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MEMBERSHIP APPROVED

Parliament approves election commission, constitutional tribunal

THE second Pyidaungsu Hluttaw approved the nominees for the chairmanship and membership of the five-member Union Election Commission and the nine-member Constitutional Tribunal of the Union during yesterday's session.

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than announced that the five-member Union Election Commission will be headed by U Hla Thein and will include members U Aung Myint, U Soe Yal, U Tun Khin and U Hla Tint. No objection was made to the nominees proposed by President-elect U Htin Kyaw last week.

Regarding formation of the nine-member Constitutional Tribunal, the speaker announced that military-appointed MP Lt-Col Tun Lin Oo, raised an objection to the nomination of Daw Khin Htay Kywe and U Twar Kyin Paung.

In response to the objection, the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw speaker replied that the decision would be made by voting, though the speaker has the right to dismiss the objection that was lodged with no firm evidence in accordance with Pyidaungsu Hluttaw rules and regulations.

According to Article 328 of the constitution, the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw shall have no right to reject persons nominated for membership on the Constitutional Tribunal of the Union by the President unless the nominees can be proved to be disqualified.

During the vote, 435 MPs voted against the objection to Daw Khin Htay Kywe, and 432 MPs voted against the objection to U Twar Kyin Paung. The two were both confirmed.

Lt-Col Tun Lin Oo, the representative of the Tatmadaw. PHOTO: MNA

U Win Myint, Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw. PHOTO: MNA

Next, the Speaker announced the formation of the nine-member Constitutional Tribunal of the Union led by U Myo Nyunt, along with members U Nyi Nyi, U Myint Win, U Myo Myint, U Khin Maung Cho, Daw Khin Htay Kywe, U Twar Kyin Paung, Daw Hla Myo Nwe and U Kyaw Hsan.—*Myanmar News Agency*

State of emergency lifted in Rakhine State

THE President's Office issued an ordinance ending the state of emergency imposed in 2012 in Rakhine State yesterday.

The ordinance said the state of emergency was lifted across Rakhine State as no threats to the lives and property of the people were found, according to a report by the Rakhine State government.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Chief ministers announced for regions and states

THE chief ministers of three regions and one state were announced yesterday. The chief ministers of the remaining regions and states are expected to be announced in the next few days.

The four newly-appointed region and state chief ministers proposed by President-elect U Htin Kyaw are U Phyo Min Thein for Yangon Region, Dr Lin Htut for Shan State, U Mann Johnny for Ayeyawady Region and Dr Lei Lei Maw for Taninthayi Region.

All the appointed region and state chief ministers are members of the National League for Democracy (NLD), led by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

U Phyo Min Thein, Chief Minister for Yangon Region, vowed to form an uncorrupt government that will attend to the needs of Yangon residents while speaking to media yesterday.

The chief-minister elect, a member of Yangon Region Parliament representing Hlegu Township Constituency 2, was nominated by President-elect U Htin Kyaw and approved with no objections as the next Yangon Region chief minister at the regional parliamentary session yesterday.

He also vowed to strive to ensure a clean government and address issues related to traffic congestion, unemployment and flooding in the rainy season in the region.

Meanwhile, Dr Zaw Myint Maung, the spokesman for the NLD, was nominated as Chief Minister of Mandalay Region at the Mandalay Region parliament yesterday.

At the Rakhine State parliament yesterday, U Nyi Pu, the regional MP Gwa Constituency 2 was announced as the nominee for the position of Rakhine State chief minister.

When the announcement came, MPs from the Arakan National Party, which holds majority of the seats in the Rakhine State parliament, walked out of the parliament in protest. The party has demanded to have one of its members appointed as chief minister.

Two women would be chief ministers, namely, Daw Nan Khin Htway Myint for Kayin State and Daw Lei Lei Maw for Taninthayi Region.

Under the terms of the 2008 constitution, the president has the sole authority to appoint chief ministers of states and regions.—*GNLM*

Crime NEWS

Illegal gun owner arrested in Tachilek

Sized illegal gun and accessories. PHOTO: MYINTMO

OFFICERS from the Tachilek Myoma Police Station seized a percussion lock firearm and related accessories from Sai On, 45, who resides Hsanhsai Ward-2 of Tachilek Township.

Acting on a tip-off, local police searched a car driven by the suspect heading from Hweye Village to the Regina Golf Course near the Regina Hotel in Hsanhsai Ward-2 on Saturday evening. They discovered a 3.8-foot long firearm filled with gunpowder behind the driver's seat. Local police have charged Sai On for illegal arms possession.—*Myintmo*

Motorbike robbers arrested in Pyin Oo Lwin

TWO men were arrested in connection with a motorbike robbery in Pyin Oo Lwin Township, Mandalay Region, on Thursday.

Two men robbed a mechanic of his motorbike. The mechanic was Bo Bo (a) Win Naing who was inspecting a Honda Click motorbike owned by a young woman. The robbery took place in front of a cyber hall located within the compound of Yandanabon Teleport. With the assistance of some villagers, police seized Aung Kyaw Myo, 27, and Arka, 21, on the Mandalay-Pyin Oo Lwin road near Ohnchaw Village in Patheingyi Township the next day.

Files have been charged against both suspects under the Criminal Law.—*Kyemon*

Elderly man killed in quarrel

A 70-YEAR-OLD man named U Htwe Maung died after a quarrel with Myo Lwin Oo, 30, in Yedashe Township, Bago Region on 20 March, police reported yesterday.

According to the police investigation, a dispute arose between the victim and the suspect over motorcycle rental prices on the Petu-Kyuntawgon Road, three miles from Yedashe Township, at around 5pm that day.

Some witnesses said the suspect punched the victim in the face, knocking the victim onto the gravel street. U Htwe Maung sustained serious injuries to his head during the fight.

U Htwe Maung succumbed to his injuries while receiving medical care at home.

Myo Lwin Oo has been charged by the local police under the Penal Code.—*Ko Lwin*

Groundnut oil mill damaged by fire

A FIRE broke out at the Panwa Groundnut Oil mill in the Shwebo Township industrial zone in Sagaing Region on Saturday early morning. The mill is owned by U Nyein Chan.

A house and 22 bags of groundnuts, worth about K500,000, were destroyed in the blaze.

According to the police investigation, the fire was caused by overheated peanut skins near the oil-milling machine.

With the assistance of residents, firefighters controlled the fire within 15 minutes.

Action is being taken against Aung Phyo Win, a security guard at the oil mill, under Section 285 of the Penal Code.—*200*

Yaba pills seized in Mabein, Taunggyi

POLICE officers from the Mabein Myoma Police Station searched a house owned by Nay Win and seized 730 yaba pills in Mabein Township on 24 March. Similarly, local police force searched a motorbike driven by Tin Myo Tun (a) Phar Ywet on the Taunggyi-Hopong road in Taunggyi Township and seized 182 yaba tablets from Tin Myo Tun on 23 March. Police filed charges against them under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Laws—*Myanmar Police Force*

Nay Win (a) Phar Ywet. PHOTO: MPF

Boy drowned in bathtub

A TWO-YEAR-OLD boy was found dead in a bathtub in Myitkyina Township, Kachin State, on Saturday. Local police are now investigating the case.

According to the boy's grandma, Hsai Mon Latt walked away from her while she was doing housekeeping work in her bedroom. A few minutes later, she searched for her grandson and found him dead in the 2-foot-high bathtub.

"I found him dead in the water," said the boy's grandmother.—*200*

60,000 yaba pills seized in Shan State this week

ANTI-DRUG squads in Shan State seized over 60,000 yaba tablets this week in Taunggyi, Phakant and Lashio townships, arresting three drug dealers.

Acting on a tip-off, local police searched a vehicle driven by Thet Aung Htwe near mile post No 98 on the Taunggyi-Meiktila highway on Wednesday and found nearly 40,000 yaba pills and confiscated them.

On 21 March, Lout Phin, who was in possession of 3,900 yaba tablets, was arrested by local police

Likewise, members of No 3 he anti-drug squad in Mohnyin seized 20,000 yaba pills and 2.8 kilograms of raw opium from Lin Aung in Phakant Township on 20 March. Those who were involved in the cases have been charged under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.—*Kyemon*

Motorcyclist dies in collision with bowser

A MOTORBIKE driver was killed in a head-on collision with a bowser on the Yangon-Pyay Road in near mile post No 50 in Taikkyi Township, Yangon, on Saturday.

The motorbike was driven by a 28-year-old Yin Htwe of Okkan Township. During the accident, the victim sustained serious injuries and died on the spot.

Police are searching for the bowser driver, who fled the scene after the accident.—*Tun Hlaing*

Heroin, yaba confiscated in Nankham

A COMBINED anti-drug squad in Muse searched a man named Yan Kya Wan who was walking along the edge of the forest at the entrance to Lwai Chat Village in Namkham Township on 25 March and confiscated 816 grams of heroin, which was hidden in 68 boxes of soap, and 78,210 yaba pills.

Similarly, on the same day, local authorities searched a Nissan driven by Soe Thu at milepost No 98 on the Taunggyi-Meikhtila road near the Bawathanthaya Bridge in Heho Township and seized 8,900 yaba tablets from a toolbox that was placed between the two front seats of the car.

Yan Kya Wan. PHOTO: MPF

Also that day, police searched a man namely Nyi Than Tun on Thayagon Street in Namkham Township and seized 7.5 grams of heroin and 313 yaba pills from his bag.

Police have filed charges the three men under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.—*Myanmar Police Force*

Union Minister Dr Myint Aung visits the newly opened Gems Training Centre. PHOTO: MNA

Gems trading, training centres opened in Nay Pyi Taw

THE Gems Trading Centre and Gems Training Centre were opened in the Shwekyarpin finished jade lots, gems and jewellery market in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Union Ministers Dr Myint Aung, U Htay Aung and U Win Myint, deputy ministers and officials observed preparations for training and trading at the two centres after the opening ceremony. Under the supervision of the Ministry of Mines, the Myanmar Gems and Jewellery Entrepreneurs Association built the two facilities with the aim of turning out jewellery technicians and producing finished jade lots and gems and jewellery to bolster the jade, gem and jewellery markets in Myanmar.

"The training centre is set to offer theory and practices on how to distinguish real jade from fake jade and how to cut and polish jade," said U Yone Mu, chairman of the association, adding that Myanmar needs a training centre to develop its gems and jewellery industry.

Works are underway to open training courses that will vary depending on the educational background of trainees at the centre.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Border affairs ministry, WFP agree to fight food insecurity

THE Ministry of Border Affairs and United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) signed the Letter of understanding on a project to reduce food insecurity and malnutrition in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

The US$134.79 million project is set to be carried out in Kachin, Kayin, Chin, Mon, Rakhine and Shan states and Sagaing, Taninthayi, Magwe, Mandalay and Yangon regions until next year. The project will include the delivery of 94,656 tonnes of rice and food to people in need. The project will also include cash grants and training programmes.

In his address, Union Minister Lt-Gen Kyaw Swe said the ministry will strive to fully implement the project, which is aimed at reducing food insecurity and malnutrition in many parts of Myanmar.

Next, WFP Resident Representative Mr Domenico Scalpelli elaborated on measures to be taken during the implementation of the project.

Director general U Ye Naing of the ministry's Department for Progress of Border Areas and National Races and the WFP resident representative signed the letter of understanding. —*Myanmar News Agency*

Director general U Ye Naing and WFP Resident Representative Mr Domenico Scalpelli sign the Letter of Understanding. PHOTO: MNA

Online Thingyan sale Festival to start on 30th March

ONLINE Thingyan sale festival will start from 30th March to 21st April via Kaymu.com.mm by uploading the products online including the accessories related to Water Festival such as handsets and the waterproof handset covers; Thingyan Fashion products such as the blouses, shirts, etc.

