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TAKE THE FIGHT TO THE SOURCE

Amyotha Hluttaw calls on govt to step up efforts in nationwide fight against drug trafficking

Thein Ko Lwin

FOLLOWING a two-day debate on the elimination of drug abuse and trafficking in the country by 17 lawmakers in the Amyotha Hluttaw, the parliament yesterday unanimously decided to call on the government to speed up its efforts in cracking down on drug crime.

The Myanmar Police Force will seek a budget allocation from the Union Government and at the same time it will expand organisational set up and amend the laws related to narcotic drugs, said Maj-Gen Aung Soe, Deputy Minister for Home Affairs.

Dr Myat Nyana Soe, Secretary of the Amyotha Hluttaw Bill Committee, stressed the need to take serious action against drug traffickers as drug trafficking is leading to trafficking in persons, arm smuggling and money laundering.



In this file photo, a police officer holds seized drugs before they are destroyed at an event to mark International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, outside Yangon June 26, 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Amendments to the laws relating to anti-drug measures should focus on how to crack-down on drug trafficking rather than users, said MP U Myo Win

from Constituency-8 from Mon State.

The MP also suggested improving the conditions of rehabilitation centres.

The parliament approved anti-drug campaigns across the country and the opening of more rehabilitation centres.

The Myanmar Police Force

is under consistent criticism for not arresting major drug traders or busting crime syndicates that produce and distribute drugs in the country.—GNLM

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Vehicle inspection system blocked by absence of by-laws

DESPITE securing Japanese financial assistance to mechanicalise vehicle inspection protocol of the Road Transportation Administration Department, the Pyithu Hluttaw Transport, Communication and Construction Committee has announced the absence of motor vehicle by-laws is hinder-

ing the process.

“The current method of vehicle inspection poses great danger as it is conducted in person by department staff. The Japanese came to test making inspections with a modern method, using a machine. Arrangements have already been made for the Japanese

to come and conduct the inspections, but there are individuals in Myanmar who also desire to do so; we’ve received applications from such people. Despite this optimism, difficulties are faced as by-laws have yet to be drawn up,” said U Tin Maung Win, chair of the aforementioned com-

mittee.

The Motor Vehicle Law was passed through the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw in September 2015, in which Article 35 stipulates that individuals wishing to conduct vehicle inspection activities can submit an application.

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သဒ္ဓါထက်သန် မြန်မာအားမန် ကမ္ဘောဇဘဏ်

Amyotha Hluttaw



Deputy Minister for Home Affairs Maj-Gen Aung Soe. PHOTO: MNA

Short-term and long-term land grants issued to applicants with no record of land disputes

ONLY applicants who have never been involved in land disputes have been granted leases of land for 10 years or 30 years in accordance with Upper Myanmar Land and Tax regulations and Lower Myanmar Town and Villages regulations, Deputy Minister for Home Affairs Maj-Gen Aung Soe told the Amyotha Hluttaw yesterday.

Respective district commissioners have issued 10-year and 30-year land grants depending on the condition of the build-

ing on the land of the applicant, added the deputy minister, while responding to a question about land grants to be issued in some wards of Mawlamyine, Mon State.

The deputy minister pointed out that complaints over land ownership may arise if land grants are issued to those who currently live in the wards as land plots were granted by lot and no ownership documents were issued at that time when residential land plots were al-

lowed to locals.

A parliamentary discussion on an anti-narcotics proposal followed, with lawmakers expressing broad support for the launch of a nationwide campaign to fight drug abuse, illicit trafficking and the establishment of drug rehabilitation centres in addition to awareness campaigns. The Pyithu Hluttaw then approved the proposal submitted by U Sai Wun Hlaing Kham of Shan State Constituency 3. — *Myanmar News Agency*

Pyithu Hluttaw

Pyithu Hluttaw to discuss proposal calling for effective anti-corruption measures

A MOTION calling for effective measures to combat corruption across the nation was put forward to the Pyithu Hluttaw yesterday.

Dr Than Win of North Okkalapa Constituency submitted the motion that aims to ensure a decline in the level of corruption in the country. U Myo Zaw Oo of Lewe Constituency seconded the motion.

The Pyithu Hluttaw sought the approval of parliamentarians on whether the motion should be discussed and after approval invited comments.

A question and answer session followed with Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation Dr Tun Win responding to questions regarding measures being taken for the settlement of farmland disputes and irrigation matters.

The deputy minister said that the Farmland Management Central Committee is set to deal with monthly reports of region/state farmland management committees. He added that the committees at various levels have to handle farmland disputes in



Dr Tun Win. PHOTO: MNA



U Myo Zaw Oo. PHOTO: MNA



Dr Than Win. PHOTO: MNA

accordance with the provisions stated in the 2012 Farmland Law and rules and regulations.

On the supply of water to more than 30,000 farms in Meikhtila through the canals of the Kinda diversion dam, the deputy minister said that construction of Myogyi dam was completed last year to supply

water to Meiktila plain and the Kengkham multi-purpose dam project which is under construction is slated for completion in the 2018-2019 fiscal year.

He added that the Kengkham, Zawgyi and Myogyi dams with 11.5million acre-feet of total water storage capacity will supply water to 14,000

acres of farmland located in the Pyaungpya and Ngalaizin water catchment area through Myogyi Myaungmadaw No (1), 26,500 acres in Panlaung water catchment area through the left canal of Kinda dam and 40,000 acres in the water catchment area of Kinda dam. — *Myanmar News Agency*

Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker receives outgoing Norwegian Ambassador

U WIN MYINT, Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw received Norwegian Ambassador to Myanmar Ms. Ann Ollestad who had completed her tour of duty, in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Also present at the call were Deputy Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw U Ti Khun Myat and officials of the Hluttaw's office. — *Myanmar News Agency*



Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw U Win Myint bids farewell to outgoing Norwegian Ambassador to Myanmar Ms. Ann Ollestad in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

Speaker meets with outgoing Norwegian Ambassador

SPEAKER of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and Amyotha Hluttaw Mahn Win Khaing Than received Norwegian Ambassador to Myanmar Ms. Ann Ollestad who had completed her tour of duty, in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the call, they discussed matters related to promotion of bilateral relations and cooperation. — *Myanmar News Agency*



Speaker of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and Amyotha Hluttaw Mahn Win Khaing Than receives Norwegian Ambassador to Myanmar Ms. Ann Ollestad in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

People in low-lying areas alerted to possible flood

WEATHER bureau has urged people living in low-lying areas in some townships which are located along the Ayeyawady, Chindwin, Dotehtawaddy and Ngawun rivers, to be alert to possible flood as the rivers have exceeded their danger levels respectively.

The water level of the Ayeyawady have reached above its

danger level in Pakokku, Pyay, Seiktha and Nyaung Oo.

Meanwhile, the rising water level of the Ngawun River has risen, reaching above its danger level in Ngathaingchaung in Ayeyawady Region.

The water level of the Ayeyawady River at Chauk reached about six inches below its danger level yesterday. However, it is ex-

pected to exceed the level today.

The Department of Meteorology and Hydrology has also announced yesterday that Rakhine State, Yangon Region, Ayeyawady Region, Taninthayi Region, Kayin State and Mon State are expected to see heavy rain today. The depression located at north-west part of the Bay of Bengal is still persists. — *GNLM*

President U Htin Kyaw receives Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee of Pakistan

PRESIDENT U Htin Kyaw received General Rashad Mahmood, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee of Pakistan, at the Credentials Hall of the Presidential Palace in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the call the two representatives held discussions on sector-wise cooperation for boosting bilateral relations, enhancing the exchange of experience between

the two Defence Services, non-traditional security issues and cooperation in counterterrorism and investment matters.

Also present were Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, Union Minister for Defence Lt-Gen Sein Win, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs U Kyaw Tin and officials.—*Myanmar News Agency*



President U Htin Kyaw meets General Rashad Mahmood, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee of Pakistan. PHOTO: MNA



President U Htin Kyaw bids farewell to outgoing Norwegian Ambassador to Myanmar Ms. Ann Ollestad at the Presidential Palace in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

President U Htin Kyaw receives outgoing Norwegian Ambassador to Myanmar

PRESIDENT U Htin Kyaw received Norwegian Ambassador to Myanmar Ms. Ann Ollestad who has completed her tour of duty, at the Presidential Palace in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the call the two representatives held discussions on further bilateral relations and cooperation, Norway's assistance to development programmes in Myanmar and its continued supports for the country's peace

process.

Also present were Union Minister for Information Dr Pe Myint, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs U Aung Lin and officials.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Myanmar looks to adopt comprehensive drug abuse prevention policy

UNION Minister for Home Affairs Lt-Gen Kyaw Swe called for a comprehensive drug abuse prevention policy in the country while addressing a meeting of the Central Committee for Drug Abuse Control in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

In his address the Union minister, who is also the chairman of the CCDAC, said that illicit drug trafficking linked with organised crimes can cause detrimental effects to a country's economic stability and has posed threat to peace and stability, security and sovereignty.

The Union minister added that the issue remains unresolved and becomes worse despite great strides in the fight against narcotic drugs by successive governments.

According to the Union minister, the government is planning to develop a comprehensive drug abuse prevention policy in accordance with recommendations adopted at the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on the world drug problem held in April.

Presentations of those present followed including a drug policy roadmap presented by CCDAC Secretary Chief of the Myanmar Police Force Police Maj-Gen Zaw Win.

Union Minister Lt-Gen Ye Aung, vice chairman of the CCDAC, made a supplementary report and the meeting came to an end with concluding remarks by the CCDAC chairman.—*Myanmar News Agency*

FM receives Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee of Pakistan

UNION Minister for Foreign Affairs Daw Aung San Suu Kyi received General Rashad Mahmood, Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the meeting, they cordially exchanged views on strengthening bilateral relations and enhancing cooperation between Myanmar and Pakistan.—*MNA*



Union Minister for Foreign Affairs Daw Aung San Suu Kyi meets General Rashad Mahmood, Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. PHOTO: MNA

Appointment of Ambassador agreed

THE Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has agreed to the proposed appointment of Mr. Sahal Moustafa Ahmed Ergesous as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

Mr. Sahal Moustafa Ahmed Ergesous was born on 1st July 1967. He obtained B.A. (Systems) from King Abdulaziz University in 1992 and got a diploma from the Diplomatic

Studies Institute in 1996. He joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1992 and served in the Royal Embassies of Saudi Arabia in the Philippines, Turkey and the United States of America. He served as Chargé d'affaires a.i. from 2013 to

2015 and has been serving as Deputy Ambassador at the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia in Peru starting from September 2nd 2015.

He is married, with 3 sons and 3 daughters.—*Ministry of Foreign Affairs*

Vehicle inspection system blocked by absence of by-laws

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But, the granting of permission to conduct such activities has been reportedly been road blocked by the absence of necessary by-laws.

