SAVING THE LAKE
Attempts to save lake ecosystem take shape

HIGH temperatures brought about by the El Niño have not impacted Inle Lake as much as expected this summer, though the lake is still facing dropping water levels characteristic of the summer season.

“The current water level is low compared to the days in our childhood, but the water level has not decreased as much as in previous years, I think, due to our dredging of silt and sentiment this year,” said Ma Htway Nyo, who lives near the lake.

The drop in the water level this year affected several villages on the outskirts of the lake, making the lake inaccessible to them.

To reduce the falling water level in Inle Lake this summer, the Irrigation Department has controlled the flow of water from the Lake into the Bilu Creek using two geo-tubes.

The department has also been dredging silt and sediment from the rivers that flow into the lake while carrying out conservation measures for the lake.

The Irrigation Department has refuted rumours that the lake is facing the threat of silting up.

“Inle Lake looks like a deep frying pan. There is always water in its centre,” he added.

Meanwhile, ministries have teamed up with UN agencies and foreign countries to step up efforts for the conservation of Inle Lake, while adopting a five-year plan with short-term and long-term components.

Measures are being taken to dredge silt to make waterways in the lake deeper, to conserve the lake’s watershed areas and birds, to reduce noise from the exhausts of boats and to limit the use of fertilisers on islands in the lake.

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FOREIGN investment in Myanmar is expected to reach US$8 billion this fiscal year

FOREIGN investment in Myanmar is expected to reach US$8 billion in the 2016-2017 fiscal year, said U ThanAungKyaw, the deputy director-general of the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA).

Foreign investment reached $9.5 billion last fiscal year, according to figures from DICA. The oil and natural gas sector stood first in attracting foreign direct investment (FDI). The energy and manufacturing sectors also attracted significant investments. The transport, communication, real estate, mines, and hotels and tourism sectors also attracted foreign investment, he added.

Foreign investments from 2011-2012 to 2015-2016 have created over 350,000 job opportunities. The Myanmar Investment Commission has been encouraging more FDI in trade, agriculture and infrastructure in order to speed up the country’s economic development and create more job opportunities.

Companies in Asian countries such as South Korea, Japan, Thailand, Singapore and China have major investments in Myanmar. Many American companies have invested in Myanmar through branch offices in South Korea and Singapore.

Myanmar received $1.413 billion in foreign investment in 2012-2013; $4.107 billion in 2013-2014 and over $5 billion in 2014-2015. Myanmar has attracted more attention from foreign investors after the Foreign Investment Law was enacted. —Zar Zar
JICA provides initial $40 million for realization of MACCS

JAPAN International Co-operation Agency (JICA) has provided an initial $40 million, together with technical assistance, for application of a Myanmar Automated Cargo Clearance System (MACCS).

“We’ve provided technical assistance for application of this online system and for the drawing up of the system. We’ll also provide trainings related to usage of the system. Application of the system will initially be rolled out in the Yangon area. If it proves successful, the system will be expanded to the country’s border points and shipping ports,” said Shuhei Ueno, chief advisor of JICA.

The MACCS allows for the online application of the importation and transportation of goods into Myanmar.

The internal Revenue Department has made it known the system will enable the Ministry of Commerce, together with other relevant departments, to apply for required proof online.

“Trainings are currently being given to those who will be utilizing the system once it’s up and running. The MACCS system will roll out firstly in Yangon this November after trainings have been completed. After this, the whole country will need to use the system. Japan is the principal financial backer of the system.” said U Maung Maung Htway Shwe, deputy director general of the Department of MACCS which falls under the Internal Revenue Department.

Training on the aforementioned system is being given to eight hundred people from the beginning of this month, while the system will start to be used by shipping ports, airports and banks, together with the Thilawa Special Economic Zone. The online application system will provide a round-the-clock 24 hour service, it is known.
—Myitmakha News Agency

Crime NEWS

Police seize yaba pills, heroin in Kengtung, Yangon

ABANDONED illegal logs and timber were discovered on Sunday by local authorities in Kanma Township in Thayet District, Magwe Region.

ACTING on a tip-off, a combined team comprising police and members of the township’s forest department searched the western part of the Pathein-Monywa road near Aleechaung Village, 15 miles from the town of Kanna.

The team found 15 teak logs weighing nearly two tonnes, 279 pieces of sawn timber weighing 33.3 tonnes and 68 pieces of hardwood weighing 8.87 tonnes.

Those confiscated forest products have been placed within the town’s garden.

Police are still searching for the owner of the illegal logs and timber.
—Kyaw Zeya Win

Illegal teak found in Magwe

Meanwhile, police in Yangon discovered 1,994 yaba pills in the possession of Ma Nyo Nyo Thein and 161 from Thant Zin Lin in the Gandamar Wholesale compound at the corner of Waizayanda Road and Gandama Road on the same day.

Police searched a room in a hotel where Thant Zin Lin was staying and found another 4,827 yaba pills and 0.01 kilos of heroin.—GNLM

Illegal teak found in Magwe

A 54-YEAR-OLD man died on the spot in a traffic accident on Sunday morning in Yedashe Township, Taungoo District, Bago Region.

A truck driven by Zaw Win Maung, 19, and carrying passengers Chan Myae Ko, 24, was heading northbound along the Yangon-Mandalay road when it collided with a motorcycle workshop on the eastern side of the road. The driver reportedly lost control of the vehicle.

The collision killed U Aung Bi, a resident of Shwepyigone Village, who had fallen asleep in the workshop.

The truck driver has been charged by local police under the Criminal Law.— Ko Lwin

Wayward truck kills sleeping man

Yaba tablets seized in Yangon, Shan State

A LOCAL anti-drug squad confiscated 40,000 yaba pills from a car driven by a man named Tha Din and carrying two passengers on board near mile post No 6/2 in Lashio, Shan State, on Saturday.

The authorities also seized 600 yaba tablets from Thura Aung in Nawngkhio Township and another 200 from U Nge in Taunggyi Township.

About 2,500 yaba pills and methamphetamine weighing 12.5 grams, along with K1.9 million in cash, were collected from drug dealers in Yangon on the same day.

People involved in the case have been charged by local police under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.— Ko Ye
THAI Foreign Minister Mr Don Pramudwinai visited Myanmar as a special envoy of Thailand’s Prime Minister Mr Prayut Chan-o-cha yesterday. The Thai delegation was welcomed at the airport in Nay Pyi Taw by officials from Myanmar’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs and by Thailand’s ambassador to Myanmar. Mr Don Pramudwinai will meet President U Htin Kyaw and State Counsellor Union Foreign Minister Daw Aung San Suu Kyi during his visit.—Myanmar News Agency

Thai FM visits Myanmar to meet president, foreign minister

Army chief gives economic advice to Coco Island residents

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing yesterday, pledging to fulfill the development needs of local communities.

“Cows should be bred on a commercial basis, in addition to growing palm trees and manufacturing palm products,” said the commander-in-chief during his tour of Coco Kyun Township.

“The Tatmadaw will provide assistance to locals for their cultivation and livestock breeding,” he added.

He went on to say that the country is on its path to multi-party democracy and that local people must cooperate with their minds bent upon effectuating regional development in order to make the democratisation process a success.

In the afternoon, the senior general was briefed by the director of military engineering and acting camp commander of the island’s naval base on the progress of building a jetty, the commercialisation of palm tree cultivation, the growing of substitution crops and palm-based cottage industries.

The senior general toured Coco Island and presented cash awards to war veterans.—MNA

Eight minors trafficked in Upper Myanmar in 2016

THE child protection team under Mandalay’s anti-human trafficking unit said 38 people were trafficked in Upper Myanmar in the first four months of 2016, eight of whom were found to be under 18.

Police Col Hnin Aye said the rate of human trafficking increased from 319 cases in 2014 to 617 in 2015. Last year, 20 children fell prey to human traffickers.

The police officer added that families and relatives were involved in the trafficking of minors.

According to police records, there were 3,160 victims of human trafficking in Myanmar from 2008 to 2015.—Aung Thant Khaing

Three Myanmar climbers to attempt Everest’s Camp 4

THREE Myanmar citizens are planning their advance to Mount Everest’s Camp 4, notoriously dubbed the ‘Dead Zone’, following their successful climb to Camp 3 on the world’s highest mountain, according to the Myanmar Hiking and Mountaineering Federation.

Nyi Nyi Aung, Win Ko Ko and Pyae Phyo Aung reached Camp 3 at a height of 23,625 feet on 4 May, but descended to Base Camp for more training and necessary check-ups before attempting the climb to Camp 4, at 26,085 feet.

