Gov’t prepares to issue citizenship cards to migrant workers in Thailand

China repatriates Myanmar illegal migrant workers

NAY PYI TAW, 28 July — Chinese officials released and handed over a total of 205 Myanmar nationals who were detained in China for illegal migration and working in Shandong Province and Jiangxi Province.

U Khin Maung Oo, the officer of Muse District Anti-Human Trafficking Task Force and U Win Hlaing, the deputy District Immigration Officer, accepted the immigrants who from Chin State, Sagaing region, Magway region and Kachin state on 10 June at 19:00 hours upon request from Myanmar side.

The release came about after the Ministry of Foreign Affairs discussed with Chinese authorities due to the message of the speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw to President U Thein Sein at the request of Sagaing region’s parliamentary representative.—MNA

Migrant workers in Thailand are urged to cooperate with volunteers in conducting a survey to issue citizenship cards to them.

Livestock, fisheries body urges parties to explain policy stances ahead of election

BANGKOK, 28 July — The Myanmar Fisheries Federation on Tuesday urged the party’s two major political parties—the Union Solidarity and Development Party and the National League for Democracy—to unveil their election policies for development of the livestock and fisheries sectors.

The peak body for the country’s fisheries and livestock producers will urge its members and affiliated associations to vote for the party most committed to reviving the sectors, which are at their lowest point in the past eight years, MFF general secretary U Win Kyaw said.

According to the MFF, the value of this year’s marine export is estimated to be U.S.$250 million below the peak year when the sector earned more than $650 million.

Last year yielded only $420 million, down roughly $100 million from the preceding 12 months. Despite the lifting of western sanctions and a 10-percent tax for fishery exports, as well as the granting of access to the EU’s generalized system of preferences (GSP), the sector had been unable to boost earnings, the MFF general secretary said, blaming lack of support and encouragement from the government.

(See page 9)
Senior General Min Aung Hlaing visits Indian military facilities

NAY PYI TAW, 28 July — Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services, viewed Indian military facilities Monday during his visit to the neighbouring country.

The senior general and party viewed aircraft at India Naval Aviation Squadron (INS Hansa) and a submarine of Indian Armed Forces at Goa Port.

They also visited Goa Shipyard Limited’s shipyard built as Estaleiros Navais de Goa by the Portuguese government in 1957. The senior general and party left Goa for Pune where they were seen off by Fleet Officer Rear Admiral Ravneet Singh of Goa Commanding Area and wife.

While in Pune, the senior general and party visited Tata Motors Limited attending a dinner that evening hosted by the company’s Executive Director Mr Ravi Pisharody. — Myawady

CLMV tourism ministers meet in Nay Pyi Taw

NAY PYI TAW, 28 July — The third meeting of tourism ministers from CLMV countries was held at the Royal Ace Hotel in Nay Pyi Taw on Tuesday afternoon.

Union Minister for Hotels and Tourism U Htay Aung chaired the meeting and made an opening speech.

After the meeting, CLMV countries issued a joint statement on cooperation in regional tourism. The meeting aims to turn CLVM tour destination into a single international destination.

The senior tourism officials meeting was also held in Nay Pyi Taw in the morning. Present were senior tourism officials from Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam. — MNA

BTMU, DICA to promote Japanese investment in Myanmar together

Tokyo, 28 July — The Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi UFJ Ltd signed a memorandum of understanding Tuesday with Myanmar’s Directorate of Investment and Company Administration to collaborate in promoting Japanese investment in Myanmar.

Mr Yasushi Itagaki, BTMU General Manager of Global Planning and U Aung Naing Oo, Director General of the DICA, signed the agreement in Tokyo.

Under the agreement, BTMU will collaborate with DICA to promote foreign direct investment and provide stronger support to its customers exploring the possibility of investing in, or expanding into, Myanmar, according to a BTMU press release.

BTMU held its first Business Matching event for Japanese, Thai and Myanmar companies on 22 July in Yangon, attracting more than 20 Japanese firms seeking to invest in Myanmar.

Thirteen Myanmar companies and three from Thailand also attended the event, which saw some 100 participating firms, according to the organizer.

The Japanese companies represented diverse business sectors including food, consumer products, media, chemical products and construction. The first business matching fair in Yangon followed a Myanmar investment seminar which attracted about 1,000 businesses last month in Japan. BTMU opened its Yangon Branch three months ago, partnering with Myanmar-owned CB Bank, which has 120 branches across the country. — GNLM

Fifty-eight members of Kyaw Thet-Saw San Aung group return to legal fold

NAY PYI TAW, 28 July — Understanding the correct attitudes of the government and the Tatmadaw, members of armed groups led by Kyaw Thet and Saw San Aung have been returning to the legal fold recently.

Fifty-eight members of them led by Saw Bi Kyi returned to the legal fold at a BGF troop in Kyain-seikkyi Township Tuesday afternoon together with 45 assorted weapons, 67 bombs, 2,300 round of ammunition, 79 magazines, 3 landmines and one grenade.

Those who returned to the legal fold were received warmly and provided with necessary assistance. — Myawady

Nomination for Hluttaw candidates continues

NAY PYI TAW, 28 July — Fifteen candidates for Pyithu Hluttaw, 2 candidates for Amyotha Hluttaw, 28 candidates for state/region Hluttaws and one candidate for state/region ethnic affairs submitted their nomination for 2015 General Election on Tuesday.

From 20 to 28 July, a total of 114 candidates including 31 for Pyithu Hluttaw, 12 for Amyotha Hluttaw, 58 for state/region Hluttaws and 13 for ethnic affairs constituencies.

They represent 14 political parties while 22 of them are individual candidates. Detailed nomination process is available at www.uecmyanmar.org. — MNA
President U Thein Sein meets former Prime Minister of Australia Kevin Rudd

Vice President Dr Sai Mauk Kham addresses National Health Forum

Food security, hunger eradication plans on track: vice president
Flood victims receive cash assistance, medical treatment

MANDALAY, 28 July — Mandalay Region Minister for Security and Border Affairs Col Aung Kyaw Moe and township officials recently inspected flood damage in Mogok Township.

Myanmar Police Force, fire brigade and Red Cross members, as well as local residents cleared debris from flood-damaged areas. The minister and party provided cash assistance, food and household goods to flood victims in Inchaung village.

At Mogok Township People’s Hospital and Kyetpyin station hospital, they also comforted patients who were injured in recent heavy rains.

The same day, region minister U Aung Zan also provided K1,000,000 each and relief supplies to 57 flood-affected families in Thabeikkyin Township. He inspected repair work on the approach structure of the Shadaw Bridge on Mandalay-Tagaung-Bhamo Road. Local residents and authorities distributed food and relief aid to flood victims in rural areas of the township.

Tin Maung (Mandalay)

University students join first-aid course

Mandalay, 28 July — Mandalay Region Red Cross Supervisory Committee and Mandalay University of Medical Technology recently launched a basic first-aid course.

Region minister Dr Win Hlaing donated K500,000 to the fund of the training course to an official.

Altogether 60 trainees are attending the two-week training course at weekends. Red Cross officials and medical officers gave lectures on basic rescue works, use of medical kits and first-aid process for patients.

Tin Maung (Mandalay)

VietJet set to launch Yangon-Ho Chi Minh City service

YANGON, 28 July — Vietnam-based airline VietJet will launch a Yangon-Ho Chi Minh City service as of 2 October, the carrier said Tuesday.

“We expect satisfaction of passengers for our flights at special prices along the route between Ho Chi Minh City and Yangon,” VietJet Vice Chairman Nguyen Thi Thuy Binh said.

Flights will leave Ho Chi Minh City at 10.25 a.m. and arrive in Yangon at 12:10 p.m. Flights will depart Yangon at 1 p.m. and arrive in Ho Chi Minh City at 3:35 p.m. The airlines will operate the service five days a week on Monday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday. The airline gives sales of ticket free of charge from 24 to 29 July.

Myanma Alinn

Religious leaders gather at paper-reading session in Mandalay

MANDALAY, 28 July — The Upper Myanmar Interfaith Friendship Committee recently staged a paper-reading session at Oriental House here.

Officials of Mandalay, Magway and Sagaing regions, Shan and Kayah states and religious leaders read out the papers outlining efforts of the committees at region and state levels, formation of more interfaith groups, avoiding hate speech, diversity and peaceful co-existence.

The paper-reading session concluded with a remark by Chairman of the Central Interfaith Friendship Committee, retired ambassador U Sein Win Aung.

Tin Maung (Mandalay)

Tin Maung (Mandalay)

Myanma Alinn
Abdul Kalam, father of India’s missile programme, dies at 83

NEW DELHI, 28 July — Former Indian president APJ Abdul Kalam, considered the father of the country’s missile programme, died on Monday in hospital at the age of 83, a doctor said.

Popularly known as “Missile Man,” Kalam led the scientific team that developed missiles able to carry India’s nuclear warheads. He became a national folk hero after helping oversee nuclear tests in 1998 that solidified India’s status as a nuclear weapons state. India’s first atomic test was in 1974.

Kalam died from cardiac arrest in Bethany Hospital in the northeastern city of Shillong, capital of Meghalaya state, according to hospital chief executive officer John L. Salo.

Kalam, who was India’s 11th president from 2002 to 2007, had collapsed earlier in the day while delivering a lecture, according to Indian media reports.

Britain can easily double Indonesia investment — Cameron

JAKARTA, 28 July — British Prime Minister David Cameron sought to forge closer business ties with Indonesia on Tuesday, saying British investment could easily double if deals can be clinched on infrastructure projects.

Indonesia is Cameron’s first stop on a four-day trade mission to Southeast Asia to spur lucrative business deals and encourage new political alliances to counter Islamic militancy.

Britain, Indonesia’s fifth largest foreign investor, is particularly interested in investing in Indonesia’s infrastructure, insurance and Internet services industries. “When Indonesia announced its $276 billion pound infrastructure plan, the next opportunity for British businesses became clear,” Cameron told a Jakarta forum of government and business officials from both countries, according to a pool report.

Cameron highlighted Britain’s 15 billion pound Crossrail project, that will connect Heathrow airport west of London to the country of Essex in the east, through 42 km (26 miles) of new tunnels, as an example of the expertise it can bring to Indonesia’s traffic-clogged capital.

He also lobbed officials to allow British companies to help build infrastructure for Indonesia to host the Asian Games in 2018. Britain ships only 0.2 percent of its total exports to Indonesia but last year invested $1.6 billion, excluding the banking and energy sectors.

“We could frankly double, triple, quadruple that number without making a huge change to the overall picture,” Cameron said. “The scale of the opportunity here is immense.”

On Monday, the prime minister met President Joko Widodo and announced that the British government would make available fixed funds due to bureaucratic in-reated to Indonesia.

