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THE TAX MAN COMETH

MPs CALL FOR EFFECTIVE TAX COLLECTION REFORM

MEMBERS of parliament stressed the need for reforming taxes in order to foster the country's current social and economic reforms while debating the Joint Public Accounts Committee's report on the tax collection target for the second six months of this fiscal year during a ses-

sion of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw yesterday.

Dr Thet Thet Khine of Dagon Township Constituency said that Myanmar is the lowest among ASEAN countries in terms of tax collection, adding that expenditures have exceeded tax collections annually.

Now is the time to reform the taxation system in order to increase the effectiveness of tax collection as the country's total tax revenues have made up less than 5 per cent of the gross domestic product while total tax revenues as percentage of the GDP in Viet Nam and Singapore

is 14 per cent and in China, India and Thailand is 17 per cent respectively, said the MP.

Taxation reform is critical for scaling up the country's economic and social reforms, thereby contributing towards job creation and boosting the government's performance in tax collec-

tion, she added.

In his discussion, Dr Myat Nyana Soe, secretary of the Joint Public Accounts Committee, pointed out that tax receipts fell below the target in seven types of taxes which are among 19 types of taxes in Myanmar.

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National Library to be relocated to commercial hub of Yangon City

A coordination meeting took place at the Presidential Palace in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday to discuss the relocation of the National Library to a convenient environment in the commercial hub of Yangon City.

The meeting attracted President U Htin Kyaw, Vice President U Henry Van Thio, Information Union Minister Dr Pe Myint, Electricity and Energy Union Minister U Pe Zin Tun and Construction Union Minister U Win Khaing.

The meeting reached an agreement to move the library from Yankin township to Pabedan township.

In a letter to the president dated 12 May, U Thaw Kaung, chief librarian of the Yangon University's Central Library, suggested relocating the National Library (Yangon) from the isolated area to a more convenient place.

The National Library has a large collection of books, periodicals, manuscripts and other rare books, holding 172,556 books, 435,580 periodicals, 12,323 palm-leaf manuscripts, 345 hand-written letters, 25,468 rare books and other literary materials.



See page 3 >> The historic building belonging to Burma Oil Corporation (BOC) during the colonial era is chosen for the new location for the National Library. PHOTO: MNA



သဒ္ဓါထက်သန် မြန်မာအားမာန် ကမ္ဘောဇဘဏ်

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker meets with European Union Myanmar official



Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than welcomes Mr. George Dura, Acting Head of Cooperation from the European Union in Myanmar. PHOTO: MNA

SPEAKER of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and Amyotha Hluttaw Mahn Win Khaing Than received Mr. George Dura, Acting Head of Cooperation from the European Union in Myanmar, at the Amyotha Hluttaw Building in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the call the two representatives held discussions on

capacity-building programmes for parliamentarians and staff of Hluttaw Offices. Also present were Deputy Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker U Aye Tha Aung, Secretary of Amyotha Hluttaw Public Accounts Committee Dr Sai Hsai Kyauk Hsam and officials of the Amyotha Hluttaw Office.—*Myanmar News Agency*

MPs call for effective tax ...

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Highlighting the importance of income tax, commercial tax, custom duty and special commodity tax for the country, the secretary said there is a need to raise some types of taxes year after year while there will be a decrease in other tax rates.

He called for the implementation of an effective tax-

ation system, suggesting that it is necessary to hire International Tax Consultant Companies that can provide professional tax advices to individuals and businesses including the government and parliament.

Next, Deputy Planning and Finance Minister responded to the discussions, pointing out that a drop in income tax revenue was due to different

income tax rates between the provisions of the Union Tax Law 2014 and 2015. During yesterday's session of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, an annual report of the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission was discussed, with lawmakers and Chairman U Win Mra of the commission holding discussions on it.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Police put down batons to donate blood

MEMBERS of No 2 Security Police Command led by Police Brig-Gen Mya Win collectively donated blood at the North Okkalapa People's Hospital on 23 July.

According to sources 5,683 voluntary blood donations have been received from members of the Myanmar Police Force who gave blood at the National Blood Centre and respective

hospitals up until yesterday.

The Myanmar Police Force said that anyone can contact Security Police Units to give blood.—*Myanmar News Agency*

EAO conference extends to five days

THE Ethnic Armed Organisations' conference has extended from four days to five days, better allowing participants the chance to join in on the Union Peace Conference—21st Century Panglong Conference.

The conference which kicked off on Tuesday in Mai Ja Yang will end today.

“Two sub-committees will

discuss the political framework review tomorrow,” said Dr Salai Hlyan Mon Sar Khaung, who acted as the alternate chairman of the second-day meeting of the conference yesterday.

Sub-committee-1 comprising signatories to the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement will review the political framework today and will submit a draft to

the conference to seek common ground for all participants, he added.

The ethnic armed organisations continued their plenary meeting yesterday in Mai Ja Yang, Kachin State, with the intention of finding common ground in the establishment of a federal system in the country.—*Ye Khaung Nyunt*

Future of Yangon's high-rises still in limbo

CONSTRUCTION entrepreneurs have voiced that difficulties will be confronted in tackling those high-rise buildings, still currently under construction, which have been ordered to reduce their number of stories, as precise directives have yet to be issued.

Eight of the 12 companies, which have been instructed to reduce the height of their high-rise buildings, are reportedly construction companies, while the Yangon regional government is allegedly yet to issue any kind of detailed directive more than which states the height of current aforementioned buildings must be reduced.

“We've finished construction of ten floors. But, they've told us to suspend any further construction from this height. The Yangon regional government instructed us to level off the building at the ten floors, for which construction is complete. They then amended the directive to a maximum of eight floors, but we've still not been informed as to exactly how we're supposed to handle these two floors which go over the stated limit,” said U Bo San, managing director of the KSB Construction Company.

The number of levels, for which the current high-rise buildings have been instruct-

ed to temporarily suspend their construction activities, is reportedly dependent upon the intended height of the structure, with orders being made to reduce between four and 12 stories per building.

“Our company has responsibility over three high-rise buildings which have been ordered to suspend construction and reduce their number of stories. There hasn't been any compromise over the location within which these high-rises have been built; the investment is one's own as construction has taken place on one's own private land. In terms of design, we've worked together with foreign architects,” said U Saw Mahn, managing director of the Myanmar Seilone Construction Company.

The real-estate market has reportedly not been negatively affected by the government issued directive, although it has allegedly seen a slight decrease in foreign investment.

Those most affected by the initiative are those involved in the construction of such high-rise buildings, with the overall financial losses of construction companies reportedly reaching as much US\$6 billion.

Over the 185 high-rise buildings currently still under construction, 64 of them have been

subject to initial inspections, of which 12 have been ordered to redesign the building plans to alleviate the number of floors.

The 12 construction companies include the KER Company, Paragon Residence Company, The Illustra@ Pho Sein, The IVYCondo Pyay Rd, East Race Course (ERC), Merchant Suite Project, Seinleiaung Condo Company and the Golden Dragon Company.

—*Myitmakha News Agency*



Men take photos in front of buildings in central Yangon, Myanmar, July 25, 2016. Picture taken July 25, 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS



President U Htin Kyaw and Commander-in-Chief Senior General Min Aung Hlaing watch the final match of Inter-ministry Men's Football Championship. PHOTO: MNA



President watches Inter-ministry Football Championship Final

PRESIDENT U Htin Kyaw watched the final match of Inter-ministry Men's Football Championship at Wunna Theikdhi Stadium in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

The final match ended with the Ministry of Defense beating the Ministry of Planning and Fi-

nance 4-1.

Next, a prize presentation ceremony followed, with Deputy Minister for Planning and Finance U Maung Maung Win presenting prizes to the winners of the best player awards.

Next, Union Minister for In-

formation Dr Pe Myint presented Fair Play award to the Ministry of Defense while Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr Win Myat Aye and Deputy Minister U Maung Maung Win awarded the Ministry of Planning and Finance and the Ministry of SWRR which stood second and third in the tournament.

Then, Union Minister for Defense Lt-Gen Sein Win and Union Minister for Health and Sports Dr Myint Htway gave individual awards and Championship Shield to the Defense Ministry football team. Among the spectators at the football match and prize presentation ceremony were Daw Su

Su Lwin, wife of the President, Commander-in-Chief of Defense Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defense Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice Senior General Soe Win, senior military officers and staff families.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Ministries to hold press conferences on work performance for first 100 days



A work coordination meeting to hold press conferences of the ministries in progress. PHOTO: MNA

A WORK coordination meeting to hold press conferences of the ministries regarding the new government's work performance for the first 100 days was held in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

All ministries will collectively hold press conferences on the government's work performance for the first 100 days at the Ministry of Information, said Union Minister for Information Dr Pe Myint, adding that it is aimed at informing the people including the media of progress made in the 100-day work programmes.

The Union minister revealed a plan for holding monthly press conferences by ministries follow-

ing the planned press conferences on the government's first 100-day plan for the people.

He stressed the need for more effort to become a transparent government by improving relationship between the ministries and citizens and the media, highlighting the importance of the role of the ministerial spokespersons in attraction of public interest by informing the people and the media of progress and developments.

Also present at the meeting held at the Ministry of Information were spokespersons from the ministries and government organisations.—*Myanmar News Agency*

National Library to be relocated to commercial . . .

>> From page 1

The Bernard Free Library was handed over to the Ministry of Culture in 1952 and renamed State Library, which was opened at the Jubilee Hall in Yangon on 1 June the same year. After being renamed National Library, the facility was moved to a building in Pansodan Street and then to Yangon City Hall. The library was moved to two new locations before settling in Tamwe township. The library building in Tamwe suffered some damage from the Cyclone Nargis in 2008 and as a result was moved to Yankin township.

Myanmar Library Association's chairman U Than Aung and Yangon Heritage Trust's chairman Dr Thant Myint-U wrote to President U Htin Kyaw on 6

May to request the relocation of the library to a proper place in the heart of downtown.

According to them, the library is much frequented by researchers only due to its isolated location.

U Tun Ohn, director-general of the Department of Fine Arts, described the new location of the library as a convenient place for visitors. Myanmar Library Association's chairman U Than Aung expressed his delight at seeing their proposal become a reality, adding that the national libraries of the ASEAN countries will soon appear impressive and grand.

U Htay Aung, deputy permanent secretary of the Ministry of Electricity and Energy, said that his ministry was proud to hand

over its office building to the National Library.

