UPWC, NCCT extend meeting on drafting text for ceasefire until Friday

By Ye Myint

The Union Peace-Making Work Committee-UPWC and Nationwide Ceasefire Co-ordination Team-NCCT on Thursday announced to extend their two-day meeting for another day until Friday to conclude discussions on the two remaining chapters of a single text document for a nationwide ceasefire, with officials saying that discussions on Thursday ended with Chapter 5.

During a media briefing, Pado Saw Kwe Htoo Win who leads the NCCT side, and U Hla Maung Shwe of the Myanamar Peace Centre said the meetings are taking place with momentum and that they had “full and frank exchange of views” for reaching an agreement on the proposed points of the two sides.

But some points needed further approval and will be brought to leaders from both sides, the NCCT leader voiced. U Hla Maung Shwe also said the document might be finalized at the next meeting as only a second draft is expected to be drawn at Friday’s meeting.

While responding to a question about whether Section 17 (1) of the Unlawful Association Act has been discussed, Pado Saw Kwe Htoo Win, Secretary-General of KNU, said talks on the issue will be taken into consideration after reaching an agreement on the document.

Responding to a question about a SNLD member who has been charged under Section 17 (1), U Hla Maung Shwe said Union Minister U Aung Min, UPWC chairman, is also dealing with that case.

During the meetings on Wednesday and Thursday, no discussion on the Commander-in-Chief’s six-point principles on the ongoing peace process was made, with discussion focusing on the draft, officials said.

The definition of the word “Revolution” will be discussed at the next meeting, with the time and place to be decided at Friday’s meeting, said Pado Saw Kwe Htoo Win.

Before the end of the joint briefing, U Hla Maung Shwe informed the media that both sides are striving for sooner completion of the single text document, expressing his belief that it could be concluded at the next meeting.

Regarding the formation of a 10-member conflict mediation team, the Kachin State government was waiting for the arrival of KIO officials, with U Hla Maung Shwe saying that they had not arrived by Thursday evening.

During the media briefing, PNLO’s Col Khun Okkar, one of the members of NCCT, said representatives from the Armed Forces had been quick to react in attempting to facilitate the meeting by making calls to their boss when something needed urgent approval.

Regarding some points discussed at today’s meeting, he briefed the media that NCCT raised the question on the inclusion of the Three Main National Causes in the document and definition of these three points.

Since Wednesday, UPWC and NCCT have been holding talks on a second draft single text document for a nationwide ceasefire at Myanmar Peace Centre in Yangon.

Peatlands in Inlay Lake basin facing threats from modern agriculture

YANGON, May 22—Peatlands in the Inlay Lake basin are facing a number of threats including conversion for agriculture, clearance and burning of vegetation, domestic waste and agrochemicals, according to the Forest Resource Environment Development and Conservation Association (FREDA).

A joint Myanmar-international team of peatland specialists discovered a total of 9,021 hectares of peatland near Inlay Lake in northeast Myanmar during surveys conducted between 15-27 February, 2014. The 9,021 hectares (ha) of peatlands represent the largest single area identified during 18 months of surveys in different parts of Myanmar. In addition, 1,599 ha of peatlands were found in the nearby Heho Basin where peatlands are all cultivated and covered with soil eroded from nearby hills.

Culturability of vegetables in natural peatland area on the edge of Inle Lake.

(YREDA)

The peatlands of Inlay Lake play a key role in stabilizing water levels and improving the water quality of the lake. The floating peatlands are also integral to the culture and economy of the local Intha Community who have cultivated them for centuries in floating gardens for hundreds of years. Although the floating vegetation around Inlay Lake has been known for years, it was not recognized that these were part of a much larger peatland system along the margins of the lake.

The peatlands at Inlay are home to a range of rare and threatened species including the Eastern Sarus Crane, Ferruginous Duck and a number of endemic fish species. During the survey freshwater crabs were observed breeding in burrows on the calcareous mound spring at Taung Bo Gyi Village in the northwest corner of the Inle Lake wetland area very rare and has been protected by the local community who do not allow any cultivation on it — to maintain its function to provide drinking water supply to part of the village and nearby monastery, according to Faizal Parish, Director of Director of the Global Environment Centre.

