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FARMLAND JUSTICE

Farmers to get back 208 acres of land in Mandalay

Aung Thant Khaing

PLANS are underway to return 208 acres of confiscated land in Madaya township to its rightful owners, according to Mandalay Region Chief Minister Dr Zaw Myint Maung.

The seized land plots are located near Yenantha Leper Hospital in Madaya township in Mandalay, with the chief minister saying that the vice president will be present at the handover ceremony as it is the first ceremony of its kind under the new government.

The plots of land were seized from 32 farmers and placed under the ownership of the Ministry of Health.

Further 1,100 acres are under scrutiny to return to farmers.

There are 25 official complaints of farmland confiscation in Madaya township.

The move comes after the chairman of the Central Review Committee on Confiscated Farmlands and Other Lands, Vice President U Henry Van Thio called for the quick resolution of farmland confiscation issues and for the speedy handover of abandoned farmlands to their lawful owners in May.

The committee held its first coordination meeting in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday, with its chairman urging officials to set up task forces to deal with the return of seized land and with the economic impact land grabbing has had on farmers.

A farmer drives a tractor, ploughing land to grow rice. Photo: Aye Min Soe

According to the vice president, private companies and government departments were granted permission to confiscate land, including farmland, under the pretext of urbanisation and industrialisation.

Land disputes resulted from lack of cooperation among land management bodies as well as from arguments between the government, landowners and investors over ownership and planning permissions.

At the meeting, Vice President U Henry Van Thio promised that the government would take speedy measures to enact comprehensible laws and procedures to return confiscated lands to their lawful owners after forming committees at different levels.

The committees are staffed with ministerial officials, local parliamentarians, town elders and farmers.

Speaker urges MPs to keep in constant contact with voters

Speaker U Win Myint greeting lawmakers in Kayin State. PHOTO: MNA

MEMBERS of parliament are to meet voters in their respective constituencies and brief them on what has been done while the parliament is in recess, Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U Win Myint told representatives in Kayin State yesterday.

The speaker urged the representatives to meet public needs through coordination with the departments concerned, stressing that a strong parliament begets a strong administrative system.

He also gave guidance on the submission of motions and bills, saying that these proposals must be in the interest of the country and the people. "For the democracy to flourish, there must be the rule of law.

And there is no guarantee of human rights without the rule of law," he said, calling for concerted efforts to enable everybody to enjoy the fruits of democracy.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Development to be effectuated in Rakhine

DEVELOPMENT will be effectuated in such a way as to suit the geographical situation of Rakhine State and on the basis of natural resources, said Rakhine State Chief Minister U Nyi Pu at a meeting held by the Rakhine State Government on Friday to coordinate plans and programmes to be carried out by the international development organisations which are currently implementing development activities in Rakhine State.

International organisations will be invited to make major investments, he added.

"Rakhine State has very high potential. It has a very profound historical tradition, too. We'd like to work together with the Rakhine State government as a development partner for the development of Rakhine State and its people," said United Nations Acting Coordinator Ms Janet Jackson.

United Nations Acting Coordinator Ms Janet Jackson.

Rakhine State Chief Minister U Nyi Pu.

Rakhine State Finance, Revenue, Planning and Commerce Minister U Kyaw Aye Thein.

"We'll formulate short-term and long-term development plans in coordination with development partners. Our policy is concerted cooperation between all stakeholders," said Rakhine State Finance, Revenue, Planning and Commerce Minister U Kyaw Aye Thein.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Yangon chief minister meets French foreign minister

Yangon Region Chief minister U Phyo Min Thein holds talks with French Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Development Mr Jean-Marc Ayrault. PHOTO: MNA

YANGON Region Chief Minister U Phyoe Min Thein met French Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Development Mr Jean-Marc Ayrault in his office yesterday morning to discuss prospects of French investment in the former capital.

Their discussion also focused on French assistance to the development of suburban areas, proper drainage systems and improvement of retaining walls along the Yangon river.

In the afternoon, the French foreign minister visited the Institut Français de Birmanie, a French Institute formerly known as Alliance Française, in Sanchaung township. –*Myanmar News Agency*

Myanmar media delegation makes study trips to foreign countries

A MYANMAR media delegation left Yangon on Thursday for Bosnia, Herzegovina, Germany and Thailand to discuss the work of the media council and to study media in foreign countries.

The delegation comprises Dr Myo Thant Tin, Vice-Chairman of Myanmar News Media Council, U Kyaw Swar Min, Secretary-2 of the concil, U Myint Kyaw, member of the council, U Thaung Tun, Editor of the D-Wave Journal, U Khin Maung Htay (MRTV-4), Chairman of Myanmar Broadcasters Association, Daw Moe Thuzar Aung, Director, MRTV and Ms Isabella Kurkowski, Resident Representative of DW Akademie Myanmar.— *Aung Thura*

(From Left to Right) U Kyaw Swar Min, U Myint Kyaw, Dr Myo Thant Tin and Ms Isabella Kurkowski. PHOTO: AUNG THURA

Sweden Provides 30 Million Swedish Krona to Support UNDP's Work in Myanmar

THE United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has received an additional 30 million Swedish krona (approximately USD 3.6 M) from the Government of Sweden to support the agency's work in Myanmar in the areas of democratic governance, local development and environmental sustainability. This follows an initial contribution of 30 M Swedish krona received in 2014.

UNDP Country Director Toily Kurbanov said that he was encouraged by the support provided by the Government of Sweden.

"With the initial tranche of funding from Sweden, UNDP has helped improve local governance in Myanmar, with a particular focus on strengthening women's participation. Our partnership with Sweden has enabled UNDP to strengthen democratic institutions such as the Parliaments, and support justice actors to better engage with the people. With this new tranche of funding from Sweden, UNDP will be better able to support Myanmar's ongoing transition."—*GNLM*

Vision Zero Fund to promote labour OHS in Myanmar

Aye Min Soe

THE Vision Zero Fund, an organisation established by the seven leading industrial nations-G7, has taken the first step in Myanmar to assist in occupational health and safety (OHS).

The Fund conducted a political launch in Yangon on Friday inviting representatives from the governmental, employees and labour sectors.

During the dialogue government labour officials suggested the VZF consider the capacity building of its officials and the worksite safety and health of workers at small and medium enterprises while representatives of employers stressed the need to assist in OHS at factories with a high labour force such as garment factories.

Representatives of labour unions suggested paying attention to the lot of workers for whom nothing is currently being done.

Regarding occupational health and safety standards at worksites, U Win Shein, Director-General of the Factories and General Labour Law Inspection Department, suggested improving the capacity building of officials concerning with the labour sector and the raising of awareness of OHS issues at factories.

Local and foreign representatives from labour sector participate in dialogue of Vision Zero Fund. PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE

"We welcome the project. If they give us effective assistance, we will implement it in order to get fruitful results," said U Win Shein.

Meanwhile, U Aye Lwin, Joint Secretary General of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce suggested overviewing all sectors related to the country's labour industry first before making decisions regarding the selection of priorities in the project.

U Maung Maung, President of the Confederation of Trade Unions Myanmar, suggested looking into many sectors, stressing the need to take workers in the Yangon Municipal services and mining sector into consideration when forming policy.

G7 has selected Myanmar as their first country for the development programmes, focusing on several issues including the prevention of work-related accidents, insurance and compensation, rehabilitation as well as capacity building programs in collaboration with the Ministry of Labor, Immigration and Population.

The project comes as encouragement to the labour sector, said U Myo Aung, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population, adding that the ministry will consider whether the project should be implemented using the tripartite system consisting of the government, employers and employees or the bipartite system consisting of employers and employees.

To achieve success, a representative of the World Health Organisation stressed the need to collect data pertaining to worksite accidents. In response to the question, U Win Shein said that his department is lacking the capacity to evaluate worksite accidents as reports on most worksite accidents go to the Social Security Board, not the Factories and General Law Inspection Department.

When the OHS law is enacted, the ministry will also announce the norms and rules related to occupational health and safety, he added.

The release of the Occupational Safety and Health Law will be included in the 100-day plan of the new government. —*GNLM*

Six charged with human trafficking in Yangon

THE Yangon Region government claims that the region has seen four cases of human trafficking for the period from 1 January to 12 June, with six people charged.

The crackdown on human trafficking saved 12 women, an official said, adding that the region's police force conducted campaigns to promote awareness and education by distributing pamphlets.

Last year the region saw nine cases of forced marriage, three cases of forced panhandling, three cases of forced prostitution and two cases of labour exploitation. In connection with the crimes, 19 people were arrested, the police said, adding that 26 fugitives remain to be brought to justice.

Over the past six months police have exposed 246 cases in total.—*Ko Moe*

Rice exports to China drop due to low demand

RICE exported to China has dropped from 4,000 tonnes per day to 1,000 tonness due to low demand from China, according to the Myanmar Rice Federation (MRF).

MRF Vice-Chairman U Aung Than Oo said the export of rice has now found a new market in Poland. The country mainly exports its rice to Africa, Russia and Europe. "Our monthly rice exports still range from 60,000 tonnes to 70,000 tonnes," he said.

Despite the decline in rice export levels, prices have gone up from US$320 to $340, depending on the quality of rice. There are some delays in the shipment of the rice during the rainy season, the federation said.—*Ko Moe*

Requests made for opening of ILO Country Office in Myanmar

REQUESTS have been made for the opening of an International Labour Organisation (ILO) representative office in Myanmar, according to the Confederation of the Trade Unions of Myanmar (CTUM).

"The request was made during the 105th Session of the International Labour Conference which was held between May-June. The ILO currently has a liaison office and an office focusing on the elimination of child soldiers [in Myanmar]. But, even these offices have limitations. Only if [their request is granted] can the problems of workers be acted on extensively. We want a country office to be opened, which will allow effective work to be done relating to the affairs of employers and workers, together with tax systems. We'll be able to work in accordance with an international standard," explained U Maung Maung, chair of the CTUM.

A request has been made for the appointment of a country director for the opening of an ILO country office, while it has reportedly been predicted this will take place around the end of this year.

"The opening of a country office is a good thing. I support such an effort. It'll allow for more effective work to be carried out over the affairs of workers. If there was an ILO country office in Myanmar, it would allow for direct demands to be made if our Myanmar maritime workers were to find themselves in trouble overseas," said U San Thein, chair of the Myanmar Maritime Workers Federation.

The beginning of Myanmar's democratic transition has witnessed the start of changes to the affairs of workers, with the establishment of a national minimum wage.

"I support [the initiative to open an ILO country office in Myanmar]. Demands for workers will be able to be made with an international standard. As it would allow [workers] to speak directly [with the ILO], I want [the office] to be opened quickly." said Ko Yan Naing, a factory worker from Yangon's Hlaingthaya Township.

The ILO is an organisation that seeks to resolve the problems of workers internationally. It reportedly has offices in a total of 168 countries around the world.—*Myitmakha News Angency*

Htigyaing farmers substitute sugarcane with more cost-effective mung beans

SUGARCANE farmers from the Htigyaing Township village of Myadaung, Sagaing Region, have been substituting their crops with the more cost-effective mung beans, it is reported.

A total expense of approximately K1 million is incurred per acre of sugarcane fields, which includes fees involved in ploughing, cultivation, seedlings and plantation maintenance, compared with reportedly just K200,000 required per acre of mung bean crops.

"We only need five workers to maintain a mung bean plantation. For sugarcane, the same space requires twenty pairs of hands. These cumbersome expenses are made worse by the fact we get a poor price for our crops at the time of sale. But for a viss (1.6kilograms) of mung beans, we can earn K240,000," said U Aung Myo Lwin, a sugarcane farmer from Myadaung village.

Mung beans from Htigyaing Township are reportedly only transported for sale within Mandalay wholesaler centres.

