

President U Thein Sein meets flood victims in Sagaing Region

NAY PYI TAW, 21 July — President U Thein Sein met residents, Hluttaw Representatives and township committee members Tuesday at the Kanbalu Township general administration department.

The township management committee chairman spoke about flooding and needs for the township at the meeting, before the Sagaing Region Chief Minister explained measures being taken for relief and resettlement of flood victims.

The president at the meeting said the world is experiencing natural disasters resulting from climate change and although such disasters cannot be prevented, their impact can be reduced with planning. The government will give priority to addressing the needs of victims, he added.

Afterwards, the president promised short and long-term plans to rehabilitate Kanbalu in cooperation with the Sagaing Region Government.

The president said damage and losses from floods in Kanbalu can be



President U Thein Sein comforts a baby patient at child ward of People's Hospital in Kanbalu.

MNA

mitigated with the cooperation of local people.

At the meeting, the president, Commander-in-Chief of Defence

Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, union ministers, the chief minister, deputy ministers and well-wishers presented

cash and relief assistance to victims.

After the meeting, the president and party visited Maha Shwesigyi Pagoda

and donated cash before proceeding to the People's Hospital in Kanbalu.

They later traveled to Wuntho by helicopter

and continued to Kawlin by car, arriving at Dakh-inayamaale Monastery to pay homage to monks and (See page 3)

No further licenses for foreign insurers this year, regulator says

By Ye Myint

YANGON, 21 July — No additional foreign insurers will receive licenses to operate in Myanmar's special economic zones this year, said the industry regulator.

The Myanmar Insurance Business Supervisory Board has so far given the green light to three Japanese insurers to operate in the SEZs and will consider granting further licenses from next year, Chairman Dr Maung Maung Thein told The Global New Light of Myanmar.

Firms "will only be entitled to apply for the license when they are in line with the criteria" prescribed for the sector, said Dr Maung Maung Thein, who is also Deputy Minis-

ter for Finance.

Corporate social responsibility and contributions to the development of the country's insurance sector and economic growth are among factors considered, he said.

Of the three insurers permitted to operate in SEZs, Sampo Japan Nipponkoa Insurance Inc became the first to be granted an operating license. The firm this week launched its operation in the Thilawa

Special Economic Zone, the country's first SEZ, the first phase of which is set to open in September.

"The (three Japanese insurers') presence in Myanmar with representative offices for around two dec-

ades resulted in them winning the licenses," the deputy minister told the media at the kickoff ceremony.

As one of the requirements for the license, applicants must have had local representative offices for three years.

Insurance firms operating in the SEZs are limited to property insurance, motor insurance, marine cargo insurance, contractors' all-risk insurance and cash transfer insurance, he added.

The licenses do not permit them to operate outside the SEZs in accord with the Insurance Law of Myanmar.

According to sources, there are currently 16 representative offices of overseas insurers in Myanmar.

GNLM



Construction is under way at the Thilawa Special Economic Zone. Three Japanese insurers have so far been granted licenses to operate in the country's SEZ, including Thilawa.—PHOTO: THILAWA SEZ FACEBOOK

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Parliament to vote on tying referendum to general election

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw

NAY PYI TAW, 21 July — The Pyidaungsu Hluttaw will vote on whether to suspend a constitutional referendum scheduled to coincide with the 8 November general election, the Speaker of the joint assembly said Tuesday.

At the parliamentary meeting, Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann relayed a letter from the Chairman of the Union Election Commission recommending the suspension of the referendum

on an amendment to Section 59 (d) changing the word “military” to “defence” in a clause stipulating that a president must be “well acquainted with the political, administrative, economic and military affairs of the Union.”

In the letter, the Union Election Commission chairman said holding the referendum along with the upcoming general elections would save time and money. However, a referendum

should be held separately and requires more than K4,729 million to complete the task, according to the Speaker.

During a parliamentary meeting on 25 June, out of six proposed changes to the constitution, the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw voted in favour of only one, the amendment to Section 59 (d).

Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann previously suggested holding the referendum at the same time as



the general election to reduce costs.—GNLM

Representatives of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw discuss holding referendum along with the coming general election.

MNA

Pyithu Hluttaw

Term ‘political prisoner’ unconstitutional: ministry



Deputy Minister U Soe Tint.

MNA

NAY PYI TAW, 21 July — Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw Thura U Shwe Mann received Czech Ambassador Mr Jaroslav Dolecek at the hall of Pyithu Hluttaw, here, Tuesday.

Also present at the meeting were Chairman of Pyithu Hluttaw International Relations Committee U Hla Myint Oo, member of Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment Commission Daw Aye Aye Mu and officials of the Pyithu Hluttaw Office.—MNA

Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw Thura U Shwe Mann holds talks with Czech Ambassador Mr Jaroslav Dolecek.

MNA

NAY PYI TAW, 21 July — The term “political prisoner” contravenes the State Constitution, which grants all prisoners the same legal status, and will not be officially used, Deputy Minister for Home Affairs Brig-Gen Kyaw Kyaw Tun told the Pyithu Hluttaw on Tuesday.

The deputy minister said the government has already released a total of

70,904 prisoners held on a variety of charges, including 354 dissidents, under the presidential amnesty.

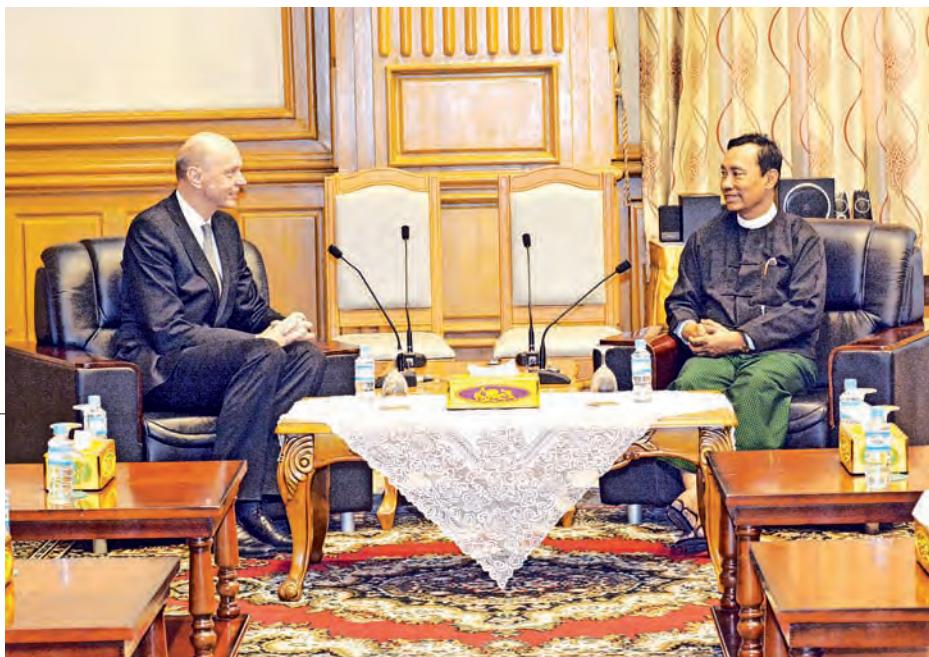
Regarding construction of infrastructure in Sagaing Region, Deputy Minister for Construction U Soe Tint said the Thetkalkyin-Phaungpyin-Homelin-Khamti road will be upgraded at a cost of roughly K3 billion.

Deputy Governor of

the Myanmar Central Bank Daw Khin Saw Oo submitted the Bill on Banks and Financial Institutions before the Bill Committee read out its findings on the bill.

Bills amending laws on electing the President and Vice President, as well as foreign currency management, were submitted by the Hluttaw Rights Committee for approval of the parliament.—MNA

Czech Ambassador calls on Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw



U Sai San Min of Shan State Constituency No 3.—MNA



U Paw Lyan Lwin of Chin State constituency No 9.—MNA

NAY PYI TAW, 21 July — Deputy Minister for Defence Maj-Gen Kyaw Nyunt granted 18.86 acres of farmlands and croplands confiscated by No 41st Infantry Regiment will be released to eight original owners as the lands are clear from security line of the regiment at the Tuesday’s session of Amyotha Hluttaw.

U Sai San Min of Shan State Constituency No 3 asked the plan to release confiscated lands of farmers used in construction of military units in Lashio.

U Paw Lyan Lwin of Chin State constituency No 9 discussed enactment of laws for legal protection of prisoners with regard to the jails bill. It needs to allow prisoners to have rights of medical treatment and rights of worship on respective religions for their mental improvement.

U Aung Kyi Nyunt of Magway Region constituency No 9 focused on issue of political prisoners. He said that the jails bill should include provisions on protection of rights for political prisoners.—MNA

Ministry to continue prosecutions to recover bad debts

NAY PYI TAW, 21 July — The Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development will continue prosecuting 10 debtors who collectively owe more than K25 billion, a senior official said Tuesday.

The official told the

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw that the debtors from the private sector paid back 0.5 percent of the total debt of K31.64 billion after they were slapped with lawsuits in April 2013.

The debtors were prosecuted a second time with more serious charges

to protect public property and funds. The settlement of debt then increased from 0.5 percent to 9 percent, leaving the total bad debt remaining at K29.422 billion.

The total amount of debts from the 10 highest debtors including top debt-

or U Min Thein (Thone Pwint Hsaing), son of U Maung Maung Thein, with K6.755 billion debt, has already declined to K25.592 billion, of which the highest single debt accounts for K6.756 billion and the lowest K484.844 million.

The official said the bad debts are from the term of former Minister for Livestock and Fisheries U Maung Maung Thein under the military government, not during the term of present civilian government.

MNA

NATIONAL

President U Thein Sein ...

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presented relief assistance for flood victims at the monastery.

The president explained arrangements for supplying seeds to damaged farms and stationery for 16 schools hit by floods. The union government, the region government and the Tatmadaw would fulfill the needs of local people, the president added.

Later, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, union ministers, the chief minister and deputy ministers explained measures for relief

and resettlement.

Afterwards, the president and party presented cash and relief assistance for victims.

Then, the president and party inspected the damage and losses in Wuntho by car. The president and party left Monywa for Nay Pyi Taw by special flights in the evening.—MNA

President U Thein Sein gives words of encouragement to flood victims in Kawlin Township.—MNA



Orthopaedic Specialist Hospital opens in Nay Pyi Taw



Vice President Dr Sai Mauk Kham comforts a patient at Orthopaedic Special Hospital in Ottarathiri Township.—MNA

NAY PYI TAW, 21 July — A 100-bed orthopaedic hospital opened Tuesday in Ottarathiri Township, Nay Pyi Taw, where three more specialist medical facilities are set to be built.

An inauguration ceremony for Nay Pyi Taw Orthopaedic Specialist Hospital was attended by Vice President Dr Sai Mauk Kham, Nay Pyi Taw Council Members Dr Paing Soe and U Phone Zaw Han and Deputy Minister for Health Dr Daw Thein Htay.

In his address, the Vice President said the newly-opened hospital can provide orthopaedic services and surgeries, as well as emergency care to patients. He said the hospital's services were greatly needed amid a rising number of road accidents.

Crash deaths in 2014

accounted for 8.4 percent of all deaths, he added, calling for more orthopaedic hospitals and strict safety measures in the country.

The vice president also said 89 percent of traffic accident victims did not receive emergency care before reaching the hospital, adding that giving proper care at the site of accidents could reduce crash deaths by 20-30 percent.

After the opening ceremony, the Vice President and party inspected the hospital and spoke words of encouragement to patients.

In Myanmar, 1,133 small and large hospitals including 28 specialist hospitals are in operation as of this June. Among them, only three are orthopaedic specialist hospitals.

MNA

Thiri Pyanchi U Tun Nay Linn concurrently accredited as Ambassador to Colombia

NAY PYI TAW, 22 July—The President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has appointed Thiri Pyanchi U Tun Nay Linn, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to the Federative Republic of Brazil, currently as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to the Republic of Colombia.—MNA

KIA blows up rice warehouse in northern Shan state

NAY PYI TAW, 21 July— Brigade 4 of Kachin Independence Army planted a sonic mine at a rice warehouse before it bust as the owner failed to give extortion money which the attackers demanded.