Cultivation of vegetables in natural peatland area on the edge of Inle Lake.
Work committees prepare for parliamentary session

Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann delivers speech at coordination meeting of The Central Committee for Organizing Parliamentary Sessions for 2014 and its work committees.—MNA

Minister for National Planning and Economic Development Dr Kan Zaw made a speech at the opening ceremony of rural, urban and regional planning course (1/2014).—MNA

In his speech, Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann said parliament has entered its third year and fifth months, with nine regular sessions, noting that there will be two more sessions this year and three in the following year. He called for open and frank discussions on the strengths and weaknesses of the previous sessions in order for the tenth session to turn out productive. Nearly 150 laws have been amended, repealed and enacted, with about 50 now under discussion at Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, Upper House and Lower House, he stated.

Thura U Shwe Mann called on ministries and work committees to help parliament promptly pass laws, stressing that concerted efforts are to be made by all sides involved in the legislative process.

Planning course opens in Nay Pyi Taw

Union Minister Dr Kan Zaw makes a speech at opening ceremony of rural, urban and regional planning course (1/2014).—MNA

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Contract on waste water treatment technical cooperation signed

YANGON, 22 May—Minister for National Planning and Economic Development Dr Kan Zaw made a speech at the opening ceremony of rural, urban and regional planning course (1/2014) in Nay Pyi Taw this morning.

With the aim of developing rural and urban planning, the Ministry for National Planning and Economic Development is conducting courses on planning at rural, urban and regional levels.

A total of 90 officials are taking the one-week course.—MNA

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MOAI, Mitsui Co., of Japan discuss to make agricultural investment in Myanmar

NAY PYI TAW, 22 May—The Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation-MOAI and the Mitsui Company of Japan on Thursday was held to discuss construction of modern rice mills, production of advanced agricultural products and investment in rice production at the Ministry in Nay Pyi Taw.

Mr Kazuo NAKAYAMA, Executive Managing Officer, Chief Operating Officer of Food Resources Business Units of Mitsui Company of Japan said: “This is the third time for the work coordination meeting on making investment in Myanmar’s agriculture sector and the company welcomes the Ministry’s assistance.”

Union Minister U Myint Hlaing said the Ministry will provide full assistance to the company to construct rice mills and make investment according to law, rules and regulations. The Japanese company joined the Myanmar Agribusiness Public Corporation—MAPCO for making the agricultural investment.—MNA

Farmers to get agricultural loans at 5% interest rate

NAY PYI TAW, 22 May—The Myanma Economic Bank under the Ministry of Finance disbursed K 1156.052 billion as agricultural loans to farmers in 2013-14 fiscal year. This year, a plan is underway to deliver the loans to farmers in June of 2014-15 cultivation season.

In the past, Myanmar Agricultural Development Bank issued agriculture loans to farmers. In 2014-15 fiscal year, MEB will present K 983.577 billion to the farmers under supervision of region and state governments. Now, the government will collect 5% interest per year for the loan. The Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation urged the farmers to pay back the loans to the government in time.
President U Thein Sein meets ASEAN Labour Ministers

NAY PYI TAW, 22 May—President U Thein Sein held a meeting with ASEAN Labour Ministers who attended the 23rd ASEAN Labour Ministers Meeting-ALMM at the Credentials Hall of the Presidential Palace in Nay Pyi Taw on Thursday.

With ASEAN’s massive labour force amounting to 285 million, top on the agenda was job creation, developing the quality of the workforce and providing social security to the workers.

Since 2000, ASEAN’s work on labour and human resources has been guided by the ASEAN Labour Ministers (ALM) Work Programme which provides the framework to prepare the region’s labour force to deal with globalisation and trade liberalisation.

In collaboration with ASEAN’s Dialogue Partners, a number of activities and various studies have been completed, are on-going or being prepared by ASEAN. ASEAN has worked with Dialogue Partners in several areas such as Industrial Relations, Social Protection, and Human Resource Development.

