More effort needed to erase perceptions of aid bias in Rakhine State, UNICEF rep says

**By Ye Myint**

**Yangon, 30 April**— UNICEF Myanmar briefed the media in Yangon on Wednesday about the situation for children in Rakhine State, stating UNICEF is working on various areas related to promotion and protection of the rights of all children in the state.

In opening remarks at Micasa Hotel in Yangon, Bertrand Bainvel, UNICEF Myanmar representative, quoted Vice-President Dr Sai Mauk Kham’s speech at a meeting of the central committee for implementation of peace and stability in Rakhine State on Monday stating the Rakhine issue is not only a concern for the people of Rakhine State but also for all the people in Myanmar.

Bainvel expressed the belief that a long-term plan for children in Rakhine in cooperation with the local authorities would bring forth an environment for a “better, stronger and more sustainable” result for each child in the state.

Responding to questions about aid work in Rakhine, Bainvel emphasized UNICEF’s work is based on need, not on race or religion, adding that much more effort is needed to “delete perceptions” of discrimination and bias. Questions of aid delivery have caused difficulties in the state in the past, with some believing international aid organizations were paying more attention to some communities than others.

In March, Medecins Sans Frontieres (Holland) was barred from work in Rakhine for alleged bias in its operations there.

Bainvel said organizations in the state have to work under whatever pressure and accept the challenges after recent violence, but there remains a determination to provide assistance to needy children no matter the situation.

And, he stressed, those children most in need will be provided for.

UNICEF has worked in Rakhine State since early 2000 from an office established in Sittway under the country programme 2005-2010.

It has expanded the number of staff from five or six to more than 20 people working on health and nutrition, water and sanitation, HIV/AIDS, education and child protection in cooperation with the government and other partners.

At the briefing, UNICEF officials also outlined the organization’s new commitments for improving the lives of all children in Rakhine State in 2014-2015 and said it will spend US$12 million in its Multi-Sector State-Level Work Plan that will be implemented over those two years.

**Dala limits water fetching time as Thingyan Lake level falls**

**By Aye Min Soe**

Villagers line up to collect water from Thingyan Lake in Dala.

The local authority in Dala on the banks of the Yangon River has limited to a single hour the time for villagers to collect drinking water from Thingyan Lake.

The move to limit water-fetching to between 4 and 5 pm is to prevent the lake from drying up before the rainy season begins.

Thingyan Lake is one of 33 in the area, but many of the others are already dried up or have become unfit for domestic use more than a month before the rainy season is expected to begin.

Even with the limit on water-fetching, the water level in Thingyan Lake has fallen to just 3 feet.

“A villager carries about 10 gallons of water at one time and about 10,000 gallons of water from the lake are collected by villagers every day,” a man incharge at the lake said.

Villagers, who face long queues every day, rely on the lake for their drinking water.

“Villagers in other areas are also experiencing scarcity of water for household use as the lakes they are relying on are dried up, though they can buy bottled water for drinking,” the man added.

Generally, the rainy season around Yangon starts in early June and ends in early October.

U Tun Lwin, a prominent weather expert, has forecast the monsoon front is likely to enter the southern part of Myanmar between 15 and 20 May this year, but it is not expected to arrive in Yangon for at least several days after that.
Success of the reforms we are currently undertaking depends on citizens respecting the rule of law, and cooperating with the government

My fellow citizens,

As I have done previously, I would like to give you the monthly update on the work of my government, and the developments that have taken place in our country.

This year’sThingyan festival was celebrated peacefully and with much merriment. In my Thingyan greetings, I wished all citizens enjoyment of celebrations free from violence and danger. Because of the vigilance of the Myanmar Police Force, town elders, and parents, and the discipline of the revelers during this Thingyan festival we passed with the fewest number of injuries and deaths.

A notable sight during this Thingyan was the participation of diplomats, their families, and foreign tourists in the celebrations. This highlights our society’s tolerance and openness towards people of other cultures and beliefs. With the Thingyan water clean singing away the impurities of the previous year, I urge all to strive in unity and with renewed spirit of the new year for one’s self, others, and country.

Last month in Yangon, I met with leaders of sixty-three of the sixty-five political parties. This was the third such meeting I have met with these leaders during the limited time available at the meeting, the party leaders openly expressed their opinions. In line with the new political culture that we are trying to establish, we agree to work together in areas of consensus and to discuss and negotiate in areas where there is disagreement. These discussions are highly beneficial to national reconciliation. All political parties place a priority on peace, and I expect all parties, small and big, to cooperate with the government as we undertake democratic reforms.

An important task is the reestablishment of nationwide basic literacy projects. If we look back at the history of literacy in our country, Myanmar was able to achieve an admirably high level of literacy because of the efforts of the Buddhist clergy during the reign of ancient kings. Sadly, during the colonial period, the literacy rate plummeted to thirty-five percent.

Prior to and after independence, the literacy rate gradually increased because of the efforts of clergy and the public. Four Yangon Teachers Training College students started the universal literacy movement in Meiktila in 1964.

Between 1965 and 1966, volunteer teachers from various universities and colleges organized, and energetically carried out a nationwide literacy movement. For these achievements, UNESCO awarded Myanmar with the Mohammad Reza Pahlavi Prize in 1971, followed by the Noma prize in 1983.

In 2013, volunteer teachers and 1985 students from ten universities provided basic literacy courses to 22,407 persons in nine townships. During April of 2014, 403 volunteer teachers and 4,664 students from various universities formed study groups, and taught 46,475 persons in 29 townships.

According to the Myanmar proverb, literacy leads wisdom; as such, literacy is of fundamental importance. Only if one is literate can he or she recognize the distinction between right and wrong or good and bad. Rumors can also be quashed. Therefore, I honor and congratulate the teachers and students from the universities who volunteered their time during the hot summer vacation period to the nationwide literacy effort.

With the public’s cooperation, the 2014 nationwide census was successfully completed with only a few problems. Data processing, and the dissemination of the results will be done in accordance with project guidelines. The nationwide census is essential for the building of an open and free society for which we are striving. Only constructive uses of the census data will be permitted. Regarding the peace building efforts, from April 5 to 8, representatives of the Union Peace Making Work Committee and the ethnic groups’ Nationwide Ceasefire Coordination Team negotiated, and agreed to draft a single text of the nationwide ceasefire agreement. The parties deliberated over the document headings previously established, and the first draft of the agreement was finalized. Getting to this stage is the positive result of negotiation and detailed work by both sides, and can be viewed as bringing peace one step closer. Based on these results, we will soon be able to sign a nationwide ceasefire agreement.

And, as I have promised the ethnic groups, we will then resolve armed conflict by political means. I would like to add that we continue to make necessary preparations for political dialogue. Peace building is difficult, and it is to be expected that efforts at solving decades-old problems will encounter many problems. However, I will continue to strive to achieve peace that our citizens steadfastly desire.

The success of the reforms we are currently undertaking depends on (See page 8)

Myanmar, Russia to cooperate in sports, culture and technology

NAY PYI TAW, 30 April—Communicator-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing held talks with Deputy Minister for Defence Dr Anatoly Antonov of the Russian Federation at Zeyathiri Hall on Wednesday morning.

They exchanged views on cooperation in sports, culture and technology between the armed forces of two countries, exchange of scholarship students and goodwill delegations of senior military officers between the two armed forces—MNA

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing holds meeting with Deputy Minister for Defence Dr Anatoly Antonov of Russia in Nay Pyi Taw. MNA

Myanmar, Japan exchange views on judicial affairs

NAY PYI TAW, 30 April—A delegation led by Japan’s Senior Vice Minister of Justice Shinshuke Okuno called on U Tun Tun Oo, chief justice of the Union at the hall of the Supreme Court of the Union on Wednesday morning to discuss the judicial system in Myanmar, procedures of the Supreme Court of the Union, drafting laws, cooperation in capacity-building for judges and judicial officers and the National Bar Exam conducted by Japan’s Ministry of Justice for the appointment of judges, law officers and advocates in Japan.

Chief Justice of the Union U Tun Tun Oo shaking hands with Japan’s Senior Vice Minister of Justice Shinshuke Okuno.—MNA

Information Ministry to recommend introduction of one-month multiple entry visas for foreign correspondents

NAY PYI TAW, 30 April—The Ministry of Information on Wednesday announced it will recommend the introduction of one-month multiple entry visas for foreign correspondents who are not based in Myanmar.

Under the new scheme, the ministry said the one-month multiple entry visa can be extended twice. Journalists need to reapply for a new visa after three months at the embassy which issued their first visa.

Foreign journalists who have an office or news agency in this country will be able to extend their visa every six-month here, according to the new plan. The move is aimed at easing visa procedures for foreign reporters who will enter the country to cover the ASEAN summits and related meetings. MNA
Be ready for disaster management programmes, vice-president urges

Vice-President U Nyan Tun, at a meeting of the National Disaster Preparedness Central Committee at the Ministry for Social Welfare, Relief and Rehabilitation, urged Wednesday that government bodies to be ready for a natural disaster management system that comprises prevention, preparedness, response and rehabilitation.

He warned the extent of damage caused by natural disasters depends on weakness, vulnerability, population density, preparedness, type of disaster and the strength of natural calamities.

U Nyan Tun said that although the type of disaster and its degree cannot be controlled, other factors can be managed through the cooperation and public awareness.

He suggested Myanmar should adopt the appropriate plans for disaster management by taking lessons from natural disasters across the world.

