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CHINA'S RED CARPET WELCOME

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi arrives in Beijing

STATE Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi arrived in Beijing via Kunming airport at 8.15 pm LST yesterday.

The State Counsellor was welcomed at Beijing International Airport by Chinese Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Liu Zhen Min and officials, Myanmar Ambassador to China U Thit Lin Ohn, the military attaché and embassy staff and their families.

Next, the State Counsellor and party left for Diaoyutai State Guesthouse in a motorcade.

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi left Yangon for China yesterday afternoon at the invitation of Chinese Premier Mr. Li Keqiang.—*Myanmar News Agency*

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi walks past the honour guard upon her arrival at Beijing International Airport. PHOTO: MNA



Myanmar to launch single-stop inspections at borders with neighbouring countries

Thein Ko Lwin

SINGLE-stop inspections will be deployed at border gates between Myanmar and neighbouring countries to prevent illegal trade, said Union Minister for Commerce Dr Than Myint yesterday.

The Union minister told Amyotha Hluttaw that discussions are ongoing with China and Thailand to launch the single-stop inspection system at border crossings.

der crossings.

The system is aimed at avoiding the public health impact of illegal goods entering the country and boosting the country's revenues collected from border trade.

Work is underway to establish customs checkpoints for border trade complete with X-ray machines to inspect containers, added the Union minister.

He blamed unscrupulous business people and corrupt staff for

illegal activities in border trade.

According to sources, goods worth more than K52billion were confiscated in 8,529 cases and inedible food worth more than 2.5billion in 937 cases were destroyed during the period from 2012-2013 FY to 2015-2016 when operations of mobile teams were shut down in December.

Commerce Ministry said that more checkpoints were opened in Kachin, Shan and Kayin states

and Bago, Sagaing and Tanintharyi regions for prevention of illegal trade after the mobile teams' inspection operations ended.

Union Minister for Commerce Dr Than Myint replied to question about border trade, saying that the Customs Department is tasked with the prevention of illegal trade in accordance with short-term and long-term action plans.

In order to prevent the illegal

cross-border flow of goods following the abolition of the Illegal Trade Prevention Committee, preventive measures against illegal imports and exports are being undertaken by customs teams in cooperation with the Ministries of Home Affairs, Commerce, Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation, Labour, Immigration and Population and Defence and Region/State governments, added the Union minister.



သဒ္ဓါထက်သန် ပြန်မအားမန် ကမ္ဘောဇဘဏ်

Amyotha Hluttaw

Matriculated and middle school passers appointed as contract teachers in remote areas

LOCAL matriculated people aged between 18 and 25 have been appointed as contract teachers in remote areas in cases where no applications for the posts by graduates were received.

They will be appointed permanent positions after graduation, Union Minister for Education Dr Myo Thein Gyi told the Amyotha Hluttaw yesterday.

If no applications were received from graduates or matriculated persons, those aged between 18 and 25 who completed the middle school have been appointed to the positions in accordance with the recom-

mendation of the Region/State government, added the Union minister.

Regarding transfers and promotions the Union minister said

“49 schools have been opened and 325 contract teachers have been appointed so far”

(Paletwa Township)



Dr Than Myint. PHOTO: MNA



Dr Myo Thein Gyi. PHOTO: MNA



U Myint Naing. PHOTO: MNA

that the Basic Education Department is responsible for deciding on transfers or promotions for middle school heads and above while the region/state education officer's office is responsible for high school teachers and the district education officer's office for primary school teachers.

Measures will be taken to announce the list of those who

were promoted to higher positions before the start of the school year as of the next academic year, said the Union minister, adding that Assistant Director and above posts need to seek the approval of the management committee of the ministry and those in the rank of staff officer also need approval of the Union Civil Service Board.

The Union minister then responded to a question regarding the opening of primary schools and the appointment of teachers in Paletwa Township of Chin State, stating that new 49 schools have been opened and 325 contract teachers have been appointed so far in the township this academic year.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Crime reduction proposal put on record in Pyithu Hluttaw

Pyithu Hluttaw



U Myat Lay Oo. PHOTO: MNA



Lt-Col Than Oo Lwin. PHOTO: MNA



Daw Khin Hninn Thit. PHOTO: MNA

THE Pyithu Hluttaw documented a proposal calling on the Union government to implement a crime reduction program as soon as possible after 16 representatives discussed it yesterday.

The proposal was submitted

by Daw Khin Hninn Thit of the Padaung Constituency.

U Myat Lay Oo of the Htilin Constituency stressed the need to identify and eliminate the causes of criminal activity in order to meet success in the fight against

crime. Crimes can be attributed to graft and corruption, lack of the rule of law, a growing gap between rich and poor, unemployment, availability of alcohol beverages and drugs, lack of education and times of hardship

when people forget the laws they need to follow and respect, added the lawmaker.

He called for harsh actions to be taken against departmental staff involved in crimes by conducting thorough investigations.

Lt-Col Than Oo Lwin, the Defense Services personnel Pyithu Hluttaw representative, pointed out the high cost of crime to society, saying that crime undermines democracy. It is imperative to reduce high crime rate, he added.

Next, five parliamentarians held discussions on a motion calling for measures to combine farming with livestock breeding that can help rural farmers improve their per acre yields, thereby contributing towards ensuring poverty alleviation and a better

living standard.

Then, a question-and-answer session followed, with Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation Dr Tun Win responding to a question about compensation for farmers who suffered losses when the Hlinechaung Dam was shut down in Pale Township of Sagaing Region.

The deputy minister replied that there is no plan to compensate the local farmers as it can burden the government.

Next, the deputy minister responded to a question on the construction of two conduits and repair of 10,465-foot Shweli embankment, saying that work will kick off on the embankment during this open season.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker meets with US Ambassador to Myanmar

SPEAKER of Pyidaung Hluttaw and Amyotha Hluttaw Mahn Win Khaing Than received US Ambassador to Myanmar Mr. Scot Marciel at Amyotha Hluttaw Building in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Also present at the call were Deputy Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker U Aye Tha Aung and officials of Amyotha Hluttaw Office.—*Myanmar News Agency*



Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than receives US Ambassador to Myanmar Mr. Scot Marciel at Amyotha Hluttaw Building in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

Meiktila police officers charged over K200,000 bribe

THE Anti-Corruption Commission yesterday sued two police officers in over the alleged demanding and taking of K200,000 as a bribe from a petrol filling station regarding the death of a young man who was electrocuted while changing a fluorescent tube at the station in Hsinsalwal village on Meiktila-Kyaukpadaung road in Meiktila Township.

U Aung Win, the owner of the fuel station, submitted a letter of complaint to the commission last June, stating that he was asked to pay K200,000 via

Police Inspector Zaw Wai Kyaw by the Head of Meiktila Myoma Police Station U Thein Han. He claimed he gave the money over to the Police Inspector in the presence of three witnesses.

According to the commission two police officers have been found guilty of being involved in the bribery following an investigation. The two officers were charged under Section 56 and 57 of the Anti-graft Law by the Mandalay Region High Court on Tuesday and in Meiktila Township Court yesterday respectively.—*Myanmar News Agency*

President U Htin Kyaw gives policy guidance to Myanmar Ambassadors

PRESIDENT U Htin Kyaw gave policy guidance to Myanmar Ambassadors who are going to discharge their duties at the Myanmar Embassy in Washington, D.C, the United States of America and the office of the Myanmar Permanent Mission in

Geneva, Swiss Confederation yesterday.

The President met with Myanmar Ambassador U Aung Lin and Permanent Representative U Htin Lynn at the Presidential Palace in Nay Pyi Taw.—*Myanmar News Agency*



President U Htin Kyaw gives policy guidance to U Aung Lin and U Htin Lynn. PHOTO: MNA



Third batch of detained Myanmar workers check in at Yangon International Airport. PHOTO: ZAW GYI

3rd batch of detained Myanmar workers returns to Yangon from Malaysia

THE third batch of detained Myanmar citizens in Malaysia arrived back to Yangon yesterday via charter flight.

The return of the group comprised of 138 Myanmar citizens was sponsored by the Ministry of Defence.

They were welcomed back at

the Yangon International Airport by the commander of the Yangon Command and senior military officers, officials of the Yangon Region Government and ministries.

KBZ's Brighter Future Myanmar Foundation provided K100,000 each to the workers.

The remaining citizens will

also be brought home by charter flight, according to the BFM.

According to sources, 2,294 Myanmar citizens were detained for various reasons in 11 camps in Malaysia. International Organization for Migration (IOM) also provided them with food and clothes.—*MNA*

MOHS steps up healthcare in Naga Self-Administrative Zone

THE Ministry of Health and Sports has assigned a team of 10 infectious disease specialists and military medical staff to provide treatment to patients suspected of the measles in a bid to prevent the spread of the disease in Sagaing Region.

A couple of weeks ago, an outbreak of measles claimed dozens of lives, mostly children, in Htankhawlar village, Lahal township.

The health workers administered vaccination against measles, which is highly contagious

during its incubation period.

According to the ministry, a total of 1,614 children under 15 years of age have been vaccinated in Htankhawlar village and its 10 surrounding villages.

To reinforce the fight against the infectious disease, the Public Health Department has also sent 15 specialists to the region. The mobile medical teams have now given treatment to 1,167 patients in villages.

The ministry has pledged to speed up its healthcare services

in the Naga Self-Administrative Zone by laying down short- and long-term plans.

The health workers in the region are now engaged in providing maternal and child care and administering vaccinations against tuberculosis, malaria, HIV and other infectious diseases.

The short-term plan will include a special immunisation programme in Leshi, Lahal and Nanyun townships in cooperation with the WHO and the UNICEF.



Before receiving treatment for measles.

After receiving treatment for measles.

Under a comprehensive health development plan, the ministry will appoint more health staff and provide training to local health workers and midwives.

As part of its long-term plan,

the Ministry of Health and Sport will cooperate with the Ministry of Education and other institutions in the enhancement of the capacity of health workers there.—*Myanmar News Agency*

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State Counsellor's Office names man of honour for July



Ko Thein Zaw (alias) Ko Zaw Zaw.

THE State Counsellor's Office has chosen Ko Thein Zaw, alias Ko Zaw Zaw, the man of honour for July for his initiative to encourage young people to read books in order to promote an intellectual society.

The office released a congratulatory message signed by State Counsellor DawAung San Suu Kyi herself on Tuesday.

A native of Sithar village in Kyaukpadaung township, Mandalay Region, Ko Thein Zaw completed his primary education, the message said.

As a grilled fish seller in Yangon, he makes arduous efforts to open small libraries with the aim of helping other people develop their creative and intellectual powers. Driven by the passion that "nothing but books can transform Myanmar", he has now opened five libraries across Yangon, Mandalay and Ayeyawady region. His means of persuading young people to read books is of significant assistance in enabling them to become productive members of society, the State Counsellor's Office said in its message. —*Myanmar News Agency*

Southwest Tatmadaw Command provide assistance in Thabaung Township

SOUTHWEST Tatmadaw Command have been providing assistance to victims in flood-hit-villages in Ayeyawady Region.

Local military members

of the Southwest Region Command supplied foodstuffs to 170 families in Htanzinhla village in Thabaung Township on Monday.

