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WORKING OUT THE TERMS

Non-Signatories to NCA to meet State Counsellor by mid July

Ye Khaung Nyunt

Peace makers pose for photo before their talks in Yangon. PHOTO: PHOE HTAUNG

NON-signatory ethnic armed organisations to the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement will hold talks with State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi prior to a conference involving all EAOs at Mai Ja Yang in Kachin State, according to a meeting between government representatives and an EAO delegation yesterday.

The meeting, held at the National Reconciliation and Peace Centre in Yangon, was between the Union Peace Conference-21st Century Panglong preparatory committee and United Nationalities Federal Council's Delegation for Political Negotiation-DPN.

In his address, Dr Tin Myo Win, chair of the preparatory committee, said that the government is willing to give more than take in negotiations with ethnic groups in order to ensure the establishment of a peaceful federal Union.

Highlighting the importance of yesterday's meeting on the peace process, the Chair added that peace is possible if both sides can find a solution through negotiations.

In his address, Khu Oo Reh, who led the DPN, expressed his belief that the ethnic side's understanding is that it is required (for them) to work together with the Tatmadaw to achieve peace in the country.

He assured that goodwill and brotherly negotiations will be undertaken between the two sides as the ongoing peace process has been accepted by NCA non-signatories.

U Hla Maung Shwe, secretary of the preparatory committee, said that State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi welcomed the meeting with the chairman of the UNFC, with the leaders of both sides agreeing in principle to meet in Yangon in mid July.

The Preparatory Committee for the 21st Century Panglong Peace Conference agreed with the DPN's request for government recognition of the Mai Ja Yang Conference in Kachin State.

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Media cautioned against hate speech

UN Rapporteur on Human Rights in Myanmar Ms Yanghee Lee speaks during a news conference in Yangon, on 1 July 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

THE new government's effort to effectuate sustainable development of Myanmar, which is marching towards a democratic society, has established a landmark in history but the challenges regarding human rights will test the new government, said United Nation Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar Ms Yanghee Lee at the press conference held yesterday at Sedona Hotel in Yangon yesterday.

"I've made due effort in my trip to be able to submit a balanced, fair report, assessing the human rights situations prevailing in Myanmar. Prevention of conflicts is important to this society. Mediamen are required to cooperate by exercising restraints in reporting on racial and religious matters so that hate is not spawned between the sides.

The incumbent government is promoting democracy and human rights as well as exerting strenuous effort for national reconciliation and internal peace. In this function, human rights is an issue requiring them to take time to address.

In the areas of conflicts, there have been restored peace and stability, and thus the refugees are needed to be returned to their native places. And the children from the internally displaced persons-IDP camps are needed to have access to education. I know that there will still be difficulty to increasingly provide humanitarian assistance and to promote healthcare services but I believe we'll see the progress if concerted effort is exerted, Ms Yanghee Lee said.—*GNLM*

Myanmar kicks off pneumococcal disease campaign

THE Ministry of Health kicked off a vaccination programme that allows children under one year to receive free Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine (PCV) across the country yesterday.

In his address at the introduction of the PCV immunisation for under-one children, Union Minister Dr Myint Htway called on the participation of all parents in the programme to protect their children against pneumococcal disease.

According to the country's latest childhood immunisation schedule, all children under one year will be given 10 types of vaccines including PCV vaccine which will be administered in a three-dose series in which the first dose is set to be given at two months, the second at four and the third at six.

Children under one year in Myanmar were previously offered nine types of vaccinations.

Next, resident representatives of donor organisations—GAVI, UNICEF and WHO— elaborated on the progress of the ongoing vaccination program in Myanmar.

The government is set to spend US$1.18million on the pneumococcal immunisation program, said the Union minister, adding that the cost for the immunisation of children would be $6.7m for the 2016-2017 FY.

He stressed the need for the participation of all in the children's PCV vaccine program as seven dollars have been invested in providing a single vaccine dose.

The Union minister also called for full vaccination coverage for all children in every part of the country including self-administer regions.—*Myanmar News Agency*

A baby receives Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine (PCV) at a ceremony to launch the vaccination programme in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: KYAW YE SWE

Card payment system introduced to teachers in Yangon, Mandalay, Nay Pyi Taw

Teachers line up to draw salary with the use of ATM card. PHOTO: SUPPLIED

AN ATM card payment system has been introduced to employees including teachers of the Ministry of Education in Yangon, Mandalay and Nay Pyi Taw, enabling employees, especially teachers, to draw their salary at their convenience.

As a trial period, more than 5000 cards have been made for faculty members and teachers from universities, colleges, State High Schools and educational employees in the three cities.

"We feel that we have caught up with the modern age as we can draw our salaries from ATM machines" said a teacher.

The move is aimed at helping teachers and employees overcome various difficulties that may arise on pay day, said Daw Swe Zin Win, General Manager of the Card Department of KBZ Bank.

The bank has future plans to grant ATM cards to teachers nationwide.—*Thura Lwin (Eco)*

Torrential rains flooded four wards in PatheinGyi

"Torrential rain caused overflow in drainage channels, flooding low-lying areas in Patheingyi Township and forcing schools to close temporarily on Thursday, " said U Khin Maung Myint, township chairman of National league for democracy.

The flooded wards are Yankin Tharyar, Yankin Aung, Aung Mingalar 1 and Aung Mingalar 2.

"The water from the drainage-arms of Sedawgyi overflowed into the houses and roads in those fours wards. This overflow of water is caused by torrential rains from East Yoma. At the lower parts of these wards, the water is 2 feet high. The hyacinth blocked the water duct of Yan Kin Aung ward's bridge," added U Khin Maung Myint.

The floodings have caused temporary closure of the high schools. And the water in a football ground was sucked in order not to give a rain check of a football match.

The school was closed because the water level is three feet in the school compound. But the school can be opened this evening and the football match can be also continued because the water receded. We cleaned the hyacinth which blocked the water ducts, said U Nyunt San, chairman of Patheringyi township development committee.—*Aung Thant Khine*

SWRR Ministry pledges disaster mitigation measures

UNION Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement (SWRR) assured his ministry will try its best to prevent the loss of lives and minimize the damages to property caused by disasters by taking effective mitigation measures.

The Union minister pledged disaster mitigation measures to take while addressing a launching ceremony of Kobo mobile application for reporting on disaster losses and damages in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

"The ministry is developing disaster response, relief and support plans with the aim of reducing the risks of suffering and damage during the disasters," said the Union minister, adding that the ministry will provide immediate response when disasters occur.

According to the ministry, works are underway to ensure the use of Kobo mobile application that helps smartphone users report on losses and damages in the disaster-hit areas, thereby ensuring speedy disaster response and delivery of aid.

The Union minister said that members of Myanmar Red Cross Society, Fire Service Department, General Administration Department and SWRR Ministry will be able to make post-disaster information available with the use of the mobile app.

A plan to install the Kobo mobile app on smartphones is included in the ministry's 100-day plan, added the Union minister.

The ministry said that demonstrations on how to use the Kobo mobile app were conducted in Rakhine and Kachin States and Yangon and Ayeyawady Regions in cooperation with UNOCHA.—*Thein Ko Lwin*

Investigation to be launched into Lebyin riot

AN investigation will be launched into a riot that occurred in Lebyin Village, Hpakant Township, in which a religious edifice, reportedly built without permission from local authorities, was destroyed by an angry mob yesterday.

Following no agreement being reached between the General Administration Department and the individuals responsible for the erecting of the mosque to tear it down, a number of local residents wielding sticks, knives and other weapons raided and burned the structure at around 3.30 pm yesterday.

Local authorities and security forces claim that they tried to disperse the mob by following routine procedures but that the mob was unresponsive and entirely beyond control.

The building was razed by the riotous crowd who left the scene at around 3.45 pm.

Local authorities claim that they have held negotiations with responsible personnel of the building in order to have the building taken down several times and finally ordered it to be demolished by Thursday as it was built without respect to local rules and regulations.

The mosque was not pulled down in time and so a riotous mob of locals came together and took the building by force in order to destroy it.

Local authorities claim they have tightened security in the area and that the situation is calm. Measures are being taken to press charges against those who were involved in the attack and further investigation may follow to identify the perpetrators. However, so far not one of the attackers has been positively identified by local police.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Police stationed to control mob at Lebyin Village. Photo: MNA

Martyrs' mausoleum to soon be renovated

THE Martyrs' mausoleum and its environs will soon be renovated with an eye towards keeping the original architectural design elements in the lead up to the 69th anniversary Martyrs' day to commemorate independence architect Gen. Aung San and the other fallen heroes, according to Yangon City Development Committee.

The entire Martyrs' mausoleum was previously painted red. However, now the front side will be painted red and the back, the sides, red-brown. A star will be built to look as if it is falling onto the lawn to symbolize the falling of the heroes. The martyrs' biography will be inscribed on slabs, said U Saw Naing, branch head of the engineering department of the Yangon City Development Committee.

The mausoleum is located at the foot of Shwedagon Pagoda in Yangon. The mausoleum was destroyed by a bomb attack in 1983. After the attack a new mausoleum was designed and built by the architecture department of the Rangoon Institute of Technology (RIT).

The renovated mausoleum was opened in July 1985. The Yangon CityDevelopment Committee annually cleans and repairs the mausoleum before Martyrs' Day however this year they will undertake large-scale repairs.—*Khin Zar Lee*

Mandalay Hluttaw passes motion for revocation of planning permission

THE Mandalay Region Hluttaw yesterday witnessed a motion calling for the revocation of planning permission given during the recent government transition, which received unanimous support.

U Myint Aung Moe of Chanmyathasi constituency, who tabled the motion, urged the regional parliament to scrutinise the land grants given to people.

Mandalay Region Chief Minister Dr Zaw Myint Maung pledged his regional government would take prompt action to deal with the case.

"It would be improper if the land plots were for the construction of hospitals, schools and markets," the chief minister said.

Mandalay Mayor Dr Ye Lwin stressed that a scrutiny committee should be set up to look into the land grants given across the region.

The scrutiny committee will report its findings to the Cabinet and the union minister, with an official saying that the committee will work with the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw's Commission for Investigation of Land Confiscation.—*Aung Thant Khaing*

Union Foreign Affairs Minister meets with RoK Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs

UNION Minister for Foreign Affairs Daw Aung San Suu Kyi received Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea Mr. Lim Sung-nam who is visiting Myanmar for the 4th Mekong-RoK Business Forum in Nay Pyi Taw held yesterday.

