Severe weather predicted for Myanmar coast with heavy rain, flooding

A large tropical depression in the northern Bay of Bengal is moving toward the Myanmar coast, prompting the issuance of a code red weather warning for the Ayeyawady Delta and southern part of the Rakhaing coast by the Department of Meteorology and Hydrology.

Winds of up to 45 miles per hour may batter the two regions, the weather bureau said, with winds of up to 30 to 35 miles per hour possible for the Yangon Region.

The depression will track northeast towards Myanmar through Sunday before curving northwest towards Bangladesh, according to the weather bureau.

The major tropical depression will be likely to result in thunderstorms and isolated heavy rainfall over Nay Pyi Taw, Sagaing Region, Mandalay Region, Magway Region, Bago Region, Yangon Region, Ayeyawady Region, Tanintharyi Region, Chin State, Rakhine State, Kayin State and Mon State from 24 to 27 October, the weather bureau said.

The weather bureau has also predicted the strong possibility of flash flooding and landslides across Myanmar as the tropical depression approaches the Ayeyawady Delta before curving towards Bangladesh.

Those living in highland areas are being warned to be prepared for possible landslides, and those living in coastal areas and near rivers have been advised to take precautions against possible flash flooding and high tides.

The depression can result in large waves with frequent squalls along the coastline and in the offshore seas of Myanmar. Surface winds could reach 45 to 50 miles per hour, the weather bureau said.

The depression is gathering energy from the warm waters of the Indian Ocean, Sea surface temperatures are between 29 and 30°C, warm enough for further development of this system, the weather agency warned.

Winds of at least 119 kilometers per hour are required for this depression to become a cyclone. Even if these wind speeds are not reached, it will remain a dangerous system as flooding is often a greater threat to life than winds alone. In excess of 250mm of rain is possible as this system brings moisture-laden winds in from the Bay of Bengal.

There are two cyclone seasons in the Bay of Bengal. The first is between April and June, when the air is becoming moister, but the upper atmospheric winds of the impending southwesterly monsoon are still relatively light. This allows cyclones to form unhindered. The second peak occurs between September and early December, as the southwesterly monsoon retreats.
BFM’s cash assistance reaches out to survivors, families of victims of ferry capsize

VICTIMS of the ferry that capsized in the Chindwin River and volunteers who helped to retrieve the bodies have been provided with cash by KBZ’s Brighter Future Myanmar Foundation-BFM.

Two soldiers and four firemen were given Ks1.5 million each, while forty victims who survived the accident were given Ks500,000 each by the foundation yesterday.

The foundation also arranged to provide K500,000 each to the families of the 75 victims who died in the disaster.

Members of the foundation presented a total of Ks71 million to Sagaing Region Government yesterday to deliver the cash to the victims. A university student who was found alive five days after the accident will also be given cash assistance of Ks5 million by BFM. The families of a doctor of the Ministry of Health who was confirmed dead and a nurse who is still missing will each receive Ks500,000.

“The is the second assistance by BFM to the victims of the ferry accident — the initial aid of Ks30 million and 300 articles of warm clothes were given to the victims on 17 October,” said a member of the foundation. A total of 68 passengers, including 14 men and 54 women, were confirmed dead as of 1 pm yesterday, according to authorities. One-hundred and fifty-nine passengers survived the accident, and 80 people are still missing. The ferry was said to be carrying about 300 passengers when it capsized, according to survivors. According to a preliminary enquiry, the Aung Soe Moe Kyaw-2 ferry left Homalin at 10.30 am on 14 October and landed in Phaungpyin, Mawlike, Kalewa and Minkin before it capsized near Kann after apparently hitting a rock on its way to Monywa. Crew members had reportedly been warned about its overloading, according to survivors.—Thura Lwin (Eco)

Talks On Hydropower Projects Along Ayeyawady River focused on impact assessment

The volunteer groups, environmentalists and experts talked about the Myitsone Dam which is the largest dam and hydropower project in Myanmar yesterday, sharing about the impacts of the project.

At the talks, Environmentalist Devi Thant Cin of the Myanmar Green Network has urged the commission formed by the government to review and scrutinize the hydropower project at the confluence of the river, and the government to confirm the projects with rules and regulations for the benefits of the country.

Environmentalists has also suggested to the governmental commission that environmental and social impacts be assessed for the locals. The commission will submit its report to the president on 11 November.

An agreement to build Myitsone dam project at the confluence of May Kha and Maylai kha rivers was signed in 2009 and it was a joint venture between China Power Investment Corporation (CPI), the Ministry of Electric Power of Myanmar and the Asia World Company.

The project was suspended in 2011 by the former president in accord with the people’s desire.—Kay Khaing

KOICA conducts social contribution activities with KOICA Alumni

KOREA International Co-operation Agency (KOICA) and Myanmar KOICA club (MMKC) jointly conducted a social contribution programme in Yangon yesterday, contributing equipment to an orphanage and updating its outdated facilities.

About 200 people, including Euicheol Shin, Chief Representative of KOICA Myanmar Office, and U Thar Aung, MP and Chairman of Social Affairs and Management Committee, participated in the event.

Together with volunteers, they also carried out rooftop constructions of the orphanage.

They also experienced Korean Culture through cooking and cultural activities at the New Generation Orphanage, which is two-hour drive from Yangon.

KOICA conducted global training programmes for Myanmar government officials, inviting them to South Korea to learn from the development experiences of South Korea. MMKC, which is an association of alumni trainees, was founded in 2010 and comprised 131 members. The organisation was registered as a local NGO in Myanmar this year.

As part of social activities to practice compassion in the community, the KOICA Myanmar Office visited Yowa elementary school and provided medical screenings and health education.

The KOICA Myanmar Office is planning to host charity events in rural communities and various cooperative projects to contribute to sustainable development.—GNLM

Crime NEWS

Road accident leaves one dead, 12 injured

A Toyota Dyna truck carrying 15 passengers overturned on the Yangon-Mandalay Expressway early on Sunday morning, killing one.

Legal action has been taken against the driver, Soe Thu, who apparently lost control of the vehicle, causing it to overturn between mile posts 1/1 and 1/2 on the expressway. The truck was heading for Nay Pyi Taw from Yangon.

In addition to the one death, there were 12 injuries.—Than Oo (Lemyathna)

 Authorities accelerate reduction of child sexual abuse cases in Yangon

THE Yangon Region authorities have accelerated its programme to reduce rape cases including child molestation in the city, said Col Tin Aung Tun, Yangon Region Minister for Security and Border Affairs.

He added the number of cases this year has increased by nearly 60 compared with the last year’s total of 110 cases. The number of cases as of mid-October reached almost 170.

This year's drug cases also increased from last year. Narcotics officers uncovered over 800 drug cases, including 44 cases of illegal trading of drugs for sexual favors.

At the same time, police put forth concerted efforts to protect people from violent attacks by unlawful groups, making special investigations in an effort to arrest the offenders of rape cases.—200
Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker enjoys Myanmar Ethnic Traditional Performing Arts Competitions

Dance troupe participate in the contest for Kayin traditional ethnic dance in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

MAHN WIN KHAING THAN, Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw, enjoyed traditional ethnic dance of Kayin at Myanmar Ethnic Traditional Performing Arts Competition being held in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Troupes representing Yangon Region, Bago Region, Kayin Region, Mandalay Region, Bago Region, Kayin Region, and Shan State participated in the contest yesterday.

The Speaker also enjoyed the individual category of Myanmar traditional orchestra contest.

The 22nd competition kicked off on 18th October. It aims at preserving and safeguarding the cultural heritage of the country’s ethnic people and its national character.

About 1,766 contestants across the country are participating in the completion which is categorized as from basic level to professional level.

The contestants were selected from regions and states after holding the preliminary contests. The competitions include contests of song, dance, composition, music and play at different stages such as professional, amateur, higher education and basic education levels. —Myanmar News Agency

Houses to be relocated due to erosion of Ayeyawady River in Mandalay

SEVEN houses on the banks of the Ayeyawady River in Ngazun Township, Mandalay Region will be relocated due to erosion.