Similarly, a mobile military medical team of the Region Command gave medical treatments to 123 people within the villages.— *C-in-C's Office*



A medical team giving medical treatment to local people. PHOTO: C-IN-C'S OFFICE

Crime NEWS

Mini-bus overturns, injures two in Nyaunglaybin



Overturned mini-bus being seen. PHOTO: NAY LIN (NYAUNGLAYBIN)

A MINI-BUS being driven by one Aye Htet with Aung Khant and two passengers on board overturned near SanPhae village, Pyandasar town, Nyaunglaybin township, Bago Region,

on Tuesday leaving two injured.

According to an investigation the mini-bus driver lost control when the engine broke down. Two passengers received minor injuries in the accident.

The injured are receiving medical treatment at Nyaunglaybin general hospital. The police have filed charges against the driver.— *Nay Lin (Nyaunglaybin)*

Man dies after gambling quarrel

A MAN has been arrested on suspicion of murder after allegedly killing another man in Dala township, Yangon Region, on 14 August.

According to an investigation Thein Zaw Htway alias Thar Htway and his brother Zaw

Naing Oo were playing cards together with Win Kyaw Lin at a funeral home.

Thar Htway and Win Kyaw Lin got into a quarrel over the game with Zaw Naing Oo eventually asking his brother to go home to avoid further conflict.

A few minutes later, Win Kyaw Lin stabbed Zaw Naing Oo with a knife. The victim was sent to hospital but succumbed to his injuries on the way. The police have filed a murder charge against Win Kyaw Lin.— *Maung Yin Oo (Dala)*

Yaba seized in Myawady

A LOCAL police squad from Myawady seized yaba from a motorcycle rider on Wahsakin road, ward 5, Myawady town on Monday. Acting on a tip-off the police stopped and searched the motorcycle en route to Myawady from Thingan Nyi Naung. One Aung Naing Htoo was discovered to be carrying 4,560 yaba pills.

Similarly, police in Taunggyi seized 1,965 yaba pills from

motorcycle rider Soe Nyunt on Zala-Taunggyi road, Taunggyi township on 14 August.

And, police from Hpa-an seized 1,790 yaba pills from motorcycle driver Saw Yu Sein with Kyaw Zin Oo on board on Hpa-an-Myawady road, Hpa-an township. All suspects have been charged under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law. — *Myanmar Police Force*



Aung Naing Htoo. PHOTO MPF

Fire destroys four houses in Myinmu

A FIRE destroyed four houses in Lat Pan Village, Myinmu township early Tuesday morning. According to an investigation the fire began inside the home of U Ko Myint, 52. The

fire was put out an hour later by firemen with the help of neighbours. No one was injured in the accident. Charges have been filed against the homeowner.— 077

LOCAL Business

Jade entrepreneurs to request Union Government to halt jade mining and export

Aung Thant Khaing

JADE entrepreneurs have united to submit a signed proposal to the Union Government to suspend jade mining and jade exports with the aim of creating a domestic jade market and promoting the market, said U Than Win from Pwint Kaung jade trading.

Over 20,000 jade businessmen from Mandalay, Sagiang and Pharkant signed the proposal and the jade businessmen held a press conference regarding this on 16th August.

"There is no domestic market of jade. However, the jade market is growing in China. If the jade market continues in its present form, it will come to an end in 2 years. We would like to create

a jade market only at the Nay Pyi Taw Mani Yadana Jade Museum because it can earn more revenue and can enable the jade market to raise its head again," U Than Win said.

Myanmar jade stones are mined in Pharkant, and there is an illegal export of jade stone through Myitkyina. The quality jade stones are not found in the domestic market. Therefore, they all have to unite to request the Union Government to halt the jade mining and jade export, he continued.

There is a large quantity of Myanmar jade stones in the China market because the raw jade stones are illegally taken into China through Laning zar, Myitkyina. Therefore, the Chinese merchants do not have to come



Traders check jade stones at the jade market in Mandalay. PHOTO: AUNG THANT KHAING

down to Mandalay and Sagaing. As a result of this, the local jade market ends in vain, said U Aung Win Oo from the Diamond Gold Star jewellery Company.

A suspension of jade mining in 2012 resulted in the tripling of the price at local jade market. However, jade mining companies aggressively mined jade using

machinery in 2014 and evaded the taxation. The domestic jade market suffers from the illegal trade via border areas, it is learnt.

The local jade entrepreneurs are badly affected from the unlimited jade mining and illegal trade. There are hundreds of thousands of locals who are dependent only on the jade market,

said U Aung Win Oo.

The signed proposals will be submitted to the State Counsellor office, the Commission on Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment, the natural resource and environmental conservation committee of Pyithu Hluttaw and Mandalay regional government, it is learnt.

US dollar exchange rate rises at black market

THE US dollar exchange rate has risen around Ks1,195 per dollar at the black market in the third week of August, it is learnt from the black market of the currency exchange.

The black market has cooled for the two weeks starting 25th July. The exchange rate at the

black market was Ks1,191 per dollar on 11th August, whereas the rate has jumped to Ks1,195 per dollar on 16th August, it is learnt.

The exchange rate at the black market was Ks1,187 per dollar on 8th August and Ks1,188 per dollar on 9th and

10th August. And in the first week, the exchange rate at the black market was Ks1,185 per dollar on 1st August, Ks1,187 per dollar on 2nd and 4th August and Ks1,186 per dollar on 3rd and 5th August respectively.

The exchange rate set from the Central Bank of Myanmar

was Ks1,187 per dollar from 1st to 12th August whereas the rate has increased to Ks1,188 per dollar on 15th and 16th August.

However, the purchase rate is Ks1,193 per dollar whereas the sell rate is Ks1,188 per dollar at the black market, it is learnt.—GNLM

Trade deficit reaches over US\$1.5billion in four months

TRADE deficit has reached over US\$1.5 billion from April to July of this fiscal year 2016-2017, with a total of trade value about US\$8 billion, it is learnt from the Trade Promotion Department under the Ministry of Commerce.

During these four months, exports both through normal trade and border trade channels has amounted to over 3.2 billion,

whereas imports worth US\$4.7 billion flowed into Myanmar. Therefore, there is a deficit of over US\$1.5 billion in trade during four months.

There are a total of seven major export goods to foreign countries. During this year, the export value of mineral goods has declined by over US\$210 million whereas that of industrial finished

products, up to US\$300 million when compared to the similar period of last fiscal year, it is learnt from the trade promotion department.

The export of natural gas and industrial finished products has fetched over US\$1.4 billion whereas the agricultural products, over US\$1 billion. And the other export goods has earned over

US\$480 million while the value of fishery products was US\$151, the mineral products, US\$89 million and forestry products, US\$74 million, it is learnt.

In the import sector, the value of capital goods was over US\$2 billion; that of personal goods, over US\$1.4 billion and the import value of industrial goods, over US\$1.1 billion.—200

Four sub-committees of CMP enterprises to be organized

FOUR sub-committees will be formed by the Myanmar CMP (Cut-Make and Pack) Supervision Committee with an aim to help the CMP supervision committee, it is learnt from an announcement released by Myanmar CMP Supervision Committee.

These four sub-committees are CMP enterprises inspection

sub-committee, CMP payment and tax supervision sub-committee, CMP import and export supervision sub-committee and CMP enterprises consultant sub-committee.

Myanmar CMP Supervision Committee was recently formed to conduct inspections on foreign and local firms to ensure

that they will follow the existing rules and regulations and to check whether the enterprises will provide the allowance to enjoy the labour rights, whether the enterprises are to be in accordance with the announcements released by the Ministry of Planning and Finance and whether the enterprises pay in taxes as

prescribed rules.

The committee will also conduct the scrutiny of the enterprises providing the recommendations when CMP enterprises seek business permission from Myanmar Investment Commission (MIC).

The CMP system is mostly practiced in the garment industry in Myanmar.—GNLM

Raw sapphire stone found in Moenyin gets higher price

RAW sapphire stones were found in waterfalls and springs located five miles away from Se Mile new village in Moenyin Township, Kachin State, and are being offered a high price.

The raw sapphire stones found in this area have different shapes and structures like glass. Although the quality of the sapphire cannot keep up with those found in Mogok, these sapphire stones are probably in keeping with buyers' taste for its crystal clear quality, said U Aung Lin, who is engaged in sapphire mining. Currently, the local farmers around Moenyin Township are exploring the sapphire stones on a manageable scale after the crops are cultivated in their farms, it is learnt.

The current prevailing price per carat of raw sapphire in this area is from Ks500,000 to Ks1million. The fine quality of sapphire fetches up to Ks5million. However, it is hard to find these precious stones in Moenyin. Although these sapphire stones cannot withstand like Mogok sapphires, its unique shape and cut has attracted the attention of Mogok gems dealers.

Currently, a private company with a block of mining and the locals have been exploring the sapphire stones in this area.—Ni Toe (The Mirror)

Indian refiners switch to soyoil as palm prices rally

MUMBAI — The share of palm oil in India's growing edible oil imports is likely to plunge to a record low this marketing year as a rally in prices slashes its discount over rival soyoil.

That shift in the world's top palm oil importer could drag on benchmark prices for palm oil that have surged around a third in the last 12 months, while bolstering markets for soyoil.

Edible oils are a common ingredient in Indian cuisine, used in everything from curries to samosas, with soyoil seen as more healthy than palm.

"Palm oil discounts are consistently reducing over soyoil. At the current price level, Indian refiners are inclined to switch to soyoil," said Govindbhai Patel, managing director at edible oil trading firm GG Patel & Nihil Research Co.

Palm's discount to soyoil has more than halved to \$70 per tonne, from \$171 in August 2015, according to data from Mumbai-based trade body the Solvent Extractors Association of India (SEA).

India's overall edible oil imports are expected to rise 1.4 per cent in the 2015/16 marketing year



Engineer Juan Elizalde looks at a soybean in a soybean field in the city of Totoras, 360 km (224 miles) north of Buenos Aires, in 2012. PHOTO: REUTERS

that ends in October to 14.6 million tonnes due to rising consumption, Patel said, but palm imports will drop 12 per cent to 8.4 million tonnes.

That will crimp palm's share of total edible oil imports to 57 per cent — the lowest since India eased restrictions on such imports in the early 1990s. Palm oil's share of India's edible oil imports stood at 66 per cent last year, down from 86 per cent in 2007/08.

India's monthly palm oil imports fell to 570,051 tonnes in July, the lowest since February 2015. And soyoil imports have jumped as palm purchases have faded. The country has so far in 2015/16 imported a record 3.1 million tonnes soyoil and total purchases in the year to October are set to rise to 4.25 million tonnes, up 42 per cent from last year's 3 million tonnes, Patel said.

India mainly imports palm oil from Malaysia and

Indonesia, while its soyoil comes from Argentina and Brazil. "In coming months, palm oil prices have to fall to remain competitive against soyoil," said an official with a leading edible oil refinery based at central Indian city Indore. He asked not to be identified as he is not authorised to speak with media.

"Otherwise palm oil exports will fall gradually and inventory will build up in peak producing months." —Reuters

China, ASEAN aim to complete framework of South China Sea rules next year

BEIJING — China and a grouping of Southeast Asian nations aim to finish by the middle of next year a framework for a code of conduct to ease tension in the disputed South China Sea, state media said on Wednesday.

Since 2010, China and the 10 members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) have been discussing a set of rules aimed at avoiding conflict among rival claimants in the busy waterway.

