

Utmost efforts to be made for providing emergency aid: President U Thein Sein

President U Thein Sein promised that the government would make utmost efforts to provide aid to flood victims across the country during his visit Friday to ...

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Houses destroyed in landslides in Haka.
PHOTO: PANSY MAWI'S FACEBOOK



Landslides occurred on the Haka-Gangaw Road.
PHOTO: MANG HA NAUNG'S FACEBOOK

LANDSLIDES HIT CHIN STATE

By Aye Min Soe

YANGON, 1 Aug — Landslides triggered by torrential rain continued to cause severe damage Saturday in western Myanmar's Chin State, leaving major roads and more than 60 homes destroyed in the capital Haka, which has been

left cut off from surrounding areas.

President U Thein Sein said Saturday that the government would expedite efforts to clear roads and send emergency goods to the Chin State.

The city was left facing food shortages after a landslide Friday severed the Haka-Gangaw Road, a

vital route for supplies into the city.

There have been no casualties reported in the city so far, according to a resident.

Haka has experienced landslides from 24 June, according to a volunteer helping with evacuation efforts.

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3-way talks aim to cut overtime costs

By Aye Min Soe

YANGON, 1 Aug — Representatives from the government, employers and workers will meet to discuss reducing overtime costs in an attempt to break a deadlock

over the proposed minimum wage, according to the labour ministry.

After the tripartite meeting on or around 11 August in Yangon, the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security

will put forward the issue as a special proposal to the parliament for legal amendment, deputy minister Daw Win Maw Tun said Friday at a meeting with employers.

(See page 2)

MRF pledges support to farmers

By Ye Myint

YANGON, 1 Aug — The Myanmar Rice Federation will help flood-hit farmers rehabilitate damaged farmlands, MRF Vice President Dr Soe Tun

said Saturday.

"We will do all we can for affected farmer to restore their flooded farmlands," said the MRF vice president.

(See page 9)

Commander-in-Chief Senior General Min Aung Hlaing presents relief aids to flood victims in Sittway

NAY PYI TAW, 1 Aug — Commander-in-Chief of Defence Service Senior General Min Aung Hlaing met with flood victims in Sittway on 1 August, providing them with relief aids.

The Commander-in-Chief arrived Sittway from Gaya, India, where he visited Officer Train-

ing Academy of the India army.

During the meeting with 400 flood victims from Sittway, he comforted them and presented relief aids including clothes, food and cash donated by the Tatmadaw and the people.

The Tatmadaw has planned to ship rubber

boats and further relief aids to Sittway.

Two helicopters of the Tatmadaw will be used to carry out evacuation and transportation in Sittway.

The Tatmadaw will also send its mobile medical teams to Sittway to give health care services to the victims.

Myawady

MNA to transport relief goods for flood victims free of charge



YANGON, 1 Aug—Myanmar National Airlines commenced daily flights Saturday connecting Yangon, Mandalay and Kalay to enable the movement of people and goods while roads and railways are cut off by flooding.

MNA is operating daily direct flights from Yangon to Mandalay and from

Mandalay to Kalay, as well as direct flights from Yangon to Kalay on Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

MNA will also operate additional flights upon the request, the airline said.

The airline will carry relief supplies and other donations free of charge for flood victims in Kalay and its surrounding

areas, it said.

Donors may contact Yangon Airport manager Ko Aung Kyaw Soe on 095076910, airport supervisor Ko Htay Lwin on 09458041082, Mandalay Airport manager Ko Aung Min Swe on 092022989 and office: 02-366221~2.

GNLM

3-way talks aim to cut overtime...

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Factory bosses, mostly from the garment industry, have demanded a reduction of the current overtime wage, from double to 1.5 times of the base wage.

"I will try for it, but I can't guarantee it will be completely settled in the time of current parliament because it is very difficult to amend a law," Daw Win Maw Tun said at the meeting.

The parliament's five-year term is drawing to an end ahead of the 8 November general election.

The previous meeting between the Yangon Region Minimum Wage Committee and factory bosses from some industrial zones was somewhat positive, a committee official told *The Global New Light of Myanmar*.

However, while the proposed minimum wage

of K3,600 (US \$3.17) for an eight-hour day may be appropriate for factories with foreign direct investment, local garment makers will have to reduce their labour forces to meet the requirement, a local factory boss said.

The proposed minimum should be implemented on a test basis, with an option to amend it within two years, Yangon Region Labour Minister U Zaw Aye Maung said.

The government is expected to announce the approved minimum wage at the end of August.

Employers have suggested the government bear some of the burden through means such as construction of housing quarters and provision of ferry services for workers.

The committee is currently holding a series of meetings with employers and workers, mostly from

the garment industry, who objected to the minimum wage proposal.

The government's minimum wage body received more than 330 objections from factory owners, mostly from garment industry, and workers in Yangon after the committee issued a notification on the minimum wage proposal on 29 June.

Dozens of major global brands including Adidas, Tesco, H&M, Gap Inc and Marks & Spencer have backed the proposed minimum wage, calling for guaranteed pay rates as a means of promoting investment and lifting living standards.

In mid-July, two separate bodies representing the international retail heavyweights lauded the government for undertaking a transparent mechanism for setting the minimum wage in line with International Labour Organization conventions.

GNLM

Thai-based migrant workers set to receive citizen IDs

By Ko Moe

YANGON, 1 Aug — Myanmar will issue national citizenship scrutiny cards to eligible migrant workers in Thailand, permanent secretary of the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security said Saturday.

U Myo Aung said the project is expected to last three months, starting early August.

"It's a totally free service," he said. "Complaints can be made about the collection of fees."

Statistics collected in May showed the population of Myanmar citizens with temporary Thai residency permits to be over 450,000, but analysts estimated the number at over 3 million.

Migrant workers with complete doc-



Director-General U Myo Aung

uments would receive passports and those without would be issued certificates of identity.

The project will be undertaken by five regional supervisory teams and 21 data-collection teams, whose members can speak Thai, Myanmar and ethnic dialects.

GNLM



UNICEF Myanmar is urging political parties to put children at the forefront of their policies, saying more than a quarter of people recently polled rated national development as their major concern for the upcoming general election.—PHOTO: PROVIDED BY UNICEF MYANMAR

UNICEF urges parties to make child-focused policy platforms

By Ye Myint

YANGON, 1 Aug — UNICEF Myanmar urged all of the country's political parties Saturday to put children at the centre of their policy platforms for the 8 November general election.

"Children do not vote but their families do," said Bertrand Bainvel, UNICEF's Chief Representative to Myanmar, calling on parties contesting the election to make new commitments for children.

Mr Bainvel said a "6 per-

cent increase in the share of the government's budget—from 9 percent to 15 percent—dedicated to education, health and social welfare" would improve the prospects of "millions of Myanmar children."

"I would like to urge parties to prioritize the critically important first 1,000 days in the life of a child, to achieve universal free and compulsory education by 2020, to expand social welfare and social interventions and to build a social protection system for children," he said.

Referring to 2014 census data, UNICEF Myanmar said children were overrepresented in the poorest section of the population, with 4.4 million children aged 5 to 18 out of school and 10 million living in poverty.

UNICEF and the NGO Child Rights Working Group (NCRWG) are working together to secure commitments from political parties to increase social spending for children should they get elected, and to provide an opportunity for them to raise their concerns with candidates. — GNLM

Utmost efforts to be made for providing emergency aid: President U Thein Sein

KALAY, 1 Aug — President U Thein Sein promised that the government would make utmost efforts to provide aid to flood victims across the country during his visit Friday to flood-hit Kalay, Sagaing Region.

He also stressed the need for cooperation between local people, non-governmental organizations and governmental departments in providing relief to the flood victims in Kalay District.

During his visit to the flood victims sheltering at schools in Kalay, the president said the government would mill more than 130,000 tons of rice stored by the Tatmadaw and provide it to the flood victims.

The president presented clothes, foods, drinking water bottles and medicines to more than 8,100 flood victims sheltering at the five schools in Kalay.

GNLM

President U Thein Sein cordially meets flood victims at relief camp opened at Kalay Basic Education High School No 3.—IPRD



Vice President Dr Sai Mauk Kham visits hospitals in PyinOoLwin, Sagaing



Vice President Dr Sai Mauk Kham meets patients at maternity ward of PyinOoLwin People's Hospital.—IPRD

NAY PYI TAW, 1 Aug — Vice President Dr Sai Mauk Kham visited hospitals in Mandalay and Sagaing Region on Saturday to discuss improvements to

healthcare services.

In his inspection of a 300-bed hospital in PyinOoLwin in Mandalay, the Vice President stressed the need to draw a master plan for the future devel-

opment of the hospital.

On his arrival at a 200-bed hospital in Sagaing city, Sagaing Region, the Vice President spoke with medical staff.

MNA

Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker encourages flood victims in Amarapura Tsp

YANGON, 1 Aug—Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann on Saturday visited Amarapura Township in Mandalay Region, where he met local people to discuss

regional development programmes.

The speaker also gave encouragement to families who were affected by the flooding of the Ayeyawady River in Shwek-

kyat village.

Prevention of flood, rescue programme and providing supplies to victims were the main topic of discussion at the meeting.—MNA



Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann meets local residents in Amarapura Township.—MNA

Relief supplies, foods donated to flood victims, Myittha, Chindwin rivers exceed danger levels

MINBU, 1 Aug — Overflow of Mann and Mone creeks in Minbu District, Magway Region, caused flash flooding in Minbu, Pwintbyu and Sedoktara townships as of 29 July.

Flood victims from Letpantaw and Layeindan

villages in Minbu Township were evacuated to safe places by Mottama-6 Z-craft of Mann oil field on 31 July.

Magway Region Chief Minister U Phone Maw Shwe and officials supervised rescue and relief works after visiting Minbu, Pwint-

byu, Sedoktara, Salin and Yenangyoung townships on Saturday.

Well-wishers from Magway and Minbu donated relief supplies and foods to flood victims while officials rushed patients to Magway People's Hospital and the

teaching hospital of Magway Medical University.

Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement provided relief items to more than 1,400 flood victims in Pwintbyu and foods, clothes and purified drinking water to the victims in Kalay.

Water level in Myittha river exceeds 1041cm more than 1000cm of danger level in Kalay. Yazagyo Dam still drains out surplus water from spillway on Saturday. Chindwin River also exceeds 85cm more than 1000cm of danger lev-

el in Monywa. That is why flood prevention measures are being taken. One person was dead in Maungtaw Township, Rakhine State, in the event of cyclonic storm that also destroyed schools, houses and power lines.

District IPRD/MNA

Air Force takes relief aid to flood victims in Rakhine State



NAY PYI TAW, 1 Aug—The Air Force transported clothing, towels and soap from Nay Pyi Taw airport to flood-affected Rakhine State on Friday in an emergency relief operation.

More than K5,954,000 worth of supplies were transported in the airlift organized by the Department of Relief and Resettlement under the guidance of the National Disaster Preparedness Central Committee.

The department also sent K24,195,000 worth of tarpaulins, clothes and family kits in an airlift from Mingaladon International Airport.—MNA



Volunteers move flood victims, cattle to relief camps in NyaungU Tsp, Mandalay Region

NYAUNGU, 1 Aug—Under the supervision of township authorities, 100 police, firefighters and local residents rescued flood victims Friday from Hselan village in NyaungU Township with the use of six motorboats and two vehicles.

The flood victims are being accommodated at relief camps opened at four monasteries in the village. A total of 185 people and 63 cows are staying at the relief camp at Shwekyang monastery, 574 people and 212 cows at Kanma monastery, 102 people and 23 cows at Myathida monastery, and 128 people and 35 cows at Myodaunt monastery.



Volunteers and residents also helped 94 flood victims, along with 827

cows and 26 sheep, evacuate to a relief camp in Pakkukyun village.

Zalun Tsp upgrades basic education high school



ZALUN, 1 Aug — A recent ceremony marked the upgrading of the basic education high school at Yaypaukyi village in Ayeyawady Region's Zalun Township.

