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CROSS-BORDER SUPPORT

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi holds talks with Thai PM on Myanmar migrant workers



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi shakes hands with Thai Prime Minister Prayuth Chanocha during an MoU ceremony at the government house in Bangkok. PHOTO: REUTERS

STATE Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi called for improving Myanmar migrant workers' access to education and healthcare services in Thailand during her talks with Thai Prime Minister Retired General Prayuth Chan-ocha at the Government House of Thailand yesterday.

In his response the Thai Prime Minister said that measures will be taken to give Myanmar migrant workers the rights to equal treatment as Thai workers, saying that 500 million Bahts have been allocated to all migrant workers to access education and 500 million Bahts for healthcare services.

In her speech the State Counsellor requested the Thai Prime Minister to allow Myanmar migrant workers to work legally in

Thailand as soon as possible and to protect Myanmar migrants working on fishing boats against human trafficking and torture by local authorities.

During the talks, the State Counsellor promised faster implementation of boundary demarcation between the territories of the two countries, citing that a boundary allows the two countries to share, not become more separate.

She stressed the need for the two governments to underscore bilateral friendship and bilateral negotiations to address problems.

In his address, the Thai Prime Minister said that a hotline and applications for migrant workers will be set up to help them seek help in the face of difficulties and operators who understand Myan-

Improving Myanmar migrant workers' access to education and healthcare services in Thailand.

mar language will be appointed.

The two governments will work together on the return of refugees to their homes from camps and transportation is set to commence following the creation of employment, social and healthcare conditions for returnees, he added.

The Thai PM stressed the need for cooperation between the two governments as well as CSOs

for the promotion of bilateral trade including border trade.

During the talks the two representatives also discussed matters relating to the implementation of the Dawei deep-sea port, special economic zone projects and further cooperation between the two nations in accordance with the ASEAN framework.

Next, the State Counsellor and the Thai Prime Minister witnessed the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding on Labour Cooperation, an Agreement on Cooperation in the Employment of Workers by Union Minister for Labour, Immigration and Population U Thein Swe and Thai Labour Minister General Sirichai Distakul and a Transboundary Agreement by the Union Minister and Thai

Foreign Affairs Minister Mr. Don Pramudwinai. The MoU and agreements will enable the two countries to promote cooperation in labour affairs, thereby contributing towards ensuring better conditions for Myanmar migrant workers in Thailand.

After the signing ceremony, the State Counsellor and the Thai PM held a joint press conference.

The Thai Prime Minister made his first two-day visit to Myanmar in October 2014.

Among Myanmar's major international trading partners, Thailand is the Myanmar's second largest with a total bilateral trade volume of US\$4.5 billion for the 2015-16 FY and \$5.7 billion for the 2014-2015 FY.—*Myanmar News Agency*

President U Htin Kyaw receives World Bank delegation

PRESIDENT U Htin Kyaw received Ms. Sri Mulyani Indrawati, World Bank's Managing Director and Chief Operating Officer, and party at a hall of the Presidential Palace in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the meeting the President exchanged views with the World Bank's Managing Direc-

tor and Chief Operating Officer on ongoing projects implemented by the World Bank in Myanmar and the global lender's technical assistance to the country's agriculture and statistical sectors.

Also present at the call were Union Ministers U Kyaw Tint Swe and Dr Pe Myint and officials.—*Myanmar News Agency*



President U Htin Kyaw holds talks with Ms. Sri Mulyani Indrawati. PHOTO: MNA

Serve the country and its people straightforwardly: Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker



Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U Win Myint speaking to MPs of Ayeyawady Region. PHOTO: MNA

PYITHU Hluttaw Speaker U Win Myint called on parliamentarians to serve the country and its people straightforwardly at a meeting in Patheingyi, Ayeyawady Region yesterday.

In his address, the speaker stressed the need to properly heal

the sufferings of the people, suggesting that lawmakers abstain from too much enjoyment of their powers and privileges.

He emphasised the need to follow and respect Hluttaw laws, rules, regulations and existing laws by lawmakers, making a call

to ensure that there is no legislative interference in the executive and judiciary branches.

The meeting was attended by Pyithu Hluttaw, Amyotha Hluttaw and Region Hluttaw representative of Ayeyawady Region.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Electoral tribunal degazettes independent MP of Kachin State for election offence

THE electoral tribunal under the Union Election Commission has reached a verdict to degazette U Sakhon Tein Yein as an independent representative of the Amyotha Hluttaw.

The tribunal announced his dismissal yesterday, saying that the representative of Kachin State was found guilty of an election offence.

U Sakhon Tein Yein, leader of Kachin State Special Region-1, was removed from his position on account of the intimidation of rival candidates during his electioneering last year.

The Union Election Commission was presented with an election petition filed by a number of candidates, including a candidate of the National League for Democracy, who lost the 2015 Election.

According to the complaints filed to the Union Election Commission, the soldier-turned-politician U Sakhon Tein Yein disturbed candidates from other parties including the ruling party with their election campaigns.

He formally belonged to New Democratic Army (Kachin) (NDA) and acted as their com-

mander. The NDA was later converted into a border guard force.

Among the petitioners were U Yaw Nar, an independent election candidate in Kachin State, and a resident named U San Wai Khaung Lwam.

As last year's election runner-up to U Sakhon Tein Yein, U Yaw Nar will be a replacement for him.

The tribunal heard the case for seven days, with a UEC official saying that an appeal could be lodged within 14 days under the Union Election Commission Law.—*Thein Ko Lwin*

Union Information Minister holds talks with BNI on ethnic media development

UNION Minister for Information Dr Pe Myint received Daw Nann Phaw Gay, executive director of the Burma News International (BNI), and party at his office in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the talks the two representatives discussed matters relating to measures to be taken for the development of ethnic media, cooperation between the Ministry of Information and ethnic media

groups in the media sector and the ministry's future programmes to support the groups in reporting.

Also present were Permanent Secretary U Tint Swe and officials.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw speaker meets World Bank Managing Director

SPEAKER of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and Amyotha Hluttaw Mahn Win Khaing Than received Managing Director and Chief Operating Officer Sri Mulyani Indrawati of the World Bank in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

The Speaker held talks with the World Bank's Managing Director and Chief Operating Officer on the global lender's assistance and support for parliamentary development in Myanmar.—*Myanmar News Agency*



Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than welcomes Ms. Sri Mulyani Indrawati in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

Yanghee Lee visits correctional facilities in Kachin

UNITED Nations Special Rapporteur to Myanmar Ms Yanghee Lee expressed her excitement at the prospect of the 21st Century Panglong Peace Conference in a meeting with the Kachin State government in Myitkyina yesterday.

She also pledged closer cooperation with the local government for regional development.

The chief minister of Kachin State promised to cooperate in the promotion of human rights, saying that the success of the conference would help solve human rights issues. The UN special rapporteur also visited correctional facilities and shelters for internally displaced persons where she met with the victims of armed conflict.—*Kachin State IPRD*



Ms Yanghee Lee visits the correctional department in Myitkyina. PHOTO: KACHIN STATE IPRD

Myanmar Gems Emporium kicks off with five-fold jump in deposit rate for foreign buyers



Vice President U Henry Van Thio visits the 53rd Myanmar Gems Emporium in the Mani Yadana Jade Hall in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

FOREIGN merchants have to deposit 50,000 Euros in order to take part in the 53rd Myanmar Gems Emporium that kicked off yesterday, according to the Ministry of Mines.

The deposit rate for foreign traders has been increased five-fold for the 53rd emporium from the previous 10,000 Euro deposit required for the previous event.

The deposit rate has been raised to help avoid price manipulation and to make sure sales prices

are fair for traders during the sales according to Director-General U Win Htein of the ministry.

Despite higher prices being offered in the previous emporia, no payments were made by foreign buyers, he added.

According to the director-general, sales at a previous emporium touched one million Euros. However, the emporium lost more than 3 million Euros as deals were broken due to buyers failing to complete their purchases.

The 53rd Myanmar Gems Emporium was opened in the Mani Yadana Jade Hall in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday in the presence of Vice President U Henry Van Thio accompanied by Union Ministers Lt-Gen Kyaw Swe and U Ohn Maung.

The Vice President and party observed pearl displays on the ground floor of the hall and preparations for the tender process and sale by auction as well as gems shops.

The gems emporium scheduled to come to an end on 6 July with a total of 6,939 lots of jade, gems and pearls going on sale.

Of 6,062 jade lots, 5,896 with reserve prices of 4,000 to 200,000 Euros per item will be sold through the open tender system while 166 will be sold at the reserve price of 200,001 Euros or more per item at auction.

Of 512 lots of gems, 353 are being sold at a reserve price of 500 to 20,000 Euros and will go

on sale through an open tender bid while 159 lots with reserve price of 20,001 and above will be sold by auction.

The ministry has stated that it is planning to take action against mining companies that fail to follow environmental regulations abolishing their licenses. New, blocks for gem mining will be allowed when the formulation of environmental conservation measures are completed.— *Thein Ko Lwin with Myanmar News Agency*



Merchants appraise a jade stone at the 53rd Myanmar Gems Emporium in the Mani Yadana Jade Hall in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: AUNG SHINE OO

CBOs to form Minerals Extraction Monitoring Network

THE Myanmar Minerals Extraction Monitoring Network was formed with 35 Community Based Organizations (CBOs), during a discussion forum held in Myitkyina, Kachin State, that focused on mineral extraction issues and traditional customary land rights.

The discussion forum was held in the Kachin State capital between June 20-22 and was attended by 69 individuals from groups opposed to mineral extraction from Kachin, Kayah, Chin, Ta'ang, Mon, Rakhine and Shan ethnic groups, together with farmer networks and CBOs.

"Networks will make a concerted effort to reveal grievances caused by mineral extraction projects and use such evidence to encourage [action to be taken] in Hluttaw and abroad.

We've [complied] complaints of citizens suffering from gold mining activities being conducted in the eastern Shan State district of Tachileik. We're going to expose this suffering [through our network]." said Sai Kae Siang, a spokesperson of the Myanmar Mineral Extraction Monitoring Network.

The network has called for the establishment of an independent inquiry commission to investigate existing mineral extraction projects across the country. It would be responsible for presenting evidence of grievances caused by mineral extraction to the President's Office and the Hluttaw over a two year period in parallel to on-going inquiries, with the aims of the commission to bring fair and effective justice to citizens injured – and the families of

those who have lost their lives – from mineral projects; to terminate current signed contracts for the extraction of minerals and to mitigate new binding agreements from being made.

Furthermore, a statement has been issued, paying special attention to suggestions from local residents, which calls for proper compensation to be paid for losses incurred because of mineral projects, such as to land and housing; full responsibility to be taken in arranging livelihoods, education and health of citizens forcibly relocated; entitlement for regional government to receive the profits from mineral extraction projects within a federal system; together with eligibility over administration and decision making.—*Myit-makha News Agency*

400 workers to be employed at Thai electric plant

A contract to employ 400 Myanmar workers for a Thai electric plant was signed with the employer at Dagon (North) Labor office on 21 June. Shwepyinyein Oversea Recruitment Agency signed the deal that is a MoU between Myanmar and Thailand.

