

President U Thein Sein receives Laotian delegation



President U Thein Sein poses for documentary photo with Laotian Vice President Mr Bounnhang Vorachith.—MNA

NAY PYI TAW, 22 July— President U Thein Sein received Laotian Vice President Mr Bounnhang Vorachith at the Presidential Palace here on Wednesday.

They discussed a wide range of topics including promotion of bilateral relations, trade and tourism, security, and border affairs.

The meeting was also

attended by Union Ministers Lt Gen Ko Ko, U Wunna Maung Lwin, U Zeya Aung, U Maung Myint, Dr Myint Aung, U Kyaw Lwin, U Ye Htut and senior government officials, as

well as Laotian delegates.

Myanmar and Laos opened the Friendship Bridge connecting the two countries on 9 May this year to mark the 60th anniversary of

diplomatic relations.

Mr Bounnhang Vorachith previously visited Myanmar three times as premier, in August 2001 to pay a goodwill visit to Myanmar, in November 2003

to attend the First AC-MECS Summit in Bagan and in December 2004 to attend the World Buddhist Summit. This is his first visit as a Vice President.

MNA

Gov't, ethnic armed groups open latest ceasefire talks, agree on 4 amendments

By Ye Myint

YANGON, 22 July — The government's Union Peace-Making Work Committee and a senior delegation of ethnic armed organizations opened negotiations Wednesday in Yangon to finalize a draft national ceasefire accord, reaching agreement on four proposed amendments to the prospective treaty.

The meeting follows three rounds of informal talks in Chiang Mai, Thailand, during which the two sides managed to clear roadblocks to the resumption of truce negotiations.

In a press conference at the Myanmar Peace Center, spokespersons of both sides said four of 13 amendments to the draft NCA proposed by the ethnic side were finalized on the first day of talks, leaving two points pending for

discussion on Thursday.

Pu Zing Cung, a deputy leader of the ethnic delegation, said it was "early to say" whether the NCA signing would take place before the 8 November general election.

"But we are hopeful of a final deal, and so we are here to see how far we can go," he said.

A draft nationwide ceasefire accord between the two sides has remained unsigned since the ethnic side's unexpected rejection of the draft deal in June at the Law Khee Lar summit involving all of Myanmar's ethnic armed groups.

U Hla Maung Shwe, senior adviser at Myanmar Peace Center, said the government side aimed to finalize the draft deal during the current talks "to ensure the signing of the official NCA" as soon as possible.

According to the meeting's agenda, both sides agreed to negotiate the

amendments proposed by the ethnic side and discuss who the NCA signatories and international witnesses should be, as well as the number of ethnic armed groups to ink the ceasefire deal, the senior adviser added.

The inclusion of all ethnic armed groups in the signing process, a major point of contention between the two sides, will be discussed on the second day of the meeting.

At the press conference, the government side reiterated its willingness to sign the draft NCA with the 15 ethnic armed groups with which it has already reached bilateral agreements.

The ethnic side, however, insisted that the ceasefire must be signed by all ethnic armed groups, including the 16 members of the Nationwide Ceasefire Coordination Team.

GNLM

Myanmar hands over 155 verified Bangladeshi nationals among those rescued by Myanmar Navy

NAY PYI TAW, 22 July—Myanmar officially handed over 155 persons who are verified as Bangladeshi nationals among the boat people rescued by Myanmar on 21 and 29 May 2015. The handing over ceremony took place at friendship bridge between Myanmar and Bangladesh border after the flag meeting in Taung Pyo (Let We').

A team led by U Saw Naing, Deputy Director, Maung Taw District Immigration Officer, from Myanmar handed over the 155 Bangladeshi nationals to the Commanding Officer of the Border Guard Battalion of Cox's Bazar and his team. Two members including the Consul from the Bangladesh Consulate in Sittway were also present. The Border Guard

Battalion of Cox's Bazar brought the 155 persons back at 14:30 hrs to Bangladesh.

Bangladesh authorities have continued verifying the remaining persons from the two boats rescued. The remaining boat people will be handed over to the country of origin upon completion of the verification process.

MNA



One hundred and fifty five boat people who are verified as Bangladeshi nationals are escorted by Bangladesh Border Guard Battalion on their way back home.—MNA

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw votes to postpone constitutional referendum

NAY PYI TAW, 22 July — The Pyidaungsu Hluttaw on Wednesday voted in favour of postponing a constitutional referendum until after the 8 November general election.

The referendum on Section 59 (d) of the Constitution had been scheduled to be held in conjunc-

tion with the election, but the Union Election Commission proposed holding it separately at a later date.

The referendum will ask voters whether the term “military” in the section — which states the president of the union “shall be well acquainted with the affairs of the

Union such as political, administrative, economic and military” — should be changed to “defence.”

A majority of MPs backed the UEC proposal, saying the concurrent staging of the referendum with the election would pose several difficulties but would not reduce

costs significantly.

The Speaker of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw earlier this month said he would send a proposal to the Union Election Commission to hold a referendum on amendment of Section 59 (D) alongside the parliamentary elections on 8 November.

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw

In budget matters, MPs also discussed the Public Account Joint Committee’s report on the national budget for the second half of fiscal 2014-2015.

Union Minister for Finance U Win Shein said the government is making plans to reduce the number of its loans from the Central Bank of Myanmar.

MNA



Union Minister for Finance U Win Shein.

MNA

Amyotha Hluttaw MPs raise queries on illegal liquor license, national sports plans

NAY PYI TAW, 22 July — Strict enforcement of regulations on reduction of illegal liquor sales will continue while the number of beverage license is being decreased year by year, Deputy Minister for Home Affairs Brig-Gen Kyaw Kyaw Tun told the Amyotha Hluttaw on Wednesday.

The ministry has issued 41,040 liquor licenses for

the fiscal year, 170 fewer than last year, under 30 categories. Deputy Minister for Sports U Thaung Htike replied to queries about national sports plans. He said a total of 40 townships across the country do not have sports grounds or stadiums. He also urged other government agencies to inform the Union government and the sports ministry if sports

facilities are renovated for other purposes.

The Myanmar Red Cross Society Bill with an amendment from Pyithu Hluttaw was submitted for approval, and the report on the Arbitration Bill was read out. The Bill on the Brothel Suppression Act was submitted for approval, and was read out to the parliament. The report on the Bill amending the Blood and Blood Products Law was



submitted and with a call for suggestions from parliamentarians.—MNA

MPs discussed an issue on strict enforcement of regulations on liquor sales at Amyotha Hluttaw.—MNA

Pyithu Hluttaw

Pyithu Hluttaw discuss reservoir projects, Chindwin River conservation



Deputy Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation U Khin Zaw.—MNA



Deputy Minister for Transport U Han Sein.
MNA

NAY PYI TAW, 22 July — Construction of two reservoirs for the Zawgyi irrigation system in Sagaing Region’s Singu Township

can be completed next fiscal year provided enough funds are allocated in the budget, Deputy Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation

U Khin Zaw told the Pyithu Hluttaw on Wednesday.

The ministry had requested funds to complete the Swanye and Minhla reservoir projects this fiscal year but did not receive budget approval. Deputy Minister for Transport U Han Sein said K 26.8 million will be spent on dredging as part of waterway maintenance of the Chindwin River.

The Joint Bill Committee submitted the second amending bill on the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Law. Approval was sought for the bills on the Union Government Law and Homogenous Marriage.—MNA

Myanmar, Laos to promote cooperation

NAY PYI TAW, 22 July — Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw Thura U Shwe Mann held a talk with Vice President of Lao People’s Democratic Republic Mr. Boun-

nhang Vorachith and party at the hall of Hluttaw complex, here, Wednesday.

They discussed bilateral relations and further cooperation between the two

countries.

Mr. Bounnhang Vorachith and wife and party arrived at Nay Pyi Taw International Airport Tuesday evening.—MNA

Networking, investment seminar draws more than 20 Japanese firms

By Aye Min Soe

YANGON, 22 July — More than 20 Japanese firms seeking to invest in Myanmar attended a business networking event Wednesday in Yangon held by the Bank of Tokyo Mitsubishi UFJ.

Thirteen Myanmar companies and three from

Thailand also attended the event, which saw some 100 meetings arranged between participating firms, according to the organizer.

The Japanese companies represented diverse business sectors including food, consumer products, media, chemical products and construction.

BTMU senior executive Mr Makoto Kobayashi said the bank had invited Japanese firms that had expressed interest in doing business in Myanmar.

BTMU plans to play a bigger role in enhancing Myanmar’s financial infrastructure as well as re-shaping the economy of the country, he added.

Mr Mitsuhiro Kimura, General Manager of BTMU’s Yangon branch, spoke about some of the challenges facing foreign banks in Myanmar, including the lack of a remittance system to enable payments,



Tokyo-based BTMU senior executive Mr Makoto Kobayashi

as well as the need for a more vibrant interbank market.

The first business matching fair in Yangon followed a Myanmar investment seminar which attracted about 1,000 businesses last month in Japan.

BTMU opened its Yangon Branch three months ago, partnering with Myanmar-owned CB Bank, which has 120 branches across the country.—GNLM

Voters must check electoral roll before polling day or risk exclusion: UEC chairman

By Ye Myint

YANGON, 22 July — Eligible voters must ensure they are listed on the electoral roll before the 8 November election, as complaints about omissions will not be accepted on polling day, Union Election Commission Chairman U Tin Aye said Wednesday.

Enrolled voters will

not be prevented from casting their ballots, however, even in cases of incorrect voter data, the chairman said at a press conference at the UEC Information Centre in Yangon. Another two-week review period is tentatively set to begin in the last week of August, and will be the final one before the election, the chairman said.

“Check the voter lists,

submit corrections and inform authorities of exclusion from the lists during the period in which it is allowed,” he said.

Amid mounting complaints about numerous errors in voter lists across the country, the commission extended the initial review period, originally scheduled to run two weeks, until the end of this month.

Only 10 percent of el-

igible voters have so far come to check the lists, leaving uncertainty over the accuracy of much of the voter data, the chairman said. The press conference followed meetings between the UEC and 51 Civil Service Organizations on Monday and between the UEC and 82 political parties on Tuesday in Yangon.

GNLM

President U Thein Sein sends messages of felicitations to Egypt

NAY PYI TAW, 23 July—U Thein Sein, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, has sent messages of felicitations to His Excellency Mr. Abdel Fattah Al Sisi, President of the Arab Republic of Egypt, and His Excellency Mr. Ibrahim Mahlab, Prime Minister of the Arab Republic of Egypt, on the occasion of the National Day of the Arab Republic of Egypt, which falls on 23 July 2015.—MNA

Myanmar, Laos to cooperate in various fields

NAY PYI TAW, 22 July — Vice President U Nyan Tun hosted a dinner for his visiting counterpart from Laos Mr Bounnhang Vorachith at the Lake Garden here on Wednesday.

During a meeting earlier at the same venue, Myanmar officials and Laotian delegates discussed bilateral cooperation across a range of fields including agriculture, tourism, sports, culture, and making joint arrangements for tourists to visit world heritage sites in

the two countries.

They also planning to operate direct flights between Yangon and Vientiane, as well as Bagan and Luang Prabang.

The Laotian delegation also visited Maha Bodhi Pagoda on the hill of Udayaramthi Pagoda in Uttarathiri Township and the National Museum. They also visited Uppatathanti Pagoda and viewed the white elephants in the compound of the pagoda.

