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OPEN THE DOOR TO TRADE

US Business Community Asks Obama Govt to Ease Myanmar Sanctions

TO improve ties between Myanmar and the USA the American Chamber of Commerce Myanmar, the National Foreign Trade Council, the US-ASEAN Business Council, the United States Chambers of Commerce and the United States Council of International Business called for the US government to ease sanctions on Myanmar last month.

Members of the US business community supported Obama's engagement in Myanmar thus far, including the lifting of import bans, the easing of finance and investment bans, the opening of a USAID office and extending both the OPIC (Overseas Private Investment Corporation) and the Export-Import Bank support.

The letter also pointed to the positive election results in November—in which Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy won a vast majority of parliamentary seats.

Vice President U Nyan Tun asked the Obama administration to lift the US sanctions on Myanmar at the meeting of Southeast Asian leaders in California in mid February. U Nyan Tun said that although the US had given economic support to other ASEAN countries, Myanmar had received little developmental assistance because



A vessel carrying containers is seen in the Yangon River. PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE

of the sanctions.

American sanctions on Myanmar were initiated in 1997 when the country was under military rule. It was not until 2012

that the United States restored diplomatic ties with Myanmar, one year after current President U Thein Sein's quasi-civilian government came to power.

Since last year, the UM-FCCI has been urging the US government to re-examine the sanctions list and remove some companies and individuals. This,

the body argues, would create a level playing field in Myanmar for US companies with otherwise limited business power. —GNLM with Irrawaddy

Water supply to return to full capacity ahead of schedule in Yangon

WORKS are progressing to complete pipe replacements ahead of schedule, said TODA Corporation, which is carrying out the replacement of aged pipelines and rehabilitation in the water supply system in Yangon.

Works are underway day in, day out with the full utilisation of manpower in order to finish earlier than the schedule, said Project Manager Fujihito Hakozaki, adding that it is required to cut off

water supply before installing and replacing pipelines.

The Yangon City Development Committee began pipeline replacement and rehabilitation works along Kaba Aye Pagoda Road on Thursday with the help of Japanese Government's assistance, slating for completion coming Monday.

So far rehabilitation work has been completed by 70 per cent but concrete used for the durability of

pipeline installments need to be dried up before the resumption of water supply, said the project manager.

The installment of new pipelines and the rehabilitation in the water supply system are being carried out at nine places with a manpower of 200 people. Water supply is expected to resume this Sunday morning, one day ahead of the originally expected completion date. —Zaw Gyi (Panida)



Workers check water pipes at Yegu Water Pumping Station in Yangon.

Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U Win Myint meets foreign guests



Speaker U Win Myint holds talks with British Ambassador to Myanmar Mr. Andrew Patrick. PHOTO: MNA

PYITHU Hluttaw Speaker U Win Myint received foreign guests at a hall of Pyithu Hluttaw Building in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During separate calls, the

Speaker met Canadian Ambassador to Myanmar Mr. Mark McDowell, British Ambassador to Myanmar Mr. Andrew Patrick and UNICEF Resident Representative

Mr. Bertrand Bainvel. Also present at the calls were Deputy Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat and officials of Pyithu Hluttaw Office.—Myanmar News Agency

Union NPED Minister discusses implementation of ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint 2025 in Thailand



Union Minister Dr Kan Zaw poses for photo along with economic ministers from ASEAN countries. PHOTO: MNA

UNION Minister for National Planning and Economic Development Dr Kan Zaw attended the meetings for successful implementation of ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint 2025 in Thailand on 2-3 March.

At the formal dinner of the ASEAN Economic Ministers on Wednesday, the Union minister discussed matters related

to progress in the implementation of the ASEAN Economic Community 2015 plan, works to be done this year, the formulation of planning by respective taskforces to implement the ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint 2025 and the ongoing works of Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP).

Moreover, the Union minister

exchanged views on the outcomes of ASEAN-US TIFA Joint Council Meeting.

During his stay in Thailand the Union Minister took part in the 22nd ASEAN Economic Ministers Meeting Retreat and the 14th ASEAN Economic Ministers-European Union Trade Commissioner Consultations.—Myanmar News Agency

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker receives foreign guests

SPEAKER of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and Amyotha Hluttaw Mahn Win Khaing Than yesterday met UNICEF Resident Representative Mr. Bertrand Bainvel and Canadian Ambassador to Myanmar Mr. Mark McDowell at a hall of Amyotha Hluttaw Building in Nay Pyi Taw separately.

While meeting with the

UNICEF resident representative, the Speaker discussed matters related to assistance programs for children in health and education sectors. Also present at the calls were Deputy Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker U Aye Tha Aung and officials of Amyotha Hluttaw Office.—Myanmar News Agency



Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than welcomes Canadian Ambassador to Myanmar Mr. Mark McDowell. PHOTO: MNA

Shwe Myanmar plane's tyre bursts on taxiway

A SHWE Myanmar Airlines plane carrying 39 passengers got a tyre burst on its return from the taxiway due to an overheated right engine on the tarmac at Yangon International Airport yesterday, according to the airline.

Both tyres were damaged when fire reached them and one passenger received a minor injury

while getting off the plane after the accident, said CEO U Khin Maung Myint. The CEO added that nothing serious happened to any of the passengers including 36 foreign visitors but the flights were cancelled. Due to the accident, passengers were transported to their designation by an Air KBZ plane at about 10 am.—Zaw Gyi (Panita)



Biluchaung hydropower plant restored with completion of rehabilitation

BILUCHAUNG No 2 hydropower plant celebrated overall completion of its all-round rehabilitation project, implemented with the help of 6.6 billion yen of Japan's grant yesterday.

In his address, Union Minister U Khin Maung Soe said that more than 53-year-old hydropower plant has been back in

operation, restored to its original strength of generating 168MW following the two stages of rehabilitation project.

The Union minister added that a national electricity master plan backed by Japan International Cooperation Agency has been drawn up in order to ensure 100 per cent electricity coverage

across the country in 2030-2031.

According to the Union minister, 256 of 511 villages in Kayah State will have access to electricity at the end of this fiscal year, and plans are underway to electrify the remaining villages through solar system.

Next, the Union Minister, Kayah State Chief Minister

U Khin Maung Oo, Japanese Ambassador to Myanmar Mr. Tateshi Higuchi, Vice-Chair of Japan-Myanmar Friendship Association Mr. Yoshito Sengoku and JICA Resident Representative Mr. Keiichiro Nakazawa formally opened a ceremony to mark completion of all-round rehabilitation of Biluchaung No 2

hydropower plant. The JICA resident representative handed over documents related to the plant to Managing Director U Khin Maung Win of the Department of Hydropower Implementation.

After the ceremony, the Union minister and party viewed the control room of the plant.—Myanmar News Agency

President urges student scouts to cultivate true patriotism as union spirit

STUDENTS should cultivate true patriotism as union spirit from a young age, President U Thein Sein told scouts camping at the Popa base, in Kyaukpadaung township, Mandalay Region, yesterday.

The president called the scout camping a memorable experience as young students from different regions and states gathered at the camp.

He encouraged them to pursue positive personality traits of discipline, morality and perseverance with determination to be ready when the time comes for them to shoulder the responsibilities of the country.

The country had its first scout association in 1913 and saw new associations emerge up to

the post-independence years, the president recalled, admitting that scouting had been a thing of the past for some 50 years. Scouting resumed in 2012 soon after the establishment of the Myanmar Scouts Federation (MSF), whose membership swelled to 59,000 in a short time.

The World Organisation of the Scout Movement (WOSM), the Asia-Pacific Scouts Federation and the Asia-Pacific Scouts Committee have sent their chairmen to the country to assess MSF's request for membership to WOSM. Officials of these organisations have pledged technology transfer and assistance to the country's nascent scout federation. After signing in the camping record book, President



President U Thein Sein speaks to scouts at Popa in Kyaukpadaung Township. PHOTO: MNA

U Thein Sein received a gift from the scout campers.

At a local high school, the president attended a bonfire held in commemoration of the scout camp, which drew 619 partici-

pants. At the scout camp which started on Tuesday, students will be lectured on scouting activities including hiking and excursions to cultural zones.

This is the fourth time that

student scouts have gathered for outdoors camping, with the first scout camp organised in Nay Pyi Taw in 2013, the second in 2014 and the third in 2015.

—Myanmar News Agency

Coord meeting on religious title presentation, rice offering ceremonies held



Vice President Dr Sai Mauk Kham delivers an address at work coordination meeting of leading committee on a religious title presentation ceremony. PHOTO: MNA

VICE-President Dr Sai Mauk Kham addressed the work coordination meeting of a leading committee on a religious title presentation ceremony and a rice offering ceremony at the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

In his address, the Vice-Pres-

ident stressed the need for ensuring convenient accommodation and good transport for members of Sangha who will be attending the ceremonies including religious title recipient monks, nuns and laypersons.

According to the Vice-President, 11 monks, a nun and a

layperson from foreign countries will be presented religious titles at the ceremony in Nay Pyi Taw together with local monks and nuns.

He also called for a medical check-up program for monks and nuns and readiness of traditional and modern medicines.

On the rice offering ceremony, the Vice-President highlighted the importance of necessary measures to be taken to avoid delays while offering rice to monks and nuns.

Next, Union Minister U Soe Win elaborated on arrangements being made for the successful holding of the religious title presentation ceremony and rice offering ceremony.

Then, those present reported on ongoing works respectively. The meeting came to an end with concluding remarks by the Vice-President.

The ceremony to confer religious titles to monks and nuns for 2016 is scheduled to be held in conjunction with the rice offering ceremony at Sasana Maha Beikman Hall of Uppatasanti Pagoda in Nay Pyi Taw on 23 March, involving 152 monks, seven nuns and 55 laypersons at home and 11 monks, one nun and one layperson from abroad. — Myanmar News Agency

Workers of Yashin Steel Mill and Foundry Plant receive overtime pay

PAY for overtime wages of workers from Yashin Steel Mill and Foundry Plant in Myaung-daga Industrial Zone in Hmawby Township must be made out no later than today, according to the General Labour Law Inspection Department.

A settlement deal was reached between workers and the plant's owner on Thursday following the mediation by the department and the township arbitration council to resolve the dispute.

Under the agreement, workers will have to work additional hours on their own volition and the department's permission will have to be sought before asking workers to work overtime.

Thanks to the agreement, workers will receive their overtime pay for hours they worked last month and it must be paid no later than today, said the department.

If any sides violate the agreement, action will be taken against them, it added.

U Kyaw Kyaw Tun, inspection officer of the department, said that officials of the department conducted an inspection tour of the plant as workers informed the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission of labour rights violations at the plant.

The Yashin Steel Mill and Foundry Plant in the Myaung-daga Industrial Zone employs 100 workers.—Ko Moe

Vice President U Nyan Tun receives JGC delegation

VICE President U Nyan Tun received a Japanese delegation led by Yoshihiro Shigehisa, honorary chairman of JGC Group of Japan, in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the meeting, they discussed matters related to implementation of Hanthawady International Airport project and related transportation infrastruc-

tures, grant development assistance and human resource development assistance from Japan.