National Parliament Speaker attends stake-driving ceremony for Yamethin Technological University

National Parliament Speaker U Khin Aung Myint attended a stake-driving ceremony for a new school building at the Government Technological University in Yamethin Township in Mandalay Region on Wednesday.

During the ceremony, he outlined the background of the Government Technological College that was established in 1999 and upgraded in 2010 as the Government Technological University.

He also urged the scholars at the university to supervise the construction of the new building and the university.—MNA

Union Parliament Speaker on tour of Gwa Township, Rakhine State

Union Parliament Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann made a trip to Gwa Township of Rakhine State on Tuesday morning, where he visited a hospital and witnessed an eye surgery. The Chairman of the National Parliament Relief and Resettlement Committee Dr Khin Shwe and family donated K100 million to the hospital for more free eye surgeries.

During the trip, the speaker visited Kanchaya Village and Yadana Myaing Basic Education High School Branch, meeting with locals.

In Kyientali Sub-Township, the chairman of the parliament committee donated K 5 million to the fund for the construction of a library at Kyientali BEHS.—MNA

UN Secretary-General’s Partnership Group on Myanmar meeting discusses violence in Rakhine State, nat’l reconciliation

UN Secretary-General’s Partnership Group on Myanmar meeting discusses violence in Rakhine State, nat’l reconciliation

The vice-president highlighted the importance of awareness, creation of communication systems, media information regarding natural disaster management programmes, and rescue drills, as well as storing water, food, clothes, household utensils and construction material for emergency use.

He also called for preparedness under an immediate disaster response system by taking the victims into shelters and providing care.

U Nyan Tun also said ministries, states and regional governments must to report the real situation to the central government so it can coordinate effectively with foreign governments, social organizations, international organizations and regional organizations. —MNA
**LOCAL NEWS**

**Myanmar, Thai authorities exchange views at border committee meeting**

**TACHILEK, 30 April**—The 79th meeting of the Myanmar-Thailand Town-ship Border Committee took place in Tachilek in eastern Shan State on 28 April.

A five-member delegation and five observers from Myanmar held talks with a 40-member Thai delegation about promotion of bilateral relations and cooperation to solve various problems between the two countries.

_Maw Gyi (Triangle Region)_

**Emphasis put on fire prevention in Mohnyin**

**MOHNYIN, 30 April**—Emphasis is being placed on effective fire prevention, fire security and fire fighting in Mohnyin Township in Kachin State, U Hein Min Htaik of Mohnyin Fire Station said.

There are 10 fire engines, three water tankers, 11 fire fighters and 1,808 auxiliary fire fighters in four fire service stations in Mohnyin, he added said.

The Township Fire Prevention Committee is conducting a basic fire fighting course, disseminating knowledge on fire education and prevention and supervising to ensure fires at road side filling shops do not occur due to negligence.

_K Hsai Naw (Phakant)_

**Licenses for trishaws to be renewed by 31 July in Yangon**

**YANGON, 30 April**—The Development Affairs Committees in townships in Yangon Region, which have been renewing licenses for trishaws from 1 April, have told the vehicle owners licenses must renewed not later than 31 July.

License fees are K 2,400 for trishaws, K 1,900 for garli, K 700 for wheel barrows and K 3,200 for push carts.

Up to 25 April, more than 900 trishaws had already obtained licenses in Hline Township in Yangon.

_Aung Myo, District IPRD_

**Myainggyingu Special Region provided with solar panel, road, bridge and water**

**HEPA-AN, 30 April**—A ceremony to open a solar electrification facility and completion of a road, bridge and water supply from the Rural Development Department and AAR Japan was held in Thitser Aye Myaing Village in Myainggyingu Special Region in Kayin State on 28 April.

State Chief Minister U Zaw Min said the Ministry of Border Affairs conducted the road and school in the region and offered vocational training for local people.

Head of the Rural Development Department U Nay Oo explained the solar electrification.

Haingbwe Township Administrator U Zay Wunna Hlaing, an official from AAR Japan and a town elder opened the new tarred road developed by AAR Japan.

State Minister for Security and Border Affairs Col Aung Lwin and a town elder cut the ribbon to open the solar electrification facility.

The chief minister pressed the main switch to open the solar facility.

_Nay Myo Lwin (IPRD)_

**Villagers in Sagaing take clerical test for general administration dept**

**KYUNHLA, 30 April**—In order to fill vacancies in the General Administra-tion Department and create more job opportunities for youths in Kyunhla Town-ship of Sagaing Region, 23 local graduates at exams on Monday, hoping to get a job as adivision clerk or office assistant.

The Township Administrator said he held the exam in accordance with the departmental rules.

_Myo Win Nyo (Kyunhla)_

**Timely rain benefits summer paddy in KhinU Township**

**KHINU, 30 April**—Storms early on 28 April brought 1.12 inches of much needed rain to summer paddy in KhinU Town-ship in Sagaing.

The rain also brought welcome relief from the 42C temperatures reached on 27 April in the area.

With the rain, water from Thaphanseik Dam is helping irrigate 41,666 acres of summer paddy in the township.

_Yaungni Tin Win_

**Myanmar traditional dance trainer course concludes in Thaton Tsp**

**THATON, 30 April**—A Myanmar traditional dance trainer course concluded on Tuesday in Thaton Township in Mon State, organized by the District Education Office.

At the conclusion ceremony at a pre-school of the township, U Aung Maung, the District Education Officer, presented certificates to the trainees before they entertained the attendees with a traditional dance performance. Around 40 trainees from Thaton, Kyin-kon, Bilin and Paung townships attended the one week course.—_District IPRD_

**Ambulance donated to 40-bed Station Hospital in Sagaing**

**CHAUNGU, 30 April**—An ambulance and K 3 million have been donated to Amyint Station Hospital in ChaungU Township of Sagaing Region. The donation on Tuesday came from Hrit Linn Tradition-inal Medicine Industry, with officials from the 40-bed hospital receiving the cash as well as the vehicle doc-uments.

_Myo Win Tun (Monywa)
Chemical watchdog to investigate Syria chlorine gas claims

New York, 30 April — To both critics and supporters, it was “classic” John Kerry.

A day before the formal end of Kerry’s quixotic, nine-month effort to broker an Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement, the Secretary of State was surreptitiously taped making a comment that provoked a political firestorm in Washington.

In a closed meeting with foreign policy experts, Kerry said that if there is no two-state solution soon, Israel risked becoming “an apartheid state.” Kerry was apparently referring to an argument made by liberal Israelis and European critics that if two states are not created and current demographic trends continue, Palestinians will outnumber Israelis.

“A unitary state winds up either being an apartheid state with second-class citizens,” Kerry said on Friday, according to the Daily Beast. “Or it ends up being a state that destroys the capacity of Israel to be a Jewish state.”

The comment played into longtime caricatures of the former Senator. To skeptics, it was Kerry, the egotistical former presidential candidate, committing yet another gaffe.

After months of pursuing an ambitious Middle East peace settlement, Kerry was blaming Israel for his own failure. Senator Barbara Boxer, a Democrat from California, called Kerry’s statement “nonsensical and ridiculous.” Senator Ted Cruz, a Texas Republican, called for Kerry to resign.

“Kerry’s defenders, it was a high-risk, high reward Secretary of State speaking the truth about the need for a two-state solution,” said one Middle East analyst.

Kerry said in a statement that he never said, or suggested, that Israel was currently an apartheid state.

And on Tuesday, his aides stood by the remarks, which they said was nothing more than Kerry reiterating a warning voiced by liberal Israeli politicians such as Tzipi Livni, Ehud Olmert and Ehud Barak for years. “He said what Livni, Olmert and Barak all said,” a senior State Department official close to Kerry said on Tuesday.

And instead of admitting failure, aides said Kerry would continue his Middle East negotiations after a pause of several months. After an initial domestic political boost, the administration predicted, Israeli and Palestinian officials would be forced back to the table by the long-term need for a two-state solution.

“It’s a matter of time before they all come back,” the aide predicted, “and want to have negotiations.”

EU says Egypt mass death sentences in breach of international law

Brussels, 30 April — The European Union’s foreign policy chief said on Tuesday Egypt’s sentencing of 683 people to death breached international law and urged Cairo authorities to ensure defendants’ rights to a fair and timely trial.

An Egyptian court sentenced the leader of the outlawed Muslim Brotherhood and 682 supporters to death on Monday, intensifying a crackdown on the movement that could trigger protests and political violence before an election next month.

The defendants were charged with crimes including inciting violence following the army overthrow of elected leader Mohamed Mursi, a senior Brotherhood member, in July after mass protests against his rule.

“These mass trials are clearly in breach of international human rights law,” the EU’s Catherine Ashton said in a statement.

“The exact charges against each defendant remain unclear, the proceedings lack the most basic standards of due process and the verdicts appear grossly disproportionate, failing short of complying with the principle of individual sentencing,” she said.

Ashton said the EU was concerned about Egypt’s compliance with its international human rights obligations, as well as “the seriousness of Egypt’s transition towards democracy.”

Afghan and foreign forces kill 60 near Pakistan border

KABUL, 30 April — Afghan troops backed by Western air power killed at least 60 militants in a battle near in southeastern Afghanistan near the Pakistan, Afghanistan’s intelligence agency said on Wednesday.

Fighting began after about 300 insurgents from the Haqqani militant network and other foreign fighters tried to storm Afghan forces’ bases in Zirak district of Paktika Province, the intelligence service of the country, the National Directorate of Security (NDS) said in a statement.