Dr Thant Myint-U of Yangon Heritage Trust said that the new location of the library would be at Burma Oil Corporation (BOC), which he said belonged to a world's most influential oil company.

Daw Moe Moe Lwin, director of Yangon Heritage Trust, said the choice of the historic building for the library's new location would make the library easily accessible to the public.

The new location of the National Library will be at No 604/608, Merchant Street, Pabedan township, Yangon, a century-old building surrounded by financial institutions and recreation centres.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Appointment of Ambassador agreed

The Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has agreed to the appointment of Mrs. Luan Thuy Duong as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

Mrs. Luan Thuy Duong was born on 1st February 1963 in Binh Dinh, Viet Nam. She obtained a Bachelor's degree in International Relations from Diplomatic Academy of Viet Nam in 1985, a Master's degree in International Relations from University of Sydney, Australia in 1996 and Post-Graduate studies in State Administration Management from National Administration Academy of Viet Nam in 2008.

She joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Viet Nam in 1991 and has served in various capacities of the Institute for International Relations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam. From 2010-2014, she served as Minister-Counsellor at the Embassy of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam in the United State of America, and currently, she is serving as Director-General for Diplomatic Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam.

Mrs. Luan Thuy Duong is married with two children.—*Ministry of Foreign Affairs*

Miss Golden Land Myanmar final to be held next month



Miss Golden Land Myanmar final lists posing for a group photo.

THE 3rd Miss Golden Land Myanmar final contest will take place next month in Yangon to select six winners for global contests, said Ko An Zaw Latt, CEO of the Miss Golden Land Myanmar Organisation.

The winners of the final contest will represent the coun-

try at Miss Earth 2016, Miss Supranational 2016 for the HIV education programme, Miss Tourism 2016 for the tourism promotion programme, Miss Intercontinental 2016 for the elderly care programme. The Face of Beauty International 2016 for the orphan care programme and Miss Globe 2016

for the peace programme. All are planned to be held before the end of this year.

"We will select six from 20 shortlisted candidates across the country during the final competition, which is scheduled to be held at the Myanmar Convention Center," said Ko An Zaw Latt.—*Khin Zali*

Detained Myanmar citizen to come home in charter flights

A TOTAL of 2,294 Myanmar citizens being detained at 11 camps in Malaysia will be brought back home under special arrangement.

"A committee has been formed and is planning to bring home 2,294 Myanmar workers on 10 charter flights. The main sponsors for the plan are Daw Nang Lang Kham from the KBZ Brighter Future Myanmar Foundation and U Aung Myat from the

Mother Trading Co Ltd," said U Myo Aung, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population, to *the Myanmar News Agency*.

The Myanmar Embassy in Kuala Lumpur said that it will continue the migrant protection programmes that began on 1 January last year to protect and help Myanmar citizens there. — *Shin Min*



Dr Mi Mi Thet Thwin, Rector of Yangon University of Computer Science and Mr Kazuo Kawasaki of JACOM Co Ltd sign agreement on granting scholarship to students of the YUCS on 26th July. PHOTO MNA

Crime NEWS

Taiwanese woman beaten and robbed in Bagan

TWO men and two women are wanted by police for beating and robbing a Taiwanese woman at a pagoda in Bagan on Tuesday.

According to an investigation two men and two women approached the Taiwanese woman while she was drawing a picture near the pagoda before asking her for money. When she refused to give the group any cash they beat her and stole what little money was in her possession in addition to her passport. Police are still investigating.— *Ye Thura Aung (Nyaung Oo)*



The Taiwanese woman being helped by the police.

Opium powder and Yaba seized in Kawthaung

AN anti-narcotics suppression squad comprising policemen from Kawthaung seized opium powder

weighing 6 grams from the house of one Myo Oo on Yuzana road, Aung Thuka ward, Kawthaung town on Wednesday.

According to a connected investigation police searched a motorboat owned by one Myo Oo at Kawthaung Jetty and discovered opium powder weighing 48 kilograms.

Similarly, police from Kholan police station seized yaba from a home in ward 4, Kholan town on Tuesday. Acting on a tip-off, police searched the home of one Soe Naing and discovered 620 yaba pills. Police also confiscated 980 yaba pills from the home of one Lone Maung in ward 6. All suspects have been charged under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.— *Myanmar Police Force*



The criminal suspects being seen. PHOTO: MPF

Truck crashes into house in Kyaukdaga

A 22-wheel vehicle carrying sugar bags crashed into a house on the Yangon- Mandalay highway, Kyaukdaga township, Bago region on Wednesday.

According to an investigation the driver, one Thant Zin Oo, 29, stopped the car to fill the tyres with air. At that time

the gear slipped and the vehicle escaped, crashing into a house between mileposts 115/1 and 115/2.

The home was badly damaged but no one was injured in the accident. The driver has been charged by police.— *Khin Ko (Kyaukdaga)*



The truck seen after crashing into a house in Kyaukdaga.

Yaba confiscated at Yangon international airport

LOCAL authorities from Yangon confiscated yaba from a female passenger heading to Malaysia at Yangon international airport on Tuesday. Acting on a tip-off police searched the bag of one Su Mon Khine and discovered 34,000 yaba pills.

Similarly, police from

Myaungmya town seized 843 yaba pills from motorcycle driver Harnit with San Kyi on board in ward 2, Myaungmya town on Tuesday. Police have filed charges against all suspects under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.— *Myanmar Police Force*

LOCAL Business

MRF and Sompo Japan Insurance Co sign for crop insurance

THE Myanmar Rice Federation (MRF) signed an MoU with the Sompo Japan Nippon Koa Insurance company on Tuesday at the Yangon Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry to implement a crop insurance system, the first to launch in upper Myanmar.

Crop insurance plays an essential role in agriculture sector because the erratic weather is a big challenge to local and foreign investors, said an official from MRF. This crop insurance will cover the losses caused by torrential rains, it has been learned from those who are engaged in the enterprise.

Myanmar is listed among countries which are adversely affected by erratic weather. This is the

reason why crop insurance is not easy to implement in Myanmar, said Dr. Tun Win, deputy minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation.

We've been offering crop insurance not only to Myanmar but also to other ASEAN member countries. It is the first time we've kicked off this insurance system in Myanmar. We will provide technical assistance without gaining any profit. Since Myanmar has difficulty in collecting weather data we will apply satellite technology to measure rainfall and weather conditions using photos sent by the satellite, said general manager Mr. Keiji Okada from Sompo Japan Nippon Koa Insurance.—GNLM



A farmer checks grapes destroyed by hailstones in Yamethin in April, 2014. PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE

Fishery products require health certificate for exporting

FISHERY products will be allowed for export only after receiving a health certificate according to an announcement released by the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation on Tuesday.

Aquaculture products exported through border trade camps and via sea trade are being checked. Health certificates granted by the Myanmar Fishery Federation are required to prove these products are fit for human consumption.

Those who are found disobeying rules and regulations as prescribed by the

Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation will have action taken under existing laws. The export value of fishery products as of first week of July this fiscal year has risen by over US\$17 million when compared to the same period last fiscal year with a total value of over US\$130 million, it has been learned from the Ministry of Commerce. Myanmar's fishery products are mainly exported to China, Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore. Fishery exports earned over US\$500 million last fiscal year.—GNLM

Yangon circular sky trains to be built

A YANGON circular sky railway will be built 60 feet above the road, it has been learned from the Yangon regional transport authority.

The current circular railway will be lengthened and transformed into a motor-road. Shopping centres will also be built at spacious stations like Kyimyindine and Mahl-wagon 20 feet above the

motor way, said U Min Zaw, the vice chairman of the All Private Bus line Supervisory Committee (Downtown).

Piles for the sky railway will have to be driven on both sides of the roads, said Dr. Maung Aung, the secretary of the Yangon Transport Authority. The railway is slated to be built in the incumbent government period.—200

India seeks pulses from Myanmar, Africa to ease shortage, minister says

INDIA is looking to import pulses from Myanmar and African nations to counter a domestic shortfall of 7.6 million tonnes that has driven local prices of key pulses like chickpea to a record high, Food Minister Ram Vilas Paswan said.

More purchases by India, the world's top consumer of pulses, could help the country rein in its headline inflation, which hit a near two-year high in June on double-digit annual increases in prices of sugar, vegetables and pulses.

"The challenge of demand-supply gap of about 7.6 million tonnes (in pulses) is being addressed

via public and private imports," Paswan tweeted on Thursday morning.

Earlier this month, India said it would help Mozambique cultivate pulses and then import them through government-to-government deals in the coming years.

India consumes nearly 22 million tonnes of pulses annually, but relies heavily on imports to meet demand as production has been hit by uncertain monsoons and irrigation problems. In the year to March 2016, overseas purchases accounted for about a quarter of the country's total consumption.

As a result, pulses

have become expensive in the country.

Chickpea prices, the most consumed pulse in India, have more than doubled in a year after back-to-back droughts curbed output in the country, prompting authorities to suspend futures trading in the protein rich food grain.

Prices will remain high until supplies rise, said Paswan, adding production is likely to increase this year due to good monsoon rains and the fact that farmers hiked the area under pulses cultivation due to better prices.

As of July 22, Indian farmers had cultivated

pulses on 9 million hectares, versus 6.5 million hectares during the same period a year ago, farm ministry data shows.

State governments need to take measures to limit stock holdings and clamp down on hoarding to check the rise in prices, Paswan said.

"States can take action against hoarders and black-marketer's by imposing stock limits on traders. We can only give direction to states to take action against hoarders. We cannot do it ourselves because action-taking power rests with the states," he added.—Reuters



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US diplomatic strategy on South China Sea appears to founder

WASHINGTON — In the lead-up to an international court ruling on China's claims in the South China Sea this month, United States officials talked about rallying a coalition to impose "terrible" costs to Beijing's international reputation if flouted the court's decision.

But just two weeks after the 12 July announcement by the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague — which at least on paper, appeared to be a humiliating defeat for China — the US strategy appears to be unravelling and the court's ruling is in danger of becoming irrelevant.

Earlier this year, US officials spoke repeatedly of the need for countries in the Asia-Pacific region and elsewhere, including the European Union, to make it clear that the decision of the court should be binding.

"We need to be ready to be very loud and vocal, in harmony together ... to say that this is international law, this is incredibly important, it is binding on all parties," Amy Searight, the then-US deputy assistant secretary of defence for South and Southeast Asia, said in February.

