

State Counsellor, Shaanxi Province's Governor hold talks

PAGE 3



Commander-in-Chief presents offertories to Sayadaws at two monasteries in Mandalay

PAGE 9



Joint Press Release between the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and the People's Republic of China

PAGE 2

State Counsellor visits Museum of Qin Terracotta Warriors in Xian

STATE Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi visited the Museum of the Qin Terracotta Warriors in Xian, Shaanxi Province, yesterday.

The state counselor arrived in Xian Saturday morning in her second stop during her five-day visit to China.

In her message in the visitors book of the museum, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi said "especially loved the beautiful horses," praising the Terracotta Warriors as beautiful and inspiring.

The Terracotta Army (Terracotta Warriors and Horses) is noted as one of the most significant archeological finds of the 20th century. Work is ongoing at this site, which is around 1.5 kilometers east of Emperor Qin Shi Huang's Mausoleum in Lintong, Xian, Shaanxi Province.

Emperor Qin Shi Huang, who ascended the throne at the age of 13 in 246 BC, spent 11 years and astronomical funds and resources realising the mausoleum project in anticipation of his own passing. It is speculated that there may be huge swathes of buried treasures and sacrificial objects inside the inner sanctum of the tomb with the buried monarch.

A group of peasants uncovered pottery fragments while digging a well nearby the royal tomb in 1974. When the fragments came to the attention of local cultural authorities a full scale archeological investigation was launched, uncovering the complete terracotta army.

Altogether, over 8,000 pot-



Myanmar State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi visits the Emperor Qin's Terracotta Warriors and Horses Museum in northwest China's Shaanxi Province on Saturday. PHOTO: REUTERS/STRINGER

tery soldiers, horses, chariots, and even weapons have been unearthed from archeological pits. Most of the warriors have been restored to their former grandeur and displayed at the

site museum, which is included on the UNESCO world heritage list.

She also visited the Famen Temple, renowned for storing what is claimed to be the finger

bone of the Sakyamuni Buddha.

It was named Famen during the first year of the reign of the Wude Tang dynasty in 618.

The temple was renovated in 1988 and opened on 9 November

in the same year.

During the tour of Shannxi Province, the State Counsellor also visited the Yang Ling Xin Cun agricultural village.—*Myanmar News Agency*

PROGRESS IN STEPS

Government, ethnic representatives meet in Yangon for NCA signing



Peace makers discuss an eight-point proposal. PHOTO: PHOE HTAUNG

THE Preparatory Committee for 21st Century Panglong Peace Conference met the Delegation for Political Negotiation (DPN) at the National Reconciliation and Peace Centre in Yangon yesterday.

Chairman of the Preparatory Committee Dr Tin Myo Win, DPN leader Khu U Yal and U Thein Zaw of the Preparatory Committee spoke at the event.

The meeting discussed an eight-point proposal submitted by the United Nationalities Federal Council (UNFC) of finding ways to sign the nationwide ceasefire agreement and join the peace conference.

After the meeting Dr Tin Myo Win described their discussions as productive enough to facilitate the peace process. He also expressed his thanks to the ethnic leaders for their active participa-

tion and interesting suggestions at the meeting.

DPN's second leader Guan Maw called the discussions at the meeting constructive, pledging that they were doing their best to join the 21st Century Panglong Peace Conference. He expressed his understanding of public speculation about the prospect of non-NCA ethnic signatories joining the peace conference.

>> See page 3

Joint Press Release between the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and the People's Republic of China

1. At the invitation of Premier Li Keqiang of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, State Counsellor of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, paid an official visit to China from 17th to 21st August 2016. During the visit, President Xi Jinping met with State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, Premier Li Keqiang held talks with the State Counsellor on bilateral relations, and Chairman Zhang Dejiang of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress also met with the State Counsellor. The two sides had in-depth exchange of views and reached important consensus on carrying forward their traditional friendship and advancing their comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership in the new era.

2. Both sides spoke highly of the "Pauk-Phaw" friendship between the two countries, and agreed that as joint initiators of the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence, Myanmar and China will adhere to the above principles and work together for progress in bilateral relations on

the basis of mutual respect, mutual trust, equality and mutual benefit. Both sides affirmed that they would continue to uphold good neighbourly policy toward each other and to continue to attach priority to strengthening their bilateral relations for the mutual benefit of the two peoples and to promote greater stability and development in both countries. Both sides reaffirmed that they would always put the interests of the two peoples at the fore front, adopt a strategic and long-term perspective, and work to achieve new progress in their comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership.

3. Both sides agreed to maintain the tradition of close high-level contacts, to enhance strategic communication and to deepen exchanges on the experience of governance. They further agreed to increase friendly exchanges and cooperation at different levels, particularly between political parties and peoples.

4. The two sides agreed to promote rule of law in the border areas, and to enhance trade, economic cooperation and various forms of friendly exchanges that

would contribute to the well-being of the peoples.

5. The two sides agreed to continue close coordination in the multilateral fora including the United Nations. They agreed to maintain close coordination on global issues concerning the pursuits and challenges of developing countries such as climate change, natural disasters and communicable diseases.

6. Myanmar welcomed China's "Belt and Road" initiative and the initiative of Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar (BCIM) Economic Corridor. The two sides will continue to make good use of existing inter-governmental cooperation mechanisms including the economic and trade joint committee, agricultural cooperation committee and electricity cooperation committee, and enhance mutually beneficial cooperation in the fields of economics and trade, agriculture, water, electricity, productivity and finance.

7. China appreciates Myanmar government's visions and policies to promote national reconciliation and to improve the

people's living standards, and supports Myanmar in its democratic transition that follows an all-inclusive path which is in line with its own national conditions and aims at ensuring national reconciliation and peace, and the promotion of economic development and social harmony. China is ready to continue to provide help toward Myanmar's economic and social development to the best of its ability, and to take concrete measures to support Myanmar's efforts in improving its people's living standards. Myanmar expressed its deep appreciation to China for providing support for Myanmar's endeavours for economic and social development. The Myanmar side expressed its readiness to work together with the Government of the People's Republic of China to further promote trade and investment that would create employment opportunities to reduce poverty and contribute to equitable development in Myanmar. Myanmar reaffirmed its adherence to the one-China principle, and expressed its understanding and support of China's position on

Taiwan, Tibet and Xinjiang.

8. The two sides decided to strengthen cooperation and to ensure prevalence of peace and stability in their border areas. China supported Myanmar efforts to realize peace and national reconciliation through political dialogue. Myanmar thanked China for its active and constructive support to Myanmar's endeavours for national reconciliation and peace.

9. The State Counsellor conveyed the cordial invitation of President U Htin Kyaw to President Xi Jinping to pay a state visit to Myanmar, and President Xi Jinping expressed his appreciation of the invitation.

10. State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi expressed her sincere appreciation to Premier Li Keqiang and the Government of the People's Republic of China for the warm welcome and exceptional hospitality accorded to her delegation during their visit, and extended an invitation to Premier Li Keqiang to visit Myanmar at a mutually convenient time in the near future, and Premier Li Keqiang expressed his appreciation of the invitation.

MOI plans contemporary history reading plus winter book fair



Union Minister Dr Pe Myint and officials discuss organizing the reading of contemporary history in conjunction with a winter book fair. PHOTO: MNA

INFORMATION Union Minister Dr Pe Myint has called a coordination meeting to discuss how to successfully organise the reading of contemporary history in conjunction with a winter book fair in the fashion of the recent first-ever political literature reading plus the monsoon book fair.

The union minister said his

ministry had plans to organise such events every four months.

The meeting took place at the Central Printing Factory of the Printing and Publishing Department in Yangon yesterday.

Dr Pe Myint urged officials to invite young people and women resource persons in the reading, stressing the need to set up a

committee to organise the event.

U Tin Hlaing, a writer under the pseudonym of Ledwinthar Saw Chit, and PPE Director General U Aung Myo Myint led the discussion.

The meeting came to an end with concluding remarks by the union minister.—*Yi Yi Myint and Ohnmar Thant*

Dermatologists furrow their brow at tattoo industry

WHILE the practice of tattooing is emerging as a 'cool' 'fashion statement' among young people across the world the dermatological hospital in Mandalay has seen more than 100 visits from young people with skin problems relating their tattoos over the last seven months.

The dermatological department saw 134 patients between January and July with one dermatologist saying that the health hazards associated with tattooing are striking.

"It is not tattoos that can enhance how one looks," the dermatologist opined, "but exer-

cise. My advice is to do physical exercises to be attractive."

Young men and women here and across the world are getting inked more regularly with a local clinical doctor stating many such people were high school and university students.

American health researchers interviewed 500 people with tattoos, 40 per cent of whom suffered skin irritation, itchiness and pain, while 10 per cent said they experienced skin risks for at least four months after the inking and 5 per cent faced bacterial infection.—*Aung Thant Khaing*



A young man has his arm tattooed. PHOTO: AUNG THANT KHAING

Pakokku U Ohn Pe Literary Awards ceremony held in Yangon

THE Pakokku U Ohn Pe Literary Award ceremony took place at Sarpay Beikman Building in Yangon yesterday, with Information Union Minister Dr Pe Myint describing the event as one of the most prestigious private literary award ceremonies.

The Pakokku U Ohn Pe literary awards have been presented to outstanding writers and poets since 1994.

The union minister urged award-winning writers to continue to contribute to the country's literature and the people.

According to Ledwinthar Saw Chit, Chairman of Myanmar Writers Association, U Ohn Pe was a pioneer of lifelong literary award. Union Minister Dr Pe Myint presented the lifelong literary award to U Maung Ka Lay, whose pseudonym is Thaukkyar U Maung Ka Lay, and poets for their collections of poems.

Ledwinthar Saw Chit and officials also presented awards to winners of various literary genres.

The first, second and third prizes are worth K300,000, K200,000 and K100,000 respectively, while the lifelong literary award fetches K500,000.

Myanmar Apex Bank's Chairman U Chit Khine contributed K6.5 million to the organising of the Pakokku U Ohn Pe's Literary Award ceremony, and U

Tin Oo of Total Power Solution For Your Company, K10 million, K1m each for ten years, to the fund of U Ohn Pe's educational excellence award.

Pakokku U Ohn Pe, a writer, passed away in Pakokku on 13 April 2008.

In the afternoon, Union Minister Dr Pe Myint attended the opening of a community centre and a mobile library, jointly conducted by the Ministry of Information and Daw Khin Kyi Foundation in Insein township.

Speaking on the occasion, the union minister pledged to open more public libraries in the ministry's public relations offices across the country.

Dr Thant Thaw Kaung of Daw Khin Kyi Foundation presented certificates of honour to Taiwan Digital Opportunity Centre Secretariat and Asus Tek Computer Inc for their donations of printers, routers, projectors and other equipment for the Daw Khin Kyi Foundation.

Daw Khin Kyi Foundation started two mobile libraries in 2013. Now the Foundation has opened mobile libraries in Kawhnum, Nay Pyi Taw, Kalaw, Natouk and Myaunmya. The mobile libraries have a collection of over 60,000 books of various categories. They have over 40,000 members.—*Win Win Maw and Myat Sandy*



Union Minister Dr Pe Myint presents the lifelong literary award to U Maung Ka Lay. PHOTO: MNA

Government, ethnic representatives ...

>> from page 1

"We, non-NCA signatories, have come here with our trust in the government and our keenness to the peace conference," Guan Maw, second leader of the DPN, said, pledging to find some common ground for the good of the country.

The meeting drew 11 representatives from the government side and 10 others from the ethnic side.

