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Hailing Union Peace Conference –21st Century Panglong

24 May 2017

Second Session



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi accepts credential from Mr. Stein Hansen, UNIDO Resident Representative, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **(NEWS ON PAGE-3) PHOTO: MNA**

Republic of the Union of Myanmar Office of the President Executive Order Number 8/2017

ME 1379 13TH Waning of Kason
(23rd May 2017)

Amnesty Order

As a gesture to welcome the Union Peace Conference – 21st Century Panglong, in order to understand the Metta (Loving Kindness) and Goodwill of the State, in order to be able to work with the People for one's own benefit, for the benefit of the region and for the benefit of the State, as a gesture of showing leniency for humanitarian reasons, the President has given Amnesty in accordance with Article 204, Sub-section (A) of the Constitution to (186) prisoners (Myanmar nationals) who are serving sentences in various prisons.

Htin Kyaw
President
Republic of the Union of Myanmar

Republic of the Union of Myanmar Office of the President Executive Order Number 9/2017

ME 1379 13TH Waning of Kason
(23rd May 2017)

Amnesty Order

As a gesture to welcome the Union Peace Conference – 21st Century Panglong, and in order to promote good relations between States, the President has given Amnesty and deported (73) foreign prisoners, in accordance with Article 204, Sub-section (A) of the Constitution.

Htin Kyaw
President
Republic of the Union of Myanmar



သဒ္ဓါထက်သန် မြန်မာအားမာန် ကမ္ဘောဇဘဏ်

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw

Hluttaw discusses climate change, disaster relief, irrigation bill

BILL amendments, the president's visit to China, climate change and a US \$125 million loan from the World Bank for disaster relief were among the issues discussed at the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw yesterday.

On the second day of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, the hluttaw approved the bill to amend the provision of legal support law after the hluttaw deliberated the bill's sections based on the comment of the Joint Bill Committee on the bill that was sent back from the President with his comments.

At the meeting, the hluttaw put on record the memorandum of the President's state visit to People's Republic of China.

Afterward, Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation U Hla Kyaw submitted to hluttaw a water and embankment bill that will set new tax rate for using irrigated waters that will make farmers value the irrigation water.

Next, Deputy Minister for Education U Win Maw Tun clarified the hluttaw on the matter of Myanmar continuing as member in 2017 Regional Cooperative Agreement (2017 RCA) replacing 1978 Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology for Asia and the Pacific (1978 RCA) that was sent by President and 6-month work progress report (from October 2016 to April 2017) of National Education Policy Commission. Announcement was made for hluttaw representative wishing to discuss water and embankment bill, Myanmar continuing as member in 2017 RCA replacing 1978 RCA and 6-month work progress report of National Education Policy Com-



Hluttaw Representatives in attendance stand up in respect for the Hluttaw Speaker. PHOTO: MNA

mission to submit their name.

U Zaw Thein of Wakema constituency, U Thant Zin of Dekkhinathiri constituency and Major Aung Kyaw Hnin of Tatmadaw Pyithu Hluttaw Representative then discussed the matter of confirming Myanmar participating as member in the Indian Ocean Memorandum of Understanding on Port State Control sent by President. Afterward, hluttaw decided to approve the confirmation.

Hluttaw representatives then discussed the matter of borrowing US\$125million from the World Bank to implement South East Asia Disaster Risk Management Project sent by President.

Tatmadaw Amyotha Hluttaw representative Major Thet Min Oo said establishing a natural disaster fund requires work to be done with a World Bank loan. US\$20 million is earmarked for it while US\$77 million is earmarked for Yangon City Development Committee to manage urban flooding and inundation. It is observed that there weren't many cases of flooding and in-

undation in Yangon of past that lack urban development but with recent urban development unbalancing the old drainage system, flooding and inundation occurs during the time when high tide and rain coincides.

In addition to this, the rise in the water level of Yangon River, the main drain of Yangon, is the main cause of occurrences of flooding and inundation. Improvement to the drainage system, constructing retention storages, modern outfall and outlet structures and automatic tidal gates is required to prevent flooding and inundation.

Material support for the safety of the people and education and management are important matters for which US\$22 million and US\$5 million was earmarked and he therefore supports the borrowing. The matter of annual interest of Ks1.2 billion and annual repayment of Ks5 billion amounting to Ks 6.2 billion need to be considered, he added. Similarly, U Bo Bo Oo of Sanchaung constituency, U Nyan Lin of Shwepyitha constituency, Naw

Hla Hla Soe of Yangon Region constituency 10, U Khin Cho of Hlaingbwe constituency, Daw Aye Mya Mya Moe of Kyauktan constituency, U Aung Kyaw Lwin of Sedoktara constituency, U Aung Thike of Seikpyu constituency, Dr. Tin Tin Win of Bago region constituency 5, U Myo Win of Mon Sate constituency 8, U Oo Tun Maung of Ponnagyun constituency, U Maung Maung Oo of Insein constituency, U Aye Naing of Dagon Myothit (South) constituency and U Aung Kyaw Kyaw Oo of Hline constituency join the discussion. Clarification by the relevant ministries and decision by the hluttaw on this matter will be made on the third day it is learnt.

Hluttaw representatives then discussed the matter of Myanmar signing the agreement on establishing Asian Forest Cooperation Organization sent by the President.

Daw Mar Mar Khine of Thaton constituency discussed that the aim of the agreement is resolving the effect of climate change with good technology

within the long term forest management frame by transforming policy into solid work processes through increased cooperation in the forest sector that is beneficial for the country. The five climate change work processes are also very good. Good benefits can be gained through signing the agreement and since there is a need to develop forest sector with modern technology, she supports the signing of this international cooperation agreement.

U Khin Cho of Hlaingbwe constituency, U Win Myint Oo @ U Nay Myo of Nyaungshwe constituency, U J Yawpu of Kachin state constituency 1, U Saw Thar Lay Saw of Shwegyin constituency, U Myint Lwin of Twantay constituency, U Aye Naing of Dagon Myothit (South) constituency, Daw Ma Ma Lay of Shan state constituency 8, Daw Sha Mu of Kayah state constituency 5, U Whe Tin of Chin state constituency 11, Dr. Khun Win Thaung of Kachin state constituency 11, Dr. Khin Sithu of Loikaw constituency, U Saw Tun Mya Aung of Papun constituency, U Maung Maung Lat of Sagaing region constituency 9, U Win Maung of Magway region constituency 6, U Oo Tun Maung of Ponnagyun constituency, Tatmadaw Pyithu Hluttaw representative Major Kyaw Zin Lat, U Myat Lay Oo of Htilin constituency and Dr. Aung Khin of Pyin Oo Lwin constituency also discussed the matter of signing the agreement on establishing Asian Forest Cooperation Organization.

It is learnt that an advance notice will be provided as on when the explanation of the relevant ministries and decision by hluttaw will be made on this matter. — Myo Myint, Aye Aye Thant (MNA) ■

Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker meets Italian Ambassador

PYITHU HLUTTAW Speaker U Win Myint received a delegation led by Italian Ambassador to Myanmar H.E. Mr. Pier Gior gio Aliberti in the hall of Pyithu Hluttaw's Building at 2:30 pm in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the meeting, the two representatives discussed matters concerning bilateral relations and cooperation between Italy and Myanmar. They also discussed about the progress on the process

of the law and investment sectors.

Also present at the meeting were Pyithu Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U T Khun Myat and officials from Pyithu Hluttaw. —Myanmar News Agency ■



Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U Win Myint holds talks with Italian Ambassador Mr. Pier Gior gio Aliberti in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee bans Ma Ba Tha

THE State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee made four decisions yesterday in connection with the organisation for protection of race and religion, also known as Ma Ba Tha, ordering the organisation to cease all activities under the name of Ma Ba Tha.

The decisions came at the Seventh State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee's 47-member special meeting. The Sangha Maha Nayaka is a government-appointed body of high-ranking Buddhist monks that oversees and regulates Buddhist clergy. The letter sent to the authorities following the meeting of the highest body of the Members of the Sangha in Myanmar said groups or individuals cannot take any actions under the name of Ma Ba Tha.

The second decision said Ma Ba Tha signboards nationwide are to be taken down by 15th July.

The third decision said any infringement of the above two resolutions would be punished under both Buddhist and civil law.

The fourth decision urged the Ministry of Home Affairs to enforce the third decision as soon as possible.

In another letter attached to the former one with decisions of the committee, the chairman and secretary figures of Ma Ba Tha signed, promising that the organisation would strictly follow the decisions of the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee and would inform the decisions to members of the organisation.—Global New Light of Myanmar ■

State Counsellor accepts credential from UNIDO Resident Representative

DAW Aung San Suu Kyi, State Counsellor and Union Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar received Mr. Stein Hansen, newly-accredited United Nations Industrial Development Organisation

(UNIDO) Resident Representative to Myanmar, who based in Bangkok, Thailand, and accepted his credentials on 23 May 2017 at 1:20 pm at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nay Pyi Taw.

During the meeting, they

discussed matters relating to further cooperation between Myanmar and UNIDO in agro-based industrialization, rural development and creating green job opportunities in Myanmar.—Ministry of Foreign Affairs ■

Armed ethnic organisations attend Panglong except for UNFC

Ye Khaung Nyunt

Eight armed ethnic organisations were given special invitations to the second meeting of Union Peace Conference - 21st Century Panglong, and eight have reportedly accepted, it was learnt yesterday. The United Nationalities Federation Council (UNFC) said it was holding its central executive committee (extended) meeting in Chiang Mai, Thai-

land on 22 and 23 May and thus unable to attend yesterday.

The UNFC explained its inability to attend the second meeting of Union Peace Conference - 21st Century Panglong in a press conference held after the two-day UNFC central executive committee (extended) meeting.

Seven other armed ethnic organisations — the United Wa State Army (UWSA), the Kachin Independence Organi-

sation (KIO), the Arakan Army (AA), the Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA), the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA), the National Democratic Alliance Army (NDAA) and the Shan State Progress Party (SSPP) reportedly arrived in Nay Pyi Taw by air yesterday afternoon to attend the second meeting of Union Peace Conference - 21st Century Panglong. ■

Myanmar turns to coffee as crops threatened by climate change

WITH climate change affecting crop production, Myanmar is taking steps to boost the coffee industry by holding events such as the Coffee Forum in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

“With the development of the Myanma Coffee Sector, Myanmar coffee growers and entrepreneurs will earn more foreign exchange,” said Vice President U Henry Van Thio at the opening of the forum.

