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BUDDHA DAY CELEBRATED

Bo Trees at pagodas across Myanmar watered on the Full Moon of Kason

FAMOUS pagodas in Yangon were thronged with Buddhist devotees yesterday, the Full Moon of Kason.

Devout Buddhists observed the Eight Precepts, meditated and performed meritorious deeds on the day of great religious significance. The Full Moon of Kason is significant because it was on this day when Gotama Buddha received His prophecy from Lord Buddha Dipankara, when Gotama Buddha was born, when He attained Enlightenment and when he entered nirvana, so says Buddhist belief.

On this auspicious day, people pour water on the Bodhi tree, which is regarded as the pariboga ceti, Bodhi or Bo Tree. It is a noble tree under which the Buddha attained enlightenment. The Kason water throwing is a festival among the 12 festivals held in their respective months.

For this function, the 33rd anniversary Kason Water Throwing Festival was held at 5am yesterday with Shwedagon Pagoda Ovadacariya Sayadawgyis and invited members of Sangha being offered meals, members of the pagoda board of trustees holding water pots accompanied with religious associations, circum-ambulating the pagoda clockwise and the Bodhi Tree being doused in water.

Similarly, the 30th anniversary Kason Water Throwing festival was held with the members of pagoda board of trustees pouring water onto the Maha Bodhi



Buddhist devotees pour water onto the Bo Tree in Yangon. Photo: MNA

tree, reciting the religious verses starting with Uddi siya jinam Buddhain, jayohi Buddhassa gatha and the gatha commencing with the Jayato Bodhiya mule.

Similar water throwing ceremonies were held at Kyaukkasan pagoda, Kaba Aye Pa-

godas, Botahtaung Kyauk de-ut pagoda, Swedaw pagoda, Sule pagoda, Shwephonepint pagoda, Moegaung pagoda, Ngahtatgyi, Chaukhtatgyi and Kohtatgyi pagodas, Melamu pagoda, Okkalapa pagoda, Kyakkalo and Kyaukalei pagodas, Thanhlyin

Kyaukkhauk pagoda and Kyauktan Kyaukhmawwun Yailai pagoda.

In Nay Pyi Daw the Kason Water Throwing Ceremony was held with Union Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture Thura U Aung Ko and wife, Nay Pyi

Taw Council Chairman U Myo Aung and wife in attendance.

Similarly, Kason Water Throwing ceremonies were held in Pagodas in Nay Pyi Taw Council areas with Buddhist devotees performing meritorious deeds.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Sagaing gold miners receive shut down warning

U OHN Win, Minister for Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation, has warned companies involved in gold mining activities within the Sagaing Region township of Kawlin that their activities will be closed down should they be found responsible for having a negative impact on the environment, public health or society.

The remark by the minister was made in response to a question posed by U Myo Zaw Aung, mem-

ber of Pyithu Hluttaw for Kawlin constituency, on Thursday during the twenty-sixth day of the first regular session of the Second Pyithu Hluttaw.

"It's difficult to say exactly when all the side-effects of the use of chemicals being used [in gold mining activities] will come to pass. But with that being said, I met with the relevant director yesterday who instructed us to report on final findings at the end of this month of

May. We have a responsibility to shut down these companies should it be found that their actions are having adverse affects on not only the environment, but also public health and society as a whole," said Minister U Ohn Win.

The question asked by U Myo Zaw Aung was how the government would mitigate detrimental impacts to the environment by systematically conducting studies on adverse affects to environment

and society caused by gold mining activities in the Kawlin township.

"Local residents have voiced that water and soil emitted from gold mining activities flows into surrounding farmlands whenever it rains, killing off their crops. Cows and buffaloes suffer from sores in their mouths from drinking this water and fish are also frequently dying. Residents are also suffering from breathing difficulties and throat related dis-

eases. On top of this, home roofing regularly has to be replaced because of airborne particles," stated U Myo Zaw Aung. Gold mining activities have been conducted in the aforementioned region for some three decades and while activities used to be under the control on the previous government power has since been transferred into the hands of one private company, it is known.—*Myitmakha News Agency*

Families of Tatmadaw members pour water on Bodhi Tree on Full Moon Day of Kason

FAMILIES of the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services (Army, Navy and Air)'s office celebrated the 60th anniversary of the sixth synod and the festival of the Full Moon of Kason yesterday with the consecration of Buddha images and the pouring of water onto the Bodhi or Bo Tree in Nay Pyi Taw.

The congregation, led by Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and his wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla, poured water onto the Bodhi Tree, the holy Banyan tree at the foot of which the Buddha attained Buddhahood or enlightenment more than 2,500 years ago in India, so Buddhist beliefs hold.

To mark the 60th Anniversary of the Buddhist Synod 414 Buddha images were consecrated by the Members of the Sangha at the Nawaday Hall.—Myawady



Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and wife pour water onto the Bodhi Tree in Nay Pyi Taw.
PHOTO: MYAWADY

Torrential rain causes landslide in Falam

TORRENTIAL rain induced by Cyclone Roanu caused a landslide in Falam, Chin State, yesterday. However, there are, at this point, no reported casualties due to the incident, according to the Falam Township Information and Public Relations Department. The landslide occurred at the retaining wall of the staff quarters of the construction department in Balai Ward. The six families living in the building have been moved to a safer location. Cyclone Roanu will cross Chin State and Sagaing Region within 12 hours, it was reported yesterday at 7pm by the Meteorology and Hydrology Department.

Local authorities in Chin State and Sagaing Region have begun bracing to receive the storm, carrying out preparedness operations as the government announced a brown code situation when the storm crossed the areas with 35 to 40 miles-per-hour wind speed.—GNLM

Japan and Denmark to give mortgage free loans to SMEs



Workers make slippers at a cottage industry in Mandalay.
PHOTO: ATK

“Japan and Denmark will give mortgage-free loans to small and medium enterprises (SMES),” said director-general Daw Aye Aye Win of the industrial inspection and administration department of the Ministry of Industry.

Loans will be provided based on the Business Plan as well as on the market situation, environmental situation and export potential.

They will give the loans to small and medium enterprises that have the potential to succeed.

“They will check the feasibility of the project, the enthusiasm and passion on the part of the businesspeople and the potential. They will also assess

the environmental impact,” continued by Daw Aye Aye Win.

The Japan International Co-operation Agency (JICA) will provide USD 45 billion in loans for the development of small and medium enterprises. Denmark is discussing the amount of the loan pool, it was reported. At the moment, 90 per cent of Myanmar Businesses are SMEs. As local banks require SMEs to present mortgages, the enterprises are finding it difficult to access to bank loans.

The Small and Medium Industrial Development Bank (SMIDB) is set to provide USD 20 billion in loans but only 11 billion can be given because the rest cannot present mortgages.—200

Fighting breaks out between Tatmadaw troops and SSA (Wanhai)

TATMADAW columns have carried out area consolidation operations in villages in Hsipaw and Lashio townships as they received information tip-offs that SSA (Wanhai) armed group had encroached upon out-of-bound areas.

During clashes, skirmishes and engagements the Tatmadaw columns captured seven enemy dead together with small arms, ammunition, wireless sets, mines, illegal assorted timber and vehicles etc.

Although the SSA (Wanhai) armed group has participated in meetings to discuss the signing of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA), they have not signed it yet and are now reportedly encroaching upon areas close to towns, building camps in the jungle, recruiting soldiers, collecting extortion money and troubling the local populace, it is alleged.

In the fighting on 5 May and on Friday some members of the Tatmadaw including a com-



Map shows locations where fighting happened. PHOTO: MYAWADY

manding officer were killed in action.

As the SSA group also allegedly carried out offensive activities during March and April of this year, and is still encroaching upon out-of-bound areas, beating and abducting local villagers, carrying out explosive attacks and extracting timber illegally, the

Tatmadaw has issued warnings and in the event of any violation of the six-point principle of Tatmadaw peace policy the Tatmadaw will respond with force. So far the Tatmadaw has carried out area consolidation operations in accordance with the duties vested under Article 341 of the 2008 constitution.—Myawady

Over 900 crimes prosecuted in 20 days in Yangon

THE Yangon Region's police force has prosecuted over 900 criminal cases in just 20 days as part of its 100-day campaign to crack down on crime to ensure safety and the rule of law in the region.

The plan took effect from 1 May and resulted in the prosecution of 902 crimes, including 171

counts of possession, 96 counts of gambling and 189 counts of alcohol excise.

Officiating Police Brig-Gen Win Naing said that the strength of the security force used in the crackdown campaign increased from 50% to 70% of 5,780 total regional police officers.

The police officer added that

200 police officers from local stations were used as reinforcements in the mission.

Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein pledged to provide the police force with modern equipment, stressing that the measure would target criminal gangs posing a threat to the rule of law.—Ko Moe

President tours Moscow's cultural sites

PRESIDENT U Htin Kyaw, currently in Russia for the Russia-ASEAN Summit, left Sochi yesterday for Moscow to visit the city's places of note including Arbat Street, the Kremlin, Red Square and various cultural and heritage museums.

While in Moscow, the president met staff, their families and scholars studying there. In the evening, he was seen off at the airport by Myanmar Ambassador to Russia U Tin Yu and Military Attaché Brig-Gen Win Maung.

On Friday in Sochi, President U Htin Kyaw visited the Sochi Discovery World Aquar-

ium, where he observed species of different sea creatures. He also went on a study tour of the Sochi Olympic Park.

The 20th ASEAN-Russia Commemorative Summit was concluded following the adoption of the Sochi Declaration and the release of the ASEAN-Russia Comprehensive Plan of Action (2016-2020).

The summit was held in Sochi on Thursday and Friday with the aim of enhancing trade and forming strategic economic partnerships through the establishment of regional economic integration.—*Myanmar News Agency*



President U Htin Kyaw visiting (SDWA). PHOTO: MNA

Why can't Myanmar freshwater prawns be exported aboard?

IN years past, large Myanmar freshwater prawns were exported aboard, but the current state of affairs see these prawns solely traded within the country.

It is partly to do with a lower price offered by foreign countries, paying just K16,000 per viss (1.6kg) of large freshwater prawns, compared with the domestic market whereby the same weight fetches K18,000.

However, were the numbers of prawn farmers to increase, it would allow for Myanmar prawns to be exported to foreign markets, together with serving the domestic market, as well.

But a lack of fertile prawns, resulting in fewer off-spring has meant needs of prawn farms for prawn off-spring cannot be met.

Not to mention plummeting numbers of freshwater prawn off-spring enterprises, dropping from once 27 farms to a meagre 4 that are left today. U Kyaw Shin, of the K Brother's prawn off-spring enterprise, says the decline in prawn farmers has resulted an inability for farmers to fulfil the numbers of off-spring required. The underlying

reasons for the collapse of the freshwater prawn off-spring industry stem from environmental changes with which technology cannot keep up; and the inability to provide the extent of investment required.

In terms of the number by which off-spring are needed in Myanmar's freshwater prawn farms, it's in the millions. But, only between 100,000s and 10 million off-spring can be produced every week, falling well short of needed numbers.

However, vice president of the Myanmar Prawn Entrepreneurs Association, U Soe Htun believes that prawn off-spring exports could be made to foreign countries, as well as supplying the local market, were the current industry able to expand and enlarge.

It is with that which the government should not only invest in prawn off-spring enterprises within the country, but also directly import standardized prawn feed and medicine, the primary necessity in the step by step changes of prawn off-spring.—*Myitmakha News Agency*



Comprehensive Plan of Action to promote cooperation between ASEAN and Russia

This Comprehensive Plan of Action is aimed at fostering and diversifying mutually beneficial cooperation for the period of 2016-2020 between the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Russian Federation as set forth in the Sochi Declaration of the ASEAN-Russian Federation Commemorative Summit to Mark the 20th Anniversary of ASEAN-Russian Federation Dialogue Relations. "Moving Towards a Strategic Partnership for Mutual Benefit" adopted on 20 May 2016 in Sochi, the Russian Federation. This Comprehensive Plan of Action will work towards mutually beneficial objectives in the next five years (2016-2020), building upon the strong cooperation between ASEAN and the Russian Federation since 1996.

