

Message from President U Thein Sein on the occasion of the seventieth Anniversary of the United Nations on 24 October

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President U Thein Sein receives a warm welcome from locals in Meiktila. PHOTO: MNA

PRESIDENT U Thein Sein, together with the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services and union ministers left Pyin Oo Lwin for the Myogyi Multipurpose Dam Project in Ywangan

Township in Shan State yesterday.

The president greeted Chief Minister of Shan State U Sao Aung Myat and a group of locals who welcomed the president to

the site. The president and the commander-in-chief inspected the construction of a 30 megawatt power plant and the installation of turbines before presenting fruit baskets to Chinese experts from

YMEC Company who are working with their Myanmar partners to construct the dam.

The president then inspected the inflow point of the dam and the construction of the main

water storage facility. After inspecting the dam, the president was briefed on the construction schedule and electricity generation.

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Govt urges diplomats, observers to be cautious about election observation

Aye Min Soe

THE government has requested diplomats and foreign election observers to refrain from activities that could be construed as being biased or that may negatively impact the country's ability to hold free and fair elections.

At a meeting held in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday with diplomatic

corps based in Yangon and those concurrently accredited to Myanmar, as well as representatives from foreign election commissions, Union Minister for Foreign Affairs U Wunna Maung Lwin said that the diplomatic community has an obligation to abide by the Union Election Commission's (UEC) Code of Conduct. He said it also has an obligation

to adhere to the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations and called for the cooperation and support of the diplomatic community for holding of general elections that are peaceful, credible and transparent.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chairman of the UEC U Tin Aye, also pledged that the upcoming election will ensure transparency

and be devoid of bias.

A total of 6,065 candidates will compete for the seats in parliament. Male candidates make up the 86.8 percent of the total with 5,274 and women making up the rest with 800 (13.2%), according to statistics from the UEC.

The UEC will not hold elections in five of the country's 330

townships, on security grounds.

Meanwhile, more than 1.03 million people who have been residing outside their constituencies submitted their applications to their ward and village constituencies in order to cast their ballots on the November 8 election from constituencies where they are currently staying, according to the UEC.

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Message from His Excellency U Thein Sein, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, on the occasion of the seventieth Anniversary of the United Nations (24-10-2015)

ON this auspicious occasion of the 70th Anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, I, on behalf of the people of Myanmar and on my own, would like to extend my warmest congratulations to the United Nations for its contributions and achievements in making the world a better and safer place to live.

On this day seventy years ago, the United Nations was born as a means of maintaining international peace and securi-

ty, promoting friendly relations among nations and achieving international cooperation on solving global issues such as the social, political, economic and environment issues that affect us all. Additionally, promoting and encouraging respect for human rights has always been high on its agenda. It is irrefutable that the United Nations has largely succeeded in its mission of implementing these noble goals.

Today, the United Nations represents all the peoples of the

world. As the largest inter-governmental organisation of the world, the United Nations' role in the global affairs is irreplaceable. The active participation of the United Nations Peacekeeping Missions in maintaining international peace and security as well as its relentless efforts in fighting poverty around the world are also indisputable. Myanmar welcomes and expresses its unequivocal support to the Post-2015 Development Agenda which constitutes a platform for

eradicating poverty and ensuring a sustainable future for the generations to come.

Despite these efforts, millions of people around the world continue to face challenges in the areas of peace and security. "The UN at 70 — A New Commitment to Action", the theme of the United Nations for this year is very relevant and timely. Therefore, the United Nations at its 70 should firmly commit to overcoming these difficulties while respecting the interests of

all its member nations. Myanmar will work jointly with all member States in supporting the Organisation in taking up these remaining challenges. I am confident that the recently adopted Sustainable Development Goals will be successfully implemented.

At this auspicious occasion, may I invite all member states to join hands with us to make the United Nations more stronger organisation and better world.—MNA

Danish Mission in Mandalay focuses on boosting skills

INTERNATIONAL Coordinator Mr Jorgen Steen Billetoft of the Danish Formation Mission visited Mandalay's Chambers of Commerce and Industry on Thursday. The Myanmar businessmen, led by vice president of the chamber U Kyaw Min and the Danish delegation discussed

the provision of assistance for the development of business enterprises, the training of skilled labourers and strategies to improve the quality of domestic products. The assistance is being provided as part of the Denmark-Myanmar Programme of 2016-2020.—*Thiha Ko Ko*



Mr Jorgen Steen Billetoft welcomed by Mandalay's Chambers of Commerce and Industry U Kyaw Min. PHOTO: THIHA KO KO

Students encouraged to cultivate reading habit



School children rely on libraries for reading in Ottara Thiri Township. PHOTO: SHWE YE YINT

STAFF at the Information and Public Relations Department, which lies under the Ministry of Information, are giving talks, hanging posters and provid-

ing books to students. Ottara Thiri District IPRD went on Wednesday to No.12 Basic Education High School and gave talks about the benefits of cul-

tivating a string reading habit. IPRD staff also set up a mobile library and loaned books to students to generate enthusiasm.—*Shwe Ye Yint*

JICA improves Mandalay's water supply



Workers lay a pipeline for water supply service in Mandalay. PHOTO: MAUNG PYI THU

RESIDENTS in Pyigyitagun Township, Mandalay Region, are currently receiving just five percent of their water needs. To improve the water supplies, a grant was provided in July and the project is being implemented by TEC International Co., Ltd with the assis-

tance of Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). Officials involved in the project met with the media on Thursday to outline the project schedule. It is due to be completed in 2017 and will improve water access in five of the township's wards.—*Maung Pyi Thu*

Workers receive free healthcare in Ottarathiri

CHAIRPERSON Daw Shwe Zin Win of the Ottarathiri Maternal and Child Welfare Association provided free medical treatment to workers engaged in the

building of a pagoda in Ottarathiri Township on Thursday. The health staff also disseminated knowledge about tuberculosis and diabetes, dengue fever, ma-

ternal and reproductive healthcare to workers. Sixty workers, including eight pregnant women, received medical treatment from staff.—*Shwe Ye Yint*



Local people receives health care services provided by Ottarathiri Maternal and Child Welfare Association. PHOTO: SHWE YE YINT

Myogyi Dam to help green Meiktila Plain

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The dam will supply water to 82,000 acres of farmland currently irrigated by Zawgyi Dam and 33,000 acres in Meiktila Plain.

The president said that it is necessary to complete the project during the current government's tenure. The project, which began in 2005-06, had come to a halt for various reasons but its completion will revitalise Meiktila Plain. Meiktila Lake has been renovated for the same purpose, the president said.

Myogyi Multipurpose Dam Project, together with other dams and reservoirs, will contribute to the greening of the entire Meiktila Plain and aid agricultural development, the president said. As the project will generate 30 megawatts of electricity it will be capable of distributing power to Ywangan in the Danu Self-Administered Zone, via existing electricity supply networks. Locals require electricity not only for household use but for industry. The state government and the self-administered zone governing body are responsible for the development of small and medium enterprises (SMEs). It is also necessary to supply electricity to



President U Thein Sein talks to a local mother and a child during his tour of Myogyi Dam. PHOTO: MNA

the Kyaukse Industrial Zone, the president said.

The dam is located a mile north of Myogyi Village and will store water released from Zawgyi Dam and Kyaingkhan Dam, which is still under construction,

to generate 135.70 million kilowatt-hours annually and to supply water for the enrichment of Meiktila Valley.

The dam has a storage capacity of 359,550 acre-feet and 725 square-miles of watershed area.

The dam will be completed in 2016.

The president, commander-in-chief and party proceeded to Meiktila in Mandalay Region where they inspected the inflow of water into the Meiktila (North)

Lake before paying homage and offering flowers, lights and water at Dhammathukha Kan Oo Shwe Se Gon Pagoda. The president and party returned to Nay Pyi Taw by helicopter yesterday afternoon.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Resettlement site inspected in Hakha



Union ministers U Soe Thane and U Win Tun assist in building resettlement site for flood victims in Hakha. PHOTO: MNA

UNION ministers U Soe Thane and U Win Tun inspected the reclamation of land plots in Hakha, Chin State yesterday as part of resettlement plans for flood and landslide victims.

The torrential rains in July and August triggered landslides that destroyed 870 homes in Hakha.

The victims were safely evacuated and will soon be resettled on 520 acres of land along the Hakha-Hpala Road, according to Chin State Chief Minister U Hong Ngai.

The chief minister said that more than 200 houses are under construction and are expected to be completed in December.

In Kalay, 358 houses will be built for victims. Officials said that the recovery project included water and power utilities.

While in Hakha, the union ministers also inspected irrigation facilities, reviewed fire-prevention measures and visited a site where a dam is being constructed. The dam is 168 acre-feet.—*Myanmar News Agency*

MPT's Swe Thahar promo reaches 10 million users

STATE-OWNED telecommunications provider Myanmar Post and Telecommunications (MPT) announced yesterday that its Swe Thahar plan has attracted 10 million customers and will soon reward its 10 millionth registered user.

The winner will receive a

top-up card valued at K1 million (US\$783). MPT is the country's leading mobile operator with over 16 million customers. The Swe Thahar Programme was launched in January under the MPT-KSGM joint venture.

Under the current promotion, MPT users can call one another at

the discounted rate of K23 (\$0.02) per minute, K10 (\$0.01) per message and K6 per 1MB of data.

MPT and KSGM signed a joint venture agreement last July with the aim of expanding its customer base and improving Myanmar's telecommunications network.—*GNLM*

Exhibition throws spotlight on Mandalay artists

Watercolourists are presenting a group show aimed at supporting fine arts students

Khaing Thanda Lwin

A COLLECTIVE art exhibition titled "The Hands" is being held at the River Ayeyawady Gallery in downtown Yangon to showcase Myanmar's cultural heritage.

This is the first group show involving teachers and pupils from the National Culture and Fine Arts University (Mandalay). The aim of the show is to

bring about memories of youthfulness, Artist U Kyaw Thu Win said.

The event runs from 24 to 26 October, showcasing 50 works by 10 watercolourists from Mandalay. Subjects include traditional artwork, still life, landscapes and a focus on the ethnic diversity within Myanmar.

All works are up for sale with prices ranging from US\$120 to \$350. Part of the proceeds

from the event will go to junior students of the fine arts at the university, U Kyaw Thu Win said.

A 27-year-old artist who created five paintings for the event with a focus on local lifestyles in Yangon said, "We plan to use the funds to purchase quality supplies for the students".

The River Ayeyawady Gallery is located on 35th Street (middle block) in Kyauktada Township in Yangon.

