***Myanmar, Norway to cooperate in hydropower generation***

NAY PYI TAW, 4 April—President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar U Thein Sein received Minister of Trade and Industry Mr Trond Giske and party of Norway at the Credentials Hall of the Presidential Palace, here, at 11 am today.

Their discussions focused on political, economic, social reform process of Myanmar, environmental conserva- tion, establishment of labour-intensive factories and workshops, mutual cooperation in information technology and communication sectors by establishing factories and workshops, investment and establishment of SME factories and workshops to manufacture value-added products based on natural products and cooperation of Norwegian companies in generating hydropower. Also present at the call were Union Minister for Foreign Affairs U Wunna Maung Lwin, Union Minister at the President Office U Soe Thane, Union Minister for Industry U Aye Myint, Union Minister for National Planning and Economic Development Dr Kan Zaw and officials.

The Norwegian Minister and party were accompanied by Norwegian Ambassador to Myanmar Ms Katja Nordgaard and embassy staff.—MNA

***Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker meets scouts, Norwegian Trade and Industry Minister***

Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann delivers speech in meeting with scouts at Hluttaw Hall.

NAY PYI TAW, 4 April—Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann met 530-member scout team led by Scouts Organization Chairman U Tin Nyo (Both Director-General) at Pyithu Hluttaw Meeting Hall this morning.

Also present on the occasion were Deputy Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U Nanda Kyaw Swa, Chairperson of the Rule of Law and Tranquility Committee Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and Pyithu Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Nanda Kyaw Swa explained scouting experience. A student and the group leader spoke words of thanks.

Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann delivers speech in meeting with scouts at Hluttaw Hall.

(See page 8)

***Singapour-Myanmar Business Forum held***

YANGON, 4 April—In his opening address at Singapore-Myanmar Business Forum held at Sedona Hotel, here, this morning, Union Minister for Construction U Kyaw Lwin said that President U Thein Sein’s visit to Singapore in 2012 had opened a new chapter for further cooperation between Myanmar and Singapore.

He expressed his belief that the business forum could bring better cooperation to the two countries in making great strides for sustainable development in future.

Next, three agreements and two MoUs between the economic entities of Singapore and Myanmar were signed by officials.

Singapore and Myanmar Business Forum held

President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar U Thein Sein poses for a documentary photo with Minister of Trade and Industry Mr Trond Giske and party.—MNA

The newly-opened Singapore-Myanmar Business Forum held at Sedona Hotel, here, this morning, Union Minister for Construction U Kyaw Lwin gave talks on economic opportunities in Myanmar.

The newly-opened Singapore-Myanmar Business Forum, was also attended by Union Minister for Hotels and Tourism U Htay Aung, Singaporean Minister for Trade and Industry Mr Teo Ser Luck, the Myanmar and Singaporean ambassadors, President of Singapore Business Federation Mr Tony Chew and guests.—MNA
Meiktila starts to come alive after days of fear

M E I K T I L A , 4 April— With the restoration of peace and stability in Meiktila, patterns and regularities of social life of local people have returned to normalcy and the marketplace has become busy and full of activities in Meiktila, resuming their livelihoods peacefully. Victim families in relief camps also live freely and happily. “We play football or cane-ball together in the playground when we have free time in the morning and evening”, says a youth from BEHS No (1) relief camp.

Likewise, groups of youth in other relief camps—Institute of Education, District sports ground, BEPS No (16), BEHS No (3), BEHS No (5) and BEMS No (2)— are playing together joyfully.

Fire negligence reduces three houses to ashes

ENMM, 4 April— A fire broke out at a house in Sarchinshin ward of Einme Township in Ayeyawady Region at about 11.30 am on 1 April. The fire started from the house of Ko Chit Oo on Anawrahta street in the ward, destroying three houses. Fire crews led by Head of Einme Township Fire Services Department U Than Zaw managed to bring the fire under control in cooperation with auxiliary fire brigade members and locals and the fire died down at about 11.45 am. Officials concerned presented supplies to fire victims and comforted them.

Motorcyclist suffers serious injuries in collision with six-wheeled truck

MUSE, 4 April— A crash involving a six-wheeled truck and a motorbike occurred on Aungban-Ywangan-Han Myint Moh motorway at about 7.40 pm on 29 March, leaving a motorcyclist seriously wounded.

The loaded six-wheeled truck driven by Pyone Cho (a) Kyaw Kyaw Hlaing, 25, of Zaydan ward in Ywangan Township collided head-on with the motorbike driven by Win Hlaing, 40, at a place between mile post No (24/5) and (24/6), three-mile north of Ywangan Township police station, on Aungban-Ywangan-Han Myint Moh motorway.

The motorcyclist had got severe injuries to his head, left arm and right thigh. As the victim was in a critical condition, he was transferred to Mandalay General Hospital.

Two young vandals detained in Mandalay

MANDALAY, 4 April— As police members were informed that a traffic police box at the junction of 26th Street and 66th Street in Pyigyi Myathin ward of Chanayethazan Township, here, had been vandalized at about 3 am on 28 March, they rushed there and tried to arrest a group of young men who committed an act of vandalism.

Police arrested Aung Phyo Min, 18, and Min Ko Kyaw, 22, of Nann Oo Lwin Village of Pathetnyi Township on a motorbike together with a three-foot and 1.5-inch iron rod on 19th street between 63th street and 64th street at about 3.50 am.

Gold shop robbery in Muse

MUSE, 4 April— An armed robbery happened to a gold shop called Shwe Linyaung at Sibinlaya Myoma Market in Muse of Shan State (North) at about 12.35 pm on 1 April.

Three masked men armed with two handguns had robbed the gold shop and ran away after snatching 200 gold chains, other gold wares and K 5 million which were being kept in the counter and the counter drawer from the shop. No causalities were reported in the incident. They seemed young men were charged with a crime of destroying the traffic police box and lines of wire of traffic control device and setting a traffic record book on fire by No (3) police station. —Kyemon

The remaining two young men— Htet Aung, 17, and Aung Ko Ko, 19, of Bukon village of Pathetnyi Township—were detained together with a motorbike at about 4.10 am. The four had left for Pale Ngwehsaung Beach.— Kyemon

Outstanding students make excursion tour to Pathein

P A T H E I N , 4 April— Outstanding students who were in Pale Ngwehsaung recreation camp on the beach of Ngwehsaung made an excursion tour of around Pathein on 2 April. In the afternoon, they visited Kantawya garden for recreation and had luncheon hosted by Ayeyawady Region Chief Minister U Thein Aung and ministers at Royal Lake Hotel. Next, they visited Fertilizer Plant No (5) and Shwesar Pathein umbrella workshop on Tawya Marzyn street in Pathein. In the evening, they left for Pale Ngwehsaung recreation camp together with officials and enjoyed the scenic beauty Ngwehsaung Beach.— Kyemon

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Two staff of Shwedagon Pagoda Board of Trustees Office made citizen’s arrest to gold chain snatcher

YANGON, 4 April— Two staff of Shwedagon Pagoda Board of Trustees Office made citizen’s arrest to a gold chain snatcher on the pavement beside the People’s Square and People’s Park along U Wisaya road in Dagon Township at about 4.13 pm on 28 March.

While walking along U Wisaya road, Ma Tin Myo Khine, 24, of Hlinethaya Township who works for Shwedagon Pagoda development committee was robbed of her gold chain by Kyi Kyi Tun, 32, of Kwathit ward in Insein Township who snatched the 0.5 tical gold chain worth K 35,000 from her and ran away.

As she shouted for help, passers-by Phy Wai Lin and Tun Tun Win, staff of Shwedagon Pagoda Board of Trustees Office, ran after the snatcher and caught her. Kyi Kyi Tun was taken into police custody for snatching gold chain and Dagon Township police station is investigating into the case.

