



Trafficked workers return from Indonesia

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Myanmar migrant workers get permits in Malaysia

NAY PYI TAW — A total of 2,633 undocumented Myanmar migrant workers in Malaysia have been issued with work permits and legalization of another 2,236 are being made for granting the necessary documentation to them, said a news release issued by the *Myanmar News Agency* on Sunday.

The news release has reported that officials from both countries handed over the work permits and approval papers to undocumented workers holding Myanmar passports. Under a programme called Cooperation in Registration, Legalisation and Deportation of Undocumented Myanmar Workers in Malaysia, biometric details of 4,869 undocumented migrant workers from Myanmar were registered, with steps being taken to issue work permits to 9,738 Myanmar migrant workers who have been confirmed to be Myanmar citizens, said the news release.

Meanwhile, a total of 15,256 undocumented migrant workers who were found to hold Myanmar citizenship and were unwilling to remain in Malaysia have been deported.

Since the programme's launch in Malaysia on 21 April last year, both countries have stepped up efforts to protect the rights of Myanmar migrant labourers in Malaysia, said the news release.—*GNLM*



Steps are being taken to issue work permit to remaining undocumented Myanmar migrant workers in Malaysia.—MNA

Unemployment unlikely to rise

YANGON — The introduction of a national minimum wage on August 28 has resulted in hundreds of workers losing their jobs in the commercial capital of Yangon, claims the Federation of Trade Unions Myanmar (FTUM).

FTUM's chairman U Aung Lin said that unemployment rates are unlikely to rise but called for sacked workers to be given redundancy payments, urging the Ministry of Labour to act as a go-between employers and workers.

With some 250,000 workers employed in Myanmar's garments and textiles industry, the chairman acknowledged that: "Five-hundred redundancies will

not have much of an effect on the entire workforce."

Labour unions said that some factories have stopped providing free transport and overtime payments, which causes workers considerable inconvenience.

"Losing overtime pay really hurts our living standards," said Ma Nway Oo Mon, who works at a garment factory in Hlaingthayar Township.

Garment factory owner U Aye Thoun said that employers may look to other ways to maintain profits and said that additional rules and regulations are needed to ensure that the purpose of the Minimum Wage Law is achieved.

The Myanmar National Minimum Wage Committee set a national minimum wage of K3,600 (US\$2.80) for an eight-hour work a day on 28 August following a series of discussions and negotiations among the government, employers and workers.

The International Labour Organisation in Myanmar said that the introduction of a national minimum wage will help raise living standards among low-income workers and ensure fair competitions among their employers.

According to the ILO, Myanmar is the 90th country worldwide to set a national minimum wage.—*Min Thit*



Five hundred garment workers were sacked out of a 250,000 strong workforce after the introduction of a minimum wage.—PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE

Flood-hit villagers of Myanaung receive local, oversea donations



Aid from local and oversea donors reach out to flood-hit Myanaung.—WIN BO-IPRD

MYANAUNG — Clothes, food and drinking water has been donated to 315 households in flood-affected areas in Myanaung Town by Abbot Sayadaw U Pandita and his disciples from a monastery in Mawlamyine.

Myanaung Township Sangha Nayaka Committee Chairman Sayadaw U Thumingla and member monks were present at the occasion, as were disciples from Thailand.—Win Bo-IPRD

Dam at dangerous level in Ngathaingchaung

NGATHAINGCHAUNG — A dam in Ngathaingchaung Township in Ayawaddy Region is withholding against the high tides of Ngawin River, although by September 4 the tide had reached above the one-foot danger level of 28 foot. Its resilience is due

to major maintenance works that were carried out at Ngawin Dam in early August by volunteers from local communities. Schools remain open and it is hoped that livelihoods will continue to be unaffected. An irrigation official said that the dam will breach only if

water levels surpass two feet and added that the dam has been well maintained in each of the necessary locations. He urged the community to monitor the situation in their local areas and provide authorities with information as necessary.—Soe Min Oo (IPRD)

Kachin State Election Sub-Commission Chairman resigns

MOHNYIN — Kachin State Election Sub-Commission Chairman U Nyunt Shwe said that he will forego his post as the chairman of Kachin State Election Sub-commission to allow his two sons to stand instead, he said on 1 September.

An official from the state's election sub-commission said that the decision was made in line with the Election Law, which

stipulates that any member of an election sub-commission cannot be related to a political candidate.

"My two sons have registered as candidates representing different political parties. As the election law doesn't allow us all to stand, I decided to resign from the post so as to give a chance to the next generation," U Nyunt Shwe said on 1 September.

The decision comes as elec-

tion sub-commissions carry out the vetting process of nominated candidates for the 2015 general elections, which will be held on 8 November, according to an official of the state sub-commission.

In Kachin State, 435 candidates from 17 political parties will be campaigning for 70 posts of Pyithu Hlyttaw, Amyotha Hluttaw and the State Hluttaw.—GNLM-001

Emerald Green Rural Development Plan kicks off in Myanaung

MYANAUNG — The Emerald Green Rural Development Plan will be launched in flood-hit

Myanaung township during the current 2015-2016 financial year. The plan is part of the broad-

er rural poverty alleviation plan and aims to help boost farmers' incomes.

Bank accounts for 18 villagers in the township have been opened as part of the scheme, according to the township rural development office of Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development. The Maysinyaung fund supervision committee has been organised with the approval of member villagers. Member farmers will be able to kick-start their farming activities as water levels recede using loans provided under the plan.—Win Bo (IPRD)



Villagers learn ways to get loans from Emerald Green Rural Development Plan in Myanaung.—WIN BO (IPRD)

Mandalay artists donate to flood victims



Artists from Mandalay donate robes to monks during a ceremony to handover aid to people in flood-hit areas.—TIN MAUNG

MANDALAY — A donation ceremony was held by artists in Mandalay for the rehabilitation of flooded communities at Nan Ootaik Mawlamyaing Dhamayeiktha Monastery on September 5.

The artists raised K20 million (US\$15,500) for members of Pwintauk Village and the surrounding areas of Sedottra Township in Magway Region.

Pwintauk Village is located 13 miles north of Mon Dam

in Magway Region. It was hit by high tides which inundated the entire village's 121 houses, plus a primary school and monastery, forcing residents to be evacuated to higher land.

The group of artists had visited the flood-affected area on August 26, after which time they decided to pool funds for their rehabilitation.

During the ceremony, the artists also donated Waso monk robes.—Tin Maung

Farming machinery demonstrations in Aunglan



A farmer plants rice with the use of a machine. —THEIN LWIN (IPRD)

AUNGLAN — A demonstration of paddy transplanting machines was given to local farmers in Zaya village in Aunglan Township, Magway Region, by agriculture officials and township authorities on September 4.

Farmers learned that the machines are capable of transplanting 130,000 seedlings per acre and can do so much faster than a labour-intensive, manu-

al process.

Officials told some 75 farmers from six different villages that that labour shortages could therefore be overcome and that yields would be higher if the machinery was deployed.

Farmers were encouraged to distribute half the amount of seeds than is typically sown, as much of the effectively 66.66 kg to 99.99 kilograms per acre goes to waste.—Thein Lwin (IPRD)

President sends message of felicitations to Brazil

NAY PYI TAW — U Thein Sein, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, has sent a message of felicitations to Her Excellency Ms. Dilma Vana Rousseff, President of the Federative Republic of Brazil, on the occasion of the anniversary of the Independence Day of the Federative Republic of Brazil which falls on 7 September 2015.—MNA

Trafficked workers return from Indonesia



Myanmar migrant workers arrive back home.—MNA

NAY PYI TAW — A total of 105 Myanmar migrant workers in Ambon Island of Indonesia were returned to their homeland on Sunday, an official reported.

Chief of Police Major General Zaw Win, who serves as the secretary of the Central Body for the Suppression of Trafficking in Persons (CBTIP), oversaw

arrangements for the men to be accommodated at a monastery in Kyimyindaing Township in Yangon.

The men will be returned to their homes after they have been questioned by authorities, who are investigating the circumstances surrounding the events that led to them being trafficked.

Of the migrants, 26 are from Taninthayi Region, 26 are from Mon State, 14 from Ayeyawady Region, 12 from Rakhine State, 10 from Yangon Region, eight from Bago Region, three from Mandalay and three from Shan State, two from Magway Region and one from Kachin State.—MNA

Commander-in-Chief arrives in Israel

NAY PYI TAW — A Myanmar military delegation led by Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing left Yangon on 5 September and arrived at the Ben Gurion Airport, Tel Aviv, Israel, this morning. The C-in-C is in Israel at the invitation of

Israeli Defence Minister Moshe Yaalon. He was welcomed at the airport by Director Mr Mishel Ben Baruch of International Defense Cooperation Directorate, Israel, and senior military officers from Israeli Defence Ministry, Myanmar Ambassador to Israel U Myo Aye and officials.—Myawady

Myanmar delegation leaves for Malaysia to attend 36th ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly

YANGON — A Myanmar delegation led by Dr Soe Yin who serves as a chairman of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw ASEAN Parliamentary Cooperation Committee, on Sunday left here for Malaysia to attend the 36th ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly.

They were seen off at the Yangon International Airport by Deputy Speaker of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and Pyithu Hluttaw U Nanda Kyaw Swa, Chairman of Pyithu Hluttaw International Relations Committee U Hla Myint Oo and officials.—MNA

Schools reopen in Ayeyawady Region



Students heading toward classrooms.—ZAW GYI (PANNITA)

PATHEIN (Ayeyawady Region) — Schools which were temporarily closed due to flood in recent memory in Ayeyawady Region have reopened recently, said an education officer Sunday.

However, some schools are established at monasteries and homes temporary as they were destroyed by the flood, said U Aung Kyaw Tun, Head of Ayeyawady Region Education Department.

The flood in the first week of August forced 1,645 schools, out of 6,867 in the region, to closed,

destroying 136 schools.

The local authorities is stepping up efforts to reconstruct the schools while carrying out repairing and reconstruction facilities of 546 schools with the use of funds allocated by the government.

School children in Thegon Village resumed their learning at a monastery these days at the village's monastery as the flood did not yet recede completely in the village located in a low-lying area, said a village.—Zaw Gyi (Pannita)

Mobile theatre to promote rights of disabled voters

YANGON — Disability rights group Myanmar Independent Living Initiative (MILI) will conduct a public awareness campaign on disability-inclusiveness ahead of the upcoming election in mid-October, according to its founder U Nay Lin Soe.

The local non-government organisation will use a mobile

theatre for the first time to host performances throughout Yangon to raise awareness about the rights of disabled voters.

“Most people with a disability have been excluded from voting in the past for a number of reasons. They face all sorts of discrimination and barriers to being able to vote, but they have

as much right to vote as anyone else,” MILI’s founder and programme director told *The Global New Light of Myanmar*.

U Nay Lin Soe added that the shows will star disabled performers and that the organisation will spend K3 million (US\$2,300) of its budget on the campaign, which will take place in four busy areas of Yangon.

“Performers and locations for the campaign have not yet been selected, but we’ll do so soon,” he said.

U Nay Lin Soe said that in addition to the mobile theatre, MILI will hold public discussions with candidates and persons that focus on issues affecting persons with disabilities.

According to the 2014 census, Myanmar has more than 2.3 million people with disabilities, which accounts for 4.7 percent of the country’s total population.

The MILI was founded in 2011 as an organization working to promote the rights of persons with disabilities in Myanmar.—GNLM



Members of MILI’s music band entertain people with popular songs at a charity event for rehabilitation of disaster victims.

