Union Minister pledges assistance from governments and UN for Kachin IDPs

NAY PYI TAW, 31 May—Vice-Chairman of Union Peace-Making Work Committee Union Minister at the President Office U Aung Min called the entire national people for cooperation with the government in peace process as he visited IDP relief camps this morning, pledging assistance from the State, region and state governments and UN for rehabilitation of IDPs.

The Union minister, while visiting relief camps in Waingmaw and Myitkyina townships together with work committee members Union ministers U Ohn Myint and U Win Tun, Lt-Gen Myint Soe from Commander-in-Chief (Army) Office, Kachin State Chief Minister U La John Ngan Hsai, lawmakers U Khet Hsein Nan and Daw Dwe Bu, Vijay Nambia from UN, anounced the bilateral agree- tions on homecoming of the displaced persons soon, adding that the two sides are consulting on how to fulfil best the security, economy, education, health and social requirements in undertaking reconstruction works.

Lt-Gen Myint Soe promised the all-out efforts of the military for assisting in public security and rehabil- itation works. Mr Vijay Nambia, Kayin State chief minister, lawmakers U Khet Hsein Nan and Daw Dwe Bu elaborated on rehabilitation measures, calling for the trust and cooperation of locals.

Families in relief camps spoke of their wishes, re- quirements and difficulties facing them. The state chief minister and personnel attended to the needs.

Personnel provided the families and students there with cash assistance, rice, school uniforms, raincoats, slippers, backpacks, note books and stationary were presented to displaced families taking refuge in relief camps.

Vice-Chairman of Union Peace Making Work Committee Union Minister at the President Office U Aung Min presents aids to local people at relief camps in Kachin State.—MNA

Tonkan-Metmung Road emerges to provide smooth transportation between Myanmar, China

For smooth transpor- tation from Myanmar to its neighbouring coun- tries, roads are being con- structed in rural areas. The new and upgraded ones would shorten the time for transportation between the countries and would speed up the development of Myanmar.

Myanmar and China, one of its neighbour- ing countries, have been cooperating in building roads to provide a smooth transportation between the two countries, and Tonkan-Metmung (Kyinsinkya) Road and Shweli-Kyaikpyu Road have emerged to link the two countries.

Tonkan-Metmung (Kyinsinkya) is located in Yunnan Province of China and it is 10.34 km long. The road is linking Tonkan and Metmung (Kyinsinkya) towns passing through Honaung and Loi- in towns in the province.

The road has been up- graded, and trucks, passen- ger buses and private cars are using the road daily.

Winding Economic Zone Management Com- mittee in Yunnan Province has upgraded the road at a cost of 48,1993 million RMB and handed over it to the Ministry of Con- struction of Myanmar on 7 April, 2012.

As the road is linked with Myanmar’s border town Muse, the road has become the direct road from Tonkan in Yunn- nan Province to Muse in Myanmar.

Besides, it can lead to northern economic cor- ridor of the Greater Me- kong Sub-Region after passing through Kunming and Shiweli and to Muse-Mandalay-Tamu Road.

Hence, Tonkan-Met- mung (Kyinsinkya) Road not only provides a road link between Myanmar and China but also has become a part of the road network for the regional countries, benefiting the trade sector of Myanmar.

Myanmar Alinn: 29-5-2013
Trs: AMS
Hline Township performs preventive measures against DHF

YANGON, 31 May — As more than 500 DHF cases had been reported during the previous four months in Yangon, health staff, YCDC staff, ward administrators and party under the leadership of Yangon Region Health Department performed preventive measures against DHF in 12 wards of Hline Township, here, on 28 May. The campaign against DHF in the township aimed at reducing the rate of DHF cases and preventing the disease in order not to recur.

“The dengue fever is mostly common among the children. So preventive measures of spraying insecticide and putting abates into the water at schools are being given priority,” says a health staff.

Preventive measures against DHF were carried out at BEPS No (18), BEHS No (3) and Maha Myaung monastic education school on that day.

According to the office of Hline Township Executive Officer, more preventive measures will be made at the remaining schools in the township.

Kyemon-Maung Thon Nya

27th branch of YMBA formed in NyaungU

NYAUNGU, 31 May — In accord with the motto of Young Men’s Buddhist Association (YMBA) in Yangon to undertake lineage, religion, Sasana and education tasks, examination centre branches are being extended in the regions and states. On 30 May, a ceremony to set up 27th branch of YMBA was held at Zetawun Monastery in NyaungU Township.

NyaungU YMBA Branch comprises U Thein Aung as Chairman, U Shwe and U Maung Kyaw as Vice-Chairmen, U Aye Maw as auditor, U Hla Tun as treasurer and U Kyaw Than as Secretary totaling 15 members.

It was attended by YMBA Chairman U Kyaw Thein, Vice-Chairman U Sein Hla and members and invited guests.

Kyemon-Ye Thura Aung

Side-by-side crash between truck and motorbike kills one rider

NYAUNGLEBIN, 31 May — A fatal crash happened to a vehicle and a motorbike with three riders, on it near Tawwi village in Nyaunglebin Township of Bago Region at about 3 pm on 24 May, causing one rider dead.

The tragic road accident involved a motorbike driven by Than Soe Oo, 23, of Shwekyin Township together with Sandar Win, 16, and Zin May Hlaing and a 12-wheeled truck driven by Tin Zaw Moe, 42, of Pyuntaza occurred at a place between mile post Nos (102/7) and (103/0) on Yangon-Mandalay Highway, eight-mile north of a police station in the township while competing each other to overtake a stationary car by road. The motorbike veered onto the roadside and overturned as its handlebars crashed into the front tyre of the truck.

The motorcyclist sustained injuries to his right hand while Sandar Win, one of two female riders, died of head injury on her way to Nyaunglebin hospital.

Regarding the road fatality, Nyaunglebin police station charged Than Soe Oo and Tin Zaw Moe with dangerous driving. — Kyemon-Nay Lin (Nyaunglebin)

Brake failure blamed for truck rollover accident in Lashio

BASHIO, 31 May — A rollover crash happened to a six-wheeled truck near Lashio People’s Hospital on south Yaykan street in ward-4 of Shan State (North) at about 8 am on 27 May.

The truck driven by Aung Myint Oo, 32, of sector-9 in ward-4 in Lashio apparently lost control after its brake failure at a turn into the street and hit a stationary motorbike and a pedestrian. Aung Htwe, 33, of sector-9 in ward-5 in Lashio. The truck then continued slamming into the front part of a shop on the street and overturned on a vehicle, Sunny pickup, after swerving into the opposite lane.

The accident caused the pedestrian injured and damage to the motorbike and goods on display at the shop, but no damage to the pickup.

No (1) Traffic Police in Lashio filed a lawsuit against Aung Myint Oo for reckless driving. — Kyemon-Zarni Aung (Lashio)

Hit-and-run car accident suspect identified after he hands himself into police

YANGON, 31 May — Dagon Myothit (Seikkan) Township police station said that a man who is believed to have fled from the scene after knocking down a 59-year-old man was charged after he handed himself into police.

U Hsan Lwin, 59, on a bicycle was fatally struck by a vehicle at the top of Mya Nanda street on Bago river road in Dagon Myothit (Seikkan) Township and pronounced dead on the spot due to serious injuries to his head, waist and legs at about 8 am on 26 May.

The suspect who drove away from the scene when he got in the fatal road accident can be identified as Thida Thet Tin after he handed himself into police.

Kyemon-Kyin Maung

Green light given to five private insurance companies

YANGON, 31 May — It is learnt that a supervisory committee for insurance of the Ministry of Finance and Revenue had decided to give the green light to five private insurance companies.

Deputy Minister for Finance and Revenue Dr Maung Maung Thein handed over documents that allow to run insurance services to responsible persons of KIBZ Insurance Co., Ltd, Grand Guardian Insurance Public Co., Ltd, Aung Thitsar Oo Insurance Co., Ltd, Citizen Business Insurance Public Limited and Aung Myint Moh Min Insurance Co., Ltd.

Life insurance, fire insurance, vehicle insurance and cash safety insurance are among the six categories of insurance allowed to these granted private insurance companies.

It is the very first time establishment of private-run insurance services during more than 50 years in Myanmar. Of 12 private insurance firms, five have been licensed so far. More private companies are expected to be given the green light in future.

Kyemon-Thaw Zat
US Secret Service says threatening letter sent to Obama

WASHINGTON, 31 May—Authorities interce-ped a threatening letter ad-dressed to US President Barack Obama that was similar to ones sent to New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg, the Secret Ser-vice said on Thursday.

Letters sent to Bloomberg and his gun control group contained material believed to be the deadly poison ricin and contained a reference to gun control, New York police said on Wednesday.

A Secret Service of-ficial said the letter sent to the White House was simi-lar but did not elaborate. The White House mail screening facility turned it over to the FBI’s Joint Ter-rorism Task Force, the Secret Service official said on condition of anonymity. Authorities have stopped several ricin-laced letters in recent weeks. A Tupelo, Mississippi, man was charged last month with sending poison-laced letters to Obama and two other public officials. Ev-erett Dutschke was being held on charges of devel-oping and possessing ricin and attempting to use it as a weapon, according to the Justice Department.

Authorities also inter-cpected a letter sent to US Senator Roger Wicker of Mississippi. Preliminary tests showed it contained ricin. Separately, federal authorities last week ar-rested a Washington man, Matthew Ryan Bu-quet, who they suspect mailed a letter containing ricin to a US District judge in Spokane. Buquet, 37, was charged with mailing threatening communica-tions.

On Thursday, the FBI’s Science office said in a statement that a simi-lar letter containing ricin was sent from Spokane to Obama and postmarked 13 May. The letter had been accused of sending to the judge in Washington state was postmarked the same day.—Reuters

US says Russia has vital role in ending Syria conflict

WASHINGTON, 31 May—The United States said on Thursday it was important to partner with Russia to help bring Syria’s warring sides together for a proposed peace conference despite Mos-co’s financial and military backing for President Bashar al-Assad.

Assad told Lebanon’s Al-Manar television that Russia is committed to im-plementing a 2010 contract for S-300 air defence mis-siles. A Russian defence ministry source said the mis-siles had not been sent yet.

“This is something that is concerning ... but at the same time we recognize that the role the Russians play here are as an important partner in helping bring the regime to the table,” State Department spokeswoman Jen Psaki told reporters.

