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Union Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC-U) holds a third-day meeting, seeking ways to prevent further clashes. PHOTO: YE KAUNG NYUNT

HOLDING IT TOGETHER

JMC-U TO PENALISE NCA VIOLATORS

THE Union Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC-U), responsible for ensuring the fulfilment of the nationwide ceasefire agreement, issued a press release following its three-day event at the Myanmar Peace Centre in Yangon yesterday.

Representatives from the government, the eight signatory

ethnic armed groups and civil society groups gathered in Yangon from 22 to 24 February and agreed to seek ways to prevent further clashes, referring to developments in the aftermath of the nationwide ceasefire agreement signed on 15 October last year, particularly the clashes between the RCSS/SSA and TNLA in

northern Shan State, which have displaced nearly 4,000 people.

Both sides of the nationwide ceasefire agreement, the government and the ethnic armed organisations, are required to make their members at all levels aware of the impact the clashes might have on the lives of citizens and their property.

The committee reserves the right to take action against any party responsible for further clashes, the joint statement said.

All members of the Union Joint Monitoring Committee have pledged to remain steadfast in the peace process and add new momentum to the restoration of lasting peace.—GNLM

Rubber growers face hardship from plunge in rubber price

Thein Ko Lwin

RUBBER growers are facing hardship from steady drop in rubber price that forced workers out of the farms, according to Myanmar Rubber Planters and Producers Association.

Shutdown of some rubber farming were driven by drop in prices of rubber in the global market and the lack of production of quality products for having a good price, said U Khaing Myint, secretary of the association.

"Fall in price and our products that cannot meet foreign demand have left the country's rubber market in the hopeless position." According to the association, 90 percent of rubber growers across the country are operating in a manageable scale, and they expressed no interest to the program encouraging cultivation of high quality rubber variety that had been conducted with international support in 2005.

It is hard to attract small-scale rubber growers to accept the concept of growing high quality rubber variety for fetching a good price, said the secretary, adding that the program failed due to the lack of their cooperation. Apart from the plunge in rubber price, growers are suffering from high production costs, said U Kyaw Lin, a rubber grower from Kayin State.

According to statistics, rubber exports, reaching 60,000 tons for this fiscal year, dropped by 20,000 tons compared to the last year's data. Despite fetching around K700 a pound last year, rubber trading is at a price of around K530 per pound in the local market this year, said the association.

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Transition teams set agenda for presidential swearing-in



Transition teams of the government and NLD hold third meeting. PHOTO: MNA

THE government's support committee and the National League for Democracy's transition team met for the third time yesterday in Nay Pyi Taw to coordinate the agenda for the transfer of state responsibilities to the incoming government.

They discussed the details of a provisional agenda for the presidential swearing-in ceremony scheduled to take place at the Presidential Palace, entering a bilateral agreement to have the

fourth coordination meeting in early March.

Present at the meeting on the government's committee were Chairman Union Minister U Hla Tun, together with Union Minister U Ye Htut and Director-General U Hla Tun from the President's Office.

The NLD's team was led by U Win Htein and accompanied by Dr Myo Aung and Dr Aung Thu.—Myanmar News Agency

Amyotha Hluttaw forms Inter-parliamentary associations, committee

THE Second Amyotha Hluttaw's first regular session approved the formation of inter-parliamentary friendship associations and the committee of the development of agriculture, livestock and fisheries yesterday.

During its 11th day session, Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than announced the parliamentary approval of the formation of the Myanmar-Viet Nam Inter-parliamentary Friendship Association, the Myanmar-Lao PDR

Inter-parliamentary Friendship Association, the Myanmar-Thailand Inter-parliamentary Friendship Association, the Myanmar-Japan Inter-parliamentary Friendship Association and the Myanmar-Singapore Inter-parliamentary Friendship Association.

The process of approving the 15-member Amyotha Hluttaw Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries Development Committee was carried out. — Myanmar News Agency

Amyotha Hluttaw



Amyotha Hluttaw is convened in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA



U Lagan Zal Jone. PHOTO: MNA



Dr Maung Thin. PHOTO: MNA

Pyithu Hluttaw

El Niño urgent motion approved, another submitted and two parliamentary committees formed

THE second Pyithu Hluttaw's first regular session continued for its 11th day with the processes of approving the El Niño urgent motion, submitting another urgent motion and forming two parliamentary committees yesterday.

In response to discussions of parliamentarians on the possible impacts of El Niño which is expected to hit Myanmar shortly, deputy ministers from ministries concerned elaborated on prepar-

edness and response plans for the ill-effects of upcoming weather event. Next, the Pyithu Hluttaw approved the El Niño urgent motion submitted by Dr Maung Thin of Meiktila Constituency.

Then, U Lagan Zal Jone of Waingmaw Constituency put forwards an urgent motion calling on the Union government to support mass participation in the fight against narcotic drugs, protect them from possible attacks

and extend necessary assistance to them. While seeking parliamentary approval of the urgent motion, Pyithu Hluttaw approved the motion to be discussed.

Next, Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U Win Myint announced that Investment and Industrial Development Committee and Electricity and Energy Development Committee were formed with 15 members each. — Myanmar News Agency

Number of foreign tourists visiting Dawei rises this year



Visitors seen at the beach in Dawei. PHOTO: MYITMAKHA NEWS AGENCY

THE number of foreign tourists visiting the southern Myanmar coastal region of Dawei has increased this year, when comparing current figures with those of January last year according to the department of hotels and tourism industry development.

A total of 2,813 tourists visited Dawei in the month of January last year, compared with 4,948 in January of 2016.

"Number [of visitors] always

goes up every year in the months after September. In the months prior [to September] there are fewer tourists. As Dawei is close to Bangkok in Thailand, those travelling to the Thai capital pass through Dawei," said Daw Aye Aye Mya, clerk of the Department of Hotels and Tourism Development for Dawei district.

The majority of tourists that arrive in Dawei are foreigners, travelling independently, while

package tour groups are rarely seen. Despite the rise in travelers to one of Myanmar's more untouched tourist destinations, the real draw of islands off the coast are yet to have fully opened up.

"The regional government hasn't yet permitted itineraries for foreign tourists to visit the islands of Laung Lone and Bouk. If [foreigner travellers] desire to visit [these locations] then they must apply for permission from the regional government," explained an official from the aforementioned government department of Dawei district.

Foreign tourists entering Myanmar from the Thai border are given a 7 day tourist visa, which can be extended at immigration upon return to the border, it is known. "We only have a record of those who've come to country for employment purposes, [a record] of three-month business visa [holders]. If one's visa has run out then they are eligible to extend it, but obviously with a letter of permission from [the visa holder's] relevant company," said U Myo Kyaw Thu, a Dawei district immigration official. — Myitmakha News Agency

Mindat fire victims receive cash assistance from KBZ foundation

THE Affected owners of 41 shops which were destroyed by fire in Mindat Township on Tuesday received cash assistance from the Kanbawza Bank and its Brighter Future Myanmar Foundation.

The foundation yesterday donated K200,000 in cash to each of the owners of the shops,

amounting to a total donation of K8.2 million.

KBZ's aid to affected families of the fire broke that out in Namhsan in northern Shan State, Labutta in Ayeyawady Region, and Kyaukkar in Tanintharyi Region in February has reached a total of K44.5 million (\$362,114). —GNLM



Employees from Kanbawza Bank in Pakokku present cash assistance to victims to Mindat fire. PHOTO: KBZ

Vice-President Dr Sai Mauk Kham addresses opening of 8th APCRSHR in Nay Pyi Taw

VICE-President Dr Sai Mauk Kham addressed the opening ceremony of the 8th Asia Pacific Conference on Reproductive and Sexual Health and Rights (APCRSHR) at Myanmar International Convention Centre-2 in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

In his speech the Vice-President called for ensuring the involvement of stakeholders in the process of policy formulation, thereby putting women within reach of reproductive and sexual health and rights.

He said that unwanted pregnancies can be avoided by enabling everyone to have access to quality health care services as unintended pregnancies and related risks were reduced as much as one-third in the world thanks to family planning and reproductive health.

Myanmar is committed to the implementation of family planning 2020 to promote the rights of women and children in

cooperation with the international community, he added.

Next, Ms. Yoriko Yasukawa, director of UNFPA's Asia Pacific Office, and Dr. Raj Karim, President of the Malaysian AIDS Council extended greetings.

In the evening, the Vice-President hosted dinner to participants of the conference.

The 8th APCRSHR is aimed at examining the responses to challenges of environmental conservation, climate change, aging population and reproductive health posed to all countries. The conference, set to last for four days, includes several formats including plenary sessions, youth seminars, paper-reading sessions and educative talks.

Myanmar is the eighth host country after the Philippines in 2001, Thailand in 2003, Malaysia in 2005, India in 2007, China in 2009, Indonesia in 2011 and the Philippines in 2014.— *Myanmar News Agency*



Vice President Dr Sai Mauk Kham visits booths at 8th Asia Pacific Conference on Reproductive and Sexual Health and Rights. PHOTO: MNA

Monitoring efforts will be carried out by MRPF to mitigate El Nino's impact on the agricultural sector

THE Myanmar Rice and Paddy Federation (MRPF) has made it known that they will continuously monitor and study the impacts of the El Nino weather front as it could have damaging affects upon monsoon season paddy cultivation.

The MRPF is currently in dialogue with meteorological experts and will inform farmers of freak changes in the weather as they unfold.

"It is quite possible that the El Nino weather front, which is more severe than previous years, will cause the drying up of water supplies in the months of June and July which usually sees rainfall. As such, monsoon season paddy could be affected. That

said, we must foremost monitor the weather front as we are still not in a position whereby we can know the exact extent of El Nino's arrival to the country," said U Lu Maw Myint Maung, secretary of the MRPF.

While the affect of El Nino will not be felt in Myanmar during the dry season paddy harvest, the late arrival of annual rainfall could have detrimental effects on cultivation of monsoon paddy crops. As a result, the federation is planning to monitor weather patterns in the manner described.

It is known that policy will be formulated should Myanmar experience a severe weather front that will have the quantity of rice exports re-evaluated, with that

sidelined for export to be used for domestic consumption, in order to mitigate infliction upon the production expenses of cultivators and to provide for domestic food security.

"The main El Nino related concern that we have to keep a close eye on is whether there will be enough rain fall for monsoon paddy. The amount of rain that will fall in coming monsoon season is something to be worried about," said U Ye Min Aung, general secretary of the MRPF.

Thirteen States and Regions nationwide experienced torrential rain during the monsoon season months of July and August in 2015 which resulted in mass flooding, after which a temporary halt was put on rice exports between the start of September and 15 October.

In order to stabilise the price of rice after the flooding, over twenty rice wholesalers were opened through which over 400,000 bags of rice was sold, according to the MRPF.

China is the main country to which Myanmar rice is exported, followed by the Philippines, Indonesia and European countries. In the fiscal year of 2014-15 over 180,000 tonnes of rice were exported to such countries, while until the end of January this fiscal year a total of 130,000 tonnes had been exported.