The burst happened at 11: 45 p.m. on 21 July

in Hona ward of Muse Township in northern Shan state, and the phone numbers were found on a paper printed with logo of KIA 's Brigade 4. KIA's member asked the owner of the storage facility to give the extortion money by 17 July.

Myawady

Senior General quashes reports of retirement

NAY PYI TAW, 21 July — Commander-in-Chief of Defence Service Senior General Min Aung Hlaing has refuted rumours he will retire this year, recently telling a BBC interviewer that such reports are unfounded.

He will turn 60, retirement age for government employees in Myanmar, in 2016.

Asked whether he would like to serve as the country's president if the situation demanded, the senior general said he would perform any duty assigned to him as a member of the defence forces.

During the interview, the senior general spoke about the reform process, the role of the Tatmadaw in politics, the nation-wide



ceasefire agreement, the upcoming general election and the situation in Rakhine State.

Myawady

Commander-in-Chief of Defence Service Senior General Min Aung Hlaing meets BBC interviewer Mr Jonah Fisher.—MYAWADY

Sitagu Sayadaw's blessing marks completion of major milestone at Star City

YANGON, 21 July — Yoma Strategic Holdings Ltd recently completed Zone A residential development of Thanlyin Star City. To mark this significant milestone, Sitagu Sayadaw Dr Ashin Nyanissara performed a blessing ceremony at Star City on Sunday. Sayadaw is well-known at home and abroad as the founder of the Sitagu International Buddhist Missionary Center.

Over the past months, all units in Zone A — around 950 units — have been handed over to its home owners. A number of these residents are followers of Sitagu Sayadaw and they were pleased to have their homes blessed by him. “We visit the monastery of Sitagu Sayadaw regularly and are devoted followers of his teachings.



Peter Crowhurst, acting General Manager of Star City, bringing an offer to Sayadaw.

Today we are so pleased that the Sayadaw came to our community to bless us and our homes. It is a great initiative of Star City to celebrate the completion of Zone A community this

way,” said U Myo Aye Aung, one of the residents.

More than 200 of home owners attended the ceremony to honour the monk. The blessing ceremony began at 9 am with

the reverend Sayadaw chanting religious verses, followed by prayers from the audience. To celebrate this gratifying moment all attendance enjoyed a traditional meal together. After the meal, the Sayadaw visited the buildings of Zone A and blessed the homes.—GNLM



Myawady District sports contests showcase young talent



MYAWADY, 21 July — The Myawady District Deputy Commissioner's Cup tournaments in football, Sepak Takraw, and track and field began Monday at the township sports ground.

Kayin State Minister for Social Affairs U Chit

Hlaing gave a speech to launch the tournaments, which give young local athletes the opportunity to showcase their talents.

The minister, Director U Kyaw Hsan Oo of the Ministry of Sports and Head of Kayin State Sports and Physical Education

Department U Aye Lwin provided sports equipment and cash assistance to the township SPED officials.

The deputy commissioner presented certificates of honour to companies that supported the tournaments.

Htein Lin Aung (IPRD)

Departmental officials provide training for rural youth

NAY PYI TAW, 21 July — Ottara District Rural Development Department launched a job skills course for rural youth Monday in Kyitaungkan Village, Pobbathiri Township.

Department head U Win Myint gave an over-

view of the course, before village administrator U Sein Win explained subject areas to be covered in the four days of training.

Officials of the Agriculture Department, Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department, Fisheries De-

partment and Rural Development Department gave lectures about use of pesticides and natural fertilizer, control of animal-borne diseases, breeding of freshwater fish, and the Green Emerald Project for the 50 trainees.

Shwe Ye Yint



Myanmar crab production down despite strong demand

PYAPON, 21 July — Myanmar's crab production has declined this year, despite strong demand on the international market, according to industry sources.

While China and Thai-

land have traditionally received the bulk of the country's crab exports, there is strong growth potential in the markets of Japan, South Korea, Vietnam and Europe, the sources said.

Brokerages pay between K3,000 and K6,000 per kilo for crabs bred in Ayeyawady Region's Pyapon, Dedaye, Bogale, Mawlamyinegyun, Labutta and Ngaputaw townships,

a Pyapon Township-based breeder said. Crabs can be caught and bred in Ayeyawady and Taninthayi regions and Mon and Rakhine states year-round.

Aung Win (Pyapon)

Defence paper cites China's "assertive measures" in East, S China seas



Defence Minister Gen Nakatani enters the prime minister's office in Tokyo on 21 July, 2015, to attend a Cabinet meeting, during which he reported the defence white paper for 2015. The annual paper said Japan demands China to stop building a new offshore platform that could be used for military purposes near the median line between China's coastline and that of Japan in the East China Sea.—KYODO NEWS

TOKYO, 21 July — Japan's Defence Ministry on Tuesday expressed strong concern about China's "assertive measures" to press territorial claims in the East and South China seas, saying such measures "include dangerous acts that could cause unintended consequences."

"China has continued so-

called assertive measures, including attempts to alter the status quo by coercive measures based on China's own assertion which is incompatible with existing international law and order, and shown a stance to realize its unilateral claims without compromise," the ministry said in a white paper.

Japan is demanding that China stop building a new offshore platform that could be used for military purposes near the median line between China's coastline and that of Japan in the East China Sea, according to the annual paper.

Japan has confirmed construction of the platform, along with existing ones, presumably for natural gas development since June 2013 and has "repeatedly protested" Beijing's unilateral action that could strengthen its monitoring of activities by Japan's Self-Defence Forces and US forces in the East China Sea, it said.

The paper, Defence of Japan 2015, was approved on Tuesday by the Cabinet after the ruling Liberal Democratic Party's National Defence Division rejected a draft version because it failed to contain any reference to the action.

Underscoring an increasingly severe security environment around Japan, the paper also cited China's massive land reclamation in the South China Sea and

North Korea's announcement in May that it had successfully test-fired a newly developed submarine-launched ballistic missile.

The Cabinet approval came after Defence Minister Gen Nakatani told a Diet session on 10 July that China "could deploy a radar system on the platform and use it as an operating base for helicopters or drones conducting air patrols" over the East China Sea where Beijing is asserting its claim over the Japanese-administered Senkaku Islands.

Japan has not revealed the number of new platforms China is building, their size and location, or other details.

While the boundary between Japan and China in the East China Sea is not clearly demarcated, the number of Chinese natural gas development facilities near the median line has jumped to 12 from four in November 2010, according to diplomatic sources.

In November 2013, China unilaterally declared an air defence identification zone over the East China Sea, but it appears difficult for the country to completely cover such a zone with radar from the mainland.

Japanese officials have said that if radar was deployed on the platform, it would improve Beijing's surveillance capability.

The paper also referred to international concerns about China's "rapid" and "large-scale" reclamation of seven rock reefs

in the hotly contested Spratly Islands in an apparent attempt to force a shift in the status quo and bolster its claim over nearly the whole of the South China Sea.

China is believed to be promoting the construction of a runway, port and other infrastructure on part of the reefs, it said.

Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam have overlapping territorial claims with Beijing in the South China Sea, an international shipping route and an area believed to have rich energy reserves and fishing grounds.

The paper said China's national defence budget "continues to increase at a rapid pace" with a surge of about 41 times over the last 27 years on a nominal basis. It grew about 3.6 times over the past decade.

The paper also pointed to the conflict between Russia and the United States and Europe over the crisis in Ukraine, as well as Moscow's increased military activity in the Asia-Pacific, the Arctic, Europe and near the mainland of the United States.

The number of scrambles by Japanese fighters against foreign aircraft approaching Japan totaled 943 in the year to March, up 133 from the previous year's level and marking the second-highest number on record, according to the Defence Ministry.

Of the total, 473 were against Russian planes, 464 against Chi-

nese planes and the rest against those from other parties, it said.

Despite China's growing activity in airspace near Japan and repeated intrusion into Japanese waters around the Senkaku Islands, Tokyo and Beijing this year resumed a bilateral maritime and air communication mechanism as part of efforts to avert accidental and unintended clashes in and over the East China Sea, the paper noted.

The paper spelled out Japan's efforts to strengthen its alliance with the United States through the revision in April of bilateral defence cooperation guidelines against the backdrop of China's assertiveness at sea and in airspace and North Korea's development of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles.

It similarly referred to Japan's defence cooperation and exchanges with other maritime democracies such as Australia, India, Indonesia and the Philippines.

While stressing Okinawa's strategic importance to Japan's security, the paper showed the government's pledge to "make maximum efforts" to reduce the burden on Okinawa of hosting the bulk of US forces in Japan.

The paper also covered international terrorism, including Islamic State militants that killed two Japanese civilians earlier this year in a hostage crisis in Syria.—Kyodo News

Graft allegations stall India's parliament, and economic reforms

NEW DELHI, 21 July — India's parliament was adjourned on the first day of a new session after opposition lawmakers demanded the resignation of leaders tainted by corruption allegations, deepening an impasse that has stalled the government's reform agenda.

Members of the opposition Congress party on Tuesday stormed the well of the chamber in the upper house, shouting slogans and forcing the speaker to halt proceedings.

Parliament is set to resume in the afternoon after a break.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi appealed for the opposition to work with the government.

"We want to take the country forward," Modi said on his way into parliament. "I hope parliament will respect the country's aspirations."

In the monsoon sitting of parliament, the government's main goal is to ease the passage of the biggest overhaul of taxes since independence in 1947. All eyes are on the upper house, where the government and its allies are a minority.

Passing the measure would



Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi speaks during the inauguration of the 46th session of Indian Labour Conference in New Delhi, India on 20 July, 2015. —REUTERS

be a victory for Modi and go some way to reassuring investors who are growing jittery that economic modernisation is happening too slowly.

Modi is under pressure from the opposition to fire his foreign minister and a state leader amid claims they gave favours to a sports tycoon living in London who faces allegations of tax evasion.

Separately, the chief minister of a central Indian state governed by Modi's party is on the defensive over the deaths of witnesses involved in a massive fraud in en-

trance exams for college and government jobs.

Modi has made tentative progress on economic transformation since he swept to office a year ago, and in his first year parliament was a third more productive than the first year of the last government, data by PRS Legislative Research shows.

But the pace of change has been slower than many expected from the man some supporters cast in the mould of reformers such as Britain's Margaret Thatcher or China's Deng Xiaoping, and private companies are slow to invest in economic revival. Plans to pass a business-friendly land purchase law are on the backburner after Congress and other parties dubbed it "anti-farmer" and refused to let parliament vote on it.

The tax bill has been passed in the lower house and got the support of an upper house panel on Monday. But the government needs a two-thirds majority to make it law, which it will struggle to reach without Congress support. Congress wants the bill to be amended before backing it.

Reuters

Philippine president signs competition law, amendments to cabotage act



Philippine President Benigno Aquino

MANILA, 21 July — Philippine President Benigno S Aquino III approved on Tuesday two laws that will further increase trade and encourage more investments in the country.

Aquino, in a ceremony in Malacanang, the presidential palace, signed the Philippine Competition Law and amendments to the Cabotage Law.

The Philippine Competition

Act aims to prevent economic concentration which will control production, distribution, trade or industry that will unduly stifle competition, distort, manipulate or constrict the discipline of free markets.

Those who violate the law will be penalized by imprisonment from two to seven years and a fine of no less than 50 million pesos (1.10 million US dollars) but no more than 250 million pesos (5.52 million US dollars). The penalty of imprisonment shall be imposed upon the responsible officers, and directors of the entity.

The amendments to Cabotage Law allows foreign vessels to transport and co-load cargoes for domestic trans-shipment. The law aims to lower the cost of shipping export cargoes from Philippine ports to international ports and import cargoes from international ports for the benefit of consumers.

Xinhua

Kerry says Iran vow to defy US is 'very disturbing'



US Secretary of State John Kerry talks to the media after a meeting with Saudi Foreign Minister Adel al-Jubeir at the State Department in Washington on 16 July, 2015.
REUTERS

DUBAI, 21 July — US Secretary of State John Kerry said a speech by Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei on Saturday vowing to defy American policies in the region despite a deal with world powers over Teheran's nuclear programme was "very disturbing".

