

President U Thein Sein sends felicitation to Ghana counterpart

PAGE 3

White tiger gives birth to three cubs at Nay Pyi Taw zoo

PAGE 3



Challenges to Good Governance

PAGE 8

THE BANKS FROM BEYOND

CBM grants operating license to four more foreign banks

FOUR foreign banks have been granted preliminary approval by the Central Bank of Myanmar (CBM) to operate in the country, reaching 13 foreign banks in total in the country, according to the announcement of the CBM yesterday. The bid-winning foreign banks are Bank for Investment and Development of Vietnam—BIDV, Taiwan's E.SUN Commercial Bank, South Korea's Shinhan Bank and the State Bank of India.

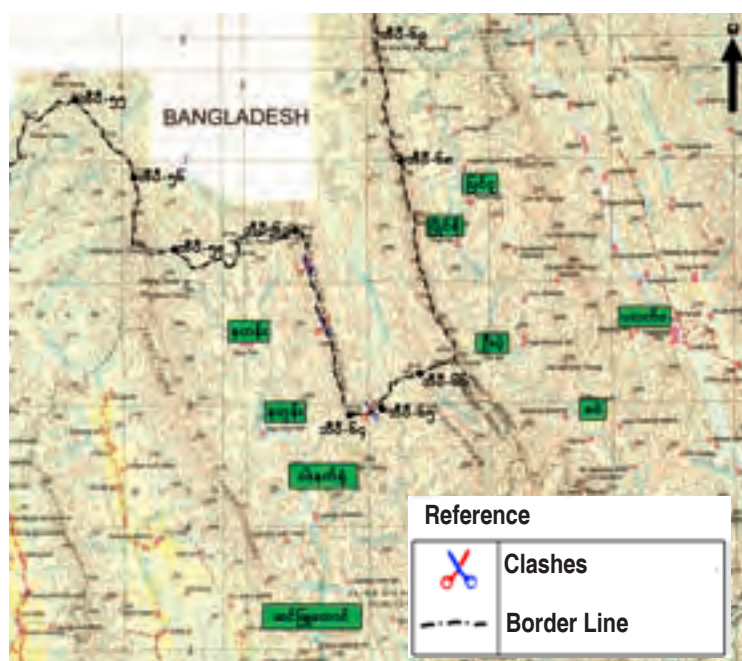
According to the announcement, the preliminary approval to prepare for commencement of banking from day one of business and will have to comply with requirements laid down by the Central Bank of Myanmar.

“Upon fulfillment of the above-stated requirements the Central Bank of Myanmar will grant the final license (to the winners) to operate in Myanmar,” the announcement said.

This is the second time Myanmar has allowed foreign banks to open 100-per cent-owned branches inside the country in more than five decades following permits to nine foreign banks in October last year to operate in the country.—GNLM



A member of staff of a local bank seen counting cash. PHOTO: TIN SOE (MYANMA ALIN)



Map shows areas where clashes happened.

AA insurgents ambush Tatmadaw columns

AA insurgents from the Arakan Army ambushed Tatmadaw troops providing security to workers building a border fence along the Myanmar-Bangladesh border recently.

The fighting occurred between border post Nos. 63 and 64 on 27 February and again on Tuesday, and between border post Nos. 64 and 65 on Thursday. An undisclosed number of Tatmadaw soldiers were killed.

After the fighting the insurgents retreated beyond the border.

As some soldiers sacrificed their lives in the fighting, the Tatmadaw is planning to annihilate the insurgents while negotiating

with the ‘neighboring country’ about the issue through diplomatic means, according to the Tatmadaw-run Myawady Daily. In March 2015, AA insurgents started to conduct operations in areas between the border post Nos. 68 and 71 in order to establish their strongholds in Paletwa and Kyauktaw.

After engaging with the Tatmadaw forces, they withdrew from the area.

Tatmadaw troops have clashed with the Arakan Army (AA), an ethnic insurgent group, 15 times from 28 December to 4 January in the Ranchaung-Ru Chaung area of Kyauktaw Township, Rakhine State.

The fighting occurred when Tatmadaw troops cleared the area, acting on intelligence that AA insurgents were preparing to invade.

Several Tatmadaw personnel, including one commanding officer, were killed in sniper attacks, while many others were injured.

The Tatmadaw captured three insurgents and seized one weapon, 1,250 rounds of bullets, 44 mines, 10 grenades, 15 tents, 42 bags of rice, 15 containers of edible oil and a cache of medicine.

Most AA members are thought to have been recruited by force or coercion.

See page 3 >>

Remains of 10 Japanese soldiers recovered in Myanmar as survey resumes

TOKYO — The remains of 10 Japanese soldiers who died during World War II in what is now Myanmar arrived Friday at Narita airport outside Tokyo after the Japanese government resumed searching for remains in ethnic minority areas of the Southeast Asian country for the first time in 39 years.

Some 137,000 Japanese are believed to have perished during the war in the country then known as Burma. In one of the most infamous battles, Japanese troops crossed steep mountains from Burma and attempted to take the northeastern Indian city of Imphal from the British Army stationed there.

The Battle of Imphal is regarded as one of the bloodiest battles of World War II. In the fight that lasted from March to July

1944, the Japanese suffered a disastrous defeat after failing to ensure sufficient food for its soldiers, with an estimated 38,000 soldiers dying from starvation and disease as well as the fighting.

In late February, Japan's welfare ministry was able to resume work to retrieve the tens of thousands of remains there, after the Myanmar government and ethnic minority militants moved to resolve their conflicts.

Japan's Health, Labor and Welfare Minister Yasuhisa Shiozaki vowed to continue the investigation "with a resolve to bring back all the remains."

According to the ministry, the remains of about 45,000 soldiers are left in Myanmar. The remains returned to Japan on Friday were found by local people in Chin state in northwestern Myanmar



Japan's Health, Labor and Welfare Minister Yasuhisa Shiozaki (C) offers a flower to the remains of 10 Japanese soldiers who died during World War II in what is now Myanmar, in a ceremony at the ministry in Tokyo on 4 March 2016. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

and elsewhere and confirmed to be those of Japanese soldiers by Myanmar government officials.

Katsuyuki Imoto, who lives in Myanmar and has provided search information to the Japanese ministry, said the remains of possibly more than 2,000 Japanese

may exist in 150 locations around the ethnic minority areas of Myanmar.

"I'm full of emotion," Imoto said of the search. "We must do all the investigation we can while the people who know the situation are alive."—Kyodo News

Legal action against loud car honks on 7 March

Legal action against loud car honks will start to take effect on 7 March, said Traffic Police Lt-Col Aung Ko Oo of No.2 Traffic Police Force.

Three police cars will be employed in regular commutes on busy streets to chase cars honking their horns loud, the officer said. The move is expected to mitigate the effects of car horn noise in established no-horn zones, where moderate honking is tolerated in consideration of traffic congestion.

"Legal action has to be brought against drivers who honk loud by taking the tolerance for granted," he said. Traffic police found weak in the execution of their duties are liable to demotion, transfer, and at most prison sentence, with the traffic police force saying that action was taken against 118 disobedient traffic police last year.—Ko Moe

Yangon Waterboom opens without a splash

THE much anticipated Yangon Waterboom park has had to close its door for a month, the day after they were officially opened, because of problems with its water filtration system, it is known.

"[We've had to close] because the water filtration system disconnected from the system which circulates water around the park. Foreign experts have been called to come and fix the problem. So, it could take between a week or two,

to a month [before the park can be reopened]." said U Ye Wint, an employee of Yangon Waterboom's events and entertainment department.

Yangon Waterboom published an official press release which stated that Indonesia and Chinese experts are currently making repairs to the water treatment and operation systems and that they are sorry the general public had to experience malfunctions with their

water filtration system at the time of the park's official opening.

A barrage of complaints appeared on social media website Facebook almost as soon as the park had opened, criticising a lack of water on the water flumes; dirty, stagnant water, along with poor customer service. Yangon Waterboom officially opened to the public on March 2 before closing its doors the following day. —Myitmakha News Agency



Yangon Waterboom Park in Thakayta. PHOTO: MYITMAKHA NEWS AGENCY

JPN govt grants US\$556,129 to five school buildings

JAPANESE government has granted US\$556,129 to construction of five school buildings.

Mr Ichiro Maruyama, Minister-Counsellor of the Embassy of Japan and chairmen of the committees from the regions concerned signed the grant contracts for the five projects yesterday.

Under the Japan's grant

assistance for grass-roots human security projects scheme, the grant cash would be shared for construction of Nan Chaung Village Basic Education Branch Middle School in Kalay, Sagaing Region, for construction of Htan Pin Gone Village Basic Education Branch Middle School in Minhla, Bago Region, for construction of Pyintar Village Basic Education Branch Middle School in Gangaw, Magway Region, for construction of Htomar Village Basic Education Branch High School in Kalay, Sagaing Region and for construction of Chaungthone Kwa Village Basic Education Primary School in Letpadan, Bago Region.—GNLM

struction of Pyintar Village Basic Education Branch Middle School in Gangaw, Magway Region, for construction of Htomar Village Basic Education Branch High School in Kalay, Sagaing Region and for construction of Chaungthone Kwa Village Basic Education Primary School in Letpadan, Bago Region.—GNLM

MWCDF opens summer English course



Students ready to learn English proficiency skills in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

MYANMAR Women and Child Development Federation (MWCDF) has opened English language proficiency course for pre-intermediate level in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

A total of 26 students are at-

tending the course at Basic Education High School-12 in Nay Pyi Taw. The summer course was opened with an address by Dr Daw Wai Wai Thair, Chairperson of MWCDF.—Myanmar News Agency

Myanmar delegation to attend 2nd ASEAN Women Entrepreneurs Forum in Vietnam

A 38-member Myanmar delegation left for Vietnam to attend the 2nd ASEAN Women Entrepreneurs Forum set for two days in Hanoi on Thursday.

They were seen off at Yangon International Airport by representatives of the Myanmar Women Entrepreneurs Asso-

ciation. The Myanmar delegation comprises of 10 members from the association including Chairperson Dr Hla Wadi, Vice-Chairs Daw Khin Lay and Dr Myat Thida Myint who won Outstanding ASEAN Women Entrepreneurs Award and 28 observers.—MWC



MPPE plans to map illegal fuel shops in Mandalay



Workers filling fuel into cars. PHOTO: KHAING HSET WAI

THE Myanma Petroleum Products Enterprise under the Ministry of Energy is planning to map the locations of illegal fuel shops in Mandalay Region and submit the chart to the headquarters and the regional government.

The enterprise has carried out the mapping of the illegal fuel shops opened along the routes it

takes when inspecting official stations.

There are some 10 illegal shops in Kyaukpadaan township alone, with an official saying that the shops have been told to apply for licences.

According to the inspection team, there are 425 licensed private fuel stations in the whole

region. Licences expire after six months and can be renewed on expiry. Fuel stations that fail to follow rules and regulations are liable to temporary closure. Currently, inspection teams have been instructed to keep tight control over illegal fuel shops as part of fire security. —Khaing Hset Wai

President U Thein Sein felicitates Ghana counterpart

U Thein Sein, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, has sent a message of felicitations to His Excellency Mr John Dramani Mahama, President of the Republic of Ghana, on the occasion of the Independence Day of the Republic of Ghana, which falls on 6 March 2016.—GNLM

FM felicitates Ghana counterpart

U Wunna Maung Lwin, Union Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, has sent a message of felicitations to Her Excellency Ms Hanna Tetteh, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration of the Republic of Ghana, on the occasion of the Independence Day of the Republic of Ghana, which falls on 6 March 2016.—GNLM

Four Myanmar to compete in 6th HD Bank Open Chess Tourney

FOUR Myanmar chess players will compete in the sixth HD Bank Cup Open Chess Tournament to be held in Viet Nam from 7 to 13 March, according to the Myanmar Chess Federation.

