MAUNGTAW BRACES FOR STORM, ORANGE ALERT ISSUED P-3 (NATIONAL)

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Hailing Union Peace Conference –21st Century Panglong (Second Session)

Union Peace Dialogue Joint Committee (UPDJC) holds its 11th meeting in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MYANMAR NEWS AGENCY**

UPDJC reaches agreements on most issues except secession

THE Union Peace Dialogue Joint Committee (UPDJC) yesterday reached agreement on 33 points out of 41 and will discuss a non-secession deadlock during a future meeting.

The achievements came at the committee's 11th meeting in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday, with an opening address by State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, Chairperson of the UPDJC, agreeing 33 points.

The peace negotiators from the government, the Hluttaw, the Tatmadaw, ethnic armed organizations and political parties discussed 41 points, including 21 points dealing with political issues. The participants agreed on 33 points, 12 in the political sector, 11 in the economic sector, four in the social sector and six in the land and environmental sector. The agreements will be signed as a part of the Union Agreement on the last day session of the conference.

> Federalism was seen as secession, but now, ... it is not considered as secession but unity.

UPDJC members consisting of 16 representatives from the government, Hluttaw and Tatmadaw, 16 from ethnic armed organizations, and 15 from political parties were present at the meeting.

In his opening remarks, the UPDJC Vice Chairman Pado Saw Kwe Htoo Win highlighted the importance of a successful political dialogue to achieve peace in the country. The compilations and discussions were thoroughly discussed in the UPDJC and implemented, he said.

SEE PAGE -3

Final day of peace conference to be broadcast live

TODAY'S meeting of the Union Peace Conference – 21st Century Panglong (Second Session), which began on 24 May in the Myanmar International Convention Centre 2, will be broadcast live on television and radio starting at 10 am. Today's session is the last day of the conference. —Myanmar News Agency ■

NATIONAL
New four-lane concrete road to be built near Goteik Viaduct
PAGE-2

LOCAL BUSINESS
Effort to get tax exemption to export garment
PAGE-5

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

Rubbish bins to be donated for the Magway hospital

A member of the Parame blood donation social organization donated rubbish bins to the Magway general hospital.

"One rubbish bin costs Ks 6,000. Now, we have already collected 50 bins. We will donate the rubbish bins as much as they need.

If we don't have any outside donors, our organization members will donate.

Our team isa blood donation team, so, we are usually going to the hospital. Therefore, a clean hospital is a pleasure for us," said U KyawKyaw, the head of the Parame blood donation social organization.

We will start our donation when we received the needed items list from an official from the health department. After donating to the general hospital, we have plan to donate to learning/teaching hospital.—MMAL ■

Parame blood donation social organization donated rubbish bins to the Magway general hospital. **PHOTO: MMAL**

New curriculum and texts books for grade-1 to be introduced this fiscal year

A new curriculum and texts books for grade-1 will be introduced starting from 1 June, 2017, according to an official from Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

The Ministry of Education drew up the primary curriculum with the assistance of JICA. The ministry will introduce the new curriculum text books to about 4.3 million grade-1 students across the country in this fiscal year.

The new curriculum text books and teaching guide books designs were drawn up by 40 Japan experts and 60 Myanmar experts who were appointed by the ministry of education. So far, National curriculum committee which is formed by National Education Policy commission permitted the new curriculum text book for the grade-1.

There are nine subjects plus 3 promotional pre-vocational subjects in primary curriculum including Myanmar, English, Maths, Science, Social, moral education, life skills, religions and arts.

This new curriculum change is the first time in 20 years with an aim to promote the knowledge for the development of the country.—MMAL ■

New four-lane concrete road to be built near Goteik Viaduct

THE Ministry of Construction said it is working to build a new four-lane concrete bridge, 800 kilometers away from the Goteik Viaduct, the most famous bridge in Nawnghkio Township in Shan State.

The goal in transportation service is to provide a safe and comfortable service for bridge users, according to the project implementers. Organised by the ministry, Oriental Highway Co Ltd is currently working for the bridge project.

The four-lane bridge will be 2,800 feet in length. Upon completion of the project, the transport authorities will not allow passenger vehicles, cargo tracks and other kinds of motor cars to use Gotetwin road section which is not safe for road users but the road will remain as a tourist attraction.

A new bypass will be built at mile post No. 72/5 on highway in Nawnghkio Township prior to an approach road for the bridge. In Kyaukme side, the construction of approach road will start at mile post No 92/5 on Mandalay-Lashio-Muse Road.

The project proposal has already been submitted to the Shan State government. Construction work will commence only after receiving green lights from the government.

The transport authorities said they paid compensation of Ks15 million for an acre of farmland and Ks10 million for an acre of cropland located within the project area.—Sai Tha Hlaing (Leinmawmye) ■

A scale model of new four-lane concrete bridge. **PHOTO: SAI (HSIPAW)**

Blue-green algae produce with testing lake

SAGAING June Pharmaceutical & Foodstuff Industry Ltd under the ministry of Industry is testing to produce blue-green algae in a test lake at Blue-Green algae production camp, Budalin township, Sagaing region, it is learnt. Blue-green algae production has been suspended since 2013 because the fresh water entering into the production camp was unable to produce the Blue-green algae. Currently, Blue-Green algae are being grown in 29 test lakes.

Blue-green algae have been produced at the Twintaung camp for the last 30 years. Blue-green algae are produced in Twintaung, Kanitaungpauk, Yaykharinn, Kani township Twinma and Sagaingpinma factories in Sagaing region.

Currently, Yaykharinn, Kani township Twinma and Sagaingpinma factories are selling blue-green algae drugs with the name of Spirulina.—200 ■

UPDJC reaches agreements on most issues except secession

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi delivers the opening speech. **PHOTO: MNA**

FROM PAGE-1

Discussions on political sector, economic sector, social sector, land and environmental sector, security sector and final day programmes for the Union Peace Conference – 21st Century Panglong (Second Session) were made in the meeting.

The issue of non-secession was much discussed at the meeting, but ended without agreement on it.

"There will be less satisfactory result than people are expecting" said U Zaw Htay, spokesman for the President's office, told reporters following the meeting.

"We did not get agreement on the matter of seceding," he added. "Without the commitment of the ethnic organizations for non-secession from the Union, we cannot move forward for discussing related issues such as constitution of respective states, equality and self-determination," he said, "so, we agreed to discuss that issues later,"

In the past, federalism has been as secession, but now, after much research and study, it is not considered as secession but unity, he said at the press conference.

"The people, the Government and the Tatmadaw had their worries and concerns about disintegration of the union. That was why non-secession is included in order to remove these worries and concerns," he added.

According to participants of the meeting, several representatives pleaded earnestly for non-secession, but armed ethnic organizations could not agree to it, officials said.

The Government and the Tatmadaw specifically discussed the secession matter at length yesterday, and the Government, hluttaw and Tatmadaw are in total agreement on the stance of non-secession.

UPDJC secretariat member Sai Kyaw Nyunt said all economic sector proposals were discussed thoroughly in yesterday's UPDJC meeting and were able to confirm the proposals. —Myanmar News Agency ■

Maungtaw braces for storm, orange alert issued

RESIDENTS in Maungtaw in northern Rakhine State are bracing for a tropical cyclone that has been predicted to cross the northern part of the state by 31 May.

The fire service department in Maungtaw issued a warning yesterday alerting residents of the possibility of the cyclone, which has formed in the Bay of Bengal, posing a danger to Bangladesh, Myanmar and perhaps parts of eastern India by Tuesday.

"Evacuation teams have been formed. Pamphlets on storm awareness have been delivered to the people," said U Ye Lin Aung, Officer of the Maungtaw Township Fire Services Department.

Local authorities also held an emergency meeting yesterday to in order to prepare to quickly carry out a response to the possible disaster.

Evacuation team announces cyclone warning over loudspeaker. **PHOTO: YE HTUT**

The Department of Meteorology and Hydrology announced yesterday that the depression over the central and southeast portion of the Bay of Bengal has further intensified into a deep depression and moved over East Central Bay of Bengal.

"It is forecast to intensify into a cyclonic storm over the next 24 hours," said an official from the weather bureau.

The storm is centred about 260 miles southwest of Pathein, 310 miles southwest of Kyaukphyu, 325 miles southwest of Sittwe, 440 miles south-southwest of Chittagong (Bangladesh) and forecast to move toward northeast wards.

Due to this deep, major weather depression, widespread rain and thundershowers are predicted for the Nay Pyi Taw, Sagaing, Mandalay, Magway, Bago, Yangon, Ayeyawady, Taninthayi regions, and the Kachin, Chin, Rakhine, Kayin and Mon states over the next 72 hours, weather department officials said. Scattered rain or thundershowers are predicted for the remaining regions and states with isolated heavy precipitation and strong wind.

Occasional squalls with rough seas will be experienced off and along the Myanmar coasts, officials said. Surface wind speed in squalls may reach 40 mph.

In addition to the strong wind and heavy rainfall, flash floods and landslides may also occur over the next three days. An advisory for people living in low-lying areas, and near small rivers and streams has been issued to take precautions against landslides and flooding. Those who will be travelling in planes, trawlers, vessels and ships off and along the Myanmar coasts are advised to take notice of the effects of the deep depression and take necessary precautions. — Min Thit(MNA) ■

Hitachi develops new ultrasound method to detect breast cancer

TOKYO — Hitachi Ltd has developed a new ultrasound screening technology that can easily detect breast cancer without causing pain.

The electronics giant aims to put the technology into practical use around 2020 through joint research with Hokkaido University Hospital.

Hitachi has already successfully detected a 5-millimetre tumour in a clinical test on a dog.