"I don't know how to interpret it at this point in time, except to take it at face value, that that's his policy," he said in the interview with Saudi-owned Al Arabiya television, parts of which the network quoted on Tuesday.

"But I do know that often

comments are made publicly and things can evolve that are different. If it is the policy, it's very disturbing, it's very troubling," he added.

Ayatollah Khamenei told supporters on Saturday that US policies in the region were "180 degrees" opposed to Iran's, at a speech in a Teheran mosque punctuated by chants of "Death to America" and "Death to Israel".

"Even after this deal our policy towards the arrogant US will not change," Khamenei said.

Several Gulf Arab states have long accused Teheran of interference, alleging financial or armed support for political movements in countries including Bahrain, Yemen and Lebanon.

Kerry said the US believed its Arab allies had the ability to confront Iranian interference in the region.

"I think President Obama's belief and our military assessments, our intelligence assessments, are that if they organise themselves correctly, all of the Arab states have an untapped potential that is very, very significant to be able to push back against any of these activities," he said.

Reuters

North Korea says not interested in Iran-like nuclear talks with US



North Korean leader Kim Jong Un provides field guidance to the Kim Jong Thae Electric Locomotive Complex in this undated photo released by North Korea's Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) in Pyongyang on 20 July, 2015.—REUTERS

SEOUL, 21 July — North Korea is not interested in an Iran-like dialogue with the United States to give up its nuclear capabilities, the isolated country's foreign ministry said in a statement on Tuesday.

The statement said North Korea's nuclear programme was an "essential deterrence" against US foreign policy towards the reclusive country, which the North views as hostile.

"It is not logical to compare our situation with the Iranian nuclear agreement because we are always subjected to provocative US military hostilities, including massive joint military exercises and a grave nuclear threat," said the statement, which was carried by state media but attributed to a foreign ministry spokesman.

"We do not have any interest at all on dialogue for unilaterally freezing or giving up our nukes," it said.

The United States and five world powers struck an historic deal with Iran last week that will limit Iran's nuclear capabilities in exchange for sanctions relief.

The Iran agreement was a

great political victory for US President Barack Obama, who has long promised to reach out to historic enemies, including North Korea.

The deal, in return for lifting US, EU and UN sanctions that have crippled its economy, stipulates that Iran must accept long-term limits on its nuclear programme.

North Korea is also heavily sanctioned by the United States, European Union and the United Nations for procuring equipment related to its ongoing nuclear and ballistic missile programmes.

"We are clearly a nuclear power and nuclear powers have their own interests," the North Korean statement said.

Reuters

China, Russia launch "Red Trips" to historic sites linked to Communist revolutions

BEIJING, 21 July — Tour companies from both China and Russia have launched new "Red Trip" routes covering historical sites linked to old revolutionary Communist Party leaders in Russia and China.

Five new routes have been launched so far. One of them follows the route of

the Red Army. Russia has launched a project called "the road of the Ulyanov family" covering many important sites in Russia linked to the communist revolutionary Lenin that also include Lenin's hometown.

Tourists who visit the city of Ulyanov are also expected to take an oath to pay

respect to Lenin.

Most of the tourists who have signed up for the tours so far are retired people who have a special connection to "the Soviet Union" as they grew up reading books by Soviet Writers and listening to popular music from that era.

Xinhua

Singapore presents master plan for new state capital in SE India

NEW DELHI, 21 July — Singapore on Monday presented a master plan for building a new state capital city in the southeast Indian state of Andhra Pradesh, said local media.

The Seed Capital Area (SCA) Master Plan for Andhra Pradesh capital

Amaravathi was presented by Singapore officials to the state's Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, said local daily Indian Express online.

The master plan is the final of the three-stage one submitted by the government of Singapore. It is for

an area of 16.9 sq-kms and would be developed in five phases to build a "smart, green and sustainable city," according to the report.

On 22 October, the ceremonial laying foundation stone for Amaravathi will be held, said the report.

Xinhua

South Korean airlines to resume suspended flights as MERS wanes

SEOUL, 21 July — Korean Air Lines Co Ltd and Asiana Airlines Inc, which cut back flight schedules after an outbreak of Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) in South Korea, said on Tuesday they will resume normal operations in early August. South Korea's MERS outbreak was the largest outside Saudi Arabia, with 186 infections and 36 deaths, prompting thousands of tourists to cancel visits to the country. No new MERS cases have been reported since 4 July.

Korean Air had suspended or reduced operations on routes to Japan and China in June and July, while rival Asiana suspended or cut service routes to Japan, China and a few Southeast Asian destinations. Asiana said it would maintain its reduced schedule to Hong Kong of two daily flights in August, down from four previously.—Reuters



A view of the Asiana Airline's head office in Seoul on 8 Aug, 2013.—REUTERS



Children play at a fountain in Tokyo, Japan, on 21 July, 2015. The temperature in Tokyo reached up to 35 degrees Celsius.—XINHUA

Greece submits bill needed to start rescue talks

ATHENS, 21 July — The Greek government submitted legislation to parliament on Tuesday required by its international lenders to start talks on a multi-billion euro rescue package.

Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras has until Wednesday night to get those measures adopted in the assembly. A first set of reforms triggered a rebellion in his party last week and passed only thanks to votes from pro-EU opposition parties.

The second bill, though less divisive, will still be a test his weakened majority.

It puts into Greek law new European Union rules on propping up failed banks, decreed after the 2008 financial crisis and aimed at shielding taxpayers from the risk of having to bail out troubled lenders.

The so-called bank recovery and resolution directive (BRRD)



Greek Finance Minister Euclid Tsakalotos speaks to the media during a handover ceremony of outgoing Deputy Finance Minister Nadia Valavani to newly appointed Deputy Finance Minister Tryfon Alexiadis in Athens, Greece on 20 July, 2015.
REUTERS

imposes losses on shareholders and creditors of ailing lenders, in a process known as “bail-in”, before any taxpayers’ money can be tapped in

a bank rescue.

The European Commission in late May gave Italy, France and nine other EU countries two

months to adopt the rules, which were meant to be applied by the end of 2014, or face legal action.

The bailout bill also includes the adoption of new rules for the country’s civil justice system, aimed at accelerating lengthy judicial processes and cutting costs.

Together with his coalition partners from the right-wing Independent Greeks party, Tsipras has 162 seats in the 300-seat parliament. But last week’s rebellion cut his support to just 123 votes, meaning he is likely to need opposition votes again. Greece on Monday reopened its banks and repaid billions of euros owed to the International Monetary Fund and the European Central Bank in the first signs of a return to normality after it struck a cash-for-reforms deal with other euro zone countries last week.

Reuters

Dacic, Zannier condemn terrorist attack in Turkey



Serbian Foreign Minister Ivica Dacic

BELGRADE, 21 July — The OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Serbian Foreign Minister Ivica Dacic, and OSCE Secretary General Lamberto Zannier condemned the terrorist attack in the Turkish border town of Suruc, offering condolences to the families of those killed and wishing a rapid recovery to the many injured.

At least 27 people have been killed and nearly 100 hospitalized in the explosion, Turkey’s Interior Ministry said.

“Today’s attack is an attack on us all,” said Dacic on Monday. “This brutal incident, following those in Egypt, Tunisia and France, is yet another attempt to instill widespread fear in our societies. Instead of reacting as the terrorists want, we must commit ourselves to standing together in countering terrorism and violent extremism.”

Secretary General Lamberto Zannier said, “This attack is yet another sad piece of evidence that violent extremism recognizes no ethnic, religious or state borders. The highest priority for all should be to intensify joint efforts to stand up to forces that are attempting to use violence and fear to exploit what still divides us. OSCE is sparing no efforts to rise to the challenge.”

Chairperson Dacic and Secretary General Zannier offered their support to the people and government of Turkey.

Turkey is one of the OSCE’s 57 participating States.—*Tanjug*

McCain urges Trump to apologize to US military families



Senator John McCain

WASHINGTON, 21 July — Senator John McCain urged Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump on Monday to apologize to US military families for saying prisoners of war are not heroes, in his first direct response to Trump’s remarks.

Trump drew a barrage of criticism over the weekend after telling a Republican forum he

did not think McCain, a Navy fighter pilot who was held prisoner for more than five years during the Vietnam War, was a hero because he was captured.

The real estate mogul has refused to apologize for the remarks, despite criticism from his own party, including calls from rival candidates for the 2016 Republican presidential nomination

for him to drop out of the race.

McCain played down the personal attack in an interview with MSNBC. He said he did not think Trump owed him an apology, but “I think he may owe an apology to the families of those who have sacrificed in conflict and those who have undergone the prison experience in serving our country.”

The longtime Arizona senator and 2008 Republican presidential nominee, who himself has been called fiery and combative, added: “The great honour of my life was to serve in the company of heroes. I’m not a hero.”

Trump was addressing a gathering of religious conservatives in Ames, Iowa, on Saturday, when the moderator referred to McCain as a war hero.

“He’s not a war hero,” Trump retorted. “He was a war hero because he was captured. I like people who weren’t captured.”

Trump softened his com-

ments at a news conference later on Saturday, saying: “If a person is captured, they are a hero as far as I’m concerned.”

In an excerpt from an interview on Fox News’ “The O’Reilly Factor” airing on Monday night, Trump said: “I have respect for Senator McCain. I used to like him a lot.”

“I supported him. I raised a lot of money for his campaign against President Obama and certainly if there was a misunderstanding, I would totally take that back,” Trump said of his Iowa comments. “But, hopefully, I said it correctly and certainly, shortly thereafter, I said it correctly.”

The White House weighed in on Monday. Spokesman Josh Earnest said President Barack Obama continued to have political differences with the man he defeated in the 2008 election, “but those debates have not reduced his appreciation for Senator McCain’s remarkable service to the country.”—*Reuters*

Colombia to continue seeking peace agreement with FARC: president

BOGOTA, 21 July — Colombia will continue seeking a peace agreement with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) to end the 50-year-old armed conflict in the country, Colombian President Juan Manuel

Santos said on Monday.

Santos made the remarks while addressing a military parade held in Bogota to celebrate the country’s 205th anniversary of independence. The Colombian government and the FARC are current-

ly holding peace talks in Cuba to end the long-lasting armed conflict.

Military parades were also conducted in Medellin, Bucaramanga and Cali, the first city to be emancipated, to celebrate the 205th anniversary.—*Xinhua*

Huge blaze threatens village in southern Croatia

ZAGREB, 21 July — Several dozen residents were evacuated from a village in southern Croatia on Tuesday as firefighters struggled to keep a raging forest fire away from houses, state television HRT reported.

It said a huge blaze had surrounded the village of Trstenik on the southern Peljesac peninsula,

one of Croatia’s most famous wine-growing regions, during the night. A fire line more than two kilometres (1.2 miles) long was still devouring a thick pine forest and vineyards on Tuesday morning, the television said. “We are fighting for the houses, it’s touch and go, people have been evacuated,” firefighter Petar Rasic told

HRT. Another fire on the nearby Korcula island had destroyed 500 hectares of pine forest by Tuesday morning, the television said.

Croatia has had a week of unusually high temperatures nearing 40 degrees Celsius, making forest fires along its Adriatic tourist coast increasingly likely.—*Reuters*

France’s Fabius to meet Iranian president in Iran next week

French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius delivers a speech at the opening of an informal ministerial meeting to prepare the COP21 summit in Paris, France, on 20 July, 2015.
REUTERS



PARIS, 21 July — French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius announced on Tuesday that he would travel to Iran next week for talks “on all subjects” and would meet Iranian President Hassan Rouhani.

The visit comes after a landmark nuclear deal between major powers and Teheran under which Western sanctions are to be lifted in exchange for agreed limits on Iran’s nuclear programme.—*Reuters*

PERSPECTIVES

Wednesday, 22 July, 2015

Companies must earn customer loyalty

By Aung Khin

Myanmar has become a market-oriented economy as part of the democratic reforms under the civilian government which took office in 2011. In recent years, popular brand items have flooded into the country, with some companies setting up their own operations here or running businesses under franchise.

However, from IT products to snack foods, the quality of products sold in Myanmar are found to be substandard compared to neighbouring countries. For example, a global-brand smartphone sells for the same price on the domestic market as overseas, but the quality is lower.