"The workers received prior training about their rights and the rules which they must

abide by, said Daw Moh Moh Thwin," divisional head of Yangon region's department of labour.

Workers have to pay an advance service charge of Ks100,000 (US\$84) to the recruitment agency and the advanced payment will be reimbursed after three months. They will be paid Bahts 300 (US\$8.5) for eight working hours a day.—200

Three states ink MoU on implementation of LIMEC

AN agreement to implement a Luangprabang-Indochina-Mawlamyine Economic Corridor (LIMEC) was signed among Thailand, Laos and Myanmar Thursday at Sukhothai in Thailand, according to Mon State Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI).

"After singing the new memorandum of understanding, the participants discussed further collaboration in tourism, education, health and trade sectors among the neighboring countries during the three-day meeting," said U Kyaw Win from the state's CCI.

Under the MoU, the three nations will expand cooperation in tourism businesses for the first phase; the following steps include exchange of commodity and other development programmes. The project implementers will draw tour plans

that will cover significant places of the three countries, including Kyaikhtiyo Pagoda in Mon State.

U Kan Myint, assistant director of the Directorate of Hotels and Tourism (Mon State), said his view is that the new project is expected to bring more economic development to the region.

"We have been trying to boost the country's tourism industry. As part of our efforts, adequate hotel facilities have been prepared for visitors," said U Chan Tun, chair of the state's Hotel Entrepreneurs Association. According to the official figures released by the Hotels and Tourism Ministry, nearly 19 million foreigners visited Mon State last year 18m of whom went to the country's famous Kyaikhtiyo Pagoda, or known abroad as 'Golden Rock.'—YCDC

Military cemeteries in Yangon to ban picnickers, merrymakers, revelers

MILITARY cemeteries in Yangon will prohibit picnickers, merrymakers and revelers from visiting. Legal action will be taken against those who do not follow the rules of military cemetery areas, said an official from the military cemetery.

Relatives of the fallen soldiers of the Second World War visit the cemeteries to pay their respects to the fallen. This being so, we do not allow people to date, sing, play the guitar and make noises within the cemetery. It can affect the national image of our country, said U Thet Mon who is in charge of the military cemetery.

We have put the warning signs inside the cemetery. We will take legal action against those who do not follow the rules. We will not allow TV/video shooting except for docu-



A military cemetery in Yangon being seen. PHOTO: CITY NEWS

mentaries.

There are more than one thousand foreigners visiting military cemeteries every month. Most of the visitors are from England and Australia. There are also about 300 local visitors visiting daily, said an official.

There are three military

cemeteries in Myanmar which are under the supervision of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. They are located in Htauk Kyant, Thanbyuzayat and Yangon. Commission member countries donate funds to the military cemeteries monthly. —Ohnmar Soe (City News)

Crime NEWS

Yaba tablets seized in Nawngkhio and Loilem

A LOCAL police squad from Lashio seized yaba pills from four passengers near the Oriental toll gate, Nawngkhio entrance gate, on Wednesday.

Acting on a tip-off, police searched a vehicle belonging to the Shwe Lun Pyan bus line and discovered 48,750 yaba pills on four passengers named Aung Thu, Sai Pi, Sai Mon and Ma Gaung Say.

Similarly, a combined investigation team comprising officers and staff from Loilem police station searched a vehicle in Pan Khaukt Woe village, Loilem township and discovered 6,200 yaba pills.

Police from Lashio station seized 600 yaba pills when searching one Aye Thidar Soe on board a passenger bus belonging to the Nam Kham Mahn bus line near the Oriental toll



Yaba tablets seized in Nawngkhio and Loilem. PHOTO: MPF

gate, Nawngkhio entrance gate. Police have filed charges against all suspects under the Narcotic

Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.—Myanmar Police Force



The 12-wheel vehicle being seen overturned in Pyu township. PHOTO: MYINT OO (PYU)

Vehicle overturns in Pyu

A 12-wheel vehicle overturned near Thardu Kan village, Pyu township, Bago region on Thursday. The vehicle, carrying chicken feed, was coming from Yangon and being driven by one Ye Min Thet, 28, when the vehicle left the road and overturned after the driver lost control. The police have opened an investigation and have filed charges against the driver.—Myint Oo (Pyu)

Man charged with two mobile phones theft

THE police have filed a lawsuit against a man on suspicion of stealing two mobile phones and money from Sandar mobile phone store at Paleik village, Sintgaing township on 22 June.

According to the investigation, Chan Myay Aung, 24, from Pantanaw township stole two mobile phones and Ks 50,000 and left for Yangon with Shwe Yee Phoo Pwint express bus. Then, the shop owner in-

formed the matter to a police station nearby.

The police was searching the vehicle and found Chan Myay Aung on board with the vehicle which belongs to Shwe Yee Phoo Pwint bus line on Thigon highway toll gate. The police seized two mobile phones and Ks 14,000 from his pocket. The local police have filed a lawsuit against him.—Than Oo

Yaba seized in Mandalay

A LOCAL anti-drug squad in Mandalay seized yaba from two suspects walking on the road in Aungmyaythazan township on Thursday.

Acting on a tip-off police discovered yaba weighing 256 grams on Daw Thin and Min Htut who were walking on the

road. When interrogated, Min Htut said that 2,600 yaba pills had been purchased from one U Thein Maung.

Police have filed charges against the three suspects under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.—Tin Maung

Police arrested a man for murder in Yedashe

POLICE have filed charges against a man for the murder of one Jam Lay alias ZawZaw in Phayagon village, Yedashe township, Bago region on Monday.

According to an investigation, Ko Thurein reported that his cousin's brother, Jam Lay alias Zaw Zaw, 25, went

to Phayagon village to demand the repayment of a debt from one Thein Min Soe, 29. When his brother arrived at Thein Min Soe's home the two had a quarrel over the loan. Thein Min Soe became angry and attacked Jam Lay with a knife resulting in his death. Police have filed charges.—Ko Lwin (Swar)

LOCAL Business

Imported tilapia fingerlings to be distributed from Hlawga breeding station

IMPORTED tilapia fingerlings, commonly known as young fish, will be farmed at Hlawga breeding station. The fish will be distributed mainly to villages and also sold to commercial breeders, said Daw Toe Nanda Tin from Myanmar Fishery Federation (MFF).

City Star Trading Company and My Fish will import the young Tilapia.

“City Star Trading Company has planned to import these fish since March. Importation will be

conducted as activity of the department in cooperation with My Fish,” said U Tun Win Myint, the divisional head of the Fisheries Department. Tilapia fish farming and processing aims to send tilapia products to domestic market and foreign markets. Private breeders would also like to cooperate with MFF regarding the import. The 14th generation tilapia fish will be bred not only at Hlawga station but also at other hatcheries, she added.—200

Singapore Co to sell foodstuff and general merchandise

SINGAPORE Myanmar Investco (SMI) has signed a deal with a local firm named the Royal Golden Sky(RGS) Company to provide merchandising, management and consultancy services for retail spaces at Yangon International Airport.

The Singapore-listed firm’s wholly-owned subsidiary, SMI Retail Pte Ltd entered into an agreement covering retail and F&B outlets for an initial period of five years. There’s a provision of extending the deal for a further amount of time by selling ten international brands in Yangon, beginning from July of this year.

According to the deal, SMI Retail will appoint RGS as its exclusive distributor of merchandise for sales at Yangon International Airport while it will provide management and consultancy service to RGS for the operation.

With growing number of

travelers, Myanmar has seen an increase in flight numbers in the last three years, overstretching the small Yangon International Airport. The new international terminal is expected to allow the airport to receive more than triple its current capacity.

SMI said the operation of these duty-free shops, retail and outlets will begin from March this year and will be progressively rolled out over the next few months.

“SMI has been able to use the capabilities of its senior executives to convince Yangon International Airport authorities to allow them to provide 10 kinds of duty free, luxury and lifestyle brands,” said Mark Bedingham, president and chief executive officer of SMI.

“This will allow SMI to have full exposure to the expected rapid growth in tourism and business travel,” he said.—200

Japanese seafood businessmen eye Myanmar’s fishery sector

JAPANESE seafood businessmen are taking interest in Myanmar’s fishery sector to investment in Myanmar, according to Myanmar Fishery Federation (MFF).

Japanese businessmen offered to invest in Myanmar’s fishery sector for the long-term, they intend to help prevent fish from extinction, providing young fish and technical assistance.

Japan, Viet Nam and Indonesia have also proposed to investment in Myanmar’s fishery sector cooperating with Myanmar’s in fish farms.

Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries is also

encouraging those who are engaged in fish cross-breeding, fish farming, prawn farming, feedstuff businesses and keeping hatcheries in the villages to join potential exporters.

“The problem with Japanese investment is that Myanmar lacks basic requirements in manufacturing,” said U Tun Tun, a fish farmer.

Various fish export in 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 FY earned Ks777bn (US\$653m) and in 2013-2014 exports were Ks-633bn (US\$536m). During the fiscal year 2014-2015, the various fish exports were Ks472bn (US\$400m).—Zar Zar



Agarwood trees.
PHOTO: SUPPLIED

Agarwood essential oil mills to be built in three Regions and States

THREE agarwood essential oil mills will be built in three Regions in Myanmar according to U Thaug Nyunt, the chairman of the Federation of Myanmar Turpentine, Agarwood and Honey-based Products.

The agarwood essential oil mills will be built by Korea in Taninthayi Region, Kachin

State and Shan State. The Myanmar-Korean bilateral trade promotion board held a meeting in Yangon concerning the mills, it is reported.

Permission is currently being sought for the construction of the three oil factories and upon completion of construction, agarwood grown locally will be purchased

and processed at the mills to extract essential oil.

There are over 10,000 acres of growing agarwood plantations on which about 500,000 agarwood plants are cultivated in Myanmar, it has been learned from the Federation of Myanmar Turpentine, Agarwood and Honey-based Products.—200

Offshore gas fields to produce over 600,000 million cubic feet next year

A TOTAL of 675,615 million cubic feet of natural gas is estimated to be produced next fiscal year by the four natural gas exploration projects, according to the second five-year national development plan.

Yetagun project is being operated by Petronas Co in the Andaman Sea, Shwe project by Dae-woo International Co in Bay of Bengal, Yadana offshore gas field in the Andaman Sea by Total S.A, a French energy group and Zawtika Project by Thai oil company PTTEP, the largest overseas offshore producing gas field in Gulf of Mottama.

It is estimated that those projects will produce 515,015 million cubic feet of natural gas to export neighbouring countries and another 160,600 million for local consumption this financial year.

