State Counsellor concludes visit to Japan

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi returned to Yangon at 3.45 pm yesterday after concluding a five-day official visit to Japan.

The welcoming group at the Yangon International Airport included Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein, Yangon Mayor U Maung Maung Soe and the chargé d’affaires of the Japanese Embassy in Yangon.

During her trip to Japan, the State Counsellor met with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and business leaders to secure economic cooperation in public and private sectors. She was seen off at Japan’s Narita Airport by Japanese Ambassador to Myanmar Mr Tatsushi Higuchi, Myanmar Ambassador to Japan U Thurein Thant Zin and his wife, Military Attaché Brig-Gen Saw Min and his wife and Chief of Protocol of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan Mr Kaku Shimazaki.

During the visit, the Japanese government pledged to give assistance to Myanmar and the State Counsellor invited Japanese companies to invest in Myanmar. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and Mr Shinzo Abe also exchanged views on promoting relations between the new generations of the two countries.—Myanmar News Agency

Visit to Japan fruitful and productive with three major results

The following is the press release issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 5th November 2016.—Ed

At the invitation of His Excellency Mr. Shinzo Abe, Prime Minister of Japan, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, State Counsellor of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, paid a 5-day official visit to Japan from 1st to 5th November 2016.

On the morning of 2nd November 2016, the State Counsellor met with Myanmar community in Japan at Rihga Hotel in Waseda. The meeting was attended by about 1,300 Myanmar nationals. During the meeting, the State Counsellor stressed that Myanmar citizens staying in Japan including students and businessmen are encouraged to contribute their experience for the development of their homeland, and for those who were already granted other citizenships should also be loyal to their respective countries; at the same time, they are advised not to forget the gratitude of their motherland. The State Counsellor also replied the questions raised by Myanmar nationals, pertaining to political, economic, social, cultural, education and consular matters.

The State Counsellor later visited Myanmar Embassy in Tokyo, met with the staff members and families of the Myanmar Embassy and the Office of the Military, Naval and Air Attaches’, and attended the lunch hosted by the Myanmar Embassy.

In the evening, the State Counsellor was accorded a ceremonial welcome by the Prime Minister of Japan at Akasaka State Guest House. Then, the State Counsellor and the Prime Minister of Japan held a bilateral meeting. During the meeting, the two leaders discussed matters of bilateral relations including the promotion of economic cooperation, defense cooperation, human resources development of Myanmar, expansion of youth exchanges and Japan’s support towards National Reconciliation process in Myanmar, and regional issues.

Prime Minister Mr. Shinzo Abe committed himself to support Myanmar’s democratization process, development of human resources through people-to-people exchange, encouraging more private investment from Japan, and support for the national reconciliation and peace process in Myanmar. Moreover, Prime Minister Mr. Abe pledged to extend economic assistance worth Japanese Yen (40) billion over next five years for development projects in ethnic minority areas in Myanmar. The Prime Minister was convinced that the aid would help Myanmar settle its deep-rooted ethnic conflict, as well as supporting top priorities for the Myanmar Government.

The Prime Minister also announced that the Government of Japan and Japan-based private-sector businesses are ready to contribute a total of about Japanese Yen (800) billion to the development of Myanmar through Myanmar-Japan Cooperation Programmes in support of the Myanmar Government’s efforts for equitable development between rural and urban areas over next five years.

The State Counsellor expressed her appreciation on behalf of the Government and the people of Myanmar for consistent support extended by the Government and the people of Japan for peace and national reconciliation, and democratisation in Myanmar. The State Counsellor stressed that the said fund would be utilized efficiently and transparently. The State Counsellor also expressed her heartfelt appreciation for assistance pledged by the Japanese Government and private sector.

Cooperation in the advancement of regional connectivity which would contribute to peace and security of the region, as well as connectivity among countries in the Mekong region.
Excerpts from experts on the discussion of principles, machineries and performances in action for the process of peace and national reconciliation

There can be implementation of nationwide ceasefire and peace process is prioritized in the incumbent government’s reign as well. As part of 21st Century Panlong Conference, political dialogues are being held continuously. Now again, the dialogue on principles, machineries and performances in action was held at Yangon Melia Hotel today under the sponsorship of Myanmar Institute of Strategic and International Studies & ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation.

Here are the excerpts from opinions of well-known persons who are taking part in performing tasks of peace and national reconciliation at different levels in the interview made by Myanmar News Agency as to today’s discussion.

U Nyunt Maung Shein (Chairman of Myanmar Institute Strategic and International Studies)

Conflicts are also in the ASEAN region, as are in Philippines and Myanmar. The present meeting is to exchange individual experiences as to how to find solutions in dealing with conflicts and problems between two countries. In the discussion held in Cebu, Philippines last year, women’s role in peace process was primarily discussed. Today’s meeting will place comparative dialogue between Myanmar and ASEAN-related organizations on the top of the agenda. The prioritized mission of the incumbent government is peace and national reconciliation so that we can manage to implement the nation’s economic development. Peace and national reconciliation is expected by the whole populace. We have many difficulties. Demands and political stances of political parties in the 21st Panlong Conference differ from each other. It may take years but we need to exert our concerted effort.

H.E. Mr. Latsamy Keomany (Chairperson of ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation)

Peace and national reconciliation is presently Mt. Juste in the world, so it will be of great benefit. Terrorist attacks, conflicts and migration problems are the ones the world is experiencing. To reduce them, we are trying to implement with collective operation of ASEAN countries, which is assumed to be important by all.

U Aung Kyi (Member of peace commission)

Today’s meeting may result in benefits as it will share and exchange knowledge to each other. Process for implementation of peace and reconciliation in Myanmar took time, the government and armed ethnic groups have had experiences to some extent. We need to adjust today’s knowledge to comply with practical situations. We hope for the best but we found it difficult to perform practically. It depends on the attitudes of all participants in the meeting.

Daw Kyi Kyi Hla (Member of MSIS)

Prevention for conflicts not to emerge, building of sustainable nationwide ceasefire, matters on resettlement and rehabilitation will be discussed. I firmly believe that our true wishes will bring about good results. It is necessary for all nations to take and active part in the process.

Dr Zaw Min Oo (Chairperson of advisory board of peace commission)

In today’s discussion, other countries will join. So, we can gain experiences. 17 groups that signed nationwide ceasefire agreement consulted in detail. It can be said to be a perfect agreement. There will be many challenges in implementing peace process. However, we have potential stance in peace process.—Win Win Maw and Nandar Win

In case of use of stoves

1. Place a person to keep vigil.
2. Don’t overuse fuel fire power.
3. Put out the remnants of fire.
4. Place heat-resistant barriers between stove and roof/wall.
5. Don’t leave the oil pan forgotten.

Warning

1. Don’t run away in case of fire. Seek help from the people nearby.
2. Prompt extinguishing of fire reduces losses and damages.
3. Keep dry chemical powder extinguishers and/or fire extinguishers in all apartments, buildings and shops to put out fire promptly and protect against the danger of fire.

Keep a fire extinguisher in your car to make people on board and the car free from the danger of fire.

Fire Services Department

Ethnic national village in Maungtaw stable

Shwe Bah village being seen. PHOTO: MNA

SHWE Bah Village, a settlement of ethnic nationals who have returned from Bangladesh, is peaceful and stable, according to authorities.

The village was set up for 50 out of 742 families that returned from Bangladesh between 2012 and 2014 under the arrangement of the Ministry of Border Affairs with a cost of K 250 million.

Artisan wells were also dug at a cost of K 22 million and the settlers were also provided with food for one year. “In 2002, a total of 50 one-storey houses were built for those who came back from Bangladesh. They have been allowed to live there in 2014 and 2015. Batteries, solar plates and inventors have also been provided to them so that they can use them the whole day,” Village Administrator U Tin Aung said. “What they can do is farming but they do not have cattle and they have to do with hoes, at a manageable level, only just two or three acres. I think they will be convenient but if they are just expecting assistance, it will not be convenient for them,” he said.

The monastery at the village was built at a cost of K 120 million in 2015-16 fy by the Ministry of Border Affairs and Security has been provided by the border guard police.—Myanmar News Agency

54-year old man found dead in Maungtaw

A MAN found dead with cuts on his neck and stabs on his body in a thatch forest in a village in Maungtaw Township on 3 November, said the local police yesterday.