During the call the two representatives held discussions on further bilateral relations and cooperation between the two countries and exchanged views on regional and international issues.—*Myanmar News Agency*

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi welcomes Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea Mr. Lim Sung-nam in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

More than 800 jade lots sold for 169.52million Euros

THE 53rd Myanmar Gems Emporium in Nay Pyi Taw made 169.52million Euros from the sale of 802 lots of jade yesterday when 1,000 lots went on sale for the fourth time through an open tender system.

Total sales in jade, gems and pearl lots reached 326.99m Euros yesterday as 312 lots of pearl found buyers for 3.12m Euros, 63 lots of gems for 3.29m Euros and 1,897 lots of jade for 157.5m Euros over the previous days.

More lots of jades are set to go on sale with displays of 1,000 lots today and jade lots with a reserve price of 200,001 Euros per item will be sold at auction on 4 through 6 July.—*Myanmar News Agency*

A trader checks a jade stone at 53rd Myanmar Gems Emporium in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: AUNG SHINE OO

Mekong nations and South Korea eye up Myanmar's investment potential

MEKONG region countries, together with South Korea, have expressed an interest towards investment in Myanmar's manufacturing sector, the Myanmar Investment Commission (MIC) has reported.

The fourth Mekong-ROK Business Forum recently took place at Yangon's Novotel Hotel during which talks and negotiations were held between business entrepreneurs for the possibility of investment between Mekong region countries.

"The primary [agenda of the talks] was the presentation, to South Korea and Mekong region countries, of the economic opportunities available to them within Myanmar. Once that was complete, business entrepreneurs converged for discussion on which sectors within the country they desired to invest in." said U Aung Naing Oo, director-general of the MIC.

Business entrepreneurs from Laos, Thailand, Viet Nam and Cambodia reportedly showed an interest in investing within Myanmar's industrial and hotel and tourism sectors.

"Dialogue was held over potential trade between Myanmar and Korea. We will take forward the discussion points made by Mekong region nations. The principal objective is to work for transparency within Myanmar's trade and investment, in a bid to improve it." said U Aung Soe, director-general of the Myanmar Trade Promotion Team, which falls under the Ministry of Commerce.

Business entrepreneurs from Mekong region nations reportedly paid a visit to the Thilawa Special Economic Zone, which lies on the southern outskirts of Myanmar's commercial capital yesterday. To date, Myanmar has seen a total investment of US$3 million since the coming to office of the new Nation League for Democracy government.—*Myitmakha News Agency*

Workshop on gender and social affairs held

A WORKSHOP on gender and social affairs took place at the Department of Agriculture Research in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

The workshop was aimed at holding discussions on the results of the study on gender and social affairs and the implementation of the Fostering Agriculture Revitalisation in Myanmar (FARM) project that aims to assist with the formulation of programmes for gender and social affairs strategies.

The workshop was attended by departmental officials, female leaders from 73 villages where the FARM project is in operational and responsible persons of project coordination unit.—*Than Oo (Laymyethnar)*

Golden belt champions to be awarded K500,000 each by GTG group

The Wall Poster of Golden belt championship being seen. PHOTO: 200

GTG Group will award K500,000 (US$422) each to golden belt champions who seized the belt for each weight class at the 8th Myanmar traditional lethwei's Golden Belt Championship.

Organised by the Myanmar Traditional boxing Federation in cooperation with H and S group, the championship is being held at Yangon's Thein Phyu Stadium between 25 June and 10 July, featuring some of the country's biggest stars.

Over 50 fighters from 19 clubs are participating in the event, spread across seven weight classes—71kg, 67kg, 63.5kg, 60kg, 57kg, 54kg and 51kg.

Semi-final matches will be held on Sunday and the final will take place on 10 July.

In the final event, Phyan Thway (Shwemoehti Nyeinchanyay) will fight against Thai boxer Suktawan.

The prize presenting ceremony will be held on 11 July at Theinbyu Stadium.

The Myanmar Traditional Boxing Federation has held the Golden Belt Championship annually since 1996.

A total of 45 fighters participated in last year's Golden Belt Championship.—*200*

Myanmar attempting to send workers to Taiwan

THE Myanmar Overseas Employment Agencies Federation (MOEAF) is reportedly putting more effort into send local workers to Taiwan said its general secretary U Kyaw Htin Kyaw.

"Workers will have a chance to work at a safe worksite with high salaries. They can earn at least US650 per month," he said.

The MOEAF has put forward a proposal related to sending local workers to Taiwan, according to the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population.

Taiwan is in need of blue-collar workers who will enjoy labour rights under its legal framework, U Kyaw Htin Kyaw said. The ministry is urging local migrants to work abroad after signing an agreement with an employer.

People wishing to work overseas need to inquire into the background history of relevant overseas employment agencies before they go there, the ministry said.

U Kyaw Htin Kyaw continued to say that workers are being sent to Malaysia, Thailand, Japan and Singapore. Among those countries Japan gives the highest salaries to workers.

The majority of migrants mostly go to Thailand, followed by Malaysia, South Korea, Singapore and then Japan.

According to official figures about 6,000 migrants go to Thailand monthly, around 3,000 to Malaysia, 200 to Japan, 100 to Singapore and 600 to South Korea.—*Zar Zar*

Public Bus Co plans to expand new route of BRT in North Okkalapa, Insein

THE Public Bus Company has plans to expand a new route in Yangon's suburbs North Okkalapa and Insein townships, with the aim of fulfilling the demands of Yangon commuters, Dr Maung Aung, chairman of the Public Bus Company said.

The company is currently searching for places to construct bus stops for the new route.

The new route will run along Htaukkyant, No.3 Road, Aungmingala highway, Thudhamma Road, Kaba-Aye Pagoda Road and Kokine Junction University Avenue Road and Hledan Junction to Insein Road.

The company will import eight new BRT buses from foreign countries and they are expected to arrive in the country in third week of June with plans to operate the new route with a fleet of 18 new buses as of next month.

Currently, the company is operating its service business with a fleet of 45 buses along Yangon's main roads.

On 7 February, with a fleet of 18 buses imported from China, the company launched its services along the first route of Bus Rapid Transfer (BRT), which has 23 stops running from Htaunkkyant to Pyay Road and Bogyoke Aung San Road to 8-mile junction via Kaba-Aye Pagoda Road.

The second route has 27 stops running Pyay Road, Kaba-Aye Pagoda Road, Bogyoke Aung San Road, Botahtaung Pagoda Road and Strand Road.

Each bus can carry over 80 passengers and bus fare is set at K300 per head for buses with an air conditioning system. The BRT buses operate between the hours of 6 a.m. and 9 p.m. daily.

The Public Bus Company began its business with K10 billion worth of shares owned by the government and K15 billion worth of shares owned by public companies.

Between November last year and February the company received 2.4 billion kyat (US$ 1.6 million) from the selling of its shares. The company stopped share selling at the end of February this year.—*200*

Crime NEWS

Police arrest drug dealers in Hpa-an

A LOCAL police squad from Hpa-an police station seized 50 yaba pills from one Thaw Thaw Htet who was walking on Man Ba Khine road, ward 7, Hpa-an town on Tuesday. The police also seized 118 yaba pills from the home of one Man win Phay in ward 7, Hpa-an.

According to a connected investigation police searched the home of one Aye Naing and Khin San Nyunt on Kaymar road in ward 4, Hpa-an town and discovered 6803 yaba pills. One Saw Htoo Htoo was found together with the host. The police also arrested Ma Nan Yin Win Kyi who is charged with selling drugs on Mya Sein Yaung road in ward 6, Hpa-an town.

On that same day a combined team comprising officers and staff from Mandalay police station seized 180 yaba pills from motorcycle driver Ye Min Soe who had one Naing Min Lwin on board in Tun Ton ward, Chanmyathasi township. Police have filed charges against all suspects under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.—*Myanmar Police Force*

Criminal suspects seen together with the drugs seized. PHOTO:MPF

Two caught in Mayangon township for thievery

TWO people have been charged with robbery after taking a gold chain from a passing woman on Yangon-Insein road, Mayangon township on Thursday.

According to an investigation two individuals approached a woman who was walking on Yangon-Insein road and snatched a gold chain from the victim and ran away with it. Local police discovered the crime in progress while on patrol and managed to capture one Ko Aye Min, 49, and Ma Tin Tin Htway, 49 with the assistance of the public. Local police have filed charges against them.— *Soe Win(SP)*

Ko Aye Min, 49, and Ma Tin Tin Htway, 49. PHOTO: SOE WIN (SP)

Sixteen tonnes of unclaimed log seized

A COMBINED team comprising officers and staff from Kawlin Forestry Department seized 25 unclaimed logs weighing 16.9 tonnes within Phay lay reserve, Wintoe township on Thursday. The team transferred the logs to Aung Myint Htway, person in charge of Jotaung forest. – *U Ye (Kathar)*

Sixteen tonnes of unclaimed logs seen after seizure. PHOTO: U YE (KATHAR)

LOCAL Business

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

About 100 factories expected to invest in garment industry

ABOUT 80 to 100 factories are expected to invest in Myanmar's garment industry over this year, said U Myint Soe, chairman of Myanmar Garment Manufacturers' Association.

In 2015, there was a recorded total of 60 local and foreign companies making new investments in Myanmar's garment enterprises. About USD two billion is expected to be earned from the garment enterprises in 2016. Foreign direct investment (FDI) in the sector remains larger than local investment.

The raw materials used in garment factories are still being imported from abroad due to Myanmar garment business being mostly engaged in cutting and packaging (CMP) production rather than cloth production. The association has already submitted proposals to the authorities concerned to establish an Export Processing Zone (EPZ).—*200*

Inspection stickers to be affixed to vehicles with license extension

YANGON Region's Road Transportation Administration Department (RTAD) is to begin fixing inspection stickers to vehicles with license extensions at their office, starting this July.

Previously RTAD announced that the stickers will be started as of 23 June, but as inspections occur at the end of the month the stickers will start early July.

"The expired date of inspection stickers will be regarded the same as license validity although the validity of those stickers is prescribed for 12 months," said an official from RTAD.

If the owners want the same date of expiry for both inspection stickers and vehicle registration card, the owner book, vehicle registration card and inspection stickers have to be made at the same time.

Inspection stickers will be affixed on the right of the windscreen after the vehicle is checked. RTAD has already offered awareness campaigns of inspection stickers and affixation of said stickers, enforcement begins as of 1 July.—*200*

Myanmar rated among top 15 for foreign direct investment

MYANMAR is rated among the top 15 countries for foreign direct investments, stated a report for the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). America, China and India will continue to the lead until 2018, and Myanmar and the Philippines replace Hong Kong and Singapore which were rated top in 2015, stated the report of UNCTAD.