The 16 members of the UP-

DJC, ethnic armed organisations and the preparation committee for the Union Peace Conference-21st Century Panglong will discuss the political framework tomorrow, said U Hlaing Maung Shwe, Secretary of the committee.

"During this meeting we discussed today what we want to amend in the NCA. The results are documented and when we reach agreement these results after negotiation, we will sign it," said Gwan Maw.—*Ye Khaung Nyunt*



Daw Aung San Suu Kyi holds talks with Mr. Hu Heping. PHOTO: MNA

State Counsellor, Shaanxi Province's Governor hold talks

STATE Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi held talks with the Governor of Shaanxi Province Mr. Hu Heping during her visit of Xian, Capital of Shaanxi, yesterday.

During the meeting the two representatives discussed mat-

ters relating to the promotion of friendship between Myanmar and Shaanxi Province, including establishing Xian and a city in Myanmar as Sister Cities in order to promote bilateral cooperation. The topics discussed at the meeting included

cooperation in the education and research sectors between Myanmar and Shaanxi Province which has 100 universities and 1,000 research departments and the opening of a consulate in the province.—*Myanmar News Agency*



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi arrives in Xian on 20 August, 2016, morning in her second stop during her five-day visit to China. PHOTO: MYANMAR NEWS AGENCY

International assistance absent from Myanmar's flood relief efforts

FLOOD affected areas of the country are yet to receive any international aid or assistance, says the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement.

"There hasn't yet been any international efforts to provide assistance for those in flood affected regions. The international community generally inquires about what kind of help it can provide when we advertise the country has been struck by a natural disaster," said U Soe Aung, permanent secretary of the aforementioned ministry.

The Ministry of Social Welfare has reportedly requested information from government departments concerned in regard to the extent of farmland and livestock devastation from flooding in July and August which will allow the

ministry to provide rehabilitation support to flood victims.

The ministry has also reportedly allocated a nationwide budget of more than K82 billion for home reconstruction and indemnity for citizens whose family members lost their lives as a result of the flooding.

"Our organization will partner with government departments in providing relief and assistance to flood victims because a great deal of difficulties await them, in terms of earning a livelihood, when they get back home," said Ko Aung Nang, member of a charity group assisting flood victims.

Torrential rain, which struck Myanmar at the start of July, has caused extensive flooding across whole swathes of the country. As

of mid-August, over 400,000 people across eight states and regions around the country remain homeless, while the toll of the flooding has so far reportedly destroyed over 250 homes and claimed eight lives, according to records of the Ministry of Social Welfare.

The recent residing of floodwaters in parts of the country has subsequently abated the number of relief shelters. The majority of shelters which remain open are located in the flat, food-prone region which occupies that country's delta, the Ayeyarwady Region, while number of shelters still open vary across different states and regions with 185 still open in Magway Region but just 40 left in operation throughout Mandalay Region.—*Myitmakha News Agency*

Tourism expected to bring more than one million jobs opportunities

THE increasing number of tourists is expected to create more than a million jobs in the tourism industry in the opening season, according to Ministry of Hotels and Tourism.

“The Myanmar tourism industry is rising with more job opportunities in the sector. Employees need to have their skills upgraded in the face of rising business.” said Ko Thit Lin, executive of the Domestic Travelling Company.

The Hotel and Tourism Department’s statistics show there are around 1,361 hotels with more than 53,355 rooms in the whole country. Tourist arrivals to the county have increased from 2.04 million in 2013 and 3.08 million in 2014 to 4.02 million in 2015. — Zar Zar

Healthcare services provided by Eastern Command in Aungban town

A TATMADAW medical team of Eastern Command provided healthcare services to 453 local people including students in Lwemakhan village and its surrounding villages, Thamaikhan village-tract of Aungban Town, Shan State on Friday.

The medical team gave medical treatment to people in need of surgery and those caught ill with infections and/or diseases. —C-in-C’s Office



Commander Gen. Aye Win comforting villagers. PHOTO: C-IN-C’S OFFICE

Crime NEWS

Four students missing after motor ferry sampan sinks



Search and rescue operation is underway after motor ferry sampan sinks. PHOTO: KO GYI SAW

A FERRY motor sampan with 17 students on board, traveling to Yang Aung Pyin from Kone Ton village, sank in the creek in Yathit Taung Township, Rakhine state on Friday. Four students are still missing.

The accident was reportedly caused by overloading of the vessel. The missing students have been identified as

Ma OO Khin Yee, Ma Ni Ni Aye, Ma Khin Phyo Wai and Ma Tin May Oo from Kyauk Sardine village. The pilot of the vessel absconded from the scene.

“The children died because it was overloaded. Sampans can carry 10 passengers at the most. Thirteen students have been rescued by people

nearby and four students are still missing. I think it is most likely they are dead.” said U Soe Phay from Kone Ton village.

U Than Hlaing, an education officer from Yathit Taung township, told media that he wishes to see a bridge built so that the ferrying service can be closed. — Ko Gyi Saw

Yaba worth over K 400,000 seized in Nay Pyi Taw

LOCAL police from Nay Pyi Taw seized yaba worth K 400,000 from the Sei Sar restaurant, Padonmar road, Shwe Kyar Pin ward, Zabuthiri township on Friday.

Police searched the property and arrested those believed to own the drugs. The arrested suspects are Nay Lin Aung, Hla Myo Aung and Kyaw Min Htet.

Police have filed charges against the men under section 15/ 19-A/20-A of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.—Myanmar Police Force

Illegal hardwood logs confiscated from vehicle

ILLEGAL tanmalan logs were seized from a vehicle on Sagaing- Monywa road near Nyaung Pin Zin village, Sagaing Township on Thursday.

According to an investigation, a combined investigation team comprising officials and staff from the Sagaing forestry department stopped and searched the vehicle which was being driven by one Chit Oo Ko, 19, from Kanbalu township. The search revealed six logs. Police have filed charges against the driver under section 6(1) of the Public Property Protection Act.— Myanmar police Force

Four-member family slain in Mingaladon

A FOUR member family was killed in their home in Myothit ward, Mingaladon township yesterday, it has been learned.

Police identified the victims

as U Soe Naung, 37, an ex-police officer, his wife Ma New Ni Lwin and their two sons.

Township criminal investigators have opened a case.—Myanmar police force

Yaba and marijuana seized in Taunggyi

LOCAL police from Ayetharyar police station seized 2,130 yaba pills from a motorcycle rider en route to Ayethayar from Nyaungshwe town. The rider was identified as one Tin Aung Kyaw with Thein Maung Oo on board.

On the same day an anti-narcotics suppression squad

comprising police from Yangon(east) seized marijuana weighing 3.1 kilograms and 16 yaba pills from the home of one Kyaw Kyaw Ko in Dagon Myothit (North) township.

All suspects have been charged under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.—MNA



Tin Aung Kyaw with Thein Maung Oo. PHOTO: MNA

LOCAL Business

Palm oil price increases by Ks300 per viss in mid August

THE price of palm oil increased by Ks300 per viss in mid-August, resulting in big profits for edible oil dealers.

The price of groceries in general has jumped since the outbreak of recent flooding, including palm oil. The high price has been passed down to local consumers.

The spike in the price of palm oil is also attributed to the rise in price in the world palm oil market, in addition to the low supply of palm oil entering the local market, it is learnt from the edible oil market.

But the unusually high price of palm oil is unreasonable, said U Nay Lin, an edible oil merchant.

The import of palm oil was granted permission starting from mid 2011 with an aim at controlling the palm oil domestic market. However, the market has been unstable in 2016.

Local consumption of palm oil amount to about 300,000 tonnes per year. Therefore, about 30,000 tonnes of palm oil are allowed to be imported monthly to fulfill the requirements of the local consumers. However, the import volume of palm oil from 8th to 12th June was 29,926.6700 tonnes, it is learnt from the import list released by Myanmar Edible Oil Dealers' Association on 15th August.

The foreign licensed importers can keep the palm oil in their possession for only three months. Therefore, they excessively supply the palm oil to the local market, making the local merchants suffer due to the high price they must pay.



Palm nuts. PHOTO: NYI ZAW MOE

The authorities concerned should intervene in this unstable market of the palm oil. And they also should monitor the price manipulators of the palm oil, merchants said. In August, those manipulators set a high daily price for September and October, saying palm oil was out of stock

in the foreign private market, said an observer of the market.

The palm oil price on 1st August was US\$650 per FOB tonne, whereas the prices rose to US\$750 per FOB tonne. Similarly, the palm oil price at local market has risen by about Ks300 per viss.—*Khin Hsaing (MAL)*

Korean firms to be selected for Yangon-Dala Bridge project via tender system

THE Ministry of Construction will grant contracts to only South Korean companies for the new river bridge project in Yangon and will do so as quickly as possible, said the Ministry's permanent secretary U Kyaw Lin.

With the loan provided by the Korean government construction of the Yangon-Dala River Bridge Project is planned to begin next year and it is estimated to be completed by 2020.

The two governments have made concerted efforts to implement the new bridge project since 2013, it is reported. The bridge will connect downtown Yangon with underdeveloped Dala, a small township on the outskirts

of the city, so as to provide better transportation services and to increase the socio-economic status of residents.

Plans are underway to invite tenders for the new project after the ministry selected a Korean advisory firm this month, U Kyaw Lin said.

The total cost of the project is approximately US\$170 million. South Korean authorities have pledged to grant a \$137.833 million loan for the plan.

The four-lane suspension bridge will be 1,936 feet (590 metres) long, 160 ft high and 823 ft wide. It will link Phoneyi Street in Lanmadaw Township to Bo Min Young Street in Dala.—200

Yangon ICT Fair to be held next month

THE Yangon Region Computer Professionals Association and Computer Entrepreneurs' Association will organise the Yangon ICT Fair 2016 in September, according to organisers.

The new event will take place from 2 to 4 September at the Tatmadaw Convention Hall on U Wisara Road in Mayangon Township in Yangon, with plans to showcase the latest computer and mobile devices.

Around 156 booths will display IT-related electronic equipment and accessories, technology and software for sale during the three-day exhibition.

Three to four exhibitions are normally conducted annually by the Yangon Region Computer

Professionals Association, said its Secretary U Myo Min Oo. The Yangon RCPA held a similar expo in May.

The YRCPA also has plans to launch a mobile ICT education system in Yangon with a scheduled initiate programme next month in Htantabin as its pilot project. Htantabin is a remote suburban townships in Yangon. The programme aims to promote knowledge of information and communication technology in rural communities. The new system offers students access to ICT-related technology education in a safe learning environment. The organisers will use a classroom installed with 16 computers and other electronic equipment.—200

Revenue authorities collect K3b commercial tax, K2b income tax from gold trading over three years

REVENUE authorities have collected over K3 billion in commercial revenues and over K2 billion in income taxes on gold trading over the previous three financial years, according to figures released by the Internal Revenue Department.

The department collected K1,015.166 million in commercial tax and K745.904 million income tax over the 2013-2014 FY from gold trading, K1,129.104 million in commercial revenue and K792.295 million in in-

come tax over the 2014-2015 FY and K1,340.919 million in commercial tax and K787.646 million in income tax over the 2015-2016 FY.

Under the existing Commercial Taxation Law, enacted in 1990, the department collects tax from gold traders every year.

The Internal Revenue Department has been collecting four kinds of taxes and duties, namely income tax, commercial tax, stamp duty and State lottery tax from the 2011-

12 fiscal year onwards.

The department expects to collect over K6 billion worth of tax through the sale of stamps this fiscal year.