The man is identified as Arli Eula, 54, from U Shackyaya Village in Maungtaw Township. The family of the victim informed the murder to the police outpost in Ngakhuya area.

The case has been filed at the local police station and the police are probing the case.—Myanmar News Agency

Keep a fire extinguisher in your car to make people on board and the car free from the danger of fire.
Myanmar promotes children’s literature

THE Children’s Literature Festival was held in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday, with the opening address of President U Htin Kyaw calling for promoting literature for Myanmar’s young people.

“Children’s literature is of high value, as it is created to help bring up innocent children in such a way as to become happy and lovely people,” said U Htin Kyaw at the opening of the festival held at the Myanmar International Convention Centre-2 (MICC-2).

The president expressed his delight to have an opportunity to attend this festival, adding that children’s literature is more difficult to create because there are more limitations such as the quality of the characters, the familiarity of the environment and the reading level.

“Children’s literature is important to foster children in a proper manner”, said the president. “We all need to encourage its development”.

Myanmar folk tales and country poems have become part of literature through the oral history format. The lullabies of our days are part of the history of children’s literature, and they have instilled in us the value of honesty, patriotism and courage.

“This is the reason why I would like to promote children’s literature, by encouraging you to open children’s reading rooms, cultivate the habit of reading and create both school and home environments that support pursuit of knowledge.

Afterwards, the president explained how children’s poems were incorporated into the school curriculum.

He said that it was the great grandpa poet (i.e. Saya Min Thu Wun) who first introduced children’s poetry into the classroom in June 1931. The grandpa composed the poems when he was teaching at Kyunyangon school.

In those days, there was the children’s journal in which Saya Min Thu Wun had written serials on how to compose poems. Besides, he has written many tales. He was born in 1909 and died in 2005. During his lifetime, he wrote more than 400 children’s tales, he said.

After delivering the opening speech, the president visited booths and book stalls at the festival, accompanied by Union ministers, the Union Attorney-General, the Union Auditor-General, the Union Civil Service Board Chairman and department heads.—MNA

The Children’s Literature Festival held in Nay Pyi Taw

THE Children’s Literature Festival and Book Fair was held in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday, attracting children and teachers.

Speaking at the opening ceremony of the festival organized by the Ministry of Information at the Myanmar International Convention Centre-2, Union Minister for Information Dr Pe Myint expressed hope that children would learn something while enjoying the festival.

In addition, the union minister pointed out that knowledge gained in childhood lasts a lifetime, especially for children who are so delicate and sensitive to their surroundings. Children can learn many good lessons from children’s literature, he said. It was his wish that this day would be remembered for the rest of their lives, he added.

He also urged all festival participants to create a favorable environment for children.

At the festival Students from No. 5 Basic Education High School and No. 1 Basic Education High School entertained the audience with songs titled “Children’s Literature Festival” and “Myanmar School”.

A first children’s literature festival was held earlier this year in Yangon, featuring reading sessions, forums, book fairs and fun-fairs for children attracting thousands of people.

Teachers and students from public schools in Nay Pyi Taw as well as those from private schools participated in the festival.

Various entertainment programs were arranged at the festival with the aim of making children happy. The Union Minister also said Children would see many books at the festival in both their tongue and in English, with the hope of attracting their attention because of the title or the cover illustration.—Myanmar News Agency

Children enjoy the Children’s Literature Festival together with teachers. PHOTO: MNA

Gluttaw approves removal of street vendors in Yangon

THE Yangon Region Hluttaw on November 4 decided to remove street vendors in at least four townships to enable the vendors to sell in a more systematic manner and to improve pedestrian access according to metropolitan standards set by the Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC).

Regional Hluttaw Botataung township Constituency 1 representative Daw Kyi Pyar tabled a motion which all representatives agreed to discuss.

On behalf of the Regional Government of Yangon, Mayor U Maung Maung Soe noted that this is a sensitive issue which causes the need to manage it tactfully and systematically. “Currently, we are making arrangements to give them places for selling in the four townships. We will supply them with water and electricty. But we will charge them,” said the mayor.

In Yangon City Development Committee has been making these arrangements since July 20 in Pabedan, Letwa, Lannmadaw and Kyauktada townships.

“The vendors are selling on the road because the parking and platform charges changed in 2014. So, the number of street vendors has increased. Cars are also being parked everywhere,” said Yangon Mayor U Maung Maung Soe.

Regional Hluttaw Hlaing constituency 1 representative U Kyaw Kyaw Tun said residents are asking when they can go safely on the road, so as not to need to avoid the crowded vendors on the platform and worry about being hit by cars.
New urban plan for Yangon to be implemented in phases

Ko Moe

THE STRATEGIC urban development plan of greater Yangon will continue step-by-step with a master plan, said Yangon Mayor U Maung Maung Soe.

This comes from the second session of Yangon Region Hluttaw held on 4 November, where a question was raised by Dr Kyaw Zin Oo of Twantay Constituency on the new urban development project, which has been planned for Twantay, Kyimyindaing and Seikkyi Khanabwino townships.

According to the mayor’s reply, the Yangon Region government will continue the development scheme in the target areas through a phase-by-phase approach using a good master plan for the project.

The aim of the plan is to balance a growing population and its urban requirements such as housing, factories, workshops and businesses.

Necessary arrangements will be made by the project implementers to systematically build urban development facilities including offices, shops, schools and transport business in the target area, U Maung Maung Soe said.

Socio-economic development of people living in the commercial city tops the list of government’s priorities, which will ensure easy and smooth flow of commodities between Yangon and Ayeyawady regions.

Karpower Asia selected to jointly implement energy project in Yangon

THE Ministry of Electricity and Energy selected Karpower Asia for its power plant project in Yangon to fulfill the ever-rising energy demand next summer.

Karpower Asia ranked second after a consortium consisting of local companies Na...
Detained Philippine mayor on Duterte’s drug list killed in prison shootout

MANILA — A mayor detained at a jail in the central Philippines for drug-related charges was killed along with another inmate in a shootout on Saturday, police said, as a bloody crackdown on narcotics continues in the Southeast Asian country.

Rolando Espinosa, mayor of Albuera town in Leyte, turned himself in to the national police chief in a meeting on Tuesday, Rodrigo Duterte asked him and his son, Kerwin, to surrender over their involvement in the drug trade.

Espinosa was later allowed to go home but on 5 October was arrested on charges of illegal possession of drugs. He was arrested on charges of illegal possession of drugs.

The shootout took place after Espinosa and inmate Raoul Yap fired at a team from the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group who was on a mission to serve a search warrant against the detainees for firearms and illegal drugs, police said.

“As a matter of procedure, this incident will undergo investigation to establish the facts and circumstances surrounding the incident,” Eastern Visayas Regional Police Chief Superintendent Elmer Beltejar said.

Police said they recovered a .45 caliber pistol and a .38 Super pistol from the cells of Yap and Espinosa. A small sachet containing suspected methamphetamine and assorted drug paraphernalia were also found inside Espinosa’s cell, police said.

The presidential palace described Espinosa’s death as “unfortunate” and said an investigation was ongoing.

Espinosa had publicly denied any part in the drug trade but his son was peddling “shabu” (methamphetamine), which he gets from a jailed Chinese drug trader.

Kerwin, allegedly among the biggest illegal drug operators in the Eastern Visayas region, was arrested by Abu Dhabi police last month, according to Philippine National Police chief Director General Ronald dela Rosa.

In October, Samsudin Dimaukom, a powerful mayor in the troubled Duterte home province of Mindanao, was also killed along with nine of his guards in a shootout, according to police.

More than 2,300 people have been killed in police operations or by suspected vigilantes in connection with the anti-narcotics campaign since Duterte took office on 30 June.

Duterte said on Friday his war on drugs had cut back the supply to “very low” levels and thanked China for supporting his crackdown, but swore repeatedly at ally the United States for criticising it.—Reuters

India’s Tata Motors defends strategy for $1500 Nano car

MUMBAI — Tata Motors, part of India’s Tata group, defended its strategy for producing the $1,500 Nano but shied away from commenting on the loss-making car’s future, after the conglomerate’s ousted chairman Cyrus Mistry said the cost of Nano’s production was always higher than its 100,000 rupees (£1,196.09) price tag and the project needed to be shut down if the company wanted to remain profitable.

