Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker asks for support from New Zealand House of Representatives

NAY PYI TAW, 30 March—Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw Thura U Shwe Mann paid a call on Speaker of House of Representatives of New Zealand Mr David Carter at Parliament Buildings in New Zealand on 27 March.

The New Zealand Speaker congratulated the Myanmar Speaker for fruitful political reforms in Myanmar, promising to closely support and share democratic experience to Myanmar.

He reckons that Myanmar parliament has started to gain public trust. Though the New Zealand Parliament is always listening to people’s voices, said the New Zealand Speaker, there are times when New Zealand people complain, their voices are gone “unheard” by the parliament. So, ombudsmen are established to take care of public complaints, thereby forging the foundation of democracy added the Speaker.

The Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker asked for support, experience-sharing and recommendations from New Zealand, calling them being crucial for Myanmar democratization process. He invited the New Zealand Speaker to visit Myanmar bicameral parliament. He believes that cooperation between the two parliaments would contribute to friendship and cooperation between two governments and peoples.

The Speaker of New Zealand’s parliament expressed his support for the Myanmar government’s economic and socio-economic reforms apart from political reforms in transition to democracy.

He also affirmed that the New Zealand government would provide assistance for agricultural and livestock breeding sector of Myanmar.

After the meeting, the Speaker of New Zealand’s parliament hosted a dinner in honour of the Myanmar delegation.

The delegation held talks with Ms Mayan Street, Chairperson of the Regulation Review Committee of New Zealand parliament, visited the parliament and held talks with Mr Phil Goff, Opposition Spokesperson on Foreign Affairs and Mr Nathan Guy, Minister of Primary Industries, on 27 March.

The Myanmar delegation led by Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann met with national races of Myanmar and some organizations in Australia and discussed latest development of Myanmar and its duties, responsibilities and undertakings of Hluttaw.

Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann and wife Daw Khin Lay Thet and party arrived back here by air this evening.

They were welcomed back at Yangon International Airport by Deputy Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw U Nanda Kyaw Swa and wife, Yangon Region Chief Minister U Myint Swe and wife, Speaker of Yangon

Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw Thura U Shwe Mann poses for documentary photo together with Speaker of House of Representatives of New Zealand Mr David Carter.—MNA

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Formation of Central Management Committee for Emergency Period

1. To control and handle the current rioting, the Central Management Committee for Emergency Period is formed with following personnel.

- **Chairman**
  - Lt-Gen Ko Ko
  - Union Minister
  - Ministry of Home Affairs (a)

- **Vice-Chairman**
  - U Aung Min
  - Union Minister
  - Ministry of President Office (4)

- **Member**
  - U Ohn Myint
  - Union Minister
  - Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries (c)

- **Member**
  - U Khin Yi
  - Union Minister
  - Ministry of Immigration and Population (d)

- **Member**
  - U Win Myint
  - Union Minister
  - Ministry of Commerce (e)

- **Member**
  - Commodore Aung Thaw
  - Deputy Minister
  - Ministry of Defence (f)

2. The tasks of the Central Management Committee for Emergency Period are as follows:

- (a) to ensure effective cooperation between the security forces of the government;
- (b) to join hands with regional governments in making swift response if riots occur;
- (c) to carry out effective preparedness not to occur sectarian and religious riots again;
- (d) to be able to prevent instigation across the country, to expose main instigators of riots and to take action against them;
- (e) to form township, ward, village guards for the people-centered police system in cooperation with Myanmar Police Force and
- (f) to coordinate the tasks with the help of civil societies.

3. Region and state governments are also to form similar committees.

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(See page 8)
New three-storey building for Bago University

BAGO, 30 March — The opening of a new three-storey building (Ortha Building) for Bago University took place at the university, here, on 25 March. Union Minister for Education Dr Mya Aye, Deputy Minister Dr Ba Shwe and Bago Region Social Affairs Minister Dr Kyaw Oo formally opened the new building, and Bago Region Chief Minister U Nyan Win unveiled the signboard of the new three-storey building.— Kyemon

Mandalay-Yangon passenger down-train derails near Toungoo

TOUNGOO, 30 March — A railroad accident happened to No (12) passenger down-train at an intersection of the railroad with a motorway between mile post Nos (166/4) and (166/5) near Toungoo railway station at about 6 and (166/5) near Toungoo mile post Nos (166/4) intersection of the railroad — A railroad accident ongoing.

As soon as the train derailment occurred, officials of Myanmar Railways and railway police members took necessary measures and the express train resumed its services with the help of another locomotive and headed towards Yangon. Necessary investigation into the derailment is ongoing. — Kyemon

Electrical overload cause fire in Mandalay

Mandalay, 30 March — A fire accident happened to a house at sector No (292) in Nanaungmyin ward of Mahaungmye Township of Mandalay at about 2 pm on 29 March. Seven houses were burnt to ground in the fire. The fire sparked by electrical overload of a wall socket used for TV, DVD player and refrigerator. It caused a short circuit, setting fire to the bamboo wall. The fire swept through the whole house of Daw Myint Myint Mar and spread other houses, reducing them to ashes. Loss of property in the fire amounted to K 3,058,700. The house owner was charged with reckless use of electricity. — Kyemon

Man detained in possession of stimulant tablets

YANGON, 30 March — A man was arrested with stimulant tablets near a bus-stop on Kyaykhaik Pagoda road in Aungchantha ward of Thanlyan Township at about 10.30 pm on 26 March. A patrol police led by Police Sub-inspector Aung Naing seized eight stimulant tablets worth K 40000 inside a small metal container from Ye Lin Tun, 27, of Wason ward in Dawbon Township of Mon State at about 12.15 pm on 25 March. Ye Lin Tun, 27, of Warso a small metal container from his behavior made them suspect. The police also confiscated K 65550 and others including his citizenship scrutiny card, a handset and two capsules. Thanlyan Township police station filed a lawsuit against him and investigation is ongoing. — Kyemon

Motorcyclist dies after crashing

MAWLAMYINE, 30 March — A motorcyclist died after crashing into a brick block in front of Kada village police outpost in Kyakmayaw Township of Mon State at about 6.45 am on 18 March. A unlicensed motorbike driven by Maung Ah Pa Lang of Kyun village skidded out of control and hit the brick block that supports a signboard. He had suffered serious injuries and was pronounced dead on the way to Mawlamyine General Hospital. Eyewitnesses said that the crash was due to excessive speed. — Kyakmayaw police station opened a case about the fatal road accident. — Kyemon

Loaded truck overturns on Yangon-Mandalay Union Highway

YEDASHE, 30 March — A 22-wheeled truck loaded with 17000 paper boxes each of which includes 24 one-liter engine oil containers plunged down the road side after crashing into a bridge at a turn on Yangon-Mandalay Union Highway near Myohla in Yedashe Township at about 12.15 am on 25 March. The loaded truck driven by Kyaw Lin, 23, of Hlinethaya Township overturned due to its heavy load after hitting the left rail of Bridge No (209/2) while making a turn on the road. Goods onboard the truck fell onto the ground underneath the bridge. The driver and a truck conductor escaped unhurt. Myohla police station filed a lawsuit against them. — Kyemon

Implementation of Regional development tasks in Naga Self-Administered Zone

NAV PYI TAW, 30 March — The leading committee of Naga Self-Administered Zone carried out regional development undertakings in Lahe Township of the zone under the supervision of Rural Region Development Department of the Ministry of Border Affairs.

During 2012-2013 fiscal year, construction of Laungnauk-Lokkon gravel road and Naungpon-Karhlan-Kyuyam earth road, building of earth, gravel and tarred roads and bridges and water supply task in Leshe, Lahe and Nangyun Townships and availabiliy of electricity through solar power for 20 housings and 600 houses was implemented, meeting set standards for the long-term benefit of local people in the zone. — MNA

Photo shows a car accident in which a Hilux hit a roadside tree near the main gate of Hmawby Airbase on Yangon-Pyay road at about 12.15 pm on 27 March. The driver was charged with reckless driving by the police station concerned. — KYEMON

Karhlan-Kyuyam earth road, building of earth, gravel and tarred roads and bridges and water supply task in Leshe, Lahe and Nangyun Townships and availabiliy of electricity through solar power for 20 housings and 600 houses was implemented, meeting set standards for the long-term benefit of local people in the zone.
No end to Italy deadlock despite President’s efforts

Rosato, 30 March—Italy remained in political deadlock on Friday after a new round of talks led by President Giorgio Napolitano failed to break the stalemate created by elections last month that left no group able to form a government alone.

Napolitano, 87, conducted a swift round of talks with the three main forces in parliament—centre-left leader Pier Luigi Bersani to win support for a new government.

But all the parties remained in the same entrenched positions they have occupied since the 24-25 February election, with no sign of movement from any of them. Bersani won the largest share of the vote in the election but fell short of a majority in parliament.

The third biggest force, Beppe Grillo’s populist 5-Star Movement, which holds the balance of power, on Friday again rejected backing a Bersani government or any administration not led by them.

The centre-left in turn reiterated that it would not enter a coalition with Berlusconi, which the 76-year-old billionaire media magnate said after his talks with Napolitano was the only way out of the crisis short of a snap new election.

Lending party.

At an event that mixed echoes of Soviet Communist Party congresses with the atmospherics of a US talk show, Putin said he planned to raise the Front’s status by making it a “public movement” and holding a formal founding congress in June.

He first set up the Front two years ago to broaden the appeal of his ruling United Russia party after regional elections showed its influence waning. Since then, United Russia’s reputation has taken further blows. At Friday’s event, Putin made a series of populist pledges to loyalists assembled in the southern heartland city of Rostov-on-Don — ranging from curtains on government pay for corporate bosses to better care for orphans, to higher standards for teaching Russian history in schools.

“We will meet regularly ... so that what we promised our citizens is not forgotten,” Putin said.

And he has already done so. At a meeting on 29 March, 2013.—REUTERS

Japan, US “energetically” discussing return of five Okinawa facilities

Tokyo, 30 March—Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said on Saturday that Japan and the United States “are energetically negotiating” the return to Japanese control of the five facilities and areas leased to the US military south of the US Kadena Air Base in Okinawa Prefecture.

