President U Thein Sein sends message of felicitations to Israeli President

NAY PYI TAW, 26 April—U Thein Sein, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, has sent a message of felicitations to Mr Shimon Peres, President of the State of Israel, on the occasion of the Independence Day of the State of Israel, which falls on 26 April 2012.—MNA

More technologies and foreign investment from developed countries outside Mekong region needed

President U Thein Sein attends fourth Mekong-Japan Summit

NAY PYI TAW, 25 April—President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar U Thein Sein attended fourth Mekong-Japan Summit at Hagoromo-No-Ma Hall of State Guest House in Tokyo at 9 am on 21 April.

The summit was also attended by Japanese Prime Minister Mr Yoshihiko Noda, and leaders of Mekong region countries Cambodian Prime Minister Samdech Hun Sen, Laotian Prime Minister Mr Thongsing Thammavong, Thai Prime Minister Ms Yingluck Shinawatra and Vietnamese Prime Minister Mr Nguyen Tang Dung, ministers, deputy ministers and high-ranking officials of Japan and countries in Mekong region.

On arrival at the State Guest House, President U Thein Sein and leaders of Mekong region countries received cordial welcome by Japanese Prime Minister Mr Yoshihiko Noda.

The leaders then posed for documentary photo. The Japanese PM and leaders of Mekong region countries addressed the summit.

The President underscored the need to continue exerting efforts for sustainable and equitable comprehensive economic development in Mekong region while peace prevails in the countries of the region witnessing progress. He tipped rich natural resources and industrious workforce in the region as the sound foundation for future development in Mekong region. East-West Economic Corridor and Southern Economic Corridor, being implemented with the assistance of Japan, could contribute much to both the region and tasks for ASEAN integration by 2015. He said that he is confident that swift commodity flow in the region could boost the role of Mekong region in the international community outside the region.

Japan to cancel 60% of Myanmar’s debt to assist the country’s moves toward democracy

NAY PYI TAW, 25 April—The following is a joint statement issued by President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar U Thein Sein and Japanese Prime Minister Mr Yoshihiko Noda at news press conference held at Hagoromo-No-Ma Hall of the State Guest House in Japan on 21–4–2012.

1. Japan will resume yen loans to Myanmar and cancel about 60 per cent of the debt and overdue charges it is owed to assist the country’s recent moves toward democracy.
2. At the Saturday’s conference and sideline meetings of leaders from the Mekong region countries— Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam, Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda agreed to implement a two step process to reduce Myanmar’s financial burden: 1—1 a ¥ 127.4 billion debt writeoff and the cancellation of ¥ 176.1 billion in overdue charges from the past two decades. The cancellation is contingent on a year of joint monitoring of the country’s democratic reforms. For its part, Myanmar will return ¥ 198.9 billion in previous borrowing from Japan by taking out a new long-term concessionary loan.
3. During the news conference, President U Thein Sein thanked Japanese Prime Minister Noda for cancelling around 60 per cent of Myanmar’s debt to Japan, and stressed the importance of Tokyo’s financial support, saying that Japan’s cooperation and support will be extremely beneficial in Myanmar’s development and reform efforts. Japan will officially resume the low-interest yen loans once the two governments determine the best way to use the funds to improve Myanmar’s infrastructure.
4. Japan will also provide ¥ 5 billion in aid to assist ethnic minorities and improve medical care, as well as to support disaster prevention, agriculture and rural development programmes.
PERSPECTIVES

Thursday, 26 April, 2012

We are able

As Myanmar is chasing her dream of democracy, human capital is of crucial importance in her stride towards her destination. Knowledge is power, so goes the saying and human resources are much needed for all these hard work. Here, the participation of all is fundamental to human resources development.

The workforce of the disabled should never be neglected in our efforts for better future. The disabled should have access to education, earn a livelihood for survival and have chance to join nation-building endeavours. The Ministry of Education in cooperation with the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement is implementing inclusive education, providing free education, accommodation and other expenses for the disabled youths from basic to higher education level.

Again, assistance of civil society is much needed to empower the disabled. It is profitable to enhance their role for disabled human resources can still be knowledge workers who work with their brains not with their hands to produce ideas and knowledge.

Another forgotten human resource is the aged. The retirement age in Myanmar is 60. Most of the pensioners, soon after their retirement, feel like useless, inviting diseases. An idle brain is not only the devil’s workshop but also the diseases’ labour room. Having no work to do is one of the reasons that shorten the lifespan of humans, discovered the scientists.

In fact, the elderly are the source of wisdom who can share their experiences and knowledge to the young. In Myanmar, those aged above 60 was 8.7 per cent of the population in 2007 and increased to 9.1 in 2010. The unprecedented global increase in the number of the aged has posted threat to social security, public health care and even to economic growth. However, the aged who are still fit with full of beans, if allowed to work on, can be main contributors to their families and the society.

It is learnt that home care services projects for the aged have been initiated, but more work is to be done to cover the most. In addition, formation of Older People Self Help Groups (OPSHG) would also contribute to fitness and longevity of the elderly, possibly curbing swelling health care costs.

Weak and withered as they are, the disabled and the aged, under the warm and caring hands of us, still can demonstrate power of willing mind. Every chance should be provided to them to do so. They are the part of the society. They should never be left out nor should they feel they are left out.

President U Thein Sein arrives Tokyo, Japan

NAV PYI TAW, 25 April—President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar U Thein Sein, left here by air on 19 April morning to attend the 4th Mekong-Japan Summit in Tokyo of Japan and to pay the State visit to Japan at the invitation of Japanese Prime Minister Mr. Yoshihiko Noda, and arrived Yangon. They thence left Yangon by Thai International Airway for Japan via Bangkok. The aircraft carrying President U Thein Sein and Myanmar delegation members Union Ministers U Wunna Maung Lwin, U Soe Thein, U Hla Tun, U Tin Naing Thein and U Win Myint, deputy minister Dr Win Myint and departmental heads, arrived Narita Airport in Tokyo at 8 am local time.

President U Thein Sein and party were welcomed at the airport by Director-General of Asia and Southeast Asia Affairs Department of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan Mr Kunio Umeda and officials, Japanese Ambassador to Myanmar Mr Takashi Saito, Chairman of Japan-Myanmar Friendship Association Mr Hideo Watanabe and members, Myanmar Ambassador to Japan U Khin Maung Tin, Military Attaché Brig-Gen Tun Tun and officials. Afterwards, the President and party arrived at Hotel New Otani where they were going to stay.

Rakhine State Chief Minister makes tours of inspection to Pauktaw Tsp

NAV PYI TAW, 25 April—Chief Minister of Rakhine State U Hla Maung Tin held a meeting with dept. officials and townselers at the General Administration Department in Pauktaw Township on 23 April. Afterwards, the Chief Minister visited Pauktaw Township People’s Hospital and contributed cash to the funds of the hospital.

During his tour of the township, the State Chief Minister inspected the site chosen for construction of a basic education primary school at Ywachaunggyi Village and construction of a road linking Ywachaunggyi Village and Sunye Village. He also attended a ceremony to open YaungcheOo Library at Kyaukseik Village.——MNA

Union Minister for Foreign Affairs receives Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Italian Republic and party

NAV PYI TAW, 25 April—Union Minister for Foreign Affairs U Wunna Maung Lwin received Mr Giulio Terzi di Sant’agata, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Italian Republic and party at his office at 9 am today. Both sides exchanged views on promotion of bilateral relations and cooperation.—MNA

President U Thein Sein receives Chairman of Japan-Myanmar Friendship Association and party

President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar U Thein Sein receives Chairman of Japan-Myanmar Friendship Association Mr Hideo Watanabe and party at Hotel New Otani.

President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar U Thein Sein arrives at Narita Airport of Japan.—MNA

Myanmar Friendship Association Mr Hideo Watanabe and members, Myanmar Ambassador to Japan U Khin Maung Tin, Military Attaché Brig-Gen Tun Tun and officials.
China to promote cooperation with Sweden in sustainable development: Chinese premier

STOCKHOLM, 25 April — Visiting Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao told his Swedish counterpart Fredrik Reinfeldt here Tuesday that China would like to promote cooperation with Sweden in environmental protection and sustainable development. Sweden has been a global leader in environmental protection and sustainable development, while China takes sustainable development as a national strategy, said Wen, adding that China is ready to carry out long-term and all-around cooperation with Sweden in policy dialogue and mechanism construction.

