THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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MAKE IT WORK

Myanmar prepares for ILO negotiations

Ko Moe

A GOVERNING board member for the International Labour Organisation has urged local businesses to strictly follow international labour standards in order to achieve success in the global supply chain.

At a tripartite meeting including employers, employees and the government on fair global supply chain issues yesterday in Yangon, U Maung Maung, chairman of the Confederation of the Trade Unions of Myanmar and a member of the governing board of the International Labour Organisation, pointed out the sacking of labour union leaders and instances of ignorance to pay workers the minimum wage and overtime fees according to the law.

The two-day meeting was held as part of the preparation for a discussion on Myanmar's role in creating job opportunities in the global supply chain at the upcoming 105th ILO meeting in June.

The outcomes of the meeting will be discussed at the ILO meeting, said U Maung Maung.

At the meeting, U Win Shein, the director-general of the Factories and General Labour Law Inspection Department, suggested improving the human resources of the labour sector in the country.

Mr Patuan Samosir, senior officer of International Trade Union Confederation-Asia Pacific, has called for cooperation between the three groups to prevent danger at worksites.

Some experts have urged the Myanmar government to assist in producing skilled labourers and building infrastructure in the labour sector.

"In face of the ASEAN Economic Community, which will start this year, the government should take measures to prevent lower productivity due to power shortages and to reduce high interest rates for employers," said U Aung Shwe of the management committee of the Hlaingthaya Industrial Zone, who is participating in the meeting as a representative of the employers.

Local brands should prepare for competition with international brands entering the country because local brands in some countries have collapsed at the hand of international competitors, said U Maung Maung.

Workers from a garment factory garther during an assembly of their factory. PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE

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Ethnic media conference kicks off

THE first day session of the Ethnic Media Conference in MraukU, Rakhine State, was dominated with discussion on challenges for future of ethnic minorities' media and for the freedom of expression during the time of the next government.

"Shortage of fund, small market and shortage of skilled man power are posing as main challenges for all ethnic media to stand on their feet in the future, said U Khaing Myat Kyaw, the Chief Editor of *the Narinjara News*. The conference kicked off yesterday, attracting around 50 ethnic media across the country and representatives from Myanmar Press Council and the government.

Meanwhile, the participants of the conference also discussed the development and the future of media in the country.

"It is questionable for us all media whether we can fully have the rights of access to information in the time of next government," the chief editor said. In the evening session of the conference, representatives from the Myanmar Press Council discussed the development of media in Myanmar, highlighting the role of freedom of expression in the time of the next government. The three-day conference will end on 16 February.— *GNLM*

Sittwe Point Beach opened

Scenic beauty of Sittwe Point Beach. PHOTO: MYAT WAI

SITTWE Point beach was formally opened as a gesture of welcoming the Union Day at the point beach entrance gate, Sittwe, capital of Rakhine state on Thursday. At the opening ceremony a Rakhine state cultural troupe performed a traditional dance. Sittwe point beach is a popular tourist destination. It was constructed on 1.8 million square feet of land beginning in June 2015.

Sittwe point was decorated with colorful lights by the New Wave company. —*Myat Wai*

Baby panda donated to Mandalay Zoo

A LITTLE panda was donated to the Mandalay Yadanarpon Zoological Garden. According to Mong Pan Administrator, a Himalayan panda left her baby in the forest near Na-kyaing village, Mong Pan township, Shan State. One U Kyaw Kyaw who visited the forest found and adopted the baby panda. After six months, U Kyaw Kyaw informed the Linkhe district administrator that he wanted to donate the panda to the zoo.

In the first week of February, U Sai Wai Lin, Mong Pan township administrator handed over the panda to U Aung Kaw Soe from the Forestry Department. They will send it to the Mandalay Yadanarpon Zoological Garden, it is reported.— *(IPRD)*

Donated Baby Panda seen in cage. PHOTO: (IPRD)

Crime News

Fire breaks out in Shwegu and Hpa-an Townships

Smoke billows from burning houses. PHOTO: ZIN OO

A FIRE broke out behind a Post and Telecommunications Office in No.3 Sainggon Ward, Shwegu Township, Kachin State on Friday. The fire destroyed three houses and two shops. The fire was finally put out by firemen with the assistance of neighbours. The cause of the fire is still being investigated by police.

On the same day a fire broke out at an illegal petrol shop in Zayat Phyu village, Hpa-an Township. The fire destroyed four shops and spread to a grocery store nearby.—*Zin Oo (Myanma Alinn)*

Passenger Vehicle crashes into HGV on Pathein-Chaung Tha Road

TWENTY-seven passengers were seriously injured when a bus loaded with 51 passengers collided head on with a heavy goods vehicle (HGV) being driven by Tun Zaw Oo, 40, from Yangon. The accident occurred on the Thabyu Chaung bridge near Pathein-Ngawun bridge on Chaung Tha road on Friday.

The bus, driven by Aung Min Naing, 40, turned over while the HGV plunged into a ravine beyond Thabyu Chaung bridge. The injured passengers are undergoing medical treatment at Pathein General Hospital. Pathein Police have filed charges.—*Hla Kyi (Pathein)*

Overturned passenger vehicle seen after the crash. PHOTO: HLA KYI

Yabba, firearms and ammunition seized in Tachilek

ACTING on a tip-off, police searched a house and rubber plantations owned by one Sai Aye and Nan Wow in Yam Kham (2) village, Tachilek township.

While police were searching the house, Sai Aye opened fire on the police and fled the scene. Members of the police arrested Sai Aye's wife and discovered 1,000 yabba pills, caffeine weighing 19 kilograms, 1000 tablets of pseudoephedrine, four firearms, an M-91 hand grenade, four vehicles and seven motorbikes. Local police are holding Nan Wow,45, while searching for Sai Aye.—*Myint Mohe (Tachilek)*

Sai Aye's wife with exhibit. PHOTO: MYINT MOHE (TACHILEK)

Car turns over on Yangon-Mandalay Highway

THIRTEEN passengers were injured in a car accident that occurred on the Yangon-Mandalay highway near Ottwin township, Bago region on Wednesday.

According to an investigation, a light truck driven by U Tun Myint Naing turned over when he lost control. Ten passengers are receiving treatment at Phyu Hospital as in-patients whereas three passengers are receiving treatment as out-patients.—*Phyu Myint Oo*

Recovery work under way for Namhsam fire victims

Union Minister U Hla Tun inspects the areas in Namhsam destroyed by fire. PHOTO: MNA

UNION Minister U Hla Tun, accompanied by the Shan State chief minister and deputy ministers, visited Namhsam Township in Lashio, Shan State, on 13 February to provide relief to victims of recent fires.

At a monastery where the victims are being provided temporary accommodation, the union minister was briefed on the distribution of relief items and arrangements for rehabilitation.

The minister urged officials to speed up rehabilitation measures as the relief and recovery are gaining momentum, stressing the importance of systematic approaches to town planning to ensure easy manoeuvering for fire engines.

He pledged governmental assistance to rehabilitation work in cooperation with members of the public, urging officials to supervise building works and complete them before monsoon season ushers in.

The fire victims have enough food reserves to last three months, he added.

The Ministry of Border Affairs donated K10 million to the victims, and Shwe Taung Co. Lt donated bags of cement. Families affiliated with the army, the navy and the air forces donated corrugated iron sheet to the fire victims. —*Myanmar News Agency*

Taungthaman Lake greening under way in Mandalay

THE Mandalay Region Constructors Association will conduct a project to keep the Taungthaman Lake and its environs green and lush, according to local residents.

Located in Amarapura Township, Mandalay Region, the lake will be a major tourist attraction in the region after being landscaped, the association's chairman U Than Win said, adding that the project will create new jobs for local people.

As world-famous U Pain Bridge spans across the lake, the beauty of the scenery will become a centre of attention, said U Khwe, a local resident of Htantaw village, expressing his belief that the project will bring socioeconomic development to the villages in the vicinity of the lake. —*Min Htet Aung (Mandalay Sub-publishing House)*

Boat trip in Taungthaman Lake is populart for recreation. PHOTO: MIN HTET AUNG (MANDALAY SUB-PUBLISHING HOUSE)

President sends message of felicitations to Serbian President

U Thein Sein, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, has sent a message of felicitations to His Excellency Mr. Tomislav Nikolic, President of the Republic of Serbia, on the occasion of the National Day of the Republic of Serbia, which falls on 15 February 2016.—*Ministry of Foreign Affairs*

President sends message of felicitations to Serbian PM

U Thein Sein, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, has sent a message of felicitations to His Excellency Mr. Aleksandar Vucic, Prime Minister of the Republic of Serbia, on the occasion of the National Day of the Republic of Serbia, which falls on 15 February 2016.—*Ministry of Foreign Affairs*

U Wunna Maung Lwin sends message of felicitations to Serbian FM

U Wunna Maung Lwin, Union Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, has sent a message of felicitations to His Excellency Mr. Ivica Dacic, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, on the occasion of the National Day of the Republic of Serbia, which falls on 15 February 2016.—*Ministry of Foreign Affairs*

Maritime university holds 10th convocation

Graduates of 10th graduation of Myanmar Maritime University pose for photo ourside convocation hall. PHOTO: SUPPLIED

THE Myanmar Maritime University (MMU) held its 10th graduation in conjunction with a prize ceremony at its convocation hall yesterday.

The Royal Institution of Naval Architects of England offered a RINA Myanmar Shipyard Award plus K100,000 to Maung Htut Khaung, who graduated in Naval Architecture Engineering.

Wealth Ocean International Co. Ltd of Japan offered the Best Marine Engineer Student Prize to Maung Khant Ye Win, who graduated in Marine Mechanical Engineering.

Hutchison Port Holding (Hong Kong) offered a gold medal and US$1,000 to Ma Thit Oo Kyaw, who graduated in Port and Harbour Engineering.

Furuno Electronics Co Ltd of Japan offered Best Nautical Science Student Prize and a one-week excursion to Japan to Maung Htein Lin, who graduated in Nautical Science.

Thome Shipping (Myanmar) Ltd offered Best Marine Electrical System and Electronics Engineering Student Prize to Maung Kyaw Win Naing, who graduated in Marine Electrical Systems and Electronics.

Starhigh Asia-Pacific Pte Ltd offered River and Coastal Engineer Best Student Prize to Ma Hnin Malar Khaing, who graduated in River and Coastal Engineering. The awards were presented to the outstanding students by Deputy Minister for Transport U Han Sein. The Myanmar Maritime University was opened in 2002 and held its first convocation in 2007. The premier university of maritime education in the country has so far produced 3,353 graduates.—*Myanmar News Agency*

LOCAL Business

Affordable river cruise opens in Mandalay

Floating Karaweik barge in the Ayeyawady River. PHOTO: AUNG THANT KHAING

Aung Thant Khaing

LOCALS and tourists can now enjoy sunset views from a river cruise on the floating Karaweik barge in the Ayeyawady River.