Mistry was sacked in a boardroom coup last week with group patriarch Ratan Tata taking over the reins as interim chair of Tata Sons. A bitter public feud has since erupted between the two sides, raising prospects of a legal battle.

The Nano’s concept received global interest for its affordable pricing but a change in its manufacturing location and the perception of a cheap car hurt production and sales, Tata Motors said in the statement.

Mistry’s leaked letter, addressed to the Tata Sons directors on 25 October, said emotional reasons were keeping Tata Motors away from shutting down the Nano’s production.

Nano sales declined more than three-fifths to 4,459 cars in the in the six months of the fiscal year beginning April 2016.

The car maker had written off some costs associated with the Nano, it said.

Tata Motors also said investments in the Nano factory could be used for making other products and that the company would focus on “growing and attractive segments of the passenger vehicle market.”

The company denied Mistry’s accusation of aggressive accounting for product development expenses and said it followed standard norms which present a fair and true picture of its financial health.

A showroom attendant cleans a Tata Nano car at the flagship Tata Motors showroom before the announcement of their Q3 results in Mumbai in 2013. Photo: Reuters

Tata Sons on Friday announced a new management team for the $100 billion steel-to-software group under interim chairman Ratan Tata.

While Mistry has been removed as chairman of Tata Sons, he is still chairman of some of the key listed group companies such as Indian Hotels Co (IHT.NS), Tata Motors (TAMO.NS), Tata Consultancy Services Ltd (TCS.NS) and Tata Steel (TISC.NS).—Reuters

Australia’s far-right groups protest Syrian refugee housing

MELBOURNE — Several hundred people rallied in the suburbs of Melbourne on Saturday, after a proposal to house refugees locally drew protest by far right anti-Islam groups and counter-protests.

Political debate around Australia’s hardline policy towards asylum seekers has been heated recently, as the conservative government last week announcing plans to permanently ban asylum seekers who attempted to reach Australia by boat from permanently entering under any visa category.

Dozens of people belonging to the anti-Islam groups rallied on Saturday against a proposal to house 120 refugees from Syria and Iraq, at a housing facility for elderly citizens in the Melbourne suburb of Eltham.

“They (the elderly citizens) are a bit concerned about it but they will just wait and see,” John Conroy a resident of the aged-care facility said.

A heavy police presence separated the group from more than 100 people rallying in favour of the proposal. Police fear protests between anti-immigration and pro-immigration groups have led to violent clashes.

Australia’s current policy of sending asylum seekers who arrive in Australian waters by boat offshore to Papua New Guinea and Nauru, where their status as refugees is determined, has bipartisan support in the Australian parliament.—Reuters

History made as climate pact becomes int’l law: UN chief

NEW YORK— UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon said Friday history was made as a landmark climate change agreement has entered into force in record time and ahead of a major climate change conference that kicks off in Morocco next week.

“This day is history in humankind’s efforts to combat climate change,” Ban said in an address to the 69th session of the United Nations General Assembly.

“This landmark Paris Agreement on climate change has entered into force.”

The accord, adopted in Paris last December at a UN climate change conference, was ratified by major emitters, including China and the United States.

It aims to hold the global average temperature rises to “well below” 2°C above preindustrial levels to avoid the serious consequences of climate change.—Kyodo News
US acts to block North Korea access to financial system

WASHINGTON — The United States on Friday formally prohibited US financial institutions from opening or maintaining accounts created on behalf of North Korean banks, extending sanctions imposed on the isolated Asian country over its nuclear and missile programmes.

The US Treasury Department said North Korea was using front companies and agents to conduct illicit financial transactions to support the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and to evade international sanctions.

“The funds have no place in any reputable financial system,” Adam Szubin, the department’s financial systems, “said in a statement.

It said that while US law already generally prohibited transactions with North Korean financial institutions, the move would support international sanctions and better protect the US financial system from illicit North Korean activity.

A Treasury Department order requires US financial institutions “to apply additional due diligence measures to prevent North Korean financial institutions from gaining improper indirect access to US correspondent accounts.”

The move comes after the Treasury in June declared North Korea a “primary money laundering concern” and proposed the steps to further block its ability to use the US financial system to fund its weapons programmes.—Reuters

Indonesian president delays visit to Australia after Jakarta clash

JAKARTA — Indonesia’s President Joko Widodo on Saturday postponed his visit to Australia due to a military exercise in Natuna Island, Riau Islands province, Indonesia, on 6 October 2016. Photo: Reuters

Indonesia’s President Joko Widodo and his wife Iriana arrive at Ranai military airbase to attend a military exercise in Natuna Island, Riau Islands province, Indonesia, on 6 October 2016. Photo: Reuters

Tokyo — Joko Widodo said he would hold talks on 15 December in Abe’s home prefecture of Yamaguchi in western Japan. Yachi and Putin, who have been holding talks in Tokyo and Russia since Abe returned to power in 2012, are likely to discuss their nations’ cooperation in political and security areas, the official said.

Yachi’s trip comes at a time the Japanese and Russian governments are speeding up talks about bilateral economic cooperation and the decades-old territorial dispute. The row over the Russian-administered, Japanese-claimed islands off Japan’s northernmost main island of Hokkaido has prevented the two countries from concluding a post-World War II peace treaty. The islands of Etorofu, Kunashir and Shikotan along with the Habomai islet group are known as the Northern Territories in Japan and the Southern Kurils in Russia. Troops of the former Soviet Union seized the islands at the end of the war. Ahead of Yachi, Japan sent Economy, Trade and Industry Minister Hiroshige Seko, who also oversees economic cooperation, to Russia on Wednesday.

Plans are also under way for Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida to visit the country and hold talks with his Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov, according to the source.

Japan hopes to use bilateral economic cooperation to make progress on the territorial dispute, other Japanese government officials said earlier. Abe presented an eight-point economic cooperation plan to Putin at their meeting in Sochi, Russia, in May. While Moscow is eager to boost economic ties with Japan, it appears to be cautious about using the territorial issue as a trade-off, political analysts said.—Kyodo News

Japan PM aide eyes Russia trip next week to lay groundwork for summit

TOKYO — Japan is making final arrangements for a key foreign-policy adviser to Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to visit Russia from Tuesday to lay the groundwork for talks with President Vladimir Putin next month, a Japanese government source said on Saturday.

While in Russia, Shotoro Yachi, the secretary-general head of Japan’s National Security Council, is expected to meet senior officials there including Nikolai Patrushev, Putin’s aide who serves as secretary of the Security Council of Russia, and coordinate the agenda for the summit, the source said. Abe and Putin will hold talks on 15 December in Abe’s home prefecture of Yamaguchi in western Japan. Yachi and Putin, who have been holding talks in Tokyo and Russia since Abe returned to power in 2012, are likely to discuss their nations’ cooperation in political and security areas, the official said.

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Tens of thousands protest in South Korea, call for president to quit

SEOUL — Tens of thousands of South Koreans protested in central Seoul on Saturday in one of the largest demonstrations in the country’s capital for years, calling on embattled President Park Geun-hye to resign over a growing influence-peddling scandal.

Roughly 43,000 people were at the candle-lit rally early on Saturday evening, according to police. Organisers said a growing crowd of 100,000 had assembled, making the protest one of the biggest since demonstrations in 2008 against US beef imports.

Park Geun-hye has been rocked by a scandal involving an old friend who is alleged to have used her closeness to the president to meddle in state affairs. Park has pledged to cooperate with prosecutors in an investigation.

Koreans have been angered by the revelations and say Park, the latest South Korean leader to be embroiled in a scandal involving family or friends, has betrayed public trust and misrepresented her government. Her approval rating has slipped to just 5 per cent according to a Gallup poll released on Friday, the lowest number for a South Korean president since such polling began in 1988. Police said they had deployed 17,000 officers and 270那么简单, including buses and mobile barriers to Saturday’s protest.

Police in riot gear lined the alleys and streets leading to the presidential Blue House as the main body of the demonstration began the march through central Seoul.—Reuters
PM May confident of Brexit plans, reassures EU leaders

LONDON — Prime Minister Theresa May told European Union leaders on Friday she was confident a court ruling that could delay Britain’s departure from the bloc would be overturned and said she would stick to her Brexit timetable.

May told German Chancellor Angela Merkel and European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker she believed her case that the government — not parliament — should be responsible for triggering Article 50 of the EU’s Lisbon Treaty to begin the divorce would win in Britain’s highest court, a spokesman said.

