Myanmar to stay out of bilateral territorial disputes, role is to act within ASEAN context: Myanmar SOM leader

By Kerstin Winter

The Preparatory Meeting of the ASEAN Senior Officials was held Friday in Nay Pyi Taw, with the Myanmar leader saying that officials discussed the remaining tasks needed to establish the ASEAN Community 2015 as well as issues related to the Post-2015 Vision.

U Aung Lynn, Senior Officials Meeting leader of Myanmar at the ASEAN Affairs Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs also touched on the subject of territorial and maritime disputes, in which several ASEAN members are embroiled.

Commenting first on the roadmap for the ASEAN Community, he said that in 2015 ASEAN will become a community based on three pillars and we are striving to meet the deadline and I am confident about it. We will try and accomplish the remaining tasks of ASEAN community building as much as we can during our chairmanship, and I believe we will be successful. We will be handing over the chairmanship to Malaysia next year and Malaysia has an important mission during its chairmanship, so we don’t want to leave them with a lot of leftover work,” he said, adding that the High-level Task Force has an important mission for other parts of the world as the bloc has managed to maintain peace in the region. Regarding stability, he said that “We will emphasize the unity of ASEAN during our chairmanship, because only with unity can we move forward.”

The Myanmar government stresses that it strives to find ways on how to have good relations with all nations, particularly the neighboring countries. “We are friends with all the countries in the world and during the chairmanship we will try to consider the feelings of all the member states,” he said. Regarding the recent incident between Vietnam and the Philippines, he explained that “We are friends with them, and we will encourage both sides to have frank conversations with local officials and ambassadors from Norway, Switzerland and the European Union, with representativeness from both communities at the administrative office of Buthidaung of Rakhine State this morning, sources said.

Speaking at the meeting, U Soe Than, Union Minister at the President Office, called for mutual cooperation for regional development. U Tin Naing Thein, also Union Minis ter at the President Office, stressed the need for regional stability and the development of human resources. The Union ministers and their entourage also went to Maungtaw, where they had cordial and frank conversations with locals.

Myanmar sees upsing in tourism industry

By Aung Khin

YANGON, 9 May — Tourist arrivals to Myanmar have increased in 2014 comparing with the previous year, according to travel agents and tour agencies. The country created the Tourism Master Plan in 2013, targeting 7.5 million arrivals by 2020. Arrival of foreign tourists increased from 791,505 in 2010 to more than 2.04 million in 2013, according to the official data.

U Htike Lun Maung, managing director of New Motion Travels & Tours Co., Ltd, said: “Our tour agency provides tourism services for inbound, outbound and domestic trips.”

Tourism Master Plan of Myanmar aims for more than 2.5 million by 2015, 3 million by 2018 and 3.5 million by 2020. U Htike Lun Maung said that both the number of inbound tourists and outbound tourists have increased in 2014, while arrangements for domestic tours have risen.

Race and Religion Protection Committee seeks guidance for further steps

YANGON, 9 May — The Central Committee for Race and Religion Protection sought advice and guidance from the panel of three pillars of the community, namely political and security cooperation, the SOM leader said ASEAN was a good role model for other parts of the world as the bloc has managed to maintain peace in the region. Regarding stability, he said that “We will emphasize the unity of ASEAN during our chairmanship, because only with unity can we move forward.”

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Union ministers, diplomats on tour of Rakhine

SITTWE, 9 May — Union ministers, touring with local officials and ambassadors from Norway, Switzerland and the European Union, met with representatives from both communities at the administrative office of Buthidaung of Rakhine State this morning, sources said.

Speaking at the meeting, U Soe Than, Union Minister at the President Office, called for mutual cooperation for regional development. U Tin Naing Thein, also Union Minister at the President Office, stressed the need for regional stability and the development of human resources. The Union ministers and their entourage also went to Maungtaw, where they had cordial and frank conversations with locals.
ADB, Japan to assist Myanmar’s water and sanitation works

May—About 18,000 people in Yangon and Mandalay will soon have access to a safe regular water supply and improved sanitation facilities with the signing of a $4 million grant funded by the Japan Fund for poverty reduction and administered by the Asian Development Bank-ADB.

The four-year community infrastructure and basic services project is expected to reduce the spread of infectious diseases, improve the system of solid and liquid wastes disposal, and reduce flooding and water logging in two of Myanmar’s most populated cities.

A self-perpetuating community operation and maintenance fund, with community development committees responsible for the collection of fees and administration of the infrastructure will be introduced by the project.

The grant will also include improving drainage of storm and flood water, and enhancing access roads and footpaths. By 2018, the grant aims to build 2,000 sanitary latrines, construct 17 kilometers of drains linked to city networks, and build four community solid waste systems in four townships. It will also build capacity within local government and develop community action plans and mobilize 100 Community Development Committees to partner with Township and City level Development Committees, to help ensure improvements such as better access to safe and regular water supplies, sanitation drainage, and flood protection are sustainable.—NLM

Race and Religion Protection...

Race and Religion Protection... (from page 1)

Township of Yangon Region on Wednesday evening, reports said.

Speaking at the ceremony, the chairman Sayadaw of CCRRP expressed their strong support of the coming meeting of the Sangha of All Schools and their cooperation with SSC, adding that they will initiate the emergence of a race protection bill.

The chairman Sayadaw of the panel of State Sangha Committee pointed out the unity among the Sanghas, calling on them to ask them for help if they have any doubts concerning religious tasks for promotion of the Sasana. MNA

Mercedes Benz showroom starts life

May—A Mercedes Benz Showroom was opened in Mayangon, Yangon on Thursday evening. The opening ceremony drew high-ranking officials, including Yangon Region Chief U Myint Swe and Union Minister for Economy and Commerce U Win Myint.

Speaking at the ceremony, U Myint Swe said permission to open brand auto showrooms is aimed at helping people buy hi-tech vehicles at will, adding the arrival of Mercedes Benz showrooms reflects that the foreign investments creates more job opportunities and generates more income taxes.

In three years after the easing of some foreign investments laws, Myanmar has seen a rapid surge in foreign investments, he said.—MNA

Myanmar, India sign MoU on cooperation in border affairs

May—Deputy Minister for Defence Maj-Gen Kyaw Nyunt and Indian Ambassador Mr. Gautam Mukhopadhyaya signed an MoU on cooperation in border affairs at the Hotel Amara in Nay Pyi Taw on Friday.

The MoU provides prevention against insurgency, illegal trespass and taking care of boundary lines of the two countries.

—MNA

Myanmar arts and crafts on high esteem

State Minister for Transport and Tourism U Win Myint and Deputy Minister for Defence Maj-Gen Kyaw Nyunt and Indian Ambassador Mr. Gautam Mukhopadhyaya sign MoU on cooperation in border affairs.—MNA

Deputy Minister for Defence Maj-Gen Kyaw Nyunt and Indian Ambassador Mr. Gautam Mukhopadhyaya sign MoU on cooperation in border affairs.—MNA

Myanmar arts and crafts on high esteem

Traditional Pathein umbrellas displayed at Myanmar arts and crafts exhibition at Mani Yadana Jade Hall.

Pyu Period offers historical evidence that Myanmar has long been boasting their high standard of culture, dating back to over 2,000 years. Myanmar traditional handicrafts have since been not only impressive but also artful. To prove this, Myanmar Traditional Arts and Crafts Exhibition will be staged at Mani Yadana Jade Hall in Nay Pyi Taw from 12 to 14 May. As the exhibition coincides with the ASEAN Summit scheduled on 10-11 May, the delegations will have an opportunity to visit there and witness the traditional arts and crafts on display.

Deputy Minister for Culture Daw Sandar Khin said this event is aimed at introducing the traditional handicrafts to tourists. On display at the exhibition include traditional cotton and silk wares, traditional tapestry, silverware, lacquer ware, lotus-thread fabric, and Kachin and Chin hand-woven textiles. Lotus-thread fabric is hard to produce, for the production involves complex processes. So revered is the fabric of this kind that it is usually woven into yellow robes, which are offered to Buddha Images and Buddhist monks. Daw Sandar Khin also said that production processes will be demonstrated at the exhibition.

Travelers from China, Arab and Persia (now Iran) had recorded Myanmar textiles and silk wares in their travelogues written between 8 AD and 9 AD. It is believed that the art of Myanmar traditional embroidery dates back over 1,000 years. The art of embroidery is so thorough, subtle and strong that Westerners branded it the ‘art of patience’. In short, the exhibition will reveal the high standard of Myanmar traditional arts and crafts and will not doubt satisfy visitors.

Trs: KTY

Myanmar handicrafts of ancient works put on display at arts and crafts exhibition.

