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MOLDING A GENERATION

Teachers lie at the heart of quality education; State Counsellor

THE future of the country lies in education and teachers lie at the heart of quality education, said State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi while addressing a seminar on education promotion implementation (pedagogy sector) in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

In her address, the State Counsellor said that teacher achievement can be judged by encouraging students to develop critical thinking and logical reasoning skills, moving them beyond memorisation, and helping them become good and responsible people.

She also pointed out the male teacher shortage in the country's education profession in her address.

It is essential that teachers not lie to their students and teachers should treat all pupils like their own children, added the State Counsellor.

Highlighting the importance of lifelong learning, the State Counsellor called on teachers to continue learning and developing themselves so that they can instill a love for learning in their pupils.

It is required that the country take into consideration the socioeconomic status of teachers, said the State Counsellor, stressing the need to reform the examination system and learning system and to increase spending on education.

Next, Union Minister for Education Dr Myo Thein Gyi elaborated on ongoing works related to teaching and training.

A paper-reading session followed on the first day of the seminar.

Also present at the seminar were Pyithu Hluttaw representative Daw Su Su Lwin, Union ministers, regional social ministers, retired Deputy Education Minister Dr Myo Myint, distinguished guests, international partner organisations, officials and principals and faculty members of the Institute of Education.—Myanmar News Agency



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi addresses a seminar on education promotion implementation (pedagogy sector) in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

Govt takes steps to protect undocumented domestic workers abroad

THE Union government will make a list of undocumented Myanmar domestic workers in foreign countries as part of its efforts to extend to those people their legal rights and protection in respective foreign countries, said Daw Khin Nwe Oo, Deputy Director-General of the Labour Department of the

Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population.

"Currently, Myanmar domestic workers are working without legal protection from governments of respective countries and they have few rights to make contact with relatives or leave their employment when problems occur,"

said Daw Khin Nwe Oo.

The government has started to collect a list of undocumented domestic workers in cooperation with Myanmar embassies and labour organisations. The ministry estimated that the numbers of domestic workers may reach from 30,000 to 40,000 in Singapore and

around 28,000 in Thailand.

According to statistics collected from domestic workers who were sent legally to foreign countries, a domestic worker has to work six days a week with a salary of about 470 Singapore dollars (around US\$350) in Singapore and with a salary of about US\$505

in Hong Kong.

Myanmar began sending domestic workers to foreign countries in 1990 and sent 174 workers to Hong Kong and 130 to Singapore under a memorandum of understanding (MoU) before it suspended the scheme in June 2014. —Nyi Nyi Tun

Amyotha Hluttaw

Amyotha Hluttaw session continues



Dr Myint Htway. PHOTO: MNA



Dr Win Myat Aye. PHOTO: MNA

ARRANGEMENTS are being made for the delivery of durable emergency first aid kits following an agreement being made with the Nippon Foundation, Union Minister for Health and Sports Dr Myint Htway told the Amyotha Hluttaw yesterday.

The Union minister said

that the traditional medicine factory in Mandalay manufactured 20 types of traditional medicine over the last two fiscal years, adding that the factory will manufacture its products on demand and works are underway to collect accurate demand data.

Regarding a station hospital to be built in a village

in Yathedaung Township, Rakhine State, the Union minister said that Kyauktan village, an area of high malaria risk, will receive a station hospital following a budget allocation.

Next, Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr Win Myat Aye said that 46 buildings including monasteries and schools and 15 hillocks have been designated as safe places to live during times of disaster in Kalay Township, Sagaing Region.

More disaster-resistant shelters, if necessary, will be built with the use of the national natural disaster management fund in accordance with recommendations from the Sagaing Region government, added the Union minister.

The Amyotha Hluttaw closed the day by discussing the Elder Bill and Territorial Sea and Maritime Zone Bill submitted by the SWRR Ministry and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.—Myanmar News Agency



Union Chief Justice U Tun Tun Oo speaks at work co-ordination meeting. PHOTO: MNA

Chief Justice speaks on measures to promote public trust in courts

WORKS are underway with momentum to successfully implement a jurisdictional strategy to win public trust and confidence in the courts and to enforce the rule of law, said Union Chief Justice U Tun Tun Oo at a work coordination meeting with High Courts and District Courts in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

The Chie Justice called on judges, judicial officers and staff to put their utmost efforts into

jurisdiction reforms and said that an annual judicial report will be released and reforms in management and leadership will be carried out.

In his address, the Chief Justice said that Supreme Court of the Union heard and determined 546 of 1,092 criminal cases and 1,275 of 2,329 civil cases during the period from 1 January to 30 June this year.

Next, he stressed the need

to perform with fair judgment based on a thorough review of the evidences in accordance with existing laws and to make more efforts not to delay legal proceedings.

The work coordination meeting, attended by justices of the Union Supreme Court, chief justices of the Region/State High Courts and officials is scheduled to last for three days till Saturday.—Myanmar News Agency

Vehicles, rafts used for illegal gold mining seized in Kachin State

VEHICLES and rafts used for illegal gold mining were seized during combined operations of a number of military columns in Dunban-Shaduzup area, Kamaing Township, Kachin State.

Between 28 July and this Tuesday Tatmadaw columns confiscated 17 backhoe excavators,

three 22-wheeled vehicles, three 10-wheeled vehicles, six six-wheeled vehicles and 13 rafts and arrested four foreign nationals.

On Wednesday military columns conducting combing operations in the area of illegal gold mining were engaged in two

clashes with around 15 members of KIA outfit and 50 members KIA outfit separately.

While combined operations continued until yesterday, small KIA armed groups exchanged small and heavy fire and staged mine attacks on Tatmadaw columns.—Myawady

Pyithu Hluttaw

Pyithu Hluttaw session continues for eighth day



U Win Khaing. PHOTO: MNA

THE Pyithu Hluttaw session continued for its eighth day with parliamentarians discussing a proposal to take preventive measures against the possible adverse affects of floods on dykes in Ayeyawady Region yesterday.

In their discussions lawmakers expressed their support for the proposal and called for durability

of the dykes to relieve concerns of the people living along the Ayeyawady and Ngawun Rivers in the region before the country's third period of flooding and possible La Niña. A question and answer session followed with Union Minister for Construction U Win Khaing responding to questions about road upgrades and bridge construction.

Regarding Shinbwayan-Nann Yunn-Panhsaung road in Sagaing Region, the Union minister said that the road will be upgraded into an all-weather facility within three years, adding that K4.5million will be used for its upgrading works.

Next, the Union minister replied that works still remain to be completed upgrading 16 bridges on the main roads accessible to Rakhine State because of funds but Dalatchaung bridge on Ann-Sittwe road will be upgraded during the 2016-2017 FY and three new bridges are under construction on Minbya-Myebon road and Ponnagyun-Yathedaung road.—Myanmar News Agency

Chinese loan provides over K10 billion for Mon State villagers

LOW-interest loans totaling more than K10.3 billion, sourced from the Chinese EXIM Bank, have reportedly been provided to agricultural and livestock co-operatives within Mon State's Thaton Township by the local Department of Cooperatives in time for the harvest season.

U Sein Han, an official of the aforementioned department, said farmers had been provided with the loans in a bid to promote their capacity and provide them with employment opportunities.

"Villagers are issued with the loan from the EXIM Bank over a period of time so they can invest in their farming. They will reap the benefits of the loan if it's utilized as an investment in their farming practices. Although the amount they receive is not completely life-changing, it will support them to some extent," he said.

He continued by stating the loans had been provided to members of the aforesaid co-operatives

with a 1.5% interest rate through a group-guarantee system, meaning that if someone failed to pay back a loan instalment on time, the remaining members were then responsible for making up the failed payment.

"I received K95,000 of my K100,000 loan, as I have to contribute K5,000 to the village co-operative association's savings pot. This kind of saving will benefit us in the longrun; in such a time as we need the money to support our farming activities. It's to our advantage to earn an income through farming even though it can't cover all expenses," said U Aye Thein, a farmer from Thayetdaw village.

Loans from the Chinese EXIM Bank have been rolled out across 51 co-operative societies, comprising of 13,652 members, within Thaton Township since 2014. Each cooperative member is provided with a loan of K100,000.—Myitmaika News Agency



A vehicle used for illegal gold mining. PHOTO: MYAWADY

Vice President U Myint Swe receives British Ambassador

VICE President U Myint Swe received British Ambassador to Myanmar Mr Andrew Patrick at the Presidential Palace yesterday.

During the meeting, they discussed matters on investment and issues related to peace making, human rights and promotion

of cooperation between the two countries.

Also present at the call were Deputy Minister for the State Counsellor's Office U Khin Maung Tin, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs U Aung Lynn and officials.—*Myanmar News Agency*



Vice President U Myint Swe receives British Ambassador Mr Andrew Patrick. PHOTO: MNA

Top priority to be given to public safety, property protection in emergency management



Vice President U Henry Van Thio addresses coordination meeting of the Emergency Management Central Committee. PHOTO: MNA

THE Emergency Management Central Committee held a coordination meeting at the Ministry of Home Affairs in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday, with an address by its Chairman Vice President U Henry Van Thio.

Speaking at the meeting,

Vice President U Henry Van Thio stressed the need to assign a top priority to the public safety and protection of property in emergency management.

The vice president said the government, since its inception, has given priority to national

reconciliation, internal peace, a constitution that facilitates the establishment of a federal republic, and socioeconomic development.

He described peace as crucial to the accomplishment of these objectives, warning of ample evidence of possible instability and conflict during the period of transition from one government to another.

He also spoke of the challenges that lie in striking the balance between freedom and stability as well as democratic rights and the rule of law, citing it as a phenomenon of transition to democracy.

He called for closer cooperation among government departments in a timely response to the rise of instability, stressing the importance of emergency preparedness plans.

"Lack of preparedness will present difficulties in emergency management," he said, adding that risk assessment should be undertaken beforehand in dealing with cases that involve danger.

He urged officials to make response plans depending on the types of disasters, pointing out the need to coordinate the early availability of information with other departments, media channels and telecommunications operators by the systematic use of social media.

Regarding the unlawful protests, Vice President U Henry Van Thio recommended the use of problem-oriented policing in order to ensure that the people did not lose their democratic rights.

"Police forces should act in line with crowd management so as to prevent rallies from descending into riots," the vice president said. Home Affairs Union Minister Lt-Gen Kyaw Swe, who is a Vice Chairman of the Emergency Management Central Committee, briefed on cooperation with international and regional agencies in emergency management, violence and protests that broke out in 2015 and 2016 and the handling of recent unlawful demonstrations.

Union Minister Lt-Gen Sein Win, Union Attorney-General U Tun Tun Oo and Police Maj-Gen Zaw Win also briefed on the committee's response activities in emergency management.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Japan to provide assistance to produce car mechanics

MOTORCAR mechanic training courses will be opened by the Japan-Myanmar Vocational Training Institute (JMVTI) which will be established as part of the relationship between the governments of Myanmar and Japan.