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Farmers given cotton farming demonstration

DISTRICT Officer U Linn Myat from Yamethin District Industrial Crops Development Department and a team of agriculturalists gave demonstrations on how to grow staple cotton to farmers in Pyawbwe Township in central Myanmar on Thursday. They explained the strains of the crop, growing

methods, the use of fertilizer as well as guidelines on achieving commercial scale production. A good harvest for an acre of cotton can yield over 1000 viss (1,600 kilos) bringing welcome income to local farmers, said an officer from the department. —*Min Min Htwe (Pyawbwe)*



Farmers learn cotton farming from governmental agricultural experts. PHOTO: MIN MIN HTWE (PYAWBWE)

Alms offered in Tatkon



Buddhist monks receive alms from people in Tatkon during the 16th annual alms event in Tatkon. PHOTO: TIN SOE LWIN

RESIDENTS of Tatkon in Nay Pyi Taw Council Area have completed the offering of alms to 484 local Buddhist monks who live in

the town's monasteries. This year marks the 16th annual alms event in Tatkon, with the final day being 27 October. After the offering of

the alms is completed, a sharing of good merits ceremony will be held at the town's Buddhist Missionary Hall.—*Tin Soe Lwin*

Shan State Election Security Committee meets

SECURITY measures are to be taken with the set standard in co-operation with local people, said Shan State Security and Border Affairs Minister Colonel Soe Moe Aung at the meeting of Shan State Election Security Committee on 22 October. The meeting focused on election and security measures taken in the respective townships in the state.—*Zaw Myo Naing*



Shan State authorities have taken steps to improve security for the November-8 election. PHOTO: ZAW MYO NAING

Nyaunglaybin residents hold ceremony to mark ceasefire signing

A CEREMONY was held to mark the recent signing of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement was held in Nyaunglaybin, Bago Region on Thursday. Nyaunglaybin Township is adjacent to both the Shwegyin and Kyaukkyi townships where fighting broke out. The conflict was limited mostly to Shwegyin and Kyaukkyi but

spilled over occasionally, residents said. Parliamentarian U Saw Linn Aung presided over the ceremony, urging locals to return their focus to the development of the region. As most people living in Nyaunglaybin area are Kayin ethnics, their traditional dances and songs were performed during the ceremony.—*Nay Lin*

Ngamoeyeik Bridge to be completed by March



Ngamoeyeik Bridge is being constructed near the suspension bridge which link North Okkalapa with North Dagon. PHOTO: SOWE WIN-MLA

THE Ngamoeyeik Bridge, which will link North Okkalapa with North Dagon, is now one-third completed. Work on the bridge began in mid-August and it is scheduled to be completed by March next year. The two-lane bridge is being constructed at a cost of K6 billion (US\$ 4.7 million) and can withstand a load of 75 tonnes.

“Completion of the bridge will benefit locals, especially residents of North Dagon, as it will cut down travel times to North Okkalapa,” said U Myint Zaw, the head of North Dagon Township Development Affairs Department.

More than 150 workers and 20 engineers from Thailand and Myanmar are constructing the bridge using Thai Prestress Box Cross beams. The bridge will be 11.5 metres long and will include a foot path.—*Soe Win-MLA*

China's Xi tells British PM he hopes to see a united EU

BEIJING — China hopes to see a united European Union in which Britain plays a prominent role in promoting Chinese relations with the bloc, President Xi Jinping told Britain's prime minister, making in an indirect plea for the country to remain part of the EU.

Prime Minister David Cameron is seeking to renegotiate Britain's relationship with the EU, which it joined in 1973, as the 'in' and 'out' campaigns prepare for battle in a referendum on membership which will be held before 2017.

China typically does not comment on votes in other countries, viewing it as an interference in an internal affair.

But Beijing has been worried about the implications of free trade-supporting Britain leaving the EU, and of any weakening of a grouping which it views as a vital counterbalance to the United States, diplomats say.

Meeting at the prime minister's official country residence at Chequers late Thursday, Xi told Cameron the EU is a strategic partner of China's and also its largest trading partner, China's foreign ministry said in a statement released on Friday.

"China hopes to see a prosper-



Britain's Prime Minister David Cameron walks in the gardens as he welcomes Chinese President Xi Jinping, with an interpreter (obscured), to his official residence at Chequers, England. PHOTO: REUTERS

ous Europe and a united EU, and hopes Britain, as an important member of the EU, can play an even more positive and constructive role in promoting the deepening development of China-EU ties," it paraphrased Xi as saying.

There was no direct mention

of the British vote on whether to leave the EU.

China's Foreign Ministry made similar comments before Xi left.

Xi is on his first state visit to Britain, 10 years after the last such trip by a Chinese president.

The British government has moved forcefully to strengthen financial and political ties with Beijing. Earlier this year, it broke ranks with the United States by signing up as a founding member of China's new infrastructure investment bank.—Reuters

Japan to add Boeing air tanker to ASDF fleet

TOKYO — The government said Friday it has selected Boeing Co.'s KC-46A as Japan's new aerial tanker, and plans to begin adding the aircraft to the Air Self-Defence Force fleet from around fiscal 2020.

The Defence Ministry plans to buy three air tankers under the country's medium-term defence buildup programme through fiscal 2018, which underscored the need to enhance the capability to protect remote islands.

"With more aerial tankers, our aerial defence capability will be reinforced," Defence Minister Gen Nakatani said at a news conference.

The United States proposed a sales price of about 20.8 billion yen (\$172.8 million) per tanker, according to the ministry, which will book the costs in the fiscal 2016 budget. Only the US government participated in the bidding through early September.—Kyodo News

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Indonesia prepares warships to evacuate 'haze' refugees

JAKARTA — Indonesia is preparing warships as a last resort to evacuate children and others suffering from smoke inhalation from slash-and-burn fires, a minister said on Friday, as the country struggles to contain fires expected to continue for weeks.

Southeast Asia has suffered for years from annual "haze" caused by forest and peat clearing across Indonesia, which has come under increasing political pressure to stop the problem, but so far to no avail.

Fires this year have been helped by drier weather brought by the El Nino weather phenomenon and have pushed air pollution to hazardous levels across Southeast Asia, forcing schools to close and disrupting flights.

"We are looking for a place for babies to be evacuated to if necessary," coordinating security minister Luhut Pandjaitan told reporters referring to plans to prepare six warships and two state-owned ferries.

The ships, however, will only be used as a last resort if other efforts, including moving

residents to government offices with air purifiers, prove unsuccessful, Pandjaitan said.

The former general, who has been tasked by President Joko Widodo to oversee the response to the haze, said the country was treating the issue as a national disaster but stopped short of declaring a state of national emergency.

Indonesia earlier this month asked several countries, including neighbouring Singapore and Malaysia and far-flung Russia,

for aid, equipment and personnel to help combat the fires.

Noting the success of Russia's Be200 water bomber, Pandjaitan said he had requested similar aircraft assistance from Canada, the United States and France.

The fires are spreading to new areas like Papua and are unlikely to be put out till next year, experts say.

Widodo said no new permits would be given to plantation companies to develop peatland,

and that the government would work to restore and re-irrigate drained peatland areas that are often hit by fires.

"This situation is having a major impact and has reached very unhealthy levels," he said, referring to thousands of fires in Sumatra and Kalimantan.

Garuda said the haze had cost the state airline about \$8 million in lost sales and other expenses, with 120,000 passengers cancelling flights last month alone.—Reuters



Thick smoke rises as a fire burns in a forest at Ogan Komering Ilir Regency, Indonesia's South Sumatra Province on 20 October 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

"We are looking for a place for babies to be evacuated to if necessary."

Luhut Pandjaitan
Coordinating security minister

PICTURE OF THE DAY



A volunteer wipes sea spray off the painted bronze sculpture entitled 'Harbour' by Chinese artist Chen Wenling during the 19th annual Sculptures by the Sea exhibition in Sydney, on 23 October 2015. Sydney's coastal walk between Bondi and Tamarama has been transformed into a temporary sculpture park featuring over 100 sculptures from Australian and international artists, billed as the largest free sculpture exhibition in the world.— PHOTO: REUTERS

Sri Lankan PM intervenes to allow former minister to travel overseas

COLOMBO — Sri Lankan Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe on Friday issued instructions to allow former minister and nationalist legislator, Wimal Weerawansa from leaving the country after he was barred by the Criminal Investigations Department.

Weerawansa was stopped at the country's international airport in the early hours of Friday and questioned by several CID officers over holding an invalid passport.

He was refrained from board-

ing a flight to Rome, where he was to attend a series of lectures.

Local media reports said that parliament which had convened on Friday had been informed of the incident by opposition parliamentarian Dinesh Gunewardena who also questioned the government as to why Weerawansa had been blocked at the airport. Reacting to the query, Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe promised to urgently look into the matter but said that if there was a court or-

der against Weerawansa, then he would not be able to do anything.

However moments later, Leader of the House Lakshman Kiriella informed parliament that legal clearance was facilitated to Weerawansa to allow him to travel overseas by the Prime Minister's intervention. Weerawansa was the Housing Minister in the previous Mahinda Rajapakse government and is currently under a corruption probe in the island nation.—Xinhua

Indian gov't warns ministers to be careful about misinterpretation

NEW DELHI — The Indian government Friday cautioned all its ministers to be very careful while making public statements.

"Ministers must be careful while making statements. We can't get away by saying the statement was misinterpreted," Indian Home Minister Rajnath Singh said in the national capital. The Home Minister's statement came in the wake of public anger over junior Foreign Minister V.K.

Singh's drawing a controversial analogy on the killing of two kids from an underprivileged family.

"If someone throws stones at a dog, the government is not responsible," the Minister of State for External Affairs, also a former Indian Army chief, said Thursday.

He was responding to questions on the killing of a two-year-old boy and his 11-month-old sister on Monday, allegedly by upper caste men, in the northern state of

Haryana near the national capital. The Minister had clarified his remarks, saying, "My statement wasn't intended to draw an analogy. My men & I put our lives on the line for the nation irrespective of caste, creed and religion."

Delhi's ruling anti-graft Aam Aadmi Party has filed a police complaint against the minister, while opposition parties, including the Congress, have demanded his resignation.—Xinhua

Greece sets red line over mortgage talks with lenders

ATHENS — Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras on Friday said his country would fully meet its obligations under a multi-billion euro bailout, but would not tolerate mass foreclosures on mortgages for thousands of indebted people.

Setting a red line in talks with the country's lenders, who are now in Athens for consultations, Tsipras said turning the country into an "arena of confis-

cations" of homes was out of the question.

Although he did not say it directly, he was implicitly referring to talks with creditors, which have hit a snag over protection of primary residences of homeowners who cannot afford to pay their mortgages.

"Some may be attempting to revive a debate (on Greece exiting the euro) through the back door, by delaying the im-

plementation of reviews and delaying the recapitalisation of banks," Tsipras told journalists after talks with French President Francois Hollande.

Mission chiefs of Greece's lenders are in Athens assessing compliance with reforms required under the 86 billion euro bailout. Athens wants the review concluded soon so it can proceed with debt relief talks.—Reuters

UNSG's Message for United Nations Day

24 October 2015

National flags are a mark of pride and patriotism in every country around the world. But there is only one flag that belongs to all of us.

That blue flag of the United Nations was a banner of hope for me growing up in wartime Korea.

Seven decades after its founding, the United Nations remains a beacon for all humanity.

Every day, the United Nations feeds the hungry and shelters those driven from their homes.

The United Nations vaccinates children who would otherwise die from preventable diseases.

