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70th Union Day celebrated in Panglong

A ceremony to mark the 70th anniversary of Union Day was held in Panglong, Shan State, yesterday with an opening speech by State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

Along with the many government representatives in attendance, there were also the sons, daughters and relatives of those who signed the Panglong Agreement exactly 70 years ago, each of whom met the State Counsellor, who is also a daughter of a signatory, her father, General Aung San.

It would be a day of remembrance for those who signed the Panglong in 1947, but also a hopeful reminder for those participating and following the 21st Century Panglong this year.

Yesterday's ceremony started with a salute of the national flag, remembrances for our fallen national heroes and the singing of the national anthem.

Young women representatives from the Chin, Kayah, Kayin, Rakhine, Mon, Kachin, Shan and Bamar ethnic groups took turns reading aloud different clauses written in the Panglong agreement.

Next, State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi delivered a speech in which she spoke of the

country's rich history and bright future. (Full text of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's speech is on pages one and two.)

The State Counsellor visited the booths displaying photos of the signatories of the 1947 Panglong agreement and their memorials, and also greeted the sons, daughters and relatives of the signatories.

The ceremony was followed by the Panglong Peace Talk, in which the State Counsellor and twelve ethnic people participated.

In attendance at the event were representatives from government including Union ministers, the Shan State Chief Minister, the Chairman of the Peace Commission Dr Tin Myo Win, Lt-Gen Yar Pyai of the Ministry of Defence, Commander of Eastern Central Command Maj-Gen Than Hlaing, chairmen of the Danu and Pa-O self-administered zones, representatives from political parties and members of ethnic groups.

The second Panglong Conference was held in Panglong, Shan State, from 3rd to 13th February, 1947, and the historic agreement was reached in a conference between the then-government led by General Aung San and 23 representatives of the ethnic people.



Top, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, centre, seated with relatives of original signatories of the Panglong Agreement. Above, the State Counsellor at the memorial to her father, General Aung San. PHOTO: MNA

The following is the full text (unofficial translation) of the speech delivered by State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi at the 70th Anniversary Union Day ceremony held in Panglong, Shan State.

'No one can escape history. Successive generations will judge our actions in their respective period till doomsday'

I'd like to greet all the people and the distinguished guests now present at the Union Day Ceremony. We gather here to recognise the Union today. Panglong is not merely a part of Shan State but a important part of the entire union. This is where the foundation of the very unity of the union was laid down.

Of the points contained in the Panglong Pact just read out

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State Counsellor asks peacemakers to inspire future generations



The State Counsellor ceremonially lit a bonfire and participated in an ethnic traditional dance as part of the Union Day dinner held in Shan State. PHOTOS: MYANMAR NEWS AGENCY



THE State Counsellor sent a message to those involved in the peace process to be unselfish and of dutiful spirit, and able to inspire future generations.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi made her comment at a Union Day dinner held in the town of Taunggyi, Shan state.

"I do not see how one can be meaningful in life if one works only for oneself, or for family or for the environment. One will be meaningful if he serves for the Union, for the country or for the place we live in," she said at the

dinner.

The State Counsellor then met with family members of leaders who had signed the Panglong agreement in 1947. As the daughter of General Aung San, the State Counsellor is one of them.

Most of them are the same age or older than Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. Therefore, the time they have left will be devoted to future generations. They do not have the time to do it for themselves.

"I would like to urge to who

are involved in peace process, to use this opportunity valuably. By doing this, we could face bravely in the next life with a dutiful soul and be at peace when we pass away," she said.

She also gave thanks for having the chance to meet the sons, daughters and relatives of the Panglong signatories.

"We PangLong generation are lucky still being here and meeting each other," she said.

The State Counsellor said it is her wish that future generations will happily celebrate the

anniversary of Union Day because of their old grandparents' dutiful works.

"The Union was established by sacrificing many lives. So we have the responsibility to protect this union to last forever. But we have to think about some parts. For example, this is our owned land but no one owns the country. We have only a duty to protect for the preservation in a life. Thus, we must value our country like something to be protected which we do not own. The main strength should be our spirit of

duty," she said.

Later yesterday, the State Counsellor ceremonially started a camp fire festivity to mark Union Day.

During the dinner, different cultural groups including Shangyi, Pa-O, Taungyo, Danu, Intha, Kayan, Mawshan, Palaung, Wa, Kokant, Lesu, Kachin, Gongshan, Arkha and Larhu performed their traditional dances. The State Counsellor presented gifts to the ethnic cultural groups and posed for photos.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Investigation Commission looks into villages in Maungtau

MEMBERS of Investigation Commission on Maungtau yesterday continued their probe into allegations of human rights violations in Ngan Chaung, Kyatyoeypin and Ngarsarkyu villages.

The commission's secretary U Zaw Myint and members travelled to Pyaungpate village, Ngakhuya village and Doe Dan village to meet women in the villages individually and collectively to inquire on facts in the 3 February report by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) as well as other difficulties and cases not included in the report, including feedback from local men. Government officials said all the interviews were conducted in a "free, responsive manner."—*Myanmar News Agency*

Nay Pyi Taw celebrates 70th Anniversary Union Day



Honour guard salutes the flag in Panglong. Inset, Vice President U Myint Swe addressed the crowd. PHOTO: MNA

A STATE flag hoisting and saluting ceremony was held in commemoration of the 69th Anniversary Union Day at the square of Nay Pyi Taw City Hall yesterday

morning, with Vice-President U Myint Swe in attendance.

At the ceremony, Vice-President U Myint Swe, who is also the chairman of the central com-

mittee on the holding the 70th Union Day, read out the message sent by President U Htin Kyaw to the ceremony.

Before the start of the Union

Day celebration, departmental staff, members of social organisations, national races and guests took designated places.

Next, a state flag hoisting team accompanied by members of national races hoisted the flag of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to full mast.

Vice-President U Myint Swe took the salute of the Guard of Honour.

Afterwards, the Vice-President and those present saluted the state flag while the national anthem was played by the Guard of Honour.

Also present at the Union Day celebration were deputy speakers of the parliaments, the Union ministers, the chairman of Union Civil Service Board, senior military officers from the Commander-in-Chief (Army), Union Supreme Court judges, the commander of Nay Pyi Taw Command, deputy ministers and other officials.—*Myanmar News Agency*

President hosts Union Day commemorative reception and dinner

PRESIDENT U Htin Kyaw and wife Daw Su Su Lwin hosted a reception and dinner to commemorate the 70th Anniversary Union Day at the square of City Hall in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday evening.

First, the President and wife extended cordial greetings to parliamentarians, chairs of political parties, region/state ethnic affairs ministers and delegates to the Union Day celebration.

It was also attended by Vice-President U Myint Swe and wife Daw Khin Thet Htay, Vice-President U Henry Van Thio and wife Dr Shwe Hlwm, Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw U Win Myint and wife Daw Cho Cho, Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw Mahn Win Khaing Than and wife Daw Nan Kyin Kyi, Chief Justice of the Union U Tun Tun

Oo, Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior-General Min Aung Hlaing and wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla, Chairman of the Constitutional Tribunal U Myo Nyunt and wife Daw Htay Yi, Chairman of the Union Election Commission U Hla Thein and wife Daw Aye Thidar, the deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services and wife, chairmen of the parliamentary committees, deputy ministers, MPs, chairmen and representatives of the political parties and departmental head.

Artists from the Ministry of Culture and cultural dance troupes of regions and states entertained dignitaries with a variety of traditional dances following the dinner.— *Myanmar News Agency*



President U Htin Kyaw and wife Daw Su Su Lwin welcome dignitaries at the reception to mark the 70th Anniversary Union Day in Nay Pyi Taw.
PHOTO: MNA

70th Anniversary of Union Day focused on Panglong Spirit

MORE than 3000 people attended to the 70th Union Day Ceremony held yesterday in front of the National Independence Monument in Maha Bandula Park in Yangon to salute the national flag and receive the message from the President.

U Phyo Min Thein, the Yangon Region Chief Minister, received a salute from an honour guard representing the Yangon Region Command and a ceremonial band from No. 1 Basic State High School in Dagon township performed national anthem as the Chief Minister saluted the flag together with honour guard and attendees.

The Chief Minister delivered

a Union Day message sent by the president of the Republic of Union Myanmar, U Htin Kyaw before the ceremony that was also attended by Yangon Region Hluttaw Speaker U Tin Maung Htun, Commander of Yangon Region Command Brig Gen Myo Zaw Thein, the Chief Justice of the High Court, U Win Swe, deputy speaker of Yangon Region, regional ministers and officials.

At 10am on the same day, the 70th Union Day Ceremony was also celebrated at the headquarters of the National League for Democracy. The national flag was saluted and there were remembrances for General Aung San and leaders

who died for independence. Eight minutes of silence was observed as a mark of sadness and tribute to monks and students who died in the democracy movement.

The chairman of the assembly, Thura U Tin Oo, patron of the National League for Democracy, said that today a day of national unification only through the negotiations by the national leader General Aung San and ethnic leaders under their long-term vision of ethnic expectations, interests and challenges. With hopes of independence, equality and fairness, they had signed the Panglong agreement with patience and harmony. Daw Aung San Su Kyaw

had said that the Panglong spirit can come alive by democratic discussion and can result in a true democratic union.

Thura U Tin Oo said the architect of the country's independence, General Aung San, had warned that if people wanted to develop, they would have to do it together.

"It would be wasted time if the Burmese went one way while the Kayin walked a different way and the Shan, Kachin and Chin were also marching separately. Today, the government, Hluttaw, Tatmataw, ethnics, tribes, political parties -- all people are marching to Union Peace Conference 21st

Century Panglong together with the same vision," he said.

"As the 20th Century Panglong spirit leads to national unification, the 21st century spirit can lead to internal peace, democracy and a federal union. Therefore, as a way to keep the Panglong spirit alive, let's create a new place that is safe both physically and mentally for the people standing with dignity in the world, based on national reconciliation."

The ceremony was attended by the NLD party members, the Yangon Region Chief Minister, ambassadors in Yangon, politicians and members of civil society.— *Myanmar News Agency*

70th Union Day celebrated in Panglong

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What we have left is historical heritage. I want people come here to pay tribute to the Panglong Monument, not only for paying tribute to the 20th Century Panglong but also for the 21st Century Panglong. When our descendants come here in the future, I want them see the place as the symbol of the Union and the symbol of the nationals' qualifications of venturing to sacrifice their lives for the benefit of the people. I myself cannot see it any longer. Only our new generations will be able to witness this. Hence, I want you to leave a good legacy for them.

Good parents do not see only the present. They usually foresee the future. Good parents do not see only the period they can see with their own eyes while living. They generally foresee the legacy they leave after death. So, broad-minded parents, well-wishing parents reprimand their offspring for their

future, for example, for their children to be bright in education and to be healthy. They will support them as much as they can. On the contrary, narrow-minded parents indulge their offspring, fulfilling them with physical needs.

It is necessary to ponder whether indulgence towards their children like these is for the children's benefits or for their own sakes. It must be considered whether this indulgence is intended to show their affection towards their children or if they want the love from their children. Likewise, in carrying out the tasks for the benefits of the country, we need to assess with bravery, whether we do it as we want people's love and support or we do it as we love our people and for their better future.

Sometimes, we abandon our people's satisfaction toward us in the interest of our citizens and for the betterment of younger

generation's future. For example, when we reprimand and force our children who do not want to go to school to send to school, the children will be annoyed with us. They may be conceived in their minds that my parents do not love me but I want play at home.

Parents who do not send their offspring to schools for fear of being annoyed by their children, in fact, do not love their children. They are indulging themselves. They want their offspring love them. We greatly value People's love. We want to get their love. We have been doing political activities for nearly 30 years with the spirit of our reliance upon our people. Yet, we will never ever get their supports by means of harming their benefit. We will do everything for the betterment of the country.

