

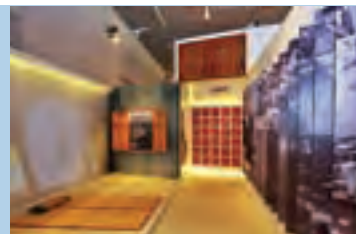
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HOUSING SECTOR SLUMPS

Entrepreneurs call for efforts to resuscitate sluggish property market



A new housing in Yangon is ready to welcome customers. PHOTO: SAW THEIN WIN

VICE Chairman U Ko Ko Htwe of the Myanmar Construction Entrepreneurs Association (MCEA) has called for the convergence of a five-party meeting to discuss the resuscitation of what is currently a sluggish property market scene.

The government, parliament,

entrepreneurs, buyers and sellers should meet at one place together in order to pool ideas to find a proper solution to the issue at hand, he said.

The country's housing market reached its high water mark between 2011 and 2014 but is now at almost at a complete standstill

despite recent legislation opening the rental and ownership market up to foreign investment.

Economist Dr Maung Aung stressed the importance of cooperation between enterprises within the industry to try to gain the power to better grasp economic opportunities and expand the vi-

ability and attractiveness of the sector.

Currently, the cost of condominiums and purpose-built affordable housing is beyond the reach of many low-income families who lack capital or do not meet the requirements for a housing loan.—Ko Moe

CTUM demands Govt include labour minister in privatisation commission

THE Confederation of Trade Unions Myanmar has demanded the government include governmental labour representatives in the government's Privatisation Commission.

The statement of the CTUM, released yesterday, said that the Union minister and representatives from the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population should be included in the commission in order to adopt policies which can lead the country's sustainable economic development and to prevent labour disputes between employers and employees, saying that the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security of the previous government played a crucial role in settling labour disputes arising from the privatisation process during their tenure.

The statement pointed out that advantages and disadvantages of privatisation fall mainly on the employers, employees and their families while it is the ministry that is concerned with labour has to settle any ill consequences of privatisation.

The Privatisation Commission, formed by the government and announced on Wednesday, is led by the Vice-President -1 with 11 Union ministers, none of whom are from the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population.—GNLM

All-round Yangon Development Project to be biggest challenge: YGN Chief Minister

THE project for an all-round development of the City of Yangon will become the greatest challenge to the new Yangon regional government, said Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein on Thursday at a meeting held at City Hall between the Yangon City Development Committee and the Renaissance Institute.

In attempts to revitalise the

city of Yangon, there were many cases of not meeting (quality) standard goals, which can be attributed to lack of accountability. As a result, the city is being faced with the overflowing of the drainage canals, which are blocked by litter thrown away by careless citizens.

The tax payers will not be satisfied with a government

which allows the people live in the midst of a garbage dump, added Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein.

Certain buildings are not in accord with the characteristics of a modern metropolitan city and thus they are in need of repairing and maintenance, it was said at the meeting. In regard to the drawing up of a master plan for the

city development project, it was decided that the people should be allowed to participate in the process in addition to seeking for ideas and plans from engineers and architects.

The chief minister went on to say that the project should be drawn up with the participation of people's representatives, legal experts, public administrators

and experts with international experience.

According to the master plan of the Japanese International Cooperation Agency, there are three phases: Phase 1 is concerned with downtown area whereas Phase 2 and Phase 3 are related to the outskirts and satellite towns, said DrMaungAung, an economist.—*ThiThi Min*

MPF moves to combat water scarcity in rural areas



Policemen seen distributing water to the locals. PHOTO: POLICE INFORMATION UNIT

THE Myanmar Police Force reports that it has been exerting great efforts to combat the drought currently gripping certain regions of the country, supplying water to affected peoples suffering drinking and bathing water scarcity.

Service personnel from police stations in Paung and Bilin

townships in Mon State began distributing water to drought affected areas in the two townships on 24 April. So far, more than 252,346 gallons of water has been delivered to people in those townships, according to the local police force.

Meanwhile, members of

the police force in Toungoo Township distributed water to two villages with the use of a 3,200-gallon water bowser on Friday.

More than 500 people from the two villages are suffering from water scarcity since mid-April. — *Police Information Unit*

Mon State cement factory to be powered by coal

A REPRESENTATIVE of the Mawlamyine Cement Ltd (MCL) cement factory, located in Mon State's Kyaikmaraw Township, said coal will be used to power the factory in a bid to mitigate high expenses.

Thawan Mapongpeng, the human resources manager of the MCL factory, has made it known that the cement factory will commence operations this June, requiring 40 megawatts of electricity to power the factory.

The Thai national said the company's contract signed with the Myanmar Investment Commission stipulates permission for the company to use coal to fulfil the factory's electricity needs.

"There's a lot of investment in diesel and gas, but the majority

of large-scale factories around the world use coal. The usage of coal in our factory will only allow for a meagre mega-wattage to be obtained, and such a negligible wattage will not negatively impact the environment," he said.

Local residents did not object to the construction of the MCL factory, but they do oppose the use of coal as the main fuel to power the factory, sending a formal letter of objection to the Mon State government, members of the Mon State Hluttaw and other relevant government departments on 25 April 2016. "The company told us local residents at the end of last year that the factory would be powered by coal.

There's no way we can accept the use of coal. We also stat-

ed our demands to the authorities. We've called for an end to the use of coal," said U Naing Myint, a resident of Katonesi Village in Kyaikmaraw Township.

MCL has announced that it will allow local residents to visit and observe the factory once it begins its operations. The company will also explain how advanced technical equipment to be used in the factory will mitigate the negative impact of coal usage on the environment.

The MCL factory was built with a \$400-million investment, while it is known that approximately 10,000 tonnes of coal have recently been stored at the factory in preparation for its use in providing electricity to run the facility. — *Myitmakha News Agency*

Police ready to take action against cybercrime offenders

THE Myanmar Police Force is inviting social media users to inform the authorities when they believe they have found or are the victim of internet-related crimes and scams with strong evidence such as electronic records.

In cooperation with technicians, cybercrime police are putting more effort into identifying and removing fake Facebook accounts, used sometimes to scam or otherwise solicit regular users.

Members of the public with

concerns or tip-offs may dial 067 407 158, the number of the MPF's technology department or their respective township law court or police station if they have evidence to back up allegations of online crime and solicitation. — *Thura Phyoo*

Campaign aims to promote awareness of breast cancer among local women

A PUBLIC health campaign will be organised by the non-profit Shwe Yaung Hnin Si Cancer Foundation with the aim of promoting awareness of the symptoms and effects of breast cancer.

The event will be held on 15 May at the University of Nursing in Yangon with organisers planning to offer seminars delivered by oncologists in conjunction with free breast self-examination training lessons.

"Breast and ovarian cancers are the most common types of cancer found to affect Myanmar women. Lung and colon cancers are most prevalent among men," said the foundation's General Secretary Dr Moe Aung Kyaw Naing at a health seminar.

He continued to say, "Lifestyle-related risk factors, such as excessive levels of drinking and smoking, explain why these cancers are more prevalent."

Doctors say women should

perform a breast self-examination once every month. Women over the age of 40 should have a mammogram (breast x-ray) every two years.

The NPO also established a day care chemotherapy centre in downtown Yangon to provide free cancer treatment to patients in need, attended to by foundation oncologists.

The centre will be opened three days a week and 2 hours per day, offering a wide range of services including breast self-examination lessons and guides on the physical examination of breasts, oral cancer screening and advice on other cancers screening.

Since its establishment in 2013, the foundation has been extending a helping hand to cancer patients through its wide range of cancer prevention activities, planning to establish a cancer treatment hospital in future. — *Myanmar News Agency*

HORECA Bizmatch fair aims to set business links between Myanmar and Thailand



The HORECA Bizmatch fair being seen. PHOTO: SOE WIN (MLA)

THE 3rd HORECA Bizmatch fair is scheduled to take place in both of the major Myanmar commercial cities, Yangon and Mandalay, this month, an organiser said, with the aim of promoting more business opportunities between Myanmar and Thailand.

The event will run on 12 May at the Sedona Hotel in Mandalay and on 13 May at Chatrium Hotel in Yangon. The event is designed to showcase Thailand's quality products including food and beverages, construction materials and domestic goods from 20 top Thai companies including online

service providers.

The major aim of the event is to promote hotel services in Myanmar. The business matching event is hoped to be an opportunity for Thai business entrepreneurs in the hotel supply chain to meet with hotel owners and executives in Myanmar.

This is the third time Thai businessmen have held the fair since 2014. The first event attracted 300 local companies. The number of visitors increased to over 450 at its second event in April of last year. The organiser expects that over 1,000 companies will attend the next event. — *Soe Win (MLA)*

Regional-based tourism earmarked for southern Myanmar villages



A village in Myeik Archipelago in southern Myanmar. PHOTO: BURMA BOATING.COM

ELEVEN villages from Myanmar's southern coastal region of Tanintharyi will conduct regional based tourism enterprises, according to the office of the Department of Hotels and Tourism.

The project, which has currently been submitted to union level government, will be implemented during the current 2016-17 fiscal year, it is known.

"Regional-based tourism is like a type of foreign investment. But, it must be conducted by local residents as it plays on regional development. It's to allow for residents to become self-reliant. The Department of Hotels and Tourism will oversee the whole project," said U Naing Win, director of the Department of Hotels and Tourism for Tanintharyi Region.

Traditional ethnic housing

will be built in the eleven villages to accommodate tourists, while programs will be provided on traditional food, handicrafts and ethnic lifestyle and the environment which tourists will be able to study. There will be enterprises run by local residents themselves.

"Youth of the local communities will be required to attend hotel service hospitality trainings, and they need to have attended school up until at least fifth grade.

This initiative will also require guides who can explain the local region in detail. Tourism entrepreneurs will need to work together with local residents.

Any profits made will of course be split fifty-fifty between entrepreneurs and those local residents," continued U Naing Win.

It is known that some of the

eleven villages, selected for implementation of the aforementioned project, are located within areas still controlled by ethnic armed groups, while construction of at least four bedrooms will be included within traditional ethnic housing.

It is aimed that the end of this year will see the successful completion of the project of one of the villages which is located in the Dawei district of the region.

The villages that will provide region-based tourism are located in Dawei district: San Hlan, Nyaw Pyin, Metta and Hsinphyutaing; Myeik district: Uyinthaungkan, Donenyaungmaing, Donekamarkyaung, Dahun; and Kawthaung district: Makyonega, Nyaungwi and Gyalan.—Myit-makha News Agency

Foreign aid agencies to help Mandalay improve water treatment systems

THE Mandalay City Development Committee has entered into an agreement with a number of foreign financial institutions to receive grants and loans to go towards the improvement of the city's running water and wastewater treatment systems according to committee member U Tun Kyi.