At this height, many climbers are contracted with altitude sickness, an illness caused by ascent to high altitudes and characterised by hyperventilation, nausea and exhaustion resulting from a shortage of oxygen. Other symptoms include insomnia, headaches, dizziness, shortness of breath and cerebral oedema.

Camp 4 is referred to as the Dead Zone because of its adverse weather conditions and remote location, making unlikely the chance of rescue in the case of an emergency. The Myanmar Hiking and Mountaineering Federation has announced that the climbers plan to reach the summit of Everest, which has a height of 29,029 feet above sea level.—Myanmar News Agency

Attempts to save lake ...
Sturgeons to be exported to Asia, EU markets

STURGEON breeding in Myanmar will be expanded by over 50 per cent of its current capacity with a view to export sturgeons to Asian and European markets, said U Han Tun, the executive vice president of the Myanmar Fisheries Federation (MFF).

Sturgeons are receiving higher demand from European and Asian countries. Sturgeons must mature for three years before being suitable for sale. In order to meet market demand, sturgeon breeding is required to be boosted by over 50 per cent, he said.

In sturgeon breeding, local sturgeon fingerlings will be kept for the domestic market, and those imported from Thailand and Viet Nam will be sent to the Europe export market when they mature.

Previously, rohu was mostly exported to Asian markets, and sliced rohu was sold in European markets. Now, sturgeon will be exported to both Asia and Europe, and the volume of fishery products exports is expected to rise.—Chanko

KBZ permitted to open representative office in Thailand

THE Central Bank of Thailand has granted permission to Kanbawza (KBZ) Bank, the largest domestic private bank in Myanmar, to open Myanmar’s first representative office in Thailand, announced an official from KBZ.

KBZ (Bkk) will compile economic and monetary reports on local entrepreneurs and Thai businessmen and conduct negotiations with Thai businessmen who want to run businesses in Myanmar.

It will provide greater access to foreign banks. Once KBZ opens the branch office in Thailand, it will offer services to Myanmar migrants working in Thailand. Beside the representative office, KBZ will continue to seek a branch banking licence to conduct banking services in Thailand.

The bank hopes to conduct banking services for entrepreneurs and legal migrant workers.—Union Daily

Myanmar gold price aligns with world price

IN May, the local gold price bounced back after a two-week slump, reaching nearly K800,000 per tical (16.4 grams). The rise in local gold prices resulted from an increase in the world gold price, not from high local demand, according to gold entrepreneurs.

The rise in local gold prices is related to changes in the interest rates set by the US Federal Reserve. The local gold price is expected to rise this month, whereas the dollar exchange rate has begun to depreciate.

“With this situation, local gold prices will rise in parallel to the rise in the world gold price,” said U Kyaw Win, owner of U Hton Goldsmith and Jewellery.

The world gold price rose to US$1,300 per ounce, up from the previous price of $1,230 per ounce in April. On 5 May, the local gold price was K789,000 per tical of pure gold, while the world gold price was $1,275 per ounce, with a dollar exchange rate of K1,167 per dollar.

The instability of gold prices in May April made price predictions difficult for gold entrepreneurs.

The drop in the dollar exchange rate is attributed to inflation, political instability, foreign direct investment, demand for local currency and foreign currency and other economic conditions, say some experts.—Union Daily

Gas turbine in Thilawa SEZ to distribute power starting in May

THE construction of a natural gas turbine in the Thilawa Special Economic Zone (SEZ) is over 89 per cent complete. The gas turbine is expected to distribute power starting in May.

“A power supply of 20 megawatts was received from the government. A 50-megawatt gas plant has been built with the assistance of a JICA loan. The gas plant is located on a diagonal line to the SEZ. It will be a back-up generator for the Thilawa SEZ. The construction of the plant is slated to be completed in the middle of 2016,” said an official from the Thilawa SEZ.

Two 25-megawatt gas turbines involved in the project were manufactured by the Mitsubishi Hitachi Power Station (MHPS), and the generator in the project was manufactured by the Brush Company from the Netherlands.

The projects were launched in January 2015. The whole project is 78 per cent complete, and the installation of the first gas turbine is over 89 per cent finished. The project includes a 20-mile,20-inch gas pipeline, which is 99 per cent complete. Japan-based Sumitomo Corporation has been providing technical advisory services in the installation of the gas turbines. The Ministry of Electric Power has been making an effort to distribute power from the turbine starting this May.

Industrial businesses in the Thilawa SEZ will get a sufficient supply of power after the 50-megawatt gas plant is built. This plant is expected to distribute electricity to Yangon, too.—Zar Zar

Four control centres to monitor labour conditions in Thailand

FOUR control centres will be opened in the border areas between Thailand and Myanmar near Ranong, Mae Sai, Kanchanaburi after an MoU is signed at the end of May, according to the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population.

“The main objective of opening these centres is to protect labourers against possible employment problems because labourers can be sent to workplaces with the poor working conditions. The centres will control inflated demand through cooperation with the Thai government. The two governments will exchange blacklist and watch list data. Blacklisted will not get permission,” said U Myo Aung, the permanent secretary of the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population.

The centres will also serve as training centres where labourers will be able to attend classes. They will provide work permits and visas. The Thai government will take prompt action against those who forge demand letters.—Chanko

Late tomato growers flourish despite early losses

TOMATO growers who cultivated late in the season are not suffering heavy losses as expected because of the rise in tomato prices beginning in March 2016. The current price of tomatoes is between K1,500 and K2,000 per vis (1.6 kilos).

Tomatoes planted early in the season in November 2015 brought about a decline in prices down to between K60 and K100 per vis. The growers suffered heavy losses at a time when they were producing 500 to 1,000 visses of tomatoes per day.

The tomato market has been on the decline year on year. Currently, growers systematically cultivate tomatoes with the support of poles and exclusively purchase pedigree seeds. The plants are irrigated once a month in winter and once a week in summer, and fertiliser is added at the same time.

The tomatoes are available to pluck after four months of cultivation.—Tetnamin
Malaysia’s ruling party sweeps state polls despite scandals around PM Najib

KUALA LUMPUR—Malaysia’s ruling coalition secured a landslide victory in the Borneo state of Sarawak on Saturday after a campaign led by the prime minister, who is facing a financial scandal involving a state-owned fund. The Barisan Nasional (BN) alliance expanded its majority to 72 out of the 82-seat state legislative assembly, a result that Prime Minister Najib Razak is likely to use as an endorsement of his tumultuous leadership.

But the coalition’s win is largely credited to the popularity of Sarawak’s Chief Minister Adenan Satem, who took over the reins in 2014. Sarawakians have rallied behind Adenan, who is seen as a Najib’s ally, after the state leader brokered greater autonomy for the state, a result that is likely to use as an endorsement of his tumultuous leadership.

The prime minister has denied any wrongdoing and consolidated power by sacking dissenters within his party, the United Malaya National Organisation (UMNO), and using a controversial sedition law to clamp down on other critics. The strong showing by the coalition was also helped by a breakdown in the opposition alliance, the Pakatan Harapan.

MANILA — Taxi driver John Par was late last week still undecided about which of the five presidential candidates he would vote for in Monday’s election. Despite many being bothered by the allegations, with his many being bothered by the allegations, with his

The 5-year-old father of Davao City in the southern Philippines who is leading in pre-election surveys, and Sen. Mary Grace Poe-Llamanzares, popularly known as Grace Poe, 47, the previous frontrunner.

“I hope corruption will be eradicated, if not lessened, so that all government projects will be finished and so that we, the people, can feel the benefits of the taxes we pay the government,” Par told Kyodo News when asked on Friday about his expectations for the successor of President Benigno Aquino, who is barred from running for a second term.

But in Davao City, the mayor has denied the allegations, with his many being bothered by the allegations, with his

Based on the most recent surveys, Duterte is likely to win despite criticism of his blunt manner of speaking and misogynistic utterances. Within the last two weeks, Duterte has been bartering for the country’s credit rating and compassionate governance. The outgoing Aquino government booted of having boosted the country’s gross domestic product growth to an annual average of 6.2 per cent since 2010, improved the country’s credit rating and competitive ranking, and brought down unemployment.
North Korea came under 6 regional
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the journalists were taken back to
wait in a lobby outside large
umbers of the foreign media
invited to Pyongyang to cover the
meeting on Saturday.

Late on Saturday,

official name, the Democratic
People’s Republic of Korea.

DPRK is short for the
People’s Republic of Korea.

The inspectors have yet to
find the perpetrators of 1971 to
book.

Nizami was one of the top
Jamaat leaders who have been
involved in two war crimes tri-
unals which Prime Minister
Sheikh Hasian’s Bangladesh
Awami League-led govern-
ment formed in 2010 to bring
the perpetrators of 1971 to
book.