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During his meeting with Reinfeldt, Wen said China would take concrete steps to back cooperation in areas such as education, culture and tourism between the two countries. Reinfeldt said Sweden is the first Western nation to set up a full-time China embassy in Stockholm, Sweden, on 24 April, 2012. Xinhua

Canada drops non-military sanctions on Myanmar

OTTAWA, 25 April — Canada has suspended its non-military sanctions against Myanmar in recognition of the latter’s moves towards democracy, Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird announced here on Tuesday. Baird said he made the decision to drop sanctions after political activist Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, who had spent years under house arrest, won a seat in parliament in this month’s elections. In March, Baird visited Daw Suu Kyi and conferred honorary Canadian citizenship upon her. Baird said he made his decision at Daw Suu Kyi’s advice.

During his visit to Myanmar, Baird also met with the country’s new civilian leaders and said he was impressed by the country’s reforms. The sanctions on imports, exports and financial transactions have been lifted, but Canada will still maintain an embargo on arms and military technology. Baird said he wants more time to monitor the situation before deciding whether to lift the embargo. He said the sanctions may be re-imposed if Myanmar reverses its policies of freeing political prisoners and relaxing its control of the media.

“The progress is real but much more remains to be done, ” Baird told reporters during a news conference at the Canadian parliament. “We put in sanctions to try to encourage and force change,” he said. “This is probably one of the best examples in the modern era where sanctions have proven very effective. Given the government has taken such significant reforms, we’re prepared to give them a shot.”

Canada’s decision follows a similar move earlier this week by the European Union which suspended most of its sanctions but maintained its arms embargo. The United States has not yet dropped sanctions, but Secretary of State Hillary Clinton recently visited the country. Baird said he hoped the thawing of relations between the two countries could result in the establishment of trade links. Myanmar is a resource-rich country with 60 million people. — XNA/Xinhua

Pakistan tests nuclear-capable ballistic missile

ISLAMABAD, 25 April — Pakistan successfully test-fired a nuclear-capable ballistic missile on Wednesday, the military said in a statement. The missile, said to be capable of delivering nuclear warheads as far as Beijing and Eastern Europe, Pakistan’s Shaheen-IA is an intermediate range ballistic missile, capable of reaching targets in India. Military officials declined to specify the range of the missile.

The missile’s impact point was in the Indian Ocean. India and Pakistan have fought three full-scale wars since they were carved out of British India in 1947. They conduct missile tests regularly and inform each other in advance. Pakistan conducted nuclear tests in May 1998, shortly after India conducted similar tests. US intelligence estimates last year put the number of nuclear weapons deployed by Pakistan at 90 to 110. Analysts say the strategic US ally’s nuclear arsenal is the fastest growing in the world. Pakistan, like neighbouring India, is not a signatory to the nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT). — Reuters

Three Bahraini policemen injured in blast

MANAMA, 25 April — Three Bahraini policemen were injured Tuesday night by a bomb explosion in a residential village, the interior ministry said.

A home-made explosive device detonated when the police were patrolling in the Duraz Village. The ministry described the blast as a result of a “terrorist bombing” targeting the security forces, and said two of the three injured policemen were in critical conditions.

The police secured the area after the incident, and blocked all roads leading to the village as a precautionary measure. Earlier this month, seven policemen were injured and three seriously, after a home-made explosive made with petrol exploded in East Ekar Village.

Xinhua

Soldier killed by armed groups near Damascus

DAMASCUS, 25 April — Armsed groups launched an assault on Tuesday at the Syrian government troops in the Damascus suburb of Douma, killing one army officer and leaving three others injured, state-run SANA news agency reported. The armed men fired RPG shells at civilians and law-enforcement forces in Douma, leaving many injured, said SANA.

Douma, some 10 km northwest of the centre of Damascus, has emerged as a hot spot of armed insurgency against the government troops. Earlier in the day, UN observers who arrived in Syria 10 days ago to oversee a cease-fire toured Douma and met with people there. The 11-member UN observer team continued their tours in different hotspots in Syria and the deployment of 300 observers would be completed over the next few weeks.

Syria has repeatedly denied reports on Wednesday that the peace plan brokered by international envoy Kofi Annan, but also accused “armed groups” of escalating their violent acts to stymy Annan’s efforts. Syria reported a surge in murders and kidnappings by armed groups in the country since the UN observers’ arrival. — Xinhua

A handout photo from Inter Services Public Relations shows a Half IV Shaheen I medium-range nuclear-capable ballistic missile is launched from an undisclosed location in Pakistan in 2010. Pakistan successfully tested a nuclear capable intermediate range ballistic missile on Wednesday, the military said.

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INTERNET
Long-scroll fragment found in museum

EGYPTIAN artifacts in an Australian museum include a long-scroll section of the burial scroll of one of the civilization’s greatest builders, a researcher says. British Museum curator John Taylor — in Brisbane for the opening of a touring exhibition of mummies from his museum — spotted a shred of papyrus on display in the Queensland Museum bearing the distinctive hieroglyphs of Amenhotep, a chief builder in the 15th century BC, whose burial scroll, known as “A Book of the Dead,” was scattered across the globe in the 19th.

Mini helicopters fly autonomously

ZHIXING, 25 April—Swiss researchers say they’ve helped develop a type of flying robot that can be navigated using only GPS-based flying robots, the new micro helicopters can work both in the open air and in enclosed spaces, and can be navigated inside buildings where GPS often fails, an ETH Zurich release said on Monday.

With a diameter of 20 inches, they are designed to maneuver in tight or even enclosed spaces, and to detect and fly around any obstacle.

Possible uses could include protection or rescue missions, or flying over disaster areas and giving a picture of the situation from the air or locating victims.

This is a research project that above all aims to explore the technical possibilities.

However, we can well imagine the flying robots developed in the sFly project could be an important aid for rescue teams in disaster relief missions in the not too distant future,” Roland Siegwart, head of the Laboratory for Autonomous Systems at ETH Zurich.

Saturn’s outer ring in cosmic light show

LATEST Cassini results go to show how the F ring is even more dynamic than we ever thought,” said Carl Murray, a Cassini imaging team member based at Queen Mary University of London, England.

“These findings show us that the F ring region is like a bustling zoo of objects from a half mile to moons like Prometheus a hundred miles in size, creating a spectacular light show. Scientists have known large objects like Prometheus can create channels, ripples and snowballs in the F ring, and now believe smaller objects, perhaps created when larger objects break up after passing through the ring, go off in new orbits that mean they can pass through the F ring on their own, creating the visual “mini-jets.”

“These small objects appear to collide with the F ring at low speeds, about 4 mph, and then drag glittering ice particles out of the F ring, leading to a fascinating light show.”

US offers more aid to drought-hit Horn of Africa

WASHINGTON, 25 April—The United States is offering an additional 120 million dollars in aid to help the drought-hit Horn of Africa countries cope with the crisis, the White House said on Tuesday.

The aid aims to prevent worsening of the situation on the ground in Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia as the lateness and insufficiency of the rains are expected to have a “significant” negative impact on crop production there, White House spokesman Jay Carney said in a statement.

He said over 9 million people remain in need of emergency assistance since the worst drought in 60 years struck the Horn of Africa in 2011, and the additional contribution has brought total US aid to more than 1.1 billion dollars.

“We urge the international community to continue their support and assistance to those in need of emergency assistance in Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia with the objective of building resiliency in order to save lives,” the spokesman added.

Rare crested ibis hatches in Japan

TOKYO, 25 April—Japanese wildlife researchers say a crested ibis chick hatched in the wild is the first of the endangered birds born outside captivity in 36 years.

The nestling hatched from an egg produced by a pair of the endangered birds on Sado Island in Niigata prefecture, the Environment Ministry said on Sunday.

