Myanmar defence chief pledges to achieve everlasting peace

The Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services pledged that the Tatmadaw will participate in establishing everlasting peace using the six peace principles laid down by the Tatmadaw under supervision of the government. He made the remarks in his speech at the 72nd anniversary of Armed Forces Day in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. Through monarchies, colonialism, communism, military rule and present-day transitional democracy, the military has always played a major part in the country’s history, Senior-General Min Aung Hlaing, the head of Myanmar’s armed forces, said yesterday.

The senior general’s remarks were part of the festivities honouring the country’s armed forces that took place in Nay Pyi Taw. Yesterday’s events included an elaborate military parade that featured thousands of troops, some of them on horseback, riding atop tanks or marching in formation.

The senior general noted that the Tatmadaw has played a role in the nation’s history from the ancient monarchies of Anawyahtar and Bayintnaung to today’s slow transition to democracy that included a change of leadership last year, from President U Thein Sein to President U Htin Kyaw. “After state authority was peacefully handed over by the former government, it is the stand of the army to keep the national tranquility, solidarity and development to support the multi-party democracy system selected by the people,” the senior general said.

The future of the military in Myanmar needs to be ensured with training and modernisation.

A military parade to mark the 72nd Anniversary of Armed Forces Day in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. PHOTO: REUTERS
28 March 2017

NATIONAL

72nd Anti-Fascist Day celebrated in NLD HQ

A ceremony to mark the 72nd anniversary of the anti-fascist day was held at the headquarters of the National League for Democracy in Bahan Township.

At the ceremony NLD Patron Thura U Tin Oo said, “Today marks the 72nd anniversary of the historical day when the architect of independence, national leader and father of the Tatmadaw General Aung San and ethnic leaders, leaders of political parties, political activists collaborated with the Tatmadaw to successfully lead the revolution against fascism. It didn’t matter how many different political convictions like communism and such were involved when the combined power united under the will for independence achieved victory in a short span of time.” Afterwards the announcement for the 72nd anti-fascist day ceremony was followed by formal messages by veteran political members.

The ceremony was attended by Central Executive Committee members of the NLD, diplomats, political parties and civil society organizations.

—Myanmar News Agency

PYITHU HLUTTAW Speaker U Win Myint met with Hluttaw Representatives at the meeting hall in Haka, Chin State to discuss law amendments, regional development, the peace process, and experiences of the Hluttaw.

The Speaker explained that the current trend towards democracy requires establishing a Federal Democratic Union Nation for freedom, equality and justice to prosper.

“Only when opportunities for democracy are opened up can rule of law be established for the citizens to have social and mental security in the country. For peace and stability to reign in the country, there needs to be enactment of laws, administration and judiciary. These three mandates cannot overrule each other but should instead be complementary,” the Speaker said.

Hluttaw representatives need to consider the restrictions and rules and regulations when submitting proposals and questions in the Hluttaw. They are put in place to prevent disruption of the nation and of the unity of the people and cannot include national level confidential cases, he said.

“In legislating laws, one must keep in mind the benefit of the people and the nation and constantly ensure that existing laws are in accord with the changing times so that a respectable and reliable legal system is developed.

“Kindness, compassion, forgiveness, compromise and trust are needed to build a democratic nation with the benefit of the citizens and future generations in mind. As the Hluttaw is the figurehead of democracy, Hluttaw representatives need to be ever vigilant in carrying out the duties of the Hluttaw and promoting the state to peace and rule of law to a better state than now.”

The Pyithu Hluttaw has been working to be inclusive of ethnic nationalities in both union and state level organisations.

“A system of checks and balances needs to be in place to prevent the aforementioned three mandates from overpowering or interfering with each other. To foster development of each constituency, it is important to discuss with the government organisations concerned to avoid conflict with the constitution” he said.

Afterwards, Hluttaw representatives reported on regional developments and the Region Hluttaw’s work, and then raised questions to which the Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker replied.

In attendance were Chief Minister of Chin State U Salai Lian Lwel, Chin State Hluttaw Speaker U Zoe Bwe, Deputy Speaker U Aung Than, ministers, Pyithu, Amyotha and Chin State Hluttaw Representatives.

Later Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U Win Myint inspected the site chosen for construction of Chin State Hluttaw Building in Haka’s Myothit Ward.

Afterwards the Speaker visited Zaythawantawya Abbey in Eainmettaw Thitsar Hill and made donations to the Deputy Abbot U Zalida and eight missionaries of the region.

Later the Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker visited the Baptist Church and spoke with its members. In the evening the Speaker inspected the area destroyed by Yone Mountain’s landslide in July 2015 and spoke with Chin State Development Committee Director U Talahure and Head of the Department of Irrigation and Water Utilization Management U Tin Aye to discuss on preventative measures in Yone mountain and Haka City with the Speaker filling in on necessary parts.

—Myanmar News Agency

PYITHU HLUTTAW Speaker U Win Myint speaks at the meeting with MPs from Chin State Hluttaw in Haka, Chin State. Photo: MNA

NLD Patron Thura U Tin Oo addresses the audience at NLD headquarters in Bahan Township. Photo: MNA

MPs need to be ever vigilant in carrying out the duties of the Hluttaw: Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker

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“In legislating laws, one needs to constantly review existing laws in the interests of the people and the nation and of the unity of the people and the nation, and then raised questions to which the Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker replied.

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—Myanmar News Agency

Water tankers donated to philanthropic associations to fight nationwide water shortage

As part of efforts for aiding in the battle with drought nationwide, KBZs Brighter Future Myanmar Foundation donated about 30 water bowser to philanthropic associations this month.

Many areas in the country are facing a water shortage problem as the summer season begins.

The donation of water bowser to the country’s region started with two 3,000-gallon water bowser being handed over to a local philanthropic association on 26 March, another to a local philanthropic association in Natmauk and one 2,000-gallon bowser to a philanthropic association in Myingyan.

Five bowser each were handed over to the Kyawthu Parahita Association and philanthropic associations in Yenangyoung, Sagaing, Pathein and Myingyan in March.

Also one bowser went to the Fire Services Department in Kume, two to Haka, five to Kayin State Government and one to Eleven Media Group in March, for a total of 30 donated bowsers.

The BFM bought 44 bowser in 2016 to supply water to the people facing water shortages in the summer. —Thura Lwin

Water tankers donated to philanthropic associations. Photo: Thura Lwin

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The BFM bought 44 bowser in 2016 to supply water to the people facing water shortages in the summer. —Thura Lwin
Dinner hosted to mark the 72nd Armed Forces Day

Families of the army, the navy and the air forces paid respects to retired senior military officers who attended the 72nd anniversary Armed Forces Day.

Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla hosted a dinner to mark the 72nd Anniversary Armed Forces Day.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Myanmar defence chief pledges to achieve everlasting peace

Since that time, the country has endured the continuing conflicts in Rakhine, Kachin and Shan states and other regions that has required the presence of the military.

“The Armed Forces, aiming at prosperity of the state and its people, will be suppressing the terrorists that attack Our Three Main National Causes. Moreover, any invasion on the state’s territory, water and air space will be defended. The battles in Rakhine State in 2016, in Kachin State in Northern Myanmar, Monekone and Laukkai regions in northeast of Shan State were the operations fought by the armed forces because they attacked the country’s sovereignty.”

More than 10,000 troops marched through the capital Nay Pyi Taw yesterday as Myanmar celebrated its 72nd Armed Forces Day to mark the resistance movement led by independence hero General Aung San — father of State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi — in 1945.

The senior general said that the future of the military in Myanmar needs to be ensured with training and modernisation.

“In the 21st Century battlefield, the most advanced technology army will be the victor. Therefore, we must try to build our Tatmadaw to achieve success in the 21st modern warfare,” said the Senior General.

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing also called for awareness of “foreign interference” in conflicts in western Rakhine State, saying that the Tatmadaw will be responsible for defending against all the measures that base insurgencies on religion and race.

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing concluded his speech, urging military personnel at all levels to work for promoting the education of the people and to assist the people in producing marketable products as part of efforts for regional development.

After his speech, the Commander-in-Chief gave a salute as the military parade columns marched past, followed by a show of military skills performed by army, the navy and air force personnel.

