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REVIEWING OUR EFFORTS

Three ministries hold press conference on work performance for first 100 days

A PRESS conference on the new government's work performance for the first 100 days was held at the Ministry of Information in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday, with permanent secretaries and director-general of the three ministries—the Ministry of Electricity and Energy, the Ministry of Border Affairs and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs— giving press briefing and answering media questions.

Permanent Secretary U Htain Lwin of the Ministry of Electricity and Energy elaborated on the min-

istry's 100-day work performance regarding project implementation in the power and energy sector.

The permanent secretary said that new power plants were built in Mandalay Region and Mon State, thereby contributing towards ensuring adequate power supply in the regions.

He added that installation of new power lines was carried out in Magway Region and Chin and Rakhine States to electrify Falam and Maei Townships and the Kyaukpyu Special Economic Zone.

Regarding the delivery of

power, he said that sub-power stations and installation of power lines in Kachin and Kayah States enabled rural households to have access to electricity.

Likewise, new power line installations and transformer replacements and the installation of new transformer units was carried out in some townships in Yangon Region to reduce power loss in transmission and distribution and ensure a stable power supply in the region, he added.

On energy sector, the permanent secretary said that issuance

Works are underway to accommodate internally-displace persons in Rakhine State and others under a long-term plan.

of 'D' level and 'E' level licenses for storage and distribution of liquefied natural gas were conducted and 663 filling stations were given temporary licenses.

Aviation fuel businesses with foreign companies' investments

have been allowed at local airports and the ministry coordinated with the MPTA to make retail fuel pricing fair and reasonable, said the permanent secretary, adding that 60 BRT buses were allowed to use CNG for public convenience.

Next, a press briefing of the Ministry of Border Affairs followed with Permanent Secretary U Ye Naing saying that the ministry's water supply works benefited 4,951 households under water stress caused by extreme weather patterns across the country.

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Members of the parliament arrive to attend the meeting of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw yesterday morning. PHOTO: MNA

Medium-Term Debt Management Strategy presented to Pyidaungsu Hluttaw

THE Pyidaungsu Hluttaw heard a message sent by the President on the release of the Medium-Term Debt Management Strategy yesterday.

Deputy Minister for Finance and Planning U Maung Maung Win presented matters related to reviling the plan to the parliament, saying that it is required to better manage public borrowing to ensure the country's economic development, peace and stability.

The deputy minister said the objective of the debt management strategy is to ensure the government's financing needs and payment obligations at the lowest possible cost consistent with a prudent degree of risk and promote the domestic market for government securities.

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Reviewing of political dialogue framework continues

THE meeting to review the political dialogue framework continued at the National Reconciliation and Peace Centre in Yangon yesterday with the participation of representatives from the government, the Tatmadaw, the parliament and 16 ethnic armed organisations.

The government is reviewing the framework with ethnic armed organisations and political parties for the participation of NCA non-signatories groups in the 21st Century Panglong Peace Conference.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr Tin Myo Win, Chairman of the Preparation Committee for Holding the Union Peace Conference— 21st Century Panglong, said that the committee is trying its best to make proceedings inclusive at the Union Peace Conference, urging all participants to work together to achieve peace in the country through dialogue.

Lt-Gen Yar Pyae, Chairman



Peace makers participate in meeting to review the political dialogue framework. PHOTO: PHOE HTAUNG

of the Preparation Sub-committee-1 for Holding the Conference said they will implement the political dialogue framework review under the guidelines of the

NCA, saying that the NCA is the only way to accomplish peace.

“We have different views and different requirements but we try to negotiate all our re-

quirements.” he added.

Khu Oo Reh, Head of the Delegation for Political Negotiation (DPN), said the DPN will follow the announcement of the

UNFC, stressing the need to take the views of the political parties into account when reviewing the political dialogue framework.

The signatories and non-signatories to the Nationwide Cease-fire Agreement have already reached an agreement and will negotiate with the government, he added.

Dr Salai Lian Hmung Sak-hong, Vice Chairman of the Chin National Front, expressed his thanks to the government for allowing non-signatories to the NCA to participate in the 21st Century Panglong.

The meeting will continue today with the participation of political parties. The results of the two-day meeting will be reviewed at the UPDJC meeting in Nay Pyi Taw on 15 August. The list of the participants in the 21st Century Panglong Union Peace Conference will be approved at the meeting. —Ye Khaung Nyunt

Medium-Term Debt Management Strategy presented to Pyidaungsu Hluttaw

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The Treasury Department was formed to implement sound debt management and the Public Debt Management Law was enacted, said the deputy minister.

He added the medium-term debt management strategy developed for at least the next three fiscal years must seek parliamentary approval before the plan is made known to the public according to section 10 of the Public Debt Management Law. According to the deputy minister, debt management activities and government borrowing will be implemented in accordance with the strategy approved by the parliament.

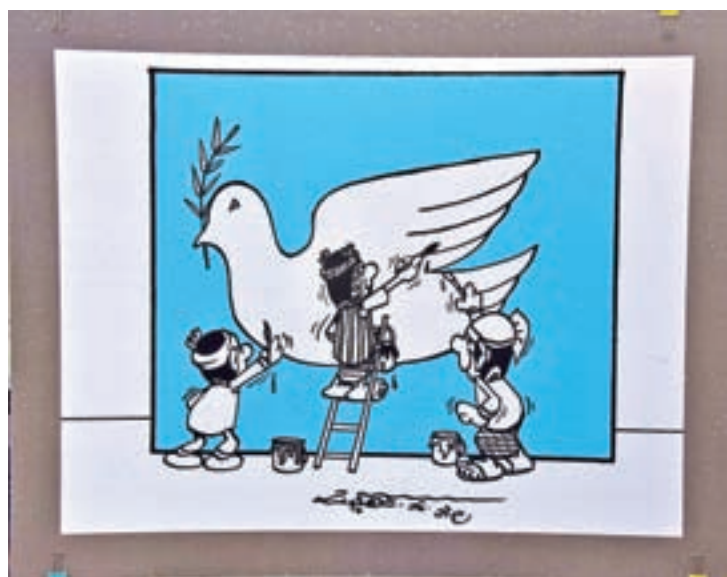
Next, Vice-Chairman of

Public Accounts Joint Committee U Aung Min and Joint Bill Committee Secretary Dr Myat Nyana Soe read out the 2016-2017 Union Budget (Amendment) and Bill amending the 2016 Union Budget Law.

Then seven lawmakers debated a proposed US\$100 million loan from the World Bank. The Speaker announced that a decision on the proposed loan would be made on the sixth day session of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw.

During yesterday's session the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw agreed on the appointment U Bo Bo Nge as a member of the Board of Directors of the Central Bank of Myanmar.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Hailing the upcoming Union Peace Conference-21st Century Panglong



Myanmar-India Foreign Office Consultations held in New Delhi

THE 15th round of Myanmar-India Foreign Office Consultations was held in New Delhi on 9 August 2016. The Myanmar delegation led by U Kyaw Tin, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Myanmar and the Indian delegation led by Dr. S. Jaishankar, Foreign Secretary of India, took part in the Consultations. It was the first Foreign Office Consultations meeting held between Myanmar and India after the coming into office of the new civilian government in Myanmar.

At the consultations, both sides cordially reviewed the wide-ranging issues of bilateral relations and multi-faceted cooperation, including exchange of goodwill visits, security and border management, enhancing connectivity, boundary issues, promotion of trade and investment, cooperation in various sectors such as tourism, cultural and consular affairs. Moreover, both sides also agreed to step up their efforts to expedite the ongoing projects being imple-



U Kyaw Tin, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, shakes hands with Dr. S. Jaishankar. PHOTO: SUPPLIED

mented with India's loans and line of credit.

As regards boundary issues, both sides agreed to mutually respect already-demarcated boundary between the two countries; to conduct joint inspections for resolving outstanding boundary issues; to raise public awareness about the demarcated boundary among the local populace of the border areas and to commence de-

marcation of disputed border areas as early as possible.

During the visit, U Kyaw Tin, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Myanmar also met with Dr. V.K. Singh, Minister of State for External Affairs of India at the latter's office, and discussed matters on promoting bilateral relations and cooperation as well as on exchange of goodwill visits.—*MOFA*

Embassy works to bring home over 2,000 migrant workers detained in Malaysia

INSPECTIONS are currently being made on a total of 2,294 migrant workers in 11 detention centers across Malaysia to allow the workers to be repatriated to Myanmar, the Ministry of Immigration and Population has announced.

The workers are being checked as they have overstayed their time at the detention centers, with a second batch of 138 workers reportedly repatriated on August 12.

“The Myanmar Embassy [in Malaysia] is checking whether the detained migrant workers are in fact genuine Myanmar citizens, or not. Whether all of them can be repatriated during August depends on the pace of the embassy's verification process,” said U Thein Win, director of the Department of Migrant Worker Affairs.

The Malaysian government reportedly sent a compiled list of the aforementioned migrant

workers to the Myanmar embassy at the start of August, U Nyunt Win, an official from the Ministry of Immigration, told Myitmakha News Agency. The migrant workers currently detained were reportedly arrested for a number of reasons such as engaging in other employment to that they were officially contracted for; having lost their passport; and for coming to work in Malaysia on a tourist visa.—*Myitmakha News Agency*



Vice President U Henry Van Thio presents aid to local people in Thabaung, Ayeyawady Region. PHOTO: MNA

Vice President provides humanitarian aid to flood victims in Ayeyawady

VICE President U Henry Van Thio presented cash assistance and relief to flood victims in the towns of Pathein, Thapaung and Kangyidaunt yesterday during his inspection tour of Ayeyawady Region.

The vice president was given a briefing by officials on rescue and relief work being undertaken in 19 flood-hit townships in the region. Officials explained the measures being taken to provide healthcare, financial assistance, rice reserves and the reinforcement of embankments and retaining walls.

In a follow-up briefing, Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye and Ayeyawady Region Chief Minister U Mahn Johnny spoke of plans to speed up relief and rescue work and make sure that

humanitarian assistance reaches victims in need.

Vice President U Henry Van Thio called for effective supervision in the timely delivery of relief to the flood victims.

The government, ministries, the regional government and philanthropic organisations provided rice, edible oil, foodstuffs, exercise books, bottled water, and medicines and medical equipment for the flood victims in Thapaung, Pathein and Kangyidaunt townships.

During his inspection tour the Vice President cordially greeted and subsequently conversed with military personnel piling sandbags high on both sides of Kangyidaunt-Daka road.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Three ministries hold press conference on work performance for first 100 days

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According to the permanent secretary, inspection teams made field trips to ensure whether construction projects in the fiscal year 2015-2016 met set standards and disaster-hit roads, bridges and buildings were rebuilt.

Moreover, works are underway to accommodate internally-displace persons in Rakhine State and others under a long-term plan, said the permanent secretary.

The ministry arranged two excursion programmes to Nay Pyi Taw for 170 ethnic people in border regions and conducted vocational training courses involving 202 trainees with follow-up help to find those trainees jobs at six different garment factories in Yangon, he added.

He continued that the ministry is trying hard to create a market for trainees who completed backstrap loom weaving courses in Chin, Kayah and Kayin States to support ethnic traditional dress production.