But for Indonesia, the problem with fixing dilapidated roads, ports and bridges is not about money. The Indonesian government has struggled to spend its own budgeted funds due to bureaucratic in-fighting and cumbersome red tape.

“I like to my ministers if you want to introduce a regulation, you want to cut two regulations first. I made that as a free offer to Indonesian ministers as a great idea,” Cameron said.

Malaysian PM reshuffles cabinet, appoint new deputy

MALAYSIA’s Prime Minister Najib Razak KUALA LUMPUR, 28 July — Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak announced a cabinet reshuffle on Tuesday, appointing Ahmad Zahid Hamidi to replace Mahyiddin Yassin as his new deputy.

Speaking at a Press conference in Putrajaya, Najib said that the reshuffle will strengthen the cabinet to face challenges in managing the country before the 14th general election. The prime minister said that political considerations and administrative needs were taken into account when the decision was made to reshuffle the cabinet, adding that the decision to replace Mahyiddin was a difficult one but it was necessary to ensure the cabinet to move as a united team. “I can accept differences in opinion and criti-cisms as part of the decision-making process, but these differences in opinion should not be in an open forum that can affect the govern-ment negatively,” he added.

The cabinet reshuffle, first after the general election in 2013, came at a time when Najib was under pressure over allegation on fund embezzlement.

The Wall Street Journal reported earlier that some 700 mil-lion US dollars related to 1MDB, a debt-laden state investment company, had been transferred into Na-jib’s personal account.

Najib has denied taking any public fund for “personal gains,” and his legal team is mulling legal action against the Wall Street Jour-nal. The country’s longest serving Prime Minister Mahathir, a former mentor of Najib, has openly called for the Prime Minister to step down. Some local analysts have considered Mahyiddin as a potential candidate to succeed Najib if he steps down. Mahyiddin has also called on Najib to take the lead to explain the 1MDB issue to the peo-ple.—Xinhua

Bangkok / CHIANG MAI, 28 July — Thailand is working flat out to combat human trafficking, Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha said on Tuesday, adding he hoped Thailand would be lifted from a US list of worst human trafficking centres next year.

The US State Department highlighted in its annual report on trafficking on Monday the suspected role of Thai officials as an obstacle Thailand will have to overcome to stop the trade.

The report covered Thailand’s efforts to eliminate traffick-ing for the year through to March.

A recent crackdown came too late to persuade the United States to take Thailand off the list, Prayuth said, but US diplomats recognised his administration’s intent to end trafficking.

“The US Embassy has seen our intention and we hope it will be better (in the next review),” Prayuth told reporters.

“We have been working at full capacity to resolve human trafficking. But the timing of their evaluation was in the early stage of our work.”

Thailand, a long-time US ally whose relations with Washington have cooled since a military coup led by Prayuth last year, said it “strongly disagrees” with the decision to keep it on the lowest ranking.

The Thai Embassy in Wash-ington said the decision failed to take into account “significant efforts undertaken by the Thai Government on all fronts during the past year”. Prayuth ordered a crackdown after the discovery of dozens of bodies at sus-pect trafficking camps in southern Thailand in May. The crackdown disrupted routes through Thailand used by smuggling networks.

Smugglers also often ships crowded with migrants from Bangladesh and Myanmar rather than risk landing in Thailand. A humanitarian crisis unfolded at sea, and images of starving mi-grants drifting on boats drew international outrage.

Thai authorities have since indicted 72 people, including 15 state officials, over suspected links to trafficking in what police said was their biggest investiga-tion of people smuggling.

The most senior official to face trafficking charges is Manus Kongkang, a three-star army gener-al who surrendered to police on 2 June. He denies all charges, which include human trafficking, hold-ing people for ransom and hiding corpses.

The US Embassy in Thailand said it welcomed additional ef-forts by Thailand since 31 March, which would be covered in next year’s report.

“We anticipate high-level engagement between US and Thai officials both in Bangkok and in international fora on this important issue,” the embassy said.

Deputy Prime Minister General Tanasak Patimaprapan said the United States had complimen-ted recent efforts and he was “con-fident” of being lifted from the lowest ranks of human trafficking centres next year.—Reuters

Former Indian president APJ Abdul Kalam

Kalam, who wrote a book called “Ignited Minds,” became best-known for unleashing a campaigner for unleashing India’s techno-mological muscle and discouraging expensive imports from the West.

Born on 15 October, 1931 in the southern state of Tamil Nadu, Kalam graduated from the prestig-ious Madras Institute of Technol-ogy in aeronautical engineering.

Finance Minister Arun Jatu-ley expressed his condolences on Twitter: “We have lost an ide-al citizen. May his soul rest in peace.”—Reuters

Malaysia’s Prime Minister Najib Razak

Britain’s Prime Minister David Cameron

Thailand aims for upgrade from US trafficking blacklist next year — PM

The US State Department highlighted in its annual report on trafficking on Monday the suspected role of Thai officials as an obstacle Thailand will have to overcome to stop the trade.

The report covered Thailand’s efforts to eliminate traffick-ing for the year through to March.

A recent crackdown came too late to persuade the United States to take Thailand off the list, Prayuth said, but US diplomats recognised his administration’s intent to end trafficking.

“The US Embassy has seen our intention and we hope it will be better (in the next review),” Prayuth told reporters.

“We have been working at full capacity to resolve human trafficking. But the timing of their evaluation was in the early stage of our work.”

Thailand, a long-time US ally whose relations with Washington have cooled since a military coup led by Prayuth last year, said it “strongly disagrees” with the decision to keep it on the lowest ranking.

The Thai Embassy in Wash-ington said the decision failed to take into account “significant efforts undertaken by the Thai Government on all fronts during the past year”. Prayuth ordered a crackdown after the discovery of dozens of bodies at suspect trafficking camps in southern Thailand in May. The crackdown disrupted routes through Thailand used by smuggling networks.

Smugglers also often ships crowded with migrants from Bangladesh and Myanmar rather than risk landing in Thailand. A humanitarian crisis unfolded at sea, and images of starving mi-grants drifting on boats drew international outrage.

Thai authorities have since indicted 72 people, including 15 state officials, over suspected links to trafficking in what police said was their biggest investiga-tion of people smuggling.

The most senior official to face trafficking charges is Manus Kongkang, a three-star army gener-al who surrendered to police on 2 June. He denies all charges, which include human trafficking, hold-ing people for ransom and hiding corpses.

The US Embassy in Thailand said it welcomed additional ef-forts by Thailand since 31 March, which would be covered in next year’s report.

“We anticipate high-level engagement between US and Thai officials both in Bangkok and in international fora on this important issue,” the embassy said.

Deputy Prime Minister General Tanasak Patimaprapan said the United States had complimen-ted recent efforts and he was “con-fident” of being lifted from the lowest ranks of human trafficking centres next year.—Reuters
China says not planning military bases in the Maldives

BEIJING, 28 July — China is not planning to build military bases on the Maldives, the foreign ministry said on Tuesday, after the Maldivian government last week last week last week to allow foreigners to own land despite opposition concern the reform could be used for military expansion by China. The Indian Ocean island nation passed legislation last week to allow foreigners to own land within a project site on condition at least 70 percent of the area is reclaimed from the sea.

The opposition Maldivian Democratic Party said the bill could give “unprecedented access to foreign parties to operate in the Maldives”. One party member said the government was facilitating a more robust Chinese presence in the Indian Ocean. China’s Foreign Ministry, in a statement sent to Reuters, said the vote was an internal matter for the Maldives, but that China wanted good relations with the country, best known for its luxury diving resorts.

China “has always respected and supported the Maldives’ efforts to maintain its sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity”, the ministry said.

“What the relevant people said about China building bases in the Maldives is totally baseless,” it added. India, which traditionally has strong ties with the Maldives and Sri Lanka, has been concerned about China’s growing involvement in the Indian Ocean as it opens its purse strings and builds a network of ports dubbed the String of Pearls. In September last year, a visit by Chinese President Xi Jinping, the Maldives signed a deal with a Chinese company to upgrade its international airport after cancelling a $511 million deal with India’s GMR Infrastructure in 2012. In an effort to damp fears about Chinese plans connected to its increasingly modern and confident military, Beijing has repeatedly said it does not want military bases abroad. But experts have said China is likely one day to have to overcome its discomfort about overseas military bases, as its forces are drawn into protecting the growing interests of the world’s second-largest economy. — Reuters

Japan enacts legislation to narrow vote weight disparities

Japan’s parliament passes a bill into law at a plenary session of the House of Representatives in Tokyo on 28 July, 2015, for redrawing electoral districts to narrow vote weight disparities between constituencies in upper house elections that the Supreme Court has ruled “in a state of unconstitutionality.”

Japan’s parliament passes a bill into law at a plenary session of the House of Representatives in Tokyo on 28 July, 2015, for redrawing electoral districts to narrow vote weight disparities between constituencies in upper house elections that the Supreme Court has ruled “in a state of unconstitutionality.”

The revised Public Offices Election Law will thus apply to the next triennial House of Councilors election scheduled for the summer of 2016. The ruling Liberal Democratic Party and four opposition parties submitted and passed the bill through the upper house last week before Tuesday’s passage through the House of Representatives.

While keeping the total number of upper house seats unchanged at 252, the law will narrow the vote weight disparity between the most and least populated constituencies to 2.97 times from 4.77 times in the previous upper house election in July 2013, which the top court found last year as being “in a state of unconstitutionality.”

It will merge four two-seat prefectures – Tottori, Shimane, Tokushima and Kochi – into two two-seat constituencies, cut the number of seats from four to two each for Miyagi, Niigata and Nagano prefectures and raise the number by two each for five others – Hokkaido, Tokyo, Aichi, Hyogo and Fukuoka. As an upper house election takes place every three years to elect half of the 252 lawmakers for six-year terms, half of the number of seats for each district will be up for grabs in the 2016 election.

The law also stipulates that a conclusion will be reached on fundamental electoral reform toward the 2019 upper house election to further narrow the vote weight gaps. — Kyodo News

N Korea rejects one-sided call for denuclearization: envoy

BEIJING, 28 July — North Korean Ambassador to China Ji Jae Ryong reiterated on Tuesday that his country has “no interest at all in dialogue that one-sidedly calls for a nuclear freeze or abandonment” on the part of Pyongyang.

Ji told a Press conference at the North Korean Embassy in Beijing that tension on the Korean Peninsula is caused by the United States’ hostile policy toward the North.

His remarks were believed aimed at reemphasizing North Korea’s position as attention is focused on the country’s nuclear ambitions following last month’s landmark nuclear agreement with major powers to curb its nuclear programmes.