The two countries are vigorously engaging in the talks over the plan for the return “so we could agree on it, including its concrete schedule,” Abe told reporters at Kadena Air Base on Friday before leaving for Mongolia.

He declined to elaborate, however, on whether the two countries could specify the timeframe for the return, saying, “All issues are now under negotiations.”

Meanwhile, several bilateral sources said on Saturday the two governments are planning to stipulate that the US Marine Corps’ Futenma air station in Okinawa should be returned to Japanese control over the next nine years.

Japanese and US negotiators might see the exchange of the five facilities as the first step toward the complete withdrawal of US forces from Okinawa.

Abe is scheduled to visit the US from Monday to Wednesday and is expected to bring up the issue of the Futenma air station.

A day earlier, the US military ordered on Friday the closure of the installation, which was previously scheduled for closure in 2016.

People clean up the explosion site in Mumbai, India, on 29 March, 2013. At least five people were killed and three others sustained injuries in an explosion at a small-scale industrial unit in Mumbai on Friday, a senior police official said.—REUTERS

Obama touts infrastructure in Florida trip focused on economy

MIAMI, 30 March—President Barack Obama walked into the mouth of a giant tunnel in Miami on Friday to highlight proposals to boost investment in US infrastructure, a move designed to show a leader still focused on the economy in the midst of broader policy battles in Washington.

Obama’s tour of the Port of Miami tunnel project and a subsequent speech were aimed at convincing members of the US Congress to back proposals that would leverage taxpayer dollars into funds to rebuild US infrastructure. The idea is to pull in private-sector funding and pick projects based on merit. He would also create “America Fast Forward Bonds” that would help state and local governments attract money for infrastructure projects. These would be direct subsidy bonds in which the issuer would receive a 28 percent subsidy of the borrowing cost as a way of attracting a wider set of investors.

In addition, Obama would add $4 billion to support two programmes that are used to provide grants for infrastructure projects like the Miami tunnel.

It is unclear how far the proposals will go in Congress. Republicans are reluctant to support what they consider government stimulus spending after a much criticized $787 billion刺激 plan that Obama managed to push through Congress in 2009.—Reuters

Rebels’ rising mortar attacks against Syrian capital reflect eagerness for civil disobedience

DAMASCUS, 30 March—After several unsuccessful attempts to storm the Syrian capital Damascus or at least to paralyze the daily life in the busy city, rebels in Syria have seemingly opted to escalate their mortar attacks on several parts of the city to push the people toward a compulsory civil disobedience.

Mortar shells have increasingly hit government institutions, schools and residential buildings alike, terrifying people, killing many while forcing most of Damascenes to stay indoors.

On Friday, one person was killed and others wounded when two mortar attacks slammed Damascus’ suburb of Jaramana.

President Barack Obama delivered remarks on infrastructure investment at Port Miami in Miami, Florida, on 29 March, 2013.—REUTERS

Putin promotes Russian People’s Front as new power base

Russia’s President Vladimir Putin (L) attends a conference held by the All-Russian People’s Front group in the southern Russian city of Rostov-on-Don on 29 March, 2013.—REUTERS

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A day earlier, the faculty of architecture engineering in Damascus University was hit with twin mortars that killed more than 15 students and injured 20 others.

Syria’s Special Judicial Investigation Committee ordered on Friday the judicial police to accelerate the investigation regarding the “criminal acts” against Syrian citizens, including the university incident.

Quoted by Syria’s state-run news agency SANA, Judge Ahmad Zaher al-Bakri said that the committee asked the judicial police to expand the investigation regarding firing mortar shells at the Architecture Faculaty to reach any information that help identify the terrorists.

Xinhua

Afghan, ISAF forces detain two Taleban including local leader

KABUL, 30 March—Afghan and NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) on Friday arrested two Taleban elements including a senior local leader in Taleban former stronghold Helmand Province, 555 km south of Afghan capital Kabul, a statement of the alliance released here said.

“During an operation in Nahr-e Saraj District of Helmand today, an Afghan and coalition security force arrested a senior Taleban leader and detained one other insurgent,” the statement added. Without identifying the name of the arrested local leader, the statement stressed that the leader “is believed to exercise operational control over multiple insurgent cells throughout Helmand Province, committing multiple attacks against Afghan and coalition forces.”

Xinhua
Russian spaceship makes shortest journey to dock with ISS

MOSCOW, 30 March—Russian spaceship Soyuz TMA-08M has docked at the International Space Station (ISS) within six hours, the fastest ever journey to the orbiting laboratory, the Russian space agency Roscosmos said on Friday.

The Soyuz-FG rocket, carrying the Soyuz TMA-08M spacecraft, was launched from the Baikonur cosmodrome space port in Kazakhstan at 00:43 Moscow time on Friday (0430 GMT Thursday). The spacecraft docked a Russian Poisk module of the ISS at 06:28 Moscow time (0228 GMT), Roscosmos said.

The Soyuz made the journey using a six-hour “beeline” scheme after orbits the Earth four times instead of the usual 30 times.

This was the first time that such a scheme was used for a manned space flight as the shortcut option was used only for missions of unmanned cargo ships before.

The crew of Russian Pavel Vinogradov, Alexander Misurkin and American Christopher Cassidy are expected to spend the next five months aboard the station after joining incumbent crew Canadian Chris Hadfield, Russian Roman Romanenko and American Thomas Marshburn.—Xinhua

Chinese scientists unlock key genetic code of wheat

BEIJING, 30 March—Scientists from China and the United States have mapped a key genetic code for bread wheat, a discovery that will help improve the crop’s productivity and ability to withstand extreme conditions.

The sequencing and drafting of the A genome, one of the three basic genomes of wheat, was published on the website of the journal Nature on Monday. Researchers present the generation, assembly and analysis of a whole-genome shotgun draft sequence of the genome of wheat T urartu, the donor of the A genome.

The identification of around 38,000 wheat genes is expected to help provide a valuable resource for accelerating deeper genomic breeding studies and offer a new foundation for the study of wheat evolution, domestication and genetic improvement.

The research, launched by a team from the Institute of Genetics and Development Biology under the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS), was conducted by Shenzhen-based BGI, a leading genomics organization, and the University of California, Davis.

Bread wheat (Triticum aestivum) is one of the most widely cultivated and consumed food crops in the world. It feeds about 40 percent of the world’s population and provides 20 percent of a human’s daily recommended amounts of calories and protein. Major efforts are underway around the world to increase the crop’s yield and quality by boosting genetic diversity and resistance to cold, drought and disease.

However, the extremely large size and polyplid complexity of the wheat genome have so far posed substantial barriers for researchers to gain insight into its biology and evolution.—Xinhua

China to build two more Antarctic research stations by 2015

BEIJING, 30 March—China is planning to build two new research stations in Antarctica by 2015 and site inspections are already being conducted by an expedition team, the State Oceanic Administration (SOA) said on Thursday.

A summer station that can be used from December to March will be set up between the existing Zhongshan and Kunlun Stations to provide replenishment and other logistical support, the SOA said.

The station will be used to study geology, glaciers, geomagnetism and atmospheric science in Antarctica. A perennial station will also be built in Victoria Land in Antarctica by 2015. The station will allow researchers to carry out multi-disciplinary research on bio-ecology and satellite remote sensing, according to the SOA.

China’s three existing Antarctic research stations are the Great Wall, Zhongshan and Kunlun stations.—Xinhua

Solar plane to set out to cross US in early May

MOUNTAIN VIEW, 30 March—The first cross-country flight of a solar-powered plane is expected to start in just over a month, its creators said on Thursday, as they make final preparations for an attempt two years from now at the first round-the-world flight without any fuel.

Swiss pilot Bertrand Piccard and project-founder and pilot Andre Borschberg, whose Solar Impulse made its first intercontinental flight from Spain to Morocco last June, aim for their plane to take off from near San Francisco in early May and land at New York’s John F Kennedy Airport about two months later.

With the wingspan of a jumbo jet and weighing the same as a small car, the Solar Impulse is just a test model for the team as they build a new aircraft they hope will circumnavigate the globe in 2015.

The project began in 2003 with a 10-year budget of 90 million euros ($112 million) and has involved engineers from Swiss lift maker Schindler and research and from Belgian chemicals group Solvay — backers who want to test new materials and technologies while also gaining brand recognition. Unveiling the current plane at a news conference at Moffett Field in Mountain View, California, Borschberg highlighted the cramped conditions of the cockpit in the Solar Impulse.

“That’s a bad economy seat—you would not fly on this airline,” he joked. “The next one should be good business class.”

While the current plane was set up for 24-hour flights, the next one would have to allow for up to five days and five nights of flying by one pilot—a feat never yet accomplished.—Reuters

Chinese regulator calls for tighter supervision of Apple

SAN FRANCISCO, 30 March—Apple Inc has come under criticism from a Chinese marketplace regulator, which called for stronger supervision of the iPhone-maker’s consumer policies within the country, according to state-run media.

On Thursday, the official China National Radio cited a Thursday notice from the State Administration for Industry and Commerce that urged authorities to protect consumers’ rights in accordance with the law.

According to CNR’s website report, the notice mentions Apple but stops short of specifying what exactly they need to go after and how to do so. The notice, CNR said, was in response to widespread reports since 15 March on how Apple’s after-sales service had hurt Chinese consumers.

Apple was singled out on 15 March by state-run China Central Television in an annual corporate malpractice expose. Other media outlets have since taken up the baton, focusing on the company’s warranty policy on Mac laptops, which critics say is shorter than in other countries. The Communist Party mouthpiece, the People’s Daily, ran an editorial on Wednesday attacking Apple for its “unparalleled arrogance”. An Apple spokesman said the company would not discuss regulatory matters. Apple’s popularity has helped offset some of the state-run attacks, which has incited strong push-back from many Chinese Internet users for what they see as unfair treatment doled out to the iPhone maker.—Reuters

Russian’s MTS acquires stake in parent’s bank

MOSCOW, 30 March—Russia’s top mobile phone operator MTS said on Friday it has acquired a 25.1 percent stake in MTS Bank for $164 million by buying additional shares issued by the bank.