“Yet, compared to that of coffee growing countries in South-East Asia such as Indonesia, Thailand and Vietnam, Myanmar's coffee sector was found to have lagged behind due to weaknesses in technique, lack of exchange of news and information and a shortage of experience in growing the coffee crop,” he added.

The Vice President made the remarks came at the Coffee Forum in Myanmar held under the sponsorship of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation at the Thingaha Hotel in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Dr Aung Thu, Union Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation said, “In the period between 2018 to 2030, it is targeted to increase the coffee growing acreage up to 200,000, with 600,00 tonnes of high-quality



Vice President U Henry Van Thio at the Coffee Forum at the Thingaha Hotel in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

coffee expected to be produced by 2030. Now that coffee organisations such as the coffee forum organisation has emerged and Myanma coffee is being exported to the global market, prospects for Myanmar coffee are found to be going well.”

Present at the forum were Union Minister for Commerce Dr Than Myint, ministers for agriculture in Regions and States, Hluttaw representatives, economists, association of Myanmar

coffee growers and producers, coffee growing and producing entrepreneurs, professionals from home and abroad, invited guests and responsible officials.

In the world commodity market, coffee follows petroleum as the most exported crop from developing countries. Of the exported agricultural produce from Myanmar, rice and varieties of beans are a staple source of foreign exchange. Likewise, coffee is a kind of crop bringing

in foreign exchange, the Vice President said.

Myanmar Arabica Coffee produced in Pyin Oo Lwin and Ywangan in Shan State is now ranked on the list of world-standard specialty coffees, fetching reasonable prices.

“By holding coffee forums in such a way, we can get benefits that will help for the development of the coffee sector,” said the Vice President.

In doing so, matters for

the Union government and the Ministry to assist coffee growers, challenges experienced presently, tasks for future development of Myanma Coffee, present market situations, and supply needs of coffee growers were discussed at length, with economists urging participants to discuss and suggest with economic perspectives.

Dr Ye Tint Tun, Director-General of the Agricultural Department, clarified the aims of holding the coffee forum, coffee and health, exports and sales of Myanma coffee, coffee-growing special regions, coffee production, distribution of coffee, prospects of the Myanma coffee market, coffee research works, difficulties, opportunities and benefits.

At the event, economist Dr Zaw Oo, coffee expert U Okkar Aung and professionals from home and abroad read out research papers.

It has been learnt that the Coffee Forum was held under the sponsorship of the Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation Ministry with a view to increase coffee production, conserve the natural environment, expand coffee crops by growing on hillsides and other methods.—Myanmar News Agency ■

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Upgrading commuter railway lines continued

THE project of upgrading commuter railway lines in Yangon is currently completed up to Hlawga and the remaining tracks will be continued, according to a senior engineer from Myanmar Railways.

The project of upgrading commuter railway lines aims at increasing the speed of commuter trains. Commuter trains in Yangon are currently running at 25km/h and takes 2 hours and 50 minutes for a round trip.

After the upgrading projects, trains will be able to run up to 60km/h and time reduced to 50 minutes per round.

The projects of upgrading level crossings, tracks, crossover bridges and other needed sections will be con-



Workers walk next to a railway in Yangon. PHOTO: GNLM/PHOE KHWAR

tinued. The works of welding the rail lines, replacing new rails and upgrading six stations are currently completed up to Hlawga. The upgrading projects will cost

a total of US\$ 207million, from ODA (Official Development Assistance) loans from Japan and allocation from the government budget. The project of upgrad-

ing commuter railway lines was started in the 2017-2018 fiscal year and will be fully completed by the 2020-2021 fiscal year. —200 ■

Eight rural health centres developed by 3MDG Fund to be finalized next year

AS PART OF its healthcare improvement programmes in remote areas, Three Millennium Development Goal Fund is currently establishing the eight new rural health centres in Chin and northern Shan states.

According to the 3MDG Fund, the project is planned to be finished and eight new health branches will be handed over to the Ministry of Health and

Sports in early 2018.

Other 74 centres in Yangon, Mandalay, Ayeyawady, Magway and Sagaing regions as well as Kayah, and eastern and southern parts of Shan states have already been handed over to the ministry. Those facilities with onsite staff accommodations will improve access to health services for over 400,000 people in hard-to-reach locations.

Those centres are financed by the 3MDG's donors — Australia, Denmark, European Union, Sweden, Switzerland, UK and the US — and implemented by the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS).

The centres will serve all community health needs, with a particular focus on maternal, newborn and child health care. The effort will aid in reducing

the dangers of childbirth; the number of deaths among women and babies during delivery is currently higher in rural areas than in urban settings.

The centres include areas for childbirth, emergency and waiting rooms, examination rooms, water tanks, incinerator and placenta pit, onsite accommodation for staff, and drug storage facilities.—GNLM ■

Most beach hotels to be opened during Monsoon season

Most of the beach hotels will be opened during Monsoon season enabling tourist to travel to the beach during the rainy season, according to an announcement on Jovago.com.mm.

During the past year monsoon season, most of the hotels in Chaungtha and Ngwehsaung beaches were shut down. But

only 10 per cent of the hotels from Chaungtha and only 30 per cent of hotels from Ngwehsaung will be shut down during this monsoon season.

"Most of the hotels from Chaungtha will be opened while only 30 per cent of hotels from Ngwehsaung will be shut down during this Monsoon season.

It means, most of the beach hotels will be opened this year compared to the same period of last year. Mostly, the price of the rooms become cheaper in June, said Mr. Grigorios Ntarnaltanis, Business Development Manager from Jovago Myanmar.

The beach hotels will be opened 90 per cent in Chaung-

tha, 70 per cent in Ngwehsaung and 50 per cent in Ngapali during Monsoon season.

Most of the hotels which are connected with Javago.com.mm can receive discount this month: 30 per cent in Chaungtha, 40 per cent in Ngwehsaung and 50 per cent in Ngapali.—Min Thu ■

Smoke-free zones to be designated in six big cities

SMOKE-free areas will be designated in the big cities comprising Yangon this year, according to the Public Health Foundation, a non-profit organisation aiming for universal healthcare in the country.

For the purpose of protecting young people from smoking and associated health problems,

the foundation is putting forth concerted efforts to establish smoke-free zones in certain public areas in six states and regions including Yangon, Mandalay, Sagaing and Magway Regions, as well as Kayin and Shan states.

Public locations such as schools, hospitals and pagodas

will be smoke-free areas. The new projects will be implemented through collaborative efforts between the foundation and region and state governments.

The move also aims to protect non-smokers who are exposed to secondhand smoke from potential diseases, including lung cancer, asthma, stroke

and coronary heart disease.

Lung cancer has been the most common cancer in the world. According to the World Cancer Research Fund International, smoking is the principal cause of lung cancer and it is estimated to be responsible for 85 % of all types of this cancer.—200 ■



The border trade between Myanmar and its neighboring countries has gone up in the current fiscal year.

PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

Border trade through ITCs exceeds Ks4.7 billion

THE VALUE of border trade using the Individual Trading Card (ITC) has exceeded Ks4.7 billion in the current financial year, the Ministry of Commerce reported.

Of the total trade of \$4.728 billion, export earnings amounted to Ks287 million, while imports topped Ks4.4 billion, according to the official statistics of the ministry.

In the first 42 days of this fiscal year, the Myawady gate on the border with Thailand

was reported to have the largest volume of trade with a value of more than Ks3.4 billion, followed by the Kanpiketee cross-border stations with Ks477m, Tachilek with Ks254m, Mawtaung with Ks198m, Tamu with Ks160m, Reed with Ks84m, Kawthaung with Ks58m and Lwejel with Ks54m.

The trade value of Muse and Kengtung border trade camps was less than Ks5 million.

The ministry first intro-

duced the ITC system at Tamu and Muse border stations in late 2012 with the aim of making smooth export/import trading.

The system was rolled out to other borders in 2013, with the ministry planning to open new border trade camps in the future.

Since its introducing to date, the ministry issued 1,285 ITCs in total. The total border trade with ITCs last fiscal year was Ks18.972 billion.—Shwe Khine ■

Export of Myanmar's coffee to China rises by 18 tonnes

MYANMAR exported 51 tonnes of coffee beans to the Chinese market via the Muse 105 mile trade zone between 6 and 12 May, earning more than US\$45,000, according to the Commerce Ministry.

When compared with the previous week, the volume of exported coffee beans was 18 tonnes more than last week's total of over 33 tonnes.

According to coffee growers in PyinOoLwin, there has been

an increase in foreign demand for both raw coffee beans and finished products. International buyers including western countries have placed an order for the country's specialty coffee.

Arabica and Robusta, popular types of coffee, are mainly cultivated in Ywangan and Nawngkhio of Shan State, PyinOoLwin and Mogok in Mandalay Region, and Taungoo in Bago Region as well as Chin

State.

Coffee beans manufactured from Ywangan were exhibited for the first time in the U.S. last year, when 56 coffee samples scored in the specialty, coffee exporters say.

Coffee demand is growing thanks to increasing consumption at home and abroad, said one of local growers who is trying to boost commercial coffee production in an anticipation of healthy exports.—Swe Nyein ■

Smuggling between Myanmar, Thailand worth as much as official trade

THERE is a large difference between the official border trade statistics released by Myanmar and Thailand, a disparity that could be explained by the smuggling business between the two countries, which is worth as much or more as official trade, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

According to Myanmar, bilateral trade via the Myawady border gate was over US\$928 million in the 2016-2017 fiscal year, while Thailand's official figures showed that the bilateral trade hit \$2.44 billion—a difference of about \$1.5 billion.

The difference in the declared amounts may be referred to as the “smuggling amount”, said an official from the Myawady Trade Zone, adding that there may be as many as 25 smuggling routes across

the Thaungyin River, the border between the Thai province of Tak and Kayin State.

Traders sometimes use the illegal routes because they cannot wait a long time to conduct export and import of goods through the normal border gate, traders say.

Informal trade in the region involves illegal transactions of restricted goods such as cattle and gems, according to U Thant Zin Aung, an MP from Myawady Constituency No. 2 of Kayin State, saying that the problem has already been reported to the relevant departments.