Undeniably, peace is a jam of value for the new generation. We need to leave the jam as the

legacy for our citizen. Natural resources are not important. Short term economic benefits are not important too. Any kinds of support including in election are not important too. These will vanish in a short time. Natural resources also will disappear sometimes in the future. Economy is likely to rise and drop in this world. Even the powerful country and economy happen to face economic crisis. If we can leave eternal peace as a legacy, this will be real legacy for them to spend for a long time.

I used to say the legacy left by my father is people's love. This will not be lost how much I spent. But we should not spend it. We must value and keep it forever. In this way, I want the present generation and those trying for the Panglong conference to succeed to save and leave legacy of peace.

And, I want to request of national ethnic groups who have not signed yet the cease fire treaty to sign with bravery and self confi-

dence. Join us in our 21st Century Panglong Agreement. If so, you can imagine how much they will be overjoyed and grateful to you.

Karma means deeds will result in effects. Karma is a deed, and here I do not mean deeds in the past. Deeds in past life cannot be managed. We can only manage deeds in the present life. Join us in the peace process with the spirit that our deed will result in effect. I firmly believe that this confidence will lead you to success. I only have the desire to help our national brethren. I never want anyone living in the country to be harmed in any way. We all are at the place the Panglong Agreement was signed, with the spirit of upgrading their benefits.

The 1st Panglong Agreement turned a page in history for our Union, so the people still remember it, until now. We deeply request you to open a new history book, and not be satisfied with just turning a page.

Thank you very much.—MNA
(Unofficial Translation)

LOCAL Business

Containers are seen at the Asia World Terminal in Yangon.

PHOTO: ZAW GYI PANITA



Export value rises by over Ks700 million in past 10 months

THE total value of external trade between Myanmar and partner countries amounted to over Ks9.3 billion, including \$3.7b from borders, an increase of more than Ks700 million compared with the same period last year, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

Between 1 April of last year and 27 January of this year, the country sold \$2.254b worth of agriculture products, \$7.639m worth of animal products, \$445m in fisheries products, \$787m worth of mineral products, \$194m worth of forest products, \$4.365b worth of industrial products and other products worth \$1.277b.

The government sector exported \$3.104b worth of products to trade partners this FY, while

\$6.228b worth of goods went to those buyers through the private sector.

Last year, the country exported \$8.623b worth of commodities including \$4.212b from the government sector and \$4.411b from the private sector.

The export of mineral products decreased by \$119 million, and industrial finished goods export also declined by \$273 million compared with the similar period last year, according to the ministry.

Agricultural products, minerals, industrial finished goods, animal products and marine products have mainly been sold to foreign trade partners, especially neighbouring countries, via sea routes and borders.—*Shwe Khine*

Border trade via ITCs reaches over Ks10.6 billion

TRADE value from the use of the Individual Trading Card (ITC) at border crossings hit more than Ks10.6 billion this fiscal year, according to the Commerce Ministry.

The border trade value through ITCs as of 27 January totalled Ks10.668 billion. The import value with ITCs was Ks9.793 billion, whereas the export earning was Ks875 million over the first ten months of this financial year.

Myawady border trade camp was found to have the largest trade value using ITCs with a

trade value of Ks5.313 billion.

Trade values were over Ks635m at Tamu trade camp, over Ks697m at Muse border gate; over Ks567m at Tachilek border gate; over Ks20m at Lwejel gate; over Ks1.7b at Kanpikete trade camp; over Ks297m at Kawthaung border gate, over Ks473m at Reed, over Ks847m at Mawtaung border, over Ks24m at Kengtung and over Ks29m at Maese border gate.

As part of a trade promotion programme, the commerce ministry first introduced the ITC sys-

tem at Tamu border trade camp in late 2012. In 2013 the system was rolled out to numerous border trade camps.

The ministry issued 292 ITCs in FY2012-13; 261 cards in FY2013-14; 317 cards in FY2014-15; 146 cards in FY2015-16 and 160 cards this FY up to 27 January.

An ITC holder may trade up to Ks15m in five days at border trade camps and import and export offices, with a trade value of Ks3m a day on average, according to an announcement released by the ministry.—*Kyaw Swa*

Sri Lanka to import 50,000 MT of rice from Myanmar

SRI LANKA has entered into an agreement with Myanmar to import 50,000 metric tons of rice by June, according to the Myanmar Rice Federation (MRF).

The Myanmar Rice Federation, the national organization for the rice industry which is responsible to negotiating rice export deals, said five companies have won contracts for the export of 50,000 metric tons of rice to Sri Lanka.

Myanmar Commerce Minister Dr. Than Myint held talks with a delegation led by the Sri Lanka ambassador to Myanmar,

KWND Karunaratne, at his office in Nay Pyi Taw on January 23 and signed a memorandum of understanding on rice exports.

According to an official, MRF has invited companies to submit bids for rice exports to Sri Lanka and selected five companies out of the 10 companies applied.

Sri Lanka's rice production has declined by about 200,000 tonnes after a drought last year. Sri Lanka is reducing rising rice prices and the control of rice millers by reducing import tariffs.—*colombopage.com*

Mango exports to be increased based on production

MANGO traders plan to raise the export volume of the marketable fruit this year based on production, according to the Myanmar Fruit, Flower and Vegetable Producers and Exporters Association.

About 40,000 tonnes of mangoes annually go to the export market, said U Soe Than Min Din, chairman of the association, who added that the commercial exporting procedures are smooth and easy for local exporters as the

delicious fruit has already gained a foothold in the foreign market.

In addition, the exporters are also planning to expand the sale of finished mango products to Russia, according to a body working for technology and market promotion for Myanmar's mango. Exporters are trying to penetrate the foreign market for dried mango and also planning to boost the export of mango essence.

Currently, local entrepre-

neurs are putting forth continuous efforts to expand exports of mango products to Thailand, South Korea, Russia and Dubai.

Mango plays a central role as a fruit crop among the horticultural fruits in Myanmar. The majority of mango is consumed as fresh dessert fruit in the ripening stage and as a salad in the immature stage because of its attractive flavor, taste, aroma, texture and nutritional value.—200



Farmer plant rice in rain-fed field in outskirts of Yangon. PHOTO: TUN TUN Oo

Indonesians to vote in local polls with eye on presidency

JAKARTA — Tens of millions of Indonesians head to the polls on Wednesday in local elections across the Muslim-majority country, with bitter feuding over the powerful post of Jakarta governor stoking political and religious tensions.

Incumbent Basuki Tjahaja Purnama, Jakarta's first ethnic Chinese and Christian leader, has angered some Muslim voters for allegedly insulting the Koran. He has denied wrongdoing, but is on trial for blasphemy in a case that rights groups and his supporters view as politically motivated.

Purnama is backed by President Joko Widodo's party and is running against Agus Yudhoyono, the son of former President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, and ex-education minister Anies Baswedan. The two Muslim candidates appear to have won over much of the conservative Islamic vote and some Purnama supporters. "In terms of per-

formance, I support Ahok," said Ferdi Ramadhan, 20, referring to Purnama's nickname.

"However, there's the consideration of religion. I'm a Muslim... so I think I will vote for Anies Baswedan," he said, after participating in a skate-boarding contest park at a park in the capital. It was built under Purnama's administration on the site of a former red-light district.

Purnama has been popular among the middle classes for cutting red tape in the traffic-clogged city and pushing through infrastructure projects, such as constructing defences against sea water intrusion.

But the forced evictions of slum dwellers from their riverbank homes to ease chronic flooding in the city have also angered many mainly Muslim residents. Muslims make up around 85 per cent of the city's population, which also has sizeable Christian

and other minorities.

The divisions have played out among communities, families and friends — much of it on social media and exacerbated by "fake news" stories — echoing the rifts seen in Britain over Brexit and the United States over the election of President Donald Trump.

"I personally am sick of arguing about these candidates and would like to just move on. It puts a lot of strain on friendships," said Sari Ekaputri, a 38-year old marketing executive who lives in Jakarta.

Jakarta police will deploy 16,000 officers ahead of voting day as concerns remain about hardline Muslim groups trying to hold similar rallies to the mass protests seen late last year calling for the jailing of Purnama.

Police banned a rally that was being planned by Islamist groups on 11 February, citing security concerns.

Despite the blasphemy allegations, Purnama has rebounded in opinion polls to remain a frontrunner. Even if he is convicted, he is legally allowed to run the city as long as appeals are under way, according to analysts. Jakarta's poll is one of scores of regional elections due to be held in other provinces, cities, and districts throughout Indonesia.

But nowhere are the stakes quite as high as in Jakarta. Winning Jakarta can be a stepping stone to the presidency and Wednesday's vote is widely being seen as a proxy ahead of the 2019 presidential, explaining how intense the campaigning has been.

"This election can determine the trajectory of future Indonesian politics... whether we will see an ugly future, where religion and ethnicity is further politicized for gains," said Tobias Basuki, a political analyst at a Jakarta-based think tank.—*Reuters*

Japan, South Korea to closely coordinate over North Korea

TOKYO — Japan and South Korea agreed Sunday to closely coordinate both bilaterally and multilaterally with the United States and United Nations in addressing North Korea's latest test-launch of a ballistic missile, the Japanese Foreign Ministry said.

In telephone talks, Kenji Kanasugi, head of the Japanese Foreign Ministry's Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau, and Kim Hong Kyun, South Korea's special representative for Korean Peninsula peace and security affairs, agreed to urge North Korea to comply with UN Security Council resolutions demanding it refrain from conducting ballistic missile and nuclear tests, the ministry said.

The talks came as Japanese officials were analyzing North Korea's test-launch of the missile that landed in the Sea of Japan, which occurred when Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and US President Donald Trump were meeting in Florida. It was the first test-firing of a

North Korean ballistic missile since Trump took office on 20 January.

"There is no doubt" that the North Korean move was a deliberate provocation timed for the Abe-Trump summit, a senior official of the Japanese Self-Defence Forces said.

While Trump has held talks with Abe and Chinese President Xi Jinping to discuss bilateral ties, the new US leader has not provided concrete details regarding how Washington will address North Korea's missile and nuclear weapons development.

"Perhaps (North Korea) wanted to draw the attention of the international community" and avoid being left out of Trump's foreign policy agenda," another senior SDF official said.

The official added that the test-launch of a ballistic missile at this time could be aimed at whipping up nationalism ahead of 16 February, the birthday of the late leader Kim Jong II.—*Kyodo News*

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Cambodian deputy opposition leader Sokha named as acting leader after Rainsy resigns

PHNOM PENH — Kem Sokha, vice president of the opposition Cambodia National Rescue Party (CNRP), was promoted to the acting president on Sunday after the self-exiled incumbent, Sam Rainsy resigned, a party's spokesman said.

"The party's board of directors accepted Sam Rainsy's resignation from the position of the president and member of the CNRP and promoted party's vice president Kem Sokha to the acting president from now on," the CNRP's spokesman, Yim Sovann told re-

porters after an urgent meeting of the party's board of directors.

He said the CNRP would hold its congress to choose the new president before 7 April, 2018.

Political analysts foresaw that the party's two prominent candidates — Kem Sokha and Sam Rainsy's wife Tioulong Saumura — could compete for the position of the party's new president.

Saumura, 66, is currently serving as a party's permanent committee member and a member of parliament

for Phnom Penh.

Rainsy announced his resignation from the presidency and membership of the CNRP on Saturday due to "personal reasons". He has been living in exile in France since November 2015 to avoid a two-year prison sentence over a defamation charge.

In December 2016, a Cambodian court also sentenced, in absentia, him to another five years in prison for conspiring to incite chaos in the country through posting fake documents on his Facebook page.

Rainsy's resignation came after Cambodian Prime Minister Samdech Techo Hun Sen announced earlier this month that the ruling Cambodian People's Party (CPP) would propose the parliament to amend the Law on Political Parties to ban convicts from serving as president of a party.