General Mya Tun Oo, Chief of General Staff (Army, Navy and Air) and senior military officers presented awards to military columns that participated in the parade held in the Thitdat Parade Ground in commemoration of the 72nd Anniversary Armed Forces Day yesterday.

The prizes which were awarded to the parade columns include best military parade, caravel award, best military songs, best flag hoisting, best military band and best military disciplines.

Artists who acted in the Pyidaungsu Thitsar Film which was produced in honour of the 72nd Anniversary Armed Forces Day were also honoured at the Bayinnaung Yeiktha.—*GNLM*

Mausoleum for Heroes

(The Nay Pyi Taw) at Armed Forces Day

THE opening ceremony of Mausoleum for Heroes (Nay Pyi Taw) was held at 9 am yesterday, at Ze-yarthari Township, Nay Pyi Taw Council, in honour of 72nd Armed Forces Day.

At the ceremony, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services opened the Mausoleum for Heroes by pressing the button. Then, flames of honour in the 4 stars beside the monument in the premises of the mausoleum were lit by pressing the button of the machine. Afterward, C-in-C of Defence Services laid the flower basket of honour in front of the monument, paying salute to fallen soldiers for the country and the Tatmadaw.

The ground breaking ceremony for mausoleum was held on March 29, 2016 on the hillock of 38.5 acres, and the mausoleum was built of marble stones measuring 54 feet each in width, length and height, at 3000 feet far from the east of the parade ground. It was sculpted in 34 Myanmar fine arts.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Children’s literature festival goes with a bang

THE closing ceremony for the Children’s Literature Festival was held by the Ministry of Information, Ministry of Education and the government of Mon State at the hall of Mawlamyine University yesterday afternoon.

During the ceremony, Mon State Minister for Social Affairs Dr Hein Lin said the three-day festival had been held successfully with the aim of promoting reading habit for children and improving their intelligence and enjoyment. He also gave his heartfelt thanks to the Union Ministers and officials from the Ministry of Information, Ministry of Education, and the government of the Mon State, town elders who supported the event with resources both human and monetary, the education staffs of the township, the rector of the University, and members of the non-profit organisations for their cooperation. He also said that celebrating festivals such as this one should be continued as it educates the public and supports the development of Myanmar Literature.

U Maung Pe, Director General of the Information and Public Relations Department of the Ministry of Information, also expressed his heartfelt thanks to the ministers and officials for their efforts for the children’s literature festival. Next, 87 students were awarded prizes by the officials.

The students participated in a poetry contest, a storytelling contest, an impromptu contest, and a paper-folding contest. Finally, the officials gave certificates of honour to the judges of the children’s contests, the township elders, education staffs, volunteering associations and officials from the private companies who provided aid and support for the festival.—*Aung Min Han (MNA)*
YUNNAN Provinical government agreed that Myanmar merchants’ bank accounts in Yunnan Province which were terminated will be reopened after scrutiny.

Myanmar businessmen trading with Chinese merchants in the Muse border area opened the accounts at banks in Yunnan Province in order to create a smooth and quick system of trading and payment. But the government of Yunnan Province recently prohibited use of all the bank accounts of Myanmar merchants because some account holders were suspected of illegal trade and drug trafficking, said U Chan Thar Oo, the secretary of Muse Commodity Depot.

“Three of the accounts that were suspicious were closed. The export of sugar, maize and rice are legally allowed to trade by our side, whereas those goods are illegitimate to flow into China by the China government, resulting in termination of bank accounts”, U Chan Thar Oo said.

The accounts of 22 merchants, members of the Muse commodity depot, were terminated.

In order to reopen the bank accounts, the type of bank account and account number with the copy of banking book should be submitted to the Muse District Administrative office by 24th March.—Phyo Lwin Aung (AMIA)

Tourists are flocking to see and help endangered Ayeyawady dolphins, which are on the verge of extinction, according to Ayeyawady Dolphin Conservation Team.

In a bid to prevent dolphin hunting, the team started to cooperate with tour agencies in 2013 and a plan was implemented in 2015, said U Han Win, the in charge of Ayeyawady Dolphin Conservation Team.

Under the plan, the tourists come to participate to protect the dolphins from hunters and fishermen. While they are here, they can taste and learn to make local food and observe local sights, allowing the villagers to earn extra money.

Cooking courses are being conducted in the villages where the Ayeyawady dolphin-based eco-tourism has been developed.

The dwindling numbers of Ayeyawady dolphins is attributed to electrocution fishing and becoming trapped in fishing nets. The conservation team, in cooperation with local police, patrol the conservation areas twice a month. Ayeyawady dolphin conservation activities were launched by the Wildlife and Bird Conservation Society and the Fishery Department. The effort is showing results. A total of 72 dolphins were counted in 2011 and 2014, whereas only 60 dolphins were found in some previous years. —Htet Aung (AMIA)

The import value of capital goods from 1st April to 10th March during this fiscal year plunged by US$1.47 billion when compared to that of the similar period last year, according to official figures provided by the Ministry of Commerce. Capital goods, raw industrial materials and personal goods are mostly imported into the country. In the same period, the import value of raw industrial materials was up by US$1067.411mln and personal goods import value increased by US$555.4ml compared to the previous year.

The total import value as of 10th March in this FY was up by US$147.436mln against that in last FY. The import during this FY hit US$15.71 billion, whereas last year’s import value amounted to US$15.57 billion.

Trade values of US$5.06 billion were in deficit so far in this FY when imports surpassed exports. There were trade deficits of US$919.4million in 2012-2013, US$2.56 billion in 2013-2014, US$4.91 billion in 2014-2015 and US$4.41 billion in 2015-2016, according to the statistics released by the Central Statistical Organization (CSO).

The government is putting forth concerted efforts so as to reduce the trade deficit by scrutinising luxury items, except for essentials, according to the second five-year National Development Plan. The external trade value as of 10th March in the current FY reached US$26.37 billion, which is over US$540million higher than that of last FY, with an increase of over US$300mln through normal trade and over US$200mln through border trade. —Mon Mon

Commuters will soon to get access to another taxi service with metered fare in April through the ride-hailing application Grab, which is widely used in Asia, said an official from the Grab taxi operation.

The experimental launching of its service will commence next month. The specific times of operation for Grab in Yangon will be determined on the basis of the requirements of commuters. Hello Cabs and Oway Ride are currently offering taxi service in Yangon through phone calls. Grab is used in Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Viet Nam, Indonesia and the Philippines. Grab is entering the local market with the use of foreign investments.

After the somewhat shaky reformation of Yangon Bus Service (YBS), some commuters relied more heavily on taxi service. Grab will apply its success in other Asian countries and the needs of local commuters in order to provide better service and earn market shares, it is learnt. —209
The Ministry of Border Affairs engaged extensively in stabilization, national unity, development of border areas and national races as well as development of human resources for ethnic groups in the time of the new government that was in office as of 30 March 2016.

Characteristics of border areas

Although border areas are wider in terms of area, its population density is low compounded by poor transport, lack of infrastructures and language barriers. The distance between villages in border areas is very far, thus making communications among local people infrequent. Internal insurgencies that were erupted after independence based on racism, dogmatism, and religion made the country lagged behind in development including its socio-economic status.

To ensure development of border areas, the Central Committee for Implementation of Development of Border Areas and National Races was formed on 25-5-1989 in accordance with Our Three Main Causes—Non-disintegration of the Union, Non-disintegration of national unity and perpetuation of sovereignty.

Meanwhile, to more effectively carry out the above-mentioned tasks, the Work Committee for Implementation of Development of Border Areas and National Races was formed on 31-5-1989, and the work committees and the work sub-committees were formed under the Central Committee and the Work Committee.

With a view to carrying the tasks in a systematic and effective manner, the Ministry of Progress of Border Areas and National Races was established on 24-9-1992 and the ministry was reconstituted into the Ministry of Progress of Border Areas and National Races and Development Affairs on 30-1-1994 in order to widely engage in urban and rural development apart from regional development.

In the time of the government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, the Ministry of Progress of Border Areas and National Races and Development Affairs was transformed into the Ministry of Border Affairs on 30-3-2011.