Mandalay Region Electric Power, Energy and Construction head U Zarni Aung inspected the riverbank on Saturday.

A portion of the bank 350 feet in length and about 130 feet in breadth at its widest section eroded inwards 5 feet due to changing currents. As a result, houses up to 75 feet away from the collapsed bank will have to be relocated. “(A request for) funds to prevent erosion have been submitted to the region government and it is expected that we will get the funds in December,” said U Kyaw Myint Than, Assistant Director of the Directorate of Water Resources and Improvement of River Systems.

—Aung Thant Khaing

Erosion is seen on the bank of the Ayeyawady River in Ngazun Township. PHOTO: AUNG THART KHAING

Five detained, one weapon seized in Maungtaw

A SECURITY squad comprising members of the Tatmadaw and Border Guard Police detained four people suspected of being involved in the recent violent attacks in northern Rakhine State.

The suspects were found during a search of Zeepinchaung (South) Village in Maungtaw Township on Saturday.

The four detainees were Swayaw Duri, Guramya, MV Cormoridain and Manmud Dullah, all from Zeepinchaung Village.

On the same day, security forces seized one MA-11, one cartridge and 25 rounds of ammunition.

The security forces also arrested Maung Maung Sein, an alleged financier of the violent attackers, at his home in Myoma (South) Ward-2 in Maungtaw yesterday morning.

Members of the Tatmadaw and the Border Guard Police are continuing their operations to hunt down the violent attackers who ambushed border police outposts on nine October during which nine policemen were killed. —Myawaddy

Severe weather predicted for ...

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Myanmar’s weather bureau also forecasts that the deep depression may intensify into a Cyclonic Storm During next 12 hours and reach near Myanmar Coast of the delta area, recurve and continue North-Northwestwards. According to the observations at 6.30 pm yesterday, the deep depression over the eastcentral Bay of Bengal remains partially stationary, centering at about 85 miles North-Northwest of Coco-Island, 85 miles Southwest of Hmawbi Island, 125 miles Southwest of Pathein and 155 miles South-Southwest of Gwa and 205 miles Southwest of Yangon.

The probably maximum storm surge is about 7 to 10 feet at Labutta district in Ayeyawady Region, Thandwe district in Southern Rakhine State.

Meanwhile, Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement is on alert while carrying out preparedness to quickly respond to disasters to be brought by the deep depression. It has also urged the people to follow the instructions of local authorities while listening to information released by the government. The ministry has urged the people to contact its hotline 067-404666 and 067 404777 if they want to know storm-related information.—GNLM

Farmers accused of falsifying land tenure documents

SOME farmers in central Myanmar have been accused of falsifying land tenure documents to receive more agricultural loans, according to U Win Myint, a manager at the Agriculture Development in Mandalay Region.

Agricultural loans are extended to farmers according to the type of land they hold. More loans are granted to rice paddy fields than to fields of other crops such as pulses, beans and sesame. As a result, some farmers who grow crops other than rice paddies try to get more loans by falsifying their land tenure documents by stating their land is used as rice paddy fields instead of other crops.

“We have found four farmers who falsified documents. It is an offence liable to be charged, but we are just informing them of the consequences of what they have done,” the bank manager said. “If they take out loans for a rice paddy, they must grow it. They can’t grow other crops.” —Aung Thant Khaing

Service personnel check the weapon hidden by violent attackers in Maungtaw Township. PHOTO: MYANMAR
Myanmar needs real estate services law: property agents

A NEW LAW regulating real estate services is needed in Myanmar to raise public confidence in the country’s burgeoning property industry as well as to promote investment from both home and abroad, according to the Yangon Region Real Estate Entrepreneurs Association.

“There are currently no laws related to real estate agents and services in Myanmar apart from the Landlord and Tenant Law. The industry needs a new law as real estate is one of the sectors attracting the most interest from investors”, said U Tin Maung Oo, a member of the Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment Committee.

“To develop the real estate services law, Myanmar Real Estate Services Association will take part in a workshop in the capital Nay Pyi Taw in November, planning to draft the law with the assistance of local and international experts in order to help ensure good conduct of business”, he added. According to industry representatives, the new law needs to detail minimum skill requirements for agents and their functions, duties and accountability, reasonable service charges and rights of agents, buyers and sellers.

A workshop was held in Mandalay on October 8 with industry representatives from upper Myanmar to discuss the drafting of the new law. A similar meeting was held in Yangon on October 22 to hear the voices of respective bodies and their suggestions on the drafting of the law. —Soe Win (MLA)

Myanmar to export cucumbers, avocados to EU market next year

LOCAL exporters plan to increase the export sales of cucumber and avocados to some European countries starting next year, said a spokesperson for Myanmar Golden Produce Co, an exporter of fresh and processed fruits and vegetables.

The plan will hopefully generate healthy profits for producers and exporters as European nations will buy the fruit at a price requested by the Myanmar side. The new trade partners said they prefer the taste of Myanmar fruits over that of their own country.

The company will export fruits and vegetables to the European market under a long-term plan with a target to eventually send fruits to Russia, Ukraine and some western countries with a high rate of fruit consumption.

Plans are underway to send a several tonnes of cucumber and avocado to the new partner countries next year, with plans to expand the export of other fruits and vegetables to other European countries. Cucumbers are an excellent source of vitamin K and molybdenum. They are also a very good source of copper, potassium, manganese, vitamin C, phosphorus, magnesium, biotin and vitamin B1. Avocado, also very nutritious, contains more potassium than bananas. The fruit is loaded with heart-healthy mono-unsaturated fatty acids and fiber. The eating of avocados can reduce cholesterol levels. —200

Myanmar to negotiate with China for official export of rice, maize

THE Ministry of Commerce will negotiate with Chinese authorities to allow the official export of rice and maize to China through the border route and to get an annual export quota via the sea route, the ministry’s spokesperson said.

Negotiations will be made with China’s Central Economic Committee through the Myanmar ambassador in Beijing to get an annual export quota to export both agricultural products via border trade camps and shipping, an official of the ministry said.

It is technically illegal without specific permission to export rice, grain and other agricultural products from Myanmar into China, but until a recent crackdown the policy was widely ignored. With the recent enforcement of the export ban, the price of rice has plummeted and the surplus of rice in Myanmar has grown. The price of rice is likely to further decline if China, the world’s most populous nation, continues the crackdown, said the official, who added that the government of Yunnan Province seems to wish to buy Myanmar’s rice because of the cheaper price. The commerce ministry also has plans to extend the trade contract to export 300,000 tonnes of rice annually to Indonesia between 2016 and 2019. According to the official figures of the ministry, the country earned US$1.4 billion from the export of agricultural products between April and October 7 this fiscal year. —200

Experts have urged the government to make new laws regulating real estate services to raise public confidence and to promote investment from both home and abroad. —Soe Win (MLA)

Used cars purchased with installments is in high demand

PEOPLE’S demand for used cars purchased on an installment plan is gradually increasing, according to Myanmar Automobile Manufacturer and Distributor Association.

Industry experts said that those purchasing used cars make up 70 to 80 per cent of the market.

But some interested buyers said the high interest rates have hindered them from purchasing.

Industry players thus called for an improvement in banking services in order to promote installment payments in the country.

More than 70 per cent of the purchase can be paid with installments.

Showrooms are cooperating with eleven banks for the convenience of the customers, but each bank has different services and interest rates.

According to the criteria for installment purchase, customers need to pay 30 per cent down payment, plus the bank’s interest, service charges as well as insurance.

According to the industry experts, the period of installment payments covers at least 5 years for a brand new cars, with 1 to 2 years for a used cars. —GNLM
MANILA — Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte expressed hope on Sunday that fishermen would be able to return to the disputed Scarborough Shoal in the South China Sea in the next few days.

