Myanmar, World Bank renews agreement for development aid worth US$1.2bn

Partnership with World Bank Group Extended to Benefit More Poor People

Myanmar and the World Bank Group have agreed to a two-year extension of a partnership that will promote growth in rural areas, improve nutrition, health and education services, build infrastructure and create more jobs.

The renewal is of the Country Partnership Framework (CPF) that began in 2015 in an effort to help the country develop, especially in poorer rural areas. It was Myanmar’s first full, nationwide strategy to improve development and human capital in 30 years.

“After a review of the current Country Partnership Framework, Myanmar and the World Bank Group agreed to a two-year extension of the CPF, which aims to end extreme poverty and promote inclusive growth in Myanmar. Over the next two years, up to US$1.2 billion in financing by the International Development Association (IDA), one of the World Bank’s financing subsidiaries, will be earmarked for Myanmar, to be complemented with technical assistance and advisory services. The International Finance Corporation (IFC), the private sector arm of the World Bank Group, and the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA), will continue their support to private lenders and investors based on demand,” said a statement released on Friday.

The decision to extend the partnership is in keeping with Myanmar’s mission of responsible development, increased infrastructure and the betterment of its people, officials said.

Photograph: Aye Min Soe

People collect drinking water from a lake in Dalla in the southern outskirts of Yangon. A partnership with the World Bank since 2015 has helped families in villages across Myanmar with education, health, clean water, sanitation, electricity for lighting, refrigeration, and business development.

Today’s issue contains an 8-Page special pull-out supplement.

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Senior General Min Aung Hlaing returns from Russia

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF of the Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and party who were in the Russian Federation left Sevastopol air base onboard a special Russian military plane on 23 June morning and arrived at the Chkalovskii air base in Moscow.

At the air base, the Senior General inspected an IL-76 TD transport plane used by the Russian military.

In the afternoon, the Senior General departed from Moscow Demodedovo International Airport and arrived in Yangon yesterday afternoon. The Senior General was welcomed at the airport by Commander of Yangon Military Command Brig-Gen Thet Pone, Russian Ambassador to Myanmar H.E. Mr. Nikolay A. Listopadov, Deputy Military Attache Commander Vitaly V. Luchshev and officials.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Jade stones worth Ks130m seized from two vehicles at Yaypu Inspection Gate

JADE stones worth about Ks130.70 million found in two vehicles were seized at the Yaypu Permanent Inspection Gate on Friday, according to the customs department. A combined inspection team of related departments checked a Ford Ranger and a Mazda heading from Mandalay to Muse and found 1,754 Kg of jade stones and cuttings hidden onboard.

The Yaypu and Mayanac-hung Permanent Inspection Gates were opened to prevent the flow of illegal goods. On Friday, the Yaypu Permanent Inspection Gate confiscated goods with an estimated worth of Ks 130.70 million in four separate incidents. The Mayanachang Permanent Inspection Gate also uncovered the attempted transport of illegal goods worth of Ks10.7 million in three separate cases.—001 ■

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing is welcomed by Russian Ambassador Mr. Nikolay A. Listopadov. PHOTO: MNA

849 children and young people released from Tatmadaw since 2012

Yangon/New York — The Tatmadaw released 67 children and young people from its rank on Friday, according to the joint press release by the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict and the Myanmar UN Country Task force on Monitoring and Reporting (CTFMR) on Grave Violations against Children.

Since the signature of a Joint Action Plan (JAP) between the UN Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting (CTFMR) on Grave Violations against Children and the Tatmadaw in 2012, 849 children and young people have been released by the army.

Today's release is the first discharge of children and young people to take place in 2017, and underlines the importance of protecting children in the context of armed conflict and within the peace process, said the statement.

"We welcome this discharge by the Tatmadaw along with other measures it has taken to prevent new recruitments and the use of children. It is much more difficult to recruit a child today than it was 4 years ago, recruitment procedures have been strengthened, and assigned military focal points ensure the ranks are aware of the standards," says Bertrand Bainvel, the UNICEF Representative, and co-chair of the UN CTFMR.

In 2017 a number of significant actions have been taken. In February, the Government signed the Paris Principles on Children Associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups—an important international framework for the reintegration of children into civilian life. And last month, the Government relaunched its national campaign to raise awareness amongst the public about its commitment to end use and recruitment of children by Tatmadaw—with radio and TV spots, newspaper inserts, and the installation of billboards across the country.—GNLM ■

SWRR Ministry assists ethnic people

THE Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement has assisted in rebuilding homes and in the rehabilitation of the people in Kokant Self-administered zone.

Dr. Win Myat Aye, Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, met with local people in Laukkai on 24 June and clarified the peace-making efforts of the government.

His trip to the Kokant Self-administered zone is aimed at assisting the ethnic peoples as part of efforts at closer relations with them, said Dr Win Myat Aye.

Following the meeting, the Union Minister handed over aid including construction materials, cash assistance for buying an ambulance and social pensions for elderly persons.

Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye meeting with ethnic people in Laukkai. PHOTO: MNA

Dr Win Myat Aye also visited Hopan, Wa Self-administered Division, and met with locals. Aid provided by the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement was distributed to local people in Laukkai yesterday as they faced shortages of food due to armed conflicts in the area in 2017. —Myanmar News Agency ■
Cooperate for long term development of literary sector

UNION Minister for Information Dr. Pe Myint said yesterday that his ministry concerns not only the news media, but also the literary sector, and encouraged literary leaders to help with the long-term development of literature.

During the meeting yesterday morning with members of literary organisations at the central press meeting hall of the Printing and Publishing Department on Theinbyu Street in Yangon, Dr Dr Pe Myint said success in nurturing and developing the literary sector will be achieved if literary organisations cooperate in similar areas in addition to working on their own aims. The Union Minister said he expected programmes to be developed concerning the literary sector to come out of yesterday’s meeting.

Responsible persons from Myanmar Writers’ Association, Myanmar Writers’ Union, Myanmar Poets’ Union, Myanmar Literature Lovers’ Association, Myanmar Literature Development Association, PEN Myanmar, Myanmar Translators Network and Myanmar Writers’ Club discussed matters relating to literary circles, literary personnel, translation, appearance of new writers, holding of a literary congress and development of the literary sector.

The Union Minister commented on the discussion and gave a closing speech.

Yesterday afternoon, the Union Minister met with responsible persons from the Myanmar Printers and Publishers Association and Myanmar Publishers and Booksellers Association and discussed matters relating to printing, publishing and distribution of books.

Later, the Union Minister attended a coordination meeting on the republishing of a Myanmar encyclopedia held in Tun Commercial Bank (head office), Botataung Township, Yangon.

The Myanmar encyclopedia republishing leading committee patron U Thein Tun, chairman Dr. Thaw Kaung (U Thaw Kaung) and committee members then explained the status of work done on publishing Myanmar encyclopedia volume 1 and experts provided suggestions.

Fifteen volumes of the Myanmar Encyclopedia had been published by the Myanmar Translation Society (Sarpay Beikman) from 1954 to 1978. Starting from 1978, an annual Myanmar Encyclopedia (condensed) was published yearly for 39 issues. It is learnt that the Printing and Publishing Department of the Ministry of Information, Sarpay Beikman and Tun Foundations are working together to update and publish the original 15 volumes of the Myanmar Encyclopedia.

—Yi Yi Myint & Ohnma Thant

Peace Music Festival in July

TO honor the peace making process, Myanmar Radio and Television (MRTV), Forever Group and Shwe Than Lwin Co., led by the Ministry of Information, is holding Peace Music Festivals – song competitions – in Taunggyi, Myitkyina, Mawlamyine, Lashio, Pathein, Kalay, Yangon, Sittway, Nay Pyi Taw and Mandalay starting the first week of July.

Competitors for Level-1 competitions will be selected first by singing any song of their choice without music. Those selected will then compete in a second selection competition by singing a song of their choice playing their own musical equipment and/or by others playing for them. Selected competitors from this second selection competition will then compete in the Level-1 competitions with a full band. These Level-1 competitions will be broadcast live.

Selected singers from the Level-1 competition will enter Level-2 competitions, where designated peace songs are to be sung. Ten competitors selected from this Level 2 competition are to enter the Level-3 competition by singing new peace songs. From this group three finalists will be chosen for the Grand Final by judges and audience voting system. Selection for first, second and third place in Grand Final singing contest will also be made by judges and audience voting system. First prize is Ks30 million, second prize Ks20 million, third prize Ks10 million. There will also be seven consolation prizes of Ks5 million each.

Those who want to compete in the competition can check for details and updates at the Peace Music Festival page (www.facebook.com/peacemusicfestival).—MRTV

NATIONAL

Myanmar, World Bank renews agreement for development aid worth $1.2bn

FROM PAGE 1

“The extended World Bank Group’s Country Partnership Framework closely aligns with our economic policy,” said H.E. U Kyaw Win, Union Minister for Planning and Finance. “It will help us to consolidate progress and advance toward achieving our key development priorities such as rural development and fostering human capital, through efforts to improve nutrition, infrastructure development, and creation of jobs, in order for all of Myanmar to benefit from the country’s development.”

A review of the current CPP by the World Bank Group showed progress in the areas of reducing rural poverty, investing in people and effective institutions, and supporting a dynamic private sector to create jobs, the organisation’s statement noted.

“Better schools, roads, and other infrastructure have benefited some 5.4 million people since 2015. Stipends have helped 150,000 more students attend school. Families in remote villages across Myanmar have benefited from community investments in schools, clinics, clean water, sanitation, electricity for lighting, refrigeration, and running businesses through World Bank-financed education, health, power, and community driven development projects. Over $1.5 billion of private sector financing was mobilised through loans, equity, and guarantees by IFC and MIGA, along with a significant program of technical assistance and advisory services” the statement read.

The top World Bank official for Myanmar said the renewal of the agreement allows the organisation to assist in the shared mission of lifting the country out of poverty using its own manpower.

“It is a privilege for the World Bank Group to be a strong partner with the people of Myanmar on their development journey. We will continue supporting Myanmar with vigor in the coming years,” said Abdoulaye Seck, World Bank Country Manager for Myanmar. “As friends of Myanmar, we listened to stakeholders across 14 states and regions, and were encouraged to learn that our support for growth and development that benefits more people, is consistent with the key directions proposed by the people and new administration.” —GNLM
Sagaya region government to spend over Ks 2.3 billion for rural development

SAGAING Region Rural Area Development Department will spend over Ks 2.3 billion from the regional government fund this fiscal year for development of transportation sectors in rural areas in Sagaya Region, according to Win Oo, a reporter of the Myanmar Amin Daily newspaper.

The Regional Department is planning to build new roads and bridges in those rural areas of Sagaya region. The department will implement the projects to build the road and bridges with an aim to access the better transportation, develop the living standard of the local people.

“The regional department is constructing the roads and bridges to fulfill the needs of the rural areas of Sagaya Region. The department is planning to construct 0.4 mile stone road spending Ks49.9 million from the Sagaya regional government fund, 66/4 mile 27 earthen road spending Ks 2.13 billion, 120-feet long concrete bridge spending Ks 60 million and 250 feet long suspension bridge spending Ks 136.3 million.—Win Oo (Zayar Time) ■

Myanmar to be dropped from list of worst offenders on child soldiers

SECRETARY of State Rex Tillerson plans to remove Iraq and Myanmar from a U.S. list of the world’s worst offenders in the use of child soldiers, U.S. officials said, a step that could prompt accusations the Trump administration is prioritizing security and diplomatic interests ahead of human rights.

The planned removal was made over the objections of experts in the State Department’s Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, which typically shapes U.S. policy on the issue, said one official with knowledge of the internal discussions.

Tillerson also rejected an internal State Department proposal to add Afghanistan to the list, two U.S. officials said. One official said the decisions appeared to have been made following pressure from the Pentagon to avoid complicating assistance to the Iraqi and Afghan militaries, close U.S. allies in the fight against Islamist militants. Both officials spoke on condition of anonymity.

Foreign militaries on the list face sanctions including a prohibition on receiving U.S. military aid, training and U.S.-made weapons unless the White House issues a waiver.