"We will offer the reduced price. We will also make Thingyan promotional Campaign. We arrange to give the best service for our customers by selling the items at competitive price as other sale festivals offer, said Audrey, the sales manager of Kaymu. A Photo contest for Thingyan Fashion is going to be held at Kaymu starting from 31st March, and the winners will be announced on 11th April.

"We will mainly sell phone accessories but there is higher demand for clothes related to Thingyan Fashion. The handset sale is usually on the decline during Thingyan period" , said Ko Kyaw Zeyya, sales manager.

Currenlty, the online shop kaymu.com.mm is working with over 2000 shops, a total of 200 to 500 shops are selling well daily.— *PTK/ Union Daily*

Correction

Please read **U Aung Aung, Director General of Administration and Human Resources Development Department, Central Bank of Myanmar,** instead of Director General, Management and Human Resources Development Department published on Page 3 of the 25th March 2016 issue of the Global New Light of Myanmar.

Please read **Daw Than Than Swe, Director-General, Accounts Department, Central Bank of Myanmar**, instead of Director General, Internal Audit Department, Central Bank of Myanmar, published on Page 3 of the 25th March 2016 issue of the Global New Light of Myanmar.

Please read **U Min Min Oo, Managing Director of Myanmar Pearl Enterprise, Ministry of Mines,** instead of Managing Director, Myanmar Pearl Manufacturing and Trading, published on Page 3 of the 25th March 2016 issue of the Global New Light of Myanmar. —*Ed*

President-elect to be sworn in on livestream

PRESIDENT-elect U Htin Kyaw and the two vice presidents will be sworn in on 30 March at the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw.

The swearing-in of the president-elect and the two vice presidents will be broadcast live so the public can watch the event on the MRTV News Channel, the Hluttaw Channel and Myanma Radio starting at 10am on 30 March.

President-elect U Htin Kyaw will deliver a speech at the event.—*Myanmar News Agency*

South Korean group studies Myanmar mushroom industry

REPRESENTATIVES of the South Korean Fruits and Vegetables Producers Association are currently in Myanmar studying the country's mushroom cultivation industry, according to the Myanmar Mushroom Cultivators and Distributors Association.

The South Korean team will study mushrooms produced in Myanmar. The information they collect will be shared with South Korean entrepreneurs, who want to invest in the construction of a factory that would produce export-quality mushrooms in Myanmar.

The South Koreans held talks with the MMCDA before conducting field studies on mushroom enterprises on March 25.

"They will construct a factory. Within this factory they will dry mushrooms for export. It's been discussed that we will participate, should there be desire," said U Nay Win, chairperson of the MMCDA.

A previous study visit was made by the Korean International Cooperation last year to offer financial assistance for the development of new varieties of mushrooms in Myanmar; to allow for the export of Myanmar mushrooms to foreign markets; and to test high-level mushroom drying technologies on Myanmar mushroom.

Myanmar mushrooms are currently only traded domestically; they are considered unfit for export.

Most mushrooms in Myanmar are grown in Yangon, Bago and Mandalay regions. A viss (1.63 kilos) of the Hnin Hmo (snow fungus) variety fetches between K5,000 and K6,000, while the same volume of Kyaukyoe (paddy straw) and Kywet Narywet (oyster) mushrooms costs K9,000 and K5,000-6,000, respectively, according to mushroom growers and traders. — *Myitmakha News Agency*

LOCAL Business

1800 cc and above imported cars to pay special freight tax

IMPORTED Cars with 1800 cc and above engine will be imposed special freight taxes, said Myanmar Customs Department.

CIF five per cent is also added to custom duties. Obviously, 1800 cc cars are not meant for all strata of people. Besides, these cars are in low demand at the market. Increasing the tax means the restricting of cars with heavy engines. "The price of cars are changed based on the tax", said U Aye Kyaw, the responsible person from car dealers' association.

Imported cars below 1800 cc will be assessed only for just commercial tax.

"1300 cc cars such as Probox, Honda Fit and Nissan ADvan are selling well whereas there's a low demand for 1800 cc cars. The price of cars with 1300 cc engine will remain unchanged at the market, said U Zaw Zaw, a car dealer.

The trading of cars dropped down at car market. But it gets back to the normal trading again. A Probox with cc 1300 engine sells from K 10.5 million to 11 million and a Honda Fit from K 12 million to 15 million at car market.—*MLT/Union Daily*

Yangon has seen an increase in number of cars since the country opened up in 2011. PHOTO: MOORE ZACK

IBK to offer K 5 million loan to everybody

SOUTH Korea financial institutions are preparing for entering Myanmar Investment market with investment opportunities in Myanmar highly promising, according to the news agencies based in Korea.

IBK Capital, a South Korea's Industrial bank, submitted application to Myanmar government to be granted a permit for establishing loan business firm. The business will start to work in Insein Township at the north of Yangon and Mandalay after the company gets the permit.

IBK Capital will lend money to those engaged in small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in various sectors as well as offer education loan to the poor families. It is slated to lend over K 5 million (US$ 4,280) per head.

BNK Capital which has been working in Myanmar since 2014 is also working in Cambodia and Laos. The company is offering loan at a rate of 30 per cent per annum and one per cent for service. It expects to gain the profit this year.

Shinhan bank based in Korea was another bank granted by Myanmar government last month to open the bank branch in Myanmar.

Woori Bank is working in Myanmar as Woori Finance Bank, and it was established in November,2015, with initial investment of US$ 2 million.

South Korea financial institutions are willing and ready to extend the businesses in Myanmar. They even liken Myanmar investment opportunities as the pearl of Indo-China.

Shanhan Bank, Woori Bank and financing institutions like BNK Capital and IBK Capital based in South Korea have started to enter the investment market of Myanmar.—*ML/ Union Daily*

Coffee growers on state-owned land urged to sign land leases

THE Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry has urged coffee growers on ministry-owned land in Pyin Oo Lwin to sign land lease contracts with the ministry.

The ministry has leased land to the companies to grow coffee in forest reserves in Pyin Oo Lwin Township under land lease contracts.

The land in the May Myo Forest Reserve, Taungpyo Forest Reserve, Sakhangyi Forest Reserve and Taungkyun Forest Reserve, which are owned by the ministry, were leased to the private sector, and the procedures for leasing land from the ministry were clarified in detail to the companies at the ministry in Nay Pyi Taw on 12 February 2016, said the announcement of the ministry.

The announcement has urged the growers to sign the contracts by 30 April, and those who fail to sign the contract by the deadline will no longer be permitted to grow coffee on the land.—*GNLM*

FMI share sales fall short of projections by half

FIRST Myanmar Investment (FMI), the first company permitted to sell shares on the Yangon Stock Exchange (YSX), has only managed to sell 42,000 of the over 80,000 shares it expected to sell as of March 28.

FMI shares on the YSX sold for an initial price of K26,000 per share. Over 80,000 proposals for share purchases were submitted within the last few days.

"The value of one of our shares has risen to K31,000 from its preliminary price of K26,000 offered at the start of trading. We will continue to sell shares," said Serge Pun, chairperson of FMI.

Those wishing to trade shares on the YSX must first open an account with one of the following securities companies: KBZSC Securities, CB Securities, AYA Trust Securities, Myanmar Securities Exchange Centre or KTZRH Securities. The securities company then takes responsibility for the purchasing of the share.

"We will trade shares for listed companies. We received a great deal of orders this morning for the trading of shares on the YSX," said U Nyo Myint, senior managing director of KBZ Stirling Coleman Securities.

The YSX was inaugurated on 9 December 2015 at the headquarters of the Myawaddy Bank. The Myanmar Economic Bank has a 51 per cent stake in the exchange, with the remaining 49 per cent owned by the Japanese Daiwa Institute of Research and the Japan Exchange Group.

The six companies permitted to sell stocks on the YSX are FMI, First Public Bank, Myanmar Citizen Bank, Myanmar Thilawa SEZ Holding Public, Great Horkhan Public and Myanmar Agribusiness Public.—*Myitmakha News Agency*

Stock purchases worth over US$10,000 to be monitored

STOCKS worth over US$10,000 will be under watch as an anti-money laundering measure, said the president of the Securities and Exchange Commission (SECM) in an interview with Xinhua News.

"Whoever buys shares above this value will be watched. We will send daily reports to the anti-money laundering unit under the Transnational Organised Crime (TOC) department of the Myanmar Police Force. Action will be taken under the Anti-Money Laundering Law," he added.

First Myanmar Investment (FMI) was the first company to start trading shares at the Yangon Stock Exchange (YSX). A share of FMI rose up from K26,000 to K31,000 at YSX on 25 March. A total of 112,845 shares were sold out by closing time, and FMI earned a total of K3.49 billion ($2,870,066) through the sale of stocks. "If legislation related to foreign companies is enacted in the parliament, YSX will attract more foreign investors coming to trade the stocks," the SECM president said.

"This is a milestone for the country," said Serge Pun, the founder and chairman of FMI.—*NG/ Union Daily*

Tourism industry receives US$2.9 billion in FDI up to February

THE inflow of foreign direct investment into the country's hotels and tourism industry reached US$2.882 billion up to February of this fiscal year, according to the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration.

The hotels and tourism sector stands as Myanmar's sixth largest, with 144 investment projects.

"This financial year, FDI is estimated to reach $7 billion, mainly in the oil and gas sector, telecommunications and manufacturing," said U Aung Naing Oo, secretary of the MIC.

According to last year's official figures, the number of tour companies has increased to over 1,922 from 1,670 in 2014, 1,822 of which are owned by Myanmar citizens. There were just over 600 locally owned companies in 2014.

According to the Hotels and Tourism Ministry, there are 1,291 hotels with over 50,000 rooms across the country.

The number of tourists coming to Myanmar has risen for the last several years. According to the ministry's master plan (2013-2020), tourist arrivals are estimated to hit 7.49 million by 2020.—*200*

China military to end paid-for services within three years

BEIJING — China's military will end so-called paid for services within the next three years, state media said on Monday, the latest move to modernise the armed forces amid a reform and anti-corruption push.

The People's Liberation Army announced the move in November, meaning non-core activities such as military-run hospitals and hotels open to the public will be ditched.

The military was banned from overt commercial activities in 1998, but allowed some exceptions.

According to a circular issued by the Central Military Commission, headed by President Xi Jinping, the armed forces must not sign any new contracts for paid services and allow existing contracts to expire.

The notice was carried on the front page of the *People's Liberation Army Daily*.

Ending all paid services is "an important political task" and all members of the military must fully implement the decision, the notice said.

Services that fulfil an important social security function will be allowed to be included under a new "civil-military integration" scheme, it added, a programme the government has given few details about.

The official Xinhua news agency said the change had been introduced "to reduce corruption in the army".

The military is reeling from an anti-corruption campaign Xi launched three years ago, which has seen dozens of officers investigated, including two former vice chairmen of the Central Military Commission, Guo Boxiong and Xu Caihou.

Xu died of cancer last year before he went on trial. Guo has yet to face a court.

Gong Fangbin, a professor at the PLA's National Defence University, told the state-run *Global Times* newspaper the end of paid-for services would help with the military's modernisation.

"Paid services can sometimes encourage corruption and the military should focus on national defence," Gong said. "The announcement also aims to improve the military's combat capability."

The People's Liberation Army Daily said in editorial the military's real focus should be on how to win wars, and seeking profits would only distract them.

"The military's basic function is to fight, and deviating from that core activity will bring endless disaster," it said.

Xi's push to reform the military coincides with China becoming more assertive in its territorial disputes in the East and South China Seas. Its navy is investing in submarines and aircraft carriers and its air force is developing stealth fighters.

The armed forces are also losing 300,000 members, following a surprise announcement by Xi in September.

The reforms have proven controversial, and the military's newspaper has published commentaries warning of opposition to the changes and concern about jobs.—*Reuters*

Soldiers of China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) take part in training in temperatures below minus 30 degrees Celsius (minus 22 degrees Fahrenheit) at China's border with Russia in Fuyuan, Heilongjiang province, on 14 January. PHOTO: REUTERS

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Japan's Abe expected to delay sales tax rise, call snap election - again

TOKYO — In late 2014, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe caught markets and voters off-guard when he postponed an unpopular sales tax hike and called a snap election. Less than two years later, the only surprise will be if he doesn't repeat the play.

