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NEWS IN BRIEF

Myanmar

NAYPYIDAW



The government of Myanmar, including President Thein Sein, has agreed to a draft ceasefire after 60 years of fighting with rebel groups, according to Al-Jazeera. Sixteen ethnic groups signed. At least one group, the ethnically Chinese Kokang, was not included in the ceasefire. Some still remain dubious of the agreement's effectiveness, though. "I'm not that confident that the agreement will have any major impact on the ground any time soon," said David Mathieson, a senior research for the Human Rights Watch in Myanmar.

Israel

JERUSALEM



Human Rights Watch is criticizing Israel's plans to deport 7,000 Eritreans and Sudanese. Israel claims that the people they are coercing into leaving are economic migrants, not refugees seeking asylum and are thus not entitled to stay, according to the BBC. HRW claims that over the last eight years, Israel has used "indefinite detention, obstacles to accessing Israel's asylum system, the rejection of 99.9 percent of Eritrean and Sudanese asylum claims, ambiguous policies on being allowed to work and severely restricted access to healthcare," in an attempt to make them leave.

France

PARIS



Are you a model? Is your body mass index under 18? Then you could be fined up to \$79,000 under a new French bill that has been introduced, according to Reuters. The penalty for staff involved in an event with underweight models could be as much as six months in jail and any material promoting extreme thinness or anorexia would be made illegal. "It's important for fashion models to say that they need to eat well and take care of their health, especially for young women who look to the models as an aesthetic ideal," Health Minister Marisol Touraine told BFM TV on Monday, March 30.

Peru

LIMA



The prime minister of Peru Ana Jara was censured and removed from office after revelations that she used the National Intelligence Directorate to spy on Peruvians, according to the BBC. Congress voted 72 to 42 to censure her, which marks the first time in 50 years that the congress has removed a prime minister. Peruvian president Ollanta Humala must select a new prime minister who will then be approved by congress. The list of people that Jara was spying on included journalists, military figures and members of the opposition.

BY ABE KENMORE
WORLD & NATION EDITOR

PHOTOS COURTESY OF COMMONS.WIKIMEDIA.ORG

Former military dictator elected

BY NICOLE ZELNIKER
FEATURES EDITOR

Elections are over in Nigeria, and the country is torn. "Nigeria has the potential to be one of the best countries in the world," said sophomore and Nigeria native Tarilabo Koripamo. "But when you have leaders put in seats because of connection (rather than education), we don't have the results we're looking for."

The People's Democratic Party nominee Goodluck Jonathan has been president of Nigeria since 2010, but now he has lost the election to former military dictator, Muhammadu Buhari.

"(Jonathan) is not a bad man, but when you have a lot of advisors telling you what to do, when you're taking on (irrelevant) projects, it becomes a problem," said Tarilabo Koripamo.

Originally scheduled for Feb. 14, the election was postponed until the end of March. The election was officially postponed because of Nigeria's fight with terrorist organization Boko Haram, who is responsible for shooting 20 to 30 people and decapitating several corpses on voting day.

"Boko Haram has been linked to al-Qaeda and has recently declared allegiance to the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria," said Visiting Assistant Professor of Religious Studies Betsy Mesard.

"Their particular understanding of what it means to create an Islamic state has been influenced by a puritan ideology that is very similar to that behind al-Qaeda and ISIS."

Those who are from Nigeria are concerned for their family and friends.

"They started killing their own people (and) bombing everywhere," said first-year and Nigerian native Uroupaere Koripamo. "People don't want to go out. They don't want to get bombed."

"I just want Nigeria to be safe."

With the rise of Boko Haram, security has become the number one issue in the election, which is part of the reason the country voted in a man with military experience.

"This election (came) down to who can protect Nigeria, who can make Nigerians feel safe," said documentary filmmaker Ayo Johnson in an interview with CNN.

Additionally, opponents of Jonathan believe he used Boko Haram as an excuse to postpone the election.

"The president wants more time to get voters, to get people in his good graces," said Tarilabo Koripamo.

Regardless, Boko Haram is only part of the religious conflicts occurring in the country.

The rising concerns about Boko Haram may be detrimental to Muslims in Nigeria.

"I wouldn't blame religion," said sophomore and Angola native Delcio Cassoma. "I would blame the people (in Boko Haram)."

The country as a whole is facing more than just Boko Haram, though. Right now, Nigeria has the largest economy



Muhammadu Buhari won Nigeria's recent election by 53.96%.

in Africa but with high levels of poverty. Almost three out of every four Nigerians live below the poverty line.

"Despite the fact that the Nigerian economy is growing, the proportion of Nigerians living in poverty is increasing every year, although it declined during 1985-1992, and during 1996-2004," said head of the National Bureau of Standards Yemi Kale in an interview with BBC.

Additionally, the 270 plus girls kidnapped by Boko Haram in 2014 have yet to be recovered.

"These girls are still missing," said Tarilabo Koripamo. "They're going on as if nothing has happened."

Jonathan planned to make this a priority if reelected. "Goodluck (plans) to bring back the girls, (but) he hasn't done anything about it (yet)," said Uroupaere Koripamo.

According to Afrobarometer, an independent research project based around the social, political and economic events in Africa, the majority of Nigerians are frustrated with the current government.

"Nigerians are generally dissatisfied with current economic conditions and the government's performance on key issues," according to Afrobarometer. "Seventy-four percent said their country was headed in the wrong direction in 2014, up from seventy percent in 2012."

The election is not just important for Nigeria but for Africa and the world as well, as Nigeria is the chief producer of oil in Africa.

"If Nigeria's elections ... result in deep political division, the financial engine of West Africa will slow," according to Kevin Sieff in an article for the Washington Post. "Neighboring countries, whose own economies are linked to Nigeria's through imports and exports, will suffer."

A whirlwind of strange political events has 2015 off to an unexpected start

BY BEATRIZ CALDAS & VANESSA MADONNA
STAFF WRITERS

Snowballs in Congress, banning the phrase climate change and grabbing women's shoulders. What has our country come to?

2015 had barely started and absurd stories involving political happenings already emerged. By gathering information from students and faculty members The Guilfordian came up with the top six ridiculous stories of the past six months ... so far.

Number 6 on the countdown is Joe Biden grabbing Defense Secretary Ashton Carter's wife's shoulders. On Feb. 17, the vice president leaned in and whispered in Stephanie Carter's ear while her husband was giving a speech. The Internet soon became obsessed with it.

"I'm a 'hugger,' and I like Joe," said Associate Professor of Political Science Kenneth Gilmore. "There's nothing creepy about Biden, unless you simply don't like ebullient humans."

At number 5 on the list is Hillary Clinton using her private email for confidential matters. The former secretary of state claimed the practice was not illegal, and every communication she had access to became available to the state department.

"Why is this significant?" said Professor of Political Science George

Guo. "If it happens to others, people don't care. But she will become a very strong candidate for the 2016 presidential election, and the opposition wants to find anything to jeopardize it. This is a very minor issue."

Counting down to number 4 is Elizabeth Lauten, communications director for Tennessee Rep. Stephen Fincher. Lauten wrote on her Facebook page that Obama's daughters, Sasha and Malia, should have shown a little more class at a turkey pardoning. She described the girls' clothing as being more appropriate for a sports bar than a televised event.

"That's completely inappropriate, especially given the age of those girls and who they are to the President," said senior and Senate Secretary Khadija Carr. "It's not anybody's business what somebody is wearing, especially children, because that's what they are."

Number 3 is Florida banning the phrases climate change and global warming among government employees. Governor Rick Scott believes that climate change is not caused by human activity, and many government employees reported their superiors telling them not to discuss it publicly.

"The science is clear," said Assistant Professor of Political Science Robert Duncan. "(Climate change) is caused by human beings, and if 97 percent of the world's climate scientists say we've got a problem, then it exists."

Moving into spot number 2 is an

Oklahoma senator and a snowball. On Feb. 19, Senator Jim Inhofe, in a meeting with Congress, tried to explain that climate change is a hoax and proceeded to toss a snowball to a page to prove his point.

"We cannot say climate change is not happening because we get snow," said sophomore and Senate President José Oliva. "There is a lack of understanding of what climate change is from (the senator) and how it is affecting many in the world."

"We are responsible for climate change, but when people like (the senator do) not think we are, we try to ignore it is happening."

And finally, in the number 1 spot, Oklahoma tried to ban AP U.S. history. On Feb. 16, Oklahoma's State legislative committee on education voted to pass a bill that prohibits public schools from teaching APUSH, causing outrage.

"We should learn from the past in order to move forward into the future," said Oliva. "We need to make sure we do not make the same mistakes."

The outcomes of this decision can change and damage next generation's critical thinking according to Duncan.

"I'm halfway convinced that the average American voter has an intellect that could hide in the shadow of a snow pea," Duncan said. "They watch Fox News and they look at the talking heads and they just do what they're told."

Will 2015 be the stage for any other ridiculous happenings? Stay tuned.