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SMALLER GOVERNMENT

President-elect proposes 21 ministries, 18 ministers

PRESIDENT-ELECT U Htin Kyaw submitted a proposal for the formation of the next government with 21 ministries as well as 18 ministers to the parliament yesterday.

The president-elect proposed the creation of a new Ministry of the Ethnic Affairs among the 21 ministries, slimming the government down from the 36 ministries of the outgoing government.

Some of the old ministries will be combined under the next government.

The ministries proposed by the president-elect are the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation; Ministry of Transport and Communication; Ministry of Culture and Religious Affairs; Ministry of Resources and Environmental Conservation; Ministry of Electric Power and Energy; Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population; Ministry of Planning and Finance; Ministry of Industry, Ministry of Health; Ministry of Education; Ministry of Construction; Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement; Ministry of Hotels and Tourism; Ministry of Commerce; Ministry of Information; Ministry of Ethnic Affairs;



MPs stand up as the Speaker of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw leaves the parliament after yesterday session. PHOTO: MNA

Ministry of the President's Office; Ministry of Defence; Ministry of Home Affairs and Ministry of Border Affairs.

The proposal will be discussed in today's parliament

session.

According to the constitution, the ministries of Home Affairs, Border Affairs and Defence will be run by the Myanmar Defence Services.

Meanwhile, the Pyithu Hluttaw (Lower House) has formed an eight-member Joint-Coordination Committee for Development of Parliamentary Affairs, which will be chaired by Daw

Aung San Suu Kyi, the chairperson of the National League for Democracy. The assignment has fuelled speculation that she will not serve as a minister in the next government.—GNLM

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Bago Region villages confronted by imminent water crisis

VILLAGES in the western Bago Region township of Pandaung are on the verge of a drinking water shortage, according to local residents.

The start of March saw the wells and reservoirs in the villages of Yedwinhla, Taungbo Gyi, Hman Kone, Ywathit Kone, Kyipin and Tel Kone begin to slowly dry up, raising concerns that a water shortage is imminent.

"There's only about six inches of water left in the well, and this has to supply the entire village. The reservoir from which we source water for our buffalo and cattle is also on the verge of drying up. Come the end of this

month and our reservoirs will have completely dried up, and we'll be in a situation where we rely on donors for drinking water," said U Tin Oo, a resident of Yedwinhla Village. Last March, local wells and reservoirs had not started to show signs of diminishing water levels, but locals say this year's hotter temperatures have caused water reserves to dry up much more quickly. "We're making preparations to donate water to those areas where it has become scarce. We'll donate bottled drinking water as well as water trucks to supply water for domestic purposes. We'll also connect with other donors to dig wells in feasible ar-

reas," said Ko Myo Nyeing Zaw from the Pyay-based Moe Mitta charity group.

Daw Zin Moe Htaike, a representative for Pandaung Township in the Bago Region Hluttaw, explained that field visits were made to the water-deficient villages on 13 and 14 March to collect information to present to parliament about the inclusion of well-digging projects and repairs to reservoirs in the 2016-17 fiscal year budget.

"I will check into whether [water availability projects] have been included in the 2016-17 budget. If they haven't, then I will inquire as to whether we should

use the whole K100 million township budget allocated by the Union government or connect with the local municipal departments. I will make proposals to the regional parliament if necessary," she said. Residents of villages suffering from water shortages have called on the government to use machinery to dig water storage facilities that would have the capacity to store water for long periods of time. The villages suffered complete water shortages between the months of April and June last year, rendering them dependent on water supplied by donors from Pyay and Ushitpin.—Myitmakha News Agency

Gazette

PRESIDENT of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has transferred U Kyaw Shwe, Director-General of the Department of Industrial Crops Development under the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, as Managing Director of Myanmar Agricultural Development Bank from the date he assumes charge of his duties.

Govt returns over 370,000 acres of land to owners

THE Land Use Management Central Committee released a statement on the progress of settling land disputes across the country yesterday, saying more than 370,000 acres of land have been returned to their original owners.

The statement said that, so far, 13,596 of 17,718 cases presented by the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw 'investigation commission for easing the suffering of people whose farmlands and other lands were confiscated' to the committee were resolved as of 29 February 2016.

Also, 1,197 of 3,782 cases directly sent to the committee and presented by the President's Office and Union Gov-

ernment Office have also been settled, the committee statement said.

According to the statement, the committee also dealt with cases of lands set to be returned to owners by ministries and companies.

Out of a total of 403,716 acres of disputed land, 374,631 acres have been transferred to their previous owners, said the committee.

In its statement, the committee called on land owners whose lands were confiscated to contact township, village and ward land use management committees to prove their ownership. —Myanmar News Agency

ASEAN info ministers vow closer cooperation in media development



ASEAN ministers responsible for information pose for photo in ASEAN way at their 13th Conference in the Philippines. PHOTO: MNA

THE 13th Conference of the ASEAN Ministers Responsible for Information took place in the Philippines from 15 to 17 March in conjunction with the 14th ASEAN Information Senior Officials Meeting and related meetings.

At the opening ceremony of the 13th meeting in Cebu yesterday, Information Union Minister U Ye Htut, who served as chairman of the 12th ASEAN Information Ministers Meeting, handed over the chairmanship to Philippine Information Minister

Mr Herminio B Coloma, who chaired yesterday's meeting.

The meeting focused on closer cooperation in implementation of information strategies in the region, action plans for media development through collaborative efforts and training for media-related industries.

Also on the agenda were programmes to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the association in its member countries and measures to enhance its role. The 13th Conference of the ASEAN Ministers Responsible for Information con-

cluded with a release of a joint statement. At another meeting between the Southeast Asian bloc and three partners—China, Japan and South Korea—the latter countries pledged their continued assistance to greater cooperation in media development and greater support for campaigns aimed at raising public awareness in the bloc.

The first meeting between the ASEAN ministers and Japan's information minister was held in Cebu from 15 to 16 March. —Myanmar News Agency

River erosion sweeps away over 100 acres of farmland in Bago Region



Farmland destroyed by erosion in Pandaung Township. PHOTO: MYITMAKHA NEWS AGENCY

THE erosion of the Buyo River bank, which runs through the villages of Kwyal Ye, Sharphyu Kwin and Kyan Su in Padaung Township, Bago Region, has claimed over 100 acres of farmland, bringing local dwellings closer to the river's edge, according to villagers.

The Buyo River used to be located roughly 500 feet away from the villages, but an increase

in water flow has caused the loss of over 100 acres of land used for the cultivation of food crops between 2014 and 2015.

"We had to relocate our dwelling because of the eroding river bank. The gradual relocation of houses has meant that only the village road remains in front of our homes. Last rainy season was particularly bad. The river bank eroded away so fast. People from

the village had to rally together and help dismantle the dwellings in danger of falling into the river. This was all carried out without assistance from any kind of organisation," said U Kyi Than, a resident of Kyan Su Village.

Heavy rains last August saw the emergency relocation of three dwellings located close to the eroding river bank. Local village administrators notified the town-

ship-level administration in January this year of the concerns of residents who still live in dwellings by edge of the river. The township level administration responded to the concerns by conducting field trip inspections to those dwellings.

"Erosion of the river bank is going to continue as soon as the first rains arrive. We have to live with that anxiety every day. I want to say to those with responsibility, please divert the water flow or build some kind of dam to alleviate the force of the water, which is causing the erosion," said U Thein Aung of Sharphyu Village. Daw Zin Moe Htaik, a representative for Panaung Township in the Bago Region Hluttaw, has said that she will raise the issue of management of the Buyo River in the parliament, as well as propose it to relevant land committees, in a bid to initiate a dam project. The threatened villages comprise over 600 households, with those residing in dwellings beside the Buyo River living in a state of concern for the future of their property. Residents have stated that the land in the villages will slowly be lost if nothing is done to mitigate the effects of the river bank erosion. —Myitmakha News Agency

Young woman found dead in Mandalay hotel room

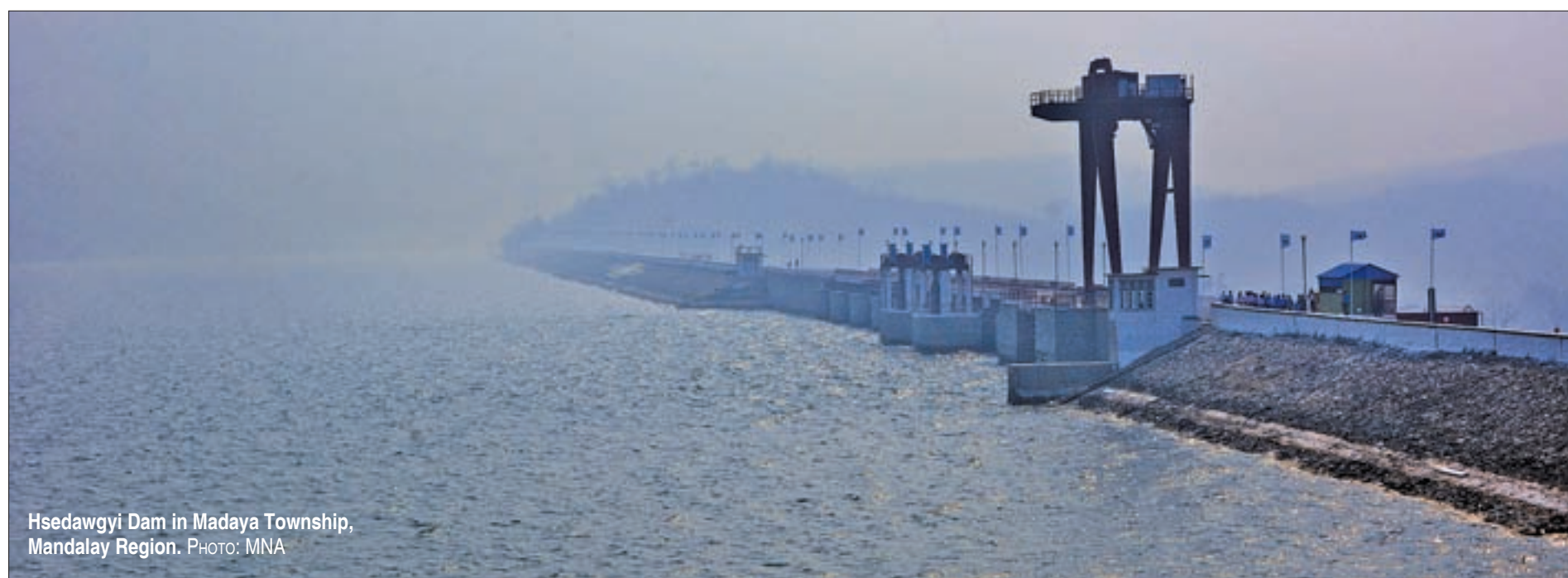
A WOMAN was found dead in her bed with no external signs of injury at the Shwe Htee Hotel in Mandalay yesterday, according to the local police station.

The woman was identified as 21-year-old Ma Yu Yu Htet from Yedashe Ward of Bahan Township, Yangon, according to Police Lieutenant Aung Myo, adding that her cause of death will be established after an autopsy.

According to the witnesses, hotel staff found the young woman dead in her bed after her friend, another woman, asked for their help after she failed to receive a reply while trying to wake up Ma Yu Yu Htet.

"The victim, accompanied by a woman and a man, arrived at the hotel at about 1am, and the man went out at about 6am. Her friend informed hotel staff of the situation at about 9am," police said.

Sources said some pills were found in her purse. —Aung Thant Khaing



Hsedawgyi Dam in Madaya Township, Mandalay Region. PHOTO: MNA

President U Thein Sein inspects Hsedawgyi Dam

PRESIDENT U Thein Sein conducted an inspection tour of the Hsedawgyi Dam in Madaya Township, Mandalay Region, yesterday.

After hearing reports about the dam and its benefits to the region and the progress of the Ahtet Hsedawgyi Dam project, the president gave instructions on measures to be taken to supply water in the midst of El Niño and to continue implementation of the dam project.

The Ahtat Hsedawgyi Dam project kicked off in 2006 after receiving a green light from the Special Project Implementation Committee.

The new dam, located 33 miles upstream from the existing Hsedawgyi Dam that can only store 30 per cent of its annual inflow, is aimed at storing surplus

water inflow, generating more electricity and preventing flooding in the region. However, the project was suspended because of financial constraints in 2009.

Upon completion, the Ahtet Hsedawgyi Dam will ensure disaster risk reduction, a power generation capacity of 64 megawatts and water supply for Mandalay Region, thereby contributing toward regional greening and development.

Next, the president inspected the spillway and a hydropower plant of the Hsedawgyi Dam.

The Hsedawgyi Dam, built in 1987, has a water storage capacity of 334,280 acre feet, which provides for 93,000 acres of farmland and generates 12.5 megawatts of electricity.—*Myanmar News Agency*



President U Thein Sein waves hands to residents on his tour of Madaya, Mandalay Region. Photo: MNA

SG Min Aung Hlaing meets German ambassador to Myanmar



Senior General Min Aung Hlaing welcomes German ambassador to Myanmar Mr Christian Ludwing Weber Lortsch. PHOTO: MYAWADY

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing received German ambassador to Myanmar Mr Christian Ludwing Weber Lortsch in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

They held discussions on bilateral relations between the two countries and their armed forces and exchanged views on inter-

national issues. Also present at the meeting were Commander-in-Chief (Air Force) General Khin Aung Myint, who is also the Acting Chief of the General Staff (Army, Navy and Air), Lt-Gen Mya Tun Oo of the Office of the Commander-in-Chief (Army) and the first secretary of the German Embassy in Myanmar.—*Myawady*

Only insured drivers can use Oway Ride Application

Soe Soe Yu

VEHICLE insurance will be required to use the Oway Ride Application, according to U Nay Aung, CEO of Oway Ride.

“Drivers working for Oway must hold a valid driver’s licence. Besides, the cars also need to be insured. Our drivers keep the cars to give the excellent service for customers,” he added.

Having car insurance can cover damage caused by accidents, fire and theft. Cars with black vehicle registration plates must pay annual insurance premiums equal to one per cent of the car’s value. Cars with business licences and red or blue plates must

pay for insurance premiums equal to 1.4 per cent of the car’s value annually, said Ma Phyu Thant Sin, an agent for Myanmar Insurance.

If a vehicle is totally damaged, the insurance will cover 100 per cent of the car value. If a vehicle is partially damaged, the insurance will pay for injuries, deaths and damages incurred by the other party, plus the cost of repairs.

“Cars with black licence plates cannot buy insurance premiums like the cars with red licence plates. If a person uses his car with black a licence for work, he must pay for 1.5 per cent of the car’s value. We are not authorised to say black licensed cars can be used as taxis or not. This is decid-

ed by the Road Transport Administration Department,” Ma Phyu Thant Sin added.

Myanmar insurance will pay compensation for injuries caused by accidents. The beneficiary of the person killed in an accident can get K1 million. Up to K50 million will be given as compensation for a car accident in which the accident damaged a car belonging to another person.

“My car has black plate, and I want to run my car with the Oway Ride Application. But I need to purchase the insurance premium,” said driver Ko Zaya.

The Oway Ride Application includes three types: Standard, Prime and Limo.

Yangon underground water supply drops drastically

THE underground water supply system in Yangon will be discontinued in the coming years as the water supply has been decreasing substantially. An overground piped water project is slated for implementation, according to Water and Sanitation Department under the Yangon City Development Committee.

With the decline of rainfall in Yangon, the volume of rainwater sinking below ground is also dropping, whereas water usage continues to rise. As a result, the underground water supply will decrease remarkably in the coming 30 years, according to the director of the Water and Sanitation Department.

The department has been forced to shut down many of the city’s former water sources over the years. Of a total of 760 tube-wells serving the city, 100 that were drilled in the 1970s and 1980s have been shut down. The number of new tube-wells is also shrinking, the director added.—200

Traditional farming attracts international visitors



Tourists are observing traditional farming methods. PHOTO: KYAW KYAW (MAHLAING)

ALTHOUGH traditional farming techniques are gradually fading in some rural areas as farmers replace them with modern, mechanical techniques, farmers across the Bagan heritage zone are preserving agricultural traditions, much to the pleasure of international tourists.

"We prefer the natural land-

scapes of Bagan and its traditional farming, string puppet toys and traditional handicrafts," said an American visitor who also plans to visit Taunggyi and Inle Lake in Shan State to photograph the traditional lifestyles of Myanmar's various ethnic communities.

One farmer in the Bagan area, situated in the Nyaung U

District of Mandalay Region, said groups of tourists often visit local farms to observe and photograph traditional farming methods.

According to the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism, tourist arrivals in Mandalay are expected to hit 5 millions this year.—Kyaw Kyaw (Mahlaing)

Police disarm explosive device in Haka

LOCAL police have arrested a man who allegedly attempted to plant a gunpowder explosive on Gant Gaw road, Pyi Daw Tha ward, Haka town on Monday.

According to a police investigation, U Hruai Tluang quarreled with his wife who went to

one U Hneih No's house. The suspect became irate and threatened to explode U Hneih No's house.

Police from Haka station arrived to the scene and arrested U Hruai Tluang, 51, who managed to escape from the scene. They

found the offender together with a gas lighter and three gunpowder sticks.

When interrogated the suspect admitted that he bought the gunpowder sticks from U Kyaw Lwin's house, located on Bogyoke road in Pyi Daw Tha ward, Haka town.

Upon searching the house of U Kyaw Lwin police discovered gunpowder sticks and ammunition.

Police also searched a warehouse owned by one U Kyaw Lwin and seized more gunpowder sticks. Police have filed charges against U Kyaw Lwin and U Hruai Tluang.—Township IPRD



Man charged with robbery

POLICE have arrested a young man trying to sell mobile phones and laptops which he stole from around Hlaingthaya township, Yangon Region.

When interrogated, Do lay alias Aung Myo Win, 20, admitted to having snatched a gold chain from a man who was walking on Insein Road, in November of last year.

He kept the item in Paing Oo alias Thet Paing Oo's house.

Further investigation led to the other theft cases of mobile phones and laptops he committed in different places over the past two months. Police also arrested Thet Paing Oo in his house. They have been charged by the local police.—Ko Ye



Paing Oo alias Thet Paing Oo's and Do lay alias Aung Myo Win. PHOTO: KO YE

Crime NEWS

Fire destroys 182 houses in Magway



Fire destroyed 182 houses in Nyaung Pin Tha village. PHOTO: NYI NYI MAUNG (MAGWAY)

A fire destroyed 182 houses in Nyaung Pin Tha village, Magway town on 16 March. The accident happened around 1pm when Daw Win Mar left the cowshed, not putting out the fire. The fire was

brought under control by the firemen with the help of neighbors.

Action is being taken against the offender, who will be charged under the law.—Nyi Nyi Maung (Magway)

Teenager imprisoned in Nay Pyi Taw rape-murder case



The four murderers are pictured with the weapons used in murder at Zabuthiri Myoma Police Station in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

THE juvenile court in Zabuthiri Township, Nay Pyi Taw, has convicted a teenager on two felony charges of murder and rape, which he had committed with his three adult friends.

Myo Zaw Win, who was 15 at the time of the crime, was sentenced to seven years in prison yesterday, while the Dakhina District court gave the death penalty to his companions Aung Tin Myo, Kyaw

Maung and Zaw Myo Thu on 15 March.

Although the imprisonment of juveniles is rare in Myanmar, minors convicted of felony assault can be jailed.

The three men and their teenage accomplice were charged with murdering a man and raping his wife behind Junction Centre in Dakhinathiri Township on 29 September 2015.—Myanmar News Agency

LOCAL Business

Palm wood furniture on the rise

CARPENTERS from upcountry villages covered with palm forests are hoping to attract the attention of foreigners with locally made palm wood furniture.

Palm tree owners sell a single tree for between K15,000 and K20,000 because it is hard to find the labourers to climb palm trees to retrieve other palm products. The trees are then used to build homes, household goods and furniture. Palm wood artisans also sell bead laces, soap containers, spoons, forks, chopsticks, plates, bowls, settee chairs, tables, tissue box covers and arm chairs, said Ko Pauk, a resident of Lethtote Village, Nyaung Oo Township.

A polished and painted arm chair, which can be made by two labourers in 7 or 8 days, sells for K12,000. However, local demand for such goods is low. Capital investments in raw materials are not costly, but the production process is time consuming, so artisans are trying to market their wares to foreign tourists, said carpenter U Aye Lwin.

Palm wood products have already been put on display in shops around Bagan and Nyaung Oo.

To raise their quality of life, local carpenters need the help of investors or government subsidies, U Aye Lwin added.—*Kyaw Htay (Naung Oo)*



Spoons, forks and soap containers made by palm wood. Photo: Kyaw Haty (Naung Oo)

Green gram growers suffer low prices

GREEN gram growers are being faced with difficulties because of the differences of price between the time of early harvest and the thumping harvest. During the time of early harvest, the green grams sell for K42,000 per basket whereas during the thumping harvest, the grams sell for K36,500 making a difference of K 5,500 per basket.

The fall in price can be attributed to depreciation of the US dollar and the falling gram price in Thailand. Untimely rainfall at the harvest time is attributed to low quality, said a pea merchant.

Some farmers experience

better prices, fetching up to K42,000 per basket. Therefore, farmers often store their crops while waiting for higher prices. They were unable to wait any longer this year and so sold out their yields as they have to pay back loans, said Ko Paing Soe Oo selling the beans in a pea depot in Michaunggaung village.

Farmers suffer from low yield, low market price and a high cost of cultivation, he added. There are 130,800 acre of land for winter crops including 130,430 acres of green gram and 370 acres of Pe-lun variety in Thongwa Township.—*Ko Kyaw (Thonekhwa)*

France's AccorHotels says planning Thailand, Myanmar expansion

FRANCE's AccorHotels aims to open 17 more hotels in Thailand including eight in Bangkok plus another six in Myanmar through 2019, to take advantage of rising tourism in Southeast Asia, an executive said on Wednesday.

The Paris-based group, which runs 60 hotels in Thailand and three in Myanmar, expects Bangkok to be its biggest Asia-Pacific market by 2019, Patrick Basset, chief operating officer for Southeast and Northeast Asia, told reporters. Basset said Thai revenue growth would slow to around 10 per cent this year from 21 per cent in 2015, when tourists returned following a drop the year earlier when the country was engulfed in political unrest that culminated in a military coup.

Likewise, Thailand's hotel occupancy will rise as much as 4 percentage points this year compared with 9 percentage points last year, he said.

Tourism makes up about 10 per cent of Thailand's gross do-

mestic product and is one of few bright spots in an economy growing at a slower rate than regional peers. Visitors reached a record 29.9 million last year and could hit 32 million this year, the government has said.

AccorHotels operates upscale, mid-range and budget hotels under the Pullman, Novotel and ibis brands, with 13,944 rooms in Thailand and plans for another 4,044 rooms by 2019, Basset said.

The expansion comes after US peer Marriott International Inc and Thai partner TCC Group Co Ltd last month said they would open seven hotels in Thailand by 2020. AccorHotels also aims to renovate rooms with budget of 750,000 baht (\$21,404.11) per room over the next five years, Basset said.

On Myanmar, Basset said growth is likely to be strong due to a low base, even as hotel numbers tripled over the past three years and revenue per available room fell 20 per cent last year.—*Reuters*

Taiwan corn chicken foodstuff sees handsome profits

FARMERS of 'Taiwan corn' in Monywa Township, Sagaing Region, have earned higher profits from this year's harvest than last year's.

"We expect to fetch good prices for our crops," said farmer U Thet Moe Tun.

Corn sold for K6,800 per basket last year, but the price has

increased to K8,000 per basket this year.

The farmers also saw large harvests this year as flooding during the rainy season left silt in their soil, making their farmland fertile.

"We did not spend too much on fertiliser this year thanks to the floods," the farmer added.—*Min Min*



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Early election looms as Australian PM seeks to reform hostile Senate

SYDNEY — Australia's parliament began an acrimonious final sitting day before a May budget yesterday, with Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull considering dissolving both houses of parliament and calling an early election to end a hostile Senate.

Independent and minor party senators elected at the last election in 2013 have stalled key aspects of the government's agenda, including changes that would make higher education and health care more expensive and limit access to welfare.

Senate voting reforms proposed by Turnbull, and being debated yesterday, would make it harder for smaller parties to enter parliament through vote sharing deals, and are supported by the opposition Greens Party, which controls enough of the Senate to insure passage of the reforms.

Australian Motoring Enthusi-



Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull. PHOTO: REUTERS

asts Party Senator Ricky Muir was elected in 2013 with less than one per cent of the popular vote as a

result of complex vote sharing deals between small parties agreed to privately ahead of the vote.

Immigration Minister Peter Dutton predicted passage of the voting changes, which are supported by business groups angered by three years of partisan gridlock amid an economic slowdown driven by a plunge in commodities prices.

"We can't go to the ballot box, cast a vote and not know where that vote is going to end up," Dutton said in an interview with Sydney's 2GB Radio.

Turnbull has consistently led opinion polls since he came to power last year and his ruling Liberal-National coalition is leading the opposition Labour party comfortably in recent polls. But there are signs Turnbull's honeymoon period as prime minister may be ending, prompting election speculation.

An election is due by January 2017, but has been expected to be called for the second half of 2016.

Turnbull is unlikely to opt for a rare double dissolution election, which sees both houses of parliament face voters, if the voting reforms fail to pass as it could return a similarly hostile group of smaller parties as he currently faces.

Under Australia's constitution, Turnbull faces a 11 May deadline to call a double dissolution election and the earliest it could be held is June.

In order to call such a poll he needs a piece of legislation twice defeated by the Senate as the trigger. He has a labour bill which has been defeated once, but would need to recall parliament early to 3 May to allow time to reintroduce the labour bill and have it voted on by the Senate before the 11 May deadline.

But to recall parliament early Turnbull must bring forward the 10 May budget as an excuse. —Reuters

Cambodia welcomes China releasing water to drought-hit Mekong River countries

PHNOM PENH — Cambodia on Wednesday welcomed the decision of the Chinese government to discharge water from Jinghong Hydro-power Station in southwest China's Yunnan Province to downstream Mekong River for emergency use from 15 March to 10 April.

"The discharge of water into Mekong River proves again the

good cooperation on water resource management between the Mekong countries and China, which is an important part of the Mekong-Lancang River cooperation mechanism," the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation said in a statement.

The welcome came after Chinese Foreign Ministry's spokesper-

son Lu Kang announced in a regular news briefing on Tuesday that China will discharge water from a dam to the lower reaches of the Mekong River to alleviate drought in Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia and Viet Nam from 15 March till 10 April.

Mekong River originates in China and runs through Myanmar,

Laos, Thailand, Cambodia and Viet Nam. It is known as Lancang in the Chinese stretch.

China and the five countries along the Mekong are friendly neighbours and assistance like this is natural, Lu said. Since late 2015, countries along the Lancang-Mekong River have suffered from drought to varying extents due to

the impact of the El Niño phenomenon, the spokesperson said, adding the situation has worsened recently and threatens people's livelihoods. "In order to accommodate the concerns of countries at the lower reach of the Mekong River, the Chinese government decides to overcome its own difficulties to offer emergency water flows," Lu said.—Xinhua

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Video apparently of Japanese hostage surfaces with message to family

TOKYO — A video surfaced yesterday appearing to show a missing Japanese journalist, reportedly held by an al Qaeda affiliate in Syria, reading a message to his family and country.

"Hello, I am Jumpei Yasuda. Today is my birthday, 16 March," the bearded man said on the video, posted on Facebook.

The man, sitting at a table in front of a white wall, said he missed his family but could not be with them. The man, who was dressed in a dark sweater with a scarf, mostly seemed calm as he spoke in English in the one-minute video but occasionally paused with emotion.

Japanese media said Yasuda was captured by Nusra Front after entering Syria from Turkey in June. Public broadcaster NHK said it had spoken by phone with the man who posted the video, who said he had received it from someone seeking Yasuda's release.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga said the man in the video appeared to be Yasuda.

"The safety of Japanese citizens is one of our most important duties and we are gathering information and making all possible efforts to respond," Suga told a news conference, declining to

give details. He added that the government was not aware that any ransom request had been made.

The Islamic State militant group beheaded two Japanese nationals — a self-styled security consultant and a veteran war reporter — early last year. The gruesome executions captured

the attention of Japan but the government said at the time it would not negotiate with the militants for their release.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe came under fire for his handling of hostage cases, something he would like to avoid with an election looming this summer. Critics say his more robust security

stance risks getting Japan involved in more international conflicts.

Reuters could not verify the video or reach Yasuda's family, but Kyodo news agency quoted his mother as tearfully saying: "I just hope he comes home safely."

The man in the video did not give any information about who was holding him or any demands they had. He said "they" allowed him to say what he wanted.

After saying he wished he could hug his wife, father, mother and brother, he said: "I have to say to something to my country: When you're sitting there, wherever you are, in a dark room, suffering with the pain, there's still no one. No one answering. No one responding. You're invisible."

In December, media freedom organisation Reporters Without Borders retracted and apologised for a report it had issued that said Yasuda had been threatened with execution in Syria. The government said at the time it was seeking information.

Yasuda, a freelance journalist since 2003, was held in Baghdad in 2004 and drew criticism for drawing the Japanese government into negotiations for his release.—Reuters



Japanese journalist Jumpei Yasuda, who is seen in this photo sent by e-mail to a Kyodo News photographer on 23 June 2015 before Yasuda's departure to Syria, with the message reading, "I will smuggle myself into Syria from now", is seen in this undated photo released by Kyodo on 24 December 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

China says opposes any unilateral sanctions against North Korea



North Korean leader Kim Jong Un talks with officials at the ballistic rocket launch drill of the Strategic Force of the Korean People's Army (KPA) at an unknown location, in this undated photo released by North Korea's Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) in Pyongyang on 11 March. PHOTO: REUTERS

BEIJING — China opposes any unilateral sanctions on North Korea, the Foreign Ministry said, after the United States imposed sweeping new curbs on the isolated country in retaliation for its nuclear and rocket tests.

Ministry spokesman Lu Kang made the remarks at a regular

briefing yesterday.

The US measures, which vastly expanded the US blockade over Pyongyang, prohibit exportation of goods from the US to North Korea. US officials had previously believed a blanket trade ban would be ineffective without a stronger commitment from China, North

Korea's largest trading partner. North Korea conducted a nuclear test on 6 January, and a 7 February rocket launch that the United States and its allies said employed banned ballistic missile technology. China signed on to new UN sanctions against North Korea earlier this month. —Reuters

Australian submarines should be built entirely at home — Germany's TKMS

SYDNEY — Australia's new A\$50 billion (27 billion pounds) submarine fleet should be built entirely within Australia, ThyssenKrupp AG's shipbuilding unit said yesterday, making the German firm the first bidder to publicly endorse domestic construction as the best option.

Germany is up against Japan and France for one of the world's most lucrative defence contracts. Each was required under the terms to provide three proposals for construction — entirely overseas, entirely in Australia and a hybrid of the two.

A decision on the politically sensitive contract is expected within months, ahead of an Australian national election in which the deal and the jobs it will create are expected to be a key issue for the conservative government.

"An all-Australian build is the best option for Australia as it offers the most efficient and lowest-cost approach," TKMS Chairman Hans Atzpodien said in an address in Canberra.

"It has become quite clear to us that Australia has the local engineering and technical skills as well as capacity to help build the new submarine fleet."

Competition for the deal has been narrowing to a race between Japan and France, sources have told Reuters, with Tokyo play-

ing up its strategic support from Washington and Paris emphasising how its proposal would help Australia's slowing economy.

This week, France sent executives from French corporate giants Airbus, BNP Paribas, Thales and dozens more to Canberra to talk up the economic benefits of its bid.

TKMS is proposing to scale up its 2,000-tonne Type 214 class submarine, while Japan is offering a variant of its 4,000-tonne Soryu boats made by Mitsubishi Heavy Industries and Kawasaki Heavy Industries.

France's state-controlled naval contractor DCNS has proposed a diesel-electric version of

its 5,000-tonne Barracuda nuclear-powered submarine.

Tokyo was initially seen as the frontrunner, due to close ties between Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and former Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott, who was ousted in a party coup by Malcolm Turnbull last September, and perceived support from Washington to build closer ties between two key Asian allies.

Australia announced in a long-awaited White Paper released last month that it would increase defence spending by nearly A\$30 billion over the next 10 years in order to protect its strategic and trade interests in the Asia-Pacific region. —Reuters



ThyssenKrupp AG's new company logo adorns its headquarters in Essen, Germany. PHOTO: REUTERS

Indian PM named in Time magazine's most influential people on internet list

NEW DELHI — For the second year in a row, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has made it to Time magazine's "most influential people on internet list."

The US magazine has described Modi as an "internet star" who has over 18 million followers on Twitter and some 32 million Facebook likes. It says the Indian prime minister often uses social media to "conduct diplomacy," and cited his sudden announcement of Pakistan visit on Twitter last year.

"... Unlike some of his contemporaries, he often uses social

media to break news and conduct diplomacy," the magazine said.

On Christmas Day, for example, Modi tweeted that he would visit the Pakistani city of Lahore to wish Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif a happy 66th birthday, the magazine added.

The list that also includes British author J.K. Rowling and US presidential hopeful Donald Trump, was prepared by the magazine based on the contenders' global impact on social media. —Xinhua

Cambodian PM reshuffles cabinet, but won't name names

PHNOM PENH — Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen announced a rare reshuffle of his cabinet yesterday, and said several ministers due to be fired had already resigned as he moved to freshen up his government.

The self-styled "strongman", whose three-decade grip on power is being tested by an opposition party growing in popularity, said parliament would vote on 4 April to approve a new lineup with changes at the top in eight ministries.

He did not say which portfolios would be affected, but had earlier warned that heads might roll and singled out the agriculture and transport ministers for working too slowly.

"This is for more efficient work," Hun Sen said at a university graduation ceremony in Phnom Penh.

"Here, no ministers are bad but some ministers are very slow so we have to make some changes."

Reshuffles have been rare under the rule of Hun Sen's Cambodian People's Party (CPP), with some ministers having held the same posts for over a decade. Some of Hun Sen's loyalists have served under him since the 1980s.

He said some cabinet members had submitted resignations before he had the chance to sack them and four provincial governors would also be removed.

CPP officially won a disputed election in 2013 but its house majority was greatly reduced, signalling widespread disenchantment with Hun Sen's iron-fisted rule, even with eco-



Cambodia's Prime Minister Hun Sen. PHOTO: REUTERS

nomical growth of more than seven per cent a year.

The premier has since promoted his sons and top allies within the party, government and military top brass in what experts see as a political dynasty taking shape.

The next election, scheduled for 2018, is expected to be a close contest between CPP and the Cambodian National Rescue Party and relations between them have soured lately, suggesting the run up to the poll may not be smooth. Kung Phoak, president of the Cambodian Institute for Strategic Studies (CISS), said there was some skepticism about Hun Sen's real motives, but he agreed a shakeup was needed.

"What is most needed now is more proactive, effective and strong ministries that have fresh ideas, energy and determination to bring the best out of those policies and programmes," he said. —Reuters

— OPINION —

Will post-renaissance Myanmar stay progressive?

Kyaw Thura

WE have come a long way over the past five decades to celebrate the arrival of a democratically elected civilian president. The country's top legislative body has named U Htin Kyaw as president 54 years after U Mahn Win Maung held office from 1957 to 1962. The country has, in a way, been reborn.

With the rise of the new leader, the incom-

ing government is scheduled to take office on 1 April. Filled with anticipation for an end to decades of stagnation, people from all social strata are now enthusiastic about a monumental change in the country's historic political paradigm.

In this crucial juncture, the real change must be focused on the revival of inspirational politics that provides a fresh perspective on the system of checks and balances in the executive, legislative and judicial branches. In addition, one of the core challenges awaiting the new government is to become more responsible, accountable, effective and transparent in its public policy so as to win the confidence from the military representatives, and the ruling-turned-opposition party as well.

One thing we all know for sure is that all the other political parties, interest groups and people around the world will keep a close watch on how the new leader and his cabinet will work with its new generation of decision makers in

adopting more inclusive strategies to inspire a new generation of engaged citizens.

Thus, the political paradigm shift will confront the new government with the daunting task of tackling mounting inequality and promoting opportunity while establishing a more progressive and inclusive politics. The approach the new government takes to deal with these challenges will decide its fate after all.

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 khin-maungaye@hotmail@gmail.com with your name and title.

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

If We Had Really Meant Business

Khin Maung Myint

CURRENTLY, we are starting to feel the effects of the severest El Nino in history. The extreme temperature rises, droughts and shortage of water are rampant around the world. These conditions would prevail and become even more severe in the days to come. Then, in the post El Nino period, the La Nina weather condition would follow and extreme cold weathers are to be expected. All these are related to the climate change caused by excessive emission of greenhouse gases, especially the Carbon Dioxide (CO2). The trees are the best tools to eradicate the CO2 in the atmosphere. Thus more trees should be grown.

Soon, the month of July would be upon us. It is recognized as the best time for tree planting. For many decades, we had been planting trees every July, which had been designated as the "Tree Planting Month". However, there was no significant or visible improvement in the greening of our country that are worthy of notice or praise as in the case of Bhutan. If only we had really meant business, our country would be alongside Bhutan, which gained the praise at the COP21 conference in Paris for being a carbon negative country and a record holder in tree planting or reforestation.

As far as I know, their greening campaigns are conducted many years or decades later than ours'.

In the past, our tree planting ceremonies were celebrated with much pomp and fanfare. The ceremonies were extravagant with much attention given to publicity. The news of those ceremonies would occupy the front pages of the state-owned newspapers with very impressive photos and the state-run TV stations' programming slots would be crammed with those news. However, I doubt anyone in the higher echelons would take any interest later, and thus in most cases the trees planted gradually withered away. If only those trees should have flourished, our country would be abreast, if not ahead of Bhutan in the greening process.

It's not only the state departments concerned that are not taking much interest to get the reforestation campaigns successful, but also some eco-activists and local NGOs too, are no better. Many "green societies" sprung up in recent years, but it is regretful that some such organizations mixed environmental activities with politics.

They used the tree planting activities to achieve political objectives. Tree planting activities should be for the improvement of the environments only and shouldn't be used as political platforms.

Here, I would like to once again, highlight the importance of the trees and the need for reforestation, which I had been persistently advocating with my articles. Today, with the global warming, due to the greenhouse effects caused mainly by carbon emissions leading to climate change that is affecting the world, the roles of the trees and forests are becoming more vital in fighting it.

The trees are useful in sequestering the CO2 gases and release the Oxygen back into the atmosphere, a process that helps to harness the global warming and, hence, the climate change. I had, in one of my articles, suggested that we should take the example of Bhutan to grow more trees and conserve the forests. Again I would like to urge our people to take the tree growing and reforestation seriously, because according to the experts our country is highly at risk to the effects of the climate change if it should reach life-threatening levels.

The general public, especially the greedy wealthy businessmen and destitute people in the countryside should be made aware of the consequences of the deforestation. The wealthy businessmen are causing the deforestation by excessive extractions of timbers and the destitute people in the countryside are destroying the forests by illegally and indiscriminately

felling trees for firewood, for making charcoal and timber for their own use or for their livelihoods. Also, the authorities concerned, too, should abandon their old habits and practices of shady dealings and turning blind eyes to such indiscriminate activities.

They should keep in mind that these activities are tantamount to crimes against humanity. I had always expressed concerns about the deforestation, as they are the root causes of flooding, soil erosions, mudslides, silting of rivers and streams, and excessive carbon emissions, which are the main contributors of the global warming and the climate change that would bring about the apocalypse.

At the beginning of this year, we had experienced or witnessed the consequences of the climate change at their worst. Many countries in the Northern hemisphere had been struck with the severest weather conditions in decades or probably in a century. The winter storms that hit the United States of America could be the worst ever in her history, affecting many states across the country and breaking many records that are related to the weather. Many countries in our region too had suffered greatly from the unprecedented record-setting snow, sleet and icy winds, which caused many catastrophic incidents. This should be

viewed as a warning of more severe conditions to come, if the climate change couldn't be reined-in. If this present weather trend should continue to progress without any relent and if it would spiral out of control as some experts had predicted, our world would be headed for doom.

I don't think it would be necessary for me to go into detail that all these devastations are in one way or another related to the deforestation. Thus in conclusion, I would like to urge our public and the authorities concerned, to take the reforestation and conservations of the forests seriously.

Also the annual public tree planting activities in the month of July shouldn't be just for publicity stunts and photo shoots or for political or personal gains, as in the past. I don't mean any offense to any individual or organization, but these are real facts that most would agree with me.

Please allow me to repeat myself. If we had really meant business and if only those trees that we had planted year after year should have flourished, our country would be abreast, if not ahead of Bhutan in the greening process. We should take Bhutan as an example and do some serious tree planting and create a green future for the generations to come. Save Gaia, our Mother Earth !

Yawan Cultural Festival to kick off



Yawan Cultural Festival seen. PHOTO: KHIN MAUNG WIN (KYEMON)

THE Yawan Cultural Festival (Dabuaekhong-2016) is slated to be held on a grand scale from 19 April to 23 April.

It will be organised by the Yawan Literature and Culture Committee under permission of the local township administrative group and the administrative group of Putao District of the Kachin

government.

Visitors can enjoy Manaw dance, traditional cultural dances, sport events, small exhibitions of Yawan culture, lucky charms, accessories, lucky draws and household goods.

The Yawan cultural festival was once held in Putao in 2001. It will portray the culture and traditional customs of Yawan

living in a peaceful coexistence with other ethnic groups. It will be held in order that Yawan people in different places can meet at the festival, said Dr Karola-rein, the chairman of Yawan literature and cultural committee (Yangon) at the media conference which was held at the M3 Food Centre on Tuesday. —*Maung Maung Myint Swe*

YCDC promotes advanced payments for pandal builders

THE Yangon City Development Committee has increased advanced payments for the construction of pandals, or temporary water-throwing pavilions, for the Maha Thingyan Water Festival this year, according to its spokesperson.

“The YCDC has promoted not only advanced payments but has also set fines for builders who break rules and regulations issued

by the committee,” a member of the committee said.

“We will collect K20 million (US\$16,463) per large pandal and K10 million (\$8,231) per small pandal this year. Last year, the YCDC took K10 million for big ones and K6 million (\$4,939) for medium ones.”

The new fine amounts will be set at K100,000 (\$82) per square foot. The committee will return

advanced payments after excluding the sum of fines if a pandal organiser breaks the rules during the festival. People wishing to construct water-throwing pandals in front of their properties must submit a proposal to the Yangon Region government through township or district general administration departments, said U Kyaw Soe, the Yangon Region Minister for Forestry and Energy.—200

Myanmar companies to showcase gems in Taiwan

ABOUT 100 domestic companies will take part in an exhibition featuring Myanmar gems and jewellery in Taiwan this month.

Organised by the Taipei-based Myanmar Trade Office and the Taipei's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the expo is scheduled to be held on 19 and 20 March.

Altogether, 80 companies plan to showcase their products, including jade, pearls, gems and finished jewellery, as well as agriculture and aquaculture products.

Moreover, local tour operators will also participate in the event to introduce Myanmar tourism destinations to Taiwanese audiences.—200

Farmers in Pyin Oo Lwin get good price for strawberries

STRAWBERRY growers in Pyin Oo Lwin are earning healthy profits because of this season's short supply, locals say.

“Climate change is one of major cause of low yields of strawberries,” a local farmer said.

Strawberry growers in Pyin Oo Lwin distribute their products across Myanmar.

“We send the marketable strawberries to Yangon and other regions,” one of growers said. “We mostly sell lower-quality strawberries to confectionery businesses.”—200

MCDC improves downtown traffic control system

THE Mandalay City Development Committee will implement a real-time traffic light control system after completing the installation of 11 traffic lights along the city's 78th Street at the beginning of April.

The project is being implemented by the MCDC and Dream Light Technology Co, with an investment of K2.7 million (US\$2.2 million).

The major purpose of the project is to reduce traffic congestion in downtown Mandalay, to ensure the enforcement of traffic rules and to prevent road accidents.

The new traffic lights are fitted with CCTV cameras, and UPS system have been installed at busy junctions, including

the junctions at 26th, 32nd, 35th, 36th, 37th, 38th, 42nd, Science and Sagaing streets along 78th Street.

The new system will clear heavy traffic jams with MCDC planning to monitor it through a central control room located within the committee's headquarters. CCTV records will be kept up to 30 days in the control room.

The project, including the construction of the control room and establishing underground networks, is nearly complete.

Mandalay residents welcome the move to reduce traffic congestion in urban areas. Worsening traffic problems are a major concern and a popular target of complaints among city residents.—*Thuta/Union Daily*

Concrete posts and wire netting, popular for fencing in Yamethin Township

CONCRETE posts and wire nettings are in high demand for fencing in Yamethin Township as the price of timber and brick has risen.

The price of teak and ironwood is about K800,000 and it costs K37 per brick. Local residents in the villages use wire netting and concrete posts which can be bought easier for fencing. Wire netting is now in higher de-

mand, said the owner of a warehouse.

Previously, bamboo costs for fencing were between K100 and K150. The price has now gone up to between K400 and K500.

Items made in bamboo like bamboo walls, bamboo fences and bamboo baskets are becoming costly, further fueling demand.—*NS/ Union Daily*



THE GLOBAL
NEW LIGHT
OF MYANMAR

English Daily Newspaper

“ဝန်ထမ်းအမြန်အလိုရှိသည်”

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Italy rescues 2,400 boat migrants, finds three corpses

ROME — More than 2,400 migrants have been rescued from boats in the Strait of Sicily in the last two days and emergency services recovered three corpses, Italy's coast guard said on Wednesday.

Now into the second year of its worst migration crisis since World War II, Europe has been hit by more than 1.2 million arrivals, mainly from Africa and the Middle East, since the beginning of 2015.

Italy's coast guard has continued to pick up migrants in trouble in the stretch of water between its southern coast and North Africa, although most people seeking a better life in Europe have taken less dangerous routes to Greece.

Italian coast guard and navy ships and a Norwegian vessel operating for the European Union border agency Frontex rescued 1,467 people in 12 operations on Wednesday, the coast guard said in a statement.

The coast guard found two bodies while rescuing 750 people packed into six rubber boats, and navy officials on a separate rescue mission found a third corpse.

The coast guard gave no details on the nationalities of the victims or those rescued.

Wednesday's rescues came after 951 people were plucked from the Strait of Sicily on Tuesday, the coast guard said. —Reuters



A rescue worker carries a child as they disembark the German naval vessel Frankfurt Am Main in the Sicilian harbour of Pozzallo, Italy, on 16 March. PHOTO: REUTERS

EU leaders meet to offer migrant deal to Turkey

BRUSSELS — Leaders of the European Union meet in Brussels yesterday to agree on a deal to offer Turkey the following day that would secure Ankara's commitment to a scheme intended to halt migrant flows to the Greek islands.

A year into a crisis in which more than a million people have arrived in chaotic misery, many of them Syrian war refugees and most of whom come from Turkey via Greece to Germany via dangerous sea crossings and long treks, hopes have risen around the summit table that they may have found a way to at least slow the movement.

But leaders acknowledge there is no silver bullet and face many obstacles over the next two

days, from howls of outrage that they plan mass expulsions of vulnerable people to a country with a patchy and worsening human rights record, to a lingering feud between Ankara and small but vocal EU member Cyprus.

"Work is progressing but there is still a lot to do," European Council President Donald Tusk wrote to leaders inviting them to the summit he will chair. After discussing the economy, the 28 EU national leaders will discuss the migration issue over dinner, starting around 8 pm (1900 GMT). A breakfast is set for Friday with Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu, where Tusk hopes to finalise a deal which the Turkish premier first sprang on the EU, with backing from Ger-

man Chancellor Angela Merkel, at a special summit 10 days ago.

Under the deal, which was set out in fuller fashion by Tusk in a draft for EU leaders on Wednesday, Turkey will, in addition to a previous agreement to try and prevent the smuggling of migrants via rafts, take back all those, including Syrian refugees, who do make it to Greek islands off Turkey's coast.

The draft, which was seen by Reuters, says the plan is "to break the business model of the smugglers and to offer migrants an alternative to putting their lives at risk". It stresses the plan is "a temporary and extraordinary measure which is necessary to end the human suffering and restore public order". —Reuters



Refugee children play with a stuffed toy at a muddy makeshift camp at the Greek-Macedonian border, near the village of Idomeni, Greece on 15 March. PHOTO: REUTERS

NEWS IN BRIEF

Kurdish TAK militant group says it was behind Ankara bombing that killed 37

ISTANBUL — The Kurdistan Freedom Hawks (TAK), a militant group active in Turkey, claimed responsibility for a suicide bomb attack that killed 37 people in the capital Ankara, according to a statement on its website yesterday.

The group described the car bombing, which occurred on Sunday, as "vengeful action" for security operations in the mainly Kurdish southeast that have been underway since July, killing hundreds of civilians, security forces and militants. TAK previously claimed responsibility for a separate car bombing in Ankara last month that killed 29 people. TAK says it split from the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK). Experts who follow Kurdish militants say the groups retain ties. —Reuters

Leftist rebel leader nabbed, another killed in S Philippine clash

MANILA — A high-ranking leader of the leftist New People's Army (NPA) was nabbed and another was killed in a firefight with government troops in southern Philippine province of Davao del Sur, the military said yesterday.

The joint military and police operation took place Wednesday in Buri village, Matanao town, said Captain Rhyen Batchar, chief of public affairs office of the Army's 10 Infantry Division. The apprehended leader, identified as Joan Casamorin alias Alvin, is currently the vice-commander of Guerrilla 72 of the Far South Mindanao Regional Committee operating in the hinterlands of South Cotabato, Davao del Sur, North Cotabato and Sultan Kudarat. Casamorin is facing charges of robbery, kidnapping and serious illegal detention, four counts of murder and robbery with homicide. —Xinhua

Air India flight gets bomb threat before landing at Thai airport

BANGKOK — Air India on Wednesday received a bomb threat for one of its flights en route to Bangkok from New Delhi before the plane landed safely at Thailand's Suvarnabhumi Airport, the airport operator said yesterday.

The 231 passengers and 10 crew members aboard AI332 were evacuated after the plane parked in an isolated area of the Thai capital's main airport Wednesday, the operator said in a statement. Forty-two people sustained slight injuries during the evacuation, it added. Bomb disposal experts and security personnel checked the aircraft thoroughly for any explosives but found nothing, according to the statement. —Kyodo News

Vucic thanks British Royal Family for supporting outreach project

BELGRADE — Serbian Prime Minister Aleksandar Vucic expressed his gratitude to Britain's Prince Charles and his wife Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall, for supporting the Family Outreach Worker Service Project, jointly implemented by Serbia's Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, UNICEF and the Novak Djokovic Foundation.

"Grateful to @ClarenceHouse for supporting Family Outreach Worker Service Project. Together we build a better future," Vucic wrote on his Twitter account on Wednesday. As part of the royal couple's official visit to Serbia, the Duchess of Cornwall Camilla Parker Bowles today visited the Centre for Protection of Infants, Children and Youth in Belgrade, where she was introduced to Family Outreach Worker Service Project. —Tanjung

'Expo-Russia Serbia 2016' opens in Belgrade

BELGRADE — The third international business expo, titled "Expo-Russia Serbia 2016", and the Belgrade Business Forum opened at the Metropol Palace Hotel on Wednesday to showcase over 100 Russian companies.

The expo is aimed at presenting a large number of Russian companies from several fields of economy, notably small and medium-sized enterprises from various regions of Russia. The expo was opened by Russian Ambassador to Serbia Alexander Chepurin, Vice-President of the Serbian Chamber of Commerce Miroslav Miletic, President of the Zarubezh Expo Organising Committee David Vartanov and representatives of the Russian State Duma Committee on Industry. —Tanjung

Fearing Islamic State spillover, France to push Tunisia aid

PARIS — France's foreign minister travels to Tunisia yesterday aiming to firm up security and economic ties as Tunis struggles with rising Islamist militancy fuelled by Islamic State's growth in neighbouring Libya. With its new constitution, free elections and secular history, France's former North African colony has been a target for jihadists looking to upset the young democracy just five years after the overthrow of autocrat Zine El-Abidine Ben Ali.

"Tunisia is an important symbol because there are few countries in the region to be reasonably optimistic about," said a senior French diplomat before the two-day visit by Foreign Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault. "The attacks in Ben Guerdan show more than ever why we need to support the Tunisians."

About 50 militants stormed through Ben Guerdan on the Libyan border on 9 March, assaulting army and police posts. That attack reinforced fears that violence is spilling over

from Libya, where Islamic State has expanded amid widespread turmoil as two rival governments battle for control. The clash came after three major militant attacks in 2015, including on at the famous Bardo Museum in Tunis, which officials say were carried out by militants trained in Libya.

France, a major economic partner, has at times come under fire from Tunisians since 2011 for appearing indifferent throughout the transition process.

But it has increasingly supported the country, fearing the growing chaos could derail its political transition.

More than 3,000 Tunisians have left to fight for Islamic State and other jihadist groups in Syria and Iraq. Security officials say Tunisians are taking more and more command positions in Islamic State in Libya. "There is a general concern about the impact of the Libyan crisis on Tunisia. Attack after attack, we see the link with Libya, where we see Tunisians in Libya turning against Tu-



A Tunisian police officer stands guard during an operation to eliminate militants in a village some 50 km (31 miles) from the town of Ben Guerdane, Tunisia, near the Libyan border, on 10 March 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

nia. Access is too easy," said a second French official.

In terms of security, Paris is providing intelligence for Tunisia's special forces and implementing a 20 million-euro package aimed at equipping them.

Several dozen French military advisers are also on the ground training them and studying how to boost the number of

special forces. However, unlike Britain, Paris is not planning to send advisers to help Tunisians stop border infiltration.

Key to France's support is a 1 billion euro (\$1.1 billion) aid package over 5 years to help Tunisia develop poor regions, stimulate job creation — especially for the youth — and modernise Tunisia's administration, a major

hurdle to the disbursement of international aid.

"There is a socio-economic breeding ground on which radicalisation is prospering," said the diplomat. "There is a direct link between massive youth unemployment, neglected regions and the fact that Tunisia provides one of the largest contingents of foreign fighters for jihadists." —Reuters

Germany's top Nazi hunter to keep up chase for another decade

BERLIN — Undeterred by dwindling numbers of living suspects, Germany's top Nazi hunter is determined to keep tracking down criminals involved in Hitler's murder machine for another decade.

As a handful of new Auschwitz-related trials get underway, Jens Rommel says his work is getting more difficult every year and yields only modest results. But it still matters.

"We help to make sure these crimes don't disappear into history and that they have a relevance today ... There is still a lot of work to do," said Rommel, no relation to Hitler's Field Marshal Erwin Rommel.

Ageing suspects, most of whom deny guilt, are growing frail, making the race to prosecute them all the more pressing. —Reuters

Singapore nabs non-Muslim Chinese for attempt to fight in Mideast

SINGAPORE — Singapore has arrested a non-Muslim ethnic Chinese for an alleged attempt to join armed conflict in the Middle East, the Home Affairs Ministry said Wednesday.

Wang Yuandongyi, 23, who is originally from mainland China but became a Singapore citizen in 2014, left Singapore in January this year for Syria in order to join a Kurdish militia group that is fighting against the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria.

But Wang, whom a ministry spokesperson said is not Muslim, was arrested in another country at Singapore's request after a tip-off and brought back to Singapore where he has been under a restriction order since March.

"He is the first ethnic Chinese placed under a Restriction Order for intending to undertake violence in overseas armed conflicts," the spokesperson told Kyodo News by e-mail after the announcement about the arrest was posted earlier Wednesday on the ministry's website.

Though arrested under Singapore's Internal Security Act, which provides for

detention without trial, Wang has instead been placed under a "restriction order," a less severe measure meaning his travel will be curbed and his whereabouts monitored. Wang first learned about the Kurds through newsfeeds in November last year and subsequently looked up information online about Islamic State's attacks against the Kurds in Syria. He began to empathize with the plight of the Kurds and to detest Islamic State, the ministry's statement said. At the same time, it added, Wang wanted to escape from personal setbacks such as financial liabilities arising from a failed business venture.

In December 2015, he allegedly initiated online contact with a Kurdish militia to express his interest in joining the group's fight against Islamic State.

The ministry also announced in the same statement that three Singaporean men have been arrested for activities in Yemen recently, two for voluntarily taking up arms in the country's sectarian conflict and another for his armed sentry role while pursuing religious studies there. —Kyodo News

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Brazilians protest after Lula named chief of staff, gains immunity

BRASILIA/SAO PAULO — Protests erupted in several Brazilian cities on Wednesday after President Dilma Rousseff named her predecessor Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva chief of staff and a taped conversation fed opposition claims the move was meant to shield Lula from prosecution.

In the capital Brasilia, riot police fired pepper spray at more than 5,000 demonstrators who filled the streets outside the presidential palace and Congress building. They waved banners calling for the leftist leader's resignation and Lula's arrest.

Thousands more demonstrators packed the main Avenue Paulista in Sao Paulo, Brazil's financial hub, which was the centre of national protests on Sunday that drew more than 1 million people onto the streets in a call for Rousseff's departure.

With Brazil's economy mired in its worst recession in a generation, popular anger at Rousseff is mounting as an investigation into bribes and politi-

cal kickbacks at state oil company Petrobras taints her inner circle.

"I am here for the future of my children, grandchildren and great grandchildren," said Vera Carneiro, 75, draped in a yellow-and-green Brazilian flag outside the presidency. "Dilma has to go. She and Lula both. Enough is enough."

Rousseff's appointment of Lula, who was charged last week with money laundering and fraud as part of the probe, was slammed by opposition parties as a desperate attempt to rally support in Congress against impeachment proceedings due to start on Thursday.

Lula, a 70-year-old former union leader whose 2003-2010 government helped lift some 40 million Brazilians out of poverty, remains one of Brazil's most influential politicians.

However, the corruption investigation has weakened his sway in Congress and there are growing signs that Rousseff's main coalition partner is prepar-

ing to abandon the government.

"Brazil cannot continue with them anymore," said Rubens Bueno, one of dozens of opposition lawmakers who interrupted a session with chants for Rousseff to resign. "They are using their positions to stay in power at all cost."

The hurried publication of Lula's appointment as Rousseff's chief of staff in a special edition of the government's Official Gazette on Wednesday gave him immunity from all but the Supreme Court, delaying any attempts to prosecute him.

The federal judge overseeing the graft probe said in a court filing released on Wednesday that taped telephone conversations showed Lula and Rousseff considered trying to influence prosecutors and courts in favour of the former president.

He admitted, however, there was no evidence they actually carried this out. One recording, made public by the court, showed Rousseff offering to send



An anti-government demonstrator holds an inflatable doll known as 'Pixuleco' of Brazil's former president Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, during a protest at the appointment of Lula da Silva as a minister in front of the Planalto Palace in Brasilia, Brazil, on 16 March 2016.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Lula a copy of his appointment "in case it was necessary" — a possible reference to it providing him with immunity.

Facing a government backlash against his release of the recordings, Judge Sergio Moro — whose uncompromising tactics have been repeatedly criticised

by authorities — said they allowed the public to scrutinize Brazil's leaders.

"Democracy in a free society requires that the governed know what their leaders do, even when they try to act in the protected shadows," he wrote.

Lula's lawyer, Cristiano Zanin Martins, said

the decision to release the wiretaps by the court was arbitrary and intended to stir up demonstrations.

The presidential palace said it would take action against the judge and that Lula's swearing in would go ahead as planned on Thursday morning. —Reuters

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Obama's trip aims to make Cuba opening 'irreversible'

WASHINGTON — President Barack Obama plans to lay out his vision for US-Cuba relations in a major speech during next week's historic visit to Havana aimed at making his opening to America's former Cold War foe "irreversible," the White House said on Wednesday.

Previewing Obama's three-day trip, US deputy national security adviser Ben Rhodes expressed hope that Tuesday's scheduled "speech to the Cuban

people" would be broadcast throughout the island and said Cuba's Communist government had not raised any objections to doing so.

But Rhodes could not confirm whether the event, which will take place at Havana's legendary Gran Teatro, would actually be carried by Cuba's state-run media, saying, "We'll see how that transpires."

Obama, who will be the first US president to visit Cuba in 88 years, ar-

rives on Sunday and holds talks on Monday with Cuban President Raul Castro, followed by what Rhodes described as a joint "press event" and a state dinner.

Obama's meeting with Cuban dissidents on Tuesday will include prominent activists of his own choosing, Rhodes said. Despite Cuban leaders' view of such meetings as interference in the island's internal affairs, Rhodes said there was no reason to believe the government

would block any invitees from participating.

"If there are any impediments to that meeting we would be very clear about this," Rhodes said. He declined to name any of those who would attend.

Obama will arrive just days after unveiling sweeping new measures to make it far easier for Americans to visit Cuba and for the island's government to conduct international trade.

Obama's critics have

accused him of giving up too much in return for too little from Cuban leaders and of now taking a premature "victory lap."

The Obama administration insists that engagement will benefit the Cuban people and open up the island to US business — though Cuban leaders have been slow to make economic reforms. At the same time, the decades-old US trade embargo against Cuba remains, with little chance Congress will lift it

anytime soon.

Rhodes said Obama's speech "will be a very important moment in the president's trip, an opportunity for him to describe the course that we're on, to review the complicated history between our two countries ... but also to look forward to the future."

"We very much want to make the process of normalization irreversible," he told reporters on a conference call. — Reuters

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United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Special Envoy Angelina Jolie visits a shelter for refugees and migrants at the port of Piraeus, near Athens, Greece, on 16 March. PHOTO: REUTERS

Jolie visits Greece to highlight Mideast refugee plight

PIRAEUS — A day after visiting refugees in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley, UN special envoy Angelina Jolie travelled to Greece on Wednesday to highlight the plight of war-fleeing families stuck in the country.

Jolie visited the temporary offices of UN refugee agency UNHCR at the main port of Piraeus near Athens, which has become a makeshift camp for some 4,000 refugees and migrants sleeping in tents on the docks.

Scores of onlookers stood outside the agency's offices to see the Hollywood actress, clapping and cheering when she appeared.

Jolie greeted children and

asked the throng of reporters, cameramen and photographers to be more "thoughtful" as she tried to speak with them.

"I'm here to learn and speak with you and the agencies and the government to learn what is happening, ok?," Jolie told one boy. "Try to stay strong."

According to a UNHCR press release, Jolie is visiting Greece "to reinforce efforts by UNHCR and the Greek government to step up the emergency response to the deteriorating humanitarian situation".

Tens of thousands of refugees and migrants are stuck in makeshift camps or reception centers in Greece, which has

been struggling with the mass influx of migrants from the Middle East.

On Wednesday, German Chancellor Angela Merkel said the closing of the main migrant route through the Balkans had created a challenging situation for Greece that should concern all of Europe.

Jolie, whose visit comes ahead of a European Union summit with Turkey over the migrant crisis, was also set to meet with Greece's prime minister.

During her trip to Lebanon, the actress urged world powers to do more to end the Syrian conflict and help the millions who have fled the fighting.—Reuters

Sylvia Anderson, voice of Lady Penelope in 'Thunderbirds', dies

LONDON — Television writer and producer Sylvia Anderson, the voice of Lady Penelope in popular 1960s television show "Thunderbirds", has died aged 88 after a short illness.

Anderson, who co-created the marionette puppet show with her late ex-husband Gerry, passed away at her UK home, according to a statement on her official website.

Debating on British television screens in 1965, "Thunderbirds" followed a secret rescue performing organisation and its elegant Lady Penelope character, who was driven around in a pink Rolls-Royce, was modelled on

Anderson.

The show aired for just two seasons but has gained a huge following since.

"Sylvia was a mother and a legend — her intelligence was phenomenal but her creativity and tenacity unchallenged," her daughter Dee Anderson wrote on the site.

"She was a force in every way, and will be sadly missed."

Born to a boxer and dressmaker from south London in 1927, Anderson also worked on television shows such as "Stingray" and "Joe 90".

Her former husband Gerry Anderson died in 2012.—Reuters



Sylvia Anderson holds the original Lady Penelope puppet from the cult 1960's television series "Thunderbirds", for sale September 19 along with other puppets which Anderson devised for television classics such as "Stingray" and "Captain Scarlet". PHOTO: REUTERS

US pop sensation Madonna earns rebuke from Aussie crowd after 2.5-hour late arrival

SYDNEY — US pop diva Madonna has been rebuked by angry Australian crowds after the star arrived over two hours late for a concert in Brisbane overnight in a tour that's been classified as trainwreck.

Hundreds of angry fans walked out on the 57-year old pop singer and received refunds before she finally arrived on stage at 23:30 local time, 2.5 hours after her scheduled 21:00 start.

"We started late, that hardly ever happens," Madonna told the crowd when she finally appeared, local media reported yesterday.

"You were here too early. You should have taken your time doing your hair and make-up, then I wouldn't have been late."

Aussie crowds weren't receptive to the apparent apology, calling her rude and not the Madonna they knew.

"I thought that was a bit crude as people had paid good money to see her from jobs that they will need to be at this morning," local resident Nick Sowden, who left at midnight, told Australia's nation-

al broadcaster. "She lip-synced a good amount of songs too. It wasn't worth the wait," Sowden said, adding most of the songs he saw were from her new album "which is pretty horrendous".

The pop diva's Australian tour, her first in 23 years that started with an intimate, cabaret style warm up show in Melbourne on 10 March, has been described by commentators as a "trainwreck" with reports of Madonna guzzling booze, taking drugs and falling off a tricycle, signalling a potential "onstage meltdown".

Madonna has hit back at the criticisms, claiming that they were sexist and misogynist.

"We are still treated like heretics if we step out of line and think outside the box," Madonna wrote on social media. "Too bad people don't know the art or of (sic) acting and playing a character... I could never do any of my shows high or drunk." The 57-year-old Material Girl is set to return to the stage in Brisbane yesterday night before finishing her tour in Sydney this coming weekend.—Xinhua



Lead singer of Pink Floyd David Gilmour plays at Earls court in 1994 in London. PHOTO: REUTERS

Pink Floyd's David Gilmour to play live at Pompeii: Italy minister

ROME — Former Pink Floyd guitarist David Gilmour will perform in the preserved ancient Roman town of Pompeii this summer, Italy's culture minister said on Wednesday.

The psychedelic British rock band that propelled Gilmour to fame made a film in 1971 at the site, which lay buried under ash for more than 1600 years after nearby Vesuvius erupted in 79 AD. "Agreement reached. After 45 years David Gilmour will play again at Pompeii on 7 and 8 July," Culture Minister Dario Franceschini said on Twitter. Gilmour will probably play at the site's Roman Amphitheatre, rather than the

Large Theatre where the documentary "Pink Floyd: Live at Pompeii" was made, a Pompeii spokesman said. Built to hold gladiator fights more than a century before Rome's Colosseum, the stone Amphitheatre can hold about 2,000 people.

The 70-year-old Gilmour will have an audience this time, having played to an empty theater over four days to film the documentary, the spokesman said. The concerts have not been listed on Gilmour's official website. On 10 and 11 July, he is due to play in a first-century Roman amphitheatre in Verona, northern Italy. British singer Elton John is also scheduled to perform at Pompeii in July.—Reuters

For New York hospital's patients, miniature horses are a strong medicine

NEW YORK — Some of the most powerful medicine delivered to young patients at Mount Sinai Hospital in New York on Wednesday came in a package less than 32 inches tall and with a tail.

Honor, a 10-month-old colt with Gentle Carousel Miniature Therapy Horses, trotted into the hearts of dozens of children and teens being treated at the Manhattan hospital.

Just a handful of young patients were well enough to secure their doctors' permission to meet Honor in person in a hospital playroom, while others watched him from their beds, viewing an internal television broadcast in their rooms and isolation units.

Maria Benitez, who is 19 but looks much younger, broke into a smile when Honor pranced into the playroom. The hospital declined to elaborate on details of Benitez's medical condition, saying only she is currently being treated as an outpatient.

While Maria said her favourite animal is a horse, this one was quite different from what she expected.



Handler Jorge Garcia-Bengochea (R) holds Honor, a miniature therapy horse from Gentle Carousel Miniature Therapy Horses, as they are greeted by Dr Lisa Satin, System Chair of Pediatrics for the Mount Sinai Health System, during a visit with patients at the Kravis Children's Hospital at Mount Sinai in the Manhattan borough of New York City, on 16 March. PHOTO: REUTERS

"He's smaller," Maria whispered, staring at the chestnut horse with black eyes.

"They are little horses, but they have big jobs," said Jorge Garcia-Bengochea, co-founder of Gentle Carousel.

Miniature horses have comforted trauma victims after such tragedies as the 2012 mass shooting at

Sandy Hook Elementary School in Connecticut, the 2013 tornadoes that devastated Oklahoma and the 2015 church shooting in Charleston, South Carolina. They also work with families of police officers who have died in the line of duty.

"They are herd animals, so they are very intuitive of what other horses

are doing, needing. And they treat people that same way. They sense different emotions, different feelings that children have," Garcia-Bengochea said.

"Children have been through very traumatic situations and they've shut down. Just being around the animal, they get animated, they start talking and they actually sometimes tell the horse things that they haven't told other people," he said.

In the hospital, the tiny equines serve as a symbol of hope and beauty, conjuring up an image of outdoor activities, running and strength, said Diane Rode, who heads up the hospital's child creative arts therapy unit.

"When you're in the hospital, you're dealing with pain, anxiety, isolation, and it's easy to get stuck in that. Focusing on the miniature horses creates a relationship back to the world and an interest and pleasure in the world we are working to foster," she said.

"Children need more than medicine to get better," Rode added. —Reuters

Pennsylvania man to plead guilty to hacking celebrities' email, iCloud accounts

LOS ANGELES — A Pennsylvania man has agreed to plead guilty to a felony computer hacking charge after authorities said he illegally accessed private phone and email accounts of celebrities such as Oscar-winning actress Jennifer Lawrence to leak information including nude pictures.

The US attorney for the Central District of California charged Ryan Collins, 36, from Lancaster, Pennsylvania, according to court documents filed on Tuesday.

Collins signed a plea agreement to plead guilty to a felony violation of the Computer Fraud and Abuse Act. He faces up to five years in federal prison, with a recommended prison term of 18 months and a fine of \$250,000.

The case has been transferred from California to the Middle District of

Pennsylvania, where Collins is expected to surrender and plead guilty. He will be sentenced at a later date.

While no victims were named in the court documents, Lawrence and other celebrities such as actresses Kirsten Dunst and Gabrielle Union and model Kate Upton addressed the leak and online dissemination of their nude photos in interviews.

Representatives for Lawrence, Dunst, Union and Upton did not return Reuters' requests for comment on Wednesday.

Prosecutors said in court documents that between November 2012 and September 2014, Collins "knowingly, intentionally, and in furtherance of criminal and tortious acts" accessed at least 50 Apple iCloud accounts and about 72 Google Gmail accounts belonging to more than 100 people. —Reuters

Pop stars to the rescue of Turkey's battered tourism industry?

BERLIN — Turkish tourism officials hit by plummeting Russian bookings and grim urban bombings are hoping that Madonna, Justin Bieber or Jennifer Lopez can help revive business along their sunny Mediterranean coast.

Tourism revenue in Turkey fell 14.3 per cent in the final quarter of last year and 2016 bookings point to an even more challenging year for the country's tourism industry, which accounts for about 4.5 per cent of the \$800 billion

economy. The "Turkish Riviera" around Antalya, the main vacation hub, is one of the worst hit areas. The local Chamber of Commerce (ATSO) appealed to Ankara's tourism ministry this month after the number of Russian visitors in January tumbled by 81 per cent.

Following the downing of a Russian warplane on 24 November, Moscow approved sanctions against Turkey and ATSO calculated the crisis would cost Turkey up to \$11 billion.

Antalya, the main city on Turkey's Mediterranean coast, will host the EXPO 2016 world horticultural fair in April.

ATSO thinks some star-studded musical support could help attract visitors worried by the headlines from the volatile region.

"EXPO 2016 should be turned into a big tourism push, for instance by organising big concerts by international celebrities such as Madonna, Jennifer Lopez or Justin Bieber, to

attract the interest of target markets," a tourism ministry report said.

It remains to be seen whether "Bieber fever" or "Madonna madness" can calm security fears that saw booking numbers dive after a suicide bomber killed 10 German tourists in Istanbul in January, the first of several bombings in Turkey this year.

The German travel group TUI has reported a 40 per cent drop in summer bookings in Turkey. —Reuters

News Channel in Brief

(18-3-2016, Friday)

<p>6:00 am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paritta by Venerable Mingun Sayadaw <p>7:35 am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People's Talks <p>8:35 am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current Affairs <p>9:35 am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly Entertainment News <p>10:35 am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MRTV's Youth Programme <p>11:15 am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly Sport Info <p>11:35 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Science and Technology programme <p>1:35 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TV Drama Series <p>2:50 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Myanmar Traditional Boxing 	<p>3:35 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CLEVER <p>4:35 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Football Magazine (Yadanarbon United FC) <p>5:35 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hyper Sport <p>6:35 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Farmer <p>7:15 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TV Drama Series <p>8:00 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • News / International News/ Weather Report <p>8:35 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documentary <p>9:00 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • News <p>TV Drama Series</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amazing World
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Note/ Hourly News Bulletins (Local + International)

Myanmar International

(18-3-2016 07:00am ~ 19-3-2016 7:00am) MST

<p>Today Fresh</p> <p>07:03 Am News</p> <p>07:26 Am Welcome To Naga Land</p> <p>08:03 Am News</p> <p>08:26 Am Crocodile Keeper</p> <p>08:34 Am A May Yay Yin Nat Festival (Episode -2)</p> <p>08:50 Am Amazing: May Phoo Han</p> <p>09:03 Am News</p> <p>09:26 Am Well-Trained Elephants</p> <p>09:36 Am Shwe U Min Natural Cave In Kalaw</p> <p>09:52 Am Coin Collectors</p> <p>10:03 Am News</p> <p>10:26 Am A Lucky Boy</p> <p>10:42 Am Conflict & Solution Between Man & Elephant</p>	<p>(11:00 Am ~ 03:00 Pm) - Thursday Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)</p> <p>(03:00 Pm ~ 07:00 Pm) - Today Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)</p> <p>Prime Time</p> <p>07:03 Pm News</p> <p>07:26 Pm A Visit to Kyauk Kyi</p> <p>07:43 Pm The Eel Business (Fisherman the eel culture)</p> <p>08:03 Pm News</p> <p>08:26 Pm National Literary Icon and Guiding Light of Myanmar Literature</p> <p>"Sayar Zaw Gyi" (Childhood and Student Life) (Episode-1)</p> <p>08:48 Pm Kay Tu Mar Lar "The Decision"</p> <p>(09:00 Pm ~ 11:00 Pm) - Today Repeat (09:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)</p> <p>(11:00 Pm ~ 03:00 Am) - Thursday Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)</p> <p>(03:00 Am ~ 07:00 Am) - Today Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)</p> <p>(For Detailed Schedule – www.myanmaritv.com/schedule)</p>	
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Entertainment Channel

(18-3-2016, Friday)

<p>6:00 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weather Report • Music Programme <p>6:30 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pyi Thu Ni Ti <p>6:50 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Music Programme <p>7:00 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Korea TV Drama Series <p>7:40 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Korea TV Drama Series <p>8:30 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cartoon Programme "BEN 10 ALIEN FORCE (Part- XIV)" <p style="text-align: center;">* 7:00 pm Live "One Champion" Boxing</p> <p style="text-align: center;">From 18-3-2016 (Friday) 6:00 Pm To 19-3-2016 (Saturday) 6:00 Pm This schedule will be repeated four times in 24 hours.</p>	<p>8:50 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International Movie Songs <p>9:10 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pa Khan Traditional Nat Festival In Ku Ni Village (Part -3) <p>9:40 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English Premier League Review (Part-3) <p>10:00 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Myanmar Video
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Barca's terrific trio down Arsenal to reach last eight

BARCELONA — Barcelona's dynamic attacking trio of Neymar, Luis Suarez and Lionel Messi were too strong for Arsenal as all three scored in a 3-1 victory on Wednesday that sent the Spanish side into the Champions League quarter-finals 5-1 on aggregate.

Brazil's Neymar opened the scoring in the first half as the home side dominated the early play, but Arsenal's Mohamed Elneny curled in an excellent finish to spark life into the visitors after the break.

Suarez, however, launched himself into the air to meet a Dani Alves cross and send a superb volley into the top corner to deflate the English side, who have now been knocked out of the tournament in the last 16 for six successive seasons.

The mercurial Messi rounded off the scoring with a trademark chipped finish two minutes from time as the defending champions extended their record-breaking unbeaten run to 38 matches in all competitions.

"We know we need to attack and defend at the same level if we want to win," Barcelona coach Luis Enrique told reporters. The La Liga leaders remained on course for a second successive treble and their coach is not concerned about who they face in the last eight of Europe's most pres-



Lionel Messi scores the third goal for Barcelona against Arsenal during their UEFA Champions League Round of 16 Second Leg at Nou Camp, Barcelona, Spain on 16 March 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

tigious club competition.

"The only team I want to keep away from us is Barca and I think we have no chances to meet them," he joked.

The defeat will increase the pressure on Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger, whose side are 11 points adrift of leaders Leicester City in the Premier League and exited the FA Cup last weekend.

"We had our chances, but we couldn't take them," Wenger

said.

"But we have to say well done to Barcelona. They have two or three players who transfer normal life into art."

Barcelona served notice of their intent when Arsenal keeper David Ospina was forced into a superb save to deny Messi, but the reprieve was short-lived as the hosts took the lead through Neymar's side-footed finish after 18 minutes.

Arsenal had lost possession playing out from the back before Suarez angled a perfectly-weighted pass into the path of Neymar to slide the ball past Ospina.

Former Barcelona forward Alexis Sanchez fluffed the visitors' best chance when he headed wide, but Arsenal continued to press and levelled six minutes into the second half when Elneny bent a sweet finish into the top corner from 20 metres.

Just when it looked like Arsenal might spring a surprise, however, Suarez's acrobatics finished the tie before Messi burst into the box and lifted the ball calmly into the net to cap another superb individual display.

"We knew they were going to go and take the game to us," Suarez said.

"In the end we proved we are strong here and made home advantage count."—Reuters

Djokovic gains revenge, Nadal rallies to advance

INDIAN WELLS — Novak Djokovic avenged his only loss of 2016 with a ruthless 6-3, 6-3 victory over Feliciano Lopez as the Serbian top seed eased into the quarter-finals of the BNP Paribas Open on Wednesday.

An eye issue forced Djokovic to retire against his Spanish opponent at the Dubai Duty Free Championships last month but he had his sights set firmly on victory for their rematch in California.

The world number one needed just 66 minutes to prevail as he won 75 per cent of his points on serve and broke Lopez three times.

"I have respect for his game, which definitely made me very cautious of approaching this match and made me very determined to impose my game plan from the very beginning," Djokovic told reporters. "I was very solid. I didn't allow him to come to the net too many times. It was a good performance."

Djokovic enjoyed his best performance of the tournament to date and next meets Frenchman Jo-Wilfried Tsonga, who defeated Dominic Thiem 6-3, 6-2, as the defending champion seeks an unprecedented fifth title at Indian Wells.

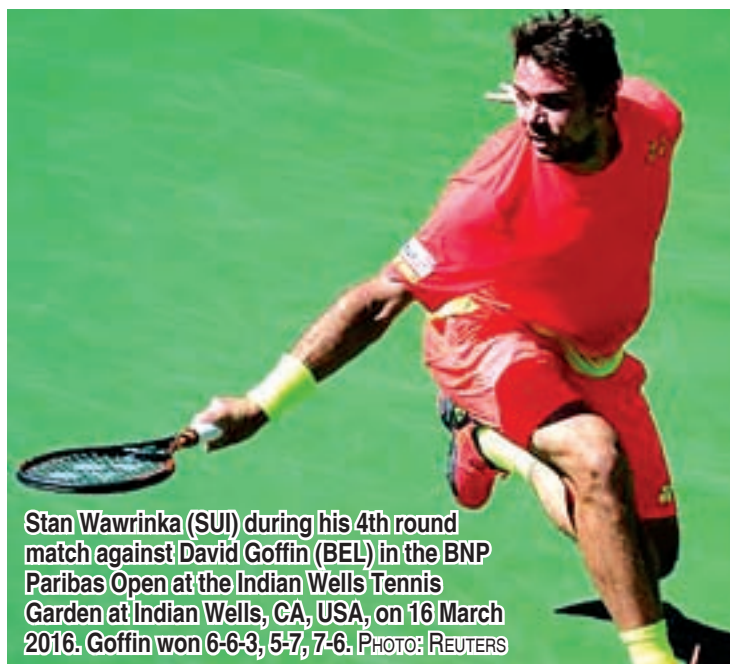
Earlier in the day, third seed

Stan Wawrinka was sent packing in the fourth round and the Swiss was very nearly joined by Rafa Nadal, who pulled off a Houdini-like escape to reach the last eight.

Fourth seed Nadal, three times a champion at Indian Wells, rallied from 5-2 down in the final set, saving a match point on the way, before battling past 18-year-old German prospect Alexandr Zverev 6-7(8), 6-0, 7-5. The power-hitting Zverev had been bidding

to become the youngest quarter-finalist at the event since 1989 and led 40-30 when serving for the match in the ninth game but his nerve deserted him at the Indian Wells Tennis Garden.

"This is painful right now, but it doesn't change anything about the process," Zverev said. Spanish left-hander Nadal won the last five games of the deciding set to advance and was delighted with the fightback.—Reuters



Stan Wawrinka (SUI) during his 4th round match against David Goffin (BEL) in the BNP Paribas Open at the Indian Wells Tennis Garden at Indian Wells, CA, USA, on 16 March 2016. Goffin won 6-6-3, 5-7, 7-6. PHOTO: REUTERS

Derby deflation as City and United battle for fourth

LONDON — When Manchester's Premier League big guns were spending lavishly in the close season, neither City nor United can have imagined that the final derby of the campaign would be little more than a contest in the battle for a Champions League spot.

With City, lying fourth, having slipped 12 points behind the leaders and United trying to climb up from sixth, Sunday's match is hardly the pivotal title decider they both would have wanted.

City spent 152 million pounds in preparation for the campaign while United also surpassed the 100-million mark, but neither team has generated the momentum needed to launch a sustained title challenge.

United, often laboured and struggling to score goals all season, go into the game at the Etihad Stadium trailing their rivals by four points but perhaps sniffing blood.

City have capitulated in recent weeks and, with leaders Leicester playing Crystal Palace on Saturday, could find them-

selves 15 points off the top by kickoff.

Since it was announced last month that Pep Guardiola would replace manager Manuel Pellegrini in July, City have won two of six league games and are far enough adrift of the summit to know that anything other than victory over their neighbours will end any lingering title hopes.

Arsenal, 11 points off the top and visiting Everton on Saturday, are another side who have imploded at a crucial point in the season with manager Arsene Wenger's position again coming under intense scrutiny.

Having won only one of their last eight games in all competitions and exiting the FA Cup at home to Watford, the debate about Wenger's future has become increasingly heated.

After Barcelona completed their expected passage into the Champions League last eight with an 3-1 win at the Nou Camp on Wednesday, Arsenal were left with nothing to play for unless they can claw their way back into title contention.—Reuters