With consumption weak, wage growth limp and emerging economy slowdowns clouding Japan's growth, economists bet Abe will again delay raising the tax to 10 per cent from 8 per cent. Currently due in April 2017, the hike is seen by fiscal conservatives as vital to rein in bulging public debt and social security costs.

Breaking an end-2014 promise not to delay the tax hike again would give Abe cause to call an election for parliament's lower house to coincide with a July poll for the upper chamber. His ruling bloc already holds a super majority in the lower house.

Big wins in both houses for Abe's centre-right LDP and like-minded lawmakers would boost his chances of being able to start revising Japan's pacifist constitution — a move long cherished by Abe and his conservative support base.

Eighteen out of 21 economists surveyed by Reuters expect Abe to delay the sales tax rise, and 15 expect a snap poll. "It appears that he (Abe) wants to avoid any impact on the election of a tax rise, achieve a long-term administration and boost the possibility of revising the constitution," said Harumi Taguchi, principal economist at IHS Global Insight.

The Sankei newspaper reported on Monday that Abe was likely to announce a decision to delay the tax rise around a 26-27 May Group of Seven summit that he will host. That would be after the 18 May release of first-quarter gross domestic product data for the world's third-biggest economy, which is expected to be weak.

Conservatives have long viewed Japan's constitution - unaltered since it was drafted by US Occupation forces after Japan's defeat in World War II — as limiting Japan's ability to defend itself and as a symbol of a humiliating defeat. Admirers, however, say it is responsible for post-war peace.

Constitutional revisions must be approved by a two-thirds majority in both houses of parliament and a majority of voters in a public referendum. The only two previous cases of dual-chamber elections resulted in landslides for Abe's Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) in both houses.

Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. PHOTO: REUTERS

Abe has repeatedly said the sales tax rise would go ahead unless a global economic contraction or a Lehman-style market shock jolted Japan's economy. Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga repeated that stance on Monday.

Recently, however, Abe has said that whether to proceed with the rise would be a "political decision", and that boosting the levy would be meaningless if it sliced tax revenues by growth.

Abe has also been meeting foreign economists, including advocates of fiscal stimulus such as Paul Krugman, fuelling speculation that he is laying the groundwork for a delay.

The tax rise, agreed upon by Abe's predecessor, has never had pride of place in his "Abenomics" recipe for reviving Japan's long-sluggish economy - a mix of hyper-easy monetary policy, government spending and reforms.

Abe is also thought to want to call a lower house election — not formally required until 2018 — before fragmented opposition parties get their houses in order.

The main opposition Democratic Party has merged with a smaller rival, and cooperation for the upper house poll with the Japanese Communist Party, the second biggest opposition group, is moving ahead. But support for the merged party languished at 9 per cent in a Nikkei business daily survey published on Monday, against 38 per cent who backed the LDP. Still, some doubts remain as to whether Abe will risk calling a snap poll given recent slides in his support rating to below 50 per cent.

Political insiders say the results of two lower house by-elections on 24 April will provide input for a decision on an election, as will voter surveys to be conducted by the LDP.—*Reuters*

Japan opens radar station close to disputed isles, drawing muted China response

YONAGUNI, (Japan) — Japan on Monday switched on a radar station in the East China Sea, giving it a permanent intelligence gathering post close to Taiwan and a group of islands disputed by Japan and China, drawing a muted initial response from Beijing.

The new Self Defence Force base on the island of Yonaguni is at the western extreme of a string of Japanese islands in the East China Sea, 150 km (90 miles) south of the disputed islands known as the Senkaku islands in Japan and the Diaoyu in China.

China has raised concerns with its neighbours and in the West with its assertive claim to most of the South China Sea where the Philippines, Viet Nam, Malaysia, Taiwan and Brunei have overlapping claims. Japan has long been mired in a territorial dispute with China over the East China Sea islands.

"Until yesterday, there was no coastal observation unit west of the main Okinawa island. It was a vacuum we needed to fill," said Daigo Shiomitsu, a Ground Self Defence Force lieutenant colonel who commands the new base on Yonaguni.

"It means we can keep watch on territory surrounding Japan and respond to all situations."

Shiomitsu on Monday attended a ceremony at the base with 160 military personnel and around 50 dignitaries. Construction of some buildings, which feature white walls and traditional Okinawan red-tiled roofs, is still unfinished.

The 30-sq-km (11-sq-mile) island is home to 1,500 people, who mostly raise cattle and grow sugar cane. The Self Defence Force contingent and family members will increase the population by a fifth.

Members of Japan's Self Defence Force hold an opening ceremony of a new military base on the island of Yonaguni in the Okinawa prefecture, on 28 March. PHOTO: REUTERS

"This radar station is going to irritate China," said Nozomu Yoshitomi, a professor at Nihon University and a retired major general in the Self Defence Force.

In addition to being a listening post, the facility could be used a base for military operations in the region, he added.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Hong Lei said China's position on the Diaoyu Islands was clear and consistent.

"We hope Japan can take more actions that benefit regional peace and stability," he told a daily news briefing in Beijing.

The deployment fits into a wider military build-up along the island chain, which stretches 1,400 km (870 miles) from the Japanese mainland. Policy makers last year told Reuters it was part of a strategy to keep China at bay in the Western Pacific as Beijing gains control of the South China Sea.

Toshi Yoshihara, a US Naval War College professor, said Yonaguni sits next to two potential flashpoints in Asia — Taiwan and the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands.

"A network of overlapping radar sites along the island chain would boost Japan's ability to monitor the East China Sea," he added. Yonaguni is only around 100 km (62 miles) east of Taiwan, near the edge of a controversial air defence identification zone set up by China in 2013.

Over the next five years, Japan will increase its Self Defence Force in the East China Sea by about a fifth to almost 10,000 personnel, including missile batteries that will help Japan draw a defensive curtain along the island chain. Chinese ships sailing from their eastern seaboard must pass through this barrier to reach the Western Pacific, access to which Beijing needs both as a supply line to the rest of the world's oceans and for naval power projection.—*Reuters*

Taliban rockets hit Afghan parliament compound, no one reported hurt

KABUL — Rockets fired by Taliban fighters struck the compound of Afghanistan's new parliament on Monday as the country's top intelligence official and caretaker minister of interior prepared to address the assembly.

Lawmakers said no one was reported wounded, contradicting Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid who said the militants' attack had caused heavy casualties.

"Three rockets were fired at the parliament but they did not hit the main building," said Safiullah Muslim, a lawmaker from Badakhshan province. "It happened when the session was ongoing."

A senior security official told Reuters that three long-range rockets were fired from a hilltop several hundreds metres from the parliament building.

The Taliban released an emailed statement along with several photographs of the attack which appeared to show a smoke rising from near the parliament in a western neighbourhood of the capital Kabul.

In another photo, a small hole, and a damaged wall, apparently caused by the rockets could be seen.

"There was a clear negligence of duty and I am going to task security officials to provide tight security in and around the parliament," Taj Mohammad Jahid, the caretaker Minister of Interior told lawmakers. —*Reuters*

India unveils Defence Procurement Policy at 4-day defence expo

NEW DELHI — India on Monday unveiled its ambitious Defence Procurement Policy at the Defence Expo in the western state of Goa.

"The policy will give boost to Make In India initiative," Indian Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar said after inaugurating the Defexpo at Naqueri-Betul in southern Goa, close to the coast.

More than 1,000 companies from 47 countries are taking part in the four-day defence expo, said to be one of the largest in the country.

The state-owned Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) is displaying state-of-the-art military systems and technologies at the expo so as to bring alive the spirit of Make in India.

Airborne early warning and control system, light combat aircraft Tejas, wheeled armoured platform, Akash air defence system and Pinaka multi-barrel rocket launchers are on display.

"Defexpo India is clearly steering the path of steady growth and has been receiving overwhelming and unprecedented international response with each edition," the Indian Defence Ministry has said.—*Xinhua*

Fire breaks out at Bangladesh's famed Sundarbans forest

DHAKA — A fire has swept through Bangladesh's southwestern Sundarbans, the world's largest mangrove forest and one of the last remaining habitats for tigers.

Md Saidur Rahman, a divisional forest officer of the Sundarbans (east zone), told journalists on Monday morning that their personnel spotted the fire in the jungle on Sunday night.

He said firefighters have managed to bring the fire under control. Some shrubs and bushes have reportedly been burnt in the fire.

A three-member investigation committee has been formed to look into the matter.

Details of the source of the fire and the extent of damage are still unknown. No casualty has been reported. —*Xinhua*

South Korean private aid group supplies TB medicine to North Korea

SEOUL — A South Korean private aid group said on Monday it has supplied tuberculosis medicine to North Korea, marking the first time for the government in Seoul to approve a humanitarian aid shipment to the North this year.

"Despite the tense situation on the Korean Peninsula this spring, medication and other supplies for multidrug resistant tuberculosis were delivered to North Korea," the Eugene Bell Foundation (Korea) said in a statement.

The shipment is known to have reached North Korea on Friday via China.

The aid group said its officials plan to make a trip to North Korea on 19 April to 10 May.

It has been providing TB medications as well as other humanitarian aid to North Korea since 1995. In particular, it aims to end unnecessary deaths from multidrug resistant TB, which requires two years of constant treatment and medicine that is 150 times as expensive as that used to treat the more common form of TB.

Despite joining the latest round of sanctions approved by the UN Security Council and adopting additional sanctions of its own over North Korea's fourth nuclear test on 6 January and its subsequent launch of a long-range rocket, South Korea has said it will continue to allow humanitarian aid to be supplied to the North.—*Kyodo News*

Belgian police break up street protests as attack investigation widens

Right-wing demonstrators protest against the wave of terrorism in front of the old stock exchange in Brussels, Belgium, on 27 March. 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

BRUSSELS — Belgian police briefly used water cannon to control several hundred rowdy protesters in central Brussels on Sunday after they ignored an official call for marches to be postponed following Tuesday's bombings.

Amid fears of further attacks, officials wanted to give police the scope to focus on investigations which have widened to other countries, leading to the arrest of an Algerian in Italy and intelligence cooperation with Germany. Police carried out 13 new raids in Belgium itself.

Hundreds nevertheless gathered at the Bourse to express solidarity with the victims of the suicide bomb attacks at Brussels airport and on a rush-hour metro train. Thirty one people were killed, including three attackers, and hundreds more injured. Islamic State has claimed responsibility.

Most of the protests were peaceful but white-helmeted riot police used the water cannon against a group of protesters, many of whom local media described as right-wing nationalists, who burst onto the square chanting and carrying banners denouncing Islamic State.

"It is highly inappropriate that protesters have disrupted the peaceful reflection at the Bourse (stock exchange). I strongly condemn these disturbances," Prime Minister Charles Michel said according to Belga news agency.

Brussels Mayor Yvan Mayeur said the group were "scoundrels".

In and around Brussels and Antwerp, police carried out 13 new raids in connection with the attacks, with nine people questioned and five later released, the prosecutor's office said.

With links to the Paris attacks in November becoming clearer, and amid criticism that Europe has not done enough to share intelligence about suspected Islamist militants, cooperation appeared to be deepening.

Belgian press agency Belga said on Sunday prosecutors had charged a man in connection with a raid in Paris on Thursday that authorities say foiled an apparent attack plot.

Belga named him as Abderamane A. who prosecutors had said on Saturday was being held after being shot in a raid in the Brussels district of Schaerbeek.

After a series of raids in Belgium and Germany, Italian police also arrested Algerian Djamal Eddine Ouali who is suspected of making documents for militants linked to the bombings, Italian media said on Saturday.