Its parents, a 3-year-old male and 2-year-old female, were raised at an ibis conservation centre on the island and released into the wild in March 2011. They were found to have built a nest on 16 March of this year, Jiji Press reported, and the chick’s birth was recorded by a remote camera placed near the nest.

“Creating a home in the wild and laying eggs, this chick is the first科技成果,” the Environment Ministry said.

The crested ibis, Nipponia Nippon, is registered as a special Japanese natural treasure, but their population plummeted in the late 19th and early 20th centuries when they were hunted for their beautiful feathers and when agricultural chemicals degraded their habitats.

The last true Japanese crested ibis died in October 2003, and Japan has been trying to reintroduce the species into the wild since 2008, after receiving a pair from China in 1999 before their extinction.

All crested ibises in Japan now are Chinese birds or their offspring, and a total of 76 have been released since September 2008.

Saturn’s outer ring is like a bustling zoo of objects from a half mile to moons like Prometheus, a hundred miles in size, creating a spectacular light show. Scientists have known large objects like Prometheus can create channels, ripples and snowballs in the F ring, and now believe smaller objects, perhaps created when larger objects break up after passing through the ring, go off in new orbits that mean they can pass through the F ring on their own, creating the visual “mini-jets.”

“Beyond just showing us the strange beauty of the F ring, Cassini’s studies of this ring help us understand the activity that occurs when solar systems evolve out of dusty disks that are similar to, but obviously much grander than, the disk we see around Saturn,” Linda Spilker, Cassini project scientist at JPL, said.

Researchers at ETH Zurich say the micro helicopters, developed as part of a European project called sFly, require neither GPS nor remote control, but can operate autonomously.

Current flying robots are large and heavy and when used in open fields they often require GPS or a trained pilot, they said. Compared with GPS-based flying robots, the new micro helicopters can work both in the open air and in enclosed spaces, and can be navigated inside buildings where GPS often fails, an ETH Zurich release said on Monday.

With a diameter of 20 inches, they are designed to maneuver in tight or even enclosed spaces, and to detect and fly around any obstacle.

Possible uses could include protection or rescue missions, or flying over disaster areas and giving a picture of the situation from the air or locating victims.

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Private company delays 1st space station visit

CAPE CANAVERAL, 25 April—A private US company has delayed launching a cargo ship to the International Space Station.

Space Exploration Technologies Corp, or SpaceX, was scheduled to launch the supply ship next Monday. But company officials said that the spaceship needs more testing. The delay will probably be about one week.

The Dragon spacecraft will be first private ship to go to the station. It will be hitched aboard the company’s Falcon rocket from Cape Canaveral.

NASA loaded the test flight with 3,500 pounds of clothing, food, computers and science equipment.

NASA successfully launched the Falcon and Dragon before, but going to the space station requires more propulsion precision. NASA is turning to private companies to carry cargo and eventually astronauts to the space station.

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Pyithu Hluttaw session continues for 21st day

Four questions raised and answered; one bill approved; report clarified and one bill submitted

NAV PVT TAW, 25 April—The 21st day session of Pyithu Hluttaw was held at Pyithu Hluttaw Hall in Hluttaw Complex here at 10.05 am today, attended by Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann and 383 Pyithu Hluttaw representatives.

At the session, four questions were raised and answered; one bill approved; report clarified and one bill submitted.

With respect to the question of U Aung Kyaing of NyaungU Constituency whether “there is any plan to move Phawtaw gate in Thabeikkyin Township to the entrance way to Mogok about 100 feet away from current location”, Deputy Minister for Immigration and Population U Kyaw Kyaw Win replied: systematic inspection was carried to prevent foreigners from entering the restricted areas. With the permission of respective departments and organizations, a total of 1650 foreigners were allowed from Mandalay to Mogok and 2164 from Mogok to Mandalay during the period from 1-1-2011 to 29-2-2012. So, that gate does not restrict the people who go through and allow the people to pass it only after staff of departments concerned inspected whether they have the permission to enter restricted areas in accord with the existing order of the Ministry of Home Affairs.

At present, foreigners are allowed to go to Thabeikkyin and Mogok Townships through the gate with prior permission. And there is no difficulty. The Region also gave comment that the gate is running smoothly. So, at present, there is no plan to move it to the entrance way to Mogok. But, with respect to the proposal, the move will be reconsidered at an appropriate time, based on the factors including increased interest in Tagaung ancient city and the completion of Tagaung road.

With regard to the question of U Soe Win of Sangyoung Constituency on “Section 259 of the Constitution prescribes that the Union prohibits forced labour except duties assigned by the Union in accord with the law in the interest of the public. He would mention that the minister of the respective department would follow this provision, how the people would complain about forced labour and why farmers are not allowed to grow crops they want to.”

Deputy Minister for Labour U Myint Thein said: Para 2, subpara 1 of ILO Convention No. 29 states that the term forced or compulsory labour shall mean all work or service which is exacted from any person under the menace of any penalty and for which the said person has not offered himself voluntarily.

In addition, Para 2, subpara 2 also says that the term forced or compulsory labour shall not include any work or service exacted in virtue of compulsory military service laws for work of a purely military character; any work or service exacted from any person as a consequence of a conviction in a court of law, provided that the said work or service is carried out under the supervision and control of a public authority and that the said person is not hired to or placed at the disposal of private individuals, companies or associations; any work or service exacted in cases of emergency, that is to say, in the event of war or of a calamity or threatened calamity, such as fire, flood, famine, earthquake, epidemic or epizootic diseases, invasion by animal, insect or vegetable pests, and in general any circumstance that would endanger the existence or the well-being of the whole or part of the population; minor communal services of a kind which, being performed by the members of the community in the direct interest of the said community, can therefore be considered as normal civic obligations incumbent upon the members of the community or their direct representatives shall have the right to be consulted in regard to the need for such services.

(See page 6)

Amyotha Hluttaw session continues for 20th day

NAV PVT TAW, 25 April—The third regular session of the First Amyotha Hluttaw continued for 20th day at Amyotha Hluttaw Hall in Hluttaw Complex here today, attended by Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker U Khin Aung Myint and 216 MPs.

First, Bill Committee Member U Myint Tun read the report of the committee on Foreign Currency Expenditure Bill which was sent back to the Amyotha Hluttaw by the Pyithu Hluttaw with amendments.

The Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker sought approval from the Hluttaw about the amendments and supplements of the Bill Committee made to the bill.

Next, U Zaw Myint Pe of Mandalay Region Constituency (5), U Steven Thabeik of Chin State Constituency (4), Dr Myint Kyi of Yangon Region Constituency (8) and U Nyan Lin of Ayeyawady Region Constituency (3), in their affirmative discussion about the proposal of U Myint Myint from Mandalay Region Constituency (6) who urged the Union government to hire local and foreign experts to compile reports on economic and engineering development of Myanmar and to form high-level work supervision coordination committee, said it needed to draw national development for both short term and long term. It was disappointing that KTU, Plans was still the blueprint of the national development plans of the present time. It was required to adopt Myanmar Investment Plan with the assistance of local and foreign experts. As there was a great potential of investment from foreign countries flooding into the country following the reforms of the nation, it was advisable to have a master plan to get ready. It needed to compile comprehensive reports on economic and engineering development for such reports were pivotal for national development.

Regarding the proposal, Deputy Minister for Industry U Myo Aung said the 30-year grand plan was initially drawn by experts from ministries of the nation without the ideas foreign experts. The plan was found to be incomprehensive despite the utmost efforts of the ministries due to time and financial constraint for detailed surveys on the ground. Policies and fields of some ministries had changed much during ten-year period from 2001 to 2010.

The new government was re-drawing 30-year grand plans of the respective ministries in line with national project policies of the modern time. In addition, it was also planning rural development project, township development project, urban development project, regional projects for regions and states, calling for sheer quantity of local and foreign competence assistance. Likewise, previously it was focused on net production and GDP in agriculture, meat and fish, forestry, industry, mines and minerals, energy, electric power, transportation, communication, finance, social and management, service, trade and other sectors. Now, it had been instructed to launch projects in national interests, which means to only essential projects for the nation, region and the people will be implemented under consideration of economic viability and socio-economic needs. In so doing, it needed to invite the assistance of experts at home and abroad.

