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Govt welcomes report on media development in Myanmar PAGE 3

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing meets outgoing Brazilian Ambassador to Myanmar PAGE 9

Better use of natural resources for development of Rakhine State stressed PAGE 3

UNUSED MEANS OF PRODUCTION

Survey to assess unused land in Yangon industrial zones

Workers are being seen at a construction site in Thilawa Industrial Zone. FILE PHOTO: MYAT THANDAR MAUNG

THE Directorate of Industrial Supervision for Yangon Region has announced that it will carry out a survey of unused plots of land in Yangon's 29 industrial zones during the first week of June.

Surveys on plots within Yangon's industrial zones began on 19 May with the aim of determining whether business activities have been implemented on them within six months of the land being granted by the government.

"We've finished [surveying the industrial zones] in Hlaingthaya [Township]. [Surveys] on those located in the northern district [of Yangon] are near completion. We'll need the best part of a week to survey the 11 zones in the eastern district and the single zone in the southern district," said U Tin Oo, head of the Department of Industry Supervision and Inspection for Yangon Region.

Current field studies have shown that warehouses for the storage of equipment have been built on most of the land within industrial zones that has not otherwise been used for the construction of factories.

"We've come across a lot of empty warehouses that were once rented out but have since been left vacant as this didn't prove cost effective. There are also warehouses being used to store beans and pluses. **See page 9 >>**

INSIDE

Indian Texperts to cooperate with Myanmar garment factories PAGE 5

Report Highlights Slavery Issue in Asia Pacific Region

MYANMAR is ranked fifth highest for slavery in the Asia Pacific region, according to Walk Free Foundation's 31 May report. 515,100 of Myanmar's 53 million citizens are said to be under some form of slavery.

The report did not estimate those who have not registered as formal citizens, or are unable to register as citizens.

Last year a major Associated Press investigation uncovered slavery of Myanmar citizens on Thai fishing vessels that operated in Indonesian waters. It also uncovered Thai factories where Myanmar citizens processed seafood that was sold in Asia, Europe and the US.

"The abuse of workers on Thai fishing vessels operating in South East Asian waters has become increasingly well documented," read the 2016 Walk Free Foundation report, going on to say:

"Researchers and investigative journalists have documented the abuse of migrant workers on fishing vessels, often young men and boys, who have endured brutal treatment including physical abuse, excessive and inhumane working hours, sleep and food deprivation, and forced use of methamphetamines."

In the region 82.9 per cent of slaves assisted by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) were men and 17.1 per cent female. Fishing, small street commerce and prostitution are the top three sectors of exploitation.

IOM assisted 1,644 victims in the Asia-Pacific region accounting for two-thirds of the world's slave population said the report.

Women are trafficked from Myanmar to China in hope of better work only to find themselves sold into marriage. This is due to Chinese government's failed, 'one child policy'; the after effect has seen a drop of women in China's rural areas.

It is also documented that women working domestically and internationally as domestic workers are susceptible to abuse with allegations going unchecked.

See page 9 >>

Pyithu Hluttaw to discuss motion calling for measures against deforestation in Magwe Region

THE Pyithu Hluttaw agreed to discuss a motion calling on the Union government to take necessary measures against deforestation and other environmental degradation in western Magwe Region during its 37th day session yesterday.

Daw Yin Min Hline, who submitted the motion, said that the forest area in the region decreased from more than 600,000 acres to around 360,000 acres in 2015, adding that flash floods often occur in the region as deforestation has increased.

During a question and answer session, Union Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation Dr Aung Thu said that silt removal from Nyaungyan Minhla lake in Thazi Township will continue as a budget of K1 billion has been allocated for silt dredging operations there.

According to the Union minister, dredging operations and related works are expected to cost around K24 billion and K2.2 billion had been used for works during between the 2013-2014 FY and the 2015-2016 FY.

The ministry will seek further funds for the lake repair project yearly as an additional allowance of about K20 billion is needed, added the Union minister.

On micro loans that allow a one-year repayment period under the farmers' cooperative programme the Union minister replied that it is impossible to allow a one-year repayment system as it is required that payments be made to the bank once every six months, saying that agricultural loans disbursed to farmers are loans from China EXIM Bank.

Moreover, the Union minister responded to a question about 20,181 acres of lands leased to 13 individuals in Dazai Township, Sagaing Region, saying that local people will be informed of the land situation by the regional vacant, fallow and virgin land management committee following the termination of the land leases.

According to the Union minister, no agricultural operations were found on 19,070 acres of lands leased to 10 individuals during the time that exceeded the prescribed period for their businesses to begin operating under the agreement.

On 20 acres of lands leased to two individuals, the amount of time it took for agricultural businesses to begin operations did not exceed the prescribed time set in accord with the Vacant, Fallow and Virgin Land Management Law of 2012. — *Myanmar News Agency*

Pyithu Hluttaw

Union Minister Dr Aung Thu. PHOTO: MNA

Daw Yin Min Hline. PHOTO: MNA

Amyotha Hluttaw

Amyotha Hluttaw session enters its 34th day with Q&A session, approval of two bills

Union Minister U Win Khaing. PHOTO: MNA

THE Amyotha Hluttaw session continued for its 34th day with questions and answers on the construction sector and the approval of bills revoking the Yangon and Mandalay City Development Laws yesterday.

Union Minister for Construction U Win Khaing told the Hluttaw that Thaukyaykhat (Paletwa) bridge, washed away by the raging waters in 2011, will be rebuilt by the Shwe Swan-in Company and that completion of the project is set for December, 2018.

Works are underway to construct a new bridge which will provide a two-lane motorway at the site of the old bridge situated on Toungoo-Thandaung-Bawgali-Mawchi road in Thandaungyi Township, Kayin State, said the Union minister. A free ferry shuttle service is being operated by the company daily to facilitate travel for local people, carrying 25 vehicles and 150 motorbikes across Paletwa creek a day, added the Union minister.

Regarding a question calling for increasing the budget allocation for construction of Kyatsin bridge in Rakhine State, the Union minister replied that more budget allocation will be sought from both the funds of the regional government and the Union government as an additional K8.46 billion is needed to complete the bridge.

During the 34th day session of the Amyotha Hluttaw, bills to revoke the Yangon City Development Law and Mandalay City Development Law were approved. — *Myanmar News Agency*

Workshop on rights of people living with disabilities held

A WORKSHOP themed around the rights of persons with disabilities, organised by the Myanmar Independent Living Initiative (MILI), took place at the Amyotha Hluttaw building in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Deputy Pyidaungsu and Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker U Aye Tha Aung gave the opening address on the occasion.

During the workshop, Programme Director U Aung Ko Myint and members elaborated on the activities of the MILI and on the rights of people living with disabilities and their needs.

Next, they answered queries raised by Hluttaw representatives.

Also present were Pyithu Hluttaw and Amyotha Hluttaw representatives as well as responsible persons from the MILI and the Myanmar National Association of the Blind. — *Myanmar News Agency*

Myanmar Ambassador presents credentials to Indonesian President

U AUNG HTOO, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to the Republic of Indonesia, presented his Credentials to Mr. Joko Widodo, President of the Republic of Indonesia on 31 May in Jakarta. — *Myanmar News Agency*

Appointment of Ambassador of New Zealand to Myanmar agreed to

The Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has agreed to the appointment of Mr. Stephen Marshall as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of New Zealand to Myanmar. Mr. Stephen Marshall was born on 3 March 1949. He graduated from Graduate Advanced Management Programme of New Zealand Institute of Management and received the Queens Commemorative Medal for services to New Zealand in 1990.

From 1977 to 1999, he served in various capacities at the New Zealand Employers Federation. From 2001 to 2007, he served as Director for Relations and Meetings (Government) Department, ILO, Geneva and he also served as Liaison Officer for Myanmar, International Labour Organization from 2007 to 2015.

He is married and has three adult children. —*Myanmar News Agency*

Appointment of Ambassador of Republic of Korea to Myanmar agreed to

THE Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has agreed to the appointment of Mr. Yoo Jae-Kyung as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Korea to Myanmar.

Mr. Yoo Jae-Kyung was born on 17 January 1959. He graduated from Korea University, Seoul in 1985, specializing in English Literature and received Master's Degree of Science in Technology Management from State University of New York (Stony Brook) in 2002. He joined Samsung Electro-Mechanics Co., Ltd in 1985 and served in various capacities. Since January 2014, he has been serving as Head of Global Marketing Unit (Senior Vice-President) at Samsung Electro-Mechanics Co., Ltd.

He is married and has two sons. — *Myanmar News Agency*

Workshop on Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment held

A two-day workshop on the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment kicked off in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

It was jointly organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, an expert team led by Prof. Dr Karl Jackson from the School of Advanced International Studies of Johns Hopkins University of the United States of America and a local NGO called Mingalar Myanmar. The workshop is set to discuss key articles of the Convention, treaty-joining processes, obligations of the State Parties and respective national stakeholders, implementation processes, reservations, challenges and experiences of other countries, said the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.— *Myanmar News Agency*

Govt welcomes report on media development in Myanmar

THE new government has expressed a desire to gain ideas and means for the development of local media, including press freedom in Myanmar, from a report titled 'Assessment of Media Development in Myanmar' based on UNESCO's Media Development Indicators.

At the release of the first in-depth study by International Media Support and UNESCO yesterday in Yangon, Union Minister for Information Dr Pe Myint, in his keynote address, vowed that the government would cooperate with individuals and organisations to improve the country's media sector. He affirmed the government's commitment to the development of the media sector, adding that the recommendations of the study are in conformity with the government's democratisation policies.

A ceremony to launch 'Assessment of Media Development in Myanmar'is held in Yangon. PHOTO: MNA

Union Minister for Information Dr Pe Myint. PHOTO: MNA

"We found the study has recommended a review of the current media law and the judiciary branch and encouraged the emergence of diversity and the development of ethnic [minority] media and gender equality. These are not much different from the topics discussed by Myanmar media personnel. The report is considered a first way to get good ideas to overcome the weaknesses of Myanmar media," said the Union Minister.

"Myanmar's media institutions have seen progress from 2011 to 2016. However, the current situation has not yet reached a satisfactory level," he added.

Recommendations of the report include legal reforms to promote freedom of expression and information, developing public service broadcasters and community media, strengthening media self-regulatory frameworks, fostering journalism education, particularly outside Yangon and introducing media literacy programmes.

"It is our hope that this report will help to inform the new government's media reform strategy to continue a positive development of independent and pluralistic media in Myanmar," said Glen Swanson, IMS's programme manager in Yangon and team leader of the research team behind the report.

"However, the onus rests not only on the government, but also on media persons to constructively engage in this process, holding the government to account and supporting democratic development through professional and reliable journalism," he said.

The UNESCO-IMS report speaks directly to this challenge by identifying gaps and key priorities to guide the reform of the media sector in five major areas: legal and regulatory framework; plurality and diversity of media; media as a platform for democratic discourse; professional capacity building; and infrastructural capacity.