We are not claiming to agree with the Russians on every issue, and not every is-sue on Syria, but we see them as an important partner on this,” she added. "Why? Because moving to a political transi-tion and there is no reason, we have to believe, that they don’t want to be a partner in that,” she added.

The United States, France and Israel have called on Russia not to deliver the missiles. Israel worries the air defence system threatens its security and has signalled it will act to prevent Assad from putting it into opera-tion. US Secretary of State John Kerry expressed his concerns privately to Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov several days ago during talks on a peace conference. Psaki said.

Russia and the United States are trying to bring to-gether Syrian government and opposition officials for talks on a transitional gov-ernment.

Pakistan, US agree to continue work for Afghan peace

ISLAMABAD, 31 May—Pakistan and the United States on Thursday reaffirmed their desire to work closely for consolidation of bilateral relations and par-tnership in all spheres of co-operation including peace and stability in the region, the Foreign Ministry said. They also stressed on the need for peace and reconciliation in Af-ghanistan. The two sides ex-changed views on several ac-tions to be taken in the realm of bilateral cooperation.

The foreign secretary also briefed the new US spe-cial representative about the steps taken by Pakistan for peace and reconciliation in Afghanistan, the Foreign Ministry said. They also agreed to work for peace and reconciliation in Af-ghanistan.

The US special envoy for Pakistan and Afghanistan James F. Dobbins called on Foreign Secretary Jalal Ab-bas Jilani in Islamabad and discussed bilateral relations and regional situation including latest developments in Afghanistan, the Foreign Ministry said. They also agreed to work for peace and reconciliation in Af-ghanistan. The two sides ex-changed views on several ac-tions to be taken in the realm of bilateral cooperation.

The foreign secretary also briefed the new US spe-cial representative about the steps taken by Pakistan for peace and reconciliation in Afghanistan.

People participate in the first National Drill of Earthquake and Tsunami 2013, in the city of Lima, capital of Peru, on 30 May, 2013. The drill was conducted, simulating an emergency before a one-minute-long eight-magnitude earthquake on the Richter scale.

IMF deputy chief expresses hope for Japan’s economic growth strategy

TOKYO, 31 May—The Interna-tional Monetary Fund’s deputy chief on Thursday expressed hope that Japan will draw up a growth strategy to give market participants the im-pression that the country’s economy will change, a Fi-nance Ministry official said.

IMF First Deputy Managing Director David Lipton also said during 30-minute talks with Fi-nance Minister Shou-cho Abe’s economic policies dubbed “Abenomics,” will be adopted by the Cabinet in mid-June, with the aim of galvanizing the economy through private investment, wage hikes and higher em-ployment.

The Washington-based lender will continue to sup-port “Abenomics,” Lipton was quoted by the official as saying during the meet-ing.

The two did not ex-change views on recent financial market develop-ments, the official added.

The 225-issue Nikkei Stock Average dived more than 5 percent to its lowest level in about one month on Thursday in Tokyo. On 23 May, the index plummeted about 1,140 points, or over 7 percent, down at its steep-est pace since 17 April, 2002.

Japan’s fiscal health is the worst among developed countries.

Lipton is visiting To-kyo for annual consulta-tions on the nation’s econ-omy, fiscal and monetary policy.—Kyodo News

Japan, African leaders to discuss UN Security Council reform

TOKYO, 31 May—Japan, Aus-tralia and New Zealand will host the first meeting be-tween leaders of Af-rica and Japan to address UN Security Council reform on Monday in Yokohama, on the sidelines of a fifth inter-national meeting on African development, local media quoted the government as saying on Thursday.

Invited are Sierra Le-one’s President Ernest Bai Koroma as the coordinator of the “Committee of 10” African countries, other lead-ers from the group and Nko-ssaua Dlamini Zuma, chair-woman of the African Union Commission, according to the Kyodo News Agency.

African leaders will gather in Japan to attend the Tokyo International Confer-ence on African Develop-ment, a summit meeting on African development held every five years, to be held from Saturday to Monday in Yokohama, southwest of To-kyo.—Kyodo

A citizen registers her fingerprint information at a police station in Changsha, on 30 May, 2013. The Shanghai police announced on Thursday that the city will start collecting fingerprint information of its citizens for ID card recognition across the region as of 1 July, which can help better protect the legal rights of the citizens and also safeguard state safety and social stability. The city has by far started the programme in 233 police stations and has registered the fingerprint information of 10,756 citizens. —Xinhua

Iran more active in sponsoring terrorists

WASHINGTON, 31 May—The US State Department said on Thursday that Iran has become more active in its state sponsorship of ter-rorism and that more than half of the world’s terrorist attacks in 2012 occurred in three countries—Pakistan, Iraq and Afghanistan.

“A marked resurgence” was noted in Iran’s state sponsorship of terrorism through the Ministry of In-telligence and Security and the Lebanon-based Shite militant group Hezbollah, the Country Reports on Ter-rorism in 2012 said.

Iran was involved in ter-rorist attacks or attempted attacks in India, Thailand, Georgia and Kenya, and provided extensive sup-port to the regime of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad in its brutal crackdown that has resulted in the deaths of more than 70,000 civilians, the report said. The depart-ment has designated Iran and Syria as state sponsors of terrorism.

The core of the al-Qaeda terrorist network has been “significantly degraded” as a result of ongoing worldwide efforts against it, but the group “seeks to establish a long-term presence” among rebels in Syria, the report said. The number of terror-ist attacks came to 6,771 last year resulting in deaths of 11,098 people, the report said.—Kyodo News

People remove the fallen trees after a sudden rain in Hyderabad, India, on 29 May, 2013. The monsoon rains, crucial for India’s agriculture, are expected to set over southernmost Kerala state next 3 to 4 days, according to the India Meteorological Department.—Xinhua

IMF deputy chief expresses hope for Japan’s economic growth strategy
Rounded pebbles suggest ancient flowing water on Mars

WASHINGTON, 31 May—Observations by US Mars rover Curiosity have revealed areas with rounded pebbles which indicate a stream once flowed on the red planet, a study said on Thursday.

The finding, published in the journal Science, represents the first on-site evidence of sustained water flows on the Mars landscape, and supports prospects that the planet could once have been able to host life, researchers from the Curiosity rover mission said.

The accomplishment comes from Curiosity’s exploration during its first 100 “sols,” or Martian days, the equivalent of about 103 days on the Earth, on the Mars surface last year.

During that time, Curiosity traveled about 400 metres from its landing site, examining multiple outcrops of pebble-rich slabs. The rover took high-resolution images of those pebbles at three locations known as Goulburn, Link and Hottah and then sent them back to the Earth for further analysis.

Researchers now said the pebbles’ grain size, roundness and other characteristics suggest that they had been transported by water over long distances. When rocks are worn by wind, they become angular and rough, but when they are moving in a mixture of flowing water and sand, the corners and edges of the rocks eventually become smooth and rounded, they explained.

“We could see that almost all of the 515 pebbles we analyzed were worn flat, smooth and round,” said Asmus Koefoed, a research assistant in the Mars group at the University of Copenhagen.

There are both light and dark rocks in various shades and colours, much like the original rocks on Earth and Mars, the researchers said.

A photo from the Mars Curiosity Rover reveals what appears to be a small animal or lizard on Mars. The photo was taken on 20 Feb, 2013 by Curiosity’s MASTCAM and a high resolution copy is available on NASA’s JPL/Caltech website. The image was originally discovered by a Japanese researcher in March and uploaded to Youtube on 14 May.—Xinhua

The deal on spectrum use and shared network-sharing arrangement that is expected to stoke competition in the French-speaking Canadian province.

Researchers, the nation’s largest wireless provider, now spends far more on its network than its main rivals, Telus Corp and BCE Inc’s Bell unit, do on their shared network.

The pairing with Videotron, announced late on Wednesday, means Rogers will narrow that gap. The deal will also help Quebecor’s Videotron arm broaden its range of wireless services and perhaps increase market share in Quebec, where the three national operators already have a head start in wireless.

“Quebecor with this deal gets a lot of tools to become more competitive,” said Desjardins analyst Mahe Vargh, adding that the deal could eventually lead to an even broader asset-sharing arrangement between the two sides.

The 20-year network-sharing deal will help the companies expand a high-speed wireless network using technology known as long-term evolution, or LTE, in Quebec and the Ottawa region. The two sides will continue to compete for customers.

“It’s going to save both on operating costs and capital requirements to maintain and evolve that wireless network,” said Isabelle Flis, a currency research analyst with Bissett Investment Management, which owns Rogers stock.

Over 10 years, Videotron is set to pay Rogers CS200 million ($194.20 million), and Rogers will pay Videotron CS93 million, based on the fair value of the services each is providing.

Quebecor shares jumped 41 percent to CS46.59 in afternoon trading, while Rogers stock was down 0.3 percent at CS47.80. The companies also said Rogers would pay CS180 million to buy Videotron’s unused spectrum in the greater Toronto area. Videotron bought those airwaves in a 2008 auction in which the federal government set aside some airwaves for new entrants, including Videotron.

The deal on spectrum puts pressure on the government’s attempt to foster competition within the sector have been stymied as the small players have struggled. Telus earlier this month bid CS380 million bid for Mobilicity, an upstart that is now fighting to stave off insolvency.

The three major telecoms are scrambling to buy up smaller competitors or acquire spectrum, and there are moves to liberalize mobile providers, as demand explodes for speedy mobile streaming of video and other data-heavy applications.

“Videotron and Rogers are moving to the mobile gaming realm, and they are trying to upend the competition and come up with something new,” said Desjardins’ Vargh.

The launch comes ahead of the widely speculated low-priced Phone later this year and as Sam- sung, the world’s top smart-phone maker, looks to widen its lead with products spanning both the high and cheap-and-cheapish ends of the market.

Samsung is also expected to unveil more varie- ties of the S4 in the upcoming mobile event in London next month including a reverse camera, a bigger screen and camera zoom functionality as well as a phone with water-proof features.—Reuters

A woman walks by a sign at the Rogers Communications headquarters building on the day of their annual general meeting for shareholders in Toronto, on 25 April, 2012.—Reuters

San Francisco, 31 May—Mobile Inc will allow US players to win cash in one of its mobile games starting next month, betting that cash-based contests will be a winning formula to expand revenue stream in mobile gaming market.

