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TOUCHING DOWN IN INDIA

PRESIDENT U HTIN KYAW VISITS BODH GAYA IN BIHA, INDIA



President U Htin Kyaw and wife pay homage to the Buddha Image at the Mahabodhi Temple Bodh Gaya in Biha, India. PHOTO: MNA

PRESIDENT U Htin Kyaw arrived at Bodh Gaya in Bihar yesterday to pay a goodwill visit to India.

The Myanmar delegation, led by the President and his wife Daw Su Su Lwin, offered robes at the revered Bo Tree and Mahabodhi temple.

Mahabodhi Temple was renovated by King Mindon of the

Konbaung Dynasty in 1877.

The president, along with his wife and a Myanmar delegation, landed at Gaya International airport and were welcomed there by Myanmar Ambassador to India U Aung Khin Soe and his wife, Gaya District Magistrate Kumar Ravi and officials.

Before the Mahabodhi Temple, the president and

his entourage visited Myanmar monasteries and offered donations including Waso robes to the Members of the Sanghas there.

President U Htin Kyaw also visited the Meditation Park and stroked the peace bell.

During the tour of the Archaeological Museum in Gaya the delegation observed King

Mindon's stone inscription.

They also visited the Daijokyo Buddhist Temple.

At the invitation of Indian President Mr Pranab Mukherjee, President U Htin Kyaw left Nay Pyi Taw for India yesterday morning and the delegation was seen off at the Nay Pyi Taw International Airport by Vice Presidents U Myint Swe and U Henry

Van Thio, Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief of (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win, Chairman of the Nay Pyi Taw Council Dr Myo Aung, Commander of Nay Pyi Taw Command Maj-Gen Moe Myint Tun, chargé d'affaires of the Embassy of India in Yangon and officials.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Upgrading of Chin State's roads to see year-round access within five years

SALAI Isac Khin, Minister of Municipal/Electricity and Industry for Chin State, has stated that efforts will be made over the next three-to-five-years to allow for year round access along roads in Chin State.

"Accessibility is the biggest problem facing Chin State. Parts of the state are completely closed off during the rainy season. Landslides are a common problem. It's with this that efforts will be made to make Chin State's roads accessible for all 12 months of the year. Talks are currently being held with

the World Bank, and an expense and project detail will be released in due course." he said.

Chin State is Myanmar's western mountainous and least developed frontier. It is comprised of 15 townships including Falam, Tiddem, Mindat, Paletwa and the capital Hakha.

"Works are already being made to improve the state's roads. The land in our state is hard on top and soft underneath, which means landslides are common, rendering it difficult to get around. It's a

Tenders to carry out the upgrading of the state's roads will reportedly be carried out with transparency

good initiative to improve road infrastructure. With better mobility, we can start to carry out initiatives that can develop our state. If car-

ried out systematically, our state could become more developed than other states and regions in the country." said Salai Pi Pi, general secretary of the Chin League for Democracy.

The calling of tenders to carry out the upgrading of the state's roads will reportedly be carried out with transparency, while the type of roads to be built will be those that are compatible with the regions soil, according to the Chin State government.

"If roads are going to be up-

graded, please hurry. We can't go anywhere at the moment because of the rainy season. It takes a really long time to get between one place and another. I just want to say, please implement this project without delay." Kat Noe, a Chin State resident, said.

Project initiatives aimed at developing Chin State were announced by minister Salai Isac Khin at a press conference held at Yangon's Summit Park View Hotel yesterday.—*Myitmakha News Agency*

University of Medicine-1 holds 53rd graduation

THE University of Medicine-1 in Yangon held its 53rd graduation ceremony yesterday, conferring MBBS degree on 575 graduates.

The graduates took an oath during the graduation ceremony and received their bachelor of medicine degrees by Rector Prof Dr Zaw Wai Soe and Pro-rector.

University of Medicine-1 has produced 17,910 doctors, including 122 Diploma degree holders of Med.Sc, 124 of M. Med. Sc degree, seven of Ph.d degree, 33 Dr.Med.Sc and 5,064 post-graduate degree holders.

Currently, the university is conducting 79 kinds of post-graduate courses and 11 post diploma

courses including family health care medical diploma course, 30 master degree courses, seven Phd courses and 31 other medical courses.

Since 2014 the university has conducted diploma courses for obstetric and gynecologists, pediatric, basic anesthesiology, X-ray, diseases and emergency medical care.

University of Medicine-1 is planning to open four post-graduate courses on tropical infectious diseases, mental health, hormone, liver and bladder surgery while giving special attention to the role of doctors who are non-governmental employees.—Zaw Min Latt



The 53rd graduation in progress at the University of Medicine-1. PHOTO: ZAW MIN LATT

Ministries clarify undertakings in first 100 days

(Continued from yesterday)

A PRESS conference took place in Nay Pyi Taw on Friday in connection with the government's commitment to its 100-day plan.

Health Union Minister Dr Myint Htwe and officials responded to queries regarding the 80 fatalities and the virus control plan in the Naga self-administered area earlier this month.

Following a report of 13

15,054 children were immunised against measles during the house-to-house visits conducted by 18 vaccination teams.

deaths in three villages in Nanyun township on 3 August, the ministry opened a medical centre in Lahal where 15 patients were found presenting with measles symptoms and nine other patients with measles-like symptoms.

The health authorities had the blood samples of 10 patients from Htankhawlar village tested at the National Health Laboratory in Yangon, with the results showing

that seven of them had come down with measles.

Treatment was given to 148 patients under 18 years of age and 35 others over 18 years of age in Nanyun.

According to health officials, 15,054 children were immunised against measles during the house-to-house visits conducted by 18 vaccination teams under the supervision of 15 infectious disease specialists to screen patients suspected of the infectious virus. Their efforts attracted 1,596 patients to the healthcare centres.

Underdevelopment and food scarcity are a major cause of nutritional deprivation, which makes villagers, especially children, less resistant to the disease, health workers said, adding that they went on medical tours of the difficult-to-reach locations.

Health authorities blamed dialect barriers, difficult access and high motorcycle rents for the epidemic of measles in the region, stressing that health workers had to build access routes to the villages. According to them, there has been no more outbreaks in the affected villages. The immunisation programme has covered over 85% of the region, with plans under way to continue the administration of 10 vaccines at

the start of the cold season.

In connection with queries regarding the cost-effective health plans, the officials of the ministry responded that the closures of pharmaceutical shops in hospitals presented problems. Coordination is going on to reopen the shops, where medical supplies will be sold at a 10% profit.

In response to the question of the abortion issue, the authorities said abortion is illegal in the country, but permissible for women with life-threatening cases.

There are 1,132 hospitals un-

Officials also spoke of the ministry's measures against health risks posed by roadside food stalls.

der the Health Department, which is planning to employ nearly 2,000 medical doctors. Health authorities admitted the some of the hospitals were overloaded with patients and as a result the health staff were overtaxed.

According to a health official, women turn to abortion when they

are at their wit's end with their unwanted pregnancies, which the official said was largely due to lack of knowledge of when to take contraceptive pills.

The officials also spoke of the ministry's measures against health risks posed by roadside food stalls, stressing its plans to conduct awareness campaigns for public health under the supervision of the Food and Drug Administration.

Regarding the doctors who graduated abroad, the health officials said they need to take an examination to win a medical practitioner licence from the Myanmar Medical Council so as to practise medicine in the country. Reconsideration is under way for cases of Myanmar doctors trained overseas who wish to practise medicine in the country, officials added.

In response to the question of injections, the officials said medical staff certified by the Myanmar Medical Council can legally give various injections. The certified medical staff include assistant health officers, nurses and midwives. Regarding the budget allotments, the ministry uses K850 billion on health sector and K19 billion on sports.

Director General U Tint Thwin of the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism responded to the queries of the

Health authorities admitted some of the hospitals were overloaded with patients and as a result the health staff were overtaxed.

ministry's arrangements for the development of ecotourism, saying that the ministry would disseminate the information of the country's landscapes and natural scenic spots across the various broadcasting channels. He also spoke of participation in travel shows in other countries to promote the country's tourism industry.

He pointed out the need for training programmes to ensure quality services in terms of accommodation, hospitality, food and itinerary, calling for cooperation among the departments concerned.

In response to a query about the installation of a lift in the ministry's office, the director general said the lift was installed at an estimated cost of US\$30,000 donated by the Myanmar Tourism Federation. The facility would be listed as the state-owned property or ministry-owned property.

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Wreckage of houses seen after the flood recedes in Tatkon Tsp. PHOTO: BFM

BFM aid reaches out to flash flood-hit families in Mandalay Region

FLASH flooding in Tatkon Township, Mandalay Region destroyed 22 houses yesterday in Thanpayagon Village-tract in the township, injuring several people, it has been learned.

Following the disaster, emergency aid from KBZ's Brighter Future Myanmar Foundation was sent to the village. Rice bags and edible oil were distributed and K500,000 was donated to each affected family.

The foundation also contributed K100 million to the fund for the restoration of quake-damaged pagodas in the Bagan Archaeological Zone yesterday.

It established a K100 million fund for disaster preparedness and quick response in 14 regions and states. The philanthropic foundation has spent more than K107 billion so far on nationwide recovery and disaster preparedness works.

BFM also helped people in

drought-hit areas every summer season to overcome water scarcity, with successful drilling of more than 80 tube-wells and supply of more than 172,800 gallons of drinking water.

It has also sent 160,000 warm clothes worth of more than US\$2 million to internally displaced peoples at camps to resist the coming extreme cold season due to La Nina weather pattern.—Thura Lwin (Eco)



President U Htin Kyaw and wife Daw Su Su Lwin are welcomed by Indian damsels on their arrival at the Gaya International Airport on 17th August, 2016. PHOTO: MNA



Mahabodhi Temple, which was renovated by King Mindon of the Konbaung Dynasty in 1877, in Bodh Gaya in India, is considered a life time destination for millions of Buddhists across the world. PHOTO: MNA

Noncommunicable diseases project to be rolled out in Mon State

IMPLEMENTATION of an non-communicable diseases prevention project will commence from this October in Mon State, according to the Ministry of Health and Sports.

Healthcare staff from townships, wards and villages will reportedly join forces in giving free public examinations, as well as offering additional treatment to those who require it, on such noncommunicable diseases as diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, cervical and mouth cancer, and long-term painful throat related diseases.

"It's easier to treat diseases if they're recognized early. If they're treated early, it also mitigates the burden on others in the household later on. The program we're going to carry out will include the detection of noncommunicable diseases, the treatment of them, and the transferring of patients to hospitals if deemed necessary," said Dr Ko Ko, head doctor of the diabetes and hormones special treatment ward of the Ministry of Health and Sports' University of Medicine - 2.

The project aimed at eliminating noncommunicable disease

will be rolled out over the next five years with financial assistance from the European Union and Help Age International.

As well as Mon State, the project will also be implemented in Yangon, Mandalay and Bago Regions, together with the capital, Nay Pyi Taw.

"As Myanmar is still a developing nation, there's a need to carry out more than just a program to eliminate communicable diseases, by conducting initiatives on preemptive protection against noncommunicable diseases as well. Only by carrying out such measures can the future burden on families be alleviated," said Dr Htein Linn, Minister of Social Welfare for Mon State.

According the 2014 published report by the World Health Organization on the instances of noncommunicable diseases, 60 percent of people in Myanmar in 2012 died from noncommunicable diseases, a higher number a fatalities than those who died from communicable diseases.

"This is a good kind of project.

