Gov’t, NCA signatories agree to hold UPC no later than 31 August

MYANMAR government and eight signatories to the nationwide ceasefire agreement have decided to hold the 21st Century Panglong Peace Conference before the end of August, as State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi met with leaders of ethnic armed organisations in Naypyidaw yesterday.

The meeting is aimed to include others who have not signed the previous government’s NCA or have been left out of the previous talks and signing.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi further pushed the need to create peace in Myanmar, saying that “peace is the best legacy to pass on to younger generations.”

Highlighting the importance of inclusion of all in the process in order to establish a federal democratic Union that can guarantee security and freedom for all, asking for cooperation and participation from all groups, who agree to the terms and conditions.

“The government has no secret intentions and it is clear that its aim is to create a federal Union allowing all peoples to enjoy peace and prosperity,” said Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi called for establishing a basis of trust and understanding between the ethnic groups and the government in order for peace to properly be implemented. The State Counsellor also called for a sense of responsibility for peace talks and goodwill in working towards achieving a federal Union.

Myanmar gained independence 68 years ago and that a federal union must be established, remarked State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

She called on all ethnic groups to cooperate with each other and the government in order to have a true beginning.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi acknowledged the anxiety that ethnic leaders may face in the face of change, encouraging them to overcome it by trust.

She asserted that various groups should trust the government. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi says that the new Panglong agreement is to establish peace, to establish a federal union and to create new opportunities for the future generations.

Next, Saw Mutu Sae Poe, leader of Ethnic Armed Organization Peace Process Steering Team EAO PPST, and members Sai Baung Khay, Khun Okkar, Pu Zing Cung, Khaing Soe Naing Aung, Dr. Naw Kapaw Htoo, U Than Ge and Saw Mo Shae explained that the peace process is still in its infant stages.

See page 4 >>
Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker receives RoK Ambassador

MAHN WIN KHAING THAN, Speaker of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and Amyotha Hluttaw, received Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Myanmar Mr. Yoo Jae-Kyung at a hall of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Building in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the meeting, they discussed matters related to strengthening bilateral friendship, promoting the economic sector of the two countries and human resource development. — Myanmar News Agency

UN Human Rights Council releases global call to action on LGBT rights

568 ORGANISATIONS from 142 countries (including three from Myanmar) have joined hands to promote the recognition and acceptance of LGBT individuals in a joint statement issued by the United Nations Human Rights Council on Monday promoting global action to combat discrimination based on sexual identity in addition to calling for the founding of a SOGI (Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity) Council to document human rights violations, prepare regular reports on issues such as root causes, trans rights, and protection gaps, engage with States from around the world to build awareness of SOGI issues, identify good practices and encourage reforms.

The High Commissioner for Human Rights was noted as saying “current arrangements to protect the human rights of LGBT and intersex persons are inadequate (globally),” and “there is as yet no dedicated human rights mechanism at the international level that has a systematic and comprehensive approach to the human rights situation of LGBT and intersex persons.” UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon was quoted as showing strong support for the measure, reportedly saying “The time (for action) has come.”

Three Myanmar organisations that offer to support and conduct political and social awareness campaigning on behalf of the LGBT community were listed in the statement. Those organisations were Colors Rainbow, Equality Myanmar and the Myanmar MSM Network.

The statement carries particular weight for Myanmar which has a long and widely reported history of abusing LGBT individuals through legal methods - section 337 of the 1860 Myanmar Penal Code (the nation’s current law code) entirely outlaws homosexual sex acts (the definition in the code being “unnatural offences”). The punishment for conviction under section 337 is transportation for life or with imprisonment for up to ten years, plus a fine. The Myanmar ‘darkness law’ outlaws the shrouding or disguising of one’s face during the night-time hours with facial makeup or a long wig on a natural-born man often considered grounds for arrest. The darkness law, it has been reported, is enacted sporadically with dehumanisation, humiliation and police torture typically following the arrest of transgender individuals.

The UNHRC statement called on international partners, both governments and NGOs, to tackle social and institutional discrimination head on and for the UN to find the SOGI council in the near future to better aid the international fight against discrimination. — GNLM

Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker meets with RoK Ambassador

SPEAKER of the Pyithu Hluttaw U Win Myint received Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Myanmar Mr. Yoo Jae-Kyung at a hall of the Pyithu Hluttaw Building in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Also present were officials from the Pyithu Hluttaw Office. — Myanmar News Agency

UN special rapporteur holds talks with Union Ministers

MS. YANGHEE LEE, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, held talks with Union Minister for Defence Lt-Gen Sein Win at the Ministry of Defence. During the meeting, they discussed issues related to national reconciliation, human rights, ending recruitment of child soldier, relations between the military and civilians, and internally displaced persons (IDPs).

In the afternoon, the UN human rights expert held talks separately with Union Minister for Border Affairs Lt-Gen Ye Aung, Union Minister for Labour, Immigration and Population U Thein Swe and Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr Win Myat Aye at their respective offices.

During the meeting with the Union Minister for Border Affairs, Yanghee Lee discussed matters related to the development of Myanmar’s border areas, human resource development of ethnic groups and creating job opportunities, improving livelihoods and resettling of IDPs, the implementation of short-term and long-term projects of the ministry, efforts for stability and development of Rakhine State, the government’s peace making efforts and human rights issues.

Ms Yanghee Lee and Union Minister U Thein Swe discussed measures taken by the ministry to bring labour rights to workers in accordance with the law and putting an end to labour disputes between employers and employees, establishing a better social security scheme for workers, and working towards assisting Myanmar migrant workers abroad providing them with rights and access to health and security in accordance with the law and cooperation with foreign organizations to eradicate child labour in the country.

The UN human rights expert held talks with Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye over the ministry’s short and long term plans, efforts for protecting elderly citizens and most importantly finally implementing laws to give rights to women in Myanmar, rehabilitation and resettlement of homeless children, disaster preparedness and rights for children. — MNA
President U Htin Kyaw accepts credentials of new ambassadors to Myanmar

President U Htin Kyaw accepts the credentials of Mr. Yoo Jae-Kyung, the newly-accredited Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Myanmar in Nay Pyi Taw.  

Vice President U Myit Swe receives BIMSTEC Secretary General

VICE President U Myit Swe received Mr Sumith Narkandala, Secretary General of Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) Permanent Secretariat, at the Presidential Palace in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. 

During the meeting, they discussed matters related to the establishment of BIMSTEC Free Trade Area, promoting of friendship of peoples of the BIMSTEC-member countries and further development of communication channels between the countries and promoting the role of Myanmar in BIMSTEC.

BIMSTEC Permanent Secretariat is based in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Also present at the call were Ministry of State for Foreign Affairs U Kyaw Tin, Deputy Minister for Home Affairs Maj-Gen Aung Soe, Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation Dr Tun Win and departmental officials.—Myanmar News Agency

Briefing on narcotics control held

A BRIEFING on narcotics control polices took place in Nay Pyi Taw on Monday, attended by Chief of Myanmar Police Force Police Maj-Gen Zaw Win, parliamentarians and officials from UN agencies.

In his address, the Police Chief stressed the need for a combination of economic, social and health polices to be involved in the narcotics control strategy.

The Central Committee for Drug Abuse Control is planning to develop a new drug control policy in accordance with suggestions by the United Nations.

Dr Myat Nyana Soe, secretary of the Pyidaungu Hluttaw Joint Bill Committee, Mr. Jeremy Douglas of UNODC and Police Col Zaw Lin Tun spoke on the occasion.

During the meeting, those present held discussions on narcotics control and exchanged views on activities aimed at fighting against narcotics drug abuse. —Myanmar News Agency

Myanmar moves towards strengthening national statistical system

THE Ministry of Planning and Finance yesterday held a kick-off meeting to develop an assessment framework for peer reviews that can improve the country’s national statistical system and statistical capacity building.

The meeting, jointly organised by the ministry’s Central Statistical Organisation (CSO) and the PARIS 21 Mission, was held at the ministry in Nay Pyi Taw. In her address, Director-General Dr Wah Wah Maung said that the CSO is playing the role of co-coordinator in developing the country’s statistics needed for the development and evaluation of policies towards the betterment of the living standards of the people.

Next, Regional Program Coordinator Mr. Millicent Gay Teg-Jade of Asia-Pacific and SIDS spoke on the occasion.