Flocks of parrots destroy sunflower plantations in Toungoo Township

TOUNGOO, 4 April— Sunflowers plantations which are ready to harvest are being destroyed by flocks of parrots recently in Pade village-tract along the east bank of Sittoung River in Toungoo Township of Bago Region, making farmers difficult.

“These parrots have come in flocks since the previous month and we are always guarding our plantations with catapults in hands everyday”, says a local of Pade Village.

“Only one or two parrots come in the morning and after noon. But they come in flocks in the evening. We tried in vain to protect our plantations by shooting at them with the catapults. They are very quick and smart in eating seeds from a plant of sunflower”, he added.

Local sunflower growers voiced their concerns over the destruction of plantations by flocks of parrots, saying that there will be a drop in sunflower output.
Italy parliament to begin voting on new president on 18 April

Rosie, 4 April—Italy’s parliament will begin voting to select a new president to replace Giorgio Napolitano on 18 April, a statement from lower house speaker Laura Boldrini said on Wednesday.

Napolitano, whose seven-year term ends in mid-May, has been struggling to break a political deadlock since last month’s election left no one with a workable majority, making it likely that the next president will inherit the impasse.

The president is elected by a joint sitting of the two houses of parliament, together with representatives from Italy’s regions.—Reuters

Japan, US to start within the year process to return land to Okinawa

Tokyo, 4 April—Japan and the United States are set to start within the year process to return to Okinawa Prefecture some land used as US military facilities, a move that could facilitate the controversial plan to relocate a US air base within the island, a Japanese government source said on Wednesday.

Tokyo may announce that intention within this week, the earliest, the source said.

The two countries are negotiating conditions for the return, in hope of improving prospects for gaining local approval to relocate the US Marine Corps’ Futenma Air Station from the city of Ginowan to a less populated coast area. That plan faces fierce local opposition.

The Japanese and US governments are awaiting a decision by the Okinawa Governor on whether to approve the Japanese government’s application to reclaim land at the relocation site.

Tokyo and Washington apparently want to show a willingness to ease the burden on Okinawa, which has long hosted the bulk of US forces in Japan, by announcing the plan to begin the land return process even before the governor decides whether to accept the land reclamation application, the source said.

People in Okinawa have urged the governments of both countries, if they are really considering the feelings of the local people, to move the Futenma base outside the prefecture, a view echoed by Okinawa Gov Hirokazu Nakaima.

Nakaima again rejected the current relocation plan when he met with Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga in Okinawa earlier in the day. He also told Suga, the top government spokesman, that he will take “significant time” before concluding whether to approve the application for land reclamation.

In Japan and Washington are negotiating terms for returning to Japanese control land used by five US military facilities to the south of the US Kadena Air Base on the island prefecture.

The idea is to „mull an announcement that the process should soon begin to return part of that land in a few years’ time, with the official adding this may be possible in 10 to 15 years.

The officials are separately mulling returning the Futenma facility to Japan in nine years. But that is conditional on progress in the relocation process, with Okinawa accepting the current plan.

Japan and the United States are discussing whether to specify such time schedules in an overall plan to be announced this month, the source said.

Kyodo News

Dutch gov’t maintains ban on catching mitten crabs in polluted water

Haag, 4 April—The ban on catching crab in polluted waterways ensures that seriously polluted crab will not enter the market and excludes unacceptable risks to consumers,” the letter said. The mitten crab fishing ban in the major Dutch rivers was installed in April 2011 because the dioxin content in the brown meat of the crab was detected to be very high, 40 to 100 times higher than in the white meat. Crabs from clean areas such as the IJsselmeer lake were not banned and are safe to eat.

The mitten crab is on average about four times more polluted than eels from the same area, which are also banned. The fisherman who are affected by both fishing bans have been compensated by the government with an allowance for five years for the loss of net income from eels and mitten crabs.—Xinhua

Freak weather causes temporary power outage, fires in Houston

Houston, 4 April—Strong winds and lightning overnight were blamed for power outages and multiple sporadic fires in Houston, the US state of Texas, with tens of thousands of homes being affected. Strong storms swept through the Houston area on Tues-

day night and Wednesday morning, bringing with them hail, lightning and strong winds. At the height of the storms, more than 45,000 customers of energy delivery company, CentrePoint Energy, lost power, according to the local TV channel ABC13.

A series of fires were also caused by the winds and lightning around the Houston area, said the news report. No major damage or human loss was reported in the city, said the news report, quoting local officials.

Xinhua

Kerry to visit Turkey, Israel before G-8 talks and trip to Asia

Washington, 4 April—US Secretary of State John Kerry will travel to Turkey and Israel ahead of the Group of Eight foreign ministers’ meeting in Britain and his trip to Asian countries, the State Department said on Wednesday.

After his stopover in Turkey this weekend, Kerry will visit Israel on 8-9 April and join the G-8 meeting in London on 10-11 April before travelling to South Korea, Japan and China on 12-15 April, it said.

Kyodo News
China’s Baidu developing digital eyewear similar to Google Glass

SAN FRANCISCO, 4 April—Zynga Inc will take the plunge into real-money gambling on Wednesday when it will begin offering poker and casino-style games in Britain in partnership with Bwin party Digital Entertainment. The launch, announced on Tuesday, marks Zynga’s first foray into online gambling, which it hopes can help reverse a steady decline in revenue as users dwindle for its older Facebook games like “Farmville.” Shares in Zynga climbed 5.5 percent to $3.24 in after-hours trade.

In September, Zynga hired Maytal Olsha, a former senior executive at 888 Holdings PLC, the online gambling powerhouse, to its advantage to its near-300-million strong gamer base to its advantage on our database to see if we have a facial image match, said Kaiser Kuo, Baidu’s spokesman. Kuo said the device will be mounted on a headset with a small LCD screen and will allow users to make image and voice searches as well as conduct facial recognition matches.

“Whatever you are doing with your camera, for example, taking a picture of a celebrity and then checking on our database to see if we have a facial image match, you could do the same thing with a wearable visual device.” Kuo said.

Baidu’s first foray in wearable technology will draw comparisons to Google’s Google Glass product, which is a piece of electronic eyewear that can live-stream images and audio and perform computing tasks. Earlier this year Google launched the Google Glass Explorer programme, opening up the eyewear for early enthusiasts to test. Kuo said comparisons to Google Glass were premature as Baidu has not decided whether or not to commercialize the product.

Google to sell second-gen Nexus 7 tablet from July

A Google employee poses with Nexus 7 tablets at a promotional event in Seoul on 27 Sept, 2012. REUTERS

Google Inc will launch a new version of its Nexus 7 tablet powered by Qualcomm Inc’s Snapdragon processor around July, two sources told Reuters, as the software giant pushes deeper into the cut-price mobile hardware market.

Google is aiming to ship as many as eight million of the Asustek-made tablets in the second half of the year, throwing down the gauntlet to other low-end tablet makers such as Amazon.com Inc’s Kindle Fire and Apple Inc’s iPad mini, the sources with knowledge of the new product said. This is the first time details about the timing and sales targets for Google’s new tablet have been unveiled, although the company has not publicly released any information.

Google, which gets almost all of its revenue from online advertising, wants the aggressively priced Nexus tablets to be a hit as more Nexuses run meaner exposure for Google’s ads. The latest version will have a higher screen resolution, a thinner bezel design and a higher screen resolution, the sources said, declining to be identified because they are not authorized to speak to the media. In a blow to Nvidia, Google weighed both US chipmakers’ processors but finally decided on Qualcomm’s for power reasons, one of the sources added. Qualcomm and Nvidia are competing aggressively in the tablet market and seek to expand from their traditional strongholds of cellphones and PCs respectively. A Google spokesman declined to comment on its new tablet. Qualcomm and Nvidia also declined to respond to questions.—Reuters

Australia expects to have more extreme weather due to climate change

Canberra, 4 April — Australia is expected to experience more and worse extreme weather as a result of climate change, said a new report released on Wednesday by the Climate Commission. Climate change is already increasing the intensity and frequency of extreme weather, including heatwaves, fires, cyclones, heavy rainfall and drought in Australia, leading to worse droughts and more frequent flooding rains, the report said.

