A DIVERSION canal is being built in Zalun, Ayeyawady Region, to prevent the flooding of over 300,000 acres of farmland and residential property. The canal is expected to be completed before the upcoming rainy season. To satisfy the demand of local residents, the diversion canal and preventive measures against the erosion of the Ayeyawady River will be completed before the upcoming rainy season, said President U Thein Sein yesterday during a visit to the site.

The embankment of the Ayeyawady River near Wathala and Maydon villages in Zalun Township faces the threat of collapse due to the effects of erosion. President U Thein Sein pledged that the government would give compensation for land and crops to farmers whose land the canal will pass through. He also stressed that any farmland created by the canal should also be given to local farmers. The diversion canal will span more than 300 acres, but it will prevent more than 300,000 acres from flooding. The canal and preventive measures against erosion are being built with grants from the national disaster fund.

Construction work on the canal began on 29 January 2016. — Myanmar News Agency

Poor adherence to law poses risk to labour disputes

DESPITE having a law calling for the formation of arbitration committees in factories, instances of poor adherence to that law has been found, according to an official from the Department of Labour Relations in Hlinethaya Township.

Although instructions had been issued to create a labour dispute arbitration committee at every factory, most of them still fail to follow instructions, said U Khin Maung Cho, staff officer of the department.

If the committees are formed as instructed, disputes can be settled at the grassroots level, he added. According to the department, it received 40 cases of dispute from the Hlinethaya Industrial Zone in which there are more than 500 factories since early this month, and seven cases are under review.

Most of the cases concern salary and termination of employment, said the department.

According to the settlement of labour dispute law enacted in 2012, the labour dispute arbitration committee shall be formed with two representatives each from employers, employees at each and every factory.

Analysts pointed out that the less problem between employees and employers there is to the country’s manufacturing sector, the more production will be possible as Myanmar is going to enter the ASEAN Economic Community and Global Supply Chains this year. They stressed the need of strengthening the country’s infrastructure and building the skills of those in the industry. — Ko Moe
**Myanmar Skills Competition aims to turn out qualified workers**

The National Skill Standards Authority will organise its first-ever Myanmar Skills Competition next month in Yangon, announced an official from the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security.

“The major purpose of the tournament is to disseminate knowledge on competencies, technologies and livelihoods of workers among people and to keep abreast of international standards,” said U Kyaw Kyaw Lwin, director of Myanada Training.

He continued: “It also aims to turn out qualified workers in the country and select outstanding youths to compete in the 11th ASEAN Skills Competition, which will be held in Malaysia this year.”

The local contest is scheduled to run from 14 to 20 March at the Thawunna Central Training Centre in Thingangyun Township, Yangon. The competition will cover 12 categories, including cooking, installation of electrical equipment, air-con services, food catering services and welding.

Hopeful contestants can obtain free application forms from the NSSA at No. 298 Myananda Street, Ward 13, Yankin Township. They may also send requests for application forms to myanmar.skills2016@gmail.com. Interested participants must send their application forms to the office not later than 29 February, an organiser said.—Myint Maung Soe

**Three injured in car accident**

A 22 wheel vehicle heading form Mandalay to Lashio being driven by one Myo Ko Oo, 18, ran off the road and turned over at mileposts 114/1-2, Mandalay-Muse road, Kyaukme township on Thursday as the vehicle was overloaded. The accident injured Daw Hla Aye, 57, the driver; Myo Ko Oo, 18, and conductor Maung Soe Htet Kyaw, 24. They are receiving medical care at Kyaukme general hospital. Myo Ko Oo was deemed guilty of careless driving by the police.—Than Htay (Dala)

**Marijuana seized in Bago**

LOCAL authorities seized a cache of marijuana in Kyauktaga Township, Bago Region, on Friday, arresting three men for drug dealing, police reported yesterday.

Kyaw Kyaw, 30; Bo Tot, 17; and Win Htay, 51; who were carrying 0.04 kilos of marijuana on two motorbikes, were arrested near milepost No 114/0 along the Yangon-Mandalay highway in Mukhayan Village by local police.

According to a police investigation, Win Htay, who resides Lettattgyi Village in Kyauktaga Township, rented motorbike taxis owned by Kyaw Kyaw and Bo Tot, asking them to deliver marijuana to a customer.

Everyone involved in the case has been charged under the Anti-Drug Law.—Khin Ko

**Raw opium seized in Waingmaw**

Ma Khong Shaung seen with seized opium. PHOTO: MYANMAR POLICE FORCE

**Illegal jade stones seized in Moemauk**

**Illegal logs seized in Sagaing**

AS PART of its operation to control illegal timber smuggling, Myanmar Police Force put more effort to expose illegal smuggling cases in the operation area. A combined team involving local police and staff from the Forestry Department searched a vehicle near Sayay junction, No.3 District to District Connection Road in Sagaing Township on 17 February.

The police seized six illegal sawn logs weighing 0.7836 tonnes on Super Custom while en route from Dazai Township of Sagaing Region to Mandalay Region. Driver is U Nan Ya Aung from 6th Street, Ward 15. Similarly, the team also discovered 0.7974 tonnes of 32 illegal sawn logs on a vehicle near Theintaw village, Sagaing-Monywa-Shwebo Road. The vehicle was leading for Mandalay Region with U Kyaw Oo from Zegon village, Kanthalau Township at the wheel.

Action was taken by the Sagaing Police against the drivers.—Myo Win (Sagaing)

**Grand Wynn to donate instant noodles to fire victims**

GRAND Wynn plans to send 20,000 packs of dried noodles to fire victims in Nambsam and Labutta. The announcement was made at Grand Wynn’s 25th founding anniversary in Yangon on 20 February.

“The food we produce is safe and will be distributed to the people with recommendations from the Food and Drug Administration,” said U L Lamain Dein, CEO of Grand Wynn.—Min Khant Soe

**Traditional boxing event to be held next month**

A TRADITIONAL boxing competition will be held in March, with organisers estimating that the event may arouse a greater interest from local audiences than international events.

Organised by the Myanmar Boxing Federation in cooperation with Great Tiger Group, the event is scheduled to be held on 4 March at Mandalay’s Sandawgyi Garden at 3pm, featuring traditional boxing performances by ethnic-minority athletes.

At least 20 well-known athletes will take part in the event. Mandalorian Phoe Kay will fight Kyel Lin Aung, while Thabyay- nyoo will face Thwai Thit Aung, Min Naing Tun will face Joka Ko and Ye Thway Ni will face Tun Lwin Moe in the bouts.

Tickets will be available at two teashops—Kima Tin Win at the corner of 35th and 76th streets and Sein Win Café between 34th and 85th streets, with prices ranging from K10,000 (US$8.07) to K30,000 ($24.22).—Khin Khin Win

**Crime News**

**AN anti-drug squad seized 1.7 kilograms of raw opium from one Ma Khong. Shaung on board a passenger bus at Waingmaw-Kan Paik road, Waingmaw township, Waingmaw.—Wun Htay.**

On the same day, members of the police discovered 800 yabba pills in a house owned by one Than Daing in ward 5, Kyung- Gyi Su ward, Taunggyi. The police filed charges against them under the Anti-Narcotic Law.—Myanmar Police Force

**LOCAL authorities seized 103 illegal jade stones from a car at Sein Lon checkpoint, Moemauk township, Kachin State on Thursday. Acting on a tip-off, a combined team searched a vehicle heading from Moemauk to Lwejai driven by one Aung Kyaw Soe, 21, with one Nan Win Hlaing, 21, on board. They found 113 visses (a viss is approx. 1.6 kilograms) of jade stones. They are being charged under Section 39 of the Gems Law by police. Members of the police further discovered 87 illegal jade stones in a PAJERO being driven by one Zin Bo, 29, on the Moemauk–Lwejai road. Acting on a tip-off, members of the police searched the car and found 225 visses of jade stones. He is being charged under Section 39 of Gems Law by the police.—Myanmar Police Force**

**Illegal jade stones seized in Moemauk**

**Illegal logs seized in Sagaing**

**The suspects are seen with the marijuana seized from them. PHOTO**
Chin National Day celebrated in Haka

THE 68th Chin National Day was celebrated in Haka, the capital of Chin State, on 20 February.

On behalf of President U Thein Sein, President’s Office Minister U Soe Thane formally opened the celebration.

He read a message sent by the president for the occasion of the 68th Chin National Day.

Messages sent by Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Kyaw Thaung and Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U Win Myint were also put on record at the ceremony.

Along with Union Minister U Soe Thane, Union Minister for Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development U Ohn Myint, Union Minister for Environmental Conservation and Forestry U Win Tun, Chief Minister for Chin State U Hong Ngai, Deputy Minister for Border Affairs Major-General Than Htut and departmental officials also attended the celebration.

During the ceremony, the Union minister and local people erected a Chin traditional ceremonial post to mark the day and enjoyed the traditional performances.—Myanmar News Agency

Water shortages faced in Sagaing Region

ACCORDING to local residents, water shortages are currently being experienced a month earlier than previous years in the Sagaing Region village of Inn Paw, located in Kani township.

The region is usually hit by a scarcity in the availability of water during the month of April, but this year drinking water shortages have been felt as early as the beginning of February.

“We’re experiencing a shortage of water in this region before the arrival of the summer months. The residents and animals of our region suffer when we don’t have access to water. There is some water left in the government built well,” said U Win Naing Oo, the local administrator for Inn Paw village.

The main water reserve for the village of Inn Paw, which is located roughly 45 miles away from the town of Mayin, is a reservoir but it is known that this is quickly drying out.

“We’re going to have a real water shortage in our village before long. We’re going to have to start buying barrels of water [from the well] to use which will be priced at K300. It would be better if the government would work as much as its capacity will allow in order to provide water for our village,” said a Inn Paw resident, Ko Poe Lone.

Local residents are currently paying K300 per barrel of water from the government dug well. It is known the fee incurred for the water barrels pays the electricity bill of the water pump which sucks up the water from inside the well. When the region suffers from annual water shortages, as well as the local development committee distributing water around in vehicles, civil society groups and charitable residents come to make donations.—Miyamakha News Agency

Myanmar’s Opportunity: Investing in All Its People

By Axel van Trotsenburg, World Bank vice president for East Asia and the Pacific

MYANMAR is experiencing a historic transformation. The November elections marked a milestone after four years of peaceful transition, with a new Parliament chosen and one political party – the National League of Democracy – holding a majority of seats. In parallel, Myanmar’s economy is also undergoing transformation, growing at seven percent a year – among the fastest in East Asia.

When the new government takes office next month it will pick up the baton to deliver on the people’s aspirations for a prosperous and harmonious Myanmar. While it will have solid successes to build on, there remain great challenges ahead.

About a third of the population still lives in extreme poverty. Almost three quarters of children in rural Myanmar grow up in homes without electricity to run a refrigerator or power lights to do homework at night. Only 29 percent of the poorest children graduate from secondary school.