The United Nations defends human rights for all, regardless of race, religion, nationality, gender or sexual orientation.

Our peacekeepers are on the frontlines of conflict; our mediators bring warriors to the peace table; our relief workers brave treacherous environments to deliver life-saving assistance.

The United Nations works for the entire human family of seven billion people, and cares for the earth, our one and only home.

And it is the diverse and talented staff of the United Nations who help bring the Charter to life.

The 70th anniversary is a moment to recognize their dedication — and to honour the many who made the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty.

The world faces many crises, and the limits of collective international action are painfully clear. Yet no single country or organization can address today's challenges alone.

The timeless values of the UN Charter must remain our guide. Our shared duty is to "unite our strength" to serve "we the peoples".

To mark this anniversary, monuments and buildings across the world are being illuminated in UN blue. As we shine a light on this milestone anniversary, let us reaffirm our commitment to a better and brighter future for all.—UNIC/Yangon

42 people die in collision in southern France

BORDEAUX — Forty-two people have died after a bus and a truck collided near Bordeaux in southern France, an official from the local prefect's office said on Friday.

Another 5 people were lightly injured, the official said, after the two vehicles crashed and caught fire on a country road. The accident took place in Puisseguin, near Libourne in the Gironde region about 57 kilometres east of Bordeaux.

The bus was carrying about 50 passengers and was heading

south for the Landes region. Local media reports said the passengers were mostly elderly.

Speaking from Athens where he is on a visit, President Francois Hollande said emergency services were mobilising and that he had been "plunged into sadness by the tragedy."

The 42 victims were members of elderly people's club, all apparently from the region, who were on a day trip, Interior Ministry spokesman Pierre-Henry Brandet said on BFM TV.—Reuters



Rescue workers carry an injured person on a stretcher during rescue operations near the site where a coach carrying members of an elderly people's club collided with a truck outside Puisseguin near Bordeaux, western France, on 23 October 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

Portugal Socialists vow to topple government

LISBON — Portugal's opposition Socialists pledged on Friday to topple the centre-right minority government with a no confidence motion, saying the president had created "an unnecessary political crisis" by naming Pedro Passos Coelho as premier.

The move could wreck Passos Coelho's efforts to get his centre-right government programme passed in parliament in 10 days time, extending the political uncertainty hanging over the country since an inconclusive 4 October election.

Coelho was named prime minister on Thursday after his coalition won the most votes in the national election.

The nomination set up a confrontation with the main opposition Socialists, who have been trying to form their own coalition government with two leftist parties who also want an end to years of austerity policies under the centre-right.

The Socialists and those parties, boosted by a swing to the left in the national election, would control most votes in parliament if they united.

In the early hours of Friday, the Socialist Party's national commission approved a motion for its lawmakers to "present a motion rejecting any government programme," that includes similar policies to the last government.

"The president has created an unnecessary political crisis," by naming Passos Coelho as prime minister, Socialist leader Antonio Costa said. After the national election, Passos Coelho tried to gain support from the Socialists for his government, which instead started negotiating with the smaller far left Communist and Left Bloc parties to form a leftist administration.

"We'll see what happens in parliament, if lawmakers reject the government programme it will prolong uncertainty, but if it is approved it will stabilise the situation," said Albino Oliveira, an analyst at brokerage Fincor.

The political stand-off has prompted concerns that the country's economic recovery after a bailout could stumble.

But, so far, bond market investors have been calm, preferring to focus on the likelihood of more quantitative easing by the European Central Bank. Benchmark 10-year bond yields were unchanged at 2.36 percent on Friday.

The country's PSI20 stock index was up 1 percent. Passos Coelho's government launched austerity measures and tax hikes during the past four years under a bailout, which plunged Portugal into a three-year recession. The country returned to growth last year, which has accelerated this year.—Reuters

Germany speeds up new measures to deal with refugee influx

BERLIN — Germany is introducing measures to tackle its refugee crisis earlier than previously expected, a top government official said on Friday, allowing accelerated deportation procedures to begin as early as next week.

Germany expects a record influx of more than 800,000 migrants this year, by far the most in the European Union. With the new measures, Berlin is aiming to cope better with the unprecedented number of arrivals and to stem the influx. The tighter rules aim to speed up asylum and extradition procedures for migrants from southeastern Europe, in order to focus on refugees from war-torn countries such as Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan. Peter Altmaier, Chancellor Angela Merkel's chief of staff, said the new measures could now be expected to come into effect before a previously foreseen start date of 1 November.

"That would be a good signal," he told ARD television.

"We want to get better and faster this year at the deportation of rejected applicants who have no claim to remain here," added Altmaier, who Merkel appointed earlier this month to oversee her government's handling of the refugee crisis. Support for Merkel's conservatives has fallen due to concern over the refugee crisis. Many Germans feel the country cannot cope with the record influx. A poll



Migrants sit around a bonfire as they wait to cross the border with Croatia near the village of Berkasovo, Serbia on 23 October, 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

for ARD showed three-quarters of Germans expect the influx of refugees to change German society.

Several European leaders are due to meet on Sunday to tackle the migrant crisis in the western Balkans as thousands trying to reach Germany are trapped in deteriorating conditions. Hungary has responded to the largest migration wave Europe has seen since World War Two by building a steel fence along its borders with

Serbia and Croatia, a step both welcomed and criticised by various leaders around Europe.

"The more fences are erected the greater the misery," Altmaier said. "Europe must see to it that this movement and this influx is orderly and structured."

The head of Germany's police trade union, Rainer Wendt, said the crisis was stretching police resources thin. "I have personally told the chancellor: we

can't be in two places at once," Wendt told newspaper *Die Welt*.—Reuters

"The more fences are erected the greater the misery."

Peter Altmaier
Chancellor Angela Merkel's
chief of staff

French far-right Le Pen family set for regional power wins

PARIS — Far-right leader Marine Le Pen is set to win control of France's northernmost area in regional elections in December, an opinion poll showed on Friday, with her niece possibly coming first too in the southeastern Provence-Alpes-Cote d'Azur region.

The centre-right Les Republicains party led by former president Nicolas Sarkozy is expected to win a majority of regions, according to the survey by the BVA polling institute, the first to measure voting intentions across mainland France ahead of elections set for 6-13 December.

The poll showed the ruling Socialists who currently dominate the regional assemblies winning just three regions.

Le Pen, who is also preparing to run as the anti-immigrant, anti-euro National Front party's candidate in 2017 presidential elections, would take 46 percent of the 13 December runoff vote in the Nord-Pas-de-Calais-Picardie region, far ahead of a projected 29 percent for the centre-right's candidate and 25 percent for the left-wing contender, the poll said.

Marion Marechal-Le Pen, Marine's niece and grand-daughter of National Front founder Jean-Marie Le Pen, could win in a far closer contest in the southeastern Provence-Alpes-Cote d'Azur region, according to the poll, which saw her taking 37 percent of votes, a fraction ahead of 36 percent for the centre-right.

Marine Le Pen succeeded her father as National Front leader in 2011, but fell out with him earlier this year over comments he made dismissing the gas chambers of World War Two as a "detail" of history.

The elder Le Pen was excluded from the party in August, in a move many saw as an attempt by Marine Le Pen to consolidate her leadership ahead of the 2017 presidential election, but which was opposed by Marechal-Le Pen.

The election being held in two rounds on 6 December and 13 will be the last before the presidential election in 2017 and it is the first contest for power at regional level since a redrawing of the electoral map last year.

Regional councillors' princi-



Far-right leader Marine Le Pen. PHOTO: REUTERS

pal powers are in the domain of local planning, transport and upper-secondary schooling.

Marine Le Pen, who has sought to rid the National Front of its anti-Semitic reputation since she succeeded her father as party leader, has enjoyed intensifying media attention as her own poll ratings have improved and in the wake of 2014 European Parliament elections where her party came first.

As tensions rise ahead of the

December ballot, she set of a fresh controversy this week by pulling out of a televised debate where she was due to face rivals from the mainstream left and right.

She accused the France 2 public television station of making last-minute changes to the organisation of the debate, prompting a withdrawal that forced France 2 to cancel the three-hour programme minutes before it was due to go on air.—Reuters

OPINION

Accountability remains at the forefront of change

Kyaw Thura

IT is only natural that people do not hesitate to replace what does not work properly with what does. The same thing can be said of politics. People will demand that change be made to a political system as soon as they are convinced it is unhelpful.

We in Myanmar, however, have a different story to tell. It is no exaggeration to say that a

long familiarity with authoritarian rule has placed us in a heavy silence. As is known to all, our country began a peaceful transition to democracy in 2010. And the changes that have occurred have earned praise from the international community. However despite sweeping political reforms, Myanmar is still in its infancy when it comes to enabling the people to realise their full potential and to follow their dreams.

It is necessary for the government to renew its commitment to a future of equality and prosperity for all national brethren. The bottom line is that the government has a moral obligation to turn the country into a better, safer place. In this respect, the government is required to recognise the productive forces of the people and to help them remain vibrant. This is vital for our national prosperity.

The time is ripe enough to chart a course that will guarantee sustainable development, forge a culture of closer cooperation, and ensure human rights and dignity. The level of responsibility, accountability and capability the government takes on will remain at the forefront of change.

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Lookout! A Small Car is Overtaking

Khin Maung Myint
(MPT Retired)

THOSE who doesn't own a private car and had to commute with the public motor bus transports would be familiar with the above warning. Whenever a car from behind was about to overtake, the bus conductor or the spare, as most of us knew, would let the bus driver know by shouting the above warning. If the readers, judging by the title of this article, think I am going to write about the unruly, undisciplined and inconsiderate motor bus drivers and conductors, they would be way off the mark. I had chosen this title just as a metaphor. If you would patiently bear with me and kindly read on, you would realize my intentions.

In March 1988, I had a chance to attend a telecommunication seminar in Bangkok. The seminar was co-sponsored by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia Pacific (ESCAP) based in Thailand and the German Development Bank. The objective of the seminar was to provide loans, aids or grants by the German Development Bank to develop the rural telecommunication sectors in the participating countries. There were ten participants including me. Before leaving for Bangkok, I had to prepare a country paper, based on set questionnaires. The main informations they want from us were the present situations of the rural telecommunications and the future plans for projects, if any, and the constraints and requirements for the implementations of such projects. Though I am not an engineer, but an administrator, I did my home work meticulously and prepared a comprehensive country paper. However, my paper was censored by my superior officer, just leaving the data concerning the number of telephone exchanges, the microwave stations and channels available, the carrier networks

and the telephone density. The constraints and requirements, which I had painstakingly written after consulting with the engineers concerned were left out.

At the seminar, the Bangladesh participant read his paper first. He mentioned their constraints and requirements in detail. After his presentations, there were some queries from the staffs of the bank. Bhutan was next and he also mentioned their constraints and requirements. Then came my turn, because in those days we were Burma, so I was sitting next to the Bhutanese, as the seating plan was in the alphabetical order. As my paper was confined only to the data, there was no query. By then I was feeling uneasy. When the Chinese and the Indian delegates did not mention their constraints or requirements, I was greatly relieved, knowing that I had company. However, what the Indian said was they were self-sufficient and do not need help from anywhere. As for the Chinese, he said they have a national project already planned to install telephone exchanges in every village, which will be completed by the year 2000 and they don't need any help.

