

PR system debated at Lower House



Representatives taking part in discussions at Upper House in Nay Pyi Taw.—MNA

NAY PYI TAW, 25 July—The Lower House session on Friday debated a proposal calling for the adoption of a suitable electoral system for lower house elections, submitted by Representative U Aung Zin from Pazundaung Constituency.

Representative Daw Dwe Bu of Ingyanyan Constituency said that the proportional representation system was a good

electoral system to build a democracy and federal state. She pointed out that the parliament would be stronger as the system allowed all political parties to secure seats at the parliament and the check-

and-balance system would be more effective. She concluded that the electoral system was good for ethnic groups and would contribute to a better future.

Another supporter of the electoral system at the Lower House session was U Nyan Swe Win, who said that the electoral system had been adopted in over 90 countries around the world and the system would contribute to an inclusive process in national reconciliation and democratization.

Representative U Thein Tun Oo of Amarapura supported the proposal and urged the session to form a committee or commission to draft a bill for adoption of the electoral system.

At the Upper House session today, representatives discussed the census and assistance for senior citizens.

MNA

Co-operative Bank launches EASi mobile agent banking service

By Ye Myint

YANGON, 25 July — CB Bank, which is officially called Co-operative Bank Ltd—The Public Bank Company Limited—launched an EASi mobile agent banking service on Friday, letting customers withdraw and transfer money through a network of banking agents, who will perform transactions over a mobile device.

The launch of the agent banking system took place at Sedona Hotel in Yangon, with a presentation made by U Kyaw Lynn, executive

vice chairman and chief executive officer of the CB Bank.

The agent banking service is aimed at contributing towards rural development to a certain extent, enabling its customers, including those running small and medium enterprises to save time and money, said the CB Bank in its press release.

Using the latest technology of Switzerland-based Temenos Banking Software Company, customers will be given the higher security system of Temenos banking software

(T-24) to prevent their accounts from being easily used by others, the statement added.

“Although cash transfers can be done with a mobile device and cash withdrawals made at ATMs or the bank’s branches, a banking agent acting as a bank clerk will allow customers, who are unable to visit automated teller machines or branches that are mostly located in big towns and usually closed on weekends and holidays, access to get cash,” U Zaw Min Thant, the Bank’s project manager told The New Light of Myanmar.

According to the Bank, the EASi mobile agent, who serves as a small branch or a bank counter, enabling customers to use the service effectively has to deposit a certain amount of cash in a bank account of the CB Bank.

“This bank service is designed to be within the reach of rural people, said U Soe Myint, one of the Bank’s 50 agents. Regarding Internet connection, the agent from Kyangin Township of Ayeyawady Region expressed his view that the

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CB Bank CEO U Kyaw Lynn delivers presentation on EASi mobile agent banking service that allows customers to make fast and secure withdrawals and transfers through the bank’s agents.—PHOTO:YE MYINT

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Law students observe UEC functions

NAY PYI TAW, 25 July—Law students from Dagon University visited the Union Election Commission Office here on Friday afternoon, where they were welcomed by the UEC

Chairman and members.

Supervised by Associate Professor Dr Daw Yi Yi Lwin, the student delegation observed how the commission functions, including the processes

of compiling voter lists, as well as rules and regulations concerning the commission. The UEC chairman and members responded to queries raised by students. —MNA

NCCT meets in Laiza

LAIZA, 25 July—The first day meeting of the Nationwide Ceasefire Coordination Team of the national races took place at the Laiza Headquarters of the Kachin Independence Organization on Friday.

The 7-chapter ceasefire draft agreement jointly drawn by the Union Peace-making Work Committee and armed ethnic groups was reviewed at the meeting.

Assessments and ad-

vice made at the meeting will be supplemented to the draft agreement and it will be submitted in continued negotiations with the Union Peace-making Work Committee.

Sai Tun Aung Lwin



Nationwide Ceasefire Coordination Team Members’ Summit in progress in Laiza of Kachin State.—SAI TUN AUNG LWIN

Youth delegation receives financial, material assistance

YANGON, 25 July — A Myanmar youth delegation is scheduled to attend the second ASEAN-China Youth Cultural Exchange Festival, which is set to take place from 29 July to 4 August in Beijing, China, sources said.

The delegation is comprised of students with excellent academic achievements from different states and regions.

According to sources, the Myanmar-China Friendship Association rendered financial and material assistance to the participant students at a ceremony which took place at Sky Star Hotel here on Friday.

Last year, a Myanmar delegation comprising eight students participated in the first ASEAN-China Youth Cultural Exchange Festival, and ten students will join the festival this year.—MNA



An official presents a gift to a youth of the Myanmar delegation that will attend the second ASEAN-China Youth Cultural Exchange Festival.—MNA

Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs attends FOC in India

NAY PYI TAW, 25 July — At the invitation of Ms Sujatha Singh, Foreign Secretary of External Affairs of India, a Myanmar delegation led by U Thant Kyaw, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, left for New Delhi to attend the 14th Myanmar-India Foreign Office Consultations (FOC), which took place from 22 to 24 July, officials said.

At the meeting, Myanmar and India exchanged views on further strengthening of existing friendly relations, the promotion of bilateral cooperation in the

areas of connectivity projects, and matters related to border affairs, defence, trade, tourism, and culture.

Connectivity projects include the construction of India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway, Reed-Tiddim road and the Kaladan Multi-Modal Transport Transit project, sources said.

U Thant Kyaw called on Ms Sujatha Singh, with their discussions focusing on enhancing the existing relations and cooperation between the two countries.—MNA

Citizenship scrutiny cards issued in Lewe



LEWE, 25 July — Under Moe Pwint Project Phase (6), citizenship scrutiny cards were issued free of charge with one-stop-service for people in Sawhmawgon Village Tract in Lewe Township on Friday.

Staff Officer U Cho Tun of the Nay Pyi Taw Council Immigration and National Registration Department, Staff Officer U Soe Thet of township INRD and officials issued 274 citizenship scrutiny cards to locals.—Zaw Myo Naing

Japan builds high school in Hinthada Tsp



Officials of Grant Assistance for Grass-roots Human Security Projects (GGP) Scheme formally open a school building at Kyet Tu Yway Village in Hinthada Township.

HINTHADA, 25 July— The Government of Japan, under its Grant Assistance for Grass-roots Human Security Projects (GGP) Scheme, has extended its assistance totaling US\$ 110,595 for a humanitarian assistance program entitled, “The Project for Construction of Kyet Tu Yway Village Basic Education Branch High School in Hinthada Township, Ayeyawady Region”.

The hand-over and opening ceremony of this project was held in Kyet Tu Yway Village, Hinthada Township, Ayeyawady Region on 24th July 2014.

Ms. Nao OI, Third Secretary of the Embassy of Japan, Hinthada Township Administrator, Hinthada Assistant District Officers of Education, teachers and students, committee chairman and committee members of the project and local residents attended the

ceremony.

A total of 847 students at the Kyet Tu Yway Village Basic Education High School in Hinthada Township, Ayeyawady Region will directly benefit from the improved learning environment, including new school buildings with necessary furniture provided by the Japanese Government’s GGP scheme. It is expected that this assistance will create a better learning environment for students in Kyet Tu Yway Village, Hinthada Township, Ayeyawady Region.

NLM

World’s largest Dhammazedi Bell salvage project to start second week of August

By Khaing Thanda Lwin

YANGON, 25 July— The Yangon Region Government on 14 July gave green light to a team led by U San Linn to start finding the Great Bell of King Dhammazedi, which is assumed to have submerged in the Yangon River.

U San Linn said on Friday at a press conference in Yangon that the bell is said to be made of gold and silver as well as copper and tin and said to be the world’s largest bell ever cast.

U San Linn said that he himself searched for the Dhammazedi Bell after dredging the sandbank and detecting its location on 11 August, 1998 and that the bell is located at a depth of 25 feet from the river bed.

Fourteen divers will arrive to salvage the bell on 29 July and have arranged

to start the work on 8 August. The project is expected to be completed in the last week of the month. It is also expected to cost over 180 million, donor U Win Myint, who participated in activities to include the three ancient Pyu cities of Myanmar on the World Heritage List, said.

Now, the team is arranging to hold meetings with officials from Ayeyawady Naval Regional Command Headquarters and the Union Minister for Transport to pull out the bell on that day with the use of a buffer system.

It is reported that many people have attempted to take out the bell, thus far without success. The water is muddy and visibility is extremely poor under the surface, officials said. The Dhammazedi Bell is



U San Linn explains plans for the salvage of Great Bell of King Dhammazedi.

PHOTO: KHAING THANDA LWIN

thought to be buried in 25 feet deep (7.6 m) of mud.

Previous attempts to locate the bell, by both domestic and foreign teams since 1987, either failed or did not materialize. Some treasures from the Shwedagon, part of the loot, are also believed to be there guarded by gods and spirits, and some locals have claimed to have sighted

the bell surfacing on a full moon night.

At the end of June 2012, the Historical Research Department of the Ministry of Culture and SD Mark International LLP Co of Singapore held a workshop in Yangon for a renewed attempt with the Singaporean firm, pledging USD 10 million for the non-profit project.—NLM

Correction

Please read “UNHCR” in the 4th line of paragraph-2 in the first column under heading “Rakhine State Government Announcement (1/2014)” on page 2 of this daily issued on 24-7-2014.—NLM

NATIONAL

Union FM attends 20th ASEAN-EU Ministerial Meeting

Belgium Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr Didier Reynders shakes hands with Union Minister U Wunna Maung Lwin.—MNA

YANGON, 25 July—Union Minister for Foreign Affairs U Wunna Maung Lwin attended the 20th ASEAN-EU Ministerial Meeting in Brussels, capital of Belgium from 22 to 25 July 2014.

The meeting reviewed the ASEAN-EU enhanced

partnership; implementation of the ASEAN-EU, Bandar Seri Begawan Plan of Action (2013—2017); ASEAN-EU Connectivity and the future direction of ASEAN-EU relations with particular emphasis on elevating the ASEAN-EU enhanced partnership to a strategic level.

The meeting further deliberated on East Asian Regional infrastructure; regional and international issues of mutual concern and interest; ASEAN-EU maritime cooperation and security; climate change and disaster management and cooperation on counter-terrorism and combating transnational crime. Union Minister led the discussion on developments in ASEAN with special emphasis on the regional cooperation toward the realization of ASEAN Community by

2015; progress in the three ASEAN Community Pillars as well as Myanmar's priorities under its chairmanship of ASEAN in 2014. Union Minister also briefed the Meeting on the developments in Myanmar.

The Meeting agreed to convene the 21st ASEAN-EU Ministerial Meeting in Bangkok, Thailand in the first half of 2016.

They exchanged views on possible areas of cooperation between the two countries. The Union Minister also briefed on the developments in ASEAN, and held separate meetings with foreign ministers from European countries.

The Union Minister met with officials from the Press Office of the EU Foreign Affairs, officials and Lebanon at the Myanmar residence in Brussels.

MNA

Labour Ministry files lawsuit against Master Sports Factory for not compensating workers

By Aye Min Soe

YANGON, 25 July—Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security filed a lawsuit against Master Sports Factory on Friday as it failed to pay salary for June and compensation to workers after the closure of the facility on June 26. The Ministry has charged Master Sports, a shoe factory owned by a Korean businessman, which was shut down without sending notice to the Ministry, with failure to comply with the regulations of the law.