PHOTO: [HTTPS://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/MYANMARILI2015?FREF=TS](https://www.facebook.com/MyanmarILI2015?FREF=TS)

Indian PM inaugurates new metro line in capital region



Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi

NEW DELHI — Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said development was the sole aim of his government which is dedicated to improving people's living standard and building infrastructures.

When inaugurating a new Delhi Metro line, Modi said: "Since the time people have elected us, our sole aim has been development."

The prime minister also took a ride in the new Delhi Metro line connecting Badarpur in northern New Delhi to Faridabad in the neighboring state of Haryana.

He said as long as railways, roads were not constructed, the fruits of development could not reach people, and the central and state governments must work together to build infrastructure which he said essential for progress. "Every Indian should have his or her home."

This work maybe tough, but we have to complete it," he said. The 10-year-old Delhi Metro is considered a showcase of success of modern infrastructure construction in India, by providing efficient and safe transportation services to millions each day in the capital region.—Xinhua

Indonesian president calls for stepping up effort to extinguish forest fire

JAKARTA — Indonesian President Joko Widodo on Friday ordered authorities to intensify the effort to stop forest fire in Sumatra and Borneo islands which have disturbed flight and health, senior official said here.

Head of National Disaster Management and Mitigation Agency Syamsul Maarif told reporters after a cabinet meeting that the president asked for increase of the number of monitoring posts as base for extinguishing the fire.

"His (the president) order is to strengthen the effort by opening 8 monitoring posts," Maarif said.

Maarif said that President Jokowi, popular name of the president, plans to visit the scene of the fire in Riau province in Sumatra island in this week.

"The president will visit Riau province. He is concerned with this forest fire problem," he said.

According to Maarif, the number of hot spot had reduced in the provinces of Riau and Jambi in Sumatra island on Friday, but risen in South Sumatra province.

Police and military would assist the enforcement of law against those intentionally burned forests, said Maarif.

Most of violation in the past occurred during the land clearing for the opening of new plantation. The haze from the fire has disturbed flight in the main airport

in Riau province and another small airport in Aceh province, according to Indonesian transport ministry.

However, it has not yet affected neighboring ASEAN countries. Haze from forest fire in Sumatra and Borneo islands have often impacted the neighboring countries, causing a huge economic loss.—Xinhua



Indonesian military and police officers spray water to extinguish the fire that burned a forest area at Rimbo Panjang Village in Kampar, Riau province, Indonesia, Sept. 5, 2015.—XINHUA

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Thai panel rejects controversial constitution

BANGKOK — Thailand's military-appointed reform council rejected a new constitution in a vote on Sunday, a result that pushes back the junta's timeframe for an election to April 2017 at the earliest while a new charter is written.

The constitution, which would have been Thailand's 20th in 83 years of at times turbulent democracy, was rejected by 135 members of the National Reform Council (NRC) and approved by just 105. There were seven abstentions.

That was far short of the 124 needed to pass and go to a referendum that was slated for early January. The shooting down of the charter drafted by a military-appointed panel will be cheered by political parties who derided it as an affront on democracy. It had been expected to sail through the NRC vote, but discord surfaced in recent weeks and Thai media has reported intense

lobbying and disagreement among members.

The biggest bone of contention was a late addition to the draft, the creation of a National Committee on Reform and Reconciliation Strategy. This committee would have been dominated by military, allowing it to exercise power over the executive and legislative branches in a vaguely defined "crisis" situation.

The NRC's rejection effectively prolongs the military's rule to 2017 because it means the whole process needs to start from scratch. Had it passed, an election was expected in the second half of 2016.

The government now has one month to appoint a committee that would have a 180 days to draft a new constitution that would go to a referendum some three months after, according to a timeframe of the process previously outlined by the generals.

Death toll climbs to 43 in boat capsized off Malaysia

KUALA LUMPUR — The death toll of a boat which capsized off the Malaysian coast has risen to 43 on Sunday after another 14 bodies were spotted in the sea, according to the local media.

New Straits Times, a Malaysian English-language newspaper, quoted a police officer as saying that two of the bodies had been

brought onshore at about 10 a.m. (0200 GMT) and the rest were expected be retrieved in the next few hours.

He said the bodies were found about 8 nautical miles from the spot where the over-loaded boat was believed to have capsized on Thursday.

It also said the capsized boat,

That means an election would take place around April 2017. The draft constitution had received a torrent of criticism from academics and media and has outraged politicians of the major parties, which have been sidelined since the military seized power in a May 2014 coup.

Critics called it a blueprint for a managed democracy that would weaken elected parliaments and governments and contained mechanisms that effectively gave the establishment and military the means to intervene in politics, either directly or by proxy through appointed lawmakers and panels.

The Puea Thai Party, ousted from office in the coup, was among parties which last week urged the NRC to reject the draft. In a statement, it said the constitution would create more conflict and "allow a dictatorial regime to continue to suppress people without checks and balances."—Reuters

which was believed to be carrying between 70 and 80 people when the tragedy happened, could only accommodate between 10 and 15 passengers.

The boat capsized early Thursday off Malaysia's western coast in the Malacca Strait, and most of the passengers were believed to be Indonesian migrants.—Xinhua

Turbulence injures 40 on Manila-bound flight

MANILA — Some 40 passengers were injured after turbulence hit an international flight bound for Manila on Saturday, the Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines (CAAP) said Sunday.

The CAAP said at 3:18 p.m. Saturday (0718 GMT), the pilot of Qatar Airlines flight QR932 requested priority landing from Manila tower due to some passengers sustaining minor injuries because of the incident.

The aircraft, which took off in Doha, landed safely at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport with medics providing medical assistance to about 40 passengers, including three children and two flight attendants, who sustained minor injuries such as abrasions, it said.

Upon investigation, the CAAP said it was determined that the incident was triggered by clear air turbulence.

Clear air turbulence is not associated with clouds and therefore cannot be detected visually or by conventional weather radar. It can strike even in the absence of clouds and pilots have no time to warn passengers and crew to get strapped to their seats.—Xinhua

Russia denies US charges on escalation of conflict in Syria

WASHINGTON — Russia's Foreign Ministry on Saturday shunned concerns of the United States about an alleged Russian military build-up in Syria, which US Secretary of State John Kerry said could lead to escalation of conflict in the war-torn country. Kerry made his views known to his Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov during a telephone conversation Saturday, one day after Russian President Vladimir Putin denied his country's involvement in military operations against the Islamic State (IS) group in Syria.

"We are looking at various options but so far what you are talking about (Russia sending troops into Syria) is not on the agenda," Putin said Friday.

Russia's Foreign Ministry said Saturday's telephone call was made at Kerry's initiative, without mentioning the United States' concerns about a possible Russian military build-up. It said the two men discussed "different aspects of the situation in Syria and its environs, as well as the objectives of the fight against the IS and other terrorist groups," highlighting "cooperation" between Moscow and Washington in "supporting UN efforts aimed at launching a political process in Syria." Israeli news outlet Ynet reported Monday, citing anonymous Western officials, that Russia was sending fighter jets to Syria to conduct airstrikes against Islamic State positions.—Reuters

PICTURE OF THE DAY



Spanish bullfighter Morante de la Puebla performs a pass to a bull during the "Corrida Goyesca" bullfight in Ronda, near Malaga, southern Spain September 5, 2015. In the annual "Corrida Goyesca" fight in Ronda's historic bullring the bullfighters wear costumes from the era of 18th century painter Francisco Goya.—REUTERS

US voices concern to Russia over latest military moves in Syria

WASHINGTON — Secretary of State John Kerry told his Russian counterpart on Saturday the United States was deeply concerned about reports that Moscow was moving toward a major military build-up in Syria widely seen as aimed at bolstering President Bashar al-Assad.

US authorities have detected "worrisome preparatory steps," including transport of prefabricated housing units for hundreds of people to a Syrian airfield, that could signal that Russia is readying deployment of heavy military assets there, a senior US official told Reuters.

The official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Moscow's exact intentions remained unclear but that Kerry called Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov to leave no doubt of the US position.

The State Department pointed to media accounts suggesting an "imminent enhanced Russian military build-up" in Syria.

"The secretary made clear that if such reports were accurate, these actions could further escalate the conflict, lead to greater loss of innocent life, increase refugee flows and risk confrontation with the anti-ISIL coalition operating in Syria," the State Department said, using an acronym for Islamic State.

Russia's actions could signal an intensified effort to support Assad, a long-time Russian ally who has seen the area he controls whittled down to a fifth or less of Syria's territory after more than four years of grinding civil war.

Among the latest steps by Russia is the delivery of the temporary housing units and a portable air traffic control station to an airfield near the port city of Latakia, an Assad stronghold, the US official said.

The Russians have also filed military overflight requests with neighboring countries, the US official said.

In addition, Russia



US Secretary of State John Kerry delivers a speech on the nuclear agreement with Iran, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, September 2, 2015.—REUTERS

has dispatched a military advance team to Syria, the New York Times reported.

It cited unnamed US officials saying that while there was no indication Russia intended to send in significant ground forces, the housing could accommodate as many as 1,000 military advisers and other personnel and enable the airfield to be a supply hub or a launching pad for Russian airstrikes.

But the official told Reuters: "It is inconclusive exactly what the Russians'

intent is.

We have not seen the actual deployment of military assets or aircraft or forces."

The official said the conclusions were drawn from a "variety of sources."

The Los Angeles Times reported US intelligence gathered the evidence from satellite reconnaissance photos.

A US security source also told Reuters there were signs of a Russian move to intervene in Syria beyond its already robust military

support role, which have included weapons and training.

The source said the United States will be watching to see whether any increased Russian military role will be used strictly to help Assad or to push back Islamic State, which has seized swathes of Syria and neighboring Iraq and is the target of a US-led coalition bombing campaign.

The US official declined to say how Lavrov had responded to Kerry's concerns. The State Department said the two agreed that discussions on the Syrian conflict would continue this month in New York, where the UN General Assembly meets.

Lavrov said last month the United States should cooperate with Assad to fight Islamic State militants.

The United States and Russia have long been at loggerheads over Syria. Russia has backed Assad. The United States advocates a political transition to end his rule.—Reuters

China, Pakistan launch joint air drill

BEIJING — "Shaheen (Eagle)-4," a joint drill between the air forces of China and Pakistan, began on Sunday in China, a military spokesperson announced.

The Chinese contingent includes fighter jets, fighter bombers and early warning planes while its Pakistani counterpart dispatched fighter jets and early warning planes, according to Air Force spokesperson Shen Jinke.

Shen, however, did not say how long the drill would last.

The joint exercise is part of a series of military exchange programs between the two air forces, Shen said, adding that China's Air Force was willing to expand the scope of cooperation with various countries. The first such drill was held in Pakistan in March 2011, the second in China's western Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region in September 2013, and the third was held in Punjab, Pakistan, in May last year.—Xinhua

10 killed, 8 missing after fishing boat capsizes off S Korea

SEOUL — Ten people were found dead while eight others were still missing, after a South Korean fishing boat capsized off the country's southern coast on Sunday, police said.

The 9.77-ton boat Dolphin capsized at about 6:25 a.m. local time Sun-

day (2125 GMT Saturday) near Chuja Island, north of the southern resort island of Jeju, Yonhap news agency quoted the police as saying.

The boat lost communications late Saturday shortly after leaving Chuja for Haenam in the country's southwestern coast.

Twenty-one fishermen were believed to be on board the ship. Ten bodies, including that of the captain, have been found in waters around Chuja, with only three rescued. Eight people have still been unaccounted for.

About 50 vessels, including coast guard ships

and military vessels, as well as a patrol aircraft and a helicopter were dispatched to the waters for search operations. Scores of divers were searching bodies undersea.

The Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries has set up a control tower in the administrative city of

Sejong to handle the maritime tragedy. President Park Geun-hye instructed utmost efforts in the search and rescue operations, and Prime Minister Hwang Kyo-ahn held a meeting with ministers and vice ministers in Sejong to discuss the incident.—Xinhua

Britain signals move towards air strikes in Syria

ANKARA/ LONDON — Britain moved closer to military action in Syria as a senior minister on Saturday said Europe's migration crisis had to be tackled at its source and a newspaper said a parliamentary vote on bombing Islamic State militants in Syria could take place next month.

Chancellor George Osborne said Britain and Europe had to find a way to tackle the conflict in Syria as well as provide asylum to those genuinely fleeing persecution.

"You've got to deal with the problem at source, which is this evil Assad regime and the ISIL (Islamic State) terrorists, and you need a comprehensive plan for a more stable, peaceful Syria," Osborne told Reuters in an interview.

"A huge challenge of course, but you can't just let that crisis fester. We've got to get engaged in that."

The Sunday Times newspaper said British Prime Minister David Cameron wanted to hold a vote in parliament in early October to pave the way for air strikes against Islamic State in Syria.

He was also seeking to launch a military and intelligence offensive against people traffickers, the newspaper said, quot-

ing senior officials.

French newspaper Le Monde reported earlier on Saturday that France was considering conducting air strikes on Islamic State in Syria, joining an international coalition led by the United States.

Cameron, under pressure to take more action in response to the migration crisis in Europe, said on Friday that the country would welcome "thousands more" Syrian refugees.

The Sunday Times said Cameron was prepared to accept 15,000 refugees from camps located close to Syria.

His government has come under pressure to do more to address the crisis following the publication of images of a Syrian toddler lying dead on a Turkish beach, which led to a public outpouring of emotion.

Osborne, speaking on the sidelines of a meeting of G20 finance chiefs in Turkey on Saturday, said the British government would provide more details of its plans next week.

"Yes, we must offer asylum to those who are genuinely fleeing persecution."

Countries like Britain always have, we are one of the founders of the asylum



British Finance Minister George Osborne listens to a question during an interview with Reuters in Ankara, Turkey, September 5, 2015.—REUTERS

system. We will take, as the prime minister said, thousands more," he said.

"But at the same time, you've got to make sure you've got aid going into the refugee camps on the borders ... We've got to defeat these criminal gangs who trade in human misery and risk people's lives and kill people."

Resolving the migration crisis also means dealing with the problem of President Bashar al-Assad's "evil" administration in Syria and Islamic State, Osborne said.

Cameron has suggested he would like to ask Britain's parliament to vote to join the US-led air strikes on Islamic State

militants in Syria, after lawmakers rejected military strikes in Syria in 2013.

However, the prime minister said on Friday he would only proceed with a fresh vote in parliament if there was a "genuine consensus" in Britain about bombing Islamic State in Syria.

Some British media interpreted the comment as a sign of concern on the part of Cameron that the opposition Labour Party would not support such a move if its leadership race is won by Jeremy Corbyn, the left-wing front-runner and an outspoken critic of Britain's role in the war in Iraq.—Reuters

Dutch journalist says she has been arrested again in Turkey

AMSTERDAM — A Dutch journalist and author who writes about Turkey's Kurdish minority said she was arrested on Sunday, the second time this year she has fallen foul of the Turkish authorities.

"I'm in custody in Yuksekova," Frederike Geerdink said via her Twitter account. She had been travelling with a Kurdish protest group whose members were all also taken into custody, she wrote.

A report by the Dutch ANP news agency said Geerdink had been arrested on suspicion of "travelling in a forbidden area." Turkish authorities could not immediately be reached for comment.

A freelance journalist based in the mainly Kurdish southeastern city of Diyarbakir, Geerdink was arrested in January and accused of posting messages on social media in favour of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK).

Her arrest was decried by human rights and press freedom groups. She was acquitted of propaganda charges in April.

A spokesman for the Netherlands' foreign ministry said on Sunday the Dutch embassy in Ankara was "monitoring the situation." Last week a Turkish court freed two Vice News journalists arrested in the southeast of Turkey on charges of having links to a terrorist organisation. The court freed the two British journalists but ruled to keep their Iraqi fixer in custody pending investigation.

The arrests caused an uproar from rights groups and raised concerns about Ankara's record on press freedoms at a time when Turkey is cracking down on Kurdish militants and taking on a bigger role in the US-led coalition against Islamic State in Syria.

Kurdish militants having been clashing almost daily with security forces in southeast Turkey since July, when a two-year ceasefire between the PKK and the government collapsed, with both sides blaming each other. Officials say that more than 70 members of the security forces and hundreds of Kurdish militants have been killed. Geerdink authored a book in Dutch on Turkey's Kurds and publishes an English language blog called "Kurdish Matters."—Reuters

Tsipras plays down fears of fractured result in Greek election

ATHENS — Former Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras played down fears on Sunday that a snap election in two weeks would produce a fractured result, saying there were enough undecided voters to produce a clear winner on the day.

Tsipras resigned last month to make way for the election, hoping to secure a new mandate for a tough austerity programme he agreed in exchange for an 86 billion euro bailout with the cash-starved country's creditors.

But having started out as the clear frontrunner, his leftist Syriza party's poll lead has collapsed in the past days, making for an unexpectedly close contest against his main rival, the conservative New Democracy party.

The prospect of a fractured result after the Sept. 20 vote has stoked fears of yet more political

instability in a country hit by years of instability and recession, and raised the prospect of Greece having to go to the polls again.

"There is 15-20 percent of undecided voters right now. In simple maths, this means that the party that will come first, if it doesn't secure an outright majority at the parliament, will be very close to it," Tsipras said in an interview with Skai television that was broadcast on Sunday. "So a government will be formed."

Tsipras stormed to power in January promising voters an end to austerity and that he would redefine the relationship Athens has with its international lenders - the European Commission, the International Monetary Fund and the European Central Bank.

But with the economy on the brink of collapse, its banks shut and the chance of a euro exit

looming ever closer, Tsipras eventually capitulated to the creditors' demands.

On Sunday, he again defended that decision, saying the country would have been worse off without the bailout, and also ruled out forming a national unity government with New Democracy if the election proved inconclusive.

"There is no room for cooperation in government because the differences in our policy programmes are very big and because we know very well that we don't share the same target," he said.

Although he was forced to back down in negotiations with the creditors, Tsipras has at least secured the prospect of some form of relief for the country's ballooning debt, although its largest creditor, Germany, has ruled out any form of "haircut".

Tsipras, who never wears a tie and whose



A protestor shouts slogans through a loudspeaker as riot policemen stand guard during an anti-austerity demonstration in the northern city of Thessaloniki, Greece September 5, 2015.—REUTERS

government became known for its informal style, said he would don a tie if he secured debt relief. Asked when this will happen, he said: "We will

have this very important development over the debt by the end of the year.

We will have a difficult year but I am optimistic." Tsipras will make a

major campaign speech, which could include new policy announcements, in the northern city of Thessaloniki on Sunday evening.—Reuters

Failure of Syria diplomacy exposes enduring divisions over Assad

BEIRUT/MOSCOW — While the desperate flight of Syrians from their country's war was dominating news bulletins this summer, yet another diplomatic push to end the four-year-old conflict was quietly running into the sand.

That largely unnoticed failure has reinforced the view amongst Syria experts that there is no solution in sight, with one of the biggest obstacles a seemingly unbridgeable international divide over President Bashar al-Assad's future.

As a consequence, Syria looks set for ever greater fragmentation into a patchwork of territories, one of them the diminishing Damascus-based state where Assad appears confident of survival with backing from his Russian and Iranian allies.

While some Western officials say even Assad's allies now recognize he cannot win back and stabilize Syria, Moscow is setting out its case for supporting him in ever more forthright terms.

Russia's foreign minister in recent days reiterated the Russian view that Assad is a legitimate

leader, slammed the US position to the contrary as "counterproductive", and likened the west's approach to Syria to its failures in Iraq and Libya.

Russia meanwhile continues to supply Assad with weapons.

A Syrian military official told Reuters there has recently been a "big shift" in Russian military support, including new weapons and training. "Our ties are always developing but in these days a qualitative shift has happened. We call it a qualitative shift in Arabic, which means big," the Syrian official said. Such assertions are difficult to verify, but US Secretary of State John Kerry expressed his concern over reports of increased Russian involvement in a telephone call with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov on Saturday. The New York Times said Russia had sent a military advance team to Syria, citing American intelligence analysts.

Reflecting the logjam over Assad, some of the ideas being tabled for advancing a political process sidestep the question of his future altogether - at least for now,

according to a diplomat tracking the conflict.

Yet this remains the biggest single obstacle to breaking a diplomatic impasse around a war whose repercussions are being felt like never before in Europe, which faces a migration crisis fueled by Syrian refugees. In turn, it is a big complication for efforts to fight the Islamic State group that has flourished in the bloodshed of a conflict that has killed a quarter of a million people and driven another 11 million from their homes.

Despite a US-led bombing campaign against the jihadist group, Islamic State (ISIS) still holds wide areas of Syria and is poised for further moves toward the big, Assad-controlled cities in the west: Islamic State already has a presence in the southern suburbs of Damascus. "I don't see a tremendous amount of change out of the Iranians or Russians. There is some talk of them being tired, but their positions are pretty firm," said Andrew Tabler, a Middle East specialist with the Washington Institute. "They think that Assad's



Syria's president Bashar al-Assad

immediate departure would lead to a collapse of the regime. Washington also sees a rapid collapse of the regime as something that would be a boon for ISIS. They are in a conundrum: if Assad goes right away, it would help ISIS, but if he doesn't go at all, you have no hope of putting the pieces of Syria back together again," he said.

"This recent outburst of diplomacy is because everyone was be-

coming concerned, and rightfully so. But the results of that process were remarkably poor. They seem to cement the earlier political positions of the region when it comes to Syria." The recent flurry of diplomatic activity followed the conclusion of Iran's nuclear deal with world powers and included high-level meetings between states with a stake in the conflict, with Russia taking the lead.—Reuters

Poland may buy submarines with other NATO members

WARSAW — Poland may join forces with other NATO members such as Norway or the Netherlands to buy submarines in a bid to cut costs, instead of buying them alone, deputy defence minister Czeslaw Mroczek said on Sunday.

The ministry had been planning to buy three submarines with delivery set for 2020-25. But the purchase, which was set to be launched at the beginning of this year, got stalled as Poland decided to arm the fleet with manoeuvring missiles, a change in contract specification that increased the costs.

"We are considering obtaining submarines, for instance together with Norway or the Netherlands," Mroczek told state news agency PAP.

"We are finishing works on initial settings - tactical and technical," he added. "From the point of view of the procedure and how we do it - whether in one or two proceedings - will depend on if we buy the submarines alone or as a joint project of two or more NATO members."

According to PAP, French industrial group DCNS, Swedish Saab Kockums and German ThyssenKrupp Marine Systems are interested in the tender.

Poland's defence ministry was not immediately available for comment.—Reuters

Saudi-led coalition jets bomb Houthis in Yemeni capital

SANAA — Saudi-led coalition jets on Sunday bombed a Houthi military position and army bases in the Yemeni capital Sanaa in what appeared to be more retaliation against Yemen's dominant group for the killing of dozens of coalition soldiers two days ago.

The air strikes targeted troops loyal to former President Ali Abdullah Saleh, an ally of the Houthis, and a Houthi base in what was the al-Imam University, a religious school affiliated

to the Muslim Brotherhood in northern Sanaa.

Residents said explosions could be heard all night and buildings had been levelled but there were no immediate reports of casualties as most people in the area had been evacuated.

"The sounds of explosions had not stopped since 1:15 a.m. (2215 GMT)," one resident told Reuters.