I will skip the other countries and mention about Vietnam. Our seminar was held for three days. For the first two days the Vietnamese participant was absent. He showed up only on the last day. He apologized for his late arrival, saying that as there was only two flights a week between Hanoi and Bangkok, he was unable to come in time. (In those days we had four flights daily to Bangkok.) The presiding chairman of the seminar told him that the country paper reading session was over and had already started to wind up the discussions, but they would oblige and let him present his paper. The reply was, he didn't have a country paper, but asked permission to speak for five minutes.

I remembered, vividly, what he said that day. As their country had been fighting a civil war

for over twenty five years, their country was at least twenty five to fifty years behind all the countries present at the seminar. They want to close that gap as much as possible, so they are ready to accept any aid from any country, as long as there were no strings attached. He said they also want to attend all international seminars and also requested the other countries attending there, to invite them to the national seminars, workshops or training sessions, all expenses paid by the hosts. I noticed that he didn't mention a word about fighting the French colonialists or the American aggressors, instead he used the phrase "We were fighting a civil war".

During the coffee break, the German manufacturers who were among the observers, approached the participants who mentioned their constraints and requirements, except the three of us — the Chinese, the Indian and myself. As the three of us were sipping coffee, quietly in a corner, a German bank official approached us and pointed out that the manufacturers were crowding around those who were potential customers, especially the Vietnamese, as they had requested for help and were bound to receive them. Then he told me that he had been to our country, many times, while the sheet glass factory at Pathein was under construction with their Bank's assistance. He went on and said, he had noticed during his frequent visits that our country lacked efficient telephone services even in the towns apart from Yangon. He asked me why I didn't raise that issue and suggested I should have done, because they were there to help us. I didn't know how to answer his question, so I just laughed and shrugged my shoulders. He smiled and said he understood me.

On my return, as I had to submit a report, I mentioned about Vietnam in detail and predicted that Vietnam would soon surpass us. Since then I took interest in

Vietnam and started to follow the news about that country as much as I could. I learned how France proposed at a World Bank meeting to grant loans to Vietnam, which the United States seconded. Then there was news about the Honda Company of Japan establishing a motor cycle factory in Vietnam. Many foreign investors followed suit. A few years back when there was a big flood in Thailand, some Japanese motor car factories were inundated. A few shifted their factories to Vietnam.

During the past two decades, I had noticed the rapid progress of Vietnam in almost all sectors. They had made headways into the regional markets, exporting everything from food stuffs, clothings, footwear, machineries, electrical and electronic equipments, construction materials, and agricultural products. Vietnam has become the second largest exporter of rice in Asia, next to Thailand. They are competing with countries like Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand in the construction business. Their businesses have found their ways to our country too and are flourishing. The Vietnamese presence in our

country is quite visible in Yangon today. Not very long ago, I heard in the news that we are lagging behind, even countries like Cambodia and Laos and that it would be some years before we could catch up with them. If so, I think the title I had chosen wouldn't be appropriate. It should be "Cars From Behind Had Overtaken!" However, I will just leave it as it is, because it would attract more attention.

I don't know how Cambodia and Laos had done that, but I am a bit familiar with the Vietnam's case. They do not dwell in the past blaming the French, the Americans or the South Vietnamese. They may not have forgotten but they had forgiven and moved on. Let us follow the example of Vietnam and leave what had passed, in the past and move on to build a bright future for our new generations. A nation could prosper only when there is peace and unity. All parties should unite and work towards a common goal. Here, the term "parties" does not mean only the political parties. Those armed groups that have not yet signed the National Ceasefire Accord, too, should join hands with other national brethren to move our Union forward and regain our old glories and prestige that we once enjoyed.

*Aba, what should we -
of the younger generation -
do to modernise our
country? / Ignite your minds,
boy!*



TIN AUNG

European dilemma, Arab spring and lessons for Myanmar

(Opinions expressed here are those of the author.)

Thiha Zaw
(Nay Pyi Taw)

EUROPE is the cradle of democracy, the center of western civilization and the origin of many scientific innovations. Being a European has every reason to be proud of. On the other hand it was also a flash point for many armed conflicts like Napoleonic wars, thirty-year war, Crimean war and most infamous two world wars. Therefore in the 1950s post-war period, all the European leaders gathered and promoted the concept of collective security and European integration. As a result European Union, European parliament, European council, single monetary system of Euro and single European community without border check points and passport control were set up successfully. Greece financial crisis was solved and Crimean crisis was contained with true European spirit. All other regional organizations like ASEAN have to look up to European Union with a lot of admiration.

But the new and unprecedented challenges of the 21st century like the threat of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) has eroded the essence of European spirit. Europe is also the pioneer of human rights and it always upholds the principle and spirit of Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR 1948). But the recent events showed that some European countries are trying to walk away from that path of democracy, human rights and single European community in favor of their own national interest. In fact for the first time since the fall of Berlin wall, Europe is in dilemma between liberalism and realism.

Myanmar is a country on the turbulent path to democratic transition. We need to learn a lot about the origin, current situations and future direction of European migrant crisis so that we can draw valuable lessons for our nation building works and democratization process. We need to balance between liberalism and realism as well as be able to adjust between democratization and stability of state.

The root of European migrant crisis stemmed from grand strategic plan of successive United States governments. They want to play a game between the middle powers of Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region so that they can sit on the world's richest oil and gas reserve perpetually to secure energy supply for their economies and those of their allies. In MENA region, there are only Egypt, Iran, Iraq

and Turkey that stand as the united and sovereign states since the era before the Christ. In other parts of the region, nomadic Bedouin tribes went around in the desert without forming any coherent societies or institutions. British made the arbitrary demarcation and divided that region as several independent states after decolonization. But most of them cannot form strong political institutions and ruled as a Sultanate. According to the theories of political science, these Sultanistic regimes are most unfavourable candidates for democratic transition. The tension between Sunni and Shiite groups dated back since the time of Prophet Mohammed and is another insurmountable obstacle for peaceful democratic principle of unity among diversity.

Since the discovery of the large oil and gas reserve under their desert, this region became the unlucky geostrategic pivot of successive United States governments who care more about their profit and care little about the ethnic and religious fault lines of the region. When they tired of power game after the fall of Communism, the United States governments change the tactics to the method of regimen change under cover of democracy and human rights. The chosen targets were Myanmar, North Korea, Iran, Iraq and Cuba. The unlucky Iraq was conquered within three weeks in 2003 war but the plan for creation of stable and democratic Iraq was a total disaster for successive the United States government until the present President Obama administration. Postwar Iraq was ripe in every aspect for all forms of armed conflicts from suicide bombing to guerilla warfare. Hundreds of thousands of innocent Iraqi people were killed and millions more were made homeless since George W. Bush declared that major combat operations are over in Iraq in 2003. As we have seen now, Iraq becomes the perfect fertile training ground for the notorious Islamic State of Iraq & Syria (ISIS) terrorist group.

Since nobody is willing to learn from the mistakes made in Iraq by United States government under George W. Bush administration, Syria, Libya and Yemen successively became victims of combined assault of forceful western style democratization and regimen change policy covertly named as infamous Arab Spring movement. Egypt narrowly escaped from that disaster under the stewardship of their courageous and vigilant leaders. The human security situation of Iraq, Syria, Libya and Yemen are now appalling. Christian minorities are displaced and beheaded. Women are raped

and sold as slaves. Children are used as suicide bombers. Christian churches and Shiite Mosque are bombed to the rubbles. Invaluable cultural monuments which are the milestones of history of mankind were destroyed. All the atrocities committed by ISIS group fulfill the United Nations definition of ethnic cleansing, genocide, war crime and crime against humanities. What is more appalling is that the reaction of the United Nations to these atrocities is almost unheard of. Where is the principle and practice of Right to Protection (R2P) and timely intervention? Nobody knows what went wrong with the world's prestigious and most reliable international body responsible for peace and prosperity worldwide. Why is the United States government dragging its feet to wipe out ISIS in spite of

The crisis of boat people is not new for Myanmar. Only a few months ago, the United Nations, Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), United States government and some of their allies conveniently put the blame on Myanmar government for the boat people crisis in the Bay of Bengal and Andaman Sea. In fact those people are not from Myanmar but the victims of human trafficking network in the region spreading from Dhaka and Chittagong to Penang and Kuala Lumpur. The voice became silence only after showing concrete evidence that they are just Bangladeshi citizen fallen as the victims of human trafficking. This is the warning call and just the beginning of coming disasters which Myanmar has to solve in near future. Disaster must be anticipated and plan must be drawn. Prepara-

enough. Therefore the dilemma is whether to extract the natural resources to get enough capital for our economy or reserve these resources for the future and used as an instrument of power game. It is a very difficult and million dollar question.

Since even the more prosperous European countries are now trying to walk away from the spirit of single European community by erecting border fencing, setting up passport control and border blockade, we need to learn that realism and the national interest is the ultimate winner at the end of the day. Not every government can afford to risk the responsibility of safeguarding the wellbeing of the citizen, maintaining social harmony in the country and protecting its future generation by accepting the immigrants. That is the bloody truth of realism theory.

The world has seen the historical process of industrial revolution, creation of bourgeois class, the rise of communism in the hope of terminating the exploitation of labour by capitalist class. Finally democratic society is the dream of every people in the world of 21st century. But the path to that destiny is not always the same for every country. The national character of the recipient people must be taken into the account. In the MENA region there is irreconcilable divide between Sunni and Shiite sect of Islam. The religious and ethnic fault lines among the Arab society are so huge that democracy cannot bridge these divides. In fact the hasty democratization upset the fine balance between two religious groups creating the power vacuum which eventually was filled by terrorist networks. As we have learnt the lessons from Arab spring, western democracy is not a panacea for every country. Democratization of Iraq by regimen change tactics is now in 12th year and Arab spring is in 5th year. Everybody knows for sure that which direction these countries are heading. It is obvious that democratic transition of Myanmar is not a copycat movement. It is homegrown formula after taking into account of so many internal and external factors like historical development of our country including the battle for the independence, national character of Myanmar people, geopolitical importance of the country in the region, numerous ethnic diversity of our people and the world's longest running civil involving many armed ethnic groups. After all it is designed to strike a truly practical balance between democratic principle and political stability of the state. That is why nobody can deny that democratic transition of Myanmar is definitely way ahead of Arab spring.

“Democratic transition of Myanmar is not a copycat movement. It is homegrown formula after taking into account of so many internal and external factors like historical development of our country including the battle for the independence, national character of Myanmar people, geopolitical importance of the country in the region, numerous ethnic diversity of our people and the world's longest running civil involving many armed ethnic groups.”

so many tragedies costing a lot of innocent lives?