Foreign direct investment in Myanmar amounted to US$63bn up to the end of May 2016, and Myanmar aims to earn US$8bn from FDI in the 2016-17 FY.

The top 15 nations are: America, China, India, Britain, Germany, Japan, Brazil, Mexico, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, France, Australia, Myanmar and Viet Nam

UNCTAD estimated that the global economy will grow at 2.4% in 2016, and global FDI flow will amount to US$1.5 trillion in 2016, US$1.7 trillion in 2017 and US$1.8 trillion in 2018 respectively.

FDI in Myanmar is expected to reach US$140bn by 2030, and the average FDI per year will be between UD$6 and 8bn from 2017 to 20130, it is targeted by the 20-year national integrated development plan of Myanmar.—*200*

Over 90,000 tonnes of rubber expected to be exported this year

OVER 90,000 tonnes of rubber are expected to be exported during the 2016-2017 FY, it has been learned from the Myanmar Rubber Planters and Producers Association (MRPPA).

In early 2016 world rubber price bounced back from the downward trend commencing from February, 2011 to over US$1,700. Myanmar rubber is also expected to fetch a high price.

Over 80,000 tonnes of Myanmar's rubber was exported over the past two years. Rubber producers are reportedly making efforts to produce higher quality rubber to compete with Thailand. "We need to select the rubber varieties depending on the weather conditions and hope to get a higher export price" said U Hla Myint, consultant to the MRPPA.

Rubber trees are suitable to be grown at below 3,000 feet above sea level, with an amount of rainfalls between 60-200 inches. Rubber cannot be grown in dry places like Mandalay, Magwe and Sagaing regions. The cultivation of rubber costs from K250,000 to K900,000 per acre depending on the cultivation methods. Pedigree rubber varieties are being imported from Malaysia, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Thailand.

Those exotic varieties are planted on pilot plots of land and then the Myanmar Perennial Crops Enterprise (MPCE) prescribes the pedigree varieties as those which yield high and are free from infections, said an official from the MPCE.

Rubber from the neighbouring countries can yield from 500 to 1,800 pounds on average per acre while Myanmar rubber yields only 700 pounds per acre. Only 600,000 acres of land are put under rubber cultivation out of 1.6million of acres of land in Myanmar.

Only verified gross mass containers permitted to be loaded

SEA containers not bearing the required Verified Gross Mass (VGM) will be denied from being loaded onto ships destined for Myanmar as of 1 July, according to U Aung Khin Myint, chairman of the Myanmar International Freight Forwarders Association (MIFFA).

Under the new declaration of the International Convention for Safety of Life at Sea, VGM is to be submitted. Otherwise, cargo ships will reject containers.

If shippers are unsure about how to properly file a VGM, they can contact the Department of Marine Administration (DMA) under the Ministry of Transport and Communication.

The freight will be measured at Yangon Ports because there is no weighing machine that meets international standard at DMA. Verified gross mass released from Yangon Ports will be provided to ocean liners, according to MIFFA.—*200*

Construction machinery showrooms planned to open in 2017

CONSTRUCTION machinery showrooms are to open in 2017 to facilitate purchasing of those machineries locally, said an official from the Ministry of Commerce. Currently, the commerce ministry has already drawn up an exclusive draft for joint import with the assistance of experts concerned.

There are a total of five companies that import construction machinery in Myanmar.

"The policy is required to import those machineries to be able to open the local showrooms. So, the Ministry of Commerce is exerting its utmost effort to introduce a new policy soon. The showrooms will be opened after adopting this policy. We expect those machinery showrooms to be opened in early 2017," he added.

Those showrooms will be opened in the commercial cities. Most machines will be imported from Japan.—*200*

Australian election seen as a dead heat, minor parties likely powerbrokers

SYDNEY — Australia braced for an election that was too close to call on Friday, with Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull warning of economic chaos if his gamble on an early poll backfires and leaves him without the outright majority he needs to enact major reforms.

The leader of Australia's conservative coalition prompted Saturday's election by dissolving both houses of parliament in May, blaming intransigent independents in the upper house Senate for blocking his agenda.

New polls on Friday showed voters may return an even more unruly upper house.

Turnbull argued on Friday that minor parties, possibly in coalition with centre-left Labour, could not be trusted to manage an economy hampered by the first mining downturn in a century and balance public finances after years of deficits.

Turnbull, acknowledging that the contest was "really close", urged voters not to be cavalier.

Early voters in Australia's 2 July general election walk to a polling centre past banners promoting Labour leader Bill Shorten (L) and Liberal Party Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull at Sydney's Town Hall, on 29 June 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

"This is not a time to make a protest vote. This is a time to treat your vote as though that is the single vote that will determine the next government," he told reporters in Sydney.

Turnbull's coalition is facing a strong challenge from Labour, as well as from independents and minor parties like the Greens, who could win enough seats to hold the balance of power in the Senate or force a minority government in the lower house.

A Fairfax/Ipsos poll published on Friday showed Labour and the coalition locked in a dead heat at 50-50, well within the 2.6 per cent margin of error for the survey of 1,377 respondents taken between 26-29 June.

The Murdoch-owned Galaxy polling agency showed a similar outcome, with the government faring slightly better on 51-49 on a first party-preferred basis after the distribution of preference votes from minor parties to the two main contenders.

Turnbull's own grip on power even appeared tenuous, with the Fairfax poll showing 27 per cent of voters intended to vote for a party other than the coalition or Labour.

Independent Senator Nick Xenophon, whose new party is fielding almost 50 candidates, could also emerge with influence. So, too, could far right parties, including Pauline Hanson's One Nation, who have campaigned on anti-immigration, anti-Muslim agendas.

"Whatever happens in this election ... if we see One Nation elected, if we see a greater informal vote, blame Malcolm Turnbull and the Greens. This was their idea," Labour leader Bill Shorten told reporters in Sydney.

Turnbull's repeated attacks on minor parties could have inadvertently driven voters into their arms by elevating their status on the national stage, said Professor Andrew Hughes from the Australian National University.

Candidates like Xenophon are viewed as trustworthy and are increasingly seen as a brake on pushing through radical reforms, such as the coalition's centre piece A$50 billion corporate tax break or Labour's strong push to legalise gay marriage.

"In the lower house, this may very well be the last situation we see a political party in Australia govern in their own right," Hughes told Reuters. —*Reuters*

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Japan's 1st votemobile starts accepting early ballots

MATSUE, (Japan) — Voters in mountainous areas of western Japan on Friday began casting ballots in a van believed to be the country's first mobile polling booth as early voting for the upcoming House of Councillors election kicked off.

The four-wheeled polling station was introduced by the city of Hamada in Shimane Prefecture to accommodate elderly voters who cannot easily travel to polling stations due to limited means of transportation.

Voters accepted voting slips outside the vehicle and sat in the van's second row of seats to mark their ballot papers before dropping them into the ballot box.

"Voting inside a vehicle was new to me, but I was able to vote just the same," said Susumu Habe, 84, who was the first to cast a ballot.

His 93-year-old cousin, Isao Habe, said it took longer to vote than at normal polling stations and the vehicle was smaller than he expected.

The van, accompanying observers and election board officials, is scheduled to visit 11 locations in three days, staying about one hour to an hour and a half in each spot, according to the local election board.

A man casting an early vote for the 10 July House of Councillors election inside a van believed to be the nation's first mobile polling booth in the western Japan city of Hamada on 1 July 2016. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

While 153 voters in the area are covered by the votemobile, it will also accept votes from people in other areas, the board said.

The voters have been notified of the dates and hours of such early voting through letters and other means before Friday. —*Kyodo News*

One killed after missile fired by Taiwan patrol boat hits fishing boat

TAIPEI — Taiwan's navy said on Friday that a supersonic anti-ship missile mistakenly fired by one of its patrol boats earlier in the day killed a Taiwanese fishing boat captain and injured three others, reversing its earlier statement that there were no casualties.

Navy Command Headquarters Chief of Staff Vice Admiral Mei Chia-shu said that the Hsiung Feng III anti-ship missile or shrapnel thereof struck a Taiwanese fishing boat, which has been towed to the southern port city of Kaohsiung.

The missile was fired by the 500-ton, Chinchiang-class patrol gunboat at 8:15 am from the Zuoying military base in southern Taiwan and struck the fishing boat about two minutes later. At a press conference earlier in the day, Mei said that the missile landed in the sea without causing injuries or damage and blamed the accident on standard operating procedures not being followed.

He also said at that earlier press conference that it did not reach the cross-strait median, an imaginary line drawn through the Taiwan Strait by the United States in the 1950s to delineate areas controlled by Taipei and Beijing. While Friday marks the 95th anniversary of the establishment of the Chinese Communist Party, the ministry dismissed speculation that the accidental firing was in any way politically motivated. —*Kyodo News*

North Korean leader meets special envoy of Cuban president

BEIJING — North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has met with a special envoy of Cuban President Raul Castro and both sides agreed to advance traditional friendly relations between the two countries, official media said on Friday.

The meeting in Pyongyang with Cuban Vice President Salvador Valdes Mesa marked Kim's first known direct contact with a high-ranking foreign political figure since October last year, when he held talks with the Communist Party of China's fifth-ranked leader, Liu Yunshan.

Although North Korea and Cuba are far away from each other geographically, Kim said they are "fighting in the same trench of the common struggle against imperialism" and he believes the "traditional relations of friendship and cooperation" between them will grow stronger in the future, according to the Korean Central News Agency.

Valdes Mesa, a member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba, told Kim also during the meeting on Thursday that it is "the steadfast policy" of the Caribbean country to develop "the relations of friendship and cooperation" with North Korea, KCNA said.

Kim has yet to travel overseas or meet any world leaders since inheriting power following the death of his father, Kim Jong Il, in late 2011. North Korea and Cuba have close diplomatic ties dating back to 1960.

Kim's meeting with the special envoy, who was on a three-day visit to Pyongyang from Tuesday, took place as South Korea is seeking to strengthen diplomatic relations with Cuba.

South Korean Foreign Minister Yun Byung Se visited Cuba in early June, following last year's normalisation of ties between Washington, Seoul's key ally, and Havana.

That was the first-ever visit to Cuba by a South Korean foreign minister.

On Friday, KCNA also reported that Kim has sent a message of congratulations to Chinese President Xi Jinping on the occasion of the 95th anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of China. —*Kyodo News*

China celebrates Communist Party's 95th birthday, Xi warns on graft, security

BEIJING — Chinese President Xi Jinping warned on Friday that the biggest threat to the ruling Communist Party is corruption, as he used the party's 95th birthday to also warn against any threats to China's security and Taiwan independence.