Samsung unveils Galaxy S4 mini phone to target mid-tier market

SAMPLIFIES THE SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

San Francisco, 31 May—Samsung Electronics Co unveiled a stripped down version of its flagship Galaxy S4 smartphone on Thursday, aiming to grab a bigger share in the mid-tier segment as growth in the high-end market slows.

The Galaxy S4 mini, which follows the debut of the S4 just a month ago, will still bigger than Apple Inc’s 4-inch iPhone 5 — and a 8-mega pixel rear-facing camera.

By comparison, the original S4, which hit the 10 million-sale mark last week to become Samsung’s second best selling smartphone in one of its mobile games through cash tournaments. The fast-growing mobile gaming market has been upheaved by the success of real-money mobile games such as “Scrabble” and “Wheel of Fortune,” as opposed to casino-style games of pure chance.

Gamers will pay a fee to compete for cash prizes and, but who derives about half its revenue from the United States, hopes this paves the way for a new revenue stream in mobile gaming, CEO Niccolò de Mas said in an interview.

Real-money gaming competitions are popular for several years through online websites such as WorldWinner and King.com but are only now moving to the mobile realm.

Those games focus on skill-based contests such as “Scrabble” and “Wheel of Fortune,” as opposed to casino-style games of pure chance.
New York, 31 May—Procter & Gamble Co (PG.N) is working to re-group its countless products and brands into four sectors, each led by a president reporting to chief executive AG Lafley, who returned to the helm last month, the Wall Street Journal reported.

The elevation of four executives to the new roles would publicly identify candidates most likely to succeed Lafley, who is expected to step aside in two or three years, the Journal reported citing people familiar with the matter.

Lafley stepped down as CEO in 2009 but returned last Thursday to replace Bob McDonald as chairman and chief executive.

Asian shares, Nikkei recover as soft US data sees QE staying on

Tokyo, 31 May—Asian shares recovered after the dollar stayed pressured on Friday after lackluster US data eased concerns about an early end to the Fed’s monetary stimulus programme which has sharpened investor appetite for risk.

Global markets rose overnight as US growth showed signs of slowing, with the S&P 500 finishing the first five months of 2013 with gains, and the Dow Jones Industrial Average posting a slight loss.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average, the S&P 500 and the Nasdaq Composite index rose 0.1 percent after touching their lowest in nearly two months.

The dollar’s fall against the yen was muted, with the currency rising 0.2 percent to 101.755.

The yen rose as investors speculated the Bank of Japan might have to act to support its currency after the US Federal Reserve said it could begin reducing its monthly stimulus programme in October.

The dollar’s fall against the yen follows comments by BoJ Governor Masaaki Shirakawa that there is “room for action” if the currency continues to strengthen.

The dollar’s decline also supported other Asian currencies, including Taiwan’s dollar, which rose 0.5 percent.

The elevation of four presidents in the first quarter, new job-loss benefits claims rose in the latest week, and pending home sales grew far less than expected in April, pointing to a fragile economy which still requires support from monetary policy.

MSCI’s broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan <.MIAPJ0000pus> steadied from the previous day’s drop to a six-week low.

With a fall of about 4 percent so far in May, the index was set for its worst monthly performance in a year.

Aandrex's (AXIO) inched up 0.1 percent after touching their lowest in nearly two months.

The previous session while South Korea’s Kospi share rose 0.3 percent.

The market is slowly gathering upside momentum, helped by a view that the likelihood of the US Federal Reserve abruptly pulling its stimulus programme is small,” said Han Beam-ho, a market analyst at Sinha Investment Corp, of Seoul shares.

Bourses in Shanghai, Hong Kong, Jakarta and Manila Philippines were lower.

Japanese equities also staged a rebound after tumbling more than 5 percent to a five-week low on Thursday as exporters took a hit from the dollar’s fall against the yen. The Nikkei stock average (.N225) gained 1.6 percent after sliding sharply last week from a 5-1/2-year peak.

Analysts said the recent correction presents an opportunity for investors to re-enter the market at better levels.

The study, which took place from April 2007 and February 2010, was funded by the Wellcome Trust, US National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, and the Singapore National Medical Research Council.

Boeing says new 737 model will burn less fuel than expected

The Boeing logo is seen at their headquarters in Chicago, on 24 Apr, 2013.—Reuters

Boeing and competes with European plane maker Airbus for the new H799 strain of bird flu that has killed 36 people in China.

So far H799 has not been able to spread easily from person to person and researchers are concerned that H799 may be able to develop resistance to Tamiflu rapidly.

Double dose of Tamiflu proves no better in severe flu

There are no benefits from giving patients with severe flu a double dose of Roche’s drug Tamiflu, despite calls from doctors for the use of higher doses in the most serious cases.

That verdict from the first randomized clinical trial to study the issue has implications for global guidelines on stockpiling drugs for a potential flu pandemic, researchers said on Friday.

“Our findings do not support routine use of double doses to treat severe flu infections, which could help to conserve drug stocks in the event of a pandemic,” said Jeremy Farrar, director of the South East Asia Influenza Disease Clinical Research Network.

Flu experts are on alert for a potential pandemic, with concerns centered on the new H799 strain of bird flu that has killed 36 people in China.

The study, which took place from April 2007 and February 2010, was funded by the Wellcome Trust, US National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, and the Singapore National Medical Research Council.

The plane is due to enter service in 2016. Airbus has about 2,125 firm orders for its A320neo family of planes, compared with 1,376 firm orders for the A320neo made by Airbus (EAD.PA).

Boeing said it expects to publish a “firm configuration” for the MAX in July. The planemaker is already reorganizing the massive 737 factory in Renton, Washington, to make room for production of initial 737 MAX test planes in 2015. The first flight and flight testing are scheduled to occur in 2016. Airbus launched its aircraft about nine months before Boeing and has about 2,125 firm orders for its A320neo family of planes, compared with 1,376 firm orders for the 737 MAX—Reuters
Kawasaki Heavy devises low-cost method to turn rice straw into fuel

Tokyo, 31 May—Kawasaki Heavy Industries Ltd has developed a technology to produce ethanol from rice straws at 40 yen (39 cents) per liter, about the same level of production cost as the sugar cane-based bio ethanol made in Brazil and elsewhere.

Kawasaki, which has been undertaking research and experiment at a plant built in Katakami, Akita Prefecture in 2009, is planning to sell facilities to produce bio fuel for cars worldwide, it said on Thursday.

Its technology only uses hot water to break down raw materials, realizing low-cost production by eliminating the need to rely on sulfuric acid and enzymes to do the job under conventional methods involving rice straws, it said.

Kyodo News

Japanese farm minister Yoshimasa Hayashi and Australian trade minister Craig Emerson met on the sidelines of an unofficial meeting of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and decided they will continue the negotiations that are in the final stages.

Hayashi told reporters after the meeting that many of the issues dealt with in the negotiations have “boiled down” and “only mains to be discussed.”

But negotiations on the remaining issues are expected to be tough as both countries gear up for international elections this summer, making it increasingly difficult for them to offer concessions.

NATO defence ministers speaking following a meeting with Norwegian Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg (not pictured) in Oslo on 8 May, 2013.—Reuters

Tornadoes in Oklahoma, Arkansas injure at least five

LITTLE ROCK (Arkansas), 31 May—Severe storms spawned a dozen reported tornadoes in Oklahoma and Arkansas on Thursday, injuring at least five people and sending residents scrambling for cover 10 days after a powerful twister killed 24 people in Oklahoma.

In western Arkansas, two people were injured in a tornado near Oden that destroyed a house and downed power lines.

Three others were injured in a storm north of Amity, Arkansas, the state emergency management department said.

One tornado warning included Cushing, Oklahoma, a critical hub for the US oil markets northeast of Oklahoma City, but the storm passed through without damaging tanks that store more than 50 million barrels of oil, said Bob Noltensmeyer, Cushing’s emergency management director.

The storms were not expected to taper off until later on Thursday night and more storms are expected on Friday, said Greg Dial, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service’s Storm Prediction Centre.

Reuters

US sanctions on Iran

WASHINGTON, 31 May—The United States relaxed sanctions on Iran on Thursday to allow American companies to sell mobile phones, software and other technology used for personal communications to Iranians.

The move announced by the US Treasury Department allows Iranians to get access to the latest Apple phones and newest software that have only been available on Teheran’s black market since sanctions were first imposed in 1992.

Also on Thursday, the Treasury Department said it had blacklisted Iranian government groups and officials accused of abusing human rights, including a committee of the United States said censors news and other information.

The United States has ramped up tough measures against Iran in recent years to slow development of the Islamic Republic’s disputed nuclear programme, blacklisting a wide range of Iranian companies and government officials.

Reuters

Antigua and Barbuda makes progress in hunger eradication plan

SANTIAGO, 31 May—Antigua and Barbuda has achieved progress in a UN-supported programme to eradicate hunger and extreme poverty, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)’s regional Office in Chile said on Thursday.

Family gardens were built, school food improved and food education programmes implemented within the framework of the “Hunger Zero Challenge” programme, the office said.

Deep Ford, the FAO’s representative to the Caribbean, said in a statement that the FAO has identified and supported the first two vulnerable homes to build family gardens, which allow them to earn income by selling vegetables imported from Japan.

Aside from the bilateral free trade talks, Japan requested Australia’s help in obtaining information on the Trans-Pacific Partnership free trade talks as Japan is set to become the 12th member of the talks from Japan.

Kyodo News

Ministers to meet to review NATO’s cyber defences

PARIS, 31 May—Free trade negotiations between Japan and Australia failed to produce an agreement on Thursday at a ministerial meeting in Paris as the two sides were unable to over come differences over beef tariffs.

Japanese farm minister Yoshimasa Hayashi and Australian trade minister Craig Emerson met on the sidelines of an unofficial meeting of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and decided they will continue the negotiations that are in the final stages.

Hayashi told reporters after the meeting that many of the issues dealt with in the negotiations have “boiled down” and “only main issues to be discussed.”

But negotiations on the remaining issues are expected to be tough as both countries gear up for international elections this summer, making it increasingly difficult for them to offer concessions.

The Pentagon accused China this month of using cyber espionage to modernize its military, which Beijing denied.

The Washington Post said this week that Chinese hackers have gained access to designs of more than two dozen major US weapons systems.