The final outcome of these tragedies is the innocent people from the MENA region including the women and children have no choice but to cross the turbulent Mediterranean Sea to reach the safe European shore. The sorrowful images of the bodies of children are captured and frantically spread by the media causing a lot of headache for European leaders. ISIS is achieving enormous strategic gain from the European migrant crisis in every moment. Undoubtedly there will be a lot of ISIS cadre among the immigrants paving way for their grand strategic aim of European conquest in near future. The more unstable become the MENA region, the wider their sphere of influence and the more recruits were available for them. Days after days, ISIS become the icon for those youths worldwide both men and women who want to seek adventure and risk their lives for religious cause. Many youths in Europe, Asia and America are boarding the plane in order to join ISIS camps in Syria.

tion must be made and crisis must be contained immediately before the massive media onslaught.

Geostrategic position of a country and its natural resources are like double-edged swords. If properly utilized, these things can bring out the sustainable development of the country. Otherwise they are like magnets for the imperialist or colonialist whose eyes greedily set on those resources. If they don't have the oil and gas reserve under their desert, the people in MENA region may not be rich but their lives would be more peaceful than now. If the Kaddafi signed his oil and gas contract with American and European companies, he would be a loyal ally of western powers and can sit on the throne like Saudi sultans forever. If the Syria does not possess Mediterranean port of Tartus for Russian navy, it will not be a target of regimen change policy of western powers. So for Myanmar which occupies the important geostrategic position of Asia in 21st century and has abundant natural resources, these advantages can bring in bad omen unfortunately if we are not clever

South African students march in capital ahead of Zuma meeting



Students sit in protest during a mass demonstration on the steps of Jameson Hall at the University of Cape Town, on 22 October 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

PRETORIA — Thousands of South African students demanding lower university fees gathered on Friday for a march on the historic seat of government in Pretoria, a sign of the post-apartheid 'Born

Free' generation flexing its political muscles.

Student leaders are due to meet President Jacob Zuma and university professors at the Union Buildings to press their case, argu-

ing that the costs of tuition are too high for many blacks, perpetuating South Africa's racial inequalities.

Tuition fees vary across different universities, but can run as high as 60,000 rand (\$4,500)

for medical students in a country where white households earn six times more than black households, according to official figures.

Protests — some of them violent — have broken out at univer-

sities across the country this week, taking the ruling African National Congress (ANC) by surprise.

On Wednesday, riot police threw stun grenades at students who stormed the parliament precinct in Cape Town as Finance Minister Nhlanelhla Nene delivered his interim budget in which he painted a gloomy outlook for Africa's most advanced economy.

Thousands of students from Wits and the University of Johannesburg marched through South Africa's commercial capital on Thursday and gathered outside Luthuli House, the headquarters of the ANC where they handed a list of demands to the ruling party's Secretary General Gwede Mantsho.

In Cape Town, students marched in the city on Thursday and engaged police in skirmishes as officers fired stun grenades.

Low growth since a 2009 recession has forced the government to keep a lid on spending, meaning that it has little spare cash to offer students in the form of enhanced subsidies.

Analysts say loosening the purse strings could also encourage other sectors of society to push for greater government assistance.

South Africa has a million students in further education, a figure that the ANC wants to increase to 1.5 million by 2030.—Reuters

Baghdad not informed of US special forces raid : Ministry

BAGHDAD — Iraq's Defence Ministry was not informed about a joint US and Kurdish military operation that rescued 69 prisoners held by Islamic State, a ministry spokesman said on Friday.

"We just heard this from the media, we didn't know about it," General Tahsin Ibrahim Sadiq told Reuters.

"It was just the peshmerga (Kurdish forces) and the Americans, and the Ministry of Defence didn't have any idea about that."

Sadiq said ministry officials were meeting representatives of the US-led coalition in Baghdad on Friday to learn more about the operation, the most significant raid against Islamic State in months.

Initial reports said Thursday's operation near the northern town of Hawija had freed Kurdish hostages, but officials later confirmed the detainees were Arabs, including around 20 members of the Iraqi security forces. The others were local residents and Islamic State fighters that the group had accused of spying, said a US official.

The prisoners were about to be executed and dumped in four mass graves, the official said.

Islamic State holds hostages in similar detention cen-

tres across the sprawling lands it controls in northern Iraq and neighbouring Syria. The jihadist group also regularly executes people it accuses of various crimes including spying for the Iraqis or foreign powers.

It was not immediately clear why these particular hostages triggered a potentially risky rescue mission.

Long-standing enmity between Arabs and Kurds, who aspire for greater autonomy in their northern region, have complicated efforts to unify the battle against Islamic State militants.

During a recent visit to Iraq, US Marine General Joseph Dunford, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, called for changes to Iraq's fragmented security structure. The security forces are now divided, with different commanders speaking to the United States on behalf of Iraq's army, its militias, police and Kurdish peshmerga.

A CIA spokesman declined to comment on the suggestion that the rescued hostages had connections to the US government.

The Pentagon's press secretary said the operation did not mark a change in US tactics in the war on Islamic State militants.—Reuters

Palestinian factions call for 'day of rage'

JERUSALEM — Palestinian factions called for mass rallies against Israel in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem in a "day of rage" on Friday, as world and regional powers pressed on with talks to try to end more than three weeks of bloodshed.

Hours after the announcements, a Palestinian stabbed and wounded an Israeli soldier in the West Bank, before being shot and wounded by other troops, the Israeli military said, part of a wave of violence that has killed around 60 people. US Secretary of State John Kerry said he was cautiously optimistic there was a way of defusing the tensions after holding four hours of talks with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Berlin on Thursday.

Israeli authorities also lifted restrictions on Friday that had banned men aged under 40 from using the flashpoint al-Aqsa mosque compound in Jerusalem's Old City — a move seen as a bid to ease Muslim anger.

One of the worst waves of street violence in years was triggered in part by Palestinian anger over what they see as Jewish encroachment on the compound, Islam's third holiest site, which is also revered by Jews as the location of two ancient temples.

The calls for mass protests were backed by both Palestin-

ian militant group Hamas and the Fatah movement of Western-backed President Mahmoud Abbas, as well as other factions.

Hamas, the Islamist movement which controls the Gaza Strip, issued a statement calling on "angry Palestinians to take part in the mass rallies at the Friday of rage and new confrontation against occupation (Israeli) soldiers."

The Palestinians seek a state in East Jerusalem, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, territories Israel captured in the 1967 Middle East war.

While the political factions have been active in calling for protests, the stabbings and shootings mostly have been carried out by "lone wolf" attackers, some inspired by social media postings.

Fifty Palestinians, half of them assailants, have been shot dead at the scene of attacks or during demonstrations in the West Bank and Gaza since 1 October. Nine Israelis have been stabbed or shot dead over the same period.

One Israeli was killed by soldiers who mistook him for an attacker, and an Eritrean migrant was beaten and shot dead by a crowd of Israelis who thought he had taken part in a shooting.

Kerry was expected to hold meetings on Saturday with Am-

man Abbas and Jordan's King Abdullah, who has a role as a custodian of the Muslim holy sites in Jerusalem. One of Kerry's goals is to reinforce the status quo at Al Aqsa, which has long banned non-Muslim prayer at the site. Netanyahu says Israel has not changed the status quo and has no intention of doing so.

On Thursday Israeli police said an Israeli who went on a stabbing rampage two weeks ago, wounding four Arabs in the southern town of Dimona, would be charged with aggravated assault rather than terrorism-related charges. At the time, Israeli politicians described the Israeli's actions as "terrorism" and said he should be treated like any other attacker. The lesser charges are likely to fuel the sense among Palestinians that Israel applies double standards.

Palestinians are also angry at what they see as excessive use of force by Israeli police and soldiers, with many attackers shot dead at the scene when they might have been detained.

The European Union's senior diplomat Federica Mogherini said the "Quartet" of Middle East peace mediators would meet in Vienna on Friday to urge Israeli and Palestinian leaders to tone down their rhetoric and calm down the situation on the ground.—Reuters

Lack of sleep linked to risk factors for diabetes and heart disease



A businessman takes a mid-day nap in the lobby of a midtown hotel in the Manhattan borough of New York. PHOTO: REUTERS

NEW YORK — People who get less than six hours of sleep a night may be more likely to have risk factors that increase their odds of diabetes, heart disease and strokes, a Korean study suggests.

This combination of risk factors — including high blood sugar, high cholesterol, extra fat around the midsection, high blood pressure and excess amounts of fats in the blood — is known as metabolic syndrome.

“The ‘short’ sleepers should be aware of the risks of developing metabolic syndrome, which could lead them to suffer from life threatening and chronic diseases,” lead author Dr. Jang Young Kim of Yonsei University in South Korea said by email.

Kim’s team followed about 2,600 adults for more than two years and found that participants who didn’t get at least six hours of sleep a night were 41 percent more likely to develop metabolic syndrome than individuals who got six to eight hours of shuteye.

The findings are drawn from

two lifestyle surveys that included questions about sleep habits. The surveys were administered once between 2005 and 2008 and again sometime between 2008 and 2011. Study participants also underwent medical exams and shared their medical history.

After an average follow-up of 2.6 years, about 560 people in the study, or 22 percent of participants, developed metabolic syndrome, according to the results in the journal *Sleep*.

Short sleep duration was linked to about 30 percent increased risk of high blood sugar and excess belly fat, as well as 56 percent higher odds of hypertension, compared to those who slept longer.

One shortcoming of the study is its reliance on partici-

pants to accurately recall and report on their sleep habits, medical conditions and lifestyle behaviors, the authors acknowledge. It also lacked data on the quality of sleep.

Still, the findings are consistent with other studies that have found an association between sleep duration, cardiovascular disease and metabolic syndrome, said Kristen Knutson, a sleep researcher at the University of Chicago who wasn’t involved in the study.

“The strength of this study is that it is a prospective study, which means short sleep was associated with the development of metabolic syndrome,” Knutson said by email. “This is important because the sleep duration was measured before the people had the disease.”

To avoid the ill effects of insufficient sleep, patients should take a close look at their daily routines and make sure they allow enough time in their schedule for rest, Knutson said.

Some things like time for work, school or childcare may not be optional, but other things like time for television or movies might be replaced with more rest.

“We don’t know yet if it is possible to reverse the effects” of too little sleep, Knutson added. “Still, adopting a healthy lifestyle which includes appropriate sleep, a healthy diet and sufficient exercise will be beneficial to your health.”—*Reuters*

“We don’t know yet if it is possible to reverse the effects of too little sleep.”

Kristen Knutson

A sleep researcher at the University of Chicago

Chemical in bananas may help fight many deadly viruses: study

WASHINGTON — A banana a day may not keep the doctor away, but a substance originally found in bananas and carefully edited by scientists could someday fight off a wide range of viruses, including those that cause AIDS, hepatitis C, and even flu, an international team of researchers said Thursday.

The new research, published in the US journal *Cell*, focused on a protein called banana lectin, or BanLec, that “reads” the sugars on the outside of both viruses and cells.

Five years ago, scientists showed the protein can inhibit HIV infection by binding to sugars on the surface of the AIDS virus, and blocking its entry to the body, but it also caused side effects that limited its potential use.