Duterte confirmed on Saturday that the Scarborough Shoal was discussed during his four-day trip to China which was aimed at paving the way for what he says will be a new commercial alliance as relations with longtime ally the United States deteriorate.

"Let us just wait for a few more days, maybe we could return to Scarborough Shoal," Duterte said in a speech in Tuguegarao City, north of the capital, where he helped deliver aid to victims of a recent typhoon.

China seized the Scarborough Shoal in 2012, denying Philippine fishermen access to its fishing grounds. The seizure formed part of a case the Philippines took to the Permanent Court of Arbitration in the Hague, which in July rejected China’s territorial claims over much of the South China Sea, including its assertion of a 200-mile (320 km) exclusive economic zone around the disputed Spratly Islands.

China immediately declared the ruling "null and void" but said it was time for talks again between the countries directly involved in the territorial disputes to reach a peaceful resolution. "China said it is theirs. I also told them it is ours," Duterte said.

China claims most of the South China Sea, through which about $5 trillion in trade passes every year. Brunei, Malaysia, Taiwan and Vietnam also have claims to parts of it.

Duterte’s efforts to engage China mark a reversal in Philippine foreign policy since he took office on 30 June.

While building China ties, Duterte has denounced the United States, apparently after being infuriated by US criticism of his bloody war on drugs.

He has called US President Barack Obama a "son of a bitch," told him to "go to hell" and thrown long-standing military ties into question.

On Thursday, while in China, Duterte provoked fresh diplomatic alarm by announcing his "separation" from the United States. He struck a more conciliatory tone as he arrived home on Friday.

— Reuters

Japan PM pitches SDF’s new overseas duties at review ceremony

TOKYO — Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on Sunday pitched new overseas duties to be given to members of the Self-Defence Forces under his administration’s security legislation as he spoke at a troop review at an SDF base in Tokyo.

"You will be assigned with new duties under the legislation. They are duties to protect the precious peace," he said in an address as the SDF’s commander-in-chief during the ceremony at the Asaka garrison of the Ground Self-Defense Force.

"Under the legislation that took effect in March, the expanded duties include going to the aid of UN personnel under attack by armed groups during UN peacekeeping operations. The government is in the process of deciding whether to give such expanded assignments to the next GSDF unit to be sent to South Sudan under a UN peacekeeping mission."

Approximately 4,000 SDF members, about 280 vehicles including tanks, and some 50 airplanes took part in the review.

—Kyodo News

China police detain person for spreading rumours of labour unrest

BEIJING — Police in China’s central city of Wuhan said they have detained a person for spreading rumours about Wuhan Iron & Steel. Qingshan district police on Sunday posted the information on Weibo, the micro-blogging service.

Telephone calls to the district police were referred to the branch political office, which was unavailable for comment.

The online website of the official China Youth Daily also reported on Sunday that a person who had posted a video allegedly showing laid-off Wugang workers in a mass protest had been detained.

A propaganda official from Wuhan Steel Group characterised the video, which was filmed at night and showed a surging crowd, as rumour, the report said.

In September, Baoshan Iron & Steel announced it will acquire indebted Wuhan Steel Group, as part of a broader effort to tackle inefficiencies and huge over-capacity in China’s steel sector.

There are tens of thousands of “mass incidents”, or protests in Chinese government parlance, every year, over everything from pollution to illegal land seizures, which are often swiftly put down by China’s stability obsessed ruling communist party.—Reuters
Typhoon Haima causes heavy damage in south China province

Guangzhou — Disasters brought by Typhoon Haima have affected 1.69 million people in south China’s Guangdong Province, said the provincial civil affairs department on Sunday.

Typhoon Haima barreled into Guangdong Friday, triggering sudden downpours in several cities. There have been no reports of casualties following the timely evacuation of 668,000 people to safer areas.

The department has received reports of damage to 2,749 houses and some 178,000 hectares of crops. The department estimated that the economic losses total 3.5 billion yuan (517 million US dollars). The typhoon caused power outages to 2,12 million households. By Saturday, 9.7 per cent of them had regained power supply, thanks to emergency repairs by the provincial power grid company.—Xinhua

India’s new aviation policy aims at sector expanding: Modi

NEW DELHI — Indian Prime Minister Narenda Modi has said his government has devised a new aviation policy for the first time since independence that aims at expanding the sector in the country.

“After coming to power, the government has for the first time since independence formulated a new aviation policy for the country, which will take care of the consumers’ needs and the growth of the sector,” Modi said in the western state of Gujarat Saturday.

Stating that the country’s development can take new dimensions if the tier-II and tier-III cities are brought on the aviation map, he said, “The government is making efforts to revive a large number of non-functional airports and airports in the country.”

He added: “That is why to promote this, the government brought out a new regional connectivity scheme under which people can travel with airfares of only 2,500 Indian rupees (40 US dollars) for up to 500-km distance.”

India is one of the fastest-growing aviation markets in the world. It recorded an air traffic of 163 million passengers in 2013, estimated to have 60 million international passengers by 2017. The market is estimated to have 800 aircraft by 2020.

In 2015, Boeing projected India’s demand for aircraft to touch 1,740, valued at 240 billion US dollars over the next 20 years. This would account for 4.3 per cent of global volumes.

—Xinhua

Australian firefighters climb Sydney Tower for ALS research

SYDNEY — Hundreds of firefighters on Sunday climbed all 1,504 stairs of the iconic Sydney Tower Eye to raise money and awareness for the neurodegenerative disease ALS, or Lou Gehrig’s disease.

The 446 firefighters, each carrying an additional 20 kilograms of gear, raced to climb the equivalent of 98 stories to the tower’s observation deck.

“It’s harder than what we usually do, but doesn’t compare to what people battling the disease go through,” said one participant breathlessly after making it all the way to the top.

This year’s fundraising target is A$500,000 (about $380,000), with all money raised going to the Motor Neuron Disease Research Centre at Macquarie University, Australia’s largest ALS research facility.

Sydney firefighter Matt Priddin organised the fundraising event after his close friend was diagnosed with the condition. A total of A$180,000 was raised at the inaugural climb held last year.

ALS is a progressive, terminal neurological disease that strikes indiscriminately. There is no known cause or cure.

Sydney Tower is the city’s tallest structure, measuring 309 metres from the bottom to the tip of the spire.—Kyodo News

LDP-aligned candidates appear set to win both by-elections

TOKYO — Candidates aligned with the ruling Liberal Democratic Party appear set to win both by-elections on Sunday for single-seat House of Representatives districts in Tokyo and Fukuoka Prefecture, according to Kyodo News projections.

The results signal public approval of the policy track the ruling parties have taken since July’s House of Councillors race and may buoy Prime Minister Shinzo Abe’s confidence as he considers when to dissolve the lower house for a snap election.

The premier is rumored to be considering a lower house election before the start of the next ordinary Diet session in January.

But the Abe administration is yet to tackle several thorny issues that could sway public opinion before then, meaning Sunday’s results alone may not serve as enough impetus for Abe to dissolve the chamber so soon.

Masaru Wakasa, 59, appeared certain to win the Tokyo No. 10 district seat vacated by Tokyo Gov. Yuriko Koike when she ran in July’s gubernatorial election without the party’s blessing.

Koike stumped for Wakasa, returning the favor after Wakasa broke ranks with the LDP mainstream by supporting her during her gubernatorial campaign. Wakasa is endorsed by the LDP’s junior coalition partner Komeito.

The LDP’s campaign and victory indicates the LDP has mended fences with Koike and looks to draw support from her wider spectrum of supporters in the next nationwide election.

Tokyo appears to have defeated 40-year-old Yo-suke Suzuki, a former journalist with public broadcaster NHK, who had the backing of the main opposition Democratic Party as well as the Japanese Communist Party, Liberal Party and Social Democratic Party.

The Fukuoka No. 6 district has likely been won by Jiro Hatori, 37, a son of former Justice Minister Kunio Hatoyama who held the seat until his death in June.