To fulfill foreign demands, Yadana offshore gas field is expected to produce 206,225 million cubic feet of natural gas this FY while 73,365 million are planned to be manufactured by Yedagun project, 89,425 million by Zawtika project and 146,000 million by Shwe project.

The government has a plan to invite foreign oil companies to operate joint venture business in

cooperation with citizen-owned companies at both inland blocks and offshore oil and gas fields with the aim of fulfilling domestic consumption.

Plans are underway to amend the current laws, bylaws and regulations relating to oil and gas exploration in the country, according to the second five-year plan (2016-17 to 2020-21). The Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise estimated that 14,209.918 million cubic feet of natural gas are projected to be manufactured from inland blocks and 689,824.918 million from offshore fields in 2016-2017 FY.—200

City Taxi associations will be formed in Yangon

CITY Taxi associations will be founded in Yangon to ensure the security of tourists and local passengers, said U Phyo Min Thein, Yangon regional chief minister.

Currently, taxis running in Yangon are unsafe, and so city taxi company associations will

be formed to regulate taxi. Once formed drivers will be monitored by GPS tracking.

The new system aims to reduce traffic congestion and curb crimes in cars marked as taxis. The Union government is said to support the City Taxi company. Initially, the Regional govern-

ment will transform bus lines and taxi systems, he added.

All-Private Bus Lines Control Central Committee took over taxis from Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC) on 30 October, 2014. There are currently a total of 62,244 registered taxis, it is learnt.—200

Philippines' Duterte says time will come to confront Abu Sayyaf



Philippine President-elect Rodrigo Duterte speaks during a conference with businessmen in Davao city, southern Philippines on 21 June, 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

MANILA — Philippine President-elect Rodrigo Duterte on Friday the time will come when he will have to confront the al Qaeda-linked Abu Sayyaf Islamist militants in the south of the mainly Catholic country.

On Friday, Indonesia's foreign minister said a halt on coal shipments to the Philippines will re-

main until Manila can secure its waters after seven Indonesian sailors were kidnapped, the latest in a string of abductions.

"There will be a time that I will have to confront the Abu Sayyaf," Duterte said during after meeting a Filipino woman who was freed after nine months of captivity. "The kidnapping must stop."—Reuters

Savage storm pummels eastern China, killing 98

BEIJING — A violent storm in eastern China that packed gale-force winds and hail killed 98 people and injured hundreds as it flattened power lines, overturned cars and ripped roofs off houses in Jiangsu province.

The storm, which included a tornado, struck mid-afternoon on Thursday near Yancheng city, a few hours' drive north of China's commercial capital Shanghai, the Ministry of Civil Affairs said.

Winds reached 125 kph (78 mph) and battered several townships in Funing county, the official Xinhua news agency said.

"I heard the gales and ran upstairs to shut the windows," Funing resident Xie Litian, 62, told Xinhua.

"I had hardly reached the top of the stairs when I heard a boom and saw the entire wall with the windows on it torn away." When the storm subsided and Xie escaped, all the neighboring houses were gone. It was like the end of the world," Xie said.

The latest death toll stood at 98, with another 800 people injured, state-run China National Radio re-

ported on its website on Friday, citing a provincial meeting on the disaster. State media earlier reported 78 deaths and about 500 people injured.

Pictures posted online showed injured people lying amid destroyed houses, overturned cars, split tree trunks and broken power lines.

Chinese President Xi Jinping, currently visiting Uzbekistan, called for a

comprehensive rescue effort, ordering China's cabinet to send a team to oversee relief efforts, Xinhua reported. Premier Li Keqiang ordered authorities to ramp up search and rescue work and medical treatment for the injured, it reported.

Xinhua earlier reported that about 200 people had serious injuries. Power and communications were down in some areas and emergency supplies, including 1,000

tents, had been rushed to the scene, the civil affairs ministry said in a statement.

GCL System Integration Technology Co Ltd, a \$5.22 billion market cap solar cell module maker, said a 40,000 square meter factory it part-owned had collapsed due to the tornado. Firefighters were doing emergency rescue work on the scene and the company was assessing the extent of the damage.—Reuters



A man takes out his belongings from his damaged house after a tornado hit Funing on Thursday, in Yancheng, Jiangsu Province, on 24 June, 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

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Nepal bans nationals from working in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Libya

KATHMANDU — Nepal on Thursday decided to bar Nepali nationals from going to war-torn countries among others for employment, a government spokesman said.

A meeting of the Nepalese Council of Ministers made a decision to bar its nationals from going to Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria and Libya, Minister for Information and Communica-

tions Sherdhan Rai told media.

The Nepalese government's decision has come two days after 13 Nepali nationals working with the Canadian Embassy were killed in a suicide bomb in the Afghan Capital Kabul. Seven Nepali nationals were also injured in the barbaric terrorist attack which was taken responsibility by Taliban insurgents.

Earlier in 2011, Nepal partially lifted the ban on its nationals from working in Afghanistan saying that workers would be allowed to work for selected employers including the United Nations, the NATO and Western diplomatic missions.

Monday's tragic incident in Afghanistan is said to be the biggest tragedy surrounding Nepali migrant

workers since the killing of 12 Nepali migrant workers in Iraq in 2004.

At least 1,213 Nepali nationals have acquired work permit from the Nepalese government to work in Afghanistan in the first 10 months. Media reports suggest that approximately 20,000 Nepali nationals are currently working in various places of Afghanistan.—Xinhua

South Korea says to place consistent sanctions, pressures on DPRK's nuke programme

SEOUL — South Korea's foreign ministry said on Friday that the country will place consistent sanctions and pressures on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)'s nuclear programme to make it give up its nuclear ambitions.

The foreign ministry submitted a report to the parliamentary committee for foreign affairs and unification, saying Seoul will consistently carry out anti-DPRK sanctions for a sufficient period of time un-

til the sanctions show effectiveness.

The ministry said the country will encourage the implementation of UN Security Council resolutions and the strengthening of independent sanctions against the DPRK of each country, while urging the international community to put pressures on Pyongyang.

The DPRK conducted its fourth nuclear test on 6 January, followed by a launch on 7 February of a long-range rocket launch,

which was condemned as a disguised test of ballistic missile technology.

Since then, Pyongyang has test-fired Rodong ballistic missiles twice during the first half of this year, test-launching Musudan intermediate-range ballistic missiles six times. The ministry said the DPRK conducted 19 provocations in the first half alone.

The DPRK's KCNA news agency reported Thursday that its sixth test-launch of a surface-to-sur-

face strategic ballistic missile Hwasong-10 has succeeded as it flew about 400 km after flying to the maximum altitude of 1,413.6 km along the planned flight orbit.

The Seoul ministry said that if Pyongyang conducts another provocation, including the fifth nuclear test, the country will push for swift, stern actions against it, including new UN Security Council sanctions and each country's additional sanctions.—Xinhua

Japan's ruling coalition headed for hefty win in upper house poll — surveys

TOKYO — Japan's ruling bloc is headed for a hefty win in a July 10 upper house election, and along with like-minded allies could even get enough seats to open the path to revising the post-war, pacifist constitution for the first time, surveys showed on Friday.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) also has a shot at the 57 seats needed to obtain a majority on its own for the first time since losing control of the chamber in 1989, the *Nikkei business daily* and other newspapers said.

Abe is casting the election for half the seats in the 242-member chamber as a referendum on his decision to delay a planned hike in an unpopular sales tax and his "Abenomics" recipe of hyper-easy monetary policy, spending and reform, amid growing

doubts whether the strategy is working.

Abe's coalition is in no danger of losing power in the election but needs a solid victory to keep his party's lawmakers in line and perhaps stay on another three years after his tenure as LDP president ends in 2018.

The premier has played down his goal of revising the constitution, which conservatives see as a humiliating symbol of Japan's World War II defeat but which admirers consider the source of the country's peace and democracy.

A Mainichi newspaper poll showed 45 per cent opposed revision versus 36 per cent in favour.

The opposition Democratic Party and three small parties, backed by grassroots groups, are trying to keep the ruling camp and its allies from winning the



A staff member of Japan's ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) posts a poster for the 10 July upper house election with the image of Shinzo Abe, Japan's Prime Minister and leader of the LDP, and other candidates' posters at the LDP headquarters in Tokyo, Japan, on 22 June, 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

two-thirds needed to begin the process of revising the constitution. Revision requires a two-thirds majority in the upper house and the lower chamber, where the ruling bloc already has such a "super majority", and a majority in a public referendum.

The LDP and its junior part-

ner, the Komeito party, were on track to exceed their target of 61 seats, or a majority of those up for grabs, the *Nikkei* said. The Democrats, who have struggled to regain trust after a rocky 2009-2012 rule, looked likely to win around 30 seats, the surveys suggested.

Other newspapers' polls

showed similar results, although up to 35 per cent of voters were undecided. "If the opposition is going to do well, it will have to depend on those voters whom the polls cannot count — the undecided, the unaffiliated, etc.," said Chuo University political scientist Steven Reed.—*Reuters*

Indonesia says coal on hold for Philippines after seven sailors abducted

JAKARTA/MANILA —

Indonesia's foreign minister said on Friday a halt on coal shipments to the Philippines will remain until Manila can secure its waters after seven Indonesian sailors were kidnapped, the latest in a string of abductions.

Philippine authorities could not immediately confirm the hostage-taking but said a Filipino woman held since September was freed on Friday by Abu Sayyaf, an Islamist militant group that has amassed tens of millions of dollars from kidnappings for ransom.

It was unclear whether the sailors were taken by Abu Sayyaf, which has beheaded two Canadian nationals in recent weeks after ransom deadlines passed. The group is still holding Malaysian seamen and Japanese, Dutch and Norwegians.

Indonesia is concerned that piracy in the Sulu Sea area, a major sea traffic corridor for the world's top thermal coal exporter, could reach levels previously seen in Somalia.

"The moratorium on coal exports to the Philippines will be extended until there is a guarantee for security from the Philippines government," Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi told reporters.

Indonesia supplies 70 per cent of the Philippines' coal import needs, which Indonesian data shows stood at about 15 million tonnes, worth around \$800 million, last year.

Analysts say \$40 billion worth of cargo passes through those waters a year, including supertankers from the Indian Ocean that cannot use the crowded Malacca Strait.



Indonesia's Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi makes a statement at the Foreign Ministry in Jakarta, Indonesia on 21 March, 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Marsudi said earlier the seven Indonesians were kidnapped by two different armed groups in attacks on a tugboat towing a coal-carrying barge and that the government would "try all options to free the hostages".

Fourteen Indonesians were abducted in two separate assaults on tugboats during March and April but were freed in May. In April, the Indonesian navy instructed all commercial vessels to avoid piracy-prone waters near the southern Philippines.

Filipino captive Marites Flor was released at dawn on Friday near the house of the governor of the southern island of Jolo and was undergoing a medical checkup at an army hospital, the army said. She was abducted from a resort in September along with Canadian Robert Hall, who was beheaded on 13 June.