The deal was concluded in accordance with the terms of an indicative offer between MTS, MTS Bank and their majority shareholder Sistema that were announced in October 2012. MTS now owns around 27 percent of MTS Bank, Sistema has a 65.3 percent stake, while the balance of shares is held by other minority shareholders, MTS said in a statement.

Russia’s MTS in 2013.—Reuters

A visitor tries an iPhone at an Apple store in Beijing on 28 March, 2013.—Reuters

Solar plane makes first cross-country flight

A man walks below a wing on the Solar Impulse at Moffett Field in Mountain View, California on 28 March, 2013.—Reuters
Big depositors in Cyprus to lose far more than feared

**L**os Angeles, 30 March—Some of the most popular prescription drugs that recently became available in generic form are sold at the lowest prices at Costco and at the highest prices at CVS Caremark, according to an analysis by Consumer Reports.

Costo said Tuesday that it plans to offer a comparison shop for drugs—such as generic Liptor to lower cholesterol or generic Plavix to thin the blood—could result in overpaying by $100 a month or even more, depending on the drug, the report said.

The article will be available in the May issue of Consumer Reports. Consumers may find good deals at local independent pharmacies, Consumer Reports said.

One of the big takeaways from the analysis is that the customer must ask the pharmacist for the best price, the publication said.

**Washington and Beijing.** US Representative Dutch Ruppersberger said last month American companies suffered estimated losses in 2012 of more than $300 billion due to trade secret theft, much of it the result of Chinese hacking.

China says the accusations lack proof and that it is also a victim of hacking attacks, more than half of which originate from the United States.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Hong Lei called the survey a “completely irresponsible action”.

We hope the relevant side China’s 1.1 politize financial and trade problems, does not exaggerate the so-called issue of online leaks and does more conducive things for China and the United States,” Hong told reporters. The Chamber’s survey was conducted among 325 members across China late last year, before the release of Mandiant’s report.

Only 10 percent of companies in the survey said they would use China-based cloud computing services, with most citing cyber security concerns as a reason. Blocked Internet searches in China had impeded business for 62 percent of respondents.

US officials have pressed China to address Internet attacks and cyber spying against American companies. US President Barack Obama raised hacking concerns in a meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping earlier in March. A recent assessment by US intelligence leaders found for the first time cyber attacks and cyber espionage had supplanted terrorism as the nation’s top threat. —Reuters

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### Consumer data support stumpy first-quarter growth picture

The economy is in a good place now in terms of momentum and strength, and it will need it as the government spending cuts will take something off growth as the year progresses,” said Chris Rupkey, chief financial economist at Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi UFJ in New York.

Consumers spending increased 0.7 percent last month after a 0.4 percent rise in January, the Commerce Department said.

Though part of the increase in spending, which accounts for about 70 percent of US economic activity, was because of higher gasoline prices, Americans also bought long-lasting goods such as automobiles and spent more on services. Gas prices at the pump increased 35 cents a gallon last month. After adjusting for inflation, spending was up 0.3 percent after advancing by the same margin in January.—Reuters

### China Merchants Bank 2012 net profits rise 25 pct

**Beijing, 30 March—**China Merchants Bank, the country’s fifth largest bank by market value, said on Monday that its net profits increased 25.31 percent year on year to 45.27 billion yuan (7.22 billion US dollars) in 2012). The company’s net interest income gained 15.81 percent from one year earlier to 88.37 billion yuan, while revenues from other sources rose 25.25 percent to 24.99 billion yuan, the bank said in a statement filed to the Shanghai Stock Exchange.

The value of the lender’s total assets amounted to 3.41 trillion yuan, an increase of 21.94 percent from a year earlier. Its non-performing loan ratio went up 0.05 percentage points to 0.61 percent as of the end of 2012, while its capital adequacy ratio came in at 12.14 percent, 0.61 percentage points higher from 2011, the statement said.—Xinhua

### Consumer data support stumpy first-quarter growth picture

### China Merchants Bank 2012 net profits rise 25 pct

**Washington, 30 March—**Consumer spending rose in February and sentiment among Americans perked up this month, further signs of an acceleration in economic activity in the first quarter after a near stall last late year. The data on Friday also showed a rebound in income growth, putting the economy in a better shape to deal with tighter fiscal policy, particularly $85 billion in across-the-board federal government spending cuts, known as the “sequester.”

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### Michael Dell spoke with Blackstone during “go-shop”

**New York, 30 March—** Dell Inc founder and CEO Michael Dell met with private equity group Blackstone Group LP and Francisco Partners during the computer maker’s “go-shop” period, a person familiar with the matter said on Friday. The meetings, which took place on 7 and 8 March, will be disclosed in Dell’s proxy statement on Friday and indicate Blackstone explored early on the possibility of keeping Michael Dell as CEO in a bid to take over the company, the person said on condition of anonymity because the information is not yet public.

Michael Dell also met this week with Blackstone senior managing directors Dave Johnson and Chinh Chu, although the outcome of these discussions has yet to become clear, the person added. Blackstone and Dell did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

During a 45-day go-shop period that expired last week, Dell explored alternatives to Michael Dell’s and Silver Lake’s $24.4 billion offer for the world’s number-three PC maker.—Reuters

### China Merchants Bank 2012 net profits rise 25 pct

**Beijing, 30 March—**China Merchants Bank, the country’s fifth largest bank by market value, said on Monday that its net profits increased 25.31 percent year on year to 45.27 billion yuan (7.22 billion US dollars) in 2012). The company’s net interest income gained 15.81 percent from one year earlier to 88.37 billion yuan, while revenues from other sources rose 25.25 percent to 24.99 billion yuan, the bank said in a statement filed to the Shanghai Stock Exchange.

The value of the lender’s total assets amounted to 3.41 trillion yuan, an increase of 21.94 percent from a year earlier. Its non-performing loan ratio went up 0.05 percentage points to 0.61 percent as of the end of 2012, while its capital adequacy ratio came in at 12.14 percent, 0.61 percentage points higher from 2011, the statement said.—Xinhua
New York to resume search for remains from 11 September attacks

NEW YORK, 30 March—New York City plans to start sifting through earth and debris recovered from the World Trade Centre site on Monday to look for the remains of victims from the attacks of 11 September, 2001, officials said on Friday.

The city’s Office of the Chief Medical Examiner on Friday advised families of the dead, who said they could not properly grieve. The city widened its search again in 2006.

The next search will comb through 590 cubic yards (451 cubic metres) of excavated material taken from and near the World Trade Centre site, said Caswell Holloway, deputy mayor for operations, in a memo to summit Michael Bloomberg made public by the Medical Examiner’s office. Much of the site known as Ground Zero is a construction zone for new skyscrapers and a memorial where the twin towers once stood.

The building under construction known as One World Trade Centre has surpassed the Empire State Building as the tallest in New York and, when completed, would be the tallest in the Western Hemisphere at 1,776 feet.—Reuters

Bombs at five Iraqi Shi’ite mosques kill 19

BAGHDAD, 30 March—Car bombs hit five Shi’ite mosques in Baghdad and the northern Iraqi city of Kirkuk just after prayers on Friday, killing 19 worshipers and injuring another 130. Ten years after the US invasion that toppled Saddam Hussein, Iraq is still grappling with political turmoil and Sunni Islamist insurgents linked to al Qaeda, who are stepping up attacks on Shi’ite targets and security forces.

Friday’s blasts hit Shi’ite mosques in southeast and north Baghdad while another tore the front off a mosque in Kirkuk, commercial capital near the Iraqi-Sunni Arab, Kurds and Turkmen 170 km (100 miles) north of the capital.

No solution in sight for Gaza’s severe water crisis

GAZA, 30 March—The Gaza Strip’s ongoing water crisis likely to be solved any time soon with pollution affecting 95 per cent of the aquifer in the Palestinian coastal enclave, Palestinian and international experts said Friday.

Husam Zaqout, the Gaza-based expert of environment, told a local workshop marking the Internationa Water Day that the groundwater in the Gaza Strip “is polluted to different degrees by toxic organic and non-organic materials.” He warned that the water pollution and shortage may develop into a full-scale humanitarian crisis sooner than people expect.

Since Islamic Hamas movement took control of the Gaza Strip in 2007, Israel has been imposing a blockade against the Palestinian enclave.

The embargo makes it difficult to build an efficient water sanitation infrastructure for the rapidly growing population.

“Water shortage in Gaza climbed to 80 million cubic metres,” said Zaqout, adding that the sources in the aquifer are gradually eroding, giving rise to the amount of salt and pollutants in the water it contains. Monzer Shublaq, Director General of the Gaza water authorities, told Xinhua that another factor behind the water crisis is Israel’s abuse of Gaza’s groundwater.

Tanzanians dig for survivors after building collapse

DAR ES SALAAM, 30 March—A building under construction collapsed in the centre of Tanzania’s commercial capital Dar es Salaam on Friday and rescuers searched for survivors under the rubble, with conflicting reports about the number of dead.

A senior police officer initially told reporters 15 people were killed and two people were pulled out alive. Hours later, the mayor for central Dar es Salaam, Jerin Sila, said two people were killed and 17 survivors had been found.

The building, in the Kariakoo District, was at least 2 storeys high. Witnesses said some cars were crushed in the collapse and people were using their hands to pull away masonry.

Rescue workers said they heard the voices of people trapped, possibly including boys who had been playing soccer nearby when the building collapsed. Some witnesses said construction workers may also have been trapped.

Tanzania’s buoyant economy has fuelled a construction boom, and Kariakoo in particular has been a focus for building. The speed of construction has raised concerns over standards.