Recently, some customers have complained that snack foods of regionally or globally famous brands in Myanmar are substandard compared with those in other countries, in terms of quality or quantity.

With a growing number of Myanmar people travelling overseas, comparisons between products or foods of the same brand can be made and publicised. If a famous brand cannot control ensure the same quality for the same price between countries, customers will lose confidence in their brand.

For any commercial product, brand loyalty of customers is important to ensure repeat business. The key influencing factors of brand loyalty include perceived value, trust and customer satisfaction.

Without establishing customer loyalty, no business can sustain profitability. In order to attain this loyalty, brands must not try to sell substandard goods in certain markets, while peddling better quality wares in others.

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

Make Election Free and Fair

Htun Tin Htun

Moral degradation exists everywhere. With increased efficiency of modern mass communications, we have become much more aware of man's inhumanity to man on a scale unheard of hitherto. Individuals tend to forget or completely ignore their obligations and duties to the society in which they live. Mankind appears to have been blinded by material achievements thinking that materialism is the end of all things. Mankind has forgotten that materialism alone does not provide the true happiness or spiritual well-being sought after by mankind. Men must seek true happiness and spiritual well-being through their respective religions as an additional adjunct to materialism. Spiritual solace and materialism go hand in hand to provide true happiness for all.

Attitude towards People, Planet and Profit needs to be positively and beneficially changed and improved to gain Peace, Progress and Prosperity. Human failings, such as ego, greed, envy, enmity and hate that prevailed from time immemorial, have remained unchanged even to the present time. The Buddha's enlightenment is such that His spiritual injunctions, particularly the Five Precepts and the Noble Eight-fold path, are prescriptions to eradicate these human weaknesses which cause pain and harm to others. The immortal observation of the Buddha that "Hatred can never be eradicated

by Hatred but only through love and compassion", is a valid statement that has gone unchallenged throughout the ages.

Knowledge about election (Awareness, Advocacy, Assessment, Analysis, Action) needs to be disseminated widely and extensively to all stakeholders all over the country in timely manner. According to the Inter-Parliamentary Union, free and fair elections require the recognition and affirmation of three sets of rights. These include: voting and election rights (these establish universal, indiscriminately suffrage, secret balloting and the right to individual appeal in situation where individual rights are compromised); candidature, party and campaign rights (these establish that everyone has the right to participate in government, to express political opinions, to campaign, to have equal access to the media, to be free from political violence and to the protection of the law); and the rights and responsibilities of the state (these establish the state as responsible for the establishment of an effective, impartial and non-discriminatory process for registering voters, providing education on electoral procedures, and ensuring a non-partisan electoral commission exists). It should be noted that these three sets of rights are premised on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights Article 21.3: "The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and

shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures".

Electoral legitimacy is of paramount importance in ensuring a stable political environment. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights serves as the foundational document in the academic debate about what constitutes a free and fair electoral contest. Transparency International (TI) has taken a significantly different approach to defining the free and fair standard. In defining what makes an election free and fair, emphasis is placed on independent electoral commissions and transparency of polling mechanism. With an independent electoral commission, the ability of incumbents to manipulate the electoral process is greatly reduced. In regards to transparency, the polling process should be scrutinized by all parties. TI argues for sophisticated electoral procedures that include tagging electoral material with serial codes and closely recording the number of voters to ensure the free and fairness of the electoral contest.

European Union (EU) suggests that in order for an election to be deemed free and fair, it must reflect basic human rights. In regards to elections the EU argues: To be truly free and fair. They must be conducted in an atmosphere which is respectful of human rights. The right to take part in government through freely chosen representatives is enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (article 21) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (article 25). The EU however, has recognized the inherent ambiguity of the phrase and has moved toward measuring whether or not an election has been conducted according to democratic standards. In the *Handbook for European Union Election Observation Mission*, free and fair is referred to as a sound bite for narrow assessment of an electoral process and is no longer promoted as a standard suitable to evaluate elections.

Law enforcement and evaluation of election monitoring are important for free and fair election. This has become a common phenomenon as groups such as the Commonwealth have come to similar conclusions. The Commonwealth currently assesses elections in terms of whether or not the will of the people has been expressed. The Commonwealth has argued this approach allows the observer group to note electoral abuses but still conclude whether or not the election had reached an international standard. Although there have been a number of international forums and initiatives dedicated to establishing a clear description, free and fair remains a blanket term used to imply electoral validity. As Elklit and Svensson suggest: the phrase free and fair cannot denote compliance with a fixed, universal standard of electoral competition: no such standard exists, and the complexity of the electoral process makes the notion of any simple formula unrealistic. However, in order to provide an evaluation of election monitoring, a conception of the most basic standards of free and fair must be established.

Elements relating to voters' opportunity to participate in the election without coercion or restrictions of any kind should be included in the freedom dimension. In a very comprehensive analysis titled "What Makes Elections Free and Fair", authors Elklit and Jorgen set out to establish the most basic prerequisites for a free and fair electoral process. With regard to the fairness of an election, the authors refer to the notion of a level playing ground. Elklit and Jorgen have developed an extensive checklist for the criteria of free and fair that can be applied before, during and after the Election Day. While Elklit and Jorgen delineation provides a clear depiction of free and fair, it is important that a clear understanding of the phrase is established and how it applies.

Code of ethics for all stakeholders in the election needs to be abided by all concerned. In a general sense, it can be assumed that free and fair electoral practices are those that meet the most basic requirements of a nation's electoral law. More specifically, these are electoral practices that work to fulfil the demand of democratic indicators as well as assist in the general capacity building of a nation's political system. These practices include but are not limited to: an independent and non-partisan electoral commission; equal access to government owned/operated resources for incumbent and opposition parties; accessibility of electoral

polls; freedom granted to opposition to campaign; universal, efficient and accessible voter registration, and strict regulations prohibiting and punishment of vote rigging and gerrymandering. It is only with a basic conception of free and fair that one can begin to explore and evaluate electoral monitoring.

Together we prosper and working together we deliver. This is Teamwork that will be effective and successful if all concerned stakeholders actively and constructively involved and participated. Elections have become a major factor in the stabilisation and democratisation of emerging democracies and post-conflict countries. More than a dozen such elections were taken place in 2010 and early 2011. However, the risk of a relapse into war and violence is considerable. Elections in these countries are a tightrope walk between war and peace, stability and instability. But there is no iron law according to which elections are doomed to fail. There have been a number of success stories in the past two decades. Such elections can be conducted successfully if important lessons are taken seriously and implemented. Apart from the difficult issues of timing and the choice of an electoral system properly tailored to local conditions, the establishment of an independent, well functioning Election Commission and an Election Complaints System are crucial elements for success.

(To be continued)

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NATIONAL

UEC, political parties meet in Yangon

YANGON, 21 July — A coordination meeting between the Union Election Commission and political parties was held at the Parkroyal Hotel on Tuesday morning.

UEC Chairman U Tin Aye made a speech at the meeting.

Discussions at the meeting focused on settlement of electoral disputes, different security for the general election, nomination of candidates and campaigning.

As 13 political parties signed the code of conducts for candidates on Tuesday, a total of 82 political parties have signed the code of conducts.—MNA



UEC Chairman U Tin Aye delivers speech at cooperation and coordination meeting between UEC and political parties.

MNA

Readers to enjoy e-books on Pitakat treatises and religious books

YANGON, 21 July — Pitakat treatises and various religious books, totaling more than 1,000 with over 380,000 pages have been created as e-books, Union Minister U Soe Win told the ceremony to launch e-library established by Department of Promotion and Propagation of the Sasana and Maha Dhammapala Association on Kaba Aye Hill, here, Tuesday.

He said that Ministry of Religious Affairs and Maha Dhammapala Association jointly established a website for longevity of the teachings of the Lord Buddha.

A plan is underway to create invaluable Myanmar and English version books from International Theravada Buddhist Missionary University and State Pari-

yatti Sasana Universities in Yangon and Mandalay as e-books and to post religious talks of prominent Buddhist monks through website www.KBRL.gov.mm.

Union Minister U Soe Win offered books of Tri-Pitakat treatises in line with the edition of the 6th Buddhist Council to the Sayadaws.

Chairman of the association U Myint Oo and U Pyone Maung Maung donated 200 e-tablets inserted with Buddhological literature to the Sayadaws.

People and Buddhist monks may browse books on Buddhist literature and sound files through www.KBRL.gov.mm website and enjoy e-library service at Kaba Aye Research Library.—MNA

Railway authorities repair flood-hit tracks on Mandalay-Myitkyina route

NAY PYI TAW, 21 July — Authorities from Myanmar Railways are now repairing tracks damaged by floods along Mandalay-Myitkyina route, according to the announcement of the agency on Tuesday.

Officials and senior engineers from MR are managing repairing works in Kawlin, Kanbalu and Shwebo townships of Sagaing region, and Mandalay.

The tracks between

Kangyi and Zawchaung stations were inundated due to heavy rains on 17 July, suspending the regular train schedules till 21 July.

The MR has also announced the trains are plying along Mohynin-Myitkyina-Mohynin route while the remaining sections are being repaired, and motor vehicles are being used to carry the passengers to the stations where damages did not occur.

MNA



Tatmadaw seize a machine that produces stimulant tablets at map MU-243382 on 20 July.—MYAWADY

110,000 stimulant tablets with WY letters worth K 3.6 billion buried underground.

Similarly, machines that produce the tablets were also discovered from

the camp on 20 July.

KKO group is not just collecting money from the public but also manufacturing narcotic drugs, according to sources.

Myawady

CBM warns private banks over exchange rate manipulation



Union Minister U Soe Thane discusses exchange rate of foreign currency.

MNA

YANGON, 21 July — The Central Bank of Myanmar blamed currency manipulation Tuesday for the kyat's weakness, urging private banks not to engage in practices that contribute to exchange rate instability.

Despite a range of contributing factors influencing the exchange rate,

the central bank has focused on currency manipulation as the reason for

the kyat's fall.

At a meeting with private bankers Tuesday in

By Aye Min Soe

Nay Pyi Taw, Governor of the Central Bank of Myanmar U Kyaw Kyaw Maung called on private banks to follow the instructions of the CBM in an effort to stabilize the kyat.

The CBM will inspect private banks to assess their currency trading activities, according to a press release after the meeting.

The central bank set the official reference rate at 1,240 kyat to the dollar Tuesday but the informal rate at foreign exchange counters reached around K1,250.

The currency has continued to fall despite official measures to prop up its value.—GNLM

K 3.6 billion worth of stimulant tablets seized from former KKO camp



Packets of stimulant tablets seized by military columns at map MU 248378 on 19 July.—MYAWADY

NAY PYI TAW, 21 July — Members of Tatmadaw columns and the BGF

searched the former camp of KKO group led by Kyaw Thet and Saw San Aung

near Kaungmu Village in Kawkareik on 19 July afternoon and seized over

Corrigendum

Please read "International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights—ICESCR" instead of "International Covenant on Education, Social and Cultural Rights—ICESCR" mentioned on page 9 of the Global New Light of Myanmar issued on 21st July 2015.—MOFA

Suspected Islamic State bomber kills 30 in Turkish town

SURUC, (Turkey) 21 July — A suspected Islamic State suicide bomber killed at least 30 people, mostly young students, in an attack on a Turkish town near the Syrian border on Monday.

Bodies lay beneath trees after the blast outside a cultural centre in the mostly Kurdish town of Suruc in southeastern Turkey, some 10 km (6 miles) from the Syrian town of Kobani, where Kurdish fighters have been battling Islamic State.

The explosion tore through a group of mostly university-aged students from an activist group as they gathered to make a statement to the local press about a trip they were planning to help rebuild Kobani. Turkey's NATO allies have been seeking tighter controls on a porous border with Syria that runs alongside Islamic State-held territories. But monitoring is difficult with 1.8 million

Syrian refugees now on the Turkish side and smuggling rifle.

The United States, which has an air base at Incirlik in southern Turkey, though it is not being used for its air attacks on IS forces, called the bombing a "heinous terror attack".

Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu told a news conference in Ankara 30 people had been killed. "It is...most probably a suicide bombing."

The *Hurriyet* newspaper said the attacker was an 18-year old woman, but there was no confirmation.

