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President visits hospitals in Tonzang, Tiddim, Falam

PRESIDENT U Htin Kyaw arrived in Chin State yesterday morning and visited the general hospitals in Tonzang, Tiddim and Falam and spoke with its residents.

President U Htin Kyaw and First Lady Daw Su Su Lwin, Union Minister Lt-Gen Sein Win, Lt-Gen Ye Aung, Dr. Aung Thu, Dr. Myo Thein Gyi, Dr. Myint Htwe, and U Win Khaing departed from Nay Pyi Taw by air and arrived in the city of Kalay yesterday morning.

From there the President and entourage, together with Chin Chief Minister U Salai Lian Luai, flew by helicopter to Tonzang and visited the general hospital and consoled the patients and gave donations.

Afterwards the President met with the citizens of Tonzang in the city's sports stadium and discussed how the current government since taking office has been working on fulfilling the needs of the country to the best of its ability. It was also noted that there is to be no discrimination between highlands and lowlands but coordinated development for all, with emphasis on underdeveloped regions. This is being accomplished with the help of foreign investment and new business models, the President said.

The President further stated that, to ensure smooth development in underdeveloped areas, the government is considering



Chin ethnic people dance around a bonfire in Falam yesterday as they welcomed President U Htin Kyaw and First Lady Daw Su Su Lwin one day ahead of Chin National Day. PHOTO: MNA

granting tax freedom for foreign companies who come to invest. Improvements on transport, communication systems and supply of full electricity is being carried out with consideration from the national budget, he added.

During a meeting with the President, Union Minister U Win Khaing and Dr. Myo Thein Gyi explained the planning strategies in response to submissions by the Tonzang Development Committee Chairman U Nam Khin Paung

on upgrading roads and bridges in Tiddim and elevating Tiddim to the status of county, and construction of an industrial high school in Tonzang.

The President then visited the city of Tiddim and its gener-

al hospital in which he met with patients and gave cash gift donations.

Afterwards the President met with residents of Tiddim in the KamHawk sports stadium.

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NO PLANS TO IMPOSE TAX ON BANKS' INTEREST RATES

ACCORDING to the Income Tax Law, interest generated from bank deposits are to be taxed, but the Internal Revenue Department has recently stated it currently has no plans to impose taxes on the interest earned from bank deposits.—
Myanmar News Agency

Investigation Commission writing full report on Maungtau

AS a result of its third fact-finding mission, the Investigation Commission on Maungtau, Rakhine State, said it has settled several issues including resettlement and free movement of the Muslim community in conflict areas in northern Rakhine.

At the meeting of the commission yesterday in Yangon following its third mission to northern Rakhine State, Chairman and Vice-President U Myint Swe urged the members of the commission to discuss the issues openly in order to ensure a full report and to sug-

gest long-term plans for Rakhine State to create job opportunities and boost the economy in the state.

The commission divided into groups and visited the villages mentioned in the report the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and sepa-

rately addressed the findings and accusations in the report.

At the request of the commission, the Ministry of Defence and Ministry of Home Affairs also formed commissions investigating the accusations.

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Measures taken to protect crops against parasites



TAUNGGOO Township Agricultural Department introduced the integrated crop protection system to prevent the summer paddy from the danger of parasites. On 17th February, staff officer U Naing Minn Hlaing and employees from agricultural department laid 120 cards of Naji-Oo in the paddy field of farmer U Aye Lwin. U San Lwin, head of district Agricultural Department also talked about the protection methods.—*Shwe Win (Pyay)*

AirAsia to start Yangon-Honolulu route in late June

MALAYSIA-based AirAsia will begin flying from Yangon, to Honolulu, the capital of Hawaii and gateway to the U.S, at the end of June, this year.

AirAsia is scheduled to start a weekly flights from Yangon to Honolulu, Hawaii via Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia and Osaka, Japan on 28 June, according to a press release is-

sued by the Malaysian low-cost airline.

All fares start from US\$252 including taxes. Tickets are available at <http://bit.ly/Yangon2Hawaii>.

Guests travelling through Osaka do not require a Japanese visa during the two-hour stop-over.

Hawaii, nicknamed the Par-

adise of the Pacific, is formed by eight islands situated in the heart of the Pacific Ocean. Honolulu, the capital city, located on the most populous island of O'ahu, is a modern city that boasts island charms, including the world-renowned Waikiki Beach, once the site of vacation homes for the kings and queens of Hawaii.—200

New oxygen-making machine to bring benefit to patients

TO FULFIL the needs of patients who require oxygen for therapy, a new oxygen-producing machine will soon be installed at the 500-bed Insein General Hospital in the north of Yangon, according to the hospital.

Beginning in early April, the hospital will support adequate amounts of oxygen to patients who need to receive the treatment, said Dr Aye Aung, medical superintendent of the hospital.

Oxygen requirements of the hospital have increased as the gas

is useful in multiple diseases.

At present, the hospital has only three small oxygen generating machines that cannot produce a sufficient amount of gas. It meets only half of the current requirement. Some monasteries and social organisations continue to donate oxygen cylinders to the hospital to fill the need.

The hospital offers free oxygen services to needy patients.

Patients with lung diseases and chronic heart disease need oxygen therapy. There are 30 pa-

tients currently receiving oxygen treatment at the hospital's lung unit alone.

The hospital uses over 150 oxygen cylinders on a monthly basis.

Oxygen therapy can be given to people with breathing disorders, who are not able to get enough oxygen naturally. Medical physicians say that people who receive oxygen therapy often see improved energy levels and sleep, and better quality of life. —*Myit Maung Soe*

My Yangon, My Home festival to come 25 February

THE 2nd edition of "My Yangon, My Home", art and heritage festival will take place at public places across Yangon starting the last week of this month, according to organisers.

To promote public interest in community arts as well as to explore the everyday life of the city and its daily routine, the extensive fair is planned to be held from 25 February through 12 March and will be moving around the city.

Based on public art to explore the city's heritage and culture of Yangonites, organisers are now preparing a wide range of exhibitions and unique art events around the theme "Memories, Objects and Spaces".

A live art installation and poster contest is scheduled to take place on the first day of the festival at Mahabandoola Park, which is surrounded by some of the important structures in the city such

as Yangon City Hall, the High Court and the Sule Pagoda. Students from National University of Arts and Culture (Yangon) will display their poster works on that day.

The first edition of MYMH-YAHF was held at different venues in Yangon during the March, 2015, with the aim of bringing together diverse communities to share experiences through public art.—200

Crime NEWS

Stimulant pills seized in northern Shan State

ACTING on a tip-off, local police searched a motorcycle and found 16,200 amphetamine pills hidden in sound boxes on the motor cycle on Saturday in Lashio.

Action has been taken against Hla Moe, the driver of the motorcycle and Maung Thein, who was on board, when the search was carried out in Namhsalat village Hsenwi Township.

Similarly, on the

same day, the police searched the motorcycle driven by Lekwen Lyan and found 12,000 stimulant pills and heroin 110g.

The police searched a house in Lwesaung village in Mongkok, Mongsat Township, and found 2425 stimulant tablet from Ardo. Police are taking action against those drug traffickers under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law. —*Myanmar News Agency*



Hla Moe and Maung Thein. PHOTO: MNA

2 men mugged near Innya Lake, suspects arrested

A bag store owner was heading home from the City Mart department store on Pyay Road, 10th Ward in Hlaing Township with a friend on Friday at about 11pm when three men approached them near a shadowed area under a construction site near Innya Kannbaung.

His friend turned around with fists raised and yelled at the trio. The men proceeded to rush at the store owner and stole a Xiaomi Redmi phone and SIM card from his trouser pockets. The case was presented on 18 February in the Hlaing Police Department under Penal Code

382 and investigation was begun.

The Hlaing Police Department was able to identify the culprits as Thet Oo, 18, from Hlaing Township, Khaing Gyi, also known as Khaing Khant Kyaw, 17, from Kamayut Township, and Tadoe, also known as Thura Soe, 27, from Hlaing Township.

Police were able to apprehend the trio yesterday at 5pm along with the stolen smartphone.

Interrogation is in process for other possible crimes the trio may have committed.—*Myanmar Police Force*



Thet Oo, Khaing Gyi alias Khaing Khant Kyaw and Tadoe. PHOTO: MNA

Republic of the Union of Myanmar Office of the President

Message of Greetings sent by U Htin Kyaw, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, to the 69th Anniversary Chin National Day celebrations 20th February 2017

Dear esteemed Chin national brothers and sisters, I wish you all Mingalarbar,

On this auspicious 69th Anniversary of Chin National Day which falls on the 20th February 2017, I send this Message of Greetings to all Chin national brothers and sisters and Union citizens who live in the Chin State, good wishes, prosperity and auspiciousness.

On 20th February 1948 after attaining Independence, a people's conference was held in Falam Township of Chin State, where a decision was made to change from an administrative system ruled by Chieftains to a democratic system of administration. On 9th October 1950, at the 7th Chin Traditional Council meeting held in Yangon, motions were tabled to designate a Chin National Day. Based on these motions a decision was taken by all the delegates present at the conference to designate the 20th of February on which date the people's conference had been held in Falam as "Chin National Day". The Chin National Day which had been designated since 1948 has now reached the 69th year this year. This Chin National Day is also an auspicious day in the sense that this day brings together all

the Chin tribes which have the same language, culture, history and traditions.

Chin State is a place where we may find the Western Yomas stretching from north to south, the Kaladan river which flows into the Bay of Bengal, the Khaw-nu-soum mountain where rare plants are found and where rare animals make their habitat, Kennedy Peak, a well-known battlefield of the Second World War, the beautiful Reed Lake, the Manipur river which flows down profusely, the Bwenu river, the Bontalar waterfalls, natural resources and mineral resources above and below the earth's surface.

In the political change that occurred in Myanmar, many political groups participated in the Multi-party general elections which were held successfully on 8 November 2015, and our government took over power systematically in accordance with the Constitution. Our government has been working for the ethnic nationals living in the Chin State, for their future social-economic development. In working like this we are making sure that there is equitable

development between towns and villages and also between townships. In order to do this, we have been opening new Basic Education schools, upgrading schools, repairing new education buildings and building new ones, and appointing new teachers; in the health care area we have been opening new hospitals and health clinics, and appointing new doctors as needed.

In addition, we have made electricity available to all places in the Chin State from the Main Electrical grid, improved road transport networks, built long-distance roads linking with the central plains and new roads within the State, initiated work on Kaladan River Basin development and built the Paletwa Port to provide access to the sea from the Chin State, built the first airport of the Chin State at Falam, and worked on urban development projects in Haka, Falam and Paletwa. As a result we may see that there have been visible and significant developments in each sector. In undertaking regional development works, it is important for the ethnic national races to join hands with the Union govern-

ment and the State government.

In the Chin State, the existence of high mountains and mountain ridges makes it difficult to travel. Thus although we have to face difficulties as we undertake development works, nevertheless the Union government is making concerted efforts to fulfill the development needs of the Chin State. Therefore the ethnic nationals living in the State should also participate and cooperate as much as possible in these efforts.