The French Development Agency has offered a €40 million loan and an €8m grant, while the Asian Development Bank has promised a US\$60m loan and a \$4m grant. The Ja-

pan International Cooperation Agency will provide 2,555 million yen.

U Tun Kyi expects the contracts to be signed later this month.

The projects includes improvements to the treatment systems of water from the Ayeyawady river for about one million residents, allowing them to access potable water in addition to the treatment of wastewater and the re-channeling of water back into the river.—Aung Thant Khaing

Two teenagers charged with vandalism



The train coaches being painted graffiti. PHOTO: MNA

TWO teenagers have been arrested for acts of vandalism they purportedly committed on Wednesday and Thursday, according to Yangon railroad police.

ZweHtetAung and Phyo Hein Kyaw, both university students and 18 years of age are charged with spraying the sides of locomotives parked at Yangon Station with colour paint on

Wednesday.

U Tun Nwe, general manager, reported the case to the police, estimating the cost of damage at K1 million (US\$860). On Thursday local police caught the adolescents with five cans of spray paint.

The Yangon railroad police station has filed vandalism charges against them.—Myanmar News Agency

18-member armed group returns to legal fold

AN 18-member armed group led by Naing Mon Chan who were previously active in the border region of Tanintharyi Region and Mon State returned to the legal-fold surrenderring their weapons to local authorities on Friday.

The group was welcomed by the Deputy Commander of Coastal Region Command in Kinpunchaung Village, Kaleinaung Township.

The group handed over 12 small arms, 10 hand grenades, 764 rounds of ammunition and 12 magazines they had brought with them to the deputy commander.

The Regional Government along with Coastal Region Command has provided food, clothing and cash to the group members and is making plans for their resettlement.—Myawady



Arm being handed over to army. PHOTO: MYANWADY

Mingala market reconstruction remains undecided: MCDC

THE reconstruction of the Mingala market at the corner of 73 and 30 Streets in Mandalay remains undecided although the findings of the inspection team have recently been submitted concerning the structural integrity of the market to the Ministry of Construction, according to the Mandalay City Development Committee.

"The committee will meet to make their final decision when the report comes back from the

ministry," said MCDC's seventh member U Khin Maung Tint.

Mandalay is located in a seismic zone, an important consideration in the report. An MCDC official citing the findings said that it would be better to reconstruct than repair the damaged building.

The market suffered a large fire on 22 March with a loss of 297 of 550 rooms, including 28 housing apartments.—Aung Thant Khaing

The birds graze around Mone Taing dam

THERE are many birds grazing around the Mone Taing dam near Mone Taing village, in Meiktila township, Mandalay because they are safer there having no fear for bird hunters.

A local said that there are many a bird feeding around the Mone Taing dam. The birds are grazing around the dam for all seasons without flying away. At first, there were only a few birds

feeding around the dam for fear of the bird hunters.

In winter, there arrive migratory birds for hibernation in addition to the bird native of Mone Taing— *Chan Thar (Meiktila)*



The birds been seen grazing around Mone Taing dam. PHOTO: CHAN THAR (MEIKTILA)

Nearly 80 bridges to be renovated with foreign loans in 2016



One of the bridges to be renovated with foreign loans in 2016.

PHOTO: SOE MOE

NEARLY 80 bridges will be renovated or built anew with foreign loans in 2016, according to the Ministry of Construction.

“Now, we are planning to renovate or build new bridges to ensure smooth transportation with the help of foreign aid and loans,” a ministry representative said.

Some bridges have been

either renovated or built anew with the help of loans from Thailand, India, Japan and South Korea. The Japan International Cooperation Agency provides the most funding for the renovation of bridges in Myanmar. As Myanmar is a hub for transportation, the country needs to renovate or build new bridges, which are parts of the Asian Highway.—*Soe Moe*

Crime NEWS

Police surgeon and two sons sentenced to death for murder of wife's paramour

ON 1 May the Phetchaburi Region Court (Thailand) sentenced a former police surgeon and his two sons to death after they were found guilty of murder. The case reportedly involved a Myanmar employee.

The younger of the sons, Mr. Akara, was a juvenile at the time of murder and so his sentence was commuted from death to 25 years and three months imprisonment.

The case occurred in 2012 when Dr. Suphat shot dead a Myanmar domestic worker in a fit of rage over the discovery that the victim had been engaging in an extramarital affair with his wife. Two of the doctor's former employees (also Myanmar mi-



The former police surgeon.

grants) appeared before the court as witnesses claiming they saw the doctor and his sons kill the

victim before burying the body. — *Kyaw Soe (Kawthaung-IPRD)*

Overheated refrigerator safeguard causes fire

A FIRE started by an overheated refrigerator on Zin Yaw Road, Kwin Yat Ward, Mawlamyine, Mon State, on 3 May.

The accident happened around midnight at the house of

U Myo Naing due to an electric short-circuiting caused by an overheated refrigerator safeguard. The fire quickly got out of control and burned the two houses.

The fire was brought under control within an hour by firefighters with the help of neighbours.

The police have taken action against the homeowner.—200

Vehicle crashes into motorcycle on Yangon- Mandalay highway

A MOTORCYCLE was side-swiped by a car between mileposts 100/7 and 101/0, on the Yangon- Mandalay highway at about 9:00 am on Friday, it has been learned.

According to an investigation, a vehicle headed for Nay Pyi Taw from Yangon being driven by one Ko Zin Myo Thaw, 39, collided with the motorcycle

which was being driven by one U Maung Ko from Kyaukdaga. The accident occurred when the former driver lost control.

The accident seriously injured U Maung Ko who is currently receiving medical treatment at the Myochaung highway clinic. The responsible driver has been charged by police.— *Khin Ko (Kyaukdaga)*



Highway Police helping U Maung Ko to take to hospital.

PHOTO: KHIN KO (KYAUKDAGA)

Brushing aside objections, Nobel laureates visit Pyongyang

BEIJING — A group of Nobel laureates visited sanctions-bound North Korea over the last week despite objections from South Korea, saying they wanted to extend an olive branch by bringing non-political, academic diplomacy to the isolated nuclear-armed state.

North Korea is largely cut off from the outside world due to sweeping international sanctions imposed on it for its controversial nuclear programme. The country tested its fourth nuclear device in January.

The government, fearful of foreign influences, also keeps a tight grip on what its people know about the outside world and their interactions with foreigners.

The three laureates — Aaron Ciechanover, Finn Kydland and Richard Roberts — arrived on 29 April for a programme covering mainly academic exchanges at elite North Korean universities in Pyongyang, under the auspices of the Vienna-based International Peace Foundation.

Uwe Morawetz, the



Workers' Party of Korea (WPK) flags decorate an intersection as women cross the street in central Pyongyang, North Korea, on 7 May. PHOTO: REUTERS

foundation's founding chairman, told reporters in Beijing after returning from Pyongyang, that before going he had met with South Korea's ambassador in Bangkok, where the group have their Asian office.

"We have been asked by the South Korean ambassador to postpone our visit until after the party congress, but we have not (been) asked to cancel the visit," Morawetz said, referring to the first congress

of North Korea's ruling Workers' Party in 36 years, which opened on Friday.

"The problem was simply that the Nobel laureates are very busy people and we cannot just switch an event that has been

planned for two-and-a-half years to another date this year," he added.

"So we made clear that we will go ahead with the visit but we have never been contacted by the US government."

While on this trip they did not meet with senior North Korean politicians, Morawetz said he had previously met with titular head of state Kim Jong Nam, so he knew it had support at the highest levels.

The group were there to discuss medical and economic fields, not nuclear ones, Morawetz said.

Ciechanover, who won a Nobel prize for chemistry in 2004, said he was a doctor and so was not asked about anything remotely related to the nuclear issue.

"We didn't come to criticise them, we didn't come to ask about the meaning of democracy in their eyes," he said. "We really came to converse and to exchange dialogue with students."

Roberts, a 1993 Nobel laureate for medicine, said he had invited one of the students he met to spend time at his US laboratory.

"Maybe the US government just needs prodding," he said, of the chances he could actually get a North Korean student to the United States.—Reuters

GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Chief Executive Officer - Nakagawa Kiyoshi
ceo@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Chief Editor - Khin Maung Aye
ce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Deputy Chief Editor - Aye Min Soe
dce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Chief Reporter - Ye Myint
chiefreporter@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Consultant Editors

Jacob Goldberg
counsultanteditor1@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Alec Wilmot
counsultanteditor2@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Editors

Ye Htut Tin
editor1@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Kyaw Thura,
editor2@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

International news

Tun Tun Naing
intlnews@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Reporters

Khaing Thanda Lwin
reporter1@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Tun Aung Kyaw
reporter2@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Translators

Hay Mar Tin Win
translator@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Proof reader

Nwe Nwe Tun

Computer Team

Tun Zaw, Thein Ngwe, Zaw Zaw Aung, Ye Naing Soe, Nyi Zaw Moe, Hnin Pwint, Kay Khaing Win, Sanda Hnin, Zu Zin Hnin

Circulation & Advertising

San Lwin (+95) (01) 8604532

Ads and subscription enquiries:

subscription@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

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Opponents try to head off maverick mayor in final rallies for Philippine presidency

MANILA — Philippine election hopefuls campaigned for a final day on Saturday amid the drama of a late intervention by the country's outgoing leader to try to block maverick mayor Rodrigo Duterte from winning the presidency.

President Benigno Aquino caused a stir on Friday with a call for candidates to collaborate against Duterte in a last-ditch move to stop the "Trump of the East" from converting his runaway popularity into victory in Monday's vote.

Philippine politics is no stranger to controversial characters and the fire-brand Duterte is one of its most divisive, alarming opponents with his advocacy of extrajudicial killings as a deterrent against rampant crime and illegal drugs.

There were no signs on Saturday of Aquino's idea taking hold. Some experts said it could backfire on his chosen successor, Manuel Roxas.

Roxas invited rival Grace Poe for talks aimed



Presidential candidate Rodrigo "Digong" Duterte wipes perspiration on his face beside an aide during election campaigning in Malabon, Metro Manila in the Philippines on 27 April 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

at derailing Duterte, who has a double-digit lead in the latest opinion polls, but met a resounding "no". Vice-President Jejomar Binay's team described Aquino's call as "hollow".

Political analyst Prospero de Vera said the government had seen the writing on the wall for its candidate and it needed to change tack.

"This is all part of the administration's messaging to project that Manuel Roxas has the momentum," he said.

"They need these dra-

matics to prevent allies in the provinces from jumping ship," de Vera said.

The five candidates have major rallies planned later on Saturday, the final day allowed for campaigning.