She also told French President Francois Hollande and European Council President Donald Tusk that the British government was sticking to its plan to invoke Article 50 by the end of March.

May is determined to carry out what she calls “the will of the people”, but a High Court ruling on Thursday that parliament must approve the process raised doubts over whether she can meet her deadline and even prompted suggestions of an early election.

Her focus on ensuring the government’s Brexit strategy is on track was breaking with the EU has incensed some lawmakers. On Friday, a member of her ruling Conservative Party said he had resigned over “irreconcilable policy differences” with May.

The focus of the government is on the Supreme Court case, winning that case and proceeding with Article 50,” May’s spokesman told reporters, referring to an appeal against the ruling that is expected to be heard early next month.

“The court decision is a legal victory, but our focus is on delivering Britain’s Brexit.”

The spokesman declined to comment on whether the government was now drafting contingency plans for a possible failure in the Supreme Court, which would allow parliament to delay any move to start the divorce process.

“What is important here is that we have a referendum, there was an overwhelming result in favour of leaving the European Union, and that is what the government must do,” he said.

The foreign minister, Boris Johnson, told his German counterpart Frank-Walter Steinmeier not to read too much into the court decision. Steinmeier said: “Further delay isn’t in anyone’s interests.”

Parliament is unlikely to defy the referendum vote by blocking Brexit. But if — as one aide to May said was the logical conclusion of the court ruling — she is forced to draft legislation for both houses to consider, her March deadline looks tight, several lawmakers said.

That could force her to call an early election, they said, a move her aides have repeatedly rejected. Bookmakers odds on an election next year were cut after the court decision but 2020 was still the favourite date.

Clinton answers a question from the audience after her presidential town hall debate at Washington University in St Louis, Missouri, US, on 9 October 2016. Photo: Reuters

CLEVELAND/HERSHEY, (Pa.) — Democrat Hillary Clinton and Republican Donald Trump battled over the strength of the economy in the final stretch of their race for the White House on Friday, with Clinton praising the latest US jobs report and Trump dismissing it as a fraudulent disaster.

With four days left in an often bitter contest that has tightened in the last week, each candidate attacked the other as unfit to be president in a late push for votes in battleground states that could decide the outcome in Tuesday’s election.

Clinton leads Trump by 5 percentage points, according to a Reuters/Ipsos tracking poll released on Friday, maintaining her advantage in the national survey even as the race tightens in several crucial swing states.

In the 30 October-3 November opinion poll, 44 per cent of likely voters supported Clinton while 39 per cent supported Trump.

Clinton wrapped up her day of campaigning with a nighttime concert in Cleveland headlined by rapper Jay Z. He was joined by rappers Big Sean, Chance the Rapper, and J. Cole, and by his wife, popular singer Beyonce, as a surprise guest.

“We have unfinished work to do, more barriers to break, and with your help, a glass ceiling to crack once and for all,” Clinton said at the concert.

At his final rally of the day in Pennsylvania, Trump mocked Clinton for her celebrity support — “I am here all by myself. Just me, no guitar, no piano, no nothing,” he said.

Earlier in the day at a rally in Pittsburgh, Clinton cited the government’s latest jobs report as evidence of the economy’s strength. The report showed higher wages for workers as well as the creation of 161,000 jobs in October and a dip in the unemployment rate to 4.9 per cent from 5 per cent.

“I believe our economy is poised to really take off and thrive,” Clinton told the gathering, after being introduced by billionaire investor Mark Cuban.

“When the middle class thrives, America thrives.”

Trump disputed Clinton’s rosy view, telling a crowd in New Hampshire that the jobs report was “an absolute disaster” and was skewed by the large number of people who have stopped looking for jobs and are no longer in the labour market.

“Nobody believes the numbers anyway. The numbers they put out are phony,” he said, referring to the figures released by the US Labour Department.

The economy and the candidates’ competing visions for the future could be critical in swaying voters in ailing Rust Belt states like Ohio, Pennsylvania and Michigan.

Both candidates made stops in Ohio and Pennsylvania on Friday, with Trump adding a stop in New Hampshire and Clinton adding one in Michigan. Each of those states is key in the state-by-state quest for the 270 electoral votes needed to win the White House. — Reuters
Opinion

Water, the life of one morning

Myint Win Thein

THERE is a saying that goes: “All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy,” which means children should not only learn everything that adults consider important, but also should be allowed to enjoy their own childhood. Many parents cannot comprehend that their children have their own lives and choices. Their lifestyle is quite different from their mothers and fathers, as the world is changing very rapidly.

Today, many children are losing their birthrights to play as they are forced to excel in education in competition against their peers. As a result, children, even before they are too young to be eligible for Kindergarten, are forced to study the alphabet of their mother tongue and, at least, one international language. It is time for children to dance to children’s music and play with their friends. Unfortunately, many parents do not understand that they are robbing their children of a happy childhood.

Therefore, parents should not force their expectations on their children. Parents think that they do not need to learn anything anymore and spend their lives happily, singing at Karaoke lounges and at the same time forcing their children to excel at school. In fact, adults should read as much as they can while children should play, sing and dance.

We should remember many innocent poems for children written by our poet laureate and great grand father Saya Min Thu Won, such as July, August Rains and Floods, Let’s us pick ripe Thapayy fruits.

Among the thorny bushes, Dark-black leeches are ready to suck blood, which can be sung as well as read like a poem.

Yin Nwe Ko (Linn)

THE period of monsoon has already come to an end. All of us have already known there were many flooded areas in Myanmar during monsoon. We have also known although there were huge water bodies there, they made a great threat on the lives of plants and animals. Under such water bodies, many plants were drowned and dead and so were some other animals which did not have enough time to avoid the rising water level. In spite of being abundant of the volume of water, animals including man could not use to drink as it was impure.

Again in summer, there is scanty of water in some parts of Myanmar. We learn again that people in dry region run out of water. As there is a saying ‘The life of water is just one morning’, water is essential and precious for those who live in such regions where water is scanty. One cannot even think whether a cup of water he or she gets is pure or not. It is a must to drink such water because one has no choice.

Purity of water is an important challenge for mankind. To have purity of water, it is essential for water not to be polluted. For years, the technicians have indicated that the water bodies that man can obtain gets more and more impure day after day in the age of IT. This article is to emphasize focusing some ways to prevent water we would get not to be polluted as much as we can manage.

Water pollution is due to the presence of harmful substances or pollutants in water bodies. It happens when untreated wastes and pollutants are discharged into water bodies. As a result, the water of sea, rivers, lakes, ponds, reservoir, and ground water get polluted. The major sources of water pollution include untreated industrial wastes, domestic dumps and garbage, thermal power stations, agricultural pesticides and insecticides, etc.

The water pollutants are released both directly and indirectly. Though, human acts are mostly responsible for water pollution, sometimes water may get polluted for various reasons beyond human control such as volcanic eruptions, soil erosion, natural mixing of mineral oils at sea, etc. Water pollution may disrupt human life of a great extent. It is highly important to take steps forward to prevent water pollution. There are several ways to do it as follows.

a. The household water should be treated properly so that they become environmentally safe. Acceptable care should be taken to ensure that effective sewage treatment process is in place and that contaminated water does not get mixed with the environment in order to prevent water pollution. Human and animal excreta should be prevented from mixing with its sources. Construction of pit toilet and proper sewage treatments can offer some solution to this problem.

b. The flowing water of the rivers cannot be cleaned easily by natural process. Since, a large number of external substances are discharged into the water, the river water becomes polluted. This may cause diseases to the people using river water. Thus, every effort should be made to prevent the river water to get contaminated. People should not be let to throw wastes into the river.

c. Factories are expected to treat its effluent wastes prior to discharge. Toxic material must be treated chemically and converted into harmless materials. If possible, factories should try to recycle the treated water.

d. Laws and legislation relating to pollution should be strictly followed. All people should be made aware that adherence to water laws are in their own interest.

e. In cities, a huge amount of water is put into drains every day. The water that flows through the city drainage system should be properly treated. Harmful pollutants should be removed, before they are introduced into reservoirs. If this water allowed going into water reservoirs without treatment, it will pollute them.

f. Big cities and towns usually have huge sewage treatment plants. These plants filter out undissolved materials. Chemical treatment is also given to separate out unwanted dissolved chemicals. The treated water is either allowed to go into the water reservoirs or reused in houses. Occasionally, the treated water is used for farming if the fields to be irrigated lie in the vicinity of the water treatment plants.

g. Washing, bathing of cattle in the pond that is used by human should not be done. Washing of dirty clothes and bathing of cattle make the pond water dirty and unsuitable for human use. If these ponds are continually misused, then it may lead to severe consequences.

h. Ponds, lakes and wells meant for human use should be routinely cleaned and treated, so that it remains fit for human use. It is an essential step that should not be avoided. A system of regular testing of pond and lake water can be introduced to ensure the safety of water.

i. Never pour household insecticides, medicines, etc. down the sink, drain or toilet. At home, people often throw wastes and old medicines into the bathroom toilet. This practice is discouraged for the reason that the chemical compounds of medicines, insecticides, etc., when mixed with other chemicals, may result in formation of harmful substances.

j. Self hygiene must be maintained and drinking water must not be polluted. Drinking water should be kept under cover in a clean place. One should not put his hands into the drinking water containers. Also, the practice of cleaning the drinking water reservoirs on a regular basis need to be strictly followed. The water meant for drinking should be purified prior to use. In the absence of good water purifier, it is recommended to drink boiled water. This is also important to prevent water borne diseases.

k. Sanitation system must be improved. The benefits of cleanliness on human health need to be understood. Human contact with hazardous materials should be prevented. After using the toilet, one should always use flush and wash their hands with soap and water.

l. Common public should be aware about the effect of water pollution. Voluntary organization members can go door-to-door to educate the people about environmental problems. They should perform street plays for creating awareness about the environment. They should run environmental education centers. Students can impart health education to enable people to prevent water pollution.

As most of the ways mentioned above depends upon the human’s acts, our readers will have taken notice that the practice by which man understands to have purity of water and obeys the ways not to be polluted it is the important role. It is sure man is the one who plucks the advantage of nature most. However, it is necessary that man should not be the one who would destroy the nature.
Visit to Japan fruitful and productive with three major results

>> FROM PAGE 1

and asked for effective support to necessary requirement of the country, particularly in the areas of agriculture, transportation, energy sufficiency, and human resources development.

Afterwards, the State Counsellor and the Prime Minister of Japan attended the signing ceremony of “Exchange of Notes for the dispatch of volunteers to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar under the Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers Program between the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and the Government of Japan”. Then, the two leaders held a joint press conference and briefed the press on the highlights of the discussions and points of agreements reached during the talks. After the joint press conference, the State Counsellor attended the farewell dinner hosted by Prime Minister Abe at the Kachro-Hall at Akasaka State Guest House.

On the morning of 3rd November 2016, the State Counsellor received Foreign Minister Mr. Fumio KISHIDA at the Imperial Hotel and exchanged views on bilateral, regional and international matters including Myanmar’s ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban treaty (CTBT), cooperation in the advancement of regional connectivity which would contribute to peace and security of the region, as well as connectivity among countries in the Mekong region. The Foreign Minister expressed Japan’s readiness to support for the successful hosting of ASEM Foreign Ministers’ Meeting in Myanmar in 2017.

Afterwards, the State Counsellor left for Tokyo to receive a Honourary Doctorate Degree in the advancement of democracy, conferred by the Kyoto University. After the ceremony, the State Counsellor held a panel discussion with students from Kyoto University. In the evening, the State Counsellor attended the dinner hosted by the Governor of Kyoto Prefecture, the Mayor of Kyoto and the Chairman of Kyoto City Chamber of Commerce and Industry at the Kyoto State Guest House.

On the morning of 4th November 2016, the State Counsellor had a royal audience with Their Majesties Emperor AKIHOTO and Empress MICHIKO at the Imperial Palace of Japan in Tokyo.

On the same day, the State Counsellor gave a press conference to Japanese media at the Japan National Press Club.

In the evening, the State Counsellor attended the dinner hosted by Chief Cabinet Secretary Mr. Yoshihide SUGA at the State Guest House. During the dinner, Mr. SUGA expressed that the visit of State Counsellor to Japan was fruitful and productive with three major results—the Government of Japan could pledge its continued support to the new administration of Myanmar, the Prime Minister and the State Counsellor share views on promotion of people-to-people exchange between the two countries, and the State Counsellor herself invited more responsible investment from Japanese private sectors. Mr. SUGA committed himself to ensure speedy implementation of the agreements that have been reached between the two leaders.

The State Counsellor left Japan on 5th November 2016 at 11:00 hrs and arrived back in Yangon at 16:00 hrs. —Ministry of Foreign Affairs

POETESS’S PHILOSOPHY (2)

• We’re writing our own history,
  Think what you’ve done so far,
  And what you’re doing at the moment.
  Decide yourself what kind of person you are.
  • If you do so far so good
  The good result will come out.
  If you do so far so bad,
  The bad result will come out.
  • If you do so good, you’ll have a good name.
  If you do nothing good for your land,
  I’m sorry, you’ll have to leave a bad name.
  • Think good example of Bo Gyoke Aung San.
  What a good name he left behind!
  Think of that good for nothing Galon U Saw,
  What a bad name he left behind!
  • So do good and leave a good name.
  Be true and leave a good fame.

Daw Aye Aye Pyone
(Retired Teacher)
Iraqi troops on southern front battle for last town before Mosul

NEAR HAMMAM AL-ALIL, Iraq — Iraqi troops advancing towards Mosul battled on Saturday for the last town left between them and the Islamic State's last hold to the north, which is already under assault from special forces fighting inside the city’s eastern districts.

Saturday’s attack on Hammam al-Alil, about 15 km (10 miles) south of Mosul, targeted a force of at least 70 Islamic State fighters in the Tigris river town, commander of the Mosul operations Major-General Najm al-Jabouri said.

Jabouri said the assault began around 10 am (0700 GMT). Some militants had already tried to escape across the river, but others put up heavy resistance and the troops had thwarted three attempted suicide car bombings.

“(The battle) is very important — it’s the last town for us before Moscow,” Jabouri told reporters. Iraqi helicopters were supporting the army, he said, backed also by jets from a US-led air coalition which had been hitting Islamic State targets across the river, but others were still no sign that anybody was recapturing Mosul.

An Iraqi soldier aims his rifle during a battle with Islamic State, at the front line in the Intisar district of eastern Mosul. PHOTO: REUTERS

In Hammam al-Alil, the jihadists had taken hundreds of people as human shields, although Jabouri said it was not clear how many people were left in the town. Before Islamic State swept in more than two years ago, Hammam al-Alil and outlying villages had a population of 65,000.

As well as forcing residents to remain as they came under attack in Hammam al-Alil, Islamic State fighters retreating north in the last two weeks have forced thousands to march with them as cover from air strikes, villagers have told Reuters. The United Nations said the militants transport ed 1,600 abducted civilians from Hammam al-Alil to the town of Tal Afar, west of Mosul, on Tuesday and took another 150 families from the town to Mosul the next day.

They told residents to hand over children, especially boys aged over nine, in an apparent recruitment drive for child soldiers, UN human rights spokeswoman Ravina Shamdasani said.

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A rebel fighter with a camera attached to his head stands near an olive tree, western Aleppo city, Syria, on 3 November 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Rebel-held zone of Syria’s Aleppo braces for renewed bombardment

BEIRUT — Syrian rebels and civilians showed no sign of leaving the besieged opposition-held sector of Aleppo on Friday, despite a Russian deadline to resume bombardment of Syria’s largest city at nightfall after a 17-day pause.

The rebels’ own shell ing of residential parts of government-held western Aleppo has meanwhile killed dozens in the past week as insurgent groups staged a counter-attack from outside the city aimed at breaking the siege on areas they control.

The government sent ambulances and buses to bring people out of the besieged zone as it has done at other times during the pause, but there was still no sign that anybody would leave.

Residents contacted by Reuters seemed resigned to the resumption in bombing, which killed hundreds of people in late September and early October as the government and its Russian allies abandoned a ceasefire to launch their assault on the biggest urban area in opposition hands.

“Nothing can be done. Nobody can stop the planes,” said Behar Mishal, an official with the “white helmets” civil defence volunteer group in eastern Aleppo, which digs victims out of the rubble and runs an ambulance service.

He said there was no way for rescue workers or medical staff to prepare in advance of the expected resumption of attacks: “All we can do is take precautions and be ready 24 hours a day.”

Moscow and Damascus say their pause in bombing the city will end at 7 pm (1700 GMT), accusing rebels of having used the pause to reinforce and launch attacks on government-held areas.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights monitoring group said that by around 8:30 pm local time, there was no sign yet of resumed aerial bombardment of central parts of the city.

The government and its Russian allies say they target only militants, and that fighters are to blame for civilian casualties by operating in civilian areas. —Reuters

Turkey orders formal arrest of nine Cumhuriyet newspaper staff

ANKARA — Turkish authorities ordered the formal arrest pending trial on Saturday of nine executives and journalists of a leading opposition newspaper who were detained on Monday, broadcaster NTV said.

The detention of the editor-in-chief and senior staff of Cumhuriyet over the security outlet’s alleged support for a failed coup in July was described by a top EU politician as the crossing of a red line against freedom of expression. Their homes were also searched. Istanbul prosecutors have said staff at the paper, one of few media outlets still critical of President Tayyip Erdogan, are suspected of committing crimes on behalf of Kurdish militants and the network of US-based cleric Fethullah Gulen. Turkey accuses Gulen of orchestrating the coup attempt, though he denies any involvement.

Cumhuriyet’s previous editor, Can Dundar, was jailed last year for publishing state secrets involving Turkey’s support for Syrian rebels. The case sparked censure from rights groups, who fear Erdogan is using the coup attempt to crush dissent. More than 110,000 people have been sacked or suspended and 37,000 arrested over the past 3-1/2 months.—Reuters

Can Dundar (R), editor-in-chief of Cumhuriyet, accompanied by his Ankara bureau chief Erdem Gul, talks to media as they leave at the Justice Palace in Istanbul, Turkey, on 6 May 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Can Dundar (R), editor-in-chief of Cumhuriyet, accompanied by his Ankara bureau chief Erdem Gul, talks to media as they leave at the Justice Palace in Istanbul, Turkey, on 6 May 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

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To Improve your Reading Skill

Read this biography.

Jaime Escalante stood in front of his class. His was wearing an apron and a chef’s hat. There were three apples on his desk, and he was cutting them into pieces with a sharp knife. But he wasn’t teaching cooking. He was teaching math. Mr. Escalante wanted his students to learn fractions, so he was cutting the apples into thirds, fourths, and eights.

From 1974 to 1997 Mr. Escalante was a teacher at Garfield High School in East Los Angeles. Most of his students came from low-income Latino families. They didn’t have much money, and they spoke Spanish at home. Some people didn’t think they could learn much. But Mr. Escalante knew they could learn. He tried to learning fun. He gave them math problems about sports, dating, shopping, and other things the teenagers liked. This helped the students be successful. They quickly learned math!

Mr. Escalante wanted his students to love learning. He wanted them to have a strong desire or wish to learn. The Spanish word for a strong desire is ganas. Mr. Escalante told his students that, with ganas, they could do anything. But telling them wasn’t enough. He had to show them.

He began to teach them calculus, an advanced type of math. He wanted them to take a calculus test that only the top 3% of students in the United States take. The test is difficult, do Mr. Escalante helped his students study every day for a whole year. Before school, during school, after school, and even on Saturday mornings, they studied calculus together.

In the spring of 1982 Mr. Escalante’s students took the test. They all did well and passed! What a success! But some people thought they cheated. They thought the students copied the correct answers from other students’ papers. So the students took the test again. And they passed again! The students proved to themselves and their community that, with ganas, they could do anything. With desire, hard work, and the help of their great teacher, they succeeded.

Exercise: I. Circle the main idea.
   b. With hard work anyone can learn.
   c. Calculus is difficult to learn.

II. Are these sentences true? Find the answers in the reading. Circle yes or no.

1. Mr. Escalante taught cooking. yes no
2. Some people thought the students couldn’t learn. yes no
3. Mr. Escalante made learning fun. yes no
4. He used sports to teach math. yes no
5. The students studied calculus for two years. yes no
6. The students cheated on the test. yes no
7. The students passed the test twice. yes no

Answers: 1. b
   2. yes
   3. no
   4. yes
   5. no
   6. yes
   7. yes

Put these sentences in order. Number them from 1-5.
   a. They took the test again and passed again.
   b. Mr. Escalante was a math teacher at Garfield High School.
   c. So he began to teach them calculus.
   d. The students took a calculus test and passed.
   e. He wanted his students to have a strong desire to learn.

IV. Read the sentences. What do the underlined words mean? Write the letters of the correct meanings in the blanks.

a. Latin American  b. were not honest  c. wish  d. poor

1. Most of the students came from low-income Latino families.
2. Most of the students came from low-income Latino families.

3. They all did well and passed!
4. But some people thought they cheated.

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DAYS: 1 = Monday  2 = Tuesday  3 = Wednesday  4 = Thursday  5 = Friday  6 = Saturday  7 = Sunday
NEW YORK — A New York City police sergeant was fatally shot and another was wounded on Friday in a shootout on the streets of the Bronx that also resulted in the death of the suspect, a man who had just broken into the apartment of his estranged wife.

The officers were responding to a call about the break-in and encountered the suspect’s vehicle about half a mile (1 km) away where the man opened fire with a .45-caliber semiautomatic handgun, Police Commissioner James O’Neill told a news conference.

An exchange of gunfire resulted with the suspect being pronounced dead at the scene while the officers were taken to the hospital, he said.

Sergeant Paul Tuozolo, a 19-year veteran of the force and father of two young children, was pronounced dead at the hospital. The wounded officer, 9-year veteran Emmanuel Kwo, was shot in the leg and was in stable condition, O’Neill said.

“The city is in mourning and the family of the NYPD is in mourning,” O’Neill said.

The NYPD is in mourning,” O’Neill said.

Mayor Bill de Blasio told reporters about an hour after informing the officer’s wife and parents of his death.

The dead suspect, identified as Manuel Rosales, had a record of at least 17 prior arrests, O’Neill said. He had forced his way into the home of his 29-year-old estranged wife while their 3-year-old son was present, O’Neill said.

A 13-year-old child and a 50-year-old woman were also at the home, he said.

Tuozolo became the first New York City police officer killed while on duty since October 2015. Kwo was taken to the same hospital, where he was informed his colleague had died.

“He’s devastated, as we all are,” O’Neill said.

Upon encountering the suspect’s red Jeep, police rammed the vehicle with their patrol car, the New York Daily News and other media reported, citing unnamed police sources. O’Neill declined to describe the events because the investigation was ongoing.

One officer approached the vehicle and was shot in the face by the suspect. The New York Times reported. The other officer returned fire and killed the suspect, the Times said.

The last NYPD officer killed in the line of duty was Detective Randolph Holder, who was shot while pursuing an armed suspect in the Harlem section of Manhattan in October 2015, according to Officer Down Memorial Page.

Greek PM Tsipras reshuffles cabinet in bid to speed up reforms

ATHENS — Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras reshuffled his cabinet late on Friday in a bid to speed up reforms Athens has agreed to implement under its latest international bailout deal, and to shore up his government’s popularity.

But Tsipras signaled he would stick to the fiscal course agreed with the European Union and the International Monetary Fund by keeping Finance Minister Euclid Tsakalotos in his post. Greece wants to wrap up a review on labour reforms and fiscal issues swiftly to qualify for more debt relief and for inclusion in the European Central Bank’s bond buying programme. This will help it to regain bond market access by 2018, when its current bailout programme expires.

Tsipras switched his ministers around but brought few new faces to his cabinet.

He appointed Dimitris Liakos, the chief of his economic office and a former fund manager, as the minister responsible for the implementation of Greece’s bailout programme.

To appease the creditors who have accused Greece of foot-dragging in selling state assets, Tsipras replaced Energy Minister Panos Koukrilis, who has openly opposed some privatisations, with George Stathakis, currently the economy minister. Koukrilis was moved to the Interior Ministry.

Shipping Minister Theodoris Dritsas was replaced by Panagiota Kouroubis, currently the interior minister. The shipping ministry oversees the privatisation of Greek ports.

The head of Greece’s privatisation agency, Stergos Pitsiorlas, was named deputy minister under Dimitris Papadimitrou, economist and president of the Levy Economics Institute, who was appointed economy and development minister.

The prime minister ti light his cabinet,” head of Alco polling agency Costas Pananos said.

This scheme seems more capable to fulfill the country’s international obligations.”