Human rights officials expressed surprise at the delisting, which was expected to be announced on Tuesday, the officials said, as part of the State Department’s annual Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report.

Fire destroys warehouse in 45 minutes in Yekyi Town

A warehouse fire in a village in Ngathaingchaung, a town in Yekyi Township, Pathein District, on Friday morning caused damage estimated at around Ks75,000, according to a report from the Fire Services Department. According to the investigation, the fire engulfed the 20-feet wide, and 15-feet high warehouse owned by U Hsan Ni, 61, a bamboo products manufacturer in Shwekyang-paing village in Daunggyibat village-tract, at 10 a.m. on 23 June while workers were working inside.

The fire was put under control almost 20 minutes after it began. The blaze destroyed the warehouse and its contents.

A State Department official said the TIP report’s contents were being kept under wraps until its release and the department “does not discuss details of internal deliberations.”

The Pentagon did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Officials said that although the report had been finalized there was always the possibility of last-minute changes.

—By Matt Spetalnick and Jason Szep/ Reuters ■

Light truck overturn kills one, injures five

A light truck overturned between the mileposts 311/3 and 311/4 on the Yangon-Mandalay Highway yesterday, leaving one dead and five injured.

The accident happened at 4:30 pm due to a tyre puncture on its way from Mandalay to Yangon and there were six passengers on board, said police source.

The injured people are not in critical condition.

The driver of the car has been charged for negligence driving.—Than Oo (Lay Hmyat Hnar) ■

PHOTO: SUPPLIED BY POLICE

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Agricultural export earnings decreased by US$32 million

AGRICULTURAL export earnings as of the mid of June this fiscal year hit over US$742 million, a decrease of over US$32 million from the same point of last year, according to the statistics released by the Ministry of Commerce.

This fiscal year, the export value of agricultural product reached US$742 million from private sector, down from US$774 million of the same period of last fiscal year.

Myanmar normally imports luxury products, personal goods, construction materials, agricultural machinery, raw materials, household goods, foodstuff and electronic devices predominately from neighboring countries. According to the ministry’s statistics, the country exported nearly US$2.5 billion worth of products this fiscal year, including minerals, fish products, animal products and agricultural products through sea routes and border trade camps, an increase of more than US$238 million compared with last fiscal year.

The country’s exports cannot be dependent only on natural resources and the agro industry, but also on fishery exports, the Cutting, Making, Packing (CMP) garment export and re-export sectors should also play an important role.

During fiscal year 2017-2018, the export of jade and mineral exports was down by US$151 million, while the value of fisheries export were found to have a decrease of US$6 million when the compared to those of the previous fiscal year.

The value of forestry product export was over US$52 million and the export value of finished products reached US$968 million. — Min Thu

UMFCCI offers Deep Sea Port project, laying YGN-MDY pipeline with JV system

THE government and Myanmar Entrepreneurs held a meeting at the meeting hall of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI) in Lamadaw Township, Yangon yesterday.

At the meeting, Dr. Win Myint, the secretary of Myanmar Fuel Oil Importers and Distributors Association discussed matters relating to paying 2 per cent withholding tax in payments, reducing fuel cost by reducing logistic cost through construction of a deep sea port and association member companies’ interest to cooperate in the construction of an onshore pipeline between Yangon and Mandalay.

Concerning the above issue, U Thant Zin, the managing director of the Myanmar Petroleum Products Enterprise (MPPPE) suggested that “the project cannot be implemented currently because of high cost.

Initially, Feasibility Study (FS), Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Social Impact Assessment (SIA) reports should be conducted. Dr. Tun Naing, Deputy Minister for Electricity and Energy also suggested that “the route survey should be conducted initially to construct the Deep Sea Port. Then, we should think about the land issue. Public Consultation, Technical Support Report, FS, EIA, SIA reports should be conducted initially.—GNLM

Normal trade reaches US$4.9 billion

External trade through sea routes from 1 April to 16 June this fiscal year reached over US$4.9 billion, an increase of over US$954 million compared to the similar period of last year, according to statistics released by the Commerce Ministry.

The value of exports via normal trade as of 16 June was more than US$1.5 billion, whereas the import value hit over US$3.3 billion. The amount showed an increase of over US$250 million for exports and nearly US$700 million for import.

During the same period, the value of border trade hit more than US$1.4 billion, an increase of US$50 million compared to last year. Myanmar exports agricultural products, animal products, fisheries products, forest products, finished industrial goods and other items while capital goods, raw industrial goods and consumer products are imported into the country. External trade as of 16 June this FY amounted to US$6.39 billion, an increase of US$1 billion from last FY. — Ko Htet

Farmers dry paddy on a rice field in Ayeyawady Delta. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

The Global New Light of Myanmar
LDP eyes submitting Constitution proposals to Diet in fall: Abe

KOBE — Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said on Saturday he wants his Liberal Democratic Party to submit proposals for discussions on changing Japan’s Constitution during an extraordinary Diet session likely to be convened in the fall.

“I expect LDP proposals to be submitted at the Constitution commissions of the upper and lower houses before the extra Diet session ends,” Abe said in a speech in the city of Kobe, indicating his eagerness to step up discussion within the ruling party to realize the first-ever amendment of the country’s postwar Constitution.

Abe has set a year-end deadline for the LDP to devise its amendment proposals and it had been widely believed the party would seek to present them to the Constitution commissions in the next regular Diet session to be convened early next year.

The LDP has already started discussions among its members over the possible amendment of the war-renouncing Article 9, after Abe raised the issue of mentioning the Self-Defense Forces in the article to give the organization a legitimate position in the supreme law.

The LDP also sees the expansion of educational opportunities through cost-free education as another area of consideration for a constitutional change.

Abe said in the speech that discussing the future of education is “an extremely important topic” that should be dealt with in connection with constitutional amendments. Abe has a golden opportunity to push for his cherished goal of rewriting the Constitution, drafted under the country’s postwar Supreme Allied Commander, in a referendum. The current Constitution has never been revised since it went into effect in 1947, partly because of the high hurdle of two-thirds of seats in each of the two Diet chambers. A majority of the Japanese people must also approve any proposed amendment to the constitution in a referendum. The current Constitution has never been revised since it went into effect in 1947, nor has a bid been made to initiate a formal amendment process, partly because of the high hurdle in proposing an amendment in parliament before it can be put to a referendum.

Abe has said he hopes the revised supreme law will be put into force in 2020, when Japan will host the Olympics and Paralympics in Tokyo. Achieving the politically sensitive goal requires careful planning, with two major national elections upcoming — the House of Representatives election by December 2018 at the latest and the House of Councillors election in the summer of 2019.

Viet Nam police detain dissident for deportation — wife

HANOI — Vietnamese police detained a French dissident of Vietname descent for deportation on Friday after the Communist state revoked his Vietnamese citizenship last month, his wife said.

Pham Minh Hoang, a 61-year-old activist and mathematics lecturer, had dual French and Vietnamese citizenship before Viet Nam canceled his citizenship without giving a reason, a move that drew criticism from human rights groups.

Despite sweeping reforms to the economy and growing openness to social change, the Communist Party retains tight media censorship and tolerates no criticism. Dozens of bloggers and activists are serving sentences for crimes against the state.

Hoang’s wife, Le Thi Kieu Oanh, said police came to their house in Ho Chi Minh city on Friday asking to carry out a regular check on their household registration but later forced Hoang to leave with them and said they would deport him the next day.

“My husband refused to go but three to four police officers used violence to drag him out and locked me inside the house... They also parked a signal-jammer car right in front of our house,” Oanh said. The French embassy in Viet Nam regretted the Vietnamese authorities decision to revoke Hoang’s Vietnamese nationality and to deport him.

“Freedom of expression and of opinion, notably on the Internet, are both guaranteed by the international covenant on civil and political rights to which Viet Nam is a party. France calls on Vietnamese authorities to ensure compliance with these commitments”, the embassy said in a statement sent to Reuters. Ho Chi Minh police said they could not provide any information on the case.

Oanh said the couple were informed on 1 June by the French consul-general that Hoang’s Vietnamese citizenship was being annulled with a month for him to leave the country, but they refused to comply. “It’s Hoang’s ideal to stay in Viet Nam to raise a voice and contribute to building freedom and democracy,” Oanh said.

She said the French embassy and consulate in Viet Nam were waiting for guidance from the French foreign ministry because Hoang’s Vietnamese and French passports have expired.

Viet Nam’s foreign ministry spokeswoman Le Thi Thu Hang last week defended the decision to revoke Hoang’s citizenship, saying it was “conducted in accordance with the provisions of Vietnamese law.” Hoang is a member of California-based Viet Nam, a group Viet Nam considers a terrorist organization. “The French government should not take part in the Hanoi regime’s brazen exile of a well-known human rights activist,” Viet Tin said in a statement. —Reuters

China, US aim to build productive military-to-military relationship

WASHINGTON — China and the United States agree to actively pursue a productive military-to-military relationship that is “constructive, pragmatic, and effective,” according to a statement released on Friday.


China and the United States are committed to implementing in good faith the annual military-to-military exchange program, enhancing high-level engagements, realizing the exchange of visits between the two defense ministers at an early date and the visit of the Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff to China at an early date, according to the statement.

The two sides are also committed to deepening their cooperation in such fields as humanitarian assistance and disaster management, fighting piracy and military medical science.

“The two sides reaffirm the importance of building mutual understanding, and of reducing the risk of miscalculation between our two militaries,” said the statement.

Fang Fenghui, a member of China’s Central Military Commission (CMC) and chief of the CMC Joint Staff Department, also participated in the Wednesday dialogue. —Xinhua
People attend colour run in central China

Sri Lankan doctors call off countrywide strike after talks

COLOMBO — Sri Lankan doctors attached to the Government Medical Officers Association (GMOA) on Saturday called off an islandwide strike after three days following successful talks with President Maithripala Sirisena.

The GMOA said that after its executive committee held talks with Sirisena, the doctors decided to suspend their strike.

During the discussions, Sirisena had assured to address the grievances of the doctors and bring in new laws to establish standards of medical education in the country.

The GMOA on Thursday began the countrywide strike, protesting against the violent clashes which erupted between police and students on Wednesday.

According to the GMOA, the strike was launched to strongly protest the violence allegedly unleashed by the police on the medical students when they held a protest in front of the Health Ministry a day earlier, calling for the closure of the country’s only private medical faculty.

The violent clashes erupted close to the Colombo National Hospital, and left at least 85 students and nine policemen hospitalized.

The police said the premises of the Health Ministry were severely damaged due to the unruly behavior of the students after they forcibly entered the building in violation of the court order issued by the Colombo Chief Magistrate.

Following the islandwide strike by doctors, thousands of patients were left stranded when they sought medical treatment in state hospitals due to wards being deserted with a lack of staff.

Patients complained that the doctors’ strike had inconvenienced the public who needed medical treatment.

Hospital emergency units, Dengue control units and hospitals in the disaster-affected areas continued to function as normal during the strike.—Xinhua

China, US agree aim of “complete, irreversible” Korean denuclearization

BEIJING — China and the United States agreed that efforts to denuclearize the Korean Peninsula should be “complete, verifiable and irreversible”, Chinese state media said on Saturday, reporting the results of high level talks in Washington this week.

“Both sides reaffirm that they will strive for the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula,” a consensus document released by the official Xinhua news agency said.

US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson had said on Thursday that the United States pressed China to ramp up economic and political pressure on North Korea, during his meeting with top Chinese diplomats and defence chiefs.

China’s top diplomat Yang Jiechi and General Fang Fenghui met Tillerson and Defence Secretary Jim Mattis during the talks.

Yang later met with US President Donald Trump in the White House, where they also discussed North Korea, Xinhua reported.

The consensus document also highlighted the need to fully and strictly hold to UN Security Council resolutions and push for dialogue and negotiation, which has long been China’s position on the issue.

Military-to-military exchanges should also be upgraded and mechanisms of notification established in order to cut the risks of “judgement errors” between the Chinese and US militaries, the statement also said.