Myanmar has a real opportunity to ensure that economic growth is inclusive and that a growing share of people benefit from the new opportunities that economic growth creates. This means not only sustaining a strong pace of growth, but doing so through a diversified economy that can create good jobs in higher-productivity sectors.

Myanmar’s agriculture sector is a good place to start. It employs 65 percent of the country’s labor force, but suffers from low productivity. The average rice paddy yields 2.5 tons per hectare, only half the amount of other exporters in the region.

New investments to enhance agricultural productivity by supplying quality seeds and adopting modern farm technologies can raise incomes for farm families, which comprise most of Myanmar’s poor. Such steps can enable a structural shift for the rural workforce to more labor-intensive and higher-productivity sectors and sustainable reductions in poverty and inequality.

Inclusive growth also means greater investment in Myanmar’s greatest resource – its people – by ensuring education for all, health-care for all, and energy for all. Providing these essential services will require policy to ensure sound public financing through tax collection, sound public spending, and public investments that favor infrastructure and human development.

Infrastructure investments can spur private sector job growth and support more productive and labor-intensive economic activities, such as manufacturing and textile production.

Inclusive growth also requires a concerted effort to reach the poorest communities, most located in rural and remote parts of Myanmar. Myanmar’s National Community-Driven Development (CDD) program, which is supported by the World Bank, is doing just that by providing financial support to the poorest communities in the country.

Through its 1,700 projects across nine townships, the CDD program directly engages local communities in Myanmar’s transformation, empowering those communities to choose in the things they decide are most essential – whether repairing a school, health center or a road, or providing safe drinking water.

This program shows us how it is possible to reach and empower even the poorest communities with small investments that yield big dividends in their daily lives – so that everyone can share in the country’s good fortune.

Today, Myanmar faces both the opportunity and the challenge of building on the development gains made since 2011. An extended period of inclusive growth and transformation for the entire country, when everyone benefits and is engaged, offers the best prospects for the end of conflict and a lasting peace.

In the final analysis, it is the people of Myanmar who will make the critical decisions that will guide the development of their country. The international community, including multilateral institutions like the World Bank Group, can play an important supportive role.

We are privileged to accompany Myanmar on its journey towards a more peaceful and prosperous future.
Appreciation of the dollar stabilises value of Myanmar gold

DESpite a fall in the value of gold on the world market, a tical’s worth (0.576 ounces) of Myanmar gold is currently stable - during this third week of February - at approximately K793,000, gold shoppers have made it known.

An ounce of gold on the world market valued as much as $1,260 during the second week of February, before declining to $1,198 in the third week of this month. The value of the US dollar to the Myanmar Kyat has increased from $1 equalling K1,200 to approximately K1,250 to the dollar.

“It can be said there is a downward trend in the value of gold on the world market. Prior to 2015, it was normal for the dollar to decline in value when the price of world market gold was high. In the wake of 2015 however, the price of the dollar would mimic the trend of an increase in the value of world market gold. For now, you could say things are back to normal but the price of the dollar still isn’t stable,” explained U Maw Maw, general manager of the AungThamardi gold store.

The value of a tical of Myanmar pure gold peaked at K803,000 during the second week of February, dropping to as low as K791,900 during third week of the month. The current increased value of the dollar, and depreciation in value of gold on the world market, has created a situation whereby the price of Myanmar pure gold is not costing what it should. — Myitmuka News Agency

MYANMAR National Airlines opens third international route

MYANMAR National Airlines opened its third international route to Bangkok, Thailand, on 20 February.

MNA launched the Yangon-Bangkok route at the Yangon International Airport on 20 February with a new Boeing 737-800. Flights on the route are scheduled on Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Monday.

The flights depart from Yangon at 5:45pm MST and arrive in Bangkok at 7:15pm local time. Return flights leave Bangkok at 9:19pm local time and arrive Yangon 9:35pm MST.

MNA previously opened routes to Singapore and Hong Kong. — Kay Khatri

Foreign hotel booking website to feature hotels in Chin State in bid to boost tourism development

FRENCH based hotel booking service website ‘Jovago’ is to provide online booking services for hotels located in Myanmar’s Chin State in order to boost tourism development to the remote and mountainous region of the country.

Jovago’s investments into Myanmar began in November of last year, with the country becoming one of over 40 which the company provides online booking services for.

“We are going to work together with all the hotels in Chin State in order to help make it a good place to travel. We have already been in contact with all the hotels,” said Hugo Schlescher, Jovago’s manager for Myanmar operations.

Chin State is also a place of interest to those wishing to cross the boarders as it has many connections into the far eastern regions of India, while tour companies have made it known that since last year the most visited parts of the State have been the town of Kamptetat, Nat Ma and Kanedi mountains and the Shalom fortress atop of Chin mountain; the plains of Tiddim and the heart shaped Ri lake.

“If the tourism industry of Myanmar is going to develop then special new tourist regions need to be exposed. Instead of just having one mass-visited destination, other potentially beautiful areas should be made of interest of tourists,” said U Tin Htun Aung, secretary of the Myanmar Tourism Entrepreneurs Association.

The official opening of the Indian-Myanmar-Thailand (IMT) trilateral highway - which starts in the eastern Manipur region of India before passing through the Tamu, Kalaywa, Monywa, Mandalay, Meitila, Naipyidaw, Mon State, Kawka-reik and Myawaddy of Kay-in State, crossing the border into Mae Sot of Thailand - has brought a growth of tourism to Chin State, Hugo Schlescher evaluated.

Chin State is yet to be used for industrial exploration enterprises, unlike other parts of the country, and still retains all of its natural beauty, while the southern part of the State is home to the Nat Ma mountain national park which is listed as a ASEAN heritage site. — Myitmuka News Agency

YSX securities trading to launch in March

THE Yangon Stock Exchange was inaugurated on 9 December with plans for six companies to start trading in March. The companies are FMI, Myanmar Thilawa SEZ Holdings Public Ltd. Great Hope Kham, Myanmar Citizen Bank, Myanmar First Private Bank and MAPCO.

Ten companies have been chosen to operate as underwriter companies, including KBZ SC, MSEC, AYA Trust, CB Securities, KBZ Bank has been chosen as the Authorised Fund Settlement Bank of the Yangon Stock Exchange by the SECM.

Out of the six listed companies, shares of FMI and Myanmar Thilawa SEZ Holdings Public Ltd are targeted to be sold out to public in early March 2016.

KBZ and MSEC have opened securities accounts for FMI and have also been in talks with AYA Trust and CB Securities to provide necessary services to Myanmar Thilawa SEZ Holdings Public Ltd.

Trading shares at the Yangon Stock Exchange will be available using an online system to participate in online trading, companies need to open securities accounts with the underwriter companies. When a securities account is opened, the underwriter companies will save securities of original shareholders and will give login IDs and passwords for the securities so that shareholders can conduct online trading without worrying about losing securities or fraud.

Those who want to open the securities accounts at underwriting companies need to first open bank accounts in person. When those who have opened KBZ Bank accounts can trade securities online, KBZ, the cash settlement bank, will settle cash in real-time transactions.

Generally, those who want to trade shares can open several securities accounts at underwriting companies. However, to check financial balances quickly, traders should open securities accounts at one underwriting company in order to get the chance to check consolidated financial statements online.

— The Mirror

Myanmar National Airlines opens third international route to Bangkok. Photo: Transport Ministry

MNA opens third international route

MYANMAR National Airlines opened its third international route to Bangkok, Thailand, on 20 February.

MNA launched the Yangon-Bangkok route at the Yangon International Airport on 20 February with a new Boeing 737-800. Flights on the route are scheduled on Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Monday.

The flights depart from Yangon at 5:45pm MST and arrive in Bangkok at 7:15pm local time. Return flights leave Bangkok at 9:19pm local time and arrive Yangon 9:35pm MST.

MNA previously opened routes to Singapore and Hong Kong. — Kay Khatri

The flight operations.

Companies are FMI, Myanmar First Private Bank and MAPCO.

Out of the six listed companies, shares of FMI and Myanmar Thilawa SEZ Holdings Public Ltd are targeted to be sold out to public in early March 2016.

KBZ and MSEC have opened securities accounts for FMI and have also been in talks with AYA Trust and CB Securities to provide necessary services to Myanmar Thilawa SEZ Holdings Public Ltd.

Trading shares at the Yangon Stock Exchange will be available using an online system.

In order to participate in online trading, companies need to open securities accounts with the underwriter companies. When a securities account is opened, the underwriter companies will save securities of original shareholders and will give login IDs and passwords for the securities so that shareholders can conduct online trading without worrying about losing securities or fraud.

Those who want to open the securities accounts at underwriting companies need to first open bank accounts in person. When those who have opened KBZ Bank accounts can trade securities online, KBZ, the cash settlement bank, will settle cash in real-time transactions.

Generally, those who want to trade shares can open several securities accounts at underwriting companies. However, to check financial balances quickly, traders should open securities accounts at one underwriting company in order to get the chance to check consolidated financial statements online.

— The Mirror
Top DPRK leader guides military drills

PYONGYANG — Top leader of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) Kim Jong Un recently guided war maneuvers of the army’s large combined units and watched a flight drill, the official KCNA news agency reported yesterday.

Engaged in the maneuvers were metropolitan defence corps, a tank division and two motorized infantry divisions of the Korean People’s Army (KPA), according to the KCNA. The maneuvers were aimed at “further rounding off operational preparedness for reliably defending Pyongyang from any enemy attack,” it said.

Kim stressed the importance of “practical and actual drills.”

Meanwhile, he watched a flight drill carried out by fighter pilots of the KPA air and anti-air forces, and expressed satisfaction over the drill. He urged the pilots to intensify training and to round off combat readiness on the occasion of the 7th Congress of the ruling Workers’ Party of Korea in May.

Kim was accompanied by Minister of the People’s Armed Forces Pak Yong Sik and Chief of the KPA General Staff Ri Myong Su. Ri Myong Su, former Minister of People’s Security, has replaced Ri Yong Gil to become the new chief of the General Staff of the KPA.—Xinhua

Opposition SDP holds convention, vows to fight Constitution revision

TOKYO — The Social Democratic Party vowed yesterday to fight Prime Minister Shinzo Abe’s drive to amend the war-renouncing Constitution as the small opposition party wrapped up a two-day convention in Tokyo.

The party adopted an action plan calling for “bold” cooperation among Japan’s opposition forces to unite against the ruling bloc in this summer’s House of Councillors election.

The main opposition Democratic Party of Japan, the Japanese Communist Party, the SDP and two other opposition parties Friday submitted to parliament two bills that aim to scrap controversial security laws enacted last year.

Senior executives of the four other parties attended the first day of the convention Saturday as guests and urged unity.

Under the security legislation that is to be put into effect 29 March, Japan would be allowed to exercise the right to collective self-defence and the Self-Defence Forces’ overseas roles would be expanded.

Abe, president of the Liberal Democratic Party, in early February called for more public debate about amending the Constitution, which he has said will be one of the issues to be highlighted during campaigns for the upper house election.

The SDP action plan meanwhile expressed alarm about a crisis the small party may be facing in the upcoming summer election.