On Saturday, at least 24 members of two families were

killed in Sanaa by air strikes targeting Houthi positions in the city, according to local medical sources. Hospital officials said on Sunday the death toll had risen to 27. On Friday, the Iranian-allied Houthis had attacked a weapons storage facility in Marib, exiled President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi's supporters had been massing troops and military hardware in preparation for an assault on Sanaa.

The attack killed 45 Emirati

soldiers, five Bahrainis, 10 Saudis and four Yemenis.

It was the heaviest toll suffered by the Saudi-led alliance since air strikes began in March to try to restore Hadi to power after the Houthis began advancing on his main base in the southern port city of Aden.

United Arab Emirates forces were important in helping Hadi's supporters drive the Houthis and their allies out of Aden, a big win for the Arab coalition.—Reuters



Smoke billows from the site of a Saudi-led air strike on al-Dailami air base in Yemen's capital Sanaa September 6, 2015. —REUTERS

PERSPECTIVES

Monday, 7 September, 2015

Mitigating extreme weather patterns

By Kyaw Thura

Myanmar is ranked the second worst country to be affected by extreme weather patterns resulting from climate change, according to the Global Climate Risk Index 2015.

The Berlin-based climate think tank Germanwatch assessed the effects of the country's extreme weather events in the years between 1994 and 2013.

According to the report, Myanmar is at greater risk of extreme weather conditions such as cyclones, flooding, severe heat and drought due to deforestation.

Myanmar's economy is driven by agriculture: 70 percent of its population relying on farming for a livelihood and thus the effects of climate change pose a serious challenge. It is therefore important for the government to avoid some of the mistakes made elsewhere in the past. The government should instead choose an approach that is best suited to the sustainable development of the country, and to make decisions in partnership with civil society.

Dr Tun Lwin, a climatologist and a former director general of the Department of Meteorology and Hydrology, quoted the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) as projecting a record strong El Nino effect that could last into the early spring of 2016 from this winter. It will cause a scarcity of water, both for farming and for drinking, and in particular where water-supply facilities have been de-

stroyed by the recent floods. To make the matter worse, central Myanmar is expected to receive less rainfall between now and October due to the retreat of a southwesterly monsoon. These conditions have the potential to wreak further havoc on agricultural output. The clock is ticking and we must act fast to help protect the country's farming communities.

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Significance of International Literacy Day 2015 to Myanmar

Myo Myint

SINCE 1966, International Literacy Day has been celebrated in member countries of the United Nations every year on 8th September under the aegis of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) with a specific theme to focus on one of the many facets of literacy in promoting peace, progress and prosperity for mankind. The theme selected by UNESCO for this year is Literacy and Sustainable Societies. In my opinion, the theme highlights the role of literacy in building stability, security, sensitivity to social needs, sincerity by all levels of society in showing concern for the welfare of others, skill-building to make use of the opportunities and to face the challenges of the 21st century and securing success in raising education, health and economic standards of the poor which are all necessary in promoting sustainable societies. Among the many challenges developing countries are facing is bringing literacy to all their citizens, because according to UNESCO, worldwide 781 million adults are still unable to read and write and among them two-thirds are women.

Myanmar fully realizes the role of literacy in poverty alleviation and building a peaceful, prosperous and modern society and has given due attention to the spread of literacy in the country. Success achieved by Myanmar in this very important area has been given due recognition by the world community with the awarding of two international awards, the Mohamed Reza Pahlavi Prize in 1971 and twelve years later, in 1983, the Noma Prize. The success was achieved not due to the effort, or brilliance of a single person, or of a small group of people, but it was achieved because of the awakening, contribution, active participation, organizational skills, firm support, and sustained efforts of many leading scholars in the country, national and local level authorities, university and basic education teachers, artistes and hundreds of university

student volunteers, some of whom had never set foot in the countryside, and who bravely faced weeks of discomfort and deprivation to live among their learners, many of them from poor villages in order to promote literacy in both accessible and remote rural areas. The names of those persons who took a leading role in the pioneering literacy campaigns should be put on record for their outstanding contribution to freeing thousands of illiterates from the shackles of dependency, ignorance and backwardness, because where there is dependency, there will be exploitation by more educated and deceitful persons, where there is ignorance, there will be ill-will, strive, and intolerance, and where there is backwardness, there will be human suffering due to outdated and harmful health and social practices. Moreover, it must also be noted that the success could not have been achieved without the enthusiastic participation of thousands of middle-aged male and female illiterates who shed their inhibitions and shame to learn new skills like little children. The literacy campaigns first initiated in Myanmar as a pilot project in 1965 continue up to the present, and each year, new areas where pockets of illiteracy still prevail are identified, and during the long summer vacation, literacy campaigns are held in these areas with the assistance of volunteer university students and teachers in the region. This year, literacy campaigns are being held in 30 townships, a huge increase from that of 9 in 2003.

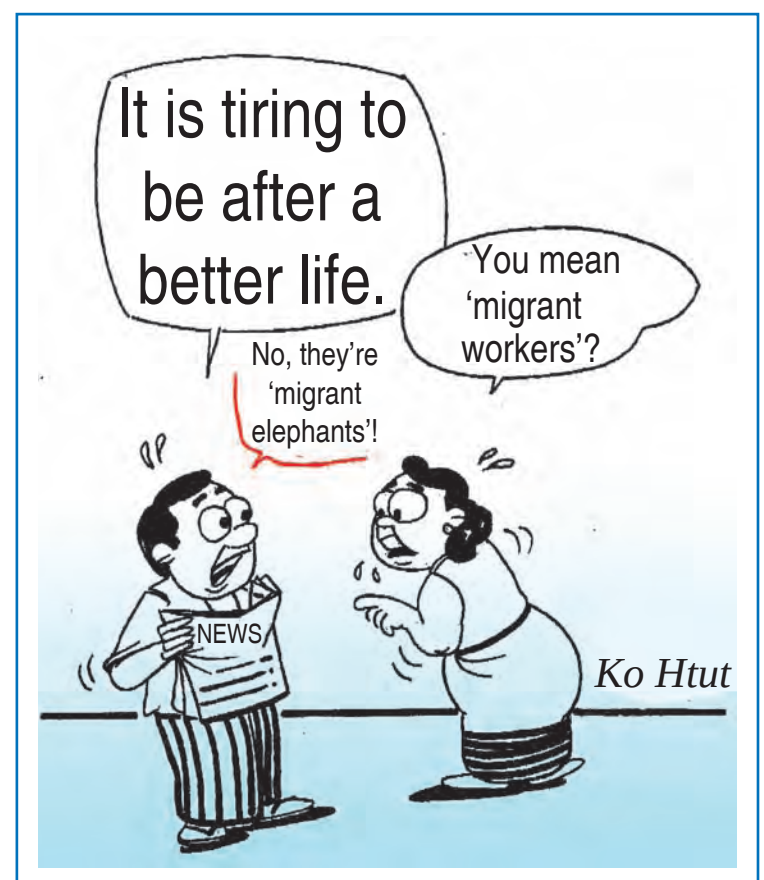
In my opinion, if they are to achieve total success, literacy campaigns need to adopt a five-pronged strategy. The first is to ensure total eradication in an area through repeated but smaller campaigns making use of local resources, such as the teachers and high school students in the locality, to ensure that there are no illiterates remaining in the area. Neo-literates can also be invited to assist as guides as well as to serve as inspirations to those who have to repeatedly attend literacy classes to gain full literacy. The second is to ensure that neo-literates do

not relapse into illiteracy again. Sometimes, people may not remember that certain skills can be forgotten once they do not make much use of it. Literacy is one such skill. To provide opportunities for neo-literates to practice their skills, they need to be provided regularly with attractive and interesting graded readers on topics relevant to them and that benefits them. If possible, libraries and small book lending centres for all literates should be established in each village or a cluster of villages. Reading, writing and arithmetic competitions for neo-literates should also be held occasionally to enable them to show off their skills. The third is to link literacy with life skills, self and family management skills and small-scale vocational training programmes by reinforcing verbal instruction with simple written instructions, thereby giving them practical opportunities to make use of their newly acquired skills. The strategy is to encourage young neo-literates to join formal education, and for them to do so, education opportunities need to be created through various kinds of assistance from the community and the state, so that the literacy skills they have acquired can be put to use in order to gain more advanced knowledge and skills. The fifth is to invite participation of the private sector to contribute their human, financial and technical resources in the national endeavour to promote literacy and make them appreciate that being involved in the literacy campaigns is also fulfilling a part of their corporate social responsibility. One area where the private sector can take a leading role is to provide financial and technical assistance in the production of learning materials for literacy campaigns as well in the production and distribution of reading and writing materials for the neo-literates, the holding of vocational programmes and the establishment of reading centres in villages. This needs sustained interest as well as sustained investments. Not only will this involvement enhance their corporate image of their enterprises and industries, but it will also make genuine contribution to

national development and productivity, and the improvement of the lives of individual families.

As we learnt from our past experience, future literacy campaigns needs the active participation of many persons and organizations in the country – the government, local authorities, higher education institutions, basic and higher education teachers, university students, methodology specialists at teacher education institutions, artistes, media personnel, illiterates and their communities. Links need also to be formed with international organizations to coordinate with them in keeping track of literacy figures and the progress achieved, gaining technical and financial assistance from them, and sharing best practices to advance literacy. Finally, what are the dividends of promoting literacy in the country? A literate population is easier to lead to the path of development. A literate population values knowledge, education, and skills, seeks to constantly improve itself, tries to progress from basic reading,

writing, numeracy literacy to advanced digital and media literacy and also tries to provide better education than they have received to the next generation. A literate population can better manage its social and health matters. A literate population has better thinking skills that will help it differentiate between right and wrong, major and minor issues and injustice and fairness and makes better decisions. A literate population cannot be incited over minor issues, has more understanding and patience, values democratic principles, can be more tolerant to diversity and better appreciates peace knowing that wars and strives do more harm than benefit. A literate population also respects each other's rights, accepts responsibilities, is less selfish and is reluctant to exploit others, knowing that justice and equality are better for a society than injustice and inequality. All these factors enhance society and contribute to building a sustainable one and make it want to improve itself for the next generation.



A Study of Myanmar Puppetry (Part V)

Maha Saddhamma Jotika dhaja
Sithu Dr. Khin Maung Nyunt

King Bagyidaw's Edict on Marionette Show
The writer's English translation
Amyint Thabin Ameidaw
[Royal Edict on Marionette Show]

I. "The Amyint Thabin shall be hereafter named *Yoke Thay* [marionette]. The puppeteers must be educated men only. No woman must be allowed to participate in the performance of the show. The show may take themes and plots from the 550 *Jatakas* [Buddha's birth stories], history *Mahawun*, *Zimney* history, fables and pagoda *thamaing* [legends]. There should be altogether 36 puppet figures."

"Homage to the Buddha should be paid at the place where the show would take place."

II. Construction of puppet stage

"If a drama is going to be performed, a stage of nine divisions, each division measuring three cubits must be constructed. At the front of the stage there should be a bar of eighteen cubits fixed at a height of twenty one fists' length. In the front of this bar, a long bamboo mat of five fists' breadth must be spread out. From the front of the middle divisions to the back of the stage there should be a space of four divisions, each measuring three cubits' length. From other divisions on the left and right sides to the back of the stage there should be spaces of four divisions of each three cubits' length, two divisions of each three cubits' length and one division of each three cubits' length. The whole stage must have altogether eighteen divisions."

III. Materials to be used in stage construction

"The stage must be made of bamboo and thatch only. It must not be constructed vis-à-vis East West, North or South. *Kya Thaung* and *Kya Khat* bamboo must not be used in the construction of the stage. Thatch should not be roofed face to face. The mat must be spread out from the right side of the stage to the left side."

