

President U Thein Sein holds separate talks with high-ranking foreign officials on migrant workers, internal peace process and drug elimination



President U Thein Sein with Royal Thai Armed Forces General Tanasak Patimapragom before a meeting on cooperation in eradication of drugs and labour issues in Myanmar and Thailand aimed at maintaining bilateral relations.—MNA

NAY PYI TAW, 22 Aug—President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar U Thein Sein held

separate talks with Thai, Sri Lankan and United Nations officials on Friday at the Presidential Palace

in Nay Pyi Taw, discussing a wide range of topics from peace and stability of the nation, eradication of

drugs, rights for Myanmar labourers abroad and the establishment of economic zones.

During his meeting with Chief of the Defence Forces General Tanasak Patimapragom of Royal

Thai Armed Forces, the president discussed work permission for Myanmar (See page 3)

Collaborative project aims to develop Myanmar's souvenir market



Japanese youths who will visit Myanmar in September to help create a country souvenir in collaboration with local students, take part in an orientation course in Saitama, near Tokyo, on Aug. 10, 2014. They were conducting a workshop to produce prototype bags that meet the needs of travellers.—KYODO

By Su Xincheng

TOKYO, 22 Aug — A group of seven Japanese

youths interested in Myanmar will try to create a souvenir that best represents the Southeast Asian coun-

try through a collaborative project with local students. Through the project, they hope to assist the

country's fledgling tourism industry, which currently cannot keep pace with souvenir demand from a growing number of foreign tourists, both in terms of quality and volume.

On 1 September, the group will start a 10-day study tour titled "Myanmar Souvenir Creation Program", organized by IC Net Ltd., a consulting firm which provides technical and management services to development projects backed by the Japanese government and major international agencies.

"As Myanmar will be one of the business hubs in Asia in the near future, I want to talk with local people to know what are the growing industries and what kind of businesses will increase there," said project participant Joji Sekiya, 21, a student at Nippon Veterinary and Life Science University.

Participants will conduct market research and create new souvenirs in collaboration with 10 students

of the Yangon Institute of Economics, a national university in Myanmar.

At an 10 August orientation for the participants, a workshop was held to provide training on product design and development, as well as business models targeting the unmet needs of customers.

"I hope you could spark creative thinking by sharing ideas with your Myanmar partners," Ryoji Higurashi, an official who will also give a lecture during the Myanmar trip, said at the event.

During the trip, the two countries' participants will be divided into three teams. They will first conduct market research by interviewing tourists to know what kind of souvenirs they prefer and then hold workshops to share ideas and finally develop prototype products.

"But it is undesirable that we stop at just creating interesting souvenirs. To make the items really sold (See page 9)

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Myanmar's reforms, internal peace-making process discussed with Sri Lankan ex-president

NAY PYI TAW, 22 Aug — Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw (Lower house) Thura U Shwe Mann met former President of Sri Lanka Ms Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga as well as UN Secretary-General's Special Adviser on Myanmar Mr Vijay Nambiar on Friday here.

At the meeting with

the former Sri Lankan President, they discussed further strengthening relations between Myanmar and Sri Lanka, the reform process and internal peace-making process, amendment of Myanmar's constitution and national solidarity and bilateral cooperation in economic, social and religious affairs.

With Mr Nambiar, both

sides discussed the progress of Myanmar's reforms and internal peace-making process as well as national unity and reconciliation.—MNA

Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann on reforms with former President of Sri Lanka Ms Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga.—MNA



Senior General hails good Myanmar Thailand ties



Senior General Min Aung Hlaing sees off Chief of Defence Forces of Royal Thai Armed Forces General Tanasak Patimapragorn at Nay Pyi Taw Airport after they held discussed bilateral issues.—MYAWADY

NAY PYI TAW, 22 Aug — Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services, and wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla, hosted a dinner in honour of a Thai delegation led by General Tanasak Patimapragorn, Chief of Defence Forces of Royal Thai Armed Forces, on Thursday, sources said.

The dinner was hosted on RV Indochina Pandaw

in the Ayeyawady River in Bagan. Prior to the dinner, they enjoyed sunset views along the river and witnessed a multi-coloured lights flotation festival observed. During the dinner, they were entertained by Tri Family Entertainment troupe and Myawady Music Band.

General Tanasak Patimapragorn and his delegation left Nay Pyi Taw for

Thailand on Friday afternoon. They were seen off at the airport in Nay Pyi Taw by Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and high-ranking military officers.

General Tanasak Patimapragorn and his delegation were in Myanmar to attend the 2nd Myanmar-Thailand High Level Committee Meeting hosted in the capital city of Myanmar.—Myawady

Condition of suspected Ebola patient shows further improvement

NAY PYI TAW, 22 Aug — The health of the suspected Ebola patient receiving medical treatment at Waibagi Specialist Hospital is continuing to improve, while the oth-

er four people who were in close contact with him have no health problems, the Ministry of Health announced on Friday.

The ministry added the suspected patient

who arrive in the country on Tuesday from an overseas assignment in West Africa has not experienced any bleeding symptoms.

MNA

Course to improve reporter skills concludes in Taunggyi

TAUNGGYI, 22 Aug — The News and Periodicals Enterprise under the Ministry of Information concluded a course on reporting skills at the Information and Public Relations office in Taunggyi, Shan State, on

Friday, sources said.

The course was designed to help reporters enhance their skills of news reporting, understand media ethics, present public-centred news and avoid possible conflicts when covering

news. Among the lecturers was U Khin Maung Kyaw Din, Chief Editor of the Mirror daily, who was selected as teacher to improve the skills of 55 local reporters.

Ko Nay

Journalists

share

challenges

faced as

reporters at

course in

Taunggyi,

Shan State.

PHOTO:

KO HTET



Free mobile app launched for people wanting to buy cars

By Khaing Thanda Lwin



YANGON, 22 Aug — Motors.com.mm of Carmudi, the world's top online car classified, has launched a mobile application for Android users in 20 countries across Asia, Africa,

Erwin Sikma, Founder and Managing Director of Rocket Internet Myanmar Classifieds, explains how to use the new mobile app.

KHAING THANDA LWIN

the Middle East and Latin America in nine different languages, Erwin Sikma, Founder and Managing Director of Rocket Internet Myanmar Classifieds, said on Thursday at a press conference in Yangon.

The new app will allow users to search for vehicles both in Myanmar and English languages, searching for brand, model and price. Further filters such as age, mileage and even color are available

to make sure that customers are able to find exactly what they want, Sascha Pasqual Woelk, Country Manager Myanmar at Motors.com.mm, said.

Emerging economic are a hotbed for smartphone usage with the expectation of a 33 per cent increase in the number of smartphones that are shipped to such nations as compared to seven per cent in the developed world, according to officials. Android is the most popular operating system worldwide, occupying 52 per cent of market share.

Erwin Sikma said he

believed that many customers will search cars or motorbikes to sell or rent through the app as the experts estimate that there will be 80 per cent of internet users in 2018 and that the company has a further plan to create app for iOS devices.

Motors.com.mm arranged a lucky draw programme for users who install the app from 16 to 31 August through Google Play Store and 1 Mobile Market. Winners will be announced on 1st September, according to Motors.com.mm.—NLM

NATIONAL

President U Thein Sein holds ...



President U Thein Sein welcomes former Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunga for talks on internal developments.—MNA

(from page 1)
migrant workers in Thailand and establishment of economic zones in Mae Sai and Mae Sot of Thailand, establishment of factories and workshops for development of border regions, implementation of the Dawei Special Economic Zone project, and cooperation in the eradication of drugs, among other topics.

The meeting held in Nay Pyi Taw was also attended by Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, Union Ministers Lt-Gen Ko Ko, Lt-Gen Wai Lwin, Lt-Gen Thet Naing Win, U Wunna Maung Lwin and U Aung Min, Thai Ambassador to Myanmar Mr Pisanu Suwanajata and other officials.

The President also received Mr Vijay Nambiar, the United Nations Secretary-General's Special Adviser on Myanmar, for separate talks at the same venue, talking about the present peace-making process in Myanmar, press freedom, flourishing of democracy, a better future for the youth, programmes for poverty alleviation and peace and stability and development of Rakhine State. The President also met former Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunga and her delegation exchanging views on the progress of the reform process, national unity, the internal peace-making process and alleviation of poverty.

MNA



President U Thein Sein and Mr Vijay Nambiar, the United Nations Secretary-General's Special Adviser on Myanmar after discussions about the peace process, press freedom, poverty reduction and developments in Rakhine State.—MNA

NAY PYI TAW, 22 Aug — The 4-Monthly Meeting of the Union Government concluded at the Presidential Palace in Nay Pyi Taw on Friday morning after officials deliberated for three days on the country's reform process.

The chairman of Nay Pyi Taw Council, chief ministers of states and regions, and chairmen of leading bodies of self-ruled regions and areas reported on priority tasks, including poverty reduction and land management, with the president calling on all parties to continue efforts on the reform process.

The union ministers reviewed reports by the chairman of Nay Pyi Taw Council, chief ministers of states and regions, and chairmen of leading bodies of self-ruled regions and areas, before President U Thein Sein made a final speech.

He said that three years of the 5-year term of the union government have elapsed and that with only over a year of the tenure left, efforts need to be stepped up.

During the democratic reform process, he said, there are many expectations raised by the public and "it is also known to all that it is impossible to fulfill all the needs of the public in only one term", the president stressed, adding that the government, however, is required to work to the best of its abilities in the interest of the public.

Praising the work of his officials, he said what is "necessary to be done in a transition has been done"

during the period of over three years, but that unexpected challenges have been encountered, leading to praises as well as blame from home and abroad.

With democratic practices a new development in Myanmar, the government has to be careful with every step. While acknowledging that there are concerns over the slow pace by some countries, other nations, however, have said that the changes are too fast or that Myanmar will backtrack after taking a wrong step, according to the president.

The president said that the government is determined to move forward without backtracking and explained that all that should be done must be done in accordance with the law in a brave and confident manner in order for the country not to backtrack.

According to the president, stability and development of a country depend on each other and are interrelated while the main prerequisite for stability of the state is the rule of law and putting an end to armed conflicts. During the period of three years, much progress has been made to end the armed conflicts that have been going on for over sixty years. There is almost no fighting in the entire country and a ceasefire agreement is going to be signed in the near future, he said, emphasizing that political dialogues are to be

President calls for continued efforts on reforms at 4-Monthly Meeting of Union Government



held after a ceasefire agreement has been signed.

The president said that the rule of law is to be maintained with continuous efforts. As the rule of law cannot be maintained just by taking actions in accordance with the law, it is necessary to take measures to educate and train students in their classes to understand and respect the law from basic level. Crimes are to be reduced through different ways and means in addition to legal actions.

One of the biggest challenges is drug eradication, with the president condemning that stimulant tablets are easily available at tea and betel shops near schools.

Parents are especially worried as the practice of drug abuse is spreading among youths and students.

Therefore, it is necessary to combat narcotic drugs by forming groups with public participation.

The president pointed out that the basic requirements for development are to provide people with food, clothing and shelter, education for their children and healthcare. To boost employment, it is necessary to provide people with land and water as a capital for farming. And to ensure food security for the population, farmland must also be protected by law so that it cannot be used in other ways.