Under Section 12 (a) of the law any person who has taxable proceeds of sale or receipt from service within one year shall pay the due monthly tax within ten days of the end of the relevant month. The authorities have urged entrepreneurs to pay commercial tax to the relevant revenue officers within the set time frame.—*GNLM*

Rubber exports reach over 2,000 tonnes within one week

MYANMAR exported more than 2,000 tonnes of rubber to its trade partners during the first week of this month through both normal trade and border trade, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

The export volume of rubber via sea routes decreased to 600 tonnes compared with the previous week's exports. However, rubber trade on the border saw an increase of nearly 760 tonnes in the first week of August.

A total of 2,109 tonnes

of rubber was sent to foreign countries, including US\$2.19 million worth of 1,779 tonnes exported via border trade camps—529 tonnes of RSS-3 rubber, 135 tonnes of RSS-5 rubber, 153 tonnes of MSR-20 rubber and 65 tonnes of RSS-1 rubber from Muse (105-mile) Trade Camp; 411 tonnes of MSR-20 rubber and 53 tonnes of RSS-3 rubber from Chinshwehaw Border Trade Camp; 192 tonnes of RSS-3 rubber from Kawthaung Border Trade Camp and 240 tonnes of rubber

from Tachilek Border Trade Camp. Between 31 July and 6 August, 100 tonnes of RSS-3 rubber, 210 tonnes of MSR-20 rubber and 20 tonnes of RSS-2 rubber worth \$0.4 million went to Malaysia via sea. Myanmar sold a tonne of RSS-1 rubber for \$1,450, RSS-5 rubber for \$1,250 and RSS-3 rubber for between \$1,350 and \$1,450. One tonne of MSR-20 rubber was also sold for between \$1,300 and \$1,400, according to Myanmar Rubber Planters and Producers Association.—200

Indonesia urges action against slash-and-burn clearing as haze season arrives

JAKARTA —

Indonesia's disaster agency urged prompt action against slash-and-burn plantation fires on Friday as the annual smoke "haze" begins to drift across the Malacca Strait to neighbouring Malaysia and Singapore.

Fires in Indonesia, set in the dry season by companies clearing land for plantations, cause an annual crisis that at times blankets large parts of the region in choking smog, closing airports and schools and prompting warnings to residents to stay indoors.

Home to the world's third-largest area of tropical forests, Indonesia has been criticised by green activists and by neighbouring Southeast Asian nations for failing to stop the annual fires.

"Smoke from forest and land fires in Riau has started to enter the Malacca Strait. Let's prevent and put out the fires," agency spokesman Sutopo Nugroho said on his Twitter account @Sutopo_BNPB on Friday, referring to a district on the main island of Sumatra.

He said that over the past week, the numbers of fire "hotspots" in West



A helicopter from the Indonesian National Disaster Management Agency (BNPB) drops water on a fire in Ogan Ilir, near Palembang, South Sumatra, Indonesia, on 11 August, 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Kalimantan, on the nearby island of Borneo, had "increased significantly."

Dry weather that complicates firefighting efforts would reach its peak in September, Nugroho told Reuters, noting that the "critical period" for fires was from August to October.

The government's early announcement of a state of emergency for fires in five provinces this year had helped to prevent them from spreading as extensively as in 2015, he said, when El Niño made the

problem worse.

"Countermeasures, including the response from the National Disaster Mitigation Agency, have been faster and better. Last year the emergency status was declared only after the fires were widespread," he said.

Heavy smoke from slash-and-burn clearing often comes from the islands of Sumatra and Kalimantan, where large forest concessions are used by pulp and paper and palm oil companies, some of which

are listed in Singapore.

Singapore has pushed Indonesia for information on companies suspected of causing cross-border pollution. "As we go through the legal process, all the information will be publicly available," Foreign Ministry spokesman Arrmanatha Nasir said on Thursday.

Indonesia imposed record fines against a local plantation company last week in the hope of deterring companies and individuals from using fire to clear land.—Reuters

Typhoon Dianmu kills one, injures three in Viet Nam

HANOI — Typhoon Dianmu killed one person and injured three others in Viet Nam, while one person in northern Viet Nam was missing, according to Central Steering Committee on Natural Disaster Prevention and Control on Saturday. The committee said a 48-year-old man in northern Son La Province was killed after being swept away by flood water.

Another person went missing in floods in northern Bac Giang Province. The typhoon also injured three people in the capital Hanoi.

As many as 297 houses were partially damaged while 13 houses completely collapsed. An estimate area of 5,844 hectares of rice and other crops were inundated, said the committee. After making landfall in northern Viet Nam on Friday afternoon, Typhoon Dianmu weakened into a tropical depression.

The National Centre for Hydro-Meteorological Forecasting has warned of rising water level at rivers and streams in northern Viet Nam, causing floods and risks of landslides.—Xinhua

Modi meets visiting Nepalese deputy PM

NEW DELHI — Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday met with Nepalese Deputy Prime Minister Bimalendra Nidhi, who is on a visit to India as Nepalese Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda's special envoy.

Indian External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Vikas Swarup posted photos of the meeting on twitter.

Nidhi's visit is the first high-level one from Nepal to India after the formation

of the new Nepalese government earlier this month.

Nidhi also met with Indian External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj and Home Minister Rajnath Singh on Friday.

Swaraj said India will work closely with the Nepalese government, and invited the prime minister of the Himalayan nation to visit India, while Nidhi lauded India's effort for the economic development of his country.—Xinhua

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China over-reliant on hospitals, needs more family doctors: WHO

SHANGHAI —

China's healthcare system is overly reliant on large, over-burdened hospitals, which will struggle to cope with a spike in diseases linked to the fast-ageing population, the World Health Organisation said on Saturday.

Even for minor ailments, Chinese patients often shun family doctors or general practitioners in favour of big city general hospitals, a trend that creates often snarling queues and fierce competition for treatment.

"As China's health challenges ... continue to mount, with an ageing population, so too will the demands on the country's health system, along with the costs," WHO China representative Bernhard Schwartlander said in a commentary, pointing to rising rates of cancer and cardiovascular disease.

"It is simply not sus-



People wait to enter Peking Union Hospital early in the morning in Beijing, China, on 6 April, 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

tainable to meet these challenges in a health system that relies on hospitals."

China has been trying to overhaul its healthcare system, including promoting local, grassroots medical facilities and pledging to raise the number — and

quality — of local GPs. However, low doctor salaries and a lack of trust by patients in local health centres has slowed progress.

The WHO pointed to long queues, difficult booking systems and tight consultation slots that of-

ten last just a few minutes.

"(It is) a symptom of the enormous patient load and pressure which doctors in China face every day," it said. "But this is not how things should be in a well-functioning health system."—Reuters

China, India to strengthen collaboration within G20 framework

NEW DELHI — China and India have agreed to increase dialogue and further cooperate within the G20 framework in a bid to enhance relations between the two countries, officials said.

While attending the China-India Financial Dialogue which concluded this week in Beijing, the officials from finance ministries and other key government departments agreed that it is essential for the two sides to share information and experiences in financial management, macro-economic policy making and structural reform measures.

“By upgrading the level of financial exchanges and policy coordination, China and India would be building a more advanced mechanism for carrying out future investment and trade at a higher level, while some vacuums in terms of government policy and laws will be filled step by step,” said an Indian economist here on condition of anonymity.

The two countries have already called for a more democratic structure of global financial governance through the reform of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. But they have so

far failed to find sufficient resources to supplement them.

“The existing structure and framework are crumbling while the needs for a more resilient mechanism for doing business are growing daily,” said another local economist.

For example, there have been talks of free exchange of the Chinese Renminbi and the Indian Rupee at the local markets, as businessmen investing in each other’s countries are faced with numerous obstacles in payment through a third currency like the US dollar and the Euro, he said on condition of anonymity.

With the shadow of financial crisis still hanging over Asia after the 2008 financial crisis, the mutual support regarding currency would help fend off international speculation, said the economist, adding that the rupee has fallen by one third against the US dollar in five years and inflation is causing discontent. The two sides also agreed to build platforms for financial interactions while fully using the AIIB, BRICS New Development Bank and BRICS Contingency Reserve Arrangement to enhance cooperation.—*Xinhua*

DPRK says deputy ambassador to Britain fled to escape punishment



A customer watches TV sets broadcasting a news report on Thae Yong Ho, North Korea’s deputy ambassador in London, who has defected with his family to South Korea, in Seoul, South Korea, on 18 August 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

PYONGYANG — The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) said on Saturday that Deputy Ambassador to Britain Thae Yong Ho has reportedly defected to the South to escape punishment for committing crimes.

Thae was accused of embezzling state funds, selling state secrets and raping a minor, said a commentary released by the of-

ficial news agency KCNA.

The DPRK had recalled him in June to put him under investigation, and on 12 July, the country’s Central Procuratorate decided to start a probe, the KCNA added. The commentary also slammed South Korea’s coverage of the incident and blamed Seoul for using the case to tarnish the DPRK’s image and step up anti-DPRK campaigns.—*Xinhua*

Duterte resumes ceasefire ahead of peace talks with communist rebels

MANILA — Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte declared on Saturday an indefinite ceasefire to pave the way for resumption of peace talks with communist rebels next week, said Presidential Peace Adviser Jesus Dureza.

The peace talks are scheduled for 22 August in Oslo, Norway.

President Duterte has “restored the effects of the unilateral ceasefire with the Communist Party of the Philippines and the National Democratic Front effective 12 midnight tonight, 21 August,” Dureza told a news conference at the international airport before leaving for Oslo with the government panel.

“The duration of the ceasefire will last for as long as necessary to bring peace in the land,” he said.

Duterte declared a unilateral ceasefire on 25 July but scrapped it six days later after the rebels failed to reciprocate and attacked and killed a militia man.

“The enabling environment brought about by this ‘silencing of the guns’ will hopefully go a long way in bringing about an expeditious and early resolution to our differences and aspirations that have long divided us as

a people,” said Dureza.

He said the restoration of the ceasefire came a few days after Duterte has released from detention about 20 prisoners who are needed in the peace negotiations.

“As we speak there is continuing efforts to make available in Oslo peace talks resumption as many of them as possible,” Dureza said, referring to the remaining political prisoners that will take part in the talks as “consultants.”

The Philippine government released from jail on Friday two communist leaders, Benito Tiamzon and his wife, Wilma, to allow them to participate in the Oslo talks.

The Tiamzons are the highest-ranking communist leader in detention after they were arrested in 2014. The government said Benito Tiamzon was the chairman of the Communist Party of the Philippines while his wife Wilma was the secretary general.

A few hours after their release, the Communist Party of the Philippines declared a seven-day unilateral ceasefire that will take effect 12:01 am on 21 August and will last until 11:59 pm on 27 August.

“This ceasefire declaration is encouraged by the (Philippine

government’s) facilitation of the release of the nearly all National Democratic Front of the Philippines consultants who are set to participate in peace negotiations in the course of the next several months,” the rebels said in a statement.

The Oslo talks are expected to tackle “social and economic reforms, political and constitutional reforms, end of hostilities and disposition of forces, ceasefire, joint security and immunity and release of political detainees,” according to Dureza.

The Duterte administration is trying to forge peace with the communist rebels. Talks between the government and the rebels began in 1986, but failed to lead to a resolution over the years.

The communist rebellion began in 1969 and reached its peak in 1987 when it boasted 26,000 armed guerillas.

However, the movement has since dwindled due to differences in strategy and tactics and the arrests of many of its top leaders in the late 1980s.