The IMVTI will be opened on a 21-acre plot of land in Insein township, the place of the former government's technical high school.

"We have been planning to implement this project for a long time. But this time, we will try our best to start this project in December. Japan will provide monetary and technical assistance. We only need to manage it. Those wishing to attend JMVTI classes must be pass grade

nine, and they must be fanatical about cars. We haven't decided on the number of students allowed yet," said Dr Tin Aung, chairman of the Phyithu Hluttaw educational promotion committee.

"There are so many cars in Myanmar these days. Expert mechanics are needed to repair and maintain the cars. We help youths to become skilled motor mechanics. We will start with mechanics and then we will open classes for other disciplines," said Mr Ichiro Aisawa, chairman of the Japan-Myanmar Hluttaw Friendship Association. Representatives of the Hluttaw of Myanmar have gone on a study tour of vocational training schools in Japan, it is noted.—200

Flooding closes schools across Ayeyarwady

A total of 42 schools from within four townships of Ayeyarwady Region have been forced to close because of continual flooding in the region, according to the region's Department of Education.

The majority of schools were forced to close in Danubyu, Kyangin, Zalun and Myan Aung Townships are primary schools, numbering 28, followed by 12 middle schools and 2 high schools.

"Consistent downpours have flooded schools, forcing us to close them. I can't yet say when they'll be re-opened. But, it's like-

ly only once flood waters have receded. The continual flooding of townships within the region is exacerbating the numbers of closed schools on a daily basis," said U Win Maung, head of the aforementioned department.

Of the schools forced to close according to township: six middle schools and 16 primary schools within Myan Aung Township; two high schools, five middle schools and seven primary schools in Zalun Township; one middle-school and two primary schools in Kyangin Township; and two primary schools in Dan-

ubyu Township. "More than just closing schools only after they've been flooded, schools should be closed in advance [of flooding] if children are faced with difficulty in attending."

Our area has seen a rise in water levels forcing children to travel to school by boat which possess many dangers to them; just last year, three children drowned when their boat sank after they were caught in a storm on their way home from school," said Ko Nay Lin, a resident of Kwinthonehsin village in Yegyi Township.—*Myitma News Agency*

City Love & Hope foundation offers stipends to outstanding students

CITY Love & Hope Foundation has invited those who passed the matriculation examination to apply for stipends.

The cash assistance will be granted to 20 students who will join Bachelor of Education, Bachelor of Computer Science,

Bachelor of Commerce, Bachelor of Business Administration and Bachelor of Business Management.

Application forms are available at <http://cmhl.com.mm/citylovehope/education/> and can send to cmhlcorp-

ratecom@gmail.com or to City Mart Holding Co Ltd head office at the east of Padonma Sports Ground on Bargayar Road in Sanchaung Township not later than 15 September, according to the announcement of the CMHL.—*GNLM*

Kanthaya Towers to be finished next year

THE construction of the Kanthaya Consortium Towers project is now 40 per cent completed and it is estimated that it will be finished in late 2017, according to a project manager.

With the use of US\$200

million invested by the Yangon City Development Committee and Asia Myanmar Consortium Development Co, the towers are being constructed on 3.52 acres located at the corner of Kanyektha Street and U Aung Myat Street in Mingala Taungnyunt



Kanthaya Consortium Towers being seen under construction.

PHOTO: SOE WIN (MLA)

Eight overseas employment agencies face legal charges

EIGHT local overseas employment agencies have been charged by the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population as they fail to abide by the ministry's rules. Three agencies have had their operations suspended.

A total of 253 overseas employment agencies have been registered in the country. Action is being taken against agencies

which have been found to break existing rules and regulations related to sending labourers abroad. The ministry has urged domestic workers to make inquiries into the background history of their agency. A registered agency has to provide trainings to employees before sending them overseas and provide necessary assistance to those who face difficulties

in foreign countries.

A majority of Myanmar migrants have been sent to Thailand. Malaysia ranks second followed by South Korea.

According to the ministry's figures around 6,000 domestic workers go to Thailand monthly, 3,000 to Malaysia, 600 to South Korea, 200 to Japan and 100 to Singapore.—Zar Zar

Tourist arrivals expected to hit 7.5 million by 2019

INTERNATIONAL tourist arrivals in Myanmar are likely to reach 7.5 million by 2019 said U Thint Thwin, the director-general of the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism at a recent meeting.

Efforts are being made to boost the country's tourism sector with the exploration of new tourism destinations including Myeik Archipelago in Taninthayi Region.

Plans are underway to build tourism facilities at potential destinations to provide better services for visitors from home and abroad.

Myanmar will top the list of tourism development countries, according to the World Travel and Tourism Council's estimation about future prospects and sustainable development of 180 countries during the period between 2015 and

2025, based on tourism contribution to the GDP ratio, development rate, employment opportunities, investments and exports. Since 2011, the country sees a massive influx of tourists year on year. It hosted over 4.6 million foreign visitors last FY, an increase of 52 per cent compared to 2014. The ministry estimates that the number will increase to 5.5 million this FY.—GNLM

Public invited to attend court hearings

ACTION will be taken against officials who bar people from attending court hearings who have permission, said Union Attorney-General U Soe Nyunt.

Judiciary officials have granted the general public the right to sit in on court hearings.

People now have a right to complain to the relevant departments if they are prohibited by judiciary staff from observing the court.

Aside from cases involving children, members of the public have been permitted to visit court to watch trials, U Soe

Nyunt said in his reply to queries raised by U Myint Lwin, Pyithu Hluttaw representative from Pazundaung Constituency on August 3.

U Myint Lwin said some people, including media persons, were not allowed to attend court hearings.—Thein Ko Lwin

Crime NEWS

Heroin, yaba and opium oil seized in Hpa-an, Loilem and Hopong

LOCAL police from Hpa-an district seized 1,170 yaba pills from one Kyaw Mong Kha in Shwe Phalar village, Hpa-an township on Tuesday. According to a connected investigation police searched one Ma Nan Kaythi Moe in Myawady-4 ward and discovered 2,000 yaba pills. Police also searched the house of one Pay Lin in Myawady-4 ward and found 17,980 yaba pills.

On the same day a local po-

lice squad in Loilem townships seized 4,700 yaba pills from motorcycle driver Mya Maung on Loilem-Namhsan road, near Pan Khauk Woe village.

Similarly, police from Hopong seized heroin weighing 97 grams, opium oil weighing 12 grams and 1,850 yaba pills from one Ta Ngwe in Hopong township. All suspects have been charged under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.—MNA



Ma Nan Kaythi Moe, Kyaw Mong Kha and Mya Maung. PHOTO: MNA

Illegal cattle seized in Katha

POLICE seized 39 illegal cattle near Yin Khe village, Katha township, Sagaing region on Tuesday.

According to an investigation police searched the vehicle of one Min Tun Oo who had six other suspects on board. They discovered 20 buffaloes and 19 oxen near the Yin Khe forest reserve. The driver was unable to

provide documentation.

When interrogated, Min Tun Oo and the other suspects admitted that they had bought the illegal cattle in Katha township. Charges have been filed against Min Tun Oo, 34, San Min, 31, Thein Zaw, 28, Myint Lwin, 48, Zaw Lin, 32, and Kyaw Win, 60 from Ye Ni village.—Lu Aung (Katha)

Fire destroys a cement factory in Kyaukse



Fire destroys the warehouse of a cement plant in Kyaukse.

PHOTO: AUNG THANT KHAING

THE Two Rhino cement plant was damaged by fire early Wednesday morning in Kyaukse township.

Firefighters attacked the blaze with 13 fire engines with help from the factory workers.

Nobody was injured in the blaze.

The fire destroyed one warehouse on the site. Police have taken action against the manager of the warehouse.—Aung Thant Khine

LOCAL Business

KBZ opens rep office in Bangkok

KANBAWZA Bank (KBZ Bank) has opened a representative office in Bangkok, becoming the first Myanmar bank to establish an international presence.

The representative office is located in the Sathorn Square Office Tower, 98 North Sathorn Road, Silom, Bangrak in Bangkok.

At the opening ceremony held at the Dusit Tani Hotel on Wednesday the Governor of the Bank of Thailand Mr Veerathai Santiprabhob welcomed the opening of KBZ's representative office in Thailand.

Ambassador of Thailand to Myanmar Mr Pisanu Suvanajata, Ambassador of Myanmar to Thailand U Win Maung and Chairman of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry U Win Aung extended greetings at the opening ceremony.

Also present at the ceremony were Chairman of Kanbwaza Bank Ltd U Aung Ko Win, executive



U Aung Ko Win, Chairman of the KBZ Group of Companies, 5th from left, is seen together with dignitaries at the opening of the rep office of KBZ in Bangkok. PHOTO: KBZ

directors Daw Nang Lang Kham and Daw Nang Kham Naung, senior officials of the KBZ Bank Ltd and local international banks in Thailand as well as invited guests from Thai economic institutions.

KBZ Bank officially received a licence from the Bank of Thailand earlier this year to open the office in the capital. The bank also recently obtained a representative licence to open an

office in Singapore, continuing its planned expansion within the ASEAN region.

The KBZ Group of Companies was ranked top for best performance in 2014 by the Myanmar Centre for Responsible Business for its operation meeting with rules and regulations and being transparent.

Zeyar Sein Htut, KBZ Bank's new chief in Thailand, said there are many

opportunities in sectors between the two countries, adding that KBZ is well prepared to provide services standing shoulder to shoulder with international banks. KBZ will focus on market research, liaising with the private sector and serving as a source of information, including regulatory requirements for doing business both in Thailand and Myanmar.

—Thura Lwin (Eco)

Myanmar's external trade value decreased by \$750m this FY

THE total value of Myanmar's external trade over the past four months saw a decrease of more than US\$750 million compared to the same period last FY, according to official figures released by the Ministry of Commerce.

The total external trade value between 1 April and the end of July this FY reached over \$8.071 billion, including over \$3 billion

from the export sector and \$4.8 billion from the import sector. The country has a trade deficit of over \$1.5 billion.

During the first four months last FY, the country earned over \$8.823 billion from external trade through sea routes and border trade camps.

Myanmar imports industrial raw materials, personal goods, construction

equipment, automobiles and capital goods among others mainly from China, Japan, India, Indonesia, Germany, France and Hong Kong.

Efforts are being made to promote the country's export sector by shipping new valued-added products from the manufacturing sector within the next five years according to the second five-year National Development Plan between

the 2016-2017 and 2020-2021 FY.

The country exports forest products, agricultural products, natural gas and fishery products mainly to neighbouring countries.

The trade department expects that the trade value of Myanmar with partner countries is likely to reach around US\$31 billion over the 2016-2017 fiscal year.—GNLM

Textile and Garment Special Zones to be established

ARRANGEMENTS will be made to found textile and garment special zones (TGSZs) to manufacture garment products of international quality specifications and to issue certificates to enable the products to enter the international textile and garment market, it has been learned.