Township administrator U Tun Hsan Win, Assistant Education Officer U Soe Soe Tun and Headmistress Daw Kyin Win formally unveiled the new BEHS.

Ayeyawady Region Minister for Planning and Economy U Hla Khaing praised education officials and local residents for their efforts in upgrading the school.

Ngwe Than (Zalun IPRD)

Trucks connect Kawlin, Kanbalu stations during train suspension

KAWLIN, 1 Aug—Trains on the Kawlin-Myitkyina railway section resumed service prior to the weekend following their suspension due to erosion caused by torrential rain.

Service remains suspended on the Kaw-

lin-Kanbalu section, with local authorities arranging transportation of passengers between Kawlin and Kanbalu stations with the use of five trucks. The fare is K1,000 per passenger.

Myint Tun Min (Kawlin)



REGIONAL

Original audio of Emperor Showa's surrender speech made public

TOKYO, 1 Aug — The Imperial Household Agency on Saturday made available to the public for the first time the original audio from the vinyl master records of Emperor Hirohito's speech announcing Japan's surrender in World War II to the Allied Forces.

The agency decided to release the original sound of the speech by the emperor, posthumously known as Emperor Showa, broadcast by radio on Aug. 15, 1945, as this year commemorates the 70th anniversary of the end of the war.

The surrender speech by the emperor, known as gyokuon hoso in Japanese, had been available only through the replicated audio until now.

The agency said it has found that the speech in the original audio is roughly 10 seconds shorter than the four minute, 40 second speech in the copied one as it believes it highly likely that it was recorded at a slower rotation speed by mistake.

A total of five vinyl master records of the emperor's speech have been kept as part of the imperial family's collection. The agency succeeded in digitally re-recording the whole speech in December.

The agency also re-

leased photos and films of a bomb shelter at the Imperial Palace. The shelter was the venue of a government meeting on Aug. 14, 1945, at which the emperor officially decided to surrender after the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. "We judged it is of great significance to make the major symbolic items related to the end of the war widely known to the public at the timing of the 70th anniversary," the agency said.

In the speech, the emperor announced to the Japanese people the nation's acceptance of the Potsdam Declaration, in which the United States, Britain and China — and later the Soviet Union — demanded Japan's unconditional surrender.

After being recorded on Aug. 14 at a building of the agency's predecessor, the emperor's announcement was broadcast at noon the following day. Some Japanese soldiers tried to steal the records and stop the airing in a coup attempt.

The broadcast was the first opportunity for most Japanese to hear the voice of the Japanese emperor. But it was hard for some people to understand because the emperor used classical language in part of the speech.—*Kyodo News*



People set water pumps to irrigate their field from Lake Merdada during dry season in Banjarnegara, Indonesia, July 31, 2015. The Meteorology, Climatology and Geophysics Agency (BMKG) predicted on Thursday that the intensity of El Nino could strengthen in the next four months and is likely to give rise to a prolonged dry season. —XINHUA

ASEAN wants talks on S China Sea code of conduct speeded up

KUALA LUMPUR, 1 Aug — Southeast Asian foreign ministers lament the slow pace of negotiations for a "code of conduct" to manage disputes in the contentious South China Sea, according to a draft communique set to be adopted by the ministers next week during their annual meeting.

The South China Sea issue is expected to take center stage again when the ministers from the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations meet Tuesday in Kuala Lumpur.

It marks the start of a series of annual meetings culminating with the ASEAN Regional Forum on Thursday next week, one of the biggest security forums

in the Asia-Pacific, with participants including the United States, China, Japan, South Korea and the European Union among others.

In the draft Joint Communique seen by Kyodo News, the ASEAN ministers voiced their concern over "recent developments" in the South China Sea which they said could "undermine peace, security and stability" in the area.

"We agreed that there is an imperative need to urgently address the erosion of trust and corrosion of confidence amongst parties on these matters," they said.

"Whilst acknowledging the progress of the consultations to establish the Code of Conduct in the

South China Sea, we are concerned with the pace of consultations. In this regard, we urged our senior officials to intensify their efforts towards the expeditious establishment of an effective COC," they added. ASEAN and China have been negotiating the code of conduct among claimants — which besides China include the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia and Brunei — since 2013.

The envisaged code would be a legally binding document used to resolve deadlocks, disputes and tensions that may arise from time to time, as opposed to the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea that ASEAN and China signed in 2002 but is merely a set of nonbinding principles.

Speaking at a press conference ahead of the ASEAN foreign ministers' meeting that he will be hosting, Malaysian Foreign Minister Anifah Aman said progress was made at a recent meeting between officials from ASEAN and China on the code of conduct.

"ASEAN and China have agreed to proceed towards the next stage of negotiations towards the establishment of the code of conduct and agreed to negotiate the framework, structure, elements as well as to address difficult and complicated issues related to the COC. This is important progress with regards to the COC," he said.

In recent months, China's rapid land reclamation activities in one of the reefs in the Spratly Islands have

rattled other claimants and pit the Asian giant against the United States as the latter joined in the chorus demanding China to halt its reclamation work.

While Washington has said it would not take sides, it has pledged to "protect" safe navigation in one of the world's busiest shipping lanes and it has rankled China with its military patrols and drills in the disputed waters.

The current row between the United States and China over the South China Sea will undoubtedly spill over at the ASEAN Regional Forum.

Foreign ministers from the 27 member countries in the forum will call on "all parties concerned to work constructively" and "refrain from taking unilateral action that would destabilize peace and stability" in the disputed sea, according to a draft statement seen by Kyodo News that the ministers are expected to issue at the end of their meeting.

Anifah said there were proposals that all parties should exercise "self-restraint" and impose "reciprocal freezing of all provocative activities."

"It is imperative that all parties handle their differences peacefully and constructively. At the end of the day, what we want is a lasting peace, stability and security in the South China Sea," he said.

ASEAN groups Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

Kyodo News

Malaysia's PM Najib says Qatar, China interested in 1MDB assets

KUALA LUMPUR, 1 Aug — Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak said Qatar and China have expressed an interest in the assets of debt-laden state fund 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB), state news agency Bernama reported on Saturday.

1MDB, the centre of several investigations over graft and its management of funds, is seeking to offload assets parked under its power unit Edra Global Energy Bhd, and sell developmental rights in its high-profile property projects.

Najib said Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani had indicated that the Qatar Investment Authority was keen to view 1MDB assets and purchase land in its Bandar Malaysia project.

The two leaders met in Malaysia on Friday.

He also said China's Ambassador to Malaysia had expressed his country's interest.

The fund, whose advisory board is chaired by Najib, is looking to pare down \$11 billion of debt. It has 14 power assets which could be worth up to 18 billion ringgit (\$4.73 billion), sources told Reuters in June.

Najib said the government has a plan to reduce 1MDB's debt, but needs six months.

"We have a programme to reduce the debts of 1MDB, and the programme is viable. We have to give it time. I would say we need about six months," he was quoted as saying at an event on Saturday.

Tenaga, Malaysia's na-

tional power firm, said last month that it had submitted an indicative non-binding proposal to acquire the five domestic and eight international power assets of 1MDB's power firm Edra Global.

Malaysian police raided 1MDB's office in July, following a report that claimed

investigators looking into the firm found nearly \$700 million had been transferred to the prime minister's bank account.

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



Traffic passes a 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB) billboard at the Tun Razak Exchange development in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, July 6, 2015.—REUTERS

Pacific Rim free trade talks fall short of deal

LAHAINA, (Hawaii), 1 Aug — Pacific Rim trade ministers failed to clinch a deal on Friday to free up trade between a dozen nations after a dispute flared up over auto trade between Japan and North America, New Zealand dug in over dairy trade and no agreement was reached on monopoly periods for next-generation drugs.

Trade ministers from the 12 nations negotiating the Trans-Pacific Partnership, which would stretch from Japan to Chile and cover 40 percent of the world economy, fell just short of a deal at talks on the Hawaiian island of Maui but were confident an agreement was within reach.

"The undergrowth has been cleared away in the course of this meeting in a manner that I would say is streets ahead of any of the other ministerial meetings that we have had," New Zealand Trade Minister



The twelve Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) Ministers hold a press conference to discuss progress in the negotiations in Lahaina, Maui, Hawaii July 31, 2015.—REUTERS

Tim Groser said. "You can see clearly that there are one or two really hard issues, and one of them is dairy."

Australian Trade Minister Andrew Robb said the problem lay with the "big four" economies of the United States, Canada, Japan and Mexico. "The sad thing is, 98 percent is concluded," he said.

Failure to seal the agreement is a setback for U.S. President Barack Obama, given the trade pact's

stance as the economic arm of the administration's pivot to Asia and an opportunity to balance out China's influence in the region.

The talks, which drew about 650 negotiators, 150 journalists and hundreds of stakeholders, had been billed as the last chance to get a deal in time to pass the U.S. Congress this year, before 2016 presidential elections muddy the waters.

The TPP seeks to meld bilateral questions of market

access for exports with one-size-fits-all standards on issues ranging from workers' rights to environmental protection and dispute settlement between governments and foreign investors.

The result frustrated negotiators who had toiled through the night to cross off outstanding disputes. U.S. Trade Representative Michael Froman said resolved issues included protection for regional food specialties.—Reuters

Hillary, Bill Clinton report total income of \$140 million since 2007

WASHINGTON, 1 Aug — Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton and her husband, former President Bill Clinton, on Friday reported income approaching \$140 million over the last eight years, providing evidence of the vast wealth they have accumulated.

Their tax records showed that in 2013, the Clinton duo delivered six-figure speeches that reaped nearly \$23 million.

Clinton, the front-runner in the race for the Democratic presidential nomination in 2016, released her family's tax returns from 2007 to 2014.

The Clinton camp said the release was in keeping with a commitment for transparency.

Hillary Clinton is struggling to overcome questions about her honesty that have arisen from a controversy over her use of a private email server for

official business as secretary of state from 2009 to 2013.

A Quinnipiac University poll this week said 57 percent of voters see Clinton as not honest and trustworthy.

The Clintons' adjusted gross income over the period was just shy of \$140 million. With deductions factored in, their taxable income was about \$111 million.

She said they paid \$43.9 million in federal taxes and made almost \$15 million in charitable contributions over the period.

All but about \$200,000 of the money they gave as charity was distributed through the Clinton Family Foundation, which is distinct from the better-known Bill, Hillary & Chelsea Clinton Foundation. The family foundation provides charitable donations to a host of organizations.

Reuters

WikiLeaks says U.S. spied on Japanese gov't, companies

TOKYO, 1 Aug — The WikiLeaks website published documents Friday showing the U.S. National Security Agency spied on the Japanese government and Japanese companies.

WikiLeaks posted NSA reports and list of 35 Japanese targets for telephone intercepts including the Japanese Cabinet Office, the Bank of Japan, the country's finance and trade ministries, and major Japanese trading companies.

"If this is true, it is extremely regrettable. We need to lodge a protest," a Japanese government source said. "But first we must verify it."

The eavesdropping dated back at least to the time of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's first government launched in 2006, and targeted internal Japa-

nese discussions on international trade and climate change policy, according to WikiLeaks.

WikiLeaks has also released similar reports about the United States spying on Germany, France and Brazil, which have strained diplomatic relations with those countries.

According to a report the NSA compiled in 2007, prior to Abe's visit to the United States in April that year, Japan's Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry planned to have Japan and the United States issue a simple joint message regarding climate change. But the report said the Foreign Ministry wanted Abe to mention "Japan's goal of reducing carbon emissions by half by 2050" at the bilateral summit.

Kyodo News

U.N. nuclear watchdog chief to meet U.S. senators next week

VIENNA, 1 Aug — The U.N. nuclear watchdog chief will meet with the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations on Wednesday in Washington to discuss his agency's monitoring role in Iran following Tehran's deal with world powers on curbing its atomic activity.