Hun Sen said the proposed amendment would also include a provision that would allow the Constitutional Council to dismantle any political party that its leaders made a serious crime.—*Xinhua*

Philippines starts to repair damage in quake-hit southern province

MANILA — Philippine authorities have begun to restore electricity and water supply to areas hit by a powerful earthquake in the south that killed six and damaged public infrastructure.

President Rodrigo Duterte visited affected areas on Sunday in Surigao City and, according to ABS-CBN online news, pledged the government would give 2 billion Philippine pesos (\$40 million) in assistance.

Carlos Egay, vice gov-

ernor of Surigao del Norte province, said life appeared to be returning to normal after the 6.7 earthquake that rocked Surigao City on Friday night.

Residents who rushed to higher ground amid fears of a tsunami have returned to their homes, he said.

"More than 100 aftershocks have been recorded since Friday, some noticeable, some not too much. Hopefully, they will not result in any more damage,"

Egay told Reuters by telephone on Sunday.

Friday's earthquake, the city's strongest since one in 1879, caused at least 400 million pesos (\$8.01 million) in damage to schools, bridges, homes, hotels, and other infrastructure, Egay said. The total is sure to rise, he said, as authorities have yet to assess the of damage to the still-shut airport, where the runaway has cracks.

Some miners in the

nickel-rich province, including top Philippine producer Nickel Asia Corp, reported no damage to their facilities, according to the Chamber of Mines of the Philippines.

Local officials have placed Surigao City under a state of calamity to hasten relief and rehabilitation efforts.

The Philippines is on the geologically active Pacific Ring of Fire and experiences frequent earthquakes.—*Reuters*

North Korea tests ballistic missile; US to avoid escalation

SEOUL/WASHINGTON — North Korea fired a ballistic missile into the sea early on Sunday, the first such test since US President Donald Trump was elected, and his administration indicated that Washington would have a calibrated response to avoid escalating tensions.

The test was of a medium- or intermediate-range missile that landed in the Sea of Japan, according to the US defence department, not an Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM), which the North has said it could test at any time.

The launch marks the first test of Trump's vow to get tough on an isolated North Korean regime that last year tested nuclear devices and ballistic missiles at an unprecedented rate in violation of United Nations resolutions.

A US official said the Trump administration had been expecting a North Korean "provocation" soon after taking office and will consider a full range of options in response, but these would be calibrated to show US resolve while avoiding escalation.

The new administration is also likely to step up pressure on China to rein in North Korea, reflecting Trump's previously stated view that Beijing has not done enough on this front, the official said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

"This was no surprise," the official said. "The North Korean leader likes to draw attention at times like this."

The latest test comes a day after Trump held a summit meeting with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, and also follows Trump's phone call last week with Chinese President Xi Jinping.

"I just want everybody to understand, and fully know, that



Passengers watch a TV screen broadcasting a news report on North Korea firing a ballistic missile into the sea off its east coast, at a railway station in Seoul, South Korea, on 12 February, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

the United States of America is behind Japan, our great ally, 100 per cent," Trump told reporters in Palm Beach, Florida, speaking alongside Abe. He made no further comments.

Abe called the launch "absolutely intolerable" and said North Korea must comply with UN Security Council resolutions.

China is North Korea's main ally but has been frustrated by Pyongyang's repeated provocations, although it bristles at pressure from Washington and Seoul to curb the North and its young leader, Kim Jong Un.

China's foreign ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Trump and his aides are likely to weigh a series of possible responses, including new US sanctions to tighten financial controls, an increase in naval and

air assets in and around the Korean peninsula and accelerated installation of new missile defense systems in South Korea, the administration official said.

But the official said that given that the missile was believed not to have been an ICBM and that Pyongyang had not carried out a new nuclear explosion, any response will seek to avoid ratcheting up tensions.

Trump has pledged a more assertive approach to North Korea but given no clear sign of how his policy would differ from Obama's so-called strategic patience. In January, Trump tweeted "It won't happen!" after Kim said the North was close to testing an ICBM, but his aides never explained how he would do so.

The missile was launched from an area called Panghyon in North Korea's western region

just before 8 am (2300 GMT Saturday) and flew about 500 km (300 miles), the South's Office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff said.

"Our assessment is that it is part of a show of force in response to the new US administration's hardline position against the North," the office said in a statement.

A South Korean military source said the missile reached an altitude of about 550 km and was probably a medium-range Rodong, which the North has successfully test-fired numerous times in recent years, or a previously unknown new type, given the unusually high trajectory.

The North tried to launch an intermediate-range Musudan missile eight times last year but most attempts failed. One launch that sent a missile 400 km (250 miles), more than half the dis-

tance to Japan, was considered a success by officials and experts in the South and the United States.

Kim said in his New Year speech that the country was close to test-launching an ICBM and state media have said such a launch could come at any time.

The comments prompted a vow of an "overwhelming" response from US Defence Secretary James Mattis when he traveled to South Korea earlier this month.

Once fully developed, a North Korean ICBM could threaten the continental United States, which is about 9,000 km (5,500 miles) from North Korea. ICBMs have a minimum range of about 5,500 km (3,400 miles), but some are designed to travel 10,000 km (6,200 miles) or more.

North Korea conducted two nuclear tests and numerous missile-related tests last year and was seen by experts and officials to be making progress in its weapons capabilities, although until Sunday no ballistic missile launch attempt had been detected since October.

Its repeated missile launches prompted Washington and Seoul to agree to deploy a Terminal High Altitude Area Defence (THAAD) anti-missile battery in South Korea later this year, which is strongly opposed by Beijing, which worries the system's powerful radar undermines its own security.

Sunday's launch comes at an awkward time for South Korea, where President Park Geun-hye has been stripped of her powers after a December parliamentary vote to impeach her. Her fate will be decided by the Constitutional Court, which is hearing arguments on whether to uphold or overturn the impeachment. —Reuters

Sri Lanka's former rebel leader forms new party

COLOMBO — Sri Lanka's former Tamil Tiger rebel leader Vinayagamoorthi Muralitharan has formed a new party in order to voice the concerns of minority Tamils in the island country, the local media report said on Sunday.

Muralitharan, who broke away from the rebel outfit in 2004 and was sworn in as a deputy minister in the previous government, blamed the main Tamil political party — the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) — for not doing enough to represent the concerns of the Tamils.

He formed the 'Tamil National Freedom Front Party' with the assistance of his close members.

Muralitharan was the former Tamil Tiger rebel leader in the eastern province and bolted from

the faction popularly known as the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

Soon after leaving the LTTE, he had formed Tamil Makkal Viduthalai Puligal (TMVP), a splinter faction of the LTTE.

After giving up arms and entering politics, he was appointed as a National List Member of Parliament for the United People's Freedom Alliance (UPFA), the party of former President Mahinda Rajapakse in 2008 and also the minister of national integration in March 2009.

He later joined the Sri Lanka Freedom Party, the largest party in the UPFA.

Muralitharan is facing a corruption probe in the island country for alleged misuse of state vehicles during the previous government. —Xinhua

Australian bushfires threaten properties, close roads

SYDNEY — Australian authorities ordered the evacuation of some sparsely populated rural areas of New South Wales on Sunday as bushfires, fanned by extreme heat and strong winds, raged across the state, threatening homes and closing roads.

A heat wave on Australia's east coast saw temperatures hit records in some parts of the state, creating conditions that officials said were worse than those preceding Victoria's 2009 "Black Saturday" fires, Australia's worst bush fire event that killed 173 people.

"This is the worst day we have seen in the history of New South Wales when it comes to fire danger ratings and fire conditions," Shane Fitzsimmons, the state's rural fire chief, told reporters.

The areas hit by fires are hundreds of kilometers from Sydney, the state capital.

Fitzsimmons said there were unconfirmed reports of homes, farm sheds and machinery being destroyed by fast-moving fires breaking containment lines.

There were no reports of injuries, but some firefighters were suffering from heat-related issues.

By Sunday afternoon, emergency warnings were issued for five rural areas. People were told to evacuate if they could, or seek shelter and avoid bush or grassland where it was too late to leave.

More than 2,000 firefighters, many of them volunteers, were battling 86 fires across New South Wales on Sunday afternoon, with 38 of them not under control.

A 13-year-old boy and a 40-year-old man were charged on Sunday for allegedly starting fires.

Temperatures climbed above 45 degrees Celsius in some parts. Dry and hot northwesterly winds coming from Australia's desert centre, some up to 75 kilometres an hour, were fanning the bushfires.

A southerly wind change associated with a cold front was forecast to arrive by early evening, the Bureau of Meteorology said.

Fitzsimmons said the front would eventually offer relief, but would create volatile conditions as it met the northwesterly flow.

Since Friday, heat wave conditions caused cancellation of major sporting events and put pressure on the electricity grid.

A paper mill, water treatment operations and Australia's largest aluminum smelter, Tomago, were among businesses halting operations to conserve energy on Friday. —Reuters

Opinion

Write for us

We appreciate your feedback and contributions. If you have any comments or would like to submit editorials, analyses or reports please email ce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com with your name and title.

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

Trust and human value

Editorial from
the "Mirror"
dated 8th
February 2017

Translated by
Khin Maung Oo

IN various aspects of human existence, the value of a person and our attitude towards someone who is different from us is very important. That attitude is none other than the "Trust" we have for that person. We can understand this person's value only if we have trust.

For us to understand that type of trust and this type of value, we should at the very least try to reduce our ego and pride as much as possible. As long as we have a low opinion and mistrust and doubts about someone, we will not be able to accept nor recognize his value.

In a certain social strata or domain there will be the highest level as well as the lowest level. Depending upon one's effort

and karma, we may find ourselves at the top strata or at the bottom. All those in different levels of society will have their respective beliefs and values.

We should not disdain those from the lowest level and at the same time we should not be excessively impressed nor be disrespectful with those at the highest level. There is no doubt that those from the highest level reached there by their effort or karma, whereas those from the lowest level may have good reasons for their inferior status due to their qualifications and karma.

Whatever it is, whether they are from the highest or lowest level, they all have their corresponding value according to their positions. We would be

able to build trust for each other only if we understood these values.

Without having or building that kind of trust, we would not be able to build a good, pleasant situation in that strata, domain or organization. In fact, each and every strata has its respective capability and values.

Every organization will each have their differences. Here, we need to know that these differences do not mean that they are different from us in shape or form, they are just existing according to their own nature and their own value. If we can recognize and co-operate with mutual trust, we will be able to establish a valuable society and a pleasant and beautiful new human society. Yet, pres-

ently even in the same community there is still discrimination if someone is different in appearance. We do not know how to value others. What is worse, we still regard those who are different from us as our enemies. When we cannot build trust, based on this fact hatred, pride and conflicts will keep on multiplying.

In our mother land as well, different groups exist in human communities or in regions. It is like a huge nest made up of different groups. Within this huge nest, if we are able to understand the different value of each individual or each group, and build trust by acknowledging each other's value, surely, we would be able to build a beautiful and peaceful human society.

Recent developments in microstructure approach to exchange rate determination and implications for monetary policy

Dr. Khin Maung Nyunt (Former Senior Economist)

IN explaining the factors determining foreign exchange rate (FX), three main approaches have been widely used: (i) traditional approach developed before 1970s, (ii) the asset market approach emerged in the 1970s and (iii) the development of market microstructure approach initiated since mid-1990s. The first two approaches are commonly referred to as macro-approach, in contrast, the last one indicates the micro-approach to FX. Recent evidences extensively suggests the link between micro and macro approaches to FX determination. The effectiveness of application of these theories depends primarily on the level of development of financial system and practices of the country. The theoretical background, application of these FX fundamentals and policy implications are discussed below and the lesson-learned is summarized in this non-technical paper.

The 'traditional approach' to FX is known as 'goods market approach' in which demand for foreign currencies depend on the purchase and sales of goods i.e. exports and imports of the country. It basically explains that trade balances influence the FX. In particular, trade deficits (i.e. total imports are greater than total exports) tend to depreciate domestic currency, in contrast, trade surpluses tend to appreciate do-

mestic currency.