The party currently has two House of Representatives members and three upper house members. Of them, the seats of two upper chamber members — SDP leader Tatadomo Yoshida and former leader Miuho Fukushima — are up for grabs in the election.

Support for the SDP is shrinking under Printing Permit No. 00510 and Global New Light of Myanmar Daily

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un guides Korean People’s Army (KPA) military drills, in this undated photo released by North Korea’s Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) in Pyongyang on 21 February 2016. Photo: Reuters

Indian army deploys troops to quell protests

BAHADURGARH, (India)/NEW DELHI — India deployed thousands of troops in a northern state yesterday to quell protests that have severely hit water supplies to Delhi, a city of more than 20 million people, forced factories to close and killed 10 people.

Rioting and looting in Haryana’s biggest carmaker by sales, Maruti Suzuki India Ltd, in northwest India.

The SDP action plan meanwhile expressed alarm about a crisis the small party may be facing in the upcoming summer election.

The party currently has two House of Representatives members and three upper house members. Of them, the seats of two upper chamber members — SDP leader Tatadomo Yoshida and former leader Miuho Fukushima — are up for grabs in the election.

Support for the SDP is shrinking under Printing Permit No. 00510 and Global New Light of Myanmar Daily

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un guides Korean People’s Army (KPA) military drills, in this undated photo released by North Korea’s Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) in Pyongyang on 21 February 2016. Photo: Reuters

Indian army deploys troops to quell protests

BAHADURGARH, (India)/NEW DELHI — India deployed thousands of troops in a northern state yesterday to quell protests that have severely hit water supplies to Delhi, a city of more than 20 million people, forced factories to close and killed 10 people.

Rioting and looting in Haryana’s biggest carmaker by sales, Maruti Suzuki India Ltd, in northwest India.

The SDP action plan meanwhile expressed alarm about a crisis the small party may be facing in the upcoming summer election.

The party currently has two House of Representatives members and three upper house members. Of them, the seats of two upper chamber members — SDP leader Tatadomo Yoshida and former leader Miuho Fukushima — are up for grabs in the election.

Support for the SDP is shrinking under Printing Permit No. 00510 and Global New Light of Myanmar Daily

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un guides Korean People’s Army (KPA) military drills, in this undated photo released by North Korea’s Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) in Pyongyang on 21 February 2016. Photo: Reuters

Indian army deploys troops to quell protests

BAHADURGARH, (India)/NEW DELHI — India deployed thousands of troops in a northern state yesterday to quell protests that have severely hit water supplies to Delhi, a city of more than 20 million people, forced factories to close and killed 10 people.

Rioting and looting in Haryana’s biggest carmaker by sales, Maruti Suzuki India Ltd, in northwest India.

The SDP action plan meanwhile expressed alarm about a crisis the small party may be facing in the upcoming summer election.

The party currently has two House of Representatives members and three upper house members. Of them, the seats of two upper chamber members — SDP leader Tatadomo Yoshida and former leader Miuho Fukushima — are up for grabs in the election.

Support for the SDP is shrinking under Printing Permit No. 00510 and Global New Light of Myanmar Daily

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un guides Korean People’s Army (KPA) military drills, in this undated photo released by North Korea’s Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) in Pyongyang on 21 February 2016. Photo: Reuters

Indian army deploys troops to quell protests

BAHADURGARH, (India)/NEW DELHI — India deployed thousands of troops in a northern state yesterday to quell protests that have severely hit water supplies to Delhi, a city of more than 20 million people, forced factories to close and killed 10 people.

Rioting and looting in Haryana’s biggest carmaker by sales, Maruti Suzuki India Ltd, in northwest India.

The SDP action plan meanwhile expressed alarm about a crisis the small party may be facing in the upcoming summer election.

The party currently has two House of Representatives members and three upper house members. Of them, the seats of two upper chamber members — SDP leader Tatadomo Yoshida and former leader Miuho Fukushima — are up for grabs in the election.

Support for the SDP is shrinking under Printing Permit No. 00510 and Global New Light of Myanmar Daily

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un guides Korean People’s Army (KPA) military drills, in this undated photo released by North Korea’s Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) in Pyongyang on 21 February 2016. Photo: Reuters

Indian army deploys troops to quell protests

BAHADURGARH, (India)/NEW DELHI — India deployed thousands of troops in a northern state yesterday to quell protests that have severely hit water supplies to Delhi, a city of more than 20 million people, forced factories to close and killed 10 people.

Rioting and looting in Haryana’s biggest carmaker by sales, Maruti Suzuki India Ltd, in northwest India.

The SDP action plan meanwhile expressed alarm about a crisis the small party may be facing in the upcoming summer election.

The party currently has two House of Representatives members and three upper house members. Of them, the seats of two upper chamber members — SDP leader Tatadomo Yoshida and former leader Miuho Fukushima — are up for grabs in the election.

Support for the SDP is shrinking under Printing Permit No. 00510 and Global New Light of Myanmar Daily

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un guides Korean People’s Army (KPA) military drills, in this undated photo released by North Korea’s Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) in Pyongyang on 21 February 2016. Photo: Reuters

Indian army deploys troops to quell protests

BAHADURGARH, (India)/NEW DELHI — India deployed thousands of troops in a northern state yesterday to quell protests that have severely hit water supplies to Delhi, a city of more than 20 million people, forced factories to close and killed 10 people.

Rioting and looting in Haryana’s biggest carmaker by sales, Maruti Suzuki India Ltd, in northwest India.

The SDP action plan meanwhile expressed alarm about a crisis the small party may be facing in the upcoming summer election.

The party currently has two House of Representatives members and three upper house members. Of them, the seats of two upper chamber members — SDP leader Tatadomo Yoshida and former leader Miuho Fukushima — are up for grabs in the election.

Support for the SDP is shrinking under Printing Permit No. 00510 and Global New Light of Myanmar Daily

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un guides Korean People’s Army (KPA) military drills, in this undated photo released by North Korea’s Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) in Pyongyang on 21 February 2016. Photo: Reuters

Indian army deploys troops to quell protests

BAHADURGARH, (India)/NEW DELHI — India deployed thousands of troops in a northern state yesterday to quell protests that have severely hit water supplies to Delhi, a city of more than 20 million people, forced factories to close and killed 10 people.

Rioting and looting in Haryana’s biggest carmaker by sales, Maruti Suzuki India Ltd, in northwest India.

The SDP action plan meanwhile expressed alarm about a crisis the small party may be facing in the upcoming summer election.

The party currently has two House of Representatives members and three upper house members. Of them, the seats of two upper chamber members — SDP leader Tatadomo Yoshida and former leader Miuho Fukushima — are up for grabs in the election.

Support for the SDP is shrinking under Printing Permit No. 00510 and Global New Light of Myanmar Daily

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un guides Korean People’s Army (KPA) military drills, in this undated photo released by North Korea’s Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) in Pyongyang on 21 February 2016. Photo: Reuters
Thousands in Japan rally against US base on Okinawa

TOKYO — Thousands of people surrounded Japan’s parliament yesterday to protest against government plans to relocate a US military base on Okinawa island, local media reported.

Kyodo news agency said some 28,000 protesters had ringed parliament house in central Tokyo, holding hands and shouting: “Don’t build the base”. Hundreds more held similar protests across the country, it also reported.

Okinawa was the site of Japan’s only land battles in World War II and many residents there resent the fact that it hosts tens of thousands of US troops and military.

The United States and Japan agreed in 1996 to relocate the base, currently in a heavily populated area, to a new site in Henoko, but many residents of the island have rejected the proposal and want the base moved altogether.

Many residents of Okinawa say they associate US bases with noise, pollution and crime. —Kyodo News

Two soldiers, one civilian died in Kashmir militant attack

SRINAGAR — Militants attacked a paramilitary convoy and a government building in India’s disputed Kashmir region on Saturday, killing at least two soldiers and a civilian, police said.

The militants attacked the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel near Srinagar, Kashmir’s capital, before invading the premises of the Entrepreneurship Development Institute, where about 100 people were undergoing a training programme.

Thirteen CRPF personnel were injured in the attack, said Syed Javed Mujtaba Geelani, inspector general of police.

The CRPF is still engaged in a gun battle with the rebels but the police have safely evacuated the civilians who were trapped in the building, Geelani said.

Muslim separatists have been fighting Indian forces in the Indian portion of Kashmir since 1989. India accuses Pakistan of training and arming the rebels in the portion it controls and sending them to the Indian side, a claim its neighbour denies. India and Pakistan fought two of their three wars since independence in 1947 over Muslim-majority Kashmir, which they both claim in full but rule in part.—Reuters

Japan aquarium takes up challenge of breeding endangered penguin

ASAHIKAWA — Japan’s northernmost aquarium is taking up the challenge of breeding endangered Humboldt penguins, whose original habitat is a much warmer region in South America.

Hidenori Takai, 41, the leader of the seven-member breeding team at Wakkanai Noshappu Aquarium in Hokkaido, says he wants to teach children who visit it about “how life is nurtured” at the breeding facility.

The aquarium has bitter history. A fan heater is needed to keep the five Humboldt penguins currently kept at the aquarium warm when temperatures fall.

The aquarium is now planning to welcome a breeding-age pair from another aquarium in the southern Hokkaido city of Muroran.

Humboldt penguins live in coastal areas of Chile and Peru, and they favor temperatures of around 10 to 20 C.

Many rearing facilities around the world are striving to breed the endangered species. It is likely to be particularly challenging for the aquarium, as it is located in Japan’s northernmost city of Wakkanai, where temperatures are much lower.

The annual average temperature in Wakkanai is 6.8 C while the average for the January-February period is as low as minus 4.7 C, according to the Wakkanai Local Meteorological Observator-

ry. A fan heater is needed to keep the five Humboldt penguins currently kept at the aquarium warm when temperatures fall.

The aquarium is now planning to welcome a breeding-age pair from another aquarium in the southern Hokkaido city of Muroran.

The aquarium is now planning to welcome a breeding-age pair from another aquarium in the southern Hokkaido city of Muroran.

The annual average temperature in Wakkanai is 6.8 C while the average for the January-February period is as low as minus 4.7 C, according to the Wakkanai Local Meteorological Observator-

ry. A fan heater is needed to keep the five Humboldt penguins currently kept at the aquarium warm when temperatures fall.

The aquarium is now planning to welcome a breeding-age pair from another aquarium in the southern Hokkaido city of Muroran.

The species usually lay eggs in spring and fall. They take some 40 days to hatch.

Takai said, “We don’t have a luxury facility like aquariums in cities, but I want the breeding to be successful and make our aquarium a place where (people can) take a close look at lives.”

“We suspect that they might be members of the banned Islamist militant group Jamaatul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB),” police official Hanyun Kabir told Reuters.

The Islamist militant group could not be reached for comment. No group has so far claimed responsibility.

The motive for the killing was probably to create an unstable situation in the country and ultimately establish a caliphate, Kabir, the deputy director general of police in the area, added.

