

NEW REVENUE STREAMS

Vessels in Ayeyawady, Chindwin rivers charged new toll fees



Boats are anchored in the Ayeyawady River in Bagan. PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE

THE Directorate of Water Resources and Improvement of River Systems has begun collecting toll fees from watercrafts under a new system as of 1 February, according to a directorate official.

“The new toll fees for boats are calculated based on miles

the watercrafts have travelled and are meant to be fair for both sides,” said U Win Hlaing, the director of the Directorate of Water Resources and Improvement of River Systems for Upper Myanmar.

According to the new rules,

fees are set at K200 for a vessel less than 39 foot long.

A vessel weighing less than one tonne will be charged at K48 per mile for the 120-mile route from Twante to Hinthada, and a vessel that weights over one tonne will be charged K36 per

mile for the same route.

The directorate is planning to open 10 stations in the Ayeyawady and Chindwin rivers.

Currently, stations have been opened in Mandalay, Magway, Pyay and Monywa, and the directorate will open stations in

Kalewa and Katha this month, the official said.

Apart from collecting fees, the stations are also tasked with ensuring that boats on the rivers are in good condition and are driving according to the law.—
Aung Thant Khaing



VP Dr Sai Mauk Kham celebrates 69th Shan State Day

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Farmers in Lewe Township expect good harvest, profits from winter crop

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A big dream for squatters in squalor

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EU to implement a five year nationwide police reform program

THE European Union (EU), which has been implementing a series of reform initiatives for the Myanmar police force, will continue with their activities over the coming five year period, expanding to more parts of the country, it is learnt.

“The situation [of the My-

anmar police force] in Myanmar cannot be changed in just a couple of years. Changes to the police force require patience. In the next five years we will implement reform programs for the police force on a nationwide scale.” said Ms. Karin Deckenbach.

But the Human Rights De-

fence Group is quick to point out that the EU has already been working together with the Myanmar police force for some time in implementing its reform activities, which have had little positive affect.

“The Myanmar police force reform programs are yet to show

any positive results. Yes, the EU has given training. But, just look at the example of the Letpadan student protests. Reformation of the police force must also come from the side of the government as well. The EU is carrying out its activities but no impact has been felt as yet. The discussion

groups and trainings will at least have some benefit though.” commented Ko Aung Naing Oo, international relations officer of the Human Rights Defence Group.

The EU conducted training sessions with the Myanmar police between 2013-15 on cooperation

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Equestrian Bronze Statue of Bogyoke maintained



THE equestrian bronze statue of General Aung San, the national hero and the architect of independence, erected in Manawramma Garden is now being maintained as a gesture of heralding his 101st Anniversary

birthday.

Not only the statue but also the whole garden is being upgraded to enable visitors to enjoy peace of mind while recreating and relaxing on holidays.

Renovation and maintenance

measures of the garden are being taken by the Mandalay City Development Committee as part of the three objectives to keep the city of Mandalay clean, green and healthy. —*Thiha Ko Ko (Mandalay)*

Mandalay Mayor Horticultural Competitions to be held on Union Day

THE 14th anniversary of the Mandalay Mayor Cup horticultural competitions will be held at Kandawgyi Garden, Chanmyathasi Township, Mandalay Regional Division on Union Day.

Depending on the category, first prize winners will be awarded K150,000 while the second prize winner receives K100,000

and third prize winners will be awarded K70,000. Consolation prize winners will be awarded K30,000 each.

Those wishing to participate in the competitions will have to contact the Kandawgyi Garden Commanding Office not later than 4 pm on 11 February, 2016. —*Thiha Ko Ko (Mandalay)*



Fruits are displayed on the stand. PHOTO: THIHA KO KO (MANDALAY)

Crime News

Car accident kills two men on the spot

TWO men were killed on the spot in a car accident that occurred on Wednesday between mileposts 100/5 and 100/6 near Kyauktaga township, Bago region. According to an investigation, a six-wheel vehicle heading from Yangon to Nay Pyi Taw being driven by Thet Naung, 25, crashed into a tractor being driven by one Mya Zin, 25, with U Sein Win, 55, on board.

The accident killed Mya Zin, 25, and U Sein Win, 55, on the spot. The six-wheel truck driver was deemed guilty of careless driving by local police. — *Khin Ko (Kyauktaga)*



An official investigates the site of the incidence.

PHOTO: KHIN KO (KYAUKTAGA)

Yabba and Marijuana seized in Kalaw



AN -anti-drug squad in Kalaw discovered 1,580 Yabba pills in the rooms at the Thama hotel and 13 kilograms of Marijuana in a

car in ward-5, Kalaw town on Thursday.

Police arrested Aung Kyaw Win Sein, Thura Zaw, Tun Oo, Myo Min Nyunt, Myo Khine Oo and Myo Aung.

Similarly, members of the police seized 286 grams of opium from a motorbike on Ta Moe - Kut Khaing road. Charges have been filed against Yan Khit Phan, the driver of the motorbike and Wo Kyin Khte, his passenger.

Police have filed charges against them under anti-Narcotic law. — *Myanmar Police Force*

Car accident kills a man in Myeik

A BIG Horn vehicle being driven by Wunna Kyaw, 39, ran over two men who were walking on a bridge, killing one and leaving the other injured. The driver lost control at Kyay Nan Tan bridge, Myeik township, Taninthayi on Thursday, causing the accident, according to the police. The accident se-

riously injured U Soe Maung, 35, and U Tin Hon, 45. They are currently undergoing medical treatment at Myeik General Hospital. U Soe Maung died at the hospital while receiving emergency medical treatment. The driver was deemed guilty of careless driving by police. — *Myint Oo (Bait)*

Four men arrested in Bayintnaung

POLICE said yesterday that they have arrested one of four suspected men who allegedly snatched K17,000,000 from a business man in Bayintnaung, Mayangon township, Yangon on 20 January. According to investigation, U Aung Tin fell unconscious after he was struck on the head by a man behind him while opening his shop at Bayintnaung market.

On Tuesday the police arrested Ba Khat alias Win Ko Ko and seized gold items from him. When interrogated, the suspect

admitted to snatching the money with three other men. Ba Khat arrived at the scene at 4:30 am with Han Lin Aung, Kyaw Thu and Zin Min Thu on 20 February. Han Lin Aung attacked the victim from behind when they saw U Aung Tin opening his shop. They split the stolen money between them.

Local police detained the man while searching for the other suspect Han Lin Aung, Kyaw Thu and Zin Min Thu who managed to escape from the scene. — *Myanmar Police Force*

VP Dr Sai Mauk Kham celebrates 69th Shan State Day



Vice President Dr Sai Mauk Kham opens Buddhist University in Taunggyi. PHOTO: MNA

DURING a visit to Taunggyi, Vice President Dr Sai Mauk Kham attended several celebrations in honour of the 69th Shan State Day yesterday morning.

Shan State Chief Minister U Sao Aung Myat read out the president's message for the day, while the local finance minister read out the message sent by the chief minister of Shan State.

High-ranking officials of the local government and parliament gave awards and certificates of honour to people and organisations who have won presidential awards for their excellent performance in agriculture, business, regional development, livestock and rescue services.

Vice President Dr Sai Mauk Kham and his entourage proceeded to the Buddhist University in Taunggyi, where he formally opened the university.

At the ceremony, State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee Chairman Sayadaw Dr Bhaddanta Kumarabhivamsa delivered a

speech on the nine moral precepts to the congregation, followed by a recitation of Metta Sutta by monks.

Sitagu International Buddhist Academy's Chancellor Sayadaw Dr Bhaddanta Nyanissara delivered a sermon. Members of the public also sought merit by offering alms and delicacies monks.

In a meeting with literary and cultural troupes at the Taunggyi Hotel, Vice President Dr Sai Mauk Kham called for further 'consolidating the Union spirit through a sense of oneness with the other ethnic groups.' He urged them to continuously hone their capacity to fit in where they are assigned.

The vice president also inspected the construction of a modern bus terminal and heard progress reports on the project.

In the evening, he attended a dinner hosted at the Taunggyi Town Hall in honour of the 69th Shan State Day.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Yangon gets new Bus Rapid Transfer route

WITH a fleet of 18 new buses imported from China and South Korea, the Public Bus Company launched its operation of public transport services along one route yesterday.

The first route of the Bus Rapid Transfer (BRT) has 23 stops running from Htaunkkyant to Alanpya Pagoda Road via Pyay Road and Bogyoke Aung

San Road; the second route has 27 stops running from Htaunkkyant to Pyay Road via Kabaraye Pagoda Road, Bogyoke Aung San Road, Botahtaung Pagoda Road, Strand Road and Phoneygy Road.

Despite original plan to begin the service with 65 buses, the line launched with a fleet of just 18 buses, as the rest are being de-

livered from different countries, added the chairman of the bus company.

Another 45 buses will arrive at the end of February, he added.

The modern bus line was officially opened by Union Minister for Commerce U Win Myint and Yangon Region Chief Minister U Myint Swe.

The Public Bus Company began its business with K10 billion worth of shares owned by the government and K15 billion worth of shares owned by public companies.

According to a press conference recently held for the event, bus fare is set at K300 per head for buses with an air conditioning system. Staff will be deployed to every bus stop, the company announced.

Each bus can carry over 80 passengers. Plans are in place to run a line along Kabaraye Pagoda Road at the end of this month, during the project's second phase.—*GNLM*



A BRT Bus seen playing. PHOTO: KHIN MAUNG WIN

EU to implement a five year nationwide police reform program

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with the general public and ability to control the mobs.

Ms. Karin Deckenbach, head of the EU's media and civil society sector, said the nationwide police reform programs will be conducted in all State and Regions of the country, while long term initiatives will prove to be beneficial for the country.

The public need to understand and accept the police dur-

ing the reformist period of the Myanmar police force, while policemen across the country also need to always protect the good people commented U Nay Myo Naing, chief adviser for the EU's police reform program.

The EU has made it known that there should be the emergence of organisations to monitor the reform process of the Myanmar police force.—*Myitmakha News Agency*

Stimulants seized in Mingaladon

A CACHE of abandoned stimulants was found near a garbage bin in Pyinmabin Village Tract in Mingaladon Township, Yangon Region, on 5 February, following a police tip-off.

Local police seized over 26,000 WY-labelled yabba pills packed in plastic bags, which were hidden in cement bags. Police have initiated an investigation into the origin of the drugs.—*Myanmar News Agency*

MRTV to broadcast President's Award for Excellent Performance live

THE President's Award for Excellent Performance Programme will be presented at the Myanmar International Convention Centre II in Nay Pyi Taw at 4pm on 9 February. The programme will be broadcast live by Myanmar Radio and Television (MRTV) starting at 3:45pm the same day.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Union Energy Minister visits Yedagun offshore gas field

UNION Minister for Energy U Zeyar Aung inspected a natural gas pipeline near the Myanmar-Thai border yesterday, calling on authorities to ensure the safety of the infrastructure and for the creation of job opportunities for local residents.

The union minister also flew to the Yedagun offshore natural gas rig, located offshore, off Taninthayi coast.

Yedagun Natural Gas Exploration project is a joint venture business shared by the ministry's Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise and the Petronas Carigali Myanmar Limited (PCML).

During his visit, the minister advised workers on how to speed up the implementation of project.—*Myanmar News Agency*



Yedagun offshore natural gas rig. PHOTO: SUPPLIED BY MINISTRY OF ENERGY

Malaysia's new Twitter police target critics of PM Najib



Malaysia's Prime Minister Najib Razak. PHOTO: REUTERS

KUALA LUMPUR — Digitally savvy Malaysian police have been taking to social media to issue warnings to critics of scandal-hit Prime Minister Najib Razak in an unusual online campaign that critics say is unlikely to work.