Last month, an arbitration court in the Hague ruled that China had no historic title over the South China Sea and had breached the Philippines' sovereign rights there. The decision infuriated Beijing, which dismissed the court's authority.

But Beijing has been keen to get diplomacy back on track since.

Meeting in northeastern China, the two sides agreed to get the framework for the code of conduct done by mid-2017, and also approved guidelines for a China-ASEAN hotline for use during mar-

itime emergencies, the official *China Daily* said.

They also agreed that a pact on unplanned maritime encounters, signed in 2014 by countries in the region, applied to the South China Sea, the newspaper added.

Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Liu Zhenmin said documents on the hotline and unplanned encounters would be presented for final approval to leaders in Laos next month at a meeting between China and ASEAN members, the paper said.

"There is another achievement — we reached broad consensus on pushing forward the negotiations on a code of conduct for the South China Sea," it quoted Liu as saying.

"All sides agreed to raise the frequency of the negotiations in a situation without interference, and seek to finish a draft framework of the code of conduct by the middle of next year," he added.

This is the third meeting on the code this year. —Reuters

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Indonesian crewman swims to freedom from militants in Philippines

MANILA — An Indonesian tugboat crewman escaped from his Islamist militant captors in the Philippines on Thursday by swimming out to sea after the militants threatened to cut his head off, a Philippine army spokesman said.

Members of the Islamic State-linked Abu Sayyaf group captured the Indonesian, Mohammad Safyan, 28, and six other Indonesian seamen from their boat as it was passing through waters off southern Philippine islands on 23 June.

Residents of Jolo island spotted Safyan floating off the shore after he escaped

under cover of darkness, an army spokesman, Major Fillemon Tan, told reporters.

"We were told he managed to escape by running and swimming to the sea," Tan said, adding that Safyan had said the militants were about to execute him when he escaped.

"We have no information on the other captives but troops in the area were ordered to use all means to locate and rescue the hostages." Abu Sayyaf rebels operating in Muslim areas of the largely Christian Philippines have developed a reputation as ruthless kidnappers. —Reuters



Philippines policemen escort Indonesian hostage Mohammad Safyan after he escaped from Abu Sayyaf captors, in Jolo, Sulu in southern Philippines, on 17 August 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Malaysian oil tanker taken over commercial dispute, not hijacked

KUALA LUMPUR — An oil tanker, which was earlier reported to have been hijacked and sailed into Indonesian waters, was believed to have been taken due to a commercial dispute, Malaysian authorities said on Wednesday.

Vier Harmoni, carrying 900,000 litres of diesel, went missing after leaving the Tanjung Pelepas port on the eastern coast of Penin-

sular Malaysia on Tuesday before it was relocated in the waters off Batam, Indonesia.

A Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency (MMEA) spokesman confirmed to Reuters that there was no element of terrorism involved in the tanker's disappearance.

The spokesman said early investigations showed the tanker had been taken

due to a disagreement between the ship's management and the crew.

The ship was registered in Batam but was being leased by a Malaysian company, the spokesman said.

The MMEA's southern regional chief Admiral Adon Shalan told *The Star* newspaper there could have been a financial dispute within the company.

"We tried to contact the ship but it went unanswered," he was quoted as saying on the daily's website. "We believe the ship's captain might have turned off its tracking system as we could not trace it on our radar."

Shipping data in Thomson Reuters Eikon suggests the ship's transponder has been turned off since 20 June. —Reuters

Australia agrees to close controversial refugee detention centre

SYDNEY — Australia and Papua New Guinea on Wednesday said they had agreed to close a controversial Australian-funded asylum seeker detention centre on Manus Island, although the ultimate fate of 800 refugees held in the camp remained unclear.

Under Australian law, anyone intercepted trying to reach the country by boat is sent for processing to camps on the tiny Pacific island of Nauru or to Manus Island off Papua New Guinea (PNG).

They are never eligible to be resettled in Australia.

Some asylum seekers have spent years in the camps, which have been criticised by the United Nations and human rights groups, with numerous reports of abuse and self-harm amongst detainees, including children.

Some in PNG are unhappy with the prospect of hundreds of asylum seekers being resettled into their country and there have been reports of asylum seekers being attacked by locals.

“Both Papua New Guinea and Australia are in agreement that the centre is to be closed,” Papua New Guinea Prime Minister Peter O’Neill said in a statement.

“A series of options are be-



A protester from the Refugee Action Coalition holds a placard during a demonstration outside the offices of the Australian Government Department of Immigration and Border Protection in Sydney, Australia, on 29 April, 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

ing advanced and implemented. It is important that this process is not rushed out but carried out in a careful manner.” There was no mention of a closing date.

Australian Immigration Minister Peter Dutton, who met

with O’Neill on Wednesday to discuss the camp, reiterated Australia’s position that it would not accept any of the refugees detained in Papua New Guinea.

“It has been the longstanding position of this government to

work with PNG to close Manus and support those people as they transition into PNG or return to their country of origin,” Dutton said in a statement.

“Our position, confirmed again today with PNG, is that no

one from Manus Island Regional Processing Centre will ever be settled in Australia.”

The announcement came after a newspaper published leaked documents detailing more than 2,000 incidents of sexual abuse, assault and attempted self-harm, reported over two years at the Nauru detention centre.

The harsh conditions and reports of systemic child abuse at the camps have drawn wide criticism at home and abroad.

Australia says the policy is needed to stop asylum seekers dying at sea on the dangerous boat journey from Indonesia to Australia. Hundreds of people died attempting the trip in the years before the policy was put in place.

The move was immediately welcomed by refugee advocates.

“Nearly a thousand men on Manus have already lost three or more years of their lives locked up in limbo for no good reason,” Elaine Pearson, Australia Director for Human Rights Watch, said in a statement.

“They’ve endured dirty, cramped conditions, inadequate medical care and violence. Finally, it is time to let them move on with their lives in safety and dignity.” —Reuters

Japan, China, South Korea foreign ministers plan to meet next week

TOKYO — The foreign ministers of Japan, China and South Korea are planning to hold talks next week in Tokyo, Japanese government sources said Wednesday, aiming to pave the way for a leaders’ meeting next month.

The three countries are looking to hold the ministerial meeting on 23 and 24 August, the first such gathering to be held in Japan in more than five years.

Japan’s ties with both China and South Korea have been under strain during that period due to

historical and territorial issues.

The talks could serve as a springboard for a meeting between Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Chinese President Xi Jinping on the sidelines of a Group of 20 summit next month in Hangzhou, China, the sources said.

Abe and Xi have held just two one-to-one meetings since both took power in 2012.

The visit to Japan by China’s Wang Yi will be the first by a Chinese foreign minister under

Xi’s leadership.

The ministers are expected to discuss their coordination in addressing North Korea’s prohibited nuclear and ballistic missile development programmes, the sources said.

They are also likely to commit to strengthening their co-operation in economic areas, including negotiations toward the conclusion of a trilateral free trade agreement.

Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida plans to hold

separate bilateral talks with Wang and South Korean Foreign Minister Yun Byung Se, the sources said.

In the meeting with Wang, Kishida is likely to encourage Beijing to exercise restraint following the repeated sailing of Chinese government vessels into waters near the Japan-controlled, China-claimed Senkaku Islands in the East China Sea.

With Yun, he is expected to convey Tokyo’s desire to further mend bilateral ties following

an agreement in December last year regarding women who were forced to work in brothels for the Japanese military before and during World War II.

Based on that agreement, the South Korean government launched last month a foundation, to be financed by Japan, for supporting the former “comfort women.”

Kishida had called late last month for trilateral ministerial talks to be held in Japan before the end of the year.—Kyodo News

North Korea’s deputy ambassador defects in London

SEOUL — North Korea’s deputy ambassador in London has defected with his family, according to media reports, which if confirmed would make it one of the most high-profile defections in recent years from the increasingly isolated country.

South Korea’s *JoongAng Ilbo* newspaper reported on Tuesday that a high-profile diplomat in the UK defected with his wife and son to a “third country”. The BBC named the defector as veteran diplomat Thae Yong Ho, a counselor at the North Korean embassy and deputy to the ambassador.

Quoting an unnamed source, *JoongAng Ilbo* said the diplomat embarked on a defection journey “following a scrupulous plan” and was in the process of “landing in a third

country as an asylum seeker.” It was not clear from the newspaper report whether the third country was the UK.

The term is usually used in South Korean media to refer to a country which is neither North nor South Korea.

An official at the North Korean embassy in London would not confirm the defection, describing reports of the event as “quite sudden”.

“If it is appropriate to give a response, then you might hear about our response,” the official told Reuters.

Further calls to the embassy went unanswered. Calls to Thae’s mobile phone were redirected to a voicemail inbox.

Thae’s reported defection follows a string of recent such flights by North Koreans, in-

cluding twelve waitresses at a North Korean restaurant in China who defected to South Korea earlier this year.

Those waitresses have finished a prolonged period of investigation and will soon enter into normal society, an official at South Korea’s Unification Ministry said on Wednesday.

The number of defections by North Koreans to the South has totaled 814 up to and including July this year, an annual increase of 15 per cent, a Unification Ministry official told Reuters.

Overall, the number of defectors, mostly from the area near North Korea’s border with China, has declined since leader Kim Jong Un took power following his father’s death in late 2011.—Reuters

China to limit North Korean airline’s operations after forced landing

BEIJING — China will limit the operations of North Korean carrier Air Koryo after one of its aircraft made an emergency landing in a northeastern Chinese city last month, and has told the airline to improve training and maintenance.

The plane, a Russian-built Tupolev TU204-300, was flying to Beijing from Pyongyang when it made a forced landing in Shenyang because of smoke in the cabin. The plane landed safely and there were no casualties.

China’s civil aviation regulator, in a statement on Wednesday, said an investigation had found smoke had come from a call button located under the luggage rack on the right hand side of the cabin between rows 20 and 27.

The regulator said they had

found three problems that happened during the emergency that the airline now had to fix.

The airline has to improve training on how to handle such an incident, how communicate with air traffic control and improve aircraft maintenance, it said.

The airline also needs to improve training on handling burst tyres, engine fires, emergency decompression and traffic collision avoidance system warnings, the regulator added.

China will take “corresponding measures to limit operations” for Air Koryo, it said, without giving details. An official reached by telephone at the airline’s Beijing office said she was unaware of the situation and declined to comment further.—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.

Once a teacher, always a teacher

Kyaw Thura

BENJAMIN Franklin, one of the founding fathers of the United States, once commented on the important role of teachers when he said "an investment in knowledge always pays the best interest." This highlights that teachers are central to human development, considering their contribution to the context of societal and cultural values.

Teachers deserve all the recognition and adulation be-

cause they play a heroic role in guiding the new generations to better shape their communities. In other words, the future of our children and our communities are in the hands of teachers. It is therefore absolutely vital for every teacher to set an example to students and other people in the community. In this respect, teachers need to go above and beyond the call of duty to turn themselves into

agents of positive social change.

Frankly speaking, school lessons are boring on their own. It is great teachers who have the intuition to make boring lessons exciting and interesting and complex problems simple and easy. Teaching children and adolescents is tiring, but it is perhaps the most important job of all. Despite their enormous contribution, teachers lead a quiet

life on a low salary as unsung heroes of society. Rita Pierson, an educator, once said every child deserves a champion: an adult who will never give up on them, who understands the power of connection and insists they become the best they can possibly be. And that adult is often a teacher. Needless to say, we all have at least one inspiring story to tell about our great teachers of our younger days.