U Tin Maung Win also expressed real concern over the need to inspect vehicles in light of a rise in traffic accidents, exacerbated by the influx of cars

and motorcycles into the country.

The mechanicalised vehicle inspection method reportedly checks exhaust and break response levels together with safety features.

“(Japan) is supporting this initiative primarily in the name of fostering Japanese - Myanmar bilateral relations. We’ll

assist as much as our capacity will allow. The Myanmar car market is also full of Japanese models. We’re currently holding talks to understand what technology is desired for inspections that will abate, not only car imports, but also traffic accidents,” said Aisawa, Ichiro - chair of the Japan-Myanmar Inter-parliamentary Friendship

Association.

July saw a series of talks, on the implementation of motor-vehicle initiatives, held between members of the Japanese government, Pyithu Hluttaw MPs, Myanmar civil servants and relevant experts in Naypyidaw on July 15-16 and at the Novotel Hotel in Yangon on 30 July.—*Myitmakha News Agency*

Legal action to be taken in case of illegal 'religious building' erection in Hpakant

LEGAL action will be taken against the individual(s) who facilitated the construction of a number of illegal building extensions, including a religious building, on vacant state land in Lepyin village, Lone Khin village-tract of Hpakant Township, Kachin State.

According to sources, the Hpakant Township administrator undertook the necessary measures to demolish four building extensions and a religious edifice that were constructed illegally on state owned land with departmental officials, led by the administrator, holding

talks with two local community leaders on 25 and 28 June. The township's Farmland Management Committee and the Land Record Department decided to take legal action in accordance with the Vacant, Fellow and Virgin Lands Law at that time.

The community leaders followed the decision and demolished three extended buildings on the area of the 0.2 acres of state land under its own auspices but rejected authorities' demands that they demolish the mosque, claiming that the land it stood on had been privately donated. The Hpakant Township

authority insisted, however, that the religious edifice was situated on state owned land.

Following word of the disagreement a furious mob of locals stormed the building and burned it to the ground on 1 July.

The disputed land plot on which the mosque was located is currently set as a restricted area in accordance with section 133 of the code of criminal procedure. Actions will be taken against those who illegally handed over the building and who involved in the mob assault, according to local authorities.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Bago Region receives K100-million fund for disaster preparedness by BFM



Bago Region receives K100-million fund for disaster preparedness by BFM. PHOTO: THURA LWIN-ECO

BAGO Region government was provided with a disaster preparedness and response fund yesterday by KBZ's Brighter Future Myanmar Foundation—BFM yesterday.

Responsible personnel of the philanthropic organization presented K100 million to Chief Minister of Bago Region U Win Thein.

The Chief Minister expressed his thanks to the donation, pledging that the fund

would enable effectiveness of the disaster preparedness in the region which is in need of assistance for the preparedness.

The establishment of the fund comes to Bago after the foundation set up such a fund in eight regions and states in June and July.

"Learning from delays in sending relief aid to some areas due to poor infrastructures when the country was hit badly by disasters last year, BFM's

chairperson Daw Nang Lang Kham decided to establish the fund nationwide aiming at assisting local authorities in carrying out relief and rehabilitation efforts timely," said U Bo Bo Wai Maung of BFM at the ceremony to present donation to the government. BFM and other philanthropic groups carried out evacuation and relief in areas which were badly hit by floods and landslides last year.—*Thura Lwin-Eco*

Incinerator aims to clean up Kyaukphyu's streets

TESTS to burn rubbish in the Rakhine State town of Kyaukphyu with an incinerator will be reportedly be conducted in the coming days, said a member of staff of the of Duwun Kyai Free Funeral Services Society (FFSS) of Kyaukphyu.

Preparations by the civil society organisation to carry out the, now imminent, tests reportedly begun back in January of this year to install a rubbish incinerator, worth K40 million, nearby the Kyaukphyu cemetery. Donated by the Korean Daewoo Company, the installation of the

rubbish incinerator has since been completed.

"We'll incur all the expenses for the rubbish incinerator test. Only then will we be able to estimate daily costs [of running the machine]. Talks will then need to be held with local residents, the Kyaukphyu Township Development Committee (KTDC) and Daewoo Company to keep the incinerator operational," said U Maung Maung Aung, chair of the Duwun Kyai FFSS.

The two rubbish trucks of the KTDC collect between 12-14 tons of rubbish a week, produced

by ten wards in and around the town, before dumping them beside the road near the cemetery and local fish farm, the development committee has made known.

"Burning rubbish with an incinerator is a good thing. For now, rubbish just piles up by the side of the road, ruining the image of our town," said a local resident.

The incinerator can reportedly burn up around 4 tonnes of rubbish a day, according to the Duwun Kyai FFSS.—*Myit-makha news Agency*

Crime NEWS

Arms, yaba seized

A LOCAL anti-drug squad in Bago seized 5,914 yaba pills worth more than K29 million from a vehicle driver on Sunday, according to police.

Similarly, police from the Zarthapyin Police Station, acting on a tip-off, searched a home in Tawgyi Village, Zarthapyin Village-tract in Hpa-an Township

and discovered 585 yaba pills, a point 22 and 103 rounds of ammunition.

Police are filing charges against the owner of the home Win Tun Aung.

Charges have been filed against all suspects under the Anti-Narcotic Act.—*Myanmar Police Force*



Win Tun Aung. PHOTO: MPF

Police seize almost 2,000 yaba pills, firearm in Myawady

A COMBINED team comprising local anti-drug squad members and police discovered almost 2,000 yaba pills and a firearm on a man in Myawady on Monday.

Acting on a tip-off the team stopped a car on its way from Thingan Nyinaung to Myawady and searched one Saw Mone Tine alias Shwe Hlwe.

The team found 1,979 yaba pills hidden in the suspect's jacket and a loaded 9-mm pistol.

Charges have been filed against the suspect under the Anti-Narcotic Act.—*Tun Tun Oo (Myawady)*



Saw Mone Tine alias Shwe Hlwe. PHOTO: TUN TUN Oo (MYAWADY)

Yaba pills seized in Taunggyi

POLICE of Ayethayar outpost stopped and searched a motorcycle being ridden by one Ma Mu Yar Khin, 39, in Ward 4, Ayethayar town of Taunggyi Township on Saturday. The police seized

372 yaba pills during the search. Police have filed charges against Ma Mu Yar Khin under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Laws.—*Myanmar Police Force*



Ma Mu Yar Khin seen together with yaba tablets seized.—PHOTO:MPF

LOCAL Business

Infrastructure in Hlaingthaya Industrial zone to be upgraded

INFRASTRUCTURE in the Hlaingthaya Industrial Zone will be upgraded similarly to how the Thilawa Special Economic Zone (SEZ) was upgraded, said an official from the industrial zone administrative committee.

Hlaingthaya Industrial Zone is the first zone to have been implemented in Yangon Region. Its infrastructures is currently the most developed in Myanmar with consistent electric power, a steady water supply and transportation. However, it does not match the standards of the Thilawa SEZ.

A policy will be formulated relating to infrastructural development in order to promote local and foreign investment. Detailed discussions will be held over the upgrading of infrastructure in the Hlaingthaya Industrial Zone, which is located on 1,400 acres of land, operating with over 650 factories. Only 10 per cent of investment in the zone is foreign. —200

Korean cars in demand in Mandalay

THE last week of July reportedly saw a rise in demand for Korean vehicles purchased on credit within Mandalay car trading centers.

Korean cars entered the Mandalay market back in 2013, with sale figures so far this year seeing 150 vehicles sold, compared with just 80 vehicles reportedly sold throughout the whole of 2015.

“Korean cars are now in demand, but they didn’t always used to be. Customers love to buy the cars just on through installments, allowing them to utilize their remaining finances in other fields. We have to sell our cars at competitive prices,” said Ko Aung Zaw Myo, chief of sales from Max Auto Korea Car Company in Mandalay. He added Mandalay boasts a total of seven car trading centers.

The Hyundai Starex 12 seater 2005 model fetches K14 million in the market through an installment plan, while a Hyundai Porter 2005 model can reportedly be purchased in the same way for K11 million, although customers allegedly prefer the former model.

“There aren’t that many Korean cars in the market; most are just ordinary vehicle manufac-



Korean cars on display at a showroom in Mandalay. PHOTO: MYITMAKHA NEWS AGENCY

tured in the Industrial Zone,” said Ko Soe, a middleman from the a Mandalay car trading center.

The first installment pay-

ment requires 70 percent to be paid, with the remaining 30 percent to be paid in 3 or 6 monthly installments. The purchasing of Korean cars reportedly comes

with a six month guarantee and one year of free maintenance, according to Korean car companies based in Mandalay. —Myitmakha News Agency

MIC grants three more permits

THE Myanmar Investment Commission (MIC) has permitted three new enterprises including the construction of an aquarium named ‘Under Water World’ and a Cutting-Making and Packing (CMP) garment enterprise, according to the decision of a commission meeting held on Sunday.

The construction of the Under Water World aquarium is being developed by Myanmar Aquarium Co Ltd. The Myanmar Aquarium will be set up at

Kandawgyi Lake in Yangon, showcasing species of local fresh water and salt water fish, it has been learned from the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA).

The Sewell Garment (Myanmar) Industrial Company Limited has been permitted to make a 100 per cent foreign direct investment in CMP garment enterprises in Ngwepinle industrial zone, Yangon Region.

Marga Global Telecom Limited has been granted per-

mission to build and operate a data centre and provide wireless internet services in Dagon Myothit (East) Township, Yangon Region.

A total of 1,874 jobs will be created, according to the announcement released by DICA.

Foreign direct investment (FDI) is expected to reach US\$6billion for the 2016-2017 FY whereas FDI was over US\$9.4 billion last FY, an increase of over US\$1billion over the 2014-2015 FY. —GNLM

Unclaimed lottery prizes to be confiscated

A TOTAL of 4,000 lottery prizes, including jackpots of K20 and K30 million, which prize winners have not claimed will be confiscated next month, it has been announced by Aungbarlay Lottery under the Internal Revenue department.

It has been almost a year since the large cash prizes were offered. Therefore, these prizes will be confiscated if no one claims them during August, said

U Min Htut, director-general of the Internal Revenue Department. Prizes above K1 million can be claimed at the Augbarlay lottery divisions in Yangon and Mandalay whereas other small prizes can be claimed at township offices of the Internal Revenue Department. Winning tickets are valid up to 31 August. The lottery prizes cannot be claimed after the deadline, said U Min Htut. —200

Dairy farmers to experiment with Napier grass

LOCAL dairy farmers will make an experimental cultivation of Napier grass (*Pennisetum purpureum*) in Mandalay, Sagaing and Bago regions, it has been learned.