Senior government officials also gathered at the scene.—Reuters

Turkish PM urges PKK to lay down weapons before withdrawing

ANKARA, 30 March—Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Friday called on the outlawed Kurdish Workers’ Party (PKK) to lay down arms before withdrawing from Turkish. In an interview with private broadcaster CNN Turk, the Turkish Prime Minister urged PKK members to lay down arms so as to prevent further confrontation, as “our security forces would not engage with those who already laid down arms.”

According to Erdogan, around, 1,500 to 2,000 PKK militants still remain in Turkish territory.

The Turkish government has been holding peace negotiations with Ocalan since last October, with the aim of outlining a timetable for the disarmament of PKK militants and their withdrawal from Turkish territory.

Last week, jailed PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan called for an end to armed struggle and withdrawal of PKK militants to northern Iraq where the PKK members have headquarters. The PKK, listed as a terrorist organization by Turkey, the United States and the European Union, took up arms in 1984 in an attempt to create an ethnic homeland in southeastern Turkey.—Xinhua

Residents inspect a damaged vehicle at the site of a bomb attack in Kirkuk, 250 km (155 miles) north of Baghdad, on 29 March, 2013.—Reuters
MR upgrade Mohnyin, Mogaung stations

Mohnyin, 30 March—Myanma Railways plans to upgrade Mohnyin and Mogaung stations in Kachin State in 2012-2013 fiscal year and Hopin Station in 2013-2014 fiscal year.

Engineer U Win Myint and party of Myanma Railways are building 500 feet long, 30 feet wide and one foot thick platform at Mohnyin State and decoration of roof and walls.

At present, the platform with measurement of 217 feet long, 32 feet wide and one foot and nine inches thick has been constructed at Mogauing Station.

Myanma Alinn

Summer culture course opened in Hline

Hline, 30 March—Jointly organized All Myanmar Theravada Buddhist Organization and Border and Hill Region Sasana Naggha Association, Hline Township Sasana Naggha Association, Myitwaddy Parahita Monastery and Ward 16 Sasana Naggha Association, the summer culture course was opened at the Myitwaddy Monastery on 20 March.

Vice-Chairman of Region Sasana Naggha Association U Ye Aung, Chairman of Township Association Thitha Tihinma, Thudhamma Manjotadhara U Khin Hla, Secretary of Township Association U Hla Tun, ward administrator U Hit Kyaw Win and course instructor Daw Khin Thanda Oo formally opened the course.

Vice-Chairperson of District Association Thithuama Theingi Daw Ohnma Lwin donated cash to the fund of the course. Over 700 trainees attended the course.

Myanma Alinn

ATR-72 600 airplane introduced

Yangon, 30 March—Air KBZ introduced the already bought new ATR-72 600 airplane was held at Parkroyal, here, on 21 March.

Deputy Managing Director U Khin Maung Myint of Air KBZ Ltd explained matters related to ATR-72-600 airplane.

Myint Kyi are providing technical and Head of District AMD Department U Aung Myint Kyi is providing training to the trainees up to 9 April.—Myanma Alinn

Rice and provisions donated to hill region monasteries

Nay Pyi Taw, 30 March—Ministry of Border Affairs and Nay Pyi Taw Council donated provisions to five monasteries from hill region of eastern part of Pyinmana Township.

On 16 March, the donation ceremony was held at Aungmingala Monastery in Thamayze Village.

Member of Nay Pyi Taw Council Col Myint Aung Than and party took the Five Precepts from hill region missionary Sayadaw Maha Saddhammajotikadhaja Bhaddanta Naninda of Koetaphoneso Village.

They then distributed provisions and alms worth K 1 million to five monasteries.

Myanma Alinn

Vocational training course commences in Myitkyina

Myitkyina, 30 March—Jointly organized by Vocational Training School of Myitkyina Township Social Welfare Department and Myitkyina Airbase, the vocational course No 1/2013 was opened at the hall of the airbase on 21 March.

With an address by Family Organizing and Discipline Enforcement Committee Daw Marlar Hsiint. Principal of the school Daw Khin Ohn Myint explained the purpose of conducting the course.

Over 700 trainees attended the course.

Myanma Alinn

Rice donated to nuns in Mandalay

Mandalay, 30 March—The rice donation ceremony was held at Shwedinda Monastery on Upoktaw Ward of Aungmyethazan Township on 18 March evening.

It was attended by Daw Myat Ngwe, wife of Mandalay Region Chief Minister U Ye Myint, region ministers and wellwishers.

Nuns from Atulawady, Thitayant and Thitsakami nunneries opened the ceremony with recitation of Namo Tassa.

The Chief Minister’s wife and wellwishers donated rice and cash to nuns from three nunneries. At the ceremony the donations amounted to K 1,215,000 and rice worth K 199,900.

Myanma Alinn

Padaung disseminates public-centred health care

Padaung, 30 March—Population Service International (Myanmar) and Township Health Department of the Ministry of Health jointly opened the public-centred health care anti-malaria course at the hall of People’s Hospital in Padaung Township on 13 March. Head of Township Health Department Dr Thin Thang Hsiint made a speech.

Coach instructors Dr Hein Ko Ko, Dr Win Htut and Dr Pyae Pyae Phyo from PSI gave lectures on matters related to malaria and preventive measures.

Population Service International provided health care services to 4207 malaria suspected persons and 477 malaria patients from 2010 to 2013 in Padaung Township.

Myanma Alinn

Loans for members of market cooperative society

Hispaw, 30 March—Hisipaw Township Rural Development Supervisory Committee held a coordination meeting in conjunction with the loan disbursement ceremony at the hall of Zaygydaw Market Cooperative Society Office on 20 March.

Chairman of the cooperative society U Aye Kyaw described the loans to 10 members of the cooperative society.

The cooperative society constituted with 529 members of vendors is operating its functions with over K 150 million.

Myanma Alinn

Farmers learn tractor driving, farming equipment utilization in Pathein

Pathein, 30 March—Under the instruction of Ayeyawady Region Chief Minister U Thein Aung and under the supervision of Head of Ayeyawady Region Agriculture Mechanization Department U Aung Myint and Head of District AMD U Khin Maung Myint, technicians of the department conducted the farmers in the operating of tractors and farming machinery control course at Basic Education Primary School in Hsattwin Model Village in Kangyi Daunt Township of Ayeyawady Region on 18 March.

Deputy Commissioner U Aye Maung Kyi of Pathein District made a speech.

Head of District AMD U Khin Aung Nyunt explained the purpose of training course.

Kangyi Daunt Township Administrator U Myint Swe, Head of District Agriculture Mechanization Department U Sai Kyaw Ohn and technicians conducted the training to 62 farmers from Pathein, Kangyi Daunt, Kyauklong, Thabaung, Kyonpyaw, Yeikyi and Ngaputaw townships.

Myanma Alinn
Invisible threat to us

It is not entirely exaggerated that ozone depletion can aggravate the impact of UV radiation on human health ever further. The more ozone layer becomes thinner, the greater people get acute and chronic UV-related health effects on the skin, eye and immune system triggered by overexposure to higher UV radiation level. Although small amounts of UV are beneficial to people and essential in the production of vitamin D, excessive exposure to sunlight is widely accepted as a root cause of skin cancer as UV index which is up to 10-11 can be harmful to the human skin.

Now daily temperature is about to reach its peak in April that is considered to be the hottest month of the year in our country. Most of Myanmar people have little awareness of the risk of UV rays and they lack a wide knowledge about health effects of UV radiation. According to a well-known local meteorologist, Myanmar is brought face-to-face with the danger of higher UV level as UV index is up to 9 in some regions and states. Even in Yangon, UV index had reached 12.8 since one month ago and it is expected to increase more than 13. Alarm bells on skin cancer and permanent blindness begin to sound to be cautious that a high UV index is very dangerous for our health. Statistics indicate that worldwide annual deaths of about 66,000 people and some 12 to 15 million who go blind annually are due to UV-related diseases like skin cancers and cataracts.

It is time to heighten the public awareness of health hazards of UV radiation and to develop sun protection measures which is urgently needed for Yangonites and dwellers of other cities and towns. As sun’s UV rays are the strongest at noon and after noon, simple precautions to be adopted are shade, clothing and umbrellas or hats which are best protection when you walk outside in the midday sun. If you are going to be out in the sun, it is required to protect yourself from too much exposure to the UV rays and to adopt the following sun safety practices — limit exposure to direct sunlight during these hours, search for shade under the scorching heat, keeping the shadow rule in your mind: “Watch your shadow — short shadow, seek shade!”; wear tight woven, loose fitting clothing and sunglasses, and take cover under an umbrella or hat that offer good sun protection.

Press Release

Lists of banks, bank branches and exchange counters for FEC withdrawal programme

1. In accordance with the guidance of the Government and the Ministry of Finance and Revenue, the Central Bank of Myanmar is implementing the withdrawal of Foreign Exchange Certificates (FEC) to avoid the losses of FEC holders. In doing so, FEC can be exchanged at the following bank, bank branches and exchange counters across the country, totaling 357.
   (a) 282 branches of Myanma Economic Bank
   (b) Myanma Foreign Trade Bank
   (c) two branches of Myanma Investment and Commercial Bank
   (d) two branches of Myanma Citizens Bank Ltd
   (e) Cooperatives Bank Ltd
   (f) seven of Myanmar Oriental Bank (MOB)
   (g) Asian Green Development Bank
   (h) Yoma Bank Ltd
   (i) seven of Small and Medium Industrial Development Bank Ltd
   (j) two of Ayeyawady Bank Ltd
   (k) Myanma Livestock and Fisheries Development Bank Ltd
   (l) First Private Bank Ltd
   (m) Tun Foundation Bank Ltd
   (n) seven of United Amara Bank Ltd
   (o) four of Inwa Bank Ltd
   (p) three of Myanmar Apex Bank Ltd
   (q) three of Myawady Bank Ltd

2. Services and their name lists of those banks, branches and exchange counters are listed in the appendix. (The appendix is available at the Central Bank of Myanmar’s Website and advertisement supplement of daily newspapers)

3. FEC can be also exchanged for kyat at the private banks and the companies that do not include in the list of banks, branch banks and exchange counters described in the para (1).

