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RIGHT TIME AND PLACE



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi holds a meeting with leaders of ethnic armed organizations. PHOTO: MNA

Gov't, NCA signatories agree to hold UPC no later than 31 August

MYANMAR government and eight signatories to the nationwide ceasefire agreement have decided to hold the 21st Century Panglong Peace Conference before the end of August, as State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi met with leaders of ethnic armed organisations in Naypyitaw yesterday.

The meeting is aimed to include others who have not signed the previous government's NCA or have been left out of the previous talks and signing.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi fur-

ther pushed the need to create peace in Myanmar, saying that "peace is the best legacy to pass on to younger generations."

Highlighting the importance of inclusion of all in the process in order to establish a federal democratic Union that can guarantee security and freedom for all, asking for cooperation and participation from all groups, who agree to the terms and conditions.

"The government has no secret intentions and it is clear that its aim is to create a federal Union

allowing all peoples to enjoy peace and prosperity," said Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi called for establishing a basis of trust and understanding between the ethnic groups and the government in order for peace to properly be implemented. The State Counsellor also called for a sense of responsibility for peace talks and goodwill in working towards achieving a federal Union.

Myanmar gained independence 68 years ago and that a fed-

eral union must be established, remarked State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

She called on all ethnic groups to cooperate with each other and the government in order to have a true beginning.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi acknowledged the anxiety that ethnic leaders may face in the face of change, encouraging them to overcome it by trust.

She asserted that various groups should trust the government. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi says

that the new Panglong agreement is to establish peace, to establish a federal union and to create new opportunities for the future generations.

Next, Saw Mutu Sae Poe, leader of Ethnic Armed Organization Peace Process Steering Team EAO PPST, and members Sai Baung Khay, Khun Okkar, Pu Zing Cing, Khaing Soe Naing Aung, Dr Naw Kapaw Htoo, U Than Ge and Saw Mo Shae explained that the peace process is still in its infant stages.

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Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than welcomes Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Myanmar Mr. Yoo Jae-Kyung in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker receives RoK Ambassador

MAHN WIN KHAING THAN, Speaker of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and Amyotha Hluttaw, received Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Myanmar Mr. Yoo Jae-Kyung at a hall of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Building in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the meeting, they discussed matters related to strengthening bilateral friendship, promoting the economic sector of the two countries and human resource development. — Myanmar News Agency

UN Human Rights Council releases global call to action on LGBT rights

568 ORGANISATIONS from 142 countries (including three from Myanmar) have joined hands to promote the recognition and acceptance of LGBT individuals in a joint statement issued by the United Nations Human Rights Council on Monday promoting global action to combat discrimination based on sexual identity in addition to calling for the founding of a SOGI (Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity) Council to document human rights violations, prepare regular reports on issues such as root causes, trans rights, and protection gaps, engage with States from around the world to build awareness of SOGI issues, identify good practices and encourage reforms.

The High Commissioner for Human Rights was noted as saying “current arrangements to protect the human rights of LGBT and intersex persons are inadequate (globally),” and “there is as yet no dedicated human rights mechanism at the international level that has a systematic and comprehensive approach to the human rights situation of LGBT and intersex persons”. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon was quoted as showing strong support for the measure, reportedly saying “The time (for action) has come”.

Three Myanmar organisations that offer to support and conduct political and social

awareness campaigning on behalf of the LGBT community were listed in the statement. Those organisations were Colors Rainbow, Equality Myanmar and the Myanmar MSM Network.

The statement carries particular weight for Myanmar which has a long and widely reported history of abusing LGBT individuals through legal methods - section 337 of the 1860 Myanmar Penal Code (the nation's current law code) entirely outlaws homosexual sex acts (the definition in the code being “unnatural offences”). The punishment for conviction under section 337 is transportation for life or with imprisonment for up to ten years, plus a fine. The Myanmar ‘darkness law’ outlaws the shrouding or disguising of one's face during the night-time hours with facial makeup or a long wig on a natural-born man often considered grounds for arrest. The darkness law, it has been reported, is enacted sporadically with dehumanisation, humiliation and police torture typically following the arrest of transgender individuals.

The UNHRC statement called on international partners, both governments and NGOs, to tackle social and institutional discrimination head on and for the UN to found the SOGI council in the near future to better aid the international fight against discrimination. — GNLM

Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker meets with RoK Ambassador

SPEAKER of the Pyithu Hluttaw U Win Myint received Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Myanmar Mr. Yoo Jae-Kyung at a hall of the Pyithu Hluttaw Building in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Also present were officials from the Pyithu Hluttaw Office. — Myanmar News Agency



Speaker U Win Myint receives Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Myanmar Mr. Yoo Jae-Kyung in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

UN special rapporteur holds talks with Union Ministers

MS. YANGHEE LEE, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, held talks with Union Minister for the Office of the State Counsellor yesterday in Nay Pyi Taw. During the meeting, they discussed matters related to duties of the special rapporteur on the situation of human rights, segregated communities in Rakhine State and the peace process in Myanmar.

Ms Yanghee Lee met with Union Minister for Defence Lt-Gen Sein Win at the Ministry of Defence. During the meeting, they discussed issues related to national reconciliation, human rights, ending recruitment of child soldier, relations between the military and civilians, and internally displaced persons (IDPs).

In the afternoon, the UN human rights expert held talks separately with Union Minister for Border Affairs Lt-Gen Ye Aung, Union Minister for Labour, Im-

migration and Population U Thein Swe and Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr Win Myat Aye at their respective offices.

During the meeting with the Union Minister for Border Affairs, Yanghee Lee discussed matters related to the development of Myanmar's border areas, human resource development of ethnic groups and creating job opportunities, improving livelihoods and resettling of IDPs, the implementation of short-term and long-term projects of the ministry, efforts for stability and development of Rakhine State, the government's peace making efforts and human rights issues.

Ms Yanghee Lee and Union Minister U Thein Swe discussed measures taken by the ministry to bring labour rights to workers in accordance with the law and putting an end to labour disputes between employers and employees, establishing a better

social security scheme for workers, and working towards assisting Myanmar migrant workers abroad providing them with rights and access to health and security in accordance with the law and cooperation with foreign

organizations to eradicate child labour in the country.

The UN human rights expert held talks with Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye over the ministry's short and long term plans, efforts for protecting elderly cit-

izens and most importantly finally implementing laws to give rights to women in Myanmar, rehabilitation and resettlement of homeless children, disaster preparedness and rights for children.— MNA



Ms Yanghee Lee holds talks with Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr Win Myat Aye in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

President U Htin Kyaw accepts credentials of new ambassadors to Myanmar



President U Htin Kyaw accepts the credentials of Mr. Yoo Jae-Kyung, the newly-accredited Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Myanmar in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

PRESIDENT U Htin Kyaw accepted the credentials of H.E. Mr. Yoo Jae-Kyung, the newly-accredited Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Myanmar, and H.E. Mr. Stephen

Marshall, the newly accredited Ambassador of New Zealand to Myanmar, on separate occasions at the Presidential Palace in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Also present on the

occasions were Minister of State for Foreign Affairs U Kyaw Tin and Director-General U Ko Ko Naing of the Protocol Department.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Vice President U Myit Swe receives BIMSTEC Secretary General

VICE President U Myit Swe received Mr Sumith Narkandala, Secretary General of Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) Permanent Secretariat, at the Presidential Palace in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the meeting, they discussed matters related to the establishment of BIMSTEC Free Trade Area, promoting of friendship of peoples of the BIMSTEC-member countries and further development of commu-

nication channels between the countries and promoting the role of Myanmar in BIMSTEC.

BIMSTEC Permanent Secretariat is based in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Also present at the call were Minister of State for Foreign Affairs U Kyaw Tin, Deputy Minister for Home Affairs Maj-Gen Aung Soe, Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation Dr Tun Win and departmental officials.—*Myanmar News Agency*



Vice President U Myit Swe welcomes Secretary General of BIMSTEC Permanent Secretariat Mr Sumith Narkandala. PHOTO: MNA

Briefing on narcotics control held

A BRIEFING on narcotics control polices took place in Nay Pyi Taw on Monday, attended by Chief of Myanmar Police Force Police Maj-Gen Zaw Win, parliamentarians and officials from UN agencies.

In his address, the Police Chief stressed the need for a combination of economic, social and health polices to be involved in the narcotics control strategy.

The Central Committee for Drug Abuse Control is planning

to develop a new drug control policy in accordance with suggestions by the United Nations.

Dr Myat Nyana Soe, secretary of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Joint Bill Committee, Mr. Jeremy Douglas of UNODC and Police Col Zaw Lin Tun spoke on the occasion.

During the meeting, those present held discussions on narcotics control and exchanged views on activities aimed at fighting against narcotics drug abuse.

—*Myanmar News Agency*

Myanmar moves towards strengthening national statistical system

THE Ministry of Planning and Finance yesterday held a kick-off meeting to develop an assessment framework for peer reviews that can improve the country's national statistical system and statistical capacity building.

The meeting, jointly organised by the ministry's Central Statistical Organisation (CSO) and the PARIS 21 Mission, was held at the ministry in Nay Pyi Taw. In her address, Director-General Dr Wah Wah Maung said that the CSO is playing the role of co-coordinator in devel-

oping the country's statistics needed for the development and evaluation of policies towards the betterment of the living standards of the people.

Next, Regional Program Coordinator Ms. Millicent Gay Teg-jade of Asia-Pacific and SIDS spoke on the occasion.

During the meeting, the director-general and foreign experts from the ASEAN Secretariat, Malaysia and the Philippines discussed the development of the national statistical systems.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Construction Ministry compensates Pyinmana farmers for lands seized in 2003

Thein Ko Lwin

THE Ministry of Construction has paid a compensation of K352.5 million for 171.97 acres to 284 farmers who lost their lands in 2003 for the construction of the Nay Pyi Taw-Pyinmana detour, said an official of the ministry yesterday.

The ceremony marking the first time compensation payments was held in Nay Pyi Taw Council Area. K1.5 million was paid for each acre of paddy land, K1.2 million for other types of cultivable land and K 0.5 million for crops.

Rates of compensation were

agreed following consultations among the ministry, the Pyinmana Township land management committee, the township general administration department, the land record team, village administrators and farmers, said Assistant Director U Htay Aung of the ministry.

But, U Myo Tint, one of the owners of seized lands, said that they were not informed of how the compensation rates were calculated.

"I received K1.5 million for 0.77 acre of land I lost in Kyee-in village and K 0.5 million for crops," added the farmer.

Some farmers expressed

their view that a list of seized lands should be remade as some land-losing farmers received more compensation than the amount of money they deserve to be given for the acres of land they lost, according to those individuals.

Moreover, some said that they wanted to be compensated based on the current land price as the current price of the land is around K20 million per acre.

Farmers in five villages—Kinpuntan, Nyaungpintha, Kyee-in, Nat-tha-ye and Thitlaylon—in Pyinmana Township lost their lands to the 16-mile detour which runs for 10 miles in the township.