The Myanmar Dairy Association encouraged the dairy farmers to experimentally grow Napier grass in Mandalay in co-operation with the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO). The grass will be used as a fodder crop for milch cows with an aim to increase milk output. The grass has been imported with the

technical assistance of the FAO. The Department of Livestock and Treatment has distributed the grass to farmers in preparation for the experiment.

The Napier grass hybrid was developed by the Pakchong Animal Nutrition Center located in the north east of Thailand. Using this grass can help alleviate the scarcity of feedstuff but also help the cows produce more milk, said U Nyo Myint, a dairy farmer from Bago.

Napier grass is fast growing like sugarcane and corn plants. It

can be harvested from one and a half to two months after cultivation. The grass has 11 to 18 per cent moisture. Between 150 to 200 tonnes of grass can be yielded per acre, per year. Dairy farmers who plant the grass are not required to replant for up to seven years.

The Myanmar Dairy Association has plans to import about 500 kilograms of Napier grass seeds in cooperation with the Myanmar Livestock Federation to fulfil the requirements of farmers. —200

Three to seven year tax holiday period to be granted

TAX holidays will be granted for three to seven years, it has been learned. Authorities have been formulating a Myanmar Investment Law (Draft), which will grant tax exemptions to foreign direct investments excluding those made in Special Economic Zones (SEZs).

The division of zones is based upon the development status of regions and states with the exception of investments in Special Economic Zones. Zone 1 will

cover underdeveloped regions and states whereas Zone 2 will cover moderately developing regions and states whereas Zone 3 covers the developed regions and states. The Myanmar Investment Commission (MIC) will release an announcement concerning these zones upon the approval of the Union government. Investments in these prescribed three zones will be granted tax exemptions, according to section 76 of the Income Tax Law (Draft). —200

Japan's Abe likely to pick hawkish ally Inada as defence minister

TOKYO — Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe will likely pick ruling party policy chief Tomomi Inada as defence minister in a new cabinet, the Asahi newspaper said on Tuesday, which could upset China and South Korea given her conservative views on wartime history.

Abe is set to reshuffle his cabinet on Wednesday, retaining several key ministers and picking a veteran lawmaker who favours big spending as ruling party number two.

Inada, 57, is a close ally of Abe and shares his goal of revising the post-war, pacifist constitution, seen by some conservatives as a humiliating symbol of Japan's World War II defeat. She regularly visits Tokyo's Yasukuni Shrine, which honours war dead and is seen in China and South Korea as a symbol of Japan's past militarism.

Japan's relations with both Beijing and Seoul have often been frayed by the legacy of Japan's military aggression before and

during World War II.

Inada served as minister for administrative reform in an earlier Abe cabinet before being appointed as the ruling Liberal Democratic Party's (LDP) policy chief in 2014. If selected as defence minister, Inada would be the second woman in the post after Yuriko Koike, newly elected as Tokyo governor, briefly held the portfolio in 2007. The reshuffle comes as Abe tries to rev up economic growth, handle multiple diplomatic challenges and eyes the possibility of staying in office after his term as ruling LDP president ends in 2018.

Abe is expected to travel to China in early September for a Group of 20 summit, where he may have a meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping.

Sino-Japanese ties have also been strained by a dispute over tiny isles in the East China Sea and China's growing military assertiveness in the South China Sea.—Reuters

China court warns against illegal fishing in riposte to South China Sea ruling



Chinese dredging vessels are purportedly seen in the waters around Mischief Reef in the disputed Spratly Islands in the South China Sea in this still image from video taken by a P-8A Poseidon surveillance aircraft provided by the United States Navy on 21 May 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

BEIJING — China's Supreme Court said on Tuesday that people caught illegally fishing in Chinese waters could be jailed for up to a year, issuing a judicial interpretation defining those waters as including China's exclusive economic zones.

An arbitration court in The Hague ruled last month that China has no historic title over the waters of the South China Sea and that it has breached

the Philippines' sovereign rights with its actions, infuriating Beijing which dismissed the case.

None of China's reefs and holdings in the Spratly Islands entitled it to a 200-mile exclusive economic zone, the court decided.

The Supreme Court made no direct mention of the South China Sea or The Hague ruling, but said its judicial interpretation was made in accordance with both Chinese law

and the United Nations' Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), under which the Philippines had also bought its case.

"Judicial power is an important component of national sovereignty," the Supreme Court said.

"People's courts will actively exercise jurisdiction over China's territorial waters, support administrative departments to legally perform maritime management duties ... and

safeguard Chinese territorial sovereignty and maritime interests."

Jurisdictional seas covered by the interpretation include contiguous zones, exclusive economic zones and continental shelves, it added.

People who illegally enter Chinese territorial waters and refuse to leave after being driven out, or who re-enter after being driven away or being fined in the past year, will be considered to have committed "serious" criminal acts and could get up to a year in jail, the Supreme Court said. "The explanation offers legal guarantees for marine fishing law enforcement," it added.

China claims most of the South China Sea, through which more than \$5 trillion of trade moves annually. Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan and Viet Nam have rival claims. China periodically detains fishermen, especially from the Philippines and Viet Nam, and Chinese fishermen also occasionally get detained by other claimants in the South China Sea.—Reuters

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Chief Executive Officer - Nakagawa Kiyoshi

ceo@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Chief Editor - Khin Maung Aye

ce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Deputy Chief Editor - Aye Min Soe

dce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Chief Proof Reader & Translator - Ye Myint

Expatriate Consultant Editors

Alec Wilmot

cconsultanteditor2@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Jaidan Coonan

Chief Translator & Editor

Kyaw Thura,

editor2@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Editor

Ye Htut Tin (Local News)

editor1@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

International Editors

Tun Tun Naing (Editor)

intlnews@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Nwe Nwe Tun (Sub-editor)

Translators

Khaing Thanda Lwin,

reporter1@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Hay Mar Tin Win,

translator@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Ei Myat Mon, Tin Nwe Lynn

Chief Reporter

Tun Aung Kyaw, reporter2@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Reporters

Soe Soe Yu, Thein Ko Lwin (Nay Pyi Taw Bureau),

Khin Mg Win (Mandalay Bureau)

Computer Team

Tun Zaw (Chief of Computer Team), Thein Ngwe,

Zaw Zaw Aung, Ye Naing Soe, Nyi Zaw Moe,

Hnin Pwint, Kay Khaing Win, Sanda Hnin, Zu Zin Hnin

Circulation & Advertising

San Lwin (+95) (01) 8604532

Ads and subscription enquiries:

subscription@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

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Thai police seize 20 Vietnamese for illegal fishing in Thai waters

BANGKOK — Thai marine police arrested 20 Vietnamese on four trawlers for allegedly illegal catching sea cucumbers in Thai waters on Monday.

According to Thai media Komchadluek, the marine police seized the trawlers about 30 nautical miles off the coast of the southern Narathiwat province at about 15:00 local time.

The police found communication devices, fishing nets and sea cucumbers on board.

The trawlers and their crew members were taken to a marine police station in Narathiwat for further investigation.

During the questioning, the crew allegedly admitted to catching sea cucumbers in the Thai waters off Songkhla, Pattani and

Narathiwat provinces and sold them in Viet Nam for 200 baht (5.75 US dollars) per kilogram, *Bangkok Post* reported.

The Vietnamese would be charged with illegal entry and fishing in Thai waters without permission, Said Nattapong Takaew, an inspector at Marine Police Division's sub-division 8.

The arrest came a day

after a Vietnamese trawler with four Vietnamese men on board was caught illegally poaching sea cucumbers 30 nautical miles off Pattani coast.

Thai navy also arrested 29 crew members of three Vietnamese trawlers for allegedly illegal fishing on 10 July, which was the 26th time that the navy have detained Vietnamese trawlers in 2016.—Xinhua

Over 100 killed, 277 households displaced in floods, landslides in Nepal

KATHMANDU— About 102 people were killed while 277 households were displaced in the past one week in floods and landslides triggered by incessant monsoon rains in different 43 districts of Nepal, a government minister has said. The whereabouts of 22 people were still unknown and 58 others were injured after the landslides triggered by tor-

rential rainfalls in central, eastern and western region of the country, Defence Minister Bhim Rawal, who is also currently in-charge of home affairs said while addressing the Parliament session on Monday.

The worst-hit 10 districts by floods and landslides are namely Pyuthan, Gulmi, Palpa, Baglung, Makawanpur, Rupan-dehi, Kathmandu, Ar-

ghakhanchi, Dolakha and Sarlahi, according to home ministry.

Rawal said that Nepal army helicopters have been deployed to carry out relief and rescue operations in the flood-hit districts.

The minister also informed the Parliament session that the government has already allocated 750 million Nepalese rupees through home ministry to

address the current havoc due to floods, landslides and inundation of settlements across the country.

Hundreds of houses have been waterlogged and many have been swept away in different parts of the country, especially in mid-western and eastern development region, according to local media reports on Monday.—Xinhua



Asylum-seekers look through a fence at the Manus Island detention centre in Papua New Guinea in 2014. PHOTO: REUTERS

PNG court orders Australia to present an asylum seeker resettlement plan

SYDNEY — Papua New Guinea's Supreme Court on Tuesday ordered Australia to present a resettlement plan for nearly 900 asylum seekers held in what it says is an illegal detention centre on Manus island — a move detainees fear will further delay their release.

The Supreme Court ruled more than three months ago that the detention centre, used to house asylum seekers trying to reach Australia, was illegal. The centre was approved by the Papua New Guinea government and is funded by Australia.

The court order is the latest delay in determining the future of the detainees and human rights groups say tensions are rising in the detention centre,

which has a history of violent protests and self harm by detainees.

"The level of frustration on Manus Island is as high as it has ever been," said Ian Rintoul, an Australian refugee advocate who was on Manus Island last week.

"The court action, while a glimmer of hope, is frustrating them as there has been no action despite detention being found to be unlawful."

Under Australia's hardline immigration policy, anyone intercepted trying to reach the country by boat is sent for processing to camps on Manus Island in Papua New Guinea or on Nauru in the South Pacific. They are never eligible to be resettled

in Australia.

The Papua New Guinea government has said it plans to close the Manus centre after the Supreme Court ruling, raising the question where will the detainees be resettled. Many in Papua New Guinea do not want the asylum seekers in their community.

The asylum seekers come from across the Middle East and Asia predominately, with Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan accounting for the bulk. Some have been held in detention for several years. Lawyers for the 898 Manus island detainees have asked the Supreme Court for compensation of 1,500 kina (\$462.75) for every day they were held illegally.—Reuters

Indonesia wages war on drugs but cuts funding for rehabilitation

PURBALINGGA (Indonesia) — Rizki Mulyadi sits half-submerged in a steaming herbal bath, hands folded in his lap and head down.