During the meeting, the director-general and foreign experts from the ASEAN Secretariat, Malaysia and the Philippines discussed the development of the national statistical systems.—Myanmar News Agency

Construction Ministry compensates Pyinmana farmers for lands seized in 2003

Thein Ko Lwin

THE Ministry of Construction has paid a compensation of K352.5 million for 171.97 acres to 284 farmers who lost their lands in 2003 for the construction of the Nay Pyi Taw-Myinmana detour, said an official of the ministry yesterday.

The ceremony marking the first time compensation payments was held in Nay Pyi Taw Council Area. K1.5 million was paid for each acre of paddy land, K1.2 million for other types of cultivable land and K 0.5 million for crops.

Rates of compensation were agreed following consultations among the ministry, the Myinmana Township land management committee, the township general administration department, the land record team, village administrators and farmers, said Assistant Director U Htay Aung of the ministry.

But, U Myo Tint, one of the owners of seized lands, said that they were not informed of how the compensation rates were calculated.

“I received K1.5 million for 0.77 acre of land I lost in Kyee-in village and K 0.5 million for crops,” added the farmer.

Some farmers expressed their view that a list of seized lands should be remade as some land-losing farmers received more compensation than the amount of money they deserve to be given for the acres of land they lost, according to those individuals.

Moreover, some said that they wanted to be compensated based on the current land price as the current price of the land is around K20 million per acre.

Farmers in five villages—Kinpuntan, Nyaungpintha, Kyee-in, Nat-tha-ye and Thitlaylon—in Pyinmana Township lost their lands to the 16-mile detour which runs for 10 miles in the township.

Jade sales reach €36.56m on fifth day of emporium

Jade sales reach 36.56m on the fifth day of the Myanmar Gems Emporium entered its fifth day fetching Ks476.6m (€36.56m) in sales of 624 lots of jade through an open tender system. According to sources, sales reached Ks56bn (€42.97m) euros yesterday as 312 lots of pearl were sold for Ks4bn (€3.12m) and 63 lots of gems were found buyers for Ks4.2bn (€3.29m) on previous days.

1000 lots of jade are on sale until 3 July with reserve prices set at Ks261m (€200,000) per lot, an auction will be held from 4-6 July to sell what stocks remain.—Myanmar News Agency

A jade stone being appraised at the 53rd Myanmar Gems Emporium at the Mani Yadana Jade Hall in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: KYAW YE SHWE

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A jade stone being appraised at the 53rd Myanmar Gems Emporium at the Mani Yadana Jade Hall in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: KYAW YE SHWE
Yangon circular train coaches to be replaced with DMU coaches in 2018

A Yangon circular train seen with old coaches. PHOTO: AMS

THE Yangon circular line coaches will be replaced with Diesel Multiple Unit (DMU) coaches in 2018 with the assistance of JICA, it has been learned.

According to Myanmar Railways Divisional 7 the coaches will be replaced with the aim of making trains run to a better time schedule in order to allow passengers better service. There are plans to introduce four RBE coaches for the circular trains running between Ywarthargyi, Toe Kyang Kalay, Hlawkar and Mingaladon. Out of these four, two RBE railway coaches will be running between Ywarthargyi and Toe Kyang Kalay stations and one will run on the Hlawkar route. The other will run on the Mingaladon route.

Out of 23 circular trains running on the Yangon circular railroad only nine are RBE coaches. These 23 trains in total running 125 rounds per day. —200

Over 4,000 Myanmar migrants receive Malaysia work permits

DIAMOND Palace Services Co, a visa work placement company amongst other things, has provided nearly over 4,500 Myanmar migrants with visas and work permits to Malaysia who are recognised as “irregular migrants,” said U Thinn Hsan, chair of Diamond Palace Services, service provider for migrant workers.

Under the programme between the two governments of Myanmar and Malaysia, the Diamond Palace Services Co has provided essential services for migrants including issuing work permit and passport over the last two years.

There has been 7,000 applicants, 4,523 irregular migrants without documents received the work permits but nearly 1,800 remain to obtain it, with the company planning to issue the permits to them before the end of July.

Submitting an application costs Ks1.4m (US$1,188) including service. The company has received less applications; it did not specify over what time period in the report.

A FIRE was caused by an overheated auto voltage regulator in Mawlamyine Township at 9:45 am on Monday.

The accident took place at the home of one Daw San San Win, 50, in Mayangon Ward. The auto voltage regulator overheated, causing an outbreak of fire which quickly got out of control. The fire killed the owner’s nephew, Zaw Kyaw Thu Lin was arrested as he was found together with the yaba. —Myanmar Police Force

Crime NEWS

Haul of yaba seized in Sittwe

POLICE discovered a haul of yaba pills packed in seven bags at a transportation hub on Monday. Reportedly, the yaba was intended for transport to Buthidauang in Sittwe.

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Overheated voltage regulator causes fire

A MAN reportedly robbed a woman of a gold chain, K400,000 and a hand phone at knife point on Khattar Street (formerly Short Road), Thiri Khaymar Ward, Sanchaung Township around 5:45 am on 27 May.

The robber, it is reported, approached and accosted the victim, named Daw Khaing, as she was walking from Khattar Street to the Royal Khattar Hotel. The victim reported the crime to the local police station.

On 29 May a similar case of robbery occurred on this same street at about 1 am. On 21 June another case of robbery took place on the same street.

“Now, we will install a CCTV on the street” said current ward administrator U Zaw Myint Lwin. —Tin Win Lay (Kyimyinda)
CB to provide loans to SMEs

**Aung Thant Khaing**

SMALL and medium enterprises in Mandalay Region will be able to acquire loans from Co-Operative Bank (CB), commonly known as CB Bank. The two types of loans under a Credit Guarantee Insurance system will be for businesses and another for real estate.

Some businesses will be able to apply for limitless loans while others who cannot provide enough collateral are set to Ks20m.

Businesses can receive loans within two weeks if they have been operating for two years, after supplying necessary information. Loan must be repaid in a year, but if the business is thriving, the loan can be extended, according to U Zaw Man Oo, the head of CB Bank. SME Banking department speaking on 27 June.

“The new system is to help businesses owners avoid other strict loan regulations. Those SME businessmen who are seeking license from the Ministry of Industry are entitled to apply for this loan under the laws of SME,” said Daw Yee She Khaing, the director of the department of SME development.

The businessmen have to be the members of SME, hold business licence and need to be citizens. The interest rate is set at 13% per annum, and another 3% is to be given to Myanmar Insurance. The interest is required to be paid monthly.

This loan system requires a recommendation from the SME association, credit guarantee insurance and bank.

KBZ celebrates 400th bank branch

KANBAWZA (KBZ) Bank has celebrated the opening of its 400th branch on west Shwegondain Rd in Bahan township. KBZ opened in Myanmar in 1994 and now has 400 branches and 16,000 staff nationwide.

Kanawaza (KBZ) Bank was granted by the Monetary Authority of Singapore to open a representative office in Singapore. This is the second KBZ bank licensed to open an international office abroad after opening a Thai office in May.

The bank offers market research and hases between the two countries private sectors, offering information, regulatory requirements to customers wishing to do business between the two countries. KBZ also established KBZ Gateway Co Ltd, a subsidiary of Myanmar’s KBZ Group of Companies Ltd, using Oracal Flexcube Core Banking Software for better, faster, stronger international and local banking services. ATM machines and digital payments such as Mobile Banking, Internet Banking, E-commerce and Online Shopping can be performed with the bank.—Thae Naing Oo

Myanmar, Netherlands agree to operate seven flights a week

SEVEN flights a week will operate between Yangon and Amsterdam after the signing of a Air Service Agreement between Myanmar and the Netherlands. The event was held at the Department of Civil Aviation in Yangon, yesterday.

During the ceremony, Deputy Minister for Transport and Communications U Kyaw Myo and Ambassador to the Kingdom of the Netherlands to Myanmar Mr Karel Hartogh inked the agreement.—Myanmar News Agency

Myanmar coffee recognised as the special coffee

FIFTY six coffee varieties have been recognised as “Special coffee” at the second national coffee competition held by Myanmar Coffee Association and Winrock International, according to Winrock International. Out of 60 listed varieties, 56 have been recorded as special.

One importer in Washington has already agreed to purchase 36 tonnes of coffee, offering triple the domestic price.

“This is also the first time of coffee export to America,” said Daw Sabe Su Yin Nwe, senior public relations officer of Winrock International.