In the report, titled The Critical Decade: Extreme Weather, the commission noted that the global climate system is warmer and moister than 50 years ago, with the extra heat making extreme weather events more frequent and severe. This has resulted in the extreme bushfires and floods that have engulfed Australian communities in recent years. According to Bureau of Meteorology, the past summer was Australia’s hottest, capped by the longest and most extreme heatwave on record.

The effects of extreme weather have a corresponding dramatic impact on communities and infrastructure, with the economic cost often running to billions of dollars. “Only strong preventative action now, and in the coming years can stabilize the climate and halt the trend of increasing extreme weather for our children and grandchildren,” the commission’s Chief Commissioner Tim Flannery said.—Xinhua
Dow, S&P set record highs after pullback

New York, 4 April—US stocks bounced back on Tuesday from Monday’s pullback, with both the Dow Jones Industrial Average index and S&P 500 closing at all-time highs, bolstered by strong gains in health insurance companies.

The blue-chip Dow also set another record intraday high of 14, 684.49 points before paring early gains. The index jumped 89.16 points, or 0.61 percent, to 14,662.01.

The broader Standard & Poor’s 500-stock index surged 8.08 points, or 0.52 percent, to 1,570.25. The tech-heavy Nasdaq Composite index soared 15.69 points, or 0.48 percent, to 3,254.86. The Nasdaq Composite index soared 15.69 points, or 0.48 percent, to 3,254.86.

The market seemingly could rebound soon after a sell-off as investors intended to buy a dip. On the economic front, new orders for US manufactured goods in February increased 3.0 percent, following a dip of 1.0 percent in the previous month, the Commerce Department reported on Tuesday.

The CBOE Volatility Index, considered the fear gauge of Wall Street, dipped 5.89 percent to 12.78. In corporate news, Verizon and China Mobile each posted in the region of record highs, with both companies making moves to expand their networks.

Shares of Vodafone (VOD.L) fell on Wednesday after a report that the telecom giant had ruled out a full take-private of Vodafone in the region of 4.25-5.25 percent range predicted in last December, the central bank said on Tuesday.

The bank lowered its 2013 inflation forecast to 2.8 percent from an initial 2.9 percent, because the risk of inflation was well-balanced, said the bank chief, while the market expects 3 percent inflation.

On copper, Chile’s main export item, the bank forecast a market price of 3.5 US dollars per pound for 2013, and 3.4 dollars for 2014.

The bank expects a 50 million US dollar surplus in the 2013 trade balance, with total export-import value amounting to some $80 billion US dollars.

Foreign investment in Chile is soaring. Foreign direct investment totalled 30.3 billion dollars last year, up 32.2 percent from the previous year. Most of the money went to the mining sector, according to the central bank.

China announces two new bird flu cases, including one death

Beijing, 4 April—China has found two more cases of a new strain of bird flu and one of the victims has died, state media said on Wednesday, bringing to nine the number of cases.

The 58-year-old cook became ill early last month while working in the Province of Jiangsu, where five of the other cases were found. He died in hospital in Hangzhou city on 27 March, the Xinhua news agency reported. Samples tested positive for the new H7N9 strain on Wednesday.

The second patient, also in Hangzhou, is a 67-year-old who is under treatment. Xinhua said no connection between the two cases had been discovered, and no one in close contact with either patient had developed any flu-like symptoms.

Of the seven other cases of the new strain, two have died, both in the business hub of Shanghai. The other five are in a critical condition in hospital in Nanjing.

Hangzhou and Nanjing are all close to each other in eastern China. The Agriculture Ministry said it had yet to find any animals infected with H7N9, though it added it was possible it had been brought to China by migratory birds.

The World Health Organizations said Monday that the first three cases had shown no evidence of human-to-human transmission. China has stepped up its alert level since the cases came to light and has said it is being transparent in dealing with the outbreak.

China has a checkered record when it comes to tackling bad news, which has been known to be covered up by officials fearing it may attract unwanted attention from superiors and damage promotion prospects.
More Dutch households struggling with debt

THE HAGUE, 4 April — More and more Dutch people are struggling with debt, according to a survey report the Ministry of Social Affairs sent to the parliament on Wednesday.

One of six Dutch households (17.2 percent) are at risk of or have problematic debt. The majority of these households, between 719,000 and 961,000, are estimated at risk of debt, while between 373,000 and 531,000 households already suffer from debt.

Households at risk of severe debt are often families with children. Compared to the 2009 study, the risk cases are often better educated and they often have a job and are home owners. Households with debt are often singles, non-working, less educated, living in a rented house and quite often women.

“In this time of economic crisis, this government realizes that people face more financial risks,” said State Secretary for Social Affairs and Employment Hetta Jfilm in a letter to the parliament. “The fight against poverty and debt is a key priority for this government.”— Xinhu

Sudden flooding kills at least 46 people in Argentina

LA PLATA, 4 April — Flash floods killed at least 46 people and forced about 1,500 residents to evacuate the Argentine city of La Plata, capital of Buenos Aires Province, government officials said on Wednesday.

Some people drowned after being trapped in their cars or while walking along city streets when the water rose suddenly on Tuesday night, while others were electrocuted. Buenos Aires Province Governor Daniel Scioli told reporters.

The same storm killed at least 12 people in La Plata Province. The governor of Buenos Aires Province, Daniel Scioli, said at least 12 people were killed and more than 200 others were injured when flood waters swamped the city.

People in wheelchairs were up to their waists in water all night. It was a disaster, the governor said.

Residents tried to clean up garbage from a flooded street after heavy rains in La Plata on 3 April, 2013. Reuters

A car passes the toll gate of Southern Yangzhou Toll Station for free in Yangzhou, east China’s Jiangsu Province, just after the zero hour on April 4, 2013. Chinese government scrapped the expressway tolls for cars with seven seats or fewer on the three-day holidays from April 4 to April 6 to that motorists travel out to pay homage to the deceased. The Qingming Festival or tomb-sweeping day, which falls on April 4 this year, is a traditional Chinese holiday for mourning the dead.

Abe, India’s Singh to host summit in Tokyo in late May

TOKYO, 4 April — Japan and India are arranging for Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to visit Tokyo in late May to hold a summit with his Japanese counterpart Shinzo Abe, a senior official of Japan’s Foreign Ministry said on Wednesday.

The two leaders are expected to confirm plans to strengthen bilateral co-operation in a range of areas, such as security and the economy, as China, the world’s second-largest economy, becomes increasingly powerful in the region both militarily and economically.

Abe and Singh are also likely to compare notes on a high-speed railway system planned in India and a bilateral pact for civilian nuclear energy cooperation, with Japan keen on exporting its shinkansen bullet train technology to India.

The nuclear energy talks have stalled following a meeting with senior Russian officials, said Russia supplying weapons to 66 countries but gave no breakdown for 2012 exports.

State arms exporter Rosoboronexport has said 43 percent of its 2012 exports went to Asia, with India, Vietnam and China among the top clients, while 23 percent went to the Middle East and North Africa and 18 percent to Latin America.

Russia supplied nearly $1 billion in arms to Syria in 2011, but Putin and other officials said last year that it was no longer delivering offensive weapons that could be used.

The United States accounts for around 30 percent of conventional global arms sales, according to Amnesty International.

Russia’s state arms exporter Rosoboronexport said in February it sold weapons worth $12.9 billion in 2012. The figure did not include spare parts and services from private companies that do not go through Rosoboronexport.

Death toll rises to 53 in Taleban attack on Afghan court

KABUL, 4 April — The death toll from Wednesday’s massive Taleban attack against an Afghan court office building in the western city of Farah has risen to 53 with over 100 others injured, local media reported.