Photo shows Myanmar handicrafts of ancient works put on display at arts and crafts exhibition.
NATIONAL

Vice-President Dr Sai Mauk Kham meets UN Resident Representative, Singaporean Ambassador

NAY PYI TAW, 9 May—Vice-President Dr Sai Mauk Kham held separate talks with a delegation led by Ms. Renata Lok-Dessallien, the UN Resident Representative and Humanitarian Coordinator in Myanmar and Singaporean Ambassador to Myanmar Mr Robert Chua Hian Kong at the Credentials Hall of the Presidential Palace in Nay Pyi Taw on Friday.

During the meeting with the UN Resident, they discussed humanitarian aid of NGOs and INGOs in Rakhine State, and cooperation in restoring peace and stability and development of the state.

The Vice-President also discussed promotion relations between Singapore and Myanmar cooperation Council on Tourism and Trade. U Pyae Phyo Oo, managing director of Asian Green Adventure Travel & Tour said: “Most of the clients this year are from Thailand and Japan. They mainly visit five tourist destinations such as Yangon, Mandalay, Bagan, Inlay and Nay Pyi Taw. Their complaint is higher rates for hotel rooms here, compared with other regional countries. This is still a problem for the country’s tourism industry.”

Myanmar sees ...

(from page 1)

tourism industry and promote tourist attractions in the country which are famed for its unique cultural heritage not only in Asia but also in the world.

The award is normally awarded based on ethics for tourism industry, safety of tourists and preservation of cultural heritages designated by the United Nations Tourism Division, United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and European Union

Myanmar to stay out...

(from page 1)

China in the South China Sea, he said, “Of course there are bilateral issues, but Vietnam is a member of ASEAN, and therefore the incident is an ASEAN issue. And of course China is a very important dialogue partner. Not only China, but the US, the Russian Federation, India, Japan, Korea, they are also important to ASEAN. As a member of ASEAN we will always represent the common position of the bloc. We will not be involved in bilateral issues, but within the ASEAN context we will always be part of the bloc’s decisions,” he stressed.

Discussing further the role of Myanmar as chair, U Aung Lynn said that one of the priorities of his country’s chairmanship is to accomplish the common goal of a single market and to promote small and medium sized enterprises.

“There are resources here that can be improved for the production of raw materials and also improve the quality of goods. And SMEs can play a vital role in these areas.”

According to him, the Myanmar government and the business community are supporting their enterprises and urging them to learn more about business opportunities not just here, but to travel abroad and look for other markets. “Based on that experience, the knowledge and the manpower, SMEs can be improved in the coming years,” he said.

AIPA delegations arrive in Nay Pyi Taw

NAY PYI TAW, 9 May—Parliament delegations from members of ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly arrived in Nay Pyi Taw on Friday evening to attend AIPA-Paleynary meeting to be held in conjunction with the 24th ASEAN Summit in Nay Pyi Taw.

At Nay Pyi Taw International Airport, Chairman of ASEAN Parliamentary Cooperation Committee UNDP gives Supreme Court of Union IT devices

NAY PYI TAW, 9 May—The United Nations Development Programme in Myanmar provided the Supreme Court of Union with servers and computers on 9 May.

Under the Country Programme Document for Myanmar (2013-2015), UNDP Myanmar pledged the expansion of information and telecommunications technology at the Supreme Court of Union.

UNDP Country Director Toly Kurbanov transferred the documents for the IT devices to U Sein Than, Director-General of Supreme Court of Union office.—MNA

Parliament speaker meets local people in Kalaw

NAY PYI TAW, 9 May—Speaker of the Union and People’s Parliaments Thura U Shwe Mann met with local people in Kalaw, Shan state on 8 May.

Shan State Chief Minister U Sao Aung Myat and officials attended the meeting.

Thura U Shwe Mann reviewed the regional development tasks and the needs of the local people.

After the meeting, Thura U Shwe Mann greeted the local people cordially and left for Nay Pyi Taw in the evening.

NPED Union Minister attends OECD meeting in Paris

NAY PYI TAW, 9 May—Dr Kan Zaw, Union Minister for National Planning and Economic Development, attended the meeting of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development Council Meeting at Ministerial Level 2014 held from 6 to 7 May in Paris.

The 2014 Ministerial Council Meeting (MCM) took place at the headquarters of OECD in Paris, which will help better relationships between OECD and ASEAN.

Union Minister discussed with Angel Guarra about the country’s reform processes and foreign investment law, as well as the required assistance of OECD.

Dr Kan Zaw then met with Amnick Girardin, French Minister of State for Development and Francophony, at the headquarters of L’Agence francaise de développement (AFD), and discussed economic cooperation, promotion of trades, environmental conservation, and exploration of oil and natural gas in Myanmar. Union Minister also met with responsible persons of 16 French companies.—MNA
Regions, States to host Chief Ministers’ Cups

Nay Pyi Taw, 9 May—Sports competitions need qualified and active coaches in respective sports events, said Union Minister for Sports U Tint Hsan at a coordination meeting on holding region/state chief ministers’ cups at the Ministry of Sports in Nay Pyi Taw on Thursday morning.

Sports competitions are to be organized both in urban and rural areas across the nation to be able to motivate sporting spirit of the national people, he said.

He stressed the need to repair and maintain the sports grounds to attract the people to participate sports events.

The Union minister pledged to provide assistance for the maintenance of the sports grounds and gymnasiums in regions and states.

Kyaw Thura (Nay Pyi Taw)

Confiscated farmlands returned to owners in Nyaunglebin Tsp

Nyaunglebin, 9 May—A ceremony to hand over 180.5 acres of confiscated farmlands to owners was held in Gyaungta Village of Nyaunglebin Township, Bago Region, in Nay Pyi Taw on Wednesday morning.

The authorities returned the farmlands to 17 farmers through village administrator U Pa. Head of Township Settlement and Land Records Department U Soe Tint explained legal affairs in handing over the confiscated farmlands to the owners.

Nay Lin (Nyaunglebin)

Plan to implement Green Village Project in Myingyan District

Myingyan, 9 May—A coordination meeting on Green Village Project took place at the hall of Myingyan Township General Administration Department in Mandalay Region on Thursday.

The meeting focused on financial management for the project, election of the members of the supervisory committee for the project, and soft interest for loans to be disbursed to the people who will engage in agriculture and livestock breeding so as to increase family income.

The project will be implemented in five villages in Myingyan Township, five more in Taungtha Township, 11 villages in Natogyi Township and 11 villages in Ngazun Township, totalling 32.

The meeting was attended by 75 persons from various sectors to implement the project.

Zaw Min Naing (Myingyan)

Special fund allotted for dredging lake for water supply

Meiktila, 9 May—Meiktila District Rural Development Department carries out construction and maintenance of 51 development tasks and water availability at 50 villages spending the special fund in four townships of Meiktila District, Mandalay Region, in 2013-14 fiscal year.

Head of the district department U Kyaw Swe and party on Wednesday viewed round dredging of Myatha Lake in Yinzin Village of Thazi Township.

On completion, the lake will supply safe water to 2333 people from three villages of the township.

Kyemon

Expired drugs and banned medicines destroyed in Nay Pyi Taw

Nay Pyi Taw, 9 May—A combined team including officials of Food and Drug Administration inspected medical stores at Myoma market on Saturday.

During the operation, officials found many expired drugs and banned medicines and destroyed them in the presence of the shopkeepers.—Min Min Latt (Mann Takketho)

Youths turned out as red cross members, scouts in Mingin

Mingin, 9 May—The first-aid course of School Red Cross and scout training course concluded at the Basic Education Middle School Branch in Kan Village of Mingin Township, Sagaing Region, on Thursday.

A total of 137 trainees attended the two courses.

Township authorities and departmental officials presented prizes to outstanding trainees.

Chinthin Thar (IPRD)
Mohnyin residents hope for better telephone connection

Mohnyin residents hope for better telephone connection

Improvement of River Systems and Water Resources and (NLM-001)

World Red Cross Day celebrated in Magway

World Red Cross Day celebrated in Magway

Thabeikkyin in upper Myanmar sees earthen road linking three villages

Thabeikkyin in upper Myanmar sees earthen road linking three villages

Landslide preventive measures taken in eight places in Yangon Region

Landslide preventive measures taken in eight places in Yangon Region

Clinical legal education summer school opens

Clinical legal education summer school opens

Capacity building training concludes in Mohnyin

Capacity building training concludes in Mohnyin
Thai protesters move to oust post-Yingluck caretaker gov’t

BANGKOK, 9 May — Thai antigovernment protesters launched a fresh push to topple the caretaker government on Friday, two days after Yingluck Shinawatra was disqualified from the premiership by a Constitutional Court ruling.