Najib is facing the biggest political crisis in his seven-year premiership over a multi-billion dollar scandal at state fund 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB) and over deposits of \$681 million in his private bank account.

Najib, chairman of the 1MDB advisory board, has denied any

wrongdoing and says he did not take any money for personal gain.

Attorney General Apandi Ali last week closed investigations of Najib and said the \$681 million was a donation from a Saudi Arabian benefactor and most of it had been returned.

That has not stopped Malaysians taking to social media to voice their exasperation.

A caricature of Najib with a clown face and the words "in a country full of corruption, we are all seditious", was widely shared recently. The police responded within hours, with an online warning to the artist who drew it, Fahmi Reza, telling him they were watching his Twitter account and he should use it "prudently and in line with the law", he said.

"The ruling elite of this country has always been intolerant to dissent. They're always afraid of losing their throne," Fahmi said.

"But the people have changed. The culture of protest and resistance is growing stronger." Fahmi was not the first person to be warned over social media

comment as the police for the first time make use of Twitter to identify people who are being watched and caution them about repercussions.

"Action will be taken against individuals who spread false information," is a typical warning to appear on Twitter, often accompanied by the Twitter handle of the person it is being directed at.

Responding to criticism of the attorney general's decision to drop the investigations of Najib, police told another Twitter user: "Investigations will be carried out on the posts made by the owner of this Twitter account". A police spokeswoman confirmed that the Twitter account issuing the warnings was an official Malaysian cyber unit account but she declined to comment on specific warnings, such as the one issued to Fahmi. She referred queries to the head of the police cyber unit but he declined to make any immediate comment. The Home, or interior, Ministry which is in charge of the unit, did not respond to a request for comment.—Reuters

Abe condemns N Korea rocket launch, eyes tightening sanctions

TOKYO — Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on Sunday condemned North Korea's rocket launch earlier in the day and instructed his government to swiftly consider tightening Japan's unilateral sanctions on the country.

Japan lodged a protest with North Korea over what Pyongyang says was the launch of an "Earth observation satellite," through diplomatic channels in Beijing immediately after the 9:31am Japan time launch, Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga said at a news conference.

The launch is widely seen as a ballistic missile test in violation of UN Security Council resolutions. Aside from a plan to tighten unilateral sanctions on the North, Japan will cooperate with the United States, South Korea and other countries in adopting a new sanctions resolution by the Security Council at an early date, according to officials in Tokyo.

Suga quoted Abe as telling officials to "make preparations so (the government) can swiftly decide (to tighten) sanctions our country imposes (on North Korea)." —Kyodo News

The top government spokesman criticised North Korea for pushing ahead with yet another provocation following its fourth nuclear test on 6 January, despite a wave of calls for restraint by the international community.

Suga said the flying object divided into five parts after the liftoff, of which four fell into the sea and the remainder continued flying southward.

North Korea's official media announced that Pyongyang has successfully put a satellite into orbit. Speaking to reporters earlier, Abe said the launch was in clear violation of UN resolutions that ban Pyongyang from conducting any launch using ballistic missile technology.

"Japan will cooperate with the international community to deal resolutely" with the matter, he said. Separately, Suga said the launch is a "serious act threatening international peace and security." Suga said no reports of damage have been confirmed on Japanese territory so far from the rocket that flew over the southwestern prefecture of Okinawa.—Kyodo News

More pulled out alive after Taiwan quake, about 120 people still trapped



Rescue personnel work at the site where a 17-storey apartment building collapsed, after an earthquake in Tainan, southern Taiwan on 7 February 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

TAINAN — Rescuers in Taiwan pulled more people alive from a collapsed apartment tower on Sunday, a day after a strong earthquake shook the island, and kept searching for about 120 people still believed trapped in the ruins of the building.

Those found alive include a 20-year-old identified by Taiwan media as Huang Kuangwei and another man in his 20s surnamed Kuo, who was able to walk out from the rubble, supported by rescuers. Both were sent to hospital.

Firefighters, police, sol-

diers and volunteers combed through the ruins, some using their hands, watched anxiously by dozens of the victims' family members who wore thick jackets, woollen hats and scarves on a chilly morning.

"She's not answering my phone calls ... I am trying to

hold my emotions and stay strong. I'll do that until I find her," said a woman surnamed Chang, 42, waiting to hear from her 24-year-old daughter who lived on the fifth floor of the complex.

"Nothing matters but to get her out. The lady living across the hallway was rescued yesterday. I know they will find her, but I have also planned for the worst. It's been more than 20 hours now."

At least 23 people are known to have died in the quake, which struck at about 4am on Saturday, at the beginning of a Lunar New Year holiday, including 16 found in the collapsed Wei-guan Golden Dragon Building in the southern city of Tainan.

Around 120 people are still beneath the rubble of the commercial-residential block, with most them trapped deep in the wreckage, the government said.

Bodies continue to be found, including those of two sisters, aged 18 and 23, Taiwanese media reported.

The building's lower floors pancaked on top of each other in the 6.4 magnitude quake and then the whole structure toppled, raising immediate questions about the quality of materials and workmanship used in its construction in the 1990s.—Reuters

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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Printed and published at the Global New Light of Myanmar Printing Factory at No.150, Nga Htat Kyee Pagoda Road, Bahan Township, Yangon, by the Global New Light of Myanmar Daily under Printing Permit No. 00510 and Publishing Permit No. 00629.

North Korean rocket puts object into space, angers neighbours, US

SEOUL/TOKYO — North Korea launched a long-range rocket on Sunday carrying what it has called a satellite, but its neighbours and Washington denounced the launch as a missile test, conducted in defiance of UN sanctions and just weeks after a nuclear bomb test.

The US Strategic Command said it had detected a missile entering space, and South Korea's military said the rocket had put an object into orbit.

North Korea said the launch of its satellite Kwangmyong-song-4, named after late leader Kim Jong Il, was a "complete success" and that it was making a polar orbit of the earth every 94 minutes. The launch order was given by his son, leader Kim Jong Un, who is believed to be 33 years old.

The launch prompted South Korea to announce it would begin talks with the United States on the deployment of an advanced missile defence, which China and Russia both oppose, to counter what South Korea sees as the North's threat.

North Korea's state TV carried still picture of a white rocket, that closely resembled a previously launched rocket, lifting off. Another showed Kim surrounded by cheering military officials at what appeared to be a command centre.

North Korea's last long-range rocket launch, in 2012, put what it called a communications satellite into orbit, but no signal has ever been detected from it.

"Everything we have seen is consistent with a successful repeat of the 2012 (launch)," said US missile technology expert John Schilling.

"But it's still too early to tell for sure," said Schilling, who is involved in the "38 North" North Korean monitoring project at Johns Hopkins University.

The rocket was launched at around 9:30am Seoul time (0030 GMT) in a southward trajectory, as planned.

Japan's Fuji Television Network showed a streak of light



North Korean leader Kim Jong Un (C) reacts as he watches a long range rocket launch in North Korea, in this photo released by Kyodo on 7 February 2016.

PHOTO: REUTERS



A North Korean long-range rocket is launched into the air at the Sohae rocket launch site, North Korea.

PHOTO: REUTERS

heading into the sky, taken from a camera at China's border with North Korea.

North Korea had notified UN agencies that it planned to launch a rocket carrying an Earth observation satellite, triggering opposition from governments that see it as a long-range missile test.

The UN Security Council will hold an emergency meeting on Sunday to discuss the launch, at the request of the United States, Japan and South Korea, diplomats said.

The United States tracked the rocket launch and said it did not believe that it posed a threat to the United States or its allies, defence officials said.

Isolated North Korea had initially given a 8-25 February time frame for the launch but on Saturday changed that to 7-14 February, apparently taking advantage of clear weather on Sunday.

North Korea's National Aerospace Development Administration called the launch "an epochal event in developing the country's science, technology, economy and defence capability by legitimately exercising the right to use

space for independent and peaceful purposes".

The rocket launch and the 6 January nuclear test are seen as efforts by the North's young leader to bolster his domestic legitimacy ahead of a rare ruling party congress in May, which will be the first since 1980.

South Korea said later on Sunday it would begin discussions with the United States on an advanced missile-defence system called Terminal High Altitude Area Defence (THAAD).

South Korea had been reluctant to discuss openly the possibility of deploying THAAD, caught between its biggest ally, the United States, and its largest trading partner, China, which has expressed concern about a system whose radar could penetrate its territory.

"If THAAD is deployed to the Korean peninsula, it will be only operated against North Korea," South Korean defence ministry official Yoo Je-seung told a news conference with Thomas S. Vandal, commander of the Eighth US Army based in South Korea.

US Secretary of State John

Kerry said the United States would work with the UN Security Council on "significant measures" to hold North Korea to account for what he called a flagrant violation of UN resolutions on North Korea's use of ballistic missile technology.

Kerry reaffirmed "ironclad" US defence commitments to allies Japan and South Korea and called the launch a destabilising and unacceptable challenge to peace and security.

China expressed regret and called on all sides to act cautiously and refrain from steps that might further raise tension. China is North Korea's main ally, although it disapproves of its nuclear weapons programme.

"China expresses regret that North Korea, in spite of the pervasive opposition of the international community, insisted on using ballistic missile technology to carry out a launch," foreign ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying said. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon strongly condemned the launch and urged North Korea to "halt its provocative actions".

US allies South Korea, Aus-

tralia and Japan condemned the launch. South Korean President Park Geun-hye said it was an unforgivable act of provocation. Foreign Minister Yun Byung-se said there would be a stepped up efforts on sanctions.

Australia said North Korea posed a global threat while Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said the launch was "absolutely unacceptable", especially after the North's nuclear test last month.

North Korea has said that its fourth nuclear test was of a hydrogen bomb. However, the United States and other governments have expressed doubt over that claim.

North Korea is believed to be working on miniaturising a nuclear warhead to mount on a missile, but many experts say it is some time away from perfecting such technology.

It has shown off two versions of a ballistic missile resembling a type that could reach the US West Coast, but there is no evidence the missiles have been tested.

North Korea says it has a sovereign right to pursue a space programme.—Reuters

Sri Lankan nationalists protest UN rights chief's visit on war crimes

COLOMBO — Hundreds of hardline nationalists gathered outside the United Nations' office in the Sri Lankan capital Colombo on Saturday to protest against a visit by the UN human rights chief who will assess Sri Lanka's progress in prosecuting alleged war crimes.

The UN says both Sri Lanka's military and the Tamil Tiger rebels most likely committed war crimes during a 26-year war which ended in 2009. A UN resolution calls for post-war reconciliation and that all alleged war crimes be investigated and tried in special courts by international judges.

However, many Sri Lankans oppose foreign involvement and supporters of former president Mahinda Rajapaksa believe the



United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein speaks to the media in Colombo, on 6 February 2016.

PHOTO: REUTERS

UN resolution aims to punish the military unfairly despite defeating the Tamil Tigers.

Although the coalition of President Maithripala Sirisena has agreed to the resolution, the visit by UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein follows comments by Sirisena saying that foreign participation was not needed for an impartial inquiry into the war.

Al Hussein began his four-day visit to Sri Lanka by visiting the UN office in Colombo to meet UN officials.

Hours afterwards, protesters outside shouted "Al Hussein, hands off Sri Lanka" and "where were you when people in Afghanistan and Iraq were killed?".

Some held banners which read, "no war crime courts, no

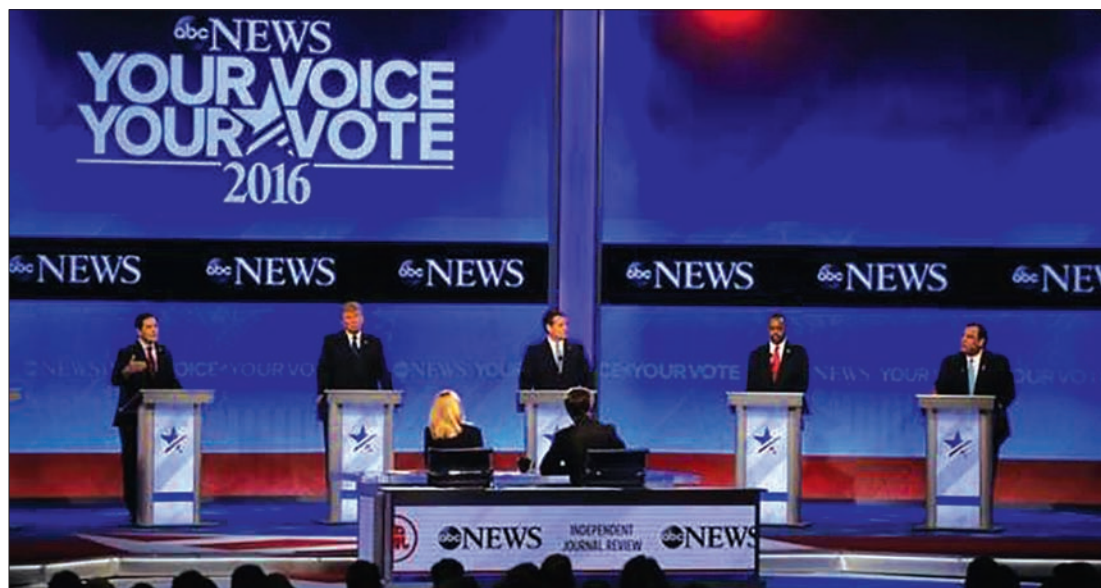
foreign judges" and "don't send the military to guillotine". They also set posters bearing Zeid's face on fire and threw shoes and slippers at his image.

"We will not allow to set up courts to fulfill the need of Western nations. Al Hussein has come here to take our war heroes to guillotine, but we won't allow that to happen," Wimal Weerawansa, the NFF leader told the gathering.

Al Hussein said soon after his arrival he would meet Sri Lanka's highest officials as well as representatives of all communities.

"I will be listening to everything that they have to say and look forward to a very constructive discussion in the days to come," he told reporters.—Reuters

Rubio, Christie and Kasich get more debate traction on social media



Republican US presidential candidates Senator Marco Rubio (L) and Governor Chris Christie (R) discuss an issue as fellow candidates, businessman Donald Trump (2nd from L), Senator Ted Cruz (C) and Dr Ben Carson, listen at the Republican US presidential candidates debate sponsored by ABC News at Saint Anselm College in Manchester, New Hampshire on 6 February 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

NEW YORK — Donald Trump lost his social media dominance for the first time during the Republican presidential debates as the candidates made their eighth showing Saturday night in New Hampshire.

Instead, many on Twitter took to mocking contender Senator Marco Rubio, who came under heavy attack on Saturday from rivals. New Jersey Governor Chris Christie also saw a big bump in his share of the social conversation.

By the end of the night, Trump, who has the most followers, still received the largest share of mentions on Twitter Inc, with 33 per cent compared to Rubio's 20 per cent. Ted Cruz, a US senator from Texas, came in third, with 15 per cent.

But Twitter said an hour into the debate that Rubio was the most tweeted about candidate on the social media platform, marking the first time a candidate other than Trump came out on top within that time frame.

Overall, Rubio received 10 more mentions per minute on Twitter than he did during the last Republican debate on 28 January, according to social media analytics firm Zoomph.

Three days before New Hampshire's primary for the 8 November election, many of the mentions were negative as Rubio became a target for continuing to repeat many of the same lines from his campaign stump speech.

"Marco, the thing is this," said rival Chris Christie, the governor of New Jersey, "when you're president of the United States, when you're a governor of a state, the memorised 30-second speech where you talk about how great America is at the end of it doesn't solve one problem for one person."

That moment was measured by Twitter as one of the top social moments of the night.

Actress Mia Farrow, @MiaFarrow, tweeted, "Rubio keeps saying the same thing."

A Marco Rubio Glitch (@RubioGlitch) account also

emerged, gaining nearly 1,200 followers as of Saturday night as it parodied Rubio as a robot in tweets in Spanish and English.

Rubio also had his worst performance yet with millennials on the popular messaging app Yik Yak, where he had a 44 per cent disapproval rating. In contrast, Ohio Governor John Kasich had his best performance with millennials, earning a 41.4 approval rating, and maintaining the largest share of the conversation on Yik Yak. The debate was also a big night on social media for Christie, who has rarely been a top contender in social mentions. According to Brandwatch, a social media analytics firm, he had the second highest percentage of positive social mentions, 61.5 per cent, compared to Trump's 62.5 per cent.

Tyler Freeman (@tyfreem) tweeted, "#GOPDebate Chris Christie has been most underrated candidate the whole campaign. He finally stood out tonight. One of the best performances." —Reuters

Dacic: Serbia cannot afford to become refugee centre

AMSTERDAM — Serbia is a credible EU partner in the refugee crisis, but it cannot afford to become a refugee centre, Serbian First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ivica Dacic said Saturday.

At an informal Amsterdam meeting of foreign ministers of EU member states and candidate countries, Dacic warned that a chain reaction of a drastic drop in border throughput or closure

of borders would be particularly dangerous to Serbia and the entire region, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement.

That would halt the flow of migrants, causing them to stay in Serbian territory in larger numbers and over longer periods of time, which would be an exceptional burden to us, Dacic warned.

Serbia is unable to take back migrants who had transited

through its territory as it has neither the funds nor the capacities for this, and it is not the country of first entry either, Dacic said.

Serbia can temporarily accommodate several thousand migrants — it has single-handedly ensured additional accommodation for 3,000 migrants and will try to do the same for 3,000 more if it is given concrete financial assistance from the EU, he said. —Tanjung

NEWS IN BRIEF

Biodiesel plant explosion in Spain kills two, seriously injures one

MADRID — Two people were killed and another seriously injured in an explosion in a biodiesel plant in the town of Algemesi in east Spain on Saturday.

The explosion happened around 11:00 am local time in an industrial estate on the outskirts of Algemesi, 33 km south of Spanish port city Valencia.

The two victims were workers who were reportedly to be in their 40s, while the injured person had burns on 80 per cent of his body, according to Marta Trenzano, the mayor of Algemesi.

The cause of the explosion has not yet been found. Some believe the accident could be caused by people soldering a storage silo, which contained residual flammable gas.

Local authority has declared Monday as a day of mourning for the victims. —Xinhua

UK says North Korea rocket launch clear violation of UN Security Council resolutions

LONDON — North Korea's launch of a long-range rocket on Sunday is a "clear and deliberate" violation of UN Security Council resolutions, British Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond said.

North Korea said the rocket was carrying a satellite, but its neighbours and the United States denounced the launch as a missile test, conducted in defiance of UN sanctions and just weeks after a nuclear bomb test. "I strongly condemn North Korea's ballistic missile technology test. This is a clear and deliberate violation of a number of UN Security Council Resolutions. North Korea's actions continue to present a threat to regional and international security," Hammond said in a statement. —Reuters

Turkey denies existence of information about Serbian snipers

BELGRADE/AMSTERDAM — Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu denied during a meeting with Serbian counterpart Ivica Dacic on Saturday the existence of official information about Serbian snipers supporting Kurds, the Serbian Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement.

Cavusoglu, who met with Dacic on the fringes of an informal Amsterdam meeting of the foreign ministers of EU member states and candidate countries, announced that Serbia will be notified in a timely fashion if the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs obtains information that would suggest otherwise, the statement also said.

The Turkish press reported recently that Serbian snipers are fighting on the side of the Kurdish PKK and that some of them have been taken prisoner in southeastern Turkey, but Interior Minister Efkane Ala dismissed the allegations earlier this week.

Dacic also met with Croatian Foreign Minister Miro Kovac, and they concluded that discussions about strengthening bilateral and regional cooperation should be continued. —Tanjung

Australian woman freed after kidnap by al Qaeda in Burkina Faso

NIAMEY — An Australian woman has been freed after she and her husband were kidnapped by an al Qaeda-affiliated group on 15 January in Burkina Faso, neighbouring Niger's President Mahamadou Issoufou said on Saturday.

Issoufou presented the freed woman, Jocelyn Elliott, to journalists at a news conference in Dosso, southwestern Niger, and said authorities were intensifying efforts to secure the release of her husband. —Reuters

Russia says North Korea rocket launch cannot but provoke 'decisive protest'

MOSCOW — Russia's Foreign Ministry said yesterday a rocket launch by North Korea could not but provoke a "decisive protest", adding Pyongyang had once again demonstrated a disregard for norms of international law.

The ministry said in a statement on its website that such actions dealt a serious blow to the security of governments in the region, and first of all to North Korea itself.

"We strongly recommend the leadership of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea think about whether a policy of opposing the entire international community meets the interests of the country," the statement read. —Reuters

Haiti leaders agree to interim government amid protests

PORT-AU-PRINCE — Haitian leaders have agreed to install a caretaker government to take over from President Michel Martelly when he leaves power this weekend without an elected successor, a move that failed to calm protesters who clashed with police again on Saturday.

The agreement was reached less than 24 hours before Martelly steps down. Under the deal parliament will elect an interim president for a four-month term.

The temporary president, expected to be chosen in the next few days, will be committed to holding delayed presidential elections by 24 April and handing over power to the winner the following month.

A presidential runoff due to be held last month was scrapped after opposition candidate Jude Celestin threatened to boycott

the vote over allegations of fraud in the first round, and protesters took to the streets in force.

Port-au-Prince has seen almost daily protests by both opposition and government supporters since January, culminating in the lynching of a former soldier during a march on Friday.

The agreement did not placate all sectors of the opposition. During the signing in an annex of the presidential palace that survived a devastating earthquake six years ago, small groups of anti-government protesters clashed outside with riot police who used a water canon and tear gas to disperse them.

"Despite this agreement, we will need to continue to remain vigilant because there are people who won't agree," Martelly said at an event with foreign diplomats at the palace.



Haiti's President Michel Martelly (R) speaks with Senate President Jocelerme Privert after an agreement signing at the National Palace in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, on 6 February 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

"Every time they exercise violence Haiti makes one step backward," Martelly said of the protesters.

Any caretaker government will have to overcome deep disagreements about how the election should be organised and which candidates can participate, since many opposition pol-

iticians are convinced the first round vote was riddled with fraud that favored ruling party candidate Jovenel Moise.

The government denies the allegations.

A senior adviser to Celestin, Gerald Germain, told Reuters his camp had yet to study the agreement

in depth and would make its position known later.

Martelly's own election five years ago was seen by many in the opposition as being facilitated by foreign pressure. His departure from office coincides with the 30th anniversary of dictator Jean-Claude "Baby Doc" Duvalier's flight from the country.

Instead of stable democracy, the years since the end of the Duvalier family's 29-year regime on 7 February, 1986 have been marked by frequent coups and transitional governments.

The impoverished country has had a chequered experience with caretaker governments, which in the past have lingered longer than expected.

When Haiti was left without an elected president after Jean-Bertrand Aristide was forced from

power in 2004, it took the transitional administration two years to organise elections.

The failure to organise clean elections before Martelly's term ended means Haiti is again left bitterly divided and beset by unrest.

Sandra Honore, who heads the United Nations peacekeeping mission that has been in Haiti since Aristide's ouster, called on all sides to support the agreement.

The US Ambassador to Haiti, Peter Mulrean, said the United States was fully supportive of the new election calendar and called for protesters to eschew violence.

"The streets should not be deciding what happens next, elections should be deciding, and this agreement will allow the elections to go forward," he said.—Reuters

Iraq's water minister plays down the danger of Mosul dam collapse



Employees work at strengthening the Mosul Dam in northern Iraq, on 3 February 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

BAGHDAD — Iraq's minister of water resources on Saturday played down warnings that Mosul dam will collapse, estimating only a "one in a thousand" chance of failure and saying the solution was to build a new dam or install a deep concrete support wall.

The US military has warned that a collapse of the 3.6 km-long (2.2 mile) hydroelectric dam located near Islamic State-held territory in the country's north would be catastrophic.

An Italian company has been awarded a contract to make urgent repairs to the dam which has suffered from structural flaws since its construction in the

1980s and requires constant grouting to maintain structural integrity.

"The looming danger to Mosul dam is one in a thousand. This risk level is present in all the world's dams", Muhsin al-Shammari said in an interview to al-Sumaria TV.

He said one solution was to build a concrete support wall 150 to 200 metres deep. In the meantime, workers are removing 5 to 6 tonnes of concrete a day at a cost of 7 billion Iraqi dinars (\$6 million) a day, he added.

Islamic State militants controlling swathes of territory in northern and western Iraq seized Mosul dam

in August 2014, raising fears they might blow it up and unleash a wall of water on Mosul and Baghdad that could kill hundreds of thousands along the heavily populated Tigris River valley.

Kurdish Peshmerga fighters recaptured the dam two weeks later with the help of coalition airstrikes and Iraqi government forces.

About 450 Italian forces will be deployed to protect the Italian Trevi Group contracted to repair the dam, whose deterioration has forced the US military to draft a contingency plan for its potential failure.—Reuters

Syrians flee to Turkish border as Aleppo assault intensifies

BAB AL SALAMA — Russian and Syrian government forces on Saturday intensified an assault on rebel-held areas around the Syrian city of Aleppo that has prompted tens of thousands to flee to the Turkish border to seek refuge.

The assault around Aleppo, which aid workers have said could soon fall to government forces, helped torpedo Syrian peace talks in Geneva this week. Russia's intervention has tipped the balance of the war in favor of President Bashar al-Assad, reversing gains the rebels made last year.

Any hopes of a ceasefire were dampened by Assad's foreign minister, who said it would be all but impossible to stop the fighting while rebels were able to pass freely across the borders with Turkey and Jordan.

Advances by the Syrian army and allied militias, including Iranian fighters, are threatening to cut off rebel-held zones of Aleppo, still home to around 350,000 people, while more than a million live in government-controlled areas.

Further complicating the tangle of belligerents that has characterised the civil war, Syrian opposition officials accused the

Kurdish YPG militia of coordinating attacks on rebels with Syrian and allied forces in the latest assault.

Taking full control of Aleppo, Syria's largest city before the civil war erupted five years ago, would be a huge strategic prize for Assad's government in a conflict that has killed at least 250,000 people across the country and driven 11 million from their homes.

Mevlut Cavusoglu, foreign minister of Turkey, which has already taken in 2.5 million Syrians, said up to 55,000 were now fleeing to the frontier.

Cavusoglu said the border was open, but at the Oncupinar crossing near the Turkish city of Kilis, which has been largely shut for nearly a year, refugees were being shepherd into camps on the Syrian side.

The local governor on the Turkish side of the border, Suleyman Tapsiz, said around 35,000 Syrians had reached Oncupinar in the space of 48 hours.

"Our doors are not closed, but at the moment there is no need to host such people inside our borders," he said.

A Turkish aid official said the refugees on the

Syrian side were safe and being given food.

One camp was teeming with women and small children, some of whom carried bottles of water or played in the mud.

Some of the tents were ripped and dirty while others, provided by a Turkish aid organisation, appeared new.

One refugee, Muhammed Idris, said he had fled from the nearby Syrian town of Azaz, counting on the open-door policy touted by Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan. After four days, he was still waiting to get in.

"Before, Tayyip Erdogan was saying on TV that Syria and Turkey are brothers, but now he is not opening the doors," he told Reuters. "Our houses are destroyed and we came to his house. Where else should we go?"

A Reuters reporter at Oncupinar could hear occasional shelling and saw several Turkish ambulances cross the border.

On the Turkish side, dozens of refugees who had already made it in queued up to beg the authorities to allow their relatives in, or to cross the border in the hope of bringing them back.—Reuters

OPINION

A big dream for squatters in squalor

Kyaw Thura

Typically, everyone dreams to be better nourished, to be better educated, to enjoy better health and to have better economic prospects. It is the responsibility of governments, especially democratic ones, to enable their citizens to realize these dreams. In this regard, our government has room to improve.

Removing squatters from their homes by force is absolutely against the government's commitment to eradicating poverty and developing rural communities. No profession is nobler than statesmanship. No responsibility is

greater than statesmanship. It is, therefore, necessary for all statesmen to be aware that the root cause of bad governance is the failure to put people at the centre of what they do.

It is clear that one of the primary responsibilities of the government is to serve the needs and hopes of citizens across the country, with no discrimination on the grounds of race, gender or religion. All elected representatives are required to swear a solemn oath that they will respect the dignity and worth of their fellow citizens and promote human rights while dedicating themselves to the undertaking of better standards of living.

It is encouraging to see the recent initiative to provide rental housing to squatters along the Ayeyawady River in Mandalay Region. The project signals the commitment of the local administrative bodies to the fight against poverty. According to the Mandalay City Development Committee, the low-cost housing project is under construction for migrant workers living in slums along the river.

The project is said to include the construction

of 22 six-storey buildings, with 1,584 rooms in total. Each room measures 10 feet by 20 feet and contains a bathroom, a toilet and a bedroom. The rooms will have to be rented by lot for K30,000 (US\$23) per month, as the applicants outnumber the available rooms. Over 1,800 people have applied so far. Low-cost rental housing should be hailed as a move to fulfil the dream of squatters living in squalor. The government should build upon these efforts and improve on them until all squatters have their basic human needs satisfied.

Write for us

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

Due to limitation of space we are only able to publish "Letter to the Editor" that do not exceed 500 words. Should you submit a text longer than 500 words please be aware that your letter will be edited.

The Common Good

Hla Maung

The "common good" is an expression where "good" is a noun rather than an adjective. It is usually a good that most of us, if not all, use. The clean unpolluted air that we all breathe in and need for survival, for example, is a "common good," and its availability has always been taken for granted. It is not something we have to buy. In fact, nobody can "own" this "common good" that we breathe in. Similarly, clean unpolluted water in our streams and rivers is a "common good". For people living beside or near rivers and streams, its free availability is also taken for granted. And because people take it for granted, it is forgotten that "the common good" is something that we all need to always value, cherish and preserve.

As populations grow, and pollution created by domestic and industrial human activity increases, it is becoming evident that we can no longer take the availability of free clean unpolluted air and water for granted. We were once sparsely pop-

ulated, and formerly used natural bio-disposable packing material such as paper, cardboard boxes or banana leaves. Now, we are densely packed in towns and villages and using non-degrading plastic or tin bottles, containers and wrappers.

The air we breathe is fouled with dust and car exhaust, and the water that most people drink is toxic with waste industrial products. The once fertile soil that our food crops depend on is now depleted of natural nutrients, and increasingly mixed with pesticides, plastic, and other debris that we carelessly and thoughtlessly throw everywhere. Mother Nature is no longer capable of restoring the environment, the air, water and Earth, to their clean original states.

The parks and gardens in our towns, and our forests where Nature's wild creatures live and roam, are also "common goods". Villagers depend on the forests for firewood and building material. The continued existence of forests protects the fragile ecosystem from breaking down. Parks and gardens provide town-dwellers

with areas for recreation and relaxation. They give shade, cool and refresh the air, extract carbon dioxide, and produce oxygen on which all animal life depends. Parks and gardens are maintained by municipal departments, and our forests too are protected by government regulations to prevent over-exploitation.

Unfortunately, instead of cherishing our common goods, we continue to mistreat and misuse them for selfish short-term private gains. Excessive logging and overfishing have led to drastic reduction of resources for future generations. Destruction of forests and topsoil cover has led to natural disasters such as landslides and frequent flooding, and burning of vast forest areas for plantations has caused extensive and persistent haze, creating problems not only locally but in nearby countries. Smoke from coal-fired industries has similarly made air unsafe for breathing in many urban areas in India and China where industrial regulations are lax or not enforced. Our very lives are becoming threatened.

In our own country, Myan-

mar people are notorious for throwing litter and household rubbish wherever convenient. We have unfortunately developed a mindset that tolerates, and even seems to condone, such behaviour. Western tourists, some of whom cannot tolerate the sight of rubbish strewn around ancient pagodas, have been seen going around Bagan with large bags and picking up the waste plastic, paper and tin cans. One can only hope that the locals take notice and are shamed!

The urban and rural rubbish that is dumped into our rivers eventually finds its way into the world's seas and oceans, where continent-size swirls of plastic debris circulate endlessly in the world's oceans. The oceans are of course another "common good", providing much of the world's populations with essential fish for food.

As with other common goods like air, water, and Earth itself, the oceans continue to be mistreated. Industrial overfishing is depleting fish stocks for future generations, and some commercial species have been brought to near-extinction.

The Myanmar concept of "the common good" is influenced by Buddhist beliefs. In one sense, it is the "common good" as presented above. For Buddhists, it also involves the

concept of "karma" and "vipa-ka", or "kusala" (good deeds) and their result. The Burmese have a saying that may be translated as "Do good to all beings and do good to yourself" (am-yar akyoh, ko akyoh). Buddhists often donate money for the construction of wells, bridges and roads. Such good deeds to benefit others will ensure one's health and happiness in this life and in later lives to come as we journey through Samsara, the cycle of life, death and rebirth. The writer hopes that this short article will awaken public awareness and appreciation of the "common goods" that we have been given by Nature, and that each of us will do our part by reducing consumption, and recycling and re-using whenever possible, by planting trees and by helping keep our environment clean.

The "common good" is a concept that does not require collective talk without individual action, but instead it requires individual action without collective talk. Nothing can succeed if everybody agrees but nobody acts as agreed, but progress will surely be made even if nobody talks but each individual does his or her little bit. We must all strive to become responsible citizens. Help save the Earth. Help save our future.

Concrete bricks replace earthen ones in Yesagyo

RESIDENTS of Yesagyo Township are increasingly using and producing concrete bricks, both on a small and commercial scale, instead of earthen bricks, according to local brick makers.

"We usually have to use firewood to bake earthen bricks. This may deteriorate the environment. It is easy to make con-

crete bricks if we have a mould, cement and sand," said one brick maker.

A local environmental activist said: "An increase in the use of concrete bricks may help support environmental conservation."

Normally, a concrete brick is sold for K70 (US\$0.06), while

an earthen brick costs K100 (\$0.08), a local resident said. The numbers of concrete brick makers and users have increased not only in Yesagyo Township but also in nearby villages.

One bag of cement can yield between 150 and 180 bricks, said a brick maker from Ward 8 in the township.—Pe Tun Zaw



Concrete bricks. PHOTO: PE TUN ZAW

Farmers in Lewe Township expect good harvest, profits from winter crop



Officials inspect the sunflower plantation. PHOTO: KO PAUK (OKKA MYAY)

FARMERS in Lewe Township, Nay Pyi Taw Council Area, who saw losses in revenue due to downward prices and a low yield last year, have anticipated the fetching of good prices for their crop this year.