There was no information on why she was freed or if a ransom had been paid.

"She is physically okay," said

Major Filemon Tan, a spokesman for the military's Western Mindanao Command.

Tan said troops were checking reports of the seven Indonesians being kidnapped.

Alarmed at the frequency of attacks, port authorities in some areas of Indonesia, particularly Kalimantan on the island of Borneo, have stopped issuing permits to ships taking coal to the southern Philippines.

Philippine officials said the government was working to address piracy and coal importers could tap other suppliers, which would push up costs for consumers. "There will be additional transportation costs if the coal will come from Australia or Russia so that means additional costs," said Rino Abad from the Philippine department of energy. The rise of sea hijackings prompted Indonesia, the Philippines and Malaysia to agree to hold coordinated patrols in future to secure the region's busy waterways.—*Reuters*

Voter trust in Australian political system at 20-year low ahead of election: research

CANBERRA — More Australians than ever before are finding it hard to trust their politicians and the political system, results of a survey released on Friday have shown.

Just eight days before Australians head to the polls for the 2 July federal election, a University of Canberra survey has found that disenchantment within the greater Australian population is at 20-year highs, with only 42 per cent of Australians happy with the way democracy was working in their country.

The survey also found that trust in politicians was at its lowest point since the mid-1990s, and lead researcher Mark Evans, who polled voters in the seat of Indi, said there was a clear disconnect between the major parties and Aussie voters.

"What we have picked up more broadly, is that dissatisfaction runs high and the current election doesn't seem to have boosted people's opinions either," Evans told the Australian

Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) on Friday.

"The evidence from Indi, and nationally for that matter, is that the key question for the majority of Australians come election time is who do you trust to run the country?"

"For many Australians, political parties are simply failing to capture the political imagination."

Evans said it was little wonder the smaller parties and independents were experiencing record support levels heading into the 2 July election.

"This provides the space for either independents or minority parties to build alternative agendas around the politics of trust or a wake-up call to the main parties to reconnect with the citizens," he said. The survey covered more than 1,400 voters and was undertaken not to determine political agenda, Evans said, rather, it was aimed at gauging an accurate snapshot of the current political sentiment.—*Xinhua*

Malaysia says it doesn't expect major economic impact from Brexit

KUALA LUMPUR — Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak said on Friday he did not expect a major impact on the Malaysian economy from Britain's decision to leave the European Union.

Najib said Malaysia's economic exposure to Britain only accounted for about one per cent

of its total trade.

"We should increase this, and there may be an opportunity to do so now if the UK reaches out to strategically important nations beyond the EU," he said, adding that he was sad to see Prime Minister David Cameron step down.—*Reuters*

Opinion

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The benefits of mutual trust

Kyaw Thura

MORE than two decades ago, the people used to pick up the remote control either to switch channels or turn off the television when the news came on. In addition, the state-run dailies were not popular among readers. People would buy newspapers just for advertisements and obituary notices, without bothering to read the whole paper.

With the democratically elected civilian government in office, this trend has now been reversed. More and more people have taken some interest in the news, especially the parliamentary news channel, while there has been a surge of subscribers to the state-run dailies. This signals that there is a certain level of mutual trust between the people and the government.

In this respect, both the members of society and decision makers at all levels must be held accountable for national development. It is absolutely vital that we must all strive to become trustworthy individuals who are willing to further promote this mutual trust. We must be completely sincere enough to be worthy of trust. We must be diligent enough to be worthy of reliability. We must be kind-hearted enough to be worthy of respect and admiration. Only then will we be able to enjoy the fruits of peace, stability and prosperity across the country.

The Legend and archaeology of Mei La Mu Pagoda

Maha Saddhamma Jotika dhaja
Sithu Dr. Khin Maung Nyunt

A sprawling metropolitan city of Yangon is amazingly surrounded by a multitude of old and new religious monuments in and around. In North Okkalapa Town, there sits one religious monument which attracts pilgrims and tourists near and far, in the booming tourism industry of the country.

In its vast precincts, pagodas and buildings bear modernity in all aspects but the legend, archaeology, and history of the discovery of the pagoda take you back far into the remote past and beyond.

Where the present Mei La Mu Pagoda stands, there used to be an old ruined pagoda with a big Nabe tree growing right in its centre. This strange phenomenon inspired some pious passersby to pay homage to it. One of them was a lady named Daw Saw Nyunt Yee who paid frequent visits to this ruined pagoda which at that time was commonly called "Hpaya Ngote Toh" (အမှတ်တံဆိပ်) Short Stump Pagoda. During one of her visits in 1959, her younger brother climbed up to the summit of the ruined pagoda, and by chance, he discovered an old casket with a statue of a young lady inside it. On examination of this discovery by the Archaeology Department it was confirmed that the statue belonged to the past 400 to 500 years and judging by the hair style, dress and jewellery, the statue lady was of high social rank.

More excavation and restoration works at the site and ruined pagoda unearthed many arti-

facts of antiquity such as Buddha Statues of different postures and gestures, images of the Celestial King Sakka Deva [Thunder god], a hermit, a Naga Serpent King, and a lady sitting on the fruit of La Mu Tree, a pagoda composed of rings of stone, super-imposed one on top of the other in the tapering design of a pagoda spire. Two rings of stone have inscribed Burmese numbers 1 and 2. The rest, each has a letter of the first fourteen letters of Burmese alphabet in order, beginning with the first letter Ka-gyi (က) and ending with the fourteenth Hta Wun Bei (ဇ). So far no expert should interpret their meaning.

However, by the strongest of coincidences, in 1958, just a year before the discovery of this stone ringed pagoda, the Government built a new satellite town of North Okkalapa, around the place where the Mei La Mu Pagoda stands. The residential quarters of this new settlement had already been named exactly like inscribed markings on the rings of stone on this pagoda. Two residential quarters named No.1 and No.2 and fourteen neighbourhoods were named after the first fourteen letters of Burmese alphabet from Ka-gyi (က) to Hta Wun Bei (ဇ). The streets of this town were given names in Pali, taken from the Jatakas, Buddha's birth stories.

About the mysterious Lady statue in the casket which was discovered on the top of Hpaya, Ngok Toh, investigation through legends and classical literature of other ancient pagodas revealed

that the Lady was identical [with the exception of her hand gesture], with the statue of Mei La Mu, just below the statue of the Celestial King Sakka Deva [Thunder god] on the edge of the upper terrace of Shwe Dagon Pagoda south west of the spire. Thus a consensus was reached that this Hpaya Ngok Toh and Shwe Dagon Pagoda must have some kind of historical association and that the lady statue in the casket was undoubtedly representative of Mei La Mu.

The Legend of Shwedagon Pagoda has it that Mei La Mu was conceived in a big fruit of La Mu Tree. La Mu and Nabe trees are some of timber trees which flourish in Myanmar mangroves in Lower Myanmar and coast lines. Out of that Immaculate Conception, a beautiful girl was born, who was adopted by a hermit named Tisa. When she grew up into an exceptionally beautiful lady, the hermit wanted to get rid of her, as it was against Viniya religious disciplines to keep a female in the hermitage. Whereupon, Sakka Deva, assuming a human handsome young man came to the hermit and asked him to marry him to the lady. Because she was born out of La Mu Fruit she became known as Mei La Mu [madam La Mu] For two reasons the hermit and the Sakka deva ar-

ranged that marriage. Firstly, to raise the social status of Lady Mei La Mu. Secondly, they foresaw that a son born of Sakka Deva and Lady Mei La Mu would become king of Okkalappa Kingdom. He would enshrine eight hair relics of Lord Gotama Buddha, brought by two merchant brothers Taphusa and Balika in the old pagoda on the summit of Singuttara Hill in which the relics of the previous three Buddhas were enshrined and King Okkalappa would thus promote Buddhism in the country. All these came about in history. To-day, on the southside of Shwedagon Pagoda is a building with Buddha Statues in it. On its facades are decorative arts and a statue of Sakka Deva holding a naked baby boy, representing father Sakka Deva and his baby son future King Okkalappa. That statue especially the naked baby has become a well known wish-fulfilling icon for those married couples who want son. They pay special offerings including gold gilding and say special prayer to get a son. When prayers are answered and wishes are fulfilled they come back with their baby sons and make more offerings to the statue of naked baby son. This belief is quite wide spread—many foreign wishers come to believe it. We

are familiar with the story of Sujata, the daughter of a wealthy man in Senagama village who came to offer concentrated milk rice to the Banyan Tree's god [Yokasoe] because her wish and prayer made to that Tree god yokasoe was fulfilled as she now got a baby boy. At that time Bodhisattha [future Buddha Gotama] was seated cross-legged meditating under that Banyan Tree. When Sujata saw him, she thought that he was tree god of that Banyan Tree, so she reverently offered her milk rice in a gold container. The Bodhisattha accepted and partook the milk rice and let go the gold container in the river.

Thus Hpaya Ngote Toh has now become Mei La Mu Pagoda of world renown. Reconstructions, development, renovation and maintenance works are constantly being carried out, with public donation of cash and kind, since 1959. Over 44 major religious monuments are found on its vast precinct. They are all painted and aglitter gold plates and glass mosaic.

Mei La Mu Pagoda is well known far and wide. It is a place of worship for pilgrims, a sight for tourists, also a haven of rest for those who want to shun the madding crowd of metropolitan city Yangon.

About the mysterious Lady statue in the casket which was discovered on the top of Hpaya, Ngote Toh, investigation through legends and classical literature of other ancient pagodas revealed that the Lady was identical [with the exception of her hand gesture], with the statue of Mei La Mu, just below the statue of the Celestial King Sakka Deva [Thunder god] on the edge of the upper terrace of Shwe Dagon Pagoda south west of the spire.

State Counsellor says Government working to turn conflict into friendship, trust and understanding



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi delivering the keynote speech at the Foreign Ministry in Bangkok.
PHOTO: REUTERS

STATE Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi met with Thai university students at the Thailand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs yesterday and gave talks at the 'Myanmar, ASEAN and the World, the way forward' forum.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi said the Myanmar government

is working hard to turn conflict into friendship, mutual trust and understanding.

She also stressed the importance of trust between conflicting groups in the country in order to achieve peace.

At the forum the state counsellor asked the students what

they want to gain from their education and what they want to give back, said a Myanmar student who attended the forum. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi held talks with Thailand's Foreign Affairs Minister Mr. Don Pramudwinai over issues related to the promotion of education. —GNLM

KOICA supports renovation to the School for Disabled Children in Mandalay

A SCHOOL for disabled children in Mandalay will be renovated soon with the assistance of the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA).

In order to improve its conditions and provide a better educational environment for children Mr. Kim Young Hyun, a World Friends Korea (WFK) Volunteer has planned the project with a given budget of \$25,700 USD. The renovation project began in December of last year and will run until July.