Paktika shares a long and porous border with lawless areas in Pakistan where foreign fighters and the Haqqani network, allies of the Afghan Taleban, is believed to be based.

10 killed, 11 missing in Russian ammo depot blasts

AMSTERDAM/BEIRUT, 30 April — The global chemical weapons watchdog overseeing the destruction of Syria’s toxic stockpile will send a fact-finding mission to Syria to investigate allegations by rebels and activists of chlorine gas attacks, the organization said on Tuesday.

The Hague-based Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) said President Bashar al-Assad’s government had agreed to accept the mission and had promised to provide security in areas under its control.

“The mission will carry out its work in the most challenging circumstances,” the OPCW said, referring to the three-year-old conflict between Assad’s forces and rebels. It gave no exact date for the mission but said it would take place soon. Accusations by rebels and Syrian activists of at least three separate chlorine gas attacks by Assad’s forces in the last month have exposed the limits of a deal which Assad agreed last year for the destruction of his chemical arsenal.

The accord followed a sarin gas attack on rebel-held outskirts of Damascus last August in which hundreds of people were killed. Washington and its allies blamed Assad’s forces for the attack, but Damascus authorities said rebels carried it out to try to force Western military intervention.

Damascus has now stopped or destroyed 92 percent of the chemicals it pledged to eliminate. However chlorine, which also created and current demographic trends continue, Palestinians will outnumber Israelis.

As many as 20 explosions were heard at the depot near Bolshaya Tura village, some 620 km southeast of Moscow, the reports said, quoting official sources, adding that explosions were probably caused by a wildfire raging nearby.

Helicopters and fire-fighters have been deployed at the scene, where 280 residents, including 83 children were evacuated.
Cameron faces vote test after Mercer’s resignation

London, 30 April — Prime Minister David Cameron faces a potentially awkward test of voter support following the resignation on Tuesday of MP Patrick Mercer, a former member of his Conservative party.

Mercer’s resignation, after reports he was to be suspended for six months for breaking lobbying rules, triggers an election that would allow the anti-European Union UK Independence Party (UKIP) to test their growing popularity in a region where the Conservative party is traditionally strong. The result could reveal how much support the Conservatives, who in 2010 had a healthy 16,000 vote majority in Mercer’s Newark constituency in the English Midlands, have lost to UKIP.

The vote will not take place until after European Parliament elections next month, in which UKIP is expected to push Cameron’s Conservatives into third place behind itself and the Labour party. Minority parties tend to do better in European than domestic elections as the voting system favours them and voters are more likely to cast their ballots in protest or on single issues.

So a big loss of Conservative votes in Newark to UKIP, which has nine seats in the European Parliament but no elected members in Britain’s parliament, could hurt at a serious split in the centre-right vote in next year’s national election.— Reuters

Firm says finds plane debris in Bay of Bengal

Perth, 30 April — A private company said it had found what it believes is wreckage of a plane in the Bay of Bengal that should be investigated as possible debris from the missing Malaysia Airlines Flight MH370, CNN reported.

The Joint Agency Coordination Centre managing the multinational search for the missing plane dismissed the report.

“Possibility, saying it continued to believe that the plane building, while police did nothing to interfere,” said Stanislav Rechnytskyi, an aide to Interior Minister Arsen Avakov, referring to events in Luhansk. “The local police did nothing.”

The rebels also seized the prosecutor’s office and the television centre.

The separatist operation in Luhansk appears to give the pro-Moscow rebels control of a second provincial capital. They already control much of neighbouring Donetsk Province, where they have proclaimed an independent “People’s Republic of Donetsk” and declared a referendum on secession for 11 May. The rebels include local youths armed with clubs and chains, as well as “green men” — heavily armed masked men in military uniforms without insignia.— Reuters

Ukraine separatists seize second provincial capital, fire on police

Luhansk, (Ukraine), 30 April — Hundreds of pro-Moscow separatists stormed government buildings in one of Ukraine’s provincial capitals on Tuesday and fired on police who held up in a regional headquarters, a major escalation of their revolt despite new Western sanctions on Russia.

New US and EU sanctions packages, announced with fanfare, were seen as so mild that Russian share prices rose in relief.

A small number of names were added to existing blacklists, while threats to take more serious measures were put on hold.

Nevertheless, Russian President Vladimir Putin responded by threatening to reconsider Western participation in energy deals in Russia, the world’s biggest oil producer, where most major US and European oil companies have extensive projects.

Demonstrators smashed their way into the provincial government headquarters in Luhansk, Ukraine’s easternmost province, which abuts the Russian border, and raised separatist flags over the building, while police did nothing to interfere.

As night fell, about 20 rebel gunmen opened fire with automatic weapons and threw stun grenades at the headquarters of the region’s police, trying to force those inside to surrender their weapons, a Reuters photographer at the scene said.

“The regional leadership does not control its police force,” said Stanislav Rechnytskyi, an aide to Interior Minister Arsen Avakov, referring to events in Luhansk. “The local police did nothing.”

The rebels also seized the prosecutor’s office and the television centre.

The separatist operation in Luhansk appears to give the pro-Moscow rebels control of a second provincial capital. They already control much of neighbouring Donetsk Province, where they have proclaimed an independent “People’s Republic of Donetsk” and declared a referendum on secession for 11 May. The rebels include local youths armed with clubs and chains, as well as “green men” — heavily armed masked men in military uniforms without insignia.— Reuters

Senior US lawmaker blocks aid for Egyptian military

Washington, 30 April — US Senator Patrick Leahy (D-VT) (C) speaks to the media after attending a closed meeting for members of Congress on the situation in Syria at the US Capitol in Washington on 1 Sept, 2013.— Reuters

Senator Patrick Leahy (D-VT) (C) speaks to the media after attending a closed meeting for members of Congress on the situation in Syria at the US Capitol in Washington on 1 Sept, 2013.— Reuters

Leahy said he would be watching the situation in Egypt with “growing dismay” even if he were not chairman of the State and Foreign Operations Subcommittee, denouncing “a sham trial lasting barely an hour.” “It’s an appalling abuse of the justice system, which is fundamental to any democracy. Nobody, nobody, can justify this. It does not show democracy. It shows a dictatorship run amok. It is a total violation of human rights,” the Vermont Democrat said.

Reuters

Pro-Russian armed men take cover behind a car near the local police headquarters in Luhansk, eastern Ukraine, on 29 April. — Reuters

Cameron faces vote test after Mercer’s resignation

Britain’s Prime Minister David Cameron

Ukraine separatists seize second provincial capital, fire on police

Crew aboard the Australian Defence Vessel Ocean Shield move the US Navy’s Bluefin-21 autonomous underwater vehicle into position for deployment in the southern Indian Ocean to look for the missing Malaysia Airlines flight MH370, on 14 April, 2014 in this handout picture released by the US Navy.— Reuters

Washington, 30 April — US Senator Patrick Leahy, chairman of the Senate subcommittee that oversees foreign aid, said on Tuesday he would not approve sending funds to the Egyptian military, denouncing a “sham trial” in which a court sentenced 683 people to death. The decision by Leahy, the longest-serving US senator and an influential foreign policy voice, could further complicate the Obama administration’s difficult relationship with Egypt, one of Washington’s most important strategic allies in the Middle East.

The Pentagon said last week it would deliver 10 Apache attack helicopters and $650 million to Egypt’s military, relaxing a suspension of aid imposed after Egypt’s military ousted President Mohamed Mursi on July 3 and violently suppressed protesters.

“I am not prepared to sign off on the delivery of additional aid for the Egyptian military,” Leahy said in a speech on the Senate floor, explaining why he would hold up the $650 million (386.2 million pounds). “I am not prepared to do that until we see convincing evidence the government is committed to the rule of law.”

An Egyptian court on Monday sentenced the leader of the Mursi’s outlawed Muslim Brotherhood and 682 supporters to death, intensifying a crackdown on the Islamist movement that could trigger protests and political violence ahead of an election next month.

Leahy said he would be watching the situation in Egypt with “growing dismay” even if he were not chairman of the State and Foreign Operations Subcommittee, denouncing “a sham trial lasting barely an hour.” “It’s an appalling abuse of the justice system, which is fundamental to any democracy. Nobody, nobody, can justify this. It does not show democracy. It shows a dictatorship run amok. It is a total violation of human rights,” the Vermont Democrat said.

Reuters

Crew aboard the Australian Defence Vessel Ocean Shield move the US Navy’s Bluefin-21 autonomous underwater vehicle into position for deployment in the southern Indian Ocean to look for the missing Malaysia Airlines flight MH370, on 14 April, 2014 in this handout picture released by the US Navy.— Reuters
Iraqis vote on Wednesday as violence grips country

Iraqis vote on Wednesday as violence grips country

BAGHDAD, 30 April — Iraqis head to the polls on Wednesday in their first national election since US forces withdrew from Iraq in 2011 as Prime Minister Nuri Maliki seeks a third term amid rising violence. The country’s western province of Anbar is awash in violence as Sunni Muslim militants challenge the Iraqi military and Shi‘ite militias for territory surrounding Baghdad. The country’s economy is struggling and Maliki faces criticism that he is aggravating sectarian splits and trying to consolidate power for political gain.

On Wednesday voters choose among 9,012 candidates and the parliamentary election effectively serves as a referendum on Maliki, a Shi‘ite Muslim who has governed eight years.