In line with Our Three Main National Causes, the ministry is working towards ensuring the development of economic, social and transport sectors of border areas, preservation of ethnic culture, tradition and literature, strengthening of friendship among national races, elimination of narcotic drugs through establishment of businesses and peace and stability, prevalence of law and order in border areas.

Border Areas and National Races Development Law

To be able to effectively carry out the tasks for border areas and national races development, the Border Areas and National Races Development Law was enacted on 13-8-1993 with the Law No. 11/93 and to be in conformity with the times, it was amended for the second time on 22-7-2015.

Under the law, the 30-year long-term from 2001-2002 fiscal year to 2030-2031 fiscal year was formulated and is being implemented, covering seven states adjacent to border line, two regions, six self-administered zones, 168 townships and 11,600 villages.

Peace and stability plays a pivotal role in ensuring national development, which calls for national unity, flourishing of nationalist spirit that has something to do with development of socio-economic status and human resources in border areas.

Towards this end, the ministry has focused on ensuring peace and stability, regional development, development of socio-economic status and human resources development.

Funds allocated for border areas development

For development of economic, social, communications sectors and cementing friendship among ethnic groups, infrastructures for health, education, transport and agriculture are being constructed along with facilitating water supply and electrifications in states and regions including self-administered zones.

In the meantime, University for Development of National Races (Sagaing) produces about 500 teachers and University for Development of National Races (Sagaing and Yangon) produce about 600 AGTI, Arts and Science degree holders yearly, and those graduates were appointed at the respective ministries.

The ministry implemented 737 works for border areas development as of 30 March 2016, utilizing K 68,262 billion and the project includes upgrading of roads and construction of new schools and water and power supply and facilitated university, colleges and schools, utilizing K 16,494 billion.

SEE PAGE 6 >>
**PERFORMANCES IN ONE-YEAR PERIOD**

**Irrigated and drinking water supply**
In the time of the new government, the ministry dug 100 wells across the country as its 190-day plan and was engaged in a string of water supply facilities, utilizing K 3507 million whereas building 100 low-cost housings in Kyaungpandu village, Maungtaw township along with of new roads, water and electric power supply. Meanwhile, it renovated 62 buildings in Sittway for IDPs.

**Humanitarian assistance**
The Ministry supplied food such as rice, edible oil, salt and bean, commodities and clothing worth K 1,060 million to the needy ethnic people, ethnic armed groups and internally displaced persons (IDP) in the border areas as humanitarian aids.

**School projects**
The ministry has been carrying out regional development tasks in cooperation with international organizations. The Bridge Asia Japan (BAJ), a Japan-based NGO constructed 100 schools in Rakhine State during five years period from 2012 to 2017 with the assistance of the Nippon Foundation. Similarly, the Sedanar Group built 100 schools in Shan State.

**Poppy-substitute development tasks**
In an effort to eradicate opium cultivation which is one of the priorities set by the successive governments, the ministry conducted a feasibility study in Naungtaya region in Southern Shan State to implement the 3-year pilot project as poppy-substitute development tasks in partnering with four ministries in the fiscal year 2016-2017. The project is scheduled to begin in the next financial year.

**Organizational structure change**
The ministry’s previous organizational structure was based on special regions or special zones that undertake regional development tasks. Now, the ministry’s organizational structure was reformed in accordance with the Constitution.

**Formation of regional road/bridge committee**
The regional road/bridge committee was formed by the Ministry of Border Affairs, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation and Ministry of Construction to effectively carry out development tasks in the border areas. Out of the 62,869 villages in Myanmar, development tasks were undertaken by the Ministry of Border Affairs in 11,069 villages in border area and by the Department of Rural Development in 52,791 villages.

**Capacity enhancement for staff**
The refresher courses on engineering aimed at assisting in regional development tasks being implemented by the ministry and improving the capacity of the staff were conducted for altogether 150 trainees. With a view to improving the capacity of the staff and teachers under the ministry, the ministry organized leadership skill courses and English language proficiency courses in collaboration with the British Council and the Nippon Foundation.

**Ensuring national unity and union spirit**
With the aim of exchanging traditional culture and customs among national races from the border areas, observing development of the country and utilizing their experiences for the interest of the ethnic people in an effective manner and consolidating national unity among all ethnic people who have been residing in Myanmar since time immemorial through thick and thin, the ministry have planned the excursions for ethnic people such as Kachin, Kayah, Kayin, Mon, Rakhine, Palaung and Danu to Nay Pyi Taw and nearby area. Plans are underway to arrange similar trips for all ethnic people on a rotation basis.

**Universities for Development of National Races**
The Universities for Development of National Races in Sagaing and Yangon under the ministry educated about 600 ethnic youths from various border areas. With a view to ensuring gender equality in line with the policies laid down by the government and encouraging human resource development, the University for Development of National Races in Sagaing is giving training to the 53 ethnic girls as a pilot project, commencing this academic year. Steps have been taken to accept more ethnic girls at both universities in the next academic year.

**Higher pass rate**
Over 6,300 ethnic students from the border areas across the nation were attending at the 44 national races youth development training schools under the ministry in this academic year. The experienced teachers gave close guidance to the matriculation students from the aforesaid schools to achieve higher pass rate starting from this academic year.

**Vocational training**
In an attempt to create job opportunities for ethnic youths from border areas who wanted to pursue higher education, the ministry increased from seven technical training schools for national youths to the nine schools. The ministry also conducted courses on computer, wire, mechanics, construction and electric welding, promoting socioeconomic status of the ethnic people.

The ministry increased from 39 vocational training centers for women to the 43 centers with the aim of creating job opportunities for the ethnic women who have not been given opportunity to learn their education due to various reasons. The courses on tailoring, knitting, crochet, weaving and cooking were given to the 6,500 trainees in 2016.

**Cooperation with international organizations**
The Ministry of Border Affairs is implementing development tasks in border areas and human resource development tasks with the government’s allotted budget in cooperation with international organizations. The ministry had been able to undertake all-round development tasks such as education, health, food security, elimination of opium cultivation, rural development, availability of water, agriculture, livestock breeding, improvement of livelihood, infrastructural development, family income rise and human resource development in 13 regions and states through five projects with foreign countries, three projects with UN agencies and nine projects with NGOs during one-year period of the new government. The ministry built 10 schools, 9 rural healthcare centers, six bridges and road works in Chin State and Naga Self-administered Zone with US$ 5 million contributed by the India in the fiscal year 2016-2017.

**Building a democratic federal union**
The ministry placed emphasis on achieving equitable development across the country in undertaking development tasks for the ethnic people in border areas, upholding the national unity in the fore.

**The ministry placed emphasis on achieving equitable development across the country in undertaking development tasks for the ethnic people in border areas, upholding the national unity in the fore.**

[Image: Road along sea shore in Sittway, Rakhine State is paved with concrete.

Officials from Ministry of Border Affairs presents cash for IDPs in Kachin State through a responsible person.

Advanced tailoring courses were conducted to create job opportunities for ethnic women from border area.]
Pakistan says starts fencing Afghanistan border in “high-threat zones”

ISLAMABAD — Pakistan has begun building a fence on its disputed 2,500 km (1,500 mile) border with Afghanistan to prevent in-cursions by militants, Pakistan’s army chief said, in a move likely to further strain relations between the two countries.

Pakistan has blamed Pakistani Taliban militants it says are based on Afghan soil for a spate of attacks at home in recent months, urging Kabul to eradicate “sanctuaries” for militants.

“Citing the attack in Islamabad earlier this month temporarily shut the main crossing points along the colonial-era Durand Line border, drawn up in 1893 and rejected by Afghanistan,” General Qamar Javed Bajwa said initial fencing will focus on “high threat zones” of Bajaur and Mohmand agencies in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), which border eastern Afghan provinces of Nangarhar and Kunar.

“Additional technical surveillance means are also being deployed along the border besides regular air surveillance,” the military said in a statement over the weekend, citing Bajwa.

Relations between Kabul and Islamabad have been tense in recent years, with both countries accusing each other of not doing enough to tackle Pakistani and Afghan Taliban militants.

Afghanistan has accused Pakistan of turning a blind eye to Afghan Taliban commanders on its soil and even of supporting the militant group, something Islamabad denies.

