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REFORMS CALL FOR FRUGALITY

President addresses fiscal challenges at finance meeting



President U Htin Kyaw addresses the finance commission meeting 2/2016 in Nay Pyi Taw on 31st October, 2016. PHOTO: MNA

THE Union Government is preparing to speed up reforms in the monetary sector after Myanmar experienced some instability with its currency.

President U Htin Kyaw made his remarks at the finance commission meeting held at the meeting hall of the President's House yesterday to revise budget estimates submitted by regions and states for the 2016-2017 fiscal year.

"Myanmar experienced instability of foreign exchange rates in answer to the impact on all foreign currencies depending on the rising dollar value," said President U Htin Kyaw. "Inflation is found to be caused by consecutive deficits and imbalanced demand

and supply. The nation is preparing to accelerate reforms in monetary sector".

He also disclosed that the government is planning to seek more subventions, or grants of money for the country's small and medium industries and to build national industries, calling for frugally and systematically spending money in times of slow global economies.

When the new government took control earlier this year, budget estimates for the 2016-2017 financial year and the Law on Union Budget were amended at the 2nd Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, as the Union's ministries were reformed.

Speaking at the meeting yes-

The governmental organisations to undertake responsibility and accountability, as there is growing concern about the national economy.

terday, the president urged the finance commission to submit laws on allotment of the revised budget to the 3rd regular session of 2nd Pyidaungsu Hluttaw.

Due to the revised budget, respective ministries have to wait

to spend their budget, which affects inland market to some extent, the president said.

He also disclosed that the IMF urged the government to make necessary reforms because of the slow growth of the global economy.

As a consequence, progress in the trade sector of Myanmar is slowing and, according to the estimate released by the IMF, Asian countries are continuing to stand at favourable levels in progress, he added.

"At the same time, we need to speed up reforms in the economic sector. As per the current situation of the State's macroeconomy, the nation's GDP may be lower than expected," said the president.

That was attributed to a decline in produce in the agricultural sector due to natural disasters, reduced wood production in the forestry sector, a shortage of income in the oil and petroleum sector due to decreasing oil prices worldwide and a reduction in the mining of minerals to lessen the effects on the environment.

"Following the State Counsellor's state visit to the United States, economic sanctions were lifted (and) co-incidentally at the time of promulgation of new investment law. To promote economic development, 12 economic principles were laid down and prioritised policies on investment were issued.

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သဒ္ဓါထက်သန် မြန်မာအားမန် ကမ္ဘောဇဘဏ်

BFM's warm clothing donations reach IDPs in northern Shan State



BFM's warm clothes for IDPs in northern Shan State being handed over. PHOTO: THURA LWIN (Eco)

WARM clothes donated by KBZ's Brighter Future Myanmar Foundation have reached internally displaced persons in northern Myanmar in advance of the predicted extreme cold weather this winter.

Members of the philanthropic foundation delivered more than 250 articles of warm clothing to the IDPs from Kehsi and Mongkai townships who are being sheltered at the IDP camp in Tonglaw Village, Mongkai Township. The BFM also donated K10 million to the camp.

As part of the effort to brace for La Nina in the upcoming winter, the BFM has imported clothing from China at the cost of more than US\$2million to distribute to residents, including IDPs, in areas which are expected to experience extreme cold weather.

The move comes under the guidance of the foundation's chairperson Daw Nang Lang Kham after weather experts warned that extremely cold weather was coming to parts of Myanmar this year, said U Aung Kyaw Soe of the BFM.

The foundation delivered more than 3,500 pieces of imported warm clothing to ethnic people in Lahe, Naga Self-administered Zone in Sagaing Region in mid-August, more than 3,000 pieces of warm clothes and 10,080 packs of dried instant noodles to IDPs in Myaing Gyi Ngu and Maethawaw in Kayin State in September, more than 7,650 articles of warm clothing to IDPs in Namtu and more than 36,500 pieces of warm clothing to ethnic people including monks and nuns in the Mandalay Region. The delivery of warm

clothes to areas which are expected to be hit by extreme cold weather will continue, the BFM said.

Similarly, BFM also provided Ks30 million and 300 articles of warm clothes to the victims and families of those who died in the Aung Soe Moe ferry capsizing accident in the Chindwin River last month and Ks71 million as second aid to the victims.

The foundation has carried out philanthropic works since the Cyclone Nargis hit the country in 2008. So far, the BFM it has spent more than K109 billion on evacuation, relief and resettlement of peoples nationwide who are affected by disasters. The money is also spent on disaster preparedness, education, health, religion and sports in communities across the country. —Thura Lwin (Eco)

Road reconstruction in Thanhlyin Tsp tops list of authorities' priorities

RECONSTRUCTION of roads across Thanhlyin Township in Yangon tops the list of authorities' priorities, according to Hluttaw representatives from Thanhlyin Constituency.

The Union government allotted Ks100 million budget for a construction, upgrading and expansion of road networks in Thanhlyin Township, a major port city of Myanmar, located across Bago River from the commercial city of Yangon.

The funds went mainly to construct road facilities in cooperation with residents. The regional authorities allotted Ks5 million each to villages or wards. Usually, a road will be built with two-third of funds provided by the government and the rest contributed by residents. Development works have been initiated since last month and it is estimated to finalise each road paving projects before the end of this financial

year.

Ko Naing Moe Wai, one of the residents from Thanhlyin Township, said the government is now replacing the broken roads with concrete ones in some villages.

Moreover, water supply project, garbage management system, electricity and other sanitation activities have also been carried out by authorities in partnership with local people. —Myitmakha News Agency

Middle-school teacher charged with bilking Ks9.3 million from job seekers

A MIDDLE-school teacher in Bago Region has been charged with bilking Ks9.3 million from job seekers, who want to employ government's education department, by police at the end of October.

The female teacher from a post-primary school in Kutaung

Village in Bago Township, currently accused of committing fraud against two women by using illegal appointment letters.

After an investigation into the suspected teacher, the Bago Region police took further legal action against her on suspicion of bilking over nine million

from other 19 job hunters within August, said Police Captain Soe Paing.

The school teacher is facing legal charges under Sections 420/468 of the Penal Code, the crime of cheating of people money illegally. —Myitmakha News Agency

Kachin State needs Tatmadaw's assistance to eliminate illegal timber trading

SECURITY assistance provided by the Tatmadaw (Myanmar Armed Forces) plays a crucial role in eliminating illegal trading of forest products in Kachin State, said U Naing Naing Tun, assistant director of the state environmental conservation and forest department.

The majority of illegal timber trafficking cases occurred along border area between China and Myanmar through conflicts-hit Kachin State.

There is no sufficient number of staff at the forest department. The department can send only two staffers to inspect 100,000-acre of forest to prevent the timber smuggling in the state.

Forest police can arrest some

cases occurred in the townships. However, the department needs the help of police and members of Myanmar Armed Forces to seize the illegal logging in conflict areas, said Col Thura Myo Tin, Kachin State Minister for Security and Border Affairs.

Currently, the local authorities are making inspection along Ayeyawady River to control illegal logging in the target area.

At the same time, the department accelerates its efforts to uncover the staff involved in the illegal logging. Action is being taken against an employee of forest department involved in the illegal timber trafficking this year under the existing laws. —Myitmakha News Agency

Crime NEWS Man arrested for murder of his neighbour

A 25-YEAR-OLD man was arrested on Sunday afternoon on suspicion that he stabbed his neighbor to death, police reported yesterday.

According to the investigators, the suspect named Saw Lwel Hla Htoo said that he killed the 49-year-old men called U Gyi Nan (aka U Khin Htwe), a farm worker, who bothered the suspect's wife before he was killed.

Police found the body of the victim with several knife injuries on his head and back of the body, in the creek near Hlasingon Village in Patheingyi Township in Ayeyawady Region at around 5 p.m on October 29. The suspect is now facing legal charges under Section 302 and Section 201 of the Penal Code for murdering and causing disappearance of evidence of offence. —Myitmakha News Agency

Yaba pills seized in Taunggyi and Kyaukse Townships

TAUNGGYI Myoma Police searched a motorbike driven by Maung Oo on Mongpyin-Taunggyi road in Kaungghmusin village, Taunggyi Township on 29 October and seized 4,680 yaba pills. Similarly, police from the Kyaukse District Police Commander's Office searched a house owned by Ma Htway Htway Shein in Kyoebinchan Ward in Kume,

Myittha Township on 29 October and found her in the house with Win Naung, Ohnlon and Aung Kyaw Hsan. Police seized 425 yaba pills and paraphernalia that is often used in smoking yaba pills.

Police have filed charges against them under the Psychotropic Substances and Anti-Drugs Law. —Myanmar Police Force



Ma Htway Htway Shein, Win Naung, Ohnlon, and Aung Kyaw Hsan being seen together with the seized yaba pills. — PHOTO: MPF

State Counsellor receives Industry and Trade Minister of Czech Republic

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, State Counsellor and Union Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, received a Czech delegation led by Mr Jan Mla'dek, Minister for Industry and Trade of the Czech Republic, yesterday at the Minister's Office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nay Pyi Taw.

At the meeting, they discussed matters pertaining to promoting the bilateral trade and economic cooperation between Myanmar and the Czech Republic including industrial and energy sectors and investments to promote the agricultural sector.— *Myanmar News Agency*



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi holding talks with Mr Jan Mla'dek, Minister for Industry and Trade of the Czech Republic in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

Traffic accidents on Yangon-Mandalay expressway claim 134 deaths

A TOTAL of 633 accidents on Yangon-Mandalay expressway from January to October of this year claimed 134 lives and injured 1,074 people, according to Expressway Police.

Police have been trying to take action against speeding vehicles on the expressway on three sections of the highway and cited over 1,700 drivers who were found to be speeding.

Despite the increased effort, the number of traffic accidents on the highway has not yet decreased. — *Myanmar News Agency*

Suspects in violent armed attacks in Rakhine State arrested

BORDER guard police arrested two men yesterday who allegedly transported to Bangladesh some of the people involved in the 9 October attacks on police outposts in northern Rakhine State. The men allegedly received payment of Ks100,000 per person.

Kawri Mullah, son of Zawhi Ahmed of Thasi Village and Barbaks, son of Sorlah Tulah of Mingalargyi Village in Mingalargyi Village-tract in Maungtaw Township were arrested by police in their respective villages.

According to investigators, the two men also transported others involved in the armed violent attacks in Maungtaw Township to neighbouring countries.

Similarly, Nu Arlaung, a suspect in the violent attacks, was arrested by police on 30 October near Buthidaung Myoma Market.

The detainees have been transferred to Pynphyu Township Police Station and Maungtaw Township Police Station to be charged under the law.— *Myawady*

Suspicious fire broke out in Ngakhuya Village, Maungtaw

A SUSPICIOUS fire that began in a shop in Ngakhuya Village broke out at about 8.30 pm on Sunday. Border guard forces who helped extinguish the blaze.

As the fire spread to other buildings, the border guards had to ask local people from other villages and members of the

security forces to assist them in bringing the fire under control.

The fire engulfed six shops including a motorcycle repair shop, motorcycle parts shop, a furniture shop, a barber shop and two empty stores. Tatmadaw troops and border guards continue to provide security for local people. — *Myawady*



A suspicious fire destroying six shops in Ngakhuya Village. PHOTO: MYAWADY

VP U Myint Swe receives Czech Industry and Trade Minister

Vice President U Myint Swe received Mr Jan Mla'dek, Minister for Industry and Trade of the Czech Republic yesterday in the Diplomatic Hall of the Presiden-

tial Palace in Nay Pyi Taw.

At the meeting, they discussed matters on promoting cooperation for development of the industry, energy, trade and agri-

cultural sectors in Myanmar.

Also present at the call were Minister of State for Foreign Affairs U Kyaw Tin and officials.— *Myanmar News Agency*



Vice President U Myint Swe holding talks with Mr Jan Mla'dek, Minister for Industry and Trade of the Czech Republic in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

President addresses fiscal challenges ...