Since Xi took power more than three years ago, he has mounted a sweeping campaign against deep-rooted graft, warning like others before him it could threaten the party's rule, and taken a muscular approach to protecting China's sovereignty, including its contested claims in the South China Sea. In a wide-ranging speech in Beijing's Great Hall of the People, Xi said that history had chosen the Communist Party to lead China, but that if they did not manage the party properly and listen to the people, then history would discard them.

"As the ruling party, the biggest danger we face is corruption," Xi told party members, in comments carried live on state television.

"We must have a staunch will, not let up on our zero tolerance attitude, investigate all cases and punish those who are corrupt, to give corrupt elements no place to hide in the party," he added.

Dozens of senior officials have been jailed in Xi's anti-graft battle, including powerful former domestic security chief Zhou Yongkang.

But China faces external challenges too. Beijing has been infuriated by a case lodged by the Philippines at an international arbitration court over the South China Sea, vowing neither to participate in the case nor accept the ruling, which is due 12 July. Without making direct reference to the South China Sea, Xi said that while China was not a trouble maker, no foreign country should think China would trade away its core interests.

"Do not expect that we will swallow the bitter fruit of damage to our sovereignty, security and development interests," he said to an audience including military officers, model workers and ethnic minorities. Viet Nam, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan also have South China Sea claims. A further headache for Xi this year has been January's election in self-ruled and democratic Taiwan of a president from the pro-independence Democratic Progressive Party, Tsai Ing-wen.

"We will resolutely oppose Taiwan independence splitist forces," Xi said, again without a direct mention of Tsai or her party. "The 1.3 billion of China and the entire Chinese race will never agree to any person, at any time, using any method to carry out activities to split the country."

China views Taiwan as a wayward province and has never renounced the use of force to bring its under Beijing's control.

Tsai has vowed to maintain peace with China.—*Reuters*

Vietnamese scoff at bike-ban plan as motorcycles engulf capital

HANOI — World famous for its endless swarms of motorcycles, Viet Nam is considering banning bikes in the capital over fears its leafy streets will become overrun as the population swells and its middle class buys up cars in record numbers.

Hanoi is forecast to have seven million motorcycles on its roads in the next two years — almost the same as its current population — leaving city bigwigs with a crisis on their hands as cars, buses and bikes jostle and petrified pedestrians run the gauntlet crossing streets.

The Communist Party's Hanoi chapter started polling on Monday ahead of a new urban plan and central to that is making the capital's motorcycles extinct by 2025, according to Voice of Viet Nam radio.

But it hasn't gone down well with bikers, who say the economy would grind to a halt if Hanoians were denied a mode of transport they've grown up with and use to ferry around anything from beer crates and cooking gas tanks to rice sacks and small families.

Motorcycles are seen on a street in Hanoi, Viet Nam, on 30 June 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

"It's impossible. It will cause difficulties for bureaucrats, employers, students and traders," said Pham Van Chinh, a motor-taxi driver. Street vendor Ho Huu Chat called for a U-turn on the idea.

"This should be reconsidered," he said. "Businesses will be affected."

Viet Nam's rapid economic growth has seen household incomes quadruple since the turn of the century, with one in every two of its 90 million people owning a motorcycle, and car sales surging 55 per cent last year, Southeast Asia's fastest rate.

That's exacerbating the chaos in the "Paris of Asia", known as much for its cacophonic horns and snarl-ups as it is for its French colonial architecture, ubiquitous lakes and tree-lined boulevards.

Though construction of elevated rail and metro systems are under way, they won't be ready anytime soon and some Hanoians think the bikes trend is irreversible. "The number of vehicles is so huge now," said motorcycle repair man Ngo Van Thanh. "People cannot agree with the ban."—*Reuters*

Opinion

Write for us

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Human trafficking is a national concern

Tha Sein

MYANMAR is taking a series of steps to achieve its own vision of a more perfect union and to bring democracy, justice and human rights to the nation. Towards this end, the incumbent government has been addressing the issue of trafficking in persons as a national concern and making tangible progress in various aspects.

We are astonished at the US decision to drop Myanmar to Tier 3 with the release of its annual human trafficking report, a move that could ban the flow of international aid at a time when the government is sparing no effort to protect its migrant workers and victims of human trafficking and forced labour. We understand that while Myanmar meets the criteria for the Tier 2 Watch List, having remained at that ranking for the last four years, a further extension is no longer possible.

The downgrade has put Myanmar on so-called Tier 3 which is the worst human-trafficking level. Keeping Myanmar entangled in the human trafficking imbroglio is a bad option which could turn catastrophic, and this might not prove to be a better alternative. It could add to the nation's inability in the fight against human trafficking and even make a profound impact on aid to be provided by the IMF and World Bank.

The traditions of friendship and cooperation between Myanmar and the US are long-standing and historic ones that are being further consolidated through mutually beneficial cooperation based on independence, equality and mutual respect. The US has done what it could to support the people of Myanmar during the heartbreak and tragedy after Cyclone Nargis. This is a reflection of the importance of a bilateral alliance with the US.

As the move was mostly about domestic issues and was relatively light on foreign policy we will continue to be a good friend and reliable partner of the US and build the union, while working for freedom, justice and democracy.

Meikhtila Lake, the largest nature and man-made aquatic body in Myanmar

Maha Sadhamma Jotika dhaja
Sithu Dr. Khin Maung Nyunt

AMONG many aquatic bodies of natural formation and artificial creation in Myanmar Meikhtila Lake is the largest and prominent.

Myanmar people call water bodies with different names, depending upon how they are formed. Water bodies of small, medium or large sizes formed by springs or falls are called Aine (အိုင်). Those formed by floods are called Inn (အင်း). Those formed both by nature, rain water and water through man-made canals are called Kan (ကန်) or Lake.

Meikhtila Lake is formed both naturally and artificially. In the arid zone of central Myanmar a vast plain of land, surrounded by hill and mountain ranges at remote places has a big depression, into which rain water flows naturally or made to flow into it by man-made canals.

As to who and at what date man came in to keep water in it, many legends, stories, verbal histories have, each its own version. Being a predominantly Buddhist country, Myanmar legends, archaeology and history are always associated with jatakas [Buddha's birth stories] and the arrivals of Buddhist missionaries to Myanmar and spread of Buddhism in the country.

Emperor Asoka of Chandra Gupta Mauriya dynasty who after becoming a Buddhist convert, succeeded in uniting his vast empire by peaceful means preached by his guru monk teacher Maha Thera Mogaliputra Tisa. To atone for his misdeeds in his attempts to unite his empire by waging wars which caused untold destruction of lives, Asoka constructed 84000 religious monuments 84000 artificial water bodies, rest houses and several social welfare works throughout his domains and beyond. Also, at the advice of his guru monk, he sent out Buddhist missions to propagate Buddhism to nine places and nine countries.

The Buddhist mission he dispatched to Myanmar then known as Suvanna Bhumi [Thaton] was led by Maha Theras Sona and Uttara whose successful missionary works were proved by religion monuments we witnesse till today across the country, especially in Mon and Karen states.

It is claimed by Myanmar people that Meikhtila' Lake was among the list of 84000 Lakes which Asoka dug across his empire and nine places and nine countries to which he sent his religious missions. But legends, archaeology and verbal history contend that there were predecessor kings before Asoka who were either builders or maintainers of the Lake. Some stone inscriptions and epigraphs on other materials such as metal, papyrus, palm leaf or mural ink writings on the walls and ceilings of monuments made references to king Akarahta as the original first digger of the Lake. He received water from sacred lake Anawrahta in Himalayan mountains brought by the devas. The king and the devas made vows that crystal pure sacred water poured into the dug Lake shall forever be the elixir of life for all living beings. In the list in this article are 16 kings and one

Loka Hteikpan Zedi on the embankment of south lake in Meikhtila. PHOTO: CHAN THAR (MEIKHTILA)

wealthymen kings of whom 8 kings were Myanmar kings, who built, maintained, repaired or renovated the Lake.

Myanmar kings maintained, repaired renovated and extended the Lake for the supply of water for consumption and irrigation. Therefore many religious monuments and spirit shrines are found around the Lake, Meikhtila town and beyond. Meikhtila Lake and Meikhtila town are favorite objects to record in history, to depict in visual arts, to describe in literature and to make old sayings and to sing in folk songs.

To mention but a few Myanmar old sayings and folk songs are "ရေမှာစစ်ကိုင်း၊ လှိုင်းမှာ ပုခန်းဝယ်၊ လယ်မှာ တောင်တွင်း၊ စပါးမှာ ရမည်းသင်း၊ အင်းမှာ တောင်သန်၊ ကန်မှာ မိတ္ထီလာ"

Sagaing is noted for water, Pakhan Ngeve is noted for waves, Taungdwingyi is noted for fields, Yamethin is noted for paddy.

Among Inns [aquatic bodies formed by flood] Taung Tha Man is the largest.

Among Lakes [aquatic bodies formed naturally artificially or both] Meikhtila Lake is the Largest. There is an old rhyme about Meikhtila Lake

ကြိုးကြာမသောက်၊ ရေနောက်၊ မပေါက် ရွှေကြာ မိတ္ထီလာ၊

In Meikhtila Lake no crane drinks its water. Its water is not muddy. No Lotus flower plant grows in it.

This old rhyme is to say that the Lake is clean and unpolluted because of constant maintenance. There used to be a water level marking post set up in the middle of the Lake, with a statue of a crane bird on its top. Water level of the Lake is maintained. So that it would never reach the mouth of the crane bird statue. Since Lake Water is clean and not muddy, aquatic plants like lotus cannot grow in it.

In one of Myanmar well-known lullabies [cradle songs to lull the baby to sleep] Meikhtila Lake is highlighted as follows:

လူတလေးရယ်၊ ချော့စရာ
မိတ္ထီလာ ကန်တော်အောက်က
ဖားကောက်ခဲ့ပါ၊
ဖားပါရင်တစ်ကောင်ပေးပါ
မျက်လုံးရယ်၊ ကြောင်တောင်တောင်နဲ့
ဖားကောင်းသော။

"In lulling baby to sleep
Go get a frog from Lake
Meikhtila's deep.
If you have got frogs
Give him one with peeping
eyes and a small body"

Meikhtila Lake was given its deserving tribute by reputed authors in different periods of Myanmar literary history in all literary forms prose, verse and drama or rhymed prose. Besides it is interesting to note how the Lake's name underwent changes until it became Meikhtila.