Nizami was again convicted in 2012 with
charges of crimes against humanity, in-
cluding looting, mass killings, arson, rape and forcefully
converting people to Muslims during the 1971 war.

The indictment order said
Nizami was a key organiser of the
Al-Badr, an auxiliary
force of the then Pakistani army which
planned and executed
the killing of Bengali intel-
etlectuals at the end of the
war.—Xinhua
Huge anti-government protest fills Warsaw’s ceremonial boulevard

WARSAW — Tens of thousands of Poles waving national flags staged a huge protest march through Warsaw on Saturday, accusing the conservative Law and Justice (PiS) party that took power last year of undermining democracy and putting Poland’s European future at risk. The throng stretched at least 3 km (2 miles) along a ceremonial boulevard leading past the presidential palace, and Warsaw Mayor Hanna Gronkiewicz-Waltz, a member of the opposition centrist Civic Platform (PO), put the number of demonstrators at 200,000.

Critics say the nationalist-minded administration is curtailing democratic checks and balances and driving a wedge between Poland and its allies in the European Union, which it joined in 2004. They also say the PiS’s euro-scepticism could push Poland, a former Soviet satellite, back into the Russian sphere of influence. PO leader Grzegorz Schetyna told the crowd it was the largest demonstration since Poland threw off communist rule in 1989.

Some PiS actions, including attempts to take more direct control of the judiciary and public media, have prompted the EU’s executive Commission to launch a “Rule of Law” procedure, which could result in a suspension of Poland’s voting rights.— Reuters

Turkey’s Erdogan pours cold water on hopes of progress on EU deal

ANKARA — Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan on Saturday poured more cold water on hopes for progress with Europe on a deal to curb migration, suggesting Ankara would not change its anti-terrorism laws just to meet European Union requirements.

The EU has asked member states to grant visa-free travel to Turks in return for Ankara stopping migrants from reaching Europe, but said Turkey still had to change some legislation, including bringing its terrorism laws in line with EU standards.

The migrant deal between Brussels and Ankara was negotiated by Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu, who this week announced his decision to step down as premier, capping weeks of public tension with Erdogan.

“Those who ask Turkey to change its laws on terror should first remove the terrorists’ tents that were erected outside the EU parliament,” Erdogan said in a speech to supporters in the eastern Anatolian city of Malatya.

He was referring to Belgian authorities allowing supporters of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK) to set up a protest site outside an EU-Turkey summit in March.

Visa-free travel is for many Turks the biggest benefit of Ankara’s deal with the EU. Europe, meanwhile, is counting on Turkey to maintain an agreement that has helped stem the flow of refugees and migrants via Turkish shores.

Davutoglu’s departure consolidates the power of Erdogan, who has been highly critical of the EU in the past and is seen in Brussels as a far tougher negotiating partner less closely wedded to EU norms.

Erdogan has frequently accused the West of not giving enough support to Turkey for sheltering more than 2.5 million refugees since the start of the Syrian civil war. He has also been infuriated by Western support for Syrian Kurdish militants at home and the threat from Islamic State in neighbouring Syria and Iraq.

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The death sentences, carried out at the Pule Chariki prison on the outskirts of Kabul earlier on Saturday, underscored the harder line pursued by the government since a suicide attack claimed by the Taliban last month killed at least 64 people in Kabul.

A statement from Ghani’s office on Sunday said the executions had been carried out after a fair and transparent legal process and in accordance with both the constitution and Islamic law.— Reuters

Mexico rumbled by 5.9 magnitude quake, no damage reported

MEXICO CITY — A 5.9 magnitude earthquake shook southern Mexico before dawn on Sunday and was felt as far away as Mexico City, prompting buildings to sway and some people to rush into the streets, but there were no immediate reports of damage.

The quake struck 29 kilometres (18 miles) northeast of the town of Pintopa de Ovando Luis, in the southern Mexican state of Oaxaca, at a depth of 24.4 kilometres.

Luis Felipe Puente, the national head of emergency services, said on Twitter that there were no immediate reports of damage in much of southern Mexico, including the states of Puebla, Chiapas and Guerrero.— Reuters

Five killed in village shooting near Moscow

MOSCOW — Five people were killed by an unidentified gunman in a village in the east of Russia’s Moscow region, the RIA Novosti news agency reported on Sunday, quoting a local emergencies service source.

The gunman, about 30 years old and armed with a Saiga hunting carbine, attacked a group of bikers, RIA Novosti said without specifying when the shooting took place.

Local authorities have issued a search warrant for the attacker, and the regional investigation department has launched a criminal probe into the case.— Xinhua

Festival of Science and Education opens in Novi Sad

NOVI SAD — The Festival of Science and Education, which the University of Novi Sad traditionally organises on the campus, was declared open by Zoran Luizanin, state secretary at the ministry of education, science and technological development, on Saturday.

The opening ceremony brought together Novi Sad University Rector Dusan Nikolic, Provincial Secretary for Science and Technological Development Vladimir Pavlov, representatives of the Petroleum Industry of Serbia and Schneider Electric DMS that backed the festival.

The event is expected to welcome a large number of young visitors, as it promotes science in the most appealing way, Luizanin noted.— Tanjug

Afghanistan executes six prisoners in anti-Taliban crackdown

KABUL — Afghanistan hanged six prisoners convicted of terrorism offences, as President Ashraf Ghani carried out a threat to approve executions as part of a tougher new policy towards the Taliban.

The death sentences, carried out at the Pule Chariki prison on the outskirts of Kabul on Sunday, undermined the harder line pursued by the government since a suicide attack claimed by the Taliban last month killed at least 64 people in Kabul.

A statement from Ghani’s office on Sunday said the executions had been carried out after a fair and transparent legal process and in accordance with both the constitution and Islamic law.— Reuters

Democratic Party eyes pledge to lower age for eligibility

TOKYO — The Democratic Party, Japan’s main opposition party, is considering pledging to lower the minimum age for eligibility to run for public office to 18 in its manifesto for the upcoming House of Councillors election this summer, party lawmakers said Saturday.

Currently a candidate must be at least 25 years old to run in elections for the House of Representatives, mayor and local assemblies, while one needs to be 30 years old or older to run for the upper house or prefectural governorship. The plan has emerged as the revised Public Offices Election Law, which lowers the voting age to 18 from 20 in an attempt to encourage political participation by youths, is scheduled to take effect 19 June. The upcoming upper house election is likely to be the first national election with youth aged 18 or 19 contesting ballots.

The Democratic Party, formed in February through a merger of the Democratic Party of Japan and the smaller Japan Innovation Party, is expected to finalise its election pledge by late this month, the lawmakers said.

In the manifesto, the Democratic Party is likely to vow to introduce a new system to pick in turn male and female candidates from a party’s candidate list in upper house elections, with an aim of boosting the number of female lawmakers, the lawmakers added.— Kyodo News
Myanmar should bolster ties with IOM

Khin Maung Aye

ISSUES facing migrant workers from countries, and nations around the world, and Myanmar is not an exception. In recent years, Southeast Asia and Europe have undergone major challenges related to migration. As many as 120,000 migrants entered Greece and Italy in 2016 so far.

The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) was founded in 1951, indicating that the issue of migration is not new. The IOM is an intergovernmental organisation with its headquarters based in Geneva, Switzerland. A total of 157 countries are signatories to its charter, and another 10 countries are observers.

In addition, more than 80 global-level and regional-level intergovernmental organisations and nongovernmental organisations also hold observer status. The IOM has 8,400 employees around the world and had a budget of US$1.675 billion in 2013.

The original objective of the founding of IOM was to accommodate people displaced during World War II. However, this objective has been expanded, and the IOM today is an international agency cooperating with governments, NGOs and civil society organisations around the world to promote awareness of migrant issues, to utilise the intellectual skills and physical labour of migrants and refugees for socioeconomic development in receiving countries, to respect the dignity of migrants as human beings and to provide welfare programmes for them.

Myanmar must strengthen its relations with the IOM in order to allow Myanmar to better accommodate migrants and refugees in such a way as not to harm the socioeconomic development of the country while utilising the intellectual skills and physical labour of migrants.

Opinion

Right to Life and Death Penalty

Dr. Khine Khine Win

Right to life is first and foremost of all human beings. It is a moral principle, the most fundamental of all rights and the most important for all and is relevant to all human beings. Indeed it protects the individual’s ability to take all those actions necessary for the preservation and enjoyment of its life. If you are alive, there is hope for a better day and something good to happen. But in its absence, all other fundamental rights have no reason to exist. Here I would like to brief on Human Rights and Death Penalty.