We have a weak healthcare system in Myanmar. The public also tend to by medicine from pharmacies to cure their illness, rather than seek medical advice and treatment at clinics or hospitals. People need to take care [of their health]," said U Htay Maung, a resident of Mon State's capital, Mawlamyine.

The root causes of noncommunicable diseases are unhealthy diets, a lack of physical exercise, smoking, and the overindulgence of alcohol. The general public need to ensure they lead a healthy lifestyle if they want to mitigate the risk of becoming susceptible to noncommunicable diseases.

Other government departments and international organizations also need to draw up needed laws and rules to regulate food and beverages on the market detrimental to health, increase taxes on cigarettes and alcohol, and conduct basic educational awareness initiatives on the prevention of noncommunicable diseases in local communities and schools across the country.—*Myitmakha News Agency*

Ministries clarify undertakings ...

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Asked about the continued operation of the Yoe Yoe Lay hotel at the Kyaik Htee Yoe pagoda, U Tint Thwin said the operating licence of the hotel had been revoked for its unauthorised extensions. The official pledged to push the hotel to obey the order.

Regarding the possible impact the earthquake might have on tourist arrivals in Bagan, the official responded that the disaster would not have a dramatic effect on the number of tourists visiting the country's cultural site. The Asian Development Bank has planned an offer of a US\$45m grant in aid to the development of the tourism industry after 2018, he added.

In connection with the official teaching of ethnic dialects to children in ethnic areas, U L Tu Mein Gaung of the Ministry of Ethnic Affairs responded that his ministry was still young and was having some difficulties with budget and staff issues. He spoke of challenges in the use of ethnic dialects, stressing the need for ethnic children to learn the Myanmar language to be able to mix with the other national races in the union as Myanmar is the most common language used in the country.

A clause in the constitution encourages the use, development and promotion of the dialect, literature, arts and culture of the ethnic groups.—*Myanmar News Agency*

7 killed, 12 injured in car crash in eastern Myanmar

YANGON Seven people were killed and 12 others injured in a passenger car crash Saturday morning near Nantohn village in Hsipaw township of Myanmar's easternmost Shan state, a local police official said.

With 30 people including drivers and conductors on board, the vehicle which

was on route of Nay Pyi Taw-Lashio crashed and overturned due to a slip on the road caused by heavy rainfall, according to the official.

A total of 2,229 people were killed in road accidents across Myanmar in the first half of 2016, according to Myanmar Police Force.—GNLM

Japan Culture House to be opened soon

THE Japan Foundation Asia Centre and the Myanmar Association of Japan Alumni- MAJA will open a Japan Culture House to improve relations and understanding between the two nations, it has been learned. The centre will be located the corner of Kabar aye road and Sayar san road and will be opened on 31 August.

Activities at the Japan Culture House (JCH) will include Japanese games such as

Kendana, Igo, a kimono game named Yukata and a Japan Quiz. Japanese cartoons and fashion magazines will also be available. Japanese traditional art classes, Shudo, lectures on Japanese Manners, workshops and lessons on Japanese tradition will also be available.

The organisation, formed by former Japanese scholarship students, is cooperating with the Japanese embassy to deliver the centre. —Won Yan Kha

Puppet shows at pagoda festivals aim to raise public interest

TRADITIONAL puppet shows will be performed at pagoda festivals in central regions by the Myanmar Marionettes Organisation to resurrect the country's traditional folk arts, said its Chairman Daw Ma Ma Naing.

Puppetry is the most popular show in Myanmar arts and culture. It usually takes place at pagoda festivals. Researchers said the 1780s are the probable date of the origin of Myanmar marionettes.

The MMO will organize puppet shows during religious festivals to be held at famous pagodas including Shwesayan and Kaunghmutaw across Bagan in Mandalay Region so as to raise public interest in Myanmar's folk art.

The organization will also accelerate the performance of marionette shows at schools to introduce the country's culture and tradition to schoolchildren.

Once a popular form of en-



Marionette troupes perform at traditional puppet show in Mandalay. PHOTO SUPPLIED BY DAW MA MA NAING

tertainment around Myanmar, puppetry is now practiced by very few people in the country today. At present, around 20 professionals remain in the field.

Publications related to the art of marionette puppetry

are planned for the future, the MMO's spokesperson said.

Foreigners from European countries have shown an interest in Myanmar puppetry.

They previously observed the art and learned it while living in Myanmar.—200

Crime NEWS

Yaba seized in Taungoo

A COMBINED team comprising officers and staff from Taungoo police station seized yaba from a house on Pauk Hla Gyi road in Myin Gyi Nyo 22 ward, Taungoo town on Thursday.

Acting on a tip-off police raided the home of one Ko Oo alias Naing Lin Htet, 22.

The authorities discovered 7,110 yaba pills. Ei Ei Khine, Zaw Min Lat, Tin Tun Hlaing were found together with the host. The police have opened a case.—Thura (Taungoo)



Ko Oo (a) Naing Lin Htet and Ei Ei Khine, Zaw Min Lat, Tin Tun Hlaing. PHOTO: THURA (TAUNGOO)

Yaba seized in Muse and Mandalay



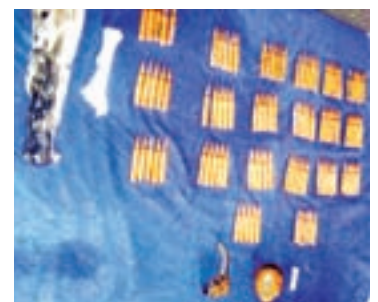
Min Ye Tun (a) Arr Kyawn (a) Kar Kyu. PHOTO: MPF

AN anti-narcotics suppression squad comprising policemen from Muse police station seized yaba from a house in Kaung Hmu Ton ward, Muse town on Thursday. Acting on a tip-off police raided the home of one Min Ye Tun alias Arr Kyawn alias Kar Kyu. The police found 27,300 yaba pills.

Similarly, local police from Mandalay township seized 1,730 yaba pills from motorcycle driver Kyaw Maung on 62 road, Pyigyitagon township, Mandalay. All suspects have been charged under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.—Myanmar Police Force

Hand grenade and ammunition found at Meiktila lake

A HAND grenade and 100 rounds of ammunition were found in Meiktila lake by Tun Win Hlaing, 17, Hsan Lwin Oo, 16, and Maung Aung Htway, 16, from Yan Myo Aung ward, Meiktila Township on 16 August when they were playing in water. An official and staff from a local police station handed over the discovered items to the regional Garrison Engineering Battalion.—Tin Hlaing (Meiktila)



Hand grenade and ammunition found in Meiktila lake being seen. PHOTO: TIN HLAING (MEIKTILA)

Yaba seized in Kalaw and Tachilek

AN anti-narcotics suppression squad comprising policemen from Taunggyi police station seized yaba from a vehicle at the kalaw entrance gate yesterday. Acting on a tip-off police stopped and searched the vehicle en route to Aung Pan from Kalaw. It was being driven by one Kyaw Oo with Soe Thet Lin on board. The

search revealed 98,000 yaba pills. According to a connected investigation police arrested one Thant Zin Tun alias Thura Maung Maung and Win Hswe near Hae Hole town.

All suspects have been charged under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.—Myanmar Police Force

Corpse found near Kyaikdon

THE body of a woman was found in a betel leaf farm near Bayar Ngotoe village, Kyaikdon township, Kayin state on 15 August.

The police identified the victim as one Ma Nan Mya Lwin, 16, from Bayar Ngot-

oe village. The police sent the corpse to the general hospital for post-mortem. The victim's father claims that she went to the village to collect betel leaf but did not return home. Police are still investigating the case —Soe Htet Aung (IPRD)

Japan's Abe pledges \$30 billion for Africa over next three years



Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe addresses the Sixth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD VI) in Kenya's capital Nairobi, on 27 August 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

NAIROBI — Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe told African leaders on Saturday that his country will commit \$30 billion in public and private support for infrastructure development on the continent.

Resource-poor Japan has long been interested in tapping Africa's vast natural resources, even more so since dependence on oil and natural gas imports jumped after the 2011 Fukushima nuclear disaster shut almost all of Japan's nuclear reactors.

Abe, in the Kenyan

capital Nairobi to attend the sixth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD), said the package would be spread over three years from this year and include \$10 billion for infrastructure projects on the continent, to be executed through cooperation with the African Development Bank.

"When combined with investment from the private sector, I expect that the total will amount to \$30 billion. This is an investment that has faith in Africa's

future, an investment for Japan and Africa to grow together," he told a gathering of at least 34 heads of state and government from across Africa.

The \$30 billion announced on Saturday is in addition to \$32 billion that Japan pledged to Africa over a five-year period at the last TICAD meeting in 2013. Abe said 67 per cent of that had already been put to use in various projects.

"Today's new pledges will enhance and further expand upon those launched three years ago. The motive is quality and enhancement," he said.

Japan's overall direct investment in Africa totalled \$1.24 billion in 2015, down from about \$1.5 billion a year earlier, according to the Japan External Trade Organisation, which does not provide a breakdown of sectors.

In comparison, rival China made a single investment of \$2 billion in oil-rich Equatorial Guinea in the month of April, 2015, alone. Abe said the new pledge will also go towards improving labour productivity and healthcare.—Reuters

Thai, Cambodian foreign ministers discuss trade, rail links

BANGKOK — The Thai and Cambodian foreign ministers met here Friday to discuss a range of bilateral issues including boosting trade and progress in a cross-border rail link.

At the 10th Meeting of the Joint Commission for Bilateral Cooperation between Thailand and Cambodia, Thai Foreign Minister Don Pramudwinai and his Cambodian counterpart Prak Sokhonn discussed the tripling in value of bilateral trade to \$150

billion by 2020 as agreed to by Thai Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha and Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen in Bangkok last December.

The two ministers also discussed progress in a rail linkage that will connect Thailand and Cambodia, on which the two countries signed a memorandum of understanding in December last year.

They also discussed political and security issues, the upgrading of border checkpoints, and the

enhancement of bilateral cooperation in the fields of trade and investment, energy, labour, agriculture and the environment.

Additionally, they also signed a memorandum of understanding on the establishment of a transit and reception center for victims of trafficking and other vulnerable groups.

Prak Sokhonn paid a courtesy call on Prayut at Government House later in a day before returning to Cambodia.—Kyodo News

Australian teen completes record round world solo flight

SYDNEY — An Australian teenager made history on Saturday by becoming the youngest person to complete a solo circumnavigation of the world in a single engine aircraft.

Lachlan Smart, from Queensland, touched down at Maroochydore Airport on the Sunshine Coast, where he had first

taken off from on 24 July.

At 18 years, 7 months and 21 days, Smart is a year younger than the previous record holder, American Matt Guthmiller.

"What a welcome," Smart said after landing to cheers from supporters. "To actually be here, having flown around the

world, for over 24,000 nautical miles is just a great relief."

The teenager stopped in 24 locations and 15 countries during his seven-week trip.

He said the weather and communicating with foreign air traffic controllers were his biggest challenges.—Reuters

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Bangladesh police kill 'mastermind' of Dhaka cafe attack

DHAKA — Bangladesh security forces killed three Islamist militants on Saturday including a Bangladesh-born Canadian citizen alleged to have masterminded an attack on a cafe in Dhaka last month in which 22 people, mostly foreigners, were killed, police said.

The militants were cornered in a hideout on the outskirts of the capital and, having refused to surrender, were killed in the ensuing gunbattle, Monirul Islam, the head of the Dhaka police counter terrorism unit, told Reuters.

He initially said four militants had been killed but later revised the number to three.