It has made me happy to hear recently that National-level political dialogues based on national races will be held soon in the Chin State. These National-level political dialogues are being held all over the Union with strong and active participation by the people and we could also see that the people are making their opinions and wishes heard in a comprehensive and wide-ranging manner. The only path to seeking solutions for political problems in a peaceful manner by having discussions and negotiations is the Union Peace Conference – 21st Century Panglong Conference.

We will be able to march to-

wards the goal of attaining Union Peace and the establishment of a Democratic Federal Union by first going through this step - the 21st Century Panglong.

We will be conducting the National-level Political dialogues for National Races where different strata of society and different groups will get the chance to participate; for this I wish to express my pleasure in advance. From the National-level political dialogues to the successful conclusion of the Union Peace Conference – 21st Century Panglong; for the emergence of a Federal System that could give assurances for equality and self-determination, which is the aspiration of ethnic nationals; and for the success and fulfillment of the Union goals; in working for all these, I wish to urge all ethnic national races and Union citizens living in the Chin State to come together in unity and work. I therefore make this very solemn exhortation and send this message of greetings.

Sd/-
Htin Kyaw
President

President visits hospitals in Tonzang, Tiddim, Falam

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In a meeting Hluttaw Representative U Htan Deik Kote submitted proposals for elevating Tiddim to the status of a county, receiving electricity from the main electrical supply, upgrading Tiddim-ThaingNgin road to a cement road, receiving adequate drinking water for Tiddim, upgrading the 100-bed hospital to a 150-bed hospital and appointing necessary medical practitioners, to which Union Minister U Win Khaing, Dr. Myint Htwe, Lt-General Ye Aung gave detailed explanations of the strategies which were in the planning stage.

During midday, the President and entourage visited Ri Lake in Rihkawdah and talked about boosting the tourism sector in the area.

Ri Lake is famous for its



President U Htin Kyaw and wife Daw Su Su Lwin present cash assistance to a patient and comfort her during their visit to a hospital in Chin State yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

naturally formed heart shape and is located near the Indo-Burma border. Ri Lake has clear water almost all year round, except in December when the water is sometimes known to turn red. The lake is about 2.5 miles in circumference and has a depth of

50-60 feet.

The President also inspected the Indo-Burma bridge connecting the City of Rihkawdah in Myanmar and the City of Zokhawtar in India.

The President and entourage then visited the city of Falam and

its general hospital and visited patients and gave cash donations.

In the evening the President and his wife attended the 69th Chin National Day bonfire celebration in Falam's Taungzalat Avenue. — Myanmar News Agency

Investigation Commission writing full report on Maungtau

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At the meeting, members of the commission discussed the facts they found during the visit and the writing of the full-text report.

The meeting was attended by commission members U Aung Kyi, U Tun Myat, Dr Daw Thet Thet Zin, U Nyunt Swe, U Saw Thalay Saw, Daw Kye-in Ngai Man, Dr Hla Maung, U Thar Nyan, Police Maj-Gen Zaw Win, U Aung Naing and secretary of the commission U Zaw Myint Pe and other officials.

The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) released a report on the situations of human rights in northern Rakhine State on 3rd February 2017, in which it alleged that human rights abuses were occurring.—Myanmar News Agency

LOCAL Business



Gold jewellery are on display at a shop in Yangon. PHOTO: XINHUA

Domestic gold price on the rise in keeping with high global price

THE gold market was cool during the Chinese New Year festival, resulting in a price slip. The domestic gold price has bounced back with the rise in global gold price and high demand, according to the gold market.

Additionally, the news of three per cent of tax to be levied on gold buyers in April prompted buyers to purchase more gold. The high demand increased the price, said the gold and jewellery shop owners.

The domestic gold fetched Ks882,000 per tical on 6th Feb and the price rose to a high of Ks900,000 on 9th Feb, whereas

the gold price was US\$1,224 per ounce on 6th Feb and soared to US\$1,241 per ounce on 9th Feb.

With a small decline in the global gold price, the domestic gold price slipped to a low of around Ks886,000 per tical on the afternoon of 10th Feb.

The price slightly increased to Ks890,000 on 11th Feb and Ks890,800 on 12th Feb. And the domestic gold price dropped a bit for three straight days from 13th to 15th Feb. The rise in global gold price on 16th Feb affected the domestic gold price with over Ks895,000 per tical on 17th Feb. — Mon Mon

10,000 tonnes of parboiled rice exported in 10 months

OVER 10,000 tonnes of parboiled rice were shipped to foreign countries over the past 10 months in this fiscal year, fetching nearly US\$4million, according to the Commerce Ministry.

“Parboiled rice mills need to be established as it has good market access, plus a good price. There is no plan for the Commerce Ministry to set up the parboiled rice mills, as this business has been already privatized,” said U Khin Maung Lwin, the permanent secretary of the Commerce Ministry.

Russia is the main buyer of Myanmar’s parboiled rice and

500 tonnes of parboiled rice were exported to America and Canada through normal trade. Myanmar’s parboiled rice also flowed into European countries. The prevailing price of boiled rice is about US\$460-470 per tonne, businessmen said.

The income earned from a one-tonne-parboil rice export exceeded by 30 per cent that from a tonne of low quality rice, said U Thauang Ngwe, a rice miller.

Previously, there were three parboiled rice mills in Einme, Kyaiklat and Bogale towns in Ayeyawady Region. Now there are nine parboiled rice mills to

meet increasing demand.

Myanmar has produced parboiled rice since 1920. Previously, a lack of proper manufacturing process resulted in odourous parboiled rice of low quality, achieved by soaking rice in cold water for several days. But with the adoption of advanced technology, odourless parboiled rice was produced more recently.

Quality rice mills with a capacity of producing about 150,000 tonnes of rice and paddy a year are now required, and the mills are being planned to be built in the farming regions, it is learnt. —Zar Lin Thu

Trade value of US\$8billion required to meet expectations

ABOUT US\$8billion is still required to meet the expected amount of trade value with foreign countries in this fiscal year 2016-2017, said U Win Myint, the director of Trade Promotion Department.

The Commerce Ministry expected a trade value of US\$31.3billion in this FY, and the trade value as of 10th Feb in this FY amounted to US\$23,522.747million, with an export value of US\$9,663.598mil and import value of US\$ 13,859.149mil. The figure is up by about US\$61million compared to that in the similar period of last FY.

The value of exports from April to 10th Feb in this FY were

\$2,362.402mil from the agriculture sector, \$8,213mil from animal products, \$470.969mil from fisheries products, \$813.667mil from minerals, \$204.669mil from forest products, \$4,497.653mil from manufacturing goods and \$1,306.025mil from other products, according to the statistics of the Commerce Ministry.

In the similar period, capital goods worth \$5,540.526mil, raw industrial materials worth \$4,972.463mil and consumer goods worth \$3,346.16mil were imported into the country.

About \$8billion of trade value is still needed to reach an expected amount in this FY, it is learnt. —Ko Htet

Average inflation rate in Jan 2017 slips

THE average inflation rate in Jan 2017 showed a small decrease when compared to the rate in December 2016, according to the Central Statistical Organisation’s monthly Consumer Price Index (CPI) and inflation rate under the Ministry of Planning and Finance.

According to 2012 statistics, the inflation rate per annum based on CPI in Jan 2017 was 6.97 per cent, whereas the rate in Dec 2016 was 7.02 per cent. The Year on Year Inflation rate in Jan 2017 is up by 1.21 per cent against Jan 2016.

Rakhine State reached the highest inflation rate of 14.04 per cent in Jan 2017, followed by Chin State with 10.94 per cent and Kaya with 10.55 per cent. Meanwhile, Yangon region possessed a high inflation rate of 9.62 per cent, followed by Nay Pyi Taw with 4.89 per cent and Mandalay by 3.59 per cent, it is learnt.

Previously, the inflation rate was evaluated based on a 2006 survey. The base year has now been changed to 2012. The Central Statistical Organisation conducted a Household Income and

Expenditure Survey in 82 townships in Nov 2012. .

Myanmar’s inflation rate is expected to reach 11.68 per cent this fiscal year, it is learnt from the statistics of the Budget Department. The inflation rate in the first five-year plan from 2011-2012 FY to 2015-2016 FY rose. Therefore, in a bid to reduce the inflation rate, special efforts are being exerted on the basis of financial, monetary, trade and foreign currency control policies, mentioned in the Second five-year National Development Plan. —Ko Khant

High-quality Zwekapin swimming pool opened in Pha-an

If swimming pools were rated the same way as hotels, the Zwekapin swimming pool in Kanthaya park, Pha-an township would merit five stars.

The Zwekapin swimming pool was formally opened on 12 February with the budget coming from the State sports and physical education department.

The aim of the state-of-the-art swimming centre is to promote and nurture gifted swimmers and also to provide relaxation for local people and teaching lifesaving skills in the event someone is drowning.

In keeping with tradition, Kayin Region Minister Daw Nan

Khin Htway Myint and responsible state officials unveiled the new facility and sprayed fragrant scent on the dedication plaque and entrance. Afterward, the Myanmar swimming Association demonstrated the 50-meter butterfly swimming method and the backstroke method to the assembled guests and State cabinet members. This new swimming complex features a 50-25 meter swimming pool with an audience arena, a meeting room, car parking, rest rooms, bath rooms and changing rooms. Local residents can now use the high-standard swimming pool for relaxation and sport, it is learnt.—GNLM

Launch of SpaceX Falcon rocket aborted seconds before liftoff

CAPE CANAVERAL (Fla) — SpaceX called off the planned launch of a Falcon 9 rocket from a historic launchpad in Florida seconds before liftoff on Saturday to investigate a potential problem with the steering system in the upper stage of the booster.

The flight, the first for the company from a launchpad at the Kennedy Space Center once used for NASA's space shuttle program, was rescheduled for 9:38 am local time (1438 GMT) on Sunday. The rocket will carry a cargo ship bound for the International Space Station.

The problem concerned an issue with the steering system of the rocket's upper stage, SpaceX said.

"Standing down to investigate," Elon Musk, founder and chief executive of Space Exploration Technologies Corp, wrote on Twitter.

SpaceX has not flown from Florida in six months. Flights were suspended after a rocket exploded while being fueled ahead of a routine, pre-launch test at

Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, located just south of Kennedy Space Centre.

The accident destroyed the rocket and its cargo and heavily damaged the launchpad, which is being repaired.

SpaceX resumed flying last month from a second launch site in California while it hustled to finish work on the shuttle's old launchpad.

Originally built for the 1960s-era Apollo moon program, the Florida launchpad was refurbished for the space shuttles, which flew from 1981 to 2011. SpaceX signed a 20-year lease for the launchpad in 2014.

"My heart is pounding to come out here today. Not because you guys make me nervous but because I've got a vehicle on this extraordinary pad behind me," SpaceX President Gwynne Shotwell told reporters at the launchpad on Friday.

