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FOREIGN MINISTER TO CLARIFY FOREIGN POLICY

UNION FOREIGN MINISTER Daw Aung San Suu Kyi will clarify her government's foreign policy in a meeting with foreign diplomats at her office in Nay Pyi Taw on April 22, according to an official.

Deputy Director-General U Ko Ko Shein of the Political Department said yesterday that invitations have been sent to 93 foreign embassies at home and abroad, including a UN agency.

So far 73 embassies have accepted the invitation, with the deputy director general adding that ambassadors or senior diplomats will attend the event.

The government's foreign policy is oriented to the protec-

tion of national interests, security, economic development, justice, stability and environmental sustainability, the official said, adding that the policy also holds in high esteem such virtues as freedom, sovereignty, culture and tradition and national solidarity.

There has been a dramatic shift of emphasis in the country's foreign policy from 'bilateral relations' to 'regional integration' and 'multilateralism'.

According to the constitution, the country practices independent, active and non-aligned foreign policy alongside the five principles of peaceful coexistence. These principles include



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. PHOTO: MNA

mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence.

The new government's for-

eign policy is aimed at enabling cooperation with neighbouring countries in an effort to maintain peace, regionally and globally, the official quoted the union foreign minister as saying. —Myanmar News Agency

Media company warned over violation of anti-corruption directive

A LARGE media company was notified of its violation of the directive on the reception of gifts, according to an announcement by the President's Office yesterday.

The President's Office dispatched copies of the directive to all government departments, announced it in newspapers and uploaded it onto its website on 1 April as part of the effort to eliminate the practice of corruption and bribery.

The media company invited high-ranking cabinet officials to its pavilion during the recent New Year festival, the announcement said, adding that a personal assistant to a very important person was among the dignitaries.

A New Year gift was presented to the personal assistant, without the officer knowing it contained K5 million (US\$4,237) in cash.

The anti-corruption directive set the limit for a single gift at K25,000, with a maximum of K100,000 as yearly gifts from organisations or individuals.

No action will be taken against the company, even though the value of the gift exceeded the limit. The government considers this to be the first incident of bribery during the grace period.

The best policy to root out corruption and bribery is 'not to give' and 'not to take', the announcement stated.

The K5 million in cash will be handed over to the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement to be used in its effort to build water facilities in water-scarce areas.

The President's Office has called for active public participation in the fight against corruption and bribery. —Myanmar News Agency

Bio security fears as bird flu hits Monywa

FOLLOWING the outbreak of bird flu at a poultry farming zone in upper Myanmar, the Ministry of Health has urged farmers nationwide yesterday to carry out strict bio security measures at poultry farms in order to prevent human infection.

In the announcement, the ministry said that strains H5 and H9 of the bird flu virus broke out at a farming zone in Monywa on April 3.

The sample of the bird flu has been sent to the Australia Animal Health Laboratory—AAHL in order to know the 'N' type of the virus, said the statement.

The same farming zone also saw an outbreak of H5N1 in February last year which resulted in the culling of more than 140,000 chickens and 500,000 quails.

THE Ministry of Health confirmed on April 15 that the last outbreak of bird flu occurred in a zone in Monywa and that there has been no humans infected as yet.

The ministry's announcement said that it had been taking measures to control the avian flu outbreak to the infected zone as of



A worker feeds chicken at a farm in upper Myanmar. PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE

last Friday.

From April 3-5, around 7,000 chickens from 13 farms were culled, according to local report.

The ministry said it is carrying out fever surveillance on the workers, their family members and staff of the ministry that were tasked with culling the infected chickens.

A team from the ministry, comprising local authorities, are combating the outbreak and have implemented a quarantine zone of the infected area and are carrying out surveillance, infection control measures as well as providing medical assistance to those with suspected human infection.

The ministry has established an isolation ward at Monywa General Hospital in order to provide treatment for people suspected of infection. Temporary clinics have been set up at the poultry farming zone.

Mandalay and Sagaing saw outbreaks of bird flu seven times from 2006 to 2015.—GNLM

Inle Lake faces drought

THE WATER levels in waterway near Inle Lake, Nyaung Shwe Township, have rendered 10 villages inaccessible. There has been a steady decline in water levels in Inle Lake which is situated in southern Shan State, with the potential to severely affect more than 300 villages.

"We have no water even for bathing and we buy drinking water for K 500 to 1000 per bucket. Farmers also need a mass water supply for their cultivation," said Ma Than Aye Myint, a local resident.

The local people have suf-

fered from falling water levels as most of the residents rely on the lake water for cooking and other household tasks.

The water levels are so low that they have reached critical condition as indicated by a water level measure post near the Phaung Daw Oo Pagoda, said a source. Water levels in the lake have fallen to roughly four feet and in some parts, only one foot of water remains.

Of the 445 households living in Inle Lake, 80 are considered lake dwellers. —200



Waterway linking Inle Lake to villages are especially drying up. PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE

Bago villages decimated by riverbank erosion

THIS year's riverbank erosion has decimated most of the farmland belonging to the villages at the Motama bend of the Sittaung estuary, on the eastern side of Bago Region's Kawa township.

February of this year saw 239 dwellings and over 2,000 acres of farmland fall victim to land erosion, with surrounding villages also losing swathes of arable land.

"Nearly all arable riverbanks and farmland in the Shwetisout village have been swept away. The adjacent village has seen over a thousand acres of farmland disappear. Everyone is out of work, and an income, as work revolved around these farmlands. People are having to live off whatever work they can get their hands on," explained U Kyaw Htay, administrator of Shwetisout village.

The erosion has caused a multitude of difficulties for local family's and their livelihoods, with the local school and monastery also being swallowed up by the river.

"The whole of Shwetisout village has been destroyed. The village of Sarhphyu, situated behind Shwetisout village, also lost their farmland to the erod-



Riverbank erosion in Bago. PHOTO: MYITMAKHA NEWS AGENCY

ing estuary, forcing them to establish a new village. The very fertile riverbank land was all washed away. People that lived off what crops they grew are now having to feed themselves by purchasing rice. In terms of employment, everyone here is out of work," said U Moe Thu, a farmer from Sarphyu village whose farmland was lost to land erosion.

The aforementioned villages started suffering from small

scale, and annual, riverbank erosion back in 2007-08, but a disastrous bout of riverbank erosion this February had calamitous affects on local farmland.

Despite no reported cases of any missing individuals resulting from the erosion, displaced local villagers have faced difficulties earning their livelihoods since February of this year, cutting timber and tending to remaining livestock in order to survive.—Myitmakha News Agency

Mandalay sees a drop in alcohol fueled brawls during Thingyan

There were 12 reports of alcohol fueled brawls in Mandalay during the Thingyan period with 39 cases being reported in total for the entire Mandalay district, according to Police Lt-Col Sein Tun.

Despite 12 cases being reported, this was actually a decrease in the number of similar

cases from last year when Thingyan celebration was observed for four days, he added.

Although the total number of cases during the 2016 festival decreased markedly compared to the 86 reported cases last year, there were also two murder cases this year while no murder cases were reported

in 2015.

Locals said that effective security measures taken by the 1,313 police officers in cooperation with other forces which included traffic police, fire brigades and NGOs helped see a reduction in crime in the Mandalay district over Thingyan.—Aung Thant Khaing

Multi-stakeholder talks on road legislation coming in June

A ROAD safety meeting is to be held in Nay Pyi Taw this coming June with the objective of amending current legislation in a bid to reduce traffic accidents.

The meeting will be attended by representatives of the Department of Road Transport, the Ministry of Construction, the Ministry of Information, NGOs and INGOs, as well as the APB Alliance Brewery Company.

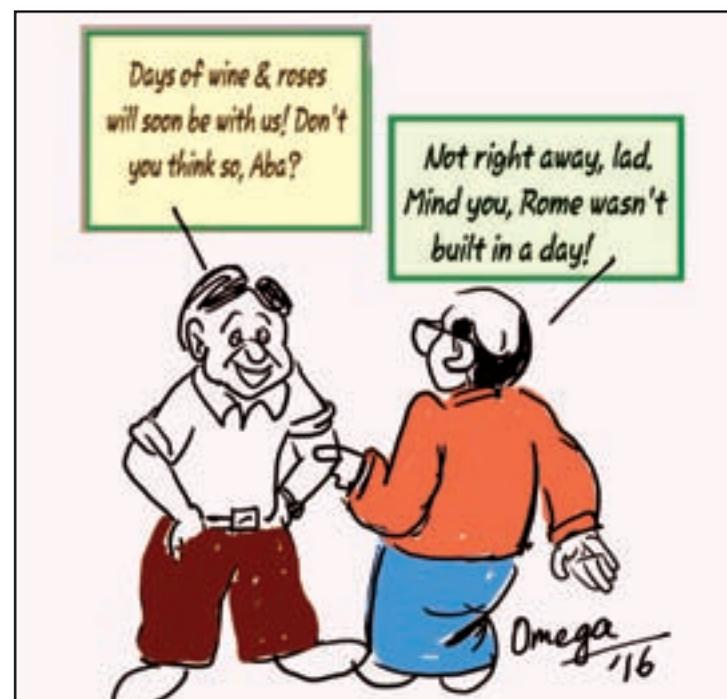
"Not wearing a seatbelt while driving and driving a motorcycle without a helmet can endanger lives during the event of a traffic accident. Few people obey road and vehicle regulations [here in Myanmar]. Discussions will be held on ways in which the law can curb these types of incidents. We will also cooperate together in the drawing up of legislation amendments," explained Zita Schellekens, director of corporate relations for the APB Alliance Brewery.

Independent businessmen and civil society organisations will join forces to carry out awareness campaigns for the public in a bid

to mitigate traffic and road-related danger. In 2015, the APB Alliance Brewery company successfully carried out road safety educational awareness programmes that reached over 3 million Myanmar citizens.

"General knowledge on vehicle and road regulations is important. It is imperative that close attention be paid to ensure that people follow these [regulations]. There has been a weak foundation in the past for the effective implementation of these regulations in way that ensures they are obeyed," said Police Colonel Kyaw Htway, head of the Myanmar Traffic Police.

Warning and road information signs, together with cat's eyes (reflective lane demarcations), will be erected along Myanmar's major highways in a bid to improve road safety, while animated cartoons, radio programmes and free-of-charge road safety applications will be disseminated via Facebook.—Myitmakha News Agency



Haka gas explosions injure two, Monywa, kills one

A SERIES of gas explosions occurred at a shop selling gas cylinders used for cooking in Haka, Chin State, destroying a house and wounding two people on Tuesday.

U Saw Yon Man, head of Haka Township Fire-services Department, said that a man was burned when he caught

fire in the blasts while a woman sustained injuries from the shockwave cause by the explosions he added.

Police said that the gas explosions in which six gas cylinders exploded one after another is believed to have occurred while water was being boiled on a gas stove in the shop.

According to sources, about 30 cylinders full of gas were kept at the shop which happens to be the only business selling cooking gas in Haka.