Bajwa said Pakistan was working on plans to “evolve a bilateral security mechanism” with Afghanistan.

“A better managed, secure and peaceful border is in mutual interest of both brotherly countries who have given phenomenal sacrifices in war against terrorism,” Bajwa added.

President Donald Trump has said the wall would be paid for by Mexico, with the US firming up plans to start building it this month. Analysts believe the wall will be a key issue in the upcoming US presidential election.

Mexico’s President Enrique Pena Nieto has said he will not pay for the wall because it would be a “serious affront to dignity and discrimination.”

Mexico’s foreign minister has also threatened to sue the US president over comments that he would “probably” send in Mexicans who helped build the wall if they tried to enter the country.

A spokesman for the Archdiocese, which centers on Mexico City and is presided over by the country’s foremost Roman Catholic cleric, Cardinal Norberto Rivera, said the editorial represented the views of the diocese.

Trump says he wants to build the wall to stop illegal immigrants from crossing the US southern border. He has pledged Mexico will pay for the wall, which the Mexican government adamantly says it will not do.

The Desde la fe editorial, which was published online, said the barrier would only feed prejudice and discrimination.

“In practice, signing up for a project that is a serious affront to dignity is shooting yourself in the foot,” it wrote. Mexican cement maker Cemex has not taken part in the bidding process to build it. Grupo Embark, another company specializing in construction materials, has also signaled readiness to work on the project.— Reuters

Mexican cement maker Cemex has said it will not take part in the bidding process to build the wall, which the Mexican government adamantly says it will not do.

MEXICO CITY — Mexicans who help build Trump wall ‘traitors,’ top Archdiocese says

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Pakistan says starts fencing Afghanistan border in “high-threat zones”

IN BRIEF

MOSCOW — The Kremlin on Monday rejected calls by the United States and the European Union to release opposition protesters detained during what it said were illegal demonstrations on Sunday and accused organizers of paying teenagers to attend.

Police detained hundreds of protesters across Russia on Sunday, including opposition leader Alexei Navalny, after thousands took to the streets to demonstrate against corruption and demand the resignation of Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov, talking to reporters on a conference call, called the protests “a provocation” and said the authorities were concerned that opposition activists would try to encourage people to break the law again in future.— Reuters

UK PM May wants tech firms’ help to access messages, but up to them how — spokesman

LONDON — British Prime Minister Theresa May wants technology firms to help law enforcement agencies gain access to messages sent using their platforms if needed, but how they do that is up to the companies themselves, her spokesman said on Monday.

“The companies which have fabulous technical expertise, are world leading, and where they can do more to assist we would like them to do so,” the spokesman told reporters.

“There are circumstances where law enforcement agencies need to be able to access the contents, they should be able to do so. How that is achieved, I think, is a matter for the talks later in the week.”— Reuters

US-backed Syrian militias say have paused military operations near Tabqa dam

BEIRUT — US-backed Syrian militias said they temporarily halted military operations near the Tabqa Dam on the Euphrates on Monday to allow engineers access to the dam to repair it. The dam was temporarily halted military operations near Tabqa dam on the Euphrates on Monday to allow engineers access to the dam to repair it.

The Syrian Democratic Forces, an alliance of Arab and Kurdish militias supported by the US-led coalition, has been battling Islamic State near the dam west of the Syrian city of Raqa, part of campaign to capture the militants’ stronghold.— Reuters

Sudan cooperation with Chad and France over kidnapped Frenchman — state news agency

KHARTOUM — Sudan is working with Chadian and French authorities on the case of a French citizen who was kidnapped in Chad and taken into Sudan, Foreign Minister Ibrahim Ghandour told state news agency SUNA on Sunday.

“The Foreign Ministry and relevant agencies followed closely until he returns to his family safely,” the minister said.

French authorities on the case of a French citizen who was kidnapped in Chad and taken into Sudan, Foreign Minister Ibrahim Ghandour told state news agency SUNA on Sunday.包括反对派领袖阿列克谢·纳瓦尔尼在内，成千上万的人走上街头示威，要求总理德米特里·梅德韦杰夫辞职。

克里姆林宫拒绝了美国和欧盟呼吁释放被捕的反对派人士的呼吁，称这些示威为“挑衅”，并表示担忧，称反对派活动人士将会试图鼓励他人违反法律，在未来再次违法。—路透社

英国首相特雷莎·梅希望科技公司帮助执法机构访问通过其平台发送的信息，但如果这些公司决定如何做，则取决于他们自己，她的发言人周一表示。

“这些拥有出色技术专长、处于世界领先地位的公司，如果他们能做更多的事情以帮助我们，我们希望他们能这样做，”该发言人对记者说。

“存在法律执法机构需要访问内容的情况下，他们应该能够做到。如何实现这一点，我认为，是关于之后的会谈的问题。”—路透社

美国支持的叙利亚民兵组织表示，他们已经暂停了对叙利亚的军事行动，以便让工程师们对以修复泰布卡水坝。

叙利亚民主力量是阿拉伯和库尔德民兵的联盟，他们得到了美国-领导的联盟的支持，他们在与伊斯兰国的战斗中接近了水坝西部的叙利亚城市拉卡，这是因为他们参与了对武装分子的袭击。

苏丹、乍得和法国当局正在调查一名法国公民在乍得被绑架并被带入苏丹的案件，外交部长易卜拉欣·甘杜尔周日在苏丹国家通讯社SUNA上表示。

“外交部及其他有关机构密切关注案情直到他安全返乡与家人团聚，”甘杜尔说。

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Boomerang Kids! Come back Home, to live with Brethren

Maha Saddhamma Jotika dhaja Sithu,
Dr. Khin Maung Nyunt

Continued from 27-3-2017

Alarmed by these treacherous activities of de Brito, Rakhine King and Lord of Proms led his armies against Syriam while de Brito was away in Goa. For eight months syrians withstood enemy the heavy siege. The besiegers withdrew when de Brito returned with reinforcement, he bribed army officers and bought off Pegua's neutrality. In 1604 A.D Rakhine and Taungoo combined their Tatmadaw's to attack Syriam. Though the enemies were outnumbered they had better weapons to repulse the attackers successfully. In the fierce battle on sea, Rakhine King's son Min Kha Maung was captured by the Portuguese, de Brito received a good ransom for the release of the young prince and once again he the victory. But there was one thing over which he could not win victory. That was the resistance spirit of Myanmar's ethnic nationalities de Brito made two blunders to arouse that spirit—insulted to religion and intruding in local politics. Buddhist shrines were broken open to loot the treasures enshrined inside and the naves were forcibly converted to Christianity. He made alliances with the Lords of Martaban, Pegu and Taungoo and played one against another, until all realized that he was their common enemy. By the turn of the 17th century a new power was rising in Upper Myanmar. With Ava [Inwa] as his base, King Min Naung of Bayint Naung was restoring the Empire which had disintegrated since his father's death. Nyuang Yan's son King Anauk Phet Larn continued his father's work. Hav-
Celebration of the 72nd Anniversary of Armed Forces Day

The annual Armed Forces Day was celebrated in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday with an elaborate parade that featured thousands of troops, some riding on tanks and other military vehicles, on planes and helicopters and marching on foot. 

PHOTOS: MNA & REUTERS
NATO to spend 3 billion euros on satellite, cyber defences

BRUSSELS — NATO plans to spend 3 billion euros ($3.24 billion) to upgrade its satellite and computer technology over the next three years as the Western military alliance adapts to new threats, a senior official said.

Seeking to deter hackers, and other threats including Iranian missiles, the investments underscore NATO’s recognition that conflicts are increasingly fought on computer networks as well as in the air, on land and at sea.

A senior official at the NATO Communications and Information Agency said the plans include a 1.7-billion-euro investment in satellite communications to better support troops and ships deployed across the alliance, as well as adding the use of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) or drones.

It was not immediately clear if NATO allies would fund a new military communications satellite to be launched into space or if an increase in broadband capacity could be gained from existing US and other allied satellites.

A non-NATO member Japan launched its first military communications satellite in January.

The proposals, for which some funding must still be approved by NATO governments, also envisage spending about 800 million euros on the computer systems that help command air and missile defences, said the official, who declined to be named.