Electronic attacks could be used to knock out military communications and disable key infrastructure to soften a country up for a conventional military strike.

NATO systems face “regular” computer attacks, according to Secretary-General Anders Fogh Rasmussen.

“The challenges evolve all the time — probably more exponentially than any other type of threat that we face at the moment and therefore we have to make sure that NATO keeps pace with that evolving threat,” said a senior NATO official, speaking on condition of anonymity.

NATO was alerted on technology may be an attempt by the US government to develop goodwill with Iranian citizens before the Iranian national elections next month.

“As the Iranian government attempts to silence its people by cutting off their communication with each other and the rest of the world, the United States will continue to take action to help the Iranian people exercise their universal human rights, including the right to freedom of expression,” Treasury said in a statement.

Social media played a big role in the wake of Iran’s disputed 2009 presidential elections, used by the opposition “Green Movement” to marshal global attention to their cause, and later inspiring protesters in the Arab Spring revolts of 2011.

Reuters
New Ngamwegon village primary school handed over

Mandalay, 31 May—A new Basic Education Primary School in Ngamwegon village in Minsu village-tract in Kyaukse Township in Kyaukse District in Mandalay Region has been handed over to the Ministry of Education.

The ceremony to hand over the school on 28 May morning was attended by Mandalay Region Chief Minister U Ye Myint, Minister U Than Soe Myint, Region Forestry and Mining, donor officials, teachers, students and local people.

The region minister for forestry and mining, donor and the region education officer formally opened the new school building. The chief minister unveiled the stone inscription of the school and officials sprinkled scented water on the inscription. The region chief minister delivered an address. The donor explained purpose of donation. The region minister for forestry and mining read out the message of felicitations sent by the Myanmar Ambassador to Japan.

The donor then handed over documents related to the school to the township education officer who returned him a certificate of honour. One of the villagers spoke words of thanks. The donor and party then performed Aikido martial arts. —MMAL-Tin Maung (Mandalay subprinting house)

School enrollment activities launched in Kanpetlet

Kanpetlet, 31 May—School enrollment activities were launched in Basic Education High School in Kanpetlet in Chin State on 27 May morning.

The launching ceremony was attended by the township administrator, departmental personnel, townswelders, social organizations members, parents and more than 200 students. Donors contributed about 200 dozens of exercise books at the ceremony. The school enrollment is accepted through 31 May. —MMAL-Township IPRD

School enrollment activities kick off in Theinni

Theinni, 31 May—School enrollment activities for 2013-2014 academic year were launched in Basic Education High School in Theinni on 29 May morning.

The ceremony was attended by township administrator UWin Khaiag, departmental personnel, members of school board of trustees, Pyithu Hlutlaw Re-presentative U Sai Win Khaing, Township Education Officer Daw Khin May Latt, headmistress Daw Ni Ni Aung, teachers, students and parents.

The township administrator and the Pyithu Hlutlaw re-presentative delivered speeches at the ceremony. The township education officers elaborated on the school enrollment activities.

Wellwishers donated K 50000 and stationery worth K 931,000. —MMAL-Chit Hla (Theinni)

Preventive measures against DHF carried out in Tatkon

Nay Pyi Taw, 31 May—Preventive measures against Dengue Hemorrhagic Fever were taken in Anawrahtaward in Tatkon Township in Nay Pyi Taw Council Area on 29 May afternoon.

The tasks were organized by Township Health Supervisory Committee with the cooperation of township Health Affairs, Association members, Township Women’s Affairs Organization members, Red Cross members, Nay Pyi Taw Council Member Dr Paing Soe and party viewed and encouraged the efforts. He also called for systematic measures to prevent against DHF. —MMAL-021

Sanitation tasks carried out in Hsipaw

Hsipaw, 31 May—Sanitation tasks are being carried out in Hsipaw Township in northern Shan State is a beautiful town on Mandalay-Lashio-Muse Union Highway and a tourist spot. —MMAL-Chit Hla (Hsipaw)

ACCIDENT

Two die in road accident in Mongphyat

Mongphyat, 31 May—Two on a motorbike were killed in a head-on clash with a truck on Union Highway in Mongphyat in eastern Shan State.

The driver of the bike Aik Khan died on the spot and the another rider Aik Pauk died on the way to hospital. The Mongphyat has filed a case as regards the accident. —MMAL-Than Zaw (Mongphyat)

More than 200 cases of Potassium deprivation reported at Yamethin Hospital

Yamethin, 31 May—The number of Potassium deprivation cases from 1 May to 26 May amounted to 226 in Yamethin People’s Hospital in Mandalay Region.

Residents in Nantlon village and its environs, Yamethin and Pyawbwe and goldminers in the area were diagnosed with the rare disease.

The Potassium level is reduced to 2.5 which needs emergency treatment. The ordinary Potassium level of human body is between 3.6 and 5.0.

The symptoms of the fatal disease are weakness and losing appetite. According to an official of a lab in Yamethin, some 85 emergency cases are reported out of 226 diagnosed patients during the period.

The cause of the increased infection in the areas of gold mines is still unknown. —MMAL-Wathan Tun (Magway)

HEALTH

Educative talk on DHF organized in Myitkyina

Myitkyina, 31 May—Under guidance of Kachin State government, an educative talk on Dengue Hemorrhagic Fever and Malaria was organized at Aye Mya Thida Hall in Basic Education High School No(1) in Myitkyina on 27 May morning.

Deputy Director (Admin/Finance) of Kachin State Education Office U Kyaw Aye and Head of State Health Department Dr Kyi Lwin delivered speeches at the ceremony.

State malaria control project manager Dr Zaw Reim, Pediatrician Dr Khin Win Yi delivered educative talks on the danger of DHF and malaria and preventive measures. Pamphlets were then distributed to those present at the talk. It was attended by headmasters/head-mistresses, teachers, health staff, and more than 500 students. —MMAL-Moe Kya (Myitkyina)

HRD

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The launching ceremony was attended by the township administrator, departmental personnel, township Women’s Affairs Association members, Pyithu Hlutlaw Representative U Thaung, Region Forestry and Mining, Region Education Officer U Than Soe Myint, lawmakers, region education officer U Soe Myint Tun, donor President of Yangon International Hotel and Japan Myanmar Culture Economic Friendship Association (JMICEFA) Mr Okio Nodita, district and township level departmental officials, teachers, students and local people.

The region minister for forestry and mining, donor and the region education officer formally opened the new school building. The chief minister unveiled the stone inscription of the school and officials sprinkled scented water on the inscription. The region chief minister delivered an address. The donor explained purpose of donation. The region minister for forestry and mining read out the message of felicitations sent by the Myanmar Ambassador to Japan.

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Committee carries out sanitation tasks in the town daily and collects wastes with dump trucks under supervision of Executive Officer of Township Development Affairs Committee U Thein Htaik Oo.

“We are planning to add more dump trucks,” U Thein Htaik Oo said. He also said his committee is committed to sanitizing and beautifying the town. —MMAL-Sai (Hsipaw)
To end poverty
UN has been urged to extend the 2015 deadline for meeting one of its Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) — to end extreme poverty — until 2030. The MDGs sought to halve extreme poverty, defined as people earning less than $1.25 a day, but the UN has been challenged to work toward a more ambitious goal over the following 15 years.

Over two years into his administration, the President has repeated over and over his call for a shift in the mindset of the people including the government officials. Changes are tangible in almost all aspects but there is still room for improvement, especially in the way some officials are used to thinking and exercising leadership.

Traditionally leading an austere and easy-going life, Myanmar people, particularly the older generation, find entrepreneurship a strange thing. The same situation is still common in many government offices where innovation and out-of-the-box thinking are rarely allowed and supported with the superiors being reluctant to accept new ideas, reflecting the failure to recognize the youth along with their imaginations and ideas as the rising power of the workplace.

There should be a sense of urgency in the minds of the upper echelons of the administration to encourage entrepreneurship especially youth entrepreneurship as an integral part of poverty alleviation effort. To provide the people with access to small loans is a must, but it should be supported with the superiors being reluctant to accept new ideas, reflecting the failure to recognize the youth along with their imaginations and ideas as the rising power of the workplace.

Three police killed in skirmish

Three policemen were killed in a skirmish with an armed group on Mantung-Namtu Road in Mantung Township, Shan State on 29 May.

Police Sergeant Soe Thein from Manpuk Village microwave station outpost and two other police engaged with an armed group near mile post No. 7 on Mantung-Namtu Road around 8 pm while on patrol.

The combined force of the military, police and militia, having been informed the fight, rushed to the scene just to recover the bodies of the three police. The identity of the armed group is under investigation, it is reported.—MNA

World No Tobacco Day observed

The theme of WNTD this year is “bar tobacco advertising, Promotion and Sponsorship.”

The MoU on framework for installation of office computer system in Central Bank of Myanmar. The governor spoke words of thanks on the occasion.—MNA

Initial agreement on computerization of Central Bank of Myanmar reaches with Daiwa

Deputy Minister for Finance and Revenue Dr Maung Maung Thein called the extractive industries being crucial to the country, defining the taxation on extractive industries as taxation on exploitation of national heritage.

He announced the formation of five-member committee constituted with Union ministers for transparency of extractive industries, calling for effective management of natural resources for economic growth of the country.—MNA

World No Tobacco Day observed

Deputy Minister for Health Dr Win Myint addresses the celebration of World No Tobacco Day (WNTD) 2013.—MNA

Initial agreement on computerization of Central Bank of Myanmar reaches with Daiwa

Deputy Minister for Finance and Revenue Dr Lin Aung spoke about the deal saying that it is intended for networking the entire banking system in the catching-up effort of the government financial and monetary regulator.

Governor of the Central Bank of Myanmar U Than Nyine and DIR Chairman Mr Takashi Fukai signed on Tobacco Control was adopted at 56th WHO Conference with the unanimous approval of the member countries, he mentioned.

WHO acting resident representative Dr Jigmi Singay read the message sent by the WHO SEA regional director. The deputy minister and guests cordially discussed and shared views on matters aiming at recruitment and training of civil service personnel, capacity enhancement programs for mid-and senior-level government officials, private and public sector partnership endeavours being facilitated in Myanmar.

Also present at the call together with the Chairman were UCSB Member U Than Tun and departmental personnel.—MNA

Workshop on Extractive Industries Taxation held

The workshop on Extractive Industries Taxation jointly organized by International Monetary Fund, International Tax and Investment Center and Norway Development Cooperation Agency took place at the Golden Palace here on 27-30 May.