Then in April, US Deputy Secretary of State Antony Blinken said China risked "terrible" damage to its reputation if it ignored The Hague's ruling.

The top lawyer from the Philippines, which brought the case against China, even said Beijing risked "outlaw" status.

The United States had backed Manila's case on the grounds that China's claims to 85 per cent of the South China Sea, one of the world's busiest trade

routes, were a threat to freedom of navigation and international law.

Yet after the international court rejected Beijing's position, the US calls for a united front appear to have made little headway, with only six countries joining Washington in insisting that the decision should be binding.

They include the Philippines, but not several other countries with their own claims to parts of the South China Sea that might

benefit if Beijing observed the decision.

China also scored a major diplomatic victory earlier this week, when the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) dropped any reference to the ruling from a joint statement at the end of a meeting of the 10-country group's foreign minister in Laos. This followed objections from Cambodia, Beijing's closest ASEAN ally.

On 15 July, the European Union, distracted af-

ter Britain's vote to leave the bloc, issued a statement taking note of the ruling, but avoiding direct reference to Beijing or any assertion that the decision was binding.

On Wednesday, US Secretary of State John Kerry expressed satisfaction that ASEAN had issued a communique that championed the rule of law and said the omission of any reference to the arbitration case did not detract from its importance.

He also said it was "impossible" for the ruling to become irrelevant because it is legally binding.

But analysts said it now risks exactly that, not least because Washington has failed to press the issue effectively with its friends and allies.

"We should all be worried that this case is going to go down as nothing more than a footnote because its impact was only as strong as the international community was going to make it," said Greg Poling, a South China Sea expert at Washington's Centre for Strategic and International Studies think-tank.

"And the international community has voted by not saying anything. The consensus seems to be 'We don't care. We don't want to hold China to these standards.'"

Dean Cheng, an expert on China with the Heritage Foundation think-tank, said Washington appeared reluctant to push a tougher line with Beijing — a vital economic partner as well as a strategic rival — with only a few months to go in President Barack Obama's tenure and a presidential election in November. —Reuters



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

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Pakistani Taliban claim responsibility for Karachi military killings

DERA ISMAIL KHAN — A Pakistani Taliban faction has claimed responsibility for Tuesday's killing of two military officers in the southern city of Karachi, a spokesman for the Islamist group said.

The killings were the latest attacks in the busy port city of 20 million people, where paramilitary forces have been cracking

down on Islamist militants and criminal gangs for almost three years.

The officers were killed as they were on the Pakistani Taliban faction's "target list", Ehsan Ullah Ehsan, the spokesman for the group, Jamaat-ul-Ahrar, said late on Tuesday.

Gunmen attacked the vehicle carrying the soldiers, who belonged to an

intelligence agency, while they were patrolling a crowded area of the city, police had said.

The crackdown has boosted security in Karachi, although in recent months, a popular Sufi musician, Amjad Sabri, was shot dead and the son of the provincial chief justice was kidnapped, but later rescued.—Reuters



Military soldiers collect evidence from an army vehicle after two army personnel were killed by attackers on a motorcycle in Karachi, Pakistan, on 26 July, 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Japan's youth volunteer programme wins 'Asia's Nobel Prize'

MANILA — The Japanese government-initiated youth volunteer organisation is among the recipients of this year's Ramon Magsaysay award, a prestigious award known as Asia's equivalent of the Nobel Prize, the foundation that gives it said on Wednesday.

One of the six awardees for 2016, the Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers will be honoured by Philippines-based Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation next month for "their idealism and spirit of service in advancing the lives of communities other than their own." The volunteer programme, established in 1965 and operated by the Japan International Cooperation Agency, gathers Japanese people aged 20 to 39 to go to developing countries to help in such area as agriculture, forestry and fisheries, civil engineering, sanitation, education, culture and sports as well as planning and administration.—Kyodo News



A man places a sign as others light candles during a vigil in Kolkata, India, to show solidarity with the victims of the attack at Holey Artisan restaurant after Islamist militants attacked the upscale cafe in Dhaka, Bangladesh, on 2 July, 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Austria to extradite Pakistani over suspected Paris attack links

VIENNA — A Pakistani man suspected of links to the jihadists who killed 130 people in Paris in November will be extradited to France, an Austrian court spokesman said on Wednesday.

He and an Algerian man came into contact with the Paris attackers in Austria, Austrian newspaper *Salzburger Nachrichten* reported after the men were arrested in a refugee centre in the city of Salzburg last December.

The Algerian man would also be extradited following a ruling by a court in Salzburg, news agency Austria Presse Agentur reported, but no one at that court was available for comment.

French newspaper *Le Monde* has reported that the two men travelled together from Syria to the Greek island of Leros with the two Iraqi brothers who blew themselves up near the Stade de France national stadium outside Paris on 13 November.

“The extradition of the Pakistani man was declared admissible,” a spokesman for a regional court in the Austrian city of Linz said, declining to give any further details.

The two men were first arrested on Leros during a passport check on 3 October, as one of them could not speak Arabic very well and the other was unable to describe Aleppo, which was cited as his birthplace on his passport, the *Le Parisien* paper has said.

Both men were released three weeks later and went to Austria, where they were arrested again.—Reuters

British-Bangladeshi survivor of cafe attack held at unknown location — lawyer

DHAKA/NEW DELHI — A man who was celebrating his daughter’s 13th birthday with his family in a Dhaka cafe when they were caught up in a bloody hostage-taking nearly four weeks ago is still being held as a suspect, the family’s lawyer said on Wednesday.

Hasnat Karim, a 47-year-old engineer who holds dual British and Bangladeshi citizenship, survived the ordeal in which 22 hostages died at the hands of Islamist militants because he and his family were Muslims and could

recite verses from the Koran.

But, after witnesses said he agreed to a demand to act as a human shield, Karim became a suspect in the 1 July attack claimed by Syria-based militant group Islamic State.

His wife and their two children were released after two days of questioning, but Karim continues to be held at an unknown location without access to his lawyers, according to Rodney Dixon, hired as international counsel by the family on Wednesday.

“He was there for his daughter’s birthday, and got caught

up as a hostage himself, together with his family,” Dixon told Reuters in a telephone interview from London. “No evidence has been pointed to, and there is none which would show that he was in any way involved in committing any crime.”

Human rights groups including Amnesty International have called on Bangladesh to either charge or release Karim.

In one of the most brazen attacks in the South Asian nation’s history, gunmen stormed the

Holey Artisan Bakery, a cafe in Dhaka’s diplomatic quarter that was packed on a Friday evening with locals and expatriates.

They killed non-Muslims and foreigners — including Italians, Japanese and an American — before security forces ended the 12-hour siege. Karim made a phone call at the behest of the gunmen to a relative during the attack, and he and his family were released before security forces stormed the building, giving rise to suspicions that he was complicit in the attack.—Reuters

North Korean seeks refuge in South Korean consulate in Hong Kong

HONG KONG — Security was tightened at the South Korean consulate in Hong Kong on Thursday after media reports that a North Korean, possibly a student, had sought refuge there.

The North Korean is understood to be a member of a delegation that attended an academic competition at a Hong Kong university two weeks ago, the *South China Morning Post* said, citing government sources in the Chinese-ruled city.

Other media said the North Korean was an 18-year-old student who was attending a mathematics competition and was from a family with a military

background.

North and South Korea remain technically at war, and the reports of a possible defection are bound to exacerbate tensions.

Uniformed and plainclothes police were patrolling around the office building near the heart of Hong Kong’s financial centre where the South Korean consulate is located. Scores of reporters thronged the building.

Local government and consulate officials declined comment.

“We are aware of the report,” a spokeswoman from the Hong Kong police told Reuters, declining to comment further.

The 57th International Mathe-

matical Olympiad was held at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology on 11-12 July. An all-male team of six took part from North Korea, according to the contest website. The team finished in 6th place.

The organising committee declined comment.

South Korea’s foreign ministry declined comment on the media reports in Hong Kong. A ministry official said the South Korean government’s position was not to make any comments related to North Korean defectors, keeping in mind their safety and diplomatic relations with relevant countries.—Reuters

Comfort women fund, to be financed by Japan, launched in South Korea

SEOUL — A fund, to be financed by Japan, was launched in South Korea on Thursday, with the aim of providing support to surviving women who were forced to work in brothels for the Japanese military before and during World War II.

While the fund, which was set up jointly between the two nations following an agreement in December, officially launched on schedule, the 1 billion yen (\$9.4 million) promised by Japan to finance it with has yet to be transferred. South Korea’s Yonhap News Agency quoted an official as saying “The foundation was launched in accordance with the South Korea-Japan agreement (in December) and in order to carry

out responsibilities on the part of Japan.” Kim Tae Hyun, an honorary professor at Sungshin Women’s University in Seoul who led a preparation committee for establishing the organisation, has been named as the head of the new entity. The two countries agreed to set up the fund, known as the Reconciliation and Healing Foundation, to help restore the honor and dignity of former “comfort women” in South Korea, sparking pleas from other Asian nations who had also seen women forced to work in brothels by Japanese forces.

No other agreements have been made, however, despite strong calls from the Philippines and Taiwan.—Kyod News

Opinion

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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.

Peace is the way

Kyaw Thura

IT is absolutely clear that sustainable development is the pet term of every government across the world, just as people dream of a decent quality of life. Simply defined, sustainable development is a stage in which the needs of the present generation are met but with no sacrifice of the ability of the future generations to satisfy their own needs when their times come.

In a very real sense, development is critical to human life. This highlights the need for forces that will drive the continuous evolution of economy and society where justice and equity prevail from generation to generation. To ensure sustainable development, policy makers should pay undivided attention to the distribution of social and economic benefits to the people from all walks of life.

The onus is on all the decision makers to examine and tackle the root cause of growing inequality and poverty, which have the potential to present a huge challenge to social, political and economic institutions. What matters most in building a more harmonious society is to root out inequality of opportunity.

Now is the time for our country to find some common ground on the question of sustainable development by formulating policies that foster an effective administrative system. No other time in history is as crucial for the people of our country to stand united and live in harmony as today, especially at a time when the peace talks are ongoing. All the stakeholders engaged in the peace process should be aware of what Mahatma Gandhi once said. "There is no way to peace. Peace is the way."

POEM:

To Some People

* To some people
Death is but a comma,
Because there they lie,
Death they defy,
And, once again, like the Phoenix,
They ruffle off ashes,
And soar into the sky.