Seychelles mining
eight million
dominion race according
to recent opinion polls,
her to Moscow where she
interviewed by Mrs. Le Pen
the French far-right Le Pen's
candidates for the
election campaign.

BELFAST — Britain’s Northern Ireland minister must decide whether to call another election, return to direct British rule of the province or give parties more time after talks to form a new regional government failed.

Northern Ireland’s parties had until Monday at 1500 GMT to form a new power-sharing government but all said a deal would not be reached after making little progress on a range of issues deeply dividing the two main nationalist and unionist parties.

The failure to restore the province’s administration after its collapse in January prolongs a period of political paralysis just as Britain starts talks to leave the European Union that will determine Northern Ireland’s political and economic future.

“We regret very much that there wasn’t sufficient progress made but I think we will return to those issues whenever we get the space to do so,” Conor Murphy, a senior member of Northern Ireland’s largest nationalist party, Sinn Fein, told BBC Radio.

Murphy said Britain’s Northern Ireland Minister James Brokenshire told the parties he would make a statement in the British parliament on Tuesday. A spokeswoman for Broken
kshire had no immediate comment on the timeline.

By law, Brokenshire must go the polls again in “a reasonable time” once the three weeks of post-election talks elapse.

Analysts think he could announce fresh elections — the third in a year — but not set a date in a bid to provide extra time.

Both the British and Irish governments have repeatedly said they are against decision-making being taken back to London for the first time since 2007.

Sinn Fein effectively ended the talks on Sunday when they said agreement could not be reached in disputed issues including funding services for Irish language speakers, gay rights and inquiries into deaths during Northern Ireland’s three decades of sectarian violence.

The two largest parties blamed each other for the collapse. The Democratic Unionist Party’s (DUP) deputy leader Nigel Dodds blamed Sinn Fein for being “intransigent” and “playing for time.”

Sinn Fein surged to within one seat of the DUP at the 2 March election to den

Russia to develop Tor air defence missile system’s Arctic version

IZHEVSK — Works for developing the Tor-M2DT short-range anti-aircraft missile system for the Arctic application are planned to be finished by the end of this year, Air Defence Force Commander Lieutenant-General Alexander Leonov said on Thursday.

“This year, the upgrade of the S-300V4 complex and the adaption of the Tor anti-aircraft missile system for Arctic applications will be completed. Work is in full swing to develop an advanced anti-aircraft artillery complex,” the general said.

The first brigade set of the upgraded S-300V4 long-range air defence missile system was delivered to the troops in 2014. From next year, only this modification will be operational in the ground force’s air defence armament, the general said.

Also, the ground forces have been supplied with the latest modifications of the Buk and Tor complexes and man-portable air defence systems since 2016, he added.

The Tor-M2 system is currently the basic short-range air defence missile complex operational in the Russian Army. It is designed to provide air and anti-missile defence at the division level. The system is capable of protecting land troops from anti-radiation and cruise missiles, remote-controlled drones, glide bombs, aircraft and helicopters.

Under an agreement between the Russia based Kupol electromechanical factory and Vityaz engineering company posted on the website of state purchases, R&D work for developing the system’s modification for application in the Arctic and the Extreme North will be carried out in 2015-2020.

The new version of the anti-aircraft missile system should be mounted on the chassis of the DT-30PM-T two-section tracked prime mover (the DT two-section prime mover).

The S-300V4 is a modification of 500V/M air defence system with better operational characteristics through the integration of modern computers and new components. The system is capable of hitting ballistic and aerodynamic targets at a distance of up to 400 km.—TASS

Britain to decide Northern Ireland’s fate after talks fail

PARIS — French far-right presidential candidate Marine Le Pen said on Monday she had yet to secure all the funding she needs for her election campaign with less than four weeks to go before voting begins.

The National Front leader, who is running in second place in the presidential race according to opinion polls, repeated her complaint that French banks were refusing to lend her money.

Speaking on Europe 1 radio after a visit last week to Moscow where she met President Vladimir Putin, she said she did not have any financial backing from Russia, nor from any Russian financial institution, but that she was trying to get a loan from a foreign bank.

“I have to,” she said. “I’m prevented from borrowing from French banks so now I am being told off for asking for a loan from a foreign bank. What am I supposed to do? ... The French banks have lent to all the presidential candidates except for me.”

One French bank, Societe Generale, has said it does not lend to any political parties. The other main banks have declined to comment on the subject.

Le Pen last week declared two loans amounting to 6 million euros for the campaign, money which came from her father and party founder Jean-Marie Le Pen’s Cotelec organisa
tion in 2014 it emerged that the National Front had received a 9 million euro loan from a Russian lender.

Potential Russian involvement in western elec
tions has become a more serious concern for US in
telligence agencies accused their Russian counterparts of seeking to influence the US election through hacking, something Moscow has denied. —Reuters

France’s Le Pen says lacks election funds, has no Russian backing

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PERFORMANCES IN ONE-YEAR PERIOD

Performances in One-Year Period of Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation

Thein Thein Moe

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation has been performing emphatically the tasks of reducing the climate change, fighting against the formation of deserts, conservation of different biological species and so on.

Here is the interview with the Union Minister for Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation who has been making concerted efforts for reducing the destruction of forest resources and conservation of environment in every way and departmental heads of the ministry.

U Ohn Win, Union Minister for Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation

Interviewer — Please let me know about the remarkable reforms of the ministry during one-year period.

Union Minister — The ministry has three major sectors, namely sector of conserving the forests, sector of conserving the environment and sector of exploiting minerals for sale.

The remarkable change of the forest sector is none other than the suspension of the production of teak and hard wood in the whole country in the financial year 2016-2017. This was done with the intention of conserving the forests.

Reduction of the Amount of Cutting Woods

Union Minister — In the area of Bago Yoma where the most valuable woods grow, 10-year suspension of cutting woods had been made. Starting from the fiscal year 2017-2018, it has been intended to cut woods less than the amount: ACC (Annual Allowable Cut). By doing so, it will help in the conservation of the forests. In the past, Myanmar Timber Corporation produced timber under the sub-contract of the Ministry of Commerce has restricted the sale, distribution and exports of chain-saws.

Interviewer — To which extent, did deforestation amount in Myanmar? Please tell me which arrangements had been made to reduce the rate of deforestation.

Union Minister — According to the data surveyed in December 2015, Myanmar forests cover 42.92% of the whole area of the country. Accordingly, to fulfill deforested area and empty area, plantation of forests has been made from the year 2017-2018 to 2025-2027 under 10-year plan. This is the remarkable change of the forestry sector.

Interviewer — I want you to tell me about the implementation for the long-term development.

Union Minister — As regards the long-term development, the Ministry has the department of conserving natural environment. It is a major department which carries out the conservation of natural environment. For sustainable development, there are three major panels under the ministry—social, economic and natural environment sectors. Among them, panel of natural environment conservation plays an important role.

A central organization is to effectively implement environmental policy on climate change and policy on strategy, presided over by Vice-President I as patron and with 6 permanent secretaries leading the respective working committees. Moreover, with a view to effectively implement the conservation of environment up to the bottom level, supervision committees and working organizations had been formed in regions, states, districts and townships.

In implementing sustainable development in the long run, all sectors are closely connected. So, related ministries, private entrepreneurs, CSOs, experts and professionals included. Only if those would operate transparently and with unity, will the whole task be successful.

Impact of Climate Change

Now, strategic framework for national-level green economic development had been drawn for economic enterprises which would cause environmental ruin least, climate-change-proof economic enterprises causing no environmental pollution to be set up. Compilation of the strategic policy was also underway in combination with experts and professionals from home and abroad. This is also a great task for the ministry.

Interviewer — Amended Mining law was learnt to have been approved on December 24 in 2015. Let me know about the preparation for the promulgation of rules and regulations of Myanmar Mining Law.

Union Minister — Mineral sector is one of great importance in Myanmar. Our country abounds with valuable minerals which are very rare in the world. For systematically mining these minerals, laws had been made since long ago. Now amendment of some laws had been underway, in accord with the changing time.

Myanmar forests cover 42.92% of the whole area of the country. Accordingly, to fulfill deforested area and empty area, plantation of forests has been made from the year 2017-2018 to 2025-2027 under 10-year plan.

