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NO BIAS IN ADVANCE VOTING

Advance votes exceed 11,900 from 13 to 17 October



Myanmar citizens in Germany cast their votes at Myanmar embassy in Berlin. PHOTO:MNA

MORE than 11,900 overseas voters have cast advance votes between 13 and 17 October for the 8 November election.

According to a report by the Myanmar News Agency, the total of 11,906 overseas voters submitted advance votes up to 17 October. The advance voting period is from 13 to 23 October.

Officials of the Myanmar embassy in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, have assisted voters to cast their ballots at the embassy, accepting complaints from voters over inconveniences, ac-

ording to a voter who cast her vote there on Sunday.

Some women were not found in the voting list, but the embassy helped them send their complaints to election authorities within a day, she added.

The Union Election Commission warned media to avoid biased news reporting on the election.

In a statement released on Sunday, the UEC accused the BBC of broadcasting biased news, citing a BBC report from 18 October.

An interviewee in the BBC

programme said the Union Solidarity and Development party gave radios and cash to the people in Hlinethaya Township in return for their votes for the party.

Quoting a trishaw driver interviewed by the BBC, the UEC said it assumes a political party would not bribe another party's supporters while wearing campaign stickers on their foreheads and hoisting the party's flag on their trishaws.

"Media should follow their ethics because biased reporting can damage the freeness and

fairness of the election," the statement said.

Following the beginning of the advance voting period for overseas Myanmar nationals this week, the Union Election Commission requested on Friday that voters be patient with inconveniences in casting their ballots at embassies.

The UEC understands that it is a huge task for Myanmar embassies to arrange convenient advance voting abroad due to weak experience in holding elections and limited staff at the embassies, so voters abroad

are asked to understand inconveniences there, said the statement issued by the UEC on Friday.

A ballot with a signature of an official of a Myanmar embassy is considered a valid vote, according to UEC.

The statement of the UEC also urged overseas Myanmar nationals who could not cast their advance votes during the slated period to get recommendations from the relevant officials at the embassies in order to cast their votes again on election day in Myanmar.—GNLM

Myanmar to develop strategy to secure world-heritage status for Bagan

THE international community will better understand the ancient history and cultural status of Myanmar if Bagan is inscribed in the world heritage list, said Deputy Minister for Culture Daw Sandar Khin at a meeting held at the Bagan Archaeological Museum from 14 to 16 October.

The meeting aimed to develop a comprehensive strategy

to inscribe Bagan into UNESCO's list of world heritage sites.

Bagan was the first kingdom of Myanmar and lasted between the 11th and 13th centuries. Over 10,000 Buddhist temples, pagodas and monasteries were constructed during the period. However, only around 2,000 temples and pagodas still survive today.

After the site of Myanmar's

ancient Pyu cities was inscribed in the list, the country has been making efforts to include Bagan as well.

If Bagan is recognised as a world heritage site, systematic measures can be taken to preserve Bagan's ancient cultural sites, and job opportunities for local people will be created, enabling the country to earn more revenue from tourism.

Ancient Buddhist edifices attract thousands of tourists to Bagan every month.

Participants at the meeting discussed the preservation of landscapes, traditional lacquer art, heritage-oriented administration of the area, coordination of government agencies in Bagan and the development of hotel zones outside the historical site.—Myanmar News Agency

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Newly renovated Sintaewa Dam inspected



Local authorities inspect maintenance of Sintaewa Dam. PHOTO: U ZAW MIN NAING

THE recently renovated Sintaewa (Thamattu) Dam in Taungtha Township, Myingyan District, was inspected by District Commissioner U Myint Thin Aung on 17 October.

The 27-metre deep dam in Mandalay Region has the capacity to store 12,000 acre-feet of water.

The reservoir has 6,100 acre-feet of water at present, which can be used to irrigate 299 acres

of paddy fields during the 2015-2016 monsoon paddy season, said Taungtha Township irrigation officer U Kyaw Swe Win.

The dam's parapet had been rebuilt.—*U Zaw Min Naing*

Centenarians receive honorarium from President

MEIKTILA Township's centenarians were awarded an honorarium from President U Thein Sein on 17 October by Mandalay Region transportation minister U Kyaw San.

The minister and other officials visited the 11 senior citizens' homes and presented each centenarian with K200,000 and a certificate of honour on behalf of

the president. The minister also gave K10,000 to each of them, and other officials offered other gifts.

Among the 11 centenarians, 105-year-old Daw Thein Mya of Panthwin village is the oldest, according to a township official.

President U Thein Sein has awarded honoraria to centenarians across the country.—*Chan Tha*



Mandalay Region transportation minister U Kyaw San presents honorarium from president to a centenarian in Meiktila. PHOTO: CHAN THA

Exhibition of Taipei Products in Mandalay

EXHIBITION of Products from Taipei of China was staged at Sedona Hotel in Mandalay's city township of Chanayethasan on 16 October. The exhibition and meeting on economic cooperation was coordinated by Taipei's External Trade Department and Mandalay Region Federation of Chamber

of Commerce and Industry. MRFCCI chairman U Aung Than and Yangon Branch Manager Mr Alex Lai of Taipei External Trade Department made addresses, at the meeting. Eighteen Taipei companies and members of MRFCCI and affiliated organizations had discussions and business match-

ing. On the sidelines of the discussions, the exhibition displayed pharmaceuticals, interior decorations, spare parts for cars and motorcycles, agricultural items, and electricity items including solar and LED bulbs, which were produced by the Taipei companies.—*Thiha Ko Ko*



Visitors in Mandalay view products from Taipei at exhibition. PHOTO: THIHA KO KO

Meiktila receives election supplies



Election supplies being discharged from truck in Meiktila. PHOTO: CHAN THA

THE Union Election Commission provided uniforms and equipment to ballot booth officers under the Meiktila Township election commission on 17 October. The commission will distribute the items, including

ballot boxes, to ward and village election commissions on 25 October, according to a commission source.

However, ballots will be distributed around 5 November, the source said.

Meiktila Township, Mandalay Region, will have 294 ballot booths manned by 5,337 ballot officials. The general elections will be held across the country on 8 November.—*Chan Tha*

Nay Pyi Taw villages receive development assistance

NWEYIT village in Tatkon Township, Nay Pyi Taw Council Area, has renovated its middle school building using funding from the township's people-centred development Project.

The school building was reopened on 17 October. The cost of the renovation was K17.4 million (US\$13,531). A total of 428 students will be able to

attend classes in the building during the 2015-2016 academic year.

Moreover, 94 households in Padaukkone village received solar panels for electricity under the project, which is managed by the Rural Development Department under the Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development.—*Tin Soe Lwin*



Officials formally open renovated school building in Tatkon. PHOTO: TIN SOE LWIN

Firefighters rescue landslide victims in Kayah State



Firefighters help landslide victims in village in Kayah State.

INCESSANT rains triggered landslides in villages of Kayah State on 11 October, leaving 53 homes damaged and 17 people dead, according to a local fire brigade.

Mawchi, Yukawkho and Zeepingwayt villages were affected in the disaster, with five

people reported missing.

Rushing to the scenes, local firefighters carried out rescue services and search operations.

The rescue team cleared blockages on roads and constructed a temporary inter-village path.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Thousands join Mo Mo's 62nd Birthday



Mo Mo entertains her birthday guests with umbrella dance.

PHOTO: PO HTAUNG

TENS of thousands of children and animal lovers joined the 62nd birthday party of female elephant Mo Mo at Yangon Zoological Gardens in Yangon on Sunday.

The elephant has become famous after her name was included in a song. She was do-

nated to the zoo at the age of seven by a monk in Kayah State in 1961. She has been entertaining her visitors for many years at the zoo. She released 62 birds to commemorate her birthday and entertained her fans with dances.—*Ye Khaung Nyunt and Myat Thanda Maung*

Treatment gap in cleft lip and palate still high

Between 6,000 and 8,000 children in the country are born with cleft lip and cleft palate each year.

Khaing Thanda Lwin

“WE will increase our effort to provide comprehensive care free of charge to all patients with congenital cleft lip and palate,” said Dr Thi Ha Myint Wei of the New Look New Light charity organisation.

“We normally carry out medial operations for about 100 patients per month in Yangon at our clinic at Shwe Baho Hospital in Tamwe Township, as other regions lack sufficient medical facilities,” he added.

The group plans to make field trips to give free healthcare services once a year, Dr Thi Ha Myint Wei said. “Last year, we went to

Thaton, Mon State. This year, it is likely we will go to Sagaing Region or Taninthayi Region.”

Since its establishment in 2009, the charity has helped more than 1,000 patients with the aim of providing better lives to people with congenital cleft lips or palates and reducing the treatment gap in the country.

According to an estimation based on records from the Central Women’s Hospital, between 6,000 and 8,000 children in Myanmar are born with cleft lip and cleft palate every year.

“The treatment gap for cleft lip and palate is still high, as there are not enough hospitals to cope with the birth rate of those pa-

tients,” Dr Thi Ha Myint Wei told The Global New Light of Myanmar.

Cleft lip and cleft palate are facial and oral malformations that occur very early in pregnancy. It occurs if the mother does not receive enough folic acid, is undernourished or under stress during the pregnancy.

The disease is commonly found in children from families with low socioeconomic status, mostly in the country’s remote areas, Dr Thi Ha Myint Wei said.

People with cleft lip and cleft palate problems may contact 09 5049135 and 09 258 121 038 to inquire about treatment opportunities.



Surgeons perform operation on cleft lip and palate patient.

Mandalay Lifestyle Expo and Car Show opens

THE MANDALAY Lifestyle Expo and Car Show was formally opened by Mandalay Mayor U Aung Moun and Mandalay Region Attorney-General U Ye Aung Myint on 17 October.

The expo was held in front of Mandalay’s city hall. The ex-

hibition showed latest models of Japanese cars imported by Bagan Automotive Co. Ltd. There was also a booth advertising available condominiums.

Moreover, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, ready-made clothes, foodstuffs, interior decorations,

mobile phones, electronic appliances, spare parts and kitchen utensils from Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore were sold at special prices, which attracted heavy crowds. The four-day Expo and Car Show is open from 9am to 8pm.—*ThihaKoKo*



Mandalay Mayor U Aung Moun and officials view Mandalay Lifestyle Expo and Car Show.

China's lighthouses in Spratlys beckon recognition from passing ships



The Huayang Lighthouse is pictured during an inauguration ceremony in the South China Sea. PHOTO: REUTERS

HONG KONG — The next time the United States sends warships by China's man-made islands in the disputed South China Sea, officers aboard will have to decide how, if at all, they will engage with a pair of giant lighthouses that Beijing lit up there this month.

Chinese officials say the lighthouses on Cuarteron Reef and Johnson South Reef in the disputed Spratly islands will help maritime search and rescue, navigational security and disaster relief.

Experts, diplomats and foreign naval officers say, however, the lighthouses represent a shrewd move to help buttress China's territorial claims in the South China Sea.

While the US and other navies mostly rely on electronic instruments to confirm their ships' positions, visual fixes from lighthouses are still used in certain conditions.

Any such moves would play into a strategy "geared to bolstering China's claims by forcing oth-

er countries to effectively recognise Chinese sovereignty by their actions," said Ian Storey, a South China Sea expert at Singapore's Institute of South East Asian Studies.

"If naval and other ships from other countries, including the US would be obliged to use and log them, it could be taken as de facto recognition of China's sovereignty," Storey said.

US officials have not confirmed or denied reports that the US Navy will soon conduct freedom-of-navigation operations within 12 nautical miles of the artificial islands.