Win Zaw Tun, Khin Ko,

Sithu and Nay Oo Kyaw Tun will leave for the host country on 6 March. The tournament attracts grandmasters and international masters from China, Russia, Viet Nam, Singapore and India. The champion will be awarded US\$40,000.—Ko Moe

Preparations underway in Hpa-an to mitigate affects of El Nino to water supplies

HPA-AN, Department of rural development of the Kayin State capital of Hpa-an has begun preparations to mitigate against predicted water shortages that will be felt by villages in the region as a result of the incoming El Nino weather front.

“We could see high temperatures and draughts with the onset of El Nino’s arrival in the country in the month of March according to early estimates by meteorologists. We could see water shortages. In the previous year, water shortages were felt in some places but it wasn’t a devastating scenario. As the year could see much more severe water shortages than years previous, State and district level departments have begun closely

monitoring rural areas, conducting field studies,” said U Khin Maung Win, head of the township level Department for Rural Development. The local development committee, department of agricultural and irrigation, department of construction, together with the fire service, will work together in carrying out a project to mitigate shortages to drinking water from being experienced. This will include water supply trucks visiting those villages facing water shortages to distribute water biweekly, while requests will be made to district and State level departments of rural development for the subsidizing of required engine fuel. U Khin Maung Win further explained that the township of Hpa-an is made up

of 91 village tracts which comprises a total 474 villages, while the township level department for rural development will carry out field studies and the digging of artesian, shallow or deep wells especially in those villages which are not located close to a natural water supply.

Some Hpa-an township villages and urban wards to the western side of the Than Lwin river experienced drinking water shortages during the hot season of 2014 which resulted in many field-working cattle fatalities, while it is known that parliamentarians and political parties, along with locally based journalists rallied round to donate drinking water to those areas that were affected by the drought. —Myitmakha News Agency

MCDC gets chlorinator, water analysis equipment



Officials of MCDC receives chlorinator and water analysis kits. PHOTO: MIN HTET AUNG

THE Water and Sewer Bureau of Japan donated a chlorinator and water analysis kits to the Mandalay City Development Committee in Mandalay Region on Friday.

The donation ceremony took place at No.4 Pumping Plant in Mandalay. Water and Sewer Bureau’s International Project Man-

ager Mr Ishii Hide said that the purpose of the donation was to enable local residents to have easy access to potable water. The chlorination and water analysis equipment are worth some K300 million (US\$245,499).—Min Htet Aung (Mandalay Subpublishing House)

AA insurgents ...

>> from page 1

The Tatmadaw has announced that it will continue to launch offensive attacks against AA forces until the area is cleared of all insurgents. The AA was formed by 20 original members at the former headquarters of the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) in April 2009, when the KIA formed the Federal Union Army (FUA) and sent member ethnic armed groups to conduct operations in their places of origin. In April 2015, further clashes erupted between the AA and the Tatmadaw when the former attempted to seize Tatmadaw-controlled territory. —GNLM



Rosy breastfeeds her cubs at Nay Pyi Taw Zoological Garden. PHOTO: SUPPLIED

White tiger gives birth to three cubs at Nay Pyi Taw zoo

AN African tiger gave birth to three healthy cubs at Nay Pyi Taw Zoological Garden in late February.

The first two cubs were born to their mother Rosy on 23 February and the third cub on 24 February.

All arrived without complication. Rosy was mated with the white male tiger known as Won Won from China at the zoo on 15 June, 2015.—The Mirror

Workshop on Myanmar Media Development, Introduction to Basic Journalism Course held in Pyay



U Khin Maung Lay (Phoe Thaukkyar-Khit Moe) delivering a speech at the opening ceremony. PHOTO: SHWE WIN (PYAY)

JOINTLY organised by Myanmar Journalists' Association (MJA) (central) and Bago Region Journalists' Association, Workshop on Myanmar Media development and Introduction

to Basic Journalism Course took place at the assembly Hall of Yanaungmingalarkin Pagoda in Pyay, Bago Region on Wednesday with the opening speech by U Khin Maung Lay (Phoe Thauk-

kyar-Khit Moe), the Chairman of the Myanmar Press Council.

In his opening speech, he elaborated the history of Myanmar News and Periodicals, and Pathien Hla Kyi, a member of (MJA) (central), explained the code of conduct for Journalists to the new generation journalists. And then officials responded to the queries raised by local reporters. At the opening, U Aung Myint, the vice chairman of Bago Journalists' Association, acted as the master of ceremony, and 50 new generation journalists from Tharyawady and Pyay Districts attended.

At the workshop, Loutlatt Soe, Daw Eai Eai Tin, Daw Khin Than Nwe (Ma Ma-Lashio), members of (MJA) (central), widely shared their knowledge and experience in developing the Myanmar Media World. —Shwe Win (Pyay)

Water supplied for villagers in Sagaing Region

AS a result of El Niño, people in Htut Khaung village in Sagaing Township, Sagaing Region have been faced with the scarcity of drinking water.

The Sagaing Township Rural Development Department helped provide water to residents of Htut Khaung village on Friday with 10 water tankers each with a capacity of 500 gallons of water.

There is an only one tube

well in the village which the population of 850 relies on for drinking and bathing.

Not to face with the water shortage, the Township Rural Development Department has made arrangements to supply and distribute the drinking water to the residents of the village and fill the water into water storage tanks.—Tin Maung (Mann Sub-printing)



Villagers collecting the drinking water supplied by the Township Rural Development Department. PHOTO: TIN MAUNG (MANN SUB-PRINTING)

Crime NEWS

Yabba and marijuana seized

AN anti-drug squad seized 1,800 yabba pills from a vehicle being driven by one Kya Oh with one Ar Htaw on board on Mai Khat-Kengtung road, Kengtung township, on Wednesday.

On the same day, members of the police discovered 180 yabba pills on Kyaw Lwin while he was walking on Yathawaddy road, South Okkalapa township. The police also confiscated 1,560 yabba pills and 24 grams of marijuana from his house at No.1026, 15 street, ward 13, South Okkalapa township.

Likewise, the police seized 230 yabba pills at the house of one Sithu on Hlaing



Kya Oh and Kyaw Lwin. PHOTO: KO YE

road, Mawlamyine. The police suspects under the Anti-Narcotic Law.—Ko Ye

Thanlyin sees two fires in a day

A FIRE destroyed a shop owned by one U Du Yar, 40, in Zay Cho road, Myoma Taung ward, Thanlyin town on Friday. The fire was put out by firemen with ten fire engines and with the help of local residents. The police are still investigating the cause of the fire.

Another fire broke out in Bogyoke village, Thanlyin township on the same day. The fire was put out by firemen with two fire engines.—Than Win (Thanlyin)



Firefighters putting out the fire. PHOTO: THAN WIN (THANLYIN)

Illegal logs seized in Maliwarn creek



Seized illegal logs seen on the Maliwarn creek. PHOTO: KYAW SOE (IPRD)

AUTHORITIES have seized in Maliwarn creek a shipment of illegal logs weighing 4.3 tonnes, according to the police.

Acting on a tip-off, a combined team searched a vehicle and discovered 4.3 tons of logs

worth Ks951,000 together with one Myo Naing alias Thargyi and Thae Maung. Police are still investigating the owner of the logs and the vehicle. The two suspects are being charged under the Forestry Law.—Kyaw Soe (IPRD)

Man sets fire to roof, burns down own home

A HOUSE fire broke out in Kyaunggon township, Patheingyi District, Ayeyawady region, on Friday when one Saw Naung attempted to burn the roof following a domestic dispute.

The flames quickly got out

of control and engulfed his family home. The fire was put out by firemen with the assistance of neighbours. Action is being taken against Saw Naung who will be charged under the law. He is currently on the run.—Win Kyaing (IPRD)

LOCAL Business

Wild extraction blamed for declining jade trade

A GEM merchant has blamed a decline in the country's jade market on the wild extraction.

Demand is slow in the world market as a direct consequence of excessive extraction, U Than Win of Pwint Kaung Gems Trading said, adding that jade mining has become worse during the transitional period.

Of the merchants buying jade in the Maha Aungmye jewelry market, the Chinese are in the majority.

It is customary in China to present top-quality jade as gifts on special occasions.

"It has nothing to do with the Chinese New Year, but the current trend is a 50% downward swing in the jade market.

—Aung Thant Khaing



Low-cost souvenirs made of jades sell well in the gift shops. PHOTO: AUNG THANT KHAING

China stands as third largest investor in Myanmar's real estate

CHINA stands the third largest investor in Myanmar in real estate since 1988, U Kyaw Win Tun, director of Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA), told Xinhua Saturday.

Myanmar's real estate sector is one of the most interested sectors for foreign investors. Among them, China is the third largest investor. China's investment amounted to US \$80 million in one project.

The largest one is Singapore whose investment amount is 1.517 billion dollars in 16 projects. These investment amounts are for 29 years period starting from 1988-1989 fiscal year to 2015-2016 fiscal year.

Meanwhile, China is standing as the first in Myanmar's foreign investment with 15.274 billion dollars from 1988 to December of the fiscal year 2015-2016.—Xinhua

Foreigners eligible to apply for motorcycle licences in Dawei

Foreigners residing and working within Myanmar's southern Tanintharyi Region for a long period of time are eligible to apply for a regional motorcycle license, according to the Road Transport Administration Department.

It is known that those foreign travellers staying within the region for a period of over fifteen days can apply for a motorcycle license, but those staying for a only a few days are not eligible.

"We have permitted the granting of vehicle licenses [to foreigners]. It's principally for those who have come to work [in the Tanintharyi Region]. We will not permit licenses for brief three or four day visits. Long term residents and those working [in the region] are eligible to apply," said U Kyaw Sein, Road Transportation Administrator for Tanintharyi Region.

The aforementioned department is currently receiving vehicle license applications, with local vehicle licenses being issued to foreigners with international driving licenses. It is known that the relevant business, company or organization, to which the appli-

cant is affiliated, are responsible for the actions of the applicant.

"There are many foreigners that come here for short trips. Since there are many expenses involved in returning to Thailand to renew their [Myanmar] visa once it's expired, it would be difficult for them to be issued with a motorcycle license. The foreigners say that it would be good if they could extend their visa from here [within the country]," said Daw Aye Aye Mya, clerk of the Dawei branch of the Department for Hotels and Tourism.

U Kyaw Sein also stated that the government is working slowly, but steadily, to ease up previous restrictions on travel for foreigners within the region, for should they act in a restrictive manner on such issues as offering vehicle licenses to foreigners, it could see the start of a decline to the burgeoning numbers of tourists to the region in recent years.

Foreigners that have come to work in the Tanintharyi Region capital of Dawei are issued with a maximum three month duration business visa.—Myitmakha News Agency

Submission to form a gems and jewelry research body will be made during new government

THE Myanmar Gems and Jewellery Entrepreneurs Association (MGJEA) has made it known that they will make a submission to the new government for the establishment of a gems and jewelry research body, in a bid to conduct research on the domestic jade market and to increase the capacity of exporting jade around the world.

"Civil society organisations, and those business individuals officially involved in the jade market, will be a part [of the body]. We will make a submission during the term of the new government for the forming of a jade market research entity," said U Soe Naing, central executive of the MGJEA.

