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SQUATTER HEADCOUNT

Yangon gov't reveals squatter clearance plan

Ko Moe

PUNITIVE action will be taken against those found to be squatting on state-owned and private land as of today, said Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein at a press briefing yesterday.

The chief minister added that a list of squatters will be compiled within 45 days as part of a broader plan to conduct research on the development of Yangon

Region where the squatter problem is seen as a challenge by the regional government.

Although the Chief Minister revealed the existence of plan to solve the problem, he did not address particular details regarding content or implementation.

While making the squatter lists, fingerprints and photographs of squatters will be collected before issuing identity cards to them, said the chief

minister, adding that transferring ownership of the cards to anyone other than the card recipient is not allowed.

A regional order will be released in designated areas to compile lists of local squatters. Police personnel will accompany teams making lists there. Those squatters who oppose the order will be arrested and charged under section 188 of the 1861 Penal Code (disobedience to order duly

promulgated by a public servant).

According to the regional government, action will be taken against listed squatters if they are found dwelling in other places.

The regional government pledged to crack down on gangs enjoying squatting benefits.

In his address the chief minister said that listed squatters will be accommodated at temporary shelters and jobs will be found for them.

Minister for Security and Border Affairs Col Tin Aung Tun said that there would be no more room for criminals in squatting locations, which, he said, have become a haven for them.

According to sources there are more than 8,000 squatter houses in Hlinethaya Township where Yangon's biggest industrial zone is situated and more than 600,000 people residing in them.

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Thilawa Special Economic Zone.

PHOTO: MYAT THANDAR MAUNG



Govt to attract investment in less developed regions

THE Department of Investment and Companies Administration has stated that less developed regions of Myanmar could see an increase in investment were taxes to be reduced to make such business ventures more attractive.

Foreign investors have already invested heavily into urban centres of the country such

as Yangon and Mandalay, but investment in less developed regions would undoubtedly result in more employment opportunities for local residents.

"We will reduce taxes on income of foreign companies should they invest in less developed parts of the country. This article will be included in the new

foreign investment law that is currently being drawn up," said the director from the Department of Investment and Companies Administration.

Less developed areas of the country such as Chin, Kayah and Rakhine States primarily require basic housing and road infrastructure, together with access to elec-

tricity, which presents a special opportunity for potential investors.

"The most import aspect of investment is tax. If reduction of taxes are to be made to encourage investment into these regions then I believe the agricultural sector should be given priority," said economist Dr Soe Htun.

Current domestic and foreign investment laws will be combined in a bid to increase both forms of investment into the country, while a new Myanmar Investment Commission will be formed which will issue permits for investors. As such, foreign companies eyeing business opportunities

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Pyithu Hluttaw

Pyithu Hluttaw approves bills revoking People's Council Law and State Council Law

THE Pyithu Hluttaw entered its 32nd day session, approving the bills to revoke the People's Council Law and State Council Law with no objection yesterday.

During a Q & A session, Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries Dr Tun Win replied that 2,526 acres of Wet Toe farmland that has 3,726 acres in total will be set aside for local farmers to use.

The ministry plans to produce quality products from 1,200 acres in cooperation with the private sector, added the deputy minister.

He insisted that the 3,726-acre Wet Toe farmland was established by the government without confiscating any land from farmers. Regarding the conservation of Moegok lake, the deputy minister said that the lake's water storage capacity in-



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

creased from 203 acres to 600 acres after silt dredging and related works with the use of K1.9 billion from the special fund.

Further works on sustainability of the lake include the repairing of the spillway and its drainage system, works that

will be undertaken by the Township Development Department and supporting committees. —Myanmar News Agency

Amyotha Hluttaw

Amyotha Hluttaw session continues



Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than. PHOTO: MNA

THE Amyotha Hluttaw session continued for its 29th day with a question and answer session and discussions on two bills yesterday.

In his response, Union Minister for Construction U Win Khaing said that construction of a suspension bridge in MraukU Township, Rakhine State can be carried out by the ministry upon receipt of budget allocation for the bridge by the ministry concerned or the regional government as the bridge is situated on a road managed by the Department of Rural Development under the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation.

Next, U Khin Maung Latt of Rakhine State Constituency 3 held discussion on the fourth revised bills on Pyithu Hluttaw, Amyotha Hluttaw and Region

or State Hluttaw election laws, stressing the need to review the time limit for by-elections.

In his remark on the law-maker's suggestion, Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than called on the Bill Committee to review the bills.

Regarding the Bill Committee's report on the bill revoking the Yangon City Development Law, the Speaker invited parliamentarians wishing to discuss the bill to list their names for discussion.

The Bill Committee's report said that the 1990 Yangon City Development Law (State Peace and Development Council Law No. 11/1990) should be revoked under the law that Yangon Region Hluttaw passed in accordance with the 2008 Constitution. —Myanmar News Agency

Strong winds wreak havoc in Hpa-an

STRONG winds battered the Hpa-an village of Nganetpya on the evening of May 24, destroying homes and scattering bamboo along roads.

The Hpa-an General Administration Department (GAD), together with the township police and fire department, arrived on the scene to assist with clearing the bamboo from the roads.

"The wind has yet to subside. As far as I know, the roofs were ripped right off six homes. The monastery was also battered by the storm. Bamboo was also ripped off at the root by the winds and was strewn across the road," said Daw Aye Aye Soe, a teacher from Nganetpya Village.

U Aung Ye Min, head of the Hpa-an Township Fire Services Department, explained that difficulties were encountered during while the debris was being cleared from the roads, and villagers had to call in assistance from the Fire Rescue Team, while rice storage facilities suffered rain damage after winds blew off their roofs, exposing rice to the rain. —Myitmakha News Agency



The house damaged by the strong wind in Hpa-an. PHOTO: MNA

Deportation preparations made for six Chinese nationals



The six Chinese nationals who would be repatriated are seen outside a police station. PHOTO: MYANMAR POLICE FORCE

PREPARATIONS are currently being made for the repatriation of six Chinese nationals, for whom an order of deportation was issued in May at the Naypyidaw office of the Ministry of Immigration and Population, according to the Kengtung Township immigration department.

The Chinese nationals were found to have crossed illegally into Myanmar and arrested at a dwelling within the Hsangsaing Ward-1 of Tachileik on 30 April 2016. They were later fined and sentenced to be deported in accordance with immigration procedures at the Tachileik Township

court of law on 16 May.

"[The Chinese nationals] will be repatriated to China via Mong La Special Region-4. The Kengtung Department of Immigration, along with other individuals concerned, will be responsible for escorting the trespassers to the border," said U Moe Maung Maung Khin, head of the Kengtung Township Department of Immigration and Population (DIP).

The Chinese nationals were temporarily detained at the Tachileik Police Station during the morning of 24 May before being transferred to the Kengtung Township DIP. Plans are currently being made for their repatriation to China via Mong La Special Region-4 with a security escort.

The six Chinese nationals in question are Li Hailing, Shi Mingchang, Zeng Peng, Lai Janjie, Zou Yongkang and Zhang Bin. They were all charged under Article 7.1 of the 1947 Myanmar Immigration Act. —Myitmakha News Agency

Union Foreign Affairs Minister meets special adviser to UNSG

UNION Minister for Foreign Affairs Daw Aung San Suu Kyi met Mr. Vijay Nambiar, United Nations Secretary-General's Special Adviser on Myanmar, at her office in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

The two representatives talk on the ongoing peace process and matters related to present and future cooperation between Myanmar and the United Nations. — Myanmar News Agency



Union Minister for Foreign Affairs Daw Aung San Suu Kyi welcomes Mr. Vijay Nambiar. PHOTO: MNA

Myanmar, China discuss media development

INFORMATION Union Minister Dr Pe Myint received a courtesy call by a Chinese delegation headed by Mr An Xiaoyu, Director-General of China Radio International (CRI), at his office yesterday afternoon.

The two representatives discussed current cooperation in media development between the ministry and the Chinese broadcaster.

The union minister was accompanied by Permanent Secretary U Tint Swe and officials. — Myanmar News Agency

Union Government Republic of the Union of Myanmar President's Office Notification 9/2016 4th Waning of Kason, 1378 ME (Wednesday 25 May, 2016) Reformation of Union Government

1. Under the provisions stated in article 200 of the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and section 6 (a) of the Union Government Law, the Union Government has been reformed with the following persons:

- | | | |
|------|----------------------|---|
| (1) | U Htin Kyaw | President |
| (2) | U Myint Swe | Vice-President |
| (3) | U Henry Van Thio | Vice-President |
| (4) | Daw Aung San Suu Kyi | Union Minister
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Ministry of President's Office |
| (5) | Lt-Gen Kyaw Swe | Union Minister for Home Affairs |
| (6) | Lt-Gen Sein Win | Union Minister for Defense |
| (7) | Lt-Gen Ye Aung | Union Minister for Border Affairs |
| (8) | U Kyaw Tint Swe | Union Minister for Office of the State Counsellor |
| (9) | Dr Pe Myint | Union Minister for Information |
| (10) | Thura U Aung Ko | Union Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture |
| (11) | Dr Aung Thu | Union Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation |
| (12) | U Thant Sin Maung | Union Minister for Transport and Communication |
| (13) | U Ohn Win | Union Minister for Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation |
| (14) | U Pe Zin Tun | Union Minister for Electricity and Energy |
| (15) | U Thein Swe | Union Minister for Labour, Immigration and Population |
| (16) | U Khin Maung Cho | Union Minister for Industry |
| (17) | Dr Than Myint | Union Minister for Commerce |
| (18) | Dr Myo Thein Gyi | Union Minister for Education |
| (19) | Dr Myint Htway | Union Minister for Health and Sports |
| (20) | U Kyaw Win | Union Minister for Planning and Finance |
| (21) | U Win Khaing | Union Minister for Construction |
| (22) | Dr Win Myat Aye | Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement |
| (23) | U Ohn Maung | Union Minister for Hotels and Tourism |
| (24) | Nai Thet Lwin | Union Minister for Ethnic Affairs |
| (25) | U Tun Tun Oo | Attorney-General of the Union |

2. The Director-General of the Office of the Union Government shall be the secretary ex officio of the Union Government under the provision stated in section 6 (b) of the Union Government Law.