His name was found in documents in a raid on an apartment near Brussels last October, including some with photos of militants involved in the attacks in Paris and in Brussels and the aliases they used.—*Reuters*

Use 'weapons of love' to fight evil of terrorism, pope says on Easter

VATICAN CITY — Pope Francis urged the world in his Easter message on Sunday to use the "weapons of love" to combat the evil of "blind and brutal violence", following the attacks in Brussels.

After a week of sombre religious events commemorating Jesus' death, Francis said an Easter Sunday Mass under tight security for tens of thousands of people in a sun-drenched St. Peter's Square.

Afterwards, in his traditional, twice-yearly "Urbi et Orbi" (to the city and the world) message, he spoke of violence, injustice and threats to peace in many parts of the world.

"May he (the risen Jesus) draw us closer on this Easter feast to the victims of terrorism, that blind and brutal form of violence which continues to shed blood in different parts of the world," he said, speaking from the central balcony of St. Peter's Basilica.

He mentioned recent attacks in Belgium, where at least 31 people were killed by Islamist militants, as well as those in Turkey, Nigeria, Chad, Cameroon, Ivory Coast, and Iraq.

"With the weapons of love, God has defeated selfishness and death," the leader of the world's 1.2 billion Roman Catholic said from the same balcony from where he first appeared to the world on the night of his election on 13 March, 2013.

The 79-year-old Argentine pontiff urged people to channel the hope of Easter in order to defeat "the evil that seems to have the upper hand in the life of so many people". —*Reuters*

NEWS IN BRIEF

Three Russian attack helicopters leave Syria for Russia

MOSCOW — Three heavy attack helicopters have left Moscow's Hmeymim airbase in Syria for Russia, Russian state TV channel Rossiya-24 reported on Monday.

Two Mi-24 and one Mi-35 helicopters left the base onboard the heavy Antonov-124 transport airplane, along with some engineers and technical staff. This month Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered the bulk of the Russian military contingent in Syria to be pulled out after five months of air strikes, saying Moscow had achieved most of its objectives. On Sunday, he congratulated Syrian President Bashar al-Assad on regaining the city of Palmyra.

Rossiya-24 showed a Russian officer at the Hmeymim base saying that Moscow's forces remaining in Syria were enough "to repel at any moment any attack and accomplish any military tasks".—*Reuters*

Japan's ANA suspends flights to Brussels until at least 10 April

TOKYO — ANA Holdings (9202.T), Japan's biggest airline, said on Monday it would continue its suspension of flights from Tokyo to Brussels until at least April 10 after suicide bombers blew themselves up in the airport departure hall.

Brussels Airport said on Saturday that it would not reopen for passenger flights before Tuesday.

"In view of the condition of the airport and the general situation we have decided to extend the cancellation of flights," ANA said in a statement. "We will decide on operations from 11 April after reviewing the situation," it added. ANA's cancelled flights up to 10 April will total 39, affecting 4,500 travellers.—*Reuters*

Two additional US citizens confirmed killed in Brussels attack

WASHINGTON — Two more US citizens have been confirmed killed in last week's Brussels suicide bombings, a State Department official said on Sunday, bringing the death toll for Americans to four.

"We can confirm the deaths of two additional US citizens in Brussels, and we express our deepest condolences to their loved ones," the official said. No other details were immediately available.

The attacks on Tuesday at the Brussels Airport and on a metro train killed 31 people, including three attackers, and injured hundreds more. Islamic State has claimed responsibility. The State Department has declined to name any of the four people killed in the Brussels attacks, citing respect for their families. On Saturday, employers said that two of them were Justin and Stephanie Shults, residents of Belgium who were originally from Tennessee and Kentucky. They were last seen dropping off her mother at the Brussels airport shortly before the check-in area was rocked by a powerful explosion.—*Reuters*

Algeria helicopter crash kills at least 12 soldiers

ALGIERS — At least 12 Algerian soldiers were killed when a military helicopter crashed in the south of the country, the Defence Ministry said on Sunday.

Further details were not immediately available. The crash occurred near Reggane town and two other soldiers were injured, the ministry said.—*Reuters*

Vulin: RS will be preserved, The Hague cannot stamp it out

BELGRADE — Republika Srpska (RS) will be preserved and The Hague tribunal's verdict against Radovan Karadzic is not affecting it in any manner whatsoever, Serbian Minister of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Policy Aleksandar Vulin has said.

In an interview for Sunday's edition of Belgrade-based daily *Politika*, Vulin stated that "The Hague tribunal did not create the RS and it therefore cannot stamp it out."

"It is the Dayton agreement that put the RS into existence. It was created based on the need of the Serb people to protect themselves west of the Drina River with official institutions — and to make sure Jasenovac never happens again," said Vulin.

Touching on the The Hague tribunal's verdict pronounced against RS' first president Radovan karadzic on Thursday, Vulin said that the court which had not convicted Naser Oric, Ramus Haradinaj and Ante Gotovina should not have convicted Karadzic either.

"But of course, the court which has not convicted these people had to convict Karadzic to justify the acquittals," Vulin said.—*Tanjug*

OPINION

The Myanmar army—free from fear or favour

Khin Maung Aye

ALMOST every country in the world has an army to defend its sovereignty and protect the lives and property of the people. The only difference is the strength of these armies, which depend on national wealth. The duties of the national army are very similar in that they all defend their countries against foes. However, the duties of these armies differ in that some countries face external foes, while others face internal ones.

It is worth recalling here in this juncture that the Myanmar Tatmadaw was born during the country's independence struggle. It is a patriotic army, which is different from mercenary armies. Another important factor is that the Myanmar army is made up of people of various backgrounds, including Kachin, Kayah, Kayin, Chin, Bama, Mon, Rakhine and Shan. Another interesting factor is that Myanmar soldiers are not conscripted into the army. Instead, they join the army of their own free will, so they are free from fear or favour. That being the case, our soldiers are dedicated to the national cause, always being willing, able and ready to sacrifice life and limb for the sake of the country.

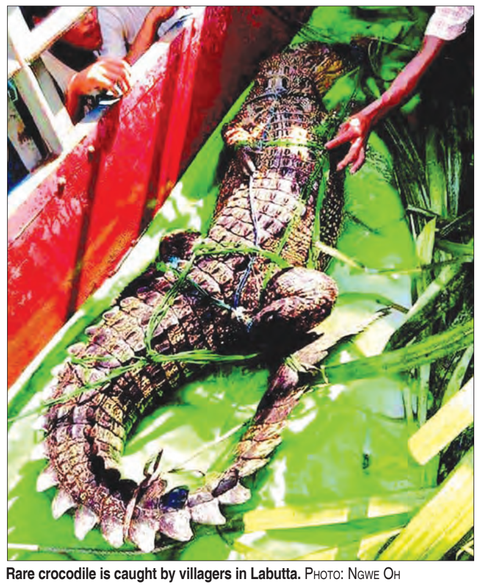
The complexities of Myanmar's history and government composition notwithstanding, it is important to give honour where it is due. Therefore, The Global New Light of Myanmar hereby honours the brave, patriotic soldiers for their sacrificing spirit on this auspicious Armed Forces Day.

We would also like to urge people of Myanmar to cooperate with the army in its effort to defend the three main national causes, to ensure long-lasting peace through ceasefire, to ensure stability, unity and development, and to build up a capable Tatmadaw that can effectively defend the national territorial integrity and sovereign power.

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 wallace.tun@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.



Rare crocodile is caught by villagers in Labutta. PHOTO: NGWE OH

Merit Sharing Ceremony of Newly Built Five Storey Hospital Annex at Wachet Sangha Hospital in Sagaing Hills

Sayar Mya

A COOL and fresh breeze swept over the calm surface of the impressive and splendid famous Ayeyawaddy River of Myanmar and hit the West Bank. Its velvet feel touched the cheeks o f the members of Sanghas and the lay persons attending the merit sharing and libation ceremony rallied around the temporary venue at the base of the newly built five story hospital annex of the Wachet Jivitadana Sangha Hospital in Sagaing Hills.

The new hospital annex is named in a dignified term as **"Annanda Gonyee Shwe Mann Yadanar Annex".**

The Place

Sagaing is the capital of Sagaing Region (formerly Sagaing Division) in Myanmar. Located on the Ayeyawaddy River, 20 km to the south-west of Mandalay on the opposite bank of the river, Sagaing with numerous Buddhist monasteries is an important religious and monastic center. The pagodas and monasteries crowd the numerous hills along the ridge running parallel to the river. The central pagoda, Soon U Ponya Shin Pagoda, is connected by a set of covered staircases that run up the 240 meter hill.

Sagaing was the capital of Sagaing Kingdom (1315–1364), one of the minor kingdoms that rose up after the fall of Bagan dynasty, where one of Thihathu's sons, King Athinkhaya Saw Yun, established himself. During the Ava period (1364–1555), the city was the common fief or rented area for which the payment is work for the crown prince or senior princes. The city briefly became the royal capital between 1760 and 1763 in the reign of King Naungdawgyi.

The Ceremony

It was a soft and serene Saturday morning of 26 March 2016 and the whole environment at Sagaing Hills remained calm and tranquil hailing the cheerful ceremony of merit sharing and libation for the five storey hospital annex.

The stage was set to begin as the master of ceremonies or MC clasped the microphone in both hands as a gesture of respectful manner in keeping the event moving in front of the members of Sanghas, donors' family and lay persons.

Attendees paying obesiance to sagaing. PHOTO: SAYAR MYA

A Short Brief

At this juncture, a short background and explanation is needed for the esteemed readers of the Global New Light of Myanmar on how a new five storey hospital annex came into existence at the Wachet Sangha Hospital at the remote Sagaing Hills.

In fact, the main Wachet Jivitadana Sangha Hospital itself came into existence **"From a plain hut to a modern hospital"** in the remote jungle at the earnest endeavor of compassionate and kindhearted Venerable Kyaswa Religious Resort Sayadaw **Bhaddanta Dr. Lakkhana** and his small group of donors and lay disciples back in 1984.

That was another event and story to be emulated among the episodes of rural health care for the poor and marginalized people being undertaken by most venerable members of Sanghas across the country in Myanmar.

Inborn Generosity

It started with a joyful phone call from Sagaing Hills by Hospital Administrator on 22 January 2015 at 9:00 am on a beautiful morning. From Sagaing, he informed the Honorary Secretary of Lower Myanmar Executive Committee in Yangon that a donor couple from Mandalay has verbally committed and dedicated to donate cash of **Myanmar Kyats 100 million** to build a hospital annex building adjacent to the existing main Wachet Hospital. The Administrator also informed the Honorary Secretary in Yangon that the Upper Myanmar Executive Committee Chairman and the most experienced Hospital Construction Engineer of Sagaing and the donor from Mandalay were looking for an appropriate construction site inside the spacious compound of the hospital right away.

The good news spread like wild fire among Wachet Donors' Circle in Sagaing, Mandalay and Yangon.

How come the donor couple decided to contribute that much money?

It was 21 January 2015, one day earlier; the spacious Wachet Hospital was crowded with patients, assisting family members and helpers. The patients, including poor and marginalized, from far and near came to Wachet in seeking medical treatment.

It was high time with tight schedules because many foreign expert teams were there at the same time namely Italian Team headed by senior surgeon Dr. Robin Chan; Australian Team under Myanmar Eye Care Program **(MECP);** and **Japan Heart Team** headed by Dr. Yoshioka. Medical Superintendent of Wachet Hospital, Myanmar senior doctors from Mandalay and trained nurses were also there at the hospital to take care of the patients. The foreign expert teams drew a lot of patients and the assisting helpers at that particular time.

On the same day of 21 January 2015, U Than Tun Oo of Mandalay, later to become the donor, was at the Wachet Hospital accompanying his father in seeking treatment from Italian senior surgeon Dr. Robin Chan.

U Than Tun Oo was looking around the precinct of Wachet Hospital and saw many people were talking shelter under the trees or any shade available. They have no proper place to sit and wait in a crowded situation. The Wachet Hospital could not accommodate properly to most crowded patients and helpers seeking treatments from three foreign teams.