Chinese state media described the talks, the first of their kind with the Trump administration, as an upgrade in dialogue mechanisms between China and the United States, following on from President Xi Jinping’s meeting with Trump in Florida in April.

Xi and Trump are next expected to meet again in Hamburg during the G20 Summit next month. A day last week’s talks, President Donald Trump said China’s efforts to use its leverage with North Korea had failed, raising fresh doubts about his administration’s strategy for countering the threat from North Korea. The death of American university student Otto Warmbier earlier this week, after his release from 17 months of imprisonment in Pyongyang, further complicated Trump’s approach to North Korea.

China, North Korea’s main trading partner, has been accused of not fully enforcing existing UN sanctions on its neighbour, and has resisted some tougher measures. Washington has considered further “secondary sanctions” against Chinese banks and other firms doing business with North Korea, which China opposes.—Reuters

Russia, India to hold joint military drills in fall

MOSCOW — The first joint Russian-Indian exercise, Indra-2017, is planned to be held in the fall in Russia’s Eastern Military District, Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu said on Friday.

“Military cooperation is an important component and pillar of Russian-Indian strategic interaction. A particularly important aspect of this cooperation is joint military exercises,” Shoigu said at a meeting of the Russian-Indian intergovernmental commission on military-technical cooperation with Indian Minister of Defence Arun Jaitley.

Such drills contribute to an increase of the prestige of the armed forces of the two countries and demonstrate the readiness of their defense departments to effectively counter modern challenges and threats, Shoigu said.

Both sides stressed the big potential of the cooperation in the spheres of missile and naval technologies, aircraft construction, shipbuilding and modernization of the land forces equipment, according to a statement by the Russian Defence Ministry.

“A ‘Road map’ of development of bilateral military cooperation between the two defence ministries and the final Protocol, aimed at the development of Russia-India relations in the military-technical sphere, were signed at the end of the Commission meeting, the statement said. —Reuters
A Chain is only as strong as its weakest link

Khin Maung Oo

The animal, vegetable and mineral kingdoms are the three traditional divisions of the natural world. Among them, human beings in the animal kingdom govern our natural world and it exploits benefits from the remaining ones for their survival. In other words, nature creates everything we need. So, nature can be said to be of great use for us. Humans are trying to discover countless secrets of nature, building pleasant worlds for them to live. Nature is producing many useful things for us, and simultaneously harming us in many ways. For example, natural disasters such as earthquakes, storms, volcano eruptions, floods, torrents, wildfires etc., are threatening us all the time. To put it simply, we cannot overcome these. Yet, due to efforts of human beings, nowadays we can trace imminent dangers of these calamities and make necessary preparations to avoid them to some extent. Through the efforts of humans to exploit from the natural world, we can use electrical power to get out of the dark to operate machines. We can get solar energy from the sun which is a sustainable energy source. It would be almost impossible to count the benefits given by the nature individually. Inventions or the avant-garde ideas and innovations of someone results in good effects for others. No inventor would invent things just for his/her own selfish use. Had selfish ideas been conceived in these inventors’ minds, we cannot imagine living in the current situations. Here, we need to be well convinced of the meanings of the two words—self and society. They can be said to be different and far in meaning because “Self” means a person whereas “Society” means people or a group of people. On the other hand if we look at it from another point of view, the two meanings are very close. That is because since time immemorial people used to live together in groups which later evolved into communities and later on became a society; solving problems together, finding ways and means to fight against natural disasters, sharing joys, benefits, knowledge and advantages one had gained. Occidental people’s advancements in technology are being picked up by Oriental ones, as are Oriental beliefs and doctrines by Occidental people. Why do we disagree with each other under these circumstances? When we live together, by bonding with each other emotionally and working hand in hand with each other, our strength will become strong as if like a chain. The well-known saying, “A chain is only as strong as its weakest link” is a noteworthy one for us. To be a strong chain, links need be strengthened. Instead, if a link is weak at one point, the chain tends to be broken at any time. In other words, the chain’s resistance depends upon its weakest link. “Unity is strength,” as the saying goes. We, all the people in the world, still have many things to work together so that we can live in peace and happiness. From now on, let us remove our mutual misunderstandings, suspicions, disagreements and hatred so as to be able to build a peaceful world. We need to understand that we are fellow travelers on this planet we call Earth.

Enhancing Rural Employment and Incomes

Kyaw Win (Labour)

ACCORDING to the 2014 Population Census Report Myanmar has a population of around 50 million. The number of working age persons (15 to 64 years) comprises 63.6% of the total population. This is indeed good news as it means Myanmar has ample human resources required for economic development. “Employed persons” of age 15 years and over, at present, amount to 20.5 million. Of this figure the number employed in the Agriculture, Livestock Breeding and Fishery sectors amounts to 10.7 million of which 68.8% are in rural areas. (Ref: 2014 Population Census Report Vol 2-B Table 5, pg 11). Around 3 million of the population of the rural areas are “contributing family workers”.

Agricultural activity being mostly seasonal in nature, there is at present, considerable “underemployment” even among the “employed persons” as among the contributing family workers. Hence agricultural productivity and average incomes, for many rural areas, is rather low and this is one of the main “push” factors for migration to the urban areas and external migration for earning more income.

The present trend of voluntary migration, comprises mostly young single males, females as well as young married people leaving behind their children in the care of their grandparents or “guardians” in the villages. This will present, adversely affect the working population in rural areas and possibly in the long term, the social fabric of the rural communities. The 12 point economic policy announced by the present Government in July 2016, includes employment creation and development of the agriculture and livestock sectors to increase export of the sectors.

With vast areas of fertile land and abundant water resources Myanmar has the potential to further diversify and intensify agriculture and livestock breeding as well as fisheries & aquaculture & horticulture; increase quantity and quality of its produce/ products enabling Myanmar to ensure it’s own food security, as well as emerge as a exporter of food and food products to the world markets.

Agriculture, livestock breeding, fisheries & aqua-culture, and horticulture sectors are not yet highly capital intensive or energy consuming industries in Myanmar. With agricultural mechanization still in its early stage, most of the rural activities related to agriculture sector, like preparing ground, planting, nuraturing, harvesting, storing etc. are still quailitatively intensive. Further diversification and intensification of agriculture, fishery & aqua-culture, and horticulture will lead to higher production and higher rates of labour absorption in these sectors. The sectors’ linkages to trade and industries will have a further multiplying effect on employment. In addition, building of rural roads and bridges linking the rural areas with main roads and highways, for better transportation, processing and storage of the agro and fishery products, will in turn create further employment down the line. Increasing opportunities for employment in rural areas will also increase rural incomes.

The drive by the present government for reducing unessential imports and increasing exports augurs well for the enhancement of exports of the agricultural sector as well. In terms of the economy, diversification and intensification of the agricultural sector including the sectors mentioned above, will enhance output of food and food products. Encouraging private sector investments, with the help and support of the government initially, towards further diversification and intensification of agriculture will bear fruits. Such action, by the Union as well as State and Regional Governments will enhance agricultural export earnings, and at the same time increase employment and rural incomes.

Recent lifting of economic sanctions by the US and EU, if the opportunity can be seized, will enable Myanmar to seek lucrative markets, to which agricultural, fishery and horticultural products may be exported. However for exporting, such products/ produce need to meet the safety and quality requirements of the concerned importing countries or region as the exporting companies/organizations in Myanmar are well aware.

Meeting these requirements, as the saying goes, is “easier said than done”. They must start with the beginning of the product/produce chain, and end in the final export of the product/ produce. Say for example, regarding agricultural produce, the type of chemicals used in the fertilizer and insect sprays, pest control measures used, the mode of processing for export, temporary storage prior to export, etc. will have to be taken into consideration for conforming to the safety and technical requirements of the importing countries.

Most farmers may not even be aware of the requirements so that their products/ produce may not meet the requirements for export to the country concerned. They have to be made more aware of such requirements and taught how to put into practice the technology and procedures to meet the requirements.

Existing Agro-products/ produce inspection Agencies, may need to up to date their facilities for testing samples of the commodity for export as to its conformity to the abovementioned requirements. With increasing exports, more such agencies may need to be set up. They would test samples of the agricultural, livestock, fishery and horticultural products/ produce, and if they meet the requirements, issue certificates of fitness for export.

Business requirements such as marketing standards and import restrictions would best be understood by the experienced business people involved in agriculture, livestock, fishery and horticultural exports. They might form themselves into associations or marketing cooperatives (to include the producers), and be the focal counterparts of the local farmers and producers in dealing with counterparts in the importing country.

The sooner the farmers, livestock breeders, fishermen, fishiculturists, and fruit and vegetable growers can grow/ produce more to meet the quantity and quality requirements for export of their products/ produce, the sooner will the export to the world market be increased. It will consequently increase export earnings and at the same time enhance employment in the agriculture, livestock breeding, fisheries and horticultural sectors and increase rural incomes.
Bulgaria’s first communications satellite launched into orbit

SOFIA — Bulgaria’s first geostationary communications satellite has been launched into space, operator Bulsatcom said in a statement on Saturday.

The Bulgariasat-1 satellite, which will provide television and communication services to Europe and North Africa, was launched by SpaceX from NA-SA's Kennedy Space Center in Florida at 1010 GMT on Friday.

The satellite could be also used in force majeure situations - accidents due to natural disasters - such as earthquakes, storms and floods when land-based networks are not operational.

“When we started this space project more than 10 years ago, we clearly knew that what was need to complete it successfully was patience, commitment and a strong team,” said Maxim Zayakov, CEO of Bulgaria Sat and Bulsatcom.

“We launched our Bulgariasat-1, we stepped up as one of the leading space nations in Europe and opened the path for the development of the related Bulgarian high-tech sectors and talented specialists.”

The satellite will be positioned into orbit at 36,000 km (22,000 miles) above the Earth and be operational up to 20 years. Over the next month, the ground control room will carry out the necessary tests and settings to make the satellite operationally ready to broadcast. Bulsatcom has secured financing for the $235 million project from the United States’ Export-Import Bank and a Deutsche Bank-led consortium of European banks. — Reuters ▪

Siberian scientists invent technology to wirelessly recharge and ‘kill’ drones

NOVOSIBIRSK — Specialists of the Institute of Atmospheric Optics within the Siberian branch of Russia’s Academy of Sciences have developed a device to remotely recharge drones, overcoming atmospheric disturbances, and also to shoot down unmanned aerial vehicles, Institute Researcher Grigory Filimonov told TASS on Wednesday.

“The technology of the highly efficient fiber lasers matrix addition allows remotely recharging unmanned aerial vehicles. It allows recharging friendly and shooting down alien drones. We have created a device with seven channels and achieved an energy increase by 49 times. The energy can be scaled up many times,” Filimonov said at the R&D and Innovation Exhibition held as part of the Technoprom-2017 international forum taking place in Novosibirsk on 20-22 June.

The system, which features dual technology, helps minimize atmospheric disturbances. PHOTO:TASS ▪

The system, which features dual technology, helps minimize atmospheric disturbances, it added. “It is possibly to transmit energy at a distance of several kilometers,” he added.

The 5th international technological forum, Technoprom-2017, is being held in Novosibirsk on 20-22 June. Diversification in the defense industry is one of the forum’s major themes. A total of 25 countries are taking part in the forum. TASS news agency is the forum’s main information partner.—Tass ▪

Novartis breast cancer drug Kisqali wins European panel backing

ZURICH — A European Medicines Agency (EMA) panel recommended on Friday approving Novartis’s Kisqali drug, bolstering the Swiss drugmaker’s bid to challenge rival Pfizer’s Ibrance against tough-to-treat breast cancer.

The EMA’s Committee for Medicinal Products for Human Use (CHMP) backed Kisqali in combination with hormone therapy as a first-line treatment for hormone receptor positive, human epidermal growth factor receptor-2 negative locally advanced or metastatic breast cancer. Kisqali got the US Food and Drug Administration’s blessing in March. This latest CHMP opinion sets the stage for likely European Commission approval this year.

Friday’s announcement, while expected, underscores Novartis’s push to strengthen its oncology portfolio hurt last year by the patent expiration on blood cancer drug Gleevec, exposing what was once its top-selling medicine to growing generic competition.