The donation ceremony for the project was held yesterday at the school in Mandalay in the presence of Mr. Nam Kwon Hyoung, Chief resident representative KOICA Office in Myanmar, KOICA WFK-Volunteers and related people including teachers, officials and community representatives.

The School for Disabled



Mr. Kim Young Hyun visits School for Disabled Children. PHOTO: SUPPLIED

Children, under the Department of Social Welfare was established to build up the physical and mental health of children with disabilities. In spite of its presence the school environment was said to be inadequate for effective learning and dangerous due to there being an indistinct space between the play-area and

the car parking area.

A safe play-area has been constructed and physical education facilities have been installed to provide a better learning environment for the children. Kitchen apparatuses were replaced and drainage holes were covered for the benefit and students and staff —GNLM

Renovation work to ancient Thai king's tomb to be sought in G-to-G agreement

THE Mandalay Region Government said yesterday controversial renovation of the tomb of a Thai king on the Linzin hill in Amarapura Township is to be done only after the governments of the two countries have discussed the issue.

Mandalay Region Chief Minister Dr Zaw Myint Maung said those who are carrying out renovations at the ancient ar-

chaeological place must show respect to the law as the work has been suspended since the time of the previous government.

According to researchers and archaeologists from Myanmar and Thailand, ancient Thai King Udumbara was believed to have been buried in the graveyard on the Linzin hill in Amarapura. —Aung Thant Khaing



The controversial site of the tomb of a Thai king at Linzin hill.

PHOTO: AUNG THANT KHAING

ILO to help reduce child labour in target communities under My-PECL

UNDER the Myanmar Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (My-PECL), two regions and a state have been selected to implement a new plan to reduce child labour within two years, its spokesperson said.

The new programme will be launched this year in three target areas including Dagon Seikkan Township in Yangon Region, Lubutta Township in Ayeyawady Region and Ye Township in Mon State, which has a population of more than 3,000 children working in various industries.

The new project will help children with poor backgrounds

to access free education services, livelihood support measures and increase the safety of children on their worksites.

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) pledged to offer technical support in connection with local organisations.

Action will be taken against employers who appointed children at their factories or workshops located within the country, it is reported. The My-PECL was founded in 2013 to improve the capacity of national and local stakeholders to coordinate, network and advocate for the elimination of child labour.—200

70 % of vision loss caused by preventable eye-diseases

THE population of visually impaired people blinded by preventable eye diseases has increased in the country, according to the Ministry of Health and Sports' report on elimination of avoidable blindness by 2020.

The report shows that over 70 per cent of people lost their vision because of different eye diseases which can be prevented. The majority of those people do not have eye-related knowledge and they did not receive treatment for the disease in the early stages.

According to the ministry's research, over 0.6 per cent of people have registered as severely sight impaired.

There are many causes of vision loss. Among eye-diseases, cataract, glaucoma, cornea diseases, injuries and retinal diseases are more prevalent in the country.

Doctors urge people with sight problem not to take medi-

cine without instructions from eye specialists as many people taking prescription medications do not follow their doctors' instructions.

Some people with eye problems have received free eye care offered by the health and sports ministry under its project to reduce people with sight loss. Under the programme, the project implementers also shares eye-related knowledge to rural community by various activities. According to the World Health Organisation, 285 million people are estimated to be visually impaired worldwide. Of them, 39 millions are blind and 246 have low vision. Eighty per cent of all visual impairment can be prevented or cured.

Cataracts remain the leading cause of blindness in middle- and low-income countries. About 90% of the world's visually impaired live in low-income settings.—GNLM

Britain votes to leave EU, Cameron quits as markets dive



Britain's Prime Minister David Cameron his wife Samantha walk back into 10 Downing Street after he spoke about Britain voting to leave the European Union, in London, Britain on 24 June 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

LONDON — Britain has voted to leave the European Union, forcing the resignation of Prime Minister David Cameron and dealing the biggest blow to the European project of greater unity since World War II.

Global financial markets plunged on Friday as results from a referendum showed a near 52-48 per cent split for leaving a bloc that Britain joined more than 40 years ago.

The pound fell as much as 10 per cent against the dollar to touch levels last seen in 1985, on fears the decision could hit investment in the world's fifth-largest economy, threaten London's role as a global financial capital and usher in months of political uncertainty.

World stocks headed for one of the biggest slumps on record, and billions of dollars were wiped off the value of European companies. Britain's big banks took a \$130 billion (93.46 billion pound) battering, with Lloyds and Barclays falling as much as 30 per cent at the opening of trade.

An emotional Cameron, who led the "Remain" campaign to defeat, losing the gamble he took when he called the referendum three years ago, said he would leave office by October.

"The British people have made the very clear decision to take a different path and as such I think the country requires fresh leadership to take it in this direction," he said in a televised address outside his residence.

"I do not think it would be right for me to be the captain that steers our country to its next destination," he added, appearing to choke back tears before walking back through the black door of No. 10 Downing Street with his arm around his wife Samantha.

Quitting the EU could cost Britain access to the EU's trade barrier-free single market and means it must seek new trade ac-

cords with countries around the world. The United Kingdom itself could break apart, with politicians in Scotland — where nearly two-thirds of voters wanted to stay in the EU — calling for a new vote on independence.

The EU for its part will be economically and politically damaged, facing the departure not only of its most free-market proponent but also a member with a UN Security Council veto, a powerful army and nuclear capability. In one go, the bloc will lose around a sixth of its economic output.

The result emboldened eurosceptics in other member states, with populist leaders in France and the Netherlands demanding their own referendums to leave.

The vote will initiate at least two years of divorce proceedings with the EU, the first exit by any member state. Cameron — who has been premier for six years and called the referendum in a bid to head off pressure from domestic eurosceptics — said it would be up to his successor to formally start the exit process.

His Conservative Party rival Boris Johnson, the former London mayor who became the most recognisable face of the "Leave" camp, is now widely tipped to seek his job. Johnson made no comment as he left his home to jeers from a crowd in the mainly pro-EU capital. There was euphoria among Britain's eurosceptic forces, claiming a victory over the political establishment, big business and foreign leaders including US President Barack Obama who had urged Britain to stay in.

"Dare to dream that the dawn is breaking on an independent United Kingdom," said Nigel Farage, leader of the eurosceptic UK Independence Party, describing the EU as "doomed" and "dying".

"This will be a victory for real people, a victory for ordinary peo-

ple, a victory for decent people ... Let June 23 go down in our history as our independence day."

European politicians reacted with dismay.

"It looks like a sad day for Europe and Britain," said German foreign minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier.

"Please tell me I'm still sleeping and this is all just a bad nightmare!" former Finnish Prime Minister Alexander Stubb tweeted.

The shock hits a European bloc already reeling from a euro zone debt crisis, unprecedented mass migration and confrontation with Russia over Ukraine. Anti-immigrant and anti-EU political parties have been surging across the continent, placing unprecedented pressure on the centre-left and centre-right establishment that has governed Europe for generations.

French National Front leader Marine Le Pen called for a similar referendum in France, changed her Twitter profile picture to a Union Jack and declared "Victory for freedom!"

Dutch far right leader Geert Wilders, also demanding a referendum, said: "We want to be in charge of our own country, our own money, our own borders, and our own immigration policy."

US presidential candidate Donald Trump, whose own rise has been fuelled by similar disenchantment with the political establishment, called the vote a "great thing". Britons "took back control of their country", he said in Scotland where he was opening a golf resort. Britain has always been ambivalent about its relations with the rest of post-war Europe. A firm supporter of free trade, tearing down internal economic barriers and expanding the EU to take in ex-communist eastern states, it opted out of joining the euro single currency or the Schengen border-free zone.—Reuters

NEWS IN BRIEF

US Navy mulls punishment for sailors seized by Iran

WASHINGTON — United States Navy officials are reviewing potential punishments against the American sailors who were briefly held by Iran in January and are close to a decision, a Navy official said on Thursday.

Ten US sailors, who were aboard two patrol craft, were detained by Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) on 12 January when they inadvertently entered Iranian territorial waters. They were released the next day after being held for about 15 hours.

The US military said the Americans were intercepted after the diesel engine in one of their boats developed a mechanical problem.

The official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the investigation also found the incident was caused by communication failures and not enough oversight and training. —Reuters

Three people killed in shootout in Turkish hospital: media

ANKARA — A hospital technician opened fire in a Turkish teaching hospital in the capital Ankara on Friday, killing three people and seriously wounding another, the governor's office said.

The gunman, who opened fire in a pharmacy in the complex, was captured by the police, the governor's office said in a statement. The three victims were pharmacy employees, it said.

It gave no details on the reason for the shooting, but the privately-owned Dogan news agency said it was a personal dispute. Police teams were sent to the scene and security inside the hospital has been tightened, Dogan said.—Reuters

Air Serbia airliner completes first direct flight to New York

NEW YORK — An Air Serbia Airbus A330 plane that took off from Belgrade on Thursday morning landed at New York's John Fitzgerald Kennedy Airport after a nine-and-a-half-hour flight.

It was welcomed with a water cannon salute and a message on the electronic billboard.

Carrying over 250 passengers, the plane took off from the Nikola Tesla Airport at 8am, marking the official start of direct flights from Belgrade to New York after nearly a quarter of a century. —Tanjung

Hun Sen pays small fine for not wearing helmet while riding motorbike

PHNOM PENH — Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen on Friday paid a fine of 15,000 riels (\$3.75) for not wearing a helmet while riding a motorbike last week in the southwestern province of Koh Kong.

After paying the fine at a police station in Phnom Penh, Hun Sen told reporters that even though he is prime minister and has parliamentary immunity, he cannot be pardoned or excluded from law enforcement. On 18 June, Hun Sen rode on a motorbike for fun with a villager in the province's Sre Ambel district for about 200 metres without wearing a helmet. The motorbike owner was fined 30,000 riels.—Kyodo News

Mexico must work on increasing Internet usage

CANCUN (Mexico) — Including more people into the digital world is a major challenge in Mexico, just like in other Latin American countries, a Mexican expert said on Thursday.

"The main goal is that all Mexicans are connected and not just on a whim, but in order to avoid digital illiteracy," said Cintya Martinez, president of the Mexican Internet Association (Amipci).

Martinez made the remarks at a meeting organised by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, which is being held in Mexico's Caribbean resort of Cancun aimed at discussing how to counter the challenges posed by the digital economy.

Around 65 million people, or 59 per cent of the population, use the Internet in Mexico, according to official figures.

On the one hand, Amipci works to increase the number of Internet users and on the other hand, they work toward providing people who are already connected with suitable content and what they really need, Martinez told Xinhua. Changing mindsets is also crucial.—Xinhua

Syria opposition accuses Russia of using incendiary bombs in Syria

UNITED NATIONS — The Syrian opposition High Negotiations Committee (HNC) called on United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on Thursday to launch an investigation into its accusations that Russia has repeatedly used air-delivered incendiary weapons in Syria.