Giving a press briefing on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' work performance for 100 days, Director-General U Kyaw Zeya said that the ministry's 100-day programme, consisting of eight processes, included protecting Myanmar citizens abroad, relaxing restrictions to facilitate the repatriating of citizens from foreign countries and canceling names of citizens on the blacklist and the relaxation of restrictions on the travels of diplomats and staff of international agencies in the country.

Myanmar established diplomatic ties with Ethiopia, the 114th nation in the country's diplomatic service sector, last December, said the director-general, adding that there will be a promotion of relations with foreign

countries and the appointment of honorary consuls.

He pointed out that more visits of foreign leaders to Myanmar have been seen in the time of the new government and said that arrangements are being made to visit ASEAN members and neighbouring countries by leaders.

Myanmar played the role of coordinator in the Asia-Europe Meeting two times and Myanmar will host the ASEAN Foreign Affairs Ministers' meeting next year, he added.

The director-general went on to say that Myanmar and Laos inked an agreement on friendship bridge management and that Myanmar and Singapore agreed on visa-free travel deal that will go into effect on 1 December.

Permanent Secretary U Htain Lwin of the Ministry of Electricity and Energy responded to a query of the measures of electricity sufficiency for industrial zones in Yangon and Mandalay, describing the two cities as the largest electricity consumers in the country. According to him, Yangon consumes nearly half of the country's electricity generat-

ed while Mandalay consumes one fourth of the electricity. Statistics show that the country has 10.8 million households, of which 3.8 million have access to electricity. People without electricity belong overwhelmingly to remote border areas.

The country's capacity to generate electricity stood at 2,700 MW in the summer last year while the nationwide consumption of electricity at that time was over 2,800 MW. U Htain Lwin blamed power failures on worn-out underground cables, which he said was laid down when the country was under colonial rule. The use of aluminum cables instead of copper cables was also a reason for power failures, he added.

The permanent secretary spoke of challenges encountered in electricity distribution in Yangon, saying that the population of the former capital was growing. Under the 100-day plan, the ministry installed transformers and replaced old power cables in the region.

In the past, the government's attempts to generate electricity from coal-fired power plants

came to a halt after a wave of public protests. The country is rich in water resources, from which electricity can be generated to an amount greater than the country's total consumption. However, power projects have been suspended for reasons of environmental effects.

The use of water resources for electricity is the only option left for the country to have full access to electricity, the permanent secretary said, adding that the hydropower projects must be systematically designed to ensure that there is little to no impact on the environment.

He talked of the plans to cooperate with the World Bank and international agencies in generating electricity in a bid to make up the rise of electricity consumption, which he expected will exceed 2,900MW and hit 3,000 MW next year.

Water resources fit for generating electricity are located in the far north of the country, he said, stressing the need for the construction of transmission lines to Yangon, the biggest power-consuming city. The 500KV projects are being conducted with the use of foreign

loans in eastern Shan State, Mawlamyine, Yay and Dawei.

According to the permanent secretary, plans are under way to enable 1.7 million households to have access to electricity in five years.

Permanent Secretary U Ye Naing of the Ministry of Border Affairs explained plans to resettle internally displaced persons in Rakhine, Kayin and Kachin states in partnership with local governments. For nationalities eager to return to Kayin State, the ministry currently has the potential to receive 196 people at the places of their choice.

"For those with no idea of where to live, we will settle them in a satellite town near Myawady in Kayin State," he said.

U Ye Naing said affordable housing will be provided for whoever wishes to return, with the houses costing K5 million each unit.

Director General U Kyaw Zeya of the Political Affairs Department responded to a query of possible discussion of the controversial Myitsone dam project during the State Counsellor's visit to China, saying that the discussion was highly likely. He pledged that they would prepare their best for the talks.

Regarding the boundary demarcations, Myanmar shares a 1,370-mile border with China, a 147-mile border with Laos and a 168-mile border with Bangladesh. The 912-mile border between Myanmar and India has been demarcated, except the Kabaw valley. Myanmar shares a 1,310-mile border with Thailand, but only 36 miles has been demarcated.

Regarding the homecoming of the citizens, the government has relaxed restrictions on their return.—*Myanmar News Agency*



Officials from Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Border Affairs and Ministry of Electricity and Energy talks to media during the press conference in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

Traditional earthen pot toys festival to be held in Mandalay

MYANMAR'S traditional earthen pot toys festival kicked off yesterday before the Taung Byone festival in Oh Bo ward, Aungmyayathazan township, Mandalay.

According to residents, earthen pot toys made of clay have been on sale although the festival is five days away.

"I have been selling earthen pot toys for over 40 years. I love the job very much. The festival is more crowded at night. Retailers buy basket loads of earthen toys to sell them back at the festival. We do not expect much profit from selling them as the pot toys are made of clay and easy to crack."

said a seller of pot toys.

Mandalay celebrates an annual 'play pot festival', where tiny pots and pans of baked clay are sold not only to children but also adult collectors.

Six pieces of earthen pot toys are sold for K500 and a pair of hairclips made of flowers for K500. Also on sale at the festival are playthings made of clay such as colourful bowls, Pyit Taing Daung, kettles and animals.

Clay pots makers from Sagaing region sell one basket load of earthen pot toys for K25,000. In the past, clay pots were not painted.—*Aung Thant Khaing*



Visitors buy traditional earthen pot toys at Taung Byone. PHOTO: AUNG THANT KHAING

Karuna Kaba Home For the Aged to be opened this month

A HOME for the aged will soon be ready to accommodate and look after retired military personnel and their family members.

The construction of Karuna Kaba started earlier this year and is now complete. The facility is situated on 33.87 acres of land

at the corner of Shwekyabin and Yadanamyinzu streets, Dekkhina township, Nay Pyi Taw and expected to be opened on 24 August.

Karuna Kaba will be managed by Central Executive Committee Chairman former Lt-Gen Tun Kyi, Secretary former Col Yan Naing Oo and 130 staff.

The home for the aged will house families and relatives of military personnel who are retired or disabled or who died in action.

The military is planning to open similar centres in Yangon and Mandalay regions.—*Ko Pauk*



Karuna Kaba Home For the Age is ready to accommodate the elder peoples. PHOTO: KO PAUK

New Member to Central Bank's Board of Directors appointed

U Bo Bo Nge, a member of the National League for Democracy's (NLD) economic committee, was appointed to the board of directors of the Central Bank of Myanmar (CBM) yesterday by President U Htin Kyaw.

The order, signed by President U Htin Kyaw and issued yesterday, states that U Bo Bo Nge was appointed as

a member of the Central Bank of Myanmar in accordance with the Central Bank of Myanmar Law.

The order came after Speaker of the Parliament Mahn Win Khine Than announced the approval of his appointment during the parliamentary session yesterday, after no objections had been raised.—*GNLM*

Crime NEWS

Truck plunges into creek

A TRUCK carrying cement bags weighting 15.95 tonnes plunged into a creek near Pan Sit village, Kyaunk Htu township, Magwe region on Wednesday.

According to an investigation the truck was being driven by one Naing Myo Tun alias

Pho Maung from Kyaunk Hut township when it plunged into a creek when the driver lost control.

No one was injured in the accident. The driver was deemed guilty of careless driving by police.—*101*



Volunteers working on removing the goods from the truck. PHOTO: POLICE

Two motorcycles collide on Mandalay-Bamauk road

TWO motorcycles collided head on while travelling along Mandalay-Bamauk road, near Nyaunglaypin village, Takaung township, Mandalay region on Wednesday, leaving one man

dead.

The drivers were identified as Maung Lin, 38, from Nyaunglaypin village and Hsan Su Aung, 35 from Kyaunk Aik.

Hsan Su Aung succumbed to

his injuries on the way of hospital while Maung Lin was seriously injured. Both riders have been charged by police for reckless driving.—*Ko Ko Aung (Ta Kau- ng)*

Yaba and heroin seized

A LOCAL police squad in Ma-bein seized heroin from a motorcycle rider on Ranbo- Maezali villages road, Momeik township on Thursday. One Aung Min was found with heroin weighing 242 grams.

Similarly, police searched a shop belonging to one Thet Naing Oo from Ranbo village and discovered 5,400 yaba pills.

Police also arrested Saw Ha Pha who was found with 2,400 yaba pills in his tent



One Aung Min, Thet Naing Oo and Saw Ha Pha. PHOTO: MYANMAR POLICE FORCE

in Ranbo village.

Police from Loilem searched the home of one Htet Htet Naing in Minglar ward, Loilem town and discovered 2,788 yaba pills.

Police have filed charges against all suspects under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.—*Myanmar Police Force*

LOCAL Business

Green gram price drops on export market due to quality issues and poor growth

Aung Thant Khaing

THE PRICE of Myanmar green gram has declined on the export market after Japan and the European Union stopped buying the crop, said U Soe Win, a bean and pulse broker from Mandalay Region.

Japan and the EU ceased importing Myanmar green grams when testing in those countries revealed what were deemed to be unsafe residual levels of fertilizer.

Chinese merchants picked up all the green gram that entered Muse Trade Camp at a reduced price.

Growers are reportedly facing financial problems as green gram plantations are increasingly unable to produce healthy profits, driving farmers into debt. Foreign experts have pointed to an over-use of imported chemical fertilizer by farmers nation-wide. The problem, one farming sector expert said, is that unscrupulous fertilizer companies push farmers

not well acquainted with its use to over-spray their crops, increasing the rate of stock replenishment.

The sudden wide-spread use of chemical fertilization has led to ecological imbalances, rampant pest outbreaks and soil acidification problems across Myanmar. These conditions take their toll on farmers and have forced many into a debt spiral.

"It is not easy to pay back agricultural loans to the government because of the low price of green gram now," said U Kyaw Myint, a green gram grower in Yesogyo Township.

Farmers say they have lost their investment in green gram plantations this season. A lack of available farm labourers in rural areas is another problem for growers, lowering output but increasing wage value due to scarcity.

"The market is down but wages for hired agricultural workers are slightly up," a grower said.



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

Telenor spreads message on safe use of Internet among school children

AN educative programme regarding safe use of Internet, organised by Norwegian company Telenor, has launched in Mandalay, sharing information regarding the potential risks cyber bullying, cyber grooming and hate speech.

The first school talks took place at a private high school in Mandalay four days ago. Plans are underway to perform this Corporate Social Responsibility

(CSR) activity at government-owned as well as private schools in Yangon and monastic schools and independent schools in Mandalay before the end of this year.

Based on the outcomes of the pilot project, Telenor Myanmar plans to scale up the new programme across the nation next year, said U Min Thu, head of the Telenor's Business Sustainability.—GNLM



Wood-based products being displayed at the 4th Myanmar International Furniture Expo. PHOTO: TIN SOE

Myanmar plans to export valued-added furniture worth \$100m within next five years

EFFORTS are being made to export at least US\$100 million worth of valued-added furniture made from wood, rattan and bamboo to foreign countries within the next five years, said U Kyaw Thu, chairman of the Myanmar Rattan and Bamboo Entrepreneurs Association.

Annually, the association exports those finished goods for no more than 50 US dollars to its

partner countries.

"The collection of good-quality raw materials plays an important role in manufacturing valued-added products. The government should erase some restrictions to help export businesses run more smoothly." U Kyaw Thu said at the opening ceremony of the 4th Myanmar International Furniture Expo at Yangon's Tatmad-

aw Convention Hall.