The success notched up by the security forces came ahead of a visit on Monday by US Secretary of State John Kerry, who is expected to discuss security in the wake of a series of killings of liberals and religious minorities in the mostly Muslim country.

Islamic State claimed responsibility for the assault on the cafe in a posh neighbourhood of the capital, during which militants sin-



A member of the security personnel stands on the side of a car as he arrives at the site of a gun-battle with militants on the outskirts of Dhaka, Bangladesh, on 27 August 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

gled out non-Muslims and foreigners, killing Italians, Japanese, an American and an Indian.

The government has steadfastly denied the presence in the country of any transnational militant organisation, like al Qaeda or Islamic State.

But police believe that Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh, which has pledged allegiance to Islam-

ic State, was involved in organising the cafe attack.

The scale of that attack and the targeting of foreigners has cast a shadow over foreign investment in the poor South Asian economy, whose \$28 billion garments export industry is the world's second largest.

The suspected mastermind killed in Saturday's raid was identified as Tamim Ahmed Chowdhury,

a 30-year-old Canadian citizen born in Bangladesh. Analysts say Islamic State in April identified Chowdhury as its national commander.

"According to our evidence we are now sure that Tamim was among the three killed," Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan told reporters. "So the chapter of Tamim has ended here."—Reuters

UN Security Council condemns North Korea missile launches

UNITED NATIONS — The UN Security Council late on Friday condemned a series of missile launches by North Korea after failing to do so earlier this month when China had wanted a statement also to oppose the planned deployment of a US anti-missile system in South Korea.

North Korea test-fired a submarine-launched ballistic missile on Wednesday which flew about 500 km (300 miles) in the direction of Japan, the latest in a series of launches by the isolated nation in defiance of UN resolutions.

“The members of the Security Council deplore all Democratic People’s Republic of Korea ballistic missile activities,” the statement said, referring to North Korea by its formal name.

The statement referred to Wednesday’s launch as well as other North Korean ballistic mis-

sile launches since 9 July.

“Such activities contribute to the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea’s development of nuclear weapons delivery systems and increase tension,” it said.

As in past statements, the Council went on to say that it “would continue to closely monitor the situation and take further significant measures in line with the Council’s previously expressed determination.”

Earlier this month, the 15-member council had been unable to agree on a US-drafted statement to condemn North Korea’s 3 August launch of a ballistic missile that landed in or near Japanese-controlled waters.

China had wanted the statement to oppose deploying “any new anti-ballistic missile stronghold in Northeast Asia with an excuse of dealing with threats of

the DPRK nuclear and missile programmes.”

Friday’s statement did not include such language.

China strongly opposes the planned basing of a US Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) anti-missile system in South Korea, which it says would worsen tension on the Korean peninsula.

Beijing worries that THAAD’s radar system has a range that could extend into China. The United States says the system is defensive and intended to counter North Korea’s missile threat.

North Korea has been under UN sanctions since 2006. In March, the Security Council imposed harsh new sanctions in response to North Korea’s fourth nuclear test in January and the launch of a long-range rocket in February.—*Reuters*

Hong Kong’s first Zika case tests negative

HONG KONG — Hong Kong’s first Zika patient tested negative for the virus on Friday and was discharged from hospital, the government said in a statement.

On Thursday, the Centre for Health Protection had said the 38-year-old woman, who had returned to Hong Kong after spending two weeks in the Caribbean, had tested positive.

She was initially tested and admitted to hospital after suffering symptoms of joint pain and red eyes.

The statement issued late on Friday said laboratory testing of the patient’s blood and urine showed negative results for the virus. It did not explain the discrepancy with results of the earlier test.

Zika was detected in Brazil last year and has since spread across the Americas. The virus poses a risk to pregnant women because it can cause severe birth defects. It has been linked to more than 1,800 cases of microcephaly in Brazil.—*Reuters*



South Korean Strategy and Finance Minister Yoo Il Ho (L) and Japanese Finance Minister Taro Aso shake hands in Seoul, on 27 August 2016, as they meet for the 7th bilateral finance dialogue. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

Japan, South Korea finance chiefs to confirm economic cooperation

SEOUL — Japanese and South Korean finance officials started talks on Saturday in Seoul, with an eye to confirming cooperation to cope with growing uncertainty in the global economy amid a slowdown in emerging economies including China.

The meeting led by Japanese Finance Minister Taro Aso and South Korean Strategy and Finance Minister Yoo Il Ho follows one in May last year in Tokyo, resuming the dialogue after a hiatus of more than two years due to tensions over a territorial row and different perceptions of history.

The bilateral relationship improved further recently following the progress made toward ending a protracted dispute over Korean women forced to work in wartime brothels for the Japanese military, with Japan disbursing 1 billion yen (\$9.8 million) to a South Korean foundation to support the former so-called

“comfort women.”

During the talks, the ministers are expected to discuss economic situations and policy challenges facing the two countries, such as downside risks resulting from Britain’s decision to leave the European Union.

In February last year, Japan ended a 14-year-old currency swap agreement with South Korea, under which each nation can obtain dollars by giving its currency to the other in order to withstand market instability.

The currency swap deal, formed in 2001, was expanded in 2011 to \$70 billion from \$13 billion to ensure South Korea had access to sufficient dollar funds amid the eurozone sovereign debt crisis.

The one-year expansion expired in 2012 and the overall size of the swap deal was cut back to \$13 billion.

Tokyo and Seoul then reduced it to \$10 billion in 2013.—*Kyodo News*

Malaysian student protesters demand 1MDB arrest

KUALA LUMPUR — Nearly a thousand protesters marched in the heart of the Malaysian capital on Saturday calling for the arrest of an unnamed high-ranking government official who US investigators say received \$700 million skimmed from a sovereign fund.

The student-led mass rally comes more than a month after US prosecutors filed civil lawsuits alleging that over \$3.5 billion was defrauded from state fund 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB).

The lawsuits repeatedly referred to a high-ranking official, only identified as “Malaysian Official 1,” who received some of the misappropriated funds. A source familiar with the US investigations has told Reuters that the unnamed official is Prime Minister Najib Razak, who has repeatedly denied any wrongdoing.

Led by student representative

Anis Syafiqah Md Yusof, the protesters marched towards Dataran Merdeka, or Independence Square, shouting “the people live” and “catch MO1,” referring to Malaysian Official 1 in the lawsuits.

The organisers had expected a turnout of 5,000.

“If we don’t speak out, who else will push them, the authorities, to arrest a criminal who has given us so much grief?” Anis said in her address to the protesters.

“Can we send MO1 to jail and bring that person to face justice?” she asked the crowd, which responded with chants of “tangkap MO1,” meaning “arrest” in Malay.

Police set up barricades around the square and blocked the crowd from entering.

“We need to fight for our rights. The country is broken, it’s gone to the dogs,” said Tony Wong, a 77-year-old protester.

“All Malaysians should stand and fight for our rights and freedom, for our future generations,” said Wong, as he handed out posters showing a silhouette of Najib with the words “Siapa MO1?” meaning “Who is MO1?”

About 800 policemen and officials from the Kuala Lumpur city hall were on patrol near the square, *The Sun* newspaper reported.

A police helicopter was also seen hovering low over the crowd ahead of the march.

The country’s police chief last week warned the protesters to stay away from the square as they had not been granted permission to gather there. Najib’s supporters had planned to hold a counter-rally, but late on Friday said they decided against competing with “school children”, according to a report by news portal Malaysiakini.—*Reuters*



Student activists shout slogans as they prepare to march towards Dataran Merdeka, or Independence Square, to call for the arrest of ‘Malaysian Official 1’ in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, on 27 August 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

US and Russia fail to close deal on ending violence in Syria

GENEVA — The United States and Russia failed on Friday to reach a breakthrough deal on military cooperation and a nationwide cessation of hostilities in Syria, saying they still have issues to resolve before an agreement could be announced.

US Secretary of State John Kerry and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, addressing a joint news conference after more than nine hours of off-and-on talks in Geneva, said teams from both sides would try to finalise details in coming days in the Swiss city.

Kerry said the talks with Lavrov had “achieved clarity on the path forward” but together they offered few details on how they planned to renew a February cessation of hostilities and improve humanitarian assistance.

“We don’t want to have a deal for the sake of the deal,” Kerry said. “We want to have something done that is effective and that works for the people of Syria, that makes the region more stable and secure, and that brings us to the table here in Geneva to find a political solution.”

The talks have been complicated since initial meetings in July by new government attacks on opposition groups, and a significant offensive in the southern part of the divided city of Aleppo led by opposition fighters intermingled with the Nusra Front, an al-Qaeda affiliate also seeking to topple Russian-backed President Bashar al-Assad.

In the days ahead the technical teams, which include U.S. and Russian military and intelligence experts, will try to figure out ways to separate the opposition groups, backed by the United



US Secretary of State John Kerry and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov attend a news conference after a meeting on Syria in Geneva, Switzerland, on 26 August 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

States and Gulf Arab countries, from the jihadis.

It was unclear after Friday’s meetings whether outstanding issues could all be resolved between Moscow and Washington, which back opposing parties in the Syrian conflict.

The United States has insisted that the Syrian air force, which has dropped barrel bombs and chlorine on residential areas, be grounded but Lavrov said on Friday that was not the goal.

Assad’s future is not part of the current talks. Instead, discussions are focused on finding an effective and lasting solution to end the violence, which would open negotiations on a political

transition in Syria.

“If the remaining details can be completed, we believe we will be able to address the two primary challenges to the cessation of hostilities - the regime violations and the increasing influence of the al-Nusra Front,” Kerry said.

Kerry believes the plan is the best chance to limit fighting that is driving thousands of Syrians into exile in Europe and preventing humanitarian aid from reaching tens of thousands more.

The talks came as opposition groups effectively surrendered the Damascus suburb of Daraya to the government after a gruelling four-year siege. —Reuters

Clinton attacks Trump’s outreach to black voters in new ad

WASHINGTON — Democrat Hillary Clinton called on Friday for voters to reject the “bigotry” of Donald Trump’s White House campaign, releasing a television ad criticizing his efforts to appeal to black voters and saying she was reaching out to people from all parties who are troubled by his candidacy.

The ad shows video of Trump’s controversial pitch to black voters, in which the Republican candidate urges them to support him by asking, “What do you have to lose?” It also shows headlines about a racial discrimination lawsuit the New York real estate mogul faced in the 1970s.

Clinton’s presidential campaign said the ad, released a day after she gave a speech accusing Trump of fueling America’s

“radical fringe,” would air in the hotly contested states of Florida, North Carolina, Ohio and Pennsylvania.

Polls give Clinton a wide margin over Trump among Hispanic voters, but he is on a pitch to reduce her advantage by stressing he would create jobs for all.

Trump pressed on with trying to broaden his appeal to minority voters on Friday, as he met with Hispanic business leaders at his signature hotel in Las Vegas.

“We’ve been doing very, very well with the Latinos. We’ve been doing amazing, far, far greater ... than anyone understands. They want to see jobs come in, we’re going to bring jobs. They want to see things happen,” Trump said.

He said the country’s GDP growth rate of 1.1 per cent in the second quarter was not a good sign for the US economy. “The country has some very, very serious problems,” he said.

Clinton, meanwhile, followed up on Thursday’s tough speech by saying that Trump’s temperament and divisiveness made him unfit for the White House.

