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Stock market overshadows real estate

THE real estate market has declined because of greater interest by the majority of investors in the stock market, according to economic experts.

"The real-estate market hasn't stagnated. Potential investors are just considering where best to place their money. Real estate was the best form of investment in the past. Now, people are putting their money elsewhere as investment opportunities in other markets have opened up. The international real estate market also isn't suffering from a decline. For the moment, we can't speculate anything yet. People have just become a little hesitant is all," explained Dr Maung Aung, economic expert.

Over K20 billion in weekly sales on the stock market has taken interest away from the real estate market, which could result in the market declining, say real estate experts.

"It's because of political change. There's still some trepidation over the sustainability of a changing system," said U Than Oo, chair of Mandaing real estate.

Those in the real-estate business have made it known the real estate industry has not completely stagnated, with people keeping a watchful eye on future developments.—Myitmakha News Agency



A panoramic view of a housing in Yangon. PHOTO: SAW THEIN WIN

IFC investment in port will boost transport sector

IFC, a member of the World Bank Group, is helping to improve Myanmar's under-developed transportation sector by providing \$40 million finance package to Myanmar Industrial Port (MIP).

MIP is one of two major container ports in Myanmar and a key trade gateway that handles more than 300,000 twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs) annually or 40% of the country's container traffic.

The \$40 million in mezzanine

financing is the first phase of a \$200 million financing package which is expected to include \$160 million in long-term senior loans to be provided by IFC and other foreign lenders. The financing package will help the company increase capacity and efficiency at its container terminal in central Yangon, the commercial capital of Myanmar. With IFC's long-term funding, the company will be able to complete the first phase of its expansion plans which, together

with the efficiency improvements, will increase the terminal's annual handling capacity to 500,000 TEUs or more. The investment is IFC's first in the transportation sector in Myanmar and is part of a broader strategy to help improve business in Myanmar by making it more efficient and competitive thereby unlocking the country's potential for increased international trade and supporting job creation and economic development.

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Mandalay to fight to curb betel chewing

MEASURES will be taken in a step by step to campaign to eliminat betel chewing by Mandalarians, according to Mandalay City Development Committee (MCDC).

MCDC is set to start making a list of betel stalls around the city as a first step of the campaign as of April 20, said the committee.

I am a betel chewer but I will kick the bad habit for my health, said U Soe Tint Aung, head of sanitation branch of the MCDC, adding that undisciplined betel juice spitting tarnishes the image of the city.

The first step is set to cover sellers including betel leaf and nut wholesalers and roadside betel stalls before launching the second step of educative campaign to heighten public awareness of diseases caused by betel chewing.

During the second step, efforts will be made to stop imports of goods related to betel quid and prescribed periods will be set to educate and take action against betel chewers.



A vendor makes betel for chewing. PHOTO: AUNG THANT KHAING

The third step is to honour those who took part in the fight against chewing of betel quid in Mandalay.

The MCDC is set to cooperate with organizations concerned

including the police force, general administration department, health department, education department, agriculture department and commerce department including civil society organiza-

tions. It is required not only to educate people but also to create alternative businesses for those involved with betel-related businesses, said Daw Moe Moe, a local.—Aung Thant Khaing

Pontoon bridges to become International standard port within three months

THE four pontoon bridges are to be upgraded to an international standard port within three months, said U Mya Than, the chief civil engineer of Myanmar Port Authority.

The project, passed by the Myanmar Investment Commission, includes upgrading the container yard, the installation of the modern equipment and the construction of the infrastructure.

In its current form, the Sule jetty covers an area of 15 acres with four 80-year-old pontoon bridges. The upgrading project is designated to take six years while the initial phase will take two years. There are plans to also upgrade the Nanthida jetty and the pontoon bridge from Pansoedan to Dala. The government invited private companies to submit tender for the projects with Sein Kaung Yadanar Co.,Ltd being chosen.—200

Exam successes abound in Kyimyindine

WITH the examination results having been released on April 18, the success percentage of Grade 5 and Grade 9 students in Kyimyindine increased this year when compared to that of last year.

As of the 2014-2015 Academic Year, Grade 5 and Grade 9 final examinations are held under the control of District Education officers for Grade 5 and Region/State Education officers for Grade 9 respectively.

There was an 80 per cent success rate in Grade 9 as 631 out of 788 students passed the exams while 86.29 per cent of Grade 5 students, 906 students out of 1,050, passed in Kyimyindine.

Students had to take great care to pass the exam this year as there was no chance of a

supplementation exam if they failed.

The results are released by three grades: Grade A (between 80 and 100 marks), Grade B (between from 60 to 79 marks) and Grade C (between 40 and 59 marks) with a smaller number of students achieving Grade A than those who achieved Grade B and C.

“The government-controlled exam is expected to produce more qualified students instead of the large number of students who passed the exams.

This system should be applied to every grade so that the students can develop the good habit of studying the whole texts without relying on hints and tips”, said a parent seeing his son’s result.—Snow



Parents check examination results for their children.

PHOTO: SNOW

Visitors flock to Kyaing Taung waterfall on New Year Day

BOTH Upper and Lower water falls in Mohné Township, Linkhay District, Southern Shan State received an influx of visitors on New Year Day of ME 1378.

The waterfalls, situated 17 miles south west of the town of Kyaing Taung, are a popular Thingyan destination for the Kyaing Taung locals and with those from around Shan State. Tourists from other States and Regions also visited the falls over Thingyan.

Visitors flock to the natural wonder to take photographs and hang out at the waterfalls where



The number of visitors to Kyaing Taung waterfall is upward during the water festival. PHOTO: SAI ZAW LAT (LINKHAY)

they soak in its scenic beauty.

“The waterfall has become a famous destination to take a rest during the heat of summer. Locals from Shan State and beyond flocked to the waterfall during

Thingyan”, said a visitor from Linkhay.

People can now go to both Upper and Lower Falls and I feel proud, she added.—Sai Zaw Lat (Linkhay)

Sustainable Milinda library opened on April 17

THE first library built in Myanmar using recycled plastic disposals was opened on April 17(Myanmar New Year Day) at Natkyo-aiin village, Bagan, NyaungOo District. The library is named after Rev Milinda who was famous for his Q&A section with the King Nagasena.

At the opening ceremony, U Tin Htoo Maung, the administrator of NyaungOo District and team leader of Plastic Free Bagan Campaign, explained the concept behind using waste plastic in the construction and thanked those associations who participated in

the project before cutting ribbon to formally open the library.

Officials, those in the associations and invited guests toured the building and studied the building’s construction. Points of interest were its unique interior design with vases and lamps also made using plastic drinking bottles and the range of books available in the library.

There is a range of reading materials in library with four main sections providing fiction and non-fiction books, journals and magazines. Well-wishers donated five desks and 10 work

benches.

The library was constructed using recycled plastic materials which were collected by the members of Plastic Free Bagan Campaign and the Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) on Saturdays. Over 3,700 plastic bricks substituting standard brick were used in construction. The plastic bricks are made from plastic drinking water bottles.

The construction of the library, which measures 34x24 feet, took three months starting on January 10 and was completed on April 10, 2016.—Ye Thura

President U Htin Kyaw, wife Daw Su Su Lwin make food donation in Thongwa Tsp

PRESIDENT U Htin Kyaw and wife Daw Su Su Lwin made their fourth food donation, known as Satuditha, in commemoration of Myanmar's New Year at Maha Atulawaiyan Sasana Beikman in Thongwa Township in Yangon yesterday.

Local people in Thongwa and nearby villages attended the donation ceremony and enjoyed food and drink.

U Ne Win, regional Hluttaw representative for Thongwa Constituency 1, said of the ceremony that people were very pleased with the event organized by the President and his wife.

"I am very happy and proud of their donation despite them being absent from the ceremony", said the Hluttaw representative,

adding that Daw Su Su Lwin has made such donations every year since 2012.

U Aung Than, a farmer from Ywathagyi village in Thongwa Township said that he was very delighted to see donation of the President at Thongwa.

He expressed his belief that the new government will work hard to meet the people's basic needs, stressing the need for ensuring better transport infrastructure in the region for the smooth flow of agricultural produce.

U Myo Swe, regional Hluttaw representative for Thongwa Township Constituency 2, called for the construction of village-to-village roads to develop the township.

It can thereby contribute to-

wards development in the health and education sectors of the township, said the Hluttaw representative, adding that measures are needed for local people to have access to clean water in the township.

The food donation ceremony was also attended by members of Sangha led by Yangon Region Sangha Nayaka Committee Secretary Bhaddanta Kaytumalar and the chairman and vice-chairman of Yangon Region National League for Democracy, regional Hluttaw representatives and departmental officials.

Officials offered day meals and alms to members of Sangha and shared merits gained at the ceremony.—*Myanmar News Agency*



People having charity food donated by President U Htin Kyaw and wife. PHOTO: MNA

IFC investment in port will boost transport sector

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"Thanks to IFC's investment, we will be able to further modernize our port operations and respond to the increasing demands of international shipping lines and local traders," said Captain U Ko Ko Htoo, MIP's Chairman. "We are also keen on IFC's advice on bringing our environmental, social and governance practices in line with international standards."

al standards."

Myanmar's container volumes are estimated to have increased by 90 per cent over the last 3 years due to rapid growth in imports and exports following the government's implementation of political and economic reforms.

"IFC's financing for MIP comes at a critical time in Myanmar's development when trans-

port infrastructure is urgently needed to realize the country's growth potential," said Hyun-Chan Cho, IFC's Head of Infrastructure and Natural Resources for Asia. "The MIP loans will also help to catalyze investment by other private developers and financiers in Myanmar's infrastructure sector for which long-term US dollar funding has not been readily available."—*GNLM*

Water shortages hit Keng Tung's hillside residents

HILLSIDE villages situated in Eastern Shan State's Keng Tung township are being confronted with water shortages, according to local residents.

The hillside villages of Sun-taung, Sunmun, Sunhsat, Yebawhaung, Honaratet and Kaugkan all annually suffer from water shortages in Summer but this season's severe water shortages comes as a result of unusually high temperatures, caused by this year's El Nino weather event.

"We've been without water for many days now. If we want

to shower or wash clothes, we must trek down to households of friends located by the Thay river. I wish people would regularly donate water to us during these Summer months," exclaimed Daw Aye Byar of the Akha ethnic group, who is forced to fetch water from Kaugkan village.

The Keng Tung township municipal council distributes water to residents, collecting K200 per unit of water, but local administrator U Sai Lonehtan has made it known distribution capacity cannot meet the needs of local

communities.

However, Daw Myint Mint Khaing, official of the Keng Tung township Department of Rescue and Resettlement, has stated water is now being donated free-of-charge to those villages within the township suffering from shortages.

According to the department, water is also being distributed free-of-charge to neighbourhoods and villages within the township on a daily basis until the onset of monsoon rains.—*Myit-makha News Agency*



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi visit Nay Pyi Taw General Hospital. PHOTO: DR. SNL

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi comforts patients at Nay Pyi Taw General Hospital

STATE Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi visited the 1000-bed Nay Pyi Taw General Hospital to comfort patients yesterday.