The military estimates the current number of communist armed rebels to be around 4,000.—*Xinhua*

177 Indonesians nabbed for attempting to fly on Philippine passports

MANILA — Philippine immigration officers on Friday detained 177 Indonesian nationals who were attempting to travel out of the country on Philippine passports belonging to other people.

Immigration Bureau spokeswoman Ma. Antonette Mangrobang said the Indonesians were scheduled to board a Philippine Airlines pre-dawn flight for Saudi Arabia to participate in the Hajj pilgrimage.

Ed Monreal, general manager of Ninoy Aquino International Airport, told a television interview that suspicions were

raised after the foreigners were found incapable of speaking and understanding the Filipino language.

According to a statement issued by the Immigration Bureau, an initial investigation revealed that the Indonesians sought to travel on Philippine passports because under a quota system that restricts pilgrims from foreign countries heading to Saudi Arabia, the number of Indonesian places had been filled.

Immigration Commissioner Jaime Morente said in the statement the Indonesians each paid \$6,000 to \$10,000 to be

able to join the pilgrimage. They claimed to have arrived in the Philippines as tourists in the past few weeks.

Morente said five Filipinos who were supposed to escort the Indonesians were also apprehended by the authorities and are being subjected to further investigation.

The bureau is coordinating with the Indonesian Embassy in Manila to ascertain the identities of the foreign nationals as charges for violation of Philippine immigration laws are being prepared against them, the statement said.—*Kyodo News*

‘Unavailability of crew member’ delays Sri Lankan Airlines flight

COLOMBO — A Sri Lankan Airlines flight from Frankfurt to Colombo was unable to leave Frankfurt on Friday due to the “unavailability of a flight crew member,” the Airlines said in a statement on Saturday.

“One of the crew members was suddenly unwell which is why the flight could not leave as scheduled,” an Airline official said.

In the statement, Sri Lankan Airlines said that the airline expects flight UL554 to depart on Saturday once Frankfurt airport reopens after the scheduled night time closure.

All passengers affected by the delay have been provided with meals and accommodation and they will also be compensated as per EU regulations, Sri Lankan Airlines said.

The national carrier, which is currently facing a staggering loss, is expected to suspend its operations to Paris and Frankfurt from winter 2016.

Accordingly, the last flights between Frankfurt and Colombo will be operated on 30 October, while operations between Paris and Colombo will conclude on 6 November.—*Xinhua*

Opinion

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Reducing poverty through agricultural development

Kyaw Thura

AS a developing country with a population of some 52 million, Myanmar should make its agricultural policy effective enough to drive the economic development. Since 70% of the population works the farm in rural areas, the government needs to direct its effort to increased agricultural production.

The previous government vowed to bring down the country's poverty rate from 26% to 16% in 2015. It did not meet its target. According to the Asian

Development Bank's statistics this year, 25.6% of the country's population lives below the national poverty line, followed by the Philippines at 25.20% and Laos at 23.20%. That means the incumbent government has the responsibility to accomplish the unfinished work.

The government should focus its development strategy on the inclusive growth concept by expanding economic opportunities to all rural farmers. They need cultivable land

and farm machinery to grow food. It is globally accepted that farmers play a key role in feeding the whole population of the world, which is projected to hit 9 billion by 2050.

Poor agricultural policies will result in poor agricultural production, thereby harming agricultural development. Undeniably, agricultural development can drive economic growth as it can raise incomes, improve food security and maintain soil health. Agriculturalists have advocated that

healthy soil sustains ecosystems such as nutrient cycling, water regulation, flood prevention and habitats for biodiversity.

Having led a simple life in rural areas, farmers will find it difficult to adapt themselves to land management and technology. The onus is on the government to render intensive and extensive support to them in terms of advanced farming practices and agricultural loans. Helping farmers is helping others after all.

Myanmar's Neighbourhood Diplomacy at Play

K. Yhome

AS State Counsellor and Foreign Minister Daw Aung San Suu Kyi wraps up her five-day official visit to China, some media reports have framed the visit within Myanmar's wider foreign policy challenge of balancing Beijing and Washington. However, the move seems to indicate Naypyitaw's evolving foreign policy priorities that are driven more by the need to stabilise the country's troubled border regions and to address the nation's economic development as the country plays catch up. For this, Naypyitaw is turning to its immediate neighbours.

Myanmar's new leadership under the National League for Democracy (NLD) recognises that foreign policy begins at the border and, more importantly, borders are where the linkages between internal and external issues are most profound with direct impact on a country's security and well-being. There is no better example of these cross-border linkages—from ethno-cultural, border trade, smuggling, gun running to illegal logging—that exhibit more vividly than along Myanmar's borders with its neighbours. The Southeast Asian nation's border regions have long been a source of economic growth and security challenge.

At a recent meeting on Myanmar's ethnic peace process in Naypyitaw, Suu Kyi emphasised the intricate linkage between peace and development. Suu Kyi reiterated the point during her China trip. Suu Kyi stated: "If you ask me what my most important aim is for my country, that is to achieve peace and unity among

the different peoples of our union... Without peace, there can be no sustained development." This complex development-security nexus manifests most forcefully in the border regions, and the recognition of this predicament evidently is prompting the NLD leadership to direct its diplomatic energy towards the country's neighbourhood.

Suu Kyi's China trip has been described as boosting "strategic cooperation" between the two countries. Bilateral relationship of two countries witnessed a setback under the previous Thein Sien administration. Since Suu Kyi's NLD won the historic November elections and after the party assumed office in March this year, Naypyitaw and Beijing have been trying to mend their ties.

Geography matters

Myanmar shares long land and maritime boundaries with Bangladesh and India to the west— sharing the Bay of Bengal; Laos and Thailand to the south-east; and China to the north. In May this year Suu Kyi accompanied Myanmar's President Htin Kyaw's first foreign trip to neighbouring Laos. During the visit the two sides discussed issues relating to peace and stability in their shared border regions, cross-border trade, and connectivity among other issues.

In June State Counsellor Suu Kyi visited another neighbour, Thailand during which the two countries further strengthened bilateral ties. Importantly, Myanmar and Thailand successfully addressed the long-standing issue involving the protection of rights of millions of Burmese migrant workers in Thailand. The two sides also set up a three-year de-

velopment cooperation framework (2016-18) for border areas and discussed issues related to connectivity and economic cooperation.

With her visit to China now, Suu Kyi has travelled to three of the five immediate neighbours of Myanmar. President Kyaw is expected to visit India sometime soon. According to media reports, Suu Kyi may visit Bangladesh later this year. President Kyaw's India visit and if Suu Kyi's Dhaka trip happens, the Myanmar new leadership will roundup all the five neighbours in the first year since assuming office.

"If you ask me what my most important aim is for my country, that is to achieve peace and unity among the different peoples of our union... Without peace, there can be no sustained development."

Why China now?

Beyond Myanmar's evolving neighbourhood diplomacy, the growing power play between China and the United States in the region may not be completely absent in Suu Kyi's decision to visit Beijing before a planned trip to Washington next month at the invitation of US President Barack Obama. But more than geopolitical calculations, Myanmar's key objectives through this visit was to win China's support to resolve some of the country's long-standing issues – border stability and

economic development.

The NLD administration has called for the "21st Century Panglong" peace conference on 31 August with the aim to find a resolution to the six-decade old ethnic conflicts. Myanmar government's key and urgent concern is to get China in its side to achieve peace in the border regions as it prepares to hold the historic peace conference. Most of the ethnic armed organisations (EAOs) that have not yet signed ceasefire are based along China-Myanmar border. In fact, China has long exercised strong influence on some of the EAOs such as the Kokang (who are eth-

nic Chinese), the Wa, and the Kachin that operate along China-Myanmar border regions.

der areas" is an important diplomatic success of the visit. How this will translate on the ground remains to be seen.

As the NLD government tries to re-set ties with its northern neighbour in the hope that it will deepen economic ties between the two countries, major economic issues had emerged to adversely affect the forward movement of their economic ties. The fate of Chinese-funded US\$ 3.6 billion Myitsone dam project that was suspended in 2011 by the previous administration owing to widespread protests is one such instance. The NLD administration recognises that China remains Myanmar's top trading partner and a major investor. That Beijing and Naypyitaw have found ways to resolve the dam issue will further open up new areas for cooperation in Myanmar's economic development—a crucial task of the NLD government.

A balanced approach

Sustaining the focus on the neighbourhood is important not only for the well-being of Myanmar but also the wider region. This will complement with India's "Neighbourhood First" policy and China's "Good Neighbourliness" policy. As Myanmar's NLD administration evolves a new neighbourhood approach, it recognises the importance of a balanced engagement with all the neighbours because that is in everyone's interest, more so for Myanmar's own interest. No one should feel left out; after all, neighbours will remain neighbours.

K. Yhome is a Research Fellow at Observer Research Foundation, New Delhi.

POEM:

Union peace Conference OR 21st century Panglong

All included,
All participated,
All co.ordinated,
All satisfied,
This is the greatest way to victory, Aung San Successor's Glory.

Khin(Natmauk)

Heavy rains and strong winds reported in Mandalay

REMAINING clouds of the tropical storm Dianmu brought torrential rains and strong winds to Mandalay in the early hours of yesterday morning.

The heavy rain caused waters to rise in the five main streams of Mandalay and caused flooding in

Wards in lower areas. Trees fell reportably on Mandalay University campus in MahaAungmye Township.

Authorities are making use of water pumping facilities to lower the city rivers back to safer levels.—*MaungPyithu (Mandalay)*



Members of rescue team cleaning up falling trees.

PHOTO: MAUNG PYITHU (MANDALAY)

Commander-in-Chief presents offertories to Sayadaws at two monasteries in Mandalay



Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla donate offertories to Sayadaws in Mandalay. PHOTO: MNA

COMMANDER-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla visited two monasteries in Mandalay yesterday.

The Senior General, accompanied by Commander-in-Chief (Air) Gen Khin Aung Myint and Commander-in-Chief (Navy) Admiral Tin

Aung San, paid homage to Presiding Sayadaw Abhidhaja Maharathaguru Bhaddanta Aggiya at the MahaVisuddaron monastery in MahaAungmyay township. Offertories were given.

Cash assistance contributed by families of the army, navy and air forces was handed over to the board of trustees.

The Senior General also

visited the Mahavijitara Dhamma Literature School where he received the five precepts from Agga Maha Pandita, Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotikadhaja Abhidhaja Maharathaguru Bhaddanta Vicarindabhivamsa. Further offertories were given there. — *Myawady*

Mon State Hluttaw to verify legal legitimacy of MCL cement plant

MAWLAMYINE the initiative of the Mawlamyine Cement Limited (MCL) cement plant, located in Mon State's Kyaikmaraw Township, to run their operations using a coal generated electricity supply, will be resolved by the Mon State Hluttaw in accordance with legal protocol, the Hluttaw has made

known.

"Law are very detailed. Is this initiative in accordance will the law? What was the main decision in granting permission for MLC [to use coal to generate electricity] based on in regard to the investment law? Furthermore, the Hluttaw will also look into, with

the perspective of the law, how permission was granted in regard to scrutinizing electric and industrial laws. If it's found [permission was] not [granted] in accordance [with existing laws] an answer will come out [as to why]," said Dr Aung Naing Oo, deputy speaker of the Mon State Hluttaw. The MCL

cement plant was constructed with the signing of a contract with the erstwhile central government. The factory has since been built, and is reportedly on the verge of making a preliminary test run to check everything is in working order before production can officially begin. Residents living in close proximity to the factory voice that after company staff held a consultation with local villagers at the start of 2016, upon completion of the factory, to inform them coal would be used to generate electricity to power the plant, residents sent a series of letters of complaint and objection to all tiers of government to entreat them to stop such utilization of coal. "We sent letters of complaint to the new government. But the government has yet to effectively resolve this situation. Boats ferrying hauls of imported foreign coal continue arrive. Us citizens will stop the use of coal to power the factory by whatever means necessary," said U Naing Mit, a resident living in the vicinity of the MCL cement plant.

