President and First Lady visit erosion-damaged areas in Haka

PRESIDENT U Htin Kyaw and First Lady Daw Su Su Lwin comfort a patient receiving treatment at Htantalan Hospital. Photo: MNA

President U Htin Kyaw and First Lady Daw Su Su Lwin together with Union Ministers and Chin State Chief Minister also went to observe the Yone Mountain that collapsed from erosion from heavy rain during the rainy season of July and August in 2015. Officials presented explanations on the completion of rebuilding local dwellings and the Tawlanay Lake destroyed by the collapse, preventive measures from natural disasters installed, and work done for long-term security in case of a natural disaster to prevent as much damage as possible.

In line with the presentation, the President stressed the necessity of utilising the allotted national budget to effectively address the requirements of local residents and regional development and planting of appropriate plants to combat soil erosion.

Later on, a visit was made to the Zaytawun monastic school in Haka, the President and the First Lady reverently observed young monks in the care of Chin monastic Sayadaw Dr. Ashin Tejosara. Donations of charitable gifts were made.

Afterwards the President travelled to Haka’s Christian Church and was welcomed by Reverend Dr. Steven Lian Hom Lain. Reverend Paul Thom Kye’O then conferred blessings and wishes on the President and entourage and the President gave gifts to Haka’s various Christian sect’s 10 reverends.

Afterwards they visited the general hospital in Haka and consoled the patients and gave cash donations, and observed the construction of new hospital wards. Next, the President met with local residents in Botailkun Hall and urged them to transparently report about their needs in a frank and open manner.

With low-income residents in mind, the Ministry of Construction is planning an affordable housing project with apartments that will sell for less than Ks100 lakh, according to the Department of Human Settlement and Housing Development.

“As housing project is meant for low-income people, we will reduce the price at which the low-income person can buy a home,” said U Min Aung Aye, Deputy Director for the Department of Human Settlement and Housing Development. “We must do this because the low-income residents should be cared for.”

Many housing projects are being implemented by the public and private sector, but the Ministry has decided to implement low-cost housing projects in Yangon Region as most of the other projects are selling for more than Ks100 lakh.

The ministry is seeking the required land, which is the most important part of its four-year project to build 8,000 apartments. Construction and Housing Development Bank, under the Department of Human Settlement and Housing Development and in cooperation with construction companies, have already sold more than 2,000 low-cost apartments including: section 1 and 2 of the Shwe Lin Pan Housing project in Hlaing Tharyar township; Kanaug low-cost housing in Dagon Seikkan township and Section 1 and 2 of the YazaNa low-cost housing project.
**2nd Pyithu Hluttaw 4th regular session lays stress on education matters**

**EDUCATION matters were discussed at the 11th meeting of 2nd Pyithu Hluttaw 4th regular session held in the meeting room of the Hluttaw yesterday morning.**

U Win Maw Tun, deputy minister for Education, replied to the question raised by Dr U Min Tha Tun of Ye-U constituency and stated as to whether there were any arrangements for opening basic training courses based on health, agriculture, art and sports for youths to be able to effectively spend the summer vacation.

“For youths to spend the summer vacation in basic education schools, the ministry of education is conducting Red Cross courses, summer sports trainings, Myanmar basic dance, courses for painting and drawing, and life in cooperation with the ministries of health and education, religion and culture. Also there will be a basic computer training course and basic training courses for Buddhism in cooperation with school executive committees and PTAs at the township and district level in Regions and States,”

“Starting from 2006, in basic education schools, soccer, volleyball, sepak takraw, karate, athletics, wushu, Myanmar martial arts, and tae kwon do were conducted starting the first week of March annually. In 2016, 4,682 trainees attended. In Yangon, 33 kinds of sport training courses are offered during summer vacation months every year. In 2016, 52,621 trainees were present at the training courses. And, in cooperation with the ministry of agriculture, courses on livestock breeding and irrigation, nutritious vegetable plantation courses and knowledge on Myanmar traditional medicine and ways of living on a healthy diet were offered in cooperation with the ministry of health and sports.

In replying to the question raised by Daw Tin Tin Yi of Kyunseik constituency, U Win Maw Tun, deputy minister said, “Myanmar Board of Examinations under the Ministry of Education submitted to the management committee, the Ministry of Education, to open new assessment centres for the matriculation exam on 27 December 2016. Among 142 centres, 65 were not eligible to be designated as exam assessment centres, with 77 centres recommended to be eligible to be designated as the exam assessment centres. After scrutiny of 77 centres, 3 areas were designated as assessment centres. So, 74 new exam assessment centres will be opened in the academic year 2016-2017. Nyaungmya village basic education high school was included in 15 centres that lack security requirements, so it was not allowed to have it enlisted in the matriculation assessment centres list in the academic year 2016-2017. If one centre’s security was broken, it will harm nearly 700,000 candidates.”

Similarly, U Win Maw Tun replied to the questions of U Saw Tun of Mudon constituency and U Htay Min Thein of Gyobingauk constituency. Following that, five Hluttaw representatives discussed the motion urging the Union Government to systematically make educational programmes with separate budgets targeted, raised by Daw Yin Min Hlaing of Dawing constituency. Concerning the motion, U Sai Oo Kham of Thein-ni constituency discussed the lack of recommendation of their assessment centres.

Dr. Zaw Lin Htut of Mon constituency raised the question concerning illegal transport of cows. “Is there any consideration for creating declaration of criminal act 144 in Minbu Township, Magway?” U Tin Aung asked. Deputy Minister Major-General Aung Soe said the purpose of introducing criminal act 144 was due to requirements in the administration department in the seven areas of oil refineries starting in 1977. Even after the legislation of the criminal act, thefts have occurred on the oil pipelines incurring losses in the national budget and livelihoods of the civilians. Until an alternative law is legislated criminal act 144 will continue to be in effect in Minbu District, Minbu township Mann Oil refinery and oil refineries from Taikkyi to lack of budget approval.

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President and First Lady visit erosion-damaged areas in Haka

More fire engines, lease grant and allowance in remote area were raised in the Amyotha Hluttaw

Digging shallow creek and ditch in Yangon region

8,000 low-cost apartments to be built
**Tourists visit elephant camp in Bago Region**

IT is a bit hard to find, but foreign visitors are discovering the Pho Kyar Elephant Camp situated at the foothills of the Bago Yoma mountain range in the Saing Ya tropical reserved forest, 10 miles away from west of Thargaya near the Yoma crossing road.

The Pho Kyar elephant camp was opened in 2005 after elephants were employed due to suspension of timber extraction, said U Ye Myint, an in-charge of the elephant camp.

“Last year, over 1,000 local and over 100 tourists visited to the Pho Kyar elephant camp. Some of the local people visited to the elephant camp mostly on Saturdays and Sundays,” he added.

The Pho Kyar elephant camp is 173 miles from the Yangon-Mandalay highway. The admission fee is Ks 1,000 for local people and Ks 20,000 for foreigners.

Tourists can take an elephant ride from 8-9am and from 3-5pm daily. The elephant riding fee is Ks 5,000 for local people and Ks 20,000 for foreigners.

Currently, 12 elephants are living in the Pho Kyar elephant camp.

**Over 60,000 children in Yangon to be vaccinated**

YANGON Region Public Health Department will vaccinate more than 60,000 children this year who are under 15 years of age from orphanages and philanthropies, including novices and nuns studying in school.

“The vaccination program will be conducted only in Yangon region. The department will provide vaccines against diphtheria, measles and German measles to 60,000 children from the every township of the Yangon region,” said an official from Yangon region public health department.

“Till now we have been vaccinated more than 60,000 children from orphanages, nuns and novices studying in schools, etc. Our vaccines project will start this year. Those under 15 years old in Yangon region will receive four types of vaccinations, including pentavalent vaccine,” he added.

The Pentavalent vaccine is a combined vaccination that provides protection to a child from five life-threatening diseases – Diphtheria, Pertussis, Tetanus, Hepatitis B and Haemophilus influenzae type b.

The Nay Pyi Taw Public health department said that the children studying at schools, orphanages and migrant communities are at risk of becoming infected with the diseases because they have not yet received full vaccinations.

**Motorboat seized, 11 arrested in Naf River, Rakhine State**

TATMAW (Navy) seized an illegal motor-boat in the Naf River as it was heading to Bangladesh Monday evening.

The security forces found the boat during routine patrol at about 4:40 pm and arrested the 11 men on board who were believed to be going to a neighbouring country illegally.

They are Ko Ni Mula, 35, from Apaukawa village in Kyauktaw Township; Armin Na Hauk, 18, from Khaung Toke village; Sidi Armauk, 40, and Akiyar, 35, from Phakton; Kayo Thaw, 29, from Leton village; Marmuk Nu Lan, 31, from The’ Chaung village in Sittway Township; Lu Lu, 26, from Pauktaw Township; Gun Hu Saung, 42, from Than Tat Khali village in Punnagyun Township and Hadi Nula, 32, from Tha’ village.

Security forces have arranged to hand over the 11 suspects to Myoma Police Station in Sittway.