Present at the workshop were personnel from IMF, ITIC, NDCA, ministries, NGOs and foreign investors.

In his concluding remark, Deputy Minister for Finance and Revenue Dr Maung Maung Thein called the extractive industries being crucial to the country, defining the taxation on extractive industries as taxation on exploitation of national heritage.

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Deputy Minister for Finance and Revenue Dr Maung Maung Thein makes a speech at the workshop on Extractive Industries Taxation.—MNA

UCSB Chairman receives Dutch, Norwegian delegations

UCSB Chairman receives Dutch, Norwegian delegations

Chairman of the Union Civil Services Board U Kyaw Tha received a delegation led by Mr Willem Kok, Former Prime Minister of the Netherlands and Mr Kjell Magne Bondevik, the Former Prime Minister of Norway at his office, here, this afternoon.

During the call, they cordially discussed and shared views on matters aiming at recruitment and training of civil service personnel, capacity enhancement programs for mid-and senior-level government officials, private and public sector partnership endeavours being facilitated in Myanmar.

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HRD

Yangon Region organizes school enrolment day

Ahlon, 31 May—The school enrolment day was observed at the hall of No. 4 Basic Education High School of No. 3 Basic Education Department of the Ministry of Education in Yangon Region for 2013-2014 academic year on 29 May. Chief Minister of Yangon Region U Myint Swe made a speech. The Chief Minister and party accepted cash donation by Yangon Region Government and wellwishers.

The ceremony was attended by Yangon region ministers, deputy commissioners of four Yangon districts and officials.

Ypyen-Tin Maung Oo (Ahlon)

Traffic rules surprise checks conducted in Mandalay

Mandalay, 31 May—Mandalay Region Road Transport Minister U Kyaw Hsng led the surprise checks of traffic in Mandalay on 23 May. The team which checked whether drivers followed traffic rules in the night was composed of Police Captain Zaw Lwin and members of traffic police corps, staff of General Administration Department and staff of Road Transport Administration Directorate.

Actions were taken against owners of unlicensed cars, drink drivers and others that did not abide by traffic rules. Fifty eight died and 179 injured in 133 traffic accidents in seven townships in Mandalay Region in the first quarter of 2013. A total of 76 were killed and 111 injured in the same period last year.

Out of 113 accidents, 55 accidents took place between 6 pm to 12 pm, prompting the Region Traffic Rules Enforcement Committee to conduct surprise checks in the night time.—MMAL-Tin Maung (Mandalay)
Baghdad bombs kill 25 in Sunni-Shi’ite bloodletting

BAGHDAD, 31 May — A series of bombs battered Shi’ite and Sunni Muslim neighbourhoods across Baghdad on Thursday, killing at least 25 people in the worst wave of sectarian violence since civil war five years ago.

The bloodletting reflects increasing conflict between Iraq’s majority Shi’ite leadership and the Sunni minority, many of whom feel unfairly marginalised since the 2003 fall of strongman Saddam Hussein, a Sunni.

The latest surge in violence began in April when Iraqi forces raided a Sunni protest camp in the north ern town of Hawija, angering Sunni leaders and triggering clashes that spread across the country.

Civil war in Syria between Sunni rebels and President Bashar al-Assad, whose Alawite sect derives from Shi’ite Islam, has aggravated the strife in Iraq. Sunni and Shi’ite Iraqis have been crossing the border to fight on opposing sides in Syria.

No group claimed responsibility for Thursday’s attacks, but Sunni Islamist insurgents and al-Qaeda’s Iraqi wing have increased their operations since the beginning of the year as part of a campaign to exacerbate inter-communal tensions. The violence prompted the United Nations envoy in Baghdad to warn about the risk of a broader confrontation if the country’s political leadership does not negotiate to ease sectarian tensions at the heart of the crisis. “Systemic violence is ready to explode at any moment if all Iraqi leaders do not engage immediately to pull the country out of this mayhem,” United Nations representative Martin Kobler said.

Residents gather at the site of a car bomb attack in Baghdad on 30 May, 2013.—REUTERS

Early on Thursday, a car bomb exploded in the mainly Sunni District of Binoog in north Baghdad, killing at least four people. Throughout the day, at least six more bombs killed another 20 people in mainly Shi’ite and Sunni districts across the capital, police said. — Reuters

Israel’s ruling party divided over order for F-35 combat jets

ROME, 31 May — Italian opposition parties and some lawmakers from the ruling Democratic Party called on the government on Thursday to abandon its plans to buy 90 Lockheed Martin F-35 fighter jets.

Italy’s total planned investment in the new Light ning II Joint Strike fighters (JSF) exceeds 10 billion euros (8.5 billion pounds) even though it cut its order last year to 90 aircraft from the 131 it had originally pencilled in to buy more than a decade ago, a move it said would save 5 billion euros.

The opposition 5-Star Movement, the Left Ecology Liberty (SEL) and 13 members of Prime Minister Enrico Letta’s Democratic Party (PD), one of two main components of the right-left coalition, now want to scrap the order completely.

“We can easily do without the F-35,” said Giulio Marconi, an SEL lawmaker. “The government should make a responsible gesture and use these resources to increase welfare spending and create jobs.”

With Italy mired in recession and struggling with public finances, the money saved by eliminating a single F-35 could be used to build 387 day care centres or renovate 555 schools, according to a motion signed by 158 parliamentarians in the lower house Chamber of Deputies.

The PD said it wanted to cut spending on the programme during the campaign for national elections last February, but has since formed a government with Silvio Berlusconi’s People of Freedom (PDL) party, which supports the F-35.

The F-35 investment “should be revised, just as we all said in the election campaign,” Giuseppe Civa ti, one of 13 PD members who signed the motion, told Reuters.

Caviti, a frequent critic of his own party, accused the PD and former prime minister Mario Monti’s Civic Choice party of re nging on campaign promises to cut spending on the jet.— Reuters

UN praises Belarus for combating human trafficking

MINSK, 31 May — The United Nations appreciated Belarus’ efforts in combating human trafficking, a senior UN official said here on Thursday.

UN Under Secretary General Yuri Fedotov, also executive director of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, told Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko that the United Nations thanks the country for its constant support in the fight against human trafficking.

Lukashenko said Belarus is strongly determined to fight all kinds of crime, adding that it is quite a challenge for Belarus, as the country is located at a crossroads of important routes.

He said the country’s transit location exposes it to certain threats, from illegal migration and smuggling of narcotic drugs and radioactive substances. “It puts us in the forefront of fight against these crimes,” the president said, adding that Belarus has made trem endous efforts to combat those crimes.— Xinhua

EU official urges legislation on tobacco packaging

BRUSSELS, 31 May— The European Union’s health and consumer policy commissioner Tonio Borg on Thursday urged the European Parliament and health ministers from member states to support a legislative proposal on tobacco packaging aimed at discouraging youth from smoking.

“Tobacco products should not look like toys or cosmetics, or taste like vanilla or chocolate. We must strive to make tobacco products and smoking less attractive to young people, the commissioner told lawmakers in Brussels, on the eve of the World No Tobacco Day.

Last December, the Commission adopted a proposal on updating the current Tobacco Products Directive with initiatives of discouraging young people from starting to smoke. It suggested that 75 percent of the front and back of cigarette packs should be covered with pictures and texts of health warning.

According to a Eurobaro meter survey in 2012, 76 percent of Europeans were in favour of putting health warning pictures on all tobacco packs and 63 percent were in favour of banning flavours.—Xinhua

A fair to promote Japanese business in Africa and showcase African products and culture begins in Yokohama, near Tokyo, on 30 May, 2013, ahead of an international meeting on African development.— KYODO NEWS
New Light of Myanmar

REGIONAL

Saturday, 1 June, 2013

Vietnam’s PM to start 2-day visit to Singapore

SINGAPORE, 31 May—Vietnam’s Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung is sched- uled to be here in Singa- pore for a two-day visit from Friday to Saturday, the city- state’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs said on Thursday. He is invited to deliver the keynote address at the 12th International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) Shangri-La Dialogue here, an annual forum attended by defense ministers and security experts from across the Asia-Pacific region. The ministry also said Dung’s visit will be “a highlight in a series of events commemorating the 40th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between Singapore and Vietnam.”

Besides, the Vietnamese PM will call on Singa- pore’s President Tony Tan Keng Yam and Prime Min- ister Lee on Friday, while on Saturday, he is scheduled to attend a breakfast meeting with representatives of Singapore companies with key business interests in Vietnam.—Xinhua

Gov’t orders TEPCO to take measure to halt radioactive water increase

Tokyo, 31 May—The government told Tokyo Electric Power Co on Thurs- day to take action to prevent radioactive water from fur- ther increasing at its Fuku- shima Daiichi complex by building shielding walls in the ground by freezing the soil around the crippled reac- tor buildings.

The frozen soil, to be created by circulating cool- ant underground, is intended to block massive amounts of groundwater seeping into the reactor buildings, where it gets contaminated by radioactive substances. The government expects the system to be in use from the first half of fiscal 2015.

According to a report compiled by a government panel on Thursday, there are no previous examples of walls to intercept water, cre- ated from frozen soil, being used for longer than a few years, making the project at the Fukushima plant “an un-precedented challenge in the world.” Economy, Trade and Industry Minister Toshimitsu Motegi told TEPCO Pres- ident Naomi Hirose that the project is “very challenging” but drastic measures should be taken to address “one of most serious problems” in the process of decommis- sioning the plant’s four units, which is expected to contin- ue up to 40 years or so.

About 400 tons of groundwater seep into the reactor buildings every day, flowing into the lengthy and complicated water cir- culation loop that keeps the plant’s damaged reactors cool. This means that the total volume of toxic water is increasing by the same amount daily. TEPCO once considered building walls to intercept water after the plant was crippled by a huge earth- quake and tsunami in March 2011, but it abandoned the idea due to fears that change in water pressure could lead contaminated water accu- mulating in the reactor buildings to flow onto the soil outside.

The risks will remain even after the creation of walls with frozen soil, a method originally proposed by a contractor Kaizoku Corp. TEPCO would have to control the level of water inside the reactor buildings such as by installing pumps. To create frozen soil, pipes to run coolant will be inserted around the reactor buildings. The wall is expected to be 1.4 kilometres long and could be 30 metres deep in some areas, the industry ministry officials said.