The award ceremony was held on 21 June at Ywar Ngan town, Shan State. Winners will continue to take part in other coffee quality competition.

Winrock International has been assisting coffee growers in rural development, with the assistance of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). They have been in contact with Myanmar farmers to add the value of the commodity.—200

Rice export via sea rises

MYANMAR rice being traded by sea has increased thanks to exports to Poland, said U Aung Thant Oo, the chairman of Myanmar Rice Traders’ Association.

Currently the country exports rice to other EU countries, Indonesia, Russia and African countries.

The export price of rice via sea trade is around Ks376,000 (US$320) per tonne, depending on the strain of rice; it has now risen between Ks393,566 (US$335) and Ks400,000 (US$340).

“We have found the new market of Poland. We are being offered US$15 more per tonne of rice. Sea trade is likely to increase despite cool rice export market to China,” said U Aung Thant Oo.

Because of this, rice export has risen above last years exports.

The export volume of rice via sea trade is from 70,000 to 80,000 tonnes a month.

African countries are reported to purchase low quality rice. Currently a delay has occurred because of poor weather conditions.—200
Grenade attack on Malaysian pub wounds eight, police rule out terrorism

KUALA LUMPUR — A grenade attack on a bar in Malaysia wounded eight people, including a Chinese national, police said on Tuesday, ruling out terrorism as a motive.

The attack, on the Movida bar in Puchong, a town on the outskirts the capital, Kuala Lumpur, took place in the early hours of Tuesday morning, when customers were watching live screening of the Euro tourney.

Selangor state deputy police chief Abdul Rahim Jaafar told reporters the suspected motive was either business rivalry, revenge, or a target killing.

“We are still investigating who the suspects are, but the motives could be business rivalry, revenge, or one or more of the victims could have been a target,” he said.

In a similar attack in 2014, a man was killed while 12 others were wounded when a bomb exploded outside a pub in Kuala Lumpur. — Reuters

North Korean Scud missile can reach US naval base in Japan

SEOUL — North Korea's extended-range Scud missiles are capable of reaching the US naval base in Yokosuka, Japan, a Seoul daily reported on Tuesday.

The previously assumed Scud-ER, a modified version of the Scud-C, could fly about 700 kilometres. But a joint assessment with US intelligence indicates that it can fly more than 1,000 km, a senior South Korean military official told the JoongAng Ilbo.

If launched from a frontline unit on a mobile launching pad, the Scud-ER, also known as the Hwasong-7, could hit Yokosuka Naval Base, south of Tokyo, to prevent deployment of US 7th Fleet assets based there to the Korean Peninsula, the report said.

Yokosuka is the largest naval installation in the western Pacific.

According to the Japanese Defence Ministry’s latest white paper, North Korea has managed to extend the range of the Scud-ER by more than 1,000 km, and it is possible that a part of Japan falls within this range,” it says.

North Korea also has longer-range ballistic missiles that can reach all or almost all of Japan, such as the Rodong, Taepodong-1, Taepodong-2, and Musudan missiles.

The JoongAng Ilbo report said the prospect of North Korea having Scud-ERs with such a capability is yet another headache for allies in the region as they consider missile defence systems. — Kyodo News

Top Chinese envoy visits Viet Nam as South China Sea tension rises

SEOUL — South Korea, the United States and Japan will jointly hold a public briefing at the United Nations on Thursday on ways to further strengthen sanctions against North Korea imposed in the wake of its nuclear test and ballistic missile launches earlier this year, a Foreign Ministry spokesman said on Tuesday.

The briefing is intended to raise the awareness of UN member states of UN sanctions resolutions...and also to discuss effective ways to further strengthen sanctions,“ Cho June Hyuck told reporters. The briefing, to be organised by UN missions of the three countries, will be held for three hours from 11 am in New York, he said.

Members from the international organisations, academia, industry, and expert panels of North Korea’s sanctions committee will be among the participants.

“To further strengthen sanctions measures on North Korea, in-depth discussions will be held on issues such as regional cooperation, arms embargo and freezing of assets,” Cho said. — Kyodo News

HANOI — China’s top diplomat met Viet Nam’s leadership on Monday during a scheduled visit aimed at strengthening close relations at a time when ties are strained by South China Sea rows.

The trip by State Councillor Yang Jiechi came amid a Chinese public relations blitz to try to discredit a looming verdict by an international tribunal, which could aggavate tensions if it rules in the coming months.

Yang, who outranks China’s foreign minister, and Viet Nam’s Foreign Minister and deputy premier, Pham Binh Minh, expressed a need to implement joint agreements on preventing rows from getting out of hand, said Viet Nam’s foreign minister.

That included “controlling conflicts well, boosting negotiation mechanisms...and finding basic and long-term solutions that both sides can accept through peaceful exchanges and negotiations”, the ministry said in a statement.

China’s state news agency Xinhua quoted Yang as saying both countries must “appropriately handle relevant disputes and problems”.

He later met with Viet Nam’s President and its Communist Party chief.

His visit comes as the region braces for the verdict in the case brought by the Philippines in 2013 to the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague seeking clarification of parts of the South China Sea.

China has said 47 countries support its refusal to recognise the case. Its diplomats have written editorials in regional newspapers denouncing what has been seen widely as a bold move by Manila, with scope for repercussions.

Incoming Philippine president, Rodrigo Duterte, on Monday said he would not discuss it until a ruling was made.

China claims almost the entire South China Sea, where about $5 trillion worth of trade passes every year. Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan and Viet Nam also have claims.

Experts had said it was unlikely Yang would seek a sympathetic ear from Viet Nam, which has trust issues with China but has grown closer to the Philippines.

Viet Nam is not involved in The Hague case but stands to benefit from a positive ruling for Manila and has echoed its opposition to China’s fortification of artificial islands, the conduct of its coastguard and perceived intrusions into its exclusive economic zone.

Ha Huong Hop, a Vietnamese academic who has advised the government, said there was “no hidden agenda” behind Yang’s visit and simply hold a public briefing would be made at the South China Sea.

The court is expected to rule in the coming months and there are concerns in the United States about how China could react should the verdict not work in its favour. Both sides have accused each other of trying to militarise a shipping route vital to the stability of the global economy. — Reuters
Empty houses and jobless maids — Indonesia’s expat exodus gathers pace

JAKARTA — Foreign workers are leaving Indonesia at an increasing rate due to the slump in commodity prices that has forced resource companies to slash jobs at a time when the government has also introduced tighter regulations on expatriates in Southeast Asia’s biggest economy.

The number of temporary residential permits issued to foreigners, including renewals, has fallen for the past few years to 171,944 in 2015 from 194,162 in 2013. In the first five months of this year, there were 72,999 issued but many of those who provide services to expats say they expect a further drop over the whole of 2016 as they are seeing very few new arrivals.

As a result, rents on upmarket homes in Jakarta have plummed and enrolment at international schools has fallen.

“The expat drought has been really noticeable in 2016,” said Deborah Minicola, a Javanese Potash Limited (IPL) at $227 million tonnes in the next few years.

Mumbai-based fertiliser company Maharashtra Bauer, a leading potash miner, is in line with our evolution of activities,” said a spokesman.

Oil and gas companies operating in the country include Chevron Corp, Total SA and Exxon Mobil Corp. Total’s Indonesia spokesman said the company has “manpower planning which is in line with our evolution of activities,” while overstating assets in Asia including some in Indonesia, declined to comment.

Exxon also did not comment.

A PwC survey of 53 farms in the oil and gas sector, released in May, found that almost three-quarters of respondents expect a smaller expat workforce in future, partly because of tighter controls on hiring foreigners.

Indonesia opened up dozens of business sectors recently to foreign investors in a move described by President Joko Widodo as a “Big Bang” liberalisation of the economy. Yet business groups say there are mixed signals from the government, which imposes restrictions apparently under pressure from protectionists.

The manpower ministry is encouraging companies to hire more Indonesian workers and is tightening its scrutiny of the work permit applications from foreigners, said Ratna Agustina, a director at a firm that provides services to expats. The government also sets an age ceiling of 55 years for foreigners employed by oil and gas contractors, downstream businesses and supporting service providers — with certain exemptions for top executives or those with skills deemed crucial.

School in Balikpapan, a city in Indonesia’s resource-dependent province of East Kalimantan, expects a 36 per cent reduction in its student body this year, said human resources officer Ni Ketut Novia. Three international schools in the city have shut over the past 2-3 years due to the mass layoffs at mining contractors and a drastic cut in expat allowances, she said.