The LDP is expected to give its post-election endorsement to Hatoyama, who was competing for the party’s support with 35-year-old Ken Kurauchi, secretary to an upper house lawmaker.

Those in the LDP loyal to the elder Hatoyama backed his son, while Finance Minister Taro Aso and others who had sparred with the former justice minister chose to support Kurauchi instead, leading to neither gaining the party’s endorsement during the campaign.

Up against Hatoyama and Kurauchi was opposition-backed Fumiko Arai, 49, a former staffer at Japan’s Consulate General in Chennai, India.

Voter turnout as of 6 p.m. stood at 22.73 per cent in the Tokyo No. 10 district and 29.04 per cent in the Fukuoka No. 6 district, according to the election boards in those areas.

The failure of the opposition-backed candidates in both districts indicates the Democratic Party’s leadership change in August, which installed charismatic former administrative reform minister Renho as leader, failed to sway voters.

Some in the party may call for a reassessment of its strategy of campaigning together with the three smaller opposition parties — something it tried in single-seat electoral districts in July’s upper house election with mixed results.

Renho had decided to carry on the united front strategy inherited from her predecessor Katsuya Okada, despite ideological difficulties between the parties that could complicate their ability to run a coalition government.

Campaigning in both districts by-elections largely centered on the broader battle between the ruling and opposition parties rather than each candidate’s particular qualities.—Kyodo News
Facebook to cut down on censorship, allowing ‘significant’ graphic posts

SAN FRANCISCO — Facebook has decided to cut down on its censorship of graphic posts which might violate its community standards against nudity and violence, as long as these posts are deemed “newsworthy and significant.”

“In the weeks ahead, we’re going to begin allowing more items that people find newsworthy, significant or important to the public interest — even if they might otherwise violate our standards,” the company’s PR officials said in a blog post on Friday.

The move came after the “napalm girl” controversy stirred outcry from some Facebook users, who complained about being prevented from posting or sharing the world-famous photograph. The image, which shows a naked 9-year-old girl fleeing a napalm attack during the Vietnamese war, was said to have violated Facebook’s ban on images of naked children, according to the CNN.

The California-based online social network also came under attack this week for removing a breast cancer awareness video for being graphic. The video, released by Swedish cancer charity Cancerfonden, explains to women how to check for suspicious lumps with animated figures.

—Xinhua

Peru’s avocado exports up 24.5 per cent thanks to boost in Chinese market

LIMA — Fresh avocados worth 386.6 million US dollars led non-traditional Peruvian agricultural exports in the first eight months, up 24.5 per cent year-on-year, Peru’s foreign trade bureau ComexPeru said on Saturday.

This rise in exports is linked to a higher demand for avocados around the world, which has caused prices to rise from 1.55 US dollars a kg in January to 2.10 US dollars in August.

Avocado exports received a boost in May 2015, when Peru was granted access to the Chinese market.

According to official reports, Peru exported 12,319 tons of avocados to China in 2015. The figure is expected to rise by 84 per cent to 22,764 tons in 2016 and by a further 63 per cent to 37,075 tons in 2017.

In its weekly report, ComexPeru said Peru is now the 10th largest exporter of fruits in the world, having exported 2.714 million US dollars worth of fruits from January to August, a year-on-year increase of 3.4 per cent. Fruits also accounted for 12.4 per cent of all Peruvian exports during the period.

In the first eight months of 2016, Peru also became the largest Latin American exporter of mandarins, whose exports in the period totalled 106.8 million US dollars. The country’s global exports of cranberries reached 41.3 million US dollars, up 125.6 per cent.

Peru still has broad potential to promote its agricultural exports even further, since the United States, the Netherlands and Spain currently account for 53 per cent of its non-traditional fruit exports, said ComexPeru.

—Xinhua

China’s first molten salt solar thermal plant sends power to grid

TIANJIN — China’s first molten salt solar thermal power plant has started to send electricity to the grid, said the developer based in north China’s Tianjin municipality on Sunday.

Known as concentrated solar power, solar thermal energy is believed to be the next generation of solar energy, and an ideal green power source for energy-hungry countries like China.

The Tianjin Binhai Concentrating Solar Power Investment Co. Ltd. said its 50-megawatt molten salt trough project in Akesai in northwest China’s Gansu Province shows the maturity of the commercial development of solar thermal technology.

Guang Jingdong, chair of the company, said that the company will carry out large-scale production with the technology in 2018, when it is scheduled to produce facilities with 200,000 kilowatts of annual solar power output.

Molten salt solar thermal plants can harness solar energy by using molten salt as a heat transfer medium.

The Akesai plant was among 20 demonstration solar thermal plants listed for construction by China’s National Energy Administration in September as the government eyes the potential of renewable energy.—Xinhua

Sharp eyes closing LED display plant in western Japan

OSAKA — Sharp Corp. is considering closing a light-emitting diode display plant in western Japan next year as part of its restructuring efforts under Taiwan’s Hon Hai Precision Industry Co., sources familiar with the matter said Sunday.

The Japanese electronics company may consolidate the production line at the facility in Mihara, Hiroshima Prefecture, with a factory in Fukuyama in the same prefecture, which mainly produces camera components for smartphones, the sources said.

Sharp will also study downsizing a liquid crystal display television factory in Tochigi Prefecture, north of Tokyo, they said.

The company plans to secure the jobs of the approximately 300 employees at the Mihara plant, according to the sources.

Sharp is taking steps to return to profitability in the fiscal year ending in March 2017 for the first time in three years.

Due to continued sluggish sales in LED panels, however, consolidated sales for the same year are expected to drop from 2.46 trillion yen in the previous year.—Kyodo News

2016 Toronto International Snowmobile, ATV & Powersports Show held in Canada

Visitors watch snowmobiles during the 2016 Toronto International Snowmobile, ATV & Powersports Show in Toronto, Canada, on 22 October 2016. As one of the largest Snowmobile, ATV & Powersports Shows in the world, this three-day show which kicked off on Friday is expected to draw tens of thousands of recreational powersports enthusiasts. PHOTO: XINHUA
Building of human capital vs economic development

Khin Maung Aye

There has been a consensus by academics and researchers that human resource development is a prerequisite for progress and development of a nation. It is also said that good government and strong institutions are necessary to foster national development. And the efficiency and effectiveness of public institutions depend, in turn, on service delivery mechanisms and a supportive framework of rules and policies which enable the bureaucracy to discharge their duties in a citizen-centric and responsive manner. This requires highly committed, effective human capital that expands and implements the policies and programmes of the government.

In this regard, it is worth recalling that the incumbent government placed much emphasis on two ministries – health and education. The reason for giving priority to these two sectors is that health and education are essential to national socio-economic activities. No nation has achieved sustainable economic development without substantial investment in human capital, considered to be the most valuable asset in a country. Myanmar’s educational system and development require strong, healthy and educated human resources. This is the reason why priority is given to the health and education sectors in the government’s programmes.

In this juncture, international assistance programmes should support capacity building for local institutions to emancipate from poverty. To contribute effectively to development, civil society organisations (CSOs) must have the rights and freedom to organise, secure resources, voice opinions, participate in agenda setting, operate effectively and help hold the state institutions accountable for development results. The development assistance can be more effective and efficient if the local capacity building is better integrated into the programmes.

In conclusion, the concept of human capacity building generally encompasses a policy that is geared towards providing the skills and capabilities of key players in organisations. Improvement in infrastructure, development of training and education programmes, continuing professional development programmes, seminars and ensuring the organisations to good governance. The capacity building should be regarded as the primary theme of the social policies and programmes. Capacity building in societies and organisations in- volves human resource development and human resource skill – the capabilities that enable them to sustain the ever-changing environment.