The State Counsellor spoke words of encouragement to patients undergoing treatment at medical and surgical wards and made sure they were receiving the best possible care.

Daw Suu Kyi also comforted patients injured in car

accidents during the Thingyan period.

We were told that she will help give us food and accommodation and treatment as well during our time in hospital, Daw Lei Lei Win Naing from Kawhmu Township who was accompanying a patient and recounted her conversation with the State Counsellor.—*Myanmar News Agency*

MWEA sends delegate to international market analysis training program in Viet Nam

MYANMAR Women Entrepreneurs' Association sent a delegate to a Training of Trainer Program on International Market Analysis which is set to be held in Hanoi, Viet Nam from 19 to 22 April.

Daw Hnin Wai, general sec-

retary of MWEA, left for Vietnam on 18 April to take part in the program.

She was seen off at Yangon International Airport by responsible persons of the association.—*MWEA*



A delegate of Myanmar Women Entrepreneurs' Association seen off at Yangon International Airport before leaving for Hanoi. PHOTO: MWEA

First Pulitzer Prize winner Myanmar

A Kachin female journalist accompanied by other three member of the Associated Press (AP) team won the 2016 Pulitzer Prize in public service for her reporting.

She and three members of the Associated Press (AP) team worked for an investigation of severe labour abuses in the Southeast Asian fishing industry that tied to the supply of seafood to American supermarkets and restaurants, reporting that freed 2,000 slaves, brought perpetrators to justice and inspired reforms.

Esther Htusan, 29, is the first ever woman journalist in Myanmar to be awarded the Pulitzer Prize. —GNLM



The AP team that investigated seafood caught by slaves poses at the George Polk Awards luncheon in New York, Friday, April 8, 2016. From left: Martha Mendoza, Robin McDowell, Esther Htusan and Margie Mason. PHOTO: AP

Pedestrian seriously injured in traffic accident

A 38-YEAR-OLD man sustained serious injuries in a traffic accident last Thursday, and he is currently receiving treatment at the Kyaungon Township Hospital, police reported yesterday.

Hla Tun, 50, was driving his car at high speed when he hit Hla Soe Oo, who was walking along the Pathein-Monywa Road that evening.

The crash occurred between mile post No 31/7 and No 21/0

near Tar U Village in the Hle-seik Village Tract in Kyaungon Township, Ayeyawady Region.

Action is being taken against the careless driver, who will be charged under the law.—Win Kyaing

Traffic accident damages vehicle

A vehicle en route to Nay Pyi Taw from Yangon driven by Thaung Han, 27, with eight passengers on board turned over on Yangon- Nay Pyi Taw road, Kyauktaga township, Bago region on 17 April when the driver lost control.

The accident damaged the vehicle badly. No one was injured in the accident. The driver was deemed guilty of careless driving by the police station.—Khin Ko (Kyauktaka)



The damaged vehicle being seen. PHOTO: KHIN KO (KYAUKTAKGA)

Car accident injures 21 passengers

TWO Light Trucks collided between mileposts 95/7 and 96/0, Yangon - Nay Pyi Taw Highway, Kyauktaga township, Bago region on 17 April, leaving 21 injured.

A light truck driven by Min Zaw Oo, 32, from Yangon hit the back of another light truck

being driven by Aung Myint Sein, 50, when the former lost control.

The accident injured thirteen passengers from the vehicle driven by Aung Myint Sein and eight passengers from the other vehicle driven by Min Zaw Oo.

A total of 21 passengers sustained minor injuries.

The injured are undergoing medical treatment at Myo Chaung highway's clinic.

The reckless driver Min Zaw Oo has been charged by the police.—Khin Ko (Kyauktaga)

Four die of suffocation in Natogyi

FOUR people died of suffocation on April 17 in Magyigont village, Natogyi township. According to the investigation, Than Shin, 65, Naing Moe, 26, and Moe Lin, 29, went down to the well which is 3 feet wide and 30 feet high.

They pumped the water with puming machines at a depth of 15 feet from above. As they had difficulty breathing because of engine fumes, they fainted and fell down to the bottom. So, two fellow workers Mya Shwe, 33, and

Zaw Oo, 26, got down to rescue them. Although, the villagers tried to save all five of them, only Moe Lin could survive from suffocation.

The police are still investigating the case — Htay Myint Maung

Crime NEWS

Exceeding speed limit injures 11

A TRAFFIC accident on the Yangon-Malawmyine road in Waw Township, Bago Region, at 2:20pm on 16 April reportedly resulted in injuries to 11 people.

Acting on a tip-off, the police discovered that an express bus driven by Aung Kyaw Sint, 36, from Kaya State, en

route to Phayagyi from Kyaukhto, lost control while speeding. The vehicle overturned on the right side of the road, leaving 11 people on board injured. Police charged the driver under Sections of 338 and 337 of criminal law at the Waw Myoma Police Station.—Ye Zarni

Vehicle turned over on Yangon- Nay Pyi Taw Highway



Vehicle seen turned over on Yangon- Nay Pyi Taw Highway.

PHOTO: KHIN KO (KYAUKTAKGA)

A vehicle heading for Nay Pyi Taw from Yangon driven by Win Naung, 42, with ten passengers on board turned over between mileposts 82/4-5, Kyauktaga township on Bago region on 18 April when the driver lost control.

Seven passengers were injured with minor injuries in the accident and they are taking medical treatment at Myoma Chaung highway clinic.

The police have filed a lawsuit against a reckless driver.—Khin Ko (Kyauktaka)

Police arrest snatcher in Pyigyidagun

POLICE have arrested a suspect who has allegedly snatched a gold chain from a girl at 51 road, Pyigyidagun township, Mandalay on 18 April.

According to the investigation, a man on a motorbike approached to Ma May Zin Htaik, 30 and her sister on their way

home. Then, the man abruptly snatched a gold chain from the victim's neck and drove away. The victim shouted for help. The people nearby helped the police apprehend Ye Min Tun, 33, from Nam Hsam. The police have taken action against him.—Myanmar Police Force



Ye Min Tun. PHOTO: MPF

LOCAL Business

India's demand for Myanmar beans sees prices soar

PRICES of export beans that appeared to climb before Thingyan period have started to pick up in the market yesterday thanks to increased demand from India, according to Mandalay bean market.

Sources said export bean prices have jumped on strong demand from Indian traders and when the bean brokerage resumed on April 19, prices for a bag of beans had increased by K5000 to K10, 000, depending on the type of bean.

The price of Mung bean per bag has rose from K160, 000 to K170, 000 and the price of V2 chickpea per bag has increased from K100, 500 to K105, 000 on the back of growing Indian demand.

Despite no new stock in the market, remaining stocks are available for bean trading, said U Soe Win Myint, owner of Soe Win Myint brokerage.

Of the current market situation he expects that those who bought beans before the Thingyan period to store their stocks until they can get a better price as strong demand boosts export bean prices. Despite weak prices in gold and the US dollar, bean prices have soared due to Indian demand this year, he added.

According to market sources, most of bean stocks are in the hands of traders as harvest time is over. Myanmar bean varieties are in good demand for export as they are grown without the use of chemicals.—Aung Thant Khaing



Farmers work on a farm as they harvest beans at a village near Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE

Logistical barriers hurting Myanmar-Korea ground sesame exports

RISING expenses are hurting Myanmar ground sesame traders who export to South Korea as the commodity cannot be sent to the East Asian country directly, according to the Myanmar Pulses, Beans and Sesame Seeds Merchants Association.

Export expenses began to appreciate in 2011, when ground sesame was exported to South Korea via Malaysia and Singapore.

“Since Myanmar does not have a direct trade link with Korea [for ground sesame], exports of the product are more costly

than they are for neighbouring countries. In competing markets, buyers purchase where prices are cheap. It’s a problem with logistics. There’s a need to develop Myanmar’s ports. Most expenses incurred in exports to Korea are incurred through container fees,” said U Myint Kyu, a member of the aforementioned association.

Myanmar competes with fellow ASEAN member Vietnam in sesame exports to South Korea. Vietnamese exports are more financially attractive for South Korean buyers since Vietnam is more

closely linked to its buyers.

“Sesame is an essential part of Korea, cuisine. Despite annual augmenting exports of Myanmar ground sesame to Korea, there is still a need for quality to meet the right standards,” said Lee Ho Yeon, a production specialist from the Korean-based CJ company, a buyer of Myanmar sesame.

Myanmar ground sesame is currently exported to Japan, South Korea and China. Annual foreign exports of the commodity weigh in at over 10,000 tonnes.—Myit-makha News Agency

US\$60 billion needed to improve Myanmar's transport infrastructure

THE Asian Development Bank estimates that US\$60 billion worth of investment would be needed through to 2030 to improve Myanmar's lacking transport infrastructure.

This would require the government raise its investment in transport to 3-4 per cent of gross

domestic product, from little more than 1 per cent in recent years.

It is estimated that transport expenditure would fall by 3 per cent from its peak after the surge in investment has resulted in improvements in the sector.

Currently, public transport

in Myanmar remains inadequate, while the majority of the country's road network needs upgrading. Adequate transport infrastructure would play a significant role in developing the country's economy by enabling more business links with both locals and foreign investors.—200

Pea exports see higher profits this FY

A high export price for peas means more than US \$ 100 million could be made from export of peas and sesame seeds this fiscal year, 2015-2016, compared to that of last year despite a sharp decline in the volume of trade, according to Myanmar Pulses, Beans and Sesame

Seeds Merchants' Association.

“The price of peas was higher this fiscal year than that of last year despite the decline in trade volume. That’s why more foreign currency could have been earned”, said U Min Ko Oo, the assistant secretary from Myanmar Pulses, Beans

and Sesame Seeds Merchants' Association.

The export price rises because India offered a higher price in order to fulfill their increased demands of peas caused by delayed harvesting and the low yield because of the late monsoon.—200

Jovago's Myanmar hotel network to hit four figures

THE French based hotel booking website, Jovago, anticipates it will increase its Myanmar hotel base to a thousand hotels by June.

“For us, we’re still really at the start of our foray into the Myanmar market. That said, one can say we’ve had increased usage of our online platform. For the moment, we anticipate having connected with a thousand hotels come June,” explained Hugo Schleicher, managing director of Jovago Myanmar.

As the first to offer an online booking service for hotels in Myanmar, Jovago has established links with over 700 of Myanmar's 1,400 officially registered hotels.

“If we compare foreign visitor figures to Myanmar in 2015 with the whole of the last decade,

it surpasses them by more than ten times over. There are roughly two thousand travels companies operating in Myanmar. Online travel services will also boost Myanmar's tourism sector,” said U Thwet Lwin Toe, chair of the Myanmar Tourism Entrepreneurs Association.

He continued by stating that development to the countries tourism industry has put the country on the map as a travel destination, with the country boasting approximately 50,000 hotels rooms.