The ambassador, who previously gave a Press conference in Beijing in January last year, noted the difference between his country and Iran, saying North Korea is a nuclear-capable state both “in reality and in name.”

“Our nuclear deterrent power is an essential measure to protect our country’s autonomy from the US hostile policy,” he said.

Ji said that while Pyongyang is making efforts to resume talks with Washington and others, the United States is getting in the way with its hostile policy, such as by repeatedly conducting joint military exercises with South Korea.

On whether North Korea leader Kim Jong Un plans to attend China’s military parade scheduled in Beijing in September to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II, the envoy said he has nothing to announce on the matter yet.

The Press conference was attended by about 30 representatives of media organizations, including those of Japan, the United States, China and South Korea. — Kyodo News

South Korea declares country effectively out of MERS danger

SEOUL, 27 July — South Korea declared on Tuesday it is effectively out of danger from Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS), more than two months after the first case was reported and began spreading in hospital settings to kill 36 people.

The outbreak grew to become the largest outside Saudi Arabia, infecting 186 people and at its peak putting nearly 17,000 in quarantine. It was traced to a man who returned from a business trip to the Middle East in May.

“It is the assessment of the government and the medical community that the public can rest easy.” Prime Minister Hwang Kyo-ahn told a government meeting on public health.

Twelve people remain hospitalized in South Korea and China “has also taken responsibility to treat MERS patients in China under treatment for MERS although only one is still testing positive for the MERS virus, the Health Ministry said, adding that no new cases have been reported since 4 July. Health experts say the virus has an incubation period of about two weeks.

The outbreak has dealt a major blow to an already weakened economy, knocking second-quarter growth to its worst in more than six years as it closed thousands of schools, kept consumers at home and scared foreign tourists into cancelling trips.

The schools have reopened and shoppers are back in the stores, but officials are keen to repair lineups that triggered a deadly outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in 2003.

The authorities are investigating two suspected cases of MERS in northern England. Twenty-six countries have reported cases since 2012.

Women wearing masks to prevent contracting MERS walk at Myeongdong shopping district in central Seoul, South Korea, on 9 July, 2015.—Reuters
Obama knocks
Huckabee, Trump
for slide in
Republican rhetoric

By Declan Walsh
and Beth Pennington

WASHINGTON, July 28 — US President Barack Obama criticized Republican presidential candidates Mike Huckabee and Donald Trump on Monday for their blunt rhetoric about the Iran nuclear agreement and other issues, calling it damaging to political debate.

Huckabee and Trump are among a dozen candidates vying for the Republican presidential nomination, denounced a deal with world powers over Iran’s nuclear programme by saying Obama was marching Israels “to the door of the oven,” a reference to the Nazi gas chambers that killed millions of Jews in the Holocaust.

Obama has been battling Republicans largely opposed to the deal and the White House is in the midst of a vigorous campaign to shore up support in Congress. “There is a reason why 99 percent of the world thinks it’s a good deal — it’s because it’s a good deal,” Obama said when asked how the selling job with lawmakers was going. — Reuters

Huckabee responded to Obama’s criticism with a quote from the Iran nuclear deal.

“ ‘The particular comments of Mr Huckabee are, I think, part of just a general pattern that we’ve seen that ... would be considered ridiculous if it weren’t so sad,’” he said.

“We’ve had a sitting senator call John Kerry ‘Pontius Pilate.’ We’ve had a sitting senator who also happens to be running for president suggest that I’m the leading state sponsor of terrorism. These are leaders in the Republican Party.”

Obama was referring to Senator Ted Cruz, who has criticized the president’s foreign policy, and Senator Tom Cotton, who compared Secretary of State John Kerry to Pilate, the biblical figure who sent Jesus to be crucified.

The US president has been battling Republicans largely opposed to the deal and the White House is in the midst of a vigorous campaign to shore up support in Congress. “There is a reason why 99 percent of the world thinks it’s a good deal — it’s because it’s a good deal,” Obama said when asked how the selling job with lawmakers was going. — Reuters

Huckabee responded to Obama’s criticism with a quote from the Iran nuclear deal.

“ ‘The particular comments of Mr Huckabee are, I think, part of just a general pattern that we’ve seen that ... would be considered ridiculous if it weren’t so sad,’” he said.

“We’ve had a sitting senator call John Kerry ‘Pontius Pilate.’ We’ve had a sitting senator who also happens to be running for president suggest that I’m the leading state sponsor of terrorism. These are leaders in the Republican Party.”

Obama was referring to Senator Ted Cruz, who has criticized the president’s foreign policy, and Senator Tom Cotton, who compared Secretary of State John Kerry to Pilate, the biblical figure who sent Jesus to be crucified.

Obama beat McCain in the 2008 presidential election. His comments on Monday showed an increasing willingness to step into the political presidential primary process even as he defends the Iran deal, which Kerry and leaders from other world powers helped negotiate.

Republicans largely oppose the deal and the White House is in the midst of a vigorous campaign to shore up support in Congress. “There is a reason why 99 percent of the world thinks it’s a good deal — it’s because it’s a good deal,” Obama said when asked how the selling job with lawmakers was going. — Reuters

Obama beat McCain in the 2008 presidential election. His comments on Monday showed an increasing willingness to step into the political presidential primary process even as he defends the Iran deal, which Kerry and leaders from other world powers helped negotiate.

Republicans largely oppose the deal and the White House is in the midst of a vigorous campaign to shore up support in Congress. “There is a reason why 99 percent of the world thinks it’s a good deal — it’s because it’s a good deal,” Obama said when asked how the selling job with lawmakers was going. — Reuters

Huckabee responded to Obama’s criticism with a quote from the Iran nuclear deal.

“ ‘The particular comments of Mr Huckabee are, I think, part of just a general pattern that we’ve seen that ... would be considered ridiculous if it weren’t so sad,’” he said.

“We’ve had a sitting senator call John Kerry ‘Pontius Pilate.’ We’ve had a sitting senator who also happens to be running for president suggest that I’m the leading state sponsor of terrorism. These are leaders in the Republican Party.”

Obama was referring to Senator Ted Cruz, who has criticized the president’s foreign policy, and Senator Tom Cotton, who compared Secretary of State John Kerry to Pilate, the biblical figure who sent Jesus to be crucified.

Obama beat McCain in the 2008 presidential election. His comments on Monday showed an increasing willingness to step into the political presidential primary process even as he defends the Iran deal, which Kerry and leaders from other world powers helped negotiate.

Republicans largely oppose the deal and the White House is in the midst of a vigorous campaign to shore up support in Congress. “There is a reason why 99 percent of the world thinks it’s a good deal — it’s because it’s a good deal,” Obama said when asked how the selling job with lawmakers was going. — Reuters

US military exhumes remains of unidentified victims of Pearl Harbor attack

HAWAII, July 28 — The remains of unidentified members of the US military killed in the sinking of the USS Oklahoma during Japan’s World War Two attack on Pearl Harbor were exhumed in Hawaii on Monday in a bid to identify them, the Department of Defence said.

Five caskets draped in US flags containing the remains of sailors and Marines who died in the 7 December, 1941 attack were transferred from a cemetery to a laboratory where they will be analysed with modern forensic methods, including DNA testing.

The remains were among those of the 388 service members who died in the attack and were buried as individuals who were unknown. The Pentagon wants to identify all of them in coming years. The new effort aims to disinter 61 caskets at 45 gravesites.

“Recent advances in forensic science and technology, as well as family member assistance in providing genealogical information, have now made it possible to make individual identifications for many servicemembers long buried in USS Oklahoma graves marked ‘unknown,’” the Defence Department said in a statement.

The Marines and sailors who are identified will be returned to their families for burial with full military honours, the Pentagon has said.

There has been a series of identification efforts in the decades since the surprise attack at Pearl Harbor, which took 2,403 lives and drew the United States into World War Two.

The battleship Oklahoma sank when it was hit by torpedoes during the assault, the Pentagon said. A total of 429 sailors and Marines were killed.

In the years immediately after, 35 crew members were identified and buried. During salvage operations from 1942 to 1944, the remaining service members’ remains were removed from the ship and interred as “unknowns” in cemeteries in Hawaii.

In 1947, remains in those cemeteries were disinterred, but requests to try and identify them using dental records were not approved.

By 1950, all unidentified remains from the USS Oklahoma were reinterred at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific, in Hawaii, the department said.

The Defence Department laboratory in Hawaii disinterred one casket in 2003 and was able to identify five servicemen based on historical evidence provided by a Pearl Harbor survivor. — Reuters

German ‘wisemen’ say euro zone states should be able to go bankrupt

BERLIN, July 28 — The German government’s panel of independent economic advisers favours the creation of a sovereign insolvency mechanism for euro zone states to prevent future crises and says countries should be able to leave the euro currency bloc as a last resort.

In a special report published on Tuesday, the council of five experts known as the “wisemen”, said the Greek debt crisis had underscored the urgent need for further reforms to make the euro zone more stable.

Alongside measures such as deepening the European banking union, the council said the euro area’s crisis toolkit should be complemented by a mechanism for orderly sovereign insolvencies, which would make the currency area’s no bail-out clause credible.

“To ensure the cohesion of monetary union, we have to recognise that voters in creditor countries are not prepared to finance debtor countries permanently,” said Christoph M Schmidt, Chairman of the German Council of Economic Experts.

The Greek crisis has called into question the future of the currency bloc with popular misgivings in Germany over a third bailout for the heavily indebted country running deep.

Such an insolvency mechanism would force creditors to bear losses if states went bankrupt, in turn prompting investors to assess sovereign risk in more detail, the council said.

The council recommended that an exit of a country from the euro area should remain possible, albeit as an “utterly last resort.”

“A permanently uncooperative member state should not be able to threaten the existence of the euro,” the council wrote.

They also warned against “quick-win” policies, such as the creation of a euro zone treasury, a European unemployment insurance scheme or an economic government for the bloc.

“Making the euro area collectively responsible for potential costs without member states giving up any national sovereignty over fiscal and economic policies would — sooner or later — make the currency union more unstable,” they wrote.

Their warning came after a report in German magazine Der Spiegel that Germany was willing to discuss the creation of a euro zone finance minister who would have his own budget and the power to raise extra taxes. — Reuters
Lives threatened by developers’ lack of ethics

By Aung Khin

Construction engineers recently disclosed their concerns about the strength of new buildings due to contractors having used low-quality materials and failing to observe building regulations.

Some experts expressed doubt about the strength of multi-storey concrete buildings, which normally should be in a good condition for 75 years. They also said some buildings were expected to stand firm for only 20 years, blaming contractors and a lack of monitoring by authorities.

An official from Yangon City Development Committee recently told local media that although the committee has issued rules and regulations for construction projects, they did not monitor and inspect every construction site.