**Four bodies found in Maungtaw**

A local police force on 16 February discovered four dead bodies buried in a field near a village in Maungtaw Township, according to a police report yesterday.

Acting on a tip-off given by Asu Bawbi, 55, of Luphabyrin Village that bodies were buried in the place about 300 yards south of the village, local police unearthed the bodies of one man and three women.

Police found that the body of the man had one gunshot wound that entered under his left arm and ended in his head. Two of the three women were found with gunshot wounds in the backbone and suffered fractured spines. The third woman had no visible injuries.

Ngakuya Township Police has opened a file on the case under section 302 of the Penal Code and are investigating.

**Senior General receives JPN-MYN Friendly Association Chairman**

DEFENCE SERVICES Commander-in-Chief Senior General Min Aung Hlaing received a delegation led by Mr. Hideo Watanabe, Chairman of the Japan-Myanmar Friendship Association, at 5 pm at Bayintnaung guest house yesterday in Nay Pyi Taw.

During the meeting, the two representatives discussed matters related to enhancing cooperation for Karatedo and martial art sport competition, training courses of domestic industries and engineering field for retired Tatmadaw personnel and cooperative measuring for Myanmar’s reformation and achieving peace process.

**Chief Justice of the Union urges courts to resolve cases in timely manner**

U HTUN HTUN OO, Chief Justice of the Union, addressed the 12th judicial coordination meeting where chief judges of high court of the region and the state and judges were in attendance and said that judicial discretion given to the courts were conferred in order to allow independent judgments according to the doctrine of separation of powers, to gear up rule of law and public trust on courts and to provide fairness to the public.

He said no one can practice their given mandate beyond the law, and regulation, honesty and truthfulness are absolutely necessary in rendering judgment. The behavior of a judge can mirror the public trust on justice.

Chief Justice of the Union urged all courts to solve cases in a timely manner and in accordance with rules and regulations.

Delays should be minimized to avoid backlogs, as the statistics of The Supreme Court of the Union of Myanmar showed that the number of newly filed criminal and civil cases in 2016 sharply increased compared to 2015.

There were a total 364,975 criminal cases, 42,789 civil suit, 303 juvenile cases, 32,233 municipal cases and 134,447 traffic cases solved in 2016, though a few remained unsolved.

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**Crime News**

**Yaba and raw opium seized in PyinOoLwin and Nawngkhi**

AN anti-narcotics squad from PyinOoLwin searched a house owned by Ma Sanda at Kyar-Twin-Yay village in PyinOoLwin Township on Monday and arrested Ma Sanda and Ma Mya Win Shwe, who were in possession of 7,646 yaba pills and 250 grams of raw opium.

Similarly, Nawngkhi Police stopped and searched a vehicle driven by Law Ka near Sinsarg village in Nawngkhi on 19 February. The police found 2,660 yaba pills in the vehicle. The illegal drugs were confiscated. Police have taken action against them under the Anti-narcotics Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.

**Passenger vehicle collides with motorbike**

TWO died in a head-on collision between a car and a motorcycle on Yangon-Pathein Road at 10 am on Monday.

Aung Tharapu, a passenger in a vehicle driven by U Soe Win, 55, collided head on with the motorbike driven by Aung Kyaw Moe, 40, with his mother Daw Pu Sein, 60, on board between mileposts 7/0 and 7/1.

The motorcycle crashed into the passenger vehicle, killing Aung Kyaw Moe and Daw Pu Sein.

The Kangyidaung Myoma Police has taken action against U Soe Win under section 304 (A)/279 of the Penal Code.

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Ngakuya Township Police has opened a file on the case under section 302 of the Penal Code and are investigating.
Currency fluctuations in India affect price of exported peas

The decrease in the price of peas exported to India this year has resulted from currency fluctuations in India, said U Soe Win Myint, a depot owner in Mandalay.

Currently, the mung bean prices are around Ks92,000 per three-basket bag at the Mandalay commodity depot, whereas the pigeon pea price is around Ks71,500 per 2,700 viss depending on quality. The prices of pigeon peas and mung beans have dropped by nearly by half when compared to the same period in the previous year, it is learnt.

Pigeon peas, mung beans and chick peas are mainly purchased by India. The peanuts are mostly exported to China.

According to current market conditions, the pea price is likely not to turn upward until Thangyan Festival, said U Soe Win Myint, a depot owner in Mandalay.

The cultivation of pigeon pea costs about Ks60,000 per acre. With the heavy rain and prevailing market price this year, only two to three baskets are produced per acre, causing financial hardship for the farmers, said U Tin Win, a pigeon pea grower.

However, the cultivation of mung beans and chick peas flourished with a high yield, allowing the growers to make a profit, said U Zaw Myo, a mung bean grower.—Zin Oo (Myanmar Alim)

Trade with ITC hit over Ks11billion as of 10th Feb in this FY

TRADE value with the Individual Trading Card (ITC) reached over Ks11billion as of 10th Feb in the current fiscal year 2016-2017, according to the Commerce Ministry.

Export value with the ITC was over Ks969million, whereas import value with ITC hit over Ks10bilion, according to statistics released by the commerce ministry.

Myawady and Kan Pike Tee border trade camps are found to have the largest trade value using the ITC. The border trade values with ITC as of 10th Feb in this FY are over Ks717million in Tamu, over Ks747million in Muse, over Ks769million in Kan Pike Toe, over Ks603million in Taichile, over Ks21million in Lweje, over Ks34million in Kawthuang, over Ks57million in Reel, over Ks50million in Maung Taung, over Ks24million in Kengtung and over Ks29million in Maese and over Ks6.2billion in Myawady, it is learnt.

The Trade Department issued a total of 1,161 individual trading cards; with 292 cards from 21st Nov 2012 to 31st March 2013, 261 cards in 2013-2014 FY, 317 cards in 2014-2015 FY, 146 cards in 2015-2016 and 171 cards as of 10th Feb in this FY, according to an announcement released by the Commerce Ministry.

A businessman can trade Ks3million a day with an ITC, and later on, the trade department allowed them to trade up to Ks15million at the same time, which amounted to a five-day trade value.—Ko Khant

SMIDB to be under Planning and Finance Ministry

SMALL and Medium Industrial Development Bank (SMIDB) which focuses on the development of small and medium sized enterprises, will be under the purview of the Ministry of Planning and Finance, said U Kyaw Win, Union Minister for Planning and Finance at a meeting with the local businessmen held at Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI) in Yangon.

SMIDB is currently providing SME loans with reasonable interest rates to SME businessmen and will assist in the needs of SMEs to effectuate their developments.

Placing SMIDB under the Ministry of Planning and Finance will be more effective for SMEs, which helps promote innovation and make progress in the businesses.

Additionally, the Myanmar Agricultural Development Bank will be managed by the Planning and Finance Ministry commencing from 1st April. The private banks are also allowed to participate in agricultural loan plans to enhance the agricultural sector, it is learnt.—200

Japanese farm equipment manufacturer Yanmar opens facility in Myanmar

JAPAN’s farm equipment manufacturer Yanmar Co. said Tuesday it had opened a new import and sales facility in Myanmar in cooperation with trading company Mitsui & Co., vowing to contribute to the modernization of the country’s agriculture practices.

Yanmar’s new facility, in which Mitsui holds a 40 per cent minority stake, is located on a 10,000-square-meter site in Japanese-backed Thalwa Special Economic Zone on the outskirts of the commercial capital Yangon.

Rival Japanese manufacturer Kubota Corp. opened similar facilities at the same area of Yangon earlier this month.

Yanmar Myanmar Co. was established in March last year with paid-up capital of $60 million. It now employs about 20 people with a plan to add up to 80 more within five years.

Through its new facility, which includes a warehouse, a dealer service and training centre and a showroom, the company will distribute farming machines including tractors, power tillers and combine harvesters, while offering service and sales support to its dealers, according to its Managing Director Takeshi Terada.

Terada said he expects annual sales to reach up to 2 billion yen in fiscal 2017, beginning 1 April, and as much as 10 billion within five years.

“Yanmar is the most important market in the region as the country has huge potential for agricultural machinery,” he said.

He noted that mechanization has been increasing in the country, which is the world’s seventh largest rice producer, as the number of farm workers shrinks gradually due to urbanization.—Kyodo News

Fuel oil produced by MPE to sell at a flexible price

THE price of fuel oil produced by Myanmar Petrochemical Enterprise (MPE) is offered to change every month, said an official from MPE.

The fuel oil will sell at a fixed price. Diesel and CGO (Coconut oil distillate) are two grades of fuel oil that MPE produces.

As a result of the move, the fuel oil price fluctuates in a range of Ks870 to Ks1,000 per viss, depending on the changes in the cost of crude oil.

In line with that, MPE issued a price review statement on Wednesday, saying it was a nominal price for the fuel oil.

Yanmar Co. on Tuesday said it was an important market for the company in the region as the country has huge potential for agricultural machinery. The company plans to move its new facility in Yangon by the end of 2017.

The fuel oil price is the most volatile in the market as it is affected by the price of crude oil from the global market.

With the increase of crude oil prices, the price of fuel oil in the domestic market increased by Ks150 to Ks200 per viss.