In the asset market approach, various forms of the model have emerged since the 1970s and emphasized the role of nominal exchange rate as 'asset price' of the durable assets. The first well-known model is purchasing power parity (PPP) theory explanation to FX. It explains that the FX equals the ratio of two price levels (relative price) of related countries in the non-arbitrage condition. In comparison, the uncovered interest parity (UIP) theory explains that FX change is based on the relation between expected returns on short-term interest-bearing assets denominated in different currencies. The 'asset market approach to exchange rate' refers to models in which the exchange rate is determined by not only present fundamentals and shocks but also discounted sum of expected future fundamentals and unobserved shocks. In other words, macroeconomic fundamentals of standard exchange rate (FX) theory explains that FX is influenced by the macroeconomic fundamentals such as relative money supplies, outputs, inflations, interest rates and expectation of FX.

Under floating rates, the FX models of asset market approach have explained well the change in FX in line with theory in the long term. However, the empirical research in mid-1990 have shown

that the approach fails to explain short term (i.e., within a week to a year) exchange rate change. The evidence shows that FX movement indicates random walk model, indicating that these models fail to forecast changes in FX in the short term. Some studies also point out that the most critical determinants of exchange rate volatility are not macroeconomics.

With respect to failure of the asset market approach, two main reasons have been explained on the basis of the assumptions of the model. First, the asset market approach assumes that news on FX fundamentals are publicly available. Based on the arrivals of news and market expectations of future fundamental variables, exchange rates immediately react the effect of these fundamental shifts. Second, this approach assumes that market players are homogenous (i.e., same in taking actions on buying or selling of currency and motives on currency trade) in the FX market.

In contrast, the market microstructure approach assumes that (i) private information, in particular, foreign currency order flow is not publicly available, (ii) market players (participants) are heterogeneous (different) in buying and selling activities and motives on currency trade and (iii) institution such as trading process and trading information is available. The market microstructure approach is based primarily on microstructure finance theories. It is generally defined as the process

and outcomes of exchanging assets under explicit trading rules. Two variables (i) foreign currency 'order flow' and (ii) spread (bid-ask) constitute major powerful tools of microstructure approach.

Order flow is defined as a measure of buying and selling currency pressure. It indicates transaction volume that is signed. Thus it is the signed buyer-initiated and seller-initiated order for a given time frame. In a dealer market such as spot foreign exchange, the dealers absorb this order flow. In a FX auction market, limit orders absorb the flow of market orders. It is worth noting that order flow determines the FX, however, it is not underlying causes of FX movement. Information/news on order flow is considered as underlying cause.

The recent researches on FX studies have applied the market microstructure approach with high frequency data such as daily to weekly data. The order flow explains significant part of change in nominal exchange rates over periods as long as four months. The evidence of these studies have shown that the results can explain movement of FX not only for the study period so-called 'in-sample forecast', but also indicate the forecast for beyond study-period i.e., 'out-of-sample forecast' ability for less than a month. The findings show that the FX forecasts under microstructure approach produce better estimates than the ran-

dom-walk model of asset market approach.

It is worth to note a major difference between two approaches on the view on 'equilibrium condition' i.e., equilibrium FX. This is also known as practitioners' view versus the academic view on equilibrium FX. From the practitioners' view, FX depreciates because "there were more buyers than sellers." It means that equilibrium FX is based on these foreign currency supply and demand in the FX market. But macroeconomic view argues that this supply does not include foreign currency of some financial institutions so-called risk-averse investors who do not want to take part in currency trade to avoid risk. Thus FX under microstructure approach reflects 'transition rate' which is not optimal rate because the buyer/seller imbalance is not known. From macroeconomic view, the FX equilibrium rate can be determined by the supply and demand of all participants in competitive market, (i.e., Walras's concept of equilibrium) suggesting the need of the 'Walrasian auctioneer' in the FX market to reflect the FX equilibrium.

In addition, the current equilibrium FX may change if order flow were observable to dealers in real time (i.e., if the market were more transparent). From a policy perspective, it points to the importance of the effects of increasing order-flow transparency.

(To be continued)

Shan Nationalities League for Democracy Party presents policy and programmes



U Sai Tun Aye of Shan Nationalities League for Democracy Party.

U Sai Tun Aye, head of research and central executive committee member of Shan Nationalities League for Democracy presented the policy, attitudes and working procedure of their party on Radio & Television on 12 February 2017.

The text of his presentation is given below.

Mai Soon Kha—

I sent, first of all, my greeting wish to you, all the nationals, to be blessed with health and happiness. I am U Sai Tun Aye of Shan Nationalities League for Democracy. With a view to helping in building our country into peaceful and developed Federal Union and to make current transition into democracy of the Union of Myanmar stable and smooth, I will present policies of Shan Nationalities League for Democracy.

Our respected national brethren and voters!

Union of Myanmar is a country in which various kinds of national races co-exist. We firmly believe that perpetuation of freedom and sovereignty of the whole Union and its development will be able to be maintained with the strength of all the nationals. For a country all the national races collectively live together, “Equality” is a vital concept.

Here, I would like to explain a few to our voters to be well convinced of policies of SNLD Party. SNLD Party is a Union Party founded, based on Shan State. Since 1988 when it commenced to be established till now, the Party has been exerting its efforts in every sector assumed to be responsible, for attaining the national equality, acquisition of right to self-administer and building up a Federal Union.

Shan Nationalities League for Democracy is a party which took its stance as a veteran, solemn and simple-minded party in the history of Shan nationalities. Especially, it is a clear evidence that it took firmly its stance for years by holding unswerving responsibilities of building up a Federal Union, attaining the national equality and acquisition of rights to self-administer, laid down since the time it was set up. Our party’s policy is based on Panglong Agreement and

Panglong Commitments. In accord with Panglong Commitments, we have been demanding for national equality and rights to self-administer, that all nationals long for.

National equality means that “Shan” has to get one kyat like “Bamar” got one kyat and “Shan” must have the right to be a President like “Bamar” had. Likewise, Kachin, Kayin and Mon must have the right. As a “Bamar” national can become a Commander-in-Chief if he is well qualified with military affairs, a “Shan” national must be eligible to serve as a Commander-in-Chief if he is well qualified. Any national races must get a post he deserves if he is well-qualified. All must have equal rights. Any one is neither a “Thakin”/ master nor a “Kyun”/ slave. We believe that is the national equality.

Right to self-administer means Shan nationals themselves must have right to administer, prescribe laws and defend our rights, in the region where Shan nationals live. Similarly, “Bamar” and “Rakhine” as well must be able to defend their rights themselves. This is the essence of Panglong Commitments included in Panglong Agreement.

It wholly depends on the political system it exercises, for all nationals to be able to live in the union without being divided into pieces. SNLD Party’s political policy includes building up a Federal Union. Federalism is the system which acknowledges different cultures, languages and beliefs existing in the country. In solving racial conflicts in a country, federalism only will be the most effective way. Federalism is a vision or doctrine that all will build up a country to co-exist, by accepting mutual understanding between one region and another, one race and another with different characteristics, according to their historical backgrounds.

Only if national ethnics practice the habits of mutual respect, understanding and acknowledgement, will the peaceful Union be able to be built up for us to live sharing weal and woe. Like “Bamar” pays respect to “Shan”, “Shan” must pay respect to “Kachin,” so that the peaceful Un-

ion will survive for ever.

As long as random uses of carte blanche, practices of bullying and exploitation of the weaker exist, we cannot build up a peaceful Union. Provided that one will harm another’s right for his benefit, the latter will defend his rights, leading to occurrences of wars and conflicts, as seen in histories. Although it lasted for 60/ 70 years for each other to solve problems with arms, no one won. There is a well-known Shan saying, “Dogs bite lice but lice never die, or vice versa.”

Innocent people and children suffered a lot betwixt and between in the conflicts. Sorrowfully enough, they had been displaced by fighting, from the areas where they have been eking out their living. Why did these happen? The answer is that they do not treat each other with equal status and they fail to acknowledge equality. Thus, SNLD Party has been demanding for gaining these rights nonstop, so far.

The Union we want is the Union with equality. In this Union, we must have a Federal Government as well as States’ Cabinets. A State Cabinet must have a full right to administer its affairs. States must have their own constitution. Power and authority that State Cabinets will exercise should not be power and authority, such as they are, like those empowered to township or district development committees. Chief Minister of the State must be the one chosen with the wishes of locals from the State, not the One appointed by the Federal Government. Besides, like having Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, States must have Hluttaws. Those Hluttaws must not be the ones in which people take parliamentary seats without being chosen by the people.

The government we want is the kind that takes responsibility and accountability. Our region has forests, minerals, jewels, rivers & creeks, with forests having been cut down, minerals exploited, jewels dug up and electric power produced by building embankments. Deforestation ruins natural environment, which causes climate changes. Local people have to suffer scourge of village displacement, floods and landslides. New jewel mining plots had emerged, but companies monopolized them, whereas locals had no alternatives but to gaze at them. Electric power had been produced and natural gas had been carried out of the country through pipes. Yet, electric power never casts light on these areas. We never want such a government.

Federal Union we want to build up must be able to guarantee for the law to protect safety of lives of the whole national populace, and for the people to enjoy social basic rights to the full. The Federal Union must conserve and develop literatures, cultures and traditions of national races, emphatically. Education received must be the kind that can guarantee for our future. It must support for the progress of social standards of peasants and workers. And, it must implement



Party Logo.

plans for people to be able to receive medical treatments at modernized hospitals and clinics, with cheapest costs, in prioritization of public health.

Our respected national brethren and voters!

Failure to acknowledge national equality, lack of democracy and overwhelming of one-party dictatorship system are great hindrances in building up a genuine Union. The Union of Myanmar is a Union/ Pyidaungsu consisting of States with different historical backgrounds, cultures, traditions and beliefs. Withdrawal of practices of bullying the weaker and developing the practices of acknowledgement of differences only can lead emergence of the basics for peace, democracy and building the Federal Union.

In building up a Union with equality, prioritization of the national interest only causes confrontation with other nationals’ interests. Due to holding the doctrine of the majority rule, political equality and rights to create one’s destiny oneself have been lost, and it causes emergence of narrow-minded nationalism, on other side.

It was regrettable to have spent time without peace and stability along the history of our country. Just after gaining Independence, less developed countries than ours and those from the same level, outpaced much better than us. Presently, our country plunged into the state of being in list of the world poorest countries. Education, health, living and social standards of the whole populace are lowering down and down, and our country suffered a variety of social problems.

On account of unqualified leaders of the country and badly flawed constitution, people had to work day in and day out, just to keep body and soul together, having costly but fruitless education system, so-called health-care which was costly but unable to cure, old and unsatisfactory services and infrastructures.

Respected national brethren and voters!

At present, all the nationals need to participate for the development of Union Spirit and smooth transition into democracy. And, political forces need to cooperate while all citizens are necessary to encourage, so that we can leave favorable legacy of the Union for new generations to come. We want to assert that it is necessary to leave justice and equality of goodness

for building peaceful and developed Union, completely not leaving conflicts and hatred between one race and another.

The spirit of loving one’s own country, region and race is not genuine and perfect Union Spirit, and we cannot build our country with excessively selfish nationalism. It is essential to have in our minds “the Panglong Spirit” with which we will build our country together to enjoy the fruits of our efforts. Similarly, if we believe just forming the so-called committee will make the solution for peace problems convenient our country will surely be on the brink of danger again. In shaping Myanmar into the Federal Union, what we greatly need is the broad-minded and practical leadership in democratic movement.

Let me disclose that our SNLD Party will co-operate with any political forces which are performing like this, in places we are assigned, both in Hluttaw and Peace Dialogues. And, we will always stand up for the people in the sectors operating check and balance over the government’s acts, constructively.