"Turkey has taken and will continue to take all necessary measures against the Islamic State," Davutoglu said, without giving details. "Measures on our border with Syria...will be increased."

One witness, giving his name as Mehmet, told *Reuters* by telephone he saw more than 20 bodies.

"It was a huge explo-



Demonstrators gather at Galatasaray square during a protest against the bomb attack in the border town of Suruc, in central Istanbul, Turkey, on 20 July, 2015.—REUTERS

sion, we all shook."

Video footage showed young men and women standing behind a banner declaring support for Kobani, some holding up small red flags. Suddenly there was a huge explosion, apparently from within the

crowd, sending up a column of flame.

The Suruc attack comes weeks after Turkey deployed additional troops and equipment along parts of its border with Syria, concerned about the risk of spillover as fighting be-

tween Kurdish forces, rebel groups, Syrian government troops and Islamic State militants intensifies.

An explosion also occurred in Kobani shortly afterwards, which a monitoring group blamed on a car bomb. A spokesman

for Syrian Kurdish forces, known as the YPG, said two fighters died.

Turkey's leaders have said they do not plan any unilateral military incursion into Syria but have also said they will do whatever is necessary to defend the country's borders.

"Terror has no religion, no country, no race," President Tayyip Erdogan said of the bloodiest such attack in Turkey since at least 50 people were killed in the town of Reyhanli near the border in 2013.

Ankara fears any disorder in the border area could re-ignite an armed Kurdish rebellion by the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) in the south-east that has killed some 40,000 since 1984. It must also consider the danger of attacks in sprawling Western cities such as Istanbul where British and Jewish targets were bombed by al Qaeda in 2003 with the loss of 60 lives.—*Reuters*

Tennessee rampage suspect went to Qatar in 2014 — sources

WASHINGTON, 21 July — The man suspected of killing five members of the US military in Tennessee last week was in Qatar at least once during a 2014 trip to the Middle East, according to two US government sources who said reasons for the stopover were still unknown.

US investigators are trying to piece together Mohammed Youssuf Abdulazez's travels to the region to see if he was radicalised by a militant group such as Islamic State. But they have no evidence he was in contact with militant groups or individuals.

On a seven-month trip to visit family in Jordan, it is uncertain how long he may have spent in the Qatari cap-

ital, a political crossroads in the region. Qatar is home to jihadist supporters as well as a US air base.

Abdulazez, a Kuwaiti-born naturalized US citizen, was killed in a gunfight with police on Thursday after he sprayed gunfire at a military recruiting centre in Chattanooga, then drove to a nearby Naval Reserve Centre where he shot and killed four Marines. Three people were wounded, including a sailor who died on Saturday.

The shooting follows a series of attacks, or thwarted attacks, in the United States and other countries by Muslims claiming to be inspired by Islamic State or other militant groups. Such "lone wolf" attacks by mil-

itant, radicalised US Muslims acting on their own pose a greater risk to the country than a large-scale operation, President Barack Obama has said.

Earlier on Monday, another source close to the probe said investigators had evidence that the suspected gunman had online exposure to general jihadist propaganda that may have inspired the rampage.

But they have not turned up any specific directive or exhortation from a militant group such as Islamic State, according to the source, who asked for anonymity when discussing sensitive information. Even so, the Federal Bureau of Investigation has said it is investigating the attack as an act of terrorism.

Abdulazez apparently did not use a laptop but could have read jihadist propaganda on his smart phone, the sources close to the investigation and a second source told *Reuters*.

More details emerged on Monday about Abdulazez's possible frame of mind leading up to the attacks. He had drug abuse problems and was worried about debt, according to his family and a diary he left behind, ABC News reported, citing a family repre-

sentative.

Close friends told *Reuters* previously that the suspected shooter drank alcohol and smoked marijuana, had received treatment for drug problems, and struggled to reconcile those habits with his Islamic beliefs. His family said in a statement at the weekend that he suffered from depression.

US lawmakers said on Sunday they will examine possible shortcomings in law enforcement or intelligence in the case, which highlighted growing concern about possible Internet-based directives from Islamic State leaders in Syria. Abdulazez, an engineer, wrote about having suicidal thoughts and "becoming a martyr" as far back as 2013 after losing his job due to drug use, both prescription and non-prescription, the family representative told ABC News.

ABC did not name the family contact, who said Abdulazez abused sleeping pills, opioids, painkillers, marijuana and alcohol.

ABC said that Abdulazez was taking sleeping pills to deal with an overnight shift at work, and was considering filing for bankruptcy because he was thousands of dollars in debt.

Reuters

Islamic State cracks down on Internet use in Syrian stronghold — monitor

BEIRUT, 21 July — Islamic State militants raided Internet cafes in their Syrian stronghold city of Raqqa after ordering a ban on wireless networks that can be used by private homes, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights monitoring group said on Monday.

In order to implement a news blackout of the group's activities, Islamic State had given cafe owners four days from Sunday to disconnect wireless Internet networks used by residents, the Observatory said, citing an IS leaflet circulated in Raqqa.

The United States said earlier this month it had intensified an aerial campaign against Islamic State in Syria with a wave of strikes in and around Raqqa, de facto capital of the militants' self-declared caliphate in parts of Syria and Iraq.

Citing a network of sources on the ground, the Britain-based Observatory said Islamic State members had already started an Internet crackdown that included shutting down networks that could be used by its own fighters at home.

The group also aims to cut off communication between its members and

their relatives for fear they may try to escape or pass on information to intelligence agencies, according to the Observatory.

Islamic State controls Raqqa Province and other parts of northern and eastern Syria, reaching up to the Iraqi border. In Raqqa, it strictly regulates public life and has outlawed music and images of people in public. Islamic State also runs nearly everything from bakeries to schools, courts and mosques.

In December the ultra-hardline group ordered shopkeepers to shut down their wireless Internet during prayer times in the eastern Syrian city of Deir al-Zor.

US-led forces dropped anti-Islamic State leaflets on Raqqa, the activist group called Raqqa Is Being Slaughtered Silently reported on its Twitter feed on Sunday.

The leaflets showed a comic book-style image of dead Islamic State fighters and a group of four people in military fatigues with guns walking on a road through the bodies. The words "Freedom will come" are written in Arabic at the bottom of the image.—*Reuters*



Betty Maynard (L) hugs her friend Cindy Atterton beside a growing memorial at the Armed Forces Career Center in Chattanooga, Tennessee in a 17 July, 2015 file photo.—REUTERS

The \$100 million question: are we alone in the cosmos?

SAN FRANCISCO / LONDON, 21 July — Scientists are about to embark on the biggest search yet for alien life, sweeping the skies for signals of civilizations beyond our solar system with \$100 million from a Russian billionaire and the backing of physicist Stephen Hawking.

Whether we are alone in the universe has engaged minds down the ages, and the recent discovery that there may be tens of billions of habitable planets in our galaxy alone has added urgency to finding an answer.

“There is no bigger question. It’s time to commit to finding the answer — to search for life beyond Earth,” Hawking told reporters at the programme’s launch in London on Monday.

Some of the world’s largest radio telescopes will be used to scan for distinctive radio signals that could indicate the existence of intelligent life.

Astronomers will listen to signals from the million star systems nearest to Earth and the 100 closest galaxies, although they do not yet plan to send messages back into space.

Hawking said some form of simple life on other worlds seemed very likely, but the existence of intelligence was another matter, and humankind needed to think hard about making contact.

“A civilization reading one of our messages could be billions of years ahead. If so, they will be vastly more powerful and may not see us as any more valuable than we see bacteria,” he said.

The 10-year project, dubbed Breakthrough Listen, is funded by Russian Internet entrepreneur Yuri Milner, himself a physicist by training, who made his fortune from savvy early investments in startups such as Facebook Inc.

He said he aimed to bring a Silicon Valley ap-



Russian entrepreneur and venture capitalist Yuri Milner arrives on the red carpet during the second annual Breakthrough Prize Awards at the NASA Ames Research Centre in Mountain View, California in this on 9 Nov, 2014 file photo.

REUTERS
proach to “the most interesting technological question of our day”.

Milner became fascinated by the notion of extraterrestrial life after reading astrophysicist Carl Sagan’s “Intelligent Life in the Universe” as a 10-year-old in Moscow.

He believes other civilizations could teach us how

to handle challenges such as allocating natural resources, he said in an interview. And if we don’t find them, we can learn other lessons.

“If we’re alone, we need to cherish what we have,” he said. “The message is, the universe has no backup.”

The new project dwarfs anything else in the field, known by the acronym SETI for the “search for extraterrestrial intelligence”. Globally, less than \$2 million annually is spent on SETI, said Dan Werthimer, an adviser to Milner’s project who directs the SETI@home programme affiliated with the University of California in Berkeley, which asks volunteers to run software on their home computers to analyze data.

Today, due to technology improvements, including in computing power and telescope sensitivity, \$100 million will go much farther than in the early 1990s, the last time SETI had signifi-

cant funding. The advances allow scientists to monitor several billion radio frequencies at a time, instead of several million, and to search 10 times more sky than in the early 1990s.

Any signals the scientists detect will have been created years ago, perhaps even centuries or millennia earlier. Radio signals take four years simply to travel between Earth and the nearest star outside our solar system.

Breakthrough Listen will book time at radio telescopes, including at Australia’s Parkes Observatory in New South Wales and the Radio Astronomy Observatory in Green Bank, West Virginia. Milner plans to book about two months a year at each site, a boon to scientists who normally might get two days a year on the telescopes.

The team, led by scientists such as Peter Worden, who until earlier this year directed the NASA Ames

Research Centre, will organize the radio signals they find, make the data public, and examine it for patterns.

The goal lies less in understanding the signals than in establishing whether they were created by intelligent life rather than natural phenomena.

Scientists say the fact that humans have developed radio signaling makes it a good bet that others may use it as well.

“It doesn’t tell you anything about the civilization, but it tells you a civilization is there,” said Frank Drake, another of the project’s supporters.

Drake, together with Sagan, sent the first physical message into space in 1972, the Pioneer plaques on board the Pioneer 10 US spacecraft.

In addition to checking for radio signals, Breakthrough Listen will hunt for light signals using a telescope at the Lick Observatory in California.—Reuters

China’s ZTE sees 43 pct rise in H1 preliminary net profit as 4G drives growth

HONG KONG, 21 July — Chinese telecom equipment maker ZTE Corp on Tuesday reported a jump in first-half preliminary net profit, thanks to increased investment in China’s 4G next-generation telecom infrastructure and improved margins in its global business. The Shenzhen-based company said its preliminary first-half net profit rose 43 percent year-on-year to 1.6 billion yuan (\$258 million), according to a filing to the Shenzhen stock exchange after market closed on Tuesday. That is set to be the company’s highest first-half net profit, although the growth was slower than the 263 percent year-on-year jump recorded at the same time of last year.

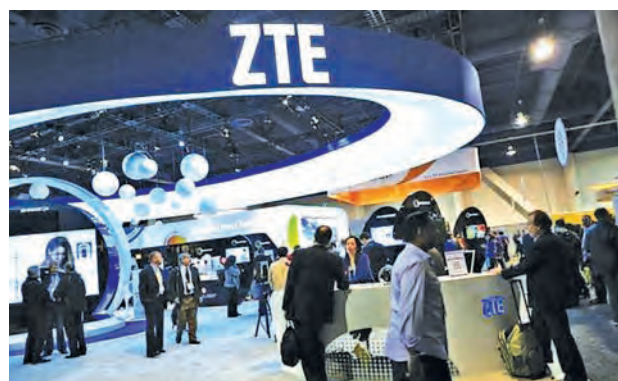
“ZTE increased revenue from sales of FDD-LTE

network systems, in addition to wireline switch and access systems, while contract profitability improved,” the company said in a separate statement. ZTE did not elaborate in the brief statement.

It came one day after cross-town rival Huawei Technologies Co Ltd, which competes with ZTE in telecom equipment and smartphones, posted a 30 percent increase in first-half revenue to 175.9 billion yuan and said it would achieve “effective growth” in 2015.

ZTE’s board earlier this month approved an A-share buyback plan estimated at no more than 1 billion yuan.