Currently, finished furniture product made from wood, rattan and bamboo in Myanmar have been sent to New Zealand, Australia, European countries, South Africa and the U.S.

Among regional countries, the annual export value of furniture from Vietnam reached US\$5 billion, followed by Indonesia and Malaysia.—Myint Maung Soe

Samsung New Galaxy Note7 launched in Myanmar

SAMSUNG Myanmar unveiled its new "Galaxy Note 7", the company announced in a press release on 12th August.

"This newly unveiled Galaxy Note7 combines productivity and entertainment, and strong security features. Powering a robust ecosystem, it is the ideal device for those who want to achieve more in life," said Mr. Nam Sik Ahn, Managing Director of Samsung Myanmar.

With refined craftsmanship, premium materials and a unique,

symmetrical edge design, the Galaxy Note7 features: A water resistant body and S Pen (IP68), Top-of-the-line security that combines Samsung Knox with biometric authentication including a new iris scanning feature and Immersive entertainment capabilities with HDR video streaming capabilities, the statement said.

"Life moves faster than ever now, so we created the Galaxy Note7 to move with users – helping them get things done more easily wherever, whenever," add-

ed Ko Zarni Win Htet, Head of IT and Mobile Department of Samsung Myanmar.

The Galaxy Note7 will come in Gold Platinum, Silver Titanium and Black Onyx and will be available in Myanmar starting on September 11 with 920,000 Kyats.

Samsung Myanmar also collaborates with KBZ Bank for installment program and Customers can buy Galaxy Note 7 with 6-month installment program with 0% interest rate.—GNLM



Models and officials pose with the new Samsung Galaxy Note 7. PHOTO: SUPPLIED

Series of blasts hit resort towns in southern Thailand

HUA HIN (Thailand) — A series of blasts hit three of the most popular tourist resorts as well as towns in southern Thailand on Thursday and Friday, killing four people and wounding dozens, days after the country voted to accept a military-backed charter in a referendum.

Four bombs exploded in the upscale resort of Hua Hin, about 200 km (125 miles) south of Bangkok on Thursday evening and Friday morning, killing two people and wounding at least 24.

Other blasts hit the tourist island of Phuket, a resort town in Phang Nga Province, and Surat Thani, a city that is the gateway to islands such as Koh Samui in Thailand's Gulf.

Hua Hin is home to the Klai Kangwon royal palace, which translates as "Far from Worries Palace", where King Bhumibol Adulyadej, the world's longest reigning monarch, and his wife, Queen Sirikit, have often stayed in recent years, until both were hospitalised.

Friday was a public holiday in Thailand to mark the queen's birthday, which is celebrated as Mother's Day. No group has claimed responsibility, though suspicion could fall on groups



Injured people receive first aid after a bomb exploded in Trang, Thailand on 11 August 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

fighting an insurgency in Muslim-majority provinces in southern Thailand.

Police had intelligence an attack was imminent, but had no precise information on location or timing, national police chief Chakthip Chaijinda told reporters in Bangkok on Friday.

"We just didn't know which day something would

happen," he said.

Since Sunday's referendum on the constitution, there have been attacks in seven provinces using improvised explosive devices and firebombs, Chakthip said. The devices were similar to those used by separatist insurgents in southern Thailand, but that did not conclusively show they

were the perpetrators, he said. Police ruled out any links to international terrorism, as did Thailand's Foreign Ministry, which said in a statement on Friday: "The incident is not linked to terrorism but is an act of stirring up public disturbance."

Thai authorities beefed up security at tourism spots, airports and on public trans-

port in Bangkok, while Thai junta chief and Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha expressed frustration about the motives for the attacks.

"Why now when the country is getting better, the economy is getting better, and tourism is getting better? We have to ask why and who did it," he told reporters. —Reuters

S Korea issues presidential pardons ahead of 71st liberation day

SEOUL — South Korea on Friday announced a list of some 4,870 convicts of all types selected for presidential pardons to mark next Monday's Liberation Day holiday, which celebrates the end of Japanese colonial rule in 1945.

Among 14 business people included in the list is CJ Group chairman Lee Jae Hyun, who was sentenced to three years in jail on charges of tax evasion and accounting fraud in 2014, but was granted a stay of execution due to health problems.

"The decision (on the pardon) has been made after collecting opinions from various walks of life to work all together to achieve national harmony and overcome economic crisis," President Park Geun hye told a Cabinet meeting earlier Friday, according to the presidential office. —Kyodo News

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

Philippines seeks formal talks with China amid South China Sea tensions — Ramos

HONG KONG — The Philippines special envoy to China, Fidel Ramos, said on Friday that Manila wants formal discussions with China to explore pathways to peace and cooperation after a meeting with former Chinese deputy foreign minister Fu Ying.

Ramos was speaking near the end of a trip to Hong Kong undertaken in an attempt to rekindle ties with China, which have been soured by a maritime dispute in the South China Sea.

In a statement signed by Ramos and Fu, they said their "informal discussions focused on the need to engage in further talks to build trust and confidence to reduce tensions to pave the way for overall cooperation."

The statement added that China welcomes Ramos to visit Beijing at some point as the special envoy of Philippine president Rodrigo Duterte, who took office in June and has signalled a greater willing-



Former Philippine President Fidel Ramos gestures as he speaks to journalists during a trip to Hong Kong, China after the Hague court's ruling over the maritime dispute in South China Sea, on 9 August 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

ness to engage with China than his predecessor.

"It's not really a breakthrough in a sense that there is no ice here in Hong Kong to break but the fish we eat... are cooked in delicious recipes," Ramos told reporters, having earlier referred to his visit as a fishing expedition.

An arbitration court in the Hague ruled on 12 July that China had no historic title over the busy waterway and had breached the Philippines' sovereign rights

there. The decision infuriated Beijing, which dismissed the court's authority to rule on the matter.

China claims almost the entire South China Sea, through which more than \$5 trillion of trade moves annually. Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan and Viet Nam also have claims in the sea, believed to be rich in energy deposits.

The statement added that both Beijing and Manila would seek to promote

fishing cooperation, marine preservation, and tourism though it made no specific mention of the South China Sea or the ruling. No time frame was given for possible talks.

Ramos said neither side asserted their own sovereignty over disputed areas in the South China Sea such as the Scarborough Shoal and Mischief Reef.

"There was no discussion on that particular aspect except to mention equal fishing rights," said Ramos.

The statement said the discussions were carried out in a private capacity, and Ramos said later other back channel discussions with China were underway.

China seized the Scarborough Shoal in 2012, denying Philippine fishermen access. This was among the factors that prompted Manila to seek arbitration.

Ramos was Philippines president from 1992 to 1998, when China occupied the submerged Mischief Reef. —Reuters



Indonesia's President Joko Widodo. PHOTO: REUTERS

Indonesia's president orders probe into alleged police role in drug trade

JAKARTA — Indonesia's president has ordered security authorities to investigate allegations of police involvement in the illegal distribution of drugs in the world's most populous Muslim-majority nation.

Haris Azhar, a prominent activist with the Commission for Missing Persons, said this month that drug trafficker Freddy Budiman confessed to him in 2014 that he had given police, military and customs officials millions of dollars in bribes to protect his drug smuggling business.

Budiman and three other drug traffickers were executed by firing squad on 29 July.

"Trace, investigate and process the allegations if it is indeed true," President Joko Widodo said in a statement issued late on Thursday, ordering the police chief to create a team to investigate the claims.

Widodo, who has made fighting drug crimes in one of Southeast Asia's biggest markets a top priority, questioned why the allegations were not brought to light earlier.—Reuters

Duterte plans to relax foreign ownership restrictions to attract investors

MANILA — Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte said on Friday that he is willing to relax the foreign ownership restrictions in the constitution in a bid to lure more foreign investors and boost employment.

Duterte told a press conference in Davao City late Thursday night that he conveyed to visiting Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida about his plan during their meeting in the southern Philippine city Thursday afternoon.

The 1987 Philippine constitution limits foreign ownership of companies in the Philippines to 40 per cent, restricting the flow of foreign investments into the country and protecting the domestic

monopolies from foreign competition in vital industries like ports, shipping, telecommunications, power and other infrastructure.

The constraint results in poor investment climate in the country, according to economists.

"I was before against selling the lands, I think that is still my stand, but I'm willing to change this 60-40 thing, make it more elaborate, maybe even a half-half thing as long as there are really a good investments where I can provide livelihoods for everybody," Duterte said.

Duterte said his talks with the Japanese foreign minister mainly focused on how to further strengthen the relations between the two countries.—Xinhua

Singapore contempt of court bill seen suppressing freedom of speech

SINGAPORE — A proposed law in Singapore spelling out contempt of court and setting out tough penalties has drawn criticism from rights groups and raised questions among foreign diplomats over the implications for freedom of speech in the wealthy city-state.

Singapore has for years taken a tough stand to protect what it sees as appropriate morality and social harmony on the multi-ethnic island and international press groups have often decried constraints on free speech and the media.

The government says the bill, due to come up for a second reading in parliament on Monday, would not change or expand current contempt of court practices and only aims to clarify them.

The new bill is "a crystallisation of the law", said K. Shanmugam, the minister of home affairs and law.

Under the law, offenders

could be fined up to S\$100,000 and jailed up to three years. Currently, no penalties are set down and contempt of court rulings are based on precedents.

Critics say the bill's vaguely worded provisions and the harsh punishments proposed could further impede freedom of speech as it would likely lead to self-censorship.

"It could have a chilling effect on free speech because the bill contains severe sanctions for being convicted — the moment there is a threat of a jail term and a substantial fine, I think most people would err on the side of caution", said lawyer Sui Yi Siong from Harry Elias Partnership LLP said.

Britain abolished a similar act called "Scandalising the Judiciary" in 2013 on the basis that "it was unnecessary and incompatible with freedom of speech", the British High Commission told

Reuters. The offence had not been successfully prosecuted in England and Wales since 1931.

"The UK will continue to urge Singapore and all countries which retain 'Scandalising the Judiciary' to abolish it," said a High Commission spokesman.

The group Human Rights Watch said the bill was "overly broad" and it should be revised to narrow its scope and reduce "disproportionate penalties".

A public petition calling for a delay in the passage of the bill and a clarification of provisions was submitted to parliament on Wednesday, the first such petition in nine years.

But it only drew 249 signatures.

Reporters Without Borders ranks Singapore 154th out of 180 countries in its World Press Freedom Index behind the Democratic Republic of Congo and Venezuela.—Reuters



Photo shows the explosion site at a power plant in Dangyang, central China's Hubei Province on 11 August, 2016. PHOTO: XINHUA

At least 21 killed in central China power plant blast

YICHANG — At least 21 people were killed and five others injured, three seriously, after a pipe explosion hit a power plant in central China's Hubei Province on Thurs-

day, local authorities said.

A high-pressure steam pipe exploded at the Madian Gangue Power Generation Co. Ltd. in Dangyang City around 3:20pm. The in-

jured have been rushed to hospital, according to local authorities.

The cause of the blast was not immediately known. Rescue efforts are underway.—Xinhua

South Korea says investigating whether Google broke antitrust laws

SEOUL — South Korea's anti-trust regulator said on Friday it is looking into whether Google has violated the country's anti competition laws, acknowledging formal scrutiny of the global internet search company for the first time.