Regarding the decrease in last year's harvest, experts from the government's agricultural department have made field trips to

villages in Lewe Township this cultural season, educating them on the systematic use of pesticides, timing of the cultivation and number of seeds per acre for growing.

"To make the pesticides more effective, farmers should spray pesticides on the crops in the early days of a month when pests mate", said U Than Tun,

an assistant staff officer of Lewe Township Agricultural Department.

The experts also advised the farmers to start to grow crops in first week or last week of December to be able to harvest the crop before the rainy season to minimize the losses and wastages when they harvest.

Harvesting can begin about

90 days after growing.

The farmer will harvest the crop with a 15 to 20 baskets per acre rate of yield in the first week of March and expect to get around K 45, 000 per basket. The winter crop is grown on around 38, 000 acres in Lewe Township which has more than 61, 000 acres of paddy in the rainy season.—Ko Pauk (Okka Myay)

Chinese tourists branch out across Myanmar

PLENTY of natural scenic beauties of Myanmar, cultural heritages, traditional customs, and hospitality of Myanmar people fascinate the tourists to come and see Myanmar.

A large number of Chinese tourists will visit Myanmar beginning on Chinese New Year, which falls on 8 February, and will visit 15 places of tourist attractions in the country.

Using 130 motor vehicles, a total of 441 Chinese people plan to visit Pyin Oo Lwin, Mandalay, Bagan, Inle, Yangon, Ngwe Saung and Muse townships during the trip.

Last year, most Chinese tourists only visited Muse and nearby areas.

To develop the country's tourism industry, the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism has arranged tourism options based on nature, culture and social heritage.

Development in tourism industries can be attributed to ancient cultural heritage tourism, adventure tourism, nature based tourism, coastal and maritime tourism, etc.—MNA

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor

The report Myanmar's largest Lake becomes a Ramsar site (GNLM, Jan 2) is indeed a bright ecological feather in the cap of Myanmar and a victory for the dedicated environmentalists, ecologists, conservators, foresters and the ordinary citizens in raising the profile of the nation to the world as an eco-friendly society. The declaration of the Ramsar site not only adds Myanmar to the global map of distinguished Ramsar sites across the globe but also opens up opportunities for eco-tourism and much needed foreign exchange for the nation too. The Ramsar site will not only add to the successful conservation of the rich biodiversity of the nation but will also add to the employment opportunities for the locals; as thousands of eco-enthusiasts and inquisitive local, regional and international tourists will flock to the site to catch a glimpse of the rich biodiversity and ecological serenity of the Indawgyi Lake and the adjacent areas. It will portray the benefits of successful eco-environmental conservation and management in one hand; and boost the local economy on the other. My heartiest congratulations to the people of Myanmar and the related government departments and local NGOS for making this a reality! Kudos to the GNLM staff and editorial board for their consistent efforts in covering both national and global news report on ecological and environmental conservation efforts and approaches with great sincerity and dedication. This has great impact in educating the public about ecological sensitivity. Keep up the good work.

Thanking you
Sincerely yours
Saikat Kumar Basu

Capacity Building Course for government servants in Taungoo



Capacity Building Course for government servants in progress. PHOTO: SHWE WIN

TO improve the capacity of the staff, a refresher course for capacity building of government servants has been conducted at the office of the Information and Public Relations Department (IPRD) of Taungoo District.

The staff from the Information and Public Relations Departments are attending the course which will last for six days from 1 to 6 February. Staff Officers of the District and township IPRDs are giving lectures on the following subjects

— Office Letter Writing and Management, Public Relations, Management of the Public Libraries, Book Keeping, Civil Service law, Printing and Publishing Law, Media Law and History in the national development.—Shwe Win (Pyay)

China says EU should take steel dumping claims to WTO



A labourer works at a steel market in Shanghai in 2013. PHOTO: REUTERS

BEIJING — China's Ministry of Commerce said that claims it was dumping steel in Europe should be put to the World Trade Organisation (WTO), responding to reports that the European Commission (EC) was preparing to impose duties on imported Chinese steel.

WTO members should fulfill their treaty obligations and stop using "surrogate countries" to pursue anti-dumping claims, a Ministry of Commerce spokesman said, according to a statement released on the ministry's

website on Saturday. The EC is set to impose provisional duties later this month of up to 16 per cent on China, and of up to 26 per cent on Russia, following its investigation into alleged dumping by the two countries.

Reuters reported that provisional measures are due to be announced by 14 February and definitive duties, if imposed at the conclusion of the investigation, by 12 August. Such duties would typically apply for five years.

The Commission's investigation follows a complaint from

Eurofer, the European steel association, which said Russia and China were dumping the steel — selling it below market prices at home or below the cost of production — on the EU market and thereby damaging the local industry.

The global steel industry is facing over-capacity, and the Chinese government is willing to discuss "in good faith" with WTO members "to create a fair, just and predictable international market environment," the statement said.—Reuters

BlackBerry cuts 200 jobs in Ontario and Florida to trim costs

TORONTO — BlackBerry Ltd is cutting 200 jobs at its hometown headquarters in Ontario and in Florida in order to trim costs, it said on Friday, as the smartphone maker moves to turn around its fortunes and put more emphasis on its enterprise software business.

"As BlackBerry continues to execute its turnaround plan, we remain focused on driving efficiencies across our global workforce," the company said in an emailed statement.

The company declined to comment on what percentage of its workforce is affected by the cuts. According to a filing, the company had 6,225 employees as of 28 February, 2015.

The layoffs will affect 75 manufacturing jobs in Sunrise, Florida, a state government website showed.

The company also confirmed that Gary Klassen is one of the people who has departed in the latest round of cuts. Klassen was one of its longest-tenured employees and the inventor of its BBM messaging service.

One source familiar with the matter, who declined to be identified due to the sensitivity of the issue, said many of the Canadian cuts were people working on its BB10 handset software at its Waterloo, Ontar-

io, headquarters.

A spokeswoman for BlackBerry declined to comment on which divisions will be affected by the cuts, but said the company stood by its commitment to release further updates on its BB10 software.

Last September, the company laid off roughly 200 staff, who had worked on the hardware and design of the BB10 devices. The company began releasing the BB10-based devices in January 2013, but despite positive reviews the smartphones failed to win back market share from Apple Inc's iPhone, and the slew of Android-based devices that dominate the global market.

In a final attempt to revive its handset business BlackBerry released its first Android-based device in November. It has stated it plans to release at least one more Android-based phone this year.

BlackBerry Chief Executive John Chen has said he will make a decision on whether the company's handset business is viable in the financial year beginning in late February.

BlackBerry has staked its turnaround on enterprise software and more aggressively licensing its trove of patents.—Reuters

Japanese manga goods store opens in Bangkok

BANGKOK — A Japanese manga and animation goods store opened in Thailand on Saturday, featuring authentic products such as stationery, accessories, CDs, posters and limited items related to popular comic books and anime shows.

About 400 customers lined up before the opening of the first Thai branch of "animate" — a store chain operated by Japan Manga Alliance Co. — at the MBK Centre, a department store in the heart of Bangkok.

The 560-square-metre store sells about 30,000 items, including Japanese comic books translated into Thai and model figures imported from Japan.

It also has a section specialising in products of the popular "One Piece" manga series.

Jiratikarn Auncharoen, a 24-year-old longtime fan of Japanese anime and manga, told Kyodo News that she had earlier visited an "animate" shop in Tokyo and was glad that a branch



A Japanese manga and animation goods store opened on 6 February 2016, in Bangkok. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

opened in her country.

Bangkok store manager Akihiro Sotokawa said he was grateful to see many customers come to the shop on the opening day, adding, "I want Thai people to buy authentic items, not counterfeit ones."

Japan Manga Alliance was set up last September by four major Japanese publishers — Kadokawa Corp., Kodansha Ltd., Shueisha Inc., Shogakukan Inc. — and manga and anime goods vendor Animate Co.—Kyodo News

Twitter users decry reported plan to prioritise tweets

NEW YORK — The hashtag #RIPTwitter became the top trending US item on Twitter on Saturday, after a report from BuzzFeed said the company is planning to change how it displays users' tweets.

The BuzzFeed report, which went live on Friday night and did not disclose the source of its information, said the social media platform will reorder tweets to prioritise those it believes more users will want to see. Currently, Twitter arranges tweets in chronological order.

The response to the news on Twitter was overwhelmingly negative, with the hashtag #RIPTwitter suggesting many users of the micro-blogging site believe the changes would mean the death of the company.

Many users were upset that tweets from accounts with fewer followers could possibly be suppressed under the new system.

Others complained that the

changes would make Twitter too much like Facebook (FB.O), which arranges content through the use of an algorithm.

"Dear Twitter, don't try to be like Facebook, we don't like Facebook #RIPTwitter," tweeted ana (@dearcalumthood) on Saturday.

"Clearly the motto 'if it ain't broke don't fix it' is something @twitter isn't familiar with #RIPTwitter," tweeted EldestSalvatore (@EldestDamon) on Saturday.

A spokesperson for Twitter declined to comment.

Twitter has come under increasing pressure to boost user growth, as it struggles to attain advertising revenues equaling those of its larger Facebook rival.

Last month, Twitter came under fire when it announced a new feature that would allow users to post tweets up to 10,000 characters long, up from its previous limit of 140 characters.—Reuters

More than 3,100 pregnant women in Colombia have Zika virus: government

BOGOTA — More than 3,100 pregnant Colombian women are infected with the mosquito-borne Zika virus, President Juan Manuel Santos said on Saturday, as the disease continues its rapid spread across the Americas.

Brazil is investigating the potential link between Zika infections and more than 4,000 suspected cases of microcephaly, a birth defect marked by an abnormally small head size that can result in developmental problems. Researchers have identified evidence of Zika infection in 17 of these cases, either in the baby or in the mother, but have not confirmed that Zika can cause microcephaly.

There are so far no recorded cases of Zika-linked microcephaly in Colombia, Santos said. The government is now uncertain about a previous projection for up to 500 cases of Zika-linked microcephaly, based on data from other countries battling the disease, he said.

Much remains unknown

about Zika, for which there is no vaccine. An estimated 80 per cent of those infected show no symptoms, and those that do have a mild illness, with a fever, rash and red eyes.

There are 25,645 people infected with Zika in Colombia, Santos said during a TV broadcast with health officials. Among them are 3,177 pregnant women.

“The projection is that we could end up having 600,000 cases,” Santos said, adding there could be up to 1,000 cases of Guillain-Barre syndrome, a rare neurological disorder that can weaken the muscles and cause paralysis. Scientists are studying a possible link between the disorder and Zika.

The Colombian government will be working across the country to fight mosquitoes — fumigating and helping families rid their homes of stagnant water, the president said.

The province of Norte de Santander, along the eastern bor-



Rosana Vieira Alves holds her 4-month-old daughter Luana Vieira, who was born with microcephaly, as her daughter Laiane Sophia looks on at their home in Olinda, Brazil, on 2 February 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

der with Venezuela, had nearly 5,000 Zika cases, the highest in the country, an epidemiological bulletin from the national health institute published on Saturday showed. That province also had the highest number of pregnant women with Zika — nearly 31 per cent of total cases.

Colombia’s Caribbean re-

gion, which includes popular tourist destinations Cartagena and Santa Marta, had more than 11,000 cases of the virus, according to the bulletin.

The government has said pregnant women with Zika are eligible to access much-restricted abortion services.

Many women struggle to find

abortion providers even when they meet strict legal requirements and illegal abortions are widespread. On Friday, local media reported the first abortion because of Zika infection.