The company’s Shenzhen-listed shares closed up 0.9 percent prior to the earnings release, lagging a 1.6 percent rise in the benchmark.—Reuters



The ZTE display is shown at the annual Consumer Electronics Show (CES) in Las Vegas, Nevada on 8 Jan, 2014.—REUTERS

Costco, Sam’s Club, others halt photo sites over possible breach

TORONTO, 21 July — Costco Wholesale Corp (COST.O), Sam’s Club (WMT.N) and a handful of other large retailers have disabled their online photo printing stores in recent days, on concerns about a possible data breach at PNI Digital Media, which manages and/or hosts photo services sites.

Last week CVS Health Corp (CVS.N) disabled its CVSphoto.com site, and the week before Walmart Canada’s (WMT.N) walmartphoto.ca took a similar action after it was informed that customer credit card data had been potentially compromised.

Other photo printing sites that might have been recently affected included Rite Aid Corp (RAD.N) and

British supermarket chain Tesco’s (TSCO.L).

“We take the protection of information very seriously. PNI is investigating a potential credit card data issue, and outside security experts are assisting in the investigation,” said Kirk Saville, vice president, global communications at Staples Inc (SPLS.O), which bought Vancouver-based PNI last year. Some websites said they had been advised by PNI of a potential breach, while others said they acted because of recent reports.

Costco Canada and Rite Aid noted that PNI has limited access to customer information since it does not process credit cards, but the photo service sites were temporarily taken down as a precaution.

Faulty metal brace likely doomed SpaceX Falcon rocket, Musk says

CAPE CANAVERAL, 21 July — A faulty metal brace in an unmanned SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket likely triggered the explosion that destroyed the booster minutes after liftoff from Florida last month, company chief Elon Musk said on Monday.

The 28 June accident, which destroyed a load of cargo destined for the International Space Station, was the third botched re-

supply run within eight months. An Orbital ATK rocket explosion claimed a Cygnus cargo ship in October and a Russian Progress freighter failed to reach orbit in April.

SpaceX founder and Chief Executive Musk said Falcon rocket flights will not resume until September at the earliest. The company also plans to delay the debut flight of its heavy-lift Falcon rocket from this



A shopper wheels his cart from a Costco Wholesale store in Arlington, Virginia on 6 Aug, 2009.—REUTERS

CVS and Walmart Canada asked customers to monitor their credit card transactions closely for unauthorized charges.

Tesco’s page simply said it was unavailable for routine maintenance.

The retailers’ main websites and other services were not affected by the po-

tential breach.

Costco shares rose 0.2 percent to end regular trading at \$145.04; Wal-Mart shares dipped 0.4 percent to \$73.10; Rite Aid fell 1 percent to \$8.82; Tesco shares ended 0.3 percent higher at 218.6 pence, and Staples shares eased 0.5 percent to \$14.63.—Reuters

year to spring 2016.

A defective brace, or strut, holding a bottle of helium in the Falcon 9 needed to pressurize the upper-stage engine’s liquid oxygen tank, was the most likely cause of last month’s accident, Musk said.

He said the strut, from a vendor he declined to identify, was built from steel certified to withstand 10,000 pounds (4,536 kg) of force but apparently

failed at 2,000 pounds (907 kg) of force, Musk said.

“It looks like the key strut that holds down one of the helium bottles failed. As a result, the helium bottle would have shot to the top of the tank at high speed,” Musk told reporters on a conference call.

“It failed five times below its nominal strength, which is pretty crazy,” he said.

Reuters



Tourists visit ancient Taoist temples built on the cliff in Sanggan River canyon in Xuanhua County, north China's Hebei Province on 20 July, 2015.—XINHUA

Bridge linking Denmark, Sweden sets traffic record

COPENHAGEN, 21 July — The Oresund Bridge linking Denmark with Sweden has set a new traffic record with more than 30,000 vehicles crossing in one day over the weekend, the bridges's management office said on Monday.

A total of 30,955 vehicles crossed the bridge in just 24 hours on Saturday, overtaking the previous record by more than 1,700 cars, the office said in a press release.

Holiday traffic has boosted the use of the bridge, and there was no

specific event that has generated the high traffic on Saturday, said Karsten Langerich, head of the private market unit of the Oresund Bridge.

"Business is good for both countries, and both Danes and Swedes travel more than they did a year ago," Langerich added.

The previous record of 29,192 cars was made in 2014 when there was an ongoing train strike, according to the management office.

Completed in 1999 and put into operation in July

2000, the Oresund Bridge is a double-track railway and dual carriageway bridge between Danish capital Copenhagen and Sweden's coastal city of Malmö across the Oresund Strait.

As the longest combined road and rail bridge in Europe, it runs nearly 8 km from the Swedish coast to the artificial island of Peberholm, which lies in the middle of the strait. A 4-km underwater tunnel, the Drogden Tunnel, links the bridge with the other end in Copenhagen's island of Amager.—Xinhua

Chinese prosecutors to arrest ex-President Hu's top aide

BEIJING, 21 July — Chinese prosecutors have decided to arrest Ling Jihua, a one-time top aide to former President Hu Jintao, in a suspected bribery case, the state-run Xinhua News Agency reported, in the yet widening crack-down on alleged corruption under current President Xi Jinping's rule.

The agency also said the Communist Party of China separately decided to expel Ling, 58, hand him over to the judicial authorities on criminal charges of accepting bribes, and remove him from public office.

Ling, former vice chairman of the Chinese People's Political Con-

sultative Conference, was a key figure in the Communist Youth League faction, from which Hu rose through the party's ranks, eventually becoming the country's president in 2003. Xi took over the presidency in 2013.

Ling is the latest target in Xi's anti-graft campaign apparently aimed at tightening his grip on power and staving off influence from the former president and his faction, ahead of a likely changeover of the party's top brass when they meet for a congress, held once every five years, in 2017.

The party alleges in a statement that Ling took advantage of his posts to

seek profit for others and accepted huge bribes personally and through his family, Xinhua said.

He also allegedly obtained a great deal of the party and state's core secrets in violation of laws, committed adultery with a number of women and traded his power for sex.

The Supreme People's Procuratorate also issued a statement saying prosecutors had opened an investigation in Ling's suspected bribery case and decided to arrest him, Xinhua said.

Ling supported Hu as his principal aide by handling party affairs after taking up the post of director of the party's powerful General Office in 2007.

Japan protests Russian minister's visit to disputed isle

TOKYO, 21 July — Japan has lodged a protest to Russian authorities about the recent visit by Russia's healthcare minister to one of the islands at the centre of a long-standing bilateral territorial dispute, the Japanese government's top spokesman said on Tuesday.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga in a Press conference called Saturday's trip by the minister, Veronika Skvortsova, to Shikotan Island "extremely regrettable" and "unacceptable as it goes against Japan's position on the territorial issue."

Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida also criticized the Russian authorities' capture on Friday of a Japanese salmon and trout fishing boat from Hokkaido for breaching the fishing quota, saying the seizure of the boat near the disputed islands is "unacceptable."

Both ministers downplayed, however, the impact of the Russian moves to preparations for President Vladimir Putin's Japan trip later this year, only saying that several factors will be taken into account.

Kishida said the Japanese government is calling for the release of the crew members of the drift-net

fishing boat Hokomaru and the return of the boat at an early date.

Skvortsova's visit to inspect infrastructure construction on the island, including a new hospital, was the first by a senior Russian official to one of the disputed islands since a trip last September to Iturup Island, known as Etorofu in Japan, by Sergei Ivanov, a close aide of Putin.

The row over the four Russian-controlled, Japan-claimed islands off Hokkaido — Kunashiri, Etorofu, Shikotan and the Habomai group of islets, which were seized by the Soviet Union following Japan's surrender in World War II — has prevented the two countries from concluding a postwar peace treaty.

Russia's recent decision to ban drift-net fishing in its economic waters from January to conserve natural resources came as a major blow to Japanese fishermen who have long been fishing for salmon and trout in Russia's exclusive economic zone under bilateral arrangements.

The minister's visit and the capture of the Japanese fishing boat came at a time Tokyo and Moscow have been arranging for political



Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga attends a Press conference at the prime minister's office in Tokyo on 21 July, 2015. Suga said Japan has lodged a protest to Russian authorities about the recent visit of Russia's health care minister to one of the islands at the center of a long-standing bilateral territorial dispute. —KYODO NEWS

dialogue at various levels.

To lay the groundwork for Putin's visit, Japan is planning to dispatch Deputy Foreign Minister Shin-uke Sugiyama to Russia in mid-August and then Kishida to Russia from 31 August to 1 September for talks with his Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov, according to Japanese government sources.

Kyodo News

Former Guangdong anti-graft official expelled from CPC

BEIJING, 21 July — The former deputy secretary of the Guangdong provincial discipline inspection commission, has been expelled from the Communist Party of China (CPC) and removed from public office after a graft investigation, the CPC's anti-graft watchdog said on Tuesday.

Zhong Shijian "seriously violated political rules and discipline, and interfered with case investigations", according to a statement from the CPC Central Commission for Discipline Inspection.

Zhong, who is also former head of the Guangdong supervision department, was put under investigation in April.

Xinhua



File photo taken in March 2013 in Beijing shows Ling Jihua, a one-time top aide to former President Hu Jintao. Chinese prosecutors have decided to arrest Ling in a suspected bribery case.

KYODO NEWS

Kyodo News

Two World War II bombs defused in Bavaria

MUNICH, 21 July — Two bombs from World War II were discovered and defused on Monday in the southern German state of Bavaria, local police reported.

One 250-kg bomb was found in the district Pasing in Munich. About 1,000

residents including middle school students, who are working and living in houses within a radius of 500 meters, had been evacuated before the bomb was defused successfully, according to the Munich police.

Another bomb was discovered by construction

workers near the highway A3 at Nuremberg. Local police then blockaded the area until experts defused the bomb in the afternoon.

For safety reasons, experts searched carefully around the area to see whether there are other explosives.

Due to the removals, traffic in both areas were affected.

Munich and Nuremberg, the capital and the second largest city in Bavaria, were severely damaged in the Second World War.

Xinhua

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WEATHER REPORT

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL EVENING OF THE 22nd July, 2015: Rain or thundershowers will be scattered in Lower Sagaing, Mandalay and Magway Regions, Kayah States, fairly widespread in Shan State and widespread in the remaining Regions and States with likelihood of isolated heavy falls in Bago and Yangon Regions, Rakhine, Kayin and Mon States. Degree of certainty is (100%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Occasional with rough sea will be experience at times Deltaic, Gulf of Mottama, off and along Mon -Taninthayi Coasts. Surface wind speed in squalls may reach (40) m.p.h. Sea will be moderate elsewhere in Myanmar water.

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FEATURE: Kimonos of the world to light up stage at 2020 Tokyo Games

Yoshimasa Takakura (3rd from R) president of kimono company Choya Co in Fukuoka Prefecture, poses for a photo with five models wearing Japanese kimonos designed based on images of the United States, Lithuania, South Africa, Italy and Bhutan during the "Japan Day" event of the world expo in Milan on 11 July, 2015. Takakura aims to make kimonos for each of the 196 nations participating in the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.—KYODO NEWS

By Maya Kaneko

TOKYO, 21 July — Japanese culture and fashion has long evolved around the kimono. But one man is spreading a message of diversity by using this traditional garment to celebrate countries from around the world.

Yoshimasa Takakura's dream is to have each of the 196 nations participating in the 2020 Tokyo Olympics have their own model kimonos, forming a rich tapestry of history and culture for the two-week long sporting event.

He also hopes the project called "Imagine One World," which was launched last year, will help revitalize the kimono industry and encourage the younger generations to learn the craftsmanship of this important Japanese tradition.

"Through the presentation of Japanese kimonos that represent culture of each country, we'd like to entice foreigners and get them more interested in Japan," Takakura said in a recent interview with *Kyodo News*. "I believe the project sends out a message of peace and serves Japan's interests as well."

Takakura's production involves about 70 craftsmen from around Japan. So far, eight kimonos have been designed inspired by the

cultures and histories of Brazil, South Africa, Lithuania, Bhutan, Tuvalu, Qatar, Italy and the United States.