The president said that under the state constitution, all land is owned by the state. Only organizations that are authorized by the government have the right to manage land in accordance with the law. There-

fore, private land owners cannot build anything they wish on their land such as hotels, factories and petrol stations. This must be done by legally authorized organizations in accordance with town plans and village plans. He said that farmland in particular is legally protected so that it cannot be used in other ways.

"Factories, workshops and residential properties must be built with the approval of the Myanmar Investment Commission so that the government organizations do not lose their land," he said.

Regarding housing in urban areas, "as cities are densely populated, priority is to be given to construction of high-rise buildings and affordable housing for low-income social classes and affordable housing is to

be sold in long-term installments to the poor, government employees, retirees, veterans, the disabled, and families of military service personnel who died in action".

It is also necessary to set up garment factories, agricultural-based industries and small-and-medium size industries to create job opportunities, according to the president.

Money, capital, technology and human resources are essential for the development of a country. Regions and states are required to attract and invite foreign investment that will not undermine the interests of the people and to encourage joint-ventures with foreign firms and public private partnership.

Acknowledging that the health and education sectors need a lot of work done, he said "it is important to improve these sectors to generate healthy and qualified human resources".

Mentioning media reforms, the president highlighted that regions and states are required to set up media like newspapers, radio stations and television channels to distribute news for the public to know the work being carried out at every level of government organizations.

In conclusion, the president urged the meeting to accelerate the work that will be beneficial for the public and achieve quick results in the remaining tasks during the Third Wave of reforms, saying that the government now only has limited time to do so.—MNA

President U Thein Sein highlights reform process, narcotic drug eradication, use of farmland, affordable housing and job creation at 4-Monthly Meeting of Union Government that concluded on Friday.

MNA

Sanitation and maintenance work carried out in Myanan Sankyaw Golden Palace



MANDALAY, 22 Aug—Maintenance and sanitation work was carried at Myanan Sankyaw Golden Palace in Mandalay to prepare for the arrival of tourists, as the number of foreigners to the

sight has been increasing steadily, officials said.

A total of 80 officers and staff of the Department of Archaeology and National Museum, (Mandalay Branch), carried out

the sanitation and cleared bushes along the circular roads and structures of the royal buildings in the compound of the Golden Palace on Wednesday.

The maintenance is

being undertaken at North Dawei Building and will be completed by the end of August, said an official of Department of Archaeology and National Museum.

“Bad weather and natural disasters have caused damage to the ancient buildings. The department did not have sufficient maintenance funds, and an inadequate number of workers to carry out sanitation and maintenance of the buildings. So now, all the staff of the department participated in the sanitation of buildings. Officials demanded a fund for maintenance of 89 buildings and replacement of tiles along the roads,” an official said.

The golden palace was destroyed in bomb blasts in the Second World War in 1945. In 1989, the government rebuilt the Golden Palace without sticking to its original style. From 1996, the Ministry of Culture has been allowing local and foreign visitors.

Min Htet Aung (Mandalay Sub-printing House)



Cash donated to family of deceased chairman of Pyinmana Township Journalists Association



NAY PYI TAW, 22 Aug—The Myanmar Journalists Association provided cash assistance to the

family of U Kyaw Myint, Chairman of the Pyinmana Township Journalists Association, who died from a heart attack on 18 August.

On behalf of the central association, Joint Secretary of Township Journalists Association U Khaing Min and officials presented K100,000 to the family of the chairman.

Zaw Myo Naing

Paddy saplings nurtured for production of quality paddy seeds

NAY PYI TAW, 22 Aug—The Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation designated 50 acres of farmlands to produce seeds of Palethwe GW-1 paddy strain in West Kyargu Village of Dekkhinathiri Township in Nay Pyi Taw Council Area in 2014-15 cultivation season.

In 2013-14 cultivation season, over 80,000 kilos of Palethwe GW-1 paddy strain could be produced from the farmland and these paddy seeds will be distributed to farmers across the nation.

Staff members of Agriculture Department are making preparation

for pollination of paddy plants so as to produce high yield quality seeds.—NLM-022



Thai medical team provides free ear care service



YANGON, 22 Aug—A Thai Ear Surgery Mobile Team has examined and cured 1,300 patients and operated 96 cases from 13 to 15 August at Hpa-an General Hospital in Kayin State.

The team also treated 900 patients and performed 90 cases of surgical operations at Yangon Ear, Nose and Throat Specialist Hospital from 18 to 20 August.

They are now examining monks, nuns and public at Jivitadana Sangha Hospital in Yangon until 23 August. They have been treating ear diseases since 1975 in Southeast Asia, including in Cambodia, Vietnam, Laos and Malaysia and came the last time to Myanmar in 2008 to provide health care services.

NLM

LOCAL NEWS

Bronze statue of venerable Sayadaw unveiled in Mandalay



MANDALAY, 22 Aug—In honour of philanthropic works, a ceremony to unveil the bronze statue of Taungsalin Monastery Abbot in Mandalay was held at Byamaso clinic on 62nd street in Chanayethazan Township of Mandalay on Friday.

The statue was cast in commemoration of 75

years-old Agga Maha Pandita Maha Dhammakathika Bahujanahitadhara Bhaddanta Theravadavamsalan-kara.

Retired professor Dr Maung Maung Lay of Mandalay University read the biography of the Sayadaw and Chairman of Byamaso Social Association supplicated on the purpose of casting the bronze statue.

The venerable Sayadaw established the Byamaso social association and clinic to provide health care services to the local people, undertaking health and education tasks of the people. The Sayadaw emphasizes Buddhist missionary on hilly region and in border areas.

Thiha Ko Ko (Mandalay)

Training given to breed quality bee queens



NAY PYI TAW, 22 Aug — Beekeeping Section of Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department under the Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development conducted training courses for beekeepers of Nay Pyi Taw Council Area for breeding quality bee queens, said Staff Officer U Myint Naing of Nay Pyi Taw Beekeeping Section.

Due to a lack of quality bee queens, local entrepreneurs could not produce quality honey. So far each beehive has been producing

50 pounds of honey per day, with companies buying the bottles for K2,000 each.

The Beekeeping Section conducts beekeeping courses in Tatkon and Pyinmana townships of Nay Pyi Taw Council Area, planning to open more courses in Yamethin and Lewe townships. About 40 entrepreneurs are engaged in production of honey with about 1,500 beehives in eight townships of Nay Pyi Taw Council Area, said the staff officer.

Ko Gyi Kyaw (Pyinmana)

Fire station, staff quarters under construction in Myinmu

MYINMU, 22 Aug—Sagaing Region Government spent a K511.1 million fund on construction of Myinmu Township Fire Station and staff quarters in the 2014-15 financial year. The region government funded K151.1 million for two two-storey RC buildings with 25% completion. Two two-storey staff quarters are under construction funded with K180 million each.

The station building and staff quarters are being constructed by Kyaw Swa Construction Company.

Po Kha



More than 80 locals in Northern Shan State get CSCs



NAY PYI TAW, 22 Aug —According to Moe Pwint (6) plan of the Ministry of Immigration and Population, staff led by Head U Khin Maung Phyu of Mongyai Township Department of Immigration and Nation-

al Registration in Northern Shan State recently issued citizenship security cards to more than 80 locals in Hoya Village in the township through one-stop service.

Aye Than

Sports trials for university football team held in Mandalay

MANDALAY, 22 Aug—The qualifier for the Upper Myanmar University Football Team (Men) kicked off at Mandalar Thiri Ground in Chanmyathazi Township of Mandalay as of 20 August.

Football teams were divided into two groups in the qualifier. Group (A) comprised footballs from Sagaing Region, Chin, Kayah and Kachin States and the Group (B), Shan State and Magway and Mandalay Regions taking part in the qualifier from 20 to 22 August.

After that, two football teams from upper and lower Myanmar will hold one more qualifier match to be

able to form the Myanmar University Football Team.

The Myanmar Uni-

versity Football Team secured the second prize in the ASEAN Inter-Univer-

sity Sports Tournament last year.

Thiha Ko Ko (Mandalay)



Rescue efforts resume in landslide-hit area, 52 remain missing

HIROSHIMA, 22 Aug — Search and rescue operations resumed on Friday following massive landslides in Hiroshima, with firefighters and Self-Defence Forces members racing against time to find survivors.

Rescue activities had been temporarily halted due to the rain that started falling late Thursday. The local meteorological office issued a heavy rain warning in the western Japanese city at 5 am on Friday and warned of more landslides.

According to police and fire departments, a total of 39 people have been confirmed dead and 52 remain missing. There may be more people buried by mudslides but not yet reported missing.

The disaster was triggered by torrential rain



Japan's Self-Defence Forces personnel continue searching for missing people among debris in Asaminami Ward in the city of Hiroshima, western Japan, on 21 Aug, 2014, after deadly landslides hit the residential areas the previous day.—KYODO NEWS

that hit residential zones in mountainous areas from late Tuesday to early Wednesday.

Experts say the survival rate for people trapped without food or water in a disaster drops dramatically after the first 72 hours.

Disaster Management Minister Keiji Furuya said during a government meeting in the morning that rescue operations could be prolonged. He ordered government offices to make all-out efforts to rescue the missing and to prevent the damage from further spreading.

According to the Hiroshima city task force dealing with the disaster, landslides have been observed at about 170 locations and damage to roads and bridges have been found at 290 places.—Kyodo News

Japan, India eye launch of “2-plus-2” security dialogue

TOKYO, 22 Aug — Japan and India are in the final stages of negotiations to establish a consultative framework involving their foreign and defence ministers with the aim of reaching a formal agreement at upcoming summit talks on 1 September, a Japanese government source said on Thursday.

The launch, if agreed at a meeting between Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi in Tokyo, would be the fifth of its kind for Japan under the so-called “two-plus-two” dialogue mechanism, following the United States, Australia, Russia and France. Japan is eager to strengthen security ties with countries in the Asia-Pacific, as China’s influence is growing.

Beijing is now giving support to countries in South Asia such as Sri Lanka in an apparent bid to expand its reach into the Indian Ocean and Chinese President Xi Jinping is expected to visit India in September.

Tokyo and New Delhi are now making arrangements to upgrade the existing dialogue mechanism on diplomacy and defence, currently at the vice ministerial level. The first such meeting was held in New Delhi in July 2010, and the second in Tokyo in October 2012. During the summit, Abe and Modi are expected to confirm cooperation in ensuring the safety of sea lanes through exchanges between coast guards, as well as joint drills between the Japan Maritime Self-Defence Force and the Indian Navy, according to the source.

The two countries will also likely step up preparations for Japan to export its *US-2 amphibian* aircraft, which can be used in search and rescue operations, after Tokyo eased its rules on the sale of defence equipment and the transfer of defence technology in April.

As India is expected to build a train network between Mumbai and Ahmadabad in western India, Abe is expected to pitch Japan’s “Shinkansen” high-speed bullet train technology, the source said.

Kyodo News

Indonesian president-elect to-do list: fuel subsidies, cabinet

JAKARTA, 22 Aug — President-elect Joko Widodo will sit down with Indonesia’s outgoing leader next week to discuss pressing economic issues, as investors closely watch for his cabinet picks and his plans to wind down a budget-sapping fuel subsidy scheme.

The Constitutional Court on Thursday gave Widodo the green light to lead Southeast Asia’s largest economy from its worst slowdown since the global financial crisis.