The protesters led by former Deputy Prime Minister Suthep Thaugsuban marched to local television stations in Bangkok to demand they stop broadcasting about government activities. They also hope to seize Government House, the headquarters of the government, and Parliament where senators are set to elect within the day a new Senate president.

According to Suthep, the blocking will continue until the protesters’ demands are met.

They have called on the caretaker Cabinet to be replaced by a people’s council that would be responsible for leading reforms before the holding of a new election. The protests started last November when the House of Representatives passed an amnesty law that Yingluck’s opponents claimed was aimed to benefit her older brother, ousted Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, who was toppled by the military coup in 2006.

Even though the bill later was rejected by the Senate and withdrawn, the protests continued.

On Wednesday, Yingluck and nine of her Cabinet members were ousted from her positions by the Constitutional Court for interfering in the transfer of government officials for political benefit. She also faces the prospect of impeachment after the National Anti-Corruption Commission indicted her over a controversial rice subsidy scheme, which could result in her being banned from politics for five years. Former Deputy Prime Minister and Commerce Minister Nwattumrong Boosongpaas is now acting caretaker prime minister, while he is also overseeing the ministries of finance, defence and commerce.

India’s BJP PM candidate confident of getting clear majority in new parliament

NEW DELHI, 9 May — India’s Bhartiya Janata Party’s prime ministerial candidate Narendra Modi on Thursday expressed his confidence of his party getting a clear majority in the new Lok Sabha or Lower House of Parliament.

In an interview with local TV channel Times Now, Modi said: “I have explained everything clearly that BJP is winning with a clear majority and we will be forming the strongest and most stable government since Rajiv Gandhi’s government.”

He also said that the BJP has the support of many other parties while playing down differences with regional or smaller parties.

“For the first time in India’s political history, the BJP has 25 parties in a pre-poll alliance in the electoral fray. Even during the NDA (BJP-led National Democratic Alliance) regime, we didn’t have a pre-poll alliance. The Congress too has never had a pre-poll alliance on this scale,” he said.

Modi also denied BJP using religious issue to win support from the voters, saying Hinduism is not religion but a way of life.

Families of South Korea ferry dead march on presidential palace

SEOUL/INcheon, 9 May — Family members of hundreds of children killed when a ferry sank last month led a somber march on South Korea’s presidential palace in the early hours of Friday, where they demanded to meet President Park Geun-hye.

Clutching memorial portraits of their children and brothers and sisters, grieving relatives were prevented by riot police from nearing the palace, and instead sat in the middle of the road where they sobbed, wailed and shouted in anger.

“Listen to us, President Park. Just give us ten seconds,” one family member said, using a portable address system. “Why are you blocking the way?” said another. “President Park, hear our voices!”

Seated on the ground in the middle of the night, they wore beige blankets and huddled in rows on the cold floor. One mother, overcome with grief, quietly sobbed as she stroked a portrait of her dead son.

President Park’s government has faced continued criticism for its handling of the disaster from the families of the ferry victims, when a faster initial response could have saved many more lives.

South Korean prosecutors are seeking the arrest of members of the family that owns the ferry operator, and may also seek the extradition of a son of the reclusive head of the family from the United States, an official said on Thursday. The Sewol, overloaded and traveling too fast on a turn, capsized and sank about 20 km (12 miles) off the southwest coast on a routine journey from Incheon on the mainland to the southern holiday island of Jeju, killing hundreds of children and teachers on a high school outing. Only 172 people have been rescued of an estimated 476 passengers and crew on board. The confirmed death toll on Friday was 273.

The Philippines and the United States formally began the annual joint military exercises dubbed as Balikatan on 5 May.

Philippine, US troops hold amphibious drill

MANILA, 9 May — Philippine and US marines conducted an amphibious operation at the shores of Zamboales Province in northern Philippines on Friday.

The amphibious operation, or “boat raid”, was participated in by more than 80 members of the Philippine Navy and around 40 US Marines. The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) said it is the first of the series of field training exercises scheduled for this year’s bilateral drills under the Balikatan. Lieutenant Annaleah P Cazcarro of the Philippine Navy, spokesman of the Philippine-US Balikatan 2014, said the Philippine Navy’s BRP Ramon Alcaraz and BRP Dagupan were used for the exercise.

The Philippines and the United States formally began the annual joint military exercises dubbed as Balikatan on 5 May.
Ukraine rebels ignore Putin call to delay self-rule vote

DONETSK, 9 May — Pro-Moscow separatists in eastern Ukraine ignored a public call by Russian President Vladimir Putin to postpone a referendum on self-rule, declaring they would go ahead on Sunday with a vote that could lead to war.

The decision, which contradicted the conciliatory tone set by Putin just a day earlier, caused consternation in the West, which fears the referendum will tear Ukraine apart.

US Deputy Secretary of State William Burns said Russia was heading down a “dangerous and irresponsible path” and the situation in Ukraine was “extremely combustible”.

Denis Pushilin, a leader of the self-declared separatist Donetk People’s Republic, expressed gratitude to Putin but said the “People’s Council” had voted unanimously on Thursday to hold the plebiscite as planned.

“Civil war has already begun,” he told reporters. “The referendum can put a stop to it and start a political process.” A man holding a Kalashnikov stood behind him.

Political analysts said Putin may have expected the rebels to go ahead with the referendum, showing that they were not under his orders. By distancing himself from a process that will not be recognized by the West, Putin may also hope to avoid further sanctions as earlier measures began hitting the economy.

His spokesman said the Kremlin needed more information about the rebels’ decision. He also said the rebel statement came only after the Western-backed government in Kiev had declared it would press on with its military operation, implying that Ukraine was to blame for the rebels’ refusal to heed Putin. Russian financial markets sank after surging on Wednesday when Putin unexpectedly called for the vote to be delayed and declared that troops were withdrawing from Ukraine’s border.

Europe safety chief backs flight-tracking after MH370

PARIS, 9 May — Europe’s top aviation regulator has called for international action to address concerns raised by the disappearance of Malaysia Airlines flight MH370, while acknowledging delays in responding to a similar disaster in 2009.

“The head of the European Aviation Safety Agency, Patrick Ky, told Reuters he supported better flight tracking of passenger jets as a United Nations agency prepares to discuss the issue at a meeting of aviation powers next week. Ky said in an interview that quicker action was needed than after an Air France catastrophe there was a certain number of recommendations, and I am not sure we as an aeronautical community were quick enough in taking up all those recommendations,” he said. "Now it is really time that we do something about this."

Pressure for improved tracking of aircraft has increased since the Malaysian jet vanished exactly two months ago. A search for the aircraft and its black boxes in the western Pacific and the southern Indian Ocean has so far failed to produce results.

Pakistan test-fires short-range ballistic missile

ISLAMABAD, 9 May — Pakistan has carried out a test of the nuclear-capable Hatf-3 Ghaznavi ballistic missile, the Defence Ministry said on Thursday.

A Press release issued by the ministry said the missile has a range of 290 kilometres and is capable of carrying both conventional and “non-conventional” warheads.

The Hatf-3 is based on Chinese design and technology Pakistan got in the late 1990s within the parameters of the Missile Technology Cutoff Regime that banned export of missile technology with a range exceeding 300 kilometres.

The release did not specify from where the missile was launched but Hatf series missiles are often fired from Somiani near Karachi.

The missile test was watched by Chief of Army Staff Gen Raheel Sharif who was reported saying Pakistan has one of the best command and control systems for strategic weapons.

US faults both sides for collapse of Israeli-Palestinian talks

WASHINGTON, 9 May — Israeli and Palestinian leaders were unwilling to make the “gut-wrenching” compromises needed for peace, a top US official said on Thursday, faulting both sides for the collapse of talks last month.

Offering his first public account of US Secretary of State John Kerry’s failed, nine-month effort to strike a peace deal by 29 April, US special envoy Martin Indyk made clear there was blame on both sides, citing Israeli settlement-building as well as the Palestinians’ signing of 15 international conventions. However, Indyk suggested talks may resume eventually, citing the start-and-stop example of former US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger’s ultimately successful 1975 effort to disengage Egyptian and Israeli forces in the Sinai.

"What was true then is also possibly true today," Indyk told a conference hosted by the Washington Institute for Near East Policy think tank. "In the Middle East, it’s never over." The central issues to be resolved in the more than six-decade Israeli-Palestinian conflict include borders, security, the fate of Palestinian refugees and the status of Jerusalem.

"One problem that revealed itself in these past nine months is that the parties, although showing some flexibility in the negotiations, do not feel the pressing need to make the gut-wrenching compromises necessary to achieve peace," Indyk said. "It is easier for the Palestinians to sign conventions and appeal to international bodies in their supposed pursuit of justice and their rights, a process which by definition requires no compromise," he said. "It is easier for Israeli politicians to avoid tension in the governing coalition and for the Israeli people to maintain the current, comfortable status quo."