Models wearing kimonos of Italy and other countries joined a parade at a Japan Day event of the food-themed world expo in Milan on 11 July. The American kimono, depicting an astronaut and the Stars and Stripes flag, was introduced at a parade near Los Angeles on the US Independence Day.

A kimono with a British theme is scheduled to be unveiled in September. Sponsors are being solicited to make kimonos for Canada, France and Germany in time for the Group of Seven industrialized nations' summit in May next year in Mie Prefecture to welcome leaders with the traditional garments, according to Takakura.

Students from an elementary school in Tokyo's Ginza district are helping in the design of the kimono for India as a part of the school's educational partnership with the South Asian country for the 2020 Games.

By next spring, Takakura hopes to have designs for a total 18 kimonos, including those representing the Philippines, Georgia, Morocco, Peru and Costa Rica.

But the project isn't cheap. Takakura, 47, whose company Choya Co is based

in Kurume, Fukuoka Prefecture, has been trying to raise money on Facebook and via crowd funding.

He aims to raise about 350 million yen (\$2.85 million) to complete designs for 196 countries; one kimono could cost up to 1 million yen and an accompanying "obi" belt 500,000 yen, while exhibition costs for the project are expected to reach 50 million yen.

Organizers have so far collected more than 15 million yen, with corporate sponsors of American Express International Inc and a wedding center operator in Kurume offering 2 million yen each for the garments from the United States and Italy, respectively.

The artisans producing one-of-a-kind kimonos are from time-honored companies such as Chiso Co and Tatsumura Textile Co, which supply textiles to the Japanese imperial family. The designs for the garments often feature the national flower, flag and items unique to each country.

For example, the design of kimono for South Africa features its national flower protea as well as other tropical and exotic species such as jacaranda and strelitzia, or bird of paradise. "I asked the creator Mr (Norimichi) Matsuda to depict various flowers that will symbolize the abolishment of apartheid policy and social reconciliation in the country," Takakura said.

The design of the kimono for Bhutan was modeled after its national flag, which shows a big dragon, a symbol of the Asian country. The kimono for Brazil was made of Brazilian silk to pay respect to Japanese immigrants engaged in sericulture in the Latin American country. "By presenting best-quality products, we hope people will learn about the depth of kimono culture, especially because nowadays garments whose designs are printed by ink-jet printers are widely available at reasonable prices in Japan," Takakura said.

Craftsmen across Japan, he noted, are excited about the project.

Hiroshi Nakamachi, a creator of Kaga-Yuzen, one of the distinct motifs of sumptuous decorated cloth born of the silk dyeing processes by Miyazaki Yuzensai in the Edo period, even travelled to the Philippines with his protege to get inspiration for the kimono design.

After the Olympics, the organizers plan a travelling exhibition of the kimonos around the globe. Eventually, Takakura said the 196 garments will be auctioned off so they can be displayed in a museum for the general public.

Money raised in the auction will also be used to train young artisans, create jobs in the kimono industry and promote the traditional garment culture.

Takakura said his aim is rejuvenating the moribund kimono industry as he fears many skilled traditional craftsmen could "disappear in five years if no measures are taken."

According to Yano Research Institute, a private marketing research company, retail sales of kimono in Japan dwindled to about 300 billion yen in 2013, about one sixth of the peak in 1981 of some 1.8 trillion yen.

Many Japanese wore kimonos made of cotton and linen as casual dress before World War II, but Westernization of clothes in postwar Japan has drastically reduced demand for the traditional garment, leaving the industry to focus on luxurious silk kimonos worn in formal settings such as wedding ceremonies.

Hiddenobu Teramura, director of the textile and clothing division for the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, believes Takakura's initiative will help promote public interest in kimonos and stimulate the industry.

As part of the effort to promote kimono culture, especially among younger generations, the ministry is planning a "Kimono Day" on 16 November, when central government officials will don the traditional garments at work, Teramura said.

Kyodo News

Explosion in eastern China kills two, suspected attacker also dead

SHANGHAI, 21 July — An explosion in a park in China's eastern Shandong Province has killed two people as well as the suspected attacker, the official *Xinhua* news agency said on Tuesday.

The report said the blast, late on Monday evening, killed a suspect named as 33-year-old unemployed villager Xie Xingtang. The *Xinhua* report did not mention a reason for the attack.

Photos circulating on Chinese microblog Sina Weibo showed police cordons surrounding an area scattered with debris and at least several people bleeding with severe injuries. *Xinhua* said three people were in critical condition.

A report in the official *People's Daily* said Xie had been chronically ill and that his condition had recently worsened.—*Reuters*

From twerk to work: Miley Cyrus to host MTV Video Music Awards

LOS ANGELES, 21 July — Two years after twerking her way into MTV history, Miley Cyrus will be hosting the cable channel's Video Music Awards.

In a tweet on Monday, the pop star posted photos of herself in a bright green alien outfit, holding up posters reading, "MTV won't let me perform," followed by "So I'm hosting this year's VMAs."

MTV confirmed the news and shared Cyrus's photos on Twitter, but it did not retweet the 22-year-old's expletive-laced tweet.

The former Disney star sparked a frenzy at the 2013 VMAs when she performed with Robin Thicke, wearing a flesh-toned la-

tex bikini and engaging in the provocative dance style of "twerking" with a suggestive foam finger. The awards show, which honours artists for achievements in music videos, has a history of surprising, unscripted moments. Kanye West famously interrupted Taylor Swift's acceptance speech in 2009 and Britney Spears shared a kiss with Madonna during the show in 2003.

The VMAs will air from the Microsoft Theater in Los Angeles on 30 August. Nominees for the awards will be announced on Tuesday. —Reuters



Singer Miley Cyrus

Harper Lee's new 'Watchman' novel sells more than 1 million in first week

NEW YORK, 21 July — Harper Lee's unexpected new novel "Go Set A Watchman" has become the fastest selling book in the history of publisher HarperCollins, with more than 1.1 million copies sold in North America in the first week, the company said on Monday.

The novel was released on 14 July, 55 years after the author's only other published work, "To Kill a Mockingbird," a classic story of racial injustice in the American South.

"Watchman," written in the 1950s, was a first draft of

"Mockingbird" with many of the same characters.

It made headlines with its depiction of noble lawyer Atticus Finch as a racist and bigot, a stark contrast to the idealistic, younger Finch of "Mockingbird" who put his principles on the line to defend a black man wrongly accused of raping a white woman.

HarperCollins, a unit of News Corp, said on Monday it had ordered reprints several times and now has a North American print run for 'Watchman' of more than 3.3 million. It did not give sales figures or print runs for the rest of the world. —Reuters



A poster of Monkey King: Hero is Back

New "Monkey King" brings hope to Chinese animation

BEIJING, 21 July — Chinese animated films have come in for some pretty harsh criticism at home over the past years. But one film has defied that trend. Chinese audiences have been stunned by the return on screens of the legend of classical novel Journey to the West in the new movie Monkey King: Hero is Back.

The film has captured the nation's attention with its high visual quality and sincerity.

The fictional hero is back. And he has taken China's social media sphere by storm. People are flocking to cinemas to discover the new sensation, or even to re-watch it.

The box office takings for the new Monkey King movie have exceeded \$50 million, a new record for Chinese animated films.

Despite its immense popularity, director Tian Xiaopeng keeps a cool head.

"We're still far away from real success. People's love for this movie stems more or less from their affection for Chinese-made

animation. Animated movies in China still need more social recognition to grow," said Tian.

It took Tian Xiaopeng and his team eight years to finish the movie. With a budget of only about US\$10 million, it has achieved a success similar to the Hollywood animated blockbusters.

"We can't afford the huge costs of Hollywood 3D animated films, so we have to find our own edge. The only way to compete with Hollywood is to find connect on a cultural and emotional level. I want to tell the story in a Chinese way, using our own philosophy and aesthetics to explain the world in our eyes," Tian said.

The Monkey King: Hero is Back is winning over Chinese audiences with a good plot and extraordinary visuals. More importantly, audiences can feel the dedication, sincerity, and passion poured into the film. But the success of a single film does not represent the

whole of China's animation industry.

China now has the largest animation industry in the world, with an annual output of 260,000 minutes every year. That is nearly twice that of Japan, which comes in second place. And yet only a third of them make it to the screens.

"I suggest the government to invest more on the original contents and IP," said Han Hua from China Film Association.

On the market side, Liu Zhijiang, producer of the Monkey King, calls for patience.

"Many investors just want to make quick money in animation. That's against the rule of the market and artistic creation. Investors have to treat animation as a real industry and give the artists enough room to fully explore their imaginations," he said.

China's animation sector still has a long way to go to catch up to Hollywood. But talents such as Tian Xiaopeng are helping shorten that distance. —Xinhua

Comic Carol Burnett to receive lifetime award from fellow actors

LOS ANGELES, 21 July — Actor and comedian Carol Burnett will receive the Screen Actors Guild Life Achievement Award at a ceremony in January, SAG announced on Monday.

Burnett, 82, is best known for her hit sketch comedy programme "The Carol Burnett Show," which ran from 1967 to 1978 on CBS.

Her parody of Scarlett O'Hara, wearing the "curtain-rod" dress, is widely considered one of the most memorable moments in comic television history. "Carol Burnett is a creative dynamo and a comedic genius. She embodies the generosity and courage that the greatest actors use in creating enduring and memorable characters," SAG-AF-

TRA president Ken Howard said in a statement. Burnett made her Broadway debut in "Once Upon a Mattress," in 1959 and also has numerous film credits to her name, including the popular role of Miss Hannigan in the 1982 film of the musical "Annie." In recent years, Burnett has made appearances on TV programmes such as "Glee" and "Hot in Cleveland."

Burnett has won multiple Emmy and Golden Globe awards, and has been the recipient of a Kennedy Centre Honour and the Mark Twain Prize for Humor.

The Screen Actors Guild and the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists merged in 2012 to form SAG-AFTRA, which is the trade's leading group that represents some 160,000 actors, broadcasters, dancers, recording artists and other performers.

The group's awards show, scheduled to take place on 30 January, 2016 in Los Angeles, annually recognizes the best performances of the previous year on film and TV. —Reuters



Comedienne Carol Burnett

'Breaking Bad' actor running for New Mexico county commission seat

ALBUQUERQUE, 21 July — "Breaking Bad" actor and New Mexico native Steven Michael Quezada said on Monday he is running for a county commissioner seat in Albuquerque, where he grew up and the hit television show was set.

Quezada, who grew up in a gang-plagued neighbourhood and played DEA agent Steven Gomez in the now-concluded series, will run on the Democratic ticket for Bernalillo County District Two.

He told Reuters he wants to support not only public, but also charter, educational opportunities for all children in the district, which is the city's most crime-ridden.

"I want to give mothers who are working two jobs choices to keep their kids out of trouble," he said in an interview. "I know what it is like to grow up here."

Quezada, 52, assumed a vacant seat on the Albuquerque School Board shortly after "Breaking Bad" aired, and he said he quickly saw the need to



Actors Steven Michael Quezada (L) and Giancarlo Esposito, stars of AMC's drama television series 'Breaking Bad', arrive for the premiere screening for the show's fourth season in Hollywood, California on 28 June, 2011.

REUTERS

expand his involvement in the community.

He referred to Albuquerque's crime rate, which is twice the national average, as well as local schools and families struggling under financial hardship.

"We have to figure out as a county how we can work more closely with schools,"

Quezada said.

He is an advocate of stronger mental health services for children in schools in order to identify at-risk children and intervene before it is too late. Albuquerque has recently seen high profile murders allegedly committed by teenagers.

"By the time they cross that line, it is too late," Quezada said. His career as an actor and comedian is already being used against him by his opponents, he added.

"Acting is my job, just like a candidate may be a contractor or lawyer," he said. "I know what is needed and I am willing to show it." Quezada said he has two college-age daughters, which makes quitting acting to take up politics full-time unrealistic.

"I see what needs to be done and I have the passion for it," he said.

Officials with the Bernalillo County Board of elections said there are currently three people running against Quezada for the November election. —Reuters

GENERAL

Digital imaging reveals oldest biblical text since Dead Sea Scrolls

JERUSALEM, 21 July — Israeli archaeologists said on Monday they had discerned biblical writing on a charred 1,500-year-old parchment with the help of digital imaging and described the text as the oldest found since the Dead Sea Scrolls.