In another incident, a gas canister at a restaurant in Monywa blew up yesterday, killing a 35-year old man and injuring another. —*Aung Thant Khaing*

President U Htin Kyaw felicitates British Queen over her birthday

U Htin Kyaw, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, has sent a message of felicitations to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland on the occasion of Her Majesty's Birthday, which falls on 21 April, 2016. —*MNA*

President U Htin Kyaw felicitates British Prime Minister

U Htin Kyaw, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, has sent a message of felicitations to His Excellency Mr. David Cameron, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland on the occasion of the Birthday of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, which falls on 21 April, 2016. —*MNA*

Union Foreign Affairs Minister felicitates British counterpart

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, Union Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, has sent a message of felicitations to His Excellency Mr. Philip Hammond, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland on the occasion of the Birthday of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, which falls on 21 April, 2016. —*MNA*

Plans underway to relieve water shortages in regions, states



Villagers collect water supplied by a water bowser in Lashio. PHOTO: SUPPLIED

THE MINISTRY of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement is providing drinking water to villages in those states and regions that are facing water shortages caused by El Niño.

The ministry said that thousands of gallons of water had been transported to villages in Shan and Kayah States and Magway, Sagaing, Ayeyawady and Yangon Regions yesterday in cooperation with regional

and state governments and departments.

Arrangements are being made to supply drinking water to villages in Nay Pyi Taw and Zeyarthiri Township, it added. —*GNLM*

Mandalay to host Mandalay Open Basketball Championship

MANDALAY Region Basketball Sub-committee announced yesterday that the Mandalay Open Basketball Championship and the Men's U-20 Basketball Championship will be held for the first time at Bahtoo Stadium in Mandalay from April 25 to 30.

The sporting event, jointly organized by Mandalay Region basketball sub-committee and Kaung Su Aung Co., Ltd., will be of an international standard and so will be the first of its kind in Myanmar.

"The tournament aims to support young people who are interested in basketball and turn

out a new generation of players," said U Wai Yan Aung of Kaung Su Aung Co., Ltd who is also a member of the organizing committee.

According to the organizing committee, accommodation is available for teams from rural areas and admission is free for the tournament.

Teams which are interested in participating in the tournament at Bahtoo Stadium must submit application forms by April 23, added U Wai Yan Aung.

Winners of the open championship will receive K2 million for first prize, K1.5 million

for second prize and K1 million for third prize.

Likewise, teams which come first, second and third in the men's U-20 championship will win prizes worth K 1 million, K700,000 and K 500,000 respectively.

The first basketball championship in Mandalay is open to teams from all regions and states, amateur basketball teams and teams representing universities and colleges across the country. For further information, the following phones can be contacted Ph: 09 2000791 and 09 31242798. —*Aung Thant Khaing*

Four regions selected for Industrial Development Center

AUTHORITIES in Myanmar have selected four regions in which the first Industrial Development Center will be established. Yangon, Bago, Mandalay and Sagaing Regions were chosen as they are considered the main gateways to international markets because they have all either seaports or airports.

The four regions were considered to have good potential for rapid development because

they possess strong workforces and easy access to public transportation such as buses and trains when compared to other regions. Each of the region's highways are connected to the major road transport network which links all regions of the country. For investors, the four regions are located within easy access to international markets and have strategical advantages for distribution. —*200*

'Made in Myanmar' to rock international market

MYANMAR is trying to hit the international market with its own country brand 'Made in Myanmar' on products from the agriculture, seafood, forest, garment and bean sectors.

Authorities will cooperate with both local export companies and foreign companies with the aim of achieving the 'Made in Myanmar' brand global recognition and recommended status on products exported from the country.

Authorities have been dis-

appointed with the smearing of the 'Made in Myanmar' brand in the international market though the brand is fully endorsed by the products being exported overseas.

Myanmar aims to project its own brand on the international stage in the hopes it will become a money spinner.

Myanmar earned K 29.1 billion in 2015 through international trading while they earned only K 15 billion the year before. —*200*

Crime NEWS

Fire destroys house in Haka



Fire service personnel seen fighting the fire. PHOTO: DISTRICT IPRD

A fire has destroyed a house on Bogyoke road, Haka Town, Chin State on April 19. According to the investigation, the fire broke out in a business selling gas cyl-

inders known as GASPA owned by Daw Byat Nam Kyai but the reason for fire is not yet known.

The fire damaged a house and four motorbikes worth Ks

1.15 million. No one was injured in the accident.

Police have filed charges against the house owner for negligence.— *District IPRD*

Light Truck falls into ravine

A light truck with ten passengers on board traveling to Dawei from Pathein plunged down a ravine between mileposts 9/5 and 9/6, near 9 mile village, Khawzar town, Yay township on April

18. Driver J Pho lost control of the vehicle and was killed at the scene.

One passenger was injured in the accident. The police are investigating.— *Htut Htut- (Yay)*

Six injured in traffic accident on Haingyi to Pathein road

A vehicle accident occurred on the Haingyi to Pathein road, on April 18, leaving six injured. According to the investigation, the vehicle, which had five passengers on board, turned over when driver Ko Thura, 30, lost control after overtaking another vehicle.

The diver and the five pas-

sengers were all seriously injured in the accident. Four passengers are undergoing medical treatment at Kyauk Chaung Hospital while two passengers were sent to Pathein General Hospital for emergency medical treatment. The police have charged U Thura with reckless driving.— *Kyaw Thu Hein (IPRD)*



A car being seen damaged after accident. PHOTO: KYAW THU HEIN

Police search for jewelry thief in Mudon

A man is wanted by police for a robbery in which jewelry was taken from a house in Mudon township, Mon state on Monday. According to the investigation, Daw Kyi Khin found her door broken when she went to cook in the early morning and gold jewelry worth Ks 41.1 million missing from the teak cupboard where she kept it. She informed the Mudon police who are in the process of investigating the case.— *200*

Police arrest illegal petrol seller

POLICE arrested a woman selling illegal petrol at a house in Yankin road, ward 7, Lashio, Shan State North on April 18. Acting on a tip-off, police searched the house of Daw Ton Myint who goes by the alias Kyan Ton Myint and discovered two 40 gallon barrels, one 20 gallon barrel and 80 bottles of petrol worth Ks 2.52 million. The police have taken action against her.— *200*

Suicide in Falam

A man hanged himself in Talanlo ward, Falam town, Chin State on April 19. According to police, U Lal Nei Thang, 25, allegedly became intoxicated and committed suicide.

The Police investigation is ongoing.— *District IPRD*

Fire destroys resort at Than Daung

A fire destroyed an old Yeiktha near the Shwe Than Dhaung resort, Than Daung town, Kayin State on April 18.

According to the investigation, the fire was caused when a visitor dropping a lit cigarette

onto some dry leaves.

The fire quickly got out of control and spread to the resort. The blaze was put out by firemen with the help of local residents within a few minutes of their arrival.— *200*



Fire destroys a Yeiktha in Than Daung. PHOTO: 200

Fire destroys servant quarters

A fire destroyed a servant quarters at Shwe Thazin Fuji soap factory between Yaw Mingyi and Pho Hla Gyi roads, Pyigyidagun township, Mandalay on 17 April.

The fire started to break out at 9:30 pm but the reason for fire

is not known yet. The fire was brought under control within 15 minutes by the firemen with 30 fire engines and with the help of neighbors. Further investigations are being made to find out the case.— *Than Zaw Min (IPRD)*

Yabba, ice and cash seized in Tamwe



Nay Min Aung (a) Fizel, Ma Khin Soe Than (a) Ma Ni and Soe Moe Naing (a) Gadon. Photo: MPF

A combined investigation team made up of officers and staff from Myanmar police force seized thousands of yabba pills and six grams of methamphetamine or ice in separate raids in Tamwe on April 18.

Police found 60 tablets of yabba belonging to Nay Min Aung, alias Fizel, on Banyadala road in Tamwe and when interrogated, Nay Min Aung told police he had bought it from Ma Khin Soe Than. Police arrested Ma Khin Soe Than, alias Ma Ni,

and Soe Moe Naing, alias Gadon, at a traffic stop and found 1,780 yabba pills, six grams of ice, two mobile phones and Ks 0.2 million on their motorbike.

In another case, police seized 960 yabba pills from the house of Sai Thiha Zaw Lat at Aung Myat road, Chan Thar ward, Taunggyi. Myo Ko Ko was found together with the host and the police have filed charges against both of them under the Anti-Narcotic Law.— *Myanmar Police Force*

LOCAL Business

Aquatic feed to be purchased from Viet Nam



A fish farm worker feeds his stock. PHOTO: THE MIRROR

AQUATIC feed will be purchased directly from Viet Nam and resold to local fish and shrimp breeders, according to Myanmar Shrimp Association.

Fish feed imported from Viet Nam is made of mixed feedstuffs and contains essential nutrients for fish and shrimp. The association will buy both livestock feed-

stuff and aquatic feedstuff.

ASEAN countries already use this feed, including Myanmar breeders but the difference is that they are not sure of whether their feed contains essential nutrients because they don't know the scientific making method, said U Win Sein, Myanmar Livestock Federation.

The ready-made Vietnamese feedstuff is cheaper than the locally made mixed feed.

"Initially, we are planning to purchase it under a two-year contract and we might extend it. We think all breeders should use this kind of feedstuff," said Dr. Thet Mhoo, the chairman of Myanmar Shrimp Association.—200

First phase of Bago Industrial Park City to be completed by year's end

The initial phase of the Bago Industrial Park project at Bawnatkyi village-tract, Bago Region, is slated to be complete by the end of this year according to i-Land Myanmar.

The industrial park will be home to textile dyeing and printing enterprises as well as bag manufactures, electrical compa-

nies and garment factories. The initial phase will encompass developing the park's infrastructure and includes the construction of 4,030 meter-long road sections, water pipes distributing water to each site, a sewage treatment plant and establishing a link between the site and the Bago Electricity transmission lines and a

park Wi-fi network. The industrial park will be constructed in accordance with eco-friendly guidelines on 182 acres of land at Field No 1393 of Naungkwan, Bawnatkyi village tract, Bago Region. Once built, it is hoped the park will generate foreign direct investment and create job opportunities for locals.—200

K200 lottery tickets not going anywhere

K200 lottery tickets will remain for some time even after K500 lottery tickets are introduced for sale, according to Aungbarlay Branch under Internal Revenue Department (Head Office).

Currently, tickets worth K200 are being sold, allowing jackpot winners to win up to

K150 million while the minimum prize is K50,000. First prize for lottery tickets worth K500 will fetch over ten times that of the current first prize while the lowest prize will remain unchanged at K50,000.

To start the new program, approval is being sought

from the head office.

Citizens are encouraged to purchase lottery tickets only from the legal shops, and actions will be taken against those who illegally sell the tickets.

The official announcement will be released upon receiving approval.—200

Pedigree sesame species in high demand

ALTHOUGH expensive, pedigree sesame species are in higher demand than other sesame seeds from brokerages in Magwe Region being prepared for early monsoon cultivation in May and June.

The price of pedigree sesame species from the grower range from K15,000 to K20,000 per basket higher than those sesame seeds from brokerages. The pedigree species from growers are considered to be of higher quality because they are stored after being cleaned and dried.

"A high quality crop plays an important role in producing high-yield sesame," said U Chit Phay, a grower from Sartaingkan village.