Another reason for the price fluctuation is the balance between domestic demand and supply. It is likely to increase if the demand is higher than supply.
Malaysia says still to establish what killed North Korean

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysian authorities said on Tuesday they had still to establish what caused the death of half-brother of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, and the body had not been formally identified as next of kin have come forward.

Kim Jong Nam was killed at Kuala Lumpur International Airport on 13 February with what police believe was a fast-acting poison. Malaysia’s deputy prime minister has previously named the victim as Kim Jong Nam, though authorities have been unable to conduct DNA tests.

“The cause of death and identity are still pending,” Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah, director general of health at Malaysia’s health ministry, told reporters.

The health ministry official said no DNA samples had been received from the next of kin.

South Korean and U.S. officials have said they believe North Korean agents assassinated Kim Jong Nam, who had been living in the Chinese territory of Macau under Beijing’s protection.

Malaysia has urged Kim Jong Nam’s next-of-kin to claim the body and help with the inquiry, which has sparked a diplomatic row with North Korea, whose officials want the body handed over directly.

Malaysia recalled its envoy from Pyongyang after North Korea’s ambassador in Kuala Lumpur cast doubt on the impartiality of Malaysia’s investigation and said the victim was not Kim Jong Nam.

North Korean ambassador Kang Chol said on Monday that his country “cannot trust” Malaysia’s handling of the probe into the killing.

Responding on Tuesday, Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak denounced the ambassador’s comments and reiterated that the investigation would be fair.

“The statement by the ambassador was totally unfounded. It was diplomatically rude. But Malaysia will stand firm,” Najib told reporters.

Authorities have still to release an autopsy report. But the health ministry official said a post-mortem examination carried out two days after the death found no evidence of a heart attack or of any puncture wounds on the body.

Malaysian police have arrested a North Korean suspect, and say that four other North Koreans fled the country later on the day of the attack.

Two women from Vietnam and Indonesia have also been arrested on suspicion of carrying out the assault on Kim Jong Nam. There is speculation that they administered a poison by wiping it or spraying it on his face.

Airport camera footage released on Monday by Japanese broadcaster Fuji TV shows the moment the women appeared to assault Kim Jong Nam, who had been living in Macau under Beijing’s protection.

Malaysian police have announced the ambassador’s recall, after being recalled by Malaysian government, after being recalled.

Mohamad (C) is surrounded by media upon his arrival from Pyongyang, after being recalled by Malaysian government, at Beijing airport in Beijing, China. In this photo taken by Kyodo on 21 February, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

Vietnamese PM keen to strengthen ties with Russia

HANOI — Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc met Russia’s Council of the Federal Assembly chairperson Valentina Ivanovna Matviyenko here Tuesday, voicing wishes to enhance bilateral relations, Vietnam’s government e-portal reported.

Matviyenko is visiting Vietnam from Monday to Wednesday.

In addition to existing cooperation in oil and gas, Vietnam will support Russia participating in energy and infrastructure projects in Vietnam, Phuc said, adding that the country wishes to enhance ties with Russia in defense and security.

Matviyenko said her country wants to enhance cooperation with Vietnam in trade and agriculture products and food, as well as areas that Russia has strengths, such as oil filtration, petrochemicals, liquefied petroleum.

The visiting Russian official showed respect to Vietnam’s decision to end nuclear projects and said Russia wants to boost implementation of their bilateral agreement on a nuclear science and technology centre in Vietnam.

This year Russian government will grant around 1,000 scholarships to Vietnamese students, Matviyenko said, affirming Russia’s willingness to support teaching Russian language in Vietnam.

—Xinhua

China jails former head of safety watchdog for 15 years for graft

BEIJING — China on Friday jailed the former head of its safety watchdog for 15 years for graft, the state broadcaster said, wrapping up an inquiry launched after deadly blasts in 2015 killed nearly 170 people in the city of Tianjin, where he worked.

“Regular mishaps, from factory fires to mine cave-ins, have boosted public concern about China’s relatively lax safety standards, which the government has pledged to improve,” Yang Dongliang, former head of the State Administration of Work Safety, who spent much of his career in the port city, was suspected of violating law and party discipline and sacked days after the blasts in a warehouse storing hazardous chemicals.

A court in Beijing found Yang guilty of abusing his position, including when he was former vice mayor of northeastern Tianjin, by accepting bribes to grant contracts to companies, China Central Television (CCTV) said.

In 1999, a property developer gave Yang an apartment in a new development complex that he failed register with the authorities.

The court reduced his sentence because Yang confessed and took steps to return bribe money and assets to the state treasury, CCTV said.

State media did not mention the blasts. Yang could not immediately be reached for comment.

The company operating the chemical warehouse that blew up in August 2015, injuring hundreds, did not have the licence needed to handle and store dangerous materials for more than a year, state media said at the time.

Yang’s agency, the State Administration of Work Safety, said on its website he signed a directive in 2012 allowing companies to function without a licence to work with dangerous chemicals as long as they had a licence governing port operations.

The Chinese president Xi Jinping vowed after the Tianjin blasts that the authorities should learn the lessons paid for in blood.

The explosions in the world’s 10th-busiest port forced the evacuation of thousands of people from a large industrial site and nearby residential areas after chemicals were detected in the air.

There were about 700 tons of deadly sodium cyanide in the warehouse at the time, the government said. —Reuters
China opposes US naval patrols in South China Sea

China says N Korean coal ban shows its sincerity on UN resolutions
Who on earth is backing these criminal acts?

Khin Maung Oo

THESE days, news about crimes, seizures of illegal drugs and smuggling of contraband teak logs, hard woods and gems and jewels have occupied the pages of newspapers and journals, almost every day. To our great surprise and delight, we heard the news of contraband seizures, because in the past, such kinds of seizures turned out to be ownerless, and most of the cases vanished out of people’s minds as time went by. Now, the situation has changed completely. People, especially conscientious youths and adults themselves stepped up to cooperate with authorities concerned, of their own accord in fighting against these unlawful deeds and activities of unscrupulous people. Loss of our country’s natural resources can pose a great danger to the country. Due to the undisciplined cutting of trees and relentless mining of minerals, we are now suffering climate change with heavy floods, landslides, deforestation, drought and global warning. If these problems go unchecked without any remedial measures, the country will surely be in great danger in the near future, according to experts. By letting these ultra-opportunists mine minerals and extract logs without any regard for the interest of the public, the country is losing its revenues, which we can use for the development of our children’s heart and minds.

In fact, the harmful effects of damages done to our natural environment can be minimized to a certain extent by taking proper corrective measures; whereas the increasing smuggling of drugs into the country will erode the intellects, strengths and abilities of our youths. If unsolved urgently, this threatening and frightening danger will swallow the future of our countries and our country. Drugs will consume our youth’s energy and morals to such an extent that very soon these youths will become a liability to the country instead of our future hope. How will our future nation-builders develop capacities to lead a country manage the country to stand tall as a sovereign nation in the world? Now, the whole nation wants to get rid of bitter experiences inherited from previous governments. We have chosen a good and clean government by a landslide victory in the 2015 general elections, being inspired by our desire to change where change is needed. For this we have energetic youths who are eager to build our country into a modern and developed nation. With their active and energetic contributions, we will surely be able to march towards our goal, on one condition that we need to change everything necessary to be changed—including laws, acts, rules and regulations so that any hindrances will not stand in our way.

Release of criminals under the general amnesty order by the previous regime led to increasing crime rates which begot theft, murder and rape cases. At present, seizures of drugs and contraband goods are heartening for us. The government is responsible for clearing out these criminal elements, arresting them and giving them the punishment they deserve. We, the people, on the other hand should cooperate with the authorities concerned conscientiously, in fighting against these criminal acts. It is natural for any society or community to have good people as well as bad ones.

Due to the concerted efforts of the Tatmadaw, the Police Force and the People, wrongdoers, law violators and criminals have been discovered and arrested and brought to justice. This is a good sign for us. Yet, it is a sorrowful thing that in some cases, some people in authority have been found to have gotten involved in some way, and this shows that there are still loopholes and weaknesses in our laws and in the Constitution.

Therefore, there are those who take advantage of these loopholes and weaknesses for their own benefit. What is worse, these people are backing the criminals and wrongdoers; these dangerous acts will surely destroy our future. Now is the time to amend any and all loopholes and weaknesses in our laws so that anyone who threatens our society can be promptly arrested, brought to justice and given the punishment they deserve.

World's major famines of the last 100 years

LONDON — The UN children’s agency UNICEF said on Tuesday nearly 1.4 million children were at "imminent risk" of death in famines in Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan and Yemen.

Famine was formally declared on Monday in parts of South Sudan, which has been mired in civil war since 2013.

People are already starving to death in all four countries, and the World Food Programme says more than 20 million lives are at risk in the next six months.

The United Nations defines famine as when at least 20 percent of households in an area face extreme food shortages, acute malnutrition rates exceed 30 percent, and two or more people per 10,000 are dying per day.

Here are details about some of the major famines around the world in the last 100 years:

SOMALIA:
In 2011, Somalia suffered a famine that killed 260,000 people in south and central regions. The famine was declared in July, but most people had already died by May.