The Myanmar is a landlocked country located between South and Southeast Asia. Myanmar is bordered by Thailand in the North, to the east by China, to the west by Bangladesh, to the south by the Bay of Bengal and the Gulf of Martaban and to the east by the Andaman Sea and the South. It is located on routes between the East and West, connecting Southeast Asia with South Asia. Moreover, economic links are influenced upon the six areas of Bangladesh import from Myanmar. These include trade, and the rest of the region. For India, it is a land of Buddha and Buddha teachings. It is the region that can be a factor for the national interest of Myanmar and Southeast Asian nations. Moreover, the Myanmar provides a gateway for the BIMSTEC or South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) could improve its economic fundamentals and infrastructure and learn from its expanding economies. Moreover, Myanmar could be an alternative gateway for the rest of the region from transport network and landlocked countries. In short, Myanmar is in the centre of BIMSTEC region and SAARC and SAARC Regional Cooperation can gain as much benefit.

For Bangladesh, Myanmar is the main and the most important country in regional context, bilateral relations, and many economic relations. Myanmar’s bilateral relations with ASEAN members are strong and continue to strengthen ties with ASEAN members under a “Look East” policy adopted by Bangladesh. Bangladesh shares many bilateral economic agreements with Myanmar, which refer to the Myanmar-Bangladesh Economic and Trade Development Agreement signed in 1993. The agreement was later revised in 1998 and 2003. Myanmar and Bangladesh are also members of the BIMSTEC (Association of Southeast Asian Nations and South Asia, and the Regional Alliance for Multilateral and Bilateral Cooperation). Myanmar also employs a set of rules of references and agreements with Myanmar and Bangladesh. Myanmar and Bangladesh have been reintegrationing into commercial community. Moreover, the current changes and development in Myanmar will have paved way to take a leader in the Southeast Asia region.

From the strategic point of view, the Myanmar is significant, especially to South Asia. The Myanmar is a landlocked country surrounded by Thailand in the North, Southeast Asia in the South. Moreover, as a natural resource, it is considered to be a strategic gateway for India. It is also suggested that Myanmar has a strategic gateway for the rest of the region. For India, it is a land of Buddha and Buddha teachings. It is the region that can be a factor for the national interest of Myanmar and Southeast Asian nations. Moreover, the Myanmar provides a gateway for the BIMSTEC or South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) could improve its economic fundamentals and infrastructure and learn from its expanding economies. Moreover, Myanmar could be an alternative gateway for the rest of the region from transport network and landlocked countries. In short, Myanmar is in the centre of BIMSTEC region and SAARC and SAARC Regional Cooperation can gain as much benefit.

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Iraqi Kurds say they captured town near Mosul

ERBIL — Kurdish fighters said they had taken the town of Bashiqa near Mosul from Islamic State on Sunday as coalition forces pressed their offensive against the jihad- ists’ last stronghold in Iraq.

An American official said Malek Barzani, Pres- ident of the Iraqi Kurdish region, had told US Defence Secretary Ash Carter that the Kurds had succeeded in lib- erating Bashiqa from Islam- ic State.

Kurdish Peshmerga fighters told reporters at the scene that they had entered Bashiqa. Journalists were not being allowed into the town, which lies 12 km (8 miles) to the northeast of Mosul. Its capture, if con- firmed, would mark the re- moval of one more obstacle on the road to the northern Iraq city. Reuters television foot- age from nearby Bashiqa, about 30 km (18 miles) northwest of Mosul, showed Kurd- ish fighters using a heavy mortar, a machine gun and small arms as smoke rose over the area around Bashiqa. As Kurdish Pesh- merga forces moved through the area, armoured vehicles moved along a road and a helicopter flew overhead.

The Peshmerga are also using tanks, rocket launch- ers and snipers. A Reuters photographer saw the fight- ers destroy at least three su- cide car bombs dispatched against their forces.

The offensive that start- ed on Monday to capture Bashiqanear Bashiqa, showed Kurd-ish forces controlling Hamdaniya district, onto the government-con- trolled Nineveh province.

BEIRUT — The battle for control of the northern Syri- an city of Aleppo intensified on Sunday with air strikes, ground offensives and shell- ing, the morning after a re- surgence in fighting ended a Russian ceasefire, a monitor in- formed, would mark the re- moval of one more obstacle on the road to the northern Iraq city.

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UN Secretary-General’s message on United Nations Day

24 October 2016

This year’s observance of United Nations Day occurs at a time of transition for the world and for the United Nations. Humanity has entered the era of sustainability – with a global commitment to fulfill the great promise of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In this, the Organization’s 71st year, we have 17 goals to propel us towards a better future for all on a healthy planet.

The world is also moving at last beyond the mindset which viewed the burning of fossil fuels as the path to prosperity. At a time of record heat, Member States have embraced the Paris Agreement on climate change in record time. This landmark measure will enter into force on 4 November. Across these and other frontlines of violence and disaster, courageous UN staff continue to rise to the occasion and respond to the plight of the vulnerable.

I thank people across the world for their support — and urge all to give their full backing to Secretary-General designate Antonio Guterres in continuing our global mission of peace, sustainable development and human rights. — UN/IC YANGON

Police officer killed, 10 people wounded in bomb in east Turkey

DIYARBAKIR (Turkey) — Two police officers were killed and 19 people were wounded when a car bomb exploded near a passing police vehicle in the eastern Turkish province of Bingol on Sunday, security sources said.

The bomb, planted by militants from the outlawed Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), was detonated near the district governor’s office, the security sources said.

Five police officers were among the injured, they said.

Turkey’s largely Kurdish southeast has been hit by waves of violence since the collapse of a 2013-2015 ceasefire between the state and the PKK last year. The autonomy-seeking PKK is considered a terrorist organisation by Turkey, the United States and Europe. — Reuters

One found dead, 3 hurt after explosions in Tochigi, north of Tokyo

UTSUONOMIYA (Japan) — One person was found dead and three others were injured after explosions occurred at two locations in Utsunomiya, the capital of Tochigi Prefecture, north of Tokyo on Sunday, local police said.

The person who died was found with burns to the body in Utsunomiya Joshi Park after police received a call at around 11:40 am saying someone was seen engulfed in flames following the sound of a blast.

The three people injured were also in the park, where a festival was underway. Before the incident, several cars caught fire in a nearby parking lot at around 11:30 am, following reports of blasts there.

No one was injured in the parking lot.

Both incidents took place in a downtown area where the local city office and other buildings are situated. The park is located around 500 meters southeast of Tobu Utsunomiya Station. — Kyodo News

In EU’s interests to give Britain tariff-free trade post-Brexit — UK minister

LONDON — Britain will have tariff-free trade with the European Union after it leaves the bloc as it is in Britain’s interests to do so, transport minister Chris Grayling said on Sunday.

Asked whether the EU’s floundering free trade deal with Canada was a worry for Britain, Grayling, a leading campaigner for Brexit, said Britain’s relationship with the EU was different as it was the bloc’s most important export market.

“Nobody in continental Europe benefits from a reduction in the world’s most important export market,” Grayling told the BBC’s Andrew Marr show. “I have always been convinced we will have tariff-free trade, we will have sensible trading arrangements, because it is in both our interests that that should happen.” — Reuters

Trump uses policy speech to attack media, promises to sue accusers

GETTYSBURG (Pa.) — US Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump promised on Saturday to sue Day Time Warner if he wins the 8 November election, arguing it was an example of a “power structure” rigged against both him and voters.

Trump, whose candidacy has caused political upheaval, described his policy plans for the first 100 days of his presidency in a campaign speech in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, near the site of a Civil War battlefield and a celebrated address by President Abraham Lincoln.

But he also defiantly raised personal grievances, describing how, if elected, he would address them from the White House in a way he said would benefit Americans. The speech was billed by his campaign as a major outlining of his policies and principles. Many of the policy ideas Trump listed on Saturday were familiar, not least his promise to build a wall on the border with Mexico to deter illegal immigration and to renegotiate trade deals and to scrap the Obamacare health policy.

Moments after promising Americans that he represented a hopeful break from the status quo, he promised to sue nearly a dozen news outlets, noting that they had “bluntly said” he promised to sue nearly a dozen news outlets, noting that they had “bluntly said” they were unfair to his repeated castigation of US media corporations, which he said cover his campaign unfairly.