The expat exodus will also create skill shortages that could hold the country back when the commodity downturn is reversed.

Low resource prices and a slowdown in demand from China, one of Indonesia’s top export markets, have reduced the incentive for exploration or production in the oil and gas and mining sectors, forcing companies to back on staff costs.

The mining, oil and gas and geothermal sectors accounted for 7.62 per cent of Indonesia’s gross domestic product in 2015, down from 11.81 per cent in 2011. Drilling contractors and exploration suppliers are among the worst-hit, industry experts say.

Some workers who recently lost their jobs are finding it difficult to get new employment.

Christian Ambar Putrini is one example. She has been looking for a job as a part-time housekeeper in Jakarta after her former bosses left for South America a couple of weeks ago. She hopes to work for a new expat family again as foreigners tend to pay higher wages for an expat family again as for-
ECONOMISTS agree that governance is one of the critical factors that explain the divergence in performance among nations. The differences of views between economists concerning governance are to do first, with the types of state capacities that constitute the critical governance capacities needed for accelerating development and secondly, with the significance of state governance related to other factors at early stages of development.

On the first issue, there is an important empirical and theoretical controversy between liberal economists who constitute the mainstream consensus on good governance and statist and heterodox institutional economists who agree that governance is critical for economic development but argue that theory and evidence show that the governance capacities required for successful development are substantially different from those identified by the good governance analysis.

The economists in favour of good governance argue that the critical state capacities are those that maintain efficient markets and restrict the activities of states to the provision of necessary public goods to minimize rent seeking and government failure. The relative failure of many developing states are explained by the attempts of their states to do too much, resulting in the unleashing of unproductive rent seeking activities and the crowding out of productive market ones. The empirical support for this argument typically comes from cross sectional data on governance in developing countries that shows that in general, countries with better governance defined in these terms performed better (Khan: 2016).

The second area of disagreement concerns the relative importance of governance reforms in accelerating development in countries at low levels of development. This being so, it can be said that although good governance is one of the necessary condition for the economic development of a state but it is not the sole and sufficient condition. There are other factors which are equally important to promotion of economic development.

The author has great expectations of ICT application to be introduced in our beloved country — Myanmar.

The Global New Light of Myanmar printed a news item saying that “ICT event to be held in Yangon this November” in Tuesday 21 June 2016 issue. Let me narrate that sixty exhibitors have signed up to “CommuniCast” to be held in Yangon this November, and the event is designed to support Myanmar’s developing ICT industry mobile, broadband, satellite and broadcasting markets.

“We are very pleased to be returning to Yangon for the third straight year with 60 exhibitors already signed up, the show is going from strength to strength,” said Rupert Owen, Show Director for “CommuniCast” — Driving Myanmar’s Digital Future.

The third CommuniCast Myanmar show returns to Yangon from 15-17 November to support the country’s development across the ICT solutions, mobile, broadband, satellite and broadcasting markets.

Co-located with the Myanmar Computer Federation’s international ICT Exhibition and incorporating the Myanmar Satellite Forum, the event is the proven opportunity to conduct business in one of Asia’s most exciting markets.

As Myanmar steps up its ambitions for satellite sovereignty, the second Myanmar Satellite Forum provides a platform for government, industry and service providers to exchange ideas, develop relationships and build partnerships.

It is indeed a good time to engage with the new government to encourage the ICT or E-Government for the development of the country.

The Importance of a National Strategic Framework for E-Government through ICT application

The implementation of e-government requires strong leadership and vision. It also requires a comprehensive strategy that is not only benchmarked on global best practices, but also sensitive to existing political and economic conditions and realities.

For e-government to become a reality, the central government, in consultation with stakeholders such as all ministries inclusive of states and regions, is advised to develop a National Strategic Framework. It articulates the government’s vision, targets and milestones, technical approach and standards for e-government systems. Such a framework must address information privacy, security, maintainability, and interface standards.

However, it must be said at the outset that a national framework is not a prerequisite to any e-government project. To put this more accurately, there are e-government projects at the ministry / department / organization or local government levels should not be held up simply for lack of a national framework. Too many government departments and local governments independently move forward with their own projects, common standards are flexible, and overall national strategy is not so important. Singapore and China embody the top-down approach, while the US and the Philippines are closer to the bottom-up approach.

There are advantages and disadvantages to each method. The top-down approach facilitates integration. However, developing a national strategy, which the approach emphasizes, often takes years of internal strife and the technology decisions tend to be poor. It is therefore, costly and difficult to reverse. The bottom-up approach is less orderly and tends to some redundancy, but it also insures innovation, resulting in a many grassroots projects.

In the end, the best approach to e-government depends on the individual country, on how its political and economic system works, and on the level of technology competence in each individual government unit.

Moreover, public awareness and support for e-government is critical for its success and its sustainability. Therefore, it requires consultation with the stakeholders in the process. Stakeholders include citizens, NGOs, businesses, various industries and special sectors such as national security, and the administration.

It is likewise important to understand global trends and to study global best practices of e-government projects and strategies. Only from studying other countries’ successes and failures is a country able to effectively design its e-government strategy and avoid pitfalls that cost time, money and resources.

Studying other countries’ experiences will allow governments that are about to embark on developing their e-government strategies to define their priority areas based on their specific political and cultural contexts in the transition to democracy.
100 children treated for dengue Haemorrhagic fever at Yangon Children Hospital

YANGON CHILDREN’S Hospital (YCH) has treated 140 patients for Dengue Haemorrhagic Fever (DHF) between January and June. The majority of those infected were five to 12 years old mostly from suburban areas, according to the hospitals figures.

Despite this, the hospital claims that the number is less than last year, during the same period, where the number infected nearly reached 500, according to the report.

“A continued outbreak of DHF has infected 138 children within the past six months, with one death reported,” said Dr Su Su Dway, medical superintendent of the YCH.

According to the Ministry of Health and Sports, over 900 cases have been reported across the country over the past six months. Over 300 cases occurred in Yangon with four deaths reported. The country’s largest city has the highest mortality rate. It did not specify on states or self administered zones.

Dengue fever is a mosquito-borne viral infection and is the leading cause of hospitalisation and death among children and adults across developing nations. Protection is more important than treatment as there are no specific medicines or antibiotics to treat the dengue virus.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), early detection and access to proper medical care lowers mortality rates below 1%.

A WHO study said that 3 million people were infected with dengue fever worldwide in 2013, with 12,500 deaths.

Myanmar reported a total of 13,086 cases in 2014 and 20,255 in 2013.

Senior-General Min Aung Hlaing meets with foreign ambassadors

Senior General holding talks with Mr. Yoo Jae-Kyung, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Myanmar. PHOTO: MNA

COMMANDER-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing received Mr. Stephen Marshall, Ambassador of New Zealand to Myanmar, at Bayintnaung Hall in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. During the talks the two representatives discussed cooperation between the two defence services, agriculture, livestock and food security and technical cooperation in the field of veterinary medicine.

Next, the Senior General held talks with Mr. Yoo Jae-Kyung, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Myanmar. — Myanmar News Agency

Nation Building through ICT application

How does a country build an appropriate e-government infrastructure?

A Government Information Infrastructure (GII), which is a network that connects all government agencies, is needed to ensure that citizens enjoy the full benefits of e-government. Building a GII is a very expensive undertaking that requires cross-agency, cross-government planning. The following must be considered when building such a government backbone.

The cost implications

A financial feasibility study is necessary for such an endeavor. This cost-benefit analysis can help government decide either to open portions of the government backbone and charge access fees to telecommunications carriers or operators to sustain operations, or to altogether ride on an existing private network due to cost constraints.

The infrastructure issues

These include the country’s existing infrastructure, current level of Internet penetration, telephone density, and existing speed of technology change, allowances for convergence or connection, and investment in broadband.

The benefits and risks

Having one’s own backbone ensures that government communications are open and secure and operating 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and 365 days a year. However, this may mean regular funding for upgrades and maintenance of the network, and for hiring a team to support the network full time.

Some governments may decide that building their own backbone is too costly and time-consuming. Building a backbone may take years and billions of dollars to complete, and if governments want to immediately engage in e-government, there may not be enough time or money to do so.

An alternative is to ride on an existing private telecommunications backbone, usually one run by a large telecommunications carrier. This means that government will be entrusting the security of the network to the operator, who will also be assuming the costs of regular network maintenance and technical support and the risks of possible network sabotage.