The public launch attracted local media stakeholders to discuss key findings and ways forward for media development in Myanmar.—*GNLM*

Better use of natural resources for development of Rakhine State stressed

RAKHINE State, with an abundant supply of natural resources and favorable topography, will be able to see development through the better use of those resources under the vanguard of the Union government in cooperation with local people and organisations, Union Minister for Border Affairs Lt-Gen Ye Aung told local people at a meeting in the office of Myaybon Township General Administration Department yesterday.

With the formation of a central committee led by the State Counsellor and four subcommittes, strenuous efforts will be made toward the realisation of peace, stability and development in Rakhine State, said the Union Minister.

He stressed the need of cooperation, unity and mutual trust in order to ensure national reconciliation initiated by State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, calling for participation of all in efforts to develop the country.

Next, Union Minister for the Office of State Counsellor U Kyaw Tint Swe, Union Minister for Labour, Immigration and Population U Thein Swe, Union Minister for Education Dr Myo Thein Gyi, Union Minister for Health and Sports Dr Myint Htway, Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr Win Myat Aye and Rakhine State Chief Minister U Nyi Pu elaborated on the measures to be prioritised to aid the development of Rakhine State.

Then, Union ministers and the chief minister visited IDP camps and attended to the needs of households there.

A meeting was held with townselders and local people in Sittwe where the Union ministers and chief minister explained the government's plans and undertakings set to be implemented by the ministries concerned.

During their inspection tours of Rakhine State, Chief Minister U Nyi Pu presented K12 million to forty households in Kantha Htwatwa IDP camp through a local and Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye handed over K100 million to a regional minister to aid households fleeing fighting in the region.

They also visited Thetkaipyin IDP camp in Sittwe and met with families at the camp.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Union Ministers meet with IDPs at a camp in Myaybon. PHOTO: MNA

Appointment of Director-General of Myanmar Trade Promotion Team

THE President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has appointed Deputy Director-General U Aung Soe of the Myanmar Trade Promotion Team under the Ministry of Commerce as the Director-General of the team on probation from the date he assumes charge of his duties.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Labour rights protestors arrive Tatkon Township Court. PHOTO:TIN SOE LWIN

Fourteen labour rights protestors appear in court

ONE day after 35 labour rights protestors from Sagaing were released, the remaining fourteen protestors including Ko Khaing Min, who is believed to be the leader of the protest, appeared in Tatkon Township Court yesterday.

They are next due to appear in court on 15 June, according to local authorities.

Out of 51 labour protestors who were detained after their protest was dispersed by police in mid May, 36 returned home yesterday as they were found not guilty, according to local authorities. Police dispersed a demonstration held by employees of a factory in Sagaing Region yesterday as they tried to pass barricades blocking them from entering Nay Pyi Taw, arresting the movement's leaders outside the capital.

Before the crackdown the protestors had reached an agreement with negotiators to hold talks with the chairman of Nay Pyi Taw Council.—*Tin Tun Tar*

Pharmaceutical Factory (Insein) will distribute medicines in new form

THE Myanmar Pharmaceutical Factory (MPF) (Insein) will produce medicines with a new MPF Logo and Film Coated drugs in order to aid the prevention of fake drug peddling. The new logo and design will be delivered to the market soon.

The drugs, which are administered for nervous weakness, pneumonia and lung diseases, inflammation of the throat, urinary tract infections, and tonsillitis will be produced under the MPF brand. Moreover, two antivenom tablets, which are administered for cobra and viper bites, will be produced in a freeze-dried form to last for five years.

The freeze-dried form can be stored even at room temperature. It can be kept for emergency use in rural areas without electricity.

MPF anti-venom tablets were produced in 1962. A new building where antidotes for snakebites will be manufactured has been completed under WHO GMP guidelines. In the 2016-2017 FY the factory will produce around 100,000 antivenom medicine batches.– *200*

HIV infections on the increase in Myanmar

THERE are currently around 210,000 people living with HIV in Myanmar with an increased number of people being diagnosed with HIV infections this year compared to the same period last year, according to the Ministry of Health and Sports.

Over 8,000 new cases of HIV transmission have been reported in 2015, the ministry's spokesperson said.

Among local patients with HIV, the ministry could provide effective combination antiretroviral therapy (ART) to over 100,000 patients. We are planning to reduce the treatment gap by expanding its services to 9 per cent of the total number of patients in the future, said Dr Tun Nyunt Oo, deputy director of Public Health Department.

The virus is most commonly spread through unprotected sexual intercourse and secondly through the sharing/re-using of hypodermic needles. Most of the recorded cases occur among young people generally between the ages of 15 and 45 years old. There are 37 million people living with HIV worldwide, 15 million of whom have received ART treatment, according to official figures from the United Nations (for 2014).—*200*

The police arrested SSA(Wanhai) members

A COMBINED investigation team comprising officers and staff from Myanmar police force searched the home of a village administrator following an information tip-off that the village chieftain was meeting with SSA village administrators on 30 May.

The police arrested U Aik Lu and U San Lu from Kaung Hao village together with another six village headmen who were found together with meeting minutes written in Shan language.

The police identified U Aik Lu U San Lu as a member of the SSA (Shan State Army) rebel group. Investigations into the other six village headmen are being conducted.— *Myawady*

U Aik Lu and U San Lu. PHOTO: MYAWADY

Crime NEWS

Two vehicle accidents cause fire

A FORD vehicle being driven by one Mr. Balasta Joseptnoral crashed into a Hijet vehicle which had stopped due to engine breakdown between mileposts 61/1 and 61/2 on the Yangon-Mandalay highway on Tuesday.

After the accident both vehicles became engulfed by fire. The accident killed Hijet driver U Win Naing and injured another man in the same vehicle.

On that same day another accident occurred around 1pm between mileposts 49/0 and 49/1 on the Yangon-Mandalay highway.

Firefighter extinguishing blaze. Photo: Aung Min Han

According to an investigation a Toyota Mark II being driven by one U Myint Ko Kyaw with two passengers on board crashed into road-dividing barriers in the middle of the road when the driver attempted to overtake another vehicle. After the accident the car overturned and was engulfed by fire. Two passengers were injured in the accident. The fire was put down by firemen. Local police opened a case and have filed charges against the driver.— *Aung Min Han*

Yaba, Ecstasy, Diazepam and Ice seized

A LOCAL police squad form Yangon East district police seized 710 yaba pills, two pills of Ecstasy and ice weighing 3 grams from one Hein Min Win Naing who was staying at the Hotel Corolla on Taw Win road, Ward 4, Mayangon township on Monday.

According to a connected investigation, the police searched a Honda Fit being driven by one David with one Htet Myat Kyaw on board at ward 4, South Okkalapa township and found ice weighing 1 gram and 660 yaba pills. Police seized 500 yaba pills from one Ahkar Myint Soe on Shwe Gone Daing road, Bahan township.

Criminals seen together with drugs. PHOTO: MPF

On that same day police from Tamu township discovered 100 yaba pills and 6,000 Diazepam tablets on a motorcycle driver identified as one Pon Htan on Thamu- Kalay road near Pan Thar village, Thamu township.

On 29 May, police in Taunggyi township stopped a motorcycle being driven by one Ko Aung with one Thant Sin on board on Thaunggyi- Zalae village road, Taunggyi township. Ko Aung drove the motorbike away leaving Thant Zin behind. Police searched Than Zin and found 185 yaba pills. Police have filed charges against all suspects under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.— *Myanmar Police Force*

Vehicle conductor run over by container vehicle

A MAN was run over by a container vehicle while sleeping underneath it at the Hteetan container yard, Kyimyindine township, on 29 May.

Ko Thaw Zin Tun alias Ko Thaw, 17, was sleeping underneath the vehicle when Sithu Win, 22, started the vehicle and unknowingly ran him over. The police sent the corpse to Yangon General Hospital. Local police have filed charges against the driver.

Police said that the conductor had broken regulations by entering the container yard.— *Ko Gyi Tin*

Over 2,000 yaba pills seized

Yaba pills and cash seized. PHOTO: TIN WIN HLAING (KAWKAREIK)

AN anti-drug squad in Hpa-an Township seized two thousand yaba pills in Thingan Nyinaung Village on 27 May. Members of the police searched the home of one Soe Naing alias Bai Gyi and Ma Saw Nu Phyu on Myo Thit (7) street, Thingan Nyinaung village and found two thousand yaba pills.

On that same day police also searched a home owned by the same couple on Kyauk Lone Gyi Lan Thwe (1) street, Ward 4, Myawady Tonship. There the police found 95 yaba pills and cash suspected to have been earned by dealing the drug. Local police have filed charges against them.— *Tin Win Hlaing (Kawkareik)*

LOCAL Business

Fish paste producers want to break into world market

LOCAL fish paste manufacturers are putting more effort into producing export-quality products to reach the international market according to the Myanmar Fish Paste, Dried Fish and Fish Sauce Association.

A local organisation related to the development of food science and technology in Myanmar will offer technological assistance to local fish paste producers.

"As part of our programme the association sent members to Thailand to observe advanced fish paste technology," said a spokesperson of the association.

"We have also gone to observe fish paste production in the Ayeyawady Delta region and discussed how to produce value-added products without using prohibited dyes and fly repellents."

To inspire local fish paste manufacturers, the Food Science and Technology Association plans to take host a competition for the industry next month.

Located in Amar Sub-township in Phyapon District, Ayeyawady Delta region, it's the norm for local villagers to operate fish paste manufacturing businesses, producing between 65 per cent to 70 per cent of all fish paste made domestically each year.—*200*

Indian Texperts to cooperate with Myanmar garment factories

INDIAN technological company Textperts is gearing up to establish trade links with Myanmar garment entrepreneurs, according to the India Daily News Agency.

Indian garment businesspeople have planned to open the door to cooperate with Myanmar businesses through the trade exhibition which will be held this coming June. Texperts, which runs successful and well established garment factories based in India, has already planned to join the trade expo which will be held from 24 to 27 June, it has been learned.

Companies from 14 countries are known to be planning to join the trade expo causing some experts to predict that the event will bring a range of benefits to the garment business sector in Myanmar. This year's expo is expected to be attended by over 9,000 businesspeople from Myanmar and abroad.

Texperts is an international textile sourcing and marketing organisation which offers its services to garment industry businesses.It is expected that Texperts will attempt to extend their business dealings by making agreements with garment factories based in Myanmar.

Myanmar also has the opportunity to prosper by entering into cooperation with the Indian garment sector as they aim to boost garment trade, requiring the assistance of international business firms.

The garment industry plays an important role in the development of the export trade. Improving the garment sector can encourage the economic development of the country, said a number of economic experts.—*PPN/Union daily*

Workers at a production line of a garment factory in Hlinethaya Industrial Zone in Yangon. PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE

Eighty-three million barrels of liquefied natural gas expected to be in two offshore blocks

AUSTRALIA based Woodside Energy has been conducting offshore natural gas exploration in Myanmar. Currently, two natural gas blocks are expected to have 83 million barrels of liquefied natural gas.

Woodside Energy has begun drilling the natural gas within block A-6 off the Rakhine shore and block A-7 off of Shwe Yee Htun-1 and Thalin-1 in cooperation with the companies of Myanmar citizens starting from 27 November of 2015. Woodside has planned to continue to explore into 2017 because of the discovery of those natural gas mines, said Peter Coleman, chief executive officer of Woodside.