According to its early history, king Akarahta dug the Lake with his four armed forces Elephantry, cavalry, chariotny and Infantry] of 400,000 strength. At that time there were 'Jforests of Shi Shar trees growing profusely in that area. Shi Shar fruits were consumed by saint monks. The king named the Lake Shi Shar Kan. The next king who repaired the Lake was king Kutha of Savathi kingdom. He was followed by king Insena, grandfather of Lord Gotama Buddha, a wealthy man Anathapindika king Azatatha, and king Kala Soka of Vesali kingdom, who named the Lake Mingalar Kantaw.

After emperor Asoka, King Duthagamani of Ceylon [Lanka dipa] King Thumondarit of Sre Kestra and Popa Saw Rahan and Anawrahta, kings of Bagan dynasty maintained, repaired and renovated the Lake.

King Anawrahta installed sluices, spill ways and water gates to regulate the inflow and outflow of Lake water. A long post was set up in the middle of the Lake to measure the water level in all three seasons, Summer, Rain and Winter. A statue of a crane bird with its beak open was superimposed upon the post. "Let the crane never drinIc1 the lake water" which means that water level of the Lake shall never rise to reach beak, so that the Lake would never be flooded andits embankments be well preserved. All users of lake water in the neighboring towns and villages were assigned to the regular maintenance, repair, and renovation works at the Lake.

To ascertain the measurements and extent of the Lake, Anawrahta sent out one equestrian soldier who was his brother-in-law, as Anawrahta raised his sister to one of his lesser queens (concubines). The soldier set out early at the sun rise and returned late at night. After such a long journey to survey the Lake, he was totally exhausted breathing hard. He could only utter three words ဓမိလာ [water does not touch] and fell dead. He meant that the Lake water does not reach Mt Popa of Bagan. His sister wept and fell dead. They became Nat spirits whom king Anawrahta appointed Guardian nat spirits of the Lake. Anawrahta gave a new name to the Lake ma hti lar [မထီလာ] and also gave the same name to Shi Shar Town. In course of time, ma hti lar corrupted to Meikhtilar.

The following isthe List of 16kings and a wealthyman who built, maintained, repaired and renovated the Lake.

1. Aka Rahta
   Shi Shar Kantaw
2. Kusa
   Shi Shar Kantaw
3. Maha Insn, Kapilavathus kingdom.
   Grandfather of Lord Gotama Buddha
   Shi Shar Kantaw
4. Wealthly man Anathapindika. of Savathi
   Shi Shar Kantaw
5. Azatatha of Raj agraha
   Shi Shar Kantaw
6. Kala Soka of Vesali
   Mingala Kantaw
7. Asoka of Pataliputra
   Kalawaka Kantaw
8. Duhta gamani of Lankadipa [Ceylon]
   Shi Shar Kantaw
9. Thumondarit of Sre Kestra
   Metta Kantaw
10. Popa Saw Rahan of Bagan
    Shi Shar Kantaw
11. Anawrahta of Bagan
    Ma-hti-lar Kan, Shi Shar Town
12. Alaung Sithu of Bagan
    Metta Kan, Shi Shar Thingyi Town
13. Narapatisithu of Bagan
    Yey mya Kan, Shi Shar Thingyi Town
14. Mingyi Swasawke Inwa dynasty
    Shi Shar Kan, Ma-hti-lar Town
15. Nyaungyan Min, Nyaungyan dynasty
    Mingala Kan, Ma-hti-lar Town
16. Bodaw paya [Amarapura] First Konbaung dynasty
    Meikhtilar Kan
    Meikhtilar Town
17. Mindon [Ratanapon Mandalay]
    Meikhtilar Kan, Meikhtilar Town.

Today Meikhtilar Lake is to the west of Meikhtilar Town. It measures 7 miles long 1/2 mile wide, covering an area of 31/2 square miles. It is now composed of two Lakes-north Lake and south lake and a rail line crosses between them. But they are connected. In monsoon, water flowed into North Lake stays until it is silted and clear before if flows into South Lake. There are 11 sluices and a 30 feet wide water gate. It supplies water for human consumption and irrigation. Many monuments, stone inscriptions and Nat spirit shrines surround the Lake, recording its long history.

Stone Inscription at Loka Hteikpan Zedi. PHOTO: CHAN THAR (MEIKHTILA)

Indian man found dead in Royal ACE hotel in Nay Pyi Taw

AN Indian man who had come to Nay Pyi Taw for a meeting was found dead in his hotel room at the Royal ACE Hotel on 29 June.

Agriculture academic Mr. Nageswara Rao Vajaha arrived to Nay Pai Taw on Monday to attend a meeting being held by the Department of Hydrology and Meteorology on Tuesday.

When the man missed his second day meeting one Mr. Steven David, who had come to attend the same meeting, inquired about him with the hotel staff, who found the body inside room 1633.

The corpse was sent to the general hospital for a post-mortem which revealed heart disease, liver damaged and a bloody nose. "According to the autopsy, he had heart disease. We have contacted the Indian embassy and informed them of his death", said Police from Dekkhinathiri.—*Thein Ko Lwin*

Tatmadaw enters football match against Laotian Armed Forces

A FRIENDLY football match between the Myanmar Defence Service's football team and the Lao People's Armed Force's football team ended with a goalless draw at the Zeyarthiri Tatmadaw sports ground in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Before the match, Adjutant-General Lt-Gen Hsan Oo, Commander Brig-Gen Moe Myint Tun and Col Bountao Thongmanila of the Lao People's Armed Forces greeted the players of both teams.

Among the spectators were Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and his wife, Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win and his wife, the Union Minister for Defence and his wife, the Commander-in-Chief (Navy) and his wife and other senior military officers.

Tatmadaw enters football match against Laotian Armed Force. Photo: MNA

Volleyball and Sepak Takraw teams from the Tatmadaw and the Lao People's Armed Forces will play against one another at Zeyarthiri Stadium today.— *Myanmar News Agency*

May seen as front-runner after Johnson quits race for British PM

LONDON — Britain's Home Secretary Theresa May is seen as the main beneficiary after former Mayor of London Boris Johnson, who successfully led the campaign for Britain to leave the European Union, sensationally quit the race Thursday to become the next Conservative party leader and prime minister.

Johnson was widely tipped as the favourite to succeed Prime Minister David Cameron who announced his plan to step down following the referendum.

"Having consulted colleagues, and in view of the circumstances in Parliament, I have concluded that person (the next prime minister) cannot be me," Johnson said. Johnson's announcement followed a decision by his key ally in the Leave campaign, Michael Gove, to put his name forward for the center-right Conservative party leadership. With Johnson out of the running, May's bid for the premiership is picking up support, with more than 70 Conservative members of parliament now supporting her, including three cabinet ministers, according to the BBC. Gove, who was widely expected to back Johnson's leadership campaign, said, "Boris Johnson cannot provide the leadership or build the team for the task ahead."

Reports suggest Leave campaigners questioned Johnson's commitment to curb immigration from other European Union states which was a key plank of the Leave campaign.

Including May and Gove, five candidates have put their names forward in the race to succeed Cameron. The others in the running are Stephen Crabb who was in the Remain camp and two Leave campaigners, Liam Fox and Andrea Leadsom.

May said she can provide the "strong leadership" the country needs and will negotiate the best possible terms with the European Union in the renegotiation talks which she said should begin next year. On the discussions, she said, "It must be a priority to allow British companies to trade with the single market in goods and services, but also to regain more control of the numbers of people coming here from Europe."—*Kyodo News*

US sailors divulged sensitive information while held by Iran: Navy

WASHINGTON — US sailors who blundered into Iranian waters in January divulged sensitive information to their captors while held at gunpoint by Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, a US Navy report said on Thursday.

It said some of the 10 crew members gave away capabilities of their vessels, one of them disclosing his vessel's potential speed and suggesting it was on a "presence" mission to demonstrate US military power in the Gulf. The incident, which embarrassed the United States, rattled nerves days before implementation of a US-nuclear accord between Iran and world powers negotiated by the administration of US President Barack Obama.

"It is clear that some, if not all, crew members provided at least some information to interrogators beyond name, rank, service number and date of birth," the report said. The report redacted names, but the Navy last week identified the commander of the boats' task force as Captain Kyle Moses and said he had been relieved of his command. In May, the Navy fired Eric Rasch, commander of the squadron that included the sailors.

The report said two people had faced administrative action and it recommended action on six others. The Navy report blamed the incident on poor planning, leaders who did not properly consider risks, and complacency, a lack of oversight and low morale. The sailors were travelling in two vessels to Bahrain from Kuwait.

At a Thursday news conference, Navy officials acknowledged that the crew and commanders had made serious mistakes. "Our actions on that day in January and this incident did not live up to our expectations of our Navy," Chief of Naval Operations Admiral John Richardson said. "Big incidents like this are always the result of the accumulation of a number of small problems."

Problems had plagued the mission from the beginning. The task force commander ordered the 250-nautical-mile transit, the longest the crews had attempted, on short notice, and "severely underestimated" the transit's risks.

"He lacked a questioning attitude, failed to promote a culture of safety, and disregarded appropriate backup from his staff and subordinate commands," the report said.

The boats' captains and crew did not review or follow their planned course from the moment they left port, the report said, and inadvertently went through Saudi Arabian territorial waters before entering Iranian waters off the coast of Iran's Farsi Island in the Gulf.

At one point, the crew members did not realise they were near Farsi Island because none of them zoomed into their navigation system's map. — *Reuters*

An undated picture released by Iran's Revolutionary Guards website shows American sailors sitting in an unknown place in Iran. PHOTO: REUTERS

NEWS IN BRIEF

Turkish police detain 11 more suspects over airport attack — media

ISTANBUL — Turkish police detained 11 foreigners suspected of being members of an Islamic State cell in Istanbul linked to the suicide bombers who staged the attack this week at Istanbul's main airport, broadcaster Haberturk said on its website on Friday.

The arrests in the dawn raid, by a counter-terror police squad in the Basaksehir district on the European side of the city, brought the number of people detained in the investigation to 24, it said.

A police spokesman could not confirm the report, which was also carried by other media.

Three suspected Islamic State suicide bombers killed 44 people in a gun and bomb attack at Istanbul's main airport on Tuesday, the deadliest in a string of attacks in Turkey this year. The suspected suicide bombers were Russian, Uzbek and Kyrgyz nationals, a Turkish government official said on Thursday.—*Reuters*

Malaysia, China, Australia to discuss next step in search for Flight MH370

KUALA LUMPUR — Government ministers from Malaysia, Australia and China will meet in Kuala Lumpur on 19 July to discuss the future of the search for missing Malaysia Airlines flight MH370, Malaysian state news agency Bernama reported on Friday.

Flight MH370, carrying 239 passengers and crew, disappeared on 8 March, 2014 enroute from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing. A wing part, known as a flaperon, washed up on the French island of Reunion in July 2015.