In order to minimize the threat of security risks, governments who are riding on a private backbone will have to set up the following types of security measures: firewalls, intrusion detection software, encryption, and secure networks such as Virtual Private Networks, Wide Area Networks or Local Area Networks for government departments / agencies that require high levels of security, such as the armed forces.

Government Information Infrastructure: New Korea Net-Government (NKN-G)

The New Korea Net-Government (NKN-G) was constructed to improve the efficiency of government operations and delivery of public services in South Korea. It connects central and local governments, public institutions, research organizations and universities through optical fibers.

The NKN-G was completed in 2015. It was developed within the larger framework of the Korea National Information Infrastructure (NII). The project was prompted in 1992 by the government’s fear that unless an infrastructure was built, its basic industries would not be able to compete in the global marketplace.

The NII was seen as part and parcel of Korea’s national economic policy, with the NKN-G allowing for simple and swift delivery of public services in support of the national government’s goal of transparent, accountable, and efficient government.

The construction of the Korean Information Infrastructure — KII involved the development of an advanced information infrastructure that involved not only communications services, but also Internet services, application software, computers and operating systems, as well as information products and services. Through the KII, Korean citizens are able to access information and services and transact business 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

What is software architecture and why is it important in e-government development?

Software architecture refers to the high-level organizational structure of a software system. A well planned, secure and flexible e-government platform is necessary for governments to meet the growing demands for services delivered via the Internet and future delivery channels. Building a common architecture for e-government requires secure and trusted inter-operable systems that will adopt existing Internet and World Wide Web standards for all government agencies, at all levels. This is a pragmatic approach that reduces the costs and risks of operating information technology systems while keeping the public sector in step with the global Internet revolution. The idea of an inter-operable system within one government means that agencies can easily “talk to one another” — whether by sending email or exchanging information, without any technical problems that hinder the smooth operation of government.

Conclusion

At the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development held in Rio de Janeiro in June 2012, a global consensus was reached that to achieve our sustainable development goals we need institutions at all levels that are effective, transparent, accountable and democratic. E-government holds tremendous potential to improve the way that governments deliver public services and enhance broad stakeholder involvement in public service.

The people of Myanmar would be more than happy to witness that Myanmar initially steps into the world of ICT industry through “Communi Cast” Myanmar show. Consequently, Myanmar embarks on the existing and reliable private communication backbone with the assistance of friendly countries creating E-Government at least for some government departments and private businesses that deal with the citizens. *****
**Germany, France, Italy sketch out new goals for EU in joint statement**

BERLIN — Germany, France and Italy said they will propose a clear plan to secure the European Union’s borders, strengthen its economy and create jobs for young people at an EU summit on Tuesday to discuss Britain’s vote to leave the bloc, Chancellor Angela Merkel, President Francois Hollande and Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi said in a joint statement after talks in Berlin that the EU needed the support of its people to move forward and must respond to their concerns.

“We will propose tomorrow... launching a process based on a strict calendar and clear commitments to respond to the challenges presented by the results of the British referendum,” read the statement in French. In the document, the three leaders agreed on the need to “develop concrete solutions for a good future for Europeans at the heart of the European Union.”— Reuters

**Balkans fear Brexit will delay EU dream**

BELGRADE — Balkan countries hoping to join the European Union fear their journey to membership of a club they see as offering prosperity and stability will face delays and uncertainty now that Britain has voted to leave.

Albania, Bosnia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia, which endured war and upheaval in the 1990s, are all at different stages in joining the 28-nation EU.

The immediate reaction in Balkan capitals to Britain’s referendum decision last Thursday was that EU membership efforts would continue undiminished.

Prime Minister Aleksandar Vucic said Serbia would stick to its “European path”, aiming to complete accession talks by 2019.

Bosnia should not be discouraged by the British vote and must press on with EU integration, said Denis Zvizdic, chairman of Bosnia’s council of ministers. But there is now acceptance that the Brexit upheaval, which came with the EU already showing less enthusiasm about enlargement, is likely to delay accession for the Balkan hopefuls. Some felt they had lost a champion in London.

“Our fear is that following Brexit the enlargement process could be slowed down,” said Maja Bobic, secretary-general of the European Movement in Serbia, a group that promotes EU values.

She said that as the EU negotiates Britain’s departure, Brussels will be focused on how the bloc can be consolidated rather than enlarged.— Reuters

**Kerry raises harassment of US diplomats in Moscow with Putin**

WASHINGTON — Russian harassment and surveillance of US diplomats in Moscow has increased significantly and US Secretary of State John Kerry raised the issue recently with Russian President Vladimir Putin, the State Department said on Monday.

Kerry last raised the matter with Putin on 24 March this year, a State Department official said. “He has raised it with President Putin,” State Department spokeswoman Elizabeth Trubed told a news briefing earlier, adding: “We see an increase and we take it seriously.”

Trudeau said harassment by Russian security agents and traffic police had been an issue over the past two years, but did not give details of incidents nor why it was raised with Putin.

Other Western embassies had reported the same behaviour towards their diplomats stationed in Moscow, Trudeau added.

Washington stripped five of the six Russian honorary consuls of credentials in January to retaliate for harassment of its diplomats in Moscow. In response, Russia’s Foreign Ministry accused the United States of provoking Russian diplomats in the United States and elsewhere. Honorary consuls are typically US citizens or green card holders who perform consular services on behalf of a foreign government, a US official said, saying the five were located in California, Florida, Minnesota, Utah and Puerto Rico. Asked whether harassment of US diplomats occurred only in Moscow, Trudeau said: “We can’t rule out such harassment that could occur elsewhere. I just don’t have specifics on other countries.”

Despite cooperation between Moscow and Washington on the Iran nuclear deal, tensions between the two countries have escalated since Russia annexed the Crimean Peninsula from Ukraine in 2014 and Moscow’s increasing backing for Syrian President Bashar al-Assad.— Reuters

**Waste of time to discuss EU treaty change now, Germany’s Schaeuble says**

KUENZELSUAU, (Germany) — German Finance Minister Wolfgang Schaeuble said on Monday it would lead to nothing if EU member states discussed a treaty change as a reaction to the British decision to leave the bloc.

“It would be a waste of time to discuss a treaty change in the EU now,” Schaeuble said in a speech at a private university in the southern town of Kuenzelsau.

The veteran politician said the outcome of last week’s referendum was heartbreaking.

“One has the impression that the British also feel like crying, but that doesn’t help anyone now. They should have thought about it earlier,” Schaeuble said.— Reuters

**UN chief in Gaza to push for resumption of peace talks**

GAZA — United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on Tuesday arrived in Gaza Strip before concluding a tour in the Middle East.

Ban Ki-moon came into Gaza through the Israeli controlled Erez crossing. He met with UN officials working in Gaza and visited a school run by the United Nations Relief and Work Agency for Palestinian Refugees UNRWA.

The last visit of UN Secretary General to Gaza was in 2014, after Israel launched a 50-day-long offensive on Gaza. He also visited the coastal enclave in the end of 2008.— Xinhua

**India police arrest woman topper for cheating in exams**

NEW DELHI — Indian police have arrested a 17-year-old woman topper in the eastern state of Bihar on charges of cheating in examinations after she failed a retest.

A senior police official said on Tuesday that Ruby Rai, who came first in Bihar state examinations, was produced in a court and remanded to judicial custody for two weeks.

Her arrest came after she was made to retake her examinations in the wake of a video interview going viral, in which she said her main subject political science was about cooking.

“She failed in the retest after her original results were cancelled. Rai was arrested soon after,” the official said.

According to the police, arrest warrants have also been issued for several other students who did well in the state examinations, but are suspected to have cheated.— Xinhua

**Missing helicopter of Thai air force found crashed, all three on board dead**

BANGKOK — Search team found wreckage of a helicopter of the Thai air force that disappeared Saturday in southeastern Thailand and all three men on board were confirmed dead, Thai media reported.

According to Thairath, the search team found them at about 10:30 am local time in the Khao Chamao mountain. The three casualties were two air force pilots and a maintenance officer.

Suttipong Inseeyong, commander of the air force’s air operation control, said it will take more time to take the bodies from the scene, since the incident happened in the mountain and it was raining.