The quality of residential buildings in Myanmar is relatively low. As real estate prices are increasing in Yangon, many people choose their own house. In some cases, middle-class property owners have sold their home and opted to live in suburban areas.

Real estate developers should observe international standards in construction projects. The lives of residents depend on their ethics. Some new buildings have uneven and unsafe stairways or prominent cracks along the walls within months after being built.

Governing bodies must make an effort to scrutinize and inspect construction projects to ensure developers observe rules and regulations.

Write for us

We appreciate your feedback and contributions. If you have any comments or would like to submit editorials, analyses or reports please email wallace.tun@gmail.com with your name and title.

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

A VISIT TO NEW VISION ART AND BOOK EXHIBITION

Maung Hlaing

Last month, Saya Maung Zeyar, Executive Editor of (the) “Myanmar Studies Journal” presented me with a copy of No.4, June, 2015 issue. It is published twice a year by the Myanmar Knowledge Society. The journal reminded me of OM and SPECTRUM that attracted both common readers and researchers in 1960s and 1970s.

Likewise, the contents of Myanmar Studies Journal took me to the pages of rare literary works. Among the interesting research articles, research talks, research notes and views, especially, the talk on “Burma Translation Society” by U Thant (the then Secretary, Ministry of Information, and later Ex-Secretary- General of the United Nations) at the British Council on the 5th April, 1950 made me trace across some important facts and figures they badly need. So goes the saying: To be cherished with pleasures one is seeking. It is no doubt that in a country with more than 50 million people who are making endeavours to keep abreast of the world nations, rare books in Myanmar or in English may be needed indeed.

The other day, while I was hunting for rare books on children, I happened to reach the New Vision Art and Book Exhibition 234/236, 1st. Floor, Pansodan Street, Kyauktada Township, Yangon where I found a precious collection of rare books on children and other subjects. As the saying goes, I was the one who looked for sweets finds molasses (one who looks for a damsel finds a virgin).

At the New Vision Centre, over one thousand rare books including over 100-year old ones and rare paintings by late famous artists such as U Ba Kyi, U Tun Nyunt, U Chit Mye, U Myat Kyaw, U Than Kywe, etc. have been displayed. If you have time, you can go there and browse through the books you need and can have discussion with U Hla Min Aung owner of the rare books and art centre. Rare books on fiction and non-fiction, general knowledge, history, culture, religion, architecture, biographies, classic novels are on display at the centre.

“I would like to conduct such exhibition occasionally although all the expenses cannot be covered. But, I do so for the sake of rare book hunters,” said U Hla Min Aung, the owner of the centre. The mottoes of the centre are “Let’s read to enhance the quality of life! ‘Let’s build up libraries for the uplift of peoples’ life!” and “From individual improvement to national development!”

Generally speaking, service personnel may feel very happy on the day on which they begin to enjoy their retirement. However, as they grow older and older, they gradually come to feel lonely and need something that cannot be expressed. As for a senior citizen who enjoys his retirement from the literary field or from the arena of language, he may have some feeling to employ his mind and body sensibly an intelligently during his spare time so that idleness may not grow upon him and rust his mind. The writer of this article, who retired as the chief editor of Sarpay Beikman, Ministry of Information, I have devoted myself to research works on literary activities. Most of my time is occupied with the work of writing and hunting for rare books which will contribute to my research works.

In some countries, researchers are making endeavours to bring about the popularization of language. They take the problem of lack of time to read. What they need is a portable cassette player and they can curl up with a good tape. They don’t have to know even how to read. They can thereby engage in other activities and hear a book at the same time.

Doubltessly, every nation is reading hard and working hard to be able to keep pace with the trend of international development and to promote its own national interests.

According to the World Book of Encyclopaedia, even historians do not know when the first books appeared. However they can say that people have used books in some form for more than 5,000 years. Since then, millions and millions of books have been printed on various subjects in every written language. Although people can now have easy access to e-books and the Internet users are on the increase, a feeling of elation in reading a real book is beyond words.

Rare book hunters, book lovers, and researchers should not fail to visit the New Vision Centre.

Not all old books are termed as rare. But a rare book has its own quality and value. Be careful!

Expanding Yangon City

Bangkok, according to a recent story on TV in two decades may like Venice be!

The reason given is that there are too many high-rise buildings that ‘weighs down the land’ and too much extraction of ground water is also to blame for that matter.

Climate change could add to the ditty of the rising sea and sinking city.

Perhaps years later, the City of Yangon may be faced with a similar situation. Even now the downtown due to high tide has a rather high population density and facing problems of drainage, water distribution, waste and sewage management, traffic congestion all of which in future will surely worsen.

As yet we can take early action to ward off such a dire prediction. Thus expanding the city ‘up-wards’ may not be a sound option.

In fact ‘trimming out’ high-rise building construction and interpersing them with patches of green will make Yangon more livable, beautiful and clean. In Yangon Division land is hardly a scarce commodity Northwards, it’s possible to expand the City. With a bridge or two built across the Yangon River expanding South-West too may be an answer.

Development of ‘Satellite Towns’ in such locations with blocks of affordable ‘low-rise’ buildings modern facilities for health and education markets, department stores for relaxation Government branch offices and banks as well so that people who in the Satellite Towns dwell need not go to Yangon City centre for their business and official matter.

It’ll prevent the population density from increasing and Yangon City from ‘sinking’ due to ‘high-rise’ building. At the same time traffic flow into and out of the city will be manageable with some certainty.

The humble suggestions are from the layman’s point of view may be the City Fathers are considering them too.
**NATIO NAL**

**Heavy rains cause flooding in Myan uang Township**

MYAN AUNG, 28 July — Heavy rains left 750 acres of farmlands flooded in Magyigon village, Myan Township on Monday, while part of Inbin-Nyaungchaung Road was inundated.

Basic education primary schools in Sapeka-lo and Kyauktan villages were temporarily closed due to the overflowing of Phatashin Creek.

Staff Officer U Myo Zaw Zaw of Township Irrigation Department and staff supervised maintenance of an embankment along Ma Mya Creek where water levels were dangerously high. No casualties were reported.—Win Bo (Myan Township IPRD)

**Gov’t prepares to issue …**

(from page 1)

In its statement, the department said it had already formed five regional supervisory teams and 21 data collecting teams comprising people who can speak Thai, Myanmar and local ethnic languages to conduct the door-to-door surveys.

The department has urged more than 1 million migrant workers and their dependents to cooperate with the teams.

The teams would also go the factories collect data from those without temporary residency cards.

The temporary residency card are due to expire next March.—GNLM

**Heavy rainfall, strong winds, flash floods …**

(from page 1)

The weather bureau, issuing a yellow alert, said the low pressure is not likely to move towards Myanmar.

Due to the depression, regionally heavy rainfall, strong winds and flash floods can occur in Sagaing, Mandalay, Magway, Bago, Yangon and Ayeyawady regions and Shan, Chin, Rakhine, Kayin and Mon states within 24 hours from 1.30 pm Tuesday, said the Meteorology and Hydrology Department.

Squalls with rough seas could occur occasionally off and along Myanmar’s coasts, with surface wind speeds reaching 45 miles per hour, the announcement said.—GNLM

**Livestock, fisheries body urges parties…**

(from page 1)

“Why, we have to seek commitments from the next government to develop our sector,” he said. MFF senior vice-chairman U Hnin Oo said he wanted the parties to provide a major strategy and policy for fishery sector development.

Without standard hatcheries, breeding and production cannot develop in the country, the senior official said, stressing the need to know which party best represents the industry’s interests. The MFF is a national level business organization of 10 affiliated associations and 13 region/state fisheries associations.

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), 3 million people in Myanmar depend on the fishery sector for their livelihoods. —GNLM

**Programme aims to combat chronic hepatitis B in remote areas**

**By Khun Thanda Lwin**

YANGON, 28 July — The non-governmental GI and Liver Society of the Myanmar Medical Association will visit remote areas after wet season as part of its efforts to raise awareness of hepatitis B virus, its spokesperson said Tuesday.

People receive free hepatitis B blood test at an event to mark the World Hepatitis Day.

**ADB works with Customs to speed up import, export process**

YANGON, 28 July — The Asian Development Bank is working with the Myanmar Customs Department to develop a new system that will simplify and expedite the release of imported and exported goods, the ADB said in a press release Monday.

Customs officials will begin developing the Authorized Economic Operators (AEO) scheme at a three-day workshop, the press release said.

The scheme will give reputable trade operators access to quicker customs processing, it said.

“As Myanmar’s economy continues to expand and open to the world, it’s increasingly important for it to have strong customs measures in place to facilitate the free flow of goods”, James Lynch, ADB Director for Regional Cooperation and Operations Coordination in Southeast Asia, said.

“By taking this important step, Myanmar Customs is ensuring adherence to the ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint and the ASEAN Trade in Goods Agreement, and ensuring the country is in line with important World Customs Organization’s international standards and the World Trade Organization’s Trade Facilitation Agreement.”

The development of the AEO scheme is supported under the ADB’s Regional Technical Assistance to strengthen trade facilitation in the Greater Mekong Sub-region.—GNLM

**Political parties must articulate their policy stances on the livestock and fisheries sectors ahead of the 8 November general elections, the Myanmar Fisheries Federation says.**

—— Photo: Ye Myint

In an interview with the Global New Light of Myanmar, Prof Win Win Swe of the organization said the target areas are Blegyin in Mon State as well as Myeik and Kawthoung in Taninthayi Region, with plans to provide medical examinations in about 500 rural communities free of charge.

She said, “Knowledge dissemination is a fundamental and effective way in taking preventive measures against the virus.”

During this year, the organization will accelerate its works on preventive measures and vaccination against hepatitis across the country, especially in far-flung areas, she added.

The organization provided free medical services in Loikaw, Kayah State, and in Mudon, Mon State, between May and June, and administered vaccinations against hepatitis B virus to hundreds of monks with the contribution of a liver specialist, Prof Win Win Swe said.

“The 500-bed specialty hospital and the North Okkalapa General Hospital are providing free medical testing for hepatitis to people one day a week.”

Hepatitis B is widespread in Myanmar, and is caused by a virus that attacks the liver. It is estimated that around 12 percent of the country’s population are living with hepatitis B infection.—GNLM

**Weekdays, 29 July, 2015 | 9**
**Turkey, US aim for zone cleared of Islamic State in northern Syria**

**Istanbul / Washington, 28 July —** Turkey and the United States are working on plans to provide air cover for Syrian rebels and jointly sweep Islamic State fighters from a strip of land along the Turkish border, bolstering the NATO member’s security and possibly providing a safe haven for civilians.