An underwater search operation for the aircraft, which disappeared two years ago, is underway, spanning 120,000 square kilometres of the southern Indian Ocean.

According to Bernama, Transport Minister Liow Tiong Lai said the meeting would focus what to do once the search of the designated area is completed. "We (Australia, China and Malaysia) will not call off the search. We are committed to completing the 120,000 sq km search — so far, we have completed 107,000 sq km.—*Reuters*

Italy elected to UN council for 2017 in deal with Netherlands

UNITED NATIONS — The United Nations General Assembly elected Italy to fill the final UN Security Council seat for 2017 on Wednesday after voting between Italy and The Netherlands was deadlocked and the pair agreed to split the two-year term on the council.

Italy has pledged to step down after one year to allow The Netherlands to be elected to the council by the 193-member General Assembly for 2018. The countries vowed to work closely together during the full two-year term.

The General Assembly elected Sweden, Kazakhstan, Ethiopia and Bolivia on Tuesday to replace Angola, Malaysia, New Zealand, Spain and Venezuela on the council beginning on 1 January, 2017. But the Netherlands and Italy were tied with 95 votes each. UN spokesman Farhan Haq said there had been previous cases of countries sharing terms on the Security Council, citing five occasions in the 1950s and 1960s.

"It's less than ideal," said a senior UN diplomat, speaking on condition of anonymity. "Broadly speaking, non-permanent members perform more strongly in their second year."—*Reuters*

Nine killed in cloudburst in northern India

NEW DELHI — At least nine people have been killed in a cloudburst that triggered heavy rains and flash floods in the northern Indian state of Uttarkhand in the past 24 hours, a senior police official said Friday.

"Nine bodies have been recovered so far from Chamoli and Didihat areas in the hilly state's Pithoragarh district. Several people have also sustained injuries and many houses washed away in flash floods," he said, on condition of anonymity.

According to weather department, more than 54 mm rain has been recorded in Uttarakhand in the past 24 hours and showers are likely to continue for the next two days. "More rains mean more devastation though disaster management officials are on standby," a weather official said. Local TV channels showed footage of the Alaknanda river rising above the danger level mark and reported that National Highway-5 has been blocked due to heavy rains and landslide near Devprayag, while another key stretch, Thal-Munsyari Road, has been cut-off and dozens of vehicles stranded. Cloudbursts and flash floods are common in the Uttarakhand. In June 2013, a multi-day cloudburst centered on the state caused devastating floods and landslides, claiming the lives of over 5,700 people, thus becoming the country's worst natural disaster since the 2004 tsunami. –*Xinhua*

US, Russia discuss Syria cooperation if Assad halts some strikes

WASHINGTON — The Obama administration is considering a plan to coordinate air strikes on Nusra Front and Islamic State militants in Syria if Syria'a government stops bombing moderate rebels, US officials said on Thursday.

The US backs the moderate rebels, who are under pressure from Islamic State and government forces, but the plan depends in part on whether Russia is willing to press Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, its ally, to stop bombing them, Many US officials and outside experts doubt Moscow is willing to do that. It also would require moderate opposition forces to disentangle themselves from Nusra and move into identifiable areas where they would be vulnerable to government and Russian air attacks.

Although Russia says it has targeted Islamic State, most of its strikes have been on the US-backed moderate rebels, who distrust the Assad government, which they and Washington have accused of most of the ceasefire violations.

"If the moderates separate themselves from Nusra, immediately the Russians and Assad go kill them," said Chris Harmer, an analyst with the Institute for the Study of War. "The idea that the moderate rebels will separate themselves from Nusra is just not going to happen. It (the administration plan) is a Hail Mary pass that is dead on arrival."

Residents walk past damaged buildings in the rebel held area of Aleppo's Bab al-Hadeed district, Syria, on 27 June 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

"It's staggering to me that anybody even at year five of this civil war thought this would be a good idea," said Harmer.

The Washington Post, which first reported the plan, said the Obama administration has submitted a written proposal to Moscow, but two US officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, said that while the plan is under discussion within the administration, no decisions have been made. A "HAIL MARY" PASS?

That Washington is even considering such a plan, however, reflects the unravelling of a 27 February cessation of hostilities agreement that was supposed to bring some calm to a country riven by five years of civil war and promote a political settlement, as well as the weakness of the US-backed moderate opposition forces.

In one sign of their predicament, US-backed Syrian rebels on Wednesday were pushed back from Al-Bukamal, an Islamic State-held town on the Iraq border, suffering casualties and seeing some of their fighters and arms captured, a rebel source said.

Finally, targeting the Nusra Front could end up boosting the popularity of the al Qaeda affiliate, which is widely hailed by anti-government Syrians as the most effective fighting force seeking to oust Assad.

Prospects for a political deal to end the conflict appear dim, not least because there is no agreement on the future of Assad, whom the United States wants to step down, but whom Russia has supported with its military intervention since last September.

UN Syria envoy Staffan De Mistura is in Washington this week to meet senior US officials to discuss efforts to reduce attacks on civilians and the provision of humanitarian aid as he "continues to work to advance a political transition," National Security Council spokesman Carl Woog said on Thursday. —*Reuters*

UN expects residents to start returning to Falluja by August

BAGHDAD — The United Nations said Iraqi authorities will allow civilians displaced by the assault on Islamic State-held Falluja to start returning home as early as August.

More than 85,000 people fled their homes during a month-long campaign that ended on Sunday when Iraqi authorities declared they had completely recaptured the city, an hour's drive west of Baghdad.

A report on Thursday from the UN refugee agency UNHCR, noting the government's plans, said the level of destruction will make their return difficult in the short term and explosives would pose a hazard to residents.

The civilians at government-run camps, who make up about a third of Falluja's total population before Islamic State took over 2-1/2 years ago, are currently relying on handouts from the United Nations and aid groups.

Lack of funding means many do not have adequate shelter, food or water amid temperatures exceeding 50 degrees Celsius (122 Fahrenheit). Humanitarian agencies fear poor sanitation could spread infectious diseases like cholera and skin diseases in addition to exacerbating chronic illnesses. —*Reuters*

Destroyed vehicles from clashes are seen in Falluja, Iraq, after government forces recaptured the city from Islamic State militants, on 30 June 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Syrian warplane crashes near Damascus due to malfunction

DAMASCUS — A Syrian warplane crashed on Friday east of the capital Damascus as a result of a malfunction, state-run TV said.

The war jet crashed in the eastern countryside of Damascus, after the pilot succeeded to eject himself, said the report. It added that search is ongoing for the pilot.

The report spelled no details about the exact crash site, as the eastern countryside of Damascus is largely under the control of the rebels, who have downed several planes during the five-year-old crisis. Last month, a warplane was also crashed in the central province of Hama, in what the official media reports said was a malfunction.

The report comes as the oppositional Syrian Observatory for Human Rights accused the government forces of killing 18 people by shelling on the town of Otaya in eastern Damascus on Thursday amid an ongoing military operations in parts of the Eastern Ghouta suburb of Damascus.—*Xinhua*

Iran's Rouhani accuses West of exploiting Sunni-Shi'ite rift, raps Israel

ANKARA — Iran's President Hassan Rouhani accused Western powers of trying to exploit differences between the world's Sunni and Shi'ite Muslims to divert attention from the Israel-Palestinian conflict, state television reported on Friday.

Rouhani's comments came as tens of thousands of Iranians joined anti-Israel rallies across the country to mark the annual al-Quds Day, established by the late founder of the Islamic Republic, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

The protesters condemned the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories and chanted "Death to Israel" and "Death to America".

"The global arrogance (the United States and its allies) wants to create discord among Muslims ... Unity is the only way to restore stability in the region," Rouhani said.

"We stand with the dispossessed Palestinian nation."

Opposition to Israel, which Tehran refuses to recognise, has been a cornerstone of Iranian policy since its 1979 Islamic revolution. Shi'ite Muslim Iran backs Palestinian and Lebanese militant groups who oppose peace with Israel.

"The Zionist regime (Israel) is a regional base for America and the global arrogance ... Disunity and discord among Muslim and terrorist groups in the region ... have diverted us from the important issue of Palestine," Rouhani said.

Shi'ite-led Iran has repeatedly called on its Sunni Muslim rival Saudi Arabia to help improve their strained bilateral relations and work for stability in the Middle East. Arch-rivals for regional hegemony, the two oil producers are on opposite sides in proxy battles in the region, where they back competing factions in Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Lebanon and Bahrain.

Ties have worsened since Riyadh's execution in January of prominent Shi'ite cleric Nimr al-Nimr prompted attacks on the Saudi embassy in Tehran. Saudi Arabia subsequently cut all ties with Iran.

Riyadh is worried that a landmark nuclear deal reached between Iran, the United States and five other major powers in 2015 will help Tehran gain the upper hand in their regional standoff.—*Reuters*

Trump floats idea of using NATO in fight against Islamic State

WASHINGTON — Republican Donald Trump said on Thursday that if elected president 8 November he would be open to drawing NATO forces into the fight against Islamic State militants in a new mission for an alliance he has called obsolete.

Trump made the comments in an interview with ABC News. The presumptive Republican presidential nominee has for months raised questions about the money the United States pours into NATO, which he says needs to be reconfigured to take account of today's threats.

"I like the idea of using NATO and also neighbours that aren't in NATO and take them out. You gotta take them out," Trump said.

Under President Barack Obama, the United States has relied heavily on US airstrikes to attack Islamic State targets in Syria and Iraq. Republicans have criticized this policy as not enough to stop the militants.

Trump said the idea of using the Cold War-era alliance would be to ease the load on American forces.

"I don't want to get too much of ours involved. I want NATO to be involved," Trump said. "We spend a tremendous amount of money on NATO. We take care of countries that frankly should be taking care of themselves in terms of economically."

Trump's comments came amid an uproar over a meeting between former President Bill Clinton and Attorney General Loretta Lynch at a time when Clinton's wife, Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton, is under federal investigation.

The private meeting took place on Lynch's plane after she landed in Phoenix on Monday night and Bill Clinton was leaving the airport after a rally he held for his wife earlier that day.

Hillary Clinton is under an FBI investigation for her use of a private email server when she was President Barack Obama's first-term secretary of state.

Trump told conservative radio talk show host Mike Gallagher that the meeting was proof of his charge that the US political system is "rigged" in favour of political elites.

"It's unheard of," Trump told ABC News. "You have this massive investigation on emails and they'd have a meeting like this."

Lynch, appointed to her position by Obama more than a year ago, said she did not discuss the email investigation or other pending matters before the Justice Department with Bill Clinton.