“In Wednesday’s Taleban coordinated attack against the Farah appellate court 53 people were killed and over 100 wounded,” local TV channel Arianna reported citing provincial officials.

The Taleban said in a statement that its fighters had killed 53 people and wounded over 100, including Afghan and foreign security forces.

The Taleban claimed a car bomb near the entrance of the provincial capital of the same name province 695 km west of Kabul.

Two of the attackers wearing army uniform detonated a car bomb near the entrance of the provincial capital of the same name province.

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Russia’s 2012 arms exports up 12 percent despite Libya losses

MOSCOW, 4 April — Russia’s exports weapons peaked 12 percent in 2012 to record $15.2 billion, President Vladimir Putin said in remarks broadcast on Wednesday, despite losing billions of dollars in deals with Libya after the ouster of Muammar Gaddafi in 2011.

Russia, the second biggest arms exporter after the United States, said its largest clients were in Asia.

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SITTWAY, 4 April—Polio vaccine immunization was launched in 12 townships of Rakhine State on 26 March morning.

At the local health centre in Sittway, Rakhine State Chief Minister U Hla Maung Tin and wife, state ministers and their wives, the chairperson of State Maternal and Child Welfare Supervisory Committee and members, officials of state and township Health Departments gave polio vaccine to children.

Ministry of Health gave 12 artists host group show

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Ministry of Health gave 12 artists host group show

The people offered gold foil worth K 574.2 million.

Yangon, 4 April—Twelve senior artists have exhibited their masterpieces at the Lakanat Galleries here from 1 to 6 April.

The group show the “ARTIST Art Exhibition” has showcased over 60 paintings. Among the variety of media exhibited there, two paintings are created with colourful soaps and one is created on plywood combining original texture of plywood and an artist’s creation.—NLM

People enjoy bullock carts race

Pujaniya of Kyangtaik Model Village in Kalay Township of Sagaing Region was held at the field from 22 to 25 March. A total of 16 bullock carts participated in the contest. After four-day contest, officials presented prizes to the winning cars.

Myanma Alinn

Hotels in Nay Pyi Taw plan free one night stay for tourists

NAY PYI TAW, 4 April—With the aim of ensuring tourism promotion in Myanmar, arrangements are being made for serving globotrotters one-night free accommodation at hotels in Nay Pyi Taw Hotel Zone.

At present, Nay Pyi Taw Hotel Zone is constituted with 31 hotels, each hotel plans to accommodate tourists at 10 rooms for one night.

If the tourists stay at the hotels in Nay Pyi Taw free of charge for one night and free breakfast will be served to them.

Thus, over 300 rooms from 31 hotels in Nay Pyi Taw Hotel Zone will accommodate tourists as one night service.

Moreover, the hotels will give free transport service to tourists from Nay Pyi Taw International Airport to the hotel. The service will start from April to June.

Myanma Alinn

The people get health care service with traditional medicine

MONYWA, 4 April—Under the arrangement of Medical Superintendent U Nay Aung of Traditional Medicine Hospital (50-bed), head of traditional clinic U Aung Soe and party gave free health care services to the local people at the Dhammayon of the monastery in Kyeebinchaung Village in Budalin Township of Monywa District on 23 March morning.

Head of the traditional medicine clinic U Aung Soe explained advantages of herbal plants.

The medical team provided health care services to 103 people from Kyeebinchaung.

Myanma Alinn

People get health care service with traditional medicine

MONYWA, 4 April—Under the arrangement of Medical Superintendent U Nay Aung of Traditional Medicine Hospital (50-bed), head of traditional clinic U Aung Soe and party gave free health care services to the local people at the Dhammayon of the monastery in Kyeebinchaung Village in Budalin Township of Monywa District on 23 March morning.

Head of the traditional medicine clinic U Aung Soe explained advantages of herbal plants.

The medical team provided health care services to 103 people from Kyeebinchaung.

Myanma Alinn

Danu nationals hold get-together

NAY PYI TAW, 4 April—Shan State Chief Minister U Sao Aung Myat attended the get-together of Danu nationals at the platform of ShweUmin Pagoda in Pindaya of Danu Self-Administered Zone on 25 March morning.

The Chief Minister donated K 1 million to Danu literature and culture association and regional development, K 500,000 to Taungyo literature and culture association, the Danu Self-Administered Zone Leading Body Chairman U K1.2 million and Amyotha Hluttaw representative U Shu Maung K 100,000 to Danu literature and culture association. They then offered alms to the Buddha image.—Myanma Alinn

Diamond orb, pennant-shaped vane hoisted atop Lawkananda Pagoda in Bagan

LAWKANANDA, 4 April—Lawkananda Tooth Relic Pagoda is one of four tooth relic pagodas built by King Anawrahta in Bagan ancient cultural region.

On 26 March, a ceremony to hoist diamond orb and pennant-shaped vane atop the pagoda was held at the pandal of the pagoda.

It was attended by venerable monks of Bagan, the administrator of NyaungU District Administration Department and officials, religious association members, social organization members, town elders and local people.

At first, members of the Sangha recited Namo Tassa three times.

Chairman of NyaungU Township Sangha Nayaka Committee Bhaddanta Paññasiri administered

Nine Precepts. Members of the Sangha recited Parittas.

Wellwishers offered religious diamond orb and pennant-shaped vanes and objects to members of the Sangh. Member of the State Central Working Committee of the Sangha of All Gana Shweminwun Ingadaunt Monastery Sayadaw Bhaddanta Vimala of NyaungU delivered a sermon, and the congregation shared merits gained.

The well wishers conveyed the diamond orb and pennant-shaped vanes round the pagoda.

They then hoisted the diamond orb and pennant-shaped vane atop the pagoda and performed the rituals of gold and silver showers as an act of successful completion of the ceremony.

Diamond orb and pennant-shaped vane weighing 2.45 viss of gold were worth K 224,210,000.

The scholarship examination at high and middle school levels was held at Basic Education High School No 1 in Sittway on 24 March.

Nine students sat for the exam comprising English, general knowledge and physical exercise at the high school level.

Altogether 14 students participated in the middle school level.

The exam ran up to 25 March. The winners in the examination will be presented scholarship awards in 2013-2014 academic year.

Myanma Alinn

Scholarship award winners selected in Sittway
Beware of rumors

These days, we see a lot of clashes, conflicts and violence around the globe. Today is the age of globalization. With the rapid advancement of IT, we have so many chances to enjoy the up-to-date information through the media and internet. These news may be right or wrong. Some media want to release information ahead of others as quickly as possible without knowing whether or not the news comes from the reliable sources.

A rumor is a piece of information whose truth or source is unknown. Rumors are known for spreading between people quickly and easily since they are easy to tell, but hard to prove. A lot of the time, rumors contain hurtful information. Since rumors are often not even true, it’s not a good idea to spread a rumor. If you hear something that sounds like a rumor, you don’t need to tell it to other people unless the information contains something hurtful or dangerous that a grown-up needs to know about.

Rumors are also often discussed with regard to “misinformation” and “disinformation”. Rumors thus have often been viewed as particular forms of other communication concepts. Recent unrests and violence have caused a loss to the State. People have to suffer the evil consequences of it. The violence has displaced and killed a number of people and damaged lots of houses and buildings.

Some organizations and people will instigate the outbreak of bloodshed by utilizing fear and hate. Such kind of news is very sensitive. We should not respond to anything with anger and need to be well aware of it. We should not believe rumor. Don’t spark the clashes off.