The helicopter lost contact over the Khao Chamao-Khao Wong National Park that straddles Rayong and Chanthaburi provinces when it was en route to provide supplies to an air force radar station.— Xinhua

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**German Chancellor Angela Merkel, French President Francois Hollande and Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi attend a news conference at the chancellery during discussions on the outcome of the Brexit in Berlin, Germany, on 27 June, 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS**
No Syrian govt attacks on Aleppo, Raqqah seen soon — Ifax cites Russian envoy

MOSCOW — Russia’s air force has helped Syrian government troops to encircle the town of Ruwaished, 240 km (149 miles) east of Amman in 2015. Photo: Reuters

Syrian refugees wait to board a Jordanian army vehicle after crossing into Jordanian territory with their families, in Al Riqban border area, near the northeastern Jordanian border with Syria, and Iraq, near the town of Ruwaished, 240 km (149 miles) east of Amman in 2015. Photo: Reuters

Turkey mends fences with Israel, Russia in foreign policy reset

ISTANBUL/MOSCOW/JERUSALEM — Turkey announced the restoration of diplomatic ties with Israel on Monday after a six-year rupture and expressed regret to Russia over the downing of a warplane, seeking to mend strained alliances and ease a sense of isolation on the world stage.

The deal with Israel after years of negotiation was a rare rapprochement in the divided Middle East, driven by the prospect of lucrative Mediterranean gas deals as well as mutual fears over growing security risks.

“It was always possible to return to normal relations with Russia,” said an official in Istanbul.

In his comments following a dinner to break the fast in the holy month of Ramadan, Erdogan said Turkey aimed for a quick normalisation of ties with Moscow.

“I believe we will normalise our relations with Russia rapidly by ending the existing situation which is not in the interest of both sides,” he said.

The Kremlin earlier said Erdogan had apologized to Vladimir Putin over last year’s shooting down of a Russian air force jet by Turkey’s military, opening the way for Russia to attempt to stem the flow.

A spokesman for Erdogan, Ibrahim Kalin, confirmed a letter was sent to Putin, though he did not refer explicitly to an apology, something Turkish officials had long ruled out. Kalin said Erdogan had expressed regret and asked the family of the pilot to “excuse us.”

The moves come as a new Turkish government packed with Erdogan allies re-evaluates its foreign policy. Ankara has seen relations strained not only with Israel and Russia, but also with the United States and European Union in recent months.

Turkey’s worst nightmare in Syria has come true: Russian support has enabled its enemy President Bashar al-Assad to remain in power, while Kurdish militia fighters have benefitted from US support as they battle Islamic State, bolstering their support has enabled its enemy President Bashar al-Assad to remain in power, while Kurdish militia fighters have benefitted from US support as they battle Islamic State, bolstering their

US investigates reports, hostages killed in Afghanistan air strike

KABUL — At least six prisoners of the Taliban as well as a Taliban commander died following a US air strike in Afghanistan at the weekend, according to conflicting reports which US officials said they were investigating.

A Defence Department official in Washington confirmed an air strike was launched against the Taliban on Saturday. The official said on Monday reports that civilians had been killed in the attack were being investigated.

Details of the incident, near the northern city of Kunduz on Saturday, remain unclear. It follows a decision by President Barack Obama to authorise greater use of US combat power against the Taliban.

Sher Azziz Kamawal, a senior police commander in northeast Afghanistan, said Janat Gul Osmani, a senior Taliban commander responsible for a series of kidnappings in the area, was killed along with five other militants when his car was hit by an air strike in the Chardara district of Kunduz.

In retaliation, he said on Monday, the Taliban had killed six civilian prisoners by blowing them up.

Taliban spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid confirmed that Mullah Janat and four fighters had been killed in the air strike, which he said also killed six captured Afghan soldiers the Taliban was holding. He denied the Taliban had killed the civilians itself.

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Norwegian court rejects Edward Snowden lawsuit on free passage

OSLO — Former US spy contractor Edward Snowden has failed in a legal bid to win guarantees from Norway that it would not extradite him to the United States if he went there to receive a free speech award, a Norwegian court said on Monday.

Snowden’s lawyer said in April he would take the state to court to secure free passage to the Nordic country. The United States has filed espionage charges against him for leaking details of extensive US surveillance programmes.

“Oslo District Court has decided that the lawsuit from Edward Snowden against the State regarding extradition, should be dismissed,” the court said in a statement.

Snowden was granted asylum in Russia, which borders Norway, in 2013. He had been invited to Norway to receive a freedom of speech award from the local branch of writers’ group PEN International, but worried that he would be handed over to the United States, his lawyers have said.

NATO member Norway has close diplomatic ties with the United States. The Justice Ministry has declined to comment on the case, leaving it to the court to decide.

The Oslo court said the country’s extradition laws only apply to people who are already in the country, and that the justice ministry could not be compelled to issue a decision on whether or not to extradite someone who lives abroad.

The decision is expected to be appealed within days, one of the lawyers involved in the case told Reuters.

“We believe the court is being too formalistic,” said Jon Wessel-Aas, representing three Norwegian press organisations acting as third-party interveners supporting Snowden’s lawsuit. He acknowledged that there was no US extradition request right now, but argued Washington would try to make one if Snowden visited the country.

As part of the verdict, Snowden was also ordered to pay 7,000 Norwegian crowns ($823.64) to the government to cover legal expenses.— Reuters

In campaign trail debut with Clinton, Warren says Trump driven by greed

CINCINNATI — Liberal Elizabeth Warren attacked Republican Donald Trump on Monday during her first campaign appearance with US Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton, accusing him of ”insecure money grubber” who is driven by greed and hate.

Warren, a leader of the Democratic Party’s progressive wing and a potential vice presidential pick, said Clinton had spent her career fighting for average Americans. “When Donald Trump says he’ll make America great, he means it even greater for rich guys just like Donald Trump,” Warren said, standing shoulder to shoulder with a smiling Clinton.

Clinton has struggled to win over some liberal backers of rival Bernie Sanders, a democratic socialist US senator from Vermont, since beating him for the Democratic nomination this month. She hopes the support of Warren can help her in that effort as she campaigns against Trump for the 8 November election.

Warren, who has vigorously attacked Trump in recent weeks, called him “a small, insecure money grubber who fights for no one but himself” and warned: “He will crush you into the dirt to get what ever he wants. That’s who he is.”

The capacity crowd repeatedly roared its approval, and a line of supporters who could not get inside stretched out the door and down the street. At one point, Warren stopped her speech to turn and applaud Clinton, a former secretary of state.

“She knows what it takes to beat a thin-skinned bully who is driven by greed and hate,” said Warren, known for calling for reining in Wall Street and eradicating income inequality.

In a statement, Trump called Warren “a sellout for backing Clinton, who has taken donations from Wall Street interests and once backed the Trans-Pacific Partnership, the Asian trade deal. Clinton has since reversed her trade stance.

In an interview with NBC News, Trump called Warren “a fraud” and “a racist,” accusing her of making up claims about her Native American heritage to advance her career.

He again called Warren “Pocahontas,” the name of a 17th-century Native American figure, to draw attention to the controversy first raised during Warren’s 2012 Senate race in Massachusetts.

She is one of the least productive senators in the United States Senate,” Trump told NBC. “We call her Pocahontas for a reason.”

Two other potential Clinton vice presidential picks — US senators Tim Kaine of Virginia and Sherrod Brown of Ohio — rejected Trump’s assertion and defended Warren’s record.

“That’s what he does, he attacks people. He acts like he’s attacking their character — he’s attacking his own character when he does that,” Brown told Reuters.

“You can’t believe anything Donald Trump says,” Period,” Kaine told Reuters. —Reuters

American whistleblower Edward Snowden is seen through a camera viewfinder as he delivers remarks via video link from Moscow to attendees at a discussion regarding an International Treaty on the Right to Privacy, Protection Against Improper Surveillance and Protection of Whistleblowers in Manhattan, New York in 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

A force of 10,000 firefighters from the Victorian Country Fire Authority (CFA) are set to target polling booths throughout the state’s marginal seats on the July 2 election day, in what shapes as a blow to the Australian Labour Party’s federal campaign.

CFA volunteers have been frustrated by Victorian Premier Daniel Andrews’ handling of a three-year dispute between the CFA and the United Firefighters Union (UFU), a union representing career fire fighters.

The UFU have been negotiating with the Victorian Government over a new pay deal that would significantly raise the wages of career firefighters, their working conditions and safety measures. But the CFA has rejected the new deal, as it feared it would give the UFU too much power over operational decisions and would threaten the volunteer organisation.