Political analysts say no party is likely to win a majority in the 328-seat parliament and forming a government may be hard even if Maliki’s State of Law alliance, as expected, wins the biggest number of seats.

Maliki, who is fending off challenges from Shi‘ite and Sunni rivals, has portrayed himself as his Shi‘ite community’s defender against the Sunni Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant. This week, Maliki vowed to stop the al Qaeda inspired ISIL from entering Baghdad.

“Isl is and al Qaeda capable of reaching the target for they were established ... bringing down Baghdad and the other provinces and destroying the holy shrines? ... I say no,” Maliki said. “ISIL is over, but its pockets still exist and we will keep chasing them and the few coming days will witness major developments.”

His forces are currently locked in a four-month fight for the cities of Ramadi and Fallujah in Anbar. His troops surround Fallujah and are waging street battles in Ramadi. The war has displaced an estimated 420,000 people and the Iraqi electoral commission concedes it can only hold the election in 70 percent of Anbar, not counting Fallujah. On Monday 50 people went shopping around Iraq, with some suicide bombers dressed in police and army uniforms. The burden falls particularly hard on Iraq’s Sunni population, who are viewed with suspicion by the mostly Shi‘ite Iraqi security forces and terrorized by the ISIL.

Iraq’s Sunni political leaders paint Maliki as an authoritarian ruler who wants to destroy their community. His main Sunni nemesis, the parliament speaker Usama al-Nujaifi, criticised the prime minister this week.

“Our people haven’t harvested the national partnership only the rattle of weapon, the language of blood, the education of revenge, the sectarian inciting, the displaced people as a result of terrorism and militias,” Nujaifi told supporters recently.—Reuters

Six hurt, suspect dead in Georgia

FedEx facility shooting

KENNESAW, 30 April — A FedEx Corp package handler armed with a shotgun opened fire at a shipping facility in suburban Atlanta early on Tuesday, injuring six people before killing himself, apparently with his own weapon, police and hospital officials said.

Three people were in critical condition, two of them with life-threatening injuries, after being shot by the 19-year-old gunman just before 6 am EDT at a FedEx warehouse near the airport in Kennesaw, Georgia, about 30 miles northwest of Atlanta, police and hospital officials said.

The shooter, identified as Giddy L. Kramer of Acworth, Georgia, drove up to the security guard shack at the warehouse and shot the guard before entering the warehouse where he shot the other five people, according to police.

FedEx employee Liza Aiken told the Atlanta Journal-Constitution she was correcting addresses on packages when she saw a colleague dressed in black and armed with a knife, gun and a cartridge belt strapped to his chest. “He had bullets strapped to his chest like Rambo,” she told the newspaper. “He looked like he was heading into war.” Authorities searching the building after the incident found a Molotov cocktail that appeared to have been left behind by the gunman, said Cobb County Police spokesman Michael Bowman. No motive was given for the attack. Aiken said she previously had reported the man to her superiors after he pointed a laser at her eye.

Police officers from Cobb County Police, and Marietta and Kennesaw departments stage near the entrance of the Federal Express Ground building after a man opened fire inside the building before turning the gun on himself in Kennesaw, Georgia, on 29 April, 2014.—Reuters

Shootouts claim 14 lives in northern Mexican border city

MEXICO CITY, 30 April — At least 14 people were killed in a series of shootouts in the northern Mexican border city of Reynosa on Tuesday as gunmen battled police in a region racked by violence between warring drug gangs.

Assailants in armoured vehicles opened fire on federal police and military officers in three shootouts in Tamaulipas, an unruly state on the US border where the brutal Zetas drug gang has fought the Gulf Cartel for control.

The death toll in Reynosa, which is directly across the border from Hidalgo, Texas, included 10 gunmen, two federal police officers as well as two young(results who were caught in the crossfire while driving in separate vehicles.

It was not immediately clear if the gunmen were affiliated with any drug cartels, which vie for control of lucrative smuggling routes into the United States.

WASHINGTON, 30 April — Conservative watchdog group Judicial Watch released emails from US officials on Tuesday that it said showed the White House was concerned primarily with image control — Judicial Watch sought to have been protesting a film being produced in the United States on 11 Sept, 2012.—Reuters

Benghazi emails show White House image control — Judicial Watch

A protester reacts as the US Consulate in Benghazi is set on fire on 11 September, 2012, killed the US ambassador to the United States and three other Americans at the US mission in Benghazi, including Ambassador Christopher Stevens. Days later, then US Ambassador to the United Nations Susan Rice appeared on television news shows and said the violence resulted from a spontaneous crowd reacting to an inflammatory video rather than the work of Islamic militants. When Rice’s account proved incorrect, Republican lawmakers accused her of trying to protect Obama during his re-election campaign, which the White House disputed. Rice is now Obama’s national security adviser.

Judicial Watch sought documents related to the Benghazi attacks through the Freedom of Information Act and obtained them earlier this month. On Tuesday, it pointed to an email from Ben Rhodes, Obama’s deputy national security adviser for strategic communications, which discussed preparations for Rice’s appearances on the shows. The email lists one goal as being “to underscore that these protests are rooted in an Internet video, and not a broader failure of policy.”

At least 14 people were killed in a series of shootouts in the northern Mexican border city of Reynosa on Tuesday as gunmen battled police in a region racked by violence between warring drug gangs.

Assailants in armoured vehicles opened fire on federal police and military officers in three shootouts in Tamaulipas, an unruly state on the US border where the brutal Zetas drug gang has fought the Gulf Cartel for control.

The death toll in Reynosa, which is directly across the border from Hidalgo, Texas, included 10 gunmen, two federal police officers as well as two young results who were caught in the crossfire while driving in separate vehicles.

It was not immediately clear if the gunmen were affiliated with any drug cartels, which vie for control of lucrative smuggling routes into the United States.
Increase in migration and human trafficking needs to be tackled

By Aung Khin

Economic progress often leads to an increase in legal and illegal migration. Many dream of going to ‘greener pastures’ to make money. Some research suggested that as many as one-third of the Myanmar population have migrated from rural to urban areas. Though the migration figures differ, according to the average estimate out of one million illegal immigrants in Thailand, 75 percent are from Myanmar.

However, migration is not always a case of human trafficking. Internal migration of women and girls occurs primarily in the rural areas, in the central dry zone and Ayeyawady delta region. They often move around for small jobs, before ending up in the cities sent by relatives or acquaintances.

Illegal immigration has long been an issue at border areas. Some of them entered Myanmar years ago from countries with high population density. Due to the porous borders and slack enforcement by border immigration officers in the past, those illegal immigrants sought to live in the country. After living here for a certain period, they are now emigrating again to neighbouring countries illegally.

Illegal immigration and human trafficking cases cannot be prevented even in developed countries. The illegal immigrant population of the United States in 2008 was estimated by the Center for Immigration Studies to be about 11 million people, mostly from Mexico, Latin American countries, Asia, Europe, Canada and Africa.

According to the study of the Washington D.C.-based Pew Research Center’s Hispanic Trends Project, the total number of migrants living in the United States without papers rose from 11.3 million in 2009 to 11.7 million in 2013. Law enforcement programmes are crucial for both, the country of origin and the new host country, in fighting against illegal migration or human trafficking. With the exception of those seeking political asylum, most immigrants have left their countries to escape poverty. No country across the world can tackle migration and human trafficking if poverty is not eradicated.

Write for us
We appreciate your feedback and contributions. If you have any comments or would like to submit editorials, analyses or reports please email wallace.tun@gmail.com with your name and title.

State is also exerting efforts to ensure fair protections without affecting the interest of both workers and employers

Nay Pyi Taw, 1 May—President U Thein Sein sent a message on the occasion of the Workers’ Day which falls on 1 May 2014. The unofficial translation of the message is as follows:—

Esteemed workers

I would like to greet all workers in Myanmar, who are an important force for our country, and wish you all physical health and mental well-being on the occasion of the world workers’ day held in honor of workers across the world on 1 May 2014. It is over 120 years since 1 May was designated as the world workers’ day and ceremonies to mark the event were held by workers around the world every year. Ceremonies to mark the world workers’ day are held in Myanmar every year, and today is the meaningful and auspicious day for workers in Myanmar.

Esteemed workers

At a time our country is accelerating the all-round transitional process after adopting the multiparty democracy system, the expertise, experience and knowledge of workers are invaluable strengths.

With the aim of ensuring labour rights and improving the social life of workers, the state, after drawing strategies and tactics, is making efforts to adopt laws and policies required for fair labour practices vital between workers and employers. At the moment, the state is placing emphasis on systematic utilization of the labour force for national development, employing those who really need jobs in appropriate employment, nurturing disciplined and efficient skilled workers constantly, and qualified human resource development essential for building a modern nation.

In addition, the state is inviting foreign direct investment to create jobs and to acquire technology and investment for the citizens as well as encouraging development for industries, manufacturing and services of national entrepreneurs. In doing so, existing labour laws are being amended and new laws are being drafted to meet international labour norms and requirements of the time and the political system as a measure to promote and protect labour rights. As freedom to form labour and employers organizations is given under the labour organization law enacted in 2011, 1,092 labour and employer organizations have been formed in other federation-level organizations have been formed in other sectors. Furthermore, measures are being taken to approve the minimum wage under the 2013 Minimum Wage Law adopted with the aim of fulfilling the basic needs of workers across the country and their families, promoting the efficiency of workers, approving the minimum wage and improving competition policies and living standards of workers.