The most popular sesame species in Magwe are Ba-pan, Sethle, Shwe-Ta-Soat, Gwa-lay-ne and Samon-Net strains because they are most suited to the region's climatic conditions.

"The growers who own just one to two acres sold out their crops entirely, leaving nothing in reserve so they could pay back the money they borrowed for cultivation. Only then can they search for high quality seeds with the money left," said U Nyo, a grower from Magyikan village, Magwy.

Magwe Region is known colloquially as "Si-oe-gyi" or the big oil pot in Myanmar because natural oil is one of its main products.—Moe

Rohu and sturgeon to manufacture as ready-made ground fish for export

ROHU and sturgeon are to be manufactured as high quality, ready-made ground fish for export, said U Han Tun, the vice chairman of Myanmar Fish Federation (MFF).

MFF will jointly conduct the packaging process with European based companies who will provide technical assistance.

"There's no technology to make ready-made ground rohu

and sturgeon in our country yet, so experts from Thailand and Viet Nam will manufacture it here then we will export them to the European market. We are planning to be able to export the ground fish by the end of the year", he added. Rohu and the sturgeon are Myanmar's most exported freshwater fish and earnings from the high quality ground fish form are expected to increase four fold.—200

Manufacturing know-how needed for quality gems



Gems and jewelry are seen at an emporium. PHOTO: 200

MYANMAR needs more emporiums in order to fulfill the technological requirements of manufacturing finished gem products although there are plenty of raw jade and jewelry products available, according to Myanmar Gems and Jewellery Entrepreneurs Association.

Emporiums in Myanmar only display upgraded raw gems because of the lack of technological know-how which is needed to produce finished gem products in the country.

The Myanmar International Gems, Jewellery and Watch Expo featured gems manufactured using foreign technology and is expected to generate a transfer of manufacturing knowledge and technologies required to finish gem products in Myanmar.

The 5th Myanmar International Gems, Jewellery and Watch Expo 2016 was held from April 1 to April 4 at Myanmar Gems Trade Centre on Kaba Aye Road.—200

Viettel plans \$1.5 billion Myanmar telecoms investment with local firms

HANOI — Vietnamese telecom company Viettel said on Monday it plans to form a consortium with two Myanmar companies to invest a combined \$1.5 billion in Myanmar's telecoms sector if it wins the country's fourth, and last, telecom licence. Viettel is expected to be awarded the licence some time after June, joining three existing licence holders: Myanmar Posts and Telecommunications (MPT), Norway's Telenor and Qatar's Ooredoo.

Liberalisation of the telecoms sector is widely seen as one of Myanmar's most successful reforms since the military ceded power in 2011. To gain the fourth licence, foreign bidders must set up a joint venture with local firms. Military-run Viettel, one of Vietnam's leading telecoms companies, said in a statement that it plans to form a consortium with Myanmar National Telecom Holding Public Limited, consisting of 11 local companies, and state-owned Star High Public Company Limited.

"This strong founda-

tion ideally positions us to cater to the untapped telecom market potential in Myanmar," Viettel's Deputy General Director Le Dang Dung said in the statement. The two Myanmar firms will hold a combined 51 per cent of the joint venture, while Viettel, which operates in 10 countries across Asia, Africa and the Americas, will own the remaining stake.

Viettel also plans to launch 4G services in Myanmar, subject to additional licensing. The Myanmar government said on 25 March that it expects to open the application process for the licence in the middle of June and that Viettel was the only candidate negotiating for a joint venture. Myanmar Posts and Telecommunications, which operates in partnership with Japan's KDDI Corp and Sumitomo Corp, is the market leader in Myanmar's telecoms sector with 18 million subscribers as of January, while Telenor has 12 million subscribers and Ooredoo has 5.8 million.—Reuters

Thai police say 15 bomb suspects at large as two appear in court

BANGKOK — Thai police cannot find 15 suspects in connection with a bomb at a shrine in Bangkok last year that killed 20 people, an officer said on Wednesday, as two ethnic Uighur Muslims from China accused of involvement appeared in a military court.

No group claimed responsibility for the 17 August blast at the Erawan Shrine, a central tourist spot popular with visitors from China and elsewhere in Asia. Five of the dead were from China and two from Hong Kong. More than 120 people were wounded.

Analysts, diplomats and even officials suspected the attack was linked to Uighur sympathisers angered by Thailand's deportation of more than 100 Uighurs to China the previous month.

But police ruled out "terrorism" and said the attack was retaliation for a crackdown on human-smuggling.

The two suspects who were arrested — Yusufu Mieraili and Adem Karadag — are Uighur Muslims, a minority



Suspects of last year's Bangkok blast Bilal Mohammed (front) (also known as Adem Karadag) and Yusufu Mieraili are escorted by prison officers as they arrive at the military court in Bangkok, Thailand, on 20 April, 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

from western China who speak a Turkic language. They have denied all charges. Police have issued arrest warrants for 15 other people, eight of whom are thought to be either Turkish or in Turkey, according to the warrants and police statements. "We don't know where they are," deputy police spokesman Major General Songpol Wattanachai told Reuters. "The perpetrators have done their utmost to escape."

Shaven-headed and barefoot, Mieraili and Karadag — who is also known as Bilal Mohammed — were led in handcuffs and leg shackles into a

cramped court in Bangkok's old city.

Mieraili spoke briefly to Reuters saying he expected the trial would take "a very long time". The men had marks on their foreheads which Mieraili said came from coming into contact with the floor during prayer.

Three judges heard evidence laid out in 25 thick files on a table beneath them. There was no jury.

The defendants' lawyers said more than 500 witnesses could be called for the prosecution and defence, and that the high-profile trial could last a year or more.

Proceedings were laboriously translated through two interpreters from Thai to English to the Uighur language.

Police say Karadag was the man caught on CCTV footage at the shrine, sitting on bench, slipping off a bulky backpack and walking away, just before the blast.

Most Uighurs live in China's violence-plagued Xinjiang region, where exiles and human rights groups say Uighurs chafe under government policies that restrict their culture and religion.

China denies this and blames Islamist militants for the rising violence.

Thai National Security Council secretary Anusit Kunakorn said on Wednesday Thailand had received a security warning from Singapore about three Uighurs who had entered Thailand. He did not give details. On 9 April, Thailand stepped up security because two Chinese Uighur men linked to "foreign terror groups" had overnights on the resort island of Phuket, police said. They were later arrested in Indonesia.—Reuters

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Printed and published at the Global New Light of Myanmar Printing Factory at No.150, Nga Htat Kyee Pagoda Road, Bahan Township, Yangon, by the Global New Light of Myanmar Daily under Printing Permit No. 00510 and Publishing Permit No. 00629.

Communist Laos appoints new president, prime minister

BANGKOK — Laos's National Assembly on Wednesday appointed Communist Party chief Bounnhang Vorachit as the country's new president and named foreign minister Thongloun Sisoulith as prime minister.

The picks are seen by many analysts as a continuation of the status quo in secretive Laos, where the communists have ruled since the end of the Viet Nam War.

State television broadcast a meeting of the single-chamber National Assembly, at which lawmakers listed the virtues of Bounnhang, who was appointed Communist Party leader in January.

"The National Assembly has approved Bounnhang Vorachit as president, with more than two-thirds of the votes," said assembly chairwoman Pany Yathotou.

The 149-member assembly completed the process of nomination and voting for both candidates in around an hour.

In his acceptance speech, Bounnhang said he would strive for "peaceful international policies, unity, friendship and cooperation".

One of the fastest-growing economies in East Asia, landlocked Laos has averaged GDP growth of 7 per cent over the past decade, with increasing use of natural resources contributing a third of output growth, the World Bank says.

This has boosted incomes and access to electricity, telecoms and healthcare for its mostly rural population of 6.7 million.

Laos has close political ties to communist Vietnam and mirrors its political system.



Laos' Vice President Bounnhang Vorachit casts his ballot during the Communist Party Congress in Vientiane on 21 January 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Communist neighbour China has been vying aggressively for influence in Laos, however, providing loans, aid and infrastructure investment.

Laos is still struggling to rid itself of the painful legacy of the Viet Nam War, when it became the most heavily bombed country in history after the

US and its allies dropped about two million tons of ordnance from 1964 to 1973.

More than four decades on, the country grapples with millions of cluster munitions and other unexploded ordnance devices that kill and maim dozens each year.—Reuters

Japan offers no comment on Australia submarine bid rejection report



Japanese Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga says at a press conference in Tokyo on 20 April, 2016 that repeated earthquakes centering on Kumamoto and Oita prefectures do not warrant a delay in the planned increase in the consumption tax in April 2017. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

TOKYO — Japan's top government spokesman on Wednesday refused to confirm or deny a report from an Australian news outlet which claimed the Australian government has eliminated Japan from the bidding process for the construction of a fleet of navy submarines.

The report from ABC News stated that a decision on the contract is due to be announced next week, and added that while it is not clear if the winner has already been chosen, the Australian Cabinet's National Security Committee "has all but eliminated the Japanese bid to build."

Asked by a reporter whether he could confirm ABC's statement, Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga said he could not comment on the matter.

Japan's Mitsubishi Heavy Industries Ltd. has been contending with Germany's ThyssenKrupp AG and French defense firm DCNS for the contract to build new submarines to replace the Royal Australian Navy's current Collins-class fleet.—*Kyodo News*

China angered by Britain's comments on South China Sea



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

THE HAGUE — China expressed anger on Wednesday after a senior British official said a ruling expected within a few months in an international arbitration case the Philippines has brought against China's South China Sea claims must be binding.

Hugo Swire, British minister of state responsible for East Asia, also said Britain saw the ruling, by the Permanent Court of Arbitration in the Hague, as

an opportunity for China and the Philippines to renew dialogue over their territorial disputes.

China claims virtually all of the South China Sea and rejects the court's authority in the case, which is widely expected to go in favour of the Philippines, significantly raising tension in the strategic waterway.

"The comments by Mr Swire neglect the facts and are very discriminatory and one-sided and seriously go against

Britain's promise not to take sides," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying told a daily news briefing.

"We are extremely dissatisfied."

Tension in the South China Sea is the fault of the United States and the Philippines, not China, with US ships and aircraft increasingly appearing in the region, she added.

"The facts prove that if the South China Sea is tense then

it's the US which is the biggest pusher of this," Hua said.

She repeated that China would neither accept nor participate in the arbitration case and it was an abuse of international law.

The court is expected to rule in late May or early June.

In February, the United States and the European Union, of which Britain is a part, warned China it should respect the ruling from the Hague.

The court has no powers of enforcement and its rulings have been ignored before. Britain has prioritised developing economic ties with China and welcomed Chinese President Xi Jinping on a state visit in October, leading critics to accuse it of placing short-term financial gain above human rights and security interests. It also upset the US administration when it became the first non-Asian country and the first member of the Group of Seven advanced economies to join a China-backed development bank for Asia seen by Washington as an unwelcome rival to Western-led institutions such as the World Bank. More than \$5 trillion of world trade is shipped through the South China Sea every year. Apart from China's territorial claims there, Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan and Viet Nam have rival claims.—*Reuters*

Japan denies UN expert's accusation gov't exerted pressure on media

TOKYO — The Japanese government on Wednesday brushed aside a UN rights expert's concerns about its influence over the media, saying the country has always upheld freedom of expression.