Sd/ Htin Kyaw
President
Republic of the Union of Myanmar

Two ministries renamed

PRESIDENT U Htin Kyaw signed the announcement of the name changes of two ministries yesterday, as approved by the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw.

The Ministry of Health is now renamed the Ministry of Health and Sports (MOHS), while the Ministry of Ethnic Affairs has undergone a name change in Myanmar language only.— Myanmar News Agency

Yangon gov't reveals ...

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Squatting in Yangon is categorised into five different types in which the squatting of homeless people for housing need and squatting for 'commercial purposes' are included, said Deputy Director U Tun Naing Ko of Yangon Region government office, adding that the number of squatters is growing year after year. Figures showed that there are estimated 170,000 squatters in Yangon's north district, 93,000 in south district, 8,000 in the west district and 150,000 in the east district. 53 per cent of all Myanmar interstate migration is to Yangon, according to a report by the Social Policy & Poverty Research Group.

Govt to attract investment ...

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Records of the Department of Investment and Companies Administration indicate that so far during this 2016-17 fiscal year, investment in the construction sector amounts to just 0.06 per cent, US\$37.767 million, with investment in the electricity sector considerably more so at 30.89 per cent, over US\$15 billion.— Myit-makha News Agency

Over 30 pedestrian overpasses to go up over Yangon circular railway

MYANMA RAILWAYS plans to build over 30 pedestrian overpasses as part of the circular railway upgrading project to ensure the safe passage of pedestrians.

Myanma Railway is building two pedestrian overpasses at the new Thamine railway station and Yaeku circular train station, and it will also build other overpasses after finishing the fencing of the circular line.

"Some people walk across the tracks rather than using pedestrian overpasses. Therefore, we are planning to build pedestrian overpasses for people after finishing the fencing," said an officer from Myanma Railway.

Myanma Railways will fence the tracks with great care because of some negative response from the public. —200

Yangon passenger bus lines to be reduced

THE Central Supervisory Committee for All Private Bus Lines (Yangon Region) plans to reduce the over 300 passenger bus lines operating across the city to 50, a spokesperson said.

U Hla Aung, chairman of the committee, said the move is part of an initiative by regional authorities to provide better transportation services to local commuters who are facing difficulties because of the unsystematic operations of different bus lines, which mostly run on the same routes.

He added: "We are putting more effort to operate bus lines and routes system-

atically. The new scheme is expected to solve passengers' problems with public transport buses."

The current number of buses will remain unchanged as the committee will only decrease the bus lines. Some private bus lines will become public companies. Currently, there are 357 passenger buses running in the city.

The exact date for the implementation of the new scheme has not been fixed yet.

The new public transport system aims to help reduce traffic congestion and balance the ratio between the buses and passengers.—200

Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services kicks off visit to Thailand



Senior General Min Aung Hlaing inspects Guard of Honour in Thailand. PHOTO: MYAWADY

AT the invitation of Supreme Commander of Thailand General Sommai Kaotira, Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing kicked off his visit to Thailand yesterday.

The Senior General was

welcomed at the Royal Thai Army headquarters in Bangkok by General Sommai Kaotira. The two held talks there concerning cooperation between the two armed forces and governments of the two countries as well as the

issue of domestic peace.

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing also met with Deputy Prime Minister of Thailand General Tanasak Patimapragorn and discussed matters relating to co-operation in culture and tourism. —Myawady

Crime NEWS

Diesel bowser overturns in Htichaint

AN eight-wheel diesel bowser en route to Myitkyina from Mandalay being driven by one Aung Myint Shwe with Myo Zaw Lin on board overturned due to brake failure near Naypu mountain, Htichaint township

on Monday.

The break failure caused the turn-over between mileposts 112/7 and 112/8. The driver Aung Myint Shwe, 34, has been charged by police.— U Ye (Katha)

Illegal logs seized from six-wheel vehicle

AUTHORITIES from the Forestry Department seized illegal logs from a six-wheel vehicle on Sagaing-Shwebo road near Thitchogon village on 22 May.

Acting on a tip-off, officers and staff from Forestry Department searched a vehicle en route to Mandalay from Budalin town being driven by one U

Kyaw Zayar Win with U Saw Htet Aung and U Tin Aung Moe on board. They discovered logs weighing 2.9 tonnes onboard the vehicle. An official from the forestry Department handed over the vehicle to Sagaing police station. Charges have been filed by the police.— Myo Win (Sagaing)



Illegal logs being confiscated by authorities.

PHOTO: MYO WIN (SAGAING)

Fire destroys passenger vehicle on Mandalay – Pyin Oo Lwin road



The passenger bus being seen on fire. PHOTO: ZAW MYO HTITE (PYIN OO LWIN)

AN outbreak of fire caused by electric short circuiting destroyed a passenger vehicle carrying about 40 passengers on the Mandalay-Pyin Oo Lwin road on Monday.

The accident occurred between mileposts 20/4 and 20/5. The vehicle was damaged. However, no one was reported to be injured.

The fire took three fire en-

gines with the firemen to put out the blaze. The police are searching for reckless car driver called Gadon who had fled the scene.— Zaw Myo Htite (Pyin Oo Lwin)

Car accident kills two in Mahlaing Township

A TRAILER collided head on with a motorcycle between mileposts 335/5 and 335/4, Mahlaing township on Monday, leaving two dead.

The trailer vehicle, being driven by one Thein Tun, 40, collided with a motorcycle being driven by one Than Zaw, 31, with Ah Nge Lay on board. The reason for the collision is not yet known.

The collision killed the motorcycle driver and the passenger on the spot. The driver has been charged by police.— Kyaw Kyaw (Mahlaing)

Heroin seized in Katha Township

LOCAL police in Katha township seized yaba from a house in Htauntali village, Katha township, Sagaing region on Monday.

Acting on a tip-off police searched the home of one Tun Zaw and discovered heroin weighing 1.95 grams. Police have filed charges against him under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.— Lu Aung (Katha)

LOCAL Business



A container truck is being loaded at Asia World Port in Yangon. PHOTO: ZAW GYI

UMFCCI, private sector initiate action to solve Port delays

THE Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI) and private sector representatives have taken steps to solve the serious delays that are currently impacting Myanmar's trade capability.

UMFCCI President U Win Aung held a meeting with services providers, customs brokers, freight forwarders and container truck owners to help the Government overcome recent backlog problems.

U Win Aung said the group formed a working committee that would report its findings and recommendations to Yangon Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein, and related government ministries as soon as possible.

"Congestion and delays in

loading and unloading processes at Yangon's sea ports undermine Myanmar's economic growth by slowing down export and import capability," U Win Aung said.

"The private sector must contribute to help improve vital areas of overseas trade including custom clearances, transportation and port management."

The working committee comprises Port owners, the Myanmar International Freight Forwarders' Association, the Myanmar Mercantile Marine Development Association, the Myanmar Customs Brokers Association and the Myanmar Container Trucks Association.

The committee members will work out of at the UMFC-CI headquarters in Lanmadaw

Township and report back to the Government within two weeks. It will also cooperate with the Government to implement the agreed plan.

The group yesterday agreed the most urgent tasks would be 1: To compile a list and make a report on the containers that are left unclaimed for over 60 days. 2: Devise quick turn-around methods to clear out and replace empty and unused containers. 3: Get shipping companies to report detailed freight logistics activities. 4: Customs clearance and containers loading- unloading processes to continue 24-hours a day. 5: Report recommendations to the Chief Minister of Yangon and the related ministries as soon as possible.—GNLM

No need to bother with meter bills

THE Thailand based technical company True Money's meter bill system is now available in Yangon to facilitate meter bills payments including services for those who do not have a bank account.

The system has been jointly established by True Money Myanmar and the Connect N Pay Company. The two companies signed an agreement on 18 May at the Park Royal Yangon.

True Money counters have been installed in electrical apparatuses stores, tea shops, restaurants, phone kiosks, hotels, hospitals and various places in the community. The system allows people to pay meter bills via True Money ma-

chines with a code number printed on their bill from the YCDC and the YESB. This service is now available in the Northern and Western Districts of Yangon.

The payment system is designed for meter bills as well as other charges from the YCDC. A service charge of K500 is collected for each payment. The system will also charge a K500 service fee for monthly payments made by a household, said Ko Tun Tun Lin, the managing director of True Money Myanmar.

The True Money counter is not available for those who do not pay their bills before deadline. These people can pay only at the

office relevant to the bill said U Pyae Sone, managing director of Connect N Pay.

Currently, there are around 1,000 True Money agents and it is expected that there will be around 6,000 agents by the end of the year. True Money has been planning to extend the following services: postpaid billing, buying tickets, subscribing to news journals, money exchanges and mobile payment systems.

People who wish to work as an agent of True Money can contact the following number - 01 2305360. True Money machines can be installed free of charge.—Thun Wathan

Ministry of Commerce to purchase 30,000 tonnes of reserved rice

UNION Minister Dr Than Myint of the Ministry of Commerce said that 30,000 tonnes of reserved rice will be purchased at harvest time.

The Ministry of Commerce will buy the rice through coordination with the rice federation and is now in negotiations to decide in what manner the rice will be bought, what price will be offered, how the rice will be stored and how it will be distributed. The government will provide capital for rice merchants.

Reserved rice was cooperatively purchased by the government and private entrepreneurs during the period of previous government. The purchasing was not practiced for the past three years, however.

Reserved rice can be utilised in cases of natural disasters. The Ministry of Commerce has already confirmed that it will purchase reserved rice, according to Dr Soe Tun, vice chairman of the Myanmar Rice Federation.

The plan to purchase reserved rice can protect Myanmar farmers against possible losses on the rice market, resulting in direct benefits, said U Thaung Win, secretary of the Myanmar Rice Millers' Association.

The demand for rice from the border areas of China has been low lately. Export via sea shipping has declined due to depreciation of the US dollar, according to rice exporters.—Chan Chan

Vehicles without permit at Yangon Port to be confiscated

VEHICLES without an import permit from the Ministry of Commerce will be confiscated and vehicles stranded at Yangon Port will be scrutinised, it has been learned.

Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein stressed to a meeting of the Myanmar Automobile Manufacturers and Distributors Association that action will be taken against those who import vehicles without an import permit, said Dr.

Soe Tun from the association.