Asked about those reports on Tuesday, US Secretary of Defence Ash Carter said the United States would sail or fly wherever international law allows.

China claims most of the energy-rich South China Sea, which links the Indian and Pacific Oceans. About \$5 trillion in shipborne trade passes through its strategic sea lanes every year.—Reuters

New minister's calendar possibly violated election law

NAHA — Aiko Shimajiri, the minister in charge of Okinawa issues appointed by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in his latest Cabinet reshuffle, admitted Sunday to having distributed a calendar bearing her name and head shot, but denied it violated the election law.

The revelation comes about a year after former Justice Minister Midori Matsushima was forced to step down for distributing paper fans to her constituents, which allegedly constituted an act of donation that is banned under the Public Offices Election Law.

If the calendar of the House of Councillors member representing the Okinawa prefectural constituency was distributed to many and unspecified voters, it could also infringe the ban on donations. Shimajiri distributed the



Aiko Shimajiri. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

calendar to constituents between December 2009 and January 2010, with her blog dated Dec. 28, 2009 reading "please contact my support group's office if anybody wants it." The post was deleted on Saturday.

Shimajiri, speaking to reporters on Sunday in the prefectural capital Naha, denied giving the calendar to a large number of unspecified people, arguing that she "handed it out to members of my support group," while apologizing for the blog and saying that its wording "could be misunderstood."—Kyodo News

Koppu hits Philippines north, destroys houses, displaces 10,000 people

MANILA — Powerful typhoon Koppu ploughed into the northeastern Philippines before dawn on Sunday destroying homes and displacing 10,000 people and whipping up coastal surges four metres (12 feet) high, disaster agency officials said.

There were no reports of casualties after the category four typhoon, with central destructive winds of 175 kph (109 mph), made landfall around 1 am (1700 GMT) near the town of Casiguran in Aurora province.

Koppu dumped heavy rain, causing flooding and damaging

roads and bridges, and toppled power and communication lines.

"There are still no reports of casualty, thank God," said Alexander Pama, executive director of National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council.

"Initially, we are getting many houses were destroyed, power lines toppled and trees blocking major roads," he said, adding 10,000 people had been displaced in northeastern Luzon, the country's main island.

The weather bureau said Koppu will remain over Luzon for three days due to a high pres-

sure in the north and another typhoon in the northwest Pacific.

Casiguran town, where Koppu slammed hit, was isolated, local radio dzBB reported. "We expect some damages on public infrastructure and agriculture," Norma Talosig, regional disaster agency head in rice-producing Cagayan Valley.

Junie Cua, governor of Quirino province, said toppled electric posts and trees were making it hard for emergency workers to reach isolated communities.

Authorities said 30 flights

and ferry services in the north were grounded. Some commuter bus suspended services due threats of landslides in mountain areas.

On Friday, President Benigno Aquino appealed on television to people not to panic and to make preparations. The last time Aquino made a televised appeal was in 2013, the day before super typhoon Haiyan struck the central Philippines, killing more than 6,300 people and leaving millions homeless. An average of 20 typhoons hit the Philippines every year.—Reuters



Residents look for recyclable materials amidst waves due to Typhoon Koppu in Manila Bay on 17 October, 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

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Japan shows off naval power as US signals wider engagement in western Pacific

TOKYO — An armada of carriers, cruiser, destroyers and submarines gathered off Japan's coast on Sunday in a display of naval power that showcased Tokyo's latest warships and signaled wider engagement by the US Navy in the western Pacific.

The Fleet Review in seas near Tokyo was the first major display of Japanese military hardware since Prime Minister Shinzo Abe won lawmaker approval for legislation that for the first time since World War Two will allow Japanese soldiers to defend their foreign allies.

Abe is pursuing a doctrine of collective self defence with allies meant to give his nation a bigger role in regional security in order to counterbalance the military power of an increasingly assertive China.

Neighbouring China, which has strained ties with several Southeast Asian countries over territorial claims in the disputed South China Sea, has said it is wary of Japan's changing defence posture.

Abe in an address after the maritime show told sailors to gird themselves for future missions and "to continue to guard the nation's peace."

Joining the Japanese navy were vessels from India, South Korea, Australia, France and the United States, including the Japan-based aircraft carrier, the 333 metre (1092.52 ft) long USS Ronald Reagan. Altogether 50 vessels and 61 aircraft participated in the display, which is held every three years.

The centerpiece of Japan's naval line up was the Izumo helicopter carrier, Japan's biggest warship since World War Two.



Japan Maritime Self-Defence Force (JMSDF) destroyer Kurama (L), which is carrying Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, leads the JMSDF fleet during its fleet review at Sagami Bay, off Yokosuka, south of Tokyo, on 18 October 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

The 248 metre long (813 feet) flat top, which was commissioned in May, is a highly visible example of how Japan is expanding its military capability to operate overseas.

The Maritime Self Defence Force designates it as a destroyer keeping it within the bounds of a pacifist constitution that forbids Japan from possessing the means to wage war such as force-projecting carriers.

In a signal the Japanese navy's growing role in Asia will be accompanied by the US fleet's wider engagement in the region, the US Navy sent Vice Admiral Nora Tyson commander of the powerful Eastern Pacific Third Fleet to join Abe on his ship.

Her presence comes after the US scrapped an administrative boundary running along the international date line in the Pacific that demarcates the operating

areas for the Seventh and Third Fleets. The change gives Tyson a command role in the western Pacific and will allow the US to deploy vessels quickly to trouble spots in the region, the Chief of the Naval Operations, John Richardson, said at a press briefing in Tokyo on Thursday.

"Admiral Tyson's presence here is just a recognition that we are trying to be as flexible as possible to keep as many options on

the table as possible so that we can be as responsive as possible," the US Navy's most senior uniformed officer said.

The forward-deployed Seventh Fleet with some 80 vessels, including the USS Ronald Reagan is the most powerful naval force in the western Pacific.

The Third Fleet, with its home port in San Diego, California includes four carrier strike groups.—Reuters

Sri Lanka says would consider visit by China navy ships

BEIJING — Sri Lanka would consider allowing Chinese naval ships to visit again but no request has been forthcoming yet, the country's defence minister said on Sunday.

Sri Lanka's previous government had caused concern in India with its close ties to Beijing, including allowing Chinese submarines to dock.

New Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena has unnerved China though with his re-examination of relations, including a \$1.5-billion Chinese-invested "port city" project in the capital Colombo.

Visiting Beijing in February, Sri Lanka's foreign minister said future visits by Chinese submarines were unlikely.

But Sri Lankan Defence Minister Karunasena Hettiarachchi, who only took up his post last month, told Reuters in Beijing that he would give serious thought to new requests from China for naval ships to call, even if there are no plans currently.

"It has not come to my table yet. If it comes I'll give it due consideration.

If it comes in the right track we'll consider it seriously," he said on the sidelines of a military forum.

"If it is really interesting and worthwhile, sometimes we do combined operations and exercises with military vessels from around the world, no discrimination."

China has built a seaport

and airport in Sri Lanka's south, raising fears it is seeking influence in a country with which India has traditionally had deep ties.

China's defence minister told the head of the Sri Lankan navy in June he wanted to ensure a "continuous and stable" development of military ties.

Hettiarachchi said his government was just trying to make sure it was being transparent in its relations with China, and that military ties should remain strong.

"There was a complaint about the previous regime about transparency but I think we are more transparent and our relations are going to be stronger in times to come."—Reuters

North Korea rejects more nuclear talks, demands peace treaty with US

SEOUL — North Korea on Saturday rejected the idea of resuming talks to end its nuclear program, saying previous such attempts ended in failure, and reiterated its demand that Washington come to the table to negotiate a peace treaty.

The statement by the North's foreign ministry came a day after US President Barack Obama and South Korean President Park Geun-hye said in Washington they were open to talks with North Korea on sanctions but that Pyongyang needs to show it was serious about abandoning its nuclear ambition. "If the United States insists on taking a different path, the Korean peninsula will only see our unlimited nuclear deterrent being strengthened further," the North's foreign ministry said in a statement.

North and South Korea remain technically at war under a

truce it signed in 1953 with the United States, which led UN forces backing the South, and China, which fought for the North. North Korea walked away from the so-called six-party talks involving the United States and four other countries in 2008 and went on to conduct two more nuclear tests.

It said only a peace treaty with Washington can permanently resolve the conflict on the Korean peninsula. Obama said the United States was open to negotiations that could ease sanctions imposed on the North, just as it had done with Iran, which reached a deal in July with major powers. "We haven't even gotten to that point yet, because there has been no indication on the part of the North Koreans as there was with the Iranians that they could foresee a future in which they did not possess or were not pursuing nuclear weapons," he said.—Reuters

Israel, US resume defence aid talks halted over Iran deal : envoy

JERUSALEM — Israel and the United States have resumed talks on future defence aid that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu suspended in protest at the Iran nuclear deal, the Israeli ambassador to Washington said on Sunday.

The allies had been looking to agree on a 10-year aid package to extend the current US grants to Israel worth \$3 billion annually, which are due to expire in 2017. But Netanyahu froze negotiations ahead of the July deal reached between Iran and world powers, which Israel deems insufficiently stringent.

“With the nuclear deal now moving ahead, Israel is also moving ahead, hoping to forge a common policy with the United States

to address the continuing dangers posed by Iran,” Ambassador Ron Dermer said in a Facebook post.

“Discussions over a new Memorandum of Understanding between Israel and the United States, which had been on hold for some time, resumed this past week in Washington,” he said, using a term for the defence-aid agreement.

Before the suspension, the two sides were close to a new package of grants worth \$3.6 billion to \$3.7 billion a year, US and Israeli officials have said. They have predicted that the amount could rise further as Israel argues that it needs more aid to off-set a likely windfall for Iran in sanctions relief which might be used to finance anti-Israel guerrillas.

The top US military officer, Marine General Joseph Dunford, arrived in Israel on Saturday for a visit that Dermer said would include defence-aid discussions. He added that Israeli Defence Minister Moshe Yaalon, visiting Washington later this month, would pursue those talks, as would Netanyahu when he meets US President Barack Obama in the White House on 9 November.

“Israel hopes that the discussions we are now engaged in will culminate in a long-term agreement that will dramatically upgrade Israel’s ability to defend itself by itself against any threat and enable Israel to address the enormous challenges we now face in the region,” Dermer said.—Reuters



US Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Joseph Dunford (L) is escorted by Israel's Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Gadi Eizenkot (C) during a welcoming ceremony for Dunford in Tel Aviv, Israel, on 18 October 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

Turkey would shoot down planes violating its air space : PM

ISTANBUL — Turkey would not hesitate to shoot down planes violating its air space, Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu said on Saturday, a day after the NATO member shot down an unidentified drone near its border with Syria.

Syrian, Russian and US coalition aircraft are flying combat missions near Turkey’s borders as part of the Syrian civil war. The drone incident highlights the danger that Turkey, with the second largest army in NATO, could be drawn into a military confrontation.

Turkey had already com-

plained of Russian warplanes violating its air space along the border with Syria earlier this month.

“We downed a drone yesterday. If it was a plane we’d do the same. Our rules of engagement are known. Whoever violates our borders, we will give them the necessary answer,” Davutoglu told a rally of his ruling AK Party in the central city of Kayseri.

Turkey is still investigating where the drone came from.

A US official said on Friday Washington believed it was of Russian origin, but the Russian defence ministry said all of its planes in Syria had safely re-

turned to base and that all its drones were operating “as planned”.