Years of drought, that have also affected Kenya and Ethiopia, have hit harvests and conflict has made it extremely difficult for agencies to operate and access communities in the south of the country.

The UN declared Somali famine over in February 2012 following an exceptional harvest after good rains and food deliveries by aid agencies.

NORTH KOREA:
From 1995-1999 between 2.8 million and 3.5 million people died because of a combination of flooding and government policy in the repressive state.

In 1984-85, in the famine, up to one million Ethiopians starved to death. For months in 1984, Mengistu denied the devastating famine in Ethiopia’s north.

Aid workers later recalled he flew in planes loaded with whisky to celebrate the anniversary of his revolution, as hunger deepened.

Bob Geldof, after watching pictures of the famine, organised Live Aid in 1985 to try to alleviate the hunger. Watched by 1.5 billion people, it raised $100 million for Africa’s starving.

CAMBODIA:
Up to 2 million died of famine following a decade of conflict, first during the 1970-1975 civil war, then during the brutal Khmer Rouge era until 1978 and finally in the aftermath of the Vietnamese invasion that ended Khmer Rouge rule in 1979.

CHINA:
Between 10 and 30 million people died as a result of Mao Zedong's Great Leap Forward in the late 1950s.

His plan involved modernising agriculture and increasing grain production however officials often exaggerated the size of harvests, and in many places the entire grain harvest was seized.

China’s leaders appeared to have been unaware of the severity of the famine as from 1958 until 1961, China doubled its grain exports and cut imports of food.

SOVIET UNION:
Up to 8 million people died as a result of Josef Stalin’s massive industrialisation programme in the Soviet Union in the early 1930s, during which the government seized grain for export. It needed the hard currency to buy industrial equipment.

When people in the Ukraine reported a famine, Stalin punished them by refusing to send them food aid. — Reuters

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Union Farmer-Labour Force Party presents policy and programmes

As regards our party’s policy on political affairs,
(A) Hands of farmers and workers serving 53 million people will always stay alert to defend the country joining with Tatmataw provided that any destructive elements harm the sovereignty of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

(B) Our party will firmly hold its own stand that the Sovereignty of the State must go into the hands of the people as the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

(C) For national reconciliation and for ceasing civil conflicts everywhere, in one of gaining Independence of the State, our party will stand on its principles of defending national integrity with active forces of national races, farmers and worker, without betraying national cause, by negotiating peacefully, based on the vision of nationalism.

(D) Our party will firmly hold the principle that we must fulfill the needs of national races as the Union formed collective-nationally and self-administrative States with equality of ethnic rights.

(E) In accord with the prescription that any transparent organization with the communist-class can be set up, we will support and implement having an access to form organizations representing farmers,
1/ to form organizations representing farmers,
2/ to form organizations representing workers,
3/ to form organizations representing national ethnic entrepreneurs,
4/ to form organizations representing women and youths, and
5/ to form Student Unions.

As regards our party’s policy on education,
Legislation and promulgation play an important role for peace and stability of a country. Only if the principle of protecting rights and duties of workers who the law is accepted and practiced, will rule of law develop in the country.
For farmers, there must be the law on applying the farming land, and confiscation of farming lands must be performed in accord with the law.
Promulgation of laws for workers to get wages and salaries they deserve and laws for workers who lose limbs on the job to get compensations or monetary support they deserve, through the influence of Ministry of Labor Affairs that can take responsibility and accountability for workers in accord with the law.

As regards our party’s policy on health,
Health is a major factor for the progress of farmers and workers, so we need a lot of medical staff. We are seeing rarity of medical staff in village, especially for rice fields. We will carry out medical affairs as a priority.

As regards our party’s policy on economy,
Our country is an agriculturally-based country, in which poor farmers and workers mostly live. For our country to stand tall in the midst of the world, we assume that our country will develop only if we can upgrade the economy of the grass-roots. Accordingly, we need to lay great importance on market and commodity prices for the convenience of strong economy of farmers and workers. So, we will implement economic plans linking with national entrepreneurs and foreign investors.

Respected voters and people!
As regards our party’s policy on education,
In making relations with world countries with keeping abreast with each other education is the most important thing. So, standard of education in our country needs to be advanced. Especially, our rural areas need a lot of the efforts. Staff: Education and development of education is the most important.

As regards our party’s policy on economy,
Our country is made up of simple and industrious farmers and workers. These farmers and workers of the State are like stars in the sky. Stars reflect light at night with the sunshine received from the sun. Only if the President of the State, State Counsellor and Speakers of 3 Hlutawaws can perform the tasks with concerted effort, bearing Metta in their minds like the sunshine, can the poor, farmers and workers cast the light to the State.

Our country is made up of simple and industrious farmers and workers. These farmers and workers of the State are like stars in the sky. Stars reflect light at night with the sunshine received from the sun. Only if the President of the State, State Counsellor and Speakers of 3 Hlutawaws can perform the tasks with concerted effort, bearing Metta in their minds like the sunshine, can the poor, farmers and workers cast the light to the State.

Hence, our party places the image of a peasant, representing the peasantry and the image of a cog-wheel representing all the working people.

U Min Thu, Chairman of Union Farmer-Labour Force Party,
Outspoken general named Trump’s top security adviser

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla./WASHINGTON — US President Donald Trump on Monday named Lieutenant General Herbert Raymond McMaster as his new national security adviser, choosing a military officer known for speaking his mind and challenging his superiors.

McMaster is a highly regarded military tactician and strategic thinker, but his selection surprised some observers who wondered how the officer, whose Army career stalled at times for his questioning of authority, would deal with a White House that has not welcomed criticism.

“He is highly respected by everybody in the military and we’re very honoured to have him,” Trump told reporters in West Palm Beach where he spent the weekend. “He’s a man of tremendous talent and tremendous experience.”

One subject on which Trump and McMaster could soon differ is Russia. McMaster shares the consensus view among the US national security establishment that Russia is a threat and an antagonist to the United States, while the man whom McMaster is replacing, retired Lieutenant General Michael Flynn, appeared to view it more as a potential geopolitical partner.

Trump in the past has expressed a willingness to engage with Russia more than his predecessor, Barack Obama.

Flynn was fired as national security adviser on 13 February after reports emerged that he had misled Vice President Mike Pence about speaking to Russia’s ambassador to the United States about US sanctions before Trump’s inauguration.

The ouster, coming so early in Trump’s administration, was another upset for a White House that has been hit by missteps, including the controversial rollout of a travel ban on people from seven Muslim-majority countries, since the Republican president took office on 20 January.

The national security adviser is an independent aide to the president and does not require confirmation by the US Senate. He has broad influence over foreign policy and attends National Security Council meetings along with the heads of the State Department, the Department of Defence and key security agencies.

Republican Senator John McCain, chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee and a frequent Trump critic, praised McMaster as an “outstanding” choice.

“I give President Trump great credit for this decision,” McCain said in a statement.

A former US ambassador to Russia under Obama, Michael McFaul, a Democrat, praised McMaster on Twitter as “terrific” and said McMaster “will not be afraid to question his boss.”

McMaster, who flew back to the Washington area from Florida with Trump on Air Force One, will remain on active military duty, the White House said.

Trump also said Keith Kellogg, a retired US Army general who has been serving as the acting national security adviser, as chief of staff to the National Security Council, John Bolton, a former US ambassador to the United Nations, would be asked to serve the administration in another capacity, Trump said.

“He has a good number of ideas that I must tell you I agree very much with,” Trump said of Bolton, who served in Republican President George W Bush’s administration.

Kellogg and Bolton were among those in contention as Trump spent the long Presidents Day weekend considering his options for replacing Flynn. His a choice, retired Vice Admiral Robert Harward, turned down the job last week.

McMaster, 54, is a West Point graduate known as “HR” with a PhD in US history from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He was listed as one of Time magazine’s 100 most influential people in 2014, partly because of his willingness to buck the system.

A combat veteran, he gained renown in the first Gulf War — and was awarded a Silver Star — after he commanded a small troop of the US 2nd Armoured Cavalry Regiment that destroyed a much larger Iraqi Republican Guard force in 1991 in a place called 73 Easting, for its map coordinates, in what many consider the biggest tank battle since World War Two.

As one fellow officer put it, referring to Trump’s inner circle of aides and speaking on condition of anonymity, the Trump White House “has its own Republican Guard, which may be harder for him to deal with than the Iraqis were.” The Iraqi Republican Guard was the elite military force of ousted dictator Saddam Hussein. Trump relies on a tight, insular group of advisers, who at times appear to have competing political agendas.

Senior adviser Steve Bannon has asserted his influence by taking a seat on the National Security Council. — Reuters

Kremlin: too early for Putin’s statements on 2018 election

Moscow — Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters on Tuesday that Vladimir Putin had not announced yet whether he was going to seek a new presidential term in 2018 because it was too early.

“We have yet enough time before the election campaign,” Peskov said.— Reuters

Nigeria’s Presidency says no cause for worry about Buhari

ABUJA — Nigeria’s President Muhammadu Buhari said there was no cause to worry about his health but he had to stay longer on medical leave in Britain than planned, the presidency said on Tuesday.

