MAKING USE OF SPACE

Idle industrial plots to be confiscated: regional minister

InACTIVE industrial zone land plots in the region will be confiscated by the government, said a cabinet member of Yangon Region government yesterday.

The government will take back land plots with no developed operations underway within the prescribed timeframe in Yangon’s industrial zones, said Minister for Electricity, Energy and Road Transport Daw Nilar Kyaw during a parliamentary session of Yangon Region Hluttaw.

According to the minister, land plots where no operation was carried out within six months will be confiscated.

Four teams formed by the regional government have made inspection tours of nine industrial zones including Hluttaw, Shweinbin and Ngwe Pinle industrial zones since 19 May, said the minister.

During tours of inspections, some land plots were found to be currently lying empty or simply had warehouses built on them, she added.

U Tint Lwin of Mingalar Taungnyunt Constituency I said that some businessmen bought land plots for property speculation, not for business use while others bought only for warehouse leases.

According to sources, there are 2,339 idle land plots and 1290 warehouses on the 4,418-acre of land in 29 industrial zones in Yangon Region.

Kyaukphyu SEZ land prices appreciating

The presence of the Kyaukphyu Special Economic Zone (SEZ) has appreciated the price of land along Rakhine State’s Mmepyin coastline to levels higher than that of land located within the town itself, according to Kyaukphyu real-estate agents.

The value of a 40 by 60 foot plot of land prior to 2014 on the aforementioned stretch of coastline would have set you back in the vicinity of K3-5 million, but prices have since risen dramatically to between K30-60 million.

“There’s been a string of land purchases with fences being erected in expectation of the arrival of hotel and tourism projects. Trading of land has been particularly prevalent,” U Tint Lwin of Mingalar Taungnyunt Constituency I said that some businessmen bought land plots for property speculation, not for business use while others bought only for warehouse leases.

According to sources, there are 2,339 idle land plots and 1290 warehouses on the 4,418-acre of land in 29 industrial zones in Yangon Region.

Private electrification companies in Yangon to go under review

The functions of private electrification companies in Yangon Region will be under review, according to Yangon Region government’s Electricity, Industry and Transportation Minister Daw Nilar Kyaw.

According to the minister, some of these companies have been found to show less adherence to contract terms.

Daw Nilar Kyaw told the Yangon Region Hluttaw yesterday that the matter would be brought to the Ministry of Electricity and Energy to review their contracts for any possible breach.

The Yangon Electricity Supply Corporation has hired some private companies to distribute power to select townships in the region.

Last fiscal year, the YESC bought 6,700 billion units of electricity from the national grid system and resold 5,913 billion units.

Yangon Region, as a commercial city, consumes 1,250 megawatts, which is more than half of the country’s total electricity generation, and is still in need of 15 per cent more to satisfy its total demand.
Two emergency motions over Kachin disaster put on record at Pyithu Hluttaw

TWO emergency motions over disaster-related damage to transportation infrastructure and public property in Kachin State were put on record at the Pyithu Hluttaw yesterday.

U Zone Teint of the Chiphewe constituency tabled a motion calling for prompt repair of a road linking Chiphewe and Hsawtlaw townships. Some sections of the road were damaged in recent torrential rain, he said.

Another motion was concerned with the collapse of houses, landslides, damaged crops, difficult communications and shortages of food due to the incessant rain. U Ar Moe Hsi of Khaunglangphu constituency proposed the motion urging the Union government and the local government to take prompt action to address the problems in Putao district, Kachin State. The region has undergone heavy rain since 18 February this year, he said.

In response to the motions, Construction Union Minister U Win Khang promised to seek union funding of the 2016-2017 fiscal year for the construction of five wooden bridges in the affected areas, saying that construction would start when the monsoon begins to withdraw.

Five bamboo bridges have been constructed in the areas as temporary replacements to ease access to the region.

Home Affairs Union Minister Lt-Gen Kyaw Swe spoke of ongoing measures for the repair of the damaged transportation infrastructure and the provision of foodstuff by local military commands. He added that local police were carrying out security measures in partnership with military personnel in a bid to prevent possible outbreaks of crime and reinforce the rule of law.

Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye said that assistance in cash and materials had been provided to flood victims in two townships in Kachin State. According to the union minister, relief worth K18 million (US$15,202) has been distributed to the victims in Hsawtlaw township and relief worth K53.8 million (US$45,439) to the people in Khaunglangphu township.

—Myanmar News Agency

Gov’t plans to build dams, reservoirs in regions, states with abundance of water resources

THE government has a plan to build dams and reservoirs that can benefit the local people of regions and states that have abundant water resources including Rakhine, said Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation at the Amyotha Hluttaw session yesterday.

In his response to a question on dam repairs in Rakhine State’s Yathedaung Township, the deputy minister said that works to repair Kampaiung freshwater reservoir will be added to the regional government’s priority queue for the 2017-2018 FY following a cost-benefit analysis and a feasibility study.

Likewise, the deputy minister replied to a question on water supply from Laibar dam to Falam, stating that a project is being implemented to supply the town with water from Yawssel creek through a pipeline with the use of temporary replacements to ease shortages of food due to the incessant rain. U Ar Moe Hsi of Khaunglangphu constituency proposed the motion urging the Union government and the local government to take prompt action to address the problems in Putao district, Kachin State. The region has undergone heavy rain since 18 February this year, he said.

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—Myanmar News Agency

Plans under way to collect data about natural resources use

PLANS are underway to collect data regarding the use of natural resources to speed up measures for environmental conservation, according to the Amyotha Hluttaw’s Committee for Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation.

Representatives will collect data in their respective constituencies, Chairman U Kyaw Tha said, adding that the initiative would involve making a list of extractive firms across the country.

The chairman said that the measure was aimed at preserving resources in line with the law.

The committee is waiting for permission from the speaker of the Amyotha Hluttaw, with its chairman stressing that initial data would be collected from both local and foreign companies engaged in coal mining, gems, oil and timber.

—in Tin Ko Lwin

Digestive health talks to be held on 29 May

YANGON General Hospital will organise health talks to mark World Digestive Health Day which falls on 29 May at the UMFFCCI Office Tower on Min Ye Kyaw Swa Road in Lanmadaw Township, Yangon.

The talks are being held in partnership with the World Gastroenterology Organisation. Prof. Dr U Thein Myint, Head of Department of Gastroenterology in YGH will give talks on digestive health.—GNLM

Chin govt’ to spend K150 m for water supply

THE Chin State government will spend K150 million from its budget on a project to supply drinking water to Falum Township through a pipeline, said Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation Dr Tun Win at a Amyotha Hluttaw session yesterday.

The pipeline that will carry water from Yawssel creek, 10 miles away from the township, will be installed to provide 1,188 residents in wards 1 and 2 with potable water.

Potable water will be available for Falum people shortly after completion of the water pipeline installation, said the deputy minister, adding that there will be 84 per cent of water supply coverage in Falum following the water supply of 2,000 gallons a day through the pipeline.

In his question, Amyotha Hluttaw representative U Zon Hlyal Htan stressed the need for adequate water supply for Falum Township which is facing potential water scarcity with the use of the President’s special fund.

He called for the installation of a water pipeline from Libar dam in Chin State to Falum.

According to the existing water supply program a total of 8,789 people in four wards have been provided with 120,720 gallons a day. —Thein Ko Lwin

Chief Minister meets activists, politicians for rule of law

MANDALAY Region Chief Minister Dr Zaw Myint Maung held talks with activists and members of political parties and civil society organisations in Mandalay Region at the regional government office yesterday.

In his address, the Chief Minister stressed the need of ensuring the rule of law in the region and invited constructive suggestions from those present at the meeting.

The National League for Democracy is committed to working together with activists and politicians in its efforts towards national reconciliation and the rule of law, said the Chief Minister.

It is required that we form a committee with a focus on monitoring judicial activities in the country, said Advocate U Thein Than Oo from Lawyers’ Network in Mandalay, calling for participations of all including the government, parliament, CSOs and lawyers’ associations in forming the committee.

During the meeting, attendees presented their suggestions on a wide range of matters including delayed trials, the fight against narcotic drugs in Meiktila and the removal of shops selling alcohol near Taungtaman Lake.

Those present called for the formation of a committee aimed at solving any problems in the region through collaborative efforts at the meeting. —Aung Than Khaung
Union Foreign Affairs Minister Daw Aung San Suu Kyi meets Vietnamese Deputy FM

UNION Minister for Foreign Affairs Daw Aung San Suu Kyi held talks with Mr. Vu Hong Nam, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Viet Nam on bilateral relations and further cooperation in trade, investment and the hotels and tourism sectors in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the call the deputy minister presented an invitation letter by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Affairs Minister Mr. Pham Binh Minh to the Union minister to attend the 9th Myanmar-Viet Nam Joint Commission on bilateral cooperation schedule to be held in Viet Nam.— Myanmar News Agency

Myanmar launches National Trade Portal and Trade Repository Website

VICE-President U Henry Van Thio called for the real-time cooperation of ministries concerned to ensure availability of timely and accurate information on the website in order to comply with ground situations at a ceremony to launch the National Trade Portal and Trade Repository Website in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Acknowledging the efforts of the departments concerned and USAID to launch the website, the Vice-President called on the agency to continue technical provisions to the national information portal. In his address, the Vice-President said that the National Trade Portal which features all trade-related information in the country was successfully launched in partnership with the USAID in order to link the ASEAN-Trade Repository.

The trade portal will boost transparency in trade policies and practices and minimise the unwanted effects of uncertainty in trade, added the Vice-President.

Next, US Ambassador to Myanmar Mr. Scot Marciel extended greetings followed by a presentation on the National Trade Portal and Trade Repository Website and words of thanks given by Union Minister for Commerce Dr Than Myint.— Myanmar News Agency

Union Information Minister meets Director of NBC Myanmar, party from the CLD

UNION Minister for Information Dr Pe Myint received Director Mr. Audun Aagre of the Norwegian Burma Committee (NBC Myanmar) and Executive Director Mr. Toby Mendel and party from the Centre for Law and Democracy separately at his office in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During talks with the representative of NBC Myanmar discussions were held on cooperation in the media sector and matters relating to ensuring freedom of media in Myanmar.