The Korea Fair Trade Commission (KFTC) disclosed the

investigation in a brief statement, without commenting on the nature of the probe nor any potential antitrust violations. A person familiar with the matter told Reuters last month the KFTC inspected Google's Seoul headquarters in July.

The antitrust body's state-

ment came after a local media report said the KFTC had decided to clear Google of anti competition charges involving the pre-loading of the company's apps on smartphones running on the Android operating system.

Google, whose corporate parent is Alphabet Inc, declined

to comment.

While it wasn't clear whether the probe would lead to any formal charges, the investigation opens another regulatory front for Google. The firm was fined \$6.8 million in Russia on Thursday and faces multiple European Union antitrust charges.

The KFTC has investigated Google before. In 2013, the regulator cleared Google of wrongdoing following a probe into whether the company hurt competition by forcing smartphone makers using Android to pre-load its search engine on the handsets.—Reuters

Opinion

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

In the service of humanity

Kyaw Thura

TORRENTIAL rain has battered many parts of the country for the second time for two consecutive years, leaving hundreds of thousands of people homeless and destroying public property and transport infrastructure. Environmentalists have blamed these incidents of unprecedented flooding on the effects of forest depletion. The serious repercussions of heavy reliance on forest resources for economic development with no regard for environ-

mental protection are still felt across the country.

Nevertheless, nobody is cold-hearted enough to stand watching the plight of the flood victims with their arms folded. Blood is thicker than water, so goes the saying. This adage highlights the importance of humanitarian aid to people affected by disaster. This signals that we need to renew our commitment to life-saving relief work to extent that children receive vaccination while sick or wounded people re-

ceive medical treatment.

All humanitarian workers should be honoured for their heroic deeds of rushing bravely to help the people in desperate need of rescue and relief. We have heard of the stories of aid workers who risked their lives for the safety and security of the people in disaster-affected areas. When it comes to rescue and relief work, the establishment of humanitarian funds should not be left out, a practice that our country still lacks.

It is undeniable that no form of discrimination as to nationality, religion and political points of view, should ever come in the way in the delivery of humanitarian assistance. The purpose of humanity is to prevent and alleviate human suffering whenever and wherever it is found. The essence of human beings is to protect the welfare of individuals without impartiality. Only then will we be able to create a caring and humane society for all humans.

DNA testing challenges traditional species classification

EXPERTS from (WCS) Wildlife Conservation Society and the National University of Singapore (NUS) have made a surprising discovery that could subvert the significance of traditional criteria used for species classification.

Employing novel techniques to retrieve DNA sequences from thousands of genomic locations, the researchers were able to uncover an unusual case of cryptic speciation in the Streak-eared bulbul [*Pycnonotus blanfordi*], a bird widespread throughout South-east Asian countries.

Cryptic speciation produces closely related sister species that are very similar in appearance and often overlooked by scientists until genetic and/or bioacoustic inquiries reveal species-level differences.

Traditionally, the bird identification literature has relied on shape and plumage color to classify bird species. More recently, vocalizations have also been used to uncover cryptic species otherwise similar in body appearance.

In the last two decades, DNA sequence comparison has gradually been added as a tool in the kit for species delimitation, casting light on a number of cryptic species where neither morphological nor bioacoustic differences provided clues for species differentiation.

"Distinguishing different species is a non-trivial task of great importance," said Colin Poole, WCS Regional Director for the Greater Mekong region. "This research helps us better understand the evolution of life and often points to cases in which sci-



The Streak-eared bulbul [*Pycnonotus blanfordi conradi*] on the left, is visually similar to the Ayeyawaddy bulbul [*Pycnonotus blanfordi blanfordi*] on the right despite having strikingly different genetic data. PHOTO: ROBERT TIZARD (LEFT), THET ZAW NAING (RIGHT)

"Advancements in DNA methodologies are of tremendous help in understanding the rich biodiversity of Myanmar and tropical Asia."

ence has hitherto underestimated the extent of actual species diversity present in any given region."

After careful examination, two described subspecies of Streak-eared bulbul [*Pycnonotus blanfordi*] resident in Myanmar [*P. b. blanfordi*] and Thailand/In-

dochina [*P. b. conradi*] were found to exhibit deep genome-wide differentiation indicating they are two separate species.

Despite negligible nuances in the birds' plumage color, and limited differentiation in their

vocalizations, WCS and NUS ornithologists identified a surprising genetic divergence dating back as far as the early Pleistocene.

A closer look also revealed different eye colors between the two forms, which the scientists

believe to be an important morphological differentiating trait in mate recognition and reproductive isolation, prompting them to call for an elevation of both forms to species level, and naming the one specific to Myanmar "Ayeyawady bulbul".

"Cryptic species have always represented an intriguing challenge for scientists," explains Dr. Robert Tizard from WCS Myanmar. "Advancements in DNA methodologies are of tremendous help in understanding the rich biodiversity of Myanmar and tropical Asia."

Through this discovery, scientists at WCS and NUS have demonstrated how novel DNA sequencing technologies that retrieve genome-wide DNA can be put to use in species delimitation, and advocate for more systematic use of genome-wide DNA for the detection of cryptic species.

"Even in birds, which are better-known than most other living beings, the age of new species discoveries is not over," said Dr. Frank Rheindt from NUS. "We hope that future collaborations between academia and conservation NGOs will lead to the discovery of numerous additional cryptic species to help us obtain a more realistic understanding of true levels of species diversity."

Although Streak-eared and Ayeyawady bulbuls are generally common where they occur and neither of the cryptic species involved in this discovery seem to be under threat of extinction, the future discovery of cryptic species may well refer to endangered species that will require immediate conservation action.—
Wildlife Conservation Society

Dagon University law students visit Union Attorney-General's Office

LAW students from the University of Dagon made a study tour of Union Attorney-General's Office in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

In his welcoming speech, Attorney-General of the Union U Tun Tun Oo elaborated on the Office's prioritisation on the rule of law, judicial reform and legal assistance to the people and called on the students to work hard in their studies.

Next, Associate Professor Dr

Thin Thin Maw of Dagon University spoke words of thanks.

Then, the Union Attorney-General presented law books for the Law Department of Dagon University.

Afterwards, 132 law students and faculty members heard presentations of heads of respective departments and observed functions of the Attorney-General's Office.—*Myanmar News Agency*



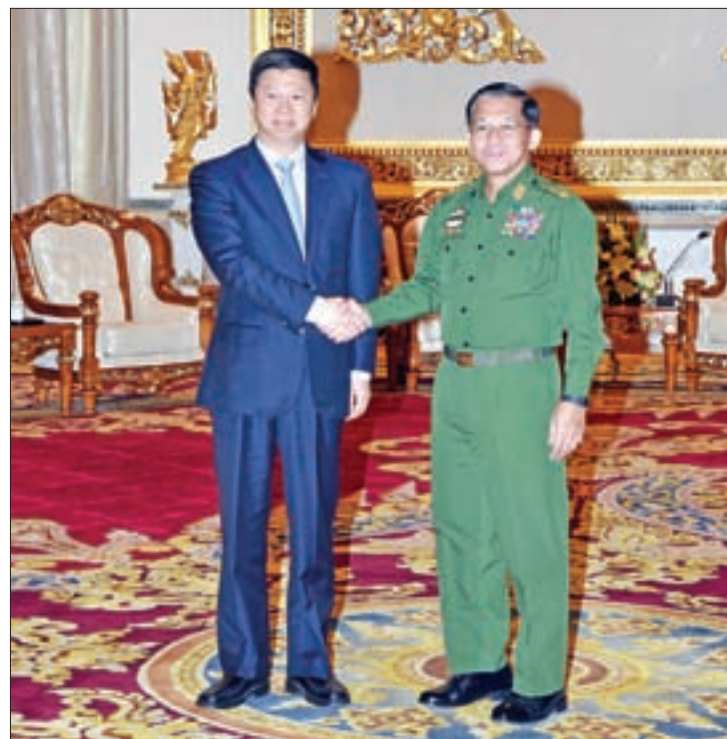
Law students visit Union Attorney-General's Office. PHOTO: MNA

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing receives CPC official

COMMANDER-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing received Mr Song Tao, Minister of the International Department of the Communist Party of the People's Republic of China, in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

At the meeting the two representatives discussed strengthening the good relations between the armed forces of the two countries with understanding and trust, cooperation for stability and the development of Myanmar, security issues at the border and the peace process in Myanmar.

Also present were Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win, senior military officers from the Office of the Commander-in-Chief (Army) and Ambassador of China to Myanmar Mr Hong Liang.—*MNA*



Senior-General Min Aung Hlaing welcomes Mr Song Tao, Minister of the International Department of the Communist Party of the People's Republic of China. PHOTO: MNA

“Why the State of Emergency in Turkey”

Article by the Ambassador of the Republic of Turkey to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, H.E. Murat Yavuz Ates,

THE developments which unfolded in Turkey on 15 July 2016 was a treacherous coup attempt by a group of plotters in the military, linked to the Fethullah Terrorist Organization (FETO). FETO linked plotters tried to overthrow the democratically-elected Government, the President and the constitutional order in Turkey.

These terrorist plotters opened fire on the civilian people, murdered the democracy defenders on the streets.

They attacked the Presidency and bombed the Parliament. They also attempted to assassinate the President.

At the end, FETO members were not successful in their attempt and democracy prevailed in Turkey. As a result of this terrorist coup attempt, 246 Turkish citizens lost their lives and 2185 were wounded.

During the coup attempt on 15th July 2016, it was revealed that FETÖ is a terrorist network that has infiltrated not only into the armed forces but also the other state organs.

It was revealed that the terrorist organisation is trying to take over the legitimate and democratic state regime.

Thus it was urgently necessary to take the measures to remove from the public institutions the people who are members of, or have relation, connection or contact with this terror organisation.

With this view, following

the failed coup attempt, a State of Emergency was declared in Turkey as of 21 July 2016.

The State of Emergency allows the removal from public service of the officials who are members of or have links to this terrorist organization.

Also the State of Emergency allows the government to take action against the companies and media outlets of the terrorist organization.

Within this framework, at present relevant public officials are being removed from public service and legal action is being taken against the companies and media outlets of the terror organization.

The purpose of declaring the State of Emergency, is to

take the required measures in the most speedy and effective manner in the fight against this terrorist organization.

The aim is to save the Turkish Republic from this terror network and return to normalcy as soon as possible. In this process, utmost care continues to be shown to protect and abide by democracy, the rule of law and the fundamental rights of our citizens.

State of Emergency is a measure envisaged by the Turkish Constitution and regulated by relevant national legislation. The Constitution includes clear provisions on the state of emergency.

State of Emergency is also a practice permitted under inter-

national human rights law, including European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR).

Article 15 of the ECHR provides the Member States with the right to take measures to suspend their obligations under the Convention, in public emergency situations.

Some European countries such as France and Germany have declared state of emergency when faced with security threats recently.

The State of Emergency has been declared for a period of 90 days.

All extraordinary measures will be terminated once the result in the fight against the Fethullah Terrorist Organization is successfully achieved.



Bureaucracy stifles potential prosecution of illegal loggers

DESPITE official complaints being made to the Department of Forestry back on 26 April over allegations of illegal logging activities being carried out within the parameters of the Shwe U Daung Wildlife Sanctuary, situated in northern Shan State, the complainant has made it known they are still waiting for a response from high levels of government.