One devotee who tried to stop the priest’s attackers was shot in the leg before the group fled, he said. Police have not yet made any arrests.

The government denies that Islamic State has a presence in the country of 160 million people. Police have blamed earlier attacks on home-grown Islamist militants.—Reuters

Suspected Islamist militants kill Hindu priest in Bangladesh

DHAKA — Suspected Islamist militants stabbed and killed a Hindu priest at a temple in Bangladesh yesterday, and shot and injured a devotee who went to his aid, police said.

Bangladesh has suffered a wave of Islamist militant violence in recent months, including a series of bomb attacks on mosques and Hindu temples.

Some of the attacks have been claimed by Islamic State, which has also said it is behind the killings of a Japanese citizen, an Italian aid worker and a policeman.

In Sunday’s attack, five or six motorcycle-borne attackers cut the throat of the priest, Jogeshwar Roy, 55, as he was organising prayers at the Deviganj temple near Panchagar, 494 km (308 miles) north of the capital, Dhaka, police said.

“We suspect that they...
Trump wins decisively in South Carolina, Clinton clinches Nevada

Voters wait in line at a polling station in Greenville, South Carolina, on 20 February 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

LAS VEGAS/COLUMBIA — Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump clinched victory on Saturday in South Carolina in a contest that saw former Florida Governor Jeb Bush drop out, while Democratic hopeful Hillary Clinton beat back a strong challenge from Bernie Sanders in Nevada.

The victories by Trump, who is running as an anti-establishment outsider, and Clinton, a preeminent political insider, solidified their positions as the front-runners to win their parties’ respective nominations ahead of the 8 November presidential election.

The night’s most prominent casualty, Bush suffered a distant fourth place finish in the Republican contest and announced he had suspended his campaign, ending his dream of becoming a third Bush president after his father and brother.

“The people of Iowa, New Hampshire and South Carolina have spoken, and I really respect their decision,” an emotional Bush said in Columbia. He finished far out of the running in each of the first three states.

By winning both South Carolina and New Hampshire and holding leads in 13 states that hold Republican contests on 1 March, Trump was arguably on track to win the nomination, an outcome that seemed astounding to contemplate when he entered the race last summer.

“It’s going to be very difficult for him to be derailed at this point,” said Hogan Gidley, who was a senior adviser to former Republican candidate Mike Huckabee. The 69-year-old real estate billionaire and reality TV star was declared the winner in South Carolina about an hour after polls closed, and launched into a feisty victory speech.

“Let’s put this thing away,” Trump told cheering supporters in Spartanburg.

He denounced TV pundits for saying there could be enough anti-Trump votes to beat him when the race thins further.

“These geniuses,” he said. “They don’t understand that as people drop out, I’m going to get a lot of votes from people. You don’t just add them together.”

Trump easily defeated Florida Senator Marco Rubio and Texas Senator Ted Cruz, who were in a close fight for second place and the right to declare themselves the anti-Trump alternative.

With 99 per cent of South Carolina precincts reporting, Trump had 32.5 per cent, followed by Rubio with 22.5 per cent and Cruz with 22.3 per cent. Cruz’s inability to distinguish himself from Rubio in the state was a blow to his campaign, which had invested heavily there to rally support among South Carolina’s large population of evangelical voters. Trump’s victory won him at least 44 of the state’s 50 delegates, bringing his delegate count to 61, compared to 11 for Cruz and 10 for Rubio, according to a tally by Real Clear Politics. Republicans need 1,237 delegates to win the party nomination.

Jeb Bush withdraws from US presidential race

COLUMBIA — Former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush said Saturday he is bowing out of the US presidential race.

The 63-year-old son of former President George H. W. Bush and brother of former President George W. Bush has been lagging in Republican primaries that began early February.

Businessman Donald Trump, 69, claimed victory in South Carolina’s Republican primary Saturday, following his win in New Hampshire. Sen. Ted Cruz, 45, won the Iowa Republican caucus.

In Nevada’s Democratic primary the same day, former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, 68, claimed victory. She also won in Iowa but lost in New Hampshire to Sen. Bernie Sanders, 74. Both parties will decide on their candidates in July for the 8 November election to select the successor to Barack Obama.

Support rate for Abe Cabinet down 7 points to 46.7%

TOKYO — The rate of support for the Cabinet of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe stood at 46.7 per cent in a telephone survey conducted Saturday and Sunday by Kyodo News, down 7.0 percentage points from the previous poll in late January.

The decline followed a series of scandals and gaffes involving Cabinet ministers and politicians of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party, with 77.7 per cent of respondents agreeing that members of government and the ruling bloc have been lax in their duties.

The disapproval rate for the Cabinet stood at 38.9 per cent, compared with 35.3 per cent in late January.

Abe’s point man in his economic policy team, Akira Amari, resigned from the post of economic and fiscal policy minister on 28 January to take responsibility for graft allegations against him and his aides.

On 12 February, LDP member Kensuke Miyazaki, who had vowed to become the first lawmaker in Japan to take paternity leave, resigned after admitting to having an affair with a woman while his wife, a fellow LDP parliamentarian, was about to give birth.

Deal with NATO not in contravention of Constitution

BELGRADE — The law ratifying an agreement with NATO is not in contravention of the Constitution, President Tomislav Nikolic wrote for the Novosti daily, explaining why he had signed the bill into law.

The law establishes a legal framework for the cooperation, launched in 2006, with the signing of a status of forces agreement (SOFA), and then strengthened in 2014 with the adoption of an Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP), Nikolic notes.

The deal with the NATO Support and Procurement Organisation (NSPO) on logistic support cooperation does envisage diplomatic immunity for NATO troops who are in the territory of Serbia with our permission, but also implies the reciprocal treatment for our soldiers in the signatory states, the Serbian president says, adding that the same principle applies for the exemption from customs duties and other taxes.

Three journalists from Turkish state news agency kidnapped by PKK — media

ISTANBUL — Three reporters for Turkey’s state-owned Anadolu Agency have been kidnapped by insurgents from the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) in Mardin, in the mainly Kurdish southeast, the Hurriyet newspaper and other Turkish media reported yesterday.

No other information was immediately available.

Missing radioactive material found dumped in south Iraq

BAGHDAH — A “highly dangerous” radioactive material that went missing in Iraq has been found dumped near a petrol station in the southern town of Zubair, environment ministry spokesman Ameer Ali told Reuters yesterday.

Ali said the material had not been damaged and there were no concerns about radiation.
nation-building and education

Sayar Mya

In my two earlier articles, it was my pleasure and honor in sharing knowledge with the esteemed readers of the Global New Light of Myanmar with the themes: (a) Nation Building through Normative Concept; and (b) Nation Building reflects different things to different people.

A few of my friends suggested I write about some countries in our own region that Myanmar could emulate either part, ingredient or component for easy reading as most of us are in fledging status in the context of nation building. The suggested notion is quite acceptable to me to write on the countries in our region or elsewhere across the globe.

Although my background was in Myanmar Foreign Service, I am interested in sharing knowledge on education that is critical to nation building.

What is Education?

Education is the process of facilitating learning, or the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, beliefs, and habits. Educational methods include storytelling, discussion, teaching, training, and directed research. Education frequently takes place under the guise of teaching, training, facilitating learning, or the acquisition of knowledge that is critical to nation building. The continuous optimization requires a "meritocratic system" that is set for development.

The educated elites and citizens will always tend to responsible and responsible general public. In other words, it means that they obey state laws, laws, regulations, and rules. Without this characteristic, no nation-building efforts will be set into motion and a smooth sail.

Secondly, nation-building requires a "meritocratic system" with a view to make the all the institutions more effective. Only in this kind of environment and better education system, the country will have the best human resources that are competent enough to carry out day to day affairs of the state.

Most states collapsed as a result of low level of education because the human resource is so weak. It means the incapacity of filling qualified students at the state institutions. However, by elevating the level of education, the nation-building task could be improved.

Thirdly, the nation-building requires a democratic society that allows the contribution of all people in the country — rich or poor. With proper education, there will always be an increase in democratic participation. All inclusive participation will in turn enhance nation-building initiatives in a better perspective. We can trust and count in the citizens’ participation in the nation-building.

On the fourth aspect of nation-building and education, the schooling stands out as very crucial in the formation of cross-cutting cleavages. In other words, division between people or groups could be narrowed down and forge them to come together. Such trend could embraces diversity among the nationals. Therefore, accepting differences is very important in nation-building. Until or unless we reconcile and accept our differences and come together, progress in nation-building will not move ahead.

With good education, the fear of such stagnation could be set aside. As the fifth point, education creates a large middle-class such as doctors, engineers, scientists, professionals, technicians, teachers, normal business people, traders, etc. This class is very important to nation building because they provide the necessary expertise that needed in a nation-building.

This is the reason why emphasis has been laid on education because an educated society is always a strong society. It is the society that is set for development.

We have already arrived at 21st century, and it is necessary that all developing countries must equip themselves with e-government or electronic government system in the nation-building.

E-government (short for electronic government, also known as e-gov, Internet government, digital government, online government, connected government) consists of the digital interactions between a citizen and their government (C2G), between governments and government agencies (G2G), between government and citizens (G2C), between government and employees (G2E), and between government and businesses/commerce (G2B). The focus should be on:

- The use of information and communication technologies, and particularly the Internet, as a tool to achieve better government.
- The use of information and communication technologies in all facets of the operations of a government organization.
- The continuous optimization of service delivery, constitutional participation and governance by transforming internal and external relationships through technology, the Internet and new media.
Forest fire spreads to village

A forest fire destroyed a building in which a computer training course was being held for villagers in Naungpain Village in Kyaukme District on 21 February.

The fire spread to the building at 1:30pm, and villagers and firefighters put out the fire.

The fire was brought under control around 1:50pm. It took two fire engines to put out the blaze. No one was injured, and the damage was valued at K1,740,000 (US$1,410).— Kyaukme IPRD

Rakhine State villagers fear flooding after land reclamation

RESIDENTS of Kyaukpru, Rakhine State, have expressed anxiety over land reclamation activities on the Ngalapwae River for construction purposes, worrying that the river will burst its bank and flood during the rainy season.

The Ngalapwae River is over 10,000 feet long and over 500 feet wide. The 400 square feet of reclaimed land are meant to be the site of a new office for the Ministry of Boarder Affairs and shops.

The land is being reclaimed on both sides of the narrowest part of the river. “Some land was reclaimed on the river back in 2014 for the construction of the bridge. It was in that year that the Kalabarthaung Village began to suffer from flooding of the Ngalaapwae River during the rainy season. Furthermore, flooding of the road, which connects the town with the docks, cut off vehicles transporting import and export goods. With the further reclamation of land on the river this year, we are sure to experience severe flooding,” said U Maung Win Aung, a resident of Ngalaapwae Village. Several residents of Kalabarthaung and Ngalaapwae villages have been made homeless during the rainy season after the gateway for water into the sea, which flows from tributaries of the river and urban quarters of the town, became blocked, flooding the villages.