This Comprehensive Plan of Action lays out priorities and measures to be undertaken by both sides to further deepen and enhance their political-security, economic, socio-cultural and development cooperation as well as to realise the full potential of the ASEAN-Rus-

sia partnership in all areas of common interest, taking into account ASEAN 2025: Forging Ahead Together and its Blueprints, as well as the results of the implementation of the Comprehensive Programme of Action to Promote Cooperation between ASEAN and Russia 2005-2015. This Comprehensive Plan of Action recognises the importance of the promotion and protection of human rights, including through practical steps, exchange of best practices and closer cooperation, particularly in international fora.

In accordance with their respective international obligations and national legislation and policies, ASEAN Member States and the Russian Federation shall endeavour to pursue cooperation in the following areas: political and Security, counter-terrorism and transitional crime; trade and investment; finance; energy, industry and minerals, transport; food, agriculture and forestry; information and communication technology (ICT); tourism; science, technology and innovation; socio-cultural cooperation; disaster management and

emergency response; environment; climate change and biodiversity; health and pandemic preparedness and response; Environment, climate change and biodiversity, health and pandemic preparedness and response; education, youth and People-to-People Exchange, physical training and sports; cooperation on narrowing the development gap and connectivity and connectivity.

This Comprehensive Plan of Action is to be implemented by the relevant authorities of ASEAN Member States and the Russian Federation through the appropriate funding support by the governments of ASEAN Member States and the Russian Federation, including the ASEAN-Russian Federation Dialogue Partnership Financial Fund (ARDPFF); regularly review the progress of implementation of the Plan of Action through the existing mechanisms of the ASEAN-Russia Dialogue Relations; submit progress reports on the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan of Action to the annual PMC + 1 Session with the Russian Federation.—*GNLM*

Construction Ministry to develop 8,000 affordable units in Yangon over two years

THE Ministry of Construction announced it will construct 8,000 affordable housing units in Yangon Region within two years according to Union Minister U Win Khaing.

According to the ministry, around 40 or 50 buildings of five-storey each will be built on 2000-acre of land this year.

Low-cost apartments will be created to fulfill the needs of the people as of this year, said the Union minister, adding that vacant lands in Dagon Myothit (South) Township are designated for the construction of affordable housing.

The units installed with necessary infrastructure will be sold for about K10 million each, and

implementation of the housing projects is expected to be completed within two years. Private entrepreneurs will be invited to take part in the project implementation and a system of bank loans will be introduced. "I want to make the people who are striving for home ownership have an affordable road to owning an apartment within eight or 10 years," said the Union minister. Under an installment plan, homebuyers need to be able to pay 15 percent of the value of the apartment as an advanced payment before a monthly payment of K80,000 or 100,000.

Sources said that the affordable units of 400-sq-ft each include

two bedrooms, a bathroom and a toilet with water and power supply.

Three-fourths of the land is building and one-fourth is other infrastructure including schools and playgrounds, said the Union minister. "I would like to ask the people to be patient, to wait for a while as it remains difficult for developers to implement the projects in Yangon," added the Union minister.

The ministry has developed 32 low-cost buildings of four-storey each in Hlinethayar Township. Works are underway to implement the Yadana and Ayarwun affordable housing projects that include 49 buildings in Dagon Seikkan Township.—*Ko Moe*

Mandalay Police Force briefs on Service-Oriented Policing in Mandalay



The AOTO motorbikes being seen. PHOTO: MPF

THE Mandalay Police Force gave a briefing on Service-Oriented Policing as part of its 100-day plan at the office of the Region Police Commander in Mandalay Region on Friday with an opening speech by Mandalay Region Chief Minister Dr. Zaw Myint Maung.

At the ceremony, the Po-

lice Adjutant-General Police Brig-Gen Win Tun of the Myanmar Police Force elaborated on the process of the Service-Oriented Policing, and Police Col. Han Tun of the office of the Region Police Force explained the conditions of implementation of rule of law and crime suppression for the 100-day plan.

For use in implementing their duties, the director U Kyin Sein of Manmitte Company donated 10 AOTO electric motorcycles, worth around k1 million per motorcycle to Police Col. Han Tun.

A total of 230 departmental personnel and guests attended the ceremony.—*Myanmar Police Force*

Six-wheel Vehicle overturns on Yangon- Mandalay highway

A SIX-wheel vehicle being driven by one Kyaw Moe Oo, 41, with Aye Lwin, 31, on board ran off the road and overturned near Yedashe town on the Yangon-Mandalay at about 1:00am Friday morning.

The car accident, attributed to a flat tyre, occurred between mileposts 194/0 and 194/1. No one was injured but the car was badly damaged.

The driver has been charged by police.— *Ko Lwin (Swar)*



A six-wheel vehicle being seen overturned. PHOTO: KO LWIN (SWAR)

Car collides with motorcycle in Banmauk township

A CAR collided head on with a motorcycle in Banmauk township, Sagaing region on Thursday leaving one man dead.

The vehicle, being driven by one Aung Zaw Tun, crashed

into the motorcycle being driven by one Chit Win, 19, with Win Zaw on board when the former lost control.

The collision killed Chit Win, 19, on the spot while Win

Zaw was seriously injured and is now receiving medical care at a local hospital.

Police have filed charges against the driver of the vehicle.—*Lu Aung (Katha)*

Over K155 million to be spent on water supply for 25 villages

THE Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation will spend K155.290 million from the union budget to provide fresh drinking and bathing water to 25 villages in Magwe region, according to the Magwe Region Rural Development Department.

The water will be supplied to villages in Yenangyoung township, Natmauk township, Pwint Phyu township, Kanma township, Mindon township, Hsin Paung Wae township, Pakokku township, Yesagyo township and Myo Thit township as well as to two villages in Minbu township, Thayet township and Pauk township. Water will further be supplied to three villages in Chauk township, and seven villages in Myine township, Magwe region.

In Magwe region, there are 25 villages currently facing

a water shortage due to the recent high temperatures brought about by El Nino. "We rushed to provide water supplies to those regions. We are ready to provide water supplies if villages are facing water shortage. If that is the case the affected people need to inform the Rural Development Department. If departments and civil society organisations (CSOs) provide clean water, the water shortage problem can be reduced in Magwe region effectively", noted Assistant Director U Zaw Lin Naing.

"Under the 100-day project, we will repairs tube wells, change old motors, repair pumps, change new water pipes and repair driver shafts" said U Zaw Lin Naing, Assistant Director of the Magwe Region Rural Development Department.— 200

Crime NEWS

Heroin and Yaba seized

A COMBINED team comprising officers and staff from a Yangon police station searched the room of one Nay Naing Soe at the New Luck hotel on Bayintnaung road, North Okkalapa township on Thursday and discovered 195 yaba pills. Police also searched the home of Nay Naing Soe in Thakayta township and seized 10,570 yaba pills.

Similarly, police searched motorcycle driver Aung Zeya Kyaw with one Ma May The Su Yee on board at the corner of U Ba Gyan and U Wisara road, ward 42, Dagon (North) and discovered five yaba pills. According to a connected investigation, police searched

Aung Zeya Kyaw's room at the New Luck and discovered 475 yaba pills.

On that same day police from Lashio police station discovered 4,000 yaba pills on a motorcycle driver identified as one Naung Ja at the Nawnghkio entrance gate.

On Wednesday another police squad in Lashio seized traces of heroin, 220 yaba pills, a knife and six motorcycles from one Aung Kyaw Zeya's house in Man Kaung village. Ye Htut Zaw, Khine Saw Lin and Win Hlaing were found together with the host. All suspects have been charged by police. — *Myanmar Police Force*



Nay Naing Soe, Aung Zeya Kyaw and Ma May The Su Yee. PHOTO: MPF

Motorcycle accident kills man in Inndaw

A MOTORCYCLE plunged into a drain near Kyaunggone village, Inndaw township, Sagaing region on Thursday leaving one man dead.

According to an investigation the motorcycle was being driven by one Aung Tin. He

swerved in an attempt to avoid hitting a dog and plunged into the roadside drain at milepost 118/0 on the Shwe Bo-Myitkyina road. The driver died upon arrival at Ahlae Taw station hospital.— *Lu Aung (Katha)*

LOCAL Business

Electric Power & Energy Ministry to buy more than 5,300 transformers for electrification plan

THE Ministry of Electric Power and Energy will buy more than 5,300 transformers through the international competitive bidding system as part of its electrification plan for rural areas.

The ministry has revealed that it will spend some of the US\$300 million loan from

the World Bank to buy 5,370 transformers to in order to supply power to villages located within 2 miles of the national grid.

Officials of the ministry held talks in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday with local companies which produce and import transformers, clarifying the

bidding system.

Officials of the ministry reiterated that the World Bank would assist local companies in producing the transformers through its loans granted to Myanmar in order for the local producers to find both domestic and international markets.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Land prices in Kyaukphyu SEZ jump 50 per cent amid competitive buying



Small-scale model of Kyaukphyu SEZ being seen. PHOTO: MYITMAKHA NEWS AGENCY

LAND within the demarcated area of the yet-to-be-built Kyaukphyu Special Economic Zone (SEZ), located in Myanmar's western Rakhine State, went on sale in January of this year to competitive purchasing, which has brought the value of land up by nearly 50 per cent in the last four months, according to real estate agents.

"News spread that construction on the SEZ would commence at the end of this year. The result has been a burgeoning competitive market of land buy-

ing by businessmen looking for an investment. It's primarily the joint forces of Myanmar businessmen teaming up with regional entrepreneurs, who are buying up the land," said estate agent Ko Khaing Kyaw Soe.

Business people have, to date, bought up over 1,000 acres of empty land and farmland within the demarcated area of the Kyaukphyu SEZ, with the majority of land investments being made on plots located within the Kathapye Village-tract, which falls under demarcation of the

first phase of SEZ project.

The value of 2,400-square-foot plot of land within the demarcated project area back in December 2015 ranged between K20-40 million, depending on the location, whereas land prices between K30-60 million this month, according to local real estate agents. U Myint Thein, chair of the Kyaukphyu SEZ management sub-committee said that implementation of the SEZ would begin at the end of this year on over 4,000 acres of land.—*Myitmakha News Agency*

The import of illegal rice from Thailand rampant

THE import of illegal rice from Thailand is rising when compared to the previous years, according to the Myanmar Rice and Paddy Traders Association.

The people in the border between Myanmar and Thailand are eating Thai rice and now it has come to penetrate com-

mercial cities like Yangon, said the central executive committee member of Myanmar Rice and Paddy Traders Association (MRPTA) U Nay Lin.

MRPTA would submit this matter to the Ministry of Commerce in order that the latter can take legal action against the ille-

gal rice importers, said he, adding that local rice market is cool now, that the illegally imported Thai rice is competitive in terms of both quality and price.

Thai rice is sold for Kyats 26,000 only per 108 lb bag which is a lower price than locally produced rice.—*Chan Chan*

Entrepreneurs need to utilise US Zero tax

"CONCERNING export of aquatic products, the United States will grant zero taxation, and it is, therefore, necessary on the part of entrepreneurs and the authorities concerned to fully utilize this special chance," said U Aye Tun, Chairman of Myanmar Aquatic Products Manufacturers and Exporters' Association and Senior Vice President of Myanmar Fishery Federation (MFF).

"US have eased economic sanctions even during the term of previous government. But now, we are granted zero taxation for our export of aquatic products. We need to take advantage of this chance. But the problem is we have no products to export yet", said U Aye Tun. He added that last year witnessed an export value of US dollar 502 millions. But it is still a very small amount when compared to that of neighbouring nations like Thailand and Viet Nam.

