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A MATTER OF PERSPECTIVE

Military History and National History inseparable: Senior General

THE history of the military and the history of the nation have been inseparable since the inception of the military; they have invariably co-existed, said Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing during his meeting with the officer cadets and other ranks at Ba Htoo Station Area yesterday.

The duty of the military is to defend the nation, to protect and safeguard Our Three Main National Causes and the lives and property of the people and to effectuate the national interest, he added.

The kings must have loyalty whereas the people must keep their promises, it is said.

If you cast a glance at the history, you will find that independence was lost because of disloyal acts with the result that we have fallen into servitude, reminded the Senior General.

If you look at the history of independence struggle, he claimed, our national leaders were assassinated by the disloyal traitors. And what is more, the nation has been faced with the threat of disintegration posed by the disloyal armed troops in the



Senior General Min Aung Hlaing comforts members of the Tatmadaw receiving treatment at the military hospital. PHOTO: MYAWADY

aftermath of independence, and the military has had to sacrifice a multitude of lives and limbs to prevent the nation from disintegration. As you know, we

still have to be confronted by the armed conflicts caused by disloyalty.

The disloyalty to the military has complicated dramatically the

affairs of the nation. This is the reason why certain conditions are enshrined in the constitution, said Senior General Min Aung Hlaing.

Last but not the least, he

claimed that if the military was not there to enforce the rule of law as well as peace and stability, the democratic system would not be strong.—Myawady

Except five pagodas, visitors banned from scaling monuments in Bagan

EXCEPT five designated pagodas in Bagan, all remaining pagodas are now subject to a new rule banning visitors from scaling or climbing on the structures, the Ministry of Culture announced yesterday. The ban comes into effect on 1 March.

Following the previous announcement that banned climbing on the pagodas in Bagan, the ministry released an amended announcement via its social media FB page, adding that the ban is aimed at conserving Myanmar's cultural heritage and protecting the safety of visitors.

The new announcement explained that the ministry has allowed visitors to visit view points of the five pagodas to enjoy the sunset.

However, it was found that some visitors entered the restrict-

ed areas and acted inappropriately, causing damage to ancient artifacts.

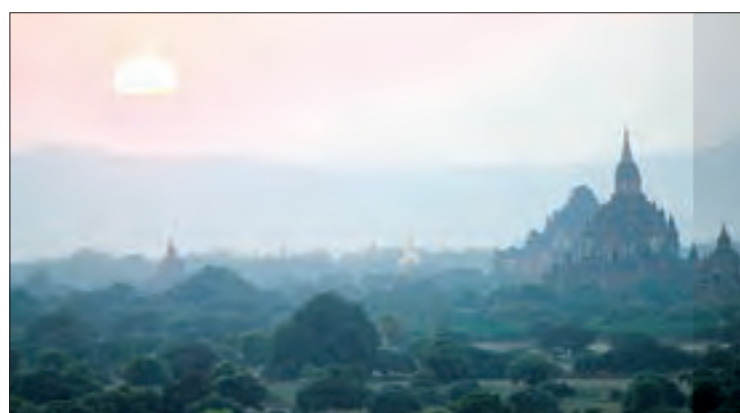
An American tourist fell off of Shwegugyi Pagoda late at night on 21 February and was taken to hospital, the announcement said.

"While the architecture of ancient cultural heritage pagodas is sound, the weight of the increasing number of visitors are posing a threat to the pagodas and to visitor safety," said the announcement.

There are more than 3,000 pagodas and religious edifices in Bagan.

Meanwhile, those involved in the tourism industry have criticised the Ministry of Culture's decision to ban the scaling of temples in Bagan, saying it could hurt the tourism industry.

Tourist operators to Bagan have said the climbing of delicate



A popular destination: Ancient Bagan temples at sunset.

PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE

temples which feature a lot of artistic handiwork should be prohibited, but that those temples which are sturdy and feature little aesthetic beauty should be allowed to be climbed upon.

"They shouldn't close off [the

temples]. If all the temples are closed off [from being able to be climbed] then it will have negative consequences for the international tourist industry. They should do it in such a way that only a few people are allowed on a temple

at one time, say ten people, then charge people for the privilege of ascending the temple, \$5 for foreigners and K500-K1,000 for locals. Money for [the restoration] fund can be made. I don't think it's possible to close off all the temples," said the chairperson of Myanmar Guide Association for the Bagan-Nyaung Oo zone.

World travellers visit Bagan specifically to take in the region's beautiful scenery. As such, the current prohibition could damage the reputation of Bagan, while those local residents who rely on the temples to make a living could encounter difficulties, tour operators have expressed. They have also stated they will also need a substitute program on the itinerary of tourists because of the ban.

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Pyithu Hluttaw

Pyithu Hluttaw calls for preparedness, response plans for El Niño

THE second Pyithu Hluttaw's first regular session entered its tenth day, with parliamentarians holding discussions on the El Niño urgent motion submitted by Dr Maung Thin of Meiktila Constituency.

A total of 14 MPs discussed the urgent motion calling on the Union government to adopt risk mitigation measures against ill-effects of El Niño which is expected to hit Myanmar this year.

In his discussion, Dr Hla Moe of Aungmyay Thasan Constituency stressed the need of launching emergency response and preparedness drills in order to mitigate possible losses in the event of disasters. The MP pointed out that such drills are not conducted yet in the country despite plans had

been drawn up by the ministries concerned. He also called for necessary policies to be formulated to purchase rice for State reserves.

U Naing Htoo Aung of Ngahtoogyi Constituency also called on officials concerned to gear up for coming El Niño's impacts, warning that the situation is likely to get worse during this summer as some parts of the country have started suffering droughts and fire outbreaks are reported frequently.

In his discussion, Dr Sein Mya Aye of Dala Constituency emphasised the importance of taking necessary measures to guarantee the socioeconomic status of the people including farmers as agricultural outputs and fishery exports will

likely be limited by consequences of El Niño.

Defense Services Personnel Pyithu Hluttaw representative Lt-Col Aung Kyaw Moe highlighted the leadership role of the Union government in the fight against El Niño effects in cooperation with regional governments, non-governmental organizations and the people. During the tenth day session, Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U Win Myint read out messages sent by Mr. Sergei E Nayshkin, Chairman of the State Duma of the Russian Federation, and Mr. Nguyen Sinh Hung, Chairman of the National Assembly of Viet Nam. Two other messages were documented. Pyithu Hluttaw session continues today. — Myanmar News Agency



Dr Hla Moe. PHOTO: MNA



Dr Sein Mya Aye. PHOTO: MNA

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker meets foreign ambassadors

SPEAKER of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and Amyotha Hluttaw Mahn Win Khaing Than received Singaporean Ambassador to Myanmar Mr. Robert Chua and Australian Ambassador to Myanmar Mr. Nicholas Coppel separately in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the calls, the Speaker held talks with the foreign ambassadors on education promotion program and interparliamentary relations.

Also present at the calls were Deputy Speaker of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and Amyotha Hluttaw U Aye Tha Aung, chairmen and secretaries of parliamentary committees and officials from Amyotha Hluttaw Office. — Myanmar News Agency



Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than welcomes Australian Ambassador Mr. Nicholas Coppel. PHOTO: MNA

Union, regional speakers approve formation of Myanmar Parliamentary Union for second term



MPs discuss formation of Myanmar Parliamentary Union in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

SPEAKERS of Union and Region/State Parliaments approved the formation of Myanmar Parliamentary Union for the second

parliamentary term following a coordination meeting in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the meeting, Speak-

er of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and Amyotha Hluttaw Mahn Win Khaing Than said that the meeting was to hold discussions with the speakers of region/state Hluttaws on formation of the Union for the second term of Hluttaw. In his address, Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw U Win Myint highlighted the importance of the Union to facilitate the functions of respective Hluttaws in the implementation of the country's democratisation process.

The meeting came to an end with concluding remarks by the Speakers of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and Pyithu Hluttaw. — Myanmar News Agency

Amyotha Hluttaw

Amyotha Hluttaw approves one committee, forms another

THE second Amyotha Hluttaw first regular session entered its 10th day with the formation of a parliamentary committee yesterday.

Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than announced parliamentary approval of the proposed formation of the Public Complaints Committee with 15 members including chairman U Hsan Myint of Ayeyawady Region Constituency 3 and secretary U Hla Myint (a)

U Hla Myint Than of Mon State Constituency 11.

Next, the Speaker informed the Parliament of the creation of the Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries Development Committee, proposing Dr Khun Win Thaung of Kachin State Constituency 11 and Dr Win Myint of Bago Region Constituency 11 as chairman and secretary of the committee. The Amyotha Hluttaw session continues today. — Myanmar News Agency

Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker receives ambassadors



Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U Win Myint welcomes Singaporean Ambassador Mr. Robert Chua. PHOTO: MNA

U Win Myint, Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw, received Mr Nicholas Coppel, Ambassador of Australia to Myanmar, Mr Robert Chua, Ambassador of Singapore to Myanmar, and Mr Lee Baek-soon, Ambassador of Republic

of Korea to Myanmar, yesterday separately.

Also present on the calls were Deputy Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw U Ti KhunMyat and official of the Pyithu Hluttaw office. — Myanmar News Agency



Vice-President Dr Sai Mauk Kham shakes hands with Ms. Yoriko Yasukawa, director of UNFPA's Asia-Pacific Regional Office. PHOTO: MNA

Vice-President Dr Sai Mauk Kham meets UNFPA delegation

VICE-President Dr Sai Mauk Kham received a delegation from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) at the Credentials hall of the Presidential Palace in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

The Vice-President held

talks with Ms. Yoriko Yasukawa, director of UNFPA's Asia-Pacific Regional Office, and party on continued cooperation in the process of the 2014 Myanmar Population and Housing Census and the importance

of the 8th Asia Pacific Conference on Reproductive and Sexual Health and Rights.

Also present were Deputy Ministers U Thant Kyaw and U Win Myint as well as other officials. — *Myanmar News Agency*



Vice-President U Nyan Tun meets Japanese delegation led by Mr. Takayuki Ueda, Vice-Minister for International Affairs, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry of Japan. PHOTO: MNA

Vice-President U Nyan Tun meets Japanese economic delegation

VICE-President U Nyan Tun received a Japanese delegation led by Mr. Takayuki Ueda, Vice-Minister for International Affairs, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry of Japan at the Credentials Hall of the Presidential Palace in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the meeting they held discussions on completion of the Thilawa Special Econom-

ic Zone Phase-I project and investments of international companies, trilateral cooperation of Myanmar, Japan and Thailand in developing the Dawei SEZ, promotion of supportive industries to encourage SEZ growth and development and bilateral cooperation in the areas of strengthening infrastructure development, financial supports, human

resources, information exchange and competitiveness for development of small and medium enterprises.

Also present at the call were Deputy Ministers U Thant Kyaw and U Han Sein, Deputy Governor of the Central Bank of Myanmar U Set Aung and officials from Embassy of Japan in Myanmar. — *Myanmar News Agency*

President felicitates Estonian President

U THEIN SEIN, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, has sent a message of felicitations to His Excellency Mr. Toomas Hendrik Ilves, President of the Republic of Estonia, on the occasion of the Independence Day of the Republic of Estonia, which falls on 24 February 2016. — *Myanmar News Agency*

President felicitates Estonian PM

U THEIN SEIN, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, has sent a message of felicitations to His Excellency Mr. Taavi Roivas, Prime Minister of the Republic of Estonia, on the occasion of the Independence Day of the Republic of Estonia, which falls on 24 February 2016. — *Myanmar News Agency*

Union FM felicitates Estonian FM

U WUNNA MAUNG LWIN, Union Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, has sent a message of felicitations to Her Excellency Ms. Marina Kaljurand, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Estonia, on the occasion of the Independence Day of the Republic of Estonia, which falls on 24 February 2016. — *Myanmar News Agency*

Except five pagodas, visitors banned from scaling monuments in Bagan

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Director of Ruby Land Travels, U Aye Kyaw, says that arrangements also need to be made, in the manner of administrative departments of ancient cultural sites found the world over, thinking of the needs of those pilgrims who come to Bagan for spiritual purposes.