* To some people
Death closes before its close.
To these walking, breathing machines
Without a clean slate of conscience within,
Even though they are not dead,
Life is but a dead full stop.

Htin Lin Zaw

A Wave of Nostalgia for my Yangon University Days

Dr. Saw Mra Aung

(continued from yesterday)

AT that time, the Ph. D programme was not yet introduced into Yangon University. Therefore, only a few teachers who won the State scholars could obtain a Ph. D degree from a foreign university. No doubt, Ph.D degree-holders would be held in high esteem in the university campus. As far as I remembered, Dr. Pe Maung Than, Dr. Win Naing, Dr. Yin Yin Nwe, and Dr. Tin Thein were only Ph.D degree holders from the Department of Geology. The Ph.D degree holders from other departments were Dr. Chit Swe (the then rector who was promoted from Maths professor), Dr. Ko Ko Gyi (Chemistry Professor) and Dr. Tin Aung (Physics Professor). Master and honours classes were the highest ones Yangon University conducted in those days. As clever students were given favour wherever they went, many students aspired to the eligibility for the honours class. So the disease of honours was epidemic among the students at that time. So when the examination drew near, the students laboured competitively at their lessons. The competition was more severe among geology students, for the number of geology students who were admitted to the honours class was always under ten each year. Some ambitious students vied with one another in the number of their study hours, especially at night. So light of some's rooms did not go out until that of others' did. So we shunned going to the canteen at night but were desk-bound in the privacy of our room, burning the mid-night oil. When we felt sleepy, we went to Lucky Tea-shop at Hledan which was kept open throughout the night and had a strong coffee together steamed garden-pea and roti. On some nights, we studied in the light of the neon-lamps of the posts standing in front of the Convocation Hall throughout the night. As we went to sleep only at dawn on the mats spread under those lamp-posts, we woke up only to the noises of the day students who attended their morning classes. Particularly, we became the objects of jokes to girls. By the quirk of my luck, I stood first in the second year examination and became one of twelve geology honours students in the 1986-87 academic year. When I came to the first year honours class, we had to attend classes at Mandalay Hall. At that time, Dr. Win Naing became our warden. He loved me so much. On day, there was a fight between hostel students and day students at U Chit's tea-shop. When the fight



The convocation hall on Chancellor's Road. PHOTO: NYI ZAW MOE

started, I was at the tea-shop with my friends from the hostel. All hostel-students except a few including me got involved in the fight. At that time, any student who engaged in fights was to be expelled from hostel under the then prescribed law. When the inspection party came to our hostel for enquiring about the reason of the fight, I was called by him into his room and asked to stay there until the party left the hostel. Thus I was evaded from being expelled from the hostel. The rector was then Dr. Chit Swe and the registrar Daw Sein Sein. Both of them were strict with rules and regulations. So, some of my friends who were involved in the fight were expelled from the hostel. Thanks to Dr. Win Naing, I had a chance to remain a hostel-student and pursue my study in peace. After the 1988 Unrest, U Khin Maung Win and U Tin Maung Nyunt became wardens of the Dagon Hostel. After Dr. Chit Swe, the office of rector of Yangon University was taken by Dr. Kyaw Sein and then Dr. Tun Maung. As far as I remember, Dr. Kyaw Sein became rector just after 1988 and promot-

ed to Minister for Education soon. He was succeeded by Dr. Tun Maung in the early 1990s. On some late afternoons, we went to Inya Lake for a swim. In those days, swimming in Inya Lake was permitted. There was a rental service for swimmers under a tall, big tree near the University Boat Club, which was established in about 1924. We could hire a tire-tube, shorts, etc from it at affordable charges. In general, the area between the land jutting out into the lake where the University Boat Club existed and a wooded island not from the bund were full of swimmers on late afternoons and evenings. No definite boundary was demarcated between men and women swimmers. But men and women swam separately on the grounds of mutual understanding. But, some mischievous boys, in a mocking manner, dived and swam under water and bobbed up suddenly amongst girl swimmers to scare away them. The shouts given by them to the skies were pleasing to the ears of the mockers. But no problem was heard to arise among them. After the swim, we used to follow Inya Road turn-

ing east and to enter Yangon University Campus by Inwa Road which ran between the residence of the rector and Inya Hostel. When we got to the junction between Bagan Road and Inwa Road, we covered our head with our longyi and, in union, shouted the names of the girls from our major who lived in the back-row of Inya Hostel. At their names shouted at the top of our voices, the girls ran out of their rooms and held up their fists to us. We had taken to our heels before they flung their angry glances at us. But our joke was not workable, for, the next day, when we met them in the class-room, they told us that they could identify us by the longyis which covered our head. We then remained silent on their identification as the saying "Silence is equivalent to confession," goes. On some evenings after dinner, we used to spruce ourselves and walk along the bund of Inya Lake where girls from Inya, Thiri, Malar and Yadana Hostels strutted along in groups. If there was an acquaintance of ours in those groups, we brazenly approached her and made friends

with other girls. Thus we sometimes had the chance of sitting together with the girls at fried gourd-fritter stalls or Rakhine Monhti stalls on the bund of Inya Lake in the evening, enjoying the beautiful scenery of Inya Lake at sun-set. Indeed, it was the happiest and most memorable occasion in our life-time. On some summery nights, we, in groups, sang songs such as မောင့်လပြည့်ဝန်း ရန်ကုန်မှာ သာတံ့လ၊ ပလတ်မောင်မင်းသား ရေဒီယိုကမာရွတ် of Sai Hti Saing, ကုံကော်မြို့တော်၊ ရင်တွင်းမေ့လျော့အတိုကြီးရဲ့ မခင်နှင်းဆီမိုးစက် တင်လေ of Hlwan Moe, မိဆိုး of Tu Tu, အဝေးဆုံးစစ်ကိုင်းလမ်း of Khaing Htoo တော်စိမ်းခါး of Chit Khaung, ရတနာသူ့ မဟာဆန်သူ့အမွေစိမ်း of Khin Maung Toe, ဝန်းခရမ်းပြာ of Aung Naing..etc.were very popular among university students. In the early 1980s, actor Kyaw Thu and actress Moe Moe Myint Aung made their debuts. They were regarded as a good match. When their films were on the cinema-houses at Myenigone, most students skipped their class and

saw them. We were no exception. In the university campus, Kyaw Thu's style was in vogue among male students. Almost students used to wear a white long-sleeved engyi without the collar, with the sleeves tucked up to the elbow, the longyi short, the bag hung across the right shoulder with its straps knotted on the shoulder and the hair shaped like the Myanmar alphabet "Ka" on the forehead. Kyaw Thu was the apple of the eyes of every university student to that extent. Starting from the second year, we had to go on field-trips at the end of March every year. As the examination was over at that time, all the students from other hostels had returned home. But, we had to continue to stay at the hostel for a few days, waiting for the day of our field trip. At that time, Yangon University humming with students from sun-rise to sun-set fell into a deserted land. All hostels, halls, canteens, roads, streets, benches under the Gangaw trees, etc emptied of students. In the afternoon, whatever I saw around the Dagon Hostel were old Padauk trees clothed in yellow leaves shedding

withered ones, lanes with no pedestrians, Seinpan trees covered with red flowers, Gangaw trees cloaked in deep green leaves spotted with white flowers, etc. Now and then, melancholy calls of cuckoo wafted to me with summery eddies. I, as a teen-ager, was gripped with a surge of home-sickness. I had to go a one-month field-trip- to Kyaukse and Nahtogyi in the second year, to Pindaya in the first year honours and to Yin-mar-bin in the final honours. Although we were scheduled to go on a field trip to Mattayar in the second year honours, it was cancelled due to the 1988 Unrest. We had to labour at our field works such as surveying, measurement of the inclination of outcrops, collection of rock samples, looking for fossils and minerals, during the day-time and to continue to do office-works such as drawing contour and maps, reading of old reports, writing daily field-reports, etc. During our day-time outings, we sometimes came across unexpected dangers and difficulties such as beasts, attack of malaria, sudden changes of weather, falling from the hill-sides, etc deep in the forests. Some students lost their way to the main camp and had to sleep deep in the forests for the night. While getting through the difficulties and dangers together during the field trips, the bonds between us became more cemented and we were tied to one another in brother-hood spirit.

On 5th September 1987, 25-kyat, 35-kyat and 75-kyat notes were demonetized without any compensation. We also had nothing to spend. So about 1000 students went on a rampage in Yangon. We were forced to send back to our native towns. I had to fly back to Sittwe free of charge when the examination for the first year honours was at hand. But the university was reopened at the 26th

October that year. On the 12th March in 1988, some students from Yangon Institute of Technology (RIT) clashed with local people at Sanda Win tea-shop in Gyogon West Ward, a Yangon suburb. The next day, Maung Phone Maw from the RIT was shot dead during the clash between the students and riot policemen (Lone Htein) and other 6 or 7 students died from gun-shot wounds a few days later. Thus the political instability reached its peak and our universities and other educational institutions were closed down with no limitation. The historic stormy year started. Some transportation modes were blocked. So I had to accompany Maung Maung Zaw to his village near Thabaung and stayed there for a month. I then went back to Yangon and thence to Sittwe.

When the university was reopened, I proceeded to the second years honours class. I noticed that a few friends of mine did not turn up. No definite information about them was available to us. With more constraints imposed on the students, we hardly felt freedom and happiness. Commodity-prices were some times higher than those before 1988. Due to the economic set-back, most parents were hard up. So students came to focus more on their study to be able to graduate from the university as early as possible. I graduated from Yangon University with my honours degree in 1992. Thus my university life at Yangon University came to an end. Anyway, the days I spent at Yangon University are the most carefree and happiest moments in my life. I wish that my Alma Mata, under the management of the first civilian democratic government, would be rejuvenated with promising, fresh generation students and higher academic prestige in a few years to come.



Recreation Centre on Chancellor's Road. PHOTO: NYI ZAW MOE

Obama urges Americans to get behind Clinton, slams Trump



Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton joins President Barack Obama after his speech at the Democratic National Convention in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, US on 27 July 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

PHILADELPHIA — President Barack Obama painted an optimistic picture of America's future and offered full-throated support for Hillary Clinton's bid to defeat Republican Donald Trump in a speech that electrified the Democratic National Convention.