Jovago offers online hotel booking services for over 30 African and 3 Asian countries and has had a presence in Myanmar for the past 7 months.—Myit-makha News Agency

Freight loaders in short supply on previous years

THE falling numbers of workers loading and unloading freight, between Yangon and various regions around the country, is causing a number of difficulties within the industry, according to highway cargo transport entrepreneurs.

“There has been a rise in the number of large scale companies handling the transportation of goods, resulting in a decline in transportation through a retail system. A worker can earn K6,000 a day working in construction and they're only required to work be-

tween 9am-5pm. That's the catalyst behind the decline in freight workers,” said U Kyin Thein, deputy chair of the Myanmar Highway Freight Transportation Service Entrepreneurs Association (Bayint Naung).

In the past, freight used to be transported to provincial towns via highway buses, but 2015 saw the start of transportation companies using their privately owned vehicles for the transportation of goods, decreasing the need for additional workers.—Myitmakha News Agency

Thai military government says no campaigning ahead of charter vote

BANGKOK — Campaigns will not be allowed in Thailand in the run-up to an August referendum on a new constitution that the military hopes will usher in stable politics but which critics say will stifle democracy, a senior government official said on Tuesday.

The military, which seized power in a 2014 coup saying it had to end violent anti-government protests, has overseen the drafting of the constitution and promised to hold an election by the middle of next year.

But critics of the draft, including major political parties, say it will enshrine the military's influence and is unlikely to resolve years of political strife.

The military government has warned critics not to attempt to sway the vote.

"Don't campaign and don't influence the referendum. Let people be free to think," Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Prawit Wongsuwan told reporters.

"If you disagree then just tick that box."

The military has mount-



Thailand's Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha greets traditional dancers as he arrives for a weekly cabinet meeting at Government House in Bangkok, Thailand, on 19 April. PHOTO: REUTERS

ed its own campaign to get people to vote in the 7 August referendum, though it says its effort is not aimed at getting people to vote in favour of the draft.

As part of that campaign, students from the military's territorial defence programme are visiting public places, including markets and shopping malls, to persuade people to vote.

Since taking power, the military has banned political activity but that has not stopped parties from commenting on issues, including the draft constitution.

The Puea Thai Party of former Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra, whose government was ousted in the 2014 coup, has told its supporters to reject the charter.

Supporters of the populist party backed by many of Thailand's rural poor, say the new constitution is a bid by the military-dominated establishment to limit its influence. Even its rival, the pro-establishment Democrat Party, has said the draft is undemocratic, though it has stopped short of telling its supporters how to vote.—*Reuters*

China rejects US query on military flight to disputed island

BEIJING — China's Defence Ministry on Tuesday rejected queries by the US military as to why China had used a military aircraft to evacuate sick workers from a new airport on an island China has built in the disputed South China Sea.

CNN quoted Pentagon spokesman Captain Jeff Davis as saying it was unclear why China had used a military aircraft rather than a civilian one in the landing on Fiery Cross Reef.

China's Defence Ministry said in a statement its military's tradition was to help those in need as part of its commitment to "wholeheartedly serve the people".

"In sharp contrast, the US side is expressing doubts about whether it's a military or civilian aircraft at a time when somebody's life is in danger," it said.

"We cannot but ask: if a US citizen suddenly took ill on US soil, would the US military look on with folded arms?" China has indisputable sovereignty over the Spratly Islands and the

United States has no right to comment on China's building works and defensive facilities there, the ministry said. Chinese activity in disputed waters of the South China Sea, including the construction of islands by dredging up sand onto reefs and shoals in the Spratly archipelago, has alarmed rival claimants, in particular the Philippines and Viet Nam, as well as the United States. The United States has repeatedly criticised the construction of the islands and worries that China plans to use them for military purposes. China says it has no hostile intent. The runway on the Fiery Cross Reef is 3,000 metres (10,000 feet) long and is one of three China has been building for more than a year in the archipelago. Civilian flights began test runs there in January but the landing by the military aircraft, on Sunday, was the first time China has publicly reported a flight by a military plane to Fiery Cross Reef.—*Reuters*

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Malaysia's Mahathir seeks court order to freeze PM's assets

KUALA LUMPUR — Former Malaysian premier Mahathir Mohamad, calling for Prime Minister Najib Razak to resign over the 1MDB state fund scandal, has applied for a court order to freeze Najib's assets, Mahathir's lawyers said on Tuesday.

The lawyers said in a statement Mahathir was also seeking a court order for Najib to disclose all assets held under his name as well as under the names of his nominees. Mahathir, along with two others, filed a suit in

March against Najib alleging corruption and abuse of power. The lawsuit also accused Najib of interfering in several probes into debt-laden 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB).

Najib has come under criticism over allegations of graft and mismanagement linked to 1MDB and deposits of about \$681 million into his personal bank account.

He has denied any wrongdoing and maintains that he did not use the funds for personal gain. In January, Malaysia's attorney-general



Malaysia's former Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad. PHOTO: REUTERS

cleared Najib of any criminal offence.

Mahathir was joined in the lawsuit by Khairuddin bin Abu Hassan and Anina binti Saadudin, former members of the ruling United Malay National Organisation (UMNO) party which Najib heads. The three, cit-

ing misfeasance and breach of duty, are seeking exemplary damages from Najib to the government of 2.6 billion ringgit (\$669.93 million) and aggravated damages of 42 million ringgit — equal to the amounts that were deposited into Najib's account.—*Reuters*

Taiwan officials head for China to discuss telecom scams

TAIPEI — Taiwanese officials will travel to diplomatic rival China on Wednesday to discuss two cases of telecoms fraud, one of which led to 45 Taiwan nationals being deported to China from Kenya, infuriating Taipei. The officials hoped to establish a way to jointly investigate the two cases, in which the scams were conducted from a third country, and visit the

detained Taiwanese, the Taiwan Justice Ministry said on Tuesday.

Taiwan has been in uproar since Kenya forcibly deported the 45 nationals to China this month. China regards self-ruled Taiwan as a wayward province and Kenya said it was deporting the 45 back to where they came from. Kenya does not have official relations with demo-

cratic Taiwan and considers the island part of "one China", in line with the position of Communist Party leaders in Beijing. Over the weekend, China slammed Taiwan for freeing 20 Taiwanese suspects deported to the island from Malaysia in a separate telecom fraud case linked to China. Taiwan has said it had no evidence to detain the individuals. China's

Ministry of Public Security said last week Taiwanese had been heavily involved in telecoms fraud in China and had caused huge losses.

Taiwanese criminals "have been falsely presenting themselves as law enforcement officers to extort money from people on the Chinese mainland through telephone calls", the ministry added.—*Reuters*

Indonesia to suspend land reclamation in north Jakarta



An activist holds a banner as he walks on reclaimed land during a protest against reclamation in Jakarta Bay, Indonesia, on 17 April. A banner read 'sealed by fisherman'. PHOTO: REUTERS

JAKARTA — Indonesia's government will temporarily halt all land reclamation in north Jakarta until regulatory and environmental conditions are met, a senior cabinet minister said on Monday.

A mega project involving 17 artificial islands off the northern coasts of the Indonesian capital has been dogged by bureaucratic wrangling, a bribery probe by the nation's anti-corruption agency and opposition from environmentalists.

The central government and the Jakarta governor had previously clashed over who has the authority to issue permits for the project. Some fishermen also staged a protest over the weekend, claiming the project was reducing their catch.

Construction will now be suspended and a joint committee will be formed to look into the issues, Rizal Ramli, Indonesia's coordinating minister for maritime affairs, told reporters.

"In analysing, discussing and resolving this problem, we cannot be too emotional," he said, flanked by Jakarta Governor Basuki Tjahaja Purnama and Indonesian Environment Minister Siti Nurbaya at a joint Press conference.

The decision could delay Indonesian property developer PT Agung Podomoro Land's multi-billion-dollar project called Pluit City, which was set to comprise apartments, offices and shopping malls on parts of the artificial land.

Earlier this month, Agung

Podomoro executive Ariesman Widjaja was named a suspect by Indonesia's Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) for allegedly bribing a member of the Jakarta provincial assembly to influence the regulation for the land reclamation. As of Monday's close, Agung Podomoro shares were down around 13 per cent since the KPK's announcement.

Agung Podomoro is assessing the government's decision to suspend the reclamation, Corporate Secretary Justini Omas said. "We will be cooperative and we will obey all the government's policies when doing business, including reclamation," Omas said.

A presidential spokesman declined to comment on the reclamation project, deferring questions to the ministries.—*Reuters*

Philippines needs to tap more renewable resources: official

MANILA — The Philippines needs to review its energy policy to step away from the use of coal and tap more renewable resources to meet the country's power supply requirements, a senior government official said on Monday.

Climate Change Commission Secretary Emmanuel de Guzman said that updating the country's roadmap to massively favor clean resources will allow the Philippines to be at the forefront of this aggressive and massive trend to investment and transition from fossil to renewable energy.

"This allows the Philippines to not only contribute to global efforts to combat climate change, but reduce growing

economic and financial risks associated with carbon-intensive energy sources, such as coal," he said.

The year 2015 marked the unprecedented growth of renewable energy globally. According to the International Energy Agency (IEA), more than 90 per cent of new electricity generated last year came from renewable energy sources, with investments reaching a record-breaking 328.9 billion US dollars.

On the other hand, coal, the most carbon-intensive among fossil fuels, is starting to be seen as a risky long-term investment.

"We must seize the opportunity now. A decisive transition to clean energy is good for the climate and makes financial and

economic sense," de Guzman said.

"It is now imperative for our country to adjust energy models with the global trend in renewable energy use in mind in order to come up with roadmaps with definitive actions for the power sector, and eventually for the transport industry and other key sectors."

In October 2015, the Philippines submitted to the United Nations (UN) its Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC), which is the country's contribution to global efforts to fight and adapt to climate change, to reduce by 2030 its carbon emissions by 70 per cent, compared to business as usual.—*Xinhua*

Cambodia, Laos, Viet Nam discuss trade deal

HANOI — Representatives from Viet Nam, Laos and Cambodia gathered on Monday in Viet Nam's Central Highlands Dak Lak Province to discuss an agreement on trade promotion.

During the fourth round of negotiation on an agreement to promote and facilitate trade in Cambodia-Laos-Viet Nam (CLV) Development Triangle Area, which opened on Monday in Dak Lak and is set to last till Wednesday, trade representatives from the three countries discussed measures to resolve remaining difficulties and obstacles to soon reach consensus and finalise the agreement.

The CLV Development Triangle Area covers four Cambodian provinces (Ratanakiri, Stung Treng, Mondulakiri, Kratie), four Lao provinces (Attapeu, Sala-

van, Sekong, Champasak), and five Vietnamese provinces (Kon Tum, Gia Lai, Dak Lak, Dak Nong, Binh Phuoc).

Officials from the three countries expressed their hope that the agreement will allow relevant localities to make full use of their potential and advantages as well as promote economic cooperation and investment in the development triangle in particular and the three countries in general, according to Viet Nam's state-run news agency VNA.

The agreement is expected to boost trade activities and commodity flows among 13 localities in the development triangle of the three countries, reported VNA.