"The fact is, both the Israelis and Palestinians missed opportunities and took steps that undermined the process," Indyk said. On 24 April, Israel suspended the talks after Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas’s unexpected unity pact with the rival Islamist Hamas group, a step that appeared to be the final nail in the coffin of the US-sponsored negotiations.

A screen on board Malaysia Airlines Boeing 777-200ER flight MH318 shows the plane’s flight path as it cruises over the South China Sea from Kuala Lumpur towards Beijing, at approximately the same point when on 8 March flight MH370 lost contact with air traffic controllers, at approximately 1.30am on 17 March, 2014. — Reuters

US Secretary of State John Kerry says goodbye to US Ambassador to Israel Daniel Shapiro (L) as he leaves Tel Aviv on 1 April, 2014.—Reuters

Pro-Russian separatist leaders hold a news conference inside a regional government building in Donetsk, eastern Ukraine on 8 May, 2014.—Reuters

A screen on board Malaysia Airlines Boeing 777-200ER flight MH318 shows the plane’s flight path as it cruises over the South China Sea from Kuala Lumpur towards Beijing, at approximately the same point when on 8 March flight MH370 lost contact with air traffic controllers, at approximately 1.30am on 17 March, 2014.—Reuters

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Not too late to conserve Myanmar forests

By Aung Khin

Myanmar still possesses some of the most significant natural forests left in the Asia Pacific region, and is a host to an array of biodiversity vital to the livelihoods of local communities. Official data showed that forests are estimated to cover nearly 48 per cent of the country’s total land area in 2005, declining from 58 per cent in 1990.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations report revealed that Myanmar lost an average of 372,250 hectare or 0.95 percent of forest per year between 1990 and 2010.

Researchers point out that deforestation in the country is caused by illegal logging of teak-like trees by developers, for the establishment of rubber plantations, threatening the livelihoods of villagers.

Expansion of agricultural lands, fuelwood consumption, charcoal production and commercial logging also contribute in forest losses. Degradation of forests have an impact on wildlife, pest and disease management, forest fire prevention, controlling natural disasters caused by soil erosion.

Neighboring countries such as India, China and Thailand are the biggest buyers of Myanmar timber, which was estimated to a total of 2.6 million cubic metres in 2012, worth US$ 1.2 billion, according to customs data of importing countries collected by Washington DC-based non-profit organization Forest Trends.

To reduce deforestation and outflow of unprocessed timber, the Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry announced mid-last year that ban on raw timber export will come into effect on 1 April 2014.

Illegal logging will benefit only a handful of unethical businesspersons, but it is a great loss to the country, Natural forests cannot be established like other infrastructures within a short time span.

Law enforcement is needed to fight against illegal transport of logs across the borders, to ensure equitable, transparent and sustainable forest management, and to promote long-term development in border areas which will help to stop the loss of Myanmar forests.

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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.

Plans to upgrade roads between Myanmar, India discussed

Nay Pyi Taw, 9 May—Union Construction Minister U Kyaw Lwin met an Indian delegation led by Ms Sujata Mehta, Under Secretary of External Affairs of India in the development of road transport sector between Myanmar and India.

They also discussed plans to upgrade India-Myanmar-Thailand tripartite ASEAN Highway, Shwebo-Myitkyina-Sumprabum-Putoa road, Reed-Tiddim road and Buthidaung-Maungtaw road in cooperation with Public Works under the Ministry of Construction of Myanmar.—MNA

Yangon Region Chief Minister attends dinner hosted by Austrian guests

YANGON, 9 May—As Austria is an industrialized nation, Myanmar invites investment of Austria urges it to cooperate with Myanmar in economic development, Yangon Region Chief Minister U Myint Swe said at a dinner hosted by Ms Doris Bures, Minister for Transport, Innovation and Technology of Austria, at Kandawgyi Palace Hotel in Yangon on Wednesday.

Also attended at the dinner were region ministers, the UMECCI president, the Austrian Ambassador to Myanmar and officials.—MNA

For Peace, Beauty and Truth

The fair organized by Zillion Business Services Limited opens for three days from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Various brands of mobile phone handsets including popular products of Sony, Samsung, Lenovo, LG, Acer, Nokia, Huawei and HTC are available at the fair. Mobile service centres are attracting needs of the customers with discount prices, gifts and lucky draw.

According to the Director of ZBS, a total of 93 showrooms participate in the fair. Of them, more than 37 booths including MacCoffee, men’s and women’s fashion shops are now displaying their products.

“Zillion Business Services Limited has been organizing the fairs two times a year since 2012, aimed at increasing mobile markets in the country and fulfilling the needs of customers,” he added.

A 50-year old woman said that smartphone is better than PC due to its easy functions. She always chooses water-resistant brand, she added.

Khaing Thanda Lwin

By Kyi Mun

For, it is in giving that a human heart can purely rejoice; and it is in abandoning Self that a human mind can be fully liberated.

So, seek staunchly to be liberated from PRIDE, which comprises of:

- P for Passions which means strong sensual Desires
- R for Resentment which means Dislike
- I for I-centered Ego which is synonymous with Selfishness
- D for Delusion which is synonymous with Ignorance
- E for Emnity which is synonymous with Hatred

Then, organize the whole life in three stages:

- To be Stainless,
- To Let Go, and
- To See Through

Finally, a Purified Life will be realized full of:

- Vision
- Knowledge
- Wisdom
- Insight and
- Light

Ref: The Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi.

U Kyi Mun residing in Yangon is a consultant of NAING GROUP Capital CO., LTD.
Learning, thinking, planning and evaluating teachers

Myo Myint
by Mr. Tanaka

A
alightful
month in Myanmar for two reasons. The first is the
Thingyan celebrations held during the second and third
weeks of the month. The second is the announcement of the
exam results for all levels of basic education with the
 announcement of Grade 11 exam soon after the
Myanmar new year. For the
majority of students who passed the exam-
nation and their parents, it is a
time for jubilation. For the
students too it is a joyful
time as it signifies the com-
pletion of a year’s work of
learning, testing, disciplin-
ing themselves, doing
extracurricular work and
preparing the exam results.

Just as students look
forward to the start of the
new school year in the
beginning of June, so also do
students. While students de-
pend on their parents to pre-
pare them for the new
academic year, teachers need to
energize themselves for the
fresh batch of students.

Every student is a
unique individual and so
each batch of students

is different from other
batches. They come with
different strengths, weak-
nesses, traits, attitudes and
expectations. In the age
of Information and Communi-
cation Technolo-
gy, has become vital
due to its pervasiveness in
all aspects of daily life. It
plays a role as learning
and teaching tool in academic
institutions and as a produc-
tivity and quality enhanc-
ing mechanism in the
workplace. Due to ICT, never has
there been such interac-
tion among the peoples of
the world. Information shar-
ing and knowledge and skill
can be shared with others
with ease.

This will ensure that
they are learning irrele-
ant things. In addition,
thought should be given to
what other life skills which
students need that they can
build into their teaching
skill.

Making agriculture profitable
by Mr. Tanaka

It is well known that as
a county develops, the
share of agriculture falls. In
industrialized countries, its
share in GDP is seldom
more than 1-2%. While
this relative decline of ag-
riculture is inevitable, im-
poverishment of farming is
not. Yet. most of the
fast growing economies in
recent times have failed to
prevent the marginalization of
farmers. Can Myanmar
become an exception?
The problems of ag-
riculture in Myanmar are
many. But, two phenomena
deserve special attention.
The first is ‘landless farm-
ers’ (‘farm workers’ would be
a more apt description, fore-
they have neither land, nor

land tenancy rights) Experts
estimate that more than
50% of the ‘farmers’ are
landless. They are among
the poorest of poor in the
country. They may be
be able to find a daily wage of K2,500
instead of the K2,000
commonly paid on farms, they
are highly mobile. They
could also move to the cities
create new problems. The
second is the troubling per-
ception among farmers that
agriculture is not profitable.
This can curb investment

in agriculture and make the
gloomly outlook a self-
fulfilling prophecy.

Addressing landlessness
An obvious solution for
landlessness is land reform.
Large-scale land reform,
however, would entail huge
political, administrative,
and fiscal costs. When

Myanmar is about to enter a
new line of transition
(hence shifting structure and
fiscal costs). When

Myanmar’s per capita GDP will
likely increase from about
900 to K10,000 or more.
So, for agriculture to re-
main profitable in com-
parison with other sectors,
farm incomes must rise by
not just a factor of 2 or 3,
but by a factor of 10.
Two paths are open,
and should be pursued in
conjunction. One
is smallholder farming of
high-value crops, such as
flowers, vegetables, tea,

etc. Where as growing two
acres of land will find mov-
ing into radically different
farming, a daunting chal-
gene. Part of the problem
is that the cost of being the
‘first mover’ is heavy, as
he has to master the new tech-
nology, develop the market,
etc. But, if he succeeds,
others can readily copy his
moder, thereby denying
him a chance to earn extra
profits for taking the high
risk. This dynamic tends to
prevent anyone from under
inve-
ment in what is good for the
country.