Mulyadi hopes the concoction he is bathing in — and the Islamic teacher who makes it — will help him overcome a six-year addiction to the drug of choice for many in Indonesia: crystal methamphetamine, or "meth".

The traditional rehabilitation centre in Purbalingga village on Java island says it has treated hundreds of addicts like Mulyadi, 26, with herbal teas and baths, prayer and counselling.

President Joko Widodo says drugs pose a bigger danger than Islamist militancy and he has ordered an intensification of a drugs war that has included the execution of drug traffickers, the latest last week when three Nigerians and an Indonesian faced a firing squad.

But while raids, arrests and punishments pick up, state funding for rehabilitation, that weans people off drugs and cuts demand, is dwindling.

That leaves thousands of people like Mulyadi with few affordable options in a country that within years has gone from being a drug transit point to one of Southeast Asia's biggest markets for narcotics.

"We need support in terms of budget to be able to rehabilitate all drug users in need," Social Affairs Minister Khofifah Indra Parawansa told Reuters.

"Our budget alone is not enough for that, it is experiencing a decline." The government estimates there are six million drug

users in the country of 250 million people. Of those, more than 1 million are addicted to meth, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime said in a 2013 report.

But less that one per cent of dependent users got treatment in 2014 compared with a global average of 16 per cent, it said.

Indonesian law mandates rehabilitation for people caught with small quantities of drugs. But many end up in crowded jails.

"Many of those who are in prison should not be sentenced to prison at all, they should be sent to rehab," Parawansa said.

Parawansa's ministry aims to rehabilitate 15,000 drug users this year on a budget of 87 billion rupiah (\$6.6 million). Next year, it will only get funds to help 9,000, she said.

While rehabilitation funding has been cut, the president has tripled the budget of the national counter-narcotics agency, known as the BNN, to 2.1 billion rupiah (\$160,000). It also draws on the police budget. A spokesman for Widodo, asked about the cut to rehabilitation spending, said many areas were seeing tighter budgets, and it did not mean the president did not value rehabilitation.

"The president is concerned about how to prevent the spread in drug use and rehab programmes are part of that," said the spokesman, Johan Budi. "We need to be hard on smugglers and traffickers, and that explains why the president is taking a hard approach, but that doesn't mean the war on drugs is at the expense of rehabilitation. Both law enforcement and rehabilitation are happening at the same time."—Reuters

Typhoon Nida shuts Hong Kong, more than 150 flights cancelled

HONG KONG — Typhoon Nida swept through Hong Kong on Tuesday, shutting down most of the financial hub and disrupting hundreds of flights with gale-force winds, while low-lying areas were put on flood alert.

Hong Kong's first major typhoon this year brought gusts of more than 100 km per hour (62 mph) and prompted authorities to issue an amber warning, signifying heavy rain, at 5.20 a.m. Hong Kong time (2120 GMT).

More than 150 flights were cancelled, the Airport Authority said, with Cathay Pacific and Dragonair warning none of their flights would be operating until 2 pm (0600 GMT) at the earliest.

Thousands of passengers were stranded at the airport and about 325 flights are expected to be rescheduled. The city's ferry, tram and bus services gradually resumed in the afternoon after the

Hong Kong Observatory lowered the tropical cyclone warning to 3 from 8, shortly after midday.

Trading in Hong Kong Exchanges and Clearing Limited (HKEx), including Shanghai-Hong Kong Stock Connect trading, and the derivatives market, would be suspended for the rest of the day.

The Chinese Gold and Silver Exchange Society suspended trading on Tuesday morning.

Streets had been largely deserted and shops shuttered since Monday evening when the typhoon signal 8 was hoisted, prompting many people to leave work early. Nida was moving inland and winds near its centre had showed signs of weakening, the Hong Kong Observatory said. Across the border, part of Guangdong Province closed offices, factories and schools as the typhoon swept across the southern part of the metropolis of Guangzhou.—Reuters



A man takes photo of an uprooted tree after Typhoon Nida hit Hong Kong, China on 2 August. PHOTO: REUTERS

Opinion

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Ostracism does not work for reintegration of ex-inmates

Khin Maung Aye

THE eleven inmates who passed the matriculation examination in 2015-2016 academic year and their teachers were honoured on 30th July. The teachers are known to be from Basic Education High School No.1 and Basic Education Middle School No.13 from Insein. They have taught 19 inmates from Insein Correctional Facility and 11 out of 19 have got through the difficult matriculation examination with one even winning distinction. In fact, this success percentage outdoes the average percentage of under 30.

This event is believed to

remind the people of improvement in the conditions of the prisoners. In those days, far from teaching/learning and sitting an examination, even a book could not be brought into the prison. This kind of improvement must be attributed to the changes in the policy towards prisoners, who have once been regarded as the criminals who will never become good citizens again. It is worth noting that policy of punishment has changed in all aspects.

One important modern aspect in meting out punishment is that the criminals are kept in the prison not to kill

their future but to help them to be able to reintegrate themselves into the society by mending their behaviour, giving enough time to reflect upon what they have done and to exercise restraint when they return to their community. In this function, the prison authorities have arranged for the Buddhist monks to deliver sermons and also established the makeshift meditation centre inside the correctional facility to enable the inmates to find solace at least for the not very ambitious. And for those who are very ambitious for emancipation from the rounds of re-

birth, the authorities have even kept the Buddhist monks inside the correctional facilities for a longer period to help the inmates understand the insights of the absolute truth, the realization of which will make them free from all sufferings.

Such being the case, it is of vital importance for entire mass of people to have a correct outlook toward the jail returnees and help them for their reintegration into the society, avoiding ostracizing them at a time when the government itself is helping them, changing its policy towards the former inmates.

An impression on Myanmar Legal Tender Notes

Tommy Pauk

THESE days, most of the people in Myanmar are talking and criticizing about the feature and figures printed on all the denominations of Myanmar legal tender notes or currency notes. Almost all the independent countries feature the portraits of their patriotic leaders or national heroes on the local currency notes in honor of their glory and fame. At present in Myanmar, the obverse sides of all the denominations of legal tender notes have figures of lion or elephant and Myanmar emblem depicting two elephants raising the white lotus. On the other side of the currency notes, the figure of Myanmar Chin lone (Typical Myanmar cane-ball game) players playing on the ground of field in the countryside (5-kyat note), the picture of the scene of the fountain decorated with elephants in the People's square in Yangon (20-kyat note), the figure of a man making a Myanmar lacquer-ware item (50-kyat note), the figures of typical artisan work (100-kyat note), the image of an elephant working in the Myanmar Timber Extraction Industry (200-kyat note), the picture of Mandalay moat (10000-kyat note), the picture of the building of Central Bank of Myanmar (1000-kyat note). The picture of the Hluttaw buildings (Parliament Buildings in Nay Pyi Taw) (5000-kyat note) and a portrait of the king's general (probably Maha Ban Doo La or Myaddy Min Gyi U Sa) at the

work site(500-kyat). These are featured on various denominations. Exceptionally, the 1-kyat note which features the portrait of General Aung San on the obverse side still remains in the circulation.

Actually, we the citizens wish to feature the portrait of General Aung San (Bogyoke Aung San) and historical prominent figures of Myanmar especially on the obverse sides of the currency notes on various denominations so that the next generation might remember their patriotic spirits whenever they carry the local currency. Even then, they can tell the foreigners and tourists about the Myanmar national heroes and prominent figures while they are visiting in Myanmar. Normally, when we are in a foreign country on a certain purpose, we ought to carry or use their local currency. In that case, we see the portraits of their leaders on the currency notes, we are inclined to know who they are and what they did well to their country. Through seeing the portrait of the leader on the currency notes we can learn a brief history of the country in which we are visiting. Likewise, foreigners and tourists visiting in Myanmar are curious to know who the person in the picture on the currency note is.

As we all know that Myanmar currency is called kyat. MMK is an acronym used in the financial market like SD or USD. During the periods of Parliamentary Democracy and the ruling of the Burma Socialist Programme Party, the reverse sides of legal

tender notes were featured with figures of Myanmar lion, elephant, peacock, a typical Myanmar girl weaving textile at her typical house, a toddy palm climber climbing in Myanmar countryside, the elephant assisting in Myanmar timber extraction industry and an awesome scene of a leg rower rowing his small boat in the inlay lake. Each denominated note on obverse side was featured with the conspicuous head figure of General Aung San, our national hero. Noticeably, just before the end of the ruling BSPP era, Central Bank of Myanmar issued new denominations. They were 90-kyat- note and 45-kyat- note for circulation which were featured with the portraits of Sayar San (Peasants' Leader in the British colonial period) and Ar-lar-wa-ka Thakhin Phoe Hla Gyi (Workers' Leader in the British colonial period : Chauk BOC land oil field Labour strike leader). Their portraits were depicted on legal tender notes in honor of their selfless sacrifices for the grass root people of Myanmar during the British colony. The portraits of General Aung San, Sayar San and Ar-lar-wa-ka Thakhin Pho Hla Gyi were embedded in the hearts of the all citizens in Myanmar because they used to carry the notes everyday for their livelihood and earning.

People from all walks of life remembered the hero and selfless leaders because they used money tender notes everyday indeed. Those currency notes reminded us that we should always respect our heroes and keep the patriotic



spirit. Apart from the locals, the foreigners and tourists had to use local currency or exchange foreign currency into local Myanmar kyat. When they saw the pictures of the famous leaders, they came to know who the honorable leader of Myanmar was and they acquired brief Myanmar historical background through learning from what the locals had said about the heroes featured on the currency notes.

Soon after the ruler of BSPP was ousted, the currency notes contained with the pictures of General Aung San, Saya San and Thakhin Phoe Hla Gyi vanished.

Some notes had been demonetized by BSPP government in 1987. Afterwards, Central Bank of Myanmar issued new legal tender notes without the portraits of General Aung San. Ever since, people have been displeased with the removal of the portrait of General Aung San on the legal tender notes. Majority of people in Myanmar now have democratic rights to ask or demand for featuring the portrait of General Aung San, our national hero on the obverse sides of the currency notes on various denominations.

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Senior General Min Aung Hlaing welcomes Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee of Pakistan



Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee of Pakistan General Rashad Mahmood inspect the Guard of Honour. PHOTO: MNA

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF of Defense Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing welcomed General Rashad Mahmood, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee of Pakistan, with a Guard of Honour in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

The Command-

er-in-Chief and the Pakistani Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee took the salute of the guard of honour and inspected it.

Next, they held talks on anti-terrorism matters, exchanges of visits between the two Defence Services, cooperation in

training and technology and potential areas of cooperation at a hall of Zeyarthiri Beikman.