In his meeting with the delegation of Centre for Law and Democracy the two sides discussed points to be included in the country’s revised Law on Broadcasting and development of broadcast industry.—Myanmar News Agency

Union Attorney-General meets British Council delegation

ATTORNEY-General of the Union U Tun Tun Oo received a delegation from the British Council led by Mr. Peter Viner at his office in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the meeting the two representatives held discussions on ongoing cooperation with the British Council in judicial and legal reforms, English proficiency and Case Management courses being opened at regional state law offices, legal assistance to the people in My Justice Project and future works.

Also present were Deputy Attorney-General U Win Myint, Director-General Daw Khin Cho Ohn and deputy directors-general.—Myanmar News Agency

State Safeguarding Law revoked

PRESIDENT U Htin Kyaw signed the Law enacted by Pyidaungsu Hluttaw to Revoke the Law to Safeguard the State Against the Dangers of Those Desiring to Cause Subversive Acts yesterday.

The 1975 Law to Safeguard the State Against the Dangers of Those Desiring to Cause Subversive Acts (1975 Pyithu Hluttaw Law No.3) was revoked with this Law signed by the President.—Myanmar News Agency

Deputy Minister for Planning and Finance appointed

PRESIDENT U Htin Kyaw appoint ed U Maung Maung Win as Deputy Minister for Planning and Finance with the release of President Office’s Order No (44/2016) yesterday.

The Order said that appointment of the deputy minister was carried out in accordance with provisions stated in article 234 (a) and (d) of the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and section 16 (b) (9) of the Union Government Law.—Myanmar News Agency

Kyaukphyu SEZ land prices ...

>> From page 1

in the areas of Launggyo and Wahmyaung,” said U Maung Gyi, a local real-estate agent.

Urban 40 by 60 foot plots of land within the town of Kyaukphyu, however, are currently fetching approximately K20-30 million on the real-estate market.

Road upgrades earmarked to boost Indian export trade

THE Ministry of Construction has said it will carry out upgrading initiatives of major roads that connect Rakhine and Chin states and Sagain Region with neighbouring India in an effort to boost trade.

“Good road infrastructure to the Indian border is vital to exports to the country. We’re currently commencing the upgrading of roads in Rakhine, Chin and Sagain, which border India. This includes repairs to a total of 69 bridges located along these roads,” said Minister for Construction U Win Khai ng.

A total of US$300 million has been allocated for the upgrading initiative, while a project is also underway along the Kaladan River to allow for the export of products via waterways, according to the Ministry of Construction.

“These repairs are a good thing. We’re working to allow for three times more trade to be exported. India will also carry out repairs to existing warehouses to allow for a goods storage system that will reduce export-related expenses to be utilised. We need good roads that can be used to transport goods,” said Minister of Commerce Dr Than Myint.—Myitmakha News Agency
Course on “Production of Horticulture Crops and Irrigation”

AS part of the bilateral cooperation between Myanmar and Israel in the framework of various training activities in agriculture and other sectors, two Israel experts from MASHAV—Israel’s Agency for International Development Cooperation, conduct the course and workshop on “Production of Horticulture Crops and Irrigation”, sharing Israel’s knowledge and experience this field with Myanmar.

The program is collaboration between MASHAV, the Embassy of Israel and Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock & Irrigation in Mandalay Region, which has taken place on May 23rd-27th at Nyaung U District Agriculture Office.

The opening ceremony of the course was held on 23rd May at Nyaung U attended by Mrs. Kasa Bainesay Harbor (Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of Israel) and U Huay Naung (District Chief Officer, Department of Agriculture, Mandalay Region), and delivered the opening remarks.

 Altogether, about 45 officials from agriculture department, as well as farmers attended the course and workshop.—GNLM

Crime NEWS

Yaba, heroin seized in Shan State and Yangon

A COMBINED team comprising Anti-Drug Squad Unit-23 of Tachilek searched a home owned by one Sai Thein and Ma Nan Phaung in Monghi village, Mongkoe village-tract of Tachilek township on Monday.

The police found Ma Nan Phaung, 55 and Jimmy Sai, 26 in the house and searched them. 150 yaba pills were discovered in the purse of Ma Nan Phaung, and 14 yaba pills were discovered under the floorboards. Police confiscated a total of 164 yaba pills from the house.

On that same day a combined team including Anti-Drug Squad Unit-42 based in Yangon West District searched a man namely Hammad alias Myoe Min Oo walking in front of a Chevrolet showroom and confiscated 255 yaba pills. Similarly, members of the office of Kengtung District Police Force Commander searched a man named Thomas alias Arsoe, 37 who was staying at the Shwe Lucky Guest House in Kengtung and seized 201 yaba pills.

A combined team comprising Anti Drug Squad Unit-27 based in Loilem stopped and searched a Probox taxi on the road, Bargaya road, Ward 8, Kyaukme township on Tuesday.

A witness, Aung Lin Swe, 19, said U Maung Gyi alias Maung Maung, 42, from Ohphoe ward, ran to lie down on the railway when the train was approaching milepost 225.

The police sent his corpse to the local hospital. The case is still under investigation.—Mya Zayar (Pyinmana)

BFM provides Parahita societies with water bowser

WHILE supplying drinking water to water scarce areas across the country, KBZ’s Brighter Future Myanmar foundation-BFM provided water bowser to non-governmental societies as part of its efforts to speed up its nationwide water supply project.

A water bowser was handed over to a towns elder in Mythatho through the Kanbawzab Bank branch in Mythatho on 22 May for use in supplying water to local people. Meanwhile, BFM also provided the Kalay Lwinpyin Parahita Society in Kalay with a water bowser on Monday.

The foundation has also donated a 3,000-gallon water tanker to the Myitthamon Parahita Association, which is carrying out social welfare services in Natogyi.

Since early April 2016, the foundation has supplied more than 800,000 gallons of drinking water to a population of 60,000 in arid areas. As part of its efforts to combat water scarcity problems, KBZ’s Brighter Future Myanmar foundation has asked communities currently facing drought and/or a scarcity of fresh water to contact the foundation and arrange for fresh potable water to be delivered.

The foundation plans to build a fleet of up to 42 water bowser.—GNLM

Police arrest drug dealer for exchanging heroin for Buddha images

POLICE searched a man who was walking along Aung Hsan road, Ward 8, Kyaukme town and seized heroin weighing 0.3 grams.

When interrogated, Thaik Tun alias Aung Kyaw Zan alias Aik Mhan admitted that he had received the heroin from Tun Aung after exchange it for two Buddha images.

According to a connected investigation, the police searched the home of Tun Aung from Pan Maung village and seized two Buddha images. The police have taken action against them.—Thein Tha (IPRD)

Man struck by the train in Pyinmana

A MAN was struck by a train between mileposts 225/21-22, Ywar Kauk ward, Pyinmana township, Nay Pyi Taw at 5:30pm, on Wednesday.

A witness, Aung Lin Swe, 19, said U Maung Gyi alias Maung Maung, 42, from Ohphoe ward, ran to lie down on the railway when the train was approaching milepost 225.

The police sent his corpse to the local hospital. The case is still under investigation.—Myo Zayar (Pyinmana)

Cluster collision of three vehicles occurs in Kyimyindine

A CLUSTER collision of three vehicles occurred on Kannar road, Bargaya road, Kyimyindine township on Tuesday.

According to an investigation two vehicles crashed into a container when the container stopped abruptly. A man sustained minor injuries in the accident.—Shwe Taing Lwin
Eleven aviation fuel sub stations to turn to JV

ELEVEN aviation fuel sub stations of the Myanmar Petroleum Products Enterprise (MPPE) will form a joint venture with a private company for technical expertise and capital investment. The founding of the JV is expected to meet international quality standards of the aviation fueling business.

Myanmar is not currently able to exercise international rules and regulations of aviation fueling business. Quality control is of vital importance to aircraft fueling and so QC is being carried out as the first priority, said a responsible person from Myanmar Petroleum Products Enterprise.

Currently, the aviation fueling businesses will continue to be jointly conducted with the National Energy Puma Aviation Services Company Limited. The joint venture is believed to be helping overcome budget constraints. The JV may result in the raising of the salaries of staff depending on their professional qualifications and skills.

Over last month aviation fuel sub stations in Mingaladon were jointly operated by the National Energy Puma Aviation Services Company Limited which has 49 per cent of the shares. The remaining 51 per cent of shares from the Myanmar Petroleum Products Enterprise is owned by the Ministry of Electricity and Energy.

These aviation fuel sub stations are located in Bagan, Tachileik, Kyaukpyu, Sittwe, Myeik, Mawlamyine, Pyinmana, Lego, Dawei, TaDawOo and Myitkyina. These joint ventures will be formed by July.—Zaw Gyi

Old IWT vessels to be sold through open tender

THREE applicants have been received so far for participating in sales of old vessels with an open tender, according to the Inland Water Transport.

Thirty-five old vessels that are no longer used by the Inland Water Transport (IWT) will be sold through an open tender, said an official from the IWT, which is under the Ministry of Transport and Communication.

The department also sold 70 vessels through an open tender last year.

Among those who competed in the tender sales, majority wanted to get some parts of water crafts. Just some wanted to run again after repair” said a Deputy General Manager of the IWT.

These old vessels are from the five branches of the Inland Water Transport. The IWT has been operating the vessels on 11 routes from the delta branch, two routes from the Ayeyawady branch and one route each from the Chandwin, Rakhine and Thanlyin branches.—Zaw Gyi

Ye betel nut price aligns with the rise in imported price of Thai betel nut

THE price of betel nuts in Ye town, Mon State has aligned with the price rise of those imported from Thailand to the domestic market of Mon State, according to the betel nut depot in Mon State.