Woodside has planned to produce 2.4billion barrels of liquefied natural gas within a decade and Myanmar will act as one of the main mines to help the company to meet the quota production.

Currently, production has declined at older mines while the new mines are not yet ready to begin production. This may lead to the energy constraints in 2020, said U Than Tun, consultant of the Myanmar Oil & Gas Enterprise (MOGE) under the Ministry of Electric and Energy.

Myanmar is expected to experience a yearly energy need increase of 2.9 per cent between 2012 and 2030, according to the Asia Development Bank (ADB). Myanmar 30-year-energy projects and natural gas production projects look promising for the electricity sector, experts say.—*200*

AYA to offer credit card services to staff

THE Ayeyawady Bank (AYA) will offer credit card services mainly to professional staff who have a regular monthly income to help improve the efficiency and speed of their banking, said U Thura Maung, the Card Business Director of AYA.

The amount of credit will be set depending on the income and/or salary of the employee. Any employee who has regular income can apply for this service which aims to fulfill the financial needs of the staff. This means that they can buy things they need even when they're short on money, he added.

AYA will scrutinise the background information of the organisations or the companies of applicants for the card. AYA will develop links with shopping centres, supermarkets and other service businesses to enable clients to use their cards conveniently.

Clients are required to pay back the money offered by the bank (their credit) plus the interest of the money they spent at the end of each month.—*200*

New Kyaukse Cement plant to be opened in mid-year

THE Ministry of Industry has announced that a new cement plant, capable of producing 5,000 tonnes of cement a day, will be opened mid-year as part of the 100-day plan.

The cement plant will be opened in Kyaukse, Mandalay Region. The Kyaukse cement plant, under Heavy Industries 2 of the Ministry of Industry, is being jointly conducted as a business with the Myanmar Conch Cement Company. The Ministry of Industry entered into a contract with Myanmar Conch Cement in November, 2014 under the BOT system. The cement from this plant will be distributed under the trade mark of ALPHA. Previously, the Kyaukse cement plant was able to produce around 400 tonnes of cement per day. The establishment of a joint venture aims to fulfill the requirements of the domestic concrete market, it has been learned.—*MPPS/ Union*

South China Sea issue should be resolved via negotiations by parties concerned

PHNOM PENH — Cambodian Defence Minister Gen. Tea Banh said on Wednesday that South China Sea dispute should be resolved peacefully through negotiations by parties concerned and outsiders should not meddle in the issue.

"Cambodia has a very definite stance: we urge all parties concerned in the dispute to sit down and negotiate with each other peacefully, and the outsiders should not meddle in this issue," he told reporters after a meeting with visiting Vietnamese Defence Minister Gen. Ngo Xuan Lich.

Cambodian Defence Minister Gen. Tea Banh. PHOTO:XINHUA

According to Gen. Tea Banh, during ASEAN Defense Ministers' meeting and ASEAN-China Defence Ministers' informal meeting in Laos last week, all ministers agreed that all parties concerned in the dispute should effectively implement the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea towards the rapid compilation of the Code of Conduct.

Lich arrived in Cambodia on Tuesday for a three-day visit. On Tuesday afternoon, he met separately with Cambodian Prime Minister Samdech Techo Hun Sen and National Assembly President Samdech Heng Samrin. —*Xinhua*

Malaysia uncovers immigration racket raising trafficking, security fears

KUALA LUMPUR — Authorities in Malaysia have uncovered an immigration racket involving the sabotage of a computerised passport-screening system at its main international airport, police said on Wednesday, raising worries about human-trafficking and security.

The immigration department fired 15 officials on Tuesday, took disciplinary action against 22 and said it was investigating more in connection with the security breach at Kuala Lumpur International Airport, which could have been going on for years.

Police said arrests were imminent. "We have identified the suspects. We are still investigating but we will make arrests soon," deputy police chief Noor Rashid Ibrahim told reporters on Wednesday.

International and domestic syndicates were involved, Noor Rashid said, and he suggested the motive was human trafficking.

"The syndicates overseas collaborate with the syndicates here. These overseas syndicates — their responsibility is to bring the man over and collect payments, while the syndicates here, their job is to accept. These are the ones that tried to penetrate the system," he said. Authorities said last week the airport's passport-verification system was deliberately disrupted at certain times of the day, possibly since 2010, raising suspicion people were being smuggled through immigration when it was down.

The revelations come after the auditor-general said in a report tabled in parliament two weeks ago that the immigration system was not functioning satisfactorily. Human rights groups have questioned Malaysia's efforts to combat human trafficking after the discovery of mass graves of suspected migrants near the border with Thailand last year. Malaysia has an estimated two million illegal migrant laborers, many of whom work in the electronics, palm oil and construction sectors. The immigration system breach has also raised concern about security.

A man stand near flight information boards at Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA) outside Kuala Lumpur, on 14 June 2014. PHOTO: REUTERS

Authorities in the Muslim-majority country have arrested about 170 people since the beginning of last year for suspected militant activity. Last month, Malaysia deported three foreign suspected militants and arrested 14 Malaysians on suspicion of links to Islamic State, including an aircraft technician.

In March, deputy prime minister Ahmad Zahid Hamidi said police had foiled an Islamic State plot to kidnap Prime Minister Najib Razak and other senior ministers last year.

Opposition lawmaker R. Sivarasa said the sabotage warranted a major criminal investigation and called for the police and the anti-corruption commission to look into it.—*Reuters*

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Thailand jails country singer for seven years in royal insult case

BANGKOK — Thailand on Wednesday jailed a country singer and political activist for 7-1/2 years, on grounds of insulting the monarchy in a public speech made three years ago.

The conviction swells a list of prosecutions pushed by Thailand's military — the self-designated protectors of the monarchy — after it seized power in a coup two years ago.

The junta has a zero-tolerance approach to criticism of the monarchy, making use of a draconian lese-majeste law that prescribes a prison term of up to 15 years for each offence.

Thanat Thanawatcharanon, known by his stage name of Tom Dundee, gave waiting media the thumbs-up as he arrived at court on Wednesday, wearing an orange prison uniform.

"The sentence is much longer than we expected," said his lawyer, Saovalux Po-Ngam. "We can lodge an appeal within a month but have to discuss first whether we will. In my personal view, the law should be scrapped, because the sentences are too long." Sentences for royal insults have become increasingly harsh under the junta, and one offender was jailed for a record 30 years in 2015.

Thanat, who has been in prison since his arrest in 2014, had previously denied the charges but confessed in a sudden about-face in court on Monday.

Confessing to a lese-majeste crime is routine practice in Thailand, where the accused often plead guilty in hopes of a more lenient sentence.

Prosecutors said Thanat made defamatory comments against the monarchy during a 2013 speech to 'red shirt' activists at a political rally in the capital, Bangkok.

He was arrested and charged in July 2014, following pressure by an ultra royalist group on Thailand's Department of Special Investigation to prosecute Thanat.

For much of the past decade, Thailand has been divided along political lines between the mostly rural-based red shirt movement and the royalist-military establishment in the capital and south. Ailing King Bhumibol Adulyadej, 88, is revered by Thais who see him as a keystone of Thailand's identity. —*Reuters*

Thanat Thanawatcharanon, also known by his stage name Tom Dundee, a Thai actor, singer and political activist, who was accused of insulting Thailand's king in public speech, gestures as he arrives at the criminal court in Bangkok, Thailand, on 1 June, 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

As Beijing flexes muscles in South China Sea, Malaysia eyes harder response

MIRI (Malaysia) — Spotting a large vessel off the coast of Sarawak state in March, officers on a Malaysian patrol boat were shocked when it steamed toward them at high speed, blaring its horn before veering off to reveal "Chinese Coast Guard" emblazoned on its side.

According to an officer from the Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency (MMEA), Chinese Coast Guard vessels have been sighted several times before around the South Luconia Shoals, off the oil-rich town of Miri. But such an aggressive encounter was a first.

"To us, it looked like an attempt to charge at our boat, possibly to intimidate," said the officer, who was not authorised to speak publicly but showed Reuters a video of the previously unreported incident.

Spurred by the incident and the appearance of some 100 Chinese fishing vessels in the area around the time, some in Malaysia are hardening the nation's previously muted responses toward their powerful neighbour China.

One senior minister said Malaysia must now stand up against such maritime incursions as China flexes its muscles along dozens of disputed reefs and islands in the South China Sea.

China's growing assertiveness has already alarmed the Philippines, Viet Nam and other claimants. It has also increased US-China tensions, with the two heavyweights trading accusations of militarizing the vital waterways through which some $5 trillion in trade passes each year.

But heralding its "special relationship" with China, and heavily reliant on trade and investment, Malaysia's previous responses to China's activity in the region have been described by Western diplomats as "low-key".

It downplayed two naval exercises conducted by China in 2013 and 2014 at James Shoal, less than 50 nautical miles off Sarawak. And in 2015, concerns raised by Malaysian fishermen in Miri about alleged bullying by armed men aboard Chinese Coast Guard vessels were largely ignored.

Malaysian fishing boats moored at the Bintulu fishing jetty to land their catch on 5 May, 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

But when scores of Chinese fishing boats were spotted in March encroaching near South Luconia Shoals, a rich fishing ground south of the disputed Spratly Islands, Malaysia sent its navy and uncharacteristically summoned China's ambassador to explain the incident.

China's foreign ministry downplayed the matter, saying its trawlers were carrying out normal fishing activities in "relevant waters".

Just a couple of weeks later, Malaysia announced plans to set up a naval forward operating base near Bintulu, south of Miri.

The defence minister insists the base, which will house helicopters, drones and a special task force, is to protect the country's rich oil and gas assets from potential attacks by Islamic State (IS) sympathizers based in the southern Philippines, hundreds of kilometres to the northeast.

Some officials and experts however say China's activities off the coast are a more important factor.

"If you beef up security for oil and gas assets, you are protecting yourself from non-state and state actors so there is some plausibility to what he's saying," said Ian Storey, a South China Sea expert at Singapore's ISEAS Yusof Ishak Institute.

"But is it really being driven by Daesh? I don't think so," Storey added, using an alternative name for IS. Underscoring the hardening attitude, one senior federal minister told Reuters that Malaysia must take more decisive action on maritime incursions or risk being taken for granted.

The minister, who asked not to be named due to the sensitivity of the matter, highlighted the contrast between Malaysia's response in March to a similar incident just days earlier in neighbouring Indonesia.

"When the Chinese entered Indonesia's waters, they were immediately chased out. When the Chinese vessels entered our waters, nothing was done," the minister said. Last month in parliament, Malaysia's deputy foreign minister also reiterated that like other Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Malaysia did not recognise China's controversial Nine Dash Line, which it uses to claim over 90 per cent of the South China Sea.

Asked about the incident described by the MMEA officer, China's foreign ministry said both countries had a "high degree of consensus" on dealing with maritime disputes through dialogue and consultation.

"We are willing to remain in close touch with Malaysia about this," spokeswoman Hua Chunying said. Malaysia's reliance on China goes some way to explaining Kuala Lumpur's reluctance to react more strongly.