The cruise offers hotel services equal to that of five-star-hotels. It costs K35,000 for a double room for local travellers. There are also double rooms or families of tourists at a rate ranging from US$70 to $120. "The service is available two days per week," said managing director Ko Kyaw Tun from the cruise company.

"We offer an affordable rate for everyone. Some might think it's expensive. We cruise up and down the river in the evening when everyone can be free. We also offer entertainment programmes, including puppet shows, in the evening," he added. Locals can pay K10,000 to cruise along the river, while foreign tourists must pay $15. The ship cruises along Ayeyawady River from 3pm to 5 pm. Travellers can explore Shwe Kyetyet Jetty and enjoy views of Mingun. Beverages, coffee and desserts are served on-board. The Karaweik design symbolises the royal vessel used by ancient Myanmar monarchs. Astrological signs are carved on the front part of Karaweik barge. Ten Myanmar traditional arts and crafts are carved on precious teak and used as decorations around the vessel, said Ko Kyaw Tun.

The triple-decker vessel is 41 feet high and has 39 rooms. The barge is 250 feet long and 70 feet wide. It is powered by 360 horsepower engines.

New MEB building opens

THE new building of the Myanmar Economic Bank (MEB) in Kamayut Township, Yangon, opened near the Bartar bus stop along the Yangon-Insein Road on 12 February.

The Yangon Region Minister for Finance and the managing director of MEB cut the ribbon at the opening event, and Union Deputy Minister for Finance unveiled the sign for the bank.

The old building was in poor condition, causing inconveniences for both civil servants and retirees who withdraw their monthly pension payments. The renovations are meant enable faster services for clients, said district branch manager Daw Shin Htwe Nyan Win.

The branch was initially opened in an older, two-storey building in Kamayut Sanyeiknyain, on a 0.74-acre plot. It took 7 months to complete the construction of the new building a cost of K500 million (US$4,065).

The new building is made of reinforced concrete and also has two storeys. The branch offers deposit accounts and provides loans for entrepreneurs and transfer remittance services.—*Khin Zarli*

Pyin Oo Lwin's outskirts see boom in real estate

THERE has been more activity in the real estate market of Pyin Oo Lwin, located in Mandalay Region, within land located on the outskirts of the town than that within the town itself, according to the Pyin Oo Lwin Realtor Association.

The floor price of a plot of land within the town would fetch from anything between K100 million to over K one billion, resulting in a cooling off of the inner town real estate market. The price of the same area of land on the outskirts of the town however is much cheaper, costing around K40 million to K100 million, explained the the chairperson of the Pyin Oo Lwin Realtor Association, U Than Win Hlaing.

"The price of land in the Pyin Oo Lwin market doesn't suffer from such dramatic fluctuations in prices like land markets in other regions. It just goes slowly and correctly. There are not fixations on the current price of land. The width of the land and whether there is good transportations connecting affect the price." he said.

The price of land has been increasing over the past few years. A plot of 80 by 100 feet land beside the Lashio-Mandalay highway is currently priced at K1,000 million, but the same space located far away from a main road would fetch less than half that, between K250-400 million.

"Most of those coming to purchase land come from the hot regions of the country. There's almost no foreign buyers in land here. Those that come here to purchase land purely to resell it for a potential profit are only from Yangon and Mandalay." said a local resident involved in the real estate business.

Of land which is being bought up quickly on the outskirts of Pyin Oo Lwin, those which fetch around K100 include a property, whereas land plots going for K40 million and over are just vacant spaces.

The price of a 80 by 100 feet plot of land on the outskirts of the town depends on its proximity to a road, going for between K250-1,000 million while a 80 by 80 feet plot of land, again dependent of its closeness to the road costs between K200-220 million; a 60 by 60 feet plot of land between K100-160; and a 40 by 60 feet piece of land between K30-100 million, according to the Pyin Oo Lwin Realtors Association.

The trading of land on the outskirts of Pyin Oo Lwin is taking place because applications for ownership are easy to obtain.—*Myitmakha News Agency*

Repayment date of crop loans pushed back

THE repayment date of crop loans taken out by farmers in the Tanintharyi Region capital of Dawei is to be pushed back until 15 April to allow those who took out the loans more time in which to repay them, according to the Dawei branch of the Farmers Development Bank.

In previous years the repayment deadline for crop loans was 31 March whereas this year the amount of days in which to repay loans has been increased. However, in keeping with years prior, crop loans are only eligible to those with a farmland ownership entitlement Form 7, not Form 105 farmland documents.

"In years before, all remaining repayments had to be made by the end of March. As the time of farmers making repayments gradually became later and later with each passing year, this year we allowed for farmers nationwide to pay back their crop loans in April." said U Win Naing, regional manager of the Farmers Development Bank.

During the last year within three districts of Tanintharyi Region of Dawei, Myiek and Kaw Thaung, a total of K11,744 million was given out in loans of K100,000 per acre of a total cultivation acerage of 117,449 acres.

"We didn't take out any loans. It's not profitable for us to have to sell off our paddy in order to meet the repayment deadline. As such, if we require expenses for our farming activities then we just search for it locally." said U Shwe, a farmer from the Min Yat village of Laung Lone township.

As weighing of paddy isn't standardised within the region it causes many difficulties in when it comes to selling. The current market price of 1.6 bushels of paddy is K5,200. But a differentiation in the standard of 1.6 bushels between regions, of 13, 14 or 15 pyi's making up 1.6 bushels, causes difficulties in selling, resulting in problems encountered in repaying loans.—*Myitmakha News Agency*

Farmers harvest rice in Tatkon. PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE

Singapore Airshow to highlight aerospace equipment, aerobatic manoeuvres

SINGAPORE — Two days ahead of the opening of the Singapore Airshow, members of media are given a glimpse of the aerial display of Asia's largest aerospace and defence exhibition yesterday.

This year's areal display include the French Air Force's Dassault Rafale, the US Air Force's (USAF) F-16C/D Fighting Falcon, the Royal Malaysia Air Force's Su-30MKM as well as the Singapore Air Force's (RSAF) integrated aerial display team.

RSAF's team comprises an F-15 SG fighter jet and an AH-64D Apache attack helicopter. They will perform 11 aerobatic manoeuvres, showcasing precision and coordination between different aircraft.

In addition, the Black Eagles from South Korea Air Force, known for their jaw-dropping acrobatic stunts, will be back to thrill the crowds with three more maneuvers added to their 2014 repertoire.

It will no doubt be the highlight of the performance, with their stunts colouring the sky with the symbol of the Korea's Taegukgi, the national flag of South Korea. The airshow is only for trade professionals on 16-19 February while it will be open to the public on 20-21 February.

In 2014, almost 10,000 people attended the Singapore Airshow. This year, visitors are able to see luxury business jets from Bombardier, Embraer and Gulfstream and take flight simulator rides.—*Xinhua*

South Korea's Black Eagles aerobatics team perform a maneuver during a preview of the Singapore Airshow at Changi exhibition centre in Singapore on 14 February 2016. The Airshow will take place from 16-21 February. PHOTO: REUTERS

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Hundreds of Cambodian youth join Valentine's Day blood drive

PHNOM PENH — The Cambodia's National Blood Transfusion Centre (NBTC) collected about 600 units of blood yesterday during its third annual Valentine's Day blood drive.

"The campaign gives an opportunity to youth to share their love by donating blood to save victims who are in need of blood," NBTC director Hok Kimcheng said during the blood drive here.

He said the NBTC received some 54,793 units of blood in the whole year of 2015, about 67 per cent of the blood donors were young adults aged between 18 and 30 years old.

Health Minister Mam Bunheng said blood transfusion did not harm donors' health; instead, their blood would save lives.

"Donating blood is a good deed because we all know that blood is essential for patients who are much in need of blood," he said, encouraging youth to continue their humanitarian activities.

Valentine's Day blood drive is one of the events Cambodia has created to encourage young people to join humanitarian activities and to contribute to preventing sexual misconduct among young adults on the day.

Valentine's Day is becoming popular among young people in this Southeast Asian country and some students skip classes to go on a date.

Early this week, the ministries of culture and education had called on parents, teachers and authorities to take possible actions to curb teenagers from using the day for salacious festivities.—*Xinhua*

People donate blood in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, on 14 February 2016. The Cambodia's National Blood Transfusion Centre (NBTC) collected about 600 units of blood on Sunday during its third annual Valentine's Day blood drive. PHOTO: XINHUA

Modi urged to make reality match 'Make in India' hype

MUMBAI — Thousands of people and mascots of lions swarmed the weekend opening of a "Make in India" drive to attract foreign direct investment, pitched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi as "the biggest brand that India has ever created".

The week-long event, the boldest since Modi launched the initiative to emulate China's export miracle back in 2014, seeks to "spark a renewed sense of pride in India's manufacturing", its marketing blurb says.

But even as the Make in India hype scales new heights, some bosses question Modi's delivery on promises to make it easier to do business, while marketing experts caution against creating unrealistic expectations.

"When you over-communicate and you under-deliver, the biggest risk is that you begin to lose trust," said Chandramouli Nilakantan, CEO of Blue Lotus Communications, a branding and public relations consultancy.

On buzz alone the effort got off to a great start, with the prime ministers of Sweden and Finland attending Saturday's gala opening hosted by Modi.

On Sunday, delegates thronged the 10 pavilions erected for the event in Mumbai, India's financial capital. Around 2,500 foreign companies and 8,000 domestic companies were expected to attend, organisers said.

Yet on the ground, the experience of businesses is more prosaic: Twenty months after Modi swept to power with a promise of growth and jobs for India's 1.3 billion people, executives say more needs to be done, including improving infrastructure.

More pressingly, key legislation such as a goods and services tax and land acquisition bill are stuck in parliament, just as global competitors such as Viet Nam step up their own reform efforts.

"Make in India is a great initiative and has created a lot of positive sentiments," Vikas Agarwal, general manager of mobile phone maker OnePlus in India, told Reuters.

"Now the government needs to follow up with policies. That includes providing custom duty and export incentives, tax rationalisation and removal of ambiguous land acquisition policies."—*Reuters*

US Justice Scalia, conservative icon, died at 79

WASHINGTON — Conservative US Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia has died, setting up a major political showdown between President Barack Obama and the Republican-controlled Senate over who will replace him just months before a presidential election.

Obama called Scalia, who served on the nation's highest court for nearly 30 years, a "larger-than-life presence" and said he intended to nominate someone to fill the vacant seat before leaving the White House next January.

