Japan to cooperate in solving conflicts

Rakhine state issue is delicate and needs to be addressed with caution: Daw Aung San Suu Kyi

JAPAN’s Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida and Myanmar’s State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi agreed yesterday to cooperate in efforts to end ethnic conflict in Myanmar, the Japanese Foreign Ministry said.

The two held talks in Tokyo on several issues including bilateral relations, challenges in the region, ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty-CTBT and the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) to be hosted by Myanmar in 2017.

Referring to recent reports of deadly attacks on border guard posts by violent armed attackers in Rakhine State, Kishida told Daw Aung San Suu Kyi: “Any sort of violence should not be tolerated, and I welcome (your) efforts for the peace and stability of Rakhine state,” according to the ministry.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi said the situation in Rakhine state is extremely delicate and needs to be addressed with caution, adding that the government is dealing with it under the principle of the rule of law, according to the ministry.

In the talks in Tokyo yesterday, Kishida said Japan will offer a new passenger boat to Myanmar with the aim of supporting its efforts to ease inter-communal tensions in Rakhine, the ministry said.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi told Kishida that the ship will not only help transport people in Rakhine but also contribute to the development of the state, which faces the Indian Ocean.

The CTBT aims to establish a verifiable global ban on all types of nuclear explosive tests.

Saw Aung San Suu Kyi met a day after Prime Minister Shinzo Abe pledged to offer 40 billion yen ($387 million) in aid over five years to fund Myanmar’s efforts at national reconciliation.

SEE PAGE 4 >>
More suspects arrested in Yathedaung and Maungtaw townships

For more attackers not to enter Buthitaung and Maungtaw areas, Tatmadaw (navy) special marine force and border guard police forces have been conducting area safety patrol. In one of their patrols, on 2 November at 7:50 pm or so, a suspicious looking fishing boat named Maung Tin Shwe was found 4 miles away from Donpik village, Yathedaung township where martial law was imposed.

Troops found weapons in Warpeik Village, Maungtaw Tsp

Troops comprising members of the Tatmadaw and police force yesterday discovered arms and ammunition looted by armed violent attackers in the October-9 attacks in Maungtaw Township.

The patrol team arrested on board the fishing vessels 8 suspected persons—name ly, Zarphaikramanuk, Maungu, Hapheik Husong, Mamad Husong, Mamad Inos, Mamauk Rawtheik, same name Mamauk Rawtheik, and Mamauk Rawhein. They were handed over to Inndin outpost camp to be put on trial.

Similarly, 4 others—Norusong, Iliyas, Nogubashot and Kharman Husein were also arrested in the grove one mile away from east of Pyaungpike village in Maungtaw township at 8:30 am today and handed over to Kyeinchaung police station, it is learnt. Meanwhile, naval patrol troops arrested four Bangladeshi illegal fishermen namely Harmit, Ismail and Bobosaung in Myanmar’s territorial waters.

They were handed over to the Police Station in Maungtaw.—Myawady

Harvesting machines sent to Maungtaw in time to reap paddy

As peace and stability are restored in the Maungtaw region, the Rakhine State Cabinet and ministry of agriculture, livestock and irrigation have sent harvesting machines to local farmers to reap the paddy in time, according to state head office of agricultural department.

U Toe Wai, head of the agricultural department, Rakhine State said, “As the area regained its stability and peace, local ethnic farmers need to harvest their paddy soon. For this, harvesters have been sent to them — 30 units by Rakhine State Government and 10 units by the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation (MALI). Failing that, there may be crop wastage increasing. Ways of using these machines will be shared with farmers. These can be manipulated even by females. They are convenient for the area as they have small-scale farms.”

Each harvester reaps 3 to 5 acres per day and it costs only K10,000 for one acre with a minimal volume of wastage, it is learnt.

U Toe Wai added, “A harvester consumes less labour and time, solving labour problems.”

According to local farmers, the Maungtaw area has enjoyed good weather and there will be high yields from paddy. Out of 80,000 paddy growing acres, ethnic locals own some 10,000 acres. Min Thit (MNA)

To complain of bribery and corruption

UNION Attorney-General Office is supervising for law officers at different levels to act in accord with the law and to be free from bribery and corruption in performing their duties.

Every individual has the right to complain of officers and staff taking and seeking for bribes by producing sufficient evidences, complainant’s name and phone number, NRC card no, to Union Attorney-general or deputy attorney-general or permanent secretary at 25, UAGO, Nay Pyi Taw. Action will be taken as necessary, it is reported.

—Myanmar News Agency
President inspects Biluchaung Hydro-power Plant 2 in Kayah State

PRESIDENT U Htin Kyaw, together with Union Ministers U Than Myint, U Thein Swe and U Pe Zan Tun and Deputy Minister Maj-Gen Than Htut, visited Lorraine in Kayah State yesterday and met with local officials, entrepreneurs, farmers and residents in Linpholay Village.

The president said that he was visiting the region to help local corn farmers as he had heard their difficulties and promised to help them in coordination with related ministries.

Then, the president pointed out that cooperation by the government, government agencies and the people is essential in building a nation and urged entrepreneurs, who the president said play a vital role, to work in the interests of the people.

Afterwards, the president heard the difficulties of the local people, who reported to the president on market stability, the need for export assistance, land title and life security of farmers, release of confiscated farmland, job opportunities, reforestation and narcotic drugs.

After hearing the public voices, the president and the chief minister of Kayah State attended to the needs of local people as much as they could.

In the afternoon, the president and party arrived at Biluchaung Hydro-power Project, where the managing director of Electric Power Generation Enterprise reported to the president on distribution of power from power stations.

Later, the president proceeded to the seven-tier lake in Dimawhso Township and heard reports on tourism development in the state before urging officials to preserve traditional culture. Local residents reported to the president on availability of electricity and education and health needs.

Union ministers also explained border trade and investment plans.

Then, the president and party observed traditional weaving methods and products.

Afterwards, the president went to Panpet village, where he met with the Padaung ethnic people before enjoying their traditional dances and handicrafts—Myanmar News Agency

Government accedes to requests of UN resident coordinator and diplomatic missions

UNION officials yesterday said they had satisfied the requirements of diplomatic officials for northern Rakhine State in the aftermath of the deadly armed attacks of 9 October.

Union Minister for Border Affairs Lt-Gen Ye Aung, Chief Minister of Rakhine State U Nyi Pu and Minister of State for Foreign Affairs U Kyaw Tin held discussions yesterday morning at the Rakhine State Guest House in Sittway with the UN resident coordinator/humanitarian assistance coordinator and ambassadors of foreign missions.

After the meeting, the officials and diplomats visited Rakhine ethnic groups in Mawrawdi Village and Muslims residents of Zawmat Village, where they were told that the village was peaceful, with no one involved in the recent attacks.

They also visited Aletkangyaw, a village of over 11,000 inhabitants. Although the majority of the villagers are Muslims, there are a few Rakhine ethnic groups. Both groups live together peacefully, they said.

They visited Kotankaup Police Station, one of the places that was attacked on 9 October, and Kotankaup Village. The village, which is mostly populated by Muslims, greeted them with a protest holding placards written in English. In Sittway, UN resident coordinator/humanitarian assistance coordinator and diplomats held a press conference at the Sittway Airport.

At the press conference, the representatives and heads of foreign missions advised the government to help fulfill the needs of displaced persons, some of whom are beginning to return to their homes and to permit the access of international aid to the region, saying that the government has allowed the international community to monitor the situation.

They also said that they were studying the situation on ground and had an opportunity to cooperate with the government, but it was still difficult to tell whether accusations of abuse were true or not. No woman told them that they had been raped, they said.

The most important issue of all was the rule of law, they added.

They said that they found some security measures and it was necessary for every country to take such measures in case of such attacks.

They also said that the government has abided by the international norms and they also urged it to continue to abide by the international norms. In addition, they said that the government allowed them to visit the villages they wanted to and imposed no restrictions on them, despite the accusations. They said they urged the government to allow international investigative bodies to refute the accusations and other international organisations, saying that every high-ranking official they met was ready to accept their opinions. They were also told to take the opportunity for observers to examine the situation—Myanmar News Agency

No woman told them that they had been raped: Diplomats

They soon acceded to the requests of UN resident coordinator and diplomatic missions.

Attack on Nurula police post in Maungtaw leaves one policeman officer dead

A police post in Nurula, about three miles away from Maungtaw, was attacked at about 6 pm yesterday by armed men on motorcycles, resulting in the death of one officer.

Violent attackers who arrived on three motorcycles assaulted the two guards of the post with small weapons fire, but members of the post were able to repel the attackers, forcing them to withdraw with injuries and abandon their motorcycles. One police officer died of his wounds and the other one was slightly injured.

Police seized one homemade bomb and four pistols together with the motorcycles—Myanmar News Agency

Placards held by Muslim villagers, are written in English with good hand writing, revealing the timed movement. Photo: MNA

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi receives an honorary doctorate from the president of Kyoto University, Juichi Yamagawa in Kyoto, Japan on 3 November 2016. Photo: Myanmar News Agency

President U Htin Kyaw inspects the Sluice Gate of the No 2 Biluchaung Hydro-power Plant. Photo: MNA
Tenders invited to install new bus stops in Yangon this month

THE YANGON Region Transport Authority (YRTA) will invite tenders to implement the first stage of the project to install 250 new bus stops across Yangon this month, its spokesperson said.