According to Universal Declaration on Human Rights article (3), everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person. Moreover, according to International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) article 6.1 every human being has the inherent right to life and it also provides that “nothing in this article shall be invoked to delay or to prevent the abolition of capital punishment by any State Party”. And also article 37 (a) of the Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC) prohibits the death penalty for person under 18 at the time of crime. Death penalty breaches not only right to life but also right to live free from torture. Both rights are protected in Universal Declaration of Human Rights, UDHR adopted in 1948.

Historically, death penalty has been used in almost every part of the world. Currently, the large majority of countries have either abolished or discontinued the practice. Despite some countries still using death penalty, in last few decades it is generally decreasing in the world. Violation and this understanding has led to progress in the abolition of the death penalty worldwide.

According to Amnesty International, as of July 2015, 101 countries have abolished the death penalty for all crimes in law, while 140 countries have abolished the death penalty in law or practice. At least 607 executions were carried out worldwide in 2014, a decrease of almost 22% compared to the figures recorded for 2013. Executions were recorded in 22 countries in 2014, the same number as 2013. This is a significant decrease from 20 years ago in 1995, when there were executions in 42 countries, highlighting the clear global trend of states moving away from the death penalty. This information clearly shows that use of the death penalty worldwide has continued to shrink. The reasons people have abolished the death penalty in increasing numbers vary. Among them broader understanding of human rights is one of the reasons for some countries.

The UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, has said that death penalty has no place in the 21st century. He called on countries to take concrete steps toward abolishing or stopping this form of punishment. “Together, we can finally end this cruel and inhumane practice for good, everywhere around the world,” he said. However in some conditions, some part of the world are still using the death penalty in judicial system without considering right to life of human being. Some people still think that the world needs the death penalty having their own reasons. Some people say that if a man has taken a life of another man then he must deserve death. On the other hand, some people do not support capital punishment as they think it is not nearly humane at all. Everyone deserves a second chance.

From my perspective, death penalty violates the right not to be subjected to torture and other cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment. Further, they are not only as they think to right to life which is the most basic of all human rights. Being a human being, I want to totally abolish the death penalty all over the world in the near future. I strongly believe that regardless of age, gender, socio-economic or ethical background, health condition and any other reasons, every human being has the right to life. I am convinced that “worst of the worst is it ever justified to take a life”.

Influx seen in amputees to National Rehabilitation Hospital

MYANMAR’S National Rehabilitation Hospital, located Yangon’s northern Mayangone township, has reportedly seen an increase in the numbers of amputees coming through its doors, averaging sixteen a day.

Not one for turning away patients with disabilities, those seeking treatment are often put on waiting lists when all of the hospital’s 65 beds become taken up.

“The influx of amputees seeking prosthetic legs and arms has rendered the hospital unable to even provide these patients with beds. We’re seeing a lot of patients from rural areas. A doctor can only handle about four patients a day,” said a doctor from the prosthetics workshop.

The current influx of amputees to the hospital is not up on previous years, but time needed for rehabilitation has meant the hospital does not have the capacity to provide beds for all those seeking prosthetics limbs.

“Each patients requires a minimum of three weeks rehabilitation training. But there are some who take much longer to recover, not being in a position whereby they can walk even after a month of rehab,” said the aforementioned doctor. The price of a prosthetic leg used to fetch 20,000 Ks 2007, but the increase in donors has meant that from 2012 about ten in a hundred patients can obtain their prosthetics free of charge.

“Donations collected are used for the running of electrical equipment. We don’t request money from those who can’t afford it,” the doctor added. According to the prosthetics workshop at the aforementioned rehabilitation hospital, amputees seeking prosthetics are categorised as to whether they have been an amputee since birth, lost a limb because of disease, an accident or from stepping on a landmine.

“We’re from Nyaungdon township. My daughter was born without legs. We’ve come to get her prosthetic legs with assistance from donors. For now though, we haven’t had to pay any money. We’ve found out it’s free-of-charge,” said Daw Mar Lar from Ayeyawady Region.

The National Rehabilitation Hospital and the International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC) have been working together since 1986 providing prosthetic limbs to Myanmar citizens. The cooperation was severed in 2007 when the ICRC withdrew it activites from Myanmar amid a worsening political climate, before reconnecting in 2011 with the return of the ICRC to the country.

The hospital also began working with the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the aid wing of the Japanese embassy, back in 2008 before projects between the two were halted in 2014. The Japanese Nippon Foundation is currently providing technical assistance, while foreign prosthetics experts are being called in to provide assistance to the rehabilitation hospital in the absence of sufficient numbers of local staff.—Myanmar Times News Agency
Art exhibit celebrates post-retirement freedom

A RETIRED art instructor from the State School of Fine Arts in Yangon has exhibited works he created during the year after his retirement last April at the Lokanat Galleries on Pansodan-Road from 9 to 13 May.

Ko Mg Kyaw Than has showcased more than 70 works using various media, including acrylic, oil and watercolour, entitling his solo show “Free Breeze”, referring his free life after retirement. “I have been free since my retirement last year, and I have toured parts of Myanmar, capturing scenes of different colours on canvas and paper with use of different media,” said the retired art teacher.

The 61-year-old artist studied art under some of Myanmar’s most famous art masters, including U Thu Kha, U Mya Aye, U Kyaw Hlaing and U Kyi. This is his fifth solo show.—Aye Min Soe

Finance minister attends ADB’s 49th annual meeting in Frankfurt

UNION Planning and Finance Minister U Kyaw Win led a delegation to Frankfurt, Germany, to attend the 49th Annual Meeting of the Asian Development Bank from 1 to 5 May.

The meeting, under the theme “Cooperation for Sustainability”, focused on the critical importance of sustainability, inclusive of development and the need for closer Asian-European links.

U Kyaw Win addressed the participants on second day of the meeting. The Union minister also met officials from international financial institutions to discuss prospects for cooperation.

Myanmar became a member of the Asian Development Bank in 1973 and has since strengthened ties with the bank in the areas of infrastructure development, human resources development, poverty reduction, employment and privatisation.—Myanmar News Agency

20 finalists chosen for Miss Myanmar World contest

MISS Myanmar World Organisation Friday selected 20 finalists from 50 shortlisted applicants for the upcoming final contest.

The selected finalists are Khin Sanda Kyi, Bella, Shwe Eainsi, Moe Myint Thu Kham, M Jar Hsai, Ni Ni Min Thu, Poe Snada Khin, Thada Maria, LA Yeik Pyar, Trazy, Lu La Hsai Mai, Myat Mon Yii (a) Pinky May, Shun Le Yi Ti, Thinzar Kyaw, Zan Thazin Thae, Tun Pale Yadana, Seng Ja Hu, Le Yamin Oo, Jelly abd Shyn Yaman.

The finalists will receive necessary trainings under the arrangement of Event Director Mr Brain Jeremiah.

The organisation will select the talented one from those finalists who will have a chance to participate in the 66th edition of Miss World pageant to be held this year representing the country. Last year event, the 23-year-old Khin Yadana Thim Myint was crowned as the Miss Myanmar World 2015 where Minu Laalaguna of Spain won the title of Miss World.

Since 2014, the organisation has held Miss Myanmar World contest for the purpose of turning out talent women and promoting their roles. A total of Women between 18 and 23 years of age applied to join this year contest, according to the organiser.

People wishing to vote for someone from those 20 finalists may visit www.facebook.com/mismyanmaworldofficial.—Khin Zarli

Chicken prices drop in Yangon after Monywa bird flu

A RECENT bird flu epidemic in Monywa, Sagaing Region, has brought about a drop in the public consumption of chickens, resulting in lower chicken price in markets in Yangon, according to sources close to poultry sales centres in Mingala Taung Nyunt Township.

Chickens at poultry farms fetched K3,600 per head (US$3) before the outbreak of the flu epidemic. Now, prices have dropped to K3,200 ($2.70), and poultry farmers are worried about possible losses in the event that prices continue to drop.

Poultry farmers will incur losses when prices go below K2,800 ($2.40), the average production cost per chicken. Bird flu hit poultry farms in Monywa on 31 March, the Ministry of Health reported, saying more than 86,000 chickens and quails were culled from 54 poultry farms up to 20 April.

The falling price of chicken has taken with it the price of chicken eggs. Duck eggs are now in high demand.

Yangon’s Mingala Taung Nyunt Township is the centre of the poultry market, attracting breeders from Ayeyawady and Bago regions. Recently, the township’s poultry centre has seen a drop in the sale of chickens from 70,000 to 50,000.—Myanmar News Agency

Selected finalists of Miss Myanmar World. Photo: Reuters
MEXICO CITY — Mexican drug boss Joaquin “El Chapo” Guzman was moved on Saturday from a jail in central Mexico to a prison in Ciudad Juarez on the US border, a development that appears to bring him closer to extradition to the United States.