It is known from those involved in the jade market that there is currently no monitoring body of the jade market which gives neither criticisms nor suggestions. As a result, only uncut jade is exported to foreign countries as, despite jade being mined, there is no market within which to trade it.

"Many jade sellers, myself included, refrain from making

demands as disapproval from those in authority could be bad for business," said jade trader U Zaw Zaw.

A plan is in place to present for the formation of an organization made up of the public and civil society groups in a bid to improve the domestic jade market and enable jade from Myanmar

to be traded on international markets.

Jade traders have made it known that the majority of jade enterprises within the Myanmar jade market are owned by the Chinese, accounting for 70%, with Myanmar owned enterprises making up just 30% of the market.—Myitmakha News Agency



Gem merchants are seen observing the precious stones. PHOTO: MYITMAKHA NEWS AGENCY

PM Modi faces voters in five states as reforms slow

NEW DELHI — Ruling Bharatiya Janata Party will face elections in five states beginning next month, according to a schedule released on Friday, at a time when its approval ratings are slipping and it is under pressure to deliver on economic growth.

State elections are important for Prime Minister Narendra Modi to be able to gain control of the Rajya Sabha, where members are indirectly elected by state legislatures.

A lack of a majority in that house has stalled Modi's economic reforms agenda and delayed passage of a key tax bill.

About 170 million people will be eligible to vote in the states of Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Puducherry, Assam and the agrarian state of West Bengal.

All these states are ruled by regional parties or Modi's top rival, the Congress party.

"The BJP's performance will be seen as a referendum on the central government... A poor showing, especially in Assam, could damage the image of the ruling party," said Sandeep Shastri, professor of political science at Bengaluru's Jain University.

The BJP's best prospects are in Assam where it is fighting on an anti-immigration plank



India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi speaks with the media inside the parliament premises upon his arrival on the first day of the budget session in New Delhi, India, on 23 February. PHOTO: REUTERS

while it trails in the other four states.

A nationwide opinion poll published by the *India Today* magazine last month showed Modi's popularity was still holding up but his nationalist alliance would win with a sharply reduced majority if general elections were held now.

The Congress party would

double its seat share, the poll showed. No surveys have yet been done for the five states electing new assemblies next month.

Modi is trying to tackle a deepening crisis in rural India, where two successive droughts have pushed farmers deeper into debt and forced dozens to commit suicide. Last year, he lost the

big heartland state of Bihar.

To allow for security forces to be deployed in strength to safeguard the election, voting in the five states will take place in phases between 4 April and 16 May, chief election commissioner Syed Nasim Ahmad Zaidi told reporters.

The results will be announced on 19 May. —Reuters

Former Indonesian president is hospitalised

JAKARTA — Former Indonesian president, Bachrudin Jusuf Habibie, 79, has been hospitalized with a bacterial infection and is being observed by the president's medical team, the Habibie Centre announced on Friday.

The NGO said Habibie had been prescribed a course of antibiotics, and had been advised to rest and limit visitors to enable a quick recovery.

Habibie was Indonesia's third president, and is, to date, its shortest serving leader, having been in office for just one year and five months from May 1998. He had previously served as vice president for a little over two months.

Habibie replaced President Suharto, who fell from power following student protests and mass riots across the country in 1998.

He caused controversy with the order for "self determination" in East Timor that led that province to gain independence from Indonesia in 1999. —Kyodo News

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South Korea slams DPRK's denunciation of UN Security Council resolution

SEOUL — South Korea slammed yesterday the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) for its denunciation of new tougher UN Security Council resolution, saying it will be an outright challenge to the international community.

Seoul's foreign ministry spokesman Cho June-hyuk said in a statement that Pyongyang's rejection of the UN Security Council resolution is tantamount to an outright challenge to the international society's unified will.

It also indicates Pyongyang's

choice to run counter to a path to peace on the Korean Peninsula and the world by defying the international society's resolution adopted unanimously by UN Security Council member states, the spokesman said.

Cho said his country will make the DPRK awakened from its delusion by responding to its reckless acts with strong and effective measures, urging Pyongyang to return to a path for peace by abandoning its nuclear weapons programme. His comments came a day after the DPRK an-

nounced two separate statements in the name of government and foreign ministry and said the country will firmly reject the new UN resolution.

Describing the fresh sanctions as the "most heinous provocation" toward an independent state, the DPRK said it will mobilise all possible measures, including "strong and merciless physical responses" against the resolution.

It was the first official response by the DPRK to the new harsher UN Security Council res-

olution, which South Korea said was the toughest and most effective non-military measures in seven decades of UN history.

The resolution was adopted to punish the DPRK for its latest nuclear test and long-range rocket launch.

Pyongyang tested what it claimed was its first hydrogen bomb on 6 January and followed up with the launch of a long-range rocket, which outsiders see as a prohibited test of missile technology, on 7 February. —Xinhua

50 injured as boat explodes in Bangkok canal



A passenger boat whose engine exploded while navigating a canal earlier on 5 March, 2016. The incident, believed not to be terrorist-related, injured at least 50 people, several seriously. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

BANGKOK — At least 50 people were injured, several seriously, when the engine of a passenger boat they were riding exploded while navigating a canal in Bangkok yesterday, Thai police said.

The police believe the incident was probably an accident and unlikely related to terrorist activities.

They suspect the water taxi exploded near the Wat Thepleela Pier after leaked fuel caught fire.

Among the injured was a male Japanese student who sustained burns on his back but his condition is not life-threatening, officials said. —Kyodo News

Air pollution hits 180 Chinese cities

BEIJING — Air pollution was reported in 180 of 338 Chinese cities at prefecture level or above on Friday, with 42 of them, including Beijing and Tianjin, categorized as "heavily polluted," the Ministry of Environmental Protection (MEP) announced yesterday.

The most affected cities are mainly located in the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region and northwest China.

Beijing was among the hardest hit, with an average PM2.5 density of 315micrograms per cubic metre. —Xinhua

Indian nationals urged to return home from danger zones abroad

NEW DELHI — India has urged all its nationals in danger zones to return to the country in the wake of the death of an Indian nun in a terror attack in war-ravaged Yemen on Friday.

“I appeal to all Indians in such danger zones to please come back to India,” External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj has tweeted.

The minister’s appeal came after reports emerged that one Indian nun was among 16 killed in the terror attack in an old care home run by Mother Teresa’s Missionaries of Charity in Yemen. Some two to four terrorists reportedly entered the old age home in the city of Aden, asking the gateman to open the gates so that they could visit their mothers. On entering, they first shot dead the gatekeeper, then moved from room to room, handcuffing the victims before shooting them in the head.—*Xinhua*

Thailand bans begging in public places, provides licenses for buskers

BANGKOK — Thai National Legislative Assembly (NLA) has approved a law on Friday to outlaw beggars and regulate street performances by providing buskers with licenses.

The new law replacing the previous legislation on begging enacted 75 years ago, criminalises begging and punishes individuals who encourage begging.

Once caught in public places, Thai beggars will be taken to receive occupational training while foreign beggars will be deported.

Meanwhile, busking and other types of street performance will not be considered as begging, but the performers need to inform local authorities and comply with guidelines set by law enforcement officials.

NLA member Wallop Tangkhananurak said street performers had waited for a proper law for 75 years.

Thailand issued its begging control act in 1941, which did not make any distinction between begging and busking.

Beggars are common in many parts of Thailand, especially in metropolitan areas and popular tourist locales. NGOs and state agencies said many of the beggars, especially children, are victims of human trafficking.—*Xinhua*

China says defence spending pace to slow, to improve intelligence

BEIJING — China said yesterday it will raise military spending by 7.6 per cent this year, its lowest increase in six years, but vowed to protect its maritime rights amid disputes in the East and South China Seas and improve intelligence gathering.

The 954.35 billion yuan (\$146.67 billion) figure is only around a quarter of the US Defence Department budget for 2016 of \$573 billion, but comes at a time of rising concern over China’s intentions in territorial disputes.

The increase is the first single-digit rise since 2010, following a nearly unbroken two-decade run of double-digit jumps, and comes as China’s economy slows.

It was announced yesterday at the start of the annual meeting of parliament, but had been flagged by an official who gave a rough figure the previous day.

President Xi Jinping is seeking to drag the People’s Liberation Army, the world’s largest armed forces, into the modern age, cutting 300,000 jobs and revamping its Cold War-era command structure.

However, the reforms have run into opposition from soldiers and officers worried about job security and few details have been released as to what will happen to those laid off.

Premier Li Keqiang told the opening of China’s largely rubber-stamp parliament that the country will “strengthen in a coordinated way military preparedness on all fronts and for all scenarios”.



A soldier of the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) stands guard in front of the Great Hall of the People ahead of the opening session of the National People’s Congress (NPC) in Beijing, China, on 5 March 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

“We will work to make the military more revolutionary, modern and well-structured in every respect, and remain committed to safeguarding national security,” he said.

“We will make steady progress in reforming military leadership and command structures and launch reform of the military’s size and structure as well as its policies and institutions.”

The official Xinhua news agency attributed the slowdown in the pace of defence spending to “rising economic headwinds and last year’s massive drawdown of service people”.

China’s Defence Ministry, in a commentary on its website, described the slower pace as “appropriate”.

“It certainly doesn’t mean the Chinese people’s dreams of a strong country and military will be impacted upon,” it added.

Beijing is feeling public pressure to show it can protect its claims to the South China Sea after the United States began conducting “freedom of navigation” operations near islands where China has been carrying out controversial reclamation work and stationing advanced weapons.

A draft of the five-year plan, a blueprint for the country’s aspirations from this year through to 2020, said China would strengthen its capabilities in maritime law enforcement and “appropriately handle” infringements of its maritime rights, though it gave no details.

The Global Times, a widely

read tabloid published by the ruling Communist Party’s *People’s Daily*, said that for many Chinese the smaller increase “was a bit of a disappointment”, but called for understanding.

“There is no need to spend hugely to catch up with the US, which seeks to keep its global military presence. China’s regional military deterrence aimed at national defence has been taking shape.”

The five-year plan also said China would improve its national security “technology and equipment construction” and raise the country’s intelligence gathering abilities.

China, the world’s second-largest economy, is increasingly exposed to international crises like the Middle East but has little experience at dealing with them, unlike established powers like the United States and Russia.

Underscoring the sensitivity of China’s defence spending, about a dozen senior officers approached by Reuters on the sidelines of parliament declined to comment on the matter.

In a government-arranged interview the previous evening, Chen Zhou, a researcher at the Academy of Military Science, said a more modern army needed better training and this is where defence funds should be spent.

“Investment in troop training needs to increase, as only this way can we allow our military to walk down a path of military professionalism.”—*Reuters*

White House says too soon to evaluate latest sanctions on North Korea

WASHINGTON — The White House said on Friday it was too early to evaluate the impact of international sanctions imposed on North Korea this week but Washington had seen in the past that increasing isolation often prompts some countries to change their approach.

The United Nations imposed new sanctions on North Korea this week in response to its nuclear and missile tests. North Korean leader Kim Jong Un ordered his country to be prepared to use nuclear weapons at any time, state media reported.

Asked about the lack of a North Korean response to the sanctions, White House spokesman Josh Earnest told a briefing: “Our expectation is that that will not yield a change overnight, but over time we have seen that increasing isolation does prompt some countries to re-evaluate their strategy.”—*Reuters*



A new multiple launch rocket system is test fired in this undated photo released by North Korea’s Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) in Pyongyang on 4 March 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

OPINION

Challenges to Good Governance

Khin Maung Aye

NOWADAYS, good governance has been accepted as one of the important keys to transformation from predatory state to developmental state. This being so, the concern for good governance is drawing attraction of the policy makers, political leadership and people at large. The literature are indicating that every nation especially the developing ones are being faced with a few challenges – weak or predatory institutions, lack of participation and democratisation, lack of social capital and cor-

ruption etc.

Regarding weak institutions, we can either emphasise the creation of new institutions or sustain the existing ones which serve the interest of participation and development. What counts is to reduce the transactional costs. These costs can be lowered when the institutions are effective. To make the institutions effective, they need empowerment. As democracy means participation, power is to be decentralized. Other than weak institutions and absence of participation and decentralisation, lack of social capital is also a major challenge in the approach of good governance. Social capital is viewed as emerging from the collection of norms, beliefs, attitudes and practices that govern relationship between individuals, and groups in a society. It is worth recalling that it is the social capital that fosters trust in societies, and it is that societies that are marked by trust are industrialised and economically developed. Another important challenge is corruption, which accompanied with favouritism surrounds bureaucratic allocations of investment licenses, import licenses and the awarding of government contracts. Such a corrupt state is a predatory state in which the government machinery is used to serve personal interests. The problem posed is how to

create conditions under which a state moves on to become a developmental state in which resources are invested for the good of the society as a whole.

Whatever the case may be, as good governance can mean different things to different nations, it is, therefore, important that the concept of good governance is to be understood in the context of each country and region to find indigenous and pragmatic solutions to its unique problems of governance. Each country should frame each own good governance agenda according to each socio-cultural and economic context.

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.

NHRI, Paris Principles and ICC

Dr. Khine Khine Win

AFTER receiving same questions from many people, I have decided to write this article. Questions are what is National Human Rights Commission? What are their mandates? Why governments establish the commissions and why they support finance to operate? What is Paris Principles and ICC accreditation?

The acronym NHRIs encompasses National Human Rights Institutions. They are State bodies with a constitutional and/or legislative mandate to promote and protect human rights in countries around the world. Protection of human rights includes receiving, investigating and resolving the complaints, mediating conflicts and monitoring activities. Promotion of human rights includes education, outreach, media, publications, training and capacity building activities as well as advising and assisting government. Since the 1990s, the number of National Human Rights Institutions, NHRIs has been growing in the world.

NHRIs are funded by the State but are independent of it: they are not non-governmental organizations but they act as "bridge" between civil societies and Governments. They link the responsibilities of the State to the rights of citizens and they connect national laws to regional and international human rights system.

There is no nomenclature for NHRIs. They are known by different names in different countries, for instance they may be called Human Rights Commission, Committee or Council, Ombudsman, Public Defender etc, depending on the region, legal tradition and common usage. But they are mostly called human rights commission. Here it should be noted that some NGOs have the

word "commission" in their name, but an NGO is not an NHRI.

The idea of establishing National Human Rights Institutions, NHRIs was first conceived in the aftermath of World War II. In 1946, the Economic and Social Council considered the issue of national institutions, two years before the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, became the common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations. Member states were invited to consider establishing information groups or local human rights committees.

In 1991, the first international workshop on National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights took place in Paris. A key outcome was the Paris Principles and those principles were originally conceived of as minimum standards, for the establishment of national commission. 20 December 1993, the Paris Principles was officially adopted by UN General Assembly with the resolution 48/134.

If you are interested in NHRIs, you should study the Paris Principles. The internationally agreed Paris Principles define the role, composition, status and functions of national human rights institutions. It set out six criteria that NHRIs should meet to be successful: A broad mandate, Autonomy from government (most important, most difficult and controversial), Independence (both operational and financial), Pluralism (membership), Adequate resources and Adequate powers of investigation. Despite the principle in favor of a broad mandate, some restrictions are common and non problematic. For instance, most NHRIs are prohibited from dealing with matters that are before the courts or that have already been decided by the courts.

For example, article 37 of the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission law (MNHRC law)

state that "The Commission shall not inquire into the complaint which violates any of the following : the cases under trial before any court, cases under appeal or revision on the decision of any court, cases that have been finally determined by any court.

Also the Paris Principles list a number of responsibilities for national institutions, which fall under five headings. First, the institution shall monitor any situation of violation of human rights which it decides to take up. Second, the institution shall be able to advise the Government, the Parliament and any other competent body on specific violations, on issues related to legislation and general compliance and implementation with international human rights instruments. Third, the institution shall relate to regional and international organizations. Fourth, the institution shall have a mandate to educate and inform in the field of human rights. Fifth, some institutions are given a quasi-judicial competence.

Nowadays, those principles are broadly accepted as the test of an institution's legitimacy and credibility. But there is no ideal or single accepted structure of NHRIs beyond compliance with the Paris Principles. By 23rd May 2014, there are 106 NHRIs operating around the world. Although the Paris Principles set out the minimum standards for the roles and responsibilities of NHRIs, they do not dictate NHRI models or structures. According to the 1993 Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, States have the right to choose the framework that best suits them, subject to international human rights standards.

If you talk about NHRIs and Paris Principles, you must know ICC too. ICC, International Coordinating Committee for National Human Rights Institutions, is the International Association of National Human Rights Institutions,

NHRIs, from all parts of the globe. It was established in 1993 with the aim of coordinating the activities of the NHRI network. ICC promotes and strengthens NHRIs to be in accordance with the Paris Principles, and provides leadership in the promotion and protection of human rights. The ICC facilitates and supports NHRIs engagement with the UN Human Rights Council and Treaty Bodies,• encourages cooperation and information sharing among NHRIs, including through an annual meeting and biennial conference,• undertakes accreditation of NHRIs in accordance with the Paris Principles, promotes the role of NHRIs within the United Nations and with States and other international agencies, offers capacity building in collaboration with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), assists NHRIs under threat and if requested. ICC can assist government to establish NHRIs.

ICC reviews and analyzes accreditation applications and makes recommendation to ICC Bureau members in compliance with Paris Principles. ICC's Sub-Committee (SCA) and Bureau of ICC take accreditation decisions. Accreditation is the official recognition that NHRIs meet or continue to comply fully with the Paris Principles. There are currently three levels of accreditation: "A" Voting member : complies fully with the Paris Principles, "B" Observer member: does not fully comply with the Paris Principles or has not yet submitted sufficient documentation to make that determination, "C" Non-member: does not comply with the Paris Principles. It is, of course, critical that the NHRI should comply with the Paris Principle.

Clearly, States are the prime obligation to respect, protect and fulfill the rights of citizens. In or-

der to promote and protect the human rights, NHRs receive their authority from the State and enable States to meet their international responsibilities to take all appropriate action to ensure that international obligations are implemented at the national level. As independent entities but establishment by the government, NHRIs occupy unique terrain, one that can link to civil society to the government. Today, NHR have a growing role to play in interacting with international human rights mechanism, such as treaty bodies, UPR and special procedures. NHRIs should coordinate their work with NHRIs from other countries, and with regional bodies in order to build international networks of NHRIs and build capacity.

To conclude, for a NHRI to play an effective role, it must function in accordance with the UN Paris Principles.

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Survey finds Myanmar's fisheries resources declined compared to past decades



Fishing boats seen at the Pazuntaung jetty. PHOTO: HTIN PAW WIN (KAMAYUT)

MYANMAR'S fisheries resources in its territorial waters have declined compared with previous decades, according to the latest survey performed by the Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development with the assistance of Norwegian government.

With the use of a marine research vessel, the ministry and relevant organisations conducted a 55-day survey along the country's water territory from 25 April to 18 June last year, observing the density of fisheries resources and its lifestyle, breeding season and birthplaces, situation of coral reefs and nutrient levels in the water.

The major objective of the programme is to collect salt water ecology-related data to calculate and estimate the number of fish caught per year that plays an important part in conserving fisheries resources.

This is the fourth time the ministry has performed the survey since 1979. The latest survey shows that groups of fish above water has declined from 10 million tons to 110,000 tons, while the groups of fish underwater has decreased from 750,000 tons to 280,000 tons.

According to the research, fishing areas located in north-east of Ayeyawady Region has been recognised as nursery

grounds and nursery regions of fish as there are numerous larva of different fish species.

During the field trip, the research team founded many coral reefs which were badly damaged in some fishing areas of Taninthayi Region.

"Developing of illegal fish farming with the use of inappropriate methods, climate change and decreasing of mangroves have led to the decline of fisheries resources," said Deputy Minister U Khin Maung Aye who urged people to promote participation in sustainable management of fisheries resources and biodiversity conservation activities.—*Htin Paw Win (Kamayut)*

Solar Home System to light up Myanmar rural areas

THE Rural Development Department and Brighterlite Norway AS signed a memorandum of understanding on the implementation of a solar home system project in rural areas yesterday.

According to the MoU, the project includes enabling rural people to have access to solar home system on fair and reasonable prices within five years as of the signing date, ensuring a 70 percent SHS coverage across the country following the delivery of SHS numbering 2 million



Mr. Martin Hamann and Director-General U Khant Zaw exchange notes after signing MoU. PHOTO: MNA

to 3 million until 2019, the installment of three types of SHS at rural homes and the establishment of information and service centres. During the signing cere-

mony, Director-General U Khant Zaw of the department and Mr. Martin Hamann of Brighterlite Norway AS inked the MoU.—*Myanmar News Agency*

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor

The report, Population survey of the Sarus crane to be conducted in Myanmar (GNLM, Feb 27) is greatly appreciated. It is indeed important to get a clear idea about the population dynamics of endangered and vulnerable species of wildlife by collecting reliable census data by comprehensive ground survey using both professional biologists as well as enthusiastic volunteers caring for ecological conservation. In addition to the Sarus crane, few other species in Myanmar also need comprehensive survey data for comprehensive efforts of successful conservation and include the following: Golden deer, Salt water crocodile, Indochinese leopard, Indochinese tiger, Red Panda, Green peafowl to name only a handful.

Thanking you

Sincerely yours

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POEM:

Fire Emergency Preparedness

With El Nino in full spate and advent of the Summer some regions including Yangon, will experience very hot weather increasing the risk of fire due to negligence or ignorance of the people, the very victims of fires and the consequence.

As far as the City of Yangon is concerned, regarding fire hazards and fire outbreaks, are offered some suggestions from 'service to public' point of view for increasing awareness of the people to prevent fires too.

Many of the tenants and shop owners in buildings of the city have been resorting to unsafe practices in using electricity, overloading electrical circuits in using electrical items, with protection of circuits and the electric items often absent which points to electricity as one of fires' main causes as has been established by the Fire Services.

Tenants and shop owners should have competent persons inspect their electric wiring circuits and connections to check the state of the wiring and particularly in relation to the electric items used, the loadbearing capacity of their electricity meters and their electrical circuits and particularly 'temporary connections'- the 'makeshifts', and if necessary, repair the electrical wiring all round installing appropriate circuit protection devices that are sound.

Buildings in the City have stairways and fire escapes the landings of which are often used as storage spaces by tenants to store their belongings including children's bicycles and cardboard boxes of their many used and useless articles thus obstructing free passage in emergency evacuations endangering their own lives and lives of other persons.

The occupants of buildings could help tackle such situations by keeping the stairways and fire escapes, free of obstructions. Fire escapes, the older ones which are often made of bars of iron should be maintained to bear the load of persons in evacuations.

In many buildings at the opening of the stairways on ground floors almost obstructing the entrance to the staircase are small stores for which the tenants themselves have difficulty, their flats to access and in the event of a fire or earthquake nothing could be worse. Perhaps the authorities by which the stores were allowed (or not allowed) could ensure that the obstructing stairway stores are relocated.

Finally fire extinguishers should be installed in accessible location to help douse accidental fires before they cause destruction. In dousing accidental fire, seeking help of the community may help in containing it while the fire fighters are on the way.

Lokethar

IMF's Lagarde eyes subsidies, simple things to tackle climate change

CAMBRIDGE (Mass) — Turning the tide on global warming should be tackled by big and small steps that range from cutting subsidies to riding bicycles, International Monetary Fund managing director Christine Lagarde said on Friday.

"Removing fossil fuel subsidies would go a long way to cutting consumption," Lagarde said in answer to a question at Massachusetts Institute of Technology about how climate change can be addressed.

She had delivered a speech on how to promote growth in

the face of an aging population and said that "game changers" including competition among insurers and raising the retirement age could go a long way to helping.

Speaking months after the end of the hottest year on record, Lagarde said "If subsidies were removed and carbon prices set properly now and taxed that would go a long way in addressing the climate change issues the world is facing."

She also encouraged individuals to do their part by simple things such as opting to ride a bicycle instead of driving

cars, drawing applause from the audience of students, faculty and local residents.

In December, nations agreed to a landmark global climate accord for transforming the world's fossil fuel-driven economy within decades.

Lagarde said that the IMF, which has not historically focused on the issue of climate change, is now becoming more engaged by producing research papers on the right price of energy and how to remove subsidies. She called the steps the "beginnings of our contributions."—Reuters

Germany, Italy call for EU-wide migrant registration system



A migrant holding a child stands in a makeshift camp at the Greek-Macedonian border, near the Greek village of Idomeni, on 4 March. PHOTO: REUTERS

BERLIN — Germany and Italy's interior ministers have written to the European Commission calling for an EU-wide system to register migrants and a harmonisation of selection procedures and rights for asylum seekers, a German newspaper reported.

In the letter seen by Sueddeutsche Zeitung, German Interior Minister Thomas de Maiziere and Italy's Angelino Alfano called for an "ambitious reform" of the Dublin rules — which oblige migrants to request asylum in the first EU country they enter — by means of a "newly adjusted Common European Asylum System".

The EU has been seeking to establish a Common European Asylum System since 1999 but differences between member countries have persisted despite attempts to unify asylum laws in the bloc.

Germany and Italy's interior ministers said in their letter to European Commission First Vice President Frans Timmermans and EU Migration Commissioner Dimitris Avramopoulos that an EU-wide registration mechanism that includes security checks should be set up with the help of EU border agency Frontex.

They also called for a harmonisation of the differing conditions throughout the bloc for accepting migrants, selection procedures and rights for asylum seekers. They said the EU's Asylum Support Office (EASO) should get extra staff and funds so it could become a "real European asylum agency".

They suggested identifying people in need of protection within their countries of origin or transit countries before bringing them to Europe — the approach currently being pur-

sued in the EU's cooperation with Turkey — and said the aim was to create an "institutionalised relocation system in the EU".

The EU's external borders need to be secured to sustainably reduce the influx and refugees should be spread around the bloc by means of set annual quotas, they said.

In the midst of the worst migration crisis in Europe since World War II, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and the Czech Republic have been among the staunchest opponents of EU plans to transfer asylum seekers arriving in southern Europe to other EU states.

The ministers called for an EU list of safe countries of origin and said a "robust and coordinated European repatriation mechanism" was needed to send illegal economic migrants back to their countries of origin.—Reuters

NEWS IN BRIEF

Russia's Lavrov, Kerry call for prompt start to Syria talks

MOSCOW — Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and US Secretary of State John Kerry, in a late phone conversation on Friday called for a prompt start to the next round of Syria peace talks, Russia's Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

The talks, under the aegis of the United Nations were originally due to begin on 7 March in Geneva, but have been postponed until 9 March, due to "logistical and technical reasons and also for the ceasefire to better settle down," the UN said.

"The two sides called to start the negotiations as soon as possible ... between the Syrian government and the whole spectrum of the opposition, during which the Syrians themselves should determine the future of their country," the ministry said in a statement.—Reuters

Fighting kills 45 militants, wounds 35 in South Afghanistan

LASHKARGAH (Afghanistan) — Up to 45 militants have been killed and 35 others injured as a clash erupted in Taliban former stronghold the southern Helmand Province yesterday, an army spokesman in the province Mohammad Rasoul Zazai said.

"A group of Taliban militants were attempting to storm security checkpoints in Sangin district early yesterday but the security forces acting upon intelligence report laid ambush and killed 45 armed insurgents on the spot and injured 35 others," Zazai told Xinhua.

The Taliban after suffering casualties fled the area, the official added.—Xinhua

India's national carrier to operate all-women flight to US

NEW DELHI — To mark the International Women's Day, India's national carrier Air India will operate an all-women crew flight from Delhi to San Francisco Sunday.

The state-run Air India's chief Ashwani Lohani has said that the flight to San Francisco on 6 March will be a symbol of "women empowerment."

"It will be a historic flight and the longest to be operated by all-women crew," Lohani told the media in the national capital.

The flight will have 14 crew members and four pilots, all of whom would be women. The duration of the flight would be more than 15 hours.—Xinhua

One killed, four still missing in Indonesia's ferry capsizal

JAKARTA — One person was dead and four others went missing in Indonesia's ferry capsizal Friday as the search and rescue operation continued yesterday.

"We discovered one body yesterday and are searching for 4 missing persons," Head of Bali Search and Rescue Office Didi Hanzar told Xinhua by phone.

The head said that the ferry was over loaded and it should load 37 passengers and 14 crews.

"The fact is we have evacuated safely 76 people and found one dead body, and according to the information here 4 people, one of them a child, are still missing," Hanzar said.—Xinhua

Stefanovic: Elections to decide Serbia's future

BELGRADE — The Serbian Progressive Party (SNS) Friday started collecting Serbian citizens' signatures for the list 'Aleksandar Vucic — Serbia is Winning' that it will run in the upcoming elections, and party vice-president Nebojsa Stefanovic said in Belgrade that those were important elections that would decide Serbia's future.

"We do not want to go back into the past. We want strong reforms and a better life for the citizens of Serbia. We will fight to create a standard of living that equals that of the developed countries of Europe," Stefanovic said.

He said that the name of the list was a way for the SNS to say that there were no obstacles to Serbia's progress when everyone was united.

Stefanovic thanked Serbian citizens for gathering in large numbers across Serbia to show support for the list and expressed confidence that they would win the elections.—Tanjung

Syria opposition says government mobilises, casts doubt on talks

BEIRUT/PARIS/LONDON — The Syrian opposition said on Friday the government was mobilising forces on many fronts despite an agreement to cease hostilities, and cast doubt on whether peace talks planned for next week would take place.

As rockets fired by government forces were reported to hit near the rebel-held town of Jisr al-Shughour in Idlib Province, an influential rebel group said there could be no ceasefire while attacks continue.

An unprecedented US-Russian agreement that came into effect yesterday has slowed the pace of the 5-year-old war, but rebels fighting President Bashar al-Assad say the government has kept up attacks on strategically important frontlines.

The opposition has yet to say whether it will attend peace talks planned for 9 March. Opposition coordinator Riad Hijab said the conditions for talks were “not favorable” but it was too early to say whether they would happen or not.

Assad, his war effort buoyed

by five months of Russian air strikes, has said the army is respecting the agreement. The truce does not cover the al Qaeda-linked Nusra Front or Islamic State, two groups which Moscow and Damascus have said they will continue to fight.

The Nusra Front is widely deployed across western Syria in close proximity to groups that agreed to cease fire, many of which say they believe the government and its Russian allies can use the presence of the militants as an excuse to fight on. Syrian state media have said very little about operations in western Syria since Saturday.

The Syrian opposition appears at odds with its Western backers over the success of the truce so far.

European leaders told Russian President Vladimir Putin they welcomed the fact the fragile truce appeared to be holding, and it should be used to try to secure peace without Assad.

But Hijab said government forces had attacked more than 50 opposition-held areas where



Protesters carry Free Syrian Army flags and chant slogans during an anti-government protest in the town of Marat Numan in Idlib Province, Syria, on 4 March. PHOTO: REUTERS

groups that approved the truce were based.

Mohamad Alloush, a senior official in one of the largest rebel groups, Jaish al-Islam, told Reuters the government was mobilising forces to “occupy very important strategic areas”. His group, in a separate statement, said the war had not stopped as far as it was concerned, and that a ceasefire was not possible while “militias and states kill our people”.

The head of another rebel group, who asked not to be identified for security reasons, said 40 army vehicles loaded with weaponry were seen heading northwards on Thursday night.

Government operations were “focused on Homs, on the coast mostly”, while Aleppo — the target of a major government offensive a month ago — was relatively calm, he said.

The Syrian Observatory for

Human Rights, a Britain-based organisation that tracks the conflict, said heavy shelling and rocket fire landed around the town of Ghasaniya near rebel-held Jisr al-Shughour on Friday. It also said warplanes on Friday mounted the first air strike against the rebel-held town of Douma near Damascus since the start of the cessation. It did not say whether the planes were Russian or belonged to the Syrian army.—Reuters

Sahrawi refugee camps in Algeria's arid south

TINDOUF (Algeria) — In refugee camps near the town of Tindouf in the arid south-west Algeria conditions are hard for indigenous Sahrawi residents.

The five camps there are home to an estimated 165,000 Sahrawi refugees, according to the United Nations refugee agency, citing government figures.

“Income-generating activities are scarce” for the refugees, the UNHCR says. The camps’ residents are “mainly dependent on humanitarian assistance with little prospect for self-reliance.”

The UNCHR classifies 90,000 of these refugees as vulnerable. NGOs, including Ox-

fam, run language and computer courses for women.

The flag of Western Sahara flutters in the school playground. A mural painted on a wall of the National Union of Sahrawi Women headquarters in Boudjdour camp reads in Spanish, “If the present is a struggle, the future is ours.”

Over and over the refugees are heard saying they want to go back home to Western Sahara, a region mired in a four-decade deadlock.

In two of the camps, Boudjdour and Al Smara, there are no streetlights. The refugees cannot afford to buy fuel for generators

so they depend on car batteries to power lights when night falls. Tankers deliver water once a month. Many residents are using mud to make bricks and rebuild their homes after floods damaged the area last year.

Children make the best of things, playing with a ball outside the tents they call home, or using a makeshift seesaw made from a wooden plank and an oil barrel.

At the local school and nursery, where teachers are indigenous Sahrawi, refugees try to get ahead through education. Older students set their sights on university in Algeria or Spain.

Morocco has controlled most of Western Sahara since 1975 and claims sovereignty over the sparsely populated stretch of desert to its south, which has offshore fishing, phosphate reserves and oilfield potential.

Morocco’s annexation of Western Sahara prompted a rebellion by the Polisario Front backed by Morocco’s neighbour Algeria. The United Nations brokered a ceasefire in 1991, but talks have since failed to find a lasting settlement in Africa’s longest-running territorial dispute. UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon plans to visit the camps on 5 March.—Reuters

Syrian rebels seize Iraq border crossing from Islamic State

BEIRUT — Syrian rebel fighters seized a border crossing with Iraq from Islamic State on Friday, Britain-based war monitor the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said.

Islamic State had controlled the al-Tanf border crossing, which is also near the Syrian-Jordanian border, since May last year after seizing it from Syrian government forces. It had been the last border crossing with Iraq that was under the control of the Syrian government.

IS, which controls a swathe of territory spreading from Iraq into central Syria, still controls the Bukamal Syria-Iraq border crossing near Deir al Zour.

The Observatory said the rebel fighters who took the crossing crossed into Syria from Jordan.

The crossing is a 240 km (150 miles) drive from Palmyra, also known as Tadmur, which has been under IS control since the middle of last year.—Reuters

Frenchman arrives in Dominican Republic for ‘air cocaine’ trial

SANTO DOMINGO — A Frenchman wanted in the Dominican Republic for helping to orchestrate a dramatic speedboat escape of two pilots convicted of cocaine trafficking arrived in the capital early on Friday to face trial in the Caribbean nation.

Looking haggard and unshaven, Christophe Naudin was escorted by over 50 officers in a motorcade to be arraigned yesterday over the 27 October 2015, escape of pilots Jean Pascal Fauret and Bruno Odos, who were under loose house arrest at the time.

He was extradited from Egypt after his arrest in Cairo last month.

Naudin, 53, a criminologist specialising in aviation security who had admitted in the media that he helped arrange the escape, was hustled into the public prosecutor’s office in Santo Domingo past a throng of local and foreign media.

The pilots were sentenced to 20 years in prison in August 2015 for possession of 1,500 pounds (700 kilos) of cocaine with intent to traffic it aboard an aircraft seized in the Dominican Republic’s Punta Cana International Air-

port in March 2013. They denied the charges and were given some freedom of movement during an appeal against the conviction.

The two fled the Dominican Republic in the well-planned escape and arrived back in France shortly afterwards.

The pilots were rearrested by French authorities on 2 November.

Dubbed “air cocaine” by French media, the case has sparked criticism of Dominican Republic’s judiciary, as the judge who granted them looser terms was subsequently charged with taking bribes in a

corruption case linked to contract killings. A French member of the European parliament, Aymeric Chauprade, is also wanted in the Dominican Republic over the case, as is Pierre Malinowski, an assistant of France’s veteran far-right politician Jean-Marie Le Pen at the parliament.

The two had also told media they helped the pilots escape.

Dominican authorities are expected to charge Naudin with conspiracy and people trafficking, according to justice officials quoted in the local media.—Reuters

Father's dark legacy threatens Fujimori's run for Peru presidency

HUANCAVELICA (Peru) — Keiko Fujimori, the daughter of Peru's imprisoned former president Alberto Fujimori, is the front-runner in this year's election but her links to his authoritarian rule could derail her in a likely run-off vote.

Languishing in a prison on the outskirts of the capital Lima, the 77-year-old Alberto Fujimori remains a deeply divisive figure in the Andean nation.

He is revered by many for quashing a bloody guerrilla insurgency during his 1990-2000 presidency and turning around an economy in ruins, but is loathed by others for human rights abuses and corruption convictions.

Known in Peru simply as Keiko, his 40-year-old daughter is promising to battle rising crime and jump-start Peru's sluggish economy despite a global slump in commodity prices.

A centre-rightist, she plans to use a nearly \$8 billion government "rainy-



Peruvian presidential candidate Keiko Fujimori of the Fuerza Popular (Popular Force) party greets supporters during a campaign rally in San Juan de Lurigancho, on the outskirts of Lima, on 20 February 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

day fund" to finance what she dubs a "shock" in infrastructure spending to spur growth, and offer tax breaks to companies training and hiring young workers.

On the campaign trail, she borrows from her father's populist style in ap-

pealing to the poor.

But she has softened her once staunch defence of his decade in power, trying to fix a problem that cost her victory at the last election in 2011, and is promising to unify a country where one in five live in poverty.

"We must work for the people who feel forgotten by the indifference of the state," Fujimori told Reuters between campaign stops in the highland region of Huancavelica.

In the run-up to the first round voting on 10 April, Fujimori consistently wins

the support of 30 to 35 per cent of voters in opinion polls, with a double digit lead over her nearest rivals.

But she needs at least 50 per cent to win outright and recent polls show her virtually tied in a second-round runoff against Julio Guzman, a centrist technocrat who has climbed quickly as he galvanizes her opponents behind him.

Guzman calls Fujimori a despot in democrat's clothing and suggested she was behind his potential disqualification.

Peru's electoral board has gone back and forth over the past month on whether minor violations of electoral rules should bar him from running. A lower electoral panel blocked Guzman's candidacy Friday, a move he said he would appeal.

"Fujimorism stands to benefit the most if I can't participate," he said recently. "What's at stake in these elections is democracy or a return to dictatorship."

The same tactic helped

President Ollanta Humala scrape a second-round win in 2011 when Fujimori was slower to distance herself from her father. Humala is constitutionally barred from seeking a second consecutive term.

Peru's next president will inherit an economy underpinned by surging copper output from new mines, but no major projects are set to come on line in coming years and a persistent slump in the global price is a threat.

Fujimori proposes "regulatory incentives" for exporters, although she has given few details.

She says she would direct spending toward public works such as roads, irrigation canals and water plants.

Her economic advisor, Jose Chlimper, says she will not spend frivolously. "We're not going to have a party. There's going to be a sense of urgency watching every dime," said Chlimper, who briefly served as her father's agriculture minister.—Reuters



An employee of Zaman newspaper holds a chain during a protest at the courtyard of the newspaper in Istanbul, Turkey on 4 March 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Turkish authorities seize newspaper close to cleric Gulen

ISTANBUL — Turkish authorities seized control of the country's largest newspaper on Friday in a widening crackdown against supporters of US-based Muslim cleric Fethullah Gulen, an influential foe of President Tayyip Erdogan.

Police fired tear gas and water cannons to disperse a few thousand supporters who gathered outside Zaman newspaper's offices and chanted, "Free press cannot be silenced."

Rights groups and European officials criticised the confiscation of Zaman

and its sister publication, the English-language Today's Zaman, which occurred on the eve of a summit between Turkey and the European Union and as concerns mount that the Turkish government is stifling critical media.

Administrators were appointed to run Zaman at the request of an Istanbul prosecutor, state-run Anadolu Agency reported. Officials were not immediately available to confirm the reports.

Erdogan accuses Gulen of conspiring to overthrow

the government by building a network of supporters in the judiciary, police and media. Gulen denies the charges. The two men were allies until police and prosecutors seen as sympathetic to Gulen opened a corruption probe into Erdogan's inner circle in 2013. "It has been a habit for the last three, four years, that anyone who is speaking against government policies is facing either court cases or prison, or such control by the government," said Abdulhamit Bilici, editor-in-chief of Zaman.

"This is a dark period

for our country, our democracy."

Zaman is Turkey's biggest selling newspaper, with a circulation of 650,000 as of the end of February, according to media-sector monitor MedyaTava website.

Police in riot gear pushed back Zaman supporters who stood in the rain outside its Istanbul office where they waved Turkish flags and carried placards reading "Hands off my newspaper" before they were overcome by clouds of tear gas, live footage on Zaman's website showed.—Reuters

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV MARIA INDIA VOY NO (30L)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV MARIA INDIA VOY NO (30L) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on ETA-6.3.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of B.S.W-3 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 WILHE LMSH SHIPS
SERVICES PTE LTD.

Phone No: 2301191/2301178

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV KARIN VOY NO ()

Consignees of cargo carried on MV KARIN VOY NO () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 6.3.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.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 X-PRESS FEEDERS

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV HYUNDAI ADVANCE VOY NO (003N)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV HYUNDAI ADVANCE VOY NO (003N) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 6.3.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.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

Republican 'Dump Trump' effort struggles to gain traction

NATIONAL HARBOR, (Md) — A plan to block Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump struggled to gain traction on Friday as rival candidates rejected it, while Democrats revelled in the chaos they hoped would boost their chances of keeping the White House.

The country's top elected Republican, House of Representatives Speaker Paul Ryan, said he was not interested in an effort to draft him into the White House race.

And US Senator Ted Cruz, a conservative presidential hopeful, ruled out a deal to pick a compromise Republican candidate at the party's July convention, which senior party figures see as their best chance to stop the unre-

dictable billionaire.

"The DC power brokers will drop someone in who is exactly to the liking of the establishment. If that will happen we will have a manifold revolt in this country," Cruz said at the Conservative Political Action Conference outside Washington.

"You want to beat Donald Trump, you beat Donald Trump with the voters," he said.

Party leaders worry Trump would not be able to beat Democratic front-runner Hillary Clinton in the election, but time is running out after he won most of the states that voted in this week's Super Tuesday.

Senior Republicans also fear Trump's plans to build a wall on the

US-Mexican border and ban Muslims from entering the United States will turn off voters in November and upset US allies.

Others note his past support for liberal policies and question whether he has any agenda other than advancing himself.

"I don't think he actually carries the conservative mantle. He's a little too crass for me," said Michele Minter, a San Diego executive assistant who was attending CPAC.

Trump, a former reality TV star, often plays by his own set of rules. He cancelled plans to speak at CPAC, normally an essential stop for ambitious Republicans, and will instead attend a rally in Kansas.

The real estate magnate, who is drawing sup-



Supporters wait to get an autograph from US Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump at a campaign rally in Cadillac, Michigan, on 4 March. PHOTO: REUTERS

port from many blue-collar Republicans concerned about illegal immigration and stagnant wages, has won most Republican nominating contests and leads in many polls for the primary contests still to come.

"I'm not a normal Republican," he said to huge cheers at a rally in Warren, Michigan.

Retired neurosurgeon Ben Carson, the only candidate to ever challenge Trump's months-long lead in opinion polls, officially

ended his White House bid.

"There are a lot of people who love me, they just won't vote for me," Carson said in a speech at CPAC, held in National Harbor, Maryland. —Reuters

INVITATION TO QUOTE
MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT
DIRECTORATE OF WATER RESOURCES AND
IMPROVEMENT OF RIVER SYSTEMS (DWIR)
AYEYARWADY INTEGRATED RIVER BASIN
MANAGEMENT (AIRBM) PROJECT
PROJECT MANAGEMENT UNIT

Wishes to purchase:

G1.1.1 – Speed Boats (2 units, 3 engines, 2 trailers)

- The goods are required to be supplied by 10 weeks from the date of contract.
- Interested qualified eligible suppliers are invited to obtain a copy of the bidding documents free-of-charge from the address given below.
- To be considered eligible and qualified a firm or individual must:
 - Have completed within the last 3 years at least one contract of a similar nature of at least 50% of the value of the bid.
 - Not be under any notice of disbursement issued by the Government, or the World Bank.
- Bids must be delivered to the address given below at or before 4th April 2016 (12:30) Hours. Late bids will be rejected. Bids will be opened in public immediately thereafter at the address given below in the presence of the Bidders' representatives and the project's beneficiaries from the concerned local community who choose to attend shall be allowed to be present in person.
- The Purchaser shall award the Contract to the Bidder whose offer has been determined to be the lowest evaluated bid and is substantially responsive to the Bidding Documents, provided further that the Bidder is determined to be qualified to perform the Contract satisfactorily.
- All bids must be accompanied by a bid securing declaration as described in the bidding documents, any bid not accompanied by one will be rejected as non-compliant.
- The address where the document may be inspected and obtained is:
 Ms. Ei Kyi pwee, PMU Procurement Officer
 Room (7), First Floor, Building (1), MICT Park, Hlaing Campus, Yangon, Myanmar
 Telephone: +95 (9) 733 89261
 E-mail: eikyipwee@gmail.com
- In case of any difficulty in obtaining the bidding documents, interested parties may contact in writing
 Mr. Aung Myo Khin, Component 3 Director
 Room (7), First Floor, Building (1), MICT Park, Hlaing Campus, Yangon, Myanmar
 Telephone: +95 95150213
 E-mail: component3director@gmail.com
 and also send a copy of the communication to:
 aungmyo@airbm.gov.mm
 aungmyo1@gmail.com; goerick@gmail.com
- The address for bid submission and bid opening is:
 Ms. Ei Kyi pwee
 AIRBM Project, PMU Office,
 Room (7), First Floor, Building (1), MICT Park, Hlaing Campus, Yangon, Myanmar
- The Government of Myanmar and/or the World Bank will declare a firm ineligible either indefinitely or for a stated period of time, to be awarded a contract financed by the Government of Myanmar and/or the World Bank respectively, if it at any time determines that the firm has engaged in corrupt or fraudulent, coercive or collusive practices in competing for or in executing a contract. Please refer to Attachment 1 "The Bank's Policy on Fraud and Corruption."

INVITATION TO QUOTE
Ministry of Transport
Directorate of Water Resources and Improvement of River Systems
Ayeyarwady Integrated River Basin Management (AIRBM) Project
Project Management Unit (PMU)

Wishes to purchase:

G1.6 - Accounting Software

- The goods are required to be supplied within 30 days from the date of the Contract.
- Interested qualified eligible suppliers are invited to obtain a copy of the bidding documents free-of-charge from the address given below.
- To be considered eligible and qualified a firm or individual must:
 - Have completed within the last 3 years at least one contract of a similar nature of at least 50% of the value of the bid.
 - Not be under any notice of disbursement issued by the Government, or the World Bank.
- Bids must be delivered to the address given below at or before 4th April 2016 (10:30) Hours. Late bids will be rejected. Bids will be opened in public immediately thereafter at the address given below in the presence of the Bidders' representatives and the project's beneficiaries from the concerned local community who choose to attend shall be allowed to be present in person.
- The Purchaser shall award the Contract to the Bidder whose offer has been determined to be the lowest evaluated bid and is substantially responsive to the Bidding Documents, provided further that the Bidder is determined to be qualified to perform the Contract satisfactorily.
- All bids must be accompanied by a bid securing declaration as described in the bidding documents.
- The address where the document may be inspected and obtained is:
 Attn: Prof. Dr. Khin Ni Ni Thein, Component 1 Director
 AIRBM Project, PMU Office, Room (7), First Floor, Building (1), MICT Park, Hlaing Campus, Yangon, Myanmar
 e-mail: component1bio@gmail.com with a copy to:
 aekhaingweb5@gmail.com; hlaingpmsin@gmail.com;
 kotinkyaw1@gmail.com; eikyipwee@gmail.com
- In case of any difficulty in obtaining the bidding documents, interested parties may contact in writing
 Attn: Mr. Htin Kyaw, PMU Procurement Unit Chief
 AIRBM Project, PMU Office,
 Room (7), First Floor, Building (1), MICT Park, Hlaing Campus, Yangon, Myanmar
 e-mail: htkinkeyaw1@gmail.com
- The address for bid submission and bid opening is:
 Ms. Ei Kyi pwee
 AIRBM Project, PMU Office,
 Room (7), First Floor, Building (1), MICT Park, Hlaing Campus, Yangon, Myanmar
- The Government of Myanmar and/or the World Bank will declare a firm ineligible either indefinitely or for a stated period of time, to be awarded a contract financed by the Government of Myanmar and/or the World Bank respectively, if it at any time determines that the firm has engaged in corrupt or fraudulent, coercive or collusive practices in competing for or in executing a contract. Please refer to Attachment 1 "The Bank's Policy on Fraud and Corruption."

China to have one of the world's most progressive VAT systems

BEIJING — China's planned replacement of business tax with value-added tax (VAT) in all sectors will establish it as a country with the most progressive VAT systems in the world, a leading accountant said yesterday.

"Business tax will be replaced with VAT in all sectors," said Premier Li Keqiang in a government work report to the annual parliamentary session yesterday.

"Starting from 1 May, the scope of work to pilot this measure will be extended to the construction, real estate, financial, and consumer service industries, and VAT deductions will cover all new immovable property of enterprises to ensure that the tax burdens on all industries are reduced," said Li at the fourth session of the 12th National People's Congress.

"This is a significant and positive development as China will have one of the most progressive VAT systems in the world," said Lachlan Wolfers, KPMG China head of indirect taxes.

The change will unify the goods and services VAT system in China for the very first time.

China will be among the first countries in the world to apply VAT broadly to the financial services

sector. That means that interest on loans made to businesses and consumers will be subject to VAT.

"To the best of our knowledge, there are only one or two relatively small economies in the world that have even tried this," said Wolfers.

The European Union has spent years studying whether VAT could be applied to financial services, and have not been able to implement it.

However, in applying VAT to financial services in China, it shows that it is possible. It would not be a surprise to see other countries follow suit if the Chinese do it successfully, according to KPMG.

While there will inevitably be some short term challenges to businesses in getting ready for the transition to VAT, over time the adoption of a more modern system will benefit the economy as a whole, said Khoo Ming Ho, partner and head of tax at KPMG China.

Tax evasion will be more difficult.

"The adoption of a unified VAT system in China should [over the long term] improve overall tax collections for the government, and tax evasion through undisclosed transactions will likely decrease," said Wolfers. —Xinhua

Studio behind Nina Simone film defends Zoe Saldana amid casting furor



Cast member Zoe Saldana laughs at the premiere of 'Infinitely Polar Bear' part of the Los Angeles Film Festival at Regal Cinemas in Los Angeles, California in 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

LOS ANGELES — The studio behind a film about African-American soul and jazz musician Nina Simone on Thursday defended the casting of Zoe Saldana in the lead role after the actress came under fire for not being black enough.

RLJ Entertainment founder and Chairman Robert L. Johnson said Saldana, who is of Puerto Rican and Dominican ethnicity, should not be judged on her color, but on her performance as Simone in "Nina."

"The most important thing is that creativity or quality of performance should never be judged on the basis of color, or ethnicity, or physical likeness,"

Johnson, also the founder of Black Entertainment Television (BET), said in a statement.

"Quality entertainment should be measured by the sheer force of creativity and the commitment that an actor or actress brings to the performance."

Johnson's statement followed the trailer release for the film this week that spurred criticism over Saldana's dark skin makeup and for wearing a prosthetic nose to portray Simone.

The controversy comes amid a larger spotlight on Hollywood's diversity issues. Numerous fans of Simone took to social media to suggest other African-American actresses

who could have played the role instead of Saldana.

"Nina" follows the relationship of an older, troubled Simone and her former nurse, Clifton Henderson, played by British black actor David Oyelowo.

Civil rights played a crucial role in Simone's life and lyrics, with the singer often drawing on struggles faced by the African-American community in songs such as "Four Women," "Mississippi Goddam" and "To Be Young, Gifted and Black."

Saldana, best known for sci-fi adventure "Avatar," posted a quote by Simone on Twitter this week, saying "I'll tell you what freedom is to me- No Fear... I mean really, no fear."

The tweet prompted a sharp response from the official Nina Simone Twitter account run by the late singer's estate, which told the actress "Cool story but please take Nina's name out your mouth. For the rest of your life."

A follow-up tweet from Simone's Twitter account said "Hopefully people begin to understand this is painful. Gut-wrenching, heartbreaking, nauseating, soul-crushing. It shall pass, but for now..."

"Nina" will be released in theaters and on video-on-demand platforms on 22 April. A Netflix documentary about Simone's life, "What Happened, Miss Simone?" was nominated for an Oscar this year but lost out to "Amy," about late singer Amy Winehouse. Simone died at age 70 in 2003.—Reuters

PM encourages aspiring politician beauty queen to run for LDP

TOKYO — Prime Minister Shinzo Abe met with a 20-year-old beauty queen, who happens to be the daughter of an opposition party leader, on Friday.

Mika Matsuno, a sophomore at Keio University's Faculty of Letters, visited the premier at his office in Tokyo after being crowned winner of the 2016 Miss Nippon beauty pageant in January.

After telling Abe she aspires to become a politician, following in the footsteps of her father,

Yorihisa Matsuno, head of the small opposition Japan Innovation Party, the prime minister said, "In that event, please run for the Liberal Democratic Party."

The LDP, headed by Abe, forms the ruling coalition with its junior partner, the Komeito party.

The prime minister also told Matsuno she resembles her father.

Matsuno won the pageant in which around 2,800 contestants from all over Japan were entered.—Kyodo News



Mika Matsuno, winner of the 2016 Miss Nippon beauty pageant, speaks with reporters after meeting with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe at the prime minister's office in Tokyo, on 4 March. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

Jenner's offer to be 'trans ambassador' for Cruz draws some fire

LOS ANGELES — Reality star Caitlyn Jenner's offer to be a "trans ambassador" to US Republican presidential hopeful Ted Cruz drew criticism on Friday from some members of the LGBT community, but major transgender rights organisations stayed out of the fray.

Jenner told gay and lesbian publication The Advocate in an interview posted this week that she admired Cruz despite the social conservative's stance on transgender issues.

The 66-year-old Olympic gold medalist turned television personality called Cruz a "great constitutionalist" and said she would like to advise him on questions relating to her community.

"Yes, trans ambassador to the president of the United States, so we can say, 'Ted, love what you're doing but here's

what's going on,'" Jenner, who last year became the most high-profile American to transition to a different gender, told The Advocate.

The muted reaction to Jenner's support for Cruz appeared to show the high level of esteem she enjoys in the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community. But that did not stop some of its members speaking out.

"Doing my best to not send tweets to a woman I respect for her courage, but dang it, @Caitlyn_Jenner you're killing me with Cruz support!" Chely Wright, the first country music star to come out as gay, wrote in a post on Twitter.

Some in the LGBT community took a more pointed stand, citing Cruz's opposition to same-sex marriage and his criticism of government efforts to

allow students to use a bathroom that conforms to their gender identity.

In January, at a campaign stop in Iowa, Cruz said "inflicting" transgender students on

teachers by allowing them to use a faculty restroom in line with their gender identity was better than having them share a bathroom with other students, according to video from NBC

News. Zack Ford, the LGBT editor at ThinkProgress, a website affiliated with the left-leaning Centre for American Progress, wrote in a post that Jenner's support for Republicans like Cruz taints her "credibility."

Mara Keisling, executive director of the National Centre for Transgender Equality, said Jenner's comments highlight the fact a significant share of transgender people are Republicans.

"One would hope that transgender people would support philosophies that are helpful and not harmful to trans people," she said, adding that Jenner might have taken that into consideration before offering her support to Cruz.

A representative for the gay rights group GLAAD declined to comment and a spokeswoman for Cruz could not be reached.—Reuters



Caitlyn Jenner arrives at the Vanity Fair Oscar Party in Beverly Hills, California, on 28 February. PHOTO: REUTERS

Dior’s dark looks, Miyake’s ‘Beyond’ pleats on offer at Paris fashion

PARIS — Designer labels presented an array of offerings for women’s winter wardrobes at Paris Fashion Week on Friday, with Dior mixing dark silhouettes with brighter prints and Issey Miyake showcasing colourful pleats.

The French capital is wrapping the autumn/winter 2016/2017 catwalk calendar after fashion weeks in New York, London and Milan.

In one of the most anticipated shows, Dior presented its first ready-to-wear womenswear collection since designer Raf Simons left the brand in October.

On a futuristic tunnel-like catwalk, the show opened with black and blue outfits — coats as well as embroidered jackets and skirts — sometimes coloured with high-coloured yellow and pink shirts and two-tone heeled tie-up ankle boots.

Silhouettes were slim with fitted coat dresses, asymmetrical peplum jackets, new versions of Dior’s famed Bar jacket and high-waisted pencil skirts, at times slit to the knee.

Dior also offered plenty of romantic off-the-shoulder looks on short



A model presents a creation by Swiss designers Serge Ruffieux and Lucie Meier as part of their Fall/Winter 2016/2017 women’s ready-to-wear collection show for fashion house Dior in Paris, France, on 4 March. PHOTO: REUTERS

coats and dresses. Paisley and other patterns adorned dark dresses and coats or decorated whole outfits.

At Issey Miyake, designer Yoshiyuki Miyamae presented a colourful line called “Beyond”, with “baked stretch” three-dimensional creations, using a process in which fabric is baked in an oven.

The first looks mixed colourful prism patterns with geometric lines on over-the-knee dresses, skirts and sleeveless tops. Other outfits were made with “concentric circles ... baked and overlapped creating strong, pleated graphic patterns”, according to show notes.

Miyamae also showed “3D Steam Stretch” tops, jackets, skirts and dresses, made of cloth shrunk with steam. Further designs bore spiral shapes, others had stuck-out twisted pleats.

A series of black and white, turquoise and dark orange outfits — robes, dresses with puffed up shoulders and tops worn with black trousers — created optical illusions with their winding pleats. The multi-colour looks were finished with black boots that came in different lengths.—Reuters

Floating school in Lagos lagoon brings hope to Nigerian slum-on stilts

LAGOS — Makoko, a vast slum of houses on stilts in a Lagos lagoon, now boasts a new school — pyramid-shaped, floating and capable of withstanding the waterways’ extreme weather, it is a beacon of hope for the nearly 100,000 Nigerians who live there.

With room for 100 pupils, the school — built

with locally sourced wood and floating on hundreds of recycled plastic barrels — throws a spotlight on the poverty that pervades the commercial hub of Africa’s most populous nation.

Aid-funded Makoko Floating School offers free education to local children, most of whose parents fish for a living and who, like

most of the megacity’s 21 million residents, lack a reliable electricity and water supply.

Makoko was established as a fishing village hundreds of years ago but now climate change and rapid urbanization are threatening its way of life.

The school, designed by Nigerian architect Kun-

le Adeyemi, can adapt to changing water levels and was built specifically to withstand the storms and floods that are common in the four-month-long rainy season.

It took three years to build and caters for children who progress from an existing school — the only English-speaking one in the area.

The school’s director, Shemede Noah, said the new site is a major improvement on the old one, which was built on reclaimed land and has been damaged by high tides in the peak rainy months of October and November.

“They started building the school and everybody was saying that it’s unbelievable, we can’t wait to see it, it can’t happen,” he said.

The school has 47 pupils so far and they, like other children in the lagoon, travel to school by canoe. —Reuters



A student stands on a bench to write on the board at a floating school in the Makoko fishing community on the Lagos Lagoon, Nigeria, on 29 February. PHOTO: REUTERS

Casual wear chain G.U. to open 1st overseas R&D centre in London

TOKYO — Japanese casual wear chain operator G.U. Co. will open its first overseas research and development centre in London in mid-March, aiming to more quickly tap into the latest fashion trends and enhance its product development.

The subsidiary of Fast Retailing Co, the operator of Japan’s largest casual wear chain Uniqlo, will initially post about 10 workers in the British capital, mainly shifting designers including four or five British nationals from its R&D centre in Tokyo, a company official said on Friday.—Kyodo News

mitv

Myanmar International

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

Today Fresh		
07:03	Am	News
07:26	Am	A Street Vendor: Spreading Knowledge
08:03	Am	News
08:26	Am	Attractions around Hopong Hill Station
08:33	Am	Ambassador’s View: Australia-Myanmar Bilateral Ties
09:03	Am	News
09:48	Am	Gold from Garbage
10:03	Am	News
10:26	Am	Sayit-wyne Girls
10:48	Am	Farming: Duck Breeder

(11:00 Am ~ 03:00 Pm) - Saturday 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
07:25	Pm	Aesthetic Chinlone
07:51	Pm	Today Myanmar: Pristine Nature- Gaw Yan Gyi Island
08:03	Pm	News
08:26	Pm	The Writer: Chit Oo Nyo (Part- II)
(09:00 Pm ~ 11:00 Pm)- Today Repeat (09:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)		
(11:00 Pm ~ 03:00 Am) - Saturday 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)		

MRTV

Entertainment Channel

(6-3-2016, Sunday)

6:00 pm <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Music Programme	8:00 pm <ul style="list-style-type: none">• “English Premier League”Crystal Palace Vs Liverpool (Live)
6:20 pm <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Talk Show	8:45 pm <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sports Highlight
6:40 pm <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Music Programme	9:46 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Music Programme
7:00 pm <ul style="list-style-type: none">• International Movie: Acolytes	10:00 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Myanmar Movie

From 6.3.2016 (Sunday) 06:00 Pm
To 7.3.2016 (Monday) 06:00 Pm
This schedule will be repeated four times in 24 hours.

MRTV

News Channel in Brief

(6-3-2016, Sunday)

6:00 am <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Paritta by Hilly Region Missionary Sayadaw	5:15 pm <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Documentary
7:35 am <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Business News	5:35 pm <ul style="list-style-type: none">• People’s Talks
8:35 am <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meet The Successful	6:35 pm <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Documentary (Women in Myanmar Society)
9:35 am <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Weekly Entertainment	7:15 pm <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Radio Drama
10:35 am <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Poem for Children	8:00 pm <ul style="list-style-type: none">• News / International News/ Weather Report
11:35 am <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Amazing World	8:35 pm <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Documentary
12:50 pm <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Myanmar Movies	9:00 pm <ul style="list-style-type: none">• News
4:35 pm <ul style="list-style-type: none">• MRTV Job Opportunity Programme	9:00 pm <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tasty Trip
Note/ Hourly News Bulletins (Local + International)	

Newly elected FIFA President Gianni Infantino. PHOTO: REUTERS



2026 World Cup bid must be 'bullet-proof': Infantino

LONDON — FIFA must make the 2026 World Cup bidding process "absolutely bullet-proof" because the entire organisation's credibility is at stake, new president Gianni Infantino said on Friday.

Infantino, elected Fifa boss last week, hopes to start 2026 bidding within three months after it was delayed by the wide-reaching corruption scandal that rocked the governing body last year.

"We have to get the 2026 bidding process absolutely right," Infantino told the BBC.

"It's certainly the commitment that I want to

give; that I will do everything I can to make sure that this happens because I think that the credibility of FIFA is, as well, at stake here.

"We need to make sure that we do everything we possibly can, not only to prevent strange things to happen around bidding processes but also to prevent the perception that strange things could happen.

"We need to make sure that bidding process that we put in place is absolutely bullet-proof."

Every World Cup bidding process since 1998 has been the subject of allegations of corruption and bribery.

The awarding of the 2018 and 2022 finals, to Russia and Qatar respectively, is being probed by Swiss authorities.

On Friday, a report into the bid for the 2006 World Cup awarded to Germany found no evidence of vote-rigging but was unable to explain a \$10

million payment by the country's bid chief Franz Beckenbauer to a company owned by Mohammed Bin Hammam.

Qatari Bin Hammam, a former president of the Asian Football Confederation, was banned from all soccer-related activity for life in December 2012 for integrity issues.

Infantino reiterated his position that the 2018 and 2022 World Cups needed to go ahead, regardless of investigations. "I am a pragmatic person," he said. "FIFA needs to deliver two World Cups, one in two years and one in six years, for decisions which have been taken six years ago.

"There has been a lot of speculation and a lot of allegations but not one single fact, in six years.

"At some stage we have to say 'let's focus on working'. I want to work and help Russia and Qatar host the best World Cups ever, as we always say." —Reuters

Suarez returns to Uruguay squad after biting ban

MONTEVIDEO — Uruguay striker Luis Suarez is set to play his first competitive international later this month since being banned for biting an opponent at the 2014 World Cup after he was called up on Friday for qualifiers against Brazil and Peru.

Barcelona's Suarez was suspended for nine games after biting Italy's Giorgio Chiellini at the World Cup in Brazil.

He was among 28 players named in Oscar Tabarez's squad to face Brazil away in Recife on 25 March and Peru in Montevideo four days later, the Uruguayan FA announced on Friday.

Uncapped Genoa midfielder Diego Laxalt and Manchester United right back Guillermo Varela were called up for the first time.

Uruguay are second in the 10-team South American standings behind Ecuador with three wins in four games.

The top four qualify automatically for the 2018 finals in Russia while the fifth-placed team goes into an intercontinental playoff against a team from the Oceania zone. —Reuters

Murray wins but Japan level with Davis Cup holders Britain

LONDON — Davis Cup champions Britain were locked at 1-1 with Japan after the opening two singles of their World Group, first-round tie on Friday after Andy Murray gave the hosts the lead.

World number two Murray, playing his first match since the Australian Open final, outclassed Taro Daniel 6-1, 6-3, 6-1 to the delight of a boisterous home crowd in Birmingham.

Japan later hit back with world number six Kei Nishikori beating local favourite Dan Evans 6-3, 7-5, 7-6(3), meaning Saturday's doubles rubber could be pivotal.

Daniel, ranked 87th in the world, briefly knocked Murray



Great Britain's Andy Murray celebrates victory against Japan's Taro Daniel during Davis Cup World Group First Round at Barclaycard Arena, Birmingham, on 4 March. PHOTO: REUTERS

out of his stride to break early in the second set but he was no match for the man who led Britain to their first title since 1936 virtually single-handed last November.

"I was getting a little out of breath, but I played a good match and served well," Murray said. "I had unbelievable support today and it was great to play in front of a full house."

Murray, who won 11 live rubbers in last season's march to the title, could team up with brother Jamie yesterday, although captain Leon Smith could use doubles specialist Dominic Inglot and rest him for Sunday's clash with Nishikori. —Reuters

Bryan brothers crush Hewitt comeback, put US ahead

MELBOURNE — Bob and Mike Bryan spoiled Lleyton Hewitt's Davis Cup comeback by closing out a tense 6-3, 6-3, 4-6, 4-6, 6-3 doubles win that put the United States 2-1 ahead in their first round tie in Melbourne.

Former world number one Hewitt, who retired six weeks ago at the Australian Open, replaced Sam Groth as John Peers's doubles partner and dragged Australia back from two sets down with an inspired returning game on the temporary grass court at Kooyong Lawn Tennis Club.

But the Bryans silenced the home crowd by breaking Peers's serve in the second game of the final set and the veteran Americans then served brilliantly to deny the hosts another breakthrough.

Serving to stay in the match at 5-2 down, the Australians

saved two match points on Hewitt's serve but conceded in the next game when Bob Bryan served to 40-0 and his brother smashed the winning volley.

Australia will pin their hopes on world number 20 Bernard Tomic upsetting 11th-ranked John Isner in the first of the reverse singles on Sunday.

The pair have played only once before, with Isner a comfortable winner at Delray Beach in 2012.

Groth, who was well beaten by Isner in the opening singles on Friday, was named to play Jack Sock in Sunday's final singles rubber during the draw on Thursday.

But Australia can still change their nomination, meaning 35-year-old Hewitt could return to the court against Sock, who lost his first singles tie in four sets to Tomic. —Reuters



Australia's Lleyton Hewitt. PHOTO: REUTERS