Dr Min Kyi Win, Minister of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation for Mon State, told Myitmakha News

Agency that a inspection committee was formed by the Mon State government in June earlier this year to review the MCL cement plant, of which the findings of their study have since been submitted to central government.

"This enterprise is one permitted by the former government. As such, we, as a state government, don't possess the power to stop it. That said, we'll do something in one way or another if the plant proves to be of detriment to the surround environment when the time comes for it to make its inaugural test run," he said.

Dr Aung Naing Oo also added that a report disclosing the findings of studies made upon the MCL cement plant by the investigation committee will be presented to Mon State Hluttaw for discussion during a parliamentary session at the start of September.

The deputy speaker also revealed to Myitmakha News Agency that plans are in place for some of the proposals made in the Mon State Hluttaw, which urge the stopping of coal to power the plant, to be presented to the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw. — *Myitmakha News Agency*



Mawlamyine Cement Limited (MCL) cement plant. PHOTO: MYITMAKHA NEWS AGENCY

Putin flies into Crimea amid war games and tension

BELBEK AIR BASE (Crimea) — Vladimir Putin flew into annexed Crimea on Friday a day after staging war games there, and said he hoped Ukraine would see “common sense” when it came to resolving a diplomatic crisis over the peninsula.

Two years after Russian troops seized the peninsula, it is again the focus of international tension, after the Russian president accused Kiev last week of sending saboteurs who clashed with Russian troops.

Kiev, which has also fought a two year war against pro-

Russian separatists in two eastern provinces, denies the border incident ever took place and calls it a fabrication that could be used as a pretext for a new Russian invasion.

The Russian leader has used threatening rhetoric, promising unspecified “counter-measures”, and has built up troops ahead of a big military exercise next month.

He addressed the crisis again on Friday, opening a meeting of his Security Council at an air base near the naval port of Sevastopol on his first visit to Crimea since he made the initial accusations.

“It is clear that we have gathered for a well known reason after the infamous incident, after we thwarted attempts by groups of Ukrainian army saboteurs to break into (our) territory,” he said.

“Judging by all accounts, our partners in Kiev have decided to escalate the situation. We are all familiar with this method of escalation. It goes back a long way and has sometimes been used successfully but not always.

“I hope that this won’t be a final choice ... and that common sense will prevail,” he added. —Reuters



Russian President Vladimir Putin poses for a photo with participants of the Tavrida national youth educational forum in Bakal Spit, Crimea. PHOTO: REUTERS

UN panel adopts report backing negotiations to ban nukes

GENEVA — A UN working group on nuclear disarmament on Friday adopted a report recommending to the UN General Assembly that negotiations begin in 2017 to outlaw nuclear weapons.

The report, adopted on the last day of the working group discussions held at the UN European headquarters, says widespread support exists among member states for the start of the negotiations.

The move is expected to stir debate at the UN General Assembly this fall on a proposed nuclear weapons convention that would prohibit the possession, development, testing, production, stockpiling, transfer, use and threat of use of such weapons.

The report includes opinions from Japan and NATO member nations who argue for a gradual approach to multilateral nuclear disarmament, saying there is a camp that opposes starting

the negotiations under current conditions, although they support nuclear abolition in view of global security. Japan has maintained that the stage is not yet set for such talks, citing threats from North Korea. It proposed instead making efforts at implementing a treaty for a comprehensive ban on nuclear tests or starting negotiations on an agreement to ban the further production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons at an early date.

Originally, the report was scheduled to be adopted by consensus. In Friday’s discussions, however, Australia called for putting it to a vote on behalf of a group of 14 nations opposing a nuclear weapons convention outright, also including South Korea, Poland and Turkey.

As a result, the document was endorsed with 68 nations in favor and 22 objecting. Japan, Switzerland and 11 other countries abstained from voting.

An original draft report circulated by Thani Thongphakdi, chairman of the working group, said a majority of the participating countries backed the 2017 start of the talks. But the opposing camp reacted strongly, forcing the wording to be altered to widespread support.

Last December, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution for convening a working group in Geneva to discuss steps to advance a move toward nuclear disarmament.

The resolution called for a working group to “address concrete effective legal measures” necessary to “attain and maintain a world without nuclear weapons,” with “all member states” encouraged to participate in it.

After holding discussions in February and May, the UN working group has held the third round intermittently since 5 August.—Kyodo News

NEWS IN BRIEF

Biden, Ukraine’s Poroshenko discuss surge in fighting in eastern Ukraine — White House

WASHINGTON — US Vice President Joe Biden spoke by phone on Friday with Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko and both leaders expressed concern over a recent surge in fighting in eastern Ukraine, where Kiev is fighting pro-Russian separatists, the White House said.

“The Vice President relayed that the United States had sent a message to Russia that the world is watching and underscored the need to de-escalate the situation. He also urged Ukraine to show restraint,” the White House statement said.—Reuters

US Justice Department to send team to Turkey for Gulen probe

WASHINGTON — The US Justice Department will dispatch a team to Turkey in coming days to pursue allegations by the Turkish government of criminal activity by Fethullah Gulen, Bloomberg news reported on Friday, citing an Obama administration official.

Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan has demanded the United States extradite Gulen, a Turkish-born cleric who lives in Pennsylvania, accusing him of being behind a coup attempt last month. Gulen has denied the accusation.—Reuters

Democrats fear hackers targeted tight Florida races for latest data leaks

WASHINGTON — Leading Democrats are growing increasingly worried that the hackers who made public leaked documents this week were trying to sabotage the Democratic candidates in several central Florida congressional races, the first time such leaks have been targeted so directly.

Two sources familiar with Democratic Party investigations of recent cyber attacks said documents made public this week by the hacker known as Guccifer2 contained information that could damage Democratic candidates in competitive Florida contests for the US House of Representatives.

The documents, hacked from the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee (DCCC), which raises funds for the party’s House candidates, are detailed dossiers describing the Florida candidates’ backgrounds, including personal details, as well as political, economic and demographic profiles of the strategic congressional districts.—Reuters

Chief financial operator of drug cartel arrested in Mexico

MEXICO CITY — The Mexican military has captured the chief financial operator of a drug cartel, the National Security Commission said on Friday.

The suspect, identified as Sergio “N”, was detained in the early hours Thursday at a residential estate southwest of Guadalajara, the capital of the western Mexican state of Jalisco, said Renato Sales Heredia, commissioner of the National Security Commission.

Sergio “N” is the chief financial operator of the Jalisco Nueva Generacion cartel, according to commission.

The state government of Jalisco has blamed the cartel for the kidnapping of Jesus Alfredo Guzman, a son of Sinaloa cartel leader Joaquin “El Chapo” Guzman, together with five other men, in the seaside resort of Puerto Vallarta on 15 August.—Xinhua

Four killed in Palestinian police arrest raid in West Bank

RAMALLAH, (West Bank) — Two Palestinian men sought for possession of weapons and other offences were killed in a gun battle with Palestinian police in an arrest raid in the town of Nablus in which two officers also died, officials said on Friday.

Palestinian security forces have arrested over 100 suspects in the past two months in the Israeli-occupied West Bank in a heightened effort to crack down on crime, Adnan al Damiri, a Palestinian security spokesman said. The operation in Nablus, by forces of the West-ern-backed Palestinian Authority (PA) headed by President Mahmoud Abbas, began on Thursday and several other suspects are still being sought, Damiri said.—Reuters

Civilians flee Syrian city as Kurdish forces fight government

BEIRUT — Civilians fled a city in northeastern Syria where government warplanes bombed Kurdish-held areas for a second day on Friday, as the Syrian army accused Kurdish forces of igniting the conflict by trying to take over the area.

The fighting this week in Hasaka, which is divided into zones of Kurdish and Syrian government control, marks the most violent confrontation between the Kurdish YPG militia and Damascus in more than five years of civil war.

The YPG is at the heart of a US-led campaign against Islamic State in Syria, and controls swathes of the north where Kurdish groups have set up their own government since the Syrian war began in 2011.

A Pentagon official said US-led coalition aircraft were sent near Hasaka on Thursday to protect coalition special operation ground forces in response to bombing by Syrian jets, and additional combat air patrols were being sent to the area.

The government air strikes on Hasaka mark the first time the Syrian military has deployed its warplanes against Kurdish groups during the war.

Pentagon spokesman Captain Jeff Davis said the incident was not an intercept and the coalition aircraft reached the area by the time the Syrian government warplanes were leaving.

YPG spokesman Redur Xelil told Reuters that Kurdish authorities had evacuated thousands of civilians from their area of control. "Whoever can bear arms is fighting the regime and its gangs," Xelil



File picture of Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) fighters taking up positions inside a damaged building in al-Vilat al-Homor neighbourhood in Hasaka city, as they monitor the movements of Islamic State fighters who are stationed in Ghwayran neighbourhood in Hasaka city, Syria in 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

said. "Our situation is so far defensive but it will change all the while the regime escalates in this way."

In its first comment on the situation, the Syrian army accused a YPG-affiliated security force known as the Asayish of igniting the violence through escalating "provocations" including the bombardment of army positions in Hasaka that had killed a number of soldiers and civilians.

In a statement, the military command said the Asayish were aiming to take control of Hasaka city, and the army had responded

appropriately by firing at armed groups' "sources of fire".

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, which tracks the war using a network of activists, said civilians were using lulls in the fighting to flee the city. Xelil said dozens of civilians had been killed over the past two days.

The YPG and Syrian government have mostly avoided confrontation during the multi-sided war that has turned Syria into a patchwork of areas held by the state and an array of armed factions.

Assad, backed by Russia and

Iran, has focused mostly on fighting Sunni Arab rebels who have been battling to oust him in western Syria with support from countries including Turkey, Saudi Arabia and the United States. The Syrian and Russian air forces are routinely deployed in the war in western Syria.

The YPG, or People's Protection Units, has meanwhile prioritised carving out and safeguarding predominantly Kurdish regions of northern Syria. The group has ties to the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) in Turkey.—Reuters

Danish parliament approves plan to help remove chemical weapons from Libya

COPENHAGEN — The Danish parliament on Friday approved a decision to send two ships as part of an international operation to move its remaining chemical weapons out of Libya.

All Danish political parties voted in favour of the contribution that consists of a civilian transport ship, a warship and more than 200 staff.

"We will undertake a leading role in an important operation to remove the remains from Libya's chemical stockpile, which otherwise risk falling into the wrong hands," Foreign Minister Kristian Jensen said in a statement.

Denmark said it had been asked by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and the United States to contribute to the operation.

The mission is expected to cost Denmark about 12 million Danish kroner (1.8 million US dollars).

Danish Defence Minister Peter Christensen said the safety of the more than 200 staff is not at risk, though there is fear that the weapons risk ending up in the hands of extremists like the Islamic State.

"We believe that the threat level is low in relation to the actual task to sail in, get the containers on board and sail out again," Christensen said.

In July, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted a resolution to ask the international community to assist Libya in destroying its chemical weapons.

The 15-nation council has authorized member states to acquire, control, transport, transfer and destroy chemical weapons to eliminate Libya's stockpile "in the soonest and safest manner."