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Now the process for achieving political stability, national reconciliation and Union peace are on the right path. After the transfer of power from the old regime to the new government, we are now building new administrative machinery. This year, governmental departments need to frugally spend their budgets and to find more revenue. Draft law on revised budget estimates for the fiscal year 2016-2017 to be submitted by Union Minister for Finance, the secretary to the finance commission, is to be discussed and approved" the president said.

Afterwards, Vice President U Myint Swe said: "According

to the budget management during the first 6-month period, some ministries and organisations got a revenue of Ks173.509 billion more than expected, with some spending Ks910.990 billion more than the originally expected amount. Out of Ks2121.779 billion demanded by Union level organisations as a refilled budget, Ks1354.614 billion was allotted. In terms of revenue, the revised estimate is Ks17152.500 billion, and the revised budget expenditure was Ks21177.614 billion, thus the revised estimate expenditure deficit is Ks4025.130 billion. Ratio of deficit and GDP is 4.97. Therefore draft law on revised budget estimate for the year 2016-2017 which has been

assessed by the finance commission needs to be approved".

Vice President U Henry Van Thio, Union Minister U Kyaw Win, Chairman of Nay Pyi Taw Council and region and state chief ministers also gave their opinions. In his closing address, President U Htin Kyaw urged the governmental organisations to undertake responsibility and accountability, as there is growing concern about the national economy. He also said the current situation requires the departments to systematically spend the country's finance in accord with rules and regulations set by internal audits and Union Auditor-General offices.—*Myanmar News Agency*

LOCAL Business



A foreign trader checks jade stones at the mid-year emporium in Nay Pyi Taw last year. PHOTO: MNA

8,000 lots of jade to be on display at Gems and Jewellery emporium

NEARLY 8,000 jade lots will reportedly be exhibited at the Gems and Jewellery Emporium from 22nd to 29th November in Nay Pyi Taw, it is learnt from the Myanmar Gems and Jewellery Entrepreneurs Association.

Companies are currently submitting their jade lots to be on display at the emporium. The accurate number of jade lots, finished gem products and pearl lots are still unknown but an estimate of nearly 8,000 jade lots are likely, officials said.

The rough jade stones will

be sold through an open tender system and competitive bidding, it is learnt.

The jade will be sold for between 4,000 to 200,000 euros per item, according to a reserve price in open tender, whereas it will be sold at 200,001 euros and above in competitive bidding.

Nearly 9,000 rough jade lots were exhibited at last year's emporium, earning 900 million euros, whereas nearly 6,000 jade lots were displayed at the emporium held in June, fetching 520 million euros. — *Ko Htet*

Mandalay No1 and 2 Industrial zones to be upgraded to meet international criteria

THE No. 1 and No. 2 industrial zones in Mandalay will be upgraded to meet international criteria to be able to manufacture agricultural machines and equipment, it is learnt.

There are 392 heavy enterprises, 304 middle-sized enterprises and 596 small-scale enterprises in the Mandalay industrial zone, with 13 categories of manufacturing businesses.

Upgrading of the industrial zone will deal primarily with technical problems. The machines used in production are also required to meet the prescribed criteria. Foreign investment in the zone is essential in order to bring down the prices of equipment and service charges, said U Khin Maung Oo, a businessman in Mandalay industrial zone.

There is virtually no manufacturing of equipment used in agri-business in the zone. If there



Mandalay Myotha Industrial Development Park. PHOTO: MMIDPROJECT.COM

were agricultural machine manufacturing factories in the zone, the machines would more easily reach the farmers in upper Myanmar. Foreign investment can only constitute a maximum of 49 per cent of the agriculture sector, with the remaining 51 per cent going to the state. However, investments of 51 per cent

can be a financial burden on the state. Therefore, this limitation needs to be relaxed, said U Soe Thar, an industrial entrepreneur.

To improve the industrial zone, the authorities concerned are making efforts to provide sufficient electrical supply and sanitation facilities, it is learnt. —200

Management course to be offered in Tokyo for Myanmar executives

THE Overseas Human Resources and Industry Development Association (HIDA) will offer the Role of Executives for Better Industrial Relations in Global Era (ERGE) course to members of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI) from 23rd January to 3rd February, 2017.

Those who meet the set qualifications are entitled to submit applications by 7th November,

2016, presenting the required documents, an autobiography, a membership certificate of UMFCCI or associated companies and a recommendation from their association. For further details, contact hrd.umfcci@gmail.com.

The course will offer practical management skills. Those selected to attend will be funded for accommodation, but applications need to be received before the deadline, said an official from Mandalay Federation of Cham-

bers of Commerce and Industry.

HIDA is an organization for human resources development in developing countries to promote technical cooperation through training, experts dispatch and other programmes.

The course aims at sharing administrative strategies to be applied in industrial relations. They will also share culture, opinions and cooperation with the labour force in Japanese companies. —200

Low market supply increases onion price

The low supply of onions has led to a price increase in recent days, it is learnt from the Bayintnaung commodity depot. Merchants are warned not to manipulate the price and efforts are being made to bring the price back to regular levels, said U Khin Han, the chairperson from the Myanmar Onion, Garlic and Culinary Crops Production and Exporting Association.

The price of onions has increased by Ks1,000 per viss at the Bayintnaung market due mostly to weather conditions that resulted in a lower yield, U Khin Han said.

On 20th October, the price of onions from Seikpyu, Monywa, Meikhtila, Myingyan and Minbu townships soared from Ks175 to Ks875 per viss. The current prevailing price of onions ranges from Ks500 to Ks1,600 per viss, it is learnt from the Agriculture

and Market Information Agency (AMIA).

The volume of onion exports last year was 35,000 tonnes. About 30,000 tonnes of onions were exported to foreign countries so far this year. The export of onions fetched US\$200-225 per tonne, it is learnt.

Myanmar exports onions to China and Thailand through border trade and to Indonesia, Malaysia and Viet Nam through normal trade. Currently, onion exports are suspended due to low supply, said U Khin Han.

During the previous year, the Ministry of Commerce gave permission to import onions from China and Thailand because of the exorbitant prices of domestic onions. Nearly 30 truckloads — about 200,000 visses of onions entered the Bayintnaung depot, it is reported. — *Phyo Lwin Aung* (AMIA)



Farmers work in the farmland in upper Myanmar to grow onion. PHOTO: GNLM

Pakistan court clears way for Imran Khan to hold anti-government protest



Pakistani opposition leader Imran Khan (C) talks to media outside his house in Islamabad, Pakistan, on 28 October 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

ISLAMABAD — A Pakistani court on Monday granted opposition politician Imran Khan permission to hold anti-government protests in the capital this week, but warned that demonstrations should not disrupt life for citizens, media reported.

Khan had threatened to “shut down” the capital Islamabad on Wednesday as part of his push to unseat Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif on grounds of alleged corruption linked to the “Panama Papers” leak.

But on Sunday, he backtracked, saying his rallying cry to stop the government from functioning was not a direct threat, but rather a prediction of what would

happen if his supporters flooded into the city.

The Islamabad High Court on Monday dismissed government challenges to Wednesday’s protests, but ordered that Khan hold the demonstration on a parade ground far from the city’s main government and commercial districts, Geo Television reported.

Justice Shaukat Aziz Siddiqui also ordered the government to ensure protection for the fundamental rights of residents of the capital to go about their daily lives, Geo reported. Last week, the government enforced administrative orders outlawing gatherings of more than five people in

the capital and neighbouring city of Rawalpindi. Since then, dozens of activists belonging to Khan’s Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf have been arrested, the party says.

Khan, a former national cricketing hero, has vowed not to back down unless Sharif either resigns, or submits himself for investigation regarding the ‘Panama Papers’ leaks.

Documents from the Panama-based Mossack Fonseca law firm in April appear to show that Sharif’s daughter and two sons owned offshore holding companies registered in the British Virgin Islands. Sharif’s family denies wrongdoing.—Reuters

Ex-Nissan worker found guilty of illegally obtaining company’s secrets

TOKYO — A former employee of Nissan Motor Co. was found guilty Monday of illegally obtaining business secrets by accessing the company’s computer server.

The Yokohama District Court sentenced Ken-ichi Okamura, 39, to one year in prison, suspended for three years. Prosecutors had sought 18 months in prison.

The defendant had pleaded not guilty, saying the data he acquired from the company did not constitute business secrets.

But Presiding Judge Hiroko Kondo dismissed his claim, saying in the ruling that “access to the data was restricted and so the defendant was aware that they were business secrets.” She added it was reasonable to assume he intended to use the data at his new employer.

According to the ruling, Okamura copied the company’s data on new vehicle plans from his home in Atsugi, Kanagawa Prefecture, and a Nissan-related facility in July 2013.

The prosecutors had also indicted Okamura for allegedly photocopying part of a corporate textbook on vehicle manufacturing processes at the company’s training facility in Yokohama sometime between November 2010 and July 2013, and taking the material with him to another automaker where he found a new job.—Kyodo News

British banker’s defence cites sexual disorder in HK double murder trial

HONG KONG — British investment banker Rurik Jutting was a narcissistic sexual sadist trying to cover a “fragile” shell after school-boy abuse, according to his defence case against charges of murdering two Indonesian women in his Hong Kong apartment.

Opening Jutting’s defence on Monday, lawyer Tim Owen called on Dr Richard Latham, a consulting forensic psychiatrist with Britain’s National Health Service who has worked on between 50 to 75 similar cases. Latham told the Hong Kong court that Jutting suffered from recognised disorders from cocaine and alcohol abuse on top of his other personality disorders of sexual sadism and

narcissism. He stated that at the time of the killings Jutting’s ability to control his behaviour was “substantially impaired”.

“There is this very fragile sense of self esteem underneath it all,” Latham told the court, adding Jutting’s narcissistic tendencies of being boastful was a means to cover up. Owen said Jutting had been a victim of sexual assault during his teenager years at Winchester College, one of Britain’s oldest and most prestigious public schools, when he was forced to perform oral sex on another boy. The defence also detailed Jutting’s father attempted suicide when Jutting was 16. Jutting, a Cambridge University graduate who previously

worked at Bank of America Corp (BAC.N) in Hong Kong, has been accused of murdering Sumarti Ningsih, 23, and Seneng Mujiasih 26, two years ago. The women’s bodies were found in his luxury high-rise Hong Kong apartment. Ningsih’s mutilated body was found in a suitcase on the balcony, Mujiasih’s was found inside the apartment with wounds to her neck and buttocks, the prosecutor told the court.

Jutting has pleaded not guilty to murder on grounds of “diminished responsibility”, but guilty to the lesser charge of manslaughter.

The trial has attracted international scrutiny since it began last week with media flying in from Britain to cover the case and the court



Members from a migrant workers’ group protest outside the High Court in Hong Kong, China on 24 October 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

room has been perpetually full. Jutting captured hours of footage on his iPhone of him torturing Ningsih. He also filmed rambling monologues where he discussed the murders, binged on cocaine and explained his violent sexual fantasies.

“The thing I never had before in a case is the video recordings he made himself because they give you a direct view of what he was like

around the time of these two killings,” Latham told the court.

Latham said that in 2011 Jutting developed a strong preference for sexual violence, torture, rape and slavery. He moved from using pornography to “acting out these things with people in a consensual way and then he gradually testing out things that were not really consensual.”—Reuters

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Key figure in South Korea political crisis appears at prosecutors' office

SEOUL — The woman at the centre of a South Korean political scandal appeared on Monday at the office of prosecutors investigating allegations she used her friendship with President Park Geun-hye to influence state affairs and benefit personally.

Choi Soon-sil, wearing a hat and scarf and covering her face with her hand, pushed her way through a crowd of journalists and people holding up signs demanding her arrest and Park's resignation to enter the prosecution building in Seoul.

"Please forgive me," said Choi, who lost a shoe in the scrum, according to pool reporters who followed her into the building's entrance.

Choi returned to South Korea early on Sunday from Germany, where she had been staying, and was ready to answer prosecutors' questions, her lawyer said earlier.