“During his normal annual checkup, tests showed he needed a longer period of rest, necessitating the President staying longer than originally planned,” the presidency said in a statement.

“President Buhari wishes to reassure Nigerians that there is no cause for worry,” it said. — Reuters

Britain faces “very hefty” Brexit bill, years of talks — Juncker

BRUSSELS — Britain will need years to negotiate a future trade deal with the European Union after it quits the bloc and will be burdened with a “very hefty bill” from Brussels on leaving, EU chief executive Jean-Claude Juncker said on Tuesday.

Noting that the Brexit talks expected to be launched next month would last two years before Britain withdraws from the bloc, Juncker said in a speech to the Belgian parliament: “To agree on the future architecture of relations between the United Kingdom and the European Union, we will need years.” — Reuters

Bodies of 74 migrants found on west Libyan shore — Red Crescent

TRIPOLI — The bodies of 74 migrants have been found washed up on a beach near the western Libyan city of Zawiya, a Red Crescent spokesman said on Tuesday.

Mohamed al-Misrati said the bodies had been recovered on Monday and that the migrants appeared to have died during the past two days. The migrants were all adults, mostly from sub-Saharan African countries, and all but three of them were men, Misrati said. — Reuters
Israeli soldier sentenced to 18 months in jail for killing wounded Palestinian attacker

TEL AVIV — A young Israeli soldier convicted of killing a Palestinian assailant lying wounded on the ground was sentenced to 18 months imprisonment on Tuesday, far less than prosecutors requested, in one of the most divisive cases in Israel’s history.

The court sentenced Private First Class Elor Azaria, who shot the Palestinian after he had stabbed another soldier in the occupied West Bank last March, stirred controversy in Israel from the start, with opinion polls showing strong support for the army medic.

A military court last month found Azaria guilty of manslaughter, a crime that carries a top punishment of 20 years in jail.

With the 50th anniversary of Israel’s wartime capture of the West Bank approaching, the trial has generated debate about whether the military, long seen as a melting pot for Israelis, was out of touch with a public that has shifted to the right in its attitudes towards the Palestinians.

The prosecution asked that Azaria be sentenced to three to five years behind bars, far below the maximum term, noting that he had shot a Palestinian who only minutes earlier had carried out an attack.

Passing an 18-month sentence that Israeli media commentators described as lenient, the court said that Azaria had not expressed regret for his crime but it noted that his army record had been unblemished up until the shooting and that his arrest had caused his family deep distress.

Palestinians had called for a life term. But there was little sign the sentencing would lead to any significant outbreak of violence by Palestinians. They have long accused Israel of using excessive force against lightly armed assailants and harbored few expectations soldiers would be held accountable.

It was not immediately clear if Azaria’s lawyers, who had said after the verdict last month that they intended to appeal his conviction, would still proceed along that path.

Eleven months ago, Azaria, then 19, was serving in the town of Hebron when two Palestinian gentlemen carried out the stabbing. Hebron has been a long-time flashpoint of violence, and the incident occurred during a wave of Palestinian street attacks on Israelis.

One of the two assailants was shot dead by troops. The other was shot and wounded. Eleven minutes later, as the wounded man, Abd Elfatah Ashrefa, 21, lay on the ground incapacitated, Azaria shot him in the head with an assault rifle.

At the trial, Azaria said he believed the Palestinian, though motionless, still posed a danger because his knife was nearby, and that he might have been carrying explosives. “He deserves to die,” Azaria was quoted in the verdict as telling another soldier after pulling the trigger.

At the sentencing, Chief Judge Maya Heller said that Azaria “took upon himself to be both judge and executioner in a case where the defendant was arrested. In one poll, nearly half of Israeli Jews said any Palestinian who carries out an attack should be killed on the spot.

Rallies for Azaria, some backed by rightist politicians and pop singers, gathered momentum as the trial progressed.

But members of Israel’s military establishment argued that the shooting violated rules stating that soldiers can open fire only in life-threatening situations, and the three-judge panel rejected Azaria’s argument.

“One cannot use this type of force, even if we’re talking about an enemy’s life,” the court said in its verdict.

Video footage of the shooting, taken by a Palestinian human rights activist, showed the knife was not within Ashrefa’s reach, and no bomb was found.

The video was distributed to news organisations, ensuring that the incident drew international attention.—Reuters

Gaddafi son’s trial unfair, should be sent to ICC — UN

GENEVA — The trial of Saif al-Islam Gaddafi, a son of the ousted Libyan leader sentenced to death in absentia, did not meet international standards and he should face murder charges at the International Criminal Court (ICC), the United Nations said on Tuesday.

Since his father’s toppling in 2011, Saif has been held in Zintan, a mountainous western region, by one of the factions that began contending for power after Gaddafi was killed.

He was sentenced to death in July 2015 by a Tripoli court for war crimes, including killing protesters during the revolution. Zintani forces refused to hand him over, saying they did not trust Tripoli to guarantee he does not escape.

The UN report on the trial of 37 defendants including Saif cited serious violations of due process, such as prolonged incommunicado detention without access to families or lawyers, and allegations of torture that were not properly investigated.

The proceedings “fell short of international norms and standards for fair trial and also breached Libyan law in some respects,” it said. No prosecution witnesses were called to testify in court, undermining the defendants’ ability to challenge evidence.

“The trial was a missed opportunity for justice,” UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein said in a statement.

Saif, former intelligence chief Abdullah al-Senussi and former Prime Minister Al-Baghdadi al-Mahmoudi were among nine defendants sentenced to death by firing squad.

“The Libyan Government has been unable to secure the arrest and surrender of (Gaddafi), who remains in Zintan and is considered to be outside the control of the Libyan authorities,” the UN report said.

Libya’s Court of Cassation is to review the procedures in the case but not the facts and evidence.

“As such the review does not constitute a full appeal as required by international standards,” the UN report said.

It called on Libyan authorities to ensure the surrender of Saif to the Hague-based ICC, “in compliance with Libya’s international obligations”. The ICC does not allow the death penalty.

“The (ICC) Prosecutor continues to call for the recognition of Gaddafi (to the Libyan authorities in order to proceed with his case),” it said.

The report, by the UN human rights office and UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), urged Libyan authorities to reform the criminal justice system saying that the trial had highlighted “major flaws”.—Reuters

Islamic State linked group expands foothold in southern Syria near Israel

AMMAN — Islamic State-linked Syrian militant groups on Monday launched a surprise attack on moderate rebels in southwestern Syria near the Golan Heights, a region where the Jordanian and Israeli borders converge, seizing several villages and a large town, rebels and witnesses said.

The rebels said the militants were able to extend their area of control in territory that forms a natural barrier between Syria and Israel where the Yarmouk River flows after they overran the towns of Tseel, Sahem al Golan, Adwan and Tel Jamoua.

“In a surprise attack Islamic State made an attack on positions held by the Free Syrian Army FSA groups which no one expected to happen so fast,” said Colonel Ihsan Ayyoub, a Syrian opposition army defector.

The militants launched a wide-scale dawn attack from their enclothes where they are entrenched in the towns of Jamla, Ain Zakar Nafaa and al Shajra, deploying dozens of armoured vehicles and several tanks to overrun nearby towns aided by sleepy cells among locals who helped the attackers, two rebel sources said.

The jihadists were later driven out of at least two villages — Jleena and Heet — after a counteroffensive by Southern Front groups, an alliance of FSA factions that coordinate operations from a joint command centre in Jordan, said Abu Yahya, a rebel official in the Jabhat Thawar Surya faction.

It includes groups that have received some support from foreign states including Gulf Arab governments.

The Syrian hardline militants are members of the so-called Khalid Ibn Al Walid Army, a group set up last year from a merger of two main militant jihadi factions who are believed to have pledged allegiance to Islamic State and now control the strip of territory southeast of the Golan Heights.

Jordanian army units stationed along the border were put in a state of heightened readiness, a Jordanian security source said, and residents in the area said sounds of mortar were heard steadily from the fighting across the border.

A rebel official told Reuters that several FSA rebel groups were expected to get fresh supplies of arms from Jordan in the next few weeks to beef up their defences against the ultra-hardline Sunni radicals.—Reuters

Suicide bombers hit court in Pakistan, at least four killed: police

PESHAWAR (Pakistan) — Suicide bombers attacked a court complex in Pakistan on Tuesday, killing at least four people, officials said, in the latest attack to stoke a new surge of Islamist violence.

A Pakistani for the Pakistani Taliban’s Jamaat-ur-Ahrar faction claimed responsibility for the attack in the northwestern town of Charsadda.

The district administration said at least four people were killed. A witness told Reuters he had seen “many” dead bodies at the scene.

A string of bombings in Pakistan over the past 10 days has killed more than 100 people.

Town resident Mohammad Shah Baz told Reuters he was inside the judicial complex when the suicide bombers detonated.

“I escaped towards the canton and climbed the wall to save my life. But there were many people dead or injured,” he said.