In the evening, the Senior General hosted dinner in honour of the Pakistani Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee at Parkroyal Hotel in Nay Pyi Taw.— Myanmar News Agency

Wisdom Talk of MRCCI given in Mandalay

THE Mandalay Region Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MRCCI) is monthly organising a 'Wisdom Talk of the MRCCI' for local entrepreneurs and youths to improve knowledge and their ability.

The Wisdom Talk of the MRCCI for July was held in the meeting room of the MRCCI on the fourth floor of the Yadanarbon Super Centre in Chanayethazan Township, Mandalay on

Saturday.

At the talk, vice chairman U Kyaw Minn elaborated on the holding of economic talks for youth to improve their knowledge. Well-known author Kyaw Yin Myint gave a talk entitled "Tie the braid with ribbon". Legal expert on trade mark and intellectual property rights U Khin Maung Oo talked on the 'Dos & Don'ts of trade marks'. —Thiha Ko Ko



Author Kyaw Yin Myint giving a talk. PHOTO: THIHA KO KO

Tour operators change trip plans as temporary closures of U Bein Bridge, Innwa old city



Strolling trip being turned into boat ride. PHOTO: SUPPLIED BY ARCHAEOLOGY DEPARTMENT

TRAVEL operators have changed trip plans for globetrotters as flooding that forced temporary closures of U Bein Bridge and Innwa cultural heritage site in Mandalay as of 1 August, said a responsible person of Tour

Mandalay. A stroll along U Bein Bridge is changed to a boat ride, said Ko Aung of the tour company, adding that tourists can still visit Innwa old city by horse carts or boats.

"It is allowed to enter the old

city but Mae Nu Oak Kyaung is banned to visit."

Tour operators said that tourism in Mandalay will be affected by long closures of tourist destinations. — Aung Thant Khaing

Cartoon show "May Myanmar be Peaceful" held in Mandalay

TO hail the 21st century Panglong Conference a cartoon show entitled "May Myanmar be Peaceful", organised by Mandalay cartoonists, was held at the Thiri Arts Hall on Mingala Mandalay Arts Street in Mandalay on Sunday.

Mandalay Region Chief Minister Dr. Zaw Myint Maung,

Mandalay Mayor Dr. Ye Lwin and members of the Mandalay Region Government attended the opening ceremony.

The three-day event included 80 cartoons for peace by 30 Mandalay cartoonists.

The show ran finished yesterday. —Maung Pyitha (Mandalay)



Chief Minister Dr Zaw Myint maung observing the cartones.

PHOTO: MAUNG PYITHU (MDY)

An impression on Myanmar Legal Tender Notes

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Printing of the picture of a leader on the Legal tender note in a certain country is essential as they reflect the history of it. Each country has its own currency in the form of note and coin. Denominations of legal tender notes and the sizes of notes may vary from one country to another. Nevertheless, they do have value

and the pictures of the invaluable leaders are also featured on the note or coin symbolically. In the countries ruled by king or queen, the portraits of king or queen is featured on their currency notes and coins. E.g The Great Britain, Kingdom of Thailand etc. Their people love to hold the notes with great respect.

We use coins in Myanmar as

well. On the obverse side of the coins, a lion image is engraved and the string of flowers is engraved on the reverse side. In terms of Myanmar ; Goung - hnet Pan- (ခေါင်းနှစ်ပန်း). Coins used in Myanmar are called Pyas. Some coins are equivalent to the value of Kyat. E.g one kyat coin. These days Myanmar coins are rarely used for buying things in everyday life. In the days of our Myanmar king Min Donn ,

(မင်းတုန်းမင်းကြီးလက်ထက်) there used to be a mint in Mandalay which made various coins to be circulated in the country. N.B. Gold, silver and bronze coins were made and the figure of peacock was engraved on the surface of the coins.

Everyone knows that the currency notes show the symbol of a country's status of wealth and as a token of remembrance of honorable heroes of its own in-

deed. We humbly believe that the incumbent government and parliament members would be able to fulfill the above-stated wish of the people in very near future. We love to see the portrait of our national hero Bogyoke Aung San on the currency notes that we always carry them in our daily life. That is the common keen- interest and wish of the entire people indeed!



Republican US Presidential nominee Donald Trump attends a campaign event at the Greater Columbus Convention Centre in Columbus, Ohio, on 1 August 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Trump campaign asks Capitol Hill to back him in Khan controversy

WASHINGTON — US Republican Donald Trump's presidential campaign appealed to Capitol Hill for support on Monday as his attacks on the Muslim parents of a decorated American soldier killed in Iraq drew sharp rebukes from fellow party members.

Trump's criticism of Khizr Khan and Ghazala Khan, who took the stage at last week's Democratic convention, sparked growing concern and dismay from Republican lawmakers responding to the latest Trump outburst to blindside his party colleagues.

Republican Senator John McCain, a former prisoner of war and the most prominent veteran in Congress, along with the commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, joined the chorus of condemnation, reflecting the highly regarded place the military and its veterans hold with many in the United States.

Trump's dispute with the Khans has dominated the White House campaign in recent days and underlined the uneasy alli-

ance between many leading Republicans and the party's free-wheeling, unorthodox nominee for the 8 November election.

Rob Wasinger, a onetime congressional candidate who has been working for the Trump camp on congressional outreach, sent an email to senior Senate aides saying, "We want to get several member statements out today on this, and would really appreciate your help."

A similar appeal was made to Republicans in the House of Representatives, according to a senior aide.

Attached to the appeal were talking points lawmakers could use to try to tamp down the controversy growing since last week's appearance at the Democratic convention by the Khans, the parents of US Army Captain Humayun Khan, who was killed by a bomb in Iraq 12 years ago.

Hope Hicks, a spokeswoman for Trump, said that the campaign was grateful to have support in Congress and that Republicans are working to keep

Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton from winning the presidency. Wasinger refused to comment when contacted by telephone.

The appeal did not generate any help for Trump. A senior Senate Republican aide, who asked not to be identified, said Republican senators were pleased with Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell's statement on Sunday calling Captain Khan "an American hero" and noting "a travel ban on all members of a religion is simply contrary to American values."

At the same time, the aide said the controversy would probably not cause Republican senators to withdraw their endorsements of Trump.

In a convention speech delivered with his wife at his side, Khizr Khan showcased his son's military service and criticised Trump's call for a temporary ban on Muslims from entering the United States, holding up a copy of the US Constitution and suggesting Trump read it.—Reuters

West Nile Virus suspected in three patients in Serbia, one dead

BELGRADE — Three persons are suspected to have been newly infected with West Nile Virus in Serbia with one person dead, national health institute stated in a press release on Monday.

The Institute of Public Health of Serbia said the suspiciously infected people come from the vicinity of the capital Belgrade in the regions of Southern Banat and Macva, where the virus, transmitted to humans by mosquitoes, was isolated by researchers in early June.

Among the three, an 81-old-man died as a result of the infection.

The institute continued that

the infection among the three people is yet to be confirmed, as the only confident way to determine the presence of the virus is to test patients' cerebrospinal fluid for the presence of matching antibodies.

Fever, headache, sore throat, back pain, muscle pain, joint pain, fatigue, mild transient rash and lymphadenopathy are common symptoms of the illness while in a small per cent of patients, the disease can lead to occurrence of aseptic meningitis or encephalitis.

According to the press release, West Nile Virus in Serbia causes deadly symptoms among

only a small number of population (0.2 per cent younger than 65, and 2 per cent older than 65 years of age).

Having in mind that carriers of the disease are mosquitoes, the virus is active in August and September.

First cases of West Nile Virus in Serbia were recorded in 2012 and so far 480 of patients with symptoms of the illness were received to the hospital, of whom 326 are treated as confirmed cases of the virus infection in accordance to the Methodological instructions for supervision of West Nile fever in the human population in Serbia.—Xinhua

NEWS IN BRIEF

Local Mexico mayor, policeman arrested over alleged murder of 10

MEXICO CITY — A local mayor and a police officer were among those arrested on Monday for their alleged involvement in the murder of 10 people in western Mexico, state prosecutors said.

Early investigations show police picked up a group of people at a store in the state of Michoacan and forced them to get into a red truck on the orders of local mayor Juan Carlos Arreygue, state prosecutor Jose Martin Godoy told a news conference.

The next day their bodies were found dead and burned. The death toll rose to 10, from nine on Saturday.—Reuters

US NHC says 80% chance of cyclone over central Caribbean Sea

MIAMI — A strong tropical wave over the central Caribbean Sea has an 80 per cent chance of developing into a cyclone in the next couple of days, the US National Hurricane Centre (NHC) said on Tuesday. The low, located about 150 miles south-southwest of Kingston, Jamaica, continues to move westward at about 20 miles per hour, the NHC said. "Environmental conditions are expected to be conducive for additional development, and a tropical storm is likely to form later today," the Miami-based weather forecaster said. Heavy rainfall and gusty winds will continue over parts of Jamaica on Tuesday morning and reach the Cayman Islands later in the day, the NHC added.—Reuters

At least five police killed in PKK bomb attack in South East Turkey

ANKARA — At least five police officers were killed in the bomb attack in southeastern Turkey on Monday, local media Milliyet reported.

An explosion took place when a suspected bombing truck of the outlawed Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK) militants hit a police shuttle bus at 17:35 local time (1435 GMT) in the province of Bingol, the report said.

Ambulances and firefighters have arrived at the explosion scene. The social media account of a Kurdish fighter "Mitanni" claimed that the attack had killed 10 police and injured six more.—Xinhua

Twelve killed as passenger bus crashes into trailer in South Pakistan

ISLAMABAD — At least 12 people were killed and over 30 others injured when a passenger bus crashed into a trailer in Pakistan's south Jamshoro district on Tuesday morning, local Urdu media reported.

Samaa TV said the driver of the bus carrying over 50 people, lost control of the vehicle and rammed into the trailer coming from opposite direction in Pataro area of Jamshoro, a district located in the country's south Sindh province.

The ill-fated bus was on its way from the country's northwest Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province to southern port city of Karachi, said the report. The injured including women, kids and the bus driver were shifted to a nearby hospital where at least seven of them are said to be in critical condition.—Xinhua

Floods in India's northeast kills 200 wild animals

NEW DELHI — Around 200 wild animals were perished in flood waters that inundated Kaziranga national park in India's northeastern state of Assam, officials said.

"Carcasses of 13 rhinos have been recovered so far in Kaziranga," Subhasis Das, Divisional Forest officer of Kaziranga national park told media on Monday. "Over 152 hog deers also died in the flood."