She had been under intense

pressure to return as the political crisis engulfed Park over allegations that she allowed Choi to use her friendship to exert improper influence and reap benefits.

Thousands of South Koreans rallied on Saturday demanding Park's resignation over the scandal. Angry Koreans say Park betrayed public trust and mismanaged the government, and has lost a mandate to lead.

Opposition parties have demanded a thorough investigation but have not raised the possibility of impeaching the president.

A public apology from Park last week for giving her friend access to draft speeches during the first months of her presidency did little to deflect demands that Park reveal the full nature of her ties with Choi and whether she enjoyed favours because of her friendship with the president.

Park, the daughter of a former president, Park Chung-hee,



Choi Soon-sil (C), who is involved in a political scandal, reacts as she is surrounded by media upon her arrival at a prosecutor's office in Seoul, South Korea, on 31 October, 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

said she had consulted Choi with good intentions and Choi was someone "who gave me help when I was going through a difficult time".

Choi, in her first comments after weeks of reports about her

ties with Park, told a newspaper last week she did get drafts of Park's speeches after Park's election victory but denied she had access to other official material, or that she influenced state affairs or benefited financially.

Choi's lawyer, Lee Kyung-jae, said outside the prosecutors' office that Choi was in poor health and may be suffering from a heart condition, which he would discuss with prosecutors. —Reuters

Australian PM defends proposal to permanently bar boat people

SYDNEY — Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull defended on Monday a proposal to ban asylum seekers who arrive illegally by boat from ever entering Australia again, rejecting criticism from rights lawyers who say it would breach the UN Refugee Convention.

Under Australia's tough immigration laws, asylum seekers intercepted trying to reach the country by boat are sent for processing at detention camps on Papua New Guinea's Manus island and the tiny South Pacific island nation of Nauru.

Some 1,200 people are currently held in the camps, and Turnbull's proposal has sparked speculation that the government has reached some deal for them to be resettled in the United States.

The legality of forever barring people from entering Australia after they have been resettled in a third country, having been officially recognised as refugees, has been questioned by rights lawyers and refugee support groups.

They say it would contravene the UN Refugee Convention, which states that no country will impose penalties on refugees due to their illegal entry or presence.

Turnbull, however, defended the proposal he first made on Sunday, and the government is expected to introduce the amend-



Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull speaks during a news conference in Sydney, Australia, on 30 October 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

ment in parliament next week.

"We have taken legal advice and we are satisfied it is within power and consistent with our international obligations," Turnbull told reporters in Yalata, South Australia.

Turnbull will have to secure backing from independent senators or the opposition Labour Party for the bill to pass into law. Australia's policy of indefinite offshore detention has led to strong domestic and international criticism.

A resettlement deal could help Turnbull's approval ratings, which this month fell to the lowest level since he assumed office in September 2015.

Pressure on Australia to find a country willing to take some of the 1,200 detainees grew after Papua New Guinea's Supreme Court ordered the closure of the

Manus Island detention centres earlier this year.

The United Nations and human rights groups have condemned alleged human rights abuses in the centres.

While refugee advocates welcomed moves to resettle detainees, they fear that more families would be divided if it was passed, and questioned its legality on constitutional grounds.

"The inherently discriminatory legislation is legally dubious and would likely face a constitutional challenge even if it did pass the parliament," said the Refugee Action Coalition.

"Offshore detention has already divided husbands and wives and parents from children, brothers from sisters. Turnbull's threat of a lifetime ban would mean more divided partners and families." —Reuters

Thailand offers \$1bn loan to struggling jasmine rice farmers

BANGKOK — Thailand's rice management committee said on Monday it will offer loans worth \$1 billion to jasmine rice farmers struggling with falling prices, on a condition that they store the grain for six months to slow down market supply.

The new rice harvest season is currently underway in Thailand, the world's second-biggest rice exporter, and the Southeast Asian nation expects output of the grain for the 2016/17 production year to come in at 25 million tonnes.

Prices for jasmine rice, Thailand's highest quality rice, have tumbled to their lowest level in years, leaving the military government scrambling to appease the country's farmers.

The 35.8 billion baht (\$1.02 billion) loan scheme, which will be implemented by Thailand's state-owned Bank for Agriculture and Agricultural Cooperatives (BAAC), is aimed at curbing an oversupply of jasmine rice in the market and stabilising prices, said Commerce Minister Apiradee Tantraporn.

"If we can push up prices

of jasmine rice, prices of other rice varieties will go up too," Apiradee told reporters in a news conference in Bangkok on Monday.

The loans will be provided to 2 million farm households to hold on to their jasmine rice stocks for six months, said Supat Eawchai, the bank's assistant manager.

The government will follow up with other measures to help improve rice prices, Apiradee said.

Prices for Thai 100 per cent jasmine rice were quoted at \$725 per tonne, FOB Bangkok, on Friday.

It was the lowest since hitting \$710 a tonne in January 2008, according to Reuters data.

Thai jasmine rice made up 25 per cent of Thailand's total rice exports from January to August this year, according to data from the Thai Rice Exporters Association.

The commerce ministry said this month its rice export push for the last quarter of 2016 will help support Thai rice prices during the annual harvest period. —Reuters

Smog chokes Delhi as pollution hits hazardous levels

NEW DELHI — Residents of New Delhi woke up to a blanket of smog on Monday as air quality deteriorated sharply overnight in India's capital, triggering warnings that even healthy people were at risk of respiratory problems.

New Delhi ranks among the world's most polluted cities, with air quality usually worsening at this time of year, when smoke from firecrackers celebrating the Hindu festival of lights and crops burnt in nearby states envelops the city of 16 million.

Drivers crawled through a thick fog as experts warned people to avoid outdoor exertion.

"Last night, levels hit the severe category, which is the worst. You could see and sense how the visibility had come down and there was a choking haze all around," said Anumita

Roychowdhury at the Centre for Science and Environment.

Levels of PM 2.5, tiny particulate matter that reaches deep into the lungs, more than doubled within a few hours to 750 micrograms per cubic metre in the city's worst affected parts, India's Central Pollution Control Board said.

That is 30 times a mean guideline of 25 micrograms per cubic metre on average over a 24-hour period set by the World Health Organisation (WHO), which says outdoor air pollution killed 3.7 million people worldwide in 2012.

The US embassy in New Delhi said its air pollution index had late on Sunday breached the "hazardous" level upper limit of 500, at which it stops measuring levels of PM2.5. The index had rocketed to 1,126 by 2 am (2030 GMT).



Security personnel stand guard in front of the India Gate amidst the heavy smog in New Delhi, India, on 31 October. 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Roychowdhury said data was not available to assess if Delhi's air was worse on average than in prior years. Air quality is usually poorest in Delhi's winter months of December and January.

Authorities have responded with measures

such as a ban on old trucks from entering the city and briefly trialling a scheme that limited private vehicle usage to alternate days, but experts say they have done little to reduce pollution.

India is home to four of the world's 10 cities with the worst air pollu-

tion, the WHO said in May. New Delhi ranked 11th.

Almost one in seven children live in areas with high levels of outdoor air pollution, mostly in South Asia, UN children's agency UNICEF said.

China shuts schools and offices if air quality de-

teriorates to extreme levels for three consecutive days, but India has not yet taken similar steps.

"Where is the plan for short- and medium-term action, and for emergency action?" Roychowdhury said. "We need one very urgently."—Reuters

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Indonesian officials urge calm ahead of Jakarta election protest

JAKARTA — Top Indonesian officials on Monday called for calm ahead of a planned protest by hardline Muslim groups that has fuelled concern over religious and ethnic tension in the run-up to next year's election of the capital's governor.

Thousands of hardline Muslims are expected to take to the streets on Friday to protest against the incumbent, who is a Christian and the first ethnic Chinese in the job, after he made comments about the Islamic holy book, the Koran.

But political, security, and religious figures in

the world's largest Muslim-majority nation have urged demonstrators to protest peacefully.

"I, along with religious and political figures, have been cooling sentiment...because rivalries exist, but after elections, we must stand together to build the nation," President Joko Widodo told a joint news conference with top opposition official Prabowo Subianto.

Earlier on Monday, in response to a question about the planned protest, Widodo said, "Protesting is a democratic right and the government guarantees the right to express opin-

ions, but also prioritises public order."

Protest organiser the Islamic Defenders Front, a small hardline group, is known for violent protests and attacks against minorities since it was formed in 1999. It has also frequently protested against Jakarta governor Basuki Tjahja Purnama, known locally as "Ahok". The group made no immediate comment in response to the officials' call for calm. The government will deploy thousands of police and military personnel to provide security on the day of the protest. The post of Jakarta governor is a prestigious

role that is sometimes seen as a stepping stone to higher political office.

President Widodo served as Jakarta governor for 1-1/2 years before running for, and winning, the presidency in 2014.

Purnama, who took over for Widodo, has gained a reputation as a tough reformer, but Muslim groups in several cities have marched against the Protestant governor, urging Jakarta residents not to re-elect him in February.

The governor has the backing of Widodo and his ruling party, however, and remains a frontrunner in opinion polls.—Reuters

India pays tributes to country's 1st woman PM Indira Gandhi

NEW DELHI — India Monday paid rich tributes to the country's first woman prime minister Indira Gandhi on her 32nd death anniversary.

Indian President Pranab Mukherjee, Vice President Hamid Ansari, main opposition Congress party's chief Sonia Gandhi and her son Rahul paid floral tributes to Indira Gandhi at the

former PM's memorial in Delhi, in presence of senior party leaders and former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.

Earlier this morning, Nehru-Gandhi scion Rahul Gandhi had led a rally from the Congress party's headquarters in Delhi to the former prime minister's house where he was assassinated by her bodyguards on 31

October, 1984. However, no minister from the central government was present during the occasion, a senior Congress leader told the media. Indira Gandhi was the only child of India's first prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru. She served as prime minister from 1966 to 1977 and then again from 1980 until her assassination in 1984, making her the sec-

ond-longest-serving prime minister after her father.

She was assassinated in 1984 by her Sikh bodyguards a few months after she had ordered the storming of the Harmandir Sahib (Golden Temple, the holiest shrine of the Sikhs) in the northern Indian state of Punjab's city of Amritsar to counter the Punjab insurgency.—Xinhua

Opinion

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

The Thorn Needs Removing If It Pierces!

Khin Maung Oo

A lie can travel half way around the world while the truth is putting on its shoes.

A lie tends to easily & promptly spread more than the truth. As per human nature, men are more interested in gory and compromising things than pleasing ones. They usually prefer idle gossips to true stories. World-famous persons such as Mark Twain, Winston Churchill and Thomas Jefferson quoted the above saying that depicts definitely human nature in their speeches. However, some lies and concocted stories are found to be conspiracies with subversive aims behind, putting on the wrong face of seeming common gossips.

Following the October 9 armed violent attack in Maung-taw District, northern border area of Rakhine State in which nine border guard policemen were killed and over 50 firearms

were taken away, the area was designated as the military operation zone and area clearance operations had to be launched. Generally analyzing, timely conspired violent attacks with the aids of foreign-based terrorists and terrorist groups can be said to have achieved the success of their strategic objectives to some extent. They waged violent attacks, targeting at going astray in the government's activities to build a state of peace and stability in Rakhine State and for local ethnics to abandon their locations for fear. Concurrently, they spread rumours through website media linking with religious and racial extremists—claiming that females were raped, religious edifices burnt down and their belongings looted—worldwide without hesitation.

As regards the armed attacks in Rakhine State, the State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi em-

phasized, "The government's attempts to solve the problem in all fairness and calibre under rule of law need to be declared to the world. Myanmar government is trying its best in solving problems and claims on violation of human rights, and the meaning of human rights is broad, it is concerned with every country, hence the need for the global understanding and acknowledgement over the government's efforts for stability and peace in the country," in the press conference held on 12 October with the Netherlands Foreign Minister.