Now, in our country, elections are being held by exercising multi-party democracy system. With the increasing amounts of parties, it is necessary to assess the stances of the parties. Our SNLD Party is standing as a veteran, solemn and simple-minded party until now, always giving priority to affairs of our nationals and our country. We will be moving on definitely and bravely without prejudice and bias, for justice, freedom, equality and peace to be deeply rooted in the country. For the emergence of genuine Federal Union which guarantees national equality, our party will be marching in future, with great strength while performing a historic duty with unswerving determination.

Likewise, if candidates representing SNLD Party to contest in the by-election are chosen and assigned duties, we would like to give solemn pledges that they will bring about the benefits of the people. Here I conclude my election campaign speech by urging our people to go to voting booths to cast their votes with bravery on the by-election day to come very soon, for the emergence of the Federal Union and for peace and development of social lives of the people.

May you all take part in the nation-building.

Mai Soon Kha!

Inter-Shi'ite tension mounts in Baghdad after clashes

BAGHDAD — Tension between Iraq's Shi'ite leaders mounted on Sunday as the toll from protests in central Baghdad on Saturday increased to six killed, five demonstrators loyal to the fiery cleric Moqtada al-Sadr and one policeman.

At least 174 other protesters were injured in clashes that pitted police and Sadr's followers who had gathered to demand an overhaul of a commission that supervises elections, ahead of a provincial poll due in September.

The clashes broke out as the protesters attempted to cross the bridge that links Tahrir Square where they had gathered and the heavily fortified Green Zone, which houses government buildings, embassies and international organizations.

In a statement reacting to the killing of his followers on Saturday evening,

Sadr said: "Their blood won't have been shed in vain." He promised strong retaliation.

Several Katyusha rockets hit the Green Zone on Saturday evening but there were no casualties, a military spokesman said. The rockets seem to have been fired from Baladiyat, a district where Sadr has many followers.

The growing tensions come at a bad time for Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi who is trying to focus on a critical battle with Islamic State in Mosul, the last major urban stronghold of the Sunni militant in northern Iraq.

Four of the five protesters killed were hit by bullets and the fifth died of unknown causes, according to an updated casualties toll given by an Interior Ministry official. Most of the injured were treated for chok-

ing on tear gas, he said.

Sadr says the electoral commission is favourable to his Shi'ite rival, former prime minister Nuri al-Maliki, a politician close to Iran whom he accuses of corruption.

He also blames Maliki for the failure of the Iraqi army to contain the advance of Islamic State in 2014, as he was then prime minister and commander of the armed forces.

The cleric said his supporters wanted to get near the Green Zone to make their voices heard by decision-makers, and had no intention of storming it again.

Abadi ordered an investigation into the violence amid claims by the Interior Ministry that some demonstrators carried firearms and knives. Sadr insists his followers were peaceful.

In a statement, Maliki's Dawa party accused



Protesters carry a man overcome by tear gas after supporters of Iraqi Shi'ite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr tried to approach the heavily fortified Green Zone during a protest at Tahrir Square in Baghdad, Iraq on 11 February, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

Sadr without naming him of trying to "distract the Iraqi people in sedition in order to prevent the efforts to get rid of Daesh," an acronym for Islamic State.

Sadr is openly hostile to American policies in the Middle East and, at the same time, he has a troubled relationship with Iraqi political groups allied with Iran.

Sadr is the heir of a clerical family who suffered under Saddam Hussein, the former president toppled in the 2003 US-led invasion. His Shi'ite rivals had fled Saddam's persecution, returning to Iraq after the invasion.

His followers held several demonstrations last year to press for anti-corruption reforms and

stormed the Green Zone after violent clashes with security forces.

Iraqi forces last month completed the first phase of the Mosul offensive that started in October, by removing the militants from the eastern side of the city. They are now preparing to attack the part that lies west of the Tigris river. —Reuters

Syrian forces supported by Russian air strikes retake ISIS reinforced position near Al-Bab



Russia's Defence Ministry said that the government forces destroyed 650 militants, two tanks and four IFVs and 18 all-terrain vehicles with heavy weaponry and other equipment. PHOTO: TASS

MOSCOW — Syrian government forces supported by Russian air strikes have retaken the town of Tedef, the most reinforced position of Islamic State near the city of Al-Bab, and reached the contact line with the Free Syrian Army as it was coordinated with Turkey, Russia's Defence Ministry said on Saturday.

"On 11 February, during an offensive operation in the northwest of the Aleppo province, the Syrian Armed Forces, supported by aviation of the Russian Aerospace Force, have liberated from ISIS terrorists (previously known as IS — eds.

TASS) the populated locality of Tedef, the militants' most reinforced position near the city of Al-Bab," the ministry said in a statement.

"The offensive operation resulted in the Syrian government forces' approach to the contact line coordinated with the Turkish side," it said.

Russia's Defence Ministry said that the government forces destroyed 650 militants, two tanks and four IFVs and 18 all-terrain vehicles with heavy weaponry and other equipment.

"Moreover, control has been regained

over the road to Raqqa, along which ISIS military groups in the town of Al-Bab have been supplied with weapons and ammunition," the Russian defense ministry said.

Earlier on Saturday, the Lebanese television channel Al-Manar said that Syrian government forces were at a distance of 1.5 km from Al-Bab, besieged in the north and west by Syrian opposition units supported by Turkish troops. In August 2016, Turkey launched a military operation in northern Syria, code-named as Operation Euphrates Shield.—TASS

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Dated: 13-02-2017.

Iran says holds eight foreigners planning attacks

TEHRAN — Iranian security forces have arrested eight hardline Sunni Islamists suspected of planning attacks to disrupt celebrations for Iran's Islamic revolution in the past week, Intelligence Minister Mahmoud Alavi said on Saturday.

Alavi said the eight were "Takfiri" foreigners, some of whom were linked to a "Takfiri" leader who had been killed in Iran, IRNA reported. He did not give details of which countries they were from.

"Takfiri" is a word

used by predominantly Shi'ite Muslim Iran to refer to hardline, armed, Sunni Islamist groups.

"Initial information indicates that Kalashnikovs and other equipment were obtained to carry out terrorist operations ... in Tehran and several other cities under the direct guidance of persons based in neighbouring countries," Alavi was quoted by the state news agency IRNA as saying.

In August, Alavi said the leader of a Sunni militant group in southeast

Iran responsible for attacks against security forces and civilian targets has been killed, although it was not immediately clear if he was person he suspected those arrested of being linked to.

Although Alavi did not identify which country Iran suspected of guiding the suspects, Iranian officials often accuse regional rival Saudi Arabia of backing ultrahardline Sunni militant group Islamic State.

Riyadh denies the charges and says Tehran

destabilizes the region and sponsors terrorism, an accusation rejected by Iran.

On Friday, Iran's prosecutor-general Mohammad Jafar Montazeri said security forces had smashed a cell linked to Islamic State near Tehran that wanted to "sabotage" rallies on Friday marking the anniversary of the 1979 Islamic Revolution that toppled the US-backed Shah. Iranian security forces have repeatedly announced arrests of Islamic State fighters and sympathizers.—Reuters

INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS SCHEDULE

YANGON TO BANGKOK			
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
TG-304	09:50	11:45	Daily
TG-302	15:00	16:55	Daily
TG-306	19:50	21:45	Daily
PG-706	6:00	8:15	Daily
PG-702	10:30	12:25	Daily
PG-708	15:30	17:25	Daily
PG-704	18:20	20:15	Daily
8M-335	7:30	9:15	Daily
8M-331	16:30	18:15	Daily
UB-017	17:45	19:15	Daily
UB-019	8:00	9:30	3,5,7
UB-019	8:55	10:25	1,6

YGN TO DMK			
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
FD-252	8:30	10:20	Daily
FD-256	12:55	14:40	Daily
FD-254	17:35	19:25	Daily
FD-258	21:40	23:30	Daily
DD-4231	08:00	9:45	Daily
DD-4235	12:00	13:45	Daily
DD-4239	21:00	22:55	Daily
SL-201	11:00	13:35	Daily
SL-207	19:45	21:45	Daily

YGN TO CAN			
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
8M-713	20:25	01:00+1	1
8M-711	8:40	13:15	2,4,5,7
CZ-3056	11:35	15:50	3,6
CZ-3056	17:40	22:20	1,5

YGN TO SIN			
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
8M-231	8:20	12:40	Daily
SQ-997	10:25	15:10	Daily
MI-515	14:20	18:50	1,3,5
MI-519	17:35	22:10	Daily
MI-522	16:20	20:50	4,6
MI-533	13:35	20:50	2
3k-584	19:40	00:10	Daily
3K-582	11:35	16:05	Daily
TR-2823	9:25	13:55	1,2,4,5,7
UB-001	7:15	11:45	Daily

YGN TO NRT			
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
NH-814	22:10	06:45	Daily

BANGKOK TO YANGON			
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
TG-303	8:00	8:45	Daily
TG-301	13:15	14:00	Daily
TG-305	18:05	18:50	Daily
PG-701	8:45	9:40	Daily
PG-707	13:45	14:40	Daily
PG-703	16:45	17:35	Daily
PG-705	20:30	21:45	Daily
8M-336	10:15	11:00	Daily
8M-332	19:20	20:05	Daily
UB-020	10:35	11:10	3,5
UB-018	21:05	21:35	Daily
UB-020	11:30	12:05	1,6

DMK TO YGN			
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
FD-251	7:15	8:00	Daily
FD-255	11:35	12:25	Daily
FD-253	16:20	17:05	Daily
FD-257	20:15	21:10	Daily
DD-4234	10:30	11:15	Daily
DD-4230	6:30	7:15	Daily
DD-4238	19:25	20:15	Daily
SL-200	08:45	10:00	Daily
SL-206	17:10	18:35	Daily

CAN TO YGN			
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
8M-714	2:05	3:40	2
8M-712	14:15	15:50	2,4,5,7
CZ-3055	8:40	10:35	3,6
CZ-3055	14:40	16:40	1,5

SIN TO YGN			
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
8M-232	13:45	15:15	Daily
SQ-998	07:55	09:20	Daily
MI-522	11:30	15:30	4,6
MI-518	15:15	16:40	Daily
MI-516	12:00	13:25	1,3,5
MI-533	11:30	12:45	2
3K-583	17:30	19:00	Daily
3K-581	09:10	10:40	Daily
TR-2822	7:20	8:45	1,2,4,5,7
UB-002	13:00	14:30	Daily

NRT TO YGN			
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
NH-813	11:00	16:30	Daily

YGN TO ICN			
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
KE-472	23:30	7:50	Daily

YGN TO KUL			
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
AK-505	8:30	12:45	Daily
AK-503	19:10	23:30	Daily
8M-501	16:10	20:10	2
8M-501	11:45	15:45	1
MH-741	11:15	15:40	Daily
MH-743	16:00	20:15	1,4,6,7

YGN TO KMG			
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
CA-416	12:30	16:00	Daily
MU-2032	15:30	18:50	Daily
MU-2012	12:55	19:55	3

YGN TO TPE			
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
CI-7916	10:50	16:10	Daily

YGN TO PEK			
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
CA-906	23:50	05:50+1	1,3,5,7

YGN TO HAN			
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
VN-956	19:10	21:30	Daily

YGN TO SGN			
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
VN-942	12:10	14:55	2,3,4,5,7

YGN TO HKG			
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
KA-251	1:05	5:25	Daily
UB-8027	09:00	13:30	1,3,5,7

YGN TO DOH			
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
QR-919	8:05	11:30	1,3,4,6,7

YGN TO CNX			
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
PG-724	13:40	15:35	Daily

YGN TO DAC			
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
BG-061	16:45	18:30	1,3,6

MDL TO DMK			
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
FD-245	12:55	15:15	Daily

ICN TO YGN			
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
KE-471	18:30	22:30	Daily

KUL TO YGN			
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
AK-504	6:55	8:00	Daily
AK-502	17:20	18:30	Daily
8M-502	16:45	17:45	1
8M-502	21:10	22:10	2
MH-742	13:55	15:05	1,4,6,7
MH-740	09:10	10:15	Daily