The amended law was enacted by the President on 24 December 2015.

The amended law was drawn up in consultation with legal experts and professionals with competency in rules and regulations. The rules and regulations were sent to the Office of the Union Attorney General on December 11, 2017.

After the scrutiny of it from the Office of UAG, it will be submitted to the Office of State Government for further implementation.

Interviewer — Please explain to me concerning the situations of EITI (Extractive Industries Transparency Initiatives).

Union Minister — It is of great importance to be transparent in extracting mineral resources. Failing that, minerals will be used up very soon. As regards this, EITI was initiated as of 2012, so Myanmar became a Candidate Country in 2014. So, in December 2015, the first report had been submitted to EITI Board.

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After that on 28 February 2017, a Tripartite Committee consisting of Government, Private and Civil Society was formed. Likewise, Work Implementation Committee was formed on 28 October 2016 to promptly carry out EITI works. Despite that, the EITI was underway to submit to the international EITI Board in March 2018.

Interviewer — Please tell me about the difference between forestry and mineral sectors, the arrangement for the long-term benefit of minerals and jewelry.

Union Minister — Regarding the difference between forest and mining sectors, forests and trees are renewable energy, with Minerals being the non-renewable. Except for those, there are few others that do not develop again. After using, it is lost. So, for long-term use, it has been arranged to leave reserved mineral resources for new generations. In Sagaing Region, Magwe Region and Mandalay Region, over 1160000 acres of coals were left, with more than 1167900 acres of reserved minerals to be left, in Kathaing Phayarautang region, Phakant township of Kachin State left for further use.

In mining minerals, EMP (Environmental Management Plan) was drawn up since the time when the new government took office in 2016-2017. After the approval of the law, licenses were given out to continue mining. If not so, the permission to dig up was suspended. Presently, it is being granted with limitation. With effect from 1 March 2016, permits to mine the limited amounts of mining was granted. Starting from 1 April 2016, it was strictly prohibited to grant new mining permits in the interest of future generation.

Interviewer — Is there any plans to implement for the reducing climate changes and natural environment conservation?

Union Minister — Concerning the sector of forestry, FAO released a report assessing the forest resources. In it, it was described that Myanmar is the third worst countries on the totem pole of the world where most of the forest resources were lost. Now, arrangements are underway for the forestation to refoliate forests and for the plantation of forests. By granting budgets for conservation, the remaining natural forests, conservation works will be carried out.

Criticisms were made that there would be shortages of woods by stopping the permits to cut woods. So as not to happen like that, arrangements are being made. Necessary raw materials can be exported from foreign countries.

To be able to do so, coordination work for reducing taxes will be made after consulting with custom branches and commercial taxes branches.

In the past, due to the abundance of forest resources logs were sold. Since April 1, 2014 sales of logs were stopped. But, in the tenure of the new government not only exports of logs but also those of timbers are to be carried out according to the limits, so that high-priced furnishings are to be produced more for the country and sellers to gain more profits.

As the conservation of forests is of great importance, 10-year plan will be implemented starting from financial year 2017-2018. The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment Conservation alone cannot implement the tasks of forest and environmental conservation and climate changes. Only if all sectors-related ministries, private organizations, social societies, the people and professionals will cooperate, it will be successful.

Dr Nyi Nyi Kyaw, Director-General of Forestry Department

Interviewer — Please let me know major reforms of the department in one-year period.

In the present rule of the new government up to the end of February, 2017, seizure of 44407 tons of teak, hard woods and other kinds of timbers were made.

The next one is to protect illegal cutting of woods, the natural resources of the country as illegal smuggling of wood is ubiquitous in the country. In the present rule of the new government up to the end of February, 2017, seizure of 44407 tons of teak, hard woods and other kinds of timbers were made.

This is the result of the collective effort of Tatmadaw, Myanmar Police Force, related departments and local people. So as to prevent illegal smuggling of woods, patrolling in the areas educating and attempt to get legal trading of those woods will be performed.

Forest Law Enforcement, Government is working is fully implemented with the help of European Union.

Under the programme Myanmar Timbers can be sold to EU countries officially.

Another one is conservation of mangroves. Mangroves are exuberantly growing in Rakhine State, Ayeyawady Region and Tanintharyi Region.

These are natural eco systems which can help reduce the climate changes. So, central committee for administering the natural resources of the coastal areas in the country at the national level was formed. Our country is rich in different kinds of biological species. Accordingly, the conservation of these natural resources is being made across the country. Presently 40 natural conservation zones were established and among them Inlay Lake was designated as MAB (Man and the Biosphere Programme) in 2015.

Besides, arrangements are being made to have Khakaborazi area, the far north of Myanmar designated as the world heritage zone.

Dr Ye Myint Swe, Director-General of the department of geological survey and mineral exploration

Interviewer — Starting from the financial year 2016-2017, management plans for 68 districts was drawn up and implemented. Under the plan, 14 kinds of forestry including forest conservation and forest plantation will be implemented. Production of timber will be suspended and after reassessing the situations of natural forests, the plan of reforestation of Myanmar forests will be implemented. In the year 2017-2018 to 2026-2027.

Technical Aids

Interviewer — I would be must obliged if you recount the implementation of the forest department, in sectors.

Interviewee — For reassessment and data collection of the forests in the country, drawing of a plan is being carried out with the technical aids of FAO and monetary aids of Finland government. The plan is collecting data after designating 8 Pilot Sites in 8 regions and states as a pilot project.

Under the programme Myanmar Timbers are to be left, in Kathaing Phayarautang region, 1187000 acres of reserved minerals to be left, in Kathaing Phayarautang region, Phakant township of Kachin State left for further use.

Plots for forest plantations were given out to continue mining. If not so, the permission to dig up was suspended. Presently, it is being granted with limitation. With effect from 1 March 2016, permits to mine the limited amounts of mining was granted. Starting from 1 April 2016, it was strictly prohibited to grant new mining permits in the interest of future generation.

In performing the tasks of conserving natural environment, reducing and adapting the climate changes, we find it difficult to some extent in techniques. Similarly, there are some weak points in capacities and skills, financial difficulties. So, we are implementing 15 kinds of projects including technical aids and monetary subsidies from international organizations. Remarkably speaking, we are implementing 5 projects in the sectors of agriculture, forestry, conservation of different kinds of biological species, and conservation of coastal areas, in the financial year 2015-2016, with the aid of US $ 28.5 million from GEF (Global Environmental Facility), which is the organization of giving aids to under-developed countries like ours.

The department of natural environment conservation is performing to cooperate in the sectors of upgrading the capacities in drawing up the policies and strategies, upgrading the capacities in implementing the purification of the environment in the field, with the force of international organizations. And, the department is to cooperate more with international institutions.
Singapore jails couple for starving Filipino domestic helper

SINGAPORE — Singapore court jailed a couple on Monday for starving their Filipino domestic helper, a case that highlighted what rights groups say is a common complaint in the wealthy city-state.

Thelma Oyasen Gawidan, 40, weighed just 29.4 kg (65 lb) in April 2014 after being given too little to eat for about 15 months, prosecutors said.

She was given two or three slices of plain white bread and one to two packets of instant noodles for breakfast, while for her second and last meal of the day she was given five or six slices of plain bread, prosecutors said. Lim Choon Hong was jailed for three weeks and fined $10,000 ($7,200), while his wife, Chong Sui Foon, got three months with no fine. They had both pleaded guilty. Prosecutors said they would appeal.

The maximum penalty is 12 months imprisonment and a $10,000 fine. “I accept that, you are remorseful and that you did not intentionally seek to starve your maid,” Judge Low Wee Ping said.

Defence counsel Raymond Lye said his clients had no intention to cause harm. The more common cases of domestic helper abuse were of “physical assault, which are intentional offences”, he said. “Clients, they feel a sense of relief. They were hoping to commence their jail term but in light of the appeal by the prosecution, that will have to be delayed,” Lye said. In her defence, Chong had said she suffered from an eating disorder when younger and had been diagnosed with obsessive-compulsive disorder as an adult, media reported. The judge said there was no link. The couple paid the domestic helper, who now works for another employer, $20,000 to settle civil claims, prosecutors said.