“I am reaching out to everyone, Republicans, Democrats, independents, everyone who is as troubled as I am by the bigotry and divisiveness of Donald Trump’s campaign,” she told MSNBC, adding she was asking “fair-minded Americans to repudiate this kind of divisive demagoguery” at the 8 November election. —Reuters

NEWS IN BRIEF

Cambodian king expresses condolences to Italy, Myanmar after earthquake disasters

PHNOM PENH — Cambodian King Norodom Sihamoni has voiced his condolences to the governments and peoples of Italy and Myanmar following the strong earthquakes in the two countries which resulted in loss of lives and damage.

In a royal message sent to Italian President Sergio Mattarella and released to local media on Saturday, Sihamoni expressed his deepest sympathy to the bereaved families and wished the injured persons a swift recovery.

“At this painful circumstance, on behalf of the Cambodian people and on my own behalf, I extend to Your Excellency, and through you, to the Italians, especially to the families of the victims, our deepest condolences,” he said.

The death toll from the 6.2 magnitude earthquake in central Italy on Wednesday has risen to 284 people as of Saturday.

In another condolence message sent to Myanmar President U Htin Kyaw, the Cambodian king said he was profoundly saddened to hear of the 6.8 magnitude earthquake that struck central Myanmar on Wednesday, killing three people and damaging at least 185 ancient famous pagodas in the ancient capital of Bagan. “We share the sufferings of the people of Myanmar and express our admiration for the remarkable rescue and recovery efforts in the affected areas and extend our best wishes of complete success,” he said.

“We also wish the injured persons a swift recovery.” —Xinhua

Bomb disposal squad deployed in central England after arrests

LONDON — An army bomb disposal team was deployed to an area in Birmingham, central England, on Friday after police arrested five men on suspicion of preparing acts of terrorism.

The West Midlands police force said as a result of one of the arrests, an army bomb disposal team had been called in as a precautionary measure to the Lee Bank area of Birmingham.

The Fire Brigade said it had been assisting the police with the operation. Police said two men, aged 32 and 37, were arrested in the Stoke area of Staffordshire while three others, aged 18, 24 and 28 were arrested in Birmingham, Britain’s second-biggest city. “Police are searching a number of properties in the Stoke and Birmingham areas as part of the investigation; these searches are ongoing,” they said in a statement. “The arrests were intelligence-led and part of an ongoing investigation.”

Britain is on its second-highest alert level of “severe”, meaning an attack is considered highly likely. —Reuters

Fire kills 17 Kyrgyz nationals in Moscow printing plant

MOSCOW — A fire in a Moscow printing plant killed 17 people on Saturday, officials said, and a representative of the Kyrgyz diaspora in Russia said all the dead were members of its community.

“The incident happened when people were changing shifts at the printing house. It is very hard for us,” Abdygany Shakirov, the Kyrgyz representative told Reuters.

Around 500,000 citizens of the impoverished former Soviet republic of Kyrgyzstan are working in Russia. The two countries belong to a Russian-dominated customs union. The Investigative Committee, which reports directly to President Vladimir Putin, said a criminal inquiry had been launched into the deaths of 16 of the victims of the blaze. —Reuters

UK’s May heads for Brexit negotiations without vote by MPs — paper

LONDON — British Prime Minister Theresa May will not hold a parliamentary vote on Brexit before opening discussions to formally trigger Britain’s withdrawal from the European Union, the Telegraph reported on Friday.

Brexit opponents maintain that since the EU referendum result is advisory, it should be passed by a vote in the House of Commons before the formal process to leave the EU is triggered, the report said.

The UK voted to leave the EU on 23 June, but May had earlier said that she will not invoke “Article 50”, the two-year formal process for divorcing from the bloc, this year as the country needs time to prepare for negotiations. The prime minister’s office was not immediately available for comment. —Reuters

Opinion

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Save Bagan as our soul and national identity

Kyaw Thura

WELL-KNOWN historian Professor Dr Than Tun once said that he did not have a definite answer to the question of who founded Bagan, but the biggest culprits who degraded that cultural heritage site of ancient religious structures were common knowledge.

There is a famous saying in our country that goes "Bagan is an absolute must for every Myanmar." Meta-

phorically speaking, Bagan, home to more than 2,200 historic religious structures, is the heart of the Myanmar people. Since Bagan is part of our national heritage, we all have a moral obligation to protect that cultural area.

The shocking 6.8 magnitude earthquake that struck in central Myanmar on 25 August did not spare the ancient royal city of Bagan, causing not only serious

damage to some 200 historic pagodas but also emotional damage to the hearts of the Bagan lovers.

From a human or cultural perspective, the destruction of the cultural heritage and historic buildings is a direct blow to the soul of our people and the identity of our country.

In this difficult time, the government has shown remarkable courage in taking the lead in the effort

to conduct damage assessment in partnership with a team of experts from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation.

It is therefore necessary for us, ordinary people from all social strata, to stand ready to support the teams of local and foreign experts in their restoration work by all appropriate means. It is ethical to save Bagan as our soul and national identity.

Memory test questions in English

Dr. Myo Win
Yangon University of Education

IN general, there are four main parts in a teaching learning process. They are instructional objectives, entering behavior, instructional process and performance assessment. First, instructional objectives are laid down. To fulfill the objectives, depending on the entering behaviours, that is, background knowledge of the learners, what to teach and how to teach are considered. After teaching, performance assessment is conducted to know whether teaching is successful or not. In other words, learners have to sit for tutorials or monthly tests. At a large scale, mid-term tests or examinations are held. Through the results of performance assessment, learning outcomes can be interpreted. Moreover, these results are also useful for deciding whether teaching is successful or not. Therefore, performance assessment is crucial in a teaching learning process.

One of the objectives of teaching English in Myanmar is to develop four language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. To fulfill these objectives, English texts are prescribed and taught to the students at different classes. Monthly tests and examination are held to know students' proficiency level of English. Grade Ten English question covers reading comprehension, cloze procedure, recall of facts in the text, punctuation, stylistic transformation, paragraph writing, letter writing and essay writing.

No. III. and No. IV are recall questions. In No. III, five sentences from the texts and five sentences from the poems are included. In each sentence, there are some missing words for the students to complete. One mark is given for correct answer. There are seven poems in the prescribed text. Most of the poems are short. So, if students read seven poems by heart, they are sure to get five marks. Most teachers ask students to read the poem by heart. It seems that they are not wrong because question type encourages the teacher to do so. In fact, one of the objectives of teaching poems is either to get oral fluency or to understand the main theme of the poems. When the recall questions are set on poems, that

question cannot reflect the objectives. Paraphrasing is a question that can reflect the objective of teaching poems. The followings are some examples sentences that are used in No.III & IV questions.

The followings are recall questions from No. III.

1. The four youths belonged to -----.
2. The ----- packed the ghee in a leaf.
3. The four youths failed ----- their tasks.
4. Jim Bishop bought a house on -----.
5. Jenny Bishop ----- her diamond earrings because they needed money.
6. Old Jenny Bishop had been ----- for years.
7. Jim Bishop's father was a -----.
8. Helen Keller ----- with other children.
9. Helen kicked Annie in the -----.
10. Helen Keller ----- from Radcliffe College.

Recall questions from No.IV.

1. Under whom did the four youths come to study?
2. Who climbed the tall bael tree and why was it easy for him to climb the tree?
3. Why didn't the astrologer come down from the bael tree?
4. When did the young boy's dream come true?
5. How did great good luck touch Jim Bishop?
6. When did Jenny Bishop's dream come true for the first time?
7. When did Helen become deaf and blind?
8. What did Helen do to the doll that Annie gave her?
9. What happened to Helen Keller in January, 1882?
10. Where did Captain Keller go to get help for Helen?

What is the benefit of being able to answer such questions? Is this information useful for solving their real life problems? Can these questions ask for students' reading skills?

There are two kinds of reading passages in the prescribed texts. They are information giving passages and pleasure giving passages. The objective is to let students get either information or pleasure through reading these passages. From these passages, some facts are asked as recall questions. The questions mentioned above are recall questions. It seems fair to conclude that

such questions cannot assess students' reading skills and it is also doubtful that factual knowledge being asked is useful for their real life situation. In my opinion, asking recall questions from pleasure giving passages seems useless. Such passages are meant only for pleasure.

In fact, matriculation exam is the ideal for other levels or standards. In Standard Four, there are also recall questions. These questions are asked in No.III. The following are some examples taken from different questions from different States and Regions.

1. Who thought that the diamonds were real?
2. Where were the two ladies talking?
3. Who thought that the diamonds were real?
4. Where were the two ladies talking?
5. What did the wealthy man give his two sons?
6. Who told the two brothers about their father's will?
7. What were the two words whispered by the old man?

These questions are taken from Lesson 1, The Necklace, and Lesson 4, Two Words of Wisdom. Both lessons are stories. Therefore, the value of these questions is doubtful. In wh- questions, who, what, which, where, when, how often, etc ask only facts. How and Why can be used to encourage students' thinking skills. While open-ended questions are encouraged for the 21st century skills, we should avoid asking memory test questions.

If we genuinely value the infusion of 21st century skills with core academic goals, then assessment should be aligned accordingly. In terms of 21st century skills, the majority of assessments should be more open-ended and performance-based. Question items need to be designed to reveal whether students meet 21st century learning goals such as demonstrating an understanding of big ideas, formulating responses to essential questions, reflecting on and analyzing important issues, solving genuine problems, etc. Assessments should also reveal whether students are able to transfer and adapt their learning to novel situations, since a fundamental goal of 21st century outcomes is to prepare students for a complex and rapidly changing world with unpredictable challenges.

Donors team up to fund renovation of quake-hit pagodas in Bagan



Senior General Min Aung Hlaing visits Bagan to observe quake-damaged pagodas. PHOTO: MNA

DONORS, including Commander-in-Chief Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, gathered in Bagan yesterday to donate cash toward the renovation of quake-damaged pagodas there.

At the donation ceremony held at the Bagan Archaeological Museum, Commander-in-Chief Senior General Min Aung Hlaing presented K100 million donated by families of army, navy and air forces of the Tatmadaw.

Adjutant-General Lt-Gen San Oo donated K70 million contributed by the families of the commands and infantry divisions.

During the ceremony more than K1 billion was donated including K400 million by the Gat Way Company, K100 million by the KBZ’s Brighter Future Myanmar Foundation, K100 million by the Max Ayeawady Foundation and K50 million by Htoo Company.

Following the ceremony the Commander-in-Chief and party visited the most popularly visited pagodas which were damaged.

He also donated cash to philanthropic organisations volunteering to clear rubble.

The number of pagodas noted as damaged by the powerful earthquake has reached 341 nationwide, with 188 in Bagan. — *Myanmar News Agency*

Director-General of UNESCO expresses solidarity with the people of Myanmar after earthquake in Bagan

THE Director-General of UNESCO, Irina Bokova, has expressed her profound sympathy to the government and people of Myanmar after the devastating 6.8 magnitude earthquake that struck central Myanmar, including the ancient city of Bagan, causing loss of life and extensive damage to nearly 200 historic monuments and iconic pagodas.

“I wish to express my sincere sympathy following the powerful earthquake that struck Myanmar today,” said the Director-General. “The loss of cultural heritage and such iconic buildings are a direct blow to the people and identity of Myanmar. Heritage bears the soul of the people and its protection is an integral part of wider efforts to empower people, to strengthen resilience and restore confidence in difficult times. UNESCO has witnessed enhanced support for safeguarding cultural heritage of Bagan and other sites in Myanmar after the inscription of the ancient cities of Pyu as the country’s first site on the World Heritage list. UNESCO is deploying culture experts in Bagan to conduct damage assessment and stands ready to support the government of Myanmar and will spare no effort to contribute to the response, in all its fields of competence.