U Sein Htun Aung, the head of the township municipal department, said the details of tabulation records for the construction of buildings and shops on the reclaimed land could not be viewed, adding that he was not aware of any construction plans.

—Myitmakha News Agency

Snakebite life insurance policy holders increase in Bago Region

THE Bago regional office of the Ministry of Finance has made it known that of the five different kinds of insurance policy that they offer, more residents of the region have been taking out policies for snakebite life insurance than fire and allied perils insurance policies.

The insurance policies on offer by the Bago Region are life insurance, third party liability insurance, fire and allied perils insurance, marine cargo insurance and travel insurance.

“Each year, we have seen a growth in numbers of residents taking out fire and allied peril policies and snakebite life insurance within the Bago Region. Snakebite life insurance is one of eight life insurance policies offered by the Ministry of Finance. Many of those who have taken out snakebite life insurance are from rural areas,” explained Daw Than Win from the Ministry of Finance.

A snakebite life insurance policy form from the Ministry of Finance costs K500. If a policy is taken out the insurance holder is liable to a minimum payout of K80,000 in treatment expenses if they are bitten by a snake during the year, and should their snakebite prove fatal, a maximum claim of up to K500,000 can be made.

—Myitmakha News Agency

Social development 

A VOCATIONAL training course in motorbike repairs organised by the Rural Development Department in Dalek District was opened in Zabuthiri Township in Nay Pyi Taw on 16 February with the aim of ensuring job opportunities and improving the socioeconomic status of rural people.

The course’s trainers have been instructing 20 trainees in the basics of repairing wheel disorders, adjusting carburetors, adjustments, mechanics and installing electrical wiring.

The course will last for 15 days from 16 February to 1 March.—Shwe Koteko

Nation Building and Education

>> from page 8

Open education and electronic technology

In 2012, the modern use of electronic educational technology (also called e-learning) had grown at 14 times the rate of traditional learning. Open education is fast growing to become the dominant form of education, for many reasons such as its efficiency and results compared to traditional methods. Cost of education has been an issue for many years. Many of the major universities are now offering open education as a way to increase the quality of education. For people looking to be independent learners, open education is becoming more and more popular. There are now over 50 universities offering open education as a way to increase the quality of education.

Many of the major universities are now offering open education as a way to increase the quality of education. For people looking to be independent learners, open education is becoming more and more popular. There are now over 50 universities offering open education as a way to increase the quality of education.

Character building is a powerful evil. A culture is beginning to form around distance learning for people who are looking to social connections and on traditional campuses. For example, students may create study groups, meet ups and movements such as U College. The word U College provides students ready to be independent learners such as down the home-schooling route so as to pursue a purely academic choice. An integral approach to education automatically supports ongoing growth of learners and teachers over the entire span of development. Every parent is first a teacher. Therefore, character education essentially begins at home.

According to Mahatma Gandhi, “Knowledge without character is a powerful evil.” Character is based on human values. It is a powerful tool that influences society. Integral parenting addresses the body, mind, soul and spirit of every child. It also moulds the child’s character for long term growth and development.

Character building is further enhanced from knowledge gained from Schools, Colleges, Universities, and other centers of learning like Polytechnics, Teachers Training Institutes and other Private Educational Providers.

Development Goals

Since 1909, the ratio of children in the developing world attending school has increased. Before then, a small minority of boys attended school. By the start of the 21st century, the majority of all children in most regions of the world attended school.

Universal Primary Education is one of the eight international Millennium Development Goals, towards which progress has been made in the past decade, though barriers still remain. Securing charitable funding from prestigious donors is one particularly persistent problem. Researchers at the Overseas Development Institute have indicated that the main obstacles to funding for education include conflicting donor priorities, immature aid architecture, and a lack of evidence and advocacy for the issue.

Additionally, Transparency International has identified corruption as a major stumbling block to achieving Universal Primary Education in Africa. Furthermore, demand in the developing world for improved educational access is not as high as foreigners have expected.

Today, we are living in the world which encompasses knowledge. Education is crucial. It is not machines, land, and capital. It is human brain. Brain is the most important asset to any family, community and nation.

We have to form good education and develop it for socio-economic development. The quality of education means growth and development in intellectual, emotional, spiritual, and social aspects. Research and creativity innovation are very important for the future development. We could achieve this only through education, and build the nation in accordance with the desire, wishes and aspiration of the entire population including the national brethren.
Syria’s Assad says he is ready for truce if ‘terrorists’ do not exploit it

BEIRUT/MADRID—Syrian President Bashar al-Assad said on Saturday he was ready for a cease-fire, on condition “terrorists” did not use a lull in fighting to their advantage and that countries in backing insurgents halted support for them.

His comments were made as the Syrian opposition said it had agreed to the “possibility” of a temporary truce, provided there were guarantees Damascus’s allies including Russia would cease fire, sieges were lifted and aid deliveries were allowed country-wide.

“We have said that we are ready to stop military operations, but the issue relates to more important factors... such as preventing terrorists from occupying areas and allowing aid to be delivered to the people,” Assad told Spanish newspaper El Pais in an interview.

He also said any truce must ensure that “other countries, especially Turkey, are prevented from sending more terrorists and weapons, or any kind of logistical support”. Damascus refers to all insurgents fighting against the Syrian army and its allies as terrorists.

Turkey, other Sunni regional powers and Western countries have supported insurgents fighting against Assad, whose forces are bolstered by Iran, Russia and Lebanese Hezbollah.

Asked about the possibility of Turkey and Saudi Arabia sending ground forces into Syria, Assad said: “We’re going to deal with them like we deal with the terrorists. We’re going to defend our country. This is aggression.”

Assad said the Syrian army was ready to negotiate a truce in recent months have failed. The latest round of talks at the United Nations in Geneva is being jointly chaired by Russia and the United States.

World powers agreed in Munich on 12 February to a cessation of hostilities that would let humanitarian aid be delivered in Syria.

The ceasefire was scheduled to start a week later, but did not take effect. Syrian army offensives continue unabated across the country, backed by Russian air strikes.

Assad said last week he would keep “fighting terrorism” while peace talks took place, vowing to retake the whole country.

He told El Pais his troops were now close to fully controlling the northern city of Aleppo and were advancing towards the Islamic State stronghold of Raqqa province.

Once he has control of the country, Assad also said in the interview, the next step would be to form a national unity government that would lay the groundwork for a new constitution and general elections.—Reuters

US Air Force drone crashes in Afghanistan

KABUL — An unmanned American aircraft crashed at an airfield in southern Afghanistan less than three months after an identical drone went down in November, a US Air Force spokesman said yesterday.

After ending its combat mission in 2014, the US military still uses air strikes by drones and other aircraft in Afghanistan to target suspected members of al-Qaeda and Islamic State and back up Afghan forces battling a Taliban insurgency.

There were no injuries or civilian damage in the crash of the state-of-the-art $14-million MQ-9 Reaper late on Saturday night, Captain Bryan Bouchard of the 455th Air Expeditionary Wing said in a statement.

“The crash was contained on Kandahar airfield,” he added. “US Air Force authorities will investigate the cause of the crash but hostile fire was not a factor.”

Usually guided remotely by pilots outside Afghanistan, unmanned aircraft have played a major, and sometimes controversial, role in the American war, acting as spy planes and launching missiles at suspected militants.

In November, another Reaper operating out of Kandahar and armed with missiles was totally destroyed when it went down more than 483 km (300 miles) to the northeast of the base in a mountainous area.

The cause of that crash was not made public but the military also ruled out ground fire as a suspected factor.

Reapers were the US Air Force’s first specifically designed “hunter-killer” unmanned aircraft, and are larger and more powerful than the older MQ-1 Predator drones.—Reuters

Niger starts voting in presidential election

NIAMEY — Niger began voting in an election yesterday in which President Mahamadou Issoufou is running for a second term with a promise to crush Islamist militants and develop the economy in one of the poorest countries in the world.

He faces 14 candidates including Seyni Oumarou, leader of an opposition coalition. Critics say Issoufou used repression ahead of the vote, including arresting opposition supporters and jailing opposition leader Hama Amadou over charges related to a baby-trafficking ring.

Issoufou’s government says it respects the law and calls the charges politically motivated. Polls opened at 8 am local time (0700 GMT) but voting started slowly, with election officials laying out materials at polling stations and a few people arriving to cast their ballots, witnesses said.

“I exercised my right to vote in favour of the candidate of my choice and I’m happy. I hope the election goes well,” said Hadiza Djiibril, a resident of the Karadje neighbourhood on Niamey’s right bank.

Islamist militant group Boko Haram, which is based in neighbouring Nigeria, has staged a series of attacks in recent months, forcing authorities to declare a state of emergency in the southeastern region of Diffa.—Reuters

Twin bomb blasts kill dozens in Syria’s Homs — monitoring group

BEIRUT — At least 46 people were killed in twin car bomb blasts that hit Syria’s Homs yesterday in one of the deadliest attacks in the city in five years of civil war, a monitoring group said, and state media confirmed the explosions.

At least 10 others were wounded by the explosions in the city centre’s Zahra district, the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said.

Footage from pro-Damascus television channels showed charred corpses buried among rubble, damage to shop fronts and debris littering a wide area.

Many cars were on fire, sending out plumes of black smoke. Wounded people walked around dazed.

State television quoted the governor of Homs as saying at least 25 people had been killed.

A bomb attack claimed by Islamic State last month in Homs in the west of the country killed at least 24 people as government forces took back some Islamic State-held villages in Aleppo province in the north.

Sunday’s attacks also came a day after government advances against Islamic State. There was no immediate claim from the group, however.

A bomb attack in December which killed 32 people took place after a ceasefire deal that paved the way for the government to take over the last rebel-controlled area of the city, which was a centre of the 2011 uprising against President Bashar al-Assad.

Observatory director Rami Abdurrahman said the attack was the second most deadly of its kind in Homs since 2011, and the deadliest for almost a year and a half.

Violence rages on unabated across the country as world powers and the United Nations push to end the conflict, meeting in Geneva to try to broker a ceasefire.

Peace talks were suspended almost immediately earlier this month as Syrian government forces and their allies, backed by Russian air strikes, intensified assaults against insurgents in Aleppo Province.

The latest fighting in the north of the country has displaced tens of thousands of people, many of whom headed for the Turkish border. The exodus added to more than 11 million already displaced by the conflict that has claimed 250,000 lives.—Reuters
WASHINGTON — The US Air Force would ground the Russian-built RD-180 engines that power its Atlas 5 rockets if a US government review determines that several sanctioned Russian individuals have too close a relationship with the engine maker, a top US general said on Friday.

Lieutenant General Samuel Greaves, who heads the Air Force’s Space and Missile Systems Centre, said the Pentagon was reviewing responses about the sanctions issue and related matters in time to meet a 22 February deadline set by Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman John McCain.

McCain last week asked the Air Force and Pentagon to explain why the US government is continuing to use engines built by Russia’s NPO Energomash given sanctions in place against Russian Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin and other sanctioned individuals, who control the company after a big reorganisation.