"I plan to fulfill my constitutional responsibility to appoint a successor in due time and there will be plenty of time for me to do so and for the Senate to give that person a fair hearing and timely vote," Obama told reporters in California.

Scalia, 79, was found dead at the Cibolo Creek Ranch resort in West Texas on Saturday. He died of natural causes, according to Presidio County Judge Cinderela Guevara, who went to the ranch and saw the body.

Chief Justice John Roberts described his former colleague, who was known for his strident conservative views and theatrical flair in the courtroom, as an "extraordinary individual and jurist."

Obama ordered flags at the White House and all federal buildings to be flown at half-staff.

A number of leading Republicans, including Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Chuck Grassley, immediately said they would oppose any attempt by Obama to nominate a new justice.

The political battle lines sharpened later at the Republican presidential debate in South Carolina, where front-runner Donald Trump and several of his rivals said it should be up to Obama's successor to replace Scalia.

"Delay, delay, delay," said Trump, who urged McConnell to block any Obama nomination.

Senator Ted Cruz of Texas said Scalia's death highlighted what was at stake in the election. "We're not going to give up the US Supreme Court for a generation by allowing Barack Obama to make one more liberal appointee."

Democrats lined up to push for a speedy appointment, with Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid saying it should happen "right away."

Obama could tilt the balance of the nation's highest court, which now consists of four conservatives and four liberals, if he is successful in pushing his nominee through the confirmation process.

US President Ronald Reagan speaks with Supreme Court Justice nominee Antonin Scalia (R) in the White House Oval Office in Washington, DC in a 7 July 1986 file photo courtesy of the Ronald Reagan Library. PHOTO: REUTERS

Scalia, who grew up in New Jersey and graduated from Harvard Law School, was a leader of the "originalist" ideology that looks at the US Constitution through the lens of its framers' 18th century intentions.

He was the first Italian-American on the court and a devout Roman Catholic who had nine children. An avid hunter who wrote the court's 2008 landmark opinion supporting gun rights, Scalia also was a close friend of liberal Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, with whom he shared a love of opera and often travelled. His replacement would be Obama's third appointment to the nine-justice court, which is set to decide its first major abortion case in nearly 10 years as well as key cases on voting rights, affirmative action and immigration.

Waiting for the next president to make a nomination would leave Scalia's seat empty for at least 11 months, an unprecedented gap in recent decades.

Obama's first two appointments to the court, liberals Sonia Sotomayor in 2009 and Elena Kagan in 2010, both experienced relatively smooth confirmation hearings in the Senate, which was then controlled by Democrats.

With Republicans now in charge of the Senate and keen to exert their influence over the process, Obama is likely to be forced into picking a moderate with little or no history of advocating for liberal causes.

The White House is also likely to consider whether to nominate a woman or a member of a minority group, or someone who fits into both categories.

Among those mentioned within legal circles as a potential nominee is Sri Srinivasan, an Indian-American judge who has served on the US Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit since May 2013.

It has been nearly 50 years since political wrangling between a president and Senate pushed a Supreme Court nomination into the next administration.

In 1968, Chief Justice Earl Warren made clear his intention to resign and Democratic President Lyndon Johnson sought to elevate then-Associate Justice Abe Fortas, who had been a close confidant. Senate Republicans fought the nomination, claiming "cronyism," and Johnson withdrew it. The appointment fell to his successor, Republican Richard Nixon.—*Reuters*

PICTURE OF THE DAY

People visit the frozen waterfall at the Blood Fairy Spring of Shijiazhuang, capital of north China's Hebei Province, on 12 February 2016. PHOTO: XINHUA

S Korea says N Korea used Kaesong wages to develop weapons

SEOUL — South Korea's Unification Ministry yesterday accused North Korea of misusing the majority of wages paid in foreign currency to its workers at a joint inter-Korean factory complex to fund the development of nuclear weapons and missiles, as well as to buy luxury goods for its power elite.

The ministry charged that around 70 per cent of the money that flowed into the Kaesong Industrial Complex has been funneled to the ruling Workers' Party of Korea for such purposes, including to a special office codenamed Room 39 which manages top leader Kim Jong Un's coffers and personal slush funds.

Last Wednesday, South Korea shut down operations at Kaesong in response to the North's 7 February long-range rocket launch and its 6 January nuclear weapons test. It also vowed to cut off the supply of electricity and water to the zone.

North Korea retaliated on Thursday by expelling all South Koreans from the joint industrial zone, the last major cooperation project between the two Koreas, and freezing all South Korean assets and equipment there. It also completely severed all communication channels with the South.

The industrial zone, which opened in 2004, has long been a key source of revenue for North Korea. About 54,000 North Koreans were employed by over 120 South Korean factories in the zone.—*Kyodo News*

Cuba returns American missile mistakenly shipped to Havana

HAVANA — The Cuban government announced Saturday that it had returned a dummy US Hellfire missile, which was shipped to Havana by mistake from Europe in 2014.

The Hellfire, a laser-guided, air-to-surface missile, arrived in Havana in July 2014 on a flight from Paris due to a mistake or mishandling in the country of origin, according to a declaration by Cuba's Foreign Ministry.

"It was worrying for Cuban authorities to see an American-made missile arrive in the country, without having been declared on the cargo manifest of the plane transporting it," it read.

As the US government made an official explanation to Havana and requested the missile's return, Cuba decided to initiate talks to return it, the declaration said.

US defence experts travelled to Havana and brought the missile home on Saturday.

The Wall Street Journal, which was first to report the lost missile, reported that the missile was meant to be in Europe for a training exercise, but ended up in Cuba due to an unknown error.—*Xinhua*

US Defence Secretary says UK needs nuclear weapons for 'outsized' world role

LONDON — Britain must renew its submarine-borne Trident nuclear weapons system if it is to maintain its "outsized" role in world affairs, US Defence Secretary Ash Carter said in comments published on Saturday.

A decision on replacing the ageing fleet of four submarines which carry nuclear warheads is due to be made this year and while Prime Minister David Cameron is committed to renewal, the issue has caused deep divisions in the opposition Labour Party.

The government has said replacing the submarines will cost 31 billion pounds while Reuters has puts the overall cost of renewing and maintaining a successor to Trident at more than 167 billion pounds over 32 years.

Carter said the submarine fleet helped the "special relationship" Britain enjoyed with the United States, the BBC said on its website. The deterrent allowed Britain to "continue to play that outsized role on the global stage that it does because of its moral standing and its historical standing," he was quoted as saying.

US Secretary of Defence Ash Carter speaks at a news conference during a NATO Defence Ministers meeting at the Alliance's headquarters in Brussels, on 11 February 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

"It's important that the military power matches that standing and so we're very supportive of it. We depend upon the United Kingdom, the United Kingdom depends on us, that's part of the special relationship."

While most lawmakers in Cameron's party support keeping nuclear weapons, Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn, a veteran left-wing and anti-war activist, supports unilateral disarmament and is holding a review of the party's policy.

That has led to deep divisions among its lawmakers and earlier this week Labour's home affairs spokesman Andy Burnham said it might be impossible for the party to agree a position.—*Reuters*

Russia warns of new Cold War as east Ukraine violence surges

Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev attends the Munich Security Conference in Munich, Germany, on 13 February 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

MUNICH — Violence in eastern Ukraine is intensifying and Russian-backed rebels have moved heavy weaponry back to the front line, international monitors warned on Saturday as Moscow responded by accusing the West of dragging the world back 50 years.

Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev described East-West relations as having "fallen into a new Cold War" and said NATO was "hostile and closed" towards Russia, in the latest sign that peace efforts have made scant progress almost two years since Moscow annexed Crimea.

"I sometimes wonder — are we in 2016 or 1962?," Medvedev asked in a speech to the Munich Security Conference.

Implementation of a deal agreed in Minsk a year ago, which would allow for the lifting of sanctions on Russia, and a lull in violence late last year raised hopes that the conflict that has killed more than 9,000 people could be resolved quickly.

But Lamberto Zannier, who heads the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) monitoring eastern Ukraine, said the situation had "become difficult again."

"We see a multiplication of incidents, violations of the ceasefire," he told Reuters at the Munich Security Conference. "We've seen cases of redeployment of heavy armaments closer to the contact line ... and multiple rocket launchers, artillery being used," he said, referring to the heavy weaponry that is meant to be removed under the Minsk deal.

Medvedev accused Kiev of trying to shift the blame onto Moscow for the continued shelling in the industrial regions of eastern Ukraine now under rebel control.

"The Minsk agreements have to be observed by everyone. But we believe that it's first and foremost up to the Kiev authorities to do that," he said.

The West says it has satellite images, videos and other evidence to show Russia is providing weapons to the rebels and that Moscow has troops engaged in the conflict that erupted following Russia's annexation of Ukraine's Crimea in 2014.

Russia denies such accusations.

NATO's Supreme Allied Commander Gen. Philip Breedlove said Russia had the power to "dial up and down" the conflict as it wished to put pressure on the government in Kiev but he said NATO did not want, nor currently see, a new Cold War.—*Reuters*

NEWS IN BRIEF

Turkish shells northern Syria for second day

BEIRUT — The Turkish army shelled positions held by Kurdish-backed militia in northern Syria for a second day yesterday, killing two fighters, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights monitoring group said.

Turkey on Saturday demanded the Syrian Kurdish YPG militia withdraw from areas that it captured in the northern Aleppo region in recent days.

The shelling has targeted an air base and other positions captured by the Kurdish-backed forces from insurgents in Syria.—*Reuters*

Lebanon's Hariri makes rare visit to Beirut

BEIRUT — Former Lebanese prime minister Saad al-Hariri made a rare visit to Lebanon yesterday, arriving in Beirut on the 11th anniversary of the assassination of his father, Rafik al-Hariri, an airport official said.

It is only his third visit to the country since he left in 2011 after his government was toppled by the 8 March coalition that includes the powerful Shi'ite group Hezbollah.

Hariri is Lebanon's most influential Sunni politician and is backed by Saudi Arabia.

His last visit was for the same occassion last year.—*Reuters*

Putin, Obama agree on cooperation to implement Syria agreement

MOSCOW — Russian President Vladimir Putin and US President Barack Obama agreed to intensify diplomatic and other cooperation to implement an agreement on Syria struck at talks in Munich, the Kremlin said in a statement following phone talks between the two leaders yesterday.

The Kremlin also said that Putin spoke with Obama about importance of creating a unite anti-terrorism fron—*Reuters*

Poland wants punishments for use of 'Polish death camp' phrase

WARSAW — Poland is drawing up new regulations to punish use of the phrase "Polish death camps" when referring to wartime Nazi concentration camps on Polish soil, Justice Minister Zbigniew Ziobro said on Saturday.