Bagan, also known as Pagan, is home to more than 2,200 structures, including pagodas and temples constructed from the 10th to the 14th centuries. The vast site is Myanmar’s national treasure and premier tourist attraction. Restoration work had been conducted in recent years in Bagan, with the support of UNESCO. The Director-General of UNESCO visited the Buddhist monuments of Bagan in August 2012, with experts from the department of archeology, museum and national library, to launch preservation and sustainable management project for what is one of the largest concentration of temples and pagodas in the world. —GNLM



POEM: Oh! My son/daughter....

Now, I am not “I” of my prime time,
I’m in my waning years;
Unable and frail in many ways.
Please understand me and be patient with me.

My hands are shaky with age;
May spill the curry while eating,
making everything around me filthy;
My clothing may also be disheveled;
Please, never feel loathsome on it.
Conjure up your childhood, and
will perceive your father or mother,
washing and cleaning you whenever necessary,
with boundless patience and kindness.

May be, I am loquacious,
repeating words again and again;
An inevitable phenomenon of senility;
Please don’t interrupt,
nor force me shut my mouth;
Listen till the end and make me happy.
Remember your childhood bed time;
And hear again my voice,
repeating many stories, folktales and lullabies,
till you fell asleep.

I may need your helping hands for my bath;
Grudge me not as I call for your help;
Please do memorize the time,
when I took you, little cute to bath,
patiently by coaxing, sometimes by forcing.

I am old and may be ignorant about modern technology;
Please, don’t ridicule my ignorance;
Recall your memory back to the far past;
And will see me trying to answer
all your inquisitive “Whys” with great patience.

Now, old enough I am;
Being enervated, my body not in harmony with mind;
May stagger or stumble.
Please, be never hesitant,
to render your strong hands,
to help me up and walk;
Remember your toddling time,
You will see how I was happy,
to help you and saw you toddling.

Don’t regret to see me growing old.
Please understand and encourage me;
A long spell of my life time,
busy trying to lead you to the progress.

Now, I, the old man adore being with you,
for the rest of my life;
Basking in your cool and kind love,
with all my satisfied smile,
radiating the beams of my love and heart on you.

Oh! Son and Daughter,
I wish all the best come to you,
for the rest of your life.

Khin Maung Win (Myingyan)
Geology



Civilians ride a bus to be evacuated from the besieged Damascus suburb of Daraya, after an agreement reached on Thursday between rebels and Syria's army, Syria, on 26 August 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Taliban fighters overrun district in eastern Afghanistan

KABUL — Taliban insurgents overran a district in eastern Afghanistan, killing and wounding dozens of police and soldiers and threatening strategically important road routes to Pakistan, officials said on Saturday.

Abdul Rahman Solamal, governor of Jani Khel district, in the eastern province of Paktia said that after heavy overnight fighting, security forces had pulled out of the district, which sits at an intersection linking eight districts and which connects Paktia with neighbouring Khost province and Pakistan.

"Our district was surrounded by Taliban for almost five days," he told Reuters. "Hundreds of them attacked our check posts overnight. 'If we do not retake it soon then Taliban can easily move from one province to another and can undermine security in at least three provinces,'" he said.

The attack comes amid heavy fighting in other parts of Afghanistan, notably in the southern province of Helmand, where US military advisers have been deployed to bolster the defences, and around the northern city of Kunduz, which fell briefly to the insurgents last year. More than 20 soldiers and police were killed and another 20 wounded in the fighting overnight, while some 200 Taliban insurgents were killed, Solamal said.

There was no immediate means of verifying the claims of Taliban casualties. Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said in a statement dozens of Afghan soldiers and police had been killed in Jani Khel and large amounts of equipment had been captured, including armoured vehicles, light and heavy weapons and ammunition. According to US estimates reported in July by the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR), a Congressional oversight body, Afghan forces control or influence just under 66 per cent of the national territory, down from just over 70 per cent at the start of the year.—Reuters

Turkey signals no quick end to Syria incursion as truck bomb kills police

ISTANBUL/KARKAMIS, (Turkey) — Turkish forces will remain in Syria for as long as it takes to cleanse the border of Islamic State and other militants, Prime Minister Binali Yildirim said on Friday, after a truck bombing by Kurdish insurgents killed at least 11 police officers.

The suicide attack at a police headquarters in a province bordering Syria and Iraq came two days after Turkey launched its first major military incursion into Syria, an operation meant to drive Islamic State out of the border area and stop Kurdish militias from seizing ground in their wake.

US Secretary of State John Kerry and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov meanwhile tried on Friday at a meeting in Geneva to finalise an agreement on fighting Islamist militants in Syria. Such a deal could in the-

ory pave the way for a political transition to end the five-year conflict.

Turkey, a NATO member and part of the U.S.-led coalition against Islamic State, has seen a series of deadly bombings this year blamed on the radical Islamists. But it also fears Kurdish militias in Syria will seize a swathe of border territory and embolden Kurdish insurgents on its own soil.

President Tayyip Erdogan said the bombing in Sirnak province would increase Turkey's determination as it fights terrorist groups at home and abroad. Yildirim said there was no doubt the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), which has waged a three-decade insurgency for Kurdish autonomy, was responsible.

"From the beginning we have been defending Turkey's territorial integrity. We are also

defending Syria's territorial integrity. The aim of these terrorist organisations is ... to form a state in these countries... They will never succeed," Yildirim told a news conference in Istanbul.

"We will continue our operations (in Syria) until we fully guarantee security of life and property for our citizens and the security of our border. We will continue until Daesh (Islamic State) and other terrorist elements are taken out."

After he spoke, the PKK claimed responsibility for the attack on the police headquarters, according to a website affiliated to the group.

Syria has condemned the Turkish operation, codenamed "Euphrates Shield", as a breach of its sovereignty. Turkish special forces, tanks and jets launched the incursion in support of Syrian rebels, mostly Turkmen and Arab, who quickly took

the border town of Jarablus from Islamic State on Wednesday.

An alliance of 23 Kurdish parties in Syria also condemned the Turkish operation on Friday. In a joint statement, they called for a complete withdrawal of all Turkish forces from the country and accused Ankara of trying to occupy Syria under the pretence of fighting terrorism.

Turkish military vehicles shuttled in and out of Syria on Friday, Reuters witnesses said, including a construction machine that helped flatten the route for a tank. Controlled explosions rang out around the Karkamis border crossing as Turkish security forces removed mines and booby traps left by Islamic State.

Ismail Metin, the commander of Turkey's second army responsible for the borders with Syria and Iraq, visited Jarablus on Friday, local sources said.—Reuters



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Scientists find Earth-like planet circling sun's nearest neighbour

LONDON — Scientists have discovered a planet that appears to be similar to Earth circling the star closest to the sun, potentially a major step in the quest to find out if life exists elsewhere in the universe, research published on Wednesday showed.

The relative proximity of the planet, known as Proxima b, gives scientists a better chance to eventually capture an image of it, to help them establish whether it has an atmosphere and water, which is believed to be necessary for life.

Future studies may reveal if any atmosphere contains tell-tale chemicals of biological life, such as methane, according to a paper published in this week's issue of the journal *Nature*.

"The key question of our initiative was whether there were potentially life-bearing planets orbiting these stars. We know now there is at least one planet with some characteristics similar

to the Earth," said Pete Worden, a former top NASA manager, who was speaking at a European Southern Observatory webcast news conference to announce the find.

The planet, located about 4.2 light-years from Earth, or 25 trillion miles (40 trillion km), is the closest of some 3,500 planets that have been discovered beyond the solar system since 1995, according to the paper.

"This planetary system is much closer than any other that we know so detailed investigation is easier," astronomer Ansgar Reiners, with the University of Gottingen in Germany, told reporters on a conference call.

Astronomers got their first hint of a planet circling the sun's small dim neighbor star in 2013. But they needed additional observations, using more precise instruments, to make a definitive call.

An international team of 31 scientists found the planet after



A view of the surface of the planet Proxima b orbiting the red dwarf star Proxima Centauri, the closest star to our Solar System, is seen in an undated artist's impression released by the European Southern Observatory, on 24 August 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

careful and repeated measurements of slight shifts in the color of the light coming from its host star, Proxima Centauri, which is a small, dim star in the Alpha Centauri system.

The shifts, which astronomers call "wobbles," are caused

by the gravitational tugging of a planet roughly 1.3 times the size of Earth on the parent star. Based on the timing of wobbles, scientists determined that the planet circles its host star in just 11 days, compared to Earth's 365-day orbit around the sun.

That puts the planet far closer to its parent star than Earth orbits the sun. However, Proxima Centauri is so much smaller and dimmer than the sun that its planet's orbit is suitably positioned for liquid water despite being just 4.4 million miles away.—Reuters

Brazilian scientists in home stretch developing snail fever vaccine

RIO DE JANEIRO — Brazilian scientists will soon launch the final phase clinical trials of a potential vaccine against snail fever, a parasitic disease that has inflicted huge socio-economic damage comparable to malaria.

"This is the first time that a parasite vaccine produced with cutting-edge Brazilian technology reaches phase II clinical studies," chief scientist of the project, Miriam Tendler, said in a press release issued by Brazil's Oswal-

do Cruz Foundation, the medical research centre developing the vaccine.

"We are working to contribute to fighting a public health problem that affects poor populations in various parts of the world," she added.

According to information provided by the foundation, the disease is endemic in more than 70 countries, where 800 million people live at risk of infection, especially in Africa.

The year-long trials are to begin in the second half of September with the participation of nearly 350 volunteers in Senegal, where the disease is endemic.

If proven effective and safe, the vaccine could then become commercially available. The results of the study are expected in 2017.

The initiative is one of the priority projects by the World Health Organisation (WHO) to ensure populations in develop-

ing countries have access to cutting-edge health technologies, said the foundation.

The phase two clinical studies will be jointly carried out by the foundation, which is overseen by the Brazilian Ministry of Health, and Brazilian biotechnology company Orygen Biotecnologia SA.

The vaccine is the "result of exemplary public-private partnerships," said Paulo Gadelha, president of the Oswaldo Cruz Foundation.—Xinhua

Brazil sees 1,775 deaths from swine flu in 2016

RIO DE JANEIRO — At least 1,775 people died from the H1N1 virus, also known as the swine flu, in Brazil between 1 January and 13 August, the Ministry of Health announced Thursday.

According to the data, Brazil is seeing the highest level of deaths from the virus since 2009, when the World Health Organisation declared a swine flu pandemic, which killed 2,060 people that year in the country.

Brazil's most populous state of Sao Paulo has seen most deaths with 737, followed by the southern states of Parana, 206 deaths, and Rio Grande do Sul, 182 deaths.

This year's deaths far outstrip the low 36 deaths in 2015 and the 163 deaths in 2014.

The symptoms of swine flu, so named because it mutated to spread from pigs to humans, are high fever of over 39 degrees, coughing, intense head, muscular and joint pain, and irritation of the eyes.

In order to counter the spread of the virus, Brazilian states have accelerated vaccination campaigns, focusing particularly on vulnerable segments of the population, such as pregnant women, children and the elderly.

The rise in swine flu deaths is happening at a time when Brazil is also fighting an epidemic of the Zika virus.—Xinhua

Miami hotel bookings slow, airfares fall since Zika outbreak



A woman looks at a Center for Disease Control (CDC) health advisory sign about the dangers of the Zika virus as she lines up for a security screening at Miami International Airport in Miami, Florida, US, on 23 May 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

MIAMI — Travelers have booked fewer hotel rooms in downtown Miami, and leisure airfares to the greater Miami area have inched down in the weeks since the Zika

virus was detected there, data reviewed by Reuters shows.