Duterte was a clear leader in final opinion polling with a lead of 11 points over Poe, with Roxas close behind in third.

Duterte, 71, is the alternative candidate who has lit up the race with his incendiary rhetoric and image as a loose cannon. Experts say his recent surge,

and Poe's popularity, represents public disenchantment with Aquino's administration.

That sentiment has perplexed investors and some Western governments given the robust performance of the Philippine economy under Aquino. However, criticism by opponents that it has not translated into jobs or better livelihoods for millions of poor appears to be resonating.

Poe's pro-investment, anti-poverty platform is striking a chord, however, as is Duterte's promises of a war on crime and his profanity-packed speeches during a campaign that bears the emblem of a clenched fist.

Duterte's campaign manager, Leoncio Evasco Jr, described Aquino's call for a united front against the Davao city mayor as desperate. "It also further unmasks the true character of the Aquino regime — one that in the face of debacle will abandon ship and run like a headless chicken," Evasco said in a statement.—Reuters

US rights official travels to Viet Nam ahead of Obama visit

WASHINGTON — The State Department's most senior human rights diplomat, Tom Malinowski, will visit Viet Nam next week to urge it to make more progress on human rights, the department said on Friday.

Meetings by Malinowski, assistant secretary of state for democracy, human rights and labour, on 9 and 10 May will pave the way for a visit to Viet Nam by President Barack Obama later this month, the third US president to travel to the southeast Asian nation since Bill Clinton in 2000.

"Among other things, he will urge Viet Nam to release political prisoners without condition and encourage further reforms that will help to make Viet Nam's laws consistent with its international human rights obligations," the State Department said in announcing

Malinowski's visit. The US eased an arms embargo against its former enemy in 2014 amid a warming of relations saying human rights conditions had improved somewhat. But concerns remain over the communist government's heavy-handedness towards political opponents and treatment of workers.

The country has jailed dissidents, bloggers and religious leaders in recent years, holding them for long periods without access to family or legal counsel and often subject to torture or other mistreatment, according to Human Rights Watch.

Relations, however, have improved over maritime security and Viet Nam is a member of the 12-nation Trans-Pacific Partnership trade pact that includes countries such as Japan and Australia.—*Reuters*

Malaysia votes in crucial local elections

KUALA LUMPUR — Voters in Malaysia's eastern Sarawak state cast their ballots on Saturday in what might be a weathervane of the next general election.

More than 1 million eligible will vote in 1754 polling stations across the state on North Borneo.

The ruling coalition Barisan Nasional (BN) is widely expected to retain the state government. Its leaders have targeted 70 out of the total 82 seats in the state legislation. Its candidates have already won two seats uncontested. BN captured 55 of the 71 seats in the last state elections in 2011. Leaders from both the ruling coalition, led by Prime Minister Najib Razak, as well as oppositions have actively campaigned in Sarawak ahead of the polling day.

However, the election was overshadowed following a heli-

copter carrying senior government officials went missing on Thursday. A deputy minister was confirmed killed in the accident.

Sarawak retained a degree of autonomy since it joined Malaysia in 1963 and is the only state that holds its state legislative elections separately from the general election. The candidates nominated by the ruling coalition are all from indigenous parties.

It is Malaysia's biggest state and rich in natural resources, but lagged behind in development comparing to the Malaysia Peninsula.

Together with the state of Sabah, the two Malaysian states on North Borneo helped the ruling coalition to retain power in the 2013 general election. It may play an even more crucial role in the next general election due in 2018.—*Xinhua*

Images show North Korea may be preparing fifth nuclear test — think tank



The Punggye-ri test site in North Korea is seen in an image from Airbus Defense and Space and 38 North taken on 5 May 2016 and released on 6 May 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

WASHINGTON — North Korea may be preparing to carry out a fifth nuclear test in the near future judging by commercial satellite images of the country's nuclear test site taken on 5 May, a US think tank said on Friday.

The 38 North website, run by Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies, said the images showed vehicle movement at the site "not often seen there except during preparations for a test."

There has been intense speculation that communist North Korea may conduct its fifth test

of a nuclear device during a congress of the ruling Workers' Party now underway.

The analysis from 38 North said the imagery of the Punggye-ri test site "suggests that Pyongyang may be preparing for a nuclear test in the near future."

It said that while the images continued to show low levels of activity, the vehicles had been spotted at what was believed to be the Command Center, some 6 km (almost four miles) south of the main site.

A senior US official, asked about the 38 North report, re-

peated a call for North Korea "to refrain from actions and rhetoric that further destabilise the region" and stick to past commitments to denuclearize.

"Our commitment to the defence of our allies, including the Republic of Korea and Japan, in the face of these threats, remains ironclad," he added. "We are prepared to defend ourselves and our allies from any attack or provocation."

The 38 North website reported last month that satellite images showed North Korea may have resumed tunnelling at Punggye-ri, activity similar to that seen before the country's most recent nuclear test in January.

The website reported in early December that satellite photographs from the two previous months indicated North Korea was digging a new tunnel for nuclear testing.

North Korea has vowed to conduct more nuclear testing in spite of stepped-up international sanctions after its previous test and a subsequent space rocket launch seen as a cover for development of its intercontinental ballistic missile programme.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un on Friday hailed the recent nuclear test and launch of a satellite as he opened the first congress of the country's ruling Workers' Party in 36 years.—*Reuters*

China takes first step in \$1 billion pledge to UN to fund peace, development

UNITED NATIONS — China signed an agreement with the United Nations on Friday to pay \$20 million (14 million pounds) annually for a decade to help fund peace, security and development activities, taking the first step in fulfilling a \$1 billion (693 million pounds) pledge made by President Xi Jinping.

The money will be paid into a newly established UN Peace

and Development Trust Fund, and China's contribution will be split evenly between supporting peace and security, and implementing a 2030 agenda for sustainable development. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon was "extremely appreciative of this generous contribution to the United Nations," his spokesman Stephane Dujarric told reporters. "This is a follow-up of Chi-

nese President Xi Jinping's announcement last September of China's contribution to a strong United Nations," Dujarric said.

During the annual gathering of world leaders at the United Nations in September last year, Xi said China would establish "a 10-year, \$1 billion China-UN peace and development fund to support the UN's work."—*Reuters*

Japan minister blasts Trump's view of bilateral security ties

WASHINGTON — A veteran member of Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's Cabinet criticised US presidential candidate Donald Trump on Friday for lacking a basic understanding of the two nations' bilateral security alliance in the postwar era.

"There are growing concerns in Japan about possible future changes to the alliance that have been proposed by a leading candidate" of the US presidential election, Shigeru

Ishiba, minister in charge of revitalising local economies, said at a think tank event in Washington.

Ishiba did not say to whom he was referring, but the businessman Trump has baffled Japanese officials by proposing pulling the US military out of Japan unless the ally pays all the costs of maintaining the American forces, suggesting that Japan could instead be allowed to go nuclear for self-defence.

"Regardless of who becomes the next president, I believe the right (security) policy will be formulated if the president understands the nature of the alliance and the international environment surrounding us," Ishiba, a former defence minister, said at the event.

Should Japan and South Korea choose to arm themselves with nuclear weapons, it would fuel regional instability and "not benefit the United States,"

Ishiba said.

In a prepared text for his address, Ishiba said, "That candidate's views clearly reflect his ignorance of the true nature of the alliance and I am sure that the views will inevitably be corrected."

Trump is regarded as the presumptive presidential nominee on the Republican side, as all of the party's other contenders have pulled out of the race.—*Kyodo News*



Shigeru Ishiba, the Japanese minister in charge of revitalising local economies, speaks at a think tank event in Washington on 6 May. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

Obama urges scrutiny of Trump's record — 'This is not entertainment'

WASHINGTON — US President Barack Obama urged the US media and American public on Friday to examine the "long record" of Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump and not get distracted by the "spectacle and the circus" aspect of the 2016 election campaign.

The Democratic president delivered an indirect swipe at the flamboyant, combative Republican primary campaign run by Trump, a former reality television star, and how media have covered it.

"It's important for us to take seriously the statements he's made in the past," Obama said in remarks to reporters. "I just want to emphasize the degree to which we are in serious times and this is a

really serious job.

"This is not entertainment. This is not a reality show. This is a contest for the presidency of the United States."

He said Trump has a long record in public life and that should be closely examined, as should the statements and policy positions of all the candidates.

"If they take a position on international issues that could threaten war or has the potential of upending our critical relationships with other countries, or would potentially break the financial system — that needs to be reported on," Obama said.

Trump received criticism and angered allies with his comments on rethinking NATO and suggesting Japan and South Korea should

consider getting nuclear weapons to defend themselves. He is perceived abroad as pursuing isolationist policies at odds with the current US role in the world. Obama said he would be looking to see the American people are adequately informed about where candidates to replace him in the White House stand on issues, what they believe and whether their budget numbers add up.

"What I'm concerned about is the degree to which reporting and information starts emphasizing the spectacle and the circus. Because that's not something we can afford," Obama said. "The American people, they've got good judgment, they've got good instincts — as long as they get good information."—*Reuters*

Greeks strike as new reforms loom on tax and pensions



Members of the communist-affiliated PAME union shout slogans during a 48-hour general strike against tax and pension reforms in Athens, Greece, on 6 May 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

ATHENS — Greeks went on a 48-hour nationwide strike on Friday to protest against tax and pension reforms, as Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras appealed to fractious lawmakers to approve the overhaul as part of a multi-billion euro bailout.

Lowering its annual pension bill, one of the most expensive in the euro zone, is a condition for Athens to qualify for a fresh installment of the latest international bailout, worth up to 86 billion euros (67.99 billion pounds), which it agreed a year ago with its EU partners.

The strike left ships docked at port, disrupted public transport and kept civil servants and journalists off the job. Thousands of protesters with the Communist-affiliated group PAME marched be-

fore parliament holding banners that read: "Rise up now!" and "Resist". Saturday's Greek Cup final between league champions Olympiakos Piraeus and AEK Athens was postponed at the request of police, who did not have resources to oversee the game. No new date was announced.

Major labour unions plan protests outside parliament on Sunday, when the reforms are due to be put to the vote.

Tsipras, who is clinging to a slim majority of three seats in the 300-member assembly, appealed to members of his Syriza party to approve the package. Whether Greece signed up to a bailout or not, he said, reform of the pension system was still needed.

"It was a necessity born from the need to make it viable. With-

out this intervention, the pensions system would collapse," he said.

In the meantime, the head of the International Monetary Fund, Christine Lagarde, urged euro zone finance ministers to start talks on Greek debt relief together with discussions on reforms, according to a letter published by the *Financial Times*.

Tsipras has called for debt relief of some form to help Greece as it introduces the reforms.