Jade sales reach €36.56m on fifth day of emporium

MYANMAR's 53rd Gem Emporium entered its fifth day fetching Ks47.6bn (€36.56m) in sales of 624 lots of jade through an open tender system. According to sources, sales reached Ks56bn (€42.97m) euros yesterday as 312 lots of pearl were sold for Ks4bn (€3.12m) and 63 lots of gems were found buyers for Ks4.2bn (€3.29m) on previous days.

1000 lots of jade are on sale until 3 July with reserve prices set at Ks261m (€200,000) per lot, an auction will be held from 4-6 July to sell what stocks remain.—*Myanmar News Agency*



A jade stone being appraised at the 53rd Myanmar Gems Emporium at the Mani Yadana Jade Hall in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: KYAW YE SWE

Yangon circular train coaches to be replaced with DMU coaches in 2018



A Yangon circular train seen with old coaches. PHOTO: AMS

THE Yangon circular line coaches will be replaced with Diesel Multiple Unit (DMU) coaches in 2018 with the assistance of JICA, it has been learned.

According to Myanmar Railways Divisional 7 the coaches will be replaced with the aim of making trains run to

a better time schedule in order to allow passengers better service. There are plans to introduce four RBE coaches for the circular trains running between Ywarthargyi, Toe Kyaung Kalay, Hlawkar and Mingaladon.

Out of these four, two RBE railway coaches will be running between Ywarthargyi and Toe

Kyaung Kalay stations and one will run on the Hlawkar route. The other will run on the Mingaladon route.

Out of 23 circular trains running on the Yangon circular railroad only nine are RBE coaches. These 23 trains in total running 125 rounds per day.—200

Commander-in-Chief (Navy)'s shield Chess Tournament 2016 held



Commander-in-Chief (Navy)'s shield Chess Tournament 2016 in Progress. PHOTO: C-IN-C'S OFFICE

THE Opening Ceremony of the Commander-in-Chief (Navy)'s shield Chess Tournament 2016, in conjunction with the Prize Presentation, was held at the hall of Thanlyin Station Area on Monday 27 June.

At the ceremony, on behalf of the Commander-in-Chief (Navy), Commander of Naval Dockyard Command Headquarters delivered the opening speech.

Commander of Naval Dockyard Command Headquarters and officers gave prizes to the winners.—Office of the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services

Over 4,000 Myanmar migrants receive Malaysia work permits

DIAMOND Palace Services Co, a visa work placement company amongst other things, has provided nearly over 4,500 Myanmar migrants with visas and work permits to Malaysia who are recognised as "irregular migrants," said U Thein Hsan, chair of Diamond Palace Services, service provider for migrant workers.

Under the programme between the two governments of Myanmar and Malaysia, the Di-

amond Palace Services Co has provided essential services for migrants including issuing work permit and passport over the last two years.

There has been 7,000 applicants, 4,523 irregular migrants without documents received the work permits but nearly 1,800 remain to obtain it, with the company planning to issue the permits to them before the end of July.

Submitting an application

costs Ks1.4m (US\$1,188) including service. The company has received less applications; it did not specify over what time period in the report.

According to the law enacted by the Malaysian government, migrants without work permit will be sent back to their countries of origin. A total of 14,111 migrants obtained passport under the programme, according to the figures of the authorised service provider.—Zar Zar

Gov't, NCA signatories agree to hold UPC no later than 31 August

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Union Ministers, the Attorney-General of the Union and Union Peace Conference preparatory committee members clarified ongoing negotiations with NCA non-signatories, preparations for the Peace Conference and works to be done in accord with the NCA.

It was the first meeting between the government and the

EAO PPST to assist upcoming '21st Century Panglong Union Peace Conference.'

Khun Okkar of PNLO who was present at the meeting said that he felt more optimistic about a brighter future for the country's peace process as NCA non-signatories are set to meet with the government to involve in the Conference.—Myanmar News Agency/GNLM

Crime NEWS

Haul of yaba seized in Sittwe

POLICE discovered a haul of yaba pills packed in seven bags at a transportation hub on Monday. Reportedly, the yaba was intended for transport to Buthidaung in Sittwe

According to the Sittwe Police, 798,000 yaba pills were seized and a suspect, Kyaw Thu Lin was arrested as he was found together with the yaba. —Myanmar Police Force



Kyaw Thu Lin. PHOTO: MPF

Overheated voltage regulator causes fire

A FIRE was caused by an overheated auto voltage regulator in Mawlamyine Township at 9:45 am on Monday.

The accident took place at the home of one Daw San San Win, 50, in Mayangon Ward. The auto voltage regulator overheated,

causing an outbreak of fire which quickly got out of control. The fire killed the owner's nephew, Zaw Naing Win alias Thar Gyi, 35, who was unable to escape due to poliomyelitis (polio). The police have filed charges against Daw San San Win.—Tin Htut

Serial robberies on Sanchaung Short Road reported

A MAN reportedly robbed a woman of a gold chain, K400,000 and a hand phone at knife point on Khattar Street (formerly Short Road), Thiri Khaymar Ward, Sanchaung Township around 5:45 am on 27 May.

The robber, it is reported, approached and accosted the victim, named Daw Khaing, as she was walking from Khattar Street to the Royal Khattar Hotel. The

victim reported the crime to the local police station.

On 29 May a similar case of robbery occurred on this same street at about 1 am. On 21 June another case of robbery took place on the same street.

"Now, we will install a CCTV on the street" said current ward administrator U Zaw Myin Lwin.—Tin Win Lay (Kyimydine)

LOCAL Business

CB to provide loans to SMEs

Aung Thant Khaing

SMALL and medium enterprises in Mandalay Region will be able to acquire loans from Co-Operative Bank (CB), commonly known as CB Bank. The two types of loans under a Credit Guarantee Insurance system will be for businesses and another for real estate.

Some businesses will be able to apply for limitless loans while others who cannot provide enough collateral are set to Ks20m.

Businesses can receive loans within two weeks if they have been operating for two years, after supplying necessary information. Loan must be repaid in a year, but if the business is thriving, the loan can be extended, according to U Zaw Man Oo, the head of CB Bank SME Banking department speaking on 27 June.

"The new system is to help businesses owners avoid other strict loan regulations, Those SME businessmen who are seeking license from the Ministry of Industry are entitled to apply for this loan under the laws of SME," said Daw Yee She Khaing, the di-



Workers making slippers at a factory in Mandalay. PHOTO: AUNG THANT KHAING

rector of the department of SME development.

The businessmen have to be the members of SME, hold business licence and need to be citizens. The interest rate is set at 13% per annum, and another 3%

is to be given to Myanma Insurance. The interest is required to be paid monthly.

This loan system requires a recommendation from the SME association, credit guarantee insurance and bank.

U Ye Win Aung, the secretary of Industrial Zone Administration Committee said that this system is not attractive to SME businesses because of the process and the loan is only for a year with no guarantee of extension.

Rice export via sea rises

MYANMAR rice being traded by sea has increased thanks to exports to Poland, said U Aung Than Oo, the chairman of Myanmar Rice Traders' Association. Currently the country exports rice to other EU countries, Indonesia, Russia and African countries.

The export price of rice via sea trade is around Ks376,000 (US\$320) per tonne, depending on the strain of rice; it has now risen between Ks393,566 (US\$335) and Ks400,000 (US\$340).

"We have found the new market of Poland. We are being offered US\$15 more per tonne of rice. Sea trade is likely to increase despite cool rice export market to China," said U Aung Than Oo.

Because of this, rice export has risen above last years exports.

The export volume of rice via sea trade is from 70,000 to 80,000 tonnes a month.

Africa countries are reported to purchase low quality rice. Currently a delay has occurred because of poor weather conditions.—200

KBZ celebrates 400th bank branch

KANBAWZA bank (KBZ) has celebrated the opening of its 400th bank branch on west Shwegondaing Rd in Bahan township. KBZ opened in Myanmar in 1994 and now has 400 branches and 16,000 staff nationwide.

Kanbawza (KBZ) Bank was granted by the Monetary Authority of Singapore to open a representative office in Singapore. This is the second KBZ bank licensed to open an international office abroad after opening a Thai office in May.

The bank offers market research and liaises between the two

countries private sectors, offering information, regulatory requirements to customers wishing to do business between the two countries. KBZ also established KBZ Gateway Co Ltd, a subsidiary of Myanmar's KBZ Group of Companies Ltd, using Oracle Flexcube Core Banking Software for better, faster, stronger international and local banking services.

ATM machines and digital payments such as Mobile Banking, Internet Banking, E-commerce and Online Shopping can be performed with the bank.—*Thae Naing Oo*



A man walks past KBZ Bank's head office in Yangon. PHOTO: NYI ZAW MOE

Myanmar, Netherlands agree to operate seven flights a week

SEVEN flights a week will operate between Yangon and Amsterdam after the signing of a Air Service Agreement between Myanmar and the Netherlands. The event was held at the Department of Civil Aviation in Yangon, yesterday.

During the ceremony, Deputy Minister for Transport and Communications U Kyaw Myo and Ambassador to the Kingdom of the Netherlands to Myanmar Mr Karel Hartogh inked the agreement.—*Myanmar News Agency*



Deputy Minister U Kyaw Myo and Ambassador Mr Karel Hartogh exchange notes after signing the flight operation agreement. PHOTO: MNA

Myanmar coffee recognised as the special coffee

FIFTY six coffee varieties have been recognised as "special coffee" at the second national coffee competition held by Myanmar Coffee Association and Winrock International, according to Winrock International. Out of 60 listed varieties, 56 have been recorded as special.

One importer based in Washington has already agreed

to purchase 36 tonnes of coffee, offering triple the domestic price.

"This is also the first time of coffee export to America," said Daw Sabe Su Yin Nwe, senior public relations officer of Winrock International.

The award ceremony was held on 21 June at Ywar Ngan town, Shan State. Winners will

continue to take part in other coffee quality competition.

Winrock International has been assisting coffee growers in rural development, with the assistance of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). They have been in contact with Myanmar farmers to add the value of the commodity.—200

Grenade attack on Malaysian pub wounds eight, police rule out terrorism

KUALA LUMPUR — A grenade attack on a bar in Malaysia wounded eight people, including a Chinese national, police said on Tuesday, ruling out terrorism as a motive.

The attack on the Movida bar in Puchong, a town on the outskirts of the capital, Kuala Lumpur, took place in the early hours of Tuesday morning, when customers were watching live screening of the Euro soccer tournament.

Selangor state deputy

police chief Abdul Rahim Jaafar told reporters the suspected motive was either business rivalry, revenge, or a target killing.

“We are still investigating who the suspects are, but the motives could be business rivalry, revenge, or one or more of the victims could have been a target,” he said.

In a similar attack in 2014, a man was killed while 12 others were wounded when a bomb exploded outside a pub in Kuala Lumpur.—Reuters



The Movida bar is pictured after a grenade attack in Puchong, on the outskirts of Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, on 28 June. PHOTO: REUTERS

South Korea, US, Japan to brief on North Korea sanctions at UN

SEOUL — South Korea, the United States and Japan will jointly hold a public briefing at the United Nations on Thursday on ways to further strengthen sanctions against North Korea imposed in the wake of its nuclear test and ballistic missile launches earlier this year, a Foreign Ministry spokesman said on Tuesday. The briefing is “intended to raise the awareness of UN member states of UN sanctions resolutions...and also to discuss effective ways to further strengthen sanctions,” Cho June Hyuck told reporters. The briefing, to be organised by UN missions of the three countries, will be held for three hours from 11 am in New York, he said. Members from the international organizations, academia, industry, and expert panels of North Korea’s sanctions committee will be among the participants.