Some members of the U.S. Congress, which is considering whether to approve the deal, have asked that more information be made public relating to the International Atomic Energy Agency's part in verifying Iran's implementation of the pact.

The International Atomic Energy Agency said in a statement on Friday that Director General Yukiya Amano "will discuss the IAEA's role in verifying and monitoring nuclear-related measures under the Joint

Comprehensive Plan of Action," which was agreed by Iran, the United States, Britain, France, Germany, Russia, China and the European Union in Vienna earlier this month.

Amano has the delicate task of assessing Iran's past and future nuclear program. He has no political mandate and never tires of stressing the IAEA's technical role.

He must nonetheless manage and maintain a fine balance between delivering data on Iran's nuclear activities and the major political consequences such information can have.

If Iran were to break promises it made in the historic July 14 deal reached with six world powers, Amano and his inspectors would be responsible for detecting and telling the world about the breach.

The IAEA said it is



International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Director General Yukiya Amano

normal practice for it not to publish safeguards arrangements with countries and that Iran is no exception, adding that the arrangement it reached with Iran on July 14 meets its requirements to clarify outstanding issues.

The U.S. Congress has until Sept. 17 to accept or reject the agreement. American Republicans have objected to the deal as not tough enough to prevent Iran obtaining a nuclear weapon in the long run.

At an emotional Senate hearing this week, U.S.

Secretary of State John Kerry warned that rejecting the deal would remove all limits on Iran's nuclear work, give it a fast track to a weapon and access to billions of dollars from collapsed sanctions.

Under the July 14 pact, world powers agreed to lift sanctions in return for curbs on a nuclear program the West suspects was aimed at developing the means to build an atomic bomb. Tehran says it seeks only peaceful atomic energy.

Reuters

Cameron draws up plan to help tackle Calais migrant crisis

LONDON, 1 Aug — Prime Minister David Cameron drew up plans to help France tackle a spike in attempts by migrants to enter Britain illegally via the Channel Tunnel, but warned there was no quick fix.

Cameron is under pressure to deter the mi-

grants, many of whom have travelled from Africa and the Middle East, after disruption to cross-Channel passenger and freight traffic.

He drafted the plans at a meeting on Friday of the government's emergency response committee 'Cobra' after some politicians called for the army to reinforce bor-

der controls. "We're going to take action right across the board. Starting with helping the French on their side of the border, we're going to put in more fencing, more resources, more sniffer dog teams, more assistance in any way we can," Cameron said afterwards.

"This is going to be a

difficult issue right across the summer." Cameron, who will speak to French President Francois Hollande later on Friday, also said government land would be used to ease disruption caused by queuing lorries on the British side of the Channel.

Re-elected in May, Cameron has promised to

cut net annual migration to Britain to the tens of thousands, a pledge he failed to keep during his 2010-15 term in office when it hit a near record high of over 300,000 people.

The issue is a sensitive one as it plays into Britain's debate about Europe ahead of an EU membership ref-

erendum. Cameron has promised by the end of 2017. Migrants have long gathered in Calais to try to get into Britain. But Euro-tunnel, the firm that runs freight and passenger shuttles via the Channel Tunnel, says numbers have swelled to around 5,000 people from about 600 and that it is struggling to cope.

Reuters

WORLD

Plane debris arrives in France for Malaysia crash investigation

PARIS / KUALA LUMPUR, 1 Aug — Aeroplane debris that washed up on the Indian Ocean island of Reunion and may belong to the vanished Malaysia Airlines Boeing 777 arrived in France on Saturday for investigators to study its origin.

According to a Reuters witness and Agence France Presse, an Air France flight carrying the debris landed at Orly airport near Paris at 0417 GMT. It will be delivered to a military unit near the southwest city of Toulouse which specialises in analysing aviation wreckage. Experts hope the barnacled 2-2.5 metres (6.5-8 feet) long wing surface known as a flaperon and a fragment of luggage could yield clues as to the fate of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH370, which

vanished without trace in March 2014. There were 239 passengers and crew on board, and some families of the victims are demanding further compensation from the airline.

Malaysian Transport Minister Liow Tiong Lai told Reuters in Kuala Lumpur on Saturday that additional Malaysian officials were headed to Reunion to look for more debris and others would go to France.

"If the flaperon does belong to MH370 it is actually in accordance with the drift pattern seen in the Southern Indian Ocean. But we do not want to speculate. We will wait for verification from the French authorities," he said.

Discovery of the debris may finally confirm the plane crashed into the sea af-

ter veering off course from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing, helping to end 16 months of lingering uncertainty for relatives.

Investigators believe someone deliberately switched off MH370's transponder before diverting it thousands of miles off course. Most of the passengers were Chinese.

The debris will be analysed at a lab staffed by 600 experts that is operated by the defence ministry near Toulouse.

If the serial number on the flaperon confirms that it is from Flight 370 then the laboratory can use sophisticated tools to try to glean more information about the causes of the crash, such as whether its shape corresponds more to a mid-air explosion or a crash into the ocean.

The defence ministry also contributed to the investigation of Air France flight 447 from Rio de Janeiro to Paris that killed 228 people in June 2009.

A fragment of luggage that was also found in the area is being flown into France with the aircraft debris and will be sent to a unit outside Paris that specialises in DNA tests.—Reuters



A view shows the Direction generale de l'armement (DGA) offices, where the France's BEA crash investigation agency will verify the plane debris found on Reunion Island, in Balma near Toulouse, France, July 30, 2015.—Reuters

Mexican judge suspends U.S. extradition order for fugitive 'Chapo' Guzman

MEXICO CITY, 1 Aug — A Mexican judge temporarily suspended a U.S. extradition order on Friday for the fugitive drug lord Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman even though the federal attorney general's office had approved it a day earlier.

No reason was given for the suspension.

Guzman, one of the world's most notorious drug traffickers, broke out of a maximum security prison earlier this month, escaping in a tunnel built right under his cell.

The United States requested Guzman's extradition on June 25, just a couple weeks before his escape, but Mexican officials said in January that Guzman would not be handed over because he must first serve time in his home country.

Guzman is wanted by U.S. authorities for a variety of criminal charges including cocaine smuggling and money laundering, and the failure to extradite him has been heavily criticized by the government's critics since the jail break.

This month's dramatic prison break was Guzman's second since a previous 2001 escape. After eluding capture for 13 years, Guzman was arrested in his native Sinaloa state in February 2014.

Lawyers working on behalf of Guzman had already sought to nullify the extradition order, which could only be executed if Guzman is recaptured.

A ruling on the request by Guzman's lawyers is set for Aug. 26.—Reuters



The U.S. Marine Corps version of Lockheed Martin's F35 Joint Strike Fighter, F-35B test aircraft BF-2 flies with external weapons for the first time over the Atlantic test range at Patuxent River Naval Air Systems Command in Maryland in a February 22, 2012 file photo.—Reuters

U.S. Marines declare initial F-35 squadron ready for combat

WASHINGTON, 1 Aug — U.S. Marine Corps Commandant General Joseph Dunford has declared an initial squadron of 10 Lockheed Martin Corp F-35B fighter jets ready for combat, marking a key milestone for the Pentagon's biggest weapons program, the Pentagon said on Friday.

The decision makes the Marines the first U.S. military service to declare an "initial operational capability" for the stealth supersonic F-35 fighter under the \$391 billion arms program that first kicked off in 2001.

Lockheed is developing three models of the jet, also known as the Joint Strike Fighter, or Lightning II.

Early technical challenges delayed the Marines' move by three years from its original target. But U.S. officials say the F-35 program has been meeting its schedule and lowering costs for the past five years.

The Marine Corps' F-35B model can take off from warships and aircraft carriers and land like a helicopter. The Marines plan to buy 420 F-35B-model and C-model jets in total.

"The F-35B's ability to conduct operations from expeditionary airstrips or sea-based carriers provides our nation with its first fifth-generation strike fighter, which will transform the way we fight and win," Dunford, who was confirmed by the Senate this week to become the next chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said in a statement.

Deputy Commandant for Aviation Lieutenant General Jon Davis said the squadron met all the requirements for the declaration during a recent operational readiness review. But he called for

vigilance to ensure sufficient training and spare parts were available for sustained combat operations.

Davis said he also hoped to boost the new planes' readiness rate beyond the current fleet rate of 70 to 75 percent.

The Marine Corps plans to send the first squadron of F-35B jets to Iwakuni, Japan, in January 2017, but Friday's declaration means they could respond to a crisis anywhere in the world.

Defense Undersecretary Frank Kendall and other officials underscored the need to continue driving down the price of the new jets, and wrap up work on new software needed to equip them with more weapons and sensors.

Each F-35B included in the last production lot negotiated by the Pentagon with Lockheed and engine maker Pratt & Whitney, a unit of United Technologies Corp, cost \$134 million. The A- and C-models cost \$108 million and \$129 million, respectively.

Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman John McCain called the Marine Corps move an "important milestone," but underscored his concerns about the capability and reliability of the jets.

"The Joint Strike Fighter is the most expensive weapons system in history, and we must learn the lessons of past failures to ensure American aviators can safely and effectively perform their missions, and that taxpayer dollars are spent efficiently," he said in a statement.

Davis told reporters the jets did well during the recent review, both in targeting and "killing" enemy aircraft and providing close air support for troops on the ground.

Reuters

Japan, U.S., S. Korea eye N. Korea to follow Iran's lead in nuclear deal

TOKYO, 1 Aug — A special U.S. envoy for the long-stalled six-party talks on North Korea's denuclearization said Friday he and his Japanese and South Korean counterparts agreed to find a way to resolve the issue by drawing on the experience of a recent landmark nuclear deal between Iran and world powers.

Sydney Seiler told reporters after their meeting

that they discussed the importance of "bringing North Korea back to authentic and credible negotiations" and "the need for DPRK to make the same decision that the leadership in Tehran did."

DPRK is the acronym for North Korea's official name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The six-party talks involving the two Koreas, Japan,

China, South Korea and Russia are aimed at ending North Korea's nuclear ambitions, but the talks have been deadlocked since late 2008.

The meeting at the Japanese Foreign Ministry in Tokyo came after an Iranian nuclear deal was reached this month between Tehran and six major powers including the United States. The accord

prevents Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons in exchange for the lifting of sanctions that could be re-imposed if the agreement is breached.

Seiler said that the door for dialogue "remains open" to North Korea, and the accord on Iran is a reminder of the positive outcome "when the leadership makes the right decision" on denuclearization.

Seiler said he agreed with his counterparts that their countries and other parties to the six-nation framework will continue their close cooperation in dealing with North Korean issues.

"We also talked about...how we could work closely with other parties such as China and Russia, whose close coordination and cooperation would be

so crucial to resolution of this issue moving forward," Seiler said.

China is host to the six-party dialogue.

Their meeting took place amid speculation of North Korea conducting a major missile test in October. The special U.S. envoy stopped short of commenting on whether he sees any possibility of such a missile launch.—Kyodo News

PERSPECTIVES

Sunday, 2 August, 2015

Desperate times call for decisive action

By Kyaw Thura

Myanmar is currently undergoing unprecedented flooding, with incessant rains putting a quarter of the nation under water.

Despite earlier calls by a weather expert and some environmentalists, it was not until late Friday that the government declared a state of

emergency in four heavily-inundated areas.

Days of catastrophic flooding have caused loss of life and property destruction in Chin State, Sagaing Region, Magway Region and Rakhine State to the extent that it would take significant time for these areas to return to normal.

It is beyond doubt that heavy rain has made the country's major rivers swell above their danger levels, prompting a few dams to vomit extra water out of their spillways.

Weather expert U Tun Lwin, a former director-general at the Meteorology and Hydrology Department, quoted a NASA forecast dated 1 August in warning of possible landslides in southern Chin State and northern Rakhine State.

The best that can be said is that the government has now stepped forward to the rescue ef-

forts, though late, using military aircraft and personnel braving bad weather to overcome difficult accessibility to affected areas.