Importers, it has been learned, have, on occasion, purchased cars from Japan via car auctions and then gone ahead and imported them. In these cases, people have then only asked for an import permit for their car after the vehicle has been sold. By this method the vehicle becomes stranded at the port, having not been registered in the proper manner.—200

Mixed seabass, soft-shell crab farming flourishing in Myeik

MIXED breeding of saltwater and freshwater seabass and soft-shell crabs is flourishing in Myeik District, causing breeders to extend their farming operations onto 10 additional acres of land, said U Maung Maung Lin from the Min Zarni breeding company.

Catching saltwater fish is the main business in Myeik District, which is on the Andaman Sea. However, the number of locals involved in seabass farming is rising.

"The market price of seabass is K20,000 per viss (1.6 kilos). Some fish varieties cannot be farmed together with other varieties, but seabass farming is thriving through mixed breeding with soft-shell crabs. Since the experimental farming has achieved a success, we will extend its

farming," U Maung Maung Lin added. Myeik fish varieties such as Paungkyae and Gawayat are suitable to use as feed for seabass. Seabass and giant sea perch are omnivorous when they are young, but when they grow up, they become carnivorous.

In pond farming, a total of about 6,000 crabs can be put into a crab pond, while about 1,000 crabs are put into a 5x5x2-metre cage, which is regarded as a productive farming technique. As a result, fish farming is cost-effective. The farming period takes between 8 and 10 months.

Seabass is in demand in the international market. Seabass farming has been done on a commercial scale in Thailand, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Singapore, Indonesia and Taiwan.—200

Cambodia revives Australia refugee deal with planned Nauru visit

PHNOM PENH — Cambodia said on Tuesday it will send a team to a South Pacific detention centre next month to interview two refugees who have volunteered to be resettled, reviving an agreement with Australia that seemed on the verge of collapse.

Australia has vowed to stop asylum seekers sailing from Indonesia and Sri Lanka and landing on its shores, instead intercepting boats at sea and holding those on board in camps in Papua New Guinea and Nauru.

Cambodia agreed with Australia in 2014 to take in refugees from Nauru in exchange for A\$40 million (\$28.56 million) in aid, but it later threatened to withdraw from the agreement. Only five people have gone to Cam-

bodia under the pact and three of them later chose to go back home. But now two more might be on their way.

“Our team is ready to go and interview two more refugees who volunteered to be resettled,” Tan Sovichea, head of the Interior Ministry’s refugee unit, told Reuters on Tuesday.

Sovichea said his three-man team would fly to Nauru in the first week of June to vet the refugees, an Iranian man and woman.

Rights groups have condemned Australia for trying to resettle refugees in poorer countries such as Cambodia, which is frequently accused of human rights abuses and has an economy less than one per cent the size of Australia’s.—*Reuters*

ASEAN defence ministers meet to discuss South China Sea, security



Defense ministers from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations pose for a commemorative photo in Vientiane on 25 May, 2016. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

VIENTIANE — Issues relating to the South China Sea dispute were a highlight of the annual meeting of Association of Southeast Asian Nations’ defence ministers in the Lao-tian capital Vientiane on Wednesday, as China’s aggressive actions in pressing contested claims to territory in the water continues to raise tension in the region.

The ministers from the 10 ASEAN member nations gathered under the theme of “Promoting Defense Cooperation for a Dynamic ASEAN Community” for a two-day meeting to discuss regional and global security threats as well as nontraditional security challenges, which saw the South China Sea issue listed as a top agenda item.

According to a draft of the meeting’s joint declaration, seen by Kyodo News, the politicians will underscore “the commitment of all parties to fully and effectively implement the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea and ASEAN’s six points on South China Sea.”

The ministers will also reiterate “the importance of maintaining peace, stability and security as well as upholding freedom of navigation in, and over-flight above, the South China Sea as provided for by universally recognised principles of international law,” the draft said. Besides the South China Sea, the meeting aims to strengthen defence and security cooperation in the region, which has one of the strongest military presences in the world.

“The ASEAN Defence Ministers’ Meeting needs to increase capacities, solidar-

ity and unity, and also improve and commit itself to dealing with security threats in an effective and timely manner,” said Laos’ Defence Minister Lt. Gen. Chansamone Chanyalath at the opening of the meeting.

The ministerial meeting will be followed by an informal meeting with China’s defence minister to discuss the capacity-building and ASEAN-centric development of regional security mechanisms, said Thai Defence Spokesman Maj. Gen. Kongcheep Tantrawanich.

The meeting will conclude Thursday as the ministers are scheduled to attend a commemorative event, marking the meeting’s 10th anniversary, by opening a photo gallery at the Lao People’s Army Museum while making visits to the country’s defence academy and satellite company.—*Kyodo News*

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G-7 to vow to use all policy tools to spur global growth at summit

ISE (Japan) — Group of Seven leaders will start a two-day meeting Thursday in central Japan at which they are expected to pledge to use all policy tools — monetary, fiscal and structural — in what Prime Minister Shinzo Abe calls the G-7 version of “three arrows” to spur world economic growth. The leaders are also likely to express “strong opposition” to island construction and militarization of outposts in the South China Sea in a declaration to be issued after the summit, a veiled criticism of Beijing’s unilateral actions to assert its claims to disputed islands and atolls.

The G-7 nations will similarly try to show a unified response to the refugee crisis in Syria, the situation in Ukraine, North Korea’s missile and nuclear weapons development, as well as tax evasion in the wake of the massive leak of documents on tax havens known as the “Panama Papers.”

The Ise-Shima summit comes amid growing uncertainties in the world economy confronted by terrorism, the slowdown in China and other emerging economies, the impact of falling oil prices on resource-produc-

ing countries, as well as the possible exit of Britain from the European Union following a 23 June referendum.

“I think the biggest theme will be how (the G-7) will respond to the current situation of the international economy,” Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said Wednesday, referring to talks with his counterparts from Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, the United States plus the European Union. “We would like to send a clear and powerful message so the G-7 can now respond to any situation and contribute to achieving sustainable and robust growth of the world economy,” Abe told reporters in Tokyo prior to his departure to Shima, Mie Prefecture.

Given uncertainties in the global economy, Abe has expressed eagerness to strike a G-7 accord on coordinated fiscal action to spur global demand. But due to Germany’s resistance to calls from Japan and the United States for boosting fiscal stimulus, the leaders are likely to settle on a vague agreement to use all policy tools — monetary, fiscal and structural — depending on conditions and resources in each country,



Photo taken on 25 May, 2016, from a Kyodo News helicopter shows Shima Kanko Hotel, the venue of the two-day summit of Group of Seven leaders from on 26 May, in the central Japan city of Shima. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

according to Japanese officials. For Japan, if Abe gains agreement from other G-7 leaders to take all possible measures to foster growth, it could give him an excuse to justify delaying a consumption tax increase planned for April next year. A tax hike would put a drag on the

economy. Citing trade and investment as the driving forces of growth, the G-7 leaders are expected to underscore the significance of the US-led trade liberalization initiative known as the Trans-Pacific Partnership, according to diplomatic sources.—*Kyodo News*

Asians to ease worries about US election: Obama

HO CHI MINH CITY (Viet Nam)—US President Barack Obama sought on Wednesday to ease growing Asian worries about the raucous election campaign to succeed him which has been dominated by the incendiary rhetoric of mogul Donald Trump, now the Republican Party’s nominee.

“I think other people sometimes look at our election system and say ‘what a mess’,” Obama told a town-hall meeting with young leaders in Viet Nam’s Ho Chi Minh City, formerly Saigon.

“But usually we end up doing okay because the American people are good people ... Sometimes our politics doesn’t express all the goodness of the people,” he said, without referring specifically to any of the presidential candidates.

Obama made the comments just before ending a three-day trip to Viet Nam, whose high point was an announcement that Washington’s ban on sales of lethal weapons to the country — a vestige of the Viet Nam War — would be completely lifted.

Obama repeatedly insisted that lifting the embargo was not a response to Beijing’s assertiveness in the South China Sea. Critics accused Washington of throwing away a powerful lever it had to press commu-

nist-ruled Viet Nam for improvements in human rights.

White House officials say the arms move was a natural step to take with a country that, once an enemy, is now a key part of Obama’s strategic ‘rebalance’ towards Asia and an important trade partner as its economy grows apace.

Obama also announced the Peace Corps would begin operating in Viet Nam for the first time.

Across Asia, policy-makers have been startled by Trump’s “isolationist” foreign policy pronouncements, which have challenged much of the status quo in Washington’s relations with the region.

Many fear Trump will feed insecurity in nations worried about China’s growing power, embolden nationalists and authoritarians, and unravel Obama’s ‘pivot’ to the Asia-Pacific.

At the townhall in Ho Chi Minh City, a young woman who had been an exchange student in Montana asked Obama what he thought of the prospects that Trump or Democratic contenders Hillary Clinton or Bernie Sanders following him to the White House.

“Usually, eventually the voters make good decisions and democracy works,” replied Obama, whose criticism of Trump



US President Barack Obama attends a town hall meeting with members of the Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative (YSEALI) at the GEM Centre in Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam, on 25 May 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

has sharpened since he all but clinched the Republican nomination. “Things are going to be ok. I promise.”

Thousands of people lined the streets of Ho Chi Minh City for a second day to cheer enthusiastically and wave mini-flags of Viet Nam and the United States as Obama drove by on his way to the airport for a flight to Japan.

At his freewheeling townhall, where he was greeted with a standing ovation, Obama noted that two-thirds of the country’s population were born after 1975, when the war ended with North Vietnamese tanks rolling into Saigon to

bring US-backed South Viet Nam under communist rule.

Obama prodded Viet Nam’s leaders on political freedoms during his visit after critics of the government were prevented from meeting him. When a woman rapper at the townhall asked him about supporting arts and culture, he segued into an appeal for people to be allowed to express themselves.

However, his unusually long one-country visit was warm and mostly about strengthening diplomatic and economic relations.

Annual US-Viet Nam trade has swelled from \$450

million when ties were normalised in 1995 to \$45 billion last year. Washington is a big buyer of Viet Nam’s televisions, smartphones, clothing and seafood.

Obama repeatedly touted the benefits of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) trade pact, of which export-led Viet Nam will be one of the biggest beneficiaries, if it survives opponents in Washington concerned about competition and a loss of US jobs.

He also talked about the challenges of climate change when asked about the drying-up of the Mekong River in the rice-bowl delta of southern Viet Nam,

urging Southeast Asian countries to work together.