"It is regrettable that the Japanese government's explanation was not sufficiently reflected" in the report and opinions of David Kaye, UN special rapporteur on the right to free-

dom of opinion and expression, Foreign Press Secretary Yasuhisa Kawamura told a press conference.

Kaye aired his concerns on Tuesday as he concluded weeklong research on the situation regarding freedom of expression in Japan that included meetings with government officials, civic groups, journalists and lawyers.

"The government has never

exerted pressure on the media," Kawamura said, in response to Kaye's comments Tuesday in which he said "the independence of the press is facing serious threats" from the Japanese government, citing the broadcasting law and the contentious secrecy law for the prevention of leaks of state secrets that took effect in 2014.

Kaye also said in the report, "I have also received firsthand

reports of newspapers delaying or canceling the publication of articles, or demoting or transferring reporters after writing articles critical of the government."

He is set to submit a fuller report to the UN Human Rights Council in 2017.

"We will appropriately respond to the matter so that the report will be objective and based on facts," Kawamura said.—*Kyodo News*

Philippine army urges no payments to free foreign captives

MANILA — The Philippines discouraged ransom payments on Wednesday for captives held by Islamist militants in a bid to stop a kidnap "industry" emerging after a series of rebel seizures of Indonesian and Malaysian crew.

A Philippine military spokesman was responding to media reports on Tuesday that quoted an Indonesian minister as saying a Taiwan firm would pay to free 10 Indonesians held by Abu Sayyaf rebels.

A combined 18 crew from

Indonesia and Malaysia have been taken captive in three separate attacks on tugboats in Philippine waters close to maritime borders with the two countries.

"The armed forces continues to encourage everyone to observe the government's no ransom policy," Philippine military spokesman Brigadier-General Restituto Padilla told reporters.

He said the military wanted to "discourage this kind of growing 'industry'" and cut off funds that would ultimately strengthen the rebels.

Indonesia's coordination minister for political, legal and security affairs, Luhut Pandjaitan, was quoted as saying a Taiwan firm was prepared to pay 50 million pesos (\$1.08 million) to free a crew held since late March.

The Philippines rarely publicises ransom payments and officials sometimes refer to them euphemistically as "board and lodgings".

Padilla said there were ongoing military operations to rescue the captives. "The safety of

the kidnap victims is our primordial concern," he added.

Five other foreign nationals, including two Canadians, are also held on the remote southern island of Jolo, a stronghold of the small but violent al Qaeda-linked group, known for beheading, bombings and extortion.

Neil Reeder, Canada's ambassador to the Philippines, expressed serious concern over an Abu Sayyaf threat to behead two of its citizens on 25 April if their families and government failed

to pay 300 million pesos for each of them. "We are very, very concerned about the situation of our nationals," Reeder told reporters in Manila.

"We are doing our best for their safety and security and we hope that they'll be safe and sound and released very soon."

Security is precarious in the south of the largely Christian Philippines, despite a 2014 peace pact between the government and the largest Muslim rebel group that ended 45 years of conflict.—*Reuters*

OPINION

Recognising the people's army

Kyaw Thura

MYANMAR was held under British occupation from 1824 to 1948, and the Japanese controlled the country from 1942 to 1945. We and our children have been taught at school that our country fell prey to foreign intrusions for lack of a strong army. However, a careful study of these historical events reveals the true reason Myanmar fell to

colonial rule twice. We lost our sovereignty to two imperialist regimes for lack of strong education, rather than a strong army. We should let bygones be bygones.

It should be made clear at the outset that an army is strong only when it is built on the strength of its people. For example, we have two well-known slogans; one is "Only when the armed forces are strong will the nation be strong", and the other is "The strength of the nation lies within". These slogans remind us that the presence of a strong army is of utmost importance in safeguarding our sovereignty and national integrity, but a strong army itself is really nothing without public support.

Simply put, if the strength of a nation is related to the might of its army, then the strength of the army depends on its soldiers. In addition, the strength of the soldiers lies in the support of their

families and the people in general.

The people and the armed forces must come together to ward off future alien invasions. All things considered, now is the time for the armed forces and the people to be aware that their inseparable bond is a thing that matters most in the defence of the country.

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.

Myanmar's Yangon Stock Exchange draws interest from local investors

YANGON Myanmar's Yangon Stock Exchange (YSX) has drawn interest from local investors as its weekly sale stood at over 20 billion kyats (about 20 million U.S. dollars) by the first week of this month before the water festival.

Trading on YSX has closed for the long water festival holidays until next week.

Even on the first trading day, March 25, the first listed company, First Myanmar Investment (FMI) received more market order volume than its sale offer. The market order reached over 37,000 while sales offer stood at over 22,000 with the value of 26,000 kyats (21.5 U.S. dollars) at the opening stage.

After the first trading period of the day, the company's trading volume reached 42,610 shares. The highest volume of shares were traded on March 29 with 210,752 shares worth 8.641 billion kyats (about 7.3 million U.S. dollars). The per share value on that day hit as highest as that of the previous days with 41,000 kyats.

Before YSX's opening, local investors were traditionally investing their money into real estate, foreign currencies, precious metals and increasingly into bank saving accounts.

A large number of investors have come to know the significance of injecting in the capital market when YSX was launched, said Aung Thura, a local finance expert.

The local real estate sector has declined recently due to the



Government officials and business people pose for documentary photos at the opening of the Yangon Stock Exchange in Yangon. PHOTO: GNLM

strong interest of investors in YSX. Moreover, YSX's attraction to investors makes it possible for Myanmar's currency to remain strong as U.S. dollar investors in the black market are rushing to sell their dollars.

Meanwhile, Myanmar's biggest public company, Myanmar Thilawa SEZ Holdings Public Limited (MTSH), will start trading on YSX as a second listed company on April 29. Other listed companies such as Myanmar Citizens Bank and First Private Bank will follow MTSH as soon as possible, according to Man Man Thein, president of the country's Securities and Exchange Commission (SECM).

"We welcome other listed

companies to be part of YSX. The more listed companies on YSX, the more chances for investors to choose. It will encourage the market to develop," U Tun Tun, Director and Chief Financial Officer of FMI, told Xinhua.

Although the securities trading on YSX stood highest in early days, it had decreased before Thingyan water festival. The lowest volume of shares were traded on April 7 with 18,019 shares worth over 576 million kyats (about 480,000 U.S. dollars).

It was due to the halt of most business during the water festival, said some local experts. The YSX will reopen on Thursday.

Aung Thura said that it was a normal status for a capital market. The highest trading in early days were due to people's interests as a new market.

The YSX officially began trading on March 25 with only one listed company, First Myanmar Investment (FMI), being available for transactions. YSX was launched last December with six listed companies, two securities companies and one fund settlement bank although it was not ready for trading by then.

If Myanmar's new Company Act, which allows foreign investors to join YSX, is submitted to the new parliament, YSX's presence will be at a larger stage, according to Man

Man Thein.

Due to the fact that the majority of the people are not so familiar with the capital market yet and its banking sector is still under-developed, Myanmar's financial sector is far more weak as compared with other countries in Southeast Asia.

At present, there are five securities companies providing services as underwriters on YSX while another five firms are waiting to be awarded licenses.

Under an agreement signed on Dec. 23, 2014, YSX is owned by Tokyo Stock Exchange and Diawa Securities Group with 49 percent, and the state-owned Myanmar Economic Bank with 51 percent. —Xinhua

ASEAN puppetry exchange programme to begin in May



Puppets looking good in their costumes. PHOTO: TIN MAUNG (MANDALAY SUB-PRINTING)

THE ASEAN puppetry exchange programme is scheduled to be held in Yangon in May with the aim of sharing traditional such folk arts among the 10 member countries, one of organisers said.

With the assistance of the Japanese embassy in Yangon, the programme will mainly cover a discussion on how to control a puppet using various methods and on different forms of performance in each country, said U Khin Maung Htwe, the art direc-

tor of Htwe Oo Myanmar Traditional Puppet Theatre.

In addition, a collective marionette show will also be performed during the event by all the teams involved in the programme.

The next host country for the exchange programme is Laos, which will host a puppetry exchange event in September 2016.

Puppetry is one of the most popular traditional arts in Myan-

mar. It is usually performed at pagoda festivals. Researchers say traditional Myanmar marionettes were first designed in the 1780s.

According to U Khin Maung Htwe, there are at most 20 professional puppeteers across the country and a few puppet-makers, mainly in Yangon and Mandalay.

"Unity among puppeteers is so crucial for the existence of puppetry world," he said.—200

Fire department to spend K 27 billion on new facilities



Fire engines being seen. PHOTO: FIRE SERVICES DEPARTMENT

THE Yangon Region Fire Services Department plans to use K 23 billion (US\$22,881,356) to purchase fire facilities the department needs within the 2016-2017 fis-

cal year, a department spokesperson said.

The budget will cover the purchase of fire engines and four water tanks, as well as the construction of 15 service cen-

tres.

Moreover, the department will hire an additional 250 members as the existing 986 staff members are insufficient.—200

Learning to Learn POEM:

"The illiterates of the 21st Century will not be those who cannot read and write but those who cannot learn, unlearn and relearn" Alvin Toffler (1971) "Future Shock."

There's a lot of truth in the above quotation, after all, formal learning in Institutions of Education will take most people up to an age just past youth with their life span probably twice those years to boot. The prime time of life will be spent in an occupation to earn a living and enter the marriage institution, adding more qualifications may hardly be an intention.

Meanwhile, failing to learn and acquire new knowledge due to the exponential rate at which it increases may leave many fumbling through life as 'illiterates'. Not being aware of the need to learn, unlearn and relearn, will not enable one to keep up with changes of concern.

Institutions of Continuing Education may be of help but the burden of learning will be upon one's own self. The best way to learning nowadays, as many would agree is through the Internet which requires computer literacy.

The internet opens windows to the world of knowledge and with the recent proliferation of all kinds of IT devices who want to broaden his/her horizon, the internet may access.

The Institutions of Continuing Education could include functions of recognizing self-learning and awarding qualifications, providing opportunities for higher learning to the population which can be an asset for one's occupational progression.

Learning may also be applicable to experiential learning some of which may quite require unlearning and relearning for changing the attitudes and mindsets of individuals to be more attuned to the Rule of Law in the practice of democracy.

Lokethar

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

I agree with the opinion of Khin Maung Aye in his comments on "Two development concepts from the State Counsellor's message" in OPINION column of 19 April issue of GNLM.

But I am not satisfied with his usage of the word "Regime" for NLD government. Oxford Dictionary define "regime" as – a method or system of government, especially one that has not been elected in a fair way: a fascist/ totalitarian/ military regime.

NLD government was elected by landslide majority of voters in the whole country in both Hluttaws in general election held on 8 Nov. last year. The election was recognized as free and fair by international communities such as UN, EU, Carter Center and countries around the world. The election result was duly accepted by incumbent USDP and the Tatmadaw.

NLD government, emerged from such a widely-respected ways and means should not be called "regime".

I don't think KMA intentionally use the word "regime". But if he really did so, it is unfair and not correct.