Acting on their own initiative, many social and philanthropic organizations have been on the scene since soon after the disasters. Lending a helping hand to the desperate plight of victims in disasters is our duty as fellow humans.

Write for us

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

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

Shwedagon Pagoda Great Wonder

Htun Tin Htun

(Continued from 1-8-2015)

Over 2558 years of its establishment, the Shwedagon Pagoda had suffered from several natural disasters. In 1768, the earthquake struck and the body part of the bell shape body was totally destroyed. So, King Ahlaung Phayar, the Innwa King, son of U Aung Zeya and the Sinphyushin King renovated, repaired and rebuilt it. And the umbrella, the new Htidaw was hoisted and the height was extended to 326 ft., which can be seen to date. Moreover on the pagoda at northeast point, a pagoda with the height of about 150 feet was first established with small zedis, encircling bud-like ornament above the vane of Shwedagon Pagoda.

Development and improvement work of Shwedagon Pagoda has been continuing from time to time since its establishment 2558 years ago. The Shwedagon's several points relating to the present day are also seen in the 1485 AD Shwedagon inscription of King Dhammaceti. These include the renovation of zedi, the propagation of the Sāsana, and the sustenance of the Sangha. The inscription also refers to the Mon heritage of Suwannabhummi. "With a break in the tradition of those knowing that the sacred hairs of the Lord Buddha were enshrined in the Shwedagon, men no longer worshipped there and the pagoda became overgrown with trees and shrubs.

Always be alert with vigilance and strive on with diligence to prevent, protect and preserve the Shwedagon Pagoda from dangers and damages. Two hundred and thirty-six years after the Parinibbana (Final Release) of the Lord Buddha (308 BC), the monks Sona and Uttara arrived in Suvvanabhummi (Thaton) to propagate the Religion. When the Re-

ligion was established and an Order of Monks set up, King Srimasoka requested the two Elders thus: 'O Venerable Monks, we have received the Dhamma (Law) and the Sangha (Order). Can you not provide us with the Buddha to worship?' The two Elders then showed the King the Shwedagon Pagoda in which the sacred hairs of the Lord Buddha were enshrined. King Srimasoka cleared the overgrowth and built a pagoda and an enclosing pavilion with a tiered pyramidal roof. From that time onwards the people of the Mon country went to worship there." The Mon lands at that time included the area of present-day Yangon with the earliest recorded reconstruction at the Shwedagon Pagoda being the 1372 AD work of King Banyan Oo of Hanthawaddy. Repairs and renovations have been carried out over the centuries and continue today. In recent years these have included refurbishment of the main four Ar-yan-khan Tazaung mentioned above, as well as other tazaungs and images on the platform. There has also been refurbishment of staircases, and installation of lifts and escalators.

Golden pagodas are seen all over Myanmar, that's why Myanmar is called the land of Golden Pagodas by almost all visitors around the Globe. In the final waxing days of Tagu 1361ME before Thingyan, a new Htidaw was hoisted at the Shwedagon Pagoda. Although the zedi height of 43 feet remains the same, the use of stainless steel for the tiers and supports made the new structure heavier, with a total weight of approximately 5 tons. Of this, over half a ton is gold. An inscription is mounted on the Htidaw itself, with other inscribed donatory plaques placed on the zidi bell below the band. In the period surrounding the raising of new Htidaw, a Jade Image, a Gold Replica or like-

ness of the Shwedagon Pagoda, and a Htidaw zedi were installed on the platform. The pure gold (thant-sin-shwe) likeness of the Shwedagon Pagoda is currently housed in a tazaung on the southeast (Tuesday) corner of the platform.

Real amazing is the Jade Image which is 45 inches high, with a gold weight of 90 pounds and decorated with 242 diamonds, 1895 rubies, 701 jades and 400 sapphires. The image of the Buddha made of jade (Kyauk-sein) was consecrated shortly before the hoisting of the new Htidaw. Carved from a single piece of stone, it is 30 inches high, simply presented with a gold band of 18 ticals (10 oz) decorated with 9 diamonds and 91 rubies. The Jade Image took nine years to carve and weighs 750 kilograms. It was installed in the Chinese Merited Association Tazaung on the southwest (Saturday) corner of the platform. The Jade Image faces east, so that while paying homage, one's back is never to the main stupa. The Htidaw Zedi is the only new zedi to be built on the platform in many years. It is located midway between the east (Monday) and northeast (Sunday) corners of the platform, close to the earlier Htidaw Zedi of King Mindon and the 1775 AD Htidaw of King Sin-Phyu-Shin.

Efforts of the Kings in the past and various Governments to maintain the Great Shwedagon Pagoda have been strenuous and concerted over 2558 years. Here The Shwe Dagon Pagoda: Design and Dimensions: is noteworthy. The height of the pagoda is 326 feet (or 99.4 meters), which includes the *hti* (umbrella, crown) and its highest point, the "diamond bud" (*seinbu*), which is a small sphere encrusted with diamonds and other precious stones. The 7-tiered wrought iron *hti* contributed to the *stupa* by King Mindon in 1871 weighed

1.25 tons and was 33 feet high. It was joined to the brick *stupa* by an iron shaft and was supported by iron struts resting upon a brass capital on top of the "banana bud," which is part of the *stupa*. In 1999, it was replaced by a new stainless steel *hti*, under the sponsorship of the State Peace and Development Council. Although of approximately the same dimensions as Mindon's *hti*, it weighs four times as much, 5 tons, including a quarter ton of gold. (Details can be seen in the article about "The Shwedagon of Four Buddhas' Relics" by Sao Htun Hmat Win, The Light of the Dhamma, Vol II No.2 (3.9.82) Department of Religious Affairs, Sirimangala KabaAye Hill, Rangoon, Burma)

All the designs of the Great Shwedagon Pagoda is unique and may be different from other parts of the world because the designs are based on genuine Myanmar Classical Ancient Architecture. The various levels or bands of the *stupa* have distinct names, starting from bottom to top: the plinth (elevation: 6.5 meters), 2 sets of terraces of square and octagonal shape (highest elevation: 27 meters), 5 round bands (highest elevation: 34 meters), the "bell" (*kyi-gwe*) which is decorated with floral motifs (highest elevation: 47 meters), the "twisted turban" mouldings (highest elevation: 61 meters), the "lotus" (highest elevation: 70 meters) and the "banana bud" (highest elevation, 86 meters). Both at its base and higher levels, the *stupa* is solid. It is covered by gold leaf and, on higher elevations, gold plates. Every four or five years, the gold covering the exterior of the pagoda is repaired and renewed. The

plinth lies 21 feet (6.5 meters) above the platform of the pagoda, which is roughly rectangular in shape and 14.0 acres (5.6 hectares) in area. Major structures on the platform include the four *tazaungs* or devotional halls at the cardinal points of the compass containing images of the four Buddhas whose relics are stored in the *stupa*, the Naung Daw Gyi (Golden Elder) Pagoda, and a replica of India's Mahabodhi Temple are also need to be observed. (See Moore, Elizabeth. "Text and New Contexts," Moore, Elizabeth. et al. *Shwedagon*, and Win Pe, U. *Shwe Dagon*).

Three of the other figures date to the lifetime of the Buddha Gautama: Ashin Ananda who assisted Him; Ashin Anuruddha, said to have arrived in Suwannabhummi (Thaton) to initiate the Hair Relic Thathana (Sasana) tradition, and Ashin Gawunpati who requested the Buddha to visit Suwannabhummi and accompanied him on his journey. Chronologically, the next figure commemorates the start of the Pariyatti Sāsana by Maha Kassapa, convenor of the 1st Buddhist Synod in the year after the Buddha's demise. There is then a gap until the 4th century BC with the depiction of images of Moggala Putta Tissa who convened the 3rd Buddhist Synod in 307 BC under the patronage of King Asoka as well as the figures of Ashin Sona and Uttara who traditionally came to Suwannabhummi to restore and revitalise the Buddhist Sāsana. Some six hundred years later, in the 4th Century AD, is the image of Ashin Buddhagosa who brought the three Pitakas (Baskets) to Myanmar.

(To be continued)

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NATIONAL

Ywama-Hlawka-Thakayta natural gas pipeline begins service

YANGON, 1 Aug—The Ywama-Hlawka-Thakayta natural gas pipeline was put into service Saturday following an opening ceremony.

The gas transmission pipeline is the largest ever built by the Energy Ministry's Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise, an official said. The new 30-inch di-

ameter parallel line was built to supplement the old 14-inch Ywama-Hlawka-Thakayta pipeline.

MOGE began construction last October, with

the aim of supplying gas to power plants and factories in the region.

The new pipeline passes through seven townships—Insein, Shwepyitha, Mingaladon, Hlegu, East Dagon Myothit, South Dagon Myothit and Dagon Myothit Seikkan.—MNA

TV broadcasting graduates receive diplomas



Deputy Information Minister U Pike Htway presents prize for project to an outstanding trainee.—MNA

YANGON, 1 Aug—The Myanmar Media Development Centre held a graduation ceremony here Saturday for its Diploma in TV Broadcasting, including a presentation of the graduates' final projects.

Altogether 42 students attended the Myanmar Media Development Centre's 10-month diploma course.

In his speech, Deputy Information Minister U Pike Htway said a new

broadcasting law will soon be enacted in the country, as the bill has been put forward to the President from the parliament.

Since 2012, MMDC has conducted media training including digital video editing, voice, and graphic design, with the aim of turning out professionals that can play a vital role in developing the country's media industry.

MNA

and July flooded 524,895 acres of farmlands across the country's 12 states and regions, and flood water decreased in 121,728 acres in which farmlands in Sagaing Region, one of severely inundated areas, are also included.

It is too early to say

whether recent flooding could severely affect the country's paddy output, Dr. Soe Tun said, calling for the government to ensure an adequate response.

"It is required to begin farming recovery as quickly as possible after the water recedes."—GNLM

UN special envoy meets Chairperson of Pyithu Hluttaw's Rule of Law, Stability and Tranquillity Committee, visits women's hostels



YANGON, 1 Aug—UNHCR Special Envoy Ms Angelina Jolie Pitt paid a courtesy call on Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, Chairperson of the Pyithu Hluttaw's Rule of Law, Stability and Tranquillity Committee, at the latter's residence here on Saturday, officials said.

The chairperson and the UN special envoy together visited two women's hostels in Hlinethaya Township, where they spoke to residents about the challenges they faced.

The Oscar-winning actor encouraged them and

pledged support, according to residents Ma Zar Zar Aung and Ma Khine Khine, adding that they complained to the special envoy about their low pay.

Ms Jolie Pitt also met squatters in the township and asked about their livelihood challenges. In addition, she held talks with social organizations and interfaith friendship groups.

The UN special envoy left the country on Saturday evening.

Min Thit/Zaw Gyi/
GNLM

UNHCR Special Envoy Ms Angelina Jolie Pitt visits women workers in Hlinethaya Township.

MNA

MRF pledges support...

(from page 1)

A contract-farming system will be put in place for farming communities hit by flooding across the country, he added.

"The federation will provide affected farmers with paddy strains and fertilizers through a profit-sharing scheme," as it is important for restoring their livelihoods.

The MRF official, however, did not elaborate on how much agricultural aid will reach to affected farming communities across the country.

"We could not say an exact amount of (paddy strain and fertilizer) will be available for farmers at the moment as they are owned by individuals and companies who are members of the MRF," he said.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation announced Friday that measures are being taken to

Landslides hit ...

(from page 1)

Damage to roads caused by the landslides has hindered emergency operations, he added.

Flash floods in Mindat, in the state's south, destroyed seven bridges including two bailey bridges and four suspension bridges Friday.

Firefighters also evacuated a family from a two-storey building in Falam, in the state's north, because of landslide danger.

The government's weather bureau on Saturday

forecast continued heavy rainfall for Chin and Rakhine states and Magway region.

Weather expert Dr Tun Lwin on Saturday warned residents of northern Shan stated to be alert to landslides and flash flood as heavy rain fall are expected there.

