THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Volume II, Number 144 | 13th Waning Day of Wagaung 1377 ME | Saturday, 12 September, 2015

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Myanmar migrant workers Zaw Lin (front) and Win Zaw Htun arrive at the Koh Samui Provincial Court, in Koh Samui, Thailand.—REUTERS

NOT A MATCH

Suspects' DNA not on backpacker murder weapon — lawyer

BANGKOK — Independent forensics tests on a garden hoe Thai police believe was used to kill two British backpackers on a holiday island show no matches to the DNA of two Myanmar migrant workers accused of their murder, their lawyer said on Friday.

The killings last year of Hannah Witheridge, 23, and David Miller, 24, raised questions about Thailand's safety for tourists, the competence of its police and its treatment of migrant workers.

Lawyers for the accused Myanmar men, Zaw Lin and Win Zaw Htun, both 22, have made alleged police incompetence and mishandling of evidence central to their defence and sought help from Thailand's foremost forensics expert, Pornthip Rojanasunand, to scrutinise evidence.

Defence lawyer Nakhon Chompuchart said the court on Friday heard testimony from Pornthip's team confirming DNA was found on the hoe police said was the murder weapon, but it did not match that of his clients, or Maung Maung, a friend of the accused and a prosecution witness.

"(Pornthip's institute) compared the DNA samples obtained from police of both the suspects and Maung Maung. There was no match," Nakhon said outside the court on Koh Samui, a neighbouring island to Koh Tao, where the Britons were killed.

Police have given conflicting statements about the DNA, saying some was lost or "used up", then later denying that and saying the DNA samples were accounted for.

The court in July ordered a reexamination of the police evidence by the justice ministry's central forensic institute, led by Pornthip, who has clashed with police numerous times before when her examinations exposed flaws in their cases.

The bodies of Miller and Witheridge were found a year ago on a beach on Koh Tao, a small island in the Gulf of Thailand popular with backpackers and divers.

Post-mortem examinations showed both suffered severe head wounds and Witheridge was raped.

Police said in October the accused men had admitted to killing the backpackers. But they later retracted their confessions saying they had made under duress.

The case continues.—*Reuters*

Post-signing steps laid out for signatories to ceasefire

Ye Myint

THE Myanmar Peace Centre has described the steps that signatories to the national ceasefire accord must follow after inking the pact, which is expected to occur in early October.

"Securing long lasting peace rests on how fully the terms of the pact are implemented, rather than the actual signing the ceasefire," said Dr Min Zaw Oo, director of ceasefire negotiation and implementation at the Myanmar Peace Centre (MPC) during a press conference in Yangon on Friday.

Commanders concerned from both sides will be required to inform their troops that a ceasefire has been reached within 24 hours of its signing. Over the next five days, commanders must explain the points in the accord to troops at various levels.

Within two weeks after signing the pact, the government and ethnic armed organisations who have signed the deal must hold a joint implementation coordination meeting to form a joint ceasefire monitoring committee and a union peace dialogue joint committee.

U Hla Maung Shwe, MPC's senior adviser, said that the door is open to both signatories and non-signatories to take part in the meetings, but that there will be differences between them at the decision-making level.

Of the 103 points in the accord, 55 points are related to military matters while 35 are linked to political issues and 23 are other matters.

Dr Min Zaw Oo said that the joint ceasefire monitoring committee will be responsible for dealing with military matters while the Union Peace Dialogue Joint Committee dealing with political issues.

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Bago monastery seeks donors

Kaylartha Golden Monastery under construction in Nyaunglaybin Township.—Nay Lin (Nyaunglaybin)

NYAUNGLAYBIN — Bhaddanta Nandima, the abbot of the Kaylartha Golden Monastery in Nyaunglaybin Township, has called on members of the public to contribute to the fund for the monastery's renovation.

The monastery, located in Mokhamu village, Bago Region, was built in 1908. In 2013, the abbot established a meditation centre there, where he also gives sermons.

Though the trustees of the monastery donated to the renovation fund, their contributions have not been sufficient to cover the project's entire cost.

Donations are welcome.

Nay Lin (Nyaunglaybin)

Monsoon paddy cultivation exceeds target in Lewe Township

LEWE – The Department of Agriculture has cultivated a total of 61,220 acres of rice paddy in Lewe Township, Nay Pyi Taw Council Area, which exceeds the department's target area of 60,721 acres by nearly 500 acres.

Farmers in the area seek to increase their paddy yield with the cooperation of the staff members from agriculture department following this year's heavy rains. —*Ko Pauk (Okkar Myay)*

Staff of the Agriculture Department observe thriving paddy plantation in Lewe.—Ko Pauk (Okkar Myay)

Local farmers cultivate monsoon paddy in villages of Tatkon Township on 11 September to meet the target of more than 46,000 acres of farmland.—Tin Soe Lwin (Township IPRD)

Experts exchange ideas on forestry, logging

NAY PYI TAW — Experts from Denmark, the UK and Myanmar exchanged ideas on environmental conservation at a workshop in Nay Pyi Taw on Wednesday. Representatives from Myanmar's Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry and from EcoDev, a local environmental organisation, made up the Myanmar contingent.

At the workshop, which was part of the Forest, Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) project, participants discussed forest law, strategies for eliminating illegal logging and the introduction of a legal timber market.

They also discussed the prospect of their home countries signing a trade agreement and implementing an information-sharing system, said EcoDev national coordinator U Kyaw Tun.

FLEGT is a pilot project that brings experts together to devise policies to combat the illegal timber trade in Kachin State, Sagaing Region and Taninthayi Region.

Myanmar has the world's third-highest deforestation rate, according to the UN. – *Thant Zin Win*

Myanmar accepts motorbike tourists from neighbouring countries

NAY PYI TAW—The Ministry of Hotels and Tourism has made arrangements with tour operators to accommodate tourists arriving in Myanmar by motorbike.

Tourists have entered Myanmar from Thailand through the Myawady border gate to visit the Kyaikhtiyoe (Golden Rock) Pagoda in Mon State. Some motorbike tourists have reached as far as Monywa and Kalay in the northwestern part of Myanmar and crossed the Tamu border gate into India, while others have visited Kutkai in Myanmar's northeast before crossing into China. — *MOHT*

Tourists arriving in Myanmar by motorbike in Myawady.—MoHT

Vice President U Nyan Tun shakes hands with Four Paws International's Chariman and CEO Mr Helmut Dungler.—MNA

Elephant sanctuary on the cards

NAY PYI TAW — Vice President U Nyan Tun met Four Paws International's Chariman and CEO Mr Helmut Dungler at the Presidential Palace on Friday to discuss establishing an elephant sanctuary in Myanmar.

The pair also discussed ways to protect animals in flood-affected areas. Also present at the meeting were deputy ministers U Thant Kyaw, Dr Aung Myat Oo, U Aye Myint Maung and Daw Su Su Hlaing.—*MNA*

Media slots for three political parties announced

NAY PYI TAW — MRTV, Hluttaw channel, MWD (Variety), Myanmar Radio and Shwe FM will broadcast campaign speeches by representatives from Democracy and Peace Party, Shan Nationalities Democratic Party and United Democratic Party (UDP) on 12 September and 12 October.—*GNLM*

Commander-in-Chief arrives back from Israel

YANGON — Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing on 9 September arrived back from Israel at the invitation of Israeli Defense Minister Mr. Moshe Ya'alon from Ben Gurion International Airport of Tel Aviv city to Yangon International Airport.

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing held discussions on exchange of military trainees and military goodwill delegation, internal situation of both countries, and military corporation, with the Israeli President, defense minister, Israeli commander-in-chief and senior officials.

The Senior General and party were warmly welcomed back by Yangon command commander Brig-Gen Myo Zaw Thein and senior military officers and Israeli Ambassador to Myanmar Mr. Daniel Zohar Zonshine.—*Myawady*

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing being welcomed back by Israeli Ambassador to Myanmar Mr. Daniel Zohar Zonshine at Yangon International Airport.—MYAWADY

Forum highlights media's role in free, fair election

YANGON — The Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL) held the Myanmar Editors' Forum at Yangon's Park Royal Hotel on 10 September.

Union Election Commission Chairman U Tin Aye urged media organisations to publish unbiased coverage of the ongoing election campaigns. He emphasised that the media plays a vital role in ensuring that the upcoming election are free and fair.

Foreign experts shared their experiences of elections held in other Asian countries.

The Union Election Commission has announced that it will release the final list of eligible voters on 14 September.

Polls for the 2015 general election will open on 8 November.—*MNA*

Detained students' rights must be upheld: HR commission

YANGON — The Myanmar National Human Rights Commission on Friday called for the proper treatment of four detained university students in Mandalay.

The Yadanabon University students have been detained since 29 June after being arrested for spray painting anti-government slogans on campus walls.

In an announcement issued on its website on Friday, the commission requested authorities to allow the students to sit their exams. The commission demanded that the appeals filed by the detained students be taken into consideration in determining whether the students may sit their exams.

In a separate announcement on Friday, the commission urged the government to investigate the brutal police crackdown on student protesters in Letpadan in Bago Region on 10 March. The students were detained after launching a series of protests against the National Education Law, demanding that amendments to it be made.

The commission has called for a thorough investigation into the brutal police crackdown against student protesters to be carried out and for legal action to be taken against police officers found guilty of misconduct.—*MNA*

What they stand for: campaigns aired

Campaign speeches of the Wa National Unity Party, Ta-arng (Palaung) National Party and All Mon Regions Democracy Party and were broadcast on state-run television and radio networks on Friday.

Wa National Unity Party

Joint Secretary General (1) U Aik Yone Paleik said Wa National Unity Party focused on equal rights for ethnic minorities, the preservation of national independence, security for private enterprises, regional development, eradicating opium poppy production and the conservation of ethnic cultures and traditions.

Ta-arng (Palaung) National Party

Joint Secretary-General U Mine Ohn Khaing and Central committee member U Hla Pe delivered speeches for the Ta-arng (Palaung) National Party. They said the party will work toward unity in diversity, self-determination and cultural autonomy to build a true union based on equal rights for all ethnicities.

All Mon Regions Democracy Party

The All Mon Regions Democracy Party emphasised the importance of democracy, human rights, national unity based on equality and self-determination, combatting corruption, social development and peace. The party currently holds 16 seats in parliament and has carried out several development projects in its constituencies, including Mon language education programmes at schools and the excavation of ancient Mon cities. The party also supports constitutional reform and the protection of farmers' land rights.—*GNLM*

ELECTION COUNTDOWN
Make your voice count. Cast your vote.
57 DAYS

Post-signing steps laid . . .

(from page 1)

Likewise, the code of conduct for both sides stated in the accord's chapter 3 will also be finalised and will use clearly-worded language, as will the monitoring guidelines for union, state and regional level committees within 30 days.

Both sides had already agreed to establish political framework within 60 days and to hold political dialogue within 90 days.

Whatever the number of signatories to the NCA, the government is committed to implementing the steps after ceasefire with any groups.

According to the terms of the deal, if the accord is signed in October, a framework for political dialogue will be drawn up in December and all-inclusive political dialogue will begin in January.

U Aung Naing Oo, director of peace dialogue programme at MPC, said that the process of formulating a framework for political dialogue began 18 months ago.

He highlighted the importance of having a shared vision for Myanmar's future to be included in the framework for political dialogue which is inclusive of all stakeholders.

According to the director, some points for the draft framework have already been agreed to, while other organisations have drawn up their own draft frameworks.

A meeting to draft the common framework will take place at Inya Lake Hotel in Yangon next Monday. Every political party will participate, including the Union Solidarity and Development Party and National League for Democracy, he added.

U Hla Maung Shwe reiterated that the accord is almost certain to be signed sometime in October, adding that signatories must fully implement the follow-up tasks approved in the agreement.—*GNLM*

Singapore votes in hotly contested poll, ruling party expected to win

SINGAPORE — Singapore voted in its most hotly contested general election on Friday, a test of the long-ruling People's Action Party's (PAP) dominance of politics in the rich, clean and green city state, even though it is bound to win.