The Turkish military said it shot down the unmanned aircraft after it continued on its course despite three warnings, in line with its rules of engagement. Broadcaster NTV said it had come 3 km (2 miles) into Turkish air space.

The Russian Defence Ministry said on Friday it had established direct contact with the Turkish military to avoid incidents with flights near the border, Interfax news agency reported.—Reuters

Merkel heads to Turkey in a bind over Europe’s refugee crisis

BERLIN — German Chancellor Angela Merkel travels to Istanbul on Sunday desperate to secure Turkey’s help in stemming the flow of migrants from the Middle East to Europe, but without being seen to sacrifice their human rights.

Dubbed a “punch-bag” for her own party by some German media due to frustrations over the refugee crisis, Merkel wants to cement a European deal with Turkey on aid and closer ties in return for help in encouraging refugees there to stay put.

Merkel has resisted pressure to tighten Germany’s border controls and turn away refugees arriving from Austria, even as Germany expects 800,000 to 1 million new arrivals this year.

By going to Istanbul just two weeks before elections in Turkey, Merkel risks Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan drawing her into his party’s election campaign amid growing European concerns about freedom of speech in Turkey’s fragile democracy.

“She has manoeuvred herself into such a ‘no win’ situation,” said Ekin Deligoez, a Turkish-born German lawmaker with the opposition Greens.

“And in such a situation, Mrs Merkel comes along with the wish for friendship! Erdo-



Germany's Chancellor Angela Merkel

gan knows that and he is using it,” Deligoez said, one of 3.5 million people living in Germany who are Turkish nationals or of Turkish origin. Just two months ago, Merkel was practically able to dictate terms to Greece over an aid plan to tackle its debt crisis. But over neighbouring Turkey, she has far less leverage to get her way, particularly as just 10 days ago, Merkel reiterated her opposition to Turkey joining the European Union.

That comment came before an EU offer to Turkey last week of an “action plan” including “re-energised” talks on joining the bloc, as well as aid and the prospect of easier travel visas, in return for its help stemming the migrant flow, a problem Merkel has called a test of historic proportions.

Turkish Foreign Minister Feridun Sinirlioglu said on Friday the plan had not taken final shape and it was wrong to give the impression that Turkey wanted a certain amount of funds to keep refugees in Turkey.—Reuters

Vucic: Serbia will not recognize Kosovo



Photo: TANJUG

BELGRADE — Serbia will not recognize Kosovo as an independent state, but it will continue to negotiate with Kosovo Albanians and endeavor to normalize relations between Serbs and Albanians and reduce the animosities of the past, Aleksandar Vucic, Serbian Progressive Party (SNS) leader and Serbian prime minister, stated on Saturday.

Vucic said that “there will be problems and tensions on this way, but our side will always

keep in mind Serbia’s security”.

At the ceremony marking the seventh anniversary of the SNS, Vucic said that he has a vision of the Balkans where everybody would respect each other and free flow of goods and commodities would be possible, but added that no one will be allowed to endanger Serbia.

“Peace and stability are our victory,” said Vucic, adding that Serbia wants good relations with Bosniaks, Albanians, Hungarians and Croats.—Tanjung

Syrian army, backed by Iranian fighters, advance south of Aleppo — monitor

BEIRUT — Syrian troops backed by Hezbollah and Iranian fighters made advances on Saturday in their offensive to retake territory

around the northern city of Aleppo from insurgents and jihadist fighters, a monitoring group said. The campaign around Aleppo,

which the army launched on Friday, is one of several assaults it has waged against rebel fighters since Russian jets began car-

rying out air strikes on Sept. 30 in support of President Bashar al-Assad.

It has concentrated so far on clearing rebel areas south of Aleppo rather than the city itself, which is home to 2 million people and divided between government forces and rebels.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said the army and its allies retook three villages amid fierce fighting in which at least 17 Islamist fighters and eight soldiers or allied forces were killed.

Troops are also trying to advance to the east of Aleppo towards Kweires military airport, aiming to break a siege on the base by Islamic State and other insurgents, the UK-based Observatory said.

Hezbollah's Al-Manar television said the army had captured the village of Huwaija, on the way to Kweires. The Observato-

ry said it the army was advancing in Huwaija, one of several villages where heavy fighting was continuing.

The army and its allies have also been fighting to retake parts of the northern provinces of Hama, Idlib and Latakia seized by rebels in recent months, as well as insurgent areas north of Homs city, around the capital Damascus, and in the southern province of Deraa near the Jordanian border.

The Observatory reported fighting around the town of Talbiseh, part of a rebel-held enclave north of Homs city which has faced heavy bombardment by Russian jets for the last two weeks, and a ground offensive by the army and allied militias.

The monitor said that at least 72 people, including 31 children and women, were killed in the past 48 hours in the assault in Homs.—Reuters



Residents inspect a site hit by what residents said were airstrikes carried out by the Russian air force in the town of Darat Izza in Aleppo's countryside, on 13 October 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

Sketches of suspects in stabbing of French train hero released

SACRAMENTO — Police in Sacramento on Saturday released sketches of suspects believed to have been involved this month in the stabbing of US Air Force airman Spencer Stone, one of the Americans who thwarted an August train attack in France.

The two composite sketches are based on eyewitness accounts of the 8 October assault in the Northern California city, where Stone was stabbed several times during a fight outside a bar, police said.

Police have said the altercation began outside a bar in the California capital's midtown district, a gentrifying area with

many popular clubs, restaurants and art galleries that retains some rough edges.

Investigators said they believe the male suspects were wearing white shirts and blue jeans. The sketches released by police showed one of the men had a goatee and spiked hair.

Police have not disclosed what caused the fight that led to "significant injuries" to Stone, who was taken to UC Davis Medical Center in Sacramento. He was released on Thursday.

Authorities have said the fight was not related to Stone's role in subduing a gunman on an Amsterdam-to-Paris train in Au-

gust. Stone's assailants are not believed to have known Stone's identity, police said.

Stone and two friends, Anthony Sadler and Alek Skarlatos, who is part of the Oregon Army National Guard, took down a man armed with a box-cutter, a pistol and an AK-47 assault rifle on the high-speed train. They received accolades for their actions from the presidents of France and the United States.

The three men, who grew up in the Sacramento area, were touring Europe at the time of the train incident, partly to celebrate Skarlatos' return from a tour of duty in Afghanistan.—Reuters

Egypt begins long-awaited parliamentary election



An Egyptian woman living in Jordan writes her vote during the first stage of Egypt's parliamentary election at the Egyptian Embassy in Amman, Jordan, on 17 October, 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

CAIRO — Egypt kicked off a long-awaited parliamentary election on Sunday, the final step in a process that was meant to put the country back on a democratic course but which critics say has been undermined by state repression.

Egypt has been without a parliament since June 2012 when a court dissolved the democratically-elected main chamber, then dominated by the Muslim Brotherhood, reversing a key accomplishment of the 2011 uprising that toppled Hosni Mubarak.

Then army chief Abdel Fattah al-Sisi ousted elected President Mohamed Mursi of the Brotherhood the following year, banning Egypt's oldest Islamist movement and declaring it a terrorist organisation.

Sisi secured support for his move from other opposition

groups by promising a prompt parliamentary vote. Those elections have been repeatedly postponed but will now take place over two rounds on 18-19 October and 22-23 November.

This week, voters cast their ballots in 14 regions including Egypt's second city of Alexandria on the Mediterranean coast and Giza, a province which includes parts of Cairo west of the Nile.

In a televised speech on Saturday, Sisi called on all Egyptians to head to the ballot boxes and urged the armed forces and interior ministry to secure the voting process.

"I call on you all, men and women, young and old, farmers and workers from all over the country to rally for the sake of the country... and choose well," he said.—Reuters

Thirty Yemeni fighters killed by friendly fire from Saudi-led strikes, officials say

SANAA — Saudi-led coalition jets targeting Houthi militiamen in Yemen killed 30 fighters loyal to Yemeni President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi when they mistakenly bombed a military camp in the province of Taiz on Saturday, local officials said.

The air strike, in which another 40 fighters were wounded, was the latest in a series of "friendly fire" incidents that have plagued the Saudi-led campaign against the Iranian-allied Houthis since it began in March.

Officials from the Saudi co-

alition and the Yemeni government could not immediately be reached for comment.

Saturday's strikes hit a mountainous area close to the southwestern city of Taiz where fighting is intense between local fighters and troops loyal to veteran former president Ali Abdullah Saleh, who has sided with the Houthis, officials who are part of Hadi's administration told Reuters.

"The coalition raid hit the wrong target," one official said.

On 18 September, 131 people were killed when missiles fired from coalition planes

hit a wedding party in the Red Sea village of al-Wahijah, near the ancient port of al-Mokha.

At least 5,400 people have been killed in the six-month civil war in the poorest country on the Arabian Peninsula, and the United Nations says the humanitarian situation, exacerbated by a Saudi blockade of Yemen's ports, is "critical".

Saudi Arabia has been leading an Arab military intervention since March to try to restore Hadi's government, now based in a hotel in Aden, and fend off what it sees as creeping Iranian influence.—Reuters

OPINION

Textbooks are not enough

Kyaw Thura

A GLANCE is all it takes to realise the simple fact that all modern states are determined to improve their education policies in order to develop local human resources. It is clear that education serves as the foundation for sustainable development.

Despite remarkable progress in politics, our country now stands at a critical juncture for advancing its education standards. That mission will re-

quire the government and educators to take the lead in crafting a sustainable educational system that can place students of today and tomorrow on equal with their peers in other parts of the world.

Now is not the time for stakeholders in the education sector to reinvent the wheel. The age of yes-men is over. It is necessary for all educational bodies to craft education policies that can help empower children to regard learning as active engagement so they become responsible and reliable human resources.

Furthermore, teachers of today have greater responsibility to improve their capacity to connect children with the real world, instead of abandoning them to the textbooks. A popular adage has it that the best university is the university of life.

In a world of change, innovation has come to the fore in bringing about quality education, without

which a culture of mutual respect will become a thing of the past. Careful consideration will reveal that mutual respect is a key ingredient for peace, stability and development. All in all, education can arm learners of all ages with the life skills necessary for embracing peaceful coexistence in diversity.

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Canada goose

Saikat Kumar Basu
Lethbridge AB Canada

CANADA goose (*Branta canadensis* L.) is an aquatic bird with conspicuous long neck, broad wingspan, flat bill and characteristic webbed feet. The adult bird varies in weight between 2-10 kgs with length around 0.8-1.5 m and broad wingspan between 1.3-1.7 m depending on various sub species distributed across the continent of North America. The species is commonly found across Canada, the United States and Mexico from the Atlantic to the Pacific coast. The species prefer to spend the summer in the different water bodies of Canada and migrates during the winter to southern US and parts northern Mexico. The species is also found in the parts of Northern Europe and the Asian Far East. It has been introduced in some of the other European countries and also in New Zealand for both ornamental and recreational values. Several sub species of Canada goose is reported from North America such as the Atlantic Canada goose (*Branta canadensis canadensis*), Moffitt's Canada goose (*Branta canadensis moffitti*); Dusky Canada goose (*Branta canadensis occidentalis*), Giant Canada goose

(*Branta canadensis maxima*), Lesser Canada goose (*Branta canadensis parvipes*), Interior Canada goose (*Branta canadensis interior*) and the Vancouver Canada goose (*Branta canadensis fulva*). Ornithologists however differ on the exact number of Canada goose sub species across the continent based on several taxonomic and genetic features with different researchers having divergent opinions on the topic of sub species. The species has a beautiful plumage being brown on the back, with black neck and head and white chicks. The powerful migratory calls of the large Canada geese flocks during the Fall season (Autumn) is an iconic symbol of the Canadian wilderness and the grandeur natural beauty of the continent of North America. The beautiful V-shaped flying pattern of the migrating flocks is an awesome sight for several avian and wildlife enthusiasts across the continent of North America.