Mgko Gyi.

Mawlamyine to host multimedia art exhibition

A COLLECTIVE art event titled the Mawlamyine Art Exhibition is being held in the capital of Mon State starting on 21 April, showcasing a wide variety of works in a single place.

The event runs until 25 April at the market on Kanna Road in Setse Ward, Mawlamyine, fea-

turing works by local painters, poets, sculptors, photographers, designers, cartoonists and musicians.

This is the second time the event has been held in Mawlamyine. The organisers expect to attract more visitors than last year's event.—200

After big New York wins, Trump and Clinton cast themselves as inevitable



Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton reacts as she arrives onstage at her New York presidential primary night rally in the Manhattan borough of New York City, US, on 19 April, 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

NEW YORK — Republican Donald Trump and Democrat Hillary Clinton scored sweeping victories in nominating contests in their home state of New York, and immediately cited them in arguing they are all but unstoppable as their respective parties' presidential nominees.

Trump's crushing defeat of Ted Cruz in Tuesday's primary election tilted the energy in the Republican race back to the front-runner, just as Republican National Committee members begin meeting in Florida on Wednesday to discuss their July convention, where the nominee will be chosen.

For the Democratic favourite, Clinton's more narrow victory over Bernie Sanders snapped a string of victories by the 74-year-old democratic socialist and gave her a much-needed lift with more tough fights ahead.

The eventual victors of the Democratic and the Republican nominating campaigns will face each other in November's general election.

Trump's win, celebrated to the tune of Frank Sinatra's "New York, New York" at Trump Tower in Manhattan, marked a rebound from his Wisconsin defeat two weeks ago. It set him up for another big night on 26 April, when Pennsylvania, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Delaware, and Maryland will hold primaries.

With a campaign staff reboot and a more focused performance, Trump has sought to improve in recent weeks as a candidate. The tone of his victory speech was in keeping with a more measured style the often-brash billionaire has adopted.

"We don't have much of a race anymore based on what I'm seeing on television," Trump said as television networks projected a large margin of victory for him. "Senator Cruz is just about mathematically eliminated."

Trump, 69, predicted some "amazing weeks" ahead for his campaign.

Still, he has a long way to go to seal the nomination and begin trying to heal the wounds in his bitterly divided party. Some fence-mending may happen when he sends campaign advisers to the RNC meeting starting in Hollywood, Florida, on Wednesday.

Trump's haul of most of New York's 95 delegates moved him closer to the 1,237 needed to win the nomination outright. Anything short of that will lead to a contested convention when Republicans hold their national conclave 18-21 July in Cleveland.

"There's only two issues left for Republicans: Will Trump get 50 per cent of the delegates prior to Cleveland, and if not, how close will he be? New York gives him a nice boost, but it will take weeks before we know the answer," said Ari Fleischer, who was White House press secretary under President George W. Bush.

Cruz, a 45-year-old US senator from Texas, came in third in New York and gave his primary night speech in Philadelphia, where he was already focused on running in Pennsylvania. He called on Republicans to unite around his candidacy.

Ohio Governor John Kasich, 63, a long-shot candidate, is seeking to use his second-place showing in New York as proof he is emerging as Trump's central challenger in the states that come up next on the calendar.

Trump wins New York: "We don't have much of a race anymore"

Clinton, a former US senator from New York, former secretary of state and former first lady, got nowhere near the knockout punch she needed to finally put Sanders away. But the broad smile on her face as she gave her victory speech spoke volumes about how important New York was to her

bid to become the first female US president.

"Today you proved once again there's no place like home," Clinton said. "This one was personal."

The race for the Democratic nomination, she said, is now in "the home stretch, and victory is in sight."

Clinton, 68, was to campaign in Philadelphia on Wednesday. Sanders flew home to Vermont to take a day off the campaign trail.

Clinton's win made it nearly impossible for Sanders to overtake her commanding lead in the number of delegates needed to win the nomination.

Dilawar Syed, a tech entrepreneur who is also the co-founder and vice chairman of the AAPI Victory Fund, a Super PAC focused on mobilizing Asian-American voters, said it looked like Clinton has the nomination.

"Clearly Senator Sanders has a lot of supporters and enthusiasm there. He also has raised a lot of good resources," Syed said. "I think the primary will go on for some time. But just looking at the numbers, we know where this is going."

Nationally, the race for the nominations has tightened recently for both parties, according to a Reuters/Ipsos poll released Tuesday.

Clinton and Sanders are tied among Democrats, with each drawing about 47 per cent support in the national poll. At the beginning of the year, Clinton led Sanders by nearly a 2-to-1 margin; Sanders has closed that gap over the past few months.

Among Republicans, Trump leads with 44 per cent support, compared with 33 per cent for Cruz and 16 per cent for Kasich.

The 15-19 April poll surveyed 719 Democrats and 593 Republicans. It has a credibility interval of 4.7 percentage points.—Reuters

NEWS IN BRIEF

Agreement struck to let people out of Syrian towns, Al-Manar says

BEIRUT — A agreement has been reached for 250 people to leave two towns blockade by Syrian rebels in northwestern Syria and for the same number to leave two towns blockaded by pro-government forces near the Lebanese border, the Hezbollah-controlled al-Manar TV station reported on Wednesday.

The towns blockaded by rebels are al-Foua and Kefraya in Idlib province, both predominantly Shi'ite and loyal to the government.

The towns at the Lebanese border blockaded by pro-government forces are Zabadani and Madaya.

The warring sides agreed a local ceasefire for the four towns in September, though the agreement has not been fully implemented.—Reuters

France to extend state of emergency to cover euro 2016 soccer tournament

PARIS — France plans to extend the state of emergency put in place after the November 2015 militant Islamist attacks on Paris for a further two months to ensure security at the Euro 2016 soccer tournament, Prime Minister Manuel Valls said on Wednesday.

"Faced with an event this big... which must take place in conditions of security and which at the same time should be a celebration... we have to ensure security," he said on France Info radio.

"The state of emergency cannot be permanent but on the occasion of these big events... we have decided to prolong."

The current state of emergency giving extra powers to police and security forces runs until 26 May. The month-long Euro 2016 soccer tournament hosted by France starts on 10 June.—Reuters

British support for staying in EU at 38 per cent, 'Out' on 34 per cent — TNS poll

LONDON — British support for staying in the European Union in a 23 June referendum stood at 38 per cent while 34 per cent of voters would opt to leave, according to a TNS poll published on Wednesday.

The poll, carried out on 12-14 April, showed 28 per cent of British voters were undecided. TNS said it polled 1198 people online.—Reuters

GCC, US agree joint patrols to block Iran arms to Yemen-Zayani

DUBAI — Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries and the United States have agreed to carry out joint patrols to stop any Iranian arms shipments reaching Yemen, the bloc's secretary general, Abdullatif al-Zayani, said on Wednesday.

Zayani was speaking at a news conference with US Defence Secretary Ash Carter after a meeting between Carter and his counterparts from the GCC, which includes Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates and Oman.

Iran denies accusations by Gulf states that it is smuggling weapons to Yemen, where GCC countries are involved in a military campaign against the Tehran-allied Houthi movement.—Reuters

Another quake, magnitude 6.2, strikes off Ecuador coast

QUITO — A magnitude 6.2 earthquake struck off the coast of Ecuador on Wednesday, the Pacific Tsunami Warning Centre said, just days after a major quake hit the country killing nearly 500 people.

The quake was centred 70 km (44 miles) west-southwest of Esmeraldas at a shallow depth of 10 km, it said, not far from the epicenter of Saturday's 7.8 magnitude quake.

Reuters witnesses in the zone said two strong tremors of about 30 seconds each were felt, waking people up and sending them racing them into the street. It was not felt in the highland capital of Quito. There was no immediate word from authorities on the impact of Wednesday's quake.—Reuters

US says North Korean remittances at risk if it conducts nuclear test

WASHINGTON — A fifth North Korean nuclear test could trigger new sanctions including an effort to choke off hard currency earnings by its workers abroad, the top US diplomat for the Asia-Pacific region has said.

“Like a regimen of medicine, the dosage can be upped when the effects fall short of what’s required,” Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Danny Russel told Reuters on Tuesday.

Russel made clear he was speaking about the possibility of fresh sanctions by the UN Security Council, by the United States on its own, or by a group of like-minded states from the European Union and Southeast Asia, along with the United States.

North Korea conducted a fourth nuclear test in January and a long-range rocket launch the following month, triggering expanded UN sanctions aimed at starving it of funds for its atomic weapons programme.

Some experts expect North Korea to conduct a fifth nuclear test in the near future, possibly before a ruling party congress in early May, following an embarrassing failure of a test of an intermediate-range missile last week.

Estimates of North Korean workers abroad vary widely but a study by the South’s state-run Korea Institute for National Unification put the number as high as 150,000, primarily in China and Russia, sending back as much as \$900 million annually. North Koreans are known to work abroad in restaurants and on construction sites, and also as doctors.



North Korean leader Kim Jong Un looks at a rocket warhead tip after a simulated test of atmospheric re-entry of a ballistic missile.

PHOTO: REUTERS

The effectiveness of current, or any new, sanctions depends heavily on them being fully implemented by China, North Korea’s neighbor, the closest thing it has to an ally and by far its largest trading partner, US officials and analysts say.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying said all sides should refrain from doing or saying anything to worsen tensions, and remain calm and exercise restraint to get the talks process back on track.

“I don’t want to answer a hypothetical question,” she told a news briefing on Wednesday, when asked if China would support new, tougher sanctions in the event of another nuclear test. If the North were to test a fifth nuclear device, the United States and its allies South Korea and Japan could also take unspecified “defense-related measures,” Russel

said. “As the threat grows, then our defensive capabilities need to adjust as well,” he said, stressing that there was also a diplomatic route that the North could take by reviving long-dormant negotiations on curbing its nuclear programme.

South Korean Unification Ministry spokesman Jeong Joon-hee downplayed the prospect that an upcoming visit to New York by North Korean Foreign Minister Ri Su Yong to attend a UN climate conference would create an opening for engagement.

“At a time when the North is talking of more provocation, I think it’s time to put more weight on sanctions rather than dialogue,” Jeong told a briefing in Seoul on Wednesday.

Russel laid out what he called the possible “universe” of how the US government and others might respond to a fifth test and

he acknowledged that sanctions have failed to deter North Korea, which tested its first nuclear device in October 2006. He stressed that no decisions had yet been made and said he could not preview a response to an event that has yet to occur.

US General Vincent Brooks, whom President Barack Obama has nominated to lead American forces in South Korea, said on Tuesday that China was frustrated over North Korea’s behavior, including its nuclear advances, but was unwilling to apply pressure that could threaten the viability of Kim Jong Un’s government.

Brooks also said Kim appeared more “risk-tolerant, arrogant and impulsive” than his father, Kim Jong Il. He was more aggressive in ignoring international concerns while advancing the North’s nuclear programme, the general said.

Russel said it would take time to judge how well the latest sanctions were being enforced, but Beijing had “exhausted traditional options of encouraging and cajoling and persuading the North Koreans and they have clearly shifted to the application of pressure.”