“I lodged my complaint back in April. The government came and collected evidence and testimonies from both sides. But to date, they say nothing has come of it. I didn't make my complaint out of jealous towards other individuals, I did so because trees and natural resources from within this wildlife sanctuary are being illegally exploited,” said complainant Khaing Min.

He added that the fact nothing substantial has come of his complaint, made to the Department of Forestry for Moemeik Township back in April, makes him raise questions about the rule of law.

“A department official and myself made a field inspection after we received the complaint. We confiscated logged timber in three areas of Padauk trees mentioned in the complaint. In terms of the complaint in regard to gold being illegally mined in the region, we haven't been able to make any inspections on the matter as yet,” said chief forester of the aforementioned department, U Kyaw Thu.—*Myitmakha News Agency*

Theresa May seeks progress on Falklands in letter to Argentine leader

LONDON — British Prime Minister Theresa May has written to Argentina's President Mauricio Macri calling for restrictions on oil exploration in the Falklands Islands to be lifted and for more flights to the British-run islands, her office said on Thursday.

Argentina claims sovereignty over the South Atlantic islands it calls Las Malvinas, and relations between Buenos Aires and London have been strained for decades over the issue, culminating in a war in 1982 which Britain won.

May, who became prime minister in July, called for "more productive" relations between the two countries in her letter to the pro-business Macri, who took office in December as Argentina's first non-Peronist president in more than a decade.

"Since the election of President Macri, we have been working towards improved relations with Argentina because we think that is in the interests of both our countries and the Falkland Islanders too," May's Downing Street office said in a statement.



Britain's Prime Minister Theresa May visits a joinery factory in London, Britain, on 3 August 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

In her letter, May said she hoped that where the two countries had differences, "these can be acknowledged in an atmosphere of mutual respect".

She called for progress towards new flights between the islands, which are located about 435 miles off the coast of Tierra del Fuego in southern Argentina, and third countries in the region.

As things stand, a Chilean airline flies from Santiago to the Falklands every Saturday via the southern Chilean city of Punta Arenas, according to the Falklands Tourist Board. Once

a month, the flight also stops in Rio Gallegos, Argentina, in both directions.

May also called for the removal of "restrictive hydrocarbons measures", a reference to various attempts by Argentine authorities to restrict oil and gas exploration in the waters around the islands.

Tensions flared in June last year, under Macri's predecessor Cristina Fernandez, when an Argentine federal judge ordered the seizure of millions of dollars' worth of assets owned by drillers operating in the Falklands area.

The Argentine measures have not halted oil exploration, although efforts have been scaled down in recent times due to low oil prices on international markets. The Falklands are inhabited by about 3,000 people, the overwhelming majority of whom say they wish the islands to remain a British overseas territory.

Argentina has rejected that argument, accusing Britain of deliberately settling people there over a long period of history to bolster an illegitimate sovereignty claim.—Reuters

Russia announces war games after accusing Ukraine of terrorist plot

MOSCOW — Vladimir Putin summoned his security council and the Russian Navy announced war games in the Black Sea a day after the Russian president accused Ukraine of trying to provoke a conflict over Crimea, which Moscow seized and annexed in 2014.

The belligerent posture heightened worries in Ukraine that Russia may plan to ramp up fighting in a war between Kiev and pro-Russian eastern separatists that had been de-escalated by a shaky peace process.

Using some of his most aggressive rhetoric against Kiev since the height of the war two

years ago, Putin has pledged to take counter-measures against Ukraine, which he accused of sending saboteurs into Crimea to carry out terrorist acts.

Ukraine has called the accusations false and says they look like a pretext for Russia to escalate hostilities. Such an escalation could be used by Putin to demand better terms in the Ukraine peace process, or to inflame nationalist passions at home ahead of Russian parliamentary elections next month.

The Russian leader met his top military and intelligence service brass on Thursday and reviewed "scenarios for coun-

ter-terrorism security measures along the land border, offshore and in Crimean air space," the Kremlin said.

Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko said he had ordered all Ukrainian units near Crimea and in eastern Ukraine onto the highest state of combat readiness. He was seeking to urgently speak to Putin, the leaders of France and Germany, US Vice President Joe Biden and European Council President Donald Tusk.

In Washington, State Department spokeswoman Elizabeth Trudeau said the United States was extremely concerned and called on both sides to reduce tension and rhetoric.

In New York, the UN Security Council held a closed-door meeting at Ukraine's request to discuss the growing tensions.

Ukrainian UN Ambassador Volodymyr Yelchenko warned that Russia had amassed more than 40,000 troops in the region and said the build-up could reflect "very bad intentions."

Oleh Slobodyan, a spokesman for the Ukrainian border guards, said he had observed an uptick in Russian military activity in northern Crimea in recent days after heavier fighting in eastern Ukraine. "These troops are coming with more modern equipment and there are air assault units," he told a news briefing in Kiev.—Reuters



Ukrainian servicemen watch Sukhoi Su-24 front-line bombers fly during military aviation drills as Russia accuses Ukraine in incursion into annexed Crimea, in Rivne region, Ukraine, on 10 August 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

NEWS IN BRIEF

Canadian woman sues Pokemon Go creator for invasion of privacy

VANCOUVER — A Canadian woman filed a class-action lawsuit against the creator of the popular video game Pokemon Go, saying she suffered from an invasion of privacy as the App designated her house a gym.

Against the California-based Niantic Inc., Barbra-Lyn Schaeffer living in the province of Alberta said on Wednesday that she and her husband "have been inundated by players at their home in the otherwise sleepy hamlet of Torrington, since the game was introduced."

Game players gathered at her home 99 miles (160 kilometres) northeast of the city of Calgary since it became the site of a Pokemon gym, the lawsuit said. Pokemon Go gyms are places where players congregate and battle it out to take control of the area for a selected team. Usually, gyms are designated to churches or public buildings. Schaeffer said people tried to come up over the fence into the ground of her home, while some others even flew drones into the yard to play the game.—Xinhua

Viet Nam's HCM City faces shortage of WCs

HO CHI MINH CITY — A private company wants to build 1,000 public water closets (WCs) in Viet Nam's Ho Chi Minh City which has only 208 public WCs, the municipal Department of Natural Resources and Environment said on Friday.

The WCs, mostly in the two districts of No. 1 and No.3, can not meet demand of the residents and tourists of the city with a population of over 10 million people.

A private company has just asked for the municipal authorities' permission to invest 110 billion Vietnamese dong (4.9 million US dollars) in building 1,000 public WCs and 500 dustbins. If the firm does that, the city should allow it to use space at flyover bridges for advertisement purposes for 15 years. The firm will conduct the bridges' maintenance for the 15 years.—Xinhua

Weak exports hit Malaysia's economic growth: central bank

KUALA LUMPUR — Hit by dwindling exports, Malaysia's economy notched its fifth consecutive quarterly decline in the second quarter of this year, growing at 4.0 per cent, the central bank said on Friday.

"Despite the stronger expansion in domestic demand, growth was weighed down by the continued decline in net exports and a significant drawdown in stocks," Bank Negara Malaysia said in a statement. The quarterly gross domestic product growth has been on a decline since the second quarter of 2015. In the first quarter of this year, GDP stood at 4.2 per cent. On a quarter-to-quarter seasonally adjusted basis, the GDP recorded a growth of 0.7%.

The central bank maintained its growth forecast for the year at between 4.0 and 4.5 per cent. Last month, for the first time in seven years, Bank Negara Malaysia announced a cut in the key interest rate to 3.00 per cent from 3.25 per cent over concerns of slowing growth in the global economy.—Kyodo News

Americans, Chinese dominate Forbes' 2016 list of 100 Richest In Tech

NEW YORK — Against the backdrop of weak global economic recovery, the world's tech industry seems unaffected, especially in the United States and Asia.

Forbes' newly released 2016 list of 100 Richest In Tech shows that 75 per cent of the titans on the list are from the United States and China, with 51 and 24 tech founders and investors respectively.

The combined worth of the list is estimated at 892 billion US dollars, representing a 6-per cent growth on a year-on-year basis.

Microsoft founder Bill Gates continues to be the richest billionaire in tech, as well as the richest person in the world, with a fortune estimated at 78 billion dollars.

Amazon founder and CEO Jeff Bezos is listed as the second with 66.2 billion dollars, followed by Facebook founder and CEO Mark Zuckerberg, who climbed from fourth to third place with 54 billion dollars.

Jack Ma, the founder of China's e-commerce giant Alibaba Group, retains his title as Asia's richest tech billionaire with 25.8 billion dollars. With Ma Huateng, the founder and CEO of the internet media company Tencent, the two Chinese tycoons are the only two non-American citizens among the top 10 on the list.—Xinhua

Libyan forces in fresh clashes with Islamic State in Sirte

TRIPOLI — Libyan forces engaged in renewed clashes with Islamic State militants in Sirte on Thursday, a day after capturing a convention complex that had been a symbol of the militant group's authority in the city.

Forces aligned with Libya's UN-backed government seized the Ouagadougou convention centre and several other key sites on Wednesday, advancing into areas that had been fought over for weeks.

Those forces, supported since 1 August by US air strikes, said in a statement that they had taken Islamic State's "most important bastions" in its former North African stronghold.

But they have yet to gain control of several neighbourhoods in central Sirte. On Thursday, fighters advancing on a hotel and guest houses near Sirte's port exchanged sporadic fire with militants, said Rida Issa, a spokesman for the Sirte operation.

The forces said they had "made incursions" into Areas 1 and 3, two of the districts still occupied by militants, and that they had "dealt with a number of snipers hidden in a corner of the Ouagadougou hall complex ... they were eliminated."

The gains come after weeks of house-to-house fighting in residential areas, with sniper fire, trip wires and landmines slowing the advance.

The fighters are led by brigades from nearby Misrata, who repelled an Islamic State advance



Libyan forces allied with the UN-backed government prepare to capture university buildings during a battle with IS fighters in Sirte, Libya, 10 August 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

south of their city in early May before pushing eastwards to Sirte and besieging the militants in the centre of the Mediterranean city.

The capture of Sirte would be a major setback for Islamic State, ousting the jihadist group from the only city in Libya where it established total control.

It could also boost the fortunes of the UN-backed Government of National Accord (GNA), which has been struggling to impose its influence on a country riven by political and armed rivalries.

In an interview with Italian newspaper *Corriere della Sera* on Tuesday, before the latest advanc-

es, GNA Prime Minister Fayez Seraj said he believed the defeat of Islamic State in Sirte would "not take too much time. Probably not months, just a few weeks".

After Wednesday's advances, brigade fighters found a house used as a laboratory for making explosive belts and seized a number of military vehicles used by Islamic State, some damaged and some in good condition, said Issa, the spokesman.

"Military engineering units are now working to clear the captured areas of mines," he added.

US Africa Command said it carried out seven strikes in Sirte on Wednesday, targeting trucks

mounted with heavy artillery, fighting positions, a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device and two supply trucks. US drones and fighter jets have carried out 36 strikes over Sirte since 1 August.

Eighteen GNA-aligned fighters were killed on Wednesday and 72 wounded, Issa said. Among the dead was Mokhtar Fakron, a senior air force commander who was killed with another pilot when their jet came down over Sirte.