The Mekong River, which sustains 60 million livelihoods as it flows through Laos, Thailand, Cambodia and Viet Nam, is under threat from at least 39 hydro-electric dams being built or under development upstream of Viet Nam, most of them in China.

Low river levels have allowed seawater to penetrate inland, ruining vast swathes of cropland in the fertile delta.

Obama did not name any of the upstream countries but said the United States would provide smaller member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) with technical assistance and evaluations of what needs to be done.

“Hopefully ... that information can be used to negotiate on an international level to try to prevent some projects that might have very bad effects,” he said. “One of the things that we’ve seen in ASEAN is that when small countries band together as a unit, then the power magnifies.”

Japan is the final stop on Obama’s swing through Asia, where he is attending a summit of the Group of Seven industrialised nations starting Thursday. —Reuters

Australia immigration policy threatens to hijack election agenda



A protestor from the Refugee Action Coalition holds a placard during a demonstration outside the offices of the Australian Government Department of Immigration and Border Protection in Sydney, Australia, on 29 April 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

SYDNEY — Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull’s election agenda focusing on jobs and growth is at risk of being hijacked by the country’s harsh immigration policy and controversial network of offshore detention camps for asylum seekers.

Canberra has vowed to stop refugees sailing from Indonesia and Sri Lanka

and landing on its shores, instead intercepting boats at sea and holding those on board in camps in far-flung Papua New Guinea and Nauru.

Now Turnbull, who ousted conservative Tony Abbott in a party coup last year promising a more progressive agenda, is facing calls of xenophobia for refusing to condemn his im-

migration minister’s claims that refugees will steal Australian jobs and strain the social safety network.

Australia goes to the polls on 2 July.

Peter Young, former director of Australia’s detention centre network, said this week that police had accessed his phone records, in part over his criticism of the country’s detention policies. Young accused the government of attempting to cover up deaths in custody, as well as intimidating medical staff and aid workers from revealing the conditions in the camps.

The immigration and foreign ministries did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Earlier this month Australia said it had agreed to compensate a charity for wrongly accusing it of inciting refugees to self-harm in protest at conditions on Nauru in 2014.—Reuters

Malaysia’s 1MDB says has made full payment of central bank fine

KUALA LUMPUR — Scandal-hit Malaysian government fund 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB) said on Wednesday it has made full payment of a fine imposed on it

by the country’s central bank.

Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM) said last month that it had issued a letter of administrative compound to the fund for failing to com-

ply with bank rules. “1MDB confirms that it has today made payment, in full, of the compound, in compliance with the decision of BNM,” the fund said in a statement.—Reuters

THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR
MINISTRY OF ELECTRICITY AND ENERGY
MYANMA OIL AND GAS ENTERPRISE
(INVITATION FOR OPEN TENDER)
(7 / 2016)

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

Sr.No	Tender No	Description	Remark
(1)	IFB-008(16-17)	Piston Rubbers for F-1600 Rig Pump Ex ZJ 70 L Drilling Rigs (3) Items	US\$
(2)	IFB-009(16-17)	4” ERW Steel Line Pipe, API 5 L, Grade A 10,000 MTR	US\$
(3)	DMP/L-007(16-17)	Server Computer (DAQ) and UPS (2 KW) (2) Items	Ks

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

Tender Document shall be available during office hours commencing from 23TH May, 2016 at the Finance Department , Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise, No(44) Complex, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar.

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

Opinion

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Education is life

Kyaw Thura

THERE is a close relationship between education and quality of life. Poor education often leads to poor quality of life. Therefore, we must all come together to improve both formal and non-formal educational processes. Our education system is in urgent need of total reform as it has been suffering from the negative impact of administrators’ addiction to ‘high pass rates’, which has become a distracting catchphrase.

The role of teachers should not be underestimated in the processes of planning, assessment, decision-making and management, as they are the only sources in close contact with students. When it comes to improving education, teachers know better than the high-ranking officers sitting in their offices. Moreover, teachers must be provided with favourable conditions for their professional enhancement, which is absolutely vital to students. Students learn best in the hands of smart teachers. It is safe to say teachers are indispensable assets for national development.

It is imperative to renovate and restructure our education system to such an extent that it equips students with the necessary capacity to meet current and future challenges. The notion that no change is possible without education provides an adequate explanation as to why developed countries put the education sector at the top of their agenda.

All things considered, changes in education are inevitable. The government and civil society organisations, on their part, must meet the social needs of teachers. And the teachers, on their part, must engage themselves in the struggle for reform in the education sector. Many hands make light work, after all.

Bahauddin Foizee

THE very uneasy & unbearable weather and the overall deteriorating environmental conditions in coastal areas all over the world have become the new trend of our planet’s environment. The economic & military rivalries among different countries around the world are to be blamed. Such rivalries have been causing excessive industrialization and increasing trend of production & usage of military hardwares for conflicts & wars that are further causing environment of our planet to deteriorate drastically.

The global & regional economic rivalries are pushing the rival states to thrust for an unprecedented & unchecked militarization of different geopolitical hotspots of our globe and to propel for producing, acquiring & using destructive weapons. Such economic & military rivalries have been the reason behind worsening weather conditions in victim countries like Bangladesh & Myanmar.

Geo-economic rivalries & the resulting pollution

The “industrialized” countries had already done enormous damage to our planet’s environment in each of their attempt to supersede the other in industrial revolution and in terms of the size of economy. The same is happening in case of “young industrialized” economies and in case of the current “industrializing” econo-



A man uses a chainsaw to cut teak logs in a logging camp in Pinlebu township, Sagaing, northern Myanmar, in this picture taken March 5, 2014.

PHOTO: REUTERS

mies. In the race of economic might, the victims have always been the environment and the human beings.

The effects of industrial competition among the economic powers are far reaching and liable

to affect the eco-system for many years to come. One particularly damaging effect is the dumping of harmful used-water from industrial sites into open oceans, seas or rivers, damaging many of the water sources around the globe and,

thus, causing health issues to the people who use such water for different purposes. For instance, the same water is used by the farmers for irrigation purpose which affects the quality of food that is produced, causing health issues to the people who consume those foods. Moreover, industrial competition among the economic powers have pushed them to increase their industrial capacities to an excessive level and, thus, causing immense air pollution which has taken toll on the environment and the health of the human being. The human and the environment are at risk from exposure to radiation from different sources, including radioactive materials, accelerators, electrical installations, mobile broadcasting centres etc. The most alarming effect of this economic competition among the economic powers is the global warming, which result from the smoke and greenhouse gases that are being released by industries into the air.

Environmental impacts of militarization

The heavy economic competitions among the global & regional economic powers are resulting in geopolitical rivalries among themselves. These countries, therefore, are resorting to heavily arming their arsenals with weapons, from light firearms to heavily destructive firearms, to barrel bombs and chemical weapons, to nuclear missiles. Some state-players are also resorting to wars & proxy wars.

The wars around the globe have been seriously impacting the natural environments of not only the war-torn countries, but also most of the countries around the globe. The weaponry & military vehicles used in the war zones have been producing many hundreds of thousands of tons of carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides, hydrocarbons and sulphur dioxide – all of which are immensely injurious to our planet’s environment. Air pollutions from weaponry & military vehi-

cles have, over the years, adversely affected human health. Increase in cancer, birth defects, and other adverse health conditions are associated with war-related environmental damage.

Rise in temperatures & sea-level

The urge for economic supremacy among the powerful economies around the globe has increased the human activities of burning fossil fuels such as coal, oil and natural gas. Such a trend is altering the relatively stable and liveable environmental conditions of our planet. Such burning of fossil fuels, which release carbons that have previously been locked up in coal, oil and natural gas for millions of years, cause gradual rise in average global temperatures. Such gradual rise in average global temperatures (global warming) poses a number of threats: (i) the threat to human health increases by many times, (ii) ecosystem is damaged due to higher temperatures, (iv) changing weather patterns cause irreversible damage to agriculture, (iv) coastal areas are vulnerable to the lethal combination of “rising sea level” and increasing number of severe ocean storms that are caused by the melting of mountain-ice and polar glaciers.

The effects of the continuation of the rise in sea-levels are deep. It would submerge under water many areas around the globe, especially the coastal ones; and perhaps it will not take decades for the coastlines to change. The rise in sea-levels has been causing more floods, especially during storms. Higher sea-levels have increased the size of the flow of water that the super-storms generally bring into inland from the ocean. Some short term impacts of rise in sea-level are regularly experienced these days by many victims around the globe. The Tsunami is an ideal example of what sort of disaster the rise in sea-level could lead us up to.

Bangladesh & Myanmar

The global & regional economic & military rivalries have been causing environmental deterioration around the globe and countries like Bangladesh & Myanmar are among the victims of

such deteriorating environmental conditions. Besides the major problems of poverty and illiteracy, Bangladesh & Myanmar’s vulnerability to environmental deterioration is very alarming. The overall economic developments of these countries have been troubled to a considerable extent by the adverse effects of deteriorating global environmental conditions.

With flat and low-lying landscape, the coastal areas of Bangladesh Myanmar are highly vulnerable to floods and storms. Among the major impacts of the environmental deterioration – particularly of the global warming – the increasing rise in sea-level every year has been the most alarming one so far, with the possibility of submerging 6-8% of ‘flood-prone’ Bangladesh under water by 2030 (a prediction made in 2007 by the UK Department for International Development). Like Bangladesh, Myanmar could also lose a substantial percentage of its total coastal landmass under the sea water. From the 4th assessment report published by the International Panel on Climate Change or IPCC, it appears that a substantial portion of ‘flood-prone’ coastal areas of Myanmar is predicted to be submerged under water by 2050.

In long run, the coastline and coastal cities of Bangladesh & Myanmar will be lost because of rise in sea-level. But in the short term, sea-level rise will cause more damage through floods and powerful storms that might bring water into inland with them, causing devastation like that of the Tsunami. A substantial portion of the total population of Bangladesh & Myanmar live in the coastal areas, where majority of the population are affected, directly or indirectly, by coastal floods or tidal flows, salinity, tropical cyclones, erosion of river-bank etc. With the rise of sea-level “even by a metre”, Bangladesh & Myanmar could lose a substantial percentage of their total landmass under the sea water, turning millions of inhabitants living in the coastal areas of Bangladesh & Myanmar into climate refugees. Moreover, the freshwater sources

in the coastal areas of Bangladesh & Myanmar face deep intrusion of saline water from the Bay of Bengal during the dry season. The melting of polar ice in its gradual process will only deteriorate the existing situation to a great extent.