The first negotiation round of the agreement was held in 2015.—*Xinhua*

China 'positive' on India military hotline proposal

BEIJING — China is "positive" towards proposals to establish a military hotline with India to deal with issues along their disputed border, Defence Minister Chang Wanquan told his Indian counterpart during a meeting in Beijing, state media reported.

The two nuclear-armed neighbours have been moving to gradually ease long-existing tensions between them.

Leaders of Asia's two giants pledged last May to cool a festering border dispute, which dates back to a brief border war in 1962, though a messy territorial disagreement remains. Chang "reacted positively toward setting up a military hotline with India on border security", state news agency Xinhua reported late on Monday, after Chang's meeting with Indian Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar.

Chang "also suggested the two sides strengthen defence exchanges and jointly safeguard peace and tranquillity of the border area", the report added. Xinhua cited Parrikar



China's Defence Minister Chang Wanquan. PHOTO: REUTERS

as saying India is ready to work with China to maintain the stability of the border. China lays claim to more than 90,000 sq km (35,000 sq miles) ruled by New Delhi in the eastern sector of the Himalayas. India says China occupies 38,000 sq km (14,600 sq miles) of its territory on the Aksai Chin plateau in the west.

India is also suspicious of China's support for its arch-rival, Pakistan.—*Reuters*

Asian leaders send condolences to Japan over quakes

TOKYO — Asian leaders have sent condolence messages to Japan over powerful earthquakes that hit the country's southwestern region last week, leaving more than 40 people dead and over 1,100 injured.

Chinese President Xi Jinping sent a message to Japanese Emperor Akihito on Monday, expressing shock about the news of the deadly disaster as well as hope that survivors will rise above their struggles and rebuild, according to China's state-run Xinhua News Agency.

South Korean President Park Geun-hye also sent a message of

condolence to Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and offered to assist Japan, the presidential office said.

Tommy Remengesau, president of the Pacific island nation of Palau, conveyed his condolences to the victims and bereaved families in a message to Abe as well.

Meanwhile, the Philippine government issued a statement conveying "profound sympathies to Japan for the casualties and damage caused by" the quakes in Kumamoto Prefecture and surrounding areas on the island of Kyushu.—*Kyodo News*

OPINION

Let's work together to reform the education system

Aye Min Soe

WHILE the formation of a democratic government is clearly a firm step forward, the new government, which won the landslide victory in the November election with campaign motto "Time to Change", will reform the country's education system.

But getting the country's education system back on the right track is no easy task. The new government will need regional and global assis-

tance to make such an investment in the people.

In the past, Myanmar was admired for the widespread literacy of its people and high-quality education standards. As a British colony, Myanmar further developed its educational standards, and upon gaining independence in 1948, and boasting one of the highest literacy rates in Asia in the late 1940s and 1950s, it was expected to become one of the fastest developing Asian Tigers of the region. However, despite its good track record, Myanmar's education system is now in an abysmal state. Consequently, the education system has disintegrated and students now spend very little time at school, with few making it to university.

Looking at both the strong and weak points of the education systems which have been implemented by successive governments since independence in 1948, the new government will reform the education sector as soon as possible.

That would be a challenge for the new gov-

ernment. In this function, cooperation from students, parents and teachers are essential to promote education.

The people, who are ready to get the second taste of democracy after the country's opening up in 2011, are waiting with high expectation to see 'change' in the education sector, carried out by the democratically elected government, for the people.

Write for us

We appreciate your feedback and contributions. If you have any comments or would like to submit editorials, analyses or reports please email ce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com with your name and title.

Due to limitation of space we are only able to publish "Letter to the Editor" that do not exceed 500 words. Should you submit a text longer than 500 words please be aware that your letter will be edited.

ENGLISH, WHY SHOULD WE LEARN IT?

ENGLISH, A LIVING LANGUAGE IN A LIVING WORLD.

U KHIN MAUNG
(A retired diplomat)

NOW the world is rapidly changing. In the new millennium, information technology, IT, or digital revolution is gaining momentum and growing stronger with everyday. And IT tools, such as computer, Internet, electronic mail or e-mail are very much in use in every part of the world. As regards the Internet, Mr. Kofi Annan, former U.N Secretary — General has said "the Internet is the fastest growing instrument of communication in the history of civilization and it may be the most rapidly disseminating tool of any kind ever."

To the credit of the Internet, the world seems to be getting smaller and smaller. What happens in one part of the world is known to the other part within seconds or minutes. What a won-

derful IT tool! Well, let's say it again, the world seems to be getting smaller and smaller, so much so that we do fondly call our world "a global village." And in this global village of ours, we make more and more contacts and communications with each other, states with states, peoples with peoples.

You may like it or not, the digital revolution is real and irreversible. With it, the world is changing, living. And in this living world, the English language has also become increasingly popular. Why? Simply because it has become a must — have tool. On the Internet, the 80 percent of the web-pages are in English. So, to keep ourselves abreast with the changing world, we must have global literacy.

I hope you may wish to ask me; what do you mean by global literacy? Well, let me explain it this way, "global literacy means

the ability to access and converse with the rest of the world with IT tools, such as, computer, the Internet and the mastery of English language as the international lingua franca." With regard to the growing popularity of English, I would like to mention a news report as follows: "English is already the second language in about 75 countries, the first language in more than 30 territories, and has far more speakers outside of Britain than in it.

So, I would like to advise you sincerely and yet strongly: please learn English if you wish to expand your horizons, if you wish to gain competitive edge over others, if you wish to achieve global literacy. In support of my advice, I would like to present to you the following excerpts I have collected from various news reports.

(A) There is no denying the fact that English today

has become a living language with more and more words and their applications added to it. For example, e-education, e-commerce, cyberspace, cybercrime, cyberattack, netizens, euresit etc.

(B) Now we'll have to recognize that there is an urgent need especially for the younger generation to learn English in earnest and then achieve proficiency in English in view of IT onslaught.

(C) Today, we need to communicate with people of different cultures because IT projects are becoming international and collaborative. That means we must have the ability to speak English. Please bear in mind that "the best way to learn a language is to speak it."

(D) English is and will re-

main our common working language. It's the language of global business, commerce and technology. But the mother tongue gives a crucial part of our values, roots and identities.

Therefore, may I advise you, sir, to go on learning constantly so as to achieve global literacy, and then to think global, but to act local, by protecting, preserving and propagating our values, roots and identities.

Man may come and man may go. But I think, we should go on learning English and anything of importance, anything worth it, forever so as to join and catch up with the changing, living world. Am I going too far? Well, if so, excuse me sir, Thank you.

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- (1) The Global Light of Myanmar.
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Water supplied for villagers in Bago Region

AS a result of El Niño, people in Kaungse village, Kaungse village-tract in Paukhaung Township Bago Region have been faced with water-shortage.

A team from Relief and Resettlement Department (RRD) of Pyay District under the Ministry of Social welfare, Relief and Resettlements helped provide drinking water and bathing wa-

ter to the residents of Kaungse village on 18 April. On the same day, RRD of Pyay District with the assistance of Paukhaung Township Fire Brigade Department distributed the water for drinking, bathing and washing to the villagers of Pyarthokyun village.—District Relief and Resettlement Department



Relief and Resettlement Department of Pyay District distributing water to the villagers of Kaungse and Pyarthokyun villages. PHOTO: RRD

Wethtigan police clear weeds



Members of the Wethtigan No 2 Police Training Corps clearing weeds on the precinct of the Yan Aung Myay Pagoda. PHOTO: YE ZANI

A TOTAL of 150 people, including 50 officers from the No 2 Police Training Corps in Wethtigan, Pyay Township, Bago Re-

gion, plus 100 trainees, cleared weeds and performed other beautification services on the precinct of the Yan Aung Myay Pagoda,

located within the precinct. They cleaned Sipinthaya Market and its environs by cutting grass and collecting rubbish. —Ye Zani

Restoration of Shwedagon's Buddha images set to begin

THE restoration of gold plated Buddha images in the Shwedagon Pagoda precinct is scheduled to begin before the monsoon season said The Shwedagon Pagoda Board of Trustees.

The restoration is part of a five-year renovation programme, which is scheduled to finish in 2020.

Since January 1 last year, the Pagoda Board of Trustees has collected cash donations from those wishing to participate in the pagoda's ninth renovation programme.

"We have received over 4,000 gold plates," said a member of the Pagoda Board of Trustees.

"Up to mid-March this year, a total of 4,200 gold plates and other donations have been collected from the well-wishers," he added.

The last gold plate renovation was made in 2014-2015, when 18,227 gold plates and gold were donated to the pagoda.

The iconic pagoda sits on

Singuttara hill in the heart of Yangon from where it rises 99 metres (325 ft) high and dominates the Yangon skyline.

For locals and non-local buddhists alike, Shwedagon is the holiest of sites and is a place where people come to sit and pray in the hope of fulfilling their wishes.

For more information, well-wishers may dial 01 375 767 and 01 3835 1204 of the Pagoda Board of Trustees.—200

More children with type-1 diabetes

THE prevalence of Type 1 diabetes was higher in four-year-old children in 2015 according to the annual diabetes figures, said Prof Aye Maung Han from Child Health Department of Yangon's University of Medicine 1.

He added that a population survey on children with diabetes had been conducted across the na-

tion, planning to soon announce the exact number of diabetic children.

With the assistance of the UK-based Action 4 Diabetics (A4D), Yangon Children's Hospital offers healthcare to those children most at risk and can help prevent them from developing diabetes-related diseases.

Starting this year, the A4D has given support both in cash and healthcare equipment for Myanmar's children suffering chronic diabetes. Doctors say, type 1 diabetes is usually diagnosed during childhood, often between the ages of 10 to 13 and that there's nothing that can be done to prevent it.—200

Fly-over money to go to much needed rural development

YANGON Region Government is planning to spend K32.2 billion on rural development projects in villages within 12 townships located outside the municipal area of Myanmar's main city.

The development projects will see the establishment of roads and bridges as well as healthcare and power facilities.

The local authorities recently abolished the construction of flyovers on Kaba-Aye Pagoda Road and Parami Road in Yangon and the budget has been redistributed to go to rural development projects in townships outside the municipal area.

The regional government decided to stop the construction

of overpasses as it is found that they don't effectively reduce traffic congestion in the city, said a member of the regional government.

Currently there is no plan to build further overpasses within the city, with authorities searching for better ways to prevent traffic jams.—200

"Everlasting Rose" POEM:

Like a beauty rose
In the dark palace
Very is the pretty
Spoke in her soul.

Her life gone from her
But she still in storm
Her smell is flowerier forever
At anywhere human reside.

Like an iron butterfly
In our deep soul
She is a woman
Our mother so forever.

Hlaing Bwa

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Living Constitution

THE term 'living constitution' might scare or even haunt those who pledge to defend the constitution by all means.

Please don't. When I say 'living constitution', what it means is not to manipulate or worst is to abuse it. I sincerely refer to a concept which will enable us to use it effectively and efficiently.