The monsoon is moderate in the Andaman Sea and South Bay of Bengal and strong to vigorous elsewhere in the bay, according to the Meteorology and Hydrology Department.

GNLM

help farming recover from floods, saying paddy strains and power tillers will be delivered to farmlands as soon as water recedes.

According to the figures of the ministry, torrential rains during June



A farmer works in a field with a power tiller. Some 500,000 acres of farmland were affected in recent flooding. —PHOTO: WORLD BANK MYANMAR.

UN Security Council slams murder of Palestine child in West Bank

UNITED NATIONS, 1 Aug — UN Security Council on Friday expressed profound outrage and condemned “in the strongest terms” the vicious terrorist attack in the village of Duma near Nablus, which killed a Palestinian child and injured his family members, said a press statement of the council.

The members of the Security Council extended their condolences and sympathies to the family of the victim of this heinous act and

to the Palestinian leadership and to the Palestinian people. They underlined the need to bring the perpetrators of this deplorable act to justice, said the statement.

An 18-month-old baby was killed and three others were critically injured in the early hours of Friday morning after their home in a village in the northern West Bank was set ablaze allegedly by Israeli Jewish settlers.

The council strongly con-

demned all such acts of violence, which have affected both the Palestinian and Israeli people, expressed concern about increased tensions, and called for immediate calm, said the statement.

The council reaffirmed that terrorism in all its forms and manifestations is criminal and unjustifiable, regardless of its motivation, wherever, whenever and by whomsoever committed, and should not be associated with any religion,

nationality, civilization or ethnic group, said the statement.

Israel captured the West Bank in the 1967 Middle East war and has controlled it ever since.

Settlement construction has been a stumbling block for peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians. The international community has repeatedly called on Israel to halt settlement activities so as to help resume the long-stalled talks.—Xinhua

Seven Libyan soldiers killed in clashes with Islamic State

BENGHAZI, 1 Aug — Seven Libyan soldiers were killed on Friday when Islamic State militants stormed a checkpoint manned by forces loyal to the official government, military officials said.

Five soldiers were killed and 15 have been missing since the Islamic State fighters attacked the checkpoint outside the eastern town of Ajdabiya, near the oil port of Bregaattack, one military official said. Two more soldiers were killed when the government sent reinforcements. Five were wounded.

“Fighting is continuing some 100 kilometres outside Ajdabiya,” one official said.

Islamic State claimed responsibility for the attack in a statement on social media, saying it had captured ammunition and military equipment.

Islamic State has exploited a growing security vacuum in Libya, where two governments and parliaments are fighting for control four years after the toppling of Muammar Gaddafi.

The official prime minister has been based in the east, working with his cabinet out of hotels, since the capital, Tripoli, was seized by a rival group that set up its own government.

Both sides command loose coalitions of former anti-Gaddafi rebels. After Gaddafi’s ouster, the various factions split along political, regional and tribal lines. Militants loyal to Islamic State, the group which has seized much of Syria and Iraq, has built up a large presence in Sirte, to the west of Ajdabiya.—Reuters

Al Qaeda in Syria says detains U.S.-trained rebels



Members of al Qaeda's Nusra Front gesture as they travel through the town of the northwestern city of Ariha, after a coalition of insurgent groups seized the area in Idlib province May 29, 2015. REUTERS

BEIRUT, 1 Aug — Al Qaeda's Syria wing said on Friday it had detained members of a Syrian rebel group who had just returned from U.S. training, in a direct challenge to Washington's plan to train and equip insurgents to combat the hard-line Islamic State group.

In a statement that appeared to contradict comments from the Pentagon, Nusra Front said the

men it was holding had entered Syria several days earlier and had been trained under the supervision of the Central Intelligence Agency. The Pentagon has denied that any of the initial group of around 60 U.S.-trained rebels known as the “New Syrian Force” had been abducted.

The chief of staff of the U.S.-led coalition against Islamic State also cast doubt the report on Fri-

day. “All the information that we have is that none of the ... new Syrian forces have been captured,” Marine Corps Brigadier General Kevin Killea said in a briefing with reporters.

Nusra Front described its captives as agents of America and warned others they should abandon the training programme. It also said the U.S.-led coalition had mounted air strikes against its

positions during its battles with rebels.

Syrian opposition sources and a monitoring group said earlier this week that Nusra Front had detained the leader of the U.S.-trained rebel “Division 30” and a number of its members. Nusra Front had yet to comment on those reports.

“We warn soldiers of (Division 30) against proceeding in the American project,” Nusra Front said in a statement distributed online. “We, and the Sunni people in Syria, will not allow their sacrifices to be offered on a golden platter to the American side.”

One of the most powerful insurgent groups in northern Syria, Nusra Front has a record of crushing rebel groups that have received support from Western states, including the Hazzm movement that collapsed earlier this year.

The latest incident highlights the difficulties the United States faces in its efforts to train and equip rebels to fight Islamic State, which is a rival of Nusra Front.

Reuters

Iraq's Kurdistan laments caught in middle of Turkey-PKK fight

WASHINGTON, 1 Aug — Iraq's Kurdistan region is suffering the fallout as Turkey launches strikes against Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) camps in northern Iraq, the region's top diplomat said on Friday, calling for both sides to return to a ceasefire.

“We are caught in between (the) two sides,” Falah Mustafa Bakir, head of the Kurdistan Regional Government's department of foreign relations, told a small group of reporters in Washington.

Turkey has repeatedly attacked Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) camps in northern Iraq over the past week, in what it says is a response to a series of targeted killings of police officers and soldiers blamed on the Kurdish militant group. The United States has said it supports the strikes against the PKK, which it brands as terrorist

group, even as it looks to Kurdish forces in Iraq and Syria as close allies in the war against Islamic State militants.

U.S. Defence Secretary Ash Carter called the Kurdish region's security forces, or peshmerga, a model for the kind of force needed to defeat Islamic State during a visit to the region's capital, Erbil, last week.

Bakir was careful not to openly criticise Turkey, even though Iraq's national government this week condemned Turkey's assault on PKK militants in northern Iraq as “an assault on Iraqi sovereignty.”

But Bakir did acknowledge the fallout.

“This has affected us negatively, because it is the mountainous border areas of the Kurdistan region that have been bombarded,” Bakir said. “People have been displaced, people have been injured. ... Therefore we hope

that both sides will go back to the ceasefire.”

Bakir said he was unable to provide figures on the numbers of people displaced or wounded. Asked about his position on the strikes, Bakir appeared to place the blame on both sides.

“We neither agree on the PKK to announce that the ceasefire is over, nor do we agree on Kurdistan region to be bombarded, because this is not the solution,” he said, noting that Turkey had also dismissed a peace process with the PKK.

Kurds live as minorities in Syria, Turkey, Iraq and Iran. Although none of the populations has its own state, Kurds have ruled an autonomous region of northern Iraq since the early 1990s. That region borders the area now run by Kurds in northeastern Syria.

Turkey's assaults on the PKK have coincided with its first air strikes against Islamic State and

a decision by Ankara to open its air bases to the U.S.-led coalition fighting Islamic State. Bakir said he was assured in meetings with U.S. officials in Washington this

week that the U.S. agreement with Turkey was solely about the fight against Islamic State, not about the PKK.

Reuters



A female Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) fighter adjusts her scarf while another carries a picture of jailed Kurdish militant leader Abdullah Ocalan at their base in Sinjar March 11, 2015. —REUTERS

BUSINESS & HEALTH

E&Y Japan arm launches internal probe of Toshiba audit



A logo of Toshiba Corp is seen next to an advertisement board for its Regza television in Tokyo, Japan, June 25, 2015. REUTERS

TOKYO, 1 Aug — The Japanese affiliate of Ernst & Young LLC has launched an in-house investigation into its audit of Toshiba Corp (6502.T) in the wake of the electronics maker's \$1.2 billion accounting scandal, a person with knowledge of the matter said.

Ernst & Young Shin-Nihon LLC has established a team of about 20 executives to investigate whether there were any problems with how it conducted its audits of Toshiba, the person said.

The person spoke on condition of anonymity. No one could be reached at the company's offices in Tokyo on Saturday.

The news was first reported by the Nikkei newspaper.

Last month an external panel of lawyers and accountants hired to probe Toshiba's accounts found the company had inflated profits by 152 billion yen (\$1.23 billion/£787 million) over seven years by postponing the realization of losses and other

schemes.

The scandal ranks as one of corporate Japan's biggest alongside the 2011 accounting fraud at medical equipment and camera maker Olympus Corp (7733.T), which was also a client of Ernst & Young ShinNihon.

The Japan Institute of Certified Public Accountants, a self-regulatory body for the accounting industry, said last week that it had started investigating the audit of Toshiba. The Financial Services Agency, the country's financial regulator, is expected to follow with its own probe in the coming months.

The in-house investigating team at Ernst & Young ShinNihon is made of audit check specialists, and there will be no cross-over with the roughly 150 people working to finish the post-scandal audit of Toshiba's accounts, the person familiar with the matter said.

The auditing firm will aim to finish its investigation by the end of August, the person said.—Reuters

NEW YORK, 1 Aug — The dollar fell and benchmark U.S. Treasury yields touched multi-week lows on Friday as an unexpectedly weak government reading of American labor costs dulled prospects for higher U.S. interest rates.

Wall Street stock prices closed down, after surrendering early gains from the Employment Cost Index data showing the smallest quarterly increase in 33 years. Oil prices declined by 2 to 3 percent on growing worries about global oversupply.

The dollar index .DXY fell well over 1 percent before recovering for smaller losses of 0.35 percent. The euro was especially strong and was last up 0.50 percent against the dollar at \$1.0984, after trading over \$1.11.

Treasuries prices rallied, with yields on benchmark 10-year Treasury notes US10YT=RR falling to a three-week low of 2.184 percent. The price was last up 22/32 of a point to yield 2.187 percent.

The 30-year Treasury bond US30YT=RR yield fell to a fresh two-month low of 2.9040 percent from 2.9390 percent prior to the data. The price was last up 28/32 of a point to yield 2.9093 percent.

The Employment Cost Index, the broadest meas-

U.S. one hundred dollar notes are seen in this picture illustration taken in Seoul February 7, 2011. REUTERS



ure of labor costs, rose just 0.2 percent last quarter, the U.S. Labor Department reported. Economists had forecast a 0.6 percent rise in the report, which followed a GDP report widely seen as allowing the Federal Reserve to start hiking rates as early as September.

"The magnitude of the miss was definitely a bit of a surprise, especially as people were really gearing up for a September (rate) hike. This definitely puts a lower probability on that," said Stanley Sun, interest rate strategist at Nomura Securities International in New York.

Wall Street's Dow Jones industrial average .DJI fell 51.78 points, or 0.29 percent, to 17,694.2, the S&P 500 .SPX lost 4.24 points, or 0.2 percent, to 2,104.39, and the Nasdaq

Composite .IXIC dropped 0.50 points, or 0.01 percent, to 5,128.28.

Drops in energy stocks eclipsed the labor data, which bolstered expectations on Wall Street that the Fed could delay a rate hike this year. Exxon Mobil (XOM.N) shares dropped 4.58 percent, while Chevron (CVX.N) lost 4.89 percent after reporting poor quarterly earnings due to weak oil prices.

European shares .FTEU3 edged up 0.1 percent on merger hopes and good earnings and finished July with a 4 percent monthly rise as worries receded about the future of Greece's membership in the euro zone.

China's CSI300 index .CSI300 ended flat after a late dip to leave it down

14.7 percent on the month. The Shanghai Composite Index .SSEC lost 1 percent, extending its July losses to 13.4 percent despite support measures by the country's authorities.

Crude oil also slipped for a second session at the end of its worst month of losses since the 2008 financial crisis.

U.S. crude CLc1 settled down \$1.40, or almost 3 percent, at \$47.32 a barrel. It slid more than 2 percent on the week.

Through July, U.S. crude was down 21 percent, its largest monthly decline since October 2008.