Guzman, head of the Sinaloa drug cartel, was one of the world’s most wanted drug kingpins until his capture in January, six months after he broke out of a high-security penitentiary in central Mexico through a mile-long tunnel.

Chapo, or “Shorty,” faces charges ranging from money laundering to drug trafficking, kidnapping and murder in cities that include Chicago, Miami and both Brooklyn and Manhattan, New York.

His lawyer, Juan Pablo Badillo, said Guzman was moved early on Saturday, but he was not sure why. He said he feared for Guzman’s life if he were extradited to the United States.

“President Obama is considered a just man, someone who respects human rights, but what if (likely Republican US president) Donald Trump comes to power?” Badillo added. “At this moment, he can’t be extradited.” Badillo said, noting that the legal process is not yet finished.

Edwardo Sanchez, a spokesman for Mexico’s presidency, said Guzman’s transfer to the state of Chihuahua was due to a prison in central Mexico, on 7 May 2016. Photo: Reuters

Federal police officers stand guard near a prison in Ciudad Juarez where Mexican drug boss Joaquin ‘Chapo’ Guzman has been moved from his jail in central Mexico, on 7 May 2016. Photo: Reuters

Eight policemen killed in attack on outskirts of Cairo: Interior Ministry

CAIRO — Unidentified gunmen killed eight policemen dressed in civilian clothes, including an officer, in an attack on a police vehicle in Helwan, just south of Cairo, the Egyptian Interior Ministry said on Sunday.

The ministry said in a statement on its official Facebook page that four gunmen with automatic weapons got out of a small pick-up truck, stopped the police car, sprayed it with bullets and then fled.

Residents told Reuters the gunmen wore masks.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attack.

Egypt is facing an insurrection, mainly based in North Sinai, that has killed hundreds of soldiers and policemen since mid-2013, when then-army chief Abdel Fattah al-Sisi ousted Islamist President Mohammed Mursi after protests against his rule.

While the deadliest attacks take place in Sinai, militants have targeted security forces and planted bombs in Cairo and other cities. — Reuters

Iran suffers losses in Syria, Aleppo truce extended

DUBAI — Thirteen Iranian soldiers were killed in a battle with Islamic militants over a village near the Syrian city of Aleppo, Tehran said on Saturday, in one of Iran’s biggest single-day losses since it sent forces to support President Bashar al-Assad.

Russia meanwhile said that 13 Iranian military advisors had been killed and 21 wounded.

Jasih al-Fatah and affiliates posted videos and photos on social media of what appeared to be the bodies of Iranians or Shi’ite militants who were killed in Khan Touman. They included footage of wallets, personal documents and Iranian currency.

Iran, along with Russia, has been a principle ally of Assad in the five-year-old civil war, while Gulf Arab states and the West have been divided in their support of the regime in Damascus.

While Tehran previously said its support was limited to advisors, it has been more open about the extent of its role since Russia intervened on Assad’s side last year.

There has been particularity involved in campaigns around Aleppo in northwestern Syria, which was the country’s commercial and industrial centre before the war and is now divided between government and rebel forces.

Just across the border from Ciudad Juarez is the US Fort Bliss military base, where Guzman could be taken.

Earlier this year, Reuters reported that US attorneys’ offices with cases against Guzman were planning to attempt to try him first after extradition. — Reuters

Three Spanish journalists kidnapped in Syria freed

MADRID — Three Spanish freelance journalists who went missing in Syria last year and were believed to have been kidnapped have been released, the Spanish government said on Saturday.

The three men — Antonio Pancha, Jose Manuel Lopez and Angel Sastre — disappeared last July. They were working on an investigative report in the northern city of Aleppo, where other journalists have been captured in the past, Spanish media reported at the time.

The Russian defence ministry said a “regime of calm” truce in Aleppo and parts of Latakia province had been extended for 72 hours beginning at 1am on Saturday (2200 GMT on Friday), Syrian state news agency SANA reported.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a British-based monitoring organisation, said Syrian and Russian warplanes had intensified their bombing of insurgent positions near Khan Touman.

In northern Syria, US-led coalition airstrikes killed 48 Islamic State fighters on Saturday, Turkey’s state-run Anadolu Agency said, quoting the Turkish military. — Reuters

Syria’s President Bashar al-Assad meets with Ali Akbar Velayati (L), Iran’s Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei’s top adviser on international affairs, on 7 May 2016. Photo: Reuters

Syria’s President Bashar al-Assad meets with Ali Akbar Velayati (L), Iran’s Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei’s top adviser on international affairs, on 7 May 2016. Photo: Reuters
Coffee, wine may be good for your gut bacteria

LOS ANGELES — Drinking coffee, tea and wine may be associated with a healthier and more diverse community of microbes living in the gut, a new study has claimed.

The opposite is true for drinking sugary beverages and whole milk, as well as for continually eating snacks and a lot of carbohydrates, researchers said.

Scientists from the University of Groningen in the Netherlands analysed the microbes inside the guts of more than 1,100 people. They identified 126 factors that were correlated with changes in the makeup of an individual’s microbial community — including 60 associated with diet, 12 related to diseases, 19 linked with drugs and four tied to smoking.

“There is a true observation of a true effect. But it is not a causality. We need to find the underlying mechanisms here,” said Simon Chapman from University of Sydney.

Researchers studied stool samples of 1,135 Dutch participants. They collected their own stool samples at home and then immediately put them in the freezer.

After a few days, samples were transported to labs at the university, where they remained frozen until they were processed by researchers, “Los Angeles Times” reported. This ensured that none of the bacteria had a chance to grow or change from the time the sample was collected and guaranteed that all samples were treated the same way, researchers said.

After analysing the samples and comparing them with other data, researchers found that consuming fruits, vegetables and yogurt positively influenced microbial diversity in the gut. Drinking tea, wine, coffee and buttermilk had the same effect.

Sugar sodas and savoury snacks were associated with lower levels of diversity. Similarly, so was having irritable bowel syndrome and smoking during pregnancy, researchers said.

Women and older people tend to have more microbial diversity than men and younger people, they said.

The findings were published in the journal Science.—PTI

Ancient coins unearthed in Everest temple

LHASA — More than 5,500 coins believed to be more than 200 years old have been unearthed during renovation work in a monastery near the base of Mount Everest in Tibet.

The round coins, weighing 26.6 kg in total and bearing floral patterns, were found by workers digging a hole in Rongpo Monastery, Dingri County, on 27 April.

Wang Kun, head of Dingri, told Xinhua that words on the coins suggested they were from the 18th century during the rule of the Gaden Phodrang regime. An expert on coin studies with the People’s Bank of China said documented mintage in Tibet started in 1792, when the Chinese central government’s minister to Tibet oversaw the creation of the first batch of standard coins.—Xinhua

Mobile phones don’t increase brain cancer risk

MELBOURNE — There is no link between increasing mobile phone use and brain cancer, claims a new study that found no rise in tumours over 30 years in Australia despite widespread use of the devices.

Researchers from University of Sydney examined the association between age and gender-specific incidence rates of 19,858 men and 14,222 women diagnosed with brain cancer in Australia between 1982-2012, and national mobile phone usage data from 1987-2012.

With extremely high proportions of the population having used mobile phones across some 20-plus years (from about 9 per cent in 1993 to about 90 per cent today), they found that age-adjusted brain cancer incidence rates (in those aged 20-84 years, per 100,000 people) had risen only slightly in males but were stable over 30 years in females.

There were significant increases in brain cancer incidence only in those aged 70 years or more, researchers said.

But the increase in incidence in this age group began from 1982, before the introduction of mobile phones in 1987 and so could not be explained by it. The most likely explanation of the rise in this older age group was improved diagnosis, they said.

Researchers also compared the actual incidence of brain cancer over this time with the numbers of new cases of brain cancer that would be expected if the “mobile phones cause brain cancer” hypothesis was true.

The testing model assumed a ten-year lag period from mobile phone use commencement to evidence of a rise in brain cancer cases.

The model assumed that mobile phones would cause a 50 per cent increase in incidence over the background incidence of brain cancer, researchers said.

The expected number of cases in 2012 (had the phone hypothesis been true) was 1,866 cases, while the number recorded was 1,435, they said.

“Mobile phones produce non-ionising radiation which is low energy, sufficient only to ‘excite’ the electrons enough to make them just heat up,” said Simon Chapman from University of Sydney.

The findings were published in the journal Cancer Epidemiology.—PTI

How Zika virus causes microcephaly decoded

LOS ANGELES — Scientists have for the first time found that the Zika virus triggers cell suicide in the developing brain, a finding that may explain how the virus causes babies to be born with abnormally small heads and also help develop new therapies against the infection.