4. FEC withdrawal rate will be equivalent to USD exchange rate at every banks and counters.

5. FEC holders can exchange their FEC at the above-mentioned banks, branches and counters along with their documents (Citizenship Scrutiny Card or Passport or Company Register) in line with bank procedures.

6. For any inconvenience, can contact the following addresses.

Foreign Exchange Management Department of CBM
Ph: 01-543136, 01-543532, 01-559278 and 01-8603748
Fax: 01-543532
Email: nawehhpaw305@gmail.com

7. The above-mentioned facts are available at the Central Bank of Myanmar’s website: www.cbm.gov.mm.

FEC Withdrawal Supervisory Committee

Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker...

Region Hluttaw U Sein Tin Win and Deputy Speaker U Tin Aung, officials of Pyithu Hluttaw Committee and Commissions.

The delegation members Chairman of Pyithu Hluttaw International Relations Committee U Hla Myint Oo, Chairman of Pyithu Hluttaw Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries Development Committee U Soe Naing and officials also arrived back.

MNA

Cash and kind donated for victims at relief camps in Meiktila

MNA

At the ceremony, wellwishers donated rice, instant noodles, edible oil, purified drinking water, blankets, longies worth K 55,980,000 through Region Chief Minister U Ye Myint and Deputy Minister U Phone Swe.

The deputy minister for border affairs and party visited relief camps at No 1 BEHS and Magyigon monastery where they viewed health and provisions of victims and donated K 1.7 million to Magyigon Monastery Sayadaw. —MNA

Deputy Minister Maj-Gen Zaw Win donates cash assistance to Chief Minister of Mandalay Region U Ye Myint.—MNA

Nay Pyi Taw, 30 March —Cash and kind donation ceremony for victims in Meiktila took place at communications staff quarters, Meiktila, this morning, attended by Mandalay Region Chief Minister U Ye Myint, Deputy Minister for Border Affairs Maj-Gen Zaw Win, Deputy Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement U Phone Swe, officials and wellwishers.

Deputy Minister Maj-Gen Zaw Win clarified the purpose of donations.

Nay Pyi Taw, 30 March — Latter Day Saint Charities donated 95 wheelchairs and equipments for the disabled to Social Welfare Department of Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement at the department yesterday.

Country director of Latter Day Saint Charities explained the purpose of donation and handed over the documents related the wheelchairs and equipment through the Director-General of Social Department. It is sixth donation by Latter Day Saint Charities.

MNA

Invisible threat to us

It is not entirely exaggerated that ozone depletion can aggravate the impact of UV radiation on human health ever further. The more ozone layer becomes thinner, the greater people get acute and chronic UV-related health effects on the skin, eye and immune system triggered by overexposure to higher UV radiation level. Although small amounts of UV are beneficial to people and essential in the production of vitamin D, excessive exposure to sunlight is widely accepted as a root cause of skin cancer as UV index which is up to 10-11 can be harmful to the human skin.

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Latter Day Saint Charities donates wheelchairs

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Country director of Latter Day Saint Charities explained the purpose of donation and handed over the documents related the wheelchairs and equipment through the Director-General of Social Department. It is sixth donation by Latter Day Saint Charities.

MNA

Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker...
Union Attorney-General meets foreign guests

NAY PYI TAW, 30 March—Attorney-General of the Union Dr Tun Shin received delegation led by Mr Go Hashimoto of Nishimura & Asahi Law Firm of Japan at his office yesterday.

The meeting focused on legal assistance in settling commercial disputes, aided by Daiwa Security Group Companies to establish stock exchange, Japanese investments in Myanmar and signing New York Convention by Myanmar.

He also met Democracy and Governance Officer Mr Gerry Porta of USAID at the same venue this noon. They discussed the role of the office and duties of region/state advocates-general.

Member Mr. Jacobs of USAID said they would assist in drafting bills and shared his experiences of assisting to drafting bills.

Committee for Implementing Latpadaungtaung Copper Mine Project Report holds work coordination meeting

NAY PYI TAW, 30 March—The work coordination meeting of the Committee for Implementing Latpadaungtaung Copper Mine Project Report took place at the meeting hall of Region Government Office in Monywa, here, yesterday noon, with an address by Committee Chairman Union Minister at the President Office U Hla Tun.

Union Minister U Hla Tun said that the government has assigned subcommittees to implement investigation report on Latpadaungtaung copper mine project. For it, the government is providing necessary assistance to respective ministries.

He urged officials to educate local people and have transparency. Officials are to follow procedures for administration and the rule of law. It also needs to seek the difficulties in the regions, he added.

The Vice-Chairman Region Chief Minister reported on committee’s undertakings, completion, difficulties, peace and stability and rural development. Deputy Ministers and deputy leaders submitted completion, follow-up programme and difficulties.

After that, Union Ministers U Ohn Myint, U Win Tun and Dr Myint Aung, and deputy minister Chief of Myanmar Police Force Police Brig. Gen Kyaw Kyaw Tun also discussed work programmes. After that, Union Minister U Hla Tun highlighted transparency, dissemination of knowledge and international standards.

Meiktila Central market re-opened

NAY PYI TAW, 30 March—Thanks to 24-hour security measures of security forces, Tatmadawmen and duty-conscious people, the clouds of fear over Meiktila skies have dispersed with locals back to normal life.

Meiktila Central market was re-opened this morning. Likewise, stores, shops, eateries, kiosks, teashops and bazaars are also open now. In addition, transportation services have also resumed to the happiness of locals and travelers.

Union National Social and Economic Advisory Council held interfaith meeting

YANGON, 30 March—Organized by National Social and Economic Advisory Council to the President and Myanmar Peace Centre, an interfaith meeting took place at Myanmar Peace Centre here this afternoon. It was participated by State Ovada Cariya Sayadaws, members of the President’s National Social and Economic Advisory personnel from political parties and religious organizations, the chairman and members of Myanmar Movie Asayone and businessmen and personnel from community associations.

Before the meeting, U Aung Naing Oo of Myanmar Peace Centre explained the purpose of the meeting and Sayadaw Bhaddanta Gunika Bhivamsa, Joint Secretary Sayadaw of State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee, delivered an address and Dr Ashin Paññasaharedu about the message of Sitagu Sayadaw Dr Ashin Nannissara.

During the meeting, all participants discussed and gave suggestions for peace and harmony of all communities in Myanmar.

New gravel road reduces travel time in Pyu Township

PYU, 30 March—A newly opened road has saved the travel time between two villages in Pyu Township.

The gravel road was constructed at a cost of 20,750,000 funded by the Armed Forces Day exceeded 1637.9 million for their mine project area have been compensated K30,750,000 for their mine project area have been compensated K2065 ft long and 10 ft wide linking Waegyi and Ohbo villages in Pyu Township and it was inaugurated on 22 March as a gesture of hailing the 68th Anniversary Armed Forces Day.

The road was 20 ft wide and international standards. A vehicle will be charged at the above rate.

The gravel road in progress

Notice

1. Yangon City Development Committee will collect tolls on using new Strand Road from vehicles which pass on it as from 1 April, 2013, at the following rate.
   a) Vehicles which are 14 ft and under in length K1500 rate
   b) Trucks with vehicle weight 20 tons and above K4000 rate

2. A vehicle will be charged at the above rate only one time during 24 hrs from 6 am to 6 am the next day.
South Africa says Mandela makes progress, in good spirits

**Nelson Mandela sits beneath the window of his prison cell on Robben Island near Cape Town, on 28 Nov, 2003.**—REUTERS

**Sunday, 31 March, 2013**

**WORLD**

**New Light of Myanmar**, (South Af-
rica), 30 March—South African former President Nelson Mandela is in good spirits and making progress, doctors said on Friday, after the 94-year-old anti-
apartheid hero was taken to hospital for the third time in four months for a lung in-
fection.

The medical report was a relief to South Africans who had been anxiously praying and waiting for an update on the health of the Nobel Peace Prize lau-
rate, hospitalized before midnight on Wednesday.

Global leaders sent their best wishes.

President Jacob Zu-
ma’s government had al-
ready reported Mandela was responding well to treatment, and had sought to reassure the na-
ton, recalling that the re-
vered statesman’s advanced age meant he required fre-
quently medical checks.

“President Nelson Mandela is in good spirits and enjoyed a full breakfast this morning,” Zuma’s of-
fice said in a statement.

“The doctors report that he is making steady progress. He remains under treatment and observation in hospital,” it added. Man-
dela became South Africa’s first black President after winning the country’s first all-race election in 1994.

A former lawyer, he is revered at home and abroad for leading the struggle against white minority rule —including spending 27 years in prison on Robben Island—and then promot-
ing the cause of racial rec-
conciliation.

In churches across South Africa, many includ-
ed Mandela in their prayers on Good Friday, one of the most important days in the Christian calendar.

At the Regina Mundi Catholic Church in the Soweto township outside Johannesburg where Man-
dela once lived, church-
goers lit candles for him.

“He’s an icon today and we are free because of him,” parishioner Oupa Radebe said.—REUTERS

**Deforestation in Brazil’s Amazon up 26 pct**

**Rio de Janeiro, 30 March**—The area of de-
forestation in Brazil’s Amazon rainforest rose from 2,685 square km in August 2012 to February 2013 increased by 26.6 percent year-on-year, an of-
official institute said on Thursday.

According to the sat-
ellite detection system, Deter, of the National Space Research Institute (INPE), 1,695 square km of forest —Sao Paulo, South America’s larg-
est city—were destroyed in the six-month period, compared with the 1,339 square km destroyed dur-
ing the same period a year ago.

The midwestern state of Mato Grosso has the largest deforested areas of 734 square km, followed by the northern states of Para with 428 square km and Rondonia with 270 square km, the institute said.

Brazil’s environ-
ment protection agency Ibama said it has stepped up patrols in the Amazon region after it was in-
formed of the increase in deforestation.

“We have started the Green Wave operation, occupying critical areas that amount to 54 percent of the deforestation in the Amazon Rainforest re-
gion,” Ibama Director Lu-
ciano de Meneses said.