UNDP to provide technical assistance to Myanmar’s Hluttaw Committees

Nay Pyi Taw, 4 April—Chairman of Amyotha Hluttaw International Relations Committee Col Maung Maung Htoo received UNDP Program Analyst Mr Edin Elgsaether at the meeting hall of Hluttaw Affairs Hall, here, this evening. They exchanged the views on UNDP’s short-and long-term technical assistance to Hluttaw Committees and appointment of senior advisor. MNA

IE Singapore opens Myanmar branch

Yangon, 4 April—The visiting Singaporean President Dr Tony Tan Keng Yam attended the opening of the 37th foreign branch by International Enterprise (IE) Singapore, at Sedona Hotel, here this noon.

The Singaporean President unveiled the signboard. The foreign branch of IE Singapore is another milestone of increasing economic cooperation since establishment of diplomatic ties between the two countries in 1996. It will serve as facilitator for economic cooperation, bilateral trade and investments.

Heritage and Community: Methodology for Management of Cultural Properties in Myanmar Workshop kicks off

In her opening speech, Deputy Minister for Culture Daw Sanda Khin said that the Protection and Preservation of Cultural Heritage Law had been enacted by Myanmar government for preservation of cultural heritage and ancient cities. The Ministry of Culture has designated 46 sites as cultural heritage zones and placed them under the protection of the law. Besides, the ministry is making preparations to include ancient cities Beikthano, Hanlim and Srikshetra-ancient Pyu city in the list of World Heritage sites.

Next, Advisor Mr. Daniel Manijarres of Direction of Cultural Affairs Office under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Colombia extended greetings. The workshop lasts till 9 April.—MNA

Press conference on 2013 Davis Cup Tennis Tournament held

Yangon, 4 April—Press conference on 2013 Davis Cup by BNP Paribas, Asia/Oceania Zone Group III & IV Tennis Tournament, jointly organized by Tennis Federation of Myanmar (MTF) of the Ministry of Sports and International Tennis Federation (ITF), was held at Central Hotel this afternoon. President of Myanmar Tennis Federation (MTF) U Aung Maw Thein extended greetings. And the MTF Tournament Director explained the tournament and the team Captain of Myanmar selected tennis team, preparation. The MTF President and officials replied to the queries raised by the press.

2013 Davis Cup by BNP Paribas, Asia/Oceania Zone Group IV Tennis Tournament will be held at Thimbyu Tennis Court in Mingalar Taungnyunt, on 22-28 April and Group IV Tournament from 29 April to 5 May.—NLM
Sitagu Sayadaw Dr. Ashin Nyanissara sends peace...

(From page 16)

the country, the Sangha (monks) community having an equal strength of the Army crush all forms of violence using the powerful weapon of loving-kindness without using force, contribute towards strengthening of peace and stability of the nation, cooperate with any religious leaders who wish to work on the same route.

At present, leaders of the country are trying to turn a new page in Myanmar political history. In this time of critical change, religious leaders, social leaders and spiritual leaders are requested to lend helping hands to them in their nation-building endeavours. I would here like to express my grave concerns that if we are now unable to work together with noble fundamental principles of peace, harmony and co-existence, we are sure to face with unexpected problems and challenges posed by rumors, suspects, riots and violence which would endanger peace and stability of the country. Then we would not be able to continue our on-going democratic process and the country would be back on the road full of hardships and difficulties.

Finally, I would like to reiterate my earnest request that all national races residing in Myanmar, noble-hearted Myanmar people, people of various religious communities holding the noble spirit of non-violence to practice Guardian of the world which is Tolerance, Forgiveness, Forgetting each other’s faults and wrong doings and harmonious co-existence and cooperate each other to prevent all forms of violence and strengthen peace and unity in the country.

Thank you very much.

Venerable Dr Ashin Nyanissara (Dr. Litt., PhD)
Chancellor of Sitagu International Buddhist Academy
Honorary Professor of International Theravada Buddhist Missionary University
Chairman of International Association of Theravada Buddhist Universities
Chairman of the board of director (TDSA)
Aggamanapandita
Mahadhammakhathika Bahujanahitadhara, Aggamaha Saddhammajojkadhaja
Sasanadhaja-dhammacariya

MOA signed for feasibility study on unconventional oil and gas drilling

NAY PYI TAW, 4 April—Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise of the Energy Ministry, Daewoo International Corporation of the ROK and Shwe Sandar Company signed memorandum of agreement (MOA) on feasibility study for unconventional oil and gas exploration, drilling and production in RSF-7 and MOGE-8 oil fields, at the Energy Ministry yesterday evening.

It was attended by Union Minister for Energy U Than Htay, Union Minister for Mines Dr Myint Aung, Union Attorney-General Dr Tun Shin, deputy ministers, Deputy Attorney-General and personnel of Daewoo International Corporation and Shwe Sandar Company.

Under the agreement, Daewoo International Corporation and Shwe Sandar Company are eligible for conducting feasibility study for drilling and production of oil and gas from source rock shale or tight reservoirs with advanced technologies and for submitting the report to MOGE within three months after the completion of study.

MNA

Yangon Region Chief Minister hosts dinner to Singaporean President, wife

YANGON, 4 April—The visiting Singaporean President Dr. Tony Tan Keng Yam and wife Mrs. Mary Tan met Yangon Region Chief Minister U Myint Swe and wife Daw Khin Thet Htay at Sedona Hotel, here, this evening.

The meeting was attended by Union Minister for Hotels and Tourism U Htay Aung and wife, Myanmar Ambassador to Singapore U Tin Oo Lwin and wife, Yangon Region Hluttaw Speaker U Sein Tin Win and wife, Yangon Region Minister for Development Affairs Mayor U Hla Myint and wife, the region ministers and officials concerned. The Singaporean delegation was accompanied by Singaporean Ambassador to Myanmar Mr. Chua Hian Kong Robert and wife and embassy staff.

After the meeting, the Yangon Region Chief Minister hosts dinner to Singaporean President, wife.

NyaungU gets new transformer

NYAUNGU, 4 April—Under the supervision of Township Electrical Engineer U Win Zaw Moe of NyaungU Township Electricity Supply Enterprise of NyaungU District, electricians installed a new 315 KVA transformer in Thiri Mingala Ward beside Myingyan Road.

Thanks to the new transformer, lamp-posts along NyaungU-Myintyan Road and Thiri Mingala Ward can be illuminated at full capacity.

Myanma Alinn

NATIONAL

DY FM attends 11th Asia Cooperation Dialogue Ministerial Meeting

Myanmar delegation led by Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs U Zin Yaw attends the 11th Asia Cooperation Dialogue Ministerial Meeting—MNA

NAY PYI TAW, 4 April—The Myanmar delegation led by Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs U Zin Yaw attended the 11th Asia Cooperation Dialogue Ministerial Meeting from 28 to 29 March 2013 in Dushanbe, the Republic of Tajikistan.

On 29 March, Deputy Minister U Zin Yaw delivered a statement at the Meeting. In his statement, the Deputy Minister stressed that ACD Member States must be able to create wealth for the Asian nations through the economic, trade and investment cooperation, and at the same time, ACD Member States need to encourage the private sectors to match business. He also said that the diversity is the beauty of Asian Cooperation Dialogue that we all enjoy, and this beauty is to bring the diversity altogether so that Asia becomes a better place to live, travel and do business.

During the meeting, Deputy Minister U Zin Yaw met with Japanese Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs H.E Mr. Minoru Kuchi at 11:30 hrs on 29 March.—MNA
Portugal’s Prime Minister Pedro Passos Coelho (L) reacts near Foreign Affairs Minister Paulo Portas during the debate on the no-confidence motion at the parliament in Lisbon on 3 April, 2013.—Reuters

Portugal government defeats no-confidence motion, warns of instability

LISBON, 4 April—Portugal’s austerity-minded government defeated on Wednesday a no confidence motion, which nevertheless united all the opposition in parliament, showing growing resistance against further budget tightening under an EU/IMF bailout.

The vote was largely symbolic as the ruling centre-right coalition holds a comfortable majority in parliament, yet Prime Minister Pedro Passos Coelho warned the move created political instability.