Brent LCOc1 settled down \$1.10, or 2 percent, at \$52.21 a barrel. It lost 5 percent on the week and 18 percent on the month.

Reuters

Vaccine success holds hope for end to deadly scourge of Ebola

LONDON / GENEVA, 1 Aug — The world is on the verge of being able to protect humans against Ebola, the World Health Organization said on Friday, as a trial in Guinea found a vaccine to have been 100 percent effective.

Initial results from the trial, which tested Merck (MRK.N) and NewLink Genetics' (NLNK.O) VSV-ZEBOV vaccine on some 4,000 people who had been in close contact with a confirmed Ebola case, showed complete protection after 10 days.

The results were described as "remarkable" and "game changing" by global health specialists.

"We believe that the world is on the verge of an efficacious Ebola vaccine," WHO vaccine ex-

pert Marie Paule Kieny told reporters in a briefing from Geneva.

The vaccine could now be used to help end the worst recorded outbreak of Ebola, which has killed more than 11,200 people in West Africa since it began in December 2013.

WHO Director-General Margaret Chan said the results, published online in the medical journal The Lancet, would "change the management of the current Ebola outbreak and future outbreaks".

The Gavi Alliance, which buys vaccines in bulk for poor countries who struggle to afford them, immediately said it would back an Ebola shot once it is approved.

"These communities need an effective vaccine sooner rather than later,"

Gavi's chief executive Seth Berkley said. "We need to be ready to act wherever the virus is a threat."

This and other vaccine trials were fast-tracked with huge international effort as researchers raced to test potential therapies and vaccines while the virus was still circulating.

"It was a race against time and the trial had to be implemented under the most challenging circumstances," said John-Arne Røttingen of Norway's Institute of Public Health, chair of the trial's steering group.

The Guinea trial began on March 23 to evaluate the effectiveness and safety of a single dose of VSV-ZEBOV using a so-called "ring vaccination" strategy, where close contacts of a person diagnosed with

Ebola are immunized - either immediately, or at a later date.

As data began to emerge showing the very high protection rates in those vaccinated immediately, however, researchers decided on July 26 that they would no longer use the "delayed" strategy, since it was becoming clear that making people wait involved unethical and unnecessary risk.

The trial is now being continued, with all participants receiving the vaccine immediately, and will be extended to include 13- to 17-year-olds and possibly also 6- to 12-year-old children, the WHO said.

Jeremy Farrar, a leading infectious disease specialist and director of the Wellcome Trust, said the trial "dared to use a highly

innovative and pragmatic design, which allowed the team in Guinea to assess this vaccine in the middle of an epidemic".

"Our hope is that this vaccine will now help bring this epidemic to an end and be available for the inevitable future Ebola epidemics," his statement said.

The medical charity Doctors without Borders (MSF), which has led the fight against Ebola in West Africa, called for VSV-ZEBOV to be rolled out to the other centers of the outbreak, Liberia and Sierra Leone, where it says it could break chains of transmission and protect frontline health workers.

VSV-ZEBOV was originally developed by Canada's public health agency before being licensed to NewLink Genet-

ics, which then signed a deal handing Merck the responsibility to research, develop, manufacture and distribute it.

The success of the Guinea trial is a big relief for researchers, many of whom feared a sharp decline in cases this year would scupper their hopes of proving a vaccine could work.

Another major trial in Liberia, which had aimed to recruit some 28,000 subjects, had to stop enrolling after only reaching its mid-stage target of 1,500 participants. Plans for testing in Sierra Leone were also scaled back. That left the study in Guinea, where Ebola is still infecting new victims, as the only real hope for demonstrating the efficacy of a vaccine.—Reuters

Donald Trump's companies have sought visas to import at least 1,100 workers

NEW YORK, 1 Aug — Donald Trump is staking his run for U.S. president in part on a vow to protect American jobs. But this month, one of his companies, the elite Mar-a-Lago Club resort in Florida, applied to import 70 foreign workers to serve as cooks, wait staff and cleaners.

A Reuters analysis of U.S. government data reveals that this is business as usual in the New York property magnate's empire. Trump owns companies that have sought to import at least 1,100 foreign workers on temporary visas since 2000, according to U.S. Department of Labor data reviewed by Reuters. Most of the applications were approved, the data show.

Nine companies majority-owned by Trump have sought to bring in foreign waitresses, cooks, vineyard workers and other labourers on temporary work-visa programs administered by the Labor Department.

The candidate's foreign talent hunt included applications for an assistant golf-course superintendent, an assistant hotel manager and a banquet manager.

Two of his companies, Trump Model Management and Trump Management Group LLC, have sought visas for nearly 250 foreign fashion models, the records show.

Trump's presidential campaign and a lawyer for the businessman declined to comment. The Mar-a-Lago Club could not be reached for comment.

The analysis of Trump's history of actively importing foreign workers comes as he has emerged as an early front-runner in the race for the Republican nomination in the November 2016 presidential election. Trump has positioned himself as a champion of American workers whose livelihoods are threatened by illegal foreign labourers and the offshoring of U.S. jobs. "I will be the greatest jobs president that God every created," he said in announcing his candidacy on June 16. "I will bring back our jobs from China, Mexico and other places. I will bring back jobs and our money."

Trump generated both notoriety and buzz by singling out Mexican immigrants in the United States. "When Mexico sends its people, they're not sending their best," he said in the speech. "They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists."

In a speech on July 11, Trump distinguished between those working legally and illegally in the United States, saying thousands of "legal" Mexicans — "incredible people" — have worked for him over the years.

The Labor Department records don't specify the nationality of the foreign workers sought by companies. But Trump could be bringing many Mexican workers into the United States.—Reuters



Firefighters watch the Rocky Fire advance in Lake County, California July 30, 2015. REUTERS

California governor declares state of emergency over raging wildfires

SAN FRANCISCO, 1 Aug — California's governor declared a state of emergency on Friday as a string of wildfires raged across the state and a firefighter was killed battling a blaze in drought-parched forest, officials said.

The firefighter, David Ruhl of Rapid City, South Dakota, was on temporary assignment in Northern California, where the brunt of 18 large fires burning across the state have destroyed homes and structures and temporarily displaced hundreds of people, the U.S. Forest Service said.

Ruhl was battling the so-called "Frog Fire," which broke out on Thursday near the town of Adin in the state's northeast, when he was killed on duty, the Forest Service said.

"This loss of life is tragic and heartbreaking," Forest Supervisor Amanda McAdams said in a statement.

Experts have predicted a long and volatile summer wildfire season in California, in its fourth year of crippling drought. Governor Jerry Brown's state of emergency will help mobilize additional firefighting and disaster response resources.

"California's severe drought and extreme weather have turned much of the state into a tinderbox," Brown said in a statement. "Our courageous firefighters are on the front lines and we'll do everything we can to help them."

Crews on Friday continued to struggle to gain control of a rapidly growing wildfire that burned largely unchecked in Northern California's ranch country, destroying three homes and forcing about 500 people to flee.

The blaze has nearly doubled in size from late Thursday morning to scorch some 15,000 acres (60 square km) of California's rural Lake County.

The so-called Rocky Fire started on Wednesday afternoon in the foothills and canyons on the inland flanks of California's northern coastal range, about 110 miles (180 km) north of San Francisco. Almost 1,000 firefighters were working on the blaze with the help of air tankers and helicopters.

North of Sacramento, a 2,300-acre (9.3-square km) blaze had threatened some 1,800 homes and other structures at its height, but 75 percent of that fire had been contained by Friday morning and evacuation orders were downgraded to advisories, officials said.

In the Southern California county of San Bernardino, east of Los Angeles, officials posted a \$75,000 reward on Tuesday for information leading to the arrest and conviction of drone hobbyists whose aircraft have interfered with recent firefighting efforts there.—Reuters

Venezuela supermarket looting leaves one dead, dozens detained

CARACAS, 1 Aug — One person was killed and dozens were detained following looting of supermarkets in Venezuela's southeastern city of Ciudad Guayana on Friday morning, according to Venezuelan authorities.

Shoppers seeking scarce consumer staples including milk, rice and flour broke into a supermarket warehouse on Friday morning, leading businesses in the area to shut their doors, local newspaper Correo del Caroni reported.

President Nicolas Maduro said the violence was premeditated and blamed the United States as being behind it. Maduro said U.S. General John Kelly, Marine

Corps commander of the Southern Command, predicted in February that there would be a "social explosion" in Venezuela in July.

"You all know that a military general of the United States doesn't predict," Maduro said on state television. "He orders and the battered Venezuelan right-wing executes."

Speaking at the Pentagon in March, Kelly said that Venezuela might see some change of leadership in the coming months.

"I certainly am not involved in any way, shape or form with coup planning. I don't know anyone that is. And I probably would know if someone was," he added,

according to a Pentagon transcript.

Shops in the area surrounding the warehouse were either shuttered or protected by national guard and police on Friday.

The Venezuelan government has long blamed opposition leaders and businesses for the country's ills, saying they are waging an "economic war" against the government with backing

from the United States.

Critics say the problems are due to a failing state-led economic model.

Low oil prices and an increasingly dysfunctional set of currency and price

controls have spurred shortages of consumer goods, causing tempers to flare in supermarket lines across the country.

State governor Francisco Rangel of the ruling Socialist Party said the looting was politically motivated.

"A group of armed motorcyclists arrived and said they were going to loot certain establishments," he told Venezuelan television station Globovision. "I'm sure it wasn't spontaneous but rather planned with a political motive."

Gustavo Patinez, 21, died of a gunshot wound to the chest, Correo del Caroni reported, adding that 60 people were detained.—Reuters



People carry goods looted from a supermarket in San Felix in the state of Bolivar, Venezuela July 31, 2015. REUTERS

GENERAL

World culture ministers gather at Milan Expo for heritage protection

MILAN, 1 Aug — Cultural ministry delegations from a total of 83 countries gathered at the ongoing world exposition in Italy's Milan on Friday to highlight the importance of cultural heritage and cultural dialogue.

During the first "International Conference of Culture Ministers", which runs on Friday and Saturday, ministers and ministry representatives will examine how culture can serve as a tool to improve peace and strategic responses to extremism and radicalization, Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi said here at the conference opening at Expo Milano 2015.

The conference, Renzi stressed, was an opportunity to work all together to strengthen protection measures in conflict situations.

"If we are women and men, we cannot be blind to what is happening in the world, where in places of beauty pages of pain have been written. We cannot pretend that nothing happened," he added.

"With culture we can react to terrorist attacks ... we are here to say that all together we can react," Renzi went on saying referring to the recent destruction of cultural heritage as a front-line act of violence perpetrated in Iraq, Syria, Libya and Yemen, and closely linked to the persecution of civilians there.

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon said in a video message that he intends to submit a plan of action on preventing violent extremism to the UN General Assembly.

"Preventing violent

extremism requires an integrated approach. We cannot defeat terrorism with weapons alone," he said.

"We must win the battle of ideas by uniting behind the universal values of human rights and dignity. That is why it is essential to promote cultural literacy, heritage education and enhanced understanding of diverse traditions and history," Ban underlined.

UNESCO Director General Irina Bokova said "when culture is attacked, the possibility of dialogue and creation of peace are menaced too ... as culture is much more than buildings and stones, it means identity and values."

"This is why I am convinced that culture is part of the path to sustainable development and peace, and is also fundamental for

security," she stressed.

The conference's agenda also tackles the preservation of cultural heritage in the face of natural disasters. Kripa Sur Sherpa, culture minister from Nepal, where an earthquake devastated the population and heritage on April 25, took part in the event. The Nepal Pavilion had been the first one visited by Renzi when the Expo Milano 2015 kicked off on May 1, just days after the disaster.

The delegations were invited to watch The Barber of Seville opera at the renowned Teatro alla Scala opera house in Milan on Friday night and visit Leonardo Da Vinci's The Last Supper on Saturday morning, accompanied by Italian Culture Minister Dario Franceschini, organizer of the conference.—Xinhua

Brazil to investigate attack on Lula Institute

RIO DE JANEIRO, 1 Aug — Brazil's federal police will help investigate a recent attack on the headquarters of the Lula Institute, founded by former President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, Justice Minister Luiz Eduardo Cardozo said on Friday.