“There is an argument to be made that serious and sustained pressure on North Korea has never before been undertaken,” he said. “The degree to which the North Korean economy depends on China and access to China is such that this stated resolve on the part of China, I think, constitutes something of a new ball game.”—Reuters

Turkish police detain 20 people over links to cleric Gulen : Anadolu

ISTANBUL — Turkish police on Wednesday detained 20 people over their alleged links to a movement led by US-based Muslim cleric Fethullah Gulen, the state-run Anadolu Agency said.

It said the arrests were made in an operation carried out in the southern provinces of Osmaniye, Adana, Mersin and Isparta, and that teachers and businessmen were among those detained.

President Tayyip Erdogan accuses Gulen of setting up a “parallel state” and conspiring to unseat the government with a network of supporters in the judiciary, police and media.

Gulen, whose adherents run some schools and are active in the media industry, denies the charges.

The two men were allies until police and prosecutors seen as sympathetic to Gulen opened a corruption inquiry into Erdogan’s inner circle in 2013. Thousands of police officers, prosecutors and judges were sacked or reassigned for alleged links to Gulen.

Earlier in the week, the police detained 100 people including executives of a prominent Turkish construction company over allegations of funding Gulen’s movement.—Reuters

Death toll from blast in Afghan capital Kabul rises to 64

KABUL — The casualty total from Tuesday’s major attack in Kabul has risen to 64 killed, more than double the total previously estimated by police, and 347 wounded, Afghan Interior Ministry spokesman Sediq Sediqqi said.

He said on Wednesday most of those killed in the attack, which hit a security services office in the heart of the government and diplomatic area of the Afghan capital, were civilians. The attack, which was quickly claimed by the Taliban, was the deadliest single incident of its kind in Kabul since 2011 and came only days after the Islamist insurgent movement announced the start of its annual spring offensive.

It began at around 9.00 am (0530GMT), in the middle of the morning rush hour, when a suicide bomber in a vehicle packed with explosives blew himself up in front of an office of a department of the National Security Directorate.

In a pattern similar to major attacks in Kabul and other Afghan cities, the bombing was followed by one or more gunmen who engaged in an extended shootout with security forces.

The attack underlined concerns raised in a United Nations report this week, which said an increase in urban warfare had caused a spike in civilian casualties during the first three months of the year.—Reuters



Afghan security forces stand next to damaged vehicles after a blast in Kabul, Afghanistan on 19 April 2016.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Global HIV drive hampered without drugs for 'neglected' West and Central Africa

DAKAR — A global drive to help curb the HIV epidemic by 2020 will fail unless millions of people with the virus in West and Central Africa receive life-saving drugs, Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) said on Wednesday.

The United Nations AIDS programme (UNAIDS) launched a five-year treatment programme in 2014 to ensure that by 2020 almost all people with HIV worldwide know their status and receive treatment.

The drugs used to treat HIV also help to curb the spread of the virus.

Only one in four adults and one in 10 children living with HIV in West and Central Africa have access to antiretroviral (ARV) drugs, compared to almost half of HIV sufferers in Eastern and Southern Africa, MSF said.

HIV treatment is not considered a priority in West and Central Africa by donors or governments, as the region has a smaller percentage of people infected with HIV than Eastern and Southern Africa, said Mit Philips, health policy advisor at MSF.

"Donors focus mostly on high prevalence countries, like in Southern Africa, where everyone knows someone affected by HIV," Philips told the Thomson Reuters Foundation by phone from Brussels.

Parts of Southern Africa have the world's highest HIV rates, including Swaziland where 27 per cent of people aged 15 to 49 have HIV, and South

Africa which has a prevalence rate of nearly 20 per cent.

"People with HIV in West and Central Africa are neglected ... the low prevalence rate is misleading but means there is a lack of interest and that the disease is less visible in society," Philips added.

Two per cent of people in West and Central Africa have HIV, yet the region accounts

for one in five new infections annually worldwide, one in four AIDS-related deaths and almost half of all children born with HIV, according to MSF.

While conflict across the region and epidemics of other diseases like Ebola have hindered HIV treatment, stigma, weak health systems and lack of political will have worsened the situation, MSF said in a report

published on Wednesday.

"Many people face an obstacle course to obtain ARV drugs — they face stigma within society and even prejudice from health workers, struggle to pay transport or consultation fees, and often find there are low stocks of the drugs," Philips said. Some 36.9 million people worldwide are living with HIV, which is spread through blood,

semen and breast milk and causes AIDS, and more than half of them do not have access to treatment. Many do not know they have the virus.

UNAIDS said in November that its treatment programme, called 90-90-90, was starting to show results as the nearly 16 million people being treated by June 2015 was double the number in 2010.—Reuters



Senegalese AIDS orphans wait for their free "milk and cookie" breakfast provided by Islamic charity Jamra, in the capital Dakar 2005. PHOTO: REUTERS

US chief justice uses sign language as deaf lawyers sworn in

WASHINGTON — In an historic first, US Chief Justice John Roberts used sign language from the Supreme Court bench on Tuesday as he welcomed a dozen deaf and hard-of-hearing lawyers who took part in a ceremony authorizing them to argue cases before the court.

The 12 members of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Bar Association were sworn in as members of the Supreme Court bar.

After they were presented to the court for admission, Roberts signed in American Sign Language: "Your motion is granted."

Membership in the Supreme Court bar allows a lawyer to argue cases before the justices but most of its mem-

bers never actually do so.

Roberts, appointed by Republican President George W. Bush in 2005, is believed to be the first US chief justice to use sign language from the bench.

It was also the first time members of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Bar Association took part in a swearing-in ceremony at the court.

The lawyers then stayed for oral arguments in two cases in the ornate courtroom, assisted by an interpreter standing in front of the mahogany bench where the eight justices sit.

The lawyers were permitted to use an instant transcription service that was transmitted to electronic devices.

Normally, no electronic devices are allowed in the

courtroom. One of the attorneys, Teresa Curtin of the Weitz & Luxenberg law firm, said in a statement the event was aimed at encouraging more people with disabilities to embark on legal careers.

When she began her law career in the late 1980s, there was only a handful of deaf lawyers in the United States, while now there are around 250, Curtin said.

In 1982, a deaf lawyer, Michael Chatoff, argued a case before the Supreme Court, assisted by a real-time transcription system.

That case concerned whether a school board was required to provide a deaf student with a sign-language interpreter. Chatoff lost the case in a 6-3 ruling.—Reuters

Hopes of finding Ecuador quake survivors fade as death toll nears 500

PEDERNALES, (Ecuador) — Rescuers in Ecuador were losing hope on Tuesday of finding more survivors from an earthquake that killed nearly 500 people and dealt a shattering blow to the South American OPEC country's already fragile economy.

Praying for miracles, distraught family members beseeched rescue teams to find missing loved ones as they used dogs, bare hands and excavators to hunt through debris of flattened homes, hotels and stores in the hardest-hit Pacific coastal region.

The death toll stood at 480 on Tuesday afternoon but was expected to rise.

The 7.8 magnitude quake, which struck late on Saturday, also left 107 people missing, and injured more than 4,000, according to the latest government tallies.

Supervising rescue work in the disaster zone, Ecuador's leftist

president, Rafael Correa, said the quake inflicted \$2 billion to \$3 billion of damage to the oil-dependent economy and could knock 2 to 3 percentage points off growth.

"Let's not kid ourselves, it will be a long struggle. ... Reconstruction for years, billions (of dollars) in investment," said Correa, who appeared deeply moved.

"In the short term, we're going to need tens of millions of dollars," Correa added from the quake-hit town of Tarqui, donning a mask, gloves and helmet.

Growth in Ecuador's small economy had already been forecast at near zero this year because of plunging oil revenues.

The quake, Ecuador's worst in decades, destroyed or damaged about 1,500 buildings, triggered mudslides and left some 20,500 people sleeping in shelters, according to the government.—Reuters

Djuric: Deals on ID cards, trucks, elections

BRUSSELS — Director of the Serbian Government Office for Kosovo-Metohija Marko Djuric said early on Wednesday that, after more than 18 hours of talks with representatives of Pristina, agreements had been reached on ID cards, the crossing of trucks, visits by Serbian officials to Kosovo-Metohija (KiM) and elections.

Underlining the importance of the deals in the “four fundamental fields” for Serbs in KiM, Djuric told Tanjug that IDs issued by the Serbian authorities could be used in Kosovo-Metohija freely as had been the case so far, adding that the talks on ID cards would continue.

As for the transport of dangerous goods, the truck blockade will end on 25

April, he said. When it comes to the 24 April elections, they will be held as in 2014, with OSCE observers, Djuric said, adding there would be 90 polling stations in KiM. Serbian officials will not be banned from entering KiM, Djuric said, adding he would visit the province on Thursday.

The director of the Office for Kosovo-Metohija

described the negotiations as “lengthy and very difficult”, noting that the deals were a result of the diplomatic efforts invested over several weeks, in which Serbian Prime Minister Aleksandar Vucic had also taken part.

“I think we have achieved a good result for our country and our people in KiM,” Djuric concluded.—*Tanjug*



PHOTO: TANJUG

Thai Airways Q1 revenue 1 pct lower than \$1.4 bln target

BANGKOK — Thai Airways International Plc's Q1 revenue came in 1 per cent below its 49 billion baht (\$1.4 billion) target, the company's President Charumporn Jotikasthira said on Wednesday. Thailand's national carrier is working through a restructuring plan and aims to return to annual profit this year. “We aim to be one of the top five airlines in the world this year,” Charumporn told reporters in Bangkok, without giving further details. The flag carrier is among a number of state-controlled companies undergoing reform since the military seized power in May 2014.

It posted a smaller annual loss in 2015, mainly due to decline in operating expenses and fuel oil costs.—*Reuters*

UK airport sniffer dogs good at finding sausages, but not drugs

LONDON — A team of sniffer dogs set up at a British airport at a cost of 1.25 million pounds (\$1.7 million) have proved adept at discovering small amounts of cheese and sausages but not so good at finding smuggled drugs, a report said on Thursday.

An inspection of border security at Manchester Airport in northern England found that during a seven-month period, the six dogs had failed to find any illegal class A drugs, those considered the most dangerous such as heroin or cocaine.

“The deterrent effect of the detection dogs was difficult to measure, but seizures alone represented a low return on investment, given 1.25 million spent on new kennels and the costs of operating the unit,” said the report by the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration.

Each dog has its own speciality in detecting goods such as drugs, tobacco, cash and meat being illegally brought into the airport by the 22 million passengers



A police dog handler talks with a colleague as his sniffer dog waits outside the GMEX (Greater Manchester Exhibition centre) in Manchester, northern England, on 21 September 2006. PHOTO: REUTERS

who use it annually. However the report found that although the sniffers had helped customs seize 46 kg of cigarettes and 181 kg of meat, they had uncovered

no class A drugs between November 2014 and June 2015 even though this was a “very high” priority.

It said one dog trained to find smuggled animal

products had made “multiple accurate detections, but most were of small amounts of cheese or sausages, wrongly brought back by returning British holiday-

makers and posing minimal risk to UK public health”.

Managers are now examining how better to deploy the dogs, the report said.—*Reuters*

French baker fires his savior instead of giving him his business

PARIS — A French baker who promised to give his business to the homeless man that saved his life has fired him instead.

Michel Flamant was close to dying of carbon monoxide poisoning when Jerome Aucant, the homeless man, raised the alarm. Flamant caused a minor media sensation by pledging to sell his business to Aucant for one euro (\$1.13). The 62-year-old said the abrupt change came after he went to his bakery shortly before midnight and found his would-be successor had invited a bunch of friends to drink on the premises in his absence.

“Last week, I returned to the bakery at 1030, 11 at night as usual and discovered that Jerome had set up a bar of sorts with wine and beer, and all his homeless friends in the oven room. I told him this was not part of the deal,” Flamant told the French state radio channel France Bleu.

“Tempers rose and he started insulting me, so I told him to pack his bags and go,” said the baker, who was saved when Jerome spotted him staggering around his bakery after a carbon monoxide leak.—*Reuters*

THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR MINISTRY OF ELECTRIC POWER AND ENERGY MYANMA OIL AND GAS ENTERPRISE (INVITATION FOR OPEN TENDER)

(5 / 2016)

Open tenders are invited for supply of the following respective items in United States Dollars.

Sr.No	Tender No	Description	Remark
(1)	IFB-001(16-17)	Spares for Well Surveying Tool (1) Item	US\$
(2)	IFB-002(16-17)	Mud Chemicals (7) Items	US\$
(3)	IFB-003(16-17)	4" ERW Steel Line Pipe (16,100) MTR	US\$
(4)	IFB-004(16-17)	10" ERW Steel Line Pipe (37,030) MTR	US\$
(5)	IFB-005(16-17)	20" LSAW Steel Line Pipe (11,270) MTR	US\$

Tender Closing Date & Time - 19-5-2016, 16:30 Hr

Tender Document shall be available during office hours commencing from 21ST April, 2016 at the Finance Department, Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise, No(44) Complex, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar.

Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise
Ph . +95 67 - 411097 / 411206

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV SINAR BIAK VOY NO ()

Consignees of cargo carried on MV SINAR BIAK VOY NO () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 21.4.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.W.P.T 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 SAMUDERA SHIPPING
LINE

Phone No: 2301185

AC/DC frontman says 'crushed' over hearing loss, but not retired

LONDON — Brian Johnson, lead singer of veteran Australian rock group AC/DC, said on Tuesday he was "personally crushed" to give up touring due to his hearing loss, but vowed that he was not retiring and will continue to record with the band in the studio.

Johnson, 68, said in a statement that he wanted to explain why the band was forced in March to postpone 10 of its US shows for its "Rock or Bust" tour this year. The British singer was replaced by Guns N' Roses frontman Axl Rose for the rest of AC/DC's European and US shows.

Johnson said he had partial hearing loss, which affects his performance onstage, and he was advised by doctors in March that he risked "total deafness" if he continued to tour in large venues. Johnson called it "the darkest day of my professional life."

"I am personally crushed by this development more than any-

one could ever imagine," he said.

"Being part of AC/DC, making records and performing for the millions of devoted fans this past 36 years has been my life's work. I cannot imagine going forward without being part of that, but for now I have no choice."

AC/DC, known for its blazing guitars and full-throated vocals on songs such as "Back in Black" and "Highway to Hell," was supposed to perform in US cities in March and April. The shows have yet to be rescheduled, but are expected to take place later this year.

Johnson said he was not retiring and that he is able to continue recording in studios with the band.

"I am hoping that in time my hearing will improve and allow me to return to live concert performances. While the outcome is uncertain, my attitude is optimistic," he said.—Reuters



Adele's songs reworked into lullabies

LONDON — Oscar-winning singer Adele's biggest hits have been converted into lullabies.

The Rockabye Baby brand has reworked 27-year-old British singer's songs like "Chasing Pavements," "Someone Like You," "Make You Feel My Love" and "Skyfall," reported Digital Spy.

In the past the company has converted the music of more than 70 artists to infant-friendly nighttime tunes, from the likes of U2, Coldplay, Foo Fighters, Maroon 5, Rihanna and Taylor Swift.

"Lullaby Renditions of Adele" will be out on 29 April.—PTI

May the royal force be with you: British princes get 'Star Wars' peek

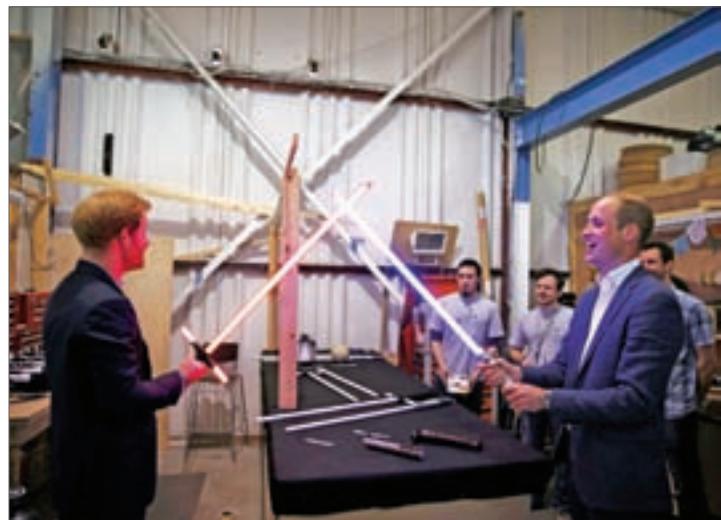
LONDON — Battling with light sabers and sitting in an A-wing fighter, Britain's royal princes got a taste of the "Star Wars" universe on Tuesday when they visited the set of latest episode in the sci-fi saga.

Accompanied by Daisy Ridley and John Boyega, the young stars of "The Force Awakens", and Luke Skywalker actor Mark Hamill, Prince William and Prince Harry toured Pinewood studios outside London, where "Star Wars: Episode VIII" is being made. In a tweet, Kensington Palace said the visit was to

"recognise the wealth of fantastic British creative talent involved" in making "Star Wars" films.

Prince William, Duke of Cambridge and Prince Harry were touring Pinewood to visit the production workshops and met the creative teams working behind the scenes on the Star Wars films. The princes met the creative teams working behind the scenes, checked out props and posed with characters such as Chewbacca and droid BB-8.

"Star Wars: Episode VIII" is due for release in December 2017.—Reuters



Britain's Prince William (R) tries a light sabre against his brother Prince Harry during a visit to the Star Wars film set at Pinewood Studios near Iver Heath, west of London, Britain, on 19 April 2016.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Vin Diesel shares 'Fast & Furious 8' movie poster

LOS ANGELES — Action star Vin Diesel shared the poster of upcoming "Fast & Furious 8".

"New Roads Ahead," the poster reads above a photo of Diesel looking somber into the distance.

The text continues with, "Furious 8". 14 April. In Theaters and IMAX."

This is the first film sans the "Fast & Furious" star Paul Walker, who passed away in November 2013.

Diesel, 48, recently an-

nounced on Instagram that there would be an entire trilogy, rounding out the franchise to an even 10.

"Fast 8" is set for release 14 April 2017, while "Fast 9" and "Fast 10" will hit the theaters on 19 April 2019, and 2 April 2021, respectively.

F Gary Gray is helming the project with Charlize Theron and Scott Eastwood set to join the franchise, while Michelle Rodriguez, Jason Statham and Dwayne Johnson are signed on to reprise their roles.—PTI



Actress Doris Roberts arrives at the Hollywood Film Awards in Beverly Hills, California on 1 November 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

'Everybody Loves Raymond' actress Doris Roberts dies

LOS ANGELES — The Hollywood community is mourning the loss of veteran actress Doris Roberts, who died on overnight on Sunday at the age of 90.

The five time Emmy award winning actress reportedly passed away from natural causes.

Roberts, whose long career stretched decades through television, stage and film, is best known for her role as Marie, the over-involved mother of Ray Romano in the long running hit television series, "Everyone Loves Raymond".—Reuters

Amitabh Bachchan pays tribute to Lalita Pawar

MUMBAI — Megastar Amitabh Bachchan has paid tribute to character actor Lalita Pawar on her 100th birth anniversary.

The 73-year-old "Wazir" actor said his "Do Aur Do Paanch" co-star was a dynamic and versatile performer. "100th birth Anniversary of late Lalita Pawar ji. Dynamic, versatile with stand out performances!", "Bachchan tweeted. Bachchan and Pawar

worked together in "Bombay to Goa," "Nastik," "Manzil," "Do Anjaane," and "Anand".

Born in Nasik, Pawar started her acting career at age nine with 1928 film "Raja Harishchandra".

Known particularly for playing scheming mother-in-law in the movies, she was honoured with Sangeet Natak Akademi award in 1961.—PTI

Shirley Temple's rare blue diamond ring fails to sell at auction



Fancy Deep Blue diamond ring, once owned by child star Shirley Temple, is displayed at Sotheby's in New York on 18 March 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

NEW YORK — A 9.54-carat rare blue diamond ring once belonging to the late Shirley Temple, one of Hollywood's most famous child actors, failed to sell at a New York auction on Tuesday, where it had been estimated to fetch between \$25 million and \$35 million.

The Sotheby's auction for the Fancy Deep Blue Diamond ring, purchased by Temple's father for \$7,210 in 1940 around the time of the actress' 12th birthday, opened bidding at \$19 million and closed at \$22 million, which was below the ring's reserve price.

"The Shirley Temple Blue Diamond is an exceptional stone in quality, rarity and provenance. It has been an honour to share its story with collectors, connoisseurs and Temple's loyal fans over the past few months," Sotheby's said in a statement.

"Unfortunately, tonight

wasn't its night in the salesroom, but we remain fully confident that it will find a buyer."

The ring was the highlight at Sotheby's Magnificent Jewels sale, which fetched nearly \$30 million across more than 300 lots.

Other top items at the auction included a platinum and fancy purple-pink diamond ring that sold for \$4.5 million, a platinum and diamond ring weighing 19.25 carats that fetched \$1.9 million and a fancy light blue diamond ring weighing 5.06 carats that sold for \$1.2 million.

Temple won legions of fans as a bouncy, curly-haired young actress in 1930s movies such as "Bright Eyes," "Heidi" and "Curly Top." Under her married name, Shirley Temple Black, she forged a career as an ambassador and died at age 85 in 2014.

—Reuters

India says it still wants back British queen's crown jewel

NEW DELHI — India will make all possible efforts to get back the Koh-i-Noor Diamond from Britain despite comments by New Delhi's solicitor general that the priceless jewel should stay with the former colonial ruler, the government said on Tuesday.

India has repeatedly demanded that Britain return the 105-carat diamond, which was presented to Queen Victoria in 1850 and today sits on display as part of the Crown Jewels in the Tower of London.

India's solicitor general surprised many on Monday when he told the Supreme Court that his country should forgo its claims to the jewel because it was given to Britain as a gift by an Indian

king in 1851, rather than stolen as many Indians today believe.

The government said on Tuesday his view did not represent its own and that it was yet to give its opinion to the court, which is hearing a case demanding the diamond be returned.

"The Government of India further reiterates its resolve to make all possible efforts to bring back the Koh-i-noor Diamond in an amicable manner," the ministry of culture said.