Years of strong growth have turned the island nation into an international financial hub with spotless streets and malls, well-tended parks and living standards unmatched in Southeast Asia.

But that success and an influx of foreign workers have brought high property prices, crowded public transport, and a widening wealth gap which have fuelled resentment among many in a city that surveys rank as one of the world's most expensive.

Opposition parties are hoping to take advantage of the grumbling and are contesting all 89 seats in parliament for the first time since independence in 1965.

Voting is compulsory for almost 2.5 million eligible voters.

The opposition has focussed its campaign on the bread-and-butter issues of jobs, healthcare and housing. Preliminary results are expected from a couple of hours after the polls close at 8 pm (1200 GMT).

"I want to see more opposition members in parliament from more parties," said one voter, a lawyer in his 40s who gave his family as Tan. "I hope there are enough opposition members to fill the front benches because we can then have shadow ministers to effectively suggest alternative policies."

Voting began amid seasonal "haze" caused by forest fires in neighbouring Indonesia, but the air quality index was down from "very unhealthy" levels on Thursday night.

Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, who cast his vote in a constituency in the south of the city with his wife, Ho Ching, said he was confident.

> *"I want to see more opposition members in parliament from more parties."*
> *— voter*

"We've done our best," Lee told reporters. "It's a major turning point for Singapore."

The PAP, which has ruled since independence, has a bedrock of support and will win the bulk of parliament's seats but opposition inroads would challenge its dominance. "In this election, we are showing a report card, we are proud of it," Lee told his last rally late on Wednesday.

The PAP's share of the vote dropped to 60.1 percent in the last election, in 2011, its lowest ever. Nevertheless, it held 79 of a total 87 seats in the outgoing parliament.

The main opposition Workers' Party held seven seats while one, that of former Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew, the current prime minister's father who died in March, was vacant.

The PAP is hoping that a sense of patriotism inspired by this year's 50th anniversary and respect for the elder Lee will work in its favour. The elder Lee drew praise for his market-friendly policies, but also criticism at home and abroad for his strict controls over the press, public protest and political opponents.

Voters queue to cast their ballots during the general election at a polling center in Singapore September 11, 2015.—REUTERS

Since 2011, Prime Minister Lee has launched a multi-billion-dollar healthcare insurance programme for the elderly, introduced cooling measures for the property market and curbed the flow of foreign workers.

But the election comes as economic risks are in focus due to uncertainties stemming from China's economic slowdown and wobbly markets.

DBS Bank, Singapore's biggest lender, this week cut its economic growth forecast for Singapore to 1.8 percent, below the official forecast of 2-2.5 percent.—*Reuters*

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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.

Japan rivers burst their banks triggering further floods, 25 missing

JOSO, (Japan) — Floods that swept houses off their foundations and crushed others under landslides spread across Japan on Friday as more rivers burst their banks, leaving at least 25 people missing and forcing more than 100,000 to flee.

A severe rain warning remained in effect for parts of northern Japan but floodwaters were retreating in the city of Joso after toppling trees and washing houses away, sometimes with their owners still inside.

One 63-year-old woman was killed after her house was crushed by a landslide and another when her car was swept away. At least 27 people were injured, eight seriously. Two eight-year-old children were believed to be among the missing, NHK national television said.

Helicopters crisscrossed skies over the largely rural city of Osaki, some 350 km (220 miles) north of Tokyo, where the brown waters of the Shibui river inundated rice fields and houses as rescuers in rubber boats ferried people to safety.

Some parts of Japan had received more than twice the usual September amount of rain in 48 hours by noon on Thursday, sparking some of the worst flooding in more than 60 years.

A woman walks towards a collapsed house on a field inundated by floodwaters in Joso in Ibaraki prefecture on September 11, 2015. Thousands of rescuers arrived in a deluged city north of Tokyo on September 11 to help evacuate hundreds of trapped residents and search for 12 people missing after torrential rains triggered massive flooding.—AFP

Japan has put heavy emphasis on disaster prevention since a 2011 earthquake and tsunami killed nearly 20,000 people and authorities are keen to avoid the kind of criticism they faced then for what was seen as a sluggish response.

The government set up an emergency centre, and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe told a meeting of ministers that the "unprecedented" rain had created an emergency.

"The central government, police, fire officials and military are all working as one," chief cabinet secretary Yoshihide Suga told a news conference.

"We are doing everything in our power to rescue those in need as soon as possible."

Some 51 helicopters and nearly 6,000 rescuers worked into the night on Thursday to pluck stranded people from houses as floodwaters raged below. More than 100 were temporarily trapped on the second floor of a shopping centre in Joso.

Toyota Motor Corp said it had suspended production at three plants in northeastern Japan on Friday morning, but that there had been no damage at any of the facilities. A spokeswoman said they would make a decision at noon on whether to resume production from Friday evening.—*Reuters*

Migrants undeterred by Balkan storms and Hungarian clampdown

IDOMENI, (Greece) — Thousands of refugees trudged through mud and torrential rain to Greece's border with Macedonia on Thursday, swelling a human tide across Europe that authorities appear powerless to control.

Hungary, a key transit country for migrants trying to reach richer and more welcoming countries such as Germany and Sweden, said it expected to finish building a fence along its border with Serbia by early October to help stem the flow.

Denmark, the latest front line in the continent's migrant crisis, allowed refugees to move freely through its territory to Sweden, a day after it shut a motorway link with Germany in a bid to halt the flow of people.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel's deputy said the record-breaking influx of refugees could help ease a chronic skills shortage and provide a boost to Europe's biggest economy. Berlin's critics, notably in ex-communist eastern Europe, say that message will only encourage more people to move.

On Greece's northern border, migrants including children and elderly women - most of them fleeing Syria's four-year-old civil war - slithered across muddy fields towards lines of Macedonian policemen who issued orders in broken English in an attempt to maintain some order.

A migrant takes a selfie with German Chancellor Angela Merkel outside a refugee camp near the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees after registration at Berlin's Spandau district, Germany September 10, 2015.—Reuters

"I am sick, (I spent) four hours in the rain," said Ayman Sayed Ali, an engineer from the Syrian city of Aleppo.

"We are humans, not animals," said a man from the capital Damascus, who said he had lost his clothes on the boat that brought him to Greece.

"Look, no clothes, no jacket, no food. We are suffering. We will die here if we stay in the rain for another hour."

Some refugees used binliners or plastic bags as makeshift raincoats or hats as protection against the heavy rain. Tempers occasionally flared and at least one policeman wielded his truncheon to stop people breaking through the police cordon.

Thousands of migrants spent Wednesday night in the open on the Macedonian side of the border due to a lack of capacity in reception centres and trains to carry them north into Serbia.

Similar scenes of desperation and congestion were repeated at key border crossings across Europe.

Greek police said up to 4,000 people were waiting to cross the Macedonian border on Thursday. About 3,000, mostly Syrians, are arriving daily on the island of Lesbos before heading for the Greek mainland, the police said.

Crossing Greece to the Macedonian border is just the first of many challenges facing the migrants in a Europe where their reception ranges from hospitality to hostility.

Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban's chief of staff said Budapest planned "different rules of the game" from next week, with penalties for illegal entry, accelerated asylum procedures and possible expulsion back over the border.

Orban, shrugging off the Cold War echoes of razor wire and watchtowers along an east European border, says the flow of migrants must stop, framing it as a battle for the prosperity and "Christian identity" of Europe.

Hungary said 3,331 people had registered after entering from Serbia on Wednesday, the highest daily total so far.

After days of smooth operation, Austria briefly suspended train services across its border from Hungary early on Thursday due to the crush of people.

"Ever more people are arriving daily," said a spokesman for the national rail company, OeBB. "It far exceeds our capacity."

Austrian police said they expected nearly 8,000 people to enter the country from Hungary in the course of Thursday.

On Wednesday the president of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, appealed to governments to share out refugees and help relieve the burden on frontline states such as Greece, Italy and Hungary.

Juncker's plan faces stiff opposition from some of the European Union's 28 member states, though Poland, a longtime sceptic, indicated on Thursday it was ready to take its share.

"Accepting migrants escaping to save their lives is our duty," Prime Minister Ewa Kopacz said.

German Economy Minister Sigmar Gabriel, who is also Merkel's deputy, said the migrants could help Germany - which expects to take in about 800,000 people this year alone - to tackle the demographic challenge of a rapidly ageing population.

"If we manage to quickly train those that come to us and to get them into work, then we will solve one of our biggest problems for the economic future of our country: the skills shortage," Gabriel told the Bundestag, the lower house of parliament.

"But there are also risks," he added, pointing to the danger that refugees might not integrate properly into German daily life if they did not receive language training.

In the United States, President Barack Obama directed his administration to prepare to take in at least 10,000 Syrian refugees over the next year, the White House said on Thursday.

It is the first specific commitment the United States has made toward increasing its acceptance of refugees from the war-torn country. The unprecedented influx of people has strained Europe's passport-free 'Schengen area' to breaking point. Former French president Nicolas Sarkozy, tipped to return to power in 2017, called on Thursday for the suspension of Schengen, saying the migration crisis had made it unworkable.

However, a survey by the Elabe polling agency showed French support for taking in more migrants from war zones had jumped to 53 percent from 44 percent only a week before, suggesting that harrowing images of drowned toddler Aylan Kurdi and the warm welcome extended by neighbouring Germany were having an impact.—*Reuters*

US, Israel weeks away from co-production deal for missile shield

WASHINGTON — The United States and Israel are weeks away from reaching a draft agreement on a co-production of Israel's air defence system called David's Sling that the two countries jointly developed, the top US missile defence officer told lawmakers on Thursday.

US Navy Vice Admiral James Syring, director of the Missile Defense Agency, or MDA, said discussions and negotiations continued with Israel on the David's Sling system, which passed a series of intercept tests in April and is expected to be operational next year.

Known in Hebrew as Magic Wand, David's Sling is being developed and manufactured jointly by Israel's state-owned Rafael Advanced Defense Systems Ltd and Raytheon Co, a top US arms maker.

Robert Scher, assistant defence secretary for strategy, plans and capabilities, said the US government had provided more than $3 billion for missile defence to Israel for David's Sling and other missile defence programs since 2001.

Syring said a draft agreement on co-production of David's Sling should be reached with weeks, with a final agreement likely in several months, but gave no further details.

After that agreement was finalised, US and Israeli officials would discuss co-production of Israel's Arrow ballistic missile defence system, Syring told the strategic forces subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee.

Designed to shoot down rockets with ranges of 100 to 200 km (63 to 125 miles), aircraft or low-flying cruise missiles, David's Sling will fill the operational gap between Israel's Iron Dome short-range rocket interceptor and the Arrow ballistic missile interceptor, both already in service. —*Reuters*

US House Speaker vows to continue fight against Iran nuclear deal

WASHINGTON — US House Speaker John Boehner on Thursday pledged that Republicans would continue to make every effort to scuttle the Iran nuclear deal.

The debate on the nuclear agreement struck between world powers and Iran "is far from over," Boehner said at a press conference on the Capitol Hill, vowing to "use every tool at our disposal to stop, slow, and delay this agreement."

Boehner's remarks came after Senate Democrats had garnered enough votes needed to block passage of a disapproval resolution against the agreement.

The P5+1 group, namely the US, Britain, France, China, Russia and Germany, reached a comprehensive nuclear deal with Iran in July. The accord would provide sanctions relief for Iran in exchange for limits on its controversial nuclear program.

"Republicans continue to do all that we can do to stop the president's nuclear agreement with Iran," said Boehner. "By putting party first, Democrats are ignoring the will of the American people and avoiding the judgment of history."

House Republicans are changing their strategy to voice their opposition to the deal, mulling the vote on a resolution stating the Obama Administration did not submit all the documents related to the Iran deal and therefore the 60-day congressional review period has yet to start.