From an estimated fighting force of some 6,000 men, more than 350 brigade fighters have been killed and at least 1,500 wounded since the campaign to recapture Sirte began.—Reuters

London schoolgirl who left to join Islamic State dead — lawyer

LONDON — One of three schoolgirls who left London in February 2015 to join the Islamic State militant group has died, her family lawyer told Reuters on Thursday.

Attorney Tasnime Akunjee said the family of Kadiza Sultana learned of her death in Raqqa, Syria, a few weeks ago.

She was believed to have been killed by a Russian air strike in Raqqa, ITV News reported earlier on Thursday.

Sultana was making plans to return to Britain and her family was communicating with her to discuss her possible escape from Raqqa, according to an interview published by ITV with Sultana's sister, which includes recordings of purported phone calls between the sisters.

Sultana, 16, along with two other friends, flew from London's Gatwick Airport to Turkey on 17 February, 2015.

The British Home Office and British Interior Ministry could not be reached immediately for a comment.—Reuters

Man killed in Canada raid made 'martyrdom video,' planned attack — police

STRATHROY (Ontario) — The man killed during a Canadian police raid at his home in Ontario on Wednesday was a supporter of Islamic State who was in the final stages of preparing an attack on a Canadian city with a homemade bomb, police said on Thursday.

Police went to the home of Aaron Driver in the small town of Strathroy after receiving credible information, including a "martyrdom video," from US authorities that he planned what could have been a "dreadful" attack, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) said at a news conference.

Driver died after he detonated an explosive device in the backseat of a taxi as police closed in and opened fire, the RCMP said in Ottawa. A representative from a local taxi company said a cab had been dispatched to Driver's address at the time of the police raid and the taxi driver sustained minor injuries.

It was a race against time," said RCMP Deputy Commissioner Mike Cabana, noting the outcome "could have been significantly more dreadful" if police had not intervened when they did.

The incident was the first security test for Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, who was elected

last October and who in February fulfilled a campaign pledge to withdraw Canada from the combat mission against Islamic State and to increase its mission training local fighters against the group in northern Iraq.

The video provided by the US Federal Bureau of Investigation allowed the RCMP to identify Driver and go to his home in Strathroy, about 225 km (140 miles) southwest of Toronto. In Washington, the FBI said it gave the RCMP "actionable threat intelligence".

In the video, a man in a black balaclava cites a phrase from the Koran, refers to crimes against Muslims and pledges an imminent attack on a Canadian city.

"Oh Canada, you received many warnings, you were told many times what would become of those who fight against the Islamic State," the man says in the video, pledging allegiance to the militant group.

Police said the attack was planned for the next 72 hours, during rush hour. The RCMP said there was no indication that Driver, a 24-year-old Muslim convert, had any accomplices and did not specify which city was targeted.

Islamic State media said Driver was its "soldier," the SITE Intel-



Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) block the entrance to Park Street as they investigate the residence of Aaron Driver, a Canadian man killed by police on Wednesday who had indicated he planned to carry out an imminent rush-hour attack on a major Canadian city, in Strathroy, Ontario, Canada, on 11 August, 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

ligence Group monitoring service said on Thursday.

Driver, who also used the alias Harun Abdurahman, was arrested but never charged with a crime last year for openly supporting the militant Islamist group Islamic State on social media.

In February he was placed on a peace bond, a court order that restricted his movements, required that he stay away from social media and computers and not have

contact with Islamic State or similar groups.

Police said on Thursday that Driver had not been under constant surveillance, but had been supervised.

Canadian Public Safety Minister Ralph Goodale said that in some circumstances peace bonds may not be the most effective tool.

"Those issues will obviously need to be very carefully scrutinized," he told CBC television.

Strathroy is a town of about 21,000 inhabitants in the heart of Ontario's farmland. Driver's house was on a tranquil street lined with detached two-storey homes, near a baseball field and a swimming pool.

Public transit operators in Toronto and the surrounding area were warned by police of potential security threats hours before Driver died, they said on Thursday.

Aaron Driver was a troubled child who converted to Islam in his teens some time before his support for Islamic State attracted the attention of Canadian police.

"I didn't realise he was so radicalised," Driver's father, Wayne Driver, told the CBC. "I didn't know he could speak Arabic so well. I knew he was mad at the world because of his mother dying but I didn't realise he was turning his hatred outward to the world."

In 2014, Canada was stunned by two deadly attacks that police said were the work of homegrown radicals and that led to tougher new anti-terrorism measures. A gunman killed a soldier at Ottawa's national war memorial before launching an attack on the Canadian Parliament in October 2014 while, in the same week, a man ran down two soldiers in Quebec, killing one.—Reuters

Zambia awaits presidential, parliamentary vote results



Zambians await their turn to cast their votes during the presidential and parliamentary elections in the capital, Lusaka, Zambia, on 11 August, 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

LUSAKA — Zambia on Friday awaited the first election results from what is expected to have been a close contest between President Edgar Lungu and his main rival, who accuses him of mismanaging the economy.

Lungu narrowly beat opponent Hakainde Hichilema in a presidential vote nearly 20 months ago to fill the vacancy created by the death of then president Michael Sata, and could be forced into a second-round rerun if he does not get an outright majority this time.

Although the final voting tally was not yet available, electoral officials reported a high turnout in Thursday's elections, where Zambians also voted for members of parliament and councillors.

The economy of Afri-

ca's second largest copper producer is under stress after weak commodity prices hit exports, and the government is trying to negotiate a support programme with the International Monetary Fund.

During the campaign, supporters of Lungu's governing Patriotic Front tussled with those of Hichilema's United Party for National Development, but there were no reports of violence on the day of the election.

If no candidate wins more than 50 per cent, a second round between the two leading vote-getters must be held within 37 days. Hichilema, a businessman and an economist by training, says he is more qualified than Lungu, a former lawyer, to steer the economy out of its slump.—Reuters

“CESVI Notice”

This notice is to inform that as of May 16, 2016 the employment contract with Mr. Thiha Soe - NRC no. TKA 111 604, is terminated for serious breach of Cesvi Code of Conduct provisions. Please do not accept any invoice, letter or other documents that Mr. Thiha Soe may issue in the name of Cesvi.

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV MAX CRUSADER VOY. NO (010N)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV MAX CRUSADER VOY NO (010N) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 13.8.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.W.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S INTERASIA LINES

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV BC MUMBAI VOY. NO (204)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV BC MUMBAI VOY NO (204) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 13.8.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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

Phone No: 2301185

South Korea looks to generate buzz for edible insects

SEOUL — Bae Su-Hyeon's lunch of sweet potato soup and funghi pasta has bugs in it. They're part of the recipe.

“It didn't feel like eating insects,” says Bae, an 18-year-old student having lunch with a friend at Papillon's Kitchen, a Seoul restaurant specializing in insects.

That's because the mealworms in her dishes were hydrolysed into powder to make the pasta and soup.

Insect-eating, or entomophagy, has long been common in much of the world, including South Korea, where boiled silky worm pupae, or beondegi,

are a popular snack.

Now, South Korea is looking to expand its insect industry as a source of agricultural income by promoting more consumption, joining a global trend that has seen rising interest in insects as a nutritious and environmentally friendly food.

To do that, the government is trying to make people more comfortable with the idea of eating crickets and mealworms that are ground into powder or hydrolysed to extract oils and protein and turned into food, from ice cream to sausages.

Kim Young Wook, chief executive of the pri-

vate-sector Korean Edible Insect Laboratory and owner of Papillon's Kitchen, said key to winning over sceptical customers was presentation.

“If people taste foods after having a good first impression, and find they are delicious, that's everything, because taste speaks for itself,” he said this week at a tasting event staged by the Agriculture Ministry.

South Korea's insect industry was worth 304 billion won (\$278 million) last year, nearly double from 2011, although food for humans accounted for just 6 billion won of that with the

rest coming from uses like animal feed.

The government wants to expand the industry to 530 billion won by 2020, with food making up nearly a fifth.

The number of farms producing insects rose to 724 last year, from 265 in 2011. Insects can be a rich source of fat, protein, vitamins, fibre and minerals, according to the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO). The composition of unsaturated omega-3 and six fatty acids in mealworms is comparable to that in fish and higher than in beef and pork, it says.—Reuters

Forest fires ravage mainland Portugal, Madeira calmer after deaths

LISBON/FUNCHAL, (Portugal) — Thousands of Portuguese firefighters struggled on Thursday to control nearly 200 forest fires after flames killed at least four people on the mainland and the island of Madeira the previous day.

Prime Minister Antonio Costa cut short his holidays

and flew to Madeira, where more than 200 buildings in the regional capital and popular resort Funchal had been destroyed or damaged and some 1,000 people including tourists evacuated.

“We understand the dimension of this horrible tragedy that devastated various municipalities here in

Madeira, and we also know about the calamities affecting other zones of the country that now have to be addressed,” he told reporters.

Some 260 people remained in makeshift shelters on Thursday, but the regional government said that all tourists were either back in their hotels or had been transferred to others. A five-star resort near Funchal had been completely destroyed by fire.

“We have to move on to the next phase — to rebuild what's been destroyed, return to normalcy, rebuild the confidence in Madeira as a major tourism destination,” Costa said.

On mainland Portugal, over 4,200 firefighters backed by 30 aircraft, including several sent by Italy, Spain and Morocco, were trying to put out blazes that

had been set off amid a heat wave and fanned by strong winds to scorch mostly the wooded north of the country.

A Spanish pilot flying a water bomber in northern Portugal left an Instagram photograph of thick plumes of smoke surrounding wind energy towers on a hill below his wing, with a caption: “This is the largest inferno I have seen in my life.”

Police have said that various fires were lit by arsonists and they arrested several suspects, including one in Madeira.

Provisional data from the Forestry Preservation Institute, cited by local media, showed that blazes destroyed about 260 square km (100 sq miles) of forests just in the first nine days of August, which is more than in some full years recently.—Reuters



Civilians, and police officers use water buckets to help extinguish a forest fire near houses at Sao Joao Latrao, Funchal, Madeira island, Portugal, on 10 August 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Auto Telephone numbers will be changed to update exchange at Mandalay S-12 RSU in Mandalay Region

Myanma Posts and Telecommunications (MPT), announced that the existing auto telephone numbers at Mingalar Mandalay Garden City (S-12 RSU-5 Exchange), MPT Guest House compound (S-12 RSU-6 Exchange), Mahar Myaing (S-12 RSU-2&7 Exchange) in Mandalay Region will be replaced on 30-9-2016 as follow. With these new numbers, the customers can use not only call services but also ADSL internet services.

No.	Area	Existing Auto Telephone Number	New Auto Telephone Number
1.	Mingalar Mandalay S-12 RSU (5)	02-78xxx	02-2848xxx
2.	Mandalay MPT Guest House compound S-12 RSU (6)	02-74xxx	02-2844xxx
3.	Mahar Myaing S-12 RSU (2) & (7)	02-62xxx 02-77xxx	02-2832xxx 02-2847xxx

Myanma Posts and Telecommunications

Auto Telephone numbers will be changed to update exchange at Pyi San Aung JSY-2000 in Zayar Thiri Tsp., Naypyitaw council Region

Myanma Posts and Telecommunications (MPT), announced that the existing auto telephone numbers at Pyi San Aung JSY-2000 in Zayar Thiri Tsp., Naypyitaw council Region will be replaced on 30-9-2016 as follow. With these new numbers, the customers can used not only call services but also ADSL internet services.