Esteemed workers

To ensure better healthcare and social security programs for workers, it has been announced that the 2012 Social Security Law has come to effect since 1 April 2014. Under the new law, there are six insurance systems instead of two previously. They are health and social security insurance, family benefit insurance, workplace injury insurance, unemployment benefit insurance, insurance for invalid persons, pension insurance for retirees and the insurance benefits for families of workers who are dead, housing insurance and optional insurance for those who have registered to pay premiums on their own. I would like to convey the good news that measures for social security protection of the majority of workers can be taken more extensively as even the self-employed can enjoy the insurance benefits after paying premiums on their own accord, although businesses with five or more workers were allowed to enter an insurance program under the previous law.

Esteemed workers

In implementing the elimination of forced labour with the aim of providing appropriate jobs for workers, ward or village administration law has been amended in accord with the elimination of forced labour Provision 29 of the International Labour Organization and educational tasks are being carried out with the cooperation of the ILO in the entire country for the effectiveness of the practical application of the law. In addition, the project for elimination of forced labour in Myanmar in 2015 is being drawn up and implemented in cooperation with the ILO. Concerning with the elimination of the worst form of child labour of the project, Myanmar registered to abide by ILO Provisi10n 2 for elimination of worst form of child labour on 18 December 2013.

Esteemed workers

The state is also exerting efforts to ensure fair protections without affecting the interest of both workers and employers. As labour market competition will be fierce under the basic map of freedom of mobilization of skilled labour in the ASEAN Community which will be implemented in 2015, Myanmar workers will have to compete not only with local workers but also with regional workers.

In addition, workers are required to improve their skills in their respective sectors as more foreign direct investment will flow into Myanmar under the foreign investment law enacted in 2012. The state is taking measures to effectively implement the promotion of workers’ skills under the 2013 employment and skill development law.

The state is also cooperating with international labour organizations to effectively protect and help Myanmar migrant workers who are working in other countries. Myanmar workers who are working abroad are also required to live and work in accordance with the existing laws, rules and regulations of the foreign countries concerned.

Esteemed workers

Half the population of our country is within the working age limit. Therefore, our country will develop by implementing measures to improve the living standards of workers. As the state is trying its best to promote the interest and improve the living standards of workers, I would like to urge workers to abide by labour laws and to place emphasis on peace in the workplace. I would like to urge workers to demand their rights in accordance with law in labour disputes in factories and workshops.

Under the democratic system being strenuously implemented by the state at present, following laws, rules and regulation plays an important role. Only when one lives in accordance with laws and rules and regulations, can one enjoy the true essence of democracy. Therefore, I would like to urge workers in all seriousness to join hands with the government for the perpetuation of the new democratic nation.
Sagai Township to raise water rates

SAGAING, 30 April—People in the Sagai urban area on 29 April. Nursing Training School in sustainable nursing at the joint organized talks on and Midwife Association Taninthayi Region Nurse MNMA, Region NMA and plan to raise rates. bills ahead as the authorities area will see higher water People in the Sagaing urbanities monthly collect K 120 for ordinary household use. the highest tempera-water rates to be able to re-cover the cost of water supply,“ U Zaw Win, a member of Podan Ward water supply committee, said. Two wards in Sagai collect K3,500 per household and surplus revenue from the water charges is spent on education, social and health development.—Nanda Min Lwin

Road under construction to connect villages on eastern bank of Chindwin River

Road under construction to connect villages on eastern bank of Chindwin River

Talks on sustainable nursing given in Dawei

DAWEI, 30 April—The Myanmar Nurse and Midwife Association and Taninthayi Region Nurse and Midwife Association jointly organized talks on sustainable nursing at the Nursing Training School in Dawei, Taninthayi Region on 29 April.

Officials from the MNMA, Region NMA and

Strong winds, heavy rains hit in Monywa, no serious damage or causalities

MONYWA, 30 April—Strong winds knocked down trees in Monywa, Sagaing Region on 28 April, but there was no serious damage or causalities, officials from township administrator’s office said.

Local authorities are clearing fallen trees in Ahlon and Sispin Wards where some power lines were cut. The Meteorology and Hydrology Department noted the highest temperature last month in Monywa was 43.8C on 24 April.

Myo Win Tun (Monywa)

Storms lift roofs, topple trees and lampposts in Sagai Township

SAGAING, 30 April—Squalls hitting Sagaing Township in Mandalay Region for the second time this week blew the roof off the public rest-house, toppled the trees in the precinct of a monastery in Konni Village cut the power lines in the village.

The thunderstorms also blew down seven concrete power line poles and a transformer was blown into a private fish pond near the village.

The storm and heavy rains damaged Shwesaga pagoda and tree branches were knocked down along the Yangon-Mandalay Highway near Belin Village.

The authorities are clearing the debris and working to resume power to the villagers.

Aung Min (Sagai)

Nahtaungya canal dredging project begins in Magway Region

TAUNGWINGYI, 30 April—The Taungdwingyi Township Irrigation Department has begun a canal dredging project near Myinsu Village in Taungdwingyi Township in Magway Region to ensure better agricultural production across the seasons.

The Nahtaungya canal is 2,000 ft long, 70 ft wide and 15 ft high and the project is expected to cost more than K10 million. The canal will benefit, 1,170 acres of farmland owned by more than 300 farmers from eight villages in the township.

Kyemon-580

Primary School teacher course underway in Chin State to improve education

FALAM, 30 April—A special training course for primary school teacher has started at Shalwai Hall in BEHS, Falam, Chin State and will run until 22 May. The course is aimed at raising the quality of primary school education by training the teachers, said an official.

More than 260 teachers from Falam District received training from 13 educational experts. They will be awarded certificates and made permanent staff once they have passed the examination.—Joe Net (Kalay District IPRD)

TODAY’S MYANMAR NEWS SITES

A special training course for primary school teacher has started at Shalwai Hall in BEHS, Falam, Chin State and will run until 22 May. The course is aimed at raising the quality of primary school education by training the teachers, said an official.

More than 260 teachers from Falam District received training from 13 educational experts. They will be awarded certificates and made permanent staff once they have passed the examination.—Joe Net (Kalay District IPRD)
Anime-themed Japanese sword exhibition to open in Paris

Paris, 30 April — An exhibition showcasing traditional Japanese swords as well as replicas of blades that appeared in the animation series “Neon Genesis Evangelion” at an exhibition at the Japan Cultural Institute in Paris, France, on 29 April, 2014, a day before the exhibition opens to the public. The “Evangelion and Japanese Swords” show was devised with the Bizen Osafune Japanese Sword Museum in Okayama Prefecture. About 50 sword craftsmen produced pieces inspired by the anime such as “the Spear of Longinus” and the “Magoroku Sword.” “The collaboration between anime, which represents modern Japanese culture, and Japanese swords, which represent refined traditional culture, is meaningful,” said Sadanobu Gassan, a 34-year-old sword maker. The exhibition will run through 21 June in Paris before being held in Madrid between 5 July and 28 September. — Kyodo News

Visitors look at traditional Japanese swords and replicas of blades that appeared in the animation series “Neon Genesis Evangelion” at an exhibition at the Japan Cultural Institute in Paris, France, on 29 April, 2014.
Microsoft’s Xbox One console to go on sale in China in September

An Xbox One which will be discounted at 6pm local time on Thanksgiving day is seen on display at the Walmart Supercenter in the Porter Ranch section of Los Angeles on 26 Nov, 2013.—Reuters

Twitter disappoints again on user growth and views; shares drop

San Francisco, 30 April—Twitter Inc reported lackluster user and usage growth for the second consecutive quarter on Tuesday, deepening investor concerns about its struggle to gain a mass following. Twitter’s stock fell more than 10 percent after hours to $38.05, below its expected profit for the fourth quarter. “In terms of timing, we are beginning to support the volume ramps of many of this year’s most popular devices and we expect this to accelerate into the September quarter,” RF Micro Chief Executive Robert Bruggeworth said on a post-earnings call.

Chipmaker RF Micro says rise in smartphone sales to fuel growth

New York, 30 April—RF Micro Devices Inc, a maker of chips that connect mobile devices to networks, forecast quarterly revenue above analysts’ estimates and said it expected rising smartphone sales to fuel growth in the second half of the year. Shares of RF Micro, whose customers include Apple Inc and Samsung Electronics Co, rose about 7.5 percent in extended trading after the chipmaker also posted a better-than-expected profit for the fourth quarter. “Incredibly mainstream,” Costolo said. The challenge, he added, was to convince “the world to see the "value added, was to convince Costolo said. The challenge, he added, was to convince "the world to see the "value

Curiosity rover set for third drilling on Mars

WASHINGTON, 30 April—US space agency NASA said on Tuesday its Curiosity rover will carry out its third drilling on Mars in the coming days. Curiosity used several tools to examine a Martian sandstone slab dubbed “Windjana” over the weekend, including a wire-bristle brush known as the Dust Removal Tool to clear away dust from a 6-centimeter-across patch on the rock, NASA said. “In the brushed spot, we can see that the rock is fine-grained, its true colours are much greener than the surface dust, and some portions of the rock are harder than others, creating the interesting bumpy textures,” Curiosity science team member Melissa Rice of the California Institute of Technology said in a NASA statement. “All of these traits reinforce our interest in drilling here in order to understand the chemistry of the fluids that bound these grains together to form the rock.”