Dr Maung Aung, secretary of the YRTA, said officials will announce its tender invitation to build modern public transport infrastructure this month. However, the exact date has not been set yet.

The new facilities will cover new information systems in the city area and both local and foreign companies are eligible to take part in the tender process, he added.

There are around 2,400 bus stops, including 123 stops installed near the descent of flyovers in the commercial hub of Yangon. Priority will be given to the bus stops located near junctions and traffic lights as well as at the descent of flyovers in six downtown townships after scrutinising the current situation of bus stop facilities.

Initially, about 250 existing bus stops will be reconstructed under the new programme designed to help systematically upgrade bus lines as well as reduce traffic jams and road accidents in the commercial city.

The upgrade of bus stops is part of the authority’s plan to improve Yangon’s bus transportation system. Ko Tayoke Lay, owner of Bus Line No. 45, commented that the new plan is believed to benefit both commuters and bus owners, saying that there are many difficulties in following the traffic rules due to unsystematic installation of bus stops and gates.—Myitmakha News Agency

Crime NEWS

Officer killed in Kyaihto car accident

POLICE are investigating a car crash that killed an officer near Taung Kalay village, Kyaihto township, Mon state on Wednesday evening.

“The officer was driving alone when the vehicle struck a tree after the wheels were blown away,” said a police officer from Kyaihto police station. “The officer was killed on the spot. The corpse was sent to the Kyaihto general hospital.”

There were no other vehicles involved in the crash nor passengers in the vehicle. Local police filed charges against Lt. Tin Myo Hway under section 304 (A) of the Penal Code.—Myitmakha News Agency

Yaba seized in Taunggyi, Hpa-An

A combined anti-narcotic squad comprising officers and staff from Taunggyi police force seized 22,000 yaba pills from a motorcycle ridden by Hla Than at Ho Pone patrol station near Ho Tj Village, Hsi Hseng Township on 2 November.

Similarly, police from Eindu Area Police Station searched a house owned by Kyaw Win at Inlay Ward, Eindu Village, Hpa-An Township. Police discovered 4,066 yaba pills and Than Sein. Police filed charges against them under the Anti-Narcotics and Psychotropic Substances Law.—Myanmar Police Force

New schedule for container cars to be effective only in mid-Nov

YANGON region government and container owners are discussing whether to take action against operators of container cars which do not run according to the new schedule, according to No 2 traffic police station.

“These days, the container owners are having meetings. They will decide very soon. After that, action will be taken against the owners of container cars which have disobeyed the new schedule. The action will be taken beginning from mid-November,” said Police Lt-Col Aung Ko Oo.

Container cars are allowed to run from 9pm to 5am starting on 1st November on Strand Road, Bayintnaung Road, Mingladon Road, Danyingon Junction, Shwe Pyay Thar Township, Yadana Road, Waizayantar traffic light, Aung Zayyar Road, Pale Road, Kayaypin Road, Pyimma Road, No.3 main road, Botataung Pagoda Road, Maha Bandaoola Bridge, Shukhinthar Road, Aya-wadi Road, Bago River Road and Kanaung Min Thar Gyi Road.

No. 59 traffic police jointly together with General Administrative Department will check the container cars whether they obey the new schedule or not at mid night.—Myitmakha News Agency

Fire destroys home in Botataung township

A fire broke out at around 9pm at an apartment on 52nd street in Botataung, Yangon on Wednesday.

The fire caused about Ks1.5 million in damages, said Police Major Ko Ko Oo from the Botataung Township police station.

“Siblings were staying together at the house. Before the accident, the brother went outside and left his sister alone. We are still investigating the case,” he said.

The fire was brought under control by 50 firemen using 19 fire engines. No one was injured in the accident. The police have filed charges against the boy. The fire accident is the third within the first week of November in Yangon.—Myitmakha News Agency

Japan to cooperate...

Later on Thursday, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi traveled by Shinkansen train to Kyoto, where she received an honorary doctorate conferred by Kyoto University where she spent time as she did research at its Center for Southeast Asian Studies from 1985 to 1986.

The president of Kyoto University, Juichi Yamagiwa, in his speech at the award ceremony, said it was the first time the university had conferred such a degree on an individual for their commitment to freedom, democracy and human rights.

“This honorary degree expresses the respect the Kyoto University holds for Daw Aung San Suu Kyi’s work and achievements, which resonate with the university’s guiding principles that encourage freedom of thought and the promotion of a harmonious global society,” Yamagiwa added.

“Advancement is a correct word because we have not yet reached our goal. In a sense, with democracy, we can never reach our goal. Our goal has to be beyond reaching because we have to keep working toward,” she said in her acceptance speech.

“Once we stop working for democracy, the democracy will fade away, just like the unused muscles. We have to keep it exercised all the time. I keep reminding our people what is important for us is not just to claim the democratic privileges but also to discharge their democratic duties, that we may be able to make our society a vibrant one — politically, socially and economically. — Global New Light of Myanmar with Kyodo News

>> FROM PAGE 1

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Photo: Photo: Myitmakha News Agency
MADB grants Ks9.5 billion in farm loans for Mandalay

According to the new plan, Madaya Township will receive Ks2.38 billion loans, Singaing Township will receive Ks1.8375 billion and Singu Township Ks1.4877 billion.

The bank has disbursed seasonal agricultural loans under both long-term and short-term plans. This season, the bank granted Ks150,000 loans per acre of rice with an 8 per cent interest rate and Ks20,000 per acre for other crops such as pulses, cotton, maize and jute. Those growers wishing to apply for a loan need a recommendation from the Scrutiny Committee. Action will be taken against those who fail to abide by the existing laws and regulations relating to loans.

U Myint Zaw, one of local growers, said farmers frequently face financing problems because of the bank’s policy that allows loans to cover the first 10 acres of farmland owned by any one farmer. He added that growers have found it difficult to pay back the loan if crops are destroyed by natural disasters.

Mirrored tables designed by State Counsellor to be sold

MIRRORED tables designed by the State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi will be reported-ly manufactured and sold at the stores of the Industry Ministry, it is learnt from the Directorate of Industrial Supervision and Inspection.

“The State Counsellor designed the table and our minister guided the plan to manufacture. Most people have expressed their appreciation because of its elegant design”, said Daw Aye Aye Win, the director-general from the Directorate of Industrial Supervision and Inspection.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi offered three designs, with two having been manufactured. The remaining Corner Table design is currently being prepared for production, it is learnt.

The price of the tables are about Ks100,000. The tables have two or three shelves. Its design includes lacquerware feet. The table is manufactured with the use of teak that has been steamed in order for it to be more easily shaped.

The high-quality mirror is also designed to withstand a certain degree of impact, said U Zaw Lin Tun from the Industry Ministry.

These tables will be sold at stores owned by the Industry Ministry. They have already been displayed at an event held by the Industry Ministry in Nay Pyi Taw, where large orders of table sets were designed by the State Counsellor were received, it is learnt.—Myitmaikha News Agency

Global Treasure Bank and Myanmar Citizens Bank to jointly offer banking operations

GLOBAL Treasure Bank (GTB) and Myanmar Citizens Bank (MCB) have joined hands to enhance their banking operations, according to a statement released by MCB.

They entered into a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to cooperate in a local remittance service. The cooperation can facilitate banking operations and remittance activities, the statement said.

Yangon Stock Exchange (YSX) approved Myanmar Citizens Bank to be listed on YSX in accordance with Section 41(c) of the Securities Exchange Law and sections 7 and 8 of the Securities Listing Business Regulations after scrutinising submitted application documents and a deliberate listing examination, it is learnt. MCB has a total of 10,400,986 shares with a capital of 52004.930 million as of 31st July, 2016. Over 20 branches and mini-branches are operational.

Global Treasure Bank was incorporated on 15th February 1996 as Myanmar Livestock and Fisheries Development Bank. The bank changed its name to Global Treasure Bank (Public Company Limited) on 1st July 2013, with the permission of the Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development, Directorate of Investment & Company Administration. Their capital has reached Ks70 billion and it is gearing up to be listed on YSX, it is learnt. —Ko Htet

Maungtaw-Bangladesh border trade returns to normal

TEMPORARILY suspended Maungtaw-Bangladesh border trade has returned to normal, according to the Maungtaw Border Trade Chamber.

Bilateral trade between Myanmar and Bangladesh through Maungtaw, a town in Rakhine State, was suspended due to border attacks in Maungtaw and Yathetauge townships on 9 October.

Border trade resumed on 14 October, when Myanmar restarted its export relations with neighbours, but there is no import from Bangladesh side, said U Aung Myint Thein, chairman of the Maungtaw Border Trade Chamber.

During normal times, 90 per cent of border trade is made by the Myanmar side, which exports fisheries products including dried fish as well as other goods to the South Asian nations, which exports kitchen wares and clothing items to Myanmar.

Both sides carry out cross-border trading by mutual agreement. They earn money from the sale of goods only after an exchange of commodities.

U Aung Myint Thein said that the merchants from Bangladesh do not want to export their goods as they fear that they may lose money due to unstable conditions.