KMG TO YGN			
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
CA-415	10:50	11:30	Daily
MU-2031	13:50	14:30	Daily
MU-2011	08:20	11:55	3

TPE TO YGN			
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
CI-7915	7:00	9:50	Daily

PEK TO YGN			
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
CA-905	19:30	22:50	1,3,5,7

HAN TO YGN			
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
VN-957	16:40	18:10	Daily

SGN TO YGN			
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
VN-943	9:25	11:10	2,3,4,5,7

HKG TO YGN			
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
KA-250	21:50	23:45	1,3,5,7
KA-252	22:20	00:10	2,4,6
UB-8028	14:50	16:20	1,3,5,7

DOH TO YGN			
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
QR-918	20:10	5:20	1,3,4,6,7

CNX TO YGN			
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
PG-723	12:00	12:55	Daily

DAC TO YGN			
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
BG-060	13:30	16:00	1,3,6

DMK TO MDL			
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
FD-244	11:10	12:25	Daily



MDL TO SIN			
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
MI-533	15:45	20:50	2
MI-522	14:15	20:15	4,6

SIN TO MDL			
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
MI-522	11:30	13:20	4,6
MI-533	11:30	14:50	2

MDL TO BKK			
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
PG-710	14:10	16:35	Daily

BKK TO MDL			
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
PG-709	12:00	13:20	Daily

MDL TO KMG			
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
MU-2030	14:25	17:15	Daily

KMG TO MDL			
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
MU-2029	13:20	13:15	Daily

NYT to BKK			
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
PG-722	19:50	22:50	1,3,4,5,6,7

BKK TO NYT			
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
PG-721	17:20	19:20	1,3,4,5,6,7

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	
4	= Thursday
1	= Monday
2	= Tuesday
3	= Wednesday
5	= Friday
6	= Saturday
7	= Sunday

Bosnia reports first case of H5N8 bird flu

SARAJEVO — Bosnia reported its first case of bird flu on Sunday, after the H5N8 strain was detected at a hen farm in the northwestern town of Prijedor.

The authorities took measures to contain the outbreak of the disease and banned visits to the farm, the state-owned Srna news agency reported citing the agriculture ministry of Bosnia's autonomous Serb Republic, where the farm is located.

Nobody from the ministry was immediately available to confirm the news.

Cases of bird flu have been found in a number of countries across Europe in the past months, including in neighbouring Croatia, Serbia, Macedonia and Montenegro.

The ministry said it would inform the public about its further steps, Srna reported. —Reuters

With eye on Obamacare, Price takes helm as US health secretary

WASHINGTON — Tom Price was sworn in as US secretary of health on Friday, putting in place a determined opponent of Obamacare to help President Donald Trump fulfil his pledge to dismantle his predecessor's law and reshape the country's healthcare system.

As head of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Price has the authority to rewrite rules implementing the 2010 Affordable Care Act, also known as Obamacare. He could move quickly to rework the regulations while waiting for Republicans in Congress to keep their pledge to scrap the law entirely.

The Republican president signed an order on 20 January, his first day in office, to freeze regulations and take other steps to weaken the law enacted by former Democratic President Barack Obama, a directive that will fall largely on Price. But Trump said in a recent Fox News interview that a replacement for the law may not come until next year.

Trump said on Friday the effort was a "difficult process" but could now get going with Price in place.



US Rep Tom Price (R-GA) testifies before a Senate Finance Committee confirmation hearing on his nomination to be Health and Human Services secretary on Capitol Hill in Washington, US, on 14 January, 2017. PHOTO: XINHUA

"Now we get down to the final strokes," he told reporters at a separate news conference at the White House alongside visiting Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. He did not offer more details but said the country would end up with "tremendous healthcare at a lower price."

Republicans, who have long viewed Obamacare as federal overreach and who have the majority in Congress, are trying to craft a replacement but have not agreed on one. Twenty million

Americans gained health insurance under the law.

"Having Dr Tom Price at the helm of HHS gives us a committed ally in our work to repeal and replace Obamacare," said US House of Representatives Speaker Paul Ryan, who has vowed to pass a new plan this year.

Price, a member of the House since 2005 who chaired the budget committee, offered legislation in 2015 to repeal Obamacare and replace it with age-adjusted tax credits for the purchase

of health insurance.

While Price's fellow Republicans have controlled the House since 2011, they did not advance his bill and it was not considered by the full chamber.

The Senate voted 52-47 earlier on Friday to approve Price, a former orthopaedic surgeon, to oversee the HHS, which has an annual budget of more than \$1 trillion.

Price's nomination was dogged by questions about his trading in hundreds of thousands of dollars in health company stocks while working on healthcare legislation. Democrats accused him of making misleading statements. Price defended his actions.

Democrats also criticized Price for his opposition to Obamacare, his ideas about restructuring the Medicare programme for the elderly and disabled, and his opposition to Planned Parenthood, an organisation that provides abortions and other affordable healthcare and education services.

With Price confirmed, the Senate is expected to vote on Monday on Trump's US Treasury secretary designate, Steven Mnuchin. —Reuters



A military officer (C) of the Hellenic Army's Explosives Ordnance Disposal (EOD) is seen inside a hole in the ground where a 250 kg World War Two bomb was found during excavation works at a gas station, before an operation to defuse it, in the northern city of Thessaloniki, Greece, on 12 February, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

WW2 bomb forces evacuations in Greece's Thessaloniki

ATHENS — Thousands of Greeks evacuated their homes in the second-biggest city of Thessaloniki on Sunday to allow experts to defuse a World War Two bomb. The 250 kg (550 lb) bomb was discovered about 5 metres (16 feet) below ground during excavation works at a petrol station last week. Up to 72,000 residents living within a 2 km (1.2 miles) radius of the bomb site were asked to leave their homes in one of the country's biggest peacetime evacuations.

Buses were taking them to local gyms, stadiums and cafes, police said.

Refugees and migrants

living in a camp in a nearby abandoned factory would also be evacuated on Sunday and taken on a museum visit in Thessaloniki, the migration ministry said.

Military experts will attempt to defuse the bomb on the spot. "We are absolutely ready," Regional Governor Apostolos Tzitzikostas told Greek TV before the operation began. "I call on our fellow citizens to stay calm. There is no reason to panic, there is no danger, the measures taken are precautionary and for the safety of residents." The complex operation was expected to last "at most six hours," Tzitzikostas said.—Reuters

Indian police recover child rights activist's Nobel Prize replica

NEW DELHI — Indian police have recovered noted child rights activist Kailash Satyarthi's Nobel Peace Prize replica that was stolen from the laureate's home in national capital some five days back.

A top Delhi Police official said Sunday that the replica which was stolen on 7 February, along with other valuables, has been recovered from the possession of three burglars, who were arrested late Saturday

night. "Was greatly concerned about theft of Shri Satyarthi's prestigious Nobel Medal replica. Proud that Delhi Police recovered it in quick time," Delhi Police chief Amulya Patnaik tweeted. Satyarthi's original Nobel

medallion is, however, intact as it is kept at the Rashtrapati Bhavan (Indian President's official residence) in the heart of the national capital as he has dedicated the prize to the country.

The 63-year-old was

awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2014 for his work to combat child labour and child trafficking in India. He shared the award with young Pakistani child education activist Malala Yousafzai for her work on female educa-

tion. Satyarthi has, through his non-government organisation Bachpan Bachao Andolan or Save Childhood Movement, rescued tens of thousands of children from hazardous industries and rehabilitated them.—Xinhua

THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR MINISTRY OF ELECTRICITY AND ENERGY MYANMA OIL AND GAS ENTERPRISE (INVITATION FOR OPEN TENDER) (3 / 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-082(16-17)	ZP375 Rotary Table (1) No	US\$
(2)	IFB-083(16-17)	Travelling Block with Hook (2) Items	US\$
(3)	IFB-084(16-17)	Rotary Swivel (2) Items	US\$
(4)	IFB-085(16-17)	Skid Mounted Water Transfer Pump with Engine and Accessories (6) Sets	US\$
(5)	IFB-086(16-17)	Transformer Welding Set, 400 AMP with Accessories (4) Sets	US\$
(6)	IFB-087(16-17)	Welding Machine (Portable) with 14 HP Engine and Accessories (4) Sets	US\$
(7)	IFB-088(16-17)	50 Ton Hydraulic Mobile Crane (1) Unit	US\$
(8)	IFB-089(16-17)	Fuel Bowser (2800 Gal Capacity) (1) Unit	US\$
(9)	IFB-090(16-17)	Skid Mounted Crude transfer Pump with Engine(100GPM x 300PSI) (2) Sets	US\$
(10)	IFB-091(16-17)	Skid Mounted Water Transfer Pump with Engine (100 GPM x 300 PSI) (2) Sets	US\$
(11)	IFB-092(16-17)	Air Compressor Engine Driven Skid with Air Dryer (80-120 HP) (1) Set	US\$
(12)	IFB-093(16-17)	CNG Compressor Driven Electric Motor with Complete Package (1) Lot	US\$
(13)	IFB-094(16-17)	2900 Series Well Head Equipment (1) Set	US\$
(14)	IFB-095(16-17)	900 Series Well Head Equipment (1) Set	US\$
(15)	IFB-096(16-17)	600 Series Well Head Equipment (3) Sets	US\$
(16)	IFB-097(16-17)	Pumping Unit (160D-173-74) Max Length 74 Inches (1) No	US\$
(17)	IFB-098(16-17)	Pumping Unit (114D-119-96) Max Length 74 Inches (1) No	US\$
(18)	IFB-099(16-17)	Gas Compressor (1) No	US\$
(19)	DMP/L-024(16-17)	A3 Digital Multifunction Copier (1) Item	Ks
(20)	DMP/L-025(16-17)	Binocular Microscope with Lighting Equipments (1) Item	Ks
(21)	DMP/L-026(16-17)	Space Aerial Cable (SAC) 95mm ² , KVA Rate & Aerial Bundle Cable, 95 mm ² , (600/1000 V Rated) (2) Items	Ks
(22)	DMP/L-027(16-17)	Submersible Pump with Motor(4-6) KW (1) Item	Ks
(23)	DMP/L-028(16-17)	Telephone Cable (2) Items	Ks
(24)	DMP/L-029(16-17)	630 KVA, 11/0.4 KV & 100 KVA, 11/0.4 KV Transformer (2) Items	Ks
(25)	DMP/L-030(16-17)	Electrical Cable (1CU x 185mm ²) (1) Item	Ks

Tender Closing Date & Time - 13-3-2017, 16:30 Hr

Tender Document shall be available during office hours commencing from 13TH 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

Greece, lenders risk euro zone instability if review talks drag on-EU's Dombrovskis

BERLIN — Greece and its lenders should quickly approve a review of reforms the indebted country must take in return for unlocking new loans, a senior European Union official said on Sunday, warning of financial instability in the euro zone if the issue lingers.

"Now is not the time to turn the clocks back to financial instability," Valdis Dombrovskis, vice president of the European Commission and the EU's financial services chief, told Germany's Welt am Sonntag newspaper.

"The reforms in the programme are aimed at improving the competitiveness of the Greek economy and to give Greeks hope of a stable and secure future," he added.

Greece and its international lenders made substantial progress in talks on Friday to bridge differences over reforms.

The chairman of euro zone finance ministers Jeroen Dijsselbloem said the talks on Friday brought all sides close to a stage when lenders can send a mission of experts to Greece to prepare a report

on the completion of the batch of reforms.

Such a staff level agreement would then pave the way for a decision by euro zone finance ministers to disburse new loans to Greece, without which Athens would default on its debt in July.

Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras said on Saturday he believed drawn-out bailout review would be completed positively but repeated that Athens would not accept "illogical" demands by its lenders.—Reuters

Bus collision kills at least 11 in Bangladesh

DHAKA — A head-on collision between two buses in Bangladesh's Narsingdi district on Sunday left at least 11 people dead and three others injured, the district's police chief Ameena Begum said.