Congress banned use of the Russian RD-180 rocket engines for military use after 2019, following Russia’s annexation of the Crimea region of Ukraine in 2014.

But US lawmakers eased the ban late last year, worried that it could drive United Launch Alliance, a joint venture of Lockheed Martin Corp and Boeing Co, out of business and leave only privately-held SpaceX, to lift satellites into space.

Greaves said the Air Force would abide by US law.

“These folks are on the sanctions list, and if the Department of the Treasury comes back and says there’s a problem with that relationship, then we have to work with the Congress and others to determine a way ahead,” he said.

 Asked to elaborate about possible consequences, he said, “If we’re not supposed to be flying the RD-180s, they’re grounded.”

The Treasury Department declined comment. A spokeswoman for United Launch Alliance also had no immediate comment.

The US Court of Federal Claims had ruled on the issue in response to a lawsuit filed in April 2014 by SpaceX, concluding that the purchases were not in violation of US sanctions.

At the time, senior US officials said that control of Energomash by Rogozin could provide a basis for formally blocking the property and interests of the company.

McCain argues the situation has changed due to a new Russian law that took effect in January, which consolidated the Russian space industry under a single state corporation, Roscosmos. Roscosmos is due to merge with the state-owned parent company of Energomash, making Energomash a direct subsidiary, he said.—Reuters

**South Africa confirms first case of Zika virus**

JOHANNESBURG — South Africa confirmed its first case of the mosquito-borne Zika virus in a Columbian man, health authorities said.

The virus, which is causing international alarm after spreading through most of the Americas, was detected in the man on his visit to Johannesburg, Health Minister Aaron Motsoaledi said.

“The businessman presented with fever and a rash approximately four days after arrival in South Africa but is now fully recovered,” he said.

The World Health Organisation declared the outbreak a global public health emergency on 1 February, noting its association with two neurological disorders — microcephaly in babies and Guillain-Barre syndrome that can cause paralysis.—Reuters

**Bangladeshi ‘tree man’ undergoes successful surgery on right hand**

DHAKA — A nine-member medical team on Saturday operated on the right hand of a Bangladeshi man whose hands and feet have grown to resemble gnarled tree branches.

Abul Bajandar underwent his first surgery successfully at Dhaka Medical College and Hospital (DMCH) Saturday.

He operated on Bajandar’s right hand and the surgery was a success,” Samanto Lal Sen, director of the 100 Bed Burn Unit Project at the DMCH, told journalists.

“I operated on Bajandar’s right hand and the surgery was a success,” he said.

Bajandar’s future operations will be conducted gradually.

Md Abul Kalam, professor and head of the Department of Burn and Plastic Surgery and Project, led the nine-member team performing the operation for about four hours starting at around 10:30am (local time) Saturday.

Bajandar over the past 20 years has been suffering from the rare disease called epidermodysplasia verruciformis, which has tree trunk-like warts, almost weighing four kg on both his hands and feet. The rare disorder is also known as “tree man” disease. Bajandar got admitted to the DMCH on 30 January. He is said to be the fourth man in the world with the illness which makes the functionality of his limbs severely limited.—Xinhua

**Record number of Americans apply to be astronauts: NASA**

WASHINGTON — US space agency NASA said Friday that a record number of Americans have applied to be astronauts this year.

NASA said in a statement it has received more than 18,300 applications for its 2017 astronaut class, almost three times the number it received in 2012 for the most recent astronaut class, and far surpassing the previous record of 8,000 in 1978.

“It’s not at all surprising to me that so many Americans from diverse backgrounds want to personally contribute to blazing the trail on our journey to Mars,” said NASA Administrator Charlie Bolden, himself a former astronaut.

“A few exceptionally talented men and women will become the astronauts chosen in this group who will once again launch to space from US soil on American-made spacecraft.”

The application window opened on 14 December, and closed Thursday. Now, an 18-month process will begin to choose eight to 14 individuals for the opportunity to become astronaut candidates. NASA said it will to announce its selections in mid-2017.

Then, the astronaut candidates will go through about two years of initial training on spacecraft systems, spacewalking skills and teamwork, Russian language and other requisite skills. Finally, those who complete the training will be assigned on any of four different spacecraft: the International Space Station, NASA’s Orion spacecraft for deep space exploration, or one of two American-made commercial crew spacecraft currently in development — Boeing’s CST-100 Starliner or the SpaceX Crew Dragon, NASA added.—Xinhua
Fiji super cyclone kills five, raises fears of health crisis

SYDNEY — Downed power lines and flooding are hampering relief efforts in Fiji after one of the most powerful storms recorded in the southern hemisphere tore through the Pacific island nation, flattening remote villages and killing at least five people.

Harsh winds and torrential rains tore up homes and cut power, water and communications links across the nation of about 300,000 people, although Suva, the capital, escaped the brunt after the storm changed direction at the last minute.

Prime Minister Frank Bainimarama confirmed the death toll and declared a 30-day state of emergency, with schools ordered to shut and a nationwide curfew extended until Monday morning.

“When we are able we will provide timelines for the return of water and power,” he said, adding that electricity supply to some areas had been deliberately cut to avert further damage.

The archipelago of about 300 islands hit late on Saturday by tropical cyclone Winston, which packed winds of 230 kph (143 mph) that gusted up to 325 kph (202 mph).

“Businessman Jay Dayal, who lives near Rakiraki, on the north coast of Fiji’s main island where the cyclone hit land, said the storm damage was extensive.

“I wouldn’t be surprised if people are now starting to go without food,” Dayal told Reuters. “It looks like a different country, it doesn’t look like Fiji.”

Humanitarian agencies warned Fiji may be facing a potential health crisis, mainly due to the lack of electricity. Low-lying river areas where hundreds of people live in tin sheds are also particularly vulnerable, aid workers said.

“We need electricity to ensure pumps are working and for sterilization,” Raijeli Nicole, an official of aid agency Oxfam, told Reuters by telephone that flights have been scheduled yesterday to assess damage in remote areas.— Reuters

Beijing to build ventilation ‘corridors’ to help tackle smog

BEIJING — Authorities in Beijing plan to develop a network of ventilation “corridors” to help tackle the city’s notorious air pollution, China’s state news agency Xinhua reported yesterday.

Construction in the zones, which will be created by connecting parks, rivers, lakes, highways and low building blocks, will be strictly controlled and obstacles to air flow will be removed over time, Xinhua cited Wang Fei, deputy head of Beijing’s urban planning committee, as saying. There will be five large corridors that will be more than 500 metres (0.3 miles) wide and several smaller ones, the report said, without giving a time frame for the project.

Pollution is a sensitive topic in China, spurring public protests every year about environmental degradation, particularly from factories. For Beijing and its surroundings, the government has set a target for 2020 of reducing pollution by 40 per cent from 2013 levels. A senior environment official said on Friday the city’s air quality has improved over the last two years. Beijing frequently features near the top of the list of China’s most polluted cities as emissions from vehicles and heavy industry combine with weather conditions to raise smog levels.

The worst bouts of air pollution tend to coincide with periods of low wind. The authorities have increased efforts to reduce air pollution in the wake of the city’s first “red alerts” in December last year, when hazardous smog engulfed the city. Beijing will close 2,500 small polluting firms this year as part of efforts to combat pollution, Xinhua reported last month.— Reuters

Moderates could gain influence over choice of next leader in Iran vote

BEIRUT — Iran’s Assembly of Experts, made up mostly of elderly clerics, has not mattered much for years. The body’s main task is choosing Iran’s supreme leader, but that job has not come vacant since 1989.

This time it’s different. Given the ailing health of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, 76, the Assembly to be elected on 26 February for an eight-year term is likely to pick his successor, charting the course of the country for many years to come.

The Supreme Leader is the highest military and judicial authority in the country and has broad powers overseeing other branches of government. Even the president, who is directly elected, has less authority.

Khamenei, hardline successor to the Islamic Republic’s founder Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, has ensured for decades that Tehran remains hostile to the United States abroad, and slow to embrace cultural reforms at home.

Elections for parliament are scheduled for the same day, but it is the outcome of the Assembly election that is likely to have a much greater long-term impact.

In terms of numbers, hardliners are almost certain to have the upper hand. The Guardian Council, a hardliner-dominated government body which reviews the eligibility of candidates, has already disqualified 475 candidates, many thought to be moderates, leaving just 161 people vying for 88 places.

Among those disqualified was Khomeini’s grandson Hassan Khomeini, a charismatic reformer blessed with his grandfather’s potent name. The Council questioned his religious qualifications.

But the list of those permitted to stand includes other prominent moderates, first and foremost President Hassan Rouhani himself, who is riding a wave of domestic popularity after helping seal a nuclear deal with world powers last year.

He is joined by one of his most influential predecessors, Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, who already holds an Assembly seat and will be campaigning to keep it.

Earlier this week, Rouhani released the names of 16 candidates, including Rafsanjani, in a bloc calling themselves the “Friends of Moderation.” Their campaign slogan: “Moderation is Islam.”

Within the assembly, a conservative majority bloc is likely to be led by hardline clerics like Mohammad Taqhi Mesbah-Yazdi, Ahmad Jannati and Mohammad Yazdi.

Nevertheless, the moderate minority could still play an important role in choosing the next Supreme Leader. When Khamenei was chosen in 1989 after Khomeini’s death, the decision was taken only after elaborate backroom dealing that went far beyond a simple tally of votes in the Assembly.

There was discussion of putting together a leadership council, before a handful of top clerics in the Assembly, including Rafsanjani, pushed for the nomination of Khamenei.

Khamenei did not have the appropriate religious rank to hold the position at the time, so the constitution was amended to allow him to take his post. Similar dealing may take place in order to choose Khamenei’s successor.

“Shi’ite clerics are really masters of the art of the deal,” said Hadi Ghaemi, executive director of the International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran, a US-based organisation which has criticised the widespread disqualification of candidates.

“So while it is important how big your faction is in the Assembly of Experts it does depend on who the charismatic dealmaker is at that time.”

In December, Rafsanjani broke a taboo by noting that a group had been formed within the Assembly to review possible candidates who could replace Khamenei.— Reuters
Seven people killed in random Michigan shootings, suspect in custody

BELGRADE — Seven people were shot and killed and several others wounded in Michigan on Saturday night in a series of apparent-ly random public shootings, according to authorities and local media.

The Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety said on its Facebook page that six people had been shot and killed and several others seriously wounded in three shootings in Kalamazoo County, in southwest Michigan.

Local media said early yesterday a teen-aged girl who was shot had died, becoming the seventh fatality.

“We seem to be dealing with a worst-case scenario, someone driving around shooting,” Kalamazoo County Undersheriff Paul Matyas told NBC News after the shootings. At least three people were wounded in the attacks.

The Kalamazoo Public Safety Department said a suspect fitting the description of the gunman had been apprehended without incident, citing Chief Jeff Hadley.

The suspect was not identified, but media reports, citing police, said he was aged 45, from Kalamazoo.