MNA

Vice President U Nyan Tun and Laotian Vice President Mr Bounnhang Vorachith hold talks on bilateral cooperation.—MNA



432,000 tablets seized from KKO group

NAY PYI TAW, 22 July— Myanmar Army announced Wednesday that its forces discovered about 432,000 stimulant tablets Tuesday hidden in Kawka-reik Township by Klohtoo-

baw Kayin Organization.

A column comprising armed forces and border guard forces combed environs of Kawmu Village in Kawka-reik Township in Kayin State and found six

yellow-colour containers filled with the tablets worth more than K 1.2 billion buried at the side where the KKO camped temporarily.

After the fighting with the KKO group led by Kyaw Thet and Saw San Aung, the armed forces of the army seized two arms, two magazines and 21 bullets from the KKO.

On 19 and 20 July, the armed forces also seized 112,000 stimulant tablets bearing WY letters and machines where are used to produce the tablets.

Myawady



Packs of stimulant tablets seized from KKO group.

MYAWADY

MNA to expand its wings to new itineraries

YANGON, 22 July — Myanmar National Airlines will expand its international itineraries starting November this year, according to its chief of executive officer.

U Than Tun said that MNA would start its five new routes, with the flight between Yangon and Singapore beginning in August.

“The Hong Kong-Taipei route will

start on 3 November,” he said, adding plans are under way to fly to two big cities of China, but he did not specify which cities.

The Yangon-Singapore round trip will cost US\$239 and the Singapore-Yangon round trip will be S\$289.

Flights to four cities in the Asia-Pacific region will be available in early 2016, the airline said.

Ko Moe (GNLM)

Union FM sends message to Egyptian counterpart

NAY PYI TAW, 23 July—U Wunna Maung Lwin, Union Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, has sent a message of felicitations to His Excellency Mr. Sameh Shoukri, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Arab Republic of Egypt on the occasion of the National Day of the Arab Republic of Egypt, which falls on 23 July 2015.—MNA



Ngamoyeik Bridge which was constructed at the cost of K 6.153 billion in Mingala Taungnyunt Township will be opened to traffic on 26 July, 2015.

YI YI MYINT

Chindwin College touts education credentials at seminar



MANDALAY, 22 July — Chindwin College held an education seminar Tuesday at the Sedona Hotel, outlining opportunities for its students to study overseas.

Regional Director Mr Simon Young of Pearson Education spoke about Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) qualifications, while college founder U Tin Latt spoke about international education programmes,

as well as engineering and business management diplomas offered by the college.

Tin Maung (Mandalay)

Traffic squads clamp down on bad drivers

MANDALAY, 22 July — Authorities in Mandalay City have recently been cracking down on traffic and parking violations as part of a concerted campaign to reduce gridlock and improve road safety.



A team comprising officers from the Mandalay

City Development Committee, the Directorate of Road Transport and police booked five vehicle owners for illegal parking on 20 July.

The same day, another team towed three other illegally parked vehicles in downtown Mandalay.

Police and Revenue Department staff also booked five drivers for driving the wrong way on 83rd, 29th and 30th streets in Chanayethazan Township.

Thiha Ko Ko (Mandalay)

Farmers urged to cut chemical use to preserve Inlay Lake



NYAUNGSHWE, 22 July — Farmers recently attended a seminar on reducing the use of agricultural chemicals to maintain the health of Inlay Lake at the monastery in Ngaphechaung village,

located in Inlay Region's Nyaungshwe Township.

Head of the Township Department of Agriculture Daw Moe Thida spoke about reduction of chemical fertilizer and pesticide usage, as well

as establishment of forest plantations.

Officials discussed sustainable usage of pesticides and replied to queries raised by local farmers.

Nay Myo Thurein

Older residents receive free medical treatment

NAY PYI TAW, 22 July — Medical staff of Zabuthiri Foundation together with local authorities performed medical checkups on older persons at their homes in Tatkon and Pyinmana townships on 18 and 19 July.

On 19 July morning, U Zaw Tun of Zabuthiri Foundation and Dr Arkar Win Han and staff from Zabuthiri Hospital gave free medical treatment to 102-year-old U Phayay in Bogyokekon Ward, Pyinmana Township and provided medicines.

Shwe Ye Yint

Mandalay philanthropic groups aid flood victims

MANDALAY, 22 July—Mandalay-based philanthropic associations recently donated food, clothes and medicine for flood victims in Sagaing Region.

Torrential rains caused flooding in Katha and

Shwebo districts, with dams overflowing and submerging roads.

The Panpyothumyay philanthropic association in Chanayethazan Township donated K12 million worth of foodstuffs, as well

as more than K5 million in cash to flood victims.

The May May philanthropic association donated foods and candles worth K1.6 million.

Tin Maung (Mandalay)



REGIONAL

Thailand backpackers murder trial resumes, focus on DNA evidence

KOH SAMUI, (Thailand) 22 July — The final hours of two British backpackers killed on a Thai resort island last year were tracked by more than a dozen security cameras, a court was told during the resumption of the trial of two Myanmar men accused of their murder.

British tourists Hannah Witheridge, 23, and David Miller, 24, were killed last September and their bodies were found on a beach on Koh Tao, a Thai island in the Andaman Sea popular with backpackers and divers.

The killings drew outrage in Britain and raised questions about the competence of Thai police and the treatment of migrant labourers in Thailand.

Following weeks of pressure on authorities to solve the crime, Thai police said in October that Myanmar workers Zaw Lin and Win Zaw Htun, both 22, had confessed to the



Myanmar migrant workers Zaw Lin (R) and Win Zaw Htun arrive at the Koh Samui Provincial Court, in Koh Samui, Thailand on 22 July, 2015.—REUTERS

killings. Both later retracted their statements, saying they had been tortured into confessing.

Their trial resumed on Wednesday and police told the

court that closed circuit television footage showed the last movements of Witheridge and Miller as they went to two bars on the small island hours before

they died.

Police Colonel Cherdpong Chiewpreecha, superintendent of Investigation Police Division 8, told the court 17 cameras dotted along a road on the island helped investigators trace the British pair's movements.

Miller and Witheridge were at the same bar but were later seen leaving separately with their friends. Nobody unfamiliar to the pair was seen following them, Cherdpong said.

Defence lawyers earlier said they would focus on the reliability of crucial DNA evidence after allegations of police incompetence and evidence mishandling by defence lawyers.

Rights groups have also claimed the accused are being used as scapegoats because of their status as foreign migrant workers in Thailand.

At the heart of the trial is a debate over DNA samples that police say link the two suspects

to Witheridge's body.

Police have issued conflicting statements about the DNA, including that some was lost or "used up". They later took back that statement, saying DNA samples had not been lost.

The court on Samui island ordered this month that remaining forensic evidence in the case be sent for reexamination at the Thai justice ministry's central forensic institute.

"We still have not seen any progress on the request to see the DNA gathered by police," defence lawyer Nakhon Chompuchat told *Reuters* before the trial resumed.

The mothers of the two accused have travelled from Myanmar for the trial. Outside the court, an emotional May Thein, the mother of Win Zaw Htun, said her son had never been in trouble and had gone to Thailand to earn money to support their family.—*Reuters*

Singapore police freeze two bank accounts linked to 1MDB probe

SINGAPORE/ KUALA LUMPUR, 22 July — Police in Singapore said on Wednesday that they have frozen two bank accounts in connection with a probe into alleged financial mismanagement and graft at Malaysia's troubled state fund 1MDB.

The move is the first time accounts outside of Malaysia have been frozen in connection with the investigation, which has left Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak facing his biggest crisis since he took office in 2009.

"On 15 July 2015, we issued orders under the Criminal Procedure Code to prohibit any dealings in respect of money in two bank accounts that are relevant to the investigation," Singapore police said in a statement on Wednesday.

It did not identify the banks or the accounts in question because the investigation is continuing.

A 1MDB spokesman declined to comment. 1MDB, a property-to-energy group whose advisory board is chaired by Najib, is facing criticism over its debt of nearly 42 billion ringgit (\$11.09 billion) and alleged mishandling of its finances.

The freezing of the Singapore bank accounts follows a similar move in Malaysia where a task force investigating 1MDB said earlier this month that it had frozen half a dozen bank accounts following a media report that millions of dollars had been transferred to accounts belonging to Najib.

The *Wall Street Journal* reported on 3 July that investigators looking into 1MDB had traced close to \$700 million (450 million pounds) of deposits moving through Falcon Bank in Singapore into the personal account of Najib in Malaysia.

Reuters has not verified the

WSJ report.

Najib has denied taking any money for personal gain and said the corruption allegations are part of a malicious campaign to force him out of office.

A 14-day notice period given to Dow Jones & Co, which publishes the *Journal*, to respond to a letter from Najib's lawyers seeking clarification, ended on Tuesday.

Singapore's central bank has also said it is in contact with financial institutions in relation to the 1MDB probe and Falcon Bank has said it is co-operating with them on their enquiries.

On Tuesday, the Monetary Authority of Singapore said it is looking into whether banks followed rules on properly identifying customers and their sources of funds and on reporting suspicious transactions.

"We're actually looking back to see if they have done all these things," MAS managing director Ravi Menon told a news conference following the release of the bank's annual report.

In Malaysia, two people have been arrested this week as part of the 1MDB investigation.

The managing director of a company was arrested on Tuesday and remanded in custody, the state news agency Bernama said on Wednesday. This follows the arrest of the director of a construction company at Kuala Lumpur's international airport on Monday. The authorities did not reveal the identities of those arrested.

The task force looking into 1MDB comprises the police, the Attorney-General, the central bank and the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission.

Reuters

China says Japan defence review misleading, damages relations

BEIJING, 22 July — China reserves the right to a "necessary reaction" after Japan issued a defence review that called on Beijing to stop building oil and gas exploration platforms close to disputed waters in the East China Sea, the Defence Ministry has said.

In the paper issued on Tuesday, Tokyo expressed concern that Chinese drills could tap reservoirs that extend into Japan's territory.

"This kind of action completely lays bare the two-faced nature of Japan's foreign policy and has a detrimental impact on peace and stability in the Asia Pacific region," China's Defence Ministry said in a statement issued late on Tuesday.

China would further evaluate Japan's defence review, or white paper, when the full text is issued and would then make a "necessary reaction depending on the situation", it said.

Beijing described Japan's

annual defence review as misleading and malicious, saying it overplayed the "China military threat" and stoked tensions between the two East Asian powers. It stuck by its claims over the disputed island chain.

The white paper "maliciously hyped up the issues of East China Sea, South China Sea, internet security and military transparency", the ministry said. It also exaggerated the threat of the Chinese military, "blackening" its image, it said.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Lu Kang said the review ignored that China's maritime activities were carried out in line with international law, according to another statement posted late on Tuesday. "The Diaoyu islands have belonged to China since ancient times ... China will continue to take necessary measures to safeguard its territorial sovereignty and Japan should not hold any unrealistic illusions," he said, referring to

the disputed chain of islets, also known in Japanese as the Senkaku. The Japanese defence review had expressed concern that the platforms being built by China could also be used as monitoring stations near the islets.

The report also commented on the disputed South China Sea, where Japan and other countries have criticized Chinese land reclamation projects as a threat to regional security.

"Japan is not a stakeholder country in the South China Sea issue, so it should not tell tales and sow discord," the Defence Ministry's statement said.

The Foreign Ministry said China's construction activities were completely within the scope of its sovereignty, and were not directed at any one country.