Effort will also be exerted to attract the attention of foreign investors to the industrial sector. The required raw materials, machines and equipment will be imported.

Currently, there are a total of 380 member companies of the Myanmar Garment Entrepreneurs Association. Among them, about 300 enterprises are exporting products

to the foreign market.

There is a total of 29 industrial zones with over 4,000 factories in Yangon Region and a total of over 300,000 people in the labour force, the majority of whom are engaged in the garment industry, it has been reported.

Myanmar's garment export sector is expected to earn US\$2 billion for the 2016-2017 fiscal year.

Over a half of Myanmar's garment enterprises exported their products to the USA in 2000 and 40 per cent to the EU. However, Myanmar's garment industry has since turned to Japan and South Korea due to economic sanctions on Myanmar, said U Phone Naing, a garment businessman.—200

DICA warns public companies to seek permission from SECM before share trading

THE Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA) issued an announcement on Tuesday that public companies have to seek permission from the Securities and Exchange Commission of Myanmar and register at DICA before they can engage in the trading of shares.

When public companies seek a business commencement certificate they must present an incorporation certificate together with the

other necessary business documents, according to DICA.

Public companies can commence share trading only after submitting the company's prospectus to SECM and after seeking the company registration and business commencement certificate from DICA. Public company leaders that sell shares without receiving the approval of SECM may be liable for a one-to-ten-year imprisonment term and/or fine. —GNLM

Panasonic mobile phones to arrive in Myanmar soon

JAPANESE company Panasonic is preparing to break into the mobile phone market in Myanmar, it has been learned.

Panasonic plans to enter the Myanmar mobile market within three months, according to an announcement released

by the Panasonic marketing department.

The Myanmar mobile phone market is said to be one of the most promising markets in Asia.

Panasonic mobile phones are already being sold in India, Sri Lanka and Nepal.—200



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Thousands gather in Bangkok urging Thais to vote on their 'big day'

BANGKOK — Around 3,000 students, civil servants and military cadets gathered in Bangkok on Thursday in a final push to urge Thais to vote in a crucial constitutional referendum at the weekend that aims to subdue political parties.

Thais will decide on Sunday whether to accept a military-backed constitution in the biggest test of public opinion since the military took power in a May 2014 coup, a vote that could give the generals a permanent role in overseeing Thailand's economic development.

Crowds gathered at the Royal Plaza near Bangkok's Government House as cars bearing banners urging Thais to cast their vote set out to drive around the Thai capital.

Thailand's two biggest political parties oppose the constitution because they say provisions in the charter are designed to ensure long-term military supervision of Thai politics.

The ruling junta, known as the National Council for Peace and Order, has said it wants to hand power back and return Thailand to democracy.



Thailand Election Commission's workers hold banners during an event to promote voting at the 7 August referendum on a new constitution, in Bangkok, Thailand, on 4 August 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

It says the constitution is designed to end more than a decade of divisive politics in Thailand, which has a long history of coups, and ensure politicians put people's interests first.

However, Reuters interviews with senior military officers belie those claims and show that the military's ambitions is to make future coups unnecessary by weakening polit-

ical parties.

Under the proposed charter, which would replace one torn up following the May 2014 coup, a junta-appointed Senate with seats reserved for mil-

itary commanders would check the powers of elected lawmakers.

The junta has promised a general election in 2017 if the constitution is approved.

A no vote could usher in more political uncertainty for Thailand and Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha, who is also junta leader, has said he will come up with another charter.

Referendum rules issued in May ban anyone from campaigning for either side of the vote, so at the Royal Plaza some carried more neutral signs that said: "On 7 August, vote in the referendum."

"Today we will have convoys around Bangkok ... to urge as many Thais as possible to come out and vote on Sunday," said Supachai Somcharoen, chairman of the Election Commission.

"This is the big day."

Some 50 million Thais are eligible to cast their votes in the referendum and the Election Commission has said it expects an 80 percent turnout.

Despite the campaigning ban, the junta has broadcast songs and television programmes to drum up support for the referendum.

"Everyone in the country ... must come out to exercise their right to vote," said Supachai.

—Reuters

US envoy hits back at suggestion US provoked North Korea

UNITED NATIONS — US Ambassador to the United Nations, Samantha Power, hit back on Wednesday at suggestions that a United States decision to deploy an advanced anti-missile defence system in South Korea had provoked recent ballistic missile tests by North Korea.

PYongyang's ally China has said Washington's decision last month to deploy a Terminal High Altitude Area Defence (THAAD) system would only worsen tensions on the Korean peninsula. North Korea threatened a physical response to the deployment decision. Speaking after the UN Security Council met on North Korea's missile launch on Wednesday, which landed in Japanese controlled waters for the first time, Power said the anti-missile system was to defend against the threat by North Korea.

"Any notion that there's some predicate by anybody other than Kim Jong Un and the DPRK (North Korea)

regime is not grounded in reality and it's not grounded in history," Power told reporters after the closed-door meeting, in reference to the North Korean leader.

China's UN Ambassador Liu Jieyi said that nothing should be done to exacerbate tensions on the Korean Peninsula.

When asked what could be done to de-escalate the situation, he said: "If you look at the factors contributing to the tension in the Korean peninsula I think the answer is self-evident." The 15-member Security Council met at the request of Japan and the United States following the latest in a series of launches by isolated North Korea in defiance of Security Council resolutions. "The missile landed within Japan's exclusive economic zone. There was no warning whatsoever," Japan's UN Ambassador Koro Bessho told reporters. "It is certainly a major, major problem for the security and safety of our region."



North Korean leader Kim Jong Un smiles as he attends a flight training session by female fighter pilots Jo Kum Hyang and Rim Sol in this undated photo released by North Korea's Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) on 22 June 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

South Korea's UN Ambassador Oh Joon said that this year North Korea had conducted 13 rounds of ballistic missile tests, firing 29 various rockets.

"They are doing all of this with a systematic, comprehensive purpose of upgrading and refining their missile technologies," he told reporters. "It poses a clear and present danger to the security of all countries in the region." Power said

she believed the Security Council could swiftly issue a condemnation. Council statements have to be agreed by consensus and previous condemnations of North Korea missile launches have taken days or weeks. United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon is "deeply troubled" by North Korea's recent missile launches, his spokesman said, calling on Pyongyang to "reverse its course." —Reuters

South Korea may shift THAAD site due to health concerns by residents — Yonhap

SEOUL — South Korea could change the site of a US THAAD anti-missile defence unit in the southeastern county of Seongju due to health and environmental concerns among residents, said Yonhap News Agency, citing remarks from President

Park Geun-hye. South Korea in July announced the US Terminal High Altitude Area Defence (THAAD) system will be deployed in the farming county, triggering protests from residents worried about possible negative health and environmen-

tal impact.

"In consideration of concerns held by the residents of Seongju, we will consider a different site if there is any that the county recommends," Yonhap quoted Park as saying in a meeting with lawmakers.—Reuters



Residents chant slogans during a protest against government's decision on deploying a US THAAD anti-missile defence unit in Seongju, South Korea, on 13 July 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

ASEAN economic ministers discuss regional trade in Laos

VIENTIANE — Economic ministers from the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations met in Laos on Wednesday to promote trade facilitation and foster a business-friendly environment in the region.

The one-day meeting, the first of its kind since the ASEAN Economic Community was established in 2015, adopted a set of work plans to implement the AEC Blueprint 2025, which was adopted by the leaders of Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam at a summit in 2015.

"ASEAN should focus more on trade facilitation issues, espe-

cially to address non-tariff barriers as well as simplify custom procedures," Lao Prime Minister Thongloun Sisoulith said at the opening ceremony in Vientiane.

He said regulatory frameworks, mechanisms, and procedures should be improved in order to enhance the regional business environment and make ASEAN a preferred global investment destination.

The 10-year sectoral work plans adopted Wednesday include the ASEAN Trade Facilitation Framework that promotes free-flow of investment and the AEC 2025 Strategic Action Plan for Trade in Goods that aims to decrease the impacts of non-tariff

measures.

According to an ASEAN official source, the ministers also discussed the unsettled agenda of a Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership meeting to be held in Vientiane on Friday to discuss things like trade in goods and services, investment liberalization and government procurement.

The RCEP is a proposed ASEAN-centered free trade agreement between the 10 ASEAN members and the six nations with which it has existing FTAs, namely Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand and South Korea. Negotiations were launched in 2012.—Kyodo News

Philippine tycoon quits corporate post as Duterte vows to destroy 'oligarchs'

MANILA — Roberto Ongpin, one of the Philippines' richest men, resigned as chairman of a listed gaming company one day after President Rodrigo Duterte swore he would take down the country's "oligarchs" and singled out Ongpin as one of them.

Shares in gaming cafe operator Philweb Corp, majority-owned by Ongpin, slumped as much as 50 pct in Manila trading on Thursday. The stock closed 37

per cent lower.

Ongpin has stepped down to focus on real estate projects developed by Alphaland Corp, also majority-owned by Ongpin, Philweb said on Thursday.

The tycoon was once a trade minister under disgraced former president Ferdinand Marcos, whose regime was characterised by widespread corruption, decadence and military brutality.

Tycoons adds to a growing list

of targets that Duterte is pursuing. The firebrand former prosecutor has said he will crack down on drug dealers, crime bosses, corrupt generals, business monopolies, online gambling and even Catholic priests.

"I am fighting a monster... Believe me, I will destroy their clutchees in our nation," Duterte said at an environment summit in southern Davao City on Thursday, without identifying anyone.—Reuters

China joins Afghanistan, Pakistan, Tajikistan in security alliance

BEIJING — China is to set up an anti-terrorism alliance with Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Tajikistan, state media said on Thursday, as it seeks to boost coordination with neighbours to tackle what it says is a growing domestic militant threat.

Fang Fenghui, a member of the powerful Central Military Commission which controls China's armed forces, hosted a meeting with his counterparts on Wednesday in Urumqi, capital of the western Xinjiang region, where officials say they are battling Islamist militants.

The four countries recognised the serious threat of terrorism and extremism to regional stability, the official Xinhua news agency said, and they agreed to set up a "four-country mechanism" for intelligence sharing and training.

"All parties reaffirmed they will cooperate to respond to these forces, and safeguard all member countries' peace and stability," Xinhua said.

Afghan army chief of general staff, General Qadam Shah Shaheem, Pakistani army chief General Raheel Sharif, and the Chief of General Staff of the Tajikistan armed forces, Major General E. A. Cobidzoda, took part in the talks, the news agency said.

The meeting comes after China's defence minister this week thanked Afghanistan's Shaheem for support in fighting the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM) an Islamist

group that China says wants to set up a separate state in Xinjiang.

China did not elaborate on the help it got.

China has long been concerned that instability in Afghanistan will spill over into violence-prone Xinjiang, home to the Muslim Uighur people, where hundreds of people have died in recent years in unrest Beijing blames on extremists.

The United States and the United Nations have listed ETIM as a terrorist group, though some experts have questioned its cohesiveness and say China's policies in Xinjiang have contributed to unrest.