Hotels sold 2.9 per cent fewer rooms in Miami's central business district and northern neighbor-

hoods during the first three weeks of August than they did a year earlier in the same period, according to hotel data and analytics firm STR.

That area includes the Wynwood arts district where on July 29 Florida officials said they confirmed cases of people who contracted the virus, marking the first transmissions by mosquitoes in the continental United States.

The decline in hotel bookings may be an early indication of the virus's effect on Miami's robust tourism industry, which had an economic impact of \$24.4 billion in 2015, according to the Greater Miami Convention and Visitor Bureau.

The drop in the number of hotel room sales for the downtown and north Miami areas is a departure from largely uninterrupted growth in bookings there at least since 2010. From January 2016 through July, hotel stays by paying travelers were up 1.2 per cent

from a year ago, according to STR data.

But for the latest week ended 20 August, the number of hotel rooms sold was down 4.2 per cent, compared to a year earlier.

Jan Freitag, senior vice president of lodging insights at STR, said the decline was not due to abnormally strong numbers the year before, and could reflect the impact of Zika virus concerns.

"We don't know enough yet," Freitag told Reuters, saying he would like to see up to two months of data, and monitor traffic to Miami from Europe and Brazil, both major sources of visitors to South Florida.

"Zika is not only a serious threat to public health. It has the potential to be an equally serious threat to a community's economy," said travel industry analyst Henry Harteveldt, adding that worries about the virus likely contributed to the decline in Miami.—Reuters



Firefighters and rescuers work following an earthquake in Amatrice, central Italy on 27 August 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Italy holds state funeral for 35 of earthquake's victims

ASCOLI PICENO, (Italy) — Italy marked a day of national mourning on Saturday for 290 people killed in a quake that devastated parts of its mountainous heart, holding a state funeral for 35 of the victims.

As political leaders gathered for the funeral Mass, rescuers kept searching through the rubble of the worst hit town, Amatrice, even though they had little hope of finding more survivors from Italy's worst quake in seven years.

Nine more bodies were recovered from the town on Saturday, including three corpses that were pulled overnight from the crumpled Hotel Roma, bringing the death toll in Amatrice alone to 230 residents and tourists.

Italian President Sergio Mattarella flew to the town by helicopter on Saturday to see the damage for himself before traveling on to the nearby city of Ascoli Piceno for the funeral service held in a sports center.

Some 35 varnished wood coffins were lined up in sports hall, including white caskets containing the remains of two of the 21 children killed in the disaster. The youngest victim was five months old. The oldest was 93.

Foreigners who died in the calamity included six Romanians, three Britons, a Spanish woman, a Canadian and an Albanian. The area is popular with vacationers and local authorities are still struggling to pin down how many visitors were there when the quake hit.

Mourners gathered in Ascoli Piceno hours before the service was due to begin to pay their respects. "Even if I didn't know them my heart broke for them. My thoughts are with them because there are people who have lost everything, homes, loved ones," said local resident, Luciana Cavicchiuni. "These things should not happen," she said.

Most of the buildings in the quake zone had no anti-seismic protection, but even some of those that did, including a school in Amatrice that was renovated in 2012, fell apart. Magistrates have opened an investigation into some of the incidents, including the collapse of a belltower in the town of Accumoli, which smashed through the roof of an adjacent building killing a family of four.

"What happened cannot just be considered fate," said prosecutor Giuseppe Saieva, who is lead-

ing the probe. "If these buildings had been constructed like they are in Japan then they would not have collapsed," he told *la Repubblica* newspaper.

Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi, who also attended the funeral, has promised to rebuild the shattered communities and the mayor of Amatrice urged the government to learn the lesson of painfully slow post-quake reconstructions of the past.

"What we need is a reconstruction in record time. It is a great opportunity for politicians to show extraordinary commitment," mayor Sergio Pirozzi told president Mattarella.

Aftershocks continued to rattle the area overnight, the strongest measuring 4.2. The Italian geological institute said some 1,332 aftershocks have hit Italy's central mountains since Wednesday's predawn 6.2 magnitude quake.

Italy sits on two fault lines, making it one of the most seismically active countries in Europe. Almost 30 people died in earthquakes in northern Italy in 2012 while more than 300 died in the nearby city of L'Aquila in 2009.—*Reuters*

US military funded laser technology research at Osaka University

TOKYO — The US military provided hundreds of thousands of dollars to Osaka University between 2013 and 2015 to finance laser technology research at one of the nation's leading schools, university documents obtained through an information disclosure request showed on Saturday.

The discovery comes amid intensifying debate among researchers in the country over whether academics should accept money from defence-linked organisations. The Science Council of Japan, the pinnacle of the Japanese scientist community, frowns upon military-related research.

The latest finding also sheds light on the US military's strong interest in research into cutting-edge technologies with military applications.

The documents obtained from Osaka University show that a male lecturer at the school's Institute of Laser Engineering received a total of \$150,000 from

a research unit in the US military between 2013 and 2015.

Another academic at the institute, a male professor, received a total of \$120,000 in 2014, according to the records. Both academics had applied for research into laser technology, but neither case is believed to have been directly linked to weapons development.

There is no law banning receiving research funds from the US military.

"We accepted the money as a scholarly donation. We went through necessary procedures based on school rules," a university official said.

The US military acknowledged it provided the money but that it is not considering applying the research in a specific way. It also said the funds were meant for research that did not have designing or developing military equipment in mind.—*Kyodo News*

Tunisia's new government wins parliamentary approval, eyes austerity

TUNIS — Tunisia's new government won a confidence vote late on Friday after Prime Minister Youssef Chahed warned in Parliament an austerity programme will be inevitable with thousands of public sector job cuts and new taxes if Tunisia does not overcome its economic difficulties.

The Unity government was backed by 167 of the parliament's 217 members.

The North African state is struggling with lower tourism revenues after two Islamist militant attacks on foreign tourists last year hit what is one of its key industries. Strikes and protests for jobs have also hurt the country's phosphate production.

Chahed has promised his new government will take tough decisions to help the economy grow and create jobs as the country comes under pressure from international lenders to push through reforms and trim public spending.

Lawmakers were meeting on Friday to vote whether to approve Chahed's new government — a broad coalition of secular, Islamist and leftist parties, independents and trade union allies which he believes can deliver on economic reforms.

"If the situation continues like this then in 2017 we will need a policy of austerity, and dismiss thousands of public sector employees and impose new taxes," Chahed told lawmakers before the vote.

Chahed, an ally of President Beji Caid Essebsi, promised a tough line on the economy. But critics question whether he has the political clout to overcome the labour union opposition, strikes and party infighting that have dogged past governments.

He said economic growth this year would not surpass 1.5 per cent, below the official target of 2.5 per cent for the year.—*Reuters*

Convicted bank robber charged in Toronto crossbow deaths

TORONTO — A Toronto bank robber known as the "fake beard bandit" was charged with three counts of first-degree murder after three people were killed in a crossbow attack in the city's east end, police in Canada's largest city said on Friday.

Brett Ryan, 35, who appeared in court briefly on Friday, was arrested in 2008 for committing robberies in disguise, police said. He was charged with more than a dozen counts of robbery and later convicted. Two men and a woman died in the driveway of a house on Thursday.

One of the people who was killed made a 911 emergency call before dying, according to a local newspaper report, which said the suspect had also been wounded.

The police have not offered a reason for the killings nor have they identified the victims.

Property records showed that the house where the three killed was in the name of Susan and William Ryan, 66 and 65 years old, respectively. William Ryan died last year, local media reported.

Brett Ryan had lived at the same house as Susan and William Ryan, according to government

records that indicated bankruptcy proceedings had been initiated for him in 2010. He was jailed for three years and nine months in the bank robbery cases, according to the Canadian Broadcasting Corp.

His lawyer, G.J. Partington, declined to comment.

Ryan's next scheduled court appearance is 2 September.

In another incident on Thursday that police said was related to the killings, police evacuated a downtown building due to a suspicious package. They gave no details on how the cases were related.—*Reuters*



Police are seen at a crime scene in front of a house where three people have died in an incident involving a crossbow in the Scarborough suburb of Toronto, on 25 August 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Brazil police seek graft charges against ex-president Lula

SAO PAULO — Federal police in Brazil urged prosecutors on Friday to bring corruption charges against former president Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva and his wife, Marisa, according to police documents seen by Reuters.

The investigation into the popular predecessor and mentor of suspended President Dilma Rousseff forms part of a sweeping anti-corruption probe into political kickbacks from contracts at state-run oil company Petroleo Brasileiro SA.

The allegations against Lula and his wife relate to the acquisition and renovation of an apartment in the beach resort of Guarujá, about 37 miles (60 km) southeast of Sao Paulo.

Federal police in the southern city of Curitiba have accused Lula and his wife of receiving some 2.4 million reais (\$747,896) in

benefits from construction company OAS in relation to the apartment.

Police have alleged that the apartment in Guarujá, which was bought and refurbished by OAS, was for all intents and purposes a gift to Lula and his family.

Attorneys Cristiano Zanin Martins and Roberto Teixeira, representing Lula and his wife, said allegations by police were without basis and politically motivated. They said the apartment in Guarujá was registered in the name of OAS and that Lula only visited it once, when he and his wife were thinking of buying it.

Under Brazilian law, police can only recommend that a suspect be charged, but it is up to prosecutors to actually lodge charges.

Federal prosecutors would not comment on Friday on what, if any, action they may take against Lula



Former Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva gestures as he attends a meeting with women activists in Santo Andre, Brazil, on 15 August 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

and his wife or others involved in the case.

Police also recommended that corruption charges be brought against former OAS Chief Executive Jose Aldemario "Leo" Pinheiro; the president of

the Lula Institute, Paulo Okamoto; and an architect who worked on the apartment, Paulo Gordilho.

OAS is among 31 builders that colluded to rig contracts at Petrobras. Pinheiro has already been

convicted in the corruption probe and local newspapers have reported he is preparing to name Lula in a plea bargain deal with prosecutors.

A lawyer for Pinheiro declined to comment.

Friday's request by the police is the latest in a series of legal headaches for the former president and it comes as Rousseff faces an impeachment trial in the Senate on charges of breaking budgetary laws.

Rousseff, who has denied any wrongdoing, is expected to be dismissed from office next week.

Last week, a Federal Supreme Court justice authorized the opening of an investigation into Rousseff and Lula for allegedly working to obstruct the course of the corruption probe, Globo TV reported. The court's press office did not respond to requests for comment.

In late July, a federal court ruled that Lula will also stand trial for obstruction of justice for his alleged attempt to stop a jailed former Petrobras executive from collaborating with investigators.—Reuters

Experts expect localisation to boost China-ASEAN industrial capacity cooperation

KUALA LUMPUR — As more and more Chinese companies tap into the burgeoning Southeast Asian market, expert and company officials expect localisation to be a key aspect to boost industrial capacity cooperation between China and members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

The long-time friendly ties and close neighbourhood provide China and ASEAN countries with unique advantages in industrial capacity cooperation, especially under the Belt and Road Initiative, namely the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road.

Lu Jianren of China-Asean Research Institute in Guangxi University sees great potential in cooperation between China and

ASEAN that was built on solid foundation.