"Next year will see both local and export markets of mung beans. As China, the main foreign purchaser of our sugarcane, no longer gives us a fair price for own sugarcane, famers have started changing their crop to grow mung beans instead," said U Aung Pu, crop wholesaler from Sein Aung Pu wholesalers, Mandalay.

The main crop of farmers from Myadaung village until this year was sugarcane, while increasing numbers are now switching to cultivating the more profitable mung beans instead as sugarcane no longer proves a cost-effective crop.

Myadaung village reportedly boasts over 2,000 acres of sugarcane fields, with roughly 200 acres of mung beans being planted this month.—*Myitmakha News Angency*

Army doctors provide healthcare to students in Mandalay Region

Army doctors being seen providing healthcare to students in Mandalay Region. PHOTO: C-IN-C'S OFFICE

ARMY medical specialists provided physical examinations and treatment for 1,150 students from BEHS 18, Mandalay who reported having trouble with their eyes, ears, noses and throats. The military medical team also provided treatment for students suffering from toothache, skin diseases, malnutrition and goiters.

The doctors are also working to raise awareness of the importance of personal hygiene and Dengue Haemorrhagic Fever.

Similarly, army doctors gave medical checkups to 2,652 students in Pywin- Oo- Lwin.—*Office of Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services*

Anti- human trafficking awareness training courses conducted

MEMBERS of the Myanmar Police Force are launching an anti-human trafficking awareness campaign in high schools, universities, ward administrator's offices and public places from 1st May to 8 August.

As part of the 100-day project, the anti- human trafficking awareness training courses and educative talks have been held in Tatkon township, Nay Pyi Taw, in Sanchaung township, Yangon region, in Dawei town, Taninthayi region, Myeik town, Myeik university, Kawthaung town, Chanmyathasi township, Mandalay region, Wine Maw township, Kachin state, Momauk town and Kengtung town, Shan state. All of those courses were conducted on Tuesday. The training courses and educative talks involve the definition of trafficking in person, migrant workers' problems and the relationship between human trafficking and migration, types of trafficking in persons and the ways in which traffickers operate.—*Ye Zarni*

An anti- human trafficking awareness session in progress. PHOTO: YE ZARNI

Crime NEWS

Passenger bus accident injures 13

A bus from Aung Yadana Bus Line being seen overturned.
PHOTO: MYO ZAYYAR (PYINMANA)

A PASSENGER bus belonging to the Aung Yadana bus line carrying 25 passengers en route to Yangon from Nay Pyi Taw ran off the road and overturned on the Yangon- Mandalay highway on Friday.

The accident occured when the driver lost control between mileposts15/7 and 16/0 due to excessive speed.

The bus was damaged badly with 13 passengers out of 25 seriously injured. The injured passengers were rushed to Hlegu General Hospital. The police have opened a case and filed charges against the driver.—*Myo Zayyar (Pyinmana)*

Vigo plunges into ravine

A VIGO automobile plunged into a ravine between mileposts 326/6 and 326/7 on Kengtung-Taunggyi Pyihtaungsu road, MongpyinTown, Shan (East) on Friday leaving two injured.

According to an investigation, the vehicle was being driven by one Aung Kyaw Soe, 42, with Zaw Min Lay, 45, on board. The vehicle was driven into an 80-foot ravine at a sharp bend as the driver failed to reduce speed before the turn.

Aung Kyaw Soe and Zaw Min Lay were seriously injured in the accident. Local police from Namtu township have filed charges for careless driving.—*Aung Zin Myint (IPRD)*

Vigo being seen upside down. PHOTO: AUNG ZIN MYINT (IPRD)

Small vehicle collides with 12- wheel truck

A VAN collided head on with a 12-wheel truck near Hmawyaw bridge, Ottwin township, Bago region on Friday, killing one person.

According to an investigation, the van being driven by one Sayardaw Rev Kuthala, 46, collided with a 12-wheel vehicle being driven by Myo Myint, 54, when the former, in his attempt to avoid pot holes, hit the truck on the Yangon- Mandalay highway.

The collision killed the Sayadaw at the scene of the accident. The monk was found to be guilty of careless driving said local police.—*Ko Lwin (Swa)*

Head-on collision being seen. PHOTO: KO LWIN (SWA)

Heroin, raw opium and yaba pills confiscated

AN anti-drug squad in Kutkai township confiscated 750 yaba pills and raw opium weighing 34.2 kilograms from the home of Yan San in Naung Hsai village, Kutkai township on Wednesday.

On that same day, local police from Hopin town seized heroin weighing381 grams and raw opium weighing 3.6 kilograms from the home of Khin Ohn Myint in Ywar Thit Gyi village, Mohnyin township, Hoepin town.

Similarly, police from Lashio station searched a vehicle registered to the Myat Mandalar Tun bus line at and discovered 3,900 yaba pills on two passengers.

Local authorities searched motorcycle driver Htet Zayar Soe on Shwe War road, Myeik town on Tuesday and seized 2125 yaba pills worth K10,625,000. Police have filed charges against all suspects under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.—*The Mirror*

LOCAL Business

Value of Myanmar gold reaches historic high

A TICAL (0.576 ounces) of Myanmar gold appreciated to its highest value in history on Thursday fetching K812,000 — a result of the rise in value of gold on the world market, according to those involve in the domestic gold industry.

An ounce of world market gold on June 15 valued at US$1,280 before appreciating to US$1,302 the following day. The price of a tical of Myanmar gold subsequently followed the same trend, rising in value from K800,000 to K812,000 on Thursday.

"It's the highest value [of gold] in Myanmar's history. The unforeseen rise in world market gold pushed up the value of Myanmar gold. People are hesitant to purchase gold products currently as a result. " said U Zaw Aung, owner of Taite Gold Shop.

In the period between 2010-15, the highest ever value of a tical of Myanmar was reportedly K802,000. But this record has since been surpassed this June with the appreciation of gold on the world market.

"It would be normal for the [US] dollar to depreciate in value at this time [of year]. But the dollar has remained stable, another factor contributing towards the increase in value of Myanmar gold. It would be difficult for the value of Myanmar gold to see a quick decline, due to high purchasing demand combined with a lower production rate caused by the arrival of the rainy season." explained U Maw Maw, general manager of Aungthamardi Gold Shop.

The value of gold on the world market started to appreciate from US$1,200 an ounce on 4 June to US$1,240. While the last two weeks have reportedly seen an increase by around US$100.

In regard to the position of the markets in the afternoon of 16 June 2016, a tical of Myanmar gold valued at K812,000; a tical of 15 carat gold fetched K760,000; an ounce of gold on the world market priced US$1,309 while the MMK — USD exchange rate valued approximately K1,190 to US$1. —*Myitmakha News Agency*

Golden jewellery are displayed at a shop in Yangon. PHOTO: MYITMAKHA NEWS AGENCY

Retail industry stunted by financial, technological and policy restraints

A COMBINATION of financial and technological problems, together with the consequences of government policy, are inhibiting local retailers from being able to expand their businesses, according to Myanmar Retailers Association (MRA).

"Local businesses need investment to develop at a time when foreign investors are interested in entering the Myanmar market. Retailers are struggling with the competitive nature of the industry on top of the effects of [government] policies," said Daw Win Win Maw, chair of the MRA.

Retailers have expressed their surveillance by Food and Drug Administration (FDA) because of their direct contact with consumers. "I would like to encourage entrepreneurs to continue to expand their business as much as they can; it's a competitive industry out there," said U Kyaw Win, Minister of National Planning and Finance.

Plans are in place for talks to be held between retailers and government ministries concerned in relation to aforementioned trade policies that are reportedly restraining the retail industry from expansion. The Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA) will reportedly issue of a total K45 billion in loans to develop small and medium-sized enterprises during this year. According to Myanmar Inspection and Testing Service Company, the loans will be issued dependent upon the quality of service given by enterprises. —*Myitmakha News Agency*

Trade value at Sittwe border camp declining

THE trade value through the Sittwe border trade camp between Myanmar and Bangladesh has declined this fiscal year compared to the same period last fiscal year, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

Trade value between Myanmar and Bangladesh from 1 April to 3 June only amounted to US$1.23 million, a decrease of US$0.173 million compared to 2015.

Maung Taw border trade camp has increased trade value over the same period. From 1 April to 3 June of this fiscal year, trade value through Sittwe border trade camp stood at US$0.442 million while trade value from Maung Taw border trade camp stood at US$0.788 million.

Myanmar exported agro products, animal products, mineral products, forest products and industrial finished products. People's toilet products, raw materials and investment materials were imported to Myanmar in large quantities.

A total of 15 border trade camps are being opened between Myanmar and neighboring countries.—*200*

Quality bean sprout to be exported to EU

MYANMAR has reached an agreement with nations of the European Union to export quality bean sprouts, said an official from the Ministry of Commerce.

Only quality bean sprouts will be exported to European Union countries after being put through the required laboratory experiments. The export price will be set depending on the volume of the production, it has been learned.

Experts from European Union states will provide technical assistance and impart their knowledge including growing methods. Standard quality bean sprouts are expected to be exported within two years, he added.

Myanmar is expecting to export between 15,000 to 20,000 tonnes of green grams used for making bean sprout to European countries, said U Min Ko Oo, the secretary of Myanamr Pulses, Beans and Sesame Seeds Merchant Association.

The EU is offering Myanmar US$200 per tone more than the price offered by China, India and other ASEAN countries, he added.

The prevailing market price of green grams is around US$1,400 per tonne but European countries offer US$1,600 per tone.

Myanmar exported about 5,000 tonnes of green grams to European countries in 2014 and 8,000 tonnes in 2015. —*Chan Chan*

MNA to open lanes with South Korea, Japan and Bodh Gaya

THE state owned Myanmar National Airline (MNA) will open off three new chartered flights to South Korea, Japan and Bodh Gaya in the open season, said Captain Than Tun, the chief executive officer of MNA.

Currently, MNA has been conducting preparations to fly to the new destinations. The company will also appoint new cabin crews for the extended flights, providing training courses.

There are a total of 16 flights run by three Boeing 737-800 NG, two Embracer-190, five ATR, four Cessna Caravans and two Beechs. These flights run to 27 domestic airports and the international airports of Hong Kong, Bangkok and Singapore, it has been learned.

MNA was reformed on 5 December, 2014 and continues to operate as a state-owned airline. MNA is running to both domestic and international airports with a staff of about about 100 pilots and 135 cabin crew members.—*200*

Smart Card to be used at natural gas stations of Yangon

SMART cards will be used at natural gas stations to facilitate the payment system, said an official from the Myanmar Oil and Natural Gas Enterprise (MOGE).

There are daily complaints about refunding problems at the stations in Yangon. This problem can be solved using Smart Cards, it is reported.

After observing the natural gas stations the Smart Card payment system will be submitted to the Ministry of Electric and Energy with a request to change the payment system at gas stations. There will be coordination meetings with the Yangon regional government.

To use Smart Card, a bank is required to link between customers and the stations. There are a total of over 26,952 CNG vehicles including 7,000 buses and over15,000 taxis according to the CNG department.

India, Thailand agree to build partnership in defence, maritime security

NEW DELHI — India and Thailand Friday agreed to build partnership in defence, maritime security and combating terrorism, said officials. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi held talks with visiting Thailand Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha here and the two leaders agreed to enhance cooperation in these fields.

"The partnership between India and Thailand will be shaped by sharing of expertise and experiences, greater staff exchanges and more exercises, cooperation on counter-piracy on seas, deeper engagement in naval patrolling, and building linkages in the field of defence research and development and production," Modi told a press conference after his meeting with the Thai prime minister.

The two leaders also agreed to cooperate in tourism, cyberspace security and connectivity with neighbours like Myanmar.—*Xinhua*

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi shakes hands with his Thai counterpart Prayut Chan-o-Cha before their meeting at Hyderabad House in New Delhi, capital of India, on 17 June 2016. PHOTO: XINHUA

Vietnamese coral reefs suffer mass bleaching event

HANOI — Unusually warm water has caused serious bleaching of coral reefs around Vietnam's Con Dao Islands, a popular diving and beach destination, affecting around a quarter of them, official media reported on Friday.