Athens hopes the measures will help persuade creditors to approve the release of bailout cash. A tranche of more than 5 billion euros is overdue, after talks faltered over the pace of reforms. The Eurogroup of finance ministers is due to meet on Monday to discuss the stalemate and the Greek debt relief call.—*Reuters*

NEWS IN BRIEF

Shots fired on University of Missouri campus: university

MISSOURI — Two gunshots were fired on University of Missouri's flagship campus on Friday though no one was injured, the school said.

Police were investigating the shooting near a plaza on the campus, and were searching for a suspect, the university said.

"There is no indication of a current threat to campus," the school added.

About 35,000 students attend the University of Missouri in Columbia, 125 miles (200 km) west of St. Louis.—*Reuters*

17 Chinese nationals hurt as Hong Kong airline hit by turbulence in central Indonesia

JAKARTA — Seventeen Chinese nationals were injured on Saturday when a Hong Kong Airlines flight hit severe turbulence over Borneo Island after taking off from Bali Island of Indonesia, officials said.

The incident occurred above Banjarmasin city, the capital of South Kalimantan province, about one hour after the Hong Kong-bound flight HX6704 take off from the Bali international airport, forcing it to return to the airport, said Herni Pramuharjo, spokesman of the transport ministry.

"Twelve people were rushed to a hospital, one of whom got very serious injury. Five others were only treated at the health clinic of the airport. All of them (17 people) are Chinese nationals," he told Xinhua via telephone.

One of the injured is a crew of the airline which carried 204 passengers and 12 crews, Pramuharjo said.—*Xinhua*

Turkish soldiers kill five people trying to enter Syria to join Islamic State

ISTANBUL — Turkish soldiers have killed five people in the south-eastern Turkish province of Gaziantep as they were trying to cross into Syria to join Islamic State and have detained five others, the provincial governor's office said on Friday.

Gaziantep borders the Turkish province of Kilis, which has seen repeated rocket attacks from an area of Syria controlled by Islamic State.—*Reuters*

Russia says US-Georgian military exercises could destabilise Caucasus

BERLIN — Russia's Foreign Ministry said on Friday that military exercises by the United States and neighbouring Georgia later this month were a provocative step that could destabilise the Caucasus region. Russia said the exercises were scheduled for 11-26 May and that the United States was indulging the "revanchist desires of Tbilisi".

Russia and Georgia fought a war in 2008 and Russia backs the breakaway regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia on the Russian-Georgian border.—*Reuters*

Germany to help Jordan, Tunisia buy armoured vehicles

Germany plans to give Tunisia and Jordan funds to buy armoured vehicles to help defend their frontiers against Islamic State, *Der Spiegel* magazine reported on Friday.

Berlin will give Amman 25 million euros (19 million pounds) to buy "Marder" armoured personnel carriers, *Spiegel* said without giving sources. Tunisia would get a double-digit million sum.

Jordan neighbours Syria where Islamic State has taken large portions of territory, while the militant group has also doubled its fighters in Libya which borders Tunisia.

Tunisia saw two major attacks by Islamist militants last year. Thirty-eight tourists were killed in an assault on a hotel, three months after 21 were killed by gunmen attacking the Bardo National Museum in the capital Tunis.

The German money comes from a 100 million euro fund to strengthen partner states south of the European Union with crisis prevention, *Der Spiegel* said.

A spokeswoman for the Defence Ministry declined to comment on the report.

She added, however, that a programme to help partner states ensure their security had been in place for years and said countries, including Iraq, Tunisia and Jordan were currently in focus.—*Reuters*

Opinion

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Cultivate a strong sense of common humanity to restore peace

Kyaw Thura

AS the world we live in has turned into a multicultural society, peaceful coexistence has come to the fore to develop a sense of belonging among people from different backgrounds. Building a sense of belonging takes courage and humanity based on knowledge economy.

Scholars have defined knowledge economy as an economy in which growth is dependent on the quantity, quality and accessibility of the available information. They have argued that the key component of a knowledge economy is a greater reliance on intellectual capabilities than on physical inputs and natural resources.

Wars and conflicts are in fact nothing new to the world. Aggressiveness and prejudice are supposed to have been ingrained in human beings from birth. It is interesting to note that people began to wage war against one another following the rise of tribalism. Tribal peoples fought for new territories and food. As is known to all, conflicts always give rise to hostilities. There is every reason to believe that humanitarianism is the highest form of human virtue.

Now that the peace talks in the country have been dragging on for more than five decades, the time has come for all sides to use their intellect to examine whether they are being assertive or aggressive at the negotiation table. It is natural that opinion is divided. However, accepting each other's differences is one thing and agreeing to work on each other's similarities is another. Simply put, acceptance does not necessarily mean agreement. Now is the time for the armed groups involved in the peace process to cultivate a strong sense of common humanity and enjoy a healthy debate over the restoration of peace once and for all.

International cosmetic brands to be showcased in Yangon

THE Cosmobeaute Myanmar 2016 event will be held from 1 June to the 3 June at the Novotel hotel in Yangon. The trade exhibition is a two day event aimed at promoting public awareness and commercial interest in cosmetic products.

"In our country we do not have much knowledge of beauty products. People here tend to not like cosmetics and so tend to look down on the cosmetics industry. At this trade show we have an opportunity to observe international cosmetic products and the technology behind it. This event can explore investment and business op-

portunities in the beauty and spa industry in Myanmar" said Mr. Johnathan, organiser of the event.

The trade show was jointly organised by the Red Event Company from Myanmar and ECMITE Asia Sdn Bhd from Malaysia. The exhibition will showcase brands from 13 different countries such as Malaysia, Viet Nam, Indonesia, Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Korea and Japan and others.

Beauty salons, cosmetic sales companies and SPA businesses have prospered in Myanmar in recent years with beauty training schools being opened across the country.— *Khin Zar Li*

Museum exhibit tells Thais to love their Myanmar neighbours

By Jacob Goldberg

THE people of Thailand are in need of a reality check, and a new exhibit titled Myanmar Up-Close at Bangkok's Museum Siam claims to offer one.

The walk-through exhibit, decorated in red and white—the two colours common to the flags of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and the Kingdom of Thailand—asks visitors what they know about Myanmar and its people.

"Doctors and nurses at big private hospitals, university lecturers, religious leaders, office workers in high-rise buildings, interpreters and billionaires," rattles one section of the exhibit. "Do you have these images of Myanmar people in your head?"

Stereotypes about Myanmar people in Thailand are fuelled by

local media in the Kingdom and by the way the two nations' shared history is taught in Thai schools.

Thai media pay special attention to crimes committed by Burmese migrants, leading many Thais to think of their Burmese neighbours as troublemakers. Last year, this culminated in the controversial conviction of two young Burmese men for the murder of two British tourists in Koh Tao, even in the absence of evidence connecting them to the crime.

Meanwhile, nationalistic Thai governments over the last few decades have filled schools with educational materials cast the Burmese people as an aggressive, imperialist enemy. The 1917 book "Our Wars with the Burmese" by the nationalist Siamese prince Damrong Rajanubhab remains popular today and presents

centuries of war between Burmese and Siamese kings as clashes between the two civilisations.

For Myanmar people, though, the current relationship between the two peoples is necessarily more complex. Myanmar people sometimes refer to Thailand by the name 'Yodaya'—the Burmese translation of Ayutthaya, the Thai kingdom that Burmese rulers sacked repeatedly throughout the second half of the last millennium. Yet, in an age of great reversal of fortunes, the Yodaya of today is home to the largest Burmese diaspora community in the world, with official Thai figures putting the number of Myanmar migrant workers in the Kingdom at around a million, though perhaps a million more live in the Kingdom as refugees or undocumented workers.

At once a perennial rival and a land of promise, Thailand draws

immigrants from Myanmar in a variety of ways, including the promise of higher wages, educational opportunities and greater civil liberties. *Myanmar Up-Close* challenges its visitors to think beyond soundbites and to consider the push and pull factors that bring their westerly neighbours across the border.

One poem on the wall of the exhibit reads:

Dream of freedom and peace from political crises;
Dream of a job in Thailand, and perhaps a chance at being a boss back home one day;
Dream of being true to self in a society that welcomes gender diversity;
Dream of taking care of other Myanmar dreamers;
Dream of finding the dream here in Thailand.

The poem's reference to gen-



Part of the exhibit resembles a songthaew, which transport many Myanmar migrants into Thailand. PHOTO: MUSEUM SIAM

der diversity is not the only one in the exhibit. A lack of tolerance in Myanmar for people of marginalised gender identities as well as sexual orientations is featured in the exhibit as one of the most prominent pull factors drawing Myanmar people to Thailand.

One wall is decorated with dozens of balloons organised in neat rows, with each balloon emblazoned with a quote explaining why one Myanmar person sought to build a new life in Thailand.

"In Myanmar, I couldn't come out that I like men. My mother didn't like it, and people would tease me. Here, I have more freedom, and I can be myself," says Ko Aung.

In addition to explaining the reasons Myanmar people move to Thailand, *Myanmar Up-Close* also recreates the journey across the border.

The entrance to the exhibition is decorated to resemble a songthaew, a common mode of transportation in some parts of Thailand that has also been used by Myanmar migrants to travel to

Thailand since the 1980s.

A wall of the lockers showcases the objects Myanmar people bring with them and incorporate into their new lives in Thailand, including medicine from Myanmar, steel lunchboxes, thanaka wood, football jerseys and Myanmar newspapers.

Another section of the exhibit is called the Guest House, and Myanmar migrants are the guests. An explanation drives home the vision of the future the exhibit aims to create:

"Thailand is comparable to a big house, frequented by guests. Certain stereotypes make us look at them as strangers, despite the fact that we all live in the same house. If we could get to know each other and learn about each other through hopes, dreams and paths to success, we can make new friends. Thailand will become an excellent 'Guest + House', where its residents complete each other's lives."

Myanmar Up-Close will remain on display at Museum Siam until July 31.

MOTHER (3) POEM:

- * Dietary habits and proper sleep
Personal hygiene and life skills to keep
You make us feel better and relaxed
With routines and basics in balance
- * Our temper tantrum, highs and lows
You know when to ignore and when to console
lessening our fear, boosting esteem, you stay in control
And what's right or wrong, you raise us to know
- * From challenges, you never run
To be resilient, from you, we learn
To persevere in the face of adversity
And to withstand life's bumps and spills with dignity
- * Mother—you are really precious
Thinking always of the needs and happiness of us
You nurse, you care and you groom
With tender love, you make our hearts bloom

Aye Phyu

MOTHER (4) POEM:

Mother

- # Your love knows no boundary
For you we're always a priority
Placing at the fore front of your life
You care and nurture us to thrive
- # I have notice these days
You seem at a loss what to do and say
'Becos your kids have become tech-savvy
No family time nor out they play
- # Netizen young and small
Look-down generation as often called
Multitasking and lost in virtual world
Readiness to be of help, gone once and for all
- # Young tech-addicts
With danger of becoming life-misfits
Falling prey to cyber crimes of all sorts
Calls for parental vigilance and close watch
- # We'd be careful, Mother, please rest assured
We won't do anything that'd ruin our future
Don't take it as a reflection of bad parenting
But just as a sign that times are changing

Aye Phyu

Training centers needed to fill skilled job vacancies in industrial zones

INDUSTRIAL zones are currently facing a shortage of skilled workers as most skilled persons have gone abroad for employment purposes, according to industrialists.