The ministry said the stone was a "valued piece of art with strong roots in our nation's history" and that Prime Minister Narendra Modi was determined to get it back.

A lawyer in India's neigh-

bour Pakistan last year filed a court petition calling for the stone's return. India and Pakistan became two different countries with partition in 1947, when they became independent from Britain.

The Koh-i-Noor is set in the crown worn by Queen Elizabeth, the mother of the reigning monarch, at the coronation of her husband George VI in 1937, and was placed on her coffin at her funeral in 2002. The Duchess of Cambridge, who last week visited India with her husband, Prince William, will wear the crown on official occasions when she becomes queen consort. William is second in line to the British throne.—Reuters



Britain's Queen Elizabeth's crown is carried through the Norman Porch of the Palace of Westminster after the State Opening of Parliament on 4 June 2014 in London, England. PHOTO: REUTERS

Visa changes promise easier travel for Chinese to New Zealand

WELLINGTON — Chinese visitors to New Zealand will soon find travel easier with a raft of new visa initiatives, Immigration Minister Michael Woodhouse said Tuesday.

The introduction of "e-visas" enabled Chinese nationals to now apply online, and a Chinese logon

service, allowing a complete online Chinese language application process, from registration to approval, said Woodhouse.

Later this year applicants would also be able to pay for online visa applications using China UnionPay debit and credit cards.

"China is New Zealand's

second-largest and fastest growing tourist market," Woodhouse said in a statement.

"Last year, over 355,000 Chinese citizens visited New Zealand and contributed over 1.6 billion NZ dollars (1.12 billion US dollars) to our economy," said Woodhouse.

"The government has been looking at ways to make it easier for Chinese travellers to visit New Zealand and ensure they have a positive experience when they come to our country," he said.

"These measures deliver on that by providing an easy, streamlined visa application and approv-

al process for Chinese nationals."

Other changes already in place to make travel to New Zealand easier for Chinese visitors included doubling the length of the multiple-entry visa to two years and introducing a three-year multiple entry business visa.—Xinhua



Entertainment Channel

(21-4-2016, Thursday)

- | | |
|------------------------------|--|
| 6:00 pm | "Epic" (Part-1) |
| • Weather Report | 9:10 pm |
| • Music Programme | • Music Programme |
| 6:30 pm | 9:20 pm |
| • Pyi Thu Ni Ti | • English Premier League (Review) (Part-2) |
| 6:50 pm | 9:40 pm |
| • Music Programme | • International Movie Songs |
| 7:10 pm | 9:50 pm |
| • International Drama Series | • Hand Down Arts Heritage |
| 7:50 pm | 10:20 pm |
| • International Drama Series | • Myanmar Video |
| 8:30 pm | • Cartoon Programme |

From 21-4-2016 (Thursday) 6:00 Pm
To 22-4-2016 (Friday) 6:00 Pm



Myanmar International

(21-4-2016 07:00am ~ 22-4-2016 7:00am) MST

Today Fresh

- | | | |
|-------|----|--|
| 07:03 | Am | News |
| 07:25 | Am | SHWE SETTAW (Minbu) |
| 07:43 | Am | The Art of Making Glaze Ware |
| 08:03 | Am | News |
| 08:26 | Am | Horse Cart Driver |
| 08:37 | Am | A May Yay Yin Nat Festival (Ep- I) |
| 08:53 | Am | Black Gold (P - II) |
| 09:03 | Am | News |
| 09:25 | Am | "Myanmar's Traditions and Culture" Myanmar Pottery |
| 09:49 | Am | Sagaing: Youth Leader |
| 10:03 | Am | News |

- | | | |
|-------|----|---|
| 10:25 | Am | A Worth Studying Site For Ancient Myanmar Heritages |
| 10:44 | Am | History Of Mrauk U Pagoda |

(11:00 Am ~ 03:00 Pm) - Wednesday 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 | Travelogue "Chaung Tha at its peak period" |
| 07:41 | Pm | Myanmar Weaving |
| 07:54 | Pm | A Girl Guide |
| 08:03 | Pm | News |
| 08:27 | Pm | Mosaic Painting (Precious Stones & Gems) |
| 08:42 | Pm | Goldsmith |
| 08:47 | Pm | A Simple And Peaceful Life |

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

Manchester City stifled by battling Newcastle

LONDON — Manchester City gave renewed hope to the chasing pack in the battle for a Champions League spot as they were held to a battling 1-1 draw at relegation strugglers Newcastle United on Tuesday.

City, who took the lead when Sergio Aguero headed home from an offside position for his 100th Premier League goal after 14 minutes, were largely stifled by a Newcastle side who levelled through Vurnon Anita after 31 minutes.

City stayed third in the Premier League on 61 points, but the result opened the door in the battle for a top-four finish to their rivals Manchester United who are fifth, five points adrift with a game in hand. Arsenal are fourth on 60 points.

Rafa Benitez's side, who were denied a late winner when Joe Hart saved brilliantly from Georginio Wijnaldum, stay second-from-bottom on 29 points, but maintain some precious momentum after their weekend victory over Swansea City.

With four games of their season remaining, they are a point adrift of local rivals Sun-



Manchester City's Kevin De Bruyne in action with Newcastle's Jack Colback and Andros Townsend during Barclays Premier League at St James' Park on 19 April 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

derland and two behind Norwich City, who are outside the relegation zone in 17th.

City had enjoyed an iron grip on this fixture having won 12 straight Premier League games against Newcastle, while

Aguero had plundered 10 goals in his eight appearances against the Magpies.

It was little surprise, therefore, when the visitors took the lead after 15 minutes, with City's Argentine strik-

er heading them in front from Aleksandar Kolarov's free kick, even if the goal should not have stood.

Replays showed that Aguero was clearly offside when Kolarov's set-piece was whipped

into the box, but the linesman kept his flag down and the City marksman wheeled away in celebration.

It was Aguero's 100th Premier goal in his 147th appearance, making him the second quickest player to get to the milestone, behind only former England striker Alan Shearer, who reached his century in 124 matches.

Newcastle had been perhaps the better side until that point though and were deservedly level when Anita, playing at right back, managed to sneak his shot in off the far post.

City never managed to get on top of their opponents, who seemed rejuvenated after their weekend victory and were fuelled by a raucous home crowd that spent much of the second half chanting the name of manager Benitez.

The visitors had a great chance to take the lead again when Aguero fired tamely straight at Newcastle keeper Karl Darlow, but it was the hosts who had the best opportunity of the second half when Wijnaldum's effort was parried by Hart's outstretched arm.—Reuters

Mourinho, Ranieri to manage at Old Trafford for charity



Former Chelsea manager Jose Mourinho. PHOTO: REUTERS

LONDON — Jose Mourinho's next managerial role has been revealed with the Portuguese leading 'England' against Claudio Ranieri's 'Rest of the World' side as the former Chelsea bosses clash at Old Trafford on 5 June in a charity match for UNICEF.

Mourinho, who was sacked by Chelsea in Decem-

ber after a Premier League loss to Ranieri's Leicester City, will have Sunderland boss Sam Allardyce in the dugout as his assistant.

"I want to be the first one to win the Soccer Aid trophy for both teams," said Mourinho, who led the 'Rest of the World' to a 4-2 victory in 2014.

"Sam and I will make a very good partnership and it will be a great feeling for Claudio to finally lose a match," added the 53-year-old, who has been tipped in the British media to take over at either Manchester United or Paris St Germain.

Meanwhile, Ranieri, who has led Leicester's unexpected title charge this campaign, is looking to inflict another loss for Mourinho.

"It is a great honour that (singer and match organiser) Robbie Williams has asked me to manage the Rest of the World XI and I'm looking forward to helping them defend their title," Ranieri said.—Reuters

Bolt eyes triple 'three-peat' and sub-19 200m

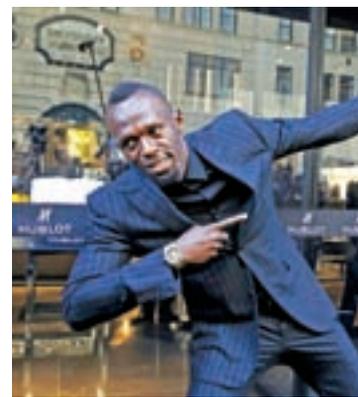
NEW YORK — Sprint king Usain Bolt aims to crown his legacy with an unprecedented Olympic three-peat at the Rio Games, and to top that off by running the first ever sub-19 seconds 200 metres. The long-striding Jamaican suggested he might not stop there, leaving open the chance he could extend his career beyond the 2017 season he has said would be his last. Bolt has already swept the 100 and 200m sprints at the last two Olympics and added gold in the 4x100 relays in both Beijing (2008) and London (2012) with his Jamaican team mates. "Just to defend my titles, to do the three-peat. That's my main goal. That's my main focus," Bolt told Reuters on Tuesday after helping sponsors Hublot open their biggest US fine watch store with a grand opening on Fifth Avenue.

"My secondary goal is to try and run sub-19," added Bolt, who set the world 200m record of 19.19 in 2009. "That's something I really want and I hope that everything goes smoothly and I can get it. That would be a big step for me."

Bolt said he has been gradually rounding into shape after dealing with ankle problems.

"I'm feeling OK," he said. "My coach says my fitness is not exactly where he wants it to be. "Starting out this season I had a problem with my ankles and it was a setback but not that bad. We're getting back on track and he's happy with the progress I'm making."

Bolt said he would ramp up his



Olympic sprinter Usain Bolt poses during a ribbon cutting ceremony to celebrate the opening of the flagship "Hublot" store on Fifth Avenue in the Manhattan borough of New York, US, on 19 April 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

preparations carefully so he can end his Olympic career with a flourish. "I really want to be at my best leading up to the championships. I have two months before (Jamaican) trials and three and a half months before the championships," he said.

"I'll keep pushing myself and hopefully everything smoothes out and I'll be at my best when the Olympics comes around."

Bolt said he would run his first race in Cayman, then in Ostrava and then to his coach's June meet in Jamaica before the trials and then on to the Diamond League meeting in London.

The 29-year-old said his

coach, Glen Mills, wanted him to leave the retirement door open.

"Coach says I shouldn't say I want to retire just yet, I should focus on the year and see how I feel after the (2017) world championships (in London)," said the six-time Olympic gold medalist.

"And if I still feel like I want to retire, I should. But he says to give it a chance, because I think my coach is pushing for me to go a few more years. We'll see what happens," he added.

"Personally, I don't really want to continue for years and years because it's getting hard. I have to sacrifice more and more. It takes up so much of your time."

In any event, Bolt said he would not treat 2017 like a farewell tour. "I'm never going to come out and joke or be a joke in a season. I'm a winner. I believe in winning. I hate to lose. I will never come out and say it is a farewell tour. I will want to compete at my best, go to the championships and win again." As for the legacy he hoped to leave the sport he has dominated for eight years, Bolt spoke about another Hublot spokesman, 75-year-old soccer great Pele.

"I met Pele today. For me, it was a dream come true," Bolt said. "I've always said I want to be the greatest. I want to be like Pele and Ali and all those guys. "I want to be great. I want to be remembered as one of the greatest that have ever done the sport."—Reuters