Tsipras set up stand-alone ministries to handle tourism - the economy’s key driver - and the crucial issue of migration, as Europe struggles with its worst migrant crisis in decades and thousands are stranded in the cash-strapped country.

Migration Minister Yannis Mouzalas kept his post, along with the ministers of foreign affairs, defence and tourism. Greece is expected to return to growth in 2017, an event which Tsipras hopes will convince Greeks that their sacrifices are paying off.

tipsras’ closest aide and adviser Nikos Pappas - who as state minister oversaw an auction on television licenses that was annulled by a top court, was appointed minister of digital governance and media.

Tsipras was first elected in January 2015 promising to end years of austerity, but he reversed course six months later and signed up to a new bailout, Greece’s third aid programme since the country’s debt crisis broke out in 2010.”

Greek PM Alexis Tsipras. Photo: REUTERS

Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras. Photo: REUTERS
Rome City Hall pulls plug on costly, graft-ridden Metro project

ROME — Rome City Council voted on Friday to stop financing a third underground transport line, pulling the plug on a project that is years behind schedule, well over budget and embroiled in corruption scandals.

The anti-establishment 5-Star Movement, which took control of Rome at local elections in June, said it could no longer justify pumping money into a project that is mired in a sea of problems.

The decision means the Metro C will stop short at the Colosseum rather than crossing through the heart of Rome, as originally planned, severely limiting the impact it was meant to make on the car-choked capital. The move dealt a blow to the local building industry, which expected that the route would carry up to 600,000 passengers a day.

The consortium building the transit line, which includes Astaldi, Viadini Lavori, a unit of Caltagirone, and Ansaldi STS, made no immediate comment.

The initial section of the driverless network, which was inaugurated in 2014 and 21 stations are now open.

Financing has been agreed for a further three stations up to the Colosseum, which are set to be operational by 2020. Work on this stretch will continue, but plans for a further 14 stops to the Vatican and beyond have been dropped.

The designers chose a costly, heavy-duty train system, expecting that the route would carry up to 600,000 passengers a day. At present, the link carries just 50,000 people a day.

Building the initial 24 stations to the Colosseum was originally priced at 2.23 billion euros ($2.54 billion), but after a welter of design changes the figure to cover as far as the Colosseum stop is now put at 3.7 billion euros, a Rome City Hall official told councillors at a meeting on Friday.

Italy’s National Audit Court has ordered more than 10 people linked to the project to stand trial over what it says was a waste of 270 million euros of public money. The defendants deny the accusations.—Reuters

US safety board opens probe into Colonial Pipeline accident

WASHINGTON — The US National Transportation Safety Board said on Friday it had opened an investigation into the Colonial Pipeline Co accident in Helena, Alabama, which killed one worker and seriously injured four others.

Colonial’s gasoline pipeline ruptured on Monday during routine maintenance operations. The company said on Friday it expects to restart the pipeline on Saturday afternoon. A team of five NTSB investigators arrived Thursday and will be in Alabama for several days conducting interviews, documenting the accident site and collecting evidence. Investigators will also visit the Colonial Pipeline offices in Alpharetta, Georgia, to interview operations and engineering staff and collect operating data and documents, the board said.

The 5,500-mile (8,850-km) Colonial Pipeline is the largest US refined products pipeline system and can carry more than 3 million barrels of gasoline, diesel and jet fuel between the US Gulf Coast and the New York Harbor area. The company said a small fire remaining at the site was extinguished overnight, and operations to remove residual gasoline from the pipeline began earlier on Friday.—Reuters

Haitian president defends aid effort as anger mounts

PORT-AU-PRINCE

Haiti’s interim President Jocelerme Privert defended a government-coordinated storm relief effort on Friday, saying aid had reached some 2 million victims of Hurricane Matthew, amid anger about uneven distribution of food and other materials.

The category-4 hurricane hit Haiti a month ago, killing as many as 1,000 people. It wiped out crops, destroyed homes in the already homeless communities and left behind.—Reuters

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Ay Caramba! ‘The Simpsons’ to break record as longest-running US show

LOS ANGELES — The Simpsons have travelled the world, saved Springfield from annihilation and even stepped into virtual reality, but the beloved animated family is entering new ground as it heads toward a record-breaking 30th season. “The Simpsons” has been renewed for two more seasons running until 2019. Twenty-First Century Fox Inc’s Fox Broadcasting said on Friday, meaning it will break the record for most episodes of any scripted television show in US history.

“The Simpsons” is currently in its 28th season, with just over 600 episodes aired. By 2019, it will have outpaced western TV drama “Gunsmoke,” which concluded after 635 episodes in 1975. “Take that ‘Gunsmoke’! You lost a race you didn’t even know you were running!” Homer Simpson said in a statement from Fox. Since its 1989 premiere, “The Simpsons” — the longest-running scripted primetime series in US history. More than 600 episodes aired. By 2019, it will have outpaced western TV drama “Gunsmoke,” which concluded after 635 episodes in 1975.

Homer’s catchphrase “D’oh!” and Bart’s “Ay Caramba!” are part of the zeitgeist and the fictional family from Springfield even have a star on Hollywood’s Walk of Fame. The show is syndicated in more than 100 countries and is already the longest-running sitcom and primetime scripted series in US history. The most recent season, which featured a virtual reality episode and guest stars including comedians Amy Schumer and Sarah Silverman, has averaged around 7.2 million total viewers across multiple platforms.

Japanese-Serbian Film Festival to be held in Belgrade

BELGRADE — The Japanese-Serbian Film Festival, a unique artistic exchange between Japan and Serbia, will be held at the Yugoslav Film Archive in Belgrade on 5-6 November. This year, the visitors of the festival in Belgrade and Tokyo will have the opportunity to see a rich programme on the topic Devotion, and they will be introduced to the similarities and differences between the two countries’ creativity, able to connect and learn from each other.

The festival is honoured to have Japanese director and producer Ryo Suzuki as a member of this year’s panel of judges. One of the partners of the festival is the Academy of Fine Arts and Multimedia.

Feature and documentary films on Devotion will be presented, and the best ones will receive the Devotion Best Film Award.

Two first-timers named as 2017 Oscar producers, no host yet

LOS ANGELES — The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences on Friday named two first-timers as producers of next year’s Oscars show, the first step in planning the ceremony and choosing a host.

Hollywood movie and television producers Michael De Luca and Jennifer Todd will produce the Feb. 26, 2017, show that will be broadcast around the world, the Academy said in a statement.

It will be the first time that De Luca, a producer of movies including “The Social Network” and “Fifty Shades of Grey,” and Todd, whose credits include the “Austin Powers” comedy spy franchise, have produced the Oscars ceremony, where the highest honors in the film industry are handed out.

Academy CEO Dawn Hudson said the pair had “shared an early vision for the show that is inspired and in keeping with the films they’ve produced: entertaining, unexpected and of the highest caliber.”

The Academy has been unusually late this year announcing who will produce the 2017 ceremony, or host it.

US talk show host and comedian Jimmy Kimmel has been widely mentioned as a potential host but Hollywood trade publication Variety on Friday reported that Kimmel was now said to be out of the running for the high-profile job, one of the trickiest balancing acts in show business.

Black comedian Chris Rock hosted the 2016 Oscars amid a controversy over the all-white acting nominee lineup and the wider lack of diversity in the industry. The show drew the lowest US TV audience in eight years with just 34 million viewers.

The Oscar producers have a major say in deciding who will host the more than three-hour show, and also in imparting its tone, theme and look. Recent hosts have included TV star Neil Patrick Harris, Ellen DeGeneres and Seth MacFarlane. —Reuters

Holocaust comedy resonates with Japan audience over wartime past

TOKYO — When German director Chris Kraus’ romantic comedy between a Holocaust researcher and a French Jewish woman was recently shown in Japan, he learned that his work has struck a chord with the audience in the country where its wartime past continues to give people food for thought.

“As a lot of elements in the film treaded into what was supposed to be taboo when dealing with this kind of theme, I was surprised to hear a Japanese person in the audience say the movie was very touching and resonated with people in Japan,” Kraus said.

In an interview with Kyodo News on Thursday after his film “The Bloom of Yesterday” won the Tokyo Grand Prix at the 29th Tokyo International Film Festival, Kraus recounted how the viewer told him that the Holocaust is a theme close to Germany but is just the same a “thought-provoking theme for the Japanese people.”