Meteorological experts regard this year El Nino weather front to be the strongest in a century, the effects of which have already started to be felt in Myanmar.— *Myitmakha News Agency*



A child walks across a dried pond as he carries water in southern Yangon in 2010. PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE

President felicitates Emir of the State of Kuwait

U THEIN SEIN, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, has sent a message of felicitations to His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Saban, Emir of the State of Kuwait, on the occasion of the National Day of the State of Kuwait, which falls on 25 February 2016.— *Myanmar News Agency*

President felicitates PM of Kuwait

U THEIN SEIN, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, has sent a message of felicitations to His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Prime Minister of the State of Kuwait, on the occasion of the National Day of the State of Kuwait, which falls on 25 February 2016.— *Myanmar News Agency*

Union Foreign Affairs Minister felicitates FM of Kuwait

U WUNNA MAUNG LWIN, Union Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, has sent a message of felicitations to His Excellency Sheikh Sabah Khalid Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the State of Kuwait, on the occasion of the National Day of the State of Kuwait, which falls on 25 February 2016.— *Myanmar News Agency*

Appointment of Ambassador agreed on

THE Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has agreed to the appointment of Mr Jong Ho Bom as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar with residence in Yangon.

Mr Jong Ho Bom was born on 30 July 1964. He graduated from the Faculty of Philosophy from the Kim II Sung University in October 1989. Mr Jong Ho Bom joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1992 and served in various capacities at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. From June 2014 to December 2015, he served as Deputy Director-General of the Protocol Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.— *Myanmar News Agency*

Wooden grinding machine replaces ox with motor

TRADITIONALLY, locals from Ngarmwaykon village, Min-su village group, Kyaukse Township, Mandalay Region, have been using grinding machines pulled by oxen to produce sesame oil, peanut oil and sunflower oil. This method has been replaced with two HP electric motors, it has been learned.

Raw materials such as sesame, peanuts and sunflowers are purchased from Minepan village, Phyauckseikpin village, Dattaw area, Kalay village, Myintwin village and Taungtaw area in Kyaukse Township and stored. When raw materials run short in the home region producers order from Pakokku area. Raw materials are systematically purified before they are milled. The customers can enjoy the taste of nat-

ural oil without any chemicals, said a businessman.

Businessmen have to pay K2500 for a viss (a viss is aprox. 1.6 kilograms) of peanuts, K14,000 for a basket of sunflowers and K30,000 for a basket of sesame. Sesame oil sells for K6,000 per viss while a viss of sunflower oil sells for K5,000 and a viss of peanut oil sells for K6,800. Businessman need to have permit from Food and Drugs Administrative Department and sells the cooking oil using modern digital weighing machines.

Wooden grinding mills are made by traditional artisans from Pakokku. Locals are now using traditional oil milling using electrical motors instead of the oxen. —Aung Min (Sintkaing)

Correction

THE Global New Light of Myanmar carried a story on Page 4 under the headline 'Tatmadaw conducts combined operations in Shan State (North)' dated 24 February. Please read the Restoration Council of Shan State/Shan State Army-South (RCSS/SSA-S) in place of Ywet Sit's Shan State Army. The error is regretted.—Ed



Tourists seen helping carry the belongings of the fire victims.
PHOTO: MICHAEL RIYO'S FACEBOOK

Unattended stove causes lacquerware shop fire in NyaungU

A FIRE broke out yesterday at a lacquerware shop near Shwezigon Pagoda, NyaungU Township, Mandalay Region.

The NyaungU District Fire Service Department (FDS) said that the fire did not spread to nearby houses as it was brought under control within 20 minutes.

According to local sources, foreign tourists gave a helping hand in the fire incident, helping move things from fire-affected house.

The FDS commented that negligence sparked the fire in the form of an unattended electric stove.—Aung Thant Khaing

Thai authorities arrested 35 Myanmar workers

THIRTY-five Myanmar workers were arrested in the forest around Kaburi, South of Thailand on Monday for entering Thailand illegally to find jobs according to the Daily News in Thailand. Investigators found that Myanmar

workers travel to the south of Thailand to find jobs, typically paying between B7,000 and B15,000 each to traffickers for a one-day pass. Seven women and twenty eight men were detained.—Kyaw Soe (Kawthaung)

Shan United FC to recruit talented youth



Football players in action at the preliminary selection match for new young generation players to emerge. PHOTO: PHO THAW ZIN

SHAN United Football Club will continue its tentative selection of young players for the team on last day of February and on 1 March in Taunggyi, Shan State, aiming to turn out a new generation of players in the region.

The selection team, comprising coaches and senior athletes

in the club, has chosen talented, young footballers for under-17 and under-22 divisions since 23 February this year.

Thirty-four young players from Taunggyi, Meishu, Laechar, Shwenyaung and Yatsauk townships participated in the programme on that day. Young

players have been invited to join the programme and demonstrate their football skills in the presence of the selection team.

They must bring citizenship cards or student ID cards, household registration, two passport photos and football dress.—Pho Thaw Zin

Crime News

Police arrested a man for stabbing girl

THE brother of the young man who stabbed a girl at Tawwin centre on 19 February came to Waibagi Police Station in North Okklapa to deliver the fugitive. The 20-year-old girl received minor injuries and is receiving medical care at Yangon general hospital.

Police determined that Hmat Gyi alias Lwan Naing Win, who absconded to Nay Pyi Taw, was responsible.

On 22 February, Myo Min Htet, the brother of the offender, Lwan Naing Win, 23, brought him to the police station. The police have filed charges against the suspect.—Ko Ye



Lwan Naing Win. PHOTO: KO YE



22 wheel container seen being turned over at the site of the incident.
PHOTO: KO LWIN (SWAR)

Car accident kills man, injures two

A 22 wheel container collided head on with a six wheel vehicle near Taung Nan Chun village, Yedashe town, Bago region on 21 February, leaving one dead and two injured.

The 22 wheel vehicle driven by Win Kyaw Htay alias Nga Pwa, 27, crashed into the six wheel vehicle driven by Zaw Lwin Oo, 43, with U Htay

Aung, 65, and Maung win, 43, on board when the former lost control.

Maung Win succumbed to the injuries at the scene of the accident while Zaw Lwin Oo and U Htay Aung were injured. Action is being taken against the reckless driver, who will be charged by police.—Ko Lwin (Swar)

Pregnant woman commits suicide

A CASE of suicide occurred in Sarguan village, Phyu township, Bago region on 22 February.

According to the police in-

vestigation, Ma Sona Moe Thi, 28, jumped into a well at U Byars Muni house, a neighbour. Police are still investigating the case.—Phyu-Myint Oo

LOCAL Business



Workers arrange fish at a market in Yangon. PHOTO: REUTERS

Myanmar seafood exports drop by \$40 million since last fiscal year

Thein Ko Lwin

THE volume of Myanmar's seafood exports dropped by US\$40 million during the 2015-2016 fiscal year compared to the previous fiscal year, according to a statement from the Myanmar Fisheries Products Producers and Exporters Association.

With the depletion of marine resources in Myanmar waters, the country's export earnings from marine products this year were estimated to have reached \$440 million, representing a \$40 million drop from last year's \$480 million, said Daw Toe Nandar Tin, vice chair of the association.

We were unable to fill order

for marine products as the country has seen a reduction in the amount of fish caught at sea and a low production yield of farmed fish, added the vice chair.

However, local producers and exporters avoided losses in production costs thanks to high domestic fish consumption, which fetched good prices at home, said U Maung Kyaw Swa, a local exporter.

The exporter called for government assistance to the sector, saying the situation is expected to get worse as low competitiveness poses a challenge to stepping up exports to foreign markets.

According to official statistics, the country's fishery ex-

ports have decreased year after year, consistently missing the government's annual targets for export earnings.

Despite having a target of \$700 million for the 2012-2013 fiscal year, the country exported about \$650 million that year. Annual export earnings declined from \$550 million in the 2013-2014 fiscal year to \$480 million in the 2014-2015 fiscal year, then to \$440 million this fiscal year.

In its statement, the association predicted that marine product exports are expected to continue to drop in the next fiscal year due to the effects of El Niño, which will hit the country this summer.

Pyay farmers prosper on high chickpea prices

THE price of the Mya Kyay Mone variety of chickpea, which is currently being harvested in Kanma, Pantaung, Shwetaung and Pyay in Bago Region, is fetching a good price as it is up by over half of last year's price, according to local chickpea farmers.

The highest value for 1.16 bushels of the chickpea last was only K18,000, while the same quantity currently has a market price of as much as K31,000. Prices were even higher—up to K38,000—at the start of the harvest season as the chickpea

supply was still low.

"[Chickpea] farmers incurred heavy financial losses last year because low chickpea prices meant they weren't able to make ends meet. The good prices this year put farmers in a more comfortable situation. If the price of the pea remains at its current price for years to come, then things will be okay. [Farmers] will be able to pay off their debts," said Ko Kyaw Win Maung, a chickpea farmer from the Sitsayan Village, Kanma Township.

Most chickpeas that arrive

at the Pyay Township wholesalers markets come from Kanma Township. The chickpeas also make their way to Yangon, while some are even sold in India, according to chickpea traders.

The duration of time between planting chickpeas and selling them is about four months, while seed, fertiliser, ploughing and threshing expenses incurred for a one-acre chickpea plot roughly amount to K100,000. A one-acre plot usually produces around 13.9 bushels of chickpeas.—*Myitmakha News Agency*

Mrauk U commercial boat services going under

THE daily running of river motorboat services between urban centres and outlying villages in the Rakhine State district of Mrauk U are on the verge of being shut down, according to local motorboat owners.

The combination of improvements to road infrastructure within the region and a rise in the numbers of privately owned motorboats has created a situation that could nearly put commercial passenger motorboat enterprises out of business.

"It's not the age of commercial motorboats anymore. Things haven't been good [for the industry] for about three years now. Roads have been built in the countryside, allowing people to travel easily by car or motorcycle. On top of that, it seems as if every family that lives in villages that are completely cut off from road access come to town with their own private motorboats. Nobody rides the passenger river motorboats anymore, so it has come to a point where the commercial motorboat industry is about to close up shop," said U Thein Htun, a port official in Minpya Township.

The lack of commercial mo-

torboat passengers has forced operators to adapt their businesses in order to stay afloat financially, providing transportations services for the movement of goods such as paddy, rice, sand and rocks.

Together with a developing road infrastructure in Rakhine State, there is an increased prevalence of local residents using motorbikes, three-wheeled vehicles and cars, while small motorised boats, which have become affordable in recent times, are being used by residents to travel along the waterways in the townships of Myay Pone, Minpya, Kyauk Daw and Mrauk U.

"A commercial motorboat used to run between the village of Min Kyaung and the town of Myay Pone last year, but it was a financial disaster. Even the petrol expenses incurred couldn't be earned back, which is why the service isn't running this year. Motorboat owners can't get any passengers anymore since everyone is travelling by their own small motorised water boats," said U Nyi Taut Kyay, a resident of Min Kyaung Village in Myay Pone Township.—*Myitmakha News Agency*

High-speed water transport companies dry-docked by lack of passengers

HIGH-SPEED water transportation companies, which run services between the southern Taninthayi Region townships of Dawei, Myeik and Kawthaung, have halted their business operations because of low demand.

The transportation services have been running since 1999 but were forced to stop operations in January this year, according to local water transport service providers.

"Passenger numbers sharply decreased at the end of 2015, forcing us to stop running services last month. The main reason [for the decline in passengers] is the opening of the Dawei-Kawthaung highway express bus services. Most travellers now use these buses rather than taking boats or ships," said an employee of the Hi-fi Water Transportation Company.

The decline in travellers traveling by water can also be attributed to the opening of the Htee Khee and Maung Taung terminals on the border with Thailand on 11 May 2013.

"Travelling by water was a very common way to travel in the past—so much so that we had

to make reservations to secure seats. The main reason why people travel by boat is to enter into Thailand illegally. Land border checkpoints weren't open in the past, so people had to travel by water," said boat passenger Ko Tayza.

There are three water route transportation companies in Dawei, which account for a total of 10 water-faring vessels. One vessel per company would run per day, with a capacity to hold between 100 and over 200 passengers.

A Dawei-Myeik boat ticket costs K13,000 per person, while a Dawei-Kawthaung ticket costs K40,000 per passenger. The vessels do not run on days when winds reach over 35 miles per hour.

The profits of businessmen involved in the water vessel transportation industry are being dented as vessel services fees and employee salaries are being paid whilst transportation services are on hold. Waterway transportation companies have made it known they are still not exactly sure when they will resume their services.—*Myitmakha News Agency*

Ousted Thai PM Thaksin's influence shows signs of waning

BANGKOK — Sitting in her busy Bangkok noodle shop, Bunruen Klinnak professes “love” for Thailand’s former prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra, who was toppled in a 2006 military coup and later fled abroad.

But Klinnak, 55, also fears Thaksin’s return to politics could spell further unrest in a country rocked by coups and bloody street protests over the past decade.

“We need to save money and be frugal because we don’t know what politics will be like in the future,” she says.

This ambivalence among even his admirers suggests Thaksin’s political influence in military-run Thailand could be flagging despite a new publicity blitz by the self-exiled billionaire.

From his base in Dubai, Thaksin has thrown money and clout behind street protests and election campaigns, helping to install his sister Yingluck as prime minister in 2011.

But the military overthrew her three years later — she is now on trial for corruption — and purged the bureaucracy of Shinawatra sympathisers. It also monitored and briefly detained politicians loyal to the family.

Thaksin cannot take his old support base for granted, say analysts and allies, and might find himself struggling for relevance in a country which has undergone a profound political awakening in



Former Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra speaks to Reuters during an interview in Singapore, on 23 February 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

the past decade. Even the “red shirts”, a grassroots political movement long considered loyal to Thaksin, show signs of outgrowing him.

In a 23 February interview with Reuters in Singapore, Thaksin said Thailand had “gone backward” under a junta that had caused economic hardship and deepened political divisions.

Thais would not tolerate the junta for much longer, he added, although it’s unclear if he can exploit this dissatisfaction.

“The symbolic power that Thaksin and his sister carries is still something the military is very much concerned about,” said Ambika Ahuja, a Southeast Asia specialist at Eurasia Group, a New York-based political risk consul-

tancy. “(But) his network of regional politicians, local civil servants, and business people has been weakened and disrupted over the years,” she said.

Thaksin remains hugely popular, especially in Thailand’s north and northeast. But this, he acknowledged, no longer translates into direct political power.

“Nobody from the Shinawatra family will be prime minister anymore. It’s over,” he said.

He is still wealthy, despite \$1.4 billion in assets being frozen since the 2006 coup. According to Forbes, he is Thailand’s tenth richest man, with a net worth of \$1.6 billion, although Thaksin told Reuters that he was “not even in the top 20.” Returning home was Thaksin’s “most important priori-

ty,” said Chaturon Chaisaeng, a minister under both Shinawatras who was ousted alongside them in the 2006 and 2014 coups.

But Thaksin’s homecoming would seem unlikely so long as Thailand’s military-backed royalist elite remained implacably opposed to it. Thaksin was also preoccupied with helping his sister, said Chaturon.

Last year a junta-appointed assembly impeached Yingluck and banned her from politics for five years. She is currently on trial on criminal charges over corruption in a multi-billion-dollar rice subsidy scheme.

“He persuaded his sister to come into politics and become the prime minister without much preparation,” Chaturon said. “And now she faces a very serious situation.”

Thaksin told Reuters he was worried about Yingluck.

Thaksin remained confident about his legacy, which included populist policies such as cheap loans and almost free healthcare.

“People never forget me,” he said in the interview.

But in recent months he and Yingluck have made many media appearances and distributed thousands of free books and calendars.

The aim was “to remind people of their achievements,” said Phumtham Wechayachai, secretary general of the Shinawatra-backed Puea Thai Party.

Some analysts said the campaign was deliberately timed to embarrass a junta that faces growing difficulties, including how to revive Southeast Asia’s second-biggest economy, which has struggled since the coup.

Underscoring the military government’s allergy to Thaksin, the authorities in northeast Thailand banned the calendars.

“I don’t know why they made it into such a big deal,” said Thaksin. Even in the northeast, a traditional Shinawatra vote bank, ambivalence towards Thaksin isn’t hard to find.

“Thaksin thinks he knows the red shirts better than their leaders. This isn’t true,” said Thida Thavornseth, ex-chairperson of the United Front for Democracy against Dictatorship, as the movement is formally known.

Many red shirts disagreed with Thaksin pushing Yingluck, then the prime minister, to pass an amnesty bill in 2013, said Thida.

The bill, which would have absolved Thaksin of his conviction, sparked huge street protests and prompted the military to again seize power.

“There are people who love Thaksin very much,” said Thida. “But there are also those in his own camp who hate him and are scared of him.” Thaksin denied this. “The red shirts love me and I love them,” he told Reuters. —Reuters

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Ye Naing Soe, Nyi Zaw Moe,

Hnin Pwint, Kay Khaing Win,

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Classical Indian dance helps trafficking victims to heal, study shows

MUMBAI — Classical Indian dance could be an effective form of therapy for victims of human trafficking and sexual violence, helping them to overcome their traumatic experiences and gain confidence, a pilot study has shown.

The six-month study of 50 female survivors in Kolkata and Mumbai found that dance movement therapy helped ease anxiety, depression, anger and post-traumatic stress when used alongside traditional counselling and other rehabilitation efforts.

“Often, in the rehabilitation of victims of trafficking and sexual violence, the impact on the body can be overlooked,” said Sohini Chakraborty, the founder and director of Kolkata Sanved, a charity which carried out the research.

“Dance is about the body, and the women are somewhat familiar with these dance forms, so we can help them heal and create a more positive body image,” she told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. The rehabilitation of victims in India is often inadequate and inconsistent in a culture that

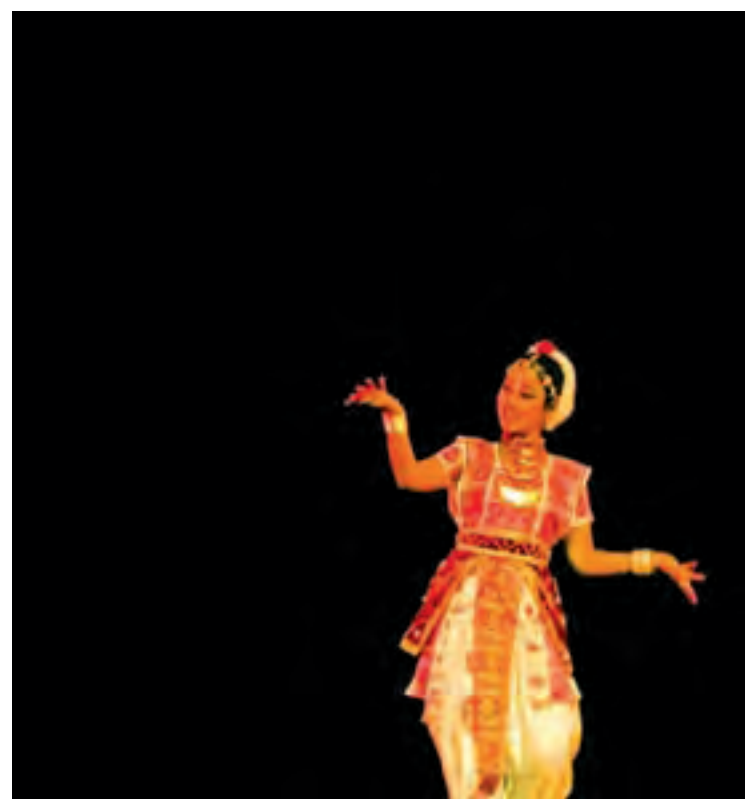
does not encourage women to speak up or seek counselling, women’s rights groups say.

Yet gender-based violence remains high in the country, with more than 330,000 reported cases of crimes against women in 2014, according to the National Crime Records Bureau.

The biggest ever survey of the health of human trafficking victims last year found high levels of abuse and severe physical and psychological health problems among survivors in Southeast Asia. The notion of dance as therapy has been increasingly recognised over the years, due to the efforts of institutions such as the American Dance Therapy Association, founded in 1966. Studies have shown it enhances the emotional, cognitive, physical and social well-being of the individual.

Indian dance forms are uniquely suited to therapy, Chakraborty said, citing the energetic footwork of kathak.

Kathak can help release anger, while the elaborate hand and eye movements in bharatnatyam from Tamil Nadu state can help express a range of emotions, she



An Indian dancer presents Kathak dance during National Dancers Festival in the northern Indian city of Jammu. PHOTO: REUTERS

said. Folk dances can also encourage bonding, she added.

The study was necessary to establish the impact of dance therapy through a scientific methodology, improve the quality of rehabilitation and encourage more shelters to provide this alternative to survivors of trafficking and sexual violence, Chakraborty said.

Kolkata Sanved’s dance movement therapy module was

particularly suited to the Indian context, said Dr. Upali Dasgupta, principal researcher on the study.

“It’s a non-judgmental, non-hierarchical therapy for these women who may otherwise be hesitant to express themselves,” she said. “We already knew instinctively that dance had therapeutic effects, but now we know for certain that it does indeed work.” —Reuters

Abe intends to visit Russia despite Obama's request not to

TOKYO — Prime Minister Shinzo Abe will proceed with plans to visit Russia, the Japanese government's top spokesman said yesterday, declining US President Barack Obama's request for Abe not to make the trip.

"Prime Minister Abe is planning an unofficial visit to Russia at an appropriate time before (Russian President Vladimir Putin) visits Japan," said Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga at a press conference, referring to Putin's expected visit to Japan sometime this year.

Suga's remarks come as sources close to Japan-Russia relations said Tuesday that Obama, in telephone talks on 9 February, had urged Abe to refrain from vis-

iting Russia in May, as Washington seeks to isolate Moscow over its actions in Ukraine and Syria and has concerns about Japan getting too close to Russia.

"Regarding Japan's diplomacy with Russia, we will closely cooperate and communicate with the United States," Suga said, adding, "Japan will appropriately respond to challenges facing the international community such as the situation in Ukraine through cooperation with the Group of Seven countries."

The G-7 groups Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United States.

Following Russia's annexation of the Crimean region of Ukraine in 2014, Japan, the Unit-

ed States and other members of the international community have imposed economic sanctions on Russia, while Moscow's membership of the Group of Eight has been suspended. Despite Obama's request, Abe intends to visit Sochi, Russia in early May for talks with Putin, seeking to find a breakthrough in the long-standing bilateral dispute over Russian-held, Japanese-claimed islands off Hokkaido that has prevented the two countries from signing a peace treaty after World War II. The islands — Etorofu, Kunashiri, Shikotan and the Habomai group of islets — were seized by the Soviet Union following Japan's surrender on 15 August, 1945.—Kyodo News



Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe speaks during a parliamentary session in Tokyo on 24 February 2016. Top government spokesman Yoshihide Suga said the same day that Abe will proceed with plans to visit Russia, declining US President Barack Obama's request for him not to make the trip. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

US sees completion of new Marine base in Okinawa delayed until 2025

WASHINGTON — The head of the US Pacific Command said Tuesday that Washington expects a two-year delay until 2025 in work to complete a new base for the contentious relocation of a Marine Corps facility in Japan's Okinawa.

"Now we're looking at 2025 before that's done," Adm. Harry Harris told Congress, referring to a plan to relocate Air Station Futenma within the southern island prefecture.

The Japanese and US governments agreed in 2013 that the land currently used by the base in Ginowan would be returned in Japan's 2022 fiscal year, which ends in March 2023, at the earliest if a relocation facility is completed in the less densely populated coastal area of Nago.

"It's slowed. It's...a little over

two years late," Harris told a hearing at the Senate Committee on Armed Services.

Tokyo has already begun work to build an airfield on reclaimed land in Nago, but progress has been hampered by tussles between protesters attempting to block the building work and law enforcement authorities near the construction site.

Tokyo and Washington came up with the relocation plan to reduce the burden on Okinawa, which hosts the bulk of US military facilities in Japan, but Gov. Takeshi Onaga wants the Futenma base moved outside the prefecture.

Construction of a relocation facility is "Japan's responsibility. That's their obligation to us," Harris said. The Marine Corps envisages building hangars for the MV-22 tilt-rotor transport aircraft

in the US 2021 fiscal year, which ends September 2021, and runways and taxiways in fiscal 2024 on the planned relocation facility, according to the Marine Aviation Plan 2016.

The Marines also intend to construct hangars for various aircraft including attack helicopters in fiscal 2025, according to the plan.

Harris also told the committee that Marines in Okinawa will be transferred to Hawaii in the 2020s as part of a bilateral plan to move 9,000 of the 19,000 Okinawa-stationed Marines to locations outside Japan such as Guam and Hawaii.

Japan and the United States have agreed to begin transferring Marines to Guam from Okinawa in the early 2020s but have yet to reveal a timeframe for their transfer to Hawaii.—Kyodo News

Japan, Australia, India diplomats to meet for regional security talks

TOKYO — Senior diplomats of Japan, Australia and India will meet Friday in Tokyo, the Japanese Foreign Ministry said yesterday, as they seek to reaffirm security cooperation amid China's growing assertiveness at sea.

The three-way meeting comes as China's rapid and massive reclamation work in the South China Sea has stoked concerns in and beyond Asia. China's deployment of an advanced surface-to-air missile system has also added to the tensions.

Vice Foreign Minister Akitaka Saiki will meet with Peter Varghese, secretary of Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and Foreign Secretary Subrahmanyam Jaisankar of India. They are also likely to exchange views on

North Korea following its nuclear test and long-range rocket launch.

As US media reported the previous day that China has sent fighter jets to an island where it has deployed the missile system, the Japanese government expressed its "serious concern" about the development.

"We'll collect and analyse information on Chinese moves and respond appropriately by closely cooperating with other countries concerned," Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga told a press conference.

Defense Minister Gen Nakatani told reporters during a trip to Aichi Prefecture, central Japan, that China "should refrain from any unilateral move to change the status quo." —Kyodo News

Philippines expects to finalise GMO rules in next few days, misses Weds target

MANILA — The Philippines expects to finalise a new set of rules on genetically modified organisms over the next few days, after a top court demanded an overhaul of previous regulations in the nation that has been seen as a trailblazer for GMO in Asia.

The government had hoped the new rules would be signed by five ministers yesterday, but Merle Palacpac, chief of the plant quarantine service at the Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI), told Reuters there had only been one signature so far as other officials were travelling.

"We hope they will all be able to sign over the next few

days," said Palacpac. Thursday is a public holiday in the Philippines. The Supreme Court in December halted the issuance of fresh permits for planting or importing genetically modified crops until the new rules were in place, putting in limbo nearly 1 million corn farmers and buyers of GM soybean meal, the Philippines' top GMO import.

Proponents of GM technology warn that delays could spark a food crisis in the Southeast Asian country, while critics have sought more time to ensure there is enough regulatory scrutiny to meet concerns over public health and the environment.

The new rules would take effect 15 days after being published, Palacpac said, adding that a permit to plant a variety of GM corn domestically will expire on 3 March. The Philippines was the first in the region to allow planting and commercialisation of GM corn, which it did in 2002, and has permitted GM crop imports for more than a decade.

"We can't really rush (the ministers) because they have to examine it and they have to consult," said Dr. Jaime Montoya, a government health scientist who heads an inter-agency panel that drafted the new guidelines.—Reuters

Nepal plane crash kills all 23 aboard, police say

KATHMANDU — A small plane crashed in Nepal yesterday in bad weather, killing all 23 people on board, a police official said, the country's second air disaster in as many years.

The Twin Otter aircraft, operated by private Tara Air, was on a flight from Pokhara, 125 km (80 miles) west of the capital, Kathmandu, to Jomsom when it lost contact with the control tower.

"It has broken into pieces," police officer Bishwaraj Khad-

ka told Reuters from Myagdi, the town nearest the crash site. "There are no survivors."

A Chinese national and a Kuwaiti citizen were among the dead.

Officials said thick fog had enveloped the Mustang area where Jomsom is located.

Mustang is a popular hiking area on the Mount Annapurna trekking circuit. A similar aircraft crashed in west Nepal in 2014, killing 18 people.—Reuters

OPINION

A joy to behold

Kyaw Thura

THE democratic reform initiated by the government since its inception in March 2011 has reached a crucial juncture, as the time to pass the baton to the incoming government is approaching. The opposition National League for Democracy won by a landslide in the country's historic elections on 8 November last year, securing more than two-thirds of the parliamentary seats it needed to

form the government and choose the president.

Activists and analysts home and abroad have hailed the NLD's astonishing win as a key victory for the country's democratic development. With public expectations for the future president emerging, the parliament has fixed 17 March as the date for the nomination of three vice presidential candidates, one each by the representatives of the Amyotha Hluttaw (Upper House), the Pyithu Hluttaw (Lower House) and the defense services. According to the constitution, the incoming government is to take office as of 1 April.

Apparently, the whole country is eager to know who their future president will be and whether the parliamentary decision will live up to their expectations. In a sense, the ordinary people are fully justified in asking for a joy to

behold. Anyone who goes against the unanimous consent deserves to be branded as a killjoy spiked with malice. Above all, our future president should be a candidate endowed with great personal character, charm and charisma.

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.

Democracy and Human Rights

Dr. Khine Khine Win

THE word "Democracy" does not appear in the United Nations Charter. And in international laws is there not a universally accepted definition of democracy. Nevertheless, there does exist an international consensus on the existence of a link between human rights and democracy.

What is democracy? There seems to be a lot of confusion about the meaning of democracy. Abraham Lincoln, former president of United States said that democracy is the "government of the people, by the people and for the people". That is one of my favorite quotes for democracy. Democracy must be for the people. According to political scientist Larry Diamond, democracy consists of four key elements: (a) A political system for choosing and replacing the government through free and fair elections; (b) The active participation of the people, as citizens, in politics and civic life; (c) Protection of the human rights, of all citizens, and (d) A rule of law, in which the laws and procedures apply equally to all citizens. There you can see that every element fo-

cus on citizens. So, it is noteworthy that active citizenship plays the crucial role in a democratic country and participation is a key role of citizens in democracy. Active citizenship means people getting involved in their local communities and democracy at all levels, from towns to cities to nationwide activity by doing as small campaign to clean up your street or big campaign as educating young people about democratic values, skills and participation. We do believe that active participation leads better democracy.

Why we want democracy? Because democracy allows equal rights and liberty for all. We all want equal rights and equal treatment regardless of race, religion, sex, color, language, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property etc as we all are human beings and are entitled to all the rights and freedoms. We all want free and full participation in politics and civic life. It is not only their duty, but also their rights.

If we want democracy, we have to be prepared to live by the principles of democracy. We have to dare to live according to the principles of democracy. So what

are the principles of democracy? When I study the principles of democracy, what I found out is that there is no exact expression for principles of democracy. Some people say there are five principles, some six, some seven and some thirteen and so on. These principles often come from part of the constitution. Here are the basic principles of democracy: citizen participation, equality, accountability, rule of law, regular free and fair elections, economic freedom, human rights, transparency, good governance, check and balance etc.

Although no two democratic countries are exactly alike, people in democracies support many of the same basic principles and desire the same benefits from their government.

Let me focus on human rights, one of the principles of democracy. As I mentioned before, we want democracy because we want equality and liberty. Equality and liberty are the basic principles of human rights. So we can say that we want democracy because we want human rights. Human rights mean those values that reflect human life and human dignity. It includes freedom of ex-

pression, freedom of association, freedom to vote, freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, freedom of religion etc.

All democracies strive to respect and protect the human rights of citizens. Democracy emphasizes the value of every human being. In 1993, at the world conference on human rights, the member states of the UN affirmed that "Development, respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms are interdependent and mutually reinforcing." And also article 21 (3) of the Universal Declaration of human rights states that "the will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures". This article recognizes the link between the democracy and human rights. Today, the relationship between democracy and human rights seems to be an obvious one.

If a nation respects human rights, it automatically may be considered to be a democracy, which automatically respects human rights. Theoretically, all hu-

man rights are universal, indivisible and interdependent. Thus, in order to be "democratic" all civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights would have to be respected. However, this would be sometimes problematic. For instance, not all nations accept all rights to be legally binding upon them and different geographical regions tend to emphasize different human rights. In consideration, the interpretation and implementation may also vary from country to country according to their region.

In conclusion, if we want a truly democratic society, we have to ensure that all human rights are respected and protected. Democracy deficits, weak institutions and poor governance are among the main challenges to the effective realization of human rights. In turn, democracy provides the natural environment for the protection and effective realization of human rights.

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Director
Human Rights Education
and Promotion Division
Myanmar National Human
Rights Commission
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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

THANK you very much for the reports of the precautionary measures taken by the respective state departments and other related organizations to meet the emergencies in case of droughts, floodings and other mishaps that could befall due to the severe El Nino conditions. Their undertakings left nothing

to be desired.

The provisions of storage spaces for rice paddy, stocking up of water for consumptions, construction of diversion canals to prevent flooding in the flood-prone areas, arrangements to provide the farmers with water from the dams, the timely promulgations of warnings to the public and other arrangements to mitigate the ef-

fects of the El Nino are very thoughtful and foresighted undertakings.

As I am obsessed with the global warming, climate change and the related matters, I had contributed quite a few articles related to them, to your esteemed daily. Lately, I had sent an article, titled "Are We Prepared for the Severe El Nino", in which, I had expressed my anxieties as to the

preparedness to cope with the looming severe climate conditions.

However, after reading the aforementioned reports in your daily, I realized that my worries are unfounded and blamed myself for being hasty in expressing them. Thus, I would like to withdraw the said article.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank you for the superb, ethical and unbi-

ased reporting and for making the GNLM available online.

It affords persons like me, to keep in touch with the developments and events back home. Although there are many Myanmar newspapers, journals and periodicals available on the Internet, I chose the GNLM only.

Your's truly,
Khin Maung Myint.
(Currently in Thailand)

Festival highlights Myanmar traditional folk dances, drama

LOCAL performing groups entertained audience with folk dances at a traditional dance festival organised by the Ministry of Culture on Saturday night at Mandalay's National Theatre.

With the aim of disseminating knowledge about traditional arts and culture, the Ministry of Culture has been conducting such cultural shows every year.

Members of the Culture Department mainly performed famous songs, dances and dramas including Thuwunnathama Jataka, which highlights parent-child relations.

Departmental officials, students from the National Culture and Fine Arts University in Mandalay and other enthusiasts attended the show.—*Thiha Ko Ko*



Local performers entertaining audience with a plot of the drama. PHOTO: THIHA KO KO (MDY)

Traditional martial arts course aims to generate qualified trainers

WITH the aim of promoting Myanmar's traditional martial arts and turning out new generation of trainers, a martial arts course for trainers will be opened in Monywa Township, Sagaing Region, next month, an event organiser said.

In cooperation with the Sagaing Region Sports and Physical Education Department, the non-governmental Myanmar Martial Arts Federation (Central) will conduct the 10-day training of trainers (ToT), which is scheduled to be opened on 3 March at the local sports ground. "We are currently expanding both martial arts competitions and ToT training programmes around the coun-

try in order to generate qualified trainers," said U Tayza Aye, vice chairman of the Sagaing Region Myanmar Martial Arts Sub-committee. The ToT courses will mainly teach Bando (free-hand system), one of Myanmar's traditional self-defence techniques, to local trainers across Monywa Township.

The ToT courses will also focus on setting the rules and regulations for martial arts competitions in local sports competitions. Bando, Banshay (arts of the sword, staff and spear), Lethwei (boxing) and Naban (wrestling) are Myanmar's most popular martial arts.—*Pho Chan*

Cattle in Singaing receive foot-and-mouth virus vaccine

THE Livestock, Breeding and Veterinary Department (LBVD) is giving free vaccinations for farm animals across the nation to prevent against foot-and-mouth disease.

As part of the programme, the department in Singaing Township, Mandalay Region, recently made a field trip to inject cattle across the township with foot-and-mouth disease vaccines. During the trip, the medical team led by Dr Win Htut,

head of the township department, vaccinated more than 1,300 cattle owned by farmers from seven villages—Monepin, Patta, Singaingyi, Thingatone, Ohntone, Sanpya and Chaungpat.

The team also provided additional medical care to the farm animals. This is the third time the department has carried out a free foot-and-mouth vaccination programme in the region.—*Tin Tin Htwe*



Officials of the LBVD check up the cattle for medical care. PHOTO: TIN TIN HTWE

68th Chin National Day held in Mandalay



68th Chin National Day opening ceremony in progress. PHOTO: THIHA KO KO (MDY)

THE 68th Chin National Day was celebrated in Mandalay on 20 February with a speech by Dr. Van Lian Thang, Chairman of the Chin National Day Holding Committee.

Present at the ceremony were members of the Social Organisations of Kachin, Kayin, Mon, Rakhine, Shan national races, members of the Association of Chin National Literature and Culture and special guests. Vice Chairperson Daw Swe Nwei Mway elaborated on Chin National Day and the aims of holding events in its honour. Chin nationals performed traditional folk dances for spectators.

The chairman and officials of the holding committee presented awards to outstanding students who passed the matriculation exam in the 2014-2015 academic year, and outstanding university students.

Students from Chin State then performed traditional Chin Bamboo Dance and traditional folk dances.

folk dances.

In the Bamboo Dance, the dancers move among bamboo poles which are constantly hitting each other.

The dance is said to be very difficult, requiring coordinated timing between the dancers and the bamboo holders. One wrong move can result in a dancer's ankle being struck hard with one of the bamboo poles, a traditional method that encourages concentration.—*Thiha Ko Ko (Mandalay)*

Nyaung Chaungthar beach to be opened on 28th February



Nyaung Chaungthar beach resort. PHOTO: THABYAY TUN, WIN MYINT KYAW (NYANGTONE)

A FAMOUS Nyaung Chaungthar beach resort will be formally opened on 28 February on an elaborate scale.

The committee of Nyaung Chaungthar Beach Construction has 41 shops of the same size built. The committee facilitated the administration and security of the beach. The committee has anticipated many visitors will come and enjoy the beach, said U Nyunt Win, assistant director from the Nyaungdone Township Development Affairs Department.

The opening ceremony includes performance programmes. A traditional elephant dance, Kayin Donyein dance, stage show and the young performers of Gimateitswe from 9 am to 6pm, it has been learned.

"We came from Meikhtila. Nyaung Chaungthar is crowded with visitors in this period. When we got here, we knew the opening ceremony will be on 28th February. We will try our best to come back again on the opening day. We enjoy it so much at this

beach. We can explore the regional diversity of each place: hot springs in Shan State; sea water at Ngwe Saung and now the fresh water at the Nyaung Chaungthar beach resort," said Ma Ei Khine Zin Phyo and her friends playing at the beach.

Nyaung Chaungthar beach is located at the intersection of Ayeyawady and Panhlaing Rivers in Nyaungdon Township, Maubin District, Ayeyawady Region. —*Thabyay Tun, Win Myint Kyaw (Nyangtone)*

Trump's third straight win has rivals looking for answers



Republican US presidential candidate Donald Trump gestures to his sons Donald Trump Jr. (L) and Eric Trump (R) as he addresses supporters after being declared by the television networks as the winner of the Nevada Republican caucuses at his caucus night rally in Las Vegas, Nevada, on 23 February 2016.

PHOTO: REUTERS

WASHINGTON — Businessman Donald Trump inched closer to the US Republican presidential nomination after easily outdistancing his rivals in the Nevada caucuses Tuesday, giving him his third win in four early nominating contests.

Broadcast networks called the state for Trump almost immediately after voting ended, with the state Republican Party confirming the victory soon after.

With returns still being tabulated, US Senator Marco Rubio of Florida was in second place, with Ted Cruz, a US Senator from Texas, coming in third.

Trump's decisive win is likely to further frustrate Republican establishment figures who, less than a month ago, were hoping that the outspoken billionaire's insurgent candidacy was stalled after he lost the opening nominating contest in Iowa to Cruz.

But since then, Trump has tallied wins in New Hampshire, South Carolina, and now Nevada, with a suite of southern states ahead on 1 March, so-called Super Tuesday.

"If you listen to the pundits, we weren't expected to win too much, and now we're winning, winning, winning the country," Trump said at a victory rally in Las Vegas.

Polls suggest Trump will do well in many of those Super Tuesday states, placing further pressure on Cruz, Rubio, and Ohio Governor John Kasich, another presidential candidate who was not a factor in Nevada, to come up with counter-measures

quickly. "These guys have to figure out how to turn their fire on Trump," said Ford O'Connell, a Republican strategist in Washington. Absent that, he said, "Which one is going to get out of this field?"

In the run-up to Nevada, most of Trump's rivals left him alone, preferring to tussle with each other in a bid to be the last surviving challenger to the front-runner.

Not long after Trump's win was certified in Nevada, Cruz's campaign released a statement criticizing Rubio for not winning the state, but did not mention Trump at all.

Rubio, who has emerged as the Republican establishment's favourite to derail Trump's progress, can take some solace in finishing second. But that also has to be viewed as somewhat of a setback considering that he had frequently campaigned in Nevada, having lived there for years as a child. A Cuban-American, he had attempted to rally the support of the state's large Latino population.

Rubio had also benefited from the departure Saturday of Jeb Bush, the former Florida governor, from the race. That brought an influx of new funds, a bevy of endorsements, and a wealth of media attention. But none of it was enough to overtake Trump.

As for Cruz, he is facing mounting questions about the viability of his campaign. After Cruz's Iowa win, Trump has made serious inroads among his core base of conservative supporters, draining anti-govern-

ment hardliners and evangelicals. Cruz attempted to appeal to Nevada's fierce libertarian wing, appealing directly to those who supported local rancher Cliven Bundy's armed protest against the federal government in 2014 and a similar more recent one staged by Bundy's sons at a federal wildlife refuge in Oregon. But that, too, was not enough.

The upcoming 1 March primary in his home state of Texas is looming as a make-or-break moment for him.

Despite early reports on social media of procedural irregularities at many Nevada caucus sites, the Republican National Committee and the party's state chapter said voting ran smoothly. Higher-than-normal turnout was reported, although historically, few of the state's citizens participate in the Republican caucus.

Nevada's contest had been viewed as a test of whether Trump had organisational might to match his star power. Unlike primaries, caucuses are more dependent on the abilities of campaigns to motivate supporters to participate. Trump's failure to do that in Iowa was viewed as contributing to his defeat there.

He had no such problems in Nevada. And he is expected to win the bulk of Nevada's 30 delegates. That would give him more than 80 before February ends, dwarfing the tallies of Cruz and Rubio.

While more than 1,200 are needed to secure the Republican presidential nomination, Trump has built a formidable head start.—Reuters

NEWS IN BRIEF

Plane with remains of diplomats lands in Belgrade

BELGRADE — The plane carrying the remains of the two employees of the Serbian Embassy in Libya, Sladjana Stankovic and Jovica Stepic, arrived in Belgrade at 7:25 pm on Tuesday.

The plane arrived from Istanbul, where the corpses were transported from Tripoli by a Maltese airliner.

The Libyan autopsy documentation does not state the cause of the deaths of the Serbian Embassy staffers, but rather lists and describes their numerous wounds, Serbia's national broadcaster RTS reports.

Another autopsy will be done in Belgrade.

Sladjana Stankovic and Jovica Stepic were abducted in November last year, and died in US airstrikes on an Islamic State base near the Libya ncity of Sabratha several days ago.—Tanjung

Airbus chief says Brexit would not help its UK competitiveness

LONDON — The head of Airbus Group said yesterday a decision by UK voters to leave the European Union in a June referendum would not benefit the planemaker's UK operations.

"If Britain leaves, I cannot imagine that this would have positive consequences for our competitiveness in Britain," Chief Executive Tom Enders told a news conference on the aerospace group's annual results.

Airbus, which builds wings for jetliners in the UK, has said a decision to quit the EU would raise doubts about its long-term investments in the country, where it employs 16,000 people.—Reuters

Indian border guards seize suspicious Pakistani boat off western coast

NEW DELHI — India's border guards have seized a suspicious Pakistani boat off the coast of the western state of Gujarat, sources said yesterday.

"The boat was seized from Harami Nala in the creek area of the Arabian Sea, along the Indo-Pakistan border of the state's Kutch region Tuesday. The boat was found abandoned in the area," sources said.

The crew of the boat has, however, escaped, leaving the boat, probably sensing that they have been tracked by the Border Security Forces personnel, they said.

A massive manhunt has been launched by security agencies in the area to track down any intruders who may have entered the country through the sea route, sources said.—Xinhua

Assad tells Putin his government will help with Syria ceasefire—Ifax

MOSCOW — Syrian President Bashar al-Assad told yesterday Russian President Vladimir Putin his government was ready to assist in implementing a ceasefire in Syria, the Interfax news agency quoted the Kremlin as saying.

Putin and Assad stressed the importance of the "continued and uncompromising" fight against Islamic State, the Nusra Front and other terrorist groups, the agency reported.—Reuters

Iran's leader calls for parliament that stands up to the West

DUBAI — Iran's top leader said yesterday he was confident Friday's elections would return a parliament prepared to resist interference by foreign powers including the United States, according to his website.

"The nation will vote for a parliament that puts Iran's dignity and independence first, and stands up to foreign powers whose influence on Iran has been removed," Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said.—Reuters

Kerry issues warning as Syrian parties back halt to fighting

BEIRUT/WASHINGTON —

The government of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and rebel groups accepted a plan for a cessation of hostilities to begin on Saturday and the United States warned it would be hard to hold the country together if the fighting did not stop.

With hostilities reported on several fronts, rebels backed by Saudi Arabia expressed doubts about the proposal, which excludes attacks by the Syrian army and its Russian backers on the jihadist groups Islamic State and the al Qaeda-linked Nusra Front. Saudi-backed rebels said Russia had stepped up air strikes since the plan was announced on Monday.

For its part, the government in Damascus has made clear that continued foreign help for the rebels could wreck the deal.

Secretary of State John Kerry said the United States would soon know if the plan would take hold. “The proof will be in the actions that come in the next days,” he told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in Washington.

If a political transition to a government to replace the current administration does not unfold in Syria, there are options, Kerry said, in a reference to undefined contingency plans believed to include military action.

The next month or two would show if that transition process was serious and Assad would have to make “some real decisions about the formation of a transitional governance process that’s real,” Kerry said.

Faced with scepticism about the cessation plan, Kerry said that things in Syria could get uglier.

“It may be too late to keep it



Residents inspect damage after an airstrike on the rebel held al-Fardous neighbourhood of Aleppo, Syria, on 18 February 2016. PHOTO : REUTERS

as a whole Syria if we wait much longer,” he said.

Kerry insisted Washington is working on ways to react if diplomacy does not work. “There is a significant discussion taking place now about Plan B if we don’t succeed at the table,” Kerry said.

France said the leaders of the United States, France, Britain and Germany hoped the cessation deal could take effect soon.

The plan is the result of intense diplomacy to end the five-year-long war that has killed 250,000 and forced millions to flee their homes helping to cause a refugee crisis in Europe.

But rebels say the exclusion of Islamic State and Nusra Front will give the government a pretext to keep attacking them because its

fighters are widely spread in opposition-held areas.

The Syrian government, backed by Russian air strikes since September, said it would coordinate with Russia to define which groups and areas would be included in what it called a “halt to combat operations”.

The terminology reflects the difficulties of getting peace efforts under way, with talks in Geneva making no headway and the failure amid further fighting of a cessation of hostilities announced on 12 February.

The United Nations describes a cessation as something that would precede the more formal ceasefire it is hoping to establish at some future date.

UN spokesman Ahmad Fawzi

said: “A ceasefire implies a whole mechanism and agreements, signed agreements between the parties etc. This is a cessation of hostilities that we hope will take force very quickly and provide a breathing space for the intra-Syrian talks to resume.”

Assad objects to the word “ceasefire”, saying it is something concluded between armies or states. “It does not happen between a state and terrorists,” he said last week. Instead, he has offered a “halt to combat operations”.

The Russian intervention in the fighting has turned the momentum Assad’s way in a conflict that has mostly reduced his area of control to the big cities of the west and the coast. US Republi-

can Senator Bob Corker, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said he did not believe Russia was convinced it would suffer any consequences if the plan fails. He said he expected Assad’s forces, backed by Russia, would continue to seize territory.

“I don’t think Russia believes that anything is going to happen. And I think that’s why they continue to make the gains,” Corker said.

On Tuesday, Islamic State fighters were reported to have tightened their grip on a supply route to Aleppo that had been used by the Syrian government in its campaign to seize the city.

Heavy Russian air strikes in support of the army were also said to be targeting one of the last roads into opposition-held parts of Aleppo.

Damascus, backed by ground forces including Lebanon’s Hezbollah and Iranian Revolutionary Guards, is making significant advances near Aleppo, which is split between rebel- and government-control.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, which reports the war using a network of sources on the ground, said Islamic State fighters had seized the village of Khanaser on the road, which remained closed for a second day. A Syrian military source told Reuters that army operations continued to repel the attack.

In a statement on the proposed cessation of hostilities, the government in Damascus stressed the importance of sealing Syria’s borders and halting foreign support for armed groups whose activities it said could wreck the agreement.—*Reuters*

Rescued Swedish girl says life under Islamic State ‘really hard’

ERBIL, (Iraq) — A Swedish teenager rescued from Islamic State militants in Iraq has said life in the so-called caliphate was “really hard” and that she was duped into going there by her boyfriend.

In her first interview since Kurdish special forces recovered her in northern Iraq, the 16-year old told a Kurdish TV channel she had met her boyfriend in mid-2014 after dropping out of school in Sweden.

“First we were good but then he started to look at ISIS videos and speak about them and stuff like that,” she told Kurdistan 24 in a brief interview, using another name for the Islamic State group.

“Then he said he wanted to go to ISIS and I said ok, no problem, because I didn’t know what ISIS means, what Islam is — nothing,” said the girl.

The couple set off from Sweden in late May 2015 and



PHOTO: REUTERS

made their way across Europe by bus and train until reaching the Turkish border province of Gaziantep, from which they crossed into Syria.

From there, Islamic State militants ferried them by bus with other men and women to the city of Mosul in neighbouring Iraq and provided them with a house. There was no electricity or running water.

“I didn’t have any money either — it was a really hard life,” she said, looking relaxed and healthy. “When I had a

phone I started to contact my mum and I said ‘I want to go home’.”

The teenager, who was rescued on 17 February, is currently in Iraq’s Kurdistan region and will be handed over to Swedish authorities.

Security services estimate that hundreds of Western men and women have left home to join Islamic State since the group overran large parts of Iraq and Syria in June 2014.

A mother who took her 14-month-old son to Syria to join Islamic State fighters was jailed for six years by a British court earlier this month.

Smiling occasionally, the girl compared life under Islamic State to that in Europe: “In Sweden we have everything, and when I was there, we didn’t have anything”.—*Reuters*

Pakistani Prime Minister welcomes Afghan peace talks’ decision

ISLAMABAD — Pakistani Prime Minister, Nawaz Sharif, welcomed yesterday the decision of peace talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban and renewed his country’s support for the reconciliation process.

Sharif’s remarks came a day after senior Afghan, Chinese, US and Pakistani diplomats agreed to facilitate the Taliban-Kabul talks by the first week of March.

Pakistan has agreed to host the talks, according a joint statement issued at the conclusion of a day-long meeting in Kabul on Tuesday.

“The decision of talks between Afghan government and Taliban is a positive signal for the peace process,” the Pakistani Prime Minister told an Afghan parliamentary delegation at his office in Islamabad.

The quadrilateral meeting called upon all the Taliban groups and Hizb-e-Islami party of former Prime Minister, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, to join the

process. Both have not yet made any decision.

“Afghanistan must have an environment where Afghan migrants return back to their country with respect, honor and dignity on the right time,” a statement from the PM’s office said.

He expressed his hope that Pakistan’s engagement in sincere and consistent efforts for promoting peace and reconciliation through an Afghan-owned and Afghan-led peace process would bring lasting peace in Afghanistan.

The Quadrilateral Coordination Group has been making good progress in right direction, the Prime Minister noted with satisfaction and also offered help to Afghanistan in its infrastructure development.

Pakistan believes that terrorism is a common enemy and Pakistan and Afghanistan need to work together to rid the two countries of this menace, Nawaz Sharif emphasized.—*Xinhua*

Faster sea level rise sharpens need to curb global warming—scientists

BARCELONA — Global warming caused by humans was almost certainly responsible for more than half the increase in sea levels in the 20th century, when oceans rose at a faster rate than in the preceding 27 centuries, scientists have found.

Worldwide, seas rose by about 14 centimetres (5.5 inches) from 1900 to 2000, according to a study led by Rutgers University in the United States. But without global warming, it would have risen by less than half of that, and may even have fallen.

“The 20th century rise was extraordinary in the context of the last three millennia — and the rise over the last two decades has been even faster,” said Robert Kopp, the study’s lead author and an associate professor at Rutgers’ Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences.

In contrast, the study, published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, found that global sea level declined by about 8 centimetres from 1000 to 1400, a period when the planet cooled by about 0.2 degree Celsius (0.4 degrees Fahrenheit).

Today, global average temperatures are around 1 degree Celsius higher than in pre-industrial times, in the late 19th century.

The researchers compiled a new database of geological sea-level indicators from marshes, coral atolls and archaeological sites in 24 locations around the world, spanning close to 3,000 years. They also used 66 tide-gauge records from the last 300 years.



Vehicles drive on a flooded freeway after a storm brought rain to Los Angeles, California, United States, on 6 January 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

A separate report, drawing on the Rutgers-led study, found that, of some 8,700 days of “nuisance” flooding identified from 1950 through 2014 at 27 sites in the United States, only one third would have happened without the sea-level rise induced by global warming.

Nuisance flooding is flooding that closes coastal area roads, overwhelms storm drains and compromises infrastructure.

“There are human fingerprints on thousands of US coastal floods — and countless more the world over,” Benjamin Straus, vice president for sea level with independent science group Climate Central, wrote in a commentary on his team’s work.

In other related research, led by the Potsdam Institute for Climate Im-

pact Research (PIK), scientists predicted that sea-levels worldwide would likely rise 50 to 130 cm (20 to 51 inches) by the end of this century if planet-warming emissions are not reduced rapidly.

“With all the greenhouse gases we (have) already emitted, we cannot stop the seas from rising altogether, but we can substantially limit the rate of the rise by ending the use of fossil fuels,” said PIK researcher Anders Levermann, who co-authored the study.

If governments put in place ambitious policies following December’s agreement on a new global deal to curb climate change, sea levels would rise by less — an increase of 20 to 60 cm (8 to 24 inches) by 2100, the study projected.

“This is quite a chal-

lenge, but less expensive than adaptation to unabated sea-level rise which in some regions is impossible”, Levermann said.

“If the world wants to avoid the greatest losses and damages, it now has to rapidly follow the path laid out by the UN climate summit in Paris a few weeks ago.”

The PIK scientists said they would make their computer simulation code available online so other experts could use the information and the estimation tool in their risk assessments.

“We try to give coastal planners what they need for adaptation planning, be it building dikes, designing insurance schemes for flooding, or mapping long-term settlement retreat,” Levermann added.—Reuters

Parcel delivery drone tested with elderly households in mind

TOKUSHIMA — The transport ministry tested a drone in Tokushima Prefecture yesterday to deliver parcels containing food items to elderly households in sparsely populated areas.

The test was mainly targeted at elderly residents who have difficulties going shopping, and was conducted jointly with Mikawayama 21, a Tokyo-based company that is working on turning drone-using parcel delivery service into a potential business.

In Wednesday’s experiment, a drone carrying such food items as bread and milk flew for about 500 metres at an altitude of around 50 metres over crop

fields. On its way back, the drone was loaded with eggs and equipment designed to measure the impact of take-offs and landings.

The test was conducted in Naka, which is designated by the prefectural government as a special zone that seeks to revitalize its economy through drone use.

Parcel delivery drones “would address the shortage of delivery truck drivers, reduce time and costs, and be a relief for seniors in thinly populated areas who have become shopping refugees,” said an official of the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism.—Kyodo News



A drone, carrying a cargo, flies over a crop field in Naka, Tokushima Prefecture in western Japan on 24 February 2016, as part of an experiment by the transport ministry. The ministry conducted the experiment in collaboration with a Tokyo firm aiming to launch a business delivering goods via drone to households of senior citizens. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV MCC MERGUI VOY NO ()

Consignees of cargo carried on MV MCC MERGUI VOY NO () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 25.2.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S MCC TRANSPORT
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Debris from a damaged water tower is shown in this handout photo provided by Assumption Parish Sheriff's Office, west of New Orleans, Louisiana on 23 February 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Tornadoes kill 3, injure dozens in Louisiana, Mississippi

BATON ROUGE — Several tornadoes lashed southern Louisiana and Mississippi on Tuesday, killing at least three people and injuring more than 30 as the storms destroyed dozens of homes and businesses and toppled a water tower, weather and emergency officials said.

Hardest hit in Louisiana was the Mississippi River hamlet of Convent, where 90 per cent of the estimated 160 mobile homes at the Sugar Hill trailer park were demolished, state police superintendent Colonel Mike Edmonson told a news conference.

"This is some of the worst damage that I've seen in my 36 years with the state police," Edmonson said.

Governor John Bel Edwards said two people were known to have died at the trailer park and two or three others were reported unaccounted for. Rescue crews with dogs combed through debris searching for anyone who might have been trapped.

Authorities said they hoped the missing might turn up later in area hospitals or elsewhere among the survivors in Convent, located about 60 miles (100 km) west of New Orleans.

"These travel trailers were picked up, thrown a considerable distance and just mangled," Edwards said after surveying the damage. He said it was "a minor miracle" the casualty toll was not higher because most of the trailers were occupied when the storm hit.

The National Weather Service confirmed one other fatality near the southern Mississippi town of Purvis, where a mobile home was destroyed.

Acadian ambulance services in Louisiana said it had transported 31 people to area hospitals in St. James Parish, most of them from the trailer park, and five others from neighbouring parishes, according to the agency's Twitter feed.

There were additional reports of survivors being taken to hospitals in private

cars, and other ambulance operators were responding to the emergency, indicating the tally of injuries would likely climb higher.

The governor declared a state of emergency in seven parishes that bore the brunt of the storms.

The storm system posed a continuing tornado threat as it swept east through the night across Mississippi and into Alabama, said Mike Efferson, a meteorologist at the National Weather Service in New Orleans.

The Weather Service said Alabama could see tornadoes and hail early Wednesday.

Storms were expected to hit southwestern Georgia by midnight and could reach Atlanta and central Georgia before the morning rush hour on Wednesday, meteorologist Adam Baker said.

Tens of thousands of customers were without power in Louisiana at the height of the storms, according to Entergy Louisiana, the main electricity

supplier in the area.

In Louisiana's Assumption Parish, a tornado knocked down a water tower and damaged homes, said Deputy Robert Martin of the sheriff's office.

Up to 20 homes were reported destroyed, and firefighters rescued residents with minor injuries from four homes, said John Boudreaux, director of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness in Assumption Parish.

Residents reported damage to homes from tornadoes and golf ball-sized hail on the Mississippi Gulf Coast as the system barreled across the US South, Efferson said.

Mississippi Governor Phil Bryant declared a state of emergency for areas expected to be affected by the storm.

Schools and government offices canceled classes or closed early in Louisiana and Mississippi as severe weather warnings lined up from Louisiana to Florida and Georgia.—Reuters

Mild quake hits western India

NEW DELHI — A mild earthquake hit the western Indian state of Rajasthan yesterday, a senior official said.

However, there have been no reports of any

casualty or damage to properties, though disaster management officials have rushed to the district, he said, on condition of anonymity.

"The quake, measur-

ing 3.0 on the Richter scale, hit the state's Jalore district, following which mild tremors were also felt in the nearby districts," the official said.

Though the state lies

in Seismic Zone 2, which is considered to be a low damage risk zone, a similar mild quake had hit Rajasthan's capital Jaipur a month back.—Xinhua

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The Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

Dated 25 February 2016

Imm@kcyangon.com

DECLARATION OF PUBLIC HOLDING COMPANY LIMITED FORMING COMPLETION

Investments and Company Directives Department of the Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development, Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, has permitted the Formation / Establishment as the Public Company, Limited with Credit Duties, according to Myanmar Companies Act, Law, to Public Company Limited, No. 10+11 (A), Gandamar Street, Thayargone Ward, Mingalar Taung Nyunt Township, Yangon and it is declared, that the Certificate of Incorporation No. is 961(1999-2000) E.C-13/2015 (13.12.2015).

1.2.1 Public Company Limited.

Invitation for Bids for Spectrum Monitoring System

The Posts and Telecommunications Department (PTD) under the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT) now invites scaled bids from eligible Bidders for the Spectrum Monitoring System (SMS). Bids shall be submitted to the following address by 2:00 PM (local time) on April 26, 2016.

Attn:

Than Htun Aung (Mr.) Project Director, Telecom Sector Reform Project

Office Building No.2, Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar.

Tel: _95 67407435 Fax:+9567407539

Email: thanhtunaung_ptd@outlook.com,

tsrproject2014@gmail.com, htunaung.than@gmail.com

A complete set of bidding documents in English can be downloaded from Ministry Website at www.mcit.gov.mm.



Demi Moore. PHOTO: REUTERS

Demi Moore to make comeback on TV with '10 Days in the Valley'

LOS ANGELES — Actress Demi Moore is returning to TV for her first major role in 20 years with drama "10 Days in the Valley" from "Rookie Blue" co-creator Tassie Cameron.

This would mark Moore's first TV role since she guest-starred on "Will & Grace" in 2003 the first series-regular role since she got her break on the soap "General Hospital", on which she appeared from 1981-84. Moore, 53, will play Jane Sadler, an overworked writer and single mother in the middle of a tumultuous separation, said The Hollywood Reporter.

When her five-year-old daughter is taken from her bed in the middle of the night, Jane must put everything on the line, including her TV show, her loyalties and her deepest and darkest secrets - to get her child back.

Cameron wrote the project and will serve as executive producer and showrunner on the series, which is being produced by Skydance Television. The drama is currently being shopped to networks.—PTI

Freida Pinto to present at Film Independent Spirit Awards

LOS ANGELES — "Slumdog Millionaire" star Freida Pinto will present at the 31st Film Independent Spirit Awards.

The awards will take place this Saturday in Santa Monica.

Also added to the starry line-up are Jessica Biel, Idris Elba, Jason Bateman and Anthony Mackie, reported E! Online.

Previously announced presenters include Jessica Chastain, Rami Malek, Michael Keaton, Aaron Paul, Nate Parker, Emilia Clarke and Patricia Arquette.

"Carol" goes into the show with the most nominations, a total of six, including competing for best feature against "Spotlight", "Beasts of No Nation", "Anomalisa" and "Tangerine".

The Independent Spirit Awards will be hosted by Saturday Night Live's Kate McKinnon and Kumail Nanjiani of Silicon Valley.—PTI

Jimmy Kimmel in talks to host 2016 Emmys

LOS ANGELES — Comedian Jimmy Kimmel is in early talks to host the 2016 Emmy Awards.

The ABC host last had the gig in 2012, during the network's last time at bat with the telecast.

Broadcast networks typically rotate hosts when they take their turn at the Emmy telecast, but ABC is looking to follow its last time by asking Kimmel for a repeat performance, reported Variety.

Discussions come before the network and the TV Academy have even solidified a date for the awards.

This news comes just a week after ABC saw a swift changing of the guard, with Channing Dungey replacing Paul Lee as entertainment president.

Kimmel's first and only time hosting the Emmys was in 2012.

Among ABC's current roster, the only natural contender besides Kimmel is "Black-ish" star Anthony Anderson. The actor-comedian has hosting credentials due to multiple times emceeing the NAACP Image Awards. An ABC spokesperson declined to comment on the matter.—PTI

Steven DeKnight to direct 'Pacific Rim 2'

LOS ANGELES — Steven S DeKnight, who created TV series "Spartacus", will make his feature directorial debut with Legendary Pictures' "Pacific Rim 2".

The first-time feature director takes the reins on the sequel to Guillermo del Toro's 2013 action movie about rampaging monsters from the deep, said The Hollywood Reporter.

DeKnight most recently

served as executive producer on Marvel's "Daredevil" for Netflix.

The current script for the project, which will be released worldwide by Universal, was written by Jon Spaihts and is based on characters created by del Toro and screenwriter Travis Beacham.

The 3D film will be produced by Thomas Tull, Jon Jashni, del Toro and Mary Par-

ent, with Jillian Share serving as executive producer. DeKnight has additionally written, directed and produced such TV series as "Buffy the Vampire Slayer",

"Angel", "Dollhouse" and "Smallville". —PTI



Pop star Jennifer Lopez. PHOTO: REUTERS

Jennifer Lopez's birthday tribute to twins

LOS ANGELES — Pop star Jennifer Lopez has gushed about her twins, Max and Emme, as they celebrate their eighth birthday.

The "On The Floor" hit-maker has paid tribute to her two kids, twins Max and Emme, who she has with ex-husband Marc Anthony, and said they're the "lights of her life". Taking to Instagram share a sweet

picture of the pair, she wrote: "HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO THE LIGHTS OF MY LIFE. You have brought me nothing but joy and happiness since the very second you were born.

"I am so proud of who you are and the beautiful loving caring people you are growing into. #coconuts8thBirthday. #iloveyoubeyondforever #maxandemme #February22nd And Thank you everyone for all the beautiful birthday wishes and videos. They are so precious!! (sic)".

Meanwhile, the 46-year-old actress-singer previously admitted it is a bit of a "juggling act" trying to balance her work and family commitments.—PTI



Sportscaster Erin Andrews. PHOTO: REUTERS

Sportscaster Erin Andrews' lawyer blames hotel in stalking case

NASHVILLE — Attorneys for sportscaster Erin Andrews said on Tuesday a Marriott hotel was negligent in enabling a guest to shoot a nude video of her that went viral on the Internet, while the Tennessee hotel put the blame entirely on the stalker. Andrews, who has since moved from ESPN to Fox Sports, has sued the Marriott Nashville at Vanderbilt University for \$75 million over the 2008 incident, in which a man in a neighboring room, Michael David Barrett, rigged a peep hole and shot the video of Andrews changing.

Andrews, who also has appeared on the "Dancing With the Stars" television show, was staying at the hotel while covering a Vanderbilt football game.

Andrews originally had named Marriott International as a defendant but the judge dismissed the company from the case last month. Barrett and the

Nashville hotel's owners and managers remain as defendants.

In opening statements in Davidson County Circuit Court on Tuesday, Andrews' attorney Randall Kinnard blamed former hotel employees for giving out Andrews' room number, which led to Barrett booking the room next door.

Marc Dedman, an attorney for the hotel, said the blame rests solely with Barrett, who pleaded guilty in 2009 to stalking Andrews and shooting the videos and was sentenced to 30 months in prison. Kinnard, pointing to the damage the video continues to cause Andrews, said: "This is not like a broken arm that heals," The Tennessee newspaper reported. A former hotel employee testified that it was against hotel policy to give out room numbers. The trial is expected to take about two weeks.—Reuters

Cuban tourism boom seen slowing, but finding a room still hard

HAVANA — Cuba’s tourism boom continues at a record pace but is expected to cool off during 2016 with the government forecasting nearly 6 per cent growth this year after a 17 per cent increase in 2015.

Amid the international buzz surrounding the country’s detente with the United States, Cuba received a record 3.5 million visitors in 2015, then set another record for any single month in January 2016, officials said.

The influx has pushed capacity to the limit and forced many tourists to scramble for hotel rooms, raising questions about how Cuba will absorb additional visitors when scheduled US commercial airline service starts this year.

The Communist government is rushing to increase hotel capacity in

the capital Havana and the beach resort Varadero, the two markets under the most strain, said Dalila Gonzalez, deputy director of marketing for the Tourism Ministry.

Cuba has forecast 200,000 additional visitors this year, or 3.7 million total, which would be less than a 6 per cent increase, Gonzalez said.

The January record of 417,764 visitors was up 12.7 per cent from a year earlier.

“One of our priorities for this year is the construction of four- and five-star hotels, especially five-star hotels,” Gonzalez told Reuters. “All you have to do is walk the streets of Old Havana to see a lot of construction under way.”

Projects remain months or years from completion, meaning the hotel



Tourists enjoy a ride in vintage cars in old Havana on 17 January 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

crunch is likely to continue, especially during the high season from November to March.

The Manzana de Gomez, an ornate building being converted into a luxury hotel, is due for completion by early 2017. It is a joint venture between the venerable Swiss chain Kempinski and the Cuban state tourism company Gaviota.

Construction recently began on a Sofitel luxury hotel on a prime parcel fronting Havana’s famous

malecon, or boardwalk. Refurbishing of out-of-commission rooms in ageing hotels is also under way.

Occupancy rates at four and five-star hotels in Havana and Varadero surpassed 80 per cent last year, Gonzalez said, a figure that includes the low season.

Because Americans are still banned from tourism under the US trade embargo and only allowed on officially sanctioned visits, Americans concentrate in the capital rather than at forbidden beach resorts. That makes finding a hotel in Havana during the high season a challenge.

American visits last year rose 77 per cent to 161,000, not counting hundreds of thousands of Cuban-Americans, and Gonzalez said a similar percentage increase was possible in 2016.—Reuters

Ahead of Oscars, fashion brands flock to Hollywood spotlight

LOS ANGELES — Celebrities might be flocking to the front rows of this week’s London Fashion Week shows, but some designers are swapping the runway for Hollywood’s awards season red carpets as the fashion world seeks new ways to draw attention.

Ahead of Sunday’s Oscars ceremony, the most-watched entertainment event around the world, Hollywood has been the setting for numerous fashion events. British designer Stella McCartney threw a party showcasing her latest collection at famed music store Amoeba, Saint Laurent Paris took over The Palladium music venue for its menswear show, Gucci

announced a celebrity ambassador and Kenzo debuted a new short film.

“It just feels like a moment when music, film, fashion, the arts, it’s all just come together for LA,” designer Stella McCartney told Reuters at her presentation, attended by the likes of Katy Perry and Gwyneth Paltrow.

Celebrities and fashion have long had a symbiotic relationship, from Audrey Hepburn and Hubert de Givenchy to Jennifer Lawrence and Christian Dior. But Los Angeles traditionally is not regarded as a trend-setting city as the year-round sunny weather doesn’t allow seasonal clothing changes as much as

fashion capitals New York, Milan, Paris and London. That notion is slowly changing. In 2012, Saint Laurent Paris moved its Parisian label design studios to Los Angeles. Last year, Tom Ford and Burberry presented star-studded runway shows and Louis Vuitton held an exhibition in Hollywood.

The spotlight on Los Angeles comes at a time when brands are rejigging the runway-to-retail model and making new fashion available faster to customers.

“Runway shows don’t have same impact as they once did, mainly because there’s so much of it and it’s overcrowded,” said Eric Wilson, fashion news director of InStyle magazine.

The red carpet, however, is watched by the entire world.

“One red carpet hit at the Oscars is equivalent to a year’s worth of marketing for a designer,” Wilson said.

Tom Ford last year moved his London Fashion Week presentation, scheduled for after the Oscars, to Los Angeles ahead of the Oscars. He then dressed nominee Reese Witherspoon for film’s biggest night. “The world is even more obsessed with celebrities than ever before,” Wilson said. “You’ll see more big name designers who are based elsewhere coming to Los Angeles to do events, for the proximity to celebrities.”—Reuters

One in three American adults not getting enough sleep

ATLANTA — Did you get enough sleep last night? If not, you are not alone.

More than one out of three American adults do not get enough sleep, according to a study released Thursday from the US Centres for Disease Control and Prevention.

“That’s a big problem” says, Dr Nancy Collop, director of the Emory Sleep Centre at Emory University School of Medicine in Atlanta, who is familiar with the study. “You don’t function as well, your

ability to pay attention is reduced, and it can have serious, long term side effects. It can change your metabolism for the worse.”

At least seven hours of sleep is considered healthy for an adults aged 18 to 60, according to the American Academy of Sleep Medicine and the Sleep Research Society.

CDC analysed data from a 2014 survey of 444,306 adults and found 65.2 per cent of respondents reported getting that amount of sleep.—Reuters

(25-2-2016 07:00am ~ 26-2-2016 7:00am) MST

Today Fresh		
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Prime Time

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07:26	Pm	Travelogue: A Tour in Korea (Part-7)
07:36	Pm	Travelogue: "Anyar Myay" or Upcountry (Part- I)
08:03	Pm	News
08:26	Pm	Myanmar Traditional Identity (EP- 4) Tumbling Doll, Pyit Tine Htaung
08:38	Pm	Welcome to the Southernmost part of Myanmar
08:48	Pm	The Firefighter

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

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

(25-2-2016, Thursday)

6:00 am <ul style="list-style-type: none">Paritta by Hilly Region Missionary Sayadaw	2:10 am <ul style="list-style-type: none">Teleplay
7:35 am <ul style="list-style-type: none">Weekly Entertainment News	2:35 am <ul style="list-style-type: none">Real Story Real Movie
8:35 am <ul style="list-style-type: none">MRTV’s Education	3:35 pm <ul style="list-style-type: none">2016 University Entrance Examination (Myanmar)
9:35 am <ul style="list-style-type: none">2016 University Entrance Examination (Maths)	4:35 pm <ul style="list-style-type: none">Football Magazine
10:35 am <ul style="list-style-type: none">MRTV Job Opportunity Programme	5:15 pm <ul style="list-style-type: none">Weekly Sports Info
11:15 am <ul style="list-style-type: none">Documentary (ASEAN)	5:35 pm <ul style="list-style-type: none">People’s Talks
11:35 am <ul style="list-style-type: none">Science and Technology Programme	6:35 pm <ul style="list-style-type: none">Current Affairs
12:35 am <ul style="list-style-type: none">TV Drama Series	7:15 pm <ul style="list-style-type: none">TV Drama Series
1:30 am <ul style="list-style-type: none">Fine Arts-Bosom of Dramatic Performance	8:00 pm <ul style="list-style-type: none">News / International News/ Weather Report

Note/ Hourly News Bulletins (Local + International)

Masterful Messi's late double for Barcelona sinks Arsenal in Champions League

LONDON — Barcelona's Lionel Messi broke free from Arsenal's shackles to score two late goals and put the Champions League holders on the brink of the quarter-finals with a clinical 2-0 victory at the Emirates Stadium on Tuesday.

The irrepressible Argentine, along with strike partners Luis Suarez and Neymar, had been subdued for most of the last 16, first-leg tie but came alive late on, clinically finishing off a lightning counter-attack and then dispatching a penalty.

"They are 95 per cent through to the quarter-finals certainly," Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger, whose side had defended solidly for 71 minutes until crumbling, told reporters.

"It's a shame we didn't get any satisfaction because we put everything into it."

Luis Enrique's Barca side extended their unbeaten run to 33 matches and, barring something extraordinary in the return at the Nou Camp next month, will take their place in the last eight for the ninth season in a row.

"I liked everything we did

tonight," the Spaniard told reporters.

Messi has proved a thorn in Arsenal's side on each of the last two occasions the teams have met in the Champions League.

In 2010 he scored four times in the last 16 second leg to send Barca through and a year later he struck twice in a 3-1 win in Spain after Arsenal had edged the first leg.

Messi, Suarez and Neymar had scored 91 goals in all competitions this season heading into Tuesday's game but none of the feared trident managed an effort on target in the first half as Arsenal's fans cranked up the decibel levels.

Arsenal were patient and should have gone ahead midway through the first half when Hector Bellerin's scuffed shot fell for Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain but he scooped his effort straight into the arms of keeper Marc-Andre ter Stegen.

The Catalans began to move through the gears though and either side of halftime wasted two glorious chances.

Suarez, who has 41 goals in



Lionel Messi scores the second goal for Barcelona from the penalty spot during UEFA Champions League Round of 16 First Leg at Emirates Stadium, London, England on 23 February 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

all competitions this term, headed Dani Alves's dinked cross wide with the goal gaping before Neymar was denied by goalkeeper Petr Cech after being played in by Andres Iniesta.

Starved of the ball for long periods, Arsenal still posed a threat and Ter Stegen did well to keep out Olivier Giroud's close-

range header from a Mesut Ozil cross.

Arsenal grew in belief but it cost them dear as they committed players forward and got stung on the break.

With 19 minutes left they lost the ball near Barca's goal and Suarez and Neymar combined in devastating fashion,

the Brazilian unselfishly picking out Messi who steadied himself before beating Cech for the first time in his career.

Suarez then hit the post when he should have scored before Messi scored again, this time with a calmly struck penalty after substitute Mathieu Flamini had tripped him.—Reuters

Young guns to lead Australia against United States

MELBOURNE — Bernard Tomic and Nick Kyrgios will lead Australia's Davis Cup charge against the United States in the opening tie in Melbourne next month, with doubles specialist John Peers to debut in the team tournament.

Australia number one Tomic and world number 33 Kyrgios, who won his maiden ATP title at the Marseille Open on Sunday, will lead off the singles on the temporary grass court at Kooyong Lawn Tennis Club.

Peers, ranked ninth in the world in doubles, will team up with big-serving Sam Groth in the doubles rubber, team captain Lleyton Hewitt said in Melbourne on Tuesday. Peers reached two grand slam finals last year with Andy Murray's older brother Jamie Murray and had earned his spot, twice grand



Australia's Bernard Tomic hits a shot during his third round match against compatriot John Millman at the Australian Open tennis tournament at Melbourne Park, Australia, on 24 January 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

slam champion Hewitt told reporters.

"I spoke to him at the Masters Cup in London at the end of last year and we talked about what he wanted to do with Davis Cup and the Olympics and he put his hand up for an opportunity," said Hewitt, who retired from tennis after the Australian Open.

Hewitt lavished praise on

20-year-old Kyrgios, who defeated world number seven Tomas Berdych and former US Open champion Marin Cilic on his way to winning in Marseille.

"We all knew he was going to win a title, it was a matter of time but the way he did it and the guys he beat, especially from the quarter-finals on was very impressive," Hewitt said.—Reuters

United's Memphis says he has not justified price tag

LONDON — Manchester United winger Memphis Depay has said he has not lived up to expectations since his big-money transfer from Dutch side PSV Eindhoven, but is working hard to improve.

Memphis joined United in June for a reported 25 million pounds (\$35 million) after finishing the previous campaign as the Dutch league's top scorer with 22 goals, but has struggled to settle in England.

The 22-year-old, described by manager Louis van Gaal as having the "potential to become a great footballer", has scored six goals in all competitions for United and two in the Premier League all season.

"I haven't yet lived up to everything people expected of me," Memphis told British media. "I have a lot of expect-

tations of myself, and it will come — confidence and experience will help. You have to learn from your mistakes and keep working hard to improve."

The winger said he was working closely with former midfielder and United assistant manager Ryan Giggs in a bid to find consistency and eliminate the mistakes that have dogged his campaign.

"Ryan Giggs is a legend, he talks a lot with me, he gives me advice, he has experienced everything already so he can help me with lots of things," Memphis added.

"He works a lot with me and he and Wayne Rooney give me lots to think about. That really inspires me because they are legends, I feel that I am doing something well with them."—Reuters