The species is currently under consideration on a nation wide opinion poll for designating a National Bird for Canada. The species is so intimately associated with life and culture of North America



PHOTO: SAIKAT KUMAR BASU

that several stamps and coins have been released in Canada and the US commemorating this majestic water bird. Canada goose is also associated with several folklores, songs and poems of the aboriginal communities of North America too. Although a well known migratory species in the continent of North America; however over the decades due to availability of food during winter, several resident Canada geese flocks are seen aggregating on snow covered agronomic fields

across the Prairies both in the US and Canada. The species is well known across North America for their extreme devotion and strong paternal instincts. Around 2-12 chicks are raised in a single clutch depending on the seasonal fluctuations of food abundance and protection from potential predators in and around fresh water bodies. Both parents are extremely dedicated in raising their young ones and are fiercely protective against any possible threat or danger to the

safety and security of their chicks. The chicks follow their parents everywhere including swimming, relaxing and foraging; and grow very fast in size and weight depending of easy availability of food sources. Aquatic vegetation, crustaceans, insects and different plant parts constitute the bulk of the species diet. The current conservation status of the species according to IUCN is Least Concerned; and is easily visible in large flocks across North America.

Appointment of Ambassador agreed on

THE Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has agreed to the appointment of H.E. Mr. Stanislav OPIELA as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Slovak Republic to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, with residence in Bangkok.

Mr. Stanislav OPIELA was born on 16th June 1952 in Levoca, Slovakia. He graduated from the Bratislava University of Economics in 1971 and from the Moscow State Institute of International Relations in 1975. He joined the Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Former Czech and Slovak Federal Republic in 1975 and served in various capacities including foreign assignments to Congo in

1984-1988 and Tunisia in 1990-1992. He served as the Charge d' Affaires at the Embassy of Slovak Republic to Tunisia from 1993 to 1994; Deputy Director of Department of European Integration in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic from 1994-1995; Deputy Chief of Mission and later as Charge d' Affaires at the Embassy of Slovak Republic to Canada from 1995 to 1998; National Coordinator for the Slovak Republic to the Central European Initiative in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs from 1998-1999; Deputy Head of Mission at the Embassy of Slovak Republic to Canada, Senior Desk Officer in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

and Ambassador at the Embassy of the Slovak Republic to Canada consecutively from 1999 to 2010; Senior Desk Officer in the United Nations Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs from 2010 to 2011; National Coordinator in the Prime Minister's Office for Slovak Republic's membership to the EU Strategy for Danube Region; and as Senior Desk Officer in the Department of Americas of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs from 2012 to 2014. Since 2014, he has been serving as Director in the Office of the State Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs. He is married and has three children.—MNA

One man's hero is
another man's
zero, man.

Yeah, one's food
definitely is another's
poison, pal.



TIN AUNG

Conditions That Make One a Wicked

Htun Tin Htun

CONDITIONS are important for all human beings to enjoy the improved quality of life, happiness, peace, prosperity and wellness. Homage to him, the Blessed One, the Holy One, the Fully Enlightened One, perfectly enlightened by Himself. Thus have I heard: On one occasion the Blessed One was residing at Ana-tha-pin-di-ka's monastery in Zeta Forest, near Savatthi. Then in the forenoon, the Exalted One having put on His robes, carrying His bowl and outer robe, went into Savatthi for alms. Now at that time, in the house of the Brahmin Aggikabharadvaja, a fire was burning, and an offering was being prepared. Then the Awakened One, while on His alms round, came to the Brahmin Bharadvaja's residence.

Opportunity is important for all human beings to beneficially use their abilities and capabilities for their utmost achievement and ultimate happiness. Let's continue the story, the Brahmin seeing, the Fully Enlightened One approaching from afar, went to Him and said this: "Stay there, you shaving. Stay there, you wretched monk. Stay there, you vasala (wicked). When he spoke thus, the Holy One (Tathagata) said to the Brahmin: "Do you know, Brahmin, who a wicked (person) is and what are the conditions that make one a wicked?" "No, indeed, Venerable Gautama, I do neither know who a wicked is nor the conditions that make a wicked (person).

Not the sweet smell of flowers, not even the fragrance of sandal, tagara or jasmine blows against the wind. But the fragrance of the virtuous blows against the wind. Truly, the virtuous man/woman pervades all directions with the fragrance of his/her virtue. The Brahmin Bharadvaja continued to say that it would be good if Venerable Gautama could explain the Dhamma to me so that I may know who a wicked is and what the conditions are that make one a wicked." "Listen then, Brahmin, and bear it well in mind. I shall speak." "Yes, Venerable Master," replied the Brahmin in assent to the Awakened One. Thereupon He (Tathagata) said: Do not associate with evil companions; do not seek the fellowship of the vile. Associate with good friends; seek the fellowship of noble men. "Whosoever is angry, harbours hatred, discredits the good of others and is reluctant to speak well of others, wrong in views, deceitful. Know him/her as a wicked." Hatred is never appeased by hatred

in this world. By non-hatred alone is hatred appeased. This is a Law Eternal. Speak not harshly to any one, for those thus spoken to might retort. Indeed, angry speech hurts, and retaliation may overtake you.

The evil-doer suffers here and hereafter; he suffers in both the worlds. The thought, "Evil have I done," torments him, and he suffers even more when gone to realms of woe. "Whosoever besieges and destroys villages and market towns and becomes notorious as an oppressor. Know him/her as a wicked." Ill done is that action doing which one repents later, and the fruit of which one, weeping, reaps and with tears. One who, while himself seeking happiness, oppresses with violence other beings who also desire happiness, will not attain happiness hereafter.

It may be well with the evil-doer as long as the evil ripens not. But when it does ripen, the evil-doer sees (the painful results of) his evil deeds. "Be it in the community, or in the forest, whosoever steals what belongs to others, takes what is not given to him. Know him/her as a wicked." So long as an evil deed as not ripened, the fool thinks it as sweet as honey. But when the evil deed ripens, the fool comes to grief. He who in this world takes nothing that is not given to him, be it long or short, small or big, good or bad--- him do I (Blessed One) call a holy man.

Overcome the angry by non-anger; overcome the wicked by goodness; overcome the misery by generosity; overcome the liar by truth. "Whosoever having incurred a debt runs away when he is pressed to pay, saying, "I owe no debt to you". Those who imaging evil where there is none, and do not see evil where it is---upholding false views, they go to states of woe. Know him/her as a wicked." Well done is that action doing which one repents not later, and the fruit of which one reaps with delight and happiness.

Nothing is better for a holy man than when he holds his mind back from what is endearing. To the extent the intent to harm wears away, to that extent does suffering subside. "Whosoever coveting anything, kills a person going along the road, and grabs whatever that person has. Know him/her as a wicked." He who has renounced violence towards all living beings, weak or strong, who neither kills nor causes others to kill---him do I (Awakened One) call a holy man. Truly an evil deed committed does not immediately bear fruit, like milk that does not turn sour all at once. But smouldering, it follows the fool like fire covered by ashes.

Speak the truth; yield not to anger; when asked, give even if you only have a little. By these three

means can one reach the presence of the Devas. "Whosoever for his own sake or for the sake of others or for the sake of wealth, utters lies when questioned as a witness. Know him/her as a wicked." He who utters gentle, instructive and truthful words, who imprecates none---him do I (Fully Enlightened One) call a holy man. Easy to do are things that are bad and harmful to oneself. But exceedingly difficult to do are things that are good and beneficial.

The misguided man in whom the thirty-six currents of craving strongly rush toward pleasurable objects, is swept away by the flood of his passionate thoughts. "Whosoever by force or with consent, associates with the wives of relatives or friends. Know him/her as a wicked." Four misfortunes befall the reckless man who consorts with another's wife: acquisition of demerit, disturbed sleep, ill-repute and (rebirth in) states of woe. Such a man acquires demerit and an unhappy birth in the future. Brief is the pleasure of the frightened man

"Opportunity is important for all human beings to beneficially use their abilities and capabilities for their utmost achievement and ultimate happiness."

and woman, and the king imposes heavy punishment. Hence, let no man consort with another's wife.

Arise! Do not be heedless! Lead a righteous life. The righteous live happily both in this world and the next. "Whosoever strikes and annoys by harsh speech to his mother, father, brother, sister, mother-in-law or father-in-law. Know him/her as a wicked." Lead a righteous life; lead not a base life. The righteous live happily both in this world and the next. Hasten to do good; restrain your mind from evil. He who is slow in doing good, his mind delights in evil.

The man of little learning grows old like a bull. He grows only in bulk, but, his wisdom does not grow. "Whosoever when questioned about what is good, says what is detrimental, and talks in an evasive manner. Know him/her as a wicked." Follow not the vulgar way; live not in heedlessness; hold not false views; linger not long in worldly existence. Should a person commit evil, let him not do it again and again. Let him not find pleasure therein, for painful is the accumulation of evil.

Mind precedes all mental states, Mind is their chief; they are all mind-wrought. If with an impure mind a person speaks or acts, suffering follows him/her like the wheel that follows the foot of ox. "Whosoever having committed an evil deed, wishes that it may not be known to others. Know him/her as a wicked." Fools of little wit are enemies unto themselves as they move about doing evil deeds, the fruits of which are bitter. Think not lightly of evil, saying; "It will not come to me." Drop by drop is the water pot filled. Likewise, the fool, gathering it little by little, fills himself with evil.

A worse taint than these is ignorance, the worst of all taints. Destroy this one taint and become taintless, O monks! "Whosoever commits evil in secret. Know him/her as a wicked." Unchastity is the taint in a woman; niggardliness is the taint in a giver. Taints, indeed, are all evil things, both in this world and the next. The cankers only increase for those who are arrogant and heedless, who leave undone what should be done and do what should not be done.

Entangled by the bonds of hate, he who seeks his own happiness by inflicting pain on others, is never delivered from hatred. "Whosoever, a Brahmin or an ascetic, or any other mendicant he deceives by uttering lies. Know him/her as a wicked." One who destroys life, utter lies, takes what is not given, goes to another man's wife, and is addicted to intoxicating drinks---such a man digs up his own root even in this very world. For a liar who has violated the one law (of truthfulness), who holds in scorn the hereafter, there is no evil that he cannot do. The liar goes to the state of woe; also he who, having done (wrong), says, "I did not do it." Men of base actions both, on departing they share the same destiny in the other world.

One should give up anger, renounce pride, and overcome all fetters. Suffering never befalls him who clings not to mind and body and is detached. "Whosoever when a Brahmin or ascetic appears during mealtime, angers him by harsh speech, and does not offer him any alms. Know him/her as a wicked." By oneself is evil done; by oneself is one defiled. By oneself is evil left undone; by oneself is one made pure. Purity and impurity depend on oneself; no one can purify another. Just as rust arising from iron eats away the base from which it arises, even so, their own deeds lead transgression

to states of woe.

Neither in the sky nor in mid-ocean, nor by entering into mountain clefts, nowhere in the world is there a place where one may escape from the results of evil deeds. "Whosoever in this world, shrouded in ignorance, speaks harsh words and expecting to gain something. Know him/her as a wicked." The evil doer suffers here and hereafter; he suffers in both the worlds. The thought, "Evil have I done," torments him, and he suffers even more when gone to realms of woe.