The price of betel nut rose from K4,250 up to K4,600 in the third week of May because of the rise in the price of Thai betel nuts. During two these days, the price of betel nuts has declined to Ks100 because the local betel nut sellers have had to reduce their prices following the decline of the price of Thai betel nuts. This being so, the price changes of the betel price are positively related to those of Thai betel nut, said a broker from a betel nut purchase depot of Ye Township.

Thousands of betel nuts bags are being imported from Thailand whereas only 200 bags of betel nuts from Mon State are seen at the market, according to the betel nut brokers.

Thai betel nuts are K200 cheaper per viss (a viss is approximately 1.6 kilograms) than Ye betel nuts. There are also betel nuts sent from Myeik archipelago of Taninthayi Region and Kyarim-Sekgyi of Kayin State at the market in Mon State.—200

Eighteen more companies received piling licences

EIGHTEEN companies have received licences for piling Yangon’s buildings through recommendations from the Supervisory Committee for Quality Control of High-rise Building Projects, according to the announcement of Engineering Department (Building) of the Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC).

This committee recommended the companies to be engaged in piling to ensure they obey rules, and operate in an eco-friendly manner without damaging buildings, roads, streets ditches or platforms and that they take responsibility for these activities. The companies that received the licences include Hein Lin Khant Company, GEOLAB (Myanmar) Co Ltd and Aryan-Oo Construction Ltd.

Previously, YCDC granted piling licences to 25 companies. —200

Cars selling well in Kentung

CARS worth around K10 million (US$8,518) are selling well in Kentung Township in eastern Shan State, according to the car dealers there.

“All types of cars at a value of around K10 million each are being sold. Some buyers sell their cars to exchange with other car models and offer to pay the difference if the value of the new car is higher,” said U Kyaw, a car dealer from Kentung.

The cars in Kentung are mostly imported from Thailand, Laos and China. The prices of the cars vary depending on whether they run on diesel or petrol and whether they have Yangon or Shan State licence plates, a car dealer said.

The most popular cars in the Kentung car market are the 2009 Honda Fit, which sells for K9 million, the 2010-2011 Honda Fit with a Yangon licence plate, which sells for between K10.5 million and K11 million, the 2001 Pajero, which sells for K13 million, and the 2001 Pajero diesel-powered model, which sells for between K15 million and K16 million.—200

Billionaire lottery tickets to be sold in June 2017

AUNGBARLAY lottery tickets are slated to be sold for K500 each in June 2017 with a jackpot prize of K1 billion, according to the Ministry of Planning and Finance.

We’ve been preparing to sell the lottery tickets at a value of Ks500 next year,” said U Min Htut, the director-general of the Ministry of Planning and Finance.

Other prizes in the Aungbarlay lottery include K500 million, K100 million and K50 million.—200

Pedigree seeds to be distributed to four districts of Sagaing

PEDIGREE seeds of peanut and pigeon pea will be distributed to eight townships through the four districts of Sagaing Region before cultivation time, said a responsible person from the regional agriculture department.

If the pedigree seeds are cultivated systematically and efficiently they can produce an abundant yield. With this knowledge the department has planned to distribute pedigree seeds in a timely manner before cultivation.

The department will distribute 30 baskets of pigeon peas each to Monywa, Butalain and ChaungOo townships respectively and 60 baskets to Sagaing Township, Sagaing District while 30 baskets of pigeon pea seeds and 15 baskets of peanut seeds will go to Myinmu Township.

30 baskets of pigeon pea seeds are slated to be distributed to Kani Township, Yinnabin District and Dipeyin Township of Shwebo District while 30 baskets of pigeon pea seeds and 15 baskets of peanut seeds will go to Wetlet Township, Shwebo District.—200
Three islands in south Thailand shut down to save coral reef

BANGKOK — Three islands off Phuket in south Thailand were closed to tourists to protect endangered coral reefs. Thai Marine officials said on Wednesday.

The tiny islands off Phuket’s east coast covering totally 246 rai of coral reefs, namely Koh Khai Nai, Khai Nok and Khai Nui, were shut down with all facilities and structures used for tourist activities since about 80 per cent of coral reefs in the area have been destroyed.

Department of Marine and Coastal Resources (DMCR) pointed out that the islands usher in at least 60 speedboats per day. More and more restaurants and shops settle down in the wake of the arrival of an increasing number of tourists, who often spend at least three hours feeding fish and snorkeling.

The area has been suffered from coral-bleaching, which does occur naturally but can be exacerbated by human interaction with coral reefs.

Meanwhile, other activities include boats anchoring on the corals, people walking on coral while playing in the water, people collecting coral and taking away with them as a trip souvenir, also cause a negative impact on the maritime ecosystem.

Local government will send more officials to monitor the tour operators and tourists in these areas to prevent them from engaging in any activities that will damage the coral-reef ecosystems.

—Xinhua

G7 agrees need strong message on South China Sea, China says don’t ‘hype’

This photo shows Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, second from right, and US President Barack Obama, third from left, as they listen to the statement of the G7 leaders during their meeting in Ise, Mie Prefecture, Japan, on May 26, 2016.

From left, Eikei Suzuki, Governor of far east Prefecture, European Council President Donald Tusk, Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, US President Barack Obama, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, French President Francois Hollande, British Prime Minister David Cameron, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker, participate in a tree planting during a visit the Ise-Jingu shrine in Ise, Mie Prefecture, Japan, on May 26, 2016, as part of the G7 Summit. PHOTO: REUTERS

The G7 groups Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United States. — Reuters

ISE-SHIMA, Japan — Group of Seven (G7) leaders agreed on Thursday on the need to send a strong message on maritime claims in the western Pacific, where an increasingly assertive China is locked in territorial disputes with Japan and several Southeast Asian nations.

The agreement prompted a sharp rejoinder from China, which is not in the G7 club but whose rise alarmed the United States was simply concern about freedom of navigation and overflight in the region. Obama on Thursday pointed to the risks from North Korea’s nuclear and missile programmes, saying the isolated state was “hell bent” on getting atomic weapons.

But he said there had been improved responses from countries in the region like China that could reduce the risk of North Korea selling weapons or nuclear material.

“I’m something that we’ve put at the centre of discussions and negotiations with China,” Obama told reporters.

The global economy topped the agenda earlier in the day, when G7 leaders voiced concern about emerging economies and Abe made a pointed comparison to the 2008 global financial crisis. Not all his G7 partners appeared to agree.

The G7 leaders did agree on the need for flexible spending to spur world growth but the timing and amount depended on each country, Seko told reporters, adding some countries saw no need for such spending.

Britain and Germany have been resisting calls for fiscal stimulus. “G7 leaders voiced the view that emerging economies are in a severe situation, although there were views that the current economic situation is not a crisis,” Seko said.

Abe presented data showing global commodities prices fell 55 per cent from June 2014 to January 2016, the same margin as from July 2008 to February 2009, after the Lehman collapse.

Lehman had been Wall Street’s fourth-largest investment bank when it filed for Chapter 11 protection on 15 September, 2008, making its bankruptcy by far the biggest in US history. Its failure triggered the global financial crisis.

Abe hopes, some political insiders say, to use a G7 statement on the global economy as cover for a domestic fiscal package including the possible delay of a rise in the nation’s sales tax to 10 per cent from 8 per cent planned for next April.

Obama ripped into Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump, saying the billionaire had rattled other G7 leaders and that his statements were aimed at getting headlines, not what was needed to keep America safe and the world on an even keel.

Trump has been accused of racism, misogynyny and bigotry for saying he would build a giant wall to keep out illegal Mexican immigrants, who temporarily ban Muslims from the United States and after he made a series of comments considered demeaning to women.

Summit pageantry began when Abe escorted G7 leaders to the Shinto religion’s holiest site, the Ise Grand Shrine in central Japan, dedicated to sun goddess Amaterasu Omikami, mythical ancestress of the emperor.

On Wednesday night, Abe met Obama for talks dominated by the arrest of a US military base civilian worker in connection with the killing of a young woman on Japan’s southern Okinawa island, reluctant to the bulk of the US military in Japan.

The attack has marred Obama’s hopes of keeping his Japan trip strictly focused on his visit on Friday to Hiroshima, site of the world’s first atomic bomb, to highlight reconciliation between the two former World War II foes and his nuclear anti-proliferation agenda.

The G7 groups Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United States. — Reuters

Chief Executive Officer - Nakagawa Kiyoshi ceo@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
Chief Editor - Klin Maung Aye ce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
Deputy Chief Editor - Aye Min Soe dce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
Chief Proof Reader & Translator – Ye Myint
Expatriate Consultant Editors
Jacob Goldberg consul3nteditor1@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
Alex Wilmot consul3nteditor2@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
Jaidan Coonan
Chief Translator & Editor Kayaw Thura editor2@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
Editor Ye Hutt Tin (Local News) editor@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
International Editors
Tun Tun Naing (Editor) innews@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
Nwe Nye Tun (Sub-editor) innews@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
Translators
Khaing Thanda Lwin, reporter1@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
Hay Mar Tin Win, translator@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
Ei Myat Mon, Tin Nwe Lynn
Chief Reporter Tun Aung Kyaw, reporter2@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
Reporters
Soe Soe Yu, Thein Ko Lwin (Nay Pyi Taw Bureau), Klin My Win (Mandalay Bureau)
Computer Team
Tun Zaw (Chief of Computer Team), Thein Ngwe, Zaw Zaw Aung, Ye Naing Soe, Nyi Zaw Moe, Hnin Pwint, Kay Khang Win, Santha Hnin, Zu Zin Hnin
Circulation & Advertising
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Ads and subscription enquiries:
subscription@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

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MANILA — While Philippine elections this month were dominated by talk about crushing crime, the next president faces another critical early test: ensuring there is enough rice for the country’s more than 100 million people.

The Philippine crop is suffering mounting drought damage, just as the country’s big Asian rice suppliers also suffer from an El Niño weather pattern.

In a country where rice accounts for about a quarter of the expenditure of the poor, any supply disruptions are extremely sensitive. Big purchases by the world’s third-biggest importer can also send shockwaves through markets.