Amidst this golden oppor-

tunity, we are being faced with delays in the port, which urgently requires a solution by Myanmar Port Authority, he continued, adding that the entrepreneurs and authorities from the departments concerned are required to make concerted effort. Now, just as the businessmen are evading taxes, the government employees are corrupt for reason of insufficient salary, playing tricks on the entrepreneurs in the pretext of redtapism. In this regard, the government is badly in need of a policy to address these problems.

"There are many things to discuss. As storage fees are high outside, entrepreneurs keep their containers in the port, and this causes delays, but the recent problem can also be attributed to long holiday during the water festival. The delays can damage our products. Another issue is the construction of the dockyard," said joint secretary U Aye Lwin.

—Win oo

Junction City Tower in downtown Yangon nearly complete

THE construction of Junction City Tower in downtown Yangon is 70 per cent complete and is expected to be finalised within the first four months of next year, according to the project manager.

Jointly organised by the Shwe Taung Group of Companies and Singapore-based Keppel Land Ltd, the project is being implemented at the corner of Shwe Dagon Pagoda Road and Bogyoke Road.

Designed by Singaporean architects, the tower will cover office apartments, a shopping centre, a five star hotel, residential apartments and serviced

apartments.

The tower has been built with the use of Singapore's state-of-the-art technology that will help reduce environmental impacts and energy consumption from 15 % to 70 % by use of energy-saving facilities.

Junction City, designed by DP Architects from Singapore, will include a five-star hotel to be operated by Pan Pacific Hotels and an office tower to be developed in collaboration with Singapore's Keppel Land company, in addition to a shopping centre and serviced apartments.—*ACM/Union Daily*

Myanmar exports over 40,000 tonnes of rice up until beginning of May

MYANMAR'S rice export including broken rice up until the beginning of May this fiscal year has reached 43,753 tonnes, generating over US\$15 million, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

The current export volume is lower than during the same period last fiscal year. It is directly linked to China's crackdown in March.

The majority of rice went to China through border trade camps.

A rice trader at the Muse border trade camp said the cur-

rent rice market is down because of transportation barriers that was effective after the end of China's crackdown at the border.

About 1,300 tonnes of rice from different towns across the nation have entered Muse market during the last few days. Around 6,500 tonnes of rice entered the market in the first week of this month.

Myanmar earned over \$11 million through rice export and \$3 million from the export of broken rice. That puts it at \$36 million less than during the same period last FY.—*ML/Union Daily*

Int'l aid pours into Sri Lanka following massive floods, landslides

COLOMBO — International assistance poured into Sri Lanka on Friday as the government continued efforts to provide relief to tens of thousands of people affected by severe floods and landslides owing to days of heavy rains.

The United States provided 50,000 US dollars for emergency humanitarian aid to meet the urgent needs of victims of the ongoing landslides and flooding while Defence Ministry officials said that one transport aircraft from India was due to arrive in the island country on Friday night with relief supplies.

The officials said two Indian naval ships with aid supplies were also expected to reach the country on Saturday.

Other countries which had pledged assistance included China, Pakistan and Australia while the Commonwealth Secretary General Patricia Scotland on Friday called on Commonwealth member countries

to provide support to Sri Lanka through coordinated operation in the aftermath of devastating landslides which struck in Sri Lanka's Kegalle District.

Evacuation efforts continued in the capital of Colombo on Friday as houses remained underwater due to severe rains in the past week.

The Navy said efforts were being made to evacuate families living in flood prone areas in case the rains continue.

"We are trying our best to evacuate the people, but many families do not want to move. We cannot leave them there. It is dangerous," a navy official involved in rescue efforts in flood hit Kollonnawa told Xinhua.

As several houses remained underwater, navy boats were patrolling the flooded areas distributing aid and water to the families who were residing in the upper floors of their houses.



Vehicles drowned by floods in Kelaniya District, Sri Lanka, on 20 May 2016. PHOTO: XINHUA

The armed forces were also involved in distributing aid in flood hit Kelaniya, just outside the capital as water levels reached a dangerous level.

Although rains had ceased in Colombo on Fri-

day, residents were unable to go near their homes due to severe flooding. However residents remained in hopes that they could return back in the coming days.

"We hope the rains do

not come back. We have lost everything as our house is completely under water. Right now we are living in a temporary camp which has been set up on the road," Fathima Nazeem said.

Sanjeewa Bandara had moved to a tent with his wife and two children and urgently required clothes and water.

Priyadarshani, 61, who fled her home with her husband on Tuesday night, said she was awaiting to return home in the aftermath of the disaster.

Over 450,000 people have been affected by the floods and landslides across the country while the Disaster Management Center said that 64 people had been killed.

Rescue efforts were ongoing in many districts, especially in Sri Lanka's Central Kegalle District, where two massive landslides had killed at least 36 people while over 140 were still trapped under the debris.

The government said it was making immediate efforts to provide assistance and has pledged to resettle those affected as soon as the water levels recede.—Xinhua

GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Chief Executive Officer - Nakagawa Kiyoshi

ceo@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Chief Editor - Khin Maung Aye

ce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Deputy Chief Editor - Aye Min Soe

dce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Chief Proof Reader & Translator - Ye Myint

Expatriate Consultant Editors

Jacob Goldberg

counselanteditor1@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Alec Wilmot

counselanteditor2@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Jaidan Coonan

Chief Translator & Editor

Kyaw Thura,

editor2@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Editor

Ye Htut Tin (Local News)

editor1@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

International Editors

Tun Tun Naing (Editor)

intlnews@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Nwe Nwe Tun (Sub-editor)

Translators

Khaing Thanda Lwin,

reporter1@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Hay Mar Tin Win,

translator@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Ei Myat Mon, Tin Nwe Lynn

Chief Reporter

Tun Aung Kyaw, reporter2@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Reporters

Soe Soe Yu, Thein Ko Lwin (Nay Pyi Taw Bureau),

Khin Mg Win (Mandalay Bureau)

Computer Team

Tun Zaw (Chief of Computer Team), Thein Ngwe,

Zaw Zaw Aung, Ye Naing Soe, Nyi Zaw Moe,

Hnin Pwint, Kay Khaing Win, Sanda Hnin, Zu Zin Hnin

Circulation & Advertising

San Lwin (+95) (01) 8604532

Ads and subscription enquiries:

subscription@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

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Australian PM's popularity slips in poll as tight election looms

SYDNEY — Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull's popularity has fallen, just over a month before what is expected to a closely fought election, an opinion poll published on Saturday showed.

Turnbull's conservative government remained neck and neck with the centre-left Labour Party in the Ipsos poll, which showed the government leading with 51 per cent support to Labor's 49 per cent.

However, Turnbull's personal popularity as preferred prime minister fell four percentage points to 47 per cent, which is still above opposition leader Bill Shorten at 30 per cent.

Australians will vote on 2 July after an unusually long 74-day campaign.

Turnbull, considered a

moderate in the conservative Liberal Party-led coalition government, had enjoyed high levels of popularity since he deposed his right-wing predecessor, Tony Abbott, in an internal party coup in September.

"Turnbull was expected to run rings around Labour in this campaign and instead Labour have him in their sites," said Peter Chen, a political scientist at Sydney University.

"He would be a very nervous man this morning."

The election comes as Australia is trying to rebalance its economy away from a once-in-a-generation mining boom.

The economy, which remained relatively unscathed by the global financial crisis, has started to show signs of a slowdown



Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull is seen during an event at Flinders University in Adelaide, Australia, on 13 May 2016 during campaigning before the 2 July federal election. PHOTO: REUTERS

in recent years.

Economic issues such as tax and the funding of education and health care have been front and centre in the campaign, as well as the hot-button issue of asylum seekers and border

protection. Australia has seen a revolving door of political leadership in recent years.

If Turnbull loses on 2 July, the change in prime minister would be the fifth since 2010.—Reuters

Thai king treated for fluid on the brain — palace

BANGKOK — Thailand's King Bhumibol Adulyadej received treatment for excessive fluid on his brain, the Royal Household Bureau said in a statement late on Friday.

According to the statement, the king had been treated with a spi-

nal-peritoneal shunt in 2011, after he became unable to walk steadily. However, a recent checkup had found his face muscles moving unusually.

Doctors decided to X-ray the king's brain on Friday and found unusually high levels of fluid in-

side. They treated the 88-year-old king by adjusting the shunt, which was inserted inside his abdomen to help drain fluid.

The king has been treated for the same condition before.

The result of the treatment was said to be satis-

factory, but the monarch's condition will be monitored, the statement said.

King Bhumibol, the world's longest-reigning monarch, has faced several illnesses in recent years and has been hospitalized for long periods.—Kyodo News

India's Modi to meet Obama, address US Congress next month

WASHINGTON — US President Barack Obama will meet with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Washington next month to discuss security and other issues and the Indian leader will be granted the rare honour of addressing both houses of Congress.

The White House said Obama and Modi will discuss economic growth, climate change, clean energy, and security and defence cooperation during their 7 June meeting.

It will be Modi's fourth trip to the United States since he became prime minister in 2014.

"The visit will highlight the deepening of the US-India relationship in key areas," the White House said in a statement on Friday. The two countries' partnership is seen as critical in Washington, which is seeking to counterbalance China's increasing power.

Modi will address a joint meeting of the US Congress, an opportunity extended to few foreign leaders, the day after the White House meeting, US House Speaker Paul Ryan said in a



US President Barack Obama talks with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi (R) during a working dinner at the White House with heads of delegations attending the Nuclear Security Summit in Washington on 31 March 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

tweet. The invitation is a sharp turnaround for Modi, who was once barred from the United States over massacres of Muslims. Last year there were only two joint addresses to Congress -

by Pope Francis and by Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, another important US ally in Asia.

In 2005, then-US President George W. Bush's administration denied Modi a visa, citing a 1998

US law barring entry to foreigners who have committed "particularly severe violations of religious freedom."

More than 1,000 people, mostly Muslims, were killed in

sectarian riots in Gujarat in 2002 when Modi had just become the state's chief minister. Modi has denied any wrongdoing, and India's Supreme Court in 2010 ruled there was no case.

Obama, who has adopted a "pivot to Asia" strategy and is keen to encourage a greater Indian military role in East Asia, quickly dismissed the issue by inviting Modi to the White House as soon as he called to congratulate him on winning the 2014 election.

The United States is also keen to encourage greater business and trade with India.

Progress has been only gradual, but in late March, the chief executive of US nuclear reactor maker Westinghouse Electric said he expected to sign a deal in June to build six reactors in India after marathon negotiations that began more than a decade ago.

The deal would be the first nuclear commercial power project since the United States and India agreed in 2008 to cooperate in the civil nuclear arena. Westinghouse is owned by Japan's Toshiba Corp.—*Reuters*

Thai, Chinese navies kick off joint drill in Thailand

BANGKOK — A joint military exercise, codenamed "Blue Strike 2016," carried out by the Thai and Chinese navies started on Saturday at Thailand's Sattahip naval base in the eastern Province of Chon Buri, around 120 kilometres southeast of Bangkok.

Around 1,000 Thai and Chinese Marine Corps personnel, roughly 500 from each country, have joined the exercise, which is being held for the third time. As well as Chon Buri, the drill will also take in Chanthaburi Province in the east of Thailand.

The opening ceremony was presided over by the Thai fleet's Commander-in-Chief Naris Pathumsuwan and China's Deputy Commander of the People's Liberation Army Navy, Wang Hai.

Adm. Naris said in his speech that the drill will help emphasize the long standing relationship between Thailand and China, adding that the two navies also enjoy a close relationship. He said the joint exercise is aimed at increasing the cooperation between the two navies, especially regarding relevant knowledge and experience.

"The exercise will also help increase the capability of marines who participated in the activities", he said.

Rear Adm. Wang said the activities in the joint exercise will focus on humanitarian assistance, evacuation and amphibious operations against terrorism.

"We will exchange training and naval tactics to maintain the stability of maritime security", he said, adding that both sides have the same intention of fighting against regional and global terrorism. The joint exercise, lasting until 9 June, will involve sea and land operations, including a rescue mission and battle operations with classified armaments and tactics, plus a combined training exercise.