Easily seen is the fault of others, but one's own is difficult to see. Like chaff one winnows another's faults, but hides one's own, even as a crafty Fowler hides behind sham branches. "Whosoever debased by his pride, praises himself highly and belittles others. Know him/her as a wicked." Weeds are the bane of fields, lust, hatred, delusion and desire are the bane of mankind. Therefore, what is offered to those free of lust, hatred, delusion and desire yields abundant of fruit. He who seeks another's faults who is ever censorious---his cankers grow. He is far from destruction of the cankers.

An evil deed is better left undone, for such a deed torments one afterwards. But a good deed is better done, doing which one repents not later. "Whosoever is given to anger, is miserly, has base desires, and is selfish, deceitful, shameless and fearless in doing evil. Know him/her as a wicked." The good shine even from afar, like the Himalayan Mountain. But the wicked are unseen, like arrows shot in the night. Those who are ashamed of what they should not be ashamed of, and are not ashamed of what they should be ashamed of---upholding false views, they go to states of woe.

Walking upon this path you will make an end of suffering. Having discovered how to pull out the thorn of lust, I make known the path. "Whosoever reviles the Enlightened One, or a disciple of the Buddha, a recluse or a householder. Know him/her as a wicked." He who knows his former births, who sees heaven and hell, who has reached the end of births and attained to the perfection of insight, the sage who has reached the summit of spiritual excellence --- him do I (Blessed One) call a holy man.

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Alibaba lobbies to stay off US blacklist list for fakes

SHANGHAI — Chinese e-commerce giant Alibaba Group Holding Ltd is lobbying hard to stay off the US Trade Representative's blacklist after coming under renewed pressure this year over suspected counterfeits sold on its shopping platforms.

Re-inclusion on the USTR's annual list of the world's most "notorious markets" for sales of pirated and counterfeit goods, while not carrying direct penalties, would be a blow to the company's efforts to shed perceptions that its sites are riddled with fakes and that its anti-piracy policies are inadequate. It could also hurt Alibaba's beleaguered share price.

Two Alibaba sites — the business-to-business platform Alibaba.com and the hugely popular Taobao Marketplace — were on the USTR's "Notorious Markets" list from 2008. Alibaba.com was removed in 2011. Taobao was taken off in 2012 for its "notable efforts" to work with rightholders to clean up the site.

On 10 September, the USTR



People ride a double bicycle past a logo of The Alibaba Group at the company's headquarters on the outskirts of Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province. PHOTO: REUTERS

called for public input as it formulates its latest list, expected in the coming months. At least three industry bodies have publicly responded with criticism of Aliba-

ba, alleging counterfeits remain widespread on its sites and that the company is difficult to work with or inefficient when seeking redress.

The company's new government affairs chief, Eric Pelletier, who took up the post in June, has sent two formal letters to the USTR this month, including a re-

buttal of the industry group criticism.

Last week, Pelletier and an Alibaba lawyer met with an inter-agency working group coordinated by the USTR to discuss Alibaba's anti-counterfeit efforts, a source with knowledge of the matter said.

In his letters, Pelletier says Alibaba has gone above and beyond in dealing with the problem, but that primary responsibility for policing and deterring infringements rests with brand owners, according to copies seen by Reuters.

He said the company had made it easier this year for brands to remove listings of suspected fakes while toughening penalties for merchants who violate company policies.

"When you step back and look at our overall efforts to combat illicit activities, our track record is clear. We are certainly not perfect, and we have a lot of hard work ahead of us...we will continue to do everything we can to stop these activities," he wrote.—Reuters

Germany studies programme to save temporary jobs at VW

BERLIN — German Chancellor Angela Merkel's office is looking into whether 6,000 temporary workers at Volkswagen (VOW-G_p.DE) could be moved onto the government's "Kurzarbeit" short-time work programme, daily Bild reported on Saturday, citing unnamed government sources.

The scheme allows companies to preserve jobs by reducing employees' hours when plant usage is low, with the government compensating workers for part of their lost wages.

The Federal Labour Office has ruled out the idea, already floated by Economy Minister Sigmar Gabriel, of including

temporary workers in the plan, from which they would normally be excluded. But Berlin wants to be prepared for cost cuts at Volkswagen.

A government spokesman could not immediately be reached for comment.

Reeling from the scandal over its rigging of diesel emissions, Volkswagen said on Tuesday it will cut investment plans at its biggest division by 1 billion euros (\$1.1 billion) a year. Some analysts have said the scandal could cost Volkswagen as much as 35 billion euros (\$40 billion) to cover vehicle refits, regulatory fines and lawsuits.—Reuters



A worker cleans the facade of a Volkswagen dealership near the Andalusian capital of Seville, southern Spain on 16 October 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

BSNL to allow landline users avail free call benefit on mobile

NEW DELHI — BSNL mobile subscribers will soon be able to avail free calling benefits offered on their landline phone as the state-run firm is going to roll out a convergence platform that will sync subscribers' mobile and fixed line connections.

"We are in the process of rolling out fix mobile convergence platform by Diwali. This will enable consumers avail value added service in mobile phones, make free night calls from mobile phones if they have subscribed to landline and host of other modern facilities," BSNL Chairman and MD Anupam Shrivastava told PTI.

He said that with this roll out, consumers will be able to link their mobile and landline accounts.

"The sync between the two accounts will be such that it will enable our subscribers receive their landline calls on mobile phones," Shrivastava said.

BSNL has invested over Rs 400 crore to modernise its landlines.

The company slipped to sixth position in terms of overall subscriber base in April. At the end of August, BSNL's total subscriber base was around 7.8 crore. After a long period, BSNL in July and August 2015 ranked among top five mobile players in terms of net addition of monthly subscribers.

BSNL, however, has been losing customers in landline space despite offering free night calls from landline to any phone in India.

"We have been able to arrest decline rate in landline connections. In a few months and with launch of fix mobile convergence, our landline should turn positive. We have already turned gainer for mobile subscribers under mobile number portability scheme," Shrivastava said.

The company has launched free roaming scheme which enables its subscribers to attend free incoming calls while travelling anywhere in the country at no extra cost.

"Free roaming scheme has become one of the major growth drivers for uptake in mobile subscriber number," Shrivastava added. The company is also in the process to tie up with Hitachi's ATM business unit which

will allow its landline customers, who pay bill offline, to make payment anytime during the day.

"Many landline users still pay bill at our counter. The counters are open for limited time and between peak office hours i.e. 10am - 2pm. We are partnering with Hitachi. It will install ATM at our premise which will also accept cash. BSNL customers will be able to pay their bills at this ATM as per their convenience," Shrivastava said.

He said that Hitachi ATM machines will be rolled out initially in small cities around March 2016.

BSNL will also get revenue share from each transaction made on ATMs installed in its premise.—PTI

Argentina receives train wagons from China to renew rail freight system

BUENOS AIRES — Argentina received on Friday a shipment of 150 brand new train wagons from China to renew its railway cargo transportation system, a minister said.

It was the first shipment out of the 3,500 wagons and 100 locomotives Argentina has acquired with the help of a Chinese loan of 2.47 billion US dollars to renovate its cargo fleet and 3,000 kilometers of railway lines, said Transport Minister Florencio Randazzo.

"This purchase, encouraged by President Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner, is of vital importance to reducing the logistic costs of goods transportation in the 18 provinces," said Randazzo. He added that train tracks renovation is also ongoing and the government has spent over 480 million dollars on construction works. All the material will arrive before June 2016, said Marcelo Bosch, president of Belgrano Cargas company, a state owned operator of cargo railway services. China has provided a range of equipment and expertise to help Argentina renovate its railway lines, key to boost economic development.

In 2013, China South Railway (CSR) won a 1-billion-dollar contract which provides 709 carriages to renew Argentina's commuter system. By the end of July 2015, all the 709 carriages had been shipped to the South American country.

Besides buying carriages and locomotives, Argentina also introduced signaling systems and other services from China, as a part of technological cooperation to revive its railway industry.—Xinhua

Nestle raises its bet on potential \$10 billion health business

VEVEY — Nestle, famous for its coffee and chocolate, is stepping up investment in nutritional therapy, a business it believes will eventually generate annual sales of 10 billion Swiss francs (\$10.5 billion).

Greg Behar, chief executive of Nestle Health Science, told Reuters that the unit formed in 2011 already had revenue of more than 2 billion francs and there were major opportunities both in the new-product pipeline and in geographic expansion.

“Most of the emerging markets are offering amazing growth opportunities,” he said.

Behar, who worked for drug-makers Novartis and Boehringer Ingelheim before heading the new Nestle unit, is forging a new kind business that is midway between food and pharmaceuticals.

The goal is to find novel ways to treat and prevent different types of diseases using nutritional approaches, from gastrointestinal problems to Alzheimer’s.

It is a bold move by the world’s largest packaged food company and requires Nestle to engage in discussions with regulators such as the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA), which Behar said were going well.

“The FDA wants to bring innovation to the market. They see the health value of our products and we’re having very construc-



A bird flies past the logo at the headquarters of world food giant Nestle in Vevey. PHOTO: REUTERS

tive discussions with them,” he said in an interview after Nestle reported nine-months results.

“They see us as a partner that can help shape this area and this regulatory framework.”

Currently, Nestle Health Science has around 40 different projects underway and Behar said: “We think we can do more.”

He believes there is a clear opportunity to fill a gap between

the traditional pharmaceutical and food industries, given ageing populations around the world and spiralling cases of lifestyle diseases.

Strategically, the shift towards health offers Nestle a hedge against slowing growth in packaged foods by opening up a profitable new area. It is also a counter to crackdowns on un-

healthy foods blamed for obesity

and other lifestyle problems. At present, Nestle Health Science margins are in line with the group average but Behar said his vision was for the division to be “significantly accretive” in the long term as its profit margins increase to above the group average.

Nestle has recently been stepping up spending in the space through acquisitions and collaborations. Last week it also an-

nounced plans to invest \$70 million in a new health science research hub and US headquarters in New Jersey.

“We will continue accelerating our external innovation,” Behar said, adding that deals could be both big and small, while the timing of acquisitions would depend on opportunities.

Earlier this year, Nestle invested \$65 million in Seres Health, a US start-up company that specializes in restoring the “microbiome”, or healthy gut bacteria, and which is developing an experimental treatment for clostridium difficile infection.

It has also acquired or invested in companies working on metabolic disorders, gastroenterology, oncology and Alzheimer’s disease.

Last month it signed a deal with Swiss biotech firm AC Immune to develop a simple diagnostic test for Alzheimer’s, on the basis that early diagnosis will be critical if targeted nutritional approaches are used in fighting the memory-robbing condition.

As part of its drive to establish itself as science leader in the field, Nestle is hosting a symposium next week in Lausanne on cognition and brain health, with academic speakers from prominent institutions such as the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Sweden’s Karolinska Institute.—Reuters

Sierra Leone claims 21 days Ebola free

FREETOWN — Sierra Leone’s President Ernest Bai Koroma addressed the nation Saturday on the country’s first 21 days of Ebola free countdown.

He described over four thousand Ebola survivors in the country as heroes and called on people not to fear them.

In a nationwide address to mark the first incubation period of 21 days in the 42 day World Health Organisation (WHO) Ebola countdown, Koroma said “the event marks a significant milestone in the nation’s fight against Ebola and there is no doubt that victory is within our reach”.