The US Centres for Disease Control and Prevention recently concluded that Zika virus infection in pregnant women can stunt neonatal brain development, leading to babies born with abnormally small heads, a condition known as microcephaly.

Now, researchers at University of California San Diego found one way Zika can damage developing brain cells. They also found that inhibiting this mechanism reduces brain cell damage, hinting at a new therapeutic approach to mitigating the effects of prenatal Zika virus infection.

Using a 3D, stem cell-based model of first-trimester brain, researchers found that Zika activates TLR3, a molecule human cells normally use to defend against invading viruses.

In turn, hyper-activated TLR3 turns off genes that stem cells need to specialise into brain cells and turns on genes that trigger cell suicide.

“We all have an innate immune system that evolved specifically to fight off viruses, but here the virus turns that very same defence mechanism against us,” said Tariq Rana, professor at UC San Diego.

“By activating TLR3, the Zika virus blocks genes that tell stem cells to develop into the various parts of the brain. The good news is that we have TLR3 inhibitors that can stop this from happening,” said Rana.

The researchers’ model closely resembled foetal brain tissue at eight to nine weeks post-conception.

In the brain added a prototype Zika virus strain to the 3D brain model, the organoid shrank. Five days after the infection, healthy, mock-infected brain organoids had grown an average of 22.6 per cent.

In contrast, the Zika-infected organoids had decreased in size by an average 16 per cent.

Researchers also noticed that the TLR3 gene was activated in the Zika virus-infected organoids. TLR3 acts as an antenna, sensing double-stranded RNA specific to viruses.—PTI
Canada fire rages for seventh day, evacuees brace for long wait

GREGOIRE LAKE (Alberta) — A wildfire ripping through Canada’s oil sands region blazed for a seventh day on Sunday as officials warned almost 100,000 people who fled the area that they would not be returning home soon.

The fire, which started at 6 pm eastern (2200 GMT) last Sunday near the town of Fort McMurray in northern Alberta, spread so quickly that the town’s 88,000 inhabitants barely had time to leave. Large parts of the town no longer exist.

Officials said that, even though the fires had largely pushed through Fort McMurray and was heading quickly northeast through dry boreal forests, the town was still too dangerous to enter.

“We know from all the calls that you’re getting frustrated because you don’t have any information on your homes. We’re really working hard on that, it’s a complicated process,” he said. The inferno looks set to become the costliest natural disaster in Canada’s history. One analyst estimated insurance losses could exceed $9 billion ($7 billion).

Fort McMurray is the centre of Canada’s oil sands region. About half of the crude output from the sands, or one million barrels per day (bpd), had been taken offline as of Friday, according to a Reuters estimate. An Alberta government statement issued on Saturday night said the fire had consumed 200,000 hectares (494,000 acres) — an area the size of Mexico City — and would continue to grow.

More than 500 firefighters are in and around Fort McMurray, along with 15 helicopters, 14 air tankers and 88 other pieces of equipment, officials said.

The strain was so intense that fire crews were rotated more quickly than usual, Morrison said. One exhausted firefighter told CBC television that members of his team were working up to 40 hours without sleep.— Reuters

Far-right demonstrators march against Merkel in Berlin

BERLIN — Almost 2,000 far-right protesters marched through Berlin on Saturday to demand that Chancellor Angela Merkel step down for allowing more than a million migrants from the Middle East into Germany since last year.

Under the motto ‘Merkel must go’, demonstrators gathered outside Berlin’s central train station waving German flags and holding up posters reading “Islamists not welcome” and “Wir sind das Volk” (“We are the People”), a slogan coined by the protesters who ended communist rule in East Germany, adopted last year by the anti-Islam Pegida movement.

The rally drew around 1,900 participants, police said, less than half the number organisers had expected, and the protesters were outnumbered by around 7,500 left-wing counter-demonstrators who also marched through the capital.

A spokesman for the police said there had been scuffles when several left-wing demonstrators tried to break through barriers separating the two groups, and threw bottles at police.

Police used tear gas and made several arrests, the spokesman said, adding that the situation was “poised to cross the Mediterranean from Libya this year. Italy says the figure is much lower, though calm summer seas may well bring a surge.” Italy and Germany are reportedly poised to cross the Mediterranean from Libya this year. Italy says the figure is much lower, though calm summer seas may well bring a surge. Z.

Italian police, demonstrators clash in protest against Austrian fence

BRENNER — A demonstration against a plan to restrict access through the Brenner Pass between Italy and Austria turned violent on Saturday, with Italian police firing teargas at hundreds of protesters throwing stones and firecrackers.

Austria has said it plans to erect a fence at the Alpine crossing that shares with Italy to “channel” people. Part of Europe’s borderless Schengen zone, Brenner is one of the routes that migrants use as they head towards wealthy northern Europe.

Two police officers were injured in the clashes, the head of a local Italian police union, Fulvio Coslovì, told Reuters. He said around 10 demonstrators were being held by police.

Local police in Tyrol, Austria said over 600 protesters showed up to the third violent demonstration at the Brenner Pass in just over a month, meeting at the Brenner station in Italy.

TV footage showed clouds of smoke filling the Brenner railway station as groups of protesters, their faces masked against the fumes, hurled stones and smoke bombs as they faced off against lines of police in riot gear. Estimates on the number of demonstrators varied between 250 and 600.

Around 300 Austrian police officers were deployed but had not yet had to intervene, a spokesman said, since the protest had taken place exclusively on the Italian side of the border so far.

Italian newspaper Corriere della Sera reported earlier this week that the protest had been organised by an anarchist group from Trentino, northern Italy, and was expected to attract demonstrators from abroad. Austrian Interior Minister Wolfgang Sobotka said in Rome last month that as many as a million migrants were poised to cross the Mediterranean from Libya this year. Italy says the figure is much lower, though calm summer seas may well bring a surge. Z.

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Italian police, demonstrators clash in protest against Austrian fence

‘One Belt One Road’ seminar held in Afghan capital

KABUL — “One Belt One Road” seminar, jointly organised by Afghan foreign ministry and Chinese Embassy in Afghanistan, kicked off here on Sunday, discussing the opportunity of boosting connectivity and development along the ancient trade route.

Afghan deputy foreign minister Hekmat Karzai stressed that Afghanistan is a strategic hub along this ancient road as it connects the trade and investment through the east and west civilizations.

He said implementing “One Belt One Road” initiative in Afghanistan requires the innovative cooperation and strengthening of the communication of policies, transportation, trade, currencies and public investment.

The deputy foreign minister reiterated that implementing the initiative could also help reduce the conflict in the region and promote peace and prosperity in Afghanistan.

Addressing the seminar, Chinese Ambassador to Afghanistan Yao Jing said the belt and road initiative aims at integrating China and participating countries’ development strategies, facilitating trade and investment, boosting growth and bringing peoples and countries closer.

He reiterated that China would like to cooperate with Afghanistan on the implementation of the belt and road in various fields, including policy coordination, facilities connectivity, trade, financial integration and people-to-people exchanges.— Xinhua
UN urges judiciary reforms in Sri Lanka to avoid delay in justice

COLOMBO — United Nations human rights experts on Saturday urged Sri Lanka to avoid delay in justice and promote fair judicial proceedings in order to take a step toward the country's economic recovery.

Sri Lanka agreed last week with the UN to reform its judiciary as part of an economic recovery package that includes a deal with the IMF.

But much of the war machinery remains in place, UN special rapporteur Monica Pinto told reporters. — Reuters

Drought-hit Zimbabwe sells off wild animals

HARARE (Zimbabwe) — Zimbabwe put its wild animals up for sale on Tuesday, saying it needed buyers to step in and save the beasts from a devastating drought.

A drought across the region has left more than 4 million Zimbabweans needing aid and hit the crops they rely on for food and export earnings, from maize to tobacco. It has also exacerbated an economic crisis in the cash-strapped country that has largely been dented by foreign donors since 1999.

Selling the animals would give some of them a new home and ease financial pressure on the parks authority, which says it receives little government funding and struggles to get by on what it earns through hunting and tourism.

“It is in light of the drought ... Parks and Wildlife Management Authority intends to de-stock its parks estates through selling some of the wildlife,” the authority said in a statement.

It asked interested Zimbabweans to get in touch and did not mention foreign buyers. Parks authority spokesperson Caroline Washaya-Moyo would not say whether the animals could be exported or how many it wanted to sell.

“We do not have a target. The number of animals depends on the bids we receive,” she said.

There was no immediate comment from the wildlife groups that protested loudly last year when Zimbabwe exported 60 elephants, half of them to China, where the animals are prized for their tusks.

About 54,000 of Zimbabwe’s 80,000 elephants live in the western Hwange National Park, more than four times the number it is supposed to hold, the agency says.