"Surely, one hospital annex is in need" was the notion that came across the mind of U Than Tun Oo.

On 21 January 2016, U Than Tun Oo decided to donate.

On 22 January 2016, U Than Tun Oo and responsible persons of the hospital search for a site in the compound of Wachet Hospital. They found an appropriate site at the southern end of the compound adjacent to the main Wachet Hospital Building side by side with the neat and clean dining hall.

On 23 January 2016, U Than Tun brought in **Myanmar Kyats 200 million**, doubled the amount that he had earlier committed. He donated all into the good hands of Upper Myanmar EC at the presence of the members of Sanghas. It was a simple merit sharing and libation ceremony conducted on the ground intended for the five storey annex building.

Only then, the names of the donors were come into notice. They are U Than Tun Oo, wife Daw Swe Zar Lynn and baby daughter Ma Yadanar Pyae. They are cool, calm and kindhearted, with high sense of generosity and above all staying in a low profile.

Among the Wachet Donors' Circle, the new donor family of Mandalay is termed as "This sort of donor does exist, but very rare."

Immediately construction started for the five storey hospital annex.

The purpose of the donation is crystal clear.

It is meant to accommodate and to put under the shade of the building all the patients, their assisting family members, the helpers, the foreign doctors, the local doctors, the trained nurses, and hospital basic workers. It is meant for OPD patients as well as overnight stay.

The ballons being released. PHOTO: SAYAR MYA

Looking back, it was like a dream. The amount of cash donated was in fact not a small amount. It was **Kyats 200 million.**

First day, the expected donor came to the hospital seeking medical treatment for his father. He witnessed a large crowd of people in need of shelter. He decided to donate.

Second day, the donor came in and search for a site for construction.

Third day, he brought in Kyats 200 million in cash and donated with a simple merit sharing and libation ceremony.

Within one short year, the Five Storey Hospital Annex at Wachet Sangha Hospital in Sagaing Hills is completed through the team work of the people involved.

That was the simple story of the hospital annex.

Ceremony starts

Next, the master of ceremonies outlined the libation and merit sharing ceremony.

Exactly at 7:30 am, the Holy Pali verse "Jayandaw Bawtiya Mulay" was recited and the ceremonial ribbon at the entrance of the Hospital Annex successfully cut open by Patron Sayadaw, donors' family and Executives of Upper Myanmar, Lower Myanmar and well wishers.

Next, the commemorative record slab was splashed and sprinkled with scented water by leading Sayadaws and well wishers.

It was followed by observing five precepts delivered from Abhidhaja Maha Rattha Guru Mandalay Maha Wizitaryone Sayadaw.

Next, members of Sanghas recited Parittas and then cash and kind were donated to the Sanghas.

After that, the donor U Than Tun Oo made a short supplication in connection with his donation for the hospital annex.

On behalf of Upper Myanmar and Lower Myanmar ECs, the Honorary Secretary of Yangon spoke words of thanks to all concern involved in the hospital annex project.

Finally, a sermon on the good deeds in connection with the merit sharing and libation ceremony was delivered by Agga Maha Pandita Mandalay Awayar Rama Yankin Sayadaw.

The Merit Sharing and Libation Ceremony of Five Storey Hospital Annex at Wachet Jivitadana Sangha Hospital in Sagaing Hills were successfully concluded by reciting "Buddha Saranam Siram Tatetahtu" three times.

Rare crocodile caught in fishing net

LOCAL fishermen in Labutta Township, Ayeyawady Region, caught a rare female crocodile on Saturday morning.

The group of 10 fisherman led by U Tun Naing found the crocodile on the bank of the Paymalaw River while they fished on a sandbank near Dawkanyone Island in Kyanchaung Village in the township.

"We captured the amphibious animals with a fishing net and carried it on our fishing vessel to send it to the township fisheries department," said one of the fishermen.

A member of fisheries department said the crocodile will soon be sent to a breeding camp in Thaketa Township, Yangon, via Labutta.—*Ngwe Oh*

Health ministry raises funds for immunisation programme

THE Ministry of Health is scheduled to spend US$6.7 million on a nationwide immunisation programme in the next fiscal year, said Dr Soe Lwin Nyein, director general of the Department of Public Health.

The vaccination programme aims to prevent fatal diseases in the target age group of 9 months to 15 years. It is estimated that the target population will reach 17.4 million in the coming fiscal year. The health ministry will spend around $7 per child. Last year, the ministry provided 13 different kinds of vaccines to children around the country, including a new combined measles-rubella vaccine. This year's expenditures for immunisation programmes were 8.7 times greater than they were in the 2010-2011 fiscal year.

Around 1.1 million babies are born each year in Myanmar, 85 per cent of whom contract measles, while 10 per cent contract rubella, according to ministry data collected in 2012. Measles is one of the major causes of child mortality around the world. Myanmar was declared a polio-free country by the WHO on 27 March 2014, highlighting the importance of vaccination programmes.—*200*

Pakistanis hunt militants behind blast that killed at least 70

Security officials gather at the site of a blast outside a public park in Lahore, Pakistan, on 27 March. PHOTO: REUTERS

LAHORE, (Pakistan) — Pakistani authorities hunted on Monday for breakaway Taliban militants who once declared loyalty to Islamic State after the group claimed responsibility for an Easter suicide bomb targeting Christians, that killed at least 70 people.

The attack on Sunday evening in a busy park in the eastern city of Lahore, the powerbase of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, killed mostly women and children enjoying an Easter weekend outing. Pakistan is a majority-Muslim state but has a Christian population of more than 2 million.

It was the deadliest attack in Pakistan since the December 2014 massacre of 134 school children at a military run academy in the city of Peshawar that prompted a big government crackdown on Islamist militancy.

"We must bring the killers of our innocent brothers, sisters and children to justice and will never allow these savage inhumans to over-run our life and liberty," military spokesman Asim Bajwa said in a post on Twitter.

Jamaat-ul-Ahrar, a faction of the Pakistani Taliban, claimed responsibility for the attack late on Sunday night, and issued a direct challenge to the government.

"The target was Christians," said a faction spokesman, Ehsanullah Ehsan, said. "We want to send this message to Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif that we have entered Lahore."

Lahore is the capital of Pakistan's richest province, Punjab, and is seen as the country's political and cultural heartland.

Sharif's office condemned the blast as a cowardly act and said a response had been ordered, without elaborating. Lahore, markets, schools and courts were closed on Monday as the city mourned. Rescue services spokeswoman Deeba Shahnaz said at least 70 people were killed and about 340 were wounded, with 25 in serious condition.

The group has claimed responsibility for several big attacks after it split with the main Pakistani Taliban in 2014. It declared allegiance to the Islamic State but later said it was rejoining the Pakistani Taliban insurgency.

Pakistan has been plagued by militant violence for the last 15 years, since it joined a US-led campaign against Islamist militancy after the 11 September, 2001, al Qaeda attacks on the United States.

While the army, police, government and Western interests have been the prime targets of the Pakistani Taliban and their allies, Christians and other religious minorities have also attacked. Nearly 80 people were killed in a suicide bomb attack on a church in the northwestern city of Peshawar in 2013. The security forces have killed and arrested hundreds of suspected militants under the crackdown launched after the 2014 Peshawar school massacre. Militant violence had eased but they retain the ability to launch devastating attacks.

Pakistan's security agencies have long been accused of nurturing militants to use for help in pursuing security objectives in Afghanistan and against old rival India.

But some, like the Pakistani Taliban, have turned against the state. They are fighting to topple the government and install a strict interpretation of Islamic law. Sharif's opponents have accused him of tolerating militancy in return for peace in his province, a charge he strongly denies.

Earlier on Sunday, hundreds of hard-line Muslim activists clashed with police in the capital, Islamabad, in a protest over the execution of a man they consider a hero for assassinating a governor over his criticism of harsh blasphemy laws.

Bodyguard Mumtaz Qadri Mumtaz shot dead Punjab governor Salman Taseer in 2011. Taseer, a prominent liberal politician, had spoken in support of a Christian woman sentenced to death under the law that mandates capital punishment for insulting Islam or the Prophet Mohammad. Qadri was executed last month.

There was no indication of a connection between the protest in Islamabad and the bomb in Lahore. —*Reuters*

Saudi-led alliance confirms Yemen prisoner swap

A Houthi follower rises a weapon as he attends a rally marking one year of Saudi-led air strikes, in Yemen's capital Sanaa, on 26 March 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

DUBAI — A Saudi-led military coalition on Monday said it had completed a prisoner swap in Yemen, exchanging nine Saudi prisoners for 109 Yemeni nationals ahead of a planned truce and peace talks aimed at ending the year-long war with Houthi rebels.

The statement did not say which group the deal was made with, but the Iran-allied Houthi movement said on Sunday it had exchanged prisoners with its enemy Riyadh, as a first step towards ending a humanitarian crisis prompted by the conflict.

The Iran-allied Houthis are battling Yemeni government forces backed by a Saudi-led military coalition.

Saudi Arabia received its nationals on Sunday, the coalition statement published on Saudi Arabia's state news agency SPA said. The alliance "hopes to begin a truce in conflict areas of the Republic of Yemen," it added.

Yemeni media said that the nine men were soldiers. The released Yemenis had been detained during operations in Yemen, SPA said.

News site Yemen Now published a photo of a group of smiling, waving men in white robes and keffiyeh head scarves, which it said was of the soldiers. Reuters was not immediately able to verify the image.

The agreement is one of several prisoner swaps between the two sides since late last year in a conflict which has killed more than 6,000 people and triggered a humanitarian crisis in the Arab world's poorest country.

Last week the United Nations said the warring parties had agreed to a cessation of hostilities starting at midnight on 10 April and peace talks in Kuwait as part of a fresh push to end the crisis following two rounds of failed talks last year.—*Reuters*

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV MERATUS GORONTALO VOY NO (131N)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV MERATUS GORONTALO VOY NO (131N) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 27.3.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.W.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claim's Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S YANG MING LINE
Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV MCC MERGUI VOY NO ( )

Consignees of cargo carried on MV MCC MERGUI VOY NO ( ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 29.3.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claim's Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S MCC TRANSPORT (S'PORE) PTE LTD
Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV MAENAM 1 VOY NO (544N)

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

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Chile reports its first sexually transmitted Zika case

BUENOS AIRES — Chile has confirmed its first case of the Zika virus having been sexually transmitted, the health ministry said in a statement on its website on Saturday.

The virus is linked to thousands of suspected cases of birth defects in Brazil.

The new case in Chile is that of a 46-year-old woman whose partner was infected while in Haiti. Chile, where the mosquitoes that transmit the virus are not found, has confirmed 10 cases of Zika involving people infected outside the country.

There is growing evidence that suggests a link between Zika and microcephaly in babies. The condition is defined by unusually small heads that can result in developmental problems.

Brazil said it has confirmed more than 900 cases of microcephaly and considers most of them to be related to Zika infections in the mothers.

US health officials recommend that women wait at least two months, and men at least six, before attempting to conceive after infection with Zika. —*Reuters*

An employee examines tubes with the label 'Zika virus' at Genekam Biotechnology AG in Duisburg, Germany, on 2 February. PHOTO: REUTERS

China calls for reform of science and technology associations

BEIJING —- Science and technology associations in China should better serve scientific and technological workers, the national strategy of innovation-driven development as well as the government and the general public through reforms, said a document publicized on Sunday.

The general office of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee recently issued a plan for deepening reforms in science and technology associations nationwide.

The document urged science and technology associations to uphold CPC's leadership in the reforms, and called for closer connections to scientific and technological workers and people as well as better management of societies and administrative organs under the associations. —*Xinhua*

US spaceship arrives at ISS with 3D printer, experiment equipment

WASHINGTON — A private US spaceship arrived at the International Space Station (ISS) on Saturday with fresh supplies to sustain future experiments, US space agency NASA said.