Colombia’s health minister, Alejandro Gaviria, has said he believes three deaths are connected with Zika.—Reuters

Eating soy may protect against reproductive effects of BPA

BOSTON — Eating soy foods may help protect against reproductive effects of bisphenol A (BPA), a chemical in many plastic consumer products and lining the inside of some canned foods, according to a study of women undergoing fertility treatments.

“The results were actually exactly what we were expecting to find,” said lead author Dr Jorge E. Chavarro of the Harvard School of Public Health-Nutrition in Boston.

BPA is known to mimic estrogen in the body, and therefore it’s believed to disrupt conception and implantation of a fertilized egg in the womb, the researchers write in the *Journal of Clinical Endocrinology and Metabolism*.

Experiments in rodents suggest that soy, which also interacts with estrogen receptors, could offset or mitigate those effects of BPA, they add.

“We wanted to follow-up on the results of two experimental models in rodents where two independent groups had found that some adverse reproductive effects of BPA could be prevented by placing the mice on a soy based diet,” Chavarro told Reuters Health by email. “We wanted to see whether a similar interaction occurred in humans.”

The researchers studied 239 women who underwent in vitro fertilization cycles between 2007 and 2012. The women completed dietary questionnaires and provided urine samples before egg retrieval for each fertility cycle.

The questionnaire included assessment of the women’s intake of 15 soy-based foods, including tofu, soy burgers, miso soup, soy protein and soy bars. Consumption of these items ranged from never or less than once per month to twice daily.

Almost three quarters of the women said they consumed at least some soy foods.

Most women underwent one IVF cycle, 18 per cent underwent two cycles and 11 per cent underwent three cycles.

As urinary BPA levels increased, the women who did not eat soy foods had lower rates of implantation, clinical pregnancy and live birth. But for women who did eat soy, increasing BPA levels were not tied to fertility outcomes.

“We still need to evaluate whether the same is also true for couples trying to get pregnant without medical help or whether risks extend to the health of children,” Chavarro said.

In one of the previous mice studies, BPA was able to switch

on and off certain genes and soy prevented BPA from doing so, Chavarro said.

“We cannot be certain whether this is the same mechanism operating in our case or whether other mechanisms yet to be identified could also be at play,” he said.

BPA is safe in the current levels occurring in foods, according to the US Food and Drug Administration.

“Based on nationally representative surveys we know that more than 90 per cent of Americans are exposed at varying levels,” but exposure to BPA can be minimized by switching from consuming canned foods to their fresh or frozen counterparts, replacing hard polycarbonate plastic food containers with glass or metal containers, and not handling thermal receipts such as those used in supermarkets, ATMs and gas stations, Chavarro said.

It is important to confirm these findings, since this is the first time that an interaction between BPA and diet has been reported in humans, he said. But soy on its own, regardless of whether or not it interacts with diet, appears to be beneficial to women who are trying to become pregnant, he said.—Reuters

Ancient wildebeest cousin boasted bizarre dinosaur-like trait

WASHINGTON — In an ancient streambed on Kenya’s Rusinga Island, scientists have unearthed fossils of a wildebeest-like creature named *Rusingoryx* that boasted a weird nasal structure more befitting of a dinosaur than a mammal.

Researchers said on Thursday the crescent-shaped protrusion atop the head of *Rusingoryx*, which roamed Africa’s savannas tens of thousands of years ago, was unlike anything on any other mammal, past or present. Instead, it resembled the head crests of a group of duckbilled dinosaurs called hadrosaurs.

The hollow structure may have enabled the horned, hoofed grass-eater to produce a low trumpeting sound to communicate over long distances with others in its herd, Ohio University paleontologist Haley O’Brien said.

“This structure was incredibly surprising,” O’Brien said. “To see a hollow nasal crest outside of dinosaurs and in a mammal that lived so recently is very bizarre.”

The fossils of *Rusingoryx*, about the size of its close cousin the wildebeest, date from about 55,000 to 75,000 years ago. Hadrosaurs with similar nasal structures, *Lambeosaurus* and *Corythosaurus*, lived about 75 million years ago.

O’Brien said the structure was an example of “convergent evolution” in which disparate organisms independently evolve similar features, like the wings of

birds, bats and the extinct flying reptiles called pterosaurs, to adapt to similar environments or ecological niches.

Rusingoryx led a lifestyle similar to hadrosaurs: herbivores both likely travelling in herds. Many scientists think hadrosaurs also used their crests to communicate vocally with one another.

The researchers said *Rusingoryx*’s nasal apparatus may have allowed it to deepen its normal vocal calls into “infrasound” levels other species may not have been able to hear. “Vocalizations can alert predators, and moving their calls into a new frequency could have made communication safer,” O’Brien said.

The researchers examined six adult and juvenile *Rusingoryx* skulls. The bony crest, laying on the top and front of the skull, was mostly hollow inside. It contained nasal passages that followed the outside of the structure then took an S-shaped pathway down into the soft tissue part of the airway. The nasal passage then sat atop of a pair of large sinuses.

At least 24 *Rusingoryx* individuals were found at the site. University of Minnesota paleoanthropologist Kirsten Jenkins said butchered bones and stone tools there indicated humans may have caused their deaths. Jenkins said hunters may have driven a herd into the stream for an ambush.

The research was published in the journal *Current Biology*.—Reuters

Contest picks brains of technologists to fight forced labour



General view of the local fishing community in the Ghanaian town of Cape Coast on 9 July 2009. PHOTO: REUTERS

NEW YORK — A cell phone tool to survey working conditions of Ghanaian fishermen and a mobile system to collect forced labour data are among the finalists in a global competition to harness technology to identify enslaved workers in supply chains, organizers said on 1st February.

The contest, Rethink Supply Chains, aims to send a message that efforts to make supply chains transparent and slave-free create market opportunities, said Catherine Chen, director of investments at Humanity United, a non-profit participant in the project.

Some 18.7 million people around the world are estimated to be trapped in forced labour in the private economy, generating \$150 billion in annual profits, according to the International Labour Organisation.

Five finalists were selected among dozens of applicants,

including software companies, regulatory-compliance consulting firms and mobile application developers, from 11 nations.

Many were already trying to develop fixes to other social and economic problems, said Chen.

“It’s exciting to be able to activate those technology companies and technologists themselves and get them thinking about another social issue,” she said.

The other three finalists were an online registry for reporting conditions of fishing crews at sea, a system to utilize internet reporting to uncover labor exploitation and a mobile platform to look at remittances to combat human trafficking.

The winner of the \$250,000 prize offered by the Partnership for Freedom, a venture including Humanity United and the US government, will be announced in April.—Reuters

S Korea, US to stage largest-ever annual war games in March

SEOUL — Combined forces of South Korea and the United States plan to stage their largest-ever joint annual war games that are scheduled to kick off in early March, mobilising a nuclear-powered US aircraft carrier.

A senior South Korean Joint Chiefs of Staff official told senior members of the ruling Saenuri Party yesterday that this year’s Key Resolve and Foal Eagle exercises will be carried out in the largest-ever scale, mobilising the highest-tech weapons.

The joint annual military exercises are scheduled to kick off on 7 March that will run through 30 April.

The Key Resolve command post exercise and the Foal Eagle field training exercise have been denounced by the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) as a rehearsal for northward invasion.

In an apparent show of force against the DPRK’s recent nuclear test and long-range rocket launch, the USS John C. Stennis, a US nuclear-powered aircraft carrier, will be mobilised during the upcoming drills, a South Korean military official was quoted by Yonhap news agency as saying.

South Korea and the United States are considering additional deployment of strategic assets during the exercises, including F-22 stealth fighters and B-2 stealth bombers capable of carrying nuclear bombs.

Pyongyang yesterday launched a Kwangmyongsong-4 Earth observation satellite into orbit aboard a long-range rocket, which Seoul and Washington see as a long-range ballistic missile, in defiance of international warnings. The rocket launch came about a month after what the DPRK claimed was its first H-bomb test on 6 January.—Reuters

Iranian-British ex-BBC journalist is in Evin prison, relatives say

DUBAI — The family of an Iranian-British former BBC journalist who was detained last week in Tehran were told on Saturday that he was in the capital’s Evin prison, a friend told Reuters.

Bahman Daroshafaei, 34, a translator and former BBC Persian service reporter, was detained on Wednesday at his home, according to the opposition website Kaleme.com.

“His family went to Evin prison today. They managed to talk to someone on the phone who said Bahman was in Evin but he would not be able to con-

tact his family for another week or so,” said the friend, who was in direct touch with the family but declined to be named.

Daroshafaei’s family said they had not been informed what the charges against him might be.

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said in London on Thursday that he did not know about the case.

Some opposition activists have suggested that Daroshafaei’s arrest, on the eve of the first visit to Britain by an Iranian foreign minister in 12 years, might have been orchestrated by

hardliners to thwart an improvement in relations as Iran emerges from international isolation under the moderate government of President Hassan Rouhani.

After living in London for several years, Daroshafaei returned to Iran in 2014 to be near his family.

His friend said six plain-clothed officers had arrested Daroshafaei at his home and confiscated his computer, hard drives and mobile phone.

A few of Daroshafaei’s friends in Tehran and London said they had received messages on social media in the last few

days purporting to come from him. One said that she had been hacked after clicking on a link she received from Daroshafaei’s account.

Britain reopened its embassy in Tehran last year after Iran agreed with world powers to curb its nuclear programme in return for a lifting of sanctions. It has made no comment about Daroshafaei’s detention.

Another Iranian-British citizen, Kamal Foroughi, remains in detention after being arrested in 2011 while working in Tehran as a business consultant.—Reuters

Five Czechs killed as huge Austrian avalanche buries 17

VIENNA — Five Czech skiers were killed in a huge avalanche that swept away their group of 17 in the Austrian skiing region of Tyrol on Saturday, police said.

The avalanche, which the regional TV station ORF Tirol said was 2 km (1.25 miles) wide and 5 m (16 feet) deep, came down shortly after noon at the Wattener Lizum region, about 40 km (25 miles) southeast of Innsbruck.

Two people were injured but out of acute danger, while 10 others survived unharmed, police said.

The experienced Czech skiers were taking part in a so-called “freeride camp” and had been repeatedly warned about the danger by locals, according to ORF.

The entire skiing region had been on a ‘level three’ avalanche alert, out of a maximum five, and several avalanches were also reported elsewhere.—Reuters



An avalanche warning sign is pictured in Wattental valley in Austria’s skiing region of Tyrol on 6 February 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS



A farmer inspects his maize field in Hoopstad, Free State province, South Africa, on 22 January 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

South Africa farm ministry: won't declare national disaster over drought

DUBAI — South Africa will not declare a national disaster in response to a drought that has hurt agricultural production, the country's deputy minister of agriculture, forestry and fisheries Bheki Cele told Reuters yesterday. "As we are experienc-

ing this kind of drought, for some reason God has been kind and late rains did come, and we think the 6 million tonnes (of maize) we were looking to import — we have downgraded that to four," he said in an interview on the sidelines of

a conference in Dubai. "The only hope is that rains continue — if they do we might be out of the woods," Cele said, adding: "We will not declare a national disaster." He said the ministry was looking at Mexico as a source of white maize im-

ports, but that if ample rain continued, total maize imports might go below the currently projected 4 million tonnes.

South Africa's ports are fully prepared receive maize imports, he added.— Reuters

Invitation for Bids

Myanmar

National Electrification Project

Credit No. 5727-MM

Contract Title: Supply, Installation and Maintenance of Solar PV System for Households and Public Facilities

Reference No. S&I - 1 (12 lots)

1. The Government of Myanmar has received financing from the International Development Association (IDA) of the World Bank Group toward the cost of the National Electrification Project, and intends to apply part of the proceeds toward payments under the contract for Supply, Installation and Maintenance of Solar PV System for Households and Public Facilities. This contract will be jointly financed by the Government of Myanmar..