The armaments and equipment include helicopters, rocket launchers, 122-millimeter Howitzer tanks, an amphibious transport dock, inflatable boats, speed boats, and a range of guns and other relevant equipment.

Thailand hosted the first Blue Strike exercise in 2010 while China held the second in 2012, involving several hundred naval participants.—*Kyodo News*

Dutch climber dies during descent from Everest summit

KATHMANDU — A 36-year-old Dutch climber died while descending from the summit of Everest, the first to perish this year on the world's highest mountain, officials in Nepal said on Saturday.

Eric Ary Arnold was among over 40 climbers who reached the 8,850 metre (29,035 feet) summit on Friday, but died later that day while coming down on high-altitude slopes known as the "death zone" because of the prevailing thin air, Tourism Department offi-

cial Gyanendra Shrestha said.

Mingma Sherpa of the Seven Summits Treks company that organised Arnold's expedition said his client complained of weakness while descending above 8,000 metres (26,246 feet) and probably died from altitude sickness.

"We are trying to get in touch with his family and insurance company about the body which is still on the mountain," he said.

A Nepali sherpa who was fixing ropes on nearby Lhotse,

world's fourth highest peak — at 8,516 metres (27,940 feet) — fell to his death this week. More than 330 climbers have reached the top of Everest this month. An earthquake last year killed at least 18 people at the Everest Base Camp, situated at some 5,400 metres (17,800 feet) altitude, and forced hundreds of climbers to abandon their expeditions. The quake, the worst in Nepal's recorded history, killed 9,000 people across the Himalayan nation.—*Reuters*

Three killed in Bangladesh textile factory fire

DHAKA — Three workers were killed on Saturday when fire engulfed a textile factory in Bangladesh, police said, renewing fears about safety in the multi-billion dollar industry.

A Pakistani technician was among those killed at the factory in Narsingdi, 50 km (30 miles) north-east of Dhaka, police official Shahidur Rahman said.

"The blaze started on the

ground floor of the seven-storey building, where chemicals were stored," he said, adding it was not immediately clear what caused the fire.

At least seven workers were injured and taken to hospital. It took firefighters three hours to put out the blaze.

Such fires have become less frequent in recent years as global brands and the Bangladesh govern-

ment have focused more on safety. The \$26 billion export industry employs four million people and generates 80 per cent of Bangladesh's export earnings.

Bangladesh's garment sector is the world's second biggest after China. The industry came scrutiny after the collapse of a factory complex in 2013 killed more than 1,100 people and a garment factory fire in 2012 killed 112 workers.—*Reuters*

Seven US warships arrive in Philippines for visit

MANILA — Seven warships, which formed a United States Navy strike group, have arrived in the Philippines for a routine visit, local media reported on Saturday.

The group consists of USS John C. Stennis (CVN 74) with Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 9 and Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 21, guided-missile destroyers USS

Stockdale (DDG 106), USS Chung-hoon (DDG 93), and USS William P. Lawrence (DDG 110), and guided-missile cruiser USS Mobile Bay (CG 53).

The USS John C. Stennis Strike Group (JCSG) warships, which are manned by about 8,500 sailors, arrived on Friday in Subic Bay, Zambales, the *Daily Tribune* said.

It is not the first time that the JCSG visited the Philippines as it participated in the US-Philippine Balikatan (shoulder-to-shoulder) exercise last April.

In pursuing its pivot-to-Asia policy, the US has reportedly deployed some 60 per cent of its navy assets in the South China Sea.—*Xinhua*

Opinion

Write for us

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

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

Why?

Kyaw Thura

EVERYONE knows that candidates from different parties during their election campaigns make all kinds of hopeful promises of how they will implement reforms on all fronts when they take office. When elected, they will work hard to adopt policies on all-round national development as advocated during the campaigns. This means that they all are in the same boat.

It is undeniable that they

all share the same development goals. Their fervent desires for national development are unmatched to some extent. Even then, what makes them opposed to each other's views? Are there any hidden agenda behind their promises?

The same thing can be said of the peace talks. When asked if they want to live together in peace, all conflicting communities will be ready with a quick answer of yes. They all keep talking of how important

peace is for the development of their communities. But nobody wants to make some sacrifice and compromise for peace. No matter how they say how much they care for peace, are there any hidden agenda behind their words?

A similarly affected topic is education. Everyone understands that their quality of life will improve dramatically when they are well educated. Despite this plain fact, only a few people land decent jobs af-

ter graduation, while many graduates remain unemployed. Most of the people leading a hard life turn out to be those who did not finish school, feeling guilty and remorseful for wasting their youth. Strange as it may seem, only a few regret it while many do not regret a thing. Instead, they willingly abandon themselves to fate. Hopefully, there is no such thing as a hidden agenda behind what they call bad luck.

All-round Developments of Renovations and Constructions of Religious Edifices and Implementations of Religious matters and affairs throughout the Republic of Union of Myanmar

Ba Sein (Religious Affairs)

ACCORDING to the present statistical census of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, the present populations of the entire nation are over 55 millions. Over 85 per cent of population takes faith in Theravada Buddhism.

Buddhism

It is known that the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has been a predominant Theravada Buddhist Nation in the world throughout age since years ago. Consequently, the members of the Sangha, the entire multifarious Buddhist people and the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, hand in hand, are striving to carry out the noble tasks of all-round developments of renovations and new constructions of religious buildings and implementations of religions matters and affairs leading to the purification, perpetuation and promotion of the Buddha Sasana throughout the country. We all Buddhists know that such all-round developments of renovations and new constructions of religious edifices have been done since the time of the State Peace and Development Council of the Union of Myanmar. We all Buddhists, from generation to generation, throughout the Republic of the Union of Myanmar will never forget such noble kinds of these historic events in the history of Buddhism of Myanmar.

During the period of the Government of the State Peace and Development Council of the Union of Myanmar, the noble tasks and historic noble events leading to the purification, propagation and pro-

motion of the Buddha Sasana were successfully carried out. And now, the new Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar is carrying out these noble tasks in continuation.

In order to confer more religious titles on the eminent members of Sangha for their outstanding activities and contributions to promotion and propagation of the Buddha Sasana (teachings of the Buddha) at home and abroad the law for presentation of religious titles was enacted in 1991 as Law No. 41/91 of the State Peace and Development Council of the Union of Myanmar. According to the Law for presentation of religious titles, more religious titles have been presented to the eminent members of Sangha at home and abroad since then. It is learnt that members of Sangha from foreign countries have not been presented religious titles since 1962.

With a view of strengthening the friendly and religious relations between the People's Republic of China and the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and to promote and propagate the Buddha Sasana (teachings of the Buddha) all over the world, the Sacred Tooth Relic of the Buddha from the People's Republic of China was conveyed to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar in 1955, 1994, 1996 and 2011 respectively for being paid homage here. While the Sacred Tooth Relic of the Buddha from the People's Republic of China was being paid homage and the other two Sacred Replica-Tooth Relics were also paid homage at the same time.

According to the strong wishes of the members of the Sangha,

the pious Buddhist people and the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar under the guidance of the State Sanghamahanayaka Committee of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, the other two Sacred Replica-Tooth Relics were enshrined each in the two Buddha Tooth Relic Pagodas, one in Yangon and another in Mandalay. The Buddha Tooth Relic Pagoda (Yangon) was completed in November 1996 and the Buddha Tooth Relic Pagoda (Mandalay) in December 1996 respectively. These two Pagodas will stand forever as significant symbol of everlasting friendship and relationship between the People's Republic of China and the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, and also will be a sacred place of Buddhist people throughout the world.

The everlasting noble tasks for hoisting the grand new golden umbrella (Hütaw) of the most famous Shwedagon Pagoda and all-round developments of renovations and restorations of the sacred stairways and gateways of the Pagoda were successfully carried out by generous donations and supporting of the government and the pious multifarious Buddhist people throughout the country.

And also, some parts and edifices of Sule and Botahtaung Pagodas in Yangon have been renovated and restored by generous donations of the Buddhist people.

And also, most ancient pagodas in Bagan (the famous ancient city of the nation) are being renovated and restored in original style by generous pious Buddhist people under the aegis of the Government. Renovations and restorations of most ancient pagodas in Bagan

have been completed. In addition, renovations and new constructions of many pagodas, temples, monasteries and other religious buildings in States and Regions throughout the country were carried out. Besides, the Lokamanicula Pagoda which was built by the Government of Myanmar in Lumbini Park, the Birthplace of the Buddha, Nepal, was completed in 1995.

In addition, it is further learnt that according to the arrangements of the concerning ministries of the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, Buddhist people throughout the nation are allowed to visit the four sacred places of the Inspiring Awareness and Apprehension of the Omniscient Buddha in India and Nepal every year.

Moreover, the immense scared Lokachantha Abhaya Labha Muni Marble Buddha Image was respectfully established by the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar in order to be paid homage by internal Buddhist people and international Buddhist communities. The Buddha Image is respectfully located in Insein Township, Yangon Region.

Furthermore, we all Buddhists across the world heartily know that the significant World Buddhist Summit which was attended by both internal and international Buddhist delegates and representatives was successfully held in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar in December 2004. The Summit was earnestly organized and sponsored by the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar. This concrete and noble event of successfully holding such significant World Buddhist Summit is

the most important milestone in the world Buddhist history.

And now, we all Buddhists throughout the country are very pleased and honored to learn that **the Uppatasanti Pagoda of 325 feet in height, the Replica of the most famous Shwedagon Pagoda**, has been already built in Nay Pyi Taw, the capital of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

Paying homage to the newly-built Uppatasanti Pagoda, the Replica of the most famous Shwedagon Pagoda in Yangon, will be like just paying homage to the most famous Shwedagon Pagoda which was built in the lifetime of the Omniscient Pagoda in 103 Great Era (589 BC) over 2555 years ago.

And also, we all Buddhists throughout the Republic of the Union of Myanmar know that the monastic education schools which were faint out and nearly disappeared in our country could have been re-introduced by the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar. For higher studies of Buddhism, the two Pariyatti Sasana Universities could be established, one in Yangon and another in Mandalay. And now, young members of the Sangha at home and abroad are attending these two universities for further studies of Buddhism. Besides, an International Theravada Buddhist Missionary University has been established already in Yangon, the second capital of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar. This university will be a permanent learning centre for further studies of the genuine Thra-vada Buddhism in the Buddhist world.

See page 9 >>

Kason nyaung yei thun pwe held in in Amarapura Township



Kason nyaung yei thun procession being seen in Amarapura. PHOTO: THIHA KO KO

THE ceremony of the water pouring on the Sacred Bodhi Tree festival was held at Shwekyetyet pagoda in Amarapura Township of Mandalay Region on a grand scale on Friday. Local people from fifteen villages of Amarapura Township came together to organise the ceremony.

The water pouring festival

(Kason nyaung yei thun pwe) is held in the second month of the Myanmar calendar, Kason (May). The full moon of Kason is very significant for Buddhist people, and is known as 'Buddha Day', because four cardinal events happened on that day: Dipinkara Buddha foretold that the hermit Thumeda would be re-

born as the Buddha, Gotama; the Buddha was born; Gotama Buddha attained Enlightenment at the foot of the Bodhi tree; and the Buddha passed into Nirvana. On the 14th waxing day of Kason, a day before the full moon, people carried water pots and visited pagodas to pour water onto the sacred Bodhi tree.—Thiha Ko Ko

All-round Developments of Renovations and Constructions...

>> from page 8

Such noble tasks of all-round developments of renovations and new constructions of pagodas, temples, monasteries and other various religious buildings throughout the country were successfully carried out in a large scale across the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

Christianity

Over 5 percent of the entire population of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar takes faith in Christianity. There are many Christian churches and worship centers throughout the country. The Christian people have lived peacefully and harmoniously with other national races of different religions in the Republic of Union of Myanmar since years ago. There are four Christian religious organizations mainly recognized by the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, and Christian religious leaders and other Christian personnel are allowed to go abroad to attend their religious meetings, conferences, seminars and trainings. Congratulatory messages of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar are sent to the ceremonies of Christian holy days such as Easter Day, Christmas Eve and other festivals. The financial grant is also yearly provided by the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to be able to promote and flourish the Christianity in the country. Various kinds of books, magazines and journals on Christianity are allowed to be published and distributed, and also renovations and constructions of churches and worship centers all over the country are allowed. Some leaders of Christian Religious Organizations are issued traveling free pass in order to tour the whole

country to carry out their religious matters and affairs.