"We solemnly urge Japan to stop stoking tensions, provoking with contradictions, and instead undertake more activities that are conducive to regional peace and stability," Lu said.—*Reuters*



A group of disputed islands, Uotsuri island (top), Minamikojima (bottom) and Kitakojima, known as Senkaku in Japan and Diaoyu in China is seen in the East China Sea, in this photo taken by Kyodo in September 2012.

REUTERS

Iran won't accept curbs beyond 10 years, negotiator says



Negotiators of Iran and six world powers face each other at a table in the historic basement of Palais Coburg hotel in Vienna on 24 April, 2015. — REUTERS

DUBAI, 22 July — Iran will not accept any extension of sanctions relating to its nuclear programme beyond 10 years, the Islamic Republic's senior nuclear negotiator said on Wednesday.

Abbas Araqchi told a televised news conference that any attempt to re-impose sanctions after they expire in 10 years would breach the agreement Iran reached with six world powers one week ago.

Araqchi was referring to a resolution the United Nations Security Council passed on Monday, endorsing the deal to curb Iran's nuclear programme

in return for relief from sanctions. The world powers suspected Iran was trying to create a nuclear bomb; Teheran said the programme was peaceful.

The resolution allows all UN sanctions to be re-imposed if Iran violates the agreement in the next 10 years. If Iran adheres to the terms of the agreement, all the provisions and measures of the UN resolution would end in 10 years.

However, the six world powers, known as the P5+1, and the European Union told UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon earlier this month that

after 10 years they planned to seek a five-year extension of the mechanism allowing sanctions to be re-imposed.

"The UN Security Council's resolution says clearly that the timeframe of agreement is 10 years, and Iran's case will be closed in the Security Council after that," Araqchi said.

"If the US and any other member of P5+1 say they want to adopt a new resolution after 10 years allowing sanctions to be re-imposed, it is the breach of Vienna agreement and has no credibility."

Reuters

Kerry to visit Gulf Arab states, vows to "push back" against Iran

DUBAI, 22 July — US Secretary of State John Kerry will seek to reassure Gulf Arab officials at a meeting in Qatar soon that Washington will work with them to "push back" against Iranian influence in the region, he told the pan-Arab newspaper *al-Sharq al-Awsat*.

Most US allies in the energy-rich Gulf publicly welcomed a deal between world powers and Teheran over its disputed nuclear programme, but they accuse Teheran of interfering in Arab conflicts and pushing hard for heightened regional influence. "I will be travelling to Doha in the next couple of weeks to meet with the whole (Gulf Cooperation Council)," Kerry told the paper in an interview published on Wednesday. He was referring to a group of countries comprising Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman and Qatar.

"I think we can persuade them both that by being more effective in our counter-push as well as through the re-



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

straints we have, they will be significantly strengthened going forward." Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei told supporters on Saturday that US policies in the region were "180 degrees" opposed to Iran's and his country would continue to back its allies in Arab states. Kerry told Al Arabiya television he found those comments disturbing and troubling. Few of America's friends in the region back the deal. Israel is implacably opposed, and

Arab allies of the United States such as Saudi Arabia, ruled by Sunni Muslims, are suspicious of an arrangement that would benefit their Shi'ite, non-Arab rival Iran, which they accuse of fomenting sectarian conflict in wars in Yemen, Iraq and Syria.

Kerry's diplomatic outreach follows a summit with Gulf Arab leaders called by President Barack Obama at Camp David in May, which was snubbed by the leaders of Bahrain and Saudi Arabia. Despite their misgivings, Kerry said, the United States aimed to convince its allies the deal was in their interests. "The whole reason for Camp David was to bring people together around in an organizational effort to push back against Iran," Kerry said. "We have negotiated a nuclear deal for the simple reason that we believe if you are going to push back against Iran, it's better to push back against an Iran without a nuclear weapon than with one," he said.

Reuters

S Korea approves civic group's visit to North to discuss joint event

SEOUL, 22 July — South Korea on Wednesday approved a South Korean civic group's request to visit the North's border city of Kaesong on Thursday to discuss a joint event marking the 70th anniversary of Korea's liberation

from Japan's colonial rule, according to South Korea's Unification Ministry.

The two sides are eyeing to hold the event on 15 August, national liberation day. The North's official *Korean Central News Agency* on Sunday said that

the North will hold a variety of events marking the anniversary in Pyongyang and the truce village of Panmunjeom on 13-15 August. The Korean Peninsula was under Japan's colonial rule from 1910-45.

Kyodo News

Over 6,000 people rushed to hospitals amid summer heat last week

TOKYO, 22 July — A total of 6,165 people were taken to hospitals across Japan with symptoms of heatstroke or heat exhaustion in the week through Sunday, almost double the figure a week earlier, government data showed on Wednesday. Of the total, about half were aged 65 or older, 14 died on the way to the hospital, 178 required hospitalization for more than three weeks and 2,200 were hospitalized briefly, the Fire and Disaster Management Agency said in a preliminary report.

The agency warns that the hot weather is likely to continue as the rainy season has just ended in most areas of the Japanese archipelago. It also revised the tally for the week to 12 June to 3,190 from the initially reported 3,058.—*Kyodo News*



People walk under the strong summer sun in Tokyo's busy Shinjuku Ward on the morning of 22 July, 2015. The Fire and Disaster Management Agency said the same day that 6,165 people across the country had been taken to hospital by ambulance due to heatstroke in the week through 19 July, of whom 14 died. — KYODO NEWS

Chinese navy starts drills in S China Sea

BEIJING, 22 July — China said on Wednesday its navy has begun 10 days of military exercises in the South China Sea, a move that comes amid concerns over Beijing's large-scale land reclamation projects in the region and its heavy-handed approach to territorial disputes.

Ships are "prohibited from entering" the "designated maritime areas where the military drills are being held," the country's Maritime Safety Administration said in a statement published on its website.

China claims most of the South China Sea, believed to be rich in oil and natural gas deposits, despite overlapping claims with Vietnam, the Philippines, Brunei, Malaysia and Taipei.

In staking its claims, it

has engaged in the construction of artificial islands, combined with aggressive maritime patrols intended to keep other claimants out.

The exclusion zone is off the southeastern coast of China's island-province of Hainan and includes some of the Paracel Islands, which are claimed by China and Vietnam.

The exercises are meant to "test the navy's tactics and weapons," state-run *Xinhua News Agency* said in an article quoting Chinese Maj Gen Zhu Chenghu, a professor at the National Defence University of the People's Liberation Army. The drills come as the international community has stepped up its criticism of China's activities in the South China Sea.

Kyodo News

Obama pitches Iran deal to vets, Daily Show's Stewart

NEW YORK, 22 July — President Barack Obama's campaign to convince Congress to support the Iran nuclear deal led him on Tuesday to a veterans' convention and The Daily Show, where he took jabs at those opposing the agreement.

In a back and forth on Comedy Central's nightly political satire show, Obama pushed back against hard questions from host Jon Stewart.

"This is an adversary. They are anti-American, anti-Semitic, they sponsor terrorist organizations like Hizbollah," Obama said of Iran.

"Sounds like a good partner for peace," Stewart responded sarcastically.

"Well, as has been said frequently, 'you don't make



US President Barack Obama makes an appearance on The Daily Show with Jon Stewart in New York on 21 July, 2015.—REUTERS

peace with your friends," Obama said. "The issue here is, do we want them having a nuclear weapon? The answer is no."

Obama urged Americans to write their representatives in Congress to express their opinion of the deal. Tuesday's efforts wid-

ened the administration's efforts to gain support for the deal, from Capitol Hill to the general public.

Congress is review-

ing the agreement, reached last week, and could vote to reject it. The process has prompted a lobbying effort on Capitol Hill from both the Obama administration and opponents of the accord.

The White House started the Twitter handle @theirdeal on Tuesday to inform Americans about the contents of the agreement.

Speaking to thousands of veterans at the 116th annual Veterans of Foreign Wars conference in Pittsburgh, Obama pushed back against Republicans who oppose him on the issue.

"Some of the same politicians and pundits that are so quick to reject the possibility of a diplomatic solution to Iran's nuclear programme are the same folks who were so quick to

go to war in Iraq and said it would take a few months," Obama said.

"We know the consequences of that choice, and what it cost us in blood and treasure."

The Daily Show interview was Obama's seventh and last appearance before Stewart leaves the show next month.

Stewart asked Obama for his take on Republican presidential contender Donald Trump, who has made a series of comments, ranging from criticism of Mexican immigrants to insults flung at Republican senators John McCain and Lindsey Graham.

Obama joked, "I'm sure the Republicans are enjoying Mr Trump's dominance of their primary."

Reuters

No reforms, no money, senior German lawmaker warns Athens

BERLIN, 22 July — A senior German lawmaker in Chancellor Angela Merkel's conservative party on Wednesday warned the Greek government not to back-track on its reform commitments.

Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras has tried to rally his Syriza party before parliament votes on Wednesday on the second package of reforms demanded by Greece's international creditors to open talks on a new bailout deal.

The bill will adopt into Greek law new European Union rules on propping up failed banks, but it does not include pension reforms curbing early retirement or raising taxes paid by farmers. Those will be dealt with in coming weeks under a full bailout deal with European partners.

"We are keeping a close eye on whether Athens not only adopts the reforms, but also implements them," Gunther Krichbaum, chairman of the German parliament's Europe committee, told the newspaper *Bild*. "Greece must fulfil the conditions, otherwise the money cannot flow."

Alexander Lambsdorff, a German liberal in the European Parliament, told the paper: "There can't be an aid programme if the Greek government moves away from its commitments. Then the EU would have to cancel the talks immediately."

Officials from the creditor institutions — the European Commission, European Central Bank and International Monetary Fund — are due in Athens on Friday for meetings with the government, Deputy Finance Minister Dimitris Mardas said.—Reuters



People queue as they wait outside a National Bank branch to open in Athens, Greece on 20 July, 2015.

REUTERS

Trump's surge seen as summer squall, but will he rain on the Republican Party?

MANCHESTER, (NH), 22 July — For most of his Republican rivals, Donald Trump's surge in the polls in the 2016 US presidential nomination fight is like a summer squall that will eventually blow itself out.

There was no general sense of panic among the candidates over opinion polls that showed support growing for the real estate mogul, whose candidacy thus far has been notable for his anti-immigrant stance and bare-knuckled tactics.

Candidates in general are practicing a strategy to condemn him when necessary, criticizing him for example for belittling the military service of Senator John McCain, a former Vietnam prisoner of war, but otherwise sticking with their own game plans for attracting support from Republican voters.

"These things ebb and flow, and it's July" said an adviser to Republican Scott Walker. "National polls don't matter unless you're trying to get into a debate."

A Reuters/Ipsos tracking poll on Tuesday found Trump winning the support of 17 percent of Republicans, effectively tied for the lead with his nearest rival, former Florida Governor Jeb Bush at 18 percent. Trump led Bush by eight percentage points a week ago.

With Trump having



US Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump (2nd L) waves to supporters at the Family Leadership Summit in Ames, Iowa, United States on 18 July, 2015.

REUTERS

offered no detailed vision for a Trump presidency, but instead offering a series of overheated statements and bragging about his wealth, there is an expectation among Republican leaders that Trump will tumble in much the same way a variety of Republican candidates fell in 2012, from Michele Bachmann to Herman Cain.

"I don't think it's anything that has the ability to be sustained," said a Republican strategist who has advised Jeb Bush in the past when asked about Trump's showing.

But there are also concerns at how much damage Trump could do to efforts to appeal to minority voters and win the White House in 2016 after losses in 2008 and 2012.