Also present at the meeting were Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs U Tin Oo Lwin, Deputy Minister for Transport U Zin Yaw and Deputy Minister for National Planning and Economic Development Daw Le Le Thein. — Myanmar News Agency



Vice President U Nyan Tun poses for photo with delegation led by Yoshihiro Shigehisa, honorary chairman of JGC Group. PHOTO: MNA

Summer courses aim to promote students involvement in sports activities



Trainees of football training course being seen. PHOTO: MYO MIN THEIN (MAYANGON)

A TOTAL of 200 students have registered to attend the summer sports trainings organised by the Education and Sports Promotion Committee under the Basic Education Department in Mayangon Township in Yangon West District.

With the aim of promoting student's participation in sports ac-

tivities, the education department will perform the development programme this year.

Under the programme, students may attend the seven kinds of sports including traditional martial arts, football, volleyball, track and field, aerobics, Teikundo and Wushu.

The programme is scheduled

to be run from 21 March until 4 April at designated basic education schools in the township with trainers from Yangon Region Sports and Physical Education Department. Organisers are inviting students to take part in the sports courses over the summer holidays.—Myo Min Thein (Mayangon)

Growers plan to develop 185 acres of summer paddy plantations in Tatkon

FARMERS will establish 185 acres of summer paddy plantations across Tatkon Township in Nay Pyi Taw Council Areas in this season, planning to obtain agricultural water from Kintha Dam and Monsel Dam, growers say.

It is likely to cultivate paddy species, which does not need much water and thrive within a short period as the weather

bureau announced that El Niño will arrive in the country this summer.

With regard to increasing rice production for local consumption, members of Agriculture Department recently inspected the rice plantation in Tatkon Township on Monday and shared agriculture-related advices to local farmers.—Maung Kyaw Gyi



Farmers seen growing the summer paddy . PHOTO: MAUNG KYAW GYI

Crime NEWS

Man arrested for KBZ bank vehicle theft

POLICE said yesterday that a man suspected of stealing a KBZ Bank vehicle in Meiktila was arrested on Tuesday.

According to a subsequent investigation, the 35-year man visited to the KBZ bank while two security officers were on duty. He informed the bank that he was an employee of KBZ and asked for the key to a vehicle which was parked outside. When he was given the key by security he drove the vehicle away on 29 February. The bank manager and security suspected something was amiss and informed the Meiktila police station. During their investigation, members of the Pyay Police station received information that



Aung Kyaw Tun alias Gin Gin Yan. PHOTO: TIN HLAING (MEIKTILA)

the vehicle was heading to Mandalay. The police stopped one Aung Kyaw Tun alias Gin Gin Yan, 34, from Lanmadaw township, Yan-

gon with the vehicle at Singain toll gate, Kyaukse. Local police have filed charges against him.—Tin Hlaing (Meiktila)

Taxi driver arrested for robbery

A TAXI driver has been charged with robbery following an altercation with passengers, according to a police station.

On 14 February, a passenger from Aungmyingalar asked to be dropped off to Dagon Myothit (Seikkan). He noted that a strange man was also on board with them. Upon arrival at Thakayta township, the taxi driver and the stranger stopped the car and robbed a Samsung phone, an iPhone 5S and K55,000 from

the passenger before fleeing in the car. The passenger informed Thakayta police station.

Similarly, on 21 February a couple hired a Caldina taxi from Aungmyingalar, agreeing to pay K6,000 to drive them to Dagon Myothit (South). When they arrived at ward 67, Dagon Seikkan township the driver's friend robbed a gold ring and necklace, two mobile phones, one luggage and Ks25,000 from the couple at knifepoint. The couple informed

the Dagon Seikkan police station.

Police arrested Maung Aung Phyo, 25, the taxi driver from Thakayta township with the Caldina vehicle at his home. During the interrogation, Maung Aung Phyo admitted he committed the robbery together with one Kalagyi alias Than Toe Aung.

The local police station is holding Maung Aung Phyo for charges while searching for the another suspect.—Myanmar News Agency

Fire destroys two houses in Myawady



The scene of Myawady Fire. PHOTO: HTEIN LIN AUNG (IPRD)

A FIRE destroyed two houses near No.14 gate agriculture zone, ward 5, Myawady on Wednesday. According to an investigation, the fire broke out while Nay Tun Kyaw, 22, and Nay Ye Kyaw, 20, were filling petrol containers.

Nay Tun Kyaw and Nay Ye Kyaw received only minor injuries. The fire was put out by firemen with five fire engines and with the help of neighbours. Police have filed charges against Nay Ye Kyaw.—Htein Lin Aung (IPRD)

Murder in Pakokku

A MAN has been charged with murder for allegedly killing U Ye Thaug, 45, in Thayetkan village, Pakokku township, Magway on Wednesday.

According to an investigation one U Ye Thaug, 45, under

the influence of alcohol argued with Ye Khaung, 31. During the quarrel Ye Khaung stabbed U Ye Thaug to death. The police have filed a murder charge against Ye Khaung.—Maung Nyi Nyar (Myay Latt)

LOCAL Business

Myanma Railways to buy 18 YDM-4 engines from India

MYANMA Railways under the Ministry of Rail Transportation inked an Memorandum of Understanding with the India Technology and Economical Service Company on purchasing 18 engines from the company.

U Thurein Win, Managing Director of Myanma Railways, and Director Mr. S. B. Malik of the India Technology and Economic Service Company, signed the MoU on purchasing 18 new engines.

U Nyan Tun Aung, Union Minister for Transport and Rail Transportation; Deputy Ministers; Indian Ambassador Mr. Shri Gautam Mukhopadhyaya to Myanmar; Director Mr. S. B. Malik of the India Technology and Economic Service Company and officials attended the ceremony. It will cost K 1.8 million per engine and K 32.4 million for all 18 engines. These engines will be used to pull passenger trains and freight trains. — *Myanmar News Agency*



MoU signing ceremony in progress. PHOTO: MNA

Samsung Galaxy S7, S7 Edge available on six-month installment payment through KBZ Bank

SAMSUNG mobile phones are available on a six-month installment plan through KBZ Bank, according to the Samsung Galaxy S7 and S7 Edge launching ceremony in Yangon yesterday.

Any customers who have a bank account with KBZ Bank will be able to buy the two Galaxy series of Samsung smartphones through a six-month installment payment, U Zarni Win Htet, a spokesperson of Samsung Company in Myanmar.

According to the launching

ceremony, Galaxy S7 and S7 Edge are priced at K900, 000.

U Aung Kyaw Myo, managing director of KBZ Bank, said that zero interest is set for installment buying as Samsung Company will pay the amount of money in interest for six months.

Banking service fee for the installment buying will also be paid by the company, added the managing director.

The two Galaxy series of Samsung smartphones will be on sale as of 20 March at the

Myanmar Plaza in Yangon and the Sedona Hotel in Mandalay under a promotion programme in which buyers will be offered to have gifts worth K150, 000 and to take part in a lucky draw program in which a stock of 200 Samsung Gear S2 Classic smartphones will be available for winners.

The company informed that installment buying needs registration in advance during the period from 7 to 18 March.—*Thein Ko Lwin*

MAB offers mobile bank transfer services to regions void of bank branches

MYANMAR Apex Bank (MAB) has made it known that, starting from this month of March, they are offering an MAB mobile banking service which allows people to send and transfer money to those people living in regions which do not have access to physical bank branches.

The MAB mobile bank application can be used with any phone operator, enabling money to be sent and transferred regardless of whether people hold a bank account with MAB or not.

“The MAB mobile bank [application] can be used with any type of phone or sim card. We’ve created [a service] that is easy and practical to use. The mobile bank service is like having a bank near you twenty four hours a day. As well as money being able to be sent and transferred through our expansive agent network, it will expand the number of people using our service to those in regions without bank branches,” said Mr. Wong Hok Siong, Head of Mobile Banking for MAB. Mobile accounts can be opened at agents nationwide, as well as in branch-

es of MAB, while money will be able to be received by both users and non-users of the mobile bank application. “About twenty per cent of Myanmar’s population are using banking services. MAB’s objective is to expand the use of monetary services so that the majority of the public can transfer money after opening a mobile banking account, without the need of having to visit a physical bank branch in person,” said U Win Min Khaing, Managing Director of MAB.

The aforementioned mobile banking service is being provided by branches of MAB and over 500 agents across the country, while an illustrated guide of one’s nearest located agents and bank branches, featuring maps, is available to be downloaded.

Furthermore, it is also known that MAB Mobile Bank can also be used in conjunction with Telenor, Oredoo, Columbus Travels & Tours, Sun Far Travels & Tours, Signature Fine Dining, Fuji Coffee House, The Garden Bistro, Titan Source, BNF Express, JCGV and 4TV Channel.— *Myitmakha News Agency*

S. Korean firm to establish cement factory in Thilawa SEZ this year

SOUTH Korean owned Yojin Co. will establish a cement factory on 24 acres of land in Zone B in the Thilawa Special Economic Zone.

Construction works for the factory will be initiated in September this year, and it is estimated to be finished within one and a half years.

The total cost of the project will be around US\$80

million with \$50m loan from ROK-based Shinhan Bank. The loan agreement between Yojin and Shinhan Bank was recently signed at MJTD office in the Thilawa SEZ. The bank has pledged to provide the loan to Yojin Construction Co after signing a reservation agreement between Yojin and MJTD.

After completion of the project, the factory will produce one

million ton of cement per year, the spokesperson of the company said.

The Thilawa Special Economic Zone is located on the outskirts of Yangon. It is the first Special Economic Zone built in Myanmar. Situated at around 20 km South-East of Yangon, Thilawa SEZ is the biggest commercial-industrial city in the country.—*Wai Yan Oo*

North Korea leader tells military to be ready to use nuclear weapons



North Korean leader Kim Jong Un visits Taeseung machinery factory in this undated photo released by North Korea's Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) in Pyongyang on 2 March 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

SEOUL — North Korean leader Kim Jong Un ordered his country to be ready to use its nuclear weapons at any time and the military to be in “pre-emptive attack” mode in the face of growing threats from its enemies, state media said yesterday.

The comments, carried by the North's official KCNA news agency, marked a further escalation of tension on the Korean peninsula after the UN Security Council imposed harsh new sanctions against the isolated state on Wednesday for its nuclear programme.

North Korea, known for bel-

ligerent rhetoric, has previously threatened pre-emptive attacks on its enemies, including South Korea and the United States. Military experts doubt it has yet developed the capability to fire a long-range missile with a miniaturised warhead to deliver a nuclear weapon as far as the United States.

Kim made the comments as he supervised military exercises involving newly developed rocket launchers, KCNA reported. It did not mention the date of the drills but said the new weapons had South Korea within range.

South Korea's defence minis-

try said on Thursday North Korea launched several projectiles off its coast into the sea up to 150 kilometres (90 miles) away, an apparent response to the UN sanctions.

Kim said North Korea should “bolster up (its) nuclear force both in quality and quantity” and stressed “the need to get the nuclear warheads deployed for national defence always on standby so as to be fired any moment,” KCNA quoted him as saying.

“Now is the time for us to convert our mode of military counteraction toward the enemies into a pre-emptive attack one in every aspect.”

Kim criticised South Korean President Park Geun-hye in his first direct published mention of her by name for acting “in league with the US scoundrels,” adding, “her hysteria will precipitate only her ruin in the long run,” KCNA said. A spokesman for South Korea's Unification Ministry, which handles relations with the North, said Kim's comments were not helpful and may have been intended for the domestic audience to boost morale in the face of the new UN sanctions.