The attack occurred on late Thursday. Security cameras showed that a small homemade bomb was thrown from a car at the institute's front door, which exploded and caused some damage to the structure. The Lula Institute said no one was hurt.

Cardozo said protective measures for the institute might be necessary, as there is a possibility that the attack was politically motivated. In a statement to the press, the Lula Institute said the attack was politically motivated.

The Lula Institute is a non-governmental organization (NGO) that focuses on political studies and cooperation between Brazil and Africa and South America. It was founded in 2011 by Lula after he finished his second presidential term. Lula works at the institute and uses it as his main office.

The institute has recently attracted media attention because a local construction company, Camargo Correa, which is being investigated for corruption in contracts with oil giant Petrobras, made donations to the institute between 2011 and 2013.

In its defense, the institute said the donations were legal and widely known, as the company had publicly declared their donations to the institute in the past.—Xinhua



Photo taken on July 31, 2015 shows the anti-submarine ship "Admiral Panteleyev" of the Pacific Fleet of the Russian Navy anchoring at Tien Sa port in Vietnam's central Da Nang city. Ships of the Pacific Fleet of the Russian Navy, including anti-submarine ship "Admiral Panteleyev", the tanker "Pechenga" and the tug "SB-522", anchored at Tien Sa port in Vietnam's central Da Nang city on Friday.—XINHUA

WEATHER REPORT

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL EVENING OF THE 1ST August, 2015: Rain or thundershowers will be fairly widespread in Kachin State and widespread in the remaining Regions and States with likelihood of regionally heavy falls in Magway Region, Chin and Rakhine States and isolated heavy falls in Sagaing, Bago, Yangon and Taninthayi Regions and Mon State. Degree of certainty is (100%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Occasional squalls with rough seas will be experienced off and along Myanmar Coasts. Surface wind speed in squalls may reach (40) m.p.h.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Continuation of Strong monsoon.

FORECAST FOR NAYPYITAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 1st August, 2015: One or two rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 1st August, 2015: Some rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 1st August, 2015: One or two rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

Ferry with 94 aboard catches fire off Hokkaido, one crew member missing

SAPPORO, 1 Aug — A car ferry with 71 passengers and 23 crew members aboard caught fire off Japan's northernmost main island of Hokkaido on Friday, leaving one crew member missing while everyone else evacuated in lifeboats, the Japan Coast Guard said.

The 11,401-ton Sunflower Daisetsu, measuring 190 meters long by 26.4 meters wide and operated by MOL Ferry Co., caught fire in the Pacific Ocean about 55 kilometers off Tomakomai port in southern Hokkaido at around 5:15 p.m., coast guard officials said.

Kunihiro Orita, a 44-year-old junior officer, was unaccounted for as he lost contact with other crew members after rushing to

extinguish the fire. He was tasked with taking charge of on-site fire fighting operations in the event of a fire aboard, according to MOL Ferry.

Captain Mikiro Sakaue, 58, had remained on the ferry to communicate with rescue vessels but later agreed to evacuate, according to the officials. Three commercial ships and two patrol boats came to rescue the evacuating passengers and crew and took them to Tomakomai port.

At a press conference at its Tokyo head office, MOL Ferry, a wholly owned unit of Mitsui O.S.K. Lines Ltd., apologized for the accident.

A company official said the safety of the 93 passengers and crew

members had been confirmed.

The fire broke out in a truck being transported by the ferry, which left Ooarai port in Ibaraki Prefecture, northeast of Tokyo, at 1:45 a.m., and was to arrive at Tomakomai at 7:45 p.m., according to the coast guard and MOL Ferry.

"I wasn't afraid until I boarded a life raft, but just as I was getting on, the outer walls of the ferry tumbled down," said Takuya Ozawa, 24, a passenger from Hokkaido's capital city of Sapporo.

As sprinklers failed to put out the fire, a coast guard fireboat sprayed water on the ferry to bring it under control.

A coast guard helicopter flew over the ferry around 7:20 p.m. and confirmed smoke coming from the starboard, but no flames were seen, according to the coast guard.

The seven-deck ferry was built in 2001 and is authorized to carry up to 154 people, 62 cars and 150 large trucks.

It was carrying 68 vehicles and 100 cargo units for trailer trucks.

The accident prompted the transport ministry to initiate an extraordinary audit of MOL Ferry's offices. The Transport Safety Board decided to send five accident investigators on Saturday.—Kyodo News



Passengers of a car ferry arrive at the ferry terminal of Tomakomai port after the 11,400-ton Sunflower Daisetsu caught fire off Japan's northernmost main island of Hokkaido on July 31, 2015.—Kyodo News

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Kriti Sanon turns sporty bride for Monisha Jaising at AICW

NEW DELHI, 1 Aug — Giving a modern twist to the highly-embellished Indian bridal wear, designer Monisha Jaising opted for a jersey lehenga and a ganji top for her showstopper Kriti Sanon.

The “Heropanti” star looked very much a “rebel” bride with her mehendi and tattoos on arms and her hair tied in a pony tail. She walked the ramp on the day three of the ongoing Amazon India Couture Week.

“Kriti has carried the outfit with a perfection. She is actually a rebel bride. She comes with a red dupatta and then she drops it and shows what she is all about.

“The lehenga is a grey sporty jersey. A lot of sportswear is made of this material. Because the show is designed such that you are in the middle of the ocean, so I felt this would work. These are the kind of clothes that you wear when you are on a boat,” Monisha told reporters here after the show.

The 25-year-old actress, who was confident and playful during her stint on the ramp, said she loved the idea behind the collection and the fabrics used in her outfit.

“I absolutely loved the concept when she told me. From the ramp being a luxurious boat to the fabric that she has used, it is really jersey material and the ganji I am wearing, it cannot get more comfortable than this.

“She has the mehendi, jewellery and bridal dupatta but at the same time she has her tattoos and



Kriti Sanon

her body art, a pony tail, which is very sporty I feel. She is wearing sneakers with some embroidery on it, so it is a little bit of what you are if you are a sporty, tomboyish girl...,” Kriti said.

When asked if she would like to don the same look for her wedding, the actress said, “I would love to dress this way when I get married. It is going to shock my parents for sure because I am not like this. If it is okay by everybody, then definitely why not.”

Titled “The Sailing Bride”, the

show celebrated a wedding on a private yacht and to bring the audience closer to the concept, the set was designed as a luxurious boat with a few female models resting on different decks and their male counterparts acting as the crew.

“The inspiration behind this collection is sport, wedding and the fact that it is your own luxury yacht. It is both traditional and also the feeling of being in the ocean and that’s the whole vibe,” said the designer.

The show was opened by model-turned-actress Pernia Qureshi, who is making her Bollywood debut with Muzaffar Ali’s next “Jaanisaar” opposite Pakistani actor Imran Abbas.

Though she looked beautiful in a blue evening gown, Pernia was visibly uncomfortable in her attire as she kept pulling it. Post the show, she changed into a cotton maxi dress.

The silhouettes were lehanga cholis, saree lehengas and gowns in hues of silver, gold, red, blue, black and orange.

“We started with Indian and ended with a lot of evening gowns. In the Indian section, we have used georgette, silk, organza, bandhni. In the gowns section, we have used a mix of fabrics.

“In colours we started with ice blue, some black then burgundy, red and then we moved to gowns where we had tea blue, tea green, lots of whites, red, so basically all the colours that you would like to wear,” she said.—PTI

One Direction releases surprise first single as a foursome



Members of the pop group One Direction pose for photographers at the Capital Summertime Ball at Wembley Stadium in London, Britain June 06, 2015.—REUTERS

LONDON, 1 Aug — Best-selling boy band One Direction released a surprise first single as a foursome on Friday, two days after former member Zayn Malik announced a new record deal as solo artist.

“Drag Me Down” follows November’s “Night Changes” and is the first single the group, which came to prominence on British televised singing competition “The X Factor” in 2010, has put out since Malik said he was quitting the band in March.

The foursome — Harry Styles, Liam Payne, Niall Horan and Louis Tomlinson — posted a video message on Twitter announcing the new single.

“It’s the first song from the

new album that we’ve been working very, very hard on,” Payne said in the video. In a separate post on his Twitter feed, Payne called the move “a bit of a surprise”.

The news came after Malik himself tweeted a picture on Wednesday of him signing papers at RCA Records.

“I guess I never explained why I left, it was for this moment to be given the opportunity to show you who I really am! #realmusic #RCA,” he wrote.

Malik quit after five years with One Direction, saying he wanted to “be a normal 22-year old who is able to relax and have some private time out of the spotlight”.

Reuters

Kangana Ranaut is talented and wonderful: Amitabh Bachchan



Amitabh Bachchan

Kangana Ranaut

MUMBAI, 1 Aug — Megastar Amitabh Bachchan has praised “Tanu Weds Manu Returns” actress Kangana Ranaut, calling her “talented and wonderful”.

The 72-year-old actor, who will share screen space with Kangana in a Rajkumar Hirani-directed commercial, took to Twitter to share his excitement. “At work at last with the wonder called Kangana Ranaut... She be so good... And talented and wonderful,” he wrote along side a picture of the duo.

The “Piku” star also praised “PK” director Hirani. “And the other wonder Raju Hirani on set in making!” Bachchan, who is seen sporting a fake full beard look for the advertisement, said even though sticking a beard is a “curse”, the final result makes it worth the effort.

“A curse for me when beards have to be stuck on... But the end results and the camera make it so believable.”—PTI

Mel B wants to ‘gather troops’ for Spice Girls 20th anniversary



NEW YORK, 1 Aug — Pop singer turned television talent show judge Mel B has hinted at a possible Spice Girl reunion, saying she would like to “gather the troops” to mark the 1990s group’s 20th anniversary next year.

The band, whose popularity endures 15 years after its breakup, stormed the charts with debut single “Wannabe” in 1996 and went on to sell more than 80 million records worldwide.

“When you say it’s our 20th anniversary coming up, it does make you think, ‘Oh my gosh it really has been that long’,” Mel B, whose real name is Melanie Brown, said on the U.S. television “Today” show on Thursday.

“Hopefully we’ll gather the troops around and we’ll get to do something to celebrate it next year ... Well, it’s in my plan. I don’t know about anybody else’s.” Mel B, who was known as Scary Spice; Victoria Beckham - Posh Spice; Emma Bunton — Baby Spice; Geri Halliwell — Ginger Spice; and Melanie Chisholm — Sporty Spice reunited briefly for the 2012 London Olympics to perform a medley of their songs.—Reuters

GENERAL

Rio Games torch to be lit in Olympia on April 21, 2016



Brazil's President Dilma Rousseff looks at an Olympic Torch model during a ceremony where the Rio Organizing Committee presented the torch and relay route for the Rio 2016 Games in Brasilia, Brazil, July 3, 2015.—REUTERS

KUALA LUMPUR, 1 Aug — The Rio de Janeiro Olympics torch will be lit in Greece's ancient Olympia on April 21 next year before leaving for the South American country 12 days later, organizers said on Saturday.

The torch will arrive in Brazil on May 3 to start its 100-day relay across the country, Rio 2016 communications director Mario Andrada told the International

Olympic Committee during a presentation of the Games progress. Rio organizers earlier this month unveiled the torch which will be carried by 12,000 torchbearers past 500 cities and villages as the city prepares to become the first South American city to host the summer Olympics.

The torch for both summer and winter Olympics is traditionally lit using a parabolic mirror and the sun's rays at a ceremony in Olympia, the site of the ancient Olympics, with the first torchbearer starting their run from the stadium.

The torch lighting and relay did not exist at the ancient Olympics but were introduced by the Nazi organizers of the 1936 Berlin Olympics.—Reuters

Broadway's buzzy 'Hamilton' music to the ears of founding father's fans

NEW YORK, 1 Aug — Broadway hip-hop musical "Hamilton" is the hottest ticket in town this summer, and George Cox is, in a word, ecstatic.