Speaking about Trump at a campaign event on Tuesday in Spartanburg, South Carolina, Bush said

that people are right to be frustrated with government but that "if we embrace this language of divisiveness and ugliness, we'll never win."

On Tuesday, Trump held a rally in South Carolina, home state of Lindsey Graham, a Republican senator who is a presidential candidate, and used it to rail against Graham.

Graham had called Trump a "jackass" for criticizing McCain, the 2008 Republican presidential nominee. Trump read out Graham's cell phone number during the rally.

"Donald Trump continues to show hourly that he is ill-prepared to be commander in chief," said Graham campaign manager Christian Ferry.

Despite Trump's histrionics, Republican professionals believe his support will not fall off enough to deny him a spot at the

party's first presidential debate, on 6 August in Cleveland.

The 10 candidates who register the most support among an average of national polls will get to compete in the event.

The Republican contest has so far been a civil affair with candidates generally declining to attack each other and instead focusing on what they would do for the country.

Having Trump on the debate stage introduces an air of unpredictability to the event.

Republican strategist Scott Reed said candidates will need to come up with a way to handle Trump at the debate.

"He's going to be on the stage and the other candidates are going to have to have a Trump strategy," he said. "The strategy needs to be to push back on the bully."—Reuters

PERSPECTIVES

Thursday, 23 July, 2015

Inequality limits country's prosperity, stability

By Kyaw Thura

The desire to raise a healthy family, get ahead in one's profession and retire in comfort is almost universal. For many, however, life is not as easy as hoped or expected. Inequality continues to severely limit the prospects of many for whom life is a struggle.

Answering the question of where inequal-

ity comes from has been a headache for governments around the world. It is safe to assume that inequality is in fact a chronic issue affecting the prosperity and stability of a nation.

Researchers frequently describe the income gap as a factor that cripples growth mechanisms. Economists have concluded that wide inequality weakens economies and creates instability in the long run.

It would be ridiculous to blame fate or luck for the widening gap between the rich and the poor, the employed and the unemployed, and the educated and the uneducated.

In addition, the education achievement gap between the children of the wealthy and those of the less-privileged has become increasingly noticeable. A handful of moneyed elite with close

connections to influential figures have channelled a great deal of the country's wealth into their pockets. Corruption and bribery are the vehicles for such malfeasance.

All things considered, inequality, either wide or narrow, will continue to threaten employment, productivity and stability. If inequality is ever to be beaten, it will take a long, hard fight.

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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**

(Continued from 22-7-2015)

Integral part of the democratization process is holding successful elections. Elections are a defining characteristic of democracy, and thus form an integral part of the democratization process. Elections represent an important dimension in the efforts towards democratic consolidation in any country. Stated differently, elections are not synonymous with democracy, but are a central component of a functioning democratic system. In discussions of election security and violence, it is relevant to consider the nature and underlying purpose of election violence. Elections are a contest for power, and are therefore inherently contentious; unless conducted fairly, they can (and often do) lead to violence. Political parties participating in an election use violence, intimidation and conflict to influence the results or timing of an election. This is particularly true when a particular side perceives the process as unfair or exclusive. As Jeff Fischer rightly observes, when electoral violence occurs under these circumstances, "it is not a product of an electoral process; it is the breakdown of an electoral process." The challenge, therefore, is to ensure that elections are fair, credible and transparent. In the words of Fischer: "[A]n electoral process is an alternative to violence as a means of achieving governance. However, when an electoral process is per-

ceived as unfair, unresponsive or corrupt, its political legitimacy is compromised and stakeholders are motivated to go outside the established norms to achieve their political objectives. Electoral conflict and violence become tactics in political competition".

One man one vote is important in democratic control and governance process of open and voluntary participation in nation building. "Successful" however the process, elections must not be considered a "one-off" initiative or an end in themselves. Sustained attention is needed to advance not only the establishment of democratic institutions and processes to ensure good governance, but also the economic development of the emerging democratic country. Thus, while elections undoubtedly require advance planning and considerable investment of time and money, the achievement of even peaceful elections will be undermined if the citizens do not experience an improvement in the economic conditions that, more often than not, helped spur the conflict in the first place.

Not for power but for good governance and services of welfare towards Peace, Progress and Prosperity for all citizens, it is aimed at. The international community – and in particular the Western countries – more often than not have failed to insist on the implementation of these elements, despite their resounding rhetoric on the need for democracy and free and fair elections. They should do better and take more seriously the notion

that, for the local population, these elements, in particular the existence of an effective and independent Election Commission and an Election Complaints System, are unmistakable indicators of the credibility of the electoral undertaking. Politicians and diplomats should not forget the lessons of the presidential elections in Afghanistan in autumn 2009, which were a near-disaster in this regard.

Free but not fair, Fair but not free. Neither free nor fair. Free and Fair election is what we all want. Elections in emerging democracies and post-conflict societies have a great potential to plunge a country back into violent conflict, to undermine processes of stabilisation and to discredit democratisation. The presidential elections in Afghanistan in autumn 2009 are one of the recent examples for this risk. Elections are not only a tool of democratic participation but also a fierce contest for positions of leadership, power and access to resources. There have been difficult elections in conflict-ridden countries in late 2009 and early 2010, like those in Afghanistan, Sudan, Burundi, Guinea-Bissau and Guinea.

Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood are foundation of Morality (character) for everyday life and the attainment of enlightenment. Right Effort, Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration are elements of Concentration to achieve the goal of supreme bliss. Right View (understanding) and Right Thought (thinking) are essential necessities for Wis-

dom to lead the path. These are Noble Eightfold Path. One should not forget that there have been a number of (more or less) successful elections in post-conflict countries in the last decades, like those in Namibia, South Africa and Mozambique, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Cambodia, Sierra Leone, Liberia, the DR Congo as well as in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and Macedonia on the Balkans. There is no iron law according to which elections are doomed to fail in war-torn countries and emerging countries. Elections can play a significant role in stabilising and democratising them if handled properly.

Electoral support by the public and donors is necessary for the long-term success of a democratic political system. Those political, structural and institutional lessons learned and elements which are today considered by most practitioners to be indispensable for giving elections a chance to succeed in emerging democracies despite the enormous challenges the environment in these countries poses. This concerns in particular the existence of certain key elements, like independent Election Commissions and functioning Electoral Complaint Systems. As expressed by Diamond (1999, p. 65), democratic survival requires that "all significant political actors, at both the elite and mass levels, believe that the democratic regime is the most right and appropriate for their society, better than any other realistic alternative they can imagine".

Experience is the best

teachers. Earn while we learn. Learn while we earn. Through "Learning by doing" and "Learning by watching", Lifelong learning needs to be nurtured not only about democracy but also about human rights, peace, development and prosperity. For democracy to survive, most individuals in a society must agree to abide by the rules of the game and accept that their policy or leadership preferences will not always prevail. Proper institutions are also critical for the success of democracy. As expected, empirical research reports a strong correlation between the development of the appropriate institutions and institutional arrangements, on the one hand, and, on the other, the success or failure of democratic transitions around the globe. (Stepan & Skach, 1993).

As we all know, proper institutions, while necessary, are not sufficient for successful democratization. Rose, Mishler, and Haerpfer (1998) suggest in this connection that the relationship between institutional arrangements and citizen attitudes is compa-

table to the relationship between hardware and software in the working of a computer, democratic institutions being the hardware and public support for democracy being the software. Thus, again, though also not sufficient, public support for democratic governance is essential for the functioning and long-term survival of a democratic political system.

Noteworthy of the fact that while public support for democracy tends to be reasonably stable in consolidated democracies, the stability of attitudes toward democracy in non-democratic or transitioning societies is less well understood. In cases where citizens are experiencing elements of the democratic process for the first time, attitudes toward democracy are likely to vary as a function of the perception of these experiences; and this is particularly important since building or maintaining support for democratic governance is necessary if democratic transitions are ultimately to succeed and be consolidated.

(See page 9)

Grandpa, how have you lived so long?

When I was young we drank natural water, not like people today drinking bottled water.



Hlaing Win Thit (Pazundaung)

NATIONAL

Japan grants US\$92,035 for BEMS in Kyaukkyi Tsp

YANGON, 22 July—The Japanese Government, under its Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects (GGP) Scheme, has granted US\$92,035 for A humanitarian assistance program entitled “The Project for Construction of Lay Paw Mu Basic Education Branch Middle School in Kyaukkyi Township, Bago Region”.

The handover and opening ceremony of the project took place in Kyaukkyi Township, Bago Region on 20 July 2015. Mr. Kazuyoshi SUZUKI, Second Secretary of the Embassy of Japan, Bago Region ministers, committee chairman and members of the construction projects, and local residents attended the ceremony.

Lay Paw Mu School in Kyauk Kyi Township did not have enough class-

rooms for the increasing number of students although it had been upgraded to a branch middle school in 2013. The students of Grades 1, 2, 3 and 9 had to study in two temporary buildings, which were very noisy. Under such circumstances, the Japanese Government, under its GGP scheme, provided funding for construction of a one-storey R.C.C building with 5 classrooms and full furniture. The project will benefit 448 ethnic Kayin students of the school.—GNLM



A Kayin child welcomes Mr. Kazuyoshi SUZUKI, Second Secretary of the Embassy of Japan at the school opening ceremony.
JAPANESE EMBASSY

Myanmar to launch UN-backed forestry emissions roadmap



Union Minister for Environmental Conservation and Forestry U Win Tun delivers speech at workshop on REDD+Roadmap Process.—MNA

NAY PYI TAW, 22 July — Myanmar is preparing to implement a United Nations-backed roadmap

to combat climate change by reducing emissions from deforestation, Union Minister for Environmental

Conservation and Forestry U Win Tun said Tuesday at a workshop in the capital.

The REDD+Roadmap Process focuses on six sectors under the UN-REDD Programme and involves multiple partner organizations, the minister said.

The two-day workshop at Hotel Max aimed to ensure accurate forestry statistics, the establishment of a national forest resource management system and calculation of an annual forest reference emission level.

Since this January, the ministry's Forest Department has carried out works to calculate the reference level of the country's for-

est carbon emissions and formulate a forest resource monitoring action plan and human resources development program, the minister said.

Myanmar started implementing UN-REDD initiatives in December 2011, and concluded the formulation of its REDD+Roadmap Process in June last year.

According to a survey conducted by the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization every five years, the total forest area in Myanmar decreased from 51.54 percent in 2000 to 46.96 percent in 2015. Loss of forest globally stood at 13 million hectares between 2000 to 2010.

MNA

Make Election Free...

(from page 8)

Do (cultivate) what is good, To avoid all evil. To purify one's mind - This is the teaching of all Buddhas. Be good to others. Keep our mind pure. Keep our election clean. Make election clean, free and fair. The new consensus of what constitutes “free and fair elections” is broader and more comprehensive in nature, aiming to ensure that the elections are conducted in a free environment with administratively fair rules. The most important criteria for a free and fair election include the following: (1) the right of all voters to participate in the electoral process without hindrance; (2) [freedom to campaign for all political parties]; (3) secrecy of the ballot; (4) reasonable speed in the counting of ballots; (5) accountability and openness of the electoral process to the competing parties and (6) an acceptable electoral law.