Islamism

About 4 percent of the entire population of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar takes faith in Islamism, and many Islamic mosques, worship centers and religious schools are situated throughout the Republic of the Union of Myanmar. Altogether 5 Islamic Religious Organizations are mainly recognized by the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and all these organizations are able freely to perform and carry out their religious affairs in accordance with the existing laws and orders of the country. Many leaders of the Islamic Religious Organizations and other Islamic personnel are occasionally allowed to go abroad to attend their religious meetings, seminars, conferences and trainings. Congratulatory messages of the Ministry of Religious Affairs are sent to the ceremonies of their holy days and other religious festivals such as the Prophet Mohammed Birthday, Idulfiti day, Iduladwaha day and other significant religious days. Many books, magazines and journals on Islamism are allowed to be published and distributed and financial grant is provided by the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to promote and flourish their religion in the country. The Haj Pilgrims from the Republic of the Union of Myanmar are yearly sent by the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to fulfill their religious duties there in accordance with five pillars of Islamic faith. And also renovations and constructions of mosques and other religious buildings are allowed. Besides, some of leaders of Islamic Religious Or-

ganizations are issued traveling free pass to tour the whole country in order to perform and carry out their religious matters and affairs.

Hinduism

Over 0.5 percent of the entire population of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar takes faith in Hinduism, and there are many Hindu temples and worship centers throughout the country. Despite differences among people of different religions of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, Hindu people have been living in harmony together with other national people of different religions since years ago. Two Hindu religious organizations are mainly recognized by the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and they are freely carrying out their religious affairs in accordance with the existing laws and orders of the country. The financial grant is yearly provided by the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to the Hindu Religious Organizations to promote and flourish their religion in the country. Besides, books, magazines and journals on Hinduism are allowed to be published and distributed. Congratulatory messages of the Ministry of Religious Affairs are sent to their religious ceremonies such as Depavali day and other festivals. Some of religious leaders of Hindu Religious Organizations are issued traveling free pass to tour throughout the country in order to carry out their religious matters and affairs.

From time immemorial, we all Myanmar nationalities of different religions in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar extending and attaching great importance to each other, have lived through thick and thin regardless of colour, caste and religion.

Peace

POEM:

Composed by Myoma Nyein

Peace is always like honey
That never leaves its taste of sweetness
Whether from the bee hive
Of a neem tree or that of a mango tree,
Promising joys and smiles
To all mankind of this world forever.
Take preventive measures
Against the outbreak of the Flames of War.
Stop the Flames of War
So horrible, so disgusting.
Come, bring your pots big or small,
Even cup your hands and do your bit,
In harmony and synchrony splash
The cool Water of Peace.
Wish all our people in this world,
Regardless of friend or foe,
To be apprehensive of the Flaming war,
To stop this Common Enemy,
Perceiving that the amassed traditions and our cultures,
Our quaint customs and noble values
Would be demolished by the war.
Love of peace brings
Happy homes and pervading joys.
Yes, Peace is always like honey.

Translated by Zaw Tun

ငြိမ်းချမ်းရေး

ရေး - မြို့မငြိမ်း

ငြိမ်းချမ်းရေးသည် ပျားရည်ကဲ့သို့ပင် အစဉ်
တမာပင် သရက်ပင် ဘာပင်ခွဲခွဲ ချိုမြိန်အရသာ
မစွန့်သည်သာပင်
ကမ္ဘာသားလူအများမျက်နှာထားချိုကြည်
ပျော်စေသည် ထာဝစဉ်
စစ်ရန်မီး ကွင်းရှောင် မလောင်မီ ကြိုတင်။
ရွံ့ရာ မုန်းစရာ စစ်ရန် မီး တားဆီး ဖို့တတွင်
အိုးကြီးအိုးငယ် သယ်ဆောင် ကာယူငင်
လက်ခုပ်နဲ့ပဲ ဖြစ်စေ ကိုယ်တိုင်ပါဝင်
ဖျန်းပက်ကြ ကိုယ်စီညီညီပင်
ငြိမ်းချမ်းရေးအေးမြသော ရေစင်
ကမ္ဘာ့ လူသားတွေ တွေးပူကြိုတင်
ရန်သူမိတ်ဆွေ မရွေးသူငါပင်
ရန်စစ်မီးကို မလောင်စေချင်
စုဆောင်းခဲ့သော ယဉ်ကျေးမှု အဆက် အစဉ်
အနုအယဉ်အမွန် အမြတ်တွေ သုန်းဆိတ် မှာမြင်
ငြိမ်းချမ်းရေး မြတ်နိုး အိုးအိမ်သာယာသူငါ ပျော်ရွှင်
ငြိမ်းချမ်းရေးသည် ပျားရည်ကဲ့သို့ပင် အစဉ်။

Trump rallies gun owners with fiery anti-Clinton speech

LOUISVILLE, (Ky) — Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump assured gun owners on Friday he would protect their constitutional right to bear arms and eliminate gun-free zones if elected, accusing Democrat Hillary Clinton of wanting to weaken gun rights.

Trump, who will almost certainly be the Republican presidential nominee, picked up the endorsement of the National Rifle Association, a politically powerful lobbying group which claims more than 4 million members.

Trump's remarks at the NRA's national convention in Louisville, Kentucky, were not a surprise, but they could solidify his status among conservatives who see protecting the US Constitution's Second Amendment as a top priority.

Trump also planned to meet on Monday with US Senator Bob Corker of Tennessee, a source close to the Trump campaign said. The two are expected to consult on foreign policy. The source said Corker remains on Trump's list of potential vice presidential running mates.

Clinton, who is close to clinching the Democratic Party's nomination for the 8 November election, has vowed to take on the gun lobby and expand gun control measures to include comprehensive background checks for gun buyers, including at open-air gun shows and online.

Trump, who is trying to unite the Republican Party behind him after a brutal primary battle, accused Clinton, a former secretary of state to President Barack Obama, of wanting to end the 2nd Amendment, which says in part that the people's right to keep and bear arms "shall not be infringed."

"Hillary Clinton wants to abolish the Second Amendment, not change it; she wants to abolish it," Trump said. Clinton campaign



Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump addresses members of the National Rifle Association during their NRA-ILA Leadership Forum during at their annual meeting in Louisville, Kentucky, on 20 May 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

senior policy adviser Maya Harris said Trump is peddling falsehoods and denounced "Donald Trump's conspiracy theories." She said Clinton believes there are "common-sense steps we can take at the federal level to keep guns out of the hands of criminals" while protecting the Second Amendment. Trump told the NRA he would eliminate gun-free zones imposed in some areas, noting that the 2015 shooting deaths of four US Marines at an armed forces recruiting centre in Chattanooga, Tennessee, took place in a gun-free zone.

"The Second Amendment is on the ballot in November," he said. "The only way to save our Second Amendment is to vote for a person you know: Donald Trump."

The NRA's convention took place on the same day that a man brandished a gun at a checkpoint near the White House in Washington and was shot and wounded by a law enforcement officer.

The New York billionaire's NRA speech was another step in his drive to make more conservatives comfortable with his

candidacy. Earlier this week, he released a list of 11 potential Supreme Court nominees who are conservative jurists, a step well-received on the right.

Many conservatives, who had backed other Republican candidates in the 2016 race, worry that Trump is a closet liberal on many issues. But Chris Cox, executive director of the NRA's Institute for Legislative Action, said it was time for them to get over their qualms about the 69-year-old candidate.

"If your preferred candidate is out of the race, it's time to get over it," Cox told the NRA audience. "Are there valid arguments in favour of some over others? Sure. Will any of it matter if Hillary wins in November? Not one bit."

In another step toward trying to unify the party, Cox has invited members of Congress to a "small roundtable discussion" with one of Trump's sons, Donald Trump Jr., on Wednesday at the Capitol Hill Club near the US Capitol, a copy of the invitation said.—Reuters

Submarine cable connecting Finland, Germany ready for commercial use

HELSINKI — A submarine data cable system between Finland and Germany was officially opened for commercial use, announced Cinia Group, Finnish government-owned ICT-based service and solution provider on Friday.

The new digital highway links Northern and Central Europe with a record-breaking capacity of 144 Tbps (terabits per second), enabling data centre providers to benefit from Finland's cool climate, strict privacy laws and low energy pricing, said Cinia Group.

Cinia Group held a ceremony on Friday to celebrate the official opening and commercial avail-

ability of the cable connection, named Cinia C-Lion 1.

"With the Northern Digital Highway, we are building infrastructure that puts Finland on the top of the list for global digital pioneers when choosing a favourable location for data intensive operations," said Ari-Jussi Knaapila, Cinia's CEO at the ceremony.

Brigitte Zypries, Parliamentary State Secretary at the German Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy, noted that the new submarine data cable is an opportunity not only for businesses in Finland and Germany but also the whole of Europe.

Finnish Minister of Foreign Trade and Development Lenita Toivakka said the Finnish government hopes the submarine cable connection to benefit Finland's national economy.

According to Cinia, the labeled Northern Digital Highway directly links Central European network nodes, such as DE-CIX, the largest internet exchange point in the world, via Finland to Russian and Asian markets.

In the future, the network connection is expected to further stretch to Asia through the Northeast Passage, said Cinia Group.—Xinhua

NEWS IN BRIEF

Five killed as cyclone Roanu starts to batter Bangladesh

DHAKA — A cyclone battered the coast of Bangladesh on Saturday killing at least five people after lashing India's east coast with heavy rain and wind.

Authorities in low-lying Bangladesh have relocated about 500,000 people into 3,500 shelters, the disaster minister said, even as Cyclone Roanu killed three people in house collapses and two in landslides.

"We've shifted most of the people who are vulnerable," Disaster Management and Relief Minister Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya told a news conference.

"All-out preparations are in place to tackle the damage". Officials suspended flights at Chittagong airport in the southeast while the Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority imposed restrictions on the movement of all ships and ferries. "The sea will remain very rough near the cyclone centre," it said. —Reuters

Paris attack suspect refuses to speak at first French court hearing

PARIS — The man prosecutors believe is the sole survivor of the Islamist group that attacked Paris in November appeared in a French court for the first time on Friday, but refused to speak.

Salah Abdeslam was brought to court in central Paris from his cell in a high-security prison outside the city, but the hearing was cut short after it became clear he would not talk. "From the start he made clear he would be exercising his right to silence, refusing to respond to questions from the judge," a spokesman from the prosecutor's office said in a text message to Reuters. Abdeslam's lawyer said last month that the Belgian-born Frenchman would speak at the hearing. The 26-year-old was placed under formal investigation on terrorism and murder charges on 27 April after his extradition from Belgium.—Reuters

Refugee centres with 913 people to close by end of 2016

BELGRADE — By the end of 2016, all refugee centres housing refugees and displaced persons from Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH) and Kosovo will be closed, Tanjug has been told at Serbia's Commissariat for Refugees and Migration.

Ivan Gerginov, assistant to the commissioner for refugees in charge of reception, accommodation, return and integration, says that nine centres in Serbia provide housing for 560 refugees and internally displaced persons, and there are eight more centres in Kosovo.

"There are a total of 913 people left in the refugee centres," Gerginov told Tanjug, adding that with the help of the EU and other partners' grants, all collective centres for refugees and internally displaced persons from the civil wars in the 1990s would be closed by the end of the current year.—Tanjug

Sri Lanka grants amnesty to 540 prisoners

COLOMBO — A total of 540 prisoners were released on a presidential pardon in Sri Lanka on Saturday in view of Vesak, an important holiday and day for Buddhists all over the world.