The main opposition Socialists and the two smaller left-wing parties backed the motion, garnering 97 votes in a 230-seat parliament.

It has contributed to concerns that a growing campaign against the government’s austerity drive could derail Portugal’s efforts to exit the bailout programme. It also throws the focus more sharply on an impending court ruling on the legality of the administration’s budget plans. Portugal’s stocks fell sharply on Wednesday due to these concerns.—Reuters

Fifth battery of Iron Dome system deployed in Israel

JERUSALEM, 4 April—A fifth battery of Israel’s Iron Dome missile defence system became operational on Wednesday amid the flare-up of hostilities on the border with the Gaza Strip.

Army Radio reported that the battery and its crew were “fully ready” for interdiction missions.

The news came hours after a rocket fired by Palestinian militants exploded in southern Israeli town of Sderot on Wednesday morning, followed by another three projectiles that fell in open areas in the vicinity, causing no injuries or damage.

On Tuesday night, Israeli aircraft struck targets in northern Gaza Strip in retaliation for mortar shells fired at western Negev earlier in the day.

In a first official response to the latest violence, Israeli military chief Lt Gen Benny Gantz vowed late Wednesday that Israel will not allow the renewal of incessant rocket fire from the coastal territory.

“We will not return to the reality that existed five months ago, prior to the ceasefire,” Army Radio quoted Gantz as saying.

Defence Minister Moshe Ya’alon, in remarks published earlier in the day, said Israel holds Islamist group Hamas accountable for all attacks emanating from Gaza, though Magles Shoura al-Mujahadin, a group reportedly linked to al-Qaeda, claimed responsibility for Tuesday’s rocket attack. “We won’t allow firing of any sort on our citizens and forces,” Ya’alon said.

Japan-French venture set to win Turkish nuclear plant order

CARIO, 4 April—A joint venture between Japan’s Mitsubishi Heavy Industries Ltd and France’s Areva SA looks set to win an order from the Turkish government to build a nuclear power plant in Sinop on the Black Sea, diplomatic sources in Ankara said on Thursday.

Japan and Turkey have reached a basic accord on construction of the country’s second nuclear plant, the sources said, adding the two countries are finalizing the details of an intergovernmental accord that would award preferential negotiating rights to the Mitsubishi-Arevea alliance.

China, South Korea and Canada have also bid for the contract. The four-reactor plant will be built at a cost of $25 billion. Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe is considering visiting Turkey in late April or early May to promote the construction of the nuclear plant.

Turkey plans to build nuclear power plants in three locations by 2023. A Russian company won the bid to construct its first nuclear plant in the Mediterranean port city of Mersin.

Kyodo News

Cattle age limit for domestic mad cow tests to be raised

Tokyo, 4 April—The health ministry has decided to raise the age limit for exempting domestic cattle from testing for mad cow disease to 48 months, up from 30 months now, probably in July, sources close to the issue said on Wednesday.

That reflects the conclusion of a governmental food safety panel that the higher age limit for tests for the disease, formally known as bovine spongiform encephalopathy, would not have negative health effects on humans.

The expert panel of the Food Safety Commission will formally suggest the new inspection threshold to the Health, Labour and Welfare Ministry after public consultations.

The ministry will then revise a related ministerial ordinance to reflect the change.

On Monday the exemption threshold for testing domestic cattle for mad cow disease was raised from 21 months to 30 months.

The ministry will also ask local governments to stop conducting their voluntary inspections of domestic cattle for BSE, as there is no need for those safety check, according to the sources. It will also terminate state aid for inspections of cattle aged below 48 months old, the ministry said.

By raising the exemption age limit, nearly 1 million cattle annually will be exempted from BSE testing. So far, 36 cows have been found infected with BSE in Japan, with the last animal testing positive in 2009. BSE infections are also declining worldwide.

The expert panel concluded that there is little possibility for BSE infections to occur in Japan, given that it has been 11 years since the last mad cow was slaughtered in Japan in fiscal 2011, of which less than 20 percent, or about 200,000, were over 48 months old, the ministry said.

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Russia delivers aid for Syrian refugees in Lebanon

BEIRUT, 4 April—A Russian plane carrying 36 tons of humanitarian aid for Syrian refugees in Lebanon landed in Beirut on Wednesday, the first such aid, the Syrian foreign minister said.

Moscow has supported the Syrian government, which has welcomed the flights from Russia.

The minister, Alexander Zasypkin, said the Ilyushin transport plane brought blankets, food supplies and generators to Lebanon, where the United Nations says 398,000 Syrian refugees are seeking refuge from the conflict in their country.

It has contributed to growing concerns that a growing number of refugees could put pressure on Lebanon’s economy.

Moscow has supported Assad throughout the revolt.

It was the first time Russia has formally suggested the exclusion of a governmental machine.

The sources said that the EU-US and Japan are considering ending aid for inspections of cattle younger than 48 months.

A total of 60 suspects have been arrested, 36 of them in the KNP.

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An alleged rhino poacher was recorded by members of the KNP ranger corps between 21 March and 1 April. In the shootouts that ensued with poachers, one alleged poacher was fatally wounded on Sunday, while another was believed to have committed suicide on Monday after the KNP was surrounded by members of the ranger corps.

The South African Air Force (SAAF) has joined the fight against rhino poaching.

Xinhua

Intensified crackdown fails to curb rhino poaching in S Africa

Workers unload humanitarian aid from a Russian aeroplane at Beirut International Airport on 3 April, 2013.—Reuters

Sheep are released in a field managed by the Paris city government in the northeastern part of the city on 3 April, 2013, to eradicate weeds without the use of herbicide and weeding machines. Kyodo News

Cattle age limit for domestic mad cow tests to be raised

Japan-French venture set to win Turkish nuclear plant order

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**New Light of Myanmar**

**REGIONAL**

**Vietnam to host int’l conference on aviation logistics**

HANOI, 4 April — An international conference on aviation logistics will kick off in Vietnam’s southern Ho Chi Minh City, from 25 to 26 April, attracting international logistics scholars and practitioners from aviation agencies and logistics companies worldwide, announced organizers on Thursday.

The conference will be co-organized by the Vietnam Civil Aviation Administration, the International Air Transport Association (IATA) and the International Federation of Freight Forwarders Association (FIATA).

**Australia demands keeping tariffs on Japan autos**

TOKYO, 4 April — Australia has demanded to keep in place for a longer period its 5 percent tariff on Japanese vehicles imported into the country in ongoing bilateral free trade negotiations with Japan, in an apparent response to Tokyo’s recent decision to tolerate US auto tariffs in another free trade negotiation, a Japanese government source said on Wednesday.

While Australia had been willing to abolish the tariff on automobiles and trucks in three years from enactment of the planned bilateral pact, it changed its stance to seek a longer period.

During the period, probably around 10 years, Australia is expected to lower the tariff step by step to help protect its domestic auto-factories.

The move follows reports last month that Japan decided to allow the United States to keep its auto tariffs for a certain period in the preparatory talks for joining the Trans-Pacific Partnership negotiations, the source said.

Japan made the concession in the US talks, deeming it as an exchange for negotiating maintenance of its own tariffs on rice and other farm products in the TPP talks.

But it now raises concerns there could be similar calls from Canada and Vietnam, which are involved in the TPP negotiations and protect their auto industry by maintaining high tariffs, if Japan accepts Australia’s request. It could subsequently undermine Japan’s aim of expanding exports by joining the TPP.

The success of whether Japan will accept the demand in the bilateral talks, Australia, which is also a member of the TPP talks involving 11 nations, is expected to approve Japan’s participation in the multilateral negotiations. Japan its own tariffs in the bilateral free trade negotiations with Australia since 2007, seeking to secure a supply of energy resources and eliminate auto tariffs.—Kyodo News

**Cambodia dispatches 2nd batch of military personnel to South Sudan for peacekeeping operations**

PHNOM PENH, 4 April — Cambodia on Thursday sent the second batch of 152 military police and medics to South Sudan in order to take part in the United Nations Peacekeeping Operations.