Telecommunications company AT&T Inc has agreed in principle to buy Time Warner Inc, one of the country’s largest film and television companies, for about $85 billion and an announcement could be made as early as Saturday, Trump also said he would look at “breaking” up the acquisition by Comcast Corp of the media company NBC Universal in 2013.

“Deals like this destroy democracy,” he said in explaining his apparent divergence from the traditional Republican position that seeks to minimize the taxation and regulation of American companies.

Amazon.com Inc, the online retailer, should also be paying “massive taxes”, Trump said, reminding voters that Amazon chief executive Jeff Bezos also owns the Washington Post, a newspaper whose coverage Trump dislikes.

Trump, a wealthy New York building developer and television star, acknowledged in a debate with rival Hillary Clinton on 9 October that he had used investment losses to avoid paying taxes. The New York Times reported on 1 October that Trump’s declared loss of $916 million in 1995 was so large that he could legally have avoided paying any federal income taxes for up to 18 years.

At a campaign event later on Saturday in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Clinton criticised Trump’s stance on news outlets, noting that she had been the subject of negative coverage too.

“When he blows up at a journalist or criticises the press and goes on and on and on - you know, I get criticised by the press,” she said. “I believe that’s part of our democratic system.”

In a statement, Clinton spokeswoman Christina Reynolds described the speech as “rambling, unfocused, full of conspiracy theories and attacks on the media, virtually no fact-checking whatsoever, here is why this is relevant to you.” said. “If they can fight somebody like me who has unlimited resources to fight back, just look at what they could do to you, your job, your security, your education, your health care.”

Trump, who has said he may not accept the election’s outcome if he loses, is trailing Clinton in most polls — although he has narrowed the gap according to a Reuters/Ipsos poll released on Friday. Clinton maintained her commanding lead in the race to win the Electoral College, however, and claim the US presidency, a Reuters/Ipsos States of the Nation project poll released on Saturday showed.

Trump has bluntly said that Mexico will pay for the wall, an idea the Mexican government has scoffed at.

He tweaked his language on Saturday, saying the United States would fairly fund the wall with the understanding that Mexico would reimburse the cost. Trump’s campaign was thrown into crisis two weeks ago when his taped video was released showing him bragging about groping and kissing women, prompting several prominent Republicans to announce they would not vote for him. — Reuters

In EU’s interests to give Britain tariff-free trade post-Brexit — UK minister
Dozens of demonstrators arrested at North Dakota pipeline

DAKOTA — More than 80 protesters were arrested on Saturday after clashing with police near a pipeline construction site in North Dakota, according to the local sheriff’s department, which said pepper spray was used on some demonstrators.

The 83 protesters were arrested near the site of the Dakota Access pipeline on numerous charges ranging from assault on a peace officer to rioting and criminal trespass, the Morton County Sheriff’s department said in a statement.

Law enforcement was alerted early Saturday morning to an SUV on private property near the pipeline construction site and found that four men had attached themselves to the vehicle, according to the sheriff’s department.

Police removed the men from the SUV before arresting them.

Later, around 300 protesters marched toward pipeline construction equipment and tried to breach a police line keeping them from the equipment, the sheriff’s department said.

Some were pepper sprayed by law enforcement. One protester attempted to grab a can of pepper spray from an officer, resulting in the officer being sprayed.

The demonstration closed a section of a local highway, but it was reopened on Saturday afternoon.

“Today’s situation clearly illustrates what we have been saying for weeks. That this protest is not peaceful or lawful,” sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier said in a statement.

“It was obvious to our officers who responded that the protesters engaged in escalated unlawful tactics and behaviour during this event. This protest was intentionally coordinated and planned by agitators with the specific intent to engage in illegal activities.”

The Standing Rock Sioux tribe and environmental activists have been protesting construction of the 1,100-mile (1,886-km) pipeline in North Dakota for several months, saying it threatens the water supply and sacred sites. Numerous protesters have been arrested near the pipeline.

It was unclear who organised and led the protest. A spokesman for the Standing Rock Sioux could not immediately be reached for comment.

The pipeline, being built by a group of companies led by Energy Transfer Partners LP, would be the first to bring Bakken shale from North Dakota directly to refineries on the US Gulf Coast.

Supporters say it would provide a safer and more cost-effective way to transport Bakken shale to the US Gulf than by road or rail.

Earlier this week, pipeline equipment in Iowa was intentionally lit on fire causing about $2 million in damage, according to local authorities and company officials.—Reuters

French police chief promises change after sixth night of protests -TV

PARIS — France’s national police chief has promised to upgrade equipment and improve working conditions for the country’s police, who staged a sixth night of protests across several cities.

The police have said they are no longer properly equipped to do their jobs and face harsh working conditions. They staged protests in Paris, Strasbourg and Nancy on late on Saturday, according to BFM TV.

“In Paris, it is mainly young police officers who say they have lost confidence in their hierarchy, in the institution and in their unions,” Jean-Marc Falcone, France’s national police chief said in an interview with weekly newspaper Journal du Dimanche.

Falcone said he would equip the staff with modern and sophisticated weaponry and gadgets, while he would also seek to reduce the burden of static surveillance missions. “I understand their concerns. And I also should tell you that I share almost all of their demands,” Falcone said.

About 100 police gathered late on Friday in front of Notre Dame Cathedral in central Paris, just opposite the central police headquarters, according to BFM TV.

Some 3,000 of them took to the streets of French cities on Thursday night. French President Francois Hollande said on Friday he would meet police representatives at his office early next week to hear their grievances.—Reuters

Australian minister says rights commissioner politicising role

SYDNEY — An Australian government minister criticised the human rights commissioner on Sunday for comments on the treatment of refugees and refraction of politicians, saying she had politicised her position and made “substantial errors of judgment”.

Under Australia’s tough immigration policy, people trying to arrive by boat are intercepted and sent to camps on the South Pacific island nation of Nauru and on Papua New Guinea’s Manus Island. They are never eligible for settlement in Australia.

The head of the Human Rights Commission, Gillian Triggs, has had an uneasy relationship with the government since she released a critical report on the treatment of children in detention in 2015, and she has criticised politicians over the treatment of asylum seekers.

Leader of the House Christopher Pyne on Saturday admonished Triggs in an interview with the ABC.

“The human rights commissioner and her position, or his position, should be above politics,” said Pyne, who is also minister for defence.

“Gillian Triggs has made substantial errors of judgement in commenting on the political process and commenting on politicians.”

The Human Rights Commission is an independent body, which has statutory responsibility to investigate complaints and breaches of human rights laws and advise courts and the government on rights issues.

On Saturday, thousands of people rallied in 25 towns and cities across Australia to welcome asylum seekers.

Pyne said it was matter for the prime minister and attorney general to say if they had confidence in Triggs.

Neither Triggs nor her office was immediately available for comment.—Reuters
Iran’s president says US election offers only bad or worse choice

DUBAI — Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said on Sunday the choice offered to voters in the US presidential election was between “bad and worse” and that harsh exchanges in the debates pointed to a lack of morality in America, Tehran’s arch adversary.

“America claims it has more than 200 years of democracy and they have had 50 presidential elections, but there is no morality in that country,” Rouhani said in a speech, carried live by state television.

“You saw the presidential debates, how they talk..., how they accuse and mock (each other),” Rouhani told a crowd gathered at a stadium during his visit to the central city of Arak.

Rouhani said a head of state had asked him during his visit to the United Nations in September about who he preferred between Republican candidate Donald Trump and his Democratic rival Hillary Clinton.

“I said should I prefer bad over worse or worse over bad?,”’ said Rouhani, a pragmatist politician and cleric who may run for reelection in Iran’s presidential polls in May 2017. He did not say to which candidate his descriptions referred.—Reuters

Nepal proposes date for discussion with China on protocol to transit transport agreement

KATHMANDU — Nepal has proposed the date for holding the bilateral meeting with China on finalizing the protocol of the Transit Transport Agreement (TTA) for 6-8 November, a senior Nepalese government official said.