Perched on top of the rocket is a Dragon capsule loaded with about 5,500 pounds (2,500 kg) of



A SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket sits on historic launch pad 39A after launch was scrubbed at the Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, Florida, US, on 18 February 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

supplies and science experiments for the space station, a \$100 billion research laboratory that flies about 250 miles (400 km) above Earth.

NASA hired SpaceX and Or-

bital ATK to resupply the station after it retired the shuttles. The US space agency last year added a third company, privately-owned Sierra Nevada Corp, for making cargo runs to the station beginning

in 2019.

By then, SpaceX aims to be launching NASA astronauts, breaking Russia's monopoly on flying crew to the space station. —Reuters

Fossils show quick rebound of life after ancient mass extinction

WASHINGTON — Fossils including sharks, sea reptiles and squid-like creatures dug up in Idaho reveal a marine ecosystem thriving relatively soon after Earth's worst mass extinction, contradicting the long-held notion life was slow to recover from the calamity.

Scientists on Wednesday described the surprising fossil discovery showing creatures flourishing in the aftermath of the worldwide

die-off at the end of the Permian Period about 252 million years ago that erased roughly 90 per cent of species.

Even the asteroid-induced mass extinction 66 million years ago that doomed the dinosaurs did not push life to the brink of annihilation like the Permian one.

The fossils of about 30 different species unearthed in Bear Lake County near the Idaho city of

Paris showed a quick and dynamic rebound in a marine ecosystem, illustrating the remarkable resiliency of life.

"Our discovery was totally unexpected," said paleontologist Arnaud Brayard of the University of Burgundy-Franche-Comté in France, with a highly diversified and complex assemblage of animals.

The ecosystem from this pivotal time included predators such as sharks up to about 7 feet long (2 meters), marine reptiles and bony fish, squid-like creatures including some with long conical shells and others with coiled shells, a scavenging crustacean with large eyes and strangely thin claws, starfish relatives, sponges and other animals. The Permian die-off occurred 251.9 million years ago. The Idaho ecosystem flourished 1.3 million years later, "quite rapid on a geological scale," according to Brayard.

The mass extinction's cause is a matter of debate.

But many scientists attribute it to colossal volcanic eruptions in northern Siberia that unleashed large amounts of greenhouse and toxic gases, triggering severe global warming and big fluctuations in oceanic chemistry including acidification and oxygen deficiency. The Idaho ecosystem, in the earliest stages of the Triassic Period that later produced the first dinosaurs, included some unexpected creatures.

There was a type of sponge previously believed to have gone extinct 200 million years earlier, and a squid-like group previously thought not to have originated until 50 million years later.—Reuters



An artist's depiction of the diversified and complex Early Triassic marine ecosystem of southeastern Idaho, US, revealed soon after the Earth's worst mass extinction, contradicting long-held notion life was slow to recover from calamity. PHOTO: REUTERS

Prescription-drug monitoring cuts doctor-shopping for painkillers

ROCKVILLE (Maryland) — State programmes that require physicians to check drug registries before writing prescriptions appeared to slash the odds of doctor-shopping for opioid pain relievers, a new study found.

"Our study shows that prescription-drug monitoring programmes are a promising component of a multifaceted strategy to address the opioid epidemic," Ryan Mutter, one of the study authors, said in a phone interview. He is a health economist at the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration in Rockville, Maryland.

Mutter and other researchers analyzed annual nationwide surveys of drug use and health from 2004 until 2014, when 36 states implemented prescription-drug monitoring programmes, or PDMPs.

PDMPs are state-run electronic databases designed to track prescribing of controlled substances and to identify people at high risk of using opioids for nonmedical purposes. Every state except Missouri now has a drug-monitoring programme. Some states have mandatory programmes requiring physicians to participate, and other states have voluntary programmes.

The study, reported in the journal Addictive Behaviours, found that in states where physicians were required to check an electronic database before writing an opioid prescription, the odds that two or more doctors would be giving pain relievers for nonmedical purposes to a single patient were reduced by 80 per cent. States that imple-

mented voluntary monitoring programmes showed a 56 per cent reduction in the odds of doctor-shopping.

States with mandatory prescription-drug monitoring programs reduced the use of painkillers for nonmedical purposes by an average of 20 days a year, the study found. States with voluntary prescription-drug monitoring programme reduced the use of painkillers for nonmedical purposes by an average of 10 days a year.

"Overall, this, as well as other studies, suggests there's promise for prescription-drug monitoring programmes," Dr Stephen W Patrick said in a phone interview. "But they aren't a panacea."

"We really need a comprehensive approach. It isn't one thing that will help get us out of the opioid epidemic," said Patrick, a pediatrician at Vanderbilt University School of Medicine in Nashville, Tennessee. He treats newborns struggling with the symptoms of withdrawal from opioids prescribed to their mothers and was not involved in the new study.

Every day, 91 Americans die from an opioid overdose, according to the US Centres for Disease Control and Prevention. Since 1999, deaths from prescription opioids have quadrupled, as have sales of opioids, including the painkillers oxycodone (Oxycontin) and hydrocodone (Vicodin).

The number of PDMPs has expanded rapidly across states since 2000, but prior studies have shown mixed results about their effectiveness, the study authors write.—Reuters

China says understands South Korean need for security, still opposes missiles

MUNICH — China understands South Korea's need to protect its security but Seoul still needs to respect Beijing's concerns about the deployment of an advanced US anti-missile system, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi told his South Korean counterpart.

China has repeatedly expressed opposition to South Korea's planned deployment later this year of the US Terminal High Altitude Area Defence (THAAD) system, which Seoul and Washington say is needed to defend against North Korea.

China worries the system's powerful radar can penetrate its territory and it has objected to the deployment.

Meeting on Saturday on the sidelines of the Munich Security Conference, Wang repeated to South Korea's Foreign Minister



Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi speaks at the 53rd Munich Security Conference in Munich, Germany on 17 February, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

Yun Byung-se China's opposition to THAAD, China's Foreign Ministry said in a statement on Sunday.

Wang "stressed that one country's security should not be founded on

the basis of harming another country's security", the ministry paraphrased him as saying.

"China understands South Korea's need to protect its own security, and at

the same time South Korea should respect China's reasonable position," Wang added.

Yun Fu Ying, chairwoman of the foreign affairs committee in the Chinese National People's Congress, told a panel discussion at the Munich conference that China could not understand Washington's decision to deploy the system to South Korea.

"It is like being stabbed by your friends," she said, adding the system would not increase South Korea's security anyway.

But Yun Byung-se told the panel the system was needed to augment Seoul's existing Patriot missile defense system and guard against the kind of high-arc shot used by North Korea in its last test.

"What we need is multiple layers of defense ... THAAD is really rele-

vant," he said. "We don't pose any threat to China."

Yun Byung-se said North Korea launched two nuclear tests and 24 missiles last year alone and was nearing the final stage of nuclear weaponization.

"In our analysis, the tipping point may be only a few years away," he told conference participants. "It's a ticking time bomb."

Wang told Yun Byung-se that efforts to seek peace with North Korea should not be abandoned, the ministry said.

"All parties, at the same time as strictly enforcing (UN) Security Council resolutions, should proactively look for break through points to resume negotiations, to break the negative cycle of the nuclear issue on the peninsula," Wang said.

North and South Korea are technically still at

war because their 1950-1953 conflict ended in a truce, not a peace treaty. The North regularly threatens to destroy the South and the South's main ally, the United States.

Earlier this month, North Korea tested an intermediate-range ballistic missile, its first direct challenge to the international community since US President Donald Trump took office on 20 January.

China says it is committed to enforcing UN sanctions against its unpredictable neighbour, whose nuclear and missile tests have angered Beijing.

China will suspend all imports of coal from North Korea starting 19 February, the country's commerce ministry said on Saturday, as part of its efforts to implement United Nations sanctions against the country.—Reuters

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Four North Korean suspects fled Malaysia after airport murder: police

KUALA LUMPUR — Four North Korean suspects in the murder of the estranged half-brother of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un fled Malaysia on the day he was attacked at Kuala Lumpur airport and apparently killed by a fast-acting poison, police said on Sunday.

A North Korean man, a Vietnamese woman and an Indonesian woman have been arrested already in connection with the assassination of Kim Jong Nam last Monday, which has triggered a diplomatic spat between Malaysia and Pyongyang.

South Korean and US officials believe Kim Jong Nam was killed by agents from the reclusive North, whose diplomats in Kuala Lumpur sought to prevent an autopsy on the 46-year-old's body and demanded it be handed over.

"We believe the North Korean regime is behind this incident considering five suspects are North Koreans" Jeong Joon-hee, spokesman at the South Korea's Unification Ministry that handles inter-Korea affairs, told a briefing on Sunday.

Kim Jong Nam, the eldest son of the late North



Malaysia's National Police Deputy Inspector-General Noor Rashid Ibrahim (L) gestures during a news conference regarding the apparent assassination of Kim Jong Nam, the half-brother of the North Korean leader, at the Malaysian police headquarters in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on 19 February, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

Korean leader Kim Jong Il, had spoken out publicly against his family's dynastic control of isolated, nuclear-armed North Korea.

The young, unpredictable North Korean leader had issued a "standing order" for his elder half-brother's assassination, and that there had been a failed attempt in 2012.

Deputy Inspector-General of police Noor Rashid Ismail told a news conference that Malaysia

is coordinating with Interpol to track down the four North Koreans but would not reveal where they flew to on the day of the murder.

"The four suspects are holding normal passports, not diplomatic passports," he said. "Next plan is to get them. We of course have international cooperation especially with Interpol, bilateral involvement with the country involved, we will go through those avenues to get the people involved."

He named the four who escaped as Ri Ji Hyon, Hong Song Hac, O Joong Gil, and Ri Jae Nam. The police are looking for three other people who are not suspects but who they believe could help with their enquiries, one of whom is North Korean.

Police said the cause of death was still not known and that they were waiting for pathology and toxicology tests after conducting a post-mortem.—Reuters

Philippine army to create task force to chase big drug syndicates

MANILA — The Philippine army will create a “battalion size” task force to help the government’s anti-narcotics agency run after high-value targets in President Rodrigo Duterte’s war on drugs, the country’s military chief said.

Duterte — who recently suspended the national police from the anti-narcotics campaign that has killed over 7,700 people in seven months — has ordered the military to play a role in his crackdown. He has said that he also wants to grant troops powers to arrest “scalawag” police.

The announcement came after it emerged last month that drug squad officers had killed a South Korean businessman at national police headquarters.

The troops, however, will only provide back-up in the campaign and not patrol the streets or play any kind of leading role, Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) Chief Isidro Lapena told Reuters earlier this month.

“We are ready to operate with the PDEA. (The task force) is yet to be created, but we are talking about a battalion size,” Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) Chief General Eduardo Ano told reporters late on Saturday in Baguio City, where Duterte attended a military alumni homecoming. Up to 5,000 soldiers could be mobilized under the task force, or only 500 depending on the threat, he said. Ano, however, ruled out a bloody operation by the task

force, unlike some of the raids conducted by the national police.