Patients undergoing screenings lie face down on an examination table and put their breasts into an attached container filled with water where ultrasonic waves are beamed from 360 degrees for scanning.

The scanning finishes in about one minute, analyzing various characteristics of tumours, including their hardness and surface roughness, Hitachi said. The surface roughness of a malignant tumour tends to be more remarkable than that of a benign tumour.

As methods to detect breast cancer, mammography and ultrasound scanning are currently common.

Mammography using X-rays exposes examinees to a low level of radiation and could be accompanied by pain because the breasts need to be flattened for better images of breast tissue. In ultrasound scanning, detectability depends on the skills of examiners.

Breast cancer is the most common cancer among women worldwide in terms of both incidence and mortality. —Kyodo News ■

Adani has to pay royalties in full for coal mine — Australia state premier

QUEENSLAND — Adani Enterprises (ADEL.NS) will get no exemption or discounted rates on royalties it has to pay to develop its Carmichael coal mine project in Australia, Queensland state Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk said on Saturday.

Ministers from the centre-left state government made the decision on Friday, putting an end to speculation that the Indian company would be offered concessions on royalties during the early years of coal production.

"Under this new policy, the Adani Carmichael mine will pay every cent of royalties in full," Palaszczuk said in a statement on Saturday.

"There will be no royalty holiday for the Adani Carmichael mine."

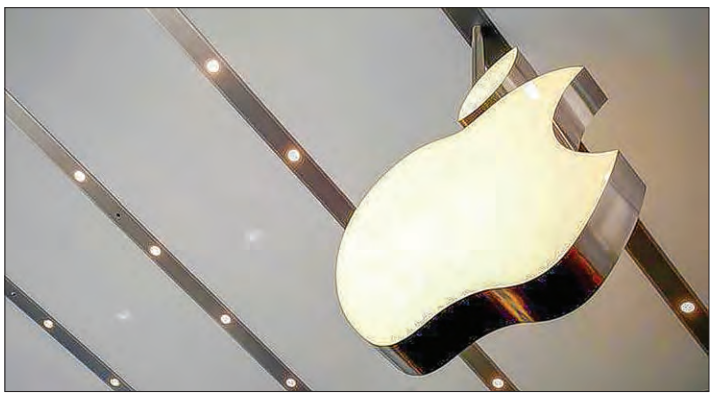
Adani said this week its board had deferred a final investment decision that had been expected by the end of May because the government had yet to sign off on a royalty regime.

Adani could not be immediately reached for comment on the Queensland government's announcement. Deputy Premier Jackie Trad said Adani would be allowed to defer payment of royalties provided interest was paid and a security of payment was in place. The state government ruled out the use of public money to subsidise the controversial project or any directly associated infrastructure.

Adani has battled green groups over the past six years looking to block what would be Australia's biggest coal mine. Opponents have argued the coal exports would stoke global warming and that the project would require a port expansion that could damage the Great Barrier Reef.

The port expansion is no longer needed as the company has shrunk the first phase of the mine to 25 million tonnes from 40 million tonnes a year, as it looks to make the mine and rail project more affordable at around $4 billion, instead of more than $10 billion. —Reuters ■

A reclaimer places coal in stockpiles at the coal port in Newcastle, Australia, June 6, 2012. **PHOTO: REUTERS**



The Apple logo is pictured inside the newly opened Omotesando Apple store at a shopping district in Tokyo on 26 June 2014. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

Acquisitions accelerate as tech giants seek to build AI smarts

SAN FRANCISCO — A total of 34 artificial intelligence startups were acquired in the first quarter of this year, more than twice the amount of activity in the year-ago quarter, according to the research firm CB Insights.

Tech giants seeking to reinforce their leads in artificial intelligence or make up for lost ground have been the most aggressive buyers. Alphabet Inc's (GOOGL.O) Google has acquired 11 AI startups since 2012, the most of any firm, followed by Apple Inc (AAPL.O), Facebook Inc (FB.O) and Intel Corp (INTC.O), respectively, according to CB Insights.

The companies declined to comment on their acquisition strategies. A spokesman for Apple did confirm the company's recent purchase of Lattice Data, a startup that specializes in working with unstructured data.

The first quarter also saw one of the largest deals to date as Ford Motor Co (F.N) invested $1 billion in Argo AI, founded by former executives on self-driving teams at Google and Uber Technologies Inc [UBER.UL].

Startups are looking to go deep on applications of artificial intelligence to specific fields, such as health and retail, industry observers say, rather than compete directly with established companies.

"What you will see is very big players will build platform services, and startup communities will migrate more to applied intelligent apps," said Matt McIlwain, managing director of Madrona Venture Group.

Healthcare startup Forward, for example, is using artificial intelligence to crunch data that can inform doctors' recommendations.

"For people who really want to focus on core AI problems, it makes a lot of sense to be in bigger companies," said Forward Chief Executive Officer Adrian Aoun, who previously worked at Google. "But for folks who really want to prove a new field, a new area, it makes more sense to be separate."

Artificial intelligence companies that do remain independent field a steady stream of suitors: Matthew Zeiler, chief executive of Clarifai, which specializes in image and video recognition, said he has been approached about a dozen times by prospective acquirers since starting the company in late 2013.

Clarifai's pitch to customers such as consumer goods company Unilever Plc (ULVR.L) and hotel search firm Trivago is bolstered by its narrow focus on artificial intelligence.

"(Google) literally competes with almost every company on the planet," Zeiler said. "Are you going to trust them with being your partner for AI?"

Tech giants have been locked in a bidding war for academics specializing in artificial intelligence. Startups rarely have the capital to compete, but a company with a specialized mission can win over recruits, said Vic Gundotra, chief executive of AliveCor, which makes an AI-driven portable heart monitor.

"They say, 'I want to come here and work on a project that might save my mother's life,'" Gundotra said.—Reuters ■

Over 220,000 acres of teakwood trees to be cultivated

THE Forestry Department has granted permission to cultivate 90,019 acres of hard teak and over 138,633 acres of private teak, it is learnt.

The Forestry Department is implementing the reforestation project starting from fiscal 2017-2018 to fiscal 2026-2027. The Forestry Department has given permission to cultivate commercial plantations, wood plantations, mangrove plantations and mixed forest and crop plantations, depending on the necessity of the region.

Under the government programme, the Forestry Department will implement 352,438 acres of forest plantations, 285,004 acres of private forest plantations, 808,538 acres of forest to support natural regeneration for timber extraction, 500,000 acres of forest to conserve in the tropical region and 770,332 acres of collective forest.— Kay Lay ■

Wokers prepare clothing for export at a garment factory in Hlinethayar Industrial Zone in Yangon. **PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE**

Effort to get tax exemption to export garment

LOCAL garment factories are attempting to export their own branded garments, according to the Myanmar Garment Entrepreneurs Association. Currently, local garment factories export their products with the Cut-Make-Pack (CMP) system.

"We are unable to export our products with the Free-On-Board (FOB) system. Currently, we are trying to get tax exemption for the FOB system.

"We are discussing this with the US to get some tax relief on the products exported with the CMP system because the garment industry was not included in the reinstatement of the Generalized Scheme of Preferences (GSP)", said U Myint Soe, the chairman of the Myanmar Garment Entrepreneurs Association.

In the US, cotton wear is taxed 10 to 12 per cent and nylon wear is taxed 37 per cent. The government collects 6 to 15 per cent tax on FOB system products. Therefore, the association has submitted a proposal of tax exemption for products exported with FOB system to the Ministry of Commerce and the Ministry of Planning and Finance.

The garment industry earns around 10 per cent of a garment's value. Currently, 33 per cent of local garment production is exported to Japan, 25 per cent to South Korea, 2.4 per cent to the US and 2.4 per cent to China.— 200 ■

Livestock breeding zone to be implemented on a 50-acre plot of land in Myaungmya

Myaungmya Township Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department is planning to implement a livestock breeding zone on a 50-acre plot of land in PainwesanGwin village in Myaungmya Township, it is learnt.

"The land is only available in Myaungmya Township. We decided to implement the livestock breeding zone after we have asked the opinions whether they would like to breed outside the town or not. The authority will make arrangements to breed all the animals at the livestock breeding zone", said an official from Myaungmya Township Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department.

The livestock breeding zone is being developed with an aim to prevent infectious diseases from animals spreading to public wards, said Dr. Aung Thu Tun, the officer from Myaungmya Township Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department.

"The regional government will make arrangements to buy the land at a competitive price and to receive the grant. The main thing is to get sufficient water. The electricity will be supplied with our own generator," said U Khin Maung Win, a local chicken breeder.

Myaungmya Township breeds about 0.6 million chickens for eggs, and about 40,000 chickens, pigs and ducks for meat.—Nilar Kyaw ■

Thilawa SEZ attains over US$120million FDI in two months

OVER US$122million of foreign direct investments flowed into Thilawa Special Economic Zone (SEZ) so far in the current Fiscal Year 2017-2018, under previously permitted investments by Myanmar Investment Commission increasing.

The investors from 16 foreign countries put investments into Thilawa. Last Fiscal Year 2016-2017 saw FDI of US$262.588million. Thilawa received FDI of nearly US$ 980million, including the increased investment amount.

Out of 2,400 hectares Thilawa SEZ, 400 hectares are for Zone A, with 96 per cent completed. And, the construction of Zone B on 101 hectares is projected to commence soon and slated to complete in mid 2018. The investors who create more job opportunities, are engaged in export business, cooperate with the local industry outside zones are more likely to be prioritized to make investments in Thilawa SEZ.