The group including 10 female will replace the first batch’s forces who have completed a one-year peacekeeping mission in that country.

Speaking at a departure ceremony at the Military Airbase in Phnom Penh, Cambodian Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Tea Banh said the government of Cambodia has strongly determined in contributing to the humanitarian affairs for building and maintaining peace through the process of sending troops to the United Nations Peacekeeping Operations.

Meanwhile, he advised them to strictly respect South Sudan’s independence and sovereignty and have to work actively to achieve this humanitarian mission.

Japan made the concession with a view to expanding exports by joining the TPP, a response to Tokyo’s recent decision to tolerate US auto tariffs in another free trade negotiation.

Regardless of whether Japan accepts Australia’s request, it could subsequence undermine Japan’s aim of expanding exports by joining the TPP.

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**Volcano erupts in North Sulawesi, Indonesia**

JAKARTA, 4 April—Mount Lokon in Indonesia’s central North Sulawesi Province erupted on Wednesday, spewing ash to the sky and volcanic materials around the slope, an official said.

The volcano in Tomohon, on Indonesia’s North Sulawesi Island, erupted for the first time in recent days. According to reports, Indonesia’s Forestry Ministry has completed a one-year peacekeeping mission in that country.

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**Cambodia reports 10th bird flu case this year**

PHNOM PENH, 4 April — A six-year-old boy from Cambodia, said the agency has issued a 2.5-kilometre evacuation zone, according to Surono. “Volcanic materials were spread and fell around the slope, but the height of the ash couldn’t be assessed as it is covered by cloud,” he told Xinhua by phone.

But the agency did not recommend evacuation after the eruption, said Surono. The archipelago country Indonesia is home to 129 active volcanoes.—Xinhua

**Pedestrians walk past Nokia’s flagship store in Nanjing East Road in Shanghai, east China, on 3 April, 2013. The retail store, which is Nokia’s only stand-alone flagship store and the largest around the world, was found closed in recent days. Xinhua**
CONGRATULATIONS!

Our heartiest congratulations to the KBZ Group of Companies for winning the award “Best Corporate Governance in Myanmar for 2013” conferred by “World Finance”, a London based prestigious organization on 3rd April 2013.

We also wish for further success of the KBZ Group of Companies in future endeavours.

Central Executive Committee/Executive Committee
Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI)
Muppets creator Jane Henson dies at 78

LOS ANGELES, 4 April—Jane Henson, who co-created popular US TV puppet programme Muppets with her husband Jim, has died following a long bout with cancer. She was 78.

The Jim Henson company confirmed the news, stating that Henson, who died at her home in Connecticut, was an “integral creative and business partner” in the Muppets, reported Guardian.

Jane, born in Queens, New York, in 1934, was an early puppeteer, as well as puppet designer for the Muppets, best known for characters Kermit the Frog and Miss Piggy, who starred in numerous television programmes and films. She first met her future husband in puppetry class at the University of Maryland in the mid-1950s and the two went on to create the five-minute television programme Sam and Friends, a precursor to the Muppets. The show served as a lead-in to The Huntley-Brinkley Report news show and The Tonight Show Starring Steve Allen.

Although Henson stopped working as a puppeteer to raise her children in the early 1960s, she was still responsible for recruiting top talent and performing occasionally on the children’s show Sesame Street. Henson legally separated from her husband four years prior to her death in 1990 of organ failure following a bacterial infection at the age of 53. She later founded The Jim Henson Legacy to promote his work. Jane is survived by her five children.—PTI

Tom Cruise wants to fly to space aboard the Virgin Galactic’s planned commercial space mission.—PTI

Los Angeles, 4 April—Tom Cruise would pay to go into space. The 50-year-old star is interested in Virgin Galactic’s planned commercial space missions — where ordinary people can pay $200,000 to fly outside of the earth’s atmosphere — as he always thought intergalactic travel would be more common-place by now.

Speaking about the space flights, he said: “Who wouldn’t want to do something like that? ‘I’m going to let a couple of other people test it out first but it would be great. I was always hoping when I was a kid that we would be traveling to different planets by now.’

Tom — who plays one of the last men alive after an alien battle in his new film, Oblivion — is also open to the existence of aliens. He added: “I don’t think you can actually count it out. It might be a little arrogant to think we were the only ones in all the galaxies throughout the universe — but I’ve never met one.”

Tom will be in good company if he does book himself aboard one of Virgin Galactic’s space flights. Two and a Half Men star Ashton Kutcher has been confirmed to take part, and others who have expressed an interest include Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt, Tom Hanks, Katy Perry and scientist Steven Hawking.

The first ever two-hour flight will see British billionaire Richard Branson — who set up the project into space with his family. So far over 500 people have been confirmed for flights.—PTI

Jon Bon Jovi (R) performs with Richie Sambora during the “12-12-12” benefit concert for victims of Superstorm Sandy at Madison Square Garden in New York on 12 Dec, 2012.—Reuters

Bon Jovi guitarist Sambora leaves tour due to “personal issues”

NEW YORK, 4 April—Bon Jovi’s Richie Sambora has dropped out of the current leg of the rock band’s tour because of “personal issues,” but the guitarist, who has done stints in rehab for problems with alcohol, tweeted fans on Wednesday that he was “well.”

“Thank you everyone for your concern,” Sambora said on Twitter. “I’m well, but had to stay in L.A. to take care of a personal matter. Love you all and see you very soon.”

Sambora, 53, who spent time in rehab in 2007 and 2011 for alcohol and prescription drug abuse, was not included at Bon Jovi’s performance in Calgary, Alberta, on Tuesday and the band said he would miss a run of North American concerts.

“Due to personal issues, Richie Sambora will not be performing on this upcoming leg. All shows will go on as scheduled,” said a statement on the band’s website on Wednesday, offering no other details or when Sambora might resume performing. Sambora also missed Bon Jovi’s 2011 North American and European tours. Celeb website TMZ.com, citing unnamed sources connected to the band, said Sambora’s absence was due to long-running tension between the guitarist and singer Jon Bon Jovi. Bon Jovi is scheduled to perform this week in Edmonton, Alberta, and Winnipeg, Manitoba, and St Paul, Minnesota, on Sunday.—Reuters
Indonesia expects miracle to beat India in Davis Cup

BANGALORE, 4 April— Indonesian team is expecting a miracle to pull off a victory against a full-strength India in the Davis Cup Asia/Oceania Group I relegation tie to be played under lights from 5 to 7 April at KSLTA Stadium here.

“The Indian team looks strong, particularly after the return of their main players, but we still are confident because anything can happen in the court. We will do our best to give a fight to the Indian contingent,” Indonesia’s non-playing captain Hendri Susilo Pramono told reporters here.

Pramono said the team has not yet decided on who would play singles and doubles, however would take a call an hour before the draw.

Former England keeper Robinson suffers blood clot on lung

LONDON, 4 April—Former England goalkeeper Paul Robinson will be out of action for at least six months after developing a blood clot on his lung during an operation, his club Blackburn Rovers said on Wednesday.

The 33-year-old suffered serious respiratory complications following a back operation last week, but has returned home after being kept in hospital over the weekend, second-tier Blackburn said in a statement on their website.

Robinson won 41 England caps but has not played since December and is out of contract at the end of the season.

Rovers, who were relegated from the Premier League last season, have been left short of keepers after first choice Jake Kean was also ruled out for the rest of the season. He sustained torn cartilage in his knee on Monday’s 3-0 defeat to Cardiff City that left Blackburn in 19th place in the 24-team Championship.

Defoe out for up to three games with muscle injury

Tottenham Hotspur’s Jermain Defoe reacts during their Europa League soccer match against Panathinaikos at White Hart Lane in London on 6 Dec, 2012.