According to wildlife officials, 12 hog deers were killed by speeding vehicles during the floods at the national highway. Assam was hit by a massive flood last week which affected over 1.8 million people in state's 22 districts. The flood water submerged large swathes of Kaziranga National Park and Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary. Though officials said herds of wild animals including elephants were seen swimming and struggling to reach highlands in Kaziranga National Park, however, some of them were swept away by water. Over 80 per cent of park's area was submerged.—Xinhua

US warplanes launch bombing campaign on Islamic State in Libya

SIRTE, (Libya) /WASHINGTON — US planes bombed Islamic State targets in Libya on Monday, responding to the UN-backed government's request to help push the militants from their former stronghold of Sirte in what US officials described as the start of a sustained campaign against the extremist group in the city.

"The first air strikes were carried out at specific locations in Sirte today causing severe losses to enemy ranks," Prime Minister Fayez Seraj said on state TV. Pentagon spokesman Peter Cook said the strikes did not have "an end point at this particular moment in time".

Forces allied with Seraj have been battling Islamic State in Sirte — the home town of former dictator Muammar Gaddafi — since May.

The militants seized the Mediterranean coastal city last year, making it their most important base outside Syria and Iraq. But they are now besieged in a few square kilometres of the centre, where they hold strategic sites, including the Ouagadougou conference hall, the central hospital and the university.

Seraj said the Presidential Council of his Government of National Accord, or GNA, had decided to "activate" its participation in the international coalition against Islamic State and "request the United States to carry out targeted air strikes on Daesh (Islamic State)."

The air strikes on Monday



Libyan forces allied with the UN-backed government fire weapons during a battle with IS fighters in Sirte, Libya, on 21 July 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

— which were authorised by US President Barack Obama — hit an Islamic State tank and two vehicles that posed a threat to forces aligned with Libya's GNA, Cook said.

In the future, each individual strike will be coordinated with the GNA and needs the approval of the commander of US forces in Africa, Cook added.

This was the third US air strike against Islamic State militants in Libya. But US officials

said this one marked the start of a sustained air campaign rather than another isolated strike.

The last acknowledged US air strikes in Libya were on an Islamic State training camp in the western city of Sabratha in February.

Although it does not include the use of ground troops beyond small special forces squads rotating in and out of Libya and drones collecting intelligence, the air campaign opens a new front in the war against IS and what American

officials consider its most dangerous component outside Syria and Iraq. Obama authorized the strikes after a recommendation by US Secretary of Defence Ash Carter. Washington took part in air strikes in 2011 to enforce a no-fly zone in Libya which helped topple Gaddafi. The country has struggled since then and Obama said in an interview with The Atlantic magazine in April that the intervention "didn't work".

"I want to assure you that

these operations are limited to a specific timetable and do not exceed Sirte and its suburbs," Seraj said, adding that international support on the ground would be limited to technical and logistical help.

"GNA-aligned forces have had success in recapturing territory from ISIL (Islamic State) thus far around Sirte, and additional US strikes will continue to target ISIL in Sirte in order to enable the GNA to make a decisive, strategic advance," said Cook, the Pentagon spokesman.

The White House said US assistance to Libya would be limited to air strikes and information sharing.

"There are unique capabilities that our military can provide to support forces on the ground and that's what the president wanted to do," White House spokesman Eric Schultz told reporters on Air Force One on Monday.

But that coordination will be a challenge, experts said.

Local forces in Libya fighting Islamic State are diffuse and fragmented, with no single centre of command, said Frederic Wehrey, a Libya expert at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Washington who recently spent three days with fighters in Sirte.

"US and Western diplomatic strategy has been to try to boost this GNA, but I think there are certain limits," Wehrey said. "It's not the sort of conventional military operation we would think of where there's a central point of contact."—Reuters

Rescuers say toxic gas dropped on Syrian town where Russian helicopter shot down

BEIRUT — A Syrian rescue service operating in rebel-held territory said on Tuesday a helicopter dropped containers of toxic gas overnight on a town close to where a Russian military helicopter was shot down hours earlier.

A spokesman for Syria Civil Defence told Reuters that 33 people, mostly women and children, were affected by the gas in Saraqeb. The group, which describes itself as a neutral band of search and rescue volunteers, posted a

video on YouTube purportedly showing a number of men struggling to breathe and being given oxygen masks by people in civil defence uniforms.

Syria Civil Defence workers, who went to the scene of the attack, said they suspected it was chlorine but could not verify that.

"Medium-sized barrels fell containing toxic gasses. The Syrian Civil Defence was not able to determine the type of the gas," said the spokesman.

The Syrian government and its Russian allies were not immediately available for comment.

Both government and opposition forces have denied using chemical weapons during the five-year-old civil war. Western powers say the government has been responsible for chlorine and other chemical attacks. The Syrian government and Russia have accused rebel forces of using poison gas.

Monitors at the Syrian Ob-

servatory for Human Rights said barrel bombs fell on Saraqeb late on Monday, injuring a large number of citizens.

Russia's defence ministry said a Russian helicopter was shot down near Saraqeb on Monday, killing all five people on board, in the biggest officially acknowledged loss of life for Russian forces since they started operations in Syria.

The helicopter came down in Idlib province, roughly mid-way

between Aleppo and the Russian air force base at Khmeimim, near the Mediterranean coast.

The Russian defence ministry said the Mi-8 military transport helicopter had been shot down after delivering humanitarian aid to the city of Aleppo as it made its way back to Russia's main air base in the western province of Latakia.

No group has claimed responsibility for shooting down the helicopter.—Reuters



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Venezuela denies zoo animals starving, says one happy family

CARACAS — Venezuela's government denied on Monday that zoo animals were dying of starvation amid a national food shortage, saying they were being lovingly treated "like family."

Minister for Ecosocialism and Water Ernesto Paiva toured Caricuao zoo in Caracas, where a union leader last week said 50 animals including Vietnamese pigs, tapirs, rabbits and birds had starved to death in the last six months.

"The animals are very dear, treated as if they were family, in fact they all have names," said Paiva, adding that they were being seen by nutritionists to ensure they had an adequate diet.

The official said widespread media reports

of deplorable conditions for zoo animals in the recession-hit OPEC nation were part of a campaign of "lies" against the socialist government of President Nicolas Maduro.

A union leader for employees of state parks agency Inparques, which oversees zoos, and sources at various facilities have said animals are suffering across the country, with lions being fed mangoes instead of meat and bears receiving less than half of their required intake.

Despite the minister's assurances that the Caricuao animals were healthy and adequately fed, state prosecutors are investigating the deaths of "various species of wildlife" there.—Reuters

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Dated 3 August 2016
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MV KANG FU VOY. NO (001)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV KANG FU VOY NO (001) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 3.8.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T (4) where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the by-laws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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US general seeks to soothe Turkey ties strained by coup purge

ISTANBUL, (Turkey) — America's highest-ranking military officer sought on Monday to soothe strained ties with NATO ally Turkey, which was angered by the West's response to a failed military coup and an apparent US reluctance to hand over the cleric it says was responsible.

The fallout from the abortive coup on 15 July, in which more than 230 people died as mutinous soldiers commandeered fighter jets, helicopters and tanks, has deepened a rift between Ankara and its Western allies.

President Tayyip Erdogan and many Turks have been frustrated by US and European criticism of a government crackdown in the aftermath of the attempted putsch in a country vital to the US-led fight against Islamic State and to stopping illegal migration to Europe.

They have accused Western leaders of being more concerned about the rights of the plotters than the gravity of the threat to a NATO member.

More than 60,000 people in the military, judiciary, civil service and education have been detained, suspended or placed under investigation since the coup, prompting fears that Erdogan is cracking down on all



Turkish Prime Minister Binali Yildirim (C), accompanied by Chief of Staff General Hulusi Akar, meets with US Joint Chiefs of Staff General Joseph Dunford in Ankara, Turkey, on 1 August 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

dissent.

"It is important that the United States, our friend and ally, display a clear and decisive stance against this terrorist coup attempt against our nation and democracy," Prime Minister Binali Yildirim told chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff General Joseph Dunford during their meeting in Ankara.

Condemning the failed coup in Turkey, Dunford, the principal military adviser to the American president, said his visit was to show solidarity and added

that the United States supports Turkish democracy, a statement from Yildirim's office said.

Earlier on Monday, about 150 protesters marched to the US Embassy in Ankara to protest Dunford's visit. "Coup plotter Dunford get out of Turkey," the crowd chanted.

"Dunford go home. Send us Fethullah," said one banner, in reference to US-based Turkish cleric Fethullah Gulen, whose network of followers in the military and state institutions are blamed by Erdogan for orchestrating the coup plot.

The 75-year-old cleric, who has lived in self-imposed exile in Pennsylvania since 1999, denies involvement in the failed coup.

President Barack Obama has said Washington will extradite him only if Turkey provides evidence of wrongdoing.

Dunford also met his Turkish counterpart and US personnel stationed at the Incirlik air base in southern Turkey, used by the US-led coalition in the fight against Islamic State.—Reuters

Ukraine's Savchenko launches hunger strike over political inaction

KIEV — Nadiya Savchenko, the Ukrainian service-woman-turned-lawmaker who spent two years in a Russian jail, announced a new hunger strike on Tuesday to speed up the release of other Ukrainian prisoners-of-war, accusing Ukraine's president of ignoring their plight.

Savchenko's return from Russia in May via a prisoner swap was a PR coup for President Petro Poroshenko. But her membership of a main opposition party and vocal criticism of key policies threaten to make her a thorn in his side.

She has been campaigning for the release via prisoner swap of the around 25 Ukrainians still held by Russia or pro-Russian separatists in eastern Ukraine, but said the Ukrainian authorities were not committed to securing



Ukrainian pilot and MP Nadiya Savchenko attends a news conference in Kiev, Ukraine, on 2 August. PHOTO: REUTERS

their freedom.

"I suggested concrete actions to the president of Ukraine — we need to start initiating the handover of people," she said in a news briefing.

"But the children of Petro Oleksiyovych (Poroshenko) aren't in captivity, while he spits on your children," she said, addressing the parents of

Ukrainian prisoners.

She called on relatives of those still in captivity to protest outside government and presidential buildings in Kiev on 8 August.

Savchenko, who spent much of her time in Russian jail on hunger strike, said she would hold a new strike until progress is made on the

prisoner exchange.

Releasing prisoners-of-war is one of the terms of the 12-point Minsk peace deal, which was brokered between Ukraine and Russia-backed separatists in February 2015 with the aim of ending a conflict which has killed over 9,400 since April 2014.

Other conditions, including a complete cessation of fighting in Ukraine's eastern territory and a pull-back of heavy weapons from the front line, have also not yet been fulfilled, raising concerns the ceasefire agreement could collapse.

Poroshenko and other politicians had not done enough to end the fighting, Savchenko said.

"Not one chocolate factory has been turned into a bullet factory," she said, referring to Poroshenko's confectionery business.—Reuters



A police vehicle stands behind a smouldering bus after it was set on fire during violent overnight disturbances in Natal, Brazil, on 1 August 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Brazil quells gang violence in northern state, 65 arrested

BRAZILIAN — Police restored order in a northern state of Brazil on Monday after three nights of violence unleashed by a criminal gang that set off bombs, torched dozens of buses and fired shots at government buildings, authorities said.