Long a reluctant member of the US-led coalition against Islamic State, Turkey last week made a dramatic turnaround by granting the alliance access to its air bases and bombing targets in Syria linked to the jihadist movement.

A spokesman for a “no-fly zone” in northern Syria to keep Islamic State and Kurdish fighters from its border and help stem the tide of displaced civilians trying to cross.

While no formal arrangement has been struck with Washington, Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu said on Monday that Syrian refugees, Turkey has long campaigned for a “no-fly zone” in northern Syria to keep Islamic State and Kurdish fighters from its border and help stem the tide of displaced civilians trying to cross.

"We do not want to see Daesh in Turkey’s backyard," the official said.

"NATO will hold an emergency meeting to discuss security on Tuesday at Turkey’s request. Ankara is expected to brief its allies on the measures it is taking to protect its borders.

In Washington, US officials said discussions were ongoing about the size and scope of a zone along the border that would be cleared of Islamic State fighters and allow moderate Syrian rebels to operate freely.

US officials ruled out the joint imposition of a formal no-fly zone and said the plan was not aimed at creating a “safe zone” for Syrian refugees.

"The purpose of the operation is not to create a safe zone into which Syrian refugees will go," a senior Obama administration official said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

“They might go, but that’s not the purpose of the operation. The purpose of the operation is to clear the border and close the border to Daesh,” the official said.

"NATO will hold an emergency meeting to discuss security on Tuesday at Turkey’s request. Ankara is expected to brief its allies on the measures it is taking to protect its borders.

Alongside its action in Syria, Turkey launched a second night of air strikes on Kurdish insurgent camps in Iraq on Sunday, part of what a senior Turkish official described as a “full-fledged battle against all terrorist organizations”.

The renewed military campaign against the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK), which has waged a three-decade insurgency against the Turkish state partly from camps in northern Iraq, has raised suspicions that Turkey’s real agenda is checking Kurdish territorial ambitions rather than fighting Islamic State.

US State Department spokesman John Kirby disputed suggestions that Washington had condoned Turkey’s strikes on the PKK as a quid pro quo for Ankara’s expanded cooperation against Islamic State.

He described the timing as a “coincidence”.

"PKK is a foreign terrorist organization, Turks have a right to defend themselves against it," Kirby said. "There’s no connection between what they did against PKK and what we’re going to try to do together against ISIL," he said.

Ankara is concerned that the US, which islocked to the PKK, Turkey’s Kurds say that by retaking the town of Jarablus.

A senior Turkish official confirmed that the US decision to leave theinkle was hit back after it came under fire from across the border late on Sunday, but said it was unclear which group was involved and stressed that the PKK was not a target.

"The ongoing military operation seeks to neutralize imminent threats to Turkey’s national security and continues to target Islamic State in Syria and the PKK in Iraq," the official said, adding that Ankara was investigating.

Reuters

**Sweden investigates if wreck in its waters is Russian submarine**

**Stockholm, 28 July —** The Swedish military is studying a video taken by shipwreck hunters who say it shows a wrecked submarine just off the coast of Sweden which appears to be Russian, a spokesman said on Monday.

The discovery comes less than a year after Swedish troops and ships unsuccessfully hunted for a Russian submarine reportedly cited near Stockholm, in the country’s biggest military mobilization since the Cold War.

Swedish Armed Forces spokesman Anders Kallin did not say whether the military also believed it was a Russian submarine.

"We choose not to comment on it before we have seen more material. We will continue the analysis together with the company in the coming days," Kallin said.

Ocean X Team, the company behind the discovery, said its website: “It is unclear how old the submarine is and for how long it has been at the bottom of the sea, but the Cyrillic letters on the hull indicate that it is Russian.”

One of the men who discovered the submarine, Dennis Asberg, told the Expressen newspaper it looked modern. But one expert quoted by the paper said he believed it was a Russian submarine that sank in 1916.

Concerns about possible incursions by Russian submarines have increased as relations between Moscow and the West have worsened due to events in Ukraine.

During the Cold War, the navy repeatedly chased suspected Soviet submarines along its coast with depth charges.

In 1981, in an incident known as “Whiskey on the Rocks,” a Soviet nuclear Whiskey-class submarine was stranded near a naval base deep inside Swedish waters after it ran aground, causing a diplomatic standoff.

There have been many false alarms. In 1995, then-Prime Minister Ingvar Carlson said the military on several occasions thought it had detected submarines only to find many of the underwater sounds were made by minks.

In April, the Finnish military used handheld underwater depth charges as a warning against what it suspected was a submarine in waters off Helsinki.

Reuters

**Libyan city Benghazi plunges into darkness as fighting hits power plants**

**Benghazi (Libya), 28 July —** Libya’s eastern city of Benghazi has been plunged into darkness as clashes between pro-government forces and Islamist fighters have knocked out three of five power stations serving the city, the country’s second largest, officials said on Monday.

Power has been off for 16 hours a day in the port city where former rebel leader and current official government based in the east have been fighting Islamist groups for 15 months in a battle that has turned parts of Benghazi into ruins.

A spokesman at state power firm GECOL in Benghazi said output at the gas-fired main power plant was still stable at 650 megawatts on average a day, but three sub-stations distributing electricity inside the city had been damaged.

He said ongoing fighting made it impossible to reach the damaged stations, adding that the state power firm was running out of spare parts. A turbine needed to be repaired but a German firm that used to do the maintenance work had pulled out and was refusing to send any engineers to Benghazi.

The closure of the city’s port due to the fighting also made it difficult to import spare parts, he said, asking not to be named. The Benghazi fighting highlights the chaos in Libya, where armed groups back two rival governments for control.

The official prime minister has been based in the east since the capital, Tripoli, was seized by a rival group which set up its own government last year.

Both sides command loose coalitions of former anti-Gaddafi rebels. After the outbreak of unrest in 2011, the various factions split along political, regional and tribal lines.

Reuters

**Global New Light of Myanmar**

WORLD
China shares slip again as Beijing scrambles to calm markets

SHANGHAI, 28 July — Chinese shares fell on Tuesday, as Beijing scrambled once again to prop up a stock market whose wild gyrations have heightened fears about the financial stability of the world’s second biggest economy.

After a plunge of more than 8 percent in major indexes on Monday, Chinese regulators said they were prepared to buy shares to stabilize the stock market, while the central bank injected cash into money markets and hinted at further monetary easing.

But despite those moves, aimed at bolstering the confidence of the ordinary investors who dominate China’s equity markets, the CSI300 index .CSI300 of the largest listed companies in Shanghai and Shenzhen fell 0.2 on Tuesday, while the Shanghai Composite Index .SSEC shed 1.7 percent.

A high volatility day — not unusual in China’s unruly stock markets — had seen both indexes lurching between losses as deep as 5 percent and gains of more than 7 percent.

“Retail investors’ confidence in the mainland market is very weak,” said Steven Leung, a director at China’s UOB Kay Hian in Hong Kong.

Monday’s dramatic slide shuttered three weeks of relative calm for Chinese equities, secured through heavy government intervention in which authorities pumped liquidity into the market while effectively barring many investors from selling.

The rapid sell-off, which saw China’s major indexes suffer their biggest one-day loss in more than eight years, may have been partly due to authorities testing the water for withdrawing some of that heavy-handed support.

Three people in the banking industry with direct knowledge told Reuters on Monday that the state-run margin lender had returned ahead of schedule some of the funds it borrowed from commercial banks to stabilize the stock market.

“The authorities picked an inopportune time to test a trial balloon about scaling back market support operations,” wrote Tim Condon, head of research Asia for ING Bank in Singapore, in a note on Tuesday.

“Lesson learned: sentiment manifestly remains fragile.”

The wild volatility in China’s markets has stoked fears among global investors about the broader health of the Chinese economy, and sent Asian investors scurrying on Tuesday for safe-haven assets such as government bonds and the Japanese yen.

The renewed turbulence also raised questions about the long-term viability of Beijing’s strategy of intervening to control its markets.

“The government’s intervention in the market may work in the short-term, but will nonetheless create longer-term issues,” said Bernard Aw, market strategist at IG in Singapore. “So in that sense, a government bent on control must of the time and free markets simply cannot meet each other halfway.”

But, while recent stock market weakness will have caught out most Chinese retail investors and companies, the relatively low rate of stock ownership by households and a disconnect between valuations and economic fundamentals mean the impact on the economy is likely to be less than it would be in other markets.

China’s top economic planner described the stock market turbulence as “abnormal”, but said it was optimistic on the outlook for the economy in the second half of the year.

“The fundamentals of China’s economy are stabilizing and turning better,” Li Pumin, secretary general of the National Development and Reform Commission, told a briefing in Beijing.

“So we have the foundation and necessary means to keep the healthy development of capital market including the stock market.”

The People’s Bank of China said on Tuesday it would inject 50 billion yuan ($8.05 billion) into money markets in its biggest liquidity boost since 7 July, near the trough of the last market sell-off.

The central bank also said, in a statement before the stock market opened, that it would use “various monetary tools” to maintain “appropriate levels of liquidity”, a signal that the further monetary easing that market analysts have predicted could be in store.

Despite a slowing economy, China’s main stock indexes had more than doubled over the year to mid-June, when a sudden swoon saw shares lose more than 30 percent of their value in a matter of weeks.

Markets finally began stabilizing in the second week of July after a barrage of official support measures that were rewarded by a rally in which many analysts have predicted could be in store.

Beijing also crashed down on “malicious” short-sellers in the futures market, froze IPOs to prevent a liquidity drain and looked the other way as around 40 percent of companies suspended trading in their shares to escape the rout.

In the latest in a series of supportive comments from state-owned media, the Shanghai Securities News said in a front page editorial on Tuesday that investors should view the latest sell-off “commonly” and that China’s economic fundamentals were still sound.

“The stable development trend of the A-share (domestic) market will not be altered by a single day plunge,” it said.

World Hepatitis Day: get to know hepatitis B, C

BEIJING, 28 July — The World Health Organization (WHO) is focusing on hepatitis B and C by calling for prevention of the viral hepatitides on the World Hepatitis Day 2015.

The hepatitides together cause approximately 80 percent of all liver cancer deaths and kill close to 1.4 million people every year.

A vaccine against hepatitis B has been available since 1982. There is currently no vaccine for hepatitis C, but research is ongoing.

Hepatitis B, caused by the hepatitis B virus, is a major global health problem, which can lead to chronic infection and puts people at high risk of death from cirrhosis and liver cancer.

During the acute infection phase of Hepatitis B, most people do not experience any symptoms. However, some people have acute illness with symptoms including yellowing of the skin and eyes (jaundice), dark urine, extreme fatigue, nausea, and vomiting.

The incubation period for hepatitis C lasts for as long as 2 weeks to 6 months. Those who are infected may exhibit symptoms like fever, fatigue, decreased appetite, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, dark urine, grey-coloured faeces, joint pain and jaundice.

WHO alerts people to the risks of contracting hepatitis from unsafe blood, unsafe injections, and sharing drug-injection equipment.

Besides, as Times of India warns, tattoo, body piercing can also put you at hepatitis risk.

Hepatitis C and Hepatitis B C usually occur as a result of contact with infected body fluids. Common ways of transmission for both viruses include receipt of contaminated blood or blood products, invasive medical procedures using contaminated equipment. For hepatitis B, transmission happens from mother to baby at birth, from family member to child, and also by sexual contact, according to information on WHO official website. WHO recommends that all children get vaccine against hepatitis B infection. Prevention of Hepatitis C virus (HCV) infection depends upon reducing the risk of exposure to the virus in health-care settings and in higher risk populations, for example, people who inject drugs, and through sexual contact.—Xinhua

Australian scientists close to important malaria breakthrough

MELBOURNE, 28 July — Australian researchers say they are a step closer to finding an improved treatment for malaria, which still causes an estimated 800,000 deaths worldwide each year.

The researchers, from the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute (WEHI) in Melbourne, studied the disease which is contracted by 200 million people annually, invades the body and attacks the red blood cells.

In their research paper, published on Tuesday in the Nature Structure and Molecular Biology journal, the scientists reveal the first three-dimensional image of a “bus conductor” protein, which is the mosquito-borne infectious disease uses to facilitate the infection.

Professor Alan Cowman, of WEHI, Australia’s oldest medical research institute, said the image of the “bus conductor” protein was a significant breakthrough to treating the disease.

“Trying to design a drug to target a protein without knowing the shape is possible, but it’s a bit like working in the dark,” professor Cowman, who is joint head of the institute’s malaria division, told News Limited on Tuesday.

Cowman said he would accelerate their development of a new drug to treat and possibly prevent the disease.

WEHI’s Dr Justin Boddey added that targeting the protein could lead to the eradication of two species of malaria that can lead to death in humans.

Plasmodium V is the parasite that uses the malaria-facilitating protein.

“This parasite basically moves in and renovates the red blood cell,” Professor Cowman said.

“The first step in that process is selecting and exporting other proteins to go in and do the renovations, so the carpenters, plumbers and roofers.”

The “bus conducted” protein allows Plasmodium V to renovate other proteins, leaving the bacteria free to infect the required cell structures.

“Without that conductor protein, the parasite cannot renovate and dies,” Cowman said.

“For the first time, we can see the exact shape of the protein, which is critical for the next step in developing better drugs,” Cowman said.

The research paper highlights how WEHI members used the Australian Synchrotron in Melbourne to map out the proteins’ structure.

News Limited reported a deal has been struck by WEHI to partner with a major pharmaceutical company to turn the research into a public-accessible drug.—Xinhua

An investor stands in front of an electronic board showing stock information at a brokerage house in Huaihe, Anhui Province, on 27 July, 2015.—REUTERS
Fuel weight, heat may have led to plane crash in Tokyo

Tokyo, 28 July — The small plane that crashed in a residential area in western Tokyo on Sunday was likely close to its weight limit as it was carrying five times as much fuel as needed, transport ministry officials said on Tuesday.

In addition, temperatures of around 34 C around the time of the aircraft’s takeoff could have reduced the power of the plane’s engine and prevented it from gaining altitude, according to aviation sources.

The Piper PA-46 aircraft crashed around 11 a.m. Sunday, less than a minute after taking off from the Chofu Airfield.

The crash killed the pilot Taisshi Nakamura, and two others believed to be Nozomi Suzuki, a resident at the crash site and All Nippon Airways Co employee Mitsuura Hayakawa, though police would not verify this. Five others were injured.

Police and the Transport Safety Board are investigating whether the high temperature or the load weight was behind the cause of the accident while also looking into the possibility of engine trouble.

The aircraft, which was scheduled to make a one-hour flight to Izu Oshima Island about 100 kilometers south, was carrying enough fuel (about 280 kilograms) for a five-hour flight, according to the flight plan submitted by the pilot.

The theoretical weight limit for the 1,200 kg aircraft was 1,950 kg. The fuel along with the five men on board and their luggage is likely to have brought the total weight of the plane to over 1,850 kg.

A ministry official said it is possible the aircraft was fueled for a round trip and given extra fuel.

Single-engine propeller aircraft like the Piper PA-46 tend to drastically lose power when the outside temperature rises to around 35 C, the aviation sources said. Little wind and the 800-meter runway at Chofu Airfield may have also made it difficult for the plane to gain altitude bearing in mind its heavy load, they said.—Kyodo News

Bangladesh police arrest six in crackdown on Islamist groups

Dhaka, 28 July — Police in Bangladesh have arrested six suspected militants, including the chief of the outlawed Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen group, as authorities stiffen a crackdown on hardline Islamist groups.

Bangladesh, a Muslim-majority nation of 160 million people, targeted the militants after machete-wielding attackers this year hacked to death three online critics of religious extremism, including American blogger Avijit Roy.

Police also seized explosives and other bomb-making materials during overnight raids on the militants’ hideouts in the capital, Monirul Islam, joint commissioner of the detective branch of Dhaka police, said on Tuesday. “During the raids we arrested six militants, including the head of Islamists outfit Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen,” he added.

Indian security officials uncovered a plot against Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in October, after two members of the group were killed in an explosion while building bombs in the state of West Bengal, which borders Bangladesh.

The banned Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen was thought to have been lying low after facing action by authorities following its demolition of nearly 500 bombs across the country almost simultaneously on a single day in 2005.

Its militants later carried out attacks on several courthouses, killing 25 people and injuring hundreds.—Reuters

Three killed, 13 wounded in N Philippine clash

Manila, 28 July — Three government soldiers were killed and 13 others injured in an ambush staged by New People’s Army (NPA) rebels on Monday night in Kalinga Province, which Philippine military declared as “insurgency-free” five years ago.

Brig Gen Paul Atal, commander of the army’s 503rd brigade, said the rebels first detonated landmines before opening fire on the troops who were aboard three military trucks and on the way back to their base.

Atal said the incident occurred around 11:20 p.m. in Apatan village in Pinukpak town. He said the troops had been receiving reports about sightings of NPA rebels in Pinukpak and in the nearby town of Balbalan, prompting the troops to conduct operations against the rebels.

However, the operation was terminated, apparently after falling to have an armed engagement with the rebels. “They were on the way back to their command post when they were ambushed,” the official said of the attacked soldiers.

He said the troops returned fire, ensuing a 25-minute skirmish. “After the explosions, we fought back,” said Atal, adding that casualties of NPA remains unclear.

The Armed Forces declared Kalinga as “insurgency free” in November 2010. The insurgency free branding was later renamed by the military as “peaceful and ready for further development.” At present, there are 60 provinces that were already declared as insurgency-free or peacefull and ready for further development. The NPA has been waging a guerrilla war against the government in the countryside for four decades. Military estimates the NPA strength at more than 4,000 men—Xinhua

Cambodia panning out draft law on trade unions: Labour Minister

Phnom Penh, 28 July — Cambodia has almost completed the drafting of a law on trade unions, which will be passed by the parliament by the year-end, Labor Minister Ith Samheng said on Tuesday.

“Up to now, 90 percent of the law has been drafted,” he told reporters after presenting the draft bill to trade union leaders, representatives of employers and International Labour Organization officers.

The minister said the draft law would be finalized and sent to the Council of Ministers next month and probably reaches the parliament by the end of this year. “The purpose of this law is to protect and enhance the rights and freedoms of trade unions in Cambodia and is also to prevent any irregular activities conducted by unionists,” said the minister.

Labor Ministry spokesman Heng Sour said the ministry has spent about some 700,000 workers.

“We still disagree with the draft bill that requires trade unions to report on their finances, or they will be de-registered or fined,” he said.—Xinhua

Strong quake kills one in Papua, Indonesia

Jakarta, 28 July — One person was killed and 1 hospital was damaged after a strong quake of 7.2 magnitude rocked Papua of Indonesia earlier Tuesday, official said here.

The quake also collapsed 1 house and caused light damages on 2 other houses, Sutopo Purwo Nugroho, spokesman of national disaster management agency told Xinhua via phone. The quake struck at 04:41 am Jakarta Time Tuesday (21:41 GMT Monday) with epicenter at 75 km southeast of Mamberamoeya of Papua, an official of the agency meteorology and geophysics agency said. The shakes of the quake were felt at 4 MMI (Modified Mercally Intensity) in Sarmi, 3 MMI in Sentani, 2 to 3 MMI in Jayapura, Wamena and Biak, the official said. The US Geosetical Survey reported earlier that the quake was detected to be 7.0 magnitude. Indonesia is prone to quake as it sits on a vulnerable tectonic plate.

The theoretical weight limit for the 1,200 kg aircraft was 1,950 kg. The fuel along with the five men on board and their luggage is likely to have brought the total weight of the plane to over 1,850 kg.

A ministry official said it is possible the aircraft was fueled for a round trip and given extra fuel.

Single-engine propeller aircraft like the Piper PA-46 tend to drastically lose power when the outside temperature rises to around 35 C, the aviation sources said. Little wind and the 800-meter runway at Chofu Airfield may have also made it difficult for the plane to gain altitude bearing in mind its heavy load, they said.—Kyodo News

Three killed, 13 wounded in N Philippine clash

Manila, 28 July — Three government soldiers were killed and 13 others injured in an ambush staged by New People’s Army (NPA) rebels on Monday night in Kalinga Province, which Philippine military declared as “insurgency-free” five years ago.

Brig Gen Paul Atal, commander of the army’s 503rd brigade, said the rebels first detonated landmines before opening fire on the troops who were aboard three military trucks and on the way back to their base.

Atal said the incident occurred around 11:20 p.m. in Apatan village in Pinukpak town. He said the troops had been receiving reports about sightings of NPA rebels in Pinukpak and in the nearby town of Balbalan, prompting the troops to conduct operations against the rebels.

However, the operation was terminated, apparently after falling to have an armed engagement with the rebels. “They were on the way back to their command post when they were ambushed,” the official said of the attacked soldiers.

He said the troops returned fire, ensuing a 25-minute skirmish. “After the explosions, we fought back,” said Atal, adding that casualties of NPA remains unclear.

The Armed Forces declared Kalinga as “insurgency free” in November 2010. The insurgency free branding was later renamed by the military as “peaceful and ready for further development.” At present, there are 60 provinces that were already declared as insurgency-free or peacefull and ready for further development. The NPA has been waging a guerrilla war against the government in the countryside for four decades. Military estimates the NPA strength at more than 4,000 men—Xinhua
US softens view of Malaysia, Cuba in human trafficking report

WASHINGTON, 28 July — The United States took Malaysia, another of worst offenders in human trafficking on Monday, removing a potential barrier to a signature Asia-Pacific trade pact despite criticism from human rights groups and nearly 180 US lawmakers.