Freedom from fear in

autonomous and independent voting is a requisite for free and fair election. There are, in particular, three basic conditions which need to be met before elections may be risked in emerging democracies: A sufficiently secure environment is the sine qua non for organising and carrying out elections successfully. The majority of combatants and militias should therefore have been disarmed (or at least reliably pacified) and sufficient progress made in the building of army and police forces. The administrative and communication infrastructures of the respective country must have been re-established to a degree that they allow for a sufficiently smooth conduct not only of the elections themselves but also related activities, like voter registration, civic education, etc. Finally, the justice system and police must have reached a degree of functioning that enables them to deal with cases of fraud,

abuse and other legal issues related to the proper conduct of elections; otherwise the opposition parties and the population at large will have no confidence in the fairness of the elections. It takes time to build the respective institutions and capabilities. Therefore, a third and widely debated question is: What is the right timing and sequencing of elections?

Autonomy and independence is one of the important principles for democratic election. Party finance has become a central concern for representative democracy. The core question relates to the autonomy of the representative process itself. Are public representative bodies sufficiently independent of private forms of power to be able to regulate the latter if that is what democratically elected representatives want to do? One obvious difficulty is that the representative process can simply be ‘bought’. All representatives do not just depend on citizens for

votes. They also depend on donors to give them money to fight their election campaigns. Broadly there are three problems in defining arrangements for party finance: (a) Should there be limits on how much any one party or candidate can spend? (b) Should there be limits on how much any one donor can contribute? And (c) should public bodies themselves contribute to the financing of parties and candidates?

In this modern age, the media is one of the most powerful influences on how an election runs inside the country, and how it is perceived from outside. For many people, an election is a crucial decision about the future. If the election goes well, the country can continue towards democracy and peace. But if the election goes badly, it can undermine democracy and turn the country back towards conflict. For an election to go well, it must be free and fair. There must be free speech so all citizens and all political candidates

can speak without fear. The media must be free to tell everyone what was said without pressure to twist the truth. That is the job of professional journalists – to fully inform citizens of the issues and their choices so they can decide for themselves for whom to vote.

Rule of Law must be strictly abided by all citizens, all stakeholders and media persons. Discipline is the symbol of democracy. The election must be fair. There must be rules to ensure every citizen has a secret vote. All candidates must have equal rights and opportunities to campaign without interference. The rules must be enforced fairly and everyone must respect the results of the vote. Elections are a great challenge for the media. Journalists need to know the

election rules. They must report fairly on all candidates, parties and issues. The media should be the voice of the voters. Journalists must adhere to professional standards of accuracy, impartiality and responsibility. And they have to work amidst great excitement, under pressure from powerful interests, and with very little time. A further determinant of whether there is a level playing field in elections is access to the media. There is variation across the nation both (a) in how far the media are obliged to allocate time to candidates and parties in national election and (b) in provisions that are made for equality of access.

May the election be clean, free and fair.

❖ ❖ ❖ ❖ ❖

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UN ship brings food aid to Yemen's Aden as fighting rages

ADEN / GENEVA, 22 July — A ship carrying food aid for Aden's beleaguered population docked in the southern Yemeni port on Tuesday, the first in months of warfare that have devastated the city, as rival factions fought in the northern suburbs.

The ship carried enough UN food aid to feed 180,000 people for a month, a small measure of relief for a city that has been severely damaged by the conflict between Houthi militiamen and forces loyal to deposed President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi.

It had been anchored off Aden since 26 June but had to wait for a safe opportunity to berth, the World Food Programme said.

"WFP made repeated attempts to send ships to Aden, all of which until today were blocked due to severe fighting in the port area," a statement said.

The delivery was the largest in months. Two UN truck convoys had made it through by land last week but the airport, the scene of heavy combat, has been closed.

Residents said loyalist fighters backed by Saudi-led air strikes battled to take back Aden's northern suburbs from the Iranian-allied Houthis on Tuesday after completing their capture of the city centre.

The Houthi militia and its army allies traded artillery fire

with the Saudi-backed forces in the Dar Saad and al Alam areas.

Residents and local fighters said Houthi shelling killed a family of eight in Dar Saad area.

Assisted by the air strikes, local anti-Houthi forces broke months of stalemate in Aden last week by seizing the airport and then driving the Houthis out of their last redoubt in the west of the city.

Saudi Arabia intervened in Yemen's war on 26 March in an effort to stop Houthi forces taking Aden, the last city nominally controlled by Hadi. Riyadh says it wants to restore Hadi to power in the capital Sanaa, which the Houthis seized in September.

Almost four months of air raids and civil war have killed more than 3,500 people in Yemen. Aden has suffered especially, with acute shortages of food, medicine and fuel.

Aden and the other southern provinces of Yemen have been largely inaccessible to UN food aid, and about 13 million people — more than half the population — are thought to be in dire need of food.

"More WFP-chartered ships are on stand-by near Aden carrying fuel and more food. WFP is working to channel food through Aden to people in need of humanitarian assistance particularly in Yemen's southern governorates, which are largely inaccessible



People and vendors gather on the rubble of shops destroyed by a Saudi-led air strike that hit a marketplace in Yemen's capital Sanaa on 20 July, 2015.—REUTERS

sible because of fighting," a WFP spokesman said.

Hadi's administration and the Arab military alliance are seeking to secure the city and make it a base from which to challenge Houthi control over most of the rest of Yemen.

"We're in an operation to complete the extension of our control over the city of Aden and to confront the Houthi presence at its entrances," a leader in a lo-

cal militia told *Reuters* by phone.

Local fighters said they advanced to the area of Aqqan in Lahj Province directly north of Aden, and that Arab air strikes killed around 8 Houthi fighters there and pounded the militia's positions in the nearby southern province of Dhalea.

A technical team from the United Arab Emirates had arrived to repair the battle-damaged international airport, fighters said.

Officials in the anti-Houthi forces say their offensive had been planned for weeks and benefited from training and arms deliveries from Saudi Arabia and the UAE.

The Emirates' official news agency WAM said on Tuesday that an officer from the country had been killed in the service of the Arab campaign, but did not specify where.

Reuters

UN envoy says deeply concerned by battle at Syria border



A child inspects a site hit by what activists said was an airstrike by forces loyal to Syria's President Bashar el-Asaad at Arbin town in Damascus countryside, Syria on 21 July, 2015.—REUTERS

BEIRUT, 22 July — The United Nations envoy for Syria has voiced deep concern about civilians in the city of Zabadani, the focus of an offensive by the Syrian military and Lebanon's Hezbollah aimed at wresting control of the area from insurgents.

Citing local sources in a statement late on Tuesday, Stefan de Mistura said the military had dropped a large number of barrel bombs on Zabadani "caus-

ing unprecedented levels of destruction and many deaths among the civilian population."

Control of the city, about 45 km (30 miles) northwest of the capital Damascus, is seen as crucial to consolidating President Bashar al-Assad's control over the border zone between Lebanon and Syria.

The Syrian air force has bombarded areas in and around the city and Sunni insurgents

have retaliated by firing rockets and heavy mortar shells on two villages near Idlib city in the north, de Mistura said.

An alliance of insurgents known as the "Army of Fatah" (Islamic Conquest) had targeted Al Foua and Kefraya, northern villages where a large number of civilians are trapped, he said.

"In both cases, civilians are tragically caught in the middle of the fighting," he added. Al Foua and Kefraya are home to Shi'ite populations.

Earlier this week the Syrian army backed by Hezbollah advanced deeper into Zabadani, two weeks into a campaign to capture it from insurgents, rebels and the army said.

Taking Zabadani from the insurgents would be a strategic gain for the Syrian army which is battling on several other fronts with a range of different insurgent groups.

Hezbollah's military role inside Syria has been growing steadily since the start of the conflict in 2011. The Syrian government has described the group as its main ally in the fight against the insurgents battling to topple Assad.

Reuters

Dozens killed in tribal clashes in biggest city in southern Libya

BENGHAZI, (Libya), 22 July — Dozens have been killed in clashes between two tribes in the biggest city in southern Libya, officials said on Tuesday, as a security vacuum grew in a remote corner of the oil producer.

A power struggle between two governments fighting for control in the north of the desert nation has hit the poor south hard, hampering supplies of anything from fuel and food to central bank money as flights to Tripoli are halted.

Fighters from two tribes, the Tuareg and Tebu, have exploited a security vacuum to vie for control in a vast area that has been long neglected. Clashes broke out four days ago in a suburb of Sabha, said the city's mayor, Hamed Rafa al-Khayali.

A Tebu official said the clashes had started after a Tebu was killed at a checkpoint.

"Around 29 people of the Tuareg tribe were killed and four were wounded in clashes," said Khayali by phone from Sabha, some 700km to the south of the Libyan capital Tripoli.

Eight people of the Tebu

were killed and 18 wounded, said Zahra Adam, a local official in the neighbouring al-Tayori town dominated by Tebu.

Khayali said tribal elders had tried to negotiate a truce but talks failed. The city asked military officials in Tripoli for help to restore order but received no response.

Libya is in chaos with two governments fighting for control while Islamic State militants exploit a security gap. Tripoli is controlled by a government not recognized by world powers, which took office a year ago after an armed faction expelled the official premier to the east.

Rivalry between the Tebu and Tuareg goes back before Muammar Gaddafi was toppled in 2011, though in the past his police state had succeeded in keeping some order.

Clashes erupted also near Derna, an Islamist hotspot in the east, between fighters of Islamic State and forces loyal to the eastern government. Three Islamic State fighters were killed, said a military spokesman.

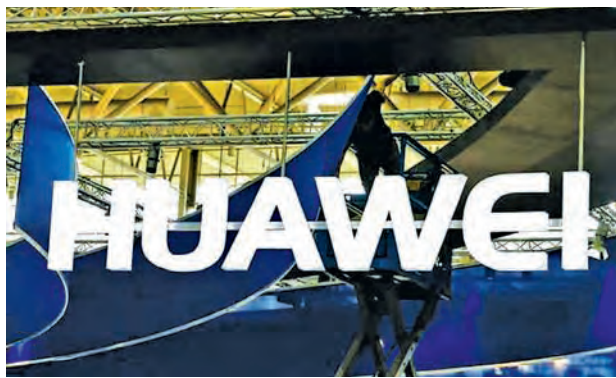
Reuters

Huawei Technologies' first-half smartphone revenue more than doubles in China

HONG KONG/BEIJING, 22 July — Huawei Technologies Co Ltd [HWT.UL] more than doubled its China smartphone revenue in the first half of 2015, defying a slowdown in the world's biggest handset market that is enveloping rivals Xiaomi Inc [XTC.UL] and Samsung Electronics Co Ltd (005930.KS).

The fourth-largest smartphone maker globally missed shipment targets for two years, but a focus shift to high-margin premium models pushed January-June worldwide shipments to 48.2 million phones, Huawei said on Wednesday. That puts it on course to move 100 million mobiles this year, 33 percent more than last.

The turnaround comes almost three years after Shenzhen-based Huawei decided to shed its budget appeal and challenge Samsung and Apple Inc (AAPL.O) at the high-end of the market, where analysts said an increasing number of previously price-conscious Chinese consumers are willing to



A worker adjusts the logo at the stand of Huawei at the CeBIT trade fair in Hanover on 15 March, 2015.

REUTERS

spend their money.

In contrast to Huawei, overall smartphone shipments in China shrank for the first time in six years in the first quarter, and one-time leader Xiaomi booked its first fall in sequential semi-annual sales, saying the domestic market is nearing saturation.

"There's that buzz going around Huawei in China right now and it's being increasingly associated with better product quality," said Bryan Ma, researcher IDC's Asia-Pacific vice president. "It's quite dramatic how successful they've been."