Bangladesh has exported its products to Myanmar mainly through Sittway and Maungtaw townships.

The cross-border export value reached about US$500,000 in October, according to the Maungtaw Border Trade Chamber.—Min Thit (Myanmar News Agency)
BANGKOK — Insurgents in mostly-Muslim areas of southern Thailand killed three people in a spate of bomb and gun attacks overnight targeting military personnel and commercial property, the military said on Thursday.

The insurgent attacks were the first since the death of King Bhumibol Adulyadej last month, and defied a request by the military junta to desist while the nation mourns a much-loved monarch who had reigned for seven decades.

Three people were killed, including two security guards and a soldier, according to Pramote Promratan, a spokesman for the military’s Internal Security Operations Command.

The latest attacks took place in Narathiwat and Pattani province, two of three Muslim-majority provinces in predominantly Buddhist Thailand where a separatist insurgency has been raging since 2004, and in neighboring Songkhla province.

“It was the work of insurgents who want to create unrest and destroy trust in the government,” Pramote told Reuters.

No group has so far claimed responsibility.

The overnight attacks were the biggest since a series of bomb blasts across Thailand’s south in August which killed four people and injured dozens, including foreigners.

Talks aimed at bringing peace to the troubled south between the military government and an umbrella insurgent group in September failed to reach any breakthrough.

Over 6,500 people have been killed in Thailand’s southernmost provinces of Yala, Pattani, and Narathiwat over the past 12 years as part of the insurgency. “This attack shows that the insurgency situation in the south is isolated from what goes on in the rest of Thailand,” Srisompop Ipsomratan, director of Deep South Watch, a group which monitors the conflict, told Reuters.

“Any request by the junta for a halt in the violence is unlikely to have any effect,” — Reuters

Insurgent bomb and gun attacks kill three in southern Thailand

Cambodian PM Hun Sen backs US Republican candidate Trump

PHNOM PENH — Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen said on Thursday he wanted US presidential candidate Donald Trump to win next week’s election because Trump would reduce tension with Russia and be good for world peace.

Hun Sen is a self-styled strongman whose has ruled for three decades. He has at times reacted angrily to US concerns about the state of human rights and corruption in Cambodia.

Most recently, the United States, European Union and United Nations have expressed concern about rising tension between Hun Sen’s government and the opposition ahead of a general election in 2018.

“If Trump wins, the world will change and may be in a good situation because Trump is a businessman so he doesn’t want war ... there can be friendship between Trump and Putin,” he said, referring to Russia’s President Vladimir Putin.

Putin has praised Trump as “very talented”, while the Republican candidate has said the Kremlin boss is a better leader than Democratic rival Hillary Clinton.

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Indonesia presses aviation sector to meet tourism targets

JAKARTA — Indonesia is pressing its aviation authorities to boost the number of plane seats in a bid to meet targets in tourism sector that has been set as the nation’s core business.

Sufficient number of plane seats is the key for the nation’s success in attaining foreign visitor number targets as 75 percent of them are accommodated by flights. Tourism Ministry Ariel Yahya said at a signing ceremony of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) between the Tourism ministry, airport administrators and air navigation agency.

“Foreign tourists very much rely on airlines. Through the MoU we intend to encourage Angkasa Pura I and II, AirNav and airlines to improve their contribution in attaining the target of 20 million foreign visitors by 2019,” the minister said.

He said that to achieve the 2019 tourism target, the country needs to increase plane seats provided by domestic and international airlines to 30 million.

The current 9.5 million plane seats are only capable to meet 12 million foreign visitors targeted by the government this year, he said.

Under the MoU, related institutions agree to exchange data and information, undertake joint tourism promotion, jointly conducting market and connectivity analysis, synchronize airport capacity and tour destination expansion plans. — Xinhua

South Korean PM nominee says president can be subject to investigation

SEUL — South Korea’s new prime minister nominee said on Thursday it is his view that the country’s president can be subject to an investigation into an influence peddling scandal.

Kim Byong-joon, a nominee for South Korea’s Prime Minister, speaks during a news conference in Seoul, on 3 November 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

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Thailand’s junta seeks to reassure powerful rice farmers amid price plunge

BANGKOK — Thailand’s military government has rolled out a series of rescue packages in a bid to help rice farmers, most of whom hail from the political heartlands of the government it toppled, amid tumbling prices of the grain.

Farmers in Thailand, the world’s second-largest rice exporter, have traditionally been politically powerful and many helped elect former prime minister Yingluck Shinawatra in 2011.

Her administration was removed in a 2014 military coup.

The military government has been anxious to head off potential confrontation with farmers but said in its first year in power that it also wanted to wean them off expensive populist schemes such as a rice scheme introduced by Yingluck which bought rice from farmers at above-market rates.

But in recent weeks the military has announced measures worth at least 59.28 billion baht ($1.70 billion) aimed at curbing market supply and stabilizing rice prices.

The measures come as the ruling junta is trying to ensure a smooth transition following the death of much-loved King Bhumibol Adulyadej and to maintain stability ahead of a 2017 general election.

“There’s a possibility for tension, which could be used to incite political gatherings,” said Kan Yuenyong, executive director of Siam Intelligence Unit think-tank.

“The government fears the situation would get out of control, so they have to intervene,” he said.

Global rice prices have plunged over the past months as the world’s largest rice producers anticipate an influx of new stocks towards the end of the year.

Some Thai rice farmers have taken matters into their own hands and are turning to social media network Facebook to sell their grain, shunning rice millers, the industry’s traditional middlemen, whose prices they say are simply too low.

Nim Intasorn, 33, who hails from the northeastern province of Kalasin, said she has received orders for over 50 tonnes of rice since she started a Facebook page in October.

“I would hold the rice until prices improve, but that isn’t practical so this is what I can do now,” she said.

Her family’s jasmine rice fetches around 7 baht ($0.20) per kilogram from rice millers, but on Facebook she can sell it for 23 baht ($0.66) to 34 baht ($0.97) per kilogram, she added.

But the trend is unlikely to take over traditional methods of selling rice, said Pisanu Sangyoo, an analyst at the Thai Rice Exporters Association.

“Most farmers still have to do business with rice millers and exporters,” he said.

Government spokesman Sansern Kaewkhamnerd said this week the government supports farmers selling their grain online.—Reuters

Pakistan express train collision kills at least 20

ISLAMABAD — A long-distance train collided into stationary coaches in the Pakistani port city of Karachi on Thursday, killing at least 20 people, hospital officials said, in the country’s second major rail collision in less than two months.

Television footage showed mangled and overturned carriages, and media reported rescuers were working to free people trapped in the wreckage.

Train traffic between Karachi, Pakistan’s biggest city, and the rest of the country was suspended after the collision near the city’s Landhi station, television news channels reported.

Sixty-five people were injured in the collision, said Seemin Jamali, head of the emergency department at Karachi’s main Jinnah hospital.

The collision occurred between the moving Zakaria Express and the stationary Fareed Express, the railways ministry said.

Minister Khwaja Saad Rafique pointed at negligence as a possible cause, with a stop signal being ignored. The whereabouts of the driver and assistant driver of the Zakaria Express were unknown, he said.

He ordered an investigation which would be completed within 72 hours.

“Facts will be brought forward, and whoever is responsible will not escape legal action and punishment,” he said.

In September, at least four people were killed and 93 injured when an express train collided with a freight train near the city of Multan in Punjab province.

Pakistan’s colonial-era railway network has fallen into disrepair in recent decades due to chronic under-investment and poor maintenance.—Reuters

Four killed, 12 injured in Viet Nam flood

HANOI — Heavy rain in central Viet Nam has caused four deaths, one missing and 12 injuries as of Thursday morning, according to local authorities.

Specifically, among the death toll, two are reported in Quang Binh province and two in Quang Tri province. Meanwhile, one person remained missing in Quang Binh province, according to the Department of Natural Disaster Prevention and Control under Viet Nam’s Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.

As many as 367 houses, 300 classrooms and six healthcare facilities are flooded. At the same time, over 300 hectares of rice and corn are drowned, while over 6,250 cattle and poultries are washed away by flood.

According to Viet Nam’s national hydro-meteorological forecasting center, from now till Saturday, the country’s central region will continue to experience downpours with total rainfall of around 100 mm, and even over 250 mm in some areas.

—Xinhua

A farmer works in her rice field in Suphan Buri Province, north of Bangkok, Thailand, on 2 November 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Rescue workers use heavy machinery on the car of a train which crashed outside Karachi, Pakistan, on 3 November 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS
A Glimmer of Hope for the Planet Earth

Khin Maung Myint

I t is learnt that, as of November 2016, 92 out of the 192 parties (countries), which had signed the agreements reached on 12 December 2015 at the Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP21) held in Paris, had already ratified it. The minimum number of countries needed to ratify the treaty or the threshold to get into force was set at 55, accounting for at least 55% of the world’s total greenhouse gas emissions. As it has acquired more than the necessary numbers set, the agreement will finally take effect on 4 November 2016. That information is a very welcoming one as it provides a ray of hope for our planet Earth, and some relief for those who are concerned about the threats of the climate change.