It is required that action be taken to fill these vacancies by developing training centre for turning out skilled labourers, said Dr Aung Thein, CEC member of Union of Myanmar Federation of Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Director Daw Yin Yin Aye of CVT Myanmar highlighted the importance of cooperation between departments concerned and private training schools to

open capacity building courses that can produce a skilled workforce for the country's manufacturing sector.

It is imperative to provide pre-employment training to unemployed young men who have completed their university education to gain employment.

It can thereby contribute towards reducing unemployment in the country, added the director. U Tin Hlaing, another CEC member of UMFCCL, said that the federation is planning to hold coordination meetings with the regional government and industrialists to nurture skilled workers for industrial zones.— *Chan Ko*



Red lockers contain items from the daily lives of Myanmar migrants in Thailand, including steel lunch boxes and thanaka. PHOTO: MUSEUM SIAM

Turkish journalists jailed for five years, hours after courthouse attack

ISTANBUL — Two prominent Turkish journalists were sentenced to at least five years in jail for revealing state secrets on Friday, just hours after a gunman tried to shoot one of them outside the courthouse in Istanbul.

Can Dunder, editor-in-chief of the opposition Cumhuriyet newspaper, who was unscathed in the shooting, was given five years and 10 months. Erdem Gul, the newspaper's Ankara bureau chief, was sentenced to five years. They were acquitted of some other charges, including trying to topple the government.

The case, in which President Tayyip Erdogan was named as a complainant, has brought widespread condemnation from global rights groups and increased fears about freedom of the press in Turkey, a NATO member and EU candidate country.

Hours before the verdict was handed down, an assailant attempted to shoot Dunder. In full public view, before a courthouse, the attack marked an alarming development in a country already grappling with bombings by Kurdish insurgents and spillover of violence from neighbouring Syria.

The man shouted "traitor" before firing at least two shots in quick succession. A reporter covering the trial appeared to have



A plain clothes police officer points his gun at an assailant who attempted to shoot prominent Turkish journalist Can Dunder, outside a courthouse in Istanbul, Turkey, on 6 May. PHOTO: REUTERS

been wounded. A Reuters witness said the assailant was detained by police. Before the shooting, he had approached reporters, saying he had been waiting since early morning and hoped Dunder would be found guilty. His motives and background were not immediately clear.

"We experienced two assassi-

nation attempts in two hours: one by firearms, the other by law," Dunder told reporters following the trial. "There will always be concerns that the orders of the highest office played a role in this ruling."

The two journalists are free pending appeal. The court also decided to postpone a hearing on separate charges of links to a terrorist

group until the outcome of a related case. In Washington, the US State Department in a statement voiced concern about the verdicts and called on Turkish authorities to "support an independent and unfettered media, which is an essential element of any democratic, open society."

No one was immediately

available for comment at Erdogan's office after the ruling.

Dunder and Gul had faced up to life in jail on espionage and other charges for publishing footage purporting to show the state intelligence agency taking weapons into Syria in 2014.

Erdogan has acknowledged that the trucks, which were stopped by gendarmerie and police officers en route to the Syrian border in January 2014, belonged to the National Intelligence Organisation and said they were carrying aid to Turkmen battling both Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and Islamic State. He has accused the journalists of undermining Turkey's international reputation and vowed Dunder would "pay a heavy price", raising opposition concerns about the fairness of any trial.

"We say the incident we covered was a crime, not our coverage," Dunder said. "And for that we were confronted by the president. He acted like the prosecutor of this case. He threatened us and made us targets."

Under the ruling AK Party, which was founded by Erdogan, Turkey has seized control of opposition newspapers and broadcasters and cut the satellite feed of a pro-Kurdish channel, accusing them of terrorism-related activities.—Reuters

Syrian government forces try to storm prison after inmates revolt

DAMASCUS — Syrian government forces fired tear gas and live ammunition into Hama prison on Friday as they tried to put down a revolt by its inmates, a monitoring group said, and an opposition source said some prisoners had choked from the fumes.

The prison has been surrounded by government forces since hundreds of prisoners rioted and seized several guards on Monday, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said. Friday's fighting was the second attempt to storm the prison in the western part of the country, the Britain-based group reported. A Syrian opposition official in contact with prisoners said security forces had fired an unidentified gas into the facility, causing 25 cases of suffocation but no deaths.

The official said Syria's main opposition body, the High Negotiations Committee, had informed the United States and the UN's Syria envoy about the situation. The HNC earlier said it held the international community responsible for a "massacre" of inmates it expected government forces to carry out.

The Syrian interior ministry has denied "reports ... about

Hama central prison", but has not elaborated on the issue since Monday.

Syrian insurgent groups, including the powerful Islamist Ahrar al-Sham, threatened to shell all the bases of government forces in Hama province if Damascus did not meet the demands of the inmates.

The prisoners rioted to protest the attempted transfer of some of them to Sednaya military prison, north of Damascus, and because trials had been postponed, the Observatory said. The HNC said they wanted better conditions in jail.

Earlier on Friday, the Observatory said, negotiations had led to the release of dozens of prisoners.

Those held in the jail include political and Islamist prisoners. International rights groups say thousands of detainees are held in Syrian government prisons without charge and many of them are subjected to torture, a claim denied by the authorities.

The Syrian conflict began in 2011 with popular protests against President Bashar al-Assad, and spiralled into civil war after a crackdown by security forces.—Reuters

Security forces shut down Baghdad to prevent Green Zone protests

BAGHDAD — Iraqi security forces ramped up their presence across Baghdad on Friday, blocking most major roads and bridges to keep followers of Shi'ite Muslim cleric Moqtada al-Sadr from reaching the government district they stormed a week earlier.

A Sadr representative meanwhile called on supporters to rally outside local mosques following afternoon prayers, rather than gathering near the heavily fortified Green Zone, a move which could reduce the risk of clashes.

The demonstrations are aimed at pressuring Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi to follow through on months-old promises to replace party-affiliated ministers with independent technocrats as part of an anti-corruption drive.

Iraq has endured months of wrangling over the proposal, with a divided parliament withholding approval amid scuffles and protests. Deep frustration among Iraqis over the deadlock culminated on Sunday in the unprecedented breach of the Green Zone, which houses parliament, government offices and many foreign embassies.

United Nations envoy to Iraq Jan Kubis told the UN Security Council on Friday that the situation remains unpredictable and could unfold in many different directions.

"A business-as-usual ap-



A supporter of Iraqi Shi'ite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr raises his hand as he shouts amongst other people during Friday prayers in Baghdad's Sadr City, on 6 May. PHOTO: REUTERS

proach simply will not be enough for the people. They want genuine change that will improve their lives," Kubis told the Security Council. In his prepared remarks, seen by Reuters, Kubis also said that solutions being discussed to end the political crisis would not meet the demands of the people and therefore demonstrations were likely to continue.

Security officials said on Friday three regiments from an elite police division that has battled Islamic State militants were deployed in and around the Green Zone. On one bridge stretching over the Tigris River, dozens of counter-terrorism forces manned Humvees mounted with machine

guns. They stood behind two consecutive barriers made of 12-foot (3.6 metre) blast walls spanning the bridge. The head of Sadr's political office said large-scale demonstrations had been postponed until Tuesday, when tens of thousands of protesters would be mobilised to rally outside an expected parliament session.

At least four soldiers were killed and seven others wounded on Friday when a suicide car bomber attacked an army checkpoint in the western part of the capital, police sources said. Two bombs in nearby Abu Ghraib killed three people and wounded 13. There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the blasts.—Reuters

CDC defends reporting of E. coli outbreaks linked to Chipotle

CHICAGO — The US Centres for Disease Control and Prevention has pushed back against complaints from Chipotle Mexican Grill that the health agency misinformed the public with its reporting of certain E. coli cases linked to the burrito chain.

The federal regulators' defense of its actions comes as the burrito chain has revamped its food safety strategy to recover from a string of 2015 food safety lapses that have scared away customers and battered the company's formerly high-flying shares.

The CDC, in a letter to a lawyer representing Chipotle, said it believes its website updates on the outbreaks served to protect and inform the public.

The CDC's response, which was posted online this week and dated 15 April, said its updates provided people who may have become sick after eating at Chipotle restaurants with information they might have needed to be diagnosed and treated for E. coli O26, a potentially serious illness.

In a letter to the CDC dated 21 December, Chipotle attorney Bryant Messner said that some of the agency's updates were confusing and unclear and that their release "only acts to create public panic."

That letter followed Chipotle official Mark Crumpacker's description of the CDC's handling of the information as "unusual and even unorthodox" at an investor conference on 8 December.

Crumpacker, the company's chief creative and development officer, told attendees at that event that the CDC's updates on the O26 investigation led to a drumbeat of news stories that made it appear illness was spreading when it was not.

The CDC said on 1 February that two E. coli outbreaks linked to Chipotle, which affected 60 people across 14 states, appeared to be over.

Chipotle, which is revamping its food safety procedures and giving away millions of free burritos in an effort to win back diners, last month posted the first quarterly loss in its history.

Its stock, which hit an all-time high of almost \$750 in August, was trading at around \$434 on Friday. The CDC estimates foodborne illnesses kill 3,000 people and sicken 48 million each year in the United States.—Reuters

Nailed it: scientists describe weird ancient hammerhead reptile

WASHINGTON — It was a creature so outlandish that scientists say it reminds them of the fanciful beasts conjured up by Dr. Seuss. But would the famous children's book author have thought up a marine reptile with a hammerhead snout it used to snack on algae?

Scientists on Friday announced the discovery in southern China of new fossils of a reptile from 242 million years ago called *Atopodentatus* that clarify the nature of this strange crocodile-sized, plant-eating sea-dweller. When the first fossils of *Atopodentatus* were found in 2014, scientists thought, based on its poorly preserved skull, it had a down-turned snout resembling a flamingo's beak with a vertical, zipper-like mouth. But two new fossil specimens, described in research published in the journal *Science Advances*, resolved the matter.

"On a scale of weirdness, I think this is up there with the best. It kind of reminds me of some of the Dr. Seuss creations," National Museums Scotland paleontologist Nicholas Fraser said.