Now, as there were offers from international organizations for assistance and economic cooperation, some ministries had started seeking international competency assistance. Under the assistance of UNDP, foreign experts were conducting trainings to local experts in shifting over to 1993, 2008 System of National Account from 1986 System of National Account in national planning. Investment feasibility surveys were being carried out by hiring foreign consultant groups in addition to local experts, and seeking assistance from UNCSTD. It was also preparing to draw industrial development plan with foreign assistance. The national plan covered sector-wise projects and regional projects. Coordination for adopting of comprehensive plan was under way and discussions would be held in near future.

Regarding formation of a high-level project coordination committee, “National Plan Commission” led by the Prime Minister was established in time of SPDC. In time of the new government, the President chairs “Special Projects Implementation Committee”.

Financial Commission was formed in line with Section 229 of 2008 Constitution which does not require the formation of Planning Commission. Formation of the National Planning Commission would focus more on sector-wise projects and regional projects.

As the Hluttaw was agreed on the proposal, it was approved.

Daw Khin Wan Kyi of Yangon Region Constituency-1 seconded the proposal submitted by U Maung Aye Tun of Rakhine State Constituency-9 urging the Union government to amend penal sections 417, 426 and 427 of Penal Code. (See page 6)

Pyithu Hluttaw representative U Soe Win of Sangyoung Constituency raising question.—MSA
Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker meets Italian delegation

The Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker met the Italian delegation led by Mr. Mario Chimoni, the deputy chairman of the Italian Parliament, and Mr. Giuliomaria Terzi Di Sant’Agata, the chairman of the National Assembly. The delegation visited the Hluttaw Complex on April 25, 2012. The speakers discussed matters related to enhanced cooperation between Myanmar and Italy. The delegation was welcomed by Deputy Speaker U Nanda Kyaw Swa, who expressed the commitment of the Myanmar Parliament to further strengthen the ties with Italy.

Amyotha Hluttaw session continues...

The Amyotha Hluttaw session continued on April 25, 2012. The session was adjourned after the Debate on the Bill to Amend the Union Election Law, 1990, and the Bill to Amend the Union Local Government Law, 2012. The amendments were made to address the issues raised by the parliamentarians. The amendments were expected to improve the existing laws and bring them in line with the current situation.

Union Minister receives UNHCR resident rep, French ambassador

The Union Minister, Mr. U Aung Hla, welcomed Mr. Johannes de Maiziere, the Representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) at the Pyithu Hluttaw Meeting Hall on April 25, 2012. Mr. de Maiziere discussed the importance of education in refugee camps and the need for international cooperation to ensure that refugees receive quality education.

Pyithu Hluttaw session continues...

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Bus tours of Japan tsunami areas begin

Organizers from the East Japan Earthquake Countermeasures Headquarters have started organizing bus tours of the affected areas. The tours are aimed at providing a first-hand experience of the damage caused by the tsunami. The tours are open to the public and are a popular way for people to understand the scale of the disaster.

Coast Guard rescues 10 from burning fishing boat

Ten members of a Taiwanese fishing boat were rescued by the Coast Guard in the Pacific Ocean on April 25, 2012. The boat was burning when it was rescued, and the Coast Guard quickly put out the fire. The crew was then transported to safety.

Bicyclists who attend the Critical Mass Earth Day bicycle ride lift their bikes in Budapest, capital of Hungary, on April 22, 2012. Critical Mass Hungary organizes bicycle rides twice a year to demonstrate the importance and popularity of bicycle as a solution of everyday city transportation.

Respecting the question of U Khin Maung Myint of Paung Constituency whether “there is any plan to hold National level Education Conference with the participation of distinguished scholars and organizations so as to implement education development programme for the development of the country”, he said: Ministry of Education has been holding education promotion programme since 1998. National Education Promotion Conference with the participation of officials and scholars is held at the last week of April yearly. Works to be done for coming academic year are discussed and decided at the conference. State-level policy choosing conference on Education and Health Development was held in February, 2012. Integrations programme with International experiences were coordinated at the conference. There is no plan to hold National level Education Conference as national education promotion programme is being continued.
More technologies and foreign investment from developed countries outside Mekong region...

Wider transportation routes in the region would establish more mutual understanding and friendship among the peoples and bring about regional stability and development thanks to more frequent contacts among the peoples in the region, he went on. He called for more technologies and foreign investment from developed countries outside the region like Japan in transforming the region into an economically developed one based on its natural resources, sound foundations for tourism development and human resources. He underlined the need for harmonious development of private-public partnership to lure more technical assistances and foreign investment.

Development of industries and economy in Mekong countries calls for investment and technical aids, he said. He sincerely believed that these steps should take cautious approach in regard of environmental degradation and climate change. He reiterated the pledge to cooperate fully in Mekong region greening programme led by Japan, and ambitions and undertakings for reduction of carbon emission and for shaping the world with mild climate. Nowadays, countries in every corner of the world, including those in the region, often suffer natural disasters, he pointed out, saying Myanmar welcomes the proposal to establish ASEAN network for disaster risk management. He thanked Japan for its assistances to ASEAN Coordination Centre for providing humanitarian assistances in disaster risk management.

He again expressed his gratitude towards the host for its helps in education, health and human resources development sectors for achieving Millennium Development Goals in the region. He urged the country to push for providing equal assistances to countries in the region by monetary institutions such as Asian Development Bank. He said Myanmar fully supports 2012 Tokyo Strategy with a set of work programmes for enhanced Mekong-Japan partnership drafted in the summit.


The fourth Mekong-Japan Summit then adopted 2012 Tokyo Strategy for Mekong-Japan Cooperation which includes fundamental objectives for cooperation for human safety comprised of regional communication network, economic development and prevention against natural disaster between Mekong countries and Japan during coming three years from 2012 to 2015.

The Japanese PM and Mekong leaders met the press between 11 am and 11.15 am.

They then proceeded to demonstration of new electric car designed by Nissan Company of Japan.
Myanmar ready to open new chapter...

From page 16: Poverty, improvement of displaced people, preventive measures against natural disasters and producing value-added agricultural products and the second pillar was to focus on the human resource development which was vital for the socio-economic development and the third pillar was to assist in construction of basic infrastructures to achieve long-term development, Mr Noda said. Similarly, Japan would help develop agro-based industries in Myanmar. He also expressed Japan’s willingness to help build necessary infrastructures for the development of Yangon and its environs and drawing the Master Plan for development of the transportation sector. Mr Noda also added that Japan had a plan to send an expert team to renovate the Bilachuang Hydro Power Plant No 2 and was willing to implement the task as soon as possible. He also welcomed the ways for the debt cancelling agreement and pledged that Japan would help to negotiate with international monetary organizations regarding the financial assistance from the organizations. Japan had a plan to review giving loans to Myanmar and welcomed the joint-venture projects of Thilawa Deep Sea Port and special economic zone between Myanmar and Japan. He urged the Myanmar side to encourage the practical cooperation between the government and the private sector in order that the project could be implemented early.

Production, agriculture, mining and energy companies in Japan were willing to invest in Myanmar and Japan was willing to help draft the foreign direct investment law and the special economic zone law and to coordinate for drawing the stability and prevalence of law and order, national reconciliation, flourishing democratic practices, emergence of the good governance and clean government, ensuring fundamental rights in accordance with the provisions of the constitution, promotion of education and health standard, economic reforms, promotion of the socio-economic life of the people and environmental conservation.

Especially, the government had steadfastly made endeavours for the stability and development of the country, improvement of the socio-economic status of the people, democratic transition and helping the people to earn their livelihood in accordance with the law, he said.

The government was also making efforts for prevalence eternal peace in the country, witnessing the achievements in the peace making process, he said, besides, the government had taken every possible steps to ensure that all participate in the national political process.

Besides, the government was implementing the tasks for promotion of the socio-economic and poverty reduction of the farmers and workers who are majority of the people across the country, he added. The President also expressed his thanks for signing the MoU during his visit for sending food aid to areas where ethnic minorities and needy people were residing.