There are now concerns that potentially vital imports may be delayed as the incoming administration of Rodrigo Duterte, who campaigned on making food available and affordable, looks to overhaul policies and review existing state purchase plans.

“Now is the right time to import as prices are starting to trend up,” said Bruce Tolentino, deputy director general for communication at the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI).

In 2008, lower Asian rice output also due to an El Niño prompted India to ban exports, sparking panic measures in the Philippines — including ordering troops to supervise subsidized rice sales and asking fast food chains to serve half-portions.

Manila also had to scramble to import more rice in 2014 after prices shot up due to typhoon crop damage.

On 13 May, Duterte’s campaign spokesman Peter Lavina said an April plan to allow the state buy rice in 2014 after prices was “insane” and would still allow imports until this was achieved.

Duterte’s choice for agriculture minister, Emmanuel Pinol, has said the administration will bar private traders from importing rice and put the task entirely in the hands of the state grains agency, the National Food Authority (NFA), a move that some traders say could stall imports.

“Many traders were expecting the Philippines to make the large 500,000 tonnes purchase shortly after approval was received, in one to two years, but would still allow imports until this was achieved,” Pinol said.

The state is planning to buy rice in 2015 after prices price spikes in 2014.

Some of the NFA’s imported stocks are more than six months old so there’s also a need for them to immediately unload and then replace, said Jaime Magbanua, president of the Grains Retailers Confederation of the Philippines.—Reuters

A new Philippine president faces key early test over food security

The Philippines said on Thursday it had found three new pieces of debris from the missing Malaysia Airlines Flight MH370, which disappeared two years ago with 239 passengers and crew on board shortly after taking off from Kuala Lumpur bound for Beijing, in what has become one of the world’s greatest aviation mysteries.

Investigators believe someone may have deliberately switched off the plane’s transponder before diverting it thousands of miles off course over the Indian Ocean.

A first piece of the Boeing 777, a wing part known as a flaperon, washed up on the French island of Reunion in July 2015. Malaysia and French authorities confirmed it was from the aircraft.

Two pieces of debris discovered later in South Africa and the Mauritian island of Rodrigues were almost certainly from the jetliner, Malaysia’s transport minister said this month.

Chester said Malaysia was arranging to collect the three new pieces and would send them to Australia, which has been leading the search for the aircraft in the Indian Ocean.—Reuters

By Zuzana Matei

Australia to study three new pieces of debris for link to missing MH370

SYDNEY — Three new pieces of debris thought to be from missing Malaysia Airlines Flight MH370 have been found washed up on Indian Ocean beaches and will be examined in Australia, the transport minister said on Thursday.

Two of the pieces were found in Mauritius while the third was found in Mozambique. The minister, Darren Chester, said in a statement all three items would be investigated in connection with the disappearance of MH370.

“These items of debris are of interest and will be examined by experts,” he said.

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Direct flights between Japan and Cambodia to commence on 1 September

PHNOM PENH — Cambodia and Japan announced on Thursday that a bilateral aviation agreement signed last year has come into effect, allowing Japanese airlines to begin direct flights to Cambodia from 1 September.

“The agreement will open the way for the two countries to operate direct flights and air transport services, thus contributing importantly to the promotion of economic ties, particularly in the tourism sector,” said Chum Souny, spokesman for Cambodia’s Foreign Ministry.

Currently, tourists from Japan need to transit in other Asian nations, such as Thailand or Singapore, before travelling to Cambodia.

The number of Japanese visitors to Cambodia in 2015 totalled 193,330, putting Japan in seventh place in the table of numbers of tourists visiting the country. Japan’s All Nippon Airways announced in January that it will begin operating a daily route between Tokyo and Phnom Penh on 1 September. Cambodian Foreign Minister Prak Sokhon and Japanese Ambassador to Cambodia Yuji Kumamaru exchanged notes in Phnom Penh on the agreement on air services, originally signed in Phnom Penh on 14 January, 2015, the spokesman said.—Kyodo News

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MINISTRY OF ELECTRICITY AND ENERGY
MYANMA OIL AND GAS ENTERPRISE
INVITATION FOR OPEN TENDER

7 / 2016

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No</th>
<th>Tender No</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Remark</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>IFB-008(16-17)</td>
<td>Piston Rubbers for F-1600 Rig Pump</td>
<td>US$</td>
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<tr>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>IFB-009(16-17)</td>
<td>4” ERW Steel Line Pipe, API 5 L, Grade A</td>
<td>US$</td>
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<tr>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>DMP/L-007(16-17)</td>
<td>Server Computer (DAQ) and UPS (2 KW)</td>
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Tender Closing Date & Time : 16-6-2016, 16:30 Hr

Tender Document shall be available during office hours commencing from 23rd 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

Date 27 May 2016

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Opinion

Night buses are as important as daytime buses

Kyaw Thuara

HUNDREDS of thousands of people in Yangon commute between work and home by bus, spending two or three hours a day travelling. That’s why the buses have become the bedrock of the city’s public transport system as their fares are affordable.

It is clear that lowly paid workers see buses as a reliable and affordable means to get around and also a viable alternative to own cars. People with low incomes spend a high proportion of their salary on their commutes. Bus fares are not a problem in the daytime, but they get higher at night as there is no official night bus service in the city. Daytime buses stop running at around 8pm. People who work late have to rely on illegal private buses and have to pay a double fare for the same journey. High bus fares have become the burden upon them. Its impact is unnoticeable on a daily basis, but how much they have spent on the night-time commutes will alarm them at the end of the month.

As night buses are as equally important to lowly paid workers as daytime buses, parliamentarians should adopt policies for night bus services and make them work for the people to whom they owe a great debt of gratitude.

It is, therefore, important for the Central Supervisory Committee for All Private Bus Lines to meet the needs of the passengers in recognition of the public transport system no official night bus service. And the government should invest more in public transport and become aware that buses matter a lot to ordinary commuters in their everyday lives.

Firing up Myanmar’s Economy through Private Sector Growth

Sjamsu Rahardja and Charles Schneider

MYANMAR’s reintegration into the global economy presents it with a unique opportunity to leverage private sector growth to reduce poverty and sustain the nationwide peace process.

For much of its post-independence period, Myanmar’s once vibrant entrepreneurialism and private sector was stifled by economic isolation, state control, and a system which promoted crony capitalism in the form of preferential access to markets and goods, especially in the exploitation of natural resources. Reflecting this legacy, private sector firms are still burdened with onerous regulations and high costs, dragging down their competitiveness and reducing growth prospects.

Since 2011, Myanmar has returned to the global market place – sanctions have been lifted and the economy is increasingly opened for trade and investment. Between 2011 and 2014, export and import trade increased by 11 percent per year and approved foreign direct investment soared by 98 percent each year, both starting from a very low base. Global buyers in apparel are stepping up purchases from Myanmar’s textile industry, bringing expansion to this labor-intensive sector. Myanmar’s successful liberalization of the telecommunications sector has lowered the cost of phones, texting and internet access for people and businesses.

After decades of debilitating restraints, Myanmar’s determined business owners and operators remain intent on pushing forward to overcome bureaucratic and technological frustrations, emboldened by the spirit of social change and now economic reform. “Reform is happening,” said one Yangon importer who launched his business in 2012. “We need to smooth the process, not lose hope.”

This businessman talks about the frustrations and obstacles he confronts almost daily, such as the lack of automation at the customs agency that delays import licensing, and complicated payment transfers that disrupt shipments. He hasn’t given up, he will keep working to change procedures because he’s confident his business will prosper.

What more can be done?

Making rules and regulations in trade and investment transparent and predictable. Myanmar’s nascent private sector will respond to emerging opportunities if the playing field is level. Passing the draft Investment Law prepared by the government in close consultation with stakeholders from the private sector and civil society will help build investor confidence while balancing the need for clear investor protections and the provision of regulatory space for the government. Passing the draft Companies Law will help ensure that key rules related to incorporation, management of companies affairs, financial reporting and audit requirements, share capital and capital raising, and the duties of directors are addressed using well-tested and modern approaches. This legal and regulatory framework is central to Myanmar’s market reform process.

Further telecommunications reforms and investment. Opening the telecommunications sector has helped attract foreign investment, and is connecting people and businesses through affordable internet access. Consumer choice has increased and an ecosystem for digital innovation is developing. Next steps: Adopting the Telecommunications Sector Master Plan, the eGovernment Master Plan and establishing an independent sector regulator to help Myanmar leapfrog into the digital age.

The government too, can install information communication and technology platforms at trade-related agencies to speed the clearance of goods across borders. A World Bank Group study suggests that these measures could reduce trade costs by 0.6 percent to 1.3 percent of cargo value.

Investment in better port logistics, and improved trade facilitation. Myanmar can leverage its unique geographical and comparative advantage by building its connectivity with its neighbors. Currently Myanmar’s logistics performance index lags last among Asean countries. Port terminals in Yangon suffer from congestion, long cargo-clearance processes, and regulations that incentivize traders to keep containers at port as long as possible. Cargo vessels entering the port are limited by the river tide and the lack of night navigation along the river channel. Myanmar traders on countries with the highest economic growth rates in the world and with markets that make up to 40 percent of world population. Removing logistics constraints and opening up ports can unleash the private sector’s potential – to become the engine of Myanmar’s economic growth.

Engaging the private sector in a dialogue over the economic reform agenda. The government can send a strong signal of commitment to improve the business regulatory environment by coordinating inter-agency reform progress and integrating feedback from the private sector into the process. Establishing a structured policy dialogue between Government and private sector, such as a Myanmar Business Forum, can help establish trust between the parties. Vietnam, for example, instituted its Doi Moi Policy of economic reforms that included a well-coordinated open reform process, high level of government leadership and private sector participation through a well-functioning Public-Private dialogue platform, the Vietnam Business Forum. Similarly, Malaysia established a high-level inter-ministerial body, PEMUDAH, responsible for driving a continuous economic reform program and facilitating private sector dialogue.