Speaking in German through a Japanese interpreter, the 52-year-old director quoted the viewer as saying, “When thinking about how Japan dealt with its wartime past, this movie gives us something to think about.”

Kraus went on to say, “I was moved that (my film) was understood in that manner.”

Differing perceptions of wartime history between Japan and its Asian neighbors, particularly South Korea and China, continue to be a source of regional tensions. Japan and its aggression before and during World War II are often compared with Germany and Nazism in terms of how the two countries have faced up to their wartime past.

Kraus, who was in Japan for the first time to attend the 10-day festival that ended Thursday, said he was initially clueless as to how the movie would be received by the audience in Japan given the differences in culture between Japan and Europe.

To his surprise, the film, which depicts the struggle of the German Holocaust researcher with his family history as a grandson of a Nazi war criminal, not only won the top prize at the festival but also the WOW-OV Viewer’s Choice Award.

—Kyodo News
Keeping an Italian medieval village alive

SESSANIO (Italy) — With the stone walls of the medieval village of Santo Stefano di Sessanio, narrow lanes weaving through stone arches, cobbled piazzas and overhanging buildings, the streets are mainly empty, except for tourists admiring the architecture and surrounding hills in Italy’s southern L’Aquila province.

A village which over centuries lived off agriculture and wool, Santo Stefano di Sessanio has just 108 inhabitants, less than a tenth of its pre-World War II population according to its mayor. Like many surrounding villages, most residents left for work in cities or abroad, leaving it all but abandoned.

Decades later, its untouched architecture caught the attention of Swedish-Italian entrepreneur Daniele Kihlgren, who came across it on a 1999 motorbike trip.

Kihlgren bought several houses, turning them in 2005 into a hotel with rooms scattered around the centre. The project has drawn tourists and injected life back into the village, according to locals.

“When I first arrived... it seemed nearly abandoned,” Kihlgren said. Everything had stopped in a past era. “While it still has shepherd and farmers, today Santo Stefano di Sessanio is being revived through tourism, with residents seeking to draw visitors to the surrounding Gran Sasso and Monti della Laga national park to their picturesque lodgings.

“You can see a visible increase in visitors,” mayor Fabio Santavicca said, without giving figures. “People have opened up their homes, renting out rooms, opening restaurants. It is a positive.”

The village now has around a dozen tourist lodgings, Santavicca said, with plans to develop local leisure activities. According to the most recently available hospitality figures from the regional tourism department, the village saw 4,361 visitor arrivals in 2013 versus 900 in 2005.

Santo Stefano di Sessanio is one of several villages in the Abruzzo region which saw its population deplete as the collapse of its wool-making industry after the introduction of synthetic materials, poverty and natural disasters in the active earthquake area drove people away.

In nearby San Silvestro village, vegetation fills empty buildings. Further north, Vale Polese is deserted. According to Santavicca, Santo Stefano di Sessanio had some 1,100 residents before World War One.

The village, which in winter sees its population fall further as some residents swap its 1,250-meter altitude for the valley, has also drawn secondary home owners from cities.

“People love coming to this region,” said resident Amelia, who owns a bed and breakfast and offers cooking classes to tourists.

“We are working hard on opening it to the world.”

—Reuters

Students, educators stress importance of preparedness for tsunami

TOKYO — Japanese students and educators emphasized Saturday the importance of preparedness for tsunami disasters and urged people to think about and discuss the matter.

At an event in Tokyo held on World Tsunami Awareness Day designated by the United Nations last December, junior high school students from Iwate and Kochi prefectures introduced their efforts to learn about how to evacuate when a major tsunami strikes.

The students and educators, including university professors and a former local official in charge of disaster prevention, all noted that each individual should place weight on saving his or her own life first and foremost to ensure the survival of as many people as possible.

“The message is simple,” said Fumihiko Inamura, head of the International Research Institute of Disaster Science at Tohoku University. “Tsunami involves an imminent situation where one must escape immediately. The only way you can save your own life is by running away quickly.”

Students from Kamashi junior high school in Iwate Prefecture who survived the March 2011 tsunami and tsunami explained about the message, “Tsunami tendenkou,” which has been handed down in the Pacific coastal areas of northeastern Japan and means one should evacu-...
Djokovic defeat sets up Murray to go to No. 1

PARIS — Novak Djokovic was dumped out of the Paris Masters in straight sets by Marin Cilic on Friday, opening the door for Andy Murray to end the Serb’s two-year stranglehold on the world number one ranking.

Djokovic, chasing a fifth title in Paris, slumped to his first defeat by big-serving Croat Cilic in 15 matches as he went down 6-4, 7-6(2).

The defeat means Murray, who ousted Czech Tomas Berdych 7-6(9), 7-5, need only win his semi-final against Canadian Milos Raonic to bring to an end the Serb’s reign as number one that started in July 2014.

“He definitely played better today and deserved to win. I wasn’t at the level I could have been,” said Djokovic.

“I was in a good position to take the match into the third set but hit two double faults. In important moments I wasn’t able to deliver.”

Djokovic, who needed to reach the final to guarantee keeping Murray at bay, saved two match points at 6-5 in the second set, the latter with a superb forehand crosscourt play, but was then facing a losing battle in the tiebreak.

Cilic, who on Thursday clinched his spot in the World Tour Finals in London later this month, raced into a 5-2 lead before a huge serve set up four more match points.

He was soon celebrating after swiping away a mid-court forehand to claim victory in one hour 45 minutes.

Asked about Murray replacing him as number one, Djokovic said: “He’s definitely a player who deserves that. To see how he has raised his level in the last 12 months is quite extraordinary.

“We have known each other since very, very early days. We were I think 11 years old when we first played against each other. Much respect for what he has done.”

Murray came through an exciting encounter with seventh seed Berdych.

The Scot saved five set points, and seven in all, after going 6-1 down in a captivating 16-minute tiebreak that he eventually took 11-9 with a forehand crosscourt winner.

Berdych, realising he had missed a golden opportunity, had his serve broken in the opening game of the second set.

The Czech broke back when his opponent served for the match at 5-4 but Murray responded by breaking again before he completed victory with a venomous ace down the middle.

“Maybe a little bit before the match there were a few nerves but once I got out there I didn’t let it affect me,” said the Scot. “It was a great atmosphere and a packed crowd.

“My goal wasn’t to get to number one this year, I was looking at the beginning of next year as the chance to do it. If it happens this week then great.”

Fourth seed Raonic progressed with a 6-2, 7-6 (4) victory over Frenchman Jo-Wilfried Tsonga.

Heavy-serving John Isner, who is unseeded, secured a meeting with Cilic after firing 17 aces as he beat fellow American Jack Sock 7-6(6), 4-6, 6-4.— Reuters

Pacquiao takes political time out to return to ring

LAS VEGAS — Senator Manny Pacquiao takes a brief break from politics to challenge Jessie Vargas for the WBO welterweight title at the Thomas & Mack Centre in Las Vegas on Saturday.

After claiming an unanimous decision over Tim Bradley in April, Pacquiao said he was heading into retirement from boxing and focusing on his political career.

Pacquiao, 37, won his May election to the senate in the Philippines but decided on another challenge in the ring and found it against Vargas, who is 10 years younger and enjoys a 4 1/2 inch height advantage and 4-inch advantage in reach.

Boxing’s only eight-division world champion, Senator Pacquiao (58-6-2) is eying to become a three-time WBO welterweight champion.

“I feel I still have a lot to prove. I am not done with boxing. I will continue to keep fighting as long as I love boxing and boxing still loves me,” Pacquiao said during the run-up to the bout.

“I am fighting for history. I was the first sitting congressman to win a world title. I want to be the first senator to become world champion.”

Pacquiao believes he is ready despite his divided focus.

“It took discipline to manage my time effectively... to balance my training camp and my senatorial duties,” Pacquiao said.

“Every day I was able to get in all my training.

“I ran every morning and did my strength and conditioning. I worked with Freddie (trainer Roach) every evening at the opening game of the first set.

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Mourinho lauds Zlatan’s attitude despite lack of goals

LONDON — Manchester United manager Jose Mourinho has no concerns over striker Zlatan Ibrahimovic’s barren spell as he expects the Swede’s ‘brilliant’ attitude to soon be rewarded with a goal.

The 35-year-old, who joined United when they travel to Swansea City on Sunday.—Reuters

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