The CFA is one of the world’s largest volunteer emergency services and community safety organisations. Its 59,000 volunteers are responsible for controlling fires in country Victoria and outer Melbourne, and played a major role in saving lives and homes in the 2009 Victorian bushfire, known as ‘Black Saturday’.

Andrews’ intervention in the firefighters’ dispute has had an adverse effect on Opposition Leader Bill Shorten’s federal campaign. In a survey published by NewsCorp earlier this week, it was revealed 40 percent of voters in four of Victoria’s marginal seats were less likely to vote Labor because of the CFA dispute.

Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull has urged Andrews to reconsider his support for the new UFU deal, warning it could damage the CFA. The federal government is considering legislation to protect the CFA from a union takeover, as the power play is threatening to spill into the federal election campaign.

The dispute is set to come to a head on July 2, election day, when an army of CFA volunteers are set to face off against hundreds of UFU members in key marginal seats across Victoria.

NewsCorp is reporting that CFA members will be at polling booths in their yellow uniforms, carrying signs and talking to voters.

One senior CFA volunteer organizer said: “We’ll be there with our trucks, carrying signs, wearing our yellows.”

UFU members plan to hand out how-to-vote cards which put the Liberal Party last.—Xinhua
Magnitude 5.7 quake shakes southern Mexico, no damage reported

MEXICO CITY — A 5.7 magnitude earthquake hit Mexico’s southern state of Oaxaca on Monday, the US Geological Survey (USGS) said, shaking buildings as far away as Mexico City, but officials reported there were no immediate damages.

The quake struck 10 kilometres (6 miles) north of the town of Pinotepa de Don Luis at a depth of 10 km (6 miles), the USGS said.

“It felt horrible and very strong, and it felt like it lasted two or three minutes,” said a receptionist at the Hotel Las Gaviotas de Pinotepa in Oaxaca state, who declined to give her name.

The shaking was felt more than 360 km (225 miles) away in Mexico City, where some offices were evacuated.

Nonetheless, Interior Minister Miguel Angel Osorio Chong said on Twitter there were no immediate reports of damage.

“Our representatives all over the state have reported to us that the preliminary situation is that there is no damage anywhere,” said Felipe Reyna, emergency services coordinator in Oaxaca.

Mexican national oil company Pemex said it had no immediate news on the state of its Salina Cruz refinery in Oaxaca, the company’s biggest with a crude processing capacity of 330,000 barrels per day.

But Oaxaca Governor Gabino Cue said on Twitter that there was no damage at industrial installations in the state.

—Reuters

India starts delivery of components for global clean energy project

NEW DELHI — India has started delivery of the components for a global project to build world’s largest fusion device in France, local media reported on Tuesday.

“So far we have delivered less than 10 per cent of total components,” Dheeraj Bora, director of Institute for Plasma Research, was quoted by the media as saying in western state of Gujarat.

“First set of vessel shield has been sent to South Korea, cooling water system has been shipped, beam dump has been delivered, and parts of Cryostat have also been delivered,” he added.

The institute is taking care of the Indian part of the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor project that aims at producing carbon-free energy. The project is scheduled to be ready by December 2025, Bora said. Other parties involved in the project are European Union, China, Japan, South Korea, the US and Russia.—Xinhua

Pacific island nations, United States agree to new multinational tuna access, aid deal

SYDNEY — The impasse on fishing access for the US tuna fleet into one of the world’s most lucrative fisheries islands has ended after the Pacific islands and the United States agreed to a new multilateral access and aid treaty.

Administered by the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) Fisheries Agency (FFA), the 28-year-old South Pacific Tuna Treaty was on the verge of collapse in the first half of 2016 following a significant impasse on fishing access fees following the collapse in tuna prices last year. The treaty is the Pacific’s most important aid, trade and geopolitical agreement governing the US fleet’s access to the Skipjack Tuna fishery in the South Pacific, providing much needed aid via the purchase of fishing days, or fishing effort, as well as fisheries surveillance by the US military. The treaty’s negotiation, which had been on shaky ground over the past five months, ended at the weekend with an agreement to give the US tuna fleet more flexibility in their access while the Pacific nations get more control over their maritime Exclusive Economic Zones.

“The sense of achievement and relief that regional cooperation has delivered a deal many doubted could be achieved, definitely tops a very long, often frustrating, and sometimes torturous negotiation process for the Pacific,” Pacific Island Forum (PIF) Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) director-general James Movic said in a statement. The FFA, the US State Department and vested interests have agreed in principle to a new business model which sees U.S. tuna vessels treated as individuals rather than a single fleet, while also allowing PIF parties to negotiate access agreements individually.

While the new treaty is less than what was originally in place, the FFA said the fewer days for the US fleet means they get a higher rate of return, and presumably, member states can sell the extra days to foreign fleets.—Xinhua

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV GSS YANGON VOY NO ( )

Consignees of cargo carried on MV GSS YANGON VOY NO ( ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 29.6.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of H.P.T where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY AGENT FOR: MS CHINA SHIPPING LINES Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV MAX CRUSADER VOY NO ( 008N )

Consignees of cargo carried on MV MAX CRUSADER VOY NO ( 008N ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 29.6.2016 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 MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY AGENT FOR: MS INTERASIA LINES Phone No: 2301185
A very British, and muddy, Glastonbury wraps up for another year

GLASTONBURY — As weary Glastonbury fans extricated their tents and cars from the ankle-deep mud on Monday morning, they could at least bathe in the glow of a “Best of British” music festival that did something to dispel their gloom at seeing fellow Britons vote to leave the EU.

Although Glastonbury, held at a dairy farm in Somerset, southwestern England, is well-known for its wet and muddy conditions, this year’s festival was particularly soggy, with rain falling on every day of the event. With some car parks flooded, many of those departing had to get local farmers to come and help tow vehicles away — for a fee.

Michael Eavis, who founded the music and performing arts festival in 1970, told the Guardian newspaper that “every single bit of wood chipp in the south of England” had been brought to the festival site in an attempt to improve the muddy conditions.

“I’ve never seen mud like it in my whole life,” he told the newspaper. “In all 46 years, it hasn’t been as bad as this.”

British superband Coldplay closed the festival in spectacular fashion on Sunday night, reeling off hit after hit, lighting up both the stage and the crowd, and sending revellers off into the night singing.

Eavis came on stage at the end of Coldplay’s set to sing Frank Sinatra’s “My Way”, accompanied on the piano by the band’s front man, Chris Martin. With lyrics such as “And now, the end is near”, the song choice sparked rumours that 80-year-old Eavis was stepping down as festival organiser.

Coldplay, who have headlined the festival a record-breaking four times, had earlier brought on Barry Gibb of the Bee Gees for two songs, including the Bee Gees’ hit “Staying Alive”, which provoked ecstatic screams from the crowd.

Around 100,000 multicoloured LED wristbands, which lit up in different colours in time with the music, had been distributed by festival staff throughout the day to revellers. Along with balloons, confetti, lasers and fireworks, they made for a stunning show.

Coldplay also paid tribute to British band Viola Beach, whose four young members tragically died in a road accident earlier this year, projecting a video of the band singing “Boys Don’t Sing” before joining in to sing along.

Earlier on the main Pyramid stage, Jeff Lynne’s ELO, formed in the same year Glastonbury started, had taken the festival’s 4 p.m. “legend slot” amid pouring rain. Their hit “Mr Blue Sky” seemed a little misplaced.

Sony regulators to decide on Sony’s Michael Jackson deal by 1 August

BRUSSELS — EU antitrust authorities will rule by 1 August whether to allow Sony Corp (6758.T) to buy out the Michael Jackson estate’s stake in its music publishing joint venture, a move which rivals such as Warner Music Group say gives Sony too much power.

Sony requested approval on 24 June, according to a filing on the European Commission website. The EU competition enforcer can clear the deal unconditionally or demand concessions.

It can also open a five-month long investigation if it has serious concerns the deal may harm consumers and rivals.

Kanye West stirs up controversy with nude celebrities in ‘Famous’

LOS ANGELES — Rapper Kanye West set tongues wagging on Monday with his latest music video that features nude portrayals of high profile celebrities including pop singer Taylor Swift, Republican presidential hopeful Donald Trump and comedian Bill Cosby.

The video for “Famous,” which premiered on E! News, featured low-resolution footage depicting 12 celebrities sleeping next to each other.