The recommendation is also the latest in a wave of upbeat news on the Basel-based drugmaker whose CEO, Joe Jimenez, has pledged to restore growth in 2018.

In recent weeks, Novartis has released positive data on cancer cell therapy CTL019, its eye drug RTH258 and Thursday’s surprise announcement that anti-inflammatory canakinumab benefited heart attack survivors. Novartis also won a US Supreme Court ruling this month that will speed its biosimilar copies of other name-brand drugs to market. Novartis considers Kisqali to be among a dozen new medicines with blockbuster potential. Analysts see global annual sales reaching $1.5 billion by 2022, Thomson Reuters data shows.

Its shares fell about 0.9 per cent by midday after hitting a 17-month high on Thursday.

Ibrance, on the market since winning accelerated approval from the FDA in 2015 and European approval last November, hit about $2.1 billion in sales in 2016. Novartis has priced Kisqali competitively with Ibrance in the United States and is offering co-packaging with hormone therapy letrozole, which it also sells, to kick-start sales.

Ibrance and Kisqali block enzymes known as cyclin-dependent kinases 4 and 6. They are designed for use in combination with existing drugs in women whose tumors grow in response to estrogen and whose cancer is not caused by the HER2 protein. Still, some analysts have expressed concern that additional patient monitoring required by the FDA on concern over heart and liver problems linked to Kisqali could dent uptake.— Reuters ▪

Birds’ flight ability could determine shape of their eggs: study

WASHINGTON — Scientists may have solved the mystery of why bird eggs come in an astonishing variety of shapes, like ellipses in hummingbirds, spheres in owls and pointy ovoids in shorebirds.

According to a new study published Thursday in the US journal Science, it’s related to birds’ flight ability and the egg membrane may play a critical role in determining shape.

“In contrast to classic hypotheses, we discovered that flight may influence egg shape,” lead author Mary Caswell Stoddard of Princeton University said in a statement. “Birds that are good fliers tend to lay asymmetric or elliptical eggs. In addition, we propose that the stretchy egg membrane, not the hard shell, is responsible for generating the diversity of egg shapes we see in nature.”

Many different theories exist as to why the shape of bird eggs varies so much across species.

One theory was that cliff-nesting birds lay more cone-shaped eggs, which roll in a tight circle and are less likely to tumble off the cliff. Another theory suggested that different egg shapes exist to maximize incubation efficiency in a clutch. To unravel the mystery, an international team of researchers analyzed the shapes of nearly 50,000 eggs representing 1,400 species in 35 orders, including two extinct orders. The eggs, from the online database of The Museum of Vertebrate Zoology at Berkeley, came from across the globe and were largely collected by naturalists in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. With simple observations, the team found that an egg’s shape is not determined by the shell: dissolve away the calcified shell and the shell-less, membrane-encased egg still remains its shape.

“By adjusting two basic properties — changes in the thickness of the egg membrane as a function of location, and a pressure jump across the membrane — we show that our model can produce a wide variety of egg shapes, encompassing the entire range of observations,” Senior author I. Mahadevan of Harvard University said. “This mechanistic approach to shape has a long history in biology, and our work suggests how tinkering with just two functional forms could allow evolution to move through the two-dimensional morphospace of egg shapes.” —Xinhua ▪
British PM May defends Brexit rights offer in face of EU doubts

BRUSSELS — British Prime Minister Theresa May defended her offer to let millions of EU citizens stay in Britain after Brexit as fellow EU leaders responded coolly on Friday to her opening move in negotiations on Britain’s withdrawal.

A year to the day after Britons voted narrowly for Brexit, May admitted differences at the Brussels summit over guarantees to the 3 million EU expatriates in Britain, but said they would be addressed in negotiations begun this week.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel said it was a “good start” but “not a breakthrough, to say the least.” Summit chair Donald Tusk, a former Polish premier, found it “below expectations” and said it could leave people, including 800,000 Poles, worse off.

“It’s obvious that this is about reducing the citizens’ rights,” Tusk told reporters of his “first impression” of May’s offer. “Our role in negotiations is to reduce this risk.”

May, facing the first European test of her authority after an election backfire cost her a parliamentary majority, pushed back, calling her proposal a “fair and serious offer.”

“Those citizens from EU countries that have come to the United Kingdom and who’ve made their lives and homes in the United Kingdom will be able to stay, and we will guarantee their rights in the United Kingdom,” she said.

“There are some differences between that and the proposals of the European Commission, but the matter will now go into the negotiations.”

Sitting alongside new French President Emmanuel Macron at joint news conferences, Merkel said: “It became clear during the discussion last night that we have a long path ahead of us.

“And the 27, especially Germany and France, will be well prepared, we will not allow ourselves to be divided.”

Many leaders want to see details that May promised for Monday, including the nit-picky gritty of how complex, multinational families would fare and what judicial oversight there would be.

Belgian Prime Minister Charles Michel was among the most sceptical, wary of getting a nasty “cut-in-the-bag” surprise.

For Poland, Deputy Foreign Minister Konrad Szymanski said: “We appreciate the effort but the offer does not meet all the criteria the EU agreed on as red lines.”

In particular, the EU 27 want their citizens to be able to enforce their rights in Britain through the European Court of Justice, something May has ruled out. They also dispute her attempt to potentially limit those rights to people already living in Britain before she triggered Brexit three months ago.

EU chief executive Jean-Claude Juncker said he could not imagine people not having recourse to the European Court of Justice. The Union wants the ECJ to be the arbiter of the Brexit treaty. That would mean Luxembourg judges retaining a role in the lives of EU expatriates in Britain — as now, via British courts.

At the end of a Brussels summit dinner on Thursday, May had outlined five principles. These were notably that no EU citizen resident in Britain at a cut-off date would be deported and that those who had lived in Britain for five years could stay for life — a right foreigners already have in the rest of the EU.

Those more recently arrived would be allowed to stay until they reach the five-year threshold for “settled status.” Red tape for permanent residency would be cut and there would be a two-year grace period to avoid “cliff edge” mishaps.

Nonetheless, some EU migrants to Britain still believe they would be required to leave.

“I don’t feel safe with (May’s offer) because I haven’t been living here for five years. She hasn’t been clear enough for me,” said 26-year-old Italian cafe worker Michele Paoletti.

Paoletti, who moved to Britain in 2014, now intends to move to the Netherlands with his Dutch wife and son.

Weakened by an election she did not need to call, May has watered down her government’s programme to try to get it through parliament and set a softer tone in her approach to Brexit, which she had opposed prior to last year’s referendum.

Yet her aims have held. She wants a clean break from the bloc, leaving the lucrative single market and customs union and so reducing immigration and ending EU courts’ jurisdiction.

However, her political weakness have generated concern that the divorce may not be orderly. Manfred Weber, German leader of conservatives in the European Parliament which must approve any Brexit deal, said the lack of detail in May’s rights proposals was “quite worrying for the rest of the negotiations”.

Describing “an island in chaos” compared to a continent growing in confidence in its economy and leaders like Macron, Weber said: “It still seems that the UK government has no idea what they want to achieve.”

— Reuters

Bomber planning an attack on Grand Mosque blew himself up — Interior Ministry

DUBAI — Saudi Arabia’s Interior Ministry said a suicide bomber who was planning an attack on the Grand Mosque in Mecca blew himself up on Friday when security forces surrounded a house where he was hiding.

The ministry said, in a statement read on Saudi-owned Al-Arabiya television, that security forces had also detained five other militants, including one woman. — Reuters

UAE’s Gargash says alternative to Qatar demands is “not escalation but parting ways”

DUBAI — A senior United Arab Emirates (UAE) official said on Saturday that if Qatar did not accept an ultimatum issued by Arab states which imposed a boycott on the small Gulf Arab nation this month, “the alternative is not escalation but parting ways”.

UAE Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Anwar Gargash told reporters that diplomacy, however, was still a priority. — Reuters
Sectarian group claims Pakistan bombs; death toll rises to 59

DERA ISMAIL KHAN, Pakistan — A faction of Pakistan-based sectarian militants Lashkar-e-Jhangvi on Saturday claimed responsibility for twin bombs that hit a market in the northwestern town of Parachinar, killing at least 59 people ahead of the holiday marking the end of Ramadan.

LeJ’s Al Ali faction said in a statement it was targeting minority Shi’ite Muslims and threatened more attacks over Pakistanis fighting against Sunni militants in Syria’s civil war.

Video footage after the attack showed civilians dragging bleeding victims outside to waiting ambulances in the chaos that came when the bombs exploded before the sundown meal breaking the daily Ramadan fast.

“We have received 59 bodies so far, and 250 were wounded,” said Sabir Hussain, medical superintendent of Parachinar Hospital. Sixty of the seriously wounded had been transferred to the larger city of Peshawar, he added.

LeJ Al Ali, which has previously partnered with Middle East-based Islamic State to carry out attacks in Pakistan, said it has previously “warned the Shia community of Parachinar ... to stop staining your hands with the blood of Sunnis in Syria”.

It repeated the demand in the statement, saying that “otherwise in the coming days you will face such hate-fueled and deadly attacks that you will not be able to stand them”.

Hundred of Pakistanis — many of them Shi’ites believed recruited by Iran — have gone to fight in Syria to defend the government of Tehran’s ally, President Bashar al-Assad.

Assad’s government is also supported by Russian air strikes and fighters from Lebanon’s Hezbollah militia, against an array of Sunni rebels backed by Turkey and Arab states.

The United States, Turkey, Arab and European powers are also participating in a coalition bombing Islamic State, a Sunni Muslim militant group.

The market bombings in Parachinar late on Friday afternoon came on a particularly deadly day for Pakistan as both Sunni and Shia Muslims prepared to mark the Eid al-Fitr holiday marking the end of the holy fasting month of Ramadan.

Another bombing in the southwestern city of Quetta killed 13 people and a drive-by shooting killed four police officers in the southern megacity of Karachi on Friday. Both of those attacks were claimed by another militant group, the Jamaat ur Ahraf faction of the Pakistani Taliban. Islamic State also claimed the Quetta attack through a messaging network. It had not commented on the Parachinar attack by Saturday afternoon. Sunni-majority Pakistan also has a sizeable Shi’ite minority and has sought to avoid being dragged into sectarian strife that rife in Syria and also the recent rift between Qatar and Saudi Arabia-led Sunni states that have cut off ties with Doha in part over its relations with Iran.

Pakistan’s military said late Friday it had tightened security across the country, including at the Afghan border, following the attacks.

Enemy trying to mar festive mood of nation through such coward acts. Shall fail against resilience of Pakistan,” Pakistan army chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa was quoted as saying in a tweet from the chief military spokesman.—Reuters

Second French journalist dies after being wounded in Mosul

PARIS — French journalist Veronique Robert has died in Paris after being wounded in an explosion in Mosul earlier this week, her employer France Televisions said in a statement on Saturday.

The mine explosion killed Iraqi journalist Baktiyan Haddad and French journalist Stephane Villeneuve while another freelance reporter suffered minor injuries.

Robert underwent surgery in Iraq before being transferred to the Percy hospital near Paris.

Islamic State fighters have been defending their remaining stronghold in the Old City of Mosul, moving stealthily along narrow back alleys as US-backed Iraqi forces slowly advance. —Reuters

If Baghdadi is dead, next IS leader likely to be Saddam-era officer

BAGHDAD — If Islamic State leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi is confirmed dead, he is likely to be succeeded by one of his top two lieutenants, both of whom were Iraqi army officers under late dictator Saddam Hussein.

Experts on Islamist groups see no clear successor but regard Iyad al-Obaidi and Ayad al-Jumaili as the leading contenders, though neither would be likely to assume Baghdadi’s title of “caliph”, or overall commander of Muslims.

Russia’s defence ministry said last week Baghdadis may have been killed in an air strike in Syria and Interfax news agency quoted a senior Russian parliamentarian on Friday as saying the likelihood that he had been killed was close to 100 per cent.

But armed groups fighting in the region and many regional officials are skeptical about the reports.