No.	Area	Existing Auto Telephone Number	New Auto Telephone Number
1.	Zayar Thiri Tsp., Pyi San Aung JSY-2000	067-75xxx	067-9985xxx

Myanma Posts and Telecommunications

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV HAI WANG XING VOY. NO (73)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV HAI WANG XING VOY NO (73) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 14.8.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MITT-3 where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S COSCO SHIPPING CO LTD.**

Phone No: 2301928

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV TOMINI HARMONY VOY. NO (1607)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV TOMINI HARMONY VOY NO (1607) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 13.8.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MITT-4 where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S BRIGHT SAIL SHIPPING
CO LTD.**

Phone No: 2301928

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV SINAR BALI VOY. NO ()

Consignees of cargo carried on MV SINAR BALI VOY NO () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 13.8.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P / M.I.T.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S SILKAGO LOGISTICS
PTE LTD**

Phone No: 2301185

Rihanna to receive MTV's lifetime achievement award



Rihanna performs on stage at the 2014 MTV Movie Awards in Los Angeles, California on 13 April 2014. PHOTO: REUTERS

NEW YORK — Rihanna will receive MTV's lifetime achievement award at the 28 August Video Music Awards (VMA) show, MTV said on Thursday, joining the likes of Kanye West, Madonna and Beyoncé.

The Michael Jackson Video Vanguard award is the highest honor in the video music industry, and reflects an artist's impact not just on music but on pop culture, fashion, film and philanthropy.

Rihanna, 28, has twice won the coveted video of the year at the MTV ceremony and is an eight-time Grammy winner with more than 61 million albums sold. The "Umbrella" singer also set up the Clara Lionel Foundation, which works to improve health and cultural services in her home of Barbados and beyond.

Rihanna will perform at the ceremony in New York, where she is nominated for four VMA's for her song "Work" with Canadian rapper Drake, and her collaboration with Calvin Harris on "This is What You Came For."

Rapper West won the Vanguard award in 2015 and other previous winners include Michael Jackson, Britney Spears and Justin Timberlake.—Reuters

Pedro Almodovar reflects on 'Julieta' at UK premiere

LONDON — Acclaimed Spanish director Pedro Almodovar said he found a new challenge in his latest film "Julieta," mining a quieter drama for his 20th feature film as he reflected on his decades-long career.

"Julieta" is an adaptation of

several Alice Munro stories about a single mother drifting into depression as she searches for her missing daughter and discovers much about her traumatic past is not what it seems. The film stars Emma Suarez as the older Julieta and Adriana Ugarte as the young-

er iteration of the character. Almodovar, 66, known for complex dramas such as "Hable con Ella" ("Talk to Her"), "Todo sobre mi madre" ("All About My Mother") and "Volver," said "Julieta" presented a new challenge for him.

"I used to make a lot of melodramas, I mean dramas with a lot of sense of humor, music and strange situations. But in this case...there is so much pain in this story that I wanted to — just to make it more softer way that I could. So I mean this sobriety, it was something new for me and it's related more with a dark drama than with melodrama," the Oscar-winning director told Reuters at the film's UK premiere on Wednesday. Debuting his 20th film, Almodovar looked back on his own career, saying he "dreamed to be a director" since childhood. When asked about his contribution to Spanish cinema, Almodovar said his country's diverse culture was at the heart of his work, and discussed the changing portrayals of his female characters through the years.—Reuters



Director Pedro Almodovar (C), cast members Adriana Ugarte (L) and Emma Suarez pose on the red carpet as they arrive for the screening of the film "Julieta" in competition at the 69th Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, France, on 17 May 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Bridges, Pine find shades of grey in 'Hell or High Water'



wChris Pine. PHOTO: REUTERS

LOS ANGELES — Oscar winner Jeff Bridges joins forces with "Star Trek" actor Chris Pine for action drama "Hell or High Water", a gritty film set in West Texas exploring the blurry line between good and bad.

Bridges plays a Texas Ranger in the movie while Pine and "Warcraft" actor Ben Foster portray two brothers who rob banks in an attempt to save their family property.

"It was kind of the authentic-

ity really that got my juices flowing," Bridges said at the film's Hollywood premiere on Wednesday. "Also...the ambiguity as far as who is good and who is bad. That is really life like, that is how life seems to me." Director David Mackenzie added: "I really like that kind of moral grey area where you ask those questions...It was very much there in the DNA of the script." "Hell or High Water" hits cinemas from Friday.—Reuters

Reuters

US Ambassador says 'sorry' to SRK over detention

NEW DELHI — US Ambassador to India Richard Verma on Friday apologised to Bollywood superstar Shahrukh Khan for his detention at Los Angeles airport and said the US was working to ensure that it does not happen again.

Verma's comment on Twitter was appreciated by Khan who thanked him for his concern.

"Sorry for the trouble at LAX @iamsrk. We are working to ensure it doesn't happen again. Your work inspires millions, including in the US," Verma tweeted.

Khan had tweeted that he was detained at Los Angeles airport but it was not clear when the incident occurred.

Responding to Verma's

tweet, the 50-year-old actor said, "No trouble sir, respect the protocol & not expecting 2 b above it. It s just a tad inconvenient. Thx for ur concern."

It is the third time in seven years that Khan has been stopped by US immigration officials at the country's airports.

The actor expressed disappointment on social media after

the incident.

"I fully understand & respect security with the way the world is, but to be detained at US immigration every damn time really really sucks," (sic) the actor tweeted.

Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asia in the US Department of State Nisha Desai Biswal also apologised to Khan for the "hassle".

"Sorry for the hassle at the airport, @iamsrk - even American diplomats get pulled for extra screening," Biswal tweeted.

In April 2012, Khan was detained at the White Plains airport near New York for over two hours by immigration officials. In 2009, he was detained at the Newark Airport in New Jersey for nearly two hours.—PTI

Athletics — Ten events not to miss at the Rio Games

RIO DE JANEIRO — Ten days of athletics competition at the Rio Olympics begin on Friday. Following are 10 events not to miss at the Olympic Stadium:

MEN'S 100 AND 200 METRES

Usain Bolt always seems to emerge at his best when global titles are on the line and these Games should be no different.

Justin Gatlin may hold the year's fastest 100 metres time and LaShawn Merritt tops the timesheets in the 200, but do not shy away from picking Bolt in both events in his final Olympics.

Behind Bolt and Gatlin, youngsters Trayvon Bromell of the United States and Andre De Grasse of Canada appear to be the best in the 100, with Merritt a strong possibility for third in the 200.

MEN'S 400 METRES

Spectators at the Olympic Stadium are in for a real treat if the 400 metres final comes anywhere close to the sensational title race at last year's world championships in Beijing.

South African Wayde van Niekerk ran a stunning lap to lead, the last two Olympic champions, Lashawn Merritt and Kirani James, across the line with all three clocking under 44 seconds.

American Merritt, the Beijing Olympic champion, and Grenadian James, who will defend his London title in Rio, have both run faster times than Van Niekerk this year so a thrilling battle between the trio can be expected on Sunday.

MEN'S 5,000 and 10,000M

Britain's double Olympic champion Mo Farah is favoured to build on half a decade of dominance in middle-distance running to become only the second man ever to retain his 5,000 and 10,000 metres Olympic gold



Usain Bolt. PHOTO: REUTERS

medals.

Kenyan and Ethiopian runners are expected to pose the biggest threat to Farah, 33, who has won five world championships over the two distances since 2011.

Kenya's 23-year-old Geoffrey Kamworor narrowly lost out to Farah over 10,000m at last year's Beijing world championships and is expected to be chief among the challengers at Rio, along with Ethiopia's Muktar Edris.

DECATHLON

Defending gold medallist Ashton Eaton will be looking to retain his title at the decathlon on Wednesday and Thursday.

The 28-year-old American has been on a tear since London, winning the world championships in Moscow in 2013 and

Beijing in 2015, and despite being hit in the head by a stray pole vault cross bar while competing in the long jump at the US Indoor Championships in March has remained in competitive form.

Eaton faces a handful of key competitors, including Canada's Damian Warner, 26, currently ranked second in the world, who placed fifth in Beijing and 30-year-old German Artur Abele, recently returned to competition after losing eight months of the 2015 season to a torn Achilles tendon.

WOMEN'S 100 METRES

With Jamaica's twice Olympic champion Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce not at her best, the women's 100 metres, unlike the men's, appears to be wide open.

Will it be another Jamaican in Elaine Thompson - the

year's fastest over the distance? Or might it be Dutch 200 metres world champion Dafne Schippers. Or could one of the Americans, United States trials winner English Gardner or world bronze medallist Tori Bowie, step up?

WOMEN'S 200 METRES

The dominant US and Jamaican sprinters will be given a run for their money at the women's 200 metres by Schippers.

A former heptathlon specialist, Schippers finished first in the 200 metres at the 2015 world championships in Beijing and earlier this year won the 100 at the European championships.

The United States will have a pair of highly regarded competitors, 25-year-old Bowie and 19-year-old Ariana Washington, with Jamaica's Thompson, 24, also expected to be a factor after

finishing second in the event at the world championships in Beijing in 2015.

Thompson has proven a late bloomer in running - excelling on the world stage after failing to make her high school track team. **HEPTATHLON**

Jessica Ennis-Hill's success in the multi-discipline event London made her one of the faces of the 2012 Games and having returned from having a child to win the world title in Beijing last year, she will be confident of defending her title in Rio.

While the Briton is a proven performer on the sport's biggest stages, Canadian gold medal hopeful Brianna Theisen-Eaton will hope to deal better with the pressure she admits got to her at last year's world championships.

Ennis-Hill's compatriot Katarina Johnson-Thompson has had a miserable time with injuries but will be a title contender if fit, as will Anouk Vetter of the Netherlands and Latvia's Laura Ikauniece-Admidina.

WOMEN'S SHOT PUT

Valerie Adams has the chance to become the first woman to win an individual Olympic athletics event three times in a row on the opening day.

Dominant between the 2008 Beijing Olympics and 2014, when the New Zealander required surgery on her shoulder and elbow, Adams eased back into competition this year but showed she was heading back to top form with two throws over 20 metres. Germany's world champion Christina Schwanitz has had injury problems of her own but looms as the biggest threat to Adams, while Gong Lijiao has the longest throw of the year (20.43) and should also be in the mix when the medals are handed out.—Reuters

Two suspects held in possible Rio Olympics plot : police

RIO DE JANEIRO — Police arrested two people on Thursday suspected of supporting Islamic State in planning a possible attack during the Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro.

Police had arrested 12 people before Thursday's operation, all suspected of collaboration with Islamic State militants. Brazil's federal police said three others have been interrogated and lat-

er released. The two arrested on Thursday were Brazilians, but police did not provide names or other details.

Although Brazil has no history of conflict with known militant

groups, the government has said the Games made the country a more likely target, particularly because of participation by countries fighting Islamic State.