"The [pagodas] are becoming weaker from the large numbers of tourists visiting the region, like those of ancient temples around

the world, the great temple in Cambodia for example. Fearful that the temple wouldn't be able to endure [the volume of tourist footfall], metal railings and stairs were attached to the temple for people to walk on. As a result, people aren't walking directly on the temple any more. Provisions have also been made to limit the number of people that can access certain areas of the temple at one given time," explained U Aye Kyaw. — *Aye Min Soe & Myitmakha News Agency*

Warning issued for combined fleet exercise in Coco Island

THE aircrafts and helicopters have been warned against flying under an altitude of 15,000 feet above the sea level, and the ships, big and small, cargo motorized boat, fishing vessels and motorized sampams have also been warned for their safety against cruising, anchoring, fishing and deploying fishing equipment and apparatus within the five-mile radius of the undermentioned areas where the combined fleet manoeuvres are

taking place for the period between February 22nd and March 2nd.

The area has four points— A, B, C and D where A is between North Latitude 14 degree 56 minutes and East Longitude 93° 26', B is between North Latitude 14° 56' and East Longitude 94° 33', C is between North Latitude 14° 00' and East Longitude 94° 33' and D is between North Latitude 14° 00' and East Longitude 93° 26' — *Myanmar News Agency*



The map shows Combined Fleet Exercise (Sea Shield-2015).

8th APCRSR held with educative booths, panel discussions

MYANMAR hosted the 8th Asia Pacific Conference on Reproductive and Sexual Health and Rights (APCRSR) in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. During the 8th APCRSR, organised by the Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association, Union Minister for Health Dr Than Aung and Ms. Yoriko Yasukawa, director of UNFPA's Asia Pacific Office spoke on the occasion. The conference included an exhibition of educative booths and also featured a range of interactive plenary session and panel discussions and roundtable discussions with the participation of youth representatives from the countries of the Asia-Pacific region. According to sources, doctors and health experts will give lectures on reproductive health on 24 and 26 February. The ninth conference is set to take place in Da Nang of Vietnam next year.—MNA

Tatmadaw conducts combined operations in Shan State (North)

THE Ministry of Defense yesterday announced that the Tatmadaw is conducting combined operations in the areas in Namhsam and Kyaukme, towns of Shan State North, where fighting between SSA (Ywet Sit) group and TNLA rebel troops have occurred.

During the period from 25 September last year to 19 February this year, the SSA (Ywet Sit) group clashed with the TNLA rebel troops 20 times, forcing 3,657 people to flee within the period from 10 to 15 February.

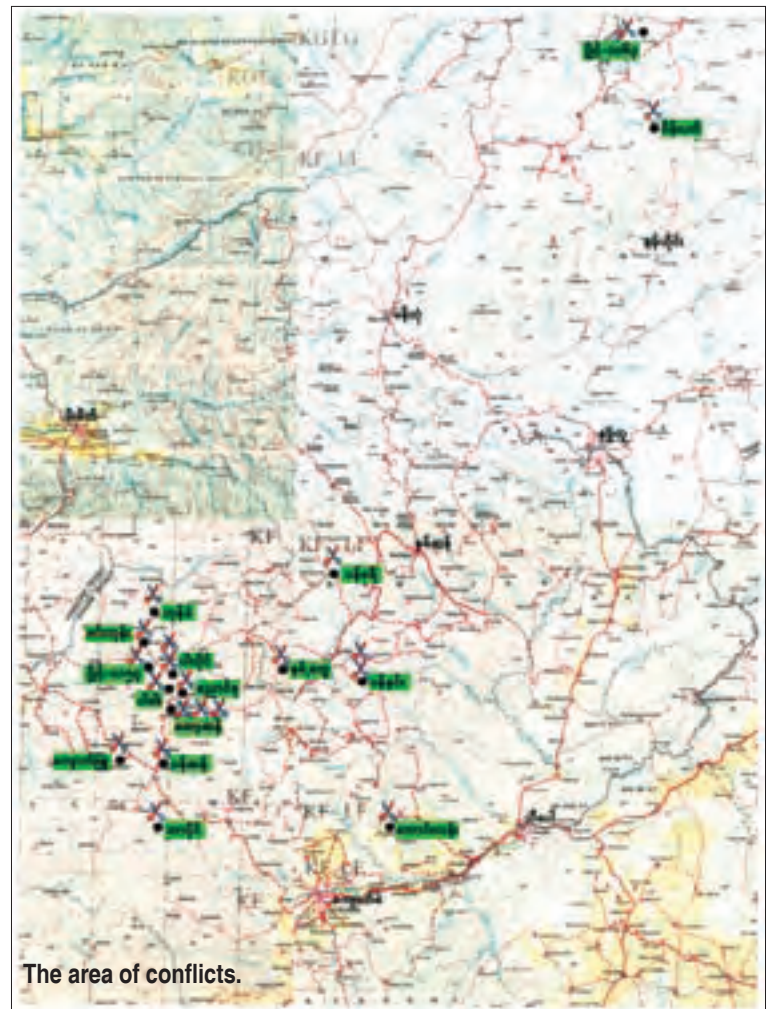
Due to the clashes, villages were set on fire, monks were arrested and some villagers were killed.

As the suffering of people

has escalated, the commander of North-East Command sent a letter of complaint denouncing the acts of SSA (Ywet Sit) group and asking the group to return to the territory designated for the group to U Sai Aung Mya, vice-chairman (1) of Joint Monitoring Committee-State level and Myanmar Peace Centre on 12 February.

The SSA (Ywet Sit) group replied that it would not return to its own territory and deploy more troops in the area.

The Tatmadaw has since begun conducting combined operations in the areas in accord with Article 20 (e) of Chapter 1 and Article 341 of Chapter 7 of the 2008 Constitution.—Myanmar News Agency



Crime News

Yabba pills, marijuana seized in Nawnghkio



Sai Aik Paung. PHOTO: KYEMON

LOCAL Anti-Drug Squads could seize over 2,000 yabba pills and nearly one kilogram of marijuana within the two days in Shan State and Yangon Region.

On 18 February, police searched a Toyota car being driven by Sai Aik Paung near toll gate in Nawnghkio and found 1,900 stimulant tablets.

Likewise, 380 yabba pills

were discovered on a motorbike driven by Eik Thein with one passenger on board on 17 February.

Police also arrested Tun Win and Nay Zaw Aung in a possession of a cache of marijuana weighing 0.82 kilogram in Dawbon Township in Yangon.

All people involved in the cases were charged under the law.—Kyemon

Conductor stabbed in bus competition quarrel

A MAN was in serious condition after being stabbed by a young man during a quarrel on 19 February within the compound of the Dagon Ayeya Highway Terminal in Hlaingthaya Township, Yangon.

A Nge Lay (a) Aung Myo Htike sustained serious injuries and was rushed to the Hlaingthaya Township Hospital for emergency care. He is now being treated at the Insein General Hospital.

According to a police investigation, a quarrel occurred between the two men, who are currently employed by different private bus lines at the terminal, to solicit customers for their bus lines.

During the quarrel, 17-year-old San Win (a) Lin Htike stabbed the complainant's body with knife and fled the scene.

Police seized the suspect and have filed charges against him.—Min Htet Paing

K10,000 worth counterfeit notes seized in Hpa-An



Sa Nay Maung Maung (a) Say Khe and Chit San Maung (a) Bait Shwai and a seized pistol gun. PHOTO: TUN TUN HTWAY (HPA-AN)

LOCAL police have filed charges against four people on suspicion of using counterfeit notes in Naung Lon (west) village, Hpa-An township, Kayin state on 20 February.

When interrogated, Nan Nyunt Thein claimed to have received K400,000 from one Sa Nay Maung Maung alias Say Khe on behalf of one Aung Myo, her debtor. Nan Nyunt Thein received the debt in K10,000

notes. Upon inspecting the notes she found that 20 were counterfeit and so informed the police.

When police searched the house of Aung Myo, they found a pistol. Aung Myo and his wife fled the scene. The police have charged Sa Nay Maung Maung alias Say Khae and Chit San Maung alias Bait Shwai while searching for Aung Myo and his wife.—Tun Tun Htway (Hpa-An)

Marijuana seized in Bago

LOCAL authorities seized a cache of marijuana in Kyaukdaga Township, Bago Region, on Friday, arresting three men for drug dealing, police reported on 21 February.

Kyaw Kyaw, 30, Bo Tot, 17, and Win Htay, 51, who were

carrying 1.04 kilos of marijuana on two motorbikes, were arrested near mile post No 114/0 along the Yangon-Mandalay highway in Mukhayan Village by local police.

According to a police investigation, Win Htay, who resides

in Lettatgyi Village in Kyaukdaga Township, rented motorbike taxis owned by Kyaw Kyaw and Bo Tot, asking them to deliver marijuana to a customer.

Everyone involved in the case has been charged under the Anti-Drug Law.—Khin Ko

Gas explosion at Pagoda Festival

A GAS cylinder exploded at the Mahar Shwesigyi pagoda festival, Kanbalu town, Sagaing on 21 February. The explosion was caused by gas filling of bal-

loons. A 7-year-old child was injured and is receiving medical treatment at the township 100-bed general hospital.—Aung Win Nyein (Kanbalu)

LOCAL Business

Taninthayi earns K1.8 billion from edible bird's nest enterprise tender

THE regional fund of Taninthayi Region is K1.8 billion larger after it received funding from a edible bird's nest enterprise tender process, according to the Regional Minister of Forestry.

The Myanmar Economic Corporation (MEC) previously had a monopoly over the edible bird's nest collection enterprises in the region in the years leading up to 2014, before tender offers began to be put out to other companies.

"There was only ever this one private company involved in this enterprise as they were the only company who would bid when tenders were first put out. The price of the tender this year, however, has tripled as other companies have entered the competition by placing bids," said U Tin Thein, director of the Department of Forestry for Taninthayi Region.

The process of calling edible bird's nest enterprise to tender began on 9 February, with the bidding companies announced on 15 February. Twenty-five per cent of the price of the tender bid first had to be paid up front to the Myanma Economic Bank, while the remainder had to be settled by February 17.

"There are only four areas within the region in which birds' nests can be collected. Four companies applied shortly after the tenders were called, but only three turned up on the day when successful bids were announced. Only two of these three companies were successful, walking away with the rights to collect birds' nests," explained U Win Naing, assistant director of the forestry department.

Among the companies that bid—MEC, Ruby Light Rays and Grand Andaman Islands—

MEC was awarded Plot 3, while Grand Andaman Islands swept up plots 1, 2 and 4.

Plot 1 is located within the townships of Laung Lone and Yay Phyu, covering an area of eight islands, won with a tender bid of over K1.2 million. Plot 2 comprises ten islands in the Ye Aye island cluster in the Myeik archipelago; it was secured with a successful bid of more than K1.8 million. Plot 3 is located in Kaw Thauung District, the southernmost part of the country, made up of a group of nine islands for which the winning bid surpassed K420 million. Plot 4 is located in an area covering the five islands of Pulaw Township, of which the tender was awarded to a bid of over K1.44 billion.

Successful tender bidders are permitted to exploit their winning plots only up until November of this year, while the period of time in which the actual collecting of edible bird's nests can take place three months per year in order to mit-

igate the potential wiping out of bird species in these areas. Bird nest collectors are also prohibited from making artificial alterations to caves where edible bird's nests are located.

Under a government initiative, some areas of Taninthayi Region have been designated wildlife zones in order to provide a safe haven for birds to nest and reproduce, according to the regional forestry department.

In the 2013-2014 fiscal year, when edible bird's nest enterprise tenders were called, the regional fund banked over K900 million, while the following fiscal year saw a decline with K620 million secured.

The current regional price for one viss (1.54 kilos) of black edible bird's nest fetches approximately K300,000, while white edible bird's nests are significantly more valuable, with the same weight going for as much as K6 million.—*Myit-makha News Agency*



Edible bird's nest.

Thilawa SEZ coordination meeting held for further stakeholder cooperation

THE ninth coordination meeting on the Thilawa Special Economic Zone being developed by Myanmar and Japan was held in Nay Pyi Taw to boost stakeholder cooperation in the project yesterday.

The coordination meeting focused on the exchange of views on further works following the signing of MoUs on developing Phase II of the SEZ.

The meeting was attended by Mr. Takayuki Ueda, Vice-Minister for International Affairs, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry of Japan, U Set Aung, chair of the Thilawa SEZ Management Committee, Deputy Minister for Construction Dr Win Myint who is also the vice-chair of the committee, Deputy Minister for Electric Power U Aung

Than Oo and officials.

According to sources, 52 companies from 16 countries have been permitted to perform business operation in the already-developed 400-hactre Thilawa SEZ Phase I where six plants are operational while construction works are underway for the setting up of 20 companies.—*Myanmar News Agency*

MPT, JTEC Joint Venture signs contract for communications network improvement

A CONTRACT for consulting services was signed yesterday between Myanma Posts and Telecommunications-MPT, the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology and JTEC Joint Venture for the Communications Network Improvement Project.

The communications network improvement project will be implemented by the Japanese government's Japanese International Cooperation Agency-JICA ODA loan and expansion of transmission networks between and inside the cities, upgrading the internet

gateway and installation of transmission link to the Thilawa Special Economic Zone are within the scope of work of this project.

The contract was signed in Nay Pyi Taw by U Sai Saw Lin Tun, the acting managing director of MPT and the personnel from JTEC Joint Venture witnessed by Deputy Minister U Win Than, Deputy Minister U Thauung Tin, Permanent Secretary, Director Generals, managing directors, officials from the ministry and the responsible personnel from JTEC, Nipon Koei and Yachiyo.—*GNLM*

Marrows see higher export

BROKERS are offering good prices for marrows grown by cultivators from Sagaing Region to export the marrows to China via Muse creating a wider demand and market recently, it has been learned from a merchant.

Marrow is the main crop of growers in Sagaing Region. If growers begin cultivating marrows when it is wet, the produce is generally more ripe, mature and larger, selling well on the Chinese market during the summer.

Brokers are able to pick and choose the best marrows for ex-

port. However, for produce that is flawed or undersized, growers usually send them to local food producers who make jam at an arranged price. "My plantation can produce two ten-wheel truckloads of marrow a year allowing me to gain over K10 million. After deducting the capital investment, I have K 4 or 5 million left", said a marrow cultivator.

A broker has to buy marrows down to Myinmu Township. Santinkin village cultivates marrows the most, said a marrow cultivator.—*007*

Ginger market sees better prices

GINGER grown in Leiktho Township and its neighbouring villages, Hpa-an District, Kay-in State has been gaining higher prices, it has been learned.

The growing of ginger on an industrial scale has now become a good business. Dried ginger

sells for K3,000 per viss. Ginger powder sells for K6,000 per viss, according to locals.

The price of ginger has risen compared with last year. Ginger growers focus on extended cultivation to maximise their income.—*Nwe (IPRD)*

Chili farmers in Monywa expect high price

CHILI planters in Monywa Township, Sagaing Divisional Region, who have been experiencing losses in chili cultivation due to downward prices are now anticipating good prices for their crop this year.

"In fact, the harvest time is a time for saving the money but chili is now being sold for K350 to K450 per viss, which is much lower than previous years. We have no profit at all as we have to pay wages for workers", said U

Aye Chun, a local farmer.

"We use 5 bags of chili seed per acre. One bag of seeds produces around 1,200 chili sprouts, using up over 2 bags of chemical fertilizer in order to get high yield. The costs cannot cover even our investment because of high expenses including worker wages", he added.

The low demand from the border areas and the existence of other chili species in the market are the two main reasons for the decreased price.—*Min Min*

Nepal ends fuel rationing after supply from India improves



A woman sits on top of their empty cooking gas cylinders while waiting in a queue to buy cooking gas during the ongoing fuel crises that has been continuing for over a month now in Kathmandu, Nepal in October 2015. PHOTO: RETUERS

KATHMANDU — Nepal ended months-long fuel rationing after supply from India improved, following the end of a border blockade by ethnic protesters against a new constitution, an official said yesterday.

Relief came as Prime Minister K.P. Oli visited India, where he met Indian counterpart Narendra Modi and cleared up differences over Nepal's adoption of its first post-monarchy constitution last September.

Nepal adopted the charter in hope of bringing stability after years of civil war, but it upset the minority Madhesi community in the south who blocked key border crossings with India causing severe shortage of oil and cooking gas.

Protesters called off the blockade this month and allowed supply trucks stranded for more than four months to roll into the landlocked country after the government changed the constitution to provide greater political voice to the Madhesis and vowed to resolve other grievances through talks.

"We are now getting 70 per cent of our normal fuel supply from India," Nepal Oil Corporation official Dipak Baral told Reuters. "With this there is no need to restrict distribution of fuel to the public."

India is Nepal's sole supplier of fuel. Rationing had led to black marketeering and caused lines of motorists outside petrol stations to stretch for several kilometres.

Nepal blamed India for supporting the protesters who share close family and cultural ties with it and causing the shortage that strained ties between the South Asian neighbours.—*Retuers*

South Korea, US delay launch of talks on US antimissile system

SEOUL — South Korea and the United States yesterday postponed the launch of formal talks on the anticipated deployment of a US missile defence system in South Korea, according to the South Korean Defence Ministry.

"It's in the final stage, but there are things that need to be coordinated" before the talks officially begin, ministry spokesman Moon Sang Gyun said at a press briefing, referring to the signing of a "terms of reference."

The signing was originally scheduled for Tuesday to mark the launch of formal bilateral talks on the deployment of the antimissile system, known as the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense, in South Korea.

"It is expected that the signing will be done in one or two days," Moon said, declining to elaborate on what caused the postponement.

South Korean media speculated the postponement may be linked to Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi's three-day visit to the United States from Tuesday for talks with US Secretary

of State John Kerry.

Wang and Kerry are expected to discuss adopting a resolution at the UN Security Council, proposing tougher restrictions on North Korea following the country's 6 January nuclear test and 7 February rocket launch in violation of existing sanctions.

Shortly after North Korea launched a long-range rocket carrying a satellite, the United States and South Korea jointly announced they will begin formal talks on the feasibility of THAAD deployment as part of efforts to cope with North Korea's nuclear and missile threats.

THAAD is designed to intercept ballistic missiles flying at high altitudes inside and outside the atmosphere.

China and Russia oppose the deployment of THAAD in South Korea, saying the missile system could hamper their strategic interests.

The United States has dismissed their concerns, insisting the missile system will be focused solely on defence against North Korea.—*Kyodo News*

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Former Thai PM Thaksin warns on economy, says no deal with military

SINGAPORE — Fugitive former Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra warned Thailand's ruling generals yesterday that a prolonged stay in power will only worsen economic hardship in Southeast Asia's second-largest economy.

The junta, which took power following a May 2014 coup, has struggled to revive Southeast Asia's second-largest economy amid falling exports and high household debt and critics say economic mismanagement is the biggest threat to its hold on power.

Speaking to Reuters in Singapore, Thaksin, 66, said the junta lacked the vision and talent to fix an economy in disarray.

"It is a government with no freedom and no pool of talent to drive the economy," Thaksin told Reuters. "The longer they stay, the longer economic hardship is going to be there."

A decade of turbulent politics has pitted Thaksin and his sister, former Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra, whose government was ousted in the 2014 coup, against a royalist-military establishment that sees the Shinawatras as a threat.

Thaksin yesterday denied long-standing reports he had struck a backroom deal with the military to leave his personal and family interests untouched in exchange for a retreat from politics.

"We are not talking. I have never telephoned anyone. I don't know why I would get in touch with them and I have no need to," Thaksin said.

Thaksin has lived in self-imposed exile for nearly eight years, mainly in Dubai.

In 2010, he urged his "red shirt" followers to mobilise protests calling for elections that ended in a bloody confrontation with the military in which more than 90 people died. His legacy of village welfare and cheap rural loans made him a hero in red shirt country in the rural north and northeast where he still commands huge respect.

But critics, including the urban elite, accuse Thaksin, a former police colonel turned telecoms tycoon, of widespread corruption. He was sentenced to two years in prison in 2008 for graft in a land purchase case, which he says was politically-motivated.

The May 2014 coup was the

latest instalment in more than a decade of bitter power struggle that has weakened an economy that was once a shining beacon of progress in Southeast Asia.

Thailand has gone through six prime ministers since Thaksin was removed in a 2006 coup and finds itself once again at a crucial political juncture.

The junta has promised elections next year. But some critics are sceptical, saying the military's objective is to block Thaksin's allies from returning to power and to consolidate the military's own powers by writing them into a new constitution.

Another undercurrent of the crisis is a deep anxiety over the issue of royal succession. Ailing King Bhumibol Adulyadej, 88, the world's longest reigning monarch, has been in hospital since May and has been treated for various illnesses.

His heir, Crown Prince Vajiralongkorn, does not command the same respect as his father. Ensuring a smooth succession will be a daunting task for whoever is in power.

Thaksin was reputed to be close to the prince but said he has not seen him since 2007.

"There is no relationship with him, only that I respect him," he said.

Thaksin's decision to speak to media this week has riled the junta.

"He remains a person without credibility who thinks he is above the law," government spokesman Major General Sansern Kaewkamnerd told reporters.

The government has rejected Thaksin's offer to hold formal talks on the country's political future.

"They said they can't talk to me because of the cases against me but a coup is a bigger crime," Thaksin said.

Thaksin, who said he spends his time meeting up with old friends including former heads of state, said he has adjusted to his nomadic life and makes, on average, 120 landings a year in his private jet.

He believes he will return to Thailand one day but won't go back to face charges or live under house arrest because of previous assassination attempts. "I am confident I can return," he said. "I am not the bad person I am accused of being."—*Reuters*

Pacquiao election rival calls for Bradley fight to be halted



Filipino boxer Manny Pacquiao, who is running for Senator in the May 2016 national elections, speaks to supporters during the start of elections campaigning in Mandaluyong city, Metro Manila on 9 February. PHOTO: REUTERS

MANILA — The Philippine election commission will decide on Tuesday whether a boxing match between Manny Pacquiao, who is standing in May's vote, and American welterweight champion Timothy Bradley violates polling rules.

On 9 May, more than 54 million people in the Philippines will vote for a president, vice-president, 300 lawmakers and thousands of local government posts.

Pacquiao, who has courted controversy with comments

against gays and same-sex marriage, is running for one of 12 vacant seats in the Senate, the upper house of parliament.

Pacquiao, a former eight division world champion, said he will make his final ring appearance on 9 April in Las Vegas against Bradley, the reigning WBO welterweight champion.

Walden Bello, a former congressman, has asked the election commission to investigate whether the bout gives Pacquiao undue advantage at the polls because

of high-profile advertising and publicity surrounding the boxing match.

Chairman Andres Bautista told reporters his commission would discuss Pacquiao's case on Tuesday. A left-wing politician and a rival of Pacquiao for one of the Senate seats, Bello said he did not want the commission to disqualify the boxer and urged Pacquiao to postpone the fight.

"Postponement is an option for Manny if he wants to continue running for Senator," Bello said.

There was no immediate comment from Pacquiao. Boxing experts said it will be difficult to postpone the match because the two sides had signed a contract.

Last week, the world's largest sportswear-maker, Nike Inc, ended its sponsorship deal with Pacquiao after the Filipino boxer described gays as "worse than animals". Pacquiao remains popular in the Philippines, where opinion polls rank him 8th among four dozen candidates running for Senate seats.—Reuters

Indonesian police investigate four men deported from Singapore over terrorism

JAKARTA — The Indonesian police are investigating four men who were recently deported from Singapore over allegations of supporting the Islamic State group. Anton Bachrul Alam, a spokesman from the National Police, on Tuesday told reporters in Jakarta that the male quartet, who age between 15 to 49, were arrested in Singapore last week-end when they were allegedly en route to Syria where the IS is headquartered.

"We are now investigating them to find out more," Anton said, noting that the group are currently in the custody of the police's counterterrorism unit in Jakarta. Reports said that the quartet are members of Jamaah Anshorut Daulah, which is one of three Indonesian radical groups supporting the IS.

The four are believed to be followers of Aman Abdurrahman, one of the most influential hardline clerics in Indonesia who is currently in jail for terrorism.

Aman, who is believed to have recruited hundreds of Indonesians to be the militants for the IS, met the four suspects from his religious boarding school in West Java. The group had flown into Singapore from Soekarno-Hatta International Airport in Jakarta before traveling to Malaysia's Johor and spent three days there and then returning to Singapore, according to Indonesian media.—Xinhua

Angry victims heckle Modi ally after Indian riots kill 19

ROHTAK — A political ally of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi was shouted down yesterday by a crowd angered by rioting in a northern state that destroyed businesses, paralysed transport and cut water supplies to metropolitan Delhi.

The chief minister of Haryana, Manohar Lal Khattar was heckled by local people in the town of Rohtak, northwest of the capital, after they objected to his comments promising that they would receive compensation.

More than a week of unrest involving the Jat rural caste has challenged the authority of Modi, who was elected in 2014 with the largest majority in three decades but has publicly ignored the outburst of anger over a lack of jobs.

Although Jat leaders reached a deal late on Monday to end more than a week of protests that killed 19 people and injured 170, anger was still boiling among the victims whose livelihoods had

been ruined.

Live TV pictures showed Khattar giving up his attempt to address angry people on the street. After retreating indoors to give an impromptu news conference, he repeated his promise of compensation only to be shouted down again.

Soon after Modi won national power, Khattar led his nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party to power in Haryana, a state of 25 million people, for the first time.

There was a trail of destruction through the town, one of several to be hit by Jat agitation to demand more government jobs and college places, with one Hyundai dealership gutted. Traders who staged an earlier sit-down protest said they had lost everything.

"I had two showrooms on the road; both were first looted and then set on fire. I have nothing left now," Anil Kumar told Reuters Television.

Kumar appealed to Modi

and to chief minister Khattar for compensation: "Are we not humans? Don't our votes count? Why did they not have any mercy on us? Don't we pay our taxes?"

Modi has remained silent through the worst social unrest of his 20 months in office. A senior government official said he would give a statement in due course to parliament, which convened for its budget session yesterday.

Finance Minister Arun Jaitley next week presents his annual budget. He is expected to announce big hikes in public sector pay that would make it hard to free up funds for investment without borrowing more money.

Thousands of troops were deployed to quell the protests, which flared on Monday near Sonipat when a freight train was torched and, according to reports, police shot dead three protesters. Jats also attacked buses in neighbouring Rajasthan.

Disruption has been huge,



Demonstrators from the Jat community shout slogans as they block the Delhi-Haryana national highway during a protest at Sampla village in Haryana, India, on 22 February. PHOTO: REUTERS

with at least 850 trains cancelled, 500 factories closed and business losses estimated at as much as \$5 billion by one regional lobby group. India's largest car maker, Maruti Suzuki, shut two factories at the weekend because its supply of components was disrupted.

The army on Monday retook control of a canal that supplies three-fifths of the water to Delhi, a metropolis with a population of over 20 million. A key sluice gate was reopened, but protesters sought to cut the water supply at another place.—Reuters

OPINION

To achieve inclusive growth and shared prosperity

Khin Maung Aye

Myanmar's economy has the potential to grow rapidly up to around eight per cent per annum in real terms over the next five years according to a World Bank's news release issued on 23rd February. The news release suggested that eight policy be chosen in order to ensure economic growth. It is true that only when we can effectuate the growth in economy, will we

be able to provide greater job opportunities and generate higher incomes for our people. It is worth mentioning here in this juncture that World Bank has explored development opportunities as well as restructuring choices for the policy makers to ponder over.

As known to all, the incumbent government has achieved a landmark in its political and economic reform process. The achievement in economic growth is to be continued to effectuate by the next regime. As pointed out by Ulrich Zachau, World Bank Country Director for Southeast Asia, the great opportunities for Myanmar is to turn continued strong economic growth into better lives for all the people of Myanmar. According to him, three policy directions will be key to help achieve such inclusive growth: the further opening and diversification of the economy with a level playing field for the private sector and structural shifts towards more productive and labour intensive activities; nation-wide programmes to

achieve, over time, universal access to basic education, health, and energy services of reliable quality; and transparency and accountability in the public sector.

As we have a long way to go to overcome the challenges to narrow the disparities in many aspects, we expect both the incumbent and the next regime to adopt the aforesaid three policy directions to promote inclusive growth and shared prosperity.

Write for us

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

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

A Visit to Zalun and Dhanubyu

Dr. Saw Mra Aung

WHEN our mini-bus left the toll-gate at the edge of Hlaingtharyar, it was nearly 5:30 am. But everything around was still in obscurity of darkness except the faint light shed by the road-side lamp-posts lining the Yangon-Pathein high-way. After the bus had covered half a mile, all the lamp-posts on both road-sides were with no more light. With clouds of mist raised from the swampy lands in some places, it seemed to be even much darker. I looked right and left for some time but saw nothing apart from the vague silhouettes of tall trees. So I, with my eyes closed, let my mind wander wherever it fancied me. The bus went on quickly in the dark. Sometimes, I fell into doze. Sometimes, I was awakened with a jerk when the driver applied the brake. When it neared the Nyaungdon Bridge at 7 pm, the sun, like an orange ball, started to peep out slowly from the eastern horizon, dispersing darkness from the world. All things were then visible to us. Just before the bridge, the high-way branched out into two- the one leading to Pathein and the other to Hinthada. Our bus followed the latter.

We were now on the way to Zalun and Dhanubyu on the western banks of the Ayeyawady River. The Nyaungdon Bridge and the Yangon-Hinthada railway were found spanning the Ayeyawady River, being parallel to each other. It was wonderful for us to see against the dawning sky the rail-way elevated some height from the land and river-surface, even higher than the bridge. We also espied the Bo Myat Tun Bridge, another Ayeyawady-crossing bridge, some distance on the left. A large sand-

bank was formed in the river, making it narrower and shallower. At the sight of the Ayeyawady River, I remembered the claim of G.E Harvey in his book titled "The History of Burma" that "Ayeyawady" derived from the Sanskrit term "Iravati" meaning "River of Refreshment", which was named after the "Ravi River" flowing in Panjab in India.

I saw some fish-breeding lakes on the other banks. The traffic on the high-way became heavier with the sun rising higher. In some places, the bus had to go slowly as the road was being upgraded with the use of heavy machines. I observed some heaps of granite, gneiss and some high-graded metamorphic rocks to be used in paving the road on the road-side. Some local people were commuting to and fro on motor-cycles and a sort of locally made vehicle called Toke-toke, etc. The road was lined with such trees as Kukko (Albizia lebbek), Malaysia Padauk, teak, Mezali (Cassia siamea), manogo, plum, etc. Except the road, all were low-lying. So some of them were inundated with water. I was aware that some of the inundated areas were turned into fish-breeding lakes bounded by embankments. On both sides of the road were stretching many deep green fields of French bean, green-pea, and ground-nut but a few fields turning yellowish green. Many farm-hands were pulling bean-plants in some fields while some were threshing the already-pulled ones by hand as well as by machine. In addition to bean-fields, there were also a few betel and gourd plantations on the road-sides. Sun-flower plantations and corn-fields were also sporadically found amongst bean-fields on the road-sides. With their economy thriving and transport improving, villages on the road seemed to become more devel-

oped and populous and bigger to the extent that they seemed to join one another with no gap between them. Some bean and pulse brokerage-houses and rice-mills were found at the edge of some villages. Due to development, some villages took on the town-cum-village looks with satellite towers, multi-medium rooms, factories, hospitals, schools, new brick-houses, company-offices, etc. We made a stop-over at a tea-shop on the high-way outside Dhanubyu at 7:30 am to fill our empty stomach. Then we continued on our trip along the high-way skirting round Dhanubyu and reached Zalun at 8:10 am. Upon arrival at Zalun, we went straight to the Man Aung Myin Pyidaw Pyan Phayagyi. When we reached the precincts of the Buddha image, some child-peddlers ran after us to sell their snacks and goods competitively. We had to elbow our way rapidly through the pilgrims to escape from them. The Man Aung Myin Pyi Daw Pyan Buddha Image was housed in a gilded pavilion with a multi-tiered roof standing sublimely in a large precincts fenced by enclosure-walls. Its interior and interior walls were gilded. They were embellished with murals depicting some episodes from the Ten Great Jatakas and the Buddhavamsa including the Great Victories of the Buddha, etc. Some stone-inscriptions recording the history of this Buddha image were set up on the terrace. The stone-inscriptions read thus: Just the Buddha departure from Dhannavati, at the request of King Candasuriya, the Buddha had the Mahamuni Buddha image cast out of alloy of five noble metals (Pancaloha), together with other three images such as Shin Kyaw Muni, Shwe Bon Tha Muni and Man Aung Myin Muni to leave behind in Dhannavati for

public devotion on his behalf. When King Bodaw occupied Rakhine in 1784, son of King Bodaw conveyed the Maha Muni Buddha Image, the Shwe Bon Tha Muni Image and the Man Aung Myin Muni to Amarapura through the Tanuggup Pass. When they came to Padaung across Pyi, the crown-prince left the Shwe Bon Tha Muni Image at a small village near present Sinte on the entreaty of the Rakhines. Then the Maha Muni Image and the Man Aung Myin Muni Image were carried on to Amrapura. On their arrival at Amrapura, the Maha Muni Image was housed at a brick-pavilion in a locality today called Myauk Pyin Quarter in Mandalay and the Man Aung Myin Muni Image was kept at a golden pavilion in the palace. When the British occupied Mandalay, the Man Aung Myin Muni Image was taken to Zalun by Zalun Myothugyi U Shwe Pwint. But after the British had occupied the whole Myanmar, they forcibly brought the Man Aung Myin Muni Image, other bronze Buddha images and other copper and bronze utilities to Bombay in India. It was kept in relegation in a Godaung. When Queen Victoria came to Dehli on a visit, she suffered from irremediable headache. One night, she dreamed that she had to send back the Man Aung Myin Muni Image to Myanmar; otherwise, a great danger would befall her empire and her. So the queen, out of fear, asked her men to search for the image to find it and, after combing through many antiques kept in the Godaung for hours, it was found among other Buddha images issuing rays of various colours. Due to this phenomenal occurrence, the image was immediately sent back to Hinthada and then to Zalun in Myanmar. So it was later known as the Pyi Daw Pyan Buddha Image

meaning "The Buddha Image Which Returned to his Own Country"

Then we proceeded to the U Thila Pagoda standing in Lanmadaw (South) Quarter in Zalun at 9:30 pm. When we got there, I saw a few pilgrims on the terrace paying homage to the pagoda and to the statue of U Thila kept in a pavilion on the side of the terrace. I worshipped the pagoda and encircled it clock-wise. Meanwhile, I found two stone inscriptions erected in a shed, recording the life accounts of U Thila. These epigraphic records said thus: U Thila was an Arahat known to Myanmar, especially for his supernatural power during Colonial Period. He, as a forest-dwelling monk, submitted himself to ten Dutingas (Austere Practices), was strict with Vinaya (Rules of the Holy Order), and the founder of the Kyakhetwaing Pariyatti Learning Center in Bago which was reputed for its meticulous observance of the Vinaya. One day, while he was crossing the rail-way near Khundaing Village in Bago Township, the express train coming from Mandalay came to a halt by itself and could move on only after his crossing. The passengers on the train marveled at this miracle and could not help but bow to him in veneration from where they were seated. On another occasion, hunter U Kaw shot him meditating in a bush three times with his rifle, mistaking him for a deer but the rifle did not work. Only when he shot upwards to the sky, the rifle worked normally. When he often came across some wild elephants which ran amock in the forest, they did not harm him but were humbled due to the power of his Metta (Loving-kindness). On some nights also, tigers and boas came and stayed with him in the forests. While he was on a

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Cargo ships are seen in the Ayeyawady River.

PHOTO: AUNG THANT KHAING

Water levels of Ayeyawady River to continue to rise over next five days

THE Water level of the Ayeyawady River in Myitkyina will continue to rise six feet (180 centimeters) over the next five days, said an official from the Department of Meteorology and Hydrology in Mandalay yesterday.

The river's water level in Myitkyina rose 12 feet (360 centimeters) within 16 hours following the untimely rains in Kachin State.

It is the beginning of the El Niño event as the recent surge in water levels of Ayeyawady Riv-

er in February is unusual, said U Than Zaw, assistant director of the department.

Water level of the river in Mandalay is also expected to rise 500 centimeters from the current level of 350 centimeters over the next five days, added the assistant director.

With water level rise, sandbanks of the Ayeyawady River will be covered with water and the waterway will be widened, said U Toe Aung Lin, deputy director of

Water Resources Utilisation Department in Mandalay, calling on watercrafts to follow the previous waterway to avoid possible unwanted accidents.

Likewise, the Department of Meteorology and Hydrology announced necessary measures need to be taken by watercrafts following the rise in water levels and called on famers dealing with cultivation on the sandbanks to be alert to the threat of water level rise.—Aung Thant Khaing

International Furniture Fair Singapore (IFFS) to be held in Singapore

THE International Furniture Fair Singapore (IFFS) will take place at the Singapore EXPO Convention and Exhibition Centre in Singapore from 10 to 13 March.

The Myanmar Rattan and Bamboo Entrepreneurs Association and the Wood Based Furniture Association will exhibit Myanmar furniture products at the event with the aim of having a chance to study how to create the furniture products and their designs, how to display their products in the booths from various countries and achieving international recognition

for Myanmar furniture products and handicrafts via the event, said U Nyan Win, the chairman of the Wood Based Furniture Association.

The Singapore Furniture Industry Council has provided 100 square metres for Myanmar exhibitors.

Six Myanmar Companies—two companies from the Wood Based Furniture Association and four from the Myanmar Rattan and Bamboo Entrepreneurs Association—will showcase their furniture products through 10 booths.—Soe Win (MLA)



Furniture being display at the Singapore EXPO Convention and Exhibition Centre. PHOTO: SOE WIN

A Visit to Zalun and Dhanubyu

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visit to Zalun to demarcate the boundary of an ordination hall, he demised on the 3rd waning of Kason in the year of 1269 M.E. After his body had been cremated, numerous his bodily relics remained. All his relics including ashes issued brilliant rays. Even the dirt of the earth where his body was cremated miraculously sent forth brilliant rays at night. So the villagers from all parts of Myanmar thronged to the cremation site and dug the soil including the dirt of the relics to the extent that it was reduced to be a hole. So a small pagoda was built over it and named the U Thila Pagoda. I again worshipped the statue of this Sasana hero in great adoration. At 10 am, we left the U Thila pagoda for Dhanubyu.

We had lunch at an inn near the clock-tower in downtown Dhanubyu. Then we drove to the Ohmardanti Beach on the bank of the Ayeyawaddy River. When we got to it at 12, I found some make-shift stalls lining the footpath leading to the beach. The beach was packed with holiday-makers from neighbouring towns and villages. We took a motored-boat to the newly-formed island, which was a fifteen-minute ride from the bank. The island was edged with stretches of sands. We drank coconut-milk at a stall roofed with

thatches on the island. I observed some people sporting happily in the water and some playing football in the sands in the heat of the sweltering sun. At 1 pm, we made our way to the Sadhammajotikarama Monastery where there was the tomb of Mahabandula who died from the bomb-shell of the British on 1st April, 1826 while the Myanmar army led by him was launching a counter-resistance on the colonialists who raided the town from the direction of the Ayeyawady River. When we paid respect to Ven. Dhammalankara, Presiding Sayadaw of the Sadhammajotikarama, he related to us that the tomb of Mahabandula was lost amongst buses in oblivion for some years and that only after a British Ayeibai (Deputy Commissioner) named Mr. Robert discovered it during the Colonial Period, he renovated it with an epitaph recording the brief life account of Mahabandula on both faces -in Myanmar on the front and in English on the back- erected at the head. On the right of this monastery was the Mahabandula Park where the statue of Mahabandula riding a horse was set up on a stone pedestal at the centre. At 2pm, we continued on our trip to the Pyi Lone Chan Tha Pagoda standing on Yangon-Hinthada high-way in Yedwington Village tract of Dhanubyu Township. It was a gilded

pagoda rising to the height of 55 cubits and 2 maiks. It is said that the original pagoda was built by King Siridhammasoka and renovated under the auspices of Khin Ma Kan Sayadaw and his lay disciples such as U Aung Zan, U Maung Gyi and U Bo Shein in the year 1275 M.E. To our amazement, it was surrounded by four pavilions housing 399 marble slabs, on both sides of which were inscribed the Three Baskets of the Dhamma in Pali with Myanmar alphabets. At these marble slabs, I was reminded of 729 marble slabs recording the Tipitaka erected within the precincts of the Kuthodaw Phayagyi at the base of Mandalay Hill after the Fifth Buddhist Synod held in Mandalay in 1871. It is known that the donors of these marble slabs were U Zan and Daw Hnin Ei and that they contributed 150 kyats for each slab and the expenditure to be incurred for construction of the four pavilions to house the slabs. I looked at the statues of the two donors in awe of their undiminished ardour for the perpetuation of the Sasana. After studying these slabs, we had no place en route to drop in on. So we started our home-ward trip at 2: 13 pm.

Our mini-bus was bound for home along Yangon-Hinthada high way. Many villages such as Nandawgon, Htaukshagon,

Phayathonezu, Nyaungchaung, Yaile, Thabyu, Kawkaleik, etc situated on the road-side swirled behind quickly. Now and then, the parts of Yangon-Hinthada railway parallel to the car-road came into sight. At 2: 40 pm, the bus arrived at the Nyaungdon Bridge. I looked down and saw a ship dredging sand along the fringe of the island formed in the mid of the river. We made a brief stop at a tea-shop on the side of Nyaungdon, at the junction of Yangon-Pathein and Yangon-Hinthada high ways. When we left the tea-shop, I had a chance to look at the scenes veiled by darkness and mist in the morning. I noticed there were more gourd, betel, ridged gourd, and papaya plantations and corn and paddy fields on the side of Nyaungdon. When our bus passed by Thazin Yekyaw Village, I saw many fish-breeding ponds and lakes with fowl-farms constructed either on their bunds or on the water-surface. Some trees like areca-nut, banana, papaya and mangoes were growing on the bunds of the ponds and lakes. Herons, individually or in group, were also found standing in the shallow areas of the lakes. Some villagers were going about in boats along the canals leading to the lakes and ponds. A large fish-feed factory, which produced the feeds required for all the

fish-breeding lakes in the environs, was also found on the side of the road. There were also Thabyay (Eugenia) plantations. When it came to 4pm, we reached Sarmalauk Junction. It assumed a new look with new and modern buildings with its economic boom, bolstered by its improved transport and rice fields, bean fields and fish-breeding lakes and ponds in its neighbourhood. At 4:30, we arrived back safe and sound at Hlaingthayar.

In brief, as we could feast our eyes on the beautiful scenery on the way, it was a really rewarding and restful trip for us. It is noticed that since the Ayeyawady delta was formed of young sedimentary rocks aged 300,000 years, it had not yet undergone any geological activities. So much of the land remained flat as alluvial plains criss-crossed with rivers and creeks favouring agriculture and fishery industry. Today, on account of better transport and foreign direct investment, the socio-economic patterns of these regions have changed. The author thinks that if the agricultural produces and fishery products of these regions can be developed into value-added products with the use of modern technology, these deltaic regions will be more prosperous and developed in not so distant future.

Rubio gets boost from Republican endorsements, Cruz missteps

WASHINGTON — Republican presidential candidate Marco Rubio received boosts Monday in his drive to become the mainstream Republican alternative to front-runner Donald Trump, with a string of high-profile endorsements and missteps by rival Ted Cruz's campaign.

Rubio, who eked out a second-place finish in South Carolina's primary by fewer than 1,000 votes over Cruz on Saturday, racked up endorsements from prominent Republicans including US Senator Orrin Hatch of Utah, Arkansas Governor Asa Hutchinson and former presidential candidate Bob Dole.

Rubio and Cruz came out of South Carolina with sharper criticism of Trump, who swept the Southern state with a comfortable margin of victory. At the same time, the two senators' rivalry intensified - and soured.

Cruz fired his main spokesman, Rick Tyler, on Monday

afternoon over a video that falsely showed Rubio dismissing the Bible.

Tyler had apologised late on Sunday for posting "an inaccurate story" involving a video purporting to show Rubio referring to the Bible and saying, "Not many answers in it." Tyler had retweeted a link to the misleading video and posted it on Facebook.

Cruz fired Tyler the next day, saying his campaign did not question the faith of other candidates. "That's why I'm asking for Rick Tyler's resignation," Cruz said.

The first-term senators from Texas and Florida are locked in a battle to become their party's alternative to political outsider Trump in Nevada's caucus on Tuesday, the last Republican presidential contest before the busy voting month of March. Tyler's dismissal came amid intense criticism of the Cruz campaign as dishonest from both Rubio and Trump.

Rubio spokesman Alex Conant called Cruz a "candidate willing to do or say anything to get elected" and urged him to apologize.

"There is a culture in the Cruz campaign, from top to bottom, that no lie is too big and no trick too dirty," he said.

Trump seized the opportunity to pile on Cruz, whom he has repeatedly characterized as a liar.

"Wow, Ted Cruz falsely suggested Marco Rubio mocked the Bible and was just forced to fire his Communications Director. More dirty tricks!" the billionaire businessman from New York said on Twitter. "Ted Cruz has now apologised to Marco Rubio and Ben Carson for fraud and dirty tricks. No wonder he has lost Evangelical support!" continued Trump, who has derided Cruz for failing to live up to expectations he would get solid support from evangelical Christians in South Carolina. —Reuters

Greek police remove migrants from Macedonian border as more land in Piraeus



Migrants rest next to a border fence at the Greek-Macedonian border, after additional passage restrictions imposed by Macedonian authorities left hundreds of them stranded near the village of Idomeni, Greece, on 23 February, 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

ATHENS — Greek police started removing migrants from the Greek-Macedonian border yesterday after additional passage restrictions imposed by Macedonian authorities left hundreds stranded while more were ferried from islands to Greece's main Piraeus port.

The migrants had squatted on rail lines in the Idomeni area on Monday after attempting to push through the border to Macedonia, angry at delays and additional restrictions in crossing. They were expected to be taken to relocation camps inside Greece.

Greek police and empty buses had entered the area be-

fore dawn, a Reuters witness said. In one area seen from the Macedonian side of the border, about 600 people had been surrounded by Greek police, the witness said.

There were an estimated 1,200 people at Idomeni, in their vast majority Afghans or individuals without proper travel documents. A crush developed there on Monday after Macedonian authorities demanded additional travel documentation, including passports, for people crossing into their territory.

Some countries used by migrants as a corridor into wealthier northern Europe are imposing restrictions on passage, prompt-

ing those further down the chain to impose similar restrictions for fear of a bottleneck in their own country.

But there are concerns at what may happen in Greece, where an influx continues unabated to its islands daily from Turkey. On Tuesday morning, a further 1,250 migrants arrived in Athens by ferry from three Greek islands. "It's a difficult management exercise. I don't know if the planning is adequate. The flows are increasing, more ships are coming," Piraeus mayor Yannis Moralis told Mega TV during a visit at the port's station where migrants had gathered. —Reuters

NEWS IN BRIEF

Michigan Uber driver admits role in deadly shooting spree: police

KALAMAZOO, (Mich) — A man working as an Uber driver admitted to the fatal weekend shootings of six people in Kalamazoo, Michigan, a police detective testified on Monday in a case raising questions about how the car service vets its drivers.

Jason Dalton, 45, was denied bail as he made his first court appearance on 16 charges including six of murder that can bring life in prison. Dalton told detectives "he took people's lives", Kalamazoo Public Safety Detective Cory Ghiringhelli testified in a county district court ahead of the suspect's arraignment.

Dalton appeared via a video link and was seen on a monitor at the Kalamazoo County court wearing glasses and dressed in an orange prison jumpsuit. When asked if he had anything to say, Dalton, who appeared emotionless through the proceedings, said he preferred to "remain silent". —Reuters

Smoke forces JAL aircraft passengers to evacuate in Hokkaido

SAPPORO — Smoke filled the cabin of a Japan Airlines Co. plane bound for Fukuoka yesterday afternoon before takeoff at Chitose airport in Hokkaido, forcing the evacuation of 159 passengers and six crew members.

At least four passengers were injured when evacuating the Boeing 737 aircraft via inflatable slides, according to rescue officials. The four passengers were taken to hospital.

Smoke was emitted from the aircraft's right engine as the aircraft was waiting to take off at around 3pm, according to the airline and the transport ministry.

According to police investigating the accident, the engine stalled after sucking in snow and there was an explosive sound when a pilot restarted it. —Kyodo News

Migrant, refugee flows to Europe top 100,000 in 2016 — IOM

GENEVA — More than 100,000 migrants and refugees have arrived in Greece and Italy already this year, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) said yesterday.

They include at least 97,325 landing on Greek islands and 7,507 in Italy, the IOM said in a statement issued in Geneva.

"Over 410 migrants and refugees have also lost their lives during the same period, with the eastern Mediterranean route between Turkey and Greece continuing to be the deadliest, accounting for 321 deaths," the IOM said. —Reuters

Indonesia sinks 30 boats to fight illegal fishing

JAKARTA — Indonesia has sunk 30 impounded foreign and local boats as the world's largest archipelago nation continued its campaign against illegal fishing in its rich oceans.

Among the 30 scuttled empty vessels, 11 were identified from Viet Nam, eight from Malaysia, seven from the Philippines and the rest from Indonesia.

The action, which was witnessed by the Indonesian Anti-Illegal Fishing Task Force, the Indonesian Navy, National Police, Indonesian Maritime Security Agency, and the Attorney General's Office, took place separately Monday in five different locations across the country. —Xinhua

Cote d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso to cooperate in war against terrorism

ABIDJAN — Burkina Faso's Foreign Minister Alpha Barry who was on a visit to Abidjan on Monday said his country will cooperate with Cote d'Ivoire in the fight against terrorism.

"Cote d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso authorities have agreed to unite their efforts in the fight against terrorism," Barry said, adding that both countries will also reinforce their bilateral relations.

The foreign minister said he had discussed with Cote d'Ivoire's President Alassane Ouattara about insecurity issues that both countries are exposed to. Barry thanked Cote d'Ivoire for last week's extradition of a soldier who took part in last year's failed coup attempt in Burkina Faso. —Xinhua

New round of Kabul meetings hope to set date for Afghan peace talks

KABUL — Officials from Afghanistan, Pakistan, the United States and China meeting in Kabul yesterday expect to set a date for the first direct talks with the Taliban since a previous round in the peace process broke down last year.

At a meeting in Islamabad last month, officials from the four countries said face-to-face talks between the Western-backed government in Kabul and the Taliban should begin by the end of February.

Afghan Foreign Minister Salahuddin Rabbani repeated a call for the Taliban to join the talks and said Tuesday's meeting would prepare the way for direct meetings to open soon.

"We want this group to design the details for talks between Afghan government and groups of Taliban by the end of February," he said at the opening of the meeting.

On Monday, the powerful chief of the Pakistan army, Gen. Raheel Sharif met officials from Qatar, where the Taliban maintains a political office, to prepare the way for Tuesday's meeting, the fourth in a series of



Delegations from Afghanistan, Pakistan, United States and China discuss during a meeting in Kabul, Afghanistan on 23 February. PHOTO: REUTERS

quadrilateral encounters aimed at laying the ground for full peace talks.

The Taliban, riven by factional infighting since last year's announcement of the death of the movement's founder Mullah

Mohammad Omar some two years earlier, has not yet given a clear indication about whether it will take part in any talks.

New leader Mullah Akhtar Mansour has laid down preconditions for taking part in any

talks, including the withdrawal of all foreign forces, while a breakaway faction that opposes him has rejected any negotiations.

But officials in Kabul have expressed hopes that at least

some parts of the movement can be persuaded to join.

"I think there's a lot of Taliban that want to come to the peace table," the outgoing commander of NATO forces in Afghanistan Gen. John Campbell said earlier this month. "That's what's going to be hard, to get all the right people to the table."

A Taliban spokesman said representatives would not be at the meeting on Tuesday.

Tuesday's four-way talks in Kabul come against a backdrop of continuing violence and increasing military pressure from the Taliban, which has stepped up its insurgency since the withdrawal of most international troops from combat in 2014.

Over the weekend, Afghan officials confirmed that troops had pulled out of two key districts in Helmand, leaving the entire northern half of the volatile province in the hands of the insurgents.

At the same time, insurgents have kept up their suicide bombing campaign, with 14 people killed in an attack on a clinic in Parwan Province north of Kabul on Monday.—Reuters

Pentagon to submit plan to Congress for closing Guantanamo prison



A Guantanamo detainee holds onto a fence inside the Camp 6 high-security detention facility at Guantanamo Bay US Naval Base in 2010.

PHOTO: REUTERS

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon is expected to submit to Congress yesterday President Barack Obama's long-awaited plan for closing the US military prison at Guantanamo Bay, setting up a battle with lawmakers who oppose his efforts.

Obama, whose pledge to shut the facility at the US naval base in Cuba dates back to the start of his presidency in 2009, is seeking to make good on his promise before he leaves office next January.

Pentagon spokesman Captain Jeff Davis said the administration intended to meet Tuesday's deadline to present its detailed proposal

for closing the facility. There are still 91 prisoners detained there.

"We understand the deadline is tomorrow and it's our intent to meet it," Davis told reporters.

US officials have said the plan would call for sending to their homelands or third countries detainees who have been cleared for transfer, now numbering 35, and bringing remaining prisoners, possibly several dozen, to US soil to be held in maximum-security prisons. Congress has banned such transfers to the United States since 2011.

Another option that will be cited in the administration's blue-

print will be the possibility of sending some prisoners overseas for prosecution and trial, one US official said.

The closure plan could also serve as a template for how to deal with future terrorism suspects captured in the fight against the Islamic State militant group.

However, the document will not name the alternative US prisons under consideration for housing detainees, US officials said. The administration wants to avoid fuelling any political outcry over specific sites during a US presidential election year.

Still, Pentagon officials have already surveyed a federal prison in Florence, Colorado, a military jail at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, and the Navy brig at Charleston, South Carolina.

An effort will also be made to speed up parole-style reviews to determine whether more prisoners can be added to the group cleared for release, officials said.

The plan will include costs for upgrading US facilities and housing the inmates there, according to a source familiar with the matter. The White House last year rejected one Pentagon proposal as too expensive, sending it back for revisions.

Republicans and some Democrats in Congress largely oppose proposals to move any of the prisoners to the United States.—Reuters

Spain arrests four with suspected links to Islamic militants

MADRID — Spanish and Moroccan police arrested four people accused of recruiting potential militants to fight in Syria and Iraq or to carry out attacks in Spain or Morocco, the Interior Ministry said yesterday.

Three Spaniards were detained in the Spanish enclave of Ceuta in northern Africa and one Moroccan in Nador, Morocco, as part of a joint operation between the two countries, the ministry said.

Including the arrests yesterday, Spain has detained 12 people with suspected links to Islamic militants so far this year.

In 2015, Spain arrested 102 people accused of connections

to the Islamic State, more than twice that in the previous year as police stepped up security measures after attacks in Paris.

Authorities also arrested nine people accused of belonging to and collaborating with a criminal and terrorist organisation due to connections with the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK).

Ceuta is one of two Spanish territories on the Moroccan coast - the other is Melilla — and has been a focus of Spanish anti-militant investigations. In March 2015 Spain said it had dismantled a militant Islamist cell in the enclave that it said was ready to attack either Spain or other targets in Europe.—Reuters

Air strikes target road out of rebel-held Aleppo: Observatory

BEIRUT — Air strikes targeted one of the last roads into opposition-held areas of Aleppo yesterday, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said, a day after the United States and Russia presented a ceasefire plan to begin Saturday.

Observatory Director Rami Abdulrahman described the air strikes as heavy and said they were believed to be carried out by Russian jets.

The targeted road links rebel-held parts of Aleppo with

rural areas to the west of the city that provide access to other opposition-held areas including Idlib Province. A Syrian army offensive backed by Russian air strikes and allied fighters from Lebanon and Iran earlier this month cut the most direct rebel supply route from opposition-held parts of Aleppo to the northern border with Turkey.

Government offensives are also targeting areas held by insurgents to the south of the city, and areas held by Islamic State to the east of the city.—Reuters

Fijian islands still cut-off after cyclone, fear of Zika and Dengue outbreaks

SYDNEY — Fiji sent boats yesterday carrying desperately needed aid to remote islands and coastal villages devastated by a powerful cyclone which killed at least 29 people, as aid workers warned of possible outbreaks of Zika and Dengue viruses.

There are fears the death toll could rise in the nation of 900,000 people when communication resumes with the smaller islands hit by Cyclone Winston on Saturday.

Aerial footage of outlying islands taken by the Royal New Zealand Air Force, and posted on the Fiji government's official website, showed whole villages flattened and flooded after Winston's destructive winds, up to 325 kph (200 mph), tore through the archipelago of 300 islands. Thousands of Fijians live in tin or wooden shacks in low-lying coastal areas.

Authorities have warned of "catastrophic" damage to Koro Island, Fiji's seventh-largest island, and more than 8,000 people continue to shelter in evacuation centres across the country.

Prime Minister Frank Bainimarama reassured Fijians that the government was doing all it could amid growing criticism of the



A remote Fijian village is photographed from the air during a surveillance flight conducted by the New Zealand Defence Force, on 21 February. PHOTO: REUTERS

slow emergency response in some parts of the country.

"We realise the desperate position that you are in," Bainimarama said in a statement after visiting an evacuation centre. "We will not rest until we have

reached you and given you the helping hand you so badly need and deserve."

"Unfortunately the recovery process will take time, perhaps a long time," he added. "Almost no part of our nation has been left

unscarred."

Aid workers warned of potential outbreaks of the Zika and Dengue viruses, both carried by mosquitoes which will breed in the stagnant water left by the storm.

"The threat of dengue and Zika in the coming days in Fiji is real," said Chris Hagarty, senior health programme manager at Plan International Australia.

"The period immediately following a disaster of this scale can be a particularly dangerous one."

The World Health Organisation declared a Zika outbreak in South America an international health emergency on 1 February, citing a "strongly suspected" relationship between Zika infection in pregnancy and microcephaly, a condition marked by unusually small heads that can result in developmental problems.

Much remains unknown about Zika, including whether the virus actually causes microcephaly. Brazil has confirmed more than 500 cases of microcephaly, and considers most of them related to Zika infections in mothers. Brazil is investigating more than 3,900 additional suspected cases of microcephaly.

Fiji's international airport at Nadi has reopened and an aeromedical evacuation team was being sent to outer islands yesterday to provide urgent support and supplies, including water and hygiene kits, medicines and access to shelter.—Reuters

Peru pipeline leaks in Amazon; two rivers polluted

LIMA — Ruptures in Peru's main oil pipeline have spilled 3,000 barrels of crude in an Amazonian region, operator Petroperu said on Monday, and the oil has polluted two rivers native villages rely on for water, according to government officials.

Two breaks in the pipeline have halted transportation of 5,000 to 6,000 barrels of oil per day, state-owned Petroperu said.

The oil has poured into the Chiriaco and Morona rivers in northwestern Peru, said national environmental regulator OEFA. At least eight native Achuar communities rely on the rivers for water, said Edwin Montenegro, a

local indigenous leader.

Peru's health ministry declared a water quality emergency in five districts near the spill.

State-owned Petroperu faces some 60 million soles (\$17 million) in fines if tests confirm that the spills, in late January and early February, hurt the health of locals, said OEFA.

It could take "some time" to resume operations, said Petroperu president German Velasquez.

Petroperu operates the pipeline and also refines the oil it transports, which had slowed in recent months to between 5,000 and 6,000 barrels per day amid slumping oil prices. The pipeline mostly

transports crude from block 192, operated by Pacific Exploration & Production Corp.

Heavy rains upended Petroperu's initial efforts to contain the damage as oil burst from retaining walls and spread into nearby rivers, said Montenegro.

TV images showed thickets of jungle sopped in black sludge and clean-up crews lifting buckets of crude from rivers.

Velasquez said a landslide likely triggered the first leak but the cause of the second rupture was unclear. The spills come as Petroperu has been preparing to take part in oil production with a private partner after more than

two decades of mostly refining, commercialising and transporting crude. The company had also planned to put up to 49 per cent of its actions on the Lima stock exchange. OEFA ordered Petroperu to replace parts of the pipeline and improve maintenance.

"It's important to note that the spills...are not isolated cases. Similar emergencies have emerged as a result of defects in sections of the pipeline," OEFA said in a statement. Velasquez said the company was conducting an evaluation of the pipeline, built in the 70s, to prevent any future spills, a process that could take up to two months.—Reuters

One dead, several injured after Dutch passenger train derails

AMSTERDAM — A Dutch passenger train derailed yesterday after hitting a maintenance crane during rush hour, killing one person and injuring several others, local media reported. Photos of the crash in Dalfsen, 120 km (75 miles) east of Amsterdam, showed four passenger cars on their side after colliding with the crane. Mayor Han Noten told Dutch radio broadcaster NOS that one person had died in the crash. The train was operated by Arriva, a subsidiary of Germany's Deutsche Bahn. A spokesman for Arriva could not immediately be reached for comment.—Reuters

UN agency bans lithium-ion batteries on passenger aircraft

MONTREAL — The UN aviation agency on Monday prohibited shipments of lithium-ion batteries as cargo on passenger aircraft, following concerns by pilots and plane makers that they are a fire risk.

Lithium metal batteries, which are used in watches, have already been banned on passenger planes globally. Lithium metal batteries, used in watches, are not rechargeable while lithium-ion batteries, used in cell phones and laptops, can be recharged.

The International Civil Aviation Organisation's 36-state governing council said the prohibition would be in effect as of 1 April, and would be maintained

until a new fire-resistant packaging standard is designed to transport the batteries. Lithium-ion batteries can still be transported on cargo planes.

The new packaging standard is expected by 2018, ICAO Council President Olumuyiwa Benard Aliu said in a statement.

The ban would be mandatory for ICAO member states.

Pilots and aircraft manufacturers are concerned that existing standards are not strong enough to contain lithium battery fires.

A 2015 working paper by an organization representing plane makers like Boeing Co found current firefighting systems on airliners could not "suppress or

extinguish a fire involving significant quantities of lithium batteries."

But one dangerous goods expert familiar with ICAO's thinking questioned whether a ban on lithium-ion batteries would really make passenger planes safer. He said instances of such battery fires usually involved deliberate mislabeling by shippers.

"When the industry banned the shipment of lithium-metal batteries, we saw instances of them being passed off as lithium ion batteries," said the expert, who was not authorized to speak publicly. "Those people who are not complying now won't comply with a prohibition."—Reuters



An aeroplane flies at sunset in Brasilia in 2011. PHOTO: REUTERS

Chile's small-scale miners battling to stay afloat amid copper rout

INCA DE ORO, (Chile) — Like his father before him, Alberto Carrizo has worked in Chile's copper mines since he was a teenager, supporting his family as prices for the metal boomed in recent decades.

But as copper prices have slid to a more than six-year low, Carrizo and his colleagues labouring away at the countless smaller mines that pock mark the Atacama desert are finding the buckets of ore they spend all day digging from the ground are fetching less and less money.

Some are responding by turning to gold mining, others are finding work in growing industries like renewable energy, while a dwindling few are hanging on, hoping prices will yet recover.

They are at the sharp end of a commodities downturn that was triggered by slowing growth in China and which has led half of all the small mining operations in top copper exporter Chile

to shut in the last eight years.

Although 93 per cent of the country's output comes from larger mines, a sharper drop in copper prices could send more small and medium-sized mines over the edge. Small mines generally employ up to 80 workers but are often much smaller, while medium-sized ones have a maximum of 400.

The mass closing of mines represents a potential social and political disaster for Michelle Bachelet, who has staked her centre-left presidency on improving social equality while keeping the country's famously successful economy ticking along. Copper makes up half of all of Chile's exports.

Mines of all sizes shed some 23,000 jobs last year alone, around 10 per cent of positions in the sector, making it by far the biggest loser in Chile's economy, according to data from the government's INE statistics

agency.

Carrizo, 59, was one of 100 workers laid off from a medium-sized operation last year.

Like many other miners who were let go by larger operations, Carrizo has since turned to small-scale mining and now spends his days 1,000 feet (305 m) underground, chipping away at the copper-rich bowels of a mountain he first visited while his father worked there in 1969.

But his stint at the Rodesia mine, which overlooks the dusty streets of the tiny mining outpost of Inca de Oro, may be short-lived.

"I've still got the strength to keep working another 10 or 15 years (but) things are complicated ... I'm going to look for a gold mine because prices are better," said Carrizo.

Like their larger peers, small- and medium-sized mining companies are coping with the copper price drop by cutting jobs, reduc-



Luis Cortes, an artisanal miner, holds up a metal sheet used to capture gold after submerging it in a mixture of water and ore, at a mill in a small copper and gold processing plant at the "Inca de Oro" (Inca gold) miners association near Copiapo city, north of Santiago, Chile, in 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

ing salaries and heaping more work onto fewer labourers. With leathery hands, miners at small-scale operations across the Atacama are painstakingly picking out rocks that contain higher-grade ore. When China's economy was still growing in double digits, or near there, it could hardly buy copper fast enough to manufacture wiring, cables and plumbing materials for

its construction boom. The metal sold for a giddy \$4.00 per pound or more - around double today's price - and miners would load trucks with as much material as possible.

But now some are turning to gold, whose safe-haven status has driven up prices for the precious metal nearly 15 per cent so far in 2016.

"A lot of miners are

moving to gold from copper because with the current level of the dollar it's very profitable," said Reinaldo Leiva, the top government mining authority in the Atacama region.

"For the miner who has been working in mining for generations, it's very difficult to switch to another activity because it's all he knows how to do," said Leiva.—Reuters

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV PANJA BHUM VOY NO (028N)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV PANJA BHUM VOY NO (028N) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 24.2.2016 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 Claim's Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.

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

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S INTERASIA LINES**

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV MAENAM 1 NO VOY (541N)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV MAENAM 1 VOY NO (541N) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 24.2.2016 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.

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

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MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S WAN HAI LINES PTE LTD**

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CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV KARIMU VOY NO (-)

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

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

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

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S BRIGHT SAIL SHIPPING
LTD.**

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MV SINAR BALI VOY NO ()

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

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

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Despite Grammy performance snafu, Adele regains Billboard top spot

LOS ANGELES — Adele may have cried all day after her shaky Grammy performance last week, but the British songstress reclaimed the top spot on the weekly Billboard 200 album chart on Monday as demand for her hit album “25” remained strong three months after its release.

Adele’s “25” climbed from No 2 after clocking a further 151,000 units across album and song sales and streaming activity, according to figures from Nielsen SoundScan. The album has sold a total of 8.3 million copies in the United States.

It features the song “All I Ask,” which Adele sang last week at the televised Grammy awards. But her performance was marred by technical issues when a microphone fell on the piano’s strings and the singer uncharacteristically hit sharp and flat notes.

Later in the week, Adele appeared on Ellen DeGeneres’ talk show and performed a flawless rendition of the song, accompanied by a candid interview in which she said she was “so embarrassed” and “cried

pretty much all day” after the Grammys.

Other Grammy performers that saw a boost in the top 10 of the Billboard 200 album charts included Canadian pop star Justin Bieber, who won his first Grammy award and climbed three spots to No 2 with his album “Purpose.”

Country musician Chris Stapleton, who picked up four Grammy awards, saw his “Traveller” album climb to No 5 from No 11; R&B star The Weeknd, who won two Grammys, had his “Beauty Behind the Madness” climb six spots to No 6; while Taylor Swift, who won the coveted album of the year Grammy Award, saw her “1989” record climb 12 spots to No 8.

The only new entry to crack into the top 10 this week was “Hymns” at No 4 by husband-and-wife country music duo Joey + Rory.

On the Digital Songs chart, which measures online song sales, Flo Rida’s “My House” held the top spot for a second week with 135,000 copies sold.—Reuters



Singer Adele performs “All I Ask” on stage at the 58th Grammy Awards in Los Angeles, California on 15 February. PHOTO: REUTERS

Producer Dr Luke accuses Kesha supporters of ‘trial by Twitter’

NEW YORK — Pop star Kesha’s former music producer on Monday said allegations that he had raped the singer were lies, and hit back at a “trial by Twitter” backed by some of music’s biggest names over Kesha’s bid to extricate herself from a recording contract.

Dr Luke, whose real name is Lukasz Gottwald, posted a series of tweets saying that people supporting Kesha’s claims of sexual assault against him were “getting behind an allegation only — motivated by money.”

“I didn’t rape Kesha and I have never had sex with her. Kesha and I were friends for many years and she was like my little sister,” the producer said.

“But lives can get ruined when there’s a rush to judgement before all the facts come out ... It’s sad that she would turn a contract negotiation into something so horrendous and untrue,” he added.

Anger and sympathy for the “Tik Tok” singer swelled after a New York judge ruled on Friday that Kesha, 28, could not be released from her six-album recording contract with Sony Music.

Kesha claimed in a 2014 lawsuit that Dr Luke raped and emo-

tionally manipulated her. Dr. Luke countersued and both cases have yet to

ful the truth is!” Kesha’s mother, Pebe Sebert, posted on Twitter on Sunday.

Dr Luke’s attorney, Christine Lepera, on Monday accused the singer and her legal team of conducting a “trial by



Kesha. PHOTO: REUTERS

come to trial.

Singer Taylor Swift has donated \$250,000 to Kesha to help her financial needs, while Lady Gaga, Kelly Clarkson, Miley Cyrus and Ariana Grande are among hundreds who have posted messages on Instagram and Twitter to the fast-growing #FreeKesha campaign.

“Most important for Kesha, is that these beautiful, powerful women are standing behind her, letting the world see how power-

Twitter, using a vicious smear campaign to ruin his reputation.”

She said the allegations in Kesha’s lawsuit are “outright lies that have been advanced to extort a contract renegotiation and money.”

Lepera said Kesha, who burst on the music scene in 2009, was “already ‘free’ to record and release music without working with Dr Luke as a producer if she doesn’t want to.” “Any claim that she isn’t ‘free’ is a myth,” Lepera said.—Reuters

‘Surprised to get lead role in Bollywood Diaries’

KOLKATA — Actor Raima Sen says she was surprised when director K D Satyam chose her for the role of a sex-worker in upcoming film “Bollywood Diaries”.

“I was in Mumbai when Satyam was scouting for faces for the character and did not attend the audition then,” says Raima, whose character of ‘Imli’ is a bubbly, vivacious girl not losing hope despite hardships in life.

“And so when one fine morn-

ing I got his offer for the role, I was pleasantly surprised. I asked him didn’t you come across any other female actor in Kolkata? You didn’t even know me earlier,” Raima said.

“Bollywood Diaries” is about the struggle of three unrelated persons. It releases on 26 February.

On the character of her co-actor Salim Diwan in the film, Raima said there are aspirants who consider themselves as gifted but

seldom get a break.

“This is very very true. I had myself seen such people in Mumbai,” Raima said and asserted that she seldom gets an edge over others for being from a well-known family of film personalities and is still working to prove her mettle in each and every work.

Ashish Vidyarthi, who is also part of the cast, said, “The film is about the extent people are ready to go to realise their dreams.—PTI

From heartthrob to Hollywood heavyweight, Leo DiCaprio is Oscar-bound

LOS ANGELES — In a roller-coaster movie awards season with no clear favorite in the Oscars best picture race, there is one sure bet - Leonardo DiCaprio, one of the world’s biggest celebrities, will finally take home the best actor statuette on Sunday.

DiCaprio’s fifth acting Oscar nomination, for his role as a fur trapper bent on revenge in “The Revenant,” will prove the charm, awards pundits say, and crown the actor’s transformation from teen heartthrob to Hollywood heavyweight.

“There are cases when a particular actor is seen as overdue, and this year it’s definitely Leonardo DiCaprio,” said Dave Karger,

chief correspondent of movie website Fandango. “What is great is that he is going to win for the right performance,” Karger said.

Twenty years after his first Oscar nomination as a blue-eyed teen in “What’s Eating Gilbert Grape,” DiCaprio, 41, has swept every major prize in the long Hollywood awards calendar for his role as taciturn Hugh Glass, who is left for dead in the wilderness after being mauled by a bear.

The actor carries the two-and-a-half hour film, which was shot in sub-zero temperatures over seven months, despite barely speaking after the bear rips out his character’s throat.

“He’s really good in the film.

It’s not like a throwaway award because of his career. I would be really stunned if he doesn’t win,” said Variety reporter Tim Gray.

DiCaprio has tried for years to shake off his image as the young man who sent women swooning in the 1990s with “Titanic” and “Romeo + Juliet,” even as he partied on yachts with a string of super-model girlfriends.

In “The Revenant”, the swaggering star of “The Wolf of Wall Street” and the smooth charmer of “The Great Gatsby” are barely recognizable under a greasy mane, straggly beard and frostbitten face.

Ironically, his very appearance may have boosted his Oscar prospects.

“What’s in Leo’s favor this year is that he uglifies himself on screen. He grows a scruffy beard, he rolls in the mud, he desperately needs a bath,” said Tom O’Neil, founder of awards tracker Goldderby.com. Despite the widespread critical acclaim, DiCaprio has taken no chances, playing an unusually active part in the hand-shaking, smiling marathon that plays out in restaurants, TV studios and on red carpets during awards season.

“He’s a notoriously reclusive star who is suddenly very available,” said O’Neil.—Reuters



Leonardo DiCaprio. PHOTO: REUTERS

Once more, Vienna ranked world's nicest city and Baghdad worst

VIENNA — Vienna, Austria's grand capital on the Danube river, offers the highest quality of life of all cities in the world, while the Iraqi capital Baghdad, once more, took its place at the bottom of the list compiled by consulting firm Mercer.

The survey of 230 cities helps companies and organisations determine compensation and hardship allowances for international staff.

It uses dozens of criteria such as political stability, health care, education, crime, recreation and transport.

Vienna's 1.7 million inhabitants benefit from the city's cafe culture and museums, theatres and

operas. Rents and public transport costs in the city whose architecture is marked by its past as the centre of the Habsburg empire are cheap compared with other western capitals.

Switzerland's Zurich, New Zealand's Auckland, Germany's Munich and Canada's Vancouver followed Vienna — which reached the best position for the seventh time in a row — in the top five of most pleasant cities to live in.

Baghdad was again ranked lowest in the world. Waves of sectarian violence have swept through the city since the American-led invasion in 2003.—Reuters



Runners cross the river Danube at Reichsbrücke bridge minutes after the start of the Vienna City Marathon in Vienna in 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

Family-friendly Labrador retriever still America's top dog



Sophia Rogers poses with her dog Bobby, an American Foxhound, during a news conference for the 2016 Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show in New York, on 11 February. PHOTO: REUTERS

NEW YORK — The Labrador retriever retained the title of America's most popular dog breed for the 25th consecutive year, even as the upstart French bulldog stole the limelight in New York and other big US cities, the American Kennel Club said on Monday.

The chunky Lab, known for its loping gait and easy-going nature, owes its enduring popularity to its well-deserved reputation as a family pet, said AKC Vice President Gina DiNardo.

"The Lab checks all the boxes," DiNardo said. "It comes in three different colors. Athletic people can play with it, run with it and swim with it. They are family-friendly and get along

with others."

But being beloved is not necessarily a springboard to elite honors. A Labrador has never won best in show at the Westminster Kennel Club's annual dog show since the prestigious event began in 1877.

By the same token, being an international superstar — like the German short-haired pointer who won Westminster last week — does not automatically translate into being America's dream dog.

The German short-haired pointer did not make the top 10 most popular breeds in US homes in 2015, trailing the pack at number 11, DiNardo said.

In addition to the Lab-

rador retriever, the top 10 list includes the German shepherd, golden retriever, bulldog, beagle, French bulldog, Yorkshire terrier, poodle, Rottweiler and boxer. Several of those most popular breeds have won Westminster's top honor, awarded four times each to the poodle and the boxer, two times each to the bulldog and the beagle and once each to the German shepherd and the Yorkshire Terrier.

But the Labrador retriever, the golden retriever, the French bulldog and the Rottweiler have never won Westminster's top honour, according to Westminster spokeswoman Lisa Peterson. In the century that AKC has been tallying the

most popular dogs, only four breeds have held that spot: the Labrador, poodle, beagle and cocker spaniel, DiNardo said. The Labrador boasts the longest reign on top, holding on for 25 consecutive years.

But the French bulldog, with its cute mug and bat-shaped ears, is gaining traction, especially among urbanites in New York, Miami, San Francisco and Honolulu, where the breed ranked higher than the Labrador last year.

"French bulldogs are smaller in size so very portable and good for apartment living, and they don't require lots of exercise so they fit into a more relaxed lifestyle," DiNardo said.—Reuters

mitv Myanmar International

(24-2-2016 07:00am ~ 25-2-2016 7:00am) MST

Today Fresh

07:03	Am	News
07:26	Am	Products Of Myanmar - Stone Of The Heavens
07:51	Am	One of the Useful Purposes of Bamboo
08:03	Am	News
08:26	Am	Myanmar Childhood Games (Ep - II)
08:34	Am	Lawka Nandar Wildlife Sanctuary And Its Rare Star Tortoises
09:03	Am	News
09:26	Am	Myanmar Leading Woman: May Sabe Phyu @ L. Hkawn Htoi
09:39	Am	Oboist and His Life
10:03	Am	News
10:26	Am	Myanmar's Export: Mango

10:36 Am "Myanmar's Traditions and Culture" Novicehood in Myanmar

(11:00 Am ~ 03:00 Pm) - Tuesday 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	Travelogue: A Tour in Korea (Part-6)
07:47	Pm	A Star for Great Achievement
08:03	Pm	News
08:26	Pm	Myanmar Traditional Identity (EP- 3) The Sphinx Of Egypt And The Manousiha Of Myanmar
08:40	Pm	A Tea Business: Pankwan (Part-2)
08:51	Pm	Indian Footsteps

(09:00 Pm ~ 11:00 Pm) - Today Repeat (09:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)
(11:00 Pm ~ 03:00 Am) - Tuesday Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)
(03:00 Am ~ 07:00 Am) - Today Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)
(For Detailed Schedule - www.myanmaritv.com/schedule)



Entertainment Channel

(24-2-2016, Wednesday)

6:00 pm

• Song of Yester Years

6:15 pm

• Fashion Show

6:45 pm

• Musical Programme

7:00 pm

• TV Drama Series

8:45 pm

• Catch Asia News

8:55 pm

• Teleplay

9:20 pm

• Joint Performance by State Orchestra and Traditional Orchestra

9:30 pm

• Myanmar Movie (Black & White)

From 24.2.2016 (Wednesday) 06:00 Pm
To 25.2.2016 (Thursday) 06:00 Pm

This schedule will be repeated four times in 24 hours.



Mercedes Formula One drivers Lewis Hamilton of Britain (L), Nico Rosberg of Germany (R) and the team's Executive Director Toto Wolff pose behind the new Mercedes F1 W07 hybrid car before the first testing session ahead of the upcoming season at the Circuit Catalunya-Barcelona in Montmelo, Spain, on 22 February. PHOTO: REUTERS

Hamilton enjoys best ever start to testing

BARCELONA — Triple Formula One world champion Lewis Hamilton completed the equivalent of nearly 2-1/2 race distances on what he said ranked as his best ever start to pre-season testing on Monday.

The Mercedes driver completed a whopping 156 laps at the Circuit de Catalunya — where the Spanish Grand Prix lasts for 66 — to eclipse the mileage of all his rivals as the new cars hit the track for the first time.

Ferrari's Sebastian Vettel, who was fastest overall and 0.470 of a second quicker than the 31-year-old Briton, did 69 laps in total.

"Today is just a real show of

just how amazing this team is," said Hamilton. "From as far as I can remember, and I've been driving a long time, I'm certain this is the most impressive first day I've had," he added.

"If you look back at the first days I've had in 2013 and maybe 2014, I had those glitches with the brakes so it's nice to have a clean day without any issues with the car. Really just go above and beyond." Hamilton, champion in 2014 and 2015 with Mercedes, had completed a race distance by lunchtime and told reporters anxious for first impressions that the car felt just like last year's dominant one.

Mercedes won 16 of 19 races last year, taking both the

driver and constructor titles, and have triumphed in 32 of the last 38 grands prix.

Valtteri Bottas was third quickest in a Mercedes-powered Williams in the morning but Red Bull's Daniel Ricciardo ended the day in that position with the Finn fourth.

McLaren's Jenson Button revived optimism at his Honda-powered team with 84 largely trouble-free laps in a refreshing change from a dismal 2015 when the former champions finished ninth out of 10. There was also a hint of change at the slower end with backmarkers

Manor, now using Mercedes engines, quicker than Renault and newcomers Haas and German rookie Pascal Wehrlein also doing more laps. Renault's British rookie Jolyon Palmer, whose former Lotus team were taken over by the carmaker in December, was last on the timesheets. Despite the strong showing, Hamilton — who has won the past two championships and is aiming to become the first Briton to win four world titles — said the season starting in Australia on March 20 would be tough. —Reuters

Sarri sent off as Napoli held at home by Milan

NAPLES, (Italy) — Coach Maurizio Sarri was sent off as Napoli wasted a chance to return to the top of Serie A when they were held 1-1 at home by AC Milan in a tense encounter on Monday. The hosts, 4-0 winners at San Siro earlier in the campaign, went ahead in the 39th minute when Lorenzo Insigne's 25-metre effort took a wicked deflection off Ignazio Abate and wrong-footed goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma.

Milan levelled five minutes later with their first shot on target, the unmarked Giacomo

Bonaventura turning the ball in at the far post after it was unwittingly headed into his path by home defender Kalidou Koulibaly.

The home side dominated the second half but became edgy as they struggled to score a second goal, with Sarri being dismissed for persistent dissent. Napoli, chasing their first league title since 1990, have 57 points from 26 games, one behind Juventus who drew 0-0 at Bologna on Friday. Dries Mertens went

closest for Napoli in the second half when he turned the ball against the foot of the post while team mate Omar El Kaddouri forced a point-blank save

from Donnarumma with a snap-shot.

Milan almost ended Napoli's unbeaten home league record late on when Keisuke Honda's powerful low drive was turned around the post by goalkeeper Pepe Reina. —Reuters



Nishikori, Osaka advance in Acapulco

ACAPULCO — Second seed Kei Nishikori defeated Thiemo de Bakker 6-0, 6-3 in the opening round of the Abierto Mexicano Telcel on Monday.

World No 6 Nishikori needed all of 59 minutes to breeze past the 105th-ranked de Bakker, who lost serve six times in the match and could never break his Japanese opponent.

Nishikori, seeded behind David Ferrer at the tournament, was down 3-2 in the second set but took the final four games to secure his path to the next round, where he will face either Dudi Sela or Sam Querrey, who he beat last week at the Memphis Open.

"I was able to play good tennis right from the start," said Nishikori, who was runner-up here last season. "It got a little competitive in the second set once he found his game, but I managed to pull away." "I feel like I've been playing well, with confidence all season." On the women's side, 18-year-old Naomi Osaka, ranked No 114 in the world, advanced with a 6-4, 6-2 victory over Kiki Bertens of the Netherlands. —Kyodo News

Sexwale 'open to negotiations and alliances' in FIFA presidential vote

CAPE TOWN — South African FIFA presidential candidate Tokyo Sexwale said on Monday he is a realist who is "open to negotiations and alliances" ahead of Friday's vote in Zurich.

Sexwale, whose campaign has failed to gain traction, is the first candidate in the process to suggest he could be interested in striking a deal.

The millionaire businessman is up against Asian Football Confederation president Sheikh Salman Bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa, former FIFA deputy general secretary Jerome Champagne, Jordanian Prince Ali Bin Al Hussein and UEFA general secretary Gianni Infantino in the race to become head of world football's governing body. —Reuters