Now, researchers from Germany, Ireland, Canada, Belgium and the United States reported how they created a new form of BanLec that still fights viruses in mice, but doesn’t have a property that causes irritation and unwanted inflammation.

They succeeded in peeling apart these two functions by carefully studying the molecule in many ways, and pinpointing the tiny part that triggered side effects.

Then, the team engineered a new version of BanLec, called H84T, by slightly changing the gene that acts as the instruction manual for building it.

The result is a form of BanLec that worked against the viruses that cause AIDS, hepatitis C and influenza in tests in tissue and

blood samples, without causing inflammation.

The researchers also showed that H84T BanLec protected mice from getting infected by flu virus.

“What we’ve done is exciting because there is potential for BanLec to develop into a broad spectrum antiviral agent, something that is not clinically available to physicians and patients right now,” David Markovitz, co-senior author of the new paper, said in a statement.

“But it’s also exciting to have created it by engineering a lectin molecule for the first time, by understanding and then targeting the structure,” said Markovitz, a professor of internal medicine at the University of Michigan Medical School.—*Xinhua*

‘Black Death’ germ has afflicted humankind longer than suspected

WASHINGTON — The plague germ that caused the “Black Death” in the 14th century and other ferocious pandemics has stalked humankind far longer than previously known.

A study unveiled on Thursday of DNA from Bronze Age people in Europe and Asia showed the bacterium, *Yersinia pestis*, afflicted humans as long ago as about 2800 BC, more than 3,000 years earlier than the oldest previous evidence of plague.

The plague has killed untold millions of people over the centuries in pandemic flares that reshaped human society.

“It seems to have started impacting human populations over large geographical scales way earlier than we thought,” said evolutionary geneticist Eske Willerslev of the University of Copenhagen and University of Cambridge.

They studied DNA from the teeth of 101 people from six sites: three in Russia, one in Poland, one in Estonia and one in Armenia. Seven had evidence of *Yersinia pestis* infection.

The researchers also tracked the timing of a pivotal event in plague evolution, a mutation that made the germ capable of being transmitted by fleas. They found *Yersinia pestis* with this mutation in a person who died in Armenia in about 951 BC, the most recent of the 101 studied.

The study, published in the journal *Cell*, showed plague

was widespread across Europe and Asia during the Bronze Age. The oldest evidence of infection was found in the DNA of people from about 2782 BC and 2794 BC buried in a mass grave in Bateni, Russia, in Central Asia’s Altai mountains.

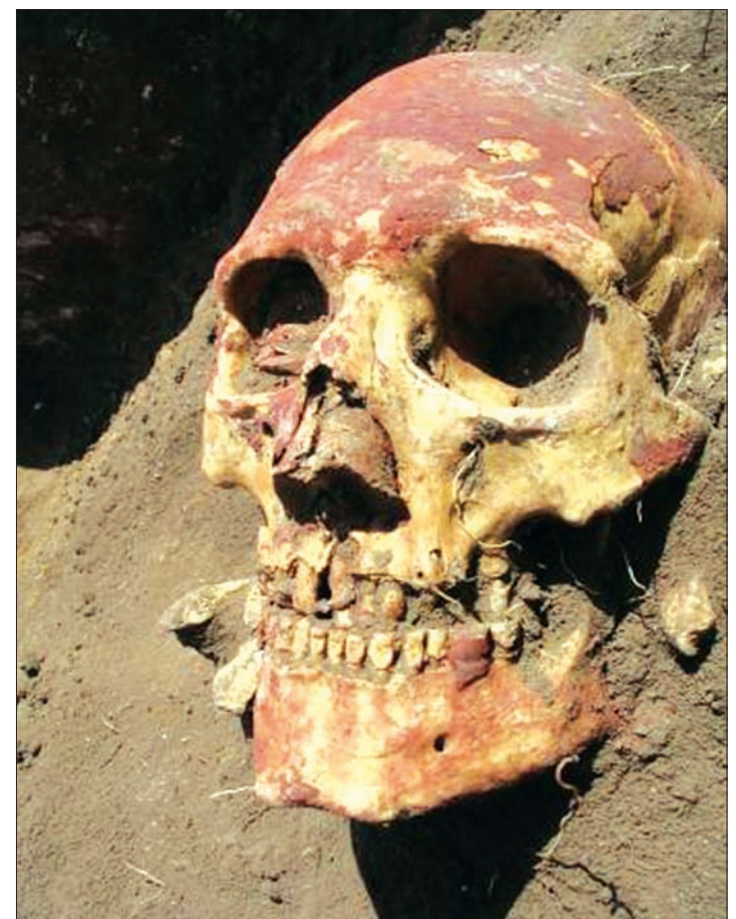
Previously, the oldest evidence of plague came from about 540 AD in Germany, Technical University of Denmark geneticist Simon Rasmussen said.

“The Bronze Age plague represents an intermediate state where it had not yet evolved the capabilities to be transmitted by fleas or cause bubonic plague. However, it was still able to cause septicemic and pneumonic plague,” Rasmussen added.

Septicemic plague infection is confined to the blood. In bubonic plague, it infects lymphatic tissue. In pneumonic plague, it spreads to the lungs and can be transmitted person-to-person via droplets.

The germ was spread mainly by such human-to-human contact until a genetic mutation allowed it to survive in fleas’ guts, choking their digestive tract and causing them to bite anything they can, wildly spreading plague.

Yersinia pestis caused two of humankind’s deadliest pandemics: the 6th century Justinian Plague, named for the Byzantine emperor who was sickened but survived, and the 14th century “Black Death.”—*Reuters*



A skull from a mass grave is seen in Bateni, Russia, in Central Asia’s Altai mountains. PHOTO: REUTERS

Paris police start moving migrants out of school



Migrants board buses after their evacuation from the Lycee Jean Quarre, an empty secondary school occupied by hundred of migrants and asylum seekers in the 19th district in Paris, France, on 23 October 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

PARIS — Police started moving hundreds of refugees and migrants out of a decommissioned secondary school in Paris early on Friday, ending a four-month stand-off over their use of the building.

Officers cordoned off the area before dawn as the inhabitants, including refugees from Afghanistan, Eritrea and other trouble spots, gathered calmly in the school grounds waiting for buses to pick them up.

Police at the scene declined to comment on the operation or say where the migrants were going.

About 100 migrants moved into the empty Lycee Jean-Quarre building in the capital's northern 19th arrondissement in July and numbers soon climbed to more than 700.

In September, a French court gave them a month to leave the premises, which city authorities had been hoping to renovate to turn into a temporary shelter for migrants and, eventually, a library.

European leaders have struggled to agree on a strategy to deal with a surge of people arriving at their borders from Syria and other war-ravaged regions in the Middle East and Africa. —Reuters

Sri Lanka detains soldiers in case of missing cartoonist

COLOMBO — Sri Lankan police have detained 11 people, most of them soldiers or former soldiers, in a widening probe into the disappearance of a cartoonist that has become a test case of the new government's resolve to address human rights abuses.

Prageeth Eknaligoda, a fierce critic of former president Mahinda Rajapakse, went missing near Colombo more than five years ago, triggering allegations from his wife and rights activists that he had been abducted by government agents.

At the time of his disappearance in January 2010, Eknaligoda was working on a story on the alleged use of cluster bombs by Sri Lanka's military in the final months of the war against the Lib-

eration Tigers of Tamil Eelam, his colleagues said.

The military has denied any such use.

New President Maithripala Sirisena has vowed to prosecute members of the previous administration for abuse of power and the first arrests in the high-profile case were made in August, a police official said.

Army spokesman Jayanath Jayaweera said four of the detained men were serving soldiers while the rest were ex-soldiers and informers employed by the military.

"It has been disclosed during the investigations these 11 people had taken Prageeth to a camp. Last week they were taken to this camp and questioned," police

spokesman Ruwan Gunasekera said. Sri Lanka is under the global spotlight after a United Nations probe found that both the Sri Lankan government and Tamil Tiger separatists committed war crimes including mass killings of civilians in the 26-year-long war that ended in 2009.

Eknaligoda's case could set a precedent for prosecution of war crimes, especially against serving members who have been beyond the reach of the law for their role in the conflict, activists say.

A spokesman for the military said it was fully cooperating with the police investigation. The military had withdrawn all privileges of the detained men, spokesman Jayaweera said, pending the investigation. —Reuters

Suicide bombing kills at least 10 in Nigeria

MAIDUGURI — At least 10 people were killed and 11 wounded on Friday in a suicide attack at a mosque in northeastern Nigeria's Borno state, hospital sources said.

Borno state is the birthplace of the Boko Haram insurgency and has been the focus of attacks by suspected members of the

militant Islamist group that have killed around 1,000 people since President Muhammadu Buhari took office in May.

A suicide bombing during dawn prayers at a mosque in the state capital Maiduguri killed at least 10 people, a hospital source said. Abdulkadir Ibrahim, spokesman of the National relief agency,

put the death toll at 6. Another hospital source said 11 people had been wounded.

No one has claimed responsibility for the attacks but Ibrahim blamed the jihadi movement, which has been trying to carve out a state in the northeast of Africa's most populous country since 2009. —Reuters

China says naval ties with US 'best in history'

BEIJING — Relations between the Chinese and US navies are their "best in history" and exchanges between the two will become more systematic in the future, China's military on Friday cited the country's naval chief as telling visiting US officers.

The comments by navy chief Wu Shengli come as Washington considers conducting freedom-of-navigation operations within 12 nautical miles of artificial islands China has built in the disputed South China Sea, without saying when it would do so. Such a move would likely infuriate Beijing.

Both China and the United States had worked hard to increase military interaction, holding joint drills and agreeing rules on encounters at sea and in the air, Wu said, according to the official People's Liberation Army Daily.

"At present, relations between the Chinese and US navies are at their best time in

history," Wu was cited as saying. "Exchanges and communications are more trusting and effective."

This has not come easily though, and is the result of hard work by both sides, he added.

"In the future, exchanges between frontline forces from both countries will gradually become more systematic," Wu said.

There was no mention of the South China Sea.

The US naval delegation Wu met earlier this week visited China's sole aircraft carrier.

The military's newspaper said they also visited a submarine school and a command college.

China-US relations have become increasingly strained over Beijing's territorial claims in the South China Sea, through which \$5 trillion in ship-borne trade passes every year. Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, Taiwan and Brunei also have claims in the area. —Reuters

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE**MV BANGSRIMAUNG VOY NO (134)**

Consignees of cargo carried on MV BANGSRIMAUNG VOY NO (134) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 24.10.2015 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.I.P.T-1 where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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CLAIMS DAY NOTICE**MV UBC CHILE VOY NO (76)**

Consignees of cargo carried on MV UBC CHILE VOY NO (76) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 25.10.2015 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T (3) where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
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AGENT FOR: M/S MERIDIAN SHIPPING
AGENCIES PTE LTD.**

Phone No: 2301186

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE**MV ANAN BHUM VOY NO (144N)**

Consignees of cargo carried on MV ANAN BHUM VOY NO (144N) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 24.10.2015 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of H.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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Incomplete applications will not be considered.