They specifically refer to documents from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on the Iran nuclear deal. —*Xinhua*

> *"Republicans continue to do all that we can do to stop the president's nuclear agreement with Iran."— US House Speaker John Boehner*

EU, Cuba enter difficult phase of bilateral talks, focus on political pact

HAVANA — The European Union and Cuba entered the most difficult phase of their bilateral talks on Thursday when they started to discuss a new political agreement to replace a unilateral policy imposed by the Europeans 19 years ago.

The two sides have met five times over the past year-and-a-half in search of a far-reaching accord. Both sides reported on Thursday that two of the three pillars of a deal, on trade and co-operation, were basically finished, and they started talking about a political agreement between the 28-nation bloc and the communist-run Caribbean island.

The EU's decision last year to open talks was a victory in itself for Cuba as a European acknowledgment it would have to scrap its "common position," which placed a priority on democratic reforms and improved human rights in Cuba.

Cuba has always rejected foreign suggestions it should change its one-party system or that human rights on the island were lacking. Historically the loudest calls came from the United States but in 1996 were echoed by the EU, which adopted the common position at the urging of Spain's conservative former Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar.

"All I can say about the common position is that is it is neither common nor a position," Abelardo Moreno, Cuba's deputy foreign minister for European affairs, told reporters at the conclusion of two days of talks in Havana.

His counterpart, chief European negotiator Christian Leffler, told a separate news conference the common position was still valid but stressed the EU was looking for a better and longer-lasting agreement to replace it.

Leffler said it was "no secret" the two sides remained apart on issues such as human rights but that the whole point of the talks was to search for areas of agreement.

"We know it's long-term work," Leffler said. "We're not trying to convince other countries, other governments, that there is one perfect European model to apply."

Christian Leffler (R), chief European negotiator for the EU-Cuba talks and Cuba's Deputy Foreign Minister Abelardo Moreno (L) attend a meeting at Cuba's foreign ministry in Havana March 4, 2015.—Reuters

Less than a year into the European talks, Cuba and the United States announced detente, leading to the restoration of diplomatic relations after 54 years of Cold War hostilities.

In March, Cuba and the EU agreed to speed the pace of talks to reach the basics of a deal by the end of 2015, but both sides backed off that goal on Thursday. The next round was scheduled for the second half of November in Brussels.—*Reuters*

S Korean attacker of US envoy given 12-year prison term

SEOUL — The Seoul Central District Court on Friday meted out a 12-year prison term to a South Korean man who attacked US Ambassador to South Korea Mark Lippert with a knife in March. Kim Ki Jong, 55, was indicted in April for slashing Lippert's face and hand, inflicting deep gashes.

Lippert was treated at a Seoul hospital for five days.

"Kim seems to have had a strong will to attack the victim, choosing a knife to repeatedly slash the part of the body that had a direct connection with life," Presiding Judge Kim Dong A at the court said, according to Yonhap News Agency.

South Korea's President Park Geun-hye (L) meets with US Ambassador to South Korea Mark Lippert in his hospital room at the Yonsei Severance Hospital in Seoul. Doctors said Lippert, 42, was recovering well from a knife attack by nationalist activist Kim Ki-Jong, which left the envoy requiring surgery to repair deep gashes to his face and hand.—AFP

The ruling said Lippert sustained serious injuries to his face and arm, and that if the deep cut to his cheek had been just a few centimeters lower his carotid artery could have been severed, threatening his life.

The court, however, acquitted Kim of the charge of violating the National Security Law, which prohibits citizens from supporting or praising North Korea.

In September, prosecutors sought a 15-year prison sentence for attempted murder, assault on a foreign envoy and violation of the National Security Law.

Kim had said he attacked the envoy to highlight his opposition to springtime US-South Korean military drills, which North Korea calls an invasion rehearsal.

Anti-US activists such as Kim have long opposed joint military exercises with the United States and the presence of 28,500 US troops in South Korea, blaming them for military tensions on the Korean Peninsula.—*Kyodo News*

Plane with 128 people onboard makes emergency landing in S Philippines

DAVAO CITY, (Philippines) — A plane carrying over 120 passengers made an emergency landing in southern Philippines on Friday after smoke was observed inside the aircraft, police said.

Philippine Airlines flight PR-1814 carrying 128 passengers was on its way to Manila from the southern Philippine city of Davao when it returned to the Davao International Airport and made an emergency landing around 1:34 p.m., said Antonio Rivera, Southern Mindanao police regional spokesperson.

Rivera told Xinhua the plane of the country's flag carrier was about four minutes into its flight when it turned back after "a smoke came out of its cargo compartment area." He said a fire truck from the Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines (CAAP) immediately responded to the site, as well as a medical team to check on the condition of the plane passengers.

An investigation into the incident was now underway, the police spokesperson said.—*Xinhua*

N Korea says Olympics march with S Korea possible if ties improve

PYONGYANG — North Korea does not rule out the possibility of its athletes marching together with South Korea's in the opening ceremony of next year's Summer Olympics in Brazil, if relations between the two countries improve based on a recent political agreement, according to a senior official.

"That depends on how (South Korea) implements the agreement," Bang Mun Il, a member of North Korea's Olympic Committee, said in an interview earlier this week in Pyongyang.

Bang, a senior official at the North's sports ministry, was referring to the Aug. 25 accord that pulled the two Koreas back from the brink of serious military confrontation after already-high tensions between them were further escalated by an exchange of fire and land-mine explosions near their shared boarder.

The six-point deal struck after four days of marathon negotiations called for more high-level dialogue between them and paved the way for another round of reunions of families separated by the 1950-1953 Korean War in October.

The two countries marched together behind a flag of a united Korean peninsula in the opening ceremonies of the 2000 and 2004 Summer Olympics, as well as the 2006 Winter Olympics. But due to the subsequent deterioration in inter-Korean relations, they have not marched jointly at Olympic Games since then. The two Koreas, divided by one of the world's most heavily fortified borders, are still technically in a state of war as the Korean War ended in an armistice, not with a permanent peace treaty.

Given the North's efforts to strengthen its athletic prowess, Bang also said the country's gold medal haul at the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Olympic Games should exceed the four golds it garnered at the 2012 London Olympics.—*Kyodo News*

US to accept 10,000 Syrian refugees: White House

WASHINGTON — President Barack Obama has directed his administration to prepare to take in at least 10,000 Syrian refugees over the next year, the White House said on Thursday.

It is the first specific commitment the United States has made toward increasing its acceptance of refugees from the war-torn country.

Since the start of the Syrian civil war in 2011, the United States has taken in 1,500 refugees, with 300 more expected to be cleared by October.

But refugee advocates and some members of Congress said taking in an additional 10,000 refugees did not go far enough toward addressing the humanitarian crisis triggered by the war, which has prompted a massive refugee influx into Europe.

In a letter distributed to House members and seen by Reuters, Democratic Representative David Cicilline asked Obama to accommodate 65,000 Syrian refugees by the end of 2016. Religious groups have called for the United States to accept 100,000 Syrian refugees.

European countries have taken in waves of migrants fleeing violence. Germany allowed 20,000 migrants into the country over the weekend and is preparing for 800,000 this year.

US President Barack Obama.—Reuters

Melanie Nezer, vice president of HIAS, a global refugee advocacy group, said that for the United States to allow 10,000 more refugees from Syria was not an adequate response to the crisis. "This is totally within the realm of what the current system on autopilot could do.

This is not time for autopilot. This is time to really ramp things up," said Nezer.

The United States is conducting air strikes in Syria as part of its effort to fight against Islamic State. It currently admits a total of 70,000 refugees from around the world annually, and is due to increase that total by 5,000 for the fiscal year starting in October.

White House spokesman Josh Earnest would not say whether the 10,000 Syrians would be a part of or in addition to that total. Earnest said national security was a top concern for admitting Syrians, a country rife with anti-American militants, noting that intensive security screening for refugees could take up to 18 months.

"I do feel confident in telling you that the president will not sign off on a process that cuts corners when it comes to the basic safety and security of the American people and the US homeland," Earnest told reporters. The additional background checks and processing will require a "significant financial commitment" from Congress, Earnest said.

Secretary of State John Kerry met with the Senate Judiciary Committee on Wednesday, a requirement before the administration can change the number of refugees allowed.

Committee Chair Chuck Grassley said he welcomed the additional 10,000 but that Kerry was not clear about whether additional refugees would be allowed later.

"Secretary Kerry initially said that the Obama administration is seeking a reasonable increase in refugees allowed into the United States in the upcoming fiscal year.

But when pressed, the administration indicated that they were considering opening the floodgates and using emergency authority to go above what they proposed to Congress in today's consultation," the Republican lawmaker said in a statement.

Congress cannot block the administration from setting limits on the number of refugees it admits from each region. But it can block funding needed for staffing agencies such as the Department of Homland Securty and the Department of Health and Human Services that handle the screening and resettlement procedures.—*Reuters*

UN says Yemen peace talks set to resume next week

UNITED NATIONS — The United Nations on Thursday said peace talks aimed at ending the conflict in Yemen are set to resume next week in the region and urged all parties to participate "in good faith."

Saudi Arabia and Arab allies intervened in March to try to restore Yemen's president to power and roll back the Iranian-allied Houthi militia. The war has brought the country to the brink of famine and peace talks have yet to end the fighting.

A UN press official said UN chief Ban Ki-moon's special envoy on Yemen, Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, welcomed the commitment of Yemen's government, the Houthis and Yemen's General People's Congress to join the talks, which will take place in the region next week.

Officials in the General People's Congress and from the Houthis said the talks would take place in Oman.

"The special envoy applauds the decision of Yemeni President Abdu Rabbo Mansour Hadi and other Yemeni parties to attend the talks," the statement said.

"He urges the participants in the talks to engage constructively and in good faith, recognising the need for a rapid end to the violence which has brought intolerable levels of suffering to the Yemeni people," it added. About 20 million people or 80 percent of the population, are estimated to be going hungry. The United Nations warned last month that Yemen was on the brink of famine.—*Reuters*

Turkish warplanes strike PKK targets in northern Iraq

DIYARBAKIR, (Turkey) — Turkish warplanes bombed Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) targets in northern Iraq overnight, a security source told Reuters on Friday, the latest in a series of daily air strikes on the militants as conflict surges in southeast Turkey.

Hundreds of militants and security force members have died since the PKK and the Turkish state resumed hostilities after the collapse of a ceasefire in July, shattering a peace process launched in 2012 to end a three-decades-old conflict. More than 15 warplanes struck sites where the PKK are located at Qandil, Zap and Avashin in the mountains of northern Iraq in attacks launched shortly before midnight that continued until 5 a.m. (0200 GMT), the source said. In Diyarbakir, the largest city in the mainly Kurdish southeast, suspected PKK militants opened fire on a restaurant frequented by police in the main commercial district on Friday morning, wounding three police officers and one civilian, security sources said.

One of the officers was seriously hurt.—*Reuters*

Saudi-led air raids hit bases, Houthi leaders' houses in Yemeni capital

SANAA — War planes from a Saudi-led military alliance bombed Yemen's capital Sanaa on Thursday, in what witnesses described as the fiercest attacks on the city in over five months of war. The air strikes hit houses of political leaders in the Iran-allied Houthi movement and military bases, as explosions and wailing ambulance sirens forced a sleepless night on the city's nearly 2 million shell-shocked residents.

"The sick people fled the hospital in terror," an official at a private hospital said. "They were afraid the building would collapse from the non-stop bombing of the army bases nearby." There were no immediate reports of casualties, a day after medics said six civilians in the city were killed by air strikes.

Saudi Arabia and other Arab states intervened in Yemen's civil war on March 26 to halt the nationwide spread of the Houthis, who seized Sanaa last year and forced the government into exile in Riyadh after advancing on its southern stronghold of Aden.

The Houthis, who hail from the Zaydi Shi'ite Muslim sect, consider their rise a revolution. But they are fiercely opposed by the Sunni Muslim Gulf Arab states who believe the group is bent on spreading Iran's influence.