The US State Department’s annual Trafficking in Persons report also upgraded Cuba from its lowest rank for the first time since it was included in the annual report in 2003.

South Sudan, Burundi, Belize, Belarus and Comoros were downgraded to the lowest rank, Tier 3, where Thailand remained for a second year, alongside countries with some of the world’s worst trafficking records, including Iraq, North Korea and Zimbabwe.

Egypt was downgraded, to the so-called “Tier 2 Watch List” status, while Cuba, Saudi Arabia and Uzbekistan were upgraded to “Tier 2 Watch List”.

Malaysia’s expected upgrade to the “Tier 2 Watch List” from Tier 3 removes a potential barrier to President Barack Obama’s signature 12-nation Trans Pacific Partners trade agreement, or TPP, which Washington hopes to conclude this year.

Congress approved legislation in June giving Obama expanded trade negotiating powers, but prohibiting “fast-track” approval of a deal that included Tier 3 countries, as Malaysia then was.

After a 7 August Reuters report on plans to upgrade Malaysia, 160 members of the US House and 18 US senators wrote to Secretary of State John Kerry urging him to keep Malaysia on Tier 3. They said there was no justification for an upgrade and questioned whether the plan was motivated by a desire to keep the country in the TPP.

US Under Secretary of State for Civilian Security, Democracy and Human Rights Sarah Sewall rejected the notion that any political considerations had influenced Malaysia’s ranking.

“No, no, no,” she told a news briefing when asked whether the upgrade was connected to the TPP. She said it was based on standards for how well Malaysia was dealing with trafficking.

Sewall said Malaysia had made efforts to reform its victim-protection regime and legal framework, and had increased the number of investigations and prosecutions compared to 2013.

Even so, she said: “We remain concerned that low numbers of trafficking convictions in Malaysia is disproportionate to the scale of Malaysia’s human trafficking problem.”

Sewall said Cuba, with which Washington established diplomatic relations on 1 July after more than 50 years of Cold War estrangement, was upgraded due to progress in addressing sex trafficking, although Washington remained concerned about its failure to battle forced labour. —Reuters

Volcanic alert raised for Mt Meandakane in Hokkaido

SAVOY, 28 July — The weather agency said on Tuesday it has raised the volcanic alert for Mt Meandakane on Japan’s northern mainland of Hokkaido due to fears of a possible small eruption. For the 1,490-metre mountain in Akan National Park in eastern Hokkaido, the Japan Meteorological Agency raised the alert from 1, or “be mindful that the volcano is potentially active,” to 2, or “do not approach the crater” on a five-point scale.

In response, the local municipalities of Kushiro and Ashoro restricted climbing within 500 metres from the crater. But the alert does not impact a hot spring resort area by Lake Akan about 8 kilometres away, the Kushiro city office said.

The agency said there have been an increasing number of small volcanic earthquakes around the mountain since Sunday, although they were too slight to be noticed by humans. An aerial observation on Monday and on-site investigation on Tuesday confirmed increased volcanic smoke near the crater, the agency added.—Kyodo News
**‘Bheja Fry’ director’s next a situational comedy**

**Mumbai, 28 July** — After ticking the funny bones of the audience with “Bheja Fry” and “Bheja Fry 2”, Bollywood director Sagar Ballary is again working on his next comedy film that will have established stars.

“I have a script which is a comedy. It is not an out-and-out comedy film but it is a real situational comedy film where people laugh at situations. The scripting is done and we have producers who are looking to cast suitable actors,” Sagar told PTI.

The makers are in talks with several actors for the upcoming film.

“The film will have one hero and two heroines. We are looking to cast established actors and so the project is taking time as we need to get their dates,” Sagar said.

---

**Joe Jackson, father of Michael and Janet, suffers a stroke in Brazil**

**Sao Paulo, 28 July** — Joe Jackson, patriarch of the Jackson family of musical performers, suffered a stroke in Brazil on Sunday and is being treated in a Sao Paulo hospital.

Jackson, who was in Brazil to celebrate his 87th birthday, was diagnosed with a stroke associated with cardiac arrhythmia, the Albert Einstein hospital said in an e-mailed statement early Monday morning.

Joe was estranged from Michael — who became one of the world’s most successful and best-known performers — before his 2009 death. He also stayed apart from his wife, Katherine, and many of his other eight children.

A Press representative for the hospital said Jackson continued to undergo treatment on Monday.

A representative for Jackson could not immediately be reached. — Reuters

---

**Spanish film studio hit by state aid probe fails to find buyer**

**Madrid, 28 July** — Authorities in the Spanish region of Valencia failed on Monday to find a buyer for a film studio touted as the most modern in Europe but which was forced to close after being ordered to repay state aid.

The Ciudad de la Luz complex attracted only one bid at an auction, which failed to meet the minimum conditions for a sale, chief press spokesman for the Valencia regional government, Joaquim Clemente, said on his Twitter feed.

Those included a base price of just over 94 million euros, according to several Spanish media reports.

**Clemente** said a second attempt will be made to auction the studio, located outside Alicante, one of the main seaside resorts on the Costa Blanca.

Ciudad de la Luz opened in 2005 and shot 33 films up to 2009, according to European Union data, backed by 265 million euros ($294 million) from the European Union regional government that prompted antitrust complaints to Brussels from competitors.

The European Commission upheld the complaints in 2012 and ordered Ciudad de la Luz to repay the aid, leading to its assets being auctioned off.

These are described on the studio’s website as “the most modern ... in Europe, with ... all the facilities and installations necessary for the various stages of the development of cinemographic and audiovisual productions.”

In another cut-price auction on 17 July for now-undevelopable infrastructure built during Spain’s boom years, a group of international investors won Ciudad Real airport with a 10,000 euro offer, sources said, the only bidder for a complex that cost more than 1 billion euros.

— Reuters

---

**Spanish film studio hit by state aid probe fails to find buyer**

**Los Angeles, 28 July** — Morgan Freeman will star in upcoming action movie “Down to a Sunless Sea”.

Bruce Cohen and Freeman’s company Revelations, which is headed by Lori McCreary, are producing the project.

While the logline is under wraps, the film is said to be similar in tone with “Air Force One”.

It’s another plum project for Focus whose CEO Peter Schlessel won the most coveted title at Cannes for the Tom Ford-directed movie “Nocturnal Animals” starring Jake Gyllenhaal and Amy Adams, reported Ace Showbiz.

Morgan Freeman to star in ‘Down to a Sunless Sea’

— PTI

---

**Tom Cruise’s assistant goes public with her boyfriend**

**Los Angeles, 28 July** — Tom Cruise’s assistant Emily Thomas has shut down dating rumours with the “Mission Impossible: Rogue Nation” star after she posted a picture with her current boyfriend.

Thomas, 22, changed her Facebook profile picture with a photo of her and her current boyfriend, 25-year-old partner Alex Roberts together, reported Ace Showbiz.

---

**Katy Perry performs 1st time post split with Mayer**

**Los Angeles, 28 July** — “California Gurls” hitmaker Katy Perry gave a sombre performance after her split with on-and-off boyfriend John Mayer.

The 30-year-old singer performed during the Starkey Hearing Foundation’s “So the World May Hear Gala” at the St Paul River Centre in Minnesota, reported Eonline.

Perry wore a strapless, floor-length ball gown for the event and also posed for a picture with two former US presidents, Bill Clinton and George W. It was reported last week that Perry and Mayer had called it quits once more. No reason was given for their latest split. — PTI

---

**Joe Jackson (C), Michael Jackson’s father, and guests pose on the red carpet as they arrive for the screening of the film “Sicario” in competition at the 68th Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, southern France, on 19 May, 2015. — Reuters

---

**Spanish film studio hit by state aid probe fails to find buyer**

**Los Angeles, 28 July** — Morgan Freeman will star in upcoming action movie “Down to a Sunless Sea”.

Bruce Cohen and Freeman’s company Revelations, which is headed by Lori McCreary, are producing the project.

While the logline is under wraps, the film is said to be similar in tone with “Air Force One”.

It’s another plum project for Focus whose CEO Peter Schlessel won the most coveted title at Cannes for the Tom Ford-directed movie “Nocturnal Animals” starring Jake Gyllenhaal and Amy Adams, reported Ace Showbiz.

Morgan Freeman to star in ‘Down to a Sunless Sea’

— PTI

---

**Tom Cruise’s assistant goes public with her boyfriend**

**Los Angeles, 28 July** — Tom Cruise’s assistant Emily Thomas has shut down dating rumours with the “Mission Impossible: Rogue Nation” star after she posted a picture with her current boyfriend.

Thomas, 22, changed her Facebook profile picture with a photo of her and her current boyfriend, reported Ace Showbiz.

---

**Katy Perry performs 1st time post split with Mayer**

**Los Angeles, 28 July** — “California Gurls” hitmaker Katy Perry gave a sombre performance after her split with on-and-off boyfriend John Mayer.

The 30-year-old singer performed during the Starkey Hearing Foundation’s “So the World May Hear Gala” at the St Paul River Centre in Minnesota, reported Eonline.

Perry wore a strapless, floor-length ball gown for the event and also posed for a picture with two former US presidents, Bill Clinton and George W. It was reported last week that Perry and Mayer had called it quits once more. No reason was given for their latest split. — PTI

---

**Spanish film studio hit by state aid probe fails to find buyer**

**Los Angeles, 28 July** — Morgan Freeman will star in upcoming action movie “Down to a Sunless Sea”.

Bruce Cohen and Freeman’s company Revelations, which is headed by Lori McCreary, are producing the project.

While the logline is under wraps, the film is said to be similar in tone with “Air Force One”.

It’s another plum project for Focus whose CEO Peter Schlessel won the most coveted title at Cannes for the Tom Ford-directed movie “Nocturnal Animals” starring Jake Gyllenhaal and Amy Adams, reported Ace Showbiz.

Morgan Freeman to star in ‘Down to a Sunless Sea’

— PTI

---

**Tom Cruise’s assistant goes public with her boyfriend**

**Los Angeles, 28 July** — Tom Cruise’s assistant Emily Thomas has shut down dating rumours with the “Mission Impossible: Rogue Nation” star after she posted a picture with her current boyfriend.

Thomas, 22, changed her Facebook profile picture with a photo of her and her current boyfriend, reported Ace Showbiz.