The Viet Nam News Agency said a Con Dao National Park study shows that up to 500 hectares of coral colonies have been affected, with an average 30-40 per cent of corals in those areas bleached.

The bleaching, which is being blamed on the El Niño weather phenomenon, started in March in the archipelago, which is situated around 180 kilometres off the popular beach town of Vung Tau and about 230 km from Ho Chi Minh City.

Most stony corals of the genus Poritidae, for example, have been completely bleached and at high risk of dying.

Heightened sea temperatures due to El Niño and global warming cause corals to expel tiny algae called zooxanthellae, which the corals need to survive. Loss of the algae causes the corals to turn white and they may die if temperatures remain high, preventing recolonisation.

Similar problems occurred in Con Dao in 1998 and 2010, from which the reefs had not fully recovered, the report said.—*Kyodo News*

Indonesia hails EU's decision to lift ban on 3 Indonesian airlines

JAKARTA — The Indonesian government on Friday hailed the European Union (EU)'s move to revoke its ban against three Indonesian airlines from serving flights to EU countries.

"The decision to revoke the flight ban reflected the achievement of diplomacy coupled with Indonesia's efforts to address flight safety in the country's aviation service," a statement released by the Indonesian Foreign Affairs Ministry said, adding that the decision showed EU's trust in the Indonesian authorities and airlines.

The EU on Thursday revoked its flight ban against three Indonesian airlines namely Citilink, Lion Air and Batik Air from serving flights to any EU countries.

The EU had, in 2009 and 2011, lifted similar ban on several Indonesian airlines, namely Garuda Indonesia, Airfast Indonesia, Indonesia Air Asia and Ekspres Transportasi Antarbenua.—*Xinhua*

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Chief Executive Officer - Nakagawa Kiyoshi
ceo@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
Chief Editor - Khin Maung Aye
ce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
Deputy Chief Editor - Aye Min Soe
dce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
Chief Proof Reader & Translator - Ye Myint
Expatriate Consultant Editors
Alec Wilmot
counsultanteditor2@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
Jaidan Coonan
Chief Translator & Editor
Kyaw Thura,
editor2@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
Editor
Ye Htut Tin (Local News)
editor1@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
International Editors
Tun Tun Naing (Editor)
intlnews@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
Nwe Nwe Tun (Sub-editor)
Translators
Khaing Thanda Lwin,
reporter1@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
Hay Mar Tin Win,
translator@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
Ei Myat Mon, Tin Nwe Lynn
Chief Reporter
Tun Aung Kyaw, reporter2@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
Reporters
Soe Soe Yu, Thein Ko Lwin (Nay Pyi Taw Bureau),
Khin Mg Win (Mandalay Bureau)
Computer Team
Tun Zaw (Chief of Computer Team), Thein Ngwe,
Zaw Zaw Aung, Ye Naing Soe, Nyi Zaw Moe,
Hnin Pwint, Kay Khaing Win, Sanda Hnin, Zu Zin Hnin
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San Lwin (+95) (01) 8604532
Ads and subscription enquiries:
subscription@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

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Body of pilot in Viet Nam's SU-30 jet accident found

HANOI — The body of a pilot who was in a SU-30 fighter jet that went missing early Tuesday morning has been found in waters off Nghe An province in central Viet Nam on Friday.

Earlier on Tuesday morning, the Russian-made SU-30 fighter jet of Viet Nam's air forces with two pilots aboard disappeared from radar screen while carrying out a training mission offshore Viet Nam's central Nghe An province, some 260 km south of capital Hanoi.

Nguyen Huu Cuong, one of the SU-30's two pilots, was rescued by local fishermen on Wednesday.

Nguyen Xuan Duong, chairman of the Nghe An Provincial People's Committee, confirmed that the body found Friday is Tran Quang Khai, the other pilot of the fighter jet.

The body was found by a local fisherman near Mat island offshore Nghe An province, being covered by parachute, according to Viet Nam's state-run radio Voice of Viet Nam.

In a related situation, a CASA aircraft of Viet Nam with nine people aboard lost contact Thursday while carrying out a searching mission for the SU-30 jet and Tran Quang Khai in waters off northern Viet Nam.

Debris of the CASA aircraft has been recovered on Friday while the nine people's whereabouts remain unknown. —*Xinhua*

Philippine volcano spews column of ash smoke into air

MANILA — Mount Kanlaon in central Philippines erupted on Saturday, spewing columns of "white steam plumes" that rose up to 100 metres, the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology said.

The institute said in a statement that Mount Kanlaon's phreatic explosion occurred from 9:19am to 9:46am Saturday.

"Alert Level 1 status remains effect over Kanlaon Volcano, which means that it's currently in a state of unrest probably driven by hypothermal processes that could generate more minor eruptions," the institute said.

In the last 24 hours, the institute said it has recorded three volcanic earthquakes and observed "a weak emission of white steam plumes that rose up to 100 metres that drifted southwest and northwest."

"Ground deformation measurements from continued GPS data as of 2 June, 2016 indicated slight inflation of the Kanlaon edifice since december 2015," the statement said.

The institute warned the people in the region not to enter the 4-km permanent danger zone, saying "sudden and hazardous steam-driven or minor ash eruptions" might occur.

It also advised pilots "to avoid flying close to the volcano summit as airborne ash from a sudden eruption can be hazardous to aircraft." "(The institute) is closely monitoring Kanlaon volcano's activity and any new development will be relayed to all concerned," the institute said.

Mount Kanlaon is a volcano in Negros Oriental, approximately 36 km southeast of Bacolod City.—*Xinhua*

Democratic Party's Renho not to run in Tokyo gubernatorial election

Democratic Party lawmaker Renho speaks in a ceremony marking the opening of her election office in Tokyo on 18 June 2016, ahead of the 10 July upper house election. The acting president of the main opposition party ruled out running in the 31 July Tokyo gubernatorial election to succeed scandal-hit Gov. Yoichi Masuzoe, saying, "There still are tasks I want to take on in national politics." PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

TOKYO — Democratic Party lawmaker Renho ruled out on Saturday running in the 31 July Tokyo gubernatorial election to succeed scandal-hit Gov. Yoichi Masuzoe.

"There still are tasks I want to take on in national politics," the acting president of the main opposition party and House of Councillors member said in a ceremony marking the opening of her election office ahead of the 10 July upper house election. Renho was among two high-profile women floated as possible candidates to succeed Masuzoe, who is stepping down over a political funds scandal. The other woman is Yuriko Koike, a lawmaker of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party and a former defence minister. Kenji Utsunomiya, a lawyer and former head of the Japan Federation of Bar Associations, is also said to be considering running in the election. Utsunomiya, who has not held public office before, ran in the previous gubernatorial election and finished second to Masuzoe.—*Kyodo News*

Floods in western Indonesia leave one dead, three missing

JAKARTA — Floods have left one person dead and three missing in western Indonesia, with about 500 others evacuated, an official at the local disaster agency said on Friday.

Heavy downpours have also triggered landslides in several parts of the West Sumatra Province, Sutopo Purwo Nugroho, spokesman of the national disaster agency, told Xinhua via phone.

"Business activities have been totally paralyzed for about eight hours in Padang city (the capital of the province)," he said.

Flood-affected residents took shelters on higher ground, Zulfiatno, head of the provincial disaster agency told Xinhua.

However, there has been no reports of damaged houses or buildings, he added.

The local authorities have put a flood emergency status in place, said Sutopo.—*Xinhua*

Smartphones blamed for 20% of train delay over dropping: JR East

TOKYO — Over 20 per cent of train delays caused by objects falling onto tracks were attributable to dropped smartphones, according to a recent survey of East Japan Railway Co.

With JR East continuing to receive a number of complaints about people using smartphones in stations, it plans to step up its campaign on Monday to urge passengers not to use the devices when getting on or off trains.

Of 229 train delays caused by objects falling onto tracks in Tokyo and six prefectures in eastern Japan in April and May, 54, or 23 per cent, were triggered by dropping of smartphones.

Other falling objects that caused delay in train services included umbrellas, hats and shoes, the company said.

People often drop their smartphones when boarding or getting off trains or while walking on train platforms.

Although station crew pick up such fallen objects with tools, the company has to halt service if the next train is approaching the station, JR East officials said.—*Kyodo News*

Cambodia imports live cattle from Australia for first time

PHNOM PENH — Cambodia imported live cattle from Australia for the first time, with a shipment of nearly 3,000 cows having arrived Friday in Sihanoukville Province.

Bun Vannarith, representative of SLN Meat Supplies Co., said a total of 2,766 young Brahman oxen from Australia on a huge ship docked on Cambodia's southwestern coast.

Vannarith said SLN has invested $50 million in the business, building the largest slaughterhouse in Cambodia with modern infrastructure.

The company is importing the Brahman cattle for meat to be distributed not only to markets in Cambodia but also possibly in other countries such as China, Thailand and Viet Nam. — *Kyodo News*

Police patrol to keep people from woods after bear attacks in Japan

AKITA (Japan) — About 50 police officers began patrolling a mountainous area in Kazuno, Akita Prefecture, on Saturday to prevent bamboo shoot hunters and other people from entering woods after a string of likely bear attacks on humans.

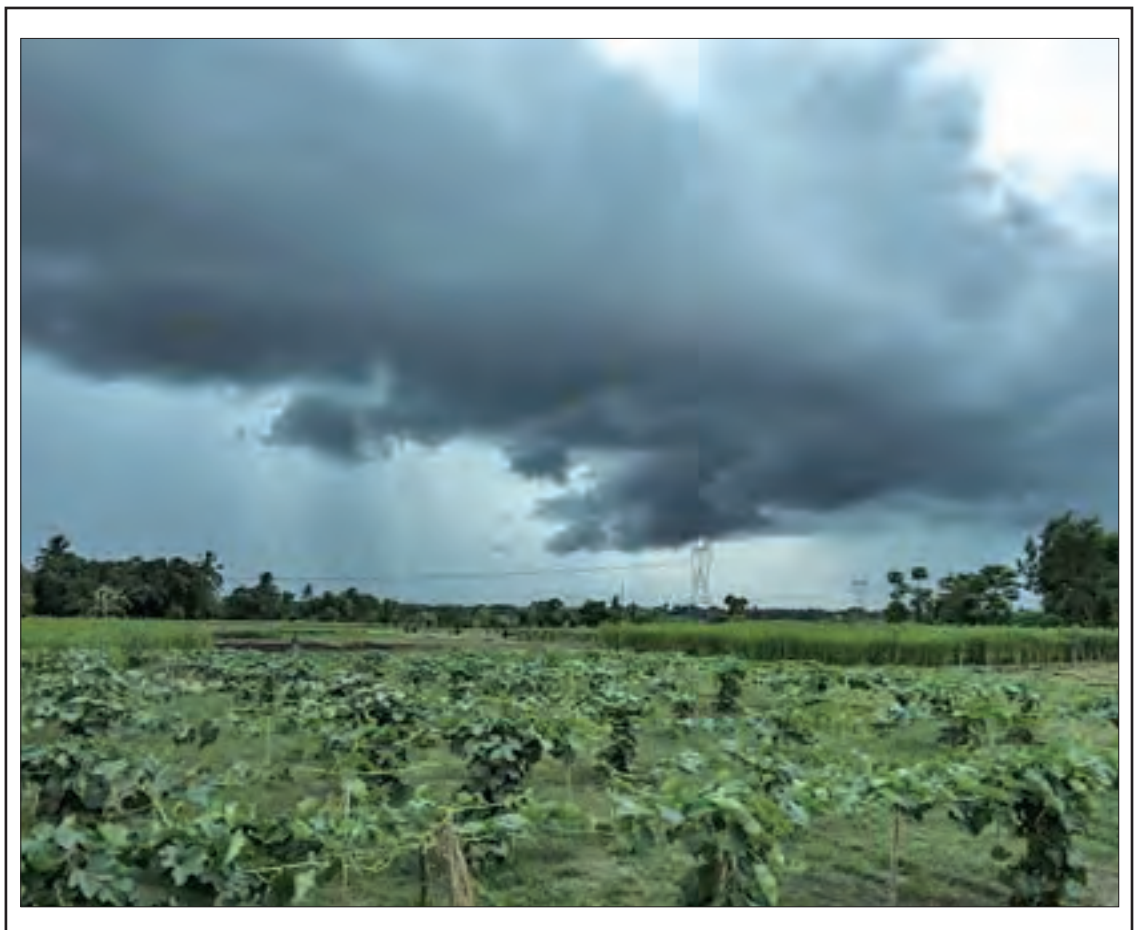
The bodies of four people apparently attacked by a bear have been found since late May in the northern Japan area where the victims in their 60s and 70s were hunting edible plants including wild bamboo sprouts called nemagaridake.