While the challenges are great, Myanmar can be as successful in its transformation as its peers, and ultimately, benefit from the great economic potential of Myanmar’s natural resources, its geographic advantage and its people.

Myanmar has a history of ethnic conflict, so the successful expansion of private sector activities and the opening of the economy will depend on consultations with local communities, especially in conflict-prone ethnic-minority areas. Only with the participation and inclusion of these groups can the economic transformation effectively complement the ongoing peace process.

Achieving all of this is a tall order—but doable with strong leadership and public-private dialogue and cooperation. Progress in economic reforms can help to transform Myanmar into a peaceful, prosperous, and inclusive country, with a thriving private sector, high levels of employment and low levels of poverty.

This blog is based on the World Bank Group’s policy note “Building Business as Usual: Fostering Competitiveness and a Dynamic Environment for Private Sector Growth.” Sjamsu Rahardja is senior trade economist at the World Bank and Charles Schneider is senior operations officer at the IFC.
Senior General Min Aung Hlaing holds talks with Thai PM

Garner Prayut Chan-o-cha yester-
day over issues related to do-
mestic peace, fighting against il-
legal smuggling including armed
smuggling and drug trafficking
and cooperation in the invest-
ment in cultural and tourism
sectors.

During the meeting, Thai Prime
Minister said the real sit-
uation of Koh Tao murder case
is being reviewed as a third
country has become involved
in the issue.

Senior General Min Aung
Hlaing also met with Privy
Council President of Thailand
Prem Tinsulanonda.

The Myanmar delegation
visited Thai Bev Group Indus-
try (Oishi Group) in Bangko-
ck on Wednesday.

Oishi group, which is a
subsidiary of Thai Beverage
Group, produces around 75
million assorted cans of soft
drink per month including
green tea.

The group is planning to
produce non-alcoholic bever-
ages.—Myanmy

Foundation Laid for Japan Funded Housing Project

A Foundation laying ceremony for a low-cost housing project for poor and vulnerable families in Dagon Seikkan Township took place Wednesday.

The Government of Japan
funded UN-Habitat to provide
the housing and basic services
facilities for families in the vi-
cinity of the project area.

The housing project is
designed to be made up of 12
units of 5 storey buildings for
240 vulnerable families.

The foundation laying cer-
emony for the first batch of 6
buildings was jointly offici-
ated by Counsellor Mr. Matsuo
Hideaki of the Embassy of Ja-
pan, Deputy Director U Sai Thet
Naing Moe of the Department
of Urban and Housing Devel-
opment, UN-Habitat Country
Programme Manager Mr. Bijay
Karmacharya, Director Dr. U
Toe Aung of the Urban Division
of the Yangon City Develop-
ment Committee, U Aung Kyaw
Oo Integrated Apartment Us-
ers’ Committee (IAUC) Chair-
person, Van Lizar Aung Direc-
tor of Women for the World, U
Saw Hte Zaw of S&A Co Ltd.
and U Ohn Myint, Managing
Director of Civil Tech Co Ltd.

In his opening remarks
Mr. Bijay Karmacharya, Coun-
try Programme Manager of
UN-Habitat Myanmar stressed
that this was a pioneering pilot
project which will contribute to
defining approaches to solving
housing problems faced by poor
and vulnerable families.

Counsellor Mr. Matsuo
Hideaki of the Embassy of Ja-
pan in his remarks on the oc-
casion noted that this was an
auspicious first time that the
Government of Japan had made
available grant assistance for the
purpose of housing construction
for the poor and vulnerable in
Myanmar.

On behalf of the beneficiar-
ies the chairperson of the IAUC
U Aung Kyaw Oo expressed
deep gratitude to the Govern-
ment of Japan and to UN–
Habitat for their assistance in build-
ing for the vulnerable.

Dagon Myo Thi (Seik
Kan) township is located in the
eastern part of the commercial
capital Yangon. The town was
established in the 1990s and was
planned as an industrial zone.
At present, it has a population of
about 166,000.

Construction will initially
cover 6 units. The families were
chosen following a process of
social mobilisation and arduous
beneficiary selection based on
vulnerability criteria. Land for
the housing project was made
available by the Ministry of
Construction.—GNLM

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing being seen holding talks.

PHOTO: MYANMAR

Hyundai Motor Myanmar Showroom offers instalment plans, discount sales

THE Hyundai Motor Myanmar
Showroom is participating in the
Korea Expo 2016 from today un-
til Sunday at the Tatmadaw Con-
vention Hall in Yangon.

The sole agent for Hyundai
brands in Myanmar has exhibited
Hyundai Sonata, SantaFe, Tucson,
Elantra, Grant i-10, H1 and
H100 and has also offered to sell
some models at one to three year
installment, with 20 percent ini-
tial payment.

It has also offered special
discount to cash down payment.

Visitors test drive a Hyundai
Tucson during the exhibition.—
GNLM

A Bridge Not Too Far

Aung Myint Oo

“LEFT, RIGHT, LEFT,
RIGHT…” those are not mili-
tary drill commands but noting
of my steps in my mind while
running. Yes, I have been trying
to be aware of each step in my
mind while running. It helps me
maintain the desired pace and
the correct posture while keeping
me away from wandering thoughts.
It also helps me calibrate my steps
to the most comfortable landing
of my foot so that lowering risks
of injuries to my joints and ten-
dons. Before doing that, I used
to experience wrong steps or in-
consistent pace or inappropriate
postures which can make my run
slower or faster than I wanted it
to be. Besides that, every now and
then I succeeded some minor inju-
ries which forced me rest for a few
days to weeks. As a result, on sev-
eral occasions I felt like quitting
my running totally.

When looked back, I have
also tried a few other ways e.g.
listening music or daydreaming
while running, to be able to dis-
tract my mind from the negative
thoughts of tiredness and pain
which sometimes make me feel
giving up of my runs premature-
ly before reaching the destiny, as
a goal to achieve. Although those
techniques may also keep me away
from negative thoughts to a certain
extent, they did not help me much
in my effort to concentrate on my
pace, strides and posture.

Then, one day, while I was
contemplating the idea of “listen-
ing to your body before running”
which I shared as a safety tip for
regular runners regardless of rec-
reational or competitive in one
of my earlier notes titled “Never
too much and too fast” published
on the Global New Light of My-
anmar on 5 May 2016. At that
time, a thought of extending this
seemingly simple but amazingly
beneficial practice to the-whole-
run in addition to using it as a
pre-run assessment came into my
mind. That’s where and how a big
challenge began. Initially it was
extremely tough and demanding
on my both body and mind which
often rendered my steps out of
sync. After a few weeks of trial
and error, I was beginning to be
able to catch the rhythm of steps
in tandem with the breaths.

Following those moments,
eventually it became a breeze
and part of my running. I was aware
of the spring-ups of my legs before
moving forward and the moments
of their landing on the surface of
track underneath. Flexion and ex-
tension of the muscles along the
legs together with the force of im-
pact on the joints acting as shock
absorbers of a motor vehicle were
being felt too. I have even learnt
to switch the point of impact be-
tween knee and hip joint depend-
ing on the texture of the surface
and the level of tiredness of my
legs. Someone with the experi-
ence of walking meditation can
understand what I have described
above. Of course, the level of con-
centration must have been much
lower than that of the one enjoy-
ing the bliss of deep meditation
although it still produces shear
amount of joy and satisfaction.

Today like any other day, af-
ter usual pre-workout warm-up,
I started my routine running in
conjunction with mindfulness of
the movements of my legs, body
and the breath. With my body,
mind and soul in sync, the des-
tination which is a bridge with a
distance of 6.5 kilometres from the
starting point becomes “A Bridge
Not Too Far”

**

Foundation being laid for Japan Funded Housing Project.

PHOTO: SUPPLIED BY FOUNDATION LAI FOR JAPAN FUNDED HOUSING PROJECT
French strikers seek to tighten grip on energy supplies

PARIS — The hardline CGT union sought to tighten its grip on France’s energy supplies and transport network on Thursday as its stand-off with the government over planned labour reforms continued into a day of nationwide protests.

Signals were mixed, though, over how much success it was having in its bid to kill off reform plans it fears remove too much worker protection. French nuclear power capacity was cut by at least 4 gigawatts (GW) as part of a rolling nationwide strike, grid operator RTE showed on its website. That is equivalent to about 6 per cent of the country’s total production capacity.

A report on France later radio’s web site cited a CGT delegate saying the union had the ability to cut off a fuel pipeline from the port of Le Havre supplying Charles de Gaulle airport outside Paris.

The SNCF state railway company said many rail connections were less harshly hit than during stoppages last week.

Power industry experts have said the nuclear plant strike is unlikely to provoke blackouts due to legal limits on strike action in the nuclear industry and power imports from abroad.

France has also mobilised its strategic oil and fuel reserves to keep fillings stations running as the strike action disrupts refinery production and deliveries from depots.

Prime Minister Manuel Valls has vowed not to withdraw the reforms that make hiring and firing easier and which he says will boost jobs and growth.

He launched a strongly worded attack on the action on Wednesday saying: “The CGT does not rule this country.”

On Thursday, Laurent Berger, head of the moderate CFDT union which is backing the reforms, called for a truce.

“The political and industrial relations climate has turned hysterical... let’s calm things down,” he said on France Info.— Reuters

Eight protesters arrested at Trump rally in California

ANAHEIM — Some 100 people staged a boisterous but largely peaceful demonstration outside a Southern California rally by Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump, at times taunting his supporters before police moved in and arrested eight people.

The activists carried signs such as “Stop Nazi Trump” and “Dump Trump,” and beat a pinata made to resemble the presumptive Republican nominee outside a convention centre in Anaheim, just a few blocks from Disneyland, before they were driven from the scene by police on horseback.

A spokesman for the Anaheim Police Department said seven adults and one minor were arrested on charges ranging from selling T-shirts without a permit to unlawful assembly.