According to one of the officials, the costs for creat- ing the system will not be- come clear until details are worked out. The cost of tens of billions of yen may be needed. Motegi said the govern- ment will financially support the project’s feasibility study by allocating part of the funds earmarked for research and development related to reactor decommissioning in the fiscal 2013 budget.

The problem of keep- ing massive amounts of ra- dioactive water at the plant has drawn renewed attention after TEPCO recently found some underground water storage pools had leaked contaminated water and had to find a new storage space. The government also requested TEPCO to build tanks to secure a total of 800,000 tons of water stor- age capacity by the end of fiscal 2016, compared from the current 330,000 tons.

Kyodo News

Indonesian ethnic group prizes women with large feet

JAKARTA, 31 May—While women with small feet are considered more attractive in most cultures, new research published on Thursday shows that an ethnic group living in the northern part of Indonesia’s Sumatra Island prefers women with large feet.

In the research published in the journal Hu- man Nature, Geoff Kush- nick, an anthropologist of the Wash- ington, said that men tend to choose women with an hourglass figure or smooth skin and smaller feet as those criteria re- flects a potential mate’s youth and fertility.

“As a woman ages and bears children, the size of her foot increases,” Kush- nick said in the research. However, data he col- lected among the Karo Ba- tak ethnic group from North Sumatra Province, who mostly live in rural villages, revealed the contrary: Its men prefer women with big feet.

He showed five draw- ings of a barefoot woman to 159 Karo Batak male and female adults. All of the participants judged the drawing of the woman with the largest feet to be the most attractive and the woman with the smallest feet the least attractive.

Kushnick found out later that the preference of Karo Batak men for big feet is linked to their ecologi- cal context—living in ru- ral areas and involvement in agricultural work—and limited exposure to Western media.

In contrast, urban so- cieties with more exposure to Western media desire to see women with small feet.

“Cultural and social influences play a stronger role in mate choice than some psycho- logists are willing to accept,” the anthropologist said. During his research, he said a male Karo Batak respondent was overheard saying, “Why would any- one like a woman with small feet? How would she work in the rice fields?” It showed that for the Karo Batak eth- nic group, large feet trans- late to strength and greater productivity in the rice fields.—Kyodo News

People greet a giant panda at Wusu International Airport in Taiyuan, capital of north China’s Shanxi Province, on 30 May, 2013. The panda pair from the Bifengxia Panda Base in southwest China’s Sichuan Province arrived in Taiyuan by airplane Thursday, starting their one-year sojourn at the Taiyuan Zoo.—Xinhua

New Zealand to push for FTA progress with India

Wellington, 31 May—New Zealand For- eign Affairs Minister Mur- ray McCully will be look- ing to boost trade, including in a free trade agreement (FTA), and other links on a visit to India and Sri Lanka next week.

McCully, who will depart on Monday, said he would meet India’s min- isters for external affairs, sports and commerce to discuss ways to further strengthen the bilateral rela- tionship and review pro- gress in the ongoing FTA, which is under negotiation.

In Sri Lanka, he would meet the ministers of exter- nal affairs and economic development to discuss that nation’s hosting of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in November, as well as prospects for New Zealand’s dairy exports, which were valued at 250 million NZ dollars (203.31 million USdollars) a year, Mc- cully said in a statement on Friday. “I also intend to discuss towards reconciliation following the end of the civil war and hu- man rights issues,” he said.

Xinhua

Toxic gas exposure leaves one dead, two seriously ill in Japan

OZAKA, 31 May—A man died and two other people were critically ill on Thursday after they were ex- posed to a toxic gas at a fish processing plant in the south- western Japanese prefecture of Nagasaki, local officials said.

The incident happened at the seafood processing plant in Sasebo City of the prefecture minutes before 9:30 am local time when employees of the seafood processing plant were cleaning drains and underground tanks for storage of scales of fish, which are located in the centre of the factory, ac- cording to Sasebo City Fire Bureau.

Kyodo News

A member of provincial rescue personnel stands on a rigid hull inflatable boat in Camp Aguinaldo in Quezon City, the Philippines, on 30 May, 2013. The Philippine National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council distributed multiple rigid hull inflatable boats and other rescue equipments to flood and disaster-prone provinces in preparation for typhoons.—Xinhua
**Chilean towns almost evacuated on volcano alert**

**SANTIAGO, 31 May—**

Some 1,400 Chilean residents near Copahue Volcano have been evacuated after an alert was issued on a possible imminent eruption, a local official said on Thursday. “Nearly 1,800 people must be evacuated from around the Copahue Volcano, of which 80 percent have been moved to three shelters built for them,” said Nivaldo Pina- leo, mayor of Alto Biobio in southern Chile.

Pinaleo said that residents must stay away from the volcano, after a dozen animals were evacuated after Friday.

All residents within a 25-kilometer radius of the volcano in Chile were required to evacuate, an area inhabited mostly by an indigenious group known as the Pehuenche.

Residents have been reluctant to leave the cattle behind, their principal source of livelihood until the government decided to evacuate the animals by army trucks. Agriculture Minister Luis Mayol said the government has also sent tons of food to the evacuees on a daily basis.

Nearly 80,000 orphans receive free health insurance

**BEIJING, 31 May—**

About 80,000 orphans were given free health insurance as a joint program supported by the Ministry of Civil Affairs (MCA) in 2009 to provide free health insurance for the children of poor families and 712,000 orphans under the age of 18 who are registered with the MCA.

“We have distributed about 750,000 insurance contracts to children in more than 20 provincial regions, including the quake-hit province of Sichuan and the plateau areas of Qinghai and Tibet,” Hu said.

Each insured child is covered for 100,000 yuan (about 16,181 US dollars) at a premium of 50 yuan a year. The 12 major illnesses covered include malignant tumors, illnesses requiring organ or stem cell transplant, aplastic anemia, acute hepaticitis and infantile paralysis, he said.

The Ministry of Civil Affairs and the Ministry of Education launched this joint program under the Ministry of Civil Affairs in 2009.

**Spanish study relates 20 pct of all cancers to smoking**

**MADEIRE, 31 May—**

Smoking is directly responsible for 20 percent of all cancers, not just lung and throat cancer, a study developed in the Catalan Institute of Oncology and the Hospital Duran I Reynals showed on Thursday. The study followed 441,211 people over a period of 11 years and of these, 14,563 developed a tumor directly related to their smoking habits. The study, which was published in the Journal of Clinical Oncology, said that 80 percent of the lungs and larynx as well as between 20 and 50 percent of tumors related to respiration, digestive or the urinary tract are also related to smoking.

Meanwhile 25 percent of liver, 14 percent of ovary and 8 percent of cases of kidney cancers are as a result of smoking, said the study, which was published ahead of Friday’s World Anti-Tobacco Day.

The methodology of the study saw investigators compare those who never smoked in their lives with those who have never smoked in their lives. Spain sees 200,000 new cases of cancer reported every year and it is estimated that around 40,000 of these cases are linked to tobacco in a country where a ban on smoking in bars, restaurants and other public spaces only came into effect in January 2011. Meanwhile, with their new data in hand, the authors of the study calculate that tobacco is directly responsible for 270,000 new cases of cancer in European countries including Italy, Spain, Britain, Greece, Germany and 37 other nations. This Spanish study forms part of the European Prospective Investigation into Cancer and Nutrition (EPIC), which is being carried out in 23 centers in 10 European countries and which looks at the effect of various habits, such as diet, tobacco and alcohol consumption, exercise, etc. on the health of the continent.
Selena Gomez reconciles with Justin Bieber for a trial period

London, 31 May — Singer-actress Selena Gomez is said to have rekindled her romance with Justin Bieber but this time plans to treat the relationship more carefully to avoid fights. A source said that the couple are officially together and are taking the relationship more maturely, reported Digital Spy.

“Justin and Selena are dating but they are taking things slow,” a source said. Gomez, who broke up with Bieber several times, didn’t want the current relationship hurt her again. “Selena is keeping her heart from being broken, so she is definitively looking at this as a trial period in their relationship,” the source added.

The source added that Gomez and Bieber would learn from the mistakes they made in the past, saying, “When they first started to date, it was amazing but they were too young and it was too much. They didn’t even know what love was and she got all mixed up.”

Singer-actress Selena Gomez.

Angelina Jolie to miss aunt’s funeral

Beijing, 31 May — Angelina Jolie, who has been in London since 22 May, said she would be unable to attend the funeral of her late aunt Debbie Martin because it clashes with the premiere of the new movie ‘World War Z’.

The ‘Salt’ actress — who recently revealed she underwent a double mastectomy after she was identified as carrying the BRCA1 cancer gene — lost her aunt Debbie Martin on Sunday so she won’t be able to attend but she has been in touch with us and with various other members of the family, which has obviously been lovely and has meant a lot to us,” Ron said.

Ron also revealed the family hope to start a charity to raise money for BRCA testing. He said: “We are currently in the process of setting up a foundation in Debbie’s memory and we are looking to raise money for women who can’t afford to get BRCA testing. We are hoping to work with a charity called the Clearity Foundation so that every woman in America will have access to BRCA testing that could save her life — no matter how much money she has.”

Angelina Jolie.

Arnold Schwarzenegger to Pump iron on TV

Beijing, 31 May — Arnold Schwarzenegger is set to return to bodybuilding in new TV series ‘Pump’, set in the 70s and based around a gym in California’s Venice Beach. The former politician and Hollywood star has sold the rights for the TV series to US cable network Showtime. An hour-long drama is being made into a pilot, set in 1970s Venice Beach, California, tracing the origins of the present-day fitness industry and “culture of body worship” to one gym called Pump.

If a series then gets the go-ahead, Arnold is planned to become a recurring character. Executive producer Eric Tannenbaum said he was excited when the idea was brought to him by writer Michael Konyves. He told The Hollywood Reporter: “We loved it, but I said the only way you can really tell this story is if we can get Arnold involved. “The birth of the fitness/ bodybuilding revolution can literally be traced back to the days when Arnold arrived in the US.”

Arnold, 65, started weight training aged 15 and moved to the US in 1968, a year after winning the amateur Mr Universe bodybuilding title. He then went on to win the professional Mr Universe title three times, and the Mr Olympia title seven times.