China is Malaysia's top export destination and Malaysia is the biggest importer of Chinese goods and services in the 10-member ASEAN group.

Corporations owned by the Chinese government also paid billions of dollars last year to buy assets from debt-riddled state investment firm 1MDB, which has been a major embarrassment for Prime Minister Najib Razak.

China's influence in Malaysia's domestic affairs has always been a concern for the Malay-majority nation. Ethnic Chinese in Malaysia account for about a quarter of the population.

Diplomatic ties between the two countries were tested in September when the Chinese ambassador visited China town in the capital Kuala Lumpur ahead of a pro-Malay rally, and warned that Beijing has no fear in talking against actions that affect the rights of its people.

The ambassador was summoned to explain his comments but the Chinese foreign ministry defended the envoy. Seeking to balance its economic and national security interests, Malaysia is pursuing various strategies including bolstering its surveillance and defense capabilities while promoting a code of conduct between China and ASEAN countries signed in 2002.

A more sensitive option is to seek closer military ties with the United States. One senior official told Reuters that Malaysia has reached out to the United States for help on intelligence gathering and to develop its coast guard capabilities, albeit quietly to avoid angering Beijing.

Storey said moves to secure closer US military ties could be twinned with soft diplomacy to try to convince China to be less assertive on its claims, but resolving the issue would be difficult regardless.

"None of these strategies work very well, but what can you do?," Storey said. "This dispute is going to be around for a very long time."—*Reuters*

Five killed in anti-insurgent raid in Thailand ahead of Ramadan

BANGKOK — Four insurgents and a ranger were killed during a raid by a joint force of security authorities in Thailand's southern Narathiwat Province, police said Wednesday.

The raid by soldiers, police and rangers took place on Wednesday morning on a mountain in the province's Chanae district, 850 kilometres south of Bangkok, where a group of insurgents has been hiding.

The raid resulted in gun battles killing four militants and a ranger, and several rifles were seized afterwards.

Internal Security Operations Command (ISOC) Region 4 deputy spokesman, Col. Yuthanam Petchmuang, said one of the dead militants was the subject of an arrest warrant for involvement in the recent seizure by insurgents of a hospital in Narathiwat.

Elsewhere in Narathiwat, two rangers were killed on Tuesday in a gun and bomb attack in Rangae district while they were patrolling.

The latest incident happened ahead of the start of the Muslim fasting period of Ramadan on 5 June.

Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha on Tuesday vowed to beef up security in Thailand's three southernmost provinces — Yala, Pattani and Narathiwat — during Ramadan.

He admitted the insurgency has prevented investors from accessing the area, and the government is trying to bring the situation in the south back to normal.

The independent agency which monitors the tension in Thailand's south said early this year that around 6500 people have been killed.— *Kyodo News*

Opinion

Write for us

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

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

Happy children are a complete joy for adults to watch

Kyaw Thura

IT takes a village to raise a child, as the traditional African proverb goes. This highlights how important it is for parents and community partners to look after children during their maturational development. All children, regardless of race, gender and religion, are entitled to have easy access to free and compulsory education once they turn five.

Young minds should be trained to view education as an effective means of developing their abilities, their individual judgement and their sense of moral and social responsibility. Only then will they be able to grow into reliable members of professional societies.

Fortunately, they are awash with opportunities to follow their natural bent with relative ease. With the advent of the internet, everything they want or need to know is just a few clicks away. Unfortunately, they are faced with the myriad challenges of modern life. It is apparent to all of us that social media has become open to misuse. They are prone to contract into socially undesirable behaviour if they are left unsupervised and unwatched. It is, however, necessary to bear in mind that too much prohibition of their curiosity will prevent their learnability. In other words, children should not be treated as pawns.

The onus is on all of us, adults, to create an environment for our children to grow up in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding. In addition, we need to impart to our children the virtues of justice, freedom and equality through tolerance and solidarity. Undoubtedly, when children feel happy, adults will feel the same automatically.

Right to Education

Dr.Khine Khine Win

EDUCATION is not only a fundamental human right but also a gate way to success. It creates an enlightened society. Strong parallels can be drawn between the right to education and the development of respect for human dignity. Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) article 26 states "Everyone has the right to education". Indeed International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) recognize the right of everyone to education. If you look through international instruments on human rights, you can see that the right to education and human rights education permeate in variety of instruments. In fact, the right to education has been strongly affirmed in international law, most importantly in the Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960) and the World Education Forum (2000) reaffirmed education as a fundamental human right.

According to article 26(2) of UDHR, the education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace. If Children and youth are in school, trafficking, abuse, child marriage, sexual exploitation and forced labor risk will be low and if they are away from school they are dangerous in many ways, very simply thinking. The more illiterate people there are, the bigger hindrance in development and democratic practice. Higher literacy means more knowledgeable and skilled people in a country which is normally termed as human capital. Literacy enables a person to understand better, so they enjoy a better socio economic life and assist in the nation's overall development.

In accordance with general international human rights, there can be no discrimination in the provision of education. It is deemed as important for girls and boys. There are many factors implicit in a discussion of the accessibility of education including geography, cost, language and poverty also. The government must ensure that the right to education will be exercised without discrimination of any kind as to race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. This is the very core principle for government for education of their children. There must be education for all without discrimination. Neither the right to education nor the right to human rights education is restricted in application to children.

All children and young people need and deserve quality education. To achieve this, the governments make to ensure that there are sufficient teachers who have the knowledge, skills and attitude to provide this, and that they have the capacity and resources to respond to learners' different needs. UNESCO marks the Global Action Week for Education, GAWE (24-30 April 2016). It is a worldwide annual event with an aim to raising awareness of the importance of education for all and this event takes education financing as its theme under the banner funding the future. What I would like to highlight here is that financing plays the crucial role in education. Children in poor countries face many barriers to accessing an education. Some are obvious like not having a school to go to, while others are more subtle, like the teacher at the school not having had the training needed to effectively help children to learn. UNESCO says yet millions of children remain deprived of educational opportunities, many as a result of poverty. No matter what the reason, all children must be able to go to school, and they all have the right to get same opportunities to build a future. That's our duty, our business for our children. Bear in mind that all children have the right to education.

In general, States are obliged to provide free education, at least at the elementary stages. Conformity with the UDHR article 26, not only requires free education but also compulsory education. A nation cannot be built without education. With education, professionals are nurtured that will enhance nation-building. In fact, education shapes the attitudes and behaviors and values of citizens and it is the best investment tool for socio-economic development too. If we want a well developed country with good citizens, give right the education to every children and young people without discrimination.

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Backup power system donated to monastery in Sagaing Region

IN an effort to develop the rural regions of Sagaing Region, Consulate General of the Republic of the India in Mandalay and the Tata Power Company donated a backup power system worth of K14 million (US$11,864) to the Taungpaw Dhammapala Monastery in the Ywama Model Village, Tentse Township, Sagaing Region, on Saturday, 28 May.

At the ceremony, the Indian consul general explained the donation of the backup power system.

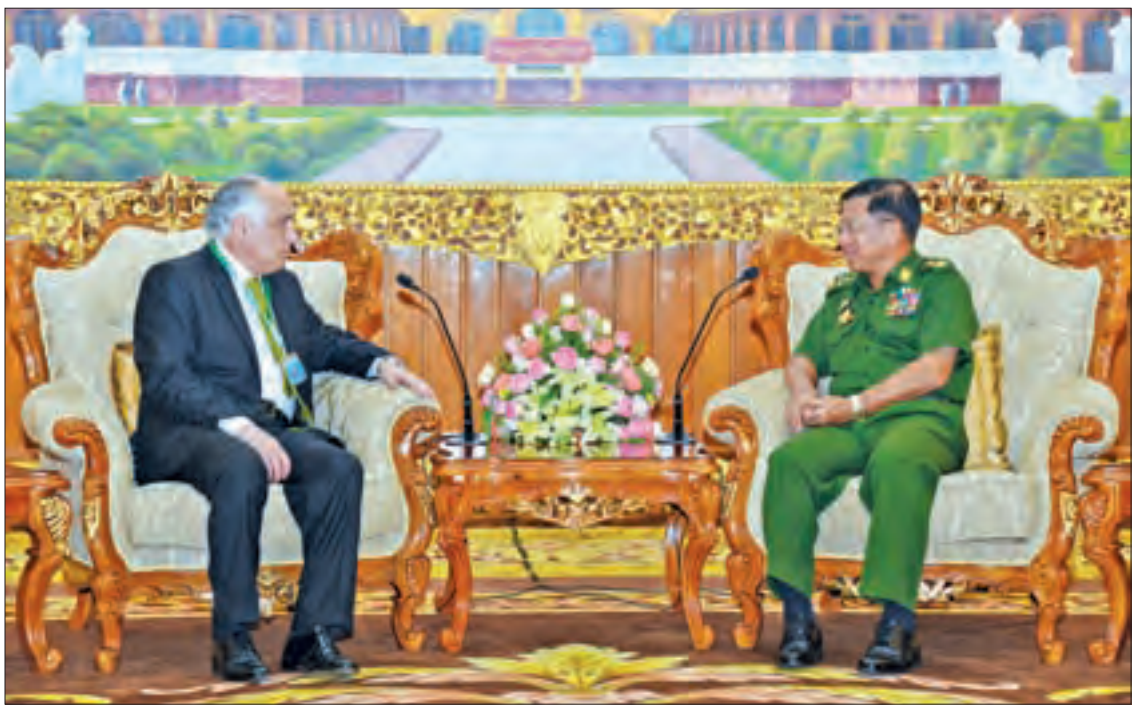
Sayadaw Bhaddanta Pandicca of the Taungpaw Dhammapala Monastery offered words of thanks to the donors.

The backup power system, which can be kept charged with 10 6-foot by 3-foot solar panels, can absorb energy from the sun and transport it to eight 200MP batteries.

The system will provide power for 12 fluorescent lamps, four electric fans, a refrigerator and a small water pump.—*Thiha Ko Ko*

A monk from the Taungpaw Dhammapala Monastery inspects the backup power system donated by the Indian consulate and the Tata Power Co. PHOTO: REUTERS

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing meets outgoing Brazilian Ambassador to Myanmar



Senior General Min Aung Hlaing receiving Brazilian Ambassador to Myanmar Mr. Alcides G.R. Prates.
PHOTO: MYAWADY

COMMANDER-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing received Brazilian Ambassador to Myanmar Mr. Alcides G.R. Prates who has completed his tour of duty in Myanmar, at Bayintnaung Hall in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the call the two representatives held discussions on cooperation in health, sports and other sectors between the two armed forces.

Also present at the call were Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice Senior General Soe Win and Lt-Gen Mya Tun Oo of Commander-in-Chief (Army) Office.—*Myawady*

Soldiers clean up No 5 High School in Mayangon

Soldiers clean up bushes and branches in a Maygon school.
PHOTO: OFFICE OF THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF DEFENCE SERVICES

WITH the aim of preventing the spread of infectious diseases in schools, members of the Tatmadaw (Yangon Command) cleared up bushes and tree branches and cleaned a drainage system to allow for the proper flow of water in the compound of No 5 Basic Education High School in Mayangon Township on Tuesday.