The majority of imports from Thailand are food, beverages, electronics, agricultural machinery and home appliances, while exports from Myanmar include agricultural and marine products.—200 ■

Trade-related payments to be conducted in four towns for first phase

TRADE-RELATED electronic payments, mainly for payment of licence fees, will be conducted in four towns in the first phase of a pilot project starting in June, it is learnt from a conference on using the Myanmar Payment Union (MPU) system held at the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UM-FCCI) yesterday.

In the first phase, payments will be made by using the MPU system while applying for a licence at the Nay Pyi Taw head office, the Yangon export/import office, and the Myawady and Muse border trade zone.

Electronic trade-related payments were conducted in these four places in April and May during the testing stage. The authority will conduct trade-related payments starting in June for the first phase after officially announcing the effort to the public, said U Yan Naing Tun, the Director-General of the trade department.

If trade-related payments with the MPU system are successful in these four places, the authority is planning to conduct similar efforts in SEZ, MIC and other border trade camps.

To implement the MPU system with trade-related payments, the authority will connect with Myanma Economic Bank, Myanma Foreign Trade Bank, Myanma Investment and Commercial Bank, Myanmar Citizens Bank, Myawady Bank, Myanmar Oriental Bank, Tun Foundation Bank, Kanbawza Bank, Gaba Yadanar Bank, Innwa Bank, Co-operative Bank, Asia Green Development Bank, Ayeyawady Bank, United Amara Bank, Small & Medium Industrial Development Bank, Urban Development Bank, Yangon City Bank, Construction and Housing Development Bank, Shwe Bank, Yoma Bank and First Private Bank.

The authority has already connected with 17 banks out of 23 banks to implement the MPU system.—200 ■

Thailand reassures foreigners following Bangkok hospital attack

BANGKOK— Thailand's foreign ministry on Tuesday reassured the international community that the country would increase security at sensitive locations a day after a bomb exploded at a hospital in the capital Bangkok wounding 24 people.

Thailand has been ruled by a junta since a May 2014 coup. The attack on Monday coincided with the third anniversary of the takeover and the army has blamed the incident on groups opposed to military rule.

No group has claimed responsibility for the attack which happened at the military-owned Phramongkutklao Hospital.

"Bombs will have an impact anywhere," Thailand's Foreign Minister Don Pramudwinai told reporters on Tuesday.

"Any action at a hospital violates human rights ... I would like the foreigners to know that security forces are looking after this," he said.

"We didn't want this to happen. If we can catch those behind this even better," he added.

One of the most popular



Thai military personnel check the bags of visitors at an entrance of the Phramongkutklao Hospital in Bangkok, Thailand on 23 May, 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

holiday destinations in South-east Asia, Thailand attracted 32.6 million visitors last year, a rise of nearly 9 per cent from the previous year.

The country's beaches and city destinations continue to lure

travelers with Chinese making up the largest group of tourists.

But Thailand has been rocked by attacks, including a series of explosions last year at popular beach locations, which cast a shadow over Thailand's

safety credentials.

The beach attacks killed four people and wounded dozens, a day after Thais voted overwhelmingly to accept a military-backed constitution that critics said would only serve to entrench military power.

Thailand's military seized power on 22 May, 2014 to end months of street action aimed at overthrowing a populist movement that had won several national elections since 2001.

The coup was the 12th military takeover since 1932 when Thailand saw the end of an absolute monarchy. Junta spokesman Winthai Suvaree said security would be increased following Monday's attack.

"Any security measures that are not working will need to change," junta spokesman Winthai told reporters at Bangkok's Government House. On 15 May, a small bomb went off near the National Theatre in Bangkok's old quarter, wounding two people. It was not clear who was behind the bomb. An explosion outside a former government lottery office on 5 April wounded two others.

Army chief Chalermchai Sitthisat said on Monday that he believed the two attacks were linked to the hospital attack, adding that the materials used to make the bombs were the same. —Reuters ■

Korea fires at suspected drone at border with North amid missile crisis

SEOUL — South Korea's military fired warning shots at a suspected drone from North Korea on Tuesday amid tension over Pyongyang's latest missile test which drew international condemnation and a warning from China.

The identity of the object remained unclear, the military said, but Yonhap news agency said it was possibly a drone, more than 90 shots were fired in return and it disappeared from radar screens.

The incursion came with tension already high on the Korean peninsula after the North's test-launch of a ballistic missile test on Sunday which Pyongyang said proved advances in its pursuit of building a nuclear-tipped weapon that can hit US targets.

The United States has been trying to persuade China, North Korea's lone major ally, to do more to rein in North Korea,

which has conducted dozens of missile launches and tested two nuclear bombs since the start of last year, in defiance of UN Security Council sanctions and resolutions.

The North has made no secret of its plans to develop a missile capable of striking the United States and has ignored calls to halt its weapons programmes, even from China. It says the programme is necessary to counter US aggression.

"We urge North Korea to not do anything to again violate UN Security Council resolutions," Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said in a statement posted on the Foreign Ministry's website on Tuesday.

"At the same time, we hope all parties can maintain restraint, not be influenced by every single incident, ...persist in carrying out Security Council resolutions on North Korea and persevere with the resolution

of the issue through peaceful means, dialogue and consultation."

Wang was responding to reporters' questions on Monday while in Ivory Coast, according to the statement.

The North's official KCNA news agency, citing the spokesman for the foreign ministry, said the country had "substantially displayed" the capabilities for mounting a nuclear attack on Hawaii and Alaska and had built full capabilities for attacking the US mainland.

US and South Korean officials and experts believe the North is several years away from having such a capability.

North Korea said on Monday that Sunday's launch met all technical requirements that could allow mass-production of the missile, which it calls the Pukguksong-2.

The test was North Korea's second in a week and South Ko-

rea's new liberal government said it dashed its hopes for peace on the peninsula.

The UN Security Council condemned the launch and again expressed its concern over the North's behaviour. The Security Council is due to meet behind closed doors later on Tuesday.

North Korea's recent missile tests were a legitimate act of self-defence by a "fully-fledged nuclear power", North Korean diplomat Ju Yong Chol told the UN Conference on Disarmament in Geneva on Tuesday.

"It is the United States' hostile policy and its aggressive joint military drills, nuclear threats and military build-up around the Korean peninsula that really aggravates the situation on the Korean peninsula and the region and which compels the DPRK to also up its nuclear deterrence," he said.

DPRK are the initials for

the North's official name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Ju was the only speaker at the forum who did not begin his remarks by offering condolences to Britain for the victims of Monday night's bomb attack at a concert in Manchester.

The South Korean military did not say if the unidentified object was hit by the warning shots on Tuesday, but it disappeared from military radar.

North Korea has previously sent drones into South Korean airspace, with some crashing. In January 2016, South Korea fired warning shots at a suspected drone which turned back.

US President Donald Trump has warned that a "major, major conflict" with North Korea is possible over its weapons programmes, although US officials say tougher sanctions, not military force, are the preferred option to counter the North Korean threat. —Reuters ■

S Korea's ex-leader Park to make first court appearance in corruption trial

SEOUL — South Korea's former leader Park Geun-hye makes her first public appearance on Tuesday since her arrest in March, standing trial on bribery charges over a corruption scandal that brought down her presidency.

Park faces more than 10 years in jail if found guilty of taking bribes from business leaders, one of the key accusations that led to her impeachment, making her the country's first democratically elected leader to be removed from office.

Park has denied any wrongdoing and is expected to plead not guilty at the trial.

The first day of arguments on Tuesday comes two weeks after the election of President Moon Jae-in, who has promised to get tough on chaebol bosses who commit crimes, and has named a respected investigator to head the office prosecuting the former leader.

Park is expected to appear at the Seoul Central District Court at 0100 GMT with the friend she is accused of colluding with to solicit money, Choi Soon-sil. Choi has also rejected the bribery charges.

At the court hearing Park and Choi are likely to be reu-



South Korean ousted leader Park Geun-hye arrives at a court in Seoul, South Korea on 23 May, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

nited for the first time since the scandal erupted in public in late October, seated near each other as defendants. It is Park's first appearance since being arrested on 31 March, three weeks after she was removed from office by a Constitutional Court ruling and

after a warrant judge decided she posed a flight risk and was likely to tamper with evidence.

The controversy surrounding her secretive lifestyle and eccentric personality did not end with her departure from the presidential Blue House. An animal

rights group has filed a complaint with the police against her for abandoning nine dogs she left behind in the presidential compound. Media reports have said she spent her time in her prison cell reading the English dictionary and keeping away from the

news available for inmates.

She is believed to have been kept away from the head of the Samsung conglomerates, Jay Y-lee, one of the business leaders accused of paying into the funds set up to back Park's policies.

Park's lawyer did not respond to telephone calls and text messages seeking comment, and the Seoul Detention Centre declined to comment citing the inmate's privacy.

The Seoul Central District Court held a lottery last week for the 68 seats available for the public, drawing more than 500 people, most of them young people in their 20s and 30s.

Heo Go-eun, a 22-year-old university music major said she had cut her classes that day to enter the lottery. "This will remain a page in history and I wanted to see for myself Park on trial," said Heo, adding she had participated in the candlelight rallies last year that drew millions of South Koreans to the street in peaceful protests. "So many people are just happy Park has been impeached, that she has already paid the price for her crimes but this is just the beginning." —Reuters ■

India says it attacked Pakistan army posts in divided Kashmir

NEW DELHI — India said on Tuesday it had attacked and damaged Pakistani army posts in Kashmir as it sought to prevent militants infiltrating from the Pakistani side of the disputed region, but Pakistan denied the assertion.

The Indian army said its troops had attacked positions in the Nowshera area, but it did not say when or how it had inflicted the damage. Reuters was unable to verify footage circulated on Indian television showing explosions in a hilly area.

"It is essential that the infiltrations along the Line of Control are controlled," Indian Major

General Ashok Narula told reporters, referring to the disputed border between the Pakistani and Indian sides of Kashmir, known as the LoC.

He also accused Pakistan of firing into villages on the Indian side of the frontier. "The recent action by our troops in Nowshera sector has caused some damage to Pak army force which are supporting infiltration," Narula said.

The Pakistani military's top spokesman, Major General Asif Ghafoor, dismissed the Indian report.

"Indian claims of destroying Pakistani post along LoC ... and firing by Pak Army on civilians

across LoC are false," he said.

The armies of the nuclear-armed neighbours face off along the heavily militarised frontier that divided the Muslim-majority Himalayan region and exchanges of fire are common. Both sides invariably accuse the other of starting it.