Poland has long sought to eliminate the misleading phrase from historical and newspaper accounts since it suggests the country, which was occupied by Nazi Germany during World War II, was responsible for Holocaust-era camps on its territory.

The Nazis operated their most infamous death camps, such as Auschwitz-Birkenau, Sobibor and Treblinka complexes, mostly in occupied Poland rather than in Germany.

"This will be a project that meets the expectations of Poles, who are blasphemed in the world, in Europe, even in Germany, that they are the Holocaust perpetrators, that in Poland there were Polish concentration camps, Polish gas chambers," Ziobro told private radio RMF.

"Enough with this lie. There has to be responsibility," he said.

The phrase "Polish death camps" is usually found only in foreign publications, almost never in Poland itself.

Ziobro said he had presented the project to Prime Minister Beata Szydlo and she reacted positively.—*Reuters*

Twenty five university students injured in accident in Sri Lanka

COLOMBO — At least 25 Sri Lankan university students were injured in an accident yesterday when the bus they were travelling in collided with a container truck, the police said here.

The accident occurred on the Bandarawela, Haputale main road, in the misty hills of the Uva Province. The students were all females who were on their way to a local university. The students and the drivers of the bus and truck were all rushed to nearby state hospitals.

Two of the students are reported to be in critical condition.

Police are conducting further investigations.—*Xinhua*

OPINION

Hopeful signs for education reform

Kyaw Thura

NO number of school buildings can guarantee a quality education. Analysts have attributed the root cause of Myanmar's deteriorating education system to a serious shortage of competent and qualified teachers, not to a lack of learning institutions, pointing out the low academic achievements of students, including graduates.

As part of the Myanmar government's education reform programme, formal schooling has been made compulsory to students from kindergarten to eleventh grade. The Ministry of Education announced on its website that K-12 education will be introduced as of the 2016-2017 academic year, with a shift of emphasis from rote learning to cognitive development in line with international standards set for early childhood development.

The newly-designed syllabus for kindergarten has attracted both constructive and destructive criticism from educational, civil and political groups, especially in big cities, prompting the Department of Educational Research to give a press briefing on the new syllabus in Nay Pyi Taw on 8 January. Officials spoke in favour of the new syllabus, expressing their belief that the course was designed to enable children to develop social skills, curiosity, cognition and scientific and environmental discovery.

In addition, the matriculation examination this year will come with slight modifications, including a greater focus on thought-provoking questions based on the textbooks.

In the new education system, there have been both encouraging signs and serious challenges. However, the on-going reforms in the education sector should not lose momentum. Despite the standard of our education not being high, there are hopeful signs that our education is not yet beyond repair.

Write for us

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

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

A Train Ride on the Death Railway Line

Khin Maung Myint

A few days ago, I took a train ride along a section of the Death Railway Line, which lies inside Thailand. In 1997, I had an opportunity to visit the Bridge on the River Kwai for the first time. After nearly eighteen years, when I came to learn about the plans for the establishments of the East-west corridor and the Southern corridor in the Greater Mekong Sub-region, I was intrigued to write an article. The article was titled "Let's Revive the Death Railway", which was published in the GNLM about a year ago.

It was the news of the opening of the Death Railway Museum in Thanbyuzayat, on the Independence Day that prompted me to visit that bridge again. The first visit was just a sight-seeing trip, but this time it was more purposeful than just sight-seeing.

For quite sometimes, before the news of that museum at Thanbyuzayat, I had been contemplating on writing a more comprehensive article about the Death Railway to get the attention and interest of the departments concerned. I have a strong belief that if the rail link between Thailand and Myanmar could be reestablished, it would benefit the Greater Mekong Sub-region and our country too. Thus I had suggested, in my first article, that we should revive the Death Railway and also to cash in on the lucrative tourist trade that Thailand had been enjoying for a long time by exploiting on the fame of the River Kwai Bridge and the notorious Death Railway. As part of my suggestions is a step closer to become a reality by the latest developments in Thanbyuzayat, my desire to advocate for the total revival of that train link is rekindled.

On my first trip to the Bridge on the River Kwai, I was disappointed, instead of being overwhelmed or excited by the sight of the bridge. The Bridge I was expecting to see was a timber trestle bridge, like the one in the famous movie. However, the bridge I saw was an iron bridge. I totally lost interest in that bridge until I became familiar with the use of the Internet.

According to what I learned from the Internet, the bridge the Japanese first built was a wooden one. A few months later, they built an iron bridge not far upstream of that wooden bridge, with the materials they dismantled from an existing bridge in Java, which was under their occupation by then. During the war, both the bridges were used. Thus the present bridge is also the original Bridge on the River Kwai that had played an important role in the history of the Second World War (WWII).

Unlike the first visit, I'm more knowledgable about the background history of the bridge this time around, so the second visit was more interesting. I devoted two full days to study the Death Railway. On the first day I visited the notorious Hellfire Pass. That would be another story but in this present article, I would be writing about the train ride along the railway line built with the sweats, bloods and the lives of many people.

Before writing about the train ride, I would like to recall briefly the background history for the benefits of those who are not familiar with the Death Railway. The railway line was built by the Japanese during the WWII, to supply their advancing troops inside Burma, to mount an invasion into India. The construction was done by 60,000 allied PoWs and some 180,000 Asian civilians forced labourers. The construction period was about 20 months, which started in 1942 and competed in 1943. The total length was 415 kilometers (258 miles) starting from near Bangkok to link up with the Burma Railway's railhead at Thanbyuzayat. There were 680 bridges along its whole length, most of which were timber trestle bridges and only 8 were of iron structure, 7 of those were in Myanmar.

The railway line passed through rough terrains over the rugged mountains that straddle the border between the two countries. It was built, literally barehanded, using basic hand-tools without any equipment or machineries. The working conditions were very harsh, with meager rations, extreme weather conditions, deadly diseases such as malaria, typhoid, cholera, skin diseases and malnutritions and above all the brutality of the Japanese soldiers. The death tolls stood at 123,621 POWs and over 90,000 Asian civilians. Among the Asian deaths, the Malays were highest in number at 45,000 and the Burmese in second place with 40,000 deaths The others included some Chinese, Indo-chinese, Indians and Javanese. Thus there is no wonder that the railway line, officially called the Siam-Burma Railways or the Burma Railways, was dubbed the "Death Railway".

From the above description, it is quite evitable how difficult the construction would have been.

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Pleasure cruise ship arrives at Thilawa port

A PLEASURE cruise ship with 599 crew members and 1,167 passengers on board arranged by Destination Asia Co., Ltd arrived at Thilawa port in Yangon from Hambantata port, Sri Lanka, on Thursday.

Permarent Secretary U Yee Mon from the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism as well as other officials welcomed the guests. Tourists will travel in two groups, one to Bagan and Mandalay region while the other will go toYangon, Bago and Thanhlyin areas. They will continue to Phuket jetty, in Thailand today.

Tourists arrivals to Myanmar by cruise ship have been increasing yearly. In 2015, 26 cruise liners arrived. One cruise liner arrived in January of this year. Seven cruise liners will arrive in February and one cruise liner in March, according to the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism. —*Myanmar News Agency*

A pleasure cruise ship arriving at Thilawa port. PHOTO:MNA

Patient, liver donor in recovery

Union minister Dr Than Aung giving words of encouragement to U Myo Maung Maung, liver donor, and U Myo Myint, liver transplanted patient. PHOTO: MYANMA ALINN

A PATIENT and a donor who have undergone a liver transplant are currently in recovery, according to a spokesperson of the 500-bed Specialists Hospital in Yangon.

A local medical team led by Dr Than Htut, medical superintendent of the 500-bed Specialists Hospital, successfully performed a living donor liver transplant on 11 February.

After the surgery, 36-year-old donor U Myo Maung Maung, who resides the compound of the Thanlyin Township midwifery training school in Yangon, and 58-year-old patient U Myo Myint, of Dagon Myothit (North), gradually started feeling better and better. On 13 February, Union Health Minister U Than Aung inspected the health conditions of both patients and offered words of encouragement to them.—*Myanma Alinn*

Namsan Lisu community celebrates New Year Event

THE All-Myanmar Lisu literature and culture New Year event was held in Namsan township, Loilem District, Shan State (South) on Friday with Chief Minister Sao Aung Myat and ministers attending the event.

Chief minister Sao Aung Myat planted a conifer tree to mark the new year event and cordially greeted the local Lisu residents.—*Thura Aung (IPRD)*

A Train Ride on the Death Railway Line

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It became more evident when I visited the Hellfire Pass and took a train ride to the Tham Kra Sae or the Kra Sae cave, just over an hour's journey from Kanchanarburi, home of the River Kwai Bridge.

The State Railways of Thailand (SRT) provides three round trips daily, between Bangkok and Nam Tok, a small town with a population of roughly 4000. It is the furthest point along the Death Railway line, a few kilometers short of the Hellfire Pass.

I boarded the train, which came from Bangkok, at Kanchanarburi. As soon as the train started to roll, it was already crossing the River Kwai bridge. The train travelled through an open country side, where large tracts of sugar cane plantations, corn fields, strawberry patches, vegetable farms and different types of perennial plantations are abundant, as far as the eyes could see. The terrain is quite plain and level almost all the way until we neared the Wang Pho viaduct.

There the mountain range closed in towards the rail line and the train started to climb a slight slope. Then just before reaching the Tham Kra Sae station, the train slowed down as it cautiously crossed the old timber viaduct built during the war and properly maintained by the SRT. As the steep mountain range reaches right to the water's edge in the Kkwai Noi River, the viaduct was built hugging hugging along the steep cliff edge.

The majority of the tourists, including me, disembarked there, though we had paid the full fare of 100 Bhats, which entitled us to travel up to Nam Tok station. The reason is: the main attractions for the tourists are the wooden viaduct at Wang Pho and the nearby Kra Sae Cave. Most of the deaths during the construction of the railway were caused at Wang Pho and the cave was used as the storage place by the Japanese.

As I walked along the viaduct, as every other tourist did, I came to realize the engineering feat with which the timber trestle structure was constructed. I praised the Japanese engineers who designed and supervised its construction and the PoWs and the forced labourers who undertook the construction work under harsh conditions.

My praise for the Japanese engineers was a bit pre-mature, which I found out when I visited the Death Railway Museum and Research Centre in Kanchanarburi the next day. There, I learned that the timber bridges built were of the standard design illustrated in the American Civil Engineers' handbook and that Japan sent some trainees to attend universities in Britain in the early 19th century to learn the trade of bridge building.