The wave of violence in Rio Grande do Norte, around 1,553 miles (2,500 kms) north of Rio de Janeiro, was triggered by a plan to move some of the gang's leaders serving time in the state's main penitentiary to other jails, and in response

to the blocking of their cellphone communications, officials said.

Brazil's President Michel Temer, seeking to quell the violence just days before the Olympic Games open in Rio, authorised the dispatch of 1,000 soldiers and 200 marines to the state on Sunday. No Olympic events are taking place in Rio Grande do Norte.

"We are winning this war," the state's security chief, Army General Ronaldo Lundgren, told Reuters by telephone. "The number of incidents

is dropping," he said of the violence in the capital Natal and about 20 other towns across the state.

His office said 65 people suspected of committing acts of violence and vandalism had been arrested since Friday.

Among them was an alleged founder of the gang, Joao Maria dos Santos, 32, aka John the Magician, who used a false pass in December to escape from the penitentiary where he was serving a 20-year sentence for organised crime, drug traffick-

ing and illegal weapons possession.

Dos Santos was arrested on Sunday with 302,000 reais (\$92,600) in cash, 20 kilos of crack cocaine, two handguns, jewellery, watches and 68 cellphones, a police statement said.

It said 26 buses had been destroyed by fire, four buildings had been shot at and four bombs exploded across the state. No injuries were reported.

Some schools were closed after a school bus was set on fire.—Reuters

Venezuela election board okays opposition recall push first phase

CARACAS — Venezuela's election board said on Monday the opposition successfully collected 1 per cent of voter signatures in every state in the first phase of their push for a referendum to recall socialist President Nicolas Maduro.

But council head Tibisay Lucena asked for a judicial probe into some apparent cases of voter identity fraud, and did not name a date for the next phase, to collect 20 per cent of signatures.

The timing is crucial because if Maduro were to lose a referendum this year, as polls indicate he would due to an economic crisis, that would trigger a new presidential vote, giving the opposition a chance to end 17 years of

socialism.

But should he lose a referendum next year, Maduro, 53, would be replaced by his vice president, maintaining the Socialist Party in power until the OPEC nation's next presidential election scheduled for the end of 2018.

Opposition leaders are demanding Lucena set a date for the collection of 20 per cent — about 4 million signatures — needed next to trigger the actual referendum.

"Only one step remaining," tweeted opposition lawmaker Freddy Guevara. "The better Venezuela is coming."

Henrique Capriles, who narrowly lost to Maduro in the 2013 presidential race and has been the main driver of the recall

push, called for rallies later this week to pressure for the next phase.

Earlier, US Secretary of State John Kerry also urged Venezuela "not to play a game of delay" over the referendum.

The government, however, has vowed there will be no referendum this year. It has launched nearly 9,000 lawsuits, alleging massive fraud in signature collection.

"Legally, it is dead," said senior Socialist Party leader Jorge Rodriguez.

Lucena said that 98 per cent of nearly 408,000 signatures gathered by the opposition Democratic Unity (MUD) coalition — twice the minimum required of 1 per cent or 200,000 — in the initial phase were validated.

She requested a probe into the others.

Critics blame failed socialist economic policies for Venezuela's three-year recession, triple-digit inflation, product shortages and long lines at shops.

Maduro, a former bus driver and foreign minister who succeeded the late Hugo Chavez, said the fault lies with falling oil prices and an "economic" war by opponents.

Adding to the heated political climate, Venezuela's Supreme Court ruled on Monday night that the opposition-controlled National Assembly's activities would be "null" until it withdrew three opposition legislators whom the tribunal had suspended pending a probe into alleged vote-buying.—Reuters

Peru probes whether police killed people to earn promotions, rewards

LIMA — Prosecutors in Peru are investigating whether a group of police extra-judicially killed 27 people in a scheme to earn promotions and rewards from superiors by appearing to stop dangerous criminals, a source said on Monday.

The inquiry was opened earlier this year after the interior ministry sent public prosecutors a report on what it said may be a criminal

source in the attorney general's office said.

Prosecutors suspect the officers ordered undercover informants to set up kidnappings and robberies with suspected criminals in order to catch and kill them under the pretence of legitimate uses of force, said the source, who spoke on condition of anonymity. The investigation was first revealed Sunday by the local investigative news show Cuarto Poder on America Television.—Reuters

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Botahtung Township, Yangon,
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Dated 3 August 2016
lmm@kcyangon.com



The hit mystery drama scored the most surfboard trophies with six, including its fifth consecutive win for Choice TV: Drama, and individual acting prizes for Ashley Benson, Ian Harding, Janel Parrish and Sasha Pieterse. PHOTO: PTI

Selena Gomez, Pretty Little Liars top Teen Choice Awards 2016

LOS ANGELES — Pop star Selena Gomez and hit TV series *Pretty Little Liars* were big winners at the 2016 Teen Choice Awards. The hit mystery drama scored the most surfboard trophies with six, including its fifth consecutive win for Choice TV: Drama, and individual acting prizes for Ashley Benson, Ian Harding, Janel Parrish and Sasha Pieterse.

Benson won an additional honour for Choice TV: Chemistry with her on-screen love interest played by Tyler Blackburn.

Benson's friend and "Spring Breakers" co-star Gomez was also a big winner, but since she is currently on the road for her Revival Tour, the singer sent in a

video message thanking fans for voting her Choice Female Artist, Choice Summer Music Star: Female, and Choice Instagrammer.

Receiving a special honour was Justin Timberlake, who was presented with the first-ever Decade Award by basketball icon Kobe Bryant.

The pop star was given the accolade for "dominating the world of entertainment" over the past 10 years, and with the win, he made Teen Choice Awards history as the male star with the most victories with an impressive total of 23.

Meanwhile, other big winners included Daisy Ridley, who was named Choice Movie Break-

out Star, Chloe Grace Moretz, a victor for Choice Movie Actress: Comedy for "Neighbors 2: Sorority Rising", and Chris Evans, who won his first Teen Choice Award for Choice Movie Actor: Sci-Fi/Fantasy, while "Captain America: Civil War" also won Choice Movie: Sci-Fi/Fantasy.

Performances at the Los Angeles prizegiving, co-hosted by Victoria Justice and John Cena, came from the likes of Flo Rida, Charlie Puth, and Jason Derulo.

But one of the highlights was Ne-Yo, singing a cover of Marvin Gaye's anthem "What's Going On" in tribute to those who have lost their lives due to gun violence in America.—PTI

Taylor Swift gave me best music advice, says Thomas Rhett

LONDON — Country singer Thomas Rhett says pop star Taylor Swift has him the best music advice by encouraging him to be fearless in the music industry. The 26-year-old country singer has revealed Swift has always encouraged him to pursue a career in the music industry, reported Contactmusic.

"I and Taylor actually grew up in the same town and knew a lot of the same people so when I first met Taylor so we sort of had that in common. And you know, every time I and my wife have been around Taylor she has been nothing but encouraging and given me honestly the best music advice you could ask for," Rhett said.

The singer said Swift has taught him to embrace trying new things and to be fearless. "She just is always so positive about

being your own person and obviously, her music portrays that. Being your own person, not being afraid to put out music that is different."

Thomas Rhett is an American country music singer and songwriter. Rhett has released two studio albums *It Goes Like This* and *Tangled Up*. Both albums have produced eight singles. Out of them, six have reached No. 1 position including *It Goes Like This*, *Get Me Some of That*, *Make Me Wanna*, *Crash and Burn* and *Die a Happy Man*. He also writes songs.

Rhett grew up seeing country idols like Tim McGraw or Brooks & Dunn in his home. His father was also famous country singer Rhett Akins. Rhett soon learned how to play the drums and formed his own band later.—PTI



Sony wins unconditional EU approval for Michael Jackson deal

BRUSSELS — EU antitrust regulators on Monday cleared Sony Corp's bid to buy out Michael Jackson's stake in its music publishing joint venture, the world's largest with copyrights to the Beatles' songs and songs by Taylor Swift.

The European Commission said deal would not hurt competition in the recorded music and music publishing industries.

"The transaction will not materially increase Sony's market power vis-a-vis digital music providers compared to the situation prior to the merger," the EU competition enforcer said in a statement. Rival Warner Music Group and independent labels had called the Commission to take a tough line with the deal because they feared it would give Sony too much power.—Reuters



Paul McCartney (L) and Ringo Starr perform during the taping of 'The Night That Changed America: A GRAMMY Salute To The Beatles', which commemorates the 50th anniversary of The Beatles' appearance on the Ed Sullivan Show, in Los Angeles in 1964. PHOTO: REUTERS

The Mummy star shares picture from Namibia set

LOS ANGELES — Actress Annabelle Wallis, best known for playing Grace on hit British drama *Peaky Blinders*, has shared behind-the-scenes picture of herself with her co-star Tom Cruise.

The photo shows the 31-year-old actress posing in the desert along with Cruise and other cast members Jake Johnson and Courtney B Vance. "#THE-MUMMY in Africa. #Namibia, we are so excited to be here!," she tweeted.

The reboot of 1999 film revolves around an ancient queen whose destiny was unjustly taken away. She is awakened in the current day after years of safely entombed in a crypt deep beneath the unforgiving desert. It brings with her malevolence

grown over millennia and terrors that defy human comprehension.

The upcoming film stars Sofia Boutella as the Mummy. Russell Crowe, Marwan Kenzari, Javier Botet and Dylan Smith are among other cast members.

Sofia Boutella is supposed to play the role of the Mummy while the *Gladiator* actor, Russell Crowe has reportedly lined up for a cameo to appear as Dr Jekyll, before getting his own solo film.

Jon Spaihts who has previously wrote the script of films like *Prometheus* and *Doctor Strange* is presently working on the script of the film along with JJ Abrams and director Alex Kurtzman.—PTI



Annabelle Wallis shares picture from the sets of her upcoming movie *The Mummy*. PHOTO: PTI



PHOTO: REUTERS

Wild nature claims place in Romanian capital

BUCHAREST — On an early morning walk through the Romanian capital’s newest park, photographer Helmut Ignat points out cormorants, harriers,

terns and several other birds flying high over the marshes. “We’re in luck, all the birds are showing themselves,” said Ignat, who discovered Vacaresti park in 2011 on assignment from National Geographic.

Word was beginning to spread that a wild wetland had sprung up between apartment buildings not far from downtown Bucharest.

Ignat is one of four founders of the Vacaresti Nature Park Association, which has spent the last four years lobbying authorities to grant the wetlands protected status.