Observations

- German scholars from Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (PICIR) warned that if incentives of the global warming are not reduced immediately worldwide, a series of unstoppable events will be triggered, causing dramatic rise in sea-levels and the total annihilation of coastal cities inhabited by millions of people. Therefore, in line with the suggestion from PICIR, the incentives of global warming, which, among others, includes the worldwide economic & military competition, must be reduced. Otherwise, millions of coastal inhabitants around the globe, especially in countries like Bangladesh & Myanmar, would face a survival threat.
- Bangladesh & Myanmar are likely to experience more ‘immediate’ adverse impacts of environmental deterioration. Agriculture, industry, school, hospitals, roads, bridges, livelihoods, marine resources, forestry, biodiversity, human health and other utility services will suffer severely.
- All in all, it is high time for Bangladesh & Myanmar to start working on real solutions along with other most affected countries. Bangladesh & Myanmar must start addressing these above mentioned concerns with utmost urgency in the global & regional level.

[Bahauddin Foizee, primarily a legal, an analyst & columnist on global affairs, and specializes on Middle Eastern, Asia-Pacific & European geopolitics. Teaches law at Dhaka Centre for Law & Economics]

Rubber trees sold for timber as latex prices drop



DECLINING latex prices have forced tree plantation owners sell off their rubber trees for timber, with some planting new trees in the hope that they will provide a better yield of latex, according to Mon State rubber plantation owners.

“There’s been no appreciation in the value of rubber. The gradual daily decline in price by K10 to K20 has seen rubber trees sold off for their timber in order to generate some income. Mon State farmers are cutting their losses and selling off their rubber trees with the objective of planting alternative crops,”

said U Htun Tin, a rubber plantation owner from the town of Thanbyuzayat.

The value of rubber has been following a negative trajectory lately, with the price of a pound of rubber from rubber wholesalers in Mudon Township has fallen from K700 in the third week of April to K600 during the third quarter of May.

More financially stable rubber plantation owners have chopped down their ageing and low-yield trees, replanting them with fresh saplings in a bid to produce greater quanti-

ties of latex.

“The cutting down of tired trees and replanting new saplings is very taxing on both time and finances. Some [plantation owners] want to replant new saplings but aren’t in a financial position that allows them to do so. As planting rubber is a family tradition of ours, we’ve taken on the decision to replant new rubber trees in lieu of relying on low-yield and time consuming trees; it’s been quite an investment of time and finances,” said rubber plantation owner U Aung Min.— Myitmakha News Agency

Moscow poised to hand over prisoner Savchenko to Ukraine: reports



Ukrainian military pilot Nadezhda Savchenko looks out from a defendants' cage during a court hearing in Moscow, Russia, on 6 May, 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

MOSCOW — Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko was flying to Russia on Wednesday to bring home detained Ukrainian servicewoman Nadiya Savchenko, in exchange for the release of two Russians held by Kiev, Russian media and a source close to the swap said.

Handing over Savchenko, whose release has been demanded by Western governments and who has become a national hero in Ukraine, would ease tensions between Moscow and the West a few weeks before the European Union decides whether to extend sanctions on Russia.

Russia's Interfax news agency quoted an unnamed

source as saying Poroshenko's aircraft was en route to the southern Russian city of Rostov-on-Don.

On board his plane, the agency said, were Yevgeny Yefeyev and Alexander Alexandrov, who both told Reuters in interviews last year they are Russian special forces soldiers who were captured while carrying out a secret operation in eastern Ukraine.

The plan, according to the source quoted by Interfax, was for Poroshenko to deliver the two Russians and pick up Savchenko and take her home.

Asked by Reuters if the exchange was now underway, a

source close to the arrangements said: "Yes."

Savchenko, a military pilot, volunteered to fight with a ground unit against pro-Moscow separatists who rose up against Kiev's rule in eastern Ukraine.

She was captured and put on trial in southern Russia, charged with complicity in the deaths of Russian journalists who were killed by artillery while covering the conflict.

A Russian court in March sentenced her to 22 years in jail. While in Russian jail, she was elected a member of the Ukrainian parliament and is widely seen in Ukraine as a symbol of resistance against Russia.—*Reuters*

Vucic: I need combative government, will speak with everyone

BELGRADE — Serbia's Prime Minister-designate Aleksandar Vucic said Tuesday that he is still not able to talk about the composition of the new government, noting that he needs a combative government and combative ministers committed to its goals, regardless of the difficulties.

"I still do not know the names of the ministers," Vucic told a press conference.

This is not a matter of whether the government will be an expert or a party-based government, he said.

"I am close to naming a combative government with clear, unambiguous and precise goals. I need combative people, regardless of whether they are in

a party or not, people who will fight for the agreed goals even when the going gets tough," Vucic said.

There is still no decision on whether the electoral list led by the Serbian Progressive Party (SNS) will form coalitions or not, he said.

"I would like to hear everyone and speak with everyone," Vucic said, but noted that including everyone in the government is unrealistic.

Asked if he will offer Socialist Party of Serbia leader Ivica Dacic to join the government, Vucic responded that, as with everyone else, he is ready to speak with Dacic.

The SNS will early next week send invitations to all who

are open to discussions about Serbia's future, he announced.

"If you see someone take part in the discussions, it will not mean that they will be part of the government, but that we are ready to talk about major problems in society, about greater tolerance and about what we can do in the coming period," Vucic said.

Asked if the new government's programme is really as reported in the media, Vucic said that the media have carried headers relating to ten major points.

"That cannot be a programme, those are points that are important, but it is not comprehensive," Vucic said.—*Tanjung*

NEWS IN BRIEF

North Korean officials to meet with ex-US officials in Sweden: Yonhap

SEOUL — North Korean officials plan to meet with former US State Department officials during a seminar set to be held in the Swedish capital Stockholm around Sunday, Yonhap News Agency reported from Washington on Tuesday.

Han Song Ryol, director of the US Affairs Department of the North Korean Foreign Ministry, and his deputy Choi Sun Hee are expected to attend the seminar set to be held at the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, the report said.

Thomas Pickering, a retired US State Department employee who served as undersecretary of state for political affairs from 1997 to 2001, and Evans Revere, who also served in the US State Department, are being mentioned as likely attendees to the seminar.—*Kyodo News*

Lightning, thunderstorms kill 23 in north India

NEW DELHI — At least 23 people were killed in northern Indian state of Uttar Pradesh due to thunderstorms and lightning, officials said Wednesday.

The lightening and thunderstorms have struck the western and central parts of the state since Monday evening.

"A total of 23 deaths were reported in the lightening and thunderstorms," an official said. "The deaths were reported from Auraiya, Unnao, Kanpur Deha, Etawah and Raebareli districts."

The winds accompanying the bad weather uprooted hundreds of trees, electric poles and roadside hoardings, disrupting train and road services in the affected areas.

The severe storms also damaged mango crops in mango belt of Malihabad of Lucknow, Meerut and other western districts, officials said.

Reports said several flights going to Delhi were diverted to Lucknow and later allowed to land in the national capital after the weather improved.—*Xinhua*

Swedish court upholds Assange arrest warrant

STOCKHOLM — A Swedish court upheld on Wednesday the arrest warrant for Wikileaks founder Julian Assange.

Assange, 44, is wanted by Swedish authorities for questioning over allegations, which he denies, that he committed rape in 2010.

"The district court finds that there is still probable cause for the suspicion against JA (Julian Assange) for rape, less serious incident, and that there is still a risk that he will depart or in some other way evade prosecution or penalty," the court said in a statement.

Assange avoided possible extradition to Sweden by taking refuge in Ecuador's embassy in London.—*Reuters*

Russia says holding off air strikes on Nusra Front in Syria

MOSCOW — Russia's defence ministry said on Wednesday it was holding off from striking rebels with the al Qaeda-affiliated Nusra Front to give other armed groups time to move away from Nusra positions.

The ministry said in a statement it had received requests from multiple armed groups, mainly in Damascus and Aleppo, asking for a pause in air strikes.

The ministry said taking those requests into account, it had decided to allow more time before it starts air strikes on the Nusra positions.—*Reuters*

Three security personnel killed in firing in NW Pakistan

ISLAMABAD — At least three security personnel were killed when unknown gunmen opened fire on a paramilitary forces' vehicle in Pakistan's northwest city of Peshawar on Wednesday morning, reported local Urdu TV channel Samaa. According to the reports, the firing incident happened at about 9:40 am (local time) on the ring road of the city when a vehicle carrying three paramilitary Frontier Corps (FC) personnel came under attack by three gunmen riding on motorcycles. Police and rescue teams rushed to the site shortly after the firing was reported.—*Xinhua*

Netanyahu clinches coalition deal, makes far-right Lieberman defence chief

JERUSALEM — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu clinched a coalition deal on Wednesday that will make far-right opposition legislator Avigdor Lieberman defence minister and broaden a razor-thin governing majority in parliament, officials said.

The agreement on a political partnership will be signed at 11 am (0800 GMT), a negotiator for Lieberman's ultranationalist Yisrael Beitenu party said.

Since winning an election last year, Netanyahu has said he would explore options to widen his one-seat majority in the legislature, and he began negotiations with Lieberman after coalition talks failed last week with the centre-left Zionist Union, the main opposition party.

Lieberman's return to power — he is a former foreign minister — is likely to stir disquiet at home and abroad given his past rhetoric against Israel's Arab minority, US-sponsored peace talks with the Palestinians and regional powers Egypt and Turkey.

Palestinian officials said that with Lieberman, who lives in a settlement in the occupied West Bank, back in the cabinet prospects for reviving statehood negotiations that collapsed in 2014 had grown dimmer.

The pact between Netanyahu's conservative Likud party and Yisrael Beitenu, after several days of intensive negotiations, will give the four-term prime minister control of 67 of parliament's 120 seats, up from his current majority of 61.

"Broadening the government, with the inclusion of the Yisrael Beitenu party in the nationalist coalition, is an important and required step that will ensure its stability," Likud negotiator Yariv Levin said in a statement, confirming an agreement had been reached.