It is the same challenge
Myanmar faces in promot-
ing export-oriented
farming. This is not a coinci-
dence, for manufacturing is
the core of the economic
system that brings about an
equitable and stable socie-
ty. Modern agriculture can
complement manufacturing
in this approach. If My-
nanmar succeeds in this
endeavor, it will chart a new
path that is more balanced
between the needs of rural
South Korea, and Taiwan
were able to find.

Mr. Tanaka is the
Head of the JICA Office in
Myanmar.
Nigeria’s president at WEF pledges to free kidnapped girls

NEW YORK, 10 May — Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan promised on Thursday to find more than 200 schoolgirls abducted by Islamist rebels, as the hostage crisis overshadowed his opening address to a conference designed to showcase investment opportunities in Africa’s biggest economy.

Speaking at the World Economic Forum (WEF) in the capital Abuja, Jonathan thanked foreign nations including the United States, Britain, France and China for their support in trying to rescue the girls, who were kidnapped from a secondary school on 14 April by Boko Haram.

He also praised delegates for coming despite the danger posed by the militants, then quickly moved on to a speech about creating jobs in African economies.

“As a nation we are facing attack from terrorists,” Jonathan told delegates. “I believe that the kidnap of these girls will be the beginning of the end of terrorism in Nigeria.”

Despite such promises, Jonathan admitted on national television this week that he had no idea where the girls were.

The kidnappings and numerous other attacks by Boko Haram militants have overshadowed Nigeria’s hosting of the forum, an annual gathering of the rich and powerful that replicates the one in Davos, Switzerland.

Security for the event was tight. Police and military trucks blocked off all roads leading to the Abuja Transcorp Hilton hotel, where the event was based. Soldiers patrolled the hotel’s grounds and the perimeter with automatic weapons. Parents of the kidnapped girls said troops had arrived in Chibok on a mission to find the girls.

“There are about three military helicopters hovering around our town and many soldiers have just arrived,” said Maima Chibok, who has a 16-year-old daughter with the rebels.

“They are moving and advancing toward the bush. We hope and they succeed in rescuing our daughters.”

France became the latest nation to offer help on Wednesday, saying it was boosting intelligence ties with Nigeria and sending security service agents there to tackle Boko Haram, the militant group which claimed the kidnapping.

In the latest big Islamist attack in Nigeria, 125 people were killed on Monday when gunmen rampaged through a town in the northeast near the Cameroon border.

UK deploys destroyer to track large Russian naval task force

LONDON, 9 May — Britain has deployed a destroyer to track an unusual large Russian naval task force transiting the English Channel, it said on Thursday and also noted a “resurgence” in Russian air activity close to its airspace.

“The Ministry of Defence said the decision to dispatch HMS Dragon, one of Britain’s newest and most sophisticated ships, to track the Russian naval force was routine and that the Russians had notified it of their transit plans in advance.”

What is different here is that a Russian task group of this size has not passed by our shores in some time,” Captain Rex Cox, HMS Dragon’s commanding officer, said in a statement.

Diplomatic relations between Russia and the West have been strained by the crisis in Ukraine, which has revived memories of the Cold War when the military forces of Western Europe were ranged against those of the Soviet Union.

The task force included Russia’s only aircraft carrier, the Admiral Kuznetsov, the Ministry of Defence said, as well as a nuclear-powered battle cruiser, a landing support ship, some tankers and a tug.

A Russian naval spokesman said last month that the Kuznetsov had completed a deployment in the Mediterranean and was on its way back to its base of Severomorsk in north-west Russia.——Reuters

Clashes flare after Venezuela student camps raided, one dead

CARACAS, 9 May — Venezuelan troops on Thursday rounded up hundreds of youth activists and dismantled camps set up to protest against President Nicolas Maduro, and a policeman was shot dead in the demonstrations and clashes that ensued around Caracas.

Pre-dawn raids by National Guard troops broke up four tent camps maintained by student activists in the capital of the OPEC member nation during three months of protests.

After the raids, hundreds of demonstrators and residents poured onto the streets, setting up barricades, a common tactic during three months of unrest. The protests had waned in recent weeks even as sporadic clashes continued. Masked youths hurled stones and petrol bombs, while police fired tear gas in upmarket east Caracas.

One policeman died of bullet wounds, among five people injured, authorities said. Witnesses said shots were fired from buildings down into the streets.

“A sniper killed the policeman while he was cleaning debris left by these violent, murderous protesters,” a somber Maduro said during an address to the nation. “He was viciously killed.”

Troops cleared away the remnants of the camps, where students from all over the country had lived in tents, chanting and strumming guitars beneath banners with anti-government slogans, such as “Maduro, assassin.”

“These arrests are irresponsible because this is a peaceful protest and we are not trying to topple the government,” said Jose Manuel Perez, 22, a student leader. “Mr. President, think about what you’re doing. We demand respect for the students.”

The government said soldiers arrested 243 people in camps it said were bases for staging violent protests. Officials displayed items taken including mortars and Molotov cocktails.——Reuters

Assad’s forces take Homs, ‘capital of Syrian revolt’

HOMS, (Syria) 9 May — Syrian forces took full control on Thursday over Homs, a city once associated with scenes of joyous pro-democracy crowds but now famed for images of ruin that epitomize the brutality of Syria’s civil war.

After holding the Old City of Homs for nearly two years, around 1,200 rebel fighters and trapped civilians boarded buses which took them out of the “capital of the revolution” in convoys on Wednesday and Thursday, activists said.

They were driven to rebel-held territory outside the city under a deal agreed between the insurgents and forces loyal to President Bashar al-Assad.

“Homs has been completely cleansed of armed terrorist groups,” state television said.

Homs provincial governor Talal Barazi told Reuters earlier on Thursday that Homs would be “declared a secure city” and reconstruction would commence after the evacuation.

Although the area had been cleared of insurgents, the army is not expected to move into the Old City until Friday when it will be checked for explosives.

Rebels smiled to cameras as they left, but the fall of Syria’s third largest city to government forces is a major blow to the opposition and a boost for Assad weeks before his likely re-election.

“Old Homs has been destroyed by three years of devastation,” Jonathan told delegates.
No lie: dinosaur dubbed ‘Pinocchio rex’ would eat you alive

WASHINGTON, 9 May— Its nickname may sound funny — “Pinocchio rex” — but it probably would not have been wise to laugh at this strange, long-nosed cousin of the famous meat-eating dinosaur T. rex as it easily could have eaten you alive.

Scientists on Wednesday identified a new member of Tyrannosaurus rex’s family, a beast named Qianzhousaurus sinensis that was up to 30 feet (9 meters) long and stalked China at the very end of the age of dinosaurs.

It differs in some significant ways from other members of the carnivorous group of dinosaurs known as tyrannosaurs, especially with a skull far more elongated than that of T. rex.

“It’s a new breed of tyrannosaur, with a long snout and lots of horns on its skull, very different from the short-nouted, robust, muscular skulls of T. rex. So it tells us that tyrannosaurs were more ecologically variable than we previously thought,” said paleontologist Steve Brusatte of the University of Edinburgh in Scotland, one of the researchers.

Its elongated snout prompted researchers to nickname it “Pinocchio rex,” inspired by the wood- en puppet who dreamed of being a real boy but whose nose grew when he told a lie.

“The long snout made us think of Pinocchio and his long nose, so Pinocchio rex seemed like a cheeky nickname,” Brusatte said.

Two other tyrannosaur fossils with long snouts have been found previously in Mongolia but both specimens were juveniles. Brusatte said it had been unclear whether those two were dinosaur kiddies with juvenile features like a long snout that would disappear in adulthood.

“The new fossil solves this debate because it is twice the size of the two Mongolian specimens and much more mature, and still has the long snout and weird horns. So these were not juvenile features, but characteristic features of this unusual subgroup of long-snouted tyrannosaurs,” Brusatte said. Quanzhousaurus lived about 66 million years ago, not long before an asteroid believed to have been 6 miles (10 km) in hit Earth and wiped out the dinosaurs and many other creatures.

“It would have been one of the last surviving dinosaurs and this species may have even witnessed the asteroid impact,” said Brusatte, whose study appears in the journal Nature Communications.