The resolution came after the OPCW made its decision to help Libya develop a modified plan on chemical weapons destruction.—Xinhua

Taliban make further gains in Afghan north

KABUL — The Afghan Taliban captured a strategic district in the northern province of Kunduz on Saturday, forcing troops to retreat to the provincial capital which fell briefly to the insurgents last year, officials said.

Fighting has sharply escalated in Afghanistan since the insurgency started spreading from its traditional strongholds in the south and east of the country to the once peaceful north.

The militants seized the district of Khanabad, which connects Kunduz to Takhar and other northern provinces, in the early morning, with heavy fighting ongoing in several other districts, the officials said. "The Taliban attacked the district from different positions and we resisted for hours but we received no support. The district fell to the Taliban," said Hayatullah Amiri, the Khanabad chief.

Afghan officials in Kabul say

a lack of ammunition and few reinforcements are the main reasons for the district's fall to the Taliban, who are seeking to force the NATO-led coalition out of Afghanistan and bring in Islamic law.

The fall of Khanabad comes only five days after the Taliban captured a district in neighbouring Baghlan Province, seizing a number of government forces' vehicles and ammunition.

The provincial capital of Kun-

duz fell to the Taliban for the first time in September last year, one of the biggest victories for the militant group since they were ousted from power by US and coalition forces in late 2001. The brief capture of Kunduz city also underlined the growing strength of the Taliban and lack of security forces' readiness, now fighting largely on their own since most international troops ended their combat mission in 2014.—Reuters

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An inflatable boat from the Spanish vessel Astral operated by the NGO Proactiva collects migrants off the Libyan coast in the Mediterranean Sea, on 18 August 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Three Syrian children drown when boat sinks off Libyan coast

ROME — Three Syrian children drowned along with three adults when a wooden boat trying to carry war refugees to Europe capsized off the coast of Libya, a humanitarian rescue group said on Friday.

The bodies of two girls, aged eight months and five years, were pulled out of the sea about 22 nautical miles from Libya on Thursday after the small vessel packed with 27 Syrians flipped over and sank, the Migrant Offshore Aid Station (MOAS) humanitarian group said.

The bodies of two women and one man were also recovered, but a five-year-old boy who was on the boat when it sank was not found, MOAS reported. MOAS operates two rescue boats in the Mediterranean Sea between Italy and Libya.

A fishing boat and a ship operated by humanitarian group Proactiva Open Arms collected the 21 survivors, who are now being taken to aboard the Responder, a MOAS boat.

The media spotlight refocused on the plight of civilians in Syria's conflict this week following a wrenching video of a dust-covered, disoriented five-year-old boy, Omran Daqneesh, pulled from the rubble after a bombing raid in Aleppo.

More than 500 migrants were rescued from overcrowded and unsafe boats in seas between Libya and Italy on Thursday. They included 146 people plucked from a semi-deflated rubber vessel, Italy's

coastguard said.

Last year, Syrian refugees bound for Europe tended to take a short boat ride to Greek islands from Turkey. Those routes have been largely shut down this year, forcing some to make the longer and more dangerous voyage from North Africa toward Italy.

Thousands of children have been killed in the Syrian civil war, now in its fifth year, and more than 3,000 migrants have died in the Mediterranean so far this year, the International Organisation for Migration estimates. About a quarter of all boat migrants in 2016 — some 100,000 have arrived in Italy — are children, the UN refugee agency says.—Reuters

Zika spreads to Miami Beach, US expands travel warning

MIAMI/CHICAGO — Federal health officials on Friday warned pregnant women not to travel to trendy Miami Beach after Florida confirmed that the mosquito-borne Zika virus was active in the popular tourist destination.

The US Centres for Disease Control and Prevention also suggested that pregnant women who are especially worried about exposure to Zika — which has been shown to cause the severe birth defect known as microcephaly — might consider avoiding all of Miami-Dade County.

The new warnings represent a challenge to Florida's multi-billion dollar tourism industry, with Miami Beach accounting for nearly half of visitor stays in the Greater Miami area. They also heighten concerns over Zika's spread in the continental United States. In a press conference, Florida Governor Rick Scott said state health officials had identified five cases of Zika believed to be contracted in Miami Beach.

"This means we believe we have a new area where local transmissions are occurring in Miami Beach," he said, noting that the state had already stepped up pesticide spraying efforts in this area.

The new transmissions come as Miami-Dade continues to battle Zika in the Wynwood arts neighbourhood of Miami, the site of the first locally transmitted cases of Zika in the continental United States. In Miami Beach, the

state believes Zika transmission is confined to a 1.5-square-mile area located between 8th and 28th streets in the popular South Beach neighbourhood.

Miami Beach resident Steve Ehrlich, 30, said news of the five cases transmitted somewhere in the blocks around his home was not surprising, but that did not make it any less concerning.

"You knew it was going to intermingle all over the place," he said.

And though Ehrlich said and he and his wife Caroline did not have any immediate plans to have more children, any thought of doing so has been indefinitely shelved.

Current CDC guidelines recommend men wait six months after being infected with Zika before trying to have children to avoid passing the virus to a pregnant partner through semen. The recommendations are based on observations that the virus can live in semen as long as 93 days after an infection, but a recent report in the journal *Eurosurveillance* described two cases in which the virus lingered in semen six months after a person was infected. "The CDC is giving recommendations for how long to wait before you get pregnant, but it seems like no one has a clear grasp on just how long it stays in your system," Ehrlich said. "That's scary for us because we eventually want to have more kids."—Reuters

US Army fudged its accounts by trillions of dollars, auditor finds

NEW YORK — The United States Army's finances are so jumbled it had to make trillions of dollars of improper accounting adjustments to create an illusion that its books are balanced.

The Defence Department's Inspector General, in a June report, said the Army made \$2.8 trillion in wrongful adjustments to accounting entries in one quarter alone in 2015, and \$6.5 trillion for the year. Yet the Army lacked receipts and invoices to support those numbers or simply made them up.

As a result, the Army's financial statements for 2015 were "materially misstated," the report concluded. The "forced" adjustments rendered the statements useless because "DoD and Army managers could not rely on the data in their accounting systems when making management and resource decisions."

Disclosure of the Army's manipulation of numbers is the latest example of the severe accounting problems plaguing the Defence Department for decades.

The report affirms a 2013 Reuters series revealing how the Defence Department falsified accounting on a large scale as it scrambled to close its books. As a result, there has been no way to know how the Defence Department — far and away the biggest chunk of Congress' annual budget — spends the public's money.

The new report focused on the Army's General Fund, the bigger of its two main accounts, with assets of \$282.6 billion in 2015. The Army lost or didn't keep required data, and much of the data it had was inaccurate, the IG said.

"Where is the money going? Nobody knows," said Franklin Spinney, a retired military analyst

for the Pentagon and critic of Defence Department planning.

The significance of the accounting problem goes beyond mere concern for balancing books, Spinney said. Both presidential candidates have called for increasing defense spending amid current global tension.

An accurate accounting could reveal deeper problems in how the Defence Department spends its money. Its 2016 budget is \$573 billion, more than half of the annual budget appropriated by Congress.

The Army account's errors will likely carry consequences for the entire Defence Department.

Congress set a 30 September 2017 deadline for the department to be prepared to undergo an audit. The Army accounting problems raise doubts about whether it can meet the deadline — a black mark for Defence, as every other



US army soldiers are seen marching in the St. Patrick's Day Parade in New York, in 2013. PHOTO: REUTERS

federal agency undergoes an audit annually.

For years, the Inspector General — the Defence Department's official auditor — has inserted a disclaimer on all military annual reports. The accounting is so unreliable that "the basic financial statements may have undetected misstatements that are both material and pervasive."

In an e-mailed statement, a spokesman said the Army "re-

mains committed to asserting audit readiness" by the deadline and is taking steps to root out the problems.

The spokesman downplayed the significance of the improper changes, which he said net out to \$62.4 billion. "Though there is a high number of adjustments, we believe the financial statement information is more accurate than implied in this report," he said.—Reuters

California firefighters make gains after 100 homes destroyed

OAK HILLS (Calif) — Firefighters gained ground on Friday against a wildfire burning in a Southern California mountain pass that has forced tens of thousands of residents to flee and destroyed about 100 homes, officials said.

The Blue Cut fire, named for a narrow gorge near its origin in the Cajon Pass about 75 miles (120 km) northeast of Los Angeles, has blackened 37,000 acres (14,973 hectares) of drought-parched heavy brush and chaparral after breaking out on Tuesday.

The blaze has destroyed 96 single-family homes and 213 outbuildings, according to a preliminary assessment from teams in the field, fire information officer Lyn Sieliet said by telephone.

Officials said firefighters were able to carve containment lines around 40 per cent of the blaze as of Friday night, despite dry,

hot and windy weather conditions and treacherous terrain.

The intensely burning blaze, which has produced cyclone-like whirls of flame, continued to threaten some 34,500 homes and other structures in communities including the ski resort town of Wrightwood, fire officials said.

Among the structures burned was the Summit Inn, a popular diner on the historic Route 66 cross-country highway.

“It’s awful. It’s a bad feeling now to see it all burn up,” said 84-year-old Cecil Stevens, who owned the diner for nearly 50 years before recently selling it.

“We’ve had a lot of fires and a lot of accidents in this area, but we always managed to get out of it without being hurt, but this time it’s different. It’s over.”



Firefighters walk over the remains of a barn destroyed by the so-called Blue Cut Fire in the San Bernardino National Forest in San Bernardino County, California. PHOTO: REUTERS

More than 80,000 residents were told to evacuate their homes on Tuesday. Since then, some people have been allowed to return home, Sieliet said, but she could not say how many.

While many residents opted to stay put, the San Bernardino County Sheriff’s Office said deputies

arrested three people suspected of attempting to loot abandoned homes.

Transit authorities on Thursday reopened Interstate 15, the primary traffic route between greater Los Angeles and Las Vegas, Nevada, after it was closed for two days by the fast-moving blaze.

The Blue Cut fire is one of nearly 30 major blazes reported to have scorched hundreds of square miles in eight Western states this week, in the midst of a wildfire season stoked by prolonged drought and unusually hot weather, according to the National Interagency Fire Center in Boise, Idaho.

The blaze ranks as one of the most destructive California fires this year, rivaling the so-called Erskine Fire, which consumed about 48,000 acres northeast of Bakersfield in June, killed an elderly couple and destroyed 386 structures, including about 150 homes. —Reuters

Kalashnikov gunmaker opens store at Moscow’s largest airport



A general view is seen of Sheremetyevo airport in Moscow in 2013. PHOTO: REUTERS

MOSCOW — Gunmaker Kalashnikov, whose AK-47 assault rifle has armed Russian forces for 70 years and been the preferred weapon of insurgents across continents, has opened a store at Moscow’s Sheremetyevo airport selling souvenirs including plastic model guns, the company said.

An airport official said the shop, offering novelties including pens, umbrellas, bags, hats, camouflage gear and “I love AK” T-shirts,

would be situated in the rail-link section of the airport complex.

The model guns — automatic pistols and rifles — would very clearly be imitations and would pose no security problems, he added.

“Kalashnikov is one of the most popular brands that come to mind for most people in the world when they hear about Russia,” Kalashnikov’s head of marketing,

Vladimir Dmitriev, said in a press release.

“So, we are pleased to provide the opportunity for everyone to take away from Russia a souvenir with our company brand.”