He urged Democrats to enable Clinton to finish the job he started with his election nearly eight years ago in a rousing speech that capped a night when party luminaries took to the stage to contrast the party's new standard-bearer with Trump, whom they portrayed as a threat to US values.

"There has never been a man or woman, not me, not Bill — nobody more qualified than Hillary

Clinton to serve as president of the United States," Obama said to cheers at the Philadelphia convention on Wednesday night.

Hillary Clinton, the wife of former president Bill Clinton, will accept the party's White House nomination in a speech to end the convention on Thursday night. The election is on 8 November.

"Tonight, I ask you to do for Hillary Clinton what you did for me. I ask you to carry her the same way you carried me," Obama said. When he finished, she joined him on stage where they hugged, clasped hands and waved to the crowd.

The two were rivals in the hard-fought 2008 campaign for the Democratic nomination. After

winning that election to become America's first black president, Obama appointed Clinton his secretary of state and now looks to her to carry on his legacy.

Republicans have painted Clinton as a Washington insider who would represent a "third term" for what they view as failed policies under Obama, elected to a second term in 2012.

Speaking to delegates, Obama offered an alternative to businessman Trump's vision of the United States as being under siege from illegal immigrants, crime and terrorism and losing influence in the world.

"I am more optimistic about the future of America than ever before," Obama said at the Wells Fargo Centre, a basketball and hockey arena.

A former first lady and US senator, Clinton made history on Tuesday when she became the first woman to secure the presidential nomination of a major party. She will lead the Democrats against Republican nominee Trump.

Obama took aim at Trump's campaign slogan and promise to "Make America Great Again."

"America is already great. America is already strong. And I promise you, our strength, our greatness, does not depend on Donald Trump," he said.

"Preach!" members of the crowd shouted. "Best president ever," someone screamed.

Obama listed what he described as progress during his two terms in office, such as recovery from an economic recession, the Obamacare healthcare reform and the 2011 killing of al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden.

He said American values, not race, religion or political preference, were what made the United States great. "That's why anyone who threatens our values, whether fascists or communists or jihadists or homegrown demagogues, will always fail in the end," Obama said.—Reuters

After attacks, Merkel cuts short holiday to face refugee policy storm

BERLIN — Chancellor Angela Merkel interrupted her vacation on Thursday to face down accusations at home and abroad that her open-door refugee policy allowed Islamist terrorism to take hold in Germany.

Merkel returns to Berlin to hold a news conference at 12pm (1100 GMT) after a spate of attacks since 18 July left 15 people dead — including four attackers — and dozens injured.

Two assailants, a Syrian asylum seeker and a refugee from either Pakistan or Afghanistan, had links to Islamist militancy, officials say. The attacks have burst

any illusions in Germany that the country is immune to attacks like those claimed by Islamic State in neighbouring France.

Politicians from left and right say Merkel's refugee policy is at fault, after more than a million migrants entered Germany in the past year, many fleeing war in Afghanistan, Syria and Iraq.

"All our predictions have been proven right," Horst Seehofer, Bavaria's state premier and a long-standing critic of Merkel's open-door refugee policy, said on Tuesday. "Islamist terrorism has arrived in Germany."

Seehofer demanded that

Merkel's government adopt tougher security measures and tighter immigration policies.

Merkel has been on holiday in northern Germany since chairing a security meeting on Saturday, leaving Interior Minister Thomas de Maiziere — who twice returned from vacation in the last 10 days — to present the government's response. Unlike French President Francois Hollande, who on Tuesday visited Normandy where two assailants killed a priest, Merkel has not been to the scene of any of the attacks in Germany — an absence that has raised questions about her leadership.—Reuters

NEWS IN BRIEF

Obama offers condolences to Merkel over recent attacks

WASHINGTON — US President Barack Obama spoke by phone with German Chancellor Angela Merkel on Wednesday to offer his condolences over the recent terrorist and other violent attacks in southern Germany, the White House said.

Obama offered Germany the US government's full support as investigations into the attacks proceed, the White House said in a statement. Obama and Merkel also discussed the situation in Ukraine and reiterated "the urgent importance of durably ending the violence in eastern Ukraine," the statement said.—Reuters

Eighteen militants killed, 17 injured in northern Afghan province

KUNDUZ (Afghanistan) — A total of 18 militants have been killed and 17 others injured as security forces pounded Taliban positions in Dasht-e-Archi district of the northern province Wednesday night, an army spokesman in the northern region Nasratullah Jamshidi said Thursday.

According to the official, the security forces backed by aircrafts attacked Taliban hideouts in parts of the restive Dasht-e-Archi district late Wednesday night killing 18 rebels on the spot and injuring 17 others.

Without commenting on the possible casualties of security personnel, Jamshidi also reported arresting 20 more militants in Saripul province on Wednesday. Taliban militants who have been fighting the government to regain power, are yet to make comment on the claim.—Xinhua

Oilfield explosion kills three people in Russian Siberia

MOSCOW — Three people have died in an explosion and subsequent fire at an oilfield in the Irkutsk Region in Russia's Siberia, TASS news agency reported Wednesday.

The accident at Rosneft's Verkhnechonskoye oilfield injured three others, with two in critical condition, it said.

The accident was caused by a snapped fuel gas receiver, the report said. Rosneft is the leading player of Russia's petroleum industry, and holds 99.94 per cent of the shares of Verkhnechonskneftegaz, which is engaged in the exploration and development of the Verkhnechonskoye oil and gas condensate field, one of the largest in Eastern Siberia.—Xinhua

Canadian woman sentenced to 10 years for killing four people in car crash

VANCOUVER — A Canadian woman whose drunk driving left four people dead in January received a 10-year sentence on Wednesday.

Catherine McKay, 49, pleaded guilty in June to four counts of impaired driving that killed a whole family. In the accident in January, McKay failed to stop her car and collided with another car carrying a couple with their two children. They all died later. Police officers found after the crash that McKay's blood-alcohol level was three times of the legal limit, according to a report by Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.—Xinhua

Islamic state posts video of men it says were French church attackers

CAIRO — Islamic State's news agency on Wednesday posted a video of two men it said were those who attacked a church in France in which they pledged allegiance to the group's leader.

The video was posted by Amaq news agency a day after two men burst into the Catholic church in Normandy during a service, forced the priest to his knees and slit his throat.

The two men who identified themselves as Abu Omar and Abu Jalil el-Hanafy appeared in the one-minute video sitting on a staircase pledging loyalty to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, Islamic State's leader.

One of the two attackers has been named as 19-year-old Adel Kermiche, who was under close surveillance after two failed attempts to reach Syria last year, France's anti-terrorism prosecutor said on Wednesday.

The second attacker remains unidentified. Police shot and killed both assailants as they emerged from the church.—Reuters

Turkey dismisses military, shuts media outlets as crackdown deepens

ANKARA/ISTANBUL — Turkey on Wednesday deepened a crackdown on suspected followers of a US-based cleric it blames for a failed coup, dismissing nearly 1,700 military personnel and shutting 131 media outlets, moves that may spark more concern among its Western allies.

So far, tens of thousands of people — including police, judges and teachers — have been suspended or placed under investigation since the 15-16 July coup, which Turkey says was staged by a faction within the military loyal to the Muslim cleric Fethullah Gulen.

Gulen, who lives in self-imposed exile in Pennsylvania but whose movement has a wide following in Turkey where it runs a large network of schools, has denied any involvement in the failed putsch.

Western governments and human rights groups, while condemning the abortive coup in which at least 246 people were killed and more than 2,000 injured, have expressed concern over the extent of the crackdown, suggesting President Tayyip Erdogan may be using it to stifle dissent and tighten his grip on power.

Erdogan, who narrowly escaped capture and possibly death on the night of the coup, denies the crackdown has wider aims and says the Gulen movement threatened democracy by attempting to build a “parallel state” within the military, media and civil service.

On Wednesday, the military dishonourably discharged 1,684 of its personnel, a Turkish government official said, citing their role in the failed coup. Of those, 149 were generals and admirals, said the official, who requested anonymity. Data show that would represent roughly 40 per cent of all generals and admirals in Turkey’s military.

Broadcaster CNN Turk has



People sit in front of a statue as they gather in solidarity night after night since the 15 July coup attempt in central Ankara, Turkey, on 27 July 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

reported that more than 15,000 people, including around 10,000 soldiers had been detained so far over the coup, citing the interior minister. Of those, more than 8,000 were formally arrested pending trial, it said.

In addition, the government said in its official gazette that three news agencies, 16 television channels, 45 newspapers, 15 magazines and 29 publishers have been ordered shut down.

These moves, which follow the closure of other media outlets with suspected Gulenist ties as well as the detention of journalists will further stoke concerns among rights groups and Western governments about the scale of Erdogan’s post-coup purges.

The United States said on Wednesday it understood Turkey’s need to hold perpetrators of the attempted coup to account, but said the detention of more journalists was part of a “troubling trend”.

Turkey ordered another 47

journalists detained on Wednesday, singling out columnists and other staff of the now defunct Zaman newspaper, the government official said. Authorities in March shut down Zaman, widely seen as the Gulen movement’s flagship media organisation.

“The prosecutors aren’t interested in what individual columnists wrote or said,” said the official, who requested anonymity. “At this point, the reasoning is that prominent employees of Zaman are likely to have intimate knowledge of the Gulen network and as such could benefit the investigation.”

However, the list includes journalists, such as Sahin Alpay, known for their leftist activism who do not share the religious worldview of the Gulenist movement. This has fuelled the concerns that the investigation may be turning into a witch-hunt of the president’s political opponents.

The media reported on

Monday that arrest warrants had been issued for 42 other journalists, 16 of whom have so far been taken into custody.

Alpay is a former official of Turkey’s left-leaning, secularist main opposition CHP party. The Dogan news agency said police raided his home in Istanbul early on Wednesday and detained him after a 2-1/2-hour search of the property.

Separately, Turkey’s capital markets board said it had revoked the licence of the head of research at brokerage AK Investment and called for him to face charges over a report he wrote to investors analysing the coup.

Erdogan’s ruling Islamist-rooted AK Party and opposition parties, usually bitterly divided, have demonstrated a rare spirit of unity since the abortive coup and are seeking consensus on constitutional amendments partly aimed at “cleansing” the state apparatus of Gulenist supporters.—Reuters

Syrian army tightens grip around Aleppo, says offers safe passage

BEIRUT/MOSCOW — Syrian pro-government forces tightened their grip around Aleppo on Thursday, and the governor of the area said they would open corridors for civilians to escape the besieged, rebel-held districts of the city.