“We must have met local and central public authorities more than 250 times,” said its director Dan Barbulescu.

Advocacy paid off. The government gave Vacaresti protected status in May, one of Europe’s largest urban wetlands.

Vacaresti is the result of a communist-era plan to build a lake in southern Bucharest, one of dictator Nicolae Ceausescu’s many projects to overhaul the city.

Abandoned in 1989, it was a massive pit surrounded by a concrete embankment that hid it from view.

Nature took over and created 183 hectares (452 acres) of wilderness where experts have identified almost 100 species, including the protected red-breasted geese, egrets, Western marsh harriers, European pond turtles

and otters. “No one was expecting that behind this embankment so many people pass by every day there was such life, a rich, balanced ecosystem,” Barbulescu said. “Bit by bit nature has built a place that lives without intervention.”

The environment ministry is expected to appoint a park manager by year-end. The association will compete for the job.

The wetlands need protection from trash, fires and poachers. Squatters need relocation.

A longtime park squatter could become its first ranger, Ignat said. Gigel Enache has been living in Vacaresti for the past 18 years, and he is almost part of the ecosystem.

He arrived with a wife, a four-year-old daughter and a horse and carriage. Now 50, he has nine children aged 4 to 22. They live in improvised huts of cardboard and tarps on the water’s edge, without plumbing, steady income or health insurance. The children bubble with excitement and questions around visitors.—Reuters



A swan, backdropped by reeds, swims on one of the lakes inside Vacaresti wetlands, in Bucharest, Romania, on 23 July 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Lego presents Olympic model of Rio city ahead of games

RIO DE JANEIRO — Lego, the world’s biggest toymaker, has developed a large model of Rio de Janeiro city to celebrate the host of the 2016 Olympic Games, set to open in a few days.

The model is the largest ever made for Latin America by the group and took 50 Lego builders some 2,500 hours altogether to create over one year, according to Lego master model builder Paul Chrzan.

“Three different countries were involved in creating all of the icons that are seen here,” Chrzan said, gesturing to the structure.

“We did create 25 different icons of Rio — they are all visible here,” he added. The miniature city features the Olympic rings, stadiums and iconic sites in Rio, all made from just under one million colourful plastic bricks.

“The really crazy thing about this is there are 10 different scales

going on. If we did it in one scale the stadium would be that big,” Chrzan said, using his hand to indicate the stadium would be very small. “So, it’s everything that we could fit into the city, in a 5 metre by 6 metre (yard) space.”

The structure is composed of roughly 953,000 pieces of Lego, according to Chrzan.

Lego, in partnership with the Danish government, created the model as a legacy gift to Rio de Janeiro. —Reuters



A man arranges LEGO bricks to build a Rio sign during a LEGO presentation of a massive model of the city including the Olympic sites at the Media Centre in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on 1 August 2016.

PHOTO: REUTERS

MRTV

News Channel
in Brief

(3-8-2016, Wednesday)

6:00 am

(Part-3)

• Paritta by Venerable Mingun Sayadaw

7:35 am

• Money Talk Myanmar (Part-3)

8:35 am

• The Farmer

9:35 am

• Nine Precept

10:35 am

• Documentary

11:15 am

• Documentary

11:35 am

• MRTV Education

12:50 am

• TV Drama Series

1:30 am

• Teleplay

3:35 pm

• Money Talk Myanmar

4:15 pm

• Documentary

4:35 pm

• Football Magazine (Yangon United)

5:15 pm

• Traditional Boxing

5:45 pm

• NHK Programme “Small Worldwide Compaines”

8:00 pm

• News / International News/ Weather Report

8:35 pm

• Documentary (ASEAN)

9:00 pm

• News

• TV Drama Series

• Fine Arts-Bosom of Dramatic Performance

Note/ Hourly News Bulletins (Local + International)

MRTV

Entertainment Channel

(3-8-2016, Wednesday)

06 : 00 pm

• Weather Report

• Music Programme

06 : 20 pm

• Cartoon Programme “Animal United ” (Part-1)

07 : 00 pm

• International Drama Series

07 : 40 pm

• International Drama Series

08 : 20 pm

• MRTV Entertainment Music

08 : 40 pm

• Wonderful Indonesia

09 : 10 pm

• International Movie Songs

09 : 20 pm

• Coconut Shell Artist

09 : 40 pm

• Pyi Thu Ni Ti

10 : 00 pm

• Myanmar Master Class: Artist Tin Win (Beikthano)

10 : 20 pm

• Myanmar Video

12 :00 pm

• Close Down.

From 3-8-2016 (Wednesday) 6:00 pm

To 4-8-2016 (Thursday) 6:00 pm

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Myanmar International

(3-8-2016 07:00am ~ 4-8-2016 07:00am) MST

Today Fresh

07:03 Am News

07:26 Am Ancient Shwe-San-Taw Pagoda

07:43 Am Lucrative Myanma Rattan Industry

08:03 Am News

08:26 Am Writer, Philanthropist: Daw Than Myint Aung (Part- I)

08:53 Am Creations of a Designer: Fashion

09:03 Am News

09:26 Am A Life In The Ring

09:42 Am Ancient Heritage at Natalin

09:54 Am Kyaikhteeyoe: Bamboo Guns

10:03 Am News

10:26 Am Unique Pattern Of Myanma Ethnic Group: A Trend Of Chin Traditional Dress

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

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

Prime Time

07:03 Pm News

07:26 Pm A Journey To Southern Shan State (Ep-1)

07:47 Pm A Way of Life: Aikido

08:03 Pm News

08:26 Pm Tapestry- A Unique Combination Of Painting and Craftsmanship

08:44 Pm Temple Stalls

08:51 Pm Myanmar Chef (Japanese)

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

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

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

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

Nadal remains doubtful over Rio participation

RIO DI JANEIRO — Rafael Nadal has conceded he is not yet sure that he will be able to represent Spain at the Rio Olympics as his fitness concerns linger.

The 2008 gold medallist withdrew from the French Open with a wrist injury and missed Wimbledon.

"I will not be at the best level in any of the categories," Nadal told journalists after arriving in Brazil. "I have not competed for two months and I have not trained a lot."

"I will train a few days here to see what I can do and then decide what is best, to be more positive for me and the team," he said.

Nadal's Spanish team mate David Ferrer acknowledged last week that the 14-time grand slam champion's fitness situation was "delicate".

World number five Nadal, who is due to be Spain's flag bearer, was absent from the 2012 Olympics due to injury and should he withdraw, it would come as a significant blow for tennis at the Games with several other high-profile player also missing.

Roger Federer sits out due to a knee problem and Wimbledon finalist Milos Raonic withdrew citing fears over the Zika virus.

Nadal's coach and uncle, Toni Nadal, later raised hopes the player may be ready to play, although perhaps not in all three events — singles, doubles and mixed doubles. — Reuters



Rafael Nadal of Spain.
PHOTO: REUTERS



An aerial view shows the Christ the Redeemer statue with the Maracana stadium, where the opening ceremony of the Rio 2016 Olympic Games will be held, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on 16 July 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Rio opening ceremony to break with opulent traditions

RIO DE JANEIRO — The Rio de Janeiro Olympics opening ceremony on Friday will break with the recent tradition of large-scale and expensive shows, featuring a low-emissions cauldron and an "analogue" experience, executive producer Marco Balich said on Monday.

With four days to go until the first Games in South America get under way, Balich told Reuters the show at the Maracana stadium was tailored to the current economic conditions in the country.

"This is not an opulent event given the situation in Brazil," said Balich, who has been involved in several past Games ceremonies, including the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics.

Brazil is suffering its worst

recession since the 1930s with Games organisers struggling for cash and racing to finish venues and infrastructure projects days before the global showpiece event starts.

"It does not have the grandiosity of Beijing, the huge special effects of Athens, the eccentricity and technological skills of London. It is an analogue opening ceremony," Balich said.

The show, expected to cost about half the \$42 million spent by London in 2012, is based on the themes of sustainability, the Brazilian smile and "gambiarra", the ability to keep functioning with makeshift fixes.

"Brazil has the last big garden (the Amazon rainforest) of the world. We need to take care of

this garden and we tried to share this message, a message of hope," Balich said.

"It is a very contemporary ceremony. Even without special effects it talks to people about the future. In a very humble way. It is not a display of how good or modern Brazil is."

Opening ceremonies are among the best-kept secrets of the Games along with the final torchbearer who will light the cauldron.

That cauldron, however, will not be like past big structures with huge flames, visible for miles.

"It will be a low-emission cauldron as it would be an oxymoron to talk about sustainability and then burn massive amounts of gas," Balich said.

"It is a small burner with a

kinetic sculpture."

While the real flame will only be accessible for Olympic stadium ticket holders, a smaller copy will be placed in a live site in central Rio for fans to take photos of.

Some 4,800 people will take part in the opening ceremony along with about 11,000 athletes, who will enter the stadium and, due to the lack of a track, will gather at the centre of the legendary football arena.

"The ceremony has a purpose," Balich said. "Talking in a positive way in terms of sustainability. Doing a dry celebration is not enough. The fact that we are taking position might not make everyone happy but that's what it is." — Reuters

US and China to win most gold in Rio — Goldman Sachs

RIO DI JANEIRO — The world's two largest economies, the United States and China, will again win most gold medals at the Olympics and Britain will push Russia into third place in the overall standings, Goldman Sachs predicted in a survey released on Monday.

American athletes will come away with 45 gold medals from the Rio de Janeiro Games which start on Friday, one less than they got in London four years ago, while China will win 36, two fewer than in 2012, according to the investment bank's economists.

Beyond athletic per-

formance, economic success enhances the chances of Olympic glory, according to Goldman Sachs, because "a country is more likely to produce world-class athletes in a world-class environment".

Britain, which hosted the Games four years ago, will win 23 gold medals, six less than in 2012. But in the overall count, it will take home 59 medals, one more than Russia, the survey said.

The Russian team, hit by doping bans, will collect 14 golds, 12 fewer than the recently revised total of their London haul four years ago, Goldman Sachs predicted. Host country Brazil has long been an Olympic under-achiever considering its population of 200



The Rio 2016 Olympic medals are pictured at the Casa da Moeda do Brasil (Brazilian Mint) in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on 28 June, 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

million people, the world's fifth largest, and its position as the world's seventh-largest economy, according to the International Monetary Fund. Goldman Sachs expects Brazil to miss its goal of breaking into the 10 top of total medal winners despite a big increase in funding ahead of the Games in Rio de Janeiro. Brazil is

expected to tie with Jamaica, the world's 131st-largest economy, in the gold medal count. In the overall standings, Goldman Sachs predicts Brazil to come 11th with 22 medals, just ahead of Ukraine, the 48th largest economy and a nation of 44 million people, less than a quarter of Brazil's population. — Reuters