“The AFP will not do that, we will not be involved in the street, we’ll not be involved in running after street pushers,” he said. “The armed forces will help the PDEA in running after high-level drug syndicates.”

In his speech during the military alumni homecoming, Duterte said: “I need the help of each one, especially the military, not for social control but protection (for) the citizens from the lawless, the reckless, and the selfish.”

He declared his war on drugs to be “by and large successful”, but added the problem was more complex than he had thought and that is why he needed the military to play a role. —Reuters



Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte reviews troops next to armed forces chief General Eduardo Ano during the Armed Forces anniversary celebration at Camp Aguinaldo in Quezon city, Metro Manila, Philippines on 21 December, 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Thai police order thousands of worshippers out of scandal-hit temple

BANGKOK — Thai police ordered thousands of worshippers to leave the country’s biggest Buddhist temple on Sunday so it can intensify its search for its former abbot, who is wanted on money-laundering charges.

Thailand’s ruling junta used a special emergency law on Thursday to let police explore the scandal-hit Dhammakaya Temple after months of failing to get it to hand over Phra Dhammachayo.

On Sunday, police said that all non-residents must vacate the premises to expedite the search of the 1,000 acre (400 hectare) facility because temple activities were hindering police. Monks who live within the temple grounds were ordered to congregate at an exit point and not interfere with the investigation. “We are conducting these steps so that we can conduct the search process as quickly as possible so that we can return the temple grounds to the worshippers,” Woranan Srilam of the Department for Special Investigation told Reuters.

The temple has been a rare institution in defying the military government. Opposition from political parties and activists has largely been silenced since a coup in 2014.

Phra Dhammachayo faces charges of conspiracy to launder money and receive stolen goods, as well as taking over land unlawfully to build meditation centres. His aides dismiss the accusations as politically motivated.

“This is an abuse of power by the junta who should not interfere on religious matters,” temple spokesman and senior monk Phra Pasura Dantamano told Reuters.

“We have always been willing to negotiate and accommodate the authorities but this is too much.”

Around 13,000 people were inside the temple as of Sunday morning, according to Dantamano, who said that the temple would have to comply with the request to evacuate. Although the temple has no overt political affiliation, the abbot is widely believed to have had links with populist former prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra, who was overthrown in 2006. A government led by Thaksin’s sister was toppled by the army in 2014.

The Dhammakaya Temple’s brasher approach to winning adherents jars on conservatives, who say it exploits its followers and uses religion to make money. The temple says it is as committed to Buddhist values as anyone else. —Reuters



Thai worshippers hold placards and pray at the gate of Dhammakaya temple, after police ordered thousands of worshippers to leave the temple so it can search for its former abbot, in Pathum Thani province, Thailand on 19 February, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

New chief minister of India’s southern Tamil Nadu wins trust vote

NEW DELHI — New Chief Minister of the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu Edappadi K Palaniswamy has won the trust vote, officials said on Sunday.

Palaniswamy won a test of strength on Saturday in Tamil Nadu Assembly after 122 legislators from his party — All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) voted for him. Only 11 votes were cast against him by rebels led by former chief minister O Panneerselvam. The 88 legislators from opposition Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) were marshalled out from the law-making body following unruly disruptions. Though the trust vote was scheduled for morning, however it was conducted in evening after multiple adjournments amid chaos after DMK legislators broke chairs, tables, flung mics and heckled the speaker of house, who finally ordered their eviction.

“This morning Pala-

niswamy met Governor Vidyasagar Rao at Raj Bhavan here,” a senior official said. “He was accompanied by some of his cabinet colleagues during the meeting.”

Last week Palaniswamy was sworn in as the new chief minister of Tamil Nadu after AIADMK chief V K Sasikala made him the legislature party leader.

Palaniswami is the second AIADMK leader to be sworn-in as chief minister of the state following death of AIDMK supremo J Jayalalithaa.

The 68-year-old Jayalalithaa died in December last year, following which her trusted legislator O Panneerselvam was chosen as chief minister. Soon after Sasikala tried to exert her grip in party and approached Governor to stake claim as chief minister, Panneerselvam opposed her move and pushed state in political crisis, which continued for more than a week.

Panneerselvam was expelled from the basic membership of AIADMK. However, Sasikala’s dream to become the chief minister were dashed on Tuesday after India’s top court convicted her in a 21-year-old Disproportionate Assets case along with other two. She was jailed on the outskirts of Bengaluru city on Wednesday to serve a four-year sentence. The Disproportionate Assets case was originally against Jayalalithaa, and Sasikala along with other two were the co-accused.

The case dating back to the 1990s was based on fact that during Jayalalithaa’s first term as chief minister, she misused her office to amass assets in a shared fortune with Sasikala and other two.

Sasikala has already served almost six months in jail in the case and now has to serve the remaining imprisonment of three years and six months. —Xinhua

Vietnamese man believes sister held over North Korean murder

HANOI — A Vietnamese man said on Sunday he believes his sister is one of the suspects arrested in Malaysia in connection with the murder of the half-brother of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un.

Kim Jong Nam was assaulted at Kuala Lumpur International Airport with what was thought to be a fast-acting poison. Malaysian police have said that among those arrested was a woman with a Vietnamese travel document.

Vietnamese authorities have said only that they are investigating and are in touch with

Malaysia.

Joseph Doan confirmed that his sister’s name was Doan Thi Huong and that she was born in 1988 in Nam Dinh province, southeast of the capital Hanoi. Those details are the same as those released by Malaysian police.

“We only hear on the internet and everyone else hears on the internet but judging from the picture it looks like her. I can’t be a 100 per cent certain because we haven’t met her yet,” he said in Nam Dinh.

The rice farmer said his sister appeared to be the wom-

an whose image was captured in a grainy airport CCTV image wearing a white shirt with the acronym ‘LOL’ on it. He said Vietnamese authorities had been in touch and had been supportive. Doan said his sister had left home when she was 18 and only came home occasionally and without letting anyone know when she would be back. “Whenever she comes home I can only tell her to study and work hard,” he said.

South Korean and US officials have said Kim Jong Nam was assassinated by North Korean agents. —Reuters

Suppressing free press is 'how dictators get started'-US Senator McCain

MUNICH — US Senator John McCain, defending the media against the latest attack by President Donald Trump, warned that suppressing the free press was “how dictators get started”.

The Arizona Republican, a frequent critic of Trump, was responding to a tweet in which Trump accused the media of being “the enemy of the American people”.

The international order established after World War Two was built in part on a free press, McCain said in an excerpt of an interview with NBC’s “Meet the Press” that was released in advance of the full Sunday morning broadcast.

“I hate the press. I hate you especially,” he told interviewer Chuck Todd from an international security conference in Munich. “But the fact is we need you. We need a free press. We must have it. It’s vital.”

“If you want to preserve — I’m very serious now — if you want to preserve democracy as we know it, you have to have a

free and many times adversarial press. And without it, I am afraid that we would lose so much of our individual liberties over time. That’s how dictators get started,” he continued.

“They get started by suppressing free press. In other words, a consolidation of power. When you look at history, the first thing that dictators do is shut down the press. And I’m not saying that President Trump is trying to be a dictator. I’m just saying we need to learn the lessons of history,” McCain said.

US Senator Jeanne Shaheen, a Democrat from New Hampshire, told the conference on Sunday she was also concerned about Trump’s comments.

“The real danger is the president’s criticism of the media,” Shaheen told the conference. “A free press ... is very important to maintaining democracy, and efforts on the part of a president to undermine and manipulate the press are very dangerous.”

The comments from US lawmakers followed Trump’s



US Senator John McCain.
PHOTO: REUTERS

tweet and came days after the president held a raucous news conference at which he repeatedly criticised news reports about disorder in the White House and leaks of his telephone conversations with the leaders of Mexico and Australia.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel emphasised the importance of a free press at the conference on Saturday, saying, “I have high respect for journalists. We’ve always had good results, at least in Germany, by relying on mutual respect.”—Reuters

Powers push for ceasefire, weapons withdrawal in eastern Ukraine from Monday

MUNICH — Germany, France, Russia and Ukraine agreed on Saturday to use their influence to implement a ceasefire and the withdrawal of heavy weapons from Monday in eastern Ukraine.

Fighting has recently escalated between Ukrainian forces and Russian-backed separatists in the region, refocusing global attention on a simmering conflict that has strained relations between Russia and the West.

“On 20 February the ceasefire regime will start and withdrawal of heavy military hardware will also start ... We have actively supported this decision and obviously expressed a conviction that this time, failure should not be allowed to take place,” Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said after talks with his Ukrainian, German and French counterparts in Munich.

The Minsk peace agreement, brokered by France and Germany and signed by Russia and Ukraine in February 2015, calls for a ceasefire, the withdrawal of heavy weapons from the front line and constitutional reform to give eastern Ukraine more autonomy.

But since the deal the sides appear stuck in a stalemate broken periodically by sharp resurgences of fighting that Kiev and the Kremlin accuse each other of instigating. Since the end of January, shelling on both sides of the front line near the government-held town of Avdiyivka has been heavier than at any time since last summer. “All parties will use their influence to implement the

agreement of the trilateral contact group from 15 February,” German Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel told reporters, referring to a body comprising Ukraine, Russia and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

“The aim is to have a ceasefire starting from 20 February and to do what has long been agreed but never implemented: To withdraw the heavy weapons from the region, to secure them and enable the OSCE monitors to control where they are kept.”

US President Donald Trump’s new administration has said that any sanctions imposed on Moscow following its annexation of Crimea and events in eastern Ukraine would not be lifted until there was progress on implementing the accords. Speaking to Reuters after the meeting, Ukrainian Foreign Minister Pavlo Klim-

kin said he was “not at all” happy and lamented a lack of “powerful results.”

Echoing those comments, Lavrov said there had been a lack of results, but that he believed Ukraine and rebels would abide by the 20 February date.

Despite their differences, French Foreign Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault said neither Moscow nor Kiev had offered any alternatives to the Minsk process.

“The meeting showed that Russians and Ukrainians had no other option, but to respect Minsk. They have no alternatives. We agree to meet quickly, perhaps in three weeks, to see if we can advance on the ceasefire, withdrawal of heavy weapons and exchange of prisoners. We need a lot of patience, because we can see a lack of will on either side.”—Reuters



A military vehicle travels near the government-held industrial town of Avdiyivka, Ukraine, on 6 February 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

NEWS IN BRIEF

Saudi foreign minister says Iran main sponsor of global terror

MUNICH — Saudi Arabia’s foreign minister on Sunday rejected Iranian calls for dialogue saying Tehran was the main sponsor of terrorism in the world, a destabilising force in the Middle East and wanted to “destroy us.”

“Iran remains the single main sponsor of terrorism in the world,” Adel al-Jubeir told delegates at the Munich Security Conference. “It’s determined to upend the order in Middle East ... (and) until and unless Iran changes its behaviour it would be very difficult to deal with a country like this.” Al-Jubeir said Iran was propping up the government of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, funding the Houthi separatists in Yemen and violent groups across the region. He said the international community needed to set clear “red lines” to halt Iran’s actions. —Reuters

South Korea says believes N Korean regime involved in Kim Jong Nam murder

SEOUL — South Korea said on Sunday it believed the North Korean regime was behind the murder of the estranged half brother of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un.

“We believe the North Korean regime is behind this incident considering five suspects are North Koreans” Jeong Joon-hee, spokesman at the South Korea’s Unification Ministry that handles inter-Korea affairs, told a briefing. But Jeong declined to give further information. Malaysia police said earlier that they had arrested a North Korean man in connection to the murder of Kim Jong Nam, but four other North Korean suspects fled Malaysia.—Reuters

US senators eye sanctions against Iran for missile development

MUNICH — US Republican senators plan to introduce legislation to impose further sanction on Iran, accusing it of violating UN Security Council resolutions by testing ballistic missiles and acting to “destabilise” the Middle East, a US senator said on Sunday.

“I think it is now time for the Congress to take Iran on directly in terms of what they’ve done outside the nuclear programme,” Senator Lindsey Graham, a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, told the Munich Security Conference. Graham said he and other Republicans would introduce measures to hold Iran accountable for its actions.—Reuters

Turkey says UN-led Syria talks in Geneva only place to discuss political solution, transition

MUNICH — Turkey’s foreign minister said on Sunday UN-led peace talks on Syria in Geneva were the only place to negotiate a political solution and transition.

“Astana has never been an alternative to Geneva,” Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu told delegates at a security conference in Munich, referring to talks held between Turkey, Russia, Iran and Syrian factions in the Kazakh capital.

“It’s a good confidence building measure and to maintain a ceasefire. It’s a good step forward. “But now we need to resume Geneva talks which is the main basis for the political solution and transition,” he said. Talks in Geneva are set to resume on 23 February.—Reuters

Shells hit Damascus, no casualties reported — Hezbollah media unit, witness

BEIRUT — Shells hit areas near the centre of the Syrian capital Damascus on Sunday, but there were no immediate reports of casualties, a Reuters witness and a military media unit run by Hezbollah said. The Hezbollah news outlet said three shells landed near the Adawi and Tijara neighbourhoods.—Reuters

Israel’s defence minister says Iran wants to undermine Saudi Arabia

MUNICH — Israel’s defence minister said on Sunday Iran had an ultimate objective of undermining Saudi Arabia in the Middle East and called for a dialogue with Sunni Arab states to defeat “radical” elements in the region.

Iran aimed to “undermine stability in every country in Middle East ... their main destination at the end of the day is Saudi Arabia,” Avigdor Lieberman told delegates at the Munich Security Conference, saying he was looking forward to hearing comments from Saudi Foreign Minister Adel al-Jubeir.—Reuters

INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS SCHEDULE															
YANGON TO BANGKOK				BANGKOK TO YANGON				YGN TO ICN				ICN TO YGN			
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
TG-304	09:50	11:45	Daily	TG-303	8:00	8:45	Daily	KE-472	23:30	7:50	Daily	KE-471	18:30	22:30	Daily
TG-302	15:00	16:55	Daily	TG-301	13:15	14:00	Daily	YGN TO KUL				KUL TO YGN			
TG-306	19:50	21:45	Daily	TG-305	18:05	18:50	Daily	Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
PG-706	6:00	8:15	Daily	PG-701	8:45	9:40	Daily	AK-505	8:30	12:45	Daily	AK-504	6:55	8:00	Daily
PG-702	10:30	12:25	Daily	PG-707	13:45	14:40	Daily	AK-503	19:10	23:30	Daily	AK-502	17:20	18:30	Daily
PG-708	15:30	17:25	Daily	PG-703	16:45	17:35	Daily	8M-501	16:10	20:10	2	8M-502	16:45	17:45	1
PG-704	18:20	20:15	Daily	PG-705	20:30	21:45	Daily	8M-501	11:45	15:45	1	8M-502	21:10	22:10	2
8M-335	7:30	9:15	Daily	8M-336	10:15	11:00	Daily	MH-741	11:15	15:40	Daily	MH-742	13:55	15:05	1,4,6,7
8M-331	16:30	18:15	Daily	8M-332	19:20	20:05	Daily	MH-743	16:00	20:15	1,4,6,7	MH-740	09:10	10:15	Daily
UB-017	17:45	19:15	Daily	UB-020	10:35	11:10	3,5	YGN TO KMG				KMG TO YGN			
UB-019	8:00	9:30	3,5,7	UB-018	21:05	21:35	Daily	Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
UB-019	8:55	10:25	1,6	UB-020	11:30	12:05	1,6	CA-416	12:30	16:00	Daily	CA-415	10:50	11:30	Daily
YGN TO DMK				DMK TO YGN				MU-2032	15:30	18:50	Daily	MU-2031	13:50	14:30	Daily
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	MU-2012	12:55	19:55	3	MU-2011	08:20	11:55	3
FD-252	8:30	10:20	Daily	FD-251	7:15	8:00	Daily	YGN TO TPE				TPE TO YGN			
FD-256	12:55	14:40	Daily	FD-255	11:35	12:25	Daily	Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
FD-254	17:35	19:25	Daily	FD-253	16:20	17:05	Daily	CI-7916	10:50	16:10	Daily	CI-7915	7:00	9:50	Daily
FD-258	21:40	23:30	Daily	FD-257	20:15	21:10	Daily	YGN TO PEK				PEK TO YGN			
DD-4231	08:00	9:45	Daily	DD-4234	10:30	11:15	Daily	Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
DD-4235	12:00	13:45	Daily	DD-4230	6:30	7:15	Daily	CA-906	23:50	0550+1	1,3,5,7	CA-905	19:30	22:50	1,3,5,7
DD-4239	21:00	22:55	Daily	DD-4238	19:25	20:15	Daily	YGN TO HAN				HAN TO YGN			
SL-201	11:00	13:35	Daily	SL-200	08:45	10:00	Daily	Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
SL-207	19:45	21:45	Daily	SL-206	17:10	18:35	Daily	VN-956	19:10	21:30	Daily	VN-957	16:40	18:10	Daily
YGN TO CAN				CAN TO YGN				YGN TO SGN				SGN TO YGN			
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
8M-713	20:25	01:00+1	1	8M-714	2:05	3:40	2	Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
8M-711	8:40	13:15	2,4,5,7	8M-712	14:15	15:50	2,4,5,7	VN-942	12:10	14:55	2,3,4,5,7	VN-943	9:25	11:10	2,3,4,5,7
CZ-3056	11:35	15:50	3,6	CZ-3055	8:40	10:35	3,6	YGN TO HKG				HKG TO YGN			
CZ-3056	17:40	22:20	1,5	CZ-3055	14:40	16:40	1,5	Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
YGN TO SIN				SIN TO YGN				KA-251	1:05	5:25	Daily	KA-250	21:50	23:45	1,3,5,7
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	UB-8027	09:00	13:30	1,3,5,7	KA-252	22:20	00:10	2,4,6
8M-231	8:20	12:40	Daily	8M-232	13:45	15:15	Daily	YGN TO DOH				UB-8028	14:50	16:20	1,3,5,7
SQ-997	10:25	15:10	Daily	SQ-998	07:55	09:20	Daily	Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	DOH TO YGN			
MI-515	14:20	18:50	1,3,5	MI-522	11:30	15:30	4,6	QR-919	8:05	11:30	1,3,4,6,7	Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
MI-519	17:35	22:10	Daily	MI-518	15:15	16:40	Daily	YGN TO CNX				QR-918	20:10	5:20	1,3,4,6,7
MI-522	16:20	20:50	4,6	MI-516	12:00	13:25	1,3,5	Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	CNX TO YGN			
MI-533	13:35	20:50	2	MI-533	11:30	12:45	2	PG-724	13:40	15:35	Daily	Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
3k-584	19:40	00:10	Daily	3K-583	17:30	19:00	Daily	YGN TO DAC				PG-723	12:00	12:55	Daily
3K-582	11:35	16:05	Daily	3K-581	09:10	10:40	Daily	Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	DAC TO YGN			
TR-2823	9:25	13:55	1,2,4,5,7	TR-2822	7:20	8:45	1,2,4,5,7	BG-061	16:45	18:30	1,3,6	Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
UB-001	7:15	11:45	Daily	UB-002	13:00	14:30	Daily	MDL TO DMK				BG-060	13:30	16:00	1,3,6
YGN TO NRT				NRT TO YGN				Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	DMK TO MDL			
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	FD-245	12:55	15:15	Daily	Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
NH-814	22:10	06:45	Daily	NH-813	11:00	16:30	Daily	YGN TO KMG				FD-244	11:10	12:25	Daily

AIRLINE CODES

8M = Myanmar Airways International

BG = Biman Bangladesh Airlines

MH = Malaysia Airlines

MU = China Eastern Airlines

NH = All Nippon Airways

SQ = Singapore Airways

PG = Bangkok Airways

UB = Myanmar National Airlines

VN = Vietnam Airline

3K = Jet Star

AI = Air India

CI = China Airlines

DD = Nok Airline

KA = Dragonair

MI = Silk Air

TG = Thai Airways

AK = Air Asia

CA = Air China

CZ = China Southern

FD = Air Asia

KE = Korea Airlines

QR = Qatar Airways

TR = Tiger Airline

DAY

1 = Monday

2 = Tuesday

3 = Wednesday

4 = Thursday

5 = Friday

6 = Saturday

7 = Sunday

Iraqi forces advance towards Mosul airport in push to capture city

BAGHDAD, SOUTH OF MOSUL, Iraq — US-backed Iraqi forces began moving on Sunday towards Mosul’s airport, the first target of a ground offensive to capture the western side of the city that remains under control of Islamic State, the Iraqi military said.

Iraqi Prime Minister Haid-er al-Abadi earlier on Sunday announced the formal start of a ground offensive on western Mosul, asking the Iraqi forces to “respect human rights” during the battle.

Islamic State militants are essentially under siege in western Mosul, along with an estimated 650,000 civilians, after US-backed forces surrounding the city forced them from the east in the first phase of an offensive that concluded last month.

Iraqi federal police units are leading a northward charge on the Mosul districts that lie west of the Tigris river, aiming to capture the Mosul airport, located just south of the city, according to statements from the armed forces joint command.

They captured several villages and a local power distribution station in the first hours of their progress and killed several militants including snipers, the statements said.

“Mosul would be a tough



Iraqi security forces advance towards the western side of Mosul, Iraq on 19 February, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

fight for any army in the world,” the commander of the US-led coalitions forces, Lt Gen Stephen Townsend, said in a statement.

Iraqi planes dropped millions of leaflets on the western side of Mosul warning residents that the battle to dislodge Islamic State was imminent as troops began moving in their direction, the Iraqi Defence Ministry said on Saturday.

Up to 400,000 civilians could be displaced by the offensive as residents of western Mosul suffer

food and fuel shortages and markets are closed, United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq Lise Grande told Reuters on Saturday.

Commanders expect the battle in the west to be more difficult than in the east because tanks and armoured vehicles cannot pass through its narrow streets and alleyways.