As we all know, the world today is facing the freak weather conditions that are getting worse year after year. All these are the adverse consequences of the effects of the climate changes: the most significant being the global warming, the results of the excessive emission of the greenhouse gases. Today the world is reeling under the unprecedented temperature rises causing extensive melting of the glaciers and severe droughts all over the globe. If these situations cannot be curbed and brought under control, the ocean levels will rise and inundate the low lying areas, shrinking the land masses. Also, due to severe droughts many pasture lands around the world, especially in China, had disappeared as they were turned into deserts.

At this juncture, I would like to recount the agreements reached by consensus at COP21. The first and most important is to hold the temperature rise at 2°C and eventually to bring it down to 1.5°C above the pre-industrial levels. The second consensus is to increase the adaptability to the adverse impacts of climate change and foster climate resilience and low greenhouse gas emission developments in a manner that does not threaten food production. The third agreement is to make money flows consistent with a pathway towards low greenhouse gas emissions and climate-resilient development. It is the world’s first comprehensive climate change agreement.

It is quite evident from the above agreements that the reduction of the greenhouse gases is the main objective in harnessing the proper rules and regulations. During clearance operations, attackers, those involved in attacks and those who have participated in destructive activity fled villages after burning some homes in villages with a view to displacing people and to instigating suspicion. Some houses on roadsides and at the edges of Kyikkan-pyin, Wetpeik, Sabeigone, Pyaungpikhe, Ngarsarkyu and Ngakshya villages caught fire. Most of them were huts and small houses. Contents of those buildings were found to have been decluttered, with nice buildings found intact. Troops of the Tatmadaw and police forces extinguished the fires but Islamists in the village did not take part in fighting the fire, it is learnt.

On November 2, while responsible officials were explaining to representatives from UN organisations and diplomats about the situation on the ground in Maungtaw district, displaced people gathered at the site, telling fabricated stories. Events were intentionally planned conspiracies before, after and during the attacks. Responsible officials continue to carry out safety and security measures in collaboration with the people.

Concocted stories spread among people to instigate suspicion

Maung Maung Myint Swe

I N a violent armed attack on a border guard police outpost on October 9, policemen were killed with arms and ammunitions lost.

In area clearance operations launched by combined forces of Tatmadaw troops and police, five soldiers were killed while those suspected of involvement in the armed attacks were arrested, some alive and some dead. They are being investigated under the unprecedented temperature rises causing extensive melting of the glaciers and severe droughts all over the globe. These situations cannot be curbed and brought under control, the ocean levels will rise and inundate the low lying areas, shrinking the land masses. Also, due to severe droughts many pasture lands around the world, especially in China, had disappeared as they were turned into deserts.

Today the world is reeling under the unprecedented temperature rises causing extensive melting of the glaciers and severe droughts all over the globe. If these situations cannot be curbed and brought under control, the ocean levels will rise and inundate the low lying areas, shrinking the land masses. Also, due to severe droughts many pasture lands around the world, especially in China, had disappeared as they were turned into deserts.

In conclusion, I would like to state that if we should have conserved our once lush and dense tropical rain forests properly, we could be taking pride in being a carbon negative country or may be even designated as a carbon sink today, instead of being a greenhouse gas emitting one. However, it’s too late yet; if we strive together, we can still achieve those goals.

Reference: Wikipedia,
Commentary: Shwe Maung fails to confess the truth about Rakhine

Pho Swe

“In the small hours of October 9 — 11am or so, we started to hear frequent bursts of firearms. We stayed awake the whole night in silence. And we dared not flee anywhere out of fear.”

“Attackers were said to have rushed into Wetepeik village to violently invade. According to some in nearby villages where mostly Muslims reside, Tatmataw troops discovered many bullet shells in searching for weapons and suspects in the village. During the search, villagers fled. Meanwhile, there were gunshots heard.”

What Ma Mya Htwe of Aungmingalar village in Maungtaw Township recounted is still occupying my mind.

She was telling the gory details about the October 9 violent armed surprise attack at Koetankaikauk police outpost and Ngchaya police station under the control of No. 1 border police command at Kyikyankin, in Maungtaw, Rakhine State.

Frightened by the gunfire and the violence, Ma Mya Htwe and her family escaped from the village to the Sittwe rescue camp via Maungtaw.

“In the Sittwe rescue camp, everything is convenient for us”, Ma Mya Htwe said. “Displaced people like us were provided with food, clothing and medical care, having no worry about living anywhere out of fear.”

Steps are being taken to find the attackers, officials said.

“Aarea clearance operations are being carried out under rule of law with three objectives — firstly co-operating by combining Tatmataw troops, police force and ward and village societies to re-capture weapons taken away by attackers, secondly finding out those who abetted and protecting them in accordance with the law”, said Col. Hein Lin, minister for security and border affairs, Rakhine State Cabinet.

It is customary for every country and society to punish anyone who commits a crime. There should be no room for suspicions and complaints on the government’s ways of solving the problems, as they have been being carried out in accord with international standards.

In the armed attack made by terrorists, 9 policemen were killed and 48 firearms of various kinds were lost, including 6,624 bullets, 47 bayonets and 164 cartridges. In the response attack, 8 terrorists were killed and two were seized alive.

Attackers wandered about the Maungtaw district, waging assaults. Combined forces of Tatmataw troops and police forces launched anti-terrorism operations, performing area clearance activities in places assumed to be their hideouts to confront the terrorists. This was described in a news release 1/2006 issued by the President’s Office on 14 October.

The news release also stated that 2 arrested attackers and 2 others repatriated by neighbouring Bangladesh were investigated. According to the preliminary investigations, the present events were born of a systematically conceived plan, planned over a long period of time, with the monetary aid and support of foreign-based terrorist organisations. Their plans include taking a stronghold in Buthaithaing-Maungtaw region and organizing Muslims residing by indoctrinating them with the spirit of extremism to occupy that area. And it is also described in the news release is that internal destructive elements took a tidy amount of money from extremists in the Middle East linked to the Rohingya Solidarity Organisation (RSO)-related Akalmul Mujahidin. The State Counsellor has issued instructions to deal with this problem in accordance with the law. In launching area clearance operations, Tatmataw and Myanmar Police Force are performing their tasks according to law, it was reported.

All assess that the present incident is not a usual terrorist attack, but completely intended to harm the sovereignty and affairs of the State.

“Attackers rushed into the area where police border out-post were situated to attack, taking harm the sovereignty of the State. In today’s VOA live broadcast debate program, U Shwe Maung, the former parliamentarian, accused Tatmataw troops, border guard police and Arakanese youth of burning down Muslim villages, raping their nationals and killing children.

U Shwe Maung, currently in the USA, led the demonstration in front of the Myanmar Embassy, it was learnt.

By seeing this, all are well convinced that the accusations of international media of violations of human rights of local residents during Maungtaw area clearance operations were intentionally fabricated in collusion with terrorist groups.

In the VOA live broadcast debate program, U Tun Aung Kyaw of the Arakan National Party (ANP) bluntly said that the violent armed attacks were done intentionally to harm the sovereignty and affairs of the State.

“Attackers rushed into the area where police border out-post were situated to attack, taking in a lot of bullets and firearms, claiming many lives. Yet, we are feeling that Tatmataw and police forces are carefully dealing with sympathetic minds”, U Tun Aung Kyaw said.

U Shwe Maung disagreed with U Tun Aung Kyaw’s assertions.

What U Shwe Maung reiterated about October 9 attacks so that people might be easily deceived is not surprising. But strangely enough, he did not mention even a word as a man who had ever lived in Myanmar — as to starting to harm the sovereignty of the State, failing to confess and denounce RSO’s subversive plans and lacking a word reminding terrorists of stopping their attempts to the best of their calibre. Their belief and attitude are weird enough. They seem to take the ethic — A stranger must not insult his host — for granted. They do not understand that the interests of the country must be prioritised over the interests of individuals, family, town or race.

Many analysts know well that the Tatmataw and the Myanmar Police Force are performing their duties to defend the sovereignty of the State as a national duty, not launching area clearance operations to find faults with everyone.

U Sithu Aung Myint, a journalist, said, “Since the advent of the occurrence, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi convened an emergency meeting, instructing to exercise rule of law, that is, for Tatmataw and Police force’s response not to be extreme attacks. Afterward, she instructed teams led by the minister for information to reach sites of the attacks to keep racial conflict under control. Those arrested were sent to courts of justice. Police officials concerned said that they sent those arrested and suspects to trial as instructed by the State Counsellor so that ICRC (International Committee of the Red Cross) can come to investigate anytime. The situations are totally different from those of 2012.

U Tun Maung Kyaw still asserted that there was no one who burnt their house by themselves in the world. He continued to deny the arson cases by burning houses with stacks of straw on roofs.

U Tun Aung Kyaw of the Arakan National Party (ANP) added: “I would like to say about situations on the ground. Attackers were still at last. They are hiding in hideouts of villages. It is not reasonable to accuse of rape cases in time of risking their lives.”

Here I firmly claim that his opinions are simple ones. It is like the “elephant in the living room.”

Water supply project for 81 villages to be completed in December

A water supply project that would pipe in water to individual residences for 81 villages from Myaing township, Pakokku district and Magwe region conducted by Rural Development Department and UNICEF will be completed in December, according to Myaing township Rural Development Department.

“Our Rural Development Department implemented this project jointly together with UNICEF. So far, the project has been completed in 59 villages. Another 22 villages still remain. They are Kyaw Min Tun from the Myaing township Rural Development Department.