The officers set up checkpoints at seven locations on roads leading to the area where the bodies were found. They also drove vehicles to see if anybody was in the area.

"The police cannot block everybody who wants to enter the mountain. We hope people will not enter dangerous areas and protect themselves," said Hajime Takahashi, head of the Kazuno Police Station.

Local hunters killed a 1.3-metre-long Asian female black bear in the area 10 June. Human remains and bamboo shoots were found from the stomach of the animal, local authorities said.

Takeshi Komatsu, a veterinarian with the municipal government of Kitaakita in Akita, said earlier that because the attacks appear to have occurred in a limited area over a short period of time, all four people were likely killed by the same bear. —*Kyodo News*



Monsoon clouds hover in the sky on the outskirts of Kolkata, capital of eastern Indian state West Bengal, on 17 June, 2016. PHOTO: XINHUA

Opinion

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If the restoration of peace is our end goal

Kyaw Thura

MORE than half a century has passed since ethnic tension started to break out in the country. Still, the resolution for the restoration of peace remains frustratingly elusive, overshadowing the country's internationally praised political reforms. However, it is highly likely that this dilemma is soon to fade away and become a thing of the past.

Now that the 21st Century Panglong Peace Conference is in the offing, there is every reason to believe that this would-be historic assembly will clean up the tarnished image of our country and break the impasse to move forward for common good. It is, therefore, important for ethnic groups that are yet to sign the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement to grasp this opportunity without fail. There is nothing wrong with the conflicting sides beginning to working together to seek solutions that will enable peace to prevail across the country.

Despite differences in race and religion, all the ethnic communities share common patriotism. All the stakeholders in the peace process is believed keep in mind peace is not an individual matter, but a collective responsibility. In other words, it is not the time to go it alone. It is time to start to work together. We have no time to waste. We cannot let our country fall into a nation at risk. It is strongly believed that we will all win when individual armed groups agree to compromise.

The Drugs of Misery

Professor Sein Sein Myint

FEW drugs are more valuable to man than the narcotics, but they are also the cause of much suffering and crime. The term "narcotics" is another word for opioid drugs or opiates which have been used to relative pain throughout history.

Properly used, narcotics help to reduce pain or induce sleep. However, continued use can result in physical dependence and addiction. The effects that narcotics have on the body and the brain differ from sedation and sleepiness to nausea and vomiting. The bio-chemical effects of narcotic drugs are what make them addictive. Chief of the narcotic drugs which have harmed mankind is the opium.

It is the dried juice from the seed pod of opium poppy (papaver somniferum). The opium poppies are sown in late spring for all harvesting. At maturity the poppy reaches a height of about one metre and bears several blossoms. The poppy flowers are beautiful. When the fetals fall off, they leave an egg-shaped pod, which is lanced about two weeks later. Tha sap oozes out of the pod overnight, hardens and scraped off the next day with a flat-bladed knife. The opium thus obtained is dried, purified and kneaded into balls.

Opium, "the tears of the poppy", has been in local use for treating moderate and severe pain for hundreds of years. Opium is reduced to morphine by a chemical process. Morphine is converted to heroin by another chemical process which is very delicate and dangerous. A miscalculation of temprature or cooking time can result in explosion. Heroin thus obtained, is several times more potent than the morphine from which it is produced. A form of highly refined heroin, called No. 4 or Double Uoglobe, is produced at the drug laboratories and refineries. This strain is so concentrated that it takes up about one-tenth of the space of raw opium, thus reducing logistical problems of shipment and transportation. Stimulant tablets are also a kind of narcotic drugs. The most commonly used street drugs that fall into this category are cocaine and amphitamines.

Drug addiction is a chronic often relapsing brain disease that causes compulsive drug seeking and use, leading to harmful consequences to the drug addict and those around him. Drug addiction is a brain disease because the use of drugs lead to changes in the structure and function of the brain. Narcotic drugs also effect the nervous system and the circulation of the blood in the body. Like many mental health disorders, several factors may contribute to the development of drug addiction. Thus it is important to recognize the signs and symptoms of drug addiction. The clinical triad of the following signs are the hallmark of heroin overdose—pinpoint pupil, depressed respiratory rate, and coma. Heroin depresses the respiratory centre and it was found that most of the heroin overdose addicts die of respiratory failure. The barbiturate groups are sedative anti-anxiety drugs.

Over use of the barbiturates causes hypotension, respiratory depression, skin lesions and impaired consciousness. The symptoms of psychotropic dependence, in its minor forms are apprehension, insominia and dizziness. In more severe cases, there will be nausea and vomiting, muscular weakness or tremors, postural hypotension, hyperthermia, muscle twitches, convulsions and confusional state or psychosis. Injection drug use can lead to cardiovascular problems such as collapsed veins, bacterial infections and sometimes cardiac arrest. So if someone is suspected of having an overdose on narcotics, immediate medical attention should be giving to prevent possible long term, life threatening effects. Drug addicts would go to any lengths to obtain drugs, thus leading to tragic crimes.

The tragic impact of the drug trade has become a serious problem throughout the world. In some countries the situation is simply catastrophic. Some countries have imposed the death sentence on those who are involved in illicit drug trade. Hence, narcotic drug abuse has become an international concern and many countries are making all-out efforts to fight against the menace of narcotic drugs.

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar, also has been waging relentless campaigns to fight against narcotic drug abuse in the country. The suppression of opium poppy cultivation is one of the measures taken by the state to wipe out narcotic drugs. Although most of the opium poppy grown are in regions which are not easily accessible, the authorities have been making continuous efforts to search out and destroy the poppy plantations while at the same time subtituting income-generating activities in place of poppy cultivation. The crop-substituing scheme is being carried out with considerable success. In addition, the authorities have been destroying and smashing refineries run by insurgent traffickers, exposing and prosecuting peddlers and drug traffickers. Another measure taken by the state is annual destruction of narcotic drugs. Large amounts of all kinds of narcotic drugs seized by the authorities are destroyed annually to make the world and the people aware of the fight against narcotic drugs by the Myanmar government. Furthermore, rehabilitation centres have been set up to help the drug addicts who wish to give up drug use.

Since the intensive campaigns waged by the state to wipe out the drug menace are being done in the interest of the whole nation, more so, in the interest of the entire mankind, such activities merit all-out support. So in full awareness of the physically debilitating, socially degrading and economically disastrous efforts of narcotic drugs, all individuals and organizations should extend their full and active co-operation to the authorities in the efforts to stamp out the drug menace which threatens the entire mankind.

Commander-in-Chief (Air)'s 2016 shield Sepak Takraw and Chinlon competition ends

THE final matches of the Commander-in-Chief (Air)'s 2016 shield Sepak Takraw and rattan ball (Chinlone)competition and prize presentation was held at the Sport Centre at the Headquarters of Mingalardon Air Force Base on Friday.

Officers and other ranks and their families, officials of The Myanmar Chinlone Federation (rattan ball), athletes and sport enthusiasts enjoyed the competition.

Officials presented prizes to the winning teams.— *Office of the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services*

Rakhine Coast well be observed

Rakhine Coast being seen recently. PHOTO: MYAWADY

A MARINE study along the Rakhine Coast is planned by Flora and Fauna International, the non-governmental organisation, to establish a marine conservation area managed by local people.

Under the new programme, the international conservation charity will observe the current situation of coral reefs, fish breeding zones, lives, culture and the natural characters of native birds as well as the development of mangroves which have been recognised by the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN).

The survey will soon be conducted by observation teams founded by FFI mainly along undamaged coral reefs and breeding zones of fish and prawns.

Although many coral reefs were badly destroyed, there are a lot of undamaged coral reefs along the Rakhine Coast, said an official from the NGO.

After the two-year survey, the FFI will choose some villages which will be entitled to take part in its marine conservation programme.

In cooperation with the local fisheries department, the FFI is developing a marine conservation area which covers three villages in Kyunsu Township including Donepalaw, Lintun and Payortwa villages, Langan Island in Bokepyin Township in Taninthayi Region.

Since 2012, the FFI has made observations along Myeik Archipelago.—*Myawady*

POEM:

On Mother's Birthday ...

On Mother's birthday, why do we rejoice?
For three score years and eleven, striving to live a life
leading to Nibbana as Lord Buddha extolled.
And for practicing what Grandfather preached, to make his land, her nation, a country where
brotherhood, equality, nobility, honesty, truth, trust and toil always prevail.
On Mother's birthday, how do we celebrate?
Not just with music, fun and frolic, but with the confidence of a noble race,
cultured, resourceful, and ever persevering.
On Mother's birthday, what do we give?
Not colourful orchids to adorn her regal head, nor dazzling gems to grace her dainty neck,
nor silken shawls to wrap around her slender shoulders.
But our commitment to ensure that one and all enjoy freedom from fear.
On Mondays' birthday, what do we pledge?
Not just in words swearing loyalty to the nation and democratic principles but also
delivering in deed and thought.
On Mother's birthday, what deeds would please her most?
Disciplining, denying and daring oneself for future generations.
On Mother's birthday, what do we wish her?
Not just good health, tranquility, and a hundred more years, but also
that she will lead us to the promised land of Pinlone spirit and eternal peace!

Pho Thit

Let's Keep Waging the War on Drugs

Aye Phyu

MY mother always scolds me whenever I refer drug addicts as stupid people who lack moral principle or will power, extremely selfish without any consideration for their loved ones and others. She urges me to sympathesize with them, not to mistakenly assume as I do, explaining that drug addiction is a complex disease that depends on several factors such as genes and biological formation, upbringing, environment, etc.

Drug abuse occurs with the recurrent use of illegal drugs or misuse of prescription or over the counter drugs with negative consequences. Experts say drugs change the brain in ways that foster compulsive drug abuse. The initial pick up may be voluntary but it is believed that the brain-changes that occur over time get to challenge the addicted person's self control, thereby hampering his ability to resist intense impulses to take drugs.

Narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances covers quite a wide range but to layman like us only cocaine, heroin, black opium, marijuana seem to be familiar terms. The recent names such as 'yaba' 'ice' and 'meth' sound new in the trade. Even last week, my fifth grade brother asked me about 'yaba' and I had no answer except that it is a kind of narcotic drug. From the Internet, I managed to get hold of some basic facts about those deadly drugs.

Meth, short for methamphetamine, is one of the most popular illicit substances found in nearly every corner of the world. 'Ice' is another name for it, believed to be the "poster drug" for global narco economy. 'Yaba,' thought by many as crazy drug in Thailand, is a round small pill, coming in "different versions that carry logos such as 'R' or 'WY.' It consists of meth and caffeine combined. It is mentioned that drug makers entice young people with candy flavors and fb (face book) sale. 'Yaba' can be taken orally or melted and inhaled. Because it gives the user alertness, seemingly endless energy and the sense of euphoria, 'Yaba' tends to lure people into giving it a try, appealing to people in all socio economic positions.

Most narcotic drugs bring about similar effects. Scientists said the active ingredient 'Meth' is highly addictive and with regular use, feelings dissipate and replaced by a host of negative effects including violent behavior, paranoia and acute psychosis.

Drug abuse and addiction really pose as a national concern for all countries. It just does not harm the addict but has a far reaching effect that encompasses family, friends, employers, community and society as a whole. Consumed by addiction, drug addicts, selfish, self centred and oblivious to others, and with only their needs in focus, will do anything to feed it, including criminal behavior, after having lost all the rational and civilized thoughts what so ever.

From some media we know that enormous costs have to be borne annually by nations, connected to health and crime related issues stemming from drug abuse and addiction. And yet those staggering cost figures according to experts in the field, do not fully describe the breadth or intensity of public health and safety implications thereof.

Once I came across a line somewhere somebody has said. It goes like that: "I don't want to defy economic logic and say 'supply' creates 'demand' but to a certain extent it feels that way."

Perhaps, that seems to reflect the reality happening in our country and in the world, too. Availability and easy access to illegal drugs has been worsening the situation, increasing the number of drug users many fold, destroying our most important and valuable human resources.

It stands to reason that all citizens from all walks of life must hands in the combat against drug trafficking through which various illegal drugs get into the hands of users.

Traffickers use all kinds of transport routes that are constantly changing. Airplanes, speed boats, trucks, tunnels and what not, taken as a whole, the system used to move illegal drugs around the world, drug officials said, comprise an extremely large logistics network. With old routes cracked down, new routes evolve in no time.

It is generally believed that the war on drugs has been keeping pace with the expansion of the global economy. Technological advances led to faster and better transport and travel systems that in turn brought about fluid efficiency and speed of the global economy. However, the grey side has it that the same facilities and similar efficiencies are also offered to the business of illegal drug network with the result of a simultaneous explosion of drug trafficking throughout the world.

Governments around the world had a discussion on what to do about the global drug problem last April 2016, at UN in New York after which a pledge was made to take a more comprehensive approach to the issues than in years past. They also decided to keep waging the war on drugs.

The 'outcome document' adopted during the UN General Assembly's Special Session (UNGASS) calls for countries to "prevent and counter" drug related crime by disrupting the "illicit cultivation, production, manufacturing and trafficking" of cocain, heroin, methamphetamine and other substances banned by International Law.

The document also reaffirmed the UNs "unwavering commitment" to supply reduction and related measures.

Yet according to UN's own data, the supply oriented approach to fighting drug trafficking has been a failure of epic proportions.

2015 world Drug Report by UN office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) states that despite billions of dollars spent trying to eradicate illicit crops, seize drug loads, and arrest traffickers, more people than ever before are getting high.

As we are building a new democratic Myanmar, we'd like to experience greater success in our war on drugs. Despite our Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances law together with strict and severe punishment and confiscation sentences for traffickers, we have been hearing in the media almost every other day about the multiple cases of seizures of different illegal drugs throughout our country.

We need to top up our effort from every angle. Government, Civil Society Organizations, NGO and INGOs, business and private sectors, and every one must put in for a concerted effort in the combat. Responsible forces must be reinforced, for tracking down local as well as cross border traffickers and any other connections elsewhere, in cooperation and collaboration with regional or international counterparts. Public participation can play a significant role in combating drug related crimes in the country, people can keep themselves quite alert in their daily life and report to the authorities concerned, any irregularity or suspicious activity in connection with illicit drugs trafficking.

As good citizens, let's keep waging the war on drugs!

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Clinton's lead over Trump slips after Florida shooting — Reuters/Ipsos poll

A combination photo shows US Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton and Republican US presidential candidate Donald Trump in Los Angeles, California, on 5 May 2016 and in Eugene, Oregon, US, on 6 May 2016 respectively. PHOTO: REUTERS

NEW YORK — Donald Trump chipped away at Hillary Clinton's lead in the presidential race this week, according to a Reuters/Ipsos poll released on Friday, as the candidates clashed over how to respond to the worst mass shooting in modern US history.

The poll, conducted from Monday to Friday, showed Clinton, the presumptive Democratic nominee, with a 10.7 point lead among likely voters over Trump, her likely Republican rival in the November presidential election. That's down from a lead of 14.3 points for Clinton on Sunday, the day an American-born shooter who declared allegiance to militant group Islamic State killed 49 people at a gay nightclub in Orlando, Florida.

Trump seized on the attack to sharpen his security proposals, saying he would block immigration to the United States from any country with a "proven history of terrorism" against America and its allies if elected. The pledge fine-tuned an earlier vow, made after the attacks last year in Paris and California, to ban the entry of all Muslims into the United States.

He also called for measures to make it more difficult for suspected terrorists to obtain firearms, veering from the Republican Party's general opposition to gun control.

While Trump's comments on both Muslims and guns dismayed some Republican elites, they may have cheered some voters.

Some 45 per cent of Americans said they supported Trump's idea to suspend Muslim immigration, up from 41.9 per cent at the start of the month, according to the poll. Meanwhile, about 70 per cent of Americans, including a majority of Democrats and Republicans, said they wanted to see at least moderate regulations and restrictions on guns, up from 60 per cent in similar polls in 2013 and 2014.

Clinton focussed her response to the Orlando attack on the need to boost intelligence gathering and defeat Islamic State and what she called "radical jihadist terrorism," while warning against demonizing Muslim-Americans. She also repeated her calls for tougher gun control measures, including a ban on assault weapons.

As usual after a major attack, "terrorism" jumped to the top concern among all adults in the poll — rising above the economy, health care and other major issues.

The poll's five-day average showed that 45.5 per cent of likely American voters supported Clinton, while 34.8 per cent supported Trump, and another 19.7 per cent did not support either candidate. On Sunday, Clinton's support was at 46.6 per cent, versus Trump's 32.3 per cent.

The Reuters/Ipsos poll was conducted online in English with adults living in the continental United States, Alaska and Hawaii. The political horserace poll included 1,133 likely voters and has a credibility interval, a measure of the poll's accuracy, of 3.4 percentage points.—*Reuters*

Let Britain be free, Europe's far-right parties urge

VIENNA — Cheered on by thousands of flag-waving Austrians, the leaders of Europe's biggest far-right parties railed on Friday against the European Union and Islam and urged Britons to free themselves from what they called heartless EU technocrats.

The rally on the outskirts of Vienna brought together an array of anti-immigration, anti-EU parties that have unsettled a European political establishment still struggling to get a grip on a historic refugee crisis and years of economic weakness.

The parties had earlier pledged more cooperation at a meeting hosted by Heinz-Christian Strache, whose Freedom Party (FPO) came within a whisker of winning the Austrian presidency last month and is now challenging the result.

Attendees included Marine Le Pen, the leader of France's National Front, and politicians from the Alternative for Germany (AfD) and Northern League of Italy.

"The fear-mongering of people like (Jean-Claude) Juncker and (Martin) Schulz cannot sway us," Le Pen told a crowd of about 2,000 at the pyramid-shaped convention centre, referring to the heads of the European Commission and European Parliament.

"They are worried that Britain might win back its freedom," she added, to cheers. "We want Britons to set themselves free."

Speaking after her, Strache accused German Chancellor Angela Merkel of causing "irreparable damage" to Europe by opening German borders to hundreds of thousands of refugees fleeing war in the Middle East.

"We are not against Europe as our opponents are always saying. We want another Europe, a better Europe, one of nations, values, culture and identity," Strache said. "The new fascism comes from the left and from radical Islam."—*Reuters*

UN Secretary-General's message on The International Day for The Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict

19 June 2016

The world continues to witness appalling levels of sexual violence in wartime. No region is immune to this scourge, which continues to affect women, girls, boys and men.

There has also been clear progress and unprecedented political momentum to address these crimes.

Sexual violence is now widely recognized as a deliberate strategy used to shred the fabric of society; to control and intimidate communities and to force people from their homes. It is rightly seen as a threat to international peace and security, a serious violation of international humanitarian and human rights law, and a major impediment to post-conflict reconciliation and economic development.

There have been landmark cases against political and military leaders, demonstrating that the era of impunity for sexual violence as a tool of war is over. I pay tribute today to the many thousands of caregivers, medical practitioners, advocates, and others on the frontline of this battle, who are fighting for change.

However, we still face serious challenges.

One extremely disturbing aspect is the use of sexual violence as a tactic of terrorism. Daesh, Boko Haram and other extremist groups are using sexual violence as a means of attracting and retaining fighters, and to generate revenue.

Abducted women, men, girls and boys suffer the most terrible trauma through brutal physical and sexual assault, child and forced marriages and sexual slavery on a massive scale.

The abduction of more than 200 girls from Chibok in Nigeria, and the continued tragedy of women and girls subjected to forced marriage or sexual slavery by extremist groups in the Middle East, are two of the most horrific examples of the use of sexual violence as a tactic of terrorism. I call for the immediate release of all those taken captive, and for the care and support of those who return, who can suffer from social isolation and depression.

Women and girls with children may need specialized medical and psycho-social support, and this must extend to the children themselves, who can suffer complete rejection.

The shame and social stigma faced by these women and children should be redirected towards the brutal perpetrators of violence.

We must continue to speak up for the women, girls, men and boys whose bodies for too long have been considered the spoils of war.—*UNIC/Yangon*

NEWS IN BRIEF

Drone flight near Washington Monument leads to citation

WASHINGTON — A man has been cited for flying a drone near the Washington Monument, police said on Friday, a flight that occurred in one of the country's most heavily restricted air zones.

The man, John Newcomer Jr., was flying the unmanned aircraft around the north side of the obelisk at 4am on Wednesday when officers ordered him to land it, the US Park Police said in a statement.

Officers issued Newcomer a citation and confiscated the UDI R/C drone and its control mechanism. The statement did not say where Newcomer was from or his age.

The drone incident near the Washington Monument, one of the US capital's landmarks, was the first in a national park in the Washington area this year, and the 28th since 2013, the statement said. US law bars unmanned aircraft in a restricted zone around Washington.—*Reuters*

Kosovo parliament votes to extend EU legal mission mandate

PRISTINA — Kosovo's parliament voted on Friday to extend the mandate of the European Union police and justice mission, whose work was suspended earlier this week because of a dispute over its role.

Two-thirds of Kosovo's parliamentarians voted to allow the mission, known as EULEX, to stay in the country until June 2018.

The mission handles war crimes and other cases considered too sensitive for local prosecutors and judges.

Western sources said the EU and Kosovo had disagreed over what the mission should do. Kosovo wanted it to have more of a monitoring role but the EU wanted it to continue its job of investigating and trying cases. The mission halted court proceedings on Wednesday pending the parliamentary vote.—*Reuters*

Russian President Vladimir Putin delivers a speech during an awarding ceremony for soldiers returning from Syria, at the Kremlin in Moscow, Russia, on 17 March 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Russian President Putin agrees with US proposals for Syrian opposition

MOSCOW — Russian President Vladimir Putin said on Friday he agreed with US proposals to incorporate parts of the opposition into the current Syrian government, saying President Bashar al-Assad accepted there was a need for a political process.

The comments advance Russia's position on Syria and follow a statement by UN Envoy Staffan de Mistura, who warned earlier this month there would not be another round of peace talks until officials on all sides agreed on the parameters for a political transition deal ahead of an 1 August deadline.

"The US proposal is absolutely acceptable. We must think about the possibilities of incorporating representatives of the opposition into the active ruling structure," Putin told the annual St Petersburg International Economic Forum.

"For example into the government. We must think what rights that government will have. But here we shouldn't go too far, we must act based on today's realities."

Putin said the most important thing for Syria was not for Assad to retake every inch of territory as he has pledged (though Putin said territorial gains were also important) but for overall faith in the authorities to be restored.

Putin said it was inevitable Syria would collapse if things continued as they were, saying that would be the worst-case scenario.—*Reuters*

Afghan police tell foreigners in Kabul to stay in or hire guards

KABUL — Police in the Afghan capital have told foreigners living outside protected compounds to travel with guards, after the kidnapping of an Indian aid worker last week added to a growing sense of insecurity in Kabul.

The push is for the safety of residents, said Fraidoon Obaidi, chief of the Kabul police Criminal Investigation Department.

"All foreign citizens and their offices in Afghanistan are terrorists' targets ... the kidnapping and criminal threat is very serious," he told Reuters. "This will be prevented only if they use security guards and escorts." One document distributed by Obaidi's officers to private homes and organisations instructs residents to take a variety of security measures, including using armed police escorts if necessary.

But national security officials have distanced themselves from the police efforts, after critics complained that the measures were counterproductive and did not reduce the threats facing residents.

In the past week, foreign workers have reported police and intelligence agents stopping their cars, being taken to police stations, questioned about personal information, filmed and photographed.

The Interior Ministry was not involved in the decision to use such tactics, and plans to work with city police to change their security measures, said spokesman Sediq Sediqqi. Although the capital has long faced threats, until a few years ago the war with Taliban insurgents was mostly waged in the countryside. Many aid workers and journalists lived in upscale Kabul neighbourhoods and frequented restaurants and sports clubs.

But since 2014, when most international troops pulled out of Afghanistan and militants launched high-profile attacks on restaurants popular with foreigners, some have relocated into protected compounds. The kidnapping of 40-year-old Judith D'Souza on 9 June in the heart of Kabul has prompted police to step up pressure on foreigners to adopt more extensive security measures. In some cases, the police tactics have prompted indignation from those they are designed to help. "Telling us we can't travel anywhere without armed guards is ridiculous," said Sri Lankan Nayela Wickramasuriya. "We may as well not have police then."

Wickramasuriya said police recently stopped her as she was leaving a friend's house during the day time and tried to prevent her from travelling home.

"Is this the new Kabul?" was the thought freelance journalist Courtney Body said ran through her mind last week as she stood in an Afghan police station being questioned by nine officers who detained her and a friend for two hours after stopping their car.

As well as the D'Souza kidnapping, at least two other foreigners, from Germany and the Netherlands, were taken from the same neighbourhood in separate incidents last year. Both of those women were eventually released unharmed, with police saying the kidnappings were most likely financially motivated. Wealthy Afghans also face an increased threat of kidnapping by gangs seeking to make money, and local employees of aid organisations are often kidnapped out in the field.— *Reuters*

Iraqi PM declares victory over Islamic State in Falluja

FALLUJA/BAGHDAD, (Iraq) — Iraqi forces on Friday entered the center of Falluja, the Iraqi city longest held by Islamic State, nearly four weeks after the start of a US-backed offensive that cleared out the tens of thousands of residents still there.

Government troops, supported by multiple air strikes from a US-led coalition, recaptured the municipal building, though the ultra-hardline militants still controlled a significant portion of Falluja, an hour's drive west of Baghdad, and many streets and houses remain mined with explosives.

Federal police raised the Iraqi state flag above the government building and continued pursuing insurgents, according to a military statement. US Defence Secretary Ash Carter said Iraqi forces had taken back a portion of the city, although he added: "There's still some fighting to be done."

Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi declared victory shortly after nightfall, as government forces continued pushing into parts of the city held by the militants.

Security forces have "tightened their control inside the city and there are still some pockets that need to be cleansed in the coming hours," he said in a brief speech on state television.

Troops could be seen coming under sniper fire earlier in the day as they entered a large mosque about 100 metres (300 feet) from the municipal building. Clashes also involved gun fire, artillery and aerial bombardment, sending clouds of smoke towards the sky above the city centre.

Heavily armed Interior Ministry police units were advancing along Baghdad Street, the main east-west road running through the city, and commandos from the counter-terrorism service (CTS) had surrounded Falluja hospital, the military statement said.

Sabah al-Numani, a CTS spokesman, said on state television that snipers were holed up inside the main hospital.

Iraq launched a major operation on 23 May to retake Falluja, a bastion of the Sunni Muslim insurgency against US forces that toppled Saddam Hussein, a Sunni, in 2003, and Shi'ite-led governments that followed.

The participation of Iranian-backed Shi'ite militias in the battle alongside the Iraqi army raised fears of sectarian killings, and authorities are already investigating allegations that militiamen executed dozens of Sunni men fleeing the city.

Iraqi soldiers gesture in centre of Falluja, Iraq, on 17 June 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Iraq's top Shi'ite cleric, Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, urged pro-government fighters in a Friday sermon not to seek revenge against residents. There were no initial signs that Shi'ite militiamen had entered the city proper.

Falluja was seen as a launchpad for recent Islamic State (IS) bombings in Baghdad, making the offensive a crucial part of the government's campaign to improve security in the capital.

US allies would prefer to concentrate on Islamic State-held Mosul, Iraq's second largest city located in the far north of the country.

Enemies of Islamic State have launched major offensives against the jihadists on other fronts, including a thrust by US-backed forces against the city of Manbij in northern Syria.

The attacks amount to the most sustained pressure on the group since it proclaimed a caliphate in 2014.—*Reuters*

Jo Cox murder suspect says name is 'Death to traitors, freedom for Britain'

A court artist sketch by Elizabeth Cook shows Thomas Mair (C) appearing at Westminster Magistrates' Court in London, Britain, on 18 June 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

LONDON — The man charged with murdering British lawmaker Jo Cox gave his name as "death to traitors, freedom for Britain" when he appeared in court on Saturday accused of a killing that has left next week's vote on European Union membership in limbo.

The murder of Cox, a 41-year-old mother of two young children, has shocked Britain, elicited condolences from leaders around the world and raised questions about the tone of campaigning ahead of the EU referendum.

Cox, an ardent supporter of EU membership, was shot and stabbed in the street in her electoral district in northern England on Thursday.

Wearing a gray sweat shirt and trousers and flanked by two security guards, 52-year-old Thomas Mair was asked his name by a clerk at Westminster Magistrates' Court in London.

"Death to traitors, freedom for Britain," Mair said. When asked again what his name was, Mair calmly repeated: "My name is death to traitors, freedom for Britain."

Mair, balding with a gray goatee beard, made no further comment in the 15-mintue hearing, his first appearance in public since police arrested him in the town of Birstall, Yorkshire, where Cox was killed.

He is charged with murder, causing grievous bodily harm, and possession of a firearm and a knife. He was remanded in custody and will appear at London's Old Bailey court on Monday.

The killing has shocked the nation and both sides in the referendum have temporarily suspended campaigning ahead of Thursday's vote, which has far reaching implications for both the EU and Britain.

A British exit from the EU would rock the bloc — already shaken by differences over migration and the future of the euro zone — by ripping away its second-largest economy, one of its top two military powers and by far its richest financial center.

Pro-Europeans, including former prime ministers Tony Blair and John Major, have warned that an exit could also trigger the break-up of the United Kingdom by prompting another Scottish independence vote if England pulled Scotland out of the EU.

Prime Minister David Cameron joined Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn on Friday to lay flowers in Birstall.

"It is a vile act that has killed her," Corbyn said.

Cameron has agreed to recall parliament on Monday to allow lawmakers to pay tributes to the popular Member of Parliament (MP), who was only elected in 2015.

The murder has sparked debate in Britain, which has strict gun controls, about the safety of lawmakers, the heightened tempo of political confrontation and any impact on the EU vote.—*Reuters*

Rio state declares financial emergency, requests funding for Olympics

RIO DE JANEIRO — Rio de Janeiro's governor declared a state of financial emergency Friday and requested federal funds to help fulfill obligations for public services during the Olympics that start 5 August.

Emergency measures are needed to avoid "a total collapse in public security, health, education, transport and environmental management," a decree in the state's Official Gazette said.

The state's revenue, largely tied to the petroleum industry, slumped in the last two years as global oil prices collapsed.

The announcement followed this week's visit to Rio by Brazil's Interim President Michel Temer, who said the federal government would ensure all obligations are met for a successful Games.

Rio is expecting about 500,000 foreign visitors during the Olympics, which has coincided with Brazil's worst recession since the 1930s and a political crisis that last month led to the suspension of President Dilma Rousseff.

"The state's financial emergency in no way delays the delivery of Olympic projects and the promises assumed by the city of Rio," Mayor Eduardo Paes said on Twitter. He also underscored that legacy construction projects, with the exception of an 8.79 billion-real expansion of Rio's metro that is expected to be finished just days before the Games open, are the responsibility of the city and that most have been completed.

The local organizing committee for the Games said the state's fiscal situation did not impact its actual running of the Olympics, which relies entirely on private funds.

A journalist walks in front of a screen with olympics logos during the medal launching ceremony in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on 14 June 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

While the majority of Olympic infrastructure costs have been spread across city, state and federal budgets, with some financing from private companies, the state is responsible for most day-to-day security and health services in Rio.

The financial pinch resulted in a 30-per cent cut in the state's security budget — just as Rio has seen a jump in homicides and assaults in recent months, raising concerns about safety ahead of the Olympics. The state of Rio expects a budget deficit of over 19 billion reais ($5.56 billion) this year as spending planned before oil prices fell outstrips revenue that is tumbling during Brazil's recession.

Rio state's debt has been downgraded several times.

On Wednesday, Fitch Ratings downgraded Rio's debt rating to 'B-' from 'B+', saying the state was suffering "a fast-deteriorating liquidity position."

Since late last year, the state has been forced to delay pension and salary payments and shutter some schools and hospitals, where crucial supplies, including medicines and syringes, are lacking.

Brazil is also facing an outbreak of the Zika virus, which has been linked to the birth defect microcephaly in which babies are born with abnormally small heads frequently associated with developmental issues.—*Reuters*

Teen hacks Pentagon websites, gets thanked for finding 'bugs'

WASHINGTON — High school student David Dworken spent 10 to 15 hours between classes on his laptop, hacking US Defence Department websites.

Instead of getting into trouble, the 18-year-old who graduated this week was one of two people praised by Secretary of Defence Ash Carter at the Pentagon on Friday for finding vulnerabilities before US adversaries did.

"We know that state-sponsored actors and black-hat hackers want to challenge and exploit our networks ... what we didn't fully appreciate before this pilot was how many white hat hackers there are who want to make a difference," Carter said at a ceremony where he also thanked Craig Arendt, a security consultant at Stratum Security.

More than 1,400 participants took part in a pilot project launched this year, and found 138 valid reports of vulnerabilities, the Pentagon said. The project invited hackers to test the cyber security of some public Defence Department websites.

The pilot project was limited to public websites and the hackers did not have access to highly sensitive areas.

The US government has pointed the finger at China and Russia, saying they have tried to access government systems in the past.

The Pentagon said it paid a total of about $75,000 to the successful hackers, in amounts ranging from $100 to $15,000.

Dworken, who graduated on Monday from Maret high school in Washington, DC, said he reported six vulnerabilities, but received no reward because they had already been reported.

However, Dworken said he had already been approached by recruiters about potential internships.

He said some of the bugs he found would have allowed others to display whatever they wanted on the websites and steal account information.

Dworken, who will study computer science at Northeastern University, said his first experience with finding vulnerabilities was in 10th grade when he found bugs on his school website.

"Hack the Pentagon" is modelled after similar competitions known as "bug bounties" conducted by US companies to discover network security gaps.

The Pentagon said the pilot project cost $150,000, including the reward money, and several follow up initiatives were planned. This included creating a process so others could report vulnerabilities without fear of prosecution.

"It's not a small sum, but if we had gone through the normal process of hiring an outside firm to do a security audit and vulnerability assessment, which is what we usually do, it would have cost us more than $1 million," Carter said.—*Reuters*

Second flight recorder retrieved from crashed EgyptAir flight

Recovered debris of the EgyptAir jet that crashed in the Mediterranean Sea is seen in this handout image released on 21 May 2016 by Egypt's military. PHOTO: REUTERS

CAIRO — A second flight recorder has been retrieved from the crashed EgyptAir flight MS804, containing data from aircraft systems which could shed light on what brought the plane down last month, Egyptian investigators said on Friday.

An Egyptian committee investigating the crash in the eastern Mediterranean Sea, which killed all 66 people on board, announced the find a day after search teams located the cockpit voice recorder.

The two black box recorders are crucial to explaining what went wrong on the Airbus A320, which crashed early on 19 May on its way from Paris to Cairo.

Egyptian investigators had received the two flight recorders and would analyse the information over weeks, the Ministry of Civil Aviation said.

No group has claimed responsibility for bringing down the plane, but Egyptian investigation sources have said that it was too early to rule out any causes, including terrorism.

If intact, the cockpit recorder should reveal pilot conversations and any cockpit alarms, as well as other cluessuch as engine noise. But crash experts say it may provide only limited insight into what caused the crash.

Preserved in water to prevent oxidisation until it can be opened in controlled conditions, the data recorder now on its way to Alexandria greatly increases the chances that the cause can be discovered, as long as its chip is intact, experts say.

To unlock the evidence, investigators will remove the chip from a protective sleeve, clean it and inspect it for damage.

While no explanation for the disaster has been ruled out, current and former aviation officials increasingly believe the root of the crash lies in the aircraft's technical systems, rather than deliberate sabotage.

Investigators will also examine the digital records of pilot commands and, if available, the tape of their conversations to try to replicate what they understood and whether their actions either dampened or added to any technical problems.

There has been a series of airplane accidents at high altitude blamed on a cocktail of technical and pilot flaws.

The crash is the third blow since October to Egypt's travel industry, which is still suffering from the 2011 uprising that ended Hosni Mubarak's 30-year rule.

A Russian plane crashed in the Sinai Peninsula last October, killing all 224 people on board in an attack claimed by Islamic State. In March, an EgyptAir plane was hijacked by a man wearing a fake suicide belt. No one was hurt.—*Reuters*

Seven decapitated bodies found on home turf of Mexican drug lord 'El Chapo

MEXICO CITY — The decapitated bodies of seven men were found in Mexico's western Sinaloa state, near the heart of jailed drug lord Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman's old home turf, a state law enforcement official said on Friday.

Martin Robles, Sinaloa's deputy attorney general, told reporters in the state capital of Culiacan the seven men were loggers attacked near the town of Rosario, located about 60 miles (100 km) south of the Pacific resort of Mazatlan.

In recent years, the state has been host to a number of confrontations between the army and drug traffickers, but it was not immediately clear if Guzman's notorious Sinaloa cartel was involved in the killing of the loggers.

Gruesome displays of violence have been rare in Sinaloa despite a longstanding rivalry between the Sinaloa cartel and a separate criminal organisation run by Isidro Meza, also known as "El Chapo."

Robles said he could not confirm widely circulated reports from earlier this week that dozens of armed gunmen attacked the Sinaloa home of Guzman's mother.

Guzman, currently held in a prison near the US border, is awaiting extradition to the United States to face drug trafficking, money laundering and murder charges.—*Reuters*

Flooded Canadian towns in gas heartland declare state of emergency

VANCOUVER — Intense flooding has prompted two northern communities in the Canadian province of British Columbia to declare states of emergency, just a month after forest fires prompted evacuations in the region.

The city of Dawson Creek, which sits atop the gas rich Montney formation, declared a state of emergency on Friday due to heavy rain that washed out bridges, flooded sewers and forced some 60 people from their homes, the mayor said.

"It was a crazy, crazy couple of days," Mayor Dale Bumstead said, adding that the rain had stopped and the town's focus was now on assessing the damage and rebuilding.

The town of Chetwynd, some 100 km (62 miles) west of Dawson Creek, declared a state of emergency on Wednesday.

Both communities are south of Fort St. John, the hub city for British Columbia's energy industry. Pembina Pipeline shut its crude-carrying Western Pipeline on Thursday, after rain and erosion exposed a portion of the line.

An aerial photo shows flooding in the City of Dawson Creek after heavy rain in this image posted on social media in British Columbia, Canada, on 16 June 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

On Friday the company said there was currently no timeline for when operations would restart.

"We are assessing the situation and working with the provincial government, regulator and industry partners to safely access the area for an inspection," Pembina spokesman Jason Fydirchuk said.

It was not immediately clear if other energy companies had been affected by the flooding. Bumstead said that while major highways around the city were damaged by the rain, workers could still access nearby energy projects using back roads. Pipeline company TransCanada Corp said there was a fair distance between where the flooding was taking place and its assets in northern British Columbia, and it did not expect operations to be affected.

In May, a handful of small communities north of Fort St. John were evacuated as intense wildfires tore through northeast British Columbia. A separate wildfire in Northern Alberta forced the evacuation of 90,000 people and shut in more than a million barrels per day of oil output.—*Reuters*

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV SINAR BALI VOY NO (006N)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV SINAR BALI VOY NO (006N) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 19.6.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P/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.

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Jones testifies Page never mentioned Spirit in Led Zeppelin trial

LOS ANGELES — Led Zeppelin musician John Paul Jones testified on Friday that his former bandmate Jimmy Page had never mentioned American band Spirit, whose song Led Zeppelin is being accused of stealing a riff from its 1971 hit "Stairway to Heaven."

Jones, 70, appeared in federal court in Los Angeles on Friday in a copyright infringement trial in which the British rock band is accused of copying the opening riff to "Stairway to Heaven" from the 1967 instrumental "Taurus" by Spirit.

When asked if guitarist Page, the co-writer of "Stairway," had ever mentioned Spirit, Jones said no.

Jones also said that he himself had never heard of Spirit until the current lawsuit that was brought in 2014 by Michael Skidmore, a trustee for Randy Wolfe, the late guitarist of Spirit and composer of "Taurus."

The lawsuit seeks a writing credit for Wolfe on the song and damages in an amount to be proven at trial.

Lawyers for Skidmore on Friday called Michael Einhorn, an expert on music royalties, to testify about damages related to the case. Einhorn said Plant and Page have made $58.5 million in total as composers of "Stairway to Heaven."

The trial has been closely watched this week as Page, 72, and Plant, 67, attended court, both wearing suits with their long silver hair tied into ponytails.

Page took the witness stand on Wednesday and Thursday and was questioned on whether there were any similarities between "Stairway to Heaven" and "Taurus."

The British musician said he did not recall hearing "Taurus" until recently, after he had been made aware of comparisons being made between the two songs.

He also testified that the descending chromatic structure of the guitar riff at the centre of the lawsuit is heard in numerous other songs, including "Chim Chim Cher-ee" from the 1964 Disney film "Mary Poppins."

Led Zeppelin's attorneys on Friday brought in music expert Lawrence Ferrara, who testified that the only similarity between "Taurus" and "Stairway to Heaven" was a "descending chromatic minor line progression."

Led Zeppelin band mates (L-R) Robert Plant, Jimmy Page and John Paul Jones sit as US President Barack Obama (not pictured) hosts an event for the 2012 Kennedy Centre honorees in the East Room of the White House in Washington, in 2012. PHOTO: REUTERS

Ferrara said that musical element was used 300 years ago, as well as in many pop songs since then.

Earlier in the trial, Skidmore's lawyers simultaneously showed the jury two video clips of expert Kevin Hanson playing the openings of both songs. Hanson said the two clips "play together as one piece of music. It is not discordant."—*Reuters*

Leonardo DiCaprio is ordered deposed over 'Wolf of Wall Street'

NEW YORK — A federal judge has ordered actor Leonardo DiCaprio to be deposed in a defamation lawsuit brought by a former Stratton Oakmont executive over his alleged depiction in the 2013 Martin Scorsese film "The Wolf of Wall Street."

US Magistrate Judge Steven Locke in Central Islip, New York, on Thursday said DiCaprio must be made available for questioning, which was opposed by Viacom Inc's Paramount Pictures Corp, DiCaprio's Appian Way Productions and other defendants.

The plaintiff, Andrew Greene, sued in 2014 for more than $50 million, claiming that he was defamed in the film through the portrayal by actor P.J. Byrne of a morally and ethically challenged character named Nicky "Rugrat" Koskoff.

Paramount has said Koskoff was a "composite character" inspired by multiple individuals, including Greene.

DiCaprio, 41, played Jordan Belfort, a stock swindler who founded Stratton Oakmont and whose 2007 memoir was a basis for the film. Greene was a childhood friend of Belfort. In opposing a deposition, defence lawyers said DiCaprio did not write the screenplay, and that there was no claim he had any role in deciding whether alleged defamatory content should be included in or excluded from the film.—*Reuters*

Leonardo DiCaprio. PHOTO: REUTERS

'Orange is the New Black' season 4 deals with racism, privatisation

Actress Laura Prepon (C) accepts the award for Outstanding Performance by an Ensemble in a Comedy Series for "Orange is the New Black" at the 22nd Screen Actors Guild Awards in Los Angeles, California, in January 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

NEW YORK — A new season of the hugely popular women's prison comedy "Orange is the New Black" launched on Friday on Netflix with cast members saying the show would dig deeper into issues of racism and the privatisation of prisons.

"We're dealing with a lot of racism and we're deepening that dialogue," actress Adrienne Moore, who plays Cindy Hayes in the show, said at the fourth season's New York launch event on Thursday night. "We were not afraid about the drama this season." The series was adapted from Piper Kerman's 2010 biography, of the same name, from her experience while jailed at a women's prison in upstate New York.

The show first premiered on Netflix in 2013 and features a diverse cast led by lead actress Taylor Schilling, who plays a version of Kerman.

Earlier this year, the comedy nabbed a whopping three-season renewal from Netflix. The deal includes a commitment from series creator and showrunner Jenji Kohan to remain at the helm of Netflix's most-watched series through seasons five, six and seven.

The series is one of the flagship shows in Netflix's original programming push led by political drama "House of Cards." The online streaming company has challenged traditional network and cable television by releasing every episode in a season at once.

"I'm waiting for tomorrow because you know that there are going to be like people who stay up and watch it all night," said Emma Myles, who plays Leanne Taylor on the show. "So like, when I wake up hung over at eleven o'clock in the morning, there are going to be people that watched the entire thing." President Barack Obama referenced the series on Jimmy Fallon's Tonight Show on 9 June, taking a playful jab at Republican presumptive presidential nominee Donald Trump. When Fallon asked Obama if he had watched news coverage about the billionaire tycoon that week, Obama responded, "No, but I have been watching my new favorite show: 'Orange is NOT the New Black.'"—*Reuters*

Singing dune draws visitors to Kazakh steppes

Stars and the 'Milky Way' are seen in the night sky over a camp, in Altyn-Emel national park, in Almaty region, Kazakhstan, on 13 May 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

ALMATY — Rising incongruously above the steppes of southeastern Kazakhstan is a structure as famed for the myths that surround as for the sound it produces — a single, singing dune.

Located between the folds of the Tian Shan mountains near the Chinese border, the 150-metre-high by three-kilometre-long dune generates a low-pitched, organ-like rumble in dry weather.

Before physicists established that the sound came from sand grains rubbing against each other, legends about its origins abounded, some claiming the great Mongol conqueror Genghis Khan was buried beneath it.

The sand hill is one of the main attractions of the Altynemel national park some 180 kilometres (110 miles) northeast of Kazakhstan's commercial hub Almaty.

The park also features volcanic mountains, millennia-old burial sites of the rulers of the Saka, an ancient nomadic tribe, and numerous wild animals including goitered gazelles known for their lightning-fast, bounding gait.

Altynemel is adjacent to another national park, Charyn, set up around a 154-kilometre-long canyon that travellers do not notice until they are nearly on top of it.

The part frequented by tourists is called the Valley of Castles, where some rocks are shaped like the towers of a mediaeval fortress.—*Reuters*

Venezuelan protests economic crisis through currency art

CARACAS — With Venezuela's highest denomination bill now worth less than a stick of gum, one local designer is protesting his country's economic crisis through currency art.

Jose Leon, 24, has been covering the faces of national heroes on the smallest bills of two bolivars — worth one fifth of a US cent at the black market rate — with the intricately-stencilled faces of American superheroes.

"One day, I was paid in two bolivar notes: what a pain! At night, watching the (US superhero) film 'Deadpool,' I decided to draw it on the bills," said the tatooist and amateur cartoonist.

"People started rejecting the two bolivar bills. I travel a lot by bus, and they wouldn't accept them. Not even for a cigarette. Nothing."

Bills in Venezuela have become a serious nuisance after the currency's precipitous fall in value. The largest 100 bolivar note is worth just 10 cents on the black market and people often carry bags full of money for basic purchases.

Leon has been covering the faces of Venezuela's independence heroes including Francisco de Miranda with images from Star Wars to Batman.

After exhibiting his work on Instagram, he received hundreds of reactions and a hashtag was born: #VenezuelaDevaluada (#VenezuelaDevalued).

"It is a protest against a government that takes away my hopes and dreams," Leon said from Venezuela's second city Maracaibo where his murals adorn city walls.

Looting and food protests are occurring daily in Venezuela, hit by triple-digit inflation and a scarcity of basic goods.

While critics blame 17 years of socialist policies, President Nicolas Maduro says the opposition, business leaders and Washington are sabotaging the economy. A pro-government website blasted Leon's "childish" work, saying he was replacing homegrown heroes with "Yankees."—*Reuters*

Walk on water at Italian lake 'Floating Piers' installation

SULZANO — Ever fancied walking on water? Well now you can, thanks to Bulgarian-born artist Christo's latest art installation providing a floating walkway at Italy's Lake Iseo.

For just a few weeks, "The Floating Piers" will rest on the surface of the picturesque lake, 100 km (62 miles) northeast of Milan, with a 3-km walkway allowing visitors to set off from the mainland town of Sulzano to the islands of Monte Isola and San Paolo, usually accessed by boat.

Some 220,000 high-density polyethylene cubes have been attached together and anchored by divers for the project. Covering them are 100,000 square meters (1,076,391 square feet) of shimmering yellow fabric, which will also feature along 1.5 km of Sulzano streets.

The piers, some 16 metres (52 feet) wide and 35 centimeters (14 inches) high, will "undulate with the movement of the waves" as visitors make their way, according to the project's website.

They will be on display June 18-3 July, which the 81-year old artist said is all part of its beauty.

A general view of the installation 'The Floating Piers' by Bulgarian-born artist Christo Vladimirov Yavachev known as Christo, on the Lake Iseo, northern Italy, on 16 June, 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

"The temporal character is also related to the dynamics of the project," Christo told Reuters, speaking in English.

"The project is designed to a particular moment of a voyage of many years ... The work of art is not the 14 days or 16 days. The work of art is ... that journey to that 14, 16 days." Works by Christo and his wife Jeanne-Claude, who died in 2009, have featured in various cities, such as "The Gates" in New York, where the artists put up 7,503 gates with saffron fabric panels in Central Park.

According to the project's website, Christo and Jeanne-Claude came up with "The Floating Piers" concept in 1970 and Christo picked Lake Iseo as the location in 2014. Access to "The Floating Piers" will be free and organisers say volunteers will be present in case anyone should fall into the water. —*Reuters*

MRTV Entertainment Channel

(19- 6-2016, Sunday)

06 : 00 pm
- Weather Report
- Cartoon Programme "Hotel Transilvania " (Part-2)

06 : 50 pm
- International Movie Songs

07 : 10 pm
- Myanmar Video

08 : 40 pm
- Writer, Philanthropist: Daw Than Myint Aung (Part - 2)

09 : 00 pm
- MRTV Entertainment Music

09 : 10 pm
- To My Dream City (Part- 1)

9 : 40 pm
- Myanmar Movie

Midnight
- Close Down.

From 19-6-2016 (Sunday) 6:00 Pm
To 20-6-2016 (Monday) 6:00 Pm

mitv Myanmar International

(19-6-2016 07:00am ~ 20-6-2016 7:00am) MST

Today Fresh

07:03	Am	News
07:25	Am	Myanmar Charitable Labour Association
07:37	Am	Buddha Image Built of Bamboo Strip
07:49	Am	Welcome to the Southernmost part of Myanmar
08:03	Am	News
08:26	Am	Irrawaddy Dolphin (Part- II)
08:39	Am	Yangon Markets: Da Nyin Gone Market
08:48	Am	Talking Shwe Thway (Children Journal)
09:03	Am	News
09:26	Am	Travelogue: To the coastal region (Myeik — Kawthoung) (Part-1)
09:51	Am	Lines & Wash Painting
10:03	Am	News
10:25	Am	Distinguished Myanmar Ladies "Tin Moe Lwin"
10:34	Am	Adventurous Young Photographer
10:54	Am	The Storytellers

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

Prime Time

07:03	Pm	News
07:25	Pm	Travelogue: A Tour in Korea (Part-5)
07:42	Pm	Sticky Shan Snack
07:48	Pm	Today Myanmar: Drone & RC Plane Technology
08:03	Pm	News
08:26	Pm	"Myanmar Music Icon" Ko Nay Win, Creator of Myanmar Own Tune Songs (Episode-2)
08:54	Pm	Now in Yangon

(09:00 Pm ~ 11:00 Pm) - Today Repeat (09:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)
(11:00 Pm ~ 03:00 Am) - Saturday Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)
(03:00 Am ~ 07:00 Am) - Today Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)

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

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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Colombia reach Copa semis after shootout win over Peru

EAST RUTHERFORD, (NJ) — Colombia beat Peru 4-2 in a penalty shootout on Friday to progress to the semi-finals of the Copa America after the two sides played to a dull scoreless draw in New Jersey.

Both teams scored their first two kicks in the shootout but while substitutes Dayro Moreno and Sebastian Perez scored Colombia's third and fourth, Miguel Trauco and Christian Cueva missed for Peru.

The result, which came after a dour 0-0 draw that was short on excitement for the 80,000 fans, takes Colombia through to a semi-final date against either Mexico or Chile in Chicago next Wednesday.

"It was a very intense game," said Colombian goalkeeper David Ospina, who saved Trauco's kick with his legs.

"This team have played well, we have a great staff and now we need to enjoy the moment before thinking about what's next.

"You need to be calm at these moments. This stadium is filled with Colombians and they enjoyed it. So now we need to enjoy it." Neither side could dominate a game that had 30 fouls but Colombia came closest to scoring through James Rodriguez, who strode forward from midfield in the first half before hitting the post with a shot from 25 yards.

Colombia also had an appeal for a penalty ignored after 53 minutes when Carlos Bacca was bundled over in the box by Renato Tapia. Peru almost broke the deadlock in the dying seconds but Ospina tipped over a powerful header from Christian Ramos.

Peru defender Alberto Rodrigues and Colombia forward Carlos Bacca battle for the ball in the 2016 Copa America Centenario soccer tournament. PHOTO: REUTERS

The other two semi-finalists will be decided on Saturday when Argentina face Venezuela in Foxborough and Chile take on Mexico in Santa Clara.

The winner of the first game will face the United States in Houston on Tuesday.—*Reuters*

Morata double guides impressive Spain into last 16

NICE — Holders Spain became the first team to score more than two goals in a game at Euro 2016, beating Turkey 3-0 as Andres Iniesta shone again and forward Alvaro Morata answered his critics with a double.

They also achieved their first objective, which was to avoid a repeat of their dismal first round exit at the last World Cup, as they booked a place in the round of 16 with a game to spare.

Spain have won both of their games in Group D without conceding a goal and Turkey have lost theirs without scoring.

Angry Turkey coach Fatih Terim said his team made an unbelievable mistake on one goal and accused them of throwing in the towel.

His opposite number Vicente del Bosque was pleased that his side had been more clinical in the penalty area.

"It's good to have fulfilled the first objective. We played well and controlled the game virtually for the 90 minutes," he said.

"There is no point in playing well on the rest of the pitch if we can't finish."

Turkey made a reasonably positive start but fell apart after Morata, criticised for being ineffective in the 1-0 win over Croatia, and Nolito struck in quick succession before halftime.

Spain virtually walked the ball into the net for the third, Morata tapping home after Iniesta threaded one of the best passes of the tournament through a bewildered Turkish defence.

"The first 30 minutes was okay but then we conceded two goals by making some individual mistakes, one of them was unbelievable," said Terim.

"Our national team threw in the towel, I have never accepted this and I will never accept it. I am deeply upset," he added. —*Reuters*

Czechs salvage 2-2 draw with Croatia after crowd trouble

ST ETIENNE, (France) — Czech Republic's Tomas Necid scored a last-gasp equaliser with a penalty as they drew 2-2 with Croatia on Friday in a dramatic Euro 2016 game that was interrupted for several minutes after flares were thrown on the pitch.

Trailing 2-0 with 15 minutes left, the Czechs looked headed towards a second Group D defeat with Croatia on track for a last 16 spot after goals by Ivan Perisic and Ivan Rakitic.

But a fine 76th minute glancing header from fellow substitute Milan Skoda cut the deficit before trouble broke out as flares rained down and Croatia fans fought each other.

After the mayhem, a handball by Croatia's Domagoj Vida left Necid, who had come on only three minutes earlier, to coolly put away his spot kick to level the scores.

"I told my players at halftime that if they did not feel like playing we should not have come here," Czech coach Pavel Vrba said. "After the break it was much better. Now we have our fate in our hands."

The Croats, on four points from two matches, have themselves and their fans to blame after a largely one-sided encounter, as they appeared distracted by the disturbances at the end.

Czech Republic's Tomas Necid celebrates after scoring a penalty goal during EURO 2016 at Stade Geoffroy-Guichard in Saint-Etienne, France, on 17 June 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

"Many Croatian patriots are ashamed in front of all of Europe, including our players who wear the shirt with so much pride and passion," said Croatia coach Ante Cacic. "We played a good match and dominated. We had many chances but credit to the Czechs who made the most of their chances."

The Czechs earned their first point to stay alive in a group that also includes European champions Spain, who beat the Czechs 1-0 in their first game and were facing Turkey later on Friday with their opponents having lost 1-0 to Croatia in their opener.

The Czechs struggled for most of Friday's match, dropping deep as the Croats, with captain Darijo Srna in the lineup after his father's funeral, immediately taking control.

Srna, in tears when the national anthem played, managed to get his emotions under control as he implemented his side's gameplan which stifled the Czechs for most of the game.

Croatia threatened early on through Perisic who wasted an opportunity, but he quickly made amends for his miss, pouncing on a Czech error and beating goalkeeper Petr Cech with a well-placed low drive into the far corner in the 37th minute.

Croatia, promised beers by Cacic if they won, were soon rewarded again with Rakitic slipping into the box and timing his chip perfectly to beat Cech and make it 2-0.

However, instead of finishing off the game by finishing any of several more good chances, they allowed their opponents to stage a comeback.

Croatia playmaker Luka Modric had to go off with a thigh muscle injury on the hour and that changed the balance of the game.

Skoda's header gave the Czechs a glimmer of hope before the game was interrupted as flares and other objects landed on the pitch behind riot police deployed in front of the Croatia fans.

This was followed by fighting among the Croatian supporters as referee Mark Clattenburg took the players towards the centre of the pitch and consulted an official. When they game resumed Croatia were punished for a lack of concentration, conceding the penalty which led to the equaliser from Necid that keeps the Czechs' qualification hopes alive.—*Reuters*

Editorial Section — (+95) (01)8604529, Fax — (01) 8604305
gnlmdaily@gmail.com www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
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