Behind that success is

convincing Chinese consumers that it is worth paying more for its feature-packed yet moderately priced devices, Ma said. Its first-quarter average selling price jumped to \$222 from \$128 a year earlier, he said. Huawei booked global handset revenue of \$9.09 billion for the first six months, up 69 percent on year, and raised its year-end goal to \$20 billion from \$16 billion. In China, where it sells most of its mobiles, phone revenue rose 124 percent.

On Monday, head of consumer business Richard Yu in a memo touted the success of Huawei's high-

end P8. The handset is priced in China well below premium models from rivals such as Samsung, which fell out of China's top three in the first quarter for the first time since 2011.

"The consumer business group recorded an unexpectedly high rate of growth," Yu wrote without elaborating. Huawei's consumer business division makes electronic goods such as smartphones, smartwatches, tablet computers and modems.

Analysts said Huawei's sales growth may not be down to company strategy alone, and that it may have benefited from pricing or distribution missteps at competitors.

But now Huawei's fast-growing Honor sub-brand has copied Xiaomi's online distribution model, the triple-digit growth rates Xiaomi has enjoyed in China in recent years may be under threat, said Strategy Analytics executive director Neil Mawston.

"They're cutting into Xiaomi's competitive edge," he said.—Reuters

Chinese scientists isolate Weyl fermions theorized 86 years ago

BEIJING, 22 July — Scientists have isolated a massless particle called the Weyl fermion, which might lead to faster and more efficient electronics, said the Institute of Physics, Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) on Tuesday.

First proposed by physicist Hermann Weyl in 1929, Weyl fermions are more basic particles than electrons and, because of being massless, can facilitate a more free and efficient flow of electricity.

However, scientists had not observed them in

experiments before.

Scientists with the CAS Institute of Physics discovered a way to reproduce the particle by shooting synchrotron radiation light beams through a synthetic metallic crystal called tantalum arsenide (TaAs).

The discovery of Weyl fermions may lead to progress in reducing the energy consumption of smaller electronic devices. The particle may also be used to achieve high fault tolerance in topological quantum computing.—Xinhua

Australian researchers take sweet revenge on superbugs

SYDNEY, 22 July — Australian researchers have found a way to fight superbugs using the bacteria's own sugar, making a promising step in combating the rise of anti-biotic resistant superbugs.

Published in the scientific journal *Nature Communications*, researchers from the University of Queensland created a compound that acts as a "Trojan Horse," stopping bacteria from inside the cell.

University of Queensland Professor of Chemistry and Structural Biology Matt Cooper told Australia's national broadcaster on Wednesday the new compound is very promising in combating the rise of anti-biotic superbugs.

"[They'll] be extremely valuable to society and to human health because we know that when we use most antibiotics, resistance arises soon thereafter," Cooper said. "The cell wall has been a target for antibiotics such as penicillin and vancomycin before, but the difference here is that we are stopping a centrally important part of the cell wall linking process."

Copper said the compound made is not sucrose, the sugar normally used though causes damage to human health, but a sugar made by the bacteria itself.

"If you like, it's the mortar that the bacteria uses to make a wall around itself," Cooper said. "Bacteria have cell walls similar to the walls of a brick

house, except instead of mortar the walls are held together by sugar polymers."

The researchers isolated this sugar, changing it chemically so it actually "turned into a weapon against the bacteria in the cells." "We then fed it back to the bacteria itself and the bacteria has these enzymes that if you like, is the brickies' labourer putting the bricks together using this sugar mortar," Cooper said.

"And what happened is our particular molecule went into this enzyme and blocked it... destroying the cell wall and killing the bacteria."

"It was just like a Trojan horse — the bacterium was expecting to find its own sugar... which it could use to build its wall, but when it finds our compound, it stops the enzyme working... and the brickies' labourer goes on strike."

Cooper said it was a promising step in combating the rise of anti-biotic resistant superbugs, though the new compound is far from finished.

"There's a lot more work to be done, but people have tried for a long time to make a drug based on this particular sugar made by the bacterium," Cooper said. "If we can make a successful compound that can be given to people that are sick with superbug infections, there is a chance we could have an antibiotic that could last a long, long time."—Xinhua

Microsoft posts record loss as it writes down Nokia

NEW YORK, 22 July — Microsoft Corp (MSFT.O) reported a \$3.2 billion quarterly net loss, its biggest ever, as the company wrote down its Nokia phone business and demand fell for its Windows operating system.

The company took a charge of \$7.5 billion in the fourth quarter related to the restructuring of its Nokia handset business, which it bought last year.

Microsoft's shares fell 4 percent to \$45.38 in extended trading on Tuesday.

Under Chief Executive Satya Nadella, the company has been shifting its focus to software and cloud services as demand for its once-popular Windows operating system slows.

Sales of Windows to computer manufacturers to install on new PCs fell 22 percent in the quarter. The company is scheduled to roll out Windows 10 on 29 July, a much-awaited launch after a lackluster response to Windows 8.

Microsoft wants to generate revenue by building search and gaming into the Windows 10 interface, Chief Financial Officer

Amy Hood said in April.

Bing, the company's online search engine, will be profitable in the year ending June 2016, Hood said on Tuesday.

Sales of Windows to businesses fell 21 percent from the year-earlier quarter, when demand for the operating system had surged after Microsoft discontinued support for Windows XP.

Revenue from Microsoft's commercial cloud business, which includes

offerings such as Office 365 and Azure, rose 96 percent, excluding the impact of a strong dollar.

Microsoft said it added 3 million subscribers for Office 365 in the quarter, taking the total number of subscribers for the product to 15.2 million at the end of June.

The company said this month that it would cut 7,800 jobs, or nearly 7 percent of its workforce, mainly in the phone hardware business.



A woman passes by a Microsoft store in Paramus, New Jersey on 8 July, 2015.

REUTERS

Feature: Chinese opera at home in Italy

By Marzia De Giuli, Song Jian

MILAN, (Italy), 22 July — An ancient Chinese story performed by Chinese artists influenced by the Italian opera style at an historic theater here was a fruitful endeavour, judging from the warm applause and enthusiastic audience feedback.

"I truly liked it," Italian opera buff Antonella Palumbo told *Xinhua* on Wednesday, 15 July, night after watching The Grand Canal at the Piccolo Strehler Theater, where the show will be performed again on Thursday, 16 July.

"I often go to the opera, and I had already watched Chinese operas before, but all of them were classical ones. This one is a modern Chinese opera, thus it is certainly closer to our taste," she noted.

Palumbo said she particularly appreciated the beautiful voices and exciting choreography.

Her husband Sergio Brusadin agreed. "I was struck by the modernity of this opera and by the fact that it contains Western elements. In fact, I have found that a lot of Eastern people love Italian opera, different from many Italians who are not interested in opera anymore, unfortunately," he highlighted.

The Grand Canal opera is about the monumental works and deep struggle that were behind the conception and construction of the Grand Canal created under the Sui and Tang dynasties between the 6th and 7th centuries to connect southern and northern China.

"We have wanted to tell a Chinese story with a language rich with Western ingredients

... as a combination of an opera show which can fill theaters, but at the same time as a platform for cultural exchange," said Ke Jun, deputy general manager of Jiangsu Performing Arts Group, which brought the opera to stages across Europe.

The Grand Canal, the longest and oldest artificial waterway in the world, is a UNESCO World Heritage site, another reason for choosing it's ancient story as a topic that could be of universal interest, Ke went on.

Ke noted it was the first time The Grand Canal opera was performed abroad after it's success in China.

"We did not know how Western opera enthusiasts would react, especially in a country with as strong an opera tradition as Italy," he said.

Indeed, the positive reaction of the Italian audience, which not only appreciated the opera, but also the narration of a period of Chinese history filled with struggles and feelings common to all, was a great feedback, Ke pointed out.

Franca Nava teaches scenography at the Academy of Fine Arts of Brera in Milan. "I found it a very complex choreography which makes use of lights and scenes very different from each other in the correct way," she said after watching The Grand Canal opera with her young daughter.

"I found it a mix between the Asian taste and the Italian opera," she told *Xinhua*.

"There are differences with respect to the Italian opera. Overall, I would say that The Grand Canal opera is a lighter show compared to the Western tradition. I am sure it can be very

much appreciated in China and also in the Western world where it can be seen like a musical, in a sense," she underlined.

Boriz Veliz and Gianluca Agazzi are two of Nava's students.

"I only knew the Peking Opera before, but I found something completely different here, and very interesting indeed," Veliz said. The pair said they were full of questions about this modern Chinese opera and its future development.

"I definitely want to read more about it when I go home," Agazzi told *Xinhua*.

The Grand Canal opera was sponsored by the Mission of China to the European Union (EU) along with the Chinese embassies in Belgium and in Italy, and the provincial government of Jiangsu. Before coming to Milan, the show performed in Brussels and other EU cities, including Italy's capital Rome.—*Xinhua*



The character Sun Wukong at the Peking opera from Journey to the West



Photo taken on 22 July, 2015, at Jindai botanical park in the city of Chofu, Tokyo, shows *Amorphophallus titanum*, which is said to be the largest flower in the world. The 2-metre-high flower blossomed on the day for its first bloom in five years. As the best time to see it was short, the park opened at 8:30 am, one hour earlier than usual.—KYODO NEWS

Pakistan top court stops execution of Christian woman

ISLAMABAD, 22 July — Pakistan's top court on Wednesday stopped execution of a Christian woman who had been on death row since 2010 over blasphemy charges, lawyers said.

Asia Bibi, a 50-year-old, was arrested in Nankana district in central Punjab province in 2009 over alleged "insult to Prophet Muhammad." She had, however, denied the charges and had told the court that neighbours had leveled charges against her over "personal differences."

A local court in Nankana had awarded Asia Bibi's death sentence. She became the first non-Muslim lady to get death penalty. A high court had upheld the sentence.

Asia, mother of five children, had challenged death penalty in the Supreme Court.

A three-member bench of the apex court stayed the execution and admitted her petition for formal hearing, her defence lawyer Saiful Malook said. The court sought all record of the case and ruled that she would not be executed until it delivers verdict on her appeal.

Malook told the court that the Lahore High Court had "not fulfilled legal requirements" while upholding the death penalty of his client.

Asia Bibi was accused of "offering insulting remarks" about the Prophet Muhammad during discussions with Muslim women in June 2009.

Denying the charges, she had informed the court that she was "forced to convert to Islam" and that she was charged after her refusal.—*Xinhua*

Peru to make contact with isolated tribe for first time

LIMA, 22 July — Peru will try to make contact for the first time with an Amazonian tribe that largely lives isolated in the jungle, part of a bid to ease tensions with nearby villages after a bow-and-arrow attack in May, authorities said on Tuesday.

Government anthropologists will try to talk with a clan of Mashco Piro Indians to understand why they have been emerging from the forest, said deputy culture minister Patricia Balbuena.

In recent years the Mashco Piro have increasingly been spotted seeking machetes and food outside their jungle enclaves in the Manu National Park in southeastern Peru.

Villagers, Christian proselytizers and tourists have all interacted with the tribe, often giving them clothes and food.

"The only ones who haven't been in contact with them are representatives of the state!"

said Balbuena.

Peru prohibits contact with the Mashco Piro and another dozen "uncontacted" tribes, mainly

because their immune systems carry little resistance to common illnesses.

Authorities have said they

cannot keep people from defying the contact ban because no penalty is attached.

Indigenous group FENAMAD warned that the decision to contact the Mashco Piro could legitimize the kind of unwanted interactions that have decimated isolated tribes in the past.