As the viaduct was built during the war, the timber posts were not milled, but the whole tree trunks were utilized. However, the replacements are milled or sliced wooden posts with the old tree trunk posts remaining in many places, which gave us an idea of how the original viaduct might have looked. During the visit, I noticed some workers replacing the old timber posts that have rotted.

Along the route before reaching the viaduct, I noticed at one place where the maintenance parties were replacing the old timber sleepers with concrete ones and also the old rail tracks with new ones. In fact, that rail route is used mainly for the tour trains, which are very popular with the tourists. Thus, judging from the attention given to its maintenance, it must be very useful to the tourism industry of Thailand. If we could reconstruct our end of that rail line up to the nearest place of interest, linked to its history, I believe we could attract more tourists as Thailand is doing. Furthermore, as some countries in the region are interested to establish a Trans-Asian railway system, the departments concerned should collaborate with Thailand to revive that rail link.

Central Africans vote for peace in crucial polls

BANGUI — Central African Republic voted yesterday in elections seen as a crucial step towards restoring democratic rule and ending years of violence that have left the impoverished nation split along religious faultlines.

Two former prime ministers, Faustin-Archange Touadera and Anicet-Georges Dologuele, are contesting the presidential run-off while authorities attempt to re-run a first round of legislative polls which were cancelled over irregularities.

"We hope that it all goes well and goes quickly so that we can have a president," said Parfait Gbokou, 30, among the first to vote after polls opened at 6 am (0500 GMT) at a primary school in the centre of the capital, Bangui.

"I hope we'll finish with these problems once and for all, and we'll have a good laugh in the end," he said.

Elsewhere, the vote got off to a slower start with delays as poll workers set up voting booths and ballot boxes. Polls are due to close at 4 pm.

Central African Republic, one of the world's most unstable countries, was plunged into the worst crisis in its history in early 2013, when mainly Muslim Seleka fighters toppled President Francois Bozize.

Christian militias responded to Seleka abuses, attacking the Muslim minority community. Thousands have died in the bloodshed, and one in five Central Africans has fled, either internally or abroad.

"We expect our new president to disarm the fighters so we can go home," said Emilienne Namsona, 47, who fled in 2013 to the M'poko displacement camp, home to some 23,000 internal refugees next to the airport in the capital Bangui.

Presidential candidates Faustin-Archange Touadera (right) and Anicet-Georges Dologuele (left) face each other during a live television debate ahead of Sunday's second round election, in Bangui, Central African Republic, on 12 February 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

"This is important because we are suffering here in Central African Republic. We want peace. We're going to vote for peace," she said.

A turnout of nearly 80 per cent for a first round of voting in December was largely viewed as a popular rejection of the violence, which has left the northeast under the control of Muslim rebels while Christian militias roam the southwest.

Both Dologuele, a banker, and trained mathematics professor Touadera have made the restoration of peace and security the centrepiece of their presidential campaigns. Both candidates are Christians.

Touadera has portrayed himself as an anti-corruption stalwart, while Dologuele pledges to revive the economy and draw in investors hesitant until now to exploit significant gold, diamond and uranium deposits.

"This election is taking place at a moment when the country is really at a crossroads ... This is an amazing opportunity to start fresh," said Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, who heads MINUSCA, the country's 11,000-troop strong UN peacekeeping mission.

However, while the polls should re-establish democracy after three years of unpopular interim administrations, observers warn against setting expectations too high.

Whoever wins the presidency will face the daunting tasks of extending state authority outside the capital, rebuilding the army, breathing life into a moribund economy and restoring a semblance of security in across nation awash with guns.

"(Elections) are not going to solve the deep, systemic problems that put this country into conflict," said Lewis Mudge, Africa researcher for Human Rights Watch. "It's cheaper to buy a grenade in Bangui than it is to buy a can of Coke. That's how bad it is here."—*Reuters*

Israeli troops kill 2 armed Palestinians in West Bank

JERUSALEM — Israeli military said it killed two armed Palestinians amidst clashes in the northern West Bank city of Jenin yesterday morning.

A military spokesperson said that reserve soldiers arrived in west of Jenin, where youths were hurling stones at passing cars of Israeli settlers.

A Palestinian opened fire at the force, causing no injuries, the spokesperson said. The soldiers then responded with fire, shooting and killing two Palestinians, said the spokesperson.

A spokesman with the Palestinian Red Crescent told the Palestinian Ma'an news agency that the agency was informed of wounded Palestinians, but soldiers prevented an ambulance from reaching the scene to provide them with medical treatment.

The incident was the latest in a five-month-long wave of violence in the West Bank and Israel, which have claimed the lives of at least 165 Palestinians and 26 Israelis.

On Saturday, Israeli soldiers shot and killed an 18-year-old Palestinian girl after she attempted to stab a soldier near a holy site in the flashpoint city of Hebron.

No Israelis were injured but the youth accidently stabbed and moderately wounded a Palestinian bystander after she was pushed by a soldier who tried to protect his soldier friend.—*Xinhua*

Syrian army gains ground around Aleppo, looks to Raqqa

MUNICH/BEIRUT — Russia said on Saturday a Syria ceasefire plan was more likely to fail than succeed, as Syrian government forces backed by Russian air strikes took rebel ground near Aleppo and set their sights on the Islamic State stronghold of Raqqa province.

International divisions over Syria surfaced anew at a Munich conference where Russia rejected French charges that it was bombing civilians, just a day after world powers agreed on the "cessation of hostilities" due to begin in a week's time.

US Secretary of State John Kerry reiterated accusations that Russia was hitting "legitimate opposition groups" and civilians with its bombing campaign in Syria and said Moscow must change its targets to respect the ceasefire deal.

The conflict, reshaped by Russia's intervention last September, has gone into an even higher gear since the United Nations sought to revive peace talks. These were suspended earlier this month in Geneva before they got off the ground.

Turkish forces shelled Kurdish YPG militia targets near the northern Syrian town of Azaz on Saturday, Turkey's Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu said, demanding that the group withdraw from land it recently captured.

The United States urged both Turkey and the Syrian Kurds to step back and focus instead on tackling the "common threat" of Islamic State militants who control large parts of Syria. The Syrian army looked poised to advance into the Islamic State-held province of Raqqa for the first time since 2014, apparently to pre-empt any move by Saudi Arabia to send ground forces into Syria to fight the jihadist insurgents.

A Syrian military source said the army captured positions at the provincial border between Hama and Raqqa in the last two days and intends to advance further.

"It is an indication of the direction of coming operations towards Raqqa. In general, the Raqqa front is open ... starting in the direction of the Tabqa area," the source said.

Tabqa is the location of an air base captured by Islamic State two years ago, and the source said the army had moved to within 35 km (20 miles) of the base.

The cessation of hostilities deal agreed by major powers falls short of a formal ceasefire, since it was not signed by the warring parties — the government and rebels seeking to topple President Bashar al-Assad in a five-year war that has killed at least 250,000 people.

If its forces retake Aleppo and seal the Turkish border north of the city, Damascus would deal a crushing blow to the insurgents who were on the march until Russia intervened, shoring up Assad's rule and paving the way to the current reversal of rebel fortunes.

Russia has said it will keep bombing Islamic State and the al Qaeda-linked Nusra Front, which in many areas of western Syria fights government forces in close proximity to insurgents deemed moderates by Western states.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, asked at a security conference in Munich on Saturday to assess the chances of the cessation of hostilities deal succeeding, replied: "49 per cent."

Asked the same question, his German counterpart Frank-Walter Steinmeier put the odds at 51 per cent.

The complex, multi-sided civil war in Syria, raging since 2011, has drawn in most regional and global powers, caused the world's worst humanitarian emergency and attracted recruits to Islamist militancy from around the world. Assad, backed on the ground by Iranian combatants and Lebanon's Hezbollah in addition to big power ally Russia, is showing no appetite for a negotiated ceasefire. He said this week that the government's goal was to recapture all of Syria, though he said this could take time.

The US government said Assad was "deluded" if he thought there was a military solution to the conflict.

Syrian state television announced the army and allied militia had on Saturday captured the village of al-Tamura overlooking rebel terrain northwest of Aleppo.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights reported advances in the same area, adding that Russian jets had hit three rebel-held towns near the Turkish border.

Government offensives around Aleppo have sent tens of thousands of people fleeing towards the Turkish border. —*Reuters*

Brazil enlists army, cabinet in campaign against Zika

BRASILIA — Brazil's government launched a nationwide campaign on Saturday to fight the Zika virus, with President Dilma Rousseff and cabinet ministers personally visiting homes and handing out leaflets along with 220,000 troops.

Under a scorching sun in the neighbourhood of Zepellin in the outskirts of Rio de Janeiro, which will host the Olympic Games in August, Rousseff said everyone needed to take part in the battle against the mosquito carrying Zika, suspected of causing the birth defect microcephaly.

There are currently no vaccines or treatment for the virus, though research institutes and pharmaceutical companies are working on several possibilities.

"Brazil and the world have lost the battle against dengue, but we won the war against yellow fever, which is carried by the same mosquito. We will win the war against Zika," Rousseff said as she launched the campaign, which also targets other mosquito-borne diseases.

A Brazilian Army soldier talks with a child during the National Day of Mobilization Zika Zero at Sao Sebastiao neighbourhood in Brasilia, Brazil, on 13 February 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Twenty-seven cabinet ministers including central bank chief Alexandre Tombini participated in the operation aimed at visiting three million homes across 356 towns and cities on Saturday.

Soldiers in Sao Paulo handed out fliers with the slogan "A mosquito isn't stronger than a whole country" at entrances to the popular Ibirapuera park. Troops also visited homes in downtown Brasilia.

The so-called National Day for "Zero Zika" is focussed on raising awareness about the disease, Rousseff said. Other operations specifically aimed at spreading larvicides and eliminating breeding spots will be launched later this month.

More than 70,000 troops were deployed in Rio de Janeiro, a priority because of the Olympics, Rousseff said, adding that sports authorities have said the Zika outbreak did not jeopardise the event.

Much remains unknown about Zika, including whether the virus actually causes microcephaly.

Brazil is investigating the potential link between Zika infections and more than 4,300 suspected cases of microcephaly, a condition marked by abnormally small head size that can result in developmental problems.

Researchers have confirmed more than 460 of these cases as microcephaly and identified evidence of Zika infection in 41 of these cases, but have not proven that Zika can cause microcephaly.

The Zika outbreak is affecting large parts of Latin America and the Caribbean and is likely to spread to all countries in the Americas except for Canada and Chile, the World Health Organisation has said.—*Reuters*

Compound in broccoli slows cancer cell growth in breast cancer

SAN FRANCISCO — A compound found in broccoli and other cruciferous vegetables has been found to slow the growth of breast cancer cells, especially at early stages.