I sincerely would like to see the application of the constitution in our daily lives be adaptive, flexible, meaningful and innovative while upholding its basic principles. Because I believe that that's the only way to achieve the objectives set in the constitution in a world which keeps changing constantly in almost every aspect of life.

Every constitution has its objectives to achieve and basic principles to uphold. But these two segments must be friendly to each other. And more importantly, these two segments must be in accordance with the interests of the people.

Having said all above, I do believe that the State Counsellor Law which intends to equip Daw Aung San Suu Kyi with necessary powers to fulfil the objectives set in the constitution, is a good example of the concept of 'living constitution'. I, therefore, fully support this law.

Finally I would like to ask a simple question 'Should we live with the constitution or die trying to defend it blindly?' It's your prerogative as a citizen.

Cheers,
Aung Myint Oo

Needy amputees to receive free prosthetic legs

AMPUTEES in Magway Region and in the nation's capital, Nay Pyi Taw, are to receive free prosthetic legs this year as part of a non-government initiative.

"We will further provide amputees with prosthetic legs free of charge in Magway and the capital Nay Pyi Taw this year," said U Myat Thu Win, President of Shwe Min Tha Foundation, a local non-government organization working for people with disabilities.

"The major aim of the campaign is to promote the lives of those who've lost their legs due to different accidents," he added.

"In cooperation with ADS, we are planning to do the fixing

of over 800 prosthetic legs to the disabled who will participate in our seventh project," said U Myat Thu Win.

Some amputees within Magway Region had prosthetic legs installed as well as other treatments from specialists last month.

Since the project began, the charity has fitted amputees with prosthetic legs in Mon and Kayin states, Mandalay and Ayeyawady regions, and Nay Pyi Taw council area. U Myat Thu Win said "We have a plan to open a branch in Rakhine State to help people with disabilities promote their lives with the assistance of the European Union."—200

Sanders hits Clinton on campaign finance hours before New York votes



US Democratic presidential candidate Bernie Sanders greets actor Danny DeVito at a rally at Prospect Park in the Brooklyn borough of New York, on 17 April. PHOTO: REUTERS

NEW YORK — US Democratic presidential candidate Bernie Sanders accused front-runner Hillary Clinton of apparent campaign finance violations on Monday, ratcheting up the rhetoric against his rival one day before New York state's crucial primary elections.

Sanders questioned whether Clinton's campaign violated legal limits on donations by paying her staffers with funds from a joint fundraising effort by Clinton and the Democratic National Committee, or DNC.

Sanders has long maintained that the DNC has favoured Clinton over Sanders. The US senator from Vermont is a democratic socialist who has run as an independent in his Senate campaigns.

"While the use of joint fundraising agreements has existed for some time -- it is unprecedented for the DNC to allow a joint committee to be exploited to the benefit of one candidate in the midst of a contested nominating contest," Sanders' campaign manager, Jeff Weaver, said.

The Clinton campaign dismissed the charge, with chairman Robby Mook saying Sanders was making baseless accusations.

"It is shameful that Senator Sanders has resorted to irresponsible and misleading attacks just to raise money for himself," Mook said.

The accusations surfaced as the Democratic and Republican candidates engaged in a final frenzy of campaigning before Tuesday's primaries.

Both the Democratic and Republican primaries are expected to be the state's most decisive in decades in the selection of the parties' candidates for November's general election.

Former US Secretary of State Clinton and Republican Donald Trump, the national front-runners, were favoured to win their respective primaries in the state that both call home. Victories would be a tonic for both candidates following a series of losses.

In recent weeks, Sanders has defeated Clinton in nominating contests. On the Republican side, US Senator Ted Cruz of Texas, Trump's closest challenger, has outmanoeuvred the billionaire businessman in the fight for delegates to the Republican National Convention that will pick the party's nominee in July.

By the end of Monday — the last official day of campaigning before the New York primaries — tens of thousands of New Yorkers will have heard the candidates' closing pitches.

At St. John's Riverside Hospital in Yonkers just north of New York City, Clinton spoke to doctors, nurses and others at a hospital cafeteria, asking for their votes and taking a jab at Cruz's dismissal earlier in the campaign of "New York values."

"I think New York's values are America's values," she told the crowd.

Cruz defended his "New York values" catchphrase on ABC's "Good Morning America" in Times Square on Monday, saying New Yorkers had "suffered under the left-wing Democratic policies" of New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio and Governor Andrew Cuomo.

Sanders needs a strong victory in New York, where 291 delegates to the Democratic convention in July are at stake, if he is to overtake Clinton.

With 2,383 delegates need-

ed to secure the Democratic nomination, Clinton has 1,758 to Sanders' 1,076, according to an Associated Press tally. That total includes unpledged superdelegates who are free to back the candidate of their choice but told the news service whom they support.

For Trump, the question is whether he will make a clean sweep of all 95 Republican delegates at stake by earning the majority of votes in all 27 congressional districts in the state.

Total victory in New York would help Trump avoid the possibility that the nomination could be wrested from him at the party's 18-21 July convention in Cleveland if he arrives without a majority of at least 1,237 delegates. In that scenario, another candidate could win on a second or subsequent ballot.

Trump has 744 delegates to 559 for Cruz and 144 for Ohio Governor John Kasich, according to the Associated Press. The count includes endorsements from several delegates who are free to support the candidate of their choice.

In Wyoming, in the latest state-by-state delegate battle, Cruz was awarded all 14 delegates, according to a party official on Saturday.

"Lying Ted Cruz can't win with the voters so he has to sell himself to the bosses-I am millions of VOTES ahead! Hillary would destroy him & K," Trump tweeted on Monday.

On ABC, Cruz responded by saying that Trump was throwing a fit because he has lost several recent state contests.

"The stakes are too high to hand the election to Hillary Clinton, which is what nominating Donald Trump" would do, he said.—Reuters

NEWS IN BRIEF

German police arrest five suspected far-right militants

BERLIN — German police arrested five people near Dresden on Tuesday who they suspected of forming a far-right militant group and preparing attacks on asylum seekers using explosives, the public prosecutor's office said.

Over 200 police and state officials were involved in the swoop to arrest the five, aged between 18 and 39, who are suspected of plotting to bomb shelters housing asylum seekers.

They are suspected of forming the "Freital Group" last year. The group is named after a town outside Dresden in eastern Germany, where anti-immigrant sentiment runs particularly high.—Reuters

EU won't water down criteria for Turkish visa waiver: Juncker

BRUSSELS — Turkey must meet all requirements for visa-free travel with the European Union and the criteria will not be "watered down", European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker said on Tuesday.

The EU is depending on Turkey to curb the flow of migrants to Europe and Juncker said it had already borne fruit. But Ankara threatened on Monday to walk away from the deal if the 28-nation EU does not deliver on its part of the March accord, namely easing visa requirements for Turks travelling to the bloc.

"Turkey must fulfil all remaining conditions so that Commission can adopt its proposal in the coming months," Juncker told a plenary session of the parliamentary assembly of the Council of Europe, Europe's leading human rights organisation.

"The criteria will not be watered down," he said.—Reuters

Magnitude 5.5 quake hits southern Japan

TOKYO — An earthquake with a preliminary magnitude of 5.5 hit Kumamoto prefecture in southern Japan on Tuesday, broadcaster NHK said.

A tsunami warning had not been issued, NHK added.

Two deadly quakes hit the same region last week, killing 44 and injuring more than 1,000.—Reuters

One killed, 18 injured in suicide attack in northwest Pakistan

ISLAMABAD — One person was killed and 18 were injured in a suicide bomb attack on a tax office in northwestern Pakistan on Tuesday morning, police said.

Police in Mardan where the attack took place said the suicide bomber blew himself up after walking into the tax office.

Geo News reported the location is close to a National Database and Registration Authority office where a suicide bomber blew himself up in December last year, killing 26 people and injuring dozens of others.

A breakaway faction of the Pakistani Taliban claimed responsibility for last year's blast.

Mardan is the second largest city in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province.—Kyodo News

Chakrabarti: Reforms have brought more investments to Serbia

WASHINGTON — Serbia is exceptionally important for the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and the bank's share in investments in the country has been on the increase since it embarked on reforms two years ago, says EBRD President Suma Chakrabarti.

In an exclusive interview to Tanjug during the International Monetary Fund/World Bank spring meetings in Washington, Chakrabarti said that Serbian Prime Minister Aleksandar Vucic has demonstrated a commitment to continue the reforms.

For the EBRD, Serbia is an exceptionally significant country for many reasons - our share in investments there has been on a noticeable increase since the start of reforms two years ago, Chakrabarti said. Secondly, much is being done to improve the investment climate and another reason is that Serbia is among the first countries in the region that are trying to attract investors from outside the region - from Asia, the Persian Gulf, etc, he said.

The EBRD has invested around EUR 4.2 billion in over 200 projects in Serbia to date, including EUR 478 million in 25 projects in 2015 alone.—Tanjug



Syrian government's head of delegation Bashar al-Jaafari attends a news conference after a meeting on Syria at the European headquarters of the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland, on 18 April. PHOTO: REUTERS

BEIRUT — The Syrian government's chief negotiator said President Bashar al-Assad's future was not up for discussion at peace talks, underlining the bleak prospects for reviving UN-led negotiations postponed by the opposition.

Bashar Ja'afari, speaking to Lebanese TV station al Mayadeen, also said his team was pushing for an expanded government as the solution to the war — an idea rejected by the opposition fighting for five years to topple Assad.

Syrian government says Assad's future not up for discussion

Ja'afari was reiterating the Syrian government's position as spelt out last month ahead of the latest round of talks, indicating no shift on the part of Damascus as it continues to enjoy firm military backing from Russia and Iran.

"In Geneva we have one mandate only to arrive at an expanded national government only, this is our mandate ... this is the goal we strive to achieve in the Geneva peace talks," Ja'afari said in comments broadcast overnight. He added that these views were relayed to UN Syria mediator Staffan de Mistura.

Ja'afari also said Assad's fate could never be raised in peace talks nor was it a matter that any UN-backed political process could deliberate.

"This matter (the presidency) does not fall under the jurisdic-

tion of Geneva ... this is a Syrian-Syrian affair, Security Council or no Security Council," he said.

The Western-backed Syrian mainstream opposition decided on Monday to take a pause in peace talks. It said Damascus was not serious about moving towards a UN-backed political process they say would bring a transitional governing body with full executive powers without Assad.

A UN Security Council resolution in December called for the establishment of "credible, inclusive and non-sectarian governance", a new constitution, and free and fair elections within 18 months.

Ja'afari also said any ideas such as those floated recently by de Mistura that sought to bridge the gap between the two sides should not touch existing state in-

stitutions or the army.

"We won't allow any constitutional vacuum to take place. What does that mean? It means the army stays as it is and state institutions continue to function," he added.

The opposition says restructuring the army and security apparatus is an essential step towards establishing a democratic Syria.

Ja'afari accused the Western-backed opposition of seeking to bring about a collapse of the country and replicate the chaos seen in Iraq and Libya after Western military intervention brought down long severing authoritarian rulers.