The militants have also developed a network of passageways and tunnels that will enable them

to hide and fight among the civilians, disappear after hit-and-run operations and track government troop movements, according to residents.

Western Mosul contains the old city centre, with its ancient souks, Grand Mosque and most government administrative buildings.

It was from the pulpit of the Mosul Grand Mosque that Islamic State leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi declared a “caliphate” over parts of

Syria and Iraq in 2014.

The city — Iraq’s second biggest — is the largest urban centre captured by Islamic State in both countries and its de facto capital in Iraq. Raqqa is its capital in Syria.

Islamic State was thought to have up to 6,000 fighters in Mosul when the government’s offensive started in mid-October. Of those, more than one thousand have been killed, according to Iraqi estimates.

The remainder now face a 100,000-strong force made up of Iraqi armed forces, including elite paratroopers and police, Kurdish forces and Iranian-trained Shi’ite paramilitary groups.

The United States, which has deployed more than 5,000 troops in the fighting, leads an international coalition providing critical air and ground support, including artillery fire, to the Iraqi and Kurdish forces.

The Sunni group imposed a radical version of Islam in Mosul, banning cigarettes, televisions and radios, and forcing men to grow beards and women to cover from head to toe. Citizens who failed to comply risked death. Capturing Mosul would effectively end the militants’ ambitions for territorial rule in Iraq. They are expected to continue to wage an insurgency, however, carrying out suicide bombings and inspiring lone-wolf actions abroad.—Reuters

Putin orders Russia to recognise documents issued in rebel-held east Ukraine

MOSCOW — President Vladimir Putin ordered Russian authorities on Saturday to temporarily recognise civil registration documents issued in separatist-held areas of eastern Ukraine, a decision strongly criticised by Ukraine’s president.

The decision will enable people from the conflict-hit region to travel, work or study in Russia.

According to Putin’s order, published on the Kremlin website, Russia will temporarily recognise identity documents, diplomas, birth and marriage certificates and vehicle registration plates issued in the eastern Ukraine regions of Donetsk and Luhansk.

The legislation will be in place until a “political

settlement of the situation” in these regions based on the Minsk peace accords, the Kremlin said.

Ukrainian authorities sharply criticised Putin’s decision, saying Russia had violated the Minsk peace process.

“For me, this is another proof of Russian occupation as well as Russian violation of international law,” Ukraine’s President Petro Poroshenko told reporters in Munich, Germany. “This step completely negates the Minsk process,” said Oleksander Turchynov, secretary of Ukraine’s National Security and Defence Council, which is headed by Poroshenko.

Fighting has recently escalated in the conflict between the Ukrain-



Local police officers arrange passports during a ceremony to issue the first passports of the self-proclaimed Donetsk People’s Republic to residents in Donetsk, Ukraine, on 16 March, 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

ian government and Russian-backed separatists in eastern Ukraine, refocusing global attention on a simmering conflict that has strained relations between Russia and the West.

The February 2015 Minsk peace agreement only locked the two sides into a stalemate that has been broken periodically by sharp resurgences of fighting that Kiev and the Kremlin accuse each other of instigating.

The foreign ministers of Germany, France, Russia and Ukraine met on Saturday in Munich and agreed to use their influence to implement a ceasefire and the withdrawal of heavy weapons from Monday in eastern Ukraine.

—Reuters

THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR
MINISTRY OF ELECTRICITY AND ENERGY
MYANMA OIL AND GAS ENTERPRISE
(INVITATION FOR OPEN TENDER)
(4 / 2017)

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

Sr.No	Tender No	Description	Remark
(1)	IFB-100(16-17)	Telecommunication Equipments (2) Items	US\$
(2)	IFB-101(16-17)	Marine VHF FM Transceiver (Synthesized) (25 W) (10) Sets	US\$
(3)	IFB-102(16-17)	Hydraulic Jack 100 Ton (1) Set	US\$
(4)	IFB-103(16-17)	Air Compressor Engine Driven with Skid 100 CFM, 150 PSI, (40-60) HP (1) Set	US\$
(5)	IFB-104(16-17)	185 KW, 3300 V Induction Motor (1) No	US\$
(6)	IFB-105(16-17)	7 Ton Fork Lift (82.4 KW @ 2000 rpm) (1) Unit	US\$
(7)	IFB-106(16-17)	Excavator (25) Ton (Bucket Capacity- 1.2m³) (1) Unit	US\$
(8)	IFB-107(16-17)	4” ERW Steel Line Pipe, API 5L Grade X-42 (16.75) Miles	US\$
(9)	IFB-108(16-17)	10” ERW Steel Line Pipe, API 5L Grade X-42 (10) Miles	US\$
(10)	IFB-109(16-17)	4” Steel Ball Valve (1) Item	US\$
(11)	IFB-110(16-17)	Assorted Sizes of Pipe Fittings (5) Items	US\$
(12)	IFB-111(16-17)	Welding Electrode E-6011 (5) Ton	US\$
(13)	IFB-112(16-17)	Heat Shrinkable Sleeves and Closure Patches (3) Items	US\$
(14)	IFB-113(16-17)	Data Acquisition, Interpretation Work Station and Data Processing Center (10) Items	US\$
(15)	IFB-114(16-17)	Spares Parts and Maintenance for PLC (Daw Nyein) (1) Lot	US\$
(16)	IFB-115(16-17)	Spares Parts and Maintenance for GDS (Ywama) (1) Lot	US\$
(17)	IFB-116(16-17)	Spersene (100) MT	US\$
(18)	IFB-117(16-17)	Chrome lignite (XP-20) (200) MT	US\$
(19)	IFB-118(16-17)	Spares for Oxygen Plant (12) Items	Ks
(20)	DMP/L-031(16-17)	Portable Fire Pump 200 GPM, Single Stage with Engine & Assembly (1) Item	Ks
(21)	DMP/L-032(16-17)	18 R 22.5 x 18PR Tyre Tubeless (1) Lot	Ks
(22)	DMP/L-033(16-17)	SAE 15 W 40 Diesel Engine Oil (1) Lot	Ks
(23)	DMP/L-034(16-17)	Gear Oil (PGO-140 EP) (GL-5) (1) Lot	Ks

Tender Closing Date & Time - 20-3-2017, 16:30 Hr

Tender Document shall be available during office hours commencing from 20TH February, 2017 at the Finance Department , Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise, No(44) Complex, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar.

Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise
Ph . +95 67 - 411206 / 411274

New US travel ban to spare green card holders — Trump official

MUNICH — A new version of a Trump administration travel ban will not stop green card residency holders or travellers already on planes from entering the United States, US Secretary for Homeland Security John Kelly said on Saturday.

US President Donald Trump’s initial attempt to clamp down for security reasons on immigration from seven Muslim-majority countries and on refugees snarled to a halt amid a judicial backlash and chaos at airports.

“The president is contemplating releasing a tighter, more streamlined version of the first (order). And I will have opportunity to work (on) a rollout plan, in particular to make sure that there’s no one in a sense caught in the system of moving from overseas to our airports,” Kelly said at the Munich Security Conference.

Asked whether green card residency permit holders would be allowed in, Kelly said: “It’s a good assumption and, as far as the visas go, ... if they’re in motion from some distant land to the United States, when they arrive they will be allowed in.”

He promised “a short phase-in period to make sure that people on the other end don’t get on airplanes. But if they’re on an airplane

and inbound, they’ll be allowed to enter the country.”

Trump’s original order, which he said was meant to head off attacks by Islamist militants, barred people from Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen from entering for 90 days and excluded all refugees for 120 days, except those from Syria, who were banned indefinitely.

The abrupt implementation of the order last month plunged the immigration system into chaos, sparking a wave of criticism from the countries affected, and from Western allies and some of America’s leading corporations, especially technology firms.—Reuters

Sri Lanka arrests soldiers over journalist’s abduction during war

COLOMBO — Sri Lankan police arrested an army officer and two soldiers on Saturday over the alleged abduction, assault and illegal detention of a leading journalist in 2008 during the war against separatist rebels, the police said.

The island nation saw abductions and killings of high-profile journalists and rights defenders during the final months of the war that ended with the defeat of Tamil Tiger separatists in May 2009.

The previous government headed by President Mahinda Rajapaksa failed to probe the crimes despite international pressure.

A special police team arrested an army officer and two soldiers over the abduction and illegal detention of journalist Keith Noyahr, police spokesman Priyantha Jayakody said in a statement. A local court ordered the three held until 23 February.

Noyahr was an associate editor of the English language weekly The Nation when he was abducted in May 2008. He was severely beaten before being released, barely able to walk. After the attack, he fled the country with his family fearing for his life.

Rights groups have blamed the Rajapaksa government for several abductions, assaults and killings of high-profile journalists or editors who were critical of his government and the war against the Tamil Tigers.

President Maithripala Sirisena, who unseated Rajapaksa in an upset win in 2015, has promised to probe human rights abuses including war crimes.

However, Sirisena’s administration has been sluggish in probing key allegations due to resistance by members of his own party and some government officials.—Reuters

US carrier group patrols in tense South China Sea

BANGKOK — A United States aircraft carrier strike group has begun patrols in the South China Sea amid growing tension with China over control of



Sailors man the rails of the USS Carl Vinson, a Nimitz-class aircraft carrier, as it departs its home port in San Diego, California on 22 August, 2014. PHOTO: REUTERS

the disputed waterway and concerns it could become a flashpoint under the new US administration.

China's Foreign Ministry on Wednesday warned Washington against challenging its sovereignty in the South China Sea.

The US navy said the force, including Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson, began routine operations in the South China Sea on Saturday. The announcement was posted on the Vinson's Facebook page.

The strike group's commander, Rear Admiral James Kilby, said that weeks of training in the Pacific had improved the group's effectiveness and readiness.

"We are looking forward to demonstrating those capabilities while building upon existing strong relationships with our allies, partners and friends in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region," he was quoted as saying by the Navy News Service.

Friction between the United States and China over trade and territory under US President Donald Trump have increased concerns that the South China Sea could become a flashpoint.

China wrapped up its own naval exercises in the South China Sea on Friday. War games involving its own aircraft carrier have unnerved neighbours with

which it has long-running territorial disputes.

China lays claim to almost all of the resource-rich South China Sea, through which about \$5 trillion worth of trade passes each year.

Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam also claim parts of the waters that command strategic sea lanes and have rich fishing grounds, along with oil and gas deposits.

The United States has criticised Beijing's construction of man-made islands and build-up of military facilities in the sea, and expressed concern they could be used to restrict free movement. —Reuters

Japanese troops hold 1st overseas drill to extract nationals

RAYONG (Thailand) — The Self-Defence Forces have been conducting their first drill overseas to extract Japanese nationals, based on security legislation that took effect last year, with part of the exercise in central Thailand opened to the media on Sunday.

The legislation loosened limitations imposed by Japan's war-renouncing Constitution to enable

Japanese troops to play a greater role overseas, including restrictions on the use of weapons during operations to protect Japanese nationals.