“ yt’s a big blow. It’s on the same muscle that he had a small tear last month. It’s on the other side now and it’s a big miss as he represents a lot for us and he will be a big miss.”

Real outclass Galatasaray, Malaga hold Dortmund

LONDON, 4 April—Real Madrid proved far too strong for Galatasaray when they beat them 3-0 in the first leg of their Champions League quarter-final on Wednesday as Malaga against Borussia Dortmund ended in a goalless stalemate.

Madrid, seeking to lift the European Cup for an unprecedented 10th time, went ahead when Cristiano Ronaldo scored his 45th goal of the season after nine minutes and Karim Benzema added the second with a shot in off the post in the 29th.

Substitute Gonzalo Higuain sealed the win with a 73rd-minute header. Real’s victory virtually guaranteed them a semi-final place because Galatasaray would have to achieve the most unlikely of turnarounds to rescue the tie in Istanbul on Tuesday. Ronaldo opened the scoring with a superb lobbed shot over goalkeeper Fernando Muslera following a perfect pass from Mesut Ozil to settle the home side’s nerves. Galatasaray came back into the game and dominated possession for a spell, but fell further behind when Michael Essien crossed for Benzema who controlled the ball at the far post before planting it low into the net.
US Army investigates shooting at Fort Knox base

CHICAGO, 4 April--Investigation has been launched after a shooting caused a temporary lockdown of the Fort Knox army base in Kentucky on Wednesday afternoon, according to local news reports. There were no immediate reports of casualties, a fort spokesman told WDRB-TV. The lockdown was lifted about 7 p.m., but traffic in and out of the fort was slow because of increased security.

A civilian was flown by helicopter to a hospital, but there was no immediate word on the victim’s condition, a military official told NBC News.

The shooting happened near the Human Resources Command, which has 3,800 employees. Fort Knox, about 60 kilometers from Louisville, Kentucky, is home to more than 40,000 soldiers, family members and civilian employees.

Less than two weeks ago, a US Marine shot two colleagues to death at a Virginia base before killing himself.--Xinhua

Jeev Milkha Singh wants truce between rival tours in Asia

NEW DELHI, 4 April--Twice Asia number one Jeev Milkha Singh would like to see a truce between the Asian Tour and its rival OneAsia so the continent can realise its potential as golf’s next big market, the golfer said on Wednesday.

For the second time this year, the rival tours went head-to-head last week with Australasian Scott Hend winning the Asian Tour’s inaugural Championship Golf Classic in Thailand while South Korean Choo Ho-sung clinched the Indonesian PGA Championship on the OneAsia circuit.

Singh was one of the four Asian Tour order of merit winners to tee off in Thailand and the Indian said he wanted the rival tours to reach a compromise.

“Just that hope that compromise takes place for the betterment of the game in the region,” Singh, an honorary Asian Tour member, said on the eve of the Panasonic Open India at the Delhi Golf Club.

“Because Asia is the market, I just feel that this is where golf is going to grow and get really big,” said Singh, adding his primary loyally lays with the Asian Tour.

“Asian Tour has been there for so many years. OneAsia just started. So our loyality obviously stays with the Asian Tour. Asian Tour has given us a lot. “Our job as players is to go out and make the most of it by playing,” he added.—Reuters

Jeev Milkha Singh acknowledges the crowd after making his birdie putt on the first green during the first round of the British Open golf championship at Royal Lytham & St Annes, northern England on 19 July, 2012. Reuters

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Firemen put out a fire at the Zhongwan Farmers Market in Shijian City, central China's Hubei Province, on 3 April, 2013. The fire broke out around 2:20 pm at the market and was put out later, leaving one person injured.—Xinhua

Sierra Leone peacekeeping troops arrive in Somalia

MOGADISHU, 4 April—Sierra Leone’s peacekeeping troops on Wednesday arrived in Somalia to join the African Union peacekeeping Mission in Somalia (AMISOM).

“An advance team from the Sierra Leonean contingent arrived today in Somalia. They will operate alongside the Kenyan contingent,” AMISOM said here in a statement.

The battalion-strong Sierra Leone contingent would be deployed “shortly” to southern Somalia where Kenyan forces were deployed, it said.

AMISOM said the deployment of the Sierra Leonean troops would enable the Kenyans to withdraw one battalion from the region in accordance with a UN Security Council resolution.

“The Special Representative of the African Union Mission in Somalia signifies the commitment across Africa to stabilizing Somalia,” said the AMISOM statement.

Sierra Leone was the fifth African country to have contributed troops to the 18,000-strong peacekeeping mission in Somalia alongside troops from Uganda, Djibouti, Burundi and Kenya. Xinhua
Sitagu Sayadaw Dr. Ashin Nyanissara sends peace message to Community Dialogue for Social Harmony & Stability in Myanmar

**Nay Pyi Taw, 4 April—** Sitagu Sayadaw Dr. Ashin Nyanissara sent a peace message to Community Dialogue for Social Harmony & Stability in Myanmar, at Myanmar Peace Center on 30 March. The following is the full text of the message.

**STRONGLY CONDEMN ALL FORMS OF VIOLENCE**

by Sitagu Sayadaw

As a religious leader, I would like to affirm that I strongly condemn all forms of violence. Today, Myanmar has witnessed riots, violence and clashes between one national race and another in different faith caused by unknown instigators. Actually, racial and religious riots and violence which started from Rakhine State spread to Meiktila in Mandalay Region resulting in clashes between Buddhists and Muslims. It did not stop and moved to some townships in west Bago Region. At the same time, due to unscrupulous people who wanted to exaggerate the situation, rumors spread to other states and regions and made the national brethren who want to live in peace and unity anxious about the security matters. This kind of rumor, indeed, is a major hindrance to our freedom, peace, prosperity. Therefore, I strongly protest and condemn all forms of religious, racial and economic violence.

The core essence of Buddhism is based on Non-violence which is termed “Ahimsa” in Pali language. I accept the fact that it is a universal principle and value which other major religions such as Christianity, Islam and Hinduism also embrace. I also believe that all Gods who founded their respective religions talked only about Peace (Santi) but protested violence. So the people of different faiths are requested to live in peace, harmony and co-existence in line with the noble teachings of their respective religions. In doing so, it is of utmost importance that Tolerance (Khati), Forgiveness (Khami) and Forgetting each other’s mistakes and wrong doings (Anummyata).

I also wish to urge that rumors and suspects should not be created with ill-intention to trigger violence. They are greatly detrimental to building peace and stability. Those who created suspects among the different communities are committing major crimes while those disseminating rumors are destroying peace and stability. The Buddha used to emphasize by saying, “Ma Anussavena Gahniththa”… which means: “Do not be led by rumors based on exaggerated hearsay without trying to discover the truth yourself”. So I would like to stress that the people should not be led by rumors and moved by suspects. Deduction should be taken through thorough observation and contemplation proving that the rumors are logical and acceptable.

Myanmar is a country rich in cultural heritage where Buddhism is significantly flourishing. It is not a land of uncivilized people. It is a country of multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, and multi-faith where the people have long enjoyed the rights to worship any religion they choose. The people have enjoyed a fine tradition of following religions and cultural teachings of their parents, teachers and virtuous recluses for thousands of years.

I would like to put my special request that the people who are living on the same land under the same flag drinking same water stand united reflecting Myanmar’s spirit of peace, harmony and co-existence.

The word Myanmar comes from Brahma which means “Noble”. The meaning would be complete if it is added with patience, forgiveness, loving-kindness, compassion, justice and rationality. I would, therefore, like to urge the people of Myanmar to be noble-hearted and also united in protecting and preventing violence.

The number of monks in Myanmar figures nearly 500,000 at present which is about the strength of the Myanmar Armed Forces. What I would like to request here is that while the Myanmar Army is carrying out its prime responsibility of defending the sovereignty of the State for the prevalence of peace and stability within (See page 9).