The arrests came one day after a Trump event in Albuquerque, New Mexico, erupted into chaos after hundreds of protesters tried to swarm the convention centre where Trump spoke, knocking down barricades, waving Mexican flags and hurling rocks and bottles at police officers in riot gear. Police responded with smoke bombs and pepper spray.

Albuquerque police said they made arrests both outside and inside the rally, where demonstrators continually interrupted Trump’s speech. The police department’s Twitter feed said officers were treated for injuries caused by thrown rocks.

In a Twitter post on Wednesday, Trump called the protesters in Albuquerque “thugs who were flying the Mexican flag.”

“The rally inside was big and beautiful, but outside, criminals!” he said.

In Anaheim, police warned in advance that they would take “swift” action if protests got out of hand, and the roughly 150 officers and sheriff’s deputies on hand may have outnumbered the protesters.

Inside, Trump was interrupted by hecklers as he spoke, including one man who waved a Mexican flag. “Do not hurt him,” Trump said as a man was led out of the arena. “I say that for the television cameras. Even though he is a bad person.”

Many of those who protested outside the arena expressed anger over Trump’s views on immigration, at one point ripping apart a piñata resembling the candidate and spearing the paper-mache head on top of a flagpole with a large Mexican flag.

Police largely stood by watching the demonstration, which became tense at times when anti-Trump protesters surrounded smaller groups of his supporters. At one point a brief shoving match broke out.

As Trump’s campaign event neared its conclusion inside, outside a police helicopter circled overhead, ordering the throng to disperse or face arrest. Officers on horseback then drove the crowd from the scene, where several people were taken into custody for failing to disperse.— Reuters

Italian marine Girone can head home — India’s top court

NEW DELHI — India’s Supreme Court on Thursday said an Italian marine under investigation for the killing of two fishermen is free to go home while international arbitration into the case goes on.

Salvatore Girone, who has been living in the Italian embassy in New Delhi, was one of two marines arrested in 2012 on suspicion of killing the fishermen during an anti-piracy mission on an Italian oil tanker. The other marine is already back in Italy after suffering health problems.

The Supreme Court ruled that Girone can return to Italy while an international tribunal decides on a jurisdictional issue between India and Italy.

The marine must surrender his passport when he arrives in Italy and will be required to return to India within a month of an order from the tribunal, the court said in its order.— Reuters

NZ parliament in lock down after security threat ahead of budget

WELLINGTON — New Zealand’s parliament was in lock down on Thursday after a security threat, but the annual 2016 budget would proceed as planned.

New Zealand police said a man had been arrested in relation to the incident and that a vehicle at the centre of the threat had been cleared and will be removed from the parliament forecourt.

“The security situation is contained, however Parliament remained locked down. #Budget2016 proceeding as planned,” NZ Parliament tweeted. New Zealand will present its annual budget at 0200 GMT.— Reuters

EU’s Tusk urges global solidarity on refugee crisis

BERLIN — European Council President Donald Tusk said on Thursday he would like the global community to show solidarity regarding the refugee crisis and recognise it as a global problem.

Tusk said he would seek G7 support and commitment to increasing global assistance for the immediate and long-term needs of refugees.

“We are aware that because of geography, most of the responsibility (regarding the refugee crisis) has been and will be placed on Europe,” said Tusk.

“If we (G7) do not take the lead in managing this crisis, nobody would,” Tusk was speaking at a briefing held shortly before the Group of Seven summit kicked off later on Thursday. The G7 groups Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United States.— Reuters

Belgian police detain four on suspicion of belonging to terrorist group

BRUSSELS — Belgian police searched houses in the city of Antwerp on Wednesday and detained four people on suspicion of belonging to a terrorist group and trying to drum up recruits to fight with Islamist militants in Syria or Libya, state prosecutors said.

Two were formally arrested while the other two were given a conditional release.

“They are suspected of trying to recruit individuals to travel to conflict zones in Syria or Libya,” a prosecutor’s statement said.

It said no weapons or explosives were found in the house searches and there was no apparent link with the 22 March suicide bombings at two international airport and on the metro in Brussels which killed 31 people.

But it said some of the four planned to join the Islamic State militant group and a preliminary investigation showed they may also have been planning attacks in Belgium.— Reuters

Three killed, 28 injured in factory blasts in India

NEW DELHI — At least three people were killed and 28 others injured on Thursday in blasts inside a chemical factory in the Indian state of Maharashtra, officials said.

The blasts occurred at Domivalli in Thane District, about 40 km north of Mumbai, the capital of Maharashtra.

“Two blasts inside a chemical factory today killed three people and injured 28 others,” an official said. “Following the blasts in factory’s boiler, a fire broke out.” All the injured, according to officials, were rushed to the nearest hospital. Television reports, however, put the number of injured in blasts over 100.— Xinhua
Afghan Taliban appoint a new leader, Kabul urges peace

KABUL (Pakistan) — The Afghan Taliban named an Islamic legal scholar who was one of former leader Mullah Akhtar Mansour’s deputies to succeed him on Wednesday, after confirming Mansour’s death in a US drone strike at the weekend.

Within an hour of the announcement of Haibatullah Akhundzada’s appointment, a Taliban suicide bomber attacked a shuttle bus carrying court employees west of the Afghan capital, Kabul, killing up to 11 people and wounding several others, including children.

The new Taliban leader was named in a United Nations report last year as former chief of the sharia-based justice system during the Taliban’s five-year rule over Afghanistan, which ended with their ouster in 2001.

Sirajuddin Haqqani, head of a feared network blamed for many deadly bomb attacks in Kabul in recent years, and Mullah Mohammad Yaqoob, son of Taliban founder Mullah Mohammad Omar, will serve as deputies.

The announcement, following a meeting of the Taliban’s main shura, or leadership council, ended days of confusion during which the Taliban declined to confirm the death of Mansour in a drone strike in Pakistan on Saturday. “All the shura members have pledged allegiance to Sheikh Habbatullah in a safe place in Afghanistan,” a Taliban statement said. “All people are required to obey the new Emir-al-Momineen (commander of the faithful).”

Akhundzada, believed to be around 60 years of age and a member of the powerful Noorzai tribe, was a close aide to Omar and is from Kandahar, in the south of Afghanistan and the heartland of the Taliban.

An official Taliban account on Twitter posted an undated photograph it said was of Akhundzada, informally known as Mullah Habbatullah, with a white turban and long, greying beard.

The post listed his full title as Emir-ul-Momineen Sheikh ul Quran, or “commander of the faithful, scholar of the Koran”.

The Taliban movement banned human images for breaching their strict interpretation of Islam when they governed Afghanistan.

Under their rule, women could only appear in public under a heavy veil and accompanied by a male relative, and they were denied a formal education. Public executions were staged and sports banned.

Senior members of the insurgent group had been keenly aware of the need to appoint a candidate who could bring disparate factions together and repair the splits that emerged last year when Mansour was appointed.

“It was much quicker than most people expected, including myself. It shows that the Taliban are keen not to have a new conflict,” said Thomas Ruttig of the Afghanistan Analysts Network.

Afghanistan Analysts Network.

According to two members of the council present when the decision was made, Akhundzada was appointed after both Haqqani and Yaqoob were ruled out, adding pressure on the group to select a leader who could unite it.

They said it was feared that Haqqani’s record as the leader of one of the most violent groups in the insurgency would bring unacceptable problems for the Taliban, while Yaqoob was considered too inexperienced, despite the prestige of his family name.

Mansour, a former deputy to Omar named as leader in 2015 after the Taliban announced their founder had died more than two years earlier, faced widespread anger that he had deceived the movement by covering up his predecessor’s death.

However, there was no sign the appointment would lead to any shift in the stance of the Taliban, which under Mansour gained more territory than at any time since being driven from power in 2001 and ruled out joining peace talks with the government.

“Prospects for the Afghan peace process remain poor,” said former CIA official and White House advisor Bruce Riedel, now at the Brookings Institution.

“The Taliban leadership including the new commander Mullah Akhundzada believe military victory is only a matter of time.”

An audio statement purporting to be from Akhundzada rejected peace talks, but the Taliban’s spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid later said the message was not authentic and did not come from the new leader. The Afghan government called on the new Taliban leader to end the war, or face dire consequences.

“Latest developments offer Taliban groups opportunity to end violence and resume peaceful life; else they will face the fate of their leadership,” President Ashraf Ghani’s deputy spokesman Sayed Zafar Hashemi said in a tweet.—Reuters
Euro zone, IMF reach compromise deal on Greek debt relief

BRUSSELS — Euro zone governments on Wednesday offered Greece debt relief in 2018, but left key details for later in a bid to bridge Germany’s view that no immediate action was needed and the International Monetary Fund’s call for decisions now.

The late-night compromise spared the battered European Union the risk of another Greek crisis this year, less than 12 months after Athens was on the brink of ejection from the currency area by rejecting austerity measures and defaulting on an IMF loan.

After talks that lasted into early Wednesday, Eurogroup ministers agreed to release 10.3 billion euros (7.8 billion pounds) in new funds for Greece in recognition of painful fiscal reforms pushed through by Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras’s leftist-led coalition, subject to some final technical tweaks.

But the bigger step forward was the debt relief deal because it provided investors with more certainty that their money in Greece would be safe, paving the way for a return to market financing for Athens in 2018 and for foreign direct investment.

Markets received the deal with enthusiasm even though it is still highly conditional.

“The possible debt relief will be delivered at the end of the programme in mid-2018 and the scope will be determined by the Eurogroup on the basis of a revised Debt Sustainability Analysis,” a statement by euro zone ministers said.

Greece’s 10-year bond yield fell to a six-month low of 7.09 per cent and two-year yields slid below 7.0 per cent. Yields on Spanish, Italian and Portuguese government bonds also dropped.

“The Eurogroup ... provided a roadmap on debt relief, which is credit positive as it signals a growing consensus among euro area member countries and the institutions, namely the IMF and the European Commission, on debt relief.” Moody’s Investors Service said in a statement.