The factory owner will face four charges, including failure to send notice to the ministry for shutting down the factory, failure to send documents related to salaries of workers and agreements between the employer and workers, failure to pay salary and compensation to 757 workers for closure of the factory in accordance with the law, and also failing to pay the monthly social security fees in May for the workers to the Social Security Board in May, said U Win Shein, the Director-General of the Factories and General Labour Law Inspection Department.

As the owner of the factory Mr In Ho Bang has left Myanmar, the Ministry of Labour, Employment and



Some of the workers affected by the Master Sports Factory closure will be employed by other factories in the Hlinethaya Industrial Zone, officials have promised.—PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE

Social Security has brought the four charges against Mr. Jeoung Hae Un, the representative of the owner of the factory and the export & Import Manager of the factory, and Daw Khin Khin Htwe, Administrative Official of the factory, under the Section 85 and 88 of the Factories Act, under Section 51 of the Labour Organization Act, under Section 39 of the Employment and Skills Development Law and under Section 93 of the Social Security Act, according to the Factories and General Labour Law Inspection De-

partment.

Regarding the closure of the factory, which opened a year ago in the Hlinethaya Industrial Zone, Master Sports Myanmar Co Ltd issued an announcement at the beginning of July that they are experiencing financial problems due to low-quality products of the factory.

The factory had to revoke agreements with its buyers due to low-quality products, the announcement said. According to the announcement by the Korean factory owner, the salary for June could be paid and some

compensation given to the workers if the workers agree not to make any further demands from the factory. Following the announcement, 58 workers received their salary which amounted to over K7 million for June, according to the Factories and General Labour Law Inspection Department.

According to estimates calculated by the ministry, the salary for June for the 757 workers amounts to nearly K65 million and the total compensation for the closure of the factory guaranteed by the law amounts

President U Thein Sein felicitates Maldivian counterpart

NAY PYI TAW, 26 July—On the occasion of the 49th Anniversary of the Independence Day of the Republic of Maldives which falls on 26th July 2014, U Thein Sein, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, has sent a message of felicitations to His Excellency Mr. Adbulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom, President of the Republic of the Maldives.—MNA

Union FM sends felicitations to Maldivian counterpart

NAY PYI TAW, 26 July—On the occasion of the 49th Anniversary of the Independence Day of the Republic of Maldives which falls on 26th July 2014, U Wunna Maung Lwin, Union Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, has sent a message of felicitations to Her Excellency Ms Dunya Maumoon, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Maldives.—MNA

UN special rapporteur meets union ministers

NAY PYI TAW, 25 July—Ms Yanghee Lee, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, called on union ministers here on Friday, sources said.

The union ministers she met were Lt-Gen Wai Lwin, Lt-Gen Thet Naing Win, U Aung Kyi, U Soe Thane, U Aung Min, Dr Daw Myat Myat Ohn Khin, U Aye Myint, and U Khin Yi.

Their discussions were concerned with ongoing peace talks with ethnic armed groups, forced labour and torture, vocational training at refugee shelters, cooperation with UN organizations and INGOs in development and stability measures, protection of women, children and disabled people, and rights and benefits between employers and employees.

MNA

Co-operative Bank launches...

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region will have better internet connection soon.

"It is learnt that the transaction charge is 15 pyar (100 pyar is equivalent to one kyat) for a transfer of K100 and agents who can make more transactions will be paid bonuses for promotion", he added. "The bank gets 20 percent of the transaction fee while 50 percent goes to an agent who performed a cash-out transaction and 30 percent to another agent who made

a cash-in transaction", said the project manager who is responsible for the Bank's mobile banking system.

CB Bank, one of Myanmar's leading public bank headquartered in Yangon, introduced the first mobile banking system, EASi mobile banking service, in the country to its customers a few months ago, offering a variety of services including funds transfer own account, beneficiary payment and Master/Visa Card Top-Up.—NLM

ly 215 job vacancies.

During the meeting, an official of Esquire Shoe Factory guaranteed that they can give 400 jobs opportunities in August and an official of Tian Yu factory, which is currently on trial, said at the meeting that they can create around 1,000 job opportunities within two months, according to the ministry.

Over 750 workers lost their jobs when the Master Sport Factory closed.

NLM

Repaved road commissioned into service in Pyinmana Tps



NAY PYI TAW, 25 July—A ceremony to inaugurate the Myitta Street, which was repaved with

asphalt, was held in Paunglaung Ward of Pyinmana of Nay Pyi Taw Council Area on Friday.

Health talks given in Lashio

LASHIO, 25 July—The Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association Central gave talks about its seven projects to local people in Lashio Township in Shan State North from 22 to 24 July.

CEC member of the association Dr May Soe Oo, Maternal and Health Specialist Dr Maharajan Muthu of UNHCR (Myanmar) and officials of the Health Department explained good health prac-

tices for families and children, assistance for health care services and implementation of the suggestions and discussions to the people in Hopeik, Hsonkwe and Einai villages in Lashio Township.

The talks were aimed at broadening the horizon of the rural people and enabling them to practise good health care to uplift the health standard of the entire people.

Shan State IPRD

Importance of proper feeding of cattle explained in Mahlaing Tsp



MAHLAING, 25 July—Local farmers face difficulties to feed cattle in Mahlaing Township of Mandalay Region, as the area has been suffering from drought in the early monsoon period.

At present, the farmers give priority to seeking feedstuff for their cattle. As such, they send their cattle to the pasture lands far from the native areas.

"We bought straws of paddy plants in Zeed-

aw Village of Natogyi Township, costing K200,000-K300,000 per bale of straw depending on size. Moreover, we bought K200 per basket of straw and K500 per basket of cuttings of maize. However, we purchased stalk pieces of maize plants in Myingyan Township. Now, we are so difficulties in feedstuff for cows and buffalos," said farmer U Kan Kaung.

Aung Htay (Mahlaing)

Speaking on the occasion, Member of Nay Pyi Taw Council Col Myint Aung Than said that the

Officials on field trips of rural development

THAZI, 25 July—As part of efforts to alleviate poverty and develop rural areas, Township Management Committee Chairman U Nyunt Ngwe and officials made field trips to the rural areas for holding meetings with members of village electrification committees on Thursday.

"When the village gets electricity, the local people can set up industries on a manageable scale in their villages. As a result, their living standard will improve day by day," he said.

The Chairman of the Township Management Committee and officials inspected installation of transformers in the villages and erection of concrete lamp-posts and power lines.—*Tun Tun (Thazi)*



council has spent K2.86 billion on extension and upgrading of asphalt roads, maintenance and construction of bridges, dredging of drains for proper flow of water and installation of lamp-posts in Pyinmana Township.

The Nay Pyi Taw Council member and officials unveiled the road.

The road is 3,400 feet long and 12 feet wide was constructed at a cost of K64.2 million.

Htet Min Aung (HGP)

Over K2 billion disbursed to farmers for cultivation of monsoon crops in Mahlaing Tsp

MAHLAING, 25 July—Myanma Agricultural Development Bank of Mandalay Region has disbursed agricultural loans to farmers of Mahlaing Township for the 2014 monsoon on 21 July.

"The bank branch delivers loans to the farmers as they have to pay back the loans to the bank," said manager U Ngwe Tun of the bank branch.

The bank disbursed K100,000 per acres of farmland and K20,000 per acre of cropland as of 5 June, issuing K2.3 billion to 14,202 farmers from 247 villages of the township up to 21 July.

"With the loans disbursement, local farmers will enjoy a better living standard," said a local of Panaing Village.

Aung Htay (Mahlaing)

Maize production of Kalay region supplied to people of Chin State, Gangaw District



KALAY, 25 July — Local farmers cultivate maize three times a year in Kalay Township of Sagaing Region, increasing family incomes.

"Farmers do not need to spend much expense on cultivation of maize, costing K200,000 per acre

in total. They can fetch K800,000 per acre in sales after harvesting," said farmer U Win Hlaing of Myohla Village.

"The maize farms need to be irrigated once before cultivation. I did not face loss in cultivation of maize yearly," he added.

Most of the people make various foods with the use of maize and its products. Maize produced from Kalay region is marketable in Falam, Tiddim, Kyikha, Tonzang, Kabaw plain, Tamu, Khampat and Yaw and Gangaw regions daily.

Linlet Kyeil Sin

Danger of unregistered pesticides, chemicals disseminated

MANDALAY, 25 July—Some people were pronounced dead as farmers use chemicals and pesticides without abiding by the prescribed limit in cultivation

of mango, cucumber and water melon and other vegetables in Mandalay Region and northern Shan State, said Daw Than Than Swe, member of Myanmar Fruits and

Flower Producers Association recently.

"Extreme use of chemicals and pesticides cause various diseases like liver cancer to the customers," said an agriculturalist.

"1,000 ml of chemical and pesticide into the body will cause death of the customers," said Daw Than Than Swe, adding that most of deaths of customers were based on use of unpermitted pesticides and chemicals.

"We disseminate information not to use unregistered chemicals and pesticides in the cultivation to the rural people," an official of Fruits and Flower Producers Association (Mandalay).

Thiha Ko Ko (Mandalay)

REGIONAL

Indonesia's constitutional court ready to take on election result challenge



The head of Indonesia's Constitutional Court Hamdan Zoelva speaks with Reuters during an interview in his office in Jakarta on 24 July, 2014.—REUTERS

JAKARTA, 25 July — Indonesia's top court is prepared to hear a case challenging the result of this month's presidential election, well aware that its reputation is on the line after its top judge was jailed for corruption, his successor said. The losing presidential candidate, Prabowo Subianto, has alleged mass cheating in the closely fought 9 July election and has said he will challenge the result in the Constitutional Court. A member of his team said the complaint would be lodged later on Friday.

The Prabowo team has not made public evidence to show that the cheating was on a large enough scale to overturn the result and some analysts say the case is more a face-saving effort and poses no real risk to the winner, Joko "Jokowi" Widodo. "We realize that scrutiny of the Constitutional Court is high and that after Akil's case there are doubts about us," the head of the Constitutional Court, Hamdan Zoelva, told Reuters in an interview late on Thursday.

He was referring to his predecessor Akil Mochtar who was sentenced to life in prison last month for accepting bribes related to judgements on other election disputes. The court will work professionally and decide all cases based on the evidence, Zoelva said.

He said he would not be surprised if Prabowo did file a complaint with his court, adding: "It is normal in Indonesia". The losing candidates did so in both previous presidential elections in 2004 and 2009 but the rulings had no impact on the final result.

Reuters

Abe leaves for Latin America to boost economic ties

TOKYO, 25 July — Prime Minister Shinzo Abe departed on Friday on a five-nation tour of Latin America to promote infrastructure exports and strengthen economic ties with the region in the fields of resources and energy development.

During his visit to Mexico, Trinidad and Tobago, Colombia, Chile and Brazil, Abe plans to meet with the leaders of the five countries and seek support for Japan's bid next year for a nonpermanent seat on the UN Security Council from 2016, according to government officials.

Positioning Latin America as a promising "market of 600 million" people, the government aims to help Japanese companies win orders for



Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and his wife Akie wave to people before leaving for a five-nation tour of Latin America from Tokyo's Haneda airport on 25 July, 2014. KYODO NEWS

infrastructure development, one of the pillars of Japan's growth strategies, according to a senior

S Korea's Park urges Tokyo governor to work for "stable relationship"

SEOUL, 25 July — South Korean President Park Geun-hye urged Tokyo Gov Yoichi Masuzoe on Friday to work for a stable relationship between South Korea and Japan, the presidential Press office said.