US and Israeli researchers made the discovery using advanced medical and digital technology to examine the object, first unearthed 45 years ago when then-standard forensics could not decipher any script on the scroll.

"This is a really big discovery," Pnina Shor, curator at the Israel Antiquities Authority, told a news conference where the five-centimetre-long (two-inch) cylindrical object was put on display.

"After the Dead Sea Scrolls, this has been the most significant find of an ancient Bible," said Shor, referring to hundreds of ancient texts found in the late 1940s near the shores of the



An Israel Antiquities Authority worker displays a scroll, found in 1970, at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem on 20 July, 2015.—REUTERS

inland sea for whom the scrolls were named.

Scientists estimate that the Dead Sea Scrolls, widely considered the oldest written biblical fragments ever found, date to between the third century BC and 70 AD.

The scroll presented on Monday was uncovered in 1970 at Ein Gedi, about 40 km (25 miles) south of the caves of Qumran, where the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered.

Archaeologist Sefi Po-

rat, 75, co-director of the dig, said the scroll dated to around the year 600 and turned up inside the remains of an ancient synagogue, which he chanced upon while exploring ceramic tiles at the beachside site.

At the time it was found, forensics technology then used to analyse ancient finds could not discern any writing on the badly charred scroll, he said. But a few years ago he sought more help from Israeli experts handling the Dead Sea

Scrolls.

Merkel Technologies, an Israeli company specialising in high-tech medical equipment, helped in the deciphering by providing micro C-T scanning, Shor said.

These findings were sent to Brent Seales, a computer expert at the University of Kentucky in Lexington. Seales said he used digital imaging software to "virtually unwrap" the scroll and visualise its text, discerning what experts said were the first eight verses of the Bible's Old Testament book of Leviticus.

Shor said more research was needed to determine the full extent of text on the scroll and what lessons it might hold for biblical scholars. But she said the findings had already turned out to be far more significant than anticipated.

"The discovery absolutely astonished us. We were certain this was a shot in the dark," Shor said.

Reuters

Indonesian jailed for match-fixing attempt in Singapore

SINGAPORE, 21 July — An Indonesian man was jailed for 30 months on Tuesday for attempting to fix a soccer match at the recent Southeast Asian Games in Singapore. Nasiruddin, 52, conspired with two others to give East Timor soccer official Orlando Marques Henriques Mendes \$15,000 to ensure they would lose to Malaysia on 30 May, Sin-

gapore's Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau said in a statement.

Malaysia won the fixture 1-0 and both sides exited at the group stages of the tournament won by Thailand last month. The CPIB also said Mendes was charged with offering bribes to players on the East Timor team.

Match-fixing in soccer matches has been rife

in Asia for years with fixers targeting low-paid players in various leagues across the region. Singapore has been frequently hit by the problem and in 2013 European anti-crime agency Europol said hundreds of football matches had been fixed in a global betting scam run from the wealthy citystate. The CPIB, who have helped with a number of match-fixing ar-

rests since, said they would continue the fight against the problem. "Singapore adopts a zero tolerance approach towards corruption, and match fixing of any form is not condoned in Singapore," said the CPIB. "The Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau will not hesitate to take action against any party involved in match fixing related activities."—Reuters

Natural disasters forced 20 million from their homes in 2014

GENEVA, 21 July — Nearly 20 million people were forced to flee their homes due to floods, storms and earthquakes last year, a problem likely to worsen due to climate change, but which could be eased by better construction, a report said on Monday.

Asia is particularly prone to natural disasters, accounting for almost 90 percent of the 19.3 million displaced in 2014, led by typhoons in China and the Philippines, and floods in India, the Norwegian Refugee Council said.

"Disaster-related displacement is on the rise and threatens to get worse in coming decades," Alfredo Zamudio, director of the

NRC's Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, told a news briefing.

Since 2008, an average of 26.5 million people have been displaced every year by disasters, the report said, and although 2014 figures were lower than that, the NRC said there was a rising long-term trend.

"Our historical analysis reveals you are 60 percent more likely to be displaced by disasters today than you were in the 1970s," Zamudio said, adding: "Climate change is expected to play a strong role in the future by increasing the frequency and intensity of such hazards."

UN scientific experts say greenhouse gas emis-

sions are stoking extremes such as heat waves and heavy rains.

As well as extreme climate events, rapidly growing and poorly built settlements in areas vulnerable to natural disasters are putting more people at risk, Zamudio said, citing areas around cities such as Mexico City, Mumbai, Karachi and Port-au Prince.

Extreme weather has struck Haiti and Cuba with different results. More than 300,000 people died in the 2010 quake in Haiti, where 60,000 still live in tents, said William Lacy Swing, director-general of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), which collected data for the report.



Residents on a boat catch fish near partially submerged trees flooded by an overflowing river after Typhoon Rammasun hit Nanning, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, on 22 July, 2014. The death toll from a super typhoon, the strongest to hit southern China in 40 years, has risen to 33, state media said on Monday, after leaving at least 77 dead in the Philippines last week. —REUTERS

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Football legend Pelé leaves hospital after back surgery

SAO PAULO, 21 July — Brazilian football legend Pelé left the hospital on Monday after undergoing back surgery, the latest in a series of health complications for the 74-year-old former star striker. Pelé, whose given name is Edson Arantes do Nascimento, spent the weekend at Albert Einstein Hospital in São Paulo after a procedure to relieve pressure on a nerve in his spine, an aide told Reuters.

The hospital announced his release in a

statement.

This is the third time Pelé has been hospitalized since November. He spent two weeks in November at the Einstein facility with kidney problems and in May he underwent prostate surgery at the same hospital.

With more than 1,280 career goals and an unequalled three World Cup titles during his playing career, Pelé is considered by many to be the greatest football player of all time.—Reuters

"Cuba is extremely well-prepared for disasters: hurricanes, typhoons, whatever happens. They have a shelter system, they have a public education system. Everyone knows what to do when disaster strikes," he said.

Being uprooted by disaster is not limited to poor countries.

"The largest case we found is in Japan, where some 230,000 people are still displaced today following the Tohoku earthquake and the tsunami disaster in 2011, including thousands displaced from the area around the damaged Fukushima nuclear plant," Zamudio said.

Reuters

Henderson will blossom as Liverpool captain, says Rodgers



Liverpool's Jordan Henderson

LONDON, 21 July — Jordan Henderson will become an even better player this season despite the additional responsibility of captaining Liverpool, according to the club's manager Brendan Rodgers. England international Henderson faces the daunting task of taking over the captain's armband as well as a key midfield role from Anfield hero Steven Gerrard, who has signed for the LA Galaxy. But Rodgers told the club's in-house television station LFCTV on Monday that he would flourish. "When I was aware that Stevie was going I wanted to look at somebody who would be a great ambassador for Liverpool on and off the pitch," he said.

"You have a huge responsibility on a worldwide basis. "Jordan was one I thought about and once I saw him grow and develop as vice-captain, I felt sure he could be a captain.

"I told him to do it his way and have his own ideas and I think he'll have an outstanding year and really blossom with the captaincy." —Reuters

Ex-FIFA VP sets sights on body's top position: Yonhap

SEOUL, 21 July — Former FIFA Vice President Chung Mong-joon on Tuesday expressed his intent to succeed Sepp Blatter as the head of soccer's world governing body, according to Yonhap News Agency.

"I am thinking of running (for FIFA president)," Chung told Yonhap by phone. "I will try to usher in a new era for FIFA."

Chung served as FIFA's No 2 man from 1994 to 2011. He has been a vo-

cal critic of the body since several officials were implicated in corruption scandals earlier this year.

Blatter announced his resignation four days after he was re-elected to a fifth term at a FIFA Congress meeting on 29 May, saying he would keep his job until a successor is chosen.

Chung was chief of the Korea Football Association from 1993 to 2009 and later became its honorary chairman.

A former lawmaker and a scion of the Hyundai Group, Chung helped bring the FIFA World Cup to South Korea for the first time in 2002, with Japan as a co-host.

"Reform measures presented by FIFA are contradictory," Chung added. "Blatter himself should be the target of reforms, but he wants to oversee the election until next February. They need to wake up."

Kyodo News



Former South Korean FIFA vice president Chung Mong-joon talks during the 24th Asian Football Confederation (AFC) congress in Doha on 6 Jan, 2011. —REUTERS

Blatter showered with paper money before unveiling FIFA reform plan



British comedian known as Lee Nelson (R) gestures after he throws banknotes in front of FIFA President Sepp Blatter (L) at a news conference after the Extraordinary FIFA Executive Committee Meeting at the FIFA headquarters in Zurich, Switzerland on 20 July, 2015.

XINHUA

ZURICH, 21 July — Sepp Blatter, president of Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) on Monday afternoon was showered with fake US dollars when he

was about to unveil FIFA's reform plan at Press conference.

FIFA's executive committee on Monday held extraordinary meeting to decide the date of the

presidential election and discuss the organizational reforms.

At a Press conference after the meeting, the 79-year-old FIFA head was interrupted by a co-

median who threw dollars over him.

The "drama" was caused by British prankster Simon Brodtkin, who has been taken into custody by Swiss police following the prank.

"I am still alive, waves of the tsunami have not taken me away," Blatter said after the Press conference resumed.

As extraordinary meeting decides, an extraordinary elective FIFA congress is scheduled on 26 February, 2016 in Zurich to elect FIFA's new president.

Meanwhile, the executive committee also pushed for a range of important reforms to be submitted for decision during the upcoming extraordinary congress.

The proposed reform topics include enhanced centralized integrity checks for Executive Committee members,

introduction of term limits, higher standards of governance at all levels of football structures, including confederations and member associations as well as individual disclosure of compensation.

Blatter, who led the FIFA office since 1998, will continue to carry out his functions until the new president to be elected.

Blatter was re-elected for the fifth time as FIFA president on 29 May, just two days after former FIFA vice president Jeffrey Webb and six other FIFA officials were arrested in a raid requested by US authorities for bribe allegation, in a luxury Zurich hotel.

However, four days after re-elected as the FIFA president, Blatter surprisingly announced that he would quit the position among corruption scandals.

Xinhua

Kids are my legacy not my Open win, says Johnson

ST ANDREWS, (Scotland), 21 July — Father-of-three Zach Johnson refused to get too carried away after winning the 144th British Open in a four-hole playoff with South African Louis Oosthuizen and Australian Marc Leishman on Monday.

It was the second major victory of the 39-year-old American's career, following his US Masters triumph in 2007, but he was keen to put his achievements in perspective.

"This isn't going to define me or my career, at least I hope it doesn't," the down to earth Johnson told report-

ers at St Andrews. "It's not my legacy.

"Granted, as a professional athlete and as a golfer I'm going to relish this, I'm going to savour this. I'm humbled by this but my legacy should be my kids, my family, that kind of thing.

"I realise it's just a game. I'm just a guy from Iowa that has been blessed with a talent and this game provides great opportunity," added Johnson.

"If you look at it that way it kind of takes the pressure off. I don't want to make it any bigger than what it should be."

Johnson spared a thought for fellow countryman Jordan Spieth, 21, who was one of the first to congratulate him despite feeling disappointment at failing to add the British Open to his wins this year at the US Masters and US Open.

"He is a really good friend of mine," said Johnson. "Granted, he's 18 years younger than me, which is perspective.

"I can't describe the magnitude of what he was going through because I've never been in that position. We haven't really seen that with the exception of Tiger

(Woods). "Jordan could be sitting here now...to have a champion like him take the time to give me best wishes...speaks volumes. He's a phenomenal talent and I'm telling you right now...he's a better person than he is a golfer."

Johnson also took time out to praise world number one Rory McIlroy who was sidelined for the British Open after injuring ankle ligaments playing soccer with his friends.

"There's not a person that anybody would rather have here than Rory," the American said. "He's



Zach Johnson of the US celebrates as he kisses the Claret Jug after winning the British Open golf championship on the Old Course in St Andrews, Scotland, on 20 July, 2015. —REUTERS

certainly taken the game to newer heights as of late.

"It's really unfortunate.

We all want him back and back healthy more than anything." —Reuters