Workers construct a road in Thilawa Special Economic Zone. **PHOTO: MYANMAR NEWS AGENCY**

The country is currently implementing three Special Economic Zones—Thilawa, Kyaukpyu and Dawei. Out of three, Thilawa is leading with its better infrastructure and successful business. –Ko Htet ■

Bodies of civilians dumped near Philippines city besieged by Islamists

Members of Philippine Marines walk next to an armoured fighting vehicle (AFV) as they advance their position in Marawi City, Philippines on 28 May, 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

MARAWI CITY, Philippines — Bodies of what appeared to be executed civilians were found in a ravine outside a besieged Philippine city on Sunday as a six-day occupation by Islamist rebels resisting a military onslaught took a more sinister turn.

The eight dead men, most of them shot in the head and some with hands tied behind their backs, were labourers who were stopped by Islamic State-linked militants on the outskirts of Marawi City while trying to flee clashes, according to police.

Nine spent bullet casings were found on a blood-stained patch of road at the top of the ravine. Attached to one of the bodies was a sign that said "Munafik" (traitor).

The discovery confirms days of speculation that Maute rebels had killed civilians during a bloody takeover of Marawi City, that the military believes is aimed at winning the Maute recognition from the Islamic State group in the Middle East as a Southeast Asian affiliate.

The army deployed additional ground troops over the weekend and dispatched helicopters to carry out rocket strikes on Maute positions as fighters held buildings and a bridge deep inside a predominantly Muslim city where few civilians remained.

At least 41 militants were killed and 13 military as of Saturday, according to the army. The number of civilian dead was unknown.

The fierce resistance of the Maute gunmen and the apparent executions of civilians will add to growing fears that subscribers to Islamic State's radical ideology are determined to establish a presence in the southern Philippines, with the support of extremists from Indonesia and Malaysia.

Marawi police officer Jamail C Mangadang told Reuters the eight men found dead were carpenters who were part of an evacuation convoy stopped by rebels late on Saturday.

Recalling information provided by their manager, Mangadang said the victims were pulled off a truck because they were unable to cite verses of the Koran, the Islamic Holy text.

"We heard gunfire, although I'm not sure if it was the same people who were shot," he said at the scene.

"Early in the morning, at 08.20, there are civilians, concerned citizens, who said 'can you verify these dead bodies?'."

Fierce battles restarted on Sunday as ground troops engaged Maute fighters with heavy gunfire. Plumes of smoke were seen on the horizon and helicopters fired at least eight rockets on rebel positions.

A surveillance drone circled the sky above Marawi City. Some civilians left on foot, others were seen tying white cloths to poles to distinguish themselves from militants as soldiers huddled behind armoured vehicles slowly advanced.

An ambulance was seen speeding away from the fighting and soldiers said a captured militant was inside.

Tens of thousands of people have fled Marawi since Tuesday, when militants went on the rampage seizing a school, a hospital, and a cathedral.

Christians were taken hostage, according to church leaders, and more than 100 inmates, among them militants, were freed when rebels took over two jails.

Zia Alonto Adiong, a local politician who is coordinating efforts to get people out of the city, said there were bodies of dead civilians in Marawi. He criticised the military for conducting air strikes and for hampering efforts to evacuate civilians.

"Some have no food at all. Some fear for their lives," he said. "This is a conflict that has gone beyond proportion. The magnitude of the degree of the damage and the people that are affected ... it's really massive."

The violence erupted in the moments after a failed attempt by security forces to capture Isnilon Hapilon, a leader of a radical faction of another extremist group, who the government believes is Islamic State's pointman in the Philippines.

The military is certain the Maute are protecting Hapilon and had narrowed down his location. Hapilon leads a radical faction of another Mindanao-based group, the Abu Sayyaf.

The little-known Maute group has staged similar, days-long sieges on Mindanao island but none on the scale of Marawi, where witnesses said flags resembling those of Islamic State had been flown and some men were wearing black headbands.

The Maute group last year killed 14 people in a bombing in the president's home city, and its battlefield capability has been a serious challenge to a military that has far greater numbers and firepower.

Another concern for the government was the discovery of foreign fighters with the Maute, among them Indonesians and Malaysians, suggesting what was once a domestic problem could mushroom into a larger regional security threat. —Reuters ■

Cambodia opposition says to win majority in local, national vote

PREY VENG — Cambodia's opposition leader on Sunday said his party will secure a majority win in a local election next month and a general election next year, pointing to a stronger, more united opposition to challenge the rule of veteran Prime Minister Hun Sen.

Kem Sokha, leader of the opposition Cambodia National Rescue Party (CNRP), said in an interview that the party hopes to win 60 per cent of the votes in the 4 June commune elections, which are seen as a barometer of a general election in 2018.

The CNRP expects to win 70 per cent of the 123 parliamentary seats in the 2018 national election, he said.

The hotly anticipated national election could extend the more than 30 year rule of Prime Minister Hun Sen and his ruling Cambodian People's Party (CPP) or make way for a new era of leadership by the CNRP in Cambodia — one of Asia's poorest countries.

The 4 June local election is seen as the biggest challenge Hun Sen's ruling party has faced in nearly four decades after his party narrowly won the last election in 2013 after losing seats to a resurgent opposition — Hun Sen's worst election result since Cambodia returned to full democracy in 1998.

"The support for the CNRP has been stronger than at any other time, both in the city and in rural areas," Kem Sokha told Reuters in an interview after rallies attended by thousands of supporters in Prey Veng province in the southeast.

Kem Sokha said that the party is now more united than before despite the resignation of former opposition leader Sam Rainsy, who lives abroad to avoid jail on a defamation conviction.

Sam Rainsy said he quit because he feared a government attempt to ban the opposition party.

"Some people think that without Sam Rainsy the CNRP would be divided," Kem Sokha told Reuters. "It has become stronger and we work on the same goals and principles," he said, adding that Sam Rainsy would return to Cambodia once the party is in power.

"They have run for five mandates and they have never won," CPP spokesman Sok Eysan said of the opposition. "They are just consoling themselves with their predictions."

Tension between Hun Sen and Kem Sokha has risen just days before the commune election with Hun Sen repeating his warning of a war if his party loses the elections.

Rights groups have accused Hun Sen of using political violence, repression and corruption to remain in power.

Kem Sokha said that the government's intimidation tactics won't influence voters who support the CNRP.

"Are people afraid? No, they are not afraid," he said.

Hun Sen's CPP has also said that it will win 60 per cent of the vote next month. —Reuters ■

North Korea leader Kim guides test of new anti-aircraft weapon

SEOUL — North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has supervised the test of a new anti-aircraft weapon system and ordered its mass production and deployment throughout the country, the state news agency reported on Sunday, after weeks of defiant ballistic missile tests.

The North's KCNA news agency did not report the exact nature of the weapon or the time of the test but said it was organized by the Academy of National Defence Science, a blacklisted agency that is believed to be developing missiles and nuclear weapons.

The North has been pushing to develop a wide range of weapon systems since early last year at an unprecedented pace including a long-range missile capable of striking the mainland United States and has in recent weeks tested its intermediate-range ballistic missile, making some technical advances.

The reclusive state rejects UN and unilateral sanctions by other states against its weapons programme as an infringement of its right to self defence and says the programme is necessary to counter US aggression.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un watches the test of a new-type anti-aircraft guided weapon system organised by the Academy of National Defence Science in this undated photo released by North Korea's Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) on 28 May, 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

It last conducted a ballistic missile test a week ago.

The United States denies any intention to attack the North.

"Kim Jong Un ... watched the test of a new type of anti-aircraft guided weapon system organized by the Academy of National Defence Science," KCNA said on Sunday.

"This weapon system, whose operation capability has been thoroughly verified, should be mass-produced to deploy all over the country ... so as to completely spoil the enemy's wild dream to command the air, boasting of air supremacy and weapon almighty," it said.

KCNA said Kim was accompanied by his military aides and listed the three men believed to be the top officials in the country's rapidly accelerating missile programme.

They are Ri Pyong Chol, a former top air force general; Kim Jong Sik, a veteran rocket scientist; and Jang Chang Ha, the head of the Academy of National Defence Science, a weapons development and procurement centre.

North Korea said on Monday it had successfully tested what it called an intermediate-range ballistic missile that met all technical requirements and could now be mass-produced, although outside officials and experts questioned the extent of its progress.

On Tuesday, the head of the US Defence Intelligence Agency said that if left unchecked, North Korea is on an "inevitable" path to obtaining a nuclear-armed missile capable of striking the United States. Appearing at a Senate hearing, Defence Intelligence Agency Director Vincent Stewart declined to offer a time estimate but Western experts believe the North still needed several years to develop such a weapon. —Reuters ■

Abe becomes 3rd longest-serving prime minister in postwar Japan

TOKYO — Prime Minister Shinzo Abe became Sunday the third longest-serving Japanese leader in the postwar era with 1,981 days in office, surpassing the tenure of his predecessor Junichiro Koizumi, who was in office between 2001 and 2006.

The figure combines Abe's first stint in power from 2006 to 2007, when he abruptly stepped down due to ill health, with his second term since December 2012.

Japanese law sets no limit on how long prime ministers can serve and by convention they are typically leaders of their own parties.

The Liberal Democratic Party, led by the 62-year-old prime minister, recently extended its term limit for party leaders, enabling him to serve a third consecutive three-year term as president until September 2021 if he wins another party leadership election. Abe will become the longest serving prime minister in Japanese history in November 2019 if he remains in his post, exceeding Taro Katsura, who was prime minister for 2,886 days in the early 20th century. The longest-serving prime minister after World War II, Eisaku Sato, was in power for 2,798 days between 1964 and 1972. Shigeru Yoshida ranks second at 2,616 days, remaining in office for a year beginning in May 1946 and then between 1948 and 1954.—Kyodo News ■

Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (L) and his wife Akie board a plane bound for Japan at Malta International Airport on 27 May 2017. Abe made a stopover in Malta to hold talks with Prime Minister Joseph Muscat after attending a two-day Group of Seven industrialized nations' summit in Italy. **PHOTO: KYODO NEWS**

China 'strongly dissatisfied' with G7 statement on East, South China Seas

BEIJING — China is "strongly dissatisfied" with the mention of the East and South China Sea issues in a Group of Seven (G7) statement, and the G7 allies should stop making irresponsible remarks, a Chinese foreign ministry spokesman said.

China is committed to properly resolving disputes with all nations involved through negotiations while maintaining peace and stability in the East China Sea and South China Sea, spokesman Lu Kang said in a statement on Sunday.

China hopes the G7 and other nations would refrain from taking positions, fully respect the efforts of countries in the region in handling the disputes, and stop making irresponsible remarks, Lu said.

In their communique on Saturday, G7 leaders said they were concerned by the situation in the South China Sea and East China Sea. They also called for a demilitarisation of "disputed features".

China has a dispute with Japan over a group of uninhabited islets in the East China Sea.

Beijing's extensive claims to the South China Sea are also challenged by Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines and Viet Nam, as well as Taiwan.

The United States has criticised China's construction of islands and build-up of military facilities in the South China Sea, concerned they could be used to restrict free movement and broaden Beijing's strategic reach.

Earlier this week, a US navy warship conducted a so-called freedom-of-navigation drill near Mischief Reef in the disputed Spratly Islands.

The manoeuvre, the first under the Trump administration, prompted an angry response from Beijing.

The G7 consists of the United States, France, Canada, Germany, Great Britain, Italy and Japan.—Reuters ■

As Regards the Term "Building," -----

Khin Maung Oo

THE moment we hear the word, "building" a structure such as a house, school or factory that has a roof and walls comes into our minds. And, we mostly hear the terms these days, nation building, capacity building and trust building. The first kind is visible structures but the second one is invisible. In life there are tangible as well as intangible things. When we build physical structures, everyone can see the building once it is finished. Not so with "trust building" or "capacity building" for that matter. A building needs to have strength, durability and reliability. It also needs to give comfort and pleasure for those who will eventually live in that building. In the case of "trust building", it may be regarded as an "intangible" thing. We certainly cannot see a physical structure but we can see the effects if the efforts to build trust bear fruit.

There is a Myanmar admonitory note for us to keep in our minds—that saying goes like this: there are three things which should not be done in haste – building a pagoda, getting married and getting a tattoo. It is very difficult to rectify any mistake once these have been done. A pagoda is very difficult to be rebuilt, a failed marriage is very difficult to save and a tattoo is very painful and difficult to remove.

In building a structure, there are many important factors, namely—a foundation, materials used in building, techniques and contribution of labor. We never want to live in open spaces. Instead we want to live in secure and protected places, to keep away the rain and wind and protect ourselves from the dangers of thieves and robbers. Hence we tried to build dwelling places. Had the building been built below standard or not in accordance with accepted building codes, we would never get a safe, long-lasting and pleasant building. If so, we are likely to be in danger any time.

Likewise, if we have no motivation or self-motivated capacity building, no progress will come out from us, and we ourselves, our families or our society will no longer benefit more than we deserve.

In a family, there needs to be a mutual trust between parents and children, sisters and brothers, wives and husbands. As long as these exist in them, they will surely be able to fight against dangers and difficulties, building brighter futures. Failing that, unnecessary events such as severe sibling rivalries and family conflicts will never cease.

As known by all, our country is making efforts to achieve national reconciliation and to bring about nationwide peace.

It is heartening for us to hear the news that national ethnic armed groups who are not yet NCA Signatories took part in the Union Peace Conference — 21st Century Panglong 2nd session. In the very near future, our State leaders and all national ethnic armed group leaders can bring about the national peace which the people have been yearning for since a long time ago. National peace can only be achieved through trust building, through honesty, straightforwardness, transparency and genuine Cetana towards our people. ■

Knowledge from Facebook

U Han Nyunt (Law)

I like

I like the facebook, but not adept at handling. I touched here and there on the screen. Gradually I got something after some fumbling moves on the screen and became interested. The next stage was that I became a face book student learning from my son. Then I was bitten by the bug of face book. Young generation can have learnt very quickly the computer knowledge such as face book, text messaging, messenger, video call and etc. In this respect oldies envy the youngsters. People can learn religion, social, politics, economics, commerce, law, education especially language, vogue, celebrities, sports and etc. from FB. Law and different legal views also take a considerable space in FB. There are a lot of interesting and noteworthy information, some of them are really informative and aesthetic. U Kyaw Aye, a highly experienced law professional asked a question "Under which line of authority the Notary Public has been awarded? And he added, "I am asking as I have no idea on that issue."

> What will you give to younger generation? The bad or the good? There are many things to learn in life, a lot to pass on to the younger generation. Do you leave good legacy or bad legacy? The youth of today are astute. They know how to behave and stay smart.

Lawyers of young generations also took interest in this topic. U Mya Thein, another prominent law professional also took part in discussion about Notary Public on face book. He is the one who appears on the screen of Myanmar Television featuring discussion on the legal affairs.

The writing of those persons highly experienced in practical field and well versed in literature of law attracted the young lawyers and also other people who are interested in law and legal affairs. They could not help looking and reading the face book.

The knowledge on law has increased among the people.

Bamar and Myanmar

The other popular topic is Bamar and Myanmar. U Kyaw Aye initiated the issue on FB. Kyi Shun posted Mg Thar Noe's article on Bamar and Myanmar. The program became popular and lively drawing the knowledge-seeking people young and old into the knowledge sharing FB program. Historical background pertaining to the topic "Bamar or Myanmar" was also studied and shared.

U Kyaw Aye posted again his view after reading Maung Thar Noe's "Bamar and Myanmar" article. Many noteworthy facts on Bamar and Myanmar were revealed. The writer likes to suggest the main players to compile the writings and discussions on FB about Bamar and Myanmar into a book.

U Mya Thein put forward some photo copies from the old books in relation with the use of Bamar and Myanmar. The books U Mya Thein used were so old in age that the present generation never had seen them. This was one of the benefits of FB. The writer requested the leading participants, U Kyaw Aye and U Mya Thein through FB to write about Bamar and Myanmar either in Myanmar or English language.

Friends on FB, Sayagyi U Mya Thein, Kyi Shun, Than Maung (Sittway), Soe Aung , Kyaw Kyaw Aung, Khin Nu Thar and Htain Lin U exchanged their respective view on Bamar and Myanmar on the FB. Thanks were due to all participants who shared their knowledge and experiences in good will. We have to wait for further activities on this issue.

Abuse and Lewd Postings

Postings of abuse and lewd language are usual occurrence in FB. Nobody accepts those dirty postings. However, as the saying "birds of a feather flock together" goes, those dirty groups seem to take themselves as heroes by lavishing abusive, obscene and insulting words to one another. Personal attacks on FB using variety of obscene language are also public nuisance. Those despicable uses of abusive language in attacking each other on FB has brought discredit on the cultured tradition of Myanmar. What will you give to younger generation? The bad or the good? There are many things to learn in life, a lot to pass on to the younger generation. Do you leave good legacy or bad legacy? The youth of today are astute. They know how to behave and stay smart.

SEE PAGE -9

3 women with fake national ID cards arrested in Sittway airport

THREE women with fake national identification cards were arrested in Sittway airport yesterday afternoon.

During an inspection at the immigration counter prior to boarding a flight from Sittway to Yangon on FMI airline, Ma Rihana Bagon and Ma Khin May (a) Rayzu Wun, Thetkepyin village, in Sittway Township, and Ma Kyawt Yin (a) Noorna Bar, Darpaing village were found holding fake national identification cards. Upon interrogation it was found that Ma Rihana Bagon bought the fake national identification card from a man named Aryu of Thetkepyin village for Ks25 lakh. Ma Khin May said she bought her ID from an unknown person in Kyaukphyu Township, and Ma Kyawt Yin from a man named Korba Ali of Thetkepyin village for Ks27 lakh each.

The three women were reportedly to have arrived at Sittway airport on three motorcycle taxis hired by Aryu and Korba Ali. An investigation is underway.—MNA ■

Ma Khin May (a) Rayzu Wun, Ma Rihana Bagon and Ma Kyawt Yin (a) Noorna Bar. **PHOTO: MNA**

Stimulant tablets seized in Nawnghkio

A combined police squad from Lashio seized 39,000 stimulant tablets and a handset from a car driven by Nay Zar Tun, 28, accompanied by Ma Hnin Pwint Tun, 22, on Lashio - Mandalay Road near the Oriental Gate in Nawnghkio on 27 May.

The police filed charges against the two suspects under the Anti - Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law. — Myanmar Police Forces ■

Nay Zar Tun and Ma Hnin Pwint Tun. **PHOTO: MPF**

Knowledge from Facebook

FROM PAGE 8

Information and Communications Technology (ICT)

According to Dr. Khaing Mye, Director General of Higher Education Department, Myanmar computer technicians have attained a stage level with those of other Asian countries and have vision to step further towards the international level.

In order to get a quick surge forward in ICT, teaching of computer knowledge and technology at schools of basic education department has been highly encouraged. "We have three mottos, ICT Education, ICT for Education and ICT an Education and we have not reached the top level. Our vision is to secure world standard." Said Dr. Khaing Mye.

I had a chance to travel abroad with U Aung Hla Tun. Then I was totally lacking knowledge how to use FB.

In foreign countries if someone is ignorant about FB, he will be dubbed as outdated poor jay. Everybody needs to be FB friendly. U Aung Hla Tun urged me to learn how to use FB. Now I became one of the modern world.

Thanks to the help of secretary U Kyaw Swa Min and council member U Zeya I have learnt how to use FB. I can post message, comment, photos and discussion. But when faced with abuse and lewd language, it is a great dismay for me. Need to ponder and be cautious to keep yourself out of those dirty groups.

Laws

Need to be cautious; I have read Telecommunications Law Section 66 (D) and Electronic Transactions Law Section 33. Nothing can happen to you as long as you don't contravene any law. No guilt for you. Law professionals pointed out the weakness and loopholes of law and gave suggestions. The departments concerned are considering amending the weak points. No need to worry. Law for the development of computer technology has been promulgated. The main objective of the law is to help in the national development program by computer technology.

Good Will

(1) FB has given immense knowledge.

(2) The good and the bad usually come together.

(3) Everybody knows what is good and what is bad.

(4) In this regard everybody means more to youngsters than to the oldies.

(5) Wish everybody gets knowledge from FB. ■

(Translation: U Khin Maung Win)

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General view of the discussion table at the G7 Summit expanded session in Taormina, Sicily, Italy on 27 May, 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

European allies see the two sides of Trump

TAORMINA, Italy — In Sicily, Donald Trump listened attentively during complex G7 debates over trade and climate change, smiled for the cameras, and for the most part refrained from provocative tweets.

In Brussels, he bashed NATO partners for not spending more on defence, shoved the prime minister of Montenegro and renewed his attacks on Germany's trade surplus with the United States.

America's allies witnessed the two sides of Trump on his first foreign trip as US president, a nine-day tour that began with sword dancing in Saudi Arabia and vague pledges in Israel to deliver Middle East peace.

As Trump headed home, European officials were left with mixed feelings: relief that he had been patient enough to listen to their arguments and unsettled by a Jekyll-and-Hyde figure who is still finding his way on the big policy issues.

"It all fits with his strategic ambiguity approach to life," said Julianne Smith of the Centre for a New American Security. "It may do wonders when dealing with adversaries. But it doesn't work when dealing with allies," she said.

Other leaders of the Group of Seven nations had viewed with trepidation their summit, held at a cliff-top hotel overlooking the Mediterranean, after four preparatory meetings failed to clear up differences with the Trump administration on trade, how to deal with Russia and climate change.

But in the end, officials said, the result was better than they had feared.

The final communique acknowledged a split between the United States and its six partners over honoring the 2015 Paris accord on climate change. That followed a debate with Trump that German Chancellor Angela Merkel described as "very dissatisfying".

However on trade, Trump bowed to pressure from allies to retain a pledge to fight protectionism. And on Russia, he did not insist on removing — as some allies had feared — the threat of additional sanctions for Moscow's intervention in Ukraine.

"I found him very willing to engage, very curious, with an ability and desire to ask questions and to learn from all his interlocutors," said Italian Prime Minister Paolo Gentiloni, the G7 summit's host. Still, there was irritation at Trump's refusal to show his hand on the Paris agreement to curb carbon emissions. Near the end of the summit, he tweeted teasingly that he would make a decision on Paris next week, leaving delegations to scratch their heads about why he could not commit in Taormina.

The most critical words were reserved for Trump's appearance at NATO headquarters in Brussels, which was described as a "disaster" by more than one European official.

With the leaders of America's NATO partners standing like school children behind him, Trump upbraided them for not spending more on defense and repeated the charge that some members owed "massive amounts of money" from past years — even though allied contributions are voluntary.

Most disturbingly for allies, Trump did not personally affirm his commitment to Article 5, NATO's mutual defense doctrine, after pre-trip signals from the White House that he would do just that. Trump also failed to mention Russia, which remains NATO's raison d'etre in the eyes of most Europeans.

It was a speech that reminded some of Trump's doom-laden inauguration address in January, one that seemed written for the hardest of his hard-core domestic audience. "Proud of @realDonaldTrump for telling NATO deadbeats to pay up or shut up," former Republican governor Mike Huckabee tweeted in response.

Trump's appearance in Brussels was particularly galling to the Germans, who after months of painstaking relationship building with Trump — including Merkel's invitation to his daughter Ivanka for a G20 women's summit in Berlin — found themselves under attack from him on two fronts.

Before heading to NATO, Trump criticized Germany's trade surplus in a private meeting with senior European Union officials.

"If Trump really wants to go down a path of isolation, it will only speed up China's rise to the top," one senior German official grumbled.

Beyond the rhetoric, Trump's body language also confounded his hosts. He muscled aside Montenegrin Prime Minister Dusko Markovic as NATO leaders walked into the alliance's new headquarters for a photo session. And he engaged in two alpha-male handshakes with France's new 39-year-old President Emmanuel Macron, who seemed to get the better of Trump on both occasions.

The macho posturing in Europe contrasted to the images, a few days earlier, of Trump and his team swaying, swords in hand, with the absolute rulers of Saudi Arabia at a lavish welcome ceremony given by King Salman.

Summing up the tour on Saturday, Trump's advisers seemed most enthused about the Saudi leg, where he clinched a $110 billion arms deal and forged what one aide described as a "personal bond" with the king.

"The president was able to make some of the most amazing deals that have really been made by any administration ever," enthused his economic adviser Gary Cohn. Daniela Schwarzer, research director at the German Council of Foreign Relations in Berlin, said the trip had confirmed Trump's "zero-sum game" view of the world in which you are either a winner or a loser and relationships are transactional.

"His rhetoric and actions suggest he does not consider it a priority to build good and engaging relations with allies the US so far considered its most important ones," she said.—Reuters ■

WORLD BRIEFS

UK defence minister denies report of divisions in PM May's team

LONDON — British Defence Secretary Michael Fallon on Sunday denied media reports of divisions in Prime Minister Theresa May's team ahead of a 8 June election.

The Sunday Times reported that May's team was riven by divisions with her joint chiefs of staff, Fiona Hill and Nick Timothy, at loggerheads over an unpopular social care pledge which May was forced to back track on after her poll lead shrank.

When asked about reports of splits, Fallon told ITV: "You know this is Westminster tittle-tattle."
—Reuters ■

British Airways says restarts flights from Gatwick and Heathrow

LONDON — British Airways said it aimed to operate a near normal schedule of flights from Gatwick airport and the majority of flights from Heathrow on Sunday after a global computer system caused chaos for thousands of customers.

"We are continuing to work hard to restore all of our IT systems and are aiming to operate a near normal schedule at Gatwick and the majority of services from Heathrow on Sunday," BA said in a statement.

"We are refunding or rebooking customers who suffered cancellations on to new services as quickly as possible," it said. "We are extremely sorry for the huge disruption caused to customers."

British Airways cancelled all its flights from London's two biggest airports on Saturday after a power supply problem disrupted its computer systems worldwide.—Reuters ■

Egypt launches 2nd day of Libyan air strikes after attack on Christians

Monks look at an armed policeman following an attack by gunmen on a group of Coptic Christians travelling to a monastery in southern Egypt, in Minya on 26 May, 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

CAIRO/BENGHAZI — Egypt launched a fresh round of air strikes over Libya on Saturday, Egyptian military sources and an eyewitness told Reuters, targeting militant camps it said were responsible for a shooting spree that killed dozens of Egyptian Christians.

On Friday, Egyptian fighter jets struck eastern Libya just hours after a shooting that killed 29 and wounded 24 in the southern Egyptian province of Minya when masked militants boarded vehicles en route to a monastery and opened fire at close range.

Islamic State claimed responsibility for the attack, the latest directed at Egypt's increasingly embattled Christian minority following two church bombings last month that killed more than 45, also claimed by the group.

President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi said on Friday he had ordered air raids on militant camps in Libya, where he said the Minya gunmen had trained, though he did not name a specific group responsible.

Sisi, who has presented himself as a bulwark against Islamist militants in the region, said Egypt would not hesitate to carry out additional strikes inside and outside the country to quash future threats.

Two military sources told Reuters that three additional air raids on Saturday morning struck the area of Derna, a city where east Libyan forces led by Khalifa Haftar, a close ally of Egypt, have been trying to gain control from Islamists and other opponents.

A source in Haftar's Libyan National Army told Reuters that they had coordinated with Egyptian counterparts to strike ammunition stores belonging to the Derna Mujahideen Shura Council, an Islamist umbrella group that opposes Islamic State.

A resident in Derna told Reuters that warplanes were seen striking the Dahr Al-Hamar area in the southern part of Derna on Saturday. Egypt's military spokesman declined to comment on the second round of strikes.

Egypt's foreign ministry said it had delivered a letter on Saturday to the United Nations Security Council informing it that the strikes were conducted as an act of legitimate self-defence, according to a ministry statement.

Derna has a history of Islamist militancy and is where Islamic State set up its first presence in Libya in 2014. However, the jihadist group was later chased from the city by local fighters and rival Islamists.

The east Libyan air force said Friday the strikes were targeting al-Qaeda linked forces and did not mention Islamic State. Egypt's military said in a statement it had "conducted several intensive day and nighttime strikes" that successfully destroyed many targets, including training camps responsible for the Minya attack.

A video uploaded to the military's Facebook page depicted fighter jets being armed with missiles and taking off as well as aerial footage of air strikes. —Reuters ■

Smoke rises from clashes during a battle between Iraqi forces and Islamic State militants in western Mosul, Iraq on 28 May, 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

Turkish military says kills 13 Kurdish militants in northern Iraq

ANKARA — Turkey's military killed 13 members of the militant Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) in air strikes in northern Iraq on Sunday, the military said in a statement.

The warplanes struck seven PKK targets in the Avasin-Basyan region of northern Iraq, and killed militants believed to be preparing for an attack, the military said. In a separate air strike in Turkey's southeastern province of Van late on Saturday, the military said warplanes had killed another 10 PKK militants.