Speaking at the outset of her meeting with Masuzoe at the presidential office, Park said, "Japanese politicians' improper words and behaviour have caused various difficulties in bilateral relations."

"I would like to ask you to work so that the two countries can share a correct recognition of past history and develop a stable relationship," Park said in a statement released by her press office.

Park said she hopes for a settlement "by sincere efforts" of the issue of Japan's wartime sexual slavery, adding it is "not only

a matter between the two countries, but also a matter concerning universal women's rights."

Park expressed regret that ordinary people from the two countries "may be farther apart psychologically due to political difficulties" even though they have got along well in the past.

The meeting was Park's first with a Japanese politician since a trilateral summit with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and US President Barack Obama in March in the Netherlands.

Bilateral relations have nosedived to the worst level in years over differing views on wartime history and over the ownership of islets in the Sea of Japan.

Abe has not held bilateral summit talks with Park since the latter took office in February last year. Abe

became prime minister for the second time in December 2012.

Masuzoe, who had proposed his meeting with Park, gave the South Korean leader Abe's message that the Japanese leader hopes to improve Japan-South Korea relations.

But neither Masuzoe nor Park touched on the feasibility of a meeting between Abe and Park, the Tokyo governor told reporters after the meeting.

Masuzoe said he told Park that he will convey to Abe the South Korean president's message that the two countries should firmly establish the recognition of past history as the first step toward building bilateral friendship.

He also said he felt that Park is willing to improve Japan-South Korea relations.

At a meeting of senior Foreign Ministry officials from the two countries on Wednesday, Japan assured South Korea that it will uphold its official apology concerning the mostly Korean and other Asian women who were forced to work in Japanese wartime military brothels.

Seoul has stepped up criticism of Japan since Tokyo concluded in a report last month that the South Korean government was involved in the drafting process of the apology, known as the Kono statement.

Kyodo News

Foreign Ministry official.

The Abe government has set a goal of increasing the value of overseas infrastructure-related orders received by Japanese firms to 30 trillion yen in 2020.

Japan saw the value increase roughly three-fold to 9.26 trillion yen last year from 2012, a feat partly attributed by the government to the prime minister's promotional activities at home and abroad.

"With this Latin America trip, I will have covered all continents of the world in my globe-trotting diplomacy," Abe told reporters in Tokyo earlier Friday.

"I would like to strengthen relations with Latin America, which has unlimited potential," Abe

said, expressing his intention to explore business opportunities there with corporate executives who are travelling with him.

In Mexico and Chile, which are engaged in talks on the Trans-Pacific Partnership free trade pact, Abe plans to exchange views with Mexican President Enrique Pena Nieto and Chilean President Michelle Bachelet toward an early conclusion of the TPP accord.

The visit is also apparently aimed at highlighting Japan's presence in Latin America, after Chinese President Xi Jinping visited four countries in the region, including Brazil and Cuba, earlier this month.

Abe is scheduled to return home on 4 August.

Kyodo News

S Korea fails to determine cause of death of owner of sunken ferry



Seo Joong-seok, director general of South Korea's National Forensic Service (NFS), gives a briefing on the cause of death of businessman Yoo Byung-un, at the agency office in Seoul on 25 July, 2014.—REUTERS

SEOUL, 25 July — South Korea's top forensic agency said on Friday it cannot determine the cause of death of the tycoon Yoo Byung Eun, whose decomposed body was found last month, adding yet another twist to the saga involving the sinking of the passenger ferry in April that left more than 300 people dead or missing.

"We couldn't confirm the cause of death since Yoo's body was badly decomposed," Seo Joong Seok, head of the National Forensic Service, told reporters.

The body of Yoo Byung Eun, the 73-year-old billionaire who owned the ferry operator Chonghaejin Marine Co, was found on 12 June on a farm just a few kilometres away from his house in the southwestern city of Suncheon, South Jeolla Province, police have said.

Seo ruled out speculation that Yoo's body had been switched, saying forensic examinations have confirmed the body was that of Yoo.

Police said on Tuesday the results of DNA and fingerprint tests showed a match for Yoo and the final results will be made by the National Forensic Service.

South Korean police launched a nationwide manhunt for Yoo, offering a \$500,000 reward for information leading to his arrest. Many of Yoo's family members, including his wife and elder brother, have been arrested on embezzlement charges.

A total of 331 people, including crewmen of the sunken ferry and Coast Guard officials, have been booked for investigation related to the disaster.

The botched manhunt for Yoo claimed heads of senior officials in the prosecution and police.—Kyodo News



Tokyo Gov Yoichi Masuzoe meets with the Press in Seoul, South Korea, on 25 July, 2014, after meeting with South Korean President Park Geun-hye. Bilateral relations have nosedived to the worst level in years over differing views on wartime history and over the ownership of islets in the Sea of Japan.—KYODO NEWS

Peres steps down as Israeli president, sees peace 'one day'

JERUSALEM, 25 July — Israel's elder statesman Shimon Peres bowed out of active political life on Thursday with an ardent defence of the war in Gaza against Hamas militants and a defiant prediction that peace will "one day" come to the Middle East.

At a ceremony overshadowed by the 17-day Gaza conflict in which nearly 800 people have died, Peres, 90, relinquished his largely ceremonial post as Israeli president to Reuven Rivlin, a member of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Likud Party.

Israeli heads of state are not directly involved in political decision-making, but Peres, a Nobel Peace Laureate, has used the presidency over the last seven years as a pulpit for advocating peace with the Palestinians, often taking a more conciliatory stance than right-winger Netanyahu.

In his farewell speech,

Peres invoked the biblical prophets he said had taught Israel to see "social justice and world peace as guiding principles" and he urged the Jewish state to "practise equality for all its citizens".

"I will not give up my right to serve my people and my country. And I will continue to help build my country, with a deep belief that one day it will know peace," he added, making clear he did not envisage a quiet retirement.

But Peres also defended Israel's offensive in Gaza, launched in response to rocket attacks on its territory, despite the deaths of at least 762 Palestinians and 32 Israeli soldiers. He accused Hamas militants of turning Gaza "into a man-made tragedy" and of deliberately putting civilians in harm's way.

"Israel is not the enemy of the people of Gaza," he said.

But he also said Israel should welcome and en-

courage debate about the rights and wrongs of the conflict in Gaza.

"In these difficult days in which the eyes of the nation are on its leaders, on you, please do not lessen the debate. It is the essence of democracy," said Peres.

Peres was born in Poland in 1923 and began in politics as a close aide to Israel's founding father and first prime minister David Ben-Gurion. In a career spanning nearly seven decades, he has served in a dozen cabinets and twice as prime minister.

He shared the Nobel Peace Prize with Israel's late prime minister Yitzhak Rabin and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat for a 1993 interim peace deal that they and their successors failed to turn into a durable treaty.

Unlike Peres, Rivlin, a former parliamentary speaker, is opposed to the creation of a Palestinian state. A champion of Jewish settlements built on



Israel's President Shimon Peres (C) looks at a book with pictures from his years in office, at the presidential residence in Jerusalem, on his last day in office, on 24 July, 2014. —REUTERS

occupied land, Rivlin, 74, has called for a confederation with the Palestinians rather than negotiating an independent state for them — something Palestinian leaders have long rejected.

Yet Rivlin, chosen by parliament last month, has

won endorsements from Israeli doves for his longtime advocacy of Jewish-Arab cooperation and for a sense of humour known to cross political and ethnic lines.

Rivlin had tears in his eyes as he was sworn in as head of state, but he

sounded a combative note against Gaza militants.

"They will not defeat us. Terror will not defeat us, or weaken our resolve or our spirit or conviction in our feeling of justice," the new president said.

Reuters

Russia says will cooperate with MH17 probe led by Netherlands



A journalist takes photographs at the site of Thursday's Malaysia Airlines Boeing 777 plane crash near the settlement of Grabovo, in the Donetsk region on 18 July, 2014. —REUTERS

KUALA LUMPUR, 25 July — Russia will cooperate with the investigation into the downing of a Malaysian airliner a week ago and is satisfied that the Netherlands, rather than Ukraine, is leading the effort, the country's ambassador to Malaysia said on Thursday.

Liudmila Vorobyeva also rejected suggestions that the pro-Russian separatists blamed by Western governments for shooting down Flight MH17 possessed a Russian-made anti-aircraft missile, and said the rebels lacked the training to use such a system.

Nearly 300 people, 193 of them Dutch citizens, were killed when the Malaysia Airlines plane en route from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur was brought down in eastern Ukraine, where separatists are battling government forces, on 17 July.

The norm under rules set down by the United Nations' civil aviation body (ICAO) is that an air investigation is led by the state in whose territory the plane crash, but Russia had said that Ukraine should not take charge because the rebels who control the crash site did not trust the

authorities in Kiev. "We want an international investigation led by ICAO. Any country part of ICAO may take part. Netherlands has the right to lead this," the ambassador told Reuters in an interview in Kuala Lumpur. "We are members of ICAO, we will cooperate with the investigation," Vorobyeva said. Russian experts were already participating in the investigation, although she did not say what role they were playing. "As soon as experts from ICAO and international experts have a part, we think it could lead to authentic results and the truth will come out," she said.

Russia has not been asked to act as an intermediary with the rebels, who the United States and Ukraine's pro-Western government says are armed by Moscow, Vorobyeva said. "We haven't been asked to do that and for the time being there's no need for an intermediary, because, as we know, the rebels have cooperated with the experts," she said. "We have to see how the situation develops, it's hard to have any forecast now." —Reuters

Bad weather likely cause of Air Algerie crash: French officials

PARIS, 25 July — Poor weather was the most likely cause of the crash of an Air Algerie flight over the West African state of Mali with 116 people on board, French officials said on Friday. Investigators at the scene of the crash had concluded the airliner broke apart when it hit the ground, the officials said, suggesting this meant it was unlikely to have been the victim of an attack. "The aircraft was destroyed at the moment it crashed," Interior Minister Bernard Cazeneuve told RTL radio of

the wreckage of the plane carrying 51 French nationals which crashed in Mali near the border with Burkina Faso on Thursday.

"We think the aircraft crashed for reasons linked to the weather conditions. No theory can be excluded at this point ... but that is indeed the most likely theory," he added.

Separately, Transport Minister Frederic Cuvillier said the strong smell of aircraft fuel at the crash site and the fact that the debris was scattered over

a relatively small area also suggested the cause of the crash was linked to weather, a technical problem or a cumulation of such factors.

"We exclude — and have done so from the start — any ground strike," Cuvillier told France 2 television.

He added that a column of 100 soldiers from the French force stationed in the region were on their way to secure the crash site near the northern town of Gossi. France deployed troops to Mali last year to halt an al-Qaeda-backed insurgency.

Aviation officials lost contact with Flight AH5017 en route from Burkina Faso to Algeria early on Thursday after a request by the pilot to change course due to bad weather.

Burkina Faso authorities said the passenger list included 51 French, 27 Burkinabe, eight Lebanese, six Algerians, five Canadians, four Germans, two from Luxembourg, one Cameroonian, one Belgian, one Egyptian, one Ukrainian, one Swiss, one Nigerian and one Malian. Crash site investigators saw no survivors. —Reuters



A screengrab of the homepage of the Ouagadougou airport's Internet site (<http://www.aeroport-ouagadougou.com>) shows a candle next to the flight number AH5017 and a map displaying the plane's last contact zone, on 24 July, 2014. —REUTERS

WORLD

Shelling of Gaza school kills at least 15; toll nears 800

GAZA / JERUSALEM, 25 July — Gazan authorities said Israeli forces shelled a shelter at a UN-run school, killing at least 15 people, as the Palestinian death toll in the conflict reached 796 and attempts at a truce remained elusive.

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon expressed horror at the Thursday attack on the school at Beit Hanoun in the northern Gaza strip. “Many have been killed – including women and children, as well as UN staff,” he said in a statement. “Circumstances are still unclear. I strongly condemn this act.”

Ban later arrived at Cairo where he was expected to meet US Secretary of State John Kerry, who has been working the telephones to try to broker a truce.

Kerry’s spokesman said the school attack “underscores the need to end the violence”.

But there was no sign of progress on securing a

ceasefire in his four days in the region. “Gaps remain between the parties,” a senior US official said, adding that Kerry would not stay “for an indefinite amount of time.”

The Israeli military said it was investigating the school incident. Israel Defence Forces spokesman Lieutenant-Colonel Peter Lerner told *Reuters* TV: “It could be errant fire from the IDF or rockets landing from Gaza terrorists but we still don’t know, there’s still a question mark.”

A spokesman for the UN Relief and Works Agency said it had tried in vain to arrange an evacuation of civilians from the school with the Israeli army, and noted reports of Hamas rockets falling in the area at the same time.

Pools of blood lay on the ground and on students’ desks in the courtyard of the school near the apparent impact mark of the shell, according to a *Reuters* photographer at the scene.



A crater marks the centre of a courtyard at a United Nations-run school sheltering Palestinians displaced by an Israeli ground offensive, that police said was hit by an Israeli shell, in Beit Hanoun in the northern Gaza Strip on 24 July, 2014. —REUTERS

Scores of crying families who had been living in the school ran with their children to a hospital a few hundred metres away where the victims were being treated. Laila Al-Shinbari, a woman who was at the school when it was shelled, told *Reuters* that

families had gathered in the courtyard expecting to be evacuated shortly in a Red Cross convoy.

“All of us sat in one place when suddenly four shells landed on our heads ... Bodies were on the ground, (there was) blood and screams. My son is

dead and all my relatives are wounded including my other kids,” she wept.

Ashraf al-Qidra, spokesman for the Gaza Health Ministry, said that besides the 15 dead, 200 people had been wounded in the attack. The director of a local hospital said

various medical centres around Beit Hanoun were receiving the wounded.

In the occupied West Bank, some 10,000 protesters marching in support of their Gaza compatriots clashed with Israeli troops and at least one protester was killed and some 200 were injured, Palestinian hospital officials said.

More than 140,000 Palestinians have fled 17 days of fighting between Israel and Gaza militants, many of them seeking shelter in buildings run by the UNRWA. Israeli forces are trying to stop militants from firing rockets into its territory.

“It’s clear that civilians are paying an unimaginable price caught between both sides,” said UNRWA spokesman Chris Gunness. “We were attempting to arrange a window for evacuation for the civilians with the Israeli army that never came. The consequences were deeply tragic.”

Reuters

First UN aid convoy enters Syria without government consent

UNITED NATIONS, 25 July — The United Nations sent its first humanitarian aid convoy into rebel-held areas of Syria without government consent on Thursday as UN chief Ban Ki-moon accused warring parties of denying assistance to millions of people in need as a tactic of war.

The UN Security Council unanimously adopted a resolution 10 days ago that authorized aid access at four border crossings from Turkey, Iraq and Jordan, even though Syria has warned it deems such deliveries incursions into its territory.

“A convoy of nine trucks crossed into Syria today from the Turkish crossing at Bab al-Salam, carrying UN food, shelter, water purification and sanitation supplies,” said Amanda Pitt, spokeswoman for the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

No further details were available on whether the trucks had reached the people it was intended for. In a report to the Security Coun-



People unpack humanitarian aid inside a warehouse in Ghouta, eastern Damascus on 24 May, 2014. — REUTERS

cil, obtained by *Reuters* on Thursday, Ban said that an estimated 10.8 million people need help, of which 4.7 million are in hard to reach areas of Syria.

He said at least 241,000 people in areas besieged by government or opposition forces. “The parties have continued to obstruct humanitarian assistance to those most in need and to withhold consent for operations in a completely arbi-

trary manner as a tactic of war,” Ban said in the report, dated Wednesday.

“I call upon parties to the conflict to lift the sieges immediately and facilitate access to people in need of humanitarian assistance,” he said. Ban has reported monthly to the Security Council on the implementation of a resolution adopted in February demanding rapid, safe and unhindered aid access in Syria. The United

Nations says that resolution had failed to make a difference and that the humanitarian situation on the ground had worsened.

The action then taken by the council on 14 July was a follow-up to the February resolution. The new resolution threatens “further measures in the event of non-compliance.” The council would need a second resolution to impose punishments. — *Reuters*

Mediterranean boat people numbers soar to near 100,000 this year

GENEVA, 25 July — Almost 100,000 boat people have made the dangerous journey across the Mediterranean to Europe this year, a roughly 60 percent increase on the whole of last year, and about 800 have died in the attempt, the UN refugee agency said on Thursday. The exodus has surged this year, as far more migrants put their lives in the hands of smugglers or unseaworthy vessels in a desperate attempt to reach Europe.

More than 75,000

made the trip in the first six months of the year, landing up in Italy, Greece, Spain and Malta, the UNHCR agency said. Their number included 10,500 children, two-thirds of them unaccompanied or separated from their families. The number of the whole of 2013 was around 60,000.

The UNHCR also said that this year the numbers are accelerating: 21,000 have reached Italy since the beginning of July.

Reuters



African migrants sit on the deck of an Armed Forces of Malta (AFM) patrol boat as it arrives at the AFM Maritime Squadron base in Valletta’s Marsamxett Harbour on 20 July, 2014. — REUTERS

PERSPECTIVES

Saturday, 26 July, 2014

Breaking with tradition

By Kyaw Thura

Our ancestors have admonished us neither to be too easy on spending nor too hard on convention. Careless spending will no doubt put us in poverty while flouting convention will for sure lead us to wrong conclusion.

This warns us to try to keep a good balance

between the past and the present. In this respect, it is however absolutely necessary to take into consideration the fact that not all conventions are flawless. This warns us again that we must be brave enough to discard any old conventions that no longer fit into today's world.

As a nascent democracy, Myanmar still has a lot of obstacles to overcome on its way toward a mature democracy. One of the vexing problems facing us is not having enough courage to break with tradition. We are all aware of the importance of changing our mindset in order to achieve our long-awaited goal, a genuine democracy. Instead, we always find ourselves trapped in an old saying that goes "Easier said than done". As Napoleon Hill put it, "there is no such thing as some-

thing for nothing".

For our country to become democratically mature, it is imperative for all of us to learn to respect core democratic principles and be willingly engaged in a different set of trade-offs.

All in all, when it comes to changing the mindset, it is the top-down practices that work best, for the simple reason that ordinary people are used to following the footsteps of leaders who walk their talk.

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.

Winning the Life Game

Kyí Mun

You must complete your growth in the midst of life.

Lao-tzu

Everyone has to live and move and has one's being in something good and true, from birth to death. But the problem is how one has to live and move and has one's being in something good and true!

In order to be a winner in the game of life, one has to deal with the following five areas of life :

- **Physical Quality** which is concerned with the **BODY**.
- **Mental Quality** which is concerned with the **MIND**.
- **Emotional Quality** which is concerned with the **HEART**.
- **Spiritual Quality** which is concerned with the **SOUL**.
- **Achievement Quality** which is concerned with the **LIFE**.

The Physical Quality of Body

The physical quality of the body consists of HEALTH and STRENGTH. If you want to be endowed with health and strength, you have got to have DISCIPLINE & DILIGENCE.

You need a resolute discipline in following a strict DIET REGIMEN and a robust EXERCISE REGIMEN. In the diet regimen, you should avoid eating saturated fats such as fats from red meats and milk products, coconut milk, egg yolk, and trans fat, on the one hand, and eat in moderation sugar and sweet foods & drinks, and salt and salty products on the other. You should take more fresh, juicy fruits and leafy vegetables.

As to the exercise regimen, you have got to do your diligence in taking some proper exercises which are aerobic in nature, such as brisk walking, swimming, jogging, according to your age and health condition.

The Mental Quality of Mind

To enhance your knowledge and wisdom, you have got to learn, to observe, to listen, to read good books. Besides enriching yourself with good knowledge and learning, you should cultivate yourself to be able to shape the future of your life with a set of sensible but very vivid VISION and STRATEGY. You must know what you really want from life. You have got to go on your own life-journey and travel it well. With a good future vision or dream, you have got to set up your long-term purpose, medium-term goals and short-term objectives. And then, you have got to lay out a realistic ACTION PLAN with very brilliant STRATEGY. Your winning STRATEGY is your CONCENTRATED STRENGTHS which you deploy and maneuver into the most advantageous position prior to your real engagement with your life struggles.

The Emotional Quality of Heart

For your unique emotional quotient, you have got to cultivate very strong passion and some lofty core values and

beliefs. You must stand for something in your whole life. You must have a strong backbone. You have got to have fire in your guts and values in your heart. The values that should be enshrined in the heart include, "Love all, serve all, help ever, hurt never." One more thing also should be included: i.e. "Doing small things with great love", as Mother Teresa used to say.

Some examples of Business Values are :

The clothing manufacturer Blue Bells'

Core Values are : **PRIDE**,

- **Profitability** through Excellence
- **Respect** for the Individual
- **Involved** Citizenship
- **Dedication** to Fairness and Integrity
- **Existing** for the Customer

The Six Values of Caring Leaders are :

- **Honesty**
- **Consideration**
- **Responsibility**
- **Persistence**
- **Excellence**
- **Commitment**

The Spiritual Quality of Soul

The ordinary worldly people are usually conditioned by Greed (Lobha), Anger (Dosa), Delusion or Ignorance (Moha), Pride (Māna), Doubt (Vicikkicā). So, all conditioned beings are selfish and egotistic. They are usually self-centered.

People of higher nature want to be free and altruistic. So, they choose to practice to live and move and have their being in Loving-kindness, Compassion, Sympathetic Joy and Equanimity of Mind. Accordingly, these people try to go all-out to serve for the most good for the most people. They are no longer self-centered.

The Achievement Quality of Life

For those who want to be masters of their own fate should try to deal with life in their own terms. They must have what it takes to win big in life. They must know how: **"to strive, to seek, to find and not to yield"** in their life. To succeed in life, they should build their success on the strong foundation of CHARACTER and COMPETENCE. They should be able to reveal themselves to the world **what they are and what they can do**. They have got to prove the true worth of their metal and the true value of their service or contribution. **People of character and competence are doers, achievers, winners** who dare to surmount all the challenges and who are visionary enough to seize and exploit all the opportunities in their pursuit of the triple bottom lines of PEOPLE, PLANET AND PROFIT. Character development is the single most difficult issue in life. Good character, which is the moral action, must be demonstrated in all circumstances.

Conclusion

Man is a conscious being with conscience. A human being, by nature, is endowed with five strengths of :

- The Strength of **Faith**
- The Strength of **Mindfulness**
- The Strength of **Diligence**
- The Strength of **Concentration**
- The Strength of **Wisdom**

By the proper and consistent deployment of these strengths, man can aspire and attain supreme most accomplishments in life.