"In the past, we cooperated in traditional sectors like agriculture, now we are working on areas like infrastructure, industrial parks under the Belt and Road Initiative," he told Xinhua in a recent interview during a seminar in Malaysia.

Some ASEAN countries are lagging behind in infrastructure where China has advantages in expertise, he said, adding that China have also provided funding support through mechanisms like the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and Silk Road Fund.

China has long advocated win-win cooperation with ASEAN and Chinese companies are attaching greater importance to bringing in benefits to the local communities and industries.

Tang Zhimin, dean of international college at the Panyapiwat Institute of Management in Thailand, said more considerations should be put into ways in better matching China's industrial advantages with the demand of ASEAN countries.

"Localisation is very important of industrial capacity cooperation," said Lu.

For China Railway Rolling Stock Corporation, its ASEAN manufacturing hub based in Malaysia is a all-around exploration for the company to expand operation overseas and seek industrial capacity cooperation. The company has put localisation as one of the top priorities.

"We use localization to seek breakthrough in industrial capacity cooperation,"

said Li Hong, general manager of the CRRC Rolling Stock Center.

One year into full operation at the facility, the effort has already bear fruits. In the 50-acre CRRC Rolling Stock Centre in the Malaysian state of Perak, local technicians can be seen working side by side with Chinese counterparts.

"More than 80 per cent of our total staff and more than 90 per cent of the technicians at the production line are local recruited, as well as two of its four department chiefs," said Li.

"We also have our eyes on the future by sending some of the staff to further studies in China, fully funded by the company. We hoped that they could strengthen our management team in the future," he told Xinhua.—Xinhua

African migrants go to Italian quake zone to help survivors

PESCARA DEL TRONTO, (Italy) — African migrants hoping to start a new life in Italy after risking their lives crossing the Mediterranean have headed to the area of Wednesday's earthquake, helping local people who lost everything in the disaster.

Wearing bright orange overalls, the group from a temporary hostel about 50 km (30 miles) away blended in on Friday with other volunteer workers who

have come from all over Italy.

"We need to help the people here," said a 20-year-old man from the West African state of Benin, who gave his name only as Abdullah.

"We saw people losing their lives and we feel bad. It's to show respect for them and their dignity," he told Reuters Television on the outskirts of Pescara del Tronto, one of the devastated villages.

Using shovels, hoes and rakes, the group of about 20 migrants helped to prepare the ground for tents and cleared a field for helicopter landings. During a break, the migrants, who are all Muslims, knelt to pray near one of the tents.

"It was their idea. They wanted to do something, so we helped make it happen," said Letizia Dellabarba of the Human Solidarity Group (GUS) charity that brought the migrants to

Pescara del Tronto.

Hopes of finding more survivors faded on Friday three days after the powerful quake hit central Italy, with the death toll rising to 267.

Italy has taken in more than 420,000 boat migrants, most from Africa, since the start of 2014. The influx has caused political friction, with some right-wing parties lambasting the government for not doing more to halt the flow.—Reuters

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MV PACAO VOY. NO ()

Consignees of cargo carried on MV PACAO VOY NO () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 28.8.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.W.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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Oops! Britney Spears does it again in latest pop culture comeback



Singer Britney Spears. PHOTO: REUTERS

NEW YORK — Britney Spears is hitting up pop culture one more time, releasing a new album, singing retro karaoke hits and about to take the MTV Video Music Awards (VMA) stage for the first time since 2007.

Spears, 34, who became a teen pop phenomenon with breathy, sexually-charged hits like “Toxic” and “Oops!.. I Did it Again,” released new album “Glory” on Friday ahead of a much anticipated return to the VMA show on Sunday in New York.

She also became the latest superstar to ride, sing and chat with US talk show host James Corden for his viral “Carpool Karaoke” segment, where both donned the schoolgirl uniforms that shot her to fame as a 16-year old in the 1998 music video for “... Baby One More Time.”

Spears dominated pop music before undergoing a personal and career meltdown in 2006-2007 that included shaving her signa-

ture blonde locks, losing custody of her two children and being placed under a court-ordered conservatorship.

She made a comeback in late 2008 and for the past three years has been performing a nightly show in Las Vegas. But the new album and the anticipation surrounding her VMA performance have thrust her back in the national spotlight.

Rolling Stone’s Rob Sheffield said “Glory” was “another fantastic comeback” for Spears, in which she “goes back to the fizzy electro-stomp mode she does best.”

“Glory” was top of the iTunes charts in more than 40 nations on Friday, including Saudi Arabia, Chile and Russia.

Billboard’s Jennifer Keishin Armstrong said that with the single and music video for “Make Me”, Spear had “reclaimed her standout talent, a distinctive dance style that combines cheerleader

precision with slinky bits of burlesque.”

Spears will perform “Make Me,” with rapper G-Eazy, at the live VMA show, her first appearance there since her halting performance of “Gimme More” in 2007 when her career hit a low.

“She has had such a huge impact on this show throughout her career, so for us to have her back is a no-brainer,” said Garrett English, executive producer of the VMA show.

“She embodies what the VMAs is to a large extent and she has had some of the biggest moments on this stage, and I think Sunday night will be the same,” English added.

Spears is also to be the subject of a 2017 TV biopic for the Lifetime cable channel that will chart her rise to fame along with her stumbles, and her romances with Justin Timberlake and ex-husbands Jason Alexander and Kevin Federline.—Reuters

Madonna surprises fans at screening of documentary on her life

LOS ANGELES — Pop icon Madonna has surprised her fans by attending the screening of Madonna: Truth or Dare on its 25th anniversary. The fans got excited after watching the 58-year-old Vogue hitmaker at the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) event in New York City, reported People magazine.

“She came out to support Alek Keshishian, her longtime friend and director of the celebrated documentary,” a source said. The Body of Evidence star shared a picture of herself on the social media and thanked Keshishian for the film.

“Surreal Moment! At the MOMA!! So nice to watch a film

in a museum. So many freedoms we take for granted that we did not have then. Thank you, Alek Keshishian. We changed history with this film,” she wrote on the occasion.

In another photo, she is seen in a long red off-the-shoulder dress with her daughter, Lourdes Leon, aka Lola and wrote, “Having a kiki with Lola after 25th Anniversary Screening of Truth Or Dare at the MOMA!”

Lately, Queen of pop Madonna had taken to Instagram to mark her son Rocco’s 16th birthday and described him as a wild child. The Hung Up hitmaker was estranged from her second child for several months at the beginning of this year, after he left her tour in December to live in the UK with his father Guy Ritchie, but they have been taking steps to repair their relationship and she took to Instagram on Thursday to share a number of posts in honour of the teenager’s birthday.—PTI



The fans got excited after watching the 58-year-old Madonna at the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) event in New York City, reported People magazine. PHOTO: PTI

Actress apologises after actor son’s arrest on rape charge

TOKYO — A veteran actress apologised Friday after her lesser-known actor son was arrested on a rape charge three days earlier.

“I cannot apologise enough for expressing how sorry I am to the victim and to the people who have been affected by the cancellation of my son’s appearances (in TV programmes and films) and those who have to do the filming work all over again,” Atsuko Takahata told

a packed press conference.

Wearing dark gray clothes, the 61-year-old actress said she met with her 22-year-old son, Yuta, on Thursday at the police station in Gunma Prefecture where he has been detained.

The actor, who came under the spotlight after appearing in NHK’s drama series “Mare” last year, cried and told his mother “I’m sorry,” the elder Takahata

said. The actress said she will not cancel her scheduled stage appearance from September. Yuta Takahata was arrested on suspicion of raping an employee of a hotel in Maebashi where he was staying. He allegedly asked the woman in her 40s to bring a toothbrush to his room and forcibly brought her inside and raped her. The police said the suspect has admitted to the charges.—Kyodo News

Horror-thriller ‘Don’t Breathe’ set to trump ‘Suicide Squad’ at the US box office



Jane Levy in “Don’t Breathe.” PHOTO: REUTERS

LOS ANGELES — “Don’t Breathe”, a tense psychological horror-thriller, is expected to topple DC antiheroes “Suicide Squad” at the US box office this weekend.

According to BoxOfficeMojo.com, “Don’t Breathe,” about a group of friends who plan to rob a blind man’s house with terrifying consequences and made for less than \$10 million, is predicted to take between \$11 million and \$14 million in its first three days.

Warner Bros’ “Suicide Squad” is expected to pull in another \$9.6 million in its third week of release at the box office this weekend, while Sony Pictures’ raunchy animated comedy “Sausage Party” is also expecting a strong holdover in its third week with \$7.5 million.

Also opening this weekend is Jason Statham’s action-packed “Mechanic: Resurrection,” boxing drama “Hands of Stone” and romance “Southside With You.”

Statham leads the cast including Jessica Alba and Tommy Lee Jones in “Mechanic: Resurrection”, a sequel to the 2011 action film “The Mechanic”, which is expected to open with around \$9.8 million this weekend.

Weinstein Co’s “Hands of Stone”, starring Robert de Niro, singer-actor Usher Raymond and Edgar Ramirez, and “Southside With You,” the Barack and Michelle Obama first date love story starring Tika Sumpter and Parker Sawyers, are both expected to open between \$2 million to \$3 million at the box office.—Reuters

LCDR AUNG TUN (Retd)

Navy-3086

Deputy Director (Retd) P.I.C – CMD

(84) Years

Son of late U MAUNG MAUNG GALAY and DAW PHI, beloved husband of DAW KHIN KHIN @ GUL BANO, of No.91, 2nd Floor, 51st Street (Middle Block), Pazundaung Township, and father of ABBAS ALI and Mrs. ZEHREEN HOSAIN; U AUNG MYIN and DAW WIN MAR LWIN; U MYINT SEIN and DAW HLA HLA YIN; KEVIN BEHBAHANY and Mrs. JINDI LI and grandfather of six grandchildren expired at 6:55am on Friday, 19 AUGUST 2016 and buried at 3:30pm on the same day at MOGUL SHIAH MUSLIM BURIAL GROUND, Yangon.

Bereaved Family

U Wynn Myat

(Apollo)

47 years

Grandson of Rev. Mahn Po Way and Gha Aye Shwe of 466, Lower Kyimyindine Road, grandson of Mr. Mahinder Singh and Daw Eyat of Moulmein, Son of Mr. B. Singh @ U Aung Wynn and Daw Mya Mya Way, brother of Dr. Khin Mya Wynn and Daw May Thu San, uncle of Kaung Si Thu, fell asleep in Jesus on Friday, 26 of August, 2016, at 7:30 PM. Funeral service will be held at Yeway Ecumenical Garden, at 10 AM on 29 August 2016.

Bereaved family

Batman suit boasting 23 gadgets earns Guinness World Record

NEW YORK — Boasting a “bat tracker”, a bat sign projector for the nighttime sky, smoke guns and an array of other devices, a Batman costume fitted with 23 gadgets has earned a place in the Guinness World Records book.

The bulky black-caped suit, made by Batman fan and special effects expert Julian Checkley, takes the title for “the most functional gadgets on a cosplay suit”, Guinness World Records said in a statement.

The costume, which will feature in the “Guinness World Records: Gamer’s Edition 2017”, is based on the suit the superhero wears in videogame “Batman: Arkham Origins”.—Reuters

Office workers turn urban gardeners on Paris luxury store rooftops

PARIS — Le Bon Marche and La Grande Epicerie, two landmark Paris luxury stores have turned their joint rooftops into an urban garden for staff who can grow their own crops in their free time.