The soldiers also cleaned inside and outside of classrooms at the school.—*Office of the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services*

Report Highlights Slavery Issue in Asia Pacific Region

>> From page 1

In December 2015 a Myanmar Times report found that 2000 cases of domestic worker abuse had been reported to Singapore's Ministry of Manpower, accounting for 1 per cent of the domestic workforce in the country.

NGO- Humanitarian Organisation for Migrant Economics (HOME) claimed it had dealt with 13.5 cases per month from Myanmar domestic workers.

HOME estimates that 40,000 Myanmar domestic workers operate in Singapore.

The report also highlighted the smuggling operations of Rohingya communities and Bangladeshi citizens smuggled from Myanmar waters into Thailand and Malaysia in search of better lives. Most of those smuggled were abused and tortured, and their families blackmailed. As death camps in Thailand and Malaysia were uncovered.

An investigation into the case found Thai military, police and businessmen along with 52 local politicians involved in the smuggling operation - the report notes.

Last years flooding and Cyclone Komen, along with this year's El Niño are also to blame for creating insecure working environments in rural areas:

"Throughout 2015–16, cyclones in Myanmar, flooding in India, and drought in Viet Nam have increased insecurity for thousands of people," reads the report.—*GNLM*

People's Forum

Letter to the Editor

Dear U Khin Maung Aye
Subject: SEAPORTS for MYANMAR.

It is really disheartening to read about Port Delays in our only *River Port* having approaches from the Sea. The answer is simple. WE HAVE NEGLECTED SEA TRANSPORTATION FOR MANY YEARS!

Myanmar has a coastline of around 1200 miles having direct access to the Indian Ocean. yet we do not have a Deep Seaport worth mentioning. It is always Thilawa which has the 3 basic requirements for a port, i.e, Power, Potable Water and easy Communications. However, Yangon can never become a real seaport because of many handicaps mentioned roughly as follows:

(a) It is located 22 miles from the Gulf of Mottama;
(b) Even shallow draught vessels need 2 tides to berth in Yangon; at least one high tide for Thilawa;
(c) Shippers always look forward to a quick turn-around for their ships as a merchant ship at anchor cost them unnecessary expenses, at times around US $ 3000 or so, per day;
(d) Heavy silting in the Monkey Point area and upper berths need continous drag-predging;
(e) There is no more room for container yards which forces containers to be stacked in yards further upstream involving more barge-work, double-handling and more, machines, river congestion, apart from added commodity, prices.
(f) Approach channels in the Yangon river have narrowed with sandbanks expanding, making ship-handling more difficult, especially during spring rides. (At least 3 collisions have occurred recently, one resulting in a Vietnamese ship sinking.)
(g) Since draught limitations will always be there, either in Yangon berths or even in Thilawa, heavy cargo for our country, needs to be break-bulked in distant deep-sea ports, and carried to our only port of yangon in smaller vessels, thereby raising costs once more.

A bove are just some of the facts involving difficulties of Yangon port, which unfortunately, have an effect on land communications, clearence and transportation also, not to mention our exports and imports. I need not stress on the Pathein port, as everyone knows, it is about 70 miles from the sea, tidal, berthless and will never have the basic requirements as a seaport.

So I hope authorities have plans develop real deep seaports accessible at any time from the Indian Ocean, with modern facilities, located as centrally as possible from our production areas, which will play important part in the equitable development of our States and Regions.

Thanking you,
Truly,
A Seadarer.

Survey to assess unused land . . .

>> From page 1

Big companies have partnered with factories in utilising their vacant land. These companies use the land as a place to store their construction materials, which is not related to industrial zone activities," added U Tin Oo.

In a bid to resolve issues of vacant land plots within zones, directives on renting out land will continue to be enforced as part of the Department of Urban and Housing Development's implementation plan for industrial zones.

"They've applied for land from the Land Records Department, then left it undeveloped after receiving the land grants. The price of land increases once grants are received," said U Myat Thin Aung, chair of the Hlaingthaya Industrial Zone.

The previous government issued directives during its term in office that stated that land must be utilised within six months for factory purposes once a land grant has been received and that it must not be used for housing or be subleased or sold off to third parties.—*Myitmakha News Agency*

UNILEVER Food Solutions is participating in Food & Hotel Myanmar 2016 at Myanmar Event Park in Yangon from 1st to 3rd June to champion kitchen modernization that will better prepare F&B businesses for upcoming opportunities.—GNLM

Combative Trump says he raised $5.6 million for vets, bashes media

US Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump holds paperwork which states 'Donald J. Trump, Veteran Fundraiser' during a news conference at Trump Tower in Manhattan, New York, US, on 31 May 2016.
PHOTO: REUTERS

NEW YORK — US Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump on Tuesday detailed $5.6 million (£3.8 million) in contributions he raised for military veterans, and staged a fiery news conference where he attacked reporters for questioning him for months about the money.

Appearing at Trump Tower in Manhattan, the billionaire accused the media of failing to give him credit for raising the funds at an event in January in Iowa.

His tirade, in which he called one reporter "a sleaze" and sarcastically described another as a "real beauty," overshadowed what otherwise should have been an upbeat event for the presumptive Republican nominee.

"The press should be ashamed of themselves," he told reporters gathered before him. "You make me look very bad. I've never received such bad publicity for doing a good job."

While Trump has long had an adversarial relationship with the media, questions about the donations to veterans touched a raw nerve with him as he tries to build a conservative base ahead of the 8 November general election.

Reporters have been persistently asking whether Trump in fact raised all the money he said he had in January and why it took so long to hand donations over to veterans groups.

A number of veterans groups listed by Trump on Tuesday as recipients confirmed they had received the donation as listed, ranging from $25,000 to, in one case, $1.1 million, which went to the Marine Corps Law Enforcement Foundation. Some of the donations arrived in February or March, some as recently as last week around the time a critical article appeared in *The Washington Post*. The money arrived in the form of a check from the Donald J. Trump Foundation.

"We received a $75,000 gift early last week from the Trump Foundation, it was not restricted or earmarked in any way," said Katherine Fritz, director of development at America's Vetdogs.

Trump's criticism of the media dashed the hopes of some Republican leaders who want him to tone down his rhetoric and become more magnanimous now that he has sealed the Republican presidential nomination.

The Washington Post said Trump only handed over a personal donation of $1 million last week — four months after announcing it — once the newspaper started asking about the money.

Trump said the news coverage of his veterans group donations had been close to libellous. Asked whether he would maintain an adversarial stance with reporters if elected president, Trump said: "Yeah, it's going to be like this."

A reporter told Trump he seemed resistant to the kind of scrutiny that comes with the office of US president. But Ari Fleischer, a former White House press secretary for President George W. Bush, said the news media should stop fretting about how Trump treats them.

"My advice to the press: Stop interviewing yourselves about Trump's attack on the press. Don't worry about it. Just do your jobs and be fair," he said.

The contretemps took place on the same day documents were disclosed from a lawsuit involving Trump University, a now-defunct education programme that ran a real estate training programme.

Trump has attacked the presiding judge as hostile to him.

The university documents showed Trump University created a special class to teach students how to cash in on US mortgage foreclosures when the United States was struggling with an entrenched housing crisis in 2009.

Democratic presidential front-runner Hillary Clinton sought to take advantage of Trump's discomfort over the media scrutiny he has faced. She told CNN that Trump's tendency to attack his critics "is a recipe for gridlock in Washington."

Clinton defended her own policy toward dealing with the news media, saying she has conducted 300 interviews this year alone. Unlike Trump, she rarely holds news conferences. Her last one was last December.

Clinton leads Trump by 11 percentage points in the latest Reuters/Ipsos opinion poll. According to the 27-31 May survey of likely voters, 46 per cent support the former US secretary of state while 35 per cent back Trump. California Governor Jerry Brown on Tuesday endorsed Clinton for the Democratic nomination, saying it was the only way to "stop the dangerous candidacy of Donald Trump."

At his news conference, Trump also bristled at the possibility that Republicans opposed to him might run a third-party candidate as an alternative to Trump or the expected Democratic nominee Clinton. He said a leader of that effort, Bill Kristol, editor of The Weekly Standard magazine, "looks like such a fool."

"Let me tell you these people are losers," said Trump, adding that a third-party candidacy would guarantee Clinton wins the White House and deny Republicans the chance to put conservatives on the Supreme Court.—*Reuters*

NEWS IN BRIEF

China's Xi meets top North Korean official in Beijing: Xinhua

BEIJING — Chinese President Xi Jinping on Wednesday met with a top North Korean official, the state-run Xinhua News Agency said, amid strained relations over Pyongyang's nuclear development programme.

A meeting between Xi and Ri Su Yong, a vice chairman of the Workers' Party of Korea, took place in Beijing.

Ri, who recently became North Korea's top official in charge of overseeing foreign affairs, made a surprise visit to China on Tuesday. He served as North Korea's foreign minister until May. —*Kyodo News*

NATO likely to designate cyber as operational domain of war — German official

BERLIN — NATO members will likely agree during a summit meeting in Warsaw next month to designate cyber as an official operational domain of warfare, along with air, sea, land and space, a senior German defence ministry official said Wednesday.

Major General Ludwig Leinhos, who heads the German military's effort to build up a separate cyber command, told a conference at the Berlin air show that he expected all 28 NATO members to agree to the change during the coming Warsaw summit.

Leinhos, who previously held a senior job at NATO headquarters, said he also expected NATO members to agree to intensify their efforts in the cyber security arena. The United States announced in 2011 that it viewed cyberspace as an operational domain of war, and said it would respond to hostile attacks in cyberspace as it would to any other threat.—*Reuters*

German cabinet approves state fund for nuclear storage costs

BERLIN — Chancellor Angela Merkel's cabinet approved a draft law on Wednesday that adopted recommendations requiring Germany's utilities to pay 23.3 billion euros ($25.98 billion) into a state fund to cover the costs of storing nuclear waste, government sources said.

The new law will also close a loophole to ensure that if companies split up, they will still remain liable towards the newly established state fund, the sources said.

A 19-member commission recommended in late April that Germany's "big four" power firms — E.ON, RWE, EnBW and Vattenfall — pay a total 23.3 billion euros ($26 billion) to remove unwanted long-term liability for the storage of nuclear waste.

The legacy costs stem from Germany's decision to end nuclear power by 2022 following Japan's Fukushima disaster five years ago.—*Reuters*

Kremlin says regrets Turkey has not acted to mend ties over downed Russian warplane

KREMLIN — Russia regrets that Turkey has not taken the necessary steps to mend ties damaged by Ankara's shooting down of a Russian warplane near the Syrian border last year, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said on Wednesday.

The Kremlin was still waiting for Turkey to apologise and to pay compensation for the incident, Peskov told reporters when asked to comment on remarks by Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan who said on Tuesday he did not understand what kind of a "first step" Moscow expected from Ankara.—*Reuters*

Britons evenly split ahead of EU referendum — YouGov online poll

LONDON — British voters are evenly split between "Remain" and "Leave" ahead of a 23 June referendum on whether to remain in the European Union, according to the latest online opinion poll from YouGov for *The Times* newspaper.