Qianzhousaurus was smaller than T. rex, which lived at the same time in North America, measured about 40 feet (12 meters) long and was the largest known land predator ever. Even though it still had the “toothy grin” of T. rex, the unique snout of Quanzhouaurus and its more slender build suggested it favored different types of prey than “conventional” tyrannosaurs, the researchers said.

“It was still a big boy,” Brusatte said. “And it still had a long mouthful of sharp teeth. You wouldn’t want to run into it. It is something of a runt compared to T. rex, but T. rex was the baddest predator of all time.”

The beautifully preserved fossil was found by workers at a construction site in Jiangxi Province in southern China.

Snapchat settles with FTC, faces 20 years privacy oversight

SAN FRANCISCO, 9 May — Messaging startup Snapchat has settled charges with US regulators accusing it of deceiving consumers by promising that photos sent on its service disappeared forever after a certain period of time.

Under the terms of the settlement, Snapchat’s privacy practices will be monitored by an independent professional for the next 20 years.

“If a company markets privacy and security as key selling points in pitching its service to consumers, it is critical that it keep those promises,” Federal Trade Commission Chairwoman Edith Ramirez said in a statement. According to the FTC, photos sent on Snapchat could, in fact, be saved by recipients using several methods.

The FTC also said Snapchat collected certain personal information about its users without their consent and failed to take proper security measures, resulting in a breach in which hackers compiled a database of 4.6 million Snapchat user names and phone numbers.

In a post on its official blog on Thursday, Snapchat acknowledged that it had made mistakes, which it attributed to being a young company focused on developing its product.

“While we were focused on building, some things didn’t get the attention they could have. One of those was being more precise with how we communicated with the Snapchat community,” the company said.

Snapchat is among a new crop of popular mobile apps that competes with established Internet services such as Twitter Inc and Facebook Inc. According to media reports last year, Snapchat turned down a $3 billion acquisition offer from Facebook.

The settlement with the FTC is subject to a 30-day public comment period, after which the commission will decide whether to make the consent decree final.

New simulation created to study universe evolution

LONDON, 9 May — Scientists created a new simulation to study the evolution of the universe, which is more complete than previous simulations and could reproduce features such as galaxy distribution and composition, according to a paper published in the reputed journal Nature on Thursday.

Previous simulations have broadly reproduced the “cosmic web” of galaxies that is seen in the universe, but failed to create mixed populations of galaxies or predict gas and metal content. The new model correctly predicts characteristics described in observational studies, and represents a considerable step forward in modeling galaxy formation, researchers said.

American scientists from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) created the simulation, together with their British and German partners. The new simulation starts 12 million years after the Big Bang and traces 13 billion years of cosmic evolution.—Xinhua
BEIJING, 9 May — Chinese Premier Li Keqiang unveiled extra aid for Africa totalling at least $12 billion on Monday, and offered to share advance technology with the continent to help with development of high-speed rail state media reported.

Li pledged the additional funding in a speech at the Organization of African Union headquarters in the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa.

China will increase credit lines to Africa by $10 billion and will boost the China-Africa Development Fund by $2 billion, bringing it to a total of $5 billion, Li said, according to the official Xinhua news agency. He provided no details of the timeframe.

Li “depicted a dream that all African capitals are connected with high-speed rail, so as to boost pan-African communication and development,” the report said.

As China has advanced technologies in this area, Li said China was ready to work with Africa “to make this dream come true”.

China will offer $10 million in aid for wildlife protection. Li added, for a part of the world where the Chinese appetite for ivory and rhino horns have driven some species to the brink of extinction.

It is Li’s first visit to Africa since he became premier last year, and follows on from a trip to the continent by President Xi Jinping in March 2013, when he renewed an offer of $20 billion in loans to Africa between 2013 and 2015.

Li said that the new $10 billion credit line would be on top of the existing $20 billion already offered, the China News Service reported.

Chinese officials said last week that Li’s trip, which also includes visits to oil-rich Nigeria and Angola, would not simply be for energy deals and Beijing will be seeking to help boost African living standards.

Reuters

China to extend over $12 bln in aid to Africa

DOKO, (Congo), 9 May — The open pit of the giant Kibali mine in northeastern Democratic Republic of Congo, a yawning beige crater punched in a dense forest, could turn a part of the world’s poorest countries into an economic powerhouse.

Kibali represents Congo’s return to the world stage as a producer and exporter of gold. The $2.5 billion joint venture between Randgold, AngloGold Ashanti and state miner Sokimo poured its first gold in September and could eventually rank among the world’s biggest.

Its scale is already evident. The mines’ sides descend in a series of deep shelves, making trucks at the base, which each carry 100 tonnes of rock to the surface to be processed, appear as small as insects.

Randgold Resources CEO Mark Bristow has great hopes that Kibali, and a neighbouring agri-business project sponsored by the mine, can do for Orientale Province what copper and cobalt have done for the southsuectd during the Katanga, on which central government relies for much of its income.

Now industrial mining operations are moving back to regions that have been the preserve of artisanal miners since the collapse of Congo’s state-run mining operations in the 1990s, at the end of dictator Mobutu Sese Seko’s 31-year rule.

“It’s a dream of mine that gold mining and agribusiness in Orientale will beat Katanga as a source of economic welfare,” Bristow told a ceremony to officially open Kibali last week.

Reuters

Randgold hopes giant Kibali mine will transform northeast Congo

BAGHDAD, 9 May — A total of 39 people were killed and 41 others wounded in separate violent incidents, including a security operation, across Iraq on Thursday, police said.

In northern Iraq, police carried out an offensive targeting insurgent groups in the northern Mosul, some 400 km north of the Iraqi capital of Baghdad, killing 17 gunmen believed to be linked to the infamous blacklist- ed group the Islamic State of Iraq and Levant (ISIL), a local police source told Xinhua on condition of anonymity.

Police also arrested eight suspects during the operation, along with seizing a cache of weapons and explosives, the source said.

In a separate incident, the body of a member of a government-backed Sahwa paramilitary group, who was kidnapped by gunmen on Wednesday from the city of Shirqat, was found by his family in a village outside the city, a local police source said.

Three family members of the kidnap victim were killed when they tried to recover the body, apparently booby-trapped. The kidnappers notified the family of the body’s location, the source said.

In Baghdad, three bombs went off near a popu lar market in the northern Sabah Abkar district, leaving one civilian dead and ten others wounded, a police source told Xinhua.

In Anbar Province, a fierce clash erupted in the early morning hours in eastern part of the militant-seized city of Fallujah, some 50 km west of Baghdad, between an army force and gunmen, believed to be linked to ISIL, leaving seven gunmen dead and five others wounded, a provincial police source told Xinhua on condition of anonymity.

BAGHDAD, 9 May — Egypt’s Sisi lowers expectations for change.

CARIO, 9 May — Egyptians should not expect instant democracy or rapid reform as they poised to be elected president later this month.

The former army chief stepped squarely into the public eye this week with a lengthy televised interview and other public remarks. His words seem carefully calibrated to appeal to Egyptians’ hunger for stability and to draw a line under the era of rapid transformation since the 2011 revolt that toppled autocrat Hosni Mubarak.

It is wrong to expect Egypt to turn into a Western-style democracy overnight, he said in his campaign site on Facebook.

“We always turn to the image of stable democracies in states that preceded us and compare them with Egypt,” said Sisi. “Applying the models of Western democracies in the case of Egypt does an injustice to Egyptians. Egyptian society still faces time before it enjoys true democracy as it should be.”

Sisi’s interviews have revealed the gruff personality that his supporters say shows that he is a decisive autocrat, his opponents say are signs of a new autocrat in waiting.

In an interview with two Egyptian television channels, CBC and ONTV, Sisi avoided getting into specific topics by saying little, and told off the pro-army anchors when they interrupted him.

He also hinted at a cautious approach to economic reforms, saying the state should not move too quickly to dismantle the subsidies for fuel and food that Western backers say are unsustainable and have ruined public finances.

Reuters

Egypt’s Sisi lowers expectations for change

Tehran, 9 May — Iran not accept any limitations on its crude oil exports by foreigners, Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh said here on Thursday. “Iran will not accept any numbers and figures for the volume of its oil exports Namdar Zanganeh said here on Thursday. “Iran will not accept any limitations and figures for the volume of its oil exports.”

Zanganeh told reporters on the sidelines of an international exhibition related to oil, gas and petrochemicals, Iran itself will determine the amount of its crude oil exports, he said. Over the past three months, Iran’s crude oil exports have reached 1.2 million barrels per day, some 200,000 barrels per day beyond what was stipulated in an interim nuclear agreement signed last November. Under the nuclear deal with the US, Britain, France, China, Russia and Germany, Iran agreed to halt part of its controversial nuclear program in exchange for an easing of sanctions that had crippled its economy.