For this project, UNICEF provided the guidelines and Myaing township Rural Development Department conducted the technical portion of the effort. “The village essentially needed a meter, and get the water from the well,” he added. Having door-to-door water supply can solve the water shortage problems and the danger of fires in the summer, according to the local people.

“Previously, we used to go door to door water supply can solve the water shortage problems and the danger of fires in the summer, according to the local people. "We used to go and get the water from the well. Now, we are using the water with our own meter," said Ko Zaw Lwin Soe from Daung Oho Gyi village, Myaing township.

The door-to-door water supply project which was implemented in Pakokku district was a three-year project that started in 2014.— Myitmakha News Agency

A villager seen standing on the water wagon at a rural village. PHOTO: MYITMAKHA NEWS AGENCY
Britain could still change its mind over EU divorce, says man who drafted Article 50

LONDON — Britain could still change its mind about Brexit after triggering its formal divorce talks with the European Union, the man who drafted Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty told the BBC.

Prime Minister Theresa May has said she will invoke Article 50 by the end of March, kicking off two years of divorce negotiations.

“You can change your mind while the process is going on.”

John Kerr, a former British ambassador to the EU who drafted Article 50, told BBC TV.

“During that period, if a country were to decide actually we don’t want to leave after all, everybody would be very cross about it being a waste of time,” he said. “They might try to extract a political price but legally they couldn’t insist that you leave.”

The High Court will rule on Thursday whether May has to get parliament’s approval before triggering Article 50, which both the claimants and the government have said is irreversible once invoked.

Kerr wants either parliament or the public — through an election or a second referendum — to revisit the decision to leave the EU in a year to 18 months time, the BBC said.

He added that if Scotland were to vote for independence, they would probably get membership of the EU pretty quickly.

—Reuters

Trump, Clinton blast each other on character; Clinton rises in poll

PENSACOLA, Fla./ LAS VEGAS — Democrat Hillary Clinton and Republican Donald Trump attacked one another’s character as they pushed their closing arguments six days before the US presidential election, while the latest Reuters/Ipsos poll showed Clinton’s lead over Trump was unqualified to lead the country.

“During that period, if a country were to decide actually we don’t want to leave after all, everybody would be very cross about it being a waste of time,” he said. “They might try to extract a political price but legally they couldn’t insist that you leave.”

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—Reuters

Turkey removes 1,218 gendarmerie from duty: interior ministry official

ANKARA — Turkey suspended 1,218 gendarmerie personnel on Thursday, an official from the interior ministry overseeing the force said, as part of investigations into a failed coup in July.

Turkey has already sacked or suspended more than 110,000 civil servants, judges, prosecutors, soldiers and others over suspected links with the network of Fethullah Gulen, a US-based cleric blamed by Ankara for orchestrating the failed coup.—Reuters

US Navy base in Sasebo briefly locked down on ‘shooting’ report

SASEBO, (Japan) — A US naval base in Japan’s Sasebo was put on temporary lockdown Thursday following a report of a shooting around 9:30 a.m., the Navy said, adding the alert was soon lifted.

“All clear (at the Sasebo base),” US Naval Forces Japan tweeted.

“No evidence of a shooter. No casualties. Base has returned to normal operations,” it said.

Japanese and US authorities began a joint security drill at the Sasebo base in the southwestern prefecture of Nagasaki on Wednesday, according to a Sasebo city official.

The US naval base told the city that the incident was not related to the drill, the official said.—Kyodo News

Development of new technologies Serbia’s strategic priority

BELGRADE — Serbia is on a good path to implement new technologies, but citizens also need to accept and use them more as we live in a world that has obviously changed greatly, it was said at the BIZIT conference on Wednesday.

State Secretary of the Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications Tatjana Matic noted that currently five out of the world’s six most successful companies work in the field of new technologies and that ten years ago the situation was the opposite, with only Microsoft in the top ten.

“The world has obviously changed greatly. The government has understood the importance of modern trends, as could be seen in PM Vucic’s programme, which noted development of new technologies is among the government’s strategic goals”, said Matic.

Strategies and laws that will contribute to further development of new technologies are being drawn, she said.—Tanjug

Pakistan withdraws six diplomats from New Delhi

ISLAMABAD — Pakistan has called back six diplomats from its High Commission in New Delhi who have already flown back to Islamabad, official sources said.

Those who have been called back include four diplomats whose names were included in a confession statement extracted by the Indian authorities from Pakistani diplomat Mohammad Akhtar expelled by India last week.

Akhtar was picked up by the Indian intelligence on 26 October and forced to sign a confession to being a spy and to name four other diplomats at the High Commission to be indulging in spying work.

A Foreign Ministry statement issued the following day said the Indian action had shrunk “diplomatic space for the working of Pakistani High Commission in New Delhi.”—Kyodo News

Two US military personnel killed in northern Afghanistan

KABUL — Two US service members were killed on Thursday while assisting Afghan security forces in operations against the Taliban around the northern city of Kunduz, a US military statement said.

“The service members came under fire during a train, advise and assist mission with our Afghan partners to clear a Taliban position and disrupt the group’s operations in Kunduz District,” the statement said.

It gave no details on the identity of the personnel or what units they served with.

The deaths underline the precarious security situation around Kunduz, which Taliban fighters managed to enter last month, a year after they briefly captured the city in their biggest success in the 15-year long war.

Although US combat operations against the Taliban largely ended in 2014, special forces units have been repeatedly engaged in combat, providing assistance to Afghan army and police.—Reuters
In a West Bank refugee camp, political struggle turns to violence

BALATA REFUGEE CAMP (West Bank) — Hundreds of bullet holes scar the battered walls, shop fronts and trash-strewn alleys of Balata, the West Bank’s largest refugee camp, the result of further clashes earlier this week between Palestinian security forces and local gunmen.

The heavily armed force came before dawn on Monday, hunting for a handful of locals they say are criminals and thugs. For six hours the gunfire raged, shattering windows and piercing metal, before the security squad withdrew, empty-handed.

Two days on, one of the men sought that night walks brazenly down the main street, past the meat hanging outside the butcher’s shop and the fresh, warm pita from the bakery oven, proud that the camp stood firm and repelled the assault.

“Balata is a fortress,” 31-year-old Khattam Abu Rezak told Reuters, dragging on a cigarette as he sat in the sparsely furnished front room of a friend’s rundown house, the curtailed portrait of Yasser Arafat on the wall. “We don’t let the Palestinian Authority in because they will take us, torture us,” he said, referring to the administration run by President Mahmoud Abbas that has limited self-rule in the Israeli occupied West Bank. “We are not criminals. The youth of Balata are angry because they are not being listened to. We want dignity, we want better lives.” To an increasing-ly large extent, the future of Palestinian politics and the fate of Abbas, now 81 and in power for 11 years, are being forged in Balata, a heartland of both the first and second Palestinian up-risings against Israeli occu-pation.

The camp of nearly 30,000 people, all refugees or descendants of refugees from the 1948 war that fol-led Israel’s founding, is one of the most destitute places in the West Bank. Over the decades, through intifadas and Israeli security clampdowns, the popula-tion has grown ever angrier and more marginalized, its struggle to escape poverty ever harder.

During Arafat’s time that frustration was directed squarely at Israel, with Balata’s young men willing to re-cruit to the Al-Aqsa Martyrs’ Brigade, the armed wing of the Fatah Party that Abbas now heads. These days most of the wrath is aimed at Abbas himself and his failure to keep his prom-ises.

Until Arafat’s death in 2004, and in the early years of Abbas’s rule, Fatah remained a tightly unified party, the overwhelming force in Palestinian poli-tics. But in recent years, as discontent has grown with the leadership’s failure to deliver an independent Pal-esitanian state, competing factions have emerged. Among Abbas’s big-gest rivals is Mohammed Dahlan, 55, a former Fatah security chief who lives in self-imposed exile in Abu Dhabi.

Born in a camp in Gaza, Dahlan has always courted support among the refugees. But in Balata he has a particularly strong base, helped by charitable donations he makes and the support, residents say, of a powerful local politician, Jamal Tirawi.

Abu Rezak, the wanted local gunman, doesn’t na-mecheck Dahlan so much as Tirawi, seeing him as a grassroots Fatah figure “with initiative, someone we can trust”. Abbas, on the other hand, has lost any sense of how the camps are feeling, he says.—Reuters

With Iraqi troops at Mosul’s gate, Baghdadi promises victory

BAGHDAD — With Iraqi troops battling inside Islamic State’s Iraqi bastion of Mosul, the militants’ leader told his followers to fight to the death, in what he said was a war against Shi’ite Islam, Western “crusaders” and the Sunni “apostate” countries Turkey and Saudi Arabia.

Expressing confidence in victory, despite the broad alliance of Iraqi and interna-tional forces arrayed against a few thousand Islamic State fighters in Mosul, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi called on the ji-hadists to “wreak havoc”.

He also urged them to target Turkey and Saudi Arabia, Sunni Muslim re-gional powers he said had entered the war against Is-lamic State.

“This raging battle and total war, and the great ji-had that the state of Islam is fighting today only increases our firm belief, God willing, and our conviction that all this is a prelude to victory,” Baghdadi said in an audio recording released online by supporters on Thursday.

Iraqi regular troops and special forces, Shi’ite mi-liitias, Kurds, Islamic State’s own fighters and other groups backed by US-led air strikes launched a campaign two weeks ago to recapture Mos- ul.

Winning back the coun-try’s second biggest city would mark the defeat of the caliphate that Baghdadi declared from the pulpit of a Mosul mosque two years ago. Islamic State also holds large parts of neighbouring Syria.

In his first audio message released in nearly a year, Baghdadi, known as Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, head of the Nineveh Province “not to weaken in the ghadh against the ‘enemies of God’.”

He also called on the group’s suicide fighters to “turn the nights of the unbe-lievers into days, to wreak havoc in their land and make their blood flow as rivers”.

Addressing those who might consider fleeing, he said: “Know that the value of staying on your land and honour is a thousand times better than the price of re-treating with shame.”

The exact location of Baghdad, an Iraqi whose real name is Ibrahim al-Samarrai, is not clear. Reports have said he may be in Mosul itself, or in Islamic State-held land to the west of the city, close to the border with Syria. The authenticity of the 31-mi-nute recording could not be immediately verified, but the voice and style closely resembled those of previ-ous speeches Baghdadi has delivered. The recording appeared to be recent as it focused on the Mosul offensive, although Baghdadi did not mention the city by name.

Mosul still has a popula-tion of 1.5 million people, much more than any of the other Iraqi cities by Islamic State’s own government, and two years ago Abd al-Mahdi and neighbouring Syria.—Reuters

Kenya says withdrawing its troops from a UN mission in South Sudan

KAMPALA — Kenya said on Wednesday it would withdraw its troops from the UN peacekeeping mission in South Sudan after it sacked a Kenyan who led the force and was accused of not responding to an at- tack on a hotel in the South Sudanese capital Juba in July.

A UN inquiry ac-cused the force, known as UNMISS, of failing to re- spond to the attack on Ho-tel Terrain despite multiple requests.

The inquiry also found that during assault by South Sudanese gov-ernment troops civilians in the hotel were subjected to and witnessed crimes in- cluding murder, intimida-tion, sexual violence and torture.

Ban Ki-moon, the UN secretary general, ex- pressed alarm at UNMISS’s failures and said he had asked for immediate re-placement of the force’s commander, Lieutenant General Johnson Mog- na Kintana Onyeku, from Kenya.

The Kenyan govern-ment said it rejected the findings of the inquiry and the request by Ban to re-place the commander, who had been in charge since June.

“The process lead-ing to this unfortunate decision not only lacked transparency but did not involve any formal consult-ation with the government of Kenya,” the statement.

It said Kenya would withdraw its troops in UN-MISS as its continued de-ployment in South Sudan was “no longer tenable and is inimical to their safety and well-being”.

The country also said it would be participat-ing in a peace process for South Sudan and discon- tinue plans to contribute troops to a proposed re-gional force to be deployed in Juba.

Kenya said UNMISS was stymied by “fundamen-tal structural and systemic dysfunctionality”, and that blaming the force’s failures on its officer was scapegoat-ing.—Reuters
South Africa watchdog calls for probe on influence peddling in Zuma’s government

PRETORIA — South Africa’s anti-graft watchdog called for a judge to investigate allegations of influence peddling in President Jacob Zuma’s government, in a report released on Wednesday as thousands of protesters called for the president to step down.

The 355-page report, titled “State of Capture”, stopped short of reaching conclusive findings, but is likely to add to pressure on Zuma by demanding a full inquiry within 30 days into the biggest crisis of his scandal-plagued presidency.

The report was finally released after the president withdrew a court bid earlier on Wednesday that had sought to delay its publication.

Police fired stun grenades and used water cannon to disperse demonstrators who had marched to the Union Buildings, where Zuma’s offices are located. Outside the High Court, protesters carried “Zuma must go” placards.

Zuma denies providing special favours for wealthy friends, including three brothers who run a business empire from media to mining and who also deny wrongdoing.

The carefully-worded report stopped short of asserting that crimes had been committed, saying the watchdog lacked the resources to reach such conclusions.

It focused on allegations that the brothers, Ajay, Atul and Rajesh Gupta, influenced the appointment of ministers, and called for an investigation into whether Zuma, some of his cabinet members and some state companies acted impropriety.

In one case it cited “extraordinary and unprecedented” government intervention in a private business dispute involving Zuma’s friends and his son. This, it said, may have created “a possible conflict of interest between the President as head of state and his private interest as a friend and father”.

The affair has rattled markets in Africa’s most industrialized economy, which faces the risk of ratings downgrades later this year. Divisions within the African National Congress (ANC) have widened since the ruling party suffered its worst-ever local election results in August.

The rand rose by as much as 20% per cent to the dollar when the court ordered that the report be released, although it later pared some of its gains. Analysts said allowing the report to be released was an indication the country still had strong institutions.

The release of the report has been a central demand of Zuma’s opponents since its publication was suspended on 14 October, the day its author, Thuli Madonsela, reached the end of her tenure as public protector, South Africa’s anti-graft watchdog.

The presidency said in a statement that Zuma had “decided in the interests of justice” to withdraw his bid to delay it.—Reuters

Philippine fishermen put Duterte diplomacy to test, visit disputed shoal

SUBIC, (Philippines) — On his first voyage as captain, Philippine fisherman Joel Banith was more worried about being battered by Chinese coastguard ships than he was about the impending storm on the horizon in the South China Sea.

His was one of the first boats to gamble on the big catches on offer in and around the disputed Scarborough Shoal since Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte made surprise overtures towards China, which sees the area as its sovereign territory.

For four years, Chinese ships have blockaded the tranquil lagoon rich in fish stocks and forced fishermen from the Philippines to travel further for smaller catches, reflecting tensions in the South China Sea where several countries have overlapping claims.

Frosty relations between China and the Philippines have improved markedly, however, as Duterte shifts away from traditional ally the United States and closer to Beijing, and some fishermen have decided to take a calculated risk.

“I felt a bit nervous because it was my first time serving as captain,” 32-year-old Banita told Reuters, a day after making the 10-hour, 124-mile journey back to the shores of the northwest Philippines.

“We heard what happened before, that they (Chinese ships) ram the boats, so I was moving slowly around the shoal but nothing happened.”

There has been considerable confusion at sea since Duterte’s diplomatic shift, with China’s foreign ministry saying this week that the situation at Scarborough Shoal “has not changed and will not change”.

Philippine officials said fishermen could return, but confirmed no agreement had been reached when Duterte visited Beijing two weeks ago in search of investment, trade, and unimpeded access to the shoal.—Reuters

Indonesians scour waters for dozens missing after speed boat crash

JAKARTA — A 280-strong search-and-rescue team scour the waters off an Indonesian island for dozens missing on Thursday, a day after a speedboat carrying mostly migrant workers struck a reef and sank, the national disaster mitigation agency said.

The accident happened as the boat was heading from the southern Malaysian state of Johor towards Indonesia’s Batam island, just south of Singapore.

The boat, carrying 98 workers and three crew, hit the reef in strong winds and big waves. Eighteen people were killed, 39 were found alive and 44 were missing.—Reuters
Biggest threat to forests, beef lags in push to cut supply chain deforestation

BARCELONA — More companies have promised to cut back deforestation in their supply chains for agricultural commodities since the Paris climate change deal last December, but progress in implementing those pledges is mixed, research groups said on Thursday.

Under the New York Declaration on Forests, launched in September 2014, some 190 governments, companies, indigenous peoples’ organisations, green groups and think tanks are aiming to help the private sector eliminate deforestation from the production of agricultural commodities by 2020.

The first report to track such corporate sustainability promises said 108 companies had announced 212 new commitments since December 2015, boosting the total to 415 businesses. Levels vary between commodities: of around 630 companies assessed, 59 percent of those that source or produce palm oil had made commitments, and 53 percent in the wood and paper industry. But for soy, it was only 21 percent, and for cattle products as low as 12 percent.

Those big four globally-traded commodities are responsible for 40 percent of deforestation.

Marco Albani, director of the Tropical Forest Alliance 2020, wrote in the report that with just four years left to the end of 2020, “there is still a lot to be done”.

“More companies need to commit, and many more need to move much faster to operationalize those commitments,” he said.

Less than half the assessed companies have time-bound action plans, robust monitoring systems remain rare, and only 45 percent of firms are reporting on compliance with deforestation policies, the report added.

Most of the companies with forest commitments are manufacturers and retailers, of which nearly 90 percent are headquartered in Europe, North America or Australia — where they are more likely to feel the heat from green consumers. Producers, processors and traders of commodities, as well companies based in developing countries, have been slower to act, the report noted.

The exceptions are palm oil producers in Southeast Asia and meat-processing companies headquartered in Brazil, it added.

Charlott Streich, director of Climate Focus, a think tank that led the report, said a large, unknown number of traders and small and medium-sized producers “are all very happy to deforest and then supply to China” and other emerging markets.

“This is the part that cannot be captured by the supply chain commitments of the big companies - this needs to be coming from governments,” she told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

Governments should enforce laws and regulations, and crack down on the corruption that helps fuel deforestation, she added.—Reuters

Obama says US mulling alternate routes for North Dakota pipeline

WASHINGTON — President Barack Obama said the US government is examining ways to reroute an oil pipeline in North Dakota as it addresses concerns raised by Native American tribes protesting against its construction.