A US Defence Department spokesman, Commander Bill Urban, said, responding to the report: “We urge North Korea to refrain from provocative actions that aggravate tensions and instead focus

on fulfilling its international obligations and commitments.”

The latest UN sanctions, drafted by the United States and China, the North's main ally, punish the isolated country following its fourth nuclear test, in January, as well as last month's satellite launch, which the United States and others say was really a test of ballistic missile technology.

South Korea and the US militaries are set to formally begin talks on Friday on deployment of the advanced anti-missile Terminal High Altitude Area Defence (THAAD) system with the US military in the South.

China and Russia oppose the deployment of THAAD, which has powerful radar capable of penetrating deep into their countries, but South Korea and the United States have said it was needed in response to the heightened missile threat from the North.

Johns Hopkins University's 38 North project, which monitors North Korea, said recent commercial satellite imagery showed new activity in the isolated country including a convoy of trucks at its satellite launch station that could be preparations for a rocket-engine test.

“One possibility is that these vehicles are returning from a delivery of supplies, fuel, or even engine components for testing to

the stand,” the report said.

The site on the North's west coast is the upgraded rocket station where it launched a long-range rocket on 7 February that put an object into space but was condemned by the Security Council as violation of past resolutions that ban the use of ballistic missile technology by the North.

On Thursday, South Korean President Park repeated a warning to the North to abandon its nuclear ambitions and said she would work to “end tyranny” by the North's leader. They were the toughest-ever comments against Pyongyang by Park, whose recent hard line against the North is a shift from her earlier policy of “trustpolitik” that focused on trying to engage in dialogue.

Last month, Seoul suspended the operation of a jointly run factory project with North Korea that had been the rivals' last remaining venue for regular interaction.

North Korea's Rodong Sinmun, the official daily newspaper of the ruling Workers' Party, on Friday carried three pages of a report and photographs of leader Kim supervising the rocket launch drills.

It also ran a full page commentary insulting Park as “a wicked woman who does everything evil against the compatriots in the North.”—Reuters

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China's 2016 defence budget to slow in line with economy

BEIJING — China's defence budget this year is likely to rise at its slowest pace since 2010, in line with the decelerating economy, by a much lower figure than had been expected, although it probably does not represent the true spending number.

Fu Ying, spokeswoman for China's parliament, said the figure would increase by about seven to eight per cent from 2015, following a nearly unbroken two-decade run of double-digit budget increases.

Fu told a news conference the actual figure would be released on Saturday, when the annual session of China's largely rubber-stamp legislative body opens.

It will be the first single-digit rise in spending since 2010, when the military budget logged a 7.5 per cent increase.

Defence spending last year was budgeted to rise 10.1 per cent to 886.9 billion yuan (\$135.39 billion), which still only represents about one-quarter that of the United States.

The US Defence Department budget for 2016 is \$573 billion.

China's leaders have routinely sought to justify military modernisation by linking defence spending to rapid GDP growth. But growth of 6.9 per cent last year was the slowest in 25 years, and a further slowdown is widely expected in 2016.



Soldiers of China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) take part in training in temperatures below minus 30 degrees Celsius (minus 22 degrees Fahrenheit) at China's border with Russia in Fuyuan, Heilongjiang Province, on 14 January 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

“One simple reason for the lower increase is that double digit growth is now harder to sustain,” said Bonji Obara of the Tokyo Foundation think-tank.

“But another reason is that China's anti-corruption campaign means less money is being siphoned off and spending has become more efficient,” he added, referring to President Xi Jinping's vigorous efforts to root out graft. The defence budget had been widely expected in military and

diplomatic circles to log another impressive increase.

Fu said the budget was based on China's national defence needs, the state of its economy and the performance of its fiscal revenues.

China has been repeatedly criticised for a lack of transparency in its defence spending and its intentions.

“China needs to be transparent and explain its military spending to the international communi-

ty,” Japanese Defence Minister Gen Nakatani said in Tokyo ahead of Fu's announcement.

“It's crucial that China does not upset the regional balance and that it firmly contribute to international stability.”

China's military build-up has rattled nerves around the region, particularly because China has taken an increasingly assertive stance in its territorial disputes in the East and South China Seas.—Reuters

Japan to suspend construction for US base relocation in Okinawa



People protesting the planned relocation of the US military base to Okinawa's Henoko coast shout slogans at a rally in front of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's official residence, as a meeting between Okinawa Governor Takeshi Onaga and Abe takes place, in Tokyo in 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

TOKYO — Japan's government will accept a court-mediated settlement plan and suspend construction work for the planned relocation of a US airbase in Okinawa and will begin a new round of talks with local authorities who want the base moved off the island.

The government in Tokyo and authorities in the southern island of Okinawa have long been at loggerheads over the relocation of the US Marines airbase at Futenma, an urban area on the island.

Tokyo wants to move the base to a less populated area but Okinawa Governor Takeshi Onaga wants the base off the island altogether.

Abe's government had already suspended construction work voluntarily for a month last year to allow time for talks with island authorities, but failed to achieve a meaningful solution.

He said the government's

stance that relocating the Futenma base within the island was the only option had not changed. However, the government would again suspend construction work to give talks another chance to succeed.

"There is no change to the government's stance that the relocation to the Henoko area is the sole choice for the restoration of the Futenma base," Abe told reporters.

"But, if the current situation, in which the government and Okinawa prefecture are suing each other, continues, the Futenma base ... might very well remain fixed there for years to come," he said.

The United States and Japan agreed in 1996 to close Futenma and move its facilities elsewhere on the island. However, relocation stalled due to opposition from Okinawa residents worried about noise, pollution and crime.—Reuters

Philippines bars North Korea-linked ship from leaving port over safety issues

SINGAPORE/MANILA — The Philippines Coast Guard has banned a North Korean freighter from leaving port until safety deficiencies, found during a security and safety inspection of the vessel, are rectified, officials said yesterday.

The inspection was ordered by the Coast Guard headquarters in Manila after the vessel was included on a list of 31 ships covered by harsher sanctions on North Korea that were ap-

proved by the United Nations over Pyongyang's nuclear programme.

The 6,830 deadweight tonne (dwt) general cargo ship Jin Teng was one of the first sanctioned North Korean ships to enter a foreign port since the tightened sanctions were passed unanimously by the UN Security Council on Wednesday.

Three Coast Guard officials, accompanied by a dogs trained to detect explosives,

searched the ship and checked crew documents on Thursday after the ship docked at Subic Bay, a former US naval base and now commercial port, a coast guard commander told Reuters.

Nothing suspicious was found on the ship or its 21 North Korean crew, although several minor safety problems including issues with firefighting and electrical equipment meant the ship could not leave

port until they were fixed, the commander said.

"Our headquarters directed that as this vessel was on the (UN) list then it should be inspected thoroughly," said the commander, who declined to give his name because he was not authorised to the media.

The ship, which is registered in Sierra Leone, was continuing to unload its cargo of palm kernel, he added.—Reuters

Indian passenger plane's landing gear fails at Mumbai airport

NEW DELHI — An Indian passenger plane's landing gear collapsed immediately after it landed at Mumbai airport late Thursday night, sources said.

However, more than 125 passengers and crew members of the Mumbai-based Jet Airways flight have been safely deplaned from the aircraft, the sources said, adding all are safe. "The mishap happened after the Delhi-Mumbai flight landed at the airport in the financial capital and first suffered a tyre burst, followed by hydraulics failure," the sources said. The engineering team of Jet Airways has been examining the flight that has been taken to isolation bay at the airport, they said.

The airliner has ordered a probe into the incident, the sources added.—Xinhua

Officials start evacuation for scuttled Indonesian vessel off Bali strait

JAKARTA — Officials have started evacuation efforts after an Indonesian landing craft tank boat (LCT) sank off the Bali strait yesterday afternoon.

The Revalia LCT boat had departed from Gilimanuk port in Bali at 12:50pm local time

before it sank 15 minutes later off the Bali strait which connects the resort island with Java island.

The vessel was scheduled to arrive in Ketapang port in East Java's Banyuwangi district, which is the easternmost region of Java island.

At least 48 passengers aboard the vessel, which is widely used to transport people and heavy machinery, survived the incident and were successfully evacuated, according to Abdullah Azwar Anas, head of Banyuwangi district.

However, 32 vehicles on board drowned along with the boat. The cause of the accident has not been determined.

At its narrowest, the Bali strait, which also connects the Indian Ocean and the Bali Sea, is 2.4 kilometres wide.—Xinhua

Viet Nam's Communists put to the test as dissidents bid for parliament

HANOI — Former IT entrepreneur and banker Nguyen Quang A is running a disciplined campaign to be elected to Viet Nam's parliament, declaring his assets, securing voter endorsements and appearing in a slick online video.

He is not, however, a member of the Communist Party of Viet Nam nor the kind of candidate that the monolithic ruling party wants in its rubber-stamp legislature.

Quang A is one of its biggest critics and among 19 dissidents trying to run as independents in a May election to the assembly, determined to test the sincerity of promises made by the party to strengthen democracy.

"They tell us we have rights

and say the regime is democratic," he said in an interview. "Let's see them turn rhetoric into reality."

To pique the Communists further, Quang A is waiting to see if party chief Nguyen Phu Trong will seek re-election to the National Assembly so that he can go head-to-head with him for his seat.

Allowing challenges at the edges of its 40-year monopoly on power could help the image of the Communist Party, which is seen as out of touch by many in a country where over half the population is under 30.

However, a rigorous vetting system and other checks of candidates by the party make it



Nguyen Quang A writes a comment on Facebook while sitting at a cafe after an interview in Hanoi, Viet Nam, on 1 March 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

almost impossible for the dissidents to succeed.

The move by the dissidents

to seek seats in parliament is part of a trend that began three years ago in which the Communist Par-

ty has been openly challenged, not only by writers, lawyers, academics and artists, but also from among its own ranks.

The aim, Quang A and other activists say, is to exploit the popularity of social media to scrutinize the 4.5 million-member Communist Party and encourage political participation from outside. Political analyst Le Hong Hiep said it was highly unlikely that the activists would even be allowed to run for parliament.

"The party wants to have some critical voices in the parliament, but not those that they cannot control or those that may cause political embarrassments," he said.—Reuters

OPINION

Until our dream is assured

Kyaw Thura

IT is interesting to note that successful political leaders in modern democracies are found to be history enthusiasts. By drawing lessons from history, these great leaders deepened their understanding of political forces of

different times. This reminds me of what Dr Than Tun, late historian of our country, once said. To echo his words, we need to learn history in order not to be dim-witted. Undeniably, knowledge of history can conjure up the ingredients of dynamic leadership for statesmen to ensure good governance.

After withstanding waves of vast demonstrations across the country and witnessing fruitless protests during the past 30 years, the people have become clever enough to damp down their irritation in the face of new incitement. In other words, they have been totally convinced of the saying “More haste, less speed”.

How calm we can stay during this transitional period is there safe to be taken as a test of our political maturity. While our long-held aspiration

is apparently within our reach, any attempt to look the other way will be no more than a silly idea. This highlights the importance of far-sightedness and political awareness until our dream of turning our country into a genuine democracy is assured.

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.

Holistic Development for Kindergartners

Dr. Khin Myoe Myint Kyu
Chairman (KG Curriculum Committee)

CONCERNING resources, there are two types: material resources and human resources. A country which stands alone on material resources is very likely to face difficulties to pursue sustainable development. Most of the developed countries depend on human resources (e.g. Singapore, Japan, Ireland, The Netherlands, etc.) and as a consequence they achieve sustainable development.

Whether a nation developed or not is very much dependent upon the citizens’ development (human resource development). Hence it is necessary to nurture well developed citizens for the sustainable development of our country. Well-developed citizens mean not only those equipped with 21st century skills but also with physical, mental, emotional, social and moral skills.

These days, I have heard/read many (negative or positive) comments concerning our KG new curriculum. Some think KG curriculum was developed as usual or some consider that it was developed by the group influenced by policy or decision makers. In reality it is not like this. Developing the KG Curriculum Framework is the very first beginning step of the KG roll out and it was done by international/national curriculum experts. Many consultation meetings were conducted with the chairmen from academic subject committees, professors and pedagogues from universities of education, experts from the Myanmar Language Commission and other stakeholders. The National Curriculum Framework (NCF) for the Kindergarten is focused on the care, development and learning needs of kindergartners. The KG Curriculum Committee was formed after finalizing the KG Curriculum Framework and I (retired Deputy Director General, Pro-Rector as well, and have more than 37 year service in education) am the chair-

man of that committee. Three education experts — Professor Dr. Thein Lwin (Educational Psychology and Developmental Psychology expert), Dr. Myint Thein (Curriculum expert) and Dr. Win Aung (Language expert) — supervised the team for the development of the KG curriculum. By the end of the KG year, the child should be a self-directing, confident, happy, healthy, well-nourished, socially adapt, emotionally balanced and enthusiastic learner, wishing to continue to explore further educational activities, well protected in conditions of freedom, equity, and dignity who can contribute positively to her family, community and the country as a whole within South East Asia and the world. The specific aims of KG education are to prepare children to be:

- (1) self-directed, independent, and having strong sense of being;
- (2) well-nourished, happy, healthy, well protected and resilient;
- (3) emotionally balanced and enthusiastic learners, wishing to explore through further reading, writing, mathematical and knowledge-intensive activities; and
- (4) contributing to the well-being of the group (the family, community, and the country).

In order to achieve the above mentioned aims, the approaches and teaching methodologies are needed to change drastically; in the past the approaches and methods led to rote learning but now the new KG curriculum is designed to use (i) holistic approach, (ii) developmentally appropriate approach and (iii) thematic approach. These approaches will enable children to obtain higher order thinking skills, such as creative thinking skill, problem solving skill, inquiry learning skill, etc. We have to consider what type of children we want to nurture: just a literate person or an educated one. Here I would like to refer to the philosophy given by Sayargyi U Myint Han (retired DG of Myan-

mar Education Research Department) that “literacy is only a tool for getting education to a great extent in an accelerated manner”. In the past rote learning is rational, but now we are entering into the 21st century and in order to keep pace with the knowledge explosion era, rote learning is no longer suitable for our human resource development. Holistic education is the best solution for nurturing children keep away from rote learning and encourage them for getting 21st century skills and higher order thinking skills.

Holistic education is a philosophy of education based on the premise that each person finds identity, meaning, and purpose in life through connections to the community, to the natural world, and to altruistic values such as compassion and peace. Holistic education aims to call forth from people an intrinsic reverence for life and a passionate love of learning. This is the definition given by Ron Miller, founder of the journal *Holistic Education Review* (now entitled *Encounter: Education for Meaning and Social Justice*). The term holistic education is often used to refer to the more democratic and humanistic types of alternative education. Robin Ann Martin (2003) describes this further by stating, “At its most general level, what distinguishes holistic education from other forms of education are its goals, its attention to experiential learning, and the significance that it places on relationships and primary human values within the learning environment.” In considering curriculum using a holistic approach, one must address the question of what children need to learn. Since holistic education seeks to educate the whole person, there are some key factors that are essential to this type of education. First, children need to learn about themselves. This involves learning self-respect and self-esteem. Second, children need to learn about relationships. In learning about their relationships with others, there is a focus on social “literacy” (learning to see social influence) and emotion-

al “literacy” (one’s own self in relation to others). Third, children need to learn about *resilience*. This entails overcoming difficulties, facing challenges and learning how to ensure long-term success. Fourth, children need to learn about *aesthetics* — This encourages the student to see the beauty of what is around them and learn to have admiration in life. (Holistic Education, Inc, Home Page)

To be in line with holistic education to nurture the holistic development of the child, the six learning areas included in the new KG curriculum are:

- (i) Wellbeing
- (ii) Moral, social, and emotional development;
- (iii) Communication;
- (iv) Exploring basic mathematics;
- (v) Aesthetic values and creative skills;
- (vi) Knowledge and Understanding of the World.

In the past the KG (Grade one) students had to study the subjects such as Myanmar, English, Mathematics and so on, while according to the thematic approach using in the new KG curriculum, the students will have to learn the topics as follows:

- (1) My Self
- (2) My Family
- (3) Our School
- (4) Our Community
- (5) Plants
- (6) Fish
- (7) Birds
- (8) Insects
- (9) Mammals
- (10) Climate
- (11) Festivals
- (12) Market
- (13) Water
- (14) Houses
- (15) Transportation

In the new KG system, teachers have to use play-way method and children have to learn not only literacy and numeracy but also aesthetic values, social skills, and higher order thinking skills through playing, drawing and coloring pictures, listening and telling stories, paper folding, role playing, counting, reading, singing, etc. They have to learn for (i)

knowing self, their families, their friends, and their environment; (ii) accepting diversity among them and appreciating others’ culture; (iii) upgrading their resiliency; and (iv) developing eagerness to further learning.

UNICEF gives support in the development of KG curriculum and now the following materials are ready for kindergartners, teachers, and schools:

- (1) Activity books for kindergartners;
- (2) Teachers Guide;
- (3) Detailed Lesson Plans for teachers;
- (4) Big Book (for story telling);
- (5) KG Teachers’ Training Manual;
- (6) Posters (talking posters);
- (7) Language Guide and Proposed Stories and Rhymes.

Based on the research works, the following advantages will be achieved by students’ activity books:

- (1) Getting interest from the students;
- (2) Handling the pencil systematically; holding
- (3) Preparing writing for Grade One;
- (4) Getting fine motor skills;
- (5) Avoiding giving children strenuous homework;
- (6) Knowing children’s development through their exercise books;
- (7) Informing children’s achievement to their parents;
- (8) Improving eye-hand coordination;
- (9) Encouraging higher order thinking skills such as creative thinking, problem-solving skills, inquiry skills, decision making skills, etc.;
- (10) Improving their language through sharing experiences between peers and as a consequence developing self-confidence, interpersonal skills, resiliency skills, and emotional control.

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Time restrictions imposed on Pyidaungsu highway in bid to curb congestion



Trucks crawl along Pyidaungsu Highway.
PHOTO: MYITMAKHA NEWS AGENCY

IN a bid to curb continuing congestion which was clogging up the flow of traffic along the section of the Pyidaungsu highway which ran through Gote, located nearby the town of Nyaung Kyo, the Traffic Rule Enforcement Supervisory Committee has imposed time restrictions on vehicles using the highway.

The Traffic Rule Enforcement Supervisory Committee of Nyaung Cho imposed, on March 3, that vehicles travelling from Mandalay – Lashio can traverse the along the road between 6am-12pm, while those travelling in

the opposite direction can travel only between the hours of 12am-6am.

“Traffic police from Lashio have arrived and are clearing the road. We’ve currently only permitted those coming down from Lashio to pass along the road. The road has become clear and vehicles can once again traverse along it without causing congestion. Cars are being allowed to travel along the road only in the manner of time restrictions imposed by the committee,” said police officer Zaw Win of Lashio traffic police.

The flipping over of a con-

tainer lorry along the Gote section of the highway during the night of 29 February caused severe congestion on the road until March 4, with traffic backed up from Hsipaw all the way to the town of Nyaung Cho.

“[The congestion] began with the flipping over of a container lorry during the night of February 29. It took place around midnight so cars from both directions were trying to veer round the crash site which caused traffic to clog up. It went on for about four days. It was a real problem for those travelling along the road, in terms of access to food and drink,” said Ko Wunna, a resident of Nyaung Cho. Money for bus tickets already purchased has to be reimbursed to customers because of the congestion, while those stuck in the traffic jam were at the mercy of food and drink vendors who inflated their prices, seeing a business opportunity in the misfortune of the stranded travelers. The Pyidaungsu highway road which connects Mandalay with Muse on the Chinese border is the principal thoroughfare for the flows of goods from central Myanmar to the border regions. —Myitmakha News Agency

Kanbe Tower Project to be implemented in May

A project to establish Kanbe Tower in Yankin Township in commercial hub Yangon will be implemented by Golden Thitsar Company in May this year and it is expected to be completed by the end of 2018.

Under the permission of Myanmar Investment Commission and Yangon City Development Committee, the five condominium buildings will emerge on two acres of land.

The project will cover three 26-floor buildings, one 21-floor building and one 12-floor building.

The total number of apartments in the hotel will be about 535 after the completion of this project.

It also includes a car park, which can allow up to 600 vehicles as well as places including swimming pools, playgrounds, fitness centres and shops.

Each apartment will be furnished with state-of-the-art advanced security system. Moreover, WiFi network will be available within the project area.

One of project implementers said, 30 per cent of total site area will be created as a green area. Located near public areas, the project is expected to fulfil the Yangon market demand and customer preferences, he added. —Soe Win (MLA)

Seminar aims to share latest treatments for diabetes

A DIABETES seminar for doctors will be held at the Myanmar Medical Association in Mandalay today with the aim of sharing latest treatment trend to local healthcare providers.

During the seminar, led by Indian Prof Dr Arun Bal, local specialists will share their knowledge and experience on

diabetes-related diseases.

Interested doctors may dial 09 253 087 658, 09 257 021 161 and 09 797 3334 of the MMA. All attendees will be awarded certificates provided by the M.SEM Orthopaedic Society and Diabetic Foot Society of India.—Tin Maung (Mandalay Sub-Printing House)

Unfinished Yangon high-rise buildings inspected



Unfinished Yangon high-rise buildings seen.

PHOTO: HTIN PAW WIN (KAMAYUT)

OVER 100 high-rise buildings, which are currently under construction in Yangon, were recently inspected by an expert group on supervision and inspection of advanced buildings.

The group has been operating since 2003 to implement construction works systematically in line with rules and regulations.

“During the inspection, we checked the safety quality environment of about 130 building sites in accordance with the guidelines designed by the group based on international guidelines for high-rise build-

ing construction,” said U Khin Maung Tint, chairman of the group.

The guidelines cover instructions related to architectural designs, water and sewerage systems, industrial designs and air systems to construct an advanced building.

The group put forward its findings on the quality of the buildings to the Yangon City Development Committee which may take action if violations are discovered. The country recognises buildings of 12 floors and above as high-risk.—Htin Paw Win (Kamayut)

Holistic Development for Kindergartners

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Actually, KG is the transition grade which places particular emphasis on the smooth transition from home and ECCD centers to the school environment and uses methods derived from Child Centered Approaches. The programs for Kindergartners are based upon the following ideas:

- The child’s experience of fun at school;
- A warm welcome from the teacher each day;
- A child friendly environment with learning spaces and resources;
- Welcoming and inviting classroom learning spaces to ex-

plore;

- Lots of time to freely explore and play and learn new and interesting things;
- A teaching methodology based in play, exploration, freedom to learn;
- Free interaction between teacher and children, and child to child;
- Flexibility of activity according to the needs and interest of the children;
- Promoting independent decision making and problem solving activities;
- Encouraging the participation of all children regardless of interest and ability, language and

culture.

Assessment is carried out for each individual child and is always formative. The child cannot “pass” or “fail”. Kindergartner develops and grows and learn. There are no traditional formal written tests of examinations. Adults (teachers, parents, or family members) and children make judgments every day about their own competence and the competence of others – their knowledge, their skills and their attitudes and behaviors. They use these judgments to decide on actions to take in future. These judgments are the assessments of competence of kindergartners and this kind of

assessment is one and the only one which best suits that level.

The most important thing is that the approaches and methodologies for KG have been totally changed from the past and thus KG teachers also need to change their traditional teaching methodologies. The Department of Teacher Education and Training makes plans for KG teacher training and within these days Training for Trainers are being conducted in Mandalay. Trainers should keep in their mind that they are crucial for showing the ways and means – what and how KG teachers should do. Successful KG implementation is very much dependent

on KG teachers. Starting from the training they have to learn the new approaches and methodologies. Interest and active participation/learning at the training will make them well-prepared to enter KG classrooms with confidence that teachers should have, since they are the key actors not only for the children but also for the Nation’s future.

In brief, it can be concluded that kindergartners will learn not only alphabets but also knowledge, skills and attitudes to become well qualified human resources. Our ultimate goal is to achieve holistic development of the kindergartners.

Rivals rip Trump but promise support if he is the nominee

DETROIT — Chief rivals to US Republican presidential front-runner Donald Trump assailed him for shifting positions on the issues at a debate, but said in the end they would reluctantly support him if he were their party's nominee.

Under questioning by Fox News Channel moderators on Thursday, US Senators Marco Rubio of Florida and Ted Cruz of Texas and Ohio Governor John Kasich made the promise despite efforts by party elders to build an anti-Trump coalition of Republican voters to pick someone other than the incendiary New York billionaire.

Hours earlier 2012 Republican nominee Mitt Romney in a speech blasted Trump, a former reality TV show host, as an unelectable fraud whose nomination would ensure victory for Democratic front-runner Hillary Clinton in the 8 November election to succeed Democratic President Barack Obama.

Tempers escalated quickly at the two-hour debate and, as in previous encounters, the battle descended into schoolyard taunts between Trump, Rubio and Cruz with accusations of lying and even a reference to male genitalia.

While Trump's three rivals followed party dogma, insisting they would set aside their concerns and rally around the ultimate nominee, they said they did so reluctantly if Trump were to emerge as the candidate for the general election.

"Sometimes he makes it a little bit hard," said Kasich, 63.



Donald Trump walks behind rival candidate Marco Rubio during a commercial break at the Republican presidential candidates debate in Detroit, Michigan, on 3 March 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Trump, asked if he would support the Republican nominee if it was someone other than him, seemed startled by the question given the momentum behind him, but eventually said, "Yes I will." Trump, 69, defended himself from Romney's blistering rebuke and called Romney a failed candidate.

With the Florida and Ohio primary votes looming on March 15 as make-or-break for the anti-Trump forces, Trump provided some ammunition to his critics.

Trump shrugged when presented with videotaped evidence from the moderators that he had shifted positions on the Iraq war, immigration and whether to admit refugees from the Syrian civil war.

"You have to show a degree of flexibility," he said.

Both Rubio and Cruz pounced.

"I hope we don't see yoga on this stage," Cruz said. Replied Rubio: "Well, he's very flexible so you never know."

It remained to be seen whether the debate would prove to be damaging to Trump. The runaway front-runner to date has been immune from criticism that other politicians normally face, for instance, over flip-flopping on issues.

While Trump saw the greatest number of overall mentions on social media site Twitter, an analysis showed that 63 per cent of the tweets expressing an opinion on him were negative, according to social media analytics firm Brandwatch which separated objective tweets from opinionated tweets in its analysis.

The rating marks a decline in positive sentiment for Trump. In the last two Republican debates, Trump broke even in terms of positive and negative mentions, according to the firm's analysis, while he enjoyed a 62.5 per cent positive sentiment rating during the Republican debate before that.—Reuters

Ukrainian foreign minister says no breakthrough in Paris talks

PARIS — Ukraine's foreign minister said on Thursday there had been no breakthrough in Paris talks aimed at getting a fragile peace deal back on track, repeating that until security was restored there could be no election in the rebel-held Donbass region.

For months, as progress in implementing the Minsk peace deal for eastern Ukraine has stalled, its architects, Germany and France, have held out hope that with time and carefully calibrated pressure on Ukraine and Russia the deal could be pushed back on track.

But since a joint visit by the German and French foreign ministers to Ukraine's capital last week, a gloomier view has taken hold: that political dysfunction in Kiev has all but doomed the chances of it delivering on its own commitments under the peace agreement.

Against that backdrop and a rise in ceasefire violations in the east, where Ukrainian government forces are faced off against

pro-Russian rebels, the ministers met in Paris.

After more than four hours of talks, described as "frank, direct and without holding back" by French Foreign Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault, little progress appeared to have been made.

"No, I don't have that impression," Ukrainian Foreign Minister Pavlo Klimkin told Reuters when asked if there had been a breakthrough.

His Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov had left the talks minutes earlier declining to comment.

One of the meeting's main goals was to tackle what is now seen in many European capitals as the biggest hurdle to the peace deal — Kiev's failure to push through an election law for the Donbass region of eastern Ukraine that would set the stage for a vote there by mid-year.

"The point I made specially is the necessity of providing security in the run-up to the future elec-

tions. Security first. Without security we can't deliver on anything further," Klimkin said.

Ayrault reiterated the hope of the four ministers to hold the elections by the end of June. He also sought to show there was some momentum on commitments to finally withdraw heavy weapons, abide by the ceasefire and give full access to monitors from the Organization for Security and Co operation in Europe.

European officials have said the goal is to keep Minsk on life support even if it looks dead. They fear that if they were to breakdown completely violence could spiral, with pro-Russian separatists running amok and eventually carving out a land corridor to Russia-annexed Crimea.

"We know that there is work to do ... but tonight we crossed an important hurdle. We will have others (to cross) but it's the right way, the right path," Ayrault said.—Reuters

NEWS IN BRIEF

EU to give Greece May deadline to register migrants — Avramopoulos

BERLIN — Europe will set Greece a deadline of May 12 to register all migrants in an orderly fashion or face more border controls, Migration Commissioner Dimitris Avramopoulos told a German newspaper yesterday.

Greece has been the main gateway for nearly a million migrants who have crossed the Aegean Sea from Turkey over the past year on their way to wealthier northern Europe. The influx has prompted Austria and others along the Balkans migration corridor to impose restrictions on their borders, meaning at least 30,000 people fleeing conflict of poverty in the Middle East are now trapped in Greece. "Greece will have until May to protect its external borders," Avramopoulos, a former Greek government minister, told *Die Welt* newspaper.—Reuters

EU nations hand out 535 million free carbon permits for 2016

LONDON — European nations have handed out a combined 535 million free European Union carbon permits to industry to cover 2016 emissions, the European Commission said on Thursday.

The allocation of EU Allowances (EUAs) will add supply to a market already awash with permits and could put more pressure on carbon prices, which are now below 5 euros a ton.

Germany and France handed out the most permits, at 129.6 million and 73.2 million respectively, while five countries including Spain and Italy have yet to distribute any of the free permits, an update on the Commission's website showed.—Reuters

Swiss to extend free movement of workers to Croatia — newswire

ZURICH — Switzerland and the European Union will sign on Friday an accord extending the free movement of workers to Croatia, Swiss newswire SDA reported yesterday, citing a government spokesman.

The justice ministry was not immediately available to comment on the report. The agreement would come as Swiss lawmakers are at odds with Brussels over how to implement a binding Swiss referendum in favour of immigration quotas that would violate a bilateral pact guaranteeing freedom of movement for all EU citizens.—Reuters

French Airbus plane narrowly avoids collision with drone

PARIS — An Air France Airbus A320 jet narrowly avoided colliding with a drone while descending for an approach to Paris Charles de Gaulle airport last month, the French aviation investigation agency BEA said.

The aircraft had been operating a service from Barcelona on 19 February and was flying at 5,500ft when the co-pilot saw the drone.

He immediately disengaged the autopilot and carried out an avoidance manoeuvre while informing the captain of the drone's presence, BEA said on its website.

The drone passed just five metres below the aircraft's left wing, the agency said, classifying the incident as "serious".—Reuters

Thai customs seize fake, prohibited goods worth over \$8 m

BANGKOK — Thai customs on Thursday announced the seizure of counterfeit and prohibited goods worth more than \$8 million over the past two weeks at Bangkok's customs port.

The goods included 3,200 shishas or water pipes, 1,000 sex toys, 80,000 counterfeit Viagra pills and other pirated goods including key chains, plastic toys, and jackets. Sex toys are illegal in Thailand.

Kulit Sombatsiri, director general of the Customs Department, said the seizures were part of the government's commitment to protecting society and reflected the determined effort of Thai customs to prevent prohibited goods from entering the kingdom.

Kulit told Kyodo News that the seized products came from China and entered Thailand by ship.

"Thanks to the customs officials' diligence, they had a record of suspicious senders so they could easily seize the illegal products. We will try to track where these products were headed," Kulit added.

Since 1 October, 2015, Thai customs has seized prohibited and pirated goods worth more than \$47 million.—Kyodo News

Kenya tackles poverty by sending teen mothers back to school

LAIKIPIA (Kenya) — Christine Gathoni dreamed of becoming a doctor, not a patient, grimacing in pain as she pushed her baby girl into the world.

But boredom and frustration at her parents' inability to pay for her education led her to sex, pregnancy and motherhood at the age of 19 with only two years of secondary education to go.

"I was idle and my boyfriend asked me out," she said, looking pensive. "After a few weeks, I realised I was pregnant."

Two out of five 19-year-old women in Kenya are either pregnant or have given birth, with the highest rates among the poorest, according to government statistics.

Their parents often encourage them to get married to escape the stigma of being a single mother.

The persistent cultural belief that girls who have given birth are adults — who have no place in a classroom — also means that as many as nine in 10 Kenyan girls who drop out of school due to pregnancy never return.

Gathoni, however, was determined to complete her education.

"If I had decided to get married, I guess life would have been unbearable," she said. "I hadn't totally lost hope in securing an education to save my family from poverty."

When Gathoni's baby turned

one, her father brought a goat to Laikipia's Ilpolei Secondary School to pay for her re-entry. Instead of accepting the goat, Gathoni's headteacher enrolled her in Jielimishe — Swahili for "educate yourself" — a programme to encourage girls from deprived communities in the East African country to stay in school.

In 1994, Kenya introduced a "return to school" policy for teenage mothers as a way of ensuring more girls finish their education, but implementation has been lax.

Despite free primary education being introduced in Kenya more than a decade ago, many students still drop out of school because their families cannot afford uniforms, books and admission fees.

Almost six out of 10 students who start primary school do not complete secondary school, government figures show.

Girls are often disadvantaged because many communities prioritise boys' education. Menstruating girls may skip lessons because of a lack of toilets and sanitary towels.

But research shows that girls who are allowed to complete secondary schooling, are likely to earn more, and have fewer unwanted pregnancies and healthier children.

In Gathoni's home county of Laikipia, a stunning region of thorn trees and grasslands, 48 per cent of



Christine Gathoni (2nd R) and classmates study at the Ilpolei Secondary School in Kenya's Laikipia county, on 18 February. PHOTO: REUTERS

girls are in school compared with 52 per cent of boys, according to a survey commissioned by Jielimishe.

Its mission is to identify 10,050 girls in Laikipia, neighbouring Meru county, and Mombasa on the coast, who need the most help and cover their school fees, textbooks, uniforms and sanitary towels.

Since the project started in June 2014, more than 300 girls have gone back to school.

Another key component of the two-and-a-half year programme, funded by the British government, is to convince local communities

that keeping girls in school — rather than marrying them off for dowry — is in their best interest.

"Due to the intense and targeted community interventions, the communities are gradually becoming responsive of girls' education," director of the project, Mike Mutungi, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

It is one of several initiatives across the country.

In 2014, the US-based Population Council set up a three-year project to expand access to secondary school education for teenage mothers in western Kenya.

It has also sponsored a radio

soap opera focused on an out-of-school teenage mother to get people talking about the issue.

There are still challenges — even for the Jielimishe girls.

Jielimishe programme manager Dennis Ratemo said some young mothers struggled to find childcare while they attended class.

He also said four girls had dropped out of school in 2015 to take care of their babies — out of 356 who had returned to school since 2014.

"In the past I struggled a lot to get the basics to keep me in school, but that's history now," Gathoni said.—Reuters

Syrian rebel group says war has not stopped

BEIRUT — A major Syrian rebel group has said the war had not stopped since a cessation of hostilities agreement came into effect, accusing the government of violations and saying a ceasefire was not possible while "militias and states kill our people".

The Jaish al-Islam group is one of the biggest rebel factions fighting President Bashar al-Assad in western Syria and an influential member of the main Saudi-backed opposition council, the High Negotiations Committee.

A UN official said on Thursday the cessation of hostilities that came into effect on Saturday was holding but remained fragile and that incidents have been contained in the provinces of Homs, Hama, Latakia and Damascus.

Jaish al-Islam said: "Our confrontations with the Assad gangs did not stop, whether in the Ghouta, in Homs, or in Aleppo, and as far as we are concerned, the war effectively

did not stop on the ground in the shadow of these violations".

Jaish al-Islam said it faced a difficult military situation on one important frontline at al-Maraj outside Damascus, where government forces have gained ground since the cessation of hostilities agreement came into effect.

"The regime has been launching a fierce attack on the area for more than four months and we were surprised that after the declaration of the truce by the international community that this attack continued and the Assad forces took new positions in the area," Jaish al-Islam said in a statement overnight.

The government has accused rebel groups of violating the agreement.

Jaish al-Islam said a ceasefire in circumstances where "militias and states kill our people, expel them and occupy our land" was tantamount to unacceptable surrender "after all this blood that has been spent".—Reuters

Palestinian woman rams car into Israeli soldier, shot dead

JERUSALEM — A Palestinian woman rammed her car into an Israeli soldier in the occupied West Bank yesterday and was then shot dead by troops at the scene, the Israeli military said. A wave of Palestinian-Israeli heightened violence, now in its sixth month, has shown no sign of abating and has raised concern of further escalation. Friday's attack took place at a main junction near the Israeli settlement bloc, Gush Etzion.

"The soldier was wounded and evacuated for medical treatment in hospital. Forces on site responded to the imminent threat and shot the attacker, resulting in her death. A knife was found in the assailant's vehicle," the Israeli military said.

Since October, Palestinian stabbings, shootings and car ramming have killed 28 Israelis and a US citizen. Israeli security forces have killed at least 173 Palestinians, 115 of whom Israel says were assailants, while most others were shot dead during violent



Israeli security forces inspect a car used by a Palestinian woman who, the Israeli military said, rammed it into an Israeli soldier before she was shot dead by the Israeli troops, at a main junction near the Israeli settlement bloc, Gush Etzion in the West Bank, on 4 March. PHOTO: REUTERS

protests. Palestinian leaders say many Palestinian attackers have acted out of desperation in the absence of movement towards creation of an independent state. Israel says they are being incited to violence by their leaders and on social media.

US Vice President Joe Bid-

en, on a five-day Middle East trip that begins on Saturday, will meet separately next week with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas. US-brokered peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians broke down in April 2014.—Reuters

UN registered 99 sex crime allegations against its staff in 2015

UNITED NATIONS — There were 99 new allegations of sexual exploitation or sexual abuse against United Nations staff members across the UN system last year, a sharp increase from the 80 allegations in 2014, according to a new UN report.

The majority of those allegations — 69 in all — involved personnel in 10 peacekeeping missions, the report said. The military and police personnel accused of sexual crimes while serving for the United Nations involved some 21 countries, most of them African.

The report by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon does not identify the nationalities of the 30 UN staff members accused of sexual abuse or exploitation who were not working for peacekeeping missions.

The report, an advance copy of which was obtained by Reuters, came in response to a new UN “name and shame” policy for UN peacekeepers implemented after a series of allegations of rape and sexual abuse by international troops in Central African Republic (CAR). Most of the allegations involved peacekeepers from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, seven in all, serving in CAR. There were also allegations against several European countries and Canada. There were allegations against troops and police from Burundi, Germany, Ghana, Senegal, Madagascar, Rwanda, Congo Republic, Burkina Faso,

Cameroon, Tanzania, Slovakia, Niger, Moldova, Togo, South Africa, Morocco, Benin, Nigeria and Gabon.

In addition to CAR, the allegations involved peacekeeping missions in places like Haiti, Mali, Democratic Republic of the Congo and Ivory Coast.

The report includes recommendations for member states to make it easier to identify suspected perpetrators and prosecute them. It calls for the UN General Assembly and troop contributing countries to allow prosecutions inside the countries where the alleged crimes took place and creation of a DNA registry of all peacekeepers.

One of the problems, human rights groups say, is that it is currently up to UN troop-contributing countries to prosecute their soldiers accused of abuse. When such prosecutions happen, the groups say, they often take place quietly and it is difficult to follow up on the results and punishments, if any.

In December an independent review panel accused the United Nations and its agencies of grossly mishandling numerous allegations of child sexual abuse by foreign troops in CAR in 2013 and 2014. The idea of prosecutions in theatre would likely be unpopular among UN troop-contributing countries, UN diplomats and officials say, though they suggest it is an idea worth pursuing as a deterrent.—Reuters

Environmental and indigenous rights leader murdered in Honduras

TEGUCIGALPA — An environmental rights activist known for her fight to stop hydroelectric plants and mines from encroaching on indigenous lands was shot dead early on Thursday in Honduras, prompting hundreds of students to protest in the capital.

Berta Caceres, a 43-year-old teacher, was shot and killed by two men at her home in La Esperanza, Honduras, 112 miles (180 kilometres) west of the capital, Tegucigalpa, Honduran Security Minister Julian Pacheco said, condemning the attack.

One other person was wound-

ed in the incident, which is under investigation. The police have arrested a suspect, and are also questioning two witnesses, the government said in a statement.

The murder rate in Honduras is one of the highest in the world.

Caceres, who had received death threats, won the Goldman Environmental Prize in 2015 for her struggle to prevent the construction of a \$50 million dam that threatened to displace hundreds of Indians.

In protest at her murder, students from the National Autonomous University blocked streets near campus, broke windows of

a local Burger King and threw rocks at riot police, who responded with tear gas.

“The cowardly killing of Berta is a tragedy that was waiting to happen. For years, she had been the victim of a sustained campaign of harassment and threats to stop her from defending the rights of indigenous communities,” said Erika Guevara-Rosas, Americas director at Amnesty International.

The project, which was subcontracted by a local company to Chinese builder Sinohydro [SINOH.U], has been temporarily suspended thanks to protests led by Caceres.—Reuters



Activists hold photos of slain environmental rights activist Berta Caceres and shout after her body was released from the morgue in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, on 3 March. PHOTO: REUTERS

Clinton ex-employee tells FBI no sign email server was hacked: NYT

NEW YORK — The technician who helped manage Hillary Clinton’s private email server for her work as secretary of state has given security logs to investigators that he said show no signs of foreign hacking, the *New York Times* reported on Thursday.

Bryan Pagliano is cooperating with the Federal Bureau of Investigation’s criminal inquiry into the email setup in exchange for limited immunity by the US Department of Justice, according to the *Times*, citing unnamed people who know about the investigation. With limited immunity, his testimony cannot be used in a prosecution against him, the *Times* said.

The investigation has overshadowed Hillary Clinton’s campaign to become the Democratic Party’s candidate in the November presidential election. Clinton has apologised for the arrangement but says she did nothing wrong and that she believes the government will vindicate her.

Pagliano, who helped set up and run the email system in Clinton’s New York home, told inves-

tigators that the logs he handed over indicated that no intrusion occurred, the *Times* said.

The security logs show who accessed the server and when, though they may not capture more sophisticated hacking, the *Times* said.

Pagliano was still working at

the State Department’s Bureau of Information Resource Management as recently as last September, but has since left, a department spokesman said on Monday. The spokesman declined to say when he left or why.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation is doing its own anal-

ysis of whether the server was attacked, according to media reports.

FBI agents plan to seek interviews with Clinton’s aides in coming weeks and would like to interview Clinton herself as their investigation enters a new phase, Bloomberg News reported on Thursday, citing two people familiar with the inquiry.

The interviews would look into how the server was set up and used and what precautions were taken to protect sensitive data, according to the people, who described the matter on condition of anonymity because the investigation is continuing, Bloomberg News said.

Investigators were almost finished examining computers and other physical evidence as part of the inquiry, which is focused on whether Clinton’s use of private email while serving as the nation’s top diplomat led to the improper handling of classified information, according to the people.

Pagliano previously worked

on Clinton’s failed 2008 presidential campaign, and ended up joining her at the State Department in 2009 as a political appointee, working as a technology specialist and maintaining Clinton’s email server.

His employment ended with Clinton in February 2013, but he stayed on as a contractor.

More than 2,000 of Clinton’s emails contain classified information that could harm national security if leaked, according to the State Department.

The government forbids sending or storing such information outside secure, government-controlled channels, and has prosecuted people for breaches.

The FBI and the Justice Department have declined to comment on their investigation, including who might be its target, beyond confirming its existence.

Pagliano’s lawyer did not respond to requests for comment. A Clinton spokesman said the campaign is pleased that Pagliano is cooperating, but declined to respond to questions.—Reuters



Bryan Pagliano (2nd R), aide to former US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, departs with his legal team after appearing at a private session of the House Select Committee on Benghazi at the US Capitol in Washington in 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

US sends elite disaster experts to respond to Ethiopia drought

NAIROBI — The United States is sending an elite team of disaster experts to respond to Ethiopia's worst drought in 50 years, it said on Thursday.

Around a dozen members of the US Agency for International Development's (USAID) Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) have arrived in Ethiopia to coordinate the US response to the drought.

They will be joined by DART logistics, nutrition, and water, sanitation and hygiene experts in the next few days.

USAID responds to around 65 disasters a year, including the recent Ebola outbreak in West Africa and last year's Nepal earthquakes.

"With the announcement of the DART, we are acting to prevent a major humanitarian crisis and protect Ethiopia's hard-earned development progress," USAID's administrator Gayle Smith said in a statement.

US President Barack Obama visited Ethiopia, a close US ally, on his 2015

trip to the continent of his father's birth.

He has made food security a priority of his development agenda, saying in 2013 it was a "moral imperative" to end hunger on the world's poorest continent.

Ethiopia's government and the United Nations have asked for \$1.4 billion to feed 10.2 million Ethiopians — the third largest appeal globally after Syria and Yemen.

An additional 7.9 million chronically food insecure people are receiving rations through the Ethiopian government's Productive Safety Net Programme, supported by the United States and other donors.

Yet funding shortages mean food aid is in short supply and malnutrition will increase dramatically if donor money runs out in May, the United Nations has said.

"The worst impacts of this drought still lie ahead," USAID said in a statement.

"The scale and severity of this crisis is expected to far



An elderly woman receives cooking oil at an emergency food aid distribution in the village of Estayish in Ethiopia's northern Amhara region, on 11 February 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

outstrip available resources." Ethiopia's spring rains started in late February but many farmers do not have seeds.

USAID is providing al-

most \$4 million of maize and wheat seeds for more than 200,000 families.

Ethiopia is one of the flagship countries for the US government's global

hunger initiative, Feed the Future, which seeks to boost small farmers' yields.

Some Feed the Future farmers are contributing maize to the disaster re-

sponse, USAID said. "It is imperative ... to save lives and ensure that tens of millions of people aren't pushed back into extreme poverty," it said.—Reuters

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV CTP FORTUNE VOY NO (219N)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV CTP FORTUNE VOY NO (219N) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 5.3.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T/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.

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S SILKAGO LOGISTICS PTE LTD**

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV SINAR BATAM VOY NO (011N)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV SINAR BATAM VOY NO (011N) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 5.3.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.W.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S FAR SHIPPING (S'PORE) PTE LTD**

Phone No: 2301185

Cuba sending Americans to the beach during Obama visit

HAVANA — Americans travelling to Cuba later this month are being moved out of Havana hotels to make room for President Barack Obama's entourage and being sent tantalisingly close to a place US law effectively forbids them from visiting: the beach.

Obama will make his historic trip to the Communist-ruled Caribbean island on 21-22 March with hundreds of people in tow, crowning 15 months of warming relations after more than half a century of Cold War animosity.

Cuba is already experiencing a tourism boom and March is traditionally its busiest month. The Obama visit has put additional strain on hotels that have already been booked to capacity for much of the high season.

Major Havana hotels are being cleared, according to the head of a US travel company who asked not to be identified for concern it would damage future business relations.

"Just got notice that the Capri, Panorama, Nacional, half of Parque Cen-

tral and potentially other hotels have been told to send all guests to Varadero from the 19th to 23rd of March," he wrote in an e-mail.

The Varadero resort, an hour's drive east of Havana, is Cuba's most sought after tourism destination, with sandy white beaches, shimmering waters and plentiful hotels.

But the beach is off limits to Americans as US restrictions on travel to the island expressly forbid tourism in Cuba. Americans are limited to authorised travel such as educational and cultural exchanges. This means most US visitors are concentrated in Havana, where there are lots of cultural sites and activities, a rocky seafront and scarce hotel rooms.

"The Cuban government is clearing out Havana hotels and sending visiting US groups to Varadero Beach for a long weekend," said Collin Lavery, president of Cuban Educational Travel, which organises authorised US travel groups.—Reuters

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV SHAN DONG HAI SHENG VOY NO (1601)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV SHAN DONG HAI SHENG VOY NO (1601) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 6.3.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P.L where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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

Phone No: 2301186

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV INNWA STAR VOY NO (005N)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV INNWA STAR VOY NO (005N) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 5.3.2016 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.

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S CONTINENTAL SHIPPING LINE**

Phone No: 2301185

Google to unveil J.J. Abrams' Lunar X Prize documentaries



Director JJ Abrams arrives at the European Premiere of *Star Wars, The Force Awakens* in Leicester Square, London, on 16 December 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

CAPE CANAVERAL — Having mastered fictional renderings of spaceflight, “*Star Wars: The Force Awakens*” director J.J. Abrams has turned his attention to a real space drama, with a series of Web-based documentaries about a Google-backed race to the moon.

Produced by Abrams and directed by documentary filmmaker Orlando von Einsiedel (“*Virunga*”), the series chronicles some of the 16 teams vying for \$30 million in prizes for landing and operating a privately developed robotic spacecraft on the moon before 31 December, 2017.

“The teams ... range from Silicon Valley tech experts, to hackers in Germany, to IT specialists in India, to a father and son (working) in a spare bedroom in Vancouver,” the X Prize Foundation, which organised the competition, said in a statement.

So far only the government-run space programmes of the United States, the former Soviet Union and China have landed spacecraft on the moon.

Abrams’ nine-part series, called “*Moon Shot*,” offers an overview of the Google Lunar X Prize contest and follows individual members from several of the teams, according to X Prize spokesman Eric Desatnik.

Each film is seven minutes long. The entire series debuts on 15 March on Google Play and on 17 March on YouTube. In addition to his work on the latest “*Star Wars*” movie blockbuster, Abrams’ directing credits include the first two films in a reboot of the “*Star Trek*” big-screen franchise. Google paid for the documentary project, a partnership of Abrams’ production company Bad Robot and Epic Digital. Terms of the deal were not disclosed.

The Google Lunar X Prize is intended to spur commercial development of lunar exploration. It is one of 13 competitions sponsored by the California-based X Prize organisation to stimulate technological developments that address a wide-range of environmental, social and medical challenges.—*Reuters*

Judge orders release of Bobbi Kristina Brown's autopsy results

ATLANTA — Autopsy results for Bobbi Kristina Brown, the daughter of singers Whitney Houston and Bobby Brown, will be made public after a Georgia judge on Thursday ordered the report to be unsealed.

Bobbi Kristina Brown, 22, died in July after months in a coma. She had been found unconscious and unresponsive in a bathtub in her north Atlanta home in January 2015.

The Fulton County medical examiner's office said it was awaiting the judge's order and would not provide the autopsy details before Friday.

Prosecutors opposed the re-

port's release, arguing it would compromise an ongoing criminal investigation of the celebrity daughter's death.

“It is our feeling that those valid reasons still exist,” Fulton County District Attorney Paul Howard Jr. said in a statement, adding that his office nonetheless would follow the court's instructions.

Last August, the conservator of Bobbi Kristina Brown's estate filed a wrongful death lawsuit accusing her boyfriend, Nick Gordon, of causing the death. A spokesman for Gordon called the lawsuit “slandrous and meritless.”—*Reuters*

Takeshi Kitano joins Scarlett Johansson in *Ghost in the Shell*

LOS ANGELES — Japanese comedian-actor Takeshi Kitano will join Scarlett Johansson in the live-action adaptation of “*Ghost in the Shell*”.

Rupert Sanders will direct the DreamWorks production, which is based on the famous Japanese manga series written and illustrated by Masamune Shirow, according to The Hollywood Reporter.

“*Ghost in the Shell*” follows the story of a female special-ops cyborg who leads a task force called Special 9 in order to stop dangerous extremists bent on the destruction of the advancement of cyber technology.

Kitano will play the chief of public security Section 9, Daisuke Aramaki. Kitano is one of Japan's top film talents, having worked both in front of and behind the camera.

The film will be Kitano's first Hollywood role since 1995, when he starred opposite Keanu Reeves in “*Johnny Mnemonic*”.

Paramount Pictures will release “*Ghost in the Shell*” on 31 March 2017.—*PTI*



Scarlett Johansson. PHOTO: REUTERS

Demi Lovato to be honoured by LGBT group for promoting equality



Singer Demi Lovato arrives at the 58th Grammy Awards in Los Angeles, California on 15 February 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

LOS ANGELES — Singer and actress Demi Lovato is to be honoured by a leading US gay rights advocacy group for speaking out on behalf of gays, lesbians and transgender people in her songs, music vid-

eos and media interviews.

The group GLAAD said on Thursday that Lovato, 23, would receive its annual Vanguard Award, which is given to straight people in the public eye who have “made a significant

difference in promoting equality and acceptance.”

The former star of Disney Channel's “*Sonny with a Chance*,” has celebrated her late gay grandfather, who came out in the 1960s, and she filmed the music video for her 2013 hit “*Really Don't Care*” at an LGBT pride event. She has also campaigned for GLAAD against bullying, and played a lesbian character in 2103 on the TV show “*Glee*,” saying she hoped it would inspire people to love and accept who they are.

“She is an extraordinary ally who is committed to helping young people embrace who they are and live the lives they love,” GLAAD President Sarah Kate Ellis said in a statement.

The Vanguard award will be presented to Lovato at a ceremony in Los Angeles on 2 April. Previous honorees include Elizabeth Taylor, Janet Jackson, Jennifer Lopez and Kristin Chenoweth.—*Reuters*

Slip sliding away, atop a Los Angeles skyscraper



An artist rendering of the ‘Skyslide’ attraction, an outdoor glass slide positioned close to 1,000 feet above downtown Los Angeles, California, is shown in this image released by OUE Skyspace, on 2 March. PHOTO: REUTERS

LOS ANGELES — Don’t look down! The owner of a 73-floor tower in Los Angeles that ranks as the tallest building in the United States west of the Mississippi River is building a

glass slide to hang off the exterior of the structure, and it will invite visitors to ride the attraction. Starting in June, thrill seekers will be able to ride the “Skyslide” at the US

Bank Tower, getting on at the 70th floor and looking down at the pavement nearly 1,000 feet (305 metres) below as they sit down and slide for 45 feet (14 metres) to an outdoor

platform at the 69th floor, according to the building’s owner, Singapore-based OUE Ltd. The glass on the fully enclosed slide will be only 1 1/4 inches (3.2 cm) thick, the company said. Tickets to the slide, which is part of a larger attraction called OUE Skyspace LA featuring an observation deck for visitors, are slated to go on sale on 18 March. Thomson Reuters leases space in the US Bank Tower. The builders of Wilshire Grand Centre, a skyscraper under construction in downtown Los Angeles, say their 73-story structure once completed, including a spire at its top, will become the tallest building west of the Mississippi. That tower is set to open next year.—Reuters

Rare Ty Cobb tobacco-brand baseball cards found

LOS ANGELES — Seven rare, identical Ty Cobb baseball cards more than a century old were found weeks ago inside a torn paper bag on the floor of a house, marking one of the most remarkable discoveries in the world of sports collectables, an expert said on Thursday.

What sets apart the newly dubbed “Lucky 7” cards is that in addition to a portrait of the American League great emblazoned on the front, his name is printed with a tobacco ad on the back — matching a design found on just 15 other Cobb cards previously known to exist.

The collection as a whole is worth “well into seven figures,” said Joe Orlando, president of Professional Sports Authenticator, or PSA, in Newport Beach, California, who

verified and graded them. He called the find “unprecedented.” “When you factor in rarity, value, quantity and quality, it can be argued this is the single greatest baseball card find the hobby has ever witnessed,” said Rick Snyder, an authorised PSA dealer in South Carolina who was the first to examine them. The Lucky 7 date from 1909 to 1911, part of a larger set designated the T206 series, affectionately known by collectors as “The Monster,” and originally distributed as tobacco brand promotions with cards of all the era’s baseball stars.

The group ranks among the most prized by collectors and includes the Holy Grail of baseball card hobbyists, one picturing the Pittsburgh Pirates’ “Fly-



The front and back of a rare T206 Ty Cobb baseball card, one of the recently discovered “The Lucky 7 Find” cards that were authenticated, is seen in an undated photo provided by Professional Sports Authenticator. PHOTO: REUTERS

ing Dutchman,” Honus Wagner. Several far more common Cobb designs exist, bearing variations of artwork portraits of the Detroit Tigers star, nicknamed “the Georgia Peach.” The newly found cards belong

to an extremely scarce version — now numbering just 22 — that also came printed with his name on the reverse side, above the phrase “King of the Smoking Tobacco World.” —Reuters

mitv

Myanmar International

(5-3-2016 07:00am ~ 6-3-2016 7:00am) MST

Today Fresh

07:03	Am	News
07:26	Am	Great Shwedagon - Nine Wonders Around The Platform Of Shwedagon Pagoda
07:39	Am	A village where old traditions prevails
07:51	Am	Pyin Oo Lwin Sweater
08:03	Am	News
08:26	Am	Thread Charm “A Kayin Threading Ceremony”
08:36	Am	Myanmar Traditional Thatched Roofs: In-Leaf
08:52	Am	Tea
09:03	Am	News
09:26	Am	Myanmar Game Changers (Ep- I)
09:52	Am	Next Generation (Nyan Kyal Say)

10:03	Am	News
10:26	Am	History And Mystery Behind The Caves
10:50	Am	Sai Ye Kwan
(11:00 Am ~ 03:00 Pm) - Friday Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)		
(03:00 Pm ~ 07:00 Pm) - Today Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)		
Prime Time		
07:03	Pm	News
07:27	Pm	A Journey To Southern Shan State (Ep-3)
07:42	Pm	Art Students: Theatrical Art
07:49	Pm	Today Myanmar: BRT SYSTEM In YANGON
08:03	Pm	News
08:26	Pm	The Writer: Chit Oo Nyo (Part- I)
08:52	Pm	Myanmar Masterclass: 3D
(09:00 Pm ~ 11:00 Pm)- Today Repeat (09:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)		
(11:00 Pm ~ 03:00 Am) - Friday Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)		
(03:00 Am ~ 07:00 Am) -Today Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)		
(For Detailed Schedule – www.myanmaritv.com/schedule)		

Botticelli Reimagined: London exhibition explores painter’s influence

LONDON — An exhibition dedicated to Sandro Botticelli opens in London this week, looking at how the 15th century Italian painter influenced artists and designers though the ages.

“Botticelli Reimagined” is the largest exhibition of Botticelli paintings and drawings ever held in Britain, according to London’s Victoria & Albert (V&A) museum.

The display features more than 50 Botticelli works and explores how others have reinterpreted the Florentine painter’s art, from the Pre-Raphaelites to today.

Botticelli (1445-1510) is famed today for his Venus paintings, particularly “The Birth of Venus”, in which the blonde, nude goddess stands on a scallop shell. However his work was initially forgotten after his death.

“Botticelli fell, sank from sight for nearly 300 years. In the early 19th century he was rediscovered. The Pre-Raphaelites of course fetishised him,”

Mark Evans, senior curator of paintings at the V&A, said. “In the era of abstraction, Botticelli again receded into the shadows but, with pop art, he came out fighting and of course he’s now one of the most celebrated global phenomena in art.”

The V&A show is divided into three sections.

“Global, Modern, Contemporary” looks at the influence of “The Birth of Venus” — which remains in Florence’s Uffizi Gallery — and features works by artists Andy Warhol and Yin Xin, photographer David LaChapelle and outfits by Italian designer brand Dolce & Gabbana.

“Rediscovery” explores Botticelli’s influence on the Pre-Raphaelites in the mid-19th century with works by Dante Gabriel Rossetti and William Morris among others. The final section, “Botticelli in his Own Time”, displays the painter’s own works, including “The Mystic Nativity” and “Pallas and the Centaur”. —Reuters

MRTV

Entertainment Channel

(5-3-2016, Saturday)

6:00 pm

• Music Programme

6:20 pm

• Talks Show

6:40 pm

• Music Programme

7:00 pm

• Cassette Recordings

8:15 pm

• International Movie

10:00 pm

• Myanmar Movie

From 5.3.2016 (Saturday) 06:00 Pm
To 6.3.2016 (Sunday) 06:00 Pm
This schedule will be repeated four times in 24 hours.

MRTV

News Channel in Brief

(5-3-2016, Saturday)

6:00 am

• Paritta by Venerable Mingun Sayadaw

7:35 am

• Hyper Sports

8:35 am

• The Farmer

9:35 am

• 2016 University Entrance Examination (Economic)

10:35 am

• MRTV’s Youth Programme

11:35 am

• Game for Children

12:35 pm

• Round Up of The Week’s Local TV News

1:20 pm

• Round Up of The Week’s Hluttaw

1:35 pm

• TV Drama Series

2:35 pm

• MRTV Job Opportunity Programme

3:45 pm

• Ooredoo MLN-1 2016 (LIVE) (Magwe FC Vs Yadanarbon United FC)

6:35 pm

• Business News

7:20 pm

• Radio Drama

8:00 pm

• News / International News/ Weather Report

9:00 pm

• News

• Gitadagale Phwintbaohn

Note/ Hourly News Bulletins (Local + International)

Messi hat-trick helps Barca to record 35-match unbeaten run

BARCELONA — Barcelona set a Spanish record of 35 matches unbeaten in all competitions with a thumping 5-1 win at nine-man Rayo Vallecano in La Liga on Thursday after goal-machine Lionel Messi scored his 35th hat-trick.

Ivan Rakitic opened the scoring, Messi caught up with Real Madrid's Cristiano Ronaldo on 35 trebles in all competitions and Arda Turan completed the rout, with Turkey's captain scoring his first goal for the club since joining from Atletico Madrid.

Barca's victory, which saw them beat the undefeated record Real Madrid had held since the 1988/89 season, restored an eight-point lead at the top over Atletico with 11 matches to go.

Atletico beat visiting Real Sociedad 3-0 on Tuesday, while third-placed Real Madrid are again 12 points off the pace after a 3-1 win at Levante on Wednesday.

Barca were helped by the fact that Rayo lost defender Diego Llorente to a red card three minutes before halftime for a foul on Rakitic before Manuel Iturra was also sent off in the 67th for bringing down Sergio Busquets in the area.

Busquets was felled from behind going for the rebound after a Messi free kick came back off the bar but Luis Suarez's penalty was saved by Juan Carlos, Barcelona's ninth miss from 18 penalties in all competitions this season.

"It's a strange situation (missing penalties)," the Catalan side's midfield general Andres Iniesta said. "We mustn't let it bother us while everything is working as well as it is. "The reasons are



Barcelona's Lionel Messi (R) and Rayo Vallecano's Diego Llorente in action during Spanish Liga BBVA at Vallecas stadium, Madrid, Spain on 3 March 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

many (to explain) why the team continues in this positive dynamic (but) the league isn't over, there are lots of points still to take," he was quoted as saying on the As website (www.as.com).

Rakitic scored in the 22nd

minute by tapping the ball home when it fell to him after Juan Carlos spilt a high cross.

Messi finished off a fine one-two with Neymar a minute later for his first goal and Llorente was shown the red card three minutes

before halftime for a foul on Rakitic. Messi scored his second in the 53rd after a shot by Suarez came back off the post and completed his hat-trick in the 72nd after darting through the defence from midfield.

Rayo got a consolation in the 57th through Manucho's header after Bebe, at the far post, nodded a cross from the right into the middle as the two ex-Manchester United players combined.—Reuters

HCM chess Average Elo 2,344

HO CHI MINH CITY — Up to 180 chess players will compete at HDBank Cup International Open Chess Championship 2016 slated for 8-13 March in Viet Nam's HCM City, the Viet Nam Chess Federation said yesterday.

The players with the average Elo of 2,344, including a grandmaster with Elo of 2,717, will vie for top rankings with total prizes of 40,000 US dollars, including the first prize of 13,000 US dollars.

They are from 16 countries and regions, including China, Hungary, Russia, Azerbaijan, the Czech Republic, Switzerland, Indonesia, Singapore and Myanmar.

Chinese grandmasters Wang Hao (Elo 2,707) and Ni Hua (Elo 2,691), two Vietnamese grandmasters Le Quang Liem (Elo 2,709) and Nguyen Ngoc Truong Son (Elo 2,649), and Czech grandmaster Viktor Laznicka are among the favourites to win the title, said the federation.—Xinhua

Rio a prime goal for Serena on her return to competition

RIO DE JANEIRO — Having played just one tournament since mid-September due to various injuries and a recent bout of flu, Serena Williams is now itching to get back into competition with the Rio Olympics among her top priorities for the year.

The American world number one has not competed since her stunning loss to Germany's Angelique Kerber in the Australian Open final in January, and says she has learned lessons from that defeat which she will use to her advantage.

"Whenever I lose, it definitely motivates me to do better," Williams, 34, said on a conference call on Thursday to promote her exhibition match with good friend Caroline Wozniacki of Denmark in New York next week.

"There's a lot from that match (in Australia) that I feel like I can improve on and do a lot better. Hopefully I will achieve that this year."

Asked if she felt fully rested after her limited playing time since mid-September, Williams replied: "Oh yeah. I was ready to go in Australia and I will be ready to go today and tomorrow, and I'll definitely be ready to go on Tuesday."

Williams, who will face Wozniacki in the BNP Paribas Showdown at Madison Square Garden in New York on Tuesday, has already won Olympic gold four times, once in the singles and on three occasions in the doubles.

Success in Rio counts among her biggest goals for this year.

"Tennis players never really thought about winning the Olympics, you grew up thinking about winning grand slams but now, with tennis in the Olympics, of course you think about it," Williams said.

"The Olympics have had such a big impact on everyone. It (the August Games) will probably affect my schedule a little bit and I probably won't be playing as much because I will be in Rio. I am really looking forward to it." A growing number of international athletes in recent weeks have said they are concerned about Zika, a virus that has been linked in Brazil to more than 4,000 suspected cases of microcephaly, a rare condition that causes abnormally small heads in infants and can lead to devel-

opmental problems.

Asked what she thought about the Zika threat, Williams replied: "I have read a few articles about it, but I haven't been following it a great deal.

"I'm going to have to read a little more about it before I can give a proper answer. I definitely think it's something that you want to be careful about and we will see what happens."

No scientific proof exists that Zika causes microcephaly or other suspected complications, but traces of the virus have been found in the bodily fluids and tissues of mothers and babies affected by it.

The link has led the World Health Organisation to declare the Zika outbreak a global emergency.—Reuters