The public safety department earlier described the gunman as a white male in his 50s who was believed to be driving a dark-colored Chevrolet SUV with chrome wheels, adding that the vehicle may have been damaged.

Police said the man who was arrested was driving a black HBIR and had a weapon in the vehicle.

According to local media, four people were shot dead at a Cracker Barrel restaurant in Texas Township, and two more died at a Seelye Kia dealership in Kalamazoo.

Four people were killed at a third shooting scene in the Cracker Barrel parking lot, where the gunman opened fire on people in their cars after a brief conversation. A fifth person died later.

The victims and shooting scenes appeared to have no link apart from the suspect.

No motive for the seemingly random attacks had been determined.

Authorities could not be reached to verify the reports independently, but confirmed the deaths in media interviews and on social media. The victims’ identities were not released.—Reuters

Udovicic: Sport tourism has great potential

BELGRADE — Minister of Youth and Sport Vanja Udovicic toured the stand of the Tourist Organisation of Belgrade which on Saturday ran a promotion of the 2017 European Athletics Indoor Championships at the Tourism Fair, and pointed to the huge potential of sport tourism.

“The development of sport infrastructure gives it a necessary boost. Just take the newly-built athletics hall as an example — it will be officially opened on 1 March to welcome people from across the world,” the line ministry cited Udovicic as saying.

Director of the Office for Kosovo-Metohija Marko Djuric dropped by the stand shared by his Office and the Tourist Association.

“Given its natural beauties and holy sites, every journey through Serbia’s southern province is a personal story created through interactions with our monasteries and conversations with our people,” Djuric said.—Tanjug

TRADEMARK CAUTION
Diadora Sport srl, a company incorporated in Italy, and having its registered office at Via Montalto 60, 31031 Caerano di San Marco TV, Italy, is the owner and proprietor of the following Trademark:

Reg. No. 4/135/2001 (1 February 2001)

In respect of “Trunks and traveling bags, suitcases, briefcases, purses, handbags, sport bags, knapsacks, rucksacks, schoolbags, pouches, wallets; umbrellas and parasols” in Class 18:

“Articles of clothing and sportswear, namely, jackets, winter jackets, wind jackets, coats, overcoats, raincoats; sweaters, vests, cardigans, shirts, sweat shirts, plush shirts, polo shirts, T-shirts, trousers, pants, dresses, gowns, shirts and underwear; gloves, hats and caps; head bands; wrist bands; belts; ties; training and track suits; bath robes; shoes, boots, sandals, slippers, sporting shoes” in Class 25:

“Gymnastic and sporting articles” in Class 28.

Fraudulent or unauthorised use, or actual or colourable imitation of the said Mark shall be dealt with according to law.

Daw Khin Myo Myo Aye, H.G.P
For Diadora Sport srl
C/o Kelvin Chia Yangon Ltd.,
Level 8A, Union Financial Centre (UFC),
Corner of Mahabandoola Road and Then Phyoo Road,
Botataung Township, Yangon.
The Republic of the Union of Myanmar.
Dated 22 February 2016
kmma@kkyangon.com

TRADEMARK CAUTION
Companie des Montres Longines, Francillon S.A. (Longines Watch Co. Francillon Ltd.), C/o Kelvin Chia Yangon Ltd.,
Level 8A, Union Financial Centre (UFC),
Corner of Mahabandoola Road and Then Phyoo Road,
Botataung Township, Yangon.
The Republic of the Union of Myanmar.
Dated 22nd February 2016
kmma@kkyangon.com

Reg. No. 47/36/2016 (1 February 2016)

In respect of “Watches and movements of all kinds, cases, dials, bracelets and all materials and parts of watches, apparatus for measuring and registering the time, sportometers and apparatus for sport-chronometers”.

Fraudulent or unauthorised use, or actual or colourable imitation of the said Mark shall be dealt with according to law.

Daw Khin Myo Myo Aye, H.G.P
For Companie des Montres Longines,
Francillon S.A. (Longines Watch Co. Francillon Ltd.),
C/o Kelvin Chia Yangon Ltd.,
Level 8A, Union Financial Centre (UFC),
Corner of Mahabandoola Road and Then Phyoo Road,
Botataung Township, Yangon.
The Republic of the Union of Myanmar.
Dated 22nd February 2016
kmma@kkyangon.com

ADVERTISE WITH US!
- We are Myanmar’s highest-circulating English language daily newspaper
- We offer competitive ad rates
- Your ad will be seen by a wide and influential readership

Email: adv.gnlm@gmail.com,
Phone: 09 25010762, 09 251022355
BERLIN — Gianfranco Rosi’s documentary film “Fuocoammare” (Fire at Sea), about the refugee crisis in the Mediterranean off the Italian island of Lampedusa, won the Golden Bear prize for Best Film at the Berlin International Film Festival on Saturday.

It was a fitting end for a festival which went out of its way to make refugees welcome by giving them free tickets. Rosi paid tribute to those who risked their lives to escape war and poverty, and to the people of Lampedusa who welcomed them.

“Of course now at this moment my deeper thoughts go to all the people that never arrived to Lampedusa on these journeys of hope,” Rosi said in his acceptance speech on stage at Berlin’s cinema palace for the glittering awards ceremony.

Rosi, who won the top prize for another documentary in Venice in 2013, in this film shows daily life on the small island, mostly through the eyes of a young boy named Samuele who makes slingshots to shoot at birds and cacti.

In the sea nearby, the Italian navy searches for overloaded boats full of refugees dying of suffocation and asphyxiation by diesel fumes and brings survivors back to Lampedusa for treatment and for transport to refugee centres.

“I want to dedicate this award to the people of Lampedusa who were always extremely open to accept people arriving there,” Rosi said.

He noted that the flood of refugees that has made headlines for the island just off the coast of North Africa.

Rosi said he had asked Dr Pietro Bartolo, a physician on Lampedusa who treats refugees and appears in the film, why the island welcomes the tens of thousands of people who land there.

“He told me Lampedusa is a place of fishermen, we are fishermen, and fishermen, they all accept always, anything that comes from the sea. So this may be a lesson that (we) should learn to accept anything that comes from the sea,” Rosi said.

The Silver Bear Grand Jury Prize went to “Sma’u Sarajevo” (Death in Sarajevo) and its director Danis Tanovic.

The Best Director award went to France’s Mia Hansen-Love for the film “L’Avenir” (Things to Come).

The Best Actor award went to Majd Mastoura for his role in the Tunisian film “Inhebbek Hedi” while Trine Dyrholm took Best Actress for her role in the Danish film “Kollektivet” (The Commune).

The best script award went to Polish director and screenwriter Tomasz Wasilewski for “Zjednoczone Stany Milosci” (United States of Love) while the cinematography award went to Mark Lee Ping-Bing for the camerawork in the Chinese film “Chang Jiang Tu” (Crosscurrent) directed by Yang Chao.

An award for a film that opens new perspectives was given to the eight-hour-long Filipino film “Hele sa Hiwagang Hapis” (A Lullaby to the Sorrowful Mystery) directed by Lav Diaz.

Festival Director Dieter Kosslick said that watching Diaz’s film was a unique experience, not just for its length but also because the premiere started quite early in the morning. “So we all showed up, were completely, totally dressed up, the sun was shining, but it was 8.30am,” Kosslick said. —Reuters

**Karlie Kloss to receive Inspiring Woman of the Year award**

LONDON — Model Karlie Kloss will be honoured for inspiring a generation of young girls at the ELLE Style Awards.

The 23-year-old model will have the distinction later this month of being named Inspiring Woman of The Year at the fashion gala, reported Digital Spy.

Kloss has been selected as the inaugural prize winner for encouraging girls to fight for science and technology through the Kode with Karlie scholarship.

In her 10-year modelling career, Kloss has been a Victoria’s Secret Angel and modelled for Marc Jacobs, Dolce & Gabbana, Dior and Hermes.

“She is to accept the Inspiring Woman of The Year Award as part of London Fashion Week on Tuesday, 23 February.

Among last year’s ELLE Style Award winners were Rosie Huntington-Whiteley for Model of the Year, Erdem for Designer of the Year and Taylor Swift as Woman of the Year. —PTI

**Israeli-Palestinian hip-hop movie wins audience prize in Berlin**

BERLIN — An Arabic-language hip-hop film featuring mostly Palestinian actors and directed by an Israeli won a prize as an audience favorite on Saturday at the Berlin International Film Festival.

Director Udi Aloni’s “Junction 48” took the Panorama Audience Award for best fiction film. The film is about the way we Palestinians are usually represented in the world,” Qupty said.

“We are representing ourselves by the new generation, we are representing the new generation looking any better or any worse.”

Director Aloni was pleased with audience reactions. “We are not optimistic because we also brought some young kids that we gave them tickets, you know 20 years old, that don’t know anything about us and they adore it.

“So probably the choice of having Tamer, he is so charismatic, and hip-hop that is so universal, it was a very good move.”

Singer Nafar doesn’t expect everybody in the Middle East to love the film but he is confident it will open up a debate. “It’s going to open up a debate and I think it’s very important and the movie is not here to give solutions, the movie is here to raise the right questions,” he said. —Reuters

**Ne-Yo marries Crystal Renay**

LOS ANGELES — Singer Ne-Yo has officially tied the knot to model and fiancée Crystal Renay. The couple exchanged vows in front of family and friends at the Terranea Resort in Rancho Palos Verdes, Los Angeles, reported People magazine.

“We can’t wait to start our life together. We’re looking forward to just being each other’s best friend,” Ne-Yo said.

A picture of the newlyweds revealed the bride in a pretty white gown with lace sleeves. Ne-Yo, whose real name is Shaffer Chimere Smith, met Renay for a collaboration for his 2015 album “Non-Fiction”.

He proposed to her last summer and they are expecting a baby boy later this year.

“Ne-Yo is already a dad to 5-year-old Madilyn Grace and 4-year-old Mason Evan from his relationship to ex-fiancee Monyetta Shaw. —PTI

**‘Fuocoammare’ (Fire at Sea) wins Golden Bear for best film in Berlin**

BERLIN — Gianfranco Rosi’s documentary film “Fuocoammare” (Fire at Sea), about the refugee crisis in the Mediterranean off the Italian island of Lampedusa, won the Golden Bear prize for Best Film at the Berlin International Film Festival Saturday.

It was a fitting end for a festival which went out of its way to make refugees welcome by giving them free tickets. Rosi paid tribute to those who risked their lives to escape war and poverty, and to the people of Lampedusa who welcomed them.

“Of course now at this moment my deeper thoughts go to all the people that never arrived to Lampedusa on these journeys of hope,” Rosi said in his acceptance speech on stage at Berlin’s cinema palace for the glittering awards ceremony.

Rosi, who won the top prize for another documentary in Venice in 2013, in this film shows daily life on the small island, mostly through the eyes of a young boy named Samuele who makes slingshots to shoot at birds and cacti.

In the sea nearby, the Italian navy searches for overloaded boats full of refugees dying of suffocation and asphyxiation by diesel fumes and brings survivors back to Lampedusa for treatment and for transport to refugee centres.