“We don’t have any concrete evidence on whether or not he’s dead either,” US Army Colonel Ryan Dillon, spokesman for the international coalition battling Islamic State, told a Pentagon briefing.

Obaidi, who is in his 50s, has been serving as war minister. Jumaili, in his late 40s, is head of the group’s Amnaya security agency. In April Iraqi state TV said Jumaili had been killed, but that was not confirmed.

Both joined the Sunni Salafist insurgency in Iraq in 2003, following the US-led invasion which Saddam and empowered Iraq’s Shi’ite majority.

They have been Baghdadi’s top aides since air strikes in 2016 killed his then deputy Abu Ali al-Anbari, his Chechen war minister Abu Omar al-Shishani and his Syrian chief propagandist, Abu Mohammad al-Adnani.

Jumaili recognizes Obaidi as his senior but there is no clear successor and, depending on conditions, it can be either of the two (who succeeds Baghdadi),” said Hisham al-Hashimi, who advises several Middle East governments on IS affairs.

Baghdadi awarded himself the title of caliph — the chief Muslim civil and religious ruler; regarded as the successor of the Prophet Mohammad — in 2014. Obaidi or Jumaili would be unlikely to become caliph because they lack religious standing and Islamic State has lost much of its territory.

“They don’t belong to the Prophet Mohammad’s lineage. The group has no longer ‘a land to rule’ or ‘Ardha al-Tamkeen’. And none is well versed in Islamic theology,” said Fadhil Abu Ragheef, another Iraqi expert on the extremist group.

“A caliph has to have an emir, the title of ‘ caliph’ in Arabic, and leadership of Muslims. The group can’t do it,” he said.

Another bombing in the same area on Saturday wounded 16 people, including four police officers. —Reuters

The appointment of the new leader would require the approval of an eight-member shoura council, an advisory body to the caliph. But its members would be unlikely to meet for security reasons so would make their opinion known through couriers.

Six members of the council are Iraqis, one Jordanian and one Saudi, and all are veterans of the Sunni salafist insurgency.

A ninth member, the group’s Bahraini chief cleric, Turki al-Bin’ali, was killed in an air strike in Syria on 31 May.

In Washington, two US intelligence officials said they believed Islamic State had moved most of its leaders to al-Maya, the group’s outskirts stronghold, east of the group’s besieged capital there, Raqqah.

Among the operations moved to al-Mayadin, about 80 km (50 miles) west of the Iraqi border, were its online propaganda operation and its limited command and control of attacks in Europe and elsewhere, they said. — Reuters
Russia launches serial production of seawar air defence missile system

MOSCOW — The development of the Pantsyr-ME seawar surface-to-air missile and artillery complex has been completed and the system has been launched into serial production, state hi-tech corporation Rostec CEO Sergei Chemezov said on Friday. “The development of the seawar version of the Pantsyr air defence system that has no analogues in the world has been completed. The presentation of the Pantsyr-ME will be held at the International Maritime Defence Show in St Petersburg,” Chemezov said. “The complex has already been launched into serial production,” he added.

The Pantsyr-ME is the shipborne version of the Pantsyr anti-aircraft missile/gun system. The system’s version for ground forces is called Pantsyr-S. The International Maritime Defence Show will be held in St Petersburg on 28 June - 2 July — Tass ■

Norway-Russia relations to deteriorate following US Marines’ base extension — Russian embassy

OSLO — Norway’s decision to extend the presence of US Marines on its soil will worsen relations with neighbouring Russia and could escalate tensions on NATO’s northern flank, the Russian embassy in Oslo told Reuters on Saturday.

Some 330 Marines will be stationed in Norway until the end of 2018, the government said on Wednesday, doubling the length of what was initially billed as a one-year trial period.

The deployment last January to practice winter warfare and cross-country skiing, and to participate in joint exercises, marked the first foreign troops to be stationed in the NATO member country since the end of World War Two.

“When we consider that this step contradicts Norwegian policy of not deploying foreign military bases in the country in times of peace,” the Russian embassy wrote in a statement to Reuters.

It further “makes Norway (a) not fully predictable partner, can also escalate tension and lead to destabilisation of the situation in the Northern region,” it added.

Norway has downplayed the significance of the deployment, emphasising the training element and denying that the arrival of Marines was an act directed against Russia. The US troops are stationed some 1,500 km (900 miles) from the Russian border — Reuters ■

France’s Macron, eastern Europeans try to mend fences

BRUSSELS — French President Emmanuel Macron and four eastern European Union leaders sought to smooth relations on Friday after publicly trading barbs over jobs and democratic values.

Macron, in power for little more than a month, has vowed to protect French workers from what he sees as “social dumping”, in which companies employ cheaper labour, and unfair competition from the poorer eastern European states.

Poland, Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic say they should be allowed to compete on lower prices — just as more developed western EU nations compete on quality products and know-how — to catch up after decades of communist stagnation.

Along with looming negotiations on the EU’s next multi-year joint budget that runs from 2021, this dispute is shaping up as one of the most contentious issues facing the bloc, exacerbating an east-west rift as it seeks unity to tackle Brexit.

But meeting on the sidelines of an EU summit, Macron and the leaders of the east European states — known together as the Visegrad four — agreed to set up an expert-level group to try to narrow differences over rules for so-called “posted workers”.

“Att the Visegrad meeting this morning we established which issues we disagree on and where we will continue to talk to better understand each other’s concerns,” Macron told a joint news conference with German Chancellor Angela Merkel on Friday.

“ There are issues where I’d like to advance together, the posted workers directive being one... I believe we need a profound reform of the balance. I will do it with respect for our partners.”

EU states are divided on rules under which, say, a Bulgarian truck driver or a Lithuanian bricklayer can work in France for a limited time in times of peace,” the posted workers directive being one... I believe we need a profound reform of the balance. I will do it with respect for our partners.”

“EU states are divided on rules under which, say, a Bulgarian truck driver or a Lithuanian bricklayer can work in France for a limited time in times of peace,” the posted workers directive being one... I believe we need a profound reform of the balance. I will do it with respect for our partners.”
More than 120 missing in southwest China landslide

CHENGDU — The rescue headquarters of the landslide in southwest China’s Sichuan Province has said the landslide buried 62 homes, and more than 120 people are thought to be missing.

The landslide from a high part of a mountain in Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture of Aba hit Xinmo Village in Maoniang County at about 6 am, blocking a 2-km section of river and burying 1,600 metres of road.

The provincial government has launched the highest level of disaster relief response and sent rescue teams to the site.

Currently more than 1,000 workers with life-detection instruments are engaged in the search for survivors.

The provincial department of land and resources said the landslide was caused by heavy rain. An estimated 18 million cubic meters of earth mass fell some 1,600 metres, engulfing Xinmo Village.

Enditem—Xinhua

Australia welcomes charges against alleged Bali bombing mastermind

SYDNEY — Australia on Saturday welcomed charges against a Guantanamo Bay prisoner accused of masterminding the 2002 Bali bombings in which 202 people were killed, including 88 Australians.

Indonesian-born militant Riduan Isamuddin, also known as Hambali, is accused of overseeing the 2002 Bali bombings and an attack on the JW Marriott hotel in Jakarta in 2003 that killed 12 people.

“I hope that should this prosecution succeed, it will bring closure to those devastated by the loss of loved ones, family and friends,” Australian Foreign Minister Julie Bishop told reporters.

“It has been a scar on the hearts of all Australians since these attacks occurred in 2002.”

Hambali was charged on seven different counts, including terrorism and murder, with the law, the Miami Herald reported, citing a charge sheet dated 20 June.

He is accused of directing three explosions on 12 October 2002, which hit a bar, nightclub and the US Consulate on the Indonesian resort island.

Two Islamist suicide bombers detonated explosives at the nightspots packed with tourists, killing 202 people.

For Australia, which suffered the most casualties, the Bali bombs were the worst peacetime attack on its citizens, many of whom regard a holiday on sun-drenched Bali as a rite of passage.

Seven Americans and 38 Indonesians citizens were also among the dead.

Hambali was captured in Bangkok, Thailand in 2003 and has been held in Guantanamo Bay without charge since 2006.

The Afghan war veteran dubbed the “Osama bin Laden of Southeast Asia” was seen as the main link between Southeast Asian militant group Jemaah Islamiah (JI) and Al-Qaeda.

Bishop said Australia would provide whatever support it could, but did not support the death penalty.

Those responsible for the murder of 202 people, including 88 Australians, should be prosecuted, should receive the severest of punishment and should never be freed,” she said.—Reuters

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Consignees of cargo carried on MV TYGRA VOY. NO ( ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 25.6.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T.M.L.P where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT MYANNA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: MS MCC TARANSPORT (S’PORE) PTE LTD
Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE

MV YANTRA BHUM VOY. NO ( )

Consignees of cargo carried on MV YANTRA BHUM VOY. NO ( ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 25.6.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T.M.L.P where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT MYANNA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: MS REGIONAL CONTAINER LINES
Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE

MV NESHA VOY. NO ( )

Consignees of cargo carried on MV NESHA VOY. NO ( ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 25.6.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T.M.L.P where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT MYANNA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: MS LAND & SEA LOGISTICS
Phone No: 2301185
Actor Johnny Depp apologizes for ‘poor taste’ Trump assassination joke

GLASTONBURY, ENGLAND — Actor Johnny Depp on Friday apologized for joking about assassinating US President Donald Trump, saying his remarks were in “poor taste.”

“The Pirates of the Caribbean” star spoke during an appearance at Britain’s Glastonbury music festival on Thursday when he pondered how long it had been since an actor had killed a US president.

His remarks drew rebukes from Trump supporters, and the White House described Depp’s remarks as “sad.”

“President Trump has condemned violence in all forms and it’s sad that others like Johnny Depp have not followed his lead,” the White House said in a statement.

“I hope that some of Mr Depp’s colleagues will speak out against this type of rhetoric as strongly as they would if their comments were directed to a Democratic elected official.”

Depp on Friday said his remarks were not intended maliciously.

“I apologize for the bad joke I attempted last night in poor taste about President Trump,” Depp, 54, said in a statement. “It did not come out as intended, and I intended no malice. I was only trying to amuse, not to harm anyone.”

Depp was at a screening of his 2004 film “The Libertine” at the Glastonbury festival when discussion turned to the topic of Trump. Depp said he thought the president “needs help.”

“Can we bring Trump here?” Depp asked the audience. “... When was the last time an actor assassinated a president?”

Actor John Wilkes Booth assassinated US President Abraham Lincoln in 1865.

“Now I want to clarify, I’m not an actor,” Depp continued. “I lie for a living. However, it’s been a while, and maybe it’s time.”

The US Secret Service said it did not come out as intended, and Depp had no other comment. Some Republicans criticized Depp’s comments as part of a grim trend.

“I’m sick of celebrities getting away with such disgusting comments,” Ronna Romney McDaniel, the Republican National Committees chairwoman, wrote on Twitter.

Depp, whose latest “Pirates of the Caribbean” movie was panned by critics in May, has had more than a year of bad press following an acrimonious divorce from actress Amber Heard and a lawsuit against his former business managers that has detailed claims of lavish spending by the actor.

Earlier in June, Delta Air Lines and Bank of America pulled their sponsorship of a New York production of Shakespeare’s “Julius Caesar” because the assassinated Roman ruler was portrayed as a Trump-like businessman.

Last month comedian Kathy Griffin posed in photographs holding up a fake bloody, severed head resembling Trump. She also apologized but was fired from hosting CNN’s annual New Year’s Eve broadcast.

Last week, a gunman opened fire on Republican lawmakers in who were practicing for a charity baseball game.—Reuters □

I feared fame on a few levels: Ricky Gervais

LOS ANGELES — Actor Ricky Gervais has said that when he started getting recognition, he initially had a fear of becoming famous.

The 55-year-old star says he used to de-plore it because he didn’t want people to lump me in a few levels. I feared it because I feared it because I didn’t want people to lump me in with people who did anything to be famous,” Gervais said.

The “Special Correspondents” actor says he used to despise the word celebrity and did not want his private life to be the cost of fame.