ASEAN’s effort on labour is led by the ASEAN Labour Ministers Meeting (ALMM) which is held every two years.

President U Thein Sein poses for documentary photo with ASEAN Labour Ministers.—MNA

Vice-President Dr Sai Mauk Kham poses for documentary photo with delegates to 23rd ALMM.—MNA

Vice-President U Nyan Tun in Manila for WEF on East Asia

NAY PYI TAW, 22 May—Vice-President U Nyan Tun left Yangon for the Philippines by air on Wednesday morning to attend the 23rd World Economic Forum on East Asia, which is due to take place in Metro Manila from 21 to 23 May, sources said.

The vice-president addressed an informal talk on Myanmar’s reform held at Shangri-La Hotel on Tuesday, following an introductory speech by Mr Klaus Schwab, chairman of World Economic Forum on East Asia.

In an increasingly competitive and rapidly changing global environment, our economies and societies have become more and more interlinked and interdependent with each other. We are experiencing challenges and opportunities not only at national level but also at regional and global scale.

I would like to touch upon the progress of transformation in Myanmar. As we are aware, transformation is a crucial tool for a country’s development. In doing so, political stability and development of infrastructure are the most fundamental factors for ensuring and enhancing the development of a country.

Keeping in mind the importance of peace as a prerequisite for development, we have adopted new approach and policies on peace-building. We have secured ceasefire agreement with 14 armed ethnic groups. Recently, we have agreed on a single text for a nationwide ceasefire and peace agreement which, I hope, will soon lead to permanent peace in every corner of the country.

In political front, all reforms measures have been taken with an inclusive and participatory approach together with greater transparency and sense of accountability. With this approach, we are able to bring all stakeholders together in our political life.

To ensure political stability, we are building a more predictable political system and we are witnessing a new political culture of dialogue which is taking root within our society. Additionally, measures such as granting amnesties are also consolidating confidence in our national reconciliation efforts.

I believe that Myanmar is now on the right track to a democratic society. In order to promote and protect the rights of people, a sound legal system must be in place first. The Government has been undertaking ten programmes of legislation since it took office such as: (1) Amendment of regulations to be in line with the Constitution; (2) Submission of bills that guarantee basic rights of citizens; (3) Amendment of public health and social welfare laws.

We also take into serious consideration of economic reforms that are necessary to sustain the political stability. Moreover, the government has adopted the Framework on Economic and Social Reform — FESR with a people-centered approach to enhance economic development and to raise the living standard of Myanmar people. This framework is an essential policy tool of the government to realize both the short-term and long-term objectives on economic and social priorities in Myanmar.

It also serves as a good reference for various entities of government to develop more detailed sectoral and regional plans. It is also a guideline for building lasting cooperation with international development partners for mutual benefits. Moreover, we have re-established our engagement with various entities of the World Bank Group, International Monetary Fund and the Asian Development Bank.

All these efforts have led Myanmar to 7.3% GDP growth in 2012-2013. We are now projecting a 9.1% GDP growth for 2013-2014. In the months to come, the Government will focus on seven priority areas and implement projects such as electricity, water supply, agriculture sector development, job creation, tourism development, financial sector and trade and investment development that will directly benefit our people.

To achieve effective implementation in these priority areas, we are encouraging private sector participation and are creating conducive environment for foreign investors. To protect the interest of domestic and foreign enterprises, we have promulgated Myanmar Foreign Investment Law. The regulatory body, Myanmar Investment Commission was re-instated with clear and transparent procedures. Investor’s interest in Myanmar is growing and foreign investment is flowing into the country with the amount of US$ 4.1 billion for the fiscal year of 2013-2014. Myanmar is a country endowed with excellent investment potentials. In order to exploit such potentials, we are introducing concepts of sharing prosperity, equitable and accountable development and inclusive green growth.

Vice-President U Nyan Tun met Chairman of the Board of Mitsubishi Corporation Yorihiko Kojima and his delegation at Shangri-La Hotel.

Vice-President U Nyan Tun speaking at Informal meeting on reform process in Myanmar.—MNA

Vice-President U Nyan Tun for WEF on East Asia.

Vice-President calls for protection of migrant workers at 23rd ALMM

NAY PYI TAW, 23 May—Vice President Dr Sai Mauk Kham held the opening speech of the 23rd ASEAN Labour Ministers Meeting on Thursday in Nay Pyi Taw, calling on member states to strengthen cooperation in order to protect migrant workers.

ASEAN governments are working together to protect migrant workers, but enhanced cooperation among employers, migrant workers, international organizations and non-governmental organizations is required, he said.

The meeting was attended by labour ministers and deputy ministers, vice-secretary general of the ASEAN Secretariat, ambassadors, the assistant director-general of the ILO and senior officials.

MNA
Nay Pyi Taw Council member inspects progress of Pyinmana Township

NAY PYI TAW, 22 May—Nay Pyi Taw Council member Col Myint Aung Than inspected drains in wards of Pyinmana Township on Tuesday. The committee member instructed officials to construct brick drains for 2,000-feet long drains in the locomotive shed in Yanaung Ward 2, and 11,000-feet long drains on both sides of U Pwar Street and Okkyin Ward, as well as 5,000-feet long drains near the Agricultural Institute.

He also looked into progress made at Rubber Dam on Ngaleik Creek in Shwechi Ward.

YCDC officials visit markets in Nay Pyi Taw Council Area

NAY PYI TAW, 22 May—A team led by the head of the Animals and Slaughter Department of Yangon City Development Committee visited a similar department of Nay Pyi Taw Development Committee on Wednesday.

Deputy Director U Khang Soe Latt of the department of Nay Pyi Taw Development Committee and visitors from YCDC viewed the fish and meat shops at Arharathukha Market in Pyinmana, with market manager U Maung Maung conducting the tour. The officials were informed about the sales by meat and fish shops in the area.

Yuzana Market in Pyinmana has 12 rooms for the wholesale of meat and fish. As of June this year, the wholesale shops will distribute meat and fish to the markets in the Nay Pyi Taw Council Area.

Mr Min Latt (Mann Tekkatho)

Brahminy bird statue and new park under construction in downtown Bago

BAGO, 22 May—Bago is getting two new attractions, officials have said, with a statue of a pair of Brahminy birds—the symbol of Bago—and a park being built in front of No 3 Basic Education High School in downtown. The statue and park are located in front of the western wall and moat built by King Bayinnaung.

Officials hope the move will attract even more visitors as Bago Region is famed for ancient cultural heritages and has been attracting a large number of tourists.

Meanwhile, the Department of Archaeology and National Museum said it working on preserving the Kanbawzathadi Golden Palace of King Bayinnaung in Bago.

San Lin (Bago)

Trade fair in NyaungU attracts large number of visitors

NYAUNGU, 22 May—Golden Lion Co., organized a trade fair and festival on the ground of Shwezigon Pagoda in NyaungU of Mandalay Region from 21 to 25 May. The trade fair showcased various kinds of personal goods, foodstuffs, textiles and other products, attracting a large number of locals. Highlight of the fair were music and fashion shows on Wednesday, organizers said.—Kyaw Htay

Two houses destroyed in landslides in Katha Tsp

KATHA, 22 May—Rising water levels recently eroded the bank at Daunggyi Village of Katha Township, Sagaing Region.

River erosion caused landslides in the village, destroying two houses. Some residents managed to move their belongings to a safer place so “there was no injury,” according to Daw Tin Ngwe of Duunggyi Village. Sagaing Region Hlutaw MP U Sein Tun and officials on Tuesday inspected the damaged caused by the landslides and met some of the victims. They allotted land plots to the families and provided K35,000 to each family.

District IPRD

Rubber Dam has been completed by 60 per cent and will upon completion be of benefit for Pyinmana residents, officials said.

Shwe Kokko

Officials check development in Hsipaw Tsp

HSIPAW, 22 May—Vice-Chairman of Shan State Development Committee U Sai Hsaing Pu and the responsible officer of the Shan State Development Affairs Department (Lashio) U Nay Lin on Tuesday inspected the development tasks, buildings and shops, and drains in Hsipaw.

Hsipaw Ko Latt
Pyinmana Township CRC focuses on child rights

YANGON, 22 May—Pyinmana Township Committee of the Rights of the Child held a meeting at the hall of Township General Administration Department on Thursday morning. Secretary of the committee Head of Township Social Welfare Department Daw Sanda Sein explained the formation of the committee and its duty and functions.

Daw Thida Sein of UNICEF explained that the committee must protect the children against sexual abuse, ignorance and exploitation in line with the laws, rules and regulations. The committee must supervise the activity to give talks on prevention against exploitation and trafficking in persons over the children and to take action against those who offended such crimes over the children.

The township committee was formed with 21 members including departmental officials, those NGOs and town elders. So, cultivation for one-acre sesame cost about K 40,000. However, sesame fetches good price, hence the farmers are to focus on cultivation of sesame," said farmer U Tin Win.

"After the sesame, I will grow paddy and wheat. I harvested sesame in June and July last year. I got K 60,000 per basket of sesame. I believe price of sesame fetches good price, hence the farmers are to focus on cultivation of sesame," said farmer U Tin Win.

The plantations are thriving in the five-acre farmlands of U Tin Win in Yinmabin Township of Sagaing Region. The plantations are irrigated from the artesian and plan- for the books in 650 metres radius area.

The device stores over 6000 copies of books for readers who can apply mobile phones, laptops, tablets and notebook for reading through WiFi service. The reader can apply download for the books in 650 metres radius area.

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"We do not need to borrow the books from the shop. Now, we can read the e-book from the device of public digital library service," said a driver of trish-aw from the stand near My- the lake successfully cultivate paddy, sesame, chilli, onion, green gram, banana and betel.

Some local fishermen catch fish in the lake and sell them to the village. They can fetch K 2500 per viss of fish and earn about K 5000 per day from fishery, said a local from Kyayed- win Village.—Kyaw Hlay

Jaggery production declines in Pakokku region

PAKOKKU, 22 May—Although there are over hundreds of thousands of toddy palm plants in over 5000 toddy plantations in Pakokku Township of Magway Region, the number of toddy farmers is lesser day by day. Yezagyo, Myaing and Pakokku townships send jaggery to Mandalay, Vang- me will be good this year," he added.

"We do not need to borrow the books from the shop. Now, we can read the e-book from the device of public digital library service," said a driver of trish-aw from the stand near Young-oma market.

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Pyay District IPRD fulfills reading requirements of local bookworms

PYAY, 22 May—Pyay District Information and Public Relations Department has installed the device of public digital library service in front of Shwepohnwint Pitakat Library on Lanna Road in Payy on Wednesday.

The device stores over 6000 copies of books for readers who can apply mobile phones, laptops, tablets and notebook for reading through WiFi service. The reader can apply download for the books in 650 metres radius area.

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Libyan renegade general challenges government as clashes rock Tripoli

BY VAR, 22 May — A Libyan renegade general called on the government to hand over power to the country’s top judges, mounting a challenge against Tripoli as heavy fighting erupted in the capital on Wednesday.

Western powers fear a call by General Khalifa Haftar for army units to join his campaign will split the nascent military and trigger more turmoil in the oil producing country which is struggling to restore order three years after the fall of strongman Muammar Gaddafi.

The government is unable to control the militias who helped oust Muammar Gaddafi in a NATO-backed 2011 uprising but are now defying authority.

“I call on the top judicial council to form a crisis government to oversee the next elections,” said the retired general, dressed in uniform and surrounded by senior officers.

The council is independent and is one of the few state bodies respected by normal Libyans tired of anarchy and militias. Haftar said government and parliament had lost any legitimacy because they were unable to purge the OPEC producer of extremists roaming around unchecked.

His campaign got a boost after Libya’s top air defence commander declared support for his campaign which kicked off on Friday with a strike against Ansar Sharia and other militant groups in the eastern city of Benghazi.

Culture Minister Habib Amin also announced his backing, the first government minister to join Haftar’s forces