Cox, founder of Seattle-based Alexander Hamilton Scholars, is one of thousands of Americans who have toiled for years to promote the much-neglected legacy of one of the founding fathers of the United States.

Now, Latino performer and composer Lin-Manuel Miranda is making headlines and winning awards with a show that is hailed as transforming both theater and the way Americans think about 18th century history.

"I consider Mr. Miranda a national treasure at this point," said Cox, whose nonprofit inspired by Hamilton's life and values has been offering scholarships, mentoring and internships for about 40 high-achieving, low income students each year since 2004.

"I am ecstatic about what (Miranda) has done. Do I understand hip-hop? No! It's not for my generation. The point is young people do," the 72-year-old financial

adviser said.

"Hamilton" opens officially on Broadway on Aug. 6 after three weeks of previews and a run at New York's downtown Public Theater earlier this year.

It is a musical biography of the orphan raised in the Caribbean who rose to become the right-hand man of General George Washington, as well as a key figure in the creation of the U.S. financial system and the creator of the U.S. Coast Guard. He was killed in an 1804 duel with then Vice-President Aaron Burr.

The musical uses rap, jazz and ballads, color-blind casting (Miranda plays the ambitious Hamilton and Washington is played by African-American actor Christopher Jackson), won a slew of off-Broadway awards, and is sold out for months.

Cox is far from alone in his enthusiasm. "Hamilton" was the show that U.S. President Barack Obama and his daughters chose to take in during a New York trip in July. Early audiences have also included Madonna, former President Bill Clinton, and Vice President Joseph Biden.—Reuters

Fight to save Indonesia's jungle corridors key for endangered orangutan

CAMP LEAKEY, (Borneo, Indonesia), 1 Aug — The bushes shook violently and the female orangutan froze. Her baby clutched her tightly before the two quickly disappeared into the Borneo undergrowth. As the bushes parted, a broad-shouldered male orangutan strutted to the feeding platform.

Dominating the fruit on offer, the male great ape dared the other orangutan in the trees to challenge him for the food.

The endangered orangutan is a solitary animal and it is rare to sight these great apes in groups, but this is Camp Leakey in the Tanjung Puting National Park in Indonesia and home to around 6,000 rescued orangutans.

The park in Borneo's central Kalimantan has been protecting great apes for 38 years but its success is now a problem as the reserve does not have sufficient space and resources to sustain any more apes. Yet Dr Birute Galdikas, 69, who heads Orangutan Foundation International (OFI), has some 300 more

rescued orangutans in her care waiting for a release back into the wild.

Galdikas' OFI is desperately trying to buy 6,367 hectares (15,807 acres) of land opposite the Tanjung park, which includes a vital stretch of land along the Sekonyer River, to accommodate the extra apes - price tag \$2.5 million.

But OFI, which relies on donations and money from eco-tourism, has only been able to raise a third.

"We have to protect this stretch of land," Galdikas told Reuters following an eco-trip to Camp Leakey to visit some of the rehabilitated great apes returned to the wild.

"If we lose this river edge, where are all the proboscis monkeys going to go? Where are all the (300) orangutans going to go?"

Protecting the forest habitat of the orangutan has become as important as rescuing the great apes if the species is to survive, says Galdikas, who came to the Tanjung forest when she was 25 years old and has spent 44 years trekking through forests and wading



A male orangutan waits near a feeding station at Camp Leakey in Tanjung Puting National Park in Central Kalimantan province, Indonesia in this June 15, 2015 file photo.—REUTERS

up to her armpits in swamps to protect orangutans.

Global demand for palm oil, which is found in supermarket products from margarine to lipstick and shampoo, and also used as a biofuel, has helped drive deforestation.

Palm oil plantations now surround Tanjung Puting National Forest, cutting corridors through which orangutans and other wildlife use to cross from one large

forest to another. Indonesia, which is ranked fifth in countries with the most annual tree cover loss, imposed a 2011 moratorium on clearing primary natural forests and peat land.

President Joko Widodo in April extended the moratorium for two years and expanded it to cover 1 million hectares (2.5 million acres). The government also increased penalties for illegal logging. But the moratorium

applies only to new areas of forest. Forests in existing commercial concessions are not protected and as a result palm oil plantations have expanded.

Palm oil production in Indonesia rose from 10.5 million hectares (26 million acres) in 2013 to an estimated 11.44 million hectares (28 million acres) in 2015, according to the Agricultural Ministry.

Togar Sitanggang,

Secretary General of the Indonesian Palm Oil Association, put expansion this year at about 300,000 hectares, and said it was limited to areas already given permits a few years ago. He said a pledge on sustainable development, new forest laws and a soft market were slowing expansion.

Indonesia says palm oil is important for development because it reduces poverty by bringing roads, schools and other infrastructure to rural communities and generates five million jobs that benefit 15 million people.

And a government biofuels policy, which aims to cut fossil fuel imports and save \$1.3 billion, is encouraging small landholders to turn to palm oil production. Under the policy each liter of diesel must contain 15 percent biofuel.

"The problem is allowing landholders in Indonesia taking part of the forest for palm oil plantations - what is good for the economy may not ultimately be good for the forests," said Galdikas.

Reuters

mitv Myanmar International

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Myanmar U-16 with six points in Group (B)

PHNOM PENH, 1 Aug — Myanmar Saturday took three more points with a 3-0 win over the Philippines in the Group (B) matches in the AFF U-16 Championship 2015 hosted by Cambodia.

In playing against the Philippines at the Olympic Stadium in Phnom Penh, Hein Htet Aung scored an opening goal in the 37th minute. Win Naing Tun added one more to the Myanmar U-16 in the 44th minute while Kyaw Kyaw Htet netted the third in the 85th minute.—GNLM

China media says Beijing can handle any problem for Winter Games

BEIJING, 1 Aug — Chinese state-run media on Saturday lauded the decision to award Beijing the 2022 Winter Olympics, saying the city could handle any problem thrown at it and would aim to put on a “big party”.

Beijing, which will host the event with the nearby city of Zhangjiakou, had been the favorite to win the Games ahead of Kazakhstan’s Almaty at the IOC selection meeting in Kuala Lumpur on Friday.

While Beijing hosted the 2008 Summer Games to wide acclaim, its bid for the lower profile Winter Games had been dogged by concerns over a number of issues including the city’s notorious smog problem, a lack of snow and its poor human rights record.

The overseas edition of the ruling Communist Party’s official People’s Daily said the world could breathe easy over any worries it might have about Beijing’s ability to hold the large-scale event.

“In China, every promise will be fully realized,” the paper wrote in a front page commentary.

“In our preparation

work, though all sorts of difficulties will present themselves, like traffic or environmental problems, Beijing will redouble its efforts to overcome them.”

China is now the world’s second largest economy, with a stable political system, harmonious society and a happy populous, even if it is not a great winter sports power, it added.

“But it’s an undisputed fact that more and more Chinese love winter sports,” it said.

The Global Times, a popular and influential tabloid published by the People’s Daily, said China could be more relaxed this time around, compared with 2008.

“This time when we host the Winter Games, we may be able to be more relaxed, focusing on the beauty of the sports instead of laboring ourselves in ensuring a perfect event. We can try to make the 2022 Games a big party,” it said in an editorial.

People who opposed the Games in China are not a part of mainstream society, the paper added.

“Some of them are just following the voices of



(Centre L to R) Beijing’s Mayor and President of the Beijing 2022 delegation Wang Anshun, China’s Vice-Premier of State Council and Head of the Beijing 2022 delegation Liu Yandong, and President of the Olympic Committee Liu Peng celebrate after Beijing was awarded the 2022 Winter Olympic Games, defeating Almaty in the final round of voting, during the 128th IOC session in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, July 31, 2015.—REUTERS

popular Western-style opponents. Others have their marginal reasons. But these opinions are not mainstream in China.”

The city government’s official Beijing Daily said that the Games had already spurred efforts to clean up the environment, and that

Beijing and Zhangjiakou would not disappoint the world.

“We have the confidence, the ability and the

conditions to put on a secure, vibrant and joyful Winter Olympics for the world,” it said in an editorial.

Reuters

Predictable Premier League excitement begins

LONDON, 1 Aug — England’s Premier League is undoubtedly one of the most exciting in world football but as it embarks on its 24th season on Aug. 8 is it also becoming one of the most predictable?

Last term only Newcastle United and Everton, both of whom dropped down the table, moved more than four places either way, while two of the three promoted clubs went straight back down.

Clubs outside the top six will aim to avoid relegation which will be more important than ever with a lucrative three-year domestic television deal, worth over five billion pounds (\$7.77 billion), starting in 12 months’ time.

Overseas TV rights will add half as much again, making the struggle to stay up intense.

While the usual suspects are expected to contest the title, however, none

of them have managed to win it for two years in a row since Manchester United completed a hat-trick in 2009 under Alex Ferguson.

Since the Scot retired in 2013, the Old Trafford club have not been in serious contention to add to their record 20 championships, finishing seventh and fourth.

They have spent vast amounts of money in that time, with only mixed success, and during the close season Louis Van Gaal has continued to revamp his squad.

Germany captain Bastian Schweinsteiger from Bayern Munich and Southampton’s Frenchman Morgan Schneiderlin will improve the midfield options and allow the Dutchman to use Wayne Rooney in his best position, further forward.

By the end of the season Rooney should have overtaken Bobby Charl-

ton’s records as record scorer for England and United.

He will be more interested in whether United have regained the title from Chelsea, who led the table from the third match of last season and finished eight points clear of the previous season’s champions Manchester City.

On the day in May that Jose Mourinho’s side made sure they could not be caught, television pundit and former United defender Gary Neville told viewers, “the rest are absolutely miles behind this Chelsea team”. United, City, Arsenal and Liverpool will all believe they have reduced the gap after a transfer window in which the champions have so far been comparatively quiet.

Other than bringing in Asmir Begovic from Stoke to replace Petr Cech as second-choice goalkeeper, Mourinho’s only notable signing has been Colom-

bia striker Radamel Falcao, who failed to live up to his reputation at United last season. He impressed Chelsea’s captain John Terry when scoring a hat-trick against the Lond club for Atletico Madrid in the 2012 UEFA Super Cup final and, like United, they have now taken him on loan from Monaco, while hoping for a better return.

City scored 10 goals more than Chelsea last season and hope to outscore them again after paying a fee that could rise to 49 million pounds (\$76.16 million) for England’s Raheem Sterling.

Their total of 83 goals was 31 more than Liverpool, which explains why Brendan Rodgers made forwards his priority and signed Christian Benteke from Aston Villa, Hoffenheim’s Brazil striker Roberto Firmino and Danny Ings from relegated Burnley.

Reuters

Man United bank on Schweinsteiger for midfield mongrel

LONDON, 1 Aug — The signing of Germany captain Bastian Schweinsteiger from Bayern Munich was a massive statement of intent by Manchester United.

Not since Roy Keane swaggered round the Old Trafford pitch from 1993-2005 have United had a midfield enforcer with the skill, power and strength of character to run the team.

The 31-year-old Schweinsteiger, a World Cup winner and serial trophy accumulator with Bayern, has all the attributes to emulate the charismatic Irishman.

That is if United get the real Schweinsteiger, not the injury-prone model who has not started regularly for Bayern in recent seasons and may be distracted by his high-profile relationship with Serbian tennis player Ana Ivanovic.

United manager Louis van Gaal has no doubt about the German after working with him at Bayern.

“Bastian is, of course, no stranger to me,” the Dutchman said. “I am truly delighted he is joining Manchester United.”

“His record speaks for itself; he has won every honour at club level and was a major part of the successful Germany World Cup-winning team last summer.”

“Bastian is the ultimate professional and there is no doubting his talent and his ability to control games.”

“He brings a wealth of experience and is an excellent addition to our squad.”—Reuters