Russia deployed warplanes to Syria last year to support President Bashar al-Assad against rebels seeking to end his rule. A crack-down by Assad on pro-democracy protesters five years ago sparked a civil war and Islamic State militants have used the chaos to seize territory in Syria and Iraq.

“Russian air forces have repeatedly deployed incendiary weapons and cluster munitions to kill, maim and terrorise Syrian civilians, including in at least 10 documented incidents,” Riad Hijab, coordinator of the opposition HNC, wrote to Ban.

“They have violated the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and breached international humanitarian law,” he wrote.

Hijab alleged that “thermite, which ignites while falling, has been likened to ‘mini nuclear



Russian military jets are seen at Hmeymim air base in Syria, on 18 June 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

bombs’ and was deployed repeatedly by Russian forces in residential areas.” He also accused Russian forces of using cluster munitions. Incendiary weapons use substances that are designed to set fire to objects or burn people,

and cluster munitions are containers that explode in the air to distribute smaller bombs over a large area. Both are banned under the convention.

The Russian mission to the United Nations was not immedi-

ately available to comment on the accusations. Ban’s office was also not immediately available to comment on the request for an investigation. State Department spokesman John Kirby told reporters in Washington that the United States

was not in a position to confirm the allegations by the Syrian opposition, but that the claims were taken very seriously.

“Regardless of what weapons they’re using, (the Russians) shouldn’t be striking groups that are committed to the counter-ISIL fight or civilians,” he added. “Russia and the Assad regime need to be more careful about distinguishing between terrorists, civilians and parties to the cessation of hostilities.”

The United States has sharply criticized Moscow over strikes last week against US-backed forces in Syria, saying Russia failed to heed US warnings to stop its attack, which killed and injured Syrian fighters battling Islamic State.

US-backed forces in Syria have reported that Russia fired at their garrison with cluster munitions in that attack, a senior British general in the US-led coalition said on Thursday.

“Definitely, the people we advise on the ground reported cluster munitions,” British Army Major General Doug Chalmers told a Pentagon news conference.—Reuters

Gunman takes hostages in German cinema, is shot dead by police

VIERNHEIM, (Germany) — A masked gunman took hostages at a cinema in western Germany on Thursday before police stormed the complex and shot him dead, police said.

No other people were injured, a police spokesman said.

The attacker, who carried a rifle or “long gun”, acted alone and appeared to be a “disturbed man”, the interior minister of Hesse state, Peter Beuth, told the regional parliament.

Police have not identified the man or established his motive,

spokesman Bernd Hochstaedter said, adding that nothing immediately pointed to him having a militant background.

German television showed pictures of heavily-armed police, wearing helmets and body armour, storming the Kinopolis complex in Viernheim, south of Frankfurt, and a couple fleeing the building.

Cinema employee Guri Blakaj told Reuters the gunman, who was aged about 18 to 25 and about 1.7 metres tall, entered the cinema at around 3pm and told workers to go into an office.

He then went into a cinema theatre. Blakaj, who said there were about six staff and 30 cine-goers in the building, then heard shots fired.

Police special forces stormed the building and shot the gunman.

The identity and motive of the attacker remained unclear. A police spokesman said investigators found no identification documents with him.—Reuters



German special police walks past a cinema complex after a masked man with a gun and ammunition belt opened fire in the small western town of Viernheim, near Frankfurt, Germany, on 23 June 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Offensives against Islamic State could displace 2.3 million Iraqis

BAGHDAD — Upcoming military offensives in Iraq against Islamic State, including an assault on the northern city of Mosul, could displace at least 2.3 million people, the United Nations humanitarian coordinator for Iraq said on Thursday.

The prediction of such a vast humanitarian emergency creates additional complications for the Iraqi government and its US allies, who have announced plans for offensives to drive Islamic State fighters this year from most of their Iraqi territory.

More than 3.4 million people across Iraq have already been forced by conflict to leave their homes, according to the United Nations. In the past month, 85,000 people fled Falluja, an hour’s drive from Baghdad, amid a military campaign that has recaptured large parts of the city from the jihadists.

Most of the displaced are from Iraq’s minority Sunni

community, raising concerns among officials that US-backed military gains against Islamic State will not bring stability to Iraq more than 13 years after a US-led invasion toppled Saddam Hussein, a Sunni.

Islamic State fighters swept through much of northern and western Iraq two years ago and declared a caliphate to rule over territory there and in neighbouring Syria.

The jihadists have lost ground in recent weeks to a number of enemies on several fronts in both countries, with the main battles still looming for the caliphate’s two de facto capitals, Mosul in Iraq and Raqqa in Syria.

Lise Grande, the UN humanitarian coordinator for Iraq, told Reuters in an interview that at least 430,000 more people could be displaced this year in Anbar, Iraq’s sprawling desert province stretching west from Falluja to the Syrian border.—Reuters

Morocco arrests 10 suspected Islamist militants, including Algerian

RABAT — Morocco said on Thursday that it had dismantled a suspected militant cell inspired by the radical group Islamic State and that it had arrested 10 men who were planning attacks in the North African kingdom.

The interior ministry said in a statement that the cell was operating in the eastern city of Oujda, and the town of Tendirara in the same region bordering Algeria.

This was the latest in a series of radical Islamist groups that Morocco has said it has broken up.

It said 10 members of the group were meeting in a safe house and planning to rob a mall in the city of Oujda to fund their attacks across the kingdom.

The group includes an Algerian national living in Morocco illegally, according to the statement carried by state news agency MAP

said. Morocco’s Central Bureau of Judicial Investigation (BCIJ), the judicial part of the Moroccan domestic intelligence service, has actively tracked suspected militants since Islamic State seized large parts of Syria and Iraq in 2014-15.

Hundreds of fighters from Morocco and other Maghreb states like Tunisia and Algeria have joined Islamist militant forces in Syria. Some are threatening to re-

turn and create new jihadist wings in their home countries, security experts have said.

Nearby Libya has become a major draw for jihadists from North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa as Islamic State has taken advantage of the security chaos there to build a base, operate training camps and take over the city of Sirte.

The Moroccan government has said it believes that 1,500 Mo-

roccan nationals are fighting with militant factions in Syria and Iraq. About 220 have returned home and been jailed, and 286 have been killed in battle.

Morocco, an ally of the West against Islamist militancy, has been the target of militant attacks, most recently in 2011 in Marrakesh when an explosion tore through a cafe and killed 15 people, mostly foreigners.—Reuters

Tears of joy as rebels sign ceasefire with Colombian government

HAVANA/BOGOTA — Colombia's government and leftist FARC rebels signed a historic ceasefire deal on Thursday that brought them tantalisingly close to ending the longest running conflict in the Americas.

The accord, capping three years of peace talks in Cuba, sparked celebrations and tears of happiness among some in the Colombian capital. It sets the stage for a final deal to end a guerrilla war born in the 1960s out of frustration with deep socio-economic inequalities that outlived all other major uprisings in Latin America.

"May this be the last day of the war," said bearded FARC commander Rodrigo Londono, better known by the nom de guerre Timochenko, his voice choked, after shaking hands with Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos at a ceremony in Havana.

Santos, 64, is half-way through his second term and has staked his legacy on peace in the face of opposition from sectors of the country who think the FARC should be crushed militarily.

"This means nothing more and nothing less than the end of the FARC as an armed group," Santos said, adding that the final peace deal would be signed in Colombia. "The children and



People celebrate the signing of a historic ceasefire deal between the Colombian government and FARC rebels at Botero square in Medellin, Colombia, on 23 June 2016. The sign reads "RIP the War in Colombia 1964 - 2016". PHOTO: REUTERS

youth of our country have never known a single day without the violence of the conflict. Neither have the adults."

In Colombia, even before Santos spoke, church bells pealed at noon to mark the start of the signing. Crowds in Bogota, the capital, gathered around giant TV screens set up in the streets, dancing, cheering

and clapping as the ceremony unfolded.

One placard read, "we've finished the war, now let's build peace."

About 1,000 people gathered in the Plaza Bolivar, the city's main square, to celebrate despite rain. Some waved flags and balloons, others hugged and wiped their eyes.

"I'm 76 and have lived

this war all my life – I never thought the time would come when these characters would sign peace. I'm so happy – I can die in peace," said Graciela Pataquiva, a retired teacher, crying as she spoke.

Santos' government says a final deal, which he said will be ready by 20 July, would add one percentage point annually to

economic growth in Colombia, which over the past two decades has turned itself around from a failing state to an emerging market darling.

Thursday's agreement went further than many had hoped, with the FARC committing to putting a final accord to the Colombian people in a plebiscite, a promise made by Santos that had

been a key sticking point.

Not everybody supports the peace process, and Santos will have to work hard to convince opponents to back it in a referendum.

Former President Alvaro Uribe, the leading critic of the talks, said the agreement was "a surrender to terrorism" by Santos.

Under the agreement read out by mediators Norway and Cuba, the rebels will lay down their arms within 180 days of a final accord and demobilise into 23 temporary zones and eight camps. The ceasefire will only kick in when the final deal is agreed, although the two sides effectively stopped attacks almost a year ago and violence is already at historic lows.

During their transition to democratic politics, the FARC's weapons will be handed over to the United Nations, which will begin a mission to verify the ceasefire.

The government will guarantee the safety of ex-rebels and their political allies, who have historically been targets for right-wing paramilitary groups, the accord said. Special protection units, comprised of both ex-rebels and security forces, will guard FARC politicians and other community leaders.—Reuters



THE ASEAN SECRETARIAT INVITES ASEAN NATIONALS TO APPLY FOR THE FOLLOWING VACANCIES:

- 1. ASSISTANT DIRECTOR ASEAN CONNECTIVITY DIVISION**
- 2. ASSISTANT DIRECTOR TREATY DIVISION**
- 3. SENIOR OFFICER TREATY DIVISION**

For details on Terms of Reference and application, please visit www.asean.org/opportunities/vacancies-asec/

Dutch anti-immigration leader Wilders calls for Dutch referendum on EU membership

AMSTERDAM — Dutch anti-immigration leader Geert Wilders called on Friday for a referendum on the Netherlands' membership in the European Union after Britain voted to leave the 28-member bloc.

Wilders, who is leading opinion polls, said if he is elected prime minister in March general elections in the Netherlands he too will call a referendum. "We want

be in charge of our own country, our own money, our own borders, and our own immigration policy," he said in a statement.

"As quickly as possible the Dutch need to get the opportunity to have their say about Dutch membership of the European Union."

A survey by a television channel Een Vandaag this week found that 54 per cent of the people in the Nether-

lands, a founding EU member, want a referendum.

Dutch voters have twice voiced strong anti-EU sentiment at the polls, most recently in April when a vast majority rejected the Ukraine-EU treaty in a non-binding referendum. "It is time for a new start, relying on our own strength and sovereignty. Also in the Netherlands," Wilders said.—Reuters

Spain to seek co-sovereignty on Gibraltar after Brexit

MADRID — Spain will seek co-sovereignty on Gibraltar following Britain's vote to leave the European Union, acting foreign minister Jose Manuel Garcia-Margallo said on Friday, saying the vote completely changed the outlook on the future of the peninsula.