**Nelson Mandela sits beneath the window of his prison cell on Robben Island near Cape Town, on 28 Nov, 2003.**—REUTERS

**Two people missing after light plane crashes into sea in New Zealand**

**Wellington, 30 March**—A light plane crashed into the sea off the coast of Kawhia in New Zealand North Island’s Waikato re-
gion on Saturday.

Wreckage has been found but two people were missing.

The Rescue Coordina-
tion Centre said the twin-
engined Beechcraft Baron aircraft was flying from Ardmore to Timaru when it reported engine failure and lost radar contact, at about 12.20 pm on Saturday, Ra-
dio New Zealand reported.

It said the wreckage and an oil slick have been found 20 km north west of the community of Kawhia on the west coast near Gannet Island.

Spokesman Steve Rendle said a helicopter was doing an aerial search while the coastguard is scouring the sea for the missing people.

**Seven killed in northern Mexican bar shooting**

**Ciudad Juarez, 30 March**—Seven people were killed when a gunman opened fire in the early hours of Friday in a bar in northern Mexico, which has seen a resurgence in drug-
related violence in recent weeks.

The man, armed with an AK-47 assault rifle, killed four men who were clients in the bar in Chihuah-
ua state as well as three women who worked there, said a spokesman for the state attorney general’s of-
office. “It has not been deter-
mined whether the attack is connected to drug traf-
ficking, but by the type of weapon involved, it is to be assumed,” said spokesman Carlos Gonzalez.

The attack occurred in the city of Chihuahua, the capital of the state that is also home to the Sinaloa cartel, considered one of the most violent cities in the world until recently. The attacker entered the bar with his face covered by a bandana, said the spokesman.

Chihuahua has seen heavy fighting between the local Juarez cartel and the Sinaloa cartel, led by Joaquin “Shorty” Guzman, who is seeking to control the city that is one of the main routes for traffick-
ing drugs into the United States.

In spite of a change of government in Decem-
ber and a new strategy that avoids direct confrontation with the powerful cartels, violence in Mexico has picked up in recent weeks along fighting along the bor-
der, in the western state of Michoacan and the tourist destination of Cancun.

Nearly 3,200 people have been killed in drug-
related violence during the first three months of Presi-
dent Enrique Pena Nieto’s government, according to Mexican government data.

**Hundreds of migrants rescued off Italian coast**

**Rome, 30 March**—Italian coastguards said on Friday they had intercepted almost 700 mostly African migrants trying to get to the country on board 10 inflatable and rickety boats.

One vessel crammed with 150 people sent out a distress call saying 80 miles off the tiny Sicilian island of Lampedusa on Friday afternoon, the service said. Emergency services were sent to rescue them and an-
other 70 people in a rubber craft nearby. All the other boats were stopped over the last two days.

Italy’s coast is a com-
mon destination for mi-
grants from north and sub-
Saharan Africa.

Thousands have died during the risky voyage across the Mediterranean as a result of shipwreck, harsh conditions and a lack of food and water, say ac-
tivists.

“When with the arrival of the spring and the subsequent improvement in the weath-
ern conditions, migrant at-
tempts to reach the Italian coast have picked up mas-
sively,” the coastguard said in a statement. A 15-metre long rubber boat carrying 98 people from sub-Saha-
ran Africa was intercepted 96 miles off the coast of the tiny Sicilian island of Lampedusa on Thursday, a coastguard official said.

Rescue workers then received an emergency call from another boat carry-
ing 131 people from sub-
Saharan Africa, Pakistan and Bangladesh close to Lampedusa, which they brought to shore.

Overnight the coast-
guard rescued 31 people from Morocco and sub-Saha-
ran Africa on a boat off the southern coast of Sicily, which was also heading to Lampedusa. The official said 214 other migrants, mainly from Africa, on five boats had also been de-
tained in the past 48 hours.

All the migrants are being held in reception centres in Sicily and Lampedusa, the official said.—REUTERS
Thai opposition leader calls for early construction of high-speed rail linking China via Laos

BANGKOK, 30 March — Former Thai Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva urged on Thursday the government to build a high-speed railway to link Thailand with China via Laos at the initial stage of a historic 730-billion-US-dollar logistics reconstruction scheme.

He also expressed opposition to the government’s plan to borrow loans to finance the scheme, saying it should instead be covered by the government budget.

Debating a legislation seeking loans to finance the Thai government’s “railroad revolution” and other logistics reconstruction plans, the leader of the opposition Democrat Party advised that the planned construction of a high-speed train project between Bangkok and Nong Khai, Thailand’s northeastern province sharing border with Laos, should be implemented ahead of a similar project to link the capital city with China’s capital. The bunder top efforts to rescue the bur- 

say, on condition of anonymity. Police and fire brigade officials rushed to the spot soon after the explosion. “This is just an accident, not any kind of terror act as those injured did not sustain any splinter injuries. However, a probe has been ordered to ascertain the exact cause of the incident,” the official added. Explosions are common in factories in India because of lack of basic safety requirements. Many industrial units don’t adhere to the safety norms and authorities also don’t properly inspect them and enforce laws. —Xinhua

Bangladeshi Army chief to visit India next week

NEW DELHI, 30 March — Bangladeshi Army chief General Iqbal Karim Bhuiyan will visit India next week, sources said on Friday.

“General Bhuiyan will arrive in India on 1 April. He will lead a delegation to this country. During his four-day tour, he would hold talks with Indian Defence Minister AK Antony, Indian Army chief General Bikram Singh, Indian Air Chief Marshal NAK Browne and Indian Navy chief Admiral DK Joshi,” the sources said.

India is helping Bangladesh with “building capacity” of the Bangladeshi military, including imparting training, conducting exercises and providing military supplies and technology. —Xinhua

20 percent Nepalis have access to Internet

KATHMANDU, 30 March — Around 5.7 million Nepalis accounting for 20 percent of the total population have an access to Internet now, a report said on Friday. The increase has been witnessed due mainly to the mobile service compa- nies, which simultaneously provide mobile-based Internet to a large chunk of users, said the report released by Nepal Telecom Authority.

Among the key internet providers, government-owned Nepal Telecom has 2.6 million subscribers, while private company NCell has 2.9 million customers. These two companies account for 96.5 percent (5.5 mil- lion) of the total internet users. Despite a subscription boom, Internet is mostly limited to urban areas of the nation, where 80 percent of the population live in the rural areas. Government has provisioned nominal fee for Internet providers to ex- pand services in rural areas. However, the Internet pro- viders say their investment is at risk when they operate in the countryside without some protection measures in place. —Xinhua

Chinese leaders urge rescue of landslide-trapped workers in Tibet

BEIJING, 30 March — Chinese President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Keqiang on Friday or- dered top efforts to rescue workers who were buried in a massive landslide in a mining area in Tibet Autonomous Region.

At least 83 workers were buried in a landslide that occurred around 6 am on Friday in Maizhokunggar County of Lhasa, the regional capital. The bur- lied, including two Tibet- ans, were workers from a subsidiary of the China National Gold Group Corporation.

Xi, who is paying state visits abroad, and Li, respectively, have told lo- cal authorities to spare no efforts to rescue the bur- ied and prevent secondary disasters.

They also urged to lose no time to confirm the number of buried workers and determine the cause of the landslide.

Some 1,000 rescuers, including police, fire- fighters and medical personnel, are working at the site, which is at an altitude of 4,600 metres. Local authorities and officials of the State Administration of Work Safety, Ministry of Land and Resources and State-owned Assets Supervision and Admin- 

istered by China National Gold Group Corporation.

Local authorities and officials of the State Administration of Work Safety, Ministry of Land and Resources and State-owned Assets Supervision and Admin- 

istration Commission of the State Council have also led work teams to guide rescue efforts at the affected mining area.

Liu Yanshan and Zhang Gaoli, who are both the Standing Com- 

mittee members of the Communist Party of Chi- na (CPC) Central Com- mittee Political Bureau, as well as other senior officials also expressed their concerns for the trapped workers. —Xinhua

Japanese police rescue five killed in factory explosion in Mumbai

NEW DELHI, 30 March — At least five people were killed and three oth- ers sustained injuries in an explosion at a small-scale industrial unit in Mumbai on Friday, a senior police official said.

“The incident hap- pened in Sakinaka area of Mumbai’s Andheri area. Those killed were factory workers who got crushed under a wall of an adjoining building, which collapsed due to the explosion in the aluminium sheet manufac- turing unit. Those injured sus- tained burn injuries,” he said.

People visit a booth on the opening day of the 4th Malaysia International Shoe Festival (MISF) in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, on 28 March, 2013. —Xinhua

A crane lifts the containment top head to cap the first unit of the Haiyang Nuclear Power Plant in Hainan, east China’s Hainan Province, on 29 March, 2013. The first unit of the Hainyang Nuclear Power Plant, which will be installed with the third generation of nuclear power technology, the AP1000, has seen com- pletion of its civil construction on 29 March. The unit is planned to come into stream at the end of 2014 with annual generation capacity of 17.5 billion Kwh. —Xinhua

Japan to set up force against cyber attack

TOKYO, 30 March — Japan’s National Police Agency will establish a force of special investiga- tors to combat Internet cyber attacks, Kyodo News Agency reports.

Japan is to strengthen its defence capabilities against cyber attacks from government bodies and high tech enterprises. The special force will compro- mise of around 140 staff and will be affiliated to lo- cal police departments.

The special force will be in charge of supervising online posts which try to incite cyber attacks, an- alyzing the characteristic of cyber attacks and alerting government bodies and enterprises. The spe- cial force will also be al- lowed to cooperated with other countries to combat attacks.

The force will also establish an information sharing system with public services including electric power, gas and high tech companies. —Xinhua

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China, Greece boost huge potential in tourism cooperation: Athens mayor

BEIJING, 30 March—Beijing and Athens, as well as China and Greece on broader horizon, boost huge potential for cooperation in tourism, visiting Athens Mayor Georgios Kaminis told Xinhua here on Friday.

Kamnis, who is in Beijing on his maiden trip to China, said his main purpose is to seek approval from the Chinese side for the opening of a direct air route to Athens so as to attract more Chinese tourists to Greece, where tourism industry serves as a pillar of the economy and provides nearly 20 percent of employment.

Tourism earnings, which accounted for 16.5 percent of the country’s GDP in 2011, fell by 4.6 percent year on year to 9.89 billion US dollars in the first 11 months of 2012, according to the central bank of Greece.

Kamnis said it is more cost-effective now to visit the ancient city of Athens, one of the most favoured tourist destinations in the world, as the eurozone debt crisis has made tour there less expensive.

In Athens, tourists can set out on a shopping spree of world’s top brands and feast on tasty traditional Greek cuisine, Kaminis said. “We have traditional Greek cuisine, part of Mediterranean cuisine, which is nutritional and healthy. They can also enjoy a very good time and good weather,” the mayor added.

Earlier on Friday, the mayor attended the first meeting of the Beijing-Athens Cooperation Committee, which was established to promote inter-city cooperation in commerce, agriculture and tourism.

Meanwhile, Kaminis said he came here also to promote a post-graduate programme between the University of Athens and China’s University of International Business and Economics on China-EU relations, and push for the establishment of a business council to attract more Chinese investments in Athens.

World Bank nods to Morocco to modernize agriculture

RABAT, 30 March—The World Bank (WB) on Friday approved a loan of 203 million US dollars to Morocco to further help the country modernize its agricultural sector, the bank’s representative in Rabat said in a press release.

The loan is part of the support for the Green Morocco Plan, a large-scale agricultural programme aiming to improve food security and promote Morocco’s integration into the global economy, among others.

“Developing a liberalized and diversified market environment will boost the performance of the agriculture sector and contribute to reducing rural poverty,” said Simon Gray, WB’s Maghreb Country director.

The Green Morocco Plan, the country’s core agricultural strategy which started in 2008, also aims to provide better opportunities to farmers by transforming the agri-food sector into a stable source of growth, competitiveness and broad-based economic development in rural areas.

The agricultural sector contributes to 19 percent of the country’s gross national product (GNP) and employs over 4.5 million people. Morocco plans to double the value-added of the agricultural sector and add another 1.5 million jobs in the sector by 2020.—Xinhua

WB loans to Sri Lanka to help fight non-communicable diseases

COLOMBO, 30 March—The World Bank (WB) has approved a concessional loan of 200 million US dollars to Sri Lanka to help the government provide health services to mitigate escalating non-communicable diseases such as obesity, diabetes and cancer, a statement said here on Friday.

The project is expected to benefit the whole population of 21 million people of the country, especially the poorer and more vulnerable population groups who depend more on public health services.

Those who will benefit directly from this project are those vulnerable to under-nutrition, maternal and child healthcare.

The funding will also cover people suffering from a range of ailments including tuberculosis, dengue, leptospirosis, HIV/AIDS as well as persons with acute and chronic non-communicable diseases like injuries, heart diseases, strokes, hypertension, diabetes mellitus, cancers and mental disorders.

“The current health system needs improvements to deal effectively with emerging health problems of a middle-income country such as ours,” WB Senior Health Specialist Kumari Vinodhani Navaratne was quoted as saying in the statement.

The WB estimates that during the past half-century, the proportion of deaths due to cardiovascular diseases has increased from 3 percent to 24 percent while that due to infectious diseases has decreased from 42 percent to 20 percent.

Over 200 rescued from ice floes off Latvia coast

RIGA, 30 March—A total of 219 people who were stranded on two ice floes that drifted from the shore of Latvia have been rescued successfully on Friday, media reports quoted Latvian emergency ministry as saying.

Among them, 180 residents were stranded on an ice floe near Varkaull beach, while another 39 were on an ice floe near Majori beach in the Gulf of Riga, according to the local reports.

Strong winds and high waves have washed one of the ice floes some four kilometres from the shore, causing trouble for the rescue, which was joined by boats, helicopters and navy ships.

The Latvian authorities have issued warnings, urging people to avoid ice-fishing or walking on ice, said the reports.—Xinhua

Armenia, China sign pact on technical, economic cooperation

YEREVAN, (Armenia), 30 March—Armenian Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Manasaryan and Ambassador of China to Armenia Tian Changhun have signed an agreement in Yerevan on technical and economic cooperation between the two countries, the Armenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced in a press release on Friday.

The agreement foresees the construction of a Chinese school of regional significance in Armenia.

Within the framework of technical and economic cooperation between Armenia and China, a number of agricultural, public health and transportation projects have been implemented in Armenia with the support of the Chinese government.

A visitor takes pictures of a wood sculpture at the African Wood Sculpture Collection exhibition in Nanjing, capital of east China’s Jiangsu Province, on 29 March, 2013. The exhibition kicking off on Friday displays near 600 wood carving works from dozens of countries in the sub-Saharan Africa.—Xinhua

Photo taken on 27 March, 2013 shows vendors duplicating keys in old town of Havana, Cuba. Since Cuba permitted the existence of small private businesses in 2010, the number of individual business owners has reached over 400 thousand, mainly in restaurant, rental housing, transportation, food processing and marketing among the 178 permitted trades.—Xinhua

People ask for job opportunities at a booth by army force during the job fair at the Vancouver Convention Centre in Vancouver, Canada, on 28 March, 2013. The 47th and final BC Jobs Start job fair kicks off in Vancouver on Thursday, with the participation of more than 50 employers. Until February 2013, the unemployment rate in BC is 6.3% and the government expected about one million job openings will be seen by 2020 in the Province.—Xinhua
NEW DELHI, 30 March — James Franco turned down sex with Lindsay Lohan because she had "issues".

Lindsay Lohan, didn’t you? Back then when she was a lot hotter?" He replied: "Oh, gosh. Poor Lindsay. I haven’t talked to her in a while... We were friends. My house in LA was being redone, so I did this thing where I just stayed at the [Chateau Marmont] hotel, and she had been living there for a couple years. I mean, I don’t want there to be bad blood about it. I don’t know how that got out. She was having issues even then, so you feel weird. Honestly, she was a friend. I’ve met a lot of people that are troubled and sometimes you don’t want to do that."

The 34-year-old actor has been romantically linked with his Spring Breakers co-star Ashley Benson, and though he refused to confirm the rumours, he did admit he is ready to settle down.

He said: "Let’s say I’m dating. I’m getting older. I would like a long-term relationship." — PTI

NEW DELHI, 30 March — James Franco turned down sex with Lindsay Lohan because she had "issues".

The Spring Breakers actor met the troubled actress — who is due to begin her sixth stint in rehab in May — through mutual friends and though she wanted their relationship to become romantic, he refused because he felt that he would be taking advantage of the "troubled" star.

Gucci Mane felt that he would be taking advantage of Gucci Mane the "troubled" star.

US rapper Gucci Mane was jailed in Georgia on Wednesday for allegedly hitting a fan in the head with a champagne bottle at an Atlanta nightclub earlier this month.

Mane, 33, faces an aggravated assault charge after causing a "severe laceration" to the man whom he hit with a champagne bottle on 16 March, according to a police report. The fan had approached Mane and tried to strike up a conversation, police said.

Mane left the nightclub before police arrived.

A magistrate judge denied bond for Mane at his first court appearance on Wednesday, sheriff’s spokeswoman Tracy Flanagan said.

Mane did not enter a plea. His next hearing will be on 10 April, Flanagan said. — Reuters

LODGE, 30 March — Even though the 39-year-old actress plays the love interest of her real life boyfriend Ryan Gosling in new movie The Place Beyond the Pines, she admitted filming the romantic scenes were still difficult.

She told Us Weekly magazine: “Love scenes are awful. Let’s just say that. They’re always awkward.”

However, Eva said working with Ryan was great because he helped to make her better. She said: “We knew each other for years before filming. You can be friends with someone and not like how they work but I respect him so much. He certainly upped my game.”

Eva has also recently said she gets upset when people call her sexy, because there is so much more to her than just looks.

She said: “Being sexy is just one component of who I am — it’s a thing I can be. It’s a side of myself I can tap into, just like I can tap into my funny side, my quirky side or my dramatic side. It’s not what I am. “I know I can do the kind of work where people are going to recognise me just as much for my determination and sensitivity and humour as for being sexy.”

Eva Mendes, 30 March— Lindsay Lohan, didn’t you?

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PSG show Barcelona what to expect with Montpellier win

PARIS, 30 March—Paris St Germain offered a glimpse of what Barcelona can expect in their Champions League clash next week when Kevin Gameiro finished off a lightning quick counter attack to earn the Ligue 1 leaders a 1-0 home win against Montpellier on Friday.

Substitute Gameiro tapped in from a Zlatan Ibrahimovic cross 10 minutes from time after David Beckham started a counter attack nine minutes after coming on as a substitute. PSG have six points from 30 games and lead second-placed Olympique Lyon, who take on Sochaux on Sunday, by eight points. The hosts were denied two possible penalties after Benjamin Stambouli brought down Jeremy Menez and Gregory van der Wiel in quick succession. Ibrahimovic came close with a 20-metre snapshot that shaved Geoffrey Jourdren’s left post. Jourdren dived to his right to tip away Thaigo Silva’s header as PSG increased the pressure in a lively first half, PSG, however, struggled to break the deadlock, prompting Carlo Ancelotti to substitute midfielder Clement Chantome with striker Kevin Gameiro over France’s Richard Gasquet.

Aitor Karanka told a news conference on Friday. “He is training well and it’s a strong possibility he could be 100 percent for games,” Karanka said. “Coentrao is in the squad.”

Barcelona lifted return of Vilanova and Abidal

Madrid, 30 March—Eric Abidal was included in Barcelona’s squad to play Celta Vigo in La Liga this weekend only a few days after coach Tito Vilanova returned following two months out receiving cancer treatment.

Vilanova flew back to Barcelona on Tuesday after two months undergoing chemotherapy and radiotherapy treatment in New York.