IV. The rituals

"The one who hires the marionette show must propitiate the nat spirit with the offering of a green coconut, bananas, and a quarter of one *tical* of pure silver [တန်တေငွေတမတ်].

The plot of the drama must

be made known to the *nat* spirits. There should be two places of offering, one at the front [of the stage], the other at the back. "At the back" means at the musical ensemble "*Saing Waing*".

There should be three performances for three successive nights. On the first night, the *Saing* [musical ensemble] must play the overtune of "Wind", "Fire" and "Rain" three times followed by a votaress dance. She must enter the performance area from the right side because this country is *Zabu-dipa* the right sided island on the south.

First homage must be paid to the stage, second homage to the local authorities, and the third homage to the audience. Homage paying song must be sung by leading male and female puppet dancers [i.e. Prince and Princess]. No other person must sing it. The *Saing Waing* [musical ensemble] should play 37 ditties for the 37 *nat* spirits. After that, the *nat* votaress must exit from above the bar."

V. The Himalayan Forest scene

"Next, to present three forests, three branches of trees must be set up on the stage. The three branches must be cut off from the astrologically auspicious trees. No creeper is allowed on the stage. To convey the image of the walls of the Universe, the three branches must be brought out from the beneath of the bar.

Then dragon and garuda must enter. The dragon must enter from the below the bar, the garuda must enter from above the bar, not from the sides. Then *Yakha* [ogre] and *Gon-man* [senior ogre] must enter - The former from the right side and the latter from the left side of the stage, the tiger from the right side. Next follows the horse, which enters facing the court scene, firstly making four-legged movements, secondly galloping, and finally running fast, and at exits from the side of the court scene."

"The necromancer [*Zawgyi* or alchemist] enters dancing with agile and acrobatic movements, miming the making of herbal medicine with his magic wand. He must enter either from the middle entrance of the bar, or above the bar and exit from either.

Then, in accordance with the drama to be performed, the court scene must be set up on the right side of the stage. Should there be two rival courts, the right side court scene must be set up first. Should there be a hermitage, it should be set up simultaneously with the



Myanmar marionette experts manipulate puppet figures of monkey (c) and garudas.

PHOTO PROVIDED BY DAW MA MA NAING

court scene.

A train of Prime Minister, Judicial Minister, *Wun-dauk-taw Min*, and *Myo Wun Min* enters from the left side. They walk majestically to the right side. Before they go in, for royal audience, they discuss state, legal and judicial matters with highly dignified and officious tones in elegant court language. The *Saing Waing* then plays the music announcing the royal entry of His Majesty the King. The king enters from the right side and takes his position on the throne. During the royal audience, the plot of the drama must be laid out in the conversation between the king and the ministers.

"The king must not weep, cry, in any kind of drama or play. He must retain his majestic dignity. In the dialogue the general outline of the drama [synopsis] must be hinted at."

Poetical quotations and epigrammatic sayings should not be uttered in the premier show. They may be uttered on the subsequent shows. Any drama must always be performed three successive nights.

1. The *nat* spirit, the *Thagyar*, the Brahma, and the necromancer must enter and exit from above the bar. They must never enter or exit from the sides. Their feet must not touch the floor.
2. Water creatures like fish, tortoise, crocodile must not be lifted or raised above the floor.
3. Jungle creatures like dragon, garuda, tigers and lions must first enter from the left side.

VI. The carving of puppet figures

"Regarding the making of puppet figures, men, horse and *nat* spirit must be carved out of the *Yamanay* wood [*Gmelina arborea*] or *thitmyitzu* wood. All the rest are to be made of let pan, *than thut* wood."

"All puppet figures must have all anatomical parts, including gender organs.

VII. Taboos or forbidding

"During the performance, special care must be taken so as not to cause any harm or offend religion, state, king and government. Jokes must not be so obscene as to insult the modesty and dignity of the monks, and Brahmins.

Anyone found guilty shall have either his body or hand or tongue mutilated."

"No other musical ensemble *Saing Waing* except the State *Saing Waing* must be gilded and decorated with glass-mosaic."

"The master of *Saing Waing*, the leading puppeteer and the stage manager have the right to punish their subordinates found guilty, either by beating up or detaining them in the lock-up. They can punish even those who are senior in age but junior in education and experience.

With the exception of king, queen, prince, prince regent, all who hire the puppet show must pay fort. Only with the consent of the puppeteers, may puppet shows be performed gratis.

Except in the case of pagoda and *nat* festivals no puppet show must be performed without the permit of *Myo Wun* [town governor]."

We thus notice that the above "*Ameidaw*" law bears strong witness to the place of precedence accorded to Myanmar puppetry in the past, and the significant role it had played in the history Myanmar performing arts. It is important to note that Myanmar is the only country which had a high official of ministerial status appointed by the king himself to look after the entertainments.

The minister for Royal Entertainment, *Thabin Wun*, was entitled to wear "*Thakhar Thoyin*" jacket, old head strap, two vermillion painted *Thaings* [insignia of his rank, long cane with white silk scurf tied to it] and a silver encased sword. He got a monthly salary of kyat 100 in pure silver. It is not easy to get appointed to this kind of post. Apart from the fact that he must be a most trustworthy man of the king, some educational qualifications were also required. He must be well-versed in *Pali*, *Bedin* [Vedas], cosmology, astrology, some knowledge of medicine, sculpture, classical literature, judicial matters, philosophy, and *Tipitaka*, Buddhist canonical texts and *Jatakas*.

It is therefore no wonder that with such strict conventions and long tradition, *Ameidaw* and supervision of the *Thabin Wun*, Myanmar puppetry and puppet show developed so much and had survived so long.

(Concluded)

China's Dalian Wanda, Suning Commerce sign cooperation deal

BEIJING — Dalian Wanda Commercial Properties Co. has signed a cooperation deal with Suning Commerce Group Co. Ltd that will see the electronics retailer open stores at Wanda Plazas throughout the country.

Suning, in which Alibaba Group Holding Ltd. last month took a 19.99 percent stake for \$4.6 billion, plans to open 40 stores at Wanda locations by year's end with more to follow.

It currently operates

1,600 outlets throughout the country.

For Wanda Commercial, which expects to raise the total number of plazas to 135 by the end of the year from more than 100 now, Suning's presence may provide a large commercial tenant with the potential to drive retail sales in a slowing economy.

"It's a win-win for both sides," Wang Jianlin, chairman of Dalian Wanda Group, Wanda Commercial's controlling shareholder, said at the signing

ceremony on Sunday. Dalian Wanda Group, headed by China's richest man, has been exiting some traditional businesses in a bid to become a fully diversified services-led conglomerate.

It expects services revenue and profit to surpass property for the first time in 2016.

In August, Wanda said it was closing down the country's largest karaoke chain, Superstar, along with some of its struggling department stores.

"China's consumer behaviour is undergoing significant changes, inevitably hurting some large-scale retailers," Qu Dejun, president of Wanda Commercial, had said in a statement at the time.

Dalian Wanda Group, which operates the biggest movie theatre chain in China and AMC Entertainment Holdings in the United States, has recently turned its attention to sports.

In August, Wanda Group signed a deal to buy World Triathlon Corp, organizer of the Ironman

Triathlon races, from US fund Providence Equity Partners LLC for what the seller said amounted to \$900 million including debt.

The company in February also agreed to buy Swiss sports-marketing company Infront Sports & Media AG, which holds World Cup broadcast rights in Asia and the broadcast rights to major winter sports around the globe.

Wanda Group and Suning are also looking to deepen cooperation on the development of e-commerce and get greater traction from combining their offline and online activities. The cooperation deal will allow for the two sides to leverage shared resources, Suning Chairman Zhang Jindong said in a statement.

Last year, Wanda and Tencent Holdings Ltd agreed to set up a 5 billion yuan e-commerce joint venture with Baidu Inc to broaden their online reach. Wanda is also leading a \$1 billion investment in a travel website.—Reuters

Toyota ties up with US universities on artificial intelligence studies



Toyota Motor Corp. Senior Managing Officer Kiyotaka Ise speaks at a press conference in East Palo Alto, California, on Sept. 4, 2015.—Kyodo News

SILICON VALLEY, California — Toyota Motor Corp. announced Friday that it will invest \$50 million in the next five years to expand its research on safety technology to reduce deaths and injuries on the road using artificial intelligence through collaboration with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Stanford University of the United States.

"We will initially focus on the acceleration of intelligent vehicle technology, with the immediate goal of helping eliminate traffic casualties and the ultimate goal of helping im-

prove quality of life through enhanced mobility and robotics," said Kiyotaka Ise, senior managing officer at the top Japanese automaker, in a press release. By establishing joint research centers at each university, Toyota said its AI research on recognition of objects around the vehicle and judgment of surrounding conditions will also explore applications for robots to improve everyday living for humans as mobility poses increasing challenges to an aging population.—Kyodo News



The logo of the Dalian Wanda Commercial Properties is seen at a news conference in Hong Kong March 31, 2015.—Reuters

Gold falls towards 2nd weekly loss after US payrolls data

NEW YORK / LONDON — Gold prices fell towards a second weekly loss on Friday after US payrolls data failed to allay uncertainty over the prospect of a near-term interest rate hike from the Federal Reserve.

Data from the Labour Department on Friday showed that non-farm payrolls rose 173,000 last month, a slowdown from July's upwardly revised gain of 245,000.

However, a drop in the unemployment rate to a near 7-1/2-year low and an acceleration in wages kept alive prospects of a Federal Reserve interest rate increase later this month.

Spot gold XAU= was down 0.4 percent at \$1,120.80 an ounce at 2:49 p.m. EDT (1849 GMT), while US gold futures GCZ5 for December delivery settled down 0.3 percent at \$1,121.40. The metal is on track to fall for a second week.

"Overall I think the payrolls were erring on the

better side, even though the headline number was weaker, because of the lower unemployment rate, the higher hourly earnings, and the upward revisions," ABN Amro analyst Georgette Boele said.

A top Federal Reserve policymaker said the data on the US jobs market was "good" and did not change the outlook for monetary policy.

Global equity markets tumbled and the dollar was mixed after the data.

Gold has come under pressure this year from expectations the Fed will hike rates for the first time in nearly a decade.

The Fed has already indicated that the timing of a hike is largely data-dependent.

The absence of Chinese buyers also weighed on gold, with markets in the major bullion consumer closed for public holidays. Monday will be a US holiday.

Gold prices in India swung to a discount to the global benchmark this

week for the first time since mid-July.

"Although August bullion imports were high, demand in India appears to have stalled," HSBC said in a note.

Capital Economics noted that weddings and festivals are viewed as auspicious times to buy gold in India.

"According to the Hindu calendar, the number of days ... considered propitious to get married is 30 percent lower in 2015 than in 2014," it

said.

"Gold demand should recover in Q3 ahead of the big wedding and festival season in Q4."

In Australia, gold coin and minted bar sales at the Perth Mint dipped in August.

Among other precious metals, silver XAG= was down 1.8 percent at \$14.51 an ounce. Platinum XPT= was down 1.3 percent at \$987.74 an ounce, while palladium XPD= gained 0.8 percent at \$577.50 an ounce.—Reuters



One kilogram gold bars are seen at the Korea Gold Exchange in Seoul, South Korea, July 31, 2015.—Reuters

Huawei eyes high-end market with new handset

BEIJING — Huawei, China's leading telecom-solutions provider, released a new high-end handset this week that will compete with smartphones by Apple and Samsung, China Daily reported Sunday.