The drought is expected to worsen an already critical water shortage in Hwange, which has no rivers and relies on donors to buy fuel to pump out underground wells.

The privately-owned Zimbabwe Independent newspaper reported in February that Buyeye Conservancy, a private game park in southern Zimbabwe, could be forced to kill 200 lions to reduce over-population.

Many hunters have stayed away, the paper quoted Buyeye general manager Blondie Leatham as saying, since the furor over the killing of Cecil, a rare black-maned lion, by a US dentist last year. — Reuters

Militia groups threaten to derail South Sudan’s transitional unity government

JUBA (South Sudan) — Despite forming the transitional government of national unity (TGoNU) to end more than two years of civil war, South Sudan’s newly inaugurated leaders must prioritize security reforms and revamp the fragile economy to prevent the youngest country from plunging again into civil war, experts have said.

The government is faced with a daunting task of rebuilding the shattered infrastructure and paying salaries of a huge number of civil servants.

Many of the civil servants have undergone more than two months without being paid, including the integrated military and police part of the more than 1,500 former Sudan People’s Liberation Movement-in-Opposition (SPLM-IO) rebels led by Vice President Riak Machar.

Experts say the security threat posed by various militia groups may at large affect peace and stability in a country awash with small arms.

“The issue of security will also be magnified by two additional problems. One is the widespread small arms across the country, making it extremely difficult for the state to ensure safety of citizens’ lives and their properties,” said Jok Madut Jok, a political and security analyst at the Sudd institute, a South Sudan think tank.

He revealed many armed groups, from Upper Nile, Bahr el Ghazal and Western Equatoria have pledged to fight the Juba government, which is another imminent threat.

The intense fighting at the height of the conflict between SPLM-IO and government troops was characterised by counter defections with several splinter commanders citing grievances stemming from resources and personal disagreements.

“If the transitional government does quickly come up with a conception as to how to bring these groups into the fold, South Sudan will remain a country at war with itself into the near future,” Jok observed.

He explained the more insecure the vast majority of the public, the more likely that more people will seek to arm themselves illegally in the false assumption of self-protection.

“Such insecurity would eventually begin to erode the very foundation of the state and that of the transitional government, as it did between 2007 and 2013,” the analyst said.

“Particularly vexing is the question of whether the president and his deputy will abide by the powers and mandates that the peace agreement has delineated. How will they interact with one another will be a matter of regular, intense negotiation of such powers,” Jok added.

He said the risk of such dialogues collapsing is too prominent and this could eventually render the government of national unity inefficient.

Meanwhile, economist Alic Garang of Ebony Centre for Strategic Studies said the cash-strapped Juba government should come up with a rescue economic package, detailing fiscal and monetary policy measures to expand the meager resource envelope and at the same time cut down on inherent inefficiencies. — Xinhua

THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR
MINISTRY OF ELECTRICITY AND ENERGY
MYANMAR OIL AND GAS ENTERPRISE
(INVITATION FOR OPEN TENDER)
(6/2016)

Open tenders are invited for supply of the following respective items in United States Dollars and Myanmar Kyats.

Sr.No Tender No Description Remark
(1) IFB-006(16-17) Bearings for F-1000 Rig Pump (3) Items US$7,500
(2) IFB-007(16-17) Repair Kits for Drill Pipe Power Tong (3) Items US$10,000
(3) DMP-L-001(16-17) Lifting Sling / Binder & Binder Chain (5) Items Ks495,000
(4) DMP-L-002(16-17) M.S Pipe, M.S Pipe, M.S Rod and Angle Iron for River Craft (6) Nos Repairing Job Ks740,000
(5) DMP-L-003(16-17) SAE 15 W 40 Diesel Engine Oil (1) Lot Ks250,000
(6) DMP-L-004(16-17) Hydraulic Oil Light (H.O.L) ISO-VG 46 (sq) Bar Between 46 & 68 (1) Lot Ks500,000
(7) DMP-L-005(16-17) Oil Tanker 3200 Gals TA TA LPT 2116 (6 x 2) (3) Units Ks1,250,000
(8) DMP-L-006(16-17) M.S Plate, U Beam & Angle Iron for TAC-E-171 Tank (1) Lot Ks300,000

Tender Closing Date & Time: 2-6-2016, 16:30 Hr
Tender Document shall be available during office hours commencing from 5th May, 2016 at the Finance Department, Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise, No(44) Complex, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar.

Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise Ph.: +95 67 - 411097 / 411206

Men attempt to get a malnourished cow on its feet in rural Masvingo, Zimbabwe. PHOTO: REUTERS

Photo: Reuter
Bollywood stars express gratitude to moms on Mother’s Day

MUMBAI — Remembering their moms’ selfless and unconditional love for them, B-town stars like Amitabh Bachchan, Alia Bhatt and Preity Zinta today wished all their fans Happy Mother’s Day.

Bachchan wrote on Twitter that no success in Bollywood would have been possible had it not been for his late mother. “Mother’s Day: 1 year of PIKU 28 years of KHUDA GAWAH but without Ma nothing of this would have happened!”

“Mommy Twitter doesn’t have enough space for my words. I’ll keep it simple. THANK YOU! @SoninRazdan #happymothersday Happy #momsday mummy- poosoo!” wrote Alia.

Her mother Soni Razdan wrote, “My 87 year young mother won’t read Twitter so I will wish her in person. But for all who will read Happy Mothers Day.”

“Sharing two pictures of herself with her mother and mother-in-law, Genelia Deshmukh posted, Happy Mothers Day Mamma n Aai... Thank u for being the best examples to follow... I love, worship, respect you’ll the most.”

Sidharth Malhotra posted a picture of himself with his mother and captioned it writing, “Men are what their mothers made them.” —Ralph Waldo Emerson thank you Mom! #HappyMothersDay.

“Everyday is Mother’s Day still today is special cuz I get to spend time with mom in Shimla,” tweeted Preity.

Dia Mirza wrote an emotional post dedicated to her mother.

“Happy Mother’s Day Mamma! I am because you are. Thank you for being my guiding light and thank you for every time you have scolded me hard.”

“No one in this world can make me see sense and no one can make me REALISE things as powerfully as you can.”

“Our roles may have reversed, but that does not mean that while I love playing mommy to you that I can ever do without you being my mamma.”

“And you always seem to know when you need to be mamma again #MothersDay.”

“Mamma! I am because you are. Love you Mommy.”

Victoria Beckham won’t do any more magazine cover shoots

LONDON — Singer Stevie Wonder paid tribute to legendary musician friend Prince at a memorial concert in Los Angeles.

A memorial service was held for the late Prince on Friday night May 6, where Wonder made a surprise appearance, reported Female First.

The “I Just Called to Say I Love You” hitmaker was joined by Faith Hill, Eric Benet, Aloe Blacc and Deitrick Haddon as they performed for thousands of fans, all adorned in purple in honour of the fallen star, at the City Hall in California as a token of remembrance for the ‘Purple Rain’ hitmaker.

The 65-year-old singer closed with show with his very own version of Prince’s 1984 hit before telling the emotional concert-goers, “In the spirit of Prince, we gotta love one another. And we can’t just talk about it, we gotta be about it.”

Fans had tears rolling down their faces as Eric belted out the lyrics to Prince’s “Wanna Be Your Lover” before teaming up with Deitrick to sing ‘Raspberry Beret’.

Although the three-hour long concert was mainly a celebration of Prince’s life, the event did take an emotional turn when a flock of doves were released during a performance of “When Doves Cry” towards the end.

Prince passed away at the age of 57 on 21 April at his home in Minneapolis.—PTI

Didn’t want celebrity friends on my tour: Selena Gomez

LOS ANGELES — Singer Selena Gomez says she did not want her celebrity friends to join on her “Revival” tour because she wants to be known for her solo music career rather than her association with them.

The 23-year-old songstress rejected the idea of being accompanied by her friends Cara Delevingne, Halsey, Steinfeld, Gigi Hadid and the ‘Bad Blood’ hitmaker on stage, because she doesn’t want her association with celebrity pals to detract from her as a musician, reported Entertainment Weekly.

Gomez spoke about Swift’s “The 1989 Tour”, which saw her and Lisa Kudrow emerge on stage during her LA performance for a duet.

“I made a joke about this [getting her friends to join her on tour]. Taylor was in the room, and she looked at me like, ‘You should totally do that!’ I was like, ‘I can’t have all those people come on my stage!’ She’s like, ‘Why not?’ ‘Because I’m not Taylor Swift!’” she said.

“I’ve worked for my whole career, and I’ve always wanted it to be about that. I’ve been in so many situations where it’s like, ‘Oh, you’re friends with this person? You’re with that person?’ All this credibility thing that drives me crazy.