The poll of 1,735 people, conducted on 30-31 May, found that both camps were level on 41 per cent, with 13 per cent undecided and 4 per cent not intending to vote.

The results were identical to YouGov's previous survey for *The Times*, which was conducted on 23-24 May.—*Reuters*

US-backed fighters, mostly Kurds, advance against IS in north Syria — monitor

Kurdish fighters from the People's Protection Units (YPG) stand near a military vehilce in the southeast of Qamishli city, Syria, on 22 April, 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

BEIRUT — US-backed Syrian fighters advanced against Islamic State in the last tract of territory the group holds near the Turkish border on Wednesday, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights monitoring group said.

The British-based Observatory said the Kurdish YPG militia made up the majority of forces involved in the attack, contradicting US officials who said the operation would be mostly comprised of Syrian Arab fighters.

Turkey is opposed to any further expansion of Syrian Kurdish influence in northern Syria, where the YPG already controls an uninterrupted 400 km (250 miles) stretch of the border.

US-led air strikes killed 15 civilians including three children near Manbij in the last 24 hours, the Observatory said.

"The majority are from (YPG), and the operation is basically a YPG operation," Abdulrahman told Reuters.

US officials told Reuters thousands of fighters, supported by a small number of US special forces, were launching an offensive to capture the crucial swathe of northern Syria that militants have long used as a logistics base. The Observatory said the assault was being carried out by the Syria Democratic Forces, an alliance that includes the Kurdish YPG and Arab fighting groups.

Washington supports the SDF, which was formed in October, has been fighting Islamic State in neighbouring Raqqa province and farther east in Hasaka. The YPG has been the most effective ally on the ground for US-led air strikes against IS, and last year captured large areas from it in Hasaka Province. —*Reuters*

Fear for civilians as Islamic State halts Iraqi army at gates of Falluja

Military vehicles for Iraqi security forces and Shi'ite fighters are seen near Falluja, Iraq, on 31 May 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

CAMP TARIQ (Iraq) — Islamic State fighters halted an Iraqi army assault on the city of Falluja with a counter-attack at its southern gates on Tuesday, while the United Nations warned of peril for civilians trapped in the city and used by militants as human shields.

The Iraqi army's assault on Falluja has begun what is expected to be one of the biggest battles ever fought against Islamic State, with the government backed by world powers including the United States and Iran, and determined to win back the first major Iraqi city that fell to the group in 2014.

A week after Baghdad announced the start of the assault, its troops advanced in large numbers into the city limits for the first time on Monday, pouring into rural territory on its southern outskirts but stopping short of the main built-up area.

Baghdad describes the assault to retake the city as a potential turning point in its US-backed campaign to defeat the ultra-hardline Sunni Muslim militants who rule a self-proclaimed caliphate across much of Iraq and Syria.

Falluja, where US troops fought the biggest battles of their own 2003-2011 occupation against Islamic State's precursors, is the militants' closest bastion to Baghdad, believed to be the base from which they have waged a campaign of suicide bombings on the capital less than an hour's drive away.

Retaking it would give the government control of the main population centres in the fertile Euphrates River valley west of the capital for the first time in more than two years.

But the assault is also a test of the army's ability to capture territory while protecting civilians. Although most of Falluja's population is believed to have fled during six months of siege, 50,000 people are still thought to be trapped inside with limited access to food, water or healthcare.

"A human catastrophe is unfolding in Falluja. Families are caught in the crossfire with no safe way out," said Jan Egeland, Secretary-General of the Norwegian Refugee Council, one of the organisations helping families displaced form the city.

"Warring parties must guarantee civilians safe exit now, before it's too late and more lives are lost," he said.

The United Nations said there were reports that the militants were using several hundred families as human shields in the city center, a tactic they have employed in other locations in Iraq. It said 3,700 people had managed to escape the city in the past week.

"Most people able to get out come from the outskirts of Falluja. For some time militants have been controlling movements, we know civilians have been prevented from fleeing," said Ariane Rummery, spokeswoman for UN refugee agency UNHCR.

"There are also reports from people who left in recent days that they are being required to move with ISIL within Falluja," she said, using an acronym for Islamic State, also known as ISIS or Daesh.

Soldiers from Iraq's elite Rapid Response Team stopped their advance overnight about 500 metres (yards) from the al-Shuhada district, the southeastern part of city's main built-up area, an army commander and a police officer said.

"Our forces came under heavy fire, they are well dug in in trenches and tunnels," said the commander speaking in Camp Tariq, the rear army base south of Falluja, 50 km (30 miles) west of Baghdad.

Reuters journalists in the area could hear explosions from artillery shelling and air strikes from a US-led coalition supporting the Iraqi forces.

A staff member of Falluja's main hospital said it received reports of 32 civilians killed on Monday. Medical sources had reported that the death toll in the city stood at about 50 — 30 civilians and 20 militants — during the first week of the offensive which had yet to involve street fighting.

Foreign aid organisations are not present in Falluja but are providing help in camps to those who manage to exit.

Falluja is the second-largest Iraqi city still under control of the militants, after Mosul, their de facto capital in the north that had a pre-war population of about 2 million.

Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi announced the assault on Falluja on 22 May after a spate of bombings that killed more than 150 people in one week in Baghdad, the worst death toll so far this year. A series of bombings claimed by Islamic State also hit Baghdad on Monday, killing more than 20 people.

In Washington, US officials said the Falluja operation would take time to complete, without giving a timetable.

"The Falluja offensive is tough ... They have faced a lot of heavy fighting in the past couple of days, machine gun fire, artillery fire, not to mention the constant threat of IEDs," Pentagon spokesman Captain Jeff Davis said on Tuesday. —*Reuters*

Taliban storm Afghan court, kill five, after vowing revenge for executions

GHAZNI — Taliban insurgents stormed a court in the Afghan city of Ghazni on Wednesday, clashing with police for at least an hour in an attack in which 10 people, including all five of the militants, were killed, police said.

The attack came days after the Taliban, who are fighting to topple the government of President Ashraf Ghani, vowed to seek revenge for the execution last month of six Taliban prisoners.

The raid began when a suicide bomber blew himself up at the gate of the court and four more attackers fought their way inside, sparking an hour-long battle with police, said city police chief Aminullah Amarkhil.

"Four civilian visitors and a policeman were killed in the attack but our forces were on high alert and shot dead the other bombers in no time," he said. The court building in the city, 150 km (100 miles) southwest of Kabul, was damaged, he said.

Spokesmen for the Taliban were not available for comment. The militants had vowed revenge for the hanging on 8 May of six Taliban prisoners convicted of terrorism offences, as part of a tougher security policy in retaliation for an April suicide attack in Kabul in which 64 people were killed.—*Reuters*

Japan, South Korea, US to press North Korea to halt provocation

TOKYO — Chief nuclear envoys from Japan, South Korea and the United States agreed Wednesday in Tokyo to increase pressure on North Korea to halt its missile launches and other provocative acts, the Japanese delegate said.

"We reaffirmed that North Korea's show of its stance to continue its nuclear and missile developments, including yesterday's experiment to launch a ballistic missile, is totally unacceptable," Kimihiro Ishikane, director general of the Japanese Foreign Ministry's Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau told reporters.

Ishikane held talks with Sung Kim, US special representative for North Korea policy, and Kim Hong Kyun, South Korea's special representative for Korean Peninsula peace and security affairs, in the Japanese capital a day after North Korea tried unsuccessfully to launch a ballistic missile.

"We will strongly urge North Korea to halt provocative acts," Ishikane said.

The envoys also shared their assessment of North Korea in the wake of the country's first ruling party congress in 36 years in early May at which its leader Kim Jong Un made clear he has no plans to curb Pyongyang's nuclear ambitions, Ishikane said.

(From L) Sung Kim, US special representative for North Korea policy, Kimihiro Ishikane, director general of the Japanese Foreign Ministry's Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau, and Kim Hong Kyun, South Korea's special representative for Korean Peninsula peace and security affairs, shake hands before their talks in Tokyo on 1 June 2016. The chief nuclear envoys seek to strengthen trilateral coordination to rein in North Korea's nuclear and missile ambitions. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

The three countries will also offer assistance to other states to effectively implement a series of sanctions imposed on North Korea by the UN Security Council in response to Pyongyang's fourth nuclear test in January and the subsequent launch of a long-range ballistic missile, he said.

Sung Kim said he hopes China, with strong ties to North Korea, will exercise its influence on Pyongyang to give up its nuclear and missile ambitions.

"I would expect and hope that our colleagues in China are making very clear to the North Koreans the important responsibilities they have to live up to the international obligations and commitments," the US representative told reporters, referring to the UN resolutions banning North Korea from conducting such tests and using ballistic missile technologies.

The three envoys are the chief delegates to the six-party talks on denuclearizing North Korea. The multilateral talks, involving the two Koreas, China, Japan, Russia and the United States, have been deadlocked since 2008.

North Korea's launch on Tuesday followed three botched attempts to launch what are believed to be Musudan missiles since 15 April .—*Kyodo News*

China says first stealth fighter not yet in service, but coming soon

BEIJING — China is still testing its first stealth fighter, the J-20, but the warplane will soon enter service, the air force said, after pictures circulated in Chinese media suggesting it had already joined the active fleet.

China expects the J-20 to help narrow the military gap with the United States, and its confirmation of the aircraft's first test flight coincided with a visit to Beijing in 2011 by then-US Defence Secretary Robert Gates. Some analysts have said J-20 photographs suggest China may be making faster-than-expected progress in developing a rival to Lockheed Martin's radar-evading F-22 Raptor.

In a statement, China's air force described as "unreliable" reports that the J-20 had appeared in training exercises, following a weekend state television broadcast that showed grainy pictures of what some viewers took to be the aircraft.

"At present, the J-20 has yet to be equipped for air force service," the air force said on its official microblog late on Tuesday afternoon.

Both the J-20, and another new aircraft, the Y-20 transporter, are still being test flown as planned, the air force said. "In the near future, the J-20 and Y-20 will, in succession, be equipped for service, effectively raising the air force's ability to fulfil its mission," it added, without giving a timeframe.

However, experts say China is struggling to develop advanced engines that would allow its warplanes to match Western fighters in combat. China has rapidly been ramping up research into advanced new military equipment, including submarines, aircraft carriers and anti-satellite missiles, which has rattled nerves regionally and in Washington. There is nothing unusual about developing new technology, which every country does if it wants a modern military, China's air force said in its statement.

"In recent years, China has mostly been relying on its own strength to develop new armaments, one after another," it added.—*Reuters*

Dead tiger cubs found in Thai temple amid trafficking fears

BANGKOK — Thai wildlife authorities found 40 tiger cub carcasses in a freezer in Thailand's infamous Tiger Temple on Wednesday as they removed live animals in response to international pressure over suspected trafficking and abuse.

The Buddhist temple in Kanchanaburi province west of Bangkok had become a tourist destination where visitors snapped selfies with bottle-fed cubs.

But the temple has been investigated for suspected links to wildlife trafficking and abuse. A raid that began on Monday is the latest move in a tug-of-war since 2001 to bring the tigers under state control.

Tiger parts are used in traditional Chinese medicine.

The 40 dead tiger cubs were found in a freezer in a kitchen area, said Adisorn Nuchdamrong, deputy director-general of the Department of National Parks.

"They must be of some value for the temple to keep them," he said. "But for what is beyond me."

Officials wearing protective masks displayed the bodies of the cubs to media at the temple. Also on display was the body of a Binturong, a protected species commonly known as a bearcat, which the authorities found with the cub carcasses. Monks at the temple were not immediately available for comment.

Officials have moved 52 live tigers from the temple since Monday, Adisorn said, leaving 85 still there.Thailand has long been a hub for the illicit trafficking of wildlife and forest products, including ivory. Exotic birds, mammals and reptiles, some of them endangered species, can often be found on sale in markets.

On Tuesday, the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals group said the temple was "hell for animals" and called on tourists to stop visiting animal attractions at home and abroad.—*Reuters*

A dead tiger cub is held up by a Thai official after authorities found 40 tiger cub carcasses during a raid on the controversial Tiger Temple, a popular tourist destination which has come under fire in recent years over the welfare of its big cats, in Kanchanaburi Province, west of Bangkok, Thailand, on 1 June 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

China to prosecute Xinjiang judge for letting off terror suspects

BEIJING — Authorities in China's violence-prone western region of Xinjiang will prosecute a former judge who reduced penalties and let off people suspected of terrorism, a regional government said.

Hundreds have died in recent years in Xinjiang, home to the Muslim Uighur people, in unrest blamed by Beijing on Islamist militants and separatists, though rights groups say the violence is more a reaction to repressive Chinese policies.

Fulati Qiuwaer was a senior judge in Aksu, in heavily Uighur southwestern Xinjiang, but had been sacked and expelled from the ruling Communist Party for his leniency in dealing with terror suspects, the Aksu branch of the party's anti-graft watchdog said.

"Fulati Qiuwaer seriously contravened the party's political discipline, and exonerated crimes and reduced penalties for those suspected of endangering security and violent terror," it said in a short statement issued on Tuesday.

The agency also accused Fulati Qiuwaer of siphoning off confiscated funds and seeking payments from people involved in court cases.

His case had been handed over to judicial authorities, it added, meaning he will face prosecution.

It was not possible to reach him for comment and unclear if he has been allowed to retain a lawyer.

Dilxat Raxit, a spokesman for the World Uyghur Congress, the main Uighur exile group, said Fulati Qiuwaer was being punished for trying to ensure Uighur suspects' legal rights were protected while in custody. Calls to the Aksu branch of the party's anti-graft watchdog seeking comment were not answered.

The government strongly denies committing any abuses in Xinjiang and insists the legal, cultural and religious rights of the Uighur people are fully protected.—*Reuters*

Australian surfer critical after losing leg in shark attack

MANDURAH — A suspected great white shark has attacked a surfer off a Western Australian beach, biting off one of his legs.

Ben Gerring, 29, a heavy machinery operator, was surfing at Falcon Bay Beach in Mandurah, south of Perth, on Tuesday when the shark attacked, media reported.

"A couple of the guys with longboards brought him in to the shore. So, it was obvious he wasn't in a good way and they were huddled around and in tears. It was really desperate scenes," said Nathan Hondros, a Mandurah Mail reporter who arrived on the scene shortly after the attack.

"He was unconscious. He'd lost his leg from above the knee so it was pretty horrific injuries. It was terrible to watch, there was a lot of distressed people on the beach. "There were kids who were in the water surfing with him so it was a really, really difficult thing to watch."

The beach was closed and Gerring, who is Australian, was taken to a hospital in Perth where he was in critical condition.—*Reuters*

Three North Korean restaurant defectors arrive in South—report

SEOUL — Three North Korean women who fled a restaurant they worked at in China have arrived in South Korea, Yonhap news agency reported on Wednesday quoting an unnamed government source.

The women, one aged 28 and two 29, fled the North Korean restaurant in Shanxi province and made their way to Thailand from where they flew to the South, Yonhap said. South Korea's Unification Ministry, which handles political ties with the North, could not confirm the report. Its National Intelligence Service, which conducts initial screening of North Korean defectors, declined to comment.

The ministry said last week that some North Korean workers had recently fled their jobs in an overseas restaurant run by the North, without identifying the number or location.

The case followed the defection of 13 North Korean workers from a restaurant run by the North in China in April, which the South described as unprecedented.

North Korea accused South Korea of a "hideous abduction" in that case.

Impoverished North Korea and the rich, democratic South have been in a technical state of war since their 1950-53 conflict ended in a truce, not a peace treaty.

About 340 defectors from the North arrived in the South in the first three months of this year, according to Unification Ministry data. A total of about 29,000 North Korean defectors have arrived in the South as of March, including 1,276 last year, with numbers declining since a 2009 peak.—*Reuters*

UNESCO listing sought for 'comfort women' documents

SEOUL — A South Korean civic group said Wednesday that together with organisations in other countries it has jointly filed an application to have documents related to so-called "comfort women" listed in UNESCO's Memory of the World Register.

The group said the application was made with the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation on Tuesday for about 2,700 documents linked to women forced into wartime Japanese military brothels.

Later in the day, the group said at a press conference in Seoul that the documents include accounts of the victims, their photos, and other materials collected from countries such as Japan, China, and South Korea.

"If successful, the registration will be of service to history education throughout the world," a member of the group said.

The application, titled "Voice of the Japanese military comfort women," was filed by the International Solidarity Committee formed in May last year and involving civic groups also in Japan, China, the Netherlands, and the Philippines, the group said.

The move follows the South Korean government's launching of a preparation committee Tuesday to carry out work for the setting up of a foundation tasked with helping improve the lives of South Korea's aging former comfort women.

The establishment of the foundation is a key part of a landmark deal reached between South Korea and Japan in December last year to resolve the simmering bilateral issue "finally and irreversibly."—*Kyodo News*

BANGKOK — Thai students drink milk to celebrate the World Milk Day in Khlong-Maha Wong School on the outskirts of Bangkok, capital of Thailand, on 1 June 2016. PHOTO: XINHUA

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV INLE STAR VOY NO ( )

Consignees of cargo carried on MV INLE STAR VOY NO ( ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 2.6.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S CONTINETAL SHIPPING LINE PTE LTD

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV SINAR SOLO VOY NO ( )

Consignees of cargo carried on MV SINAR SOLO VOY NO ( ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 2.6.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.W.P.T/M.I.T.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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

Phone No: 2301185

Julia Roberts to be named Woman of the Decade

Julia Roberts. PHOTO: REUTERS

LONDON — Oscar-winning actress Julia Roberts will be named the Woman of the Decade at the Spike Guys Choice Awards next month.

The 48-year-old "Pretty Woman" star will receive the award at the 10th annual event that will take place in Culver City, Los Angeles, reported Female First.

In the past, the award show has honoured winners based on one year, but for its 10th edition, Spike Guys Choice is widening its scope and looking over the whole decade. Others, who will receive awards at the ceremony include "Pitch Perfect's Anna Kendrick, Ben Affleck and Matt Damon.—*PTI*

Actress Amber Heard leaves the Superior Court of Los Angeles in Los Angeles, California, US on 27 May 2016, with what appears to be a bruise on her right cheek after obtaining a restraining order against husband Johnny Depp in this still image from video. PHOTO: REUTERS

Amber Heard reports Depp domestic violence accusation to police: lawyers

LOS ANGELES — Actress Amber Heard has given a statement to Los Angeles police in which she accused estranged husband Johnny Depp of domestic violence, her lawyers said on Tuesday, a week after she filed for divorce and obtained a restraining order against Depp.

Heard's attorneys said in a statement that in an attempt to "protect her privacy and Johnny's career" the actress initially declined to report to police a 21 May incident between her and Depp that she claimed left her with a bruised eye.

"Johnny's team has forced Amber to give a statement to the LAPD to set the record straight as to the true facts ...," Heard's lawyers Samantha Spector and Joseph P. Koenig said.

"Amber has suffered through years of physical and psychological abuse at the hands of Johnny," they said.

Representatives for Depp did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Los Angeles Police Department spokeswoman Officer Liliana Preciado declined to comment, citing privacy.

Depp's 17-year-old daughter Lily-Rose supported her father on Instagram, posting a photo captioning her father as "the sweetest most loving person I know."

Heard, 30, said in court papers filed in Los Angeles last week that Depp, 52, had been abusive to her throughout their relationship, culminating in an argument during which he hurled a cell phone at her face and shattered objects in her apartment.

Depp's lawyer argued in a court document that Heard "is attempting to secure a premature financial resolution by alleging abuse." —*Reuters*

'Mary Poppins Returns' with Blunt, 'Hamilton' star Miranda

NEW YORK — Britain's beloved cinematic singing nanny Mary Poppins will once again grace the big screens, this time with Emily Blunt and Lin-Manuel Miranda, the creator and star of the Broadway smash-hit "Hamilton," as her sidekick, Walt Disney Co said on Tuesday.

"Mary Poppins Returns," a sequel to the 1964 classic film "Mary Poppins," is scheduled for release in theaters on Christmas Day 2018 and will star British actress Blunt in the titular role made famous by Julie Andrews.

Miranda, who recently won a Pulitzer Prize for creating and starring in Broadway's historical, hip-hop musical "Hamilton," will play a new character named Jack, a street lamplighter.

"Mary Poppins," the movie based on the popular children's books by author P.L. Travers, followed a magical flying British nanny as she improved the lives of the unhappy Banks family with the aid of chirpy Cockney chimneysweep Bert, played by Dick Van Dyke.

The new film will be set in Depression-era London, the setting of Travers' stories, and will see Mary Poppins return to the now grownup Jane Banks, Michael Banks and his three children after they suffer a personal loss, Disney said.

"Through her unique magical skills, and with the aid of her friend Jack, she helps the family rediscover the joy and wonder missing in their lives," the studio said.

The studio did not say in its statement whether Andrews, now 80, or Van Dyke, 90, will appear in any capacity and representatives for the actors did not immediately respond to Reuters' request for comment.

"Mary Poppins Returns" is the latest in a slate of reboots from Disney, which last year remade animated fairytale "Cinderella" into a live action film. Disney will also release the live action "Beauty and the Beast," starring Emma Watson, next year.

The studio also owns George Lucas' "Star Wars" science-fiction adventure franchise and the Marvel superhero franchise.—*Reuters*

Actress Emily Blunt. PHOTO: REUTERS

JLo, Cristiano Ronaldo to feature in new music video

LONDON — Producer RedOne has roped in celebrity friends Jennifer Lopez and Cristiano Ronaldo to star in the video for his new track.

The singer-actress and soccer star will lip-sync to the Grammy Award-winning hitmaker's new song "Don't You Need Somebody" in the promo.

Meanwhile, the tune also features Enrique Iglesias, Serayah, and reggae star Shaggy. RedOne, real name Nadir Khayat, has worked with artists ranging from U2 to One Direction, and has produced hits for Lady Gaga, Iglesias, Marc Anthony, Nicki Minaj, Usher, and Lopez but now he's aiming for the charts himself. "The reason I chose to become a producer in the first place was being able to explore the sheer number of ideas and musical styles I had.

It enabled me to work with artists in all different genres. "I thought that to be a performer, you had to stick to a single sound, and I loved too many kinds of music to do that. But now I find myself wanting to get back to singing and playing, and friends like Enrique have encouraged me to do so," he said.—*PTI*

A general view shows the northern gates (L) of the NEAT Gotthard Base Tunnel near the town of Erstfeld, Switzerland, on 31 May 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Swiss declare Alps tamed as Gotthard rail tunnel opens

AMSTEG (Switzerland) — Switzerland opens the world's longest and deepest rail tunnel through the heart of the Alps on Wednesday in an engineering marvel that stands as a symbol of European unity at a time of increasing fragmentation.

The 57.1-km (35.5 mile)-long Gotthard Base Tunnel, 17 years under construction and designed to last a century, is part of a 23 billion Swiss franc infrastructure project to speed passengers and cargo by rail under the mountain chain that divides Europe's north and south.

Typically Swiss, the project that federal transport office director Peter Fueglistaler called "a masterpiece of timing, cost and policy" came in on schedule and on budget.

High-speed trains will whisk passengers in 17 minutes through a passage that took days until the first Alpine rail tunnel opened in 1882. Around 260 freight trains and 65 passenger trains will traverse the two-tube tunnel daily once final testing ends later this year.

The Swiss, as a rule rail fanatics, are throwing a party to mark the event that will draw the leaders of all its neighboring countries in a show of European solidarity.

"It is just part of the Swiss identity," Fueglistaler said of the Swiss fondness for major engineering feats. "For us, conquering the Alps is like the Dutch exploring the oceans."

The tunnel along Europe's main rail line that connects the ports of Rotterdam in the north to Genoa in the south snakes through the mountains as much as 2.3 km below daylight and through rock as hot as 46 degrees Celsius (114.8°F).

The rail route goes over the pass now in a series of loops and tunnels. The new flat route means even heavy trains will need only one locomotive rather than two or three.

Engineers had to dig and blast through 73 kinds of rock as hard as granite and as soft as sugar. Nine workers died.

Swiss voters — despite opposition at times from the government and parliament — supported the gargantuan rail project in a series of binding referendums in the 1990s.

Fittingly, the first ones to travel the tunnel at the official opening will be 500 lucky winners plus guests from the 130,000 who entered a ticket lottery for the inaugural trip.

The overall project includes the Loetschberg rail tunnel that has already opened, the Cereti tunnel still being built and renovations to make rail tunnels at least 4 metres high at the corners to be able to handle big freight containers. Work is due to finish in 2020.

The mammoth rail venture is being financed by value-added and fuel taxes, road charges on heavy vehicles and state loans that are due to be repaid within a decade.

Major contractors included Alpiq, Balfour Beatty, Thales and Heitkamp. —*Reuters*

Dior, in UK for cruise line, says new designer 'work in progress'

LONDON — Appointing a new Dior creative director is a "work in progress", the French fashion house's chief executive said on Tuesday, with the luxury label still to name a head designer some six months after Raf Simons left to set up his own brand.

Dior, one of the world's most famous designer houses, announced Simons' surprise departure in October after some three years at the helm. An in-house creative team has been working on collections since.

"(It is a) work in progress, work in progress and we're giving it a little bit of time," Chief Executive Sidney Toledano told Reuters. "It's an important position."

Toledano was speaking at a preview for Dior's new London boutique opening this week, a four-floor store selling clothes, accessories, children's wear as well as a home collection.

"The UK market in London business for us is doing very well, we still have double digit growth," he said, adding however that last year's Islamist militant attacks in Paris had hurt tourism and sales in France.

"...What happened in November had a real impact on the first quarter but still we will continue developing our presence in Paris. We have a five-year plan and in September we'll open a new fine jewellry boutique."

Dior also presented its cruise collection on Tuesday at Blenheim Palace near Oxford, Winston Churchill's birthplace and where the label hosted fashion shows in 1954 and 1958.

Cruise collections, originally designed for wealthy fashionistas holidaying on yachts or cruises during the winter months, are outfits produced by stylists on top of seasonal lines.

Lucie Meier and Serge Ruffieux, who are leading Dior's creative team, took inspiration from "not only the post-war high society's wardrobes but also the restlessness and wanderlust (that) characterised the period", according to show notes.

Models, such as new Dior makeup ambassador Bella Hadid, strutted down the catwalk in tops, dresses and skirts adorned in floral as well as Asian and African prints and embroidery.— *Reuters*

Dior sunglasses and handbags are displayed at Dior's new flagship store in London, Britain, on 31 May 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

MRTV Entertainment Channel

(2- 6-2016, Thursday)

6:00 pm
- Weather Report
- Pyi Thu Ni Ti

6:20 pm
- Music Programme

6:30 pm
- Cartoon Programme " The Lion of Judah" (Part-2)

7:00 pm
- International Drama Series

7:40 pm
- International Drama Series

8:30 pm
- Music Programme

8:50 pm
- Hanthawaddy U Win Tin "A Fearless Man" (Episode - 1)

9:10 pm
- International Movie Songs

9:20 pm
- Myanmar Traditional Instruments - Myanma Harp (Episode-2)

9:50 pm
- Music Programme

10:10 pm
- Myanmar Movie

From 2-6-2016 (Thursday) 6:00 Pm
To 3-6-2016 (Friday) 6:00 Pm

mitv Myanmar International

(2-6-2016 07:00am ~ 3-6-2016 7:00am) MST

Today Fresh

07:03	Am	News
07:25	Am	Myanmar Scout
07:55	Am	Art Students: Their Dream
08:03	Am	News
08:26	Am	Myanmar Classic Cars Rally (Part-1)
08:39	Am	Myanmar Classic Cars Rally (Part-2)
08:51	Am	Myanmar Classic Cars Rally (Part-3)
09:03	Am	News
09:26	Am	"Myanmar's Traditions and Culture" Tea
09:51	Am	Famous pagodas of Sagaing
10:03	Am	News
10:25	Am	The Richly Blessed Gem Land
10:51	Am	Cultural Show: Theatrical Make Up

(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
07:26	Pm	An Oasis Trip to Mt. Popa
07:54	Pm	Cosplayer
08:03	Pm	News
08:26	Pm	Myanmar Traditional Identity (EP-1) The Culture of Pennant Pillar
08:40	Pm	Aye Aye Soe: Myanma Pioneer Female Bodybuilder
08:53	Pm	Green Grocer

(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)

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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Ronaldo leads Portugal squad for Euro 2016

PHOTO: REUTERS

LONDON — Any sliver of a doubt over whether Cristiano Ronaldo would lead Portugal into the Euro 2016 was erased on Tuesday when he was named in their 23-man squad for the finals.

The 31-year-old forward, who scored the decisive penalty as Real Madrid won their 11th European Cup last weekend, will skip Portugal's friendly against England at Wembley on Thursday.

Ronaldo is merely recharging his batteries on holiday in Ibiza after a long season, however, and will join up with the squad in plenty of time for their opening fixture against Iceland on 14 June in Saint Etienne.

Coach Fernando Santos, whose team will also meet Hungary and Austria in Group F, was able to confirm the squad he announced on 17 May.—*Reuters*

Zlatan tight-lipped about future at Sweden training camp

Sweden's forward and team captain Zlatan Ibrahimovic attends a press conference in Bastad, Sweden, on 1 June 2016, where the team stays for a training camp as part of preparations for the upcoming Euro 2016 European football championships. PHOTO: REUTERS

STOCKHOLM — Sweden captain Zlatan Ibrahimovic has remained tight-lipped about his future at club and international level, telling reporters on Wednesday that he would let them know his plans when he was good and ready.

Rumours linking the 34-year-old free agent to Manchester United and Malmo, as well as speculation that he would announce the end to his international career, have gathered steam but a relaxed Ibrahimovic opted to avoid discussing his future.

"I want you to still write a lot of stories, so I get excited when I see them, because I want to see who is making up the best story," he told reporters at Sweden's training camp, where the side are preparing for the Euro 2016 finals in France.

"When I'm tired of it, I'll let you know where I will go."

The striker did manage to refute a suggestion that he might play half a season for Swedish league leaders and his first club Malmo before joining another side at the beginning of 2017.

"I'm still not interested in the Allsvenskan (Swedish league). I'm too good for the Allsvenskan," he stated, without giving any more hints about his next destination after he completed four trophy-laden seasons with French champions Paris St Germain last month.

Speaking in the west coast town of Bastad where the Swedes are training ahead of their final pre-tournament friendly against Wales, Ibrahimovic stonewalled questions from reporters about his post-Euro 2016 plans.

"It's nothing I've thought about, nothing I've invested any energy in," he said when asked if he intended to bring his international career to a close.

Sweden's all-time leading goal scorer did, however, reveal that he was back in full training following a calf muscle injury that caused him to miss the 0-0 draw with Slovenia in Malmo on Monday. With the US State Department issuing a warning about possible attacks in Europe during events like the European Championship, Ibrahimovic said he would not be unduly worried.

"After the tragic events in Paris (last November), the security has been heightened considerably, you see military guys on the street," he explained.

"Ahead of this championship I know that they have stepped it up a lot. One doesn't want something to happen. I believe the security will be in place.

"I hope that the people can enjoy the football, the players can enjoy playing football, and even those sitting at home — let them enjoy it. I hope it will be a pleasure," he said.

Sweden have been drawn in Group E of the 10 June — 10 July tournament alongside Belgium, Italy and Ireland, who they play first at the Stade de France on 13 June.—*Reuters*

Serena swats her way into Roland Garros quarters

PARIS — Champion Serena Williams swatted aside the limp challenge of Elina Svitolina 6-1, 6-1 on Wednesday, to reach the quarter-finals of the French Open.

The world number one rarely sparkled on a damp, dank center court at Roland Garros, but always wielded enough firepower to see off the Ukrainian 18th seed in a match that was delayed by two days due to the fickle Parisian weather.

Empty green seats outnumbered raincoat-clad fans by around five to one on the Parisian showcourt, and the heavy, slow balls meant there was little artistry to entice greater numbers.

Although spluttering from time to time — Williams fired the odd serve alarmingly long; netted the occasional simple groundstroke — the top seed always did enough to neuter her scurrying opponent.

The American will play Carla Suarez Navarro or Yulia Putintzeva for a spot in the semis.—*Reuters*

Man Utd's Memphis vows to return stronger next season

LONDON — Manchester United winger Memphis Depay is keen to breathe fresh life into his faltering career in England under new manager Jose Mourinho after enduring a disappointing debut campaign under former boss Louis van Gaal.

The Netherlands international, who joined United from PSV Eindhoven in June last year, scored two goals in 29 Premier League appearances in his first season, 13 of which came as a substitute.

"I did not play as many games as I hoped and I am obviously disappointed about that," Memphis told British media.

"I had different expectations. But I have to deal with that. You have to make decisions on when to go for an individual action. "The old Memphis, who beat every opponent, will soon be back again. It's now on to next season. I have to prove my worth during pre-season."

The 22-year-old scored 22 league goals to fire PSV to the Dutch championship in the 2014-15 season but failed to provide a similar spark for United, who missed out on Champions League qualification after finishing fifth.—*Reuters*

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