Ref : 1. Management by Stephen P. Robbins and Mary Coulter

2. The Art of Leadership by Manning Curtis

3. Five-Star Leadership by Patrick L. Townsend and Joan E. Gebhardt

U Kyi Mun residing in Yangon is a consultant of NAING Group Capital Co., Ltd.

Recreation Trolleys donated to Parami General Hospital

YANGON, 25 July— The Embassy of Israel project in the health sector, donating two more "Recreation Trolleys", this time to



"Parami General Hospital", in Yangon.

The donation ceremony on 23 July was attended by Mr Tomer Heyvi, Deputy Chief of Mission at the Embassy of Israel in Yangon, Prof. Dr Thein Aung, Chairman of Parami General Hospital, Dr Zeyar Aye, Vice Chairman, and more guests as senior medical superintendents, child specialists and nurses, all from Parami Hospital.

Mr Heyvi, DCM, from the Israeli Embassy explained in his opening remarks that this special project is for the benefit of

hospitalized children of Myanmar. The Recreation Trolley contains children's book and toys that are meant to help in creating a friendlier environment for children. The idea was taken from the Children's hospitals in Israel that uses different methods in order to reduce the trauma experienced by a child during hospitalization.

This is the 3rd donation made by the Embassy of Israel. In total, 10 Recreation Trolleys were donated to 5 different children's hospitals in Myanmar.

NLM

LOCAL NEWS

Ancient Inwa City draws more foreign visitors



MANDALAY, 25 July—Ancient Inwa city (AD 1364) which is one of the cultural heritages in Myanmar, located in Tada U Township of Mandalay Region, is attracting more

and more globetrotters and local visitors. Ancient Barmei, also known as Bagaya monastery, Mei Nu brick monastery, Nanmyint Tower, Sanya Gate, Yadana Hsim-

ee Pagoda, Shwesigon Pagoda, Botalok Lake, Thit-tat, coal chamber, Inwa archaeological museum are also tourist areas in the ancient Inwa city.

Although a strong

earthquake jolted many buildings of the city in 1838, there remained the Bagaya monastery built with 267 teak posts near the Nanmyint tower.

Tourists often visit the ancient Inwa city and its significant sites and buildings, by pony carts.

Nine archaeologists will be sent to Japan for attending the archaeological technology course in August under the arrangements of the Myanmar Culture Ministry and National Research Institute for Cultural Properties-NRICP of Japan, according to the Archaeology and National Museum Department (Mandalay Branch).

Thiha Ko Ko (Mandalay)



Township IRD provides cash to Township Development Affairs Committee



LETPADAN, 25 July—Letpadan Township Internal Revenue Department of Bago Region shared funds for the first three months of the 2014-15 fiscal year to the Township Development Affairs Committee at the DAC office on Thursday.

Head of Township IRD

Daw Thet Thet Nwe explained the purpose of sharing the fund to the committee and presented K797,668 levied from the taxpayers. Executive Officer U Sann Lwin of the committee accepted the cash share.

Nay Lin (Nyaunglebin)

Midwifery and nursing assessment workshop held in Kawkaeik

Tomatoes in Chin State sold with profit

KALAY, 25 July — Tomatoes produced in Chin State have been sold for profit in Kalay, Tamu and Gangaw regions, selling K800 per 1.6 kilos in Kalay, K450 in Tamu and K800 in Gangaw, according to a tomato merchant.

People of Chin State are cultivating tomato plants in May and June, producing over about 5 ki-

los of fruits per plant and over 8,000 kilos per acre. The fruits are transported to Kalay, Tamu and Gangaw regions by car.

Local farmers use folio fertilizer worth K15,000 to K30,000. They cost K200,000 per acre, fetching profit K300,000 per acre, said U Zar Lyan Thang of Lonpan Village.

Linlet Kyel Sin



KAWKAREIK, 25 July —PU-AMI organized a midwifery and nursing assessment workshop at the Kawkaeik District General Hospital in Kayin State on 23 July morning.

Kayin State Project

officer Dr Thuza Win Pe of PU-AMI explained the emergence of PU-AMI and its functions. Mr Sebastien, Program Coordinator and Ms Aude, MNCH Officer explained the implementation of

the project in Kayin State in 2012 and its achievement.

PU-AMI focuses on providing technical assistance and training to midwives in rural areas and giving health care

services to mothers and children.

The workshop lasted from 23 to 25 July, attended by 10 midwives and 20 auxiliary midwives.

Soe Htet Aung (IPRD)

Cash donated to Mandalay General Hospital for improving health standard of people

MANDALAY, 25 July —U Thet Wai-Daw Kyi May (Asia Energy Co Ltd) of Mandalay donated K100 million to a fund for providing health care services to the people at Mandalay Gen-

eral Hospital on Thursday.

On the occasion, Chief Minister of Mandalay Region U Ye Myint explained arrangements of the region government to be able to give health care services to

the local people at full capacity and providing necessary buildings and healthcare equipment at the general hospital. He also explained the efforts of the region government for uplifting the

health sector.

Medical Superintendent Dr U Maung Win accepted the cash donations and returned a certificate of honour to the wellwishers.

Thiha Ko Ko (Mandalay)

Afghan vote recount moves at snail's pace, rival sides far apart

KABUL, 25 July — The dusty ballot box from the disputed Afghan presidential election was supposed to contain 550 votes. When auditors cut the seal they found barely 30 votes inside.

Both candidates cried foul, accusing the other camp of stealing votes from a 14 June run-off presidential ballot, the results of which are still being squabbled over amid allegations of widespread vote rigging.

“Both camps argued over one result sheet for hours,” an Independent Election Commission (IEC) official told *Reuters*.

Eventually a United Nations official stepped in, and told the two sides to move on and let the IEC investigate.

Preliminary results from the election put Ashraf Ghani, a former World Bank official, well ahead, but his rival Abdullah Abdullah rejected the result, claiming major fraud and calling the outcome a “coup” against the Afghan people.

His supporters threatened to form a parallel government, and Afghans weary of civil war, hard-line Islamist rule under the Taliban and a vicious insurgency that has struck civilians as well as soldiers began to fear the worst.

More than 1,500 Af-

ghan civilians have died in the insurgency during the first six months of the year, although the Taliban failed to deliver on its promise to derail the vote entirely as millions of people turned out in defiance.

After direct US intervention earlier this month, both sides agreed to a full recount to resolve the dispute, but with more than 23,000 ballot boxes to audit, observers worry that the process is becoming bogged down by rows over every detail.

If that happens, talks to form a unity government just as thousands of foreign troops prepare to leave the country could drag on for months.

Moreover, the snail's pace at which the recount is moving will push back the inauguration of a new president to replace Hamid Karzai, who has led Afghanistan since the Taliban was ousted in a US-led war in 2001.

The ceremony was scheduled for the start of August, and major delays could complicate plans to sign an agreement by the end of 2014 to keep about 10,000 US troops in the country.

By Thursday, after eight days of counting, only about 1,000 ballot boxes had been examined, IEC spokesman Noor Mohammad Noor told a news



Afghan election workers count ballot papers for an audit of the presidential run-off in Kabul on 18 July, 2014. —REUTERS

conference in Kabul.

He conceded the process was moving forward slowly, partly due to staffing constraints over the holy month of Ramadan, and because it was not well organized.

“(And) there are still disagreements between both camps about the invalidation of fraudulent votes. For example, both camps ... argued for four hours over one ballot box,”

Noor said.

The United Nations said it had been unable to get both sides to agree on a common text for scrutinising votes, which would allow for a recount once fraudulent votes are thrown out.

The scrutiny mirrors the “hanging chads” of the 2000 US presidential election, when George W Bush won Florida, and in turn the presidency, by a

few hundred votes after officials debated which absentee ballots and punch ballots with hanging flaps to count.

Just over a week into the Afghan recount, the audit has already been suspended twice due to disputes over how the process is conducted.

The recount is the first step towards a new administration. Next, the two candidates must sit

down and iron out a more complicated agreement - the composition of a unity government. The bitter standoff has quashed hopes of a smooth transition of power after Karzai.

In a bid to break the impasse, US Secretary of State John Kerry flew to Kabul to secure a political agreement with Ghani and Abdullah, a former foreign minister.

Reuters

Rise of Islamic State tests Syrian army strategy



Militant Islamist fighters on a tank take part in a military parade along the streets of northern Raqqa province on 30 June, 2014. —REUTERS

BEIRUT, 25 July — The growing power of the ultra-hardline Islamic State means the Syrian army is now having to confront a group it has until now been reluctant to attack for political reasons.

The emergence of the al-Qaeda offshoot, formerly known as the Islamic

State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), has so far allowed President Bashar al-Assad to present himself to the world as a bulwark against Sunni Islamist radicals.

At the same time, the group's tendency to fight more moderate rebel forces also helped to divide the opposition, making it easier

for Assad's forces to recapture territory lost in earlier periods of Syria's civil war.

As a result, some analysts suspect army commanders pursued a twin-track strategy against ISIL — they have sought to reduce the group's threat to the state, while ensuring it remains strong enough to continue feuding with other rebels.

Now that Islamic State's fighters have gained momentum in Syria, boosted by equipment seized in a rapid offensive next door in Iraq, the army may need to become more confrontational with the group if it wants to avoid losing territory to it.

Last month Islamic State declared an “Islamic caliphate” in territory it controls in Iraq and Syria, and vowed to expand.

It has mainly advanced in Syria by capturing land from more moderate rebel fighters. But it is now clashing with the Syrian military more often, and the army has responded by stepping up aerial bombings on its positions.

In the short term, Damascus has not been too worried about ISIL, said a former Syrian diplomat who spoke on condition of anonymity. “In the long-term though, it must be a matter of great concern because it makes it all the more difficult should ISIL establish itself semi-permanently, especially with its control of resources like the oil.”

“There is a conflict of interests here between what is short-term and practical, and a long-term consideration,” the former diplomat said.—*Reuters*

Two Finnish aid workers killed in western Afghanistan

KABUL / HELSINKI, 25 July — Two Finnish aid workers with an international Christian organization were shot dead on Thursday in Afghanistan's western city of Herat, officials said.

The attack comes at a sensitive time as Afghanistan audits votes from a disputed presidential election to pick a successor to the incumbent, Hamid Karzai.

Foreign troops have been in Afghanistan fighting the Taliban since 2001 but are withdrawing from the country this year, leaving Afghan forces to maintain security.

“The two women who were gunned down were working in the health sector for a foreign aid organisation in Herat,” provincial governor Fazlullah Wahidi told *Reuters*.

Two gunmen on a motorbike approached the aid

workers' taxi and opened fire, he said. Finland's foreign ministry later said the women were Finnish, while the Afghan Interior Ministry said the two worked for International Assistance Mission, a Christian group that has worked in Afghanistan since 1966.

“The barbaric fate of the women affects us all. The act is particularly shocking as the women were in Afghanistan to help local people,” Finnish president Sauli Niinisto said in a statement. He said he had demanded that local officials do all they can to bring those guilty to justice.

In a separate incident, explosives attached to a motorbike went off in the northern province of Takhar, killing six civilians and wounding 28 people, the interior ministry said.

Reuters

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Facebook goes express to mega-cap status — now valued more than AT&T, Coke

NEW YORK, 25 July — In the days after its infamously mishandled initial public offering in May 2012, it looked as if Facebook would struggle to become a must-own for fund managers.

Now the company's \$190 billion market value makes it bigger than such bellwethers as Coca-Cola and AT&T. It's not a member of the Dow industrials, but if it were, it would be larger than two-thirds of that index's 30 members.

Shares of the world's No 1 social network touched a record high of \$76.74 on

Thursday after earnings and revenues easily topped analysts' forecasts, boosting its market value to nearly \$194 billion. That ranks it 15th in the Standard & Poor's 500 benchmark index, just below the \$196 billion market cap of International Business Machines Corp.

"A 100-year-old company with real assets versus a company admittedly with virtual assets and they are trading at the same market cap — crazy," said Kim Forrest, senior equity research analyst at Fort Pitt Capital Group in Pittsburgh.

The speed of Face-



A man is silhouetted against a video screen with an Facebook logo as he poses with an Dell laptop in this photo illustration taken in the central Bosnian town of Zenica, on 14 Aug, 2013.

REUTERS

book's rise to mega-cap status is what's notable. It took Apple Inc nearly three decades to achieve such a market value; Google Inc needed five years.

Facebook has only been public for a little more than two years, and only joined the S&P 500 seven months ago. Since S&P Dow Jones Indices announced the addition on 11 December, Facebook shares have risen 54 percent.

The gains represent a reversal of fortune for the social media company. After a botched IPO that infuriated investors in May 2012, the stock slumped, under-

performing for 15 months before finally eclipsing its offering price of \$38 in August 2013. Since then, Facebook shares have been unstoppable, doubling in less than a year.

"People understand the world is moving to mobile, and when you look at the time spent on mobile, Facebook has the lion's share," said Walter Price, senior portfolio manager and managing director of the AllianzGI Global Technology fund, which owned more than a million shares as of 30 June.—Reuters

Australia develops much smarter phone for the blind



SYDNEY, 25 July — Mobile smart phones for the blind and visually impaired have — until now — relied almost solely on clunky voice-to-text technology, but with the release, on Thursday, of the world's first braille mobile phone, all that may be about to change.

With the evolution of touch screen technology, the blind have been left out in the cold with the extraordinary technical evolution of mobile devices. According to Brad Scoble, Director of OwnFone Australia, that door has now been opened with the "world's first commercially available braille phone." "Touchscreen technology is problematic ..." Scoble said.

"OwnFone, in consultation with the blind and low vision community, developed a simple mobile phone without a touchscreen and one that users can personalize with braille buttons.

It's not the first time mobile designers have reached out to the visually impaired. While the phone supports calls, texts, GPS navigation, object recognition, and some 100,000 audio books, Tom Sunderland, the inventor of

OwnFone, says that personalization is the future of vision-impaired technology.

"The braille buttons are produced using 3D printing and customized for every customer, which makes OwnFone's braille phone a world-first."

Sunderland, based in UK said, "OwnFone is the first in the world to sell a braille phone which is personalized for every user."

According to Sunderland, the cost of developing a braille phone versus the market size has previously been a barrier to entry.

"3D printing provides a fast and affordable way to overcome this barrier," he said. Vision Australia estimates there are currently 357,000 people in Australia who are blind or have low vision. Providing services that cater to this disproportionately large segment has been a priority of successive governments.

The controversial National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) implemented last year (providing support for the significantly disabled) reflects the commitment here to ensuring services for those disadvantaged by a disability are a policy priority.—Xinhua

Antarctic fish might survive ocean warming: New Zealand study

WELLINGTON, 25 July — A species of Antarctic fish might be able to survive the predicted warming of its native waters over the next century if the warming is gradual enough, according to a New Zealand scientist.

University of Canterbury researcher Charlotte Austin tested how the emerald rock cod adapted to warmer waters after being removed from its minus 1.9-degree centigrade habitat below the Antarctic ice.

The fish were able to fully recover from short exposures to temperatures up to 6 degrees centigrade, but long periods of time at

4 degrees centigrade was fatal, Austin said in a statement on Thursday.

However, if the temperature increase was gradual, all fish tested survived the 56 days of the experiment at 3 degrees centigrade and were able to successfully digest food, a vital physiological process for survival, she said.

The results provide some optimism for the survival of this species if ocean temperature in Antarctica does not exceed the predicted increase of 2 degrees centigrade over the next century.

Austin said Antarctic cod dominated the Southern Ocean and were vital

to the food-web and ecosystem due to a wide range of predators, including whales, orca, seals, penguins and other fish.

Several species have been targeted by humans for commercial fisheries and the sustainability of

the largest cod species, the Antarctic toothfish, is a subject of contention.

The adult emerald rock cod is about 170 mm in length, while the Antarctic toothfish could exceed 2 metres when fully grown.

Xinhua



Scientists to excavate Wyoming cave with trove of Ice Age fossils

SALMON, (Idaho), 25 July — Scientists will begin excavation early next week of an ancient Wyoming sinkhole containing a rare bounty of fossil remains of prehistoric animals, such as mammoths and dire wolves, preserved in unusually good condition, researchers said on Thursday. The two-week dig, set to begin next Monday under the direction of Des Moines University paleontologist Julie Meachen, marks the first exploration of Natural Trap Cave in north-central Wyoming since its initial discovery in the 1970s.

At that time, scientists found that the 85-foot-deep cavern formed a natural repository for a rich fossil



record that may date back as far as 100,000 years, but a full-scale expedition into the sinkhole has not previously been attempted.

The cave, formed by the collapse of limestone bedrock at the base of the Bighorn Mountains,

became a tomb for thousands of ancient mammals that stumbled into the 15-foot-wide mouth of the sinkhole, then concealed by vegetation, and plunged to their deaths.

Conditions in the underground chasm, which

widens to 120 feet at its base, are cold and damp, offering a degree of preservation for fossils generally associated only with those found frozen in ice in Siberia and the Arctic, Meachen said. "They fell into a refrigerator," she said of animals such as camels, American lions, cheetahs, woolly mammoths and short-faced bears.

Meachen will lead a team of international scientists as they rappel from the outer rim of the cave's opening — covered for decades by a metal grate installed by federal land managers — to the depths below, where they will load fossils into buckets to be hoisted to the surface.

Reuters

Malaysia official pledges to support Port Klang free trade zone

KUALA LUMPUR, 25 July — Malaysian Investment Development Authority (MIDA) would try its best to support the international trade in Port Klang free trade zone and preparation for Malaysia Halal Industry Park.

Ding Yuezhen, director of MIDA, said during a seminar on Port Klang free trade zone in Kuala Lumpur lately.

She said, after six years preparation, Port Klang free trade zone and halal industry park are in the last stage. She appreciated the contribution from SM International Wholesale (China) Centre, the projects operator, to the economic trade, cooperation and exchange between China and Malaysia.

She said, “as such a large project, its operation needs all parties’ co-operation and supports. We realized the problems it would face. Therefore, we plan to hold special meetings with Malaysia Halal Industry Development Corporation, customs office and immigration to



Port Klang free trade zone projects operation seminars is held in Malaysia Industrial Development Authority.

XINHUA

clear the last hurdle for Port Klang free trade zone and Halal industry park’s opening, and also to provide the best investment environment for each entering company.”

Xia Baowen, chairman of SM International Wholesale Centre said, with the supports of the two governments, this project will open soon. It is credit to all government

departments including Malaysia Industrial Development Authority.

He hoped the three special meetings to be held soon could solve the actual problems and let

Chinese companies’ invest have no worries.

He said, based on the present situation, this project will be fully operational in two months.

Xinhua

IAEA says needs more money to monitor Iran nuclear deal extension

STOCKHOLM, 25 July — The UN atomic watchdog said it needs 1 million euros in extra funding to help pay for its monitoring of a four-month extension of an interim nuclear deal between Iran and six world powers. The request was made in a note to member states of the UN Inter-

national Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) dated 24 July and seen by Reuters on Friday, six days after the extension of last year’s agreement was announced.

Iran and the six powers — the United States, France, Germany, Russia, Britain and China — agreed to continue talking

after they failed to meet a 20 July deadline for a final accord to end the decade-old dispute over Iran’s nuclear programme.

The IAEA has a pivotal role in verifying that Iran is complying with the preliminary agreement, under which Teheran halted its most sensitive uranium en-

richment in exchange for a limited easing of sanctions that are hurting its economy.

The short-term deal was designed to buy time for talks on a comprehensive agreement on the permissible scope of a nuclear programme which Iran says is peaceful but which the West fears may be aimed at developing an atomic weapons capability.

The IAEA saw its workload increase significantly under last November’s preliminary accord, initially due to run for six months from 20 January but now prolonged until 24 November.

Its inspectors accessed Iran’s uranium enrichment facilities of Natanz and Fordow daily, compared to about once a week before. The agency also provides monthly updates to member states on how Iran is implementing its commitments.

IAEA Director General Yukiya Amano said in January the agency would

nearly double the number of people it has working on Iran as a result of the November agreement. He then asked for about 5.5 million euros in extra voluntary contributions, money which diplomats later said it had obtained without problems in view of the deal’s political importance.

In the new note, the IAEA said it had received a request from the seven countries involved in the negotiations to “continue to undertake the necessary nuclear-related monitoring and verification activities in Iran” under the accord.

That would include monitoring of additional measures to be taken by Iran as part of the terms of the extension, such as Iran’s commitment to turn some of its higher-grade enriched uranium oxide into nuclear fuel for a Teheran research reactor.

“Continuation of the ... activities will require additional financial resources for the Agency,” the note said.—Reuters

Train hits school bus in India, killing 18

NEW DELHI, 25 July — A train rammed into a school bus at a railway crossing in southern India on Thursday, killing 18 people including 16 children and injuring 22 other children. Press Trust of India quoted police as saying the bus driver apparently did not notice the approaching train when driving across the unmanned crossing in Medak district of Telangana state around 9 am.

A district official said 13 children died on the spot, and another three succumbed to their injuries on way to local hospitals. The deceased children ranged in age from 5 to 15 years. Both the driver and cleaner of the bus were also killed. A railway official told PTI that the injured have been taken to a nearby hospital.

A Telangana state minister said an inquiry will be conducted and action will be taken against those responsible. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed his deepest condolences to the families of the deceased.—Kyodo News

US lifts flight restrictions for Tel Aviv

WASHINGTON, 25 July — The US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has lifted its restrictions on US airline flights into and out of Israel’s Ben Gurion Airport in Tel Aviv. Before making this decision, the agency worked with its US government counterparts to assess the security situation in Israel and carefully reviewed new information and measures that the Israeli government is taking to mitigate potential risks to civil aviation, the FAA said in a statement on Thursday.

The FAA initially instituted the flight prohibition on Tuesday, in response to a rocket strike that landed approximately one mile from the airport. Then the agency extended the flight restrictions for additional 24 hours. The US State Department has been warning citizens to defer nonessential travel to Israel since early February this year because of safety concerns in Gaza. Long-range rockets launched from Gaza since early this month have reached many locations in Israel, resulting in negative impacts on the safety of aviation there.—Xinhua



The flag of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) flies in front of its headquarters during a board of governors meeting in Vienna on 28 Nov, 2013.—REUTERS

ADVERTISEMENT & GENERAL

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV THAI BINH 68 VOY NO (-)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV THAI BINH 68 VOY NO (-) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 25.7.2014 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of S.P.W-1 where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV STX PRIDE VOY NO (023)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV STX PRIDE VOY NO (023) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 26.7.2014 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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Weather report

FORECAST VALID UNTIL EVENING OF THE 26th July, 2014: Rain or thundershowers will be isolated in Kayah State, scattered in Mandalay and Magway Regions, Kachin State, fairly widespread in Sagaing and Ayeyawady Regions, Shan, Chin, Rakhine and Kayin States and widespread in the remaining Regions and States with likelihood of isolated heavy falls Yangon, Ayeyawady, and Taninthayi Regions, Rakhine and Mon States. Degree of certainty is (100%).