“All Sierra Leoneans should be proud of what we have achieved together and put aside fear and ignorance on our dealings with the over four thousand survivors who are our heroes,” he said.

The head of state declared

that “all dead bodies will continue to be swapped to be certain that a single case (of Ebola) will not be missed”.

“We will fight Ebola together and we will win together and we will not relax our guard,” he added. Koroma’s address came two days after four people were arrested and charged with illegal washing of bodies at a ceremony in the fishing village of Goderich in the west end of the city.

The last case of Ebola in the country was recorded on September 13 in the north while the last patient was discharged from the treatment centre.

According to WHO “a country can only be declared Ebola free after 42 days of the last confirmed case”, and for Sierra Leone November 8 is the date the country will be declared “Ebola free”.—Xinhua

“We will fight Ebola together and we will win together and we will not relax our guard.”

Sierra Leone’s President Ernest Bai Koroma

What a nightmare: sleep no more plentiful in primitive cultures

WASHINGTON — Maybe we cannot blame late-night TV, endless Internet surfing, midnight snacks, good books, bothersome work deadlines and other distractions of modern life for encroaching on our sleep.

Research unveiled on Thursday showed that people in isolated and technologically primitive African and South American cultures get no more slumber than the rest of us.

Scientists tracked 94 adults from the Tsimane people of Bolivia, Hadza people of Tanzania and San people of Namibia for a combined 1,165 days in the first study on the sleep patterns of people in primitive foraging and hunting cultures.

Even without electricity or other modern trappings, they logged an average of 6 hours and 25 minutes of sleep daily, a figure near the low end of industrialised society averages.

“The bigger conclusion is not that they sleep less but that they very clearly do not sleep

more, contrary to what has been assumed,” said UCLA psychiatry professor Jerome Siegel.

He said there had been a notion that people used to sleep more than they do now and that modern life reduced sleep time, but the new findings suggest this is a myth.

University of New Mexico anthropologist Gandhi Yetish said the research suggests 8 hours of sleep, long touted as the ideal total, “may be a longer sleep duration than can be realistically expected.”

“These findings challenge many of the traditional beliefs about ‘normal’ sleep,” Yetish added.

The Hadza and San are “hunter-gatherers” and the Tsimane are considered “hunter-horticulturalists,” growing some of their food. Their lifestyles are seen as analogous to ancient human societies.

Despite having no electric lights, they did not go to sleep at sundown, remaining awake

more than 3 hours after sunset and awakening before sunrise. They rarely napped.

Their sleep durations were seasonal, with about 6 hours during summer and just under 7 hours during winter.

Study participants wore small, wristband devices that tracked sleeping and waking times along with light exposure.

“I visited study participants in their homes each morning to conduct short, 10-minute interviews on their pre-bedtime activities, fatigue, dreams and other sleep-related issues,” said Yetish, who has spent 10 months with the Tsimane and slept in a nearby tent.

The Tsimane live in houses built of logs cut down from the rainforest, with woven-leaf roofs.

Families typically have a garden for crops while also hunting and fishing.

The research was published in the journal *Current Biology*.—Reuters

PICTURE OF THE DAY



Fish weighing over 80 kilogram is cooked in a hotpot during a food festival in Zhengzhou, Henan Province, China, on 17 October 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

China, South Korea unhappy with Japanese Cabinet members' shrine visits

BEIJING — China's official media on Sunday criticized the visits by Japanese Cabinet members earlier in the day to the war-linked Yasukuni Shrine in Tokyo, saying that such moves heighten tensions in the region.

South Korea's Yonhap News Agency, meanwhile, reported that the international community, including South Korea and China, sees the shrine visits as acts to justify Japan's aggression before and during World War II.

In its dispatch from Tokyo, China's Xinhua News Agency said that continued visits to the shrine by some Japanese politicians are causing tensions in relations between Japan and its Asian neighbors such as China and South Korea.

Xinhua's English article also mentioned that Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe sent a ritual offering to the shrine on Saturday, and remarked that even though he did not visit the shrine, his offering

"is still deemed provocative" at a time when a trilateral summit with China and South Korea is being arranged for next month.

A day after Abe sent a "masakaki" tree offering, Internal Affairs and Communications Minister Sanae Takaichi and Justice Minister Mitsuhide Iwaki separately visited the Shinjō shrine which has been a source of diplomatic friction with China and South Korea, both of which suffered under Japan's wartime aggression.

South Korea and China view the shrine as a symbol of Japan's past militarism.

Yonhap said the two ministers' shrine visits "could cast a pall on the planned summit" of the leaders of China, Japan and South Korea.

Yasukuni Shrine honours wartime Japanese Prime Minister Gen. Hideki Tojo and other convicted Class-A war criminals, along with over 2.4 million of war dead.—*Kyodo News*

One dead as earthquake hits northwest Argentina

BUENOS AIRES — An earthquake measuring 5.9 in magnitude shook Argentina's northwest province of Salta on Saturday, killing one person and leveling buildings, according to local police.

The earthquake took place in El Galpon, Salta at around 8:33 am local time (1133 GMT) with the epicenter in 123 km from Salta's capital city, according to Argentina's National Seismic Prevention Institute.

So far only one fatality has been reported. According to local online media Infobae, a woman died when a wall collapsed on her during the 15-second quake.

The earthquake also destroyed homes and schools, and many have

lost everything in the quake, Hector Romero, a local official, told the radio station Cadena 3.

The earthquake was also felt in the provinces of Tucuman, Jujuy, Santiago del Estero and neighbour-

ing Paraguay reported the quake was felt in their capital of Asuncion, according to local media.—*Xinhua*



Debris of a wall are seen in street after an earthquake in El Galpon locality, Salta province, Argentina, on 17 October, 2015. PHOTO: XINHUA

NEWS IN BRIEF

Guinea President Conde wins election with 58 of vote

CONAKRY — Guinea's President Alpha Conde won 58 percent of the vote in an 11 October election to gain a second term as leader of the West African nation, the National Electoral Commission said on Saturday.

Opposition leader Cellou Dalein Diallo said he would not recognise the result and would call on his supporters to protest against fraud and ballot-rigging. An earlier tally based on full election results gave Diallo 31 percent.—*Reuters*

Cuba denies it has sent troops to Syria

HAVANA — The Cuban government on Saturday denied a report it had sent troops to Syria in support of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad.

Foreign ministry official Gerardo Penalver

"categorically denies and refutes the irresponsible and unfounded information regarding the supposed presence of Cuban troops in the Syrian Arab Republic," a government statement said.—*Reuters*

German aid worker kidnapped in Afghanistan released

KABUL — A German aid worker kidnapped in Afghanistan in August has been released safely, the German development agency GIZ said in a statement. "We are relieved and happy that our staff member is free again," a statement from the organisation said.

No details were re-

leased regarding the kidnapping, which occurred in downtown Kabul on 17 August.

The kidnapping was one of a series of attacks on foreign targets in the Afghan capital since the withdrawal of international troops from most combat operations last year.—*Reuters*

Chinese chrysanthemum enters Guinness record book

ZHENGZHOU — A "full-standing multiflorous chrysanthemum" grafted in central China's Henan Province has earned its place in the Guinness Book of World Records for containing the largest number of chrysanthemum species.

The multiflorous chrysanthemum is 3.8 metres in diameter and composed of 641 different types of chrysanthemums grafted to south-

ernwood. It was certified for the world record on Sunday in Kaifeng City, Henan Province.

A representative of Guinness Book of World Records made the announcement at a chrysanthemum festival in Kaifeng City.

It took about four years to cultivate the plant, which now has more than 1,500 flowers blossoming at one time.—*Xinhua*

French give Hollande lowest approval rating this year

PARIS — French President Francois Hollande and Prime Minister Manuel Valls have seen their approval ratings fall again this month, with Hollande's hitting its lowest level this year, according to an Ifop poll released on Sunday.

The share of respondents satisfied with Hollande fell to 20 percent from 23 percent in September, in the survey

for the newspaper Le Journal du Dimanche.

It had stood at 29 percent in January, when Hollande was praised for his handling of Islamist militant attacks in Paris.

Prime Minister Manuel Valls received a positive rating from 36 percent of respondents, down from 39 percent in September and 53 percent at the start of the year.—*Reuters*

China eyes UNESCO listing for Confucius family cuisine

JINAN — China is preparing a bid for the family cuisine of ancient philosopher Confucius to be listed as a UNESCO intangible cultural heritage, experts said on Sunday during a food conference in east China's Qufu City.

A committee for the standardization of Confucius's family cuisine was established and officially launched preparations for

the UNESCO application during the ongoing 5th Asian Food Study Conference in the ancient thinker's hometown.

"It will take at least three years to prepare before we file the application to UNESCO," said Liu Deguang, director of the committee, adding that the committee plans to hire special teams to collect historical materials and promote

standardized production. The family cuisine of Confucius developed as a result of frequent visits by China's emperors, high-ranking officials and other distinguished guests to Confucius's home. Many banquets, ceremonies and royal commemorations were held there, giving the family the opportunity to develop its own style of formal cuisine. The time- and labour-intensive cuisine has

been challenged by modern technology and requires preservation, experts said.

"Cooking Confucius family cuisine is complex, labour-intensive and demands great attention to detail," said chef Wang Lingtao.

The most complex banquet in Confucius family cuisine consists of 196 dishes, including six cold dishes such as braised sea cucumber and stir-fried sea-

sonal vegetables. They are served on special silvered porcelain plates, and dining etiquette and manners have been passed down by Confucius's descendants for more than 2,000 years, according to Wang.

In ancient times, chefs at the Confucius Mansion passed on cooking skills and recipes only to their descendants or apprentices. But now experts believe the recipes

should be made public so they can be preserved.

Confucius (551-479 BC) is regarded as one of China's most influential sages. Some of his ideas about food and diet played a significant role in the development of Chinese food culture.

Confucius family cuisine was included as part of China's national intangible cultural heritage in June 2011.—Xinhua

Two books, borrowed 52 years ago, returned to library in Oregon

PORTLAND — Two overdue books borrowed more than 50 years ago from a library in Portland, Oregon, have finally been returned, but the identity of whoever had them for all these years may never be known.

The books "Basic Principles of Speech," and "Preface to Critical Reading," were placed in the Portland State University Library book drop earlier in October after they were checked out on 3 January, 1963, the library said in a statement earlier this week.

The anonymous person who dropped off the tomes put a rubber band around them and a note saying they were borrowed for a high

school speech class.

"It is now time for them (to) go back home. Outdated — yes — but I'll let you decide their fate now," the handwritten note read.

Library officials said the books are so old, they are not sure what they will do with the long overdue items. The library does not charge fines for overdue books, but charges a fee for replacing lost books.

"If it were me, the guilt would have been relieved by returning them," Joan Petit, a librarian at Portland State University, said in a statement. The books were borrowed from the library of Portland State College, which became a university in 1969.—Reuters

Two soldiers killed in clash in S Philippines

MANILA — Two soldiers were killed when they were attacked by members of New People's Army (NPA)'s in south Philippine province of Compostela Valley on Saturday, military said on Sunday.

The Philippine military said the soldiers from the 25th Infantry Battalion encountered around 60 NPA members at Casoon Village, Monkayo, Compostela Valley Province at round 2 pm.

After 25 minutes' fire-

fight, two soldiers were killed in action with another wounded while militants managed to escape.