“To further strengthen sanctions measures on North Korea, in-depth discussions will be held on issues such as regional cooperation, arms embargo and freezing of assets,” Cho said.—Kyodo News

North Korean Scud missile can reach US naval base in Japan

SEOUL — North Korea’s extended-range Scud missiles are capable of reaching the US naval base in Yokosuka, Japan, a Seoul daily reported on Tuesday.

“We previously assumed the Scud-ER, a modified version of the Scud-C, could fly about 700 kilometres. But our joint assessment with US intelligence

indicates that it can fly more than 1,000 km,” a senior South Korean military official told the JoongAng Ilbo.

If launched from a frontline unit on a mobile launching pad, the Scud-ER, also known as the Hwasong-7, could hit Yokosuka Naval Base, south of Tokyo, to prevent deployment of US 7th Fleet assets based

there to the Korean Peninsula, the report said.

Yokosuka is the largest strategically important US naval installation in the western Pacific.

According to the Japanese Defence Ministry’s latest white paper, North Korea has managed to extend the range of the Scud-ER by extending the body of the

ballistic missile while reducing the weight of its warhead, among other factors.

“The range of a Scud ER is estimated to reach 1,000 km, and it is possible that a part of Japan falls within this range,” it says.

North Korea also has longer-range ballistic missiles that can reach all or al-

most all of Japan, such as the Rodong, Taepodong-1, Taepodong-2 and Musudan missiles.

The JoongAng Ilbo report said the prospect of North Korea having Scud-ERs with such a capability is yet another headache for allies in the region as they consider missile defence systems.—Kyodo News

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Top Chinese envoy visits Viet Nam as South China Sea tension rises

HANOI — China’s top diplomat met Viet Nam’s leadership on Monday during a scheduled visit aimed at strengthening historically close relations at a time when ties are strained by squabbles over the South China Sea.

The trip by State Councillor Yang Jiechi comes amid a Chinese public relations blitz to try to discredit a looming verdict by an international tribunal, which could aggravate tensions if it undermines Beijing’s vast claims to waters extending far into Southeast Asia.

Yang, who outranks China’s foreign minister, and Viet Nam’s Foreign Minister and deputy premier, Pham Binh Minh, expressed a need to implement joint agreements on preventing rows from getting out of hand, said Viet Nam’s foreign ministry.

That included “controlling conflicts well, boosting negotiation mechanisms ... and finding basic and long-term solutions that both sides can accept through peaceful exchanges and ne-

gotiations”, the ministry said in a statement.

China’s state news agency Xinhua quoted Yang as saying both countries must “appropriately handle relevant disputes and problems”.

He later met with Viet Nam’s president and its Communist Party chief.

His visit comes as the region braces for the verdict in the case brought by the Philippines in 2013 to the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague seeking clarification of parts of United Nations maritime law.

China has said 47 countries support its refusal to recognise the case. Its diplomats have written editorials in regional newspapers denouncing what has been seen widely as a bold move by Manila, with scope for repercussions.

Incoming Philippine president, Rodrigo Duterte, on Monday said he would not discuss it until a ruling was made.

China claims almost the entire South China Sea, where about \$5 trillion



China’s State Councillor Yang Jiechi (L) and Viet Nam’s Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Pham Binh Minh shake hands after a meeting at the International Convention Centre in Hanoi, Viet Nam, on 27 June. PHOTO: REUTERS

worth of trade passes every year. Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan and Viet Nam also have claims.

Experts had said it was unlikely Yang would seek a sympathetic ear from Viet Nam, which has trust issues with China and has recently grown closer to the Philippines.

Viet Nam is not involved in The Hague case but stands to benefit from a positive ruling for Manila and has echoed its opposition to China’s fortification of artificial islands, the conduct of its coastguard and perceived intrusions into its

exclusive economic zone.

Ha Hoang Hop, a Vietnamese academic who has advised the government, said there was “no hidden agenda” behind Yang’s visit and no compromises would be made over the South China Sea.

The court is expected to rule in the coming months and there are concerns in the United States about how China could react should the verdict not work in its favour. Both sides have accused each other of trying to militarize a shipping route vital to the stability of the global economy.—Reuters

Empty houses and jobless maids — Indonesia's expat exodus gathers pace

JAKARTA — Foreign workers are leaving Indonesia at an increasing rate due to the slump in commodity prices that has forced resource companies to slash jobs at a time when the government has also introduced tighter regulations on expatriates in Southeast Asia's biggest economy.

The number of temporary residential permits issued to foreigners, including renewals, has fallen for the past few years to 171,944 in 2015 from 194,162 in 2013. In the first five months of this year, there were 72,399 issued but many of those who provide services to expats say they expect a further drop over the whole of 2016 as they are seeing very few new arrivals.

As a result, rents on upmarket homes in Jakarta have plummeted and enrolment at international schools has fallen.

"The expat drought has been really noticeable in 2016," said Deborah Minicola, a Jakarta-based technical advisor at international relocation company Allied Pickfords. "This time the expat community has been hit from so many angles."

The outflow is likely to dent higher-end consumption and drive up unemployment, economists say, as big-spending expats tend to hire multiple workers ranging from housemaids and drivers to gardeners and bodyguards.

Some workers who recently lost their jobs are finding it difficult to get new employment.

Christiana Ambar Putriani is one example. She has been looking for a job as a part-time housekeeper in Jakarta after her former bosses left for South America a few weeks ago. She hopes to work for an expat family again as foreigners tend to pay higher wages but it is getting tougher to find such jobs, she says.

The Australian Independent



A house guard stands in front of an empty rental house at Kemang district in Jakarta, Indonesia, on 23 June, 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

School in Balikpapan, a city in Indonesia's resource-dependent province of East Kalimantan, expects a 36 per cent reduction in its student body this year, said human resources officer Ni Ketut Novia. Three international schools in the city have shut over the past 2-3 years due to the mass layoffs at mining contractors and a drastic cut in expat allowances, she said.

The expat exodus will also create skill shortages that could hold the country back when the commodity downturn is reversed.

Low resource prices and a slowdown in demand from China, one of Indonesia's top export markets, have reduced the incentive for exploration or production in the oil and gas and mining sectors, forcing companies to hack back on staff costs.

The mining, oil and gas and geothermal sectors accounted for

7.62 per cent of Indonesia's gross domestic product in 2015, down from 11.81 per cent in 2011. Drilling contractors and exploration site surveyors are among the worst-hit, industry experts say.

Oil and gas companies operating in the country include Chevron Corp, Total SA and Exxon Mobil Corp. Total's Indonesia spokesman said the company has "manpower planning which is in line with our evolution of activities." Chevron, which is selling assets in Asia including some in Indonesia, declined to comment. Exxon also did not comment.

A PwC survey of 53 firms in the oil and gas sector, released in May, found that almost three-quarters of respondents expected a smaller expat workforce in future, partly because of tighter controls on hiring foreigners.

Indonesia opened up dozens

of business sectors recently to foreign investors in a move described by President Joko Widodo as a "Big Bang" liberalisation of the economy. Yet business groups say there are mixed signals from the government, which imposes restrictions apparently under pressure from protectionist voices around the president.

The manpower ministry is encouraging companies to hire more Indonesian workers and is tightening its scrutiny of the work permit applications from foreigners, said Ratna Agustina, a director at a firm that provides services to expats. The government also sets an age ceiling of 55 years for foreigners employed by oil and gas contractors, downstream businesses and supporting service providers — with certain exemptions for top executives or those with skills deemed crucial. —Reuters

Japan Airlines pilot arrested for hitting policeman, flight cancelled

TOKYO — A Japan Airlines copilot was arrested on Monday for hitting a policeman in central Japan, resulting in cancellation of a morning flight he was due to board the following day, the airline said.

Soichi Tatsumi, 42, was quoted as saying by the police that he does not remember clearly as he was drunk. JAL is also checking if he was complying with the airline's internal rules about preflight drinking.

Tatsumi slapped a policeman who had rushed to the scene after the copilot was seen hitting a 49-year-old JAL captain he had been drinking with on Monday night in Kanazawa, Ishikawa Prefecture, the airline said.

He was arrested on the spot for allegedly obstructing an officer in the performance of his duty.

The copilot was supposed to accompany the captain on Flight 182, which was scheduled to fly from Komatsu airport, near Kanazawa, to Tokyo's Haneda airport on Tuesday morning. The flight was cancelled as JAL could not arrange another copilot to substitute for Tatsumi.

According to the company's rule, pilots are allowed to drink until 12 hours before a flight's departure, but both the copilot and the captain are suspected of breaching the rule.

Eighty-one passengers were accommodated on other flights. JAL apologised over the incident. —Kyodo News

India expects potash miners to offer decade-low price after Belarus deal

MUMBAI — Leading global potash producers, including Russia's Uralkali, are likely to supply the crop nutrient to India at the same price Belarus agreed, a key Indian negotiator with overseas suppliers told Reuters.

Belarus on Monday agreed to sell 700,000 tonnes of potash to Indian Potash Limited (IPL) at \$227 per tonne, the lowest price in a decade.

"Uralkali has very good relations with Indian buyers. We are hopeful that it will agree to \$227," said P.S. Gahlaut, managing director of IPL, the country's biggest

importer. The contract price with Belarus is too low, and Uralkali, the world's biggest potash producer, is not yet ready to sign a potash supply contract with India, said a company spokesman.

"We cannot offer a higher price to any supplier. If they insist, then we can postpone purchases," Gahlaut said.

Usually, the first contract is signed by a major producer and then it becomes a benchmark for other miners. In the past, all suppliers have agreed over the price negotiated in the first contract.

This year, the price agreed

upon by Belarus is a third lower than last year, and a few suppliers feel it is too low.

"Belarus agreed to a lower price in a hurry," said an official with a leading potash miner.

Major potash suppliers to India include Uralkali, Potash Corp of Saskatchewan, Agrium Inc, Mosaic, K+S, Arab PotashCo and Israel Chemicals. Indian companies could sign contracts for another 3 million tonnes in the next few weeks, if other suppliers offer the same price, said an official with a Mumbai-based fertiliser company. —Reuters



An employee holds processed potassium salts at a Uralkali potash mine near the city of Berezniki in the Perm region close to Russia's Ural mountains in 2013. PHOTO: REUTERS

Opinion

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Economic Development and Governance

Khin Maung Aye

ECONOMISTS agree that governance is one of the critical factors that explain the divergence in performance across developing nations. The differences of views between economists concerning governance are to do first, with the types of state capacities that constitute the critical governance capacities needed for accelerating development and secondly, with the significance of governance related to other factors at early stages of development.