The Prisons Department said the prisoners released were serving minor offences and included those who had been imprisoned for their failure to pay the fines imposed by court. Those who are above 70 years old and who had been serving their sentences for more than 10 years were also included in the pardon.

The department said no prisoner who had been sentenced for murders, robberies and child and woman abuses were released under the pardon. Out of the 540 released, 47 were released from the Welikada Prison, the main prison in Sri Lanka's capital.—Xinhua

Magnitude 5.9 earthquake recorded in central Australia: USGS

SYDNEY — An earthquake with a magnitude of 5.9, unusually powerful for Australia, struck the country's desert centre early on Saturday, the US Geological Survey said.

There were no immediate reports of damage or casualties from the 10-km-deep quake, which was centered some 460 km (285 miles) west-southwest of the outback town of Alice Springs. The earthquake, which happened just before 4 am local time in the sparsely populated area of the Northern Territory, was initially recorded at a magnitude of 6.2 before being revised down by USGS. Geoscience Australia said it could have been felt as far as 507 km from its epicenter, although any damage would be limited to a 40 km radius. "It occurred in the middle of the desert and as far as we can tell it was far from any community and there have been no reports of injuries or damage," Northern Territory Police duty superintendent Angela Stringer told Reuters.—Reuters

Russia urges joint strikes on Syria rebels but US reacts coolly

MOSCOW/ WASHINGTON — Russia has proposed to the US-led coalition that they stage joint air strikes on Syrian rebels, including militant Islamist group Nusra Front, who are not observing a ceasefire, but the United States responded coolly on Friday.

Such action would begin as of 25 May and be coordinated with the Syrian government, Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu told a Defence Ministry meeting broadcast on state television, adding Moscow reserved the right to stage strikes unilaterally.

He said joint air strikes should also target convoys carrying weapons and ammunition crossing into Syria from Turkey.

“We believe the adoption of these measures will allow a transition to a peaceful process to be achieved in the entire territory of Syria,” he said. “Of course, these measures have been coordinated with the leadership of the Syrian Arab Republic.”

Shoigu said discussions with US military experts based in Jordan and other counterparts in Geneva had begun on Thursday.

But the United States made clear on Friday it had little interest in the idea, noting Russia has floated similar proposals in the past and stressing that it expected Moscow to pressure its Syrian government ally and to avoid unilateral strikes.



Russian President Vladimir Putin (R) and Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu attend a meeting with top generals at the Bocharov Ruchei state residence in Sochi, Russia, on 10 May 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Washington has consistently refused to join forces with Russia in Syria ever since Moscow launched its campaign of air strikes in September last year, accusing it of acting solely to prop up Syrian President Bashar al-Assad.

The United States has called on Assad to step down.

Communication between the US and Russian militaries on Syria has been limited to contacts aimed at avoiding an ac-

cidental clash as they carry out rival bombing campaigns and small numbers of US forces operate on the ground.

Western officials suggested that the proposal, which the Pentagon said had not been formally presented to the US Defence Department, was an attempt by President Vladimir Putin to raise Russia's profile on the international stage.

“There is no agreement to conduct joint air strikes with the

Russians in Syria,” said US State Department spokesman John Kirby.

He added that the United States believed that Assad's government was responsible for most of the violations of the fitful ceasefire that began on 27 February.

“We look to Russia to end such (government) violations, which includes strikes that have hit civilians and civilian facilities,” he said.

While Russia supports the Assad government, the United States and its allies support rebels trying to overthrow him in a civil war that has burned for more than five years and killed at least 250,000 people.

However, both sides oppose the al Qaeda-linked Nusra Front, which was not included in a ceasefire deal which has failed to prevent widespread violence. A US military strike killed Nusra Front's leader, Abu Firas al-Suri, in April.

White House spokesman Eric Schultz said the US aim remains for Russia to persuade Assad to abide by the cessation of hostilities in Syria, saying it was not the first time Russia had made such a proposal.

“You've seen Russia show an eagerness to cooperate with us militarily. This is not something that's new,” Schultz said.

In private, US officials said the idea was a non-starter.

“Don't see it happening,” a US official said, adding the US military “will ensure safety of flight but nothing else.”

A Western official from a coalition country also played down the proposal.

“Putin has long had a strategy regarding Syria of trying to share the geopolitical stage with the United States and its allies, and his latest proposal appears to reflect that goal,” the official said.—Reuters

Police break up anti-government protest in Kazakhstan

ALMATY — Police broke up an anti-government protest in Kazakhstan's biggest city Almaty on Saturday, detaining dozens of protesters and cordoning off the city's main square.

Opponents of President Nursultan Nazarbayev, who has been in power since 1989, had called for rallies on Saturday in all major cities, extending a series of demonstrations that started last month in response to plans to privatize large tracts of farmland.

Around 100 protesters had gathered at a police checkpoint that blocked access to Almaty's main square.

Reuters witnesses saw police in full riot gear chase the protesters down the street, detaining them one-by-one and putting them into buses.

Police also briefly detained two Reuters reporters but released them after driving them

a short distance in a police van.

Kazakh authorities had warned that the planned rallies were “illegal” and that authorities would react.

“Law enforcement bodies are obliged to prevent any violations and immediately take the necessary legal measures including criminal prosecution,” Prosecutor General Zhakip Asanov had said in a statement on Friday.

Earlier this week, police and courts detained at least half a dozen activists in several cities who had planned to take part in Saturday's protests.

Although relatively small so far, with the biggest no more than a few thousand strong, the recent protests have become the most visible and geographically broad display of public discontent against the president's rule in more than a decade.—Reuters

Four killed, 90 injured in Baghdad Green Zone riots: hospitals

BAGHDAD — At least four people were killed and 90 injured among anti-corruption protesters who stormed Baghdad's heavily fortified Green Zone on Friday, hospital sources said on Saturday.

Iraqi security forces used live and rubber bullets as well as tear gas to dislodge the protesters from the district that houses government buildings, parliament and embassies.

The toll, compiled from four hospitals where casualties were taken as well as Baghdad's central morgue, accounts for bullet wounds only, not cases of suffocation caused by tear gas.

The disturbance was the second breach of the Green Zone in less than a month.

Protesters included supporters of powerful Shi'ite Muslim cleric Moqtada al-Sadr and people from other groups upset with the government's failure to approve anti-corruption reforms and improve security against bombings by Islamic State mili-



Anti-government protesters carry a man injured during the storming of Baghdad's Green Zone in Iraq 20 May, 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

tants.

The government briefly imposed a curfew on Baghdad on Friday and authorities later said that order had returned after what they called rioting at the Green Zone.

Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi, in a late-night speech,

condemned the Green Zone breach and warned against chaos and strife: “The law must take its course with every transgressor.”

Sadr expressed support for what he called a “peaceful spontaneous revolt” and condemned the government for “killing its children in cold blood”.—Reuters

French investigators say smoke reported on EgyptAir jet before crash



Recovered debris of the EgyptAir jet that crashed in the Mediterranean Sea is seen with the Arabic caption "life jacket" in this still image taken from video on 21 May 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

PARIS — An EgyptAir jet sent a series of signals indicating that smoke had been detected on board before it crashed into the Mediterranean on Thursday, France's air accident investigation agency said on Saturday.

A spokesman for the BEA agency said the signals did not indicate what caused the smoke or fire on board the plane, which plunged into the sea with 66 people on board as it was heading from Paris to Cairo.

But they offered the first clues as to what unfolded in the moments before the crash. One aviation source said that a fire on board would likely have generated multiple warning signals, while a sudden explosion may not have generated any.

Egypt said its navy had found human remains, wreckage and the personal belongings of passengers floating in the Mediterranean about 290 km (180 miles) north of Alexandria. The army spokesman published pictures on Saturday on its official Facebook page of the recovered items, which included blue debris with EgyptAir markings, seat fabric with designs in the airline's colours, and a yellow lifejacket.

Analysis of the debris is likely

to be key to determining what happened to the flight.

It was the third blow since October to Egypt's travel industry, still reeling from political unrest following the 2011 uprising that ousted Hosni Mubarak.

A suspected Islamic State bombing brought down a Russian airliner after it took off from Sharm el-Sheikh airport in late October, killing all 224 people on board, and an EgyptAir plane was hijacked in March by a man wearing a fake suicide belt.

"These messages do not allow in any way to say what may have caused smoke or fire on board the aircraft," said a spokesman for the French BEA agency, which is assisting an official Egyptian investigation.

He added that the priority now was to find the two flight recorders, containing cockpit voice recordings and data readings, from the Airbus A320 which vanished from radar early on Thursday.

The flight data was sent through an automatic system called the Aircraft Communications Addressing and Reporting System (ACARS), which routinely downloads maintenance and fault data to the airline operating the aircraft.

Aviation website Aviation Herald published a burst of seven messages broadcast over the space of three minutes. These included alarms about smoke in the lavatory as well as the aircraft's avionics area, which sits under the cockpit.

While suggesting a possible fire, the relatively short sequence of data gives no insight into pilot efforts to control the aircraft, nor does it show whether it fell in one piece or disintegrated in mid-air, two aviation safety experts said.—

Reuters

Secret Service shoots gun-wielding man near White House



Police secure a location after a shooting near the White House in Washington DC, US, on 20 May 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

WASHINGTON — A US Secret Service agent shot a man who brandished a gun near the White House on Friday while President Barack Obama was out golfing, and the man was taken to a hospital in critical condition, officials said.

The Secret Service, which protects the president and his family, briefly locked down the White House as a precaution, and Vice President Joe Biden was secured within the White House complex during the lockdown, a White House spokeswoman said.

Authorities later said there appeared to be no link to terrorism.

The shooting took place just off 17th and E streets, near what is known as the South Lawn outside the home and offices of the president.

A man carrying a gun approached a checkpoint shortly after 3pm (1900 GMT) when uniformed Secret Service officers ordered him to stop and drop the weapon, the Secret Service said in

a statement.

"When the subject failed to comply with the verbal commands, he was shot once by a Secret Service agent and taken into custody," the statement said. The man was taken to hospital in critical condition, the District of Columbia Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department said.

Authorities said they were investigating the motive.

"At this time, based on a preliminary investigation, there is no known nexus to terrorism," security agencies said in a joint statement. A man who appeared to be in his mid-20s walked to a gate of the White House holding a silver-coloured gun pointed at the ground, said Brett Polivka, a 26-year-old visitor from Texas who was near the south side of the White House.

"A couple officers drew their guns, went right at him and within two or three seconds we heard a gunshot," Polivka said.

The Secret Service, which also guards other top dignitaries,

said all those under its protection were safe, but it did not say if Obama's family was home at the time.

"Everyone in the White House is safe and accounted for," a White House official said.

The shooting followed several incidents that raised questions about the Secret Service's performance.

In September 2014, a knife-carrying man jumped a fence and ran into the White House itself in one of the worst security breaches during Obama's tenure.

That episode led to the resignation of the Secret Service's director. In March 2015, two Secret Service agents capped off a night of drinking by driving into a White House barricade inches away from a suspicious package that investigators were examining. In 2011, a man hit the White House with automatic rifle fire, though damage to the building was not discovered for several days.—Reuters



Refugees stand outside their tent at the Ifo Extension refugee camp in Dadaab, near the Kenya-Somalia border in Garissa County, Kenya, in 2011. PHOTO: REUTERS

Kenya discusses plan to close Somali camp with UN envoys

DADAAB (Kenya) — Kenya's president showed "room for discussion" over a decision to shut a refugee camp for Somalis but did not promise to reverse it, a delegation of UN Security Council diplomats opposed to any forced closure said after talks on Friday.

Kenya said last week it was drawing up a timetable to shut Dadaab refugee camp, home to about 350,000 Somalis, because of security concerns. The United Nations and Western donors have urged Kenya to rethink and not forcibly return the Somalis.