The small peninsula off the south coast of Spain, a British Overseas Territory since 1713 and known to its 30,000 residents as "the Rock", is a major point of contention in Anglo-Spanish relations.

"It's a complete change of outlook that opens up new possibilities on Gibraltar not seen for a very long time. I hope the formula of co-sovereignty — to be clear, the Spanish flag on the Rock — is much closer than before," he said.—Reuters

Invitation to Submit Expression of Interest (Establishment of substation & power distribution System) Ref No: EOI-3/2016-2017

Ayeyarwaddy Development Public Co.,Ltd which is currently developing Patheingyi Industrial City Project in Patheingyi Township, Ayeyarwaddy Region, hereby invites the interested parties to submit Expression of Interest Letter (EOI letter) for the selection as partner(s) to jointly Finance, Build, Operate & Maintain substation & power distribution System in the Project site.

Interested Parties are requested to submit EOI Letter together with Company Profile, Executed Project Reference List as well as other supporting qualification documents to the below address by or before 22nd July 2016.

Ayeyarwaddy Development Public Co.,Ltd
#1104-1106, Ye Ta Khon Tower, 531, Lower KyeeMyinDaing Road,
KyeeMyinDaing Township, Yangon, Myanmar
Email: aswin.lwin@gmail.com

If there is any information or clarification required, please contact only by email to the above-mentioned email.

Wildfire destroys dozens of homes in central California

LOS ANGELES — A fast-growing wildfire on Thursday destroyed at least 80 homes near the riverside community of Lake Isabella in central California, as a threat to populated areas from five other major blazes across the state diminished, authorities said.

The so-called Erskine Fire erupted around 4 pm in the foothills of Kern County about 42 miles (68 km) northeast of Bakersfield.

Within hours it exploded to cover between 3,000 and 5,000 acres (1,200 to 2,000 hectares) of drought-parched brush and grass, fire information website InciWeb said.

Fire officials also said power was knocked out as darkness fell and evacuation orders were in effect for more than 1,000 homes. Flames were threatening about 1,500 structures in the area by Thursday night, InciWeb added.

Footage of the blaze carried on the Kern County

Fire Department's Facebook page showed flames consuming several homes and roaring through nearby foothills, as firefighting helicopters maneuvered around billowing black and white smoke. The video showed entire blocks of homes devastated by the fire, with jets of flame seen shooting into the evening air from charred household gas canisters.

There were no immediate reports of injuries, though Kern County Fire Captain Tyler Townsend said some residents flouted evacuation orders. Up to 350 fire personnel were battling the blaze and hundreds more were en route, according to InciWeb. Nearly 5,000 firefighters elsewhere around the state battled to control several major wildfires raging from the Klamath National Forest near Oregon to desert brush near the Mexico border. Authorities said the danger was still high in some areas, despite making enough progress to lift evac-



Firefighters mop up after helicopters dropped water on a fire in the San Gabriel mountains near Azusa, California, US on 21 June 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

uation orders for many residents who had been forced to flee earlier this week.

The combination of high temperatures, gusty winds and low humidity could challenge crews and raise the risk of new blazes, the mountains of Los Angeles, Ventura and Santa Barbara counties, the National

Weather Service said.

In San Diego County, authorities lifted evacuation orders for the Mexican border community of Portrero on Thursday, saying crews had cut containment lines around a fifth of a wildfire that has blackened some 6,800 acres (2,752 hectares).

Evacuation orders re-

mained in force for residents of two other mountain communities. Flames have already destroyed five homes and a dozen outbuildings since Sunday.

In foothills northeast of Los Angeles, authorities lifted evacuation orders on 534 homes on Wednesday as firefighters struggled to cor-

ral two wildfires that had merged, but evacuation orders stayed on 324 more homes.

The blaze had charred 5,200 acres of chaparral and grass by Thursday morning and containment lines had been drawn around 15 per cent of the flames, authorities said.—Reuters

Boat migrant rescues surge as calm seas return to Mediterranean



Migrants in a dinghy await rescue by the Migrant Offshore Aid Station (MOAS) around 20 nautical miles off the coast of Libya, on 23 June 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

ABOARD THE TOPAZ RESPONDER — Ships manned by humanitarian organisations, the Italian navy and coast guard helped rescue about 4,500 boat migrants on Thursday as calm seas returned to the Mediterranean, prompting a surge in departures from North Africa.

Rescue operations were continuing, an Italian coast guard spokesman said. The corpse of a woman was taken from a large rubber boat, and the mi-

grants were collected from a total of about 40 different vessels, he said.

The Topaz Responder, a ship run by the Malta-based humanitarian group Migrant Offshore Aid Station (MOAS), said earlier in the day that around two dozen migrant boats had been spotted in the sea about 20 nautical miles from the Libyan port city of Sabratha.

Libya's navy intercepted about 1,000 migrants on board eight rub-

ber boats off Sabratha on Thursday morning, spokesman Ayoub Qassem said. He said the migrants were from Arab as well as sub-Saharan African countries.

"The mass movement is probably the result of week-long, unfavourable weather conditions" that have come to an end, MOAS said on Twitter.

The Topaz Responder picked up 382 sub-Saharan African migrants from three different large rubber

boats. The Bourbon Argos, a ship run by humanitarian group Doctors without Borders, plucked 1,139 migrants from 10 boats, and two other humanitarian vessels picked up 156 more.

The Italian navy said it had rescued 515 from two dinghies, German humanitarian group Sea-Watch said it had 100 on board, and the Italian coast guard, which coordinates rescue operations, said it had deployed several boats.—Reuters

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV MCC S'PORE VOY NO ()

Consignees of cargo carried on MV MCC S'PORE VOY NO () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 25.6.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T/M.I.P where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S MCC TRANSPORT
(S'PORE) PTE LTD

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV THAI BINH 688 VOY NO (04/2016)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV THAI BINH 688 VOY NO (04/2016) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 25.6.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of S.P.W-5 where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S G-LINK EXPRESS PTE LTD.
Phone No: 2301928

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV ROYAL 89 VOY NO (07-16)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV ROYAL 89 VOY NO (07-16) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 26.6.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.W.P.T-2 where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S GLOBAL MARS
Phone No: 2301928



PHOTO: REUTERS

Harry Styles to go solo?

LOS ANGELES — One Direction singer Harry styles has reportedly signed a recording contract with Columbia Records for a solo album.

The terms and conditions of the recording contract are yet not revealed, reported Billboard.

“One Direction” announced that it would be going on an indefinite hiatus last year and each member has gone on to work on their own

solo projects.

The 22-year-old hitmaker will be the first from the team to start making his own music.

Earlier, four songs performed and written by the star were registered with the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP) hinting his concentration on a solo career.

Styles is currently filming the Christopher Nolan World War II drama, “Dunkirk”.—PTI

Taylor Lautner joins ‘Scream Queens’ cast

LONDON — Actor-model Taylor Lautner has joined the cast of “Scream Queens” season two.

The 24-year-old will appear as Dr Cassidy Cascade on the Fox series. He took to Instagram to reveal his excitement, reported Female First. “Big news everyone!! Thrilled to be joining @scream-queensFox it’s going to be such a blast playing Dr Cassidy Cascade. The season 2 premiere is Tuesday, 20 September at 9pm on Fox! (sic),” he wrote. Season two moves

the action from a university campus to a hospital, where bizarre medical cases are under observation.

Lauthner’s character is a doctor, who suffers from a strange medical condition and becomes a suspect when a series of tragic events plagues the institution.

Season one stars Jamie Lee Curtis, Emma Roberts, Lea Michele, Abigail Breslin, Keke Palmer, Billie Lourd, Glen Powell and Niecy Nash will return for the second series with Lauthner.—PTI



PHOTO: REUTERS

Ralph Stanley, US bluegrass music pioneer, dies at 89

LOS ANGELES — US bluegrass pioneer Ralph Stanley, who with his brother Carter helped popularize the Appalachian music and gained late career fame through the movie “O Brother, Where Art Thou?,” died on Thursday, the family said. He was 89.

Stanley died in his sleep after a long battle with skin cancer, grandson Ralph Stanley said on his Facebook page.

“I feel so lost and so alone right now. He was my world, and he was my everything,” he wrote. Further details about Stanley’s death were not immediately available.

During a seven-decade career, Stanley, a banjoist and singer from the coal mining country of southwest Virginia, wrote or co-wrote more than 200 songs, including “Hard Times” and “The Darkest Hour Is Just Before the Dawn.”

“I wrote 20 or so banjo tunes, but Carter was a better writer than me,” Stanley said in a 2008 inter-



US bluegrass pioneer Ralph Stanley. PHOTO: REUTERS

view with Virginia Living magazine.

A major contributor to the so-called “lonesome” style of bluegrass, Stanley and his brother performed as the Stanley Brothers and the Clinch Mountain Boys from 1946 to 1966, according to a profile on the International Bluegrass Mu-

sic Museum’s website.

The band was the first bluegrass group to play the Newport Folk Festival, in 1959, and headlined folk festivals for decades. The Clinch Mountain Boys were the first bluegrass act to record a capella gospel hymns, in 1971.

As his brother’s health began to fail, Ralph Stanley increasingly began fronting as lead singer and as the face of the band. Carter Stanley died in 1966, and Stanley continued to perform into his 80s with the Clinch Mountain Boys.

Born 25 February, 1927, at Big Spraddle Creek in Virginia’s Dickenson County, Stanley took early musical influence from his banjo-playing mother and from the Primitive Baptist Universalist Church.

After service in the US Army in the 1940s, Stanley gave up plans to become a veterinarian and joined his brother to form a band.—Reuters



Singer
Selena Gomez.

Kerry Washington, Selena Gomez join ‘Lean In’ campaign

LONDON — Actress Kerry Washington and singer Selena Gomez have joined hands to support the new “Lean In” campaign, which encourages women to support each other.

The celebrities like Emma Watson, Lena Dunham, newswoman Megyn Kelly, and tennis ace Serena Williams are also part of the campaign, reported by Contactmusic.

Washington, 39, talks about the creator of her show “Scandal”, in the campaign promo, “I’m not sure what my life would look like if it were not for Shonda Rhimes.”

While Gomez, 23, said, “The women I work with are everything.”

“Together we can get to equality, together we can stand up to anything and anyone. Together we can make the workplace a better place... When women lean in together, we accomplish amazing things. Let’s lean in together,” they concluded.—PTI



Actress
Kerry Washington.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Don't look down! Skyslide to open 1,000 feet above Los Angeles

LOS ANGELES — Nearly 1,000 feet (305 metres) above the streets of downtown Los Angeles, a glass slide on the outside of the 70th floor of the city's tallest building is preparing to welcome the brave.