The SDF did not allow the media to view the use of weapons by troops during the drill, conducted as part of Cobra Gold multilateral exercises co-hosted by Thailand and the United States. SDF mem-

bers were previously only allowed to "transport" Japanese nationals to safe locations during overseas emergencies. Under the new legislation, they can use weapons while rescuing nationals and can also protect foreigners under certain conditions.

The drill on Sunday, which also involved US and Thai forces, was based on the scenario of a situa-

tion of political instability overseas following a natural disaster. The SDF members escorted Japanese nationals and US citizens to an airport, where the evacuees boarded a C-130 transport airplane.

As part of the drill, local residents blocked the road to the airport and the SDF members responded by threatening the use of force. "We

were able to collaborate with the United States and other countries and it was meaningful training," said Col Hiroyuki Kawaguchi of Japan's Ground Self-Defence Force, who was in command of the drill. Around 130 personnel from Japan's ground, air, maritime self-defence forces are participating in the Cobra Gold exercises at the Utapao Royal Thai

Navy Airfield and elsewhere in Thailand.

The latest Cobra Gold exercises, which began last Tuesday and are scheduled to end on 24 February, involve Thailand, the United States, Singapore, Japan, Indonesia, South Korea and Malaysia as direct participants. Japanese troops have taken part in the multilateral exercises since 2005.—Kyodo News

UK parliament's upper house likely to attach conditions to Brexit bill — ex minister

LONDON — The British parliament's upper chamber is likely to attach conditions to legislation giving Prime Minister Theresa May the power to trigger the country's exit from the European Union, a former minister from the opposition Labour Party said on Sunday.

Earlier this month, May won approval for the legislation from parliament's lower chamber, the House of Commons. The unelected upper chamber, the House of Lords, is due to begin debating the bill on Monday.

The legislation passed through the Commons without being amended, but it could face a tougher ride through the Lords, where May's Conservative Party does not have a majority.

Amendments aimed at giving EU citizens in Britain guaranteed rights post-Brexit, and calling for parliament to have a vote on the final Brexit

deal are expected to attract the most support.

Asked during an interview on BBC TV whether it was his view the government could be defeated on these two issues, Peter Mandelson, a Labour member of the House of Lords said: "I think it is. I think there is a strong body of opinion across party and amongst independent peers as well that both these issues are very serious."

May has said she plans to trigger Article 50 of the EU's Lisbon Treaty by the end of March and that she expects to get the legislation through parliament in time to do so.

If the Lords succeeds in attaching any conditions to the legislation, the amended bill will have to go back to the Commons for its approval.

The House of Commons has already rejected amendments on both issues.

The legislation will be

passed back and forth between the upper and lower houses until they both agree.

"At the end of the day the House of Commons must prevail because it is the elected chamber but I hope the House of Lords will not throw in the towel early," Mandelson said.

Justice Secretary Elizabeth Truss told the BBC she expected the Lords to get on and pass the legislation.

"It is a simple bill on do we trigger Article 50, the British people have voted for that, they were clear in the referendum and the House of Lords now needs to get on with it which is what I understand they will be doing," she said.

"I fully expect the House of Lords will recognise the will of the people and the will of the House of Commons, which was overwhelming, and pass that legislation."—Reuters

ကွန်ပျူတာ စနစ်ဖြင့်ထိန်းသော
MECHANICAL CAR PARKING

Side View: 14'4" x 7'2" x 16"
Front View: 7'2" x 7'2"
Plan View: 16' x 16' x 16'

TPW
Tet: 09.25.981.36.36

No. (31), Room (B), 7 Miles, Pyay Road, Yangon
T: 09.259.81.36.36
: 09.259.81.37.37
: 09.259.81.46.46

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Hungarian love story wins top prize at Berlin Film Festival

BERLIN — A Hungarian love story called “On Body and Soul” about two lonely hearts working in a slaughterhouse in Budapest won the Golden Bear for best film on Saturday at the 67th Berlin International Film Festival.

“This film is approachable only with a generous heart,” director Ildiko Enyedi told the audience at the awards ceremony ending the 10-day Berlinale, which showcased 18 films in competition and 403 in sidebar screens.

Jury president Paul Verhoeven, a Dutch director and producer, said the seven-member panel

had fallen in love with the film because it reminded people of something too often forgotten in everyday life: compassion.

As is traditional in Berlin, this year’s festival also tackled current affairs with entries that reflected on global developments and the dark chaos of the modern world with films and their makers commenting on political events in the United States and elsewhere.

“Thanks to all the filmmakers who tried to save the world with poetry over the last 10 days,” festival director Dieter Kosslick said in a short speech. “You don’t

need me to tell you that all is not right with the world now.”

The Silver Bear for best actor went to Austrian Georg Friedrich for his performance in “Helle Naechte” (“Bright Nights”), a German-Norwegian father-son drama. South Korea’s Kim Min-hee won the Silver Bear for best actress for “On the Beach at Night Alone”. The grand jury prize went to “Felicite”, a French-Senegalese-Belgian production directed by Alain Gomis about a charismatic woman who works as a singer in a bar in Kinshasa and brightens the lives of her audi-

ences. Finland’s Aki Kaurismaki won the Silver Bear for best director with his film “The Other Side of Hope”. Kosslick said the films picked for the festival this year were designed to show that diversity beats monotony, and to tackle issues such as persecution of homosexuals and discrimination against racial minorities.

He pointedly avoided mentioning the name of US President Donald Trump, who provoked an international uproar by announcing that he was suspending entry to the United States by citizens of seven Muslim-majority nations,

saying that this year’s line-up was “protest enough”. The jury also introduced a new prize — for original documentary film — that was awarded to “Ghost Hunting”, about an Israeli interrogation centre, by Palestinian director Raed Andoni. “The president of the United States yesterday called the press the enemy of the people,” said American filmmaker Laura Poitras in presenting the award. “We documentarians are here to say we are the enemies of nationalism and exclusion.” —Reuters



Members of the international jury and director Ildiko Enyedi, receiver of the Golden Bear for Best Film ‘On Body and Soul’ pose during the awards ceremony at the 67th Berlinale International Film Festival in Berlin, Germany, on 18 February, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

Dubai police summon Russian model who dangled from skyscraper-newspaper

DUBAI — Dubai police have summoned a Russian model who posed for a video while dangling from a skyscraper to sign a pledge not to put her life in danger again, a local newspaper reported on Saturday.

A video of the model, identified by local media as 23-year-old Viktoria Odintcova, went viral after she posted it on her Instagram account earlier in the week.

It shows her stepping off a

girder at the top of Dubai’s 73-storey Cayan Tower and dangling in the void, held only by a man gripping her hand. Major-General Khalil Ibrahim al-Mansouri, an assistant to the chief of police in Dubai, was quoted by the Arabic-language al-Ittihad newspaper as saying that Odintcova “had been summoned to sign an undertaking not to repeat any dangerous moves that could endanger her life in Dubai.”

“What the young Russian

woman had done represents a danger to her life,” the newspaper quoted Mansouri as saying.

He said it was important for residents in the Gulf Arab city to avoid practising dangerous hobbies without taking necessary precautions or obtaining prior permission from authorities, the newspaper said. The video registered more than half a million viewings after it was posted on Odintcova’s Instagram account.—Reuters

Paramount CEO Grey to depart as soon as next week — sources

LOS ANGELES — Brad Grey, the chairman and chief executive officer of Viacom Inc’s (VIAB.O) Paramount Pictures film studio is expected to leave with an announcement coming as early as next week, according to two sources familiar with the situation.

Grey’s departure from the studio, which he has headed for 12 years, comes after years of underperformance, producing box office bombs such as “Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Out of the Shadows” and “Ben-Hur.”

Viacom Chief Executive Bob Bakish will work with an interim management team at Paramount, according to one of the sources.

A spokeswoman for Viacom declined to comment. A spokesman for Grey declined to comment.

Paramount was at the centre of a bruising power struggle between Viacom’s controlling shareholder, Sumner Redstone, and his daughter, Shari, and Viacom’s former chief executive, Philippe Dauman.

The battle began when Dauman, who resigned in August, proposed selling a stake in Paramount against Redstone’s wishes. Last month, Grey helped to arrange a deal for two Chinese

film companies, Shanghai Film Group (SFG) and Huahua Media, to invest \$1 billion in Paramount, giving the studio much-needed cash and support as it attempts to grow.

As part of the agreement, SFG and Huahua Media will finance a combined 25 per cent of all of Paramount’s films for the next three years, with the option to extend to a fourth year. The Chinese studios will share in the economic returns of the films, but details were not provided.

During his tenure at Paramount, Grey was responsible for a seven-year marketing distribution deal with Marvel and the 2008 acquisition of DreamWorks SKG for \$1.6 billion, from which Paramount got the Transformers franchise. However in recent years, the studio has struggled.

Viacom’s Bakish is making Paramount a focal point in his strategy to turn around the New York-based media company’s declining ad revenue and ratings.

In Viacom’s earnings call last week, Bakish outlined a strategy to focus on six of its brands: Paramount, BET, Comedy Central, MTV, Nickelodeon and Nick Jr channels. As part of the strategy, the networks will start making films with Paramount.—Reuters

Film about colonial era explains modern Brazil, director says

BERLIN — A film about Brazil’s national hero that explores racism and the privileges of a small elite in the 18th century helps explain Brazil’s current problems because little has changed since that colonial era, its director said on Friday.

In “Joaquim” — which is competing at the Berlin Film Festival — the eponymous 18th century second lieutenant works at a checkpoint catching gold smugglers. He falls in love with a black slave and hopes to buy her freedom but struggles to get the

promotion he needs to provide the funds, with one of his peers telling him you have to be well-born to rise up. When Joaquim is sent on a mission to find new sources of gold, he ends up wanting to free Brazil from colonial power Portugal, encouraged by his lover and books a man gives him. “When you go to a psychoanalyst, if you are having a crisis and you lie down on the couch, the psychoanalyst asks who is your father and who is your mother? How was your life with them? In order

to understand the present day crisis,” Brazilian Director Marcelo Gomes told Reuters in an interview. “So I think I did the same thing here — I went back 200 years to the birth of the Brazilian nation to understand the present day crisis. I uncovered the flaws of the past to understand the flaws of today,” he added. Gomes said the “social fractures” of the colonial era were still visible in Brazilian society and modern-day examples of corruption included companies not paying their taxes.—Reuters

Jasper Conran reworks masculine classics at London womenswear show

LONDON — British designer Jasper Conran reworked classic masculine looks for his latest womenswear collection at London Fashion Week on Saturday, presenting a clean-cut line of coats, skirts and dresses.

At a fashion show held at the luxury Claridge's hotel, models strutted down the catwalk in a range of outerwear including parka, mackintosh, bomber, quilted, biker and sheepskin jackets as well as duffle, pea and suede coats.

Conran presented V-neck, T-shirt, print, fringed sequin, banded and tunic dresses in materials

that ranged from mohair to cotton and organza.

Slim trousers slit at the bottom came in mohair and wool, while straight skirts to the knee were in leather, hair-on-calf or layered organza. They were worn with banded vests or boxy tops.

"What I have been working with is what I would call familiar, the things that (are) menswear classic," the designer told Reuters backstage.

"I've been working with that and re-proportioning and rethinking and reworking and re-fabricating those so it's the familiar but it's unfamiliar."

Conran used a colour palette of chocolate, berry, navy, greens, cream, black and white with dabs of scarlet, orange, pink and royal blue bursting through the collection.

"It's... exciting juxtapositions of colour — so classic colours, berry colours, browns and greens and then vibrant colour," he said. For accessories, footwear was flat, with knee-length boots and loafers in mainly dark colours.

London Fashion Week, during which designers are showcasing their autumn/winter 2017 womenswear creations, runs until Tuesday.

—Reuters



A model presents a creation at the Jasper Conran catwalk show during London Fashion Week in London, Britain, on 18 February 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

Elephants on parade in Laos as numbers dwindle

SAYABOURY, LAOS — Dozens of elephants, adorned in bright colours and with garlands of flowers, paraded through a Lao-tian town on Saturday in a celebration of a species that has become increasingly scarce in the Southeast Asian country.

Known historically as the "Land of a Million Elephants", Laos now has only a few hundred left in the wild and not many more than that in captivity, most of which are used in logging.

Nearly 70 elephants joined the main procession at the 11th annual elephant festival in Sayaboury Province some 200 km (120 miles) northwest of the capital Vientiane.

"The festival is organized to draw the public's attention to the condition of the endangered elephant as well as promoting traditional culture and livelihoods,"



An elephant takes part in the rehearsal before the opening of the elephant festival, which organizers say aims to raise awareness about elephants, in Sayaboury province, Laos, on 17 February 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

said Yanyong Sipaseuth, the deputy governor of the province.

Wild elephant numbers have dwindled because of the destruction of their

forest habitat, although poaching for ivory has also played a part, conservationists say. A ban on capturing elephants from the wild so they can be domesticated

has put greater strain on the existing captive population, meaning elephants are often worked so hard that they fall sick and no longer reproduce.—Reuters

Contemporary art brings life to Cairo's City of the Dead

CAIRO — On a winding road leading into Cairo's City of the Dead, a cartoon mouse with round ears and green eyes adorns the shop fronts and walls of the mausoleums where thousands of Egyptians live among the gravestones.

The path leads to a 15th-century complex built by Mameluk Sultan al-Ashraf Qaitbey, a UNESCO World Heritage Site that has been recently revived as a local artistic hub. In an adjacent courtyard where local boys play football, a mural shows Frankie the mouse putting a leash on a Pharaonic cat.

Contemporary art is bringing life and colour into the once-drab necropolis, part of an ongoing project by Polish architect Agnieszka Dobrowolska called "Outside In: the Art of Inclusion".

"What we want to do is to bring together the old heritage, the traditions of

this particular place, with creative contemporary art and with various cultural events to promote diversity. Old meets new, death and life come together in the city of the dead, where we can exchange ideas and culture between east and west," Dobrowolska told Reuters.

What began as a conservation project for the complex — which includes a mosque, a school and the remains of a drinking trough — grew into the initiative to invite artists from around the world to engage the community and create art inspired by the local culture. It is largely funded by the European Union.

Artists have so far come up with murals, mosaics, sculptures, graffiti and even live performances. Frankie the mouse is the work of a Polish graffiti artist who uses the pseudonym Franek Mysza.—Reuters



A graffiti, painted on the wall of a house located inside the 15th-century complex built by Mameluk Sultan al-Ashraf Qaitbey, is photographed, in Cairo's City of the Dead, Egypt, on 13 February 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

mitv Myanmar International Programme Schedule

(20-2-2017 07:00am ~ 21-2-2017 07:00am) MST

07:03	Am	News
07:27	Am	Myanmar Delicate Artistic Creations— Gem Stone Painting
07:46	Am	Ayeyawady Dolphin (Part- I)
08:03	Am	News
08:26	Am	Strolling Along A Memory Link — U Pein Bridge
08:45	Am	Living Myanmar Glazed Ceramics
09:03	Am	News
09:27	Am	Myanmar Traditions and Culture Tea
09:54	Am	Myanmar Street Foods
10:03	Am	News
10:26	Am	Clam Farming

10:44 Am Yatana Theinga City and Shwe Bon
Yatanamingalar Palace

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

Prime Time

07:03 Pm News
07:27 Pm Food Trip (EP-2)
08:03 Pm News
08:26 Pm Welcome To Naga Land

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

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

Lewandowski rescues lethargic Bayern with stoppage-time leveller



Hertha's Vedad Ibisevic scores a offside goal past Bayern Munich's Manuel Neuer during the match of German Bundesliga between Hertha BSC Berlin and Bayern Munich at Berlin Olympiastadion in Germany on 18 February, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

BERLIN — Bundesliga leaders Bayern Munich needed a last-gasp goal from striker Robert Lewandowski to rescue a 1-1 draw at Hertha Berlin on Saturday and increase their advantage at the top to eight points.

Hertha scored through Vedad Ibisevic with the Bosnian volleying in for his ninth goal and his first since November, with Bayern, who crushed Arsenal 5-1 in the Champions League in mid-week, lacking any game plan despite controlling possession.

The Bavarians, who looked a shadow of the team that obliterated Arsenal with three goals in 10 minutes, had few clear-cut chances in the second half.

But Lewandowski was in the right place at the right time to fire in from close range for his 16th league goal in the sixth minute of stoppage time after Arjen Robben had seen his shot blocked.

"The team is always there when needed," said captain Philipp Lahm. "But to be honest we had come to Berlin to win."

Bayern, who have now won just one of their last three league games, moved up to 50 points with RB Leipzig, in second place on 42, travelling to Borussia Mönchengladbach on Sunday.

"We worked at it until the very end," said Bayern's Thomas Mueller. "We have the mentality but we would have liked to

win here." Borussia Dortmund bounced back from their midweek Champions League loss at Benfica to ease past VfL Wolfsburg 3-0 and climb into third place on 37 points. An own goal from Jeffrey Bruma put them in the driving seat before Lukasz Piszczek and Ousmane Dembele increased their lead with second-half goals.

Hoffenheim joined them on 37 points after their 2-0 victory over bottom side Darmstadt 98, courtesy of Andrej Kramaric's brace. Eintracht Frankfurt squandered their chance to go third in the standings, slumping to a 2-0 defeat by visitors Ingolstadt to drop to sixth on 35 points. —Reuters

Bale scores as Real tighten grip on top spot; Gameiro treble fires Atletico to victory

BARCELONA — Gareth Bale marked his return to action after a long injury layoff by sealing a 2-0 victory for Real Madrid over Espanyol on Saturday to provisionally stretch Zinedine Zidane's side's lead at the top of La Liga to four points.

Alvaro Morata headed home a floated cross from Isco to put Real ahead after 33 minutes against a stubborn Espanyol side and Bale steered another pass from the Spain midfielder in off the post in the 83rd minute shortly after coming off the bench.

Bale, making his first appearance since damaging ankle ligaments against Sporting Lisbon in November, netted his eighth goal of the season. Real also set a club record of scoring in 42 consecutive games in all competitions.

"I'm delighted that Gareth is back and especially for him, he was so keen to return and feel like a player again after almost three months away from the pitch," Zidane told reporters.

"I told him to enjoy the game, he is a special player, different to everyone else."

Real top the standings on 52 points, four clear of Barcelona who host Leganes on Sunday while Sevilla, in third on 46, entertain Eibar later on Saturday.

Real have a game in hand on both their title rivals.

Earlier on Saturday, Kevin Gameiro came off the bench to score a hat-trick in the space of five minutes to fire Atletico Madrid to a 4-1 win over struggling Sporting Gijon that kept them fourth in the standings on 45 points.

Yannick Carrasco had given Atletico the lead 12 seconds into the second half but Sergio Alvarez gave the impressive home side a deserved equaliser in the 49th minute.

Sporting continued to cause Diego Simeone's side problems after drawing level and Alvarez missed a gilt-edged chance to put them ahead when he sent a half-volley over the bar from close range.

For the second week in a row, however, Atletico dug deep to rescue the points from an unconvincing display.

Antoine Griezmann had a goal harshly ruled out for offside but laid on the pass for Gameiro's first strike, the former Sevilla player calmly rounding Ivan Cuellar to put Atletico ahead in the 80th minute. Gameiro ruthlessly killed off Sporting with two quick-fire strikes, latching on to a pass from Thomas Parthey to score in the 81st minute and taking advantage of another through ball from Griezmann to complete his treble. The Frenchman is the first Atletico player to score a hat-trick in the league as a substitute while his treble was the second fastest in the history of La Liga, behind only Bebeto's for Deportivo La Coruna against Albacete in 1995. "We didn't imagine anything else than the difficult game we had, Atletico have always struggled to win here," said Atletico coach Diego Simeone. "It was a very competitive game, we scored then they pulled us back immediately. "The substitutes gave us an extra boost and made us stronger in midfield and then Gameiro's speed settled the game. The reaction was very good as we managed to score by playing well. I'm very happy for Gameiro, it's not easy to score three times in a game, it'll do wonders for him." —Reuters



Real Madrid's Gareth Bale scores against Espanyol during the match of Spanish La Liga Santander at Santiago Bernabeu stadium in Madrid, Spain on 18 February, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

Luis Enrique says future unaffected by PSG thrashing



Barcelona coach Luis Enrique. PHOTO: REUTERS

BARCELONA — Barcelona coach Luis Enrique has not made up his mind about whether he will remain in charge next season but his team's thrashing by Paris St Germain will not affect his decision, he said on Saturday.

Luis Enrique has eight trophies in his two-and-a-half years in charge and has led Barca to a third consecutive King's Cup final but he came in for heavy criticism following Tuesday's harrowing 4-0 loss to PSG in the Champions League, the club's heaviest defeat in a major competition since 2013.

Doubts hung over his future before the Parc des Princes meltdown as he stalled over talks to extend his contract, which expires at the end of the season.

"What happens in these months will have nothing to do with my decision, not one game, not two or the 38 games in the league. I still haven't taken it," Luis Enrique told a news conference on Saturday ahead of Sunday's La Liga game against Leganes.

"Criticism has no effect on me, if it did then I wouldn't have been able to stay in this job for almost three years. We are our own fiercest critics, the ones who most want to improve. Everything else is just a circus."

Barca are on the brink of their earliest exit from the Champions League since 2007 but can get their bid to catch Real Madrid at the top of La Liga back on track when they host struggling Leganes.

Barca are second in the standings on 48 points and have played two games less than Real but Luis Enrique is still optimistic about their title chances.

"It's a different game for us after what happened on Tuesday, a good opportunity to see the team's response from a difficult situation," he said.

"In football everything is exaggerated but I still don't think everything is black or white. We are still alive in three competitions, we're struggling a bit in one of them but we have a small chance. In the other two we're more than alive." —Reuters