"When I was landing at the airport, I did see President Clinton at the Phoenix airport as I was leaving and he spoke to myself and my husband on the plane," Lynch told reporters.

"Our conversation was a great deal about grandchildren. It was primarily social and about our travels. He mentioned the golf he played in Phoenix and he mentioned travels he had to West Virginia...But there was no discussion of any matter pending for the department or any matter pending before any other body," Lynch said.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation is investigating Hillary Clinton about her email use and has already interviewed some of her aides. The investigation into whether laws were broken as a result of the server kept in her New York home has overshadowed Clinton's campaign.—*Reuters*

Demonstrators shout slogans as they hold pictures of Ahmet Nesin, Sebnem Korur Fincanci and Erol Onderoglu during a protest against an arrest of three prominent campaigners for press freedom, in front of the pro-Kurdish Ozgur Gundem newspaper in central Istanbul, Turkey, on 21 June 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Turkish court frees two press-freedom campaigners, third still in jail

ISTANBUL — Turkey released two prominent press-freedom activists from prison on Thursday following international condemnation of their detention, but their prosecution on terrorism-related charges will proceed, a lawyer said.

Erol Onderoglu of Reporters Without Borders (RSF) and Sebnem Korur Fincanci, president of Turkey's Human Rights Foundation, were freed by a court, lawyer Fikret Ilkiz told Reuters.

Journalist Ahmet Nesin, jailed with Fincanci and Onderoglu on 20 June, remained in pre-trial detention, media said.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said last week the arrests caused great concern and called for Onderoglu to be prompted freed.

Turkey, a candidate for the European Union, ranks 151 out of 180 nations on RSF's World Press Freedom Index. RSF accuses Erdogan of an "offensive against Turkey's media" that includes censorship and harassment. Up to 30 journalists are in jail.

The indictment against the three activists calls for up to 14-1/2 years in prison on charges of terrorist propaganda after they joined a "solidarity campaign" with 50 others to guest-edit the pro-Kurdish newspaper Ozgur Gundem for a day each.

Ozgur Gundem focuses on Turkey's conflict with Kurds fighting for autonomy and has faced scores of investigations, fines and the arrest of a dozen correspondents since 2014.

The government denies jailing journalists for their work, saying they are prosecuted for criminal wrongdoing. Ankara is waging a military campaign to stamp out the renewal of a Kurdish insurgency. Thousands have been killed in the past year.—*Reuters*

Argentina, Peru seek closer energy ties with Chile

FRUTILLAR, (Chile) — Argentine President Mauricio Macri and Peruvian President-elect Pedro Pablo Kuczynski urged their South American counterparts at the Pacific Alliance trade bloc summit on Thursday to deepen energy ties across the region. "Considering the new discoveries we've made in non-traditional energy, as I've discussed with Chile's President (Michelle) Bachelet, I believe the only path forward is to think about a unified energy matrix for Argentina and Chile," Macri told a packed theatre in picturesque Frutillar. "And let's hope to integrate Bolivia, Brazil, Uruguay and Paraguay," he said. Despite being home to one of the world's biggest shale oil formations, Argentina has for years been a net energy importer as the vast Vaca Muerta formation has remained mostly untapped.

Royal Dutch Shell's head of unconventional business said earlier this month that the company hoped to launch an early production well this year at Vaca Muerta, considered the world's No.2 shale resource after North America.—*Reuters*

Smugglers use Uber-registered drivers to move migrants to US border

MEXICO CITY — Human traffickers are finding increasingly creative ways of shuttling Central American migrants through Mexico to the US border and that includes hiring Uber-registered drivers.

On 10 June, five vehicles carrying 34 Central American migrants were apprehended while traveling together between the northern Mexican states of Zacatecas and Coahuila, said Segismundo Doguin, a Coahuila state official at the National Migration Institute (INM).

Four of the vehicles were linked to the Uber Technologies Inc [UBER.UL] platform, Doguin said, but it was unclear whether the human smugglers had hailed the drivers using the Uber app. The drivers said they were not the owners of the cars but worked as Uber chauffeurs, he said.

Uber Mexico said in a statement that it bore no responsibility but was cooperating with authorities.

"The company does not own the cars registered on the platform, nor does it employ the drivers, who are independent contractors," Uber said.

There has been a sharp rise in the number of Central American children and families trying to reach the United States this year, a hot button issue in the US presidential race. Republican candidate Donald Trump has vowed to build a wall along the US-Mexican border to keep them out.

Mexican migration officials attribute the increase to migrants finding new routes past checkpoints, increasingly through varied forms of transport.

"First we saw them on trains, then on buses, then on trucks and today we see them in rented vehicles," Doguin told Reuters by telephone on Wednesday.—*Reuters*

Nobel laureates urge Greenpeace to stop opposing GMOs

WASHINGTON — More than 100 Nobel laureates called on the international environmental group Greenpeace on Thursday to end its opposition to genetically modified crops, saying there is a scientific consensus they are safe and can benefit society.

At a news conference, the scientists cited in particular the value of a genetically modified rice used to prevent some illnesses related to vitamin A deficiency in much of the developing world.

"Golden Rice" produces beta carotene in the grain, which rice does not do in the natural world.

The laureates called on Greenpeace specifically to stop opposing the grain, as well as related biotechnology that they say has a positive impact across the globe.

"The time has come that we now know these things are safe," Nobel laureate Sir Richard Roberts said. "The basic method does not lead necessarily to a bad thing."

Activists of environmental group Greenpeace wear masks and protective clothing while protesting outside the European Commission headquarters in Brussels in 2012. PHOTO: REUTERS

He said the group could influence other organisations and parties opposing GMOs.

Greenpeace officials called the event a publicity stunt.

It contends that Golden Rice could contaminate non-genetically engineered rice and make it hard for people in developing countries to avoid such products. It said other efforts to address nutrition needs in developing areas of the world should be funded and implemented.

"We've been attacked in countries around the world because we're working with farmers and communities on the threat they face from GMOs," said Charlie Cray, a senior researcher with Greenpeace. "The real issue here is: Why are they doing a press conference in Washington DC a week before there is a major vote in GMO labeling?"

The US Senate is scheduled to take a procedural vote next week on a bill that could pre-empt Vermont's GMO labeling law, set to take effect on 1 July. The laureates say science backs them up and urged Greenpeace to re-examine which findings the group uses in its advocacy.

"They are willing to dismiss the views of the vast majority of scientists," said Randy Schekman, who won a Nobel in physiology or medicine in 2013. "What I fail to understand is their acceptance of science and the scientific process when it serves their purposes, but in their opposition, they oppose the view of scientists."—*Reuters*

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

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

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

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

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Tarzan swings again in screen tale of rescue and revenge

LOS ANGELES — Tarzan may have left the jungle, but the call of the wild proves too irresistible for the vine-swinging hero as he is lured back to the African forests, only to find himself racing to save his kidnapped wife and the Congolese people in a new film.

"The Legend of Tarzan," due in US theaters on Friday, sees Tarzan, played by Swedish actor Alexander Skarsgard, going by the name John Clayton, living in a manor in Victorian England and married to Jane, played by Margot Robbie.

But an invitation to the Congo draws the Claytons back, where they are ambushed and Jane is kidnapped by the nefarious Leon Rom (Christoph Waltz), who has been tasked with delivering Tarzan to a tribal chief in exchange for diamonds.

"It's more about the traditional story in reverse, so we go back to the Congo rather than beginning there," actress Margot Robbie told Reuters.

Skarsgard, best known for playing a vampire in HBO's "True Blood" series, is the latest star to play Tarzan, bulking up his physique over nine months to embody the jungle hero's strength and animal-like agility.

Cast members (L-R) Christoph Waltz, Alexander Skarsgard, Margot Robbie, Samuel L. Jackson and Djimon Hounsou pose at the premiere of the movie "The Legend of Tarzan" in Hollywood, California, on 27 June 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

"A transformation as an actor is always exciting," Skarsgard said. "It was tough physically and mentally sometimes as well because you're so isolated from friends and family for nine months. It wasn't tough in a way because I was so excited and motivated."

The fictional story of Tarzan, based on the books by Edgar Rice Burroughs, is weaved into the real life story of African-American historian George Washington Williams, who travelled to the Congo and condemned Belgium's King Leopold II for his harsh and brutal treatment of the Congolese people.

In the film, Samuel L. Jackson plays Williams, who helps save the Congolese people from being enslaved by Belgium's military.

"It's one way of giving it some historical accuracy," Jackson said. "This was actually something that was going on in the Congo at the time and (King Leopold) is responsible for one of the biggest holocausts in Africa."

Much of the Time Warner Inc-owned Warner Bros. film was shot on sets built to look like jungles.

Director David Yates, best known for directing four "Harry Potter" films, said the attraction of "Tarzan" for him was in its grand scope.

"This just seemed to me epic, beautiful sense of adventure, big beating heart, lots of action and themes I really responded to," he said.—*Reuters*

Lindsay Lohan to pen book on her life experiences

Lindsay Lohan. PHOTO: REUTERS

LOS ANGELES — Actress Lindsay Lohan is planning to write a tell-all book based on her life experiences.

Through the book the "Freaky Friday" star, who turns 30 this year, aims to help people in overcoming the problems they face, reported E! online.

"I am in the process of writing a book, and I am very excited to share my personal experiences in life and how to overcome obstacles.

"I am grateful that I have a voice, which I can now feel comfortable using as a platform to let people know that we all have ups and downs in life, and we can all come up from the downs if we get in touch with our inner self and spiritual side," Lohan said. The "Mean Girls" actor feels proud of herself for being strong and accepting her faults. "I hope that my words will connect with those who need some guidance when (or) if they are in a tough place," she added. —*PTI*

Justin Bieber falls during concert

LOS ANGELES — Singer Justin Bieber had an unfortunate moment during his Jacksonville concert when he fell on stage.

The 22-year-old pop star, who has had his fair share of accidents this week, fell down during his gig last night, reported E! online.

Bieber was taken down by the wet floor while performing his hit single "Sorry".

The popstar, instead of being careful, decided to have fun and splashed around with his dancers. But, one kick made him slip and land on the floor.

However, he took it upon himself to turn the embarrassing moment into a motivational one. "Life's about taking falls and life's about getting back up!" he said to his fans, while getting up from the stage.

The fans at the concert caught the moment on camera and shared it online.

The "Love Yourself" hitmaker has been in similar situations before. Earlier this month Bieber fell into a trap door on stage during his concert in Canada.—*PTI*

Rita Ora to host America's Next Top Model

LONDON — Singer Rita Ora will reportedly replace Tyra Banks as the host of US TV show "America's Next Top Model".