Bieber, 26, joined the judging panel with Minaj, country singer Keith Urban and Jackson, a music producer, for the show’s 12th season. Carey reportedly earned $18 million while Minaj’s salary was reported to be $12 million and Urban’s was at $8 million for the season. Carey and Minaj, 30, grabbed headlines throughout the season for their on-camera arguments and off-camera feuding, with Carey saying in January that she had hired extra security following threats reportedly made against her by Minaj. Despite the added star power of Carey, Minaj and Urban, the show’s ratings slumped to the lowest in 12 seasons, with the 16 May season finale of “Idol” drawing 14.2 million to see vocal powerhouse Candice Glover win the competition. Fox released statements following the announcements of both judges.

“Mariah Carey is a true global icon — one of the most accomplished artists on the planet — and we feel extremely fortunate that she was able to bring her wisdom and experience to the ‘American Idol’ contest this season,” Fox said. “Nicki Minaj is a superstar who brought a level of honesty and passion to ‘American Idol’ and who had a tremendous positive impact on so many contestants this season. Given her extremely busy career, we understand and respect her decision and wish her the best,” the network added after Minaj’s announcement.

Jackson announced this month he would not return to the show next season. It was unclear whether Urban would. Pop singer and actress Jennfer Lopez and Aerosmith frontman Steven Tyler left “Idol” in 2012 after two seasons and used their increased visibility from the show to relaunch their music careers. Fox, which is owned by News Corp, will also lose reality programming chief Mike Darnell, who said last week he would leave at the end of June. Darnell shepherded “American Idol” into a ratings juggernaut since its debut in 2002.

Mariah Carey, Nicki Minaj leaving "American Idol"

Los Angeles, 31 May — Pop singer Mariah Carey and rapper Nicki Minaj will leave “American Idol” after just one season as judges on the singing contest show, following on the heels of longtime judge Randy Jackson who left amid a vocal powerhouse Candice Glover win the competition. Fox released statements following the announcements of both judges.

“Mariah Carey is a true global icon — one of the most accomplished artists on the planet — and we feel extremely fortunate that she was able to bring her wisdom and experience to the ‘American Idol’ contest this season,” Fox said. “Nicki Minaj is a superstar who brought a level of honesty and passion to ‘American Idol’ and who had a tremendous positive impact on so many contestants this season. Given her extremely busy career, we understand and respect her decision and wish her the best,” the network added after Minaj’s announcement.

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The source added that Gomez and Bieber would learn from the mistakes they made in the past, saying, “When they first started to date, it was amazing but they were too young and it was too much. They didn’t even know what love was and she got all mixed up.”

Singer-actress Selena Gomez.

Angelina Jolie.

Singer Jon Bon Jovi performs with his band Bon Jovi during the 2012 iHeart Radio Music Festival at the MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas, Nevada on 21 Sept, 2012.— Reuters

Bon Jovi cuts price of Spanish tickets for cash-strapped fans

Madrid, 31 May — US rock band Bon Jovi has waived its fee for a concert in recession-hit Spain next month so that cash-strapped fans can afford tickets, the band’s publicist said on Thursday.

Tickets for the 27th June tickets are priced at 18-39 euros ($23-$50) each to cover costs, the publicist said. The concert has sold out already. Tickets for the Stuttgart leg of “Because We Can: The Tour” cost 77 euros in comparison.

The lead singer of band, 51-year-old Jon Bon Jovi, told El Mundo newspaper that Madrid was originally left off the list of tour venues because organizers feared seats would not be filled at a time of deep recession and high unemployment.

But the band decided to perform anyway in order not to let down Spanish fans. “We didn’t want to let down fans that have supported us for 30 years in a country that I love,” he told the paper.

Randy Jackson (C) is embraced by Mariah Carey (L) and Nicki Minaj (R) as he finishes his final season as a judge during the Season 12 finale of “American Idol” in Los Angeles in this 16 May, 2013 file photo. — Reuters
**Bayern’s Dante and Luiz Gustavo to miss German Cup final**

BERLIN, 31 May—Bayern Munich’s Dante Gustavo and Luiz Gustavo will miss the DFB Cup final (German Cup) and the chance to wrap up a historic title treble in one season as they are forced to join the Brazilian soccer team for the Confederations Cup following lengthy discussions on Thursday.

Two days ahead of the German Cup final in Berlin the Brazilian Bayern duo will head to their home country to meet the official deadline for the Confederation Cup preparations on Saturday. After lengthy discussions, trying to find a joint solution with the Brazilian Football Association (CBF) and the FIFA, the German giant and Champions League winner had to bite the bullet when they have been ordered to release the players for the “Selecao”.

“We’re releasing the players. They’ll travel to Rio this evening,” Bayern chairman Karl-Heinz Rummenigge said on the club’s official homepage. In accord with international FIFA statutes clubs must release their players 14 days ahead of a tournament therefore the Bavarians released the Brazilian internationals to evade legal actions and consequences for future call ups for both players.

Rummenigge added: “You have a clear impression that a form of psychological terror is being used against the two players. I find the pressure being applied inhumane and unscrupulous. More than anything else, I think it’s very unfair, because the players are being forced into a position that I believe is unacceptable.”

Nonetheless, the Selecao encounters Japan on 15 June for the opener of the Confederations Cup in Brasilia whereas Bayern Munich faces with Stuttgart the German Cup final on June 1 to round off a possible historic season.

**Tiger ‘tamed’ by good friend Couples at the Memorial**

DUBLIN, (Ohio), 31 May—Tiger Woods had plenty of fun playing with good friend Fred Couples in Thursday’s opening round of the Memorial Tournament, but was frustrated after failing to capitalize on good ball-striking in tough conditions.

While PGA Tour veteran Couples surprised himself with his own good play on lightning-fast greens that became increasingly bumpy for the late starters, Woods had to settle for a one-under par 71 after mixing five birdies with four bogeys. “It was probably the highest score I could have shot today,” five-times Memorial champion Woods told reporters after launching his title defense with a total of 30 putts on a hot, muggy and breezy afternoon at Muirfield Village Golf Club.

“Didn’t capitalize on a few opportunities I had. Short irons, I didn’t hit them close enough. All in all it was a pretty high score. “But I played a lot better than my score indicates. Hopefully tomorrow I can clean up, make a few more putts and get a roll.”

Woods, who has clinched his 14th major title on his way to the starts on the 2013 PGA Tour, is considered one of the best putters of all time but he struggled on greens he described as “a little crusty and a little bumpy”.

He added: “I just didn’t make anything today. I thought I hit good putts. I misread a couple pretty badly. “Chipping is tough badly. “Chipping is tough

**Novak Djokovic of Serbia hits a return to Guido Pella of Argentina during their men’s singles match at the French Open tennis tournament at the Roland Garros stadium in Paris on 30 May, 2013. Djokovic beat Pella 6-2, 6-0, 6-2.—Reuters**

**Watertight Djokovic stays on course, Li sinks Nadal playing catch-up in French Open quest**

PARIS, 31 May—Novak Djokovic had a simple solution to the rain showers that continued to play havoc at Roland Garros on Thursday—win quickly— but the weather got into the works of former women’s champion Li Na as she was bundled out at a soggy Roland Garros. World number one Djokovic needed just an hour and 26 minutes to dispose of Argentina’s Guido Pella, winning 6-2, 6-0, 6-2 to reach the third round outfits. Sixth seed Li was twice forced off court during lengthy rain delays and when the third installment of the match began she lost seven games in a row during a 5-7, 6-3, 6-2 defeat. Slate grey clouds hung over Roland Garros for much of the day with tournament organizers forced to cancel matches for the second time in three days. Four second round ties will now be played on Friday when the third round is scheduled to start.

Former runner-up Samantha Stosur of Australia needed two periods of play on Chatrier Court to get past plucky Frenchwoman Marion Bartoli all on show on Chatrier Court to get past plucky Frenchwoman

Novak Djokovic of Serbia hits a return to Guido Pella of Argentina during their men’s singles match at the French Open tennis tournament at the Roland Garros stadium in Paris on 30 May, 2013. Djokovic beat Pella 6-2, 6-0, 6-2.—Reuters

**Starting point for Nadal**

PARIS, 31 May—The weather gods are conspiring against Rafa Nadal’s hopes of winning a record-breaking eighth French Open title. Thursday’s rain at Roland Garros left the Spaniard kicking his heels in the locker room and he now faces the prospect of winning six matches in 10 days if he is to retain his title.

Fierce rival and top seed Novak Djokovic got lucky and thrashed Guido Pella in the second round after the showers between the showmen on Thursday but Nadal, who faces Slovakia’s Martin Klizan, has not played for four days. It is not ideal, especially as Italy’s dangerous claycourter Fabio Fognini is already through and waiting for defending champion Nadal having had an extra day’s rest.

Klizan, who just missed out on being seeded, is a tall, powerful left-hander and an unknown quantity for Nadal who has never faced him before. It should be a formality, but Germany’s Daniel Brands proved on Monday that Nadal can be vulnerable before he starts firing on all cylinders at Roland Garros.

Friday’s schedule is a packed affair with third round ties, matches vying for court space with third round ties, the pick of which is second seed Roger Federer up against Frenchman Julien Benneteau. Women’s top seed Serena Williams is also in third round action on Friday against Romania’s Sorana Cirstea while home fans will have plenty to cheer with Jo-Wilfred Tsonga, Gael Monfils and Marion Bartoli all on show courts.

**Indian weightlifters bag seven more medals**

NEW DELHI, 31 May—Indian weightlifters continued to shine at the 15th Asian Youth Weightlifting Championships by bagging seven medals, including two gold, on the third day in Doha today.