During visit of former Nepalese Prime Minister K.P Sharma Oli to China last March, the two nations had signed the agreement which will pave the way for either country to use each other’s territory for third country trade.

However, the TTA is just a framework and is incomplete without the protocol.

The protocol to the TTA will include details about customs arrangements, mode of transport, types of cargo and operational modality.

Nepal’s third country trade is presently conducted only through Indian territory. The TTA with China allows the Himalayan country to transport its imports and exports via its neighbour’s territory.

Rabi Sainju, joint secretary at the Nepal’s Commerce Ministry, who also heads protocol preparation team of Nepal government, told Xinhua on Saturday that they proposed the date for holding the meeting on protocol.—Reuters

British PM calls regional leaders to Downing Street for post-Brexit meeting

LONDON — British Prime Minister Theresa May called Sunday the leaders of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to Downing Street for talks aimed at strengthening ties.

The behind-closed-door meeting will take place on Monday, and will be the first joint gathering May has chaired since becoming prime minister.

It will take place against a post-Brexit backdrop that could pose a threat to the survival of Britain.

This week Scotland’s First Minister Nicola Sturgeon paved the way for a possible re-run of an independence referendum.

Wales First Minister Carwyn Jones will head to London aware of a keynote speech this weekend at the annual conference of Plaid Cymru, the Party of Wales.

Plaid’s leader Leanne Wood raised the question of Wales fast-forwarding its ambitions for independence if Scotland goes it alone.

Although Welsh independence has been a long-term dream of Plaid Cymru, Wood told delegates at her conference that the Brexit vote had changed things.

Wood said a time may come when Wales has to decide whether to “hitch itself to Theresa May’s right wing England, or contemplate independence.”

She told her conference 200,000 jobs in Wales depend on Britain’s membership of the European Union.

Although the leave vote in Wales matched almost the same 52-48 Brexit vote across Britain, voters in Cardiff, the Welsh capital, backed remain in the 23 June referendum by a 60-40 margin.

Wood told the conference: “We might not have wanted this outcome, but we have to try and secure the best possible deal for Wales.

But what we will not ever accept is a negotiated deal which sees Wales worse off. Our red line at all times is the Welsh economy. Plaid Cymru will never sign off or endorse something that is bad for Wales.”

At Monday’s meeting, May aims to set out her vision for a new way of working between the British government and the regional administrations.

A statement issued by Number 10 on Sunday, said that May will call on the regional administrations to commit to fully working with the British government to enhance the prosperity and security of the people of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

“She will set out how the UK government is resolution in its commitment to strengthening the union further and making a success of the opportunities ahead. Additionally, the PM will seek agreement on strengthening ways of working, guaranteeing that relationships will be built on a basis of cooperation and consensus.”

The Downing Street gathering will discuss how the regional administrations can work together to get the best deal for Britain and seize the opportunities that exiting the EU will bring.

Downing Street said May plans to invite the first and deputy first ministers to take up a key role in helping to build a new industrial strategy for the whole of Britain to spread wealth, jobs and opportunities more evenly, and ensure that the economy works for everyone.

Ahead of the meeting, May said: “When I stood upon the steps of Downing Street, I made clear the importance of our great Union.”—Xinhua

Mass prison break in Haiti, 174 inmates flee after killing guard

ARCAHAIE, (Haiti) — Most inmates of a northern Haitian prison escaped on Saturday after killing a guard and stealing firearms, said authorities who launched a manhunt with support from UN peacekeepers for the 174 fugitives.

Police set up checkpoints on roads leading from the prison and detained several people without identity cards, a Reuters witness said. However, the 266 inmates of Arcahaise prison do not wear uniforms, making it easier for escapees to mingle outside.

Eleven inmates were caught during the break, which happened during a period when some were bathing, officials said. The inmates broke into an area used by the guards, stealing at least five rifles among other weapons. One guard was shot dead.

Haiti’s Minister Of Justice, Camille Edouard Junior, said one prisoner died after falling off a wall and hitting his head during the escape from the Arcahaise prison on the coast north of capital Port-au-Prince.

“One guard was killed during the incident,” Edouard Junior told Reuters. “Three prisoner were wounded, including one who died as a consequence of his wounds.”—Reuters

Blue Angles performs during Houston Airshow

A formation of US Navy Blue Angles performs during the Houston Airshow at Ellington Airport of Houston, the United States, on 22 October 2016. PHOTO: XINHUA

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Swedish Academy says up to Dylan if he wants to come to receive Nobel Prize

STOCKHOLM — The committee that awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature to Bob Dylan said on Saturday it was up to the American singer-songwriter whether to attend the prize-giving ceremony later this year or not.

The notoriously media-shy Dylan has not yet made any comment on the 8 million crown ($900,000) prize, despite repeated attempts by award-givers the Swedish Academy to contact him since it named him as the winner on 13 October.

On Saturday, Swedish media reported that Academy member Per Wastberg had said that if Dylan remained silent, it would be “rude and arrogant”.

The Academy, however said Wastberg’s comments did not reflect their view.

“The author awarded the Nobel Prize makes up his or her own mind regarding the ceremonies involved in the presentation of the prize,” Sara Danius, Permanent Secretary of the Academy, said in a statement.

“The Swedish Academy has never held a view on a prize winners decision in this context, neither will it now, regardless of the decision reached.”

The Academy gave 75-year-old Dylan the prize for “having created new poetic expressions within the great American song tradition”. It was a controversial choice.

Dylan revolutionized American popular song with numbers such as “Blowin’ in the Wind”, “The Times They Are A-Changin’”, “Subterranean Homesick Blues” and “Like a Rolling Stone.” Yet some have questioned whether his work qualifies as literature. Others have complained that the Swedish Academy missed an opportunity to bring attention to lesser-known artists. The award ceremony takes place each year on 10 December, the anniversary of Alfred Nobel’s death, when the King of Sweden hands each laureate a diploma and a medal, followed by a lavish banquet at Stockholm’s City Hall for about 1,300 people. —Reuters

Anne Hathaway: Was not happy with 2013 Oscar win

LONDON — Actress Anne Hathaway has revealed that she was not happy after winning an Oscar in 2013 for “Les Misérables”.

The 33-year-old actress won the honour for her role of a prostitute named Fantine in “Les Misérables” and she said she was forced herself to smile after the win, reported Guardian.

“I felt very uncomfortable. I kind of lost my mind doing that movie and it hadn’t come back yet. Then I had to stand up in front of people and feel something I don’t feel which is uncomplicated happiness,” Hathaway said.

“It’s an obvious thing, you win an Oscar and you’re supposed to be happy. I didn’t feel that way.”

“I felt wrong that I was standing there in a gown that cost more than some people are going to see in their lifetime, and winning an award for portraying pain that still felt very much a part of our collective experience as human beings.”

She added, “I tried to pretend that I was happy and I got called out on it, big time.”

“That’s the truth and that’s what happened. But what you learn from it is that you only feel like you can die from embarrassment, you don’t actually die.” —PTI

Madonna and I are very different, I write all my music: Gaga

LOS ANGELES — Lady Gaga does not like comparisons with Madonna and the singer made it clear by saying she pens all her music on her own. Gaga threw shade at Madonna during an interview with Beats 1 Radio when host Zane Lowe compared the two singers and brought up their relationships with their dads, reported Us magazine.

“Madonna and I are very different. Just saying. We’re very different. I wouldn’t make that comparison at all and I don’t mean to disrespect Madonna, she’s a nice lady, and she’s had a fantastic huge career, biggest pop star of all time.

“But I play a lot of instruments, I write all my own music, I spend hours and hours a day in the studio. I’m a producer. I’m a writer. What I do is different,” the 30-year-old singer said.

By “different,” Gaga meant that she is “not just rehearsing over and over again to put on a show.”

“There is spontaneity to my work. I allow myself to fail. I allow myself to break. I’m not afraid of my flaws,” she added.