“I didn’t like the word celebrity I feared intrusion, you know? Make me famous, and suddenly you can go through my trash bins. I was very protective of my priva-cy: “I didn’t want people to write bad things about me that were-ent true because that’s just not fair. Fifty percent of everything written about me is wrong,” he says.—PTI □

Radiohead take aim at ‘strong and stable’ May at Glastonbury

GLASTONBURY, ENGLAND — Britain’s Radiohead returned to Glastonbury’s Pyramid Stage on Friday, 20 years after a legendary performance at the festival, with a set that mocked Prime Minister Theresa May’s election campaign and pulled songs from nearly all of their albums.

The band from Oxfordshire, England, first headlined in 1997, one of the wettest years in the festival’s history, when they lifted a sodden crowd with music from their album “OK Computer”.

Featuring songs about alienation, capitalism and modern technology, the band’s third al-bum sounds oddly prescient in a politically divided and anxious Britain in 2017.

Fans expected “OK Computer” to feature heavily in the set on Friday, the same day a version of the album was re-released, including tracks that did not make the cut 20 years ago, called “OK Computer OKNOTOK 1997 2017”.

The band opened with “Daydreaming” from last year’s “A Moon Shaped Pool”, followed by “Lucky”, the first of a host of “OK Computer” tracks that included “Exit Music (For a Film)”, “Let Down”, “Paranoid Android” and “Karma Police”.

Singer Thom Yorke changed the lyric at the end of the song “Myxomatosis” to “strong and stable”, apparently mocking a slogan that May repeated many times in her campaign.

“See you later Theresa; Shut the door on the way out,” Yorke said, in one of his few ad-dresses to the crowd.

Radiohead performs on the Pyramid Stage at Worthy Farm in Somerset during the Glastonbury Festival in Britain on 23 June, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

May has yet to form a stable government in Britain, more than two weeks after an incon-clusive national election.

Radiohead’s two-hour show went down well with fans, but left some newcomers under-whelmed, evidenced by a steady stream of people heading off to other stages.

Tom Martin, a 30-year-old from Cork, Ireland, was not disappointed by a band he had long fol-lowed. “It was the best gig I’ve ever seen,” he said.

Radiohead performs on the Pyramid Stage at Worthy Farm in Somerset during the Glastonbury Festival in Britain on 22 June, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

Early in the day, English duo Royal Blood drew a huge Pyramid Stage crowd for a maste-rclass in straight, hard rock as their second album “How Did We Get So Dark?” went straight to the top of the charts.

Lead singer and guitarist Mike Kerr, who formed the band with drummer Ben Thatcher in 2013, said playing the main stage at the world’s biggest greenfield festival was “life-changing, terrifi-c and ridiculous”.

The festival started with a minute of silence on Friday morning in memory of recent terror attacks and the devastat-ing Grenfell Tower fire before Hacienda Classical eased revel-lers into the first day of music.

Peter Hook, the bass play-er from Manchester bands Joy Division and New Order, led the crowd in reflecting on “our hopes and our prayers for life, love and freedom, the things we are here to celebrate”.

Other performers on the main stage at Worthy Farm in south-west England, included 81-year-old Kris Kristofferson and English indie band the xx. —Reuters □
Indian toilet charity renames village after Trump

MARODA, India — A toilet charity has renamed an Indian village after US President Donald Trump as part of a promotional push to raise cash and support for better sanitation.

Aid group Sulabh International, which says it has built 1.5 million toilets across the country, has set up "Trump Village" signs around the small community in the northern state of Haryana, each bearing a grinning portrait of the president.

Neither the White House, nor the Trump family's commercial empire, has given permission for the rebranding of the village, still better known locally as Marora, the charity said. But founder Bindeshwar Pathak said he hoped the gesture would win enough publicity and goodwill to at least raise awareness of a major social problem.

"Such a step might spur rich people, companies and other donors to come forward and donate money," he said.

"Once basic infrastructure is built here, the popularity of this village will grow and it will act as a motivational factor." The change is purely symbolic — the name Marora will continue to appear on maps and signs.

But locals said they were prepared to embrace the new title, Trump Sulabh Village in its full form, and any good things it brought with it.

"All our problems such as electricity and water will be addressed by renaming," said resident Mohammed Jataruddin.

Village head Shaukat Ali also played along, saying he was grateful for the charity's work. "A toilet is being constructed, a road is being built and community hall will also be built in the village," he said.

The event was organized as Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi prepares to fly this weekend to Washington. The US embassy in New Delhi said it was aware but referred further inquiries to Washington.

Fewer than a third of India's 1.3 billion people have access to sanitation.

The United Nations estimates that half the population defecates outdoors — putting people at risk of cholera, diarrhoea, dysentery, hepatitis A and typhoid.

VR amusement park opens in Tokyo's Shibuya district

TOKYO — Tokyoites now have another way to escape their mundane day-to-day lives with the opening Saturday of an indoor amusement park featuring virtual reality technology in the city's Shibuya district.

Shibuya VR Land, located in the Shibuya Modo shopping complex, offers an hour's worth of content for an admission fee of 2,200 yen ($20). Theme park operator Huis Ten Bosch Co created the facility in the hope of drawing visitors to its Dutch-inspired park in southwestern Japan's Sasebo, which also features VR attractions.

"We see it as a way to boost name-recognition across Japan and globally," a public relations official said. Shibuya VR Land offers five different sets of content.

Ultra Reverse Bungee uses headsets and moving seats to give the sensation of being shot into outer space by a giant catapult, while Impending Doom of Love puts you on the receiving end of a declaration of love from one of three handsome young men or a young woman.

Other content includes a game where you battle hoards of enemies with a weapon of choice, a music game, and an escape from a haunted hospital.

The popularity of VR has soared in recent years as headsets such as Sony Interactive Entertainment's PlayStation VR and the Oculus Rift have become available to consumers.

Video game publisher Bandai Namco Entertainment Inc will open its own VR amusement park in Tokyo's Shinjuku area next month, where visitors can jump into the world of anime such as Gundam and Dragon Ball.

Competition among theme parks in Japan is heating up as the industry enjoys strong ticket sales due to a shift in consumer preferences toward spending on experiences rather than products.

A steady inflow of tourists from China and other parts of the world has also provided a tailwind.—Kyodo News
Hockey tournament to commemorate Olympic Day held in Yangon

By Ye Yint Shine

A hockey tournament to commemorate Olympic Day 2017 was held yesterday morning at the Theinbyu Hockey Grounds in Yangon.

Two youth teams (A and B), a women's selection team, an above-45 Old Star team and a Telenor Myanmar amateur team participated in the tournament. Youth team A came in first place and youth team B finished in second place.

The president of the Myanmar Hockey Federation U Saw Lu Lu Htaw presents the prize to the winners. PHOTO: PHO THAW ZIN

By Shweli Myat Thawda

In preparation for the 29th SEA Games, the Myanmar U-22 team played a test match with the MWL All Star team and won by a score of 2-1 yesterday afternoon at Thuwunna Stadium in Yangon.

The match was won with a come-from-behind effort when the Myanmar U-22 team scored two goals in the second half. Even though the team won, the contest revealed many requirements and weaknesses that should be worked on, observers said.

The MWL All Star team played with controlled pace in the first half, waiting for errors from the U-22 team. They were rewarded with a goal in 18th minute scored by experienced player Yan Paing, who headed in the goal. After scoring the goal, Yan Paing was replaced as he was playing while sick. Afterwards, both teams made substitutions.

The U-22 team was not playing well in the early part of second half, but gradually picked up the pace to equalise on the 70th minute. Than Paing scored after Sithu Aung created an opportunity for him. The U-22 team played better from then on and, in the 79th minute of play, Aung Thu scored the winning goal with a long range shot.

Kvitova into Birmingham semis, will face Safarova

BIRMINGHAM — Czech Petra Kvitova moved into the Aegon Classic semi-finals with a 6-4, 7-6(5) win over France’s Kristina Mladenovic on Friday.

The seventh seed, twice Wimbledon champion, is playing in her second tournament after a lengthy layoff with a hand injury, suffered during a knife attack at her home in December.

“Both of us play really fast on this surface, the grass suits her game as well, so it was about a few points here in three, one or two key breaks in the match,” Kvitova said. It took a second-set tiebreak and one hour 43 minutes for Kvitova to secure the win which sets up a semi-final clash with compatriot Lucie Safarova.

Safarova saved three match points in the deciding set and rallied to win the last four points of the third set tiebreak to end the three-hour contest on top.

“It was such an amazing fight between the both of us and I am so happy that I won,” Safarova said.

“I stayed positive until the end. I had a few opportunities but she was serving well. I just believed that I could pull it out and win it,” she added. Later on Friday, Spain’s Garbine Muguruza takes on American Coco Vandeweghe and Australian Ashleigh Barty faces Camila Giorgi of Italy.

Czech Republic’s Petra Kvitova.

Midfielder Harrop joins Preston from Man United

LONDON — Preston North End have signed midfielder Josh Harrop from Manchester United on a four-year contract, the English Championship team said on Friday.

Harrop, 21, was the top scorer for United’s reserve team with 10 goals in 25 appearances last season and made a memorable senior debut, scoring the opener in United’s 2-0 win over Crystal Palace on the final day of the 2016-17 league campaign.

“It’s a new start for me to get things going in my career and I’m buzzing to get playing and to make an impact in the team,” Harrop said on Preston’s official website. (www.pnefc.net)

“Hopefully I can achieve my aims and ambitions that I have set myself by coming here and that’s to get promoted with Preston North End and help the club get as high as we can.” Harrop is Preston’s third signing in the current transfer window as they recruited striker Sean Maguire and goalkeeper Declan Rudd earlier this month.—Reuters

Manchester United’s Josh Harrop. PHOTO: REUTERS
my university is not well developed as much as others from urban areas and it is the one where most people think lowly of its students. whenever we participate in competitions together with other students from urban universities, some of them, especially students from yangon look down on us as if we were the idiots. some judges from that competition also treat us just like this. they consider that all students from rural universities have no qualifications. i don't know exactly yet why they think lowly of us. is it impossible that we can be more outstanding than those students they look up? qualification should be measured by place or effort? can't we never be the qualified students even if we try harder than others? there are a lot of questions and issues that should be taken into consideration. here, i would like to share my experience and difficulty concerning discrimination that i faced in my university life. as we all know, there are a lot of chances for today university students to sit the interviews to go to foreign countries not only for exchange programs but also for scholarships. in my university also, we all want to go abroad so that we tried so hard to pass the interviews. last year, i sat the interview in my university to go to cambodia and it was two days before our examination. i had to read and study a lot of facts concerning that interview at the time when i should have studied for exam.

my last page

no one is great enough to glimpse his or her parts in the future. life is drifting on the pages of a book – the book being full of traps and tricks. people are flowing the sense of urgency of death between pages without noticing that they have been reading how they would die alone since their births. this is the nature of human beings. being one of them, i am incapable to resist the temptation of any enjoyment and joyfulness.

on my first page, the occasion of being as a baby, no anxiety nor stress could bother me apart from the fear of sudden, loud noises and sudden drop from some height. crying was my weapon; it was the loudest voice calling for the attention – the attention of the people i love the most, my parents. my cry had my need done or sometimes prepared to be ready. this was during my stay in cradles rocked by the hands of my mother. the swing of my cradle was always rhythmic with the lullaby of my father. communication and movement were my new additions to my capability when my stay in cradles was over. i started talking gibberish once i had some spoken words. they smiled at me and nodded their heads as if they understood my words. when i could toddle, they loved my movements the most. this was just for the time being.

by the time there are no pages left to turn over, my happiness melts into sadness. on the last page of my book, i suddenly realized that i am now just a hopeless, dying man. i am now the frail looking the crimson sunset with the imaginary fear. feeling the sexy touch of the warm wind blow while losing in my thoughts, my spirit of adventure stimulates my nerves to set out around the world to transcend the snow of tamrac in california. sadly, i have no mental strength nor physical capabilities to fulfill my wish; the worse is i am even no longer the judge of any decision that my mind asks as it will now be made passively. meanwhile, i echo my thoughts in the abstract walls of my mind: nothing lasts forever; good things never last long enough to enjoy.
Basic English Grammar for Basic Students

Lesson 8: Pronouns

There are words that are very useful in our English writing and speaking. These are “Pronouns”. “Pronouns” are words used in place of nouns.