Last week, an Indian father and daughter were killed and about a dozen civilians were wounded in firing. But an official in Pakistani Kashmir said Pakistan had responded to "unprovoked" Indian firing. India accuses its neighbour of training and then sending militants across the border to launch at-

tacks and support a separatist movement against Indian rule.

Pakistan denies that, saying it limits its help to providing moral support to the inhabitants of India's only Muslim-majority state.

Narula said security forces had stepped up operations along the border because infiltrations would rise with the melting of winter snow and the opening of mountain passes.

India is struggling to contain a recent flare-up in protests against its rule in Kashmir, where deep-seated anger and calls for independence remain widespread.—Reuters ■

Two soldiers killed in ambush in Thailand's restive south

BANGKOK — Two paramilitary soldiers on patrol in Thailand's deep south were shot dead on Tuesday in an ambush by insurgents.

The two volunteer rangers in the 47th Ranger Forces Regiment were attacked while on a regular patrol on a motorcycle in an area of Yala province. Thousands of people have been killed since an insurgency began in 2004 in Thailand's southern provinces of Narathiwat, Pattani and Yala, a predominantly Muslim region of the mostly Buddhist country.—Kyodo News ■

If there is a will, there is a way

Aye Min Soe

BY granting presidential pardons to 186 Myanmar and 73 foreign prisoners one day ahead of the second session of the Union Peace Conference-21st Century Panglong, the Union Government has honoured this historic event.

The amnesty is aimed at allowing the citizen prisoners to serve the national and regional interest and their own interests, as well to cooperate with the people after understanding the State's goodwill and loving kindness, the government said.

The symbolic act of pardoning these prisoners who come from diverse locations and ethnicities is a rare opportunity to reconcile with

their families and to build a new life, instead of languishing in prison. Today, they can also participate in the peace process.

Peace cannot be achieved without the involvement of all groups in society. Civil society organizations have long played an important and active role in this country, including in our ethnic states.

To bring peace to our society and country, we must draw lessons from the setbacks of the past, and join together again to write a new chapter for our lives and for our country.

The second session of the Union Peace Conference-21st Century Panglong began in Nay Pyi Taw today, with the participation of different peoples

representing diverse ethnicities and organizations.

At this moment, all the people across our country are watching with great trepidation. Ethnic people in the areas of our country where there is not yet peace are waiting expectantly for the outcome of this conference.

Armed conflicts have resulted in our national brethren, especially in ethnic regions, being forced to abandon their homes and bear the brunt of socioeconomic deprivation as internally displaced persons.

We must not forget their plight as they are deprived of enjoying peace in their own homes.

Lack of peace and stability has caused Myanmar to lag behind its

neighbouring countries in terms of socioeconomic development.

Today, as a way of resolving political problems through political means, the Union Peace Conference-21st-Century Panglong begins its second session as a way of partly fulfilling the greatest wish of our people.

Whether we shall be able to fulfill the hopes and dreams of our people depends on all the leaders who are present here today.

We all know that strong desire is needed to achieve any goal. If there is a will, there is a way.

We pay tribute to all those who have already strived so hard to bring about peace and prosperity for all our people across the country. ■

Peace is in sight

Khin Maung Myint

THE Union Peace Conference—21st. Century Panglong (Second Session), where the stakeholders will be endeavoring to achieve peace is scheduled to commence on 24 of May. People are in high hopes that this round of deliberations would bear fruits. The indications from the buildup on the road to this conference is overwhelmingly encouraging. Many armed groups apart from a very few are ready to sit down at the conference table to find a solution for an everlasting peace. Thus, it is assumed that PEACE is in sight at long last.

For decades, since our Independence peace had eluded us. Now that situations are quite favourable for peace to be achieved is within arm's reach, this opportunity should not be let to slip away again as in the past. During my lifetime I had witnessed quite a number of peace initiatives being taken, without much success. Those are the things of the past and there may be sound excuses for their failures, so I'll not be stressing on their shortcomings, but would like to urge all the stakeholders to this latest session of the Union Peace Conference to be aware of the peoples' desires. The people are really fed up with the armed conflicts between the national races and the government or between themselves and are really hungry for absolute and everlasting peace.

Today, if one would observe all the other countries in the region, one is bound to see that ours' is the only country where armed conflicts are widespread. These are hindrances or obstacles that must be overcome to achieve

peace. Without peace there wouldn't be stability, which in turn would affect the developments and hence, the prosperities of a country too.

My personal view is that peace cannot be achieved through fighting. Even if we can overpower all the armed groups, there would still be mistrusts and grievances among the minorities towards us. These mistrusts and grievances are the root causes of the multi-racial insurgencies. Everyone should be mindful that the belligerencies will lead to turmoils only, but not towards peace. So we should endeavor to build total trust among the diverse nationalities and eradicate the grievances. Peace could only be achieved through negotiations.

In my two previous articles—“Are we on track” and “Peace is the foundation of prosperity” contributed to the Global New Light of Myanmar daily—I had already outlined the salient points that are vital to the attainment of peace. Thus, I don't intend to be going into detail again what those points are that the stakeholders should be mindful of, but would like to emphasize only the three most important points they should observe during the peace conference. Those are: “to nurture further trust”, “abandon all grievances that are born out of hatreds based on the past histories” and last, but not least “to make as much concessions or compromises as possible”.

It is undeniable that trusts among the various ethnic races including the armed groups and the incumbent administration have improved recently. To achieve any agreement, trust is the

most vital factor. Without trust there cannot be respect, thus mutual trust should be nurtured to create mutual respect. Then only any discussion would be smooth and successful, so all the stakeholders should endeavor in building the trust further than the level already achieved, for this conference to be a total success.

To nurture or further build the trust, all grievances that are born of hatreds based on past histories should be totally abandoned. Then only it would dispel all doubts and suspicions amongst the different national races and would lead to forgiveness. If one cannot forgive, trust cannot be expected to emerge. Thus even if you may not be able to forget the past, at least please try to forgive if you sincerely want to achieve peace.

In the endeavor for peace, it is

Now that situations are quite favourable for peace to be achieved is within arm's reach, this opportunity should not be let to slip away again as in the past.

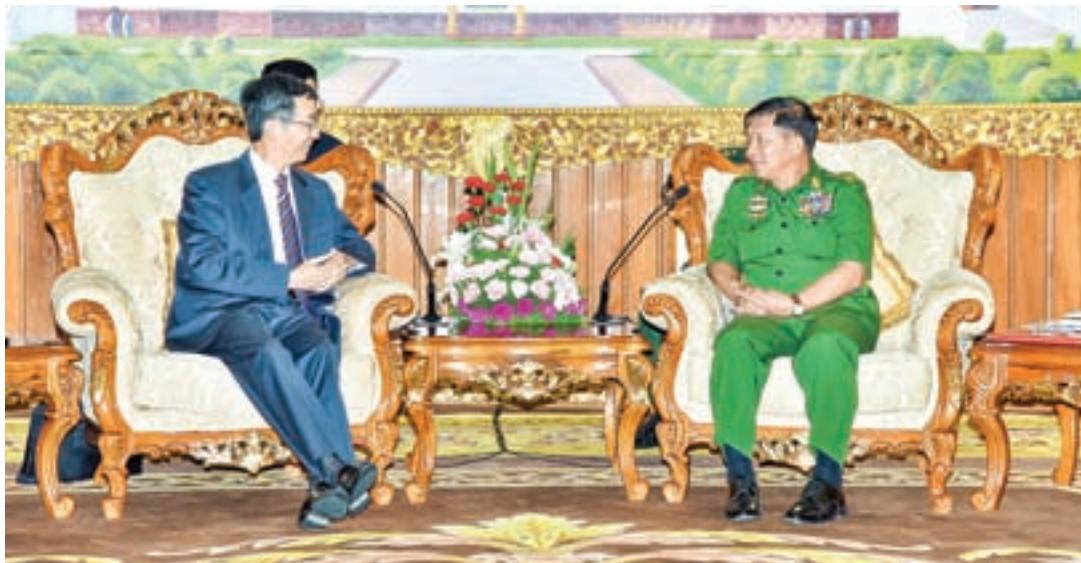
very important not to be dogmatic, but flexible—ready to make compromises as much as possible. All parties should avoid making unreasonable or impossible demands that cannot be agreed upon. Please don't be reluctant to make concessions or compromises for the good of the people and the country. As far as I know, the authorities had already made some unprecedented concessions, which is a great leap forward that should be hailed as a breakthrough. Most ethnic armed groups appreciated that progress. This is an indication that the incumbent administration is sincere in its desire to attain peace. I believe that they will not hesitate to make more compromises on the demands that are legitimate and if they are in line with the interests of the people and could benefit the country. However, there are restrictions or limits to everything, so please be reasonable and understanding.

Having said that, I would like to sincerely urge all the stakeholders in the peace process to be patient, try to understand one another, please be devoid of doubts, suspicions and grievances among the national races. Please look beyond the interests of own nationality races and work hand in hand towards a united Pyidaungsu, where the diverse ethnic races can live in peace and harmony. Whatever we do, our actions should not compromise our sovereignty, Independence and the rule of law. With the natural resources that we have and the right situations, that is peace and stability, and the right guidance by the incumbent government, we are bound to progress and develop rapidly. Such situations will benefit every citizen undoubtedly. So let's strive together towards a peaceful and united Pyidaungsu, where there is rule of law and where stability prevails.

Senior General meets Special envoy of Asian Affairs of China

Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing received H.E. Mr. Sun Guoxiang, Special Envoy of Asian Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China at 2:30 pm in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the meeting, they discussed matters relating to strengthening bilateral relations, enhancing the cooperation between the two countries and measures for success of the second session of the Union Peace Conference—21st Century Panglong.—Myanmar News Agency



Senior General Min Aung Hlaing holds talks with Special envoy of Asian Affairs of China. PHOTO: MNA

Senior General meets Brazilian Ambassador

Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing received Ambassador of Brazil to Myanmar H.E. Mr. Antonio J.M. de Souza e Silva, at 1:30 pm yesterday at Bayintnaung Guest House in Nay Pyi Taw. During the meeting, both sides discussed matters concerning the promotion friendship between the two armed forces of the two countries and exchange of visits.—Myanmar News Agency

Union Minister for Defence meets Thai Ambassador and party

UNION MINISTER for Defence Lt-Gen Sein Win met with Thai ambassador Mr. Jukr Boon-Long and party yesterday afternoon in Ministry of Defence. At the meeting,

they discussed matters relating to cooperation between the armed forces of the two countries, border affairs and Rakhine State.—Myanmar News Agency

First reunion of University of Dental Medicine alumni

A first student reunion of University of Dental Medicine (Yangon) alumni was held in University Golden Jubilee Hall yesterday morning.