"They want to repeat the experience of Libya and Iraq ... and turn Syria into a failed state," he said.—Reuters

Spain arrests Moroccan accused of links to Islamist militants

MADRID — Spanish police arrested a Moroccan man on the island of Mallorca early on Tuesday on suspicion of having close links to Islamist militants, the Interior Ministry said in statement.

The man, who was not named, is also accused of recruiting fighters to join forces in Syria and Iraq and of being in charge of commissioning potential attacks in Spain and across Europe, the ministry said. "The police operation, which has meant the rapid neutralisation of a direct threat, remains ongoing," it said.

Spain has detained 19 people with reported connections to Islamist militants since the start of the year.—Reuters

Death toll from Taliban attack in Afghan capital rises to 28: police

KABUL — The death toll from a Taliban attack on a government security agency's building in the Afghan capital on Tuesday has risen to at least 28, the Kabul police chief said, with more than 320 wounded.

Police chief Abdul Rahman Rahimi said civilians and members of the Afghan security forces were among the dead and wounded. The Taliban claimed responsibility for the attack. It was the first in the Afghan capital since the Islamist militant group declared the start of their spring offensive a week ago.—Reuters

US to send more troops to Iraq to tackle Islamic State

BAGHDAD — The United States will send more troops to Iraq and will put them closer to the front lines of battle there to advise Iraqi forces in the war against Islamic State militants.

US defence officials said on Monday that Washington will deploy about 200 additional troops, mostly as advisers for Iraqi troops as they advance towards Mosul, the largest Iraqi city still under Islamic State control.

"As we see the Iraqis willing to fight and gaining ground, let's make sure that we are providing them more support," US President Barack Obama said in an interview with CBS News.

"My expectation is that by the end of the year, we will have created the conditions whereby Mosul will eventually fall," Obama said.

The United States has also authorised the use of Apache attack helicopters to help the Iraqis as they can provide quicker air support and precision fire.

The advisers will accompany Iraqi units of about 2,500 troops moving closer to the front lines of battle. Until now, the advisers were limited to larger divisions of about 10,000 troops located further back from the battlefield.

The change will allow them to offer quicker advice to Iraqi troops as they try to retake Mosul, likely facing stiff resistance from an entrenched enemy. But it could also leave the US advisers more vulnerable to enemy mortars and artillery.

"This will put Americans closer to the action," US Defence Secretary Ash Carter said. "Their whole purpose is to be able to help those forces respond in a more agile way."

The decision to enlarge the US military force was made in close concert with Iraqi author-

ities, said Carter, who met US commanders and Iraqi officials including Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi on a visit to Baghdad.

Iraq is engulfed in a political crisis over anti-corruption reforms that is crippling state institutions and threatening to slow the campaign against the militants.

The increase raises the authorized troop level in Iraq to 4,087, not including special operations personnel, some logistics workers and troops on temporary rotations.

The Pentagon will also provide up to \$415 million (£290.37 million) to Kurdish peshmerga military units, who have played an important role in pushing back Islamic State in northern Iraq. Part of that funding will likely be spent on basics like food, said Lieutenant General Sean MacFarland, head of the US-led coalition battling Islamic State.

lition battling Islamic State.

"Right now the peshmerga are not getting enough calories to keep them in the field," MacFarland said.

The increase is the latest move by the United States, which invaded Iraq in 2003 to overthrow Saddam Hussein, to step up its campaign against the hardline Sunni jihadists.

Since December, Iraqi forces trained by the US military and backed by coalition air strikes have taken back territory from Islamic State, which seized swathes of Iraq and Syria in 2014.

Some US troops already in Iraq will be shifted to establishing logistics for Iraqi forces as they move towards Mosul, Carter said. These include supply lines, particularly important as Mosul is 400 km (250 miles) north of Baghdad.

Most of the new US advisers, who will make up the bulk of the new troops, will be Army Special Forces, as are the about 100 advisers now in Iraq.

The rest of the troops announced on Monday include support crew for the Apaches and security forces to protect the advisers.

The United States will also deploy an additional long-range rocket artillery unit to support Iraqi ground forces in the battle for Mosul, Carter said. Two such batteries are already in place in Iraq.

The officials did not rule out the possibility that lasting success might require further US commitments.

"If it doesn't take us all the way, we'll come back and have another discussion and ask for more if we need to," McFarland said.—Reuters



US Army soldiers look at a F-16 fighter jet during an official ceremony to receive four of these aircrafts from the US, at a military base in Balad, Iraq, in 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

Chinese envoy to visit Syria, Iran in peace bid

BEIJING — China's new special envoy for the Syria crisis will visit Syria, Saudi Arabia, Iran and Russia to push for a peaceful solution of conflict there, the Chinese Foreign Ministry said on Tuesday, the latest diplomatic effort by Beijing in the region.

While relying on the region for oil supplies, China tends to leave Middle Eastern diplomacy to the other permanent members of the UN Security Council, namely the United States, Britain,

France and Russia.

But China has been trying to get more involved, including recently hosting both Syria's foreign minister and opposition figures, though at different times.

China appointed Xie Xiaoyan, a former ambassador to Iran, as its special envoy for Syria last month, and he is in Geneva participating in peace talks, Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying told a daily news briefing.

When he has finished there, he will go to Syria, Saudi Arabia, Iran and Russia, she added.

Xie is going to "have a deep exchange of views with relevant parties on pushing for a political solution to the Syria crisis", Hua added. She provided no other details. Xie this month praised Russia's military role in the war, and said the international community should work harder together to defeat terrorism in the region.—*Reuters*



UN Special Envoy for Syria Staffan de Mistura (L) shakes hands with China's Special Envoy for Syria Xie Xiaoyan on the sidelines of Syrian peace talks at the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland, on 18 April. PHOTO: REUTERS

AP, Reuters, New York Times among 2016 Pulitzer Prize winners

NEW YORK — The Associated Press won the Pulitzer Prize for public service for reporting on abuse in the seafood industry that helped free 2,000 slave labourers, and Reuters and *The New York Times* shared the breaking news photography award for images of the European refugee crisis.

The Pulitzer Board, in conferring the most prestigious honours in US journalism and the arts on Monday, also honoured the *Los Angeles Times* for breaking news reporting for its coverage of the massacre by Islamist militants in San Bernardino, California.

This year's announcement at New York's Columbia University marked the 100th anniversary of the Pulitzers, which began in 1917 after a bequest from newspaper publisher Joseph Pulitzer.

The AP's prize-winning "Seafood from Slaves" report was an investigation into the mistreatment of workers in Southeast Asia used to supply seafood to American supermarkets and restaurants. The

coverage resulted in the freeing of 2,000 slave laborers and sweeping reforms, the board said.

The reporters "found captive slaves, countering industry claims that the problems had been solved," AP Executive Editor Kathleen Carroll wrote in her nomination letter to the Pulitzer judges.

"US customs records show the (slave-peeled) shrimp made its way into the supply chains of major US food stores and retailers such as Wal-Mart, Kroger, Whole Foods, Dollar General and Petco, along with restaurants such as Red Lobster and Olive Garden," the AP reported in the series of 10 articles.

The New York Times, with a record 117 Pulitzer prizes and citations before this year's announcement, added two more in 2016, taking the prize for international reporting in addition to its photography award.

The Boston Globe, the *Tampa Bay Times* and *The New Yorker*

magazine also won two awards each. In total, the board handed out prizes in 21 categories, selected from about 3,000 entries.

In the awards for letters, drama and music, the musical "Hamilton" by Lin-Manuel Miranda won for best drama. The Pulitzer board called the Broadway hit "a landmark American musical about the gifted and self-destructive founding father whose story becomes both contemporary and irresistible."

Viet Thanh Nguyen won the fiction award for "The Sympathizer," an immigrant story about a "man of two minds" and two countries, Viet Nam and the United States. The board awarded the history prize to the T.J. Stiles book, "Custer's Trials: A Life on the Frontier of a New America."

The Reuters photo coverage of Middle Eastern migrants arriving in Europe was led from Greece by Yannis Behrakis, chief photographer for Greece and Cyprus and the *Guardian* newspaper's 2015

Agency Photographer of the Year.

The team captured a series of images of migrants crowded on flimsy sea craft and their first moments upon reaching Europe.

"We showed the world what was going on, and the world cared. It showed that humanity is still alive," Behrakis said. "We made for these unfortunate people's voice to be heard. Now with a Pulitzer, we feel that our work has been professionally recognised."

Some images showed families rushing ashore, flailing away in the water or collapsing on the beach. Others juxtaposed the rafters at sea with a cruise ship or a leaping dolphin or the setting sun.

The Reuters photo staff was named as co-winner for breaking news photography along with Mauricio Lima, Sergey Ponomarev, Tyler Hicks and Daniel Etter of *The New York Times*, also for their images of the migrant crisis.

It was the third Pulitzer for Reuters, a unit of Thomson Reuters, having won for international reporting in 2014 and for breaking news photography in 2008.

The Tampa Bay Times and the Sarasota Herald-Tribune shared the 2016 prize for investigative reporting. The two Florida newspapers won for collaborative reporting on violence and neglect in the state's mental hospitals.

The Tampa Bay Times took a second Pulitzer, with three of its reporters being honored for showing the consequences of a school board turning some county schools in to "failure factories."

The prize for national reporting went to the staff of the Washington Post for developing a database on fatal police shootings and those likely to fall victim.

Alissa J. Rubin of *The New York Times* won in the international reporting category for her stories on the inhumane treatment of Afghan women. *The Boston Globe's* prizes were in the feature photography and commentary categories, while *The New Yorker* took prizes for criticism and feature writing.—*Reuters*

Three days after Ecuador quake, hopes for survivors dwindle

PEDERNALES/CANOA — Earthquake-stricken Ecuador faced the grim reality of recovering more bodies than survivors as rescue efforts moved into a third day on Tuesday and the death toll climbed over 400 in the poor South American country.

Praying for miracles, desperate family members beseeched rescue teams to find their missing loved ones as they dug through the debris of flattened homes, hotels, and stores in the hardest-hit Pacific coastal region.

In Pedernales, a devastated rustic beach town, crowds gathered behind yellow tape to watch firemen and police sift through rubble into the night. The town's soccer stadium was serving as a makeshift relief center and a morgue.

"Find my brother! Please!" shouted Manuel, 17, throwing his arms up to the sky in front of a small corner store where his younger brother had been working when the quake struck on Saturday night.

When an onlooker said recovering a body would at least give him the comfort of burying his sibling, Manuel yelled: "Don't say that!"

But for Manuel and hundreds of other anxious Ecuadorians with relatives missing, time was running out.

As of Tuesday, rescue efforts would become more of a search for corpses, Interior Minister Jose Serrano told Reuters. The death toll stood at 413, but was expected to rise.

The quake has injured at least 2,600 people, damaged over 1,500 buildings, and left 18,000 people spending the night in shelters, according to the leftist government.—*Reuters*



Syrian refugee kisses his daughter as he walks through a rainstorm towards Greece's border with Macedonia, near the Greek village of Idomeni, on 10 September 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

Ruling expected on 20 April in Lebanon child kidnapping case

BEIRUT — A Lebanese judge is expected to rule on Wednesday in the case of an Australian woman and TV crew charged with kidnapping her children from their father in Beirut following a custody dispute.