The “Hands To Myself” hitmaker, however, said she does enjoy collaborating with other artists, although her solo career is her main priority for now.

“I love being able to work with other artists I admire.”

“But I have a lot to do on my own before I am willing to make it all about embracing other people.”

Victoria Beckham. Photo: Reuters

Doing ‘Captain American’ best decision of my life: Chris Evans

LONDON — Actor Chris Evans says though he was apprehensive while signing Marvel’s “Captain America” franchise, it later turned out to be the best decision of his life.

The 34-year-old actor, who has reprised his superhero role in “Captain America: Civil War”, said starring in the Marvel Comic sequels has been the most life changing experience, reported Female First.

“When I first got the offer to be a part of this franchise, the thought of a multi-picture contract that could last eight years of my life was stressful and scary. But doing these movies was the best decision of my life.

“The directors, the Russo brothers, have a way of making it feel extremely relatable and real amid flashes of superhero fanfare.”

LONDON — Penthouse global newlightofmyanmar 9 May 2016
One winning ticket sold in $429 million Powerball lottery

LOS ANGELES — One winning ticket matched the numbers drawn on Saturday night for the multi-state Powerball jackpot for a payout estimated at $429.6 million, the ninth-highest US lottery prize in history, officials said. The winning numbers selected just before 11 pm EDT were 25-66-44-5-26 with the Powerball 9. Lottery officials said one ticket, purchased in New Jersey, had the winning combination, according to media reports. The winner was not identified. Winners of huge lottery payouts sometimes do not come forward publicly for months.

It was the largest jackpot for any US lottery since January, when three Powerball tickets split a record $1.6 billion.

The odds of winning at Powerball are one in 292 million. Statistics experts say that means an American is roughly 25 times more likely to become the next president of the United States than to win the game.

Kelly Crepe, a Texas-based lottery spokesman, said Saturday's Powerball followed 17 consecutive draws without a winner. A spate of late ticket-buying on Saturday increased the jackpot by some $15 million, to an estimated $429.6 million. Powerball is played in 44 states, as well as the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands. — Reuters

NEW YORK — Thousands of pigeons with tiny LED lights strapped to their legs swooped through the darkening skies in a jaw-dropping display of beauty, but savvy New Yorkers gazing up at the performance art knew enough to keep their mouths shut.

As evening fell over the Brooklyn Navy Yard, once home to the nation's largest naval fleet of carrier pigeons, artist Duke Riley opened an enormous coop and released the homing pigeons of his “Fly by Night” project.

At the call of his whistle, the massive flock took off and circled for 30 minutes late Thursday over the deck of their temporary home on a decommissioned US Navy ship, following a bamboo pole waved in the air by Riley.

What resembled airborne embers swirling from a campfire were actually LED lights in the birds' leg bands, which historically were used to carry messages.

“It is a collaborative project between me and the pigeons,” Riley said. “It's a performance or maybe it's just a drawing that they are doing in the sky.”

The show will be repeated every weekend evening from 5 May through 12 June.

Riley's flock includes a variety of specially trained pigeons, some of which are his own, while others were purchased or borrowed from pigeon fanciers. After the project ends, Riley will keep many of them as his pets.

“Fly by Night,” which was presented by the non-profit organization Creative Time, comes three years after Riley's 2013 performance piece “Trading With the Enemy,” in which trained pigeons carried cigars from Havana to Key West, Florida, to protest the US embargo of Cuba and challenge American spying capabilities since the birds evade surveillance equipment.

The New York City project pays homage to pigeons keeping, whether for sport, service or companionship. Once a popular pastime on city tenement rooftops, the hobby has dropped off amid escalating real estate prices.

While dubbed by some New Yorkers as “rats with wings,” pigeons have been revered for thousands of years, dating back to the ancient Christians of Cappadocia in Turkey, who valued the birds for their excellence, a rich fertiliser.

Pigeon droppings were also at the top of the minds of wary art lovers on Thursday, as 2,000 birds flew overhead, threatening to amont onlookers with what some superstitions define as good luck.

“It was not a concern of mine at all because most animals, including humans, usually don’t like to defecate while they are exercising,” Riley said. Evidence on a reporter’s purse, however, proved otherwise. — Reuters
CHAMPIONS LEICESTER AND STRUGGLING SUNDERLAND PARTY

KINGSTON — Elaine Thompson clocks sizzling 10.71 seconds in Kingston wind

LONDON — Leicester City celebrated their gloriously unlikely Premier League triumph in a fitting manner with a 3-2 victory over Everton in front of their overjoyed, partying fans at the King Power Stadium on Saturday.

Jamie Vardy, with a double, and Andy King scored the goals that left the home supporters in raptures even before they could savour the almost unthinkable sight of captain Wes Morgan and manager Claudio Ranieri lifting the trophy after the final whistle.

There were more celebrations at the Stadium of Light where Jermain Defoe was again the toast of Sunderland after his winner in a 3-2 victory over Chelsea lifted them out of the relegation zone, leaving Newcastle United and Norwich City on the verge of the drop.

Defoe scored his 15th league goal of the season to lead a stunning comeback victory against Chelsea who had captain John Terry sent off in added time for a second bookable offence.

With Norwich losing 1-0 at home to Manchester United and Newcastle only able to draw 0-0 at doomed Aston Villa, the victory means Sunderland, with two games remaining, will be safe if they beat Everton on Wednesday.

Rafa Benitez’s Newcastle, a point behind north-east neighbours Sunderland in 18th place having played a game more, would then be relegated along with Norwich who are second from bottom.

After the nerve-shredding drama at the other end of the table, Leicester were able to relax in the day’s late game and revel in the triumph that has been making headlines all over the world.

Free pizzas and beer for the fans and a stirring rendition of Nessun Dorma by Italian tenor Andrea Bocelli in a Leicester shirt was the order of the day before the Foxes showed no ill-effects from their week’s heady celebrations since being crowned champions on Monday.

The “Jamie Vardy’s having a party” chant was belted out by the supporters as the England striker took his season’s goal tally in the league to 24.

The only false note came when the forward blasted his second penalty of the day high over the bar in the 72nd minute with Leicester already cruising at 3-0.

It seemed perfect that the goals should arrive from Vardy, whose amazing rise from minor-league obscurity reflects City’s own soaring journey, and King who has been a club stalwart throughout the thinnest of times.

Leicester’s victory gave them a 10-point lead at the top of the table with the champions having one game to go, at Ranieri’s former club Chelsea next weekend.

United’s win at Norwich, courtesy of Juan Mata’s fifth goal against the Canaries, left them in fifth place, one point behind neighbours Manchester City who occupy the fourth Champions League qualification spot and face fellow contenders Arsenal on Sunday.—Reuters

Thompson clocks sizzling 10.71 seconds in Kingston wind

KINGSTON — Elaine Thompson clocked a sizzling wind-assisted 10.71 seconds to win the 100 metres at the Jamaica International on Saturday, sending out a warning to her sprint rivals ahead of August’s Rio Olympics.

The Jamaican got off to a blistering start with English Gardner before pulling away from her rival in the last 40 metres to win by 14 hundredths of a second.

American Gardner was second in 10.85 with the fast-finishing Michelle-Lee Ahye of Trinidad and Tobago third in 10.98, both also aided by an illegal wind of +2.4 metres per seconds.

Thompson, who last summer logged 21.66 — the fifth fastest 200m of all time — to take silver at the Beijing world championships, told Reuters things were coming together nicely for what she hoped would be a twin sprint assault in Rio.

“It’s a stepping stone, so I’m taking it one step at a time. Each race that I run I’ll see what I can correct with my coach and see what I have to do next,” Thompson said. “I’ve been training really hard this year so I just went out there to execute and that’s what I did and I came out victorious.”

Thompson, third in the 60m at the world indoors in March, would have become the second fastest Jamaican woman behind reigning Olympic and world champion Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce (10.70) had it not been for the wind. “My start isn’t the best, but I’m working on it and I’ve been getting better,” the 23-year-old said.

There was also local success in the men’s blue riband sprint when Kemar Bailey-Cole, who withdrew from last year’s world championships with a hamstring injury, recovered from a poor start to edge American Mike Rodgers by two hundredths of a second in 10.01.

His compatriot Julian Forte, who faded in the last 20 metres, was third in 10.06, while American former world champion Tyson Gay finished fifth in 10.08. The wind also robbed American Brianna Rollins, the 2013 world champion, of the year’s second fastest time in the 100m hurdles, as her 12.32 was aided by a trailing wind of +2.9 m/s.

World 400m silver medalist Shaunae Miller of the Bahamas ran a world leading 22.14 in the 200m but again the mark will not stand because of the +2.5 m/s wind.—Reuters