In October 9 violent armed attacks, border guard policemen were killed, as were the Tatmataw troops in area clearance operations. Besides, local minorities abandoned their dwelling places and farmlands to leave for safe locations. Some locals fetching firewood and wood in the forest were shot down. To hide the actual situ-

ations, social media are spreading false news and information in connection with terrorist groups via internet website, and international media also spread them, lacking the scrutiny as to whether news are confirmed or not.

As a matter of fact, affairs in northern Rakhine are not concerned with racial and religious conflicts. It is the sole affair which offends the sovereignty of Myanmar and trespasses Myanmar territory. Simultaneously, Rakhine nationals are not the aggressive ones towards foreigners who profess other religions. They have been living together with Islamists Kamans for years. The government is responsible for solving any problems of offending the country's sovereignty, threatening its populace's lives and property, violating rule of law and causing instability.

In other words, the thorn has to be removed as it pierces.

Singing Anyeint and Dancing Anyeint Part (2)

Maha Saddhamma Jotikadhaja Sithu, Dr. Khin Maung Nyunt

(continued from 28-10-2016)

A good comedian has the inborn gift of making jokes out of practically anything and his jokes contain some grains of truth. He is a wise fool. A good *Anyeint* is judged not only by the physical beauty of the dancers and their singing and dancing or the music, but also by the joking talents of the comedians.

Anyeint comedians need to be differentiated from others of the same category such as jesters, buffoons, and clowns.

The American Heritage Dictionary explains buffoon jester and clown together as follows:

"**Clown** = buffoon or jester who entertains by jokes, antics and tricks in a circus, play or other presentation". But on jester it gives the following explanation:

"**Jester** = at medieval court a person who spoke, acted or sang to provoke amusement and laughter".

In Myanmar history, we have court jesters, such as Amat kyi U Paw U of King Bodawpaya's reign. Court jesters occupied high position at the royal court. Ministers or junior minis-

ters (Amat kyi). They were royal advisers. Their main duty was to help the king in his daily routine and to make jokes to please the king and his audience to reduce royal anger or temper when he was ill disposed and to inform or report to the king unpleasant mutters in a joking style. Court jesters were present at places and great houses across the world in the Medieval Age.

Buffoons appeared on the stage of Elizabethan theatre such as Shakespeare's play houses. They also played the role of chroniclers who briefed the synopsis of the play to be performed soon.

Clowns are those who appear at circus. With painted face, weaving specially designed clownish dress, they come out in announced and showed their antics and tricks to cause laughter to the audience or to dispel their boredom.

So Myanmar Comedians in *Anyeint* are not exactly the same as these explained above. They are unique.

Here we may note some noted *Anyeint* dancers and comedians who were very famous in the

heyday of *Anyeint*. They were singers Ma Sein Thone, and dancers Ma Sein Sin, Ma Ngwe Myaing, Au Ba Thauang, University Mya Than Kyi, College Sein, Liberty Mya Yin, UTC Shwe Hnin Zi, College Myaing I.C.S. Ma Tin Shwe, Fashion Aung Ngwe, Mya Thauang Khin, Hla Galay Sein etc.

Among comedians, U Kyin Khe, U Thin Khar, U Oat Si, U Dat San, U Dut Kho, U Taung Gyi, U Chit Saya, U Paw San etc were most well known. Later some of them appeared in Myanmar movies.

In the post Second World War period, Myanmar *Anyeint* gradually declined in every aspect. The mime causes are the impact of foreign entertainments — both live and movies. The I.C.T. Super highway of the Globalization Age has built a borderless global village, Myanmar is no exception to fall victim to the bad impact of this Age.

Myanmar *Anyeint* today becomes all night variety show, including short plays, puppets, magic, stage circus, pop, hip hop songs and dance, and music of all sorts. Songs are hush, jokey, sarcastic, politically and socially satirical, and, sometimes obscene. Dancers wear vulgar dresses; make jerky or acrobatic movements, yell out songs not easily

understandable. Comedians make mockery instead of mimicry, polemics instead of satire and obscenities instead of jokes.

However there are efforts being made by the state by NGOs or by private volunteers to revive typical Myanmar *Anyeint* and bring it back to stage. Myawaddy Anyeint is one outstanding effort of today. A few weeks ago Myanmar Radio and Television MRTV has launched a series of Myanmar *Anyeint* live show on the screen reviving and re-enacting the *Anyeints* of Okkala Aye Kyi, Ma Ngwe Myaing, Liberty Ma Mya Yin, Hla Galay Sein, Daw Au Bar Thauang and many others. We heartily welcome this launch. They should be preserved in the libraries and archives.

(Myanmar performing artists ought to know the following performing arts terms given in the lexicons and dictionaries, should they want to adapt them into Myanmar Performing Arts.)

Opera = A form of theatrical presentation in a dramatic performance is set to music

Operatta = A theatrical production that has many of the musical elements of opera, but is lighter and more popular in subject and style and contains spoken dialogue.

(Italian)

Orchestra = A large groups of musicians who play together on various musical instruments, usually including strings, woodwinds, brass instruments and percussion instruments.

Ballad = A narrative poem, after of folk origin and intended to be sung, consisting of simple stanza and usually having a recurrent refrain. A popular sing, romantic or sentimental

Ballet = An artistic dance form characterized by grace and precision of movement and an elaborate formal technique. A theatrical presentation of group or solo dancing in a musical accompaniment using costume and scenic affects and converging a story, theme or atmosphere.

Cabaret = A restaurant or night club providing short programs of live entertainment. The flow show billed by a cabaret.

Clown = A buffoon or jester who entertains by jokes, antics, and tricks in a circus, plays or ethic presentation

Jester = At medieval court jesters were kept to provoke amusement and laughter

Chief of Defence Services holds talks with Chinese counterpart

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing received a ceremonial welcome in Beijing, China, by Gen Fang Fenghui, the Chief of Joint Staff and a member of the Central Military Commission of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) of the People's Republic of China.

At the ceremony, the two chiefs received a formal salute and then inspected the Honour Guard.

Afterwards, they held talks over exchange of goodwill visits by leaders of the two armed forces, coordination at a strategic lev-

el, peace and stability at border areas, cooperation in sports, culture and in the medical and training sectors.

After the meeting, General Fang Fenghui hosted a dinner in honour of the Myanmar military delegation.

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and party visited Ling Guang Si Temple in Beijing and paid homage to the Buddha's Tooth Relic.

The delegation also visited the exhibition of the CETC company in Beijing.— *Myanmar News Agency*



Senior General Min Aung Hlaing receiving a ceremonial welcome in Beijing, China. PHOTO: MNA

Myanmar parliamentary delegation concludes visit to S Korea

A MYANMAR delegation led by U Win Myint, Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw, arrived back Yangon yesterday after paying a visit to the Republic of Korea.

Before coming back Myanmar, the delegation visited Arisu Fil-

tration Plant, in Seoul, South Korea, yesterday.

Afterwards, the delegation visited the Transport Control Centre in Seoul.

The Myanmar delegation left Seoul for Myanmar as they con-

cluded the goodwill visit to South Korea. They were seen off at the Incheon Airport by MPs from Korean parliament and Myanmar Ambassador to the Republic of Korea Thura U Thet Oo Maung.— *Myanmar News Agency*



Speaker U Win Myint is welcomed back by Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein . PHOTO: MNA

K 330 million development project to implement in Thaton

THATON Township Development Committee plans to spend K 330 million budget allotted for implementation of development project in the township this fiscal year, its spokesperson said.

The project will include con-

struction of road and bridge facilities, water supply and sanitation plans across Thaton, a town in Mon State located on the south of Myanmar.

The authorities plan to spend Ks218.5 million on 22

road projects, Ks22.9 million on construction of bridges, Ks54.6 million on distribution of water and Ks38.2 million on cleaning and greening of the town. The committee invites popular participation in the development programmes, urging residents to report on the needs in their wards and streets to the committee.

A local expressed his view that locals see the positive changes of the committee, which raised funds for the township's development scheme including garbage collection.

The Thaton Township Development Committee plans to expand the fulfillment of development facilities covering expansion of road networks and paving access road so as to provide better services for dwellers next financial year.— *Myitmakha News Agency*



Thaton Township Development Committee Office. PHOTO: MMK

Proceeds from Carnival Walk to go to charity

WITH the aim of promoting healthy habits among families by changing lifestyle, Active Family Day Out 2016 "Carnival Walk" is set for Yangon in December, aiming to donate the proceeds from the event to aid organisations.

Scheduled to take place on 3 December at People's Park in Yangon, the new event is open to all ages, inviting interested people to make registration to take part in the event between 11 and 28 November at marketplace by City Mart (Golden Valley branch), City Mart Supermarket (Thamine branch) and Ocean Supercenter (Shwegondine branch).

The registration fees is K3,000 per form, which includes up to three people to participate. 100 % of registration fees will go to philanthropic organizations including Yankin Children's Hospital and a local body to eliminate

trafficking in persons through City Love and Hope Foundation, said one of organisers. Several entertainment programmes such as family games and activities, special games for kids, a sale of traditional food for health and lucky draw programme will be included in the upcoming family fun day with the goal of promoting healthy lifestyle choices, said May Zin Soe Htet, marketing manager of City Mart Holding Co.

The first-ever event was held in 2014 and attracted 2,000 people at People's Park, messaging about the importance of families staying active and the enjoyment of doing activities together as a family. Last year's Active Family Day Out Event was celebrated by roughly 2,500 participants in Yangon.— *Myitmakha News Agency*

POEM:

"The Poetess's Philosophy"

- * Everything on earth isn't permanent.
If changes, it never stands still.
Whatever exists will eventually decay.
All ends against our will.
- * It is only the fools who blame others,
The broad-minded blame themselves.
The noblest blames neither himself nor the others.
All in the world comes and goes only by themselves.
- * Gold is found to be always yellow.
But not every yellow is gold.
Not all educated are wise,
But the wise are always educated, it's told.
- * If Jack were better, Jill wouldn't be so bad."
I'm always against that saying.
"Jack may either be good or bad, but Jill must be good."
What about my idea of changing that saying?

Daw Aye Aye Pyone
(Retired Teacher)

Iraqi forces resume offensive towards eastern Mosul

BAGHDAD — Iraqi troops resumed on Monday a coordinated offensive towards Mosul, the last major city held by Islamic State, targeting the eastern bank of the Tigris river that divides the city, military officials said.

The army's counter-terrorism unit had paused its advance last week after it made ground quicker than forces on other fronts, to allow them to close the gap and get nearer to the city.

Iraqi security forces and Kurdish Peshmerga fighters started the offensive on 17 October, with air and ground support from the US-led coalition against the hardline Sunni group.

Pro-Iranian Iraqi Shi'ite militias joined the fighting on Saturday, aiming to cut the route between Mosul and Raqqa, Islamic State's main stronghold in Syria.

The battle for Mosul, still home to 1.5 million residents, is shaping up to be one of the toughest in a decade of turmoil following the US-led invasion that toppled Saddam Hus-



Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) take part in an operation against Islamic State militants south of Mosul, Iraq on 30 October 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

sein in 2003.

"The operation to liberate the left bank of Mosul has started," said a military statement, referring to the eastern bank of the river that flows from north to south. Another statement said five villages were taken north of Mosul, where Peshmerga fighters are also being deployed.

Islamic State militants has been fighting off the two-week offensive with suicide car bombs, snipers and mortar fire.

They have also set oil wells on fire to cover their movements and displaced thousands of civilians from villages toward Mosul, using them as human shields, UN officials and villagers

who spoke to Reuters have said.

Worst-case United Nations forecasts see up to 1 million people being uprooted by the fighting, which UN aid agencies said had so far forced about 17,500 people to flee — a figure that excludes those taken into Mosul by the retreating militants.—Reuters

Aleppo fighting spreads amid accusations of gas attack

AMMAN/BEIRUT — Syrian rebels opened a new front in Aleppo as fighting spread on the third day of a major insurgent counter-attack to break the government's siege of the opposition-held part of the city, and each side accused the other of using poison gas.