Religious significance of the month "Wagaung"

Maha Saddhamma Jotika dhaja
Sithu Dr. Khin Maung Nyunt

THE 5th month of Myanmar Lunar Calendar Wagaung has its literal meaning "The mid-month of Buddhist Lent", the peak of monsoon. Non-stop rain fills up and spills over all water bodies causing floods and landslides. Myanmar old saying ဝါဆို၊ ဝါခေါင်၊ ရေတောင်တောင် [Billows of rain water in the months Waso and Wagaung] epitomises the natural environments in these two months. However, in spite of foul weather, Myanmar paddy planters do their job in full swing. Khat-tar or ground lilies [crinum amoenum] of all species and varieties spring up with blooms of colorful hues and fragrance everywhere across the country, deserving the status of the designated flower of this month in Myanmar tradition. Lion is the zodiacal sign of this month and astrologically this month is named simha [Leo]. Heavenly bodies are not visible due to overcast sky. But astrologers say that in daytime the sun and asterism Hpou Sha and at night the moon and asterism Tharawun appear shining astride.

The traditional festival of Wagaung is "Sayey tan Pwe". It is the festival of religious charity by casting lots. Myanmar word for lot is Sayeytan. To choose recipient monks for religious donation, food or alms in religious offering lots are cast. This custom of religious charity by means of lot casting originated in the lifetime of Gotama Buddha.

While Lord Gotama Buddha was residing in Weiluwn Vihara monastery at Yazagyoe, there occurred the time of food scarcity. Buddhist devotees could not provide alms food for all monks of

the Vihara. They used different means of offering food. Some selected ten to twenty monks to offer food. Some provided food to monks only on Sabbath days. Some cast lots to choose recipient monks. Finally they all agreed to report to Lord Buddha on their situation and ask for the best means of settlement.

Lord Buddha expounded seven different modes of offering food to monks as follows:

1. Sangha-bhat which is the food offered to all monks.
2. Uddesa-bhat which is the food offered particularly to one or two monks.
3. Nimantana-bhat which is the food offered to the invited monks.
4. Sala ka-bhat which is the food offered to the monks chosen by casting lots.
5. Pakkhika-bhat which is the food offered to the monks on the waxing and waning days.
6. Uposathika-bhat which is the food offered to the monks on the Sabbath day and
7. Patipadika-bhat which is the food offered to the monks on the day after the Sabbath day.

Lord Buddha said that he approved all of them. So the Buddhist devotees unanimously decided to choose Salaka-bhat-food offered to the monks chosen by casting lots. To perform casting lots, one monk among themselves was chosen and appointed him unanimously "Bhattuddesaka" the monk who was given the charge of allotting food offered by donors. Lord Buddha gave permission and direction for se-

lecting and appointing "Bhattuddesaka". This monk must have special qualifications such as

- (a) Good health
- (b) Activeness
- (c) Managerial skill
- (d) Freedom from biases and prejudices and
- (e) Ability to keep correct list of allotted and unallotted monks.

The first Bhathuddesaka was Maha Thera Ashin Datba. He discharged the duty of allotting Uddesa bhat, Nimanta-bhat and Salaka-bhat, with fairness and correctness.

Sayeytan lots are wooden or bamboo slats, strips or palm pei leaves on which names and addresses of the donors of food are scribed. They are put into a basket which is shaken up side dour many times so that the lots are shuffled up. Monks queue up according to their serial numbers of their seniority of their ordained years to draw the lot. Then they go to the houses as directed by their lots to partake alms food offered there.

Originally there was no rule fixing month, venue and date for casting lot charity. Myanmar Kings chose Wagaung as the month for performing this religious function because monks observing Wa vows and residing to gather in the same monastery might have difficulty in receiving enough food in Wagaung. Originally casting lots was to provide food to monks. But, later all four basic needs of monks [Satupyitsaya] – food, clothing (robe), Sheter (monastery) and medicine are also, sometimes, donated by casting lots.

History of the festival of Sayeytan Pwe can be traced back to the past. Stone inscription at old Bagan mention this festival. In lines 22 and 23 of Saw Hla

Win Pagoda stone inscriptions dated 1268, 1290 and 1291 A.D. There was mention of Seyeytan Pwe. King Thihathu [1298-1312 AD] of Pinya dynasty built a big wooden monastery and offered it to a learned monk named Hsu Twin Pyit Sayadaw. But Sayadaw advised the King to donate the monaskry by casting lot. From that time began the festival of Sayey tan Pwe in Wagaung.

Myanmar word Sayey tan Swan came into use in the time of King Tha Lun (1629-1648) of Nyaung Yan dynasty. Most Venerable Shwe U min Sayadaw monk of Pakhan Gyi translated two Pali Treatises (a) Culava Pali Nisaya and (b) Culava Pali Athakatha Nisaya into Myanmar then he translated two Pali words "Salaka" and "Bhalta" into Myanmar as "Sayey-tan" and "Hswan" Salaka means wooden or bamboo sticks on which letters are scribed and "bhalta" means "hswan" food for monks.

This Sayeytan festival was the favorite theme of Myanmar visual, performing and literacy artists. The festival is depicted in ten Myanmar Visual Arts, performed in Myanmar song, dance, music enacted in drama live and puppets and penned in prose, verse and drama by Myanmar writers- U Yar, U Min, Hpo Thudaw U Min, Mei Kway, U Hpyey and U Ponnya mentioned this festival in their verses and plays.

On page 229 of one Myanmar chronicle "Kon baung set Maha Yaza Wun Tawgyi vol. II the holding of the Sayey tan festival at the Palace of King Bagyidaw [1819-1837 A.D] was graphically recorded as follows:-

"On the 8th waning moon day of Wagaung, village monks and forest monks were invited to the palace Eight priestly utensils

and other offertories were arranged on two hundred and sixty padaytha bins [wooden frames in the design of a tree (cornucopia)]. Their Majesties donated them to the invited monks and they poured libation water to share their religious merits with all sentient beings. Next their Majesties offered Salaka-bhat [Sayey tan Swan] to the monks".

In all Myanmar religious occasions, a festive mood is created by the gathering of the lay devotees dressed in their finery, and dainty damsels carrying offertories on their heads, followed by parties of merry-maker male youths who joyously sing, dance and play folk music of ozi, dho bat and byaw befit the occasion.

The full moon day of Wagaung is designated as the Day of Metta Sutta — one of the Suttas in Buddha Paritta. The background history of Metta Sutta is as follows:-

A party of monks went into a forest for their Lent for religious practices there. The guardian spirits of the forest and yokkhasoe [guardian devas of the Trees] had to come down to give place to the monks. They thought that their dwelling places were invaded by these monks. So they created fearful visions to frighten the monks away. The monks reported the matter to Lord Buddha. Where upon the Buddha gave them Metta Sutta [Discourse on Loving Kindness] to be recited or chanted so that all sentient beings- humans, animals and spirits would hear and listen to appreciate and understand the importance of living peacefully to gather without malice and harm, but only love and kindness to one another. At Buddha's advice monks returned to the forest and chanted Metta Sutta.

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Ancient relics recovered from remains of toppled Rakhine pagoda



Ancient relics are recovered from remains of a toppled pagoda in Minbya Township, Rakhine State.

PHOTO: MYITMAKHA NEWS AGENCY

MINBYA, August 16 - a number of relics, including a golden pagoda statue have reportedly been recovered in the wake of the toppling over of the ancient Myetyoedawdat Pagoda in Rakhine State's Minbya Township.

The upper and middle sections of the pagoda toppled over on the afternoon of August 10, while members of the pagoda trustee group have reportedly since managed to recover 65 of the pagoda's relics which include bronze bells and pagoda statues.

"The rain has been torrential. The pagoda has always featured various cracks and opening on its structure. The rain seeped into these cracks, weakening the pagoda and causing it to topple over. We managed to collect in,

and safe house, a golden pagoda statue from inside the pagoda, along with a number of other precious relics. I'm sure we'll come across more in the coming days. All the relics we find and keep safe will be used again when the pagoda is rebuilt," said U Aung Kyaw Sein, from the pagoda trustee group.

The Myetyoedawdat Pagoda is located seven miles outside of the town of Minbya, beside the Yangon-Sittwe highway. It's original height measured 50 feet and the circumference of its base is 96 feet.

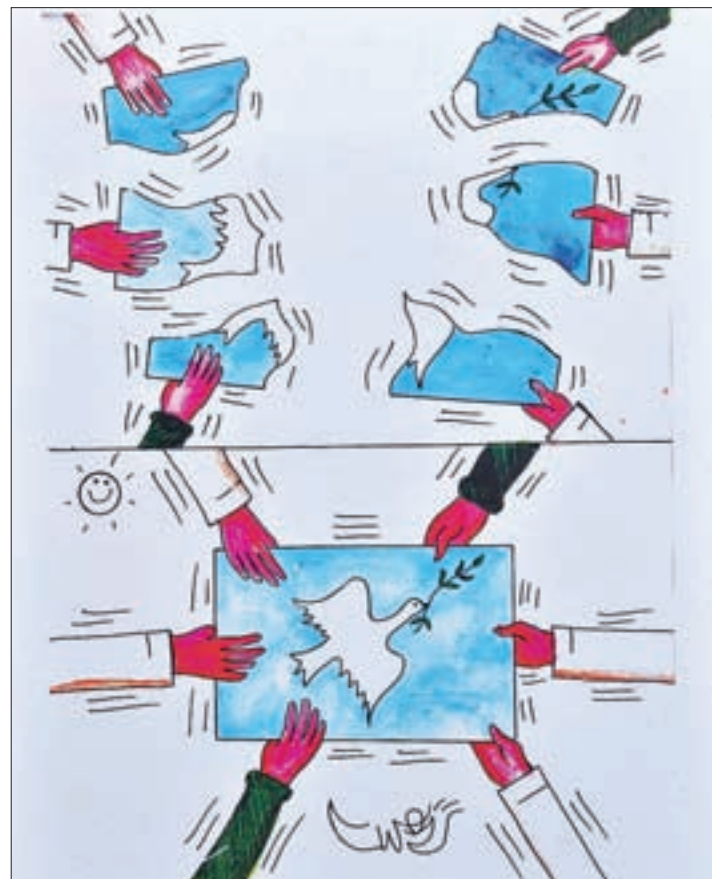
"The pagoda can't be restored to its former glory anymore. If we were to make repairs to the upper section, it wouldn't be sturdy with the base and could topple down once

again. The whole pagoda will have to be systematically rebuilt from the bottom up to ensure the foundation is secure," said U Htun Myint Oo, a resident of Awa village located nearby the pagoda. The Myetyoedawdat Pagoda was constructed in the Buddhist calendar year of 222 by erstwhile Rakhine King Suriyasetka, and was consecutively maintained and worshiped by the king's successors.