Twitter—the platform — we believe is already incredibly mainstream,” Costolo said. The challenge, he added, was to convince "the world to see the “value

Ancient hunting structures found under Lake Huron

BEIJING, 30 April—Prehistoric stone walls were discovered deep beneath the Lake Huron, according to a new findings in Monday’s the Proceedings of the National Academy of Science. This will give a clearer portrait of prehistorical people’s life in the Great Lakes region, US. The stone walls form a lane 30 metres long and 8 meters wide, and have its hunting blinds built into the sides as well as other lanes and structures, similar to structures used to channel caribou by hunters. “They were massive, and probably related to the first people to inhabit the New World and hunt mastodons,” said John O’Shea, an archaeologist of Michigan University.

A picture is beginning to emerge of a hunting and gathering people who brought down caribou in small groups in autumns, dug in snug and lived off food caches and animals such as beaver in the winter. The findings were pubilshed on Monday in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Science.
Philippines says US obligated to help in case of attack

MANILA, 30 April — Washington has a treaty obligation to come to the assistance of the Philippines in case of an attack on its territory or its armed forces in the South China Sea, Manila’s foreign minister said on Wednesday, disputing criticism of a new security pact.

The United States and the Philippines on Monday signed a new 10-year Enhanced Defence Cooperation Agreement allowing US forces wider access to local bases to preposition ships, aircraft, equipment and troops for maritime security. The new military deal is a testament to America’s “ironclad” commitment to defend its oldest Southeast Asian ally, US President Barack Obama told Filipino and American troops taking part in military exercises next week at an Army base in Manila.

“Under the Mutual Defence Treaty, the US will come to the assistance of the Philippines if our metropolitan territory is attacked or if our armed forces are attacked in the Pacific area,” Albert del Rosario said in a statement.

“In 1999, in a diplomatic letter, the US affirmed that the South China Sea is considered as part of the Pacific area.”

Del Rosario’s statement was meant to dispel concerns and doubts that Washington will not take action if the situation in the disputed areas in the South China Sea escalates into a conflict with China, which has grown assertive in its claims.

Malaysia names leader for MH370 international investigation team

KUALA LUMPUR, 30 April — Malaysia has hired Kok Soo Chon, a former director-general at the department of civil aviation, to lead the international investigation team tasked to find the cause of the disappearance of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH370, the government said on Tuesday.

Other team members are from the US National Transportation Safety Board, Britain’s Air Accidents Investigation Branch, China’s Aircraft Accident Investigation Department, France’s Land Transport Accident Investigation Bureau, the Australia Transport Safety Bureau, aircraft manufacturer Boeing and British satellite communications company Inmarsat.

The team also has representatives from Singapore and Indonesia.

“The main purpose of the international investigation team is to evaluate, investigate and determine the actual cause of the incident so similar incidents could be avoided in the future,” Acting Transport Minister Hishammuddin Hussein said. The investigation, he said in a statement, “is not aimed at apportioning blame or liability with regards to the incident”.

The search for Flight MH370, which vanished while flying from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing on 8 March with 239 people on board, has so far failed to turn up any trace of wreckage from the plane.

Efforts have focused on a vast expanse of water in the Indian Ocean off the coast of Western Australia. It remains unclear what caused the Boeing 777 to veer sharply off course and disappear from radar as it prepared to cross into Vietnamese airspace.

Malaysia will discuss with other countries involved in the search, the deployment of equipment with deep sea search capabilities, the cost of the operation and how best to keep next of kin informed. It is also verifying reports of possible wreckage sightings in the Bay of Bengal, the statement said.

Korea ferry disaster exposes cozy industry ties, soft penalties

SEOUL, 30 April — A culture of cozy personal ties that can blur the lines between businesses and those regulating them, of profit over safety, and soft courts is in focus as South Korea demands answers over the sinking of a ferry with the loss of more than 300 lives, mainly high school students.

Prosecutors are investigating two shipping trade organizations responsible for vessel safety checks and for certifying ships that operate in domestic waters.

Two officials at the Korea Shipping Association (KSA) have been arrested on charges of obstructing justice for destroying documents related to a probe into lobbying by the KSA.

A third official was arrested for alleged influence peddling and embezzlement. Prosecutors are also investigating Korean

Police officers stand guard at a pier, as yellow ribbons dedicated to missing and dead passengers on board the capsized Sewol ferry are tied to its handrails, at a port where family members are waiting for news from the search and rescue team in Jindo, on 28 April, 2014.  

REGULATORY

International and Australian air crews involved in the search for missing Malaysia Airlines plane MH370, prepare for an official photograph on the tarmac at the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) Pearce Base in Bullsbrook, near Perth on 29 April, 2014. — REUTERS

Study finds Fukushima radioactivity in tuna off Oregon, Washington

PORTLAND, 30 April — A sample of albacore tuna caught off the shores of Oregon and Washington state have small levels of radioactivity from the 2011 Fukushima nuclear disaster in Japan, researchers said on Tuesday.

But authors of the Oregon State University study say the levels are so small you would have to consume more than 700,000 pounds of the fish with the highest radioactive level to match the amount of radiation the average person is annually exposed to in everyday life through cosmic rays, the air, the ground, X-rays and other sources.

Still, the findings shed some light on the impact of the meltdown on the Pacific Ocean following the March 2011 tsunami and subsequent power plant disaster, said Delvan Neville, a graduate research assistant at OSU and lead author of the study.

“I think people would rather have an answer on what is there and what isn’t there than have a big question mark,” Neville said.

At the most extreme, radiation levels tripled from fish tested before Fukushima and fish tested after. That level was 0.1 percent of the level set by the US Food and Drug Administration for concern.

“The levels were too small to really be a food safety issue, but we still want to tell people about it so they know what’s there.”

Neville said. — REUTERS

Tokyo Electric Power Co (TEPCO)’s tsunami-crippled Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant’s reactor building one to four (L to R) are seen in Fukushima prefecture, in this aerial view photo taken by Kyodo, on 11 March, 2012.  

— REUTERS
Iran’s Rouhani suggests critics benefited from sanctions

Iran’s President Hassan Rouhani speaks during an event to mark Nawroz, the Persian New Year, in Kabul on 27 March, 2014. REUTERS

DUBAI, 30 April — President Hassan Rouhani, in a riposte to hardliners who suggest he is capitulating to the West, accused critics of his government on Tuesday of using lies and exaggeration to oppose his policies, including Iran’s nuclear talks with world powers. In an interview on state television, Rouhani suggested his critics were a “tiny minority” who had profited from sanctions and feared losing out if curbs were removed with an eventual resolution of Iran’s nuclear dispute with the West.

Rouhani and his negotiators have been under pressure from Islamic hardliners opposed to the talks with the United States and five other powers seeking curbs on Iran’s nuclear programme in return for an end to sanctions against Teheran. As the talks move toward a possible deal by late July, the hardliners, many of them holdouts from the administration of former President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, have stepped up their campaign, accusing Rouhani of sacrificing national pride and revolutionary identity for the sake of an agreement.

Reuters

Some Pakistanis still believe bin Laden was killed in 2011

Abbottabad, 30 April — Three years after Osama bin Laden was presumably killed in a US Navy SEAL raid on his compound in the Pakistani city of Abbottabad, some Pakistanis are hooked on the view that he was already dead when the operation took place on 2 May, 2011. This conspiracy theory was first peddled by senior Pakistani officials before the Abbottabad Commission set up by the government to investigate the circumstances that led to the raid on the compound in the city, located some 110 kilometers north of Islamabad.

In the commission’s confidential report, which was partially leaked to the media last year, the administrative head of the Hazara region, of which Abbottabad is a part, was of the view that bin Laden was not present in the compound when the raid took place.

Even if he was killed there on 2 May, 2011, some argue that he could not have been living there for five years as has been suggested.

The administrative head of Abbottabad told the commission he believed bin Laden came to the compound only two weeks before the raid because “very few clothes were found for OBL.” He also noted the small amount of electricity consumed and food found in the house.

A man identified only as Aziz, who lives opposite the compound, testified he heard “no cries of woe and children” from the house. He said a family residing in the relatively posh area would typically need a variety of services, such as those of a barber, cook, driver, carpenter or electrician, but the occupants of the compound were not entitled to service during the five years. And he wondered aloud how 15-16 children belonging to bin Laden and his two wives — brothers Abdr and Ibrahim — could be kept quiet for five years. Another man, identified as Shatranj, who also lived near the bin Laden compound and was detained by Pakistan’s shadowy Inter-Services Intelligence for nearly three weeks, said that as far as he knew, only Aabir and Ibrahim lived there.

According to the head of local Crime Investigation Agency, bin Laden could have been brought to the house as part of a conspira- cy involving the US Central Intelligence Agency, which masterminded the daring raid on the compound.

It was because of such statements that the commission observed that “only a minority of people in the area believed that OBL lived there.” Veteran Arab journ- alist Jamal Imdad, who met bin Laden three times and is writing a book about his life, claims bin Laden died in April and returned from a visit to North Waziristan, a restive tribal area bordering Afghanistan, and was buried somewhere there and Abbottabad. He said the doctor who attended him informed the ISI, which took his body and informed the CIA of his death.

Kyodo News

Chinese Premier Li Keqiang (R) meets with former US Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner in Beijing, capital of China, on 29 April, 2014.—XINHUA

Advertise with us!
For inquiries to place an
advertisement in the NLM,
Please email
wallace.turn@gmail.com
New Delhi, 30 April — Actress Deepika Padukone was named Entertainer of The Year at the NDTV Indian Of The Year 2013 awards in New Delhi on Tuesday night.