WEATHER REPORT

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL EVENING OF THE 24th October, 2015: Rain or thundershowers will be isolated in Taninthayi Region, Kachin and Shan State and weather will be partly cloudy 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.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 24th October, 2015: Generally Fair.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 24th October, 2015: Partly cloudy.

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 24th October, 2015: Generally Fair.

WEATHER OUTLOOK FOR WEEKEND: Weather will be partly cloudy in Yangon and Mandalay Regions.

UK's TalkTalk says cyber attack could affect 4 million customers



A woman walks past a company logo outside a TalkTalk building in London, Britain on 23 October 2015.

PHOTO: REUTERS

LONDON — British broadband provider TalkTalk said a cyber attack on its website could have led to the theft of private data from its more than 4 million customers, in what would be one of the biggest such breaches of personal information in the country.

The firm said late on Thursday that investigations were ongoing, but there was a chance names, addresses, dates of birth, phone numbers, email addresses, TalkTalk account details, credit card details and/or bank details were compromised.

"Potentially this could affect all of our customers. I don't know for cer-

tain, which is why we are taking the precaution of reaching out to everyone," CEO Dido Harding told the BBC.

The attack is potentially one of the biggest and most damaging to hit a British company, and comes after several high profile cases in North America. The details of millions of customers of infidelity website Ashley Madison were leaked in August after a massive cyber assault, while Sony Corp's film studios were hit in November 2014.

The attack is the third to hit TalkTalk this year, and experts said it would damage the reputation of the company, which competes with bigger rivals BT, Virgin Media and Sky.

"Their brand will be damaged and their customers will say it is the final straw," said computer security expert Graham Cluley.

Shares in TalkTalk, which had fallen 7 percent since the group's websites went down on Wednesday, fell another 8.5 percent on Friday morning to a two-year low of 238 pence.

Some customers took to Twitter to vent their anger. "I see #talktalk has been hacked again, seriously need to go to another provider, especially as I find out via BBC and not TalkTalk," said Cardiff-based user Lan.

The Metropolitan Police said its cyber crime unit was investigating an alleged data theft from a telecommunications website, without giving details.

Personal data including names, addresses and phone numbers were stolen from TalkTalk at the start of the year, and in August servers owned by Carphone Warehouse, the retailer which founded TalkTalk, were attacked, potentially affecting 480,000 TalkTalk mobile customers.

A spokeswoman said Wednesday's attack was the first time TalkTalk's own servers had been subjected to a sustained external attack.—Reuters

One killed, two hurt in Tennessee college shooting

NASHVILLE — One person was killed and two others were wounded by gunfire on the campus of Tennessee State University in Nashville late on Thursday, police said.

The shootings, which occurred just before 11 p.m. local time, appeared to have stemmed from a dispute over a dice game in an outdoor courtyard, the Metropolitan Nashville Police Department said.

The male who died was not enrolled at the school, a university spokeswoman said. Police have not said whether the other individuals involved were students or visiting the campus. It was unclear if a suspect was in custody.

The three gunshot victims were transported to Vanderbilt University Medical Centre, said Tanya Stone, operations supervisor for the Metro Nashville emergency communication center.

The two who survived had injuries not considered life-threatening, the Tennessee newspaper reported. Last week, three people were shot and wounded during a large house party near the Tennessee State University campus.

The incidents come amid a string of gun violence at or near several US schools in October, including deadly incidents on the campus of Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff and adjacent to Texas Southern University in Houston.—Reuters

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Harry Potter play to pick up where final book left off

LONDON — A new play that opens in London next summer will pick up the story of Harry Potter where the seventh and final volume of JK Rowling's saga left off, with a plot involving a grown-up Harry and the youngest of his three children, Albus.

"Harry Potter and the Cursed Child", based on a new story part-written by Rowling, opens at the Palace Theatre in London's West End district on 30 July, 2016, publicists for the production said on Friday.

The story takes place 19 years after Harry's final showdown with the dark wizard Lord Voldemort, described in "Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows", the seventh book.

Now an overworked employee of the Ministry of Magic with three school-age children, Harry "grapples with a past that refuses to stay where it belongs", a statement about the new play said.

Meanwhile, Albus, named after Harry's old headmaster and mentor Albus Dumbledore, struggles with the weight of the family legacy.

"As past and present fuse ominously, both father and son learn the uncomfortable truth: sometimes, darkness comes from unex-



British author JK Rowling. PHOTO: REUTERS

pected places," the publicists said.

The play will be in two parts which are intended to be seen in order on the same day, or on two consecutive evenings. An initial 16 weeks of performances will go on sale in the first booking period, which starts on 30 October.

Publicists have been releas-

ing a drip-drip of information over several months in what appears to be a strategy to tantalise fans, although commercial success for the venture looks extremely likely regardless of any marketing efforts.

So far everything connected to Harry Potter has turned to gold.

Rowling's books have sold over 450 million copies and been translated into 78 languages, while the eight-part film franchise based on the books grossed more than \$7 billion at the worldwide box office.

The new story was a collaboration between Rowling, script-

writer Jack Thorne and theatre director John Tiffany, who has won awards in London and New York for his work on the musical "Once".

"The story only exists because the right group of people came together with a brilliant idea about how to present Harry Potter on stage," Rowling was quoted as saying.

"I'm confident that when audiences see 'Harry Potter and the Cursed Child' they will understand why we chose to tell the story in this way."

Responding to a tweet about the artwork for the new production, Rowling said on her Twitter account: "And I love it!" The artwork shows what appears to be a child in a bird's nest with wings, on a bright yellow background possibly evoking fire.

Both parts of the play will be performed on the opening day, 30 July. Reduced price previews will start on 7 June.

Tickets go on sale online at 1100 GMT on 28 October for those who registered for priority booking on the official website, HarryPotterthePlay.com. Tickets then go on sale to the general public on 30 October at 1100 GMT.—Reuters

First single, video from new Adele album out Friday

LONDON — The first single from Adele's new album "25", a title she announced in a tweet earlier this week, will be released on Friday along with a video, the best-selling British singer's record label said.

The single is entitled "Hello" and the accompanying video, filmed in the countryside around Montreal, was directed by Canadian filmmaker Xavier Dolan, whose films include "Mommy" and "Tom at the Farm", XL Recordings said in a statement on Thursday.

It said the full 11-track album would be out on 20 Novem-

ber. Adele's last album, "21", released in 2011, became a runaway hit worldwide. It sold more than 11 million copies in the United States and was the best-selling album of the decade to date in Britain, according to industry statistics.

Adele won six Grammy awards for "21" and an Academy Award for her theme song for the last James Bond movie, "Skyfall".—Reuters



Singer Adele. PHOTO: REUTERS

Shah Rukh Khan launches official logo of 'Fan'

MUMBAI — Superstar Shah Rukh Khan has launched the official logo of Yash Raj Films' "Fan," which features the photographs of his real life admirers.

The 49-year-old "Happy New Year" shared the logo by retweeting the post of his fan club.

"Ok our 'Fan' team being so stingy stingy and showing such little bits of the film. Chalo abhi logo

hi sahi," he captioned the post.

In the logo clip, his admirers say, "I am a big fan..." has been mixed with the theme track of the film. Directed by "Band Baaja Baaraat" helmer Maneesh Sharma, the film will have Shah Rukh playing the role of both a superstar and his fan.

The teaser of Sharma's project, who lived with the idea for eight years, was released earlier this year.

The clip featured the actor doing his signature arms open pose and a fan impersonating the superstar during a performance in front of his home crowd.—PTI

Not signed or approved any other film: R Madhavan

MUMBAI — Actor R Madhavan has denied reports that he has been roped in to play the negative role in the remake of Tamil blockbuster "Thani Oruvan".

The "Tanu Weds Manu Returns" star, who is busy with his bilingual sports drama "Saala Khadoos"/ "Irudhi Suttru", said he has not signed on any other project.

"I have not signed nor approved any other project in any language. Right now my

life is only Saala Khadoos and Irudhi Suttru," he posted on Twitter.

"Saala Khadoos", produced by filmmaker Rajkumar Hirani, was earlier scheduled to release on 16 October. It is 45-year-old actor's second movie with Hirani after "3 Idiots".

The film marks the directorial debut of Sudha Kongara Prasad in the Hindi film industry. Prasad has also written the script of the film.—PTI

Israeli director to present film at Dharamshala festival

SINGAPORE — Award-winning Israeli writer-director Talya Lavie will present her debut feature on women in the armed forces at the Dharamshala Film Festival to be held next month.

"Zero Motivation", which deals with women conscripted into the Israeli military with the men, is about women in a remote army camp, said Lavie, 37, after presenting the same movie at the week-long 23rd Israel Film Festival being held in Singapore on 21 October.

The movie is about everyday drama in the private lives of the young women, using the mandatory military service as a platform

to tell a universal coming of age story.

"It is about love and disappointment, dreams and fears, friendship and loneliness and discovering your true self," she said.

"I am very excited about taking my film to India, especially to Dharamshala," Lavie told PTI.

The 100-minute feature film is in Hebrew with English subtitles and was sold out on all four screenings in Singapore.

The film has won several awards including the Best Narrative Feature in last year's Tribeca Film Festival in New York.

Lavie has also won the Best Director and Best Screenplay

awards for the film from the Israeli Film Academy.

Elaborating on the women cause, she said, "We want women empowerment. Women are 51 per cent of the global population and we want to change the discrimination." She pointed out that women were still being discriminated even Israel, an advanced country and society, as well as the liberal Hollywood.

"As a filmmaker, it is very important to hear women voices; women telling their own stories and just not have the men telling women stories. I want to hear women stories told by more and more women," she said.—PTI

Afghan university unlikely host for women's studies programme

KABUL — A group of Afghan students gathered on the leafy campus of Kabul University this week to embark on an unlikely course — the country's first Master's degree in gender and women's studies.

Advances made for women since US-led troops ousted the Islamist Taliban in 2001 are held up as one of the wins of the war, but women are still regularly sidelined from political life and subject to violence in public and at home.

Many worry that things could get worse as security deteriorates around the country, a fear buttressed by reports of abuse against women in Kunduz after the Taliban briefly took control of the northern city last month.

"There's been a lot of change for women, but it's not enough," said Zheela Rafhat, a high school teacher and one of 28 students enrolled on the two-year course, which will tackle subjects like gender and violence. "It's better in the capital than in rural areas where there's been a lot of fighting."

Photographs of Kabul from the 1960s and 70s show a city where Afghan

women strolled the streets in miniskirts and heels, a scene that had disappeared by the time the Taliban came to power in 1996.

Under the hardline group's interpretation of Islam, women and girls were banned from public life, including going to school and working, and had to wear a full-body burqa when venturing outside.

Millions of girls have gone back to school in the last 14 years, but access to higher education has been limited.

Teaching women's studies at graduate level should help spread awareness and send people into the workforce who can promote equality, the faculty and students said. Eighteen women and ten men have enrolled in the programme.