The rebels, including both Free Syrian Army factions and jihadists, are seeking to end the siege by seizing government-held areas of Aleppo, in an effort to link the city's rebel-held east with rebel-held rural areas to the west of the city.

Syrian state media said militants had fired shells containing chlorine gas at a residential area of the government-held western part of the city, al-Hamdaniya. Rebels denied that, and said government forces had fired poison gas on another frontline.

State media cited an Aleppo hospital director saying three dozen people

— civilians and soldiers — had suffered suffocation in the alleged rebel gas attack, but did not report any deaths.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a UK-based organisation that reports on the war, said it had confirmed reports of suffocation among government fighters in two frontline areas shelled by rebels, but it did not know if chlorine gas was the cause.

The rebels said the army had shelled rebel-held Rashideen district with chlorine and shared videos purportedly showing victims with respiratory problems. Aleppo, Syria's biggest pre-war city, has become the main stage of conflict between President Bashar al-Assad, backed by Iran, Russia and Shi'ite militias, and Sunni rebels including some supported by Turkey, Gulf monarchies and the United States.—Reuters

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One in seven children suffer high air pollution: UNICEF

OSLO — Almost one in seven children worldwide live in areas with high levels of outdoor air pollution, mostly in South Asia, and their growing bodies are most vulnerable to damage, the UN children's agency UNICEF said on Monday.

UNICEF called on almost 200 governments, which will meet in Morocco from 7-18 November for talks on global warming, to restrict use of fossil fuels to give twin benefits of improved health and slower climate change.

About 300 million children, or almost one in seven worldwide, lived in areas where outdoor pollution was highest, defined by UNICEF as at least six times international guidelines set by the World Health Organisation (WHO), it said.

Of the total, 220 million lived in South Asia. It identified the regions with satellite imagery developed by NASA.

UNICEF executive director Anthony Lake said air pollution was a "major contributing factor in the deaths of around 600,000 children under five every year", causing illnesses such as pneumonia. "Pollutants don't only harm children's developing lungs — they can actually cross the blood-brain barrier and permanently damage their developing brains — and, thus, their futures," he said in a statement.

"Air pollution affects poor



People take photos near the Singapore Flyer observatory wheel shrouded by haze on 26 August 2016.

PHOTO: REUTERS

children the most," Nicholas Rees, a UNICEF specialist on climate and economic analysis who wrote the report, told Reuters.

Worldwide, the WHO estimates that outdoor air pollution killed 3.7 million people in 2012, including 127,000 children aged under five. Factories, power

plants and vehicles using fossil fuels, dust and burning of waste were among sources.

Indoor air pollution, often caused by coal- or wood-burning cooking stoves used in homes in developing nations, killed even more people, 4.3 million, of whom 531,000 children aged under five, it said.

UNICEF called on the UN-led meeting in Morocco to hasten a shift from fossil fuels to cleaner energies such as wind or solar power, to improve children's access to health care, limit children's exposure to pollution and to step up monitoring of the air. —Reuters

Viet Nam says its first microcephaly case much likely caused by Zika

HANOI — The microcephaly of a baby from the central highlands region, the first case in Viet Nam, is "much likely to be caused by Zika virus," a Vietnamese health agency said on Sunday.

The four-month-old girl from Dak Lak province has microcephaly, and this innate defect must have been related to Zika virus, said the Preventive Medicine Department under the Health Ministry.

Microcephaly is a birth defect where a baby's head is smaller than expected when compared to babies of the same sex and age.

The baby's microcephaly was first detected on 14 October, and specimens taken from her and her 23-year-old mother are being tested in Japan. The young woman had a fever and hives when she was pregnant.

To date, Viet Nam has spotted nine Zika patients, including five from Ho Chi Minh City, and one each from Phu Yen, Khanh Hoa, Binh Duong and Long An provinces. Ho Chi Minh City and Binh Duong have declared Zika outbreaks at communal level. —Xinhua

Aussie research says Asia's rare snake venom could create non-addictive painkillers

SYDNEY — An Australian research has found that the venom derived from one Southeast Asia's rarest and most beautiful snake can be turned into non-addictive painkiller drug that could work better than opium.

University of Queensland School of Biological Sciences Faculty of Science Associate Professor Dr Bryan Fry said venom derived from Southeast Asia's long-glanded blue coral snake could improved any kind of pain treatment for humans such as cancer pain, a torn muscle or even a migraine.

"This was a 15 year project in the making that has finally come true after we managed to study two of such snakes in Cameron Highlands, Malaysia," Fry told Xinhua in a telephone interview on Monday.

"With its combination of electric blue stripes and neon red head and tail, the blue coral snake is arguably one of the world's most striking species of snake."

"It also has the biggest venom glands in the world, extending over a quarter the length of its body."

At present, the long-glanded blue coral snake can be found in

Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia and no where else in the world but mass deforestation is threatening the species to extinction.

"This particular animals are very rare... and their habitat the forest are being destroyed to make way for palm oil plantation," Fry said.

"This is a great example why we need to conserve nature because you may have something so rare that could be potentially be so useful for human medicine but of course we can't save lives if it (the snake) is extinct," he said.

"It makes me wanna cry on how much (forest) is destroyed as there may be a plant there that can cure cancer that is completely chopped off before we can study it," Fry added.

For this particular study, Fry said mass amounts of venom was milked out from the two snakes in Malaysia without harming them in anyway in 2007 and three years later in 2010.

Fry who has been working with snakes for the last 20 years said the discovery on the health benefits from the venom came by chance.

"We tested against everything and we found this by accident," said Fry.

Moving forward, Fry said he and his team would be working on a artificial version of the toxin by improving on it before turning it into a medicinal drug meant for commercialisation.

Fry also added that they would be looking at other similar snakes in the same blood line to see if such animals produced similar benefits.

"Singapore has a very good population of snakes that are in the same blood line as the long-glanded blue coral snake.

"And we are working with Raffles Museum to capture the other species that could also have the same time of venom that helps cure human pain," he said.

"(The snake) It doesn't have a common name and is even rarer but we have a good idea where to find one," Fry said on his quest to find similar blood line snakes in Singapore.

The findings of the research which was led by Fry involved scientists from Australia, China, Singapore and the US was been published in journal *Toxins* in October. —Xinhua

New tool may help combat antibiotic resistance

LONDON — Scientists, including one of Indian origin, are developing a new device that can quickly identify bacterial infections, an advance that may help fight antibiotic resistance by reducing unnecessary prescription of drugs.

The tool, designed by the researchers at University of Sheffield in the UK, could help doctors make more informed prescriptions and reduce the number of patients with viral infections being prescribed antibiotics.

The device could enable patients with flu-like symptoms to give a small blood sample and be promptly told whether they have a bacterial or non-bacterial infection and be treated accordingly.

The diagnostic tool uses genetically engineered bacteria to detect the presence of a bacterial infection in a patient's blood sample.

It can distinguish between a viral and bacterial infection by detecting a protein known as lipocalin.

This protein is produced in high levels by cells of the immune system in response to

bacterial infections.

The protein's function is to bind to small molecules which bacteria use to access iron in order to grow.

Researchers are developing the device so that genetically modified bacteria mixes with a patient's blood sample and turn florescent when there are low levels of the lipocalin protein — indicating a viral not bacterial infection.

"The main aim behind this project is to create more informed prescriptions to address the ever increasing resistance against antibiotics that we face today," said Saylee Jangam, a student from the University of Sheffield.

"Antibiotic resistance is a huge problem and this is why we chose to base our project on it. We may not be able to reverse it, but with our device, we could potentially slow it down," she said.

"What is even more interesting is that we are using genetically engineered bacteria to detect the presence of bacterial infections in blood — that is right — using bacteria to detect bacteria," she added. —PTI

Venezuela's Maduro meets opposition at Vatican-led talks

CARACAS — Venezuela's unpopular socialist leader Nicolas Maduro shook hands with opposition leaders at Vatican-convened talks on Sunday, but his wary foes threatened to boycott further meetings if some demands were not quickly met.

The irate opposition Democratic Unity coalition has escalated protests against Maduro after authorities scuttled a recall referendum that polls show he would have lost, triggering a presidential election.

Their top demand is to revive the plebiscite.

Opponents say 17 years of socialism have wrecked the OPEC nation's economy and crushed democracy, while the government says a US-backed elite is seeking a violent coup.

Maduro, 53, who won



Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro (centre L) greets former president of Dominican Republic Leonel Fernandez (Centre R) as he arrives for a political meeting between government and opposition, in Caracas, Venezuela on 30 October, 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

election to succeed Hugo Chavez in 2013, arrived mid-evening for the meeting at a Caracas museum.

He cordially greeted

the five opposition leaders, including coalition secretary-general Jesus Torrealba and opposition governor Henri Falcon.

Also attending were a Vatican envoy, representatives of the Unasur regional bloc, and three former heads of state or govern-

ment from Spain, Panama and the Dominican Republic.

"The Pope is following the situation of this country very closely and hopes this process can continue peacefully," said papal envoy Archbishop Claudio Maria Celli.

Venezuela's opposition is also demanding freedom for political prisoners, humanitarian aid amid an unprecedented economic downturn, and respect for the opposition-led National Assembly.

The opposition delegation would "demand an end to the repression and persecution of democrats and the people, and will walk away from the dialogue if the demands are not resolved in the short term," the coalition said in a statement.

It termed the talks an "exploratory meeting" only.

Maduro, who aides said had skipped Saturday's Ibero-American summit in Colombia to prepare for Sunday's meeting, only stayed for a few minutes.

"There is no alternative to dialogue and meeting in search of the nation's common interests," he said, before walking to the opposition delegation for formal handshakes in a ceremony televised live across Venezuela. He has distanced himself from the quashing of the referendum, saying it was a decision of independent judicial and electoral authorities based on allegations of fraud in an initial opposition signature drive.

Those institutions have for years leant towards the government, however, and many Venezuelans believe it was a coordinated ploy to outwit the opposition.—Reuters

Ministry of Electricity and Energy
Electric Power Generation Enterprise
INVITATION FOR PREQUALIFICATION (EPGE G-02)
Urgent Rehabilitation and Upgrade Project (Phase I)
Loan Agreement No. MY-P2

This invitation for prequalification follows the general procurement notice for this project that appeared in Development Business of 31st October 2016 on-line.

The Republic Of The Union Of Myanmar has received a credit from Official Development Association (ODA) of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) toward the cost of the *Urgent Rehabilitation and Upgrade Project (Phase I), (MY-P2)* and it intends to apply part of the proceeds of this credit to payments under the contract for Package 2 "Renovation Works of Transmission System" which includes Rehabilitation Work to four Substations at the existing Gas Turbine Power Plants (Ahlone, Hlawga, Ywama and Tharkayta) in Yangon Region. The Electric Power Generation Enterprise (EPGE) intends to prequalify contractors for supply and rehabilitating of four Substations which will supply as much electricity as possible to the grid.

It is expected that invitations for bid will be made after prequalification. Prequalification will be conducted through the procedures specified in JICA Guidelines: Procurement under Guidelines for Procurement under Japanese ODA Loans dated April 2012 and is open to all bidders from eligible source countries, as defined in the guidelines.

Prequalification notice with following contents;

1. Package Name:	Urgent Rehabilitation and Upgrade Project (Phase I) Package two (2) "Renovation Works of Transmission System"
2. Prequalification Document issuance time:	10:00 to 15:30 on 4 th November 2016.
3. Prequalification Document fee:	Three Hundred Thousand (300,000) kyat only
4. Application submission closing date and time:	26 th December 2016 by 14:00 (Myanmar Standard Time)
5. Submission place:	Procurement Department Electric Power Generation Enterprise, Ministry of Electricity and Energy Building No. 27, Nay Pyi Taw The Republic of the Union of Myanmar
6. Others:	Applications for prequalification should be submitted in sealed envelopes, and be clearly marked " Application to Prequalify for Renovation Work to Four Substations in Yangon Region (ICB EPGE-G-02) "

Interested eligible Applicants may obtain further information from and inspect the prequalification document between 10:00 - 15:30 hrs at;

Thermal Power Department

Electric Power Generation Enterprise (EPGE),

Building No. 27, Nay Pyi Taw

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar

Phone : + 95 67 8104282

Facsimile number : +95 67 810 4280

E-mail : epgethermal@gmail.com

Ten facts about fast urban growth on World Cities Day

LONDON — As the world sees the biggest wave of urban growth in history, with millions of people flocking to the fast-growing cities of the developing world, cities are coming under the spotlight as never before. How do cities cater for their new residents? What makes a city unique, and what makes it liveable?