The NPA, armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines, has been waging a guerrilla campaign against the government in the countryside for four decades. Military estimates the NPA strength at more than 4,000 men scattered in more than 60 guerrilla fronts throughout the country.—Xinhua



A devotee (3rd L) of the Chinese Bang Neow shrine walks with a motorcycle handlebar pierced through his cheek during a procession celebrating the annual vegetarian festival in Phuket, Thailand on 18 October, 2015. The festival, featuring face-piercing, spirit mediums and strict vegetarianism celebrates the local Chinese community's belief that abstinence from meat and various stimulants during the ninth lunar month of the Chinese calendar will help them obtain good health and peace of mind. PHOTO: REUTERS

Mysterious painting on display for first time in Lisbon

LISBON — A 17th-century painting featuring a panoramic view of Lisbon is on display for the first time at the National Museum of Ancient Art in the Portuguese capital city, after its arrival from Weilburg Castle in Germany last week.

The highly anticipated painting, which will be in exhibition here until 14 February, 2016, has only been on display since Thursday for weather related reasons.

Antonio Filipe, director of National Museum

of Ancient Art, and local experts will examine the painting in an attempt to better understand some of the mysteries surrounding it. The painting hides three mysteries — who painted it, when it was painted and why it was in Germany.

Although it has been known to experts in Portugal for several years, most local historians are seeing the painting for the first time. Miguel Soromenho, an art historian, is one of the first to be contacted about

the existence of this work in 2008. "It is the first time I've seen it," he said.

The first mystery experts want to uncover is how it got to Germany. Historians only know that it arrived there after the Second World War.

The second mystery is who painted it. Several key inscriptions could provide clues for the answer. Art historian Andreas Gehlert said the painting has "some architectural details of palaces, monas-

teries and ornaments."

The third mystery is the date. The painting has an inscription with the date 1613, which describes in detail the reception of King Philip III of Spain on his first visit to Portugal. However, the king only arrived in Portugal in 1618 — five years after that date.

One possible explanation for the inscribed date, therefore, could be that the painting was made for the arrival of the Spanish king in 1613.—Xinhua

WEATHER REPORT

BAY INFERENCE: Weather is partly cloudy in the Andaman Sea and Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL EVENING OF THE 19th October, 2015: Weather will be partly cloudy in Lower Sagaing and Magway Regions, Kachin State, rain or thundershowers will be scattered in Taninthayi Region, Shan, Kayin and Mon States and isolated in the remaining Regions and States. Degree of certainty is (80%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Sea will be slight to moderate in Myanmar waters.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS:

Continuation of rain or thundershowers in Taninthayi Region and Mon State.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 19th October, 2015: Likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (60%).

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 19th October, 2015: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (80%).

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 19th October, 2015: Partly cloudy.

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Grateful Dead co-founder Phil Lesh reveals bladder cancer diagnosis



Musician Phil Lesh plays with his former bandmates at a benefit concert at the Warfield Theatre in San Francisco, California. PHOTO: REUTERS

LOS ANGELES — Rock musician Phil Lesh, a founding member of influential band the Grateful Dead, has been diagnosed with non-aggressive bladder cancer and has canceled a pair of October concerts, he said in a statement late on Friday.

Lesh, who plays with the band Phil Lesh & Friends, in a statement on the website of his San Rafael, California-based music venue Terrapin Crossroads,

said he received the diagnosis early this month and has since received treatment at the Mayo Clinic in Scottsdale, Arizona.

"I am very fortunate to have the pathology reports show that the tumors are all non-aggressive, and that there is no indication that they have spread," Lesh said in the statement.

"So thanks to my local doctor Cliff Sewell and the incredible team at the Mayo Clinic, all

is well and I can return to normal activities in two weeks from my surgery."

He said that due to his illness he was canceling a pair of Phil Lesh & Friends shows slated for 25 October and 26 October at Terrapin Crossroads, which were going to feature Chris Robinson from defunct group the Black Crowes. The California-born Lesh in 1965 was a founding member of the Grateful Dead, which has been one of the most influential bands in rock music history with legions of "Deadhead" fans who often went from town to town following the band on tour. The Grateful Dead was closely entwined with the hippie movement and was known for the wide range of American musical styles it embraced and for its devotion to jamming and the live concert experience.

After the death of lead singer Jerry Garcia in 1995, the band has been revived in various forms. In July, the four surviving members of the Grateful Dead, including Lesh, gave what they said will be their last group performance at Chicago's Soldier Field.—Reuters

Carrie Underwood releases new single 'Renegade Runaway'

LOS ANGELES — Grammy-winner Carrie Underwood has dropped her new single "Renegade Runaway", which features in her forthcoming studio album "Storyteller".

"Storyteller" is expected to debut on 23 October, reported E! Online.

"New music alert! You can download Track 1 from #Storyteller if you pre-order now! #RenegadeRunaway -TeamCU," the 32-year-old country crooner's team posted on Twitter. "Renegade Runaway" is a catchy, powerful number. It comes just one week after Underwood dropped "Heartbeat", a romantic duet with singer Sam Hunt, which is reportedly inspired by her husband, Mike Fisher.—Reuters



PHOTO: REUTERS

Marriage isn't perfect: Angelina Jolie

LONDON — They are known to be one of the most compatible real-life couples but actress Angelina Jolie says she and husband Brad Pitt "have (their) issues."

Jolie, however, added they are nothing like the unhappy couple they play in their upcoming film "By the Sea", reported Female First.

The 40-year-old actress has six children, Maddox, 14, Pax, 11, Zahara, 10, Shiloh, nine, and seven-year-old twins Knox and Vivienne, with Pitt, 51.

"Brad and I have our issues, but if the characters were even remotely close to our problems, we couldn't have made the film.

"This is the only film I've done that is completely based on my own crazy mind. As artists we wanted something that took us out of our comfort zones. Just being raw actors. It's not the safest idea. But life is short.—Reuters



PHOTO: REUTERS

Tracy Morgan returns to 'Saturday Night Live' 20 months after near-fatal car wreck

NEW YORK — Tracy Morgan returned to "Saturday Night Live" on Saturday to host the long-running comedy show on which he shot to fame, more than a year after he suffered near-fatal injuries in a deadly high-speed car accident.

Morgan, a "Saturday Night Live" cast member from 1999 to 2006 before he left to join "30 Rock," the hit sitcom based on SNL, was joined by former co-stars including Tina Fey and Alec Baldwin, who returned to the NBC program in a show of support.

Morgan wasted no time in addressing his traumatic experience of June 2014, which killed his good friend, fellow comedian James McNair.

"It was awful," Morgan said in his opening monologue, "but it also showed me how much love and support I have ... and here I am."

The joke came just as fast:

"People are wondering, 'can he speak? Does he have 100 percent mental capacity?' But the truth is, I never did," Morgan said, adding "I might actually be a few points higher now."

He then launched into a sketch set at "30 Rock" when his character almost dies. Castmates Fey and Baldwin joined the bit.

The comedian suffered broken bones and a serious brain injury in a June 2014 highway accident in New Jersey that killed another passenger in the van, comedian "Jimmy Mack" McNair. A speeding Wal-mart truck driver who had been awake for 28 hours was held responsible for the accident.

In June Morgan, fighting back tears, said in a television interview he was yet 100 percent and wondered whether he could be funny again.

Lest there be any question about his ability to perform, Morgan appeared in nearly

every sketch during the live show's 90-minute broadcast, including a reprise of his one-time "Saturday Night Live" sketch, "Brian Fellow's Safari Planet," in which he plays a somewhat dim-witted, semi-hostile host of a nature programme.

He also appeared in the weekly "Weekend Update" news segment and a "Family Feud" game show bit, and graced other sketches as a bar thug who just wants to tango with another man and as a singing astronaut on Mars, among others.

An emotional Morgan was joined on stage at the finale by his wife Megan Wollover and their baby daughter.

Morgan appeared at last month's Emmy awards in his first live public appearance since the accident, receiving a standing ovation as he presented the award for best drama series.—Reuters

Two new 'X-Men' spin-off TV shows in works

LONDON — Two new live-action "X-Men" TV series are finally becoming a reality with "Legion" and "Hellfire".

FX is partnering with Agents of SHIELD's Jeph Loeb, "X-Men" producers Bryan Singer and Simon Kinberg as well as

" Fargo" creator Noah Hawley for the live-action Legion pilot.

Fans of the "X-Men" comic books will likely know that "Legion" is the code name of the vastly powerful mutant psychic David Charles Haller, the son of Professor Charles Xavier and Holocaust

survivor Gabrielle Haller, reported Digital Spy.

"Since he was a teenager, David has struggled with mental illness. Diagnosed as schizophrenic, David has been in and out of psychiatric hospitals for years.

"But after a strange encounter

with a fellow patient, he's confronted with the possibility that the voices he hears and the visions he sees might be real," FX said about the show. "Legion is just the sort of ambitious story that Noah excels at," FX programming president Nick Grad said.

"His adaption of Fargo for television was one of the most acclaimed television events in recent memory. It's also an honour to partner with Marvel on Legion and to enlist such an accomplished team of executive producers to create this pilot.—PTI

LUXE City Guides – Sundown Singapore

SINGAPORE — Among the ranks of Asia’s powerhouse players, Singapore is often depicted as the squeaky clean poster girl for gleaming glass modernity, priggish protocol and no-fuss efficiency.

But don’t judge this slick city-state by its cover: it also boasts divergent cultural heritage, knockout cuisine, a burgeoning bar scene and a heart-stopping skyline at night.

Despite having recently hit the big 5-0, Singapore shows no signs of slowing. In fact, this once smalltown kitty cat has transformed over the years into a buzzing metropolis well worthy of its moniker, the Lion City. So forget the cliches, you’re in for a roaring good time...

Although there are a few curiosity-piquing new stays in the pipeline (such as the Philippe Starck-struck South Beach and bonkers Hotel Vagabond), for now nothing beats marina-side darling Fullerton Bay Hotel (fullertonbayhotel.com).

Ensure you snag one of their elegant, teched-out pads with a balcony and waterfront outlook, which is particularly spectacular as the Singapore horizon sparkles to life. The rooftop pool and Andre Fu-imagined Lantern bar are also in prime position for drinking in that view. Book ahead for a sunset kickback on one of

the coveted front-row daybeds. To get a real taste of local history, skip along to the Peranakan Museum (peranakanmuseum.org.sg), a pastel-pretty manse offering a crash course in Baba/Nyonya life with intriguing artefacts, antiques and photos.

As you’ll no doubt learn, Peranakan identity originates from the 16th century intermarriage of Chinese merchants and women from the Malacca Straits. This cultural coupling spawned an aromatic, punchy cuisine — still unique to the region today — combining Chinese cooking methods with indigenous ingredients such as coconut milk, galangal, tamarind and lemon grass.

Blue Ginger (theblueginger.com) is a delectable initiation into exactly that.

A 10-minute cab hop away and set across a funkily converted shop house, the tongue-tingling fare ranges from robust beef rendang and smoky squid curry to banana leaf-enveloped fish cakes. Service can be slow, but it’s friendly.

While once there was a dearth of decent drinking dens (and an abundance of expat boozers and generic hotel lounges), the scene is fast gaining global recognition, with a couple of establishments sneaking onto The World’s 50 Best Bars list this year.

Leading the new wave is 28 Hongkong Street (28hks.com), an unsigned, dim-lit lair of both classic and cutting-edge pours. Feeling fancy? Ask for The Office, a clandestine in-house cubby for only eight lucky patrons.

The plush and deeply seductive Manhattan Bar (regenthotels.com), inside the Regent Hotel, is a more formal affair; or for the youth vibe, Potato Head Folk (pttheadfolk.com) is an artsy triumvirate of burger joint Three Buns, chinoiserie-dappled Studio 1939, and breezy Rooftop Garden, swilling the best rum cocktails in town.

Whether indulging in a 5-star feast or rolling up your sleeves for hawker fare, the choice in Singapore is positively diet-destroying. The lack of air-conditioning and stark strip lighting aren’t exactly forgiving, but hawker centers really are the best way to sample local food. Pack your wet wipes and make a beeline for the stalls with the longest queues.—Reuters



People walk past the skyline of Marina Bay central business district in Singapore. PHOTO: REUTERS

Tokyo to give away 300,000 Halloween garbage bags



Tokyo Gov Yoichi Masuzoe shows an orange garbage bag with a ghost pumpkin motif during a press conference at the metropolitan government offices, on 16 October 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

TOKYO — As Tokyo braces for Halloween weekends when its streets will be thronged by partygoers wearing all kinds of costumes, the metropolitan government has prepared 300,000 orange garbage bags with a ghost pumpkin motif to give away in an effort to keep the capital’s streets clean amid the fun.

Naming the campaign “HALLOWEEN&TOKYO,” Gov-Yoichi Masuzoe said he hopes costume-clad people will use the bags to bring garbage home.

The governor told a press conference he wants Tokyo to be known as a “clean and

comfortable” city. The plastic bags will be given away for free this month at locations including Shibuya, Roppongi, Shinjuku and Akihabara — popular destinations for Halloween costume street parties.

The Halloween garbage bags are part of the “&TOKYO” strategy announced by the metropolitan government earlier this month. It allows individuals and companies to use the catchphrase and its logo free of charge in a bid to spread the Tokyo brand and establish its position as a city of international tourism ahead of the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics.—Kyodo News

Australian sailing pressures Rio over water pollution

MELBOURNE — Australia’s Olympic sailing boss Peter Conde has called on the sport to pressure Rio Olympics organisers to clean up water pollution ahead of next year’s Games.

The water quality of Guanabara Bay, where Olympic sailing and other aquatic events will be

held, has long been criticized and come under the microscope amid reports of athletes falling ill after competing there.

“It would be good if everyone in the sport kept the pressure onto the government to do what it really needs to do — to tidy the place up,” Conde said in comments published by

News Ltd media on Sunday.

“We’re dealing with health and safety issues that are unusual for the sport to have to deal with.”

Two international sailors, from South Korea and Germany, trained in Rio in August and contracted infections which they said came from the waters.

An independent study commissioned by the Associated Press and reported in July found the waters were so contaminated with bacteria and viruses from human sewage that athletes could become ill and unable to compete.

Rio organisers have repeatedly pledged to clean up the waters in time for the

Games and played down reports of floating garbage and dead fish washing up on shores.

Australia’s sailors, who won three gold medals at the London Olympics, would have to take extra precautions with their health at Rio next year, Conde said.

“It is clearly a priority

area that we didn’t have at the last Games (in London) and it’s not just about water quality and about getting sick,” he said.

“It’s about detection for infection, detection for getting sick through food and safety.

“At the simplest level, it comes down to hygiene.”—Reuters

Myanmar International

(19-10-2015 07:00 am ~ 20-10-2015 07:00 am) MST

Today Fresh

07:03 Am News

07:26 Am Myanmar Delicate Artistic Handy Creations - The Making Procedure Of Goldsmith

07:44 Am Licuala Palm Leaf

07:53 Am Guiding Star of Song Birds

08:03 Am News

08:26 Am Gardener: King Orange Plantation

08:40 Am Myanmar Masterclass: Artist Than Kywe

08:52 Am Kyaikhteeyoe: Bamboo Guns

09:03 Am News

09:26 Am Kayah Style

09:35 Am Myanmar Traditional Instruments - Myanma Harp (Episode-2)

10:03 Am News

10:26 Am Orchid Lover

10:35 Am Aesthetic Chinlone

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

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

Prime Time

07:03 Pm News

07:26 Pm Food Trip (Ep-10) (Part -2)

07:48 Pm Excavation At Kawhmu

08:03 Pm News

08:26 Pm Taste Of Myanmar (Rice Salad with Vegetables)

08:45 Pm Myanmar Leading Woman: May Sabai Phyu @ L. Hkawn Htoi

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

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

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

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

Entertainment Channel

(19-10-2015, Monday)

6:25 am

- Myanmar Series

7:00 am

- TV Drama Series

7:50 am

- TV Drama Series

8:35 am

- Teleplay

9:50 am

- China In Myanmar Cultural Show

10:00 am

- Myanmar Video

12:00 noon

- Close down

Unmatchable traditional boxing fixtures draw criticism

Maung Sein Lwin (MyanmaAlin)

NEW generation traditional boxing matches organized by Myanmar Traditional Boxing Federation and sponsored by Myanmar Media Group drew criticism from instructors and fans alike as some of the boxers were unmatched in skill and weight.

As a result, referees had to stop some matches or the bout finished during early rounds and fans were disappointed.

Chief instructor U Maung Maung from Swan Kay Kay Traditional Boxing Club said that his club participated in the matches because they had been invited by the organizers but a boxer from his club had to fight against a boxer of higher skills from a higher weight class. He added that such unmatchable fixtures would discourage new generation boxers.

Of eight matches on that day, referees had to stop 3 matches and disappointed traditional boxing fans.

One of fans complained that he had watched all traditional boxing competitions for new genera-



Saw Kyet Yoe and Nargis Maung Maung exchange punches. PHOTO: MIN HTET

tions eight times and the matches on that day were very bad because the boxers were unmatchable. Fans like him were disappointed,

he added, saying that if new players had to play against much better boxers than them, they would develop ring-fright later.

Kerber to face Jankovic in Hong Kong final

HONG KONG — Serbia's Jelena Jankovic all but ended Venus Williams' slim hopes of qualifying for the end-of-season WTA Finals by winning the battle of former world number ones in the Hong Kong Open semi-finals on Saturday.

Jankovic prevailed 6-4, 7-5 in a tight match to set up a Sunday showdown with Germany's Angelique Kerber, who proved too strong for Australia's Sam Stosur. Kerber beat the former US Open champion 6-2, 6-2 and is now one win away from securing her place in the eight-woman field at the WTA Finals in Singapore in eight days time. "I'm not thinking too much about needing one more win tomorrow, though," the German said in an on-court interview. "It's going to be another day and another match, and I'm just going to try and play some good tennis and win the final here." Jankovic showed some good resilience in fighting back from 3-0 down in the second set to edge out the former Williams, winner of seven grand slam singles titles.

Williams needed to make the final to move into one of the eight qualifying slots for the WTA Finals.—Reuters

Ronaldo sets Real record, Neymar hits four

MADRID — Real Madrid and Barcelona pulled two points clear in La Liga when Cristiano Ronaldo set a club scoring record in Real's 3-0 stroll against Levante and Neymar hit four as Barca beat Rayo Vallecano 5-2 on Saturday.

Real barely had to shift into top gear at the Bernabeu, where Ronaldo surpassed Raul with his 324th goal in his seventh season in the Spanish capital.

Barca squandered a host of chances, looked shaky in defence and needed a brilliant Neymar performance to come from behind and see off a Rayo side who played attractive attacking football at the Nou Camp.

The contrasting victories for Spain's injury-hit big two lifted them to 18 points from eight matches, with Real ahead on goal difference.

Villarreal, the surprise early front-runners, slipped to third but can reclaim the lead with a win at home to fourth-placed Celta Vigo on Sunday, when Atletico Madrid, who are fifth, play at Real Sociedad.

Marcelo fired Real ahead in the 27th minute when he exchanged passes with Ronaldo and blasted the ball past Ruben in the Levante goal.

Ronaldo made it 2-0 three minutes later when he cracked a trademark long-range effort into the corner, ending a rare four-

match goal drought in Spain's top flight for the Portugal captain, his joint-worst run since he joined Real in 2009.

Substitute Jese skipped past his marker and drove the ball high into the net to make it 3-0 eight minutes from time as Real secured a morale-boosting win ahead of Wednesday's Champions League Group A match at Paris St Germain.

"Cristiano took on the responsibility because we lacked forwards," Real coach Rafa Benitez, missing regulars Karim Benzema, James Rodriguez, Luka Modric and Sergio Ramos through injury, told a news conference. "He had to lead the team and that's what he did."

Barca, missing talisman Lionel Messi and captain Andres Iniesta, were rocked when Javi Guerra gave Rayo a surprise 15th-minute lead.

Ivan Rakitic and Luis Suarez had earlier failed to beat Tono when through one-on-one with the Rayo keeper but Barcelona were level in the 22nd minute when Neymar won and converted a penalty.

The Brazil forward, clearly trying to lift the team in Messi's absence, was felled again in the area in the 31st and successfully dispatched his second spot kick.

Barca keeper Claudio Bravo had to make several good saves as Rayo came out strongly after

City and United in scoring spree, no goals for Klopp

LONDON — Goals rained in for Manchester City and Manchester United but Juergen Klopp's first game as Liverpool manager was solid rather than spectacular as they drew 0-0 at Tottenham Hotspur in the Premier League on Saturday.

Raheem Sterling's hat-trick and a Wilfried Bony double helped leaders City to a 5-1 home win against Bournemouth while a few miles down the motorway United thumped Everton 3-0 with Wayne Rooney scoring his first away league goal for 11 months.

City have a two-point lead over United and Arsenal, who moved up to second with a 3-0 win at Watford. West Ham United, who won 3-1 at Crystal Palace, are a further two points adrift.

Liverpool's sixth draw in seven matches in all competitions left them down in 10th place but there was reason for optimism for Klopp who replaced the sacked Brendan Rodgers this month. It was Liverpool's first clean sheet for nine matches in all competitions.

"0-0 is not my dream result

but it is okay," former Borussia Dortmund coach Klopp said after an entertaining encounter at White Hart Lane. "Of course, our target is to have the nil on the right side and on the other side another number!"

England winger Sterling, signed by City for about 45 million pounds (\$69.48 million) from Liverpool, lit up the Etihad Stadium with all three of his goals coming before half-time. With Sergio Aguero facing an injury lay-off, Sterling, criticised for his lack of finishing prowess since his move, seized the spotlight, poking in the opener after seven minutes, dribbling through for his second after half an hour and completing his hat-trick in first-half stoppage time.

Bony, given his chance because of Aguero's misfortune, also got in on the scoring act — linking well with Sterling.

"We are on fire, now we just need to continue. It is a very important week for us — Sevilla on Wednesday in the Champions League and then the Manchester derby at the weekend," he said.—Reuters



PHOTO: REUTERS

the break and the weakness of the European champions' back line will be a worry for coach Luis Enrique ahead of Tuesday's game at BATE Borisov.

Neymar struck in the 69th and 70th minutes to make it 4-1, becoming the first Barca player other than Messi to score four in a match since Samuel Eto'o in 2008, before he crossed for Suarez to clip the ball home 13 minutes from time.

Jozabed took advantage of more poor defending to score Rayo's second in the 86th minute.

"He (Neymar) has been

electric since the start of the season," Luis Enrique told a news conference. "When he gets into the area there is nobody who can stop him."

Sevilla's stuttering start to the season continued when the Europa League holders, who play at Manchester City in the Champions League on Wednesday, drew 1-1 at modest Eibar and are 11th on nine points.

Valencia warmed up for Tuesday's match at home to Ghent in Europe's elite club competition with a 3-0 victory against Malaga that lifted them to eighth with 12 points.—Reuters