“I want to dedicate this award to the people of Lampedusa who were always extremely open to accept people arriving there,” Rosi said.

He noted that the flood of refugees that has made headlines for the island just off the coast of North Africa.

Rosi said he had asked Dr Pietro Bartolo, a physician on Lampedusa who treats refugees and appears in the film, why the island welcomes the tens of thousands of people who land there.

“He told me Lampedusa is a place of fishermen, we are fishermen, and fishermen, they all accept always, anything that comes from the sea. So this may be a lesson that (we) should learn to accept anything that comes from the sea,” Rosi said.

The Silver Bear Grand Jury Prize went to “Sma’u Sarajevo” (Death in Sarajevo) and its director Danis Tanovic.

The Best Director award went to France’s Mia Hansen-Love for the film “L’Avenir” (Things to Come).

The Best Actor award went to Majd Mastoura for his role in the Tunisian film “Inhebbek Hedi” while Trine Dyrholm took Best Actress for her role in the Danish film “Kollektivet” (The Commune).

The best script award went to Polish director and screenwriter Tomasz Wasilewski for “Zjednoczone Stany Milosci” (United States of Love) while the cinematography award went to Mark Lee Ping-Bing for the camerawork in the Chinese film “Chang Jiang Tu” (Crosscurrent) directed by Yang Chao.

An award for a film that opens new perspectives was given to the eight-hour-long Filipino film “Hele sa Hiwagang Hapis” (A Lullaby to the Sorrowful Mystery) directed by Lav Diaz.

Festival Director Dieter Kosslick said that watching Diaz’s film was a unique experience, not just for its length but also because the premiere started quite early in the morning. “So we all showed up, were completely, totally dressed up, the sun was shining, but it was 8.30am,” Kosslick said. —Reuters
Bangkok's Chinatown: a night at the opera

BANGKOK — Battles, a search for love and justice, all set in China. Hired by local Chinese shrines, opera companies in Bangkok's Chinatown perform mythical stories in Mandarin to round off celebrations marking the Lunar New Year in the Thai capital.

The wobbly wooden planks creak as the actors perform, moving from makeshift stage to stage. Among the audience, children look captivated, including a boy wearing a Barcelona soccer strip while his neighbour holds chopsticks and a bag of street food.

Chinese opera has a long pedigree in Thailand, home to the largest overseas Chinese community in the world.

The Chinatown cast, a mix of Chinese and Thai performers, range from a seasoned actor of more than 30 years, to a 7-year-old girl.

"Every time I get nervous and excited," says the girl, Vorvai, who began performing two months ago. "I want to perform well and enjoy it. I try to get better each time."

Hours before going on stage, performers in these operas, which blend music, legend and drama, start to apply their elaborate make-up, while the baby of a cast member sleeps backstage.

Offstage, musicians follow the dream-like action while playing traditional Chinese instrument including drums, plates and flutes. The operas combine colourful costumes, elaborate sets, with dialogue and singing that tell tales of tragedy and comedy alike.

Booking their autumn/winter 2016 collections, including Burberry, Alexander McQueen, Erdem and Topshop Unique.

"I really like these stories based on history," he says. "But I'm worried that the younger generation will struggle to understand them." —Reuters

London kicks off fashion shows amid catwalk shake-up

LONDON — London picked up the fashion baton from New York on Friday with five days of catwalk shows and presentations amid industry shake-up as designers strive to sell their creations faster.

London Fashion Week, which returns to a car park as its main venue, will feature 93 designers presenting their autumn/winter 2016 collections, including Burberry, Alexander McQueen, Erdem and Topshop Unique.

Among the most anticipated shows will be that of luxury goods maker Mulberry, which returns to the catwalk after a break with a new creative director — Johny Coca, formerly at Louis Vuitton and Celine.

"The industry as a whole is really exciting," said Pandora Sykes, fashion features editor at The Sunday Times Style magazine.

"He is the person that made everyone want Celine lug. So he can even lead a soupcon of that to Mulberry, then they are already on the up."

The London shows take place as an increasing number of luxury labels seek to satisfy demand from clients living in different climates, by bridging the usual six-month gap between catwalk presentation and retail availability. Burberry has said it is cutting down its four catwalk shows to two in February and September, featuring both menswear and womenswear, and that the clothes will be available to purchase straight after.

In an interview, Mulberry Chief Executive Therry Andretta said Burberry's decision will "impact people's thinking".

British Fashion Council Chief Executive Caroline Rush told Reuters that businesses were "really thinking about how do they put the customer at the heart of what they do, and this is really what it is about."

"And all of the noise and excitement that comes out of London fashion weeks and shows is... how do we get that better connection with the customer that wants to buy the product?"

Among the first to kick off Friday’s shows was Seoul-born J. JS Lee who said her line was inspired by Victorian architecture and furnishings. Models wore tailored trouser and skirt suits with frayed detailing, as well as dresses with draped detailing in red, yellow, black and white.

 Presenting furry coats, lace and knitted dresses and folklore-like frocks in black, nude, pink and black, Turkish designer Bora Aksu said he took inspiration from a Russian duchess living a spartan life.

"Her life journey of just being a duchess at a young age and being a farmer girl inspired the collection so there is lots of contrasting elements in it," he said. "So there are things like rainbow coats but also the fur is representing her aristocracy." — Reuters

London Fashion Week Autumn/Winter 16

(22-2-2016) - Sunday Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)

(03:00 Pm ~ 07:00 Pm) - Today Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)
Centrowitz takes mile, Felix and De Grasse win sprints

NEW YORK — Matthew Centrowitz surged to victory with a final-lap burst to repeat as Wanamaker Mile winner, while elite sprinters Allyson Felix and Andre De Grasse powered to wins at the 109th Millrose Games on Saturday.

Centrowitz, feeling sub-par due to congestion, laid back behind New Zealand rival Nick Willis before charging past at the gun for the final lap to win in a meet record 3:50.63 for a 2016 indoor best.

“Caught a little something this week, but still wanted to defend my title,” Centrowitz said.

“I couldn’t attack it like I wish I could,” Centrowitz said. “I couldn’t attack it like I wish I could’ve until I had to.” Willis, the 2008 Olympic 1500 metres silver medallist, repeated his runner-up finish to Centrowitz from last year in 3:51.06 for his third second to go with a pair of thirds in Wanamaker bids. Shandon Rowbury won the women’s mile by nearly two seconds, clocking 4:24.39. Felix and DeGrasse, sprinters with high Olympic expectations, were unhappy with their starts in the 60-metre dashes yet emerged victorious on the fast Armory track. Four-times Olympic champion and nine-times world champion Felix was taking a break from arduous training in her quest for a rare 200-400m double.

“This was about working on my start which still needs more work,” said Felix, who won in 7.15 seconds, five-hundredths of a second ahead of world champion Felix was taking a break from arduous training in her quest for a rare 200-400m double.

Both races were devoid of the sprints' usual fireworks as athletes dropped back from contention after a slow start or fell ill.

Nadal dumped from Rio semi-finals by Uruguayan battler

RIO DE JANEIRO — Rafael Nadal’s below-par season has continued with the former world number one dumped from the Rio Open semi-finals with a 6-7(6), 7-6(4), 6-4 defeat by unseeded Uruguayan Pablo Cuevas on Saturday.

The top seed capped Cuevas in a first set tie-break and denied his opponent two-set points in the second but succumbed to his first defeat against the world number 45. “I lost an opportunity, that’s it,” Spaniard Nadal said after being denied his 100th ATP final by claycourt specialist Cuevas who fired 48 winners to clinch the contest.

“I fought until the end. I have to accept it and keep working to change the dynamic. That’s what’s happening today and I have to work hard to change it,” added the 14-times grand slam champion. “I didn’t win a title, so it wasn’t a positive two tournaments. I had my chances in both. I lost in the semi-finals of both tournaments and just have to look forward to Indian Wells.”

—Reuters

Moratti sister lets slip Mourinho ‘is going to Manchester’

MILAN — The growing rumours that Jose Mourinho will be the next manager of Manchester United were further fuelled by a throw-away remark from Inter Milan dignitary Bedy Moratti on Saturday.

The Portuguese’s name has been increasingly linked by the media with the job amid the struggles of incumbent Louis van Gaal to win over the United-ed faithful. The speculation was sent spinning into overdrive when Moratti, sister of former Inter president Massimo, let slip to reporters after a meeting with Mourinho that the former Chelsea boss “is going to Manchester.”

Moratti was in Milan to watch Inter take on Sampdoria amid reports in Italy that he might be interested in a return to the club he steered to Champions League glory in 2010, a suggestion he was quick to deny.

After Mourinho had visited former employer Massimo Moratti and his family for lunch, Bedy, filmed in a video interview withCalcio Mercato, said: “It was pleasant. He’s still fantastic. He’s been missed on a human level. “Now he’s happy — he’s going to Manchester and he’s well.”

Bedy, whose family retain a major stake in Inter, was a board member at the San Siro outfit and is honorary presi denent of supporters’ group Inter Club.—Reuters

Reading stun West Brom in FA Cup, Arsenal held

LONDON — Championship strugglers Reading spiced up an otherwise dull afternoon in the FA Cup fifth round with a shock 3-1 victory over Premier League West Bromwich Albion after holders Arsenal were held 0-0 by Hull City on Saturday.

Arsenal’s inability to break down Championship leaders Hull’s massed defences ended their 14-match winning streak in the competition.

Top-flight Watford were also up against Championship opposition in Leeds United and edged a dour game 1-0 to reach the quarter-finals for the first time in nine years.

In the day’s only all-Premier League clash, Everton won 2-0 at Bournemouth, Ross Barkley and Romelu Lukaku scoring for the visitors after the Toffees’ keeper Joel Robles saved a first-half penalty from Charlie Daniels.

Reading, currently 16th in the second-tier Championship, guaranteed there will be at least one club from outside the Premier League in the last eight as they came from behind to beat West Brom.

They have won only once in the league since the turn of the year but goals from Paul McShane, Michael Hector and Lucas Piazon punished West Brom for a lacklustre display after they had taken the lead through captain Darren Fletcher.

Both McShane, a former West Brom player, and Hector converted headers from free kicks by Oliver Norwood while Piazon’s late effort capped a dismal exit for West Brom.

It only got uglier for Albion after the final whistle when their midfielder Chris Brunt was struck by a coin thrown from an area housing West Brom fans.

“I’ve never seen anything like that in 10 years, it’s disgusting,” Brunt said in a statement. “I hope the police have got hold of him.”

Arsenal’s three-year unbeaten run in the FA Cup continued but they laboured to beat a second-string Hull side.

With one eye on Tuesday’s Champions League last 16 first leg at home to Barcelona, Arsenal made nine changes from the side that beat Premier League leaders Leicester City last week.

Even when manager Arsene Wenger, in charge of his 100th FA Cup tie for the club, threw on the likes of Alexis Sanchez and Olivier Giroud the Gunners could find no way past Hull’s inspired keeper Eldin Jakupovic.—Reuters