Let’s read the following passage.

Mary and John are friends. One day, Mary told John that Mary wanted to go and see the Castle on the hill. John agreed with Mary and then Mary and John went up the hill to see the Castle. The Castle was a very big Castle in the eyes of the children. Mary and John climbed up the hill, but as the hill was so steep, Mary could not climb the hill. Mary was exhausted on the way and Mary had to take rest for awhile. John was not exhausted, so John could climb up to the hill-top.

Here, in this passage, as we mention “Mary, John, Castle, hill” again and again. This repetition makes the whole passage awkward.

So, not to sound awkward, we do not repeat the Nouns again and again and we use other words in place of them. These are called “Pronouns”.

Let’s read the same passage in the other way as follows:

Mary and John are friends. One day, she told him that she wanted to go and see the Castle on the hill. He agreed with her and then they went up the hill to see the Castle. It was a very big Castle in the eyes of the children. They climbed up the hill, but as it was so steep, she could not climb it. She was exhausted on the way and she had to take rest for awhile. He was not exhausted, so he could climb up to the hill-top.

Now, it sounds better.

Instead of repeating “Mary, John, Castle, hill” again and again, we use “he, she, him, her, they, it”

These words are called “Pronouns”.

Pronouns are the words used in place of Nouns.

Here, in Pronouns, we use “I, me, my, mine, we, us, our, ours” for the First Person, “you, your, yours” for the Second Person, and for the Third Person, we use “he, him, his” for Masculine Gender (Male), “she, her, hers” for Feminine Gender (Female), “they, them, theirs” for plural and “it, its” for things and animals.

Here, I think, there are a lot to explain to you.

-The First Person means “the person who speaks”.
-the Second Person means “the person to whom we are speaking” and
-the Third Person means “the others about whom we are speaking”.

e.g. I want to tell you that he is not a good boy.

Here, “I” is the person who speaks, “you” is the person to whom I am speaking, and “he” is the person about whom I speak.

The First Person . I
The Second Person . you
The Third Person . he

Examples.

(a) I tell you to come with me to visit Mr. B. He lives in Bago.
(b) I love all my friends. They are very nice to me.
(c) She likes her tea sweet, but he does not make it as she wants.
(d) They are playing in the field. It is so spacious.
(e) Will you come with us to the Pagoda? It is over there.

In these examples, I, you, me, He I, They, me
She, her, he, it, she
They, it and you , us , It. These are all Pronouns.

Exercise 8

I. Underline the Pronouns in the following sentences.

(a) Mary had a little lamb, its fleece was white as snow.
(b) Have you finished your homework?
(c) He will finish his very soon.
(d) We like paying a visit to the seashore with our friends.
(e) She saw some sea-shells on the seashore. It is very sandy.
(f) I cannot promise you that I will come tomorrow.
(g) My dog likes KFC so much. It is his favorite food.
(h) That tree is very useful. We can eat its fruits, its leaves and flowers and we can use its barks as medicine.
(i) Have you had your dinner? I have had mine.
(j) She can sing very sweetly. Can you?

II. Say which are the First Person, the Second Person and the Third Person from the following sentences.

(a) My friends and I like to go on trips.
(b) I do not understand what you are talking about.
(c) She told you the truth, but you did not believe it.
(d) They will come to see you. Do you want to see them?
(e) We are going out on Sunday, a visit to his house in the country.
(f) Have you got any money to pay for the clothes we bought?
(g) Will you attend the classes regularly? Yes, I will.
(h) I have a little puppy. Its tail is short and curly.
(i) Have you ever been to Mandalay? No, we have not. We have never been to Mandalay.
(j) He will never obey my words although these are good for him.

When we use pronouns in place of Nouns, there are three Cases. These are...

1. Subjective Case (when you use it for the Subject)
2. Objective Case (when you use it for the Object)
3. Possessive Case (when you use it to show the possession)

In the following sentences, we will find all these cases.

(1) He is going to UK to see his friend. She lives in London. He will go and see her at her home and if she agrees to work with him, she will come to Paris to work in his company.

Here, “He” is “Subjective Case” as it is in the place of the “Subject”, “She” is also “Subjective Case”, “He” is “Subjective Case”, “her” is “Objective Case”, because it is the “Object”.

The next “her” in “her home”, shows “the possession”, it is “Possessive Case”. The word “she” is “Subjective Case”, “him”, “Objective Case”, “she”, “Subjective Case” and the word “his” “shows the possession”, so it is “Possessive Case”.

Here come the Exercises.

Exercise 8

III. Mention the cases of Pronouns in the following passages.

(a) He was going fishing one sunny day and he saw some fishes in a very big pond. As it was a very big one, he thought he will get so many fishes. He even saw these swimming to and fro in the pond. He wanted to eat them all.

(b) Will you come to my house tomorrow? Then we will go to see him in his office.

(c) They like playing football in their University. It is on the other side of the river and we will go and watch them playing.

(d) Our headmistress is so patient and nice. She will not scold you if you do something wrong. But she will explain about the discipline of her school to you.

(e) Once upon a time, he was quite handsome, but now as he grows older, you will find him smart and wise. All his friends come to see him to seek for his advice.

You can show these in three columns.

IV. Change the Nouns in the following passages into Pronouns wherever it is necessary to do so in suitable cases.

(a) When Ma Ma saw Maung Maung playing in the dirty mud, Ma Ma scolded Maung Maung why Maung Maung was playing with dirty mud. But, as Maung Maung was only a young little boy, Maung Maung liked playing in the mud very much.

(b) Mary had a little lamb and the lamb's fleece was white as snow and everywhere that Mary went, the lamb was sure to go.

(c) Peter Piper picked a pack of pickled pepper and a pack of pickled pepper was picked by Peter Piper.

(d) Susan saw some seashells on the shore. The seashells were bright and beautiful in the sunshine. Susan liked to carry the seashells to Susan's home.

(e) Oh! Look at the Moon. The Moon was shining up there. Oh Mother the moon looks like a lamp in the air. Last week, the moon was smaller and shaped like a bow, but now the moon grows bigger and round as an O. Are the little stars around the Moon, the Moon's little babies.

There are a lot to learn more concerning “Pronouns”. But, let’s stop for now as you’ve learned a lot this week. We will continue next week.

Bye for now and hope that you have done your Exercises well when we meet again next week. See you then! Bye Bye!

Your English Teacher , GNLM.
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How to Improve and What to Improve in Our Education System

Dr. Nu Nu Win (Retired Professor and Head of Department)

Now is the time to improve our Education System. So, we need to know what to improve, how to improve and when to improve. We need to improve both in quality and quantity. So, let us think together which quality and quantity we want to improve.

Concerning with Quality, we need to mention some of the important ones, such as the quality of teachers, classes, curricula, courses, assessment systems and so on.

As well, concerning with quantity, the writer wants to mention some such as: less drop-out rates, more students reaching the end of Basic Education, better results in Matriculation Examinations, higher quantity of students, higher quantity of trained teachers, better students-teacher ratio, higher quantity of schools and so on.

For all these qualitative and quantitative improvements, in other words, what to improve, we should think of how to improve and when to improve. There can be different ways and means to improve all these factors, but the key point is which way or means we should do our improving. We should also think of the effects of our chosen ways and means. There can be repercussions and side effects in some ways and means, because Education is the field in which most of the public is concerned as stakeholders. That’s why it is very important to take care to listen to the responses by the public on which any changes in Education will effect. Most of the public are some kind of stakeholders as students, parents, teachers and donors in the field of Education.

And the other point is when to do it. Some are necessary to be changed as soon as possible, but some are the things need to be done regularly or we can take time and do these slowly and steadily, until we have a perfect condition to do so. Therefore, if we do quickly to some changes which should be done regularly or slow and steady, it can have unnecessary mistakes. So also with the factors that are necessary to change as soon as possible. If we take time to do so, there can be harmful effects on these matters.

For these to improve, how to improve and when to improve are very important in the field of Education for all decision makers or responsible persons. So, these persons also need to have expertise in Education and experience in Education.

Let’s discuss some of them.

The first factors the writer wants to discuss here is the quantity and quality of teachers.

For all primary, middle and secondary schools in our country, we have shortage of teachers. That’s why we have to appoint such un-cert. or untrained teachers, what we call “Nay-sar La-pay or Swe Khant Teachers” or “Teachers with Contract” for some schools in some regions. Let’s see the first type of teachers. They have daily allowance, but paid monthly. The next name was really improper for “Swe-khant” we take what we get and appoint anyone who is available to do so, not seeing or taking account about their quality.

From the writer’s point of view, although “something is better than nothing”, that means having teachers trained or untrained is better than having no teachers or not enough teachers.

From the point of view as an Educationist and an Education- al Psychologist, frankly saying, the writer does not like it, just because the primary children who are very cute and young, should only be taught by trained teachers, who know Child Psychology. Because children are so soft and so timid during this age in their very first years in schools, the writer believes that they should be handled very carefully as if we were handling very fragile things. If their first experiences in school in their very first periods of time they leave their homes and mothers were very bad for all these gentle little ones, they will be afraid of school and they will not be enthusiastic to attend school any more. Then the school cannot be a Child-friendly School anymore. It can have bad effects on the child’s school life.

Teachers should have genuine love for children and youths. What we should take into consideration is, if an un-cert. or untrained teachers have genuine love for children and youths, we should have some leniency to them.

But, it’s a great but because a teacher who knows Child Psychology, knows very well, when and how much he/she should be lenient or be strict. So, if it is in wrong timing or in wrong way, the effect will be what we do not want to get. This is an important factor we should take it into consideration.

That is just mentioning an example concerning quality of teachers. Let’s think of other factor the quantity of teachers.

We need to have enough teachers. And something is better than nothing. And if the classrooms are of right size (i.e. with a Teacher – Pupil ratio of 1:40, it can be the right size.). If the ratio is better, maybe 1:20-25, it will be better. So, we need to have enough teachers for our schools.

Then the next question to ask at this point is: how can we get enough teachers for our schools?

Can we have enough trained teachers in the coming ten years or not? It is an important issue to solve in time.

If we get teachers both in quality and quantity, it will be the best way to solve this issue.

So, what can we do with this issue?

According to the writer’s point of view with an experience of teaching nearly fifty years, the writer wants to suggest a suitable way to get enough trained teachers in 5 or 10 years. This is as follows:

We have about 24 Education Colleges which train primary and lower-secondary teachers.

In these Colleges, the training goes like that. For the first six months, the student-teachers are trained in their College classrooms, and for another 6 months, they have practical teachings in the public schools in their native regions. So, the classrooms are free and available during these 6 months.

So, we call for another batch of trainees during these 6 months, we can get a double number of trained teachers for primary. (Just because, the second batch will go for practical trainings to schools and the first batch will come up to attend another year for training.) In this way, we can double the number of trainees for primary teachers (that means a double in number of primary teachers we can get in one year.)

After two years, we can get a double in number of trained teachers for lower secondary classes (middle schools).

But, according to our teacher training systems at the present, there can be some 600 trainees, who get higher marks to join the Universities of Education for their B.Ed. degree to become Senior Teachers for Upper Secondary classes. If we can take a pending for one or two years on them to attend B.Ed. , we can get a double number of Junior Teachers for Lower Secondary classes. After some one or two years, they can join the Universities of Education for their B.Ed. degree to become senior teachers for Upper Secondary classes.

And for the time being, in their places at the Universities of Education, we can accept more number of Direct Intakes for B.Ed. students. That will also lead to a double in number to get more senior teachers for the Upper Secondary classes.

The writer believes that, in this way, we can double the number of trained teachers for all primary, lower and upper secondary in some years.

We have now more than 100 thousands untrained teachers in our field of Education, so it is a great burden for the Education Colleges to train these un-cert. or untrained teachers.