For the 45 vacant seats out of 48 vacant seats in the parliament, the by-election was held on 1 April and the National League for Democracy party won the majority and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was also elected as a representative of Kawhmu Township, he said. He expressed his hope that Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and NLD party would be impartial and would join hands with the government in the interests of the country and the people, praising the by-election as a free, fair and transparent one.

A policy-making meeting on Official Development Aid (ODA) between the two countries was held in Nay Pyi Taw in November, 2011. He said that his government was making efforts for increased trade activities.

The Myanmar President said that Myanmar, based on agriculture, was working hard for industrialization of the nation. He requested the Japanese Prime Minister to render prioritized help in reclamation of flooded farmland, construction of anti-salt water embankment in farmlands prone to natural disaster-led salt water, production of paddy seeds and modern rice mills. He also requested for more help in human resources development and technological assistance for promotion of the socio-economic and poverty reduction of the farmers and workers who are majority of the people across the country, he said.

The Myanmar government was adjusting the investment law, continued the Myanmar President, promising for promotion of the socio-economic and poverty reduction of the farmers and workers who are majority of the people across the country, he said.

The Myanmar President also clarified the achievements of his government in human rights development and technological assistance, fulfilment of basic needs of socio-economic life, and assistance for education, health and forest conservation of Myanmar.

The Myanmar President went on saying that Myanmar was rich in natural and human resources but in need of international investments and technologies. It had permitted over 40 billion USD investment in 460 businesses. Japan stood 12 in 31 investors in Myanmar having invested 216.22 million USD which accounted for 0.53 per cent of total investment in Myanmar. He thanked the Japanese Prime Minister for his encouragement to Japanese companies to make investments in Myanmar. The Myanmar President said that Myanmar has projects to build Thilawa Special Economic Zone near Yangon and deep sea ports in Dawe, the southern part of Myanmar, inviting Japanese to make investments, pledging to make sure smooth investment procedures.

The Myanmar government was adjusting the investment law, continued the Myanmar President, promising for promote of the socio-economic and poverty reduction of the farmers and workers who are majority of the people across the country, he said.

The Myanmar President then expressed his commitment that Myanmar government would like to promote the bilateral trade further. During 2010-2011, the bilateral trade amounted to 493.8 million USD and in 2011-2012 it nearly doubled, reaching 822.5 million USD. He also added that he would like Economics, Trade and Industry Ministry, Chambers of Commerce and Industry and Japanese export, import companies including JETRO to smoothen the way for increased trade activities.

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production factories run with energy as raw material besides special economic zones. As Japan was a technological superpower, Myanmar would like to cooperate with it in mines, cottage industries, export of products of cooperative societies, improvement in standards and quality of foodstuff, construction of dockyards including water and air transportation, and port modernization and related works. The Myanmar President said he was glad to hear that ANA Airways would run direct flights between Japan and Myanmar. He then invited the Japanese Prime Minister to visit Myanmar at his earliest convenience.

Next, the two leaders were present at the MoU signing ceremony during which Myanmar Ambassador to Japan U Khin Maung Tin and Japanese Ambassador to Myanmar Mr Takashi Saito signed MoU on Japanese government’s assistance to Myanmar government for human resources development fellowship programme and exchanged notes before the Myanmar President and the Japanese Prime Minister.

Union Minister for National Planning and Economic Development U Tin Naing Thein and Japanese Foreign Affairs Minister Mr Koichiro Gemba and Japanese Economy, Trade and Industry Minister Mr Yukio Edano signed MoU on cooperation in main project development of Thilawa between Japan and Myanmar. Myanmar Ambassador to Japan U Khin Maung Tin and Japanese Ambassador to Myanmar Mr Takashi Saito signed MoU on Japan’s assistance in preventive measures against natural disaster for rehabilitation of mangrove forests in Ayeyawady Delta.

The two leaders then gave interview to media teams during which they explained matters related to the summit and future programmes of the two countries. Next, the Myanmar President and the Japanese Prime Minister heard reports on Thilawa Sepcial Economic Zone Project and Grand Yangon Development Plan presented by a responsible official at the presentation hall.

The President then attended the dinner hosted by the Japanese Prime Minister together with his entourage. The two extended greetings at the dinner and had dinner together.—MNA
Nay Pyi Taw, 25 April—President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar U Thein Sein attended a dinner hosted to leaders of Mekong region countries by Japanese Prime Minister Mr Yoshihiko Noda at the State Guest House in Tokyo at 7 pm on 20 April.

Also present on the occasion were leaders of Mekong region countries, Japanese Deputy Prime Minister Mr Katsuya Okada and ministers from Japan and Mekong region countries and high-ranking officials.

On arrival at the dinner, the President and leaders of Mekong region countries were cordially greeted by the Japanese Prime Minister.

After extending greetings on the occasion, the Japanese Prime Minister hosted a dinner to leaders of Mekong region countries.

Afterwards, the Japanese Prime Minister and leaders of Mekong region countries fed fishes at the pond in commemoration of a friendship between Mekong region countries and Japan.

Nay Pyi Taw, 25 April—President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar U Thein Sein attended a luncheon hosted to leaders of Mekong region countries by Keidanren, Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry at Imperial Hotel in Tokyo at noon on 20 April.

Present at the luncheon were leaders of Mekong region countries the Cambodian Prime Minister, the President of the Republic of Union of Myanmar, the Thai Prime Minister, the Vietnamese Prime Minister, ministers from Japan and Mekong region countries, deputy ministers, ambassadors, high-ranking officials, businessmen and traders.

On arrival at Imperial Hotel to attend lunch, leaders of Mekong region countries were welcomed by Chairman of Keidanren Mr Hiromasa Yonekura and President of Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry Mr Tadashi Okamura, and they had a documentary photo taken together.

Next, the Chairman of Keidanren extended greetings on the occasion.

Afterwards, President U Thein Sein and leaders of Mekong region countries extended greetings.

Next, the Chairman of Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry toasted further development of economy in Japan-Mekong region.

Later, leaders of Mekong region countries, ministers from Japan and Mekong region countries, deputy ministers, ambassadors, high-ranking officials, businessmen and traders enjoyed a luncheon together.
**Union Minister for Finance and Revenue receives Italian delegation**

**NAY PYI TAW, 25 April—**Italian Foreign Affairs Minister Mr Giuliosmari Terzi di Sant’agata and party paid a call on Union Minister for Finance and Revenue U Tun Hsan at the Central Bank of Myanmar here this evening.

During the meeting, they discussed loan assistance of Italian government to Myanmar government in its political, economic and social reforms, investment opportunities, and prospects for future economic growth, and matters of mutual benefits. The Union Minister replied to queries of the Italian delegation in the areas of businesses that Italian businessmen are interested in making investments.

Also present at the call were Deputy Minister U Win, Governor of Central Bank of Myanmar U Thaung Tin and personnel concerned.—**MNA**

**US oil price edges up**

**New York, 25 April—**The US crude oil price edged up on Tuesday while the Brent crude slipped, and the spread between the two benchmarks narrowed further.

Driven by solid US corporate earnings, the markets sentiment rose, which offered support to the US crude price.

And a weakening dollar, which dipped about 0.2 percent against a basket of currencies, also contributed to the price increase.

But the US economic data offered no support. According to a closely-watched gauge, US home prices in most major cities hit new lows in February, suggesting a struggling situation in the housing industry. Besides, the Conference Board’s consumer confidence index slipped in April in a reflection of the softening general economy.

Investors were waiting for the inventories data due out on Wednesday and the Federal Reserve’s updates about the US economy following a two-day policy meeting.—**Xinhua**

**Rail Minister receives Italian guests**

**NAY PYI TAW, 25 April—**Delegation led by Italian Foreign Affairs Minister Mr Giuliosmari Terzi di Sant’agata called on Union Minister for Rail Transportation U Aung Min at the ministry here this afternoon.