China denies that its policies stoke tension in Xinjiang or motivate Uighurs to join Islamic State militants, though it acknowledges some have gone to Syria and Iraq to join the group.

China is also working with Pakistan and the United States to broker peace talks to end a Taliban insurgency that has raged for 15 years in Afghanistan.

That effort never got beyond exploratory talks and appeared to break down completely when Taliban leader Mullah Akhtar Mansour was killed in a US drone strike in Pakistan in May.

Sources in the Taliban told Reuters that a Taliban delegation visited China in July, though Chinese officials have not confirmed it.—Reuters

Nepal's new prime minister names core team, seeks reconciliation

KATHMANDU — Nepal's new Maoist Prime Minister Prachanda named a minority leader to the key position of home minister in his first appointments on Thursday, seeking reconciliation after months of protests by southern plainsfolk over a new constitution.

The 61-year-old former rebel commander has vowed to tackle the grievances of the Madhesi minority that demands a greater say in central government by amending the constitution adopted last September.

The Madhesi, who have close cultural and family ties with neighbouring India, have staged protests against the charter, saying it marginalized them by dividing their southern homeland into several states.

Violence, blamed by many Madhesi on the use of excessive police force, claimed more than 50 lives in the protests that pe-

tered out in February.

Prachanda appointed Bimalendra Nidhi of the centrist Nepali Congress, the biggest coalition party, as deputy prime minister in charge of the home ministry, officials said.

Among those appointed to the cabinet was Krishna Bahadur Mahara from Prachanda's Maoist party, who will also be a deputy prime minister in charge of the finance ministry.

"Initially only a few people will represent in the cabinet, more will join later," said Prakash Sharan Mahat, an official of the Nepali Congress.

Prachanda, whose real name is Pushpa Kamal Dahal, still uses his wartime pseudonym, which means "fierce". He has promised to keep his cabinet small, after predecessor K.P. Oli was criticized for appointing a 32-member coalition with six deputy prime ministers.—Reuters

Opinion

What does it take for quality education to materialise?

Kyaw Thura

QUALITY education has been the talk of the country in the past three decades. Activists have been complaining to the successive governments about the country's declining education system. When it comes to the realisation of quality education, the importance of the quality of teachers and students alike cannot be overestimated.

For the incumbent government, education is clearly at the top of the agenda, giv-

en the government's promise that it would spend the revenues generated from the commercial taxes of telecommunications on education and health.

In Nay Pyi Taw yesterday, the Ministry of Education had a seminar on pedagogy with a sharp focus on the successful implementation and promotion of education, which drew State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. In her address, the state counsellor stressed that the

learner-centred teaching is broader in scope, considering that learning is a lifelong endeavour. She also encouraged teachers to awaken children's natural curiosity and channel it into learnability.

Judging from her words, children who receive effective and appropriate incentive in their formative years are highly likely to succeed at school. Positive support through interactions is central to their psychosocial development later in life. Only

then will they become quality learners. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi also called for self-improvement of teachers. Quality teachers are those who facilitate children's ability to keep on learning on their own. In other words, quality teachers are those who have acquired complete mastery of their subject matter and excellent pedagogic skills. After all, it takes quality teachers and quality students for quality education to materialise.

Towards People-centred and People-Oriented ASEAN

Aung Htoo

A strong ripple effect felt the world when people of the United Kingdom recently decided to leave the European Union at a nation-wide referendum. It took the world and other regional organizations by surprise. The European Union has been considered as a role model for successful regional integration that took root 60 years ago. Someone might think similar fate could be faced in ASEAN as well. Former Secretary-General of ASEAN, Mr. Surin Pitsuwan, was quick to rebuke that it is highly unlikely.

Britain's decision to leave the EU was mainly voted for by the elderly and those who were disenfranchised that they are not getting benefits from the European Integration. Whatever happened, Brexit was decided by the people or voters and reflected the aspiration of the people. It strikes to my mind that if the European Union could be built in first instant as people-centred union and if the people believe in the benefits of integration, such thing may not be possible.

When we look back ASEAN, as a regional organization, ASEAN is also not a people-centred organization yet. The Charter of ASEAN still maintains that ASEAN is an intergovernmental organization. Therefore, ASEAN is driven by leaders and is looking forwards to new and fresh leadership. ASEAN was established by foreign ministers of founding member countries on 8th August 1967 as an Association of Southeast Asian Nations to cooperate in economic and socio-cultural fields in accordance with the Bangkok Declaration. In 2003, ASEAN had decided to be integrated into a community. By the end of 2015, ASEAN declared it-

self as ASEAN Community. As any other organization, ASEAN has its own vision and mission. In 2005, ASEAN had produced ASEAN Vision 2020 which stated "ASEAN as a concert of Southeast Asian Nations, outward looking, living in peace, stability and prosperity, bonded together in partnership in dynamic development and in a community of caring societies". As a growing and dynamic regional organization, ASEAN has issued another Vision in 2015 to keep up with the changing circumstances, "ASEAN 2025: Forging Ahead Together", that reaffirmed ASEAN's resolve to continue along the path of regional integration and provide an insight as to the regional organisation's priorities focus and goals. In its Vision 2025, the leaders had pledged to ASEAN peoples their resolve to realise a rules-based, people-oriented, people-centred ASEAN of "One Vision, One Identity, One Community".

Before going over to the need for a people-centred organization, one should know the differences between ASEAN and the European Union. While the European Union considered itself as a "common European House", ASEAN member countries are very diverse in nature. It has different sizes in terms of population, territory or economy. It consists of different systems of economies and governments, multitude of ethnic groups and languages. The only common denominator in ASEAN is that they live in the same geographic region, "the Southeast Asia" and they accept a unique quality of "Asian Values". Asian values embedded in the mind of Asian people can be seen as preference for social harmony, concern with socio-economic prosperity and the collective well-being of the community, loyalty and respect

towards figures of authority and finally preference for collectivism and communitarianism. Therefore, ASEAN adopts the motto of "Unity in Diversity". The approach of ASEAN is the ASEAN Way that resorts to constructive engagements, consultation, quiet diplomacy, compromise and decision by consensus. Because of the ASEAN Way of decision-making, ASEAN was criticised from time to time by others that it could only achieve the "lowest common denominator". How ambitious a member state may be, it must value and respect the comfortability of others to accept a proposal. Members of ASEAN are similar to permanent members of the United Nations Security Council. They possess veto powers in decision making. Decision can be made only when all the members comfortably agree to. Therefore, ASEAN is often questioned for its lack of credibility, relevance, centrality and boldness. At this time of heightened tension on the South China Sea, the criticism could be more vocal. On the other hand, one has to realize that ASEAN's integrity, unity and credibility are firmly rested on the pertinent way of decision making by consensus. ASEAN may face the similar fate as the European Union if decisions were made by majority and not by consensus.

Case in point is the South China Sea issue at recently concluded 49th ASEAN Foreign Minister meeting (AMM) in Vientiane, Lao PDR. ASEAN has made a spectacular move out of a crisis based on the ASEAN consensus. After the judgement of International Permanent Court of Arbitration, the Philippines wanted to include references to the Court's ruling in the Joint Communique. But some member states resisted. The Drafting Group could not agree to over-

come it. The Senior Officials could not solve it. But after repeated attempts of the ASEAN Foreign Ministers themselves in informal consultation setting, they reached consensus and successfully issued the Joint Communique of the 49th AMM. This is the victory for ASEAN and the relevance of the ASEAN Way.

Another contrast between ASEAN and the European Union is that ASEAN will never agree to form as a supranational organization where member countries give away parts of their sovereignty to the bureaucrats similar to that of the European Union. The European Union has a secretariat of more than 7000 staff, which drafts every common positions and regulations for the member states and monitors its compliance. ASEAN member states do not allow ASEAN Secretariat to do the same. ASEAN Secretariat has a skeleton staff of about 200. ASEAN Chairmanship is on rotation basis and the Chair leads ASEAN during its chairmanship and decisions were made, reviewed and monitored collectively at respective ASEAN Summits and its ministerial or senior officials meetings. ASEAN Secretary-General and the ASEAN Secretariat are merely to support ASEAN activities and its member states.

Basically, ASEAN has worked to achieve common goals and purposes contributed by its member states to the best of their ability and capacity. The idea is that "the whole is bigger than the sum of its parts" as once Aristotle stated. The individual efforts of the member states will contribute to the greater success of ASEAN. ASEAN is not bound by rigid rules and regulations. Because of that approach, ASEAN becomes one of the most dynamic and successful regional organizations.

When ASEAN has grown as

a dynamic and credible regional organization with combined efforts of its individual member states, the European Union seems to regulate its members with equal benchmarks, common positions and regulations. When more developed countries in the EU like Germany or France could comfortably fulfil the requirements of the EU such less developed countries as Greece, Portugal or some Eastern European members have difficulties in keeping up with the pace of integration. Britain as a country which once controlled the quarter of the world did not even join the European Monetary System. The financial rescue package for Greece had made an initial crack in the EU. When the EU has imposed quota system to accept mass migration of refugees from the Middle East, the patience became very thin for most of the EU member states. The result of Brexit referendum is indicative of that frustration.

ASEAN should learn from the lesson of the EU. The most important thing is that when ASEAN member states become more democratic, the ASEAN governments increasingly need to fulfil the aspiration of the people. Therefore, ASEAN should be more people-oriented and people centred in the future. Looking at the future of ASEAN, it is imperative that ASEAN as an organization should inevitably be more focused on people-centred ASEAN.

The governments of the member states should take steps to transform the organization into a people-centred one. The government should adopt policies on how to transform people-centred ASEAN. At the same time they should call for broad participation of the people into that process. For example, as governments adopted policies on more visa

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Curriculum Vitae of His Excellency Mr. Bounnahang VORACHITH, President of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, and his spouse



Mr. Bounnahang Vorachith.



Mrs. Khammeuang Vorachith

HIS Excellency Mr. Bounnahang VORACHITH was born on 15th August 1937 in Banna Village, Thapanthong District, Savannakhet Province, Lao PDR.

From 1982 to 1993, Mr. Bounnahang VORACHITH served as Governor of Savannakhet Province, from 1993 to 1996, he served as Mayor of Vientiane Municipality and from 1996 to 1998, he was appointed as Deputy Prime Minister. He also served

as Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Investment and Co-operation, Chairman of the Central Committee on Land-Forestry Management and Chairman of the Central Committee on Rural Development. From 2001 to 2006, he was appointed as Prime Minister of Lao PDR and from 2006 to 2016, he was appointed as Vice President of Lao PDR. He was elected as General Secretary of the Lao People's Revolution

Party Central Committee of the X Party Congress in January 2016. He was elected as President of the Lao PDR on 20 April 2016 in the preliminary Session of the VIII National Assembly.

His Excellency Mr. Bounnahang VORACHITH is married to Mrs. Khammeuang VORACHITH, and they have three sons and two daughters.