The agreement on debt is a political victory for Athens and could bring debt sustainability, which is credited positive as it signals a growing consensus among euro area member countries and the institutions, namely the IMF and the European Commission, on debt relief. Moody’s Investors Service said in a statement.

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“We have no major changes to the (Greek) programme, so there is no need for a prior vote of the Bundestag,” German Finance Minister Wolfgang Schaeuble said, calling it a good result. — Reuters

Italian navy says migrant boat flipped, five dead

ROME — A large wooden fishing boat overcrowded with migrants capsized off the coast of Libya, the Italian navy said on Wednesday, with some 562 people rescued and five found dead.

Photographs show the blue fishing boat rocking violently before capsizing, sending migrants tumbling into the sea. Some then climbed onto the hull of the overturned vessel, while others swam for life boats or towards the navy ship. Navy swimmers are also shown pulling migrants in lifebelts towards safety, according to the navy pictures.

Women and children were among those rescued, but no details of the migrants’ nationalities have been given. The Italian navy patrol boat Bettica saw that the vessel was in difficulty and approached it to hand out life jackets, before it could begin a rescue and the boat flipped over due to the sudden movement of the passengers, a statement said.— Reuters

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CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV CAPE FLORES VOY NO ( )

Consignees of cargo carried on MV CAPE FLORES VOY NO ( ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 27.5.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 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: M/S COSCO Container Lines

Phone No: 2301185

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CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV RATA NITHA VOY NO ()

Consignees of cargo carried on MV RATA NITHA VOY NO ( ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 27.5.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.W.P.T where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Shipping Agency Department
Myanmar Port Authority
Agent for: M/S Hanjin Shipping Lines

Phone No: 2301185

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CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV BAD LONG VOY NO (1606)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV BAD LONG VOY NO (1606) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 27.5.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MITT-5 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: M/S Bright Sail Shipping Co Ltd

Phone No: 2301928

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**Public Notification**

In order to make the application process of building construction permits in YCDC area more convenient, our committee will provide on-line services. Please visit www.ycdc.gov.mm to make on-line applications.

Head of Department, Engineering Department (Building)
Yangon City Development Committee

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NEW YORK — Hillary Clinton broke government rules by using a private email server without approval for her work as US secretary of state, an internal government watchdog said on Wednesday.

The long-awaited report by the State Department inspector general was the first official audit of the controversial arrangement to be made public. It was highly critical of Clinton’s use of a server in her home, and immediately fueled Republican attacks on Clinton, the Democratic front-runner in an already acrimonious presidential race.

The report, which also found problems in department record-keeping practices before Clinton’s tenure, undermined Clinton’s earlier defences of her emails, likely adding to Democratic anxieties about public perceptions of the candidate. A majority of voters say Clinton is dishonest, according to multiple polls.

The report concluded that Clinton would not have been allowed to use the server in her home had she asked the department officials in charge of information security. The report said that staff who later raised concerns were told to keep quiet. Several suspected hacking attempts in 2011 were never reported to department information security officials, in breach of department rules, it said.

“She’s as crooked as they come,” Donald Trump, the presumptive Republican presidential candidate, said of Clinton at a campaign rally in Anaheim, California, adding that the report’s findings were “not good” for her. Clinton’s campaign disagreed, saying the report rebutted Republican’s criticisms.

The inspector general’s office examined email record-keeping under five secretaries state, both Democratic and Republican. John Kerry, the current officeholder, and predecessors Madeleine Albright, Colin Powell and Condoleezza Rice all agreed to speak to the inspector general’s investigators. Clinton was the only one who declined to be interviewed, as did her aides.

The report contradicted Clinton’s repeated assertion that her server was allowed and that no permission was needed. Several other inquiries continued, including a US Justice Department investigation into whether the arrangement broke laws.

The inspector general’s report cited "longstanding, systemic weaknesses" with State Department records that predated Clinton’s tenure, and found problems with the email record-keeping of some of her predecessors, particularly Powell, that failed to comply with the Federal Records Act.

But it singled out Clinton for her decision to use a private server in her home in Chappaqua, New York, for government business. "OIG found no evidence that the Secretary requested or obtained guidance or approval to conduct official business via a personal email account on her private server," the report said, using an abbreviation for the office of inspector general.

The report said Clinton should have discussed the arrangement with the department’s security and technology officials. Officials told investigators that they “did not — and would not — approve her exclusive reliance on a personal email account to conduct Department business.” The reason, those officials said, is because it breached department rules and presented “security risks.”

State Department spokesman Mark Toner said he would not “challenge” those findings. He told reporters the department was aware of hacking attempts on Clinton’s server, but had no evidence that any were successful.

When two lower-level information technology officials tried to raise concerns about Clinton’s email arrangement in late 2010, their supervisor in Clinton’s office instructed them “never to speak of the Secretary’s personal email system again,” the report said. Their supervisor told them that they had been approved of the system, but the inspector general’s office said it found no evidence this was true.

Brian Fallon, Clinton spokesman, said the report rebutted criticisms of Clinton made by her political opponents.

“The report shows that problems with the State Department’s electronic record-keeping systems were longstanding and that there was no precedent of someone in one’s position having a State Department email account after the departure of her successor,” he said in a statement.

He did not address the report’s criticism of Clinton’s use of a private server, something no other secretary of state has done.

Democrats, including fund-raisers for Clinton’s campaign, said the report revealed nothing new. “It’s digging and digging and digging,” Amy Rao, the chief executive of data company Integrated Archive Systems and a Clinton fundraiser, said in an interview, comparing the investigation to probes the Clintons faced in the 1990s. “Trust me: There’s no there there. It’s Whiterather.”— Reuters
Katy Perry going on tour in 2017

LONDON — Singer Katy Perry is set to go on a musical tour in 2017.

The 31-year-old “Roar” hitmaker has also hinted at her new album, reported Digital Spy. “I’m touring in 2017,” Perry said. When asked about her new album she said, “I’m working on it.”

The singer’s fourth studio album will serve as the follow-up to 2013’s Prism, which topped both the UK and US chart.

The album had popular songs including “Unconditionally,” “Dark Horse,” “Birthday” and “This Is How We Do.”—PTI

Amber Heard files for divorce from Johnny Depp: media

LOS ANGELES — Actress Amber Heard has filed for divorce from husband Johnny Depp after just 15 months of marriage, several media outlets reported on Wednesday.

Heard, 30, filed the divorce petition in a Los Angeles court on Monday, citing “irreconcilable differences” with the 52-year-old Depp, the A-list actor who starred in “Pirates of the Caribbean,” according to a copy of the court documents uploaded online by celebrity news website TMZ.

Reuters could not independently verify the report. Representatives for the two did not return calls or emails seeking comment.

The couple got married in February of last year and tied the knot in Australia in May. They began dating in the late 1980s after Depp appeared with French actress Vanessa Paradis. The pair began dating in 1998 and they were together for 14 years, during which time they lived in London and Paris.

Heard, who has appeared in movies such as “The Rum Diary” and “The Danish Girl,” wed Depp in February 2015.

They have one child together, a daughter named Lily-rose Depp, born in 2012.

Heard, who rose to fame in the late 1990s for playing the role of“Percy” in the 2000 film “Percy Jackson: Sea of Monsters”, has been embroiled in a number of controversies over the years, including a highly publicized domestic violence case against Depp.

No financial details were available on Wednesday and the couple had not made any public statements regarding the divorce filing. —Reuters

Young spellers face off in Scripps National Spelling Bee finals

MARYLAND — About four dozen young spellers will face off on Thursday in the finals of the Scripps National Spelling Bee under tougher rules aimed at preventing a third consecutive tie in the long-running contest.

The winner emerging from spelling rounds through the day and a championship televised by ESPN at 8pm EDT will take home a $40,000 cash purse, along with other prizes.

Ten finalists in the contest at National Harbour, Maryland, a Washington suburb, were winnowed from 285 spelling whizzes after two days of written and oral tests. The Bee, which has been a US institution since it started in 1925, has toughened rules to bar ties for winners. Of the five ties in its history, one was in 2014 and another was last year.

When eighth-graders Gokul Venkatachalam of Chesterfield, Missouri, and Vanya Shivashankar of Olathe, Kansas, were co-winners.

The new rules call for the last three contestants to spell up to 25 words correctly. Judges can turn to tougher words if they think the spellers are getting through the first few words.

Under previous rules, the final contestants faced a championship list of 25 words. A winner, or co-winner, emerged after spelling only about 10 words at most from the list.

Thursday’s spellers are the cream of 11 million students who took part in Bee contests in the 50 US states, the District of Columbia, US territories, Defence Department schools in Europe and six foreign countries, including Jamaica and Japan.—Reuters

Jennifer Lopez designs t-shirt for her squad

LOS ANGELES — Singer Jennifer Lopez took to social media to share her newly designed tank top that reads “lucky to have these curves,” a t-shirt made for everyone in her squad.

The 46-year-old “Feel the Light,” hitmaker took to Instagram to share her selfie in which she is wearing the t-shirt.

“I designed this limited edition tank top just for my squad, you included. Get yours before they’re all gone.”

The “lucky to have these curves” top will be on sale for only two weeks. The prices go from US $22.99 to USD 24.99 depending on the style of the shirt.—PTI

Disney to make live-action version of ‘The Little Mermaid’

LOS ANGELES — Disney in talks to make a live-action version of Hans Christian Andersen’s “The Little Mermaid.”

Production chiefs recently heard a new take and are currently evaluating whether to proceed with the idea, reported Deadline.

Initial discussions have also taken place with major producers, including some with a strong connection to the studio. If Disney executives decide to move forward, they’ll compete against an existing live-action project being led by Working Title and set up at Universal.

The Universal project has Chloe Moretz attached to star and Rebecca Thomas set to direct from a script by Richard Curtis.

Following the recent success of “The Jungle Book”, Disney is moving forward expensively with its live-action slate in general.

Its upcoming movies include “Alice Through the Looking Glass”, “Pete’s Dragon” and “Beauty and the Beast (2017)”. Emma Stone is set to star in “Cruella”, Ava Duvernay will direct “A Wrinkle in Time”.