The 25-year-old singer quit the British version of "The X Factor" earlier this year to concentrate on her music career, reported Femalefirst.

"Rita is in a dream world as she's landed the ultimate gig. She'll be mixing her two passions of fashion and music and taking over from a TV institution in Tyra," a source said.

"'Next Top Model' bosses wanted to inject some freshness back into the format and they see Rita as the ideal new face. She is releasing a new single later this year to coincide with it," the source added.

The show ran for 22 series over the space of 12 years before the CW Network pulled it last year but it has been picked up again by VH1 and former host Tyra will remain as an executive producer.—*PTI*

Rita Ora. PHOTO: REUTERS

Brunei keeps fireworks ban during Hari Raya festival

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN — The complete ban of sales and use of fireworks stands, said the Royal Brunei Police Force (RBPF).

The RBPF said Thursday that no permits have been issued to any companies in Brunei for the sale of fireworks, even in the upcoming Hari Raya festival celebration. The move, said Acting Director of Operation Senior Superintendent Pg Hj Muhammad in a press conference held at the RBPF Headquarters, was to further ensure the safety of the people during the celebration.

Fireworks played late at night also disturb the community's peace, he said, as there may be people who need the silence to rest.

The acting director reminded members of the public that the selling, owning or importing of firecrackers and fireworks is an offence under Brunei's Chapter 58 of the Firearms and Explosives Act.

"It is an offence liable to a jail term of not less than five years and not more than 15 years, and a minimum of three strokes and maximum of 12 strokes of canes, as well as a fine up to 3,000 Brunei dollars (2,230 US dollars) if found guilty," he said.—*Xinhua*

Asar Pandhra festival marked in Nepal

LALITPUR — Foreigners covered with mud participate in the Asar Pandhra festival in Nuwakot, Nepal, on 29 June 2016. The festival, which falls on "Asar 15" of the Nepalese calendar, is marked with music, dance and playing with mud during rice transplanting. PHOTO: XINHUA

An igloo with a view ... Australians go to the polls in Antarctica

SYDNEY — In an igloo overlooking Vincennes Bay, Antarctica, 27 Australians did their democratic duty and cast ballots on Friday, the day before the rest of the nation votes in a general election.

"It's about minus 20 degrees today and not much breeze, so we thought the igloo would be a good place to do it," said Adam McLaughlin, who doubles as an electrician at Australia's Casey Station on the frozen continent as well as being the electoral returning officer for the base.

Voting is compulsory in Australia and, thousands of kilometres away on the mainland, conservative Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull and centre-left Labour opposition leader Bill Shorten were making their final pitches to skeptical voters on Friday at the end of an unusually long eight-week campaign.

Opinion polls published have the race too close to call.

Not surprisingly, the campaign has not come to Antarctica, where the last contact with the outside world was a resupply visit in April. The next ship is due in October.

"It's pretty good being down here because we do escape that constant bombardment through the media," McLaughlin told Reuters by telephone.

Australia's Antarctic expeditioners do not elect their own member of parliament, their votes counting towards results in their home electorates. McLaughlin's home is Bramston Beach, 6,000 km (3,725 miles) away in tropical North Queensland state.

His home electorate is a gigantic 568,993 sq km (220,080 sq miles) that stretches from the ocean through sugar cane and banana farms to the arid Outback, with mining and grazing interests thrown in for good measure.

"It's about as different from here as you can get, it's one extreme to the other," McLaughlin said.

The votes he collects at Casey Station will be kept under lock and key until polls close on Saturday night.

McLaughlin will then count them and telephone the results through with those from other Australian Antarctic bases to election officials in Hobart on the island state of Tasmania, 3,445 km (2,140 miles) to the northeast.

The Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) has 41 mobile voting teams to attend to more than 400 remote polling booths in the vast nation.

Norfolk Islanders, thousands of kilometres off Australia's east coast, will be voting in their first federal election, an AEC spokesman said, after a law absorbing the previously self-governing territory into the Australian federation took effect on Friday.—*Reuters*

Voters stationed at the Casey Research Station in Antarctica pose with their ballots for the Australian federal election in this handout picture taken by Michael Brill of the Australian Antarctic Division, on 28 June 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

MRTV Entertainment Channel

(2-7-2016, Saturday)

06 : 00 pm
- Weather Report
- Cartoon Programme " Inside Out " (Part-1)

06 : 50 pm
- Safari World

07 : 00 pm
- Cassette Recordings

08 : 10 pm
- MRTV Entertainment Music

08 : 30 pm
- The Stories of The Great Souls (Mar Mar Aye) (Episode -1) Music

09 : 20 pm
- International Movie Songs

09 : 30 pm
- Travelogue "Chaung Tha at its peak period"

09 : 40 pm
- Music Programme

10 : 00 pm
- Myanmar Video

Midnight
Close Down

3-7-2016 (Sunday)
* 01 : 30 Am Live: EURO 2016 " Germany Vs Italy "

From 2-7-2016 (Saturday) 6:00 pm
To 3-7-2016 (Sunday) 6:00 pm

mitv Myanmar International

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

Today Fresh

07:03	Am	News
07:26	Am	Great Shwedagon- The Prayer Halls and Buddha Images (Part-2)
07:53	Am	Next Generation: Nyan Kyal Say
08:03	Am	News
08:26	Am	Come Beat Eggs For Fun & Reward
08:48	Am	Safari World
09:03	Am	News
09:26	Am	Five Hair Relic Enshrined Pagodas
09:39	Am	A Visit To Ye
10:03	Am	News
10:26	Am	A Street Vendor "Spreading Knowledge"

(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
07:27	Pm	Myanmar's Traditions and Culture "The Golden Land"
07:47	Pm	Today Myanmar: Squatter Issue in Yangon
08:03	Pm	News
08:26	Pm	The Writer: Chit Oo Nyo (Part- I)
08:51	Pm	Myanmar Masterclass: Artist Khin Maung Zaw

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

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

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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‘Kid’ trouble for coach Santos as Portugal progress

MARSEILLE — Portuguese coach Fernando Santos said his hardest task will be keeping his “kids” grounded after they advanced to the semi-finals with a win over Poland on Thursday.

More than a third of Sanches’ 23-man squad are under the age of 25, with 18-year old Renato Sanches producing a match-winning performance in his first start. He became the youngest player to score in a knockout stage game at the Euros.

“I have to manage everything because for these kids ... it’s a dream,” said Santos, whose team will play either Belgium or Wales in next Wednesday’s semi-final.

“They are playing for their country, they have reached the semis and now anything can happen. It is a dream for me, but I imagine it is an even bigger dream for my players.”

Santos put faith in his youngsters in the quarter-final, with João Mário (23) William Carvalho (24) and Cédric (24) all joining Sanches in the starting side and the coach felt conceding an early goal may have been down to a lack of experience.

Portugal’s Ricardo Quaresma celebrates with team mates after winning the penalty shootout during the EURO 2016 at Quarter Final, Stade Velodrome, Marseille, France on 30 June 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

“Some of them (my players) have reached this stage for the first time and some of their heads are up in the clouds because they are dreaming of what’s happening.”

Shortly after they went behind, Santos hauled over Sanches — the youngest player to start for Portugal in a major tournament — for a chat.

Although he would not divulge what was said, it seemed to make the difference.

Sanches went on to equalise just after the half hour mark, followed captain Cristiano Ronaldo’s lead to convert the second penalty in the shootout, and won his second successive man-of-the-match award.

But Santos was eager to take the spotlight off his young midfielder.

“He still has a lot to offer and is still growing. The Renato you see today, I think this is not the future Renato,” he said.

“He has to take all his qualities and put it all on the pitch and it is my job to help organise his type of play.”—*Reuters*

Bolt staves off false starts to move into 100m semi-finals

KINGSTON — Usain Bolt negotiated a series of delays and a false start in his own race before easily winning his quarter-final of the 100m in 10.15 seconds at Jamaica’s national championships on Friday.

Although sluggish from the blocks, the world record holder separated from the field after 40 metres before cruising across the line with the quarter-finals’ joint second fastest time.

The six-time Olympic gold medallist, however, was upset at the amount of time he had to wait before getting to run after a succession of false starts in other races.

“It’s just the whole system which bothers me, you know I was out there too long,” Bolt told Reuters after warming down.

“They (organisers) just sent everybody out and a whole lot of false starts and I was in the last heat and I kind of got cold so I didn’t feel as fluent as I wanted to and that’s what I was really annoyed about.

“If I can get through that then I’ll be fine.”

Nickel Ashmeade, who win the third of the four quarter-finals, was the fastest qualifier in a time of 10.07 seconds. Asafa Powell clocked 10.17, while Yohan Blake and Kemar Bailey-Cole both recorded 10.26. The semi-finals and final are on Friday.

Two-time Olympic champion Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce (11.38), Simone Facey (11.31), Elaine Thompson (11.38) and Veronica Campbell-Brown won their heats in the women’s 100 to move into the semi-finals.—*Reuters*

Yohan Blake (L), Usain Bolt (C) and Asafa Powell in action during men’s 100m race at Kingston on 11 June 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Regal Murray hurries into round three

LONDON — Andy Murray produced the kind of imperious form that has propelled him into two grand slam finals this year as he beat Taiwan’s Lu Yen-hsun 6-3, 6-2, 6-1 in the Wimbledon second round on Thursday.

Lu, the son of a chicken farmer, ruffled a few feathers on Centre Court when he jumped out to a 2-0 lead before extending it to 3-1 in the opening set.

However, once Murray had levelled for 3-3, it did not take him long to clip his rival’s wings.

From 3-2 up in the second set, Murray won seven games on the trot as Lu struggled to find a way to keep pace with Murray’s potent ground strokes. A Lu double fault on match point allowed Murray to hurry off court for a royal audience with Camilla, the Duchess of Cornwall. After huffing and puffing his way through five-setters in the first two rounds of the French Open, Murray was relieved that his start to the grass court major was much more serene. Six sets contested, six sets won. “It’s always difficult to know how close you are to being your best. But I was hitting the ball clean. I was happy with how I played,” said the world number two, who will next face Australian John Millman. Lu, affectionately known as Rendy on the tour, had handed Murray a chastening defeat in the first round of the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

Since then, however, the man who beat Andy Roddick to reach the 2010 Wimbledon quarter-finals has failed to win a set against the Scot in four subsequent meetings.

On a comeback trail after being out of action for four months having undergone right elbow surgery in January, Lu had come into the match on an 11-match winning streak on grass after claiming two Challenger titles in the run up to Wimbledon.—*Reuters*

Great Britain’s Andy Murray celebrates winning his match against Chinese Taipei’s Yen-Hsun Lu at Wimbledon, England on 30 June 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

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