Now, they are planning to train all these primary and secondary teachers as B.A.(Edn.) degree holders in 4 years in 4 or 5 Education Colleges which will be upgraded into Degree Colleges.

But, one question, the author wants to ask is, if we cannot get enough trained primary and lower secondary teachers by a training of two years, how can we get enough trained teachers in 4 years’ time?

And all these Education Colleges have recently a big burden of training to the already appointed un-cert. teachers in our schools, how will we able to do for a new higher course for 4 years? The writer is afraid, whether it will become a bigger burden onto these Colleges of Education.

What a big thing to accomplish!

And do we need to wait another 4 years (instead of two years with the present course) to get more trained primary and lower secondary teachers? What are we going to do then? Do we get more un-cert. or untrained teachers for our primary and lower secondary children?

The knowledge of Child Psychology is important not only for primary children, but also for lower secondary children who are teenagers, a very critical period in life.

And with more and more un-cert. or untrained teachers in the field of Education, there will be more and more burden on the Education Colleges?

These are the factors we should take it into consideration, concerning quantity of teachers. It is also how or in which ways and means we are going to solve our present issue. It is important that we choose the correct technique with proper sequencing and perfect timing.

These are just one or two examples in our field of Education. In practical life, we could face much more issues than what the writer has just mentioned for which we need to have practical solutions readily available.

That is why the writer said that when we are going to improve our Education System , we should see and decide what to improve, how to improve and when to improve.

Other pertinent factors will be discussed in the coming weeks.

Dr. Nu Nu Win (Retired Professor and Head of Department)
Land of Myanmarchen

By Soe Soe Naing

Kyaiktiyo Pagoda located in a resort in Mon State.

Kyaiktiyo Pagoda was built there exist 500 statues of monks. Buddha image built by Mon Queen Shin Sawpu, 72 feet in length and 100 feet in height is lying at Bilaun. When you are feeling weary during your trip. You can climb to the upper terrace of the image and during the exam. So, I passed the first interview? Why do they select us because of our lack of something? We can satisfy if we have chances!!

Moments later, my energy is now being drained of fearlessness in the mind throughout the discovery of the value of youth. Nevertheless, the youth of my days has been passing years by years without showing any sign. They are all gone as invisible as smoke vanished into the air. Yanaung Chantha image. We can satisfy if we have chances!!

yestertdays of yesterdays were almost deaf to sense their rustling. The sun is no longer whispered through leaves, but the mirror of darkness – the kind of darkness in which a cigarette smoke varnish into thin air. Nevertheless, the youth of my days has been passing years by years without showing any sign. I will remember forever and the ticking clock on the wall and the announcement of my death are the last of the last things that I will remember forever and always. While searching for carpe moments among those points. The worst abstraction is attachment – the attachment to loved ones which can be persons or things. I paid attention not much enough to sate the knot of attachment, which should be stopped when their ration of dead rises. Another famous places are Warcru old town, Setse beach and Kyaikkami waterfront. In order to seize another day, we all don't want to attempt any things!!

W ith smooth transportation, Mon State in southern Myanmarchen attracts local pilgrimage and foreign tourists with its famous monasteries and pagodas, its cultural heritages, natural scenic beauties and Myanmarchen's traditional lifestyle. The capital of the state, Mawlamyine, is 10 miles from Yangon, is the first stop along the long journey towards the ravine.

The Gautama Buddha, in the eighth century, reached on foot from the base of the hill and after the mole appeared on temple of the image, Narcinpyin Pagoda is situated in Zockbidan village, historic late iron images, Myawaddy Monastery, Mawlamyine.

As a human being is rendered helpless and directionless, the worst abstraction is attachment – the attachment to loved ones which can be persons or things. I paid attention not much enough to sate the knot of attachment, which should be stopped when their ration of dead rises. Another famous places are Warcru old town, Setse beach and Kyaikkami waterfront.

Therefore, we all don't want to attempt any things!!

Discrimination in education between urban and rural Universities

From page-A

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Therefore, we all don't want to attempt any things!!
Interview with Israeli Ambassador to Myanmar Mr Daniel Zonshine

A wide-ranging interview with Israeli Ambassador to Myanmar Mr Daniel Zonshine by the Global New Light of Myanmar and MRTV touched upon democratic and economic reform, peace process and bilateral relations between Israel and Myanmar.

Q: Mingalabar, welcome to our exclusive interview with Israeli Ambassador Mr. Daniel Zonshine. Israel and Myanmar have established relationships since 1953, so it's been a long history together. We want to know the progress of diplomatic relations between our two countries.

A: As you've said, we've had relations and representations since '53 here in Myanmar. This relationship is, from our point of view, very strategic in this area. Our first representative here was a politician with a lot of experience and he started activities that were the beginning of the development at that time.

The first State Visit that we had in Israel was Burmese Premier U Nu in 1955. During those years, we've developed a lot of connections, a lot of activities, exchange of people, of training and of sharing knowledge of both sides. All along the years we kept good relations and we've always had our embassy here and never closed it nor changed the level, the level of ambassador. In the last few years we've seen more possibilities and more potential for cooperation. Based on the good relations from the '50s we tried to plan cooperation for the future and I think there is a big potential for that.

Q: So after the reflection of our bilateral relations I also want to know your impression on Myanmar's transition to democracy and Myanmar's endeavors for the peace process.

A: Well, it's a heavy issue. Coming from a country that is democratic and sitting in an area where democracy is not very common, we look at democracy in a very wide context. It's not just about elections and voting but it's a state of mind and it has to do with freedom of expression, freedom of press and many issues that are related and derive from democracy. This is a process that will take time and I think to change the mindset of the people, it's not something that you can do overnight by declaration or by signing an agreement. It has to do with education and preparing the minds of the people.

If I can use an example from our history from the biblical times when the Israelites who were in Egypt and slaves for 400 years. When they got free and left Egypt, it took them 40 years to wander in the desert. The way from Egypt to the land of Israel is much shorter, you don't need 40 years but it took 40 years to change the mind of the people from slavery to free people.

So, changing the minds of people is a process that will take time. The expectations are high, they're skyrocketing and there may be some kind of conflict between the expectations and the possibilities and reality. But once you have a national agreement, that this is the direction and the way to implement it, I think in the long run you can achieve it. Not just in elections but a democracy as a way of life, democracy as running a society, democracy as balancing the different forces in society and in the country. This is something that I wish Myanmar will have as soon as possible, but again we need patience.

Now when you talk of peace, the peace process is not a very short thing and Myanmar has been dealing with it for quite a long time. I think that this is something that needs a top-down approach, meaning building the trust which is essential for that sort of thing, starting from the heads, the leaders. This is something that should start from the top - the government, the military, the minorities, looking at the vast interest of the country and of the people. When you take into consideration the interests and when you can bridge the differences in interest naturally not each side or party of the discussion has the same interest - it is essential for a progress. If you manage to bridge it and in this regard trust is essential, then it's top-down because when in the top there are disagreements - the price is paid mostly in the lower levels. People who are either fighting or killing or are killed, or people who have to move away from the areas of their houses, damage of property and to the lives of people and the environment where they are living. So all will benefit when the top-down approach reaches down to society and the country in general.

Talking about our experience, in '73 we had fierce war with Egypt and Syria in what we call the Yom Kippur War and four years later the late Egyptian President Anwar Sadat arrived in Israel. Of course there were some preparations for that, but his arrival to Israel changed the minds of people. And we are talking about countries that were fighting from the very beginning, from 1948, since our war of independence, fighting with Egypt in '48 and '56, in '67 and then again in '73, a war that so many lives from both sides were lost. This move from the head of state, at least in Israel, changed the mind of the people and that's why I'm taking the top-down approach.

I don't think people hate each other in the personal level but if the leadership is screening some kind of trust or readiness to sit down, to negotiate, to have peace which is more natural than to have war, this can bring and change the minds of people and enable to move forward to the next step. There are sentiments that exist from the past, so many years of fighting and disagreement and different interests, if you have the change coming from the top to the people, than I believe it is much easier to achieve this peace we are talking about.

Q: That's very interesting and it's a good lesson.

A: I think We should always look at others and see and learn from other countries and their mistakes and also learn from the good things that are happening in the area and see what is suitable for us, what is suitable for Myanmar as a society, as a country with different groups and interests. Take the experience of others and even get help from others in order to promote and to make things better than they are now.

Q: We have learned that there is a lot of cooperation between our two countries, especially in the field of education, healthcare, agriculture and technology so please elaborate more about these cooperation programs, especially human resource development programs.

A: This is something that we really put an emphasis on and share our knowledge and experience with other countries and in this regard Myanmar is a priority country in our approach and in our ministry. I can divide it into cooperation and development on one hand and relations in the commercial area on the other hand. Yesterday I came back from a short visit to Bangkok and on the plane with me were a few dozens of young Myanmar people who just came back from an 11-month stay in Israel. They were there in a project that is ongoing for twenty-three years of receiving young Myanmar people for studying and working in agriculture in Israel.

I think this period of time, when they are exposed to the Israeli methodologies and technical innovations and especially technology, I think the mindset of Israeli farmers helps to get a better understanding of modern agriculture, a better understanding of the importance of planning, experience, research and the know-how that accompanies agriculture.
A TALE FOR CHILDREN UNDER 10

Four-week-old little one which refuses to listen to the mommy-Deer

By Khin Maung Phone Ko

In the African jungle, all the animals were feeding on their food. Among them were a flock of deer with their newly added little ones. There was One mother deer and her four-week-old (a baby deer) are grazing on a dry grass.

A young little one was named Bimbee who was not so happy to eat dry grass and grumbling about it. It looks around here and there. While it sees a green grass right under the tall big tree, “Mom! Mom! I want a fresh green grass under the big tree”. None (animal) was there too. May I go there, mom please”, Bimbee said. Mommy dear reply was no! But Bimbee insisted again and again to go there. Then mom deer says that no other deer were there, it shows that place was not a safe for you too. But Bimbee ignored mom’s warning and went under the big tree to eat the green grass. While it is happily grazing on the grass there came down from the tree a big leopard and a sound of gun fire together from the hunter nearby.

Bimbee must jump and run for its life towards mom deer. Wooo! Then saw a leopard waiting on the tree has jumped on the stub-born Bimbee for a meal. By a stroke of the mercy of the creator God, a gun fire from a hunter who was aiming to kill the leopard with his gun.

This event has saved Bimbee from the victim of the leopard’s meal.

The theme of the story is off-springs or children should listen to mother or father, so that they are to honour them.

The Bible verses: “Honour your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you. (Genesis 20:12, NIV) □

Here are the answers to the last week’s lesson “Sentences” exercises .

I. (a), (c), (d), (f), (g), (i) and (j) are sentences.

II. You have to write 10 sentences.

III. Subjects

(a) Birds
(b) I
(c) Students
(d) Our teachers
(e) Johnny
(f) Tomorrow
(g) Mother
(h) Frizzy flowers
(i) You
(j) The moon

Predicates

(a) are singing sweetly.
(b) will pluck all these mangoes.
(c) correct our mistakes in English.
(d) had a little puppy.
(e) is my birthday.
(f) bakes that cake.
(g) are blooming beautifully.
(h) Do know the Ugoly Duckling?
(i) is shining up there.

The Objects in these sentences are: ..

(a) ..,..., (b) all these mangoes, (c) this book, (d) our mistakes
(e) a little puppy, (f) ..,..., (g) that cake, (h) ..,..., (i) the Ugoly Duckling, (j) ..,...

IV. You have to make your own sentences.

e.g. The boy saw a small dog on the street.

The boy (Subject), saw a small dog on the street (Predicate), a small dog (Object).

Example sentences:

1) Five examples of Phrases are: .....

on the road, in the garden, on the wall, outside the stadium, up there.

2) Five examples of Clauses are: ...

Who sang heavy metal, which is on the table, when the moon shines, where he goes, whose book I have hired.

5. Phrases 

(a) who got 100 marks in Mathematics
(b) on the tree
(c) up there
(d) under the rain cloud
(e) in the meat-safe
(f) who sang “Bo Aung Din”
(g) who lies late

6. Clauses

(j) on the wall