"Eleven passengers, including two children and four women, were killed on the spot in the head-on collision between the buses," she told Xinhua.

The road accident which occurred at around

9:00 am local time (0300 GMT) also left three passengers of both the buses critically injured, she added.

All the three injured in the crash were rushed to a local hospital, she said adding the mini bus was trying to overtake a vehicle when it collided head on with a regular route bus coming in the opposite direction.

Bangladesh has one of the highest fatality rates for

road accidents in the world due mainly to shoddy highways, poorly maintained vehicles, violation of traffic rules by inept drivers and lack of monitoring of the traffic department.

In a disastrous road accident Friday night, at least 13 people were killed and dozens of others injured in a fiery crash between a bus and a pickup truck, carrying gas cylinders, in Bangladesh's central Faridpur district.—Xinhua

Hundreds of whales in 2nd New Zealand stranding able to swim free

SYDNEY — New Zealand conservation authorities said 240 pilot whales that were stranded overnight at a remote bay which only days earlier had a larger beaching refloated themselves on Sunday and were swimming offshore.

“We had 240 whales

strand yesterday in the afternoon and we were fearful we were going to end up with 240 dead whales this morning,” Herb Christophers, a Department of Conservation spokesman said.

“But they self-rescued, in other words the tide came in and they were able to float

off and swim out to sea.”

The pod was the second large group to strand itself in recent days at Golden Bay, at the northwest tip of the South Island, in one of the worst mass strandings in New Zealand.

On Thursday evening, a conservation worker spotted

that about 400 whales had washed ashore. Hundreds of volunteers spent days pouring water over the beached whales to try and keep them cool, while waiting to catch high tides to carry them out to sea again.

But most of the whales from that pod died. Officials will soon have to start clearing the carcasses, Christophers said. The strandings have been New Zealand’s largest in decades.

The precise cause was not known, though beached whales are not uncommon at Golden Bay.

Its shallow muddy waters confuse the marine mammals’ sonar, leaving them vulnerable to stranding by an ebb tide, according to marine environmental organisation Project Jonah.

Pilot whales are not listed as endangered, but little is known about their population in New Zealand waters.—Reuters



A volunteer looks after one of a pod of stranded pilot whales as they prepare to refloat them after one of the country’s largest recorded mass whale strandings, in Golden Bay, at the top of New Zealand’s South Island, on 12 February, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS



German president-elect, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, receives flowers after the first round of voting of the German presidential election at the Reichstag in Berlin, on 12 February, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

Steinmeier becomes German president

BERLIN — Former foreign minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier was elected Germany’s president on Sunday, the 12th person to hold the largely ceremonial post in the post-war era.

Steinmeier, a Social Democrat who had served as foreign minister until last month, won 931 of the 1,260 votes by lawmakers and representatives of Germany’s 16 federal

states.

His predecessor, Joachim Gauck, steps down on 18 March.

The German constitution mandates that a special assembly is convened to elect presidents. It includes 630 lawmakers in the Bundestag lower house and an equal number of representatives from the federal states.—Reuters

6 killed in S China highway collision

GUANGZHOU — Six people were killed and three others injured after a minibus collided with a truck at a highway tunnel in southern China’s Guangdong Province early Sunday, local police said.

The minibus from Dongguan city, rear-ended the truck and then caught fire at the expressway tunnel in Meixian County at 2:44 am on Sunday, said Meizhou City Public Security Bureau. Rescuers retrieved six bod-

ies from the minibus, while three others were injured and sent to hospital for medical treatment. The injured are in non-critical condition.

Police blamed the accident on the driver’s fatigue. He drove the minibus from

Dongguan to Sanming city, in neighbouring Fujian Province, on Saturday morning and returned the same night.

The minibus was supposed to only sit seven people but was carrying nine, police said.—Xinhua

Panama detains Mossack Fonseca founders on corruption charges

PANAMA CITY — The two founders of Panamanian law firm Mossack Fonseca were arrested on Saturday, the attorney general’s office said, after both were indicted on charges of money-laundering in a case allegedly tied to a wide-ranging corruption scandal in Brazil.

Firm founders Jurgen Mossack and Ramon Fonseca were detained because of the risk they might try to flee the country.

Attorney General Kenia Porcell told reporters on Saturday that the information collected so far “allegedly identifies the Panamanian firm as a criminal organization that is dedicated to hiding assets or money from suspicious origins.”

Porcell said the one-year investigation that led to the arrests has been aided by prosecutors in Brazil, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Switzerland and the United

States.

Mossack Fonseca is also at the center of a separate case known as the Panama Papers, which involved millions of documents stolen from the firm and leaked to the media in April 2016.

The fallout from the leaks provoked a global scandal after numerous documents detailed how the rich and powerful used offshore corporations to hide money and potentially evade taxes.

On Thursday, prosecutors raided Mossack Fonseca offices seeking evidence, and the homes of the firm’s founders were searched on Friday.

Fonseca, a former presidential adviser in Panama, has previously denied that the firm had any connection to Brazilian engineering company Odebrecht, which has admitted to bribing officials in Panama and other countries to ob-

tain government contracts in the region between 2010 and 2014.

“This investigation in principle is not related to Odebrecht, but to the Lava Jato case,” Porcell said, referring to the probe centered on Brazilian state-run oil company Petrobras.

Fonseca has also denied any relationship with the Lava Jato case.

Following the arrests, Mossack Fonseca defense lawyer Elias Solano called the accusations against the firm’s founders “weak” and said he would challenge the evidence presented against his clients.

A source in the prosecutors office told Reuters that an unidentified third lawyer with the firm had also been arrested, while a fourth faces an arrest warrant, but her whereabouts are unknown.

The two additional lawyers were not named by Porcell.—Reuters

ကွန်ပျူတာ စနစ်ဖြင့်ထိန်းသော

MECHANICAL CAR PARKING

Side View

14'4"

7'2"

18'

Front View

7'2"

7'2"

Plan View

18'

7'2"

7'2"

7'2"

Front View

14'4"

7'2"

7'2"

7'2"

21'6"

TRW

Ideas coming true

(BRNo.200904356H)

No. (31), Room (5), 7 Miles, Pyay Road, Yangon

T: 09.259.81.36.36

: 09.259.81.37.37

: 09.259.81.46.46

အမှတ်(၃၁)၊ အခန်း (၅)၊ ၇မိုင်၊ ပြည်လမ်း၊ ရန်ကုန်။

Making 'Final Portrait' was as difficult as Giacometti's painting: Tucci



Actors Armie Hammer (L-R), Geoffrey Rush, Clemence Poesy and director Stanley Tucci arrive for the screening the movie 'Final Portrait' at the 67th Berlinale International Film Festival in Berlin, Germany, on 11 February, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

BERLIN — If you want a taste of the psychological and physical strain that comes with posing for one of the 20th century greatest painters, then go watch "Final Portrait". Director Stanley Tucci's adaptation of US writer James Lord's memoir "A Giacometti Portrait" offers a window into the chaotic life of Swiss painter and sculptor Alberto Giacometti in Paris in the 1960s.

Lord was in Paris in 1964 when Giacometti painted a portrait of him. The process drags on for weeks, during which Giacometti and Lord reflect on the frustration that comes with creativity and the absurdity of life.

Actor-director Tucci told Reuters at the Berlin Film Festival, where "Final Portrait" was shown out of the competition,

that making the project a reality was more time-consuming than Giacometti's portrait of Lord.

"I wanted to make this movie for a long time," Tucci said. "And I finally got the guts many years later to write Lord a letter and at first he said 'No, you shouldn't do this — nobody can do this', so then I wrote him another letter explaining how I would do it and he said 'Well you seem to have an understanding of art and let's meet'."

He added: "So we met and because we had a mutual friend who had spoken to him and said 'would you just let Mr Tucci do what he wants to do', so he gave me the rights and then I took a couple of years to write it and it took 10 years to get the money to make it."

Tucci praised actor Geoffrey Rush's improvisations on the set, which he said he encouraged.

Rush at times spiced up the atmosphere in his dimly lit and gothic-looking studio with outbursts of cursing and jokes.

Armie Hammer, who plays Lord and at times loses hope that the portrait will ever be finished, said sitting in a chair for four weeks of shooting while Rush painted him was uncomfortable.

He said: "No it was, to be perfectly honest I sat in that chair across from Geoffrey Rush and watched him become Alberto Giacometti and he is an actor, an artist that I have looked up to since I got into this business so to get to have him as a scene partner was really exceptional." —Reuters

China may increase quota for Hollywood films: state paper

BEIJING — China is likely to raise the quota of imported films allowed into the country, the state-run Global Times newspaper said, a potential fillip for Hollywood producers who are increasingly looking to tap the country's fast-growing box office.

The official newspaper, citing experts, predicted around a dozen films could be added to the current annual quota of 34 imported movies, while foreign producers would get closer to the 40 per cent of ticket revenues they receive in other overseas markets. That would be up from the current 25 per cent.

The Global Times, a tabloid more commonly known for writing strongly-worded, hawkish and nationalist editorials, is published by the ruling Communist Party's flagship paper.

Hollywood has been push-

ing for more foreign firms to be screened in Chinese theaters ahead of key talks this year to review the current five-year agreement, signed in February 2012.

Hollywood executives have voiced hopes China will increase the quota and the share of revenues more in line with international markets. But talks have been clouded by the inauguration of US President Donald Trump, who has openly criticized China on trade and the sensitive issue of Taiwan.

Trump, in a phone call with Chinese President Xi Jinping on Friday morning China time, gave Hollywood a potential boost when he softened his stance on Taiwan and agreed to honor the longstanding "one China" policy.

China's cinema ticket sales slowed last year, rising 3.2 per cent against the year before to



People print movie tickets from a machine at a cinema in Tianjin, China, on 13 January, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

45.3 billion yuan (\$6.6 billion), according to data from box office tracker EntGroup. That compared to nearly 50 per cent growth in 2015. However, the market is becoming increasingly important for

US producers from Walt Disney Co to Time Warner Inc's Warner Bros, helping add \$1.8 billion in ticket sales to Hollywood's 20 highest-grossing films in 2016. —Reuters

Kinky 'Fifty Shades' stokes fantasy, not reality, says author

LOS ANGELES — E L James, the British author and producer of the erotic "Fifty Shades of Grey" novels and film franchise, knows that her story about an attractive couple engaged in a kinky relationship is very much a fantasy.

In the "Fifty Shades" trilogy, Christian Grey is a young handsome billionaire entrepreneur with a penchant for bondage, discipline, dominance, submission and sadomasochism (BDSM) who introduces the beautiful but naive Anastasia "Ana" Steele to his world of whips and sex toys.



Author E L James.
PHOTO: REUTERS

"It's a wish fulfillment piece that you can escape into, you can become Ana, you can see where you can go to with this guy and change him to be a far better human being, and of course, that's just a fantasy," James, 53, told Reuters.

James' trilogy, born out of fan fiction that she had written inspired by young adult vampire love story "Twilight," has sold more than 150 million copies worldwide since its 2012 release. It became a pop culture phenomenon, making erotic literature mainstream, and spawned a film franchise for Universal Pictures. —PTI

Gomez reunites with Aniston at friends birthday bash

LOS ANGELES — Singer Selena Gomez has spent a quality time with longtime pal and actress Jennifer Aniston at their common friends birthday bash.

The pair attended a party for Aleen Keshishian, a member of their management team. Aleen posted the reunion of the two stars on Instagram.

They both posed in matching all-black outfits. Aleen also shared a video of her and Se-

lena. "It's your birthday. I love you," the 24-year-old songstress said in the clip.

Gomez has been a huge fan of Aniston from a long time she previously said that the 48-year-old actress even gives her "a lot of maternal advice".