Rakhine residents have voiced the need for repairs to be to historic pagodas and stupas across the state - including the likes of those in the Mrauk-U Ancient Cultural Zone - which are showing cracks and dilapidation, having been weakened by impact of the annual monsoon rains.—

Myitmakha News Agency

Hailing the Union Peace Conference-21st Century Panglong



Religious significance of the month "Wagaung"

>>from page 8

Upon hearing and understanding the meaning of Metta Sutta, the spirits of the forest and trees realized monks are friends not enemies who come there only for religious practices during Lent and they would leave after Lent. They had no intention to invade their domains and settle there. So monks and guardian spirits of the forest and trees became friends.

The following is the English Translation of Metta Sutta by the Late Rector-Sayadaw U Silanandabhivamsa, the International Theravada Buddhist Missionary University, Yangon, Myanmar.

Metta Sutta [Loving Kindness Discourse]

1. By the power of this Sutta, the Yakkha do not show

fearful visions, and a person who makes effort regarding this Sutta day and night [by reciting and practicing], sleeps comfortably and when he is asleep, he does not have bad dreams. Oh good people Let us recite this protective Sutta which is endowed with these qualities and others as well.

2. He who wants to dwell penetrating the state of calm [Nibbana] and who is skilled in his good, should practice the three kinds of training. He should be able, up right, very up right, obedient, gentle and not conceited.

3. He should be contented, easy to take care of have few activities, have light living

have few possessions and be controlled in his senses, he should be wise, and not impudent and not be greedily attached to the families [devotees].

4. He should not commit any alight wrong, by doing which he might be censured by wise men. May all beings be happy and safe. May their hearts be happy.

5. What so ever living beings there be, feeble or strong, long or big, or medium or short small or fat [round], seen or unseen, those dwelling far or near, those who have been born and those who are yet to be born, may all beings without exception be happy.

6. Let none deceive another or despise any person in any place. Let him not wish any harm to another with insult or ill will.

7. Just as, a mother would protect her only child at the risk of her own life, even so let him cultivate a boundless heart toward all beings.

8. Let his thoughts of boundless love pervade the whole world- above, below, and across, making them unrestricted, free of hate and free of enemy.

9. Whether he is standing, walking, sitting, or lying crown as long as he is awake, he should develop this mindfulness in loving kindness. This is the Noble

Living here [in the Dispensation of the Buddha], they say.

10. Not approaching [taking wrong views, being virtuous and endowed with Vision The first Path Knowledge] and discarding attachment to sensual objects. Je definitely does not come again to lying in a (mother's) womb.

End of Metta Sutta

By chanting or reciting Metta Sutta, you send out to all sentient beings message of your loving kindness, compassion and good will. All who receive your good messages reciprocate the same to you. You are immune from all dangers. You have no enemies, you have only friends.

FBI delivers documents on Clinton email probe to US Congress

WASHINGTON — The Federal Bureau of Investigation said on Tuesday it had turned over to the US Congress a number of documents related to its probe into Hillary Clinton's use of a private email server while she was secretary of state.

The Democratic presidential nominee has for over a year been dogged by questions about her use of a private email account while she was the nation's top diplomat.

Republicans have repeatedly hammered Clinton over the issue, helping to drive opinion poll results showing that many US voters doubt her trustworthiness.

The FBI said it had provided "relevant materials" to congressional committees looking into the matter.

"The material contains classified and other sensitive information and is being provided with the expectation it will not be disseminated or disclosed without FBI concurrence," the agency said in a statement.

The Clinton campaign criticised the delivery of the documents. "This is an extraordinarily rare step that was sought solely by Republicans for the purposes of further second-guessing the career professionals at the FBI," Clinton spokesman Brian Fallon said in a statement.

"We believe that if these materials are going to be shared outside the Justice Department, they should be released widely so that the public can see them for themselves, rather than allow Republicans to mischaracterize them through selective, partisan leaks."

A spokeswoman for the House of Representatives Over-



Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton listens to Vice-President Joe Biden speak as they campaign together during an event in Scranton, Pennsylvania, on 15 August, 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

sight and Government Reform Committee said in an email that staff for the panel was reviewing the information classified as "secret."

"There are no further details at this time," the aide said.

Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Chuck Grassley, a Republican, said in a statement that an initial review of the material showed most of it was marked unclassified, and urged the FBI to make as much of it public as possible.

FBI Director James Comey

told Congress last month that Clinton's handling of classified information while using private email servers was "extremely careless." But he said he would not recommend criminal charges be brought against her.

Comey's statement lifted a cloud of uncertainty from Clinton's White House campaign. But his strong criticism of her judgment ignited a new attack on her by Republicans, including Donald Trump, her Republican opponent in the 8 November election.—Reuters

Donald Trump shakes up campaign staff: US media

NEW YORK — US Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump has shaken up his campaign staff amid sliding poll numbers and signs of disarray, US media reported early on Wednesday.

Trump made senior advisor Kellyanne Conway his campaign

manager, and Breitbart News executive chairman Stephen Bannon has been brought on as the campaign's chief executive, the *New York Times* reported citing Conway.

Paul Manafort would remain as campaign chair, it said. The *Washington Post* cited campaign

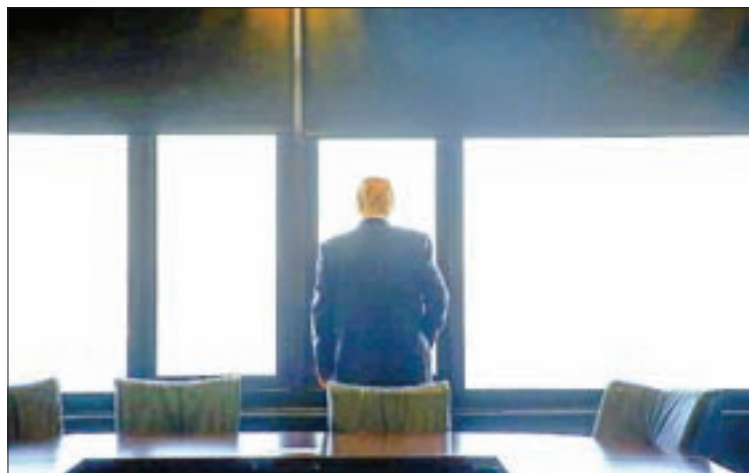
aides as saying that while Trump respected Manafort, he felt "boxed in" and "controlled" by people "who barely knew him".

Manafort was forced to deny any impropriety this week after the *New York Times* reported his name was on secret ledgers showing cash payments designated to him of more than \$12 million from a Ukrainian political party with close ties to Russia. Manafort has denied impropriety.

Manafort took on the role in March after Trump fired his predecessor Corey Lewandowski.

The shakeup comes as opinion polls show Trump, a wealthy New York businessman who has never held elected office, falling behind Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton in the race for the 8 November election.

The *Wall Street Journal* said on Monday in an editorial that Trump should fix his stumbling White House campaign by Labour Day on 5 September or step down.—Reuters



Republican US presidential nominee Donald Trump looks out at Lake Michigan during a visit to the Milwaukee County War Memorial Centre in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, on 16 August 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

NEWS IN BRIEF

Shipping traffic suspended in Turkey's Bosphorus after collision — shipping agent

ISTANBUL — Traffic in Turkey's Bosphorus Strait, a key international shipping lane for oil and grain, was suspended on Wednesday after a bulk carrier collided with a coast guard boat, shipping agent GAC said.

Six people were rescued and taken to hospital, a spokesman at the office of the Istanbul governor said.

The coast Guard in Istanbul said it was unable to provide information on the accident. The collision occurred at 8:40am (0540 GMT) at the southern end of the strait, forcing the capsizing of the coast guard vessel, GAC said. GAC identified the cargo ship as the M/V Tolunay, a Cook Island-flagged bulk carrier headed north to the Black Sea.

More than 3 per cent of the global crude supply — mainly from Russia and the Caspian Sea — pass through the 17-mile Bosphorus that connects the Black Sea to the Mediterranean.—Reuters

Turkey set to release 38,000 prisoners, makes space in jails after coup

ISTANBUL — Turkey will release some 38,000 prisoners under a penal reform announced on Wednesday as the arrests of tens of thousands of people suspected of links to last month's attempted coup burden overstretched jails.

The reform, extending an existing probation scheme, was one of a series of measures outlined on Wednesday in two new decrees under a state of emergency declared after the 15 July failed putsch during which 240 people were killed. The government gave no reason for the reform. Turkey's Western allies worry President Tayyip Erdogan is using the crackdown to target dissent. Angrily dismissing Western concerns over stability in the NATO member, Turkish officials say they are rooting out a serious internal threat.

The decrees, published in the country's Official Gazette, also ordered the dismissal of 2,360 more police officers, more than 100 military personnel and 196 staff at Turkey's information and communication technology authority, BTK.—Reuters

Three humanitarian NGO workers kidnapped in DR Congo

GOMA, (DR Congo) — Three workers of a Catholic humanitarian organisation, Caritas, were kidnapped by armed men on Tuesday in Goma, the capital of North Kivu province in the east of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DR Congo), security sources said.

Police sources in North Kivu said a convoy of two vehicles that were transporting the three workers was ambushed by armed men and the three Caritas workers were kidnapped and taken to a nearby forest.

"One of the vehicles came under fire, but was able to turn around," the source said, adding that there were two German journalists in the vehicle and one of them was wounded in the leg.

Father Arsene Munembwe of Mweso diocese in North Kivu province, who was contacted by Xinhua, confirmed the incident, adding that the kidnappers were demanding a ransom of 20,000 US dollars to release the hostages.—Xinhua

Russian bombers fly from Iran to bomb Syrian militants for second day

MOSCOW — Russian SU-34 bombers based at Iran's Hamadan air base on Wednesday carried out strikes on Islamic State targets inside Syria for a second day, the Interfax news agency quoted Russia's defense ministry as saying.

The ministry was quoted as saying two command posts had been destroyed and more than 150 militants killed in the strikes.—Reuters

Biden: Serbia political, economic keystone in region

BELGRADE — US Vice President Joseph Biden said on Tuesday Serbia was the political and economic keystone in the region.

At a press conference with Serbian Prime Minister Aleksandar Vucic, Biden said a united and peaceful Western Balkan region was crucial for all of Europe.

Biden said he and US President Barack Obama appreciated the leadership demonstrated by Vucic on many occasions, in particular in the relations with Croatia. I commended the prime minister's efforts towards broader reconciliation in the region — the visit to Srebrenica and the signing of the declaration with Croatia, Biden said.

Serbia must be a part of a democratic Europe, he said.—Tanjung

Libyan forces say advancing towards recapture of Sirte from IS

SIRTE, (Libya) — Libyan forces said on Tuesday they had taken one of the last districts in central Sirte held by Islamic State militants, battling snipers and car bombs in their campaign to recapture the entire city.

Forces aligned with Libya's UN-backed government in Tripoli are three months into a campaign to oust Islamic State from their former North African stronghold and have encircled the militants in a shrinking section of the city centre.

Since 1 August, their progress has been aided by US air strikes on Islamic State vehicles, weapons and fighting positions. The US Africa Command said it had carried out a total of 48 strikes as of Sunday.

The Libyan forces are composed mainly of brigades from the western city of Misrata. After they secured key sites south of central Sirte last week, fighting shifted into neighbourhood Number 2, which the brigades said they had now captured.

"On Tuesday morning clashes erupted ... that led successfully to the recapture of neighbourhood Number 2 with the cooperation of a tank unit to confront Islamic State snipers," said Rida Issa, a spokesman.