The unmanned Cygnus spacecraft docked at the ISS at about 6:51am EDT (1051 GMT), with the help of Canadarm2 robotic arm operated by US astronaut Tim Kopra, NASA said.

The spacecraft will be installed to the orbiting lab's Earth-facing port of the Unity module.

More than 3,500 kilograms of cargo were shipped to the ISS, including an upgraded 3D printer to replace an old one sent up in 2014.

The device, about twice the size of its predecessor, will help the space station produce new tools and experiments, NASA said.

Also on board was Saffire-I, a box designed to contain fire-related experiments.

"Such studies have not been possible in the past because the risks for performing such studies on spacecraft with astronauts aboard are too high," NASA said in a statement.

The US space agency has planned three fire-related experiments, all of which will be conducted inside the Cygnus as it reenters Earth's atmosphere after completing its mission in two months.

The Cygnus is operated by Orbital ATK, which has conducted four previous missions to the ISS under a contract with NASA. —*Xinhua*

Simple blood test may predict risk of developing TB

WASHINGTON — Scientists have identified blood biomarkers in people latently infected with a bacterium linked to tuberculosis, an advance that may lead to a blood test that predicts who is at high risk of developing the disease.

One-third of the world's population is thought to be infected with Mycobacterium tuberculosis (Mtb), the bacterium that causes tuberculosis (TB), but just a small fraction ever develops symptomatic illness, researchers said.

The researchers from the University of Cape Town and the Centre for Infectious Disease Research in US identified the biomarkers in two stages.

First, researchers collected blood samples for two years from more than 6,000 Mtb-infected, but otherwise healthy adolescent volunteers in South Africa.

Analysis of the samples showed patterns of gene expression that differed between volunteers who eventually developed TB and those who remained healthy. This risk 'signature', confined to a set of 16 genes, could be detected in a blood sample as early as 18 months before the infected person developed active TB. Next, the team confirmed the genetic risk signature's predictive ability in a study of more than 4,500 volunteers in South Africa and The Gambia.

Volunteers in this study were healthy but lived with people who had recently been diagnosed with active TB. The second study group was more varied in age, health status, ethnicity and exposure to locally common strains of Mtb than volunteers in the first study. Despite the differences, the same risk signature found in the first study was detected in the people who eventually developed active TB during the second trial.—*PTI*

South Korea finds ducks infected with bird flu

SEOUL — South Korea has detected bird flu in ducks on a poultry farm near Seoul, an agriculture ministry official told Reuters on Monday, the first discovery in four months and a month after the country regained its bird flu-free status.

The case involved a strain known as H5N8, the same type of influenza that occurred last November.

All 11,604 ducks at the infected farm in the city of Icheon, 80 kilometres (50 miles) east of Seoul have been slaughtered, the official said.

South Korea had resumed poultry meat exports to Hong Kong for the first time in nearly two years after it was declared an Avian Influenza-free nation, the agriculture ministry said on 13 March.

The bird flu discovery comes amid ongoing concerns about food safety in South Korea, where an outbreak of foot and mouth disease was discovered in pigs in January.—*Reuters*

Alder BioPharma's migraine drug succeeds in mid-stage study

NEW YORK — Alder BioPharmaceuticals Inc said its drug to prevent migraines met the main goal in a mid-stage study, the results of which support a quarterly single injection dosing strategy.

Four doses of the drug, ALD403, were tested against a placebo in patients suffering from chronic migraines, those who experienced 15 or more headache days per month, of which at least eight were assessed as migraine days.

The two highest doses of the drug, 300 mg and 100 mg, brought about a 75 per cent reduction in migraine days in 33 per cent and 31 per cent of patients respectively, meeting the main goal of the study.

A single infusion of 300mg, 100mg or 30mg doses resulted in a durable reduction in migraine days during a 12 week period, supporting a quarterly dosing strategy, Alder Bio said.

Migraine is a common neurological disorder characterised by a throbbing pain in the head, commonly accompanied by nausea, vomiting and high sensitivity to light and sound.

Nearly one in four US households includes someone with migraine and employers in the country lose more than $13 billion a year as a result of 113 million work days lost due to the disorder, the Migraine Research Foundation estimates.

The poor side-effect profile of existing preventative medicines for migraine, including beta blockers and botox, limits their use. Only about 12 per cent of adults with frequent episodic or chronic migraine take preventive medication, Alder said, citing the US Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality.

Alder plans to independently sell the medicine in the United States to serve the 13 million patients who are candidates for migraine prevention therapy, Chief Executive Randall Schatzman said in a statement on Monday. —*Reuters*

Trump questions NATO, Asia nuclear weapons ahead of Washington summit

WASHINGTON — US Republican presidential front-runner Donald Trump on Sunday doubled down on his criticism of NATO, a cornerstone of US foreign policy for decades, and called for the alliance's overhaul days before world leaders convene in Washington.

President Barack Obama will host the Nuclear Security Summit on Thursday and Friday with 56 delegations in attendance. While preventing nuclear terrorism will headline the discussions, Trump's views could be a topic as well, particularly behind the scenes.

In another sharp departure from historic US policy, Trump said in an interview published on Sunday by *The New York Times* that he would consider letting Japan and South Korea build their own nuclear weapons, rather than rely on America for protection against North Korea and China.

The billionaire businessman, vying to win his party's nomination for the 8 November presidential election, also said he might halt US purchases of oil from Saudi Arabia and other Arab allies unless they commit ground troops to fight Islamic State or pay the United States to do so.

Republican US presidential candidate Donald Trump speaks to reporters as he leads the news media on a tour of the construction site of the Trump International Hotel at the Old Post Office Building in Washington, on 21 March.
PHOTO: REUTERS

"NATO is obsolete," Trump said on ABC's This Week with George Stephanopoulos. The 28-country North Atlantic Treaty Organisation was set up in a different era, Trump said, when the main threat to the West was the Soviet Union. It was ill-suited to fighting terrorism and cost the United States too much, he added. "We should readjust NATO ... it can be trimmed up and it can be, uh, it can be reconfigured and you can call it NATO, but it's going to be changed," he said.

On 21 March, Trump said the United States should slash its financial support for NATO, which was formed in 1949 after World War Two and became a bulwark against Soviet expansionism. Russia will not attend the upcoming nuclear summit, but Chinese President Xi Jinping will.

Obama said the United States would review international efforts to combat Islamic State in the wake of the Brussels attacks. Trump's chief rival for the Republican nomination, Texas Senator Ted Cruz, called the real estate mogul's views on NATO "catastrophically foolish." Speaking on Fox News Sunday with Chris Wallace, Cruz said Trump was "out of his depth."

"Abandoning Europe, withdrawing from the most successful military alliance of modern times, it makes no sense at all," Cruz said. "It would hand a massive victory to (Russian President Vladimir) Putin, a massive victory to ISIS," the militant group also known as Islamic State.—*Reuters*

Sanders says party leaders may 'rethink' after wins

WASHINGTON —- Fresh from Democratic presidential primary wins over the weekend in three US states, Bernie Sanders said on Sunday he had political momentum that could help him win the backing of Democratic power brokers in his race against Hillary Clinton.

Sanders easily won nominating contests in Alaska, Washington and Hawaii on Saturday. His latest remarks reflect his plan to chip away at Clinton's commanding lead in the number of delegates needed to win the party's nomination for the November election.

Interviewed on Sunday by US broadcasters, Sanders said Democratic "super-delegates," who can change their allegiance, might face pressure to rally behind him because most polls suggest he has a better chance than Clinton of beating a Republican candidate.

"Momentum is with us," Sanders, a senator from Vermont, said on CNN'S State of the Union news program. "A lot of these super-delegates may rethink their position with Hillary Clinton." Sanders also criticized Clinton's reliance on wealthy donors to fund her campaign. He cited a fundraising dinner being hosted next month by actor George Clooney, where supporters will have to donate at least $33,400 to attend, or $353,400, nearly seven times the annual median income, if they want "premium" seating.

"It is obscene that Secretary Clinton keeps going to big money people to fund her campaign," Sanders told CNN. "Our events, we charge $15 or $50 for people to come. So, it's not a criticism of Clooney. It's a criticism of a corrupt finance system."

About 85 per cent of the votes at the 25-28 July Democratic National Convention in Philadelphia, where a party nominee will be chosen to face the Republicans in the Nov. 8 election, are being determined by state nominating contests.—*Reuters*

Suspected money launderer for 'El Chapo' detained in Mexico

MEXICO CITY — A man suspected of laundering money for jailed drug kingpin Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman was detained in southwestern Mexico, and faces extradition to the United States, Mexican authorities said on Sunday.

Juan Manuel Alvarez, who was arrested in Oaxaca state, has ties to an international money-laundering network that spans Mexico, Colombia, Panama and the United States, Mexican police said via their official Twitter account.

A separate statement from Mexico's National Security Commision, which coordinates security forces, said Alvarez is sought over money laundering allegations in the United States.

Describing him as the "principal financial operator" for an undisclosed drug trafficking group, the statement said he headed another criminal organization that operates mainly in the western Mexican state of Jalisco.

That state is home to the Jalisco New Generation Cartel (JNG), whose gunmen shot down an army helicopter in the state last May, claiming the lives of six military personnel. The JNG have historic ties to Guzman's Sinaloa Cartel.

Guzman, who escaped twice from Mexican maximum-security prisons, was recaptured in Mexico in January and is seeking to speed up his extradition to the United States in the hope he will be treated better in prison there.

As head of the Sinaloa cartel, Guzman is accused of leading a bloody war against rival gangs and smuggling vast quantities of illegal drugs into the United States.—*Reuters*

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MV SINAR BITUNG VOY NO ( )

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

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AGENT FOR: M/S SILKAGO LOGISTICS PTE LTD

Phone No: 2301185

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Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV KOTA HARTA VOY NO ( )

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

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CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV KULTHARA VOY NO (03/16)

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A UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter from the Kansas National Guard carries a water bucket as it prepares to help fight the Anderson Creek wildfire in southern Kansas, on 25 March. PHOTO: REUTERS

Easter snow helps US firefighters slowly contain prairie wildfire

NEW YORK — A wildfire that has scorched hundreds of thousands acres of prairie and ranch land in Kansas and Oklahoma since last week was slowly being contained, authorities said on Sunday, with a rare Easter snowfall providing some help to fire-fighting teams.

Even though Kansas and Oklahoma received about an inch of snow on Saturday night, officials remained cautious about when teams could bring the fire under control.

"Firefighters are trying to use some of that precipitation to get a handle on things," said Melanie Karns, spokeswoman for the Oklahoma Forestry Services. "If we just get a little bit of rain or snow, it helps, but it takes more than just a little bit to help put out some of the heavier fuels."

By Sunday afternoon, the so-called Anderson Creek Fire, which began on Tuesday in Oklahoma and spread northward, was 45 per cent contained across the two states, Karns said. The fire was 36 per cent contained at midday on Saturday.

The Kansas Forestry Service on Friday said the wildfire was the largest in the state's history and one of the largest ever in the United States. It has already charred nearly 400,000 acres in both states.

Karns said the agency would update the number of burned acres by late Sunday afternoon.

Barber County, Kansas, about 100 miles southwest of Wichita near the Oklahoma border, remains the most difficult area to contain the blaze. The fire is 31 per cent contained in the county, Karns said.

Fire-fighting teams have used Kansas Air National Guard Black Hawk helicopters to dump buckets of water in canyons and other dry areas. Helicopters continued to drop water in dry and burning areas on Sunday afternoon, said Shawna Hartman, spokeswoman for Kansas Forest Service. About 50,000 gallons of water were dumped throughout Saturday, Hartman said.—*Reuters*

Honduras arrests suspect in murder of environmental activist

An activist holds a photos of slain environmental rights activist Berta Caceres during a march to mark International Women's Day in Managua, Nicaragua, on 8 March.
PHOTO: REUTERS

TEGUCIGALPA — Honduras has arrested a suspect in the murder of an environmental rights activist and colleague of recently slain award-winning indigenous leader Berta Caceres, officials said on Sunday.