—PTI



Singer Selena Gomez. PHOTO: REUTERS

From chemotherapy to the catwalk, cancer centre stage at New York Fashion Week



Lisa Layton from Portland in Oregon, part of a group of advanced-stage cancer patients to model in SMGlobal Catwalk presentation for Say Yes to HOPE, takes a photo with a model backstage before modeling herself during New York Fashion Week in Manhattan, New York, US, on 11 February 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

NEW YORK — Less than a week ago, Tiffany Schwantes, 34, was hooked up to an intravenous chemotherapy drip at her local cancer centre in Huntsville, Alabama, receiving treatment for cancer that has metastasized to her lungs.

On Saturday night, she strutted a catwalk draped in a pale pink strapless Dalia MacPhee ball gown for New York Fashion Week, one of 11 people with advanced-stage cancer transformed into models for one glamorous night in Midtown Manhattan.

Adjusting her chestnut-colored wig in front of

the mirror in her hotel room before the show, Schwantes said, "I feel good. I feel pretty."

The stay-at-home mom was diagnosed with stage-four cancer of the bile ducts and liver in 2012 when she was 29.

"I had just had my baby girl two years before, so I thought I was healthy," said Schwantes, whose son, Carter, is now 11 and daughter, Madison, is 7.

"Going from a young wife and mother to a full-time cancer patient was hard. I wasn't used to going to the doctor two to three times a week. I wasn't used to feeling so bad that

I couldn't take care of my children."

For just a few hours on Saturday night, all that was almost forgotten. The models, some of whom have had chemotherapy, surgery or radiation, danced their way down the catwalk to Destiny's Child's "Survivor," sporting floor-length gowns, diamond earrings, and topping off their looks with long lashes and striking makeup.

The "Surviving in Fashion" event was put on by YES!, a non-profit organization that provides support to anyone affected by advanced cancer, and SMGlobal Catwalk.

Bill Ramey, 60, of Greenwood, Indiana, was in New York for the first time to brave being the only man on the runway.

He wore blue jeans and a black sweatshirt that read: "LIVE LIFE, LOVE LIFE."

"My goal is to make it down and back on stage and remain upright," said Ramey, who was diagnosed with stage-four colon cancer on Valentine's Day in 2013.

"My first thought was that I wouldn't be able to see my daughter graduate college or get married. Meeting my grandkids never even crossed my mind," Ramey said. He then smiled.

"I got to do all three this summer."

After taking a deep breath, Ramey said, "I've accepted the fact that I'll probably die from cancer. But God has given me some extra time, and this is my way of paying it forward."

Schwantes, whose husband of 13 years was there to support her, said she hoped the show would inspire others to feel as good as she did for the night.

"We get one night to dress in beautiful gowns and amazing jewelry and just have fun. It gives us a night to feel like we are more than just a cancer patient," Schwantes said. "I hope they can see me, still going strong after five years, and it gives them a little hope."—Reuters

The true face of Mr Darcy — long, oval and pale



Jane Austen's fictional character, Fitzwilliam Darcy, is seen in this historically accurate portrait by Nick Hardcastle, released in London, Britain, on 9 February, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

LONDON — Mr Darcy, the romantic hero of Jane Austen's novel "Pride and Prejudice," has been portrayed by a string of show-business heart-throbs, but a new study suggests he would probably have looked very different from the modern ideal of masculinity.

Austen is likely to have had in a mind a man with sloping shoulders, white powdered hair, a pale complexion, thin oval face and a small mouth, according to academics who were asked to advise on the most historically accurate look of Mr Darcy, to mark a television

series celebrating the writer's work. The late 18th-century depiction of masculine beauty may disappoint the image that many women have of Mr Darcy who has been played in cinema and television versions of the book by actors such as Laurence Olivier and Colin Firth.

"Darcy's character has been sexed up for the modern day audience with a turbo-charged injection of testosterone and steamy romance," said Amanda Vickery, a history professor at Queen Mary University of London.—Reuters

London's ancient past goes on show after rail tunnel digs

LONDON — A new exhibition opened in London on Friday showing items ranging from 8,000 year-old basic flint tools to Roman coins and Victorian-era jam jars that were discovered during tunneling for the city's new Crossrail railway project.

The exhibition at the Museum of London Docklands also features skeletons of victims of the Great Plague in 1665, whose teeth helped scientists to pinpoint the bacteria that caused the deadly disease by DNA testing.

London's new east-west Crossrail project has been under construction since 2012 but archaeological excavation works ahead of the tunneling began in 2009. The exhibition runs until 3 September.

— Reuters



A visitor looks at horseshoes and bones at the 'Tunnel: The Archaeology of Crossrail' exhibition at the Museum of London, in London, Britain on 10 February, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

mitv Myanmar International Programme Schedule

(13-2-2017 07:00am ~ 14-2-2017 07:00am) MST

07:03	Am	News
07:26	Am	Myanmar Delicate Artistic Handy Creations-Lacquareware Making
07:52	Am	Chaung Tha Souvenir Business
08:03	Am	News
08:25	Am	The Writer: Chit Oo Nyo (Part - I)
08:50	Am	Egg Shell
09:03	Am	News
09:26	Am	A Lucky Boy
09:42	Am	Development Momentum Of Sittway
10:03	Am	News
10:26	Am	Crab Business (Part-I) Mud Crab
10:41	Am	A Chance to Change Their Future

(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-8)(Part-2)
08:03	Pm	News
08:26	Pm	Sons of the lake
08:49	Pm	A Simple And Peaceful Life

(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)

Last-gasp goals rescue lacklustre Bayern at Ingolstadt

MUNICH — Bundesliga leaders Bayern Munich needed late goals from Arturo Vidal and Arjen Robben to beat relegation-threatened Ingolstadt 2-0 on Saturday in a tepid performance four days before they host Arsenal in the Champions League.

It was hardly the dress rehearsal that Bayern coach Carlo Ancelotti had hoped for ahead of their round of 16 first leg against the Premier League club in Munich on Wednesday.

Despite the scrappy performance, Bayern opened up a seven-point lead at the top.

“It was an important win for us and we had to work hard for it,” Ancelotti told reporters. “We had to improve considerably in the second half and we were rewarded in the end. We showed a lot of character.”

But his team lacked a clear game plan and inspiration on a rugged pitch where they struggled against Ingolstadt’s solid defence and had only one chance for Robert Lewandowski to show for after 45 minutes.

Bayern, chasing a record-extending fifth consecutive Bundesliga title, almost scored straight after the restart but a Thomas Mueller shot was cleared on the line.

Poland forward Lewandowski hit the woodwork late in the game in their only other clear scoring chance before Vidal was left unmarked in the box to volley in for the lead in the 90th minute.

Substitute Robben added another in stoppage time as Bayern moved up to 49 points.

Second-placed Leipzig lost further ground on Bayern after being beaten 3-0 by visitors Hamburg SV.

Former Leipzig player Kyrriakos Papadopoulos, who left in January after only four months, headed Hamburg into the lead with his second goal in two matches.

The visitors added two more through Wallace and Aaron Hunt to make it three wins in three matches in all competitions and move out of the bottom three



Munich’s Arjen Robben. PHOTO: REUTERS

for the first time since the third matchday and up to 15th.

Leipzig, who suffered their first home loss of the season, are second on 42 with Borussia Dortmund dropping to fourth after their shock 2-1 loss to bottom-placed Darmstadt 98.

Dortmund, who travel to Benfica in the Champions League last 16 on Tuesday, are on 34 points with Eintracht Frankfurt in third on 35 after

they lost 3-0 to Bayer Leverkusen courtesy of a Javier Hernandez double.

Schalke 04 eased past Hertha Berlin 2-0 for their first win in three matches to move up to 11th and reignite their hopes of a European spot. Hertha, who have now lost three of their last four games, are stuck in sixth place on 33, losing ground in the hunt for Champions League spot.—Reuters

Real back on top after crucial win at Osasuna

BARCELONA — Real Madrid returned to the top of La Liga after winning a testing away clash against Osasuna 3-1 on Saturday thanks to goals from talisman Cristiano Ronaldo, midfielder Isco and substitute Lucas Vazquez.

Osasuna striker Sergio Leon cancelled out Ronaldo’s 24th-minute opener in the 33rd after defender Tano had been carried off with a sickening double leg break.

Isco restored Real’s lead in the 62nd and Zinedine Zidane’s side added a third through Vazquez with the last kick of the game.

Real goalkeeper Keylor Navas needed to produce a string of quality saves to preserve their advantage before Vazquez sealed only a second league win in seven visits to the perennial La Liga strugglers. Real top the standings on 49 points, leapfrogging Barcelona on 48 after the champions thrashed Alaves 6-0 on Saturday.

Zidane’s side have two games in hand on their arch rivals as they bid to win the title for the first time since 2012.—Reuters

Messi, Suarez, Neymar score as Barca rout Alaves

BARCELONA — Barcelona provisionally went top of La Liga for the first time since October after Luis Suarez, Neymar and Lionel Messi scored in a 6-0 thrashing of Alaves on Saturday although the win was overshadowed by a serious injury to Alexis Vidal.

Suarez turned in a cross from Vidal in the 37th minute to give Barca the lead over the Basques, who they will meet in the King’s Cup final, and Neymar pounced on an error from goalkeeper Fernando Pacheco in the 40th.

Messi hit the ball under a hapless Pacheco for the third in the 59th minute to complete a full house for the ‘MSN’ trident, while an own goal by Alexis Ruano, a thumping strike from Ivan Rakitic and a volley by Suarez completed the rout.

The Uruguayan, who was sent off at the end of Tuesday’s 1-1 draw with Atletico Madrid which sealed Barca’s place in the King’s Cup final, moved one goal ahead of Messi at the top of the league’s scoring charts with 18 strikes.

A brilliant outing for Luis Enrique’s side turned sour, however, when Vidal was left writhing in pain from a harrowing an-



Barcelona’s Luis Suarez (R) scores first goal past Alaves’ goalkeeper Fernando Pacheco at Spanish La Liga Santander at Mendizorroza stadium in Vitoria, Spain, on 11 February, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

kle injury sustained in a challenge from Theo Hernandez with five minutes remaining.

Hernandez had given Barca an early scare when he hurtled from his own half towards goal but was thwarted by goalkeeper Marc-Andre ter Stegen, although quick-fire strikes from Suarez and Neymar set Barca on their way to a comfortable victory which turned into a drubbing.

Barca top the standings on

48 points although Real Madrid, second on 46 and having played three games less than the Catalans, can return to top spot when they visit basement club Osasuna later on Saturday.

“I leave here feeling good from a footballing perspective, for our performance and the result, but frustrated by Alexis’s injury and what it means for him,” Barca coach Luis Enrique told reporters.—Reuters

Angry Bilic says referee was bad after West Ham denied

LONDON — West Ham United manager Slaven Bilic was sent to the stands after his frustration boiled over when West Bromwich Albion salvaged a last-gasp 2-2 draw in the Premier League on Saturday.

Bilic lost his cool when Gareth McAuley’s header deep into stoppage time denied his side after they had fought back from conceding after six minutes at the London Stadium.

The Croatian was angry at Nacer Chadli’s opener, feeling there had been a foul in the build-up, and was also perplexed when West Ham had a 16th-minute equaliser ruled out by referee Michael Oliver

“The way we played makes me proud and happy. We should have scored more but we scored enough to win the game,” Bilic, whose side forged ahead after the break through Sofiane Feghouli’s 63rd-minute tap-in and Manuel Lanzini’s 87th-minute shot, said.

“To concede like this, it is very frustrating. The decisions were big time against us, every one of them.

“It is hard for referees but when you are on the wrong side of all decisions it makes you



West Ham United manager Slaven Bilic remonstrates with referee Michael Oliver at Premier League at London Stadium. PHOTO: REUTERS

very angry.

“The referee was very bad today.” Bilic took his anger out on a pitch-side microphone and could face disciplinary action.

“To be fair I am already big time punished with what happened in the game,” he said.

“I don’t think that I crossed the line, it was nothing personal. It was the fourth or fifth decision which went against us and it’s hard to get over that without reacting.” West Ham are 10th with 32 points while West Brom are eighth on 37.—Reuters