Atopodentatus is the earliest-known herbivorous marine reptile, said paleontologist Olivier Rieppel of the Field Museum in Chicago.

Atopodentatus apparently used chisel-like teeth along the edge of its blunt, hammer-shaped snout to scrape algae off hard underwater surfaces. It then quickly opened its mouth to create suction before closing its jaws to filter the plant material through densely packed and needle-shaped teeth much like baleen whales strain tiny shrimp-like krill from seawater.

Atopodentatus, about 9 feet (2.75 metres) long, lived in a shallow sea in China's Yunnan province alongside fish and other marine reptiles, said paleontologist Chun Li of the Chinese Academy of Sciences' Institute of Vertebrate Paleontology and Paleoanthropology.

When thinking of hammerhead creatures, sharks may come to mind. But *Atopodentatus*' hammerhead feature differed in location and function from the sharks, whose eyes are on the end of lateral extensions on their head.



A fossil of *Atopodentatus unicus* is seen alongside a reconstruction showing what it would have looked like in life is shown in this image released on 6 May. PHOTO: REUTERS

Atopodentatus appeared during the Triassic Period relatively soon after the biggest mass extinction of species in Earth's history, illustrating that life was bouncing back nicely. Other oddball creatures also swam the seas at the time, including a reptile called *Dinocephalosaurus* whose neck comprised half of its 17-foot (5.25

meters) length. "If you saw this reptile (*Atopodentatus*) in isolation cruising around with some of the fishes of the day, I think you would say it was really quite absurd," Fraser said. "But alongside some of its fellow denizens of the deep, I think it would just appear as one more oddity in a mesmerizing world."—Reuters

Brazil scientists seek to unravel mystery of Zika twins

SAO PAULO — Scientists struggling to unravel the mysteries of a Zika epidemic in Brazil hope they can learn from cases of women giving birth to twins in which only one child is afflicted by the microcephaly birth defect associated with the virus.

Jaqueline Jessica Silva de Oliveira hoped doctors were wrong when a routine ultrasound showed that one of her unborn twins would be born with the condition, marked by stunted head size and developmental issues.

"When I found out one of them had microcephaly, the ground fell out from beneath me," the 25-year-old said as she sat on

the sofa of her home in the city of Santos. "You always hope that they will be born well, thinking that it could be a mistake by the doctor or in the ultrasound."

Her son Lucas, who she holds in her arms, was born healthy in November. His twin sister Laura, whose head is visibly much smaller, requires regular treatment by a team of neurologists and physiotherapists in nearby Sao Paulo.

With two young children already, Oliveira — who suffered the symptoms of Zika early in pregnancy — knew that life would be difficult with a child with developmental problems. Her husband, the family's only breadwin-

ner, brings home just over 2,000 reais (\$566) a month.

"I thank God for giving her to me... I would never abandon her," Oliveira said, adding she had never questioned why only one child was born with microcephaly. "The doctors want to study them so they can see what protected Lucas in case it can help other children."

Cases of only one twin developing a disease, such as rheumatoid arthritis or diabetes, have been widely documented. Medical research has focused on the interaction between the environment and genetic issues.

Lucas and Laura are one of

five cases of Zika twins scientists are studying in Sao Paulo.

Similar cases of newborn twins - one with and one without microcephaly — caught the attention of doctors last year in northeastern Brazil, where the mosquito-borne Zika was detected for the first time in the Americas. The divergence in twins was one reason why researchers began to suspect the presence of a new disease.

Brazil has since registered nearly 5,000 confirmed and suspected cases of microcephaly associated with Zika, according to the Health Ministry. The outbreak, and its impact on pregnant women, has cast a shadow over the upcoming summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro on August.

The Zika outbreak is affecting large parts of Latin America and the Caribbean, with Brazil the hardest hit so far. It is likely to spread to all countries in the Americas except for Canada and Chile, the World Health Organisation has said.

Last month, the US Centre for Disease Control and Prevention officially confirmed that infection with Zika in pregnant women is a cause of microcephaly and other severe brain abnormalities in babies. A team from Sao Paulo University studying the five cases believes they may hold clues to the nature of the disease itself and hope to have results from their investigation in a year's time.

"The importance of these twins... is that they could give us some very important answers," said Mayana Zatz, director of the Human Genome Research Centre at the university.—Reuters



Five-month-old twins, Laura (L) and Lucas lie in their bed at their house in Santos, Sao Paulo state, Brazil on 20 April. PHOTO: REUTERS

Torn apart by Canadian wildfire, families face anxious future

LAC LA BICHE/CONKLIN, (Alberta) — After she and her husband fled in different directions as a wildfire burnt mercilessly through Canada's Fort McMurray, Erin Naughton faces another difficult task: how to keep her family going until they can return to the city they call home.

She fled north to pick up one child, while her husband drove south as traffic and evacuation routes forced them apart on Tuesday.

Believing she will not be able to return to her scorched community for months, the restaurant manager is preparing to send her son and daughter to live with family in Edmonton in Alberta, and Victoria in British Columbia, so they can finish the school year, hundreds of kilometres (miles) apart.

"I'm going to be splitting up the family again," said a tearful Naughton at the campsite near Conklin, a way station for evacuees from the massive wildfire that has burnt much of Fort McMurray to the north.

"But that's what a mom does, what's right for her kids."



Evacuees from the Fort McMurray wildfires, Ellyse Naughton (L), holds her toy robotic dog as her mother Erin looks at her phone as they camp at the Christina Lake campground in Conklin, Alberta, Canada, on 5 May. PHOTO: RETUERS

The wildfire forced 88,000 people to evacuate this week and burnt at least 1,600 buildings in the oil sands city in western Canada. Residents are not likely to return anytime soon, even to assess damage, according to officials.

In the evacuation centres in Lac La Biche or Edmonton, south of Fort McMurray, jugglers entertained and a Santa gave out toys, trying to bring smiles to little faces.

While some families are sticking together, many

others are being forced to consider a fresh start elsewhere — or separate from loved ones — after their homes were destroyed in a city where thousands were already unemployed from the oil industry slump.

Suncor contractor

Derek Edwards said he may drive his family, including a daughter, 9, and son, 3, across the country to Ontario for work. Suncor has cut production due to the fires and dropping oil prices.

He has a job lined up, but is hesitant.

"There is so much uncertainty right now," he said at the combination hockey arena-high school in Lac La Biche that is housing evacuees. "I need to take a few days before making decisions that impact my family long term."

Philippines-born Kirby Abo is convinced it is time to leave.

Abo who works at a Fort McMurray bottle recycling plant is worried about lost income and pondering a move to much-larger Edmonton, 500 km (320 miles) away, to support his wife and three children, who joined him from the Philippines this year.

"I think (Fort Mac) is going to be a ghost town for quite awhile."

Leslie Booker, a mother of two who works in Fort McMurray schools in early childhood development, does not plan to leave. Her house, visible through an online security camera video, has survived. She plans to read and write with her kids, ages 11 and 7, instead of enrolling them in a new school this late in the academic year. "Our life is here. We will go back and rebuild."—Reuters



A Syrian refugee holds onto his children as he struggles to walk off a dinghy on the Greek island of Lesbos, after crossing a part of the Aegean Sea from Turkey to Lesbos in 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

EU's Juncker sees refugee crisis at 'turning point'

LONDON — Europe's migrant crisis is at a "turning point" thanks to a deal with Turkey to stem the number of new arrivals which is showing its first successes, European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker said in comments published on Saturday.

Under an accord struck with the European Union, Turkey has agreed to help stop illegal migrants reaching the continent in return for accelerated EU accession

talks, visa liberalisation, and financial aid. Juncker told the Funke Media Group that the deal, which came into force last month, was already enabling Europe to better manage the flow of migrants.

"We at a turning point," he said. "The deal with Turkey is having an effect and the number of migrants is sinking significantly." He added there still needed to be a sustainable drop in the numbers before the "all-

clear" could be sounded, but said the deal had given the 28-member bloc room for manoeuvre to create a fair and efficient asylum system in the medium term. Europe is grappling with its largest migration wave since World War II, as a traditional flow of migrants from Africa is compounded by refugees fleeing wars and poverty in the Middle East and South Asia. The deal sealed off the main route by which a million migrants crossed

the Aegean into Greece last year, but some believe new routes will develop through Bulgaria or Albania as Mediterranean crossings to Italy from Libya resume.

Juncker criticised the decision to build a fence between Greece and Macedonia. "I don't share the view of some that this fence — or building fences in Europe in general — can contribute anything to the long-term solution of the refugee crisis," he said.—Reuters

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV MAENAM 1 VOY NO (548N)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV MAENAM 1 VOY NO (548N) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 8.5.2016 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.

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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.

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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 ADVANCE CONTAINER LINES
Phone No: 2301185

Chile environmental watchdog probes Codelco smelter

VENTANAS CITY (Chile) —Codelco [COBRE.UL], the world’s largest copper producer, is being probed by Chile’s environmental regulator for violations at a refinery and smelter, the agency said on Friday.

The regulator, known by its Spanish acronym SMA, said it would investigate the state-owned miner’s Ventanas facility in the coastal town of Puchuncavi for 13 environmental infractions.

These include failing to convert to natural gas for certain processes and equipment, lacking a system to capture acidic mist, and not implementing a process to safeguard native wildlife, the SMA said in a statement.

Communities near Ventanas have blamed emissions and heavy-metal

particles from the plant for health problems.

Codelco said in a statement the infractions it has been accused of do not pose health risks to people. It will respond to the charges within 72 hours, the company added.

“We will analyze SMA’s report and will quickly address the observations with technical accuracy and responsibility,” Ventanas general manager Jose Sanhueza said.

The Ventanas plant dates to 1964 and by law the SMA can only supervise parts that were modified after 1997. This means SMA does not have the power to shut down the whole plant, although it can temporarily revoke environmental permits or impose fines.

“We carried out pro-



A worker monitors a process at the copper smelter of Codelco Ventanas in Ventanas city, Chile in 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

grammed inspections and we also included complaints, as neighbours in Puchuncavi have sent our institution diverse complaints,” SMA chief Cristian Franz said in the statement. Franz has said that mining companies and oth-

ers investing in Chile can expect increased scrutiny and sanctions if they break environmental rules, as the SMA is allocated more resources and more inspectors.

Codelco said on Friday it has invested \$160 million

in nearly 15 projects at Ventanas since 2012, to reduce emissions and improve waste management.

Codelco told Reuters last month that it was considering building a new copper smelter to boost output by more than 10 per-

cent.