Didier Enrique "Electric" Ramirez was apprehended for his alleged role in the killing of Nelson Garcia, 39, who was shot dead earlier this month by at least two assailants following a dispute with local landowners, authorities said in a statement.

Garcia was killed near his house in the San Francisco de Yoyoa region, 75 miles (120 kilometers) north of the capital Tegucigalpa.

Caceres, a 43-year-old teacher, was shot and killed earlier this month by two men at her home in La Esperanza, Honduras, 112 miles (180 kilometers) west of Tegucigalpa.

Garcia was a member of the Consejo de Organizaciones Populares e Indigenas de Honduras (COPINH), the same organization that Caceres led until her death.

Caceres, who had received death threats, won the Goldman Environmental Prize in 2015 for her efforts to prevent the construction of a $50 million dam that threatened to displace hundreds of indigenous people. The impoverished Central American nation has one of the world's highest murder rates.—*Reuters*

‘Batman v Superman’ shatters records with $170.1 million debut

LOS ANGELES —“Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice” steamrolled past records, debuting to a gargantuan $170.1 million over Easter weekend despite being pilloried by critics. That ranks as the top opening weekend for a DC Comics film, the best March launch ever, and the sixth biggest domestic opening weekend of all-time.

It’s a shot in the arm for Warner Bros., which has been reeling from a series of costly bombs such as “Jupiter Ascending” and “Pan,” and is looking to the Dark Knight and Man of Steel throw down to kick off a series of inter-connected comic book franchises. Warner Bros. has already announced release dates for sequels and spin-offs for the next five years, with the first of these superhero adventures, “Suicide Squad,” coming out in August.

“This sets us up well,” said Jeff Goldstein, Warner Bros. distribution executive vice president. “We’re very proud of what we’ve made before in the DC world and what’s coming in front of us is really exciting.”

The studio spared no expense, tapping Ben Affleck to assume Batman’s cape and cowl, bringing back “Man of Steel” director Zack Snyder and Superman star Henry Cavill, and shelling out $250 million in production expenses, as well as millions more in promotional razzle dazzle. The bet appears to have paid off, positioning DC and Warners to have the kind of cinematic universe of costumed heroes and villains that rival Marvel has leveraged to enormous profits.

It also undercuts the influence of top critics. Reviews for “Batman v Superman” were withering — the New York Times’ A.O. Scott said seeing the film is “… about as diverting as having a porcelain sink broken over your head” — but audiences didn’t care. They were kinder to the picture too, giving the film a B CinemaScore grade.

Cast members (L to R) Deborah Snyder, Diane Lane, Gal Gadot, Amy Adams, Ben Affleck, Zack Snyder, Henry Cavill, Jesse Eisenberg, Holly Hunter, Tao Okamoto, and Charles Roven attend New York premiere “Batman V Superman: Dawn Of Justice” at Radio City Music Hall in New York, on 20 March. PHOTO: REUTERS

“It’s the fans that speak the loudest,” said Jeff Bock, a box office analyst for Exhibitor Relations. “It proves how strong these characters are.”

The film’s audience was largely male (66 per cent) and crowds tended to be younger, with 63% of ticket buyers ranging between the ages of 18 and 34. Imax showings contributed $18 million to the gross, premium large format screens added an estimated $17 million to the earnings, 3D screens were responsible for 40% of the opening weekend results, and RealD 3D accounted for an estimated $47 million of the total.

“The filmmakers delivered experientially on something that can best be seen in movie theaters,” said Greg Foster, CEO of Imax Entertainment. “This is not a movie that any one wants to see in a small venue.”

Last weekend’s champ, “Zootopia,” slid to second place, racking up $23.1 million to push the family film’s domestic total to $240.5 million. Globally, the Disney Animation blockbuster has earned $696.7 million, pushing it past the likes of “Tangled,” “Big Hero 6,” and “Ratatouille.”

In third place, Universal scored a counter-programming success with “My Big Fat Greek Wedding 2.” The romantic comedy pulled in female crowds not interested in watching the superhero beatdown, earning a solid $18.1 million from 3,133 locations.

“It’s not so much to do with strategy and positioning as it is just a fun film,” said Nick Carpou, Universal’s distribution chief. “‘It’s about family and everyone has that experience and can relate to a lot of what’s in the film and the way people care for each other in the story.”

“My Big Fat Greek Wedding 2” is a follow-up to the 2002 box office phenomenon, which grossed $368 million at the global box office. Gold Circle Entertainment, HBO and Playtone produced the sequel for $18 million and brought back original stars Nia Vardalos and John Corbett.

The weekend was a grim one for Lionsgate, which saw “The Divergent Series: Allegiant” plunge 67% in its second weekend, eking out $9.5 million. The film has earned $46.6 million, a disappointing result that puts the studio in an uncomfortable position given that another sequel, “Ascendant,” is currently scheduled to debut in June 2017, when it will face off against heavy hitters such as “World War Z 2” and a reboot of “The Mummy.”

Sony’s “Miracles from Heaven” tied for fourth, earning $9.5 million, and pushing the faith-based drama’s domestic haul to $34.1 million after two weeks.

In limited release, Sony Pictures Classics debuted the Hank Williams drama “I Saw the Light” to $50,464 on five screens, for a per screen average of $10,093, while Bleecker Street’s drone thriller “Eye in the Sky” expanded from 35 theaters to 123 in its third week, earning $1 million and pushing its domestic total to $1.7 million.—*Reuters*

Trai Byers ‘hates’ Michael Jackson’s ‘Man in the Mirror’ song

LOS ANGELES — Actor Trai Byers, best known for playing Andre Lyon in musical drama “Empire,” hates pop legend Michael Jackson’s one of the most popular tracks “Man in the Mirror”.

The 32-year-old “Selma” actor said his father used to listen to the song on loop which made him allergic to it.

“I hate Michael Jackson’s ‘Man in the Mirror’. The lyrics are great, but my father played it for 12 hours straight on a car trip. To this day, that song makes me itch,” Byers said.

However, the actor, who is a action movie junkie, is a huge fan of Denzel Washington and owns the collection of all his movies.

“I have just about every movie Denzel Washington has ever made,” he said.—*PTI*

Actress Amy Adams and husband Darren Le Gallo arrive at the Vanity Fair Oscar Party, on 28 February. PHOTO: REUTERS

Adams’ wedding setting inspired by ‘Forrest Gump’ movie

LONDON — Actress Amy Adams wanted to get married under a tree after watching “Forrest Gump”. The “Man of Steel” star and artist Darren Le Gallo wed in May, 2015 after becoming engaged in 2008, reported Contactmusic.

“I wanted to get married under a tree. That was important to me. I put my guests on hay bales and we all sat in a semi-circle and did the ceremony under a tree.

“I fell in love with the idea of a tree watching Forrest Gump. Jenny (character played by Robin Wright) and Forrest had their tree,” she said.

However, when the news first leaked about the wedding plans, fans feared Adams was so obsessed by the film the whole ceremony was Gump-esque.

“Someone heard that and thought I had a Forrest Gump-themed wedding.”—*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Zayn Malik ‘understands’ pressures of fame

LONDON — Singer Zayn Malik says he has maintained a bit of ‘sanity’ amid all the success and popularity.

The 23-year-old former One Direction member said he does not want to get caught up in the hype of fame, reported Female First.

“I’ve kept a little bit of my sanity. I understand how the media works. Journos gotta earn their money. Paps have got to earn their money,” Zayn said.

The “Pillowtalk” hitmaker said he said he discovered this in the first few months of his career.

“I think so. I think that’s why it came across as being mysterious or detached. I just didn’t want to get caught up in something that wasn’t real.

“You can be the biggest band in the world for a certain time, but that ends. I’m not saying that (I knew at the beginning). But if I did…I’ve got a great brain,” he said.—*PTI*

Historic church burnt down in northern Finland

HELSINKI — A large Lutheran church in Ylivieska, northern Finland, was totally destroyed Saturday night in a fire lit apparently on purpose.

Police detained a local man who was born in the 1980s, and he has initially confessed, police said. There were no fatalities.

Built in 1786, the Ylivieska church represented tall Finnish wood church architecture. It could seat 700 people. Nothing could be salvaged, vicar Timo Maatta told broadcaster Yle.

The church had wall paintings by Swedish artist Thomas Kiempe from the 1780s and Sigurd Wettenhovi-Aspa from 1892.

The fire in Ylivieska culminated in the crash of the tall steeple. Locals spread photos of the scene in social media.

The fire occurred some hours before a scheduled Easter night vigil. After the church was destroyed, some 500 people attended an outside ceremony near the ruins, which was presided over by Oulu Lutheran bishop Samuli Salmi.

Finnish Minister of Education and Culture Sanni Grahn-Laasonen issued a statement deploring the loss of "centuries of local culture."

Church arson is relatively frequent in Finland. In 2006, a young man caused a fire that destroyed the Cathedral of Porvoo, the site of the declaration of Finnish autonomy by Czar Alexander of Russia.

Also on Saturday, a storage depot of a church in Pattijoki, near Ylivieska, caught fire. The cause was not reported.—*Xinhua*

Rowing-Cambridge win Boat Race in difficult conditions

Cambridge celebrate after winning the Men's Race in BNY Mellon 2016 Oxford v Cambridge University Boat Race in River Thames in London on 27 March. PHOTO: REUTERS

LONDON — Favourites Cambridge won the annual University Boat Race in choppy conditions on London's River Thames on Sunday, extending their lead over Oxford in the long-standing series to 82-79.

Their more experienced crew was in front from the start and finished comfortable winners to end a run of three successive defeats.

As usual in an Olympic year, both crews were under strength, with leading rowers preparing for Rio instead, although Cambridge still fielded three Americans, one German-American and one Austrian in their eight.

Their coach Steve Trapmore, who won a gold medal in Great Britain's eight at the 2000 Olympics, said it was an "epic" victory given the conditions.

"I've never felt prouder," he told the BBC.

"We're all sad," Oxford cox Sam Collier said. "We threw everything we had at it but the conditions played a part. It was a tough one." Earlier, Oxford easily won the 71st edition of the women's race, now held over the same course, after the Cambridge boat took on water and almost sank.—*Reuters*

Britain's town hall leaders, teacher's unions line up against 'classroom revolution'

LONDON — The classrooms of thousands of schools across Britain became a new battleground Sunday when civic leaders of the organisation representing local town and city councils attacked the biggest ever education shake-up.

Their attack came less than 24 hours after the country's biggest trade union representing teachers, the NUT, decided to ballot its members on possible strike action over the "classroom revolution."

Saturday also saw Education Secretary Nicky Morgan jeered as she addressed a meeting of the other main teacher's union, the NAS/UWT, that the government would not be reversing its controversial plans that would affect around 16,000 schools.

Since the days of Queen Victoria in the 1800s most junior and high schools have come under the control of local education authorities.

That will change under plans by the Conservative government who want every school to be a self-rule academy by the early 2020s.

The leaders of the National Government Association, the body representing hundreds of local councils, laid down their opposition Sunday in a joint letter to *The Observer* newspaper.

Condemning the plans, the letter was signed by four councillors who lead the main groups on the LGS, David Hodge, leader of the Conservative Group, Nick Forbes, leader of the Labour Group, Marianne Overton, leader of the Independent Group and Gerald Vernon-Jackson, who leads the Liberal Democrat Group.