In 2014, the United Nations launched 13 October as World Cities Day to promote awareness of global urbanization and highlight the need for co-operation to meet the challenges of growth.

Here are 10 facts about cities:

1. Around 54 per cent of the world population currently live in urban areas which is forecast to rise

to 66 per cent by 2050

2. The urban population rose to 3.9 billion in 2014 from 746 million in 1950, according to the United Nations

3. Cities may be home to growing numbers of people, but cover less than 1 per cent of the world's surface

4. There are now 28 mega-cities — with populations of 10 million plus — compared to just 10 mega-cities in 1990

5. Tokyo is the world's largest city, with the greater Tokyo area housing about 38 million inhabitants

6. Asia is home to about 53 per cent of the world's urban population while Europe is home to 14 per cent, and 13 per cent live in Latin America

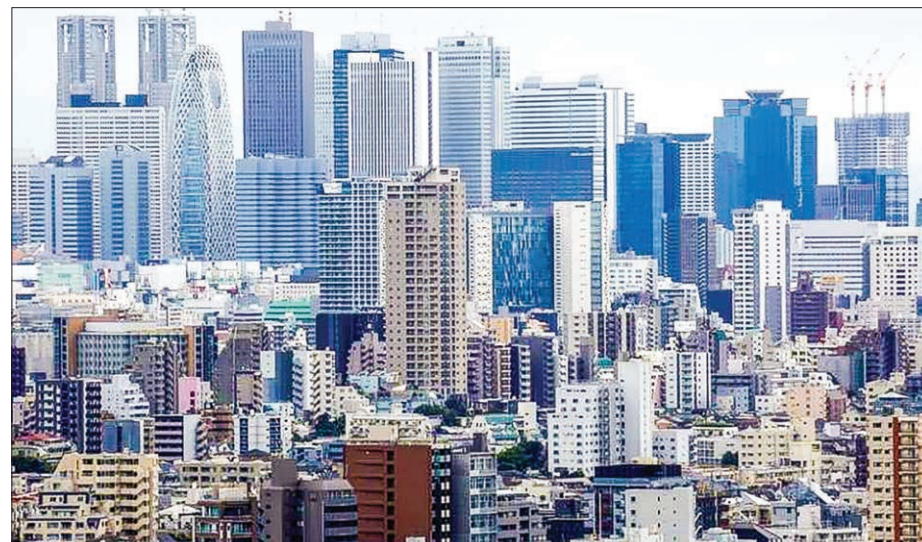
and the Caribbean

7. With a population of just 500, the Vatican is the world's smallest independent state

8. China has its own version of a European city called "Thames Town". Located 19 miles (30 kms) outside Shanghai, its architecture is based on a British market town, with red telephone boxes, corner shops and cobblestone streets

9. The world's most creative city is Al-Ahsa in Saudi Arabia, according to UNESCO's Creative Cities' Network

10. According to the Quality of Living Rankings by consultancy Mercer, in 2016 the city offering the best quality of life was Vienna, with Zurich coming second.—Reuters



Residential and commercial buildings are pictured in Tokyo, Japan, on 16 August 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

FBI obtains warrant to examine Hillary Clinton emails

WASHINGTON — Federal investigators have secured a warrant to examine newly discovered emails related to Hillary Clinton's private server, a source familiar with the matter said on Sunday, as a prominent Democrat accused FBI Director James Comey of breaking the law by trying to influence the election.

The warrant will allow the Federal Bureau of Investigation to examine the emails to see if they are relevant to its probe of the private email server used for government work by Clinton, the Democratic presidential nominee, while she was secretary of state from 2009 to 2013.

Comey came under heavy pressure from Democrats on Sunday to quickly provide details of the emails, as Clinton allies worried the prolonged controversy could extend beyond the 8 November election and cast a shadow over a Clinton transition if she wins the White House.

Comey's disclosure of the email discovery in a letter to Congress on Friday plunged the final days of the White House race between Clinton and Republican Donald Trump into turmoil. Clinton had opened a recent lead over Trump in national polls, but it had been narrowing even before the email controversy resurfaced.

The unexpected turn in the email controversy shook financial markets' conviction of a Clinton victory in the election and the US dollar slipped against major currencies in early Asian trading on Monday.

US Senate Democratic leader Harry Reid sent a letter to Comey on Sunday suggesting he violated the Hatch Act, which bars the use of a federal government position to influence an election.

"Through your partisan actions, you may have broken the law," Reid, a senator from Nevada, said in the letter to Comey.

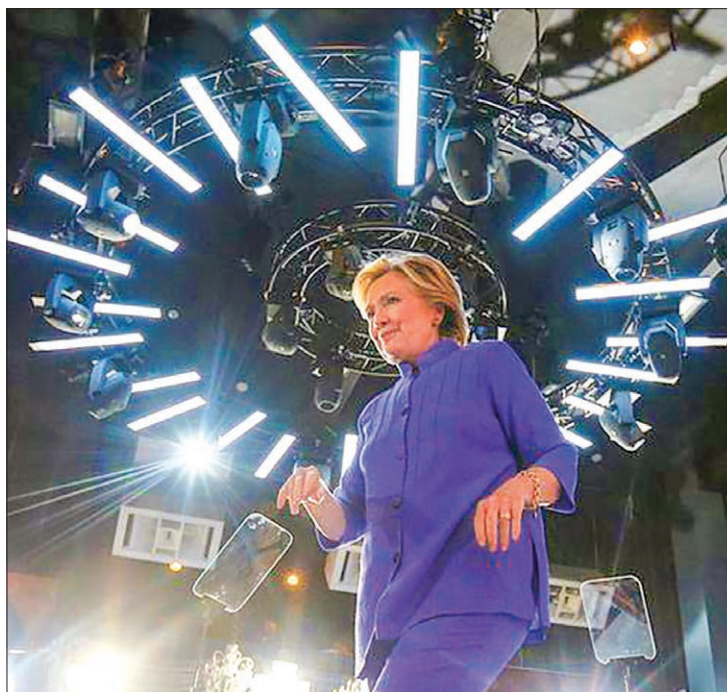
Clinton campaign chairman John Podesta and campaign manager Robby Mook questioned Comey's decision to send a letter notifying Congress of the email review before he even knew whether they were significant or relevant.

Comey's letter was "long on innuendo, short on facts," Podesta said on CNN's "State of the Union" programme, and accused the FBI chief of breaking precedent by disclosing aspects of an investigation so close to the election.

"We are calling on Mr Comey to come forward and explain what's at issue here," Podesta said, adding the significance of the emails was unclear.

"He might have taken the first step of actually having looked at them before he did this in the middle of a presidential campaign, so close to the voting," Podesta said.

Comey's letter was sent over the objections of Justice Depart-



US Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton walks off the stage at a campaign rally at the Manor Complex in Wilton Manors, Florida, US on 30 October 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

ment officials. But those officials did not try to stop the FBI from getting the warrant, a source familiar with the decision said, because they are interested in the FBI moving quickly on the probe.

Sources close to the investigation have said the latest emails were discovered as part of a separate probe of former Democratic US Representative Anthony Weiner, the estranged husband of Clinton aide Huma Abedin.

Weiner is the target of an FBI investigation into illicit text messages he is alleged to have sent to a 15-year-old girl in North Carolina. The FBI already had a warrant to search Weiner's laptop in that probe, but needed a warrant to look at the material that might be related to Clinton.

Sources familiar with the matter said FBI agents working on the Weiner investigation saw material on a laptop belonging to Weiner that led them to believe it might be relevant to the investigation of Clinton's email practices.

Trump has highlighted the issue as proof for his argument that Clinton is corrupt and untrustworthy.

"We have one ultimate check on Hillary's corruption and that is the power of the vote," Trump told a rally in Las Vegas on Sunday. "The only way to beat the corruption is to show up and vote by the tens of millions."

Comey, who announced in July that the FBI's long investigation of Clinton's emails was ending without any charges, said in his letter the agency would review the newly surfaced emails to determine their relevance to the investigation of her handling of classified information.

Richard Painter, a professor at the University of Minnesota Law School and the chief White House ethics lawyer from 2005 to 2007, said he filed a complaint

over Comey's actions with the Office of Special Counsel, which investigates Hatch Act violations.

"We cannot allow FBI or Justice Department officials to unnecessarily publicize pending investigations concerning candidates of either party while an election is underway. That is an abuse of power," he said in a column in the New York Times.

But Daniel Richman, a former federal prosecutor who now teaches at Columbia Law School, called the allegations that Comey improperly tried to influence the election "inane."

"Comey's critics cannot show his letter violated the Hatch Act unless they can prove that the FBI director was intending to influence the election rather than inform Congress, which was Comey's stated aim," said Richman, who said he had advised Comey on law enforcement policy but not this issue.

An ABC News/Washington Post poll released on Sunday showed Clinton with a statistically insignificant 1-point national lead on Trump. About a third of likely voters in the poll said they were less likely to back Clinton given Comey's disclosure.

Clinton, who told a Florida rally on Saturday that Comey's letter was "deeply troubling," did not address the issue directly on Sunday but referred vaguely to voters overcoming a "distraction."

"There's a lot of noise and distraction but it really comes down to the kind of future we want and who can get us there," she told a packed gay nightclub in Wilton Manors, Florida, where hundreds of supporters who could not get in lined the streets outside.

"We don't want a president who would appoint Supreme Court justices to overturn marriage equality," she said. —Reuters

NEWS IN BRIEF

Man wrestles giant panda in China zoo

BEIJING — Video footage of a man who wrestled with a giant panda bear after breaking into a zoo enclosure in southern China went viral over the weekend.

The video, taken last Thursday, showed the man sneaking up to Meiling, a 120-kg (265-pound) male panda, and touching the sleeping bear on the head.

The 12-year-old panda woke up and grabbed the man's leg, pushing him to the ground. After wrestling with the bear for more than five minutes, the man broke free and fled the enclosure.

Authorities at the zoo in the southeastern province of Jiangxi said the panda was probably just playing with the man, who disappeared with only a tear in his trousers, state broadcaster CCTV reported.

The giant panda is prized in China and seen as a conservation success story, whose cause has been championed right up to the highest levels in Beijing. —Reuters

Turkish police detain editor of opposition Cumhuriyet newspaper — media

ISTANBUL — Turkish police detained the editor-in-chief of the opposition secularist Cumhuriyet newspaper on Monday and said homes of the paper's executives and writers were being searched, broadcaster CNN Turk and other media reported.

Media did not give a reason for the detention of editor Murat Sabuncu or the searches, which came as authorities crack down on anyone suspected of links to US-based cleric Fethullah Gulen, accused by the government of orchestrating a failed coup in July. —Reuters

Spain's Rajoy sworn in as prime minister after deadlock broken

MADRID — Spanish conservative leader Mariano Rajoy was sworn in as prime minister on Monday by King Felipe, after more than 10 months of political jockeying to form a government following two inconclusive elections.

Rajoy, leader of the People's Party, is returning to power after losing his absolute majority, and will have to strike deals with opposition parties to pass legislation in a fragmented and hostile parliament. —Reuters

South African state prosecutor drops fraud charges against Gordhan

PRETORIA — South Africa's state prosecutor dropped fraud charges on Monday against Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan, the latest twist in a police investigation that has rattled financial markets in the continent's most industrialised economy.

Worries that Gordhan could be prosecuted or even removed from his job have also increased the risk that credit rating agencies would downgrade South Africa to "junk" status, undermining efforts to revive economic growth.

The rand gained as much as 1.6 per cent against the dollar, while bonds firmed as the head of the prosecution service, Shaun Abrahams, read his decision. —Reuters

Turkish prosecutors say operation launched against Cumhuriyet executives

ISTANBUL — Turkish authorities ordered the detention of executives from Cumhuriyet newspaper on Monday on accusations they committed crimes on behalf of Kurdish militants and the "Gülenist Terror Organisation" (FETO), the Istanbul prosecutor's office said.

An investigation was launched in August into several executives after allegations that the newspaper's publications were of a nature that legitimized a 15 July failed coup, the prosecutor's office said in a statement.

Ankara blames the supporters of US-based cleric Fethullah Gulen for the coup attempt. The government refers to his network as the Gülenist Terror Organisation (FETO). Gulen has denied involvement in the putsch.

Earlier on Monday, police detained the editor of Cumhuriyet, one of Turkey's few remaining opposition dailies, and searched the homes of some executives. The statement said the executives were accused of committing crimes on behalf of or in the name of FETO and Kurdish militants without necessarily being members. —Reuters



Kim Kardashian attends Harper's Bazaar's celebration of 'ICONS By Carine Roitfeld' at The Plaza Hotel during New York Fashion Week in Manhattan, New York, US, on 9 September 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Kim Kardashian unlikely to attend Angel Ball

NEW YORK — Reality TV star Kim Kardashian West is unlikely to attend the Angel Ball next month, a black tie gala, which will honour her father Robert Kardashian.

The “Keeping Up With the Kardashians” star is still shaken up after being robbed at gunpoint in Paris earlier this month and she has now cancelled her appearance at the Angel Ball, an annual cancer research fundraiser which is due to take place at Cipriani Wall Street in New York on 21 November, reported the New York Post.

Her mother Kris Jenner and sisters Kourtney and Khloe Kardashian are still expected to attend the black-tie gala, which will honour her late lawyer Robert Kardashian, who died of cancer in 2003.

A publicist for the event said, “Kim is not expected to attend at this time.”

The 36-year-old beauty has been keeping a low profile since the robbery in her hotel suite, but made her first public appearance last week at her spouse's concert in Los Angeles, and so could still change her mind about attending the glitzy event.—PTI

‘Inferno’ Fizzles With \$15 Million as ‘Madea’ Pulls Off Victory

LOS ANGELES — This is how a franchise ends. “Inferno,” the latest big screen tour through Dan Brown's historical conspiracy theories, flamed out at the weekend box office, earning a frosty \$15 million. That's a fraction of the \$46.2 million that “Angels & Demons,” the previous film version of Brown's novels, earned when it debuted in 2009, and it pales in relation to “The Da Vinci Code's” \$77.1 million opening way back in 2006.

“This was a serious meltdown,” said Jeff Bock, box office analyst with Exhibitor Relations. “It shows how fickle audiences can be. When studios release a sequel they don't want, they just turn their shoulder.”

“Inferno” couldn't muster a strong enough debut to capture the top spot on the domestic box office chart. Lionsgate's “Boo! A Madea Halloween” nabbed first place for the second consecutive weekend, picking up \$16.7 million to bring its stateside total to \$52 million. The Tyler Perry comedy's victory is an upset. Heading into the weekend, “Inferno” was expected to kick off to north of \$20 million — a figure

that easily would have secured it a first place finish.

“Inferno” finds Harvard cryptologist Robert Langdon (Tom Hanks) grappling with amnesia as he tries to piece together clues in order to prevent the release of a global pandemic. Reviewers vivisectioned the film, saddling it with a 20% “rotten” rating on critics aggregator Rotten Tomatoes.

In addition to the brutal reviews, “Inferno” ran smack up against a World Series battle between the Cubs and the Indians, two franchises that have gone decades without capturing a championship. Those games generated a lot of excitement among “Inferno's” core audience of older men.

Strong foreign grosses could be enough to pull “Inferno” out of the red. The film has earned roughly \$150 million overseas. Sony, the studio behind the film, also reined in “Inferno's” production budget. The picture cost \$75 million to make, half the budget of “Angels & Demons.”

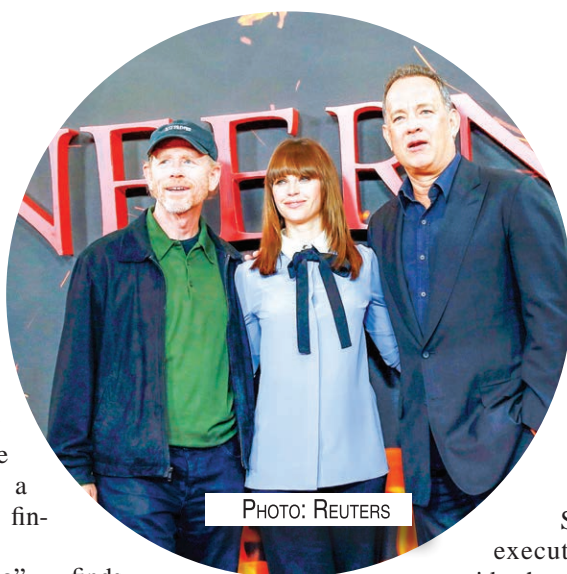


PHOTO: REUTERS

Sony executives said they always expected “Inferno” to be more of a foreign

play than a domestic bet, noting that previous Langdon adventures pulled in more than 70% of their box office from foreign markets.

“Globally, the movie is in really good shape,” said Rory Bruer, Sony's worldwide distribution chief. “We made this film for much less and we felt strongly that it was a film that would resonate internationally.”

Still, the results are disappointing, particularly for director Ron Howard, who could use a hit. Once a reliable purveyor of popcorn fare with a certain prestige sheen, such as “Apollo 13” and “A Beautiful Mind,” Howard's commercial radar has been faulty of late. His recent efforts, such as “In the Heart of the Sea,” “The Dilemma,” and “Rush,” all lost money. “Angels & Demons” was his last major studio movie to turn a profit.—Reuters

Katy Perry's '50s-themed birthday bash

LONDON — Singer Katy Perry celebrated her 32nd birthday with a 1950s-themed party that included a ‘detention’-themed photo booth.

The “Roar” hitmaker, whose big day was on 25 October 25, sported a big

blonde updo and a yellow pussy bow top for the bash, which featured Elvis Presley and Marilyn Monroe lookalikes and a giant game of Twister for guests including her boyfriend Orlando Bloom and friend Kate Hudson, reported Female First.

The sock hop bash, which was staged at ‘Hudson High’ in honour of Perry's real surname Hudson, also featured a ‘detention’ photobooth, and her guests shared some pictures from inside on social media.

Perry shared a number of photos of the night on her social media accounts, including one of Bloom, 39, playing basketball in bright red shorts and a matching sweatshirt.

On another image she wrote, “Thanks @COVERGIRL for keeping everyone clean-cut and QT at Hudson High, Home of the Poodles. ... Principal Hudson. #KatyxCoverGirl (sic).—PTI



Singer Katy Perry. PHOTO: REUTERS

Adele, boyfriend planning engagement?

LONDON — Singer Adele and longtime partner Simon Konecki are thinking about getting engaged and taking the next step together.

The 28-year-old singer and Konecki have been in a relationship for five years and share four-year-old son Angelo together, but

it now seems they're finally ready to take the next step and put a ring on the “Someone Like You” hitmaker's finger, reported Daily Mirror.

A source said, “They've decided it's the right time to think about making that step [to getting engaged].

“They won't make a big song and dance about it, that's not the way either of them are, and you won't see Adele walking around with a huge diamond on her finger flaunting it. But they're ready to take the next step and both very excited about the prospect.—PTI

Foreign visitors to Japan this year have already hit record 20 million

TOKYO — The estimated number of foreign visitors to Japan this year has already surpassed last year's record 19.74 million, topping 20 million in only 10 months, the Japan Tourism Agency said Monday.

The number of visitors in the first nine months of this year was up 24.1 per cent from the same period the previous year to 17.98 million and the figure is estimated to have topped the 20 million line as of Sunday, the agency said.

The rate of increase for the first nine months, however, was half the 47 per cent increase logged for the whole of last year, with the yen's appreciation and the Chinese economy's slowdown apparently eating into growth.

Major quakes in Kumamoto Prefecture and its vicinity in April caused a temporary drop in visitors from South Korea.

The agency attributed this year's rise generally to increased port calls by cruise ships and airlines launching new routes. Continuous tourism promotion



Foreign tourists pose for a photo in front of the Kaminarimon gate in Tokyo's Asakusa district in this file photo taken on 8 February, 2016. The estimated number of foreign visitors to Japan in 2016 has already surpassed the previous year's 19.74 million record, topping 20 million in only 10 months, the Japan Tourism Agency said 31 October, 2016. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

campaigns and eased visa restrictions led to gains particularly in visitors from Southeast Asian countries, it said.

The government's top spokesman welcomed the figures Monday morning, but said the achievement is "just the halfway point."

"We have set a goal of 40 million (foreign visitors annually) in 2020...so there are still many more things for us to do," Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga told a press conference.

Tokyo will host the Olympic and Paralympic games in 2020.

To help reach that goal, the government will consider further relaxing visa rules, including for Chinese, Indian and Russian nationals, and work to address a shortage of accommodation facilities, Suga said.

The number of monthly tourists from abroad topped 2 million for the first time on record in March when many visited for the cherry blossom season. The record was then rewritten in July with nearly 2.3 million visitors.

Buying sprees by shoppers from the Chinese mainland and Hong Kong have subsided, pushing down overall year-on-year spending by foreign visitors in the July-September quarter for the first time since the fourth quarter of 2011. The figure was down 2.9 per cent to 971.7 billion yen (\$9.3 billion).

"(The era of) buying sprees is over for sure, but tourist numbers continue to grow, so it's also true that the total amount of spending will increase," Suga said.—Kyodo News

'Lucky bird' rooster at Osaka zoo luring visitors

By Hiroyuki Shimizu

OSAKA — A rooster raised by Osaka's Tennoji Zoo as food for other animals has now become an attraction himself after managing to avoid being eaten three times, with visitors feeling some of his luck may rub off on them.

The bird, who has now also got himself a name, Masahiro, is often surrounded by a crowd of visitors as he struts around the zoo of an evening.

Masahiro started life in July last year as one of some 70 chicken that were destined to become meals for raccoons and other animals in the zoo.

His first lucky escape was when a baby duck was born through artificial hatching and, as ducks learn how to eat from their parents, he was chosen to serve as the newly born duck's dad rather than ending up as some animal's dinner.

His second stroke of fortune came two months later, when he was placed in a cage as a bait to catch a wild weasel that was attacking birds. The weasel, however, didn't show up for three days.

Masahiro's next job was to have been food for big predators such as lions and tigers, but his turn never came.

In October last year, the zoo decided to keep the rooster and give him a name, too.

His popularity with visitors also owes to his gentle nature. He rarely thrashes around when he is held in a visitor's arms.

Holding Masahiro



Photo taken 18 October, 2016 shows a visitor touching the rooster Masahiro at Tennoji Zoo. Reared to be food for other animals, the bird has won a reputation for being "lucky" after surviving being eaten three times. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

to her chest, a woman in her 30s said she was thrilled to touch him and hoped to "capitalize on his luck."

Such is Masahiro's newfound celebrity that he even spent a day serving as "chief" of the Osaka prefectural police's highway patrol unit in September.

He will also appear in an event at the zoo in November to promote New Year's cards for 2017, which is the year of the rooster in the Chinese zodiac.

"I never thought that a chicken would grab the spotlight," Shin Nishio, 47, a veterinarian at the zoo, said. "Roosters are usually discarded as they don't lay eggs. Encountering Masahiro, who survived by chance, is a good opportunity to think of what life means."—Kyodo News

Halloween-themed film tops North American weekend box office

LOS ANGELES — Tyler Perry's Madea character beat Tom Cruise last weekend, and then beat Tom Hanks this weekend, to be the number one again at the box office in North America.