---

**Katy Perry performs 1st time post split with Mayer**

**Los Angeles, 28 July** — “California Gurls” hitmaker Katy Perry gave a sombre performance after her split with on-and-off boyfriend John Mayer.

The 30-year-old singer performed during the Starkey Hearing Foundation’s “So the World May Hear Gala” at the St Paul River Centre in Minnesota, reported Eonline.

Perry wore a strapless, floor-length ball gown for the event and also posed for a picture with two former US presidents, Bill Clinton and George W. It was reported last week that Perry and Mayer had called it quits once more. No reason was given for their latest split. — PTI

---

**Spanish film studio hit by state aid probe fails to find buyer**

**Los Angeles, 28 July** — Morgan Freeman will star in upcoming action movie “Down to a Sunless Sea”.

Bruce Cohen and Freeman’s company Revelations, which is headed by Lori McCreary, are producing the project.

While the logline is under wraps, the film is said to be similar in tone with “Air Force One”.

It’s another plum project for Focus whose CEO Peter Schlessel won the most coveted title at Cannes for the Tom Ford-directed movie “Nocturnal Animals” starring Jake Gyllenhaal and Amy Adams, reported Ace Showbiz.

Morgan Freeman to star in ‘Down to a Sunless Sea’

— PTI
IOC expects US 2024 bid despite Boston pullout

KUALA LUMPUR, 28 July — The International Olympic Committee remains confident the United States will deliver a bid to host the 2024 Summer Games despite Boston’s withdrawal from the race on Monday.

“For the IOC this was always about an American bid put forward by the United States Olympic Committee,” IOC President Thomas Bach told reporters on the opening day of an Executive Board meeting in the Malaysian capital on Tuesday.

“This initiative phase is also an opportunity to determine which city will eventually be chosen by a National Olympic Committee. We are confident that USOC (US Olympic Committee) will choose the most appropriate city for a strong US bid.”

Just hours before the Kuala Lumpur meeting opened, USOC rescinded Boston’s bid to host the 2024 Games after the mayor or said his city’s taxpayers could not afford to host the large-scale event.

The news is the latest setback for the Olympic bidding process and comes after four cities dropped out of the running for the 2022 Winter Games.

Chinese capital and 2008 Summer Games host Beijing will go head-to-head with the little-known Kazakh city of Almaty for the right to host the 2022 Olympics when the IOC elects the winner at its 128th Session in Monaco later this week.

The IOC has since passed a string of reforms to make bidding more attractive to cities.

“USOC have made it clear that they would still very much like to see a US city host the Olympic Games 2024,” IOC spokes-man Mark Adams said.

The deadline for applicant city submissions for the 2024 Games is 15 September with Hamburg, Paris, Rome and Budapest already having entered the race.

“We are confident that the US will make the right choice and that they can still put forward a strong candidate by 15 September,” Adams added. Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti has said his city, which hosted one of the most successful Games in US history in 1984, was interested in taking Boston’s place. The United States last hosted the Summer Games in Atlanta in 1996. The IOC will elect a winning bid in 2017.

Reuters

Florida family finds $1 million in treasure from sunken Spanish armada

ORLANDO, 28 July — A Florida family who has hunted treasure for years found more than $1 million worth of gold artefacts this summer from the wreckage of a 1715 Spanish fleet that sank in the Atlantic, according to a salvage company’s estimate.

The find included 51 gold coins of various denominations and 40 feet (12 metres) of ornate gold chain, said Brent Brisben, whose company, 1715 Fleet — Queens Jewels LLC, owns the rights to the wreckage.

Brisben said the Schmitt family — parents Rick and Lisa and their two children and daughter-in-law — who hunt for treasure off their salvage vessel Aarrt Booty, could not immediately be reached for comment.

Brisben said Rick and Lisa’s 27-year-old son, Eric, found and recovered the pieces in June.

Brisben said he timed the announcement to coincide with Friday’s 300th anniversary of the sinking of 11 galleons brought down by a hurricane off the coast of Florida as the convoy was sailing from Havana to Spain.

Eric Schmitt found the artefacts in 15 feet (4-5/2 metres) of water off Fort Pierce, approximately 130 miles (210 km) north of Miami.

The Spanish convoy’s manifests indicated the ships carried cargo valued today at about $400 million, of which $175 million has been recovered, Brisben said.

His company bought the rights to the site in 2010 from heirs of the legendary treasure hunter Mel Fisher and the firm allows others, including the Schmitts, to search under subcontract agreements.

The centrepiece of the Schmitt’s latest find is a perfect specimen of a coin called a royal made of silver, weighing 14 troy ounces.

The Spaniards valued the coins as much as 10000 pesos.

The Schmitts will split the recovery with Fisher’s estate.

The Schmitt family will split the remainder, Brisben said.

The Spanish convoy’s ships carried cargo valued today at about $400 million, of which $175 million has been recovered, Brisben said.

The Schmitts will split the recovery with Fisher’s estate.

The Schmitt family will split the remainder, Brisben said.

The Schmitt family will split the remainder, Brisben said.
Stoke sign Dutch winger Afellay

Ibrahim Afellay — LONDON, 28 July — Stoke City have signed Netherlands winger Ibrahim Afellay on a two-year contract, the Premier League club said on Monday. The 29-year-old, who has played 50 times for his country, left Barcelona at the end of last season after four years. “It’s no secret that Ibrahim was wanted by a number of clubs and we are understandably delighted that he has chosen to join us,” Stoke chief executive Tony Scholes told the club’s website. “He’s clearly excited about the prospect of playing in the Premier League and the fact that he knows so many players who are already at the club will no doubt help him settle into his new surroundings.” Afellay started his career with PSV Eindhoven and helped the Netherlands win the 2010 World Cup final before joining Barca. The Spanish giants won the Champions League in 2011 but Afellay’s career in Spain was stalled by injuries and he was sent out on loan to Schalke 04 from 2012-13 and Olympiakos last season. Afellay was Stoke’s eighth signing of the close season after Philipp Wolfsheind, Jakob Haugaard, Josehlu, Marco van Ginkel, Glen Johnson, Shuy Given and Moha.—Reuters

Official in charge of Olympic stadium construction to resign

Tokyo, 28 July — The sports ministry said on Tuesday the official in charge of construction of the new national stadium will quit and be replaced next week amid criticism over the scrapping of an earlier plan to rebuild the centerpiece for the Tokyo 2020 Olympics due to spiraling costs. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology said Kimito Kubo, 58, will resign as director general of the Sports and Youth Bureau for personal reasons. Effective 4 August, Michiyasu Takahasbi, 54, currently the director for the Office for the Counsel for the Improvement of Education Rebuilding at the Cabinet Secretariat, will be appointed the new Sports and Youth Bureau director general. The personnel change comes after Prime Minister Shinzo Abe decided to scrap the original stadium plan and devise a new one from scratch following public criticism over its construction costs. The Japanese government had originally estimated the stadium’s cost at 130 billion yen ($1.1 billion). However, the price tag almost doubled to 252 billion yen due to rising labor and material costs. Kubo assured his current post in January 2012 and was involved in efforts to have Tokyo chosen to host the 2020 Summer Olympics. As head of a ministry bureau overseeing the Japan Sports Council, the operator of the venue, he was in charge of coordination with the Tokyo metropolitan government and other parties over the total construction cost. Although more than 18 months remain until Kubo’s mandatory retirement age, both sports minister Hakubun Shimomura and Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga did not clarify whether he had been forced out of his position over the stadium issue. Shimomura emphasized at a Press conference that Kubo made “an honorable retirement to step aside for younger people.” On his own responsibility over the stadium, the minister said that he will humbly accept criticism and “build it in time for the Tokyo Olympics without creating a national burden.”

Suga separately said, “The person with appropriate ability made a comprehensive judgment and the prime minister’s office gave its consent.” Shimomura said that the government plans to set up an independent panel to look into the process that led to the scrapping of the original plan and compile an interim report by mid-September.

Van Gaal seeking galactico touch for resurgent United

LONDON, 28 July — Louis van Gaal wants to recruit a new galactico match-winner for Manchester United in a bid to fulfill his ambition of bringing another Premier League title to Old Trafford before he walks away from the club in two years.

Yet though United’s Dutch manager also talks of his side still needing more speed and creativity, the impact of his new signings on their successful pre-season US tour persuades him he now has a team that is better equipped to launch an assault on the title after finishing fourth last season. Van Gaal, who vowed to stick to his promise to retire in 2017, cut an upbeat figure after the tour win over European champions Barcelona, suggesting that in his second year at the helm he could be ready for a more concerted challenge for major silverware.

“You want always more,” Van Gaal told reporters in San Jose. “In my other teams I was already, in my first year, a champion so I hope that we can manage that in three years’ time.

“But when it is this year I am very happy. But I cannot say this year we shall be the champion. We have to fight for it. That is the most important thing. Until the end we have to challenge the number one. And maybe we are.

“I think that we have now a selection more balanced than last year. The positions are occupied double. But I think we need still more speed in front and also more creativity and that is why I want (Angel) Di Maria to stay. But we don’t know that so we have to wait and see.”

Asked if it would be difficult to secure the signing of a creative superstar, Van Gaal said: “Of course, I can give examples of champions. Bayern Munich have (Franck) Ribery and (Arjen) Robben, Chelsea have ( Eden) Hazard and Willian, speed and creativity. “Real Madrid have (Cristiano) Ronaldo and (Gareth) Bale. Manchester United fans want us to compete with these teams. Barcelona have Neymar and (Lionel) Messi.”

“(Ashley) Young has made a fantastic season. (Juan Mata) played the same, with assists and goals but to win the Champions League we need speed also.”

United, who have won all their three matches in America, end their tour on Wednesday against Paris St Germain in Chicago. — Reuters

Myanmar

Myanmar secure three points in first match

PHNOM PENH, 28 July — The AFF 11-16 Championship 2015 continued its group matches at Olympic Stadium, Phnom Penh, Cambodia, on Tuesday.

Myanmar thrashed Singapore 3-1 in the group (B) match. Hein Htet Aung scored an opening goal in the 12th minute, Win Naing Tun added one more for Myanmar in the 39th minute and Htet Phyo We netted the third goal in the 62nd minute. —GNLM

Local youths show skills in Sepak Takraw tourney

MYAWADDY, 28 July — The Myawaddy District Deputy Commissioner’s cup Sepak Takraw tournament concluded on 27 July at the township gymnasium.

Pyi Khaing Phyo team finished first, No 3 team second and Khit Kyaung Thar (a) team third in the double regu event. Pyi Khaing Phyo team secured first place in the regu event, while Khit Kyaung Thar (a) team finished second and No 3 team third.

Deputy Commissioner U Lwin Ko Oo and township officials presented victorious teams.

Hein Lin Aung (IPRD)