The event includes talks on dentistry, entertainments and selling stall and was held until 4 p.m.—Global New Light of Myanmar

Viet Nam & Myanmar: Charm & Beauty art show in Yangon

Viet Nam & Myanmar: Charm and Beauty art show is held in Yangon for 3 days starting from 24 May. The show is jointly organized by artists and

photographers and is held in Myanmar Plaza and National Theatre from May 24 to May 26. Entrance is free.—Myanmar News Agency

F-7 fighter jet accidentally drops two practice bombs

THE Office of the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services said a Tatmadaw (Air Force) F-7 fighter jet accidentally dropped two concrete bombs during practice flights. The bombs landed in a sesame field next to the Zayatkone firing grounds near milestone 22/4 on Meiktila-Kyaukpadaung Road, causing no damages or casualties. The office of the com-

mander in chief said the bombs were accidentally dropped during operational tests because of a power outage of the jet's weapons system, just prior to the arrival at the target area on the firing grounds. It has been learnt that experts from the Air Force made an area clearance operation for security purposes at 2pm.—Myanmar News Agency

Northern ethnic armed groups arrive to attend UPC — 21st Century Panglong (2nd session)

Seven ethnic armed groups, known as the Northern Alliance arrived at Nay Pyi Taw by air, to attend the 2nd session of Union Peace Conference—21st Century Panglong yesterday.

UWSA, KIO, AA, TNLA, MN-DAA and SSPP—northern ethnic armed groups arrived at the Nay Pyi Taw international airport via Kunming, People's Republic of

China while NDAA arrived by the Myanmar National Airways. They were welcome at the airport by U Thein Zaw, Vice-Chairman of the Peace Commission, U Aung Kyi, leader of advisory group for peace and responsible officials.

The 2nd session of the Union Peace Conference—21st Century Panglong will be attended by U Bao Youxiang of United Wa State

Army and 7 members, U N' Ban La and 6 members of Kachin Independence Organization, Dr Nyo Tun Aung and 2 members of AA, Tar Joke Jar and 3 members of TNLA, Ran Wun Jaung and 3 members of MNDA, Sai Ba Tun and 4 members of SSPP, vice-chairman U San Pe, U San Lu and 14 members of NDAA.—Myanmar News Agency

Thura U Shwe Mann receives Sweden Ambassador

CHAIRMAN of Pyidaungsu Htuttaw's Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment Commission, Thura U Shwe Mann received Sweden Ambassador for human rights, democracy and rule of law H.E. Ms. Annika Mariana Elisabet Rachel Ben David and party at Hluttaw hall 1-11 in Nay Pyi Taw.

Matters relating to status of drawing up laws related to human rights, humanitarian affairs, democratic reforms and development in Myanmar were discussed.—Myanmar News Agency



Thura U Shwe Mann shakes hands with Sweden Ambassador. PHOTO: MNA

Complex electrical service cable to be cleared

THE Ministry of Electrical Power and Energy will clear the complex electrical service cables on about 4,000 lampposts in states and regions in this fiscal year, said an official from the ministry of electrical power and energy.

Currently, the ministry is implementing the complex electri-

cal service cable clearing project in Yangon, Nay Pyi Taw, Bago, Taninthayi, Ayeyawady Regions, Kachin, Kayah, Kayin, Chin, Mon and Rakhine States.

The clearing of complex electrical cables is conducted with the aim to have a systematic cable connection in supplying electrical

power and to enable the distribution of electricity with generators when there is a cut-off in regular electricity supply. Previously, the electricity supplied is not equal and balanced in the three phases. The first supplied 450 MW while 189 MW is supplied in the second and 200 MW in the third.—200

Trump plays up Middle East peace hopes after talks with Palestinian president

BETHLEHEM, West Bank—US President Donald Trump talked up the prospects of peace between Israelis and Palestinians on Tuesday, saying he believed both sides were committed to an historic deal, but he offered no concrete proposals on how to get there.

After an hour of talks with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas in Bethlehem, in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, Trump condemned the bomb attack in Manchester that killed 22 people, calling the perpetrators “evil losers”. He then moved on to address efforts towards Middle East peace.

“I am committed to trying to achieve a peace agreement between the Israelis and the Palestinians and I intend to do everything I can to help them achieve that goal,” he said, with the 50th anniversary of Israel’s capture of territories that Palestinians seek for a state approaching next month.

“President Abbas assures me he is ready to work towards that goal in good faith, and Prime Minister (Benjamin) Netanyahu has promised the same. I look forward to working with these leaders towards a lasting peace.”

While Trump has spoken frequently in the months since he took office about his desire to achieve what he has dubbed the “ultimate deal”, he has not fleshed out any strategy his administration might have towards achieving it. He also faces difficulties at home, where he is struggling to contain a scandal after firing James Comey as FBI director two weeks ago.

He has appointed his son-in-law, Jared Kushner, as a senior adviser on brokering an agreement, while Jason Greenblatt, formerly a lawyer in Trump’s real estate group, has taken the day-to-day role of liaising with officials and leaders in the region on the nitty-gritty contours of any solution.

The last talks between the Israelis and Palestinians, led by former US secretary of state John Kerry, broke down in April 2014 after around a year of largely fruitless discussion.

While both Netanyahu and Abbas have made positive noises



Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas extends his hand to US President Donald Trump during their remarks after their meeting at the Presidential Palace in the West Bank city of Bethlehem on 23 May, 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

about their readiness to negotiate, both also face domestic constraints on their freedom to manoeuvre and strike a deal.

Netanyahu must deal with opposition from rightist elements within his coalition who oppose any steps towards a two-state solution to the decades-long conflict. Abbas’s Fatah party is at sharp odds with the Islamist group Hamas, which is in power in Gaza, leaving no unified Palestinian position on peace.

Standing alongside Trump, Abbas, 82 and in the 12th year of his original five-year term, said he was determined to deliver an agreement for all Palestinians, although he did not provide any substance on how such an objective could be achieved.

“I would like to reiterate our commitment to cooperate with you in order to make peace and forge an historic peace deal with the Israelis,” he said, speaking through an interpreter.

“And we would like to reassert our willingness to continue to work with you as partners in fighting terrorism in our region and in the world.”

Ahead of his visit to the

Middle East, the second leg of a nine-day tour that began in Saudi Arabia and will move on to the Vatican, Italy and Belgium, administration officials indicated that Trump might talk about “Palestinian self-determination”, a nod towards the ultimate objective of statehood.

But in his public remarks, Trump steered clear of any such language, and did not mention what has been the goal of US diplomacy for two decades: a state of Israel and an independent Palestinian state co-existing side-by-side.

During meetings with Netanyahu on Monday, Trump focused attention on the threat from Iran but also talked about the opportunities for peace in the region and how Saudi Arabia and other Arab nations were shifting their stance, potentially opening a window towards a regional agreement.

One of the long-standing regional proposals is a Saudi peace initiative that was first put forward in 2002 and has been re-endorsed several times since.

In effect, it would offer Israel recognition by the Arab world and the “normalisation” of rela-

tions in exchange for a full withdrawal from the territory Israel has occupied since the June 1967 Middle East war, including East Jerusalem. It also urges a “just settlement” of the Palestinian refugee problem.

Netanyahu has expressed tentative support for parts of the initiative, but there are many caveats on the Israeli side, including how to resolve the ever more complex refugee issue and whether Israel would withdraw from the Golan Heights, strategic territory that Israel took from Syria in the 1967 war.

Husam Zumlot, a former adviser to Abbas who is now the Palestinian ambassador in Washington, said the contours of any deal between the Israelis and the Palestinians were well known to both sides. If negotiations were to resume, they needed to be about the core issues, not talks about talks, he said.

“President Trump is really, really serious and he thinks peace is possible. It’s not easy, but we agree with him - peace is possible. All the stars are aligned,” he told Reuters. “We are ready. Everything is ready.”—Reuters ■

WORLD BRIEFS

US hasn’t verified Islamic State link to Manchester attack – Coats

WASHINGTON—The United States has not confirmed an Islamic State link to a suicide bombing that killed at least 22 people at a concert hall in the British city of Manchester, despite the militant group’s claim of responsibility, the top US intelligence official said on Tuesday.

“I might mention that ISIS has claimed responsibility for the attack in Manchester although they claim responsibility for virtually every attack.

We have not verified yet the connection,” Dan Coats, the Director of National Intelligence, told a hearing before the Senate Armed Services Committee, using an acronym for Islamic State.—Reuters ■

UK police say carry out controlled explosion in Manchester district

LONDON—Police in the British city of Manchester said they had carried out a controlled explosion in the Fallowfield district to the south of the city centre, as part of their investigation into a bomb attack on Monday which claimed 22 lives.

“Police have executed warrants, one in Whalley Range, and one in Fallowfield, where a controlled explosion took place, as part of the investigation into last night’s horrific attack at the Manchester arena,” Greater Manchester Police said in a statement.—Reuters ■

Vucic: Name of new PM to be announced on 11, 12 or 13 June

BELGRADE—Serbian PM and President-elect Aleksandar Vucic said Monday the name of the new PM would be announced on 11, 12 or 13 June and that his presidential inauguration would take place after 20 June.

He also said that, contrary to media reports, not only three names were in contention for the office of PM, but more.—Tanjung ■



A damaged car lies among rubble after an explosion in the al-Zahraa neighbourhood of Homs city in this handout picture provided by SANA on 23 May, 2017, Syria. PHOTO: REUTERS

Car bomb explodes, kills 4 in Syria's Homs — state TV

BEIRUT — A car bomb exploded in Homs on Tuesday morning, Syrian state television said, two days after the city went back under full government control for the first time since 2011.

Authorities destroyed another vehicle rigged with explosives near a Shi'ite Muslim shrine south of Damascus, the broadcaster and other state media reported.

Islamic State claimed responsibility for both attacks via its online media outlet Amaq.

Syrian state television, quoting the head of the Homs health authority, said the blast killed four people and injured

32 in the al-Zahraa neighbourhood, which lies around 160 km (100 miles) north of the capital.

Homs governor Talal al-Barazi told Syrian state news the attack came in response to recent gains that Syrian government forces had made in Homs.

On Sunday, hundreds of Syrian rebels and their families left Homs's last opposition-held district, al-Waer, which has been under siege by the army and allied forces for more than a year.

The evacuation completed a deal that brought Homs back under the control of President Bashar al-Assad's government for the first time since the start

of the conflict. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a Britain-based war monitoring group, said the explosion in the al-Zahraa neighbourhood killed five people.

Pictures broadcast on state television showed a burned vehicle chassis in a blast site in a street, with damage to buildings and surrounding cars.

The second blast occurred near the Sayeda Zeinab shrine, close to a checkpoint on the Damascus airport road, where Syrian authorities intercepted the car and blew it up. State media said the vehicle contained two people when it was destroyed. —Reuters ■

New bridge reunites Mosul as Iraqi forces gear up for final assault

BAGHDAD — Iraqi military engineers installed a new floating bridge across the Tigris river on Tuesday, reconnecting the two halves of Mosul to facilitate troop deployments ahead of a final assault to dislodge Islamic State.

All five bridges connecting the two sides of the city bisected by the Tigris were struck by the US-led coalition in order to hinder the militants' movements in the early stages of the campaign to retake Mosul last year.

Seven months on, Iraqi forces have removed Islamic State from all but a pocket of territory in the western half of Mosul, including the Old City, where the militants are expected to make their last stand.

It is set to be the most

complex battleground yet.

"This floating bridge is very important for deploying reinforcements to the west side rapidly to build up adequate forces to sweep the Old City soon," Colonel Haitham al-Taie told Reuters.

Taie said the bridge in the Hawi al-Kaneesa area would also spare fleeing civilians from making a long journey to the nearest crossing point, about 30 km (20 miles) south of Mosul.

The United Nations said last week up to 200,000 more people may flee as Iraqi forces push to retake the rest of the city.

The militants are effectively holding hundreds of thousands of civilians hostage as human shields to slow their advance.

—Reuters ■



Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) fire towards Islamic State militants during a battle in Qairawan, west of Mosul, Iraq on 23 May, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

Turkish police say seeking 144 people over links to failed coup, 35 detained

ISTANBUL — Turkish police said on Tuesday they are seeking 144 people including police, soldiers and prosecutors, over suspected links to the network of a US-based cleric blamed by Ankara for orchestrating last year's failed coup.

In raids across 42 provinces, 35 of the 144 wanted people have already been detained, the police said in a statement,

adding that the suspects were thought to be using ByLock, an encrypted messaging app the government says was used by preacher Fethullah Gulen's followers.

Turkey accuses Gulen, who has lived in self-imposed exile for almost 20 years, of running a decades-long campaign to overthrow the state through the infiltration of

Turkish institutions, particularly the military, police and judiciary.

The investigation, launched by Istanbul chief prosecutor's office, was targeting the Gulenist structure within the army, the police said, although the individuals also included academics and lawyers. The cleric denies the charges. —Reuters ■

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Suicide bomber kills 22, including children, at British concert hall

MANCHESTER, England — A suicide bomber killed at least 22 people and wounded 59 at a packed concert hall in the English city of Manchester in what Prime Minister Theresa May called a sickening act targeting children and young people.

Islamic State, now being driven from territories in Syria and Iraq by Western-backed armed forces, said it carried out the attack. Some experts discounted this, noting there was no evidence of direct involvement and that details of the IS claim — in two contradictory postings — contrasted with the British police account.

Police announced a 23-year-old man had been arrested in connection with the attack, carried out late on Monday evening as people began leaving a concert given by Ariana Grande, a US singer who attracts a large number of young and teenage fans.

In a statement made outside her Downing Street offices after a meeting with security and intelligence chiefs, May said police believed they knew the identity of the bomber.

“All acts of terrorism are cowardly,” she said. “But this attack stands out for its appalling sickening cowardice, deliberately targeting innocent, defenceless children and young people who should have been enjoying one of the most memorable nights of their lives.”



People rush out of the Arndale shopping centre as it is evacuated in Manchester, Britain on 23 May, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

The attack came less than three weeks before a national election. The northern English city remained on high alert, with additional armed police drafted in. London Mayor Sadiq Khan said more police had been ordered onto the streets of the British capital. Monday's attack was the deadliest in Britain since four British Muslims killed 52 people in suicide bombings on London's transport system in 2005. But it will have reverberations far beyond British shores.

Attacks in cities including Paris, Nice, Brussels, St Petersburg, Berlin and London have shocked Europeans already anxious over security challenges from mass immigration and pockets of domestic Islamist radicalism. Islamic State has repeatedly called for attacks as retaliation for Western involvement in the conflicts in Syria and Iraq.

Witnesses related the horror of the Manchester blast, which unleashed a stampede just as the concert ended at what is Europe's

largest indoor arena, full to a capacity of 21,000.

“We ran and people were screaming around us and pushing on the stairs to go outside and people were falling down, girls were crying, and we saw these women being treated by paramedics having open wounds on their legs ... it was just chaos,” said Sebastian Diaz, 19. “It was literally just a minute after it ended, the lights came on and the bomb went off.” A source with knowledge of the situation said

the bomber's explosives were packed with metal and bolts.

A video posted on Twitter showed fans, many of them young, screaming and running from the venue. Dozens of parents frantically searched for their children, posting photos and pleading for information on social media.

“We were making our way out and when we were right by the door there was a massive explosion and everybody was screaming,” Catherine Macfarlane told Reuters.

“It was a huge explosion — you could feel it in your chest.”

World leaders expressed solidarity with Britain.

US President Donald Trump spoke with May by telephone and agreed the attack was “particularly wanton and depraved”, the White House said.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel said it “will only strengthen our resolve to...work with our British friends against those who plan and carry out such inhumane deeds”. Singer Ariana Grande, 23, said on Twitter: “broken. from the bottom of my heart, i am so so sorry. i don't have words.”

May, who faces an election on 8 June, said her thoughts were with the victims and their families. She and Jeremy Corbyn, the leader of the opposition Labour Party, agreed to suspend campaigning ahead of the election. —Reuters ■

UK terrorism reinsurance fund says to respond fast to Manchester attack

LONDON — Britain's terrorism reinsurance fund Pool Re will work with its members to resolve any claim arising from the suicide bomb attack in Manchester, chief executive Julian Enoizi said on Tuesday.

At least 22 people, including some children, were killed and 59 were wounded when a suicide bomber struck as thou-

sands of fans streamed out of a concert by US singer Ariana Grande in the English city of Manchester on Monday.

“Our thoughts are with all those affected by last night's horrific attack in Manchester. Pool Re will work with its members in resolving any claim arising from the attack as quickly as possible,” Enoizi said in an

emailed response to Reuters.

Pool Re, set up in 1993, acts as a backstop to insurers paying out claims on property damage and business interruption.

It is financed by the insurance industry with government backing, and pay outs depend on the British government deeming an attack to be terror-related.—Reuters ■



Britain's Prime Minister Theresa May speaks outside 10 Downing Street in London on 23 May, 2017. Photo: REUTERS

Britain's MI5 says revolted by Manchester attack

LONDON — Britain's domestic intelligence agency MI5 said on Tuesday it was revolted by a suicide bomb attack in Manchester, which killed 22 people and injured dozens more at a British concert by

US singer Ariana Grande.

“Everyone at MI5 is revolted by the disgusting terrorist attack in Manchester last night,” Director General Andrew Parker said in a statement on MI5's website.

“We remain relentlessly focussed, in numerous current operations, on doing all we can to combat the scourge of terrorism and keep the country safe,” he said. —Reuters ■

UK's May says police believe they know identity of Manchester attacker

LONDON — British Prime Minister Theresa May said on Tuesday police and security services knew the identity of a suspected suicide bomber who killed 22 people, many of them children, at a concert in Manchester.

May, speaking outside her

10 Downing Street official residence, said the authorities were not ready to announce the identity of the attacker. She also said the attacker had carried out the attack alone but it was not yet clear if others had helped in the preparation.—Reuters ■

Venezuela prosecutor decries Maduro's new congress plan, deepening rift

CARACAS/PUERTO ORDAZ, Venezuela — Venezuela's state prosecutor has panned unpopular President Nicolas Maduro's plan to create a grassroots congress, deepening a rare public split among the ruling Socialists as two months of massive protests show no sign of abating.

Chief State Prosecutor Luisa Ortega had stunned the crisis-hit nation in March when she lambasted the Supreme Court for annulling the powers of the opposition-led National Assembly.

Since then, she has been a wild card within the publicly homogenous Venezuelan government, the foes of which accuse it of seeking to dodge elections by creating a parallel assembly with powers to rewrite the constitution.

Socialist Party official Elias Jaua, in charge of the "constituent assembly" project, confirmed on Monday that Ortega had written him to express her discontent in a letter that was previously leaked on social media.

"It is my imperative to explain the reasons for which I have decided not to participate in this activity," Ortega's two-page missive reads.

"Instead of bringing stability or generating a climate of peace, I think this will accelerate the crisis," she said, mentioning it



Demonstrators hold a banner that reads "MEDICINE RIGHT NOW" during a rally called by health care workers and opposition activists against Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro in Caracas, Venezuela May 22, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

would heighten uncertainty and alter the "unbeatable" constitution launched under late leader Hugo Chavez. Jaua acknowledged receipt of Ortega's letter, but quickly said she was merely expressing a "political opinion," without any power to change the situation.

"We consider that the only organ the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela's constitution empowers to interpret the constitution is the Supreme Court's constitutional chamber," he said at a news conference, in reference to the pro-government top court.

Venezuelans are scrutinizing Maduro's government and the armed forces for any cracks as protesters take

to the streets daily to demand early elections, humanitarian aid to alleviate food and medicine shortages, and freedom for jailed activists.

While there are no outward signs of major fissures that would destabilize 18-years of 'Chavista' rule, demonstrators have been cheered by Ortega's public dissent and by some public denunciations of officials by their relatives.

While anti-government protests have brought hundreds of thousands to the streets, Venezuelans are increasingly concerned about spates of nighttime looting and barricades popping up in many neighborhoods.

Masked youths man

roadblocks and turn back traffic at the main entrances of certain neighborhoods, or ask motorists for a monetary "collaboration" to be allowed through.

Those scenes have largely been concentrated outside the capital Caracas, however, with the jungle and savannah state of Bolivar hard-hit overnight.

Some 51 buses were burned after a group attacked a transport company in the city of Puerto Ordaz, the prosecutor's office said on Monday.

Barricades and clashes with the National Guard were also rippling through the city on Monday, according to a Reuters witness. —Reuters ■

Russian air defence weaponry sparks interest at Minsk military show

MOSCOW — Russian short-and long-range air defence weapons displayed at the Milex-2017 military exhibition in Minsk whipped up interest among potential buyers, Rosoboronexport's (part of the Rostech corporation) press service reported.

"Rosoboronexport's partners showed a heightened interest in Russian air defence weapons with various operating range, such as the S-300 (the SA-

10 Grumble), the Buk-M2E (the SA-17 Grizzly) and the Tor-M2KM (the SA-15 Gauntlet) surface-to-air missile systems," the report says. Besides, the participants gave priority to advanced aircraft models, army wheeled and tracked vehicles, radar equipment, electronic warfare and intelligence equipment, as well as other military weaponry.

"We've had very engaging meetings with



Milex-2017 military exhibition in Minsk. PHOTO: TASS

representatives from Angola, Bulgaria, Greece, Egypt, Iran, Kazakhstan, China, United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Singapore and Turkey," the report quoted the head of the Rostech

and Rosoboronexport combined delegation and Rosoboronexport's security department head, Valery Varlamov, as saying. Minsk is holding the exhibition from May 20-22. —Tass

French unions urge Macron not to rush through labour reform

PARIS — French unions urged President Emmanuel Macron on Tuesday not to try to hustle through his labour reform plans this summer, in contrast with calls from the main employers' group for swift measures to reinforce rising business optimism.

Macron's meetings with unions and employers were a first crucial test of his commitment to carry out labour reforms which he sees as vital to reviving an economy bedevilled by high unemployment, but which are opposed on the Left. The head of France's biggest moderate trade union said he had urged the newly-elected Macron to leave more time for discussion and not to try to rush his reforms through by executive decree this summer — a strategy which Macron has suggested he might follow.

"I asked him not to do it hurriedly, to do it without rushing, that the idea should not be to wrap everything up by the end of summer, end of August," CFDT leader Laurent Berger told reporters.

The centrist leader wants to make hiring and firing easier by giving more powers to companies to reach in-house deals on working time, for instance, and capping severance

packages awarded by industrial tribunals.

Against a background of 9.6 per cent unemployment, the pro-business, Europe-minded Macron has made a loosening of labour market regulations his biggest economic priority for his first year in office.

During the roller-coaster campaign, Macron said he would seek parliament's approval over the summer for powers to push through legislation by means of executive decree.

But speaking after his own meeting with Macron later on, the head of the more militant CGT union said the president seemed willing to take more time than initially planned.

"The timetable seems to have changed," Philippe Martinez told reporters.

"It seems to me that the short time frame that was planned is not as short as I had understood," the leader of the CGT, which led weeks of sometimes violent protests last year against reforms by former Socialist President Francois Hollande, added.

A source close to Macron told Reuters it would be up to Prime Minister Edouard Philippe, a former right-wing mayor, and Labour Minister Muriel Penicaud to decide on the timetable. —Reuters ■

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

MV DYNAMIC OCEAN-18 VOY. NO ()

Consignees of cargo carried on MV DYNAMIC OCEAN-18 VOY. NO () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 24.5.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MSTL-1 where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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Nicole Kidman tells Cannes her rebel spirit pushes her to strange films

CANNES, France — For an A-list star who, as she says herself, does not have to work, Nicole Kidman has been pretty busy ahead of Cannes, appearing in three movies and a TV series screening at the film festival.

“I don’t have to work. I work because it’s still my passion, it’s the way in which I express myself,” she told a news conference after the screening of “The Killing of a Sacred Deer”, one of two Kidman movies competing for the Palme d’Or.

Kidman — whose other Cannes offerings are science fiction teenage film “How to Talk to Girls at Parties”, an episode of Jane Campion’s TV series “Top of the Lake” and “The Be-

guiled” by Sofia Coppola — said she sought unusual projects. “I want to support people who are trying different things or have a very, very unique filmmaking style,” she said. That certainly applies to “The Killing of a Sacred Deer” in which she plays the mother of children mysteriously struck with paralysis, which director Yorgos Lanthimos says is a comedy, but plays out much more like a horror film. “I love to be asked to be in those things because that’s just where I am,” Kidman said. “I have always had that slightly rebel spirit where I have gone: ‘I don’t want to conform, I want to find a way not to.’ And that’s just who I am.”—Reuters ■



(L-R) Cast member Andrew Lowe, producer Ed Guiney, cast members Barry Keoghan, Nicole Kidman, Raffey Cassidy, Colin Farrell, Sunny Suljic, and Director Yorgos Lanthimos pose at the 70th Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, France on 22 May, 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**



Emeli Sande considered quitting music

LONDON — Singer Emeli Sande says her success after the release of debut album ‘Our Version of Events’ made her nearly quit the music industry.

The “Read All About It” hitmaker says some people’s response to her success left her feeling like she should change her career, reported Femalefirst.

Scottish recording artist Emeli Sande performs at the 2013 Wango Tango concert at the Home Depot Center in Carson, California on 11 May, 2013. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

“It hurt, and

I didn’t know what to do. I was like, ‘Should I stop? Should I continue? Should I just go away?’ I considered it now and again, but I was never serious.

“I knew I’d never break away from music, but I felt that if people didn’t want to see me singing then I could do other things. It’s very hard to get the balance right, and I never want to force anything on anyone. But I was also very proud of what I was representing, as when I was a kid I didn’t see many women who looked like me on TV,”

Sande says.

The 30-year-old singer, however, decided to continue on her journey in the music industry.

“I needed to build my confidence up. I came into the industry with lots of it, because I didn’t know any different. Then you (come to) London and (join) the industry and you’re like, ‘Am I doing it right?’

“You have lots of people behind you and a lot of opinions, but you forget the only opinion that got you here was your own.—PTI ■



PHOTO: REUTERS

Former James Bond actor Roger Moore dies aged 89 — family

LONDON — British actor Roger Moore, who won international fame playing secret agent James Bond, died on Tuesday aged 89, his family said on the actor’s official Twitter account.

They said he had died in Switzerland of cancer.

His 12 years as James Bond, the British agent with a voracious appetite for danger and sex, made Moore a millionaire as well as a heartthrob the world over.—Reuters ■

‘First Wives Club’ sequel didn’t happen due to pay issues

LONDON — Hollywood star Goldie Hawn says the sequel to the 1996 hit comedy “First Wives Club” did not go ahead because producers offered low salary.

The 71-year-old veteran actress played the lead role of Elise Elliot Atchison in the movie, which followed three vengeful ex-wives played by Hawn, Bette Midler and Diane Keaton, reported Femalefirst.

“They (makers) were afraid of women of a certain age, when they came to do the sequel they

wanted to pay us exactly the same amount. It was such an insult. “That’s the kind of stuff I look at and I go ‘you know what, I’m taking this other movie’. I got paid very little for it and that movie was ‘Banger Sister’ and I love that movie. She was a great character. It wasn’t about the money it was about respect. It was about being treated that way which was awful. Unheard of!” she says. Hawn currently stars alongside Amy Schumer in comedy film “Snatched”.—PTI ■



Actors Kurt Russell and Goldie Hawn pose on their stars after being unveiled on the Hollywood Walk of Fame in Los Angeles, California on 5 May, 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

London's Chelsea Flower Show to open with a volcano and a secret garden

LONDON — A secret garden and model erupting volcano are among the main attractions of this year's Chelsea Flower Show, Britain's premier gardening show which is enticing royalty and celebrities alike this week.

Queen Elizabeth is expected to visit the show in Chelsea, a prosperous area of central London, on Monday, while media mogul Rupert Murdoch and actress Judi Dench were among visitors ahead of the show's official opening on Tuesday.

The show, which is organised by the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS), will run from May 23-27, and is expected to draw



Cacti are displayed at the Royal Horticultural Society's Chelsea Flower show in London, Britain, on 22 May, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

around 165,000 visitors in total. The RHS said tickets sold out two weeks in advance of its opening. —Reuters ■

Jerry Garcia's 'Wolf' guitar to go up for auction in New York

NEW YORK — A one-of-a-kind guitar that became a trademark of sorts for Grateful Dead leader Jerry Garcia could fetch more than \$1 million when it goes on the selling block at Guernsey's in New York City later this month.

Dubbed "Wolf," the instrument was purchased by the musician in 1973 for \$1,500 and played for nearly two decades. It sold in 2002 — seven years after Garcia's death — for more than \$700,000. That price

far surpassed the then-record \$497,500, set in 1999 by Eric Clapton's Fender Stratocaster "Brownie."

Named for its distinctive inlay of a wolf on the lower body, the instrument is one of five that was designed for Garcia by luthier Doug Irwin. The other guitars were dubbed "Eagle," "Tiger," "Wolf Jr.," and "Rosebud."

Garcia sang and played guitar for the rock band from its formation in 1965 until his death from a

heart attack at 53.

Arlan Ettinger, president of Guernsey's auction house, said in an interview he is curious to see how much it goes for once it is put up for auction again on 31 May. "The world record for any guitar ever sold, which had been this and its mate 'Tiger' (\$957,500) at a million dollars, has since been eclipsed over the last 15 years," he said. "Now it's slightly above \$2 million, but we'll see where this goes." A Fender Stra-

tocaster signed by some of the world's greatest rock stars including Clapton, Mick Jagger and Keith Richards brought in a record \$2.7 million at auction in November 2005.

Wolf's current owner Daniel Pritzker, a longtime Deadhead, was reluctant to part with the instrument but he felt it was the right thing to do since he intends to donate the proceeds to an organization that works for social justice, Ettinger said. —Reuters ■

Archaeologists dig up 17th century stone bridge in downtown Moscow

MOSCOW — Archaeological experts have discovered the stone foundation and a brick arch of a 17th century white stone bridge at Slavyanskaya Square in downtown Moscow, where a water pipe is being repaired in line with the city's gentrification program, the Moscow mayor's office said in a statement published on its website.

"Experts have been cleaning up and examining the ancient bridge for several days. The brick part has been dated to the third quarter of the 17th century," the statement reads citing Head of the Moscow Cultural Heritage Department Alexey Yemelyanov. According to the statement, for a long time, the bridge was believed to have been lost, while the discovery was mentioned only once in a document dating back almost 400 years. The

bridge, leading to downtown Moscow through the Varvarskaya Tower of the Kitai-Gorod wall, was used until the 1820s.

During the reign of Alexander I, the moat surrounding the Kitai-Gorod was filled, while the wall was no longer viewed as a defense facility. It was then that the modern-day Slavyanskaya Square area was leveled and the remains of the bridge ended up buried underground. The head of the Moscow Cultural Heritage Department said that the bridge's framework had been seriously damaged in the Soviet era, during the construction of utility lines.

Archaeologists believe that the bridge has been repaired many times. "Now, the bridge has been naturally preserved. All the information about the discovery will be put on Moscow's archaeological map," Yemelyanov added. —Tass ■



For a long time, the bridge was believed to have been lost. PHOTO: TASS

Myanmar International
Programme Schedule
(24-5-2017 07:00am ~ 25-5-2017 07:00am) MST

<p>09:45 Am Live: Union Peace Conference-21st Century Panglong (Second Session)</p> <p>07:03 Am News</p> <p>07:26 Am Myanmar Social & Charitable Association (Ep-2) (Jivitadana Hospital)</p> <p>07:51 Am Sagaing: Guitars</p> <p>08:03 Am News</p> <p>08:25 Am Home Grown Treasure</p> <p>09:03 Am News</p> <p>09:25 Am Director: Thiha Kyaw Soe</p> <p>09:39 Am Kambawzathardi Golden Palace - A Treasured Legacy of Golden Days</p> <p>09:55 Am Paper Flower</p>	<p>10:03 Am News</p> <p>10:26 Am The Beauty In The North Of Myanmar</p> <p>10:43 Am A Lucky Boy</p>	<p>(11:00 Am ~ 03:00 Pm) - Tuesday Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)</p> <p>(03:00 Pm ~ 07:00 Pm) - Today Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)</p>	<p>Prime Time</p> <p>07:03 Pm News</p> <p>07:26 Pm A Visit To Ye</p> <p>07:47 Pm Chinlone and the dreams of the player</p> <p>08:03 Pm News</p> <p>08:26 Pm Tapestry-A Unique Combination of Painting and Craftsmanship</p> <p>08:45 Pm Local Tour Guide: Pho Khant</p>	<p>(09:00 Pm ~ 11:00 Pm) - Today Repeat (09:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)</p> <p>(11:00 Pm ~ 03:00 Am) - Tuesday Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)</p> <p>(03:00 Am ~ 07:00 Am) - Today Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)</p>	<p>(For Detailed Schedule - www.myanmaritv.com/schedule)</p>
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Programme Schedule
(24-5-2017, Wednesday)

<p>6:00 Am</p> <p>◆ Paritta by Venerable Mingun Sayadaw</p> <p>7:00 Am</p> <p>◆ Breakfast News</p> <p>7:35 Am</p> <p>◆ Money Talk Myanmar</p> <p>8:35 Am</p> <p>◆ Solution for Agriculture</p> <p>9:00 Am</p> <p>◆ Documentary</p> <p>9:45 Am</p> <p>◆ Union Peace Conference -21st Century Panglong (second session) (Live)</p> <p>10:30 Am</p> <p>◆ Pyi Thu Ni Ti</p> <p>11:20 Am</p> <p>◆ Documentary(ASEAN)</p> <p>12:30 Am</p> <p>◆ TV Drama Series</p> <p>2:25 Pm</p> <p>◆ TV Drama Series</p>	<p>3:00 Pm</p> <p>◆ TV Drama Series</p> <p>4:35 Pm</p> <p>◆ Documentary (Part-2)</p> <p>5:05 Pm</p> <p>◆ Kyae Pwint Myaye Yin Khone Than</p> <p>5:15 Pm</p> <p>◆ Documentary</p> <p>5:45 Pm</p> <p>◆ MRTV Travelogue</p> <p>6:20 Pm</p> <p>◆ Football Magazine</p> <p>6:35 Pm</p> <p>◆ Real Story Real Movie</p> <p>7:15 Pm</p> <p>◆ TV Drama Series</p> <p>8:00 Pm</p> <p>◆ News/ International News/ Weather Report</p> <p>8:35 Pm</p> <p>◆ Documentary</p> <p>9:15 Pm</p> <p>◆ TV Drama Series</p> <p>◆ Fine Arts - Bosom of Dramatic Performance</p>
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PHOTO: REUTERS

Former Disney CEO Eisner close to buying Portsmouth

LONDON— American billionaire businessman Michael Eisner is poised to take control of Portsmouth after the ex-Premier League club's Supporters Trust (PST) voted to sell its 48.5 per cent share on Monday.

The decision paves the way for the former Walt Disney CEO to complete a summer takeover of the largest club under fan ownership in England, adding another colourful chapter

to one of football's most famous old names.

"This is true fan ownership and democracy at work," PST chairman Ashley Brown said in announcing the result of the vote.

"We believe he (Eisner) understands the importance of the custodianship of Pompey and will be an owner all fans will be proud of." Portsmouth, who were founded in 1898, have a gold-plated heritage, winning the title twice in 1949 and 1950, and the FA Cup in 1939 and 2008. They have always enjoyed strong local support but a series of financial problems under foreign owners culminated in relegation from the Premier

League in 2010, administration and further tumbles down the divisions. With the club's future under threat, the PST took control in 2013 alongside 12 "presidents", nine of whom also now support selling to Eisner, after raising enough money from 2,750 members to secure a 48.5 per cent stake. Eisner and his Tornante investment group have offered 5.57 million pounds (\$7.25 million) for Portsmouth, matching the amount the supporters originally raised. "Hoping to complete acquisition process (due diligence and all that stuff) this summer," California-based Eisner said on Twitter on Monday. The decision

to revert to outside ownership now has been controversial with not all supporters in agreement. But the 75-year-old Eisner topped up his bid with the promise of £10 million more investment, with at least £5 million earmarked for the repair of Fratton Park, Portsmouth's tumbledown ground on England's south coast.

"It seems to me that this would be an investment my children and grandchildren could participate in," Eisner said on a visit to the club earlier this year. "We are not doing it to have a failure financially, obviously, but that is not the only reason why we are doing it."—Reuters ■

Moyes resigns as Sunderland manager after relegation

LONDON— Sunderland manager David Moyes has resigned following their relegation from the Premier League this season, the northeast club said in a statement on Monday.

Moyes, who joined Sunderland at the start of the campaign, said earlier this month he would stay in charge next term but the Scot decided to leave after a meeting with the board in London on Monday.

"I would like to thank (chairman) Ellis Short and the board for giving me the opportunity to manage Sunderland and the fans for always being so passionately supportive of their club," Moyes, 54, said in a statement.

"I wish the players and my successor well in their efforts towards promotion back to the Premier League".

Short added: "I pursued the services of David Moyes for a considerable period prior to his appointment last summer, which makes the announcement of his departure difficult for everyone concerned.

"Having worked tirelessly throughout the campaign to avoid relegation from the Premier League, David has chosen to leave the club without compensation, which is testament to his character."

Sunderland appointed Moyes on a four-year con-

tract in July to replace Sam Allardyce who left to become England manager.

However, the former Everton and Manchester United boss, who had been released by Real Sociedad, struggled at the Stadium of Light. Sunderland finished bottom of the table with 24 points after only six victories in 38 games, scoring 29 goals.

The Scot, who was sacked by Real Sociedad after just a year in charge, had last managed in England during an ill-fated spell at United in 2013-14, following Alex Ferguson's retirement.

Moyes had started his managerial career at Preston North End, winning the third-tier crown, before leaving to take over at Everton where he spent more than 11 years.

He was Sunderland's fourth full-time managerial appointment since Italian Paolo Di Canio was sacked in September 2013.

The club had flirted with relegation in each of the previous four seasons before finally going down this term.

Former Sunderland striker Kevin Phillips is the bookmakers' favourite to take over with former Middlesbrough manager Aitor Karanka and Leeds United boss Garry Monk also backed.—Reuters ■

Ajax out to relive Van Gaal era in Europa League final

STOCKHOLM — The shadow of Louis Van Gaal will loom over Manchester United and Ajax when the two teams coached by the Dutchman meet in the Europa League final on Wednesday.

Van Gaal left contrasting legacies at the two clubs. He steered a vibrant Ajax side to the 1995 Champions League title but was sacked unceremoniously by United in 2016 after two difficult years in charge.

His torrid spell at Old Trafford, marked by uninspiring and cagey football, was in stark contrast with a glorious 1991-1997 run at Ajax, where he won the UEFA Cup in 1992 before capturing Europe's blue ribbon trophy three years later.

The Dutch side, then boasting 18-year old Patrick Kluivert, Frank Rijkaard, Clarence Seedorf and keeper Edwin Van Der Sar, are appearing in their first European final after two decades of relative obscurity in Europe.

Meanwhile United are scrambling to salvage their season by earning a place in next year's Champions League after finishing outside the top four in the Premier League.

United, who dominated English football for years under Alex Ferguson, have endured their own tough spell since the Scot who guided the club to a record 20th English league title depart-



Former Ajax manager Louis van Gaal holds the UEFA Europa League trophy before the match of UEEA Europa League Semi Final First Leg between Ajax Amsterdam and Olympique Lyonnais at Amsterdam Arena, in Amsterdam, Netherlands on 3 May, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

ed in 2013.

His replacement David Moyes lasted less than a season before Van Gaal was hailed as the club's would-be saviour when he took over in July 2014.

But the 65-year old from Amsterdam soon lost the hearts of many United fans with a cautious style of play that saw United scraping out a top-four finish in his first season in charge, followed by a wretched second year when they finished fifth.

Not even winning the 2016 FA Cup could save Van Gaal's job as United missed out on the Champions League for the second time in three years, a failure

current manager Jose Mourinho is under pressure to rectify in Stockholm.

United enter the final as favourites, but their performances under Mourinho have resembled those under Van Gaal despite heavy spending which saw them lure Paul Pogba back from Juventus for a world record fee of 105 million euros.

Meanwhile, Ajax, assembled by coach Peter Bosz for a fifth of Pogba's price tag, reached the final with football strikingly similar to the attacking verve instilled by Van Gaal, with 19-year old Danish striker Kasper Dolberg excelling.—Reuters ■