State Counsellor: Majority protects rights of minorities

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi addressed the workshop responsible for drafting rules that protect the rights of ethnic minorities, stressing the important role of the majority in protecting rights of the minorities, held in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

The State Counsellor said that ethnic majorities have a great responsibility to give protection to the languages, culture and customs of ethnic minorities, urging them not to forget the needs of minorities when they work for protecting the rights of minorities.

“You are deeply urged to keep it in your minds that it is incumbent upon great nations to be kind to lesser minorities and take responsibility to protect their rights,” she said.

“In protecting the rights of ethnic nationals, you also need to be careful about responsibility. If anyone wants rights, they are required to accept responsibility.”

Officials from the Office of the Attorney General, legal experts and scholars also participated in the workshop to address the legal aspect of the draft rules.

‘If anyone wants rights, they are required to accept responsibility’

Rule of law is meant for defending the whole populace of the country under the protection of laws of great benefit for the citizens, absolutely not for suppressing the people. Therefore, rule of law is of great importance. And the law needs to be just. It will be beneficial for our country only if there are just and fair laws”.

The State Counsellor also met with Union Ministers, Ministers of ethnic affairs from Regions and States, and leading members of Self-Administered Regions.

In the discussion that followed officials clarified the initial draft of the regulations on protecting the rights of ethnic nationals with those present discussing in groups.

In its current form, the regulations consist of nine chapters. The discussion will continue tomorrow.

— Myanmar News Agency

Aid delivered to communities in Maungtaw Township

The Muslims For Peace Foundation, a Bangkok, Thailand-based NGO, donated cash and provisions to both communities in Maungtaw Township, Rakhine State.

Mr Waraponkhuntali and Mr Viraponsontardo, members of the Muslims for Peace Foundation, donated Ks2 million to the authorities concerned from the Office of the Rakhine State Cabinet on Monday for the national people in Maungtaw Township and 300 bags of rice to the village elders for Tat Oo Chaung, Ducheradan and Gorduthara village-tracts in Maungtaw Township.

“Our group is a non-governmental organisation. This is the first time we have donated to the Maungtaw Township. We provided aid to both communities, arranging to donate further,” Mr Waraponkhuntali said.

U Tin Aung, village administrator of the Gorduthara (South) said: “Provisions will be divided equally according to the members of the family household. We thank you for such a donation. Now our villages will become stable and peaceful.”

Aid from Indonesia flows into villages

Meanwhile, humanitarian aid from Indonesian government arrived Sittway, Rakhine State on 21st January for communities in northern Rakhine State were delivered to both communities yesterday.
Union government manages to collect more taxes than targeted

THE Union Government managed to collect a larger amount of taxes than the previous year, according to the Deputy Minister for Planning and Finance U Maung Maung Win.

The Union Government collected more taxes than its targeted Ks2141.759 billion for the first six months of 2016-17 fiscal year, Deputy Minister U Maung Maung Win of the Ministry of Planning and Finance told the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Session yesterday.

He said the Union government was able to collect Ks2548.759 billion during the period and the Union Government was able to collect more taxes than in the same period last year.

“As the Union Government intends to rely on taxes, it is important for the government to collect taxes of the appropriate amount while also levying an amount that is not burdensome to taxpayers, educating the public to willingly pay taxes, to develop an international standard tax regime and to prevent tax evasion with the help of international experts,” U Maung Maung Win said.

Later, the Deputy Minister explained the purposes of their budgets to the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, including the Ministry of Home Affairs, which asked for Ks107,639,303 million, and the Ministry of Defence, which asked for Ks1290.865 billion, Ks86.865 billion less than the previous fiscal year.

Responsible officials of the 15 ministries of the government, the Supreme Court of the Union, the office of the Amyotha Hluttaw, the constitutional tribunal, the union election commission, the office of the union attorney-general, the office of the auditor-general of Myanmar and the union civil service board also explained their requested budgets at the session.

—Myanmar News Agency

Police inspector (investigation) in Ye Township, filed a suit & arrested for taking bribes

CONCERNING the turning over of the Canter vehicle in Ye township, Mon State, the aggrieved party made a complaint to the Anti-Corruption Commission that Police Inspector Kyaw Thet Khang of the investigative branch in Ye Myoma Police Station had demanded bribe money from the aggrieved by inventing a fake case.

Upon receipt of the complaint, the anti-corruption commission formed an investigative board to try the case. By misappropriating the authority assigned upon, it was found that police inspector Kyaw Thet Khang opened a criminal case against U Aung Kyaw Myo and arrested him, demanding 3 Lakhs for granting bail from the aggrieved on 23 December and asking for K 5 Lakhs for the case on December 27.

Hence, Police Inspector Kyaw Thet Khang was filed and arrested under section 56 of the anti-corruption law, 2013 at the high court in Mon State on January 30, according to the source of the Anti-Corruption Commission.

—Myanmar News Agency

Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services inspects textile factory, Aircraft Maintenance Base in Meikhtila

Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing visited the Textile Factory of the Defence Services in Meikhtila yesterday.

During the visit, the Senior General inspected the uniforms and other textile produced by the factory.

Afterwards, he went to the Aircraft Build and Maintenance Base in Meikhtila and inspected the works there.

—Myanmar News Agency

Thura U Shwe Mann receives ambassadors to Myanmar

Chairman of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Commission for the Assessment of Legal Affairs and Special Issues Thura U Shwe Mann received the Ambassador of United States to Myanmar H.E. Mr. Scott Marcil, Ambassador of Britain to Myanmar H.E. Mr. Andrew Patrick, Ambassador of Denmark to Myanmar H.E. Mr. Peter Lysholt Hansen, and charge’de’ Affaires a.i. of European Union in Myanmar Dr. Colin Steinbach yesterday at the Hluttaw Building I-1 in Nay Pyi Taw.

During the meeting, they discussed whether the passage of the foreigners’ bill and the foreign workers bill will be supportive of foreign investment, suitable to contemporary situations, just and beneficial and contributory to the national economic development or not. Later, the chairman of the commission and members met with civil society organization concerned with the rule of law and justice. The organizations held discussions with the commission, which focused on amendments or enactment of laws related to the rule of law, labour rights, women’s rights, anti-corruption and land rights. In response to the discussions, the chairman explained the performance of the main duty assigned to the commission by the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, the process of drafting and enactment of laws, and coordination with union level organizations, Hluttaw organizations, civil society organizations and interested people and other duties of the commission.

—Myanmar News Agency

Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker receives ambassadors to Myanmar

Speaker U Win Myint holds talks with Ambassador of Britain H.E. Mr. Andrew Patrick, Ambassador of Denmark H.E. Mr. Peter Lysholt Hansen, Ambassador of United States H.E. Mr. Scott Marcil, and charge’de’ Affaires a.i. of European Union in Myanmar Dr. Colin Steinbach, yesterday morning at the Pyithu Hluttaw Building in Nay Pyi Taw.

During the meeting, they discussed matters concerning the legislation of Hluttaw. Also present at the meeting were Deputy Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw U Ti Khun Myat and officials of Pyithu Hluttaw Office.

—Myanmar News Agency

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw is being convened in Nay Pyi Taw. Photo: MNA
Residents at Myanmar-Bangladesh border want upgraded border fence

Maung Po Zaw (MNA)

SOME local people in the Myanmar-Bangladesh border areas want an upgraded barbed-wire fence at the border of the two countries.

It is learnt that there are big holes on the current fence near border posts 796, 1065 and 1180, allowing anyone to pass through easily.

The border fence is easily destroyed by those who want to go to the neighbouring country and come back to Myanmar. If possible, we want a higher concrete wall so that the rule of law can be maintained and trans-border crimes can be prevented,” said U Maung Oo Tha, a town elder in Maungtaw.

Maungtaw in Rakhine State shares 128.75 miles of land boundary and 39.82 miles of water boundary with Bangladesh.

A border fence of barbed wire 10 feet high and about 38.108 miles long was constructed 150 feet away from the Zero Line at the mouth of Kongchaung Creek in southern Maungtaw to border post BP32 in 2009. Another barbed-wire fence 36.66 miles long from BP 32 to BP 54 was constructed in 2012 and yet another fence from BP 54 to 66 in 2014. But the border line from BP 66 to BP 67 was left unfenced because it is an area covered with deep forests that includes an inhabited area.

“We have reported to the Ministry of Home Affairs about the damaged fences, which will allocate funds for the upgrading of the fence. We will upgrade the border fence in accordance with the budget allocation of the ministry. But everything depends on the budget allocation,” said an official who was involved in the erection of the fence at its first stage.

Minister of Lao People’s Democratic Republic pays homage-visit to Shwedagon Pagoda

Mrs Sengdeuane Lachanthaboune, Minister for Education & Sports of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, and party currently in Yangon, paid a homage visit to Shwedagon Pagoda at 10 am yesterday morning.

Mrs Sengdeuane Lachanthaboune sees Jade Buddha Statue at the Shwedagon Pagoda. PHOTO: MNA

A visiting delegation led by Mrs Akie Abe, wife of the Prime Minister of Japan under the programme of the Greater Mekong Initiative, arrived in Yangon yesterday from Mandalay.

They were welcomed at Yangon International Airport by U Han Tun, Minister for Agriculture, Livestock Breeding, Forestry and Energy of the Yangon Region Government, Daw Kathy Soe, Director-General of Strategic Studies and Training Department under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other officials.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe’s wife and party visited the World Buddhist Vipassana Bivman Monastery in Mayangone township, Yangon, Thakha Kari Nun teaching school in Mingalardon township, Zalan Nun teaching school, Pyinnya Theingi nun teaching school, Apanma Nun teaching school and Ponnya Visudhi Monastic school to observe classes and instruction.

During their visit, the wife of the Prime Minister of Japan and party donated Ks 50 lakhs each and stationery to the schools. —Myanmar News Agency

Wife of Japanese PM visits Yangon nunneries, monasteries

U Aye Tha Aung, Deputy Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw attends 12th Global Appeal, 2017 Opening Ceremony

U AYE THA UNG, Deputy Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw and Hluttaw representative Dr Daw Than Ngwe attended the opening ceremony of Global Appeal, 2017 held at the Taj Palace Hotel in New Delhi, India on 10:30 am on Monday. The Global Appeal was held to end the stigma and discrimination against those affected by Leprosy.

Afterward, Deputy Speaker met with responsible officials from Nippon Foundation and WHO to discuss. Following that they met with representatives present at the 12th Global Appeal, 2017 to end the stigma and discrimination against those affected by leprosy, discussing with them for getting aids necessary for ending stigma and discrimination against lepers in Myanmar and arrangements in Hluttaw for eradication of leprosy in Myanmar, it learnt.—Myanmar News Agency

World Bank provides assistance to Ministry of Health and Sport

DR. MYINT HTWE, Union minister for Health and Sport, arrived at the Myo Chaung Special Station Hospital on Saturday, where he toured the hospital, made sure that instructions given on his previous visit were implemented and provided further assistance.

Yesterday afternoon, Yangon region public health department met with officials of the World Bank to discuss their assistance in nutrition promotion activities, implementing of the national health project, emergency situations and the outbreak of natural disasters and infectious diseases.

They also met with a combined team comprised of members from the United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the University of Oslo. They will convert the Myanmar health information system to a computer-based system using District Health Information Software 2 (DHIS-2) software as a National Database Platform. They also discussed upgrading the IT infrastructure of the ministry of health and sport.

Moreover, officials from Stanford University, a prestigious American university, called on the union minister and discussed maternity, child health matters and accommodation of Yangon General Hospital.

The union minister also paid respects to shweparamitawya Sayadaw Rev Sandalika and offered alms, it is learnt.—Myanmar News Agency

Aid delivered to communities . . .

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Seven teams formed and started to deliver the aid to the peoples in five districts on 27th January and have distributed aid to 99,168 from 10,575 households from 52 villages in 24 villages-tracts so far.

Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement and the Chief Minister of the Rakhine State Government accepted the aid including 9,000 boxes of dried noodles, 3,220 bags of flour, 1,050 boxes of biscuit and 50 bags of clothing on 21st January in Sittway, Rakhine State.

Under the arrangement of the Rakhine State Government, the aid is being delivered to the people in Sittway, Myauk-U, Kyaukpyu and Thandwe districts.
National-level policy discussion concerning migration held on 30th Jan

THE Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population held a national-level policy discussion on Monday at Hotel Amar in Nay Pyi Taw to include gender affairs into amendments of the law relating to employment and a national project concerning migration.

The change was made in cooperation with UN-Women and announced in an opening speech delivered by the Union Minister for the Labour, Immigration and Population U Thein Swe.

The Union Minister said that this meeting was held with the objective of conducting campaigns to make the public aware of the suggestions concerning migration according to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and highlighting the gender affairs concerning migration in the overseas employment law draft and national project concerning the migration.

The overseas employment supervision committee was re-formed to include the ministries concerned in order to encourage migrant workers to work with dignity and to ensure a systematic migration.

The Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population is conducting the activities with overseas employment agencies for migrant workers to have access to basic knowledge such as the dos and don’ts, it is learnt.

The incorporation of the requirements, opportunities and the rights of the migrant workers into the amendment of Myanmar migration-related law and consideration of the requirements of the women migrants in formulation of policies and plans are the only correct means for achievement of sustainable social development, officials said.—Myanmar News Agency

Flyovers to be built at junctions between motor roads and railroads

AUTHORITIES will build nine more overpasses or underpasses at junctions between motor roads and railroads to prevent possible railway-related deaths and injuries caused by high-speed trains, according to the Myanma Railways.

With the assistance of the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA), a high-speed rail system is being implemented according to the railroad improvement project that began earlier this year.

Overpasses are planned for Ywamayaung Street, Parami, Bayintnaung, Danyingon, Golf Course Road, Khayepin Street, Gantana Street, Thitsa and Yadana roadways. In addition, automatic gears and a modern railway signalling system will also be installed at busy junctions.

After finishing the current project, the speed of the train will be 36 miles per hour, almost twice as fast as the current speed.

The MR and relevant bodies continue to conduct awareness raising programmes for commuters by distributing pamphlets and putting warning signals at circular trains.—200

Water spinach plantations flourish in Mandalay

WATER spinach, which is affordable and has many health benefits, are being planted on a commercial scale in suburban Mandalay.

The number of local residents engaged in water spinach plantations has risen, allowing a worker to earn about Ks5,000 a day.

The growers form Ngwe Taw Kyeegon ward from Pyi-gyidagun Township supply the water spinach in sufficient quantities to the markets of Mandalay. Water spinach can be cut for many months once cultivated.

A water spinach grower can send over 150 baskets a day to the market. One basket contains 336 bundles of water spinach.

Water spinach, known locally as Taiwan Kasun, can be cut after 45 days of cultivation. The plants grow faster in the summer than in the winter.

The growers have to focus on cutting weeds, fertilising and irrigation after planting.

A basket of water spinach sells for about Ks6,000. —Nwuy Ngyi Myit Nye

Importers, exporters of fruit, flowers and vegetables meet on 3rd February

FRUIT, flower and vegetable importers and exporters will hold a discussion on 3rd Feb at the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry, according to the Myanmar Fruit, Flower and Vegetable Producers and Exporters Association (MFVP).

This discussion aims to deal with the problems faced in the import, export and production of the perishable commodities and to facilitate the process. Additionally, they will discuss matters concerning cooperation with each other in the supply chain. Those interested are welcome to attend. The MFVP has already negotiated with the Ministry of Commerce to take part in the priority export sector of the National Export Strategy, it is learnt.—200

KS2 billion for farmers affected by Myanmar-Thailand bridge

COMPENSATION of nearly KS2 billion were paid by authorities to affected farmers, who lost land, crops and buildings as a result of the Myanmar-Thailand friendship bridge project.

The construction of the friendship bridge No.2 in Myawady, a border town in Kayin State, is nearly finished, said U Thaung Han Soe, director (urban) of the Kayin State Road Department. He continued to say that the project is expected to be completed in March, when state officials from the two countries will attend the opening ceremony.

A total of KS1.977 billion compensations for land, crops and structures were recently paid to 56 farmers out of 68 affected people.

The authorities will compensate more than 448 million kyats to the rest of the farmers before the last day of the month. —Myitmita News Agency

Crime

Illegal timbers seized

FOREST department staff and forest security police led by the Director of Yangon Region Forest Department arrested a man and seized eight empty containers, three press machines, seven vehicles and six ten-wheeled vehicles carrying illegal timber weighing 395 tonnes in the War War Win company yard at No. 402, Sagar Wath Street, Pale Myothit Ward in Mingalardon Township in Yangon Region on Saturday. Of the 395 tonnes, 375 tonnes were deemed illegal Padauk square timbers and about 20 tonnes of Tamalan square timbers. Officials measured the seized timbers in detail and police have taken action against the accused under Section 42(b) of Forestry Law at Mingalardon Township Court. Interrogation of the accused has led the police to searching two godowns of Ruby Lion Manufacturing at No. 16/64 and 170 in U Tun Nyo street in Shwe Pyi Thar Industrial Zone in Yangon yesterday morning.

Police seized 280 tonnes of illegal Padauk square timber and 3 tonnes of Tamalan. Police have taken action against the illegal timber owner and other people involved in the case in accordance with the law, according to the forest department.—Myanmar News Agency

Overpasses are planned for Ywamayaung Street, Parami, Bayintnaung, Danyingon, Golf Course Road, Khayepin Street, Gantana Street, Thitsa and Yadana roadways. In addition, automatic gears and a modern railway signalling system will also be installed at busy junctions.

The MR and relevant bodies continue to conduct awareness raising programmes for commuters by distributing pamphlets and putting warning signals at circular trains.—200

Growers are planting water spinach in Mandalay. Photo: The Mirror

Illegal timber containers are seen. Photo: MNA
2,600 million viss of fish, prawns produced this quarter

THE private sector was able to produce a total of 2,609 million viss of fish and prawns in the third quarter of this fiscal year.

Meanwhile, the Fisheries Department could produce 552 million fish larvae, with 461 million fish larvae sold and 91 million larvae put into rivers and creeks, it is learnt.

Dr Aung Thu, Union Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation, delivered a speech at a 3rd coordination meeting held on 30th January by the Fisheries Department during which he said he wished to boost production to meet demand, provide technical assistance in the safe food production chain and get wider access to more markets so as to effectuate the economic development of the agro industry and enhance the socio-economic status of the rural people.

“All the stakeholders in the supply chain are required to improve agricultural production, in accordance with the policy, in order to keep up with international countries in the highly competitive market. In addition, civil staff are also needed to exert the efforts to become skilled and competent ones,” said Dr. Aung Thu.

Afterwards, the director-general of the Fisheries Department explained the activities accomplished during the third quarter of this fiscal year and said the government grants over Ks5 trillion to cooperatives every year, with Ks25 billion, with Ks10 billion from the government and Ks15 billion from the private sector. —200

YANGON Bus Public Company to suspend stock trading

YANGON Bus Public Company Limited will suspend its stock trading starting on 3 February, it is learnt.

The company will hold its first anniversary general meeting where the suspension of stock trading will be officially announced, said Dr Maung Aung, the chairperson of Yangon Bus Public Company.

The company sold its shares at a price of Ks100,000 in 2016. Shares worth over Ks3 billion have been traded so far. It will announce its resumption of stock trading at a later date, company officials said.

Gov’t grants over Ks5 trillion to cooperatives in January

THE government grants small loans to the cooperatives every year, with Ks5.15 trillion lent to 31,364 cooperatives this month.

But the cooperatives are allowed to take out loans only after paying off existing loans.

There are a total of 31,364 cooperatives in 290 townships across the nation, with 2,641,350 members.

The central cooperative sells agricultural tools at a cheap price. They will offer a small loan plan and instalment plan to the farmers in a bid to transition to mechanised farming.

Seventy per cent of Myanmar’s population lives in rural areas, depending mainly on agriculture for their livelihoods. The farmers are faced with financial problems because traditional cultivation cannot reap many benefits.

Therefore, the government formed agricultural cooperatives in all regions and states with an aim at providing agricultural machines to be utilised in the production chain from farm to mill. —Than OO (Lasmyethna)

Rohu exports down 30 per cent in 2016

Floods in previous years have had a negative impact on fish farming lakes, causing businessmen to turn to other type of fish for cultivation. As a result, rohu exports in 2016 declined by 30 per cent, according to the Myanmar Fishery Federation.

Myanmar’s rohu has already attained a market share not only in Asia but also in Middle East countries.

Rohu accounted for 80 per cent of Myanmar’s fish cultivation. Additionally, the rohu topped the list for the highest volume of fish exported from Myanmar.

But the fish farming businesses did not turn out as expected because previous floods destroyed some fish farming lakes and the price of aquatic feedstuff increased. Over 90,000 tonnes of rohu were exported in 2015, whereas Myanmar exported only about 60,000 tonnes of rohu in 2016. The rohu are cultivated on an enormous scale in neighbouring countries such as India and Bangladesh.

According to statistics of the Ministry of Commerce, 95 tonnes of rohu were exported to Bangladesh from 17th to 23rd December and 65 tonnes of rohu were also exported from 24th to 30th December. —200

Merchants check fishes at Sanpya fish market in Yangon, early morning on 7 January, 2017. PHOTO: PACE KHANAR
Philippines’ Duterte asks China to patrol piracy-plagued waters

MANILA—Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte on Tuesday said he had asked China to help in the fight against Islamic State-linked militants by sending ships to patrol southern waters plagued by raids on commercial vessels.

Speaking to newly promoted army generals, Duterte said he had sought China’s help in dangerous waters in the south to check the activities of Abu Sayyaf, a Muslim rebel group sustained by piracy and kidnap-for-ransom activities.

A surge in piracy off parts of the Philippines is forcing ship-owners to divert vessels through other waters, pushing up costs and shipping times.

Duterte said piracy in the Sulu Sea between eastern Malaysia and the southern Philippines would increase to lev- els seen in Somalia, and raise insurance costs for firms and increase prices of consumer goods and services.

“We would be glad if they have their presence there just to patrol,” Duterte said, adding that China could send coast-guard vessels, not necessarily “gray” warships.

“In the Malacca Strait and here in Sulu Sea re-mains to be a big prob- lem,” he said. The Malacca Strait, between Malaysia’s west coast and the Indone-sian island of Sumatra, has over the years also been plagued by pirates.

He did not say if China had responded.

The Philippines, Mal-a-aysia and Indonesia had an agreement to patrol and tackle the Abu Sayyaf in the Sulu and Celebes Sea after they kidnapped the crew of an Indonesian and Malaysian tug boats and South Korean and Viet-nam merchant ships.

Philippine Defence Secretary Delfin Lorenzo-zana last week said coop-eration might be expanded to include Brunei and Singapore. The United States has also expressed concern about the security problem and held exercis-es with Malaysia and the Philippines last year.

Lorenzana said on Tuesday the military had intensified operations on land with the aim of de-feating Abu Sayyaf within six months.—Reuters

Malaysian police arrest three suspected Islamic State sympathizers

KUALA LUMPUR—Malaysian authorities have arrested three men for suspected links with the Islamic State mili-tant group, police said on Tuesday.

Muslim-majority Malaysia has been on high alert since an attack last January by Islam-ic State-linked militants in Jakarta, the capital of neighbouring Indonesia.

Khalid had not iden-tify the suspects but said one of them, a 38-year-old Malaysian, had posted a plan to carry out a bomb attack in the capital, Kuala Lumpur, on his Face-book page.

Another of the sus-pects is an Indonesian with Malaysia residency working as security guard with the national carrier, Malaysia Airlines.

He and the third sus-pect, another Malaysian, were believed to have been planning to join Is- lamic State militants in Syria, Khalid said.

The three face charg-es of suspected involve-ment in terrorism, he said.

Malaysia has not seen a serious militant attack but authorities say they have disrupted sev-eral plots. Seven people were wounded in a gre-nade blast at a bar near Kuala Lumpur in June, in an attack claimed by Is-lamic State.

Malaysia has arrested more than 250 people be-tween 2013 and 2016 for suspected militant activity linked to Islamic State.

According to police data, 91 Malaysians had gone to fight in the Mid-dle East as of October last year. Of them, eight had returned to Malaysia and 24 had been killed in fighting.

Last week, authori-ties said they had arrested four people with links to an Islamic State cell based in the southern Philip-pines.—Reuters

Hun Sen warns of seizure of Cambodian opposition party’s head office

PHNOM PENH—Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen warned on Tuesday that the opposition party’s head office in capital Phnom Penh will be seized and sold should he win a lawsuit against Sam Rainsy, the party’s leader.

“Hun Sen told a parliament session that apart from the office of the Cambodian National Res-ervation Party, which is regis-tered to party president, other properties belonging to Sam Rainsy located elsewhere, such as in the southwest coastal prov-ince of Sihanoukville, would also be confiscated.

Hun Sen said the money he expects to get from winning the defama-tion case against Sam Rainsy, some $1 mil-lion, will be used to build homes for handicapped people in Cambodia.

The lawsuit was filed after Sam Rainsy allegedly accused Hun Sen of bribing Thy Sovantha, a for-mer opposition activist, with $1 million in ex-change for her to work in support of the ruling Cam-bodian People’s Party and attack the CNRP.

Also Tuesday, Son Chhay, a senior member of the CNRP, told report-ers the court and the ruling party should exercise sep-arate powers. Son Chhay said any “inappropriate seizures” of their party’s properties will not ben-eft the ruling party and will instead lead to “more votes” for the CNRP in the next general election.

The Phnom Penh Mu-nicipal Court summoned Sam Rainsy to appear in court on 14 February for questioning over the defama-tion charge filed by Hun Sen.

Sam Rainsy, who has been in self-imposed exile abroad since November 2015, faces a series of law-suits and possibly arrest if he returns to Cambodia. He has been convicted in absentia of defamation.

Thy Sovantha, Heng Samrin, president of the Cambodia Prime Minister Hun Sen, Photo: Reuters

Seven-Eleven illegally fines staff for sick leave without substitute

TOKYO—A Seven-Eleven conve-nience store in Tokyo illegally docked payment of a 16-year-old part-time worker after she took sick leave without arranging for another em-ployee to cover her shifts, the operator of the chain said on Tuesday.

The store deducted 9,350 yen ($82) from the high school girl’s pay-check after she took two sick days for a cold in Jan-uary, according to Seven & I Holdings Co.

The store had in-formed its part-time work-ers that they have to find other workers to fill in their shifts when they take unscheduled days off and that if they do not find a replacement, the store will impose a penalty.

The convenience store operator apologized for the act, it is the employ-ee’s responsibility to find a replacement when an em-ployee is unable to work.

The entire amount will be refunded to the girl, who had already quit the job.

The pay cut also ex-ceeded the legal upper lim-it set for a wage penalty, the company said.

“We will make efforts to make all franchises thorough-ly adhere to laws,” it said.

The girl took two days off last month after inform-ing the store that she had caught a cold. She was scheduled to work for a to-tal of 10 hours over the two days, according to the To-kyo-based retail giant.—Kyodo News
Tech companies to meet on legal challenge to Trump immigration order

SAN FRANCISCO — A group of technology companies plans to meet on Tuesday to discuss filing an amicus brief in support of a lawsuit challenging US President Donald Trump’s order restricting immigration from seven Muslim-majority countries, said a spokesperson for a company organizing the gathering.

The meeting is being called together by GitHub, which makes software development tools.

Amicus, or friend of the court, briefs filed by parties who are not litigants in a case but want to offer arguments or information to the judge.

Alphabet Inc’s (GOOGL.O) Google, Airbnb Inc and Netflix Inc (NFLX.O) are among the companies invited, a separate person familiar with the situation said.

Representatives for Google and Netflix could not immediately be reached for comment. An Airbnb spokesman declined to comment.

The technology sector has become the clearest corporation-organizer to the ban announced last week. The industry depends on talent from around the world, and companies have been considering the best way to muster their resources, with efforts so far including statements condemning the move and financial support for organizations backing immigrants, such as the American Civil Liberties Union.

The Trump administration says the rules will increase national safety and are well within its powers.

Michael Rosenn, general counsel for fundraising company Kickstarter, which will be involved in a filing, said the effort began on Monday.

“We’re all very shaken. We’re shaken to see our neighbors and our families and our friends targeted in this way,” Rosenn said.

“All of us are trying to think about what we can do.”

The discussions among the tech companies came after Amazon.com Inc (AMZN.O) and Expedia Inc (EXPE.O) filed declarations in court on Monday supporting a lawsuit filed by the Washington state attorney general. Amazon and Expedia said Trump’s order adversely impacts their business.

A separate lawsuit challenging Trump’s order as unconstitutional was filed on Monday by the Council on American-Islamic Relations. If the tech companies decide to file an amicus brief as a group, it is unclear which case they would weigh in on.

Other companies invited to meet include Adobe Systems Inc (ADBE.O), AdRoll, Automatic Inc, Box Inc (BOX.N), Cloudera Inc, Cloudflare Inc, DocuSign, Dropbox, Etsy Inc (ETSY.O), Evernote Corp, Glu Mobile Inc, Lithium, Medium, Mozilla, Pinterest, reddit, Salesforce.com Inc (CRM.N), SpaceX, Stripe, Yelp Inc (YELP.N), and Zynga Inc (ZNGA.O), the source said.

A representative for internet communications company Twilio confirmed it would be involved in filing an amicus brief.

Cloudflare Chief Executive Matthew Prince said the internet security company is willing to consider and sign an amicus brief. Denelle Dixon, chief legal and business officer for Mozilla, said the immigration order was “misplaced and damaging, to Mozilla, to the technology industry and to the country.”

Spokespeople for Box and AdRoll said they would attend the meeting. An Etsy spokesman said the company received GitHub’s invite but could not confirm if it would move forward with the group. Salesforce declined to comment. Representatives for the other companies could not immediately be reached for comment.—Reuters

Nintendo upgrades full-year net profit forecast on weak yen

OSAKA — Nintendo Co on Tuesday revised upward its earnings projection for fiscal 2016 through March, helped by the yen’s depreciation.

The Kyoto-based company now expects a group net profit of 90 billion yen ($792 million) for the current business year, compared with a profit of 50 billion yen projected in October.

The consumer electronics and game software maker said it booked a foreign exchange-related gain of 1.4 billion yen in the nine-month period as the value of its foreign-denominated assets rose due to a weaker yen. On the other hand, Nintendo cut its operating profit projection to 20 billion yen, against an earlier forecast of 30 billion yen, on projected sales of 470 billion yen, underchanged from its previous estimate.

Nintendo said consolidated net profit more than doubled to 102.97 billion yen in the April-December period from a year earlier, aided by the success of mobile gaming releases including “Super Mario Run,” a side-scrolling adventure game featuring Nintendo’s iconic and longest-running character.

The company said its profitability was also aided by the popularity of its palm-sized “Nintendo Classic Mini Family Computer,” released in Japan in November in a revival of its groundbreaking early game console that was branded Famicom in Japan and Nintendo Entertainment System elsewhere.

Nintendo revised its assumed foreign exchange rates for the current business year, now expecting the US dollar to average 110 yen, rather than 100 yen. It also expects the euro to average 120 yen, rather than 115 yen.—Kyodo News

China to boost development of photovoltaic power technology

BEIJING — China will promote the development of photovoltaic power technology in the next five years to upgrade the country’s energy structure.

China will accelerate the technological and industrial upgrade of photovoltaic power and speed up elimination of outdated capacity during 2016-2020, according to the National Energy Administration (NEA) solar power development plan for the next five years. China will install over 110 million kilowatts of solar power by 2020, according to the plan and reduce the price of photovoltaic power by at least 50 percent compared with 2015. China had the world’s largest installed capacity of photovoltaic power in 2015, with an annual growth rate of over 33 percent from 2011 to 2015. China is aiming to lift the proportion of non-fossil fuels consumption to 20 percent by 2030 from the present 11 percent.—Xinhua

Tokyo stocks tumble on concerns over Trump entry ban

TOKYO — Tokyo stocks tumbled on Tuesday, with the Nikkei index dropping over 300 points, dragged down by concerns over US President Donald Trump’s entry ban on nationals of seven Muslim-majority countries. The 225-issue Nikkei Stock Average ended down 327.51 points, or 1.69 percent, from Monday at 19,041.34. The broader Topix index of all First Section issues on the Tokyo Stock Exchange finished 22.10 points, or 1.43 percent, lower at 1,521.67. Decliners were led by iron and steel, marine transportation and bank issues.—Kyodo News

Nintendo Co President Tatsumi Kimishima. Photo: Kyodo News

A man walks past a logo of Airbnb after a news conference in Tokyo, Japan, on 26 November, 2015. Photo: Reuters

China to boost development of photovoltaic power technology
The Four Resources and the Five Dimensions of Development

Kyaw Myaing

I n marching forward towards a modern, developed Federal Democratic Union, it is important for us to have the overall view as well as the long term view.

By overall view we mean a critical appraisal of our Four Resources. These four resources may be characterized as: Human Resources, Financial Resources, Institutional Resources, and Natural Resources.

By long term view, we mean to say that it is necessary to have a long term vision of how we wish to develop as a country and also at the individual level, how we wish to live our lives and how we prepare for our next life. Since our long term goal is the establishment of a modern, developed Federal Democratic Union, we will need to establish the most important institutions for democracy and to consolidate the institutions we already have.

We all know that a democratic system of government is based on a principle that is heartening to note is the democratic system of government. The Four Resources model, all the four resources, are inter-related. If we do not have the maximum benefit for the people in terms of taxes collected from the export of our natural resources, the area in nature and the generation of hydropower, proper care should be taken to protect our country from environmental degeneration.

In relevant connection with the rest of the world. Our government without strong financial resources, we will lag behind other countries. Therefore, one of the tasks of the current government will be to further strengthen the main pillars of our democracy.

The best way to keep morale high in all government departments is to make sure that a proper career development policy is in place. This type of policy will make sure that staff and officers get opportunities to study abroad and attend meetings and conferences abroad in accordance with their theory and practice of sound management.

As we move ahead to modernize our country, promotion and training opportunities will help hand over the reins of government to young talent and professional qualifications, experience and hard work.

In Myanmar, the Sangha is a very important historic “Vision” and eventually promises to keep the Five Precepts. Actually keeping these five precepts simply mean that we make a solemn promise in front of a Buddhist monk or in front of the Buddha image at home or at a shrine or famous pagoda like the Shwedagon pagoda. The reason for bringing up this point about the Five Precepts is because this constitutes a very important aspect of self-discipline. When we make this simple promise to keep the Five Precepts, we are actually making the promise to ourselves. If we fail and fail to keep any one of the precepts, we will be the first person to know.

Conclusion

Another thing to bear in mind is the importance of having a guiding philosophy which can stand the test of time and which can stand rigorous scientific scrutiny. In Myanmar, the majority of our citizens are Buddhists. Therefore, we may say that our guiding philosophy is Buddhism. To put it another way, we may say that the majority of Myanmar citizens follow the teachings of Lord Buddha.

The best way to keep morale high in all government departments is to make sure that a proper career development policy is in place. This type of policy will make sure that staff and officers get opportunities to study abroad and attend meetings and conferences abroad in accordance with their theory and practice of sound management.

As we move ahead to modernize our country, promotion and training opportunities will help hand over the reins of government to young talent and professional qualifications, experience and hard work.

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All that we are is founded on our thoughts. It is based on our thoughts. So we should all strive to do good deeds and keep a positive frame of mind.

San Shwe Aung

A generation is “all of the people born and living at about the same time, regarded collectively.” It can also be described as, “the average period, generally considered to be between thirty years, during which children are born and grow up, become adults, and begin to have children of their own. A familial generation is a group of living beings constituting a single step in the line of descent from an ancestor. In developed nations the average familial generation length has now reached 25 or even 30 years in some states. State Counselor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi said at the IE Singapore's Global Conversations business dialogue in Singapore during her official visit in November 2016 that “In 20 years’ time, Myanmar will have overtaken Singapore in GDP per capita.” The State Counselor has laid down a very important historic “Vision” for Myanmar citizens. We all people of Myanmar need to know this historic “Vision” and need to commit ourselves to realize that historic “Vision.”

In relevant connection with above mentioned episode, there was a world famous “Vision” laid down by the then 35th President of United States of America John F. Kennedy on 25th May 1961 at the US Congress. He declared that “I believe that this century should commit itself to achieving the goal, before this decade is out, of landing a man on the moon and returning him safely to the earth.” Following that renowned guidance line by the President Kennedy, the people of United States of America had worked very hard to realize that “Vision” and eventually National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) of USA sent space craft Apollo 11 to the moon on 20th July 1969, just before the end of the decade. On 20th July 1969, astronaut Neil Armstrong had become the first human to have put his feet and walked on the surface of the moon. We can draw an excellent lesson from President Kennedy's “Vision” that a great leader can truly inspire the whole nation to make seemingly impossible dreams possible.

A historic “Vision” ...... after a generation

Write for us

We appreciate your feedback and contributions. If you have any comments or would like to submit editorials, analyses or reports please email ce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com with your name and title.

Due to limitation of space we are only able to publish “Letter to the Editor” that do not exceed 500 words. Should you submit a text longer than 500 letters please be aware that your letter will be edited.
Lahu National Development Party presents its policy, philosophy and programs

U SHEE MON, Secretary for Social Affairs of the Lahu National Development Party presented the policy, programs and projects of their party on Radio and TV on 31 January 2017.

The text of his presentation is given below:

Respected People and Voters watching television and giving us support!

First of all, I would like to express my thanks to the Union Election Commission for making arrangements for us to broadcast on television our party’s policy, philosophy and programs as part of our election campaign.

I am U Shee Mon, Secretary for Social affairs of the Lahu National Development Party. LNDP represents all the Lahu nationals. Our aim is to ensure that Lahu nationals get what they need and the opportunities they deserve, in accord with the law. In the by-election to be held on April 1, 2017, “LNDP” will contest for 2 parliamentary seats—one at the State Parliamentary Seat in constituency 2 of Kengtung township, eastern Shan State and another for the State Parliamentary Seat in constituency 2 of Kyaythee township, southern Shan State.

The policies of our Lahu National Development Party are as follows:

1. To ensure that the sovereignty of the Union of Myanmar spreads across all the nation as far as the borders of our country; to ensure the perpetuation of national unity and to exert our efforts for the eternal survival of Myanmar’s Independence, by observing the laws and practices of developed nations and delimitation of a well-defined region; to abandon terrorism which has caused sufferings to everyone and to find the right solutions under the law in accord with just, fair, and peaceful democratic practices.

2. To cultivate the development of literature, culture, traditions and arts of Lahu nationals, to create new policies that will guarantee equal opportunities for all citizens in law, to establish a well-defined region; to freely to release political, economic, social and organizational activities.

3. To upgrade the living standards of the region where Lahu nationals reside, which had lagged behind in development during the successive regimes.

4. For the development of the Union and the region, to use the opportunities, skills and practices of developed countries as working guides.

Future programs of the LNDP:

1. Our party will organize and train Lahu nationals living in the area and across the Union of Myanmar to develop an enlightened and active organizational outlook in the economic, political, and social fields and to improve the prestige of our party.

2. Our party will organize and work to raise the status of ethnic nationals and delimitation of a well-defined region; to abandon terrorism which has caused sufferings to everyone and to find the right solutions under the law in accord with just, fair, and peaceful democratic practices.

3. Our party will occasional- ly combine, align and help each other by making friends with any political party with common aims, conception and vision, without discrimination on a basis of equality.

4. Our party will organize our ethnic nationals particularly to give up their hereditary ways of livelihood of producing narcotic drugs and opium, to substitute crop agriculture and livestock breeding and to explore minerals as a means of livelihood. As needed, technicians, professionals and investment will be found out for successful implementation.

5. Our party will exercise an independent and active political policy and peaceful co-existence with other parties.

6. Our party will cultivate the revival of literature, culture, traditions and arts of Lahu nationals and development of social affairs and activities.

7. Our party will carry out programs for easy transportation and communication from one area to another, availability of free health care and free education regardless of status.

Here, I conclude my presentation on LNDP’s policies and programs by giving assurances that our party will place strong emphasis for the affairs of children and the participation of women.

A historic “Vision” ….. after a generation

The LNDP is a party committed to creating a new and independent political system. The Lahu people are an indigenous nation, proud of their own unique history and culture. The LNDP seeks to promote the Lahu people’s rights and interests, to protect their language and culture, and to ensure the perpetuation of national unity and to exert our efforts for the eternal survival of Myanmar’s Independence.

Our party’s main goal is to build a new, independent, and democratic Union. We believe that success depends on the cooperation and support of all the ethnic nationals residing in Myanmar. We aim to create a strong and united nation that is free from any external influence or control.

The LNDP’s vision is to create a society that is just, fair, and peaceful, where all citizens are treated equally regardless of their ethnic background. We believe in equality, respect, and tolerance, and we strive to create a society where everyone can live in harmony and peace.

Our party’s vision is to create a society that is free from corruption and political interference. We believe that corruption is a major obstacle to development and we will work towards eradicating it from our society.

The LNDP’s vision is to create a society that is inclusive and diverse. We believe that diversity is a strength and we strive to create a society where everyone is welcome and respected.

Our party’s vision is to create a society that is sustainable and environmentally friendly. We believe that we must protect our natural resources and work towards a greener future.

In conclusion, the LNDP’s vision is to create a new, independent, and democratic Union where all citizens can live in peace and harmony. We believe that this vision is achievable with the support of all citizens and we will work towards realizing it.

U Shee Mon of Lahu National Development Party.
US envoy says no American weapons buildup in Philippines

MANILA — The United States ambassador to the Philippines on Tuesday rebuffed accusations by President Rodrigo Duterte that American troops were building arms depots in five Philippine bases, in breach of a security deal.

Duterte on Sunday said the United States had stockpiled weapons, including tanks, in three locations in the Philippines, which could provoke China and put his country in harm’s way.

Duterte then threatened to scrap a defence treaty between the two allies that is crucial to US strategic interests in Asia.

“We are not building a weapons depot anywhere in the Philippines,” Ambassador Sung Kim told a forum at the influential Makati Business Club, adding facilities due to be built were to store equipment for disaster response.

He said the United States could not build anything on Philippine bases against the consent of the Philippines government, and its facilities are “not related to weapons”.

Philippine military officials on Monday contradicted Duterte and said his concern had been looked into, but there was nothing to back it up.

Sung said he had several lengthy discussions with top security officials including the defense minister, and promised to address some concerns. He said the alliance remained robust.

Duterte’s spokesman, Ernesto Abella, declined to say what the president’s source of information was when he said American armories were being built.

“I cannot tell you that but he seems to be privy to some sort of information,” Abella told a news briefing.

“He may have come up on other confirmation that may have affected those comments,” Duterte’s remarks came after the Pentagon approved upgrades and construction of barracks, runways and storage facilities this year under a 2014 Enhanced Defence Cooperation Agreement (EDCA) that the outspoken president has scorned for.

The defence agreement covers rotational deployment of US ships, aircraft and troops at five bases, and storage of equipment for humanitarian and maritime security missions.

Duterte has said he hates having American troops on Philippine soil. He has made efforts to improve ties with China, despite a long-running dispute over rival claims in the South China Sea.

Reuters

French police raid Fillon parliament office over fake pay affair

PARIS — Financial police searched French presidential candidate Francois Fillon’s office in parliament on Tuesday, a parliamentary source said, part of an inquiry into his wife’s income that has thrown the election wide open.

Fillon had been favorite to win the presidency for conservative party The Republicans until a week ago when a newspaper reported that his wife Penelope drew hundreds of thousands of euros in pay without doing any work.

Fillon has said she did work for the money, but an official inquiry has been opened, and an opinion poll published on Sunday showed rival independent centrist Emmanuel Macron has caught him up. The scandal has also coincided with the choice of a hard-left presidential candidate by the Socialist party in Benoit Hamon, a move also seen as good for Macron’s prospects.

A group of right-leaning Socialist lawmakers wrote in Le Monde newspaper on Tuesday that they could not back Hamon, the clearest sign yet that his appointment could tear the party apart, with some lawmakers tempted to switch to the Macron camp.

But it was the Fillon fake pay scandal, and his team’s attempts to control it, that was center-stage on Tuesday.

The Canard Enchaine’s story on fake pay calls into question the squeaky-clean image that won him the party ticket for The Republicans over rivals who had legal issues overshadowing their campaigns.

Separately from the search of his office, Fillon’s lawyer sought to explain the payments on Tuesday.

“Francois Fillon had no constituency office while he was a member of parliament,” his lawyer Antonin Levy told RTL radio.

“That role was filled from their home, and in your view who is at home … if there is no office? Penelope Fillon of course.”

Le Canard Enchaine reported that Penelope Fillon — who had previously said in interviews that she did not get involved in her husband’s political affairs — had been paid 500,000 euros ($534,000) from state funds as a parliamentary assistant to Fillon and his successor.

The newspaper said it could find no evidence that she had actually done any work. It also said she was paid a further 100,000 euros for very little work by a literary review, whose owner Marc Ladeirix de Larchairre was a family friend.

The payments involved were made over a period between ranging between 1998 and 2013, the newspaper said.

The Fillons and Ladeirix de Larchairre were all interviewed by the police leading the inquiry on Monday. Fillon has not denied the payments but has said her payments were justified.

He has said he will step down as presidential candidate should he be put under formal investigation.

The convention, signed on Monday, also enables the two countries to exchange information to prevent international tax evasion and avoidance.

The new document updates the existing one that took effect in 1963 and is intended to promote investment and economic exchanges between the two countries, the government said.

It will come into force after Japan and Austria complete domestic procedures.

Kyodo News

Czech minister believes foreign state behind ministry hack

PRAGUE — Hackers have breached dozens of email accounts at the Czech Foreign Ministry in an attack that was similar to the hacking of the US Democratic party, Foreign Minister Lubomir Zaoralek said on Tuesday.

Zaoralek said he was told by experts the attacks were likely conducted by a foreign state. He said no confidential material from the ministry was compromised in the attacks.

Reuters

US President Trump poses grave risk to world trade: French Finance Minister

PARIS—US President Donald Trump’s administration poses a grave risk to international trade and Europe will have to stand up to him to prevent the collapse of global economic institutions, French Finance Minister Michel Sapin said on Tuesday.

“Our American partner appears to want to take unilaterally protectionist decisions which could destabilise the whole world economy,” Sapin said in a speech to an audience of international economists gathered at the French finance ministry.

“Decisions by the new US administration are posing a grave risk to the world trade order,” he said. “Neither France nor Europe … can watch helplessly as our economic institutions risk being dislocated,” he added. —Reuters

Dacic: We are not interfering in internal matters of others

BELGRADE — Commenting on the US visa ban for citizens of seven Muslim countries, FM Ivica Dacic said Serbia did not want to interfere in internal matters of sovereign countries, while his Qatari counterpart, Sheikh Mohammed Bin Abdulrahman Bin Jassim Al Thani, said he believed the US would reassess the decision.

“This is something related to the domestic issues of the US, which we cannot comment on. The Muslim countries cannot be designated as terrorists, and we believe that the American institutions, as they have announced yesterday, are going to look at the decision and develop further assessment for the impact of such a decision on them,” Al Thani told reporters after meeting with Dacic in Belgrade. —Tanjug

New loans for Greece depend on IMF participation-German FinMin

BERLIN — Further financial assistance for Greece depends on the successful completion of a review of its bailout programme and the participation of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), a spokesman for the German Finance Ministry said on Tuesday.

“Further payments depend on the successful completion of the programme’s review and the participation of the IMF,” the spokesman said.

On Monday, the head of the euro zone’s bailout fund said Greece will only receive more loans from the bloc if the IMF joins its latest aid programme, spelling out a condition thus far disregarded by Athens’s creditors.

Greece needs a new tranche of financial aid under its 86 billion euro bailout by the third quarter of the year or it faces the risk of defaulting on its debts. —Reuters

Japan, Austria sign treaty to avoid double taxation

TOKYO — Japan and Austria have signed a convention aimed at avoiding double taxation, the Japanese government said on Tuesday.

The convention, signed on Monday, also enables the two countries to exchange information to prevent international tax evasion and avoidance.

The new document updates the existing one that took effect in 1963 and is intended to promote investment and economic exchanges between the two countries, the government said.

It will come into force after Japan and Austria complete domestic procedures. —Kyodo News
Protests expected after Pakistan detains alleged architect of Mumbai attack

LAHORE, (Pakistan) — Pakistani police confirmed the accused architect of the 2008 Mumbai attacks being held in Lahore, but its identity remains unknown.

The detention of Islamic leader Hafiz Saeed follows action by the US administration of President Donald Trump aimed at countries deemed linked to terrorism, and one Pakistani official said the fear of US action against Pakistan had been a factor in the decision to hold Saeed.

India has been demanding action against him since the attack on Mumbai by 10 gunmen from Pakistan, who infiltrated the city by boat and killed 166 people in a rampage that included attacks on two luxury hotels, a Jewish centre and a train station. The attack brought nuclear-armed Pakistan and India to the brink of war. India had yet to respond to Saeed’s confinement to his home in the eastern city of Lahore.

Police detained Saeed, founder of the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) militant group that India blames for the bloodshed, at the headquarters of his charity, the Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JuD), late on Monday.

“Shortly before dawn on Tuesday, police took him to his house, where a Reuters cameraman saw police setting up a perimeter. They later banned media from the scene as about 100 Saeed supporters chanted slogans,” Saeed and his supporters accused Pakistan of acquisicing to the wishes of the United States, which has a $10 million reward for information leading to Saeed’s arrest, and India’s Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

“This is taking place because of Modi’s insistence, Trump’s pressure and Pakistan’s helplessness,” Saeed told media late on Monday as he was being led away.

Saeed has denied ordering the Taliban attacks and has distanced himself from the LeT, while leading its charity.

A JuD spokesman, Farooq Azam, announced protests in the southern city of Karachi.

“HARD DECISIONS” The United States has listed both the LeT and the charity as “foreign terrorist organizations”, Western officials regard the charity as a front for the LeT.

The Pakistani government has not commented on why it acted now.

A senior defence ministry official said the government had not been consulted by the new US administration but had been feeling US pressure on the issue.

“Trump is taking hard decisions against Muslim countries, there is open talk of actions against Pakistan also. So, yes, this was a consideration,” said the official, who declined to be identified. In recent months, Saeed has been holding regular new conferences to denounce a security crackdown in the Indian-controlled part of the divided Kashmir region.

Afghan troops battle Taliban offensive in Helmand province

LASHKAR GAH (Afghanistan) — Afghan forces said they were holding off a Taliban offensive in Helmand province on Tuesday, according to reinforcements and air support arrived.

Both sides reported heavy fighting as Taliban militants attacked government positions in Sangan district, an area where insurgents have made major gains in the past two years.

“There is heavy fighting still ongoing between the Taliban and our forces but those places that were captured by the Taliban yesterday, we have taken back,” said Omar Zawak, a spokesman for the governor of the southern province. Among the reinforcements sent to the embattled district were new commando units, he said.

A regional Taliban spokesman, Qari Yusouf Ahmadzi, said fighters had captured at least 25 government checkpoints and killed more than 100 soldiers and police.

The Taliban used tunnels dug from houses to attack the government’s front-line checkpoints, General Waliullah Alizada, commander of the 215th Army Corps, said on Monday.

Army officials said they had killed at least 19 Taliban and wounded 25. British, American and other international forces battled the Taliban in Helmand for years after the ouster of the militant group from power in late 2001. Sangan and other districts saw sustained heavy fighting.

The Taliban have made gains in several parts of the country since most foreign combat troops withdrew from Afghanistan at the end of 2014.

The US-led coalition has redeployed hundreds of troops to Helmand, however, to train and advise Afghan forces, as well as provide occasional air support.

Iran won’t use ballistic missiles to attack any country: foreign minister

TEHRAN — Iran said on Tuesday it would never use its ballistic missiles to attack another country but that its missile tests are neither part of a nuclear accord with world powers nor a UN Security Council resolution endorsing the deal.

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif spelled out Tehran’s stance after a US official said Iran on Sunday test-launched a medium-range ballistic missile that exploded after 630 miles (1,010 km).

“Visiting French Foreign Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault told reporters France had voiced its concerns over the Iranian test, adding that it harmed the international community’s confidence in Tehran and contravened UN Security Council Resolution 2231,” that resolution rati- fied a July 2015 accord between Iran and six world powers under which it scaled back its nuclear activity to defuse concerns it could be put to making atomic bombs, in return, Iran won relief from crippling economic sanctions.

Zarif neither confirmed nor denied the US report that it tested a ballistic missile on Sunday but added: “The missiles aren’t part of the nuclear accord. Iran will never use missiles produced in Iran to attack any other country.”

No Iranian missiles have been produced to carry nuclear warheads,” said Zarif, speaking at a joint news conference held with Ayrault in Tehran. The Security Council resolution called on Iran not to carry out activity related to ballistic missiles capable of delivering nuclear weapons.

Senator Bob Corker, chairman of the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee, condemned Iran on Monday and said he would work with other lawmakers and the Trump administration to hold Iran accountable.

Ayrault said at the start of his two-day trip to Tehran on Monday that France would act as a defender of the nuclear deal that new US President Donald Trump has threatened to tear up.

But Ayrault added it was imperative the Islamic Republic abide strictly by the conditions of the accords. Ayrault said it was in the “common interest” that all sides heeded the deal.

The United States, Russia, China, Britain, Germany and France were parties to the deal. Par- ties took one of the hardest lines against Tehran in the negotiations, but has been quick to restore trade relations since then. —Reuters

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif speaks to the media after meeting with French Foreign Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Tehran, Iran, Monday, Feb. 6, 2017. (AP Photo/Ebrahim Noroozi)
PARIS — Two French Socialists said they would not back their party’s hard-left presidential candidate Benoît Hamon, deepening splits in the party and handing a possible boost to independent centrist rival Emmanuel Macron.

Other senior party members, including Finance Minister Michel Sapin, took to the airwaves on Tuesday urging Hamon to pull back to the centre ground, signaling they might also desert him if he persisted.

Hamon secured the Socialist ticket after a run-off vote on Sunday on a raft of divisive policies including legalizing cannabis, cancelling debts between EU states and bringing in a “universal income” for all citizens.

Socialist politicians Christophe Car Essche and Gilles Simeoni, from the right wing of the Socialist party, wrote an article in Tuesday’s Le Monde newspaper saying they could not support him.

“How could we back a program that is the total opposite of the (current presidential) mandate that we support and which produced progress in our view,” they said. Sapin and Health Minister Marisol Touraine, staunch allies of unpopular Socialist President Fran çois Hollande, said Hamon should concentrate on winning over the rest of the party, and not expect fellow Socialists to fall into line behind him.

Sapin said Hamon had two or three weeks to clarify the situation, without going into further details. The Socialists, weakened and divided after Hollande’s presidency, are given next to no chance of getting beyond the first round of the election in April. But a defection of centrist Socialists could be a significant boost for Macron.

A poll published on 29 January for French newspaper Le Figaro showed far-right leader Marine Le Pen would come first in the election’s first round in April with 25 per cent of the vote while conservative candidate Francois Fillon would garner 21-22 per cent and Macron 20-21 per cent. In the run-off on 7 May, both Fillon and Macron were seen winning either if it was either against Le Pen, while Macron would beat Fillon in the knockout, the poll added.—Reuters

Former French education minister Benoît Hamon reacts after partial results in the second round of the French left’s presidential primary election in Paris.

Poland’s Walesa collaborated with communist secret police — institute

WARSZAWA — Poland’s government-affiliated history institute said on Tuesday it had new evidence that Lech Walesa, who led protests and strikes that shook communist rule in the 1980s, had been a secret police informer during that period.

A lawyer for Walesa, whose actions leading the Solidarity trade union contributed to the fall of communism throughout eastern Europe, said the evidence could be faulty and asked to question the assessors.

The Institute of National Remembrance (IPN) said a handwriting study showed recently-published documents suggesting Walesa, who was awarded the Nobel Peace prize and later became president, had indeed collaborated were genuine.

The IPN said forensic evidence proved he had provided at least 29 reports, signed with the codename “Bolek”, long ascribed to Walesa. It did not say what these reports contained.

“There is no doubt,” investigator Andrzej Pozorski told a news conference. “A handwritten agreement to collaborate with the Security Police from 21 December, 1970, was written in its entirety by Lech Walesa.”

The issue of whether Walesa collaborated has become deeply divisive in Poland. Former electrician Walesa, with his familiar fulsome moustache, being borne aloft by workers occupying the Gdansk shipyards became one of the abiding images of anti-communist movements in the Soviet bloc. He became an object of fierce condemnation by Soviet authorities.

Pozorski said the IPN, a state agency tasked with investigating crimes “against the Polish Nation” from World War Two until the collapse of communism, had reviewed 17 cash receipts and concluded they were written by Walesa.

Walesa has acknowledged once signing a commitment to inform. But he insists he never fulfilled it and a special court exonerated him in 2000.

Walesa’s legal representative, Jan Widacki, said the special court examination did not amount to scientific evidence.

“This is not something that can be measured. We would definitely like to interrogate the assessors who issued this opinion,” Widacki told public television TVP Info.

He said if the assessors worked on Walesa’s handwriting from recent years, then their opinion could be faulty.

“Walesa’s handwriting today is not Walesa’s handwriting from the 70s when he was a simple labourer,” Widacki said.

The documents surfaced last year at the house of a late communist interior minister. The ruling conservatives, led by Jaroslaw Kaczyński, have leapt at the opportunity to question Walesa’s independence from the communist-era police after he became Poland’s first democratically elected president between 1990 and 1995. Walesa’s critics argue the files put into question not only Walesa’s standing as a hero of the effort to end communist rule but also raise doubts about whether the country ever succeeded in fully shaking off the influence of pre-1989 communist officials.

His defenders say that whatever the authenticity of the documents, they do little to undermine his merits in leading efforts to shake off communist rule.—Reuters

Germany sends tanks to Lithuania for NATO mission

GRAFENWOEHR, (GERMANY) — Germany began sending tanks and other equipment to Lithuania on Tuesday as part of a NATO mission to beef up the defence of eastern Europe and send a signal of resolve to Russia, which has denounced the build-up as an act of aggression.

The German army command said it was sending about 200 vehicles, including 30 tanks, by train to Lithuania along with 450 troops, the first of whom arrived last week. The transports would continue until late February.

Seven decades after the end of World War Two, the movement of German troops to eastern Europe, even on a NATO mission, remains a sensitive issue both in Germany and the region. On Monday the US military deployed thousands of soldiers and heavy weapons to Poland, the Baltic states and southeastern Europe in its biggest build-up since the Cold War.

The movements are part of a strategy agreed by NATO leaders last July to reassure member states that were once part of the Soviet bloc and have been alarmed by Russia’s seizure of the Crimean peninsula from Ukraine in 2014.

The 28-nation Western alliance decided to move four battalions totalling 3,000 to 4,000 troops into northeastern Europe on a rotating basis to display its readiness to defend eastern members against any Russian aggression.

The deployments focus on Poland and the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, which fear Moscow could try to destabilise them by cyber attacks, territorial incursions or other means.—Reuters

Some leading French Socialists threaten to desert hard-left Hamon

PARIS — Two French Socialists said they would not back their party’s hard-left presidential candidate Benoît Hamon, deepening splits in the party and handing a possible boost to independent centrist rival Emmanuel Macron.

Other senior party members, including Finance Minister Michel Sapin, took to the airwaves on Tuesday urging Hamon to pull back to the centre ground, signaling they might also desert him if he persisted.

Hamon secured the Socialist ticket after a run-off vote on Sunday on a raft of divisive policies including legalizing cannabis, cancelling debts between EU states and bringing in a “universal income” for all citizens.

Socialist politicians Christophe Car Essche and Gilles Simeoni, from the right wing of the Socialist party, wrote an article in Tuesday’s Le Monde newspaper saying they could not support him.

“How could we back a program that is the total opposite of the (current presidential) mandate that we support and which produced progress in our view,” they said. Sapin and Health Minister Marisol Touraine, staunch allies of unpopular Socialist President Fran çois Hollande, said Hamon should concentrate on winning over the rest of the party, and not expect fellow Socialists to fall into line behind him.

Sapin said Hamon had two or three weeks to clarify the situation, without going into further details. The Socialists, weakened and divided after Hollande’s presidency, are given next to no chance of getting beyond the first round of the election in April. But a defection of centrist Socialists could be a significant boost for Macron.

A poll published on 29 January for French newspaper Le Figaro showed far-right leader Marine Le Pen would come first in the election’s first round in April with 25 per cent of the vote while conservative candidate Francois Fillon would garner 21-22 per cent and Macron 20-21 per cent. In the run-off on 7 May, both Fillon and Macron were seen winning either if it was either against Le Pen, while Macron would beat Fillon in the knockout, the poll added.—Reuters

Former French education minister Benoît Hamon reacts after partial results in the second round of the French left’s presidential primary election in Paris.
Honda, GM to launch joint venture to produce fuel-cell car systems

DETROIT — Honda Motor Co and General Motors Co of the United States said on Monday they will establish a US subsidiary to jointly produce next-generation systems for hydrogen-powered vehicles in the country.

The two automakers, which have cooperated to develop systems for fuel-cell vehicles since 2013, aim to launch production in the fifty-fifty joint venture around 2020, they said.

American Honda Motor President Toshiaki Mikoshiba told a press conference in Detroit that the companies decided to set up a manufacturing base in Michigan “mainly because America is the world’s biggest market for fuel cells.”

The automakers aim to gain a competitive edge over their rivals in the race to further develop the environment-friendly vehicles by reducing high production costs through the mass production tie-up. But the companies did not disclose at the press conference the expected impact of the joint venture on profits.

Honda and GM are seeking to downsize fuel batteries and their peripheral devices, with the aim of using them in fuel-cell vehicles they plan to sell from 2020, they said.

The two automakers will invest $4.25 million each to establish the joint venture at a GM factory in Michigan, which will likely create around 100 new jobs.

They plan to build a new production line to churn out fuel cells at the Michigan factory, which is currently producing batteries for electric vehicles.

In line with the envisioned joint venture with GM, Honda will suspend production of fuel-cell car systems at a factory in Tochigi Prefecture, eastern Japan.

As part of efforts to expand cooperation with companies in other business sectors, Honda is considering teaming up with Google Inc of the United States to develop self-driving technology.

Japanese automakers are struggling to sell fuel-cell vehicles due to their high cost and the slow development of required infrastructure in the country, with Honda launching a hydrogen-powered vehicle called the Clarity Fuel Cell last year to challenge rival Toyota Motor Corp’s Mirai released in 2014.

Around 100 Clarity Fuel Cell vehicles have been sold, while the Mirai has seen sales of about 2,500 units in Japan, the United States and Europe.

— Kyodo News

SOUTH AFRICA

South African ‘Bull Dog’ prosecutor made famous by Pistorius trial resigns

JOHANNESBURG

South African prosecutor Gerrie Nel, who oversaw the conviction of Paralympian Oscar Pistorius, has resigned from the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA), its spokesman said on Tuesday.

Lead prosecutor Nel is a veteran lawyer known for his ability to take on the powerful and politically connected. His biggest scalp is former police chief and Interpol head Jackie Selebi, who was convicted of corruption in 2010.

During the Pistorius trial, Nel painstakingly crafted a picture of Pistorius as a cold-blooded killer who fired through a door at his covering girlfriend. For his non-sense attitude, Nel earned the nickname ‘The Bull Dog’ as a prosecutor.

Pistorius says he shot dead Steenkamp by accident after mistaking her for an intruder in his house.

“We confirm that Advocate Gerrie Nel tendered his resignation on the 30th of January,” said the NPA’s spokesman Luvuyo Mfaku. He said the resignation “is effective today (Tuesday)” and that Nel said he was resigning to pursue other interests. Nel was not available to comment.

Pistorius was sentenced to six years in prison in July after being found guilty of murdering his girlfriend Reeva Steenkamp on appeal last December. The track star originally received a five-year sentence for a manslaughter conviction, that was upgraded to murder on appeal.

Nel was challenging Pistorius’ six year sentence, arguing it was too lenient as it was less than half the 15-years that state prosecutors sought.— Reuters

Poisonous gas kills 9 workers inside oil mill in India

NEW DELHI — At least nine people were killed after inhaling poisonous gas at an oil mill in western India, officials said on Tuesday.

The workers were cleaning a chemical tank of the oil mill at Latur industrial area, about 472 km east of Mumbai, the capital city of Maharashtra.

“Nine workers were killed inside an oil mill here,” a police official posted in Latur said. “The incident occurred yesterday evening after which bodies of seven workers were taken out. Early today two more bodies were recovered from the tank.”

One worker, who was rescued in an unconscious state, was hospitalized at a nearest medical facility.

“He is undergoing treatment at Vivekanand hospital,” the official said.

Police registered a case of criminal neglect and ordered a probe into the incident. Witnesses told media they came to know about the incident when the workers did not come out for long and fellow workers who went to check on them too got stuck.

“Bodies were found stacked inside the tank,” a fire service official said.

“Primarily it appears workers have died due to inhaling poisonous gas but exact reason will be known only after the post mortem of bodies is carried out.”

Police have arrested four persons including the owner of the mill in connection with the mishap.

Labor union leaders in India often accuse factories and mills of ignoring safety standards vis-a-vis workers.— Xinhua

3 injured in Osprey “hard landing” in Yemen: Pentagon

WASHINGTON — A US Marine Corps MV-22 Osprey transport aircraft made a hard landing in Yemen during an anti-terror operation on Sunday, the Pentagon said.

One Osprey aircraft, which can take off and land like helicopters but cruise like planes, have drawn safety concerns, particularly in Japan, due to a series of fatal accidents involving them, including during their development phase.

In December, a US MV-22 deployed in Japan’s Okinawa crash-landed in a coastal area of Okinawa’s main island, igniting concern and calls for the aircraft’s removal from the island prefecture.

Pentagon spokesman Jeff Davis said the Osprey in Yemen did not take any enemy fire. It was later destroyed by the US military in an air strike as it was unable to fly, he said.

The Osprey was involved in an operation targeting an al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula military group.— Kyodo News

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GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Phone: 2301928

CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE

MV BANGSAKO VOY. NO (43)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV BANGSAKO VOY. NO (43) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 1.2.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.S.T.L-2 where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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Consignees of cargo carried on MV BMC CALYPSO VOY. NO () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 1.2.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of S.P.W-7 where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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Spain’s Almodovar to head Cannes Film Festival jury

PARIS — Spanish filmmaker Pedro Almodovar will head the jury at this year’s Cannes Film Festival on the French Riviera, its organisers said on Tuesday.

The Oscar winning writer and director, whose works include “Julietta”, “Bad Education” and “All About My Mother”, has had five of his movies shown in competition at the festival.

Almodovar, 67, said he was “grateful, honoured and a bit overwhelmed”. Further jury members for the 70th edition of the festival, which will run from 17 May to 28 May, will be announced in April.