“This is definitely a familiar practice, especially by employers who want to save money,” Gee said, adding that although overall living and working conditions for domestic helpers in Singapore had improved, “a lot more needs to be done.”

20-year-old woman burnt alive in western India

NEW DELHI — A gory incident, a 20-year-old woman was burnt alive in a village near Jodhpur town in the western Indian state of Rajasthan for staging a protest against cutting of trees.

The incident took place on Sunday but came to light Monday morning when the woman succumbed to her injuries in a hospital.

According to police, the woman, identified as Lalita, had raised objections to the cutting of trees planted in her farm for the construction of a road near her village on Sunday.

Initially it started as a minor argument, but the row escalated and a group of villagers allegedly attacked her.

The group that included village head Ranveer Singh did not stop there. It soon poured petrol on her and set her on fire, cops said.

“The village head and 10 others poured petrol on her and burnt her alive. We have launched a probe and will soon arrest the accused,” a senior police official said. — Xinhua

About 700 artillery troops engaged in Crimean coastal defence drills

MOSCOW — About 700 artillery personnel of a separate coastal defence brigade from the Black Sea Fleet’s army corps are completing command and staff exercises at the Opuk practice range in Crimea.

Fleet spokesman Vyacheslav Trukhachyov told TASS on Monday.

“The brigade’s units are planned to practice organizing sea coast defence in the areas of potential amphibious assaults, and delivering counter-strikes in interaction with other formations of the army corps as part of the command and staff drills,” the spokesman said. A field camp with the required infrastructure has been set up at the practice range and the deployment of forces has been completed, he said.

The drills started on Friday with the march of a column of 100 pieces of the armor to the practice range. While on the move, the troops repelled air strikes and neutralized a sabotage and reconnaissance group of a nothemy. — TASS

Philippine military rescues three Malaysian hostages from Abu Sayyaf

MANILA — The Philippine military said on Monday it has rescued three Malaysian men held captive by the Abu Sayyaf militants in the southern Sulu province.

Gen Eduardo Ano, chief of staff of the armed forces of the Philippines, told reporters that the military rescued three Malaysian hostages around 11:30 pm on Sunday in a remote village in Sulu.

“They are all alive and well, and they are in a Sulu hospital,” Ano said, adding they were brought to a local hospital for check-ups. Ano did not identify the Abu Sayyaf are still holding around 20 hostages of different nationalities, including Vietnamese and Dutch.

The three hostages were part of five Malaysian crewmen who were kidnapped by the Abu Sayyaf militants off Malaysia’s Sabah state in July last year.

The two other hostages were rescued last week by Philippine marines and sailors after they were reportedly abandoned by their captors.

The three hostages who were rescued late Sunday were identified as Zainal Abidin Talip, Mohd Ali Bin Ismail and Fandy Bin Bakran.

The two Malaysian hostages rescued on 23 March were identified as Taufiq Haji Ahmad and Abdirahman bin Sumas.

Abu Sayyaf is one of the smallest and most violent jihadist groups operating in the southern Philippines.

It is notorious for kidnapping and attacking civilians and the army.

The group, numbering about 500, has been sowing terror in the southern Philippine region since the early 1990s. Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte has ordered the military to crush the Abu Sayyaf militants. —Xinhua

Request for Proposal for Joint Venture in Onshore Seismic Acquisition Services with Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise

Date: March 24, 2017

MOGE is a state-owned enterprise which is responsible for the upstream oil and gas sector under the Ministry of Electricity and Energy (“MOEE”) of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar. MOGE intends to establish a joint venture with an internationally proven service company in onshore seismic acquisition services. The main goals are to strengthen MOGE’s technological know-how, upgrade its workforce, gain access to financing, adopt international best practices and widen market access.

MOGE had initially launched a public invitation for interested parties to submit a Letter of Expression of Interest (“LEDI”) for a Joint Venture in Onshore Seismic Acquisition Services with MOGE in June 2014. MOGE is now launching this Request for Proposal (“RFP”) in the form of an open tender to interested parties, including but not limited to LEDI respondents from the LEDI exercise conducted in June 2014, to submit a response to this Request for Proposal (“the Application”). In this context, MOGE intends to select a suitable internationally proven seismic acquisition services company as the Joint Venture Partner through a step-by-step process: Phase 1: Request for Proposal; Phase 2: Evaluation Process; and Phase 3: Negotiations and Signing.

Interested parties are required to submit an Application no later than 3 PM, local time (Nay Pyi Taw, Republic of the Union of Myanmar), on April 24, 2017 to the following address: MOGE Tender Committee for Joint Venture Establishment in Petroleum Services (Seismic), Complex 44, MOGE Office, Nay Pyi Taw, Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

The RFP, which includes guidelines for submission, can be purchased by any interested party starting March 24, 2017 (excluding Saturdays, Sundays and Public Holidays) at Complex 44, MOGE Office, Nay Pyi Taw, Republic of the Union of Myanmar for a non-refundable cash payment of five hundred United States Dollars (USD 500). The purchaser will be provided with a payment acknowledgement when payment is made. Only Applications from Applicants that had purchased the RFP document officially from MOGE will be evaluated.

Interested parties who have purchased the RFP are welcome to submit questions regarding the RFP and comments on the draft Joint Venture Agreement attached in its annex, no later than 12 PM, local time (Nay Pyi Taw, Republic of the Union of Myanmar), on April 4, 2017, to which MOGE will duly respond to all questions submitted and issue a revised draft Joint Venture Agreement.

Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise
Ministry of Electricity and Energy

GEOGRAPHY OF MYANMAR

Ministry of Electricity and Energy

Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise

Nay Pyi Taw

REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR

Ministry of Electricity and Energy
Emma Thompson says wants people to ‘shout loudly’ about climate change

STOCKHOLM — From “Sense and Sensibility” to “Love Actually” and “Nanny McPhee,” British actress Emma Thompson is known for her memorable roles in costumes dramas, comedies and fantasy films.

But like fellow Oscar winner Leonardo DiCaprio, the 57-year-old is also an avid environmental campaigner, seeking to raise awareness on issues such as fracking and climate change.

“I think that we’ve all got to shout as loudly as we can,” Thompson told Reuters in an interview. “Ordinary people now need to know more. They need to inform themselves. You can’t just sit back and go ‘look, I recycle’.”

The actress was speaking in Sweden, where she is advertising on the set of “Adult World” — a story about a 22-year-old actress that has been large-scale dramas, comedies for her memorable roles in costumes dramas, comedies and fantasy films. She was also named as one of the first countries to sign the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement and to provide a constitutional right to a healthy environment.

“You can’t say you want to safeguard future generations and then drill for more of the stuff that has already put our planet in danger,” she said. “We already have.”

In 2014, Thompson, who said she joined Greenpeace in her youth, travelled to the Arctic archipelago of Svalbard, roughly midway between the North Pole and northernmost tip of Europe.

“To see the ice that is sadly melting changed me actually on quite a molecular level,” she said. “But also to see the grief of the scientists who have been visiting the place for 25 years and to stand on a glacier and to see...the marks of where it used to be is a terrible thing.”

Current- ly in cinemas in Disney’s “Beauty and the Beast” remake, Thompson said her next project was directing a film about the 1665 London plague.

“What is interesting about it is that like so many plagues that affect the world it affected only the poor which is why we don’t know much about it,” she said, when asked what next for her.

“But on my 60th birthday I want to be putting up a Greenpeace banner.”— Reuters

Emma Roberts knows how to ‘step away from spotlight’

LOS ANGELES — Emma Roberts has lived most of her life in the spotlight and the actress says that now she has learned a lot about how to handle it.

The 26-year-old actress talked about how she has become proficient in maintaining a certain level of privacy when it comes to more personal aspects of her life, such as relationships, reported People magazine.

According to Roberts, it is extremely important to learn how to ‘able to step away from it.”

“I mean, I think it’s all about just really knowing who you are yourself. And staying grounded with your family and with your friends.

“I think it’s easy to get so caught up in it because now with social media, there is no stepping away, really, because even when you do it’s still all on your phone. So I think (it’s about) figuring out how to really step away and kind of turn it off and make time for yourself and your real life,” she said.

The “Scream Queens” star has been in an on-again, off-again relationship with Evan Peters, 30, since 2012.

The two met while filming on the set of “Adult World” and got engaged in late 2013. They called it quits in June 2015 and have been largely on and off since then. — PTI

Emma Lopez goes on romantic date with Alex Rodriguez

LOS ANGELES — Jennifer Lopez and Alex Rodriguez.

Jennifer Lopez and Alex Rodriguez enjoyed a romantic dinner date in Beverly Hills just days after returning from their whirlwind getaway to the Bahamas.

The pair was spotted leaving the Bel-Air Hotel together in a luxury car, reported E! Online.

Lopez, 47, wore her signature gold oversized hoop earrings to accessorize her light ensemble, while Rodriguez wore a black wool coat and matching shirt.

“All his friends can tell he really likes JLo (but) in the beginning they thought this may actually be a fling. Friends are slowly thinking this may actually be a great match.

“He calls JLo his lady. He would wife her up in a heartbeat... She is different than other people hes dated,” a source said.— PTI

Emma Roberts says wants people to ‘shout loudly’ about climate change

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Photo: Reuters
Captain James Cook waistcoat fails to sell at Sydney auction

SYDNEY — A waistcoat owned by British explorer Captain James Cook, who claimed Australia for Britain in 1770, has failed to sell at auction, with bids far below its anticipated million dollar price tag, the auction house said on Monday.

The 250-year-old waistcoat was passed in at A$800,000 and A$1.1 million on 22 March 2017. Photo: Reuters

J-pop singer, Kyogen troupe perform at Washington cherry blossom event

WASHINGTON — Multilingual J-pop singer May J, member of the Shigeoanya Kyogen traditional Japanese theater troupe from Kyoto and other artists performed at the opening ceremony Saturday of an annual cherry blossom festival in Washington.

With many cherry trees in full bloom in the capital, May J, who sang “Let It Go” from the 2013 Disney animation film “Frozen” and other songs in both English and Japanese, said she was glad to have seen people picking under the blossoms in downtown Washington.

“That’s how the Japanese people enjoy cherry blossoms. I was happy to see that,” she said. Speaking at the ceremony, Muriel Bowsan, grandmother of Kevalyn Bharadwaja passed away peacefully on 26-03-2017 at 12:30 PM. Photo: Kyodo News

Cherry blossoms are in full bloom in Washington on 25 March 2017, with the Washington Monument in the background. Photo: Kyodo News

Sayamary A Bhurahawo (Acejai)
BA, MA, B Ed
Aged (88) years
Principal (Retired)
B E M S: (2) Paterns
B E R S: (2) Jesuit
Principal, MLA International School
Daughter of (Sri Ram Chandru and Smt Manmohan), beloved wife of (Sri Ganjam Bhurahawo, Retired Lecturer, Physics Dept, R.A.S.U.), sister-in-law of (Smt Pushkiran Bhurahawo and Pushkaran), (Sri Yed Yen Bhurahawo — Dr. Dina Khin Mya Oo), (Smt Lata Bhurahawo, ex Head of History Dept, Mandalay College), beloved aunt of (Dr Indira Bhurahawo), (Dr Vaiba Laxmi Naing), (Dr Krishna Bhurahawo, Sr Rq Thik Bhurahawo, Sr Asha Kherpatal, Rthi Bhurahawo — Aye Aye Mynn, Rabindra Nath Bhurahawo, Ravi Raj Bhurahawo, Smt Mala Bhurahawo — Aye Aye Singh), beloved mother of (Dr Vaibinden Bhurahawo — Dr Nita Khin Maw Min), grandmother of (Kevyru Bhurahawo) passed away peacefully on 26-03-2017 at 2:10AM (IST) at the Global Hospital, Chennai, India.

The cremation ceremony will be held at Hindu Weyaw cemetery at 3:00PM on 30 March 2017. Buses will leave No. 51/35, 124th St Mingla Taung Nyunt, Yangon at 12:30 PM. Bereaved family
Defoe scores on return as England beat Lithuania

LONDON — England striker Jermain Defoe made a scoring return to the international stage and substitute Jamie Vardy added a second goal as the hosts laboured to a 2-0 victory over Lithuania in World Cup qualifying Group F on Sunday.

Veteran Defoe, making his first appearance for nearly 3-1/2 years, fired last-minute England ahead in the 21st minute at Wembley but Gareth Southgate’s team struggled to finish off a Lithuania side who are 93 places lower in the FIFA rankings.

England survived a couple of worrying moments and had to wait until the 66th minute to double their lead when Defoe’s replacement Vardy finished neatly shortly after coming on.

It was hardly an emphatic performance but the result kept England top of Group F with 13 points from five games, five more the Slovenia who visit Scotland later on Sunday. England’s plodding pace allowed Lithuania a relatively comfortable opening 20 minutes on a balmy afternoon.

England completely dominated possession but barely tested Ernests Stekurs’ goal as their passing lacked pace.

It took 34-year-old Sunderland striker Defoe to inject some spark, first latching on to Adam Lallana’s clever reverse pass to force a fine save from Stekurs and then firming England ahead with his 20th goal for his country.

Raheem Sterling burst towards the byline and squared the ball for Defoe to plant a shot past Stekurs — his first England goal since bagging two against San Marino four years ago.

The lively Defoe flashed another snap-shot just wide but England toiled away bluntly against Lithuania’s yellow wall.

The hosts had a scare on the stroke of halftime when a clearly offside Nerijus Valskis headed towards an open goal under pressure from goalkeeper Joe Hart but his weak effort was cleared off the line by a retreating John Stones. There was no discernible change of gear at the start of the second half as fans ambled back to their seats. Lithuania had a half-chance when Vytautas Sivka’s deflected shot was comfortably gathered by captain Hart.

England responded with Alex Oxley-Chamberlain’s 25-metre effort clawed away by a flying Stekurs. Defoe then made way for Vardy — with Marcus Rashford replacing Sterling — and the Leicester City striker made an instant impact, scoring with a neat finish from Lallana’s pass.

— Reuters

Nishikori survives Miami marathon, Raonic withdraws

MIAMI — Second seed Kei Nishikori of Japan outlasted Spain’s Fernando Verdasco 7-6(2), 6-7(5), 6-1 in a nearly three-hour marathon at the Miami Open on Sunday.

The victory came hours after third-seeded Milos Raonic of Canada, suffering from a hamstring injury, withdrew before his third-round match.

Nishikori, the runner-up to Novak Djokovic last year, fired 37 winners but Verdasco, aided by persistent swirling winds, used his varying pace and depth to rattle the eventual winner, incurring 48 unforced errors.

Verdasco rallied to force a first-set tie-break after trailing 3-0 but Nishikori’s lunging half-volley backhand winner enabled him to take the set.

Nishikori served for the match at 5-4 in the second set but Verdasco saved a match point to break back and eventually forced a deciding set with a sweeping cross-court backhand.

Nishikori won six of seven games in the third set to advance to the Round of 16.

Raonic said he would not return until he felt 100 per cent fit again. “That could be in two weeks; that could be a little bit longer.” — Reuters

LONDON — Arsenal midfielder Mesut Ozil insists he is comfortable at the North London club and will make a decision regarding his future soon with the German’s contract due to expire at the end of next season.

Manager Arsene Wenger said last week that contract negotiations with key players Ozil and striker Alexis Sanchez were on hold until the end of the current campaign.

“Do you think Arsene Wenger tells the journalists (about my future) before he tells me? I know him differently,” Ozil told German newspaper Die Welt.

“I have a contract until 2018 in London and I feel very comfortable there. We’ll talk soon and then make a decision.”

Arsenal have slipped to sixth in the Premier League, losing four of their last six encounters in all competition, including a 10-2 aggregate loss to Bayern Munich in the last 16 of the Champions League.

Ozil acknowledged the recent slump in form and said his side was hoping to finish the season strongly.

“Of course, we have had a difficult time recently and we are not satisfied with sixth place,” the 28-year-old German added.

“I am convinced, however, that we will catch up again soon.” Arsenal trail fourth-placed Liverpool by six points and are hosting third-placed Manchester City on Sunday.

— Reuters