2. The Department of Rural Development, Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development now invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for supply, installation and maintenance of 12 lots of solar PV for households and public facilities as hereunder:

Lot 1– NEP Solar PV Packages in Kayin

Lot 2– NEP Solar PV Packages in Chin (1)

Lot 3– NEP Solar PV Packages in Chin (2)

Lot 4– NEP Solar PV Packages in Sagaing

Lot 5– NEP Solar PV Packages in Tanintharyi

Lot 6– NEP Solar PV Packages in Rakhine (1)

Lot 7– NEP Solar PV Packages in Rakhine (2)

Lot 8– NEP Solar PV Packages in Shan (East)

Lot 9– NEP Solar PV Packages in Shan (North)(1)

Lot 10– NEP Solar PV Packages in Shan (North) (2)

Lot 11– NEP Solar PV Packages in Ayeyarwaddy (1)

Lot 12– NEP Solar PV Packages in Ayeyarwaddy (2)

3. Bidding will be conducted through the International Competitive Bidding procedures as specified in the World Bank's [Guidelines: Procurement of Goods, Works and Non-Consulting Services under IBRD Loans and IDA Credits & Grants by World Bank Borrowers dated January 2011 \(revised July 2014\)](#) ("Procurement Guidelines"), and is open to all eligible bidders as defined in the Procurement Guidelines. In addition, please refer to paragraphs 1.6 and 1.7 setting forth the World Bank's policy on conflict of interest.

4. A Pre-Bid meeting will be held on **March 3, 2016 at 9.00 a.m.** in Nay Pyi Taw, Office No. 14 (Main Conference Room, ground Floor), in order to answer any questions that potential bidders might have.

5. Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information from the address below and inspect the bidding documents during office hours 0900 to 1600 hours Myanmar time at the address given below.

6. A complete set of bidding documents in English may be purchased by interested eligible bidders upon the submission of a written application to the address below and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee of MMK 85,000 or USD 70. The Bidding Documents will be issued through hand deliver or through courier, if so requested. In case Bidding Documents are requested to be couriered, then an additional amount of USD 50 is required to cover courier charges. The method of payment will be in cash if the Bidding Document is to be issued through hand delivery. In case the Bidding Documents are to be courier, the payment should be made by cashier's check or bank's draft payable to "Department of Rural Development".

7. Bids must be delivered to the address below on or before **April 5, 2016, 13.00 hrs.** Myanmar time. Electronic bidding will not be permitted. Late bids will be rejected. Bids will be publicly opened in the presence of the bidders' designated representatives and anyone who choose to attend at the address below on **April 5, 2016, 13.00 hrs.** Myanmar time

8. All bids must be accompanied by a *Bid Securing Declaration as stated in ITB 19.1- Bidding Data Sheet of the bidding document.*

9. The address referred to above is:

Attention: U Myint Oo Deputy Director General,
Chairperson of the Procurement Committee

National Electrification Project

Department of Rural Development,

Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development,

Office No. 14,

Naypyitaw,

Country: Myanmar

Tel /Fax: +95 067 409529

ksaung@gmail.com, dr.soesoeohn@gmail.com, neppmo.drd@gmail.com

Argentina facing stiff challenge in efforts to enter international financial markets

BUENOS AIRES — Argentina is facing a severe challenge in attracting investors amid global economic instability, volatile financial markets and tumbling oil prices, a report says. "The deterioration of the international context impacts the region, including the Argentinean government's strategy to minimize the impact of its macroeconomic reforms," economic consulting firm Ecolatina said in a report on Friday.

The Argentinean government has rolled out a series of measures to improve investment incentives, including an infrastructure plan which would require

long-term, low-interest international loans.

It has also sought to remove internal restrictions on foreign exchange operations, clarify rules for the private sector, boost the profitability of the agricultural sector and resolve Argentina's conflict with vulture funds in the United States. "Finding financing on capital markets and attracting foreign investors would directly help (Argentina) to overcome its own contraction," explained the firm, adding that gaining access to foreign exchange markets could strengthen the country's internal reserves. Such extra financing

could also help make up some of the fiscal deficit currently affecting the country, Ecolatina reported.

According to the consultancy, the speed at which the Argentinean economy will pick up largely depends on how much investment it secures in the second half of 2016. "It is probable that Argentinean authorities will have to rethink their strategy. The low price of oil has complicated matters for energy companies and exporting countries," said the report. "The appreciation of the dollar has also generated additional exchange pressures for emerging economies," it said.—Xinhua

PICTURE OF THE DAY



Kids learn about the knowledge of monkey during the 2016 Chinese New Year Celebration event at Chinese Cultural Centre of Greater Toronto in Toronto, Canada, on 6 February 2016. PHOTO: XINHUA

Ministry of Energy Myanma Petroleum Products Enterprise Invitation for Opened Tender (1/2016)

1. Open tenders are invited for supply of the following respective items in United State Dollars (CIF Yangon) and Myanmar Kyats (M PPE Warehouse Yangon).

Sr.No	Description	Qty	Remark
(1)	200 IGPM Fuel Transfer Centrifugal Pump (Engine Driven)	2 Sets	USD
(2)	600 IGPM Fuel Transfer Centrifugal Pump (Engine Driven)	2 Sets	USD
(3)	Fire Extinguisher	6 Items	Kyats
(2)	Tender Clos Vig Date & Time -	9 - 3 - 2016, 12:00 Hrs	

3. Tender documents are available at our office starting from 8 - 2 - 2016 during office hours and for further detail please contact: Phone :067-411487.

Planning Department

Myanma Petroleum Products Enterprise
Ministry of Energy, No(6) Complex, Nay Pyi Taw

Inarritu wins DGA award for 'The Revenant,' stoking its Oscar hopes



Alejandro G. Inarritu (3rd L) accepts the Feature Film award for "The Revenant" as he poses with crew members during the 68th annual DGA Awards in Los Angeles on 6 February 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

LOS ANGELES — Hollywood's directors named Alejandro Inarritu the best film director of 2015 for "The Revenant" at a gala ceremony on Saturday, helping focus the race for the Oscars.

The Directors Guild of America (DGA), the leading industry group representing film and television directors, also chose Matthew Heineman as the best documentary maker for "Cartel Land."

Past DGA feature film award winners have often gone on to claim the best director Oscar and see their films win best picture from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

It was Inarritu's second consecutive DGA win after taking home the prize last year for "Birdman," for which he also won the best director Oscar. That film also took home the best picture Academy Award.

So far this year industry awards from the Screen Actors Guild, the Producers Guild and now the DGA have gone to different films, with actors choosing "Spotlight" and producers honoring "The Big Short."

Heading into the DGAs, Oscar watchers had narrowed this year's race to Inarritu's dark drama, which stars Oscar favourite Leonardo DiCaprio, Tom McCarthy's journalism tale "Spotlight" and financial farce "The Big Short."

The Oscars will be handed out in Hollywood on 28 February in a star-studded television show viewed around the world which is one of the most-watched TV programs in the United States.

But Oscar buzz, which is typically the focus of Hollywood's awards season, has been

overshadowed since January by claims of a lack of racial diversity in Academy Award voting after no actors of colour were nominated in key acting and directing categories for a second straight year.

The controversy led to a revival of the #OscarsSoWhite hashtag on Twitter, as well as calls for an Oscar boycott by the likes of director Spike Lee and actress Jada Pinkett Smith.

Following its January nominations, the Academy unveiled changes to membership rules that are meant to bring greater diversity, but the cloud of racial bias in Hollywood has continued to dominate awards talk.

DGA president Paris Barclay noted the controversy in his opening remarks, saying the DGA had long championed "the important fight for equal opportunity."

In addition to film directors, the DGA also handed out television honors. Chris Addison won for best TV comedy direction for "Veep," while David Nutter won the award for TV drama series for "Game of Thrones." —Reuters

I wasn't always nice to Leonardo DiCaprio: Johnny Depp

LOS ANGELES — Johnny Depp says when making the film "What's Eating Gilbert Grape" he was going through a rough time and wasn't always very receptive to Leonardo DiCaprio, who was then 19-year-old.

Depp, 52, shared stories of working with DiCaprio during the 31st annual Santa Barbara International Film Festival, where he was presented with the Malin Modern Master Award for his accomplishments in the film industry.

"It was a hard time for me, that film, for some reason. I don't know why," Depp said.

When it came to his relation-

ship with DiCaprio, Depp said, "I tortured him."

"I really did. He was always talking about these video games, you know? I told you it was kind of a dark period. 'No, I will not give you a drag of my cigarette while you hide from your mother again, Leo.'"

Depp also said he greatly admired DiCaprio's work ethic, even then.

"I'd say the absolute truth is that I respect Leo a lot. He worked really hard on that film and spent a lot of time researching. He came to set and he was ready to work hard and all his ducks were in a row." —PTI



Johnny Depp. PHOTO: REUTERS

Naomi Campbell's runway tip for Gigi Hadid



Model Naomi Campbell. PHOTO: REUTERS

LONDON — Model Naomi Campbell gave Gigi Hadid a catwalk masterclass before the Victoria's Secret fashion show.

The 20-year-old model had a major confidence boost after she got a "terrifying" lesson from Campbell, reported

Female First. "I was with Naomi a couple of weeks before the VS show. She said, 'Don't apologise, don't do it. You are perfect the way you are. Everyone said my walk was weird too'," Gigi said.

She went on to recall the ramp walk practise session she had with Campbell at her hotel.

"I go to her hotel and we end up practising walking in the hallway of the hotel.

Italian families are coming out to watch and she's like, 'Don't look at them, keep walking, they're your audience.'

"The elevator would open and the waiter would come out - 'Don't look at him, he's your audience, do a spin and keep going.' It was terrifying, walking in front of this Italian grandmother and her kid," she said. —PTI

Beyonce releases new song 'Formation'

LOS ANGELES — Pop diva Beyonce dropped a brand new single titled "Formation" on Saturday.

Produced by Mike Will Made-It and Aplus, the song is the 34-year-old singer's first new track since 2014's "7/11," said The Hollywood Reporter.

The music video, shot primarily in New Orleans, also features a cameo from Beyonce and Jay Z's 4-year-old daughter, Blue Ivy.

"Formation" is written by Swae Lee from Rae Srem-murd.

The video starts with Beyonce on top of a police car in a flooded street and cuts to a man holding a newspaper with Martin Luther King Jr's face on the cover with the title "The Truth."

Last month, Queen Bey starred in the music video for Coldplay's single "Hymn for the Weekend." —PTI



Pop diva Beyonce. PHOTO: REUTERS

Solange Knowles loses wedding ring

LONDON — Singer Beyonce Knowles' younger sister Solange lost her wedding ring during a New Orleans Mardi Gras celebration.

The 29-year-old singer misplaced her art-deco inspired diamond ring on 4 February when it flew off her hand as she threw beads into the crowd, reported Female First. Solange had designed the ring with jeweller Lorraine Schwartz for her 2014 wedding to Alan Ferguson.

She was Honorary Muse in

the Krewe of Muses parade at Mardi Gras and the group put out an appeal on social media for the ring.

They wrote on Facebook, "Honorary Muse Solange lost her wedding ring between Toledano and Foucher. Reward if found! Contact info@kreweofmuses.Org (sic)."