Sambhu Lapung clinched two gold and a silver in boys 69kg category. He bagged a silver in snatch (119kg) before winning a gold each in clean and jerk (114kg) and total lift (263kg).—PTI

**MADRID**

Madrid this year, put out French wildcard Lucas Pouille 6-1, 7-6, 6-1, ending the run of the last remaining teenager in the men’s draw. Defending men’s champion Rafa Nadal and women’s champion Maria Sharapova were both hoping to squeeze in their second round matches later or face a complicated route ahead. Stosur will next face 18th seed Jelena Jankovic in a repeat of their 2010 semi-final after the Serbian won 12 successive games to beat Spain’s Garbine Muguruza 6-3 6-0. Reuters

**Samantha Stosur of Australia serves to Kristina Mladenovic of France during their women’s singles match at the French Open tennis tournament at the Roland Garros stadium in Paris on 30 May, 2013.—Reuters**

**Rafael Nadal of Spain celebrates defeating Daniel Brands of Germany in their men’s singles match during the French Open tennis tournament at the Roland Garros stadium in Paris on 27 May, 2013.—Reuters**

**Reuters**
Sneijder ready to be at his best again in Asia

HOENDERLOO, (Netherlands), 31 May—The Dutch team started its preparation for the forthcoming friendly against Indonesia and China with captain Wesley Sneijder, ready to leave a turbulent year behind him, he told Xinhua in an exclusive interview. The Netherlands set up its training camp in the woods of Hoenderloo to prepare for the matches against Indonesia on 7 June and against China on 11 June in Beijing.

“l am looking forward to it and with me all the others,” said Sneijder. “It’s a beautiful experience. You don’t find these countries too often normally. If you can combine the visit with a trip like this, that is a bonus.”

And for me certainly from the sporting perspective, it’s a challenge. Since I have not been at the Dutch team too often recently, I like to play football again. I’m happy to go there.”

For Sneijder it will not be his first visit to China. In August 2011 he played the Italian Super Cup with Inter against AC Milan, scoring one goal but losing 2-1.

“That was a nice experience in Beijing,” he said. “I know the city a bit now, we have been there for a week. The atmosphere in the stadium and around the stadium was perfect. I think we are going to experience something like that again. It’s nice to take that with me in my career.”

Sneijder admitted he does not know a lot of the forthcoming opponent, or about Chinese football in general. “Very little, but in the next few days we can prepare ourselves. We still have time. First we have to go elsewhere, to Indonesia.”

The European Under 21 Championships will also be played in June and twelve regular players of the first Dutch team will be active at that tournament in Israel. For that reason the choices of head coach Louis van Gaal were limited and he called up four debutants. However, with one year remaining before the World Cup the battle for a place in the squad has started and lack of motivation will be no issue.

“Many players are motivated. They play at the European Championship with the Under 21 team,” Sneijder explained. “That is more important than this trip, that is clear. So those guys are missing, but still all the other guys that are here, that are available, will go to China and Indonesia. We will be going there with a good team.”

Wesley Sneijder

US genetically modified wheat find threatens exports, stokes consumer fears

Kern, managing director and CEO of Mercedes-Benz India, poses for photos during the launch of new Mercedes-Benz “A-Class” in Mumbai, India, on 30 May, 2013.—Xinhua

TOKYO/BRUSSELS, 31 May—Unapproved genetically modified wheat found growing in the United States is threatening the outlook for US exports of the world’s biggest traded food commodity, with importers keenly aware of consumer sensitivity to gene-altered food.

Major importer Japan has cancelled a tender offer to buy US western white wheat, while other top Asian wheat importers South Korea, China and the Philippines said they were closely monitoring the situation.

“We will refrain from buying western white and feed wheat effective today,” Tomi Hisakome, a Japanese farm ministry official in charge of wheat trading, told Reuters.

The European Union is preparing to test incoming shipments, and will block any containing GM wheat. Chicago Board of Trade wheat futures fell 0.5 percent on Thursday.

GM wheat was discovered this spring on a farm in the west coast state of Oregon, in a field that grew winter wheat in 2012. USDA officials said on Wednesday that when a farmer sprayed the so-called “volunteer” plants with a glyphosate herbicide, some of them unexpectedly survived.

Scientists found the wheat was a strain field-tested from 1998 to 2005 and deemed safe before. St Louis-based biotech giant Monsanto withdrew it from the regulatory approval process on worldwide opposition to genetically engineered wheat.

No GM wheat varieties are approved for general planting in the US or elsewhere, the USDA said. The EU has asked Monsanto for a detection method to allow its controls to be carried out.

With high consumer wariness to genetically modified food, few countries allow imports of such cereals for direct human consumption. However, the bulk of US corn and soybean crops are genetically modified.

The latest finding revives memories of farmers unwittingly planting genetically modified rapeseed in Europe in 2000, while in 2006 a large part of the US long-grain rice crop was contaminated by an experimental strain from Bayer CropScience, prompting import bans in Europe and Japan.

Karen Braun, a senior analyst for Lanworth Commodities, takes photographs of wheat during a study to determine how recent hail storms will effect upcoming crop yields on a farm near Effingham in southern Illinois, on 15 May, 2012.—REUTERS

Industrial-size worm farm cuts Sydney waste

SYDNEY, 31 May—A worm farm trial in a Sydney eatery precinct has halved the total waste of a local restaurant and juice shop, saving on rubbish bills and producing fertiliser, the City of Sydney said Friday.

The Green Living Centre held a six-month trial of the farm using a 1,500 litre skip bin to house the worms at their office in Newtown, Sydney.

Over the six months the farm diverted 462 kilograms, the equivalent of 6,500 hamburgers, of food waste from two local businesses, said Project Manager Mithra Cox.

The 323 litres of organic fertilizer produced by the worms was given away to local residents, and is expected to produce about 40 kilograms of compost.

“The worm farm plays an important role in turning food waste into a valuable organic fertilizer, and diverting waste from landfill,” said Cox. “This trial has shown that large worm farms can handle commercial quantities of food waste and halve the amount of waste going to landfill from restaurants and food outlets,” she added.

US genetically modified wheat

Aichi Steel to offer technical assistance to India’s Usha Martin

NAGOYA, 31 May—Aichi Steel will offer technical assistance to Usha Martin Ltd of India for the production of specialty steel to meet an expected increase in demand from automakers.

Aichi Steel will assist in quality assurance and provide technical guidance to Usha Martin, a leading producer of steel wire products based in Kolkata, West Bengal. Other details of assistance will be worked out in the days ahead, according to the Japanese company’s press release on Thursday.

Kyodo News

Aichi Steel to offer technical assistance to India’s Usha Martin

Myanmar TV

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Senior General Min Aung Hlaing receives Lt-Gen Tarnchaiyan Srisuwon and party from Royal Thai Armed Forces

NAY PYI TAW, 31 May—A delegation led by Lt-Gen Tarnchaiyan Srisuwon from Royal Thai Armed Forces who will attend the 2nd Myanmar-Thai Senior Staff Talk paid a call on Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at Zeyathiri Beikman, here, at 1 pm today.

They held comprehensive discussions on further cementing of friendship between the Myanmar and Thai armed forces in the time of new generation leaders, promotion of relations between the governments, armed forces and peoples of the two countries, holding of Myanmar-Thai high-ranking military officials meeting and organizing of sport events for enhancing amity among ASEAN armed forces.

The meeting was also attended by Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Command-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win and senior military officers from the Office of the Commander-in-Chief (Army). The Thai delegation was accompanied by senior military officers and Thai Military Attaché (Army) Senior Col Prachern Chaiyakit.

MNA

Comprehensive Education Sector Review to be carried out in three phases

Union Minister for Education Dr Mya Aye delivers an address at meeting on Comprehensive Education Sector Review (CESR).—MNA

YANGON, 31 May—Union Minister for Education Dr Mya Aye called Comprehensive Education Sector Review (CESR) an important step in promoting the Myanmar’s education standard to international level.

The Union minister, addressing the consultation seminar on the draft report for phase 1 of the CESR, said the CESR, which is led by the Ministry of Education and involves educational personnel, spoke of the need to listen to the voices of people in designing a modern, comprehensive education system.

He said CESR aims at developing human resources and supporting the State’s economic and social sectors. He invited ideas and suggestions of the representatives from the various sectors of education in Myanmar.

He thanked the partners who supported the CESR process for helping to sketch the roadmap for promotion of Myanmar’s education standard to regional level.

Deputy Ministers Dr Myo Myint and U Aye Kyu elaborated on assessment of higher and basic education sectors in the report. Next, CESR national advisor U Tin Nyo, secretary of work committee Director-General Dr Myo Thein Gyi gave suggestions, followed by discussions of participants.

Present on the occasion were Yangon Region Chief Minister U Myint Swe, Hluttaw speakers from regions and states, national advisors, departmental heads, social organizations, ethnic people, women, parents and reps from community-based organizations.

The Education Ministry sought feedback on recommendations of Myanmar’s education reforms presented at the clarification of rapid assessment of comprehensive education sector report phase-1 (draft) on 31 May, 2012.

The similar event was organized in Mandalay on 14 May. In phase-2, suggestions and recommendations will be sought on a wider scale from social organizations, administrative and legislative bodies, political parties, and religious organizations.

The assessment will be carried out in three phase. For details, contact CESR Office, No. 426, Pyay Road, Kamayut Township, Yangon, email: cesr.mm@gmail.com; Ph: 95-12304285, Fax: 9512304282. —MNA

Myanmar bags two gold, six silver, 10 bronze in 2nd SEA Vovinam Championship

YANGON, 31 May—Myanmar bagged two gold, six silver and 10 bronze in the 2nd South East Asian Vovinam Championship 2013 held on 28-30 May in Siem Reap of Cambodia.

Ma Thida Lin secured the first place in solo demonstration event (women) and another gold came from the combined efforts of Ma Cho Ma Linn, Maung Kaung Htet Lian, Maung Aung Thura and Maung Ko Ko Naing in 1+3 team (men/women) event.

The championship came as a tough test to the skills as well as the confidence of Myanmar Vovinam team which participated with full force in a regional tournament for the first time.

Vovinam is the traditional martial arts of Vietnam and will be included in XXVII SEA Games to be hosted by Myanmar in coming December.

To clinch victory in XXVII SEA Games, players with high potential were selected from Myanmar National Sports Committee Chairman’s Shield Martial Arts Tournament 2012 and given intensive training at the training camp. The 52-member tentatively selected team underwent a joint-training with Vietnamese counterparts in Vietnam from 16 March to 14 April. Myanmar Vovinam Federation is also planning to hire a Vietnamese coach.

Myanmar Martial Arts Federation

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing receives Lt-Gen Tarnchaiyan Srisuwon from Royal Thai Armed Forces and party.—MNA

Maung Kaung Htet Lian, Maung Aung Thura, Ma Cho Ma Linn, and Maung Ko Ko Naing in 1+3 team (men/women) event.

Maung Kaung Htet Lian, Maung Aung Thura, Ma Cho Ma Linn, and Maung Ko Ko Naing in 1+3 team (men/women) event.