Dwayne Johnson will star in “Jungle Cruise”, Tim Burton will direct “Dumbo”, and Rob Marshall will direct Emily Blunt in “Mary Poppins”.—PTI

When asked about her new album she said, “I’m working on it.”

The singer’s fourth studio album will serve as the follow-up to 2013’s Prism, which topped both the UK and US chart.

The album had popular songs including “Unconditionally,” “Dark Horse,” “Birthday” and “This Is How We Do.”—PTI
France helps Syrian archaeologists fill in the cracks

HOMS (Syria) — Young Syrians tasked with restoring their country’s world famous archaeological heritage, ravaged by five years of war, are getting a helping hand from French experts.

Syria’s antiquities chief, Maamoun Abdulkarim, has already moved thousands of artifacts from the ancient city of Palmyra — some of whose temples were dynamited last year by jihadist group Islamic State — and other historic sites into safekeeping. He has now invited the experts to spend a year training Syrian architects and archaeologists in restoration techniques.

The French team visited the 900-year-old Krak des Chevaliers castle, a UNESCO World Heritage site, on Tuesday to discuss the damage and deliver advice.

The castle, which sits on a hill overlooking Lebanon, was overrun by rebels for three months in 2014 and damaged by mortar fire.

Fighting has also left much of the old cities of Homs and Aleppo in ruins.

“Sadly there is really a lot of work to do,” said Jacques Seigné, Emeritus Research Director at France’s National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS).

“Restoration work requires techniques and financing, of course, but one of the greatest aspects of restoration work is the human element. People have to be trained to know what they are doing and why they are doing it,” Seigné said.

Seigné is working with Sawa Consulting, which works on cultural projects in conflict zones, to deliver the training across accessible parts of Syria.

Sawa Consulting’s Nicolas Edmet said the company is also discussing how to begin restoration projects across Syria with antiquities chief Abdulkarim, including in Palmyra, which United Nations cultural organization UNESCO has called one of the most important cultural centers of the ancient world. Islamic State was driven out of the city by Syrian government and allied forces in March.— Reuters

Tunnel of lights, animal lanterns illuminate Sydney festival

SYDNEY — An arched tunnel made of tens of thousands of LED light globes and animal-shaped lanterns are among creative displays at this year’s Vivid Sydney festival, an annual event of illuminated installations and music in the Australian city.

The 70-metre long tunnel, dubbed the “Cathedral of Light,” stands at Sydney’s Royal Botanic Garden. Large lanterns in the shape of animals including a rhinoceros, an elephant and tigers are among items on display at Taronga Zoo. Vivid Sydney kicks off on 27 May and runs until 16 June.— Reuters

Tourism surges in South Africa in Q1

CAPE TOWN — South Africa saw a strong rebound in tourist arrivals in the first quarter of this year, Tourism Minister Derek Hanekom said on Wednesday.

The surge supports expectations that the tourism sector in South Africa is in for a bumper year, Hanekom said in his latest update on tourist arrivals.

Arrivals for the first three months of 2016 grew by 18.7 per cent, compared to the first quarter of 2015. In March alone, the number of tourists who visited South Africa improved by 21.4 per cent, compared to the same period last year, the minister cited figures provided by Statistics South Africa this week.

Hanekom said the persistent surge in arrivals boded well for the potential of tourism to stimulate a range of economic activity and create jobs across the industry’s diverse value chain.

“The remarkable increase in arrivals recorded in March could be attributed to the Easter holiday falling in March this year, while it was in April last year.

“But the spectacular overall growth in tourism is part of a trend which started towards the end of last year and played out strongly during our high season. It shows that tourism in South Africa has the enduring capacity to support and grow our national economy. Our task now is to maintain the positive trend by improving our performance throughout the year,” Hanekom said.

The United Kingdom continued to be the main source of overseas arrivals in the first quarter of 2016. UK arrivals increased from 129,220 in 2015 to 147,639 in 2016, a growth of about 14.3 per cent.

Arrivals from China in the first quarter of this year grew by 65.2 per cent compared to last year, and arrivals from India grew by 16.9 per cent during the same period.

Hanekom said the growth from China indicated that the decision of the South African cabinet to implement a revised visa application process for China has paid off immensely. Accredited Chinese travel companies can now apply for visas on behalf of their clients, making the process much easier for travellers to South Africa.

“The current exchange rate has benefitted tourists from several source markets. They are finding incredible value in visiting South Africa,” said Hanekom.

He urged all spheres of government, its partners in industry, entrepreneurs and communities to continue working together to make the best of the bumper year as expected.— Xinhua

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United and Chelsea haggle over Mourinho’s image rights

LONDON — Jose Mourinho is expected to be named Manchester United’s new manager either later today or tomorrow, after the tangle of issue of who owns his name — and, crucially, is licensed to exploit it commercially — is resolved.

The unusual sticking point has prevented the widely trailed formal announcement that Mourinho will succeed Louis Van Gaal in the Old Trafford hot-seat. Mourinho is understood to have agreed a three-year contract, reportedly worth £66 million pounds.

But British media are also reporting that Chelsea are demanding United pay a sum running into millions of pounds to sign over three separate trademarks of Mourinho’s name, one of which the club have owned since 2006, during his first spell in charge.

Although the trademarks are limited in scope — reports say they cover secondary items like computer games and teddy bears — the area is important enough to United, who have a diverse portfolio of global sponsors, to require resolution.

The delay has surprised sports rights experts. They have questioned why Mourinho apparently signed over his own image rights, which are a huge driver of revenue.

“Is it pretty uncommon for a manager of his stature not to have full control over the rights to his name and image, and pretty rare for a club to retain rights independently of a manager,” Julian Moore, a sports rights lawyer at Pinsent Masons, told Reuters in a telephone interview.

Chelsea believe they are entitled to compensation for allowing United to market their new manager on specific items. A similar conflict arose when Mourinho first left Chelsea in 2007 to join Inter Milan and then Real Madrid, but the London club allowed their former manager’s name to be used by those clubs under licence.

The Times reported that Chelsea had two further trademarks on Mourinho granted by the European Union’s intellectual property office in 2013. Although owning his name is now of little value to them, the club are believed to feel a direct commercial rival like United should pay for the privilege of using it.

The subject has formed part of extended negotiations between United Chief Executive Ed Woodward and Jorge Mendes, Mourinho’s agent. Also requiring resolution are potential conflicts of interests between United’s extensive list of commercial sponsors and Mourinho’s personal endorsement deals, with cars, casinos and watchmakers reportedly requiring clarification.

“United will want to ensure they have cleared all rights because they have a complex web of interests around the world. They will want all rights sorted before hiring someone of this type,” Moore said.

United and Chelsea did not respond to requests for a comment on Wednesday. — Reuters

United and Chelsea haggle over Mourinho’s image rights

Jose Mourinho walks to his house in London, Britain, on 23 May 2016. Photo: Reuters

Real Madrid’s Cristiano Ronaldo stands in front of reporters after a training session at Madrid, Spain on 24 May 2016. Photo: Reuters

Ronaldo fit and ready to fire Real to more European glory

BARCELONA — Cristiano Ronaldo says he will be “100 percent” in Saturday’s Champions League final as he attempts to fire Real Madrid to a record-extending 11th European Cup and further torment their city rivals, Atletico.

The prolific Portuguese set alarm bells ringing on Tuesday when he ended training prematurely with a knock but was fit to train again the following day. Although Ronaldo scored the final goal in Real’s 4-1 extra-time win over Atletico in the 2014 final in Lisbon, he has admitted he was far from at his best due to a hamstring problem and is determined to put in a better performance at Milan’s San Siro on Saturday.

“Cristiano always appears in the games that matter. I’ll be at 100 percent. On Saturday, I’ll be in better form than I was in Lisbon,” Ronaldo told Spanish television channel La Sexta.

“At the start he was hurting me. It was pretty bad. It was terrible because you know that in certain moments you could give more but you can’t because your body doesn’t respond.”

Ronaldo has scored — and been on the winning side — in both the Champions League finals he has played in, having also won in 2008 with Manchester United.

He is top scorer in this season’s tournament with 16 goals and is one strike away from equalling the record tally of 17 he set in 2013/14.

Real’s all-time top scorer also gave the club a lift before the final by declaring he wants to stay at Real for the long term.

“Real Madrid would be making a smart decision if they offered me a new contract,” he added.

Zinedine Zidane’s men are without defenders Raphael Varane and Alvaro Arbeloa for the game, while Atletico have a clean bill of health.

It’s a far cry from the dishevelled state in which Diego Simeone’s team arrived at the 2014 final, when they struggled with fitness after a long season and suffered key injuries.— Reuters

Bacsinszky stops Bouchard to reach third round

PARIS — Swiss eighth seed Timea Bacsinszky recovered from a shaky start and survived a nervy finish to beat Canada’s Eugenie Bouchard 6-4, 6-4 in the French Open second round on Thursday.

Bacsinszky, who reached the semi-final at Roland Garros last year, fell 4-1 down in the opening set but a relieved Bacsinszky recovered from 3-0 down to tie the 12th game. Nara, ranked 91st in the world, faded in the second set and improved to 2-0 in their career meetings. — Kyodo News

Nara defeated by Ivanovic in French Open 2nd round

PARIS — Japan’s Kurumi Nara has been knocked out in the second round of the French Open for the third straight year on Thursday after losing 7-5, 6-1 to Ana Ivanovic of Serbia.

Nara showed resilience in recovering from 3-0 down to tie 4-4 in the first set, fending off four break points in the fourth game as she moved inside the baseline and struck deep. But Ivanovic, the 2008 champion, claimed the set with her second break in the 12th game. Nara, ranked 91st in the world, faded in the second set and Ivanovic, the 14th seed at Roland Garros, eased to a straight-sets win and improved to 2-0 in their career meetings. — Kyodo News

Timea Bacsinsky returns the ball at the French Open tennis championships in Paris, on 26 May. Photo: Reuters