Barcelona’s Eric Abidal gestures to his team mates during a training session at Ciutat Esportiva Joan Gamper in Sant Joan Despi near Barcelona on 13 Feb, 2013.—Reuters

Steve Wheatcroft of the US hits out of the sand trap on the 17th hole during second round play at the Canadian Open Golf tournament at St. George’s Golf and Country Club in Toronto on 23 July, 2010.—Reuters

Spain’s goalkeeper Iker Casillas attends a 2014 World Cup qualifying soccer match between France and Spain at the Stade de France stadium in Saint-Denis, near Paris, on 26 March, 2013.—Reuters

Barcelona’s goalkeeper Iker Casillas waits for Real Madrid return

Madrid, 30 March—Real Madrid goalkeeper Iker Casillas has been back in training after injury but lacks the necessary sharpness to make the squad for Saturday’s La Liga game at Real Zaragoza, according to assistant coach Aitor Karanka. The Spain and Real captain has been out with a broken finger since January and also missed the World Cup qualifiers against Finland last Friday and France on Tuesday.

“The medical team passed him fit a week ago but he doesn’t have the competitive edge needed to be 100 percent for games,” Karanka told a news conference on Friday. “He is training well and this is good for everyone. When he is 100 percent he will be cleared to play but because he is a goalkeeper it is tough,” Diego Lopez, signed from Sevilla in January as cover for Casillas, has excelled in the

Wheatcroft leads in Houston, McLroy and Mickelson make cut

Los Angeles, 30 March—Unheralded American Steve Wheatcroft carded another five-under-par 67 to take a one-shot lead after the second round of the Houston Open on Friday, while major winners Rory McIlroy and Phil Mickelson fought hard to just make the cut at Redstone Golf Club.

The 35-year-old Wheatcroft only earned a start for the event through Monday qualifying but now sits at 10-under, holding the 36 hole lead over fellow Americans Jason Kokrak (69) and DA Points (71) who are tied at seven-under.

McIlroy and Greg Chantome were the joint fourth at seven-under.

Steve Wheatcroft of the US hits out of the sand trap on the 17th hole during second round play at the Canadian Open Golf tournament at St. George’s Golf and Country Club in Toronto on 23 July, 2010.—Reuters

Murray to face Ferrer in Miami final

Miami, 30 March—Britain’s Andy Murray fought back for a 6-7, 6-1, 6-2 win over France’s Richard Gasquet to reach the final of the Sony Open where he will face Spaniard David Ferrer on Sunday. Murray recovered after making a mess of the first set and then at the end of the set you kind of look up at the stats and I had hit over 20 winners and lost the set,” the Scotsman told reporters.

“Kunst is a big player. Halfway through the second set I started to find the right way to play, the right shots to go for and I did well after that,” he said.—Reuters

Paris St Germain’s Jeremy Menez (L) challenges Montpellier’s Daniel Congre (C) and Hilton (R) during the Ligue 1 soccer match at the Parc des Princes Stadium in Paris on 29 March, 2013.—Reuters
Lebanese fisherman injured by Syrian fire

BEIRUT, 30 March—A Lebanese fisherman was injured on Friday after a Syrian boat which entered Lebanese territorial waters opened fire on his fishing boat off the northern coast of Arida. The fisherman, identified by the state-run National News Agency as Khaled Ahmed al-Ali, was injured in the leg.

The Syrian navy has often fired at fishing boats in Lebanese territorial waters since early 2011, when Syria’s political unrest erupted.

In January 2012, a young Lebanese fisherman was killed and his uncle injured when Syrian soldiers opened fire on them near Arida. But Damascus said then the sailors were smugglers and it was other nearby Lebanese vessels that fired first.

French public debts rises to 1833.8 bln euros

PARIS, 30 March—Public debt of France widened by 15.8 billion euros (20.25 billion US dollars) to stand at 1,833.8 billion euros by the end of the fourth quarter 2012, official figures showed on Friday.

As a percentage of gross domestic product (GDP), it peaked at 90.2 percent in the fourth quarter, 0.3 point higher compared to the third quarter 2012, the national statistics bureau INSEE said in its latest report.

Furthermore, the net public debt rose by 32.2 billion euros, INSEE added.

In the meantime, the French government public deficit reached 4.8 percent of the GDP, according to the official data.

The government had projected a deficit of 4.5 percent of GDP, estimating its public debt would stand at 89.9 percent in 2012. Heavily plagued by climbing unemployment and sluggish economy, the Eurozone’s second largest economy has admitted it might not fulfill its pledge of cutting public deficit of GDP to 3 percent in 2013, but suppose it stands at 3.7 percent.

Tunisia denies rumours of setting up US base in country

TUNIS, 30 March—Tunisia’s Defence Ministry spokesman denied rumours of allowing a US military base to be set up in the country, the official TAP Press agency reported Friday.

Colonel Major Mokhtar Ben Nasr told reporters in the capital Tunis that those rumours relayed by certain media and social networking websites were “baseless.”

He meanwhile said the recent visit of head of the US Africa Command, General Carter Ham, in Tunisia was a farewell visit. Ham, who met Tunisia’s leaders and defence officials during his visit, warned against the threat posed by al-Qaeda in the North African nation and the Maghreb.

Thermal power plant fire kills one, injures three in Ukraine

KIEV, 30 March—At least one person was killed and three others were injured in a massive fire that broke out on Friday at a thermal power plant in eastern Ukraine, the State Service for Emergencies said.

The accident occurred at 3.15 pm local time (1315 GMT) at Uglegorsk power plant in Donetsk region, when the blaze broke out inside the power station unit and spread rapidly to the roof, triggering a large amount of smoke which was sweeping through the nearby area, it said.

According to the State Service for Emergencies, the fire has been already put out.

Jennifer Lopez axed from IPL 6 opening ceremony

KOLKATA, 30 March—Indian Premier League organizers have dropped pop diva Jennifer Lopez from the opening ceremony of its sixth edition, to be held in Kolkata on 2 April.

According a report in The Sun, the 43-year-old singer was said to have demanded a private plane and dozens of hotel rooms for her entourage. She also wanted to bring along her personal stylists, assistants and chef as well.

Describing Jennifer’s demands as “idiotic,” a source said: “The demands were outrageous. She effectively priced herself out of an event which has a huge audience.” However a spokesman for the singer has said she had turned down the deal because she was busy recording an album.

Last year singer Katy Perry, who was dressed in Bollywood attire, performed at the IPL 5 opening ceremony, watched by an estimated 56 million people.

International rap artist Pitbull has been roped in this year to perform alongside Bollywood stars Shah Rukh Khan, Katrina Kaif and Deepika Padukone.

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Mandalay Region chief minister calls for public cooperation in security measures

NAY PYI TAW, 30 March—Mandalay Region Chief Minister U Ye Myint called for public cooperation in restoration of law and order as he met Meiktila townselders at Meiktila District General Administration Department this noon.

Also present on the occasion were Deputy Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr Daw Myat Myat Ohn Khin attended a coordination meeting on ICT application in disaster management on 23 and 24 March in Tokyo, Japan.

The meeting was also attended by disaster prevention and relief ministers from Sri Lanka, the Philippines, Thailand, Turkey, Cambodia, Chile, Indonesia and Bangladesh, delegates from ICT-related establishments, and radio and television stations.

The Myanmar Police Force and armed forces.

The townselders put further questions about security measures and reported on security measures being undertaken. Deputy Minister for Home Affairs Brig-Gen Kyaw Zan Myint explained in detail joint security measures of the ministries and townselders.

Winner cyclists awarded in Pre-SEA Games Cycling Contest

NavPyiTaw,30March—The Pre-SEA Games Cycling Contest was opened at the cycling ground at Pozaung Hill in Ottarathiri Township on 28 March.

Chairman of the Leading Committee for Organizing the XXVII SEA Games Union Minister for Sports U Tint Hsan, deputy ministers and guests enjoyed participation of cyclists in the contest.

Chandra Rafianszani of Indonesia secured the first prize in the cross country men’s event and Kumawati Yazid of Indonesia in the women’s event. Pyo Wai Zin of Myanmar stood second in the men’s event. Tanaphon Jarupeng of Thailand won the first prize in the downhill men’s event and Vipavee Deekhalles in the women’s event. Buunin of Indonesia stood first in the men’s BMX event and Nica Prasoetsria of Thailand in the women’s event. The Union minister and party awarded the winners.

In the evening, the Union minister hosted a dinner to the managers, coaches and cyclists at Mount Pleasant Hotel.

Myanmar’s first solar-powered groundwater pumping put into service

Today, world people are suffering drastic efforts of drought, untimely heavy rain, hailstones falling, severe storms and intense heat triggered by climate change.

While the world is encountering climate change, the first-ever solar-powered underground water pumping system has been introduced in Taungdwingyi Township of Magway Region that lies in the dry zone of Myanmar under the directives of Deputy Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation U Khin Zaw. Tapping underground water started on 18 December 2012 with the use of a borehole drilling machine of Water Resources Utilization Department under Yangal creek in Kokokwa village of the township. Thanks to strenuous efforts of staff led by Deputy Director U Hla Min of the department, works to tap groundwater from 80 feet below the surface with the use of a 10-inch diameter pipe were completed on 21 December 2012.

Next, Assistant Director U Thet Shae and Staff Officer U Thein Aung of Irrigation Department carried out sinking of tubewell and installation of 39 solar panels. Next changing 20 200-volt batteries using solar panels was undertaken by Assistant Director U Maung Maung Lwin of Irrigation Department. Then feeding electricity to the water pumping followed. In this way, groundwater was transported to Kyi-yoe-kyi lake situated 2000 feet far from the tubewell via three-inch water pipeline on 10 March. The tubewell can produce 6000 gallons of clean groundwater per hour.

As solar power-run groundwater pumping system will supply water to lakes in summer, thereby contributing towards greening of the region and adequate supply of drinking water for local people and their cattle, local people are appreciated with the efforts of officials concerned. So, the first solar-powered groundwater pumping was put into service in Taungdwingyi Township.