"Authorities should restrict boat transit and keep people from approaching," said FENAMAD president Klaus Quicque.

Luis Felipe Torres, the head of the state isolated tribes team, said the government will not forcibly contact the Mashco Piro or try to change their nomadic lifestyle.

"But we can no longer pretend they aren't trying to make some sort of contact," Torres said. "They have a right to that, too."

The Mashco Piro have historically rejected outsiders, surviving enslavement during Peru's bloody rubber boom in the

late 1800s and later rebuffing missionaries.

But in the past year, the Mashco Piro have appeared in populated areas more than 100 times, especially along the banks of a river where they gesture to passersby, said Balbuena.

Not all interactions with outsiders have been peaceful.

In May, a group of Mashco Piro attacked the native Machiguenga community of Shipetiari, killing a young man with an arrow.

In 2011 the Mashco Piro killed another local man and wounded a park ranger with arrows. Using interpreters of Yine, a native language similar to the Mashco Piro tongue, the government hopes to prevent future clashes, Balbuena said.

A team of doctors six hours upriver would treat the tribe if disease breaks out, Balbuena said.—*Reuters*



Members of the Mashco-Piro tribe observe a group of travellers from across the Alto Madre de Dios river in the Manu National Park in the Amazon basin of southeastern Peru, as photographed through a bird scope on 21 Oct, 2011.—REUTERS

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

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WEATHER REPORT

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL EVENING OF THE 23rd July, 2015: Rain or thundershowers will be scattered in Magway Region, fairly widespread in Lower Sagaing, Mandalay and Taninthayi Regions, Shan and Kayah States and widespread in the remaining Regions and States with likelihood of regionally heavy falls in Rakhine State and isolated heavy falls in Upper Sagaing, Bago, Yangon and Ayeyawady Regions, Kachin and Mon States. Degree of certainty is (100%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Squalls with rough sea are likely at times off and along Myanmar Coasts. Surface wind speed in squalls may reach (40) m.p.h.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Increase of rain in the Rakhine Coasts.



Firefighters work at a bus depot in Huli District of Xiamen City, southeast China's Fujian Province, on 22 July, 2015. One guard on duty was killed in the fire which broke out here early Wednesday morning. The cause is under investigation.—XINHUA

**Chinese fishing
boat crew gets
suspended
sentence for
poaching coral**

YOKOHAMA, 22 July — A district court on Wednesday gave a Chinese fishing boat crew member a one-year prison term, suspended for five years, over coral poaching in Japanese territorial waters.

Zhang Youyin, 45, was also fined 2 million yen (\$16,183) for illegally collecting precious red coral last 21 December with the boat captain Fang Dongbing, 46, in the sea about 6 kilometres off Torishima, an uninhabited island about 580 km south of Tokyo.

Japan toughened a law on illegal fishing by foreigners in its territorial waters last year after Chinese vessels had been spotted near the Ogasawara and Izu islands off Tokyo. The Japan Coast Guard believes they were engaged in coral poaching. The number of such vessels totaled over 200 at its peak last year. The maximum fine was raised more than seven times to 30 million yen from 4 million yen in December.

Presiding Judge Ben Adachi at the Yokohama District Court said it was a heinous act as the defendant "completely ignored fishery regulations" and "disrupted the order significantly."

Zhang had denied the allegation that he conspired with the captain, who has been sentenced to one year in prison and fined 10 million yen.

But the judge dismissed his claim, saying he gave money to buy the boat in exchange for sharing profits from the coral poaching.

But Adachi said Zhang was less responsible as he acted with instructions from the captain.—Kyodo News

**China probes senior Xinjiang
security official for graft**

BEIJING, 22 July — A deputy regional security chief and former head of the prison system in China's violence-prone far western region of Xinjiang has been put under investigation for suspected corruption, the government said on Wednesday.

Xie Hui is being investigated for "suspected serious breaches in discipline", the ruling Communist Party's anti-graft watchdog the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection said in a brief statement, using the usual euphemism for corruption.

It provided no other details, and it was not possible to reach Xie for comment.

Xie's official resume, included in the watchdog's statement, shows he spent his entire career working in Xinjiang, including in the old labour camp system,

which used penal labour as punishment.

He ran the Xinjiang prison system from 2010 until his promotion in 2013 to be a vice head of the Xinjiang public security bureau.

President Xi Jinping has pushed a sweeping crackdown on corruption since taking power two years ago. Xi, like others before him, warned that the problem was so severe it could affect the party's ability to maintain power.

For years Xinjiang, home to the Muslim Uighur people, has been beset by violence, blamed by the government on Islamist extremists who want an independent state called East Turkestan.

Rights groups and exiles say the violence is more a reaction to Uighur frustration at government controls on their religion

and culture. Beijing denies any repression in Xinjiang.

The energy-rich region, which sits strategically on the borders of Pakistan, India, Afghanistan and Central Asia, has not been as much a focus of the government's graft crackdown as other parts of China.

Last year, however, prosecutors begun an investigation into the former Communist Party chief of the Xinjiang Police College, which trains public security officials, for suspected abuse of power and corruption.

Also last year, the ethnic Uighur mayor of Hotan, a major city in the heavily Uighur south of Xinjiang, was put under investigation for corruption, one of the few ethnic minorities caught up in Xi's campaign.

Reuters

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**Indonesia shuts
three airports
as Mount
Raung eruption
persists**

JAKARTA, 22 July — Mount Raung Volcano in East Java, Indonesia continues spewing columns of ash, forcing authorities to close three airports on Wednesday, Sutopo Purwo Nugroho, spokesman of national disaster management agency told Xinhua via phone here.—Xinhua

Taylor Swift, Ed Sheeran lead MTV Video Music Award nominations

LOS ANGELES, 22 July — Pop singer Taylor Swift, British singer-songwriter Ed Sheeran, R&B singer Beyonce, and DJ-producer Mark Ronson lead the nominations for the MTV Video Music Awards, the cable network said on Tuesday.

Swift, whose “1989” was the best-selling album of 2014, earned nine nominations for the awards to be handed out on 30 August. Sheeran garnered six nominations, while Beyonce and Ronson each scored five nods.

Swift’s superhero-themed video for “Bad Blood,” a collaboration with hip-hop artist Kendrick Lamar, which also features cameos by more than a dozen other celebrities, will compete for the coveted Video of the Year award against Beyonce’s “7/11,” Sheeran’s “Thinking Out Loud,” Ronson’s “Uptown Funk” featuring Bruno Mars, and Lamar’s “Alright.”

Swift also earned nominations for her music video “Blank Space” in the Best Female Video and Best Pop Video categories.

The awards show, which MTV bills as “music’s most unexpected night,” hands out “Moonman” statuettes for

achievements in music videos. The event has made headlines in recent years for singer Miley Cyrus’ provocative “twerk” performance with a foam finger in 2013, and hip-hop artist Kanye West’s interruption of Swift’s 2009 acceptance speech.

Cyrus tweeted on Monday that she will host this year’s awards, showing pictures of her with placards saying: “MTV won’t let me perform” and “So I’m hosting this year’s VMAs.”

The show, which attracts a young audience prized by advertisers, will air live from the Microsoft Theater, formerly the Nokia Theatre in Los Angeles.

The Video Music Awards began in 1984 and helped propel the young cable channel, now owned by Viacom Inc, as a player in the entertainment industry.

Reuters



Siddhartha Mukherjee’s docu gets Emmy nomination

NEW DELHI, 22 July — Pulitzer winning Indian-born American doctor Siddhartha Mukherjee has been nominated for an Emmy Award for his documentary series on cancer.

The six-hour programme based and titled after Mukherjee’s Pulitzer Prize-winning 2010 book “Cancer: The Emperor of All Maladies” is among five nominees for the award for documentary or nonfiction series, his publishers Penguin Random House said.

The series on cancer on American TV channel PBS has been directed by Emmy Award-winning filmmaker and writer Barak Goodman and executive produced by Ken Burns, who has won multiple Emmys.

The film portrays the history of the illness and unfolding scientific mysteries, illustrated by intimate personal accounts and geared to the layman’s understanding and fear of this once-unmentionable disease.

It contains archival film and interviews with experts besides illustrations and computer graphics.

Mukherjee, who has previously authored “The Laws of Medicine,” is currently an assistant professor of medicine at Columbia University and a staff cancer physician at Columbia University Medical Centre in the US.

The New York-based oncologist and a Rhodes scholar graduated from Stanford University, University of Oxford, Harvard Medical School.

Meanwhile other nominees for the The 67th Emmy Awards in the documentary or non-fiction series category are “American Masters” (PBS), “The Jinx: The Life” (HBO), “Deaths Of Robert Durst” (HBO); “The Roosevelts: An Intimate History” (PBS) and “The Sixties” (CNN).

PTI

Swiss Paleo Festival pays tribute to folk roots at 40th edition



Zoe Colotis, singer of the band Caravan Palace, performs at the Paleo Festival in Nyon, Switzerland, on 20 July, 2015.—REUTERS

NYON, (Switzerland), 22 July — Switzerland’s Paleo Festival celebrates its 40th edition this week, drawing big names such as Sting and Robbie Williams but also paying tribute to its folk-music roots.

The week-long event, held in Nyon, began as a folk festival in 1976 with an audience of 1,800 spectators. It has since grown into a major open-air festival, last year drawing 230,000 people to its seven stages.

Pop singer Robbie Williams headlined the

festival’s open on Monday, to be followed by acts and artists such as rock group Kings of Leon, electronica band Faithless, Sting and DJ David Guetta.

The festival will also look back at its roots with shows from folk singers such as 1976 headliners Malicorne and Joan Baez, who took to the festival stage in 1982.

“We decided to keep a little piece of nostalgia and invite some legendary artists who have marked the last 40 years,” festival founder and director Daniel

Rossellat said in a handout for the festival’s 40th edition.

Over the years, the festival has played host to musicians varying from Ray Charles to The Cure. It also has an area dedicated to circus acts and street theater.

“At the beginning it was mainly folk music,” Jacques Monnier, the festival’s programmer, said. “Later we opened to new horizons, like Brazilian music, South America and finally to rock, hip-hop, electro.” Paleo Festival Nyon runs until 26 July.—Reuters

R&B’s Tyrese tops Billboard chart for first time

LOS ANGELES, 22 July — R&B singer Tyrese earned his first No 1 spot on the US Billboard 200 album chart on Tuesday with the debut of his album “Black Rose.”

“Black Rose” marks the sixth solo album for the artist, also an actor known as Tyrese Gibson and a star in the “Fast and Furious” film franchise. “Black Rose” sold 77,000 album units in its first week, including 74,000 full album copies, according to figures from Nielsen SoundScan for the week ending 16 July.

The Billboard 200

chart tallies album sales, song sales (10 songs equal one album) and streaming activity (1,500 streams equal one album).

Taylor Swift’s “1989,” the bestselling album of 2014, remained at No 2 after 37 weeks on the chart. Rapper Meek Mill’s “Dreams Worth More than Money” fell to the third spot on the chart after debuting in the No 1 position.

“Kidz Bop 29,” by the Kidz Bop Kids entered the chart in the No 4 spot. The popular Kidz Bop brand, in which young performers cover mainstream pop hits, has had 22 top 10 al-

bums since its first release in 2001. The 29th installment in the family-friendly series features covers of the Rihanna, Kanye West and Paul McCartney song “FourFiveSeconds” and Taylor Swift’s “Style.”