District police chief Sohail Khalid said at least one of the attackers blew himself up and another opened fire at the main entrance of the court compound before they were shot and killed. Jamaat-ur-Ahrar spokesman Asad Mansoor claimed responsibility for the attack in a massage to journalists. He said fighting was still going on at the court.—Reuters
British heterosexual couple lose bid to have civil partnership instead of marriage

LONDON — A heterosexual British couple who object to what they call the patriarchal nature of marriage narrowly lost a court bid on Tuesday to be able to enter into a civil partnership after judges upheld a ruling that such unions were only eligible to those of the same sex.

Civil partnerships were introduced in Britain in 2004, giving gay couples similar legal rights to those enjoyed by married heterosexuals. Since 2014, same-sex marriage has also been legal in England, Wales and Scotland, meaning gay couples could choose to get married or enter into a civil partnership.

Rebecca Steinfeld, 35, and her partner Charles Keidan, 40, who have a child, said that meant the law discriminated against heterosexuals like them who wanted a civil partnership rather than to be married. The couple say they have deep-rooted and genuine ideological objections to marriage based upon what they consider to be its historically patriarchal nature.

Last January, London's High Court rejected their claim saying the law specified that civil partnerships were only for people of the same sex, and on Tuesday that ruling was upheld by the Court of Appeal.

The judges accepted there was a potential breach of the couple's human rights but by a two-to-one majority said the government should be allowed more time to assess whether civil partnerships should be extended or perhaps even phased out.

“We lost so narrowly that there’s everything to fight for,” Steinfeld told reporters outside the court. “All three of the judges agreed that we were being treated differently because of our sexual orientation and that this impacts are family and private life.”

Keidan said there were more than three million mixed-sex couples living together with two million dependent children.

“These couple lack legal and financial security and I think many would agree that this isn’t right,” he said. “None of us should be denied recognition or protection because marriage isn’t right for us.”

He said they would challenge the ruling in the Supreme Court, the highest judicial body in Britain, unless the government indicated it would change the existing law.—Reuters

**CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE**

**MV MERATUS GORONTALO VOY. NO (164)**

Consignees of cargo carried on MV MERATUS GORONTALO VOY. NO (164) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 22.2.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.W.P.T where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT**

**MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY**

**AGENT FOR: M/S YANG MING LINE**

Phone No: 2301185

**CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE**

**MV TOVE MAERSK VOY. NO (**)**

Consignees of cargo carried on MV TOVE MAERSK VOY. NO (**) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 22.2.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT**

**MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY**

**AGENT FOR: M/S TRANSPORT (S’PORE) PTE LTD**

Phone No: 2301185

**CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE**

**MV THUAN PHUOC VOY. NO (3)**

Consignees of cargo carried on MV THUAN PHUOC VOY. NO (3) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 22.2.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of S.P.W-5 where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT**

**MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY**

**AGENT FOR: M/S G-LINK EXPRESS PTE LTD.**

Phone No: 2301185

**Geneva talks to encompass Syrian transition process: UN**

GENEVA—Syria peace talks due to start this week in Geneva are based on the broad mandate of a UN resolution that asks the UN mediator to hold talks on a “political transition process”, an official involved in the talks said on Tuesday.

Last week the United Nations appeared to back away from using the phrase “political transition”, which is understood by the opposition to mean a removal of President Bashar al-Assad or at least an erosion of his powers.

Michael Contet, chief of staff of Special Envoy for Syria Staffan de Mistura, told a regular UN briefing that de Mistura was putting the final touches to arrangements for the talks.

“The invitations as well as the substantive agenda for the negotiations are all based on the wide scope of Security Council resolutions, in particular (UN Security Council Resolution) 2254, which is our main guidance in this process. “The second operative paragraph of 2254 requests the special envoy to convene formal negotiations on the political transition process.”

The talks would revolve around three sets of issues, which 2254 mandates de Mistura to mediate on: establishment of a credible, inclusive and non-sectarian governance; a process for drafting a new constitution; and free and fair elections under UN supervision.

Contet declined to take questions.—Reuters

**Socialist French minister says may vote for centrist Macron**

PARIS — Stephane Le Foll, the French Socialist government’s spokesman and its agriculture minister, said on Tuesday he backs his party’s official candidate Benoît Hamon but might vote for independent centrist Emmanuel Macron instead.

Hamon, elected as candidate in a Socialist party primary in January, is struggling to make an impact on the presidential election. He is pushing a more hard left programme that appears to be increasing divisions within the party.

Some left-wing voters also prefer independent leftist Jean-Luc Melenchon to him, and people on the right of the Socialist party are tempted by Macron, who is favourable to win the 7 May runoff according to opinion polls.

“I support the man who has been chosen (by the Socialists), but the moment comes when political responsibility with regard to what is at play, with regard to (far-right National Front leader) Marine Le Pen and with regard also to the programme of (conservative) Francois Fillon,” Le Foll said on BFMTV.

Foreign Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault, who is the number two in the cabinet rankings said on Sunday, he had also not decided which way he would vote.

“For Benoit Hamon, the conditions are not yet in place for him to get to the second round. As for Macron, I’m waiting for his programme,” Ayrault told Ouest-France newspaper.

Macron is due to unveil his economic programme this week.

Le Pen, Fillon and Macron are all vying for a place in the second round run-off that would decide who becomes president, while Hamon is in a distant fourth place.—Reuters

A man inspects the damage at a site hit by airstrikes in the rebel held besieged Douma neighbourhood of Damascus, Syria on 19 February, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS
France’s Le Pen cancels meet with Lebanon grand mufti over headscarf

BEIRUT — French far-right National Front presidential candidate Marine Le Pen cancelled a meeting on Tuesday with Lebanon’s grand mufti, its top cleric for Sunni Muslims, after refusing to wear a headscarf for the encounter.

Le Pen, among the frontrunners for the presidency, is on a two-day visit to Lebanon to bolster her foreign policy credentials nine weeks from the 23 April first round, and may be particularly sensitive to Franco-Lebanese votes.

Many Lebanese fled to France, Lebanon’s former colonial power, during their country’s 1975-1990 civil war and became French citizens.

After meeting Christian President Michel Aoun — her first public handshake with a head of state — and Sunni Prime Minister Saad Hariri on Monday, she had been scheduled to meet the Grand Mufti Sheikh Abd al Latif Derian.

He heads the Dar al-Fatwa, the top religious authority for Sunni Muslims in the multireligious country.

“I met the grand mufti of Al-Azhar,” she told reporters, referring to a visit in 2015 to Cairo’s 1,000-year-old centre of Islamic learning, and said that France’s traditional partner in the struggle against Islamic extremism was a priority.

“Le Pen wants to extend this ban to all public places, a measure that would affect Muslims most of all,” Le Pen’s deputy Gilbert Collard Listen, in Bkerke, north of Beirut, Lebanon, on 21 February, 2017, Photo: Reuters

Marine Le Pen, French National Front (FN) political party leader and candidate for the 2017 presidential elections, meets with Cardinal Bechara Boutros Rai of Lebanon, the Maronite Patriarch of Antioch and the Whole Levant, as French deputy Gilbert Collard Listen, in Bkerke, north of Beirut, Lebanon on 21 February, 2017, Photo: Reuters

In the name of church-state separation and equal rights for women, Le Pen wants to prevent Muslim women from wearing a headscarf. The meeting was held and had been “surprised by her refusal”.

“But it was no surprise in the French political context. One Muslim woman has headscarves in the public service and for high school pupils, a headscarf was required for the meeting and had been ‘surprised by her refusal’.

Five die as light plane crashes into mall in Australia

MELBOURNE — A pilot and four American passengers were killed on Tuesday when a small plane crashed into the roof of a shopping mall after taking off from an airfield outside Melbourne, Australia’s second-largest city, police said.

The twin-turboprop Beechcraft King Air plane suffered an engine failure and crashed into the mall near the end of the runway at Essendon Airport, Victoria state police assistant commissioner Stephen Leane told reporters in Melbourne.

Witnesses told Australian Associated Press the plane exploded on impact.

“There were five people on the aeroplane and it looks like nobody’s survived the crash,” Leane said. The crash happened at around 9 am, about an hour before the mall was due to open and there were fatalities other than those aboard the aircraft, he added.

“Five all occupants were male — the pilot was Australian and the four passengers were from the United States of America,” Victoria police said in a statement.

Sky News reported burning wreckage strewn across the mall’s carpark and a thick column of black smoke rising from the crash site.

The plane had been bound for King Island in Bass Strait between the mainland and the southern island state of Tasmania and Australian newspapers reported that at least two of the men were traveling to play golf on the island’s famed links.

A spokesman for Airservices Australasia said flights in and out of Melbourne’s main airport were unaffected.

Essendon Airport, which is used mainly by light aircraft, remained closed.

The Australian Transport Safety Bureau is investigating the crash. — Reuters

Marine Le Pen, French National Front (FN) political party leader and candidate for the 2017 presidential elections, meets with Cardinal Bechara Boutros Rai of Lebanon, the Maronite Patriarch of Antioch and the Whole Levant, as French deputy Gilbert Collard Listen, in Bkerke, north of Beirut, Lebanon on 21 February, 2017, Photo: Reuters

Transportation Safety Administration (TSA) sources told the broadcaster.