Huawei unveiled the Mate S at a launch event in Berlin on Thursday. Priced at 780 US dollars, this is Huawei's most expensive handset, with previous models round the 500-650 dollar price range. The Mate S will compete with the new iPhone, which is expected to be released at Apple's annual product event on Sept. 9, the report said. "Samsung is facing great downward pressure and Apple seems to have hit its heights, innovation-wise."

This is the right time for Huawei to be on the offensive," said Richard Yu, head of Huawei consumer business.

Huawei's sales surged 46.3 percent in the second quarter this year, although its 7.8 percent market share lags far behind the foreign heavy weights, according to the report.

The report said that besides a 5.5-inch display and fingerprint security, the handset features a new technology that "allows the handset to tell the difference between a tap and a hard press on the screen".

Yu said it was "a revolutionary approach to touch-screen control and would usher in a new era for interaction".—Xinhua

Three-man international crew safely reaches space station



Cosmonauts Aidyn Aimbetov of Kazakhstan, Sergei Volkov of Russia and astronaut Andreas Mogensen of Denmark (L-R) pose behind a glass wall after a news conference at Baikonur cosmodrome, Kazakhstan, in this September 1, 2015 file photo. —REUTERS

ALMATY—A Russian Soyuz spaceship safely delivered a three-man international crew, including Denmark's first astronaut, to the International Space Station (ISS) on Friday, a day after having had to maneuver to avoid colliding with space debris.

The Soyuz TMA-18M blasted off to the \$100 billion space laboratory from the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan on Wednesday to take Russian Commander Sergei Volkov, Kazakh cosmonaut Aidyn Aimbetov and Danish astronaut Andreas Mogensen into orbit.

"The Soyuz has now successfully docked at the ISS," a NASA TV presenter said after the spaceship reached the 15-nation orbiting outpost at about

1040 Moscow time (0740 GMT).

In less than two hours, hatches are to open, and the trio will float in weightlessness into the station which is currently manned by a six-member crew.

Mogensen, dubbed "Denmark's Gagarin" after the Soviet cosmonaut and first man in space, Yuri Gagarin, took Danish-made exercise bikes and 20 of Danish toymaker LEGO's plastic figures into orbit.

He and Aimbetov, Kazakhstan's third cosmonaut, are due to return to Earth on Sept. 12 together with veteran Russian cosmonaut Gennady Padalka, who has been working aboard the ISS since March. By then, Padalka will have racked up a total of 878 days in space, more than any other person.

Volkov will land next March together with NASA astronaut Scott Kelly and Russian Mikhail Kornienko, who will have spent one year in space by that time.

This time it took two days to reach the ISS, rather than a six-hour approach usually taken in recent years. Russian space agency Roscosmos said last month the altitude of the ISS, lifted in July to avoid space debris, required the slower approach. On Thursday, ballistics experts from Russia's Mission Control and US space agency NASA advised the Soyuz crew to make a maneuver in order to avoid a collision with a third stage of a Japanese rocket launched in 1989, Roscosmos said. —Reuters

Dengue scare affects platelet availability in city

NEW DELHI — With dengue scare gripping the city and people rushing to secure platelets needed for the management of the fever, stocks at several blood banks in the city have gone down even as health officials stressed that transfusion is not necessary in all cases.

In view of the situation, health department and civic body officials today urged people not to panic, stating that platelet transfusion plays a limited role in the management of dengue fever and is not necessary in all cases. "Platelet transfusion plays a limited role in management of dengue fever and thus is not necessary in all cases.

People contracting dengue do not need to panic as in initial stages a patient needs fluid management.

"All dengue patients do not need blood or platelets. If there are no bleeding manifestations, in terms of bleeding from nose, gums,

mouth, under the skin, or in the vomit, urine or stool, even if one's platelets fall up to 20,000 the person should not panic," said a Health department official.

The entire dengue management is based on fluid management and platelets are required to be transfused if the count goes below 10,000 and even then only if there are signs of bleeding.

People have this assumption that platelets have to be transfused if the platelet count falls below one lakh which is wrong.

According to the doctors at government hospitals, due to dengue scare people are rushing to hospitals to secure platelets as a result of which patients who really need blood transfusions are getting adversely affected. "Several patients who are critically ill and need blood transfusions, are affected due to this dengue scare because people

are rushing to hospitals to secure platelets," said a doctor.

Some health experts also blamed the doctors who do not have full knowledge of the disease and end up generating a scare among people about the disease.

The Guidelines for Dengue Management of the World Health Organisation has no mention about platelets transfusion.

"Also, drop in platelet count is no confirmation of dengue, as it could be due to other infection. So specific test should be done to confirm if one has contracted dengue," said the official.

The city has till August 29 reported 831 cases with north Delhi recording the highest at 352 and south Delhi 220. East Delhi posted the lowest with 73 cases while 115 cases were reported from areas outside the jurisdiction of the three municipal corporations.—PTI

Ebola Reston virus found among monkeys in Philippine facility

MANILA — Ebola Reston virus was found among monkeys held captives in a Philippine facility, the country's Department of Health and the Bureau of Animal Industry confirmed on Saturday.

Janette Garin, secretary of the health department, assured the public that Ebola Reston virus is different from Ebola virus disease which infected more than 28,000 people, including about 11,300 deaths, mostly in Africa.

She refused to name the facility but she said 25 personnel are being monitored.

Garin said blood samples were collected from the 25 employees and were sent to the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine for Ebola virus disease antibodies testing using Eliza or Enzyme Im-

munosorbent Assay.

"The results yielded negative for Ebola virus disease," she said. "While it does not cause any human illness, the Department of Health will continue to monitor the health status of the staff currently employed in the said facility," she said.

Rubina Crescencio, director of the Bureau of Animal Industry, said the bureau is currently studying how the monkeys got infected.

Ebola virus disease was first detected in monkeys from the Philippines that were being examined in a laboratory in Reston, Virginia of the United States in early 1990s. Garin said Ebola Reston virus can be transmitted to humans, without resulting into illness. "The threat to human health is likely to be low or none for health adults," she added.—Xinhua

Novartis to start human tests with Google lens in 2016

ZURICH — Novartis plans the first human tests next year of a "smart" contact lens it is developing with Google designed to help restore the eye's natural autofocus. "This project is progressing well," Novartis Chief Executive Joe Jimenez told Swiss newspaper Le Temps in an interview.

"I had said it would take about five years to see a product on the market," Jimenez told the paper. "The calendar is on track and we are already developing a technological lens prototype (that) should be tested on humans in 2016." A Novartis spokesman told Reuters that Jimenez was referring to a smart lens for accommodative vision correction in people with presbyopia, or age-related long sightedness, who can no longer read without glasses.

Under an agreement signed with Google in 2014, Novartis is also developing smart contact lenses to help diabetics track their blood glucose levels. Jimenez also discussed Novartis' efforts to test a novel pay-for-performance pricing model with some customers for its new heart failure drug Entresto.

Earlier this year, Novartis said it was pursuing a system under which customers would get the drug at a discount but then pay Novartis more if it cut the need for costly hospital visits. Jimenez indicated the plan has encountered headwinds. "In the United States, we pro-



CEO Joe Jimenez of Swiss drugmaker Novartis

posed to insurers a differentiated price calculated according to length of stay," Jimenez said. "Few insurers entered in the field. They told us that the system was too complicated."

Novartis finally established the price at around \$4,500 per year, he said.

The CEO, a former executive at Reddiwip-maker ConAgra Foods who joined Novartis in 2007, also said the company expects its generics business Sandoz "will always be large enough to be competitive worldwide" without joining a consolidation trend.

Israeli generics rival Teva agreed to buy Allergan's generics unit in July for more than \$40 billion. "There is no project on our side to participate in this consolidation trend because we cannot ensure this growth," Jimenez said.

Novartis, which owns a one-third voting stake in pharmaceuticals rival Roche, has trade agreements with Roche on two drugs and Jimenez said he can imagine research and development collaborations, as well. "But the opportunity hasn't presented itself yet," he said.—Reuters

Brooks faces fights on all fronts back at Murdoch's London HQ

LONDON/WASHINGTON — When the once toxic Rebekah Brooks returns to run Rupert Murdoch's British newspapers on Monday she will face the toughest challenge of her career — rebuilding her reputation and the company in the harsh glare of the public spotlight.

Brooks, the media mogul's protegee who was cleared last year of being part of a criminal phone hacking campaign to dig up news stories, will resume oversight of Britain's The Sun and The Times papers as News UK chief executive, following a four-year battle to clear her name.

On her return, she will face a new fight to stem falling circulation at The Sun, the move of advertisers online and the simmering resentment from some staff who feel Murdoch sought to protect Brooks above all others when faced with the crisis engulfing his company.

Renowned for her networking abilities, the 47-year-old will also have to find a way to rebuild ties with those who run the country after her 2011 fall from grace led to her vilification.

"The challenge now is to work out how she's going to operate this time around given her profile and given that her big modus operandi in the past was relationships and networks," said one former senior executive from Murdoch's British newspaper arm.

"The fact is that politicians and business figures still need to have a strong relationship with News UK," Brooks' return marks a spectacular comeback for someone who worked her way up from the lowest rung on the newsroom ladder to become one of the most powerful women in Britain and a close friend to the last three prime ministers.

That all seemed set to end in 2011 when the News of the World tabloid she once edited admitted its journalists had hacked into thousands of voicemails including those of a murdered schoolgirl to break news, sparking widespread public revulsion. So tarnished was Brooks that Prime Minister David Cameron, once a close friend, distanced himself, while lawmakers who once eagerly sought Murdoch's approval turned their back.

Brooks was later arrest-



Former News International chief executive Rebekah Brooks

ed and charged with conspiring to hack into phones, bribing public officials and perverting the course of justice but was cleared following an eight-month trial.

Andy Coulson, a former colleague and lover who went on to become Cameron's spokesman, went to jail, while a handful of other journalists were also found guilty. A similar probe is still going on at rival Trinity Mirror (TNIL).

"Rebekah has gone through a personal experience which we can only guess at how deeply that has affected her, and the Rebekah we are going to see in the future is going to be different," a second former colleague said on the condition of anonymity.

A senior company insider said people who spent time with Brooks over the last couple of months during her visits to News Corp headquarters had noted that she was now a much more congenial person than before.

Despite the acquittal, critics of the company were dismayed by her return, noting Brooks' defence had been that she could not be expected to know what her staff were doing.

Chris Bryant, an opposition lawmaker, said Murdoch was "sticking two fingers" — a British gesture of insult — at the public, while media analysts said it signalled that his News UK operation was ready to put the crisis behind it.

The senior company insider said Brooks had been given her old job back because she had been fully vindicated in the trial.

The next challenge for Brooks will be tough, however. In her four-year absence, Britain's press, known collectively as "Fleet Street" after the London lane where the papers were based for generations, has changed significantly.—Reuters

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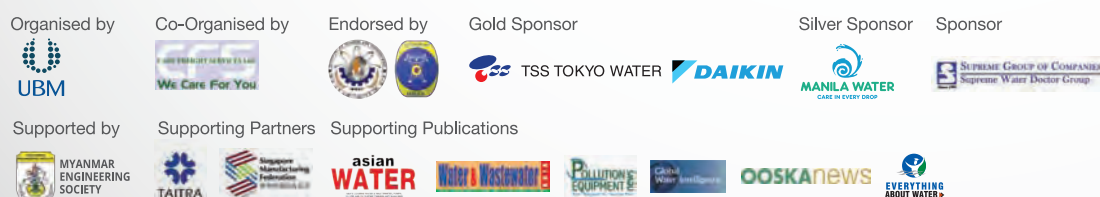
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Police raid pro-Pyongyang group office over subsidy fraud

SAPPORO — Police searched an office building Sunday in Hokkaido of the pro-Pyongyang Chongryon group on suspicion that its affiliate companies swindled the Japanese government out of subsidies for businesses hiring people without jobs.

Investigators said several companies in Sapporo linked with the General Association of Korean Residents in Japan, which serves as North Korea's de facto embassy in Japan, allegedly misused the state subsidy system by pretending that staff at a school in the city for ethnic Koreans had lost jobs. The school for primary and secondary education was also searched and about 30 investigators scuffled with school workers when the raid started around 8 a.m.

A 48-year-old man related to Chongryon was indignant at the police action, saying the office was searched despite having nothing to do with a fraud committed by individuals. Chongryon has effectively functioned as North Korea's embassy for decades in the absence of diplomatic relations between Tokyo and Pyongyang.—Kyodo News



Police officers enter an office building of the pro-Pyongyang Chongryon group in Sapporo in the northernmost Japanese prefecture of Hokkaido on Sept. 6, 2015. —Kyodo News

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Ministry of Construction Republic of the Union of Myanmar

Invitation for Bids

Date: 07 September 2015
Loan No. 46422-003MYA
and Title: MYA:GMS EWEC Eindu to Kawkareik Road Improvement Project
Contract No. and Title: ICB1-ED-KKR
GMS EWEC Eindu to Kawkareik Road Improvement Project
Lot 1: ICB1-ED-KKR-L1, Lot 2: ICB1-ED-KKR-L2
Deadline for Submission of Bids: 08 December 2015, 2:00 p.m. Myanmar local time

- The Republic of the Union of Myanmar has applied for financing from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) towards the cost of the Greater Mekong Subregion East West Economic Corridor Eindu to Kawkareik Road Improvement Project. Part of this financing will be used for payments under the contracts named above. This contract will be jointly financed by ASEAN Infrastructure Fund (AIF). The eligibility rules and procedures of the ADB will govern the bidding process.
- The Ministry of Construction (“the Employer”) invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for the contracts (lot1 and Lot2) described above. The works, which will be executed under traffic, will require the removal of the existing pavement structure, widening and raising the road embankment, construction of a new two lane with sealed shoulders pavement structure with asphaltic concrete surfacing, demolition of existing structures and construction of approximately 111 new structures.
- International Competitive Bidding (ICB) will be conducted in accordance with ADB’s Single-Stage: Two-Envelopes bidding procedure and is open to all Bidders from eligible countries as described in the Bidding Documents.
- Bidders may bid for one or two contracts (lots), as further defined in the bidding document Bidders wishing to offer discounts in case they are awarded more than one contract will be allowed to do so provided those discounts are included in the Letter of Bid.
- To obtain further information and inspect the bidding documents, bidders should contact:
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Project Management Unit
Ministry of Construction - Department of Highways
Room No. (702), Building No.2(B),
Block 334/344 Bagan Housing
Anawratha Road, Lanmadaw Township, Yangon
Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Tel +95 95153149
Fax +95 67407576
Email: edkkrpmu@gmail.com
- To purchase the bidding documents in English, eligible bidders should:
Write to the address above requesting the bidding documents for both or either of the Lots described above.
Pay a non-refundable fee of:
• Lot 1, USD 200 or equivalent in MMK by bank cheque or transfer
• Lot 2, USD 200 or equivalent in MMK by bank cheque or transfer
The office is open Monday to Friday from 9:30 to 16:30
- A site visit will be organised:
Kayin State Director office, DOH, Ministry of Construction in HpaAn, the 22 October 2015 at 09:00 am Myanmar local time
A Pre-Bidding meeting will be organised:
Kayin State Director office, DOH, Ministry of Construction in HpaAn, the 23 October 2015 at 09:00 am Myanmar local time
- To submit their bids bidders should;
Deliver them to
Ministry of Construction
Office building No.11,
Extension building DOH,
Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar
On or before the deadline
8 December 2015, 2:00 p.m. Myanmar local time
Together with the Bid Security as described in the bidding documents
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Tropical Storm Grace forms over eastern Atlantic

WASHINGTON — Tropical Storm Grace formed in the eastern Atlantic Ocean on Saturday with maximum sustained winds of 40 mph (65 kph) and was heading west on a path that could take it in the direction of the Caribbean, the National Hurricane Center said.

It became the seventh named storm of the current hurricane season, the Miami-based hurricane center said.

The storm was located about 285 miles (460 km) southwest of the Cape Verde islands, with tropical storm-force winds extending outward up to 35 miles (56 km) from the center, the NHC said.

“Some additional strengthening is expected during the next day or so, with weakening possible by Monday,” it said in an advisory. Erika, a tropical storm that killed 20 people on the Caribbean island of Dominica and at least one person in Haiti, fell apart on Aug. 29 over eastern Cuba.—Reuters

Cuban sets Guinness World Record for seated keep-ups

HAVANA — Cuban Erick Hernandez set a new Guinness World Record in Havana on Saturday by keeping up a ball for over three hours, while seated and only using his feet, according to official daily Granma. At the Copacabana hotel, Hernandez maintained a ball airborne for 3 hours, 16 minutes and 31 seconds, breaking the seated keep-ups record set by his countryman, Luis Carlos Garcia, last December 13 when he kept the ball up for 3 hours, 15 minutes and 1 second. “I spent three months preparing for this attempt, focusing far more on physical conditioning than on ball control. In training, I managed to reach 3 hours and 33 minutes, so I knew I could succeed today,” the record-holder told local press.

Hernandez already holds two Guinness World Records for heading a ball 319 times in a minute and for bouncing the ball using only his thighs for 1 hour and 28 minutes. He has also run a 100m sprint while keeping up a ball in 17.83 seconds and has run a marathon while doing so in 7 hours and 17 minutes.—Xinhua

Chinese pianist Lang Lang performs in Copenhagen



Chinese young pianist Lang Lang

COPENHAGEN — Chinese young pianist Lang Lang fascinated the Danish audience on Saturday night with his exceptional skills embodied in the performance of Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 2.

The concert started at 7:30 p.m. at the DR Concert Hall, a new architectural landmark for the Danish capital. Together with Lang Lang on the stage is the Danish National Symphony Orchestra, which also played Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 5 on the second composition. The concert was conducted by Viennese Manfred Honeck, who is chief conductor of the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra in the

United States. In an exclusive interview with Xinhua after his performance, Lang Lang said he was quite happy with the co-operation with the Danish National Symphony Orchestra and Honeck, who he said was an old friend for many years.

"Although the audience is quite familiar with the music piece, I had a unique feeling of freshness and it seemed like I was playing it for the first time," the 33-year-old pianist said.

This year marked the 65th anniversary of diplomatic relationship between China and Denmark, and the two countries have witnessed a spate of cultural exchanges including various musical performances by musicians from

both countries.

Lang Lang said he hoped his music could play the role of lubricant to boost understanding among different cultures.

"The world now needs peace instead of conflicts," said the pianist.

Chinese ambassador to Denmark Liu Biwei said Lang Lang now belongs not only to China, but also to the world.

"He displayed his impressive skills tonight and I am so proud of him," Liu said after watching the concert.

Hasse Ferrold, president of International Club Copenhagen, said he had never watched Lang Lang's concert before, but he knew many Danes fly around the world to listen to his concerts.

After listening to his music live, Ferrold said he now understands why people are so enthusiastic about Lang Lang and his music.

"I can see that the music is part of him and it comes just out of his heart," he said.

"He is a very respectful person with outstanding qualities, and he is a very good cultural ambassador of China," he added.—Xinhua

Kristen Stewart sci-fi 'Equals' fails to add up for Venice critics

VENICE — With Kristen Stewart of "Twilight" fame and Nicholas Hoult of "X-Men", the science-fiction film "Equals" is sure to have some box-office draw, but it failed to win much critical acclaim when screened in competition at the Venice Film Festival.

Stewart and Hoult play colleagues Nia and Silas in a post-apocalyptic world where emotion is looked upon as a disease. They both do obscure work on enormous computer screens in a sterile, almost blindingly white world that feels like a sanitized Silicon Valley campus.

Directed by Drake Doremus ("Breathe In", "Like Crazy"), the two co-stars are called upon mostly to express themselves with glances and hand gestures as they portray people who, if their budding affair is discovered, will be shipped to a place called the "DEN" where suicide is encouraged, or death is arranged.

"Hoult and Stewart certainly give it their all, and both deliver sensitive, nuanced performances," Peter Bradshaw wrote in The Guardian in a review posted online on Saturday. "But Doremus never really manages to solve the problem (that) afflicts the first half of the film: with everything and everyone moving at half speed, there's an inbuilt dramatic

inertness to proceedings that no amount of intense whispering and tremulous handholding can overcome."

"Equals" resembles George Lucas's classic fable of white-suit futurism 'THX 1138' as if reshot as a perfume commercial: Oppression, by Calvin Klein," Bradshaw added.

The Hollywood Reporter said: "For high-concept melodrama that's low on complexity, this very solemn film takes itself way too seriously."

"But it's not entirely without interest, thanks to sleek visuals and decent chemistry between alluring leads Nicholas Hoult and Kristen Stewart."—Reuters



Actress Kristen Stewart

Atkinson marks 'Mr Bean' anniversary outside Buckingham Palace

LOS ANGELES — It has been 25 years since Rowan Atkinson first introduced the world to the affable "Mr Bean" and he marked the show's milestone anniversary with a celebration at Buckingham Palace, London.

The 60-year-old actor-comedian rode up to the London landmark in character, atop his famous 1976 British Leyland Mini 1000, reported Entertainment Weekly.

The arrival recreated a memorable scene from the show, in which Mr Bean packs his vehicle so full of shopping purchases that he needs to find an alternative way to drive it.

The car had a #MrBean25 hashtag



British comedian Rowan Atkinson, in character as 'Mr Bean'

commemorating the show, which ran from 1990 to 1995 and inspired a spin-off animated series and two feature films.

There was also a cake

for the occasion, and presents, and Mr Bean's best friend, Teddy, also came along for the ride.

The British sitcom, created by Atkinson and

Richard Curtis, follows the exploits of Mr Bean who solves various everyday problems, often causing disruption in the process.—PTI

Paul McCartney, Fergie, Jon Bon Jovi team up for charity song

LOS ANGELES — "Love Song to the Earth", a charity song featuring renowned musicians Paul McCartney, Stacy Ferguson aka Fergie and Jon Bon Jovi among others, has been released.

The number has been recorded to support United Nations Foundation and raise awareness of climate change, reported Acshowbiz.

The charity song was released on September 4, ahead of the UN climate conference, which will be attended by world leaders in December.

Proceeds from the song will be donated for UN cause.

Other musicians tak-

ing part in the star-studded project include the likes of Sheryl Crow, Colbie Caillat, Natasha Bedingfield, Leona Lewis, Sean Paul, Johnny Rzeznik, Nicole Scherzinger, and Victoria Justice.

"Many people turn a blind eye arguing that everything is okay environmentally. The song reminds us that having ownership of our world means taking care of it."

"With this song we wanted to talk about the environment in a way that would help people feel empowered to do something rather than be paralysed by fear," said Bedingfield in a statement.—PTI

Sanchez scores as Chile beats 3-2 Paraguay

SANTIAGO — Arsenal forward Alexis Sanchez scored in the 82nd minute as Chile beat an under-strength Paraguay 3-2 on Saturday, in their first match after winning their first Copa America in July.

Chile took the lead after seven minutes when a defensive blunder from a Paraguayan player allowed Felipe Gutierrez to beat goalie Anthony Silva.

Chile did not seem to miss key midfielder Arturo Vidal, who left Santiago during the week for personal reasons, and dominated the first half against a Paraguay team mostly made up of players from the local league.

Paraguay looked renewed during the second half with Jonathan Fabbro and Jorge Benite scoring within two minutes of each other before Chile's Sanchez and Jorge Valdivia, however, became more influential on the match. Gutierrez then scored his second goal after a Mauricio Isla cross before Sanchez sealed the win in the final 10 minutes.—Reuters



Image provided by Chile's National Professional Soccer Association (ANFP) shows Chile's Felipe Gutierrez (R) vying with Paraguay's Jonathan Fabbro during a friendly match with Chile at the National Stadium in Santiago, Chile, on Sept. 5, 2015. Chile won the match. —XINHUA

Int'l film festival on differently-abled in Delhi in Dec

NEW DELHI — As part of its efforts to create awareness about issues facing the differently-abled, the government would soon organise an International Film Festival for persons with disabilities.

A first-of-its-kind initiative by the Centre, the three-day International Film Festival For Persons with Disabilities is being jointly organised by the Union Ministry of Social Jus-

tice and Empowerment and the National Film Development Corporation (NFDC) in Delhi from December 1 to 3.

The festival will be dedicated to promoting awareness about and appreciation of the lives, stories and artistic expressions of differently-abled people.

The focus of the festival will be on how to change the way the community thinks about disability,

sources said, adding that some of the best new releases from around the world narrating the real-life experiences of people with disabilities would be screened as part of the event. The government has invited feature, documentary and short films from the general public across the globe by September 25 for screening at the festival. It has been decided that awards would be given at the festival for

various categories, including best feature film and documentary and short film, apart from best actors. Lov Verma, Secretary in the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, functioning under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, said that the main objective of the festival is to create awareness about the issues associated with persons with disabilities.—PTI

Unique collection of Chinese comics comes to Comic Festival in Brussels

BRUSSELS — A unique collection of 75 original comic drawings from Chinese authors is displayed during the Comic Festival in Brussels, a Xinhua reporter noted Saturday on the spot.

This is the first time that Chinese cartoons come to the Comic Festival in Brussels, whose 6th edition is organized from Sept. 4 to 6, 2015.

During the festival, a selection of works by 12 Chinese artists shows the audience the special charm of Chinese contemporary comics, which has attracted the special attention of thousands of fans of comics since Friday.

This original initiative is carried by Atlas International Culture, a Belgian company advocating exchange and cultural discoveries between China and Europe, in partnership with Beijing Total Vision Culture Spreads Co., Ltd.

"We are looking forward to offering the Euro-

pean public, through fresh initiatives, numerous discoveries on various aspects of the Chinese culture," said the director of Atlas, Wang Haichen, to Xinhua.

According to Wang, there is a good prospect for collaboration on comics between Belgium and China, since Belgium is a Kingdom of comics and China is also a country with a rich cartoon heritage and cartoons.

Each year, nearly 300 television animated series, 40 animated films and thousands of comics are produced and distributed in China.

The new creations reflect the traditional culture, style, spirit and the Chinese dream around.

Since 2010, the Comic Festival celebrate comics in all its forms in Brussels and welcomes more than 100,000 people each year. Young and old, amateurs or professionals, everyone is benefiting from the activities. —Xinhua

Headliners and underdogs share US Open spotlight

NEW YORK — Roger Federer, Andy Murray and Simona Halep strolled into the fourth round of the US Open on Saturday but shared the Flushing Meadows spotlight with tenacious underdogs Donald Young and Johanna Konta.

Second seed Federer took another step towards a sixth US Open title with an efficient 6-3, 6-4, 6-4 win over Philipp Kohlschreiber while third seed Murray followed him into the fourth round with a clinical 6-3, 6-2, 7-5 victory against Brazilian Thomaz Bellucci.

It was another leisurely afternoon on Arthur Ashe Stadium court for Federer, who has yet to drop a set, though he lost his serve for the first time in the tournament as Kohlschreiber broke him twice.

Federer, who had sprinted through his first two matches with the loss of only nine games, next meets big-serving American 13th seed John Isner, who advanced when Czech Jiri Vesely retired with a neck injury when trailing 6-3, 6-4.

"I think I won the big points today," said 34-year-

old Federer. "I served well when I had to at the end."

Federer's Swiss compatriot Stan Wawrinka also took the quick route following Federer into the last 16 by breezing past Belgian Ruben Bemelmans 6-3, 7-6(5), 6-4. Richard Gasquet also wasted little time, the 12th seeded Frenchman romping to a 6-4, 6-3, 6-1 decision over a drained Australian Bernard Tomic, who was coming off a gruelling five set battle with compatriot Lleyton Hewitt.

Halep worked the night shift for the first time at this slam and found it to her liking as she steamrolled past American Shelby Rogers 6-2, 6-3 in 67 minutes.

It was a mixed day for German contenders as Victoria Azarenka of Belarus beat 11th seed Angelique Kerber 7-5, 2-6, 6-4, though Sabine Lisicki advanced beating Czech Barbora Strýcová 6-4, 4-6, 7-5. Konta continued to enjoy her time in the US Open spotlight as the British qualifier beat 18th seed Andrea Petkovic 7-6(2), 6-3 to reach the fourth round of a grand slam for the first time.—Reuters

People visit Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam



People walk through the aisles decorated with sunflowers outside the new entrance hall of the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, on Sept. 5, 2015. The Van Gogh Museum celebrated the opening of its new entrance hall, marking the 125th anniversary of Vincent van Gogh's death here on Saturday. —XINHUA

MYANMAR TRADITIONAL BOXERS IN ACTION



Myanmar Media Group in cooperation with Myanmar Traditional Boxing Federation has organized new generation *Letwei* matches for five times. Photo shows *Kya Ba Hein* of *Alingyaung Club* throws his right hook to the chest of *Kyaw Kyar* of *Taungga-lay Club*. *Kya Ba Hein* emerges winner at the match on 6-9-2015. NEWS- BY MAUNG SEIN LWIN (MYANMA ALINN) & PHOTO BY TIN SOE (MYANMA ALINN)

Amarapura Tsp wins Sepak Takraw tournament



MANDALAY—Amarapura Township won the U-25 men's Sepak Takraw Tournament in Mandalay Region's Bahtoo Gymnasium on 5 September.

Amarapura Township defeated Aungmyethazan 2-0 in the double regu event and Mahaangmye 2-1 in the regu event.

Officials from the Sports and Phys-

ical Education Department presented cash prizes to the winners, while the Minister for Social Affairs Dr Win Hlaing presented the championship trophies and K300,000 for double regu event and K400,000 for the regu event to Amarapura Township team on behalf of the Chief Minister of Mandalay Region.—*Tin Maung (Mandalay)*

Injured Ibrahimovic may miss Sweden qualifier on Tuesday

MOSCOW — Sweden captain Zlatan Ibrahimovic may miss Tuesday's Euro 2016 qualifier against Group G leaders Austria after sustaining a muscle injury near his ribs during the 1-0 defeat by Russia.

"I felt something tighten when I went up to compete for a header," Ibrahimovic told reporters following Saturday's game. "I couldn't continue, no chance," he said after being replaced by Ola Toivonen at halftime.

"Let's see what happens tomorrow. If it's a pulled muscle then you have to let it rest," added the 33-year-old Paris St Germain striker, his country's all-time top scorer.

Russia's win put them on 11 points, one behind second-placed Sweden. Austria, who have 16 points, host Moldova later on Saturday.—*Reuters*

Swiss seal 'crazy' win with remarkable late rally

BASEL — Switzerland, having looked as if they could play all night without scoring, struck three times in a remarkable last 14 minutes to come from 2-0 down and beat Slovenia 3-2 in a Euro 2016 qualifier on Saturday.

Milivoje Novakovic and Bostjan Cesar netted either side of halftime as Slovenia took control of the Group E game against the error-prone hosts who were jeered off at halftime. But two goals from Josip Drmic, including the winner in the fourth minute of stoppage time, and one by fellow substitute Valentin Stocker gave the Swiss a memorable victory.

Breel Embolo, 18, the other Swiss substitute, also played a key role in the first goal as coach Vladimir Petkovic's second-half changes paid off handsomely. "It was a crazy game where we had the bit of luck that we didn't have in Slovenia," Petkovic told SRF television, referring to Switzerland's 2-0 defeat in Maribor in October. The win left the Swiss second in the group and clear favourites to follow England through while Slovenia must now battle for third spot, and a place in a two-legged playoff, alongside Estonia and Lithuania.

Petkovic's men have 15 points

from seven games while Slovenia are fourth on nine points, below Estonia (10) who beat Lithuania (six) by a 1-0 margin. England (21) qualified after crushing San Marino 6-0 earlier on Saturday.

The Swiss dominated the first half but struggled to create openings and were then caught on the break as Novakovic dinked the ball over Yann Sommer on the stroke of halftime.

Cesar headed in from a corner three minutes after the restart to leave the Swiss floundering and Sommer prevented a third with a superb stop denying Josip Ilcic.—*Reuters*

England first to qualify as Rooney equals record

SERRAVALLE — England became the first team to join hosts France at Euro 2016 after crushing San Marino 6-0 on Saturday, with Wayne Rooney equalling Bobby Charlton's all-time scoring record of 49 goals for his country.

The visitors out-classed San Marino's part-timers as they chalked up a seventh successive Group E qualifying win to seal a place in France next year with three matches to spare. Rooney, who scored his first goal for England 12 years ago this weekend, equalled Charlton's 45-year-old record when he scored with a 13th-minute penalty, sending goalkeeper Aldo Simoncini the wrong way.

Both players scored their 49 goals in 106 appearances.

The England skipper never had another clear-cut chance to break the record and manager Roy Hodgson

replaced Rooney after 57 minutes with Harry Kane who also got among the scorers with a well-taken chip in the 75th. "It's a proud moment for me to equal Bobby's record and my aim is to push on and help the team beat Switzerland on Tuesday," Rooney told ITV Sport.

"Since I joined Manchester United, Bobby gives me advice after games and I am sure if an-

yone will be happy for me to break his record it will be him." Hodgson said he had always planned to take Rooney off.

"It was in our thoughts to keep Wayne on for 45 to 60 minutes because other players needed to play," the manager explained.

"We played well today and players like Jonjo Shelvey had a good game on a very difficult pitch."—*Reuters*



England's Wayne Rooney covers himself during their Euro 2016 qualifying soccer match against San Marino at the Olympic stadium in Serravalle, San Marino, September 5, 2015.—*REUTERS*

Drogba scores hat-trick in Montreal victory

MONTREAL — Didier Drogba scored a hat-trick in his second Major League Soccer match as he helped the Montreal Impact beat Chicago Fire 4-3 on Saturday.

The former Chelsea and Ivory Coast striker made an uneventful MLS debut two weeks ago but made up for that on Saturday when he scored in the first half, equalized at 3-3 in the 61st minute then grabbed the game-winner four minutes later.

Montreal were playing their first game under interim coach Mauro Bello following Frank Klopas' firing. They ended a four-game winless streak with the win.

Jeff Larentowicz, Gilberto and Ken-

nedy Igboananike scored for the Fire in defeat.

In Seattle, the Sounders beat Toronto FC 2-1 with goals from Obafemi Martins and Clint Dempsey. Eriq Zavaleta scored in the 59th minute for Toronto.

In San Jose, Philadelphia Union substitute Conor Casey scored two second-half goals to defeat the Earthquakes 2-1.

Casey entered in the 60th minute and leveled the game at 1-1 in the 74th when he headed home a Raymon Gaddis cross, then scored the game winner with another header in the 86th minute.

Chris Wondolowski had opened the scoring for the Earthquakes from the penalty spot in the 64th minute.—*Reuters*