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Continuation of increase of rain or thundershowers in the Southern Myanmar areas.

Help book for first-time visitors to Japan launched in India

NEW DELHI, 25 July — An Indian graduate school student undertaking Japanese language studies in New Delhi has published a self-help book aimed at her compatriots who may be visiting Japan for the first time.

The book titled "Meri Japan Yatra," or "My Japan Trip," was recently launched at the Japan foundation in New Delhi.

The author, Archana Sharma, 24, spent one year in Japan studying the Japanese language. She penned her experiences in Japan both in Hindi and in Japanese.

Born and raised in New Delhi, Sharma said she was interested in Japanese culture, particularly cartoons, since childhood.

She got a chance to visit Japan with a scholarship from the Japan government and studied Japanese language and culture for one year at Kyushu University in Fukuoka.

"These days, a good number of Indian students go to Japan, and I hope my book will not only help those students but also help professionals and tourists visiting Japan for first

time," Sharma said.

Sharma's message to Indians visiting Japan is: "Try to adjust and understand Japanese culture positively."

"There are many good things to learn from the Japanese people. During my trip to Japan I was so impressed by cleanliness wherever I traveled," she said.

Sharma, who is now studying Japanese language in the post-graduate programme at Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi, says she wants to become a Japanese language teacher and translate and write books both in Hindi and in Japanese.

"I would like to exchange cultural ties by translating Japanese literature in Hindi. I will also go to Japan and try to publish things in Japanese," she said, adding that her dream is to pursue a Ph D in Japanese language in Japan.

"I definitely recommend all my Indian friends and colleagues to visit Japan and learn the Japanese language as relations between two countries are increasing," she said.

Kyodo News

Rival Libyan militias clash in Tripoli, Benghazi

TRIPOLI, 25 July — Heavy black smoke rose over southern Tripoli on Thursday after rival militias exchanged artillery and rocket fire in a battle over the Libyan capital's airport that has killed around 50 people in nearly a fortnight of fighting.

Sporadic blasts echoed across the city since the morning in clashes that have deepened fears of post-war Libya becoming a failed state, with a fragile government unable to control heavily armed brigades battling for power.

Fighting in the capital and the eastern city of Benghazi, its heaviest since the 2011 war that ousted Muammar Gaddafi, has led most international flights to Libya to be canceled and has prompted the United States to pull out embassy staff. A Health Ministry official in Tripoli was unable to provide details of Thursday's casualties because he could not contact hospital staff in the area. One local



Smoke rises near buildings after heavy fighting between rival militias broke out near the airport in Tripoli on 23 July, 2014. — REUTERS

doctor said at least 30 injured were at his hospital in Tripoli on Wednesday.

The Mitiga hospital in Tripoli said it was in an emergency situation because of a lack of resources and the inability of many employees to get to work due to the fighting and gasoline shortages, state news

agency LANA reported.

Underscoring Libya's chaos, acting Prime Minister Abdullah al-Thinni said on Thursday that he was prevented by militias from flying from an airport outside Tripoli. "Groups controlling Mitiga Airport prevented acting Prime Minister Abdullah al-Thinni

and ministers from flying to the eastern city of Tobruk," a statement from his office said. Mitiga, used mostly for military and oil company flights, has been opened to limited international flights since the clashes erupted and Tripoli International Airport was closed.— Reuters

Australia to send 100 extra police, troops to Ukraine

SYDNEY, 25 July — Australia will send 100 additional police and some defense force personnel to Europe to join a planned

Dutch-led international security force to secure the Malaysia Airlines Flight MH17 crash site, Prime Minister Tony Abbott said



A Malaysian air crash investigator works at a crash site of the Malaysia Airlines Flight MH17 near the village of Hrabove (Grabovo), Donetsk region on 24 July, 2014. — REUTERS

on Friday.

The Australian Federal Police (AFP) officers, some of whom will be armed, will join a contingent of 90 AFP officers already in London waiting for a deal with Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko to be approved by Ukraine's parliament. "This is a humanitarian mission, with a clear and simple objective," Abbott told reporters. "I expect the operation on the ground in Ukraine, should the deployment go ahead, to last no longer than a few weeks."

Abbott announced on Thursday that 50 police officers had been deployed to London ahead of the mis-

sion, but a police spokeswoman said on Friday that the number was 90. It was unclear why the discrepancy had occurred.

On Tuesday, Abbott said that Russian-backed rebels who control the area were tampering with evidence on "an industrial scale" and argued that outside police or possibly military forces were needed to ensure that did not continue. The Boeing 777 was shot down last week in eastern Ukraine en route from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur, killing all 298 passengers and crew on board. Twenty eight Australians were killed.

Reuters

Venice film festival to kick off with black comedy “Birdman”



A statue of a lion, the symbol of the 69th Venice Film Festival, is silhouetted in Venice on 28 Aug, 2012 file photo.—REUTERS

ROME, 25 July — Mexican director Alejandro Inarritu opens this year's Venice film festival with the premiere of “Birdman”, a black comedy that heads a 55-strong selection leaning heavily towards war and recession, festival director Alberto Barbera said on Thursday.

As well as “Birdman”, starring Michael Keaton

as a fading action hero, 19 other films are in the main competition, including “Manglehorn”, starring Al Pacino, “Good Kill” with Ethan Hawke as a disillusioned military drone pilot and Fatih Akin's “The Cut” with Tahar Rahim, star of Jacques Audiard's 2009 thriller “A Prophet”.

Oscar winner Barry Levinson also directs Paci-

no in “The Humbling”, showing outside the main competition.

Abel Ferrara's biopic “Pasolini”, with Willem Dafoe playing the Italian writer and director who was murdered in 1975 and Iranian director Rakhshan Bani-Etemad's “Tales” will also be vying for the coveted Golden Lion award.

Reuters

Rachel McAdams embarrassed by her ‘The Notebook’ audition



the film.

McAdams, 35, starred opposite Ryan Gosling in the love story, which is hailed as one of the most romantic films of all times. She was seen blushing, with her head down, when she was shown her 10-year-old audition tape for the film at a TV chat show recently, reported *The Huffington Post*.

McAdams reads lines from an emotional scene

for director Nick Cassavetes and Ryan Gosling in the audition clip. Though she once called the moment ‘the best audition experience I've ever had,’ it did not save McAdams from embarrassment, who admitted she was watching the clip for the first time ever.

The film, based on the novel of the same name by Nicholas Sparks, released in 2004.

PTI

Mamata Banerjee wants Bollywood to come to Kolkata

KOLKATA, 25 July — West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said she wants Bollywood to turn its eye to the state as it is a gateway to Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan and the north-eastern states.

“We want Mumbai to come here. Bengal is the gateway to north-east, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh. Bengal will be transformed into ‘Biswa Bangla’,” Banerjee said while felicitating actors and technicians of the Bengali film industry with the ‘Mahanayak Uttam Kumar Samman’.

She said the state government has a vision and a mission and Hollywood and Bollywood would come to the state. “We have identified land for two new film cities. A TV studio will also come up at a six-acre plot in Baruipur,” Banerjee said.

Paying tributes to legendary Bengali actor Uttam Kumar on his death anniversary, she said when the actor passed away, some people thought Bengali cinema would be over. “But new talent has emerged. The golden era of Uttam-Suchitra in Bengali cinema can never be forgotten,” she said, adding, the golden era of Bengali film and television industry would return one day.—PTI

Brain power outwits Asian mobsters in sci-fi thriller ‘Lucy’

NEW YORK, 25 July — Gun-toting thugs and a vicious Asian mob boss are no match for the brawn and brain of French director Luc Besson's super-powered heroine in his sci-fi, action thriller “Lucy.”

Besson is known for creating strong female characters in “La Femme Nikita” and “The Fifth Element.” But he goes a step further in “Lucy,” which opens in theaters in the United States on Friday, with an American student in Taipei who becomes invincible after the full power of her brain is unleashed.

Scarlett Johansson (“The Avengers”) is Lucy, a woman tricked by a boyfriend into delivering a suitcase and becomes one of several unwilling drug mules dispatched around the globe by Asian mobsters.

After a brutal beating, the powerful synthetic compound implanted in her stomach seeps into her body and gradually lets her access more and more of her brain power.—Reuters



Scarlett Johansson

12th China Int'l Chorus Festival to open

BEIJING, 25 July — The 12th China International Chorus Festival (CICF) and International Federation of Choral Music (IFCM) World Youth Choral Education Conference will kick off in Beijing on 29 July, 2014.

A total of 121 activities will be held during the seven-day festival, which is themed “Come to Beijing, listen to the songs of the world.” There will be compe-

titions, high-level concerts, exchange performances, master classes, choral saloons, forums and performing tours.

Chinese musician Tian Haojiang and singer Momo Wu will be the image ambassadors of the event.

Established in 1992, the CICF is a biennial event aiming to enhance the choral exchanges between China and other countries.—Xinhua

‘Hunger Games,’ ‘Divergent’ pushed aside for new Comic Con fare



Cast member Megan Fox poses at a Press line for the movie “Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles” during the 2014 Comic-Con International Convention in San Diego, California on 24 July, 2014. —REUTERS

SAN DIEGO, 25 July — Young adult film franchises have dominated the conversation at San Diego's annual Comic Con gathering in recent years, but as the buzz-building convention kicked off on Thursday, the absence of established blockbusters has allowed studios to push new fare targeting a similar audience.

Without the star-studded film panels promoting November's “The Hunger Games: Mockingjay - Part 1,” the next installment in the series starring Jennifer Lawrence, or next year's “Insurgent,” the sequel to this year's “Divergent” film, convention-goers will fill up on a new crop of dystopian thrillers.

“It does feel strange that there's no big young adult panel at Comic Con this year, but what's interesting is that there are some young adult-orientated panels that are going to pick up the slack,” said Dave Karger, chief correspondent of Fandango. The “Twilight” series, “Hunger Games” and “Divergent” have all been highlights at Comic Con's main Hall H, where audiences are shown exclusive footage and studios organize promotional panels with stars and filmmakers.—Reuters

GENERAL

Former wine collector to forfeit \$20 million for counterfeiting

NEW YORK, 25 July — An Indonesian man once considered one of the world's top wine collectors was ordered on Thursday to forfeit \$20 million for selling millions of dollars of counterfeit bottles of wine to unsuspecting buyers.

Rudy Kurniawan, whose fall from grace made international headlines, was ordered to forfeit the sum by US District Judge Richard Berman. The order came at a hearing that was originally scheduled for his sentencing, which was delayed until on 4 August.

The delay followed arguments over how much in losses Kurniawan's crimes had caused, a key factor in determining his sentence. The judge said he wanted more information.

Kurniawan, 37, was found guilty in December of one count of mail fraud for counterfeiting wine and one count of wire fraud for defrauding a financing company out of a \$3 million loan.

Meanwhile, Kurniawan has agreed to settle a civil lawsuit filed by billionaire oenophile William Koch, who in 2009 sued him in California state court as part of a long-running legal crusade against fake vintage wine.

The deal was disclosed in court by Kurniawan's lawyer, Jerome Mooney. Brad Goldstein, a spokesman for Koch, confirmed the deal, which he said was for \$3 million in damages.

Mooney in an email said what Kurniawan ultimately pays Koch will be determined by the probation department. Goldstein also said Kurniawan had agreed to "provide full cooperation to help reform the industry."

Koch, the founder of Oxbow Group, testified as a government witness against Kurniawan. He is the brother of conservative political activists, Charles and David Koch. Forbes estimates his net worth at \$3.9 billion.

Prosecutors accused Kurniawan of operating



A visitor looks bottles of cava (sparkling wine) on a display at the Alimentaria trade show in Barcelona on 2 April, 2014.—REUTERS

a counterfeit wine factory out of his California home, buying empty rare bottles, printing forged labels and spending thousands on French wax to produce hundreds of fakes.

Mooney argued at trial he had acquired the fake bottles unknowingly and had been made a scapegoat

for a pervasive counterfeit problem in the fine wine industry. Ahead of the sentencing, Koch was expected to seek \$2.1 million in restitution.

Earlier this month, the billionaire reached a confidential settlement in a separate lawsuit filed in 2008 in New York state court

against Acker, Merrall & Condit Co, a wine dealer and auction house that sold him Kurniawan's bottles.

"As I testified during Kurniawan's criminal trial, I, like many others, was conned and cheated by Mr Kurniawan," Koch wrote in a letter to Berman in May.

Reuters

Typhoon Rammasun kills 62 in China

BEIJING, 25 July — The death toll from super typhoon Rammasun in China has reached 62 with another 21 people missing, according to latest figures from the Ministry of Civil Affairs.

The strongest typhoon to hit south China in four decades, Rammasun brought gales, downpours and floods to four southern provincial-level regions, affecting over 11 million people in Guangdong, Hainan, Yunnan and

Guangxi, the ministry said in a statement on Friday. A total of 862,000 people have been resettled and some 261,000 are in urgent need of basic necessities. The typhoon also caused direct economic losses of 38.48 billion yuan (6.25 billion US dollars).

Roads and infrastructure for power and water supply, and telecommunication in affected areas have been badly damaged, the statement added.

Xinhua

Panasonic to recall 1.03 mil water heaters

OSAKA, 25 July — Panasonic Corp said on Friday it will recall about 1.03 million Eco Cute water heaters for free repair. Subject to the recall are 208 types of water heaters produced between November 2003 and January 2013 under various brands including National and Panasonic.

The compressors in these heaters could blow up due to metal corrosion, Panasonic said. According to Panasonic, five complaints have been reported so far, none of them involving any injury. —Kyodo News

Vietnam's HCM City hosts int'l track and field championships

HO CHI MINH CITY, 25 July — The Ho Chi Minh (HCM) City international track and field championships, "Vietnam Open 2014", kicked off here on Friday, attracting hundreds of athletes from nine countries and regions in Asia, local Vietnam News daily reported on Friday.

Athletes from Cambodia, Hong Kong of China, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, South Korea,

Tajikistan, Thailand, and host Vietnam have participated in this year's two-day competitions, which is the 21st edition of the tournament held annually in HCM City since 1993.

Many local big names like Vu Thi Huong in the women's 100m and 200m events, Vu Van Huyen in the men's pole vault and decathlon, and Nguyen Thi Thanh Phuc in the women's walk, will compete

in the events, which are said as good opportunities for them to file their skills ahead of the coming 17th Asian Games in September in South Korea.

Of international teams, South Korea and the Philippines are sending the largest contingent.

There are also four international referees from Thailand and Singapore to officiate at the events.

Xinhua

'Spider-Man 3' gets delayed, to release in 2018



The 'Amazing Spider-Man 3' was first scheduled to bow in 2016.—PTI

LOS ANGELES, 25 July — The fans of 'The Amazing Spider-Man 3' will have to wait longer as the web-casting superhero's arrival in theatre has been delayed by almost two years. Sony announced the reshuffle in release dates at San Diego Comic-Con.

The film, which was first scheduled to bow in 2016, will now release in 2018, said the Hollywood Reporter. The studio has instead moved forward the release date of Spider-Man spin-off 'Sinister Six', which now opens in theatres 11 Nov, 2016.

'Sinister Six' is about the villains in the Spider-Man universe and tells the story of they try to destroy New York. Drew Goddard will write and direct the movie.

PTI

MYANMAR INTERNATIONAL

(26-7-14 07:00 am~
27-7-14 07:00 am) MST

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- * Great Shwedagon-Nine Wonders Around The Platform of Shwedagon Pagoda
- * World News
- * Myanmar Traditional Identity (Episode- 4), Tumbling Doll, Pyit Tine Htaung
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Wenger bemoans Arsenal's pre-season tour schedule



Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger leads a training session at London Colney near London on 14 May, 2014.—REUTERS

NEW YORK, 25 July — Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger has echoed the sentiments of new Manchester United boss Louis van Gaal in criticising the demands of their pre-season tour. Wenger said it was “impossible” to prepare his squad properly for the upcoming Premier League campaign, which begins on 16 August, given the demands of their pre-season schedule and players returning later than normal after World Cup duty.

Arsenal are in the United States for a friendly against Major league Soccer (MLS) franchise New York Red Bulls, before heading to Austria for a training camp and then returning to London for the Emirates Cup.

“These training camps in the modern game are decided for commercial reasons and because of the extent of popularity of the club,” the Frenchman told a news conference on Thursday.

“We’ve never been to the States before and I was very happy to come to New York – a city I love.

“But for purely football reasons, the best thing to do is stay and not travel too much because of the time you waste and the jet-lag you suffer is not ideal.”

Arsenal are without a host of internationals fol-

lowing the World Cup and Wenger highlighted the difficulty in players beginning the intense domestic campaign so soon after returning from the tournament.

“This season is a post-World Cup year and very difficult because the time is very short between the final, which was on 13 July, and the start of the new season on 16 August.

“And compulsory, from FIFA, you are obliged to give four weeks’ holiday to the players, so I don’t know how all that works together. It looks, to me, impossible.”

Wenger’s comments came days after Van Gaal said Manchester United’s pre-season tour was wrongly being dictated by the club’s commercial interests.

United beat Los Angeles Galaxy 7-0 on Wednesday, and now face games in Denver, Washington and Detroit.

Van Gaal’s team potentially face a fifth game on 4 August, less than two weeks before they kick off their Premier League season at home to Swansea City on 16 August. “More or less, yes,” Van Gaal told British media in the United States, when asked whether the demands were hindering their preparations.

Reuters

Isner survives Ginepri test as seeds fall in Atlanta

LOS ANGELES, 25 July — Top seed American John Isner saved two match points before edging compatriot Robby Ginepri 4-6, 7-6 (5), 7-5 in the second round of the Atlanta Open on Thursday.

The defending champion was set for an early exit when down 4-5 and 15-40 in the deciding third set but leant on his rocket serve to fight back, level the match at 5-5, and then break Ginepri for the first time in the contest in the following game.

Isner then disposed of the world number 281 quickly in his final service game, closing the contest with four straight aces to take his tally to 30 for the night on the Georgia hard court. “I was a nervous wreck out there but fortunately for me I was able to hit two big serves and bring that game back to deuce and it really turned the match around,” the world number 12 told reporters.

“He returns very well,

that’s what he does best, and he was giving me fits on my serve tonight.

“I actually served a lot better as the match progressed, and I had to be-cause he was re-turning well, and that

last game, I can’t serve any better than that.”

Earlier, lucky loser Thiemo De Bakker of the Netherlands recorded a big upset by beating second seed Kevin Anderson of South Africa in straight sets. Ranked a distant 142nd in the world, the 25-year-old Dutch

right-hander took down the world number 17 6-4, 7-5.

“It proves that I can play against (the top players),” De Bakker told reporters.

For Anderson, the runner-up to Isner last year, it was a disappointing night.

“I didn’t feel like my normal serve out there,” the Florida resident said.

“I felt a step behind the whole match. I thought he played well, hit the ball quite big. I was disappointed with how I played.”

Seventh seed Yen-Hsun Lu was also bounced out after losing 6-4, 6-3 to Germany’s Benjamin Becker, who set up a quarter-final match up with De Bakker.

Australian Marinko Matosevic, the eighth seed, was too good for American Tim Smyczek as he won through 6-4, 7-5.

The Australian, who won 61 per cent of his service points and converted five of seven break points, faces Isner in the last eight. Reuters



John Isner of the US

Madrid's Modric says Kroos and Rodriguez are the real deal

MADRID, 25 July — Real Madrid’s Croatian midfielder Luka Modric has praised the high-profile signings of World Cup pair Toni Kroos and James Rodriguez and has targeted a clean sweep of domestic and European silverware next season.

Midfielder Kroos, 24, joined the La Liga side from Bayern Munich for a fee reported to be 25 million euros (19.9 million pounds) just days after playing an integral role in Germany’s World Cup triumph.

The Columbian Rodriguez, 23, arrived from Monaco for a fee in the region of 80 million euros having

won the Golden Boot as the tournament’s top scorer with six goals in five matches.

“I watched James Rodriguez and Toni Kroos play in the World Cup and, for me, they were two of the best players in the competition,” Modric told Marca. “They’re great players and will only improve our team even more.

“Real Madrid have shown their ambition by bringing such fantastic signings to the club. It’s great news for us, the players, because we always want to play with the best, and also for the supporters, who want to see the best players.”

Los Blancos won the Champions League and King’s Cup last season and Modric believes their stellar squad is capable of doing even better in the upcoming campaign.

“Every competition and every trophy is important at Real Madrid,” the 28-year-old added. “It would be marvellous to be able to win all six (available trophies), but it will be very, very tough. We’ll face some very good teams on the way.

“The pressure will be the same as it always is at Real Madrid. There won’t be as much as there was for La Decima (their 10th European title), which was



Colombia's soccer player James Rodriguez

enormous. “Now it’ll be the logical pressure involved with being Real Madrid, because of the club’s history and the fact that we’re the current champions. It’ll be easier after having won La Decima. I think it’s our time.”—Reuters

Banned Suarez could make Barca debut in El Clasico

MADRID, 25 July — Disgraced Uruguay striker Luis Suarez, who is serving a four-month ban for a biting incident at the World Cup, could make his Barcelona debut against Real Madrid in El Clasico in October.

La Liga announced its fixtures for the season on Thursday and the first meeting of the two Spanish giants will be on the week-



end of 25-26 October at Real’s Bernabeu stadium.

However, Suarez would only be able to play if the match went ahead on Sunday the 26th, the day after his suspension ends.

The 27-year-old was given a nine-match

international ban and suspended for four months from any football-related activities by world soccer’s ruling body FIFA after biting Italy defender Giorgio Chiellini in a Group D game in Brazil in June.

Earlier this month,

Suarez was transferred from Liverpool to Barca for a fee that media reports put at 81 million euros (\$109.07 million).

After an initial appeal against the biting ban was rejected, Barca decided to go to the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS).

If CAS decides to cut the suspension, Suarez could appear for his new club earlier.—Reuters

Uruguay's national soccer team player Luis Suarez attends a news conference prior a training session at the Dunas Arena soccer stadium in Natal, on 23 June, 2014.—REUTERS