The Skyslide, on the

73-floor US Bank Tower, will open to the public on Saturday and allow thrill seekers to slide 45 feet (14 metres) to an outdoor platform on the 69th floor.

According to the building's owner, Singapore-based OUE Ltd., the glass on the

fully enclosed slide is only 1 1/4 inches (3.2 cm) thick, but can withstand hurricane-force winds and even a powerful earthquake.

Thomson Reuters leases space in the US Bank Tower. —Reuters



Sandra Brown, 40, rides the Skyslide on the 69th and 70th floors of the US Bank Tower which is attached to the OUE Skyspace LA observation deck in downtown Los Angeles, California, US, on 20 June 2016.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Whitney Houston, Prince memorabilia to hit auction block

BEVERLY HILLS (Calif.) — From costumes to instruments, a selection of music memorabilia will go under the hammer in Beverly Hills this week, including items belonging to late singers Whitney Houston and Prince.

Heritage Auctions is offering a selection of belongings of Houston, who died in 2012, including clothes, awards, earrings as well as personal documents at the 24-25 June sale.

Also up for grabs is Prince's Yellow Cloud electric guitar, which has an opening bid of \$30,000. Prince died in April of an accidental, self-administered overdose of an opioid painkiller.—Reuters



A Dolce & Gabbana gown (L) and a Dolce & Gabbana "Diva Train" coat (R) that belonged to the late singer Whitney Houston, are seen on display at Heritage Auctions in Manhattan, New York, US, on 10 June 2016, which are among the items of memorabilia in the "Whitney Houston Collection" which is being auctioned by Heritage Auctions on 24 June in Beverly Hills, California. PHOTO: REUTERS

Japan's tallest building Abeno Harukas celebrates 5m visitors



So Takahama (2nd from R) and his wife Yukiko (2nd from L) pose for a photo on the observation deck of Abeno Harukas, Japan's tallest skyscraper, in the city of Osaka on 24 June 2016 after the husband was certified as the 5 millionth visitor to the observation deck. The milestone was reached the same day about two years and three months after the 300-metre-tall building's opening in March 2014.

PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

OSAKA — The number of visitors to the observation deck of Abeno Harukas, the tallest skyscraper in Japan, reached 5 million Friday, thanks to increased foreign tourists, the operator of the building said.

The milestone was reached about two years and three months after the 300-metre-tall building in Osaka was opened by

Kintetsu Corp. in March 2014. Visitor numbers hit 1 million in July 2014 and 3 million in May 2015.

Visitors are able to see as far as Kyoto and Kobe from the Harukas 300 observation deck, which is the second highest in Japan after Tokyo Skytree's deck, located at a height of around 450 metres. —Kyodo News

NASA spots 'Super Grand Canyon' on Pluto's moon

WASHINGTON — Pluto's largest moon Charon is home to an unusual canyon system that is far longer and deeper than Earth's Grand Canyon, according to a new image beamed back by NASA's New Horizons spacecraft.

The image captured by New Horizons several hours before its closest approach in July last year shows a portion of the eastern limb in the global view of Charon.

It shows a deep canyon in-

formally named Argo Chasma grazing the limb.

The section of it seen in the image measures about 300 kilometres long.

Argo's total length is about 700 kilometres long — for comparison, Arizona's Grand Canyon is 450 kilometres long, scientists said.

They estimate Argo Chasma to be as deep as nine kilometres, which is more than five times the depth of the Grand Canyon.—PTI



Entertainment Channel

(25- 6-2016, Saturday)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 06 : 00 pm | to Philanthropist (Part-1) |
| • Weather Report | 09 : 00 pm |
| • Cartoon Programme "Song of the Sea" (Part-1) | • International Movie Songs |
| 06 : 50 pm | 09 : 10 pm |
| • Magician Sak Kaw Ma | • Cruising To Precious Islands (Part-1) |
| 07 : 10 pm | 09 : 40 pm |
| • Cassette Recordings | • Music Programme |
| 08 : 20 pm | 10 : 00 pm |
| • MRTV Entertainment Music | • Young Lady Musician Nge Lay |
| 08 : 40 pm | 10 : 20 pm |
| • U Kyaw Thu: From Artist | Myanmar Movie |

* (01 : 30) Am Live: Euro 2016 "Croatia Vs Portugal"

From 25-6-2016 (Saturday) 6:00 Pm
To 26-6-2016 (Sunday) 6:00 Pm



Myanmar International

(25-6-2016 07:00am ~ 26-6-2016 7:00am) MST

Today Fresh

- | | | |
|-------|----|--|
| 07:03 | Am | News |
| 07:26 | Am | Great Shwedagon- The Prayer Halls And Buddha Images (Part-1) |
| 07:53 | Am | A Nun's Creation in Fruit Carving |
| 08:03 | Am | News |
| 08:26 | Am | Myanmar Traditional Festival |
| 09:03 | Am | News |
| 09:26 | Am | A Bike Ride in pursuit of Mural Art (Episode-2) |
| 09:44 | Am | The Eel Business (Fisherman the eel culture) |
| 10:03 | Am | News |
| 10:26 | Am | A Novitiation Ceremony in a Rural Township |

10:51 Am One of the Useful Purposes of Bamboo

(11:00 Am ~ 03:00 Pm) - Friday 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 | To The Land of Countless Temples- Bagan Trip (Ep-2) |
| 07:47 | Pm | Today Myanmar: Drone & RC Plane Technology |
| 08:03 | Pm | News |
| 08:26 | Pm | U Kyaw Thu: From Artist to Philanthropist (Part-I) |
| 08:46 | Pm | Myanmar Masterclass: Artist Kyaw Thauang |

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

No glory, but Ibrahimovic proud after final curtain call

STOCKHOLM — Zlatan Ibrahimovic's international career did not end in a blaze of glory at the European Championship but the striker said he was proud to have represented Sweden at the tournament.

Ibrahimovic, Sweden's all-time top scorer with 62 goals in 116 games, netted 11 of Sweden's 19 goals in their Euro 2016 qualification campaign.

However, he was unable to add to his tally in France as Sweden bowed out of the tournament on Wednesday with 1-0 defeat to Belgium.

"It feels heavy. It feels disappointing but at the same time I enjoyed it," the 34-year-old told reporters in France. "We had the possibility of playing in the European Championships, I represented Sweden at this tournament so at the same time I am proud."

"This was my last game and I have many fantastic memories of the national team. It is a nice story as where I came from, what people called the little ghetto, I made the country my country. Sweden."—Reuters

Portugal braced for series of finals, says Santos

LYON, (France) — Having squeezed into the Euro 2016 knockout stages after three contrasting group stage draws, Portugal are ready to move up a gear when they face Croatia in their mouth-watering last-16 clash in Lens on Saturday, coach Fernando Santos said.

While the Croatians romped into the tournament's business end with a 2-1 win over holders Spain, the Portuguese came from behind three times in Wednesday's rip-roaring 3-3 draw against Hungary at Parc OL.

Their talismanic forward Cristiano Ronaldo, subdued in the 1-1 tie with Iceland and a goalless stalemate against Austria, rediscovered his scoring touch with two fine second-half goals which saved Portugal from an early exit.

Santos was confident that Ronaldo, who became the first player to score in four European championships, would thrive as Portugal aim to win "a series of finals" on the road to what would be their maiden title.

"Ronaldo is a scorer and a winner, he plays up front and feeds on goals," Santos said after the Real Madrid hitman was vot-

ed man of the match against the Hungarians.

"I am sure this performance will boost his confidence in our bid to win the competition.

"Everything is different now because every game that follows is like a final, there is no room for error. We want to come out on top in all of them and go all the way."

"We have to strike the right balance between defence and attack because when we come forward we leave too many gaps at the back, as our group stage results show."

The Croatians, who came from behind to beat Spain with a makeshift team, left their coach Ante Cacic spoilt for choice after reserve striker Nikola Kalinic and several other fringe players shone.

Kalinic enjoyed a rare start instead of the towering Mario Mandzukic and repaid the faith with a sublime equaliser before Ivan Perisic netted a late winner.

"We could have done with

easier opposition than Portugal in the last 16 but if we play like we did in the

group stage, we have a great chance of progressing," Kalinic told a news conference at Croatia's Deauville base.

"We are one of the best teams here and if our midfield wins the battle in the centre of the pitch, we should win."

"This is the present generation's chance of a lifetime and we will only be remembered if we do something big here."—Reuters



Portugal head coach Fernando Santos. PHOTO: REUTERS

Djokovic to play wildcard Ward in Wimbledon first round

LONDON — Defending men's champion Novak Djokovic will play British wildcard James Ward in the first round of the Wimbledon championships on Monday as he continues his bid for a calendar year grand slam.

The 29-year-old Serb, the top seed, could face a semi-final with third seed Roger Federer, the seven-times champion he beat in the last two finals at the All England Club.

Federer, who missed the French Open through injury, plays Guido Pella in the first round. Second seed Andy Murray faces an all-British first round against wildcard Liam Broady.

Fourth seed Stan Wawrinka, Murray's prospective semi-final opponent, begins against American teenager Taylor Fritz.

The women's draw follows later on Friday.—Reuters



Novak Djokovic returns the ball at French Open Men's Singles Final match. PHOTO: REUTERS

Stuck on 21, Serena aims to finish the job

LONDON — The peak remains tantalisingly close for Serena Williams but negotiating the final incline to a record-equalling 22nd grand slam singles title is proving the trickiest of all.

American veteran Williams gets another chance to match Steffi Graf's professional era benchmark at Wimbledon when the championships start next week, having proved uncharacteristically vulnerable when it matters.

Had it not been for defeat by Germany's Angelique Kerber in the Australian Open final and Garbine Muguruza at the same stage in Paris, 34-year-old Williams would have already passed Graf and would be set to tie Margaret Court's all-time record of 24.

Instead, it has all become a bit of a struggle.

Add in her US Open semi-final defeat by Roberta Vinci last year when a calendar slam seemed in her pocket, there are doubts about her finishing skills — and her nerve.

"Something is holding her back, and it could be nerves," 18-times grand slam champion

Chris Evert said.

"Especially against Kerber and against Muguruza, she wasn't able to dig herself out of the hole like she has in past years.

"She's been famous for finding that next gear, that next level, when she's down."

Three-times Wimbledon champion John McEnroe tips Williams to win a seventh All England Club crown, but says self-imposed pressure could be mounting.

"It's not easy to try to do what she's doing, to make history at this stage," he said.

"There's not that many people that wouldn't pick her here. If she's playing well, she'll win the tournament."

Of the challengers, they come in two distinct categories.

The power hitters such as Spain's Muguruza, twice champion Petra Kvitova, former world number one and rising American Madison Keys. Sadly Victoria Azarenka withdrew with injury.

Then there are the scramblers like world number three Agnieszka Radwanska, Kerber and Simona Halep.—Reuters