“The Festival de Cannes is delighted to welcome a unique and hugely popular artist. His works have already carved out an eternal niche in the history of film,” festival organisers said in a statement.—Reuters

Los Angeles — Canadian rapper The Weeknd held off singer-songwriter John Mayer to take the No 1 spot on the Billboard 200 album chart for a fourth straight week, according to figures on Monday from Nielsen SoundScan.

After nine weeks on release, The Weeknd’s “Starboy” added another 56,000 units sold for the week, while Mayer’s new four-song EP, “The Search for Everything: Wave One,” sold 49,000. Mayer on Monday announced a North American and European tour to promote the album that will kick off on 31 March in Albany, New York and end in May in London.

In a week of few new album releases, the soundtrack to Oscar-nominated movie “La La Land” took the No 3 spot.

The Weeknd holds off John Mayer for top Billboard spot

Pop group JKT48 appointed as tourism ambassadors for Hokkaido city

HAKODATE (Japan) — The city of Hakodate in Japan’s northernmost prefecture Hokkaido on Monday appointed Jakarta-based pop idol group JKT48 as tourism ambassadors in a bid to draw visitors from Indonesia and other Southeast Asian countries.

Some members of the overseas sister group of AKB48, one of the most popular Japanese all-girl idol groups, visited Hakodate city hall and accepted the appointment from Mayor Toshiki Kudo.

“I hope (Indonesian people) will experience the cold weather of Hokkaido, as it is hot in Indonesia,” Melody Nurramdhani Laksani, the 24-year-old leader of JKT48, told reporters through an interpreter.

Social networking services are among the ways I’ll promote the attractions of Hakodate,” she said.

Group members will take part in events to promote Hakodate in Southeast Asian countries.

“I’ve heard the number of people traveling abroad has been increasing as the Indonesian economy grows, I’d like to pay a visit there, too,” the mayor said during his meeting with the JKT48 members.

On Monday the group shot a music video local tourist destinations including the Hakodate Asiaichi, a morning market famous for fresh fish, and the 107-meter-tall Goryokaku Tower, which commands a view of the city located in southeastern part of Hokkaido.

The JKT48 members, including Japanese singer Rina Chikano, are expected to stay in Hakkaio through Saturday.—Kyodo News
Adult swaddling therapy fad hits Tokyo

TOKYO — Wrapped up from head to toe in a white bag and gently rocking from side to side, five Japanese mothers gathered at a Tokyo reiki clinic recently, their children swaddled tight in white cloths.

They were there to try out an adult swaddling therapy, a practice popular among new parents in Japan, which translates as “adult wrapping”, was devised by a Kyoto midwife who has been practising it for 10 years.

The therapist, Otonamaki, which means “rose petal”, is a treatment which aims to soothe babies by mimicking the feeling of being swaddled in the womb.

The mothers, who were attending a series of official and festive events during the year-end and New Year period, expressed this feeling with my body,” said one mother who tried the 20 minute session.

“I have never experienced this before so its quite hard to describe properly.”

“Not everyone is a fan. Chiropractor Shiro Oba was skeptical about its powers of healing and encouraged mothers with back pain to visit a physician.

“There may be cases where people with asthma may find it easier to breath (in that position), but once the cloth is off it’s the same thing,” said Oba.

“But apart from that, I just can’t think of how people can benefit from this even as a form of reflexology or exercise.”— Reuters

Tourism in Slovenia boosted by Melania factor

LIUBLJANA (Slovenia) — The Slovenian tourism industry has been boosted by the fact that it is the home country of US First Lady Melania Trump, preliminary figures of the national Statistics Office showed on Tuesday. The number of overnight stays in Slovenia by American tourists jumped by 15.4 per cent in December and 10.2 per cent in the whole of 2016. The total number of tourist overnight stays in Slovenia rose by 7.6 per cent to some 11.1 million in 2016 versus a rise of 7.2 per cent in 2015. The overall number of foreign tourist stays was up by 10.3 per cent in the whole year with most visitors coming from Italy, Austria, Croacia, Germany and Serbia.

Slovenia’s government expects tourism to help to towards a further boost to the country’s economy which is seen expanding by 2.9 per cent this year versus some 2.3 per cent in 2016. — Reuters

Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko talk with local people on 31 January, 2017, in Hayama, near Tokyo, where they are staying at an imperial villa to rest after attending a series of official and festive events during the year-end and New Year period. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

Special Condoleance

I am overwhelmed with sadness for the bereaved family of U Ko Ni, Advocate, Notary Public, and Writer (Maung Ko Ni-Advocate), who passed away suddenly at 5.10 pm on Sunday.

Union Minister
Ministry of Information

We are overwhelmed with sadness for the bereaved family of U Ko Ni, Advocate, Notary Public, and Writer (Maung Ko Ni-Advocate), who passed away suddenly at 5.10 pm on Sunday.

Members of Indonesain Delegation

Mud, toil, chills and sweat as English farm hosts last ‘Tough Guy’ race

PERTON, England — It’s been run annually since 1897, over and through 250 obstacles, along eight miles (15 km) of mud and freezing water — but it seems all good things must come to an end.

The aptly named “Tough Guy” race attracts some of the biggest names in world obstacle course racing every year to a farm in the village of Perton, in the English West Midlands.

But founder Billy Wilson told the Birmingham Mail that Sunday’s race would be the last of this incarnation, and that it was “time to reinvent it”.

All of which left the more than 5,500 participants from 42 countries determined to make the most of the occasion, which required them to sign a waiver wisely called “the death warrant”, absolving the organisers of responsibility for damage to life or limb.

Most, like Joe Hicks, costumed with crutches and bubble wrap marked “fragile”, were just aiming to complete the course, even more treacherous this year thanks to heavy rain.

Others, like 27-year-old Jon Albion, from Essex near London, took it all rather more seriously. Twice a world obstacle course champion and winner of “Tough Guy 2015”, Albion got out ahead of the mass of muddy runners struggling with hypothermia and exhaustion and charged to victory in one hour, 40 minutes and 47 seconds, almost three minutes ahead of his rivals. “(It was) cold but I’m fine,” he said.— Reuters

Myanmar Leading Lady: Naw Susanna Hla Hla (For Detailed Schedule – www.myanmaritv.com/schedule)
Bayer Leverkusen have signed 19-year-old Jamaican winger Leon Bailey from Belgian’s Racing Genk on a contract to 2022, the German club said on Tuesday. Bailey, who played for Genk in the Europa League and scored four goals in six matches, is also eligible for the Champions League, the German club said.

Leverkusen are through to the round of 16 in Europe’s top club competition and face Spain’s Atlético Madrid next month. “He is an unusually quick and very cunning player, who gives our attack an added push,” Leverkusen sports director Rudi Voeller said in a statement. “We are certain he will prove to be a huge win for us.” Bailey, who joined Genk in 2015 and has played once for Jamaica’s under-23 team, was reportedly a target for several top European clubs before being signed by Leverkusen.— Reuters

**Familiarity breeds contentment for Sunderland’s Moyes**

LONDON — Sunderland manager David Moyes hopes that signing players he has previously worked with will help them settle quicker and boost the club’s fight for Premier League survival but has denied his policy is to only target familiar faces.

Moyes has added three players so far in the January transfer window, all of whom worked under him when he was in charge of Everton.

Centre-back Joleon Lescott joined on a free transfer last week, while Costa Rica left back Bryan Oviedo and Ireland midfielder Darron Gibson switched from Everton on Monday. “The advantage of signing players I’ve worked with before is that I know what I’m getting. I know what they’ll do and their characters more than anything,” Moyes told British media.

“They trust me and they know the way I manage and the way I work. They will know to expect. Sometimes for them, that makes the move easier. I hope it shows. “When you sign players you never know if it will make a difference, but I believe in time they will make a difference because of their type and their attitude. I do believe we will be stronger on 1st February than we were on 1st January.” After taking over at Sunderland in the close season, Moyes signed Steven Pienaar, another player he worked with at Everton, as well as Adnan Januzaj, Paddy McNair and Donald Love, who were at Manchester United during the Scot’s ill-fated spell there.

“They tried for me or two others, so to say I’m only going for players I know is not true,” Moyes added.

“It’s actually the players who have been available and have said, ‘Yeah, I’ll have a go at that’. We tried for the boy at Norwich (Robbie Brady) and he said no. There were others as well, but people have said no.” Sunderland are bottom of the Premier League on 15 points from 22 games, though they are only three points from safety. They host Tottenham Hotspur later on Tuesday.— Reuters

**Kyrgios hopes team spirit can help overcome Seppi loss**

MELBOURNE — Nick Kyrgios struggled to deal with the farore over his shock second round meltdown at the Australian Open but said the return to a team environment with Davis Cup had helped him through it. The local hope was jeered off the court after squandering a two-set lead and throwing a tantrum in the 1-6, 6-7(1), 6-4, 6-2, 10-8 loss to Italian Andreas Seppi on 18 January. Former world number one John McEnroe then questioned his commitment to the sport, while local media pilloried him the following day with one headline telling him to “Nick Off” — an Australian slang term meaning to leave.

“I was obviously struggling, mentally was tough,” the world number 15 said on Tuesday, ahead of Australia’s Davis Cup tie with the Czech Republic at Kooyong this weekend.

“But I’ve had a lot of support and obviously Rusty (Australia captain Lleyton Hewitt) has been helping me though it. “I think this week is crucial for me to bounce back and go out to try to enjoy it again and I feel good.”

Several former players have suggested that Kyrgios needed to employ a coach fulltime to help him mentally, something the 21-year-old said he was considering after the Seppi defeat.

He now had some potential candidates in mind but they needed to be the “right person”. “It’s finding someone who has my best interest at heart and it’s tough to find someone on the team who’s willing to care about me as a person first,” Kyrgios said. While Kyrgios added that Hewitt had helped him “100 percent” with the fallout from the Seppi loss, the former world number one was not ready to become his coach.— Reuters