Solange and Alan tied the knot in an intimate ceremony in New Orleans in 2014 surrounded by 50 of their closest friends and family members. —PTI

Asleep in Jesus

Mr.A.Anthony Muthu

Aged. (72)

B.A; B.Ed; M.A.(English)

High School English Teacher

S.H.S (4) Mingalartaungnyunt (Retired)

Marutham Teacher's Training Institute

D.T.ED (INDIA)

Has gone asleep in Jesus at Chennai, in INDIA on
6.2.2016 at 5:00 P.M.**In February, Chicago goes crazy for 'paczki' as donuts go gourmet**

CHICAGO — Chicagoans this month are less obsessed with badmouthing Mayor Rahm Emanuel or worries about their sports teams, and more focused on finding the perfect "paczki," a rich, Polish, donut-type dessert that's taking the high-end dessert market by storm.

Long a staple treat preceding the Catholic fasting period of Lent, the pastries, a no-hole, denser and richer version of the donut, have exploded in popularity in recent years far beyond Chicago's large Polish community to a growing number of high-end, specialty donut shops, bakers and food experts say.

These gourmet bakeries, with names like

"Glazed and Infused," are experimenting with new paczki varieties — using key lime pie, jelly made with blood oranges, or white chocolate in place of more traditional plum and rose jelly fillings.

"It's really big this year," said Rebecca Skoch, a food and beverage consultant who organises the annual "Donut Fest." "Chicago has a great mix of bakers that do classic donuts and newer, avant garde places that aren't afraid to experiment."

Skoch said Chicago is a leader in the gourmet donut trend nationwide, ahead of New York and Portland, so it makes sense that new shops want to take on a local favourite.—Reuters

Rio Carnival enters 2nd day, attracts millions of revellers

Revellers parade for the Vai-Vai samba school during the carnival in Sao Paulo, Brazil, on 7 February 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

RIO DE JANEIRO — On the second day of Rio's riotous five-day Carnival, Brazilians once again showed their ability to party in whatever circumstances.

Despite economic distress and Zika virus threats, the parade at the Sambadrome was packed and "blocos", or street parties, filled the city streets with music. On Friday evening, the first parade of the Carni-

val went off without a hitch, with giant floats decorated with the Egyptian God Anubis or with threatening archers towering above legions of dancers. On Saturday, around 1 million people lined the streets for the classical Cordao do Bola Preta, the city's oldest bloco, along its traditional route through town.

Thousands also gathered for one of the most

traditional blocos, the Banda de Ipanema, which meandered its way through the streets of one of Rio's most well-heeled neighbourhoods. While Zika virus threats appeared not to have dampened the festive atmosphere, the municipal government did advise revellers against kissing each other for fear of spreading the virus.

To what extent the

famously passionate Brazilians will take the advice remains to be seen. *The Globo* daily newspaper said in an editorial: "A Carnival without a kiss is like a beach without sun...it's no fun at all."

It is also noteworthy that the municipal police said they received some 120 reports of robberies in the main venues of carnival celebrations.—Xinhua

Endangered monkey dies under anesthesia at H.K. theme park

HONG KONG — An endangered golden snub-nosed monkey on loan from mainland China has died under anesthesia at a Hong Kong's Ocean Park, the theme park's officials said Friday.

Hu Hu, who was 5 years old, "could not be revived" after she went into cardiopulmonary arrest during an examination under anesthesia for a problem with her right shoulder Thursday.

"This was a very unfortunate outcome and all the staff members who have cared for her are deeply saddened," park official Suzanne Gendron said.

Hu Hu was observed to be

favoring her right shoulder on Tuesday and did not respond to initial treatment with pain medications.

The decision for a medical checkup was made after discussing with Chengdu Zoo in western China's Sichuan Province, which loaned Hu Hu and two other monkeys from Sichuan to the Ocean Park as part of a collaboration to breed this iconic endangered species.

"We understand this was an unfortunate accident," said Yu Jianqiu, assistant director of Chengdu Zoo. "We believe Ocean Park will take the most stringent man-

ner in the necropsy of Hu Hu to understand the cause of death and avoid similar situations."

Two other golden monkeys — female Le Le, 6, who arrived at Ocean Park with Hu Hu in 2012 and male Qi Qi, 5 who arrived in 2015 — remain in good health, the zoo's officials said.

Fewer than 16,000 golden monkeys, a protected species endemic to China, are believed to be left in the wild, according to the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. Most are in Sichuan, while smaller populations exist in Gansu, Hubei, Shaanxi provinces.—Kyodo News

**News Channel in Brief**

(8-2-2016, Monday)

- 6:00 am**
• Paritta by Hilly Missionary Min Gun Sayadaw
7:35 pm
• People's Talks
8:35 am
• Documentary (Women in Myanmar Society)
9:35 am
• Documentary (ASEAN)
10:35 am
• Weekly Entertainment
11:35 am
• MRTV's Youth Programme
12:35 pm
• TV Drama Series
1:10 pm
• Tasty Trip
2:30 pm
• Gitadagale Phwintbarohn

- 3:35 pm**
• MRTV Migrant Workers
4:35 pm
• University of Distance Education (TV Lectures) — Third Year (Philosophy)
5:15 pm
• Documentary
6:30 pm
• MRTV (70)th Anniversary Sing & Enjoy
7:30 pm
• MRTV (70)th Anniversary Stereo
8:00 pm
• News / International News / Weather Report
8:35 pm
• Documentary
• MRTV (70)th Anniversary Myanmar Songs
• MRTV Actor Star (Part-2)

Note/ Hourly News Bulletins (Local + International)



(8-2-2016 07:00am ~ 9-2-2016 7:00am) MST

Today Fresh

- 07:03 Am News
07:26 Am Myanmar Sculpture-Work of Art
07:42 Am Jeyyanandi (A Day in the Life of a Nun)
08:03 Am News
08:26 Am Mon Traditional Wedding
08:36 Am Paper Products... Plain but Pretty
09:03 Am News
09:26 Am Myanmar Traditional Instruments (MYANMA OBOE)
09:51 Am Philatelic Pleasure

- 10:03 Am News
10:26 Am Travelogue: Ngwe Saung Beach
10:47 Am Chinlone & The Dreams of the player

(11:00 Am ~ 03:00 Pm) - Sunday Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)
(03:00 Pm ~ 07:00 Pm) - Today Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)

Prime Time

- 07:03 Pm News
07:26 Pm Food Trip (EP-1) (Part-1)
07:47 Pm Farming: Duck Breeder
08:03 Pm News
08:26 Pm Taste Of Myanmar (Fried Flat Noodle)
08:48 Pm Life of Sea Urchin Diver

(09:00 Pm ~ 11:00 Pm) - Today Repeat (09:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)
(11:00 Pm ~ 03:00 Am) - Sunday Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)
(03:00 Am ~ 07:00 Am) - Today Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)

(For Detailed Schedule – www.myanmaritv.com/schedule)**Entertainment Channel**

(8-2-2016, Monday)

- 6:00 pm**
• Alinka Wut Yee Music Troupe
6:20 pm
• Pyi Thu Ni Ti
6:40 pm
• Fashion Show
7:00 pm
• TV Drama Series

- 7:50 pm**
• TV Drama Series
8:35 pm
• Musical Programme
10:00 pm
• ASEAN Cultural Fair-2014
10:20 pm
• Myanmar Video

From 8.2.2016 (Monday) 06:00 Pm
To 9.2.2016 (Tuesday) 06:00 Pm

This schedule will be repeated four times in 24 hours.



Manchester City's Sergio Aguero scores their first goal during Barclays Premier League at Etihad Stadium on 6 February 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Leicester rock Man City to race clear, Spurs second

LONDON — Leicester City's unlikely assault on a first Premier League title gathered momentum with a ruthless 3-1 demolition of Manchester City helping them storm five points clear at the top on Saturday.

Defender Robert Huth scored twice and Algerian magician Riyad Mahrez fired his 14th league goal of the season as

Leicester sent a clear message of intent to those who still doubt they have the quality to become champions.

Bookmakers have now made Claudio Ranieri's men, 5,000-1 outsiders at the start of the campaign, favourites to go all the way.

Tottenham Hotspur moved above Manchester City into sec-

ond place, Kieran Trippier scoring in a 1-0 win over Watford at White Hart Lane.

Leicester have 53 points from 25 games. Spurs are on 48, one ahead of Manchester City. Fourth-placed Arsenal, who visit Bournemouth on Sunday, have 45.

Elsewhere, Newcastle United clawed their way out of the relegation zone after Aleksandar Mitrovic netted in a 1-0 home victory over West Bromwich Albion.

Norwich City dropped into the bottom three after a 2-0 defeat at basement club Aston Villa while Sunderland, in 19th place, scored twice in the final eight minutes to draw 2-2 at Liverpool.

Ranieri's Leicester face Ar-

senal at the Emirates next weekend and the Italian said all the pressure was now on the league's big guns in this most unpredictable of seasons.

"We have to try in this crazy league but there are some big teams who have to win," he told reporters.

"The spirit is fantastic but I've said this from my first moment here in Leicester."

Leicester's energy and attacking verve proved too hot for City to handle at the Etihad Stadium, the hosts perhaps still digesting the news that Bayern Munich boss Pep Guardiola would be replacing Manuel Pellegrini as manager next season.

Poor marking allowed Huth to convert Mahrez's free kick after three minutes to rock the home team who struggled to re-

spond in rain-lashed Manchester.

Mahrez then showed why he, along with team mate Jamie Vardy, should be a leading contender for Player of the Year honours when he doubled Leicester's lead following a swift break, taking N'Golo Kante's pass to advance and fire the ball past Joe Hart.

Huth's header from a corner on the hour made it 3-0, ensuring Sergio Aguero's late reply proved of no consequence.

Pellegrini made no excuses for Manchester City's chastening defeat.

"A lot of things went wrong. We played against a very good team," the Chilean said. "It's fair to give them the merit they have."—Reuters

Lee grabs Phoenix Open lead, Mickelson five back

SCOTTSDALE — New Zealand's Danny Lee used a hot start to grab his first 54-hole lead in a PGA Tour event at the Waste Management Phoenix Open on Saturday while three-time winner Phil Mickelson vaulted into contention.

Lee made three consecutive birdies from the second hole to build a big cushion en route to a four-under-par 67 at the TPC Scottsdale in Scottsdale, Arizona, and 13-under 200 total.

Japan's Hideki Matsuyama (68) and American Rickie Fowler (70) were tied in second at 10-under.

"I'm very confident with my putting at the moment and it seems like my ball-striking worked well today as well, so it was a fun day," Lee told PGATour Radio.

"My iron game's really good right now and I've been putting

well since I switched to a claw grip (two years ago), so it seems like everything's going smoothly right now."

Bryce Molder (64), in a tie for fourth with fellow American Boo Weekley (65), stormed into the clubhouse with five birdies in the final seven holes in front of a raucous gallery, vaulting within four shots of the lead with the lowest round of the week.

Mickelson (65), who started the day a distant eight strokes off the pace, finished a bogey-free round in style with a 30-foot birdie at his final hole, the par-four ninth, to sit five strokes off the pace.

The man they will all chase on Sunday is 25-year-old Lee, who was born in South Korea before moving to New Zealand at the age of eight.

Lee was hailed in some circles as the next Tiger Woods

when he turned professional in 2009 after winning the US Amateur Championship the previous year.

He had already won on the European Tour as an amateur, but had a rough adjustment to the professional ranks and took a few years to make his mark after temporarily losing his way.

Lee posted his first PGA Tour victory last July at the Greenbrier Classic and has risen inside the top 50 in the world rankings.

Fowler, meanwhile, took consolation with being in striking distance despite struggling with the speed of the greens.

"Pleased to get that round out of the way," said the world number four. "I didn't have my best stuff out there, saw a lot of putts slide by. "I was giving the greens a little too much credit and they were a little slow."—Reuters



Danny Lee watches his fairway shot on the 17th during the third round of the Waste Management Phoenix Open golf tournament at TPC Scottsdale. PHOTO: REUTERS