Also present at the call were Deputy Minister Thura U Hla Tun, Secretary-General of the Ministry of Traffic and Tourism U Htay Aung, directors-general, managing directors and officials.—**MNA**

**Three hurt in southern Philippine blast**

**DOTABATO, 25 April —**At least three people were wounded following a grenade explosion on Tuesday night in the restive southern Philippines, police said on Wednesday.

The provincial police commander Cornelio Salinas said that two unknown men on board a motorbike tossed a grenade at the house of trader Gerry Gomez at 6:10 pm in the township of Midsayap in North Cotabato, wounding three locals identified as Nenita Benitez, 64, Amid Bravo, 15, and Asmirah Dau.

**Xinhua**

**Take Fire Preventive Measures**
**CLAIMS DAY NOTICE MV OEL BLESSING VOY(157)**

Consignees of cargo carried on MV OEL BLESSING VOY (157) are hereby notified that the vessel will arrive on 26.4.2012 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claims Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the vessel.

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY AGENT FOR: MS WONGSAMUT OCEAN SHIPPING CO LTD**

Phone No: 256916/256919/256921

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**CLAIMS DAY NOTICE MV BANGPAKAEW VOY(194)**

Consignees of cargo carried on MV BANGPAKAEW VOY (194) are hereby notified that the vessel will arrive on 26.4.2012 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claims Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the vessel.

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY AGENT FOR: MS BLPL LOGISTICS PTE LTD**

Phone No: 256908/378316/376797

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**MINISTRY OF RAIL TRANSPORTATION MYANNA RAILWAYS INVITATION TO OPEN TENDER**

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Closing Date & Time - 8.6.2012 (Friday) (12:00) Hours

Two tender documents are available at our office starting from 26.4.2012 during office hours and for further detail please contact: Deputy General Manager Supply Department, Myanana Railways, Corner of Thanbyuzi Street and Marchut Street, Botataung Yangon. Phone: 951-291985, 291994.

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**Explosion rocks soccer viewing centre in Nigeria**

Jos, 25 April — An explosion rocked a football viewing centre in Nigeria’s central north city of Jos on Tuesday night, the police said. Plateau State commissioner of police Dipo Ayeni confirmed this to Xinhua, saying that the number of casualties cannot be confirmed now.

A Xinhua reporter in the restive city said three persons were injured in the blast that rocked a football center at Tudun Wada in Jos north area of Plateau. According to him, the affected persons have been rushed to the hospital while the youths in the area are demanding for the immediate withdrawal of security from the area.

He said security personnel have cordoned off the area and dispersed the protesting youths. There is no immediate claim of responsibility from any group. The blast occurred when the European Champions League match between Chelsea football club of England and FC Barcelona of Spain was going on.— Xinhua

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**Beijing roast duck prepared by culinary disciples**

Beijing, 25 April — Wearing white chef uniforms and hats, four top-ranking chefs from the Quanjude Group, a chain of restaurants renowned for their roast duck, presented a bouquet of flowers and bowed to Gu Jiuru and Yang finally got the opportunity to acknowledge and pay his respects to Gu Jiuru and Neeraj Singh (L), the spokesman of the advance team of UN observers, speaks to media in Damascus on 24 April, 2012.— Xinhua

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**Central China mine flood kills nine**

ZHENGZHOU, 25 April — Four miners went missing following an explosion and a flood in central China’s Henan Province, the local government said Tuesday.

A total of 53 miners were working in the mine in the city of Pingdingshan when it flooded. Forty-two of them managed to escape on their own, while two others were pulled out after rescuers pumped water out of the mine, according to the local rescue headquarters.

The bodies of five miners were found shortly after the flood, leaving four miners unaccounted for. After finding their bodies on Wednesday, rescuers wrapped up their rescue efforts to make way for an internal investigation into the accident.

A preliminary investigation showed that the flooding was caused by seepage from a damaged mining pit adjacent to the mine. The mine is owned by the Yulongxiangtong Coal Mining Co, which was taken over by Henan Coalbed Methane Development Co Ltd, in January this year.— Xinhua

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**DAMASCUS, 25 April—** The spokesman of the advance team of UN observers said that two observers have stationed in Syria’s central Hama Province on Tuesday. The advance team toured Douma suburb of Damascus, central Hama Province and is currently patrolling the outskirts of central Hama province. Neeraj Singh told Xinhua by phone on Tuesday.

He said that two observers have stationed in Douma to monitor the situation there following reports of continued clashes between Syrian troops and rebel forces in that area over the past days.

On Saturday, two observers arrived to stationed in Homs. Witnesses told Xinhua that the situation there got calmer after the deployment of observers.

On ground, there are 11 unarmed military observers operating and preparing the ground for the larger mission, which the UN Security Council has agreed to expand to around 300 observers. The advance team of international observers arrived last week after Syria accepted the UN-backed truce aiming to solve its politically. Since their arrival, violence has declined to some extent, but attacks and deaths are still reported to take place on daily basis. —Xinhua

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**Judge killed in ambush in C Philippines**

Manila, 25 April — A trial court judge was killed in an ambush on Tuesday night in central Philippine Province of Negros Occidental, police said on Wednesday.

The victim was identified as Judge Henry Arles of Regional Trial Court in Kabankalan, a city of Negros Occidental Province, Philippine National Police spokesman Agrimero Cruz Jr said.

Initial investigation by the police revealed that the victim, while driving his car to south direction, was shot by a group of unidentified suspects on a tricycle in the vicinity of Malpadal village, Isog town of Negros Occidental Province. Arles was brought to a hospital but was declared dead on arrival by a local doctor. Cruz said investigation has been ongoing to determine the possible motive of the killing and for the apprehension of the suspects.— Xinhua

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**A collage of profile pictures makes up a wall in the break room at the new Facebook Data Centre, on 19 April, in Forest City, North Carolina. Facebook struck a $550 million deal to get its hands on hundreds of AOL patents from Microsoft as the social network hardened its defenses before it goes public on the Nasdaq.**

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**In this photo released by Tsunemi Kubodera, a researcher with Japan’s National Institute of Marine Biology, a giant squid attacking a bait squid is being pulled up by his research team off the Ogasawara Islands, southeast of Tokyo.**

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**A preliminary investigation showed that the flooding was caused by seepage from a damaged mining pit adjacent to the mine. The mine is owned by the Yulongxiangtong Coal Mining Co, which was taken over by Henan Coalbed Methane Development Co Ltd, in January this year.— Xinhua**

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**An advance team of UN observers, under the UN Supervision of the International Committee of the Red Cross, is backing truce aiming to solve the conflict in Syria. After Syria accepted the UN-backed truce aiming to solve its politically. Since their arrival, violence has declined to some extent, but attacks and deaths are still reported to take place on daily basis.**

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**South American bird found in Chicago**

Chicago bird-watchers say they’ve found a South American white-crested elaenia 7,000 miles away from home — only the second to be spotted in the United States.

Two Oak Park brothers spied the bird last week during a routine bird-watching trip to Douglas Park. The teens posted photographs on Facebook on the Illinois Birders’ Forum, the Chicago Tribune reported Sunday, and other bird-watchers quickly weighed in to confirm the birds’ suspicions.

“You’re finding something that shouldn’t be there,” said Ethan Gyllenhaal, 16. “It was so weird to think that it flew 7,000 miles away. You just happen to be looking at the right tree and the right time.”

“It’s kind of being a proude parent,” said Aaron Gyllenhaal, 15. The elaenia — about 13.5 to 15 centimeters long and weighing about half a ounce — is normally found in the forest edges in the Andes Mountains, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology said.

The American Birding Association has not confirmed the bird is, in fact, a white-crested elaenia. No one seems to know how or why the bird traveled 7,000 miles to perch in Douglas Park, the Tribune said.

**Christina Aguilera loves her make-up**

LOS ANGELES, 25 April — Singer-actress Christina Aguilera loves her cosmetics too much, says make-up artist Scott Barnes, who doubts the former can ever keep her look toned down. Barnes suggested that Aguilera should opt for a more subtle look for the show “The Voice”, but he isn’t sure how long the change will last.

“Christina didn’t really want to change anything, but sometimes, too much of too much is definitely too much. I cut back on the bronzer and redened her look a bit, while keeping to who she is,” contactmusic.com quoted Barnes as saying.

**Woman angry at dating spreadsheet leaker**

The woman who received the highest ranking on a New York investment banker’s dating spreadsheet said she’s angry at the woman who leaked the document.

Liliana Biedaut, 26, a makeup artist who received a 9.5 ranking on the infamous Match.com dating scorecard made by David Merkur, 28, said she was upset to find someone had leaked the spreadsheet to the public.

The New York Post reported on Friday. The spreadsheet, which Merkur used to rank eight female Match.com users on their appearances, became public after the banker sent it to one of his dates, a woman named Arielle, and she sent it to her friends. “Why would she send it to the whole world?” said Biedaut, whose ranking was the highest on the list. “It was a really stupid move.”

Biedaut, who theorized Merkur sent the list to Arielle because “he really liked her” and she passed it on because she was “spiteful” about her low ranking, said she is “absolutely” considering legal action against the other woman.

**Zeta-Jones sings at school fundraiser**


She took to the stage with a group of students at the event held at Manhattan’s Cipriani 42nd Street restaurant last week, reports dailystar.co.uk. Music star Sting also paid a visit to the charitable event.

**Parrot picked to grace Frontier plane tail**

Denver-based Frontier Airlines announced Polly the parrot will become the latest animal to be pictured on the tail of an airplane. Dan Krause, Frontier’s vice president of marketing and customer experience, said the parrot received more votes than Chloe the chimpanzee and Enrique the tree frog to join the airline’s cast of characters, The Denver Post reported on Thursday.

“It was a tight race all the way through but Polly came out ahead with 35 percent of the vote,” Krause said. “With nearly 65,000 unique votes cast throughout the campaign, it is clear the public feels strongly about which animal should join our current cast of characters and we look forward to integrating Polly into upcoming campaigns.”

Krause said Chloe was close behind with 36 percent and Enrique finished last with 25 percent.

**Jessie J working on musical**

LONDON, 25 April — Singer Jessie J, who suffered a stroke when she was 18, is writing a feel-good musical. She wants the show to inspire youngsters who wish to achieve their dreams.

Currently seen as a mentor on US-based reality show “The Voice”, Jessie J believes the tough love of one of her teachers helped her become a star, and insists she wants to do the same for her contestants on the show, reports contactmusic.com.

“I would love to do musicals. That is what trained in. I’ve started writing one but it’s kind of been put to the side,” she told radio.com. “It’s about life and feeling good. It’s about time there’s something on stage that kids can go to and come out thinking they can take on the world and do something with their life if they are in a bad place,” she said while explaining the script. — Internet

**Aniston and Theroux not marrying in Crete**

LOS ANGELES, 25 April — Jennifer Aniston’s publicist Monday denied a media report that said the Hollywood actress plans to wed beau Justin Theroux in Crete this July. The film star’s representative told US Magazine.com the wedding report is a “total fabrication” and said Aniston “was not in Greece” scouting locations for a possible ceremony.

“Now is that one of the most photographed people in the world supposedly goes to Greece to check out hotel she never heard of and is not spotted or photographed?” the representative told the celebrity news Web site.

Aniston and Theroux have been dating for nearly a year. — Internet

**Bonham Carter wore nappies on ‘Harry Potter’ sets**

LOS ANGELES, 25 April — Actress Helena Bonham Carter had to wear a nappy on the set of “Harry Potter and The Half-Blood Prince” because she had a weak bladder after the birth of her second child.

The star started work on the sixth movie just 12 weeks after welcoming her daughter Nell.

But her high-energy scenes came too close to the birth, and she admits she had several accidents during filming. So, she resorted to wearing a nappy to save herself from embarrassing drying-off sessions, reports dailystar.co.uk.

“I really couldn’t jump up and down and scream without losing most of my bodily liquid. They had these air dryers on set, these huge things — that’s where I would dry myself off,” said Carter.

She managed keeping the diapers a secret during the shoot. “None of the men known I wore diapers. They don’t know, you see. But all the girls, yes, ‘How can you?’ But, actually, I don’t think I was too embarrassed. There’s quite a liberating about having a baby.”

“I love having a baby. I wouldn’t change it for the world if I could. The birth day is fantastic. It is magic. It is complete magic,” she said. — Internet

**Century-old tortoise dies**

A 660-pound Aldabra tortoise more than 100 years old has died at the Silver Springs Nature’s Theme Park in Silver Springs, Fla, officials say.

Frank the Tank passed away in his pen Thursday, The Orlando (Fla.) Star-Banner reported. Considered to be the theme park’s oldest animal, the park was Frank’s home for more than 40 years. Aldabra tortoises are native to the Aldabra group of islands of Seychelles, a country off the east coast of Africa.
No complaints says Terry after red card

Barcelona, 25 April — Chelsea captain John Terry said he deserved his red card in Tuesday’s 2-2 draw at Barcelona which eliminated the holders and booked the Premier League side’s place in next month’s Champions League final. Defender Terry was shown a straight red card by Turkish referee Cuneyt Cakir in the 37th minute for kneeling Alexis Sanchez in the back and will miss the final on 19 May. “It does look bad on the replay. I raised my knee which in hindsight I shouldn’t have done. No complaints from the replay,” the Englishman told Sky Sports after his team went through 3-2 on aggregate. “Sanchez dived in behind me. At the time I was bewildered. I feel like I’ve let the lads down,” added Terry, who missed penalty cost Chelsea the 2008 title against Manchester United in Moscow. Chelsea will also be without the suspended Branislav Ivanovic in the Munich final while fellow defender Gary Cahill was injured during Tuesday’s match and David Luiz missed the replay.

Terry said he was not surprised at Chelsea’s stunning upset. “This is what this football club deserves. It’s massive.” Caretaker coach Roberto Di Matteo said: “He’s a fantastic leader of this group. Everybody can make a mistake in life. We’re just happy to go through. We’re all human beings. They’ve under huge pressure these players.”

Schalke star Huntelaar left behind by team bus

Allianz Arena, 25 April — Schalke 04’s Dutch striker Klaas-Jan Huntelaar, Huntelaar capped a memorable weekend, which included a training ground bust-up and his 25th league goal of the season, by being stranded in Augsburg, it was reported on Tuesday, Allianz Arena.

Anlhsoven, 24 April — Schalke’s Dutch striker Klaas-Jan Huntelaar capped a memorable weekend, which included a training ground bust-up and his 25th league goal of the season, by being stranded in Augsburg, it was reported on Tuesday. Huntelaar was photographed flying with training-mate Jermaine Jones in training on Saturday, and then scored as the Royal Blues drew 1-1 at Augsburg on Sunday only to be forgotten by his team-mates, according to German daily Bild. The 28-year-old sees himself as the first half of the Bundesliga’s top scorer alongside Bayern Munich’s Mario Gomez. But after answering a barrage of questions from waiting journalists, Huntelaar discovered the Schalke team bus had left without him en route to Munich airport, from where the squad were due to fly back to Gelsenkirchen. Local police helped link up with the team bus so he could catch the flight home, but he is not the first Bundesliga star to be left behind in Bavaria.

Last month, Borussia Dortmund midfielder Ilkay Gundogan suffered a similar fate after scoring the winning goal for his side in the German Cup semi-final at Greuther Fuerth. “Someone counted double and another called me by the wrong name,” Schalke goalkeeper Lars Unnerstall before captain Benedikt Hoewedes finally noticed Huntelaar was missing. “On a day like that, it can happen,” said Schalke’s general manager Horst Heldt.

BRAZIL will invest $17 billion in mass transit for World Cup

Sao Paulo, 25 April — Brazil will invest $17 billion on public transport for the 2014 World Cup and the 2016 Summer Olympics, President Dilma Rousseff announced on Tuesday. She said in a speech here that the federal government, states and cities would earmark a total of $32 billion reals ($17 billion) for streetcars, subways and bus stations but gave no timetable for completion.

The president stressed that the projects would directly benefit 53 million Brazilians in several cities. “Young people, children and adults use these transport systems and mass transit must serves people with the lowest incomes,” she stressed.

With a population of more than 191 million, Brazil, Latin America’s leading economic power, faces huge transportation problems in big cities such as Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Salvador and Belo Horizonte, its biggest challenge as host of the world’s two top sporting events.
UK police still hope to find missing Madeleine alive

LONDON, 25 April—British police investigating the disappearance of Madeleine McCann, the three-year-old who went missing in Portugal five years ago sparking a global hunt, still hope to find her alive, the officer leading the inquiry said on Wednesday. Detective Chief Inspector Andy Redwood told reporters police have identified 195 “investigative opportunities” from existing evidence that have been handed to Portuguese police. Some, he said, included new information.

“We genuinely believe there is a possibility that she is alive,” he said. “We would like the case to be reopened.”

Madeleine disappeared from her family’s holiday apartment in the resort of Praia da Luz on May 3, 2007, prompting a massive police probe and a search that gripped media across the world. She went missing while her parents Kate and Gerry were dining at a nearby restaurant with seven friends. Despite numerous reported sightings from Belgium, Spain and Morocco, and investigations stretching as far as Australia, her whereabouts remain a mystery. The McCanns were named as official suspects by Portuguese police four months after their daughter’s disappearance but in 2008 they were cleared and Portugal’s public prosecutor later dropped the case citing a lack of any evidence. The McCanns had won 550,000 pounds ($888,000) in damages from two British newspapers who suggested they had killed Madeleine, while their friends-knew as the “Tapes”-also won large payouts over claims they had lied about the abduction. Last year, the McCanns wrote to British Prime Minister David Cameron saying neither the British nor Portuguese officials were doing enough to find their daughter and that only private investigators they had hired were still following their case.

Bolton fight back to beat Villa

LONDON, 25 April—Bolton Wanderers fought back from a goal down to beat Aston Villa 2-1 on Tuesday and boost their chances of Premier League survival.

Aston Villa took the lead through Stephen Warnock after 61 minutes but Bolton hit back immediately with a goal by Martin Petrov and David N’Gog grabbed the winner a minute later.

Bohan climbed above Blackburn Rovers into 18th place in the 26-team standings, a point behind Wigan Athletic and Queens Park Rangers with a game in hand. Villa remained in serious danger of going down on 36 points, just two ahead of Wigan and QPR.

Beyonce named People’s most beautiful woman

NEW YORK, 25 April—People magazine has named Beyonce as the World’s Most Beautiful Woman for 2012. The 36-year-old singer tops the magazine’s annual list of the “World’s Most Beautiful” in a special double issue. The announcement was made Wednesday.

Commenting on her selection, Beyonce tells People: “I feel more beautiful than I’ve ever felt because I’ve given birth. I have never felt so connected, never felt like I had such a purpose on this Earth.” Beyonce, who is married to rapper Jay-Z, gave birth to a daughter, Blue Ivy Carter, in January.

“She’s just the cutest thing,” says the Grammy winner, who sings to her daughter and claims to “love” changing diapers. Does Blue resemble mom or dad? “She looks like Blue,” the singer says. “She’s her own person.” “The best thing about having a daughter is having a true legacy,” she adds. “The word ‘love’ means something completely different now.” Other celebrities on the list include Julia Roberts, Nicole Kidman and Jessica Pare of “Mad Men.” —Internet

Owen aims for return this season

LONDON, 25 April—Former England striker Michael Owen thinks he could still feature for Premier League title-chasers Manchester United before the end of the season, despite being sidelined by a string of injuries. The 32-year-old has not featured since November 2 due to a thigh problem but is now back in full training.

With just three games of the league season left, Owen accepts he is unlikely to start but is keen to be involved from the bench. Reigning champions United lead Manchester City by three points at the top of the table before a potentially vital derby at Eastlands on Monday.

“I can’t imagine myself getting back and starting in the 11,” Owen told MUTV, United’s own television station, on Wednesday. “My mindset has got to be get myself ready mentally, physically and everything else because I might be needed for 10 or 20 minutes at a late stage of the season. “Who knows? It could be the last game of the season at Sunderland. “I might have built up enough, whether playing in a reserves game or two, and then that’s fine.”

“But think the immediate thing is to get myself mentally ready, just in case the manager says, ‘I’ll put you on the bench’ or whatever and I’ll come on for 15 minutes and try to nick a goal if we’re struggling.”

Owen’s only league appearance this season was a draw at Stoke in September but he has scored three goals in two League Cup matches.—Internet
**Myanmar ready to open new chapter in friendly relations with Japan**

President U Thein Sein

**Japanese PM Mr Yoshihiko Noda**

**Myanmar supports Myanmar’s reform process**

NAV PYI TAW, 25 April—President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar attended the Myanmar-Japan Summit at the State Guest House in Tokyo, Japan, on 21 April.

When President U Thein Sein arrived at the State Guest House, he was welcomed by Prime Minister of Japan Mr Yoshihiko Noda.

At the summit, Myanmar delegation led by President U Thein Sein was comprised of Union Ministers U Wunna Maung Lwin, U Soe Thein, U Hla Tun, U Tin Naing Thein and U Win Myint, Deputy Minister Dr Win Myint, Ambassador of Myanmar to Japan U Khin Maung Tin and high-ranking officials while Japanese side was comprised of Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda, ministers, deputy ministers, Japanese Ambassador to Myanmar Mr Takashi Saito and high-ranking officials.

First, Japanese Prime Minister extended greetings expressing Japan’s high praises for the constructive reform process in Myanmar and Japan would continue to support the process. Results from the summit would strengthen the relations between the two countries, he added.

By-elections which was important for Myanmar. He continued to say that it was a historic milestone under the Constitution and the visit was a historic milestone between the two countries as a Head of State paid a visit to Japan during 28 years. He continued to say that he hoped that the two countries would be able to lay down infrastructures to open a new chapter for bilateral relations thanks to the summit.

President U Thein Sein expressed his wish to work together with the Japanese Prime Minister as part of efforts for promoting the understanding and friendship between the two countries and bilateral cooperation based on the historic friendship of the two countries.

Afterwards, Japanese Prime Minister Mr Noda said that Japan would make efforts for promoting the bilateral friendship and was ready to help Myanmar’s reform process. In responsive to constructive developments in Myanmar, Japan was reviewing its policies on Myanmar, he added. He pledged Japan’s aids as three pillars in three sectors in Myanmar. The first pillar would help aiding the socio-economic development of ethnic minorities in border areas and rural people, reducing poverty.

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![Myanmar-Japan Summit held at State Guest House in Tokyo.—MNA](image)

**President U Thein Sein arrives back from Mekong-Japan Summit and official goodwill visit**

NAV PYI TAW, 25 April—President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar U Thein Sein and party after attending the 4th Mekong-Japan Summit in Tokyo of Japan and paying a state visit, arrived back at Nay Pyi Taw Airport here this morning.

The Myanmar delegation led by President U Thein Sein was welcomed back at Nay Pyi Taw Airport by Vice-President Dr Sai Maung Khum, Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Vice-Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) General Soe Win, Union Minister for Religious Affairs Thura U Myint Maung, Union Ministers at the President Office U Thein Nyunt and U Soe Maung, Union Construction Minister U Khin Maung Myint, Union Transport Minister U Nyan Tun Aung, Union Energy Minister U Than Htun, Union Science and Technology Minister U Aye Myint, Union Electric Power No.2 Minister U Khin Maung Soe, Nay Pyi Taw Command Commander Maj-Gen Maung Aye, departmental personnel, Minister-Counsellor Deputy Chief of Mission Mr Chiro Manya and officials of Japanese Embassy.

Delegation members Union Foreign Affairs Minister U Wunna Maung Lwin, Union Industry Minister U Soe Thein, Union Finance and Revenue Minister U Hla Tun, Union National Planning and Economic Development Minister U Tin Naing Thein and Union Commerce Minister U Win Myint, Deputy Health Minister Dr Win Myint and departmental officials also arrived back here together with the President.—MNA

**President U Thein Sein being welcomed back by Vice-President Dr Sai Maung Khum and Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Vice-Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at Nay Pyi Taw Airport.**

MNA