Xinhua

Iran not accept limits on crude oil exports

The KCD open pit gold mine at the Kibali mining site in northeast Democratic Republic of Congo, on 1 May, 2014. — REUTERS

39 killed, 41 wounded in another bloody day in Iraq

Iran's Sisi lowers expectations for change

Egypt’s Sisi lowers expectations for change
Head-on collision kills eight in Bangladesh

DHAKA, 9 May—At least eight people were killed as two speeding buses had a head-on collision on a highway at Bangladeshi southwestern Rajbari District on early Friday, according to a senior police officer.

Eight persons died on the spot while 20 to 25 others were injured, said Ahsan Habib, assistant superintendent of police in Rajbari district, some 118 km away from capital Dhaka.

The accident occurred at about 4:00 am local time, Habib said, adding the reason of the accident was not known yet.

He said all the injured were rushed to nearby hospitals for treatment.

Bangladesh has one of the highest fatality rates for road accidents in the world due mainly to shoddy highways, poorly maintained vehicles, violation of traffic rules by inept drivers and lack of monitoring of the traffic department.

According to latest study of Accident Research Institute of Bangladesh University of Engineering Technology, some 2,000 to 3,000 people are killed in road accidents in Bangladesh every year, of which about 75 percent fatalities occur in rural areas.

Two killed, 40 injured following 4.3 magnitude earthquake in south Pakistan

ISLAMABAD, 9 May—At least two people were killed and 40 others injured when an earthquake hit Pakistan’s southern Nawabshah District, local Urdu TV channel Dunya reported. The earthquake measured 4.3 at Richter scale, according to the US Geological Survey, which hit the country in the wee hours of Friday morning.

Vietnam vows to deepen comprehensive partnership with US

HANOI, 9 May—Vietnam has always attached importance to deepening the comprehensive partnership with the United States, said Vietnamese Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Phạm Bình Minh.

Minh made the remarks when he met with US Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia and Pacific Affairs Daniel Russel in Vietnam’s capital Hanoi on Thursday.

Minh urged the US to continue to open market, limit trade barriers, especially supervision program applied by the US Department of Agriculture on Vietnamese pangasius (tra fish).

Minh also urged the US to recognize Vietnam’s market economy status and complete negotiation on the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) with flexibility and differential treatment as committed.—Xinhua
Actress Jolie takes plight of kidnapped Nigerian girls to red carpet

LONDON, 9 May — Hollywood actress Angelina Jolie, in London to promote her new film “Maleficent,” used the red carpet event on Thursday to renew her plea for the safe return of more than 200 Nigerian school girls kidnapped by Islamist rebels.

The 38-year-old actress, who serves as a United Nations special envoy for refugees, said she had “heart-warming” to hear reporters’ questions and people’s concern for the abducted girls at a movie event.

“The important thing though is to understand that this happens because these men think they can get away with this and they can do this,” Jolie told reporters.

“We have to start arresting people for this, we have to start making them to justice and we have to start making it an absolute crime that puts fear in these men so that they think twice about this kind of action.”

People around the world have been showing their support by taking part in protests and joining online campaigns calling for the rescue of the girls taken from a secondary school by extremist group Boko Haram on 14 April.

A young Coppola plumbs James Franco’s teenage tales in ‘Palo Alto’


“Palo Alto” is a film about the lives of high school students in a affluent San Francisco suburb, and how their lives are filled with drinking, partying and promiscuity.

“Director Gia Coppola attends the premiere of the film “Palo Alto” in Los Angeles in this file photo. REUTERS”


“Palo Alto” is a film about the lives of high school students in a affluent San Francisco suburb, and how their lives are filled with drinking, partying and promiscuity.

“Even though I was in a really good school and I had friends and people thought I was cute, I still thought I was a really bad girl,” Coppola said. “The dialogue felt real, and I haven’t seen anything like that in a while that really articulated what it’s like to be young today, even though his book took place in the ’90s.”

Coppola, 27, adapted Franco’s book “Palo Alto,” a collection of short stories exploring suburban ennui in his California hometown, into a film starring young talent, led by Emma Roberts and “Glee” alum Kevin McHale, out in US theaters on Friday.

The filmmaker, the daughter of Gian-Carlo Coppola, who died before she was born, and niece of director and writer Sofia Coppola, began working on the film five years ago after graduating from college with a photography degree. She wanted to tackle a subject that she could relate to — the plight of the American teen.

“When I read (Franco’s) book, I just really fell in love with it,” Coppola said. “The dialogue felt real, and I haven’t seen anything like that in a while that really articulated what it’s like to be young today, even though his book took place in the ’90s.”

Coppola’s family has a history of exploring coming-of-age stories, from her grandfather’s 1983 films “The Outsiders” and “Rumble Fish” to her aunt’s 1999 feature film debut with “The Virgin Suicides,” all of which Coppola said she referenced during her own debut process.

The film features vivid cinematography influenced by the director’s photography training, and follows four characters who Coppola pulled together from the stories of Franco, who also appears in the film.

April, played by Roberts, is introverted and mysterious, the object of desire for the film’s central male character, James Franco. She also appears in the film.

Director Gia Coppola attends the premiere of the film “Palo Alto” in Los Angeles in this file photo. REUTERS

US first lady Michelle Obama and Pakistani schoolgirl and human rights activist Malala Yousafzai are among those backing an online campaign and have posted photos of themselves holding a sign reading “BringBackOurGirls.” Jolie also said she was increasingly concerned about for people in Ukraine, where pro-Moscow separatists have ignored a public call by Russian President Vladimir Putin to postpone a referendum on self-rule in eastern Ukraine, declaring they would go ahead on Sunday with a vote that could lead to war. “I can’t imagine anybody from that region isn’t just terrified that the worst is yet to come,” she said.

Jolie, dressed in a long black gown and joined by her fiancé Brad Pitt, led the stars of Walt Disney’s “Maleficent” at the premiere at London’s Kensington Palace. Disney’s modern reimagining of the Sleeping Beauty fairytale is due out in theaters around the world at the end of the month.”

Reuters
S African ruling party condemns killing of member during election day

CAPE TOWN, 9 May — The ruling African National Congress (ANC) on Thursday condemned the killing of an ANC member during the election day.

The victim was allegedly killed by an opposition party member outside a voting station in KwaDukuza, KwaZulu-Natal Province Wednesday evening.

This was the second reported killing during the elections which the government said were “successful, peaceful and smooth running.”

Earlier, acting Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) CEO Phumla Williams said two deaths outside polling stations were recorded on Wednesday but did not provide further details.

ANC national spokesperson Jackson Mthembu said the ANC member was allegedly killed while sitting at the ANC desk outside a voting station.

Brazilian veteran diplomat named deputy head of UN Guinea-Bissau office

UNITED NATIONS, 9 May— UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on Thursday appointed Marco Carmignani of Brazil as his deputy special representative with him into the capital.

With more than two decades of service with the United Nations, Carmignani brings with him a wealth of political and leadership experience, the UN News Centre said in a release. For the past seven years, he served in peacekeeping and political missions in the Middle East as senior advisor and chief of staff, it said. Prior to that, he held a number of senior positions at the UN Secretariat in New York and in Africa, including with the UN Operation in Burundi.

Residents purchase bottled drinkable water at a supermarket in Jingjiang City, east China’s Jiangsu Province, on 9 May, 2014.— Xinhua

E China city suspends water supply over suspected pollution

NANNING, 9 May — Water supply in Jingjiang City in east China’s Jiangsu Province was suspended on Friday after ab-
normal water quality was found in the Yangtze River water source, according to local authorities.

The city’s water company detected a strange odor in the river water around 10 am, said a state-
m ent posted by the city’s official account on microblogging site Sina Weibo.

The government in-
tiated an emergency re-
ponse plan and the wa-
ter supply is expected to resume before 5 pm as backup supply is ready to be delivered, said the state-
m ent. Samples of the water have been sent for testing, according to a spokesman with the city government.

A string of water pol-
ution incidents has aroused serious concern across Chi-

China. The latest occurred last month in Lanzhou, capital city of northwest China’s Gansu Province, when ex-
cessive levels of benzene were detected in the city’s tap water.

Nadal breezes through on good day for women’s seeds in Madrid

MADRID, 9 May— Top seed and home favourite Rafael Nadal will face To-
mas Berdych in the quar-
ter-finals of the Madrid Open Tennis Tournament after both won their re-
spective last 16 matches on Thursday. Nadal swept past Finland’s Jarkko Niem-
men 6-1, 6-4, while num-
ber 6 seed Berdych has to fight back from a set down before defeating Bulgari-
an number 12 seed Grigor Dimitrov 3-6, 6-3, 6-2.

The draw continues to open up for Nadal after the withdrawals of Roger Federer and Novak Djok-
ovic and the defeat of num-
ber three seed Stanislas Wawrinka earlier in the week. Thursday saw num-
ber 7 seed Andy Murray’s disappointing season con-

continue as he lost to Colombi-
an qualifier, Santiago Giral-
do 6-3, 6-2, while number
8 seed Milos Raonic lost a tight game to Nei Nishikori 7-6 (7-5), 7-6 (7-5).

The Japanese player won recently in Barcelona and has carried that form with him into the capital.

While the top seeds have struggled in the men’s competition, the favourites in the women’s tourna-
ment have all made pro-
gress, although Li Na had to recover from a set down against American Sloane Stephens before winning 2-6, 6-3, 6-2. The num-
ber 2 seed was way below her best, unconvincing on her serve and hit 46 un-
forced errors on her way to victory and she knows she will have to improve in order to beat Maria Sharapova on Thursday. Shara-
pova, who is seeded 8 in Madrid this year, had a straight set, 6-4, 6-3 win over Australian, Samantha Stosur. Serena Williams beat Spaniard Carla Su-
arez, 6-2, 6-3, while Petra Kvitkova also progressed 6-4, 6-3 against Lucie Safarova and number 3 seed Agnieszka Radwanska swept past Robert Vinci 6-1, 6-1 in less than an hour.—Xinhua

Serena Williams of the United States serves to Spain’s Carla Suarez Navarro during the women’s singles third round at the Madrid Open tennis tournament in Madrid, capital of Spain, on 8 May, 2014. Williams won 2-0.— Xinhua

Rafael Nadal of Spain returns the ball to Jarkko Nieminen of Finland during their match at the Madrid Open tennis tournament on 8 May, 2014. — REUTERS
Mourinho fined over referee comments after key defeat

LONDON, 9 May — Chelsea manager José Mourinho has been fined 10,000 pounds after sarcastically praising the match referee and English referees’ chief following a key Premier League defeat last month, the FA said on Thursday.

The Londoners lost 2-1 at home to a struggling Sunderland side, which ended Mourinho’s 77-game unbeaten league record at Stamford Bridge and hit their title bid, with Manchester City now poised to wrap up the championship this weekend.

“I want to congratulate again (referee) Mike Dean. I think his performance was unbelievable,” Mourinho told reporters after a controversial Sunderland penalty, which led to his assistant Rui Faria being sent to the stands after a pitchside rant.

“And... congratulations also to Mike Riley, the referees’ boss. What they are doing through the whole season is fantastic, especially in the last couple of months, and in teams involved in the title race. Absolutely fantastic,” Mourinho added.

Mourinho had denied the £2,000 charge but the FA said in a statement on Thursday that an independent commission had ruled that his comments had brought the game into disrepute and the charge for improper conduct was found proven.

Faria has already been handed a six-match stadium ban and a 30,000 pounds fine after admitting misconduct charges.

In a separate case involving another defeat for Chelsea in the title run-in, the often outspoken Mourinho lost his appeal against a decision to fine him 8,000 pounds in relation to his actions after Chelsea’s 1-0 loss at Aston Villa in March.

The Portuguese coach entered the field of play and approached the referee at the end of the game and the FA panel on Thursday upheld a ruling of improper conduct.

Poyet relaxed after masterminding Sunderland’s great escape

LONDON, 9 May — Having secured Sunderland’s Premier League status that appeared doomed at the turn of the year, manager Gus Poyet says he can finally afford to relax for the first time in seven months.

The Wearside-born became second team after West Bromwich Albion in 2004-05 to avoid dropping into the second-tier Championship after being bottom at Christmas, Poyet having reinvigorated a lofted squad that seemed resigned to its fate.

Wednesday’s 2-0 win over West Brom, their fourth consecutive victory, earned the point they needed to retain top flight status ahead of their final match at home to Swansea City on Sunday.

“It’s an incredible day, I’m going to be able to go home and relax for the first time in seven months, which is very special,” the Uruguayan told the club website (www.safc.com).

“We’ve made this incredible escape and it’s going to be remembered for a long time.” A little over a month ago the Black Cats looked odds-on for relegation, having given up a 1-0 lead at Tottenham Hotspur to meekly fall to a 5-1 loss which saw them seven points off safety, albeit with two matches in hand on their cellar-dweller rivals.

The defeat left the demonstrative Poyet claiming they would need a miracle if they wanted to move out of the bottom three.

Divine inspiration was in short supply next time out when a Wes Brown own goal saw them lose their fifth straight match, 1-0 at home to Everton, before two goals to Connor Wickham earned a point at Manchester City, likely to be crowned champions on Sunday.

Kaymer sets Players pace with record equalling 63

Ponte Vedra Beach (Florida), 9 May — Martin Kaymer birdied his last four holes to equal the tournament record and seize a two-shot lead in Thursday’s opening round of the Players Championship as several other big names lined up in pursuit.

On an ideal day for low scoring at the TPC Sawgrass Stadium Course, which has been softened by recent rain, Germany’s Kaymer rode home in a sizzling seven-under-par 65 to complete a nine-under-63.

His back nine, holes one to nine, set a new low for the tournament while his 63 matched the record scores previously posted at the Players Championship by Fred Couples (1992), Greg Norman (1994) and Roberto Castro (2013).

“I didn’t make many mistakes today, which was nice,” Kaymer told reporters after a flawless nine-birdie display in the PGA Tour’s flagship event which is widely regarded as the unofficial fifth major.

“I missed only one fairway, which was on 16. So overall my ball-striking was very good.

Fortunately I could take advantage of some puts on my back nine, on the front, on the golf course. It was just a very, very, very good round of golf,” Kaymer said.

Kaymer sank a 16-footer at the par-three eighth, then got up and down from a greenside bunker at the par-five ninth to end the day two strokes in front of American Russell Henley, who had set the clubhouse lead with a sparkling 65 in the morning. South Korea’s Bae Sang-moon opened with a 66 while US Open champion Justin Rose, England’s former world number one Lee Westwood and 2008 Players champion Sergio Garcia of Spain were among a large group on 67.

Northern Ireland’s Rory McIlroy got to five under after 11 holes at a hot and sunny morning at the TPC Sawgrass but then struggled coming home on the way to an opening 70.

“I played well pretty much the whole way around, I just let a couple of shots get away from me at the end,” McIlroy said.

“So I’ll come out tomorrow and try and attack again, because I feel like you can go low on this golf course this week. It’s soft, the greens are receptive.”

Former world number one Kaymer, who landed his only major title at the 2010 PGA Championship, birdied the 11th and 15th to reach the turn in two-under 34. He continued to build momentum, picking up further shots at the first, second, fourth, sixth, seventh, eighth and ninth to shoot the first ever 29 over nine holes at the TPC Sawgrass.

“If you strike it very well, you gain confidence hole after hole, and then you feel like you can become maybe a little bit more aggressive,” said the 29-year-old German, a 10-times winner on the European Tour.

“It’s nice to make some history. No one shot 29 on that golf course before and I did it today. But it’s only the first round of a long, long tournament.”

Henley, a double winner on the PGA Tour who is known for his steaky putting, piled up six birdies after the turn to set the early pace at the TPC Sawgrass.

“I got off to a good start and I felt really comfortable on the greens today,” said the 25-year-old from Georgia after mixing nine birdies with a double-bogey at the par-four seventh.

Mercedes to blow their own trumpet in testing

BARCELONA, 9 May — Formula One packsetters Mercedes will try out a new ‘megaphone’ style exhaust in testing next week as the sport seeks ways of raising noise levels and placating fans angered by the new quieter V6 engines.

The team said on their Twitter feed that the ‘prototype solution’ to boost tailpipe noise would be put on the car at a scheduled test in Barcelona after Sunday’s Spanish Grand Prix, the fifth race of the year.

Reports had earlier suggested they could do so in Friday practice but a spokesman said that would not happen.

German media quoted Mercedes motorsport boss Toto Wolff earlier in the week as saying that possible solutions ranged from the very complex to putting a “simple megaphone at the back.”

Formula One has ditched the raucous, screaming 2.4 liter V8 engines with their twin exhausts this season in favour of turbocharged 1.6 liter V6 power units with energy recovery systems and a single tailpipe.

Critics panned the softer sound at the season-opening Australian Grand Prix with promotors complaining and the sport’s commercial supremo Bernie Ecclestone saying the noise needed to be louder.

Mercedes Formula One driver Lewis Hamilton of Britain drives to a pit stop during the Chinese F1 Grand Prix at the Shanghai International Circuit on 20 April, 2014. — Reuters