A quarter of a million civilians still live in Aleppo’s opposition-controlled eastern neighbourhoods, effectively under siege since the army and allied militia cut off the last road into rebel districts in early July. Syrian state television quoted the governor of Aleppo as saying three humanitarian corridors would be established for civilians to leave the city.

President Bashar al-Assad also offered an amnesty for rebels who surrender within three months. Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu said a fourth corridor would be set up in the north of the city for militants, near the Castello road which the army recently took over.

“On behalf of the President of the Russian Federation, today, (we will) start a large-scale humanitarian operation together with the Syrian government to help civilians in Aleppo,” Shoigu said in televised comments.

The Syrian army said on Wednesday it had dropped thousands of leaflets over opposition-held Aleppo districts, asking residents to cooperate with the military and calling on fighters to surrender.

A picture of what appeared to be one of the leaflets showed a map of Aleppo, titled “Safe exit points from Aleppo city”, with four crossing points out of the rebel areas marked on the map and described as humanitarian corridors.—Reuters

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Barbed wire fences surround the Don Dale Youth Detention Centre located near Darwin in the Northern Territory, Australia, on 27 July 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Australia prison abuse could violate torture conventions — UN

SYDNEY — The use of hoods, restraints and teargas on Australian aboriginal children in youth detention centres by police, as shown in footage released this week, could violate the UN treaty barring torture, a top UN official said on Thursday.

Australia's Northern Territory on Wednesday suspended the use of hoods and restraints on children after the broadcasting of CCTV footage showing guards at a juvenile detention centre tear-gassing aboriginal inmates and strapping a half-naked, hooded boy to a chair.

Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull has ordered a Royal Commission in the treatment of children in the detention centre, the most powerful inquiry in the country, rejecting calls for a national inquiry.

UN Special Rapporteur on Torture, Juan Mendez, told Aus-

tralia's Radio National on Thursday that the video suggested that torture may have taken place and welcomed the inquiry but warned against limiting its scope.

"It's hard to tell only from the video or the press coverage but I do think that it's a very worrisome development that can amount to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment under any circumstance...," he said.

He said that there was no question that very severe pain and suffering had occurred and that the perpetrators seem to be representatives of the state. If others knew and did nothing, they too could be punished alongside those who actually committed the violence, he said.

The footage, showing six aboriginal boys being stripped naked, strapped to a chair with a hood, thrown by the neck into a cell and held for long periods in

solitary confinement, was shot between 2010 and 2014 at the Don Dale Youth Detention Centre near Darwin in the Northern Territory.

A report into some of the incidents by the Northern Territory Children's Commissioner in 2015 found fault with the guards' behaviour, but the findings were disputed by the then head of prisons and not acted upon, said Australian Broadcasting Corp, who aired the footage.

The Northern Territory's corrections minister was sacked on Tuesday, just hours after the broadcast.

The case highlights concern about the disproportionate numbers of aboriginal youth in custody, with indigenous leaders calling for politicians to deal with the wider issue of the treatment of Aborigines in Australia.—Reuters

Death of black man in Canada after arrest sparks race debate

OTTAWA — The death of a mentally ill black man following his arrest by police in Canada's capital has sparked calls for a probe into whether race was a factor in the incident as advocacy groups voiced concerns over police violence against minorities.

Witnesses told local media that the Somali immigrant, identified as Abdirahman Abdi, 37, was beaten by Ottawa police officers. A video from a bystander showed him in a bloodied shirt lying face down on the ground with his hands cuffed behind his back and his pants pulled down before paramedics arrived.

While incidents of this type are rare in Canada, they are not unheard of and the death echoed similar events in the United States where allegations of police brutality and racial bias have sparked protests. Some confrontations in the United States were also caught on video.

Some people have expressed frustration that Abdi's death has not attracted as much attention as a number of incidents in the United States.

"There's a thirst publicly to have this conversation, and not to have it in the American context, but to have it in our context," said Rodney Diverlus, co-founder of Black Lives Matter Toronto.

Ontario's Special Investigations Unit has launched an investigation into the circumstances surrounding the arrest. Family spokeswoman Nimao Ali said in a statement earlier this week that Abdi had been dead for 45 minutes before he arrived at the hospital.

Naeem Malik, president of the Ottawa Muslim Association, which is covering the cost of Abdi's funeral on Friday, said he

used to see Abdi and his brother at mosque.

"He was mentally not capable of doing things," said Malik. "He used to kind of mumble. I don't know whether it was due to the mental problem or maybe there were speech problems."

A protest march is scheduled for Thursday in Montreal, and nearly 200 people are confirmed to attend, according to a Facebook event page.

Referring to whether race was a factor in Abdi's arrest and death, Amira Elghawaby, a spokeswoman for the National Council of Canadian Muslims, said, "That is a legitimate question people are asking and there will be a need to hopefully find some answers as to how or whether there was prejudice at play here."

Abdi's death comes as the Black Lives Matter movement ramps up activity in Toronto, Canada's largest city, and follows the death of two non-white men at the hands of police in that city in recent years.

"This is another deadly display of the police penchant for offering triggers over treatment," tweeted Anthony Morgan, a Toronto lawyer.

Last year, a Toronto police officer shot and killed Andrew Loku, a 45-year-old Sudanese immigrant with a history of mental illness. No charges were laid.

A Toronto police officer was convicted in January in the shooting death of Sammy Yatim, 18, after an altercation on a streetcar.

Earlier on Wednesday, Baltimore's top prosecutor dropped all remaining charges against police officers tied to the case of black detainee Freddie Gray, whose death led to protests last year.—Reuters

Trump draws ire after urging Russia to find 'missing' Clinton emails

MIAMI/WASHINGTON — Republican Donald Trump on Wednesday invited Russia to dig up tens of thousands of "missing" emails from Hillary Clinton's time at the US State Department, vexing intelligence experts and prompting Democrats to accuse him of urging foreigners to spy on Americans.

"Russia, if you're listening, I hope you're able to find the 30,000 emails that are missing," Trump, the Republican presidential nominee, told reporters.

Trump made the remark at a testy news conference at his Doral golf resort in Florida that allowed him to steal some of the limelight from the Philadelphia convention where Clinton on Thursday will accept the Democratic presidential nomination for the 8 November election.

The Clinton campaign shot back that Trump was posing a possible national security threat by encouraging a foreign power to conduct espionage in the United States. Some intelligence experts said the comments raised questions about Trump's judgement.

A spokesman for Trump, Jason Miller, tried to tamp down the storm of protest, saying Trump did not urge Russia to hack Clinton's emails.

Trump said on Twitter that if anyone had Clinton's emails, "perhaps they should share them with the FBI!"

The criticism of Trump's comments reverberated at the Democratic National Convention where speakers brought up the episode to try to intensify Democratic support for Clinton, who is running neck and neck with Trump in

the polls.

"Donald Trump today once again took Russia's side. He asked the Russians to interfere in American politics," longtime Clinton supporter and former CIA Director Leon Panetta said. "Donald Trump ... is asking one of our adversaries to engage in hacking or intelligence efforts against the United States of America to affect the election."

Another speaker, retired US Rear Admiral John Hutson, said of Trump: "This morning, he personally invited Russia to hack us. That's not law and order, that's criminal intent."

Trump was referring in his remarks to a private email system Clinton kept while secretary of state from 2009 to 2013. She handed over thousands of emails in 2015 to US officials probing



Republican Donald Trump.

PHOTO: REUTERS

that system, but did not release about 30,000 emails she said were personal and not work-related.

A Federal Bureau of Investigation probe of the issue found no basis for criminal charges, but FBI Director James Comey said this month there was evidence Clinton was "extremely careless" in her handling of classified information.

Trump dismissed suggestions

that WikiLeaks' release of embarrassing Democratic Party emails last week was engineered by Russia to help nudge the US election toward Trump, who has been called "very talented" by Russian President Vladimir Putin.

"It's just a total deflection, this whole thing with Russia," said Trump. "I never met Putin. I don't know who Putin is."

The Democratic Party chairwoman, Debbie Wasserman Schultz, resigned on Sunday after the leaked emails showed party leaders favouring Clinton over her rival, US Senator Bernie Sanders, for the presidential nomination.

Cyber security experts and US officials have said there was evidence that Russia engineered the release of the sensitive party emails in order to influence the presidential election.—Reuters

Pope says Europe attacks show 'world at war', religion not to blame

KRAKOW, (Poland) — Pope Francis, starting a trip to Poland overshadowed by the killing of an elderly priest in France by suspected Islamist militants, said on Wednesday this and a string of other attacks were proof the "world is at war".

However, speaking to reporters aboard the plane taking him to Krakow for the start of an Catholic youth jamboree, he said he was not talking about a war of religion, but rather one of domination of peoples and economic interests.

After his arrival under heavy security in Krakow, the pope also took on Poland's conservative government, implicitly criticising its anti-immigration stance.

But his strongest words of the day came while talking to reporters about the killing of Father Jacques Hamel, who on Tuesday was forced to his knees by suspected militants who then slit his throat.

"The word that is being repeated often is insecurity, but the real word is

war," he said.

"Let's recognise it. The world is in a state of war in bits and pieces," he said, adding that the attacks could be seen as another world war, specifically mentioning World War I and II.

"Now there is this one (war). It is perhaps not organic but it is organised and it is war. We should not be afraid to speak this truth. The world is at war because it has lost peace."

About 15 minutes later, after an adviser spoke to him, Francis took the microphone again as he was leaving the journalists' section in the plane and said he wanted "to clarify" that he was not referring to a war of religion.

"Not a war of religion. There is a war of interests. There is a war for money. There is a war for natural resources. There is a war for domination of peoples. This is the war," he said. "All religions want peace. Others want war. Do you understand?"

Poland's political landscape has undergone a big shift since October



Pope Francis greets the faithful as he arrives at the Jasna Gora shrine in Czestochowa, Poland on 28 July 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

when the eurosceptic, conservative Law and Justice (PiS) party ended nearly a decade of centrist, secular government.

Despite being rooted in Christian values, the PiS government disagrees with

Francis on issues such as refugees and the environment. It opposes mandatory European Union quotas for accepting migrants.

In a speech to President Andrzej Duda and the government in Krakow's

historic Wawel Castle, he pointedly called for "a spirit of readiness to welcome those fleeing from wars and hunger, and solidarity with those deprived of their fundamental rights ..."