The AK-47, the first rifle the firm produced, has acquired an iconic status due to its low production costs and reliability in extreme conditions. It was introduced in 1948, armed the whole of the Soviet Union and eastern Europe

in communist times and served largely pro-Soviet rebel forces across Africa and Asia.

Produced also under license beyond Russian frontiers, it remains one of the most popular assault rifles in the world.

Sheremetyevo International Airport is Moscow’s and Russia’s largest airport by passenger traffic.

In 2015, it handled more than 31 million passengers.—Reuters

Panama launches reforestation programme to compensate for canal expansion

PANAMA CITY — The administration of the Panama Canal (ACP) announced on Friday that it has begun a reforestation program covering 83 hectares in the province of Darien to compensate for the recent expansion of the Canal.

The reforestation is part of a campaign that will re-forest 1,243 hectares nationwide at a cost of 3 million US dollars, the ACP said in a statement. A total

of 937 hectares of land have already been reforested.

“We are very proud of the benefits that the canal expansion has brought to this part of the country, especially as this is the first restoration project by the Canal in Darien,” said Ilya Espino de Marotta, the ACP’s executive vice-president.

Hermel Lopez, regional director for the Ministry of the Environment, said the project is highly impor-

tant for the province, given the reduction in its forest cover.

The ACP reforestation programme includes planting coffee and cacao trees as well as native species, such as the cocobolo.

The ACP has committed itself to planting two hectares of trees for each hectare which was affected by the canal expansion works.

The initiative will take place over one year of ac-

tive planting and four more years of maintenance, carried out by local contractors.

According to Panama’s National Association for the Conservation of Nature, Panama has lost 65 per cent of its original forest cover due to a deforestation rate of around 20,000 hectares a year.

The government has teamed up with Ancon to reforest 1 million hectares in 20 years.—Xinhua

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Consignees of cargo carried on MV MCC XIAMEN VOY NO () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 21.8.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T / M.I.P where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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James Gunn defends Zendaya Coleman's casting in Spider-Man: Homecoming

LOS ANGELES — Filmmaker James Gunn has weighed in on the “racist” controversy surrounding the reported casting of Zendaya Coleman as Mary Jane Watson in Jon Watts’ “Spider-Man: Homecoming”.

The “Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2” helmer defended the casting in a lengthy Facebook post published following the social media backlash from fans, reported Ace Showbiz.

“People get upset when something they consider intrinsic to a comic book character changes when adapted for a film. I get this,” Gunn said.

“I do not believe a character

is the colour of his or her skin,” he added, before addressing the reports about MJ being played by the young black actress.

“If a character’s primary attribute — the thing that makes them iconic — is the color of their skin, or their hair color, frankly, that character is shallow and sucks,” he explained.

“For me, what makes MJ MJ is her alpha female playfulness, and if the actress captures that, then she’ll work.”

Gunn also noted that he was speaking hypothetically as he couldn’t confirm the casting report.

He added, “Whatever the case, if we’re going to contin-

ue to make movies based on the almost all white heroes and supporting characters from the comics of the last century, we’re going to have to get used to them being more reflective of our diverse present world.

“Perhaps we can be open to the idea that, although someone may not initially match how we personally conceive a character, we can be — and often are — happily surprised.”

Jon Watts’ “Spider-Man: Homecoming” released on 7 July, 2017.

In the upcoming film, Zendaya stars alongside Tom Holland, Robert Downey Jr. and Marisa Tomei.—PTI



Zendaya Coleman. PHOTO: PTI

Eager fans line up for Kanye West's 'Pablo' clothing



A shopper shows her ‘The Life of Pablo’ merchandise to NYPD officers after visiting a pop up store featuring fashion by Kanye West in Manhattan, New York, US, on 19 August 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

NEW YORK — Rapper and fashion designer Kanye West is turning his tour merchandise into high-demand fashion, and eager fans lined up on Friday to be among the first to get their hands on the limited-edition “Life of Pablo” clothing.

Hundreds waited outside pop-up stores in London, Manhattan and Los Angeles a week ahead of the rapper kicking off his “Saint Pablo” North America tour for his “The Life of Pablo” album.

The collection of t-shirts, hoodies and jackets featuring lyrics and phrases from West’s album written in large gothic font, is being sold at 21 pop-up stores

around the world, including Melbourne, Singapore and 14 US locations.

Items ranged from \$55 for a short sleeve T-shirt to \$105 for hoodies and \$325 for a camouflage print jacket.

West fan Perriante Biffle showed off his new long sleeve white t-shirt printed with the ‘New York’ location and song lyrics.

“It’s Yeezy (Kanye West’s nickname). You just gotta get it, bro,” Biffle said.

“Even though everybody is gonna get it ... if you got that item, you’re the man. So you got to get it. It’s a trend.”

In Los Angeles, fashion de-

signer Cesar Martinez waited 24 hours to be first in line and was rewarded with a phone call from the rapper himself.

“We’re going to work together. I have a notebook, I’ll show it to you, you’ll love it. I’m the future, bro,” Martinez told West. He also thanked the rapper for inspiring him, saying “I got out of the projects because of you.”

Karim Perez said he spent more than \$900 in the Manhattan store on Friday on items including a black hoodie and a jacket. He said prices were around \$10 to \$20 higher compared to the first round of “Pablo” pop-up stores in Manhattan and Los Angeles in March.—Reuters

Schwarzenegger says he wants world to be fitter

HONG KONG — Arnold Schwarzenegger says being a bodybuilding champion, movie star and governor of California is not enough — he wants people to be fit too.

Schwarzenegger was unveiling the inaugural Arnold Classic Asia Multi-Sport Festival in Hong Kong.

The event, which will run until Sunday, features a range of activities such as fencing, bodybuilding, rugby, yoga, weightlifting, arm wrestling, chess and solving Rubik’s cube puzzles.

“To me, it was not only important to be a bodybuilding champion and to do movies and to be the governor, but also to use my power of influence to promote health and fitness all over the world,” Schwarzenegger told reporters. Schwarzenegger has held similar events elsewhere around the world.—Reuters

Frank Ocean releases new music, finally

NEW YORK — After much anticipation, influential R&B artist Frank Ocean has made waves with the unveiling of “Endless,” a new visual album, his first in four years.

Twitter went wild after the album’s release late Thursday, with users tweeting about the New Orleans native roughly 100 times per minute, according to social media analytics firm Zoomph.

Ocean, 28, previously promised that the long-awaited album would drop in July 2015 under the name of “Boys Don’t Cry” in a Tumblr post in April 2015. Earlier this month, the New York Times said the album would be released on 5 August.

A tweet from the official account of Apple Music (@AppleMusic) announcing the debut of Ocean’s work on Thursday, received more than 21,000

likes and more than 22,000 retweets.

Ocean’s first album, titled “Channel Orange,” earned him two Grammy awards.

Ocean, whose work fuses hip hop, soul and R&B with social commentary, is regarded as having redefined contemporary R&B. Prior to his debut album’s release in 2012, Ocean publicly revealed his first love was a man, an unheard of move at the time for a hip-hop artist.

The 45-minute “Endless” album, available for streaming on his site and on Apple Music, features 12 new songs and interludes over black-and-white video footage of Ocean building a staircase in what appears to be a warehouse.—Reuters



Frank Ocean performs at the Oya music festival in Oslo. PHOTO: REUTERS

Germany take women's gold after beating Sweden

RIO DE JANEIRO — Germany won their first ever Olympic gold medal in women's football on Friday when they turned in a superior second half performance to beat Sweden 2-1 at the Maracana stadium in Rio de Janeiro.

The no. 2 ranked Germans scored two goals in the second half, and although the Swedes got a goal back they could not snatch an equalizer that would take the game into extra time. The win was Germany's sixth unbeaten match in the tournament and lifts them into an elite group alongside the United States and Norway as the only teams to win both the Women's World Cup and the Olympics. Germany failed to qualify for the Olympics in 2012 but won the bronze the last three times they played, in 2000, 2004 and 2008.

"This is something completely new, so this is definitely a new summit for German women's football," said German coach Silvia Neid, who is retiring after the Olympics.

"I really don't have words to describe this, it doesn't matter if it's the World Cup or Euros, this

is what you have earned through your hard work over weeks and months. It's really crazy when you get to the end. When you have finally reached your goal it is pure joy."

Sweden, who scored just three goals in their five games before the final, started surprisingly positively but Germany began to impose themselves as the match went on and the best chance of the half fell to Anja Mittag after 25 minutes.

Leonie Maier's curling shot was only parried by the Swedish keeper and the ball fell to Mittag just yards from goal but she blasted the ball high and wide.

The sides were evenly matched but things changed in the second half and it was the Germans who deservedly took the lead three minutes into the second period.

When they did it was a goal worthy of a cup final. Dzsenifer Marozan gathered a cross ball on the edge of the box and had time to steady herself before curling a perfect strike into the top right-hand corner of the net.

They extended their lead 14 minutes later thanks to an unfor-

tunate own goal. A Sara Daebritz free kick from 20 yards smacked the post and Linda Sembrandt tried to clear but instead kneed the ball into her own goal from just a few yards out.

Sweden reacted almost immediately and just five minutes later Stina Blackstenius pulled them back into the game.

Olivia Schough hit an inviting low cross into the box from the right and Blackstenius slid in between two defenders and poked the ball home to cut the deficit.

Schough had a great chance to level the scores three minutes from time but her shot was blocked just yards from goal, much to the chagrin of a Brazilian crowd who were supporting the Swedes, perhaps because the German men's side hammered Brazil's men 7-1 in the World Cup two years ago. "You just have to look back and be proud then it's easier to get a smile on your face," Swedish coach Pia Sundhage said of her unfancied team afterwards. "I think we should all be proud of what we have done and how we played."—Reuters



Goalkeeper Almuth Schult (GER) of Germany punches the ball clear at Maracana stadium, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on 19 August 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Kenya's Cheruiyot stuns Ayana to win 5,000m gold

RIO DE JANEIRO — Vivian Cheruiyot, Kenya's most decorated athlete, finally got her hands on an Olympic gold medal after winning the women's 5,000 meters on Friday by upsetting favorite Almaz Ayana of Ethiopia in the final.

Cheruiyot, 32, had been the nearly woman in her last three Olympic finals, winning two silver medals and one bronze, but she ran a superb tactical race to outwit 5,000m world champion Ayana in a Games best time of 14:26:17.

"It was my fourth Olympic Games and I had not had gold," Cheruiyot told reporters.

"I'm so happy for me, my husband, my son, my parents. This might be the last Olympics for me so I thought maybe God might give me gold."

Ahead of the race, all eyes were on Ayana, who last week shaved 14 seconds off the 10,000m world record in one of the greatest ever long-distance races.