It said it was willing for the first time to take on foreign partners for the expansion, and had earmarked almost \$2 billion to renovate other ageing smelters over the next two years.—Reuters

Pope rebukes ‘weary’ Europe, says migrants not criminals

VATICAN CITY — Pope Francis on Friday lamented a Europe he said had grown “weary” and “entrenched”, and urged the continent not to see migrants as criminals.

Francis made his pointed comments in the presence of top EU leaders, including German Chancellor Angela Merkel, European Central Bank chief Mario Draghi and the presidents of the European Par-

liament, Commission and Council.

“What has happened to you, the Europe of humanism, the champion of human rights, democracy and freedom? What has happened to you, Europe, the home of poets, philosophers, artists, musicians, and men and women of letters?” he asked.

“What has happened to you, Europe, the mother of peoples and nations, the

mother of great men and women who upheld, and even sacrificed their lives for, the dignity of their brothers and sisters?”

The pope was speaking at a ceremony in the Vatican’s frescoed Sala Regia to award him the Charlemagne Prize, conferred annually by the German city of Aachen to those who have contributed most to the ideals of post-war Europe.

His comments pointed to a malaise at the heart of the European Union, which has wrestled with a long, divisive debt crisis and is struggling to absorb a vast influx of migrants and refugees, many fleeing conflicts such as Syria’s civil war.

Francis called Europe “weary, yet still rich in energies and possibilities” and said it was “increasingly entrenched, rather than

open to initiating new social processes capable of engaging all individuals and groups in the search for new and productive solutions to current problems.”

The Argentine, the first non-European pope in 1,300 years, said desire for European unity “seems to be fading” and that “those who consider putting up fences” were betraying the dream of the founders of a modern Europe.—Reuters

36 foreigners safe as cruise boat catches fire near Halong Bay

HANOI — A cruise boat carrying 36 foreign sightseers from Viet Nam’s scenic Halong Bay burst into flames on Friday, but all of them escaped serious harm, local media reported.

According to the *Tuoi Tre* newspaper, the boat had just docked at Tuan Chau port after returning from the famed World Heritage site in the northern province of Quang Ninh when the fire broke out, apparently in the kitchen section.

The panicked foreigners, including those from Britain, France, Taiwan and South Korea, jumped into the water and made it safely to shore, but the boat, operated by local travel firm VIT Co., was completely destroyed by the fire, the report said.

It said three slightly injured tourists were treated at a local hospital. The newspaper published photo of the two upper decks of the all-white, 17-room cruise boat engulfed in flames as a tourist jumped into the water from the lower deck.—Kyodo News

THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR
MINISTRY OF ELECTRICITY AND ENERGY
MYANMA OIL AND GAS ENTERPRISE
(INVITATION FOR OPEN TENDER)
(6 / 2016)

Open tenders are invited for supply of the following respective items in United States Dollars and Myanmar Kyats.

Sr.No	Tender No	Description	Remark
(1)	IFB-006(16-17)	Bearings for F-1000 Rig Pump (3) Items	US\$
(2)	IFB-007(16-17)	Repair Kits for Drill Pipe Power Tong (3) Items	US\$
(3)	DMP/L-001(16-17)	Lifting Sling / Binder & Binder Chain (5) Items	Ks
(4)	DMP/L-002(16-17)	M.S Plate, M.S Pipe, M.S Rod and Angle Iron for River Craft (6) Nos Repairing Job	Ks
(5)	DMP/L-003(16-17)	SAE 15 W 40 Diesel Engine Oil (1) Lot	Ks
(6)	DMP/L-004(16-17)	Hydraulic Oil Light (H.O.L) ISO-VG 46 (or) Between 46 & 68 (1) Lot	Ks
(7)	DMP/L-005(16-17)	Oil Tanker 3200 Gals TA TA LPT 2116 (6 x 2) (3) Units	Ks
(8)	DMP/L-006(16-17)	M.S Plate, U Beam & Angle Iron for TAC-171 Tank (1) Lot	Ks

Tender Closing Date & Time - 2-6-2016, 16:30 Hr
Tender Document shall be available during office hours commencing from 5TH May, 2016 at the Finance Department, Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise, No(44) Complex, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar.

Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise
Ph . +95 67 - 411097 / 411206

Yangon University of Foreign Languages
Invitations for application of MA(EFL) Course

1. The First Year academic programme leading to the MA (English as a Foreign Language) degree for the 2016-2017 academic year will be opened in June 2015.
2. Those who wishes to attend the course should
(a) be Myanmar citizens
(b) fulfill the requirements for admission to the First Year academic programme leading to the MA (EFL) degree.
3. Applications should be submitted by 13 May 2016 at the latest. Enquiries on admission may be made during office hours at Student Affairs Department, Yangon University of Foreign Languages.

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Kristen Bell. PHOTO: PTI

Kristen Bell opens up about anxiety and depression

LOS ANGELES — Actress Kristen Bell has revealed that she struggled with anxiety and depression from a young age.

The 35-year-old star, who has daughters Lincoln, three, and Delta, 16 months, with husband Dax Shepard, said the problem runs through her family, reported *People* magazine.

"I'm extremely co-dependent. I shatter a little bit when I think people don't like me. That's

part of why I lead with kindness and I compensate by being very bubbly all the time because it really hurts my feelings when I know I'm not liked. And I know that's not very healthy and I fight it all the time," the "Frozen" star said.

Bell told "Off Camera With Sam Jones" that her mother, a nurse, gave her tips to combat the feelings of depression.

The actress said she is not ashamed to ask for help and still

takes medication to keep her depression and anxiety at bay.

"If you do decide to go on a prescription to help yourself, understand that the world wants to shame you for that, but in the medical community, you would never deny a diabetic his insulin. Ever.

"But for some reason, when someone needs a serotonin inhibitor, they're immediately crazy or something."—PTI

Axl Rose to make debut with AC/DC at Lisbon concert

LOS ANGELES — Guns N' Roses frontman Axl Rose will make his debut with AC/DC at a concert in Lisbon on Saturday, standing in for lead singer Brian Johnson on the veteran Australian rock band's world tour.

AC/DC, known for songs such as "Highway to Hell" and "Back in Black", had to reschedule dates on the US leg of the "Rock or Bust" tour in March after Johnson,

68, was advised by doctors to stop touring "or risk total hearing loss". Rose was announced as a replacement a month later.

Johnson, who has fronted the group since the 1980 death of original lead singer Bon Scott, has said he was "personally crushed" to give up the tour but vowed he was not retiring.

"It's a horrible thing and the hope (is) that it gets better," Rose

said in a video statement. "I'm not dancing around about this because it's not like ... okay somebody's said they're going to go do something else, it's because of an unfortunate circumstance and that's something I'm very aware of."

Saturday's concert in Portugal will be followed by shows across Europe, according to a list of tour dates sent by a publicist for the band.—Reuters

Ben Affleck, Jennifer Garner enjoy family trip to Paris

LOS ANGELES — After spending time together as a family in England, Ben Affleck and Jennifer Garner have now taken their three kids to Paris to show them some iconic sights in the City of Light.

Affleck, who is currently filming "Justice League" in London, arrived in the French capital on Thursday with Garner and their kids: Violet, 10, Seraphina, 7, and Samuel, 4.

That same day, the family indulged in some sweet treats at the Amorino ice cream parlor, reported *People* magazine.

"They are so excited for this opportunity for the kids. 'He is shooting over there and they will likely come back and forth. He similarly brought the kids to the set during *Miracles From Heaven*. This is normal for them," a family friend said.

Affleck was not spotted with the rest of his family on Friday as Garner took the children to the Roue de Paris and held Samuel in her arms while waiting in line for the renowned Ferris wheel.

From there, she and the kids went on a tour of the Place de l'Opera, where Garner took photos on her cellphone as a hired guide talked through the history



Ben Affleck and Jennifer Garner. PHOTO: PTI

of the famed opera house.

The "Miracles from Heaven" star and the kids continued to Montmartre, where the doting mother took selfies with her two daughters and ended up throwing a tired Seraphina across her back as they continued up the last flight of stairs leading to Sacre-Coeur Basilica.

Later, Garner and the kids visited the Jardin du Luxembourg, a sumptuous garden dating back to the 17th century, where the kids were spotted hav-

ing fun while operating sailboats around a fountain.

Before arriving in Paris on Thursday, the family spent time in London, with a Twitter user posting that the family was spotted on the Harry Potter tour at Warner Bros Studios Leavesden.

Since announcing their split in June, both Affleck, 43, and Garner, 44, have stressed that they are focused on their children, and have not yet filed for divorce.—PTI

Arsenio Hall sues Sinead O'Connor over Prince drug accusations



Comedian Arsenio Hall is shown in Los Angeles, California, October 19, 2015 and Irish recording artist Sinead O'Connor is shown in New York, 14 December, 2011 in this combination photo. PHOTO: REUTERS

NEW YORK — Comedian Arsenio Hall has filed a defamation lawsuit against the singer Sinead O'Connor, who accused him of supplying drugs to music legend Prince, whose death on 21 April has prompted speculation about an overdose.

The \$5 million lawsuit, filed on Thursday in Los Angeles Superior Court, refers to O'Connor as a "desperate attention-seeker" and claims Hall and O'Connor have not spoken in 25 years.

Prince died on 21 April at Paisley Park, his home-studio complex in a Minneapolis suburb. A law enforcement source with knowledge of the investigation told Reuters prescription opioid drugs were found at the scene, and Minnesota media said the painkiller Percocet was found in his system.

Results from an autopsy could take weeks to be released publicly, authorities have said.

On Monday, the Irish singer, whose biggest hit was her 1990 version of the Prince song "Nothing Compares 2 U," posted a note on her Facebook page claiming Hall supplied drugs to Prince for years.

"Two words for the DEA investigating where prince got his drugs over the decades... Ar-

senio Hall," the post said.

O'Connor also claimed Hall, a former late-night talk show host, "spiked" her with an unknown drug years ago at a party.

Hall's lawsuit said O'Connor's statements had quickly gone viral, causing "substantial harm" to his reputation.

"O'Connor's heinous accusations that Hall engaged in this criminal conduct are despicable, fabricated lies," the complaint said.

In a Facebook post on Friday titled "Regarding Arse-inio Hall's laughable threats," O'Connor said she was "amused" by his accusations and added that authorities were taking her allegations seriously.

"I do not like drugs killing musicians. And I do not like Arsenio Hall," O'Connor wrote, before adding an expletive-laden insult.

Prince had been scheduled to meet with a doctor specializing in addiction treatment the day after his death, a lawyer for the doctor said on Thursday. Federal authorities, including the Drug Enforcement Administration, also said on Thursday they had joined the investigation of the singer's death.—Reuters

‘Your Mama pulls fire trucks!’ is praise for StrongMoms’ kids

NORWALK, (Conn) — Still shunning alcohol because she was breastfeeding her 7-week-old baby, Jessica Hopkins grabbed a 50-pound (23 kg) beer keg with her bare hands and hurled it over a chest-high metal bar.