They say: "The wholesale removal of democratically elected councils from all aspects of local education, to be replaced by unelected and remote civil servants, has rightly raised serious questions around local needs and local accountability."—*Xinhua*

MRTV News Channel in Brief

29-3-2016 (Tuesday)

6:00 am
- Paritta By Venerable Mingun Sayadaw

7:35 am
- Socio Economic Scenes

8:35 am
- Documentary

9:35 am
- MRTV's Youth Programme

10:35 am
- Science and Technology Programme

11:35 am
- Documentary

12:50 pm
- TV Drama Series

1:40 pm
- TV Drama Series

2:00 pm
- Sing & Enjoy

3:35 pm
- Socio Economic Scenes

4:35 pm
- Football Magazine (Ayeyawady United FC)

5:15 pm
- Kyaye Pwint Myaye Yin Khone Than

5:35 pm
- Money Talk Myanmar

6:35 pm
- People's Talks

7:15 pm
- TV Drama Series

8:00 pm
- News / International News/ Weather Report

8:35 pm
- Documentary

9:00 pm
- News
- Yes or No Talk Show
- "6th ASEAN Quiz" (Part-2)
- TV Drama Series

Note / Hourly News Bulletins (Local + International)

mitv Myanmar International

(29-3-2016 07:00am ~ 30-3-2016 7:00am) MST

Today Fresh

07:03	Am	News
07:26	Am	Insight Myanmar "MNHRC Complaints Mechanism"
07:51	Am	Art Students: Sculpture
08:03	Am	News
08:26	Am	…….Shan Novices To Be……..
08:41	Am	Excavation At Kawhmu
08:50	Am	Licuala Palm Leaf
09:03	Am	News
09:26	Am	Archery Session (from Ramayana Play)
09:47	Am	Today Myanmar: Community Policing
10:03	Am	News
10:26	Am	Daingnak Style
10:42	Am	Development Momentum Of Sittway

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

Prime Time

07:03	Pm	News
07:27	Pm	A Day Out With Sarah (EP-7)
07:52	Pm	Now in Yangon
08:03	Pm	News
08:26	Pm	Discovering Tribes "Gaybar Kayin"
08:48	Pm	Myanmar Leading Lady "Naw Susanna Hla Hla Soe"

(09:00 Pm ~ 11:00 Pm) - Today Repeat (09:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)
(11:00 Pm ~ 03:00 Am) - Monday 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 Entertainment Channel

(29-3-2016, Tuesday)

6:00 pm
- Weather Report
- Music Programme

6:30 pm
- Pyi Thu Ni Ti

6:40 pm
- Music Programme

7:00 pm
- International Drama Series

7:40 pm
- International Drama Series

8:30 pm
- Cartoon Programme "BEN 10 ALIEN FORCE" (Part-21)

9:00 pm
- Music Programme

9:10 pm
- The Stories of The Great Souls (Mar Mar Aye) (Ep-1)

9:50 pm
- International Movie Songs

10:00 pm
- Dances

10:20 pm
- Myanmar Video

From 29-3-2016 (Tuesday) 6:00 Pm
To 30-3-2016 (Wednesday) 6:00 Pm
This schedule will be repeated four times in 24 hours.

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

6th Waning of Tabaung 1377 ME | Tuesday, 29 March, 2016

Romania hold Spain as Casillas equals European record

CLUJ-NAPOCA — Romania held European champions Spain to a 0-0 draw on Sunday in a Euro 2016 warm-up that saw visiting goalkeeper Iker Casillas equal the record for most international caps by a European player.

Casillas's 166th appearance for Spain, over a 16 year span that includes winning the World Cup in South Africa in 2010, took him level with Latvia's Vitalijs Astafjevs in the continent's record books.

The goalkeeper has also not conceded a goal in 710 minutes for Spain but he was forced to make a couple of fine saves to keep the clean sheet.

The stalemate also showed that both teams have work to do in front of goal before the European championship finals in France start in June.

It was Spain's second friendly in four days following their fortuitous 1-1 draw away to Italy in Udinethat ended their run of seven successive wins as well as a run of six successive clean sheets.

David de Gea played in goal for Spain in that match.

The game featured several missed chances with Romania, who have never lost at home to Spain, enjoying decent spells of possession and always looking to counter in numbers.

Spain coach Vicente del Bosque made 10 changes to the side that started against Italy, with centre back Gerard Pique the only survivor and Barcelona midfielder Sergi Roberto making his international debut.

The second-string line-up started well, creating some decent chances, and Romania keeper Ciprian Tatarusanu produced an excellent save to deny Pedro Rodriguez an opener after 10 minutes.

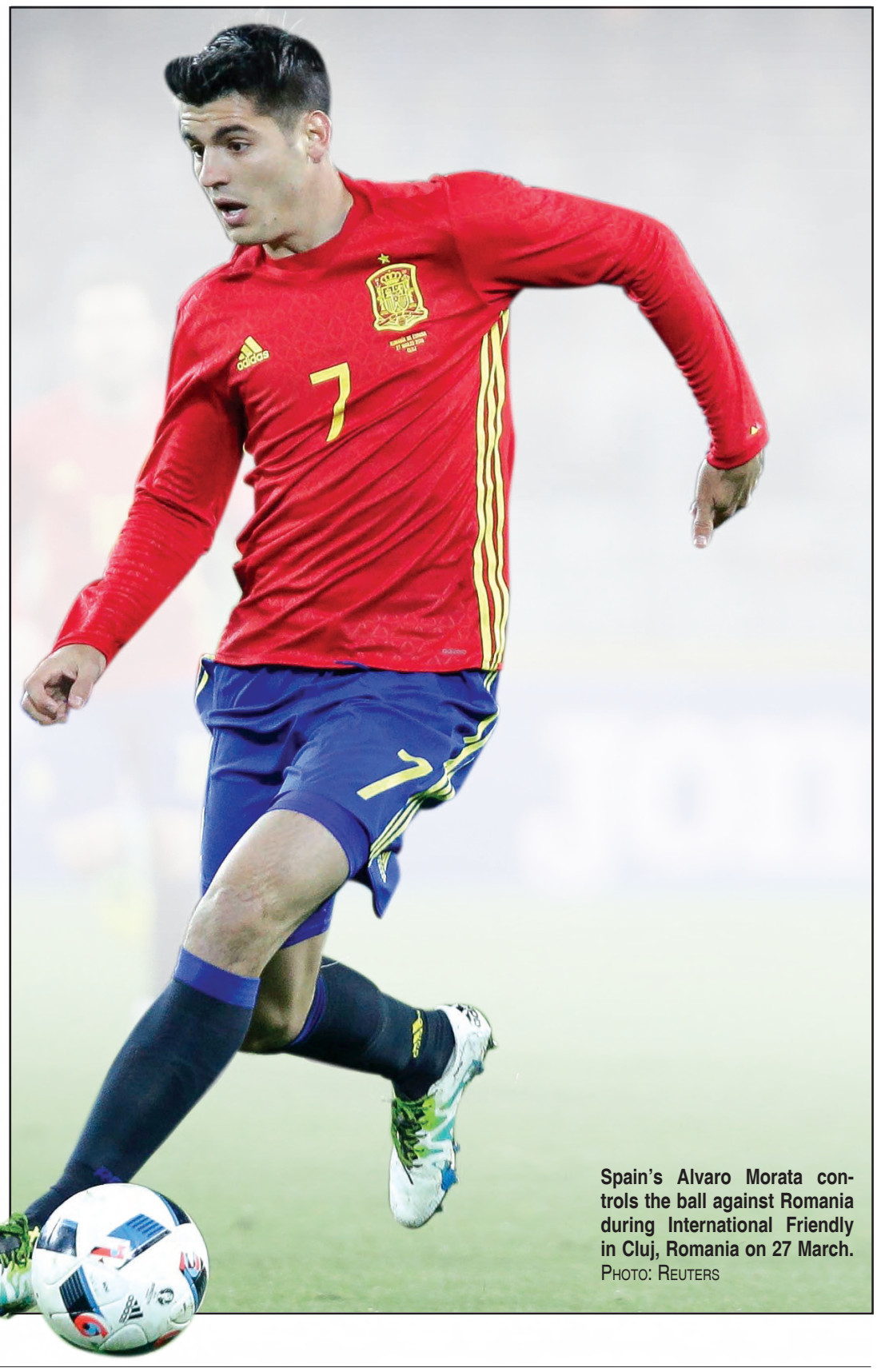
The open, attacking nature of the game continued but it was obvious that Spain needed more quality in the penalty area against a team unbeaten in their 16 previous games.

Nicolae Stanciu, who scored a stunning long-range winner on his international debut in Romania's 1-0 win over Lithuania in another friendly on Thursday, tested Casillas on two occasions with lively Adrian Popa also looking dangerous.

The two coaches made a number of substitutions after the break with the flow fizzling out before Florin Andone beat his marker in the penalty area and smashed a low left-footed shot just wide.

A minute's silence was observed before the game in a tribute to Dutch great and former Barcelona player and coach Johan Cruyff, who died on Thursday aged 68 after a five-month battle with lung cancer.

Romania have been drawn in Group A with hosts France, Switzerland and Albania at Euro 2016. Spain are in Group D alongside Turkey, Croatia and the Czech Republic. —*Reuters*



Spain's Alvaro Morata controls the ball against Romania during International Friendly in Cluj, Romania on 27 March. PHOTO: REUTERS

Djokovic too good for unseeded Sousa in Miami

MIAMI — Five-times champion Novak Djokovic overcame a first-set spill to beat unseeded Joao Sousa of Portugal 6-4, 6-1 in the third round at the Miami Open in Florida on Sunday.

The world number one fell on his left side while hitting a forehand on the baseline and his shot went into the net to allow Sousa to pull even at 4-4. But Djokovic was not injured and he dusted himself off and won eight out of the next nine games in a 77-minute match. The Serb is vying to match Andre Agassi's tournament record of six wins in Key Biscayne. "That first set came down to a few points," said Djokovic after improving to 24-1 in 2016. "After that, it was quite a good performance. In the second set I felt much more comfortable. I was serving very well the entire day. "I'm glad that I managed to finish the match the way I did. Obviously, it gives me confidence for the next one."

Djokovic landed 86 per cent of first serves in the second set and dropped only three points on serve. He will meet Dominic Thiem in the next round after the Austrian defeated Japanese qualifier Yoshihito Nishioka 6-2, 6-2.

Argentine lucky loser Horacio Zeballos, who received a second chance when Roger Federer withdrew because of a stomach virus, continued to make the most of his good fortune. He rebounded to beat Spain's Fernando Verdasco 1-6, 6-4, 7-6(4).—*Reuters*

Ibrahimovic confirms Premier League interest

STOCKHOLM — Sweden captain Zlatan Ibrahimovic hinted on Sunday at a move to the Premier League and promised big things to come in his career.

Speaking to reporters after a training session at the Friends Arena, where Sweden face the Czech Republic in a friendly on Tuesday, the 34-year-old was open about his future after Paris St Germain.

"I've had four fantastic years with them," he said, adding that there were no ongoing talks with the French champions about an extension to a contract that expires at the end of the season. "The relationship I have with them is only positive. They have done everything they could for me and my family."

Available on a free transfer and linked to Manchester United, Ibrahimovic said there had been interest from Premier League clubs. "Yes, there is an interest, I can confirm that. We have to see where it leads. When the moment comes, when all the cards are on the table, that's when I have to go through what I want, and then we'll see who wants it more," he said.

"It's like a marriage. Two parties have to want it, not one or the other. Each side needs to want it as much as the other."

Having already secured the French title, PSG face Manchester City in the quarter-finals of the Champions League. After the club season finishes. the striker's attention will turn to leading Sweden at the Euro 2016 finals in France. "A lot of big things will happen this summer. Have a little patience and you will have things to write about. The future looks very good," said Ibrahimovic.

The Swede had been linked to a move to Major League Soccer earlier in the season but his scintillating form has opened up other possibilities, including the possibility of playing for Sweden at the Rio Olympics in August as an over-age player.

He has scored 35 goals in 40 games for PSG so far this season, and scored three of Sweden's four goals in a 4-2 aggregate win over nordic neighbours Denmark that saw his side secure their spot at Euro 2016. "If I'd had a bad season I wouldn't have had the options I have today," he said. "Now it's the opposite and I have a lot of options. It's looking good; the Euros, after the Euros. Then we have the Olympics too." —*Reuters*

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