The Ethiopian looked to be on the way to another dominant victory after surging into a huge lead four laps into the race but she tired in the closing stages and was unable to hold off Cheruiyot's late burst.—Reuters



Vivian Cheruiyot (KEN) of Kenya celebrates winning the gold at Olympic Stadium in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on 19 August 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

MRTV News Channel

(21-8-2016, Sunday)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>6:00 am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paritta by Hilly Region Missionary Sayadaw <p>7:35 am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business News <p>8:35 am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Myanmar Traditional performing Arts Competitions <p>9:35 am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> People Talk's <p>9:50 am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poem for Children <p>10:35 am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women in Myanmar Society <p>11:15 am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gitadagale Phwintbaohn <p>12:35 am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This Week's Special Interest | <p>12:50 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Myanmar Movie <p>3:45 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ooredoo MNL-1 2016 (LIVE) (Horizon FC & Zwegapin United FC) <p>6:35 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sing & Enjoy <p>7:15 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Myanmar Series <p>8:00 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> News / International News/ Weather Report <p>9:00 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> News Once Recorded Arts TV Drama Series Myanmar traditional performing Arts comnetitions |
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Note/ Hourly News Bulletins (Local + International)

MRTV Entertainment Channel

(21-8-2016, Sunday)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>06 : 00 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weather Report Cartoon "The Girl Who Leapt Through Time" (Part-2) <p>06 : 25 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Music Programme <p>07 : 15 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Myanmar Video <p>09 : 05 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MRTV Entertainment Music <p>09 : 20 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writer, Philanthropist: | <p>Daw Than Myint Aung (Part- II)</p> <p>09 : 40 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> International Movie Songs <p>09 : 50 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wedding Reception Dinner <p>09 : 55 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dances of Myanmar "Akha Traditional Dance" <p>10 : 00 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Myanmar Movie |
|--|---|

* 09 : 20 pm Live: Premier League "West Ham United Vs AFC Bournemouth"

From 21-8-2016 (Sunday) 6:00 pm
To 22-8-2016 (Monday) 6:00 pm

mitv Myanmar International

(21-8-2016 07:00am ~ 22-8-2016 07:00am) MST

Today Fresh

- | | | |
|-------|----|---|
| 07:03 | Am | News |
| 07:26 | Am | Yangon Markets: Da Nyin Gone Market |
| 07:37 | Am | Buddha Image Built of Bamboo Strip |
| 07:48 | Am | MURAL PAINTING BAGAN |
| 08:03 | Am | News |
| 08:26 | Am | Visiting A Serene Village in The Northwest of Myanmar |
| 08:41 | Am | Elegant and Exquisite Myanmar Cotton Fabrics |
| 08:54 | Am | H.ELP (8) Penalty for Killing Elephant in Myanmar |
| 09:03 | Am | News |
| 09:26 | Am | Rakhine Tourist Area |

- | | | |
|-------|----|------------------------------|
| 10:03 | Am | News |
| 10:26 | Am | The World's Largest Book |
| 10:51 | Am | A Star for Great Achievement |

(11:00 Am ~ 03:00 Pm) - Saturday 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 |
| 07:25 | Pm | MOYINGYI WILDLIFE SANCTUARY |
| 07:43 | Pm | Young Artist: Maw Thu Da Nu |
| 07:50 | Pm | Today Myanmar: Flood Disaster |
| 08:03 | Pm | News |
| 08:26 | Pm | Bogalay Tint Aung: A Man of Versatility (Part- 3) |
| 08:53 | Pm | Myanmar Masterclass: Still Life (glass) |

(09:00 Pm ~ 11:00 Pm)- Today Repeat (09:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)
(11:00 Pm ~ 03:00 Am) - Saturday Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)
(03:00 Am ~ 07:00 Am) -Today Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)

(For Detailed Schedule - www.myanmaritv.com/schedule)

Ibrahimovic and Pogba shine as United win again

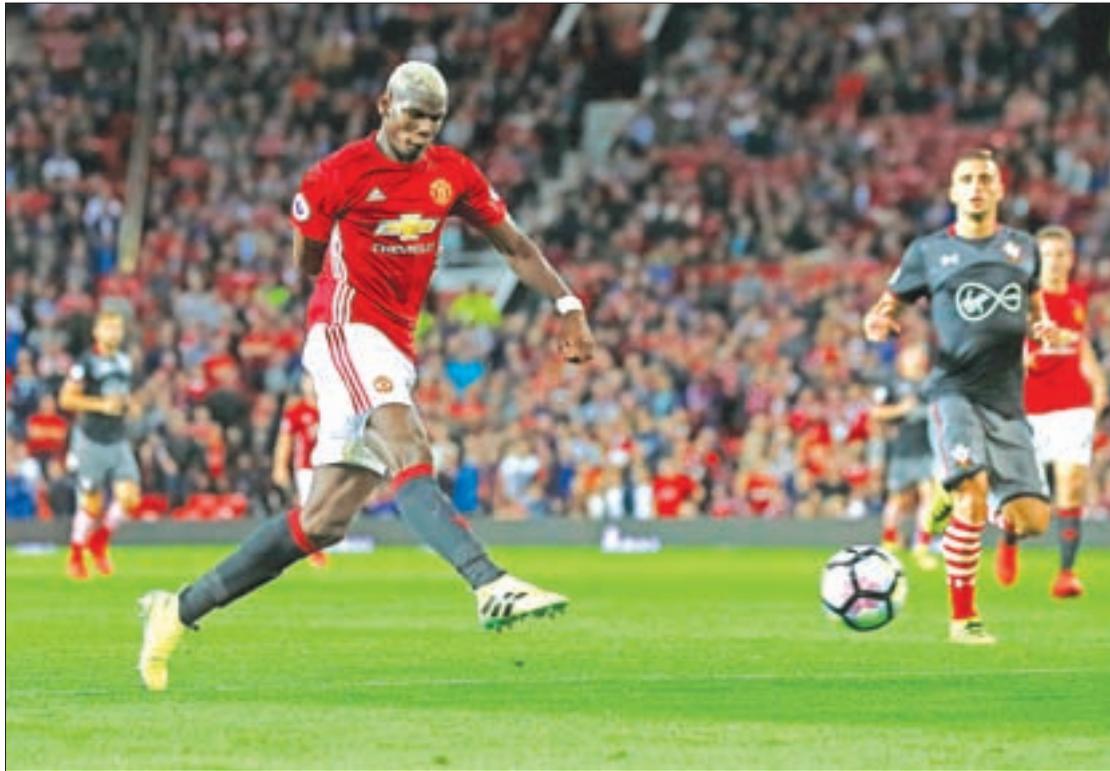
LONDON — Zlatan Ibrahimovic struck twice and Paul Pogba, the world's most expensive player, shone on his return as Manchester United beat Southampton 2-0 on Friday to make it two wins from two Premier League games.

Ibrahimovic, playing his first home game for the club since leaving Paris St Germain in the close season, opened the scoring in the 36th minute when he produced a towering leap to power a header into the net from a cross by Wayne Rooney.

The 34-year-old Swede added a second from the penalty spot in the 52nd minute after substitute Jordy Clasie fouled defender Luke Shaw as he drove into the box.

It was Ibrahimovic's third goal in two league games and guaranteed maximum points for manager Jose Mourinho on his first appearance in the home dug-out.

"We were good enough to deserve the victory," said Mourinho. "We won comfortably and the margin could have been bigger."



Manchester United's Paul Pogba shoots at goal against Southampton during Premier League at Old Trafford, on 19 August 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Pogba, back at his first club after being bought from Juventus for a fee of 89 million pounds (\$116.35 million), demonstrated

his class with a dynamic midfield display.

The French international, who missed the season-opening

win at Bournemouth last week through suspension, dribbled with strength and combined well with Ibrahimovic and Rooney.

"Pogba was so good," Mourinho said. "He needs the freedom he had. I couldn't be happier with him."

Southampton, who drew with Watford last week, started brightly but were rocked by an early injury to Spanish midfielder Oriol Romeu who limped off in the 12th minute.

The visitors enjoyed the better of the opening exchanges although they lacked a cutting edge with Nathan Redmond and Shane Long finishing tamely.

United grew in stature and went in front when Rooney, making his 600th appearance in club football, picked out Ibrahimovic with a pinpoint centre.

Left back Shaw, a constant threat against his former club, was felled seven minutes into the second half and Ibrahimovic sent keeper Fraser Forster the wrong way from the spot.

Pogba went forward in search of a goal late on but failed to test Forster.

"We are becoming better and better," said Ibrahimovic. "It's a good start. We need to get used to winning."—Reuters

Kerber moves step closer to world number one ranking

CINCINNATI — Angelique Kerber moved within two victories of the world number one ranking when she beat Spain's Carla Suarez Navarro in their quarter-final at the Western & Southern Open in Cincinnati on Friday.

The German second seed overcame a slow start before finding some form and outlasting ninth seed Navarro 4-6, 6-3, 6-0 in a match that never reached any great heights in front of a small crowd in steamy afternoon heat.

Kerber's task was perhaps made easier by an apparently injured Navarro, who moments after losing withdrew from her doubles match, citing a thigh complaint.

If Kerber wins on Sunday, she will displace Serena Williams as world number one, ending the American's run of 183 consecutive weeks at the top.

Williams was a late withdrawal from Cincinnati, citing a shoulder injury.

To overtake Williams, Kerber must first get past Romanian Simona Halep who defeated Poland's Agnieszka Radwanska 7-5, 6-1 to reach the semi-final.

Kerber and Halep last met in the quarter-finals of Wimbledon, where the German prevailed in

two tight sets, but Halep has not lost a match since en route to victories at the Bucharest Open and Rogers Cup in Montreal.

Kerber has played a heavy schedule over the summer, and it showed in her sluggish start on Friday.

"It was really difficult to go out there," she told the WTA website. "I'm playing like I don't know which day ... every day, it's the same. When I'm waking up it's the same routine I have ... Of course it's really hot out there."

The other semi-final will pit fourth seed Garbine Muguruza against 15th seed Karolina Pliskova.

Spaniard Muguruza, the French Open champion, beat Hungarian qualifier Tímea Babos 6-4, 6-3, while Czech Pliskova upset Russian seventh seed Svetlana Kuznetsova 6-3, 4-6, 6-2. Pliskova credited her victory to improved serving as the match progressed.

"In the first set I tried to play aggressive and not give her time to dictate the game," she said of Kuznetsova.

"My serve wasn't that good in the first two sets, but in the third it improved a lot."—Reuters

Unbeatable Bolt signs off with triple-triple

RIO DE JANEIRO — Usain Bolt drew down the curtain on his brilliant Olympic career by securing a sweep of the sprint titles for a third successive Games when Jamaica successfully defended the 4x100 metres relay crown in Rio on Friday. Two days shy of his 30th birthday, Bolt anchored his country to victory in 37.27 seconds so adding the relay crown to the 100 and 200 metres titles he has owned since exploding onto the Olympic stage in Beijing in 2008.

He will depart that stage never having tasted defeat in a final, his nine gold medals a joint record in athletics with Finnish distance runner Paavo Nurmi and American sprinter and long jumper Carl Lewis. In the eight years since Beijing, the 11-times world champion has become one of the best known sportsmen on the planet and with the 'triple-triple' has a legitimate claim to the title of greatest Olympic track and field athlete ever.

There has never been any doubt in the Jamaican's own mind.

"There you go, I am the greatest. I've worked hard every Olympics to win three gold medals... so I'm just happy that I've accomplished so much," Bolt told reporters.

"It's a relief but I'm also sad that I have to leave. This is my last



Usain Bolt (JAM) of Jamaica runs to win the Jamaica team the gold at Olympic Stadium in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on 19 August 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

one... It's just so many special feelings I'm feeling."

There is no doubt that Bolt has transformed his sport, if only by almost single-handedly displacing the United States as the superpower of men's sprinting.

It was only almost single-handedly, though, as his three Olympic relay titles, two in world record times, always required the input of his fellow Jamaican speedsters. Again on Friday, former world record holder Asafa Powell, Bolt's training partner Yohan Blake and Nickel Ashmeade

gave the double sprint world record holder the lead at the final exchange, albeit an extremely slim one.

That was always going to be enough for Bolt in his final Olympic race, however, and he powered down the straight to finish five metres clear of Japan's Aska Cambridge.

"I told the guys, 'don't give me too much work to do, make it easy'," Bolt said.

"And they did exactly that, I had no work to do, just to run to the line."—Reuters