Since a Houthi missile attack killed at least 60 Gulf Arab troops east of Sanaa last Friday, the coalition has stepped up its air strikes on the capital and increased its deployment of troops, which Yemeni officials say number a few thousand, ahead of an eventual push towards Sanaa. Fear is spreading that a decisive battle there may wreak widespread destruction, as it has in the southern city of Taiz, where medics said 18 people were killed in an explosion in a residential area on Thursday variously blamed on Houthi artillery shelling and Saudi-led air strikes.—*Reuters*

Smoke and balls of fire rise from a military base after it was hit by Saudi-led air strikes in Yemen's capital Sanaa September 10, 2015.—Reuters

PERSPECTIVES

Saturday, 12 September, 2015

Time is ripe to secure good governance

By *Kyaw Thura*

TWO things must be done to ensure good governance in Myanmar. First, we – the citizens – must exercise our right to participate in the political process. Second, we must elect competent leaders who can transform the people's desires into reality. There has never been a more crucial time to secure these prerequisites to good governance.

Without good governance and accountable leaders, our country will lapse into political instability. In its absence, the rule of law will evaporate and the people will become threatened by injustice. Institutional injustice trickles down in the form of economic inequality, stripping people of opportunities and rights they would enjoy under a stable, accountable government.

One such right is the right to education. Education is an invaluable tool in building a modern, prosperous country. The longer we lack good governance, the longer we will fail to educate our people properly, leading to a vicious cycle of poverty and inequality.

From a Buddhist point of view, there is no better time for anything than the present. If we fail to seize the opportunities and freedoms currently at our disposal, our desire for a better future will have been in vain.

We cannot be faulted for being born into hard times, but we can be faulted if we hesitate to grasp the opportunity dangling before us. Now is the time to apply the lessons we have learned from the past to secure efficient and accountable governance.

Write for us

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Being a Service Personnel

Myo Myint

IN Myanmar, a person who works for the government is referred to as service personnel in English. However, I prefer the term government servant to the term service personnel, as the term makes it more obvious the role of a person who works in a government organization both to the person concerned as well as the public — he/she is employed by the government and paid to serve the interest of the people and not to boss over them or to exploit them.

Whether a person is a high official like a permanent secretary or a low grade one like a cleaner, all government servants have to follow the Public Service Personnel Act 2013. The act prescribes both responsibilities and benefits of service personnel. The responsibilities range from being loyal to the state, obeying what are prescribed in the constitution and existing laws, protecting public property and funds from wastage and misuse, not being involved in party politics, having a sense of duty, not to abuse the rights given in accordance with one's responsibilities, to be respectful to the populace, etc. The Public Service Personnel Act 2013 also specifies the rights of employees such as right to security of employment, leave, promotion, pursuit of education, and retirement. Moreover, those who are employed in areas designated as being remote, enjoy twice the salary given to those in more accessible areas. In addition, government servants are obliged to follow the rules and regulations specified by their respective organizations. Each ministry may also have rules and regulations regarding the benefits their employees may enjoy, such as provision of housing, free transportation to and from work, use of ministry vehicle, etc.

Despite the strict rules and regulations set for government employees, some members of the public who have had the opportunity, or bad luck, to have to deal with government employees will know that they are of many types. The first type, I regret to say, are few in number. The first type work in accordance with set rules and regulations and will offer assistance to anybody who needs to come to their office by providing him/her all the necessary information, and helping him/her complete him/her business matter as expeditiously as possible without the hope of receiving anything in return. The second type of government employee will do his/her job, but without much interest in helping a person. The third type expects something in return to speed up matters. The junior ones will explicitly have one of the drawers of their desk open to accept whatever gift is given, or they will expect something to be slipped in as tea money with the papers. The fourth type will first frighten those who come to them by treating them insolently and throwing all the bureaucratic red tapes at them and then will do their job at a high price. Many make a lot of extra income for themselves by such means, but there are also those who act as a middleman and have to give a certain percentage of their income to their colleagues and their bosses. Hence, the most important information some government employees want to get, on getting a new job, or being posted to a new department, is whether they can get extra income, or in plain words, whether they can get bribes there. This does not mean that every employee is hungry for bribes. Some are contented with the salary they get legitimately. Some having no opportunity to earn extra income from their primary job, and cannot make ends meet, resort to moonlighting by doing other jobs after work like driving a taxi driver, or working as a broker, giving tuition, working as a manager or a waiter in a restaurant, working as a private nurse, selling things as a street vendor, doing odd jobs on weekends, etc., etc.

The thing that government employees look forward to most is promotion as it does not occur very often in their career and not everyone may be included. The Union Civil Service Board has prescribed rules and regulations regarding promoting officer level staff to a higher post supplemented by rules and regulations of each ministry. It is very obvious that the higher the level, the smaller the number of posts available. Therefore, the selection procedure has to be most stringent. Since there is large pool of staff available for selection with the same or even better qualifications and performance, sometimes, there has been surprising and disappointing selections. Although there are private expressions of doubts and dismay regarding such matters, Myanmar people do not have the habit of lodging complaints or raising questions about decisions made by higher authorities and so there is little public debate about the correctness of such decisions. To ensure confidence in the system as well as the authorities who have made the selection, it is very important that the criteria and the system utilized need to be very transparent and it must be ensured that the promotion given is strictly based on meritocracy with no bias or favouritism involved. Moreover, the more important the post is with wide decision-making powers like that of a rector or a pro-rector (future rector) of a university, the more careful the selection has to be, because if the person is an inefficient and incapable one, he/she is liable to make bad decisions and initiate wrong policies, and such persons are liable to prefer inefficient, back-biting, toadying persons as close confidents and advisors. As a consequence, the organization not be able to progress due to poor management, as long as that person remains in office which may be for a very long time. Moreover, there will be antagonism among staff arising from disrespect for and lack of confidence in the administrator. Hence, it is very important that the person delegated authority to make decisions regarding promotions has taken into account all relevant factors and that his/her decisions are double checked by the supervising authority to ensure that the right selection has been made based on meritocracy using correct and consistent criteria and done in an honest and transparent manner.

One of the things most dreaded by most government employees working in big cities and towns, is transfer time. For those employees that work for ministries that have offices and branches under them all over Myanmar, including in far flung areas, such as the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Immigration and Population, and the Ministry of Home Affairs, they are liable to be transferred from one duty station to another, after serving the designated period, throughout their career, and they face the dilemma of whether to accept the transfer or seek a new job. The majority of government employees understand the need for transfers, as people need to be rotated, but they feel that there should be a fair and consistent system free of favouritism, bribery and decisions made carelessly. There is no doubt that transfers causes inconvenience and misery to many. Some staff may be single and appear to have no family responsibilities, but in actual fact, they may have to leave behind their aged parents whom they have been taking care of. Working married couples may, in many cases, not be posted to the same region. The husband may be posted to one town, and the wife to other, and the children may have to be left behind with their grandparents in another town. Such a situation is not good either for the family, as they suffer from work enforced separation, and financial difficulty, or for the organization they work for, as such employees may not be able to concentrate fully on their work and may give vent to their frustration on persons they have to deal with or their staff. Another serious consequence of transfers is people resigning from their jobs. There comes a time when employees cannot take up their new post due to repeated transfer to the same place, intolerable living and working conditions, family and financial problems, feeling that the posting has been unfair, or simply becoming fed up with having to move from one place to another.

The percentage of staff attrition after every transfer is not known, or given much thought to, but bearing in mind that more and more jobs are now becoming available in the private sector, the number could be quite significant. Those who have the authority to transfer staff from one post to another may be too remote from them, to know their true worth and ability. They may also feel that their resignation is of little consequence to the department concerned, thinking that in the place of one who resigns, there are hundreds of persons waiting to step into their shoes. This may be true for certain persons and certain departments, but it certainly is not true for all. For instance, those administrators in the education sector, if they have been teachers themselves, should know that a competent teacher, who has mastery of subject, teaching methodology and child psychology, cannot be produced over night, or in many cases even within a decade, especially an outstanding dedicated, hardworking and trustworthy one. Such a person would be a great loss to the academic department concerned and to successive generations of students as well. Mediocrity breeds mediocrity. If left with only mediocre people, and run by mediocre people, an organization, especially, a higher education institution, will find it difficult to escape from the cycle of mediocrity. Consequently, to ensure that outstanding employees who contribute to the development of an organization stay on until their retiring age, it is important that a conducive and fair working environment be created by those in administrative position. The organization also needs to boldly get rid of the laid-back, the toady, the inefficient, and the corrupt to make its firmness apparent to all employees. The following practices by those in management positions may contribute to the development of a fair, smooth, working environment:

- Creating a non-abusive, non-threatening, cordial environment
- Being in touch with all levels of employees and giving them access to present their needs and difficulties
- Being fair and transparent in assessing performance, and in matters of promotion and rewards, by using a consistent, transparent and comprehensive evaluation system which includes double checking by higher authority
- Taking into account all relevant factors, including matching staff skills with organizational needs and personal difficulties when carrying out staff transfers
- Making accountability central at all levels
- Ensuring that cliques, toadying, favouritism, bribery and corruption do not exist
- Assigning responsibilities to staff according to their capacity and the need of department rather than based on personal likes and dislikes
- Practising a fair reward and punishment system
- Carrying out staff capacity building activities to create a dynamic atmosphere

On the other hand, government employees in return, need to work in accordance with rules and regulations, without shirking responsibility on the grounds that their salary is too small compared to the private sector. (They may not know that sometimes they are enjoying hidden benefits such as, shorter working hours compared to those in the private sector.) They need to practice self-management skills both at work as well as in their personal lives. They need to constantly upgrade their skills and knowledge to match the organization's changing needs. They need to be loyal to their organization and contribute to enhancing its image.

Now that the public sector is growing, there will be constant migration to the better paying private sector. However, creating a happy, fair, stable, more employee-friendly, and stress-free working environment that also gives careful consideration to the welfare of employees will go a long way in attracting talented people and building employee loyalty and maintaining good administrator-staff relationships. This will ensure that government organizations always possess a corps of efficient employees who have the willingness and capacity to serve the public which is their bounden duty.

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Farming machinery demo given

Farmers in Tatkon Township get knowledge on using power tillers and other machinery to harvest maize.—Min Min Latt (Mandalay University)

TATKON — The Agricultural Mechanisation Department gave a demonstration to 50 farmers on how to harvest maize using power tillers and other machinery in Tatkon Township on 9 September.

The township's administrator, U Thant Zaw Oo, oversaw the demonstration.

"The use of machinery such as power-tillers, combine harvesters and paddy threshers can drastically reduce the time it takes to carry out certain tasks manually. Moreover, these devices can save farmers on labour costs and avoid the difficulties posed by labour shortages," said farmer U Naing Lin, who owns the 2.5 acre field where the demonstration took place.

Min Min Latt (Mandalay University)

Brick making factories harming soil quality

Toddy palm trees died due to brick making businesses. Kyaw Kyaw (Mahlaing)

NYAUNG-U — Brick making factories in rural areas is damaging the soil and resulting in its degradation, according to a survey in Nyaung-U.

Locals in Shwepyitha Village in Nyaung-U Township have said that a number of toddy palm trees died and are putting the blame on nearby brick making businesses, said Kyaw Kyaw, a local correspondent of the state-run Myanma Alinn on Friday.

Around a hundred farmers in Shwepyitha Village have suffered hardships due to soil degradation and the loss of palm trees on which they rely for a livelihood by producing toddy palm liquid and jam.

The loss of livelihoods has caused some locals to migrate to urban areas in search of work.

They called on the local authorities to take necessary measures to conserve the natural environment.—*Kyaw Kyaw (Mahlaing)*

Colonial-era canal being replaced by YCDC

YANGON — Traffic on U Htaung Bo Road will return to normal in the next few days when repair work on U Htaung Bo Road is completed, a spokesperson from Yangon City Development Committee said on Friday.

YCDC's engineering department is replacing a colonial-era old canal underneath a road, which collapsed on 6 September.

Work to repair the road and canal began immediately after it collapsed.