While sulforaphane has long shown evidence of value in cancer prevention, researchers at Oregon State University (OSU) and the Oregon Health & Science University suggested in a new study that it may play a role in slowing cancer growth as well.

The findings were the result of the first clinical studies to look at the effect of sulforaphane on breast tissues of women diagnosed with breast cancer.

Emily Ho, a professor at the OSU College of Public Health and Human Sciences, said "our original goal was to determine if sulforaphane supplements would be well tolerated and might alter some of the epigenetic mechanisms involved in cancer."

In a double-blind, randomized, placebo-controlled trial, 54 women with abnormal mammograms were given either a placebo or supplements that provided sulforaphane. The amount of sulforaphane they received would equate to about one cup of broccoli sprouts per day, if eaten as a food.

"We were surprised to see a decrease in markers of cell growth, which means these compounds may help slow cancer cell growth," said Ho. "This is very encouraging. Dietary approaches have traditionally been thought to be limited to cancer prevention, but this demonstrated it could help slow the growth of existing tumors."

Previous studies have found that women with a high intake of cruciferous vegetables, such as broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage or kale, have a decreased risk of breast cancer. In particular, sulforaphane appears to inhibit histone deacetylases, or HDACs, which in turn enhances the expression of tumor suppressor genes that are often silenced in cancer cells.—*Xinhua*

China to launch domestic gravitational wave research project

BEIJING — Tianqin, China's domestic gravitational wave research project initiated by the Sun Yat-sen University in July 2015, is awaiting governmental approval.

The US-based Laser Interferometer Gravitational-wave Observatory (LIGO) announced its ground-breaking discovery of gravitational waves on Thursday, which fulfilled the prediction of Albert Einstein's general theory of relativity one century ago.

The new discovery has encouraged further studies into gravitational waves around the world, with China accelerating its domestic research, said Li Miao, dean of the Institute of Astronomy and Space Science of the university in south China's Guangdong Province.

According to Li, Tianqin has already made progress on some key technologies and will be carried out in four stages over the next 15 to 20 years, including the last step of launching three high-orbit satellites to detect gravitational waves.

The university plans to build a 5,000-square-metre observatory and a new lab occupying more than 10,000 square meters on Fenghuang Mountain in Zhuhai City, Guangdong Province.

Chen Yanbei, scientist with LIGO, said Tianqin will study the gravitational waves in the space, which is different from research made by the US ground-based observatory.—*Xinhua*

Guillain-Barre on rise in 5 Latam countries, no proven link to Zika — WHO

GENEVA — A neurological disorder suspected of links to the mosquito-borne Zika virus is on the rise in Brazil, Colombia, El Salvador, Suriname and Venezuela, the World Health Organisation (WHO) said on Saturday.

The rare Guillain-Barre syndrome, in which the body's immune system attacks part of the nervous system, causes gradual weakness in the legs, arms and upper body and sometimes leads to total paralysis.

"In the context of the Zika virus outbreak, Brazil, Colombia, El Salvador, Suriname and Venezuela have reported an increase of GBS (Guillain-Barre Syndrome)," the WHO said in a weekly report on Zika virus now circulating in 34 countries, including 26 in the Americas.

"The cause of the increase in GBS incidence observed in Brazil, Colombia, El Salvador and Suriname remains unknown, especially as dengue, chikungunya and Zika virus have all been circulating simultaneously in the Americas," it added. Investigations continue to determine the cause, WHO said, noting that there was no laboratory confirmation of Zika virus in patients with GBS in Colombia and El Salvador.

Venezuela has reported 252 cases of Guillain-Barre occurring at the same time and place as Zika infections, it said. "Zika virus infection was confirmed for three of the GBS cases, including one fatal case."

Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro said on Thursday that three people had died of complications linked to Zika virus and that suspected cases of Zika had risen to 5,221.

Even in the best of settings, 3 to 5 per cent of Guillain-Barre patients die from complications, which can include paralysis of the muscles that control breathing, blood infection, lung clots or cardiac arrest, according to the WHO.

In French Polynesia, all 42 GBS cases identified during the Zika virus outbreak in 2013-2014 tested positive for dengue and Zika virus infection, the WHO said. There is no proven link between the Zika virus, the birth defect microcephaly and Guillain-Barre syndrome, but senior WHO expert Marie-Paule Kieny said on Friday that scientists suspected on and might be able to confirm it within weeks. Microcephaly is a condition marked by a baby's abnormally small head size, which can result in developmental problems.

"Prevention measures have become critical. There are concerns that the Zika virus may spread globally to environments where mosquitoes can live and breed," the WHO said on Saturday.—*Reuters*

Nurses take care of Guillain-Barre syndrome patients in the neurology ward at the Rosales National Hospital in San Salvador, El Salvador on 27 January 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Vucic: Of course Tolimir wasn't killed by ballistic missile

BELGRADE — The report from the Hague Tribunal confirming that General Zdravko Tolimir died of natural causes is not an answer that we asked for in the letter that I sent, Serbian Prime Minister Aleksnadaer Vucic said Saturday.

Vucic said that it was not a proper answer to the question of why Tolimir had died and why he had not been released to receive medical care at Belgrade's request four months before, and then commented:

"Of course he died of natural causes. It's not that we thought he had been hit by a ballistic rocket."

"Serbia knows what its domestic and international obligations are, but it seems that Serbia has to remind some others in the world of their obligations, and that is to protect life and people," the prime minister said.

Vucic told reporters in Belgrade that his letter, asking for Tolimir's provisional release, with all possible guarantees offered by the Serbian government, had been sent four months ago and had not been answered, and the way The Hague was treating Serbia posed a problem to both the government and him personally.

Vucic also said it was no wonder that the request to extradite SRS leader Vojislav Seselj was arriving in the midst of the pre-election campaign.—*Tanjug*

Serbian Prime Minister Aleksnadaer Vucic. PHOTO: TANJUG

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Level 8A, Union Financial Centre (UFC),
Corner of Mahabandoola Road and Thein Phyu Road,
Botahtaung Township, Yangon,
The Republic of the Union of Myanmar.
Dated **15 February 2016** yma@kcyangon.com

New Zealand's Christchurch rocked by 5.7 magnitude quake, cliffs collapse into sea

Dust and debris rise above houses after a cliff collapsed due to an earthquake on the Whitewash Head area, located above Scarborough Beach in the suburb of Sumner, Christchurch, New Zealand, on 14 February 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

WELLINGTON — A strong 5.7 magnitude earthquake struck near Christchurch in New Zealand yesterday, causing cliffs to collapse into the sea but no major damage to the city, which was devastated by a 2011 quake which killed nearly 200 people.

The epicentre of Sunday's quake on New Zealand's south island was 15 kms (9 miles) east of Christchurch and at a shallow depth of 15 km (9 miles), said the country's seismological body Geonet.

Geonet said there were more than 40 aftershocks.

The quake came eight days before the anniversary of the deadly 2011 quake that caused upwards of NZ$40 billion ($26.52 billion) of damage, causing much of the city to require a rebuild.

Police said there were no reports of major damage or serious injuries, but people were evacuated from several buildings and there were reports of some liquefaction.

The Christchurch City Council said cliffs collapsed in several places along the surrounding coast, spreading large clouds of billowing dust across the sea and hills.

"Obviously with a 5.7 magnitude earthquake so close to the eastern coast of Christchurch its certainly been a big shock for the city, a set back in terms of people's confidence and feeling of security," said Christchurch Mayor Lianne Dalziel.

"Our city is stronger than it was five years ago. There are going to be a lot of people out there feeling very vulnerable." —*Reuters*

Yangon Golf Club

The Annual General Meeting of the Yangon Golf Club and Annual-At-Home with Prize Giving ceremony, will be held on Sunday, 21st February, 2016 at the Club House Premises on the following programme.

Annual General Meeting - 10:00 AM
Annual-At-Home - 12:00 Noon

All members cordially with their families are invited to join us on this special occasion of Annual-At-Home.

Executive Committee
Yangon Golf Club

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Britons expect PM David Cameron to get poor EU deal- poll

LONDON — A clear majority of Britons do not expect Prime Minister David Cameron to get a good deal in his renegotiation of Britain's EU membership terms, according to a poll on Saturday, adding to the pressure on him ahead of next week's meeting of leaders.

Cameron is hoping to clinch a deal with his European Union peers at a summit on 18-19 February which he can then put before the British public in a referendum on whether to remain in the 28-member bloc.

Opinion polls suggest the country is evenly divided on whether to stay or leave, and much could depend on how they view any final agreement achieved with the rest of the EU. The latest ComRes survey for the Independent on Sunday and Sunday *Mirror* newspapers found that by nearly three to one, Britons were expecting that Cameron would not get a good deal for Britain.

That was the view of 58 per cent of those polled, while only 21 per cent thought he would get a good agreement. The survey also had a worrying message for those who want to stay in the EU and hope to use the argument that Britain's economy will suffer if it leaves. While 39 per cent said they agreed Britain would be better off in the bloc, 36 per cent felt the economy would be better off outside. Cameron has repeatedly said he wanted Britain to stay in a reformed EU, a message he reiterated in speech on Friday at a dinner in the German city of Hamburg with Chancellor Angela Merkel, appealing for understanding of Britain's need to protect its sovereignty.

Merkel herself said she was becoming more confident a deal could be struck but she warned more compromises may be needed on both sides.

British and EU negotiators say much of the reform package has been agreed, but Cameron will have to settle tricky final issues, such as on migration where the British leader hopes to be able to curb benefits for EU workers.

However, many eurosceptics in Cameron's own party have described the draft deal as one which does little to bring back any meaningful powers from Brussels, and are likely to campaign for an exit in the referendum.—*Reuters*

Greek police arrest three Iraqi Kurds with guns, ammunition

ATHENS — Greek police arrested three Iraqi Kurds in two separate operations, on suspicion they were trying to move a large number of guns and ammunition into Turkey, a police official said yesterday.

The men, aged 22, 28 and 39 and all British passport holders, were found to have tens of thousands of small-caliber cartridges and more than 20 pistols and rifles in a car and a trailer close to the border with Turkey on Saturday evening.

The 39-year-old suspect was found to have 200,000 cartridges and four pistols on him when he was apprehended close to the Turkish border crossing. The other two had 18 rifles and 27,000 cartridges when they were detained at a town close to the Turkish border after days of surveillance.

"We don't have any evidence to connect them with ISIS ... we have informed Europol and Interpol", the police official said. The weapons were not combat rifles but could have been used for training, the official said. They were due to be taken before a local magistrate later yesterday or Monday on suspicion of illegal possession of weapons and smuggling.—*Reuters*

Trump, Bush engage in bitter clashes at Republican debate

GREENVILLE, (S.C.), — Republican presidential candidates Donald Trump and Jeb Bush clashed angrily over the Iraq war, the Bush family and Trump's business dealings at an acrimonious debate that underscored the importance of South Carolina's primary in a week.