Deepika, who delivered three blockbuster hits last year, has cleaned up at award shows this season for her performances in Chennai Express, Ram-Leela and Yeh Jawani Hai Deewani. She recently won Best Actress and Entertainer of The Year at the IIFA awards held in Florida.

"I am very nervous about being billed Bollywood's Golden Girl, this award matters most to me," said the Chennai Express star. On a lighter note, she added, "Kevin Spacey is so graceful in a lungs," referring to her Lungi Dance with Hollywood star Kevin Spacey at the IIFA Awards.

Deepika’s big release this year includes Kochadaiiyaan opposite Rajinikanth and Happy New Year co-starring Shah Rukh Khan. When she arrived in Delhi earlier today, Deepika took this playful selfie of herself.—PTI

NDTV Indian of The Year: Kangana Ranaut named Actor of The Year

New Delhi, 30 April — The Queen rules Bollywood and don't we all know it. Actress Kangana Ranaut was named the Actor of The Year at the NDTV Indian of The Year awards in new Delhi on Tuesday night.

Kangana, long been considered an outsider in Bollywood, starred in the super hit and much praised Queen last month and followed up with the just-released Revolver Rani.

Kangana Ranaut

Thrilled to have received her award from Aamir Khan, Kangana said, "It’s really flattering to be here and receive this award. I was told Aamir was going to present me this award so I had to be here. He has been a huge inspiration and this is a very special evening." Aamir also had high praise in return, "Kangana goes with her heart. Not many people are able to do what she did," he said.

Kangana will next be seen in Ungli. This was Kangana saying hello to Delhi, her smile disarmingly wide, when she checked into Delhi earlier today.—PTI

Harrison Ford, Carrie Fisher lead cast of new ‘Star Wars’ film

Los Angeles, 30 April — Harrison Ford will lead returning and rising stars, including Carrie Fisher, Mark Hamill, Andy Serkis and Oscar Isaac, for the anticipated new “Star Wars: Episode VII” film, Walt Disney Co and Lucasfilm said on Tuesday.

Ford, Fisher and Hamill, who were rumoured to be returning to director J J Abrams’ reboot of the franchise, will be joined by the series’ original stars Peter Mayhew (Chewbacca), Anthony Daniels (C-3PO) and Kenny Baker (R2-D2).

Ford played Han Solo. Fisher played Princess Leia and Hamill was Luke Skywalker in the original films, but it is not known if they will reprise their roles or have different characters in the new film.

Joining the franchise alongside “Lord of the Rings” star Serkis and “Inside Llewyn Davis” actor Isaac will be Swedish actor Max Von Sydow, “Girls” star Adam Driver and newcomers John Boyega and Daisy Ridley.

“It is both thrilling and surreal to watch the beloved original cast and these brilliant new performers come together to bring this world to life, once again. We start shooting in a couple of weeks, and everyone is doing their best to make the fans proud,” Abrams said in a statement.

Disney purchased “Star Wars” creator George Lucas’ Lucasfilm in 2012 for $4.05 billion and announced three new films in the franchise this year including “Star Wars: Episode VII” is scheduled for release on 18 December, 2015. — Reuters

With Lego makeover, ‘The Simpsons’ gets fresh face 25 years on

Los Angeles, 30 April — Fox’s hit animated show “The Simpsons,” which has used donut-loving Homer and his dysfunctional family to satirize US popular culture for 25 years, is celebrating another milestone with a plastic makeover featuring Lego building blocks.

“Brick Like Me,” airing on Sunday, marks the show’s 550th episode and adds a notch in this year’s revival of the popular Danish plastic building brick, after the runaway success of February’s “The Lego Movie.”

“The Simpsons,” created by Matt Groening and premiering in 1989, has rarely changed its basic visual form in a quarter century. It is the world’s most-watched US television show, syndicated across more than 100 countries, and reaches more than 150 million viewers a week according to Fox. The show also has one of the largest TV Facebook fan pages with 72 million.

The show has tapped into the changing American zeitgeist and successfully embedded itself in international pop culture over the past two decades, with Homer’s “D’oh!” catchphrase entering the Oxford English Dictionary in 2001.

“Brick Like Me,” the branchchild of longtime “Simpsons” writer-producers Brian Kelley and Matt Selman, will see both the cartoon characters and town of Springfield reimagined in the form of the plastic toy brick blocks. In a clip of footage shown to Reuters, Homer and Marge wake up in their 3D Lego forms and Homer tumbles, disassembling himself. Later, Bart goes to Springfield Elementary school and manages to reduce the building into a rubble of plastic bricks.

“We really try to take full advantage of the Lego playground, to tell the story from a different way than we usually would,” Selman said at the show’s headquarters in the center of the Fox Studios lot in Los Angeles.

“it yielded a ton of funny ideas. It was a very special evening. We really try to take full advantage of the Lego playground, to tell the story from a different way than we usually would,” Selman said at the show’s headquarters in the center of the Fox Studios lot in Los Angeles.

“My Old Classmate,” a Chinese pop song from the 1990s, ruled China’s box office in the week ending on 27 April, according to a film industry weekly.

The film tells of the romance between two deskmates spanning across 20 years and stars Zhou Dongyu, a Chinese actress who rose to fame in the leading role in Zhang Yimou’s 2010 “Under the Hawthorn Tree”, and grossed 11.1 million yuan (1.76 million U.S. dollars) in the three days since its debut on 25 April, according to figures released by China Film News on Tuesday.

The previous week’s champion, “Captain America: The Winter Soldier,” an American superhero movie featuring Marvel Comics character Captain America, dropped to third place with 56 million yuan in box office last week, as its total gains in China reached 66.4 million. — Reuters

Chinese love story tops weekly box office

Beijing, 30 April — “My Old Classmate,” a Chinese love story inspired by a namesake popular song in the 1990s, ruled China’s box office in the week ending on 27 April, according to a film industry weekly.

The film tells of the romance between two deskmates spanning across 20 years and stars Zhou Dongyu, a Chinese actress who rose to fame in the leading role in Zhang Yimou’s 2010 “Under the Hawthorn Tree”, and grossed 11.1 million yuan (1.76 million U.S. dollars) in the three days since its debut on 25 April, according to figures released by China Film News on Tuesday.

The previous week’s champion, “Captain America: The Winter Soldier,” an American superhero movie featuring Marvel Comics character Captain America, dropped to third place with 56 million yuan in box office last week, as its total gains in China reached 66.4 million. — Xinhua
**US tornadoes kill 34, threaten more damage in South**

**Tupelo, 30 April —** At least 34 people were killed in tornadoes unleashed by a ferocious storm system that razed neighbourhoods in the southern United States over the last three days and threatened more destruction in heavily populated parts of the South on Tuesday. In Arkansas and Mississippi, the hardest hit of six states struck by the storm, there have been 27 confirmed storm-related deaths and more than 200 people injured as tornadoes reduced homes to splinters, snapped trees like twigs and sent trucks flying through the air like toys.

The tornado that ripped through Mississippi’s Winston County on Monday packed winds of up to 200 mph, according to the National Weather Service’s Storm Prediction Center in Norman, Oklahoma. “Unfortunate-ly, the areas that are under the gun today are the same ones that were under the gun yesterday.”

**MANILA, 30 April —** At least 15 people were killed when security forces and Islamist militants exchanged mortar fire for three hours on Tuesday in a remote southern Philippine island, a marine general said on Wednesday, claiming the rebels were trying to retake their base.

**Brigadier-General Martin Pinto** said a soldier was killed and 19 others were wounded as sporadic fighting continued early on Wednesday in Patikul, Sulu, a known hotbed of the al-Qaeda-linked Abu Sayyaf Group.

“By employing combined arms of 105mm howitzers, 81mm mortars and close air support from the MQ-520 helicopters, the marines were able to inflict heavy casualties on the enemy,” Pinto told reporters.

“The wounded marines, most of them are caused by mortar shelling from the Abu Sayyaf, were evacuated to an army hospital for treatment,” Pinto said about 300 rebels launched an offensive to retake their base in Patikul after soldiers captured them on Monday.

“Our troops held their ground for three hours and repulsed the attack as reinforcements came,” he added.

Early this month, security forces killed 18 Abu Sayyaf in nearby Basilan island as the Philippines stepped up an offensive against armed groups opposed to the peace pact with a larger Muslim rebel group, Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

The peace deal struck with the MILF ended a 45-year conflict that has killed more than 120,000 people, displaced 2 million and stunted growth in one of the resource-rich areas in the poor Southeast Asian state.

The situation on the ground remained shaky as other groups, particularly the Abu Sayyaf, a group on the US anti-terrorist "blacklist", continued to pursue the armed struggle to set up a separate and independent Islamist state in the south.—Reuters

**Simmonds goals help Flyers force decider against Rangers**

**New York, 30 April —** Wayne Simmonds scored a hat-trick and goaltender Steve Mason made 34 saves as the Philadelphia Flyers sent their playoff series against the New York Rangers to a decider with a 5-2 victory at Wells Fargo Centre on Tuesday.

Defenceman Erik Gustafsson and centre Claude Giroux also had goals for the Flyers, who will need to become the first team to win two in a row in this series to advance to a Conference Semi-final showdown against the Pittsburgh Penguins. Rangers left winger Carl Hagelin ended Mason’s shutout bid with 6:34 left in the game and center Mats Zuccarello scored a consolation goal in the final minute.