"The neighbourhood is now completely under control of our forces," he said, adding that his side had also made incursions into neighbourhood Number 1, situated in the heart of Sirte, the hometown of late Libyan dictator Muammar Gaddafi. The Misrata-led forces had faced four vehicle-borne bombs, two of which they had destroyed on the ground before they could reach their targets, Issa said.—Reuters

Civil war costs Yemen \$14 billion in damage and economic losses

WASHINGTON — The cost from damage to infrastructure and economic losses in Yemen's civil war is more than \$14 billion so far, according to a confidential report seen by Reuters that highlights the effort needed to rebuild the country, where more than half the population is suffering from malnutrition.

"The conflict has so far resulted in damage costs (still partial and incomplete) of almost \$7 billion and economic losses (in nominal terms) of over \$7.3 billion in relation to production and service delivery," said the 6 May joint report by the World Bank, United Nations, Islamic Development Bank and European Union.

The internationally recognised Yemeni government of President Abd Rabbu Mansour Hadi is battling the Iran-allied Houthis in a bitter civil conflict, and is also facing the al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula militant group.

The 16-month civil war has killed more than 6,500 people, displaced more than 2.5 million and caused a humanitarian catastrophe in a country with a per capita gross domestic product the World Bank last estimated at only \$1,097 in 2013.

The Preliminary Damage and Needs Assessment report is an internal working document that is not being publicly released.

"These preliminary findings are not only partial, but also evolving" because the conflict is ongoing, the report said. The assessment, it said, was conducted between late 2015 and early this year.

A survey by Yemen's education ministry cited by the report showed that of 1,671 schools in 20 governorates which suffered damage, 287 need major reconstruction, 544 were serving as shelters for internally displaced persons, and 33 were occupied by armed



An armed boy walks as he attends a gathering held by tribesmen loyal to the Houthi movement to show support to a political council formed by the movement and the General People's Congress party to unilaterally rule Yemen by both groups in Sanaa, on 14 August 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

groups. Based on a sample of 143 schools, the estimated cost of the damage was \$269 million.

Citing the Ministry of Public Health and Population, the report said 900 of 3,652 facilities providing vaccination services were not operating in early 2016, leaving 2.6 million children under 15 at risk of contracting measles.

In Taiz, Yemen's third-largest city, the public health system has nearly collapsed, with half the public hospitals damaged or inaccessible.

"There has been a surge in civilian morbidity and mortality as an indirect consequence of the conflict," the report said.

The report could assess residential damage only in the cities of Sanaa, Aden, Taiz and Zinjibar, and data collection was cut off in October 2015 — only about seven

months into the conflict. That data alone found an estimated \$3.6 billion in damage.

The cost to reconstruct damaged energy facilities in the four cities was an estimated \$139 million, most going to repairing damaged or destroyed power plants.

A shaky cease-fire between the government and the Houthis, who practice a variant of Shi'ite Islam, took effect in April and brought some respite from the war, which started when the rebels pushed the government into exile in March 2015. Peace talks broke down earlier this month, though, and Saudi-led air strikes on the Houthis who control the capital Sanaa have resumed.

The report said that immediate attention must be focused on restoring import financing, particularly for food and fuel, which

is caught in a conflict between the Saudi-backed government and the central bank in rebel-controlled Sanaa.

The government asked international financial institutions to cut off the bank, alleging that it was misusing state funds. The bank, which provides foreign exchange for imports, has denied the allegations.

"As long as the conflict is ongoing, it's key to keep going the basic imports needed to avoid a humanitarian crisis. That is a very critical issue right now," the IMF's Yemen Mission Chief Albert Jaeger told Reuters. "The best the international community and donors can do is to find a way to get the government and the central bank to cooperate to get at least the humanitarian side of things going."—Reuters

UN to investigate peacekeepers' response to South Sudan hotel attack

UNITED NATIONS — United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon launched an investigation on Tuesday into accusations peacekeepers in South Sudan failed to respond properly to an attack on a Juba hotel by uniformed men who killed a journalist and raped several civilians.

Ban was "alarmed" by the initial findings of a UN fact-finding mission into the attack on the Hotel Terrain on 11 July during an outbreak of fighting between troops loyal to President Salva Kiir and those backing former Vice President Riek Machar.

The secretary-general was "concerned about allegations that UNMISS (the UN peacekeeping



UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. PHOTO: REUTERS

mission in South Sudan) did not respond appropriately to prevent this and other grave cases of sexual violence committed in Juba," Ban's spokesman said.

Ban has launched an independent special investigation to determine the circumstances sur-

rounding the incidents and evaluate the overall response by the UN peacekeeping mission, the spokesman said in a statement.

US Ambassador to the United Nations, Samantha Power, said on Monday: "We are deeply concerned that United Nations peacekeepers were apparently either incapable of or unwilling to respond to calls for help."

The "US embassy in South Sudan responded to distress calls from the compound and urgently contacted South Sudanese government officials, who sent a response force to the site to stop the attack," she said in a statement.

Hundreds of people were killed and the United Nations

said government soldiers and security forces executed civilians and gang-raped women and girls during and after last month's fighting. South Sudan rejected the accusations.

"The Secretary-General reiterates his outrage over the acts of violence committed by the SPLA (South Sudanese army) and opposition forces in Juba from 8 to 11 July," said the UN spokesman. Ban urged the government to investigate all human rights violations and prosecute those responsible, he said.

Human Rights Watch said on Monday it had uncovered evidence of the cold-blooded execution of civilians by security

forces during the fighting. It also found evidence of soldiers raping civilians.

The UN Security Council authorised on Friday the deployment of a 4,000-strong protection force to ensure peace in Juba as part of the UN mission and threatened an arms embargo if the government did not cooperate.

UN peacekeepers have been in the oil-producing country since it gained independence from Sudan in 2011. South Sudan descended into civil war after Kiir dismissed Machar as his deputy. They signed a peace deal in August 2015, but implementation was slow and sporadic fighting continued.—Reuters



People evacuate their horses as smoke fills the skies in this photo taken with an extreme wide angle lens at the so-called Bluecut Fire in the San Bernardino National Forest in San Bernardino County, California, US, on 16 August 2016.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Southern California wildfire rages unchecked after evacuations

LOS ANGELES — Hundreds of firefighters were battling a rapidly-spreading wildfire raging unchecked in drought-stricken Southern California on Wednesday after flames forced more than 80,000 residents to flee.

The Bluecut Fire, which erupted on Tuesday morning and has grown to cover some 18,000 acres (7,300 hectares) of heavy brush in an area called the Cajon Pass, was zero per cent contained as of Tuesday night, fire officials said.

Authorities issued evacuation orders for 82,640 residents and some

34,500 homes near Interstate 15, the main freeway between Las Vegas and the Los Angeles area, a stretch of which was closed indefinitely.

Two firefighters were trapped by flames in the effort to evacuate residents and defend homes, but managed to escape with only minor injuries, fire officials said. The cause of the blaze is still under investigation.

More than 600 miles (970 km) to the northwest, crews made headway against a Northern California wildfire that has destroyed more than 175

homes and businesses.

The so-called Clayton Fire was 35 per cent contained on Tuesday night, according to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire). It has charred 4,000 acres (1,620 hectares) in and around the community of Lower Lake since Saturday evening, forcing hundreds to flee.

Damin Pashilk, a 40-year-old arrested on suspicion of setting that blaze, and several others in the area over the past year, is set to appear in court on Wednesday.

The Clayton fire

threatened about 1,500 structures at its peak. As of Tuesday evening, only 380 buildings were in danger, according to Cal Fire. There were no reports of casualties.

California Governor Jerry Brown on Tuesday declared a state of emergency in San Bernardino County for the Bluecut Fire, which allows state agencies to come to the assistance of local officials. He had issued emergency declarations on Monday for the Clayton Fire and another in Central California, the Chimney Fire.—*Reuters*

Front-runner to lead Japanese opposition says PM's 'Abenomics' has stalled

TOKYO — The clear favourite to become the first female leader of Japan's biggest opposition party believes Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's signature "Abenomics" policy has stalled and a change of gear is needed to favour people over corporations.

Renho, a former TV announcer born to a Taiwanese father and a Japanese mother, also criticised Abe for failing to express remorse over Japan's wartime aggression on the anniversary of Tokyo's defeat in World War II, a stance that also rangles with Asian neighbours China and South Korea.

Renho, 48, who goes by her given name only, hopes to repair the Democratic Party's image, battered by three years in power that were plagued by infighting, policy flip flops and unkept promises that handed Abe's Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) a landslide election win in December 2012.

"It has become clear during the past three years that trickle-down policies aiming to enrich exporting firms by engineering a weak yen and fiscal spending focused on public works have reached their limits," Renho told Reuters in an interview.

"One economic policy solution is to spend money on individuals," she said. Renho, the mother of 19-year-old twins, is an advocate of policies that support working women and cited easing the financial burden of childrearing as an example. She is the only lawmaker to announce candidacy so far for the 15 September leadership race of the Democratic Par-



Democratic Party's lawmaker Renho. PHOTO: REUTERS

ty, formed when the former Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) merged with a smaller group. An upper house lawmaker, she grabbed attention in a DPJ-led cabinet in 2010 by leading an attack on wasteful public spending.

Renho urged the Bank of Japan to end its controversial negative interest rate policy and expressed concern that it was becoming increasingly hard for the BOJ to exit its massive asset-buying programme. She said a Democratic government would not sharply shift Japanese foreign policies centered on Tokyo's alliance with Washington.

However, she expressed dismay at Abe's remarks at a war memorial ceremony on Monday when he did not mention remorse for Japan's wartime military aggression, contrasting them with Emperor Akihito's comments the same day.

"In the context of the emperor's expression of 'deep remorse' two years in a row, (for Abe) to excise the expression of 'deep remorse' used by past premiers made me feel strongly that something was wrong," Renho said.—*Reuters*

The Cooperation of Myanmar Radio and Television for the Promotion of TPO Asian Tour.

"The "Thai Philharmonic Orchestra" (TPO) from Bangkok with its 90 international musicians will come to Myanmar to perform three concerts in Yangon, Mandalay and Nay Pyi Taw Under the baton of its Chief Conductor. Maestro Gudni Emilsson (Tuebingen, Germany) and Guest Conductor, Maestro parteep Suphanrojn (Bangkok, Thailand) together with the world-renowned pianist Oliver Kern (Hamburg, Germany). In addition, 8 dancers and 2 Myanmar traditional musicians from Myanmar National Symphony Orchestra will join this concerts and bring a unique music experience to all.

The concerts will take place at National Theatre of Yangon on August 26th, 2016 at 07:00 p.m; National Theater of Mandalay on August 27th, 2016, 07:00 p.m; and, Myanmar International Convention Centre II (Nay Pyi Taw) on August 29th, 2016 at 06:30 p.m; Myanmar Radio and Television (MRTV), Ministry of Information will broadcast live coverage of the concert in Nay Pyi Taw.

Son of Mexican drug boss 'Chapo' among group abducted at resort

MEXICO CITY — One of Mexican drug lord Joaquin "Chapo" Guzman's sons was among a group of people abducted from a restaurant in the Mexican tourist resort of Puerto Vallarta, the state attorney general said on Tuesday.

Jalisco Attorney General Eduardo Almaguer told a news conference that one of Guzman's sons, Alfredo, 29, was among six people abducted by armed men from an upscale eatery in the heart of the Pacific resort town early on Monday.