British singer-songwriter Ed Sheeran’s “X” came in at No 5 after 55 weeks on the chart.

Pop band R5’s second full-length album, “Sometime Last Night” debuted in the No 6 spot. The album sold 31,000 units, making it the band’s highest ranking on the chart. The band, made up of Disney star Ross Lynch, his three



Actor Tyrese Gibson poses backstage during the 2015 Billboard Music Awards in Las Vegas, Nevada on 17 May, 2015. REUTERS

siblings and one friend, reached No 24 on the chart with their 2013 album “Louder.”

On the Digital Songs chart, which tallies digital single downloads, OMI’s summer reggae hit “Cheerleader” remained in the top spot with 172,000 down-

loads in the past week.

This week’s chart was Billboard’s first to use on Friday through Thursday sales figures. The change follows a music industry-wide switch to Friday record releases earlier this month.

Reuters

GENERAL

Scala to supervise integrity checks on FIFA candidates

ZURICH, 22 July — A FIFA committee headed by Domenico Scala will supervise integrity checks on candidates hoping to stand in February's election to replace Sepp Blatter as president of world football's governing body.

FIFA said on Tuesday that Scala, chair of their Independent Audit and Compliance Committee, would be the Ad-hoc Electoral Committee chairman.

Claudio Sulser, chairman of the FIFA Disciplinary

Committee, and Larry Mussenden, chairman of the FIFA Appeal Committee are also members of the committee. The committee is responsible for supervising the integrity checks and admitting and announcing candidates. Potential candidates have until 26 October to present their intentions in writing to FIFA's general secretariat with support from at least five football federations.

FIFA said the Ad-hoc Electoral Committee will



Domenico Scala, head of FIFA's watchdog audit and compliance committee, talks on his mobile phone in the FIFA headquarters in Zurich, Switzerland on 20 July, 2015.

REUTERS

then carry out an "examination and a decision on the admission of the candidates to the FIFA presidential

elections". The vote will take place on 26 February at a special 'elective congress' in Zurich.—Reuters

Jake Gyllenhaal plays boxer seeking redemption in 'Southpaw'

NEW YORK, 22 July — Jake Gyllenhaal takes on the role of a champion boxer who tries to turn his life around after tragedy strikes in "Southpaw", a drama the Hollywood actor says is essentially about family. The "Brokeback Mountain" star plays boxer Billy Hope

who loses his family, his house and his manager and soon hits rock bottom.

"The story is about a guy who uses his rage to get great success," Gyllenhaal said at the film's premiere in New York on Monday night.

"That same rage de-

stroys his whole life. Throughout the film and his journey, he has to learn how to fight — not only in the ring but in life without rage."

Gyllenhaal has said he watched fights and trained intensively for the part.

Canadian actress Ra-

chel McAdams, known for her roles in "The Notebook" and "Sherlock Holmes" portrays Hope's wife Maureen.

"(The movie is) very moving. It's got a lot of heart, a lot of grit, it's got a lot of soul in it," she said.

Reuters

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Okazaki makes 1st appearance for Leicester

Japanese striker Shinji Okazaki

LINCOLN, (England), 22 July — Japan striker Shinji Okazaki made his first appearance for Leicester City in a preseason friendly against Lincoln City on Tuesday, playing the first 45 minutes and a part in his side's first goal in a 3-1 win.

Okazaki, who joined the Foxes from German side

Mainz last month, started the game up front alongside Leonardo Ulloa and chased down a flick from the Argentine before the ball fell for Riyad Mahrez to slot in the equalizer. "They were much stronger than I was expecting," Okazaki said of Lincoln, who play in the fifth-tier National League and gave the 29-year-old a tough introduction to the English football with their physical approach.

Led by newly appointed manager Claudio Ranieri, Leicester play four more preseason games before kicking off their Premier League campaign against Sunderland at home on 8 August.

Kyodo News



England's Wayne Rooney celebrates after scoring their third goal against Slovenia during UEFA Euro 2016 Qualifying Group E at Stozice Stadium, Ljubljana, Slovenia on 14 June, 2015.

REUTERS

At US Capitol, Arizona Apaches protest planned copper mine

WASHINGTON, 22 July — Scores of Native American demonstrators protested at the US Capitol on Tuesday against a proposed \$6 billion copper mine in Arizona at a site that members of the Apache tribe say is sacred.

Members of the San Carlos Apache tribe began a cross-country caravan to Washington this month to persuade Congress to save the area known as the Oak Flat campground near Superior, Arizona.

The group of Native

Americans, called Apache Stronghold, hopes to get lawmakers to repeal a land exchange that paves the way for the project by Resolution Copper Mining. The company is owned by Australian miners Rio Tinto Plc and BHP Billiton Ltd.

More than 100 Native Americans and supporters marched from the White House to the Capitol, where they drummed, sang and performed prayer ceremonies for nearly three hours.

"Today is our day. Today is our ceremony. We're not here looking at this Capitol like it's in charge of us," said tribe councilman Wendsler Nosie.

The caravan has been gathering support at Native American reservations and held a protest in New York on Friday.

Mine supporters tout its expected benefits, including about 3,700 jobs and \$60 billion in economic impacts. Nosie called the job estimates inflated.

Reuters



Visitors watch photographs exhibited in the 26th Show of Argentine Photojournalism, in Buenos Aires, capital of Argentina, on 21 July, 2015. Some 300 photos are on display in this annual event, which is one of the most important of its kind in the country, according to local press. — XINHUA

Mandalay to host Olympic women's football qualifiers

MANDALAY, 22 July — Myanmar will host the second-round Asian Zone qualifiers for the 2016 Olympic Games women's football tournament at Mandalay Thiri Stadium, here, from 14 to 22 September 2015.

Thailand, Vietnam, Chinese Taipei and Jordan will join the hosts in the qualifying stage.

Myanmar are scheduled to meet Jordan at 6:30 p.m. on 14 September, Thailand at 6.30 pm on 16 September, Vietnam at 6:30 p.m. on 18 September, and Chinese Taipei at 6:30 p.m.

on 22 September.

Myanmar hosted the first-round qualifiers in Mandalay, where the team sailed into the second round qualifier by defeating Sri Lanka and India.

The top country in the second-round qualifiers will face Japan, South Korea, North Korea, China and Australia in the third round for a chance to reach the 2016 Rio Olympic Games.

Coach Daw Thet Thet Win will lead the 25-strong national squad. The Myanmar team plans to train abroad before the qualifiers.—Nyi Myat Thawda

Van Gaal hints United may be interested in Real's Ramos



Manchester United manager Louis van Gaal applauds fans during a lap of honour after their Barclays Premier League Match at Old Trafford on 17 May, 2015. —REUTERS

MADRID, 22 July — Manchester United manager Louis van Gaal has hinted the club may be pursuing Real Madrid's Spain defender Sergio Ramos and could also sign a "surprise" striker.

There has been media speculation in recent weeks that the 29-year-old Ramos, who has two years left on his Real contract, could join United as part of a swap deal, with his Spain team mate and goalkeeper David De Gea, 24, going the other way.

United have also been linked with a bid for Barcelona's Spain forward Pedro and Bayern Munich's Germany forward Thomas Mueller as Van Gaal looks to revitalise the squad after a disappointing 2014-15 campaign.

Pedro, 27, no longer commands a regular spot in Barca's

starting lineup following the arrival of Uruguay striker Luis Suarez, while the 25-year-old Mueller is said to be unhappy with Bayern coach Pep Guardiola's working methods. "I cannot talk about these rumours," Van Gaal said when asked about Ramos at a news conference on the club's North American tour.

"I have said in a lot of Press conferences that it's a process," added the Dutchman. "Maybe Mr Ramos is in the process... you never know."

Van Gaal said the club could buy a striker but cautioned that it was not a player that had been written about in the media.

"You have to wait and see," he told reporters. "The transfer period is open until 1 September so we have to wait."

Reuters

Women football stars to make debut on FIFA video game cover



United States forward Alex Morgan (13) and Colombia defender Nataly Arias (14) go for the ball during the second half in the round of sixteen in the FIFA 2015 women's World Cup soccer tournament at Commonwealth Stadium in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada on 22 June, 2015.—REUTERS

LONDON, 22 July — American World Cup champion Alex Morgan will be one of two women football players to score a first by featuring on the front cover of FIFA, the world's most popular football video game, the game's publisher said on Tuesday.

Morgan, 26, helped bring the US football team victory against Japan in the 2015 Women's World Cup final earlier this month.

The forward will be pictured on the US version of FIFA 16

alongside Barcelona's Lionel Messi, EA Sports said. A Canadian version of the game will feature Messi and Canada's captain, Christine Sinclair.

EA Sports unveiled plans in May in the lead-up to the Women's World Cup to include women in the FIFA videogame franchise for the first time. Only men's teams had featured in the game since it was first released in 1993.

Morgan said it was an honour to be one of the faces of the

12 international women's teams which will play in FIFA 16 and include England, Germany, the United States and Brazil. "I know people all over the world play this game and I'm really excited that FIFA 16 is putting such an important spotlight on women's football," Morgan said in a statement. FIFA is the world's most popular football video game and the latest instalment, FIFA 15, sold more than 16 million copies, according to video game research firm VG Chartz. The Women's World Cup, played in six cities across Canada, put the spotlight on the women's sport, which is gaining in popularity but still lags far behind men's football.

For example, FIFA invests about \$900 million a year in football projects around the world but only 15 percent of that goes to women's football, Mayrilian Cruz-Blanco, FIFA's senior women's football developing manager, told a recent news conference.

Morgan was in the USA women's team which won an Olympic gold medal at the 2012 London Games after beating Japan 2-1. Sinclair won her first Olympic medal that year, receiving bronze as a member of Canada's Women's football team.

Reuters

Suarez determined to make flying start to next season

MADRID, 22 July — Luis Suarez struggled to get into his stride with new club Barcelona after his ban for biting an opponent expired in October and the Uruguay striker is determined to avoid the same fate when the new season starts next month.

Suarez joined the Catalan club from Liverpool last July but was unable to play the first three months of the campaign after he was sanctioned for sinking his teeth into Italy defender Giorgio Chiellini's shoulder at the World Cup.

After a slow start following his Barca debut in the La Liga 'Clasico' against Real Madrid, he started to come into top form around the turn of the year and was a key performer alongside strike partners Lionel Messi and Neymar as Barca romped to a treble of Champions League and Spanish league and Cup titles.

"For the first few matches I was lacking rhythm," Suarez told reporters after a training session on Barca's pre-season tour of the United States.

"That's what pre-seasons are for, to work and try to contribute from the start," added the 28-year-old. "This year, start-



Barcelona's soccer players Luis Suarez points during a training session at Joan Gamper training camp, near Barcelona, Spain on 15 July, 2015. —REUTERS

ing at the same pace as my team mates, it will be different."

Barca play their first match in the International Champions Cup friendly competition later on Tuesday against MLS side Los Angeles Galaxy.

The match in Pasadena will be a chance for Suarez to catch up with former Liverpool team mate and close friend Steven Gerrard, who left the English club after 17 years at the end of last term to join LA Galaxy.

Gerrard praised Suarez in an

interview published on Barca's website (www.fcbarcelona.es) on Tuesday. "I don't think anyone ever looks forward to playing against Luis Suarez, he is a fantastic talent and a very dangerous player," Gerrard said.

"He is a fantastic team mate, probably the best player I have played with," he added.

"He's a good guy, a family man away from the pitch, we keep in touch and have supported each other throughout our careers."

Reuters