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President U Thein Sein concludes Japan tour

President U Thein Sein poses for documentary photo together with officials at Hoju collective farm outside Kyoto, Japan.

MNA

NAY PYI TAW, 6 July — President U Thein Sein concluded his trip to Japan on Monday, arriving at Nay Pyi Taw airport in the early evening.

Vice Presidents Dr Sai Mauk Kham and U Nyan Tun, Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, union ministers and officials welcomed the president home.

The president was accompanied on the tour by Union Ministers U Wunna Maung Lwin, U Tin Naing Thein, U Ohn Myint, U Khin Maung Soe, U Kyaw Lwin, Dr Kan Zaw, Dr Than Aung and U Ye Htut, deputy ministers U Ohn Than and U Han Sein, Deputy Governor of the Central Bank of Myanmar U Set Aung, Yangon Mayor U Hla Myint, Brig-Gen Ko Ko Naing of the Ministry of Defence and officials.

The Myanmar delegation led by the president attended the 7th Mekong-Japan Summit together with leaders from Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam.

The summit started in 2009 and is held every year, with Myanmar having hosted the 6th summit in Nay Pyi Taw last year.

The summit aims to promote development of countries in the Mekong region, including the east-west economic corridor and southern economic corridor through the Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund.

With a population of 240 million and total GDP of US $664 billion, the region is an increasingly important market.

The summit adopted the Tokyo Strategy 2015,

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Singapore, Myanmar agree to cooperate in banking supervision, capacity building

By *Aye Min Soe*

YANGON, 6 July — The central bank of Myanmar and Singapore agreed at a meeting Monday in Yangon to cooperate in banking oversight and capacity building.

At the 5th Singapore-Myanmar Joint Ministerial Working Committee meeting, high-ranking officials from the Central Bank of Myanmar and the Monetary Authority of Singapore signed a memorandum of understanding and exchanged views on developing an inter-bank funding market, as well as deepening technical cooperation in banking and capital market supervision.

The JMWC meeting also discussed the business environment for foreign investors, urban development strategies, transportation and logistics, food and agriculture, expansion of air connectivity, development of small- and medium-sized enterprises and the legal sector in Myanmar.

The two sides also agreed to jointly organize legal workshops and

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Minimum wage committee invites feedback

NAY PYI TAW, 6 July — The National Minimum Wage Committee on Monday invited feedback from organizations and individuals on its recently announced minimum wage proposal.

The committee has set a 13 July deadline. Feedback forms must be submitted to minimum wage committees in states and regions, as well as to the National Minimum Wage Committee and the Department of Labour under the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security.

The committee, which is comprised of ministerial representatives, employers and labour organizations, proposed a minimum wage of K 3,600 per day, although the figure has not yet been officially announced.

The proposal will be submitted to parliament.

MNA

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Deputy Minister for Health fields queries at Pyithu Hluttaw

NAY PYI TAW, 6 July — As the Traditional Medicine Department covers a wide range of duties other than treatment, its director general must be multi-skilled, Deputy Minister for Health Dr Win Myint told the Pyithu Hluttaw session on Monday.

Deputy Minister for Health Dr Win Myint.—MNA

The deputy minister also said the plan to double the patient capacity of the 50-bed hospital in Gyobingauk would be submitted to the Union Government with the approval of the Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development and the Ministry of Finance, following surveys of land for new buildings.

The ministry had no plan to upgrade the rural healthcare centre into a station hospital during the current fiscal year, the deputy minister said.

Afterwards, the session heard findings of the bill committee on the motor vehicle bill, the bill repealing the pension act and the bill amending the penal code.—*MNA*

Amyotha Hluttaw

Deputy Minister for Education U Thant Shin.—MNA

Attorney-General of the Union Dr Tun Shin. MNA

Univ. for Development of Nat'l Races set for entrance criteria change

NAY PYI TAW, 6 July — Entrance criteria for the Bachelor of Education at the University for Development of National Races will be amended, Major-General Tin Aung Chit, Deputy Minister for Border Affairs, told the Amyotha Hluttaw on Monday.

In response to a query from MP U Salai Kwe Yan of Chin State constituency 12, the deputy minister said changes to criteria include a stipulation that parents of applicants must be residents of areas for which places in the course have been designated. Stipulations on the political activities of applicants will also be amended.

Attorney-General of the Union Dr Tun Shin explained that debtors of fish farms able to settle bad loans or renegotiate payments would be exempt from lawsuits.

Deputy Minister for Education U Thant Shin said the ministry is scrutinizing budget allocations for the appointment of permanent teachers at early child development schools.

MPs and representatives of Defence Services also discussed other bills ranging from heritage issues to matters of the constitutional tribunal.

MNA

Union Election Commission clarifies its voters' list functions to the public

NAY PYI TAW, 6 July — The Union Election Commission explained its functions concerning the compilation of voters' lists, saying that current voters' lists were compiled by village, ward/village-tract or township levels and mistakes can be corrected within 14 days of the announcement of voters' list. After such corrections have been made, the approved voters' lists will be announced, according to the UEC. It urged the public to cooperate with the commission during the process.

The UEC also denied the media accusation that data in voters' lists were wrong from 30 percent to 80 percent and expressed its belief that public cooperation will lead to correct data in voters' lists.

MNA

Gems emporium concludes with 949 million euro worth of gems and jade sales

NAY PYI TAW, 6 July — The 52nd Myanma Gems Emporium concluded here on Monday with a total sales of 949 million euro worth of gems and jade sales.

The emporium held at Mani Yadana Jade Hall could attract 4,596 merchants as gems and jades are sold in open tender and competitive bidding systems from June 24 to July 6. A total of 126 gems lots were sold at 5.49 million euro through open tender and competitive bidding.

Some 1,005 jade lots were sold at 261. 40 million euro through open tender and 35 lots were through competitive bidding for 54.95million euro.—*MNA*

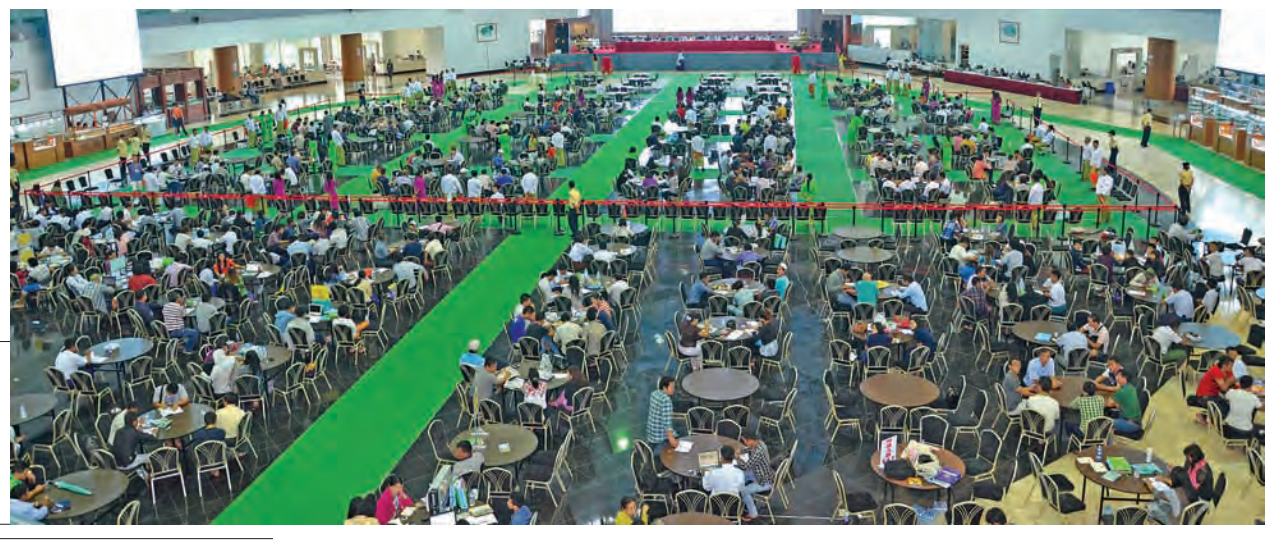


Photo shows final day of 52nd Myanma Gems Emporium. MNA

Fund Director of 3MDG Dr Paul Sender and Deputy Health Minister Dr Daw Thein Thein Htay formally open the launching of new cash transfer system for MDR-TB patients at Yangon Region TB Centre.
PHOTO: 3MDG

MDR-TB patients gain easier access to cash assistance

By *Khaing Thanda Lwin*

YANGON, 6 July — The Three Millennium Development Goal Fund on Sunday introduced electronic fund transfers for patients receiving treatment for multi-drug-resistant tuberculosis in Yangon and Mandalay regions, giving them easier access to monthly cash assistance.

In partnership with Kanbawza Bank, the new arrangement lets patients withdraw their assistance payments from ATM-sin 50 townships across the regions. They will receive K30,000 in monthly support throughout their 20-month treatment course.

Patients and their families can make withdrawals at Yangon Region TB Centre (Aung San) and Upper Myanmar TB Centre in Patheingyi of Mandalay, as well as other KBZ Bank ATMs, according to a press release issued on Sunday.

With the aim of fighting MDR-TB in the country, the 3MDG Fund and the Ministry of Health signed a US$11.5 million agreement to treat 2,200 patients with MDR-TB in 2014. The agreement also covers the strengthening ofdata management and improvement of MDR-TB infrastructure.

According to a WHO report, 500,000 people have been diagnosed with MDR-TB worldwide.Myanmar isone of 27 high MDR-TB burden countries. Around 5 percent of new TB cases are found to be multi-drug resistant.—*GNLM*

President U Thein Sein concludes...

(from page 1)

pledging cooperation in the development of industrial infrastructure, human resources and green initiatives, as well as coordination between Mekong countries and other countries.

The president also attended the Japan-Myanmar Summit, where he discussed development of the Dawei Special Economic Zone, construction of a coal-fired power station, upgrading of railway lines, and measures to combat traffic congestion in Yangon with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

The Japanese government also approved assistance loans of 100 billion yen for the Yangon Circular Rail Line, National Power Supply Phase-2 and development of the East-West Economic Corridor, and signed a memorandum of intent related to the Dawei Special Economic Zone.

The president studied the public transportation of Japan by taking public trains between Tokyo, Nagoya and Kyoto, and generation of electricity at the largest coal-fired power station in Japan, which generates 4,100 megawatt every day.

The president invited Japanese companies to create environmentally friendly coal-fired power stations in Myanmar.

The trip was the third by the president to Japan, starting with his inaugural visit in April 2012.

Earlier in the morning, the president visited a collective farm outside Kyoto before visiting Osaka to study the city's gas smart energy network and attend a luncheon hosted by businessmen at the Rihga Royal Hotel.

MNA

President U Thein Sein departs Osaka City, Japan.

MNA

Amyotha Hluttaw speaker meets Australian delegation

Nay Pyi Taw, 6 July—Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw U Khin Aung Myint held a talk with a delegation led by Professor Andrew Walker of Southeast Asian Studies from Australian National University (ANU) at the hall of the Amyotha Hluttaw, here, on Monday.

The speaker explained matters related to Myanmar Hluttaw to the delegation members.

Also present at the meeting were chairmen of Hluttaw committees and officials of the Amyotha Hluttaw Office.—*MNA*

Myanmar, UNODC focus on narcotic drug elimination

Nay Pyi Taw, 6 July—A delegation led by Mr Jeremy Douglas, UNODC's SEA and Pacific Region Resident Representative, called on Union Minister for Home Affairs Lt-Gen Ko Ko at the ministry, here, on Monday to hold talks on narcotic drug elimination.

They also discussed alternative development tasks and other cooperation matters.

Also present at the meeting were Deputy Minister Brig-Gen Kyaw Kyaw Tun and officials of Myanmar Police Force and General Administration Department.—*MNA*

Sectoral cooperation between Myanmar and Singapore are discussed at 5th Singapore-Myanmar Joint Ministerial Working Committee meeting.

Photo: Aye Min Soe

Singapore, Myanmar agree to cooperate in banking...

(from page 1)

seminars to share best practices, and enhance understanding of the legal frameworks of both countries.

To improve the weak institutions of Myanmar's small-to-medium enterprise sector, the country would cooperate with Singapore to improve the efficiency of government personnel from the sector, Daw Aye Aye Win, the Deputy Director-General of the Central Department of SMEs Development of the Ministry of Industry, said before the meeting.

Myanmar allocated 20 billion kyatsworth of loans to SMEs this year. The country's Small and Medium-sized Industrial Development Bank has already disbursed 9 billion kyats to SMEs in 15 regions and states including Nay Pyi Taw Council Area, she added.— *GNLM*

Group of Thai tourists concludes visits to Myanmar

Nay Pyi Taw, 6 July—A group of Thai tourists on Monday returned from their 5-day travelling around Myanmar through the Yangon International Airport and Myawady border town, a source reported.

Under the supervision of the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism, the 16-member group riding motorbikes arrived on 1 July in Myanmar via Myawady border town.

During the visit, they paid homage to several pagodas including Kyaikhtiyo Pagoda in Kyaikto of Mon State, as well as Shwemawdaw Pagoda and Shwethalyuang Pagoda in Bago Region where they visited Kanbawzathadi Palace. On the third day, the group visited Bogyoke Aung San Market after paying homage to the country's prominent Shwedagon and Botahtaung pagodas in Yangon. On 4 July, they returned to Mawlamyine and visited the significant places in Hpa-an on 5 July.—*MNA*

Statue of General Aung San to be erected in Sakhantha Park

KYAUKPADAUNG, 6 July — Local residents including teachers and students have started laying the foundations for a bronze statue of General Aung San at Sakhantha Park in Lutlatyay Ward, Kyaukpadaung, Mandalay Region.

Teachers and students of Pan Pyo Lett private school have been helping build the foundations.

The 9.5-foot-high statue was cast in Mandalay and will be unveiled with a grand ceremony.

Ko Nay (Kyaukpadaung)

Health officials gather for MERS symposium

MANDALAY, 6 July — A symposium on Middle East Respiratory Syndrome took place at the Myanmar Medical Association office in Mandalay on 4 July.

On the occasion, Director-General Prof Dr Myint Han of the Department of Medical Care said health officials in Mandalay Region gained experiences in surveillance and prevention of Ebola, MERS and SARS, as well as H1N1 and H5N1 flu strains as part of preparations for the 2013 SEA Games. The director-general pledged to upgrade Kandaw Nadi Hospital as a specialty hospital for infectious diseases in Mandalay.

He stressed the need to systematically raise health awareness at entry points to the country.

Head of Mandalay Region Public Health Department Dr Win Naing spoke about supervision and surveillance of diseases at TadaU International Airport and NyaungU Airport in addition to railway stations, ports and bus terminals.

Dr Win Naing invited medical personnel from private clinics to join hands with the government in prevention of MERS.

Min Htet Aung (Mandalay Sub-printing House)

Police officers of Pyinmana Township meet local residents to hold discussions on security measures, reviews on monthly crimes and important role of public participation in crime reduction.

ZAW MYO NAING

TODAY'S MYANMAR NEWS SITES

Pumpkin harvest season begins in Lewe Tsp

NAY PYI TAW, 6 July — Pumpkin harvesting season is under way for farmers from Mwayyoelay and Yondaw villages in Lewe Township.

Planting in the villages, situated by the Yangon-Mandalay Expressway, began in the last week of April, with the harvest kicking off in the first week of July. Prices per pumpkin range from K100 to K500 depending on size.

"Farmers invest K80,000 per acre for cultivation of pumpkin during the period from sowing to harvesting," said a local farmer.

"Some farmers in Zigon and Yayohsin villages faced losses in cultivation of pumpkin due to heavy rains when the saplings were young," a local farmer said.

The farmers send their fruits to Nay Pyi Taw Thabyegon Market and Kinmontan market in addition to merchants from Kyaukdaga, Pyawbwe, Taungdwingyi and Kyaukpadaung townships.

Ko Pauk (Okkar Myay)

Local farmers prepare sending of pumpkin to market in Lewe Township.

Inter-village road under construction in Tatkon Tsp

TATKON, 6 July — Officials of Nay Pyi Taw Council, Township Administrator U Kan Saw Hlaing and departmental officials recently inspected progress of a 10-mile-long, 10-foot-wide gravel road linking Dahatgon, Alekyun and Kyeein villages in Tatkon Township.

During their visits to Dahatgon, Myaukmyaik and Alekyun villages, they explained progress of the road and regional development to local residents.

Nay Pyi Taw Council allocated K522.9 million from its budget to construct the inter-village road with the aim of improving transport for local people.

Tin Soe Lwin (Tatkon Township IPRD)

Monywa University opens painting courses for students

MONYWA, 6 July — Monywa University recently opened beginner and advanced painting courses at the Literary and Fine Arts Association's hall in Monywa, Sagaing Region.

The chairman of the Monywa University Literary and Fine Arts Association remarked, "The painting courses help the students pursue geography, zoology and botany subjects." More than 100 students are attending the courses until 31 July.

Artists from Chindwin Yay Kyi arts group U Ye Myint, U Zaw Win Tin, U Nyo Thein and U Maung Maung San provide the students with theoretical lectures and practical training.

Po Chan (Monywa)

Breeders, producers discuss consumer safety policies

MANDALAY, 6 July — Poultry breeders and producers met in Mandalay on 4 July to discuss strategies for development of the industry.

Mandalay Region Minister for Agriculture and Livestock Breeding U Myint Than invited departmental officials, officials of Livestock Breeding Federation and breeding farm owners to take part in developing policies to ensure the safety of poultry products for consumers.

Speakers discussed losses incurred by local poultry farms due to importation of chicken, necessary factors for adopting the policies, and the danger of imported frozen chicken to consumers.—*Tin Maung (Mandalay)*

University students attend advanced and basic painting course at Monywa University.

Resettled villagers receive livestock for breeding

PINLAUNG, 6 July — A ceremony to hand over K30 million as capital investment for the meat sector as part of the Emerald Green Project was held at the monastery in Talaima village, Pinlaung Township, on 4 July.

Assistant Director Dr Ni Ni Win of the Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department handed over K30 million to Meat Committee Chairman U Tun Wai for breeding tasks. Officials distributed 21 buffalos, two cows, 338 pigs and 500 ducks to 196 breeders from 14 villages.

Residents from 23 villages have been resettled to make way for the Upper Paunglaung hydropower project.

Township IPRD

Businesses join roundtable discussion in Mandalay

MANDALAY, 6 July — Hub Myanmar Company Ltd held a business talk entitled "Better Future, Better Myanmar 2015" at the National Theatre in Mandalay on 5 July.

Representatives from local and overseas firms including Samsung participated in a roundtable discussion.

In the afternoon session, U Tin Zan Kyaw, principal of Device Business Management Academy, gave talks on social collaboration for business benefit.—*Tin Maung (Mandalay)*

Nago mayor expresses opposition to security bills

NAHA,(Japan), 6 July — The mayor of Okinawa Prefecture's Nago city expressed his opposition on Monday to the government's national security bills to expand operations of the Japanese Self-Defence Forces, branding the bills as unconstitutional.

"The bills are extremely dangerous as they could increase people's anxiety and change Japan's way of being," Susumu Inamine said at a House of Representatives panel meeting held in Naha to hear opinions on the bills from people in Okinawa. "They violate Article 9 of the Constitution," Inamine said.

The bills would enable Japan to exercise the right to collective self-defence, or the use of force to defend an ally even if Japan is not directly attacked, after the government changed the interpretation of the Constitution to this effect last year.

The government previously interpreted the war-renouncing article of the Constitution as prohibiting Japan's exercise of the right to collective self-defence.

Inamine is a firm opponent to the government's plan to relocate the US Marine Corps Futenma Air Station to Nago city's Henoko area from Ginowan, south of Nago.

At the panel meeting, opposition to the bills was also expressed by former Okinawa Gov Masahide Ota and Tomokazu Takamine, former president of the *Ryukyu Shimpo* newspaper in Okinawa, who were recommended to give testimony by the opposition camp.

Ota particularly called for suspending the government plan to move the US base to Henoko.

Two others, Ishigaki Mayor Yoshitaka Nakayama and Nanjo Mayor Keishun Koja, recommended by the ruling coalition, supported the security bills, but also called for in-depth Diet deliberations, saying people still lacked a full understanding of the bills.

The ruling Liberal Democratic Party and its junior coalition partner Komeito are seeking to pass the bills through the House of Representative in the middle of this month following hearings in Okinawa and other prefectures.

The Okinawa hearing came after some LDP lawmakers criticized media organizations' negative coverage of the national security bills at their gathering last month.

The anti-media criticism has drawn opposition particularly in Okinawa where the prefectural assembly adopted a resolution protesting against writer Naoki Hyakuta's remark at the LDP gathering that two major Okinawa newspapers, including the *Ryukyu Shimpo*, should be "destroyed."

Kyodo News

Chinese Ambassador to Nepal Wu Chuntai (2nd R) hands over a document to the Academic Administrative officer of Kathmandu School of Law Sudha KC (2nd L) during the handover ceremony of computers donated by Chinese embassy for the earthquake-hit Kathmandu School of Law in Bhaktapur, Nepal, on 5 July, 2015.
XINHUA

Singaporean teenager blogger given four-week imprisonment for online offensive remarks

SINGAPORE, 6 July — Singaporean teenager blogger Amos Yee Pang Sang was sentenced to four weeks in jail on Monday for making offensive remarks online.

As Amos Yee has spent more than 50 days in remand and his sentence was backdated, it meant he could walk free from the court.

Amos Yee's lawyer Alfred Dodwell said Yee would appeal against the conviction. It still remained as a question whether Yee's behaviour was a crime or not, and Yee wanted to appeal to the High Court, the lawyer added.

The 16-year-old teenager, who was arrested in March, repeatedly breached bail conditions and refused to speak to a probation officer.

Yee was found guilty of two charges, one for making offensive remarks against Christianity and another for circulating obscene imagery online. The third charge for his insulting statements on founding Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew in a YouTube video was dropped.

Yee has been remanded at the Institute of Mental Health for the past two weeks to assess his suitability for a mandatory treatment after a doctor said the teenager might have autism-spectrum disorder.

Anyone who is found guilty of making remarks hurting the feelings of a religious group can be jailed for up to three years, or fined or both under the law. Anyone convicted of electronically transmitting an obscene image can be jailed up to three months or fined, or both.

Xinhua

Thai army chief says won't release 14 student critics of coup

BANGKOK, 6 July — Fourteen Thai students who were arrested after staging anti-coup rallies must face military court and will not be released beforehand, Thailand's army chief said on Monday, despite growing calls for charges to be dropped. The students were arrested last month after holding peaceful demonstrations in Bangkok calling for an end to military rule. Thailand's junta, which calls itself the National Council for Peace and Order, has banned all political gatherings.

Sympathy towards the students' plight is growing in Thailand and among the Thai diaspora. On Friday, scores of people stopped by a makeshift wall in downtown Bangkok to write messages of support for the students on Post-it notes. Some read: "Free the 14."

Army chief General Udomdej Sitabutr acknowledged public support for the students but dismissed calls to free them.

"Security officials do not view the students as enemies, they are like our nieces and nephews. Authorities caught them because they did not behave correctly," Udomdej told reporters. "We have to let the law decide and the next step is to send the case to the military court."

Last week the United Nations and European Union urged Thailand to release the students but Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha, the general who led the coup against an elected government last May, said he would not bow to international pressure.

Since taking power, the junta has imposed curbs on freedom of expression and intimidated its critics.

The 2014 coup ousted the government of Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra. Thailand has been divided for a decade between Thailand's traditional establishment in the capital and the south and supporters of Yingluck and her brother, former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, who was himself ousted by the army in 2006.

The 14 students are due to appear at a military court on Tuesday.

Reuters

Philippines confirms second MERS case

MANILA, 6 July — The Philippines confirmed a second case of the deadly Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) corona virus on Monday in a man who showed symptoms after arriving in Manila last month from Dubai.

The 36-year-old was admitted to hospital on Saturday and was under observation, Health Ministry spokesman Lyndon Lee-suy said, adding contact tracing was now under way to prevent the spread of the disease.

The man had also travelled to Saudi Arabia, the spokesman said. His condition was improving and there was no known transmission so far.

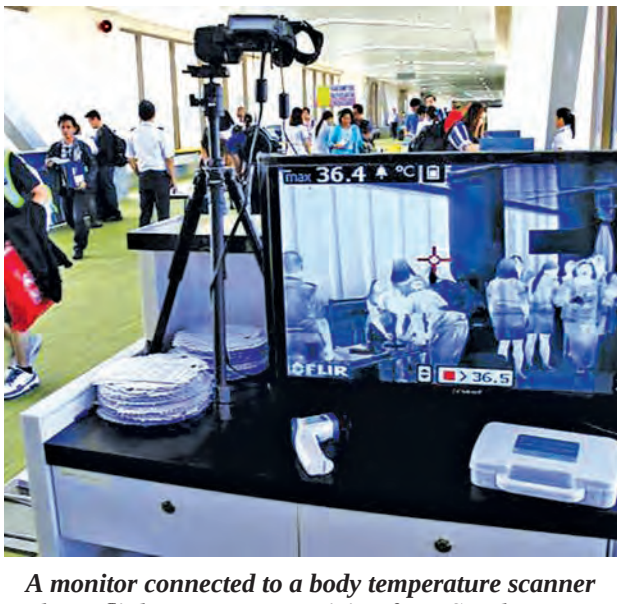
The first case discovered in the Philippines was in January, a Filipino nurse working in Saudi Arabia who survived.

MERS was first identified in humans in Saudi Arabia in 2012 and the majority of cases have been in the Middle East. Scientists are not sure of the origin of the virus, but several studies have linked it to camels.

Isolated cases cropped up in Asia before South Korea recorded the biggest number in an outbreak that started in May.

Nearly 180 people have been infected and 27 people have died in South Korea, the largest outbreak outside Saudi Arabia. In the Thai capital Bangkok, more than a hundred people were believed to have been in contact with an Omani man, the only MERS case in Thailand who eventually recovered.

The World Health Organization described South Korea's outbreak as a "wake-up call" but said it did not constitute a global emergency.—*Reuters*



A monitor connected to a body temperature scanner shows flight passengers arriving from South Korea, at Ninoy Aquino International Airport in Manila, on 9 June, 2015.—REUTERS

Kerry urges Iran to make 'hard choices', says US ready to walk

VIENNA, 6 July — An Iranian nuclear agreement is possible this week if Iran makes the "hard choices" necessary, but if not, the United States stands ready to walk away from the negotiations, US Secretary of State John Kerry said on Sunday.

Speaking during a break from one of his four meetings with Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif on Sunday, Kerry said they had made "genuine progress" in talks over the last few days but "several of the most difficult issues" remain.

"If hard choices get made in the next couple of days, made quickly, we could get an agreement this week, but if they are not made we will not," he said in Vienna, where talks between Iran, the United States and five other powers are being held.

US Secretary of State John Kerry

Foreign ministers from Britain, China, France, Germany and Russia began arriving on Sunday evening as the major powers make a push to meet Tuesday's deadline for a final agreement to end the 12-year-old dispute.

Kerry said negotiators were still aiming for that deadline, but other diplomats have said the talks could slip to 9 July, the date by which the Obama administration must submit a deal to Congress in order to get an expedited, 30-day review.

The agreement under discussion would require Iran to curb its most sensitive nuclear work for a decade or more in exchange for relief from sanctions that have slashed its oil exports and crippled its economy.

US President Barack Obama's administration, which has been accused of making too many concessions by Republican members of Congress and by Israel, remains ready to abandon the talks, Kerry said.

"If we don't have a deal and there is absolute intransigence and unwillingness to move on the things that are important for us, President Obama has always said we're prepared to walk away," he said.

European officials also said the onus was on Iran to cut a deal. After arriving in Vienna, French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius told reporters the main question was whether Iran would make "clear commitments" on unresolved issues.

German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier said it would take courage and compromise to reach a deal. "I hope that this courage exists above all ... in Teheran," he told reporters.

The major powers suspect Iran of trying to develop a nuclear weapons capability. Iran says its nuclear programme is solely for peaceful purposes such as producing medical isotopes and generating electricity.

Reuters

Security cameras to be installed in shinkansen cars following suicide

Central Japan Railway Co President Koei Tsuge

OSAKA, 6 July — Two Japanese railway companies said on Monday they will introduce more security cameras inside the cars of their shinkansen bullet trains in the wake of a suicide last week that left two dead and 26 others injured.

Central Japan Railway Co and West Japan Railway Co said in addition to cameras already set up at the end section of each car, they will install more cameras to cover the interiors of cars and the aisles at the car ends.

The modifications will be made on existing shinkansen within two years from fiscal 2016 starting next April as well as on new shinkansen to be manufactured, they said.

The move came after Haruo Hayashizaki, 71, set fire to himself last Tuesday inside a shinkansen bound for Shin-Osaka in Osaka from Tokyo, filling the train's cars with smoke and also killing a female passenger as well as injuring 26 others aboard.

Central Japan Railway operates shinkansen trains between Tokyo and Shin-Osaka stations, while West Japan Railway provides shinkansen services between Shin-Osaka and Hakata stations as well as Joetsu-Myoko and Kanazawa stations.—*Kyodo News*

Japan to emphasize its healthcare aid at next G-7

TOKYO, 6 July — The Japanese government is considering emphasizing measures to help spread basic health and medical care in developing countries as one of its foreign policy priorities when it hosts the Group of Seven summit next year, a draft document showed on Sunday.

The draft of the government's 2016-2020 strategy in the health and medical field, to be adopted shortly, highlights promoting universal health coverage, a goal defined by the World Health Organization as ensuring all people have access to essential healthcare services at affordable prices.

While Japan has so far given priority to maternal and child health and infectious disease control in its international health policies, the new strategy would emphasize the importance of healthcare for people of all generations, from babies to seniors.

The government will "consider promoting UHC when making contributions in the area of international health" at the Ise-Shima summit next 26-27 May in Mie Prefecture, central Japan, the document says, using the acronym for universal healthcare coverage.

Japanese health minister Yasuhisa Shiozaki, at a press conference last Friday to announce that G-7 health ministers will meet before the summit in the port city of Kobe, suggested universal health coverage will be on the agenda.

Japan, whose people are among the world's longest lived due in large part to its universal health insurance system, has promoted UHC since 2013 when it put that objective in its diplomatic strategies in international health. But its efforts so far remain little recognized.

Under the new strategy, Tokyo would add programmes to train public health experts in developing countries and increase financial aid for conventional assistance for such things as opening clinics and providing medical supplies, the sources said.

As a prelude to the strategy, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe offered Kenya 4 billion yen in loans for health projects when he met with visiting Kenyan counterpart Uhuru Kenyatta in March.

While poverty and insufficient facilities and materials often prevent people in developing countries from accessing essential healthcare, diabetes and dementia are also growing into serious problems due partly to malnutrition and aging populations.

Japan aims to strengthen health and medical systems through the developing world so they can deal with those problems, the sources said.

Kyodo News

Former senior Xinjiang lawmaker expelled from CPC

BEIJING, 6 July — Li Zhi, a senior lawmaker of northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, has been expelled from the Communist Party of China (CPC), the CPC's anti-corruption watchdog said on Monday.

Li, former deputy head of the standing committee of the Regional People's Congress of Xinjiang, was found "seriously violating discipline, faking personal record and cheating the organization with a wrong age," according to a statement from the CPC Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI).

He was also caught accepting monetary gifts, seeking benefits for others by taking advantage of his posts in fields such as official selection and enterprise management, and "asking for and accepting huge amount of bribes", the statement said. Li also "seriously violated socialist morality and committed adultery," it said, adding he had tried to interfere with and hamper the investigation, and transfer and hide illicit funds and property.

Xinhua

Former S Korean first lady to visit N Korea from 5 August

SEOUL, 6 July — Lee Hee-ho, the widow of former South Korean President Kim Dae-jung, is scheduled to make a four-day visit to North Korea from 5 August, travelling by air, according to an organization set up in honor of the deceased president.

The itinerary for the 93-year-old Lee includes a visit to a children's hospital, a maternity Hospital and a nursery, according to the Kim Dae-jung Peace Centre.

The arrangement was made at talks held between officials from the centre and North Korean officials at the North's border city of Kaesong earlier Monday.

Attention is turned to whether Lee will be able to meet with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un during her visit at a time when inter-Korean relations remain tense.

The centre said whether Lee could meet Kim Jong Un has not been decided yet.

Specifics, including the size of an entourage, will be discussed at talks that will be held later.

North Korea has further heightened tensions by threatening retaliation against South Korea for the opening on 23 June in Seoul of a UN office set up to monitor human rights violations in the North.

Lee met Kim Jong Un in December 2011 when she travelled to Pyongyang to express condolences over the death of then North Korean leader Kim Jong Il, father of the current young leader.

She had sought to travel to the North in December last year, but the plan was canceled mainly due to her declining health.

Kim Dae-jung, who served as South Korea's president from 1998 to 2003, held a landmark summit with Kim Jong Il in Pyongyang in 2000, in which they agreed to promote national reconciliation and economic cooperation. He died in 2009.

Kyodo News

Photo taken in May 2015 in Seoul shows Lee Hee-ho, the widow of former South Korean President Kim Dae-jung. Lee is scheduled to make a four-day visit to North Korea from 5 Aug, 2015, where she will visit a children's hospital, a maternity hospital and a nursery.

KYODO NEWS

PERSPECTIVES

Tuesday, 7 July, 2015

Penny-pinching reflects outdated management

By *Aung Khin*

TO produce goods of sufficient quality and quantity for the market, sound financial management is a must. As the global market converges and international competition intensifies, human resource issues take on even greater importance.

In any organization, sufficient staffing is necessary to get the job done. If a staff member takes leave or is absent, company managers must ensure that their colleagues are not overloaded with work.

An insufficiently staffed company is like a vehicle with parts missing. Driving a car with missing wheel nuts is almost sure to guarantee an accident. Insufficient staffing can cause employees stress and make them lose confidence in their work.

Penny-pinching can strain the growth of a business. Management needs to understand the working environment at a basic level. Only then can they properly take care of their human resources. If the top manager is incapable, the entire organization is sure to topple.

Even in developed countries where advanced technologies are used, employers give significant consideration to the contentedness of staff. In less technologically advanced countries, companies rely even more heavily on their human resources. They should therefore be recognized for their important role and treated properly.

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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.

THEMES FOR LITERATURE FOR CHILDREN

Maung Hlaing

A few days ago, I ran into U Myint Kyaing (Retired Deputy Director-General, Ministry of Culture) at Shwe Wae Tun Café, a popular rendezvous for writers, artists, publishers and so on. He told me that as the first paper reading session on literature for children was held in 1965, a Golden Jubilee should be celebrated this year. And he also urged me to write articles on children's literature.

If memory serves me right, after 1965, there were another two paper reading sessions—one was on "Literature for Children" (in 1973) and another one was on "Folk Tales" (in 1987). Scholars read their interesting papers at the sessions. Whatever it may be, what he said reminded me of my works on children's literature appeared in the Guardian National Magazine over 30 years ago.

According to the World Book Encyclopedia (C-ch), the definition is that a child is a person between about 18 months and 13 years of age. Childhood is the period between infancy and adolescence. Childhood can be divided into four stages based on periods of major psychological change. These stages are the toddler stage, the preschool years, the early school years, and the pre-teenage years.

Of the four stages, developing language skills is a major challenge for children during the toddler stage. That is why, many parents use stories and pictures to help toddlers increase their vocabulary and build sentences. As for the preschool years which extend three to five years of age, children should become accustomed to the books without texts before they go to school. In most of the countries, whether they be developing or developed, people pay much attention to production of preschool books which can be called the source of the literature for children.

The early school years, which last from about age five to eight, mark a major turning point in a child's development. As for this age-group, books and reading habit come to play an important role. The motto "Interest is the soil in which knowledge can grow" was vividly seen on the first page of the readers (text books) we read in our early school years. Students could enjoy interesting stories such as "The king and the Gooseherd", "Androcles and the Lion" and so on. The pre-teenage years which extended from about age eight to thirteen can be said to be very important periods for a child because a wrong action may be permitted under some circumstances unless they are attracted by interesting reading materials. It is for this reason that scholars suggest to produce picture books of folk tales and creative stories and books for knowledge.

Today, thousands of books and illustrated stories for children are published all over the world. Unfortunately, we cannot say that almost every book is suitable for our children.

As for children, they enjoy folk tales, fairy tales, fables about animals, and stories of the gods of earth and sky that ancient peoples believed in. And, they appreciate other books, songs and tales that travelling musicians and story-tellers told about brave heroes.

Besides, some famous books, such as "Robinson Crusoe" and Jonathan Swift's "Gulliver's Travels" were not written for children at all. Yet children have claimed them for their own.

A change has now started to take place. And renaissance has come about in the realm of children's literature. Most of the devoted writers and publishers have now started to write for special age-groups.

The writers for children produce their work in accordance with the age-groups, and types of their work for the children have become varied and many. They can be classified into picture books, comic journals, pictorials, modern short stories, science stories, tales and creative stories, children's novels, drama scripts, humour and translation of literary works. Our duty is to introduce them to our children.

These tender age-groups are periods when their experiences start differentiating between right and wrong. If we want to introduce good books to our children, we must try to create 'good themes' which mould the children's character from the start. We cannot deny the fact that it is the 'theme' that is the main factor in producing a good book for children.

How then should we choose the themes for children's books?

Publishers are urged to consider the suggested themes which were laid down in the International Year of the Child.

These are:

- International Understanding;
- Getting to know one's own and others' cultures;
- Concern for the environment;
- Peace;
- Promoting concern for the disadvantaged and the handicapped;
- Human rights; and,
- Books designed specifically for minorities or for the handicapped.

These themes are good and acceptable but some experts say that these are hard to put into practice as a whole.

In this connection, modern writers for children try to create the themes that can attract a wide age range of readers. As for children's literature, some experts consider the most important three themes—how to live, how to die and how to love. Others, however, like to create themes which give too much moral lessons.

It cannot be denied that children's literature which can be enjoyed at a young age has some educational purpose. However, since children can see the essence of matters better than adults, the book cannot be accepted by children if it attempts to lecture the children or to impose morals on them.

Children like to read stories with happy or funny endings but not tragedies.

In the past, literature for children depicted only the safe, funny and happy world "for children". But the present writers are now trying to deal with themes such as death, old age, poverty, war, discrimination, which can be shared by both adults and children, most fundamentally in the form of children's literature. It is true that children's literature has been gaining adult readers in many countries including Myanmar, as adults come to realize that children do live, love, worry, suffer, and are troubled, as much as adults or even more.

As a matter of fact, children are the best critics of children's books. It is because they have the ability to distinguish something good from something bad. This, however, does not mean that they make judgments on the spot; rather, something good which remains in the child's mind will be revived again in his or her mind in ten years time or in twenty years time. On the other hand, children immediately forget what they think is boring and never look at it again.

In brief, children love funny stories or humour. They don't like to accept boring or preaching style which gives them too much lessons. We must therefore, create themes that can support their desire for reading, paving the way for their interest in good books.

There is nothing like interest to get children to read well, to read widely, and to understand what they read. We should not ignore the fact that interest is the soil in which intelligence and knowledge grow.

PHOTO GALLERY

President U Thein Sein visits natural gas power plant in Iwasaki, Osaka City.—MNA

President U Thein Sein delivers speech at luncheon by private entrepreneurs at Rihga Royal Hotel.—MNA

President U Thein Sein views agricultural machinery at Hoju agricultural farm outside Kyoto.—MNA

Images of President U Thein Sein's visit to Japan

President U Thein Sein being welcomed back by Vice Presidents Dr Sai Mauk Kham and U Nyan Tun and Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at Nay Pyi Taw Airport.
MNA

Greek finance minister quits to smooth talks after 'No' vote

ATHENS / FRANKFURT, 6 July — Greece's outspoken finance minister resigned on Monday, removing a major obstacle to any deal to keep Athens in the euro zone after Greeks voted resoundingly to back the government in rejecting the austerity terms of a bailout.

Yanis Varoufakis, a self-proclaimed "erratic Marxist" economist who infuriated euro zone partners with his unconventional style and hectoring lectures, had campaigned for Sunday's sweeping 'No' vote, accusing Greece' creditors of "terrorism".

"I was made aware of a certain 'preference' by some Eurogroup participants, and assorted 'partners', for my... 'absence' from its meetings; an idea that the Prime Minister judged to be potentially helpful to him in reaching an agreement," Varoufakis said in a statement.

His sacrifice, after promising Greeks he would win a better deal within a day of their overwhelming referendum vote, suggested leftist Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras is determined to try to reach a last-ditch compromise with European leaders.

Greece's chief negotiator in aid talks with international creditors, Euclid Tsakalotos, is the frontrunner to become finance minister, a senior government official said.

A mild-mannered economist and professor, Tsakalotos had already taken over a prominent role in negotiations with lenders after Varoufakis was sidelined from the talks in April.

Varoufakis' successor is due to be named after a meeting of political leaders that got under way at 10 am (3.00 am EDT).

With banks shuttered, cash machines running out of banknotes and sympathy for Athens among EU governments close to exhausted, Greece's fate is largely in the hands of the European Central Bank and of German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

The ECB's policymaking governing council was holding a conference call on Monday to decide how long to go on keeping Greek banks afloat after the overwhelming rejection of bailout terms the central bank had helped to shape.

Merkel, under mounting pressure in Germany to cut Greece loose from the euro zone, meets French President Francois Hollande in Paris later in the day to seek a joint response ahead of an emergency summit of euro zone leaders in Brussels on Tuesday.

Public opinion in Europe's biggest economy is fast turning against any further aid to Greece, and Merkel's vice-chancellor, Social Democrat Sigmar Gabriel, said on Sunday that Tsipras had torn down the last bridges of compromise with the euro zone.

Greek Finance Minister Yanis Varoufakis leaves after making a statement in Athens, Greece on 5 July, 2015. REUTERS

After five years of economic crisis and mass unemployment, Greek electors voted 61.3 percent 'No' to the bailout conditions rejected this month by their radical leftist government, casting Greece into the unknown.

"You made a very brave choice," Tsipras said in a televised address as jubilant supporters thronged Athens' central Syntagma Square to celebrate the act of defiance of Europe's political and financial establishment.

"The mandate you gave me is not the mandate of a rupture with Europe, but a mandate to strengthen our negotiating position to seek a viable solution."

The ECB's policymaking governing council was meeting to decide whether maintain, increase or reduce a lifeline for Greek banks, which have been shuttered for a week with cash withdrawals rationed and money fast running out.

Several people familiar with ECB policy said the central bank would reject a Greek government request to raise the cap on emergency liquidity assistance provided by the Greek central bank and leave the limit unchanged, slowly tightening the noose on the banks but giving them a few more days' air.

The euro tumbled against the dollar on Asian markets after the setback for Europe's monetary union and European shares and bonds were expected to take a hit when markets opened after the weekend.

In early bond trading, investors rushed into safe-haven German bonds while yields on Italian government debt rose sharply.

Asian stocks suffered the biggest daily fall in two years, partly because of fears over China's economy, but Varoufakis' departure may soften the impact in Europe, maintaining a slender prospect of a deal to keep Greece in the euro and avoid a catastrophic bankruptcy. "The first message to Athens is that no one ever wants to see Varoufakis again after he called us terrorists," an official who attends Eurogroup meetings said.

It was not clear whether Hollande or top EU policymakers had conveyed that message to Tsipras in telephone calls on Sunday evening after the referendum result became clear.

In a parting blog post celebrating the Greek 'Oxi' ('No') vote, Varoufakis said Greeks had taught Europe a lesson in democracy and should now demand better financial rescue terms.

"It is, therefore, essential that the great capital bestowed upon our government by the splendid 'No' vote be invested immediately into a 'Yes' to a proper resolution — to an agreement that involves debt restructuring, less austerity, redistribution in favour of the needy, and real reforms."

EU officials said it would be hard to give Greece easier terms, not least because its economy has plunged back into recession since Tsipras' Syriza party won power in January, leaving public finances in a worse position than when the rejected bailout deal was put together.

Analysts with several major banks including Citi, Barclay's and JP Morgan said a "Grexit" from the euro zone was now their base case, or most likely scenario.

But on the streets of Athens, citizens were unrepentant at their defiant vote.

"I voted 'No' to austerity; I want this torture to end," said 42-year-old Katerina Sarri, a mother of two manning a Kiosk in Athens.

"I'm aware that we will suffer for years but I'm still hopeful. I need to know that there is light at the end of tunnel, that the lives of my children will be better," she said.

Reuters

Argentina's Fernandez celebrates Greece's 'No' to creditors

BUENOS AIRES, 6 July — World markets may tremble at Sunday's decision by Greek voters to reject conditions of a rescue deal from creditors, but the leader of Argentina, which suffered a similar crisis more than a decade ago, boldly welcomed the referendum result.

President Cristina Fernandez, known for combatively defending her unorthodox policies, tweeted that Greece's vote marked "a resounding victory for democracy and dignity."

There are stark similarities between Argentina's 2002 financial meltdown and the turmoil in Greece: rigid monetary regimes, creditors battling domestic politics to fix the problem and banking systems at breaking point.

Argentina's President Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner waves to supporters from a balcony after a ceremony the Casa Rosada Presidential Palace in Buenos Aires on 4 May, 2015.—REUTERS

In Greece, 61 percent of voters rejected a deal that would have imposed more austerity on their already ravaged economy.

"The Greek people have said 'NO' ... to the impossible and humiliating conditions that would be imposed for the restructuring of their debt," she tweeted. "We Argentines know what this is about. We hope that Europe and its leaders understand the message ... that you can't force anyone to sign their own death warrant."

The South American grains behemoth defaulted on $100 billion in bonds in a 2002 crisis that thrust millions of middle-class Argentines into poverty. By the next year, helped by a massive soy crop, Argentina started growing again.

But the 2002 crisis continues to plague its finances.

Fernandez regularly blasts bondholders who have sued the country over the debt it failed to pay 13 years ago.

Most holders agreed to restructurings that paid about 30 cents on the dollar, while a group of hedge funds sued for full repayment.

The country defaulted again last year when a US judge barred it from honouring its restructured debt without reaching a deal with the funds, which Fernandez denounces as "vultures."

Argentina became one of the world's fastest expanding economies after its default, growing at an averaging above 8.5 percent between 2003 and 2007, when Fernandez was first elected.

Since then she has ordered trade and currency controls that have slowed investment while government fiscal accounts deteriorate due to high state spending.—*Reuters*

Peru declares emergency in 14 regions on El Nino worries

LIMA, 6 July — Peru has declared a 60-day state of emergency in towns in 14 regions to brace for possible damage from the climate pattern El Nino in the rainy season, state media reported on Sunday.

Peru has forecast a "moderate to strong" El Nino in the winter season and has not ruled out an extraordinary event in the summer, which begins in December in the southern hemisphere.

The phenomenon, a warming of Pacific sea-surface temperatures, has wreaked havoc on local fishing in Peru and triggered landslides in years past.

The emergency declaration orders authorities to take action to prepare for the "imminent danger" of El Nino and unusual climate conditions, state news agency *Andina* said.

The regions placed under the state of emergency include several key fishing and mining areas.

Unusually warm waters linked to El Nino led catches of cold-water anchovy to plummet last year, helping drag down economic growth to the weakest pace in five years.

Peru is the world's top producer of fishmeal — animal feed made of ground-up anchovy — and a major exporter of copper, gold and silver.

Reuters

Saudi-led strikes on Yemen hit party headquarters of Houthi ally Saleh

Sanaa, 6 July — Saudi-led air raids pounded the Sanaa headquarters of Yemen's former president Ali Abdullah Saleh's General People's Congress party late on Sunday, killing and wounding several people, witnesses and a party official said.

The strikes coincided with a visit to the capital by the UN special envoy to Yemen, Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, who is seeking to arrange a pause in fighting until the end of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan on about 17 July to allow for deliveries of humanitarian aid.

Saleh is an ally of the country's dominant Houthi movement. A Saudi-led coalition has orchestrated a more than three-month bombing campaign against the Houthis and army units loyal to Saleh to try to restore President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi, who is in exile in Riyadh.

The General People's Congress party's assistant secretary general, Faeqa al-Sayed, said the party headquarters had been destroyed.

The raids were an attempt to make the talks with the UN fail, she said, adding that several employees and others were killed.

"This will not make us back down on our efforts .... to create the suitable environment to cooperate with the United Nations," she said in a statement on the party's website.

Ould Cheikh Ahmed arrived in Sanaa on Sunday for talks with the Houthis, after discussions in Muscat, Oman to push for a pause in fighting that has killed nearly 3,000 since March.

Both sides largely observed a five-day truce brokered by the United Nations in May to allow in fuel and medicine to civilians trapped in conflict zones.

Saleh, the strongman who resigned following 2011 "Arab Spring" protests after more than three decades in power, has emerged as the main military ally of the Houthi Shi'ite fighters. The strikes late on Sunday also struck the home of former president Saleh's nephew and several houses belonging to Houthi supporters in the south and west of the capital Sanaa. —*Reuters*

Dust rises from the site of a Saudi-led air strike in Yemen's southwestern city of Taiz on 5 July, 2015.—Reuters

Two attacks in central Nigerian city of Jos

Jos, (Nigeria), 6 July — Two blasts hit the central Nigerian city of Jos on Sunday evening, one at a restaurant and another targeting a Muslim cleric who has disowned Islamist militant group Boko Haram, several witnesses said.

Plateau State police spokesman Emmanuel Abuh confirmed there had been two attacks in Jos but had no further details immediately.

"I saw people running out crying, some with bloodstains," said resident Bashir Abdullahi, describing the scene after he said a suicide bomber ran into the crowded restaurant. "I believe many lives were lost."

The second attack targeted cleric Sani Yahaya Jingir as he was preaching, witnesses said. Gunmen started shooting sporadically and then there was a loud blast, they said.

"We saw two or three vehicles coming from different directions and we started hearing gunshots from all angles and then a very loud bang, like a bomb being thrown into the mosque," said witness Abubakar Shehu.

There was no official word on casualties from the two attacks. A *Reuters* witness at a hospital in Jos said 16 bodies had been brought in.

A suicide bomber killed six people at a church in northeast Nigeria earlier on Sunday after a week in which suspected Boko Haram insurgents killed more than 200 people.—*Reuters*

Egyptian army kills 63 militants in North Sinai

Smoke rises in Egypt's North Sinai along the border with southern Israel, on 1 July, 2015.—Reuters

Cairo, 6 July — Egypt's military launched air strikes and ground operations that killed 63 Islamist militants in North Sinai on Sunday, security sources said, as the country grapples with an increasingly ambitious insurgency based in the region. The Sinai has recently witnessed some of the heaviest fighting between security forces and Islamist militants since the army toppled President Mohamed Mursi of the Muslim Brotherhood in 2013. Security sources said on Sunday troops killed the 63 in villages between the towns of Sheikh Zuweid and Rafah. The army found four militant hideouts and attacked them with Apache helicopters and ground troops. It also attacked vehicles belonging to the militants, the security sources added. Islamic State's Egypt affiliate, recently renamed Sinai Province, has killed hundreds of soldiers and police since Mursi's removal.

Though the vast peninsula has long been a security headache for Egypt and its neighbours, the removal of Mursi brought new violence that has grown into an Islamist insurgency that has spread out of the region.

On Monday, a car bomb in Cairo killed Egypt's top prosecutor, the highest-profile official to die since the insurgency began. Egyptian government officials have accused Mursi's Muslim Brotherhood of links to Sinai attacks. The Brotherhood says it is a peaceful movement that wants to reverse what it calls a military coup through street protests. Egypt's interior ministry said on Sunday it had arrested 12 Brotherhood members who had formed three cells with the intention of carrying out attacks on policemen, soldiers and military and police bases. Also on Sunday, the prosecutors referred to trial 22 people charged with planting bombs near targets including the high court and cabinet buildings, state news agency *MENA* reported. President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi has also expressed concern about militants based in neighbouring Libya, where Egypt has launched air strikes on Islamic State targets.

Reuters

Heavy fighting as Iraqi forces try to surround Falluja

Baghdad, 6 July — Iraqi Shi'ite fighters and army troops made gains north of Falluja on Sunday but their efforts to seal off Islamic State militants in the city met heavy resistance, including suicide bomb attacks, army sources and militia fighters said.

Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi's government is trying to reverse recent gains by Islamic State hardliners in the western province of Anbar after they seized the provincial capital Ramadi in May. Falluja, just 40 km (25 miles) west of Baghdad, was a centre of Sunni Muslim armed opposition to the Shi'ite-led government even before Islamic State took control of most of Iraq's Sunni regions in June last year.

Sunday's offensive was led by fighters from Kata'ib Hezbollah, part of the mainly Shi'ite Hashd Shaabi force fighting with the army against Islamic State. Spokesman Jaafar Hussaini said the group managed to cut off a supply line to Islamic State-held territory north of the city. Authorities say they already control the eastern, southern and western approaches.

"Today's advance is a key achievement to isolate Daesh terrorists inside the city and cut all their supply lines," Hussaini said, referring to Islamic State. "Today's advance will determine how and when Falluja liberation operations start."

Two army sources said Islamic State fighters deployed at least two suicide car bombs to break the advance, killing 21 members of the Hashd Shaabi and army force, but failed to stop them capturing a bridge at al-Sheeha, north of the city. They said Islamic State forces pulled back to the nearby area of Albu Shijil, where they came under heavy bombardment from army artillery. Iraqi forces are being supported in Anbar by a US-led coalition which has been carrying out air strikes for nearly a year against Islamic State in its self-declared caliphate across parts of Iraq and Syria. In Iraq, the Islamist militants have been pushed out of the city of Tikrit and eastern province of Diyala, but are still fighting in the town of Baiji, home to Iraq's largest oil refinery. In Syria they have lost ground to Kurdish fighters, but captured the central town of Palmyra in May. In the Iraqi capital Baghdad at least 12 people were killed in four separate bombings. Two bombs struck on Sunday morning, and the second pair exploded after dusk as people were breaking their daily Ramadan fasts. There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attacks, but statements issued in the name of Islamic State on Sunday said it was behind two bombs which killed 10 people the day before.

Reuters

Members of the Iraqi army and Shi'ite fighters launch a mortar toward Islamic State militants outskirt the city of Falluja, Iraq on 19 May, 2015.—Reuters

Japan celebrates addition of industrial sites to UNESCO listing

TOKYO, 6 July — Japanese public and politicians rejoiced on Monday after the UNESCO World Heritage Committee decided to add the "Sites of Japan's Meiji Industrial Revolution" to the World Cultural Heritage list.

"I am extremely happy that the roots of Japanese manufacturing have been listed as World Heritage," Prime Minister Shinzo Abe told reporters, thanking companies and locals who have worked to preserve the sites.

Japan has successfully pushed for the listing of 23 facilities in eight prefectures, such as in Nagasaki and Iwate, saying they represent its rapid industrialization from the late 19th to the early 20th centuries. The sites will be added to the list on Wednesday.

The city of Izunokuni in Shizuoka Prefecture, home to the Nirayama reverberatory furnace, one of the 23 facilities, celebrated the UNESCO committee's decision with a ceremony attended by some 50 people at the municipal building.

Visitors at the Nirayama reverberatory furnace in the central Japanese city of Izunokuni walk in the rain on 6 July, 2015, the morning after the UNESCO World Heritage Committee decided to add the facility as "Sites of Japan's Meiji Industrial Revolution" to the World Cultural Heritage list.—KYODO NEWS

"We now have a great responsibility to pass down the Nirayama reverberatory furnace to the next generation," Mayor Toshiko Ono said. Also at other facilities, tourists and locals expressed delight at the news.

"People had talked about coal mining labour in negative terms, but the world has recognized it," said 75-year-old Eiko Seki before starting a tour of the Hashima Coal Mine on Hashima Island in Nagasaki, known as "Battleship Island" because of its shape. "It's a source of pride for the Japanese."

In Kamaishi, Iwate Prefecture, some 200 children cheered as the city celebrated the decision to add its Hashino iron mining and smelting site to the heritage list. "I want more people to come and see the history of steelmaking in Kamaishi," said Tsuyako Ito, an 89-year-old resident. On Sunday, the UNESCO committee decided to add the 23 Japanese sites to the World Cultural Heritage list after South Korea withdrew its opposition on condition that Japan publicly acknowledge that Koreans had been coerced to work at some of the sites during World War II.—*Kyodo News*

Tropical storm shuts Manila schools, floods northern Philippine towns

MANILA, 6 July — All shipping was ordered to remain in harbour and some flights were cancelled in the northern Philippines, while schools were closed in the capital, Manila, on Monday due to flooding and landslides from a tropical storm, disaster officials said.

Storm warnings were issued in at least 14 areas of the main Philippine island of Luzon as tropical storm Linfa moved slowly across the north of the Southeast Asian archipelago. It was carrying maximum wind gusts of 100 km per hour (60 mph).

Alexander Pama, executive director of the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council, said the storm would bring heavy rain within a 400-km (250 miles) radius. The storm was named Egay in the Philippines.

"We are grounding all sea travel and fishing operations in the north because we expect sea waves to go as high as 4 metres (13 feet), Pama said.

"We don't want any lose of life or any accidents," he said. Army units had been placed on standby to evacuate people to temporary shelters if needed, Pama said.

The government was expecting some crop damage in rice-producing areas in northern Luzon. Linfa made landfall in the north of the island on Saturday and was about 135 km (85 miles) southwest of Laoag City in Luzon's far north on Monday. An average of 20 typhoons pass through the Philippines every year. Haiyan, the strongest typhoon ever to make landfall in the Philippines, killed more than 6,300 people and left 1,000 missing in 2013.

Reuters

No MERS infection reported in S Korea, no death for 6 days

SEOUL, 6 July — No case of infection with the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) was reported in South Korea on Monday, while no death was added for six straight days, the health ministry said. The total MERS contagion cases were unchanged at 186, according to the Ministry of Health and Welfare.

The spread of the deadly viral disease showed signs of abating because only one case was added in the past four days through Sunday. No case was reported for four days through 1 July.

The South Korean government planned to declare an end to the MERS spread if 28 days, or twice the 14 days of incubation period, pass by without any case of MERS infection reported.

No death was reported for six days in a row, leaving the death toll at 33 and the fatality rate at 17.7 percent.

One more patient was discharged from a hospital as he completely recovered after being infected. The discharge number increased to 117. Excluding the dead and those discharged, 36 patients are under treatment. Among them, 12 are still in unstable conditions. The number of those quarantined reduced from 982 on Sunday to 907 on Monday.

Xinhua

Workers clean and overhaul a lamp during the annual maintenance of city lamps near Tian'anmen Square, in Beijing, capital of China, on 6 July, 2015.—XINHUA

Hungary passes law to tighten asylum rules

BUDAPEST, 6 July — Hungary's parliament passed legislation on Monday that tightens its asylum rules, providing the legal framework for the erection of a fence along the country's southern border with Serbia to stem the flow of illegal migrants.

The legislation shortens the time frame for screening asylum claims and will allow Budapest to reject claims from migrants who on their journey from Syria, Afghanistan or Iraq have passed through safe countries. The United Nations and the Council of Europe have criticized the bill, saying it would weaken refugee protection in Hungary.—*Reuters*

US Pacific Commander in New Zealand for defence talks

WELLINGTON, 6 July — The Commander of the United States Pacific Command, Admiral Harry Harris, is in New Zealand this week for defence and security talks, the government announced on Monday.

Harris was arriving in Wellington Monday and would hold talks with Prime Minister John Key, Defence Minister Gerry Brownlee and Foreign Minister Murray McCully the same day.

"Admiral Harris has a long relationship with this country, having trained on a Royal New Zealand Navy patrol vessel early in his career, and I look forward to our discussion this afternoon," Brownlee said in a statement.

"The defence relationship between New Zealand and the United States is a hugely important one, and it is in excellent shape," he said. "New Zealand and US military forces regularly take part in joint operations and training activities, and that is set to continue. We work collaboratively in a number of areas, including humanitarian assistance and disaster relief in the Pacific."

Harris was being hosted in New Zealand by the Chief of Defence Force, Lieutenant General Tim Keating.

He would hold talks with Keating and Secretary of Defence Helene Quilter on Tuesday and would depart New Zealand on Thursday.—*Xinhua*

Rivals Pakistan, India to start process of joining China security bloc

BEIJING, 6 July — Nuclear-armed rivals Pakistan and India will start the process of joining a security bloc led by China and Russia at a summit in Russia later this week, a senior Chinese diplomat said on Monday, the first time the grouping has expanded since it was set up in 2001.

The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) groups China, Russia and the former Soviet republics of Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, while India, Pakistan, Iran, Afghanistan and Mongolia are observers. "As the influence of the SCO's development has expanded, more and more countries in the region have brought up joining the SCO," Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Cheng Guoping told a news briefing."... India and Pakistan's admission to the SCO will play an important role in the SCO's development it will play a constructive role in pushing for the improvement of their bilateral relations."

India and Pakistan have fought three wars since 1947, two of them over the divided Muslim-majority region of Kashmir which they both claim in full but rule in part. Pakistan also believes India is supporting separatists in resource-rich Baluchistan province, as well as militants fighting the state.

The SCO was originally formed to fight threats posed by radical Islam and drug trafficking from neighbouring Afghanistan. Cheng said that the summit, to be attended by Chinese President Xi Jinping, would also discuss security in Afghanistan.

Beijing says separatist groups in the far western region of Xinjiang, home to the Muslim Uighur minority, are seeking to form their own state called East Turkestan and have links with militants in Central Asia as well as Pakistan and Afghanistan.

China says that Uighur militants, operating at the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM), has also been working with Islamic State. "It can be said that ETIM certainly has links with the Islamic State, and has participated in relevant terrorist activities. China is paying close attention to this, and will have security cooperation with relevant countries," Cheng said.

Reuters

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

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

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

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

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WEATHER REPORT

BAY INFERENCE: Monsoon is strong to vigorous in the Andaman Sea and Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL EVENING OF THE 7th July, 2015: Rain or thundershowers will be scattered in Lower Sagaing, Mandalay and Magway Regions, Kachin State, fairly widespread in Upper Sagaing Region, Shan and Kayah States and widespread in the remaining Regions and States with likelihood of isolated heavy falls in Ayeyarwady and Taninthayi Regions, Rakhine, Kayin and Mon States. Degree of certainty is (100%).

Four children die in house fire in southwestern Japan, father arrested

OITA, (Japan), 6 July — Four bodies believed to be of children were found in a house gutted by a fire early Monday in southwestern Japan's Oita Prefecture and their father was arrested later on suspicion of arson, police and firefighters said.

The police are trying to identify the bodies, as four aged between 5 and 14 out of the eight children of Maritime Self-Defence Force member Kenichiro Suemune, 40, are missing. Suemune has admitted to setting his house on fire, according to investigators.

The fire broke out shortly before midnight Sunday at the two-story wooden house in the city of Kitsuki and was put out about 100 minutes later, the police said. Suemune's wife, 42, and eight children lived in the house. The missing four are the eldest daughter Yukari, 14, the fourth son Masahiro, 9, the second daughter Mayumi, 7, and the 5-year-old fifth son Shigeru.

The police said Suemune, who is currently stationed in Hiroshima Prefecture, was visiting his family from Sunday.

The couple and their 3-year-old third daughter suffered burns and were sent to a hospital but their injuries are not life-threatening. The eldest son, 18, was at a relative's home when the fire started, the police said. Authorities said the bodies of the four were found near the living room on the first floor. They believe that most of the family members were upstairs in the house when the fire broke out and fell downstairs after the flames burned through the floor.—*Kyodo News*

Photo taken on 6 July, 2015 shows a burnt two-story wooden house in Oita Prefecture, southwestern Japan. Four bodies of children were found at the site, and their father Kenichiro Suemune, 40, was arrested the same day on suspicion of arson. KYODO NEWS

Policeman killed by rebels in Colombia

BOGOTA, 6 July — A policeman was killed and three other people were wounded on Sunday after the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) rebels attacked a town in southern Colombia.

The policeman was killed when the rebels attacked a group of policemen who were in a local festivity at the main square at Solita town in the southern Caqueta department, authorities said. "Unfortunately a policeman was killed and three others were seriously wounded," said Merly Sarria Pena, mayor of the town.

A reward of around 19,200 US dollars is offered to anyone who provides information leading to the capture of the attackers.

The FARC has claimed responsibility for its terrorist actions during the last months, and the main targets were the government forces, as well as oil and electricity infrastructure.—*Xinhua*

***People visit the exhibition named "Welcome Home, Flying Tigers" held at Puente Hill Mall in Los Angeles, the United States, on 5 July, 2015. A cultural exhibition named "Welcome Home, Flying Tigers" is held here in order to commemorate the 70th anniversary of Chinese people's Anti-Japanese War and the World Anti-Fascist War.*—XINHUA**

Thai customs seizes 250 kg of Laos-bound elephant ivory

BANGKOK, 6 July — Thai customs officers said on Monday they have seized another 250 kilograms of elephant ivory.

The 102 pieces of ivory, worth $300,000 on the black market, were detected by X-ray machines at Bangkok's Suvarnabhumi Airport, hidden in the parcels, the officers told a press conference.

The parcels were sent from Brazzaville, the capital of the Republic of the Congo, and were destined for Laos, where an illegal trade in ivory flourishes.

Kyodo News

Well-wishers swoon as Britain's Princess Charlotte christened

LONDON, 6 July — Britain's Princess Charlotte, the baby daughter of Prince William and his wife Kate, was christened on Sunday as crowds gathered to witness the family's first public outing together since her birth in May.

The ceremony took place at St Mary Magdalene Church on the Sandringham estate in eastern England, where William and Kate, the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, have a country home.

Television pictures showed members of the public clapping, cheering and taking photographs as William and Kate left the church with Britain's newest royal, who is fourth in line to the throne, and her older brother George.

The princess's full name, Charlotte Elizabeth Diana, is a nod to her late grandmother Princess Diana and her great-grandmother Queen Elizabeth.

Charlotte left the church in a black pram pushed by Kate, while the one-year-old George, dressed in bright red shorts and a white embroidered shirt, walked hand-in-hand with his father.

William's office said the couple had chosen five friends and family members to be Charlotte's godparents. The christening was conducted by Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby, the spiritual head of the Anglican Church, who also oversaw the christening of Prince George.

The princess wore the same christening robe that George had worn. The lace and satin gown, made by Queen Elizabeth's dressmaker, is a replica of one first used by the royal family in 1841.

Prince George and Princess Charlotte are seen in this undated handout photo taken by the Duchess in mid-May at Anmer Hall in Norfolk and released by the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge on 6 June, 2015. **REUTERS**

After the ceremony, the duke and duchess planned to serve their guests slices of cake from a tier of the couple's wedding cake, the statement from William's office said.—*Reuters*

Box Office: 'Inside Out' Provides Fourth of July Fireworks Over 'Terminator,' 'Magic Mike XXL'

'Joy' and 'Sadness', characters of the animation film 'Inside Out', pose at its premiere at El Capitan theatre in Hollywood, California on 8 June, 2015. The movie opens in the US on 19 June. — **REUTERS**

LOS ANGELES, 6 July— "Inside Out" delivered the firepower at the five-day holiday weekend box office as it finished in first ahead of "Jurassic World" and new entries "Terminator: Genisys" and "Magic Mike XXL."

In a tight race, Disney-Pixar's animated comedy pulled in as estimated $45.3 million in the US over the five days — giving it $246.2 million stateside in its third week at 4,158 locations. "Inside Out," with Amy Poehler, Mindy Kaling and Bill Hader voicing the emotions of an 11-year-old girl, is showing impressive staying power at multiplexes. Universal's fourth weekend of "Jurassic World" remained a solid draw, three weeks after its record-setting opening. The dino thriller, starring Chris Pratt and Bryce Dallas Howard, stomped it way to $43.8 million at 3,737 screens and ranks as the fourth highest domestic grosser of all time with $568.2 million.

For the three days covering Friday through Sunday, "Jurassic World" had the edge on "Inside Out" with $30.9 million to $30.1 million, according to Sunday estimates. "Terminator: Genisys" followed with $28.7 million for the three days and $44.2 million for the five. The Paramount-Skydance robot actioner is the fifth installment in the series with this iteration starring Emilia Clarke and Arnold Schwarzenegger. With a hefty $155 million price tag, overseas performance will be crucial. That component provided an upside for Paramount, which saw $74 million from international markets for the weekend -- led by Russia at $12.5 million, South Korea at $11.1 million and Mexico at $6.6 million. Warner's stripper sequel "Magic Mike XXL" wound up the five days with $27 million at 3,355 sites with a 96% female audience with Channing Tatum, Joe Manganiello and Matt Bomer reprising their roles from the 2012 sleeper hit. Performance was front-loaded with $15 million in its first two days but with a budget of just $14.8 million, "Magic Mike XXL" is already in the black for the studio.—*Reuters*

Tears flow as Grateful Dead say farewell in Chicago

Guitarist Bob Weir of veteran rock band The Grateful Dead performs during the second day of their last three concerts at Soldier Field stadium in Chicago, Illinois on 4 July, 2015, in this handout courtesy of Jay Blakesberg.— **REUTERS**

CHICAGO, 6 July — The Grateful Dead gave what they say will be their last group performance on Sunday, playing to some 70,000 singing, dancing and tearful fans in Chicago's Soldier Field.

The four surviving members of the band ended their 50-year-run this weekend with three Chicago concerts. The shows come 20 years after the death of lead guitarist Jerry Garcia, who played his last show in the nation's third-largest city in 1995.

Known for their poetic lyrics and constant improvisation which can turn a three-minute song into an 18-minute experiment, the Grateful Dead emerged from the San Francisco Bay area to become one of the longest lasting and most influential bands of the era.

Inspired by blues, bluegrass, country and jazz, the band became the model for groups such as Phish, Blues Traveler and others in the "jam band" movement. The band's colorfully-dressed followers, known as "Deadheads," often attended multiple concerts on a tour.

Phish guitarist Trey Anastasio filled in for Garcia at the Chicago shows, joined by original members Bob Weir, Phil Lesh, Mickey Hart and Bill Kreutzman who have toured, along with other musicians and under various names, for years. Jeff Chimenti and Bruce Hornsby played keyboards for the Chicago shows.

The seven musicians started and ended the show with group hugs. They started the show with one of the group's most psychedelic early songs — "China Cat Sunflower," paired with the folk blues standard, "I Know You Rider."

The second half included extended jams on crowd favorites "Truckin'" and "Cassidy," and ended with Buddy Holly's "Not Fade Away;" the Dead's biggest popular hit, "Touch of Grey;" and the elegaic "Attics of my Life."

Those who couldn't get tickets to the sold-out concerts followed simulcasts on cable television around the country. At a "watch party" on Chicago's northwest side Chris Wainscott, 42, of Milwaukee, said the time was right for the band to end its run. "After 50 years, you've had your chance to take what you wanted to take from it," said Wainscott, who had seen dozens of concerts since 1994.

Reuters

Singer Bobby Brown struggled through a concert in Atlanta, Georgia, just miles from where his daughter Bobbi Kristina is clinging to life in a hospice.— **PTI**

Bobby Brown struggles with emotions during Atlanta gig

LOS ANGELES, 6 July — Singer Bobby Brown struggled through a concert in Atlanta, Georgia, just miles from where his daughter Bobbi Kristina is clinging to life in a hospice.

The R&B star forgot lyrics and seemed understandably emotionally detached from the concert, frequently walking offstage to hug friends and brother Tommy, reported TMZ.

The gig came just days after Bobbi Kristina, who has been in a coma since a near-drowning incident at her home in January, was moved from a hospital to the hospice once doctors informed Bobby and other family members that they had done all they could for the 22-year-old.

But, despite the dire situation, Brown refused to cancel his concert at Wolf Creek Ampitheater, during which he joined the likes of Mint Condition and Juvenile on the bill.—*PTI*

Clouds already hanging over Nibali after stormy day

ZEELAND, (Netherlands), 6 July — By the time Vincenzo Nibali reached the sanctuary of his team coach, it was a beautiful summer's evening, but a stormy second stage had already left a cloud over his hopes of following up last year's Tour de France victory.

The Italian lost a chunk of time to Alberto Contador and Chris Froome, two of his big rivals to wear the yellow jersey in Paris on 26 July, after a dramatic 166km sweep through the flatlands of southern Netherlands.

Cross winds coming off the North Sea and torrential rain storms made a twitchy peloton break apart and with crashes, mechanical problems and attacks going on all day, Nibali, with fellow GC (general classification) contender Nairo Quintana from Colombia, found himself the wrong side of a split with about 50km remaining.

Team Sky's Froome, who finished in the group with stage winner Andre Greipel, now holds a one minute 21 second advantage over Nibali with Contador 1:09 ahead with only two stages gone.Swiss Fabian Cancellara holds the yellow jersey.

It was a complete contrast to last year's second stage when Nibali attacked Froome and Contador after a hard day in the hills of Yorkshire and powered to victory and the yellow jersey, which he held all the way to Paris.

Nibali, who at one stage even loss contact with the chasing bunch after a puncture, eventually rejoined the peloton and rolled into the dramatic coastal finish at Zeeland one minute 28 seconds behind Froome.

Team director Giuseppe Martineli said it had just been one of those unpredictable days when things do not go quite to plan. He refused to believe Nibali's chances had been seriously undermined.

"Last year everything was great, less so this year, but that's cycling," the Italian told reporters.

Astana rider Vincenzo Nibali of Italy cycles during the 13.8 km (8.57 miles) individual time-trial first stage of the 102nd Tour de France cycling race in Utrecht, Netherlands, on 4 July, 2015.—REUTERS

"It's a lot of time lost for today but it can change tomorrow or the day after."

With the first nine stages offering plenty of danger, Nibali will have opportunities to repair the damage long before the mountains.

Froome, the 2013 champion who crashed out last year, sounded surprised to have built such a lead on Nibali but was not getting carried away.

"It was chaos out there with the storm, the wind everything," said the 30-year-old who is in 10th spot, 12 seconds better than Spaniard Contador.

"One second Nibali was next to me and the next I couldn't believe it when I heard he was distanced. It's the nature of racing in Holland."—*Reuters*

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Alamo, Spanish missions in San Antonio named World Heritage Site

SAN ANTONIO, 6 July — A UN agency named the Alamo and the four Spanish colonial Catholic missions in San Antonio as a World Heritage Site on Sunday, the first place in Texas deemed to be of "outstanding cultural or natural importance to the common heritage of humanity."

The decision caps a nine-year campaign by San Antonio and Texas to have the early 18th Century missions listed alongside world treasures such Britain's Stonehenge, the Taj Mahal in India, and Cambodia's Angkor Wat. The missions are the 23rd World Heritage Site in the United States.

"The City of San Antonio is delighted with UNESCO's decision today and the recognition that our Spanish colonial missions are of outstanding value to the people of the world," Mayor Ivy Taylor said from Bonn, Germany, where the announcement was made.

Visitors walk at the entrance to the Alamo, the most-visited tourist site in the state, in San Antonio, Texas on 2 March, 2015.—REUTERS

Sarah Gould, archivist at the Institute of Texan Cultures, said there are many reasons for the listing of the four missions, which are still used as Catholic churches, and the Alamo, a fortified church, barracks and other buildings that were the scene of the 1836 battle for Texas Independence.

"Other than the Alamo, which has had quite a bit of changes to it, the other four are in really wonderful condition," Gould said, "almost in as good a condition as they were when they were built."

As well as creating the basis for European settlement of what is now the US Southwest, she said the missions were also important in the formation of its early economy, for instance by introducing cattle raising.

Casandra Matej, director of San Antonio's Convention and Visitors Bureau, said Sunday's listing will prompt a full scale, international tourism campaign.

She estimated it will mean more than 1,000 new jobs for the city's already robust tourism industry, and a $100 million annual boost for the region.

But the designation has not been entirely embraced in Texas, where the phrase "United Nations" provokes suspicion among some. The Texas Republican Party's official platform includes opposing "granting jurisdiction and sovereignty over Texas' cultural sites to any international body."

Matej said there was no way that would happen, and noted that the United Nations exercises no "sovereignty" over other US World Heritage Sites, such as Philadelphia's Independence Hall, or Thomas Jefferson's Monticello home in Virginia.

"The current management, how everything is managed, will stay the same," she said. "This is a designation that will draw visitors to our destination, and allow us to share our splendid missions with the world."—*Reuters*

Saskatchewan evacuating thousands more as wildfires spread

TORONTO, 6 July — The Western Canadian province of Saskatchewan said on Sunday it was evacuating an additional 8,000 people from the far north of the province, as wildfires continue to spread and threaten homes.

The provincial government said that as of Saturday there were 114 active fires in the province. More than 5,000 residents have already been moved out of the area in the past week.

The latest evacuations are around the town of La Ronge, roughly 600 km (370 miles) north of the provincial capital, Regina.

A spokesman for the Saskatchewan government said the premier of the province, Brad Wall, has asked Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper for assistance from the armed forces to help with the logistics of the operation.

About 5,000 of the evacuees will be housed in the town of Cold Lake in the neighboring province of Alberta, with the remainder being moved to shelters around Saskatchewan, said the spokesman.

The Saskatchewan government said the province had faced 569 wildfires so far this season, compared with 193 in 2014.

Reuters

Firefighters tackle a wildfire near the town of La Ronge, Saskatchewan on 4 July, 2015 in a picture provided by the Saskatchewan Ministry of Government Relations. —REUTERS

Japan's Fuji TV starts delivery of 4K programmes online

TOKYO, 6 July — Japanese broadcaster Fuji Television Network Inc on Monday started delivering 4K ultra high-definition online programmes, becoming the first commercial broadcaster in the country to commence such a service.

The company kicked off its service with a documentary based on the Hashima coal complex, a site representing Japan's industrialization from the late 19th to the early 20th centuries, in southwestern Japan's Nagasaki Prefecture, and a program introducing illuminated spots in Tokyo.

The broadcaster also said it will soon provide a drama it jointly produced with China.

The programmes can be seen on Fuji Television's official paid video streaming service "Fuji TV on Demand" on computers with 4K displays but not on smartphones.

Kyodo News

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Tuesday, 7 July, 2015

Japan miss 2nd straight Women's World Cup title with US defeat

VANCOUVER, 6 July — Japan's hopes of retaining their Women's World Cup title were shattered with a 5-2 hammering by the United States in the final in Vancouver on Sunday.

Four goals in the first 16 minutes, including a hat-trick from US captain Carli Lloyd — the first in a Women's World Cup final — left Japan with a mountain to climb and although Nadeshiko replied through Yuki Ogimi and an own goal from Julie Johnston, there was to be no way back.

Lauren Holiday and Tobin Heath also scored for the Americans, who avenged their penalty shoot-out defeat to the Japanese in the 2011 final, and secured a record third title and their first since 1999.

"If we had been a bit tighter at the start (the result could have been different), but the players never stopped running until the end and I am proud of them," said Japan coach Norio Sasaki.

"We have had the pressure of being champions these past four years but to get to this stage the players have done really well."

United States players react as they receive the FIFA Women's World Cup trophy after defeating Japan in the final of the FIFA 2015 Women's World Cup at BC Place Stadium. REUTERS

Captain Aya Miyama said, "I have no regrets. I gave everything I had and everyone on the team made an effort to win this World Cup."

"We really tried hard. But winning the final and finishing runners-up are two different things so I feel really sorry about that."

Japan had not conceded first in six wins en route to the final but they got off to the worst possible start and fell behind with just three minutes gone.

Lloyd was allowed to run unchecked into the box and the midfielder swept home Megan Rapinoe's corner grabbing her second from another set-piece two minutes later.

The Americans won a free kick on the right side of the box after Aya Sameshima had brought down Tobin Heath. Julie Johnston flicked on Holiday's kick and the ball hit two defenders before falling for Lloyd to steer in from close range.

Worse was to follow as Azusa Iwashimizu failed to properly head clear a cross from Heath and Holiday buried the loose ball before Lloyd completed her hat-trick with arguably the goal of the tournament.

Lloyd, the tournament MVP, picked up the ball in her own half and the captain spotted Ayumi Kaihori way off her line before uncorking a superb strike from the halfway line beyond the backpedaling Japan goalkeeper and into the net.

Japan failed to manage a single shot until the 23rd minute but American goalkeeper Hope Solo comfortably dealt with an effort from Mizuho Sakaguchi that would have gone wide in any case.

But Ogimi pulled one back in the 27th minute, getting a good first touch on Nahomi Kawasumi's cross and turning to smash past Solo.

"We tried to play our game and never gave up until the end but we could not come back after continuing to concede goals at the start. We just weren't good enough," said Ogimi.

Sasaki sent on former Women's World Player of the Year Homare Sawa, star of Japan's 2011 world title win, for Iwashimizu in the 33rd minute to give Japan more firepower and also replaced Kawasumi with striker Yuika Sugasawa six minutes later.

Sawa applied pressure that paid off as her marker Johnston tussled with her for the ball and headed Miyama's free kick into her own net seven minutes into the second half. But Japan's hopes of a comeback took another blow as the US restored their three goal cushion in the 54th minute.

Kaihori got a hand to a corner from the left, but the ball fell to Morgan Brian, who turned the ball back from the far post for Heath to lash in and make it 5-2.

Japan threw on Mana Iwabuchi and pressed hard to try and claw their way back and Sugasawa went close with a close-range header in the 76th minute, but the Americans comfortably held on for the win.

"We conceded three goals at a point in the game that we shouldn't have and that hurt us. But I think all of the players gave it everything they had," said Sawa, playing in a record sixth World Cup that she said would be her last.

"I myself have no regrets either and gave it everything I had," said the 36-year-old, the top scorer and MVP at the last World Cup in Germany.

Iwabuchi, whose late goal earned Japan a 1-0 win over Australia in the quarterfinals, was unable to hide her disappointment.

"The only thing left is frustration," said the Bayern Munich striker. "This was the last game with these 23 players and it was a great team."—*Kyodo News*

Optimism returns for Woods after rare bogey-free round

Tiger Woods takes a practice swing on the 11th tee at The Old White TPC.—REUTERS

NEW YORK, 6 July — Tiger Woods declared his tie for 32nd at the Greenbrier Classic a "very positive week" and sounded genuinely excited about his prospects ahead of this month's British Open at St Andrews starting on 16 July.

Woods has won twice at the Old Course, in 2000 and 2005, but it would be premature to suggest his game is quite ready to be etched on the Claret Jug once more.

Still, after signing his first bogey-free card in 56 rounds on the PGA Tour, he had reason for tempered optimism after finishing six strokes behind winner Danny Lee in West Virginia on Sunday.

A day after six-times major champion Nick Faldo concluded that Woods was still prone to blocking drives under pressure, the American former world number one was singing a different tune.

"It's the best I hit it in a long, long time," the 14-times major champion told reporters after signing for a three-under 67.

"This could have been one of those special rounds. I really could have gone low. I had full control over all clubs. I hit it great. I had shapes both ways, right-to-left, left-to-right.

"If I just made a couple of putts, this week could have been completely different. I've made some nice strides heading into the British Open."

It is only one month since Woods shot his worst round as a professional, an 85 at the Memorial tournament, and he also missed the cut at the US Open.

Although the easy conditions on a rain-softened course at the Greenbrier did not provide the most exacting test, Woods said that being in the midst of swing changes at the Memorial played a role in what appeared to be a performance that augured badly for his future. "I made a big giant step at Memorial, even though I shot those numbers," he said. "I shot those high numbers but shifting the baseline like I did, consequently I'm here now. Very excited about it.

"I've just got to get used to the feel. It's a completely different motion. It's not a short-term fix. People looking for the one quick fix and the very next day play great golf, it doesn't work that way. "It takes time to build it. I'm very pleased with what I've been able to do."—*Reuters*

Singapore-bound Serena becomes earliest Finals qualifier

NEW YORK, 6 July — World number one Serena Williams added yet another record to her glittering tennis resume by becoming the earliest qualifier for the end-of-season WTA Finals.

The Australian and French Open champion, who is bidding for a rare calendar grand slam, booked a spot at the eight-woman championship in Singapore, still more than three months away, after her Wimbledon third round win over Britain's Heather Watson.

"I'm really thrilled to be the first player to qualify for the WTA Finals and I can't wait to return to Singapore to defend my title," Williams said in a WTA statement on Monday.

"Last year was my first time visiting Singapore and I really enjoyed myself — the crowd is amazing and I'm excited to be going back."

The 33-year-old American, who plays her big sister Venus in the fourth round of the grass court championships later on Monday, has won 20 grand slam singles titles and trails only Steffi Graf (22) and Margaret Court (24) in the all time list.

Serena Williams of the USA celebrates winning a game during her match against Heather Watson of Britain at the Wimbledon Tennis Championships in London, on 3 July, 2015.—REUTERS

She had held the top spot in the rankings for 124 consecutive weeks and was the oldest woman to hold the position since the rankings were introduced in 1975, the WTA said.

The body said Williams was the fastest qualifier for their prestigious championship since the format was revamped in 2003.

WTA chairwoman and CEO Stacey Allaster was full of praise for Williams, who will be bidding for a sixth WTA Finals title on her 10th appearance when the action gets underway at Singapore's Sports Hub from 23 October-1 November.

"Serena is once again inspiring our fans with another historic season and I congratulate her on becoming the first player to secure her place," Allaster said. "I am thrilled for our fans in Singapore that they will have an opportunity to watch one of the greatest players to ever play women's tennis."—*Reuters*

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