With the Republican candidates increasingly anxious for a good showing in the first primary in the American South on 20 February, fights between Trump and Bush dominated the two-hour debate hosted by CBS.

Leading in the polls, Trump came under sustained fire from his rivals and there also were plenty of finger-pointing exchanges between Trump and Texas Senator Ted Cruz.

Cruz and Florida Senator Marco Rubio, competing with Bush to emerge as the main anti-Trump alternative, battled over illegal immigration.

Trump, leading polls in South Carolina and in position to take command of the Republican nomination fight if he wins the state, attacked Bush's brother, former President George W. Bush, for launching the Iraq war in 2003. "A big, fat mistake," Trump said.

It was the most bitter exchange between them over the course of nine debates ahead of the 8 November presidential election and was a sign of how critical both see a strong showing in South Carolina.

Republican US presidential candidate former Governor Jeb Bush (rear) walks past rival candidate businessman Donald Trump and his wife Melania (R) as they stand at the front of the stage at the conclusion of the Republican US presidential candidates debate sponsored by CBS News and the Republican National Committee in Greenville, South Carolina on 12 February 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

"George Bush made a mistake," Trump thundered. "We all make mistakes. But that one was a beauty ... They lied! They said there were weapons of mass destruction. And there were none." Many in the crowd booed Trump and the Republican front-runner dismissed them as "lobbyists and special interests" who supported Jeb Bush, the former Florida governor.

Bush also criticised Trump for remarks praising Russian President Vladimir Putin, saying Putin is stirring turmoil in Syria by launching air strikes in support of Syrian President Bashir Assad, who Washington would like to leave power.

Bush, who will campaign on Monday with his brother George, rejected Trump's comments and defended his family.

"I'm sick and tired of him going after my family," Bush said. "My dad is the greatest man alive in my mind. While Donald Trump was building a reality TV show, my brother was building a security apparatus to keep us safe. And I'm proud of what he did.

"He had the gall to go after my mother," Bush said, reminding the audience that Trump had criticised his 90-year-old mother, Barbara Bush, wife of former President George H.W. Bush. "My mother is the strongest woman I know."

"She should be running," Trump responded.

Bush provoked another outburst from Trump by saying the Republican nominee should be someone "who doesn't brag, for example, that he has been bankrupt four times."

"That's another lie," said Trump. "I never went bankrupt."—*Reuters*

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR
MINISTRY OF RAIL TRANSPORTATION
MYANMA RAILWAYS

YANGON CENTRAL RAILWAYS STATION AREA COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Announcement

Myanma Railways has invited Expression of Interest (EOI) from reputable local, international and joint venture developers to undertake design and build works for Yangon Central Railways Station Area Comprehensive Development.

Total of 18 EOI's received from potential Developers on the date of 6 January 2016 from 14 countries. MR has reviewed and evaluated all the submitted EOI's. On the basis of the information provided with EOI, Myanma Railways has shortlisted 15 potential developers who prove themselves capable enough for the development as stated below –

a. Italian Design for Myanmar Group	Italy
b. Yoma Strategic Holding & FMI Group	Singapore + Myanmar
c. CREST Consortium + M& A- Iconic	Korea + Myanmar
d. Shwe Gon Development Group	Myanmar
e. Min Dhama Company Limited	Myanmar
f. High Tech Concrete Technology Co., Ltd	Myanmar
g. Capital Diamond Star Group	Myanmar
h. Fortune International Group	Myanmar
i. China Railways International Group	China
j. Lotte Asset Development	Korea
k. Win & Win Co.,Ltd	Singapore
l. Excellent Fortune Development Group Co.,Ltd	China
m. Megawide + Pyi Hlawn Kyaw	Philippine + French + USA
n. Great Genesis Gems Co.,Ltd (Yaung Investment Group)	China
o. Injynn Development Co., Ltd	Myanmar+USA+England +France+Korea+VietNam

MR is now inviting the shortlisted potential Developers to prepare and submit Request for Proposal (RFP).

RFP Document of the proposed Yangon Central Railways Station Area Comprehensive Development Project could be obtained from 6.3.2016 to 31.5.2016.

The non-refundable fee for RFP Document including an electronic copy (a CD Rom), total of US$ 30,000.00 (USD Dollars thirty thousand only) is payable to the Banks in respective countries which have established correspondence with MFTB.

The original receipt from the bank issued for the RFP Document fees must be affixed to the first page of the Tendering Document upon submission

The completed RFP Document shall be submitted to the Deputy General Manager, Supply Department, Myanma Railways, Corner of Theinbyu Street and Merchant Street, Botahtaung Township, Yangon, Myanmar, Phone +95 1 291985 or 291994 not later than 14:00 hrs, on 19 August 2016.

Further information could be obtained from the website http://www.yangonrailwaystation.com.mm or enquiries can be made by contacting e-mail: yrsdev@yangonrailwaystation.com.mm or calling telephones +95 1 393424

Managing Director
Myanma Railways

‘Spotlight,’ ‘Big Short’ win Hollywood writers’ top honours

LOS ANGELES — Writers for the films “Spotlight” and “The Big Short” won top Writers Guild Awards on Saturday, boosting the films’ chances in the run-up to the Academy Awards, Hollywood’s biggest honors.

Josh Singer and Tom McCarthy won for their original screenplay for “Spotlight,” a drama based on Boston Globe reporters’ investigation into the Catholic Church’s handling of priest sex abuse.

Charles Randolph and Adam McKay took the Writers Guild of America’s prize for adapted screenplay for “The Big Short,” based on Michael Lewis’ book about the US housing and credit bubble and subsequent collapse in the mid-2000s.

Both films are nominated for the best picture Oscar, which will be handed out at a gala ceremony in Hollywood on 28 February. The writers for both films are also Oscar-nominated.

“Going Clear: Scientology and the Prison of Belief” won for best documentary screenplay.

Among television honours, “Mad Men,” which aired its final season, won the Writers Guild award for drama series, while “Veep” took the prize for comedy programmes. The group chose “Mr. Robot” as best new series. The Writers Guild, a leading industry group representing film, television, radio and other media writers, presented some of the final awards leading up to the 28 February Academy Awards.

So far this year, industry awards from the Screen Actors Guild, the Producers Guild and last week’s Directors Guild have gone to different films.

Actors chose “Spotlight,” producers honoured “The Big Short” and directors last week threw their supporting behind “The Revenant,” leaving the prospects for Oscar gold wide open.

But Oscar buzz, which is typically the focus of Hollywood’s awards season, has been overshadowed since January by claims of a lack of racial diversity in Academy Award voting after there were no nominees of colour in the four acting categories for a second straight year.

The controversy led to a revival of the #OscarsSoWhite hashtag on Twitter, while prominent African Americans in the industry — director Spike Lee and actors Will Smith and Jada Pinkett Smith — said they would skip the ceremony.

Following its January nominations, the Academy unveiled changes to membership and voting rules that are meant to bring greater diversity to the organisation.—*Reuters*

Actors Billy Crudup, Liev Schreiber, Rachel McAdams, John Slattery, Michael Keaton, Brian d’Arcy James and Mark Ruffalo (L to R) pose backstage with their award for Outstanding Performance in a Motion Picture for the film “Spotlight” at the 22nd Screen Actors Guild Awards in Los Angeles, California on 30 January 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Jennifer Lawrence donates 2 million to Children’s hospital

Actress Jennifer Lawrence. PHOTO: REUTERS

LOS ANGELES — “The Hunger Games” star Jennifer Lawrence has donated USD 2 million to the Kosair Children’s Hospital in her native Kentucky.

The 25-year-old actress has gifted the large sum to the hospital in order to establish the Jennifer Lawrence Foundation Cardiac Intensive Care Unit, reported E! online.

In a video message announcing her donation, she said: “As part of my effort to help these children and caregivers, I challenge the entire community to get behind this cause and help match my gift by raising an additional USD 2 million to support all of these brave and inspiring children.—*PTI*

Katy Perry invites Taylor Swift to her Grammy party

Katy Perry. PHOTO: REUTERS

LOS ANGELES — Singers Katy Perry and Taylor Swift have always been rumoured to be at loggerheads with each other but the “Dark Horse” singer reveals she has sent an invitation to her arch rival for a pre-Grammy party she is hosting.

Perry is hosting the party in sponsorship with Spotify, reported Aceshowbiz.

It’s unclear if Swift will accept the invite, but she once boycotted with Spotify and pulled her music from the streaming service.

Another artist snubbing Spotify who also gets an invite from Perry is Adele. “It’s just up to their schedules,” the host said.

The party will take place at Cicada in downtown LA. “Artists are always looking for a way to connect with each other, but we don’t get that authentic connection because we’re either being pulled or pushed,” Perry said of the bash.

The apparent feud between her and Swift started after the latter talked about a mean girl that inspired her single “Bad Blood”.

Without giving any names, Swift told Rolling Stone in 2014, “She did something so horrible. ... And it wasn’t even about a guy! It had to do with business.

She basically tried to sabotage an entire arena tour. She tried to hire a bunch of people out from under me.”

Perry fired back with a cryptic message about “Regina George in sheep’s clothing” as media quickly referred the unnamed star to her.

She later suggested in an interview that Swift’s “sweetheart” reputation was nothing more but a media narration.

Later in an interview, Swift denied “Bad Blood” was about Perry as she clarified, “I never said anything that would point a finger in the specific direction of one specific person, and I can sleep at night knowing that.—*PTI*

LED Rose Garden seen on night before Valentine's Day in Hong Kong

The LED Rose Garden is seen in Hong Kong, south China, on 13 February 2016. A total of 25,000 LED roses were set up at the seaside in Central of Hong Kong on the night before the Valentine's Day. PHOTO: XINHUA

Japanese boy band KAT-TUN to cease group activities 1 May

TOKYO — The Japanese boy band KAT-TUN said Saturday they will cease group activities 1 May, allowing the three members to focus on their solo careers for the time being.

KAT-TUN, which will mark its 10th anniversary in March, will begin a concert tour in April. The tour will end on 1 May at Tokyo Dome. According to Johnny & Associates, it has not been decided when KAT-TUN will resume its group activities. The agency manages KAT-TUN and more than 20 other boy bands and male recording artists.

The group made its debut in 2006 as a six-boy band, but two members left the group by 2013. Another member is set to withdraw from the band and quit Johnny & Associates at the end of March.—*Kyodo News*

London museum celebrates 40 years of theatre in London, New York

LONDON — The big hits of London's West End theatres and of New York's Broadway are celebrated in a new show at the Victoria & Albert Museum.