The PKK, which has carried out a three-decade insurgency in southeast Turkey, has camps in the mountains of northern Iraq, near the Turkish border. It is considered a terrorist group by Turkey, the United States and the European Union. —Reuters ■

Congo militiamen free one French, three Congolese mine workers

PARIS/KINSHASA — Militiamen have a freed French national and three Congolese who were kidnapped in March during an attack on Banro Corp's Namoya gold mine in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, the Interior Ministry said on Sunday.

"The president of the republic welcomes the news of the liberation of our compatriot kidnapped on March 1 in the east of Democratic Republic of Congo," said a statement from the office of French President Emmanuel Macron.

The militiamen had kidnapped five workers, including the French national, a Tanzanian and three Congolese.

The Tanzanian had already been freed.

The remaining four hostages were all freed on Saturday, the Congolese Interior Ministry said in a statement.

New York and Toronto-listed Banro's four gold mines in eastern Congo have faced hazards both from illegal miners squatting on site and by armed groups that are a legacy of a regional conflict which officially ended in 2003.

Armed robbers attacked Banro's Twangiza gold mine in neighbouring South Kivu province in February, killing three police officers. —Reuters ■

Extension of Invitation for Bids

Date: 25th May 2017

Loan Agreement No.; Yangon-Mandalay Railway Improvement Project Phase –I MY-P4 dated 5th September, 2014(Package No. ; CP101, CP102 and CP103)

Myanma Railways has already advertised the invitation for Bids in the **Global New Light of Myanmar** on 31st March, 2017.

In order to be convenient for the interested eligible applicant's document preparations, Myanma Railways extends the closing date from 30th June, 2017 to 28th July, 2017 at 1:00 p.m. at Myanmar Railways Head Office Meeting Room, Nay Pyi Taw.

Managing Director, Myanmar Railways
Ministry of Transport and Communications

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Britain's Prime Minister Theresa May and her husband Phillip (R) leave after a church service in Sonning, Britain on 28 May, 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

UK PM May's lead narrows after Manchester attack placing landslide win in doubt

LONDON — British Prime Minister Theresa May's lead over the opposition Labour Party has narrowed sharply, according to opinion polls published since the Manchester attack, suggesting she might not win the landslide predicted just a month ago.

Four polls published on Saturday showed that May's lead had contracted by a range of 2 to 6 percentage points, indicating the 8 June election could be much tighter than initially thought when she called the snap vote.

"Theresa May is certainly the overwhelming favourite to win but crucially we are in the territory now where how well she is going to win is uncertain," John Curtice, professor of politics at the University of Strathclyde, told Reuters.

"She is no longer guaranteed to get the landslide majority that she was originally setting out to get," said Curtice, a leading psephologist who is president of the British Polling Council.

May called the snap election in a bid to strengthen her hand in negotiations on Britain's exit from the European Union, to win more time to deal with the impact of the divorce and to strengthen her grip on the Conservative Party.

But if she does not handsomely beat the 12-seat majority her predecessor David Cameron won in 2015, her electoral gamble will have failed and her authority could be undermined just as she enters formal Brexit negotiations.

Sterling on Friday suffered its steepest fall since January after a YouGov opinion poll showed the lead of May's Conservatives over Labour was down to 5 percentage points.

An ICM poll for the Sun on Sunday showed May had maintained a 14-point lead, the only poll since the Manchester attack that has shown her lead unchanged.

When May stunned politicians and financial markets on 18 April with her call for a snap election, opinion polls suggested she could emulate Margaret Thatcher's 1983 majority of 144 seats or even threaten Tony Blair's 1997 Labour majority of 179 seats.

But polls had shown May's rating slipping over the past month and they fell sharply after she set out plans on 18 May to make some elderly people pay a greater share of their care costs, a proposal dubbed the "dementia tax" by opponents.

As her lead shrank, May was forced to backtrack on the policy at an appearance before the media on Monday at which she appeared flustered and irritated when taking questions from reporters.

Campaigning was suspended for several days after the Manchester attack but resumed on Friday.

Polls since the attack showed little evidence that May — who as a former interior minister oversaw the police and domestic intelligence agency — had gained support.

"The campaign has changed," Johnny Heald, managing director of ORB International, said. "Expect to see a forensic focus on Brexit and security over the next two weeks."

Headline national poll numbers failed to clearly predict Donald Trump's victory in the 2016 US presidential election, the shock Brexit vote or Cameron's 2015 election.

Pollsters have said their 2015 findings significantly overestimated support for Labour. While they have since adjusted their methodology to seek to address this, it will not be known until 9 June whether they have now gone too far the other way.

The trend of a decline in May's lead is clear though.

Opinium said May's lead had slipped to 10 percentage points, down from 13 points the week before and from 19 percentage points on 19 April. Its online survey of 2,002 people was carried out between 23 and 24 May.

ComRes said the lead of May's Conservatives had fallen to 12 percentage points in an online poll of 2,024 carried out 24-26 May, from 18 percentage points in a comparable poll on 13 May.

ORB said May's lead had halved to 6 percentage points, according to an online poll carried out 24-25 May.

A YouGov survey of 2,003 people between 25-26 May showed May's lead had narrowed to 7 percentage points from 9 a week ago.

The polls painted a complicated picture of public opinion, with voting intentions being influenced by both the deadly Manchester attack and May's unpopular social care proposals.

Conservative election strategist, Lynton Crosby, has ordered a return to May's main message: that only Theresa May can be trusted to negotiate Brexit, the Sunday Times reported. The newspaper also reported that May's team was riven by divisions with her joint chiefs of staff, Fiona Hill and Nick Timothy, at loggerheads over the unpopular social care pledge.

When asked about reports of splits, British Defence Secretary Michael Fallon dismissed them as "Westminster tittle-tattle."—Reuters ■

Philippines' Duterte jokes about rape amid concern over martial law abuses

MANILA — Philippines President Rodrigo Duterte has sought to reassure soldiers who might be accused of committing abuses under martial law, and jokingly said that if any of them were to rape three women, he would personally claim responsibility for it.

Duterte is notorious for comments often deemed offensive and intended the remark as a joke, reiterating that only he would be liable for any backlash over military rule on southern Mindanao island. He has, however, said he will not tolerate abuses.

Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte speaks to soldiers next to Defence Secretary Delfin Lorenzana and Armed Forces chief General Eduardo Ano during a visit at a military camp in Iligan City, Philippines on 26 May, 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

"If you go down, I go down. But for this martial law and the consequences of martial law and the ramifications of martial law, I and I alone would be responsible, just do your job, I will take care of the rest," Duterte said on Friday, according to a president's office transcript.

"I'll imprison you myself," he said, referring to any soldiers who commit violations, then he joked: "If you had raped three, I will admit it, that's on me."

Duterte made the remark in a speech to soldiers on Mindanao island, where he imposed martial law on Tuesday to try to crush Islamic State-linked rebels, who have been battling the military after laying siege to a southern city.

The comment sparked criticism on social media and Chelsea Clinton, daughter of former US president Bill Clinton and presidential candidate Hillary Clinton, called Duterte "a murderous thug with no regard for human rights."

"It's important to keep pointing that out & that rape is never a joke," Clinton tweeted.

It was not the first time Duterte has made a joke about rape. He caused outrage in the lead-up to his presidential election win last year when he recalled a 1989 prison riot in which an Australian missionary was killed, and inmates had lined up to rape her.

In what was intended as a joke, Duterte said the victim was beautiful and as mayor of Davao city where the riot took place, he should have been first in line. He later apologised and said he did not intend disrespect to women or rape victims.

Duterte is known for his informal, no-nonsense style and his speeches are often loaded with profanity, threats and jokes about taboo subjects, which offend some, but are taken lightly by many Filipinos.

He also joked on Friday that he would join soldiers in the fight against extremists if he could, but he had arthritis.

Presidential spokesman Ernesto Abella said Duterte was assuring troops of his full support and his comments had included "exaggeratedly describing crimes". Abella did not mention rape specifically.

In a statement he said Duterte "is decisively acting, speaking with heightened bravado, that law and order would be brought back in these areas of rebellion".

Human rights groups and some lawmakers have criticised his decision to declare martial law as excessive, and say it could lead to abuses by security forces.

Duterte urged rebels to disarm and hold talks and said anyone not authorised to carry guns would be killed. "My order to the troops is (that) all people who are not authorised by government to carry arms and they resist, kill them, wipe them out," he said. —Reuters ■

Sri Lanka seeks international help after deadly flooding, landslides

Sri Lankan army soldiers walk past the debris of houses at a landslide site during a rescue mission in Athwelthota village, in Kalutara, Sri Lanka on 28 May, 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

COLOMBO — The number of people known to have been killed in floods and landslides in Sri Lanka rose to 122, officials said on Saturday, as the country appealed for international assistance.

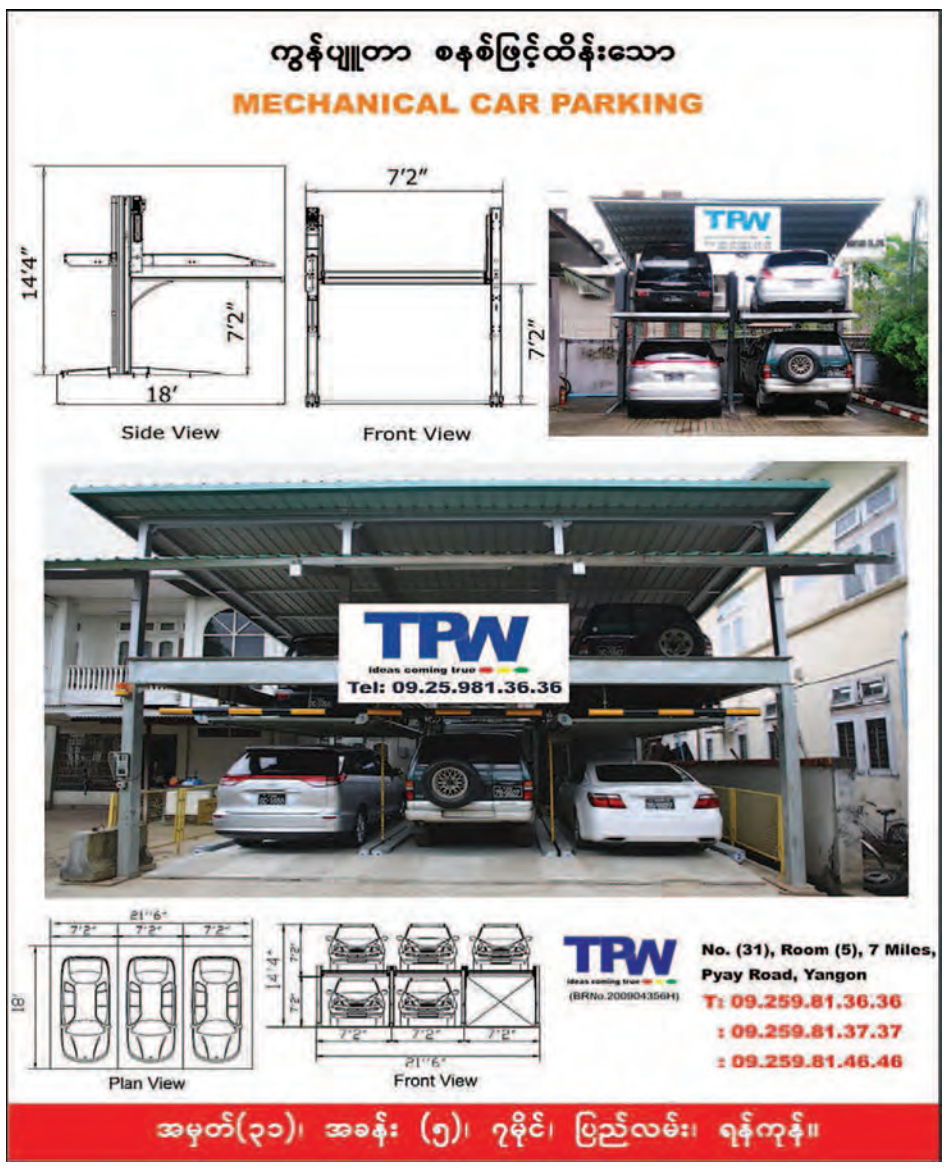
The state-run disaster management centre said 97 people were still missing after the worst torrential rains since 2003.

The Foreign Ministry said that in coordination with the Disaster Management Ministry, an appeal had been made to the United Nations and neighbouring countries to provide assistance "especially in the areas of search and rescue operations".

India is sending three Navy ships with supplies and other aid, the first of which arrived in Colombo on Saturday. Officials said deaths were reported from the western coastal district of Kalutara, the central southern district of Ratnapura and the southern district of Matara. Sri Lankan military and rescue teams have used boats and helicopters, but officials said access to some areas was very difficult.

The early rainy season downpours have forced many families from their homes and affected over 415,618 people across the nation.

Police spokesman Priyantha Jayakody said multiple landslides were reported in Kalutara, Ratnapura and Matara. Military spokesman Roshan Senevirathne said more than 2,000 military personnel had been deployed to help the police and civilian agencies.—Reuters ■



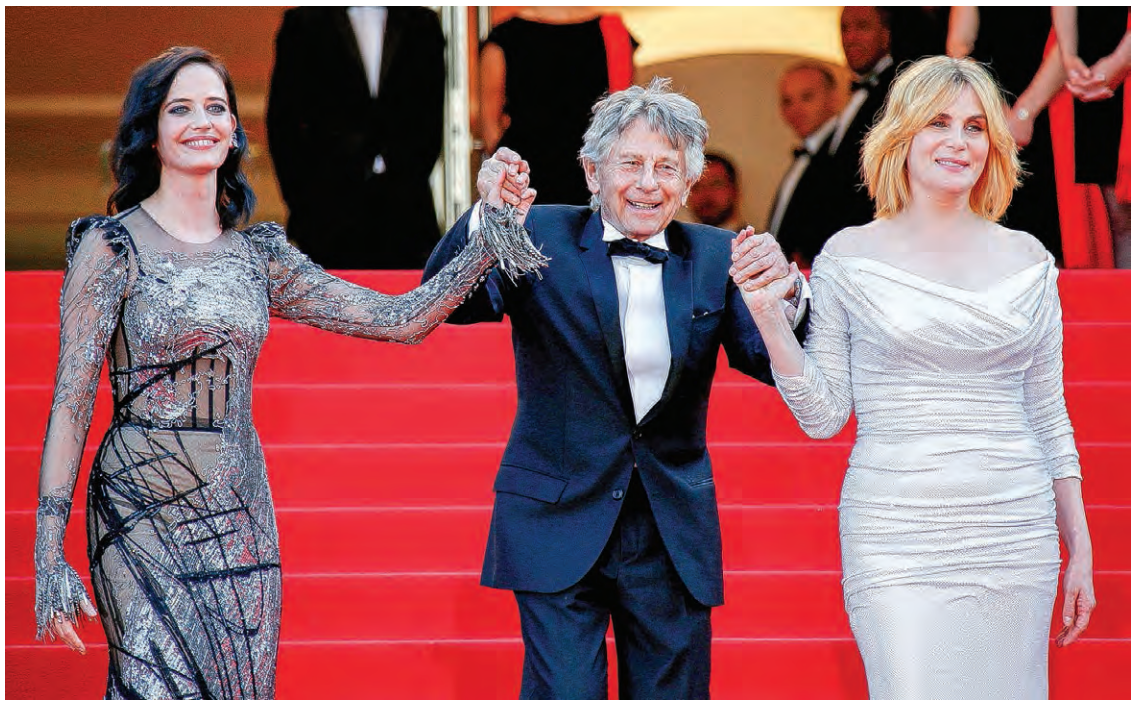
Polanski's return to female psycho-drama divides Cannes critics

CANNES, France — Roman Polanski, whose 1960s films "Repulsion" and "Rosemary's Baby" focused on women in mental torment, returns to the same theme in a film that screened at Cannes on Saturday to mixed reviews.

"Based on a True Story" stars Polanski's wife Emmanuelle Seigner as Delphine, a successful author who makes friends with an overly-keen fan Elle, played by Eva Green, in a relationship that quickly takes on elements of "Single White Female".

The French-Polish Polanski is still unable to make films in the United States since fleeing the country in 1978 due to fears that a plea bargain with prosecutors over his sexual assault of a 13-year-old girl would be overruled.

But he has continued to have a successful career and remains active at 83, securing a premiere for "Based on a True Story" in an out-of-competition slot at Cannes.



Director Roman Polanski and cast members Eva Green and Emmanuelle Seigner pose at 70th Cannes Film Festival. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

"I have never made a film where there are two principal female characters – it's always a man and a woman, or two men," Polanski told a news conference of his French-language movie.

"Here two women oppose each other. It's fascinating. There are elements that I dealt with in my first films and I was interested to come back to that type of cinema."

Polanski cast Eva Green — who is French but made her career in English-speaking movies, including in the 2006 James Bond film "Casino Royal" — as a character who switches from best friend to violent stalker and back and could ultimately be a figment of Delphine's imagination.

"You are always asking, does she exist? Doesn't she exist? And that is a real challenge for an actor — to try to put some flesh on that character," Green said.

"Is she a ghost? That's the question."

The Hollywood Reporter's Deborah Young praised "Based on a True Story" as "a masterfully made psychological thriller in the traditional mode", but Nathalie Simon in Le Figaro called it "grotesque, predictable and funny - not a good sign for a thriller".—Reuters ■

'Logan' star Dafne Keen may return for an X-23 solo movie

LOS ANGELES — "Logan" producer Hutch Parker said Fox might sign on child star Dafne Keen to return for an X-23 solo movie following her impressive debut in the recently released superhero film.

Keen played mutant Laura/X-23 in the Hugh Jackman starrer.

Parker, however, made it clear that she won't be joining any of the "X-Men" movies, reported AceShowbiz.

"I don't know definitively, but in terms of the stuff we've been talking about, it's not sort of slipping her into the background of another movie. It's looking at that character, which is a great character and has a pretty interesting run within the comics, to find a story that we think she could carry or certainly be kind of majorly significant within.

"That's the only kind of thing that Jim as a storyteller, a filmmaker... That's the way his sort of process works. And the way his mind works in terms of what he would aspire to. Which isn't to say that the studio couldn't have a conversation about something else, but the one that we've been kind of discussing loosely and kicking around is more likely to be its own film," he told IGN. —PTI ■

Hugh Jackman and Dafne Keen arrive at the 2017 MTV Movie and TV Awards in Los Angeles on 7 May, 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

I found peace away from the spotlight: Lindsay Lohan

LOS ANGELES — Actress Lindsay Lohan says she misses Hollywood but has found "peace" while staying away from the spotlight.

The 30-year-old actress said during her time away from the films she could focus on things which interests her, like helping children, reported E! online. "Yeah, I miss it (Hollywood)...I think there's a lot of noise that we deal with, so I found a kind of peace in life working with children and helping other people that really interest me," Lohan says. "I think it's important for us to recognize that all of this stuff is fun, but you have to take time for you," she adds.—PTI ■

Johnny. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

Johnny Depp lives on another planet: Armie Hammer

LONDON — Actor Armie Hammer says Johnny Depp lives an extravagant life and he finds it hard to understand his level of fame.