However, she cleared that she don’t mean that in a disrespectful way and would not like to get compared to anyone anymore. —PTI

Difficult to balance between work, motherhood: Underwood

LOS ANGELES — Singer Carrie Underwood has found it “difficult” to juggle her career with motherhood. The 33-year-old singer songwriter, who has 20-month-old son Isaiah with her husband Mike Fisher, has admitted she plans to take some time out of her busy schedule to celebrate the upcoming festival Halloween with her child because she finds it hard when her “professionalism and motherhood collide,” reported E! Online.

Speaking about parenting, the blonde beauty said, “I’m not going to lie, it’s difficult when professionalism and your motherhood collide - which is on a daily basis - but it’s wonderful. “It’s like bring your baby to work every day. He’s just there, and it’s great. He’s just a little longer, but he’s just my little sunshine. He makes me happy all day. [But] I’ve blocked some time to be able to take him trick-or-treating a little bit and got him a costume and everything.” —PTI
Baby girl ‘born twice’ after life-saving surgery to remove rare tumour

HOUSTON — Lynlee, a Texas baby girl, looks as healthy as other babies, but her birth in June was the second time she made an entrance into the world after surviving a life-saving surgery.

Lynlee’s mom, Margaret Boemer, went for a routine ultrasound 16 weeks into her pregnancy and shockingly found that her child had something wrong.

“They saw something on the scan, and the doctor came in and told us that there was something seriously wrong with our baby and that she had a sacrococcygeal teratoma,” Boemer said in an interview shared by Texas Children’s Hospital. “And it was very shocking and scary, because we didn’t know what that long word meant or what diagnosis would bring,” she said.

Sacrococcygeal teratoma is a tumour that develops before birth and grows from a baby’s tailbone, according to Texas Children’s Hospital. Found more often in girls than boys, it is a type of tumour commonly seen in newborns, but its occurrence is very rare, with only one in 35,000 births, the hospital said. Some of these tumours can be tolerated during pregnancy and removed after birth, Dr. Darrell Cass, co-director of Texas Children’s Fetal Centre and associate professor of surgery, pediatrics and obstetrics and gynecology at Baylor College Medicine, told the CNN.

But Lynlee was not as lucky as her heart showed signs of failing, he added. Cass told Boemer that fetal surgery is another possibility, but this option is risky both for the baby and the mom.

Boemer decided to take the surgery as it would mean a glimmer of hope for her baby’s survival. “We wanted to give her life,” she said.

Cass performed the emergency fetal surgery in March when Boemer was about 24 weeks pregnant.

And obstetric surgeon made an incision in Boemer’s uterus, pulled out the baby and removed the giant tumour from her small body. Then they placed the baby back inside her mom’s womb.

At Palace Museum, the world mulls heritage protection

LONDON — A Chinese delegation on Saturday wrapped up its three-day trip to Britain where they visited universities and a media house to boost exchanges on Tibetan culture.

The delegation visited universities of Oxford, Westminster and Cambridge, where they talked with researchers and students on issues ranging from Tibet’s open and religious freedom, to the ancient culture and the transmission of the Tibetan Buddhist scriptures.

They also visited the headquarters of the Daily Telegraph and talked with senior editors on foreign affairs. Zhang Yun, head of the delegation and also director of the Institute of History Studies of the Chui Tibetanology Research Centre, said he hopes to present the real Tibet to the Western world by clearing the myth and clearing up misunderstandings through the visit.

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**Locatelli gives Milan controversial win over Juve**

MILAN — A stunning second-half strike by 18-year-old Manuel Locatelli gave AC Milan a 1-0 win over Juventus after the Serie A titleholders had a goal controversially disallowed on Saturday.

Juventus thought they had gone ahead in the first half from Miralem Pjanic’s free kick but the goal was ruled out for offside after a two-minute consultation between match officials.

It was Milan’s first win over Juve for nearly four years and ended a run of nine successive defeats against the Turin side.

Earlier, Barca levelled their own goal by Armando Izzo handed Sampdoria a 2-1 win over neighbours and bitter rivals Genoa in a pulsating derby. Sampdoria also missed a penalty in first-half stoppage time.

Juventus stayed top with 21 points from nine games but Milan closed the gap to two points.

“It's clear that the goal was good, everyone else is saying that, not just me,” said Juve coach Massimiliano Allegri. “The Milan protests made the referee doubt his decision, but we as teams should think about playing.”

Juventus have won the last five Serie A titles while Milan have slumped into midtable mediocrity but the seven-times European champions have made a bright start this season under new coach Vincenzo Montella.

**Mihara takes 3rd, Asada 6th in Skate America**

CHICAGO — Japan’s Mai Mihara reached the podium in her ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating debut, finishing third at Skate America on Saturday.

Mihara, who was second after Friday’s short programme, finished with 189.28 points. Her compatriot and three-time world champion Mao Asada finished sixth with 176.78. Ashley Wagner of the United States finished first with 196.44, followed by countrywoman Mariah Bell with 191.59. Japan’s Kanako Murakami (145.03) was 10th.

Despite a good first showing, the 17-year-old Mihara was less than delighted.

“In competition, I didn’t skate as strongly as I’m able and that is frustrating,” Mihara said with tears in her eyes.

Another mistake soon followed.

Asada, meanwhile, made a series of jump mistakes in a free programme in which her score of 112.31 was more than 30 points below her career best.

“I was unable to establish my timing or rhythm during the latter half of the programme when fatigue set in,” said Asada, whose shoulders slumped and head hung after failing to reach a Grand Prix podium for the first time since 2010. “I’m a long way off.”

Asada landed just one of her planned jumps cleanly and her edge work was lacking in her closing steps.

“If she was at full strength, she would be able to resolve this easily,” Asada’s coach Nobuo Sato said.

Japan’s Shoma Uno landed a quad flip en route to winning the men’s short program with 89.15 points.

Kyodo News

**Late Messi penalty seals dramatic Barca win**

BARCELONA — Lionel Messi squeezed home a stoppage-time penalty to grab a thrilling 3-2 win for champions Barcelona in a controversial La Liga match at Valencia on Saturday. Talisman Messi scored against Valencia for the 10th season in a row to put the visitors ahead in the 22nd minute although team mate Luis Suarez was in an offside position and obstructing the view of goalkeeper Diego Alves.

Earlier, Barca captain Andres Iniesta was carried off on a stretcher due to a knee injury, while Sergio Busquets was fortunate not to receive a second yellow card before the break.

Valencia turned the game around in four second-half minutes, Munir El Haddadi equalising against his parent club and Rodrigo Moreno putting the hosts ahead in the 56th.

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**Pjanic floated a 35-metre free kick over the wall, Juve’s Leonardo Bonucci lunged and failed to make contact with the ball but distracted Milan goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma and it flew into the net.**

**Juventus players were back on the halfway line waiting for the restart when referee Nicolò Rizzoli disallowed the goal for offsides against Bonucci although replays suggested he was onside when the ball was played.**

Locatelli added to Juve’s sense of injustice when he collected Suso’s pass and fired an unstoppable shot past Gianluigi Buffon into the top corner in the 65th minute.

Donnarumma, 17, ensured Milan’s win by turning away Sami Khedira’s long-range shot with the last kick of the game.

Sampdoria ended a six-match winless run that had put coach Marco Giampaolo’s job on the line in the so-called Derby of the Lighthouse.

Genoa’s misfortune came two minutes into the second half when Luis Muriel crossed from the right, goalkeeper Mattia Perin palmed the ball away but it flew straight at Izzo and rebounded into the net.

Colombia forward Muriel, a constant thorn in Genoa’s side, gave Sampdoria the lead after 12 minutes when he side footed the ball home after Fabio Quagliarella’s cross hit the bar and he followed it up by firing in the follow-up.

Barcelona’s Lionel Messi (R) and Valencia’s Enzo Perez in action at Mestalla Stadium, Valencia, Spain on 22 October 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS