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DEMOCRACY DEEPENS

No permit to protest required under new bill

Thein Ko Lwin

THE revised Peaceful Assembly and Procession Bill proposed to the Amyotha Hluttaw yesterday will allow demonstrators to protest without seeking permission from the authorities.

The new bill, drawn up in accordance with the country's blossoming multi-party democratic system, would revise the Peaceful Assembly and Procession Law, which was enacted under the previous government.

Under the revised law, a request to hold a protest or demonstration must be submitted to the appropriate police station at least 48 hours before the start of the event, said Dr Myat Nyana Soe, secretary of the Amyotha Hluttaw Bill Committee.

"It is only required to inform the police station in the designated township of the start of the demonstration, but copies of the letter of request are to be distributed to each police station in townships where demonstrators are set to pass through," he added.

Under the previous law, protestors have to stand trial in court in the townships where they pass through for violations of rules and regulations.

The Bill Committee's sec-



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

retary said protestors are to be charged for violating the law in the court situated in the township where the event started, in accordance with the revised law.

The law has been revised based on the fundamental rights and duties of citizens stated in Article 347 the 2008 constitution, and charges and penalties are

clearly mentioned in the revised law, he added.

"It is required to reveal what they want to do and what they will do. They have to act as they submitted, without breaching rules and regulations. Protestors will be given warnings first when they breach the prescribed rules. If they ignore police warnings,

the leader of the demonstration will be charged, and peaceful measures will be taken for the dispersal of the peaceful assembly and procession in accordance with existing laws. Further actions will be taken against the demonstrators."

According to the revised law, protest leaders are to be charged

for violating of the points stated in their request letters to hold the demonstration within 15 days.

If the new bill is passed, the 2011 Peaceful Assembly and Procession Law (Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Law 15) and revised 2014 Peaceful Assembly and Procession Law (Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Law 26) will be revoked.

Mandalay Govt tackles water crisis with hundred day project initiative

THE resolving of El Nino induced water shortages, currently plaguing villages in Mandalay Region, is going to be carried out under the hundred day project initiative, according to the Mandalay Region Department of Rural Development.

U Myo Naing, head of the aforementioned department,

has said that K98.6 million of a total fund of K172.45 million earmarked for upgrading and maintenance activities for the resolving of current water shortage problems, will be used for the digging of two shallow wells and 59 hand-dug wells within the region which began on April 23.

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President proposes new ministry for state counsellor

PRESIDENT U Htin Kyaw proposed the formation of a ministry for the state counsellor in a message sent to the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw yesterday.

The proposal is intended to speed up the government's efforts at national reconciliation, internal peace, national development and the rule of law, the president said in the message.

The constitution vests the president with the power to designate ministries as necessary and make changes and additions to the number of ministries with

the approval of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw.

Union Parliament Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than has invited interested representatives to take part in a discussion on the formation of the ministry for the state counsellor. If approved, the new ministry will be the 22nd in the cabinet.

Also in the Union Parliament, Deputy Minister for Defence Maj-Gen Myint Nwe sought parliamentary approval of a plan to sign a defence co-operation agreement between

Myanmar and Russia, saying the signing of the agreement would create new levels of defence co-operation between the two countries, thereby fostering dialogue and mutual understanding of defence policies in terms of international and regional security.

After the State Counsellor Bill was put on record, the parliament replaced Vice President U Henry Van Thio with U Manalaw Maung, an MP from Chin State, on the Joint Public Accounts Committee.—*Myanmar News Agency*

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Nay Pyi Taw celebrates National Fire Service Day

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Lower House MP calls for immediate repairs to unsafe dams

A PROPOSAL urging the Union government to take immediate action to repair unsafe dams before the upcoming monsoon season was submitted to the parliamentary session yesterday.

In her submission of the proposal, Daw Khin San Hline, an MP for Sagaing Region's Pale Township, said the Mone and Kyee-On Kyee-Wa dams along

Mone Creek in Magwe Region are in need of repairs, and the dams pose a threat to public safety.

She called on the government to perform immediate repairs of the damaged dams, including a natural landslide dam situated at the border between China State and Sagaing Region.

"Flooding occurred across

the country from July to September last year, and landslides in Chin State showed that Myanmar is facing the impact of global climate change," added the Pyithu Hluttaw representative.

According to official figures, last year's floods affected more than 300,000 people from 60,000 households.

MP Daw Khin San Hline

stressed the need to review the projects, in which billions of kyats were invested, calling for adaptations to global climate change.

The Pyithu Hluttaw agreed to discuss the MP's proposal and announced that representatives willing to take part in discussion are to list their names not later than 10 May.—*Thein Ko Lwin*



Daw Khin San Hline. PHOTO: MNA



The Intein lake in Kachin State being seen. PHOTO: MNA

Environmentalists protest fishing rights auction in Intein Lake

AN auction for fishing rights in Kachin State's Intein Lake has elicited objections from a local wildlife conservation unit.

The objection came after invitations to the auction in upper Intein Lake for the 2016-17 fiscal year were sent out by the Fisheries Department.

The upper Intein Lake is located in a wildlife conservation sanctuary.

The Kachin State government decided to ban fishing in the lake in 2013-2014 fiscal year in order to conserve the wildlife area and to prevent violations of wildlife conservation rules by people who would be brought in by the business.

The lake attracts local visitors and tourists who come to see migrant and local birds, said U Khin Maung Win, the park

warden of the Indawgyi Lake wildlife sanctuary park.

Despite banning commercial fishing in the upper Intein Lake, which has an area of 100 square miles, local people are allowed to catch fish on a manageable scale.

There are 39 villages in total around the lake with a population of more than 50,000.—*Mang Ngai*

Four school heads fired for exam question leak

FOUR school heads have been sacked for leaking questions of Grade 5 and Grade 9 examinations in Chauk Township, said Union Minister for Education Dr Myo Thein Gyi at a question-and-answer session in the Pyithu Hluttaw yesterday.

Police filed charges against the sacked school heads, added the Union minister in response to a question raised by Dr Hla Moe of Mandalay Region's Aungmyethazan Constituency.

"Questions were leaked at the basic education examinations in Chauk Township, Magwe Region, and three school heads who were in charge of the administration of

the examinations, and another school head, were found guilty of taking out the question papers dishonestly," said Dr Myo Thein Gyi.

According to the ministry, a team led by Deputy Director-General Dr Zaw Win of the Basic Education Department investigated the leak.

The four school heads who were fired for the question leak include a headmaster who was in charge of administering the Grade 9 examinations, two school heads in charge of Grade 5 examinations in Chauk Township and another school head.—*Thein Ko Lwin*

Myanmar, China look to team up against transnational crime

UNION Attorney General U Tun Tun Oo held talks with Chinese Ambassador to Myanmar Mr Hong Liang on the fight against transnational organized crimes in two countries in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the meeting, they

held discussions on bilateral cooperation in legal affairs and judicial matters, exchanged views on the rule of law and further efforts to be made in the fight against transnational organized crimes.—*Myanmar News Agency*

MADB suffers losses of over K700 million in Tanintharyi Region

MYANMAR Agricultural Development Bank (MADB) for Tanintharyi Region has made public losses incurred during the previous 2015-16 fiscal year in the form of K737.26 million in non-performing loans.

"We've never experienced such losses in the last 62 years. The last fiscal year was the first time we've suffered a loss. The main factor behind the incurred losses is low interest rates. Interest rates are only four percent. And then from within the four percent, only three percent is re-

paid to the bank. The remaining one per cent is swallowed up in staff and general expenses," said U Win Naing, bank manager of the aforementioned bank for Myanmar's southern Region of Tanintharyi.

A total of K11,744.9 million of credit was lent to farmers for monsoon paddy expenses within the Tanintharyi Region during the last fiscal year, and as of May 2, while K11,270.95 million has been repaid, K473.95 million is still outstanding.

Furthermore, K116.2 million

of credit was lent to five township in the form of winter paddy loans, but as of May 2, a meagre K1 million has been repaid, it is known.

"The last day for repayment of winter paddy loans is stipulated as June 30 so I don't think we have any problems just yet. Farmers have still got time [to repay the credit lent to them]. The final date for monsoon paddy repayments was April 15 though, which we've now crossed over, so any outstanding repayments need to be made urgently. We're

currently planning the issuing of credit for the next season," added U Win Naing.

The primary reason behind the aforementioned losses is outstanding payments not being made within the stipulated repayment dates.

As such, loans of K100,000 per acre issued during the previous fiscal year will be increased to K150,000 this fiscal year. But, the increasing of credit limit comes with an increase of interest rates, rising to as much as eight percent this year from four

percent the year previous. It is known that a farmer is eligible for a maximum credit loan for up to ten acres of land. In terms of those Tanintharyi Region townships with outstanding monsoon paddy credit repayments of the previous fiscal year, K2.1 million is owed by Kawthaung; K315.2 million by Myeik; K142.2 million by Kyunsu; K12.3 million by Tanintharyi; and K2.15 million by Palaw – totalling K473.95 million for the entire region, according to records.—*Myitmakha News Agency*

Nay Pyi Taw celebrates National Fire Service Day

MYANMAR'S fire service brigade came into existence as an answer to the call of national needs, said Dr Myo Aung, Chairman of the Nay Pyi Taw Council, on the occasion of the 70th Myanmar Fire Service Day celebration in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

In his address, the Nay Pyi Taw Council chairman said Myanmar has encountered natural disasters because of its geographic location and changing weather patterns.

The country's Fire Service Department is trying hard to improve its performance and fire service technologies to minimise disaster losses, he added.

A total of 300 fire service members from townships in Nay Pyi Taw took part in the National Fire Service Day celebration, demonstrating techniques of rescue and firefighting operations with the use of vehicles and firefighting equipment.

According to official figures, fire outbreaks across the country during the previous five years cost Myanmar over K23.4 billion (US\$20 million) in property loss and damage.—*Myanmar News Agency*



A firefighter demonstrates firefighting skills at the 70th Myanmar Fire Service Day celebration in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

Dozens of wood workers strike for fringe benefits

DOZENS of workers from a wood factory in Sagaing Region have gone on strike in protest of the company's failure to meet their demands for fringe benefits.

Over 70 workers went on strike in front of the Myanmar Veneer & Plywood Co on 29 December last year for fringe benefits, including extra pay for productivity, skills and regular attendance.

Local parliamentarians and departmental officials stepped in

to negotiate a settlement of the outstanding dispute between the workers and the employer on 29 April but did not meet success.

On 30 April, the protesters marched to Nay Pyi Taw. In Myittha Township on 3 May, local labour relations officials persuaded them to return to Sagaing to reach a peaceful settlement to the dispute at the tribunal.

Ko Khaing Min, who led the strike, said the factory dismissed 161 workers without ex-

plaining the reason and that their demands for a proper explanation were met with refusal.

"We left Sagaing on 29 April, and we will walk up to Nay Pyi Taw until justice is served," he said, adding that direct involvement and negotiation from Union-level officials would adjudicate the dispute.

The workers on strike arrived in Wundwin Township yesterday.—*Myanmar News Agency*



Workers march in protest of the wood factory in Sagaing. PHOTO: HTAY HLAING

Traffic-related accidents kill 509, injure 3,068 in April

A TOTAL of 1,674 road accidents killed 509 people and injured 3,068 across Myanmar in April, according to official statistics.

Figures showed 18 people died and 136 were injured in 39 road crashes in Nay Pyi Taw, while 58 were killed and 280

wounded in 221 cases in Yangon, and 70 were killed and 317 were injured in 211 cases in Mandalay.

There were 1,206 traffic-related accidents in other states and regions, causing 363 deaths and 2,335 injuries.—*Than Oo (Laymyethnar)*

Mandalay Govt tackles water crisis with hundred day project initiative

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"We're conducting activities with budget received as part of the hundred day project initiative, together with budget for the current fiscal year, to ensure villages will have more access to water in the coming year. We, as a department, will also conduct maintenance activities as well as calling companies to bid for tenders. We'll carry out the activities in a manner as stipulated by the hundred day project initiative," he said.

A total of 2 lakes will be dug, and 93 other activities conducted, in 95 villages spanning 13 townships as part of the hundred day water provision project, while 2 shallow wells and 20 hand-dug wells will be dug in 22 villages

with funding for the 2016-17 fiscal year.

Extremely high temperatures brought by the El Nino weather front have dried up ponds, lakes and fisheries throughout the region. The Mandalay Region Department of Rural Development, together with public groups, are currently working to alleviate drinking water shortages of local villagers.

Public donors have supplied 103 villages with as many as 465,555 gallons of water since the start of 2016, while combined efforts between the Department of Rural Development and public groups have seen 1,072,505 gallons of water donated to 196 villages, according to the department.—*Myitmakha News Agency*

Community-based tourism projects to implement across Myanmar



A landscape near Nawbuhtabaw Mountain in Kayin State. PHOTO: PYAE PHYO AUNG

THE Ministry of Hotels and Tourism will implement community-based tourism projects within the first 100 days of the new government's term at designated areas across Myanmar, a ministry spokesperson said.

The projects will be developed in three phases, including human resources development programmes for locals, exploring new tourist attractions and expanding the tourism market by linking old and new destinations.

There are six new target zones under the programme—Myaing

Township in Magway Region; Thantaggyi area in Kayin State; Ayeyawady dolphin protected areas in Mandalay; Loikaw in Kayah State; the Pa-O Self-Administered Zone in Shan State and Indawgyi Lake in Kachin State.

In addition, the ministry will explore Gawyingyi Island in Ayeyawady Region and areas around Loikaw as new destinations. Both areas are expected to attract visitors from home and abroad.

The programme will cater to tourists who prefer to create their own experiences in the country-

side, observing the culture and lifestyles of ethnic minority communities.

The projects will play a vital role in reducing poverty by creating job opportunities for locals.

Transportation plays an essential part in tourism development. The country needs to focus on infrastructure development and better services.

Last year, Myanmar attracted 4.7 million foreign visitors. Tourist arrivals are expected to hit more than seven million by 2020.—Pyae Phyo Aung

Japan Products Expo coming to Mandalay

A TRADE expo is being held in Mandalay with the assistance of the Japanese Embassy with the aim of facilitating new business links among entrepreneurs.

Organised by the Myanmar Promotional Services Co, the Japan Products Expo will run between 6 and 8 May at Mandalay's City Hall from 9am to 7pm. Business people from Upper Myanmar are welcome to

attend the event.

Japanese products, including electronic devices, personal goods, cosmetics, machinery, cameras, color copiers, watches, auto accessories, vehicles and motorbikes will be displayed at the event for sale.

Moreover, several entertainment programmes are scheduled to be held during the event.—Maung Pyithu

Photo exhibition aims to raise funds for people in need

A COLLECTIVE photo exhibition will launch in Yangon on Friday with a focus on showcasing landscapes and animal-themed art.

'Image Catchers: Natural Stories' runs until 11 May at Summit Art Gallery in Utopia Tower, located in Bogyoke Park, Kandawgyi Lake Garden. The exhibit will sell photographs for between K70,000 and K100,000.

"Partial proceeds from the event will be donated to some

philanthropic groups working for needy citizens," one of organisers said.

Works by nine local photographers—Ko Ko (Photography), U Zaw Zaw, Tin Htut Naing, Min Min, Nyi Nyi (PDE), Win Hlaing (SMK), Aung Khaing, Trego Mya Lwin and Naung Thi (B&F)—are being featured during the six-day event.

For further information, the organizer can be reached at 09 253 207 852.

Crime NEWS

Police arrest two mung bag robbers in Bago

A COMBINED investigation team from the Shwepyitha Police Force has arrested two men in connection with the robbery of 31 mung bags at their house in Dagon Seikikan Township on 30 April.

On 27 April, a group of men forcibly seized the 31 mung bags from a Hyundai vehicle carrying 375 bags that had stopped beside the road in Paungde Township. The driver reported the incident to the Shwepyitha Police Station.

During an interrogation, A Nge Lay (aka Yin Ko Ko Aung, aka Myo Htet Aung) and Nga Paw (aka Hein Min) admitted to stealing the mung bags. They also said Soe Paing, Nyein Win, Sai Sai, Kyin Hwet, Pho Than Lone and Thant Zin Moe were in-



Nga Paw and A Nge Lay. PHOTO: MNA

volved in the case.

The local police station has charged A Nge Lay and Nga Paw

for the robbery and is searching for the other accomplices.—Myanmar News Agency

Meth seized on Thai- Myanmar Friendship Bridge

THAI police seized methamphetamine worth K75 million (US\$64,103) from a Myanmar national on the Thai- Myanmar Friendship Bridge on 3 May.

Acting on a tip-off, Thai police seized 4 grams of the drug from a motorbike driven by a Thai citizen. When interrogated, the Thai citizen admitted that

Myanmar citizen Zayyar Min, 27, asked him to deliver the drugs to Aung San Myint, 27, who was staying at the Mae Sai Hotel.

The Thai police have opened a case and filed charges against the two Myanmar citizens and one Thai citizen at the Mae Sai Customs Department.—Myint Moeh

Illegal teak logs and sawn timber seized in Sagaing

OFFICIALS from the Indaw Township Forest Department, the Township Administrative Department and the local police force seized 71 illegal teak logs and sawn timber in Indaw Township, Katha District, Sagaing Region, on 2 May.

The logs, which weighed 33.894 tonnes, a saw-mill, a round saw and other materials, as well as 143 illegal teak planks

weighing 1.5398 tonnes, were seized from the Tat Lwin Forest Reserve in the township.

Police found the owners of the teak logs—U Maung Maung Soe and U Mya Win Aung—living in Mya Thida Village, though the owner of the teak planks escaped. Police have filed charges against U Maung Maung Soe and U Mya Win Aung.—Lu Aung

Police arrest jewellery thief at Victoria Hospital

A WOMAN was caught in the act of stealing diamond and pearl jewellery worth K17.25 million (US\$14,744) at Victoria Hospital on Taw Win Street, Mayangon Township, Yangon, at about 12:05am on 30 April.

A female patient from North Dagon Township arrived at Victoria Hospital together with her sister. While the patient was receiving a medical examination for treatment, her sister put her

blue MK handbag on the table near the bed and went to the registration counter. When she came back from the counter, she found her handbag stolen and the jewellery gone. The victim has opened a case at the police station. Police investigated the case and arrested Ma War (aka Aye Aye Wa) together with the handbag and jewellery. CCTV records have helped the police identify the thief.—Police IPRD

LOCAL Business



A Toyota Fortuner being displayed during the launching ceremony. PHOTO: GNLM

Toyota Fortuner launched in Myanmar

THE Toyota Fortuner model was introduced to media yesterday in Yangon. It will be sold by two official sales agents in Myanmar

As a special opportunity for the people, a roadshow for the 4x4 Toyota Fortuner will be held at Myanmar Plaza on Kaba Aye Pagoda Road

on 7 and 8 May.

The two sales agents are Toyota Aye & Sons and Toyota Mingalar, which began selling the model on 5 May.—GNLM

Myanmar import volume rises by \$54m this FY

IMPORTS of industrial raw materials from foreign countries in the current fiscal year saw an increase of US\$54 million from the last fiscal in both the private and public sectors, according to the official figures released by the Ministry of Commerce.

The total import volume over the past 22 days has reached over \$260 million, including

\$2.775 million from the state-owned sector and \$259.498 million from the private sector.

“The number is higher now than at the same period last fiscal year. The country earned \$207.876 million from imports at the beginning of the last,” said the ministry official.

Myanmar mainly imports industrial raw materials, con-

sumer goods, construction equipment, automobiles and capital goods. Thanks to its economic reforms, Myanmar’s construction sector is rapidly growing and needs to develop infrastructure in all segments.

Myanmar’s main import partners are China, Japan, India, Indonesia, Germany, France and Hong Kong.—ML/Union Daily

Dried river catfish business triples this year

THE number of producers in the business of making dried fish from river catfish has tripled this year, according to the Myanmar Dried Fish, Fish Sauce and Fish Paste Association.

“River catfish are used for making dried fish during the period of restriction on the catching of salt water fish in June, July and August. The river catfish is in high demand at Shwepadauk fish market and Kyimyindine Sanpya fish market, Yangon. Currently, only traditional drying methods are used in the drying process. Dried fish production might im-

prove if drying machines can be used. Besides higher production, the quality of dried fish will be higher too”, said U Naung Han, a fish breeder.

Last year, there were six dried river catfish businesses. However, this year has seen up to 17 businesses in operation. Only twenty per cent of fish flesh is sold as-is, by-products and waste can be used and fats can be sold.

Fish paste and dried fish products are mainly sold to the local market. It is difficult to find an export market, said U Min

Min Htun from the Myanmar Fish Paste and Dried Fish Distribution Depot.

The price of salt used in making fish paste and dried fish has risen from K120 to K170 per viss (approximately 1.6 kilograms). Labour wages in the sector have risen, affecting the bottom line. The price of dried catfish has risen from K2,500 to between K3,700-K4,000 per viss. The annual sales of dried catfish are made up by 20 per cent sales at dried fish markets with a total of 20,000 visses moved annually.—200

Thailand seeks direct flight to ancient bagan

THAILAND seeks to open a direct flight to a tourist destination in central Myanmar, said a government official on Wednesday.

Tourism & Sports Minister Kobkarn Watanaavrangkul has proposed in a recent cabinet meeting that Thai airlines be given a new route directly and daily to Bagan, an ancient city with about 2,200 Buddhist temples and pagodas in Myanmar’s Mandalay Region, the official said.

The Thais, mostly being tourists, may visit Bagan via Mandalay’s Nyaung U airport which does not have a direct flight to and from Thailand yet.

Thai airline passengers might be able to choose to fly directly to Bagan and save some traveling cost without stopping over at Yangon, the former Myanmar capital, according to the tourism minister.

The Thai and Myanmar authorities are yet to decide upon such possibilities, given the fact that the Thai side is already seeking to expand daily flights between the two neighbouring countries.

There are currently an average of 150 flights of Thai airlines to Myanmar in a week, compared to less than 30 flights of Myanmar airlines to Thailand weekly.—Xinhua

Leading Singapore bakery to open branch in Yangon next year

SINGAPORE-based Bread Talk Group will open a branch in Yangon at the beginning of next year, and the company has plans to open at other Junction shopping centres in the city.

The Singapore firm signed an agreement with the Shwe Taung Group of Companies, a leading Myanmar corporation, to open its bakery shops in the country.

The Singaporean company decided to expand its presence in Myanmar to meet demand from local customers.

Bread Talk Group is a listed

Singaporean bakery founded in the mid-2000s to sell a wide variety of bread, cakes, buns and pastries. The group has 38 retail outlets in Singapore, as well as a presence in other Asian countries, including China, India and Thailand.

Shwe Taung Group was established in 1990 with the aim of ‘inspiring lives through responsible investment and sustainable development’.

Singapore tops the list of countries with investments in Myanmar with over \$12 billion.—PPN/Union Daily

Growers get handsome prices for yellow diamond mango

GROWERS from Kyaukpadaung Township, Mandalay Region, have received high prices for Seintalone yellow mangoes this season as they entered the market at the time locals expect, the growers said.

Produced in the Popa area in the township, the fully matured mangoes are sold for K350 per mango in the Nyaung U market, a vendor said.

“We, local farmers, normally grow Seintalone mango trees. This season, green areas of the mangoes turn yellow as they ripen; many were destroyed by powerful winds that recently hit the Popa region,” a

farmer said.

“That is why the growers send their products to local markets located in nearby regions as early as possible,” the farmer continued.

The Seintalone mango, also known as the diamond solitaire mango, is one of many mango varieties available in Myanmar. Most mangoes are primarily grown in Mandalay Region and southern Shan State. It is the most popular mango variety in foreign markets. The mango export season lasts from late April to mid-July, with most of the fruit shipped to China.—Kyaw Htay

Maesal trade zone in Kayah State to be opened later this year

THE new Maesal trade zone, which is under construction at the Myanmar-Thailand border, is scheduled to be opened later this year, according to a project manager.

With the aim of boosting cross-border trade and communication, the Maesal trade zone was established in 2013 by local authorities in Kayah State.

“All construction works near-

ly finished, and we are planning to launch the zone before the end of this year,” said the project manager. “Kayah State will rapidly develop after the trade zone opens.”

This is will be the fifth trade

zone along the Myanmar-Thailand border with the aim of improving trade and eliminating smuggling.

As of 11 March this year, the total trade volume of cross-border trade has reached US\$6.56 bil-

lion, including \$4.15 billion from imports and \$2.4 billion from exports.

Myanmar earned \$6.14 billion from cross-border trade in the 2014-2015 fiscal year.

Finishing touches in North Korea capital ahead of rare party meeting

PYONGYANG — Thousands of North Koreans practised dance and parade routines on Thursday as the capital of the isolated nation prepared for a ruling party congress where leader Kim Jong Un is expected to consolidate power.

Pyongyang, a city of nearly 3 million, was scrubbed clean ahead of the opening of the meeting on Friday. Teams of elderly workers used shears to carefully cut the grass alongside main thoroughfares, and painted the base of trees a crisp, bright white.

Workers were putting finishing touches at the 25 April House of Culture in Pyongyang, a stone structure draped in red party flags and banners named after the founding anniversary of the country's army. A party congress has not been held for 36 years, and the event marks the political high point of Kim's four year-rule.

Thousands of delegates

from around North Korea will attend, in what is likely to be a highly choreographed show of support for the young leader. Usually suspicious of foreigners, North Korea has invited scores of foreign journalists to cover the congress.

"We are very proud to have the respected Marshal Kim Jong Un as our great leader and we are very proud to hold the Seventh Party Congress," said Ji Eun Kyo, who works in a rice factory and was on her way to rehearse for a flower parade that is part of the festivities around the congress.

"People are actively participating in the event," said Ji, who was speaking to Reuters in the presence of one of the official guides assigned to manage the movements of foreign journalists.

Kim, believed to be 33, is expected to use the congress to formally declare North Korea a nuclear weapons state and adopt his "Byongjin" policy to push

simultaneously for nuclear capability and economic development, further consolidating his power.

Byongjin follows Kim's father's Songun, or "military first," policy and his grandfather's Juche, the North's home-grown founding ideology that combines Marxism and extreme nationalism.

In the capital this week, groups of residents practised loud chanting of patriotic slogans and thousands of school children in red hats and white shirts rehearsed performances for the event, under a constant hum of noise and music.

North Koreans have been engaged in a 70-day campaign of intensified work in the run-up to the congress, which has included a tidying up of the capital to welcome delegates. Kim has himself kept out of the spotlight so far, last making a public appearance in state media on 24 April, when he supervised the test of a sub-



A policewoman controls traffic while standing in front of flags of the Workers' Party of Korea (WPK) in central Pyongyang, North Korea, on 5 May. PHOTO: REUTERS

marine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) a day earlier. The congress is expected to last four or five days, with Kim likely to make an address on the first day to lay out his vision for the country he inherited after the death of his father, Kim Jong Il, in December 2011, said Cho Bong-hyun who heads research on North Korea's economy at IBK Bank in Seoul.

The second and third days are likely to be allocated for discussions based on Kim's remarks, with the party's Central Committee

meeting to approve organizational and personnel matters, such as new appointments to the powerful Political Bureau, Cho said.

The young leader's tenure has been marked by frequent reshuffling within his inner circle, including purges and executions, most notably of his powerful uncle Jang Song Thaek in 2013.

Kim has also aggressively pursued nuclear weapons, with rival South Korea warning that it could conduct a fifth nuclear test at any time. Pyongyang was slapped with heavy UN

sanctions in March following its fourth nuclear test in January.

North Korea under Kim has also allowed grey market commerce to play an increasing role in the economy, with rising consumption evident in the capital, where vehicle numbers are on the rise and shops carry a growing array of goods.

According to state media, delegates to the congress took in an opera on Wednesday — "Victory of the Revolution is in Sight" — at the Pyongyang Grand Theatre.—Reuters

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Stubborn Shanghai residents hold a line drawn in rubble

SHANGHAI — In a corner of Shanghai, surrounded by a cement wall, lies one of the world's most valuable fields of debris and garbage.

On paper, the Guangfuli neighbourhood is a real estate investor's dream: a plot in the middle of one of the world's most expensive and fast-rising property markets.

But the reality is more like a developer's night-

mare, thanks to hundreds of people living there who have refused to budge from their ramshackle homes for nearly 16 years as the local authority sought to clear the land for new construction.

The stalemate highlights a fundamental and unresolved problem in China's half-liberalised property regime: who owns the land?

Even as the fields

around Guangfuli have bloomed million-dollar condominium towers, the residents live a scrappy existence. The plot is ramshackle and looks bombed out. Residents grow vegetables in Styrofoam boxes wedged between rubble and refuse. They freeze in the winter and boil in the summer as many windows lack glass and the walls are perforated with holes.

Most houses have the

Chinese character for "tear down" spray painted on them by demolition teams, although the paint has faded as the standoff between the residents and the developer dragged on.

Long-time resident Luo Baocheng lives with his brother and family in a small three-story apartment building, which he said he inherited from his mother.

Luo said the property developer, Xinhua Zhongbao, refuses to pay the 4.2 million yuan (447,500 pounds) he says the house is worth.

"They told me, I don't have a property right certificate," he said. "I've lived here 32 years, does that or does that not mean it's my property?"

Local real estate agents say average prices in the area around Guangfuli are now closing on \$12,000 per metre (\$1,115 per sq ft). As Shanghai property prices accelerate — they rose 25 per cent in March from a year earlier — the conflict over Guangfuli has intensified.—Reuters



A night view of the old houses surrounded by new apartment buildings at Guangfuli neighbourhood in Shanghai, China, on 10 April. PHOTO: REUTERS

China and Russia to hold anti-missile drill after US, South Korea talk defence

BEIJING — China and Russia will hold their first joint computer-assisted anti-missile drill, state media said on Thursday, after the United States and South Korea discussed an anti-missile defence system for the South to counter threats from North Korea.

North and South Korea remain technically at war after their 1950-53 conflict ended in a truce, rather than a treaty. The North routinely threatens to destroy South Korea and the United States.

The Chinese and Russian foreign ministers last week urged Washington and Seoul to drop the proposed deployment of the Terminal High Altitude Area Defence (THAAD) system, following North Korea's fourth nuclear bomb on 6 January and subsequent missile tests.

The tests violate UN resolutions against North Korea backed by Russia and China. US and South Korean officials have expressed concern that the North could attempt a fifth nuclear test in a show of strength ahead of its Workers' Party congress, which begins on Friday. The China-Russia drill will be held this month at a Russian military research centre, the official English-language *China Daily* newspaper said, citing China's defence ministry.

The paper gave few details, but cited experts saying the drill would help the two countries' militaries familiarise themselves with their respective command structures and data transmission processes.

The White House has said it is still in talks with its close ally, South Korea, on the THAAD system and that it would not threaten other countries if installed.

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi has said the system threatens equilibrium on the Korean peninsula and damages China's and Russia's strategic security. North Korea's drive to develop a nuclear weapons capability has angered China, Pyongyang's sole major diplomatic and economic supporter. But Beijing fears THAAD and its radar have a range that would extend into China. President Xi Jinping has said Beijing would not allow war and chaos to break out on the Korean peninsula. —Reuters

Ageing Thailand takes toll on indebted households

BANGKOK — Thai civil servant Supapan Pullbangyung spends just under half of her salary on caring for her 75-year-old father, who suffers from diabetes and dementia.

Hers is one of many Thai families looking after elderly relatives at a cost that country-wide adds up to just under a third of household income. The number of families facing similar problems will balloon as the population ages at a rate among the fastest in Southeast Asia.

Thailand's working-age population is expected to shrink by 11 per cent by 2040.

The rising cost of care is an additional burden to households struggling with record debt that is a drag on consumption and stunting the economy.

"I struggled for months and it took a while to adjust," said Supapan, who lives in Nonthaburi province, just north of the capital, Bangkok.

Looking after her father costs at least 15,000 baht (\$430) a month, she said, a little less than half what she earns.

A culture of filial piety in which families feel obliged to care for their elderly means more often than not they absorb the expense of looking after parents and grandparents.

A poor savings culture has left many people ill-prepared to help themselves financially in old age, meaning they must rely on working family members.

More than a quarter of the 66 million population has not saved for old age, according to a 2014 survey, one of many factors contributing to the government considering raising the age of retirement from 60 and urging businesses to hire more



An elderly man receives help from a nurse during a physical therapy session at Bangkhuae Home Foundation in Bangkok, Thailand, on 27 April. PHOTO: REUTERS

older people. "It is going to be a burden on the younger generation," said Sutayut Osornprasop, a human development specialist at the World Bank.

Households caring for elderly relatives spend at least 7,620 baht (\$217) on them per month, according to the Health Insurance System Research Office, a state agency led by the Ministry of Public Health.

That's more than 28 per cent of the average 2015 monthly household income of 26,915 baht.

Kangsadan Sagulpongmalee, 40, is a lecturer in Petchaburi Province who is caring for her 70-year-old diabetic father. He underwent spinal surgery

last December and is recovering at Wellness City, a privately run complex for the elderly on 192 hectares of land near the city of Ayudhaya, north of Bangkok.

"My salary earned as a lecturer isn't enough at all. I have to spend my parents' life savings"

Kangsadan Sagulpongmalee
Lecturer

"The cost has been very high," she said. "My salary earned as a lecturer isn't enough at all. I have to spend my parents' life savings."

Kangsadan plans to move

her father to a house near her workplace once he has recovered so she can look after him.

"I'm doing whatever it takes for my parents. It'll be very expensive, but I'll try my best to handle everything."

A lower cost of living in Thailand's rural areas means some who move to the city for work are considering going back to care for elderly parents.

Noppasorn Suebsai, 21, is one of them.

"If you live in the countryside where we don't spend as much the cost will be less," said Noppasorn, a Bangkok-based nursing student. "I don't think I will struggle as much to care for my parents." —Reuters

Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines agree to team up against Abu Sayyaf

JAKARTA — Foreign ministers and armed forces commanders of Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines agreed on Thursday to beef up maritime security and establish a hotline in the wake of recent hijackings of Indonesian vessels and the holding of their crews for ransom.

In a joint declaration issued at the end of half-day talks in the Indonesian city of Yogyakarta, the ministers and military chiefs agreed "to conduct patrols among the three countries using existing mechanisms as a modality."

Besides joint patrols, the top government officials agreed to set up a "hotline of communication" in order "to better facilitate coordination," as well as "a national focal point to fa-

cilitate timely sharing of information and intelligence" during emergency situations and security threats. According to the declaration, the three countries also agreed to render immediate assistance to people and ships in distress in maritime areas of common concern.

A clear standard operating procedure of the cooperation will be formulated, according to Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi.

"To follow up the meeting, the three countries will sit down again to design the standard operating procedure," Retno said.

The ministers and military chiefs, the declaration said, will instruct their relevant agencies to meet on a regular basis to imple-

ment and to periodically review the measures and procedures they agreed on.

Retno stressed that piracy, kidnappings, as well as other transnational crimes can undermine the public's confidence in trade and commerce in the region.

Ten Indonesians were taken hostage in late March, presumably by Abu Sayyaf, a kidnap-for-ransom gang in the southern Philippines, after their boats were hijacked off the southern Philippine island province of Tawi-tawi. Philippine authorities on Sunday took custody of 10 crew members of the tugboat Brahma 12 and barge Anand 12.

In mid-April, another group of Indonesians aboard another

pair of cargo vessels were similarly attacked by suspected Abu Sayyaf bandits in waters off Tawi-tawi. Four of them were taken hostage and are believed to remain in the hands of their captors.

Abu Sayyaf claims to promote an independent Islamic state comprising part of Mindanao Island and the Sulu Archipelago in the Philippines, and besides kidnappings for ransom has engaged in bombings, assassinations and extortion, making it one of the Philippines' most serious security threats.

Its membership is thought to have dwindled to less than 400 in recent years in the wake of enhanced US military support to the Philippines. —Kyodo News

Opinion

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A just use of resources

Kyaw Thura

AS a nascent democracy, our country is in urgent need of a broad political consensus in favour of democratic reform. Despite a great wealth of natural resources, the country has never been able to enjoy peace and prosperity on sheer account of ideological differences between power brokers and communities. Much disagreement arises from how to exercise the sharing of power

and resources.

The problem of resource allocation is widely attributed to the greed for the lion's share of the country's resources.

A moral from Aesop's fable titled "The Lion's Share" is a perfect example. In the fable, the lion, the jackal, the fox and the wolf hunt a male deer together. The lion orders his fellows to divide the carcass into four. The beast takes

the first portion as King of Beasts, the second as an arbiter and the third for his part in the chase. As for the fourth portion, the lion roared: "Which of you dare lay a paw on it?"

Simply put, resource allocation is the process of assigning resources to various uses in a manner that propels national development and addresses the problem of poverty. Modernising a country

and promoting the welfare of all citizens encompasses a wide range of responsibilities and requires the balancing of disparate needs and priorities. The government is believed to be smart enough to formulate its most important goals and define the most effective course of action to ensure the best returns. The point is that the use of resources should benefit everyone across the country.

Learn a lesson from the Panglong conference

Dr. Nehginpao Kipgen

ON April 27, Myanmar's State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi held a meeting with the Joint Monitoring Committee, a body representative of the army and eight non-state armed groups that signed the so-called Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) last October.

The meeting was the first of its kind since the National League for Democracy (NLD) assumed power. Probably, the most significant development of the meeting was that the state counsellor wanted to convene a "Panglong-style" conference within two months.

The NLD leader had publicly voiced her support for holding a Panglong-type conference since the days of her confinement. A few days after her release from house arrest in November 2010, Suu Kyi said, "A second Panglong conference addressing the concerns of the 21st century is needed for national reconciliation."

As the country prepares for the Panglong-style conference,

there are three important lessons the country needs to learn from the failure of Panglong conference: representation, support and cooperation, and constitution.

First, the Panglong conference, held on the eve of the country's independence from Great Britain in 1947, was not attended by representatives of all ethnic nationalities. In fact, the historic Panglong agreement was signed by representatives of only four groups - Bama/Burman or Myanmar, Chin, Kachin, and Shan.

Similarly, although eight armed groups signed the NCA last year, only four ethnic groups (Bama/Burman or Myanma, Chin, Karen and Shan) are represented. Three different organizations represented the Karen people - Karen National Union, Democratic Karen Benevolent Army, Karen Peace Council.

The conference must ensure that all ethnic groups are represented, particularly about the two dozens of armed groups which did not or were not allowed to sign the NCA. No ethnic group should be given a special status or preferen-

tial treatment, at least in the early stages of political dialogue process.

Second, the conference must have the support and cooperation of different political stakeholders. Here I mean to say that the NLD government's peace initiatives should have the backing of the military and political parties of different ethnicities, including those parties in the opposition.

During the Panglong conference, although the then leader General Aung San gave assurance to the frontier people (now called ethnic minorities) that there will be equality of rights in post-independent Burma, many doubted the sincerity of the Burman leaders.

The British colonial administration was also concerned that the non-Burman ethnic groups would not be treated equally in the Union of Burma. To allay the fear and suspicion, Aung San said to the frontier leaders, "if Burma receives one kyat, you will also get one kyat."

Third, the conference should focus on amending the existing

constitution or drafting a new one that would guarantee equality of rights for all citizens within the structure of federalism.

One fundamental principle of the Panglong agreement, which was incorporated in the 1947 constitution, was the acceptance of autonomy in the internal administration of the frontier areas.

The constitution also guaranteed the frontier people the right to secession after 10 years of the formation of the union. However, the assassination of Aung San in July 1947 shattered the hope of the frontier people.

After the death of Aung San, the Burmese army was against granting autonomy in the frontier areas. The army, which Aung San led against the British and Japanese forces, equated autonomy/federalism with disintegration of the union.

Instead of respecting and protecting the constitution, the military staged a coup in 1962 and ruled the country, which subsequently led to the rise of insurgency movement. The military then suppressed the country's ethnic

minorities.

As Aung San Suu Kyi, who is the daughter of Aung San, leads this 21st century Panglong-style conference, there is high hope and expectation that the shortcomings of Panglong conference will be addressed. At the same time, there is also a caveat of another failure should there be lack of support and cooperation from leaders of all major political stakeholders, including the military.

Given the reemergence of a ray of hope after five decades of despair, the international community should help Myanmar to achieve peace and stability, which will be beneficial for all.

Dr. Nehginpao Kipgen is Assistant Professor and Executive Director of Centre for Southeast Asian Studies, Jindal School of International Affairs, O.P. Jindal Global University. He is the author of three books, including 'Democratisation of Myanmar'.

Traditional clay pot business scarce in Twantay township

TRADITIONAL clay pot business has become scarce in Twantay township because of the rising costs of raw materials and scarce supply of labor, said a villager from Twantay township.

The traditional clay pot business has been handed down by the grandparents since I was 28 years old. Now, I am 65 years old. Previously, there were

nearly 500 clay pot businesses in Twantay township but now there are just 15 businesses left. Most of the clay pot businesses have to depend on greedy money lenders after they suffered from Cyclone Nargis. So, we now hopes to seek support from the government.

Ma Kay Thwe, a clay pot maker said that I work in the clay pot business from 7:00 to

5:00. At first, my brother and I worked together and we earned Ks 1,500 per day.

But, my brother worked as a porter and he is earning Ks 4,500 per day. Moreover, the high price of fire wood is a major cause for stopping the business.

Traditional Twantay clay pots are in high demand from Yangon.—Chan Ko



A traditional clay pot business seen in Twantay township.
PHOTO : CHAN KO

Commander-in-Chief assists in resettlement of soldiers with disabilities



Commander-in-Chief speaking words of encouragement soldiers with disabilities. PHOTO: MYAWADY

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing visited regiments in Mandalay and Mongmaw to assist in the resettlement of soldiers with disabilities.

At a meeting with service personnel in Myittha, Mandalay Region, he honoured those who sacrificed their limbs for the

country.

He also called for providing them with effective vocational training in order to help them earn a livelihood when they leave the Tatmadaw.

During his tour of Mongmaw, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing met with officers and other ranks and their families.

He also inspected the site

chosen for the construction of housing for war veterans.

In the afternoon, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing went to the villages in Pyawbwe Township, which was stricken by strong winds and presented 3,000 zinc-coated roof sheets and cash donated by Tatmadaw families to local people.—*Myawady*

Educational Talk on human trafficking held in Keng Tung

THE Anti-Trafficking Police Force, under the umbrella of the Myanmar Police Force, are aiming to eradicate the human trafficking industry in Myanmar by implementing preventive measures in the form of a public

awareness campaign.

Anti-human Trafficking Police Force Unit-18 gave an educational talk on the prevention of human trafficking at a Child Protection course organised by the Committee of Child Rights in

Keng Tung, Shan State (South) on Saturday 30 April.

Issues raised in the talks ranged from how to recognise the signs that someone might be a victim of human trafficking and the ever changing and adaptive methods and means of human trafficking (entrapment, transportation and sale).

An official from the Anti-Human Trafficking Police Force explained the differences between human trafficking and human smuggling, methods of recruitment used by human traffickers, the history of human trafficking, the process of human trafficking, human trafficking laws and the punishment for those convicted of human trafficking related crimes.

The police force gave out education pamphlets to 45 girl students who attended the ceremony.—*Ye Zarni*



Educational Talk on human trafficking held in Keng Tung.

PHOTO: YE ZARNI

MOTHER (1) POEM:

From morn till night fall
Up on two feet, serving all
Like “doctor-on-call”.

“Mom- I’ve lost my book
You know who sneaked in and took?”
Kid with puzzled look.

“A button gets pop
Other jackets I don’t opt.
Mom- come fix it off”.

“My backpack just snapped
What to do with broken strap?
No school but a nap”.

Just an example
A day in a life simple
Mom has to tackle.

Little things not small
In magnitude nor in stall
Impassable balls.

Three sixty five days
No one ever comes and pays
Holidays seem nay.

Yet mothers do stay
Find solutions all the way
Make homes bright and gay.

A mother’s great role
We must appreciate more
With all hearts and souls.

Aye Phyu

Wind storms cause K 3 billion in damage in Mandalay Region



Thousands of homes were destroyed by wind and hail stones over the last two months in Mandalay Region. PHOTO: MIN HTET AUNG

MANDALAY Region was hit with over K3 billion in damages by natural disasters between April and May, local authorities announced.

Strong winds and hailstones hit the region over the last two months, destroying 1,417 homes, 61 schools, 49 monasteries and 38 pagodas and leaving 18 people and 1,410 farm animals dead and 24 people and 121 cattle injured.

Among 27 disaster-affected townships, Singai, Kyaukse, Myittha, Ngazon and Yamethin

townships were the worst-damaged by the natural disasters.

Powerful winds blew the roofs off nearly 14,000 homes and 334 monasteries between 21 April and 1 May, damaging the umbrellas of 11 pagodas.

“Relief supplies and K532 million contributed by the regional government, relevant departments, social organisations and local donors will be distributed to the victims as soon as possible,” said Mandalay Region Chief Minister Dr Zaw Myint Pe.—*Min Htet Aung*

Obama sips Flint water, urges children be tested for lead



US President Barack Obama drinks a glass of filtered water from Flint, a city struggling with the effects of lead-poisoned drinking water, during a meeting with local and federal authorities in Michigan, on 4 May.
PHOTO: REUTERS

FLINT, (Mich) — President Barack Obama sipped filtered water in Flint, Michigan, on Wednesday and assured angry residents that their children would be fine in the long term despite the “complete screw-up” that contaminated their drinking water with lead.

Obama made the trip to the mostly African-American community to demonstrate that the water there was safe even as he predicted it would take more than two years to replace the city’s aging pipes.

Flint, with a population of

about 100,000, was under control of a state-appointed emergency manager in 2014 when it switched its water source from Detroit’s municipal system to the Flint River to save money. The city switched back in October. The river water was more corrosive than the Detroit system and caused more lead to leach from its aging pipes. Lead can be toxic, and children are especially vulnerable.

“This was a man made disaster. This was avoidable. This was preventable,” Obama told a crowd at a local high school.

“Flint’s recovery is everybody’s responsibility, and I’m going to make sure that responsibility is met.”

The president urged parents to ensure their children were tested for lead and said residents should run their taps frequently to flush out remaining pollutants.

After coughing repeatedly during his remarks, he asked for a glass of water, and drank it in front of the crowd. Earlier he sipped from a glass of filtered Flint water during a meeting with regulators. The White House had said that it did not know if the president would drink filtered Flint water.

Obama said the crisis had resulted from government officials at all levels not paying attention. Questions linger over whether environmental regulators could have acted more urgently to help the city, where more than 40 per cent of its residents live in poverty.

Susan Hedman, the EPA’s Midwest chief and an Obama appointee, resigned in February amid concern that she had not acted quickly on a June 2015 memo from agency scientist Miguel Del Toral that said tests showed high lead levels in water from Flint homes.—*Reuters*

Trump supporters see Iraqi, Syrian refugees as major threat

WASHINGTON — Supporters of Donald Trump, the presumptive US Republican presidential nominee, see refugees arriving from Iraq and Syria as one of the greatest threats to the United States, according to a study released on Thursday by the Pew Research Centre.

Eighty-five per cent of respondents who said they supported Trump saw the refugees fleeing the Islamic State militant group as a threat, compared with 74 per cent of Republicans overall, said the study.

Only 40 per cent of Democrats viewed the refugees from the region as a major threat.

Trump’s campaign said in a statement last December that he was “calling for a total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States until our country’s representatives can figure out what is going on.”

His comments followed fatal attacks in Paris claimed by Islamic State and a deadly shooting spree in San Bernardino, California, by a Muslim couple who the FBI said had been radicalised.

US President Barack Obama’s promise to admit 10,000 Syr-



Supporters of US Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump protest outside a campaign event for Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton in Williamson, West Virginia, United States, on 2 May. PHOTO: REUTERS

ian refugees by the end of the year has sparked a backlash from Republicans, concerned that violent militants could come into the United States posing as refugees. More than 30 governors have tried to block refugees from their states. There are nearly 5 million registered Syrian refugees according to the United Nations, a

result of a war in which more than 250,000 people have been killed.

The Pew report, based mostly on telephone interviews with about 2,000 US adults from 12 to 19 April, found that 65 per cent of Trump supporters also saw the US involvement in the global economy in a negative light.—*Reuters*

NEWS IN BRIEF

Islamic State rockets hit Turkish town, wounding one person

ANKARA — Two rockets fired from Islamic State-held territory in Syria hit a Turkish border town on Thursday, slightly wounding one person, a local mayor said.

The town of Kilis, which stands at the border in southern Turkey, has been repeatedly targeted by Islamic State rockets which have killed 19 people since the start of the year.

NATO member Turkey has routinely returned fire, destroying Islamic State gun positions and killing 370 militants, the state-run Anadolu Agency said this week.—*Reuters*

Russia arrests groups for planning attacks in Moscow region

MOSCOW — Russia’s state security service said it had arrested a group of central Asian citizens who had been ordered by leaders of “terrorist groups” in Syria and Turkey to carry out attacks in the Moscow region, Russian news agencies reported on Wednesday.

The Federal Security Service (FSB) said the attacks had been planned for Russia’s May holiday celebrations and it had seized large numbers of weapons and explosives.

“(The attacks) were ordered by leaders of international terrorist groups operating in Syria and Turkey,” Interfax news agency quoted the FSB as saying.—*Reuters*

Glider crashes into mountain in Fukushima Prefecture, pilot died

FUKUSHIMA (Japan) — A glider crashed into a mountainous area in Fukushima Prefecture on Thursday, killing the pilot, believed to be man in his 40s or 50s, firefighters said.

After receiving a report around 2:20pm that an aircraft appeared to have crashed on a mountain, local firefighters found the one-seat glider in mountainous terrain in the town of Miharu and confirmed the death of the pilot.

No one else was injured in the accident, the firefighters said.—*Kyodo News*

Woman arrested at Sydney Airport over alleged multi-mln-dollar fraud

SYDNEY — A Sydney woman faced court on Wednesday on fraud charges after she allegedly spent millions on handbags and luxury goods after a bank provided her with 4.6 million Australian dollars (3.44 million US dollars) in error, the ABC reported on Thursday.

New South Wales (NSW) state police arrested 21-year-old Christine Jiaxin Lee at Sydney Airport on Wednesday evening.

The court heard she was attempting to board a flight to Malaysia with an emergency issued Malaysian passport.

The police prosecutor noted the money was accessed through an overdraft facility, mistakenly attached to Lee’s Westpac savings account.

It’s alleged she obtained 4.6 million Australian dollars (3.44 million US dollars), 3.3 million Australian dollars (2.47 million US dollars) of which is yet to be recovered.—*Xinhua*

Turkey kills four IS militants in northern Syria

ANKARA — Four Islamic State (IS) militants were killed Thursday when Turkey bombed an IS-controlled area in neighbouring Syria in retaliation for rocket fire that hit its southern province of Kilis, the Turkish military said.

The rockets injured two people, including one police officer, in Kilis, private Dogan News Agency reported.

In recent weeks, Kilis has been repeatedly hit by rocket fire from areas under the control of IS militants inside Syria.

The Turkish military has destroyed a total of 2,144 IS positions in northern Syria and killed 807 militants, the army said in a separate statement on Thursday.

Since mid-January, rockets fired from inside Syria have killed 20 people, including seven Syrians refugees, and injured 66 others, including 17 Syrians, in Kilis, the Turkish military said.—*Xinhua*



Journalists protest against restriction on the press and to demand the release of detained journalists, in front of the Press Syndicate in Cairo, Egypt on 4 May 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Thousands of Egyptian journalists demand sacking of interior minister

CAIRO — Thousands of Egyptian journalists called on Wednesday for the presidency to dismiss the interior minister and apologise for a police raid on the press syndicate and arrest of two opposition reporters, witnesses said.

Defying a heavy police presence outside their union, around 3,000 journalists attended an emergency meeting to protest against the arrest on Sunday of Mahmoud El Sakka and Amr Badr who work for the opposition website Bawabet Yanayer.

The arrests came as authorities try to quell rising dissent against President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi. Hundreds of officers were deployed in central Cairo after protests last month against his decision to hand two Red Sea islands to Saudi Arabia.

Thousands of demonstrators called on 15 April for “the downfall of the regime”, a slogan from the 2011 Arab uprisings. Police dispersed smaller protests two weeks later.

Union officials said the police action at the syndicate was the first raid on the organisation in its 75-year history.

“We demand the presidency deliver a clear apology to journalists over the crime of raiding the syndicate,” said syndicate official Karem Mahmoud, reading out the meeting’s decisions.

“We demand the sacking of the interior minister as he is the main (person) responsible for the crisis,” he said.

A spokesman for the presidency was not available for comment when Reuters called his mobile phone. Sakka and Badr, who are in jail, could not be reached for comment and Reuters could not determine whether they had lawyers.

A spokesman for the interior ministry could not immediately reached for response to Wednesday’s demonstration.

Chanting “journalism is not a crime,” the reporters voted to call on newspapers to print blank front pages and stop using Interior Minister Magdy Abdel Ghaffar’s name.

They also decided to hold a meeting next week to discuss organising a strike if their demands were not met, union officials said.

On Monday, the public pros-

ecutor said Sakka and Badr were being investigated for “spreading news based on lies” and possession of firearms among other accusations. The interior ministry has denied its officers had stormed the union building but confirmed it had arrested the two inside the building.

The prosecutor’s office issued a gag order on Tuesday on the case of the two journalists and the circumstances of their arrest. Syndicate officials said on Wednesday they would challenge it in court.

Dozens of pro-government demonstrators gathered outside the syndicate in downtown Cairo chanting calling for Sisi to “slaughter” the journalists as they entered and exited the building, according to a Reuters eyewitness.

The journalists’ protests come at a time the former general also faces criticism because of the struggling economy and many question whether he continues to enjoy the broad public support that allowed him to round up thousands of opponents after he seized power in 2013.—Reuters

Libyan crude output at risk as east and west tussle for control

TRIPOLI — Libya’s crippled oil production appeared at risk of further decline on Wednesday after an escalating stand-off between rival eastern and western political factions prevented a cargo belonging to trading giant Glencore from loading.

A Tripoli oil official warned the country’s oil output could fall by 120,000 barrels-per-day (bpd) if the Benghazi-based National Oil Corporation (NOC), set up by the eastern government, continues to block tankers loading for Tripoli from the eastern Marsa el-Hariga port.

The Seachance tanker left the port on Wednesday of its own accord and without loading any of its planned 600,000 barrel crude cargo for Glencore, a port official said.

Reuters ship tracking showed the tanker was still waiting outside the port. The Seachance was originally expected to load on 26-28 April.

The stand-off at Hariga, part of a broader political struggle between factions in eastern and western Libya, threatens to further reduce oil output which has fallen to less than a quarter of its 2011 high of 1.6 million bpd.

Exports from the port are usually divided between allocations to Glencore, as part of an oil export deal the trader struck with

the rival Tripoli NOC last year, and cargoes to the 120,000 bpd Zawia refinery in western Libya.

Glencore declined to comment. Much of Libya’s oil production is concentrated in the east. The NOC in Tripoli has ambitious plans to revive output but those have been put in jeopardy by continuing political conflict and repeated attacks on eastern oil facilities by Islamic State militants.

The NOC in Benghazi ordered port workers not to load the Seachance after seeing a tanker carrying its first attempted oil export shipment blacklisted by the United Nations, and returned to be unloaded in western Libya.

The Tripoli NOC and its western backers warn that efforts by the eastern NOC to sell oil independently risk dragging the country further into crisis. But eastern politicians, who have not formally endorsed a UN-backed unity government trying to establish itself from the capital, insist that the Benghazi company is the country’s legitimate NOC.

On Wednesday the head of the Benghazi NOC, Nagi al-Maghrabi, said there was no plan by the company’s board to close Hariga, and suggested the refusal to load the Seachance was made for bureaucratic reasons.—Reuters



A view of pipelines and a loading berth of the Marsa al Hariga oil port in the city of Tobruk, east of Tripoli, Libya, in 2013. PHOTO: REUTERS

Truce takes hold in Aleppo but fighting goes on elsewhere in Syria

AMMAN — A cessation of hostilities agreement brokered by Russia and the United States brought a measure of relief to the battered Syrian city of Aleppo on Thursday but President Bashar al-Assad said he still sought a total, crushing victory over rebel forces.

Syrian state media said the army would abide by a “regime of calm” in the city that came into effect at 1am (2200 GMT on Wednesday) for 48 hours, and relative calm prevailed on Thursday morning after two weeks of death and destruction. The army blamed

Islamist insurgents for violating the agreement overnight by what it called indiscriminate shelling of some government-held residential areas of divided Aleppo. But residents said the violence had eased by morning and more shops had opened up.

Elsewhere in Syria, fighting persisted. Islamic State militants captured the Shaer gas field in eastern Syria on Thursday, the first gain for the hardline jihadists in the Palmyra desert area since they lost the ancient city in March, according to rebel sources and a monitor.

Assad said he would accept nothing less than an outright victory against rebels in Aleppo and across Syria, state media reported.

In a telegram sent to Russian President Vladimir Putin thanking Moscow for its military support, Assad said the army was set on “attaining final victory” and “crushing the aggression” in its fight against the rebels.

The British-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said at least one person was killed in rebel shelling overnight of the Midan neighbourhood on the government

side of Aleppo, which was Syria’s commercial hub and largest city before the war.

Rockets also hit the New Aleppo district, state media said.

But a resident of the rebel-held eastern part of the city said that although warplanes flew overnight, there were none of the intense raids seen during the past 10 days of air strikes.

People in several districts ventured out onto the streets where more shops than normal had opened, the resident of al Shaar neighbourhood said.

Another resident said civilians in several districts sensed a general trend towards calm.

“From last night it was positive and my wife went out to shop and shops opened and people breathed. We did not hear the shelling and bombing we had gotten accustomed to,” Sameh Tutunji, a merchant said.

A rebel source also said that despite intermittent firing across the city’s main front lines, fighting had subsided and no army shelling of residential areas had been heard.—Reuters

Israeli general assailed for Nazi comparison on Holocaust memorial day

JERUSALEM — Israel’s deputy military chief suggested in a Holocaust memorial speech that there were signs of Nazi-like behaviour in Israeli society, drawing condemnation from two cabinet ministers on Thursday before he backtracked on the remarks.

Major-General Yair Golan’s speech, at a ceremony on Wednesday, would have touched a nerve at any time in a nation that vehemently rejects accusations by its fiercest critics that its treatment of Palestinians is comparable with the oppression long suffered by Jews.

But this year, emotions have been heightened and divisions deepened by a debate among Israelis over whether a soldier was justified in shooting and killing a Palestinian assailant who

was wounded and lying on the ground, in an incident in the occupied West Bank city of Hebron in March.

Wearing his red paratroop beret, Golan said at the gathering to honour the six million Jews killed by Nazi Germany that the annual remembrance day should also lead Israelis to deep soul-searching about “how we, here and now, treat the stranger”.

“If there’s something that frightens me about Holocaust remembrance it’s the recognition of the revolting processes that occurred in Europe in general, and particularly in Germany, back then — 70, 80 and 90 years ago — and finding signs of them here among us today in 2016,” he said.

Golan also made a clear reference to the Hebron shooting, over which

the soldier involved is due to stand trial next week on manslaughter charges that carry a maximum 20-year prison term. He decried the “aberrant use of weapons” and said the military was committed to “investigate difficult issues impartially”.

Two ultranationalist members of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s cabinet quickly took the general to task, before a nationwide memorial siren brought Israel to a standstill for two minutes on Thursday.

“His remarks attest mainly to a lack of understanding, ignorance, and a cheapening of the Holocaust,” Justice Minister Ayelet Shaked of the Jewish Home party told Channel 10 TV. “On such a day, I wouldn’t even want to quote what he said.”

Education Minister



Holocaust survivor Eliezer Lev Zion, born in Germany in 1927 and released from Ardeche detention camp in France in 1940, speaks to Israeli border policemen during a Jewish National Fund ceremony marking the annual Holocaust Remembrance Day in Israel, at the Bōnai Bōrith Martyrōs Forest in Jerusalem, on 5 May. PHOTO: REUTERS

Naftali Bennett, the party’s leader, said Golan must “rectify” his mistake before “God forbid, our troops are likened to Nazis, with a kosher stamp from on high”.

Later, in a statement, which Bennett welcomed, the military tried to lay the controversy to rest.

“(Golan) clarified today that he had no intention whatsoever of comparing

the Israel Defence Forces and the State of Israel to the horrors that occurred in Germany 70 years ago,” it said. “This is an absurd and baseless comparison that he never would have made.”

Golan is the second-highest ranking officer in the Israeli army, a position that in the past has launched its holders to become overall head of the

Israel Defence Forces.

Defence Minister Moshe Yaalon issued a statement expressing his “complete faith” in Golan. “The role of every IDF commander ... does not end just with leading soldiers into battle, but also obligates him to set out a path and values for them, using both compass and conscience,” he said. —Reuters

Egypt hands over phones records to Italian investigators

CAIRO — Egypt has sent Italian investigators some phone records they had requested as part of their probe into the torture and killing of student Giulio Regeni in Cairo earlier this year, a legal source said on Wednesday.

Italy last month recalled its ambassador to Egypt for consultations after the Italians said that Cairo did not provide information that

Rome said was needed to solve Regeni’s killing, including a mass of telephone data.

The legal source with direct knowledge of the investigation said Rome had asked for the phone records of 13 Egyptians who had been in contact with the 28-year-old Regeni before he vanished on 25 January, and had received some of the documents they had request-

ed. The source did not give further details. He said Italian investigators would fly to Cairo on Sunday for talks with their Egyptian counterparts. Regeni’s body was discovered in a road-side ditch nine days after he disappeared. An autopsy showed that he had been extensively tortured before his death and his mother told reporters that she had only recognised her son by his nose.—Reuters

Approval of Venezuelan leader drops as crisis bites

CARACAS — Just over one in four Venezuelans approves of President Nicolas Maduro’s governance as a crippling economic crisis weighs on the leftist leader, according to a leading pollster.

Venezuelans are suffering rampant shortages of products including bread and antibiotics, salary-destroying inflation, and increasingly frequent power and water cuts as the OPEC country’s state-led model flounders.

Maduro, whom the opposition is vying to remove from office this year, saw his rating drop to 26.8 per cent in March from 33.1 per cent in February, according to a Datana-lis poll seen by Reuters.

While low compared with his charismatic mentor and predecessor, Hugo Chavez, Maduro’s popularity remains above that of neighbouring presidents including Colombia’s Juan Manuel Santos and Brazil’s Dilma Rousseff.

Still, some 68.9 per cent of Venezuelans polled said Maduro should quit this year or be removed via a recall referendum before his term ends in 2019, up from 63.6 per cent in February.

The Democratic Unity



Venezuela’s President Nicolas Maduro. PHOTO: REUTERS

coalition has ramped up its push to oust the 53-year-old former bus driver and union leader and this week cleared one of the first hurdles towards holding a recall referendum.

Some 57.3 per cent of Venezuelans said in March they would vote to remove him from office should a referendum be called, up from 52.1 per cent in February, the survey showed.

The opposition says the only way to avoid an impending economic or humanitarian disaster in Venezuela is to push out Maduro, whom they say is unwilling to correct Venezuela’s economic distortions.

Maduro has scoffed at plans to remove him and ridiculed his political rivals as divided, coup-mongering elitists.

Having narrowly won a 2013 election, Maduro initially benefited from reverence towards his predecessor Chavez and the popularity of social welfare programmes.

But that has waned as many poor “Chavista” supporters bear the brunt of the economic crisis.

Since Maduro took over, the bolivar has fallen around 98 per cent against the dollar on the black market rate. Annual inflation is in triple-digits.

Polls in Venezuela are notoriously divergent and controversial, but Datana-lis has become the most closely watched by both sides. The survey of 1,000 people was conducted from 4 to 14 March has a 3.04 percent margin of error. —Reuters

THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR MINISTRY OF ELECTRICITY AND ENERGY MYANMA OIL AND GAS ENTERPRISE (INVITATION FOR OPEN TENDER) (6 / 2016)

Open tenders are invited for supply of the following respective items in United States Dollars and Myanmar Kyats.

Sr.No	Tender No	Description	Remark
(1)	IFB-006(16-17)	Bearings for F-1000 Rig Pump (3) Items	US\$
(2)	IFB-007(16-17)	Repair Kits for Drill Pipe Power Tong (3) Items	US\$
(3)	DMP/L-001(16-17)	Lifting Sling / Binder & Binder Chain (5) Items	Ks
(4)	DMP/L-002(16-17)	M.S Plate, M.S Pipe, M.S Rod and Angle Iron for River Craft (6) Nos Repairing Job	Ks
(5)	DMP/L-003(16-17)	SAE 15 W 40 Diesel Engine Oil (1) Lot	Ks
(6)	DMP/L-004(16-17)	Hydraulic Oil Light (H.O.L) ISO-VG 46 (or) Between 46 & 68 (1) Lot	Ks
(7)	DMP/L-005(16-17)	Oil Tanker 3200 Gals TA TA LPT 2116 (6 x 2) (3) Units	Ks
(8)	DMP/L-006(16-17)	M.S Plate, U Beam & Angle Iron for TAC-171 Tank (1) Lot	Ks

Tender Closing Date & Time - 2-6-2016, 16:30 Hr

Tender Document shall be available during office hours commencing from 5TH May, 2016 at the Finance Department, Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise, No(44) Complex, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar.

Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise
Ph . +95 67 - 411097 / 411206

Cuba scrambles to keep pace with US-fuelled tourism boom

HAVANA — The number of US visitors to Cuba has nearly doubled this year, its tourism minister said on Wednesday, as the island races to build hotels and expand Havana airport to keep up with booming demand.

Tourism has taken off since Cuba and the United States announced they would work to bury the Cold War hatchet in December 2014. The Caribbean island received a record 3.5 million visitors last year.

The influx has pushed capacity to the limit, prompting hotels to sharply hike prices and raising questions about how Cuba will absorb additional visitors when scheduled US commercial airline service starts later this year.

“With the increase in demand there have occurred problems with the confirmation of reservations and some irritation with delays at the airports, most of all in Havana,” Minister Manuel Marrero said at the opening of an annual tourism fair.

Still, overall satisfaction with Cuba as a destination was high, reflected by the fact that nearly half of last year’s tourists were return visitors, he said.

The number of visitors so far in 2016 jumped 13.5 per cent on the year to 1.5 million tourists, Marrero



A man who identifies himself as Classic Car Manager Mr. Sergio (C), offers a ride in a vintage car to tourists, in Havana, Cuba, on 4 May. PHOTO: REUTERS

said. Of those, 94,000 were Americans, a 93-per cent jump on the year, and more than 115,000 were Cuban-Americans.

Cuba’s tourism infrastructure is creaking mainly in the capital, where visits were up 37 per cent this year, according to the minister. Almost all Americans visit Havana as part of their itineraries as they are banned from the beach.

Marrero said three new hotels were under construction around the colonial part of the city, bids were in to renovate some existing establishments, and more were on the drawing board.

He said an airport expansion was planned in Ha-

vana, but gave no more details.

“Until just a little while ago Cuba was a forbidden destination, and not only for Americans, but for many others from various countries who feared travelling to the island,” tourism professor Jose Luis Perello, of the University of Havana, said.

European tourism in Cuba was up 60 per cent through April of this year, said Eric Peyre, who heads up the French hospitality company Accor’s operations in the island.

Security threats in other traditional holiday destinations for Europeans, such as the Middle East and Afri-

ca, were adding to the Caribbean island’s allure, he said.

“Air France has 11 flights a week. Last week, they signed for 28 flights a week from France as from this November, 18 to Havana,” he said.

Accor manages three hotels in Cuba, including the 188-room Hotel Seville in Old Havana, once-favourite hangout of Chicago gangster Al Capone, which Peyre said was sold out through the end of the year.

“Last year, a room and breakfast at the Seville cost \$120, this year \$180, and beginning in November it will cost \$280,” he said.—Reuters

Nauru urges calm among desperate asylum seekers after self-immolations

SYDNEY — The tiny South Pacific island of Nauru urged calm among 500 asylum seekers held in detention on behalf of Australia after two set fire to themselves and others self-harmed.

Under Australia’s hard-line immigration policy, asylum seekers intercepted trying to reach the country by boat after paying people smugglers are sent for processing to a camp in Manus Island in Papua New Guinea or to Nauru.

The remote detention centre on Nauru has been widely criticised by the United Nations and human rights agencies for its harsh conditions and reports of child abuse. Many staying there have self-harmed.

A young Somali woman on Monday set herself on fire at the camp, the second

such attack in a week. The first victim died. Nauru said it was working on finding a permanent home for the detainees.

“I want to assure you that future long-term and permanent settlement options are actively being considered and planned for you,” David Adeang, minister for multicultural affairs, said in a video posted on the government website.

“But while you are here, we urge you to use your time on Nauru constructively and peacefully.”

But detainees, many of whom have been on Nauru for years, said tensions were high, with many devoid of hope. “I don’t want to be alive. I see my wife suffering and I can’t do anything,” Iranian Amir Zaire, 30, told Reuters.—Reuters



The Parliament House building of the small island nation of Nauru is pictured, on 10 February 2012. PHOTO: REUTERS

Number of Aust’n school students caught cheating doubled in 2015

MELBOURNE — An Australian state’s education department has been left alarmed by revelations that the number of students caught cheating in Year 11 and 12 exams doubled in 2015.

Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) investigated 65 alleged breaches of exam guidelines by these students over the 2015 school year — up from 38 incidents in 2014. The data only includ-

ed cases of cheating that occurred during the all-important Victorian Education Certificate (VCE) exams, which influence students’ final Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) grade.

Australian universities use ATAR scores to select the best applicants for undergraduate courses. Of the 65 incidents, 10 students were eventually penalized for “serious breaches.” One student had their subject results re-

turned to zero, while the rest had their grades reduced by up to four grades. VCAA chair Chris Wardlow said most students understood that cheating in VCE exams wasn’t worth the risk, given the harsh sanctions they

faced if caught. “It’s unfair to yourself and your classmates. Students who do appear before review committees are deeply remorseful for their actions,” Wardlow told Fairfax Media on Thursday.—Xinhua

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV VEGA FYNEN VOY NO ()

Consignees of cargo carried on MV VEGA FYNEN VOY NO () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 6.5.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T/MP 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 MCC TRANSPORT
(S’PORE) PTE LTD

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV BANGKACHAI VOY NO (144)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV BANGKACHAI VOY NO (144) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 6.5.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of AIPT-2 where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to 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 WONGSAMUT OCEAN
SHIPPING CO LTD.

Phone No: 2301928

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV XETHA BHUM VOY NO ()

Consignees of cargo carried on MV XETHA BHUM VOY NO () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 6.5.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S REGIONAL CONTAINER
LINES

Phone No: 2301185

Beyonce, Adele named among most powerful mums

LOS ANGELES — Singers Beyonce and Adele have topped a list of the fifty most powerful mothers.

The singers are celebrated in Working Mother magazine, which also includes country singer Carrie Underwood, “How To Get Away With Murder” actress Viola Davis and Oscar-winner Cate Blanchett among others. Beyonce, mother to daughter Blue, four, is celebrated for her savvy as a businesswoman; she earned an estimated USD 250 million in 2015, according to *Forbes Magazine*. She recently made a big splash in the leisure market in partnership with Topshop, her latest venture, Ivy Park. Meanwhile Adele, who returned to music after a three year hiatus, broke records with new release 25, the best-selling album of 2015, which has solely been credited with boosting global music business revenues for the first time in almost 20 years. The mother to son Angelo, three, shared in a recent interview with *Vogue* magazine, that her son is the most fulfilling part of her life. Working Mother’s full list of its picks 50

for the Most Powerful Moms will be out later this week.—PTI

Adele. PHOTO: REUTERS



Beyonce.
PHOTO: REUTERS

Oscar winner Jodie Foster finally gets Hollywood star

LOS ANGELES — Actress Jodie Foster may have had to wait more than forty years for her star on Hollywood’s landmark Walk of Fame, but at Wednesday’s ceremony when she was finally given the honor, she said she was glad it was for her

work as a director. Foster most recently directed Sony Pictures’ “Money Monster,” a high-stakes thriller starring George Clooney and Julia Roberts, premiering at the Cannes Film Festival and released in US theaters next week.

“The star ceremony is something I’ve always thought of and dreamed of. I told my children when they asked me ‘Why don’t you have a star on Hollywood Boulevard?’, I said I was waiting to have the opportunity to have one as a director and Sony so nicely — we love Sony — they made my dreams come true,” Foster said.

“Money Monster” is a thriller about a young man named Kyle (Jack O’Connell) who holds presenter Lee Gates (Clooney), the host of a TV financial news show, hostage live on air while he demands answers about why a company’s stock crashed. Kyle forces Gates and his pro-

ducer (Roberts) to investigate the real reason behind the stock crash that causes him to lose his life savings.

Foster, 53, who started acting as a child and has won two best actress Oscars for her roles in 1989’s “The Accused” and 1992’s “The Silence of the Lambs,” turned to directing with films such as 2011’s “The Beaver” and episodes for Netflix’s “House of Cards” and “Orange is the New Black.”

The actor-director said that while the Walk of Fame star honoured her long career so far, it is also “support for the for the exciting things I’m going to do in the future.”

Kristen Stewart, who played Foster’s daughter in 2002’s thriller “Panic Room,” praised the star, saying “She did everything young, she kicked Yale’s ass, she won Oscars, she became a filmmaker herself, she created a family and still is just normal and cool and kind.”—Reuters

‘May the Fourth Be With You’: fans celebrate Star Wars Day

LONDON —From dressing up as stormtroopers to hosting movie marathons, film fans celebrated Star Wars Day on Wednesday with all things dedicated to the blockbuster sci-fi franchise.

“Star Wars” enthusiasts marked the day celebrating the space saga by chanting or tweeting “May the Fourth Be With You”, a play on the films’ catchphrase “May the force be with you”. In Taipei, fans dressed up as their favorite characters including Rey, the heroine from the latest “The Force Awakens” film, Chewbacca, stormtroopers as well as Jedi Knights, posing for pictures alongside an inflatable R2-D2 and Jabba the Hutt.

In Malaysia, a replica of

Han Solo’s Millennium Falcon ship was built with more than 200,000 Lego bricks in the run-up to the occasion.

Fans also took to social media to share pictures of “Star Wars” themed artwork, cupcakes as well as toast cut in the shape of some of the movies’ characters.

Actress Daisy Ridley, who plays Rey, also joined in on the celebrations by sharing behind the scenes pictures of her on set.

After the huge box office success of “The Force Awakens” which came out last year, fans are now awaiting the next installment, “Star Wars Episode VIII”, currently in production and due for release in December 2017.—Reuters

Restaurant criticism hurt my feelings: Jessica Biel

NEW YORK — Actress Jessica Biel was hurt when critics took aim at her family-friendly restaurant project before the doors opened.

The “Total Recall” star recently launched Au Fudge, a kid-friendly eatery which incorporates a mostly organic menu of California-French comfort food in Los Angeles, reported the *New York Post*.

Biel said she wasn’t prepared for the backlash from people who were quick to compare

her business venture to those of other Hollywood stars, like Gwyneth Paltrow, Jessica Alba, and Reese Witherspoon, who have left the film sets behind to start successful lifestyle initiatives.

“You can’t help but get your feelings hurt,” she said.

“You think, ‘Well, hold on a second. I’m just trying to do something cool for my community. Why is this getting so turned around?’ But it inspired us to keep moving forward be-

cause we know our hearts are in the right place.”

The mother-of-one has also credited the support of her co-owners and husband, singer Justin Timberlake, for helping her ignore the critics who didn’t have anything nice to say.

“He’s not one of those people to pooh-pooh an idea or a passion. He is the person who says, ‘Do it. And if it fails, it fails. But you did it’. I’m sure he was probably thinking, ‘It’s going to be hard’.—PTI



Actress Jessica Biel. PHOTO: REUTERS

Asleep in Jesus**Naw Lay Lay Thein (37 years)**

Naw Lay Lay Thein residing at 13/C Zion Hill - Nant Thar Gone quarter, Insein. Beloved youngest daughter of U Saw Kalu Say + Naw Hti Paw. Beloved wife of Saw Zarni Moh and mother of Saw Glenn Johnathan Moh, Naw Judyline Moh, Saw Rain Joseph Moh and Saw Joshua Gabriel Moh. Youngest sister of Naw Eh Gay + Saw David, Naw Si Si Soe + U Tin Myo Naing and Naw Khin Khin Chit + Saw Gaw Khu. Aunty of Six nieces and nephews was called to her heavenly home on 4-5-2016 at 6:45 am.

Funeral service will be held on 6-5-2016 at 9:00 am at Ko Tha Phyu Memorial hall, Insein and thence to Ecu-menical Garden, Yae Way for burial

Asleep in Jesus**Naw Lay Lay Thein (37 years)**

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Funeral service will be held on 6-5-2016 at 9:00 am at Ko Tha Phyu Memorial hall, Insein and thence to Ecu-menical Garden, Yae Way for burial

20% of Japanese men in 20s did not eat rice in one month-period: survey

TOKYO — About 20 per cent of Japanese men in their 20s did not eat rice during the previous one-month period, according to a recently released survey that suggests younger people are shunning Japan's staple food.

The nationwide survey on traditional Japanese food culture in everyday life was conducted by the farm ministry last October on those aged 20 to 69, drawing responses from about 10,000 people. Of the total, 93.2 per cent said they had eaten rice during the previous month, but the figure stood

at 81.6 per cent among men in their 20s, 91.5 per cent among women in the same age group and 88.5 per cent among men in their 30s. In comparison, 96.3 per cent of men in their 60s and 97.1 per cent of women in the same age group said they had eaten rice during the past month. Asked what they had eaten during that period in a multiple-choice question, 84.2 per cent said bread, 80.9 per cent said fish, 80.5 per cent said meat, 58.5 per cent said instant noodles, and 14.8 per cent said various local foods. —Kyodo News



Brazilian top model Gisele Bundchen poses before a fashion show by German designer Karl Lagerfeld as part of his latest inter-seasonal Cruise collection for fashion house Chanel at the Paseo del Prado street in Havana, Cuba, on 3 May 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Chanel brings glamor back to Cuba in catwalk extravaganza

HAVANA — French fashion house Chanel brought glamor back to Communist-ruled Cuba on Tuesday in a runway show on one of Havana's main boulevards, featuring glittering gowns, tulle cocktail dresses and models in Panama hats smoking cigars.

Chanel is the first major fashion house to hold a runway show in Cuba, highlighting both warming relations with the West and new inequalities on the island.

Former Cold War foes the United States and Cuba formally agreed to restore diplomatic relations last July.

Celebrities, including actress Tilda Swinton and supermodel Gisele Bundchen, jetted into the Caribbean island for the show that evoked the elegance

of pre-revolutionary Cuba, arriving at the venue in vintage convertibles.

The Cuban contingent included former President Fidel Castro's grandson Tony, an aspiring model, which raised some eyebrows, given the leader's railings against capitalism.

"It is an honour for all Cubans for this big event to take place here," said Castro, 17, whose grandfather was also known for his good looks as a young revolutionary.

Karl Lagerfeld, who has been at Chanel's creative helm since 1983, has said his latest inter-seasonal Cruise collection was inspired by the "cultural richness and opening up of Cuba."

Cuban motifs in the new Cruise line were exemplified in a fabric depicting

turquoise and pink vintage cars used for leisurewear such as jackets, a bathrobe and skirts.

Sequined black berets also recalled the non-glitzzy one sported by late revolutionary hero Ernesto "Che" Guevara, a national hero in Cuba. By showcasing its Cruise collection in Cuba, Chanel has said it was harking back to the roots of the line, originally designed for wealthy Americans holidaying on yachts and cruises in the Caribbean to escape the winter gray.

US cruises to Cuba were forbidden during the country's standoff with the United States. On Monday, the first US cruise ship to sail to the island since Castro's 1959 revolution docked in the capital.

US President Barack Obama is also chipping

away at curbs on travel to Cuba.

"We have been banned from Cuba, so getting to come here before it really changes, and seeing the show, was pretty epic," said one of the guests, Loïc Villepontoux, on his way to the afterparty in Havana's Cathedral Square.

Lagerfeld, 82, is known for his lavish show settings and has created a mock casino, supermarket and brasserie in the past.

This time, he let the faded glamor of Havana, once a wealthy port, speak for itself.

During a 25-minute show set to live Cuban music, his models strutted down a 160-metre (525-foot) section of the leafy Paseo del Prado, lined with ornate street lamps and bronze lions.—Reuters



Entertainment Channel

(6-5-2016, Friday)

6:00 pm

- Weather Report
- Music Programme

6:30 pm

- Pyi Thu Ni Ti

6:50 pm

- Cartoon Programme

"Brother

Bear (II)" (Part- III)

7:10 pm

- International Drama Series

7:50 pm

- International Drama Series

8:30 pm

- Music Programme

8:50 pm

- English Premier League (Review- III)

9:10 pm

- International Movie Songs

9:30 pm

- Myanmar Video

**From 6-5-2016 (Friday) 6:00 Pm
To 7-5-2016 (Saturday) 6:00 Pm**



Myanmar International

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

Today Fresh

07:03	Am	News
07:26	Am	Unique Pattern of Myanmar...A Trend of Chin Traditional Dress)
07:56	Am	Scented Buddha Images
08:03	Am	News
08:26	Am	Myanmar Traditional Instruments (MYANMA DRUM)
08:51	Am	Temple Stalls
09:03	Am	News
09:26	Am	Irrawaddy Dolphin (Part-I)
09:41	Am	Natural Lake: Fish Breeding Business
09:53	Am	Creations of a Designer

10:03	Am	News
10:26	Am	Chanmyay Yeiktha Meditation Centre- Chaw Dwin Gone
10:43	Am	Amazing: Sayargyi Nyein Chan Aung
10:54	Am	School for the Blind

**(11:00 Am ~ 03:00 Pm) - Thursday Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)
(03:00 Pm ~ 07:00 Pm) - Today Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)**

Prime Time

07:03	Pm	News
07:26	Pm	Travelogue "To the coastal region (Myeik - Kawthoung)" (Part-1)
07:51	Pm	Wet Markets of Yangon: Thirimingalar Market
08:03	Pm	News
08:26	Pm	Creator of Imagination
08:52	Pm	Ngapali Beach: Fishing Villages

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

Brilliant Bale helps Real tame Man City to reach final

MADRID — Real Madrid reached their 14th European Cup final and crushed Manchester City's hopes of a maiden title after Gareth Bale's deflected effort secured a 1-0 victory in the second leg of their Champions League last four clash on Wednesday.

Bale's right-footed shot ricocheted off City midfielder Fernando on its way into the top corner to break the deadlock in the tie in 20th minute, with Madrid going on to dominate the encounter despite failing to add to their lead.

The 1-0 aggregate result, after last week's goalless first leg stalemate, set up a mouthwatering final on 28 May between Real and their city neighbours Atletico Madrid, who they beat to lift their 10th European crown in 2014.

"The players deserve this," said Madrid boss Zinedine Zidane, who has the chance to crown his first season as coach with club football's most coveted prize.

"Everyone worked hard and that's why we're in the final. I'm delighted for what has happened. The final will be perfectly even, but now we're going to enjoy this, it's an important day."

For City, however, it was a tame ending to their European campaign as they failed to force Madrid keeper Keylor Navas into



Gareth Bale celebrates scoring the first goal for Real Madrid.

Real Madrid's Gareth Bale in action with Manchester City's Bacary Sagna during UEFA Champions League Semi Final Second Leg at Estadio Santiago Bernabeu, Madrid, Spain, on 4 May. PHOTO: REUTERS

a single save.

While Bale enjoyed good fortune in forcing the goal, the Wales international nonetheless produced a blockbuster European performance.

He tirelessly closed down

City's midfield in a lung-busting display and was Madrid's biggest threat in attack, providing exquisite passes and sending a header crashing against the bar in the second half.

City's chances of shutting out

Madrid were stung when their influential captain Vincent Kompany limped off the pitch with what appeared to be a muscle problem in the ninth minute, capping a frustrating season overshadowed by injuries for the centre back.

Madrid seized the moment soon after. The energetic Dani Carvajal skipped past Kevin De Bruyne down the right and slipped the ball round the back of City's defence and into the path of Bale.

He made for the near post before his cross spun off the outstretched leg of Fernando and looped into the net off the woodwork.

Madrid grew stronger after the goal and a shot from Ronaldo flew over the bar, while Pepe put the ball in the net only to see his effort ruled out correctly for offside.

Despite Madrid's dominance, City could have levelled just before the break when De Bruyne found Fernandinho on the left of the area, and the Brazilian's left-footed shot clipped the near post.

It was one of few scares for Madrid, who bossed the second half as they did the first.

Ronaldo spurned three chances to double the lead and Bale's header smashed the bar.

"We could easily be in the final but they managed the game well, and got a very lucky goal," said City keeper Joe Hart.

"They've beaten us with a very lucky goal but it is what it is."—Reuters

Maturing Kyrgios knocks Wawrinka out of Madrid Open

MADRID — Australian Nick Kyrgios let his tennis do the talking against Stanislas Wawrinka as he knocked the fourth seed out of the Madrid Open with a scintillating display on Wednesday.

Last year the 20-year-old got a suspended 28-day ban and \$25,000 fine after making lurid remarks about Swiss Wawrinka's girlfriend during their match at the Rogers Cup in Montreal.

Kyrgios, who has had several brushes with authority, was widely criticised, but his 7-6(7), 7-6(2) second round victory on Wednesday was further proof of a growing maturity after he won his first ATP title earlier this year in Marseille.

There was the odd outburst at the umpire, one after a first serve during the first-set tiebreak was called out despite appearing to clip the line, but Kyrgios kept his emotions in check to edge a tight tussle.

Japan's Kei Nishikori, the sixth seed, had a narrow escape before joining Kyrgios in the third round.



Wawrinka returns the ball during Madrid Open at Madrid, Spain, on 4 May. PHOTO: REUTERS

Italy's Fabio Fognini recovered from losing the opening set to level the match and served for the match at 5-4 in the decider before imploding.

Nishikori won 6-2, 3-6, 7-5 to set up a meeting with Frenchman Richard Gasquet.

World number one Novak Djokovic was back to his ruthless best as he thumped Croatian

tyro Borna Coric 6-2, 6-4.

Djokovic suffered his earliest defeat for three years when Czech Jiri Vesely beat him on his 2016 claycourt debut at last month's Monte Carlo Masters but if Coric harboured any hopes of pulling off another upset, Djokovic snuffed them out by breaking the 19-year-old three times.—Reuters

Nibali's form under scrutiny ahead of Giro start

PARIS — A big question mark hangs over Vincenzo Nibali's form as the 2014 Tour de France champion targets a second Giro d'Italia title when the three-week race starts on Friday.

The Italian, who was disqualified from last year's Vuelta (Tour of Spain) after getting a tow from his Astana team car, has failed to impress since winning the Tour of Oman in February.

Nibali, one of only six men who have won all three grand tours, prevailed on the Italian roads in 2013 and he believes his experience will help him to succeed despite his recent poor form.

"My advantage compared to other riders is that I have the experience," said Nibali, who will be taking part in his sixth Giro.

Nibali picked Giro debutant and Movistar rider Alejandro Valverde as the man who could ruin his race.

However, the 2009 Vuelta winner, who finished third overall in last year's Tour de France, could have his Giro chances hampered by the tough weather conditions expected during the

6-29 May race.

"It's a treacherous Giro," said Valverde.

Team Sky will be hoping that Spain's Mikel Landa has what it takes to give them their first victory in a grand tour outside the Tour de France.

Landa, who joined from Astana this year, finished third overall last year after working for team leader and eventual runner-up Fabio Aru of Italy.

"That transition to a new team and expecting someone to perform at a really high level early on into a new term is a bit of a double whammy. It's not a four-month goal," said Sky manager Dave Brailsford.

"Our ambition with him is longer term. We think his ability to perform is huge. We would like to start that after four months racing but (transition) it's a factor. But can he win the tour of Italy? Yes he can."

Fabian Cancellara of Switzerland is expected to don the coveted pink jersey as he will start off the ramp as the big favourite for Friday's opening time trial, where his main rival could be local favourite Tom Dumoulin.—Reuters