Obama’s comments late on Tuesday to online news site Now This were his first to directly address the escalating clashes between local authorities and protesters over Energy Transfer Partners’ $3.8 billion Dakota Access pipeline project.

“My view is that there is a way for us to accommodate sacred lands of Native Americans. And I think that right now the Army Corps is examining whether there are ways to reroute this pipeline,” Obama said in the video interview.

The US Department of Justice did not comment on Obama’s statement regarding rerouting the line, citing pending litigation involving the tribes and an ongoing review of permitting by the US Army Corps of Engineers.

“Ultimately, this is a determination the Army must make based on its own review, and we don’t yet know what that decision will be,” a Justice Department spokesman said.

On Wednesday, protesters on the banks of the Cannoneta Creek confronted law enforcement, as they attempted to build a wooden pedestrian bridge across the creek to gain access to the Cannon Ball Ranch, private land owned by ETP, according to a statement from Morton County officials.

The US Justice and Interior Departments along with the Army Corps of Engineers halted construction on part of the pipeline in September due to protests by Native American tribes who contend the pipeline would disturb sacred land and pollute waterways supplying nearby homes.

The affected area includes land under Lake Oahe, a large and culturally important reservoir on the Missouri River where the line was supposed to cross. The Army Corps of Engineers confirmed Wednesday that it will let law enforcement go into this land to prevent further campsites from being set up.—Reuters

Hams are seen in a collapsed factory following an earthquake in Norcia, Italy, on 31 October 2016. Photo: Reuters

Earthquake hits already battered central Italy, no casualties

ROME — A strong earthquake hit the same area of central Italy on Thursday that has already been battered by a spate of recent tremors, but there were no reports of casualties or further serious damage.

The US Geological Survey (USGS) initially measured the quake at 5.0 but later revised it to 4.8. Its epicenter was in the Marche region, one of three areas hit repeatedly since August.

Nearly 10 hours after the latest quake, there were no reports of casualties, injuries or serious damage to buildings already weakened by previous tremors. Earthquakes measuring 5.5 and 6.1 hit the area on 26 October, followed by a 6.6 magnitude quake on Sunday, the biggest tremor to strike Italy for 36 years. The recent quakes have reshaped more than 600 square km (230 square miles) of land, lowering areas around the epicentre by up to 70 cm (28 inches), according to data released by Italy’s National Institute for Geophysics and Volcanology (INGV).

Central Italy was hit by an initial earthquake on Aug 24 that killed 300 people, most of them in the town of Amatrice. Since then, some 21,600 aftershocks have battered the region, the INGV said, driving most residents from their homes.—Reuters

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV KOTA HARTA VOY. NO ( )

Consignees of cargo carried on MV KOTA HARTA VOY. NO ( ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 4.11.2016 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 Claim’s Day.

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S ADVANCE CONTAINER LINES

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV MALACCA STAR VOY. NO ( )

Consignees of cargo carried on MV MALACCA STAR VOY. NO ( ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 4.11.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.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 Claim’s Day.

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
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Phone No: 2301185
Taylor Swift tops Forbes’ 2016 list of highest paid women in music

NEW YORK — With earnings of $170 million in 2016, Taylor Swift was 2016’s highest-paid woman in music, Forbes magazine said on Wednesday.

Swift, 26, smashed the Rolling Stone’s North American touring record, pulling in a total of more than $200 million on the North American portion of her “1989” world tour. Last year, the “Bad Blood” singer came in second to Katy Perry with an estimated $80 million.

Swift was honoured with the first-ever “Taylor Swift Award” at the BMI Pop Awards in May, quipping that she “would be kind of bummed” if the award had gone to someone else.

British “Hello” singer Adele, 28, ranked second on Forbes’ list with $80.5 million in earnings, her highest total yet. Adele, whose album “25” swiftly became the biggest seller of 2015, enjoyed continued success with album sales this year and grossed millions per night for her arena shows.

Madonna, who was named the highest-paid woman in music in 2013, ranked third this year. Her last North American tour grossed $170 million, bringing her career total on the road to $1.4 billion pretax, according to the magazine.

In the past 12 months, Madonna, 58, earned a total of $76.5 million.

That was slightly more than Barbados-born Rihanna, who earned $75 million and also received a lifetime achievement award at the MTV Video Music Awards on 28 August.

“Lemonade” artist Beyonce, who was 2014’s top earner, ranked fifth at $54 million.

Collectively, the 10 women on Forbes’ list earned more than $600 million this year.

Forbes compiled the list after estimating pretax income for the 12 months from June 2015 to 2016 based on interviews with managers, agents, lawyers and some of the stars.

It also looked at data from the Pollstar, the Recording Industry Association of America and tracking firm Nielsen SoundScan.—Reuters

Garth Brooks win top prize, but Beyonce takes Country Music Awards’ centre stage

NASHVILLE — It’s billed as country music’s biggest night, but it was pop-R&B queen Beyonce who commanded the spotlight at the 50th annual Country Music Awards on Wednesday with a thumping performance of “Daddy Lessons.”

Accompanied by the Dixie Chicks, the Texas-born star appeared more than two hours into the more-than-three-hour-long show, which was broadcast live from Nashville on ABC, frustrating fans who tuned in specially and expected her widely touted performance to open the show.

Working a glittering, beaded gown, Beyonce brought the A-list audience to its feet with the country-blues “Daddy Lessons” from her newest album “Lemonade,” joined by a bevy of on-stage musicians and the Dixie Chicks.

The crowd roared with appreciation at Parton’s observing that her Willie Nelson Award “is an absolute high, for me,” as she emphasized the word ‘high’ in a nod to Nelson’s well-documented marijuana use.

Kenny Chesney was presented the special Pinnacle Award, only the third time the honour has ever been presented.

Female vocalist of the year went to Carrie Underwood, her fourth win in the category.

After blurring thanks to the many legends in attendance, Underwood was seemingly at a loss for words, saying “I’ve just become suddenly simple.”

Chris Stapleton was named male vocalist of the year, and ended his speech saying “It takes a village,” a line often associated with US presidential candidate Hillary Clinton.

Co-hosts Brad Paisley and Underwood also mentioned the presidential campaign in opening banter that included the lines “this show is rigged,” “will you accept tonight’s results?” and “You’re a nasty woman.”

Other top awards included single of the year, won by Thomas Rhett for “Die a Happy Man,” and Lori McKenna’s “Humble and Kind,” named song of the year.

An emotional Maren Morris won for new artist, noting “Last year I sat across the street in a bar and watched this show.”

Eric Church won album of the year for “Mr. Misunderstood.”

Other awards went to Little Big Town for vocal group of the year and the Brothers Osborne, named vocal duo of the year.—Reuters

‘Loving’ spotlights interracial couple who changed US marriage laws

LOS ANGELES — When Mildred Loving, a black woman banned from her rural Virginia hometown for marrying a white man, wrote to US Attorney General Bobby Kennedy in 1963, she never imagined that her letter would change the course of American history.

Kennedy referred Mildred and Richard Loving’s case to the American Civil Liberties Union, and in 1967, eleven years after the couple had been exiled from Virginia for violating the state’s anti-miscegenation laws, the US Supreme Court struck down legislation that prohibited interracial marriages. Nearly 50 years after the landmark ruling, the quiet, working class Lovings are showcased in the film, “Loving,” out in US theaters on Friday. Behind every cause are the people that fight for something they believe in, and in this case, the Lovings’ unwavering devotion to one another was what inspired writer-director Jeff Nichols.

“We stop thinking about the humanity at the centre of these things, and that’s what Richard and Mildred showed us,” he said.

In “Loving,” the couple from Caroline County, Virginia, travel to Washington, D.C. to get married, bypassing Virginia’s strict laws preventing interracial marriage. They return to their home to live quietly under the radar, but the police are tipped off and the Lovings, who are expecting their first child, are arrested and given a suspended prison sentence on the condition that they leave Virginia.

The film centres on the Lovings’ quiet daily lives, with little dialogue between the couple, but their discomfort living in cramped quarters in a noisy big city and their desire to go back to Virginia is the catalyst for their case. The Lovings “weren’t standing on podiums shouting and inciting crowds. They were literally kind of pushed through an already open door, they weren’t kicking it in,” said Joel Edgerton, who plays Richard Loving.

“They’re very identifiable, unwilling heroes,” he added.—Reuters

Ang Lee tackles war drama in ‘Billy Lynn’s Long Halftime Walk’

TAIPEI — Oscar-winning director Ang Lee brought his latest movie “Billy Lynn’s Long Halftime Walk” to his native Taiwan on Wednesday, a war drama the filmmaker has sought to turn into a strikingly immersive experience.

The film, about a young US private returning home for a victory tour following a battle in Iraq, was produced for a 3D presentation in 4K with a high frame rate of 120 per second.

Newcomer Joe Alwyn plays the protagonist in the film, based on the novel of the same name, and the cast includes Vin Diesel, Chris Tucker and Kristen Stewart.