A delegation of UN Security Council diplomats, returning from a visit to Somalia, held talks with Kenyan President Uhuru

Kenyatta on Dadaab and other issues, such as the African force battling militants in Somalia, which Kenya contributes to.

Egypt's UN ambassador, Abdellattif Aboulatta, said the delegation voiced concern about the Dadaab closure plan.

"The discussion was open. We did not receive any promise. But what we understood was that there was room for discussion about it," he said at a news conference, with Britain's envoy Matthew Rycroft, who was also among diplomats on the trip.

In a statement, the presidency said the Dadaab issue was "discussed at length" without giving details.—Reuters

Cooler weather welcomed in Canada's fire-stricken energy heartland

CALGARY — Firefighters battling a massive blaze in Canada's energy heartland were aided on Friday by a second day of light rain and winds that held flames back from oil sands facilities, as producers signaled a gradual increase in operations.

The wildfire in northern Alberta has blackened more than 500,000 hectares (1.2 million acres) of land, six times the size of New York City, since it erupted earlier this month.

It also triggered a prolonged shutdown that has cut Canadian oil output by a million barrels a day.

The footprint had already exceeded the total area burned during Alberta's entire 2015 fire season, and it jumped Thursday into the

neighboring province of Saskatchewan.

The fire's growth slowed on Friday as firefighters were helped by colder, damper weather that began a day earlier and vastly improved air quality, provincial authorities said.

"We expect to hold this fire in place over the weekend," Alberta Wildfire Manager Chad Morrison told a news conference.

Morrison said that fire crews hope to use the improved conditions to advance further against the blaze. Authorities plan to roughly double the number of firefighters over the next two weeks to about 2,100 personnel backed by bulldozers and aircraft dumping flame retardant.—Reuters



An aerial view of Highway 63 south of Fort McMurray, Alberta, Canada, shows smoke from the wildfires taken from a CH-146 Griffon helicopter, on 5 May 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Nigeria's Buhari orders heightened military presence in restive Niger Delta

ABUJA/ONITSHA, (Nigeria) — Nigeria's President Muhammadu Buhari on Friday said he ordered a heightened military presence in the restive Niger Delta region to deal with a resurgence of attacks on oil and gas facilities, a day after yet another pipeline explosion.

British Foreign Minister Philip Hammond warned on Saturday military action would not end a wave of attacks in the southern swamps because it did not address rising anger among residents over poverty despite sitting on much of Nigeria's oil wealth.



Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari. PHOTO: REUTERS

The rise in attacks in the Delta in the last few weeks has driven Nigerian oil output to a more than 20-year low, worsening a drain on public finances.

A group calling itself the Niger Delta Avengers has claimed responsibility for several sophisticated attacks.

Speaking at a meeting with Shell's upstream head, Andrew Brown, Buhari said he had instructed the chief of naval staff to reorganise and strengthen the military Joint Task Force to deal with the militancy.

"We have to be very serious with the situation in the Niger Delta because it threatens the national economy," Buhari said in a statement.

"I assure you that everything possible will be

done to protect personnel and oil assets in the region," he added.

Nigeria had several times announced army reinforcements to the Delta but diplomats said the military has achieved little as militants were operating in small groups and hiding in the hard-to-access swamps.

"Mr. Brown had appealed for an urgent solution to rising crime and militancy in the Niger Delta," the presidency said.

An industry source told Reuters that major oil firms warned Vice President Yemi Osinbajo this month that a military crackdown was actually fuelling dissent in the Delta.

The presidency statement also quoted Brown as saying Shell would not pull out of Nigeria despite the vi-

olence and that it was in talks with state energy firm NNPC for new oil and gas projects.

There was no immediate comment from Shell, but its country chair said in an interview published on Sunday the firm was committed to long-term investment in the West African nation.

Buhari's comments came after locals said a gas pipeline operated by NNPC was attacked late on Thursday. The pipeline, which connects the Escravos oil terminal to Warri, supplies gas to different parts of the country.

Eric Omare, a spokesman for the Ijaw Youth Council, a youth umbrella, said the attack occurred near the village of Ogbe Ijoh, near Warri, "on the pipeline belonging to NNPC."

Resident James Dadio-wei said he heard a "loud bang" at the pipeline, but an NNPC spokesman was unable to confirm the attack.

On Thursday, intruders blocked access to Exxon Mobil's terminal exporting Qua Iboe, Nigeria's largest crude stream. And, earlier this month, Shell workers at Nigeria's Bonga facilities were evacuated.

In February, the Avengers claimed an attack on an undersea pipeline, forcing Shell to shut a 250,000 barrel-a-day Forcados terminal.

The group also claimed responsibility for blasting a Chevron platform in early May, shutting the Warri and Kaduna refineries. Power outages across Nigeria worsened as gas supplies were also affected.—Reuters

Chile, Argentina, Uruguay call for effective dialogue in Venezuela

SANTIAGO — The governments of Chile, Argentina and Uruguay on Friday urged Venezuela's ruling party and right-wing opposition groups to hold talks and end their country's political crisis.

In a joint statement issued in the Chilean capital of Santiago, the Foreign Ministries of the three countries expressed concern for the current political situation in Venezuela and called

on the different political camps to reach an understanding.

"With full respect for the principle of nonintervention in internal affairs, we believe that Venezuela's problems should be resolved by the Venezuelans themselves, in keeping with its institutions and observing international commitments to fully protect human rights and individual freedoms," said the state-

ment. "We are confident that the Venezuelan people will know how to honour their long democratic tradition and historic commitment to consensus and peaceful political solutions, thus discouraging radical alternatives that will lead away from democratic ways," it added.

The message was addressed to Venezuela's government, National Assembly as well as political

and social groups.

Venezuela has been embroiled in political troubles in recent months with some opposition groups campaigning to unseat President Nicolas Maduro.

The president said on Tuesday that a "systematic aggression" against his country from the outside was underway with the aim of "creating conditions" for a military intervention.—Xinhua

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV NINOS VOY NO ()

Consignees of cargo carried on MV NINOS VOY NO () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 22.5.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.W.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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Maroon 5 cancels shows in North Carolina in protest at transgender bathroom law

WINSTON-SALEM, (N.C.) — The band Maroon 5 is cancelling concerts planned in North Carolina, the latest musical act to take a stand against a state law on bathroom use that has been criticised as discriminatory against transgender people.

“This was a difficult decision for us to make as a band,” the American pop rock group said on its website on Friday.

“We don’t want to penalize our fans in North Carolina by not performing for them, but in the end it comes down to what we feel is morally right AS WE FEEL EVERYONE SHOULD BE TREATED EQUALLY.”

With a law passed in March, North Carolina became the first state in the country to require transgender people to use multiple-occupancy public restrooms and changing facilities that correspond with the gender on their birth certificate rather than their gender identity.

The law, approved by the Republican-led legislature in a one-



Adam Levine and Maroon 5 perform at the Z100's Jingle Ball 2014 at Madison Square Garden in New York on 12 December 2014. PHOTO: REUTERS

day special session, also blocks local governments from passing anti-discrimination ordinances that include protections based on gender identity and sexual orientation.

It has sparked lawsuits by

both supporters and opponents of the law, and a mounting backlash from corporations, conventions, tourists and entertainers. Last week, the US Justice Department asked a federal district court to de-

clare that the state is violating the 1964 Civil Rights Act.

On Tuesday, renowned violinist Itzhak Perlman also backed out of a scheduled performance in North Carolina in protest of the

law. Other performers who have canceled shows in the state include Bruce Springsteen, Demi Lovato, Nick Jonas, Boston, Pearl Jam, Ringo Starr and the group Cirque du Soleil. The upcoming shows by Maroon 5, known for hits such as “Moves Like Jagger,” were to be held in Raleigh and Charlotte. The band’s decision drew praise and criticism from fans posting comments on its website.

“You shouldn’t punish your fans who have no control over the politics!” one post said.

Republican Governor Pat McCrory’s campaign spokesman Ricky Diaz questioned the timing of the band’s “political statement.” McCrory is up for re-election in November.

“At this point, the only people they are hurting by hypocritically targeting North Carolina for selective outrage are their fans and the hardworking men and women servicing these shows while they keep tour dates overseas — even in Russia,” Diaz said in a statement.—Reuters

Penn unfazed as ‘The Last Face’ ripped apart in Cannes

CANNES (France) — Sean Penn stood by his latest opus after “The Last Face”, which will premiere for the public at the Cannes Film Festival later on Friday, was ripped apart after the media screening.

“I just finished the film, so it’s not a discussion that I think I can be of any value to, I stand

behind the film as it is and certainly everyone is going to be well entitled to their response,” Penn told a news conference on Friday.

Set against the backdrop of the Liberian war, “The Last Face” revolves around a love story between two aid workers. But it failed to convince the

viewers who started to boo in the opening minutes.

The *Daily Telegraph* wrote that “Penn has never made a film this bad before” while The *Hollywood Reporter* labeled the effort as “stunningly self-important but numbingly empty cocktail of romance and insulting refugee porn”.—Reuters

Gosling and Crowe play not so ‘Nice Guys’ in a seedy Los Angeles

LOS ANGELES — Films about Hollywood often harken the glamour, glitz and golden age of cinema, but “The Nice Guys,” gives a very different sheen to Los Angeles in the late 1970s.

“LA had a kind of fallen feel, it was almost a biblical fallen feel, like a Sodom and Gomorrah, this place was a mess — the sky was crusted with smog, there was a porn cesspit on Hollywood Boulevard,” writer-director Shane Black said.

“It was the perfect faded glory scenario to put these two clowns in, these two gumshoes trying to fill shoes they can never fill.”

Black’s vision of Los Angeles comes to the big screen in the caper “The Nice Guys,” out in US theaters on Friday. It follows two hopeless private eyes, Holland (Ryan Gosling) and Jackson (Russell Crowe).

The duo meet when Jackson breaks Holland’s arm. Grudgingly, they team up to solve an ever-deepening mystery of a missing girl that brings them face to face with the porn and automotive industries.

“This is like an anti-buddy movie,” Crowe said. “There’s not one bit of familial connection between these two guys that happens once, not a friendly gesture, nothing, they just happen to be stuck in a situation together.”

Crowe and Gosling engage in witty banter throughout the film as they find themselves in increasingly bizarre and surreal situations. Black said he wanted Crowe and Gosling’s relationship to reflect a more grown-up portrayal, adding that “the private eye genre is comprised largely of men, not boys.”

Crowe’s Jackson is the rough, looming counterpart to Gosling’s hapless, quip-filled

Holland, who is often brought to task by his pre-teen daughter Holly (played by newcomer Angourie Rice), a relationship that Gosling said he enjoyed playing.

“He’s just such a disaster,” Gosling said of his character. “He’s seconds away all the time from being the worst person ever, and he has this daughter that’s literally propping him up and trying to help him be a good person.”

Black noted the underlying plot of government corruption affecting the smog that made the city’s air unbreathable. He said it could resonate with present day social themes.

“There is the same social unrest and it is reflected in what the seventies had to offer,” the filmmaker said. “You could just as easily see these guys acting on climate change now as they are on pollution in this movie.”—Reuters

British celebrities back remaining in EU in letter to newspaper



Actors Benedict Cumberbatch and Keira Knightley pose as they arrive for the European premiere of the film ‘The Imitation Game’ at the BFI opening night gala at Leicester Square in London in 2014. PHOTO: REUTERS

LONDON — British actors Benedict Cumberbatch, Keira Knightley, Chiwetel Ejiofor and Helena Bonham Carter are among more than 250 celebrities from the arts world who have signed a letter urging Britons to vote to remain in the European Union.

Some of Britain’s best-known artists, musicians and writers are also signatories to the letter in the *Guardian* newspaper that warns of the country becoming “an outsider shouting from the wings” if Britons vote to leave the EU in a 23 June referendum.

“Britain is not just stronger in Europe, it is more imaginative and more creative ... Our global creative success would be severely weakened by walking away,” they said.