Curriculum Vitae of Mrs. Khammeuang VORACHITH, Spouse of the President of the Lao People's Democratic Republic

Mrs. Khammeuang VORACHITH was born on 20th November 1949 in Khangvieng Village, Pek District, Xieng Khouang Province, Lao PDR. She graduated from Military Medical College.

From 1964 to 1983, she served as nurse at Savannakhet's Hospital and from 1983 to 1992 as Deputy Secretary of Youth Committee of Savannakhet Province.

Measures taken to control TB

YANGON National Tuberculosis Programme (NTP) and the Public Private Mix TB Project (PPMTB Project) will join forces to open a total of five PPMTB Centres within five private hospitals situated in Yangon and the Sagaing Region capital of Monywa, to be financed by the Global Fund.

The centers are reportedly to be opened at the five hospitals to be able to treat patients in the manner as criteria of the NTP prescribes.

"Patients vulnerable to contracting TB can be transferred from private hospitals and clinics to government tuberculosis treat-

ment wards, but the patients themselves are reluctant to be moved, stating a plethora of reasons why they can't be transferred. It's this scenario which has been the impetus for establishing the PPMTB Centres, so that patients can be treated when they come and visit one of the private hospitals without having to be transferred. Two centres are to open in Yangon and four in Monywa," said Dr Thet Naing Maung, manager of the PPMTB Project. Excluding Kayah and Chin States, the Myanmar Medical Association (MMA) will dispatch more than 1,400 medical practitioners to

assist rolling out of the PPMTB Project in 135 townships across all other states and regions throughout Myanmar from 2017. "The NTP is also playing its part in helping to establish PPMTB Centres in private hospitals," continued Dr Thet Naing Aung. "The entire country will be freed from shackles of concerns toward contracting TB only with success of the NTP tuberculosis eradication initiatives. Opening the PPMTB Centres will abate the numbers of those contracting the disease. It's not going to be an easy task, but we have to give it our all."—*Myitmaika News Agency*

Towards People-centred and People-Oriented ASEAN

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free movement of people among ASEAN countries, ASEAN people must also be prepared to get involved more into people to people exchanges. Through these activities, the people of ASEAN Community could appreciate "We feeling" as ASEAN citizens.

ASEAN citizens should know more about the purposes and activities of ASEAN Community. The parliamentarians elected by the people should forge closer cooperation. The parliaments of ASEAN member states should adopt legislations in support of ASEAN Community and harmonization of laws among ASEAN countries.

ASEAN countries should establish independent human rights commissions to oversee the pro-

motion and protection of human rights in accordance with ASEAN Human Rights Declaration and other international standards and norms. ASEAN countries should mobilize and pool resources for search and rescue operations and humanitarian assistance in times of disasters. In education sector, curriculums should be harmonized and school and university certificates should be mutually recognized.

ASEAN students should be given opportunity to interchange their studies across ASEAN education institutions. Inter-ASEAN trade and investments must be promoted and create a single market, single investment and tourism destination. ASEAN should ensure collectively for food and energy security as well. ASEAN

must promote its diverse culture and the common identity. Within the framework of ASEAN, farmers, workers, academia, youth, women and disabled persons should take part in activities that promote ASEAN integration. Civil societies should hold the activities that promote and support ASEAN Community. These activities will surely promote the bottom - up approach which will in turn complement the current top-down approach of ASEAN Community.

In so doing, the ASEAN citizens will recognize the future potential of ASEAN Community, the benefits accrued from the integration and will not be swayed from the Community which they deeply cherish and they are involved in.

U Maung Maung Lynn presents credentials to President of Israel

U MAUNG MAUNG LYNN, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to the State of Israel, presented his Credentials to His Excellency Mr. Reuven Rivlin, President of the State of Israel on 3 August 2016, in Jerusalem.—*Ministry of Foreign Affairs*

Appointment of Ambassador agreed

THE Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has agreed to the appointment of Mr. Khaled Mohamed Abdelrahman Abdelsalam as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Arab Republic of Egypt to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

Mr. Khaled Mohamed Abdelrahman Abdelsalam studied at Diplomatic Institute of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Cairo from 1982 to 1984. Then he served in various capacities at Egyptian Embassies in Tunisia, from 1984 to 1988; in Afghanistan, from 1990 to 1991; in Viet Nam, from 1992 to 1994, Consul-General of Egypt in Houston, Texas, from 1995 to 1999 and Egyptian Embassy in Tripoli, Libya, from 2001 to 2005. From 2005 to 2009, he served as Consul-General of Egypt in Shanghai, China. From 2010 to 2014, he served as Ambassador of Egypt to Rwanda.—*Ministry of Foreign Affairs*

Myanmar, Thai artists to show W/C works at Yangon Gallery under art exchange program

MYANMAR and Thai artists will cooperate to conduct a Myanmar-Thai Water Colour Art Exchange and Workshop in Yangon from 12 to 15 August.

Fifteen artists each from the two countries will exhibit water colour works at the exhibition which will be held at the Yangon Gallery in People's Park, Yangon.

The art exchange and workshop in Yangon is sponsored by the Yangon Gallery while the event in Krabi, Thailand, is sponsored by the mayor of Krabi.

As part of the exchange programme, artists will make outdoor trips to Bago and Chaungtha to capture Myanmar scenery on paper.—*Kay Khaing*



Water colour painting titled "Paying Homage" by Beikthano Tin Win is one of the paintings to be displayed at the art exchange. PHOTO:KAY KHAING

Traditional marionettes festival to come this month

THE Myanmar traditional marionettes festival will take place in the third week of this month in Mandalay with a wide range of entertainment programmes.

To mark the 2nd anniversary of the founding of the Myanmar Marionette Organisation a one-day event is scheduled for 19 August at the Shwepyitha Hotel.

Several educative talks will be conducted by famous writers before traditional puppet shows plus hand puppet and modern puppet shows are presented by

puppeteers mainly from Yangon and Mandalay. The event will be open to the public free of charge.

Puppetry has traditionally been one of Myanmar's most popular folk arts and is commonly seen at pagoda festivals. Researchers date the origin of Myanmar marionettes to the 1870s.

At present around 20 professional puppeteers remain in the field. A member of the MMO said foreigners show greater interest in the country's puppet tradition than locals.—200



Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump attends a campaign event at the Jacksonville Veterans Memorial Arena in Jacksonville, Florida, US, on 3 August 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Fury at top of Republican Party over Trump snub of House speaker

WASHINGTON/JACKSONVILLE (Fla.) — Donald Trump's White House campaign was in turmoil on Wednesday after he angered senior Republican Party leaders by criticising a dead soldier's family and refusing to back the re-election campaign of House of Representatives Speaker Paul Ryan.

On Tuesday, Trump denied support to both Ryan and Senator John McCain in their coming primary contests, hitting back at critics in the Republican leadership who have taken him to task for his insistent public dispute with the parents of the soldier, a Muslim US Army captain killed in the Iraq war.

Republican National Committee Chairman Reince Priebus was furious over the failure to endorse Ryan, who is the most senior elected Republican, and over Trump's feud with the Khan family, two Republican sources said.

"He feels like a fool," a Republican source familiar with the situation said of Priebus.

The RNC did not respond to a request for comment about Priebus.

Another Republican source said Trump's family members, who have played an influential role in his campaign, were aware that an intervention was needed to get Trump back on track. One idea being floated was to have a senior adviser travel with Trump to help him stay on message.

More than any other major figure in the Republican establishment, Priebus worked to bring Trump into the party's fold despite the New York businessman's status as an outsider. Trump, who had never previously run for public office, beat 16 rivals to become the Republican presidential nominee for the 8 November election.

Ahead of last month's Republican Party Convention, the

RNC chairman sought to rally the fractured party behind Trump. Priebus feels burned by Trump's string of self-inflicted wounds and his refusal to observe basic decorum by giving Ryan his support.

But in what appeared to be an effort to soothe ruffled feelings, Trump's vice presidential running mate, Mike Pence, said on Wednesday he endorsed Ryan as "a strong conservative leader" and was doing so with Trump's blessing.

The Indiana governor told Fox News that it takes time to build relationships in politics and that was exactly what Trump and Ryan were doing.

Trump has had a running dispute with the parents of Army Captain Humayun Khan since they took the stage at last week's Democratic National Convention. Khizr Khan, with his wife, Ghazala, standing by his side, cited the sacrifice of their son, who was killed by a car bomb in 2004, and criticized Trump's proposal to combat terrorism by temporarily banning Muslims from entering the United States.

Many Republican leaders, including Ryan and McCain, have criticised Trump's subsequent attacks on the parents. Even longtime ally Chris Christie, the Republican New Jersey governor, said it was inappropriate to attack the Khans.

Trump's feud with the Khans was the final straw for Republican congressman Adam Kinzinger, a former Air Force pilot and Iraq war veteran. Kinzinger, who had held off supporting Trump, told CNN on Wednesday: "I just don't see how I get to Donald Trump anymore."

Trump, who made his comments about Ryan and McCain in an interview with *The Washington Post*, shrugged off the backlash. "There is great unity in my cam-

paign, perhaps greater than ever before. I want to thank everyone for your tremendous support. Beat Crooked H!" he wrote on Twitter early on Wednesday, referring to his Democratic rival, Hillary Clinton.

Campaign manager Paul Manafort told Fox News the campaign was moving in a positive direction, with Trump himself in control. "The campaign is in very good shape. We are organised. We are moving forward," Manafort said.

In Daytona, Florida, Trump said the news media's coverage of him was dishonest. "We're doing quite well despite the fact that we get a totally false narrative," he told supporters at a rally.

At another campaign event in Florida, in Jacksonville, Trump pointed out a group of families, known as Gold Star families, who have lost loved ones in war, calling them "incredible people." He didn't mention the spat with the Khans. Trump's always unruly campaign has been mired in disorder in recent days. On Monday, Trump fired Ed Brookover, a senior adviser hired as a liaison between the campaign and the RNC.

Ryan, who is favoured to win next week in his race against primary challenger Paul Nehlen, appeared to be trying to ignore the snub from Trump. An aide to the speaker said he would not have time to meet Trump later this week, when Trump is expected to be campaigning in Wisconsin, Ryan's home state.

The aide did not indicate whether anyone had requested a get-together of Trump and Ryan, but when asked whether they might meet to patch things up, the aide told Reuters, "The speaker has a full schedule — can't back out of previous commitments in the (congressional) district." —Reuters

NEWS IN BRIEF

Turkey detains 20 suspected Islamic State members

ISTANBUL — Turkish police detained 20 suspected members of the Islamic State militant group in the southern city of Adana early on Thursday, the private Dogan news agency reported.

It said anti-terror police, supported by a helicopter, staged simultaneous raids on 22 addresses in the city after a tip-off that Islamic State cells were planning attacks.

The suspects, who included senior local figures in the group, were taken to Adana police headquarters for questioning, it said.

President Tayyip Erdogan has said Islamic State militants from the former Soviet Union were behind an attack on Istanbul's main airport in June which killed 45 people. Dozens have been detained over the attack. Islamic State controls an area of Syria along the Turkish border, east of Adana. The city of Adana is near the Incirlik Air Base, where US personnel are stationed and which is used for air missions in the fight against Islamic State.—Reuters

US Secretary of State Kerry to visit Turkey in late August — CNN Turk

ISTANBUL — US Secretary of State John Kerry will visit Turkey in late August, broadcaster CNN Turk said on Thursday, more than a month after a failed military coup shook the NATO member state.

Turkey's relations with Washington have been strained by the abortive putsch, which President Tayyip Erdogan blames on US-based Turkish cleric Fethullah Gulen. Erdogan has called for the extradition of Gulen, who denies involvement in the plot.—Reuters

Ranger dies fighting Spanish island wildfire, German man arrested

MADRID — A park ranger died and about 700 people have been evacuated as a wildfire blazed out of control on the Spanish island of La Palma, emergency services said on Thursday.

Francisco Jose Santana, a married father of five, was killed while fighting the fire which started on Wednesday and is being fanned by high winds. Spanish police said they had arrested a 27-year-old German man who, according to a source from the investigation, has admitted to starting the fire accidentally. Spanish media reported that he had tried to burn used toilet paper. The last major fire on the island, part of the Canary Islands, was in 2009 when 4,000 people were evacuated. The island is a popular tourist destination and the wildfire comes at the height of a record summer holiday season.—Reuters

Child abuse in Japan at worst level on record in FY 2015

TOKYO — Child abuse in Japan reached its worst level on record in fiscal 2015, with the number of cases handled by welfare officials surpassing 100,000 for the first time, a government survey showed Thursday.

Psychological abuse, such as children's witnessing of domestic violence, showed a notable increase. Experts say growing income inequality and isolation of families from local communities are raising the risk of spousal abuses. A total of 103,260 cases were handled at child consultation centers nationwide in the year through March, up 16 per cent from the year before and marking the 25th consecutive annual increase since the government started taking tallies in fiscal 1990, according to the preliminary report.—Kyodo News

Sudan floods kill 76, destroy thousands of houses

CAIRO — Floods and heavy rain in Sudan have killed 76 people and destroyed thousands of homes in recent days, the interior minister said on Thursday.

Ismat Abdelrahman said 13 of Sudan's 18 provinces had been affected by flooding.

The Nile is at its highest levels in more than a century, swollen by heavy rain in many parts of the East African country, according to the water and irrigation ministry.

Interior ministry statistics showed downpours and flooding had completely destroyed 3,206 houses, and damaged 3,048 others in the eastern province of Kassala, one of the worst hit areas.

Sudan suffers from an underdeveloped infrastructure, particularly in rural areas, which makes it harder to cope with heavy rain and natural disasters.—Reuters

Bangladesh police arrest two suspects in Dhaka terror attack

DHAKA — Bangladesh police have arrested two survivors of last month's attack by radical Islamists at a Dhaka restaurant that left 20 hostages dead, including nine Italians and seven Japanese, on suspicion of involvement in it, local media reported on Thursday.

Hasnat Karim, a businessman and former North South University teacher, and Tahmid Hasib Khan, a University of Toronto student, were both arrested Wednesday night, police were quoted in the reports as saying.

Karim, 47, is a British citizen of Bangladeshi origin, while Khan, 22, is a Bangladeshi citizen and permanent resident of Canada, according to reports.

After booking them under Section 54 of the penal code that allows for arrest without a warrant in some cases, police produced the duo in court, which placed them on remand for eight days, local media said.

The two suspects were among over a dozen people rescued during a commando operation at the Holey Artisan Bakery and O' Kitchen Restaurant, which share a building in Dhaka's diplomatic enclave Gulshan, on 2 July following an almost 12-hour standoff.

Dhaka Metropolitan Police Deputy Commissioner Masudur Rahman was quoted by the *Dhaka Tribune* as saying their suspicious movements during the attack prompted police to take action against them.

According to authorities, Karim and Khan were quizzed and released soon after the incident. But since then and until their arrests, their whereabouts were unclear.

Human Rights Watch said in a 15 July statement that despite police denials, the two men at the time "clearly" remained in custody, without being charged and without access to lawyers.—*Kyodo News*



Fighters of Libyan forces allied with the UN-backed government move towards Islamic State fighters positions during a battle in Sirte, Libya, on 31 July 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

US strikes easing advance against Islamic State in Sirte, says commander

SIRTE (Libya) — US air strikes are easing the passage of Libyan forces as they seek to clear Islamic State from the militant group's former North African stronghold of Sirte, a senior field commander said on Wednesday.

Mohamed Darat said the first strikes, which took place on Monday, had helped Libyan brigades under his command secure the Dollar residential neighbourhood by targeting militants who had been holding out on the district's edge.

Libya's UN-backed government requested the strikes nearly three months into a campaign that had slowed due to heavy casualties from sniper fire, mines and mortars.

"In the last two houses in this area we faced strong resistance so we asked (the US) to hit that site," said Darat, speaking from a part of Dollar captured last week. "We moved back and they struck."

A US defence official said there were five strikes on Monday and two on Tuesday. The Pentagon said the first targets included two tanks, construction and military vehicles and a rocket launcher.

The strikes were carried out by armed drones from Jordan and Marine Corps AV-8B Harriers from the USS Wasp, an assault ship located in the Mediterranean Sea, the US official said, adding that intelligence-gathering drone flights were being operated from Sigonella air base in Sicily.

Losing Sirte would be a huge blow for Islamic State, which took control of the city midway along Libya's Mediterranean coastline last year. The group is already under pressure from US-backed campaigns in Syria and Iraq.

Libyan commanders say a few hundred Islamic State fighters are now encircled in the center of Sirte, though they have retained control

of four neighbourhoods.

The advance through residential areas would be gradual, Darat said. "We'll do what we did in Dollar and move forward house by house."

"We're resting now and if there are air strikes it will make our lives easier, but we will advance with or without them."

The forces fighting in Sirte are mainly composed of brigades from the nearby city of Misrata, which counter-attacked in early May when Islamic State advanced up the coast west of Sirte.

Many of them are volunteers and former rebels who fought in the uprising that toppled Muammar Gaddafi five years ago. At least 350 brigade members have been killed and more than 1,500 wounded since May.

Almost all of Sirte's 80,000 residents have fled the city, and the streets are mainly deserted. Each day of heavy fighting tends to be

followed by a lull of several days.

On Wednesday brigade fighters rested in buildings or in the shade of trees, eating green almonds and cooling off with iced drinks, the quiet broken by occasional crackle of gunfire.

They welcome the air strikes, some saying they should have come sooner.

"We wish they'd do it on a more regular basis," said Mohamed Abu Dabbous, a fighter on the front line between the Zafaran and Area Two districts.

He said that when it tries to move forward his unit is exposed to fire from a cluster of about 20 unfinished apartment blocks used by Islamic State snipers, buildings he said would make an obvious target for US strikes. His fighters also risk being hit by mines.

"In 2011 we dealt with Gaddafi's snipers, but it was easier then because there weren't any landmines."—Reuters

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Pentagon not to pay Pakistan \$300 million in military reimbursements



US Defence Secretary Ash Carter holds a news conference at the Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia on 20 August 2015.

PHOTO: REUTERS

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon will not pay Pakistan \$300 million in military reimbursements after US Secretary of Defence Ash Carter decided not to tell Congress that Pakistan was taking adequate action against the Haqqani network, a US official said.

Relations between the two countries have been frayed over the past decade, with US officials frustrated by what they term Islamabad's unwillingness to act against Islamist groups such as the Afghan Taliban and

the Haqqani network.

"The funds could not be released to the Government of Pakistan at this time because the Secretary has not yet certified that Pakistan has taken sufficient action against the Haqqani network," Pentagon spokesman Adam Stump said on Wednesday.

The \$300 million comes under the Coalition Support Fund (CSF), a US Defence Department programme to reimburse allies that have incurred costs in supporting counter-terrorist and coun-

ter-insurgency operations. Pakistan is the largest recipient.

"This decision does not reduce the significance of the sacrifices that the Pakistani military has undertaken over the last two years," Stump said.

According to Pentagon data, about \$14 billion has already been paid to Pakistan under the CSF since 2002. The decision by the Pentagon is a sign that while it sees some progress by Pakistan in its military operations in North Waziristan, much work remains.

Pakistan rejects harbouring militants but says there are limits to how much it can do as it is already fighting multiple Islamist groups and is wary of a "blowback" in the form of more militant attacks on its soil.

"Pakistan does not draw any distinction between any terrorists and we have taken up the fight against terrorism and the terrorist elements within Pakistan," Foreign Office spokesman Nafees Zakaria told reporters in Is-

lamabad on Thursday.

"These reimbursements enable the United States to support Pakistan's ongoing counter terrorism efforts in a manner that serves shared interests of both the countries."

Relations between the United States and Pakistan were tested in May by a US drone strike that killed Afghan Taliban chief Mullah Akhtar Mansour on Pakistani soil.

There has been growing resistance in the US Congress to sending money to Pakistan. Many lawmakers have expressed concern about its nuclear programme, commitment to fighting terrorist organisations and cooperation in the Afghanistan peace process.

In March, Republican Senator Bob Corker said he would use his power as the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to bar any US funding for Islamabad's purchase of \$700 million of Lockheed Martin Corp F-16 fighter jets.—Reuters

South Africa's main opposition leads count in Nelson Mandela metro

JOHANNESBURG —

South Africa's opposition Democratic Alliance (DA) led in the symbolic Nelson Mandela Bay municipality on Thursday in local elections seen as a barometer of the ruling ANC's wider popularity

two decades after the end of apartheid.

The DA had 53 per cent of the votes compared with 37 per cent garnered by the African National Congress (ANC), with 62 per cent of the vote counted.—Reuters

Paris police on alert for refugee who may be planning attack

PARIS — Security agencies in Paris have circulated a photo of an Afghan asylum seeker on suspicion that he might be plotting an attack on the capital, a police source said on Thursday.

Police did not have a name for the Afghan, the source said, and no active manhunt was underway. Metronews reported that the man had been in France for the past two months.

France is reeling after two attacks last month by Islamic State loyalists, one of whom killed 84 people by driving a truck into Bastille Day revellers in Nice while two others cut the throat of an elderly priest. The country has been under emergency rule since militant gunmen and suicide bombers killed 130 people in Paris in November.—Reuters

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An Emirates Airline flight is seen after it crash-landed at Dubai International Airport, the UAE on 3 August, 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Fire guts Emirates jet after hard landing; one firefighter dies

DUBAI — An Emirates jetliner arriving from India caught fire after slumping onto the runway in Dubai on Wednesday, killing one firefighter in an intense blaze and bringing the world's busiest international airport to a halt for several hours.

All 300 passengers and crew were safely evacuated from the gutted Boeing 777-300 after a crash that one survivor described as terrifying. Fourteen people were admitted to hospital.

The Dubai carrier's first significant accident happened after the crew apparently attempted to abort the landing for a second attempt amid unconfirmed witness reports of landing gear problems.

Video showed a tower of flame bursting from the front of the plane, and then a thick black plume of smoke rising into the sky. Reuters was unable to verify the footage independently.

Photographs on social

media showed a plane lying crumpled on the tarmac with black smoke pouring from its upper section, and later images showed a gap along the length of the charred fuselage where its roof had been.

"It was actually really terrifying. As we were landing there was smoke coming out in the cabin," said passenger Sharon Maryam Sharji. "People were screaming and we had a very hard landing. We left by going

down the emergency slides and as we were leaving on the runway we could see the whole plane catch fire. It was horrifying."

Another passenger leaving the airport with his family said there had been a problem with the landing gear. A spokesman for operator Dubai Airports said everyone aboard flight EK521 coming from Thiruvananthapuram in southern India had been evacuated.—Reuters

US woman killed in London knife attack, no evidence of terrorism link say police

LONDON — A US woman was killed and five other people injured by a man with suspected mental health issues who went on a rampage with a knife in central London, but police said there was no evidence that the attack was terrorism related.

Armed police were called at 10:33 pm (2133 GMT) after a Norwegian man of Somali origin with a knife started to attack people in London's Russell Square, an elegant park near the site of a 2005 suicide bombing.

The victim, a US citizen in her 60s, was treated at the scene but pronounced dead a short time later.

Another woman and four men were treated in hospital, though three of them were later discharged. Nationals from Australia, Britain, Israel and the

United States were among those hurt.

"All of the work we have done so far increasingly points to this tragic incident as having been triggered by mental health issues," said London Metropolitan Police Assistant Commissioner Mark Rowley.

"We believe this was a spontaneous attack and that the victims were selected at random," said Rowley, who is Britain's most senior anti-terrorism officer.

"So far we have found no evidence of radicalisation that would suggest that the man in our custody is in any way motivated by terrorism," said Rowley. Initially he said that terrorism was a line of inquiry.

Police, who arrived within six minutes of being called, used a Taser electric shock gun while detaining

the 19-year-old suspect. He was later formally arrested on suspicion of murder.

Police cordoned off the southern part of the square, which sits at the heart of London's university area and is close to landmarks such as the British Museum, for several hours as forensics officers examined the attack scene.

Later, workmen hosed blood off the pavement.

London's Sadiq Khan, the first Muslim mayor of a major Western capital, called for vigilance and urged Londoners to report anything suspicious to the police, who increased their presence in the capital.

"The safety of all Londoners is my number one priority and my heart goes out to the victims of the incident in Russell Square and their loved ones,"



Armed police officers patrol at the scene of a knife attack in Russell Square in London, Britain, on 4 August 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

he said.

Just hours before the Russell Square attack, London's police chief said that he would deploy an additional 600 armed officers across the capital to protect against attacks.

London counter-terrorism police chiefs have previously warned that Islamic State was seeking to radicalise vulnerable people with mental health issues to carry out attacks.

In some operations, police commanders have taken advice from specialist psychologists.

Islamist militants hit London with coordinated suicide bombings on 7 July, 2005, killing 52 people. One of the bombs detonated on a bus close to Russell Square.

Since then, dozens of plots have been foiled and there have been smaller-scale attacks, such as

the beheading of an off-duty soldier by militant Islamists in a London street in May 2013.

A man who attacked passengers at a London underground train station in December was jailed for life earlier this month. The judge said the attacker was suffering from paranoid schizophrenia at the time of the offence but may have been motivated by events in Syria.—Reuters

Kenya's traditional midwives in frontline of drive to cut maternal deaths

KISUMU, (Kenya) — By the time she was three months pregnant, 24-year-old Cynthia Salome had already decided that she wanted her husband's grandmother to be her midwife when it was time to give birth.

She felt more comfortable in the hands of Roselinda Akumu, the oldest midwife in the village of Manyatta, in Kenya's Kisumu county. Akumu, 78, delivered her first baby in the 1960s and has lost count of the number of mothers she

has helped.

So when Salome's labour pains began in December, her husband took her to Akumu's home. She was hoping to give birth to her first child there.

However, Akumu, one of the village's 10 traditional birth attendants who are attached to nearby Migosi Hospital, decided that the birth was complicated and the expectant mother should be admitted to hospital.

"I was in labour for a long time and gave birth in the morning of the third

day," Salome told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

"All this time, Roselinda was by my side," added Salome who now has a healthy, seven-month-old son.

Kisumu County in western Kenya has begun an initiative to involve traditional birth attendants in interventions to curb maternal deaths.

The midwives are taught about the dangers of unskilled deliveries and assigned the task of referring

pregnant mothers to hospital. For every referral, a traditional birth attendant at Migosi Hospital is paid 300 Kenyan shillings (around \$3).

Health officials in Kisumu hope that hospital deliveries will improve the overall health of women and children.

Maurice Otieno, Kisumu county's director of health services, said that it was worrying that almost a third of pregnant women in Kisumu County were not delivering in hospital.

"The policy direction is to re-orientate traditional birth attendants, train them and task them with referral of pregnant mothers," Otieno told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

According to a 2014 report from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), 488 expectant mothers die per year in Kenya per 100,000 live births. This compares with just six deaths per 100,000 births in Germany.

Kisumu is among the counties with highest ma-

ternal mortality rate in Kenya with 495 mothers dying for every 100,000 births. In the remote and poor eastern areas like Garissa and Mandera, the maternal mortality rate is even higher.

Otieno hopes that once the hospital initiative is implemented throughout Kisumu county, the maternal death rate will fall.

So far, the number of women delivering in the pilot hospitals like Migosi has more than tripled since the intervention began in 2014.—Reuters



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People look at a model of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry which is part of the Warner Bros 'The Making of Harry Potter' studio tour in Leavesham, England, on 28 October, 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

Second 'Fantastic Beasts' movie coming in November 2018, studio says

LOS ANGELES — The second movie in the Harry Potter spin-off series "Fantastic Beasts" will be released in November 2018, Hollywood movie studio Warner Bros said on Wednesday, promising "much more on the horizon" from the boy-wizard franchise.

British author J.K. Rowling will write the script for the second movie as she did for the first and David Yates, who directed the last four "Harry Potter" films, will direct, Warner Bros said in a statement. The movie, yet to be titled, is part of a three-movie deal based on Rowling's book "Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them," a prequel to her best-selling "Harry Potter" books. The first movie, starring Eddie Redmayne, will be released on 18 November, 2016.

Redmayne plays Newt Scamander, a 'magizoologist' who arrives in New York in 1926 with

a case of magical creatures that escape, wreak havoc and face threats from the non-magical humans in the city.

Ahead of San Diego's Comic-Con event last month, Yates teased that a familiar character from the "Harry Potter" stories will return in "Fantastic Beasts."

"There is a mention of some characters that we know and love from previous movies, but we only talk about them fleetingly," Yates told Reuters.

"In the next movie, part two, we'll get to meet one of them in a significant way. He's much younger than he used to be, but he'll be coming back."

In June, Yates said Rowling already had ideas for the third "Fantastic Beasts" film and said he relished not having to adapt the new stories from books.

"When we adapted the books, we'd always have to leave out things you hated leaving out

because they didn't quite work in the structure of the storytelling for the movie," he said.

"Pottermania" returned with a vengeance in recent weeks, with rave reviews for the London stage play "Harry Potter and the Cursed Child," and publication of the play script in book form. US and British booksellers say the book is already the best-selling title in a decade.

Harry Potter theme park attractions are up and running in Florida and California, as well as in Osaka, Japan.

Warner Bros, without giving details, hinted "there is much more on the horizon" from Rowling's Wizarding World.

More than 450 million copies of the seven original Harry Potter books have been sold worldwide in 79 languages.

The movie franchise has grossed more than \$7 billion worldwide.—Reuters

Daisy Ridley quits Instagram after receiving online abuse

LOS ANGELES — Actress Daisy Ridley has left Instagram following online abuse she received on the photo-video sharing website.

The 24-year-old Star Wars actress was accused of hypocrisy by some users, after she posted a tribute to the victims of gun violence in America.

Daisy posted following the Teen Choice Awards 2016 on Sunday, after the audience were introduced to Alton Sterling's son Cameron, and victims from the Orlando, Newtown and San Bernardino shootings. "Serious bit: as I sat in the audience yesterday tears were streaming down my face at the tribute to those that have been lost to gun violence.

"I didn't get a great picture of the incredible group that came on stage but they were so brave. It was a true moment of

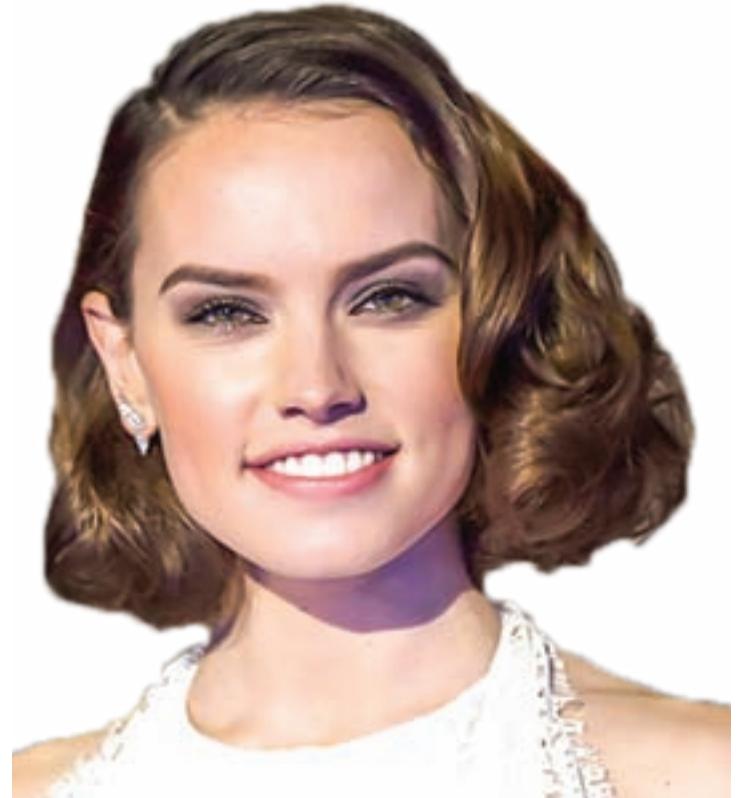
togetherness. We must #stoptheviolence," she wrote.

The actress said that she was moved to tears following a special segment at the Teen Choice Awards 2016 dedicated to young family members of victims of gun violence.

However, people accused her of hypocrisy because her Star Wars character Rey occasionally shoots stormtroopers with a blaster. Her Instagram account has now been deleted, and judging by comments made by co-star John Boyega, she won't be returning anytime soon.

Writing to a fan in a now-deleted Instagram comment, Boyega said, "She's doing what's best for her."

"I won't be advising my friend to come back. Sorry." He added, "She makes her own decisions and as a friend, I support her right to."—PTI



Actress Daisy Ridley. PHOTO: PTI

I want to do lot of Bollywood films: Sunidhi Chauhan

MUMBAI — Having won several accolades for her singing talent, Sunidhi Chauhan now wants to spread her wings and try hands at acting in Bollywood films. The 32-year-old singer recently made her acting debut with the short film, Playing Priya.

The Sheila Ki Jawani hit-maker said earlier she wasn't prepared to take on the role of an actor, even though she was fascinated by acting since childhood.

"Earlier I wasn't ready to act but now I have reached a stage where I know this is the

right time. I was inclined to acting since childhood. Now I want to do a lot of Bollywood films," Sunidhi told PTI.

"I am waiting for good roles and offers to come. I won't take up anything, I'll choose the right script and would definitely like to do a full length feature film," she said. The singer, who has crooned hit tracks like Te Amo, Crazy Kiya Re, Kamli and Chor Bazari, said she was offered a film when she was just 19.

"When I was 19-year-old, I had an offer to act. But I turned it down because I wasn't ready



Sunidhi Chauhan who made her Bollywood debut with short film Playing Priya says she wants to do lot of films. PHOTO: PTI

for it. I wanted to focus on playback singing only. Now I know for sure I can give equal attention to both, singing and acting," she said. Talking about Playing Priya, Sunidhi said she enjoyed the process of being in front of the camera and realised that the medium requires a lot of hard work.

"It was an amazing experience shooting for the film. Since it is a short film, I didn't have the burden of a feature length movie. What I did realise was, whether long or short, filmmaking requires a lot of hard work, dedication and patience."—PTI

Riot police open way for torch through Rio protest

RIO DE JANEIRO — Police used stun grenades and tear gas to clear protesters in the path of the Olympic torch in a poor suburb of Rio de Janeiro on Wednesday, two days before South America's first Olympic Games open under tight security.

Olympic Brazilian sailors earlier delivered the torch to the host city's mayor after crossing Guanabara Bay near the end of a 20,000-km (12,400-mile) journey through one of the world's largest and most diverse countries.

The flame landed on terra firma at 9:15 am (13:15 London time) while just kilometres away 450 heavily armed police battled drug traffickers to carry out dozens of arrest orders in the Alemao slum, an area near the international airport and close to the main road to Olympic venues.

Armed soldiers stood patrol on highways and on many corners throughout the iconic beach city in Brazil's largest security operation ever. Some 85,000 police, soldiers and security personnel will be deployed in Rio,

more than double the amount in London in 2012, to deter both violent street crime and the threat of attacks by extremists.

Police said anti-government protesters in Duque de Caixas, on Rio's north side, threw rocks and blocked the torch's path. Police dispersed them with pepper spray and rubber bullets. A video of the incident spurred social media criticism of the police and amplified complaints that the Games ignored the poor.

A representative for the local organising committee called the incident isolated and said the protesters had held up the torch but its route was not changed.

Three people were injured by rubber bullets, including a 10-year-old girl, local media reported. The clash, which came a day after anti-torch protests in nearby towns and amid several days of gang violence in northern Brazil, underscored social tension in the massive country.

The world's largest sporting event comes to Brazil at a challenging time, in the midst of the country's worst recession in

at least a quarter century and an impeachment trial of a suspended president. Many residents struggling with the dire economy question the wisdom of hosting the Olympics, a bid Brazil won in 2009 while the economy was booming. "The Olympics is a waste of time. The Games did not bring any benefits to Rio de Janeiro," said waiter Adriano Souza, 25, lamenting the lack of public transportation to get around the sprawling, mountainous city.

Residents have faced hours of traffic jams in recent days as new express bus lanes ferrying athletes and visitors to sport venues take up highway space, leading Mayor Eduardo Paes to declare Thursday the fourth city holiday of the Games.

After picking up the torch at a local naval academy, a grinning Paes took it on its first laps through the streets of downtown Rio, known locally as "the marvellous city." A few protesters cropped up in the mostly celebratory crowd, which cheered to the pulse of drums and samba music.—Reuters



Mayor Eduardo Paes (C) carries the Olympic torch just after it was transported across Guanabara Bay from Niteroi to Rio de Janeiro three days before the official start of the Rio 2016 Olympic Games, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on 3 August, 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

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07 : 10 pm	09 : 35 pm
• International Drama Series	• Impressionist Myanmar Master Artist - U Lun Kywe
07 : 45 pm	10 : 00 pm
• International Drama Series	• Myanmar Traditional Instruments - Myanma Harp (Episode-2)
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Fast beauty: Korean cosmetics shine in China, draw investors



A customer tries a lipstick at a shop of Innisfree, Amorepacific's budget brand in central Seoul, South Korea, in 2013. PHOTO: REUTERS

SEOUL — At an Innisfree cosmetics store in Seoul's popular Myeongdong shopping district, a saleswoman helps 21-year-old Chinese tourist Yang Hui carry her shopping baskets to the pay desk in front of a large display showing K-Pop star Yoona.

"There's a lot to choose from," said Yang, confessing to having bought more than she'd planned from the store's range of around 900 products.

South Korea's top cosmetics company Amorepacific Group (002790.KS) launches some 400 new Innisfree branded products a year, about half of which are no longer available a year later.

It's one of dozens of Korean mass cosmetics brands with a short product development cycle — a "fast beauty" approach that is increasingly popular among Chinese and other Asian millennials, gaining exposure in the United States and Europe, and attracting high-profile foreign investment.

South Korea has become a hot-bed for applying to cosmetics the "fast fashion" principles of shifting designs quickly from catwalk to Main Street to capitalise on new trends.

Thousands of small cosme-

tics firms compete to get their new products to market, with third-party manufacturers cutting the time on testing and recipe alignment and providing the capacity for swift market launch.

Korean brands have cut product development cycles to as little as four months, compared to over a year for global brands, industry experts say.

"When we received an eyeshadow order from a major global client in 2004, it took us two years to begin production. Now it takes us one year from the word go," said Lim Dae-gyu, a director at Cosmax Inc (192820.KS), a cosmetics manufacturer with annual sales of close to \$500 million.

"For South Korean mass brands, it takes less — just 4-6 months from planning to market launch is average," Lim added.

South Korea last year overtook the United States and Japan to become the No. 2 cosmetics exporter to China after France. It shipped \$1.1 billion worth of skincare creams, facial masks, compacts and other cosmetic products to the world's second-largest economy, according to the Ministry of Food and Drug Safety.—Reuters

American rivals to feel ‘full wrath’ of lightning quick Bolt

RIO DE JANEIRO — Usain Bolt is promising to let American sprinter Justin Gatlin “feel his full wrath” as he zones in on an unprecedented treble-treble of gold medals at the Rio de Janeiro Olympics.

Bolt was given a medical exemption by Jamaican officials to compete at the Rio Games after he pulled a hamstring during the Olympic trials and Gatlin wasted little opportunity in trying to get under the 29-year-old’s skin.

Gatlin said the six-time Olympic gold medallist had been given ‘a medical pass’ to compete and Bolt said on Wednesday that had only served to fuel his desire to shut the American up by proving himself on the track. “Yes definitely, I think they have not learned over the years that the more you talk, the more I will want to beat you,” Bolt told Reuters on Wednesday. “It’s one of those things, but I’m looking forward to it, should be exciting and they will feel my full wrath as always.”—Reuters

Pacquiao to make ring return against Vargas

LOS ANGELES — Manny Pacquiao will take on American World Boxing Organisation welterweight champion Jessie Vargas when he returns to the ring on 5 November, according to the Filipino boxer’s manager Michael Koncz.

“Retirement doesn’t suit Manny right now,” Koncz told the *Los Angeles Times* of the former eight-division world champion.

“Boxing is in his blood. When he trains, it’s like a pressure-release valve. You can see a dramatic difference in his mood... he’s happy. It’s amazing what training and fighting does for him.” Pacquiao (58-6-2) had announced his retirement after defeating Timothy Bradley in April and was elected to the Philippines’ senate in May. His promoter Bob Arum announced last month that he would fight again in November. Arum tweeted earlier this week that he would travel to the Philippines for a meeting on 10 August to discuss the 37-year-old southpaw’s return.—Reuters



Brazil kick off at home with 3-0 win

RIO DE JANEIRO — Brazil got off to a winning start in their home Olympics on Wednesday when the women’s football team beat China 3-0 in host city Rio de Janeiro.

Although the opening ceremony takes place on Friday, the soccer competitions begin ahead of time with six women’s matches on Wednesday and another eight men’s games on Thursday.

Brazil put on a commanding performance in front of their home crowd at the Olympic sta-

dium in Rio de Janeiro.

Defender Monica headed home the first 10 minutes before half time and Andressa Alves got a second with a volley from close in after 59 minutes. Stand out performer Cristiane got a third with a header in the final minute of the game.

The result leaves them top of Group E ahead of Sweden, who beat South Africa 1-0. Nilla Fischer scored Sweden’s winner after 74 minutes, bunting the ball into the net with her knee after the South African

keeper failed to hold a cross.

In the second game in Group F, Canada beat Australia 2-0 in spite of playing most the game with 10 women.

Canada got the first goal after 16 seconds and then added another 10 minutes from time, even after having Shelina Zadorsky sent off after 18 minutes.

Germany hammered Zimbabwe 6-1, with Melanie Behringer getting two goals for the Germans and Kudakwashe Basopo scoring Zimbabwe’s first goal at an international

tournament. The Germans were 2-0 up at half time before they moved up a gear and ended up easy winners in Sao Paulo.

The United States defeated New Zealand 2-0 thanks to a goal in each half from Carli Lloyd and Alex Morgan.

Colombia were due to face France in the evening’s sixth and final game.

The men’s competition begins on Thursday, with eight games, including Brazil against South Africa and holders Mexico versus Germany.—Reuters

Fans target US keeper Solo with teasing Zika chant

RIO DE JANEIRO — United States goalkeeper Hope Solo was the target of some teasing at the hands of Brazilian soccer fans on Wednesday as her team beat New Zealand 2-0 in their opening match of their quest for a fourth successive Olympic gold.

Solo, playing her 199th international match in the game in Belo Horizonte, was greeted by thousands of fans shouting “Zika!”, in reference to a Twitter photo she published last month, every time she cleared the ball or took a goal kick.

“Not sharing this!!! Get your own!” the 35-year-old had written on Twitter, where she was photographed wearing a mosquito net and holding a jumbo-sized

bottle of insect repellent. Solo later downplayed the picture but the Rio Games, the first in South America, have been beset by concerns over an outbreak of the virus, which can cause birth defects in newborn children.

Several athletes, particularly male golfers, have withdrawn due to their concerns of contracting the mosquito-born virus.

The chant, based on similar chants used by fans all across Latin America, was one of the talking points in a game the US controlled without dominating. They took an early lead after just nine minutes thanks to captain Carli Lloyd, who got on the end of a cross