"This means doing

everything possible to alleviate the suffering while tirelessly working with wisdom and constancy for justice and peace, bearing witness in practice to human and Christian values," he said.

Poland's conservative leaders have harnessed a brand of patriotism infused with Catholic piety to build popularity among voters and ensure the backing of the clergy, which is influential across provincial Poland.

Francis' five-day trip to the Krakow is taking place in the shadow of a predecessor, John Paul, who has cult-like status in Poland for his role in inspiring his native country to stand up to communist rule in the 1980s.

There were more posters of John Paul in Krakow than of Francis, an Argentine.

During the trip, Francis will also visit the former Nazi death camp site at Auschwitz-Birkenau, and pray at Czestochowa, site of Poland's holiest shrine.—Reuters

At least 120 cases of sexual violence in South Sudan capital — UN

UNITED NATIONS — The United Nations said on Wednesday there has been at least 120 cases of sexual violence and rape against civilians in South Sudan's capital Juba since fighting erupted three weeks ago between troops loyal to the country's rival leaders.

Heavy fighting involving tanks and helicopters raged in Juba for several days between troops loyal to President Salva Kiir and those backing Vice President Riek Machar earlier this month. At least 272 people were killed before the leaders ordered a ceasefire.

UN spokesman Farhan Haq said the UN peacekeeping mission in South Sudan continued to receive "deeply disturbing reports of sexual violence, including rape and gang rape, by soldiers in uniform and men in plain clothes against civilians, including minors, around UN House and in other areas of Juba."

Haq said UN peacekeepers had stepped up patrols and were also providing "protection at designated times to women

when they to go out of the Protection of Civilians sites to collect firewood and procure other non-food items."

The United Nations is protecting tens of thousands of people at sites in Juba and elsewhere in South Sudan. Haq said the United Nations called on all parties to immediately sanction the soldiers responsible for "these unspeakable acts of violence."

South Sudan, which gained independence from Sudan in 2011, descended into civil war after Kiir fired Machar as vice president in 2013. More than 10,000 people have been killed and some 2 million displaced, many of whom fled to neighbouring countries.

Kiir reappointed Machar earlier this year under a peace deal agreed in August. But Machar left Juba following the outbreak of violence earlier this month and Kiir replaced him on Monday with General Taban Deng Gai, a former chief opposition negotiator who has broken ranks with Machar.—Reuters

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV PATHEIN STAR VOY. NO ()

Consignees of cargo carried on MV PATHEIN STAR VOY NO () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 29.7.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T / A.I.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 REGIONAL CONTAINER LINES

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV YANGON STAR VOY. NO (061 7JR)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV YANGON STAR VOY NO (061 7JR) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 29.7.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

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

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

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MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S YANG MING LINES

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV SINAR BALI VOY. NO ()

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

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

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Working on Bad Moms was a treat: Kristen Bell

Actress
Kristen
Bell. PHOTO:
REUTERS

LOS ANGELES — Actress Kristen Bell found working on *Bad Moms* a “treat” because she got on well with her castmates.

The 36-year-old actress said she enjoyed “hanging out” with her co-stars on the set of the movie, sometimes with their kids and on other times without the offspring, which gave them the chance to remember they are all more than just someone’s mother, reported *Entertainment Tonight*.

“We so are [still friends]. It

was such a treat because we did bring our kids some days, but other days we just hung out on set as girlfriends, which was sort of the theme of the movie, to remember that you are an autonomous female who needs female friendships, or any friendships.”

Though they’re not working together any more, Bell knows she can always call on her co-stars – Mila Kunis, Jada Pinkett Smith, Kathryn Hahn, Christina Applegate and Annie Mumolo – for parenting advice.

“We all had kids of different ages, all six of us that were in the movie, so we shared advice at all times. It takes a village, and previously we lived in the same house or cave as our village.”

“Now, we’re all separated into different households, so it’s important to stay in communication and help each other: ‘Hey, how did you deal with this issue? What did you do when your kids weren’t sleeping? What did you do when your kids wouldn’t eat healthy foods?’”—PTI



Sylvester Stallone has a key role in Guardians of the Galaxy 2

PHOTO: PTI

LONDON — Hollywood action star Sylvester Stallone will have a key role in *Guardians of the Galaxy 2*, according to director James Gunn.

Stallone, 70, showed up briefly in the footage shown at Comic-Con, appearing in just a single one-second shot, reported *Digital Spy*. “It’s a very, very key, important role. It’s not a huge role. He’s a great and key supporting actor,” Gunn said.

The filming of *Guardians of the Galaxy 2* has just begun and its helmer James Gunn has revealed that he has been offered to direct a possible third film of the franchise.

“Right now I really am just concerned with doing *Guardians of the Galaxy Vol 2*. I’m not sure what I’m going to do after this,” the filmmaker said during a Q&A chat with fans on Facebook.

“Marvel has talked to me about continuing on. I’m not sure if that’s what I want to do or if that’s not what I want to do,” Gunn continued, “I really just want to make *Guardians of the Galaxy Vol 2* the greatest possible movie that I can, and something that’s as honest and sincere and true as it can possibly be.”

The production of *Guardians of the Galaxy Vol 2* started

in Atlanta, Georgia last month and, according to Gunn in the same Q&A, is scheduled to wrap up in June.

Meanwhile, rumours that Kurt Russell is Star-Lord’s (Chris Pratt) father were confirmed at Comic-Con, with the actor playing Ego the Living Planet in the 2017 sequel.

Zoe Saldana, Dave Bautista, Vin Diesel, Bradley Cooper, Michael Rooker, Karen Gillan, Sean Gunn, Glenn Close, Pom Klementieff, Elizabeth Debicki and Chris Sullivan will also star in the movie.

Guardians of the Galaxy Vol 2 will release in 2017.—PTI

Amber Heard accuses Johnny Depp of stalling divorce



Johnny Depp and Amber Heard. PHOTO: PTI

LOS ANGELES — Actress Amber Heard has alleged that her former husband Johnny Depp is trying to delay their divorce by insisting she signs a non-disclosure agreement before he submits financial documents to the court.

The 30-year-old *Magic Mike XXL* star made the accusations in new court documents, which she filed on Tuesday, 26 July, reported *Us* magazine. In the documents, Heard’s legal team claimed that Depp, 53, is deliberately trying to stop the divorce from going ahead quickly and quietly after he told the actress there would be a USD 100,000 fine for every time any financial information was leaked.

The pair is also reportedly squabbling on a date for Heard’s deposition. His team has suggested two dates in August but Heard said she is unable to make it because she is filming *Justice League Part One* in London.

However, Heard said she has offered to appear in court on a Saturday but Depp’s team isn’t

keen. Documents from Depp’s lawyer Laura Wasser claims Heard has already shared information about the couple to the media.

Meanwhile, Heard currently has a temporary restraining order against Depp after she claimed he attacked her with an iPhone, leaving her with a bruised eye. She also alleged that “during the entirety of our relationship, Depp has been verbally and physically abusive” to her.

The pair announced their divorce in May after just 15 months of marriage. Johnny Depp has been married to actresses Jennifer Grey, Sherilyn Fenn and Winona Ryder previously. Depp also had a high-profile four-year romance with Kate Moss. Depp was in 14-years long relationship with Vanessa Paradis.

Earlier Johnny Depp made her first appearance since his split with wife Amber Heard at annual Starkey Hearing Foundation Awards Gala in St Paul according to E! Online.—PTI

Billy Bob Thornton features in Bad Santa 2 trailer

LONDON — A new trailer for *Bad Santa 2* has been unveiled in which Billy Bob Thornton is back as the naughty Saint Nick.

Mean Girls director Mark Waters is helming *Bad Santa 2*, and the script has been written by Entourage creator Doug Ellin with Johnny Rosenthal and Shauna Cross, reported *Digital Spy*.

Geyer Kosinski will produce. Miramax will partner with Broad Green Pictures to co-finance and co-produce, said *The Hollywood Reporter*. Tony Cox and Brett Kelly, who were the part of the original film, are also returning as Marcus and Thurman Merman, respectively.

Actress Christina Hendricks has been roped in by the makers of to play Diane, the head of a charity organisation. The sequel to the 2003 dark comedy sees the return

of Tony Cox and Brett Kelly reprising their roles. Oscar-winning actress Kathy Bates as will be seen as Soke’s mom in the movie.

In *Bad Santa 2*, Willie and Sunny, who’s just as mean and foul-mouthed as her son, try to scam a charity headed by Diane. Although Diane looks prim and proper on the outside, she apparently “has a thing for shady low-lives in a Santa costume,” so Willie should be just her type.

The film is expected to hit theatres next year.

The film is due for release on November 23, 2016. The original November 2003 *Bad Santa* became a seasonal classic and managed a profitable box office take upon its release – grossing USD 60 million in the US on a budget of USD 23 million, and earning USD 76.5 million worldwide.—PTI

Ice Bucket Challenge credited with ALS breakthrough

WASHINGTON — The Ice Bucket Challenge that went viral two years ago, raising hundreds of millions of dollars, has helped identify a new gene behind the neurodegenerative disease ALS, or Lou Gehrig's disease, researchers say.

The challenge involved people pouring ice-cold water over their heads, posting video on social media, and donating funds for research on the condition, whose sufferers include British physicist Stephen Hawking.

Celebrities including Taylor Swift, Kim Kardashian, Ellen DeGeneres, Benedict Cumberbatch and former US President George W. Bush were among millions of people who took part in 2014, attracting more than 400 million views on social media. The challenge raised \$220 million worldwide, according to the Washington-based ALS

Association. News of the gene discovery again sent Ice Bucket Challenge viral, proving one of the top trending topics on Twitter on Wednesday.

The money funded the largest ever study of inherited ALS and identified a new gene, NEK1, that ranks among the most common genes that contribute to amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, the ALS Association said in a statement on Monday.

"Global collaboration among scientists, which was really made possible by ALS Ice Bucket Challenge donations, led to this important discovery," said John Landers of the University of Massachusetts Medical School.

Landers and Jan Veldink of University Medical Centre Utrecht led the study involving researchers in 11 countries.

"It is a prime example of the success that can come from



McLaren Mercedes team members dump buckets of ice water onto Formula One driver Lewis Hamilton of Britain as he takes part in the 'Ice Bucket Challenge' after the first practice session at the Belgian F1 Grand Prix in Spa-Francorchamps in 2014. PHOTO: REUTERS

the combined efforts of so many people, all dedicated to finding the causes of ALS," Landers said in a statement.