"The person ... is the

son of Joaquin Guzman Loera, and has been identified through [inspections of] vehicles and by security agencies, as well as through expert opinions," Almaguer said.

Puerto Vallarta, in the state of Jalisco, is one of Mexico's top vacation destinations, attracting all-inclusive tourists and high-end sun seekers to its beaches.

Guzman was the head of the Sinaloa cartel and one of the world's most wanted drug kingpins until he was captured in January. Six months earlier, he had



Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman is escorted by soldiers during a presentation in Mexico City, on 8 January 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

broken out of a high-security penitentiary in central Mexico through a mile-long tunnel.

Jalisco, which lies south along the Pacific coast from Sinaloa, is home to the Jalisco New Generation cartel, which has be-

come one of the country's most powerful drug gangs in recent years.

At the news conference, Almaguer identified four others who had been kidnapped, but said law enforcement had no leads as to their whereabouts.—*Reuters*

Turkey faces 'difficult path' to EU visa-free travel: German minister

BERLIN — Turkey faces a long and arduous path to obtaining visa-free travel within the European Union, and immediate prospects are not bright, Germany's European affairs minister said on Tuesday.

Michael Roth told Reuters that it was clear from the start that a migrant deal struck between the EU and Turkey required completion of 72 criteria before Turks could be granted visa-free travel.

"Turkey faces a very long and difficult path. The criteria must be fulfilled, and it doesn't look good at the moment," Roth said. "As long as the 72 criteria have not been fulfilled — and a few are still open — there cannot be visa liberalisation."

At the same time, Roth said it was important to keep open channels of communication with Turkey, which would remain an important partner given the refugee crisis, and because of the presence of over 3 million people in Germany of Turkish descent.

Finance Minister Wolfgang Schäuble, a member of Chancellor Angela Merkel's conservative Christian Democratic Union, said it was important to continue working with Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan to ensure his help in dealing with a flood of refugees from countries like Syria and Iraq.

"I absolutely don't like what Erdogan is doing, but I don't agree that ... we should end cooperation with him," Schäuble told an event in the northern German city of Rostock on Tuesday evening. "It is in our own interest to keep working together."

Turkish Foreign

Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu had warned on Monday that Turkey could walk away from its promise to stem the flow of illegal migrants to Europe if the EU failed to grant Turks visa-free travel to the bloc in October.

Tensions between Ankara and the West have been aggravated by the failed coup attempt in Turkey on 15 July. Turkey is incensed by what it sees as an insensitive response from Western allies to the failed putsch, in which 240 people were killed.

Roth, a member of the centre-left Social Democrat junior partners in Merkel's ruling coalition, said Germany would continue to raise its concerns about Erdogan's detention of more than 35,000 people in a crackdown on suspected putschists.

Shortly after Roth spoke, German broadcaster ARD published part of a confidential government report which it said marked the first official assessment linking Erdogan's government to support for Islamist and terrorist groups.

"The many expressions of solidarity and support actions by the ruling AKP and President Erdogan for the Egyptian MB (Muslim Brotherhood), Hamas and groups of armed Islamist opposition in Syria emphasize their ideological affinity with the (broader) Muslim Brotherhood," ARD cited the government report as saying.

Egypt has designated the Muslim Brotherhood a terrorist organisation. The group says it rejects violence. The European Union and the United States have blacklisted Hamas as a terrorist group.—Reuters

Greek authorities inspect the area where four people, including a nine-year-old girl, died and at least five were injured after a boat with about 20 people on board collided with a speedboat off the Greek holiday island of Aegina close to Athens, Greece, on 16 August 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS



Four killed as tourist boat, speedboat collide off Greek island

ATHENS — Four people, including a nine-year-old girl, died and at least five were injured after a boat with about 20 people on board collided with a speedboat off the Greek holiday island of Aegina on Tuesday, officials said.

The child, the captain of the tourist boat — which sank — and two male passengers

were found dead, a coast guard official said. Twenty-one people had been rescued, most of them Greek nationals. The circumstances of the collision were unclear. The Athens News Agency reported that the speedboat rammed into the tour boat and its captain had been arrested.

The five injured were

transferred to Athens, two of them with serious injuries, an official at the local health center told Reuters.

Other people were missing, Aegina mayor Dimitris Mourtzis told Skai TV.

"It's such a small channel, just a few minutes' distance," he said, referring to the waters between the port of Perdika in Aegina and the

nearby uninhabited islet of Moni.

Excursions are run daily in the area. Private boats, coast guard vessels and a helicopter were searching for survivors.

About an hour away from Athens by boat, Aegina is a popular destination for both Greek and foreign visitors in summer.—Reuters

Worker fatally attacked by bear at safari park in Japan



Photo shows the car that was being driven by Kiyomi Saito when she was attacked by an Asian black bear at Gunma Safari Park in the city of Tomioka, Gunma Prefecture, on 16 August 2016. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

MAEBASHI (Japan) — A female employee died on Tuesday after being attacked by a bear at a safari park in Gunma Prefecture northwest of Tokyo, local police said.

The worker was attacked inside her car by an Asian black bear, weighing around 160 kilograms, while she was on patrol in an area that exhibits the species at Gunma Safari Park in the city of Tomioka, the police said.

The police received an emergency call at 1:15 pm

that an employee was being attacked by a bear.

The woman, identified as Kiyomi Saito, 46, was taken to a local hospital but was confirmed dead. The police are investigating how the 5-year-old male bear got inside the car. The wildlife park, covering 360,000 square metres, opened in 1979 and keeps about a thousand animals of 100 varieties. In 1997, a couple were killed by a tiger when they got out of their car.—Kyodo News

North Korea confirms restart of plutonium production

PYONGYANG — North Korea confirmed Wednesday it has resumed plutonium production and said it has no plans to stop nuclear tests as long as perceived threats from the United States continue.

"We have reprocessed spent nuclear fuel rods removed from a graphite-moderated reactor," the Atomic Energy Institute, which holds jurisdiction

over North Korea's main nuclear facilities at the Yongbyon complex, said in a written interview with Kyodo News.

In its first-ever response to foreign media questions, the institute also said North Korea has been producing highly enriched uranium necessary for nuclear arms and power "as scheduled."

The institute, however,

stopped short of disclosing the amount of plutonium or enriched uranium North Korea has produced, saying it wants to leave that to the assessments of Western experts. There had been some indications of renewed activity at the nuclear complex, cited by foreign officials and security experts based on satellite imagery in recent months.—Kyodo News

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| (b) COMMODITIES & VOLUME | - TEAK LOGS (165) TONS |
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| | - PYIN KADO/IN -KANYIN/INGYIN/SAGAWA/ |
| | THITYAR/YEMANE/ HTAUK KYANT |
| | ABOUT (2067) TONS |
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'Star Trek Beyond' cast greeted in South Korea by fans



Actors Deep Roy (L) and Simon Pegg. PHOTO: REUTERS



Actors Chris Pine (L), John Cho (C) and Karl Urban arrive for the world premiere of "Star Trek Beyond" at Comic Con in San Diego, California US, on 20 July, 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

SEOUL — The cast of "Star Trek Beyond" hit the red carpet in Seoul on Tuesday to meet and greet fans days before the film's release in South Korea.

Scores of screaming fans took pictures of and with the movie stars, including Chris Pine, Zachary Quinto and Simon Pegg, as they entered the venue and signed autographs. Pine, who plays the starship Enterprise's Captain James T. Kirk, said he was grateful for the warm welcome.

"I don't think we've ever been received quite the

same way anywhere in the world," Pine said at a news conference.

"Thank you very much for having us, for your support, your passion for our really wonderful (film) franchise 'Star Trek,' and we look forward to showing it to you."

In the movie, the beloved cast of characters explores the farthest realms of charted space, where they encounter a new, mysterious enemy who puts them — and everything that the United Federation of Planets stands for — to the test.

"I have the good fortune to play a character who is iconic throughout the world, who has had an incredibly positive influence on millions of people over a number of generations," said American actor Zachary Quinto, who plays Vulcan first officer Spock. British actor Simon Pegg, who co-wrote the screenplay for "Star Trek Beyond," also stars in the film as Scotty, the ship's engineer.

"I love the little moments of character, I love the little exchanges between 'Bones' and Spock," said Pegg, referring to the ship's curmudgeonly surgeon, Dr. Leonard

"Bones" McCoy. "But then it's impossible not to love the extraordinary action as well. There are various sequences in the film which just always leave me completely breathless, even though I've seen them before," Pegg said. "Star Trek," created by Gene Roddenberry in 1966, was the first mainstream US television series with a racially diverse cast, and spawned several TV series and movies. The franchise is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year.

Director Justin Lin said he hopes "Star Trek" will continue to thrive.

"I hope that this allows the franchise to be able to go on for the next, hopefully, 50 years," said Lin.

Production companies Paramount Pictures, Sky dance Media and Bad Robot Productions have announced a fourth film in the rebooted "Star Trek" series.

Australian actor Chris Hemsworth, who appeared in 2009's "Star Trek," will return to the space saga in the role of Captain Kirk's father, George Kirk. The remaining cast members are also expected to return.

"Star Trek Beyond" was released in US cinemas in July to a solid \$59.6 million opening weekend. It will be released in South Korea on Friday.

—Reuters

Actress Zoe Saldana arrives for the world premiere of "Star Trek Beyond" at Comic Con in San Diego, California US, on 20 July, 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

'A Star is Born' again with Bradley Cooper, Lady Gaga

LOS ANGELES — Pop singer Lady Gaga and Oscar-nominated actor Bradley Cooper are joining forces to remake classic Hollywood musical drama "A Star is Born," Warner Bros said on Tuesday. Cooper, 41, who has been nominated for four Oscars including acting and producing 2014's "American Sniper," will make his directorial debut on the movie, while Lady Gaga, 30, will make her feature film lead acting debut.

Warner Bros did not give a release date for the project.

"A Star is Born," the story of an aspiring young starlet who arrives in Hollywood and is helped by an aging leading man, was first told on the big screen in 1937 with Janet Gaynor and Fredric March.

It was remade with Judy Garland and James Mason in 1954 and with Barbra Streisand and Kris Kristofferson in 1976.

In the new film, Grammy-winning Lady Gaga will compose and perform new songs. The singer made her television acting debut in FX's "American Horror Story: Hotel," playing the vampire Countess, which landed her a Golden Globe best actress in a limited series/TV movie award.—Reuters



PHOTO: REUTERS

Britney Spears to perform at 2016 MTV Video Music Awards

LOS ANGELES — Pop star Britney Spears is set to return to the MTV Video Music Awards stage after nine years.

The "Hold It Against Me" hitmaker has been announced to perform at the 2016 MTV VMAs, set to take place Sunday, 28 August. She will deliver the first live performance of her single "Make Me" from her upcoming ninth studio album "Glory" and also perform her new single "Glory" with her collaborator G-Eazy.

MTV confirmed Spears' performance following weeks of speculation that she would open the VMAs after she canceled her two "Piece of Me" shows on the same weekend as the awards-giving event. G-Eazy later spilled the beans to a fan during an outing last week.