Lionsgate's "Tyler Perry's Boo! A Madea Halloween" was on track to sell 16.7 million US dollars in tickets in the United States and Canada from Friday evening to Sunday.

That was good enough to gross 52 million dollars

in sales over 10 days, according to studio estimates gathered by comScore.

The latest Robert Langdon thriller starring Tom Hanks "Inferno" opened in second place with 15 million dollars at 3,576 locations. Based on Dan Brown's bestseller, the sequel to "The Da Vinci Code" opened far below its predecessor, which opened 10 years ago with a whopping 77 million dollars debut. Acting as a renowned Harvard professor

of symbology in "Inferno," this Tom Hanks' film cost 75 million dollars in its budget, which was half that of "The Da Vinci Code" or "Angels and Demons," its two sequel predecessors.

Internationally, "Inferno" has a good result. In two weeks of overseas release, it has earned nearly 132.7 million dollars.

The Tom Cruise thriller "Jack Reacher: Never Go Back" was in third place, at 9.6 million dollars this weekend and 39.7 mil-

lion dollars over 10 days of release.

Rounding out the 10 most-popular movies this weekend were "The Accountant" (8.5 million dollars), "Ouija: Origin Of Evil" (7 million), "The Girl On The Train" (4.3 million), "Miss Peregrine's Home For Peculiar Children" (4 million), "Keeping Up With The Joneses" (3.4 million), "Storks" (2.9 million) and "Ae Dil Hai Mushkil" (2.1 million). —Xinhua

mitv Myanmar International

(1-11-2016 07:00am ~ 2-11-2016 07:00am) MST

Today Fresh

07:03	Am	News
07:26	Am	Myanmar Game Changers (Ep-3)
07:53	Am	TECH School
08:03	Am	News
08:27	Am	Continuation In Rural Tradition
09:03	Am	News
09:26	Am	Life In NightArt In Life (Ep-2) (Part- I)
10:03	Am	News
10:43	Am	A Way of Life: Aikido
10:54	Am	Today Myanmar: Inflation & Economic Stagnation

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

Prime Time

07:03	Pm	News
07:26	Pm	A Day Out With Sarah (EP-6)
08:03	Pm	News
08:26	Pm	Taste of Myanmar (Noodle With Fermented Soya Bean)
08:43	Pm	Art Students: Their Dream
08:49	Pm	Aye Aye Soe: Myanma Pioneer Female Bodybuilder

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

Villagers of Miao ethnic group make hundred-bird clothing



Villagers of Miao ethnic group wear the traditional hundred-bird clothing with embroidery at Gaopai Village of Rongjiang County, southwest China's Guizhou Province, on 30 October, 2016. The hundred-bird clothing, embroidered with colourful silk and bird feathers, is the traditional dress for festivals and important occasions of Miao ethnic group. PHOTO: XINHUA

Cilic wins Basel title, edges nearer London

BASEL (Switzerland) — Marin Cilic beat Japan's Kei Nishikori for the Basel Open title on Sunday to edge closer to securing his place in the ATP World Tour Finals in London next month.

The powerful Croatian won 6-1, 7-6(5) to claim a 16th ATP Tour title and consolidate ninth place in the Race standings.

Rafael Nadal's decision to end his season early means Cilic is actually holding the last berth for the eight-man showdown at London's O2 Arena.

Cilic is now 210 points above Czech Tomas Berdych with Belgium's David Goffin a further 190 points adrift.

He needed only 25 minutes to take the opening set as he overpowered world number five Nishikori who is already assured of a third consecutive appearance at the season-end.

Nishikori offered more resistance in the second set and had three set points at 5-4 but Cilic held firm and claimed the title by winning the tiebreak on a Nishikori double-fault.



Marin Cilic of Croatia celebrates with the trophy after defeating Kei Nishikori of Japan during Swiss Indoors ATP men's final at Basel, Switzerland on 30 October 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Former US Open champion Cilic dropped only one of his 54 service games on the way to the title, his second of the year after also winning in Cincinnati.

Cilic will also lead Croatia in the Davis Cup final against Argentina next month.—Reuters

Hazard and Costa fire warning of Chelsea's title ambitions

LONDON — Chelsea's points tally after 10 games shows they are twice as good as they were at this stage of last season's Premier League campaign, which considering the form of Eden Hazard and Diego Costa is hardly surprising.

They were both on target on Sunday as Chelsea outclassed Southampton 2-0 to move into fourth spot with 22 points — just one behind Manchester City, Arsenal and Liverpool. The poor form and questionable appetite of both Costa and Hazard was blamed partly for Chelsea's dire start to last season that ultimately cost manager Jose Mourinho his job. However, the duo who helped fire Chelsea to the 2014-15 title are thriving once again in Antonio Conte's 3-4-3 system. Hazard's opener after six minutes meant he has scored in three consecutive Premier League games and has five for the season. This time last year he had failed to register and did not score his first league goal until April.—Reuters

Manchester City cannot afford second defeat by Barca

LONDON — Manchester City cannot afford another defeat on Tuesday at home to Barcelona, who thumped them 4-0 two weeks ago, having taken just one point from their last two Champions League Group C matches.

That third successive win for the Catalan pass-masters means they need only a draw in the return game to ensure their annual qualification for the knockout stage.

City, however, are in danger of losing second place in the table to Borussia Moenchengladbach, who sit one point behind them going into a home tie with Celtic.

Although they beat Borussia 4-0 on matchday one, Pep Guardiola's side still have to travel to Germany for a game that could decide which team qualifies with Barcelona.

Former Barca coach Guardiola was as chastened after the Nou Camp loss, when Lionel Messi scored a hat-trick and City goalkeeper Claudio Bravo was sent off, as he was on a previous return there, which resulted in a 3-0 loss for his Bayern Munich team in the 2015 semi-final.

At least Bayern recovered some self-respect by winning the second leg 3-2 on that occasion and a repeat would suit him perfectly.

Achieving it would also be a historic result for the Premier League leaders, who have lost all five previous meetings between

the clubs, including round of 16 games in 2014 and 2015.

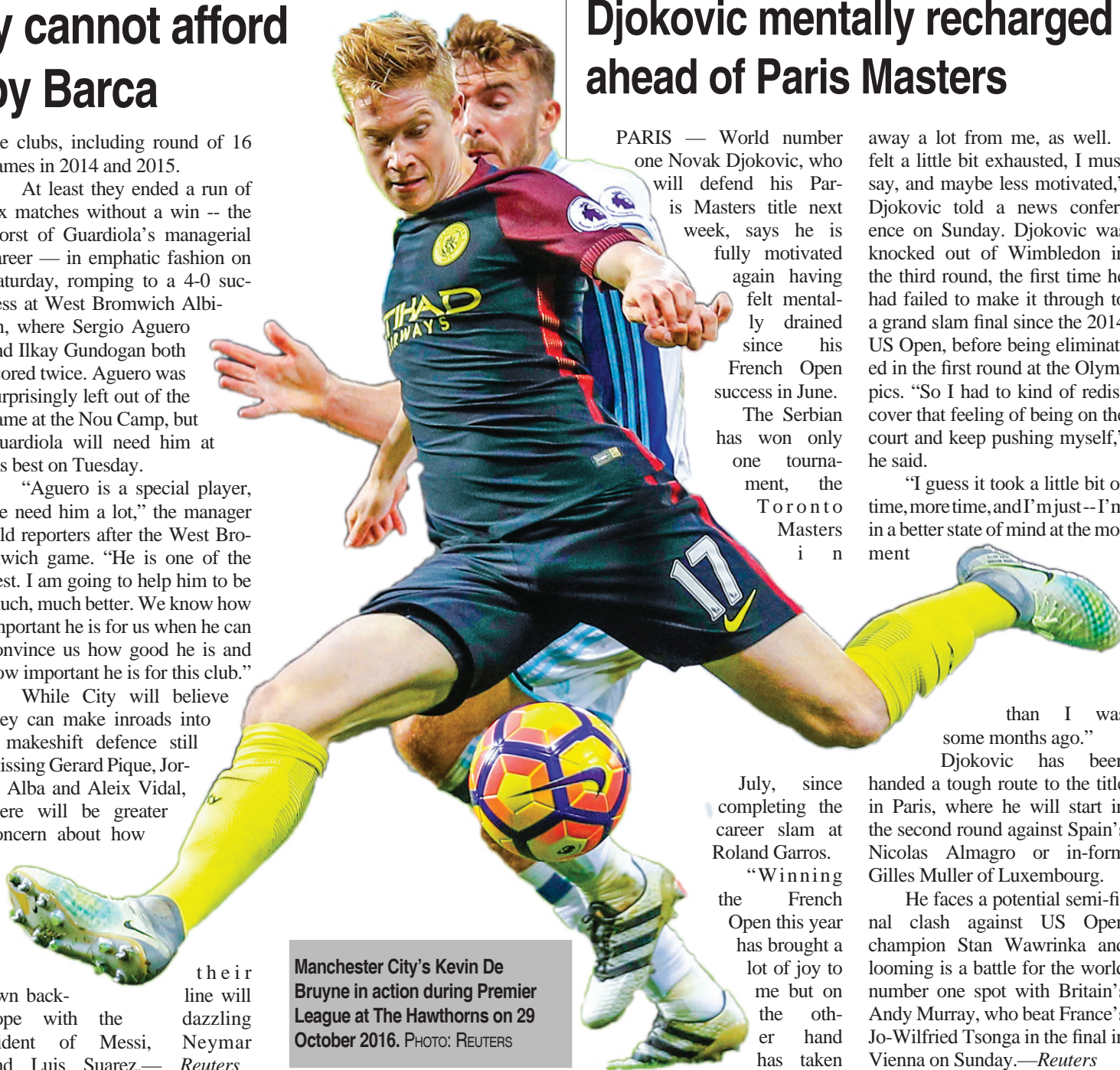
At least they ended a run of six matches without a win -- the worst of Guardiola's managerial career — in emphatic fashion on Saturday, romping to a 4-0 success at West Bromwich Albion, where Sergio Aguero and Ilkay Gundogan both scored twice. Aguero was surprisingly left out of the game at the Nou Camp, but Guardiola will need him at his best on Tuesday.

"Aguero is a special player, we need him a lot," the manager told reporters after the West Bromwich game. "He is one of the best. I am going to help him to be much, much better. We know how important he is for us when he can convince us how good he is and how important he is for this club."

While City will believe they can make inroads into a makeshift defence still missing Gerard Pique, Jordi Alba and Aleix Vidal, there will be greater concern about how

own back-cope with the trident of Messi, and Luis Suarez.—

their line will dazzling Neymar Reuters



Manchester City's Kevin De Bruyne in action during Premier League at The Hawthorns on 29 October 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Djokovic mentally recharged ahead of Paris Masters

PARIS — World number one Novak Djokovic, who will defend his Paris Masters title next week, says he is fully motivated again having felt mentally drained since his French Open success in June.

The Serbian has won only one tournament, the Toronto Masters in

away a lot from me, as well. I felt a little bit exhausted, I must say, and maybe less motivated," Djokovic told a news conference on Sunday. Djokovic was knocked out of Wimbledon in the third round, the first time he had failed to make it through to a grand slam final since the 2014 US Open, before being eliminated in the first round at the Olympics. "So I had to kind of rediscover that feeling of being on the court and keep pushing myself," he said.

"I guess it took a little bit of time, more time, and I'm just -- I'm in a better state of mind at the moment

than I was some months ago."

Djokovic has been handed a tough route to the title in Paris, where he will start in the second round against Spain's Nicolas Almagro or in-form Gilles Muller of Luxembourg.

He faces a potential semi-final clash against US Open champion Stan Wawrinka and looming is a battle for the world number one spot with Britain's Andy Murray, who beat France's Jo-Wilfried Tsonga in the final in Vienna on Sunday.—Reuters