The 30-year-old actor co-starred with Depp, 53, in 2013 movie "The Lone Ranger".

"So here's the deal: Yes, the guy lives an extravagant lifestyle. There's no way around it. But he also lives on like an entirely other planet, something I have no idea about. Nobody here has any idea the planet this guy lives on," Hammer says during his appearance on "Watch What Happens Live".

"It was just a crazy world, so when you go to a restaurant, they have to close down part of the restaurant. It sounds extravagant but it's also... Super intense," he adds.—PTI ■

AI program AlphaGo sweeps 3-game series against world's top Go player

WUZHEN (China) — AlphaGo, a game-playing artificial intelligence programme, on Saturday won its third straight game against the world's top Go player, to sweep the three-game series played in Wuzhen, China.

Go is a Chinese board game similar in complexity to chess. AlphaGo is the Go-playing program developed by DeepMind Technologies Ltd., a British AI company acquired by Google in 2014.

AlphaGo's comprehensive victory over top-ranked Go player Ke Jie in the Human vs Machine series is expected to further stoke interest in the potential of AI and mechanized "deep learning."

Television broadcasts of the games in China were banned by the government, which also censors Google internet search in the country. —Kyodo News ■

Members of a historical battle re-enactment group, dressed as bandits and the French army, joke before participating in a Spanish Independence War battle re-enactment during the fifth edition of "Ronda Romantica" (Romantic Ronda) in Ronda, southern Spain on 27 May, 2017. Ronda Romantica is a cultural, historical and tourist event during the four days where thousands of people of Ronda and about fifty towns around of "Serrania de Ronda" (Ronda Mountain Ranges), dressed in traditional costumes, recreate the era of the bandits, drovers and romantic travelers in the nineteenth century. They also recreate the war of Spanish Independence which started in 1808 with the invasion by French Napoleonic troops and lasted until 1814, when the French were defeated and expelled from the country. Photo: REUTERS

The visually impaired walk at the Changa Medero stadium during a baseball lesson, in Havana, Cuba on 17 May, 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

Baseball for the blind takes flight in Cuba

HAVANA — Yubis Zapata had to stop playing baseball when he lost his eyesight during military service due to an explosion, so for him, it is a miracle to be able to play once more, in Cuba's growing league for the blind.

Baseball has long been a national passion. The Communist-run country quickly adopted this version after it was developed in the 1990s in Italy, but it has only really caught on in recent years, spreading to all corners of the Caribbean island.

Players like Zapata are ambitious. Their dream is for blind baseball to be included in the 2020 Paralympics, and to bring home the trophy for Cuba.

"When you lose your vision, these first years are difficult," said Zapata, 41, at a training session in Havana where players wore white uniforms.

"When you get this kind of opportunity, it's fabulous. Your world didn't end, it continues."

The players, who are blind or visually impaired and wear colourful blindfolds while playing, say baseball has helped them refine their sense of orientation by sound.

The ball has bells inside so that fielders can hear where it lands and scramble for it. First base is a beeping mat, and players clap paddles at second and third base to orient runners. There is no pitcher; the batter tosses the ball in the air and hits it. Fly balls are not allowed.

"This is different from conventional baseball — you have to be more concentrated," said Carlos Fuentes, 32, a physical therapist who lost his sight in recent years. "This sport in a way has served me as rehabilitation, for spatial orientation."

The game was brought to Cuba by Italian coaches, who also provided the specialised equipment. Enthusiasts say it is more truthful to the original sport than its American parallel, beep baseball. Havana coach Roberto Carmona says the game is played throughout Europe, Asia, in Cuba and Panama. But for it to be included in the Paralympics, there need to be two teams per continent, which he is confident can happen by 2020. Five Cuban provinces play the game, he said. There is no age or gender limit and even sighted people can play as long as they wear a blindfold.—Reuters ■

mitv Myanmar International
Programme Schedule

(29-5-2017 07:00am ~ 30-5-2017 07:00am) MST

07:03	Am	News
07:26	Am	Myanmar Delicate Artistic Handy Creations-The Making Procedure of Goldsmith
07:42	Am	Swan Hein Cave
08:03	Am	News
08:27	Am	The two brilliant Mountaineers (MT. EVEREST)
08:56	Am	Hip-Hop and Design
09:03	Am	News
09:25	Am	Pole Star for the Blind
09:53	Am	Yoghurt Vendor
10:03	Am	News
10:26	Am	Natural Lake: Fish Breeding Business
10:39	Am	Oboist and His Life

(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
07:26	Pm	Food Trip (Ep-3) (Part-1)
07:50	Pm	Yangon Markets: Da Nyin Gone Market
08:03	Pm	News
08:26	Pm	Discovering Tribes: Enn (Their Life and Customs)
08:53	Pm	Paper Art Creator

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

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

MRTV
Programme Schedule
(29-5-2017, Monday)

6:00 Am
♦ Paritta by Hilly Region Missionary Sayadaw
7:00 Am
♦ Breakfast News
7:35 Am
♦ MRTV Travelogue
8:35 Am
♦ Women in Myamar Society
9:10 Am
♦ Teleplay
9:25 Am
♦ World Heritage " The Wetsh Castle" (Great Britain)
10:30 Am
♦ Documentary
11:15 Am
♦ Documentary (Asean)
11:35 Am
♦ MRTV Youth's Programme
12:30 Am
♦ Teleplay
1:30 Pm
♦ Fine Arts-Bosom of Dramatic Performance
2:20 Pm
♦ TV Drama Series
3:10 Pm
♦ TV Drama Series
4:20 Pm
♦ University of Distance Education (TV Lecture)-Second Year (Oriental)
4:45 Pm
♦ Documentary (Part-5)
5:05 Pm
♦ This Week's Special Interest
5:35 Pm
♦ Yes or No Talk Show (Hot-Talk) (Part-2)
6:15 Pm
♦ Football Magazine
6:30 Pm
♦ Law Affairs
7:15 Pm
♦ TV Drama Series
8:00 Pm
♦ News/ International News/ Weather Report
8:35 Pm
♦ Documentary (Mandalay Palace)
9:15 Pm
♦ TV Drama Series
10:00 Pm
♦ Pyi Thu Ni Ti

Arsenal celebrate with the trophy after winning the FA Cup final at Wembley Stadium on 27 May, 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger celebrates with the trophy after winning the FA Cup final at Wembley Stadium on 27 May, 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

Arsenal win English FA Cup after beating Chelsea 2-1

LONDON — Arsenal won the FA Cup for the third time in four years on Saturday when they beat Chelsea 2-1 in the final, thanks to a contested fourth-minute goal by Alexis Sanchez and a 79th minute header by Aaron Ramsay.

Chelsea striker Diego Costa had given the Premier League champions hope in the 76th minute when he equalized.

However, Ramsay sealed the win three minutes later. Chelsea played the last 20 minutes with 10 men after wing-back Victor Moses was shown a second yellow card.—Reuters ■

Athletics-Farah runs year's fastest 5,000m in Oregon

British athletics star Mo Farah. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

EUGENE, Oregon — British double Olympic champion Mo Farah made his last US track race a special one, running the year's fastest 5,000 metres at the Prefontaine Classic Diamond League meeting on Saturday.

Farah, who will be moving up to the marathon after August's IAAF world championships in London, sprinted down the straight to defeat a high-quality field in 13 minutes, 00.70 seconds.

Ethiopian Yomif Kejelcha finished second in 13:01.21 and Kenyan Geoffrey Kamworwor claimed third in 13:01.35.

Olympic bronze medallist Ashley Spencer added another 2017 best with an impressive run of 53.38 seconds in the women's 400 metres hurdles. —Reuters ■

Kvitova's return to provide French Open with early emotions

Czech Republic's Petra Kvitova in action during her first round match against USA's Julia Boserup at French Open at Roland Garros in Paris, France on 28 May, 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

PARIS — Five months after being stabbed during a burglary, Petra Kvitova will provide the French Open with early chills as she makes her return to competition by opening play at Roland Garros on Sunday.

The left-handed Czech, a two-time Wimbledon champion, takes on American Julia Boserup on Court Philippe Chatrier after making a speedy recovery from a left hand injury sustained in the attack last December.

Whether she will be fit enough to beat the world number 86 is anyone's guess, but Kvitova was all smiles when she arrived at the stadium on Friday.

"I've already won my biggest fight," she told reporters. "I stayed in life and I have all my fingers.

"I'm happy that I didn't have to change any technique, and everything seems OK. Of course, the hand doesn't have that power and the strength yet, but I'm working on it."

Kvitova, who is seeded 15th courtesy of her protected ranking, reached the French Open semi-finals in 2012. —Reuters ■

Barca win third King's Cup in row as Messi, Neymar down Alaves

MADRID — Lionel Messi and Neymar showed their class as Barcelona beat a determined Alaves side 3-1 in the King's Cup final on Saturday to win the competition for the third year in a row and bid farewell to coach Luis Enrique on a high.

Messi curled in the opener in the 30th minute from outside the area following clever link up play with Neymar after Alaves, who were playing in their first domestic final, had struck the inside of the post.

The Basque side drew level three minutes later when Theo Hernandez fizzed a spectacular free kick into the top corner although Neymar restored Barca's lead a minute before halftime, bundling in Andre Gomes's pass from close range after starting the move with a dazzling run down the left.

Paco Alcacer further stretched the Catalans' lead two minutes later killing off Alaves' hopes of a first trophy in their 96-year history and delivering Barca's 29th King's Cup, the ninth trophy of Luis Enrique's three-year tenure. —Reuters ■