Its militants control parts of

Iraq and Syria and a US-led coalition has conducted air strikes against them. The group has supporters worldwide who have carried out shootings and bombings of civilians.—Reuters



Entertainment Channel

(13-8-2016, Saturday)

<p>06 : 00 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weather Report Next Generation "Skater" Music Programme <p>06 : 25 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cartoon Programme "Batman; Mystery of the Bat woman" (Part-2) <p>07 : 00 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cassette Recordings <p>08 : 15 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MRTV Entertainment Music <p>08 : 25 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sai Htee Hseng Or An Exceptional Music Star From <p>* 08 : 30 pm Live: Premier League "Crystal Palace Vs West Brom"</p>	<p>Shan Plateaus (Ep-3)</p> <p>08 : 55 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> International Movie Songs <p>09 : 05 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cruising To Precious Islands(Part-1) <p>09 : 35 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Music Programme <p>09 : 45pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Myanmar Childhood Game (Ep-2) <p>09 : 55pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MRTV Entertainment Music <p>10 : 05 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dances of Myanmar "Pre Kayaw Dance" <p>10 : 10 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Myanmar Movie
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From 13-8-2016 (Saturday) 6:00 pm
To 14-8-2016 (Sunday) 6:00 pm



mitv Myanmar International

(13-8-2016 07:00am ~ 14-8-2016 07:00am) MST

<p>Today Fresh</p> <p>07:03 Am News</p> <p>07:27 Am Great Shwedagon- Charitable Associations</p> <p>08:03 Am News</p> <p>08:26 Am Reviving and Promoting a Traditional Festival</p> <p>08:54 Am [Doctor] [Painter]</p> <p>09:03 Am News</p> <p>09:26 Am Discovering Tribes: Akha- Their Life and Customs (Part-1)</p> <p>09:47 Am The 110th Anniversary of Yangon Zoological Garden</p> <p>10:03 Am News</p> <p>10:26 Am Next Generation "Sammy Tin (Clarinetist)"</p>	<p>10:34 Am The Hills Of Phowintaung And Shwebataung</p> <p>10:52 Am Kindhearted Pet Lovers</p> <p>(11:00 Am ~ 03:00 Pm) - Friday Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)</p> <p>(03:00 Pm ~ 07:00 Pm) - Today Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)</p> <p>Prime Time</p> <p>07:03 Pm News</p> <p>07:26 Pm Travelogue "To the coastal region (Myeik - Kawthoung)" (Part-1)</p> <p>07:50 Pm Today Myanmar: Suspension of High Rise Buildings</p> <p>08:03 Pm News</p> <p>08:26 Pm Now in Yangon</p> <p>08:31 Pm The Stories Of The Great Souls (Mar Mar Aye) (Ep-1)</p> <p>(09:00 Pm ~ 11:00 Pm) - Today Repeat (09:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)</p> <p>(11:00 Pm ~ 03:00 Am) - Friday Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)</p> <p>(03:00 Am ~ 07:00 Am) - Today Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)</p> <p>(For Detailed Schedule - www.myanmaritv.com/schedule)</p>
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Phelps writes new page with four wins in same event

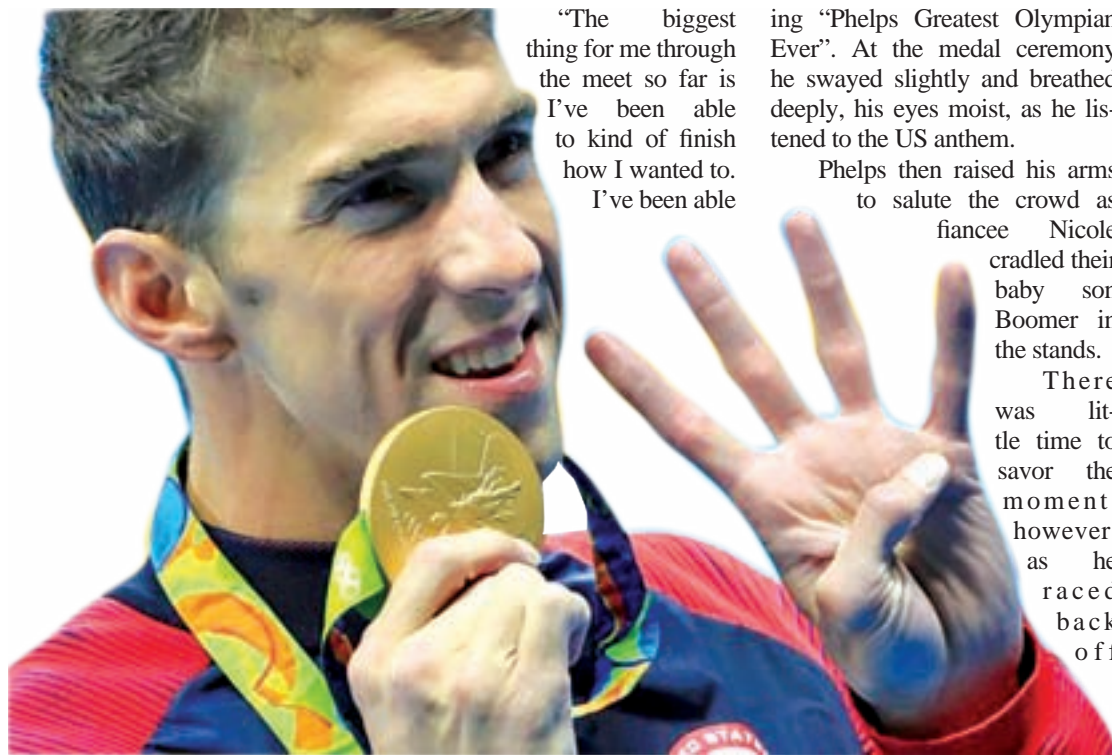
RIO DE JANEIRO — Michael Phelps of the United States won the Olympic 200 meters individual medley on Thursday to capture the 22nd gold medal of his career and become the first swimmer to win the same event at four consecutive Games.

Japan's 400 IM champion Kosuke Hagino won silver and Wang Shun of China took bronze, both moving dramatically through the field on the final length after turning in fifth and seventh place.

It was yet another extraordinary swim for Phelps, 31, who has now won two individual and two relay golds at his fifth Olympics, two years after coming out of retirement. His medal haul has now risen to 26, including two silvers and two bronzes, with the 100 butterfly final still to come on Friday. Thirteen of his golds have come in individual races, the rest in relays.

"Right now I don't know how to wrap my head around that. I don't know what to say. It's been a hell of a career," Phelps told reporters, while acknowledging the strain on his 31-year-old body.

"That hurt a lot ... my body is in pain, my legs are hurting, I'm tired."



Michael Phelps gestures to indicate the four gold medals he has won at this Olympic games as he poses with his gold medal. PHOTO: REUTERS

Despite winning four golds in London in 2012, Phelps has said he was dissatisfied with his preparation and results there and wants to bow out on his own terms.

"The biggest thing for me through the meet so far is I've been able to kind of finish how I wanted to. I've been able

to come back and I've been able to accomplish things that I just dreamt of," he said.

He was lauded by the Rio crowd, with one banner proclaim-

ing "Phelps Greatest Olympian Ever". At the medal ceremony he swayed slightly and breathed deeply, his eyes moist, as he listened to the US anthem.

Phelps then raised his arms to salute the crowd as fiancee Nicole cradled their baby son Boomer in the stands.

There was little time to savor the moment, however, as he raced back off

the pool deck to get ready for the semi-finals of the 100m butterfly, which he also has the chance to win for a fourth successive Games.

He finished second in his semi-final to qualify fifth fastest for Friday's final.

In the medley, Brazil's Thiago Pereira went off fastest, leading from Phelps after the butterfly leg, with Ryan Lochte of the United States and Hagino neck-and-neck just behind.

With the Rio crowd's excitement mounting, the three turned almost together after the backstroke, with Lochte just 0.01 seconds ahead.

Phelps led from Pereira and Lochte at the final turn and powered on as the other two faded, opening the way for Hagino and Wang to grab the two other medals.

Phelps clocked one minute, 54.66 for a comfortable winning margin of 1.95 seconds.

Japan's Hiromasa Fujimori was fourth and Lochte fifth in the last individual race of his long career, with a flagging Pereira seventh. Phelps' four consecutive golds in the same event are unique for a swimmer, and place him in the same Olympic pantheon as fellow-Americans Al Oerter in the discus and Carl Lewis in the long jump.—Reuters

Arsenal can compete with big-spending rivals, says Wenger

LONDON — Despite the influx of new talent at the top end of the Premier League, Arsene Wenger remains confident that Arsenal can still compete this season.

The Manchester clubs have spent a combined 322 million pounds in the transfer market, more than 40 per cent of the

league's total outlay since May, but Arsenal's only notable arrival is 30 million pound Granit Xhaka.

"The top clubs have new ambition so it promises to be a very exciting season and difficult one as well," Wenger told journalists on Friday. "United are the richest club in the world, with Real Madrid, so

not many teams can compete with their financial amounts but that doesn't make the difference as I feel on the pitch we can compete."

Wenger will test his mettle against incoming coaches Antonio Conte at Chelsea and Manchester City's Pep Guardiola this season, while he will also be pitted against

his old foe Jose Mourinho at Manchester United. However, the 66-year-old does not believe the new faces on the touchline will be the deciding factor in the title race.

"(The new managers) will be interesting," Wenger added, "but the quality on the pitch will be the most important thing and let's not

forget we finished second.

"We need to skip one more place. The last four years we have been fourth, third and second, and we want to make progress again."

Arsenal begin their Premier League campaign on Sunday when they host Liverpool at the Emirates Stadium.—Reuters



Andy Murray (GBR) of United Kingdom hits the ball against Fabio Fognini (ITA) of Italy during Men's Singles Third Round at Olympic Tennis Centre in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil on 11 August 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

RIO DE JANEIRO — Defending champion Andy Murray survived a scare to reach the quarter-finals of the men's Olympic tennis tournament with a three-set victory over Fabio Fognini on Thursday.

Murray won 6-1, 2-6, 6-3 after rallying from a 3-0 third-set deficit against the Italian, who won eight straight games before the Briton regained control.

Spain's Rafa Nadal also

booked his spot in the last eight with a 7-6(5), 6-3 win over Frenchman Gilles Simon.

The Olympic tennis tournament has been marked by some major upsets in the opening

Murray reaches quarter-finals after Fognini scare

rounds and both Murray and Nadal were tested on Thursday, in gusty conditions after rain delays had cancelled play on Wednesday.

The momentum shifts in Murray's match were striking. The Italian mounted an aggressive counter-attack after Murray won the first set easily, repeatedly wrong-footing the Briton on the baseline, or drawing him in with drop shots. But Murray turned it around to win the last six games.

"It wasn't pretty, but I won," he told reporters. "The wind was swirling everywhere, so it was just really tough conditions for us to play well."

Murray, who now faces Steve Johnson of the United States, is favourite to clinch a second straight gold medal following the first-round exit of world number one Novak Djokovic to Argenti-

na's Juan Martin Del Potro.

Brazil's Thomaz Belucci beat Belgium's David Goffin in two close sets on Thursday to set up a quarter-final clash between against Nadal.

Japan's Kei Nishikori will play France's Gael Monfils, and Del Potro is up against Spain's Roberto Bautista Agut.

Also advancing on Thursday to the women's semi-final was American Madison Keys, who beat Russia's Daria Kasatkina in straight sets. She now faces Germany's Angelique Kerber while Puerto Rican Monica Puig will meet Petra Kvitova of the Czech Republic.

Due to weather delays on Wednesday, tournament organisers have yet to announce a definitive schedule for the next round of singles matches, which could begin on Friday.—Reuters