The letter was coordinated by “Stronger In”, the official campaign to persuade voters to stay in the EU that is also backed by Prime Minister David Cameron. Cameron’s governing Conservative Party is deeply split over the issue.

Other signatories to the letter include singer Paloma Faith, designer Vivienne Westwood and writer John Le Carre.

The move by “Stronger In” is likely to be seen as an attempt to broaden the EU debate beyond economics and immigration.

Though opinion polls have given sharply different pictures of public opinion, betting odds on Friday indicated a 79 per cent implied probability of Britain voting to stay in the EU.—Reuters

Cold comfort: Korean convenience store launches hangover cure ice cream

SEOUL — South Koreans, Asia’s biggest per capita alcohol consumers, can now soothe themselves after a big night out with hangover-fighting ice cream.

A convenience store chain has launched the Gyeondyo-bar, which translates as “hang in there” and according to the company is the first ice cream bar marketed specifically to combat the after-effects of alcohol consumption. It hit the shelves on Friday.

Drinking, often in groups of co-workers, is big business in South Korea, and so are hangover cures, which generate roughly 150 billion won (\$126 million) in annual sales, according to industry data, ranging from pills and beverages to cosmetics for women who want to keep their skin soft after a boozy night.

Those cures exclude the “hangover soup” that is a staple of Korean restaurant menus.

South Korea is exporting its remedies.

Its most popular hangover beverage, Hut-gae Condition, made by a unit of the CJ Corp conglomerate, has been sold in China, Japan, and Viet Nam since 2014. The drink also features in the popular 2014 music video “Hangover,” by Korean pop star Psy and US rapper Snoop Dogg.

South Koreans drink 12.3 litres of alcohol per year, the most in Asia-Pacific, according to a 2014 World Health Organisation report.

A study by South Korea’s National Health Insurance Policy Institute estimated that the social cost of drinking, including to lost production, hospitalisations and early deaths, was about 9.45 trillion won in 2013.

The ice cream bar’s name “expresses the hardships of employees who have to suffer a working day after heavy drinking, as well as to provide comfort to those who have to come to work early after frequent



Ice cream bars named Gyeondyo-bar, which translates to “hang in there” are seen at a convenience store in Seoul, South Korea, on 20 May 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

nights of drinking”, convenience store chain Withme FS, a unit of E-Mart Co Ltd, part of the Shinsegae Group conglomerate, said in a press release.

The grapefruit-flavoured dessert contains 0.7 per cent oriental raisin tree fruit juice, a traditional hangover remedy cited in a Korean medicine book from the 17th century that is included in popular hangover potions. A 2012 article in the Journal of Neuroscience found oriental raisin tree extract reduced symptoms of intoxication in rats. —Reuters

Countdown begins for Vivid Sydney festival of light

SYDNEY — The countdown has begun for the world’s largest light, music and ideas festival, Vivid Sydney.

The 23-night extravaganza kicks off on 27 May in the Australian city of Sydney and will feature more than 80 light installations, 1,500 hours of programmed music and 170 creative events.

New South Wales (NSW) state tourism minister Stuart Ayres said in a note on Friday the festival is the biggest major event NSW state puts on all year.

“For the first time, the world of Australian indigenous art will be celebrated on the Sydney Opera House sails, installations will illuminate the Royal Botanic Garden and Taronga Zoo, while our first indoor venue, The Galleries on George Street will also join the festival,” Ayres said.

“We also have two world-firsts at Darling Harbour with the Vivid Laser-Dragon Water-Theatre’s 13-metre robotic arm, and Intel’s ‘Eyes on the Harbour’ Real Sense water theatre face projection.”

Destination NSW chief executive Sandra Chipchase said it would also be the longest Vivid yet.

“Vivid Sydney’s world-class line up has something to inspire and entertain everyone, from families wanting a night out to visitors looking for new ways to explore the city after dark,” Chipchase said.

“At the same time, music lovers and those seeking to ignite their creative juices through thought-provoking discussions and creative collaborations will find inspiration at Vivid.”

The work of 30 Chinese artisans will also be showcased at Sydney’s Taronga Zoo for the festival.

The artisans from the city of Zigong in China’s Sichuan Province worked hard to construct 43 animal shaped lanterns for the festival. —Xinhua

7-Eleven worker becomes first woman to climb Everest seven times

KATHMANDU — A 42-year-old woman born in Nepal climbed Mount Everest for the seventh time on Friday, breaking her own record for the most summits of the

world’s highest mountain by any woman, a hiking official said.

Lhakpa Sherpa, who works in a 7-Eleven store in Connecticut, reached the 8,850-metre

(29,035-foot) peak from the Tibetan side, said Rajiv Shrestha of the 7 Summits Adventure company that organised her expedition.

“She has broken her own re-

cord,” Shrestha told Reuters. She was accompanied to the top by a Nepali guide.

Three hours later, eight members of a Russian team and eight of guides also climbed from the same northern route, he said.

Lhakpa Sherpa, one of the 11 children of a Nepali family, was born in eastern Sankhuwasabha district where the world’s fifth highest mountain, Makalu, is located.

Two other Sherpa climbers share between them a record for 21 ascents of Everest, the maximum climbs by men.

More than 330 climbers have climbed Everest from the Nepali side this month after expeditions were forced off the world’s tallest peak by last year’s devastating earthquake that killed at least 18 people at Base Camp.

In total, 9,000 people were killed across Nepal in the 7.8 magnitude quake, the worst disaster in the country’s recorded history. —Reuters



Light illuminates Mount Everest during sunset in Solukhumbu District, also known as the Everest region, in 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS



Entertainment Channel

(22- 5-2016, Sunday)

6:00 pm

- Weather Report
- Myanmar Traditional Customs At Manuha Pagoda

6:20 pm

- Music Programme

6:40 pm

- Myanmar Video

8:50 pm

- Music Programme

9:10 pm

- International Movie Songs

9:30 pm

- Next Generation: Nyan Kyal Say

9:40 pm

- Myanmar Movie

From 22-5-2016 (Sunday) 6:00 Pm To 23-5-2016 (Monday) 6:00 Pm



Myanmar International

(22-5-2016 07:00am ~ 23-5-2016 7:00am) MST

Today Fresh

07:03 Am

News

07:25 Am

History And Mystery Behind The Caves

07:49 Am

Yangon Markets: Da Nyin Gone Market

08:03 Am

News

08:26 Am

Myanmar Traditional Thatched Roofs: Nipa Palm

08:42 Am

Chaung Tha Souvenir Business

08:50 Am

Sagaing: Guitars

09:03 Am

News

09:26 Am

Alaungdaw Kathapa

09:44 Am

Amazing: Magician Sak Kaw Ma

10:03 Am

News

10:26 Am

Discovering Tribes- Pre Kayaw: Their Life and Customs (Part- I)

10:51 Am

Philatelic Pleasure

(11:00 Am ~ 03:00 Pm) - Saturday Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)

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

Prime Time

07:03 Pm

News

07:25 Pm

Dawei - Tavoy, Travel To The Southern Part of Myanmar

07:43 Pm

Myanmar Traditional Art Bronze Casting

07:49 Pm

Today Myanmar “An impact of El Niño weather event: Water Storage”

08:03 Pm

News

08:26 Pm

Hanthawaddy U Win Tin “A Fearless Man” (Episode - 2)

08:43 Pm

Myanmar Masterclass: Kyaw Phyu San

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

(11:00 Pm ~ 03:00 Am) - Saturday Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)

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

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

China rethinks its sporting obsession as Rio Olympics approach

SHANGHAI — Change is unfolding at Shanghai's No.1 Children's Sports School Pudong New Area, a small cog in a state-run machine that has churned out Chinese Olympic champions for three and a half decades.

China's sports system has been enormously successful since the country returned to the Olympic fold in 1980, culminating with the host nation topping the medals' table at the 2008 Beijing Olympics with only a slight dip into second place behind the United States in London four years later.

And yet, with the Rio de Janeiro Games less than three months away, the system is beginning to break down due to the shifting demographics of a more prosperous nation.

It poses a big challenge to the school's party committee secretary, Huang Qin, whose institution is one of 2,183 around the country producing 95 per cent of the country's Olympians.

Fewer parents are willing to let their children endure gruelling training routines from as young as six years of age, leading to a fall in student numbers. Some schools have closed and others are adjusting the way they work. The number of sport schools is down from 3,687 in 1990, government numbers show.

"In the 1980s and 1990s,



A coach helps a girl during gymnastics lessons at the Shanghai Yangpu Youth Amateur Athletic School in Shanghai, China, on 23 March 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

schools like ours were extremely attractive," Huang said, recalling a time when families were poorer and generous sports subsidies

were more highly prized.

The school's alumni include former Olympians such as hurdler Chen Yanhao and female foot-

baller Xie Huilin.

"(But) parents are less willing now to send their child to sports schools if they perform fairly well

in exams...The source of students for sports schools has shrunk as society placed more importance on cultural education."—Reuters

Century goal-mark awaits Real Madrid attacking trio

MADRID — Real Madrid's attacking trio of Cristiano Ronaldo, Gareth Bale and Karim Benzema need to score twice in the Champions League final on 28 May against Atletico Madrid to hit the century mark for goals this season for the first time.

The previous combined best for the trio, who are known as the BBC (Bale, Benzema and Cris-

tiano) was 97 in the 2014-15 campaign.

For a sixth consecutive year, Ronaldo found the back of the net more than 50 times in all competitions with his two goals against Deportivo La Coruna last weekend increasing his season tally to 51.

Frenchman Benzema finished second to Ronaldo scoring 28 - 24

in La Liga and 4 of them Champions League strikes — while Bale scored 19, all of them in La Liga. These were personal bests for both players at Real.

In La Liga alone, the three stars scored a combined 78 goals, two more than in 2014-15, to establish their best mark in the three seasons they have played together. Ronaldo struck 35 of those, 13

fewer than last season when he earned the Pichichi award as the top scorer in Spain's top division.

Real manager Zinedine Zidane has said since taking over at the club that he will have all three players on the pitch as much as possible. "I will always play with the three of them, that's definitely the plan," he said last January.—Reuters

Sevilla, Liverpool charged after crowd trouble at final

BASEL — Liverpool and Sevilla are facing disciplinary action due to the behaviour of their fans during this week's Europa League at the St Jakob-Park stadium in Basel, UEFA said on Friday.

Both clubs have been charged by European football's governing body following crowd disturbances at the match on Wednesday.

Liverpool have also been charged due to their fans setting off fireworks. Sevilla's supporters have been accused of throwing objects.

There were skirmishes between supporters of both teams prior to Sevilla's 3-1 victory in Switzerland. Liverpool and Sevilla fans were sharing one end of the stadium and when scuffles broke out there was initially only a small stewarding presence in position to prevent fighting.

Police entered the terrace minutes later and stood between the two sets of fans.—Reuters

China's world No.1 Liu misses out on Rio singles spot



Liu Shiwen of China competes during 2016 World Table Tennis Championships, Women's Finals at Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, on 6 March 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

SYDNEY — Women's world number one Liu Shiwen will not take part in the table tennis singles at the Rio Olympics after failing to secure one of China's two spots in the competition, the International Table Tennis Federation has announced.

The Chinese Table Tennis Association have instead handed the slots to tried and tested Olympic campaigners in reigning champion Li Xiaoxia and world champion Ding Ning, the London silver medallist. Liu will, however, get the chance to make her Olympic debut in Brazil when she teams up with Li and Ding to defend China's team title after London gold medallist Guo Ye was dropped from the national team due to a

spine injury. Zhang Jike will have the chance to defend his singles title in Rio after being picked alongside world number one Ma Long in the men's competition.

The 28-year-old world number four was preferred to Xu Xin and Fan Zhendong for the 6-17 August tournament despite being below them in the world rankings.

World number three Xu will join Ma and Zhang to defend the team title but teenager Fan, second in the world rankings, missed out on the chance to make his Olympic debut. World champion Ma missed out on a singles berth at the 2012 Olympics after a brief dip in his ranking, despite having dominated the game for much of the previous two years.—Reuters