Passengers walk through JFK checkpoint without being screened — NBC

NEW YORK — Eleven passengers walked through a security checkpoint without being screened before apparently boarding planes at John F. Kennedy International Airport in New York on Monday, NBC reported.

The breach occurred at about 6 am local time at a checkpoint lane that was not fully staffed, NBC News reported.

The passengers’ carry-on bags were screened and cleared by a security team with sniffer dogs, Transportation Safety Administration (TSA) sources told the broadcaster.

Three of the passengers set off metal detectors but were permitted to continue to their flights by going through gates without being body searched by staff, the broadcaster said.

US authorities beefed up security at airports in 2001 following the 9/11 attacks. A debate over whether it should be tightened further has been given impetus by a deadly shooting in January in a Florida airport baggage claim area, and attempts by President Donald Trump to clamp down on immigration from some Muslim-majority countries.

The Port Authority said three passengers were screened after they got off their flight when it landed in California.

It did not say if they were the people who had also set off the metal detectors, and gave no information about the identities or flight schedules of the other eight passengers.

The TSA said it was confident the incident presented “minimal risk to the aviation transportation system,” NBC News reported.

TSA and port authorities officials were not immediately available for further comment. — Reuters

THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR MINISTRY OF ELECTRICITY AND ENERGY MYANMA OIL AND GAS ENTERPRISE (INVITATION FOR OPEN TENDER)

(4/2017)

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr.No</th>
<th>Tender No</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Remark</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>IFB-100(16-17)</td>
<td>Telecommunication Equipments (2) Items</td>
<td>US$</td>
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<tr>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>IFB-101(16-17)</td>
<td>Craft VHF FM Transceiver (Synthesized) (25 W) (10) Sets</td>
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<td>(3)</td>
<td>IFB-102(16-17)</td>
<td>Hydraulic Jack 100 Ton (1) Set</td>
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<td>(4)</td>
<td>IFB-103(16-17)</td>
<td>Air Compressor Engine Driven with Skid 100 CFM, 150 PS, (40-60) HP (1) Set</td>
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<td>(5)</td>
<td>IFB-104(16-17)</td>
<td>185 KW, 3300 V Induction Motor (1) No</td>
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<td>(6)</td>
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<td>7 Ton Fork Lift (82.4 KW @ 2000 rpm) (1) Unit</td>
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<td>Excavator (25 Ton) (Bucket Capacity-1.2m³) (1) Unit</td>
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<td>(8)</td>
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<td>4” ERW Steel Line Pipe, API 5L Grade X-42 (16.75) Miles</td>
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<td>(15)</td>
<td>IFB-114(16-17)</td>
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<td>Spares for Oxygen Plant (12) Items</td>
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<td>(21)</td>
<td>DMP/L-032(16-17)</td>
<td>Portable Fire Pump 200 GPM, Single Stage</td>
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<td>(22)</td>
<td>DMP/L-033(16-17)</td>
<td>With Engine &amp; Assembly (1) Item</td>
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<tr>
<td>(23)</td>
<td>DMP/L-034(16-17)</td>
<td>18 R 22.5 x 18PR Tyre Tubeless (1) Lot</td>
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<td>DMP/L-035(16-17)</td>
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<td>DMP/L-036(16-17)</td>
<td>Gear Oil (PGO-140 EP) (GL-5) (1) Lot</td>
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Tender Closing Date & Time

20-3-2017, 16:30 Hr

Tender Document shall be available during office hours commencing from 20th February, 2017 at the Finance Department, Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise, No(44) Complex, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar.

Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise
Ph: +95 67 - 411206 / 411274
Ex-teen idol David Cassidy says he has dementia

LOS ANGELES — Former teen idol David Cassidy said on Monday he was suffering from dementia, a day after weekend performances in California in which he forgot his words and appeared to fall off stage raised concern about his health.

The former Partridge Family singer and actor, 66, told People magazine he was fighting dementia, a disease which his mother also suffered from.

“I was in denial, but a part of me always knew this was coming,” Cassidy told People.

Cassidy told the magazine he had decided to stop touring as a musician to concentrate on his health.

“I want to focus on what I am, who I am and how I’ve been, without any distractions,” he said. “I want to love. I want to enjoy life.”

Cassidy’s publicist said his comments were accurate but gave no further details.

His comments followed video clips taken by fans of the singer struggling to remember words to some of his old hits at small venue concerts in southern California on Saturday and Sunday. At one point, he appeared to fall off the side of a small stage before climbing back up. Cassidy, whose hits “Cherish” and “I Think I Love You” had teenage girls swooning in the 1970s, has struggled with drinking and financial troubles in recent years. In 2015, he had to auction his Florida home after a bankruptcy filing. He was arrested three times for drunken driving between 2010 and 2014, and was ordered to rehab as part of his sentence in 2014.

Cassidy appeared in several stage shows after his career as a solo singer declined. He played an aging former teen heartthrob in the short-lived 2009 TV comedy “Ruby & the Rockits” and was a member of the “Celebrity Apprentice” reality TV show in 2011.—Reuters

Selena Gomez hates being defined by boyfriends

LOS ANGELES — Singer-actress Selena Gomez is reportedly fed up of being defined by her boyfriends.

The “Hands To Myself” hitmaker, who is currently dating “Can’t Feel My Face” singer The Weeknd, is doing all she can to separate herself from her boyfriend, reported TMZ.

The brunette beauty made a point of not attending the Grammy Awards with her boyfriends as she wants people to focus on her as an artist rather than have people worry about who she’s dating.

And Gomez is also said to be pleading for her ex Justin Bieber — who she dated on and off for a number of years — to move on and stop criticising The Weeknd, according to sources.

Meanwhile, the 24-year-old singer’s relationship with The Weeknd — real name Abel Tesfaye — is going from strength to strength after she recently spent a whopping USD 30,000 on a birthday party for her boyfriend.—PTI

Lin-Manuel Miranda predicts Oscars will be political

LOS ANGELES — Just few days ahead of the 89th Academy Awards, actor-composer Lin-Manuel Miranda, who is nominated in the best original song category at the ceremony, says this year’s Oscars will be a political affair.

Miranda, 37, has scored his first-ever Oscar nomination for his track “How Far I’ll Go” from the film “Moana” and the actor has already anticipated the atmosphere of the star-studded ceremony as he says “this year it would be just as political as your social-media feeds”, according to The Hollywood Reporter.

“It’s a political time, so I imagine the Oscars will look exactly like your Twitter or Facebook feed. Why should we ignore for three hours what were talking about 24 hours a day?” he wrote in a guest column of the publication.

The “Hamilton” creator also wrote about his longtime love affair with the award show, offering a reasonable explanation for why he never wants to host Hollywood’s biggest night.

“Hosting the Oscars is not a thing I would ever want to do. You always have to do this dance as a host: You’re playing to a billion people at home, and you’re playing to anxious contestants in a room, and that’s an insanely hard thing to divide. It’s the most thankless task in the world.”

Calling Oscars “larger-than-life thing”, He further said watching the ceremony when he was a child was always a family thing.

He still remembers watching the Academy Awards in 1990, rooting for “The Little Mermaid” to win best song and best score, the first time he “felt like I had a horse in the race.”—PTI

Megan Mullally teases ‘Will & Grace’ revival

LOS ANGELES — Mulally took to Twitter to share a new photo of the crew back together.

“Lunch,” she captioned the pic of herself laying across the laps of Sean Hayes and Eric McCormack.

NBC announced last month that the Will & Grace revival was official a go, crediting the video the cast filmed in September as the catalyst for the 10-episode reboot.

Creators Max Mutchnick and David Kohan will be returning as co-showrunners and executive producers, with legendary TV director James Burrows on board to direct and executive produce.—PTI

Attenborough, 90, to present BBC “Blue Planet” sequel

LONDON — Britain’s most revered TV naturalist David Attenborough, 90, is returning to present a sequel to “The Blue Planet” documentary series, 16 years after the original illuminated the depths of the world’s oceans.

“The Blue Planet II” will air later this year on the BBC, and follows the 2001 series which vividly depicted marine life from across the world and won two Emmys and two Baftas for its music and cinematography.

The BBC said the new series will feature phenomena such as methane volcanoes in the Gulf of Mexico and the Pacific Ocean’s so-called ‘boiling sea’, as well as footage from 1,000 metres under the Antarctic Ocean.

“I am truly thrilled to be joining this new exploration of the underwater worlds which cover most of our planet, yet are still its least known,” Attenborough said.

The series follows his critically acclaimed series “Planet Earth II”, which was broadcast in Britain last year. It was the most watched natural history program for at least 15 years, the BBC said, and premiered in the US on Saturday.