Women like Hopkins, a former jewelry design assistant, are the fastest-growing group of competitors in Strongman, a sport that involves chucking, dragging and hefting tremendously heavy weights. Events include single-handedly pulling a 23-ton (21-metric-ton) fire truck across a parking lot or heaving a 200-pound fire hydrant onto a shoulder-high platform.

“It’s almost like labour — you have to work through it even though it’s hard,” Hopkins said recently on her first day back at Strongman training since giving birth.

Hopkins, 34, quit her job to care full-time for her daughter, Louie, but does not want to give up Strongman competitions and preparing for them at Punch Kettlebell Gym in Norwalk, Connecticut.



A participant in the May Queen Spring Strongwoman competition pulls a truck in Lancaster, Pennsylvania in 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

“You feel proud of yourself, which is awesome,” said Hopkins as she gazed at Louie snoozing in her portable cradle.

Females now make up 35 per cent of the 20,000 US Strongman members, said Diane Wessels, chief executive officer of Strongman Corp, the competition’s governing body. The sport may bring to mind steroid-fueled muscle heads, but the competitions draw doctors, university professors, tech

industry salespeople and even parent-teacher association presidents.

“For a lot of women who do Strongman, it’s part of who we are,” said Gina Melnik of Boston. “It’s how you define yourself.”

The 38-year-old government researcher with a PhD from Tufts University has pulled a monster truck and repeatedly flipped a 650-pound tractor tire.—Reuters

A flaming passion: ex-miner creates everyday replicas with matches

RUDA SLASKA (Poland) — Janusz Urbanski has a one of a kind chessboard he never plays, a personalised guitar he does not strum and a boat he cannot sail. Why? They are all made from tens of thousands of matches.

For the last 40 years, the former Polish miner and ironworker has harboured a passion to build replicas of objects, buildings and famous sites with just match sticks and glue.

The 60-year old’s home in Ruda Slaska, a small town in Poland’s southern Silesia region, is filled with such sculptures as well as plastic bags full of matchboxes.

“It takes me 10, 12 hours everyday. Once you begin, it pulls you in, you want to finish fast and see the end product,” Urbanski told Reuters. “You already have the next idea brewing in your head.”

Urbanski believes he has used around 11 million matches since he first started making the sculptures, a hobby which began from a model making workshop.

He burns the heads before painstakingly gluing the matches together. His sculptures fill his flat and vary in size. The boat, named “Stefania” after his late mother-in-law, is 2.4 metres (7.9 ft) long.

“I wanted to make a big boat to commemorate her,” he said. “Maybe this is the biggest ship made from match sticks.”

Urbanski has also made a replica of part of the Great Wall of China, which took him several months and around 150,000 matches. He also has replicas of the Eiffel Tower, Golden Gate Bridge, a soccer stadium, truck and small house.

A local celebrity, he likes to make the sculptures as gifts and rarely sells them. But some of his works are displayed at a local museum and a replica of his local church was donated to the parish.

“I’m proud of every one of my works,” Urbanski said.

“When I make something, it’s big. Of course it takes time, but I put my heart into it.” —Reuters



Nepalese school kids show greeting cards prepared for their mothers for the upcoming Mother’s Day in Kathmandu, Nepal, on 6 May 2016. A group of Nepalese school kids prepared greeting cards for their mothers ahead of the Mother’s Day which falls on 8 May this year. PHOTO: XINHUA



Janusz Urbanski holds matchsticks as he makes a new sculpture in his flat in Ruda Slaska, Poland, on 4 May 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS



Entertainment Channel

(8- 5-2016, Sunday)

6:00 pm

- Weather Report
- Music Programme

6:50 pm

- Myanmar Video

8:40 pm

- International Movie Songs

8:50 pm

- National Literary Icon &

Guiding Light of Myanmar Literature: Sayar Zaw Gyi (Episode- 2) Service Life and Literary Journey

9:10 pm

- Music Programme

9:30 pm

- Myanmar Movie

9:40 pm

- Myanmar Video

*** 09 :30 pm** Live: English Premier League “Liverpool Vs Watford”

From 8-5-2016 (Sunday) 6:00 Pm
To 9-5-2016 (Monday) 6:00 Pm



Myanmar International

(8-5-2016 07:00am ~ 9-5-2016 7:00am) MST

Today Fresh

- | | | |
|-------|----|--|
| 07:03 | Am | News |
| 07:26 | Am | Myanmar Social & Charitable Association (Ep-1) Mingalar Byuhar |
| 07:50 | Am | Kay Tu Mar Lar “The Family” |
| 08:03 | Am | News |
| 08:26 | Am | Travelogue: To the coastal region (Myeik - Kawthoung) (Part-2) |
| 08:41 | Am | A Worth Studying Site For Ancient Myanmar Heritages |
| 09:03 | Am | News |
| 09:26 | Am | Strolling Along A Memory Link - U Pein Bridge |
| 09:44 | Am | Mt. Naw Bu Baw |
| 09:53 | Am | Kyeikhteyoe: Welcome All |

- | | | |
|-------|----|---|
| 10:03 | Am | News |
| 10:26 | Am | Lawka Nandar Wildlife Sanctuary And Its Rare Star Tortoises |
| 10:49 | Am | Sagaing: Youth Leader |

(11:00 Am ~ 03:00 Pm) - Saturday 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 |
| 07:25 | Pm | Travelogue: “Anyar Myay” or Upcountry (Part- I) |
| 07:49 | Pm | Today Myanmar: Online Shopping-Food Delivery Service |
| 08:03 | Pm | News |
| 08:26 | Pm | Writer, Philanthropist: Daw Than Myint Aung (Part- II) |
| 08:47 | Pm | Myanmar Masterclass “Min Wae Aung” |

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

Romanian FA postpones all matches following Ekeng death

BUCHAREST — The Romanian Football Federation (FRF) has postponed all football this weekend following the death of Dinamo Bucharest and Căminul de Muncă midfielder Patrick Ekeng on Friday.

Ekeng, 26, collapsed on the field after suffering a suspected heart attack shortly after coming on as a 62nd-minute substitute during a league match against Viitorul Constanta and was pronounced dead two hours after the incident.

The FRF said in a statement on Saturday that all matches in the top three divisions, the junior championship, futsal (indoor football) and women's games that were scheduled to take place between 7 and 9 May were postponed.

The Romanian Cup final between Dinamo and CFR Cluj, which was due to be played on Tuesday, was also postponed until 17 May.

Local media said police have begun an investigation into Ekeng's death while hospital officials claimed that he had not received adequate first aid treatment at the ground, which was denied by the club's doctor.

"He was brought to us in cardiopulmonary arrest at the emergency room, in an ambulance, without resuscitation measures as far as we know," doctor Cristian Pandrea of the Floreasca emergency hospital told reporters.

"We started resuscitation measures that lasted approxi-



Dinamo Bucharest's Patrick Ekeng is transported to an ambulance after collapsing during a play-off match against Viitorul Constanta in Bucharest, Romania, on 6 May. PHOTO: REUTERS

mately one hour and 30 minutes. These measures were, unfortunately, without result."

Ekeng was placed in an ambulance less than three minutes after collapsing and Dinamo's club doctor Liviu Batineanu said he performed cardiac massage.

"The first thing you do is to clear out the air passage and perform cardiac massage," Batineanu said.

On Saturday, Dinamo fans unveiled a huge banner outside the club stadium that read "An empty place in our hearts".

Ekeng, capped twice by Cameroon, had also played for Le Mans in France, as well as Swiss club Lausanne and Spain's Cordoba. Ekeng joined 18-times Romanian champions Dinamo as a free agent in January and scored his only goal in their 2-2

draw against Steaua Bucharest in the Romanian Cup semi-final's second leg in April. Cameroon midfielder Marc-Vivien Foe also died after collapsing on the pitch, during a Confederations Cup match in 2003 against Colombia in France.—Reuters

UEFA dismiss complaints over Europa League final venue



An aerial view of Basel (Basle) St. Jakob-Park soccer stadium in 2008. PHOTO: REUTERS

ZURICH — UEFA has dismissed complaints that the Europa League final venue in Basel is too small, after fans of finalists Liverpool complained that "a large number" of supporters would miss out.

European soccer's governing body said on Friday that "at least" 9,000 tickets would

be reserved each for Liverpool and opponents Sevilla at the 35,000-capacity St Jakob Park.

"We hope that in future years, UEFA will...stage the final at a ground that allows more genuine supporters of the final clubs to attend," said the Liverpool supporters' club Spirit of Shankly.

"It is crystal clear that this amount of tickets will not be enough... Tens of thousands of supporters will have attended every home game this season and a large number will miss out."

It also complained of "the cost of travel increasing by the minute from greedy travel operators", a lack of accommodation and lack of public transport out of the city after midnight.

"It is pretty clear that Basel is not best equipped to deal with such large numbers that we have witnessed in previous years," it added.

UEFA spokesman Pedro Pinto said the final venues were chosen almost two years in advance due to "the enormous logistical effort involved."

He said the stadium, which hosted matches at Euro 2008, as one of Europe's "elite venues", adding that capacity was just one factor taken into account.

"UEFA tends to select slightly smaller, top-quality venues for the UEFA Europa League final,"

he said. "This means UEFA can give more of its national associations an opportunity to host a club final."

"The number of supporters requesting final tickets varies from club to club, and of course it is impossible to predict in advance which clubs will reach the final," he said, adding that stadium capacity at recent finals had been "very satisfactory."

UEFA advised ticketless fans not to approach the stadium due to "very tight" security.

Liverpool manager Juergen Klopp told reporters on Friday that there was no point complaining about the meagre ticket allocation, but he urged supporters without tickets to travel to Switzerland all the same.

"It's worth going even if you don't have a ticket to enjoy the city. We can't think about the size of the stadium."

If you ask who wants to see this final you will find 30 million people so there is no chance. It's like this."

Basel's city government, which has already announced street and tram line closures around the stadium, was closed for a public holiday and could not be reached for comment.

The ticket allocation for the Champions League final in Milan on 28 May has also caused controversy, with only 40,000 of the 71,500 tickets available going to fans of finalists Real Madrid and Atletico Madrid, and 6,000 to other supporters.

The rest are reserved for officials, sponsors and corporate hospitality.

"I don't like it but I expect it and we have to accept that because no matter how much we complain we won't get anywhere," said Jacinto Fernandez of the Real Madrid supporters' club Guadarrama.

He did not take issue with tickets being sold to Italian fans but said: "I have more of a problem with the number of tickets UEFA take and hand out internally. It's abusive."—Reuters