The court, as expected, unanimously upheld last month’s presidential election result, rejecting a last-ditch attempt by losing candidate Prabowo Subianto to force a re-vote. Widodo will begin his five-year term on 20 October. Indo-

nesia markets responded positively to the ruling on Friday. The rupiah and Indonesian government bonds rallied, while stocks hit a near 15-month high before turning negative.

With the legal hurdles out of the way, the 53-year-old Widodo is expected to step down soon as Jakarta governor to focus more on the transition. The one-time furniture salesman has promised to form a cabinet that is dominated by technocrats in order to overhaul a sleepy bureaucracy and introduce much-needed economic reforms to address big fuel subsidies, cooling investment and creaky infrastructure.

“The next step is to get things ready, we will meet with the current president to get to know the prob-

lems. We will then start getting in talks with ministries,” Widodo, also known as Jokowi, told reporters late on Thursday shortly after the verdict.

A presidential spokesman said outgoing President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono would meet with his successor next week.

“The key things to watch for now are any announcements on cabinet minister appointments, and whether Jokowi’s transition team is able to convince the outgoing administration to raise fuel prices before it leaves office,” said Mallika Chawla, analyst at Goldman Sachs.

One of Widodo’s main campaign pledges was to raise heavily subsidised prices of diesel and gasoline — historically a sensitive issue — and to use the revenue to fund projects to help millions of poor.

Fuel and power subsidies are expected to cost the government \$31 billion next year, or nearly 18 percent of the total budget. Critics say the money would be better spent on health, education and infrastructure.

Widodo has formed a high-powered advisory team to handle his transition to power, choose a cabinet and prepare a pol-

icy roadmap.

The team is headed by Rini Soemarno, an influential, US-educated businesswoman who served as trade minister and is a former head of PT Astra International, Indonesia’s biggest automobile distributor.

A senior member of the transition team told *Reuters* they would hold more advanced talks with the outgoing government about the possibility of a fuel subsidy cut before October.

“Removing fuel subsidies is one of the key tests for Jokowi when he comes to power. He has to do it gradually, rather than in one shot,” said Wellian Wiranto, economist at Singapore’s OCBC Bank.

The former OPEC member, and now major oil importer, has some of the world’s cheapest fuel prices, but the subsidies are eating up an already tight budget and threatening investor confidence by widening the current account deficit.

The central bank said on Thursday it would not loosen its monetary policy until the current account deficit narrows to 2.5 percent of gross domestic product, a level unlikely to be reached until after next year.—Reuters

Four Indian states hold by-elections

NEW DELHI, 22 Aug — Indians in four states voted on Thursday in by-elections held first time since the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) came to power in May.

By-elections were held in 10 assembly constituencies in the eastern state of Bihar, three each in the southern state Karnataka and central state Madhya Pradesh and two in the northwest state Punjab.

“As per information received by the Election Commission, by-elections have been peaceful and largely incident-free,” Election Commission Director General Akshay Rout told media.

In Bihar, over 2.64 million people were eligible to exercise their franchise to decide the fate of 94 candidates in the 10 assembly constituencies. However, voter turnout stood at 46.42 percent, officials said.

Meanwhile, 78 percent voting was reported in Karnataka, where the main contest was between the Congress and the BJP. In Madhya Pradesh, over 70 percent balloting was recorded in by-elections in the three assembly constituencies.

The results of the election will come out next week.—Xinhua



Indonesian president-elect Joko Widodo speaks to the media at a Press briefing in the garden of his home in Jakarta on 21 Aug, 2014.—REUTERS

WORLD

National Guard start pullout as protests in Ferguson turn calmer

FERGUSON, 22 Aug — Missouri's governor ordered National Guard troops to withdraw from the riot-weary town of Ferguson on Thursday as tensions eased after nearly two weeks of racially charged protests over the fatal police shooting of an unarmed black teenager.

Demonstrators were orderly for a second straight evening on Thursday, the calmest night in the St Louis suburb since 18-year-old Michael Brown was gunned down by a white police officer on 9 August under disputed circumstances.

Even as scores of boisterous but peaceful protesters returned to the streets, Brown's father, Michael Brown Sr, urged them during a CNN interview "to go back to your regular life."

He expressed gratitude for the outpouring of support but criticized thugs and outside agitators who police have blamed for much of

the lawlessness that accompanied earlier protests.

"This looting, all this other stuff ... it's not helping our boy. It's doing nothing but causing more pain, plus it's shaming his name," Brown's father said. "Go back home to your family ... Hug your kids. Hold onto them tight. Keep them close."

Ferguson erupted in anger after the teenager's slaying, with nightly rallies frequently punctuated by looting, vandalism and clashes between protesters and heavily armed riot police, often ending in volleys of tear gas and dozens of arrests.

The turmoil has cast the community of 21,000 people into the international spotlight as an emblem of often-troubled US race relations.

Although Ferguson is predominantly African American, its political leadership, police department



Protesters walk through the street during a march in support of the protests against the killing of unarmed black teenager Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, in Manhattan, New York on 20 Aug, 2014.—REUTERS

and public school administration are dominated by whites. Civil rights activists say Brown's death was the culmination of years of police unfairly targeting blacks.

With civic leaders and

clergy urging protesters in recent days to maintain order and leave the streets after dark, crowds have grown thinner in number and have become more subdued.

"I think we've turned a corner," said State Highway

Patrol Captain Ron Johnson, a black officer placed in command last week of a local police force widely criticized for heavy-handed tactics that seemed to be stoking civil unrest.

On Thursday night,

Johnson and many of his officers mingled casually among protesters. The police presence was generally more low key than it had been since Brown was shot, but the night was not without incident.

Police made a number of isolated arrests of people suspected of instigating the earlier unrest, and tensions heightened briefly as protesters clamored around arresting officers, before members of the clergy members moved in to calm the crowd.

National Guard troops, who were deployed to Ferguson to assist police at the height of disturbances but have kept a relatively low profile during demonstrations, were ordered by Governor Jay Nixon to begin pulling out of the community.

"We continue to see improvement," Nixon said in a statement.

Reuters

Ukraine's Poroshenko talks tough ahead of meetings with Merkel, Putin

KIEV, 22 Aug — Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko said on Thursday he would call on Russian President Vladimir Putin to rein in pro-Russian separatists when the two men meet next week and told the Kremlin chief he had "a strong country, a strong army" behind him.

Poroshenko spoke as government forces, despite taking heavy losses themselves, thrust deeper into rebel-held territory in Ukraine's Russian-speaking east and kept the separatists whom they have battled since April on the back foot.

The Ukrainian battlefield successes, after a faltering start in April when government forces were humiliated, have alarmed some Western governments who fear they could box Putin dangerously into a corner with no way out to save face.

German Chancellor



A Ukrainian serviceman stands near an armoured fighting vehicle at a military camp in Luhansk region on 21 Aug, 2014.—REUTERS

Angela Merkel is scheduled to visit Kiev on Saturday to show her support for Poroshenko — but diplomats say she is also bearing a message that he should consider calling a ceasefire so as not to incur a backlash from Putin.

Poroshenko, who will oversee emotion-charged Independence Day celebrations on Sunday in Kiev in which veterans from the eastern front will take part in a military parade, talked tough on Thursday.

Indicating he too had

a political image to defend at home, he told local journalists that in talks in Belarus's capital of Minsk next Tuesday, at which he will meet Putin, he would "call for the (rebel) fighters to be withdrawn from Ukraine".

Reuters

US aid workers who survived Ebola leave Atlanta hospital

ATLANTA, 22 Aug — Appearing thin but smiling, a Texas doctor who weeks ago entered an Atlanta hospital in a full-body biohazard suit to be treated for Ebola said on Thursday he was "thrilled to be alive" as doctors declared him virus-free and safe for release.

Dr Kent Brantly's release came two days after a second US missionary, Nancy Writebol, was quietly allowed to leave Emory University Hospital, where both had been treated after contracting the deadly virus in July while working for Christian organizations in Liberia.

They were each cleared for discharge from the hospital's isolation unit after their symptoms eased and blood and urine tests showed no evidence of the virus, a doctor who treated them said on Thursday.

The announcement of their release and expected full recovery from a disease that has killed 1,350 people in West Africa prompted an emotional scene in Atlanta. Hospital workers cheered, clapped and cried as a thin but steady Brantly entered a news conference holding his wife Amber's hand.

"Today is a miracu-

lous day," said Brantly, a 33-year-old medical missionary for the Christian relief group Samaritan's Purse. "I am thrilled to be alive, to be well and to be reunited with my family."

Brantly thanked the health teams at Emory and in Liberia for their care "during the most difficult experience of my life," recalling how he grew sicker each day before being evacuated to the United States earlier this month.

"I am forever thankful to God for sparing my life and am glad for any attention my sickness has attracted to the plight of West Africa in the midst of this epidemic," he said.

Writebol did not attend. The 59-year-old from Charlotte, North Carolina, left the hospital on Tuesday and was resting in an undisclosed location with her husband, Christian mission group SIM USA said in a statement.

The couple was smiling and hugging in photos released by the organization on Thursday, but Nancy Writebol endured "dark hours of fear and loneliness" during the course of her fight, her husband said.

Reuters

Russia seizes Japan research whaling patrol ship in Sea of Okhotsk

TOKYO, 22 Aug — Russia has seized a Japanese research whaling patrol ship in the Sea of Okhotsk on suspicion of intruding into Russia's territorial waters, Japanese government sources said on Friday. The 712-ton *Shonan Maru No 2* left Japan on 8 August to visually examine whales in the Sea of Okhotsk at the request of the government-linked Fisheries Research Agency.

Russian authorities say the Japanese patrol ship failed to notify them of a change in its planned route, with research originally set to take place in Russia's exclusive economic zone, and that the ship intruded into Russia's territorial waters, the sources said.

The skipper and crew members of the ship have been questioned by Russian authorities since 15 August on a voluntary basis and have not been detained. The *Shonan Maru No 2* has been anchored at a Russian port, according to Japan's Fisheries Agency, part of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries.—Kyodo News

PERSPECTIVES

Saturday, 23 August, 2014

Urban areas: Where the grass is greener

By Kyaw Thura

The world remains unchanged in size, while its population keeps growing. Now the population of the world has hit over 7.2 billion.

The rapid growth in population is a great challenge to governments of the world nations. As an answer to the call of providing shelter to the increased population, governments have inevitably turned to urbanization.

The process of urbanization is now challenging every part of the world inhabited by humans, especially in rural areas.

One thing important to note here is that ur-

banization parallels industrialization, for it is suggested that industrialization helps rural people to earn a living other than farming. As a direct consequence of this, rural people find themselves abandoning their rural lifestyle in the thought that living in a rural area create less job opportunities for them.

Although farming is a major source of income in rural areas, unpredictable climatic conditions, such as torrential rain and drought, are prone to income fluctuation. This makes them consider urban areas apt to move to.

It is safe to assume that a variety of goods and services is one of the benefits of urbanization. In addition, better education and better health care are guaranteed there, apart from various forms of public transportation.

Despite urban areas endowed with opportunities, they are a competitive environment in which only the strong survive, thereby leaving the weak out of work and in poverty. Another negative impact urbanization has on cities is pollution and envi-

ronmental degradation. For example, more land is needed to build houses and set up industries, which affects the environment and the natural habitat of animals.