But the project is not without critics, some of whom think the course amounts to little more than another misguided foreign intervention. The course is funded by South Korea and run by the UN Development Programme in coordination with the government.

"Some people don't take it seriously," said Nargis Nazer Hossain, a



An Afghan woman speaks as they attend a class of the gender and women's studies masters programme in Kabul University, Afghanistan. PHOTO: REUTERS

21-year-old student from Kabul. "They think it's in the interest of foreigners."

Other objections run deeper.

When the course was presented to the Ministry of Higher Education, it took two months to be approved, said Ghulam Farooq Abdullah, dean of

the university's Faculty of Social Sciences.

Abdul Bari Hamidi, an Islamic studies professor and a member of the ministerial committee that approves new graduate programmes, said he objected to the course because it promoted gender equality.

"There is no gender

equality in Islam," Hamidi said. "In family affairs, the head of the family must be a man, and being an Imam (Islamic spiritual leader) is limited to men."

Lecturers said the course work would address the topic, keeping Afghanistan's cultural context in mind.

"This is teaching by Afghan colleagues, Afghan professors, according with our reality and our society," said Nasrullah Stanekzai, a law professor who taught the first day of class on Monday.

Nevertheless, Kabul University is a somewhat unlikely host, having been the stage for heated protests against women's rights. In 2013, hundreds of students marched against the Elimination of Violence Against Women law, objecting to its secular foundations.

"There are students at Kabul University with radical ideas, but it's not rampant," said Ahmad Zia Rafhat, a journalism lecturer. "Some of the students come to the university from provinces where the Taliban have a bigger influence."

None of the students to whom Reuters spoke expressed any apprehension about taking the course. Nor did a small group of students hanging around the classroom offer any objections.

"I think it's a good thing," said Mushtaba Danish, a third-year undergraduate. "Men need the expertise for the future."—Reuters

Indonesia to host Melanesian festival

JAKARTA — Indonesia's eastern city of Kupang was scheduled to host the initial Melanesian Festival from 26-30 October, aimed at encouraging Melanesian countries to further explore cooperation among them so as to attain collective welfare, an Indonesian senior official said here on Thursday.

Besides Indonesia as the hosting nation, the upcoming festival would be attended by delegates from Melanesian countries consisted of Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Island, Timor Leste, Vanuatu and New Caledonia, Cultural

Director General at Indonesia's Education and Culture Ministry Kacung Marijan said here.

The festival would also be attended by representative official of Vanuatu-based Melanesia Spearhead Group (MSG), Marijan added.

Marijan said the festival was highly expected to improve international community's understanding on Melanesia race and their culture, encouraging further cooperation among Melanesian countries.

"Cooperation improvement was expected to occur in sectors of culture, edu-

cation and economy. Cooperation in maritime was also highly expected as Indonesia has initiated it with several Pacific countries," Marijan told a press conference in his office here.

"Commonality in cultural and social values would be significant factors to further expand cooperation among Melanesian countries," Marijan added.

According to Marijan the appointment of Indonesia to host the Melanesian Festival was due to the facts that Indonesia has 80 percent of Melanesian race living in the world, Marijan pointed out.

He said Indonesia's provinces mostly inhabited by the Melanesian race were Papua, West Papua, North Maluku, Maluku, East Nusa Tenggara and Southeast Sulawesi.

The festival themed "Celebrating the Cultural Diversity of Melanesian World" was scheduled to be officially opened by Indonesian Education and Cultural Minister Anis Baswedan.

Marijan said the festival would be filled with several events consisted of international conferences, art performances, cultural exhibition and movies.—Xinhua

Fashion firm puts Rome's 'Square Colosseum' to work

ROME — A boxy monument to Italy's Fascist era is filling with workers for the first time in its 70-year history as fashion brand Fendi opens its new headquarters at the restored "Square Colosseum".

The travertine structure, formally known as the "Great House of Italian Civilisation" or the "Great House of the Civilisation of Work", was built by dictator Benito Mussolini for a planned world's fair in 1942 that was canceled due to the outbreak of World War Two. Abandoned and little used since then, the rationalist imitation

of the ancient Colosseum amphitheatre now houses 500 Fendi employees and a free art exhibition on the ground floor.

"We are opening the doors of a building that for 72 years has been closed to the world and hiding its beauty," Fendi chief Pietro Beccari said at a preview of the exhibition. In a hushed, white-walled workshop on the lowest of seven storeys that loom over the so-called EUR business district south of Rome that was Mussolini's great project, Fendi's employees measure and trim pieces of fur.—Reuters

mitv Myanmar International

(24-10-2015 07:00 am ~ 25-10-2015 07:00 am) MST

Today Fresh

07:03 Am News
07:26 Am Great Shwedagon: The Prayer Halls And Buddha Images (Part-1)
07:52 Am School for the Blind
08:03 Am News
08:26 Am Thadingyut Lighting Festival
08:32 Am Phaung Daw Oo Pagoda Festival (Part-2)
09:03 Am News

09:26 Am Between the Beaches: Chaung Tha Vs Ngwe Saung
09:35 Am Lucrative Myanma Rattan Industry
09:53 Am Colonial Buildings and a New Yangon
10:03 Am News
10:26 Am Discovering Tribes "MUUN" (Episode - II)
10:49 Am Myanmar Railways City Circular Train
(11:00 Am ~ 03:00 Pm) - Friday Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)
(03:00 Pm ~ 07:00 Pm) - Today Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)

Prime Time

07:00 Pm Live: Coca-Cola Music Festival
(10:00 Pm ~ 11:00 Pm) - Today Repeat (10:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)
(11:00 Pm ~ 03:00 Am) - Friday 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)

MRTV Entertainment Channel

(24-10-2015, Saturday)

6:00 am
• Myanmar Fashion
6:25 am
• Teleplay
6:45 am
• Myanmar Fashion (Music)
7:15 am
• Myanmar Series
7:40 am
• Teleplay
8:00 am
• Channel Zero (Part-5+6)
9:20 am
• Myanmar Video

New recruits for int'l football tournament

THE Myanmar Football Federation announced the recruitment of new players for the Myanmar U-21 men's football team yesterday. The team will compete in the International U-21 Football Tournament in Vietnam from 20 to 29 November.

Former manager of the Yangon United Football Club Eric Williams will take charge of the new team, which will begin intensive training on 26 October.

Mr Williams was the coach of the Myanmar U-16s football team when they won second place in the ASEAN U-16s tournament.—Maung Sein Lwin



Myanmar U-21 men's football team. PHOTO: MOEMAKHA

Next FIFA boss should be outsider with good human rights record

ZÜRICH — The next FIFA president should be an external candidate with a good record on human rights and governance and provide a strong track record of driving democratic reform, world players' union FIFPro said on Friday.

Football's world governing body, engulfed in the worst scan-

dal in its history, is set to elect a new president on 26 February to replace the suspended outgoing head Sepp Blatter, who has been in charge since 1998.

"A clean break from the past is essential for FIFA to climb out of the toxic pit which continues to produce serious accusations

of corrupt behaviour on almost a daily basis," FIFPro said in a statement.

"Clearly, the presumption of innocence is a principle that needs to be upheld while various investigations are ongoing. At the same time, there is no doubt the present mayhem has left

FIFA morally bankrupt."

Asian Football Confederation (AFC) President Shaikh Salman bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa of Bahrain said this week he had been urged to stand in the election, but FIFPro's four-point criteria released on Friday was a clear question mark on his suitability.—Reuters

Liverpool toil as Klopp's old Dortmund team shine

JUERGEN Klopp got a taste of the problems at Liverpool as his first home game as manager ended in a frustrating 1-1 draw against Rubin Kazan who played more than 50 minutes with 10 men in the Europa League on Thursday.

As Klopp's new charges struggled to break down limited Russian opponents, the German's former side Borussia Dortmund were ruthless with Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang scoring a superbly-executed hat-trick.

Dortmund secured a 3-1 win at Azerbaijani outfit Qabala on a night when Anderlecht came from behind to beat Tottenham Hotspur 2-1 in a 1984 UEFA Cup final rematch and Sporting Lisbon thumped Albanian side

Skenderbeu 5-1.

Spain's Villarreal continued their bright start to the season with a 4-0 victory over Dinamo Minsk but Fiorentina suffered a surprise 2-1 home defeat by Lech Poznan and former European champions Celtic lost 3-1 at Norwegians Molde.

Klopp had warned Liverpool fans he had no stardust to sprinkle on the squad and magically turn around their poor early-season form and Thursday's display proved him right.

Kazan silenced the boisterous home crowd when they took the lead through Marko Devic's superb rising finish but a red card in the 36th minute for captain Oleg Kuzmin changed the dynamic of the match and handed

Liverpool a route back.

However, after Emre Can levelled from close range, the hosts huffed and puffed and created little to leave Liverpool trailing Group B leaders Sion by four points.

"Tonight is not an absolute masterclass but it's not the worst day in my life,"

Klopp told reporters.

"Sometimes it's a big advantage against 10 men. Sometimes it's a thankless job."

Klopp's former frontman Aubameyang continued his scorching form with a superb treble as the Germans strolled to a victory that kept them top of Group C with seven points from three matches.

Having already bagged 10 Bundesliga goals this season, the Gabon striker opened his Europa League account when he found the top corner after 31 minutes.

He doubled his tally with a poked finish after exchanging passes with Shinji Kagawa seven minutes later and then made the game safe with 18 minutes remaining when he pounced on a loose ball before Qabala grabbed a late consolation.

Anderlecht's Stefano Okaka bagged their winner against Tottenham in the 75th minute when he fired home from close range to complete an impressive comeback and secure the Belgian team's first win in Group J.

The Premier League club had made a superb start when Christian Eriksen put them ahead after four minutes as an attempted clearance deflected into his path and he calmly slotted home. The Belgians, who lost the

1984 final on penalties, were level nine minutes later with Guillaume Gillet arrowing a perfectly-controlled half volley into the net from the edge of the area.

Okaka's winner moved Anderlecht level with Tottenham on four points, one behind group leaders Monaco who beat Qabala 1-0.

Napoli's Manolo Gabbiadini scored twice in a 4-1 triumph at Danish side Midtjylland to maintain their 100 percent record in Group D while Fenerbahce's Fernandao netted an 89th-minute goal in a 1-0 win at home to Ajax Amsterdam in Group A.

Lazio saw off Norwegian side Rosenborg Trondheim 3-1 in Group G despite having Brazilian Mauricio sent off after six minutes and it was a dismal night for Fiorentina.

Dawid Kownacki and Maciej Gajos struck in the second half for Polish side Poznan and although Giuseppe Rossi pulled one back for Fiorentina late on, Italian misery was complete when Ante Rebic received a late red card.

Fiorentina have now lost their last three European home games and are bottom of Group I.

Schalke 04 stayed top of Group K but could only draw 2-2 at home to Sparta Prague, who trail them by two points, while last season's beaten finalists Dnipro Dnipropetrovsk were beaten 1-0 at home by St Etienne in Group G.—Reuters



Emre Can celebrates scoring the first goal for Liverpool with Adam Lallana. PHOTO: REUTERS