Representatives for West, Kardashian, Jenner, Trump and Cosby declined to comment on the video. Representatives for the other celebrities did not immediately return requests for comment.

E! News host Jason Kennedy said “Kanye wants everyone to know this is not a video. This is an essay.”

The imagery for “Famous” is inspired by artist Vincent Siderio’s 2008 painting “Sleep,” which featured people in various states of undress sleeping next to each other.

Desderio called West’s video “a tableau that was disturbingly familiar, rapturously beautiful and frighteningly uncanny,” in an essay published Monday for W Magazine.

West, known for often embarking on rambling ‘tweetstorms’ on social media, held the first screening of the “Famous” video in Los Angeles late on Friday.

The video quickly became a trending topic online over the weekend especially due to West’s complicated history with Swift.

The rapper famously interrupted Swift’s acceptance speech at the 2009 MTV Video Music Awards, but the truce did not last long. The two fell out again in February after West’s song “Famous,” off his latest album “The Life of Pablo,” featured the lyric “I feel like me and Taylor might still have sex, I made that bitch famous.”
South China Sea reefs ‘decimated’ as giant clams harvested in bulk

TANMEN, (China) — Ornaments made from the shells of endangered giant clams, renowned in China for having auspicious powers and the luster of ivory, have become coveted luxuries, a trend which has wreaked havoc on the ecosystem of the South China Sea.

China banned harvesting of giant clams last year but in the tiny seaside town Tanmen on the southeastern island of Hainan, most stores still sell products made from the over-four-foot-wide shells.

The once sleepy fishing village has transformed over the past three years to harvest clams on an industrial scale. There are around 460 handicraft retailers, compared to 15 in 2012, with the industry now supporting around 100,000 people.

The price of giant clams has risen 40-fold over the past five years, while the plundering of the seabed has led to severe degradation of the reefs, scientists and academics said.

With rising tensions in the South China Sea, Tanmen fisherfolk have turned a blind eye.

China claims almost the whole South China Sea, setting it at odds with rival claims from its Southeast Asian neighbours, including the Philippines. The region accounts for more than a tenth of global fisheries production.

The government, which looks after Tanmen, announced in March 2015 that it would strictly enforce the ban on digging, carrying and selling of endangered marine species including the giant clams.

“The government is enforcing the ban,” said Zhang Hongying, an official called Zhao said the authorities were not doing anything for the ban, “but there’s no government office saying that we are doing something to support the industry.”

Fishermen said they had not been allowed to dig for clams since last year, while shopkeepers said new supply remained tight.

To harvest the clams, the entire reef has to be dug up, said Neo Mei Lin, a marine biologist at the National University of Singapore. “What used to be really good coral reefs in there have definitely been decimated over the last two to three years,” Lin said.

Tanmen fishermen’s income has more than tripled over the last three years, according to media.

As a result, authorities were not doing anything for the ban, “but for a living I need to sail,” said one fisherman and his colleagues angler their nets and haul in the catch.

There used to be 300 boats using the traditional fire fishing method each night but now there are only three, according to the local fishermen’s association in Jinshan District, north of Taipei.

“Generally, it is a really good night, over $4,500. Only bad weather forces them to shore early,” said Ed Gomez, a senior adviser at the University of the Philippines Marine Science Institute.

But during a recent visit to Tanmen, stores lining the harbor promenade were mostly empty. Many retailers said business had dropped since April due to China’s tough economic climate and soaring temperatures.

“There are no tourists at the moment. We have to wait until September,” said Yu Guo, owner of Xiayu Xuan craft store. Yu, from Beijing, came to Tanmen to buy property four years ago and set up the store with a local partner as the economy boomed. “In the good times, we could earn 10 million yuan ($1.52 million) per month,” he said. —Reuters
Iceland stuns England as Euro dream continues

LONDON — It was not quite the triple bagel that Novak Djokovic was aiming for during the opening 41 minutes of his first-round match but the Serbian is unlikely to be too disappointed after he beat Britain’s James Ward 6-0, 7-6(3), 6-4 at Wimbledon on Monday.

The holder of all four grand slam titles appeared to be hurtling towards his 29th successive tour-level defeat, his lowest ranking wildcard out of his trance. Although the soccer pedigrees making the third round here not be more different, Iceland looked the better team in just about every aspect of the game and were deservedly to extend their dream run on their first tournament appearance.

After falling behind to a four-minute Wayne Rooney penalty they levelled almost immediately through Ragnar Sigurdsson and struck again in the 18th with a shot by Kolbeinn Sighþorsson.

A ponderous England never looked remotely capable of finding a way back into the game and even at the end when they were reduced to launching long balls into the box, Iceland dealt with everything comfortably.

“It feels fantastic to come here as an underdog and perform in this way,” said Iceland joint-coach Lars Lagerback, who also claimed two wins and four draws against England in his days as Sweden’s manager.

Pundits were quick to rank England’s defeat alongside that against the amateurs of the United States in that World Cup where they had won only one knockout match, on penalties at home to Spain in 1996.

Hodge, who steered the team to 10 straight wins in qualifying, duly became the latest in a long line of England managers to fall on his sword after a failure to get to the business end when it really matters.

“Now is the time for someone else to oversee the progress of a hungry and extremely talented group of players,” Hodgson said, reading a prepared statement.

“They have done fantastically, and done everything asked of them,” he added in a bizarre account of yet another failure to perform at a major tournament.

He also had three chances to get the better of Italy from the penalty spot on his 115th appearance, matching David Beckham’s outfield record.

The final led less than two minutes, though, as Iceland scored via an Aron Gunnarsson long throw, just as they had predicted. It was flicked on by Kari Arnason to an unmarked Ragnar Sigurdsson to sweep home.

If England’s defending was so that goal it was disastrous for the second as Iceland were allowed time and space on the edge of the box to set up Sigurdsson for a low shot that Joe Hart should have saved but merely took the power off as it rolled over the line.

England looked shell-shocked and spent the rest of the half struggling to make any inroads, their front men and attacking midfielders static, and were booed off by their own fans.

England threw on midfielder Jack Wilshere for the second half and then striker Jamie Vardy but the team’s passing was awful and their movement sluggish.

Harry Kane, the Premier League’s leading scorer last season, summed up the poor quality on show when he took three free kicks and launched each one high into the stands without a team mate even close to connecting with the ball.

The final whistle produced extraordinary scenes as the entire Iceland squad and coachess splintered to the corner of the pitch to celebrate ecstatically with their fans.

They can now look forward to facing France with the price for the winner being a semi-final against Germany or Italy.

“Everyone started to run towards the fans so I did that too and then I dropped it completely,” said Ragnar Sigurdsson.

“This is the biggest thing everyone in the squad has experienced. I don’t know how big it is, but it’s damn big.”

In contrast England’s players sank to the turf in despair, with a deluge of jeers, boos and whistles raining down from the fans all around them, finally being encouraged to leave the pitch to a chant of “You’re not fit to wear the shirt.” — Reuters

Djokovic makes solid start to Wimbledon title defence

PARIS — Like an ailing heavyweight, Spain and their hopes of a third straight European title ended in a tame surrender as their golden era in their football history.

A first-half effort from defender Giorgio Chiellini and a stoppage-time goal by striker Graziano Pelle sent the Azzurri into the quarter-finals at Euro 2016 and left Spain to mull over an帐acle of yet another failure to perform at a major tournament.

They came into the tournament hoping to re-establish their status as the game’s dominant power and prove their shock early exit at the 2014 World Cup was the exception not the rule.

Their failure, however, leaves a glove on an ageing Italy side should the Spanish team that won back-to-back European titles either side of their 2010 World Cup triumph, might still float like a butterfly, but no longer stings like a bee.

Spain were second best from the start against an Italy side, who were better organised, more

Italy’s Giorgio Chiellini scores a goal against Spain during the 2016 Round of 16 match at Stade de France, Saint-Denis near Paris, France, on 27 June. Photo: REUTERS

Effective on the ball and ruthless in every department.

The Italian defence, regrouped like no other in the world game, never looked like being dragged out of position by their opponents’ passing patterns.

While the Spanish midfield axis of Sergio Busquets and Andres Iniesta, for so long the engine room of the national team’s dominance, looked slow and ponderous. Spain used to make other sides chase shadows as they passed the ball around but, until Italy scored on Monday, the two combatants had equally shared possession.

“In the first half, we were more concerned about watching them play than playing our game,” said Iniesta. — Reuters