One disadvantage that might go unnoticed is that the influx of migrant is likely to exceed employment opportunities business in urban areas can create. Then, newcomers are sure to remain unemployed.

Nevertheless, people will never stop finding a better place where they think their dreams will come true.

Write for us

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

Due to limitation of space we are only able to publish articles that do not exceed 500 words. Should you submit a text longer than 500 words please be aware that your article will be edited.

MYANMAR PERSPECTIVES MAGAZINE - REMEMBERED

By Ba Than

One early day of August 1995, a small group of elder scholars, academicians, practitioners, administrators, economists, jurists, and educationists, all intellectuals by any count, quietly met and deliberated on presenting Myanmar to the world through the written media from a kaleidoscope of angles and sectors in the English language. The articles written by native scholars aimed to provide the readers not only with authentic first-hand accounts of rich cultural heritage and thereby convey the true spirit of Myanmar in its highest form of literary endowment, but also introduce the pristine Buddhist teachings of Lord Gautama Buddha, mild moral ethics of the Myanmar the land and its multi-ethnic society.

This pioneer Editorial Board was formed with Dr. Khin Maung Nyunt, a well-known History Professor & historian as Chief Editor, and included U Than Htut, U San Lwin, U Htin Gyi, U Ba Than, Dr. Thaw Khaung and Daw Kyi Kyi Hla as members. All of them are proven intellectuals in their own professions with high proficiency in the English language. Later Dr. Sei Tu, U Ba Thwin, U Kyaw Win (Culture), U Win Pe joined the elite group. All have contributed articles of high quality as a hobby, sharing valuable experiences at home and abroad so that

readers may enjoy diverse aspects of literature, a veritable armchair travelogue.

The Myanmar Perspectives was intended to have a wide coverage of Myanmar in the world stage. Thus it was launched in two ways: a monthly INTERNET presentation where many articles contributed at random by writers were delivered regularly on the subscribed monthly webpage. They were then sifted corresponding to a wide range of activities and interests comprised under various headings as follows:

- 1) Current events
- 2) Nation building
- 3) The Economy
- 4) Culture highlights
- 5) Tourist Column
- 6) Attractions and Delights
- 7) Biodiversity
- 8) Poems
- 9) Folklore
- 10) Religion
- 11) Profile
- 12) Myanmar Superlatives etc.

Some articles meriting special interest were added to highlight their interest.

The first monthly INTERNET was published around September 1995. The first Myanmar Perspectives magazine, a small book of mere 42 pages made its debut in October 1995. It was graced with 20 articles. The cover photo represented the ancient wooden monastery "Shwe-In-Pin" situated at Mandalay. Innwa Book Store situated in downtown Yangon

was the main distribution centre. To enable the publishers have as wide a coverage as possible, the copies were also distributed through various accredited Myanmar embassies abroad, regularly every three months. The comments on webpage were monitored every month which displayed increased number of visitors, who spoke on wide spectrum of issues concerning Myanmar and the world.

Many native writers of national fame and international renown each, with proven experience and knowledge, in their own professional calling and flair, voluntarily contributed to make their magazine an invaluable collection for casual reading as well as ready reference for study and research. Allow me to mention with pride some of the contributors namely: U Win Pe (Mya Zin), Shan elder scholar Sai Aung Tun, KT Aye, U Kyaw Win (Culture), U Kyaw Win (Labour), U Aung Myint, U Hla Thein, U Ba Thwin, Daw Yin Yin Lay and etc. Then there were many equally illustrious personalities, who, in one way or the other made this magazine a prize possession. What is noteworthy was that these writers were all retirees but still active in their scholarly domain, continuing to share what they know in this ever challenging knowledge age.

The magazine format was also attractive, bound

in art paper and wood free stationery. Each quarterly issue represented the current topic as a cover story, with equally attractive illustration "photo or artistic drawing" presented by top photographers and famous artists.

In addition country tours were arranged in the open season every year, where the Editorial Board members could study and observe at first hand, a moving panorama of events and changes. The tours covered specific neighboring border towns of adjacent countries such as Kawthaung-Ranong, Myawaddy-Maesod, Maong-lar, Muse-Kyai-gaung, Myitkyina, Moekau-ng, Hpakan, Sittwe, etc. It also studied ancient Kingdoms of world heritage value such as Beikthano, Hanlin and Srekittra. These tours provided enlightening insight and grass-roots knowledge of updated information of knowledge for articles, poems, essays both for the Internet and the magazines. There was freedom of expressions as the doyen writers and poets delved into the literary and current events. Thus the Internet and the Magazine had established a vibrant hold on the reading public as a qualitative publication in the literary market. Credit needs to be given to one and all, who have contributed so much with goodwill and dedication, so that the world will see Myanmar as a delightful place to visit, a good theme for study and research, and a good oppor-

tunity for business and social activities.

By 2004 Myanmar Perspectives could modestly proclaim as already published over 100 monthly internet issues 35 quarterly magazines. These collections offered priceless treasure trove of articles and poems, touching almost every aspect there was to know about Myanmar. It provided a neat collective work of ready informal reference for students, researchers, scholars, writers and journalists, giving them a valuable lead for further in-depth research and presentation. Its quality was proven as all write-up came from firsthand sources.

These members of the Editorial Board were in their own personal calling, authors of a number of books hitting the best sellers' list, like Dr. Khin Mg Nyunt, Dr. Thaw Kaung, Daw Kyi Kyi Hla, U Win Pe (Poet Mya Zin), U Ba Than, U Hla Thein, U Sai Aung Tun, U Htin Gyi, to name just a few. They were indeed trial-blazers, setting examples for future generations-intellectuals, scholars and writers, to carry on their literary mantle in continuity and perpetuity.

In his lifetime mission, the author mused on the literary odyssey where magazines come and go. He remembered English Dailies and monthly magazines such as the Guardian daily news and the Guardian monthly magazine, the longest serving magazine in the news world. Then came the Nation, the Burman, the Working Peo-

ples' Daily, The Open Mined (OM), the Spectrum, the Myanmar Perspectives and lastly the New Light of Myanmar. During their heyday they played their roles well, informing, educating, entertaining readers in a variety of ways. Then when their time is up they just fade into oblivion, leaving fond memories in the minds of readers.

In this context the author, a poetry lover remembered Shakespeare (1564-1616) and his sonnet: "All the World's A Stage", where he composed about men and women being merely players having their exits and entrances, as one man in his lifetime plays many parts." Again he contemplated upon the Persian Poet-Omar Khayyam and his famous quatrain, "the Rubaiyat" (made popular by the English translation of Fitzgerald (1800-1833), where this verse bewitched his mind thus:

"Tis all a Chequer-Board of nights and days;

Where Destiny, with men for Pieces plays.

Hither and thither moves and mates and slays.

And one by one back in the Closet lays."

As the author had said, these literary works and their authors played their parts well while on stage and eventually faded into history, leaving lasting impressions on the living, while they lived.

In like manner the Myanmar Perspectives, after having served the readers for nine years has now ended, as Khayyam has said:

(See page 9)

NATIONAL

MMCWA hosts monsoon tree-planting ceremony in Nay Pyi Taw

NAY PYI TAW, 22 Aug — The Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association (MMCWA) and Myanmar Women and Child Development Federation as well as Myanmar Women's Affairs Federation hosted a monsoon tree-planting ceremony on Friday at the compound of MMCWA to conserve the environment, growing more than 500 perennial plants and flowers.

Also present on the occasion were Honorary Patrons of MMCWA Daw Khin Khin Win, wife of President U Thein Sein, Daw Nan Shwe Hmon, wife of Vice President Dr Sai Mauk Kham and Daw Khin Aye Myint, wife of Vice President U Nyan Tun, Deputy Minister for Health Dr Daw Thein Thein Htay and chairpersons and executive members of the bodies.—MNA

Daw Khin Khin Win, wife of President U Thein Sein, plants a perennial tree at the compound of MMCWA in Nay Pyi Taw.—MNA



YCDC announces winners of Painting, Cartoon and Poster contests 2014



A prize-winning painting from the "Painting, Cartoon and Poster Contests 2014" organized by the Yangon City Development Committee.

YANGON, 22 Aug — The Yangon City Development Committee announced the winners of the Painting, Cartoon and Poster contests 2014.

A total of 416 students sent their art works to the

first contest organized by the YCDC under the theme that all should participate and cooperate in upgrading Yangon City to become a city with a high living standard.

Meanwhile, 162 stu-

dents participated in the second event of the painting, cartoon and poster contest in which they had to draw and create art works under the theme within three hours.

Winners of the contests will be invited from 20 to 25 August to the Public Relations and Information Department of YCDC for the presentation ceremony.

Among the winners, the art work created by Ma Naw Wut Yi Thein, a matriculation student of BEHS (1) Lanmadaw won and in the practical event was selected for the Mayor's grand prize award.

Each contest was divided into three categories for primary, middle and high school students.

NLM

Umbrella hoisted atop Letpadaung Taunggyar Pagoda in Salingyi Tsp

NAY PYI TAW, 22 Aug — An enshrinement and umbrella hoisting ceremony of Letpadaung Taunggyar Pagoda was held in Kyaw Village of Salingyi Township in Sagaing Region on Friday.

Union Minister U Hla Tun, Chairman of the Implementation Committee of the Report of the Inves-

tigation Commission for Letpadaungtaung Copper Mine Project, Union Minister for Religious Affairs U Soe Win, Chief Minister of Sagaing Region U Tha Aye and party hoisted the diamond orb, pennant shaped vane and umbrella atop Letpadaung Taunggyar Pagoda.

Members of the Sang-

ha consecrated the Buddha image at the pagoda, with Union Minister U Soe Win and delegation enshrining religious objects at the pagoda and planting Bo saplings.

Members of the Sangha will administer religious talks there on 23 and 24 August.

MNA

Thailand eyes garment investment in Myanmar

NAY PYI TAW, 22 Aug — Union Minister for Industry U Maung Myint held a meeting with Mr Chalermphol Assakul, Director of Bangkok Weaving Mills Limited, Thailand, and party on Friday

at his office here to discuss making investment in Myanmar's garment industry.

At the call, the Union Minister said there are more than 10 industries in the country in which half of industries have

been privatized, adding that, the Ministry will hire No.3 garment industry (Sagaing) and its staff to the private company.

Mr Chalermphol Assakul said that the company wants to invest in the country's garment industry to make more production.

MNA

MYANMAR PERSPECTIVES

(from page 8)

"Alas that Spring should vanish with the Rose, That Spring's Sweet scented manuscript should close."

However in the eastern literary horizon there is a new dawn, a new wind of change, a momentous happening and a new wave of great expectation. On September 2014, the "Global New Light of Myanmar" will make its debut with a new presentation for wider coverage.

The author, a regular writer since for decades since the days of the Guardian, the Working Peoples' Daily and the ageing New

Light of Myanmar warmly sends his auspicious greetings on this gala inauguration and tenders his blessings to bring joy to the new generation of readers in this era of change.

Again in his passionate poetic mood, the author likes to end this article with the famous rhyming couplets of the classical poem "The Brook" composed by Lord Tennyson (1809-1892) thus:

"I chatterchatter as I flow

To join the brimming river;

For men may come and men may go,

But I go on forever."

Collaborative project aims to develop

(from page 1)

in Myanmar's market, proper business plans are also necessary," added Higurashi, a former member of the Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers, one of the technical assistance programs for developing countries by the Japan International Cooperation Agency.

In March, IC Net implemented a trial trip for the souvenir program, with participants producing some prototype souvenirs such as the country's traditionally printed skirts,

a book cover featuring a Myanmar character, and key rings.

Prototype souvenir produced through the project will be sold at the Bogyoke Aung San Market, a popular tourist destination in the heart of Yangon, to gauge responses from tourists.

"Myanmar is famous for traditional handicrafts coming from its ethnic minority groups. I think they would benefit from learning about marketing management," Takeharu Kojima, an advisor working

MRTV to show Brunei King's cup final live, Myanmar to face Vietnam

Myanmar Radio and Television (MRTV) will broadcast live the final match of the 2014 Brunei King's Cup "Hassanah Boolkiah Trophy U-21 2014" on Saturday start-

ing at 6:30 p.m. as the Myanmar U-23 team will play the match against Vietnam at 7 p.m. on that day.

Myanmar Radio and Television

for the agency's Myanmar team said.

Since Myanmar began to open up to the international community in 2011 following decades of military rule, the country has been attracting more and more foreign visitors.

The number of foreign

visitors to the country totaled about 1.6 million in the first seven months of 2014, up more than 40 percent from the same period of 2013, according to the latest data released by Myanmar's Hotel and Tourism Ministry.

Kyodo

Militants, weapons transit Gaza tunnels despite Egyptian crackdown

AL-SARSOURIYA, (Egypt), 22 Aug—A third of the houses on the main street of this Bedouin town near Egypt's border with Gaza look derelict, but inside they buzz with the activity of tunnel smugglers scrambling to survive a security crackdown by the Egyptian army.

Smugglers and tunnel owners, who once publicly advertised their services, have taken over the nearly two dozen single-storey concrete structures and boarded up their doors and windows to avoid the attention of the authorities.

While tunnels used by Gaza's dominant Hamas militants to infiltrate Israel were a priority target of an Israeli offensive in the Palestinian enclave this summer, many smuggling conduits into Egypt have skirted detection.

That has allowed transports of weapons, building materials, medicine and food to continue to and from the small, coastal territory that is subject to blockade by both Israel



A Palestinian fighter from the Izz el-Deen al-Qassam Brigades, the armed wing of the Hamas movement, gestures inside an underground tunnel in Gaza on 18 Aug, 2014.—REUTERS

and Egypt, tunnel operators say and Egyptian security sources acknowledge.

"During the Gaza war, business has flourished," said a Bedouin guide who gave *Reuters* access to one of the tunnels and a rare look at how the illicit, lucrative industry has evolved since Egypt began trying to root out the passages in 2012.

Egypt sees a halt to the flow of weapons and fighters as important to its security, shaken in the past year by explosions and shootings by an Islamist insurgency based mainly in the Sinai Peninsula bordering Gaza and Israel.

Humanitarian supplies and building materials headed in the other direction have provided a vital

lifeline to the 1.8 million Palestinians in Gaza who have been living under the Israeli-imposed blockade since Hamas seized the enclave in 2007.

Cairo mediated talks this month between Israel and Palestinian factions led by Hamas to try to end the war in Gaza but refused to discuss easing its tight control of the Rafah border

crossing as part of the deal Hamas seeks.

A 10-day ceasefire expired on Tuesday without a deal to extend it indefinitely, with Israel resuming air strikes on Gaza and Hamas and other Islamist militants their rocket salvos into the Jewish state.

The guide who accompanied *Reuters* and requested anonymity estimated the total number of functional tunnels in about 10 border villages like Al-Sarsouriya at nearly 500 — down from about 1,500 before the Egyptian clampdown began.

Most of the bigger tunnels — the kind that can accommodate cars and even trucks — have been destroyed by the Egyptians, but smaller ones ranging 1-2 metres (yards) in diameter survive.

The guide said that as many as 200 new tunnels had been built in the past two years, dodging Egyptian security sweeps, with new ones coming onboard each week.

The smaller tunnels are still big enough to al-

low weapons, building materials and humanitarian supplies to pass under the heavily guarded land crossing.

"Each day, about 3 or 4 people cross with weapons, and each one carries about 6 or 7 guns," the Bedouin guide said, without specifying what type of arms were being transported.

A senior Egyptian security officer confirmed that while the biggest and longest tunnels were no more, smaller ones remain operational.

"The situation is much more controlled. It's not 100 percent but we are trying to reach this percentage," he told *Reuters*. He said the army had achieved a noticeable reduction in smuggling of weapons, fuel, food and drugs over the past two years.

Egypt accuses the Islamist Hamas of supporting the Sinai insurgents, which Hamas denies. For its part, Israel has long wanted Egypt to end arms smuggling from Sinai to Gaza militants.

Reuters

Iran says wants progress in nuclear talks before action on Islamic State

PARIS/DUBAI, 22 Aug — Iran is ready to do something to help tackle Islamic State insurgents in Iraq but first wants progress in negotiations with world powers over its nuclear programme, Foreign Minister Javad Zarif was quoted as saying by Iranian media.

France, one of the six nations in nuclear talks with Teheran, said on Wednesday it wanted Arab states, Iran and the five permanent members of the UN Security Council to coordinate a comprehensive response against Islamic State, whose militant forces control large parts of Syria and Iraq.

"If we agree to do something in Iraq, the other side in the negotiations will need to do something in return," Zarif said in remarks late on Wednesday carried by state news agency *IRNA*.

"All the sanctions imposed on Iran over its nuclear activities should be lifted in return for its help in Iraq."

The Sunni Islamist insurgency threatening to tear apart Iraq has alarmed both

Shi'ite Muslim Iran and the United States, which have had no diplomatic relations since soon after the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Teheran.

Iran has offered to cooperate with the United States on stabilizing Iraq, which like Iran has a majority Shi'ite population, but Washington has responded cautiously.

Western officials have repeatedly said they do not want to mix the nuclear dossier with events elsewhere in the region.

"If we agree to help in Iraq, the other party (the West) should also do something in return," the semi-official *Mehr* news agency quoted Zarif as saying. "It is still not clear what we should do in Iraq and what they (the other party) should do in return ... and this is the difficult part."

French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius urged Iran on Wednesday to be part of any coordinated action against Islamic State but said that the Iraq and nuclear issues should be dealt with independently.

Reuters

Amid US air strikes, Iraq struggles to build own air force

WASHINGTON, 22 Aug — President Barack Obama told a recent interviewer he did not want the US military to become Iraq's air force. But he may have little choice.

Iraq had only a fledgling air force when the United States withdrew in 2011. Washington has agreed to bolster Iraqi air power by selling Baghdad 36 sophisticated *F-16* multi-role jet fighters and 24 *Apache* helicopters.

But lengthy contract negotiations, long manufacturing lead times and slow bureaucracies have taken a toll. The Iraqi planes are just beginning to roll off the production line, four years after Congress was first notified of the planned sale and just as Baghdad is fighting for survival against jihadist militants.

As of August, only two of the \$65 million (39.20 million British pound) Iraqi *F-16*s had been handed over by Lockheed Martin Corp to the US government and none had reached Iraq. The jets are now held up by payment problems and deteriorating security, which has prevented work needed to prepare Balad air base for the planes.

"The *F-16*s are not being delivered at this time



An Iraqi Air Force helicopter participates in a ceremony marking the 83rd anniversary of the founding of the Iraqi Air Force, in Nasiriyah city, south of Baghdad on 22 April, 2014.—REUTERS

because the Iraqis did not make the latest instalment and because the installation security plan at Balad was not completed because of the security situation in Iraq," a US defence official said on condition of anonymity. US strikes this month have helped drive Islamic State back from sensitive Kurdish regions. Islamic State militants beheaded US journalist James Foley in face of the strikes. The slow delivery of US attack aircraft to Iraq has angered some Iraqi officials and raised questions about whether the Obama administration could have moved

more quickly to speed the flow of helicopters and warplanes to Baghdad at a time when it was under increasing threat.

Nuri al-Maliki, who resigned as prime minister last week in the face of widespread criticism over his country's political fragmentation, and other Iraqi officials have criticized the slow delivery of the *F-16* aircraft. They blamed the slow-moving US bureaucracy and said Baghdad expected the planes sooner.

Iraqi officials were not available to comment on the planes, as incoming Prime Minister Haider

Al-Abadi prepares to form a new government.

Hassan Jihad Ameen, an Iraqi lawmaker on the security and defence committee in the previous parliament, said he thought the United States had been slow to deliver because of concerns Maliki's Shi'ite-led government would use the planes in a way that intensified sectarian divisions with Sunnis.

"Now ... there is a hope that we have this new government which doesn't differentiate between Iraqis and (is) able to create better atmospheres," Ameen said.

Reuters

China, Mongolia give strong boost to win-win cooperation

BEIJING, 22 Aug — China and Mongolia on Thursday gave a strong boost to bilateral ties by upgrading their diplomatic relationship to a comprehensive strategic partnership and setting a target of expanding two-way trade to 10 billion US dollars by 2020.

Ambitious as it seems, the goal is within reach, considering the agreements the two sides signed on speeding up cooperation in rail and road connectivity, mineral resources development and processing, and finance, among many other areas.

These deals are just part of the fruits reached by the pair of neighbors during Chinese President Xi Jinping's ongoing two-day state visit to Mongolia.

The visit is the first in 11 years by a Chinese head of state to Mongolia, and also the second time for Xi to make a one-country state visit since he took office in

March 2013.

On Thursday, Xi and his Mongolian counterpart, Tsakhiagiin Elbegdorj, signed a joint declaration to upgrade bilateral ties to a comprehensive strategic partnership.

The two countries established a goodneighbourly partnership of mutual trust in 2003 and elevated the ties to a strategic partnership in 2011. The latest upgrading demonstrated both sides' great attention to the neighborhood and their will to push the ties on to a fast track.

China agreed to offer sea ports and railway transport access to the landlocked neighbour and help Mongolia finance a number of projects in medical care, education, railroad and residential community construction.

China and Mongolia also inked a memorandum of understanding on setting up an economic cooperation zone and a deal on cur-

rency swap.

In addition, China also promised to support Mongolia creating a better environment for attracting foreign investment and help it join the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) mechanism and actively engage in East Asian cooperation.

They agreed to carry forward economic cooperation for the benefit of both countries and peoples and realize common development, according to the joint declaration.

All these agreements will inject fresh impetus into the trade between China and Mongolia, which stood at 324 million dollars in 2002 but surged to nearly 6 billion dollars in 2013.

China has been Mongolia's largest trading partner and largest source of foreign investment over the past 10-plus years.

Between 1990 and 2012, a total of 11,642 foreign enterprises registered



Chinese President Xi Jinping (R) holds talks with his Mongolian counterpart Tsakhiagiin Elbegdorj in Ulan Bator, Mongolia, on 21 Aug, 2014. Xi arrived in Ulan Bator Thursday for a two-day state visit to Mongolia. —XINHUA

in Mongolia, among which 49 percent were Chinese. Of the 9.826 billion dollars of foreign direct investment (FDI) absorbed by Mongolia during the same period, 3.484 billion dollars came from Chinese companies.

The two countries enjoy close geographic links

with a 4,710-km land border dotted with 14 crossings along the frontier.

About 1.3 million people traveled between the two countries in 2013, among whom over 1 million Mongolians visited China, including officials, tourists, businessmen and

students. This year marks the 65th anniversary of China-Mongolia diplomatic ties, the 20th anniversary of the revision of the Treaty on Friendship and Cooperation between China and Mongolia, and the China-Mongolia Friendly Exchange Year.—Xinhua

Mexico captures mobsters related to C American gang

MEXICO CITY, 22 Aug — Mexican immigration authorities said on Thursday they captured members of a criminal gang related to the Central American Mara Salvatrucha Gang.

Mexico's National Institute of Immigration (INM) said in a statement it arrested 13 suspects in

the southeastern state of Chiapas with help from the State Attorney General's Office (PGJE), the Federal Police, navy and army, among other security institutions.

Arrests were made after the INM received an anonymous complaint about the suspects, who

should respond to charges of extortion, kidnapping, robbery and homicide, according to the statement.

The suspects demanded 100 US dollars from each one of a group of Central American migrants, and they were arrested before letting them on the train.

Members of the gang, led by a man identified as

Jose Guadalupe Cantarrero Reyes, are from Honduras, Guatemala and Mexico.

Each year, thousands of undocumented Central American migrants flee poverty in their hometown and traverse Mexico in an attempt to reach the United States, many turning victims along the way preyed on by criminal gangs.

Xinhua

33 killed in deadly bus crash in Egypt's Sinai

CAIRO, 22 Aug — At least 33 people were killed and over 40 others seriously wounded in the early hours of Friday as two buses collided on a highway some 50 km away from Red Sea resort city Sharm El-Sheikh in Egypt's South Sinai Province, a security source told Xinhua.

"The two passenger buses were too fast and they crashed in confrontation position due to sleepiness of one of the drivers that led to the fatal accident," the source added.

An unnamed medical source revealed that the injured included Saudi Arabian, Ukrainian and Yemeni tourists while the rest are all Egyptians. "None of those dead is a foreigner so far," he said.—Xinhua

British Muslims blame jihadi subculture after beheading video



US journalist James Foley speaks at Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism, Media, Integrated Marketing Communications in Evanston, Illinois, after being released from imprisonment in Libya, in this 2011 handout photo provided by Northwestern University.—REUTERS

LONDON / BAGHDAD, 22 Aug — A British Muslim leader called for action on

Thursday to tackle a jihadi sub-culture after an Islamic State video showed a sus-

pected Briton beheading US journalist James Foley, held hostage in Syria.

In Washington, US Defence Secretary Chuck Hagel said the threat from Islamic State was "beyond anything we've seen" and the US Justice Department opened a criminal investigation into the death of Foley on the video, which featured a masked man speaking English with a British accent.

As Western officials tried to identify the man, the Muslim Council of Britain denounced Foley's "abhorrent murder" and one of its advisers urged anyone who knows the killer's identity to contact the

police.

Horror at the video spanned from the West to Baghdad, where Iraqis asked why the United States and its allies had not cracked down on Islamic State fighters long before they captured large areas of Syria and Iraq.

Foley, 40, was beheaded by an Islamic State militant in the video that surfaced on the Internet on Tuesday, and officials in Washington revealed that US special forces had tried unsuccessfully to rescue him along with other American hostages earlier this summer.

A firefight between the US forces and Islamic

State militants during the rescue attempt appeared to be the first direct ground engagement between the two sides.

The video caused particular shock in Britain, which is home to about 2.7 million Muslims, although the hundreds of British men fighting alongside the militants in Iraq and Syria have created concern for some time.

Iqbal Sacranie, an adviser to the Muslim Council of Britain, said Britons from across the country's communities had to stop young men being seduced by radical ideologies.

"This sub culture of this 'jihadi-cool' — as they

call it in the media — within the margins of society ... that is the real challenge," he told BBC Radio. "This is a problem that affects all of us and it will only be dealt with more effectively if all of us are working together on this."

Sacranie said the Muslim community was pushing the message that "this is totally alien to Islam" and families were reporting to the authorities when they discovered their sons had headed to the Middle East to fight. He also told London's *Evening Standard* newspaper that anyone who recognised the man in the video had a duty to contact police.—Reuters

Some South Korean ferry mourners tire of activists seizing their cause

ANSAN, (South Korea), 22 Aug — South Korean families who lost loved ones in April's ferry disaster are demanding accountability from the government, but some have grown weary of strident activists adopting their cause for political ends.

The overloaded *Sewol* capsized and sank on a routine voyage that killed about 300 people, most of them children from the same school, causing an outpouring of grief as well as outrage at President Park Geun-hye's conservative government for what was widely seen as a botched rescue operation.

Four months later, the tragedy is so politically charged that Pope Francis had to answer for wearing a yellow ribbon in support of the victims during his visit to Seoul.

Some family members have tired of the political to-and-fro over proposed legislation to create an in-

dependent investigative committee with the right to prosecute. The People's Committee for the *Sewol* Ferry Tragedy, which supports mourning families, consists of more than 800 civic groups, many of them already critics of Park.

"Everyone is getting exhausted. Most of us like me want to see some kind of closure," the father of one victim told *Reuters*.

He was speaking during a cigarette break on Wednesday outside a meeting of family members in Ansan, the working class city southwest of Seoul where most of those killed in the disaster had been pupils at the Danwon High School. He declined to give his name and was wary of being overheard.

Another father of a victim said some family members did not want left-wing activists helping them, as it compromised their political neutrality.

"Some of us didn't

want to mingle with them, but at that time we were office workers who didn't know how to speak up for ourselves," he said. "So I thought we needed their support."

The mother of a victim, who declined to be identified outside the meeting in Ansan, said she had no choice but to defer to those championing their cause.

"It is somewhat burdensome that those civic groups are helping us and some people (not tied to the disaster) speak ill of us. But as a mother who lost her child, I have no choice but to follow people who are active in our group because they are doing something that I can't do," she said.

At Wednesday's meeting in Ansan, households overwhelmingly backed their initial position calling for an investigative committee, with 132 out of 176 voting to stick with that demand.



Mourners stand in line to pay tribute to victims of the sunken passenger ship *Sewol*, at the official memorial altar in Ansan on 30 April, 2014. — REUTERS

At a makeshift camp of victims' supporters in the centre of Seoul, a father has been on hunger strike but many of more than 100 people gathered on a morning this week appeared to be left-wing activists.

Among the posters and banners at the protest site, one says: "Why is the (presidential) Blue House trying to kill Yu-min's father? President Park Geun-hye, come out and take responsibility!"

Activists have rallied around Yu-min's father, Kim Young-oh, 47, who lost his 16-year-old daughter in the disaster and has been fasting, living off water and salt, for more than 30 days.—*Reuters*



Islamist fighters are seen near Tripoli's airport highway, in Libya, on 21 Aug, 2014. The Islamist militants and pro-secular militiamen constantly pounded each other's strongholds in Libya's capital city of Tripoli since 13 July. The clashes between the rival militants have left at least 102 people dead and 452 others wounded. — XINHUA

New Zealand, Japan promote joint research into food production

WELLINGTON, 22 Aug — Government agencies in New Zealand and Japan are seeking to strengthen joint research into "functional foods" with government funding, New Zealand's Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) announced on Friday. The New Zealand-Japan Strategic International Collaborative Research Programme (SICORP) would see MBIE invest up to 400,000 NZ dollars (336,587 US dollars) each into three projects over two years.

The funding would be offered to New Zealand-based research teams with established collaborative links with Japanese research partners in one of the three fields: functionality evaluation or health applications of foods or ingredients; development of food products or processing methods; and improving food safety.

Japan is one of New Zealand's key strategic science and innovation partners and a world leader in functional foods and beverage research and devel-

opment, MBIE international relationships manager Karla Falloon said in a statement.

"New Zealand and Japan could significantly benefit from close collaboration on this topic. SICORP is designed to build on and reinforce this partnership," said Falloon.

SICORP was jointly established in 2009 by MBIE and the Japan Science and Technology Agency to enable research collaboration on topics where the two countries possess complementary capabilities.

Xinhua

UN chief calls for international efforts to end Syrian bloodshed

UNITED NATIONS, 22 Aug — UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on Thursday called for international efforts to end the Syrian crisis at the first anniversary of the chemical weapons attack on Syria.

On 21 Aug, 2013, a massive alleged chemical weapons attack struck Ghouta, on the outer fringes of Syria's capital Damascus, killing more than 1,400 people, including more than 426 children.

"Since the attack, the Syrian conflict not only continues unabated, but

it has spilled over into neighbouring countries, sparking a humanitarian catastrophe and fuelling further human rights violations and crimes against humanity," Ban said in a statement, adding that the ongoing conflict is contributing to conditions conducive to the proliferation of terrorism.

Ban called on the international community to help end the Syrian conflict which threatens "regional and international peace and security."

He also conveyed his

deepest condolences to the families who lost their loved ones.

The Syrian crisis, which began in March 2011, has killed over 150,000 people, injured more than 680,000 others and displaced at least 6.5 million people. At least 10.8 million people are in need of assistance inside Syria.

The conflict has also spawned a refugee crisis in which some 2.5 million people are sheltering in neighbouring countries.

Xinhua

Vietnam to open more direct flights to Cambodia, Singapore

HO CHI MINH CITY, 22 Aug — Vietnam's national air carrier Vietnam Airlines will open direct flights from Phu Quoc Island in southern Kien Giang Province to Cambodia and Singapore from November this year, Vietnam's government portal reported on Friday.

Specifically, Vietnam Airlines will operate three flights per week from Phu

Quoc to Siem Riep of Cambodia by ATR72 aircraft, and two flights per week from Phu Quoc to Singapore by Airbus 321 aircraft.

Currently, the Phu Quoc International Airport operates two domestic routes and one international route between Phu Quoc and Russia. Phu Quoc is Vietnam's largest island and belongs to Kien Giang

Province, about 1,220 km south of capital Hanoi. Domestic and foreign investors are encouraged to invest in the island, especially its infrastructure and tourism, to make it an attractive resort destination.

From March 2014, Phu Quoc allowed foreign tourists to visit visa-free for a period of up to 30 days.

Xinhua

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**Ministry of Energy
Myanma Petroleum Products Enterprise
Invitation for Opened Tender (3/2014)**

1. Open tenders are invited for supply of the following respective items in Myanmar Kyats and United States Dollars (CIF Yangon).

Sr.No	Tender No	Description	Qty	Remark
(1)	MPPE/LP/MCY/CAP/T/5 (2014-2015)	2,800. Gallons Bowser (Brand New)	10 Units	Kyats
(2)	MPPE/LP/MCY/CAP/T/6 (2014-2015)	Flow Meter 100 IGPM (Positive Displacement Liquid controls, Branded)	10 Nos	Kyats
(3)	MPPE/LP/MCY/CAP/T/7 (2014-2015)	Air Conditioner	5 Sets	Kyats
(4)	MPPE/LP/TTS/T/2 (2014-2015)	Tyre with Tube and Flap	2 Items	Kyats
(5)	MPPE/MCY/CAP/T/3 (2014-2015)	300 IGPM Fuel Transfer Centrifugal Pump (Engine Driven)	2 Sets	USD
(6)	MPPE/MCY/CAP/T/4 (2014-2015)	Fire Fighting Angus Engine Driven Pump With Trailer Inductor	2 Sets	USD
(7)	MPPE/MCY/CAP/T/5 (2014-2015)	Mercedes Refueller Engine Assembly with Clutch and Gear Box Assembly	2 Sets	USD
(8)	MPPE/AV/T/1 (2014-2015)	Aviation Gasoline 100LL	480x200 Litre Drums	USD
(9)	MPPE/AV/LUB/T/1 (2014-2015)	Aviation Lubricating Oil & Grease	14 Items	USD
(10)	MPPE/MCY/T/2 (2014-2015)	Filter Elements	8 Items	USD

2. Tender Closing Date & Time- 18-9-2014, 12:00 Hrs.

3. Tender documents are available at our office starting from 19-8-2014 during office hours and for further detail please contact: Phone: 067-411487.

Planning Department
Myanma Petroleum Products Enterprise
Ministry of Energy, No(6) Complex, Nay Pyi Taw

Portugal's public debt rises to 134 pct of GDP in first half this year

LISBON, 22 Aug—Portugal's public debt was higher than expected in the first half of this year, according to official data released on Thursday by the Bank of Portugal.

The country's public debt rose to 134 percent of GDP at the end of June, while the government had predicted public debt would peak at 130.2 percent of GDP this year.

Portugal's public debt was 128.9 percent of GDP in 2013 and its international lenders had to ease debt targets given the economy's deteriorating prospects.

The centre-right government has been imple-

menting harsh spending cuts and tax increases in order to meet its budget reduction targets and gain financial sovereignty.

Portugal had a clean exit from the 78-billion-euro (about 104 billion US dollars) bailout programme it signed with the troika of the international lenders — the European Union, the International Monetary Fund and the European Central Bank in May this year. Next year the country's public debt is expected to peak at 131.8 percent of GDP, according to the Paris-based Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

Xinhua

**THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR
MINISTRY OF RAIL TRANSPORTATION
MYANMA RAILWAYS
INVITATION TO SUBMIT EXPRESSION OF INTEREST
FROM DEVELOPERS FOR DRY PORTS PROJECT**

1. In line with the National Development Plan, the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has been identifying the economic potentials to contribute to the country's economic development by providing business opportunities and investments for the local, international developers and private organizations. As our endeavor for freight transport sector development, Myanma Railways has committed to formulate dry ports and implement the functions of its at Ywarthargyi (Yangon Region) and Myitnge (Mandalay Region).

2. Myanma Railways now invites Expression of Interest (EOI) from reputable local, international or joint venture developers/investors to undertake design, build and operate works for the dry ports project.

3. The EOI form will be taken at Deputy General Manager, Supply Department, Myanma Railways, Corner of Theinphyu Street and Merchant Street, Botahtaung Township, Yangon, Myanmar. Phone +95-1-291985, 291994. Developers must submit EOI in original, a duplicate copy and electronic copy of a CD ROM not later than 14:00 pm, 19 September 2014. No submission by E-mail shall be entertained.

4. Myanma Railways shall determine to its satisfaction whether the EOI that is selected as having submitted the substantially responsive and then successful developers will be invited to submit for tender process. Enquiries can be made by calling telephones +95-67-77005, 77085, 77068.

**Managing Director
Myanma Railways
Ministry of Rail Transportation**



People sign a document during the key delivery of the Hugo Chavez housing complex, in Playa Grande, Vargas State, Venezuela, on 21 Aug, 2014. More than 500 families received on Thursday the keys to their new dwellings by the government's "Great Mission Housing Venezuela".

XINHUA

Elephant population increases in Serengeti-Maasai Mara

DAR ES SALAAM, 22 Aug — The number of elephants in the Serengeti-Maasai Mara ecosystem has increased from 258 in 1986 to 7,535, according to the results of a latest survey released on Thursday.

The census was conducted by a scientists' community from Tanzania and Kenya which are sharing the ecosystem covering 32,000 square-kilometres of the Ngorongoro Conservation Area, Serengeti National Park, Maswa District, Ikongoro and Grumeti Wildlife Management areas, and Kijereshi Game Reserve on the Tanzanian side as well as Masai Mara National Park and adjacent areas in the Narok County of Kenya.

Tanzania's Minister for Natural Resources and Tourism Lazaro Nyalandu said an aerial survey

conducted between May 19 and June 6 this year indicated there were 7,535 jumbos as opposed to 258 in 1986. An analysis of the census data suggests an increase of elephants in the southern part of the ecosystem in contrast to a decline in the northern part, Nyalandu said. "Besides a birthrate upsurge, there is no other explanation to the increase," the minister said, admitting that elephants' migration from the north to the south could partly play a role. Nyalandu said 192 carcasses of elephants were counted in the entire ecosystem, 117 of which, equivalent to 61 percent, were in Kenya, and 75 of them, equivalent to 39 percent, were in Tanzania.

However, barely 17 carcasses were estimated to have been of elephants killed within the last 18 months, suggesting that

poaching was on the decline in the recent past.

The buffalo population was also counted during the census which established 61,896 of them, 18 percent increase from 54,974 in 1986. "These results provide highest population estimates of elephants and buffaloes ever recorded in history," the minister said.

"The results are encouraging, for the situation is not as bad as the global community has been portraying," said Charles Musyoki, the head of Kenya delegation and assistant wildlife director.

Musyoki said on behalf of the cabinet secretary in charge of wildlife that owing to the Serengeti-Masai Mara transcending boundaries, there was a need for establishing and nurturing dialogue on important conservation issues.

Xinhua

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Weather report

FORECAST VALID UNTIL EVENING OF THE 23rd August, 2014: Rain or thundershowers will be isolated in Lower Sagaing Region and Kayah State, scattered in Mandalay, Magway, Bago, Yangon, Ayeyawady and Taninthayi Regions, Shan, Chin, Kayin and Mon States and fairly widespread in the remaining Regions and States with likelihood of isolated heavy falls in Upper Sagaing Region, Kachin and Rakhine States. Degree of certainty is (80%).



A "Star Wars" Lego set called "The Ghost" starship is shown in this publicity photo released to Reuters on 21 Aug, 2014. — REUTERS

Disney brings the Force with 'Star Wars' game, TV show push

LOS ANGELES, 22 Aug — Walt Disney Co is ramping up its first major push to promote the "Star Wars" franchise it purchased from George Lucas in 2012, blitzing consumers this year with a mobile game, animated TV show and an expanded line of toys and clothes.

The anticipated rush of light sabers, Wookiees and other "Star Wars" mainstays is Disney's attempt to cash in on its \$4.05 billion acquisition of LucasFilm, which gave the company a popular yet aging franchise that has not produced a new feature film in nine years.

On Thursday the company introduced "Star Wars: Commander," a free mobile app that lets players direct battles with franchise heroes Han Solo, Chewbacca and Princess Leia. It is available exclusively for 30 days through Apple Inc's App Store and later on Google Inc's Android devices. Disney generates revenue by selling a currency known as crystals that can be used to speed up game play. On 29 September, the company will release computer-animated movie "Star Wars Rebels: Spark of Rebellion" online and on the Watch Disney XD app. The film debuts on Disney Channels around the world on 3 October, followed by a series based on the movie on the Disney XD channel starting on 13 October.—Reuters

Jackie Chan takes 'bow of apology' after son busted for drugs



Hong Kong actor Jackie Chan poses on the red carpet during the 33rd Hong Kong Film Awards on 13 April, 2014. — REUTERS

BEIJING, 22 Aug — Kungfu movie star Jackie Chan offered the public a "deep bow of apology" after his son, actor, singer and socialite Jaycee, was arrested in Beijing for drug use.

Jackie Chan, 60, served as a goodwill spokesman for the China

National Anti-Drug Committee in 2009, promoting anti-drug education.

Jaycee, 32, was arrested on Monday after police found 100 grams of marijuana in his apartment, they said.

"As a public figure, I'm ashamed and distressed," Chan wrote on his Chinese-language microblog on Wednesday. "His mother is especially heartbroken."

"Along with Jaycee, I want to take a deep bow of apology to the public."

The younger Chan is the latest celebrity caught up in a campaign against drugs in China, which has vowed to purge the country's elite of decadence and other social vices.

Reuters

Beyonce and Jay-Z's 2013 Cuba trip no violation of US embargo

MIAMI, 22 Aug — American music industry power couple Beyonce and Jay-Z did not violate US sanctions on Cuba by travelling to the communist-ruled island last year, a US government review has found.

"We found no indication that US sanctions were violated, and we concluded that the ... decision not to pursue a formal investigation was reasonable," said the review by the Treasury Department's Office of Inspector General dated on Wednesday.

The four-day visit in April 2013 was a cultural trip that was fully licensed by the Treasury Department, organizers said at the time.

The long-standing US trade embargo against Cuba prevents most Americans from traveling to the island without a license granted by the US government.

Two Cuban-American members of Congress, both Republicans representing south Florida and supporters of a firm stance on Cuba, had asked the Treasury Department for information on what type of license the couple obtained for their trip.

Beyonce and Jay-Z celebrated their fifth wedding anniversary in Havana and were greeted by big crowds as they strolled through the Cuban capital. They were instantly recognized despite the past half-century of ideological conflict that



US singer Beyonce (L) and her husband rapper Jay-Z walk as they leave their hotel in Havana on 4 April, 2013. — REUTERS

separates the two countries.

The visit was planned as a "people-to-people" cultural visit and involved no meetings with Cuban officials, or typical tourist activity such as trips to the beach, organizers said at the time.—Reuters

Eva Longoria to guest star in 'Brooklyn Nine-Nine'

LOS ANGELES, 22 Aug — Actress Eva Longoria will be seen as a guest star on the comedy series 'Brooklyn Nine-Nine'.

The 39-year-old 'Desperate Housewives' star will play the role of a defence attorney on the show. Her character, Sophia, catches the attention of Andy Samberg's Jake Peralta when she faces off against him in court, reported Aceshowbiz.

Her stint will last on the series for three episodes. It is unclear in which episode she will make her first appearance.—PTI



GENERAL

Serena Williams to face compatriot Townsend in US Open opener



Serena Williams

NEW YORK, 22 Aug — Defending champion Serena Williams will face compatriot Taylor Townsend in the first round of the women's singles of the US Open after the draw was concluded here on Thursday.

Williams, who is seeking for her third consecutive US Open singles title, showed up at the

draw ceremony and said, "As an American, it's always very important to play at the US. I don't know who is there (to stop me). I'll play one by one."

Without injured Rafeil Nadal, Wimbledon champion Novak Djokovic might face Australian Open champion Stan Wawrinka in one semifinal on the men's side.

Second-seeded Roger Federer and fourth-seeded David Ferrer are in the other half and will not face each other in early stage.

Chinese top player Li

Na withdrew from the tournament due to wrist injury. Zhang Shuai is the only seeded Chinese and she could be the first seed to meet Serena if she could go through.

And the other two Chinese players, Peng Shuai and Zheng Jie, set up a first-round meeting and the winner will face Agnieszka Radwanska, the 4th seeded Polish, in the second round. Enditem

The 2014 US Open is scheduled from 25 August to 8 September. — Xinhua

MYANMAR TV

(23-8-2014, Saturday)

6:00 am
* Paritta by Venerable Mingun Sayadaw

6:20 am
* Physical Exercise

7:00 am
* News/Weather Report

7:20 am
* Business News

8:30 am
* TV Drama Series

9:00 am
* News/International News

9:30 am
* Documentary

10:00 am
* News

10:15 am
* Current Affairs

11:30 am
* Game For Children

12:25 pm
* Round Up of The Week's TV Local News

2:45 pm
* Hyper Sports

3:00 pm
* News

3:15 pm
* Alinka Kyaw Swar Shwe Pyi Aye Music Troupe

4:00 pm
* News

4:30 pm
* University of Distance Education (TV Lectures) -Third Years (Myanmar)

5:00 pm
* News

5:15 pm
* Documentary

6:20 pm
* MRTV's Youth Programme

6:50 pm
* Myanmar-U19 & Vietnam-U21 (Man) Football Competition (Final) (Live)

9:00 pm
* News

* Myanmar Series
* Gitadagale Phwintbarohn

MYANMAR INTERNATIONAL

(23-8-14 07:00 am~ 24-8-14 07:00 am) MST

- * Local News
- * Great Shwedagon - The Religious Insignias of pagodas in Myanmar
- * World News
- * Art Students: Sculpture
- * Local News
- * Waso Charity Feast
- * World News
- * Today Myanmar: "Market Respond to Ooredoo Launching"
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- * Local News
- * Photographer : Kyaw Win Hlaing (YUC)
- * World News
- * Mya Nan San Kyaw (The Golden Palace)

NZ wine exports at record high after bumper grape harvest

WELLINGTON, 22 Aug — Exports of New Zealand wines hit a new record in the year to the end of June, as wineries saw a bumper grape harvest, the New Zealand Winegrowers industry group announced on Thursday. Both export volumes and values rose by 10 percent, with overseas sales reaping a record 1.33 billion NZ dollars (1.11 billion US dollars), according to the group's annual report.

New Zealand Winegrowers chair Steve Green said the industry had bounced back from supply constraints of the 2012 vintage with a harvest of



445,000 tones of grapes this year. "The 2014 harvest may seem like a drop in the ocean compared to major producers, but it was a record for New Zealand and signals the drive for export growth in the year ahead," Green said in a statement on

the annual report.

Strong sales and forecast demand had given growers and wineries the confidence to invest in vineyard and infrastructure development, but Green cautioned against any drop in standards to meet demand.

"Consistently meeting consumer expectations for premium New Zealand wines will take us a long way. Being the most sought after and highly valued must be our aspiration to ensure a bright future," he said.

The report showed sales up in all the industry's growth markets in western Europe and North America, but exports to the Chinese mainland were down 8 percent to 24.8 million NZ dollars (20.77 million US dollars) and exports to Hong Kong dropped 18 percent to 16.9 million NZ dollars (14.15 million US dollars).

Xinhua

Russia to send virologists to help fight Ebola in Guinea

MOSCOW, 22 Aug — Russia is sending a group of medics to Guinea to help fight the Ebola epidemic, Deputy Prime Minister Olga Golodets said on Thursday.

"They'll be working along with the scientists from other countries on the new anti-virus drug," Interfax news agency quoted Golodets as saying.

The team consists of eight top Russian virologists, who will undertake maximum precaution to avoid contracting the disease themselves, she said, adding that they will leave later Thursday.

The Ebola outbreak in Western African countries of Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Nigeria have claimed more than 1,200 lives since earlier this year.—Xinhua

Robin Williams' ashes scattered in San Francisco Bay

SAN RAFAEL, (Calif), 22 Aug — Comedian Robin Williams' ashes have been scattered in the San Francisco Bay following his apparent suicide, according to a death certificate released by Marin County on Thursday.

Williams, 63, was found hanged in his Tiburon, California, home last week. The "Mrs Doubtfire" star had been suffering from severe depression, anxiety and early Parkinson's disease before his death.

Williams' cremated remains were released on 12 August, the day after his death, according to the document.

Williams' death stunned

his former Hollywood colleagues, who remembered him for his generosity and humble nature.

The actor's madcap comic style launched him to prominence as a friendly alien in the late 1970s TV series "Mork & Mindy," and his dramatic versatility also earned him an Oscar for his role as a fatherly therapist in 1997's "Good Will Hunting."

Williams' family has not announced plans for a memorial.

Fellow comedian Billy Crystal will give a tribute to Williams at the annual television Emmy Awards on 25 August.

Reuters



A memorial to Robin Williams is set at the Throckmorton Theatre in Mill Valley, California on 14 Aug, 2014. REUTERS

Djokovic, Federer favoured for grand slam sequel

NEW YORK, 22 Aug — Top seed Novak Djokovic and number two Roger Federer are favoured to wage another title showdown in the last grand slam of 2014, although some emerging young guns have other ideas for the US Open starting on Monday.

Djokovic and Federer's path to a championship clash could be less troubled than usual with the absence of last year's winner Rafa Nadal due to a wrist injury, and the sub-par form of 2012 champion Andy Murray since last year's back surgery. If the leading men star in the Arthur Ashe Stadium final, it would provide a sequel to their five-set thriller at the All England Club in which a teary-eyed Djokovic hoisted the Wimbledon trophy.

Both claim to be overdue for another taste of triumph at Flushing Meadows.

Djokovic counts just one US title (2011) in his haul of seven grand slams despite reaching the Flushing Meadows final in each of the last four years and five times overall. Federer, 33, has five successive US



Roger Federer

Open crowns from 2004 but has gone without since. He extended his grand slam title record collection to 17 by winning the 2012 Wimbledon, which stands as his only slam triumph in his last 18 tries.

Lying in wait for another chance to spring a surprise and trumpet their arrival on the main stage are promising players who made a big splash in London.

Seeded fifth is

hard-serving Canadian Milos Raonic, a Wimbledon semi-finalist along with fellow 23-year-old Grigor Dimitrov of Bulgaria, seeded seventh in Flushing Meadows, where girlfriend Maria Sharapova will likely be seen cheering him on.

Also hoping to follow up the fireworks he set off at the last major is 19-year-old Australian Nick Kyrgios, who ousted Nadal in the fourth round before falling to Raonic in the quarters

at Wimbledon. Among the veterans, Australian Open champion Stan Wawrinka of Switzerland is seeded third ahead of Spaniard David Ferrer, with Tomas Berdych of the Czech Republic at number six, two places ahead of Murray, who has shown hints of a return to form of late.

Jo-Wilfried Tsonga of France, who beat Federer in the Rogers Cup final in Toronto, holds the ninth seed while Japan's Kei Ni-

shikori rounds out the top 10 seeds.

The 27-year-old Djokovic has made some life changes since his last appearance in New York, joining Federer as a family man four days after his Wimbledon triumph when he married childhood sweetheart Jelena Ristic, who is expecting their first child.

The honeymoon, however, may have affected the Serbian's preparation as the outstanding hard court player, who owns four Australian Open titles on the surface, has had a lackluster run-up to the Open with a pair of fourth-round exits this summer.

World number one Djokovic has a long way to go to catch Federer both on the grand slam wins chart and on the family front.

In May, Federer's wife, Mirka, gave birth to their second set of twins. Leo and Lenny were born almost five years after the arrival of twin sisters Myla Rose and Charlene Riva.

Federer has enjoyed strong results this hard court season as runner-up in Toronto and champion in

Cincinnati, and the absence of Nadal should improve his chances of getting back to the winner's circle.

Nadal has been like Kryptonite to Federer, who has lost nine of their 11 career meetings in grand slams and trails in their overall head-to-head by 23-10.

Djokovic and Federer have had a much closer ledger with each player winning six times in their grand slam encounters and the Swiss holding a scant 18-17 edge in career meetings.

Federer has won three tournament titles in 2014, bringing his impressive career haul to 80 victories, while the Serbian has claimed four tournaments this year for 45 career tour wins.

A US Open title for the Swiss elder, ranked third behind Djokovic and Nadal, would vault him past the Spaniard into second in world rankings and into first place in the ATP Race to London for the World Tour Finals should Djokovic fail to reach the final.

Reuters

Bouchard, Raonic make final push to summit at US Open

TORONTO, 22 Aug — Canada has long been a global ice hockey super power, toasted a Formula One driver's champion and at different times has laid claim to the world's fastest man.

The Maple Leaf has been waved by a Masters champion and produced most valuable players in the National Basketball Association, National Hockey League and Major League Baseball.

But one sporting peak no Canadian has yet to reach is the top of the tennis mountain as a grand slam winner.

Faced with some Everest sized hype, Canadians Eugenie Bouchard and Milos Raonic have set up base camps within sight of that lofty goal and head into the US Open next week prepared to make a final push for the summit.

By reaching the Wimbledon final Bouchard has already climbed higher than any Canadian before her after semi-final appearances at the French and Australian Opens — losing to eventual champions on

both occasions — had already marked her as a rising star.

Raonic also reached new heights on the lawns of the All-England Club, becoming the first Canadian man to play a grand slam semi-final following a quarter-final run at Roland Garros.

Those results touched off a bout of tennis fever in their hockey mad homeland and installed both as cornerstones around which the next tennis generation will be built.



Eugenie Bouchard of Canada holds the runner-up trophy after being defeated by Petra Kvitova of the Czech Republic in their women's singles final tennis match at the Wimbledon Tennis Championships, in London on 5 July, 2014.—REUTERS

Raonic's rise has been more steady than spectacular but the big-hitting 23-year-old has already earned the seal of approval from 17-time grand slam champion Roger Federer and his coach Stefan Edberg. Seeded fifth at Flushing Meadows, Raonic is on the verge of crashing the Big Four of grand slam champions Novak Djokovic, Rafa Nadal, Andy Murray and Federer, who have dominated the sport for the past decade.

Reuters

US keeper Howard to take year off from international duty

NEW YORK, 22 Aug — US national team goalkeeper Tim Howard says he will take a year off from international duty in order to spend more time with his family. Howard, who will continue to play in England's Premier League with Everton, has been capped 104 times by the US and was the starting goalkeeper in the last two World Cups.

In a statement distributed by the US Soccer Federation on Thursday, Howard, 35, said he had told US coach Jurgen Klinsmann that he would not be available for national team selection until September 2015, meaning he would miss next year's CONCACAF Gold Cup. "Having played overseas for the last 12 years and missing out on spending time with my family, making this commitment to my family is very important at this time," said Howard.

"It's the right decision at the right time. Jurgen has always been up front with all the players in saying you have to earn your place, which is something I agree with, so I look forward to



Tim Howard of the US gestures during their 2014 World Cup round of 16 game against Belgium at the Fonte Nova arena in Salvador on 1 July, 2014.—REUTERS

coming back next fall and competing for a spot."

Howard's absence will open the way for Aston Villa keeper Brad Guzan to become first choice keeper while Real Salt Lake's Nick Rimando, who was the third keeper at the World Cup in Brazil, could also get chances to start.

"This gives us a huge opportunity to see Brad Guzan and Nick Rimando going forward and fighting for the number one spot," said Klinsmann.

"We have young talented goalkeepers with Sean Johnson and Bill Hamid, who have been

brought along the last couple years, so this may give them a chance here and there to get some game time." Klinsmann said that after a "productive conversation" he understood Howard's situation but made it clear that the keeper would have to fight to get his spot back.

"I told him as long as he is the same Tim Howard that we always see performing well, he will be welcome back with open arms and right back competing for a spot. He knows that he has to prove that he deserves to be back."

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