Tin Win Lay (Kyimyindine)

Traffic on U Htaung Bo Road will return to normal in the next few days.—Tin Win Lay (Kyimyindine)

Drought hits Pekhon

PEKHON — A drought in Hpekon in southern Shan State has damaged more than 500 acres of rice fields.

Farmers in Naungkalaing Village have been particularly hard hit, as many are unable to afford the cost of pumping water from nearby canals into their rice fields, said local farmer U Ny Rae.

Local farmers will lose their seedlings if they cannot transplant rice seedlings on their farms soon, he added.

Fields in Naunghlaing Dam in Pekhon Township could not be irrigated due to low rainfall this year.

Ye Naung (Pekhon)

Man drowns in creek

MINBU — A man drowned in Mann Creek near the Mann Shwe Satt Taw Pagoda while attempting to cross the creek, local police said on Friday.

U Nyunt Hlaing, 52, of Kyipinkan village in Minbu (Saku) Township was swept away while wading through 6 feet deep waters. His body has been retrieved by police and a case has been opened to investigate the circumstances surrounding his death.—*Myanma Alinn*

Opening of Nanyin Creek Bridge may be delayed

MOHNYIN — Locals in Mohnyin, Kachin State, have expressed concerns about the possible delay of a bridge over opening on the town's bypass road.

The community is calling on the Kachin State Government to take responsibility for the delay despite the fact that the government's tenure will soon expire, according to a local report.

The Kachin State government has injected more than K1 billion into the iron reinforced bridge, which will be 300 ft long and 30 ft wide.

Kachin State Government is responsible for the delay of the completion of the bridge as it put out the project to the tender, said U Maung Nai, a local journalist. The bridge is expected to complete one year later than its target for opening, he said.—*GNLM001*

The bridge is expected to complete one year later than its target.—GNLM001

Honda gets California approval for self-driving cars on roads

SAN FRANCISCO — Honda Motor Co Ltd has received a permit from the state of California to drive its autonomous vehicles on public streets, joining companies ranging from Google Inc to Volkswagen AG (VOWG_p.DE) in testing the fast-growing technology.

The California Department of Motor Vehicles on its website listed Honda as the most recent of 10 companies that had received the self-driving permits as of Friday.

Other companies already approved include Daimler AG's Mercedes Benz, Tesla Motors Inc, Nissan Motor Co Ltd and BMW AG.

Honda, which is deploying advanced driver-assistance systems across its Honda and Acura models, is one of many carmakers investing in self-driving technology. Some, including Tesla and BMW, already offer semi-autonomous features.

The Japanese carmaker already has a secure autonomous vehicle testing facility in Concord, California, northeast of San Francisco, where such cars could get a test run before on-road testing, a spokesman said.

California is one of a handful of states, along with Michigan, Florida and Nevada, that have passed legislation enabling testing of self-driving cars on public roads.

Google and other automotive manufacturers and suppliers have said the technology to build self-driving cars should be ready by 2020.—*Reuters*

A staff of Honda Motor Co's showroom bows to a visitor as she is reflected in a company logo on a car displayed at company showroom in Tokyo January 30, 2015.—Reuters

Asian shares get lift from Wall St, dollar steadies

TOKYO — Asian shares edged higher on Friday following gains on Wall Street while the dollar steadied, but gains were capped by uncertainty over whether the Federal Reserve will raise interest rates next week.

European stocks were seen following suit, with the pan-European FTS-Eurofirst 300 index of top-European shares set for its biggest weekly gain since July.

Financial spreadbetters expected Britain's FTSE 100 to open 0.5 percent higher, Germany's DAX to open up by as much as 0.8 percent, and France's CAC 40 to open up 0.9 percent.

US stock futures rose 0.3 percent, suggesting a slightly firmer opening on Wall Street later in the session.

MSCI's broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan was up about 0.2 percent, below its session highs but still on track to rise more than 3 percent for the week.

Chinese shares erased earlier gains, with the CSI300 index and Shanghai Composite Index down 0.9 percent and 0.8 percent, respectively. Investors are awaiting Chinese industrial output, retail sales and investment data on Sunday for clues on whether the world's second-largest economy is continuing to lose momentum, which could help set the tone for trading next week.

Major US stock indexes posted modest gains on Thursday, but European stocks broke a three-day run of gains with a drop of nearly 1.5 percent

Japan's Nikkei stock index closed down 0.2 percent, but pared earlier losses and ended a choppy week 2.6 percent higher, even as investors remained cautious.

"We could still see volatile trading next week on speculation about the Fed rate hike," said Yutaka Miura, senior technical analyst at Mizuho Securities, who expected investors to continue unwinding their positions.

"Even if stocks jump, we don't know if and how long the rally will last so it's safe to reduce positions in an environment like this," Miura said.

Government data released before the market open showed that large Japanese manufacturers' sentiment turned positive in the July-September quarter, suggesting that companies were taking China's recent slowdown in stride.

US data on Thursday suggested the labour market was gaining momentum in early September as fewer Americans filed for weekly unemployment benefits, but a separate report showed weak inflation, further clouding the outlook for what the Fed will decide to do at its Sept. 16-17 policy meeting.

A man holding an umbrella walks in front of an electronic stock quotation board outside a brokerage in Tokyo September 8, 2015.—Reuters

"Based on the performance of the US economy alone, the Fed should raise rates but they do not operate in a vacuum," said Kathy Lien, managing director at BK Asset Management in New York.

Considering volatile global equities, a dovish European Central Bank and actions by other central banks, it will be difficult for the Fed to act, she said in a note to clients.

The dollar rose about 0.1 percent against the yen to 120.75, though it gave up ground late in the Asian session to the euro, which added about 0.1 percent from US levels to $1.1294.

The dollar index, which tracks the greenback against a basket of six major rivals, was steady from US trading at 95.454.

China's yuan firmed against the dollar in onshore trading on Friday. The greenback came under pressure overnight as the yuan shot higher in offshore markets on what was suspected to be rare intervention by Chinese state banks, likely taking aim at speculators betting on further falls in currency after its surprise devaluation last month.

In commodities, US crude oil futures gave back some of their overnight gains after top exporter Saudi Arabia said it saw no need for a producer summit to defend prices.

US crude was down about 0.6 percent in Asian trading at $45.66 a barrel, after rallying 4 percent on US Energy Information Administration data that showed strong demand for gasoline.

Brent, which gained 2.8 percent in the previous session, was down about 0.1 percent at $48.86.

Spot gold edged down from US levels to $1,110.30 an ounce, on track to drop about 1 percent for the week, its third straight weekly fall.—*Reuters*

Verizon says TV streaming could be added to new mobile video service

LAS VEGAS — If Verizon's new mobile video service go90 succeeds in grabbing the attention of millenials who increasingly watch content on mobile devices, a streaming option for TVs could be next.

Verizon Communications Inc, the No. 1 US wireless carrier, launched a trial of its free, ad-supported mobile video product, an app that offers live events, on-demand shows and Web videos, on Tuesday.

Companies such as Netflix Inc and Hulu that offer Web-based video services have put pressure on traditional pay-TV companies that are struggling to add viewers.

With go90, Verizon, which also offers a separate pay-TV service through its FiOS unit, has taken a different approach by introducing an ad-supported, short-form mobile video service.

"We said, Let's start with a mobile-first product," Marni Walden, Verizon's president of product innovation and new businesses, told Reuters on Thursday.

"The thought is that there could be a companion product that would come at some point in the future that could be in-home" for TVs.

Verizon wanted to leverage its mobile network to stand out in a crowded streaming video market, Walden said.

Dish Network Corp and Sony Corp also offer online video services. On Wednesday, Apple Inc announced an improved version of its set-top box, Apple TV, without details on new content agreements.

"Our focus is all on our mobile product today," Walden said.

A sign hangs in the Verizon booth on the first day of the Consumer Electronics Show (CES) in Las Vegas January 8, 2013.—Reuters

"We have to be successful with this product first and then we would have the right to say, 'Yes, let's go do the companion.'"

Go90 was developed from OnCue video streaming technology, which Verizon purchased from Intel Corp in 2014. "We don't believe trying to replace linear TV is the right thing," Walden said.

"We don't think the initial model we saw in Intel Media with $80 broadband and $80 content was one we could win at, particularly with all of the clutter and noise in that same space."

Go90's content partners include the National Football League, VH1, the Food Network and ESPN.

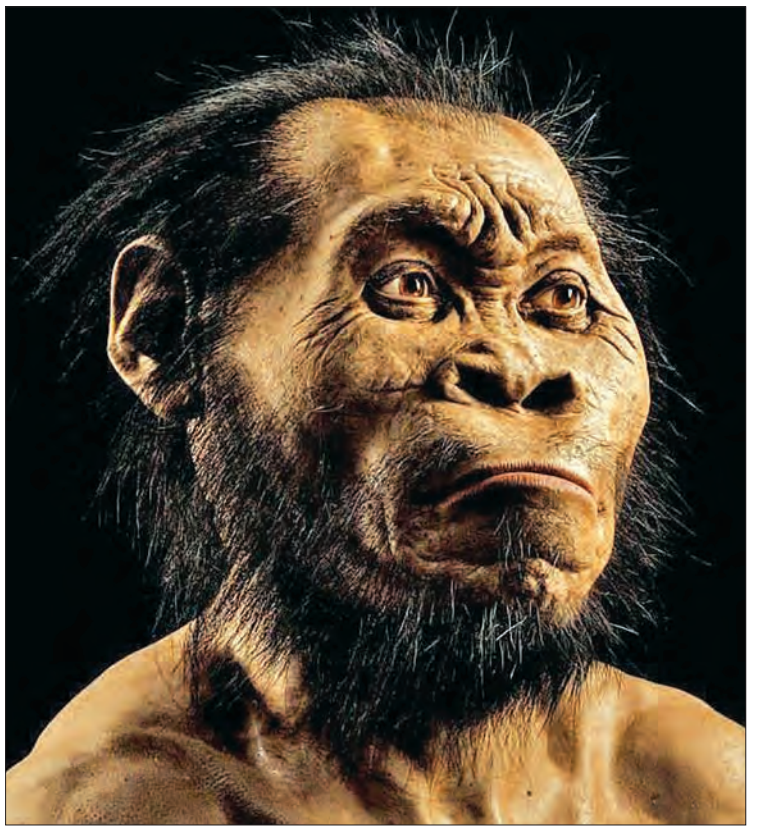
From the Web, it will offer videos from Maker Studios, Machinima and AwesomenessTV, among others.

Verizon is also considering letting users create content in the future, Walden said.

Go90 will use Verizon's multicast video technology that streams live events to multiple mobile devices through a single lane of airwaves.

Moving forward, Verizon aspires to relay events to a global audience, although that would require negotiating streaming rights, Walden said.—*Reuters*

S African archeologists discover new human ancestor



South African scientists have recently discovered remains of human ancestors near the archaeological site.—Xinhua

JOHANNESBURG — South African archeologists on Thursday officially announced a "groundbreaking fossil discovery of international importance".

The fossils, which consist of infants, children, adults and elderly individuals, were found in a room deep underground that named by the scientists as the Dinaledi Chamber, or "Chamber of Stars".

The fossils were revealed for the first time during an international launch at the Maropeng Visitor's Centre in the Cradle of Humankind World Heritage Site, some 50 km northwest of Johannesburg.

It has been much anticipated since Professor Lee Berger, research professor in the Evolutionary Studies Institute at the University of Witwatersrand (Wits) in Johannesburg, and a team of researchers, cavers and explorers announced in November 2013 that they had discovered a significant fossil find in a cave known as Rising Star in the Cradle of Humankind.

The discovery of the new species of human relative not only sheds light on the origins and diversity of our genus, H. naledi, but also appears to have intentionally deposited bodies of its dead in a remote cave chamber, a behaviour previously thought limited to humans, said the Wits in a statement.