In a video announcing her performance, the 34-year-old

singer says in voiceover as an albino Burmese python is seen slithering through her dressing room, "The VMAs don't just give you a stage, they give you a story. Some way of taking a fraction of a second and making it live forever." She adds, "Before you know it, it's history. Before you know it, it's Britney." The snake is a throwback to her 2001 "I'm a Slave 4 U" performance at the annual award show where she danced with a python named Banana. Spears joins other performers billed for the show, including Video Vanguard Award recipient Rihanna. The show will air live from Madison Square Garden in New York City.—PTI



Britney Spears. PHOTO: REUTERS

Chinese women shatter Brazil's dream of third gold

RIO DE JANEIRO — China's women volleyball team upset favourites Brazil in a five-set battle on Tuesday that dashed the host nation's hopes of winning a third consecutive Olympic gold medal.

The younger Chinese team outplayed their more experienced opponents 15-25, 25-23, 25-22, 22-25, 15-13 and went through to the semi-finals where they will face the Netherlands.

Brazil, with eight players who competed in the 2012 London Games and four of them veterans from Beijing in 2008, had not dropped a single set until their quarter-final shocker against China.

China won their second gold medal in 2004 in Athens and are now on a path to a third under head coach Jenny Lang Ping, a former Chinese volleyball player who coached the United States to a silver medal at the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

Unnerved by the loud cheering and booing of Brazilian supporters in Rio's packed Maracanazinho stadium, China took the lead in the third set with a succession of unstoppable spikes by its top scorer Zhu Ting.

Brazil fought back in the fourth but China prevailed



China's players (CHN) celebrate after winning the match during Volleyball Women's Quarterfinals 2016 Rio Olympics, Maracanazinho at Rio de Janeiro, Brazil on 16 August 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

in the fifth.

The United States crushed Japan in straight sets 25-16, 25-23, 25-22 to stay undefeated and boost their hopes of a first Olympic gold medal.

The Americans will meet a surprisingly strong Serbian team in the last four on Thursday. Serbia ousted Russia 25-9,

25-22, 25-21 to become the first Serbian volleyball team to reach an Olympic semi-final.

"We played extremely strong in attack and service, causing the Russian receivers a lot of problems," said Serbian coach Zoran Terzic.

Serbia will have to prepare for a very different game

against the United States, who play much faster and more as a team than a Russian side that relies on two main attackers, Terzic told reporters.

Earlier, Netherlands beat South Korea 3-1 and will go on to play China on Thursday before Saturday's final and bronze medal matches.—Reuters

Injured Tottenham captain Lloris out for four weeks

LIVERPOOL — Tottenham Hotspur expect to be without injured captain Hugo Lloris for four weeks, the Premier League side confirmed in a statement on Tuesday.

The goalkeeper injured his hamstring and was replaced by Michel Vorm 35 minutes into Spurs' opening 1-1 draw with Everton at Goodison Park on Saturday. "Following further assessment and scans of the left hamstring injury sustained by Hugo Lloris in the 1-1 draw at Everton on Saturday, we can confirm he is expected to be out of action for around four weeks," read a brief statement on the club's website.

Lloris, who captained France to the final of the European Championship on home soil this summer, is set to miss upcoming home games against Crystal Palace and Liverpool, as well as the trip to Stoke City on 10 September. He could also be a doubt for Spurs' first Champions League group stage fixture on either 13 or 14 September.—Reuters

Marta's hopes of career-capping gold dashed at Maracana

RIO DE JANEIRO — Brazilian striker Marta, generally considered the greatest women's footballer of all time, wanted nothing more than to win an Olympic gold medal in front of a home crowd at the Maracana stadium to cap her career.

That hope was dashed in Rio on Tuesday when Sweden beat Brazil in the semi-finals in a penalty shoot-out after a match dominated by the home side.

The crowd chanted Marta's name throughout the game and her runs from the right-wing towards the goal caused Sweden a lot of trouble. It was not enough. As Lisa Dahlkvist fired in the winning penalty to silence the baying crowd, Marta could only sink to her knees

in the centre circle. A Brazilian official knelt with her, hugging her in consolation.

Later she chatted with fans before heading into the dressing room, where all the Brazilian team were in tears. "The disappointment is great and we had many opportunities in the game, but we did not get a goal," she said. "The pain is as great here (in the dressing room) as it is outside."

"I do not want to disappoint the people who were out there supporting us today. People not want to be disappointed," she said.

The 30-year-old Brazilian captain, who plays for the Swedish club Rosengard, could be nearing the end of a distinguished career.

She was voted world player of the year five times in a row between 2006 and 2010.

Nicknamed "the Queen", and, less chivalrously, "Pele in Skirts", she has scored more than 100 goals in 109 internationals.

Even with her skills, major success has eluded the Brazilian women's team. With her in the side, they won silver at the Athens Olympics in 2004 and Beijing in 2008, and were runners-up in the World Cup in China in 2007. But a gold in Rio de Janeiro in the temple of Brazilian soccer would have been particularly sweet — and would have boosted the women's game in Brazil, which has often lacked official support.—Reuters



Lisa Dahlkvist (SWE) of Sweden (L) and Marta (BRA) of Brazil compete during 2016 Rio Olympics, Women's Football Tournament Semifinal at Maracana in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil on 16 August 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Entertainment Channel

(18-8-2016, Thursday)

06 : 00 pm • Weather Report • MRTV Entertainment Music 06 : 20 pm • Cartoon "The Missing Lynx" (Part-I) 07 : 10 pm • International Drama Series 07 : 50 pm • International Drama Series	08 : 25 pm • Premier League (High Light Review) 09 : 25 pm • Thiri Wun Tha Play (Part-3) 10 : 15 pm • Myanmar Video Midnight • Close Down
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From 18-8-2016 (Thursday) 6:00 pm
To 19-8-2016 (Friday) 6:00 pm

Myanmar International

(18-8-2016 07:00am ~ 19-8-2016 07:00am) MST

Today Fresh 07:03 Am News 07:27 Am A Heart.....Filled With Noble Volunteerism 07:40 Am A Way of Life: Karate-do 07:53 Am A Girl Guide 08:03 Am News 08:26 Am Taung Byone Nat Festival (Ep-4) 08:42 Am He can do it 08:54 Am Waso or the Buddhist Lent 09:03 Am News 09:26 Am Products of Myanmar — Stone of The Heavens 09:51 Am Kyaikhteeyoe: My Father The Porter 10:03 Am News	10:26 Am A Street Vendor "Spreading Knowledge" (11:00 Am ~ 03:00 Pm) - Wednesday Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am) (03:00 Pm ~ 07:00 Pm) -Today Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am) Prime Time 07:03 Pm News 07:27 Pm Ngapali, Unique Spot To Relax 07:45 Pm Products of Myanmar - Mya Setkyar Pure Silk Fabric From Inle Lake 08:03 Pm News 08:26 Pm Myanmar Traditional Identity (EP-2) Myanmar Chinthe (Myanmar Lion) 08:41 Pm Coin Collectors 08:48 Pm Director: Kyi Phyu Shin (09:00 Pm ~ 11:00 Pm)- Today Repeat (09:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am) (11:00 Pm ~ 03:00 Am) - Wednesday Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am) (03:00 Am ~ 07:00 Am) -Today Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)
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(For Detailed Schedule – www.myanmaritv.com/schedule)



Aguero hits City treble despite two penalty misses

BERNE, (Switzerland) — Sergio Aguero missed two penalties in the first 20 minutes and then scored a hat-trick as Manchester City romped to a 5-0 win at Steaua Bucharest in the first leg of their Champions League play-off on Tuesday.

David Silva and Nolito were also on target against the crestfallen former European champions who were spared an even heavier defeat as the visitors hit the woodwork three times.

Borussia Moenchengladbach also took a big step towards qualifying for the group stage with a 3-1 victory at Swiss side Young Boys.

Former European champions Ajax Amsterdam were held 1-1 at home by Russians Rostov while Croatian champions Dinamo Zagreb also had to settle for a 1-1 draw at home to Austrians Salzburg.

Copenhagen beat APOEL Nicosia 1-0 in the evening's other match.

City's visit to Romania got off to an extraordinary start as Aguero fluffed his lines.

The Argentine, who has missed four of his last five penalties in European competition, saw his first spot kick saved by Florin Nita after eight minutes and then shaved the crossbar with another



Manchester City's Sergio Aguero misses his second penalty at National Arena, Bucharest, Romania on 16 August 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

attempt 12 minutes later.

Even so City found little resistance and took the lead in between when Silva fired home after neat footwork by Raheem Sterling.

Aguero finally found the target four minutes before halftime when he sidefooted the ball in from 18 metres following another chance created by Sterling.

Nolito and Aleksandar

Kolarov also hit the woodwork in the first half for rampant City.

New signing Nolito increased the lead for Pep Guardiola's side four minutes after the restart when he beat the offside trap to collect Kevin de Bruyne's pass and rounded Nita for his first goal since his move from Celta Vigo.

Aguero exchanged passes with Nolito before scoring the fourth with an angled drive and

he then raced through the defence to complete his hat-trick with a shot off the post.

"We played a really good game. It could have been eight or nine," said De Bruyne. "In the end Sergio scored three goals. If you do that nobody will complain about the two missed penalties."

Two goals in four minutes in

the second half put Gladbach in command of their tie.

Substitute Andre Hahn netted within a minute of going on, as the home defence appealed in vain for offside, before Rafael's volley was deflected into his own net by Alain Rochat.

Raffael had given the Bundesliga side an early lead but Miralem Sulejmani equalised from close range for the Swiss in the 56th minute.

Christian Noboa floated in a free kick to put Rostov in front, only for four-times European champions Ajax to reply with a Davy Klaassen penalty before halftime. Andrija Pavlovic's well-taken goal two minutes before halftime, as he latched on to Thomas Delaney's pass and rounded goalkeeper Boy Waterman, gave Copenhagen a narrow lead over APOEL.—Reuters



Omar McLeod (JAM) of Jamaica crosses the finish line to win the gold during Men's 110m Hurdles Final at Olympic Stadium, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on 16 August. PHOTO: REUTERS

Jamaica, Kenya and US strike gold

RIO DE JANEIRO — Jamaica, Kenya and the United States added to their athletics medal tallies in the 110metres hurdles, women's 1,500m and men's triple jump on Tuesday, while Russia's sole track and field competitor survived to compete another day at Rio.

Athletes from Kenya, Croatia and Canada also claimed Olympic gold in a largely empty stadium, where announcers urged rowdy Brazilian fans to restrain themselves after provoking a French pole vaulter with a chorus of boos the night before.

Jamaica's Omar McLeod

earned the country its first gold in the men's sprint hurdles, Kenya's Faith Kipyegon devastated the field in the 1,500m and American Christian Taylor successfully defended his triple-jump gold.

However, the loudest cheers of the night came for native pole vaulter Thiago da Silva as he received the gold medal he won on Monday night. The crowd once again booed silver medallist French Renaud Lavillenie, ignoring Da Silva's gestures asking for quiet.

Lavillenie, who the night before had complained about the

booing during his final attempt, apologised on Tuesday for having compared his experience to the hostility of Nazi Germany towards Jesse Owens at the 1936 Berlin Games.

The announcer at the Rio Olympic Stadium at least four times during Tuesday's evening competition asked the crowd to be respectful to the competitors, a reaction the Carioca fans' flashes of belligerence. Russian athletes in particular have faced hostile crowds in Rio as the result of a doping scandal that has shaded the Games.—Reuters



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