The show "Curtain Up: Celebrating 40 Years of Theatre in London and New York" includes dozens of costumes, memorabilia, interviews, film clips, and other items to explore the big state hits and the creative talents — both in front of the curtain and behind the scenes — that have created them.

Exhibition curator Anna Landreth-Strong told Xinhua: "We have looked at things that have done well on both sides of the Atlantic. For instance, we have items from 'The Phantom of the Opera', which is the longest running show on Broadway."

The show also marks the anniversary of the founding of the premier London theatre awards, The Oliviers, which began in 1976 and of the New York counterpart The Tony Awards.

"This is a New York-London thing; the Olivier Awards celebrate excellence in West End theatres, it also looks across to the Tony Awards which is very specifically for Broadway," said Landreth-Strong.

A selection of golden top hats, worn by the cast for the shows final number, are on display from "A Chorus Line" symbolising the glamorous success that is supported by the professional talent celebrated in the show.

Other items sure to delight theatre fans include costumes from "The Lion King" and "Wolf Hall."

Visitors can also see the set models for "Matilda the Musical," an RSC musical which won seven Olivier awards and five Tony awards, as well as models from the UK National Theatre's production of "War Horse," including one of the horses in the show.

The show is backed by London's V&A museum and by the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts at the Lincoln Centre.

The exhibition, which is free, runs until 31 August. After the end of the London show, the exhibition will cross the Atlantic for display in New York.—*Xinhua*

Pakistanis should ignore Valentine's Day, president urges

ISLAMABAD — President Mamnoon Hussain has urged Pakistanis not to observe Valentine's Day, the romantic holiday that hardline Muslim clerics want banned but officials in the capital say they cannot suppress.

The president criticised Valentine's Day, which falls on Sunday this year, as a Western import that threatens to undermine the Islamic values of Pakistan.

Despite its roots as a Christian holiday, Valentine's Day has gained popularity among Pakistanis, with flower vendors reporting booming sales this year, as in recent years.

"Valentine's Day has no connection with our culture and it should be avoided," Hussain said at a ceremony celebrating a nationalist leader.

Local media reported earlier in the week that Islamabad would ban celebrations on Valentine's celebrations as an "insult to Islam", but city officials later said such a rule would be unenforceable.

The northwestern city of Peshawar, near the Afghan border, has banned Valentine's Day celebrations, local media said.—*Reuters*

Teddy bears and heart shaped cushions are displayed for sale along a roadside ahead of Valentine's Day in Islamabad, Pakistan, on 12 February 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

mitv Myanmar International

(15-2-2016 07:00am ~ 16-2-2016 7:00am) MST

Today Fresh

07:03	Am	News
07:26	Am	Myanmar Masterclass "Kyaw Phyu San"
07:41	Am	Yatana Theinga City and Shwe Bon Yatan amingalar Palace
08:03	Am	News
08:26	Am	The Stories Of The Great Souls (U Pyae Son)
09:03	Am	News
09:26	Am	Myanmar Traditional Instruments - Myanma Harp (Episode-1)
09:51	Am	Sweet Delicacy Of Pathein
10:03	Am	News
10:26	Am	The Most Prominent Resort And Residence - Ngapali
10:51	Am	Sai Ye Kwan

(11:00 Am~03:00 Pm)-Sunday Repeat(07:00Am~11:00 Am)
(03:00 Pm~07:00 Pm)-Today Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)

Prime Time

07:03	Pm	News
07:26	Pm	Food Trip (EP-1) (Part-2)
07:53	Pm	Sticky Shan Snack
08:03	Pm	News
08:26	Pm	Taste Of Myanmar (Glass Noodle Soup)
08:45	Pm	A Day Trip To Thanlyin
08:53	Pm	Trishaw Man

(09:00 Pm~11:00 Pm)-Today Repeat (09:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)
(11:00 Pm~03:00 Am)-Sunday Repeat(07:00 Am~11:00 Am)
(03:00 Am~07:00 Am)-Today Repeat(07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)

(For Detailed Schedule – www.myanmaritv.com/schedule)

MRTV News Channel in Brief

(15-2-2016, Monday)

6:00 am
- Paritta by Venerable Mingun Sayadaw

7:35 am
- People's Talks

8:35 am
- MRTV (70)th Anniversary Stereo Songs

10:35 am
- MRTV Documentary (1) + (2)

11:35 am
- MRTV Documentary (3) + (4)

12:35 pm
- MRTV (70)th Anniversary (Soe Aung)

12:50 pm
- MRTV (70)th Anniversary (Aung Htet)

1:05 pm
- MRTV (70)th Anniversary (Zaw Paing)

1:20 pm
- **Teleplay** (MRTV)

3:35 pm
- MRTV (70)th Anniversary Stereo Songs

4:30 pm
- MRTV Documentary (5) + (6)

5:35 pm
- MRTV (70)th Anniversary Stereo Songs

6:30 pm
- EMPEROR Live Show

Note/ Hourly News Bulletins (Local + International)

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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Gloom returns for Man Utd, Chelsea crush Newcastle

LONDON — Manchester United missed the chance to steal a march on the Premier League's top four when an own goal by keeper David De Gea cost them a 2-1 defeat at Premier League strugglers Sunderland on Saturday.

With the sides above them all playing each other in a mouth-watering Sunday programme, United could have closed to within three points of fourth-placed Manchester City but the gloom that has enveloped them most of the season returned as their hopes of Champions League qualification receded.

Anthony Martial's dinked finish shortly before halftime cancelled out Wahbi Khazri's third-minute opener for Sunderland but United fizzled out after the break and Spaniard De Gea could only help Lamine Kone's late header into his own goal.

While United's limp defeat put the spotlight back on under-pressure manager Louis van Gaal, Sunderland's first home league win over United since 1997 raised spirits after a week which saw them sack midfielder Adam Johnson after he pleaded guilty to sexual activity with a 15-year-old girl. Sunderland remain second from bottom but with the Newcastle United, Swansea City and Bournemouth losing and Norwich City surrendering a two-goal lead against West Ham United, their hopes of avoiding relegation rose.

"This is more than an added bonus for us; this is a massive, massive three points," Sam Allardyce, whose Sunderland side are now only one point away from the safety zone, said.

Newcastle were thumped 5-1 at Chelsea in the late kick-off as the champions produced their best performance of a poor league season to extend their unbeaten run in all competitions to 12 since Guus Hiddink replaced sacked Jose Mourinho. Pedro scored twice for Chelsea, while Diego Costa, Willian and Bertrand Traore also punished a wide-open Newcastle defence to leave the north east club back in the bottom three on goal difference below Norwich who drew 2-2 with West Ham United.

Norwich, on a run of five consecutive defeats, led 2-0 with second-half goals from Robbie Brady and Wes Hoolahan but their leaky rearguard buckled again and Dimitri Payet and Mark Noble earned West Ham a point. West Ham could have moved above Manchester United into fifth spot with a win but dropped to seventh, below Southampton after they beat Swansea 1-0 in south Wales.

United have 41 points and look destined for a battle for a Europa League place with Southampton and West Ham who have 40. "It will be difficult to qualify for the Champions League and the top four now, we know that," United skipper Wayne Rooney told the club's website.—*Reuters*

Sunderland's Yann M'Vila in action with Manchester United's Wayne Rooney during Barclays Premier League at Stadium of Light on 13 February 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Myanmar boxers defeat Japanese opponents

TWO Myanmar fighters defeated their Japanese rivals in the 'Heroes Vs Samurais' boxing tournament in Yangon yesterday.

Saw Gaw Muto overcame his opponent using strong kicks against Shimamura Naoki of Japan in the first round.

Forty seconds into the first round, the Japanese fighter sought permission from the judges for a rest.

The fight ended after 70 seconds.

The bout between Thabyay Nyo and Kaneko Naoki of Japan lasted two rounds.

In the first round, the Japanese fighter dominated the fight with skillful offensive attacks.

However, in the second round, Thabyay Nyo improved his offensive strategy and knocked out his rival at the 50-second mark.—*Kay Khaing*

Saw Gaw Muto (Left) and Shimamura Naoki exchange kicks.
PHOTO: MLA

First league win for Neville, Ronaldo lifts Real

MADRID — Valencia handed coach Gary Neville his first La Liga win when they beat Espanyol 2-1 on Saturday while Cristiano Ronaldo scored twice in a thrilling 4-2 home victory for Real Madrid over Athletic Bilbao.

Hosts Valencia fought their way back from Oscar Duarte's opening goal for fourth from bottom Espanyol with strikes from Alvaro Negredo and Denis Cheryshev in the final 19 minutes.

"The fans were amazing, above all when we went behind they stuck with us," said former England and Manchester United defender Neville.

"When Espanyol scored we responded with better play and that's because of how the fans supported the team. We knew that it was going to be a night of emotion."

Earlier, second-placed Real made a blistering start and Ronaldo netted after three minutes, surging into the box from the left, cutting inside Xabier Etxeita and beating Gorka Iraizoz for his 15th goal in 14 matches.

Bilbao hit back with a string of counter-attacks and were on level terms seven minutes later when midfielder Javi Eraso pounced on a poor back pass from Raphael Varane.

James restored Real's lead in the 37th minute with a ferocious shot from the edge of the edge of the box and they led by two goals at halftime after Toni Kroos scored from Ronaldo's pass in added time.

PHOTO: REUTERS

"We missed a great opportunity because we could have won," Bilbao coach Ernesto Valverde told reporters.

"We were guilty of naivete with their third goal. The result shows that even if you do a lot (Real) have good finishing. That made the difference."

The home side had Varane harshly sent off for a second booking after he elbowed striker Aritz Aduriz for the second time in the match while going for a high ball in the 83rd minute.

It was the first-ever red card for the 22-year-old France defender nicknamed 'Mr Clean'.

Ronaldo grabbed his 21st league goal of the season, and 16th of his career against Bilbao, in the 87th minute. The Basque side then pulled one back with substitute Gorka Elustondo's header in added time.

Real have 53 points from 24 matches, one behind leaders Barcelona who have two games in hand and host Celta Vigo on Sunday.

Atletico Madrid, two points adrift of Real in third spot, visit Getafe on Sunday.

Neville celebrated his first win in 10 La Liga matches in charge after substitute Negredo equalised in the 71st minute and Cheryshev, on loan from Real Madrid, headed the winner five minutes later. "We have to thank the fans for cheering us on from the very beginning," said Cheryshev. "It was breathtaking." Valencia are 11th with 28 points. Espanyol, without a win in eight matches under Constantin Galca, remain one place and one point above the relegation zone with the Romanian's job hanging by a thread.—*Reuters*

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