A judicial source said the case would likely be dismissed, with the father and mother reaching an out-of-court settlement that would result in the four-member television crew being fined and released. The children would remain with their father, the source said.

But a lawyer for the father suggested otherwise, saying there was no indication the case would be dropped.

The Australian “60 Minutes” television crew, the mother, two Lebanese and two Britons were charged with kidnapping on 14 April after the Lebanese authorities said they scup-

pered their attempt to take the woman’s two children back to Australia.

CCTV footage broadcast on Lebanese television appeared to show several people grabbing the children, who the father said were aged five and three, from their grandmother and bundling them into a car.

Australia’s Channel Nine television network said its crew was not connected to the people who grabbed the children, Australian media reported.

The mother was subsequently arrested and the children were returned to their father.

“We have faith that the Lebanese justice system will deal with this matter appropriately,” Channel Nine said in a statement. “The Lebanese people we are dealing with on the ground have been welcoming, professional and are treating our



Police escort Australian Sally Faulkner, the mother of the al-Amin children, and Australian reporter Tara Brown, to Lebanon’s Baabda Prison for women, after their trial was adjourned, Lebanon on 18 April. PHOTO: REUTERS

people on the ground, with consideration and respect.”

Australian Foreign Minister Julie Bishop said the case had been adjourned for a couple of days after a hearing on Monday “to ena-

ble the parties and their lawyers to try to negotiate some solution and that would obviously be the best outcome in the interests of the children and interests of the parents”.

“We want to see all Australians detained brought home to Australia as soon as possible,” she said.

Lebanon, unlike Australia, is not a signatory of

the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction, which allows for children normally resident in one location to be returned if taken by a relative.—Reuters

Australia concludes Mozambique debris ‘almost certainly’ from MH370

SYDNEY — An Australian team examining two pieces of debris found in Mozambique in recent months has concluded that they are “almost certainly” from missing Malaysian Airlines flight MH370, according to a report released on Tuesday by the Australian Transport Safety Bureau.

The report identified one of the pieces as a segment of the Boeing 777’s flap track fairing panel and the other as a part of the horizontal stabilizer

panel. They were found on separate occasions in Mozambique in December and February.

The pieces will be returned to Malaysia this week, officials said.

The plane went missing on 8 March, 2014 while flying from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing with 239 people on board, most of them Chinese nationals. A multinational search operation in the southern Indian Ocean has failed to locate the wreckage.—*Kyodo News*

Gov’t to test biometric cashless payments for foreign tourists

TOKYO — Japan’s economy ministry is planning to test cashless payment technology using fingerprints and other biometric markers to make transactions more convenient for foreign tourists, sources close to the project said on Tuesday.

The trials by the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry will be held from around October in tourism hot spots in the Kanto area around Tokyo, the Kansai region centering on Osaka and the island of Kyushu in the country’s southwest, the sources said.

The ministry will ana-

lyze customer data and purchasing patterns collected from each area during the trials by nationality, age group and other demographic features, with a view to making Japan a more attractive destination and improving tourism services in the country.

Initiatives allowing tourists to rely less on cash could help boost visitor numbers ahead of the 2020 Olympics and Paralympics in Tokyo.

The system using biometric identification technology, known as the Omotenashi Platform after the Japanese term for hospitality, is being

developed by Dai Nippon Printing Co and Deloitte Tohmatsu Consulting LLC.

Trials of the platform in the Kanto area will include payments using fingerprints at hot spring resorts and restaurants in Kanagawa Prefecture’s tourist sites, including the hot spring town of Hakone and historical coastal town of Kamakura, the sources said.

In the Kansai area, technology using vein scanning will be tested with the cooperation of airport, railway and amusement facility operators in the hope of offering tourists a consistent payment system throughout

their visit. With the participation of local business organisations in Kyushu, trials there will allow tourists to use prepaid premium coupons at restaurants and shopping centers after registering their personal information.

According to the sources, the results of the trials are expected to be compiled in a report around March next year.

“If (the technology) boosts understanding of the wide range of tourists’ needs, its use could lead to an improvement in the level of services provided to them,” a source close to the project said.—*Kyodo News*

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CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV MOROTAI VOY NO (286)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV MOROTAI VOY NO (286) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 20.4.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S CMA CGM LINE

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV BC SANFRANCISCO VOY NO (029W)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV BC SANFRANCISCO VOY NO (029W) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 15.4.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S ORIENT OVERSEA
CONTAINER LINES

Phone No: 2301185



Songwriters and musicians Wesley Schultz and Jeremiah Fraites. PHOTO: REUTERS

The Lumineers topple Kanye West's reign on US Billboard chart

LOS ANGELES — Folk rockers The Lumineers knocked Kanye West off the top spot on the weekly US Billboard 200 album chart on Monday.

"Cleopatra," the second album from the Colorado-based Lumineers, best known for their 2012 hit "Ho Hey," sold 125,000 units from album and song sales and 17 million streams.

Rapper West's "The Life of Pablo," which topped the chart last week based on the strength of streaming activity, dropped to No 4 this week with 47,000 units, comprising 1,400 physical album sales and 69 million streams.

The only other new entry on the top 10 of the Billboard 200 chart this week was "Gore" by

metal rockers Deftones at No 2, selling 71,000 units.

On the Digital Songs chart, which measures online single sales, Canadian R&B artist Drake ousted his own "Pop Style" with his "One Dance" song featuring Wizkid and Kyla, which sold 119,000 digital copies. "Pop Style" dropped to No 5.—*Reuters*



PHOTO: REUTERS

Beyonce teases fan with trailer for 'Lemonade'

LOS ANGELES — Beyonce is cementing her status as the queen of surprise releases after teasing fans with a minute-long trailer for "Lemonade" over the weekend, promoting an event premiering on Saturday on cable network HBO.

"The past and the present merge to meet us here. What are you hiding? Why can't you see me? You're the love of my life," the singer says mysteriously over snapshots of herself, other women and vague locations.

Beyonce rarely gives interviews anymore, instead giving fans a glimpse of her life on her website and Instagram. Her avid fanbase, known as the 'beyhive,' have been speculating about what "Lemonade" will offer, whether it's another documentary following up on her 2013 HBO film "Life is But a Dream" or if it's a concept video with new music from the R&B star.—*Reuters*

Madonna enjoys Kabbalah session with son

LONDON — Queen of Pop Madonna recently attended a Kabbalah session with her son Rocco in London following their reconciliation.

The 57-year-old singer and Rocco, 15, recently reunited in London for the first time since he fled her "Rebel Heart" world tour to live with his father Guy Ritchie in the English capital, reported

Sun online.

"Madonna has relied heavily on Kabbalah to get her through this tough time. It's great that Rocco is open to coming to the centre with her. There had been rumours her strict Kabbalah lifestyle was a reason they fell out. If so, it's a big deal for him to join her there on his Friday night," a source said.—*PTI*



PHOTO: PTI

Rihanna joins Calvin Harris onstage at Coachella

LOS ANGELES — R&B star Rihanna joined Calvin Harris onstage during his headline set on the second day of Coachella 2016.

The 28-year-old Barbadian beauty, who was spotted partying with Leonardo DiCaprio at the music and arts festival, took the stage to perform her collaborative hit with Harris, "We Found Love," reported *Aceshowbiz*.

The 32-year-old Scottish DJ introduced the songstress to perform their 2011 collaboration and she showed up in a tassel red, white and blue jacket paired with ripped jeans. Harris' girlfriend Taylor Swift was seen supporting him in the crowd.

Rihanna and the "Bad Blood" hitmaker greeted each other with a hug, post the performance.—*PTI*

Chicago eyes \$1.5 billion bonds for 'Star Wars' filmmaker Lucas' museum

LOS ANGELES — Bonds valued at up to \$1.5 billion would be issued under Mayor Rahm Emanuel's proposal to bring a museum, proposed by "Star Wars" filmmaker George Lucas, to Chicago, the city said on Monday.

The museum will feature Lucas' collection of paintings, illustrations and digital art. The bonds would be issued by the Metropolitan Pier and Exposition Authority for the museum and the replacement of a big part of its McCormick Place convention center that would be razed for the project.

Lucas would contribute \$743 million to the authority for the museum. The financing plan also calls for the extension of taxes and millions of dollars from the state of Illinois, which is also low on revenue. A spokeswoman for Governor Bruce Rauner said the proposal is under review.

The mayor offered the McCormick Place site for the museum after a parks protection group filed a lawsuit over the original lakefront site near Soldier Field, the home of the Chicago Bears football team, stalling the project.—*Reuters*



George Lucas and his wife Mellody Hobson arrive at the European Premiere of Star Wars, The Force Awakens in Leicester Square, London, in December 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

Sushi for Passover? With age-old ban lifted, rice is now kosher at seder meal



A woman uses chopsticks to eat sushi at a restaurant in La Serena, Chile, in 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

NEW YORK — This year, the Passover menus of many American Jews may feature rice and beans or sushi for the first time, thanks to new rules taking them off the list of foods forbidden during the elaborate meals prepared for the long holiday, which begins on Friday.

The change, approved by Judaism's Conservative movement in November, lifts a rule in place since the 13th century that prohibited Ashkenazi Jews outside Israel from eating a group of foods known as kitniyot — rice, corn, peanuts, beans and other legumes — during Passover.

The move comes partly in response to the growing popularity of gluten-free and vegan diets, said Rabbi Elliot Dorff, chair of the Conservative movement's Committee on Jewish Law and

Standards. But he said it is also a recognition of a changing composition and traditions of the Jewish faithful in the United States, which has the world's largest Jewish community outside Israel.

Jews of Ashkenazi descent, typically from Eastern Europe, are still in the majority in the United States. But a growing number are of Sephardic descent, typically from Spain, Portugal, North Africa and the Middle East. And Sephardic Jews never had a ban on eating kitniyot during Passover.

Passover, which starts on Friday with a holiday meal known as a seder and ends on 30 April, commemorates the flight of the Israelites from Egyptian slavery.

Conservative Judaism, one of the religion's three major branches, observes Jewish law but not as strictly as Orthodox Judaism or as

loosely as Reform Judaism.

For Conservative Jews who have observed the centuries-old prohibition against eating kitniyot over Passover, this year's seder promises to be like no other they have experienced. Menus might include sushi, which is made with rice; rice and beans; hummus; chicken satay with peanut sauce and other once-forbidden foods. The new variety may satisfy seder guests who balked in the past at traditional dishes like beef brisket, gefilte fish and matzo ball soup.

"For vegans, it was really a matter of not having protein for eight days," said Dorff, a philosophy professor at American Jewish University in Los Angeles.

Still taboo for all Jews during Passover are any foods that are leavened — called hametz — including such grains as wheat, barley, oats, rye and spelt. The only approved way to consume grains is in the form of matzo, a cracker-like food that symbolizes the Jewish flight from slavery, when there was no time for bread to rise.