“The whole thing was so special. The chance to work with a director like Ang at any stage of anyone’s career would be the most amazing opportunity,” Alwyn said. “For it to come around for me so early on with such a groundbreaking film, which is trying to do so much and push boundaries, is incredible.”

Lee, known for “Life of Pi” and “Brokeback Mountain,” told reporters at the premiere in Taipei he hoped “everyone will love this movie” despite not all cinema-goers able to show it in its groundbreaking format.

“I hope that everyone can happily embrace a new kind of experience,” he said.—Reuters
Kenyan conservationists to track elephant ‘corridors’ between parks

AMBOSEL (Kenya) — Scientists in Kenya are fitting radio collars on elephants to help secure the “corridors” they use between national parks, part of a conservation drive that has seen the nation’s elephant population double within the last 35 years.

“The purpose for collar- ing the elephants is that we will provide information on its movements across this landscape,” said Steve Jumbe, head of programmes in East Africa for the conservation body International Fund for Animal Welfare.

“Those movements will define critical corridors and dispersal areas that the elephants use... so that we can secure [these areas].”

Conservationists used a combination of helicopters, four-wheel-drive vehicles and elders from the local Masai tribe to track the elephants across the grass savannah.

Two more elephants were fitted with collars on Wednesday, making a total of 14 elephants being tracked under the programme.

Both were darted outside the limits of Amboseli National Park in southern Kenya, in areas where herders were grazing livestock, underscoring the potential for conflict with humans.

Elephants also often raid crops and farms as they migrate between parks, angering villagers who rely on their produce to feed their families. But tracking data from the IFAW project showed elephants could be deterred by electric fences around farms, suggesting a way for the animals and their human neighbors to live together more peacefully.

The collars can also provide rangers with an early warning if the elephants are staying too close to human habitation.

The Kenya Wildlife Service said elephant numbers had rebounded to 32,000 from a low of 16,000 in 1989, the year that the world conservation body CITES banned sales of ivory from African elephants.

Kenya’s Wildlife Service was set up a year later. But elephants remain threatened by poaching and habitat loss.

—Reuters

Tiny Slovenia world’s best at preserving environment to boost prosperity

LONDON — Protecting the environment makes nations more prosperous, a think tank said on Thursday, as a study showed Slovenia is the country best at using nature to improve the wellbeing of its citizens.

In its study, the London-based Legatum Institute for the first time included governments’ efforts to reduce pollution, preserve biodiversity and limit the exploitation of natural resources in a formula to calculate its annual prosperity index.

“The protecting the environment, leaving citizens with a cleaner, safer and even prettier environment, is strongly linked to wellbeing,” Alexandra Mousavizadeh, director at the Legatum Institute, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

The index is published amid increased global efforts to tackle climate change and foster sustainable growth.

In September last year UN member states set a number of ambitious targets to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity for all by 2030.

In December, nearly 200 nations agreed to keep global temperature increases to below 2 degrees Celsius to curb global warming, as part of the landmark accord reached in Paris.

The Legatum Institute’s index measures the prosperity of 149 countries based not only on their wealth but also on a series of other factors including education, personal freedoms, how safe people feel and how they get on with their neighbours.

In 2016 New Zealand was ranked first, followed by Norway, while Slovenia came top in the category dedicated to the natural environment.

Its ranking was due to the “aggressive” environmental policy Slovenia has adopted over the past decade, which has included the creation of large protected areas on land and sea, according to the institute.

—Reuters

Michelin dishes stars to 26 Chicago restaurants

CHICAGO — Michelin said on Wednesday it awarded its coveted stars to 26 Chicago restaurants in the latest edition of its dining guide that will be launched on 7 December up from 22 in last year’s edition.

The latest guide cast a spotlight on a burgeoning food scene where local chefs showcase their interpretation of American cuisine.

“Chicago is not a coastal city. You don’t have the Asian influence like in San Francisco and the international influence in New York. You have a more American take on food,” said Michael Ellis, international director of the Michelin Guide.

Michelin’s anonymous reviewers rate restaurants in 28 countries and its stars are seen as a sign of top-notch dining around the world. It rates restaurants in three other US regions: New York, the San Francisco area and Washington.

Alinea and Grace retained their three-star status, Michelin’s highest accolade, for their “exceptional cuisine, worth a special journey.”

There are more than 100 restaurants in the world with the three-star distinction.

“Every restaurant have to earn their stars (each year). It’s not a lifetime achievement,” Ellis said.

Two Chicago restaurateurs, newcomer Oriole and veteran Tru, moved up to its two-star category for their “excellent cuisine, worth a detour,” joining Acadia, 42 Grams and Sixteen.

Michelin lauded Oriole, which opened in March, for “a consistently exciting blend of contemporary food that embraces familiar global flavours,” under head chef Noah Sandoval.

Tru, which had been a one-star eatery since 2011, improved its menu with dishes that have “interesting flavour combinations and appealing visual presentations,” overseen by executive chef Anthony Martin, Michelin said.

Michelin handed out one star to 19 restaurants in its 2017 guide on the third most populated US city, praising them for being “very good” in their category.

—Reuters
Higuain hero and villain as Juve blow early lead

TURIN (Italy) — Gonzalo Higuain converted an early penalty for Juventus and then missed a sitter before Olympique Lyonnais hit back late in the game to grab a 1-1 draw in their Champions League match on Wednesday.

Corentin Tolisso’s 85th-minute header, the first goal that the Italian champions have conceded in four games in Group H, kept alive the French side’s slim hopes of reaching the last 16 and kept Juve waiting for at least one more game to book their spot.

Juventus are second with eight points, two behind leaders Sevilla, and should still progress, while Lyon have four.

Juventus coach Massimiliano Allegri was angry with his team for trying to grab a late winner instead of settling for the draw.

“We ran too many risks towards the end and we could have undermined our whole campaign in the Champions League,” he said. “You go to war when there’s a chance of winning; you don’t go to war when there’s a chance of losing.”

Juve were gifted an early lead when Higuain burst down the left and found Stefano Sturaro who was clumsily pushed over by Moisant Diakhaby.

The Argentine stepped up and sent Anthony Lopes the wrong way from the spot.

However, Higuain turned villain shortly before halftime when he scooped the ball over the crossbar with the goal at his mercy after Mario Mandzukic had possession off a defender and set him up with a glorious opportunity.

In between, Claudio Marchisio sent a low drive agonisingly wide from just outside the penalty area.

Juventus, who won 1-0 in Lyon two weeks ago, appeared to sit back after halftime and the visitors enjoyed plenty of possession although they struggled to turn it into genuine chances.

Already missing Giorgio Chiellini from their so-called ‘BBC’ defence, Juve supporters saw Leonardo Bonucci limp off in the 67th minute when he had to be replaced by Mehdi Benatia.

The revamped defence were caught out with five minutes left when Rachid Ghezzal delivered a superb free kick into the Juve area which was attacked by three players, with Tolisso getting there first to head past Gianluigi Buffon.

Juventus threw themselves forward in search of a late winner and Neylon threatened to snatch the points when Alexandre Lacazette ran on to a through ball but Buffon did well to narrow the angle. — Reuters

Djokovic cruises, Murray struggles, Wawrinka out in Paris

PARIS — Novak Djokovic began his bid to hold on to his number one ranking and an historic French Open triumph by Gilles Muller in the Paris Masters second round while Andy Murray struggled through and Stan Wawrinka faltered on Wednesday.

Serb Djokovic, who could be dethroned from the top spot by Wimbledon champion Murray this week, broke Luxembourger Muller once in each set to secure a drama-free 6-3, 6-4 victory.

The 29-year-old will hold on to his ranking if he reaches the final in Paris.

“I like to focus on playing match after match and putting quality and value into my game. I know that if that’s the case, then I can challenge anybody on the world in any surface, in any conditions,” Djokovic told a news conference.

It went less smoothly for Murray, who overcame a blip to down Spaniard Fernando Verdasco 6-3, 6-7(5), 7-5 before US Open champion Wawrinka was knocked out by German qualifier Jan-Lennard Struff 3-6, 6-7(0), 7-6(1).

A long season eventually took its toll on the world number three from Switzerland, who started brightly but ran out of gas after being forced into a second-set tiebreak.

Djokovic cruised to victory in their 17th meeting, breaking to open the second, netting a backhand winner and Lyon threatened to snatch the points when Alexandre Lacazette ran on to a through ball but Buffon did well to narrow the angle. — Reuters

61st Kayin State Day to celebrate from 6-10 November

A TRADITIONAL boat race and aThai-Myanmar Lethwei challenge fight will be held in celebration of Kayin State Day, according to the Department of Sports and Physical Education in Hpa-an District.

The 61st Kayin State Day, a holiday marked by the state government, which has organized an annual boat race and a traditional dance competition, is planned to take place between 6 and 10 November with a wide range of entertainment programmes, including market festivals and sports events.

The main aim of holding a traditional boat race at the celebration is to revitalize the tradition and culture of the Kayin people.

This type of sports event was held during the term of Dr Saw Hla Htun, former chairman of Kayin State and father of the current Kayin State chief minister, said U Sa Tin Aung Mynt, head of the department.

The boat race is scheduled to be held from 6 to 8 November at Thayetmyo lake, while traditional dance competition, is planned to take place between 6 and 10 November with a wide range of entertainment programmes, including market festivals and sports events.

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