Game Seven of the Eastern Conference series will be played at Madison Square Garden on Wednesday, where the Rangers are 2-1 on home ice this post-season. Mason, who did not start the first three games of the series because of an upper-body injury, was outstanding for the second time in three games. He outplayed Rangers goalie Henrik Lundqvist, an eight-time All-Star and former Vezina Trophy winner, who allowed four goals on 23 shots and was replaced by Cam Talbot for Game Seven of the Eastern Conference series.

Rangers are 2-1 on home ice this post-season. Mason, who did not start the first three games of the series because of an upper-body injury, was outstanding for the second time in three games. He outplayed Rangers goalie Henrik Lundqvist, an eight-time All-Star and former Vezina Trophy winner, who allowed four goals on 23 shots and was replaced by Cam Talbot for Game Seven of the Eastern Conference series.

**Philippines troops exchange mortar fire with militants, 15 dead**

**Manila, 30 April —** At least 15 people were killed in a four-hour exchange of gunfire between Philippines troops and Abu Sayyaf guerrillas Wednesday in southern Sulu province.

The theatre of operations continued for a third day with the government forces repulsing a second major assault by armed tribesmen who have been fighting for more than two years to join a larger rebel group, Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

President Benigno Aquino put a $200,000 bounty on the head of a prominent Abu Sayyaf leader and increased troop deployments around the restive region.

Avez Ong, a councilor of the local housing authority, said they had recorded 15 bodies lying around the market square and on a hill near the government’s main front line position.

Traditionally black and densely forested, the resource-rich areas in the Sulu archipelago lie under some threat from the storm system that spawned the tornadoes, forecasters said. “We will see tornadoes again today,” said Bill Bunting, operations chief at the National Weather Service’s Storm Prediction Center in Norman, Oklahoma. “Unfortunately, the areas that are under the gun today are the same ones that were under the gun yesterday.”

**US tornadoes kill 34, threaten more damage in South**

**Tupelo, 30 April —** At least 34 people were killed in tornadoes unleashed by a ferocious storm system that razed neighbourhoods in the southern United States over the last three days and threatened more destruction in heavily populated parts of the South on Tuesday. In Arkansas and Mississippi, the hardest hit of six states struck by the storm, there have been 27 confirmed storm-related deaths and more than 200 people injured as tornadoes reduced homes to splinters, snapped trees like twigs and sent trucks flying through the air like toys.

The tornado that ripped through Mississippi’s Winston County on Monday packed winds of up to 200 mph, according to the National Weather Service’s Storm Prediction Center in Norman, Oklahoma. “Unfortunate-ly, the areas that are under the gun today are the same ones that were under the gun yesterday.”

**MANILA, 30 April —** At least 15 people were killed when security forces and Islamist militants exchanged mortar fire for three hours on Tuesday in a remote southern Philippine island, a marine general said on Wednesday, claiming the rebels were trying to retake their base.

**Brigadier-General Martin Pinto** said a soldier was killed and 19 others were wounded as sporadic fighting continued early on Wednesday in Patikul, Sulu, a known hotbed of the al-Qaeda-linked Abu Sayyaf Group.

“By employing combined arms of 105mm howitzers, 81mm mortars and close air support from the MQ-520 helicopters, the marines were able to inflict heavy casualties on the enemy,” Pinto told reporters.

“The wounded marines, most of them are caused by mortar shelling from the Abu Sayyaf, were evacuated to an army hospital for treatment,” Pinto said about 300 rebels launched an offensive to retake their base in Patikul after soldiers captured them on Monday.

“Our troops held their ground for three hours and repulsed the attack as reinforcements came,” he added.

Early this month, security forces killed 18 Abu Sayyaf in nearby Basilan island as the Philippines stepped up an offensive against armed groups opposed to the peace pact with a larger Muslim rebel group, Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

The peace deal struck with the MILF ended a 45-year conflict that has killed more than 120,000 people, displaced 2 million and stunted growth in one of the resource-rich areas in the poor Southeast Asian state.

The situation on the ground remained shaky as other groups, particularly the Abu Sayyaf, a group on the US anti-terrorist "blacklist", continued to pursue the armed struggle to set up a separate and independent Islamist state in the south.—Reuters

**Simmonds goals help Flyers force decider against Rangers**

**New York, 30 April —** Wayne Simmonds scored a hat-trick and goaltender Steve Mason made 34 saves as the Philadelphia Flyers sent their playoff series against the New York Rangers to a decider with a 5-2 victory at Wells Fargo Centre on Tuesday.

Defenceman Erik Gustafsson and centre Claude Giroux also had goals for the Flyers, who will need to become the first team to win two in a row in this series to advance to a Conference Semi-final showdown against the Pittsburgh Penguins. Rangers left winger Carl Hagelin ended Mason’s shutout bid with 6:34 left in the game and center Mats Zuccarello scored a consolation goal in the final minute.

Game Seven of the Eastern Conference series will be played at Madison Square Garden on Wednesday, where the Rangers are 2-1 on home ice this post-season. Mason, who did not start the first three games of the series because of an upper-body injury, was outstanding for the second time in three games. He outplayed Rangers goalie Henrik Lundqvist, an eight-time All-Star and former Vezina Trophy winner, who allowed four goals on 23 shots and was replaced by Cam Talbot for Game Seven of the Eastern Conference series.

Rangers are 2-1 on home ice this post-season. Mason, who did not start the first three games of the series because of an upper-body injury, was outstanding for the second time in three games. He outplayed Rangers goalie Henrik Lundqvist, an eight-time All-Star and former Vezina Trophy winner, who allowed four goals on 23 shots and was replaced by Cam Talbot for Game Seven of the Eastern Conference series.

**Philippines troops exchange mortar fire with militants, 15 dead**

**Manila, 30 April —** At least 15 people were killed when security forces and Islamist militants exchanged mortar fire for three hours on Tuesday in a remote southern Philippine island, a marine general said on Wednesday, claiming the rebels were trying to retake their base.

**Brigadier-General Martin Pinto** said a soldier was killed and 19 others were wounded as sporadic fighting continued early on Wednesday in Patikul, Sulu, a known hotbed of the al-Qaeda-linked Abu Sayyaf Group.

“By employing combined arms of 105mm howitzers, 81mm mortars and close air support from the MQ-520 helicopters, the marines were able to inflict heavy casualties on the enemy,” Pinto told reporters.

“The wounded marines, most of them are caused by mortar shelling from the Abu Sayyaf, were evacuated to an army hospital for treatment,” Pinto said about 300 rebels launched an offensive to retake their base in Patikul after soldiers captured them on Monday.

“Our troops held their ground for three hours and repulsed the attack as reinforcements came,” he added.

Early this month, security forces killed 18 Abu Sayyaf in nearby Basilan island as the Philippines stepped up an offensive against armed groups opposed to the peace pact with a larger Muslim rebel group, Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

The peace deal struck with the MILF ended a 45-year conflict that has killed more than 120,000 people, displaced 2 million and stunted growth in one of the resource-rich areas in the poor Southeast Asian state.

The situation on the ground remained shaky as other groups, particularly the Abu Sayyaf, a group on the US anti-terrorist ‘blacklist’, continued to pursue the armed struggle to set up a separate and independent Islamist state in the south.—Reuters
England manager Roy Hodgson

LONDON, 30 April — England manager Roy Hodgson has ruled out making any late changes to his World Cup squad based on “last-minute form” in the final weeks of the Premier League season.

Hodgson, whose team face the daunting prospect of battling through to the knockout stages of the World Cup campaign with title defenders Spain and a “notoriously bad time because that's where things are really done.”

“I wanted to make my decision around the November to early March time because that's where things are really done.”

Real Madrid crush Bayern 4-0 to make UEFA Champions League final

BERLIN, 30 April — Real Madrid dethroned title holders Bayern Munich 4-0 to smooth the way for the final at the Champions League semi-finals on Tuesday.

Real Madrid took the lead in Munich after a Spanish handball converted their ticket for the final in Lisbon with a 2-0 triumph on aggregate over the German title defenders.

Carlo Ancelotti’s men staged a clinical chance conversion and killed the game with three first-half goals. Sergio Ramos sealed his brace within 20 minutes to destroy all hopes by the Bavarians. Besides

that Christian Ronaldo set a new record with his goals No. 15 and 16.

Bayern Munich took over from the kickoff to press into defence, as they wanted to neutralize their 1-0 first leg loss with an early goal.

The concert was organized by Fortune International Ltd & HAN International Trade Company Myanmar under the arrangement of Myanmar Taekwondo Federation to raise fund.

Murray to be spared nightmare Wimbledon draw despite low ranking

LONDON, 30 April — Wimbledon champion Andy Murray should be spared a horror draw at this year’s tournament despite his recent rankings slide, organizers said on Tuesday.

Murray, who became the first British man to win the men’s singles at the grasscourt grand slam for 77 years last July when he beat Novak Djokovic in the final, has sunk to eighth in the ATP rankings which at the end of last year.

four seeds even if his world ranking does not improve. Seedings at Wimbledon are generally based on ATP rankings but the fact that Murray was unbeaten on grass last year and reached the Wimbledon final in 2012 as well will count in his favor, according to All England Club chairman Philip Brook.

“For Andy Murray, as the winner of Queen’s last year, and the winner here last year, and a finalist here in 2012, there will be a significant impact on him,” he told a news conference.

Murray’s ranking has slipped from a career-high four two down to eight, largely because of back surgery and the end of last year.