Changing rules is one thing; changing tradition another, said Rabbi Amy Levin, interim rabbi at Congregation Rodeph Shalom in Bridgeport, Connecticut, whose research supported the decision to make kitniyot kosher for Passover.

"I'll make lentil soup in the pots I bought myself," Levin said. "But the pot I inherited from my grandmother, I don't know. She never wanted to put lentils in that thing!" —Reuters

Shakespeare more popular abroad than in Britain

LONDON — On the 400th anniversary of his death, Shakespeare is more popular abroad than in Britain and makes a significant contribution to the UK's prosperity and influence, according to a survey published on Tuesday.

The British Council, which commissioned the YouGov survey of 18,000 people from 15 countries, said the results showed that internationally Shakespeare is widely known, liked and understood.

"Four hundred years after his death, Shakespeare's work continues to play a vital role in educating and entertaining people around the world," said the Council's Rosemary Hilhorst in a statement.

The Council, which fosters cultural relations between Britain and other countries, said Shakespeare's influence internationally helps generate a positive attitude towards the UK.

Over a third of people questioned said Shakespeare made them feel more positive about Britain in general, with the greatest number of respondents holding this view in Brazil

(57 per cent) and India (62 per cent).

The survey also found Shakespeare was more popular (65 per cent) in terms of being liked, understood and still regarded as relevant today overseas than in his home country (59 per cent).

But his popularity in other English-speaking countries such as Australia and the United States was significantly lower than in the non-English speaking countries polled including China, Turkey and Mexico.

The British Council said his popularity had a direct influence on Britain's economy, not just in terms of attracting visitors to Shakespeare's theatres but also contributing to the country's standing in the world which had the knock-on effect of attracting tourists.

William Shakespeare's work, which includes 38 plays and 154 sonnets has been translated into over 80 languages and is performed throughout the world. The precise date of his death is not known but his funeral was held on 25 April, 1616.—Reuters



A Shakespeare First Folio discovered nearly 400 years after his death is displayed at Mount Stuart, Isle of Bute, Scotland, Britain on 7 April. PHOTO: REUTERS

Italian police recover Nazi-looted paintings in Milan

MILAN — Three late 15th century paintings missing since they were looted by Nazi troops from a Tuscan villa over 70 years ago have been recovered and two people have been accused of receiving stolen goods, police announced on Monday.

The works, of religious themes, seized in two private homes in Milan last July, were described by art historian Paola Strada as "of immense interest because of their unique character,

and because they are from artists considered rare on the market".

Part of a vast collection of art of the House of Bourbon-Parma, the paintings were plundered in 1944 by German troops from a villa in the Tuscan town of Camaiore, where Prince Felix, consort of the Grand Duchess of Luxembourg, once lived.

Most of the stolen pieces, kept in the villa of a high-ranking member of the Nazi SS military organisation, were found and re-

turned to Luxembourg soon after the end of the war.

The paintings recovered in Milan, and held in the city's Pinacoteca di Brera art museum since July, were three of almost 40 pieces still missing.

A criminal investigation linked to the recovery of the paintings has been initiated, the head of the Art Crimes department Riccardo Targetti said, with two unnamed people accused of receiving stolen goods.—Reuters



Entertainment Channel

(20-4-2016, Wednesday)

- | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| 6:00 pm | "Old Master Q and Little Ocean Tiger" (Part-3) |
| • Weather Report | |
| • Music Programme | |
| 6:30 pm | • Music Programme |
| • Pyi Thu Ni Ti | |
| 6:40 pm | • English Premier League (Review) (Part-1) |
| • Music Programme | |
| 7:00 pm | • International Movie Songs |
| • International Drama Series | |
| 7:40 pm | • Myanmar Traditional Instruments |
| • International Drama Series | |
| 8:30 pm | • Myanmar Video |
| • Cartoon Programme | |

From 20-4-2016 (Wednesday) 6:00 Pm
To 21-4-2016 (Thursday) 6:00 Pm



Myanmar International

(20-4-2016 07:00am ~ 21-4-2016 7:00am) MST

Today Fresh

- | | | |
|-------|----|---------------------------------------------|
| 07:03 | Am | News |
| 07:26 | Am | Yangon Markets: Nyaung Pin Lay Market |
| 07:33 | Am | The Richly Blessed Gem Land |
| 08:03 | Am | News |
| 08:26 | Am | Local Tour Guide: Pho Khant |
| 08:39 | Am | Oboist and His Life |
| 09:03 | Am | News |
| 09:26 | Am | Chef Life "Myo Min Soe Oo" |
| 09:36 | Am | A Visit to San-Taw-Shin Kyike-Hti-Yo Pagoda |
| 09:52 | Am | Inspiration |
| 10:03 | Am | News |

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|----|----------------------------------------------|
| 10:26 | Am | Fantastic Orchid Garden From The Flower City |
| 10:36 | Am | A Chance to Change Their Future |
| 10:54 | Am | Myanmar Traditional Art Bronze Casting |
| (11:00 Am ~ 03:00 Pm) - Tuesday Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am) | | |
| (03:00 Pm ~ 07:00 Pm) - Today Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am) | | |

Prime Time

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|----|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 07:03 | Pm | News |
| 07:26 | Pm | A Day in Bagan |
| 07:47 | Pm | The 110th Anniversary of Yangon Zoological Garden |
| 08:03 | Pm | News |
| 08:26 | Pm | Myanmar Traditional Identity (EP-1) The Culture Of Pennant Pillar |
| 08:41 | Pm | Art Students: Their Dream |
| 08:48 | Pm | Myanmar Leading Woman: May Sabai Phyu & L.Hkawn Htoi |
| (09:00 Pm ~ 11:00 Pm) - Today Repeat (09:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am) | | |
| (11:00 Pm ~ 03:00 Am) - Tuesday Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am) | | |
| (03:00 Am ~ 07:00 Am) - Today Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am) | | |

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



Harry Kane scores the third goal for Tottenham Hotspur against Stoke City during Barclays Premier League at The Britannia Stadium on 18 April. PHOTO: REUTERS

Tottenham run riot at Stoke to cut Leicester's lead

LONDON — Tottenham Hotspur took a large bite out of Leicester City's Premier League lead with two goals apiece from Harry Kane and Dele Alli earning them a 4-0 victory at Stoke City on Monday.

The visitors produced a scintillating display of attacking football to take full advantage of Leicester's 2-2 home draw with West Ham United on Sunday and close the gap to five points with four matches remaining.

Leicester remain favourites with 73 points but Tottenham's fourth victory in five games, achieved with a real flourish,

means the title race is back on the boil.

"We are ready to put the pressure on Leicester. We think we can do it. Leicester are five points ahead but we have closed the gap, that's all we could do," Kane, who moved two goals clear of Leicester's Jamie Vardy at the top of the scoring charts with 24 goals, said.

"We scored four but could have had six or seven. It is one of our best performances all season. I was itching to play. I had to wait a whole day and a half."

England striker Kane gave Tottenham the perfect start after

nine minutes, curling a textbook shot past keeper Shay Given after being played in by Moussa Dembele. Stoke briefly threatened a response and Hugo Lloris made a fine save from Marko Arnautovic but Tottenham should have gone further ahead when Alli played in Christian Eriksen but the Dane curled a shot against the crossbar with the goal gaping. More chances went begging early in the second half for Tottenham early in the second half but they doubled their lead after 67 minutes when Eriksen's pass sent Alli clear and he calmly chipped

the post after rounding Given shortly afterwards, a comical miss that had Spurs manager Mauricio Pochettino beating the turf in frustration, but it did not prove costly as Kane calmly converted Erik Lamela's pull back after another rapid Spurs attack. Tottenham were running riot and completed the rout after 82 minutes with Eriksen again the provider, clipping a clever pass to the outstanding Alli who swept home a volley to condemn Stoke to their joint worst home defeat in the Premier League.—Reuters

Hakuho headlines sombre Spring Festival in Tokyo

TOKYO — Nearly 8,000 spectators attended the ceremonial Spring Festival sumo wrestling tournament held outdoors at a controversial war shrine in the Tokyo sunshine on Monday.

The headline act was top-ranked Yokozuna, Hakuho, the most successful sumo wrestler of all-time with a record 36 career tournament wins.

The Mongolian beat compatriot and fellow Yokozuna, Kakuryu in his bout, one of almost 30 that took place between wrestlers who weigh on average over 120 kilogrammes (265 pounds) and grapple, slap and push for victory in traditional mawashi loin-cloths.

The history of sumo, Japan's national sport, can be traced back over 1,500 years with its roots in a religious ritual conducted in Shinto shrines to pray for abundant harvests.

The annual Spring Festival at Yasukuni Shrine, seen as a symbol of Japan's past militarism by many in Asia, started with a blessing of Shinto's religious gods and wishing peace for all.

Traditional foot-stamping ceremonies took place before the bouts begun.

One fan felt this year's event was more sombre than usual after the biggest in a series of earthquakes to hit Japan struck near Kumamoto city early on Saturday.

"This time I hesitated to come and enjoy it after the earthquake disaster," said Mieko Nakamura, who also attended as a spectator last year. "Some of the wrestlers, however, are from Kumamoto so we decided to come and cheer them up." The next grand tournament, the Natsu basho, will take place in Tokyo on 5 May and will feature all the sport's top ranked wrestlers.—Reuters



Sumo wrestlers perform a show fight during the annual 'Honozumo' ceremonial sumo tournament dedicated to the Yasukuni Shrine in Tokyo, Japan, on 18 April. PHOTO: REUTERS

Djokovic, Serena win top Laureus awards for dominating tennis in 2015

BERLIN — World number ones Novak Djokovic and Serena Williams completed a clean sweep for tennis as they won the Laureus Sportsman and Sports-woman of the Year awards on Monday.

In a glitzy ceremony in the German capital, hosted by US actor Bill Murray, Serbia's Djokovic beat Barcelona footballer Lionel Messi, sprinter Usain Bolt and Formula 1 champion Lewis Hamilton among others for the top men's award at the annual ceremony.

Djokovic and American Williams, who fought off competition from footballer Carli Lloyd and Jamaican sprinter Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce among others, were rewarded for dominating their sport last year, with each winning three of the four grand slams.—Reuters



Nick Blackwell. PHOTO: REUTERS

Blackwell retires from boxing after emerging from coma

LONDON — Nick Blackwell has announced his retirement from boxing after sustaining serious injuries against Chris Eubank Jr. in the British middleweight title fight last month that left him in an induced coma with bleeding in his brain. "No that's me done," Blackwell tweeted after being asked by on the social media site if he would be making a comeback. "I can't put my friends and family and self through that again but I'll still be involved." Blackwell, a former British middleweight champion, told Eubank Jr. that he held no grudges after he collapsed in the ring. The fight was called off in the 10th round because of swelling over his left eye. After the 25-year-old emerged from the coma, he posted a message of thanks for the support he had received, leading Eubank Jr. to ask after his well-being on Twitter.—Reuters