Attenborough is also known for his work on the “Life” series of nine documentaries made over a 30-year period from 1979.—Reuters

Members of the cast of the NBC television series “Will and Grace” Debra Messing (L) Eric McCormack (C) and Megan Mullally (R) clown around on the bell balcony overlooking the main trading floor of the New York Stock Exchange shortly before ringing the closing bell for the session in New York, on 18 May, 2006. PHOTO: REUTERS

Lin-Manuel Miranda poses next to a portrait of himself by Bryan Organ to mark his 90th birthday at New Walk Museum and Art Gallery in Leicester, Britain, on 22 September, 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS
Burberry turns to artist Henry Moore for latest London Fashion Week show

LONDON — British artist Henry Moore provided the inspiration for luxury label Burberry’s latest collection at London Fashion Week on Monday, with models strutting amid his sculptures in neutral designs influenced by his work.

At the British brand’s mixed menwear and womenswear catwalk show, Chief Creative Officer Christopher Bailey offered deconstructed knitwear, overhanging shirts and the fashion house’s trademark outerwear for both male and female wardrobes. There were ivory lace dresses for women, worn with knits or over ruffled white shirts with frills and striped tops. Rope detailing adorned sweatshirt-like jumpers. Bailey also presented one-shouldered short dresses, capes and loose indigo blue trousers. A pair of overalls in the same shade also made an appearance. Men’s shirts also had lace detailing while trousers were high-waisted. A selection of jackets and Burberry’s famed trench coats came in sculpted shapes. “I have often played with his work, his influence through other collections,” Bailey told Reuters of Moore after the show. “But I never really got under the skin of his work and that’s what I wanted to do here, really understand his thought process.” Moore, who died in 1986, was known for his bronze sculptures, some of which were on display at the Burberry show venue. Except for a few printed designs seen on a dress and men’s shirts, the color palette was mainly a neutral white, ivory, gray and blue. “(Moore) always wore indigo blue shirts and I had stripes in there — he always wore ... a striped butcher’s apron, so I wanted to get that in there, but also his monumental sculptures, they were all kind of the colors of the collection,” Bailey said. For the finale, Bailey, who like Moore comes from the English county of Yorkshire, sent out models in intricate shoulder pieces decorated in pearls, feathers, lace and other luxurious embellishments. —Reuters

Chinese New Year Concert held in Berlin

Photo taken on 20 February, 2017 shows the Chinese New Year Concert 2017 at Berlin Philharmonie in Berlin, capital of Germany. The Chinese New Year Concert 2017 performed by Guangdong National Orchestra of China kicked off on Monday. A series of cultural activities will be held to commemorate the 45th anniversary of the establishment of the Chinese-German diplomatic relations.

Supplied photo shows the package design of the first title under the “Final Fantasy” video game series launched in 1987. Square Enix Co. said 20 February, 2017, the series has been recognized by Guinness World Records as the role-playing game series with the largest number of titles, totaling 87 as of 15 February. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

Motherhood has changed me: Una Healy

LONDON — Singer Una Healy has said becoming a mother has definitely changed her life for the better. “The Saturdays singer, who has Aoife, four, and two-year-old Tadhg with her husband Ben Foden, is so thrilled to have two wonderful children and has revealed how much they have inspired her, reported Daily Star.

“It’s definitely changed my life for the better becoming a mum — the love I have for them and the excitement I have for everything they’re doing. “They’ve inspired me in so many ways with my music and keep me wanting to do well in life to help support them and put food on the table,” Healy said.—PTI

“Final Fantasy” recognized as most prolific roll-playing game

TOKYO — Square Enix Co said Monday its video game series “Final Fantasy” has been recognized by Guinness World Records as being the role-playing game series with the largest number of titles, according to the same number of titles as of last Wednesday, including works that were derived from the series and smartphone games.

“Final Fantasy” was launched in 1987 with its first game sold to be played on Nintendo Co’s consoles for home use that were branded famicom in Japan. Since then, the main characters in the series have grown up, undergoing various experiences such as battling enemies, and the series’ storylines and songs have become popular worldwide.

Up to now, 15 “Final Fantasy” compilations have been released. The series’ 14th compilation has also been recognized by Guinness World Records as “most original pieces of music in a video game (including expansions).” The certifications were awarded at a promotional event in Frankfurt, Germany, over the past weekend.—Kyodo News

Obituary

Al Haj Tun Aung (Chairman – Gensecon Myanmar Pte. Ltd.)
(Supervisor (Rtd.) – The Guardian Newspaper House)
(Aged 69 Years)

This is to inform all friends and relatives of far and near that Al Haj U Tun Aung (a) Shahul Hameed residing at 156, Thembuya Road, Botataung Tsp., Yangon, (son of Al Haj U Abbas and Al Haj Daw Mariam Bi), Son in Law of (Al Haj U Yassin and Al Hajah Daw Mi Mi Gyi – Principia B.S.C Collage), beloved husband of Al Hajah Daw Myt Myt Sein (Vice Chairman – GMPF), father of Ma Aye Aye Tun and Mg Soe Wnna (Diamond Group Construction) and also father of Al Haj Arkar Tun (Ayywarat Paper and Printing Inks Distribu- tion) and beloved grandfather of Mg Soe Thureen Tun (Grade 1, B.E.H.S. (5) Botataung) and Ma Soe Yatti Tun, passed away this morning (21-02-2017) at 03:58 AM. Burial Rights have been taken place at the Yeway Sunni Muslim Garden at 5:00 the same day today.

The Bereaved Family

Lifestyle

22 February 2017
Leicester complains to FA over crowd behaviour at Millwall

LONDON — Leicester City have complained to the Football Association (FA) about “abuse, provocation and intimidation” aimed at their players, staff and fans during Saturday’s FA Cup defeat by third-tier Millwall.

Millwall supporters ran onto the pitch after their team’s 1-0 victory over Premier League champions Leicester, and mounted police were forced to intervene to keep some fans away from Leicester’s supporters.

“The BBC quoted a Leicester City spokesman as saying that while they had congratulated Millwall on their victory, the behaviour of their fans was unacceptable.”

Wenger astonished by Sutton’s fight after FA Cup win

LONDON — Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger left Sutton United with a deeper respect for non-league football after watching his Premier League charges being pushed hard by their far less illustrious opponents in the FA Cup fifth round.

Arsenal ran out 2-0 winners at Sutton’s tiny Gander Green Lane ground on Monday, but Wenger was full of admiration for Sutton’s spirited display.

“arthur i really enjoyed tonight because we absolutely had to do the job and it is tricky.” wenger told the media after goals from lucas perez and theo walcott left sutton’s dream cup run.

“If we had come here in a relaxed mood we would have gone out tonight because they produced quality,” said the frenchman.

“Arsenal have been drawn against non-league Lincoln City in the quarter-finals, a team that became the first non-league side to reach the FA Cup quarter-finals in 103 years.”

Isco ready to walk out on Real Madrid — reports

MADRID—Spain international Isco will look to leave Real Madrid in the summer after growing tired of a lack of first team opportunities with the European champions, Spanish media reported on Tuesday.

“arthur i am of the opinion that the team is quality and we are going to have chances like in the first leg of the tie.”

Isco started 11 of 21 games in La Liga and only one in the Champions League. Marca reported the 24-year-old was also unhappy with Real Madrid’s offer of an improved salary in negotiations to renew his contract and that he wants to move to the Premier League, with Manchester City his number one choice.

Isco scored a crucial goal in Real’s 3-1 at osasuna on 11 February but was left out of the team in Wednesday’s 3-1 win over napoli in Europe’s elite competition. He is ranked 15th in the squad for the number of minutes played this season and rarely starts when coach zinedine zidane has a full squad available.

The Spaniard, however, played a starring role in saturday’s 2-0 victory over espanyol on saturday, setting up goalscorers alvaro morata and gareth bale, but after the game said he was uncertain whether he would remain at the club beyond the summer.

“I am playing because the career of a player is very short,” he told beIN sports.

St Etienne say not obsessed by nemesis Ibrahimovic

SAINT-ETIENNE (France) — St Etienne are Zlatan Ibrahimovic’s preferred victim, but les verts refuse to obsess over the Man United striker ahead of their Europa League last-32 return leg on Wednesday.

“arthur i will have chances like in the first leg but this time we will have to convert them,” he said.

“You can have an anti-Ibrahimovic plan or an anti-Pogba plan but with this team, danger can come from anywhere,” said galtier.

St Etienne coach christophe galtier said united could inflict damage through any number of players.

Manchester United’s Wayne Rooney. Photo: Reuters

Man United’s Rooney could miss League Cup final with muscle injury

LONDON — Manchester United skipper Wayne Rooney could miss Sunday’s League Cup final against Southampton should he suffer a muscular injury, club manager Louis van Gaal has confirmed.

Rooney, United’s all-time top scorer, has not played since the start of February and missed Sunday’s FA Cup fifth-round win over Blackburn Rovers.

“I don’t know,” Mourinho told reporters when asked if Rooney would be fit to face Southampton in the final. 

“arthur i have not registered our dissatisfaction with the FA,” he said. “We are awaiting their response.”

Millwall expressed disappointment that Leicester did not raise the issue on the day of the match.

“We have been made aware of these allegations today and are extremely disappointed that Leicester City, as is the professional protocol in such instances, did not raise them on the day of the game itself,” a spokesman for the League One club said.

Reuters