The research was published

in the scientific journal *Nature Genetics* this week and scientists hope it will provide another potential target for therapy development.—Reuters

Venezuela food shortages leave zoo animals hungry

CARACAS — Some 50 animals have starved to death in the last six months at one of Venezuela's main zoos, according to a union leader, due to chronic food shortages that have plagued the crisis-stricken South American nation.

The fatalities at the Caricua zoo in Caracas include Vietnamese pigs, tapirs, rabbits and birds — some of whom had not eaten for two weeks, according to Marlene Sifontes, 52, a union leader for employees of state parks agency Inparques which oversees zoos.

Other animals are at risk across the country.

Their troubles mirror those of Venezuelans who routinely skip meals or spend hours in supermarket lines, at times chanting "We want food!" or even looting, amid an unprecedented economic downturn in the OPEC nation.

"The story of the animals at Caricua is a metaphor for Venezuelan suffering," said Sifontes.

Authorities have not given numbers, but state prosecutors have opened an investigation into the deaths of "various species of wildlife" at the zoo.

Currently, lions and tigers at the Caracas zoo are being fed mango and pumpkin by anxious staff to make up for reduced rations of meat, while an elephant is eating tropical fruit instead of its usual diet of hay, the union leader said.

The zoo's management declined comment.

President Nicolas Maduro blames the country's problems on an "economic war" waged by local opponents and the United States.

His critics say heavy reliance on oil, the price of which has fallen steeply, and unsustainable economic policy are to blame.

As with all shortages in Venezuela, the situation for zoos is worse outside the capital, though wardens are looking for ways to keep animals alive. In La Laguna, a park in the western state of Tachira, administrators said they had to seek donations from local businesses to get fruit, vegetables and meat for the animals.—Reuters

A summer cruise to the North Sea's oil rigs amazes tourists

OSLO — Bored with palm-fringed beaches and turquoise seas? Then the gigantic oil platforms of the North Sea beckon. The first ever "rig-spotting" cruise just ended off the coast of Norway, and those onboard the four-day trip said it was jaw-dropping.

"I couldn't believe that these

big buildings could be made," said passenger Kari Somme, 86, after seeing Statoil's (STL.OL) Troll A platform — the heaviest structure ever moved by mankind — towering 200 metres (650 feet) above the surface of the sea.

"It's just wonderful, just wonderful. I was so excited because I didn't know much about

it. So when I came here and we went from rig to rig, or platform to platform, I was amazed," she said.

The North Sea is usually known for its cold and storms.

The group of 120 tourists, all Norwegians except for a German and a Swedish couple, paid between 6,000 crowns and 30,000

crowns (\$700-\$3,500) for four days on board the high tech offshore vessel Edda Fides.

The trip was organised by Edda Accommodation, a firm that provides housing for oil workers working offshore. It was looking for new ways to drum up business: oil firms are cutting costs to cope with a 60-per cent drop in the price of oil since mid-2014.

"There was little activity, so we used our creativity to come up with ideas. We organised this trip in six weeks," Bjoern Erik Julseth, the hotel manager on board, told Reuters by phone.

The group toured oil installations at the Troll, Balder or Ringhorn fields. Right after this ended, a second tour departed for a trip further north to the fields of the Norwegian Sea.

Many were curious to see Norway's oil production first hand. Oil brought wealth to a once-poor country of 4.2 million within a generation, and is still its top industry. But the bulk of the work is unseen as it takes place offshore.—Reuters



People observe an oil platform during a cruise in the North Sea, Norway, in this handout picture on 21 July 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS




Entertainment Channel

(29-7-2016, Friday)

<p>06 : 00 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weather Report Pyi Thu Ni Ti <p>06 : 30 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cartoon Programme "Shrek 2" (Part-2) <p>07 : 20 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> International Drama Series <p>08 : 00 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> International Drama Series <p>08 : 40 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MRTV Entertainment Music 	<p>09 : 00 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Those Who Never Give Up(Ep-5) Shwe Min Thar Foundation <p>09 : 20 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> International Movie Songs <p>09 : 30 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Festival of Poking Cheek with Thanakha <p>09 : 40 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Music Programme <p>10 : 00 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Myanmar Video
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From 29-7-2016 (Friday) 6:00 pm
To 30-7-2016 (Saturday) 6:00 pm



mitv Myanmar International

(29-7-2016 07:00am ~ 30-7-2016 07:00am) MST

<p>Today Fresh</p> <p>07:03 Am News</p> <p>07:26 Am Discovering Tribes "MUUN" (Ep -II)</p> <p>07:50 Am Sagaing: Youth Leader</p> <p>08:03 Am News</p> <p>08:26 Am Bagan: The Land of Pagoda</p> <p>08:51 Am Writer</p> <p>09:03 Am News</p> <p>09:26 Am Image of The Monks</p> <p>09:43 Am Myanmar's Export: Mango</p> <p>09:52 Am Soft Drinks without Vendor</p> <p>10:03 Am News</p> <p>10:27 Am Entrepreneur "Nan Ei Ei Zar"</p>	<p>10:40 Am The Treasures in a Small Village (Part-2)</p> <p>(11:00 Am ~ 03:00 Pm) - Thursday Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am) (03:00 Pm ~ 07:00 Pm) - Today Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)</p> <p>Prime Time</p> <p>07:03 Pm News</p> <p>07:27 Pm Mrauk U, Treasure Trove of Rakhine Culture</p> <p>07:46 Pm Village Belle</p> <p>08:03 Pm News</p> <p>08:26 Pm Bogalay Tint Aung: A Man of Versatility (Part- 1)</p> <p>08:51 Pm Myanmar Masterclass: 3D</p> <p>(09:00 Pm ~ 11:00 Pm)- Today Repeat (09:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am) (11:00 Pm ~ 03:00 Am) - Thursday Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am) (03:00 Am ~ 07:00 Am) -Today Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)</p> <p>(For Detailed Schedule – www.myanmaritv.com/schedule)</p>
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Djokovic survives test to reach third round in Toronto



Novak Djokovic of Serbia chases down a shot from Gilles Muller of Luxembourg on day three of the Rogers Cup tennis tournament at Aviva Centre, in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, on 27 July 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

TORONTO— Novak Djokovic was given a scare in his North American hardcourt season opener but managed to prevail with a 7-5, 7-6(3) victory over Luxembourg's Gilles Muller on Wednesday to reach the third round of the Rogers Cup.

Djokovic, playing his first match since his shock third-round Wimbledon loss to American Sam Querrey, fell behind

3-1 in the tie-break before switching gears and winning the next six points to seal the win in one hour, 43 minutes.

"It's tough playing the first hardcourt match since March. It was hot and that made the ball move very fast," said Djokovic. "It was hard to control, it was not easy to play. But I managed

to stay tough."

The Serbian world number one, a three-times winner of the Canadian Masters event, will next play Czech qualifier Radek Stepanek, a 7-6(5), 6-4 winner over Canadian wildcard Peter Polansky.

Querrey, whose Wimbledon run came to an end with a quarter-finals loss to eventual runner-up Milos Raonic, could

not pen a similar script as he retired from his second-round clash with Belgian seventh seed David Goffin while trailing 6-4, 2-1.

Japanese third seed Kei Nishikori beat American qualifier Dennis Novikov 6-4, 7-5, ninth seed John Isner fell 7-6(3), 6-7(4), 6-4 to American Ryan Harrison and Canadian fourth seed Raonic

beat Taiwan's Lu Yen-hsun 6-3, 6-3.

For Raonic, who grew up in a Toronto suburb, the match was his first since losing the Wimbledon final to Britain's Andy Murray and he soaked up the warm reception from fans.

"I don't get to play here in Toronto very much," Raonic said. "I can't wait to come back out here tomorrow."—Reuters

Hazard keen to recover title-winning form for Chelsea

LONDON — Eden Hazard said he was eager to recapture the form he displayed in Chelsea's title-winning 2014-15 campaign to help the club recover from the disappointments of last season and bring the Premier League trophy back to Stamford Bridge.

Chelsea launched one of the worst defences of the league title in living memory last campaign, finishing 10th in the final table 31 points behind champions Leicester City.

"I want to be the best, like I was two seasons ago. I said — after the season like this — I wanted to stay at Chelsea because I didn't want to finish like this," Hazard told British media.

The Belgian winger's 14 goals helped Chelsea become the English champions for the fifth time in 2015 and earn him England's Footballer of the Year and the Players' Player of the Year awards.

The goals, however, dried up last season for the 25-year-

old, who netted just four times in the league.

"We've got to show to everybody we are Chelsea, we're big players, we're a big team and we didn't finish in a good place last season. Now we want to do better and win the Premier League. We need to do this," Hazard said.

Hazard also said if he was to ever leave the west London club, it would only be as a Premier League champion.

"When I was in France (with Lille), I finished my last game with a hat-trick and that was a good time to leave. And if I must leave one day, I hope I can finish good here and be a champion again," he added.

New Chelsea manager Antonio Conte has already strengthened his squad with two big-money signings in striker Michy Batshuayi and midfielder N'Golo Kante. Conte will begin his tenure in England with a London derby against West Ham United at Stamford Bridge on 15 August.—Reuters

Bolt arrives in Rio for shot at immortality



Usain Bolt (JAM) poses after winning the 200m in 19.89 in the London Anniversary Games during an IAAF Diamond League meet at Olympic Stadium, London, on 22 July 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

KINGSTON — Jamaica's Usain Bolt has landed in Rio de Janeiro more than a week before the Olympics opening ceremony to fine tune his preparations for his attempt at an unprecedented triple-triple of gold medals in the men's sprints.

The world record holder, who required a medical exemption after he pulled out of the Jamaican trials with a hamstring strain, proved his fitness last Friday by running 19.89 seconds to win the 200 metres at the London Diamond League meeting.

He will join the Jamaican pre-Olympic camp as he seeks to become the first man to win gold medals in the 100, 200 and 4x100 relay at three successive Games.

Bolt had been training and receiving medical treatment in Munich after he pulled out of the Jamaican trials with the hamstring injury.

The lanky sprinter is among 59 track and field athletes in Jamaica's 63-member delegation.

The Caribbean nation will also be represented in diving, swimming and artistic gymnastics.—Reuters