Lieberman's swearing in as defence minister was expected to take place next week, with Netanyahu holding the second-most important cabinet post in the interim.

Yisrael Beitenu will become the sixth party in Netanyahu's religious-nationalist coalition.

Netanyahu has said the coalition deal, which prompted Moshe Yaalon, a Likud member and former general, to quit as defence minister in protest on Fri-



Avigdor Lieberman, head of far-right Yisrael Beitenu party, (L) and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu shake hands after signing a coalition deal to broaden the government's parliamentary majority, at the Knesset, the Israeli parliament in Jerusalem on 25 May 2016.

PHOTO: REUTERS

day, would stabilise the government and enable policymaking.

In a surprise move last week, Lieberman, who has had a testy relationship with Netan-

yahu, voiced his willingness to negotiate a coalition agreement after it appeared the Israeli leader was nearing a deal with the Zionist Union.—Reuters

Ten killed in suicide attack near Afghan capital



Afghan policemen work at the site of a suicide attack in west of Kabul, Afghanistan on 25 May 2016.

PHOTO: REUTERS

KABUL — A suicide bomber killed at least 10 people and wounded four on Wednesday in an attack on a bus carrying staff

from an appeal court west of the Afghan capital, Kabul, officials said, and the Taliban claimed responsibility.

The attack came on the same day the Taliban announced a new leader to succeed Mullah Akhtar Mansour, who was killed

in a US drone strike at the weekend.

Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said the attack on staff from the judicial system was in response to the Afghan government's decision earlier this month to execute six Taliban prisoners on death row. Other attacks would follow, he said.

"We will continue on this path," he said in a statement.

The decision by President Ashraf Ghani to execute the prisoners on death row was taken as part of a tougher policy toward the Taliban following a suicide attack by the insurgent movement which killed at least 64 people in Kabul. An interior ministry spokesman said 10 people had been killed and four wounded in Wednesday's attack, while the Taliban said 22 people had been killed or wounded.—Reuters

Afghan Taliban appoint new leader after Mansour's death

KABUL/PESHAWAR — The Afghan Taliban named one of former leader Mullah Akhtar Mansour's deputies to succeed him on Wednesday, after confirming Mansour's death in a US drone strike at the weekend. Mansour will be replaced by Haibatullah Akhonzada, who was named in a United Nations report last year as the Taliban's former chief justice, said Zabihullah Mujahid, the Taliban's main spokesman, in the statement.

Sirajuddin Haqqani, head of a feared network blamed for many high-profile bombs attacks in Kabul in recent years, and Mullah Mohammad Yaqoob, son of Taliban founder Mullah Mohammad Omar, will serve as deputies. The announcement, following a meeting of the Taliban's main shura, or leadership council, ended days of confusion during which the Taliban declined to confirm the death of Mansour in a drone strike in Pakistan on Saturday.

"All the shura members have pledged allegiance to Sheikh Haibatullah in a safe place in Afghanistan," the statement said. "All people are required to obey the new Emir-al-Momineen (commander of the faithful)."

Haibatullah Akhonzada, believed to be around 60 years of age and a member of the powerful Noorzai tribe, is from Kandahar, in the south of Afghanistan and the heartland of the Taliban.—Reuters

Islamic State 'falsely claiming' attacks in Bangladesh

DHAKA — Islamic State is trying to ride a wave of religious radicalisation by falsely claiming a spate of killings in Bangladesh, a government minister said, adding there was enough evidence implicating domestic militant groups.

Analysts say that as Islamic State loses territory in Iraq and Syria and its finances get drained, it may be trying to build affiliates in countries such as Libya, Egypt and Bangladesh for jihadists to launch attacks locally and cheaply.

But Shahriar Alam, Bangladesh's state minister for foreign affairs, told Reuters in an interview that no local or foreign agency had found any presence

of Islamic State in the country.

"Those claims (of killings) are definitely false," Alam said on Tuesday. "But what we've agreed with our partnering countries is that we'll not argue over it - that sends a wrong message."

His comments came just days after a EU delegation said there was an unprecedented threat to human rights and freedom of expression in Bangladesh and urged Dhaka to tackle the challenge to protect its international reputation.

Since February last year, the Muslim-majority South Asian nation of 160 million has seen the killing of at least 26 people, including five secular

bloggers, a publisher and two gay right campaigners.

Al Qaeda has claimed some of the attacks, while Islamic State has claimed 17 killings since first taking responsibility for murders in Bangladesh in September last year, according to US-based monitoring service SITE.

Alam said it was an attempt to "ride the wave" without being involved at all.

"We know from Syria that there is no such common ground for Islamic State and al Qaeda, they can't be on the same platform," he said. "But the funny thing is that in some instances both have claimed responsibility here."

The government has said that two groups, Ansarul-lah Bangla Team and Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh, were behind the attacks as part of their campaign to establish a sharia-based Muslim state. "Islamist violent extremism has gained so much ground (around the world)," Alam said.

"The question is whether Bangladesh is vulnerable. Bangladesh has always been vulnerable because of the low level of education, lack of employment. But till date, the global radical organisations, the terrorist groups, haven't been able to make any presence in Bangladesh, let alone make it their base."—Reuters

Vietnamese dissident spent as a reluctant tourist during Obama visit

HANOI — Vietnamese dissident Nguyen Quang A spent much of Tuesday as a tourist with plainclothes cops — eating fish noodle soup, visiting a temple and a fortune teller — returning home just as President Barack Obama took off from Hanoi aboard Air Force One. “It was a compulsory tour,” joked Quang A, 69, a well-known critic of the Communist Party who is famous for creative stunts of his own to make Viet Nam’s leaders pay more than lip-service to political inclusiveness.

Quang A, a former IT entrepreneur, was one of more than 100 Vietnamese who tried to run as independents for last weekend’s election to the parliament, which is tightly controlled

by the Communist Party. Almost all failed to get on the ballot.

Dissent was once the domain of a tiny number in Viet Nam who met behind closed doors or found themselves behind bars. It is not as rare these days. Before Obama’s visit, a spate of protests erupted over a mass fish kill along the central coast. However, the media is censored and the most outspoken critics of the party’s monopoly on power face harassment, arrest and jail for “anti-state propaganda”. Quang had an inkling he wouldn’t make it to his appointment with Obama, as he put on his best suit and posed for a selfie. Before walking out of the door of his Hanoi home on Tuesday morning, he uploaded

the image on Facebook and typed in a message: “May be intercepted, arrested. Advising so people know.”

It took only a few minutes before 10 plainclothes police bundled him into a car and drove him away. They weren’t giving him a free ride to Obama’s hotel, where the US delegation had set up a meeting with activists and civil society leaders to discuss Viet Nam’s deep-rooted resistance to guaranteeing human rights and political freedom.

“That was just a cheap trick by those who have no understanding,” Quang said of being forced to be a tourist. “I don’t judge these security officials. I judge their bosses, their minds are just so addled.” At least two other dissidents were

blocked on Tuesday from seeing Obama, who only a day earlier had announced the scrapping of an arms embargo on Viet Nam, dubbing it a necessary step in a new alliance between two countries with shared concerns about China’s military clout. Washington had for years told the communist-ruled state for years that a rollback of the ban on sales of lethal weapons would depend on its commitment to free speech and stopping the harassment, arrest and jailing of its detractors.

“There are still areas of significant concern in terms of freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, accountability,” Obama said, acknowledging some activists were stopped from seeing him.—Reuters

Security ramped up across Tokyo ahead of G-7 summit



Police officers stop vehicles in the Japanese city of Ise on 25 May, 2016 near the international media center for the May 26-27 Group of Seven summit. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

TOKYO — As Japanese authorities prepare for the two-day summit of Group of Seven leaders in central Japan from Thursday, travellers and commuters have begun to see a heightened level of vigilance in the capital with more uniformed officers on the streets and other security measures implemented.

Although Tokyo is about 300 kilometres away from the venue of the G-7 summit, the Metropolitan Police Department is mobilising up to 19,000 police officers to tighten security.

East Japan Railway Co. will seal off coin lockers and trash receptacles in bullet trains on Thursday and Friday in addition to trash bins at major stations such as Tokyo and Shinjuku.

Security has also been tight near the summit venue in Mie Prefecture and Chubu International Airport in neighboring Aichi Prefecture, with au-

thorities deploying up to 23,000 police officers in the two prefectures.

The airport’s observatory deck has been also closed.

As the airport authorities changed their initial plan to conduct blanket security checks including physical inspections of carry-on luggage to random checks, travellers did not wait in long lines.

Takeshi Yoshikawa, a 33-year-old company worker who plans to leave for Europe via Narita airport, said he was surprised by the security measures, adding “I doubt that they can work as counterterrorism steps.”

Yasuo Mio, a 59-year-old company worker, was scheduled to travel to Hokkaido for business trip. “I arrived two hours ahead of schedule but (security checks) ended easily. I’ll wait four hours at the airport until my flight departs,” he said.—Kyodo News



Local residents react as President Obama leaves after having a dinner with Anthony Bourdain at a restaurant in Hanoi. PHOTO: REUTERS

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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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Protesters throw rocks, bottles at police outside Trump rally in New Mexico

NEW MEXICO — Protesters threw rocks and bottles at police officers who responded with pepper spray outside a rally for presidential candidate Donald Trump in Albuquerque, New Mexico, police said.

Hundreds of protesters tried to storm the convention centre in New Mexico's biggest city, knocking down barricades and throwing objects at a door and then hurling rocks and bottles at mounted police in riot gear, the Albuquerque Police Department said on Twitter on Tuesday and video posted online showed. Several police officers were injured, the police tweeted.

Protesters chanted anti-Trump slogans, held anti-Trump signs and waved Mexican flags before the demonstration descended into chaos with some protesters standing on top of police cars.

Television footage showed officers responding by using pepper spray and smoke bombs to disperse the crowd.



Protesters picket outside the event site before Republican US presidential candidate Donald Trump begins a rally with supporters in Albuquerque, New Mexico, US on 24 May. PHOTO: REUTERS

Police said they made arrests both outside and inside the rally, where protesters continually interrupted Trump's speech.

No one at the police department was immediately available for comment.

Protests have become common outside rallies for Trump, the party's presumptive nominee, who has polarized opinion with his rhetoric against illegal

immigration. He abandoned a rally in Chicago in March after clashes between his supporters and protesters.