In the past months, the LVMH-owned adjoining stores on Paris’s residential left bank have built planter boxes on a 700 square metre (7,500 square feet) roof area, where the store’s employees grow 60 or so kinds of fruit, vegetables and herbs such as strawberries, zucchinis, mint and lavender.

The stunning views over Paris and the chance to learn about gardening have attracted 200 of the stores’ 1,500 employees, selected by lottery, and put the stores at the forefront of the city’s urban gardening drive.

By 2020, the Paris city government wants to have 100 hectares (1 square km) of green roofs, sidewalks and walls, with one third dedicated to the production of fruits and vegetables.

“In the beginning we spent more time looking at the amazing view than at the planter boxes, but this is a great place to grow vegetables and meet colleagues,” said Charlotte Arnoux, recruitment officer and first-time gardener.

Arnoux and seven colleagues take turns taking care of three one square meter (11 square feet) planter boxes in which they grow sorrel, basil and different varieties of tomatoes, all without the use of pesticides.

The stores’ customers are not aware of the garden over their heads and cannot visit it, but the initiative has drawn visitors from other companies in France and abroad who want to set up similar rooftop gardens for staff.

“Given the impact this has on staff morale, the cost of investment was minimal,” said technical director Hubert Genet.

The stores’ own technical staff built the planters and converted the narrow rooftop into an urban garden. —Reuters

A man walks between planter boxes on the 700 square metre (7500 square feet) rooftop of the Bon Marche, where the store’s employees grow some 60 kinds of fruits and vegetables such as strawberries, zucchinis, mint and other herbs in their urban garden with a view of the capital in Paris, France, on 26 August 2016. PHOTO:REUTERS

A mudlark shows a Henry VII coin that he excavated from the River Thames in London, Britain, on 23 May 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Searching for history along the Thames

LONDON— A torch on his head, Jason Sandy scours the nighttime London foreshores of the Thames river, searching for objects that could offer a glimpse of life in the British capital hundreds of years ago.

As the occasional party boat passes by, its music blasting and lights flashing, the 42-year-old architect only has a few hours while the tide is low to make his finds.

Sandy has been mudlarking for a hobby for the last five years, scouring the river banks for historical artifacts.

Some of his finds are so rare they are displayed in museums.

“Over 2,000 years of time, everything has been thrown into the Thames, accidentally lost ... dropped so 2,000 years of history are down there,” he said.

“It’s really the thrill of almost like time traveling and knowing that the last person to touch this was from that time period,” he added, describing the feeling of making a find.

Sandy, originally from Chicago, has found numerous artifacts like a Tudor comb, Victorian toothbrush and a Roman women’s hair pin, which the Museum of London dated to AD 43. —Reuters

MRTV

Entertainment Channel

(28-8-2016, Sunday)

06 : 00 pm

• Weather Report

• Cartoon “ Ice Age; Dawn of the Dinosaurs ” (Part- 1)

06 : 50 pm

• MRTV Entertainment Music

07 : 05 pm

• Myanmar Video

08 : 20 pm

• MRTV Entertainment Music

08 : 40 pm

• Bogalay Tint Aung: A Man of Versatility (Part- 2)

* 02 : 00 Pm Live: “SMM” 2016 Yangon Aerodrome Asian Men’s Club Volleyball Championship, NPT

* 09 : 20 Pm Live: Premier League “ Manchester City Vs West Ham United ”

From 28-8-2016 (Sunday) 6:00 pm

To 29-8-2016 (Monday) 6:00 pm

09 : 05 pm

• International Movie Songs

09 : 15 pm

• Preparation for Peace Light Art Festival

09 : 30 pm

• Music Programme

09 : 45 pm

• Come Beat Eggs For Fun & Reward

10 : 05 pm

• Myanmar Movie

mitv

Myanmar International

(28-8-2016 07:00am ~ 29-8-2016 07:00am) MST

Today Fresh

07:03 Am News

07:26 Am Wet Markets of Yangon: Thirimingalar Market

07:34 Am Marketable Goods (Straw painting)

07:53 Am School for the Blind

08:03 Am News

08:26 Am Five Treasures in the Ancient City of Mrauk U

08:42 Am We’ll Leave After 12 Passengers are on Board.....

08:57 Am H.E.L.P (9) Don’t keep Lots of Food in House

09:03 Am News

09:26 Am The Precious Lands of Myanmar

(Mandalay Region)

10:03 Am News

10:25 Am Myanmar’s Traditions and Culture: The Golden Land

10:45 Am Chanmyay Yeiktha Meditation Centre- Chaw Dwin Gone

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

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

Prime Time

07:03 Pm News

07:25 Pm To The Land of Countless Temples- Bagan Trip (Ep-2)

07:48 Pm Today Myanmar: The Plastic School

08:03 Pm News

08:26 Pm National Literary Icon and Guiding Light of Myanmar Literature (Ep-3) “National Literary Icon In His Old Age”

08:54 Pm Myanmar Masterclass: Contemporary Art

(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)

Lewandowski treble as six-goal Bayern rout Werder

MUNICH — Robert Lewandowski's hat-trick helped give coach Carlo Ancelotti a flying start to his first Bundesliga campaign as Bayern Munich cruised to an easy 6-0 win over Werder Bremen at the Allianz Arena on Friday.

The champions went ahead with a stunning ninth-minute volley from Xabi Alonso before Poland striker Lewandowski opened his account four minutes later from a Franck Ribery through ball.

Lewandowski then effectively put the game beyond Werder's reach one minute into the second half.

Captain Philipp Lahm and Ribery made it 5-0 before Lewandowski completed his treble with a 77th-minute penalty, his second hat-trick of the season after he also bagged one in the Ger-

man Cup last week. Italian Ancelotti, who replaced new

Manchester City coach Pep Guardiola at Bayern in the close season, said before the game that the Bavarians were aiming to win every competition this term.

Alonso opened the scoring against an outclassed Werder team when the Spanish midfielder was given time to control the ball before smashing it into the top corner of the net from 20

metres.

Ribery then cut the Werder defence wide open to set up Lewandowski's first goal of the night.

Better finishing could have given the Pole his hat-trick before half-

time.

He failed to convert on the rebound after a 25-metre shot by Thomas Mueller hit the post and in the 38th minute his close-range effort struck the crossbar.

Bayern have won the Bundesliga for the past four seasons and they showed no signs of easing up in the second half.

Lewandowski made it 3-0 when he met Mueller's cross to prod the ball in from waist height.

Lahm struck after a one-two with Mueller before Ribery, who was excellent throughout, also found the net.

Lewandowski rounded off the scoring after Thiago was fouled from behind in the box.

On Saturday, last season's runners-up Borussia Dortmund start their campaign at home to coach Thomas Tuchel's former club Mainz while Borussia Mönchengladbach entertain Bayer Leverkusen.—Reuters



Bayern Munich's Robert Lewandowski scores the sixth goal against Werder Bremen during German Bundesliga at Allianz Arena, in Munich Germany on 26 August 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Jutanugarn grabs lead, eyes fifth title of the year

CALGARY (Canada) — Thailand's Ariya Jutanugarn set her sights on a fifth victory this year as she moved to a three-stroke lead after the second round of the Canadian Women's Open on Friday. Jutanugarn completed the final two holes of her delayed first round in the morning, where she finished at four-under-par, then fired a bogey-free eight-under-par 64 in the second round to move to 12-under and take command.

South Korea's Chun In-Gee (67) and Northern Ireland's Stephanie Meadow (69) trail her at nine-under.

The second ranked player in the world, Jutanugarn won the Women's British Open in her last event but withdrew from the third round at the Rio Olympics with a knee injury.

The knee didn't appear to bother her on the way to a red-hot second round.

"So I know I hurt my knee, so that's why I didn't play very good on the third round (in the Olympics)," Jutanugarn told reporters.

"And after the draw I just felt OK. I just had to rest and take care of my knee. So after that I feel like just play golf, and it didn't feel like anything changed."

World number one Lydia Ko, seeking her fourth Canadian Women's Open, is four shots behind at eight-under-par after shooting a three-under 69 in the second round.—Reuters

Challenging early foes for Djokovic, Williams

NEW YORK — Top seeds Novak Djokovic and Serena Williams face challenging early tests at the US Open following Friday's draws for the year's last grand slam starting on Monday.

Djokovic, who has been bothered by a wrist injury, faces towering Jerzy Janowicz of Poland in his opening match at Flushing Meadows, and is likely to meet 48th-ranked Jiri Vesely of the Czech Republic in the second round.

Vesely beat the Serbian world number one earlier this season on clay in Monte Carlo.

"I'm doing everything in my power ... to make sure that I'm as close to 100 percent as possible," Djokovic told reporters, saying he hurt his wrist in Rio a few days

before the start of the Olympic tournament, where he lost in the first round.

Williams, recovering from a shoulder injury that contributed to her third-round exit in Rio, drew Russian lefthander Ekaterina Makarova as her first opponent.

The 34-year-old American, seeking to break her tie with Steffi Graf for most grand slam singles titles in the Open era on 22, has a 4-1 career record against Makarova, but lost to the Russian in the fourth round at the 2012 Australian Open.

Williams is in a strong quarter that also includes fifth seed Simona Halep of Romania and 16th-seeded Australian Sam Stosur, who beat the American in the 2011 US Open final.

Djokovic is seeded to face either Frenchman Richard Gasquet or big-serving American John Isner in the fourth round, with France's Jo-Wilfried Tsonga or 2014 champion Marin Cilic, who ended Andy Murray's win streak in the Cincinnati final, as possible quarter-final opponents.

Men's second seed Murray, who ran off 22 wins in a row including his second Wimbledon title and successful defence of his Olympics crown, appeared to get a more favourable draw.

The Scotsman opens against Czech Lukas Rosol, has Grigor Dimitrov of Bulgaria or Feliciano Lopez of Spain as potential fourth-round foes with Japan's sixth-seeded Kei Nishikori possibly waiting for him in the

quarters.

Third seed Stan Wawrinka, who is in Murray's half of the draw, begins against Spanish veteran Fernando Verdasco, and may have to deal with a young Australian, Bernard Tomic or Nick Kyrgios, in the fourth round.

The dangerous Juan Martin del Potro of Argentina, the 2009 champion who showed in claiming Olympic silver that he is regaining form after a long recovery from an injured wrist, could be there to oppose the Swiss double slam winner in the quarter-finals.

Fourth-seeded Rafa Nadal, winner of 14 slams, and fifth seed Milos Raonic of Canada could clash in the quarters for a possible semi-finals showdown with Djokovic.—Reuters

Rose equaliser denies Liverpool victory at Tottenham

LONDON — Danny Rose scored a second-half equaliser to cancel out James Milner's penalty as Tottenham Hotspur came from behind to draw 1-1 with Liverpool at White Hart Lane on Saturday.

Erik Lamela nodded Eric Dier's cross into the path of Rose in the 72nd minute and the England left back controlled the ball and slammed it past Simon Mignolet to extend Spurs' unbeaten start to the season.

Milner beat Michel Vorm from the spot in the 43rd minute

after Erik Lamela had tripped Roberto Firmino in the box, as Spurs struggled to deal with Liverpool's attacking firepower.

Stand-in goalkeeper Vorm made an excellent save to deny Philippe Coutinho from close range and was twice called out of his area to tackle the outstanding Sadio Mane as the visitors created chance after chance during the first half. Tottenham's Danny Rose scores their first goal against Liverpool during Premier League at White Hart Lane, on 27 August 2016.—Reuters



Tottenham's Danny Rose scores their first goal against Liverpool during Premier League at White Hart Lane, on 27 August 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS