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President sends messages of felicitations to LPDR

NAY PYI TAW, 12 July – On the occasion of the 60th Anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and Lao People's Democratic Republic which falls on 12 July 2015, U Thein Sein, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, has sent messages of felicitations to His Excellency Mr. Choummaly SAYASONE, President of the Lao People's Democratic Republic and His Excellency Mr. Thongsing THAMMAVONG, Prime Minister of the Lao People's Democratic Republic.—*MNA*

Challenges go along with potential of Myanmar top-earning industry: MOGSS

By Ye Myint

Photo of Yadana gas field located in Andaman Sea, approximately 60 kilometers offshore the nearest landfall in Myanmar. With a huge estimated reserve and international giants awarded onshore and offshore blocks, Myanmar has a huge potential in the oil and gas sector beyond 2015.

PHOTO: WWW.SMART-TECHNICAL.COM

YANGON, 11 July — Although Myanmar's oil and gas sector has a huge potential for further growth in the coming years, local services firms see challenges that need to be addressed for realizing their potential, the Myanmar Oil and Gas Service Society, an association of local service companies in the country's top-earning industry, said Saturday.

Local companies need to expand their capacity and boost project management skills in order to capture a bigger share of the country's US$20 billion industry, U Aung Ye Soe, secretary-general of the association, said at a seminar on the potential of Myanmar's oil and gas industry beyond 2015 in Yangon.

The secretary-general, who also served as one of the panelists at the seminar, pointed out that around 50 of 162 local companies that have been registered at the Ministry of Energy as of this March are operating in the sector, adding that fewer than 10 are serving as integrated services firms.

"The number of locally owned firms providing services in exploration and production projects of international oil and gas companies is low", he said.

According to the Myanmar Investment Commission, the oil and gas sector was crowned Myanmar's top-earning sector, with the sector attracting more than $3.22 billion in foreign direct investment the previous year, nearly half of the $8.01 billion that entered the country.

A total of 20 foreign firms have been allowed to operate exploration and production projects, 10 each of shallow-water and deep-water blocks, and the signing of contracts for three shallow-water blocks and one deep-water block has been completed, said Dr Myo Thet, vice-chairman of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry.

From fiscal 1988-89 to date, the permitted amount of investment in the country's oil and gas sector has reached a total of $19.64 billion from 151 companies, accounting for 37.74% of all businesses, the vice-chairman said. "In terms of investments by existing enterprises, 93 firms have invested $18.71 billion in the sector, accounting for 40.47%", he said.

(See page 3)

Work on Kyauktan Tsp power plant set to start in 6-12 months

YANGON, 11 July — A public-private joint venture involving firms from Myanmar, India and Singapore will start building a coal-fired power plant in Yangon Region's Kyauktan Township within six to 12 months, pending regional government approval, one of the developers said Saturday.

The Ministry of Electric Power, Myanmar-based Diamond Palace Services Co., Ltd., Singapore-based Global Advisor Pte. Ltd and India-based Orange Powergen Pvt. Ltd plan to build the plant on 600 acres near Chaungwa village, Zebarkonetan village and Meepya village.

Diamond Palace Services Chairman U Thein Than said the plant aims to meet the region's rising demand for power.

"After the Yangon Region government has agreed the project, we will start construction in six to 12 months to complete the project in three years," he said.

According to figures released at a press conference at Kyauktan Township General Administration Office, the estimated value of the project is between US $900 million and $1.2 billion. The project will adhere to an environmental impact assessment and survey by the Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry, a company official said.

(See page 3)

SECM to announce winners of underwriter license in July

By Aye Min Soe

YANGON, 11 July — The Securities and Exchange Commission of Myanmar will announce winners of underwriter licenses this month, ahead of the launch of the Yangon Stock Exchange later this year, SECM chairman and Deputy Minister for Finance and Revenue U Maung Maung Thein said Saturday.

The SECM will select winners from 18 underwriting applicants for the Yangon Stock Exchange, the deputy minister told to the *Global New Light of Myanmar*.

Preparations for launching Myanmar's first exchange, with the abbreviation YEX, would be completed in July, the deputy minister said.

The debut of the YEX has been postponed from October this year to late November or early December to make way for the country's 8 November general election, announced four days ago by the Union Election Commission, he added.

The SECM has received 57 service provider applications for the YEX.

According to figures released in May, there were 20 applications for underwriters, 30 for consultants and seven for brokers and dealers.

SECM invited applications for the four service license categories in January, setting different capital requirements for each.

License costs range from K30 million in paid-up capital for consultancy businesses to K15 billion for underwriters, according to the deputy minister.

(See page 3)

Historic Taungthaman Bridge set for restoration

MANDALAY, 11 July — The 164-year Taungthaman Bridge in Mandalay Region's Amarapura Township will undergo a K227-million restoration under a plan outlined by the region government on Friday.

The meeting at the hall of the region government in Aungmyethazan Township, attended by officials of the Ministry of Culture, also discussed steps for the conservation of Taungthaman Lake.

Region Minister for Finance Dr Myint Kyu explained the funding for the restoration works, while Assistant Engineer U Aye Lwin of the Archaeology and National Museum Department (Mandalay) outlined technical aspects of the project.

Departmental officials discussed sanitation to improve the lake's water quality, including measure to prevent sewage inflows, as well as security measures for the bridge.

The bridge overhaul will involve the replacement of roughly 100 posts and beams, installation of wooden railings, and repairs to damaged posts and power lines.

Thiha Ko Ko (Mandalay)

MCDC, JICA to implement water supply project in Pyigyidagun Tsp

MANDALAY, 11 July — An information session to explain the use of water meters and the water supply project in Pyigyidagun Township was held at the city hall, here, on 9 July.

Mandalay City Development Committee member U Tun Kyi spoke about cooperation between the MCDC and the Japan International Cooperation Agency on the project. He said a plan is under way to install water meters at residences in Ngwedaw Kyigon, C, D, E and Thinpangon wards.

Thiha Ko Ko (Mandalay)

Summer paddy yields 300 baskets per acre in Nyaungshwe Tsp

NYAUNGSHWE, 11 July — A model plot of summer paddy was recently harvested in Mongpyo village, Nyaungshwe Township, Shan State.

Before harvesting of the 10-acre plot, which yielded 300.76 baskets per acre, Head of Township Agriculture Department Daw Moe Thida Htaik urged local farmers to use quality paddy strains and follow good agricultural practices to boost production.

Nay Thurein

TODAY'S MYANMAR NEWS SITES

UEC briefs Muse District officials for 18 Nov. poll

MUSE, 11 July — Union Election Commission member Dr Sai San Win held a meeting Friday with district and township officials at the hall of Muse District General Administration Department to discus the arrangements for the 18 November general election.

The talks included assistance for people with disabilities and measures to ensure the election is conducted in a transparent manner.

The meeting was attended by about 60 officials from Muse, Namkham and Kutkai Township Election sub-commissions and local residents.—*L Soe (Muse)*

MNHRC holds rights workshop in Myingyan

MYINGYAN, 11 July— The Myanmar National Human Rights Commission recently conducted an information session for local residents in Myingyan, Mandalay Region.

Members of the commission gave lectures on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, fundamental rights of citizens under the constitution, the formation of the commission and its activities. The talk at Myingyan basic education high school No. 1 was attended by district and township authorities, departmental officials, social organizations and local residents.—*Zaw Min Naing (Myingyan)*

PERSPECTIVES

Sunday, 12 July, 2015

True democracy heeds voice of people

By *Kyaw Thura*

Despite rapid advancements in communication technology in the 21st Century, the voice of the people often remains unheard or ignored.

For a country to possess genuine democracy, it must have parliamentarians who heed the public's voice. Simply put, responsible and accountable democracy requires the involvement of people from all walks of life.

In fact, elections can be seen as channels through which people can make their voices heard. To this end, the electorate must devote its enthusiasm to the election set for 8 November this year.

The people, the parliament and the government should all walk hand in hand in the democratic process so that favourable reforms will take place and bring about prosperity and stability. In a democracy, every citizen must have their say in shaping policies and influencing decisions that affect their lives.

While democracy is not without challenges, many hands make light work, as the saying goes. It is therefore important for the government to understand that enhancing democratic structures does not solely rest with it. Some prominent challenges include constitutional reforms, decentralization, transparency, accountability and the rights of individuals.

All things considered, democracy calls for all citizens, all political parties, the parliament and the government to take a greater stake in the democratic process. Now is the time for the government to reconsider its position and start to hold the view that there is substantial room to modernize the democratic system by encouraging inclusive participation.

Write for us

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

Due to limitation of space we are only able to publish "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.

'Low-priced' goods beyond reach of ordinary people

By *Su Hnin Lei*

The adjective "low-priced" has been widely used in Myanmar recently, with examples such as "low-priced phones," "low-priced cars," and "low-priced apartments."

Ordinary people could only dream of owning these "low-priced" items in the past. While ordinary people in developing countries may use some of these items, for many in Myanmar, they remain luxury items.

The cost of mobile SIM cards in the past was millions of kyats (thousands of U.S. dollars). It then gradually declined to hundreds of thousands of kyat, and is around 1,500 kyats.

Mobile phone calls can cost 25-50 kyats. It is questionable whether such rates are reasonable for low-income people in the country.

Low-priced automobiles have become a hope for the middle class, while they are still a dream for those on low incomes. The value of used cars decreased from hundreds of millions of kyats (hundreds of thousands of U.S. dollars) to tens of millions of kyats and below.

Although these used cars are sold in instalments through a hire-purchase system, the monthly payments are too high for many families paying for children's education and medical treatments, often earning less than 3,000 kyats per day.

People are awaiting the emergence of low-priced apartments, sometimes called mid-priced apartments. Housing demand is increasing with high population density in Yangon due to domestic migration.

Civil experts have remarked that the ratio of homeowners is still relatively low in Yangon, suggesting apartments should be sold for government staff or company employees through long-term instalment.

Common workers will only be able to own apartments when the government builds low-cost housing and subsidises accommodation. In addition, the government should set up rental apartment projects for the workers.

Living standards of common people show the economic status of the country. Efforts are being made to narrow the gap between rich and poor, and to alleviate poverty.

While the term "low-priced" may be popular, in reality, such goods and services are more like an "impossible dream" for ordinary Myanmar people earning less than the proposed minimum wage of K3,600 per day.

Scholarship provides assistance for school fees, supplies

Kyaw The-ein (MNA)

YANGON, 11 July— Siam Cement Group has launched recruitment for ascholarship programme that provides educational assistance for 200 Myanmar high school students, the conglomerate announced.

Now in its fourth year, the SCG Sharing the Dream scholarship will provide K220,000 per scholar to support the cost of school fees and supplies for an academic year.

This year, SCG will offer 100 scholarships for students in Yangon Region and 100 scholarships for students in Mon State.

Information about the programme is available by contacting the Myanmar Business Executives Association on 01-516639, 09 4200 69902.

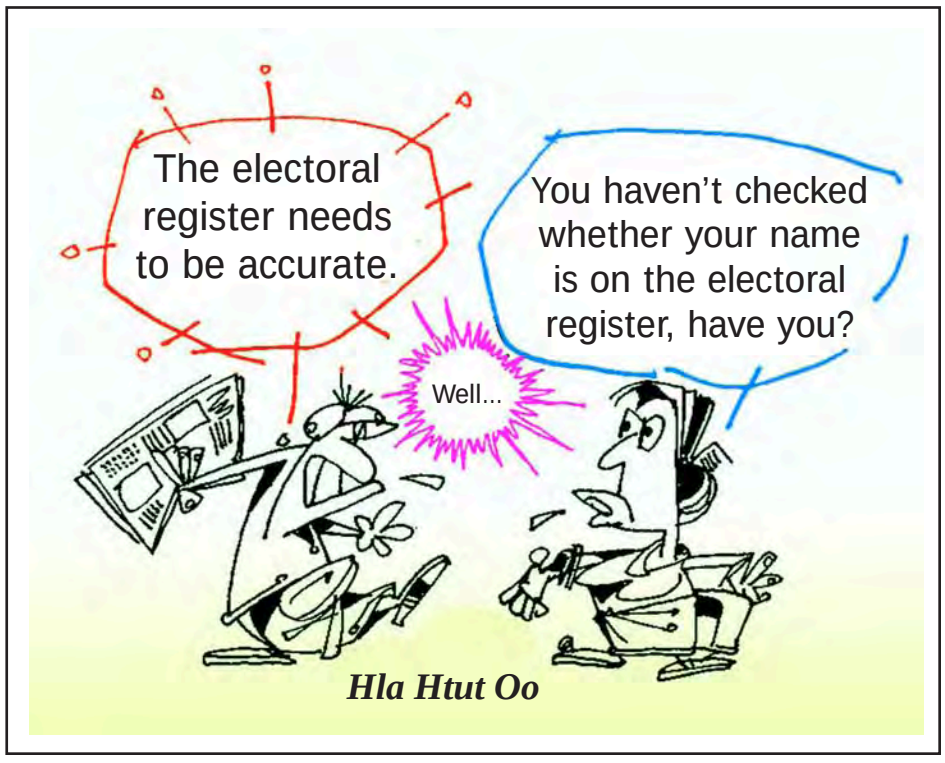
Yoma to hand over school operation to U.K.'s Dulwich College

YANGON, 11 July— Yoma Strategic Holdings will hand over the academic and operational management of Pun Hlaing International School here to Education Index Management, owned by Dulwich College International School, from next month, Singapore's Business Times reported Friday.

Dulwich College has the largest overseas network of any British independent school, with five international schools and two high school programmes in China, South Korea and Singapore.

"We are confident that this will further cement Pun Hlaing Golf Estate's status as a premier residential community in Yangon," said Melvyn Pun, CEO-designate of Yoma Strategic.

Pun Hlaing International School is situated in Pun Hlaing Golf Estate in Yangon.—*GNLM*



Hla Htut Oo

ARTICLE

Working Together is Success

Htun Tin Htun

Wish-to-do makes the impossible possible. Will (mind/ consciousness) makes the impossible possible. Working-hard (efforts) makes the impossible possible. Wisdom makes the impossible possible. The way a team plays as a whole determines its success. You may have the greatest bunch of individual stars in the world, but if they don't play together, the club won't be worth a dime. When a team outgrows individual performance and learns team confidence, excellence becomes a reality.

"One for all and all for one", a slogan gives us the strength to build and develop our organization better. "Each for all and all for each", a slogan gives us the equality and equity for the sustainable development. We are one world. Our Planet, Our Dignity, Our Future makes us a United Team. One can make good, two can make better and a team can make the best. A team effort is a lot of people doing what I say. Passion and teamwork can turn a bunch of ordinary folks into an unbeatable, winning team.

Recognition and appreciation are important driving forces for psychological need of all human beings. Leader is the one who knows the way, goes the way and shows the way. See the future, Engage with and develop others, Reinvent continuously, Value respect and relationships, Embody the values (SERVE) are secrets of great leaders. People who work together will win, whether it is against complex football defences, or the problems of modern society.

Knowledge is power. Character and Wisdom makes human beings to get rich and good. Learn Buddha's DHAMMAPADA (Anthology of Verses) (A Practical Guide to Right Living) for your knowledge and wisdom improvement. Learn Buddha's 37 Bodhipakkhiya Dhamma (The Requisites of Enlightenment: 1) the four establishments of mindfulness; 2) the four right efforts; 3). The four bases of success; 4) the five faculties; 5) the five powers; 6) the seven factors of awakening; and 7) the Noble Eightfold path) for the development of your enlightenment. Effective Team Work can surely provide us knowledge, skills, attitude as well as expertise and behavioural change. Working together works. Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success. If you can laugh together, you can work together.

Individually, we are one drop. Together, we are an ocean. Individual commitment to a group effort — that is what makes a team work, a company work, a society work, a civilization work. Football is an honest game. It's true to life. It's a game about sharing. Football is a team game. So is life. The secret is to work less as individuals and more as a team. As a coach, I play not my eleven best, but my best eleven. Finding good players is easy. Getting them to play as a team is another story.

Nothing is impossible to one with a will. No one is perfect. S/he is not perfect. You are not perfect, I am not perfect. We are not perfect. But practice makes perfect. For practice, we must learn more and more and do it again and again. Learning plus practice can produce RESULTS. No man is wise enough by himself. The work of an advertising agency is warmly and immediately human. It deals with human needs, wants, dreams and hopes. Its 'product' cannot be turned out on an assembly line.

Getting to start needs getting to know each other first. Forming, Storming, Norming and Performing are stages to achieve our goals before we are Adjourning. If everyone is moving forward together, then success takes care of itself. When we are debating an issue, loyalty means giving me your honest opinion, whether you think I'll like it or not. Disagreement, at this stage, stimulates me. But once a decision has been made, the debate ends. From that point on, loyalty means executing the decision as if it were your own.

The way a team plays as a whole determines its success. Build for your team a feeling of oneness, of dependence on one another and of strength to be derived by unity. The only real purpose of a team is for the strengths of the whole to offset the weaknesses of the individual. The leaders who work most effectively, it seems to me, never say 'I'. And that's not because they have trained themselves not to say 'I'. They don't think 'I'. They think 'we'; they think 'team'. They understand their job to be to make the team function. They accept responsibility and don't sidestep it, but 'we' gets the credit.... This is what creates trust, what enables you to get the task done.

Our world has abundant of resources. Keep in mind that, these valuable resources are not only for our generation but for next generation to generations. One piece of log creates a small fire, adequate to warm you up, add just a few more pieces to blast an immense bonfire, large enough to warm up your entire circle of friends; needless to say that individuality counts but team work dynamites. One man can be a crucial ingredient on a team, but one man cannot make a team.

Good governance needs to be appropriately practised and strengthened within our team. Keep our mind pure. Be good to others. Not to do evil. Cultivate good. Be en-dowed with mindfulness, efforts and wisdom. Keep our planet green. Keep our campus clean. Genius is one percent inspiration and ninety-nine percent perspiration. Many hands make light work. I never did anything alone. Whatever was accomplished in this country was accomplished collectively.

Economy, efficiency, effectiveness can be gained through the effective team who produce optimal outputs using minimum inputs. Two people are better than one. When two people work together, they get more work done. When a gifted team dedicates itself to unselfish trust and combines instinct with boldness and effort, it is ready to climb.

There are plenty of teams in every sport that have great players and never win titles. Most of the time, those players aren't willing to sacrifice for the greater good of the team. The funny thing is, in the end, their unwillingness to sacrifice only makes individual goals more difficult to achieve. One thing I believe to the fullest is that if you think and achieve as a team, the individual accolades will take care of themselves. Talent wins games, but teamwork and intelligence win championships.

Honesty is the best policy. Integrity drives the team members to aim high and to make effective performance and get best results. If I have seen further than others, it is by standing upon the shoulders of giants. The man who works for the gold in the job rather than for the money in the pay envelope, is the fellow who gets on. To make your dream a reality at the quickest possible time, work with others who share in the same dream with you.

Endurance, Equity, Equality, Empowerment, Enlightenment, Effort, Encouragement are main principles among others for formation of a great team. When we dream alone it is only a dream, but when many dream together it is the beginning of a new reality. There is no room for jealousy in business. If someone is doing a better job than you are, either find a way to improve yourself or join forces with that person.

Responsibility must be equal to authority. Rights and duties must be balanced and fair. Respect your fellow human being, treat them fairly, disagree with them honestly, enjoy their friendship, explore your thoughts about one another candidly, work together for a common goal and help one another achieve it.

I am a member of a team, and I rely on the team, I defer to it and sacrifice for it, because the team not the individual, is the ultimate champion. I don't believe in team motivation. I believe in getting a team prepared so it knows it will have the necessary confidence when it steps on a field and be prepared to play a good game. The important thing to recognize is that it takes a team, and the team ought to get credit for the wins and the losses. Successes have many fathers, failures have none.

SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Time-bound) is important to set goals, targets and objectives for our Team.

Sustainable Development Goals of Post 2015 Development Agenda can surely be achieved through effective team building and development of team work. It is not a question of how well each process works, the question is how well they all work together. Whatever problems arise in a romantic relationship, it is important to face them together as a couple. If an aspect of the relationship stops working, don't simply ignore it, but instead address it with your partner. Things change, so respond to them together as they do.

Unity is strength. Strengths come from within. Fit no stereotypes. Don't chase the latest management fads. The situation dictates which approach best accomplishes the team's mission. Teamwork divides the task and multiplies the success. When there is trouble, enemies are sometimes forced to get together to solve problems!

Cohesion is the first appliance of every group success. I offer you peace. I offer you love. I offer you friendship. I see your beauty. I hear your need. I feel your feelings. My wisdom flows from the Highest Source. I salute that Source in you. Let us work together for unity and love. Concern for community is one of the principles of cooperatives.

Community development is people-centered development. All the people in the community need to work and rebuild together to achieve their sustainable goals. Cooperation, coordination, collaboration and compromising are 4Cs for programme's success. Caring, sweet speaking, helping, giving, sharing and co-existing make the friends to be closer. These are the elements of team and organization development.

Ethical values for cooperation are honesty, openness, social responsibility and caring for others. The cooperative members, in the tradition of their founders believe in these ethical values. Cooperatives are based on the values of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity. The success of cooperatives depends on team work. There is no such thing as a self-made man. You will reach your goals only with the help of others. The perils of overwork are slight com-pared with the dangers of inactivity. There is no reason why a strong back can't get you as far as a strong mind. Work together, grow together, and conquer together.

Seeing is believing. Learning by doing. Learning by watching. Lifelong learning will definitely cultivate all of us to be good human beings. SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis will make the team to be more effective. By working faithfully eight hours a day, you may eventually get to be a boss and work twelve hours a day. We can accomplish more together than we would dream possible working by ourselves.

Start your diagnosis (Awareness, Advocacy, Assessment), then discover, dream and design (Analysis), then deliver (Action) your products to meet the market demand through the cooperative efforts. This is team work. Your most precious possession is not your financial assets. Your most precious possession is the people you have working there, and what they carry around in their heads, and their ability to work together. You've got to give great tools to small teams. Pick good people, use small teams, and give them excellent tools — so that they are very productive in terms of what they are doing. Make it very clear what they can do to change the specification. Make them feel like. The Team is responsible for what the Team has done. I am responsible for what I have done. You are responsible for what you have done. S/he is responsible for what s/he has done. We are responsible for what we have done. So we have our own responsibility to understand "things as they really are"...

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Dr Sai Mauk Kham gives World Population Day address

NAY PYI TAW, 11 July— Women and girls are most vulnerable in emergencies, with their health needs often neglected, Vice President Dr Sai Mauk Kham said Saturday at a ceremony to mark World Population Day 2015.

The United Nations has announced 11 July as World Population Day since 1987, when the world's population hit five billion. This year's theme is "Vulnerable Populations in Emergencies," with the aim of ensuring women's and adolescent girls' rights to sexual and reproductive health is protected and their safety guaranteed during conflicts and disasters.

Today, the world has a population of over 7.3 billion, with population growth posing considerable challenges.

The vice president cited a study saying nearly 4 percent of women and girls in emergencies are likely to get pregnant, with 15 percent expected to encounter reproductive health complications.

Widespread conflicts and disasters across the world have forced over 50 million people to leave their homes, three-quarters of them women and children. The number of displaced people is projected to hit 78 million next year.

According to the Ministry of Health, Myanmar has over 900,000 pregnant women annually, with more than 2,000 dying in childbirth.

Vice President Dr Sai Mauk Kham says women and girls are most vulnerable in emergencies at a ceremony to mark World Population Day 2015.—MNA

Dr Sai Mauk Kham urged the ministry to place greater emphasis on health care for women, mothers and children, noting the country has a higher infant mortality rate than its neighbours, with 62 neonatal deaths per 1,000 live births. Union Minister U Khin Yi and country representative Ms Janet E Jackson explained functions of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).—*MNA*

Gov't reasserts control over Myawady-Kawkareit roads

NAY PYI TAW, 11 July—Government troops have taken control of two roads linking Myawady and Kawkareit in Kayin State following several clashes with a local ethnic armed group.

Traffic resumed as normal on the old Myawady-Kawkareit Road on 8 July, and on the new one the following day. The Klohtoobaw Karen Organization (KKO) had placed tollgates on the roads and was restricting access, ignoring local government notices to desist.

The group opened fire on security troops led by the head of the Southeast Command on 2 July.

On the new road on 26 May, the ethnic armed group stopped the motorcade of the local chief minister on his way to a religious ceremony in Myawady. The army took no action at that time, wishing to avoid sparking an unwanted conflict.

The old Myawady-Kawkareit Road is a narrow, hilly route, limiting the flow of commodities. The government built the new road in cooperation with the government of a neighbouring country.

Myawady

Vice Presidents send messages of felicitations to LPDR

NAY PYI TAW, 12 July—On the occasion of the 60th Anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and Lao People's Democratic Republic which falls on 12 July 2015, Dr Sai Mauk Kham and U Nyan Tun, Vice Presidents of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, have sent messages of felicitations to His Excellency Mr. Bounnhang VORACHITH, Vice President of the Lao People's Democratic Republic.—*MNA*

Challenges go...

(from page 1)

With the influx of foreign companies looking for local partners as well as setting up operations in Myanmar, the sector offers more employment opportunities and increases the work volume for a robust chain of support services, said Dr Aung Kyaw Htoo, another panelist.

As international firms are required to use 25 percent of local labor and inputs, more efforts are needed for local firms to firmly seize this opportunity, Dr Aung Kyaw Htoo, managing director of DARE, added. He also stressed the need to address the challenges of limited human resources and training and certification in order to extend the scope of services by local firms.

"We need more legislation, more technology transfer, a task force for local content development and business ventures with overseas entities", he said.

For her part, Daw Hin Phyu Phyu Aung, managing director of Lion Energy Company, said that strong and developed local services will be of benefit to oil and gas operators.

She called for local companies to be able to compete with international players and stressed the need to develop both technical and financial competencies and local talent in the industry. The managing director also highlighted the importance of clear rules and regulations and policies, a level playing field and tax incentives for small players. Ms. Vicky Bowman, director of the Myanmar Centre for Responsible Business who was also a panelist, emphasized the importance of creating a responsible business.

In Myanmar, the Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise (MOGE) has signed production-sharing contracts with international oil and gas giants including Daewoo, Total, Chevron and PTT to explore and produce oil and gas at Yadana, Yetagun, Shwe and Zawtika blocks. According to statistics, 53 blocks have been set as onshore and 51 as offshore. Among them, 17 companies have been permitted to operate 17 onshore blocks and nine 20 offshore blocks. Myanmar's oil and gas are being exported to Thailand and China. — *GNLM*

Work on Kyauktan Tsp power plant...

(from page 1)

Dr Win Maung of Environment (Wumkyin) Myanmar Cooperative Ltd said, "Data has been collected from the relevant departments about health and education of locals, and the detailed information will be gathered from residents."

Myanmar draws 72 percent of its electricity from hydropower, 24 percent from natural gas and 4 percent from coal-fired plants.—*Ko Moe (GNLM)*

Ambassadors appointed

NAY PYI TAW, 12 July—The President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has appointed U Thurain Thant Zin, Director General of the Protocol Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to Japan. The President has also appointed U San Lwin, Director General of the Political Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to the Republic of Austria.

MNA

Union FM sends message of felicitations to LPDR

NAY PYI TAW, 12 July—On the occasion of the 60th Anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and Lao People's Democratic Republic which falls on 12 July 2015, U Wunna Maung Lwin, Union Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, has sent a message of felicitations to His Excellency Dr. Thongloun SISOULITH, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Lao People's Democratic Republic.—*MNA*

SECM to announce winners...

(from page 1)

An underwriting license also allows operation in the other three businesses areas.

Joint ventures with foreign firms have been allowed in all four categories to speed up the development of the stock market.

The colonial-building, where Yangon Stock Exchange would be established, is under renovation on 11, July, 2015.
PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE

Japan's Tokyo Stock Exchange and Daiwa Institute of Research Ltd signed an agreement with the Myanma Economic Bank to help establish and run the exchange in December, 2014.

The market will be run by Yangon Stock Exchange Joint-Venture Company, with a 51 percent stake owned by the Myanma Economic Bank under Myanmar's Finance and Revenue Ministry and the remainder by the Japanese partners.

GNLM

China evacuates nearly a million people from expected path of typhoon

SHANGHAI, 11 July — More than 865,000 people have been evacuated from China's eastern province of Zhejiang ahead of Saturday's expected landfall of Typhoon Chan-Hom, state news agency *Xinhua* said.

The typhoon, packing winds of up to 173 kph (108 mph), may be the most powerful to hit Zhejiang in July since the Communist Party took power in 1949, the National Meteorological Centre said.

It will bring heavy rain to parts of China, including the commercial capital of Shanghai and the eastern provinces of Anhui, Fujian, and Jiangsu, besides Zhejiang, the weather service said.

Besides the closure of schools and the suspension of flights and trains, 29,000 ships have returned to port, *Xinhua* said, citing local authorities.

Typhoons are common at this time of year in the South China Sea, picking up strength from the warm waters before dissipating over land.

Earlier this week, typhoon Linfa moved slowly across the north of the Southeast Asian archipelago and up to China's southern province of Guangdong.

Reuters

A wave, under the influence of Typhoon Chan-hom, hits the shore next to residential buildings in Wenling, Zhejiang Province, China, on 10 July, 2015.—REUTERS

Clearer picture on possible cause of MH17 crash: Malaysian PM

SEPANG, (Malaysia), 11 July — Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak said here on Saturday that the criminal investigation team now has a clearer picture on the possible cause of the crash of Malaysia Airlines (MAS) flight MH17, and is carefully looking into and investigating all scenarios.

At a memorial to mark the first anniversary of the tragedy, Najib said in his speech that the investigation of the MH17 incident has been divided into two parts, ie the criminal investigation and the technical investigation.

At this moment, the criminal investigation is still ongoing and carried out by joint investigation team (JIT) comprising of Australia, Belgium, Malaysia, the Netherlands and Ukraine, he said, adding that detailed investigation work is still being carried out by JIT, taken by police and prosecutors to collect evidence to find out the cause of the incident and who is responsible for the crash of MH17, and the investigation of JIT is expected to continue till around the end of 2015.

"It should be understood that the purpose of the ongoing criminal investigation is to bring those responsible for the incident to face justice, and all prosecution mechanism is being considered," Najib said, adding that they are not pointing fingers at any party until the authentic evidence is justified. The prime minister said Malaysia has tabled a draft resolution to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), urging the international court to bring those responsible for shooting down the MH17 to face justice.

He said the proposal of the resolution and the related criminal court, which involved cooperation between government of Malaysia, Australia, the Netherlands, Belgium, and Ukraine, has been distributed to the 15 members of the UNSC for voting process.

He also assured that Malaysia is committed to give full cooperation in the investigation and seek justice for the sake of families and friends of the victims.

On the same day, Malaysian Transport Minister Liow Tiong Lai said in a press conference after the memorial that one of the two main investigations on the downing of MH17 is nearing completion.

"The Dutch Safety Board (DSB), which is leading the technical investigation, has provided all countries involved, including Malaysia, with a draft of the final report," he said, adding that the final report is expected to be officially released in October this year. The memorial was attended by the victims' next-of-kin, MAS staff, Malaysian senior officials, religious leaders and foreign dignitaries.

MAS flight MH17 crashed in eastern Ukraine on 17 July last year on its way from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur, killing all the 298 people on board.

Xinhua

Indonesia's Bali airport reopens after volcanic eruption

Passengers wait in the international terminal at Ngurah Rai Airport on the Indonesian resort island of Bali on 10 July, 2015.—REUTERS

JAKARTA, 11 July — Indonesian authorities reopened the main airport on the popular resort island of Bali on Saturday after its closure on Friday due to a volcanic eruption on nearby Java island, an airport official said. "We have reopened since 10 am local time (0200 GMT).

Flights have resumed," the airport's general manager Trikora Harjo said.

Mount Raung in East Java has been erupting for nearly a week, forcing several airports in the region to close and causing widespread flight disruption on Friday.

All of the airports, including Lombok international airport, have reopened.

Reuters

Indian capital's airport put on alert after bomb call

NEW DELHI, 11 July — Security at the Indira Gandhi International Airport in the Indian capital was beefed up Friday night after its call center in Gurgaon received a call from a person informing about the presence of a "bomb", said local media.

The Press Trust of India quoted sources at the airport as saying the caller, who used an Australian phone number, did not specify any location or airline.

"At around 5:35 pm the airport call centre received a call saying that there is a bomb. The call had come from an Australian number," the report quoted sources as saying.

All security agencies concerned were pressed into service to search and detect the presence of any possible explosive material, said the report.—*Xinhua*

New checkpoint to be built on Thai—Cambodian border

BANGKOK, 11 July — Thai Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha and visiting Cambodian Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Hor Namhong agreed Friday to cooperate toward opening a new checkpoint on the border of their countries.

In their talks at the Government House in Bangkok, the two agreed to set up the checkpoint at Thailand's Ban Nong Ian district in Sa Kaeo province and Cambodia's Satoeng Bot village in Banteay Meanchey province to ease traffic congestion at the existing Klong Luk-Poi Pet checkpoint, deputy spokesman Maj Gen Werachon Sukhondhapatipak told reporters.

They also decided to aim at establishing a special economic zone near the planned new checkpoint to develop the area.

Heavy congestion at the existing checkpoint, involving trucks, tourists and others, causes waiting times of up to five hours to go through the custom and immigration process there.

Kyodo News

Abe mulls visiting China in early September to repair strained ties

TOKYO, 11 July — Prime Minister Shinzo Abe is considering visiting China in early September in a bid to repair strained bilateral ties, a government source said on Saturday.

The premier is exploring the possibility of traveling to the neighbouring country either before or after a ceremony in Beijing slated for 3 September to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II, the source said.

China has extended an official invitation to Abe to attend the event marking Beijing's victory in what it calls the war of resistance against Japanese aggression, but it has yet to receive the Japanese leader's response, Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Cheng Guoping said on Friday.

Abe is hoping to hold talks with Chinese President Xi Jinping during his trip to improve bilateral relations impaired by a territorial row and differing perceptions of history, the source said.

However, the two countries may face difficulties in arranging Abe's China trip because their relations could be swayed by what the premier would say in an expected statement on the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II and China's activities to press sovereignty claims in the East and South China seas.

Beijing has been urging that Abe's statement include a full apology and note that Japan was engaged in a war of aggression.

To lay the groundwork for Abe's visit, Shotaro Yachi, the head of Japan's National Security Council, is planning to travel to China later this month to hold talks with Yang Jiechi, China's top diplomat who serves as state councilor, the source said.

Abe and Xi held talks last November in Beijing and this April in Jakarta on the sidelines of international conferences.

China apparently hopes to improve its relations with Japan before Xi's planned visit to the United States in September, while Abe is eager to bolster his support by repairing ties with Beijing amid Diet deliberations on controversial security bills that could lead to a decline in his Cabinet's approval rating, observers say.

Kyodo News

Greek PM gets backing for bailout; EU, IMF give green light

ATHENS/ BRUSSELS, 11 July — Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras won backing from lawmakers on Saturday for painful reform proposals aimed at obtaining a new international bailout, but he faced a rebellion in his own party that could threaten his majority in parliament.

The measures, which received an initial green light from the European Union and International Monetary Fund before a crucial meeting of the 19 euro zone finance ministers in Brussels, were passed with the support of pro-European opposition parties.

With Greece's banks shut and completely dependent on a credit lifeline from the European Central Bank, the measures were seen as a last chance to avert financial collapse and prevent Greece from being pushed out of the euro.

Euro zone sources said bailout talks are now very likely after the European Commission, European Central Bank and IMF told euro zone governments after a review of Tsipras's proposals that they were sufficient basis to start negotiating conditional loans from the currency bloc's ESM bailout fund.

But in an ominous sign for the stability of the government, 10 members on the ruling benches abstained or voted against the measures and another seven were absent, leaving Tsipras short of the 151 seats needed for a majority of his own.

Prominent leftwingers in his Syriza party signalled before the vote that they could not support the mix of tax hikes and spending cuts proposed by Tsipras, following the rejection of similar austerity measures by voters in Sunday's referendum. Energy Minister

Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras (C) is congratulated by lawmakers after a voting session at the Parliament in Athens, Greece, on 11 July, 2015. REUTERS

Panagiotis Lafazanis, Deputy Labour Minister Dimitris Stratoulis as well as the speaker of parliament, Zoe Constantopoulou, all called "Present", in effect abstaining from the vote and withholding their support from the government.

"The government is being totally blackmailed to acquiesce to something which does not reflect what it represents," Constantopoulou said. Following the vote, where many leftists in his own party were stunned by his acceptance of previously spurned austerity measures, Tsipras said he would now focus on securing a deal.

"The parliament today gave the government a strong mandate to complete the negotiations and reach an economically viable and socially fair agreement with its partners," he said.

"The priority now is to have a positive outcome to the negotiations. Everything else in its own time."The positive evaluation by the three institutions will form a key part of discussions among euro zone finance ministers when they meet in Brussels at 3 pm (1300 GMT).

Leaders from the euro zone and the broader EU are due to meet in Brussels on Sunday. If ministers have agreed to start loan talks, leaders will have no formal decisions to make, but may want to hear more from Tsipras about his plans. Without a deal, they would have to discuss how to contain the fallout a Greek bankruptcy would have on the wider European economy.

After the jubilation in Athens on Sunday following the resounding rejection of further austerity in a referendum, there was bitterness that parliament was being asked to accept a strikingly similar package of measures. The leader of the right wing Independent Greeks party, the junior coalition party in Tsipras' government, said his lawmakers would back the proposals "with a heavy heart".

Five members of Syriza's hardline Left Platform wing signed a letter saying it would be better to return to the drachma, Greece's pre-euro currency, than to swallow more austerity with no debt write-off.

"The proposals are not compatible with the Syriza programme," Lafazanis, who belongs to the far-left faction, told Reuters before the vote. Underlining the unhappiness of many on the left at the government's apparent embrace of austerity, a few thousand demonstrators gathered in front of parliament before the vote to protest against the measures.—*Reuters*

Iran, six powers struggle to overcome deadlock in nuclear talks

VIENNA, 11 July — Iran, the United States and other major powers struggled on Saturday to break a deadlock in nuclear talks that has held up a historic deal that would bring sanctions relief for Teheran in exchange for curbs on its atomic programme.

Teheran and the six powers have given themselves until Monday to reach a nuclear agreement, their third extension in two weeks, as the Iranian delegation accused the West of throwing up new stumbling blocks to a deal.

Among the biggest sticking points at the moment is Iran's insistence that a United Nations Security Council arms embargo and ban on its ballistic missile programme dating from 2006 be lifted immediately if an agreement is reached.

Russia, which sells weapons to Iran, has been publicly supporting Teheran on this issue.

However, a senior Western diplomat said earlier in the week the six powers —the United States, Britain, Germany, France, Russia and China — remained united over the issue, despite Moscow's and Beijing's well-known dislike of the embargos.

Western powers have long suspected Iran of aiming to build nuclear bombs and using its civilian atomic energy programme to cloak its intention — an accusation Iran strongly denies.

Other problematic issues in the talks are access for inspectors to military sites in Iran, answers from Teheran over past activity and the overall speed of sanctions relief.

"Still have difficult issues to resolve," US Secretary of State John Kerry tweeted on Saturday after meeting Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif.

The two men have met nearly every day since Kerry arrived in Vienna more than two weeks ago for what was intended to be the final phase in a negotiation process lasting more than year and a half aimed at securing a long-term deal with Iran.

Also present at Saturday's meeting was European Union foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini. Kerry also met with German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier. The US delegation has not provided readouts of Saturday's meetings.

Kerry told reporters late on Friday the atmosphere in the talks was constructive. "A couple of differences have been decided ... It's safe to say we have made progress," he said, without giving any details. French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius returned to Vienna on Saturday. British Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond said on Friday he would also return soon.

It remained unclear whether Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov would return on Saturday. The Russian foreign ministry told *Reuters* his travel plans had not been finalized.—*Reuters*

Dark clouds are seen over Palais Coburg, the venue for nuclear talks in Vienna, Austria, on 9 July, 2015. —REUTERS

Kerry doesn't view Russia as existential threat-US State Dept

WASHINGTON, 11 July — US Secretary of State John Kerry does not agree with the Marine Corps general nominated to be America's next top uniformed commander that Russia poses an existential threat to the United States, a spokesman said on Friday.

On Thursday, Marine General Joseph Dunford told lawmakers weighing his nomination to be chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff that Russia presented the greatest threat to US national security.

"If you want to talk about a nation that could pose an existential threat to the United States, I'd have to point to Russia," Dunford said. "And if you look at their behaviour, it's nothing short of alarming."

US State Department spokesman Mark Toner said Kerry did not share the assessment, even though Russia's actions in Ukraine posed regional security challenges. "The secretary doesn't agree with the assessment that Russia is an existential threat to the United States, nor China, quite frankly," Toner told a regular news briefing when asked about Dunford's remarks. "You know, these are major powers with whom we engage and cooperate on a number of issues, despite any disagreements we may have with them," he said. "Certainly we have disagreements with Russia and its activities within the region, but we don't view it as an existential threat."

Dunford included China, whose rapidly expanding military has alarmed Pentagon officials, second in his list of top US security concerns, as well as North Korea and the threat from Islamic State militants. Toner said Kerry did consider the rapid growth of groups like Islamic State, particularly in ungoverned spaces, an existential threat.

Dunford added his voice to those Pentagon officials who have supported providing lethal arms to Ukraine to help it defend itself from Russia-backed separatists, a step that President Barack Obama has so far resisted.

White House spokesman Josh Earnest said on Thursday that the administration was mindful of Russia's destabilising activity but Dunford's comment reflected "his own view and doesn't necessarily reflect the ... consensus analysis of the president's national security team."

US Defence Secretary Ash Carter has said he was inclined to provide defensive arms to Ukraine, but has qualified this position by saying that economic sanctions should be the primary focus for exerting pressure on Moscow.

Reuters

Rio de Janeiro subway assailants shoot man dead, force shutdown

RIO DE JANEIRO, 11 July — Assailants shot and killed a man beside a subway-station ticket counter in central Rio de Janeiro on Friday afternoon, prompting a shutdown of the station and renewing security concerns just over a year before the city hosts the 2016 Olympics.

The victim, a middle-aged man whose name has not been disclosed, was followed by three men into the subway station, where one of the assailants shot him and took his bag, according to Metro Rio, the company that operates the subway system in Brazil's second-biggest city.

In addition to the target of the assault, who died shortly after being shot, another bystander was injured in the leg. As of late Friday afternoon, none of the assailants had been arrested.

Police in a statement said they were investigating the shooting, which occurred shortly before 1 pm (1700 GMT) and forced a three-hour shutdown of the Uruguaiana subway station, located in a bustling retail area frequented by shoppers, commuters and office workers.

Local media broadcast photos and videos taken by passengers after the shooting, including some graphic imagery of the victim in a bloodstained shirt lying dead near the subway ticket window.

The incident led news broadcasts and web sites of Brazil's major media at a time when many in Latin America's biggest country, already grappling with an economic downturn and a political crisis, are also worried about increased violence.

Crime levels in Rio and other major cities remain below those of recent decades, when assaults and kidnappings were everyday concerns.

But a spate of deadly attacks, including the fatal stabbing in May of a physician who was riding his bike around a lagoon in an upscale Rio neighbourhood, have heightened concerns that the city and other major metropolitan areas are backsliding on security issues.

Rio will host the first Olympics ever held in South America next year. The opening ceremony, at Maracana stadium just west of the central area where Friday's shooting occurred, is scheduled for 5 August.—*Reuters*

Russia's Putin calls for lifting all sanctions against Iran

UFA, (Russia), 11 July — Russian President Vladimir Putin called on Friday for sanctions on Iran to be lifted as soon as possible after a deal is reached on Teheran's nuclear programme.

Iran and six major powers, including Russia, are discussing a deal that would curb Teheran's nuclear programme in exchange for relief from sanctions.

Putin told a news conference in the Russian city of Ufa that there was a question over which sanctions should be lifted and when, but went on to say they should be ended as soon as possible.

"We are calling for the comprehensive lifting of them as soon as possible," he said.

Iran has also been restricted from selling oil as part of the sanctions. Putin said Iran would probably increase its oil production once the curbs are lifted.

"It is possible, the global economy would adjust to it, I mean that consumption would grow... we are ready for it," he said.

Global oil prices have more than halved since peaking at $115 per barrel in June 2014, prospects of more oil on already saturated market, are dampening the oil prices further.

Oil prices are set to come under further pressure from easing global demand and an expanding glut of crude while a rebalancing of the markets may last well into next year, a West's energy watchdog said on Friday.

The Russian economy has suffered from the lower prices of oil, which together with gas, generate half of state budget revenues.

The European Union has extended a suspension of sanctions on Iran until 13 July to allow ongoing talks about the country's nuclear ambitions to succeed. Putin said he hoped the six major world powers negotiating with Iran will reach a deal soon.—*Reuters*

Russian President Vladimir Putin looks on as he attends a meeting with Uzbekistan's President Islam Karimov in Ufa, Russia, on 10 July, 2015.
REUTERS

Medical diplomacy helps build Cuba's soft power

HAVANA, 11 July — In addition to tropical scenes and hand-rolled cigars, doctors have become yet another leading force of human resources characteristic of Cuba, not only earning respect and hard currencies from the rest of the world, but also building soft power for the Caribbean island.

Cuban President Raul Castro has bestowed medals upon the island's medical staff who contributed to the fight against the Ebola epidemic in Western Africa, the official daily *Granma* reported on Friday.

The State Council, chaired by Castro, granted the Order Carlos J Finlay on Thursday night to 248 members of Cuba's medical brigade. Finlay is a celebrated Spanish-Cuban physician and scientist recognized as a pioneer in the research of yellow fever.

Among the medal winners were two members of the medical team who were recognized posthumously for their merits during their work in Africa as they died in the line of duty, *Granma* said.

The United Nations praised Cuba on Thursday for being at the forefront of the global crusade against Ebola by sending 256 doctors and nurses to Western Africa in an immediate response to a cry for help from the international community and the World Health Organization (WHO) in September 2014.

"I saw their work in the three nations (Sierra Leon, Guinea and Liberia) and I was impressed by their work," UN anti-Ebola specialist David Nabarro told Cuban news agency *Prensa Latina* on Thursday referring to the Cuban medics.

Castro lauded the medical staff's work in fighting the Ebola epidemic in Western Africa, which has left more than 11,200 dead since its outbreak over a year ago, according to WHO official figures.

"You represent the continuation of the personal altruism and selflessness, which have characterized the island's medical cooperation since it began in 1963, with the sending of the first brigade to Algeria," Castro was quoted by *Granma* as saying in his letter.

Cuba's medical staff and know-how have traveled to wider areas beyond Algeria and Western Africa.

During the 67th World Health Assembly held in Geneva in May 2014, Cuban Health Minister Roberto Morales said that since the revolution in the 1950s, about 135,000 healthcare workers have helped improve health services in more than 120 countries.

At present, Cuba has about 50,000 health collaborators and medical brigades in 68 countries worldwide, and some 39,000 doctors from 121 countries have been trained in Cuba as part of the island's so-called medical diplomacy.

The island's prestigious Latin American School of Medicine (ELAM) has trained more than 24,400 medical professionals since 2005, according to the Cuban Health Ministry.

In 2012 alone, 5,694 students from 59 countries graduated from Cuba's free training programme at the ELAM, with the overwhelming majority (2,400) from Bolivia, followed by Peru (453), Nicaragua (429), Ecuador (308), Colombia (175) and Guatemala (170). Enrollment currently numbers 6,075 students from 117 nations, with many from poor families.

After Cuba's 1959 Revolution, revolutionary leader Fidel Castro pushed to make first-world medical services a priority for the government.

Cuba had only over 6,000 doctors at the time, and nearly half of them left to settle in Miami or other parts of the United States, encouraged by then US President Dwight Eisenhower.

Thanks to the government's continuous effort during the past decades, the island now has around 300 hospitals with 80,000 beds and over 750,000 doctors for 11 million Cubans, one of the world's highest rates of doctors per capita, according to the Cuban government.

Xinhua

***Security officials examine the blast site in southwest Pakistan' s Quetta on 10 July, 2015. At least two people were injured in a planted explosion in Quetta on Friday evening, local media reported.—*XINHUA**

Air strike kills Islamic State commander in Afghanistan

KABUL, 11 July — A senior Islamic State commander has been killed by an air strike in eastern Afghanistan, intelligence officials said on Saturday, the fourth high-ranking member of the militant group to be killed in the area in the past week.

Hafez Saeed was the leader of Islamic State in the "so-called Khorasan state", according to Afghanistan's National Directorate of Security (NDS), referring to an old term to describe Afghanistan and Pakistan.

He was killed along with 30 other militants as they gathered in Achin district of Nangarhar Province late on Friday, the intelligence agency said. It did not give any further details about the air strike.

Saeed, a Pakistani, was among a small but increasing number of senior Taleban militants who have switched allegiance to Islamic State in Afghanistan.

Such figures have been targets for US drone strikes, which have killed three other Islamic State commanders in the same area in the past week, including Shahidullah Shahid and Gul Zaman.

After pushing out the Taleban insurgents, Islamic State fighters have in the past two months gained ground in several districts of Nangarhar province, which shares a long and porous border with lawless areas inside Pakistan.

Achin fell to the IS militants last month after heavy clashes with the Taleban.

Reuters

Iraq's Shi'ite militias target Falluja in Anbar campaign

ERBIL, (Iraq) / WASHINGTON, 11 July — Iraqi Shi'ite militia fighters are tightening a noose around the Islamic State-held city of Falluja west of Baghdad as the first stage of a counter-offensive in the Sunni province of Anbar, likely to determine the course of the conflict in coming months.

Islamic State seized Anbar's capital Ramadi two months ago, extending its control over the Euphrates River Valley west of Baghdad and dealing a major setback to Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi and the US-backed army he entrusted with its defence.

While the government initially vowed to swiftly recapture Ramadi, it now appears to have turned instead to Falluja, a city located further downriver and closer to Baghdad, meaning supply lines for a counter-offensive would be less vulnerable.

Colonel Ali al-Yasiri, commander of Iraq's 4th armoured regiment, 1st division, which is fighting near Falluja, said plans for a quick offensive to retake Ramadi were shelved in June after commanders concluded that Falluja would be "a dagger pointed at the army in Ramadi" unless it was tackled first.

"Our commanders gave us orders one week after losing Ramadi to regroup ... in order to launch a counter offensive to retake Ramadi," he told *Reuters*. "This decision failed to win support from all military commanders."

Iraq's Shi'ite paramilitaries and members of Iraqi security forces gather at North of Fallujah in province of Anbar, on 6 July, 2015.—REUTERS

As the government seeks to claw back territory, Abadi has turned to the mainly Shi'ite Hashid Shaabi militia fighters who have proven more successful than the army on the ground.

In April, the militia recaptured the city of Tikrit, former dictator Saddam Hussein's home town on the Tigris River north of Baghdad. But until the fall of Ramadi in May, the government was reluctant to deploy the Shi'ite fighters west of Baghdad in the valley of Iraq's other great river, the Euphrates, where Sunni tribes have been hostile to outsiders for generations.

The army seems to be taking advantage of the extra capabilities offered by the militia umbrella group, which includes Iranian-backed elements. Yasiri welcomed the Hashid's involvement, saying the army had struggled unsuccessfully for 18 months to contain Sunni insurgents in Anbar.

Abadi and the army can rely on US-led air strikes, more closely coordinated since US officers moved into a military base less than 10 miles (15 km) from Falluja and started overseeing training of Sunni tribal recruits there.

Jets and artillery have been pounding militant targets in both Falluja and Ramadi, inflicting heavy daily casualties on militants and civilians alike, according to medical sources.

But a US official, speaking on condition of anonymity, suggested a lack of Iraqi army control of militia activities in Falluja would prevent the kind of air support for the campaign that the United States has offered elsewhere in Iraq.

Shi'ite militia figures say they will take the lead on the ground, not the army.

"Hashid forces are closing in on Daesh terrorists inside Falluja after seizing almost all supply routes around the city," said Muen al-Kadhimi, a senior aide to Hadi al-Ameri, commander of the Iranian-backed Badr organization, the most powerful of Iraq's armed Shi'ite groups.

Shi'ite fighters and army troops have made gains north of Falluja this week, although they faced heavy resistance from Islamic State fighters who sent car bombs to stem the advances. Authorities say they already control Falluja's eastern, southern and western approaches. Tribal and insurgent sources in Anbar reported an Islamic State attack early on Friday in villages between Falluja and Ramadi, which lie about 40 km (25 miles) apart on the Euphrates. But their opponents insist the campaign to retake Anbar is on track. "Now we are only 5 km (3 miles) from the centre of Falluja and the plan to liberate the city is going perfectly," said Kadhimi.

He confirmed the strategy of retaking Falluja before the provincial capital: "We can't go to Ramadi first and leave our back exposed. This is why Falluja is a prior target." Falluja saw the fiercest fighting of the US occupation which followed Washington's 2003 invasion to topple Saddam Hussein, and has also been a centre of Sunni hostility to the Shi'ite-led government in Baghdad.—*Reuters*

One person killed in Cairo bombing at Italian consulate

CAIRO, 11 July — A bomb exploded in front of the Italian consulate in Cairo on Saturday, killing one person, officials said, raising the possibility that Islamist militants will open a new front against foreigners in Egypt.

A security official told *Reuters* the blast was caused by a car bomb. State news agency *MENA* cited a senior security source as saying preliminary investigations indicated that a bomb was placed under a car near the consulate and remotely detonated.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the early morning blast, which caused heavy damage to the consulate. It shook other buildings downtown and could be heard in several surrounding neighbourhoods.

A health ministry spokesman said one Egyptian civilian was killed and 10 wounded. *MENA* separately said two policemen were among the wounded.

Italy's Foreign Minister Paolo Gentiloni said there were no Italian victims in the blast. "Italy will not be intimidated," he said on Twitter.

Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi has said militancy poses an existential threat to Egypt, other Arab states and the West.

One of the toughest security crackdowns in Egypt's history has weakened the mainstream Muslim Brotherhood group, blamed by security officials for small-scale bombings. The Brotherhood says it is a peaceful movement.

Meanwhile Islamic State's Egyptian affiliate, based in the Sinai, poses a major security threat. It has killed hundreds of soldiers and police since the army deposed President Mohamed Mursi of the Brotherhood in 2013 after mass protests.

Egypt has witnessed a recent increase in attacks against tourism targets, including a suicide bombing near the ancient Karnak temple in Luxor last month.

An attack on Westerners could signal a dangerous escalation of violence in the country, which is relatively stable in a region engulfed by militancy and sectarian conflict since the Arab Spring uprisings.

A Western diplomat said he was aware of the explosion in front of the consulate but could not confirm that the building was the target.

The violence, and political turmoil triggered by the 2011 revolt that toppled autocrat Hosni Mubarak, have hurt Egypt's tourism industry and economy.

Two weeks ago, a car bomb killed the country's top public prosecutor and militants affiliated to Islamic State attacked several military checkpoints in North Sinai, in what was the fiercest fighting in the region in years.

Reuters

An Egyptian security official stands with working dog as they arrive to inspect the site of a bomb blast at the Italian Consulate in Cairo, Egypt, on 11 July, 2015.—REUTERS

Saudi-led air strikes hit Yemeni cities two hours into truce

SANAA, 11 July — Saudi-led air strikes hit Yemen's capital and another main city causing explosions, residents reported, two hours after a United Nations humanitarian truce took effect.

Bombing pounded Yemeni military positions east of the capital Sanaa and also Yemen's third largest city Taiz.

The UN-brokered pause in the fighting was meant to last a week to allow aid deliveries to the country's 21 million people who have endured over three months of bombing and civil war.

A coalition of Arab states has been bombing the Iranian-allied Houthi rebel movement since late March in a bid to restore to power Yemen's President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi, who has fled to Riyadh.

The group controls much of Yemen, including Sanaa and Taiz.

Air raids and fighting have killed more than 3,000 people since then.

Residents in areas of heavy combat between Houthi forces and local militiamen reported that ground fighting and Saudi-led air strikes on the Houthis had increased across the country in the hours before the truce was to take effect.

All parties to Yemen's conflict had welcomed the announcement of the truce and called for it to be extended.

But the exiled government wants the group to release prisoners and give up land, while the Houthis say they doubt any calm would last.

"We don't have big hope in its success because its success is linked to the commitment of the Saudi regime and its allies," Abdel-Malek al-Houthi, leader of the Houthi movement, said in a televised speech on Friday.—*Reuters*

RBS looking to sell $5 billion Greek shipping loan business

LONDON / ATHENS, 11 July — Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS.L) is winding down its Greek operation and is putting its $5 billion (3 billion pound) shipping loans portfolio up for sale as the group scales back non-core activities, finance sources familiar with the plans said on Friday.

The move, part of a wider strategy by RBS to shrink parts of its international business, comes as Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras makes a last ditch effort to secure a bailout from international creditors and prevent a financial meltdown in the country.

For decades, RBS has been a top lender to the global shipping industry and its Greek office — with an estimated 60 staff members — has played a pivotal role.

"We won't be around for much more in Greece. RBS is slowly closing up operations here," one source at RBS said.

"The shipping business is up for sale. They have decided to sell it, if there is a buyer by December."

RBS is downsizing its corporate and institutional banking business in the Middle East, Africa, parts of Europe and Asia as the lender, majority owned by the British government, focuses on its home market.

British state-backed rival Lloyds Banking Group (LLOY.L) has also been exiting the ship finance sector and sold $500 million from its remaining ship finance portfolio in April last year, sources told *Reuters*. Pricing on that deal was in the region of 80 percent of the value of the loans, one of the sources said at the time.

Pedestrians are reflected in the glass of an advertising board as they walk past a branch of The Royal Bank of Scotland in central London, Britain on 17 June, 2015.
REUTERS

Greek ship owners are among the country's wealthiest tycoons and the sector has been a major market for shipping banks despite tough conditions.

The Greek fleet, which includes Greek and foreign-flagged ships, is one of the biggest in the world and provides vital income for the country.

"This is a sad time for the ship finance industry when one of the market leaders for decades will seemingly no longer be with us (in Greece)," a finance source said.

Shipping still faces a multi-billion dollar funding hole as many European banks have retreated from the sector, partly due to capital constraints and regulatory demands to shore up reserves in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis.

RBS's former shipping boss Lambros Varnavides, one of the industry's most influential players who retired last year, helped the bank to build a particularly strong presence in Greece.

While Greek shipping magnates generally operate from the Athens suburbs and the port of Piraeus, their companies are largely registered in places like the Marshall Islands and the Turks & Caicos. The firms are often listed on stock exchanges abroad and their ships fly foreign flags such as Liberia's. Given the international nature of their business, top Greek ship owners have been largely unaffected by the country's crisis.

The finance source said RBS's shipping loans portfolio in Greece was worth $5 billion. The bank had an estimated further $6 billion of loans in the rest of its global shipping book.

The remaining $6 billion of shipping loans were expected to be managed out of the UK, the source added.

RBS, which briefly became the world's biggest bank after an acquisition binge under former chief executive Fred Goodwin, has undergone a complex restructuring to focus on lending to British households and businesses.

Reuters

Pledges of $3.4 billion for Ebola recovery made at United Nations

***Ambulances are parked in Nedowein, Liberia, on 10 July, 2015.—*REUTERS**

UNITED NATIONS, 11 July — Some $3.4 billion in pledges were made at the United Nations on Friday to help Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea stamp out Ebola and begin rebuilding health systems and economies devastated by the worst outbreak on record of the deadly hemorrhagic fever.

The United Nations had said that $3.2 billion was needed to support the three states' national recovery plans for the next two years. Liberia's President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf had said $4 billion was needed to cover a separate sub-regional plan.

Helen Clark, head of the UN Development Programme, said the preliminary tally of pledges on Friday took the total amount allocated so far for Ebola recovery to more than $5 billion, which she described as "a great start."

Johnson-Sirleaf also again appealed for international donors to cancel debt owed by the West African nations.

"The world as a whole has a great stake in how we together respond to this global threat," Johnson-Sirleaf told the pledging conference. "Diseases, just like terrorism, know no national boundaries."

The Ebola outbreak, which began in Guinea in December 2013, has killed more than 11,200 people across West Africa. Ebola re-emerged in Liberia last week, nearly two months after it was declared free of the virus, while neighbouring Guinea and Sierra Leone are still struggling to eliminate it.

"The threat is never over until we rebuild the health sectors Ebola demolished, until we rebuild the livelihoods in agriculture that it compromised, until we shore up government revenues it dried up; and until we breathe life again into the private sector it has suffocated," Sierra Leone's President Ernest Bai Koroma told the UN conference.

Among the largest pledges were some $381 million from Britain, $266 million from the United States, $650 million from the World Bank, $220 million from Germany, $500 million from the European Union, $745 million from the African Development Bank and $360 million from the Islamic Development Bank.

"We cannot yet breathe a sigh of relief. Instead, let us collectively take a deep breath and resolve to finish the job," UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said earlier on Friday.—*Reuters*

Thousands of chickens to be killed after bird flu alert in northern England

LONDON, 11 July — Up to 170,000 birds at a large poultry farm in northern England are to be culled following a suspected case of bird flu, the British government's Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) announced on Friday.

Defra has also established a 10 km temporary control zone around the farm near Preston in the county of Lancashire. The order bans the movement of all animals from the farm and other poultry farms in the zone. The farm at the centre of the suspected outbreak has not been named.

Government Chief Vet Nigel Gibbens issued a statement saying the risk from the suspected outbreak to the public was very low, while the country's Food Standards Agency has said there is no food safety risk for consumers.

The ban will hit exhibitors at a large countryside show taking place on Saturday in the locality. It means exhibitors travelling from many parts of England and Wales will be unable to exhibit their birds.

In a statement issued on Friday, Defra said: "We are investigating a case of suspect avian flu (bird flu) near Preston Lancashire and movement restrictions have been put in place. A temporary control zone has been imposed at a poultry farm in Lancashire."

"All birds at the premises will be humanely culled as a precautionary measure to limit the risk of disease spread," Defra added.

The agency said the decision to take precautionary action has been taken based on the clinical symptoms displayed by birds at the farm and emerging laboratory findings.

"The investigation into the suspect case and laboratory tests are ongoing. We have a strong track record of controlling and eliminating previous outbreaks of avian flu in the UK. Outbreaks in Yorkshire last year and Hampshire in February were both successfully contained, allowing restrictions to be lifted at the earliest opportunity," added Defra.

Chief Vet Nigel Gibbens added: "We have taken swift precautionary action to limit the risk of disease spreading. These measures to control the movement of poultry and humanely cull birds at the farm are part of our tried and tested approach to deal with such incidents."

"Poultry keepers should remain vigilant for signs of disease and maintain the highest levels of biosecurity at all times," Gibbens added.—*Xinhua*

China's civil aviation industry sees rapid growth in 2014

BEIJING, 11 July — China's civil aviation industry achieved steady growth in 2014, the civil aviation authority said on Friday.

Air travellers on domestic and international flights hit 392 million, up 10.7 percent year on year, according to the Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC).

The industry generated operation revenue of 619 billion yuan (101 billion US dollars), up 8.2 percent. Profits climbed 14 percent to reach 28.9 billion yuan, 3.5 billion yuan more than the previous year.

However, there is still room for improvement in terms of punctuality rates, which posted 68.4 percent last year, down from 72 percent in 2013, the CAAC said.

Xinhua

Mexico City could be first globally to limit Uber cars

MEXICO CITY, 11 July — Mexico City could become the first city in the world to limit the number of Uber cars, according to draft regulation that the company said on Friday also threatens to wipe out its most popular service in the giant metropolis.

Aside from the fleet limit, the plan seen by *Reuters* aims to enforce a minimum car value of 250,000 pesos ($15,909) on Uber and companies like it, a big worry for the ride-hailing service that is coming under increasing pressure from regulators.

The San Francisco-based company said the minimum value would hit hard Uber X, its cheapest and most popular service used by 90 percent of drivers. The start-up cost to most drivers using the service was about 150,000 pesos, Uber said.

"This would imply the end of Uber X," the company said in a statement. "This would dramatically increase the cost and decrease availability for Mexican riders."

An illustration picture shows the logo of car-sharing service app Uber on a smartphone next to the picture of an official German taxi sign in Frankfurt on 15 Sept, 2014.—REUTERS

A Mexico City government official working on the regulation confirmed the details of the plan, which was drafted on Thursday and is expected to be finished next week. The official noted that details of the draft are still being negotiated.

The draft does not specify the exact car limit. Regulation by Mexico City would be the first for Uber in Latin America.

All cars in Mexico City worth over 250,000 pesos are subject to an annual tax, meaning the proposed regulation carries a potential double-whammy for the services.

No city in the world has yet imposed a cap on the number of Uber cars in circulation, Uber's public policy chief Corey Owens said this week in an interview.

Ruben Alcantara, a taxi union leader, said he would demand that Uber's cars cost at least 400,000 pesos when he meets with the government to discuss the regulation on Monday.

Uber, which has been valued at over $40 billion, opened in Mexico City in 2013 and says it is one of its fastest-growing markets with 500,000 customers and over 10,000 drivers, some of whom share cars.

Its competitor Cabify, which says it has 300,000 users in the city, said a limit on its number of vehicles made "no sense" because many of its drivers worked part-time. The planned regulation would also require Uber's drivers to have permits and to pay a percentage of its revenue to a city transport fund, as shown by an earlier draft.

A city official said on Tuesday the permits were expected to cost 1,599 pesos a year and the revenue levy would be 1.5 percent, a figure that Owens put at the "high end" of what the company pays in other major cities.

The figures could still change, officials say.

Reuters

Sino-UK remote sensing satellite constellation launched

BEIJING, 11 July — Three one-metre resolution optical Earth observation satellites were successfully launched early on Saturday, according to operator Twenty First Century Aerospace Technology Company Ltd (21AT).

The satellites, which will form the DMC3/TripleSat Constellation, were launched from a site in India and were part of a Sino-UK cooperation project.

The satellites were developed by UK-headquartered Surrey Satellite Technology Ltd (SSTL), which is the world's leading small satellite company and part of the Airbus Group.

21AT, a commercial Earth observation satellite operator based in Beijing, provided the imaging capacity of the three satellites and dubbed the Constellation "Beijing-2."

The Chinese company will manage the satellites' operation, including observation and control, and data reception and production, as well as related services.

The cooperative contract for the DMC3/TripleSat Constellation was signed in London in 2011 and witnessed by the UK prime minister and Chinese premier. According to SSTL, the satellites provide the best combination of spatial resolution and time resolution — which stimulates monitoring applications, such as urban planning and intelligent management, at a very high resolution.

Wang Zhiyong, 21AT deputy general manager, said Beijing-2 was a state-approved programme and was part of national civilian-use space infrastructure.

China has encouraged private investment to support the launch and operation of remote sensing satellites, and ground application systems for satellite navigation. Industry observers heralded "Beijing-2" as an important milestone in the involvement of the private sector and the commercialization and international cooperation in the industry.

Xinhua

New app to help tourists experience best of Irish design

DUBLIN, 11 July — A new app was launched on Friday to help foreign tourists as well as Irish people discover and experience the best of Irish design.

The app, Design Island, features curated recommendations from design experts and enthusiasts on things to do and places to visit, allowing users to experience the best that the island of Ireland has to offer from a design perspective. The app has been developed for use during and beyond the Irish Design 2015 programme, a year-long initiative backed by the Irish government promoting and celebrating Irish design in Ireland and internationally in order to drive job creation, grow exports and increase competitiveness. Creation of the new app has been led by a team at IBM's recently launched design studio in Dublin, which is being expanded at the IBM Technology Campus in Dublin's Damastown for creative collaboration by designers, developers and product managers.—*Xinhua*

BlackBerry snags two new domain names as Android chatter heats up

TORONTO, 11 July — BlackBerry Ltd (BB.TO), which has been coy about its ambitions to make a mainstream Android smartphone, fueled more speculation about its plans this week when it scooped up two Android-related domain names.

Several blog posts in the last two days have noted that the Canadian handset maker bought the domain names "AndroidSecured.com" and "AndroidSecured.net" this week. That spurred more chatter that it intends to build a device powered by Google Inc's (GOOGL.O) Android platform, which powers the vast majority of smartphones sold across the globe.

The purchase of the domain names is particularly interesting since BlackBerry Chief Executive John Chen has declined to confirm a June *Reuters* report that said the company was planning an Android phone.

Speculation that BlackBerry will embrace Android was also spurred this week by a Digitimes report that said the company plans to roll out several models of Android-based phones.

In the past three weeks, however, Chen has said at least twice that he would only build an Android phone if he can "secure Android". BlackBerry downplayed the significance of its domain name purchases in an email on Friday, saying: "BlackBerry frequently registers domain names to support the breadth of our cross-platform portfolio. Android is an important part of our cross-platform enterprise software strategy."

Indeed, one of the domains, "AndroidSecured.com", currently redirects users to a BlackBerry enterprise-focused site.

But that has not stopped a barrage of chatter on tech blogs about the purchases being part of BlackBerry's plan to build its own secure Android, going beyond supporting existing Android phones on its BES12 device-management system. BES12 allows corporate and government clients to secure Android-, iOS-, Windows- and BlackBerry-powered devices on their networks.

Under the leadership of Chen, the Waterloo, Ontario-based company has been pivoting toward software and device management as its recent devices, powered by its BlackBerry 10 software, have failed to win mass appeal. Analysts and tech gurus believe a move to Android could give BlackBerry's device arm a new lease on life.

The company already helps provide enhanced security for some of Samsung Electronics' (005930.KS) Android line-up. It also helped US aircraft maker and defense contractor Boeing Co (BA.N) build Boeing Black, an ultrasecure Android smartphone for defense and security customers.—*Reuters*

Samsung Electronics to bring forward key smartphone launch

SEOUL, 11 July — Samsung Electronics Co is bringing forward the launch of a key premium smartphone model, a person familiar with the matter told *Reuters* on Friday, as the South Korean tech giant seeks to revive sales after a sluggish second quarter.

The world's top smartphone maker will launch a new version of its Galaxy Note phablet in mid-August, the person said, declining to be identified due to the sensitivity of the matter. Previous versions, such as the Note 3 and 4, typically launched in September.

A Samsung spokeswoman declined to comment.

The mid-August launch will likely put the new Note smartphone model on the market ahead of arch-rival Apple Inc's next iPhones. The US company is preparing for its largest initial production run for new phones so far by the end of the year, the *Wall Street Journal* reported earlier this week.

Samsung is seeking to rebound from a disappointing 2014, when its annual profit hit a three-year low as smartphone earnings slumped. Though Samsung's earnings are recovering, its second-quarter guidance of a 6.9 trillion won ($6.11 billion) operating profit fell short of market expectations following a supply shortage for the curved-screen version of its flagship Galaxy S6 smartphone.

"I don't know how much the earlier launch will help boost the company's average selling price for smartphones, but this suggests that Samsung will work hard to maintain its market share for the high-end market," said HDC Asset Management fund manager Park Jung-hoon.

Reuters

A man walks at the Samsung Electronics' headquarters in Seoul on 7 Jan, 2015.—REUTERS

24 people killed in stampede in Bangladesh

Dhaka, 11 July — At least 24 people were killed and over 50 injured in a stampede that occurred in Bangladesh early Friday morning during a free handout of clothes to the poor, police said.

Abu Ahmed, a district police official, told *Kyodo News* that all of the victims of the incident at a chewing tobacco factory in northern Mymensingh district were women and children.

A huge number of people who had gathered at the gate of the factory tried to rush in when it opened, causing the stampede, according to witnesses.

Witnesses said the factory's owner distributes clothes to deprived people every year during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan.

Police detained six people, including the factory owner and his son, over the case, police sources said.— *Kyodo News*

Sri Lanka's main opposition confident of polls victory despite defection

Colombo, 11 July — Sri Lanka's main opposition on Saturday said that it was confident of winning the parliamentary elections scheduled to be held in the island nation next month despite a group of opposition members defecting from the party to join the ruling United National Party (UNP).

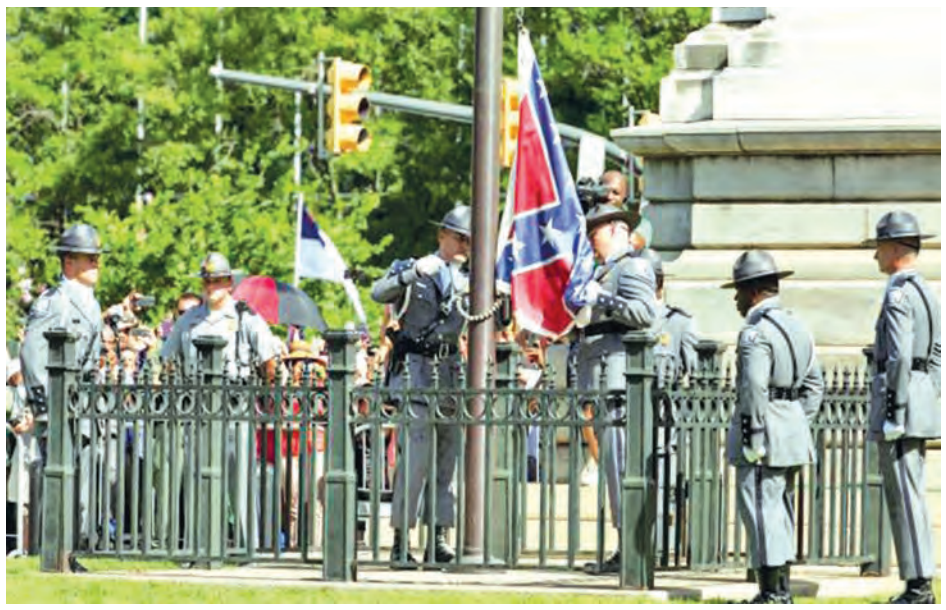
Opposition United People's Freedom Alliance (UPFA) member Dinesh Gunewardena told *Xinhua* that despite reports that an alliance was to be formed between the defected group, the UNP and Sri Lanka's main Buddhist party, the Jathika Hela Urumaya (JHU), the opposition, which included former Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapakse, was confident of forming a new UPFA government after the 17 August elections.

"Anyone breaking away from the party will not be able to prevent a UPFA victory," he said.

Several Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) members who belong to the UPFA alliance on Friday said they will support the UNP while the JHU and Sri Lanka's main Muslim party, the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC) said they too will contest next month's election under the UNP ticket.

Xinhua

South Carolina lowers Confederate flag in wake of church massacre



The Confederate battle flag is permanently removed from the South Carolina statehouse grounds during a ceremony in Columbia, South Carolina, on 10 July, 2015. — Reuters

Columbia, 11 July — South Carolina on Friday removed the Confederate battle flag from the state capitol grounds in a joyous but solemn ceremony that relegated a divisive symbol of the South's pro-slavery legacy to a museum.

The Civil War flag, which had flown at the State House for 54 years, came down less than a month after a white gunman killed nine black men and women in a historic Charleston church.

As an honour guard of black and white state troopers ceremoniously lowered the flag and folded it to be taken to a nearby museum, a crowd chanted "U-S-A, U-S-A" and broke out singing a refrain from a late 1960s pop song, "Na na na na, hey hey, goodbye."

While the banner is a hated symbol of slavery and racism to many, it is an emblem of Southern pride and heritage for others.

The banner was moved to the "relic room" of the state military museum in Columbia, South Carolina's capital. There it will take its place among other artefacts carried by Southern Confederate soldiers 150 years ago in the Civil War.

President Barack Obama, the United States' first black president, tweeted, "South Carolina taking down the confederate flag — a signal of good will and healing, and a meaningful step towards a better future."

South Carolina Republican Governor Nikki Haley, who pushed for the state legislature to enact a law to remove the flag, was among those watching on the State House steps.

The legislature gave final passage to the bill, required before the flag could be moved, by an overwhelming majority on Thursday after three days of tense debate.

In an interview with NBC's "Today" TV show on Friday before the flag came down, Haley said, "I'm thinking of those nine people today," referring to the "Charleston 9" gunned down on 17 June at the port city's African Methodist Episcopal church. Among the slain were Reverend Clementa Pinckney, the church's pastor and a widely admired state senator.

The 21-year-old white man charged in the massacre, Dylann Roof, appeared in photographs posing with a Confederate flag that surfaced on a website bearing a racist manifesto. That image spurred politicians and leading national retailers to pull the flag from display.

In South Carolina, the first state to secede during the 1861-1865 Civil War, this week's debate in the state legislature brought an emotional closure to a symbol long divisive in the state. The Confederate battle flag waved atop the state capitol from 1961 to 2000, when it was moved to a Confederate war memorial near the State House entrance as a compromise with those who wanted it removed from the grounds permanently.

The state raised the banner over the capitol dome at a time when segregationists were resisting federal efforts to integrate the South.

Reuters

Cambodian deputy PM praises China for contributing to socio-economic development in Cambodia

Phnom Penh, 11 July — Cambodian Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sar Kheng said on Friday evening that China has greatly contributed to socio-economic development in Cambodia and vowed to further enhance the bilateral ties for mutual benefits.

At an event at the Chinese Chamber of Commerce in Cambodia, Sar Kheng highly spoke of close relations and cooperation between Cambodia and China, particularly in politics, diplomacy, economics and trade.

He said China is the key source of capital for Cambodia, stressing that the Chinese investments in Cambodia have reached over 10 billion US dollars in the fields of agriculture, infrastructures, energy, aviation, tourism, telecommunications, and banking and finance.

Cambodian Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sar Kheng (L) and Chinese Ambassador to Cambodia Bu Jianguo (R) attend an announcement ceremony of the president of the 7th Council of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce in Cambodia, in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, on 10 July, 2015. Sar Kheng said on Friday evening that China has greatly contributed to socio-economic development in Cambodia and vowed to further enhance the bilateral ties for mutual benefits. — Xinhua

Moreover, China has provided grants, non-interest loans and concessional loans to Cambodia for socio-economic development, he added.

"These investments and financial assistance have greatly contributed to socio-economic development and poverty reduction in Cambodia,"said Sar Kheng.

Chinese Ambassador to Cambodia Bu Jianguo said the two-way trade volume between China and Cambodia was valued at 3.8 billion US dollars last year and was expected to hit 5 billion US dollars by 2017.

"The Chinese Chamber of Commerce in Cambodia has been playing a very important role to further enhance relations and cooperation between China and Cambodia, especially in economics and trade," she said at the event which gathered about 500 Chinese business people and Cambodian government officials.

Founded in 1996, the Chinese Chamber of Commerce in Cambodia has more than 600 Chinese companies as members to date, said Gao Hua, who was re-elected as the president of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce in Cambodia on Friday. —*Xinhua*

Scaffold collapse kills three, injures four in southern Vietnam

Ho Chi Minh City, 11 July — Three workers died when a scaffold for the construction of a 17-story building collapsed here on Friday, with four others injured, local media reported on Saturday.

Of the four injured workers, one was discharged from hospital on Friday, and the rest are still under treatment.

One of the three, 53-year-old Le Ngoc Mai, underwent surgery as his abdomen was pierced through by a metal bar, local newspaper *Tuoi Tre (Youth)* reported.

Deputy Construction Minister Le Quang Hung has asked the Department of State Assessment of Construction Work Quality to coordinate with concerned agencies to look into the accident as well as similar incidents that have occurred recently.

On 25 March, a scaffold at a construction site of a Taiwanese- invested steel-mill complex in central Ha Tinh Province collapsed, killing 13 Vietnamese workers and injuring 29 others.

Ho Chi Minh City has so far this year seen 27 deadly workplace accidents with 28 victims, according to *Tien Phong (Pioneer)* newspaper. Of the accidents, 13 cases happened in the construction sector.—*Xinhua*

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CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
MV MATHU BHUM VOY NO (1004W)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV MATHU BHUM VOY NO (1004W) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 12.7.2015 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S MOL (S'PORE) PTE LTD

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
MV VEGA LUPUS VOY NO (1511)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV VEGA LUPUS VOY NO (1511) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 12.7.2015 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S MCC TRANSPORT (S'PORE) PTE LTD

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
MV WEST SCENT VOY NO (084N)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV WEST SCENT VOY NO (084N) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 12.7.2015 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.W.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S INTERASIA LINES

Phone No: 2301185

MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
HOLIDAY NOTICE

As the wharves, warehouses and chellan Offices of Yangon Port will be closed on the 19th JULY 2015 (Martyr's Day), Loading, Unloading and delivery for Goods will be received on Payment as Holiday Fees.

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Ministry of Energy
Myanma Petroleum Products Enterprise

Invitation to interested parties regarding a Joint Venture for the Importation, Storage, Distribution of Petroleum Products

1. The Myanma Petroleum Products Enterprise (MPPE) is a state-owned enterprise which is responsible for carrying out the retail and wholesale distribution of petroleum products under the Ministry of Energy (MOE) in Myanmar. The enterprise operates storage facilities, conducts sales and distributes petroleum products through four (4) main fuel terminals, twenty four (24) sub fuel terminals and twelve (12) gas stations in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.
2. In order to better serve customers in the importation, storage, distribution and sales of petroleum products in Myanmar and to improve the management of the business while conducting environmentally friendly operations, interested foreign companies are invited to submit a bid to form a joint venture.
3. Interested parties may enquire at the following address for the details, rules and requirements of the tender starting from the date of this announcement.
4. The Invitation to Tender documents shall be available for purchase on 20-07-2015 at the address listed below.
5. The application must be submitted in person and shall be submitted not later than 1:00 pm on the 20-10-2015.

Managing Director
Myanma Petroleum Products Enterprise
Ministry of Energy
Office Building No. 6
Nay Pyi Taw
Tel : +95 67 411488, +95 67 411053, +95 67 411119, +95 67 411092
Fax: +95 67 411101, +95 67 411137
Email: mppe.ho2@mptmail.net.mm

WEATHER REPORT

BAY INFERENCE: Monsoon is moderate to strong in the Andaman Sea and South Bay and weak elsewhere in the Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL EVENING OF THE 12th July, 2015: Rain or thundershowers will be isolated in Kayah State, scattered in Lower Sagaing, Mandalay, Magway and Bago Regions, Kachin, Shan and Rakhine States, widespread in Taninthayi Region and fairly widespread in the remaining Regions and States with likelihood of isolated heavy falls in Yangon and Ayeyawady Regions. Degree of certainty is (100%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Squalls with moderate to rough sea are likely at times Deltaic, Gulf of Mottama, off and along Mon - Taninthayi Coasts. Surface wind speed in squalls may reach (35) m.p.h. Sea will be moderate elsewhere in Myanmar waters.

THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR
MINISTRY OF ENERGY
MYANMA OIL AND GAS ENTERPRISE
(INVITATION FOR OPEN TENDER)
(11/2015)

Open tenders are invited for supply of the following respective items in United States Dollars.

Sr.No	Tender No	Description	Remark
(1)	IFB-031(15-16)	Electrical Spares for ZJ 50D Drilling Rigs (36) Items	US$
(2)	IFB-032(15-16)	Spares for CNG Retest Factory (36) Items	US$
(3)	IFB-033(15-16)	Spares for Oxygen Generator, Oxygen Purifier and Oxygen Compressor (10) Items	US$
(4)	IFB-034(15-16)	13 5/8" x 5K Double Ram BOP (1) Unit	US$
(5)	IFB-035(15-16)	Spares for Mack Oil Field Truck (21) Items	US$
(6)	IFB-036(15-16)	Spares for Hydraulic Power Station	US$

Tender Closing Date & Time - 5-8-2015, 16:30 Hr

Tender Document shall be available during office hours commencing from 17th June, 2015 at the Finance Department, Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise, No (44) Complex, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar.

Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise
Ph: +95 67 - 411097 / 411206

Japan calls on US to expand beef imports with low tariff in TPP

TOKYO, 11 July — Japan is calling on the United States to expand imports of Japanese beef under a low-tariff quota to 10-fold the current level within the framework of an envisioned multilateral Pacific Rim free trade agreement, negotiation sources said on Friday.

The two sides are still negotiating on the details of Japan's proposal to expand the annual quota from the current 200 tons to 2,000 tons, the sources said.

Japanese and US officials wrapped up two days of talks in Tokyo on Friday. Japan's Economic and Fiscal Policy Minister Akira Amari and US Trade Representative Michael Froman are expected to meet on the sidelines of a ministerial meeting of all 12 Trans-Pacific Partnership countries later this month in Hawaii, and seek to resolve remaining issues.

The United States levies a tariff of 4.4 cents per kilogram of Japanese beef. The tariff rate goes up drastically when the amount of imports exceeds 200 tons.

Japan exported a total of 1,251 tons of beef in 2014, of which 153 tons was for the United States. Tokyo plans to boost total beef exports to 4,000 tons by 2020.

Under the TPP, Japan plans to incrementally cut its 38.5 percent tariffs on imports of US beef to as low as 9 percent in 15 years after the pact takes effect, a measure which could damage domestic farmers. If Japan can also expand its beef exports to the United States under the TPP, it could alleviate any negative impact on farmers and allow them to gain more international recognition for the Japanese "wagyu" beef brand. Ministers from Japan, the United States and the 10 other countries — Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore and Vietnam — are set to meet for four days from 28 July in Maui, Hawaii.

Kyodo News

Indian commuters drive through a water logged street after a heavy rain in Kolkata, capital of eastern Indian state West Bengal, on 10 July, 2015.
XINHUA

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Over 1,300 students hospitalized for eating "poisonous candies" in S Philippines

DAVAO CITY, 11 July — More than 1,300 school children were rushed to hospitals after eating allegedly poisonous durian candies in a southern Philippine province, the police said on Saturday.

The victims were mostly elementary students from nine towns who complained of dizziness and vomiting and rushed to hospitals shortly after eating locally-made durian candies on Friday, said Liza Mazo, chief of the Office of Civil Defence in Mindanao's Caraga region.

At least 12 people have been arrested after witnesses positively identified them as the ones who sold the candies to different schools in Surigao del Sur Province, said regional police spokesperson Martin Gamba.

Officials said at least 1,350 school children and teachers have been affected by the mass poisoning in the towns of Tago, Tagbina, Cagwait, Tandag, Marihatag, San Agustin, Carrascal, Cortes and Madrid.

Gamba said the suspects were now detained by police while cases were being readied against them.

Xinhua

Actor Harrison Ford

Harrison Ford leads 'Star Wars' cast in Comic-Con spectacle

San Diego, 11 July — Han Solo made his official comeback to "Star Wars" on Friday as actor Harrison Ford was the star guest at Comic-Con, and fans were given a glimpse of some behind-the-scenes footage of the new film "The Force Awakens".

Ford made his first public appearance since a March crash of a vintage aircraft he was piloting that left him with non-threatening injuries, for which he had surgery on his leg.

The actor, 72, bounded onto the stage at the San Diego convention for film and pop culture. He said he was doing "fine," and reflected on returning to the films that launched his career.

"It should have felt ridiculous. It was 30 years ago and I sort of grew up and yet I was doing something I did so long ago, and I will tell you that it felt great," Ford said about his return to playing rogue smuggler-turned-rebel fighter Han Solo.

"Star Wars: The Force Awakens," due in theaters in December, is the first of a new trilogy rebooting George Lucas' "Star Wars" franchise.

Ford was accompanied by "Star Wars" veterans Carrie Fisher, who plays Princess Leia, and Mark Hamill, who plays Luke Skywalker. Fisher said the three of them picked up where they left off during filming, and also enjoyed watching the newcomers to the franchise.

They were joined by actors John Boyega (Finn), Daisy Ridley (Rey) and Oscar Isaac (Poe Dameron), the three leads who will fight the dark side, of which actors Adam Driver (Kylo Ren), Domhnall Gleeson (General Hux), Gwendoline Christie (Captain Phasma) represented on Friday.

Driver didn't reveal anything about Kylo Ren, but Gleeson said his General Hux will be in charge of people on the Starkiller base, part of the dark side.

Christie said it was "exciting" to explore playing a female Stormtrooper, soldiers of the dark side.

While "The Force Awakens" will feature a large amount of special effects, fans were treated to a clip of behind-the-scenes footage which showed real explosions, robotic creatures and intricate sets that director JJ Abrams said were essential for authenticity and for actors to interact with.

The surprises didn't end with Ford's appearance, as fans were 'escorted' by Stormtroopers to a live concert of composer John Williams' "Star Wars" score at a nearby venue.—*Reuters*

Ed Sheeran writes 50 songs for new record

Ed Sheeran

London, 11 July — Singer Ed Sheeran has written "50 songs" for his third album.

The "Thinking Out Loud" hitmaker is already hard at work on his next album following the success of his second studio LP 'x' last year, even though he doesn't want to release the collection until the end of 2016 at the earliest, reported *Daily Star*.

"I've done 40 – maybe more like 50 songs already, and I'm not planning to release it for another year and a half, so I want to do a few more," he said.

The 24-year-old singer-songwriter has sold out shows around the world including three nights at London's Wembley Stadium since he unveiled his last record so confessed he's feeling "pressure" to live up to people's high expectations because he doesn't want to be a disappointment.

"Because there's even more pressure now for this album. When you have a whole company depending on one thing, if I don't release the goods, it's going to be awkward," he said.—*PTI*

Global record industry makes Friday new music release day

London, 11 July — Singles and albums will be released on Fridays from now on, harmonizing when fans around the world can purchase new music.

In a borderless business that has grown increasingly digital as artists promote their music on social media platforms, singers, record labels and retailers are aligning distribution, with 10 July marking "New Music Fridays."

Music release days have varied across countries — Mondays in Britain and France, Tuesdays in North America, Wednesdays in Japan and Fridays in Australia, Germany and Ireland, according to music trade body British Phonographic Industry (BPI).

Now singles and albums will come out at 0001 local time on Fridays in more than 45 countries.

"Fans don't understand why they have to wait to legally access music that has already been released in other countries," BPI and BRIT Awards Chief Executive Geoff Taylor said in a statement.

"It makes sense to consider the time of the week when interest in entertainment, digital activity and physical footfall is building towards its peak."

The move is also aimed at fighting music piracy. Charts will also likely change to take in a full week's sales and streaming with Britain moving to Friday from Sunday.

Among the first albums released on Friday under the shift are electronica trio Years & Years' debut album "Communion" and "Nina Revisited: A Tribute to Nina Simone" by various artists. British all-girl band Little Mix release their single "Black Magic" and Nick Jonas' single "Chains" also comes out.

Years & Years helped launch "New Music Fridays" at the London entertainment retailer HMV, where long queues formed to make the first purchases under the change.

"When we first started, there were a lot of people talking about us on blogs in the USA, Germany, Indonesia," Emre Turkmen of Years & Years told *Reuters*. "So it makes sense that record releases follow that trend — the globe rather than nations."—*Reuters*

Elvis Presley's songwriter Roy C Bennett dies

Roy C Bennett

Los Angeles, 11 July —Noted songwriter Roy C Bennett, who penned hits for Elvis Presley and Frank Sinatra, has died. He was 97.

With his partner Sid Tepper, Bennett published over 300 songs, including over 40 for Presley, reported Variety.

They also wrote tunes that were recorded by The Beatles, Carl Perkins, Perry Como and Eartha Kitt.

Their hits included "Red Roses for a Blue Lady", Dean Martin staple "Naughty Lady of Shady Lane" and most of Presley's "Blue Hawaii" soundtrack.

Bennett's partnership with Tepper in the 1970s after the latter suffered a heart attack and retired to Florida, but Bennett went on to publish the popular Choral Singer's Handbook. Tepper died in April at the age of 96.—*PTI*

'Game of Thrones' keeps fan in dark about next season at Comic-Con

San Diego, (Calif), 11 July — Fans hoping to get a glimpse of what HBO's "Game of Thrones" has in store for its anticipated next season were left in dark at San Diego's Comic-Con on Friday, as the cast kept tight-lipped on the fate of their characters.

"Our cast here, they're going to have a hard time answering questions about what's going on moving forward," moderator Seth Meyers said at the panel featuring cast including Maisie Williams, Sophie Turner, Gwendoline Christie, Alfie Allen and John Bradley.

Instead of footage or announcements for the new season, fans were shown a montage of "Game of Thrones" popping up in various other shows including "The Simpsons" and "Sesame Street," and a reel of the cast's audition tapes.

"Game of Thrones," based on the "A Song of Ice and Fire" books by George RR Martin, has become HBO's most-watched series, with 20 million viewers tuning into season 5 this year across HBO's TV and on-demand platforms.

In the past season that concluded last month, fans saw the leaders of the realms of the mythical Westeros continue fighting wars for the Iron Throne, with shocking moments including a brutal rape, burning a child, the rise of the zombie-like army of White Walkers and a fire-breathing dragon.

Alejandro Castillo dresses as White Walker from Game Of Thrones.—Reuters

Turner, who plays Sansa Stark, spoke about her character's rape by the villainous Ramsay Bolton, a scene that divided fans and critics who felt the show may have gone too far.

"There's one thing that Sansa still is, despite what's happened to her, which is strong," Turner said.

Executive producer Carolyn Strauss addressed criticism that the show puts its female characters through torturous scenes, saying it was fitting for the time period of the show.

"At that mythical time when the show takes place, things were not great for a lot of people, male and female," she said.

Christie, who plays Lady Brienne of Tarth, said it was refreshing and "long overdue" to have a character like hers that was sexualized.

Notably missing from the panel was lead cast members Emilia Clarke, Peter Dinklage, Kit Harington and show creators David Benioff and Dan Weiss.

"Game of Thrones" concluded the fifth season with the death of one of its leading characters, Jon Snow, played by Harington.

But fans are speculating Snow will return, citing recent appearances by Harington in public still sporting the longer hair his character wears as proof that he will be back.

Reuters

Boca resume Argentine championship waiting on Tevez

BUENOS AIRES, 11 July — Boca Juniors fans must wait another week to see Carlos Tevez wear their blue and yellow colours again even though the Argentine championship resumes this weekend after a break.

Tevez, who has returned home after a decade in Europe, will not be back from holiday after the Copa America until next weekend's home match against Quilmes at La Bombonera.

Boca visit Sarmiento in Junin this Sunday (0130 BST Monday) looking to at least retain second place in the standings behind San Lorenzo, who visit Union in Santa Fe on Saturday (2210).

Coach Rodolfo Arruabarrena has no doubt that Tevez will give Boca an extra edge in quality by returning while still at the peak of his powers after two fine seasons with Juventus.

"Tevez's presence gives us greater class, we hope to make the most of that," Arruabarrena told a news conference on Friday. "Physically he's good, let's see when he arrives on Tuesday, but he gets in shape quickly.

Argentina's Carlos Tevez braces himself before crashing into Colombia's goalie David Ospina (R) during their Copa America 2015 quarter-finals soccer match at Estadio Sausalito in Vina del Mar, Chile, on 26 June, 2015.—REUTERS

"Carlos has shown me in these last few years he feels more comfortable with a number nine in front of him," added Arruabarrena as he ponders how to get the best out of Tevez.

The striker is on holiday after helping Argentina reach the Copa America final in Chile, the reason for the five-week break at the halfway point in the league championship.

San Lorenzo have 32 points after 15 matches, one more than Boca and two in front of Racing Club and River Plate.

River, who are at home to Temperley on Saturday (2000), missed the chance to pull level with the Saints at the top when they were held 0-0 at Tigre on Wednesday in their match in hand after it was postponed in May.

Former Argentina internationals Javier Saviola and Lucho Gonzalez made their River comebacks in that match after, like Tevez, securing a return to their first club last month.

Argentina under-20 striker Giovanni Simeone has moved from River to Banfield, who are coached by former River favourite Matias Almeyda, looking for more regular action and saying his father Diego helped him decide.

"He gave me a lot of advice about coming here, he knows Almeyda well, but it was my decision," said the son of Atletico Madrid's coach Diego, who played alongside Almeyda for Argentina at the 1998 and 2002 World Cups.

"I know here I'm going to improve and evolve as a player," said the 20-year-old, having chosen Banfield, who visit Quilmes on Saturday (2210), because of Almeyda's commitment to attacking football.

As a potential future senior international, Simeone will no doubt be watched keenly by Argentina coach Gerardo Martino who is looking to move on from the disappointment of losing the Copa America final to Chile on penalties last weekend.—*Reuters*

Solo Frenchman beats Airbus across Channel in electric plane

Pilot and designer Didier Esteyne takes off in the Airbus Group E-Fan electric aircraft, during an attempt to fly across the channel from Lydd Airport in southeast England, Britain on 10 July, 2015.
REUTERS

PARIS, 11 July — An attempt by Airbus to make history by crossing the English Channel in an electric plane ended in wounded pride on Friday after a French pilot claimed to have beaten it by hours.

In a further twist, a Slovenian businessman said he might have beaten both of them earlier in the week if he hadn't been robbed of his chance of glory.

In a contest that echoed the cloak-and-dagger rivalries of aviation's early pioneers, it was Frenchman Hugues Duval, 35, who emerged on top by secretly crossing the Channel in both directions in his one-seater Cri-Cri, launched off the top of another plane on Thursday evening.

"We crossed the Channel before Airbus. The only way I could do this was to hide and do it with the utmost discretion," he told *Reuters*.

That came more than 12 hours before Didier Esteyne piloted an Airbus E-Fan across the Channel from Lydd, in Kent, to land on French soil in Calais on Friday, watched by dozens of journalists and VIPs.

The E-Fan flight took the opposite direction from Louis Bleriot's first heavier-than-air crossing in 1909. Airbus's aim was to highlight the promise of electric flight, which it says could ultimately produce a 100-seat regional passenger plane.

Airbus gamely conceded defeat to the Cri-Cri, with its chief technology officer Jean Botti telling reporters, "It's not a victory but a start...the start of a great innovation."

Privately, however, Airbus officials said Duval's tiny one-seater, weighing just 70kg (154 lb) and built by a small team in Brittany, was too small to be considered an airplane. They also grumbled at the fact it had been catapulted by another plane.

Adding further intrigue, Slovenian entrepreneur Ivo Boscarol said his own attempt to cross the Channel in a Pipistrel electric plane even earlier in the week was thwarted when Germany's Siemens abruptly took away its engine, saying it was not certified over water.

"History is always about who is first and nobody is interested in the second or third," Boscarol told *Reuters*. "That is it and life must go on."

Siemens said it had only acted out of concerns for safety and denied any link between the decision and its role in helping to verify the design of the Airbus E-Fan's twin engines.

Boscarol said he would continue to work with the German company, noting that the research could bring serious business opportunities including in the field of pilot training.

The contest in the skies above the Channel took place 75 years to the day after the Battle of Britain, the epic air contest between the British and German air forces in World War Two.

"The Channel, especially for French and English pilots, has a special place on the pedestal like flights over the Atlantic. It has a kind of religious prestige," Boscarol said.

Reuters

mitv Myanmar International

(12-7-2015 07:00 am~13-7-2015 07:00 am) MST

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MRTV Entertainment Channel

(12-7-2015, Sunday)

6:00 am
• Alinka Wutyi Music Troupe
6:30 am
• Myanmar Video
8:00 am
• Fashion (Music)
8:35 am
• Sing & Enjoy
9:30 am
• Myanmar Movie

At Rio's 'midnight' Olympics performance may suffer

RIO DE JANEIRO, 11 July — Rio de Janeiro may have a penchant for late-night parties, but scheduling of events past midnight at next year's Olympic Games could be a real test of endurance for the world's greatest athletes.

Academics and athletes fear the late hour could hinder performance and result in fewer world records and displays of athletic mastery at Rio 2016 as competitors struggle to adjust training and sleep patterns.

The schedule, partly the result of broadcast contracts, will see some swimming finals, beach volleyball and basketball matches run into the early hours. After media, warm down, drug testing and the taxi home, athletes might not be in bed until 3-4 am local time.

Athletics is also due to be held late, with finals finishing after 11 pm.

"It's going to be a challenge and could impact on times," said Marc Woods, a former British swimmer who won 12 Paralympic medals in five separate Games.

What will be the latest finals at an Olympics in recent memory has brought into focus the tension between sponsors, broadcasters and the sports they support and televise. While viewing figures are vital for the funding of nearly all Olympic sports, athletes and fans have long expressed concern over the rising influence of television and advertisers.

"It kind of stinks. They're not really looking out for the athletes," said Dara Torres, a former US swimmer who won 12 Olympic medals across five Games between 1984 and 2008.

Scheduling is the responsibility of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), but key broadcasters such as America's NBC and Brazil's TV Globo have significant influence.—*Reuters*

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Sunday, 12 July, 2015

Federer beats Murray for Djokovic final

London, 11 July — Seven-time champion Roger Federer demolished local hero Andy Murray in straight sets at the semi-ifinals of Wimbledon to set up a final showdown against defending champion Novak Djokovic on Friday.

The 33-year-old Federer won 7-5, 7-5, 6-4 over the 2013 champion Murray to reach his 10th Wimbledon final. The Swiss struck 56 winners against just 11 unforced errors, and 20 aces.

Federer said, "Definitely one of the best matches I've played in my career. The first set, I don't remember point by point, but it was definitely really, really solid."

Murray admitted that he was totally outplayed, "That's definitely the best he served against me."

The final is a rematch of the 2014 decider which extended almost four hours and brought Federer to tears at the trophy presentation.

"I'm just happy personally for myself to be back in a final," Federer said. "Whoever that's going to be against, it's always a big occasion. That it's Novak, the world No 1, it obviously adds something extra."

Djokovic, also the winner in 2011, defeated France's 21st seed Richard Gasquet 7-6 (2), 6-4, 6-4 victory in two hours 21 minutes.

The Serb said after the match, "I am definitely living the dream right now, playing on the most famous tennis court in the world. I have a great responsibility to play well here, because if you look at the names of the legends who won Wimbledon it is a great honor and privilege to be out there."

Of Sunday's final, he said: "Roger is one of the people that made me a better player. He helped me understand what I need to do to become a better player and to win against him and win Grand Slam trophies.

"He's so good and so consistent. He is the greatest ever. There's not enough praise for what he does. This is where he plays his best tennis I think. It's probably going to be the biggest challenge I can have."—*Xinhua*

Roger Federer of Switzerland embraces Andy Murray of Britain after winning their match at the Wimbledon Tennis Championships in London on 10 July, 2015.
Reuters

Novak Djokovic of Serbia hits a shot during his match against Richard Gasquet of France at the Wimbledon Tennis Championships in London on 10 July, 2015.
Reuters

Bayern fans unhappy about Schweinsteiger exit

Berlin, 11 July — Bayern Munich's fans seem to be the only ones that are not amused by the reported transfer of Bavarian icon Bastian Schweinsteiger.

The 30-year-old midfielder and captain of the German national team is, according to media reports, about to leave the German champions after 17 years and will join Champions League rival Manchester United.

Schweinsteiger will reportedly sign a three-year contract in England and follow his former Bayern coach Louis van Gaal. "Man U" is reportedly paying between 18 and 20 million euros for Schweinsteiger and he will be paid up to 13 million euro per season.

Soon after the German tabloid "*Bild*" reported on Schweinsteiger's transfer, fans started to express their concern that Bayern Munich would "sell its identity". During the last days blogs popped up like "Schweinsteiger must stay", "football god stay" or "pro Schweinsteiger".

Schweinsteiger is the second German-born midfielder who is leaving Bayern in the era of Spanish coach Pep Guardiola. The 45-year-old was not willing to grant Schweinsteiger a place in the starting eleven. But Schweinsteiger needs to be part of the line-up as he plans to lead the German national team as captain during the 2016 European Championship in France.

Van Gaal, other than Guardiola, is willing to guarantee Schweinsteiger a key role. Before Schweinsteiger, Bayern midfielder Toni Kroos also left Bayern to join Real Madrid.

The exit of Schweinsteiger is regarded as another signal from Bayern's leading figures such as CEO Karl-Heinz Rummenigge in favor of Pep Guardiola. Many around the club see Rummenigge's policy as a risk.

The Munich-based daily *Sueddeutsche Zeitung* wrote recently: "Bayern Munich depends in his future plans on a coach like they have never done before".

The Munich-based news magazine "*Focus*" changed the Bayern Munich slogan "Mia san mia" (we are us) into "Mia san Guardiola". Meaning: Bayern is entirely dependent on Guardiola.

Now it is expected that Guardiola is allowed to re-invest the Schweinsteiger transfer money into a new player after Bayern have just signed Brazilian winger Douglas Costa. And that despite the fact that Guardiola has not yet signed a new contract. Rummenigge and Co however have expressed their wish that he will. Guardiola's current one ends in 2016. With Schweinsteiger leaving, many fear that the Spanish fraction will increase as in Bayern's midfield. Guardiola seems to be favoring a midfield of Alonso, Thiago, Martinez and Costa.—*Xinhua*

Torino defender Darmian to have medical at Manchester United — Van Gaal

London, 11 July — Italian defender Matteo Darmian will have a medical at Manchester United ahead of a proposed transfer from Torino, manager Louis van Gaal said on Friday.

"I've read (the rumours) in the papers but that is true," Van Gaal told a news conference when asked if Darmian was on his way to the Premier League club for a medical.

The 25-year-old, who started all Italy's matches at last year's World Cup in Brazil, can play across the defence and United have reportedly agreed a 12.9 million pound transfer fee with Torino.

Darmian would become United's second signing of the close season after Netherlands international Memphis Depay joined from PSV Eindhoven for a fee reported to be around 30 million euros.

"I'm very excited, we'll face this new adventure," Darmian told Sky Sports Italia on Friday.

"It's a dream, I'm superstitious so I won't say anything until the signatures (are signed), let's wait."

Reuters

Italy's Matteo Darmian (R) fights for the ball with England's Nathaniel Clyne during their international friendly soccer match at Juventus Stadium in Turin on 31 March, 2015.—Reuters

Yang seizes three-shot lead at US Women's Open

Lancaster, (Pennsylvania), 11 July — Amy Yang made four successive birdies on the back nine to claim a three-stroke lead at Friday's halfway mark of the US Women's Open at Lancaster Country Club.

South Korea's Yang added a sparkling four-under 66 to her opening 67 for a seven-under-par total of 133.

The 25-year-old Yang, the Open runner-up in 2012 who was tied for first after 54 holes last year, began zeroing in with her irons, taking dead aim at the flags and sinking four successive birdie putts from the 11th hole.

Yang capped her birdie spree by knocking an eight-iron to one foot at the 14th.

"I drove the ball really well," said Yang, looking for her first major. "I kept my ball on the fairway and close to the pin."

Tied for second on 137 were world number three Stacy Lewis, who shot 67, and Japanese Tour player Shiho Oyama, who fired a 66 that featured four birdies on her second nine.

"I feel really great and then I'm so excited to play after two more days," said Oyama. "Chip shot is good, putting is good, everything, I have a confidence."

Lewis, who finished second to Michelle Wie last year, also got hot on her second nine, making three birdies to move within two of Yang before taking a bogey at the last out of a greenside bunker.

"I hit the irons today probably the best I've hit them in a long time," said two-times major winner Lewis.

American Marina Alex (71) was four strokes off the pace on 137, with six players another shot back — world number one Park In-bee (70), fellow South Korean Chun In-gee (70), Australian Karrie Webb (72), Americans Jane Park (72) and Morgan Pressel (70), and Japan's Rumi Yoshiba (68).

Sunshine on Friday replaced overcast skies and a storm that hit Lancaster Country Club on Thursday, causing a premature halt to the opening round that required 55 players to finish on Friday morning.

Breezy winds, trickier pins and deceptively soft, slower greens confused the early wave of players when the second round commenced, but the later starters seemed to warm to the task.

Reuters

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