The fossils, which have yet to be dated, lay in a chamber about 90 meters (some 100 yards) from the cave entrance, accessible only through a chute so narrow that a special team of very slender individuals was needed to retrieve them.

So far, the team has recovered parts of at least 15 individuals of the same species, a small fraction of the fossils believed to remain in the chamber.

"With almost every bone in the body represented multiple times, H. naledi is already practically the best-known fossil member of our lineage," Berger said.

Speaking on the occasion of the announcement of the discovery, Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa said "today will be written into the history books as one of those moments in which the world learnt something new and remarkable."

"The discovery of a new species of primitive hominin in our own genus reveals much about our ancestors.

"In time, it may reveal much about ourselves," Ramaphosa said.

This find will generate interest from beyond the scientific community as it will inspire poets and writers to revisit Africa's rich oral traditions, and to imagine ways to retell the story of mankind's common ancestry, he said.

"It will encourage us to enquire further about the whole scope of human existence, the world around us, and the world before us," Ramaphosa added.—*Xinhua*

Cash prizes may convince kids to eat more fruits and veggies

CHICAGO — Want kids to eat more fruits and vegetables? Show them the money, a US study suggests.

Researchers conducted an experiment in six Utah elementary schools, offering some kids cash and others praise for eating these healthy foods, while a third group of children got no incentives at all. Fruit and vegetable consumption was significantly higher in the group of students who got cash rewards.

Cash prizes may have helped convince kids to overcome their fear of trying new things, said study co-author Greg Madden, a psychology professor at Utah State University in Logan.

"The rewards can be used to encourage children to repeatedly try fruits and vegetables, and there is some evidence to suggest that repeatedly tasting novel foods increases their acceptability," Madden said by email. Madden and colleagues tested the power of cash prizes at schools participating in a program called Food Dudes, which uses role modeling, repeat tasting and rewards for eating fruits and vegetables.

The study included 882 students offered prizes for eating more fruits and veggies, 640 children who were praised by teachers for doing this and a third group of 770 kids who didn't get any recognition at all based on their food choices.

At the start of the study, researchers photographed students' lunch trays before and after meals for three days to assess what they were given to eat and how much they actually consumed. During this stage, they didn't specify how many fruits or vegetables the children were served.

After that, the researchers provided all students – including kids who brought lunch from home – the same fruits and vegetables, with younger children receiving quarter-cup servings and older students getting one-third cup portions. Again, researchers took before and after pictures to see how much the children ate.

Then, researchers added rewards or praise to the children assigned to these groups over the next 16 days. To encourage tasting, students initially received bite-size portions of new fruits and vegetables, and portions were gradually increased.

All of the kids got hand stamps if they accepted the fruits and vegetables, and another hand stamp if they ate each serving. After lunch, teachers gave cash to some students with four stamps and praised others. A control group of students received the same portions of fruits and vegetables but didn't get cash or praise.

Compared with students who didn't get any incentives, students who got prizes increased their fruit and vegetable consumption by 0.32 cups, while kids who received praise consumed 0.21 cups more. Over about three months, the kids self-reported their fruit and vegetable consumption, and teachers tracked their progress on wall charts in the classroom, while continuing to offer prizes or praise to students in those study groups.

Then, the rewards stopped. Researchers checked back with the kids six months later to see what they put on their lunch trays and what they ate and found the students in the prize group still ate significantly more fruits and vegetables than their peers.

It's possible that the delay between fruit and vegetable consumption and the delivery of any reward might have diluted the effectiveness of the incentives, the authors acknowledge in the Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. It's also possible that the students exaggerated how much they ate when they reported their own eating habits.

Even when the rewards work in school, however, this is only one piece of the puzzle, noted Samantha Heller, a nutritionist at New York University's Center for Musculoskeletal Care and Sports Performance who wasn't involved in the study.

"Rewarding good behavior such as healthy eating is a step in the right direction," Heller said by email. But kids don't eat every meal at school. "The children still need strategies for managing healthy eating choices outside the cafeteria and when the rewards stop," Heller added.—*Reuters*

Students eat lunch at Salusbury Primary School in northwest London June 11, 2014.—Reuters

New device could save millions from septic shock

BOSTON, (Mass) — Prostate cancer, breast cancer and AIDS are all potentially lethal diseases that affect hundreds of thousands each year. But Sepsis, a deadly immune response triggered by infection, kills more people than all of them combined.

According to the National Institutes of Health, more than a million people suffer from sepsis each year in the United States and between 30-50 percent die from the condition.

Mike Super says there is no approved therapy for sepsis, which is why he and a team of scientists at Harvard's Wyss Institute are attempting to develop one.

"The current standard of therapy is to give antibiotics and fluids. But what we are talking about here is treatment for sepsis and that is what is missing," said Super, a senior staff scientist at Harvard's Wyss Institute. According to Super, what is missing is a way to rapidly cleanse the bloodstream of dangerous pathogens before they trigger a deadly inflammatory response that could damage blood vessels and lead to organ failure.

The scientists are using a dialysis system to filter the blood through a tube filled with mesh of tiny fibers that are coated with Super's secret weapon - an engineered protein called fcMBL.—*Reuters*

The United Nations General Assembly voted in favor of raising a flag of Palestine at its headquarters in New York, Sept 10, 2015. The United Nations General Assembly on Thursday voted overwhelmingly to approve raising Palestinian flag at UN headquarters.—Xinhua

UN approves proposal to raise Palestinian flag

UNITED NATIONS — The United Nations General Assembly on Thursday voted overwhelmingly to approve raising Palestinian flag at UN headquarters.

The resolution "decides that the flags of non-member observer States at the United Nations maintaining permanent observer missions at Headquarters shall be raised at Headquarters and United Nations offices following the flags of the States Members of the United Nations."

A total of 119 countries voted "yes," 45 abstained and 8 countries voted "no."

In 2012, UN General Assembly granted an update of Palestine's status to non-member state, which is an implicit and symbolic recognition of Palestine's statehood at the UN.

The resolution also requests the Secretary-General to take necessary measures for the implementation of this decision during the 70th session of the General Assembly and within 20 days of its adoption.

UN spokesperson Stephane Dujarric said at the beginning of this month that the UN will follow the decision of the General Assembly, adding that "it's up to the member states to make that decision."

After the vote, Palestinian Ambassador to the UN Riyad Mansour said the "historic" vote constitutes the information of the international community in support of a just, lasting, comprehensive and peaceful solution to the question of Palestine.—*Xinhua*

Indian special court convicts 12 men in 2006 Mumbai train blasts case

Forensic officers examine a damaged railway train compartment hit by bomb blast in Mumbai July 12, 2006.—Reuters

NEW DELHI — An Indian special court on Friday convicted 12 men in 2006 Mumbai train blasts case in which nearly 190 people were killed and over 800 injured.

However, one of the accused has been acquitted by the anti- terror court, while another 15 people, most of whom masterminded the multiple blasts on local trains in Mumbai, are still on the run.

The 12 convicted in the case were found guilty of planting bombs inside pressure cookers on local trains. They are likely to be sentenced later.

The convicted men are all members of home-grown banned organization, the Students Islamic Movement of India or SIMI.

It was on the evening of July 11, 2006 when seven blasts ripped through first-class coaches on Mumbai's local trains at rush hour.—*Xinhua*

Hostages held in LA-area restaurant as police pursue carjacking suspect

LOS ANGELES — Several people were being held hostage in a Los Angeles-area restaurant late on Thursday after a suspected carjacker barricaded himself inside the building following a police chase, law enforcement and media reported.

The suspect had holed up inside a barbecue restaurant in the city of Downey, in southeast Los Angeles, police said. A sergeant on duty would not say how many people were being held.

Broadcasters KNBC and KCAl9 said six people were taken hostage.

Video from the scene showed dozens of police cars and officers surrounding the building.

The suspect is accused of carjacking two cars in Los Angeles on Thursday, media reported. The suspect led police on a high-speed chase that was captured on live television before the driver came to a stop at the Downey restaurant around 7:30 p.m. local time and jumped out - making a run for the building.

Customers and staff fled the restaurant, KNBC said.

Downey police would not give further details and declined to immediately give a description of the suspect.—*Reuters*

Venezuela opposition leader Lopez jailed for nearly 14 years

CARACAS — Hardline Venezuelan opposition leader Leopoldo Lopez was jailed on Thursday for nearly 14 years on charges of inciting 2014 anti-government protests that spiralled into violence killing more than 40 people.

The ruling enraged foes of socialist President Nicolas Maduro who say Lopez is an innocent scapegoat, but it brought cheers from grassroots government supporters who view the US-educated activist as a dangerous conspirator.

After a marathon session at the heavily guarded Palace of Justice, judge Susana Barreiros ruled Lopez, 44, who was arrested in February last year, had masterminded the violence and street riots that erupted for three months.

Though Lopez had publicly called for peaceful resistance to the Maduro government and was behind bars during most of the unrest, prosecutors said his speeches sent subliminal messages and constituted a call to violence.

He was ordered to return to the Ramo Verde military jail to serve a sentence of 13 years and nine months.

Lopez's case has become a cause celebre for opposition supporters over what they deem the Maduro government's trampling of human rights. The US government, the United Nations and international rights groups had all called for Lopez's release.

"This is not only an attack on liberty and legality ... but also a provocation to the Venezuelan people," said Jesus Torrealba, leader of the opposition coalition which includes Lopez's Popular Will party.

Some Lopez supporters banged pots and pans in upmarket areas of Caracas, a traditional form of protest in Venezuela. Others took to social media to vent their anger, hailing Lopez as a Venezuelan "Nelson Mandela."

The sentence was a slap in the face for the United States, which had been pressing for his release during a quiet rapprochement with Venezuela over the last few months.

US Assistant Secretary of State Roberta Jacobson said she was "deeply troubled" by the ruling.

Lopez has for years been one of the most prominent hardline figures in Venezuela's opposition. He was a successful and popular mayor of the Chacao district of Caracas until 2008.

He is the scion of wealthy families and a direct descendant of the sister of Latin American independence hero Simon Bolivar as well as of Venezuela's first president, Cristobal Mendoza.

That blue blood creates barriers with the poor, and his confrontational style puts off some moderate opposition figures.

A 2009 US government cable revealed by WikiLeaks said that some in the opposition thought Lopez "arrogant, vindictive and power-hungry," though conceded his "enduring popularity, charisma and talent as an organizer."

Lopez's critics paint him as a dangerous radical in the pocket of Venezuela's wealthy elite and the US government.

They point to his attempts to unseat President Hugo Chavez in 2002. During a failed coup attempt, Lopez helped organise the illegal arrest of one of Chavez's cabinet members.

Earlier in the day, Lopez supporters and government backers clashed outside the trial, with one opposition activist dying of a heart attack, according to Popular Will.—*Reuters*

Lilian Tintori (C), wife of jailed opposition leader Leopoldo Lopez waves to supporters next to Venezuelan National Guards as she arrives at the courthouse to attend her husband's trial in Caracas.—Reuters

INVITATION FOR OPEN TENDER (7/2015)
(TENDER NO. MPPE/JET A1/T/2(2015-2016))

1. Open Tender is invited for the Myanma Petroleum Products Enterprise, the Ministry of Energy for the supply of JET A1 (282,000 bbl ± 10%)
2. Tender Closing Date & Time - 24-9-2015, 12:00 Hr
3. Tender Opening Date & Time - 24-9-2015 13:00 Hr
4. Delivery Time - 1st November 2015 to 2nd January 2016
5. Tender documents and details information are available at the Department of Finance, the Myanma Petroleum Products Enterprise, Nay Pyi Taw, during office hours commencing 10-9-2015 on payment of Myanmar Kyat One Hundred Thousand (Kyat 100,000.) per set.
6. Only bid from tenderer who has purchased tender document officially from the Myanma Petroleum Products Enterprise will be accepted for evaluation.

Managing Director
Myanma Petroleum Products Enterprise
Ministry of Energy, No(6) Complex, Nay Pyi Taw
Contact Phone No.
067-411487/ 411486/411280

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
MV PIONEER A VOY NO (35)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV PIONEER A VOY NO (35) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 12.9.2015 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of S.P.W (2) where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S G-LINK EXPRESS PTE LTD.
Phone No: 2301186

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
MV KOTA TENAGA VOY NO (TGN-301)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV KOTA TENAGA VOY NO (TGN-301) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 12.9.2015 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.W.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S ADVANCE CONTAINER LINES
Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
MV ANAN BHUM VOY NO (140N)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV ANAN BHUM VOY NO (140N) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 12.9.2015 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of H.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S COSCO CONTAINER LINES
Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
MV THAI BINH 039 VOY NO (02)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV THAI BINH 039 VOY NO (02) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 13.9.2015 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.W.P.T (2) where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S G-LINK EXPRESS PTE LTD.
Phone No: 2301186

Singapore stands ready to assist Indonesia in fighting haze

SINGAPORE — Singapore's Minister for Defence Ng Eng Hen on Thursday called his Indonesian counterpart Ryamizard Ryacudu to reiterate Singapore government's offer to assist Indonesia in combating the ongoing forest fires in Sumatra.

As part of the overall haze assistance package offered to Indonesia, Singapore's Ministry of Defence (MINDEF) and Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) have placed on standby a C-130 aircraft for cloud seeding operations, a Chinook helicopter with a water bucket for aerial fire-fighting, and up to two C-130 aircraft to ferry Singapore Civil Defence Force (SCDF) fire-fighting assistance team.

SAF stands ready to support and assist the Indonesian military, which has been deployed to put out the fires, according to the minister.—*Xinhua*

WEATHER REPORT

BAY INFERENCE: Monsoon is moderate in the Andaman Sea and South Bay and weak elsewhere in the Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL EVENING OF THE 12th September, 2015: Rain or thundershowers will be widespread in Yangon, Ayeyarwady and Taninthayi Regions, Kayin and Mon States, fairly widespread in Upper Sagaing Region, Kachin, Shan and Chin States and scattered in the remaining Regions and States with likelihood of isolated heavy falls in Taninthayi Region. Degree of certainty is (100%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Squalls with moderate to rough sea are likely at times Deltaic, Gulf of Mottama, off and along Mon - Taninthayi Coasts. Surface wind speed in squalls may reach (30 - 35) m.p.h. Sea will be moderate elsewhere in Myanmar waters.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Thundery activities in the Northern Myanmar areas.

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PICTURE OF THE DAY

A Bavarian boy escorts cows during the traditional "Almabtrieb" in Oberstaufen, about 180km (110 miles) south of Munich, Germany, September 11, 2015. At the end of the summer season, farmers move their herds down from the Alps to the valley into winter pastures.—Reuters

Stair car hits plane at Vietnam's biggest airport

HO CHI MINH CITY — A stair car on Friday ran into the wing of an Airbus plane operated by Jetstar Pacific, in the latest collision between a ground service vehicle and an aircraft in Vietnam, local online newspaper Tuoi Tre (Youth) News reported.

The Jetstar Pacific flight BL570 was about to taxi at Tan Son Nhat International Airport in Ho Chi Minh City on Friday morning when the stair car hit its left wing and damaged its tip.

The flight bound for the Central Highlands city of Buon Ma Thuot was thus delayed and passengers had to leave the aircraft to wait for its repairs.

A Jetstar Pacific representative confirmed that the ground service vehicle is also under its management, adding that the wing of the Airbus plane was only slightly damaged.

The airline says the accident was not serious and it took only two to three hours to fix the components with support from the French planemaker's technical team.—*Xinhua*

Sofia Vergara, Kaley Cuoco are highest paid TV actresses

Sofia Vergara and Kaley Cuoco.—PTI

LOS ANGELES — "Modern Family" star Sofia Vergara and Kaley Cuoco of "The Big Bang Theory" fame have been annouced as the highest-paid actresses of 2015.

Vergara, 43, and 29-year-old Cuoco took the top spot in 2015 Forbes list of highest paid TV actresses for earning USD 28.5 million each before tax, reported Aceshowbiz.

Vergara has topped the list for the past four years. Cuoco earned USD 1 million per episode on the hit CBS comedy between June 1, 2014 to June 1, 2015.

On the second position is Vergara's "Modern Family" co-star Julie Bowen. "Grey's Anatomy" actress Ellen Pompeo is third. Emily Deschanel of "Bones" have made it to the list forthe first time at 11th position for earing USD 6.5 million.

Other popular names, who are part of the top 14 include – Julianna Margulies, Amy Poehler, Mindy Kaling, Kerry Washington, Patricia Heaton, Robin Wright and Zooey Deschanel.—*PTI*

Singer and former Texas governor candidate, still Kinky in comeback album

Texas Independent gubernatorial candidate Kinky Friedman addresses supporters during his election night party at Scholz Garten in Austin, Texas, in this November 7, 2006 file photo.—Reuters

NASHVILLE — After more than three decades, the unconventional politician, friend of two presidents, mystery novelist, animal lover and singer-songwriter Kinky Friedman is making something of a recording comeback.

"It's 32 (years), but say 39, either way, it's a long time," Friedman, who ran as an independent for Texas governor in 2006, said in a telephone interview from his Texas ranch.

The politically incorrect former leader of the Texas Jewboys is releasing a new album, "The Loneliest Man I Ever Met," on Oct. 2. Most of the songs on the record are by people he admires such as Bob Dylan, Lerner and Loewe, Tom Waits and Warren Zevon.

"These aren't covers. They are interpretations," said Friedman whose previous songs include "They Ain't Making Jews Like Jesus Anymore."

"I suffer from the curse of being multi-talented," said Friedman.

"If you are writing novels and developing them for a TV series, run an animal rescue and then throw in politics, it definitely might have thrown me off track as far as a consistent recording career," said the man who lists Bill Clinton, George W. Bush and thousands of rescued animals as friends.

Friedman, 70, vows to be less-multi-talented and focus instead on writing, performing and recording material - from the melancholy to the satirical to the sardonic. All of the traits apply to the collection.

He ran for Texas governor in 2006, saying he wanted to be in the governor's mansion because he needed more closet space, coming in third with 12.5 percent of the votes.

In 2014 he tried unsuccessfully to win the Democratic nomination for Texas agricultural commissioner, making promises to legalize marijuana if he got the seat.

Even in his political years, Friedman continued writing installments in his 20-novel mystery series involving a Jewish private eye named Kinky Friedman who gives up the country-singing life to become a Greenwich Village gumshoe. In this interview from his Texas ranch — a part of which contains Utopia Animal Rescue Ranch — Friedman laughed when talking about the first track on the album. "Bloody Mary Morning" features Friedman in a duet with Willie Nelson, the song's writer.

"The only time I smoke dope is with Willie. It's kind of a form of Texas etiquette. I got so high, I needed a step ladder to scratch my ass."—*Reuters*

'Pacific Rim 2' production delayed until 2016

LOS ANGELES — The production of Guillermo del Toro-directed sequel to "Pacific Rim" has reportedly been delayed.

The production, scheduled to take place in Toronto, would not start until next year, reported Ace Showbiz. To this point, there is no confirmation on the reason of the delay or what month it will begin.

"Pacific Rim 2" is considerably a long-gestating project. del Toro was already talking about the sequel before the first movie arrived in theatres.

The follow-up was confirmed in November 2014 and seven months later del Toro said he had planned a great storyline with epic battle at the end of the movie.

Legendary Pictures is yet to respond to the report.—*PTI*

My daughter makes me a better person: Reese Witherspoon

Actress Reese Witherspoon.—Reuters

LONDON — Actress Reese Witherspoon credits her daughter Ava for making her a better person each day.

The 39-year-old actress, shared a cute happy birthday post on Instagram as her daughter turned 16, reported Hello! magazine. Reese posted a side-by-side photo of Ava as a little girl, and now. "Wow! My sweet girl turns 16 today. I am so blessed to have such a kind, compassionate, brilliant, artistic, all-around wonderful daughter who makes me a better person every day," she wrote.

The "Wild" actress was 23 when she gave birth to Ava, after tying the knot with her "The Cruel Intentions" co-star Ryan. The couple, who also have a son together separated in October 2006.—*PTI*

Taiwan picks Cannes-winning "Assassin" for 2016 Oscars

TAIPEI — Taiwan's Motion Picture and Drama Association has entered Taiwanese director Hou Hsiao-hsien's acclaimed martial arts film "The Assassin" in the 2016 Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film.

According to a statement released by the association on Wednesday, "The Assassin" stood out among 13 candidates thanks to "its high degree of proficiency in cinematography, lighting, arts and character shaping, which succeeded in demonstrating natural personalities of people in a classic setting."

"The director shows great ambition in creating a new film language style," the statement read.

Set in ancient China, the film tells about a general's daughter named Nie Yinniang who was trained by a nun to become an assassin. The film won Hou Hsiao-hsien the best director award at the Cannes Film Festival in May. "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon" directed by Ang Lee is the only Taiwanese film crowned by the Oscars.—*Xinhua*

Director Hou Hsiao-Hsien (C), actress Shu Qi (L), and actor Chang Chen attend a press conference to promote the movie "The Assassin" in Taipei, southeast China's Taiwan, Aug. 7, 2015. The movie is to be screened on Aug. 28 in Taiwan.—Xinhua

South Korean grandparents demand more resources for child care

SEOUL — Ock Mi-eun, 57, has been taking care of her grandson since he was born two years ago so that her daughter could return to work. She receives 1 million won ($830) a month for her services.

It is not unusual for South Koreans to pay their parents to take care of their children. But the number doing so is on the rise and the arrangement has become more professional-like as parents increasingly pay the equivalent of full babysitting rates.

"You've left your child with someone else, it's only being responsible to pay some compensation," said Ock, who picks up her grandson from his morning daycare and looks after him until his mother retrieves him in the evenings. Childcare classes for the elderly, rare before 2013, have cropped up at public health centers. They typically teach the resuscitation technique CPR, infant massage, feeding and playing with children.

"They're very eager to learn modern-day childcare because so much has changed from their time, and they don't want to be looked down on by their children," said Song Geum-re, who lectures at childcare classes for the elderly.

The trend is being driven by changes in South Korea's population — the fastest-ageing in the world. A record share of women work and a high rate of poverty among the elderly means many older people need the income.

Even though government data shows almost 53 percent of women work, that level is low compared with other member countries in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

As of April 2014, 22.4 percent of all married women aged 15 to 54 in South Korea had quit their jobs due to marriage, childbirth or childcare, government data shows.

New mothers are often deterred from returning to work by a lack of day care, where demand far outstrips available places. A ruling party lawmaker said last year there were 11 children for every day care spot available and in the more sought-after government facilities the ratio was 47 to one. The share of families whose children were looked after by grandparents rose to 35.1 percent in 2012, the last year for which government data is available, from 31.9 percent in 2009.

A survey by the Gyeonggido Family and Women's Research Institute in 2011 showed nearly 80 percent of 300 grandparents who regularly took care of their grandchildren were paid.

Suh Moon-hee, a visiting research fellow at the Korea Institute for Health and Social Affairs, said paying grandparents for childcare is not new but the prevalence and the amounts paid have risen, suggesting a more professional arrangement.

"In the past, if South Koreans paid a third of what they would have paid visiting babysitters because they regularly gave their parents financial support.

Now they pay them full wages," she said. "It's more of a transaction for services." For many families, enlisting grandparents to look after young children has mutual benefits.

An instructor gives a lecture during a child care class for grandparents in Seoul, South Korea, September 1, 2015.—Reuters

Compensation for childcare can be a key source of income for elderly people in South Korea, where government data shows that 49 percent of those aged 66 and above live in poverty.

One Seoul district began paying monthly stipends in 2011 to grandparents who regularly take care of their young grandchildren. A lack of funding has derailed similar initiatives elsewhere.

The new professionalism among grandparent carers even shares some traits with daycare centers. Many grandparents are strict about working hours, Song said, with some cutting off service at 6 p.m. sharp.

"Grandparents exchange information amongst their friends, who's being given how much and whatnot. It's all business-like," she said.—*Reuters*

Bannister's record-breaking shoes sold for $412,000

LONDON — The pair of running shoes worn by Roger Bannister when the Briton ran the first sub-four minute mile in 1954 were sold by auctioneers Christie's on Thursday for 266,500 pounds ($412,062.30).

The black kangaroo leather shoes, with six spikes on each sole, were accompanied by a letter of provenance signed by Bannister, 86, who was selling them to benefit charitable causes.

Expected to fetch between 30,000-50,000 pounds, they were bought by an anonymous bidder at the 'Out of the Ordinary' sale in London.

"These shoes are the last tangible link I have with the four-minute mile," Bannister had said before the sale. "All my trophies are now on display at Pembroke College, Oxford, where I was Master.

"They served me great purpose, I'm grateful to them. I think it's the right time to part with them and I plan to give part of the proceeds to the Autonomic Charitable Trust (ACT) which encourages the area of neurological research to which I have devoted most of my life," he added.

"Other worthwhile causes in which I have an interest will also benefit."

Bannister wore the shoes on May 6, 1954 at Oxford's Iffley Road cinder track when he ran the mile in three minutes 59.4 seconds.

A program from the meeting, with pencil notes for the race, fetched 4,375 pounds.—*Reuters*

Surfer Shawn Dollar says barely made it back to shore after breaking neck

LOS ANGELES — Big-wave surfer Shawn Dollar, who broke his neck in four places during a wipeout earlier this week, said in an interview published on Thursday that he immediately lost feeling in his arms and legs and didn't know if he could make it back to shore.

Dollar, who holds the world record for the largest wave ever paddled into, suffered the neck injuries, along with head trauma, when he struck a large rock after wiping out on Monday while surfing along the Central California coast. Despite the four fractures, Dollar somehow avoided paralysis as he initially had feared.

"I heard the breaks in my neck, and I immediately wasn't sure if I was paralyzed," Dollar, 34, told People magazine in an interview the magazine said was conducted from his hospital bed, where the pro surfer has been fitted with a neck brace.

The married father of two said in the interview that immediately after hitting the boulder, he lost feeling in his arms and legs and faced the daunting task of getting back to shore. "I barely had the strength to move, let alone get on my board and paddle out and climb over rocks to shore," he said. "It was just like I was in a cauldron of rocks with waves breaking on me. With a broken neck, I was like, 'I don't know if I'm going to be able to get myself out of here.'"

Dollar said he used all the strength he had left to make it back to shore, needing help to walk nearly a mile (1.6 km) through ravines and up steep trails before he could be driven to a local hospital. He will have to wear the collar for at least two months before beginning rehabilitation for his injuries.

"Luckily the break isn't structural. I didn't damage my spinal column," Dollar told the magazine. "I have to remain really still. I have to keep my movement down to a minimum so that I don't injure myself to a point where I'm paralyzed. It's still a very delicate situation."

According to the Guinness Book of World Records, Dollar made history when he dropped in on a 61-foot (18.6-meter) wave at the Cortes Bank, a reef 100 miles (160 km) west of San Diego. Dollar was in the water with big-wave surfer Sion Milosky at the famed Maverick's break south of San Francisco in 2011 when Milosky was killed in a wipeout.—*Reuters*

MRTV Entertainment Channel

(12-9-2015, Saturday)

6:00 am
- Classical Songs

6:10 am
- Teleplay

6:50 am
- Fashion Show (Music)

7:05 am
- Teleplay

7:15 am
- Myanmar Series

7:30 am
- Cassette Drama

9:40 am
- Dramatic Arts

10:00 am
- Myanmar Video

12:00 noon
- Close Down

mitv Myanmar International

(12-9-2015 07:00 am~13-9-2015 07:00 am) MST

Today Fresh

07:03 Am News
07:26 Am Great Shwedagon- The Religious Insignias Of pagodas In Myanmar
07:45 Am Creative Costume of Kayah Nationals
08:03 Am News
08:26 Am Sagaing: Pe Kwel Kone Nat Festival
08:36 Am The Wachet Jivitadana Sanga Hospital
09:03 Am News
09:26 Am Director: Kyi Phyu Shin
09:37 Am Yatana Theinga City and Shwe Bon Yatanamingalar Palace
09:55 Am Scented Buddha Images
10:03 Am News
10:26 Am Discovering Tribes "Lisu: Their Life and Customs" (Part- I)
10:48 Am Around The Maha Boditahtaung

(11:00 Am ~ 03:00 Pm) - Friday 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 Myanmar's Traditions and Culture "The Golden Land"
07:47 Pm Today Myanmar: Election 2015
08:03 Pm News
08:26 Pm "Myanmar Music Icon" Ko Nay Win, Creator of Myanmar Own Tune Songs (Episode-1)
08:52 Pm Myanmar Masterclass: Conceptual Art

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

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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Saturday, 12 September, 2015

Arsenal have enough attacking options, insists Arsene Wenger

LONDON — After failing to score in their opening two home league games for the first time in 36 years, Arsenal will be looking for their first goals and their first win at the Emirates Stadium this season when they play Stoke City on Saturday.

Manager Arsene Wenger has been roundly criticised by many of the club's fans for failing to strengthen his team during the transfer window, especially in attack.

Arsenal are sixth in the table with seven points from their opening four matches that include a 2-1 victory at Crystal Palace, a 1-0 win at Newcastle and a goalless draw with Liverpool.

But two of those three goals were own goals, and Arsenal appear to have a lack of firepower up front with Danny Welbeck's injured knee keeping him out of the side at least until Christmas time.

Including their 1-0 win over Chelsea in the Community Shield in August, Arsenal have only scored four goals in five games so far.

Wenger though, defended his transfer policy on Thursday, saying he was satisfied with his squad

Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger. Reuters

and had plenty of options in attack too. "I have made over 300 transfers and every time the decision you make is do you buy the player to strengthen your squad, or not.

"The solutions we had were not convincing at all and in the end you do not buy to give wrong hopes.

"You want to buy because the players who come in can help your squad to be stronger.

"Buying and selling is one way to strengthen your team but it is not your only way."

Welbeck, scored only four league goals in his first season at Arsenal following his move from Manchester United just over a year ago, but knows where the net is as his 14 goals in 33 England appearances prove.

Without him, the burden falls on Olivier Giroud, who has scored once this season, and Alexis Sanchez, who hasn't scored any, as Wenger's senior front two, although Theo Walcott, Santi Cazorla and Aaron Ramsey have consistently backed up with goals from midfield in the past.

Wenger said Arsenal did want to sign a forward but couldn't find one to improve the squad.

"It's about finding an efficient solution," he said. "They don't just drop down from heaven." Asked about Giroud's start to the season — he was jeered by French fans for a series of missed chances in France's friendly against Serbia on Monday — he replied: "I have confidence in the ability and quality of our strikers.

"Of course I'm confident that I have enough cover and enough quality."

The last time Arsenal failed to score in their opening two league matches was in the old First Division in August 1979 when they lost 2-0 to Ipswich Town and drew 0-0 with Manchester United at Highbury — the same sequence they have had this season with a 2-0 loss to West Ham followed by the draw with Liverpool.—*Reuters*

Myanmar trainees to get opportunity to attend basketball umpiring course

Ko Moe

YANGON — The International Basketball Federation (FIBA) plans to conduct a basketball umpiring course at Aung San Gymnasium on 19 September with the aim of improving skills of players and umpires in Myanmar.

"FIBA in its plan will provide the umpiring course for development of basketball standard in Myanmar," said Daw Ohnmar Aung, Joint Secretary of Myanmar Basketball Federation, on 11 September.

She added that the federation had informed 42 basketball umpires from regions and states of attending the course.

The trainees must study theoretical and practical subjects from 19 to 25 September.

FIBA conducted the basketball umpiring courses in Myanmar in 2013.—*GNLM*

Chelsea's Courtois set to miss Everton game with injury

LONDON — Chelsea goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois has injured his knee and is likely to miss the champions' visit to Goodison Park to take on Everton on Saturday, British media reported.

The Belgium international returned to Chelsea fully fit after international duty, but limped out of his first practise session on Wednesday.

The 23-year-old could be facing an extended period on the sidelines and the club will discover the full extent of the problem after more tests are conducted on Thursday.

Chelsea, who lie 13th in the table on four points from four games, can bring in Asmir Begovic as a replacement, having signed the former Stoke City keeper in the close season after Petr Cech departed for Arsenal.—*Reuters*

Mayweather legacy a numbers game: Holyfield

SHOULD Floyd Mayweather Jr end his boxing career on Saturday as planned, his legacy will be underpinned by the extraordinary numbers he has brought to the sport, says former world heavyweight champion Evander Holyfield.

Mayweather has said that his welterweight title defence against fellow American Andre Berto will be his final fight and should he win, as is widely expected, he would match the 49-0 record of former heavyweight great Rocky Marciano.

Should it turn out to be his farewell appearance in the ring, he would bow out as boxing's richest ever prize fighter, having set records in the sport when it comes to annual earnings, pay-per-view buys and gate receipts.

"Mayweather has made more money than anybody else in the game of boxing," Holyfield, who has been crowned world heavyweight champion a record five times, told Reuters.

> ***"Mayweather has made more money than anybody else in the game of boxing."***
>
> ***—Holyfield***

"He's brought the game up in a way that no other fighter ever has. He took boxing and turned it to a whole other level, whether people believe it or not.

"I don't think we ever thought a welterweight or a middleweight would make more money than a heavyweight but that is what this man has done."

Mayweather, 38, topped the Forbes list of the world's 100 highest-paid celebrities in June with an estimated $300 million in earnings over the previous 12 months.

Holyfield, who had a career record of 44-10-2 with one no contest when he finally retired in June 2014, expressed mixed feelings over Mayweather's legacy as a fighter.

"He is undefeated, which speaks for itself," said the 52-year-old American, who was nicknamed 'The Real Deal' for his own exploits in the ring. "He can fight. He's everything that a lot of people may not give him credit for.

"But he has done things his own way, which has been good but has been bad too. When you

Undefeated WBC/WBA welterweight champion Floyd Mayweather Jr. speaks during a news conference at MGM Grand Hotel & Casino in Las Vegas September 9, 2015.—Reuters

talk about being the undisputed champion, he has never been an undisputed champion, but he claimed to be it."

Mayweather is widely regarded as one of the best defensive fighters of all time, and prides himself on his ability to evade punishment with his skilful movement about the ring while making continual adjustments against opponents on the fly.

However, he has been a polarising figure throughout his career because of his arrogance and flamboyant showmanship, and has occasionally been criticised for selecting opponents when they are past their prime.

"The rules and regulations should determine what a fighter is, more so than opinion," said Holyfield, who first became undisputed heavyweight champion in 1990 with a three-round stoppage of Buster Douglas.

"Whatever the undisputed champion means is that you are the best if there are three belts and you've got all three belts, then it is undeniable that you are the best fighter in that weight division.

"But if you choose to fight whoever you want to fight and you say 'I'm going to waive this belt', then it takes something away from the game of boxing," he added, in a veiled criticism of Mayweather.

Holyfield, who also dominated the cruiserweight division before moving up to heavyweight, spoke to Reuters after celebrating National Alumni Day earlier this week for the Boys and Girls Clubs of America (BGCA).

The youngest of nine children, he credits the Boys Club in Atlanta for paving the way for his boxing career and teaching him the value of strong character and sportsmanship.

"I don't know if I could have been a champion if it wasn't for the Boys Club," said Holyfield, who is one of 16 million BGCA alumni. "I went there for a whole year and it changed my life, it changed my whole perspective on a lot of things.

"My coach, who was 70 years old, told me that I could be like Muhammad Ali. And I told him, 'I am just eight years old.' But I believed him.

"That sports club had an award for the person who showed good conduct... and I became the person that I am today."—*Reuters*

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www.facebook.com/globalnewlightofmyanmar

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

"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."