On the first issue, there is an important empirical and

theoretical controversy between liberal economists who constitute the mainstream consensus on good governance and statist and heterodox institutional economists who agree that governance is critical for economic development but argue that theory and evidence shows that the governance capacities required for successful development are substantially different from those identified by the good governance analysis.

The economists in favour of good governance argue that the critical state capacities are

those that maintain efficient markets and restrict the activities of states to the provision of necessary public goods to minimise rent seeking and government failure. The relative failure of many developing states are explained by the attempts of their states to do too much, resulting in the unleashing of unproductive rent seeking activities and the crowding out of productive market ones. The empirical support for this argument typically comes from cross sectional data on governance in developing countries that shows that in general,

countries with better governance defined in these terms performed better (Khan: 2016).

The second area of disagreement concerns the relative importance of governance reforms in accelerating development in countries at low levels of development. This being so, it can be said that although good governance is one of the necessary condition for the economic development of a state but it is not the sole and sufficient condition. There are many other factors which are equally important to promotion of economic development.

Nation Building through ICT application

Sayar Mya

THE author of this article has had an opportunity to stay in Singapore and Australia for about four months in 2014 and 2015. We stayed at our daughter's condominium at Botanic Gardens View, Taman Serasi, Singapore, in district 10, near Orchard MRT Station. It was amazing to witness that people could carry out day to day tasks with unbelievable ease and comfort through ICT application.

I am taking the liberty to share the experience with the esteemed readers on the advantages of ICT application. For instance, my daughter purchased air tickets for me and my better half for the trip from Singapore to Sydney just using the laptop at home. Flight reservation was made from home and the airfare was settled with credit card from home. Even the seat reservation on board was easily done from home. Since my daughter was busy at the Embassy, she did all these travel arrangements at night time after having dinner. The complete task of purchasing air ticket and securing of seats on board were done within one hour from home. This is just one example on the advantage of ICT application in developed countries. The system is operating 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and 365 days a year.

While staying at the residence of our son at 8 A, Birdsville Crescent, Leumeah, NSW 2560, Australia, we had witnessed that the citizens enjoyed ease and comfort by ICT application. There, my son did exactly the same in purchasing air tickets and securing seats on board for the return journey from Sydney to Singapore for us from home. This is just one example.

The author has great expecta-

tion and high impression on the ICT application to be introduced in our beloved country --- Myanmar.

The Global New Light of Myanmar printed a news item saying that "ICT event to be held in Yangon this November" in Tuesday 21 June 2016 issue. Learnt that sixty exhibitors have signed up to "Communi Cast" to be held in Yangon this November, and the event is designed to support Myanmar's developing ICT industry mobile, broadband, satellite and broadcasting markets.

"We are very pleased to be returning to Yangon for the third straight year with 60 exhibitors already signed up, the show is going from strength to strength," said Rupert Owen, Show Director for "Communi Cast."

Driving Myanmar's Digital Future

The third **Communi Cast** Myanmar show returns to Yangon from 15-17 November to support the country's development across the ICT solutions, mobile, broadband, satellite and broadcasting markets.

Co-located with the Myanmar Computer Federation's international ICT Exhibition and incorporating the Myanmar Satellite Forum the event is the proven opportunity to conduct business in one of Asia's most exciting markets.

As Myanmar steps up its ambitions for satellite sovereignty, the second Myanmar Satellite Forum provides a platform for government, industry and service providers to exchange ideas, develop relationships and build partnerships.

It is indeed a good time to engage with the new government to encourage the ICT or E-Govern-

ment for the development of the country.

The Importance of a National Strategic Framework for E-Government through ICT application

The implementation of **e-government** requires strong leadership and vision. It also requires a comprehensive strategy that is not only benchmarked on global best practices, but also sensitive to existing political and economic conditions and realities.

For e-government to become a reality, the central government, in consultation with stakeholders such as all ministries inclusive of states and regions, is advised to develop a **National Strategic Framework**. It articulates the government's vision, targets and milestones, technical approach and standards for e-government systems. Such a framework must address information privacy, security, maintenance, and interface standards.

However, it must be said at the outset that a **national framework** is not a prerequisite to any e-government project. To put this more precisely, critical e-government projects at the ministry / department/organization or local government levels should not be held up simply for lack of a national framework. Too many governments spend years and valuable resources on the process of developing a national strategy, when they could be moving forward on a few critical projects. What governments in developing countries should realize is that a national strategic framework is an ongoing process and not a static document. **What are the two approaches to e-government?**

There are two approaches to e-government. The first is the **top-**



PHOTO CREDIT: WWW.GOOGLE.COM

down approach. Characterized by a high degree of control by the central government, it usually includes the development of a strategy. The second is the **bottom-up approach**, in which individual departments and local governments independently move forward with their own projects, common standards are flexible, and overall national strategy is not so important. **Singapore and China** embody the top-down approach, while the **US and the Philippines** are closer to the bottom-up approach.

There are advantages and disadvantages to each method. The top-down approach facilitates integration. However, developing a national strategy, which the approach emphasizes, often takes years of internal strife and the technology decisions tend to be poor. It is therefore, costly and difficult to reverse. The bottom-up approach is less orderly and tends to some redundancy, but it also inspires innovation, resulting in a many grassroots projects.

In the end, the best approach to e-government depends on the individual country, on how its po-

litical and economic system works, and on the level of technology competence in each individual government unit.

Moreover, public awareness and support for e-government is critical for its success and its sustainability. Therefore, it requires consultation with the stakeholder in the process. Stakeholders include citizens, NGOs, businesses, various industries and special sectors such as national security, and the administration.

It is likewise important to understand global trends and to study global best practices of e-government projects and strategies. Only from studying other countries' successes and failures is a country able to effectively design its e-government strategy and avoid pitfalls that cost time, money and resources.

Studying other countries' experiences will allow governments that are about to embark on developing their e-government strategies to define their priority areas based on their specific political and cultural contexts in the transition to democracy.

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100 children treated for dengue Haemorrhagic fever at Yangon Children Hospital

YANGON Children's Hospital (YCH) has treated 140 patients for Dengue Haemorrhagic Fever (DHF) between January and June. The majority of those infected were five to 12 years old mostly from suburban areas, according to the hospitals figures.

Despite this, the hospital claims that the number is less than last year, during the same period, where the number infected nearly reached 500, according to the report.

"A continued outbreak of DHF has infected 138 children within the past six months, with one death reported," said Dr Su Su Dway, medical superintendent of the YCH.

According to the Ministry of Health and Sports, over 900 cases have been reported across the country over the past six months. Over 300 cases occurred in Yangon with four

deaths reported. The country's largest city has the highest mortality rate. It did not specify on states or self administered zones.

Dengue fever is a mosquito-borne viral infection and is the leading cause of hospitalisation and death among children and adults across developing nations. Protection is more important than treatment as there are no specific medicines or antibiotics to treat the dengue virus.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), early detection and access to proper medical care lowers mortality rates below 1%.

A WHO study said that 3 million people were infected with dengue fever worldwide in 2013, with 12,500 deaths.

Myanmar reported a total of 13,086 cases in 2014 and 20,255 in 2013.—200

Senior-General Min Aung Hlaing meets with foreign ambassadors



Senior General holding talks with Mr. Yoo Jae-Kyung, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Myanmar.

PHOTO: MNA

COMMANDER-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing received Mr. Stephen Marshall, Ambassador of New Zealand to Myanmar, at Bayintnaung Hall in Nay Pyi

Taw yesterday. During the talks the two representatives discussed cooperation between the two defence services, agriculture, livestock and food security and technical cooperation in the field of

veterinary medicine.

Next, the Senior General held talks with Mr. Yoo Jae-Kyung, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Myanmar.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Nation Building through ICT application

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How does a country build an appropriate e-government infrastructure?

A **Government Information Infrastructure (GII)**, which is a network that connects all government agencies, is needed to ensure that citizens enjoy the full benefits of e-government. Building a **GII** is a very expensive undertaking that requires cross-agency, cross-government planning. The following must be considered when building such a government backbone.

The cost implications

A financial feasibility study is necessary for such an endeavor. This cost-benefit analysis can help government decide either to open portions of the government backbone and charge access fees to telecommunications carriers or operators to sustain operations, or to altogether ride on an **existing private network** due to cost constraints.

The infrastructure issues

These include the country's existing infrastructure, current level of Internet penetration, telephone density, and existing speed of technology change, allowances for convergence or connection, and investment in broadband.

The benefits and risks

Having one's **own backbone**

ensures that government communications are open and secure and operating 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and 365 days a year. However, this may mean regular funding for upgrades and maintenance of the network, and for hiring a team to support the network full time.

Some governments may decide that building their own backbone is too costly and too time-consuming. Building a backbone may take years and billions of dollars to complete, and if governments want to immediately engage in e-government, there may not be enough time or money to do so.

An alternative is to ride on an existing **private telecommunications backbone**, usually one run by a large telecommunications carrier. This means that government will be entrusting the security of the network to the operator, who will also be assuming the costs of regular network maintenance and technical support and the risks of possible network sabotage.

In order to minimize the threat of security risks, governments who are riding on a **private backbone** will have to set up the following types of security measures: firewalls, intrusion detection software, encryption, and secure

networks such as **Virtual Private Networks, Wide Area Networks or Local Area Networks** for government departments / agencies that require high levels of security, such as the armed forces.

Government Information Infrastructure: New Korea Net-Government (NKN-G)

The New Korea Net-Government (NKN-G) was constructed to improve the efficiency of government operations and delivery of public services in South Korea. It connects central and local governments, public institutions, research organizations and universities through optical fibers.

The NKN-G was completed in 2015. It was developed within the larger framework of the **Korea National Information Infrastructure (NII)**. The project was prompted in 1992 by the government's fear that unless an information infrastructure was built, its basic industries would not be able to compete in the global marketplace.

The NII was seen as part and parcel of Korea's national economic policy, with **the NKN-G** allowing for simple and swift delivery of public services in support of the national government's goal of transparent, accountable, and efficient government.

The construction of **the Ko-**

rean Information Infrastructure --- KII involved the development of an advanced information infrastructure that involved not only communications services, but also Internet services, application software, computers and operating systems, as well as information products and services. Through **the KII**, Korean citizens are able to access information and services and transact business 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

What is software architecture and why is it important in e-government development?

Software architecture refers to the high-level organizational structure of a software system. A well planned, secure and flexible e-government platform is necessary for governments to meet the growing demands for services delivered via the Internet and future delivery channels. Building a common architecture for e-government requires secure and trusted inter-operable systems that will adopt existing Internet and World Wide Web standards for all government agencies, at all levels. This is a pragmatic approach that reduces the costs and risks of operating information technology systems while keeping the public sector in step with the global Internet revolution. The idea of an in-

ter-operable system within one government means that agencies can easily "talk to one another"—whether by sending email or exchanging information—without any technical problems that hinder the smooth operation of government.

Conclusion

At the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development held in Rio de Janeiro in June 2012, a global consensus was reached that to achieve our sustainable development goals we need institutions at all levels that are effective, transparent, accountable and democratic. E-government holds tremendous potential to improve the way that governments deliver public services and enhance broad stakeholder involvement in public service.

The people of Myanmar would be more than happy to witness that Myanmar initially steps into the world of ICT industry through "**Communi Cast**" Myanmar show. Consequently, Myanmar embarks on the **existing and reliable private communication backbone** with the assistance of friendly countries creating E-Government at least for some government departments and private businesses that deal with the citizens.

Germany, France, Italy sketch out new goals for EU in joint statement

BERLIN — Germany, France and Italy said they will propose a clear plan to secure the European Union's borders, strengthen its economy and create jobs for young people at an EU summit on Tuesday to discuss Britain's vote to leave the bloc. Chancellor Angela Merkel, President Francois

Hollande and Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi said in a joint statement after talks in Berlin that the EU needed the support of its people to move forward and must respond to their concerns.

"We will propose tomorrow ... launching a process based on a strict calendar and clear com-

mitments to respond to the challenges presented by the results of the British referendum," read the statement in French. In the document, the three leaders agreed on the need to "develop concrete solutions for a good future for Europeans at the heart of the European Union."—Reuters



German Chancellor Angela Merkel, French President Francois Hollande and Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi attend a news conference at the chancellery during discussions on the outcome of the Brexit in Berlin, Germany, on 27 June, 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Balkans fear Brexit will delay EU dream

BELGRADE — Balkan countries hoping to join the European Union fear their journey to membership of a club they see as offering prosperity and stability will face delays and uncertainty now that Britain has voted to leave.

Albania, Bosnia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia, which endured war and upheaval in the 1990s, are all at different stages in joining the 28-nation EU.

The immediate reaction in Balkan capitals to Britain's refer-

endum decision last Thursday was that EU membership efforts would continue undiminished.

Prime Minister Aleksandar Vucic said Serbia would stick to its "European path", aiming to complete accession talks by 2019.

Bosnia should not be discouraged by the British vote and must press on with EU integration, said Denis Zvizdic, chairman of Bosnia's council of ministers. But there is now acceptance that the Brexit upheaval, which came with the EU already showing less

enthusiasm about enlargement, is likely to delay accession for the Balkan hopefuls. Some felt they had lost a champion in London.

"Our fear is that following Brexit the enlargement process could be slowed down," said Maja Bobic, secretary-general of the European Movement in Serbia, a group that promotes EU values.

She said that as the EU negotiates Britain's departure, Brussels will be focused on how the bloc can be consolidated rather than enlarged.—Reuters

Kerry raises harassment of US diplomats in Moscow with Putin

WASHINGTON — Russian harassment and surveillance of US diplomats in Moscow has increased significantly and US Secretary of State John Kerry raised the issue recently with Russian President Vladimir Putin, the State Department said on Monday.

Kerry last raised the matter with Putin on 24 March this year, a State Department official said.

"He has raised it with President Putin," State Department spokeswoman Elizabeth Trudeau told a news briefing earlier, adding: "We see an increase and we take it seriously."

Trudeau said harassment by Russian security agents and traffic

police had been an issue over the past two years, but did not give details of incidents nor why it was raised with Putin.

Other Western embassies had reported the same behaviour toward their diplomats stationed in Moscow, Trudeau added.

Washington stripped five of the six Russian honorary consuls of credentials in January to retaliate for harassment of its diplomats in Moscow. In response, Russia's Foreign Ministry accused the United States of provoking Russian diplomats in the United States and elsewhere. Honorary consuls are typically US citizens or green card holders who perform consular ser-

vices on behalf of a foreign government, a US official said, saying the five were located in California, Florida, Minnesota, Utah and Puerto Rico. Asked whether harassment of US diplomats occurred only in Moscow, Trudeau said: "We can't rule out such harassment that could occur elsewhere. I just don't have specifics on other countries."

Despite cooperation between Moscow and Washington on the Iran nuclear deal, tensions between the two countries have escalated since Russia annexed the Crimean Peninsula from Ukraine in 2014 and Moscow's increasing backing for Syrian President Bashar al-Assad.—Reuters

NEWS IN BRIEF

Crashed EgyptAir flight data recorder successfully repaired: investigation committee

CAIRO — Egypt investigators said on Monday that the flight data recorder of crashed EgyptAir flight MS804 had been successfully repaired, paving the way for investigators to analyze data that may explain why the jet plunged into the Mediterranean last month.

The investigators added in a statement that the doomed plane's cockpit voice recorder would begin to be worked on "within hours" also. The recorders arrived in Paris from Cairo on Monday to remove salt deposits. They will be sent back to a laboratory in Cairo to analyze the data once the repairs are completed, the statement added.—Reuters

Waste of time to discuss EU treaty change now, Germany's Schaeuble says

KUENZELSAU, (Germany) — German Finance Minister Wolfgang Schaeuble said on Monday it would lead to nothing if EU member states discussed a treaty change as a reaction to the British decision to leave the bloc.

"It would be a waste of time to discuss a treaty change in the EU now," Schaeuble said in a speech at a private university in the southern town of Kuenzelsau.

The veteran politician said the outcome of last week's referendum was heartbreaking.

"One has the impression that the British also feel like crying, but that doesn't help anyone now. They should have thought about it earlier," Schaeuble said.—Reuters

UN chief in Gaza to push for resumption of peace talks

GAZA — United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on Tuesday arrived in Gaza Strip before concluding a tour in the Middle East.

Ban Ki-moon came into Gaza through the Israeli controlled Erez crossing. He met with UN officials working in Gaza and visited a school run by the United Nations Relief and Work Agency for Palestine Refugees UNRWA.

The last visit of UN Secretary General to Gaza was in 2014, after Israel launched a 50-day-long offensive on Gaza. He also visited the coastal enclave in the end of 2008. —Xinhua

India police arrest woman topper for cheating in exams

NEW DELHI — Indian police have arrested a 17-year-old woman topper in the eastern state of Bihar on charges of cheating in examination after she failed a retest.

A senior police official said on Tuesday that Ruby Rai, who came first in Bihar state examinations, was produced in a court and remanded to judicial custody for two weeks.

Her arrest came after she was made to retake her examinations in the wake of a video interview going viral, in which she said her main subject political science was about cooking.

"She failed in the retest after her original results were cancelled. Rai was arrested soon after," the official said.

According to the police, arrest warrants have also been issued for several other students who did well in the state examinations, but are suspected to have cheated.—Xinhua

Missing helicopter of Thai air force found crashed, all three on board dead

BANGKOK — Search team found wreckage of a helicopter of the Thai air force that disappeared Saturday in southeastern Thailand and all three men on board were confirmed dead, Thai media reported.

According to Thairath, the search team found them in at about 10:30 am local time in the Khao Chamao mountain. The three casualties were two air force pilots and a maintenance officer.

Suttipong Inseeyong, commander of the air force's air operation control, said it will take more time to take the bodies from the scene, since the incident happened in the mountain and it was raining.

The helicopter lost contact over the Khao Chamao-Khao Wong National Park that straddles Rayong and Chanthaburi provinces when it was en route to provide supplies to an air Force radar station.—Xinhua

Plight of stranded Syrian refugees worsens as Jordan blocks aid — aid workers

AMMAN — Thousands of Syrian refugees stranded on Jordan's northeastern border with Syria are running out of food after a militant suicide attack prompted the army to shut the area, international relief workers and refugees said on Monday.

Jordan, a staunch US ally, declared the area a closed military zone after a suicide bomber, believed to be an Islamic State militant, drove a vehicle last Tuesday from the Syrian side and rammed it into a military base close to Rukban camp, killing seven border guards.

Aid workers said convoys of food which normally go to the camp were being held up for a sixth day in Ruwaished, the closest town to Rukban camp, which is far from any inhabitable place. Only water trucks were being allowed through.

"Access continues to be denied and we are concerned because these trapped people have basic needs," said Hala Shamla-wi, spokesperson for the International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC).

Relief workers said the few supplies coming into the area were from smuggler rings inside Syria.

"We know the food rations will run out soon, probably in a few days' time ... This is a matter of concern," said Dina El Kassaby, regional spokesperson of World Food Programme (WFP).

The authorities gave no explanation for blocking aid that affects between 60,000 to 70,000 refugees, mostly women and



Syrian refugees wait to board a Jordanian army vehicle after crossing into Jordanian territory with their families, in Al Ruqban border area, near the northeastern Jordanian border with Syria, and Iraq, near the town of Ruwaished, 240 km (149 miles) east of Amman in 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

children, who have been stranded for months in a no-man's land at the only crossing where Jordan now receives refugees.

Since Russia expanded its air strikes against Islamic State-held areas in central and eastern Syria, the number of refugees trekking south across the desert to the Jordanian border has risen sharply, according to UN aid workers.

But Jordan, which has already accepted more than 600,000 UN-registered Syrian refugees, fears Islamic State

militants may have infiltrated the ranks of those arriving at the border.

Earlier waves of Syrian refugees had a much easier time entering Jordan but the kingdom sealed border crossings near population centres in 2013 in an attempt to stem the flow.

Officials chose the sparsely populated desert area where the borders of Syria, Jordan and Iraq meet in order to discourage refugees from entering the kingdom, relief workers say.

Rights groups such as Am-

nesty International have urged Jordan not to take a tough security response.

"A total closure of the border and denial of humanitarian aid to the area would inevitably lead to extreme hardship among those unable to find refuge and put their lives at risk," said Sherif Elsayed-Ali of Amnesty International.

Foreign Minister Nasser Joudeh told Western envoys after the attack that Jordan's security outweighed humanitarian concerns.—Reuters

US investigates reports hostages killed in Afghanistan air strike

KABUL — At least six prisoners of the Taliban as well as a Taliban commander died following a US air strike in Afghanistan at the weekend, according to conflicting reports which US officials said they were investigating.

A Defence Department official in Washington confirmed an air strike was launched against the Taliban on Saturday. The official said on Monday reports that civilians had been killed in the attack were being investigated.

Details of the incident, near the northern city of Kunduz on Saturday, remain unclear. It follows a decision by President Barack Obama to authorise greater use of US combat power against the Taliban.

Sher Aziz Kamawal, a senior police commander in northeast Afghanistan, said Janat Gul Osm-ani, a senior Taliban commander responsible for a series of kidnappings, was killed along with five other militants when his car was hit by an air strike in the Chardara district of Kunduz.

In retaliation, he said on Monday, the Taliban killed six civilian prisoners by blowing them up.

Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid confirmed that Mullah Janat and four fighters had been killed in the air strike, which he said also killed six captured Afghan soldiers the Taliban was holding. He denied the Taliban had killed the captives itself.—Reuters

No Syrian govt attacks on Aleppo, Raqqa seen soon — Ifax cites Russian envoy

MOSCOW — Russia's air force has helped Syrian government troops to escape encirclement near Aleppo, Interfax news agency on Tuesday quoted Russia's ambassador to Syria as saying, adding he did not expect Syria's army to assault the city in the nearest time.

"I am not confident than an offensive on Aleppo will take place in the foreseeable future," Alexander Kinshchak told Interfax. "As for Raqqa, in this case I would also like to refrain from any certain forecasts regarding its liberation," he added, referring to Islamic State's bulwark.

"Frankly speaking, I am not certain at all that this may happen in the nearest time."—Reuters

Turkey mends fences with Israel, Russia in foreign policy reset

ISTANBUL/MOSCOW/JERUSALEM — Turkey announced the restoration of diplomatic ties with Israel on Monday after a six-year rupture and expressed regret to Russia over the downing of a warplane, seeking to mend strained alliances and ease a sense of isolation on the world stage.

The deal with Israel after years of negotiation was a rare rapprochement in the divided Middle East, driven by the prospect of lucrative Mediterranean gas deals as well as mutual fears over growing security risks.

"With this agreement, economic relations will start to improve," Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan said of the deal with Israel, echoing Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who said it would have "immense implications" for Israel's economy.

In his comments following a dinner to break the fast in the holy month of Ramadan, Erdogan also said Turkey aimed for a quick normalisation of ties with

Moscow.

"I believe we will normalise our relations with Russia rapidly by ending the existing situation which is not in the interest of both sides," he said.

The Kremlin earlier said Erdogan had apologized to Vladimir Putin over last year's shooting down of a Russian air force jet by Turkey's military, opening the way for Russia to lift economic sanctions.

A spokesman for Erdogan, Ibrahim Kalin, confirmed a letter was sent to Putin, though he did not refer explicitly to an apology, something Turkish officials had long ruled out. Kalin said Erdogan had expressed regret and asked the family of the pilot to "excuse us."

The moves come as a new Turkish government packed with Erdogan allies re-evaluates its foreign policy. Ankara has seen relations strained not only with Israel and Russia, but also with the United States and European Union in recent months.

Turkey's worst nightmare

in Syria has come true: Russian support has enabled its enemy President Bashar al-Assad to remain in power, while Kurdish militia fighters have benefited from US support as they battle Islamic State, bolstering their position in territory adjacent to the Turkish border.

Days after taking office last month, new Prime Minister Binali Yildirim said Turkey needed to "increase its friends and decrease its enemies", in what appeared a tacit admission that his predecessor's policies had left the NATO member isolated.

"It seems to me Turkey is undertaking a reprioritisation of foreign policy," said Brenda Shaffer, a visiting professor at Georgetown University and a fellow at the Atlantic Council.

"In both of these cases, it is practical realpolitik overriding ideological considerations. There were never any bilateral disputes between Turkey and Israel, just the opposite, there were only mutual interests. The same

is true for Russia."

Turkey and Israel will exchange ambassadors as soon as possible, Yildirim said on Monday.

Relations between Israel and what was once its principle Muslim ally crumbled after Israeli marines stormed an activist ship in May 2010 to enforce a naval blockade of the Hamas-run Gaza Strip and killed 10 Turks on board.

The mending in relations with Israel raises the prospect of eventual cooperation to exploit natural gas reserves worth hundreds of billions of dollars under the eastern Mediterranean, officials have said. Netanyahu said it opened the way for possible Israeli gas supplies to Europe via Turkey.

Speaking after meeting US Secretary of State John Kerry in Rome, Netanyahu said the agreement was an important step.

"It has also immense implications for the Israeli economy, and I use that word advisedly," he told reporters.—Reuters

Norwegian court rejects Edward Snowden lawsuit on free passage



American whistleblower Edward Snowden is seen through a camera viewfinder as he delivers remarks via video link from Moscow to attendees at a discussion regarding an International Treaty on the Right to Privacy, Protection Against Improper Surveillance and Protection of Whistleblowers in Manhattan, New York in 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

OSLO — Former US spy contractor Edward Snowden has failed in a legal bid to win guarantees from Norway that it would not extradite him to the United States if he went there to receive a free speech award, a Norwegian court said on Monday.

Snowden's law firm said in April he would take the state to court to secure free passage to the Nordic country. The United States has filed espionage charges against him for leaking details of extensive US surveillance programmes.

"Oslo District Court has decided that the lawsuit from Edward Snowden against the State regarding extradition, should be dismissed," the court said in a statement.

Snowden was granted asylum in Russia, which borders Norway, in 2013. He had been invited to Norway to receive a freedom of speech award from the local branch of writers' group PEN International, but worried that he would be handed over to the United States, his lawyers have said.

NATO member Nor-

way has close diplomatic ties with the United States. The Justice Ministry has declined to comment on the case, leaving it to the court to decide.

The Oslo court said the country's extradition laws only apply to people who are already in the country, and that the justice ministry could not be compelled to issue a decision on whether or not to extradite someone who lives abroad.

The decision is expected to be appealed within days, one of the lawyers involved in the

case told Reuters.

"We believe the court is being too formalistic," said Jon Wessel-Aas, representing three Norwegian press organisations acting as third-party interveners supporting Snowden's lawsuit. He acknowledged that there was no U.S. extradition request right now, but argued Washington was sure to make one if Snowden visited the country. As part of the verdict, Snowden was also ordered to pay 7,000 Norwegian crowns (\$823.64) to the government to cover legal expenses.—Reuters

Australian firefighters to campaign against Labour on 2 July election day

MELBOURNE — A force of 10,000 firefighters from the Victorian Country Fire Authority (CFA) are set to target polling booths throughout the state's marginal seats on the July 2 election day, in what shapes as a blow to the Australian Labour Party's federal campaign.

CFA volunteers have been frustrated by Victorian Premier Daniel Andrews' handling of a three-year dispute between the CFA and the United Firefighters Union (UFU), a union representing career fire fighters.

The UFU have been negotiating with the Victorian Government over a new pay deal that would significantly raise the wages of career firefighters, their working conditions and safety measures.

But the CFA has rejected the new deal, as it feared it would give the UFU too much power over operational decisions and would threaten the volunteer organisation.

The CFA is one of the world's largest volunteer emergency services and community safety organizations. Its 59,000 volunteers are responsible for controlling fires in country Victoria and outer Melbourne, and played a major role in saving lives and homes in the 2009 Victorian bushfire, known as 'Black Saturday'.

Andrews' interven-

tion in the firefighters' dispute has had an adverse effect on Opposition Leader Bill Shorten's federal campaign. In a survey published by NewsCorp earlier this week, it was revealed 40 percent of voters in four of Victoria's marginal seats were less likely to vote Labor because of the CFA dispute.

Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull has urged Andrews to reconsider his support for the new UFU deal, warning him it could damage the CFA. The federal government is considering legislation to protect the CFA from a union takeover, as the power play is threatening to spill into the federal election campaign.

The dispute is set to come to a head on July 2, election day, when an army of CFA volunteers are set to face off against hundreds of UFU members in key marginal seats across Victoria.

NewsCorp is reporting that CFA members will be at polling booths in their yellow uniforms, carrying signs and talking to voters.

One senior CFA volunteer organizer said: "We'll be there with our trucks, carrying signs, wearing our yellows."

UFU members plan to hand out how-to-vote cards which put the Liberal Party last.—Xinhua

In campaign trail debut with Clinton, Warren says Trump driven by greed



Democratic US presidential candidate Hillary Clinton (R) stands along side US Senator Elizabeth Warren at a campaign rally in Cincinnati, Ohio, US, on 27 June, 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

CINCINNATI — Liberal Elizabeth Warren attacked Republican Donald Trump on Monday during her first campaign appearance with US Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton, calling him an "insecure money grubber" who is driven by greed and hate.

Warren, a leader of the Democratic Party's progressive wing and a potential vice presidential pick, said Clinton had spent her career fighting for liberal values while Trump, a wealthy real estate developer, was focused on boosting his bottom line.

The US senator from Massachusetts appeared with Clinton before a raucous, enthusiastic crowd

in Cincinnati, Ohio, targeting a battleground state in a potential preview of a Clinton-Warren campaign team. She repeatedly accused Trump of looking out for himself instead of for average Americans.

"When Donald Trump says he'll make America great, he means make it even greater for rich guys just like Donald Trump," Warren said, standing shoulder to shoulder with a cheering Clinton.

Clinton has struggled to win over some liberal backers of rival Bernie Sanders, a democratic socialist US senator from Vermont, since beating him for the Democratic nomination this month. She hopes the support of

Warren can help her in that effort as she campaigns against Trump for the 8 November election.

Warren, who has vigorously attacked Trump in recent weeks, called him "a small, insecure money grubber who fights for no one but himself" and warned: "He will crush you into the dirt to get whatever he wants. That's who he is."

The capacity crowd repeatedly roared its approval, and a line of supporters who could not get inside stretched out the door and down the street. At one point, Warren stopped her speech to turn and applaud Clinton, a former secretary of state.

"She knows what it

takes to beat a thin-skinned bully who is driven by greed and hate," said Warren, known for calling for reining in Wall Street and eradicating income inequality.

In a statement, Trump called Warren "a sellout" for backing Clinton, who has taken donations from Wall Street interests and once backed the Trans-Pacific Partnership, the Asian trade deal. Clinton has since reversed her trade stance.

In an interview with NBC News, Trump called Warren "a fraud" and "a racist," accusing her of making up claims about her Native American heritage to advance her career.

He again called Warren "Pocahontas," the name of a 17th-century Native American figure, to draw attention to a controversy first raised during Warren's 2012 Senate race in Massachusetts.

"She is one of the least productive senators in the United States Senate," Trump told NBC. "We call her Pocahontas for a reason."

Two other potential Clinton vice presidential picks — US senators Tim Kaine of Virginia and Sherrod Brown of Ohio — rejected Trump's assertion and defended Warren's record.

"That's what he does, he attacks people. He acts like he's attacking their character — he's attacking his own character when he does that," Brown told Reuters.

"You can't believe anything Donald Trump says. Period," Kaine told Reuters.—Reuters

Magnitude 5.7 quake shakes southern Mexico, no damage reported

MEXICO CITY — A 5.7 magnitude earthquake hit Mexico's southern state of Oaxaca on Monday, the US Geological Survey (USGS) said, shaking buildings as far away as Mexico City, but officials reported there were no immediate damages.

The quake struck 10 kilometres (6 miles) north of the town of Pinotepa de Don Luis at a depth of 10 km (6 miles), the USGS said.

"It felt horrible and very strong, and it felt like it lasted two or three minutes," said a receptionist at the Hotel Las Gaviotas de Pinotepa in Oaxaca state, who declined to give her name.

The shaking was felt more than 360 km (225 miles) away in Mexico City, where some offices were evacuated.

Nonetheless, Interior Minister Miguel Angel Osorio Chong said on Twitter there were no immediate reports of damage.

"Our representatives all over the state have re-



Workers evacuate a building after an earthquake in Mexico City, Mexico, on 27 June 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

ported to us that the preliminary situation is that there is no damage anywhere," said Felipe Reyna,

emergency services coordinator in Oaxaca.

Mexican national oil company Pemex said it had

no immediate news on the state of its Salina Cruz refinery in Oaxaca, the company's biggest with a crude

processing capacity of 330,000 barrels per day.

But Oaxaca Governor Gabino Cue said on Twit-

ter that there was no damage at industrial installations in the state. —Reuters

India starts delivery of components for global clean energy project

NEW DELHI — India has started delivery of the components for a global project to build world's largest fusion device in France, local media reported on Tuesday.

"So far we have delivered less than 10 per cent of total components," Dheeraj Bora, director of Institute for Plasma Research, was quoted by the media as saying in western state of Gujarat.

"First set of vessel shield has been sent to South Korea, cooling water

system has been shipped, beam dump has been delivered, and parts of Cryosat have also been delivered," he added.

The institute is taking care of the Indian part of the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor project that aims at producing carbon-free energy. The project is scheduled to be ready by December 2025, Bora said. Other parties involved in the project are European Union, China, Japan, South Korea, the US and Russia.—Xinhua

Pacific island nations, United States agree to new multilateral tuna access, aid deal

SYDNEY — The impasse on fishing access for the US tuna fleet into one of the world's most lucrative fisheries islands has ended after the Pacific islands and the United States agreed to a new multilateral access and aid treaty.

Administered by the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) Fisheries Agency (FFA), the 28-year-old South Pacific Tuna Treaty was on the verge of collapse in the first half of 2016 following a significant impasse on fishing access fees following the

collapse in tuna prices last year. The treaty is the Pacific's most important aid, trade and geopolitical agreement governing the US fleet's access to the Skipjack Tuna fishery in the South Pacific, providing much needed aid via the purchase of fishing days, or fishing effort, as well as fisheries surveillance by the US military. The treaty's negotiation, which had been on shaky ground over the past five months, ended at the weekend with an agreement to give the US tuna

fleet more flexibility in their access while the Pacific nations get more control over their maritime Exclusive Economic Zones.

"The sense of achievement and relief that regional cooperation has delivered a deal many doubted could be achieved, definitely tops a very long, often frustrating, and sometimes torturous negotiation process for the Pacific," Pacific Island Forum (PIF) Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) director-general James Movic said in a statement. The FFA, the US

State Department and vested interests have agreed in principle to a new business model which sees U.S. tuna vessels treated as individuals rather than a single fleet, while also allowing PIF parties to negotiate access agreements individually.

While the new treaty is less than what was originally in place, the FFA said the fewer days for the US fleet means they get a higher rate of return, and presumably, member states can sell the extra days to foreign fleets.—Xinhua

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A very British, and muddy, Glastonbury wraps up for another year

GLASTONBURY — As weary Glastonbury fans extricated their tents and cars from the ankle-deep mud on Monday morning, they could at least bathe in the glow of a “Best of British” music festival that did something to dispel their gloom at seeing fellow Britons vote to leave the EU.

Although Glastonbury, held at a dairy farm in Somerset, southwestern England, is well-known for its wet and muddy conditions, this year’s festival was particularly soggy, with rain falling on every day of the event.

With some car parks flooded, many of those departing had to get local farmers to come and help tow vehicles away - for a fee.

Michael Eavis, who founded the music and performing arts festival in 1970, told the Guardian newspaper that “every single bit of wood chip in the south of England” had been brought to the festival site in an attempt to improve the muddy conditions.

“I’ve never seen mud like



Revellers take part in ‘EU referendum — Call to action’ flash mob at Worthy Farm in Somerset during the Glastonbury Festival, Britain, on 26 June 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

it in my whole life,” he told the newspaper. “In all 46 years, it hasn’t been as bad as this.”

British superband Coldplay closed the festival in spectacular fashion on Sunday night, reeling off hit after hit, lighting up both the stage and the crowd, and sending revellers off into the night singing.

Eavis came on stage at the end of Coldplay’s set to sing Frank Sinatra’s “My Way”, ac-

companied on the piano by the band’s front man, Chris Martin. With lyrics such as “And now, the end is near”, the song choice sparked rumours that 80-year-old Eavis was stepping down as festival organiser.

Coldplay, who have headlined the festival a record-breaking four times, had earlier brought on Barry Gibb of the Bee Gees for two songs, including the Bee Gees’ hit “Staying Alive”, which

provoked ecstatic screams from the crowd.

Around 100,000 multi-coloured LED wristbands, which lit up in different colours in time with the music, had been distributed by festival staff throughout the day to revellers. Along with balloons, confetti, lasers and fireworks, they made for a stunning show.

Coldplay also paid tribute to British band Viola Beach, whose

four young members tragically died in a road accident earlier this year, projecting a video of the band singing “Boys Don’t Sing” before joining in to sing along.

Earlier on the main Pyramid stage, Jeff Lynne’s ELO, formed in the same year Glastonbury started, had taken the festival’s 4 p.m. “legend slot” amid pouring rain. Their hit “Mr Blue Sky” seemed a little misplaced.—*Reuters*

EU regulators to decide on Sony’s Michael Jackson deal by 1 August

BRUSSELS — EU antitrust authorities will rule by 1 August whether to allow Sony Corp (6758.T) to buy out the Michael Jackson estate’s stake in its music publishing joint venture, a move which rivals such as Warner Music Group say gives Sony too much power.

Sony requested approval on 24 June, according to a filing on the European Commission website. The EU competition enforcer can clear the deal unconditionally or demand concessions.

It can also open a five-month long investigation if it has serious concerns the deal may harm consumers and rivals.

Sony signed a deal in March to acquire the stake that the deceased pop star held in Sony/ATV Music Publishing, the world’s largest music publisher, which owns copyrights to most of the Beatles’ songs and songs by the Rolling Stones, Taylor Swift, Pharrell Williams and Kanye West.

Warner Music Group has conveyed its concerns to the Commission, a person familiar with the matter told Reuters, while lobbying group Impala which represents independent labels and national trade associations, has also done the same.—*Reuters*

Kanye West stirs up controversy with nude celebrities in ‘Famous’

LOS ANGELES — Rapper Kanye West set tongues wagging on Monday with his latest music video that features nude portrayals of high profile celebrities including pop singer Taylor Swift, Republican presidential hopeful Donald Trump and comedian Bill Cosby.

The music video for “Famous,” which premiered on E! News, featured low-resolution footage depicting 12 celebrities sleeping next to each other with West situated in the middle, nestled between Swift and his wife, reality star Kim Kardashian.

Other celebrities include former US President George W. Bush, Vogue editor Anna Wintour, rapper Chris Brown, R&B singer Ray J, transgender reality star Caitlyn Jenner, model Amber Rose and singer Rihanna, who provided vocals for the song.

E! blurred out depictions of breasts and genitals. It is not known if the portrayals are paintings or wax statues, but in some cases it appears to be the actual celebrity posing.

The video ends by pausing on the sleeping faces of Swift, Rihanna and Brown over the audio of heavy breathing.



Entertainer Kanye West. PHOTO: REUTERS

Representatives for West, Kardashian, Jenner, Trump and Cosby declined to comment on the video. Representatives for the other celebrities did not immediately return requests for comment.

E! News host Jason Kennedy said “Kanye wants everyone to know this is not a video. This is an art visual.”

The imagery for “Famous” is inspired by artist Vincent Desiderio’s 2008 painting “Sleep,” which featured people in various states of undress sleeping next to

each other.

Desiderio called West’s video “a tableau that was disturbingly familiar, rapturously beautiful and frighteningly uncanny,” in an essay published Monday for W Magazine.

West, known for often embarking on rambling ‘tweetstorms’ on social media, held the first screening of the “Famous” video in Los Angeles late on Friday.

The video quickly became a trending topic online over the weekend especially due to West’s complicated history with Swift.

The rapper famously interrupted Swift’s acceptance speech at the 2009 MTV Video Music Awards and snatched her microphone award out of her hand. The duo buried the hatchet at last year’s MTV Video Music awards, but the truce did not last long. The two fell out again in February after West’s song “Famous,” off his latest album “The Life of Pablo,” featured the lyric “I feel like me and Taylor might still have sex, I made that bitch famous.”—*Reuters*



People watch a projection of late US singer Michael Jackson during ‘Blink’, an 30-metre-high audio-visual video installation that captures people in slow motion, by British artist Simon Bowsell on the facade of Hong Kong Cultural Centre on 25 May 2010. PHOTO: REUTERS

Gov't begins probe into natural monument damage by climbers

GIFU (Japan)— The government has started an investigation into the management and preservation of natural monuments by local governments in Japan, after discovering a rock designated as a national treasure was damaged by wedges for climbing, officials said on Tuesday.

The Cultural Affairs Agency plans to request that local governments improve the way they manage such sites and places of scenic beauty, based on the results of the emergency investigation, the officials said.

The agency has interviewed officials of the local governments. In Gifu Prefecture, central Japan, it has found that two wedges were embedded on the Oni Iwa rock, a national natural monument around 15 meters high. Among other reports, the agency also discovered around 60 wedges in rocks at the Tenryukyo gorge, a state-designated place of scenic beauty in neigh-

bouring Nagano Prefecture.

"These cases are possibly just the tip of the iceberg amid the booming popularity of climbing," said Tadahiro Shibata of the agency's cultural property department. "We will grasp the nationwide trend first." The Japan Free Climbing Association said many climbers do not know such sites are cultural properties.

Currently, there are about 240 geological and mineral formations designated as national natural monuments and 250 or more rocks and gardens designated as places of scenic beauty across the country. The management of each site is the responsibility of local governments.

Police are investigating the case involving Oni Iwa in the Hida-Kiso River National Park, straddling Gifu and Aichi prefectures, as a suspected violation of the law for protecting cultural properties. —Kyodo News

Keepers of the flame — Taiwan keeps the art of fire fishing alive

TAIPEI — Under the darkness of the night sky, a small group of Taiwan fishermen set sail off the northeast coast, light a fire on the end of a bamboo stick using chemicals and wait for the fish to come.

Like a magnet, hundreds of sardines leap out of the water towards the bright light waved by one fisherman and his colleagues angle their nets and haul in the catch.

There used to be 300 boats using the traditional fire fishing method each night but now there are only three, according to the local fishermen's association in Jinshan District, north of Taipei.

The 30 or so remaining fishermen have a three-month seasonal window from May to July where they can catch sardines using fire, a practice that dates back hundreds of years, the association says.

The fishermen spend up to



Fishermen light a fire to attract fish on a traditional "sulfuric fire fishing" boat in New Taipei City, Taiwan, on 19 June 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

six hours a night at sea to catch between three and four tons of sardines, which can earn them, on a really good night, over \$4,500. Only bad weather forces them to shore early.

"My daily earnings are unstable, but for a living I need to sail," Jian Kun, a 60-year-old boat owner, tells Reuters of the fire fishermen's plight.

The government provides a subsidy to the fishermen to encourage them to continue fire fishing and also filed the technique to the

Department of Cultural Affairs for registration as a cultural asset in 2014.

And the annual Jinshan Sulfuric Fire Fishing festival was started in 2013 to help promote the practice, while photography tours have been set up to generate interest and boost finances.

The method of lighting the fire has been updated to include the use of calcium carbide, but the boats are old, with little to ease the physical toll on the fishermen who average around 60 years old.—Reuters

South China Sea reefs 'decimated' as giant clams harvested in bulk

TANMEN, (China) — Ornaments made from the shells of endangered giant clams, renowned in China for having auspicious powers and the luster of ivory, have become coveted luxuries, a trend which has wreaked havoc on the ecosystem of the South China Sea.

China banned harvesting of giant clams last year but in the tiny seaside town Tanmen on the southern island of Hainan, most stores still sell products made from the over four-foot-wide shells.

The once sleepy fishing village has transformed over the past three years to harvest clams on an industrial scale. There are around 460 handicraft retailers, compared to 15 in 2012, with the industry now supporting around 100,000 people.

The price of giant clams has risen 40-fold over the past five years, while the plundering of the seabed has led to severe degradation of the reefs, scientists and academics said.

"With rising tensions in the South China Sea, Tanmen fisher-



Products made from giant clam shells are displayed inside a store in the seaside town of Tanmen in China's Hainan province, on 10 May 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

men's important role in strengthening China's claims in the disputed waters and supporting the People's Liberation Army navy are recognised by the Chinese government," said Zhang Hongzhou, an associate research fellow at Nanyang Technological University in Singapore. "As a result, authorities have turned a blind eye."

China claims almost the whole South China Sea, setting it at odds with rival claims from its Southeast Asian neighbours, including the Philippines. The region accounts for more than a tenth of global fisheries production.

The Qionghai government, which looks after Tanmen, announced in March 2015 that it

would strictly enforce the ban on digging, carrying and selling of endangered marine species including the giant clams.

"The government is enforcing the ban," said Zhang Hongying, an official at the Qionghai government foreign affairs office. Another official called Zhao said the authorities were not doing anything to support the industry.

"If the business is legal, our government won't stop people doing it," he said. "But there's no government file saying that we are going to do something to promote the shell industry."

Fishermen said they had not been allowed to dig for clams since last year, while shop keepers said new supply remained tight.

To harvest the clams, the entire reef has to be dug up, said Neo Mei Lin, a marine biologist at the National University of Singapore.

"What used to be really good coral reefs in there have definitely been decimated over the last two to three years," Lin said.

Tanmen fishermen's income

has more than tripled over the last three years, according to media, while the town has urbanized rapidly with neatly paved roads and modern buildings.

"I think the Hainanese have essentially taken out all the giant clam shells from the South China Sea, dead or alive," said Ed Gomez, a senior adviser at the University of the Philippines Marine Science Institute.

But during a recent visit to Tanmen, stores lining the harbor promenade were mostly empty. Many retailers said business had dropped since April due to China's tough economic climate and soaring temperatures.

"There are no tourists at the moment. We have to wait until September," said Yu Guo, owner of Xianyu Xuan craft store. Yu, from Beijing, came to Tanmen to buy property four years ago and set up the store with a local partner as the economy boomed. "In the good times, we could earn 10 million yuan (\$1.52 million) per month," he said.—Reuters

MRTV Entertainment Channel

(29-6-2016, Wednesday)

06 : 00 pm	09 : 30 pm
• Weather Report	• International Movie Songs
• Pyi Thu Ni Ti	09 : 40 pm
06 : 20 pm	• Geographic Centre of Myanmar
• Cartoon Programme "Bee Movie" (Part-2)	10 : 00 pm
07 : 10 pm	• Music Programme
• International Drama Series	10 : 20 pm
08 : 50 pm	• Dances of Myanmar
• MRTV Entertainment Music	10 : 30 pm
09 : 00 pm	• Myanmar Video
• Life In NightArt In Life (Part-2)	Midnight
	• Close Down.

From 29-6-2016 (Wednesday) 6:00 Pm
To 30-6-2016 (Thursday) 6:00 Pm

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Today Fresh

07:03	Am	News
07:27	Am	The Precious Lands of Myanmar (Mandalay Region)
08:03	Am	News
08:26	Am	Shwe Bo Township Bearing Five Names (Part-1)
08:45	Am	Rakhine Traditional Wedding Ceremony
09:03	Am	News
09:26	Am	Entrepreneur "Nan Ei Ei Zar"
09:39	Am	Family of Toys
10:03	Am	News
10:26	Am	Elephant Catching and Scaring Trip Mile Stone 26
10:39	Am	"Myanmar's Traditions and Culture" Myanmar Pottery

(11:00 Am ~ 03:00 Pm) -Tuesday 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
07:26	Pm	A Journey To Southern Shan State (Ep-1)
07:47	Pm	Dhamma School
08:03	Pm	News
08:26	Pm	Myanmar Traditional Identity (EP- 3) The Sphinx of Egypt And The Manousiha Of Myanmar
08:41	Pm	Bollywood Actress "Laila Khan" (Born & Raised in Myanmar) (Part-I)

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



England's Wayne Rooney looks dejected at the end of the game at Stade de Nice, Nice, France, on 27 June. PHOTO: REUTERS

Iceland stun England as Euro dream continues

NICE, (France) — Iceland pulled off one of the biggest shocks in European Championship history when they stunned abject England 2-1 on Monday, leading Roy Hodgson to quit and sending the tiny nation into a quarter-final against hosts France.

Although the soccer pedigrees of the two countries could not be more different, Iceland looked the better team in just about every aspect of the game and fully deserved to extend their dream run on their first tournament appearance.

After falling behind to a fourth-minute Wayne Rooney penalty they levelled almost immediately through Ragnar Sigurdsson and struck again in the 18th with a shot by Kolbeinn Sigthorsson.

A ponderous England never looked remotely capable of finding a way back into the game and even at the end when they were reduced to launching long balls

into the box, Iceland dealt with everything comfortably.

"It feels fantastic to come here as an underdog and perform in this way," said Iceland joint-coach Lars Lagerback, who also claimed two wins and four draws against England in his days as Sweden manager.

Pundits were quick to rank England's defeat alongside that against the amateurs of the United States in the 1950 World Cup but such a judgement conveniently overlooks the progress the Icelanders have made in recent seasons, not least in beating the Netherlands home and away to get to France in the first place.

It also fails to take into account England's miserable European Championship record, where they have won only one knockout match, on penalties at home to Spain in 1996.

Hodgson, who steered the team to 10 straight wins in qualifying, duly became the latest in a long line of England managers to fall on his sword after a failure to get to the business end when it really matters.

"Now is the time for someone else to oversee the progress of a hungry and extremely talented group of players," Hodgson said, reading a prepared statement.

"They have done fantasti-

cally, and done everything asked of them," he added in a bizarre account of yet another failure to perform at a major tournament.

Hodgson, 68, then refused to take further questions

It all looked so different for England at the start when Raheem Sterling was hauled down by keeper Hannes Halldorsson, allowing Rooney to smash them ahead from the penalty spot on his 115th appearance, matching David Beckham's outfield record.

The lead lasted less than two minutes, though, as Iceland, scored via an Aron Gunnarsson long throw, just as they had predicted. It was flicked on by Kari Arnason to an unmarked Ragnar Sigurdsson to sweep home.

If England's defending was bad for that goal it was disastrous for the second as Iceland were allowed time and space on the edge of the box to set up Sigthorsson for a low shot that Joe Hart should have saved but merely took the power off as it rolled over the line.

England looked shell-shocked and spent the rest of the half struggling to make any inroads, their front men and attacking midfielders static, and were booed off by their own fans.

England threw on midfield-

er Jack Wilshere for the second half and then striker Jamie Vardy but the team's passing was awful and their movement sluggish.

Harry Kane, the Premier League's leading scorer last season, summed up the poor quality on show when he took three free kicks and launched each one high into the stands without a team mate even close to connecting with the ball.

The final whistle produced extraordinary scenes as the entire Iceland squad and coaches sprinted to the corner of the pitch to celebrate ecstatically with their fans.

They can now look forward to facing France with the prize for the winner being a semi-final against Germany or Italy.

"Everyone started to run towards the fans so I did that too and then I flipped out completely," said Ragnar Sigurdsson.

"This is the biggest thing everyone in the squad has experienced. I don't know how big it is, but it's damn big."

In contrast England's players sank to the turf in despair, with a deluge of jeers, boos and whistles raining down from the fans all around them, finally being encouraged to leave the pitch to a chant of "You're not fit to wear the shirt."—Reuters

Djokovic makes solid start to Wimbledon title defence

LONDON — It was not quite the triple bagel that Novak Djokovic was aiming for during the opening 41 minutes of his first-round match but the Serbian is unlikely to be too disappointed after he beat Britain's James Ward 6-0, 7-6(3), 6-4 at Wimbledon on Monday.

The holder of all four grand slam titles appeared to be hurtling towards his 29th successive win at a major when he opened his Wimbledon defence by jumping out to a 6-0, 3-0 lead.

But two rallying war cries from the Centre Court crowd, "Wake up Wardy, wake up" followed by "He's only human James!" snapped the 177th-ranked wildcard out of his trance.

A 'human' Djokovic was forced to block out the noisy commotion moments later when Ward finally held serve to save his blushes.

Had the world number one not kept track of the score, he might have thought Ward had

just won the match as the Briton celebrated by holding both arms aloft as he lapped up the applause from all around the court.

Ward, who had not won a tour level match of any kind since making the third round here 12 months ago, then went on a roll to level the set at 3-3.

He also had three chances to break his more illustrious opponent in the 11th game of the second set but it was not long before Djokovic snapped back into his 'Super-human' persona and ushered the son of a London black cab driver out of Wimbledon.

"I was really flawless, I felt great," said the 29-year-old, who is bidding to become the first man since Rod Laver in 1969 to hold the first three legs of the calendar grand slam. Unsurprisingly, Ward's memory of the day was somewhat different.

"It was an ugly start," Ward said after slumping to his eighth successive tour-level defeat.—Reuters

Italy defeat shows Spain's golden era gone for good

PARIS — Like an ailing heavyweight, Spain and their hopes of a third straight European title ended in a tame surrender as their 2-0 defeat by Italy represented the definitive end to a golden era in their footballing history.

A first-half effort from defender Giorgio Chiellini and a stoppage-time goal by striker Graziano Pelle sent the Azzurri into the quarter-finals at Euro 2016 and left Spain to mull over a second successive failure on the international stage.

They came into the tournament hoping to re-establish their status as the game's dominant power and prove their shock early exit at the 2014 World Cup was the exception not the rule.

Their failure, however, to land a glove on an ageing Italy side showed the Spain team that won back-to-back European titles either side of their 2010 World Cup triumph, might still float like a butterfly, but no longer stings like a bee.

Spain were second best from the start against an Italy side, who were better organised, more



Italy's Giorgio Chiellini scores a goal against Spain during the EURO 2016 Round of 16 match at Stade de France, Saint-Denis near Paris, France, on 27 June. PHOTO: REUTERS

effective on the ball and ruthless in every department.

The Italian defence, regimented like no other in the world game, never looked like being dragged out of position by their opponents' passing patterns.

While the Spanish midfield axis of Sergio Busquets and Andres Iniesta, for so long the engine room of the national

team's dominance, looked slow and ponderous. Spain used to make other sides chase shadows as they passed the ball around them but, until Italy scored on Monday, the two combatants had equally shared possession.

"In the first half, we were more concerned about watching them play than playing our game," said Iniesta.—Reuters