He has accused Mexico of sending drug dealers and rapists across the US border and has promised to build a wall and make Mexico pay for it.

According to CNN, his supporters chanted "build that wall" during his rally on Tuesday in Albuquerque

where a little less than half of the population is Hispanic or Latino.

"Watching thugs (and) punks in Albuquerque — en route to California. They don't even know what they are protesting," Trump aide Dan Scavino said on Twitter. Trump heads on Wednesday to a rally in Anaheim, California, which has a growing Latino minority. —Reuters

Stabbed Japanese pop idol called police for help during attack

TOKYO — A young woman who was stabbed numerous times by a fan just before she was scheduled to make an appearance on a pop idol show in Tokyo last weekend called police for help in the middle of the assault, investigative sources said Wednesday.

"Help me," Mayu Tomita, a 20-year-old college student, screamed during an emergency call to police at 5:05 pm Saturday, around 100 seconds before a witness called the police to report that a man was stabbing a woman in the neck. Tomita remains in a critical condition.

The incident took place near the entrance of the building where Tomita was scheduled to appear at an idol event in Koganei, western Tokyo. Tomita had earlier reported to the police that she was being harassed on social media by Tomohiro Iwazaki, who was arrested at the scene. The police said he has admitted to stabbing her.

The police previously had registered her name, address and telephone number, as well as the possibility that Iwazaki, 27, may attend the event and cause trouble.

After her emergency call, the Metropolitan Police Department dispatched police officers to her residence rather than the venue as the operator failed to confirm her location, the sources said.

The police have not revealed that they received an emergency call from the victim, previously saying a witness had reported the attack.

The police are planning by the end of next month to revise their system to enable the location of an emergency caller to appear automatically on an operator's screen if the caller is on a watch list, the sources said.

The Tokyo police plan to upgrade the system eventually to make the same functionality available for all emergency phone calls, they added. —Kyodo News

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I once took drug while filming 'The Hunger Games': Lawrence

PHOTO: REUTERS

LOS ANGELES — Oscar-winning actress Jennifer Lawrence once took a drug during the production on "The Hunger Games", but that was unintentional.

The Oscar-winning actress, 25, made the shocking revelation when playing a game of "True Confessions" with Jimmy Fallon and John Oliver on "The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon", reported Ace Showbiz.

"I once took an Ambien before filming a scene in 'The Hunger Games'," she said, letting the two funnymen guess whether she told a truth or a lie.

"Were you sleeping in this scene?" Fallon asked.

"No, in fact, I was dancing," Lawrence replied. "I woke up and I thought it was something else, it was like normal to take it," Lawrence further explained.

Oliver pointed out that she could cause a trouble for the studio if that was true, but she insisted that no one paid attention to "The Hunger Games" franchise right now since people are focused on "Star Wars" movies. Both Fallon and Oliver guessed that it was true.

"It's plausible, it's reckless, I kind of like it, if it's not true I'm going to be very sad," Oliver reasoned. And Lawrence admitted that it did really happen.—PTI

Beyonce delays start of her Minneapolis concert due to storm

LOS ANGELES — R&B star Beyonce was forced to postpone her show at the TCF Bank Stadium in Minneapolis, Minnesota for 45 minutes because of the severe weather.

The 34-year-old was scheduled to take the stage at 08:30 PM, but law enforcement and the staff decided to evacuate the stadium at 08:15 PM because of the approaching lightning.

Concertgoers were asked to move to either the TCF Bank Stadium concourse or to Mariucci and Williams Arena, reported Ace Showbiz. Fortunately, the concert didn't get canceled. After a 45-minute delay, fans were told to return to their seats "in a calm and orderly fashion."

"I am so honoured to be here tonight. Thanks for riding with me through the storm," Bey told the crowd once she appeared onstage.—PTI



PHOTO: REUTERS

War on terrier: Australia deputy PM dogs Depp with 'Hannibal Lecter' jibe

SYDNEY — Australian Deputy Prime Minister Barnaby Joyce on Wednesday billed himself as Hollywood star Johnny Depp's Hannibal Lecter, playing mind games in his head and escalating a "war on terrier".

The sparring began with the illegal entry of Depp's two Yorkshire terriers into Australia last year when the actor was filming the latest "Pirates of the Caribbean" movie, breaching the country's tight biosecurity laws.

Depp's wife, actress Amber Heard, was convicted in April of falsifying travel documents to sneak the dogs into the country on a private jet and was given a suspended fine of A\$1,000 (492 pounds). A videoed deadpan apology by Depp and Heard for the offence, dubbed "terriergate" by the media, went viral.

Depp kicked off the latest round in the war of words when he appeared on the US Jimmy Kimmel Live! chat show on Tuesday, describing Joyce as someone who "looks somehow like inbred with a tomato".

"It's not a criticism. I was a little worried he might explode," said Depp. Joyce, who had threatened pets Pistol and Boo with euthanasia, fired back on Wednesday, comparing himself to the fictional forensic psychiatrist and cannibalistic serial killer who has graced both the big and small screen.—Reuters



Justin Bieber performs a medley of songs at the 2016 Billboard Awards in Las Vegas, Nevada, US, on 22 May 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Bieber, Gomez land top Teen Choice Awards nominations

LOS ANGELES — Former lovers Justin Bieber and Selena Gomez and former One Direction star Zayn Malik will be the stars to beat at the 2016 Teen Choice Awards after landing three nominations each.

The "Baby" hitmaker scored nods for Choice Male Artist, Choice Song (Sorry) and Choice Male Hottie in the first wave of nominations, while his ex-girlfriend earned similar recognition for Choice Female Artist, Choice Song (Hands To Myself) and Choice Female Hottie.

Bieber will be up against

Malik, who is also nominated in the same three categories, while Gomez will be in competition with close friend Demi Lovato, who also earned the same nods.

Other artists nominated in the music categories include Taylor Swift, Nick Jonas, Beyonce, Ariana Grande, and Nick Jonas.

In the movie section, superhero films "Captain America: Civil War" and "Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice" are the frontrunners with four nominations apiece, while in the TV category, teen drama "Pretty Little Liars" leads the charge with

six nominations for Choice TV Show: Drama, Choice TV Actor: Drama (Ian Harding, Keegan Allen, and Tyler Blackburn), and Choice TV Actress: Drama (Ashley Benson and Troian Bellisario). The "Vampire Diaries" scores five nods, with stars Ian Somerhalder, Paul Wesley, Kat Graham, and Candice King each grabbing mentions.

Other TV shows in the running for prizes include "Empire", "Gotham", "The Flash", and "Scream Queens".

The winners will be announced on 14 August.—PTI



Singer Selena Gomez. PHOTO: REUTERS

HBO accidentally leaked 'Game of Thrones' episode 'The Door'

LOS ANGELES — "The Door", the latest heartbreaking episodes of popular series "Game of Thrones", was accidentally released early by HBO.

The Sunday episode saw the demise of a fan-favourite character while also revealing the mystery behind his name but some fans got a chance to watch the show early on the HBO Nordic platform "temporarily due to a technical issue", a network spokesperson told Variety.

Before the episode could be taken down, the 'GoT' fans ripped the episode and posted it online.

"Game of Thrones" is one of the most popular and pirated shows on the internet.

TorrentFreak reported that the copies of the episode were widely circulated on torrent and steaming sites before HBO could take down links to the pirated copies.

For many fans it was a spoiler as details about the plot twist at the end of the episode spread online.

"The Door", fifth episode in the season six of the show, revealed Hodor's heroic destiny and fans learned the tragic reason why the gentle giant could only say one word, "Hodor."

Actor Kristian Nairn played Hodor on the show.

The latest episode also saw the death of the Bran's direwolf Summer.—PTI

Childhood goes up in smoke for Indonesian tobacco farm workers

PROBOLINGGO (Indonesia) — Thirteen-year-old Siti Maryam says she suffers headaches and nausea after harvesting tobacco leaves with her bare hands during four years of working on her family's farm in Indonesia.

Maryam, who is among the thousands of children a rights group says work in hazardous conditions on farms in the world's fifth-biggest producer of tobacco, spoke to Reuters in a field near the east Java city of Probolinggo.

"I feel dizzy, get headaches and feel like vomiting," said Maryam, listing symptoms that match a condition experts call acute nicotine poisoning, or "green tobacco sickness".

Indonesia is one of the world's fastest-growing markets for tobacco products, with about \$16 billion of cigarettes sold last year in the country of 250 million, an increase of 13 per cent from 2014, says market research firm Euromonitor International.

But a lack of information leaves families oblivious to the risks their children face while working on tobacco farms, said Margaret Wurth, a researcher for New York-based Human Rights Watch. Several big companies lack procedures to screen out tobacco that involves the effort of children working in hazardous conditions, the group said in a report on Wednesday.

"As a result, these companies risk contributing to the use of, and

benefiting from, hazardous child labour," it added.

The group interviewed 227 people, among them 132 children aged between 8 and 17, who said they worked on tobacco farms in four Indonesian provinces.

But the report risks generalizing the whole of Indonesia and some children do work in non-hazardous conditions on tobacco farms, the chairman of the Indonesian tobacco farmers' association, Soeseno, told Reuters.

"The root of the problem is poverty in certain small villages," he said. Parents getting children to help is in line with cultural norms in some areas, Soeseno, who goes by one name, like many Indonesians, said by telephone.

Customers do not normally ask whether child labour is involved, said Suradi, a trader who buys tobacco from farmers in Probolinggo for resale.

"When I send the tobacco to the storehouse it only depends on the quality," he told Reuters.

Human Rights Watch said it contacted some of the biggest companies operating in Indonesia, such as Philip Morris International Inc, Djarum Group and PT Gudang Garam Tbk.

Philip Morris welcomed the report, sustainability officer Miguel Coleta told Reuters, adding that the company sourced almost 70 per cent of its tobacco through direct contracts with Indonesian farmers, versus about 10 per cent

four years ago.

But change requires many stakeholders to cooperate, including the Indonesian government, he added. "We are talking about a massive market, millions of people," Coleta said in an interview. "It's not something easy to reform overnight."

Indonesian tobacco firms Djarum and Gudang Garam did not respond to Reuters' requests for comment. In the tobacco field in Probolinggo, a dozen children helped to sow seeds, earning about 10,000 to 15,000 rupiah (\$0.73 to \$1.10) for working seven hours a day. "I work here just to help my parents and help to fulfill our needs," said 15-year-old Waradatul Yaumi.—Reuters

Bidders fail to reach minimums for two rare US coins at auction

NEW YORK — Two legendary US coins, one of them more than 200 years old, that were on the auction block on Tuesday in New York City did not sell after bidders failed to reach minimum reserved prices, according to Sotheby's.

A bid of \$10,575,000, the most ever offered for a coin, was place by phone for an 1804 Draped Bust Silver Dollar, but it failed to reach the consignor's reserve price, Sotheby's auction house said in a statement.

A phone bid of \$7,285,000 was placed on an extremely rare 1822 half eagle, but it also failed to reach the consignor's reserve price, Sotheby's said.

The pieces were highlights

of the fourth coin auction series of the D. Brent Pogue Collection, which is working in collaboration with the auction house and Stack's Bowers Galleries.

Some 61 coins from the Pogue Collection, which in recent years has become the most valuable auction series in history, were sold for more than \$16.7 million during the auction at Sotheby's headquarters in New York.

The collection focused on non-machine manufactured currency made from 1793 to the 1830s, said David Tripp, Sotheby's worldwide senior numismatic consultant.

"All the coins in the Pogue collection were struck and produced in these early years when things were really handmade and so there are all sorts of peculiarities," Tripp told Reuters TV.

The 1804 Silver Dollar, originally owned by the Sultan of Muscat in 1835 and then by the Childs Family Collection for more than 50 years, was purchased by D. Brent Pogue in 1999 for \$4 million.

One of the five most valuable coins in the world, the silver dollar features blue and gold tones and a portrait of America's Lady Liberty staring skyward, with stars bordering the coin's edges. —Reuters



The Sultan of Muscat-Brands-Childs 1804 Silver Dollar.
PHOTO: REUTERS

Japanese artist wins award at Chelsea Flower Show



Supplied photo taken 21 May 2016, shows Japanese landscape artist Kazuyuki Ishihara's work, called "Senri-Sentei-Garage Garden." Ishihara won a gold medal at the Chelsea Flower Show in London on 24 May for his creation of the garden reflecting the changing of the seasons in Kyushu, southwestern Japan.
PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

LONDON — Japanese landscape artist Kazuyuki Ishihara won a gold medal at the Chelsea Flower Show in London on Tuesday for his creation of a garden reflecting the changing of the seasons in Kyushu in southwestern Japan.

Ishihara was one of three gold medal winners in the Artisan Garden Award and also picked up the President's Award for his "Senri-Sentei-Garage Garden" in which a veranda and a garage are decorated with pine trees and autumn leaves.

The 58-year-old designer said he created the garden to show the transition of the seasons in Japan, imagining his home town of Nagasaki, and also hoped to bring some cheer to people in Kyushu after it was heavily damaged by powerful earthquakes in Kumamoto Prefecture in April.

Ishihara has been a regular competitor at the prestigious annual show, first held in 1913, and has now won eight gold medals since 2006.—Kyodo News

Entertainment Channel

(26- 5-2016, Thursday)

6:00 pm

- Weather Report
- Pyi Thu Ni Ti

6:20 pm

- Cartoon Programme "The Prince of Egypt" (Part- 3)

7:00 pm

- International Drama Series

7:40 pm

- International Drama Series

8:20 pm

- Music Programme

8:40 pm

- Wonderful Indonesia

9:10 pm

- International Movie Songs

9:20 pm

- Irrawaddy Dolphin (Part- II)

9:30 pm

- Music Programme

9:50 pm

- Dances

10:10 pm

- Myanmar Video

From 26-5-2016 (Thursday) 6:00 Pm
To 27-5-2016 (Friday) 6:00 Pm

Myanmar International

(26-5-2016 07:00am ~ 27-5-2016 7:00am) MST

Today Fresh

07:03 Am

News

07:26 Am

Bago: A City of Famous Historic Pagoda

07:47 Am

Myanmar Railways City Circular Train

08:03 Am

News

08:26 Am

Myanmar National Poet And Literary Icon; Prolific Writer of Poems & Prose - Min Thu Wun (Ep-4) Political Life & Remembrance

08:52 Am

Talented Musicians

09:03 Am

News

09:26 Am

"Myanmar's Traditions and Culture" Myanmar Pottery

09:49 Am

Kay Tu Mar Lar "The Decision"

10:03 Am

News

10:26 Am

The Man and The Elephant (Part-I)

10:41 Am

The Man and The Elephant (Part-II)

10:56 Am

Will you feed the pigeons?

(11:00 Am ~ 03:00 Pm) - Wednesday 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

Cruising To Precious Islands (Part-2)

07:46 Pm

YUFL

08:03 Pm

News

08:26 Pm

Pride of Myanmar- Bagan arts and handicrafts

08:41 Pm

A Simple And Peaceful Life

08:53 Pm

Next Generation: Nyan Kyal Say

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

(11:00 Pm ~ 03:00 Am) - Wednesday 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)

Mourinho agrees terms with Man United – Sky TV

ENGLISH soccer's biggest club seem to have secured the services of the sport's most colourful manager after Jose Mourinho, according to Sky TV reports, agreed personal terms with Manchester United on Tuesday.

After a trophy-laden career with Porto, Chelsea, Inter Milan and Real Madrid, Mourinho is set to replace Dutchman Louis van Gaal, who was sacked on Monday, with a remit to bring back the glory days the club once took for granted under Alex Ferguson.

The 53-year-old, sacked by Chelsea in December seven months after winning his third Premier League title at the London club over two spells, had been constantly linked with the United job as Van Gaal struggled to make an impression at Old Trafford.

The Dutchman was dismissed two days after steering United to their first FA Cup success in 12 years when they beat Crystal Palace 2-1 after extra-time in Saturday's Wembley final.

Van Gaal's preferred possession-dominated playing style

at a club more readily associated with fast, direct attacking, was widely criticised, and it appeared to take his players time to adapt.

Mourinho is also known for pragmatism, however, relying on a strong defensive foundation and hard-working midfielders and strikers.

He has a history of success wherever he has managed and a proven track record in the English game.

Mourinho won the UEFA Cup and Champions League as well as the domestic double twice in his two seasons at Porto and led Chelsea to their first top-flight title in 50 years in his first campaign, retaining it the following season.

He also won the League Cup and FA Cup before moving to Inter where he won Serie A as well as the Champions League and Italian Cup.

Mourinho helped Real to their first La Liga crown in four years and on returning to Chelsea, he again won the Premier League before an unexpectedly poor — and troubled — start to the 2015-16 season led to his sacking.—Reuters



Former Chelsea manager Jose Mourinho leaves his home in London, Britain on 24 May 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Easy for Djokovic and Nadal, Murray suffers, Kerber out

PARIS — Novak Djokovic, Rafael Nadal and Serena Williams barely got their shoes dusty at the French Open on Tuesday but two of the top five women's seeds went out and Andy Murray survived the first round by the skin of his teeth.

World number one Djokovic, back on the Philippe Chatrier Court where Stan Wawrinka snatched the title from his grasp a year ago when a career slam loomed, crushed Taiwan's Lu Yen-hsun 6-4, 6-1, 6-1.

Nadal found big-serving Aus-

tralian Sam Groth even more compliant as the Spaniard began his tilt at a 10th Roland Garros title with a 6-1, 6-1, 6-1 victory.

Reigning champion and top seed Williams completed the Chatrier programme by polishing off Slovakia's Magdalena Rybarikova 6-2, 6-0.

Predictable day three most definitely was not, though.

Germany's Angelique Kerber, who four months ago downed Williams to win the Australian Open, was sent tumbling out by

flying Dutchwoman Kiki Bertens who won 6-2, 3-6, 6-3.

Third seed Kerber was troubled by a shoulder injury while later fifth seed Victoria Azarenka, the former world number one, hobbled out with a knee injury against Italy's Karin Knapp when she trailed 4-0 in the deciding set.

The women's draw has now lost three of the top seven seeds after Italian Robert Vinci's demise on Monday.

"First rounds are always tough in the tournament, especially for me. What can I say? It happens," Kerber told reporters.

It rarely happens to the leading men though.

Djokovic has not exited a slam in the first round since the 2006 Australian Open and a repeat never looked possible as he began a familiar quest for the one major title to elude him.

"It's not the first time that I'm experiencing such anticipation and expectations," Djokovic said.

"Whether or not I'm going to have a chance to fight for a trophy that's in Almighty's hands, I can't influence that, but I can certainly give my best."

Nadal's only taste of a round-

one defeat came at Wimbledon three years ago and there was never any chance of another meltdown as he leaked just three unforced errors.

World number two Murray is equally reliable — his last first-round exit coming at the 2008 Australian Open.

That record looked in severe peril on Tuesday, however, as he became embroiled in an engrossing battle of wits with Czech qualifier Radek Stepanek, at 37 the oldest man in the draw.

Murray, 29, had partially dug himself out of a deep hole on Monday night when he lost the first two sets to an inspired opponent before winning the third and taking a 4-2 lead in the fourth when bad light intervened.

Despite the precarious nature of his position, most expected Murray to overwhelm Stepanek when play resumed. Having levelled it up, however, Stepanek rediscovered the unorthodox wizardry that so flummoxed Murray on Monday and came within two points of becoming the oldest man since Jimmy Connors (aged 38) in 1991 to win a round at the French Open.—Reuters

Spurs striker sees Kane and able partnership with Vardy

PARIS — Tottenham Hotspur forward Harry Kane believes he and Leicester City marksman Jamie Vardy will provide England with one of the most formidable strike partnerships on display at next month's Euro 2016 tournament in France.

Kane edged out Vardy by a single goal in the race for the Premier League golden boot after netting 25 times to become the first Englishman to scoop up the award since Sunderland's Kevin Phillips 16 years ago.

The pair both scored in England's 2-1 friendly win over Turkey in Manchester on Sunday as their burgeoning partnership continued to bear fruit on the international stage.

"We should be considered among the best strikers in Europe. We're up there, we're confident, we're both scoring goals and long may it continue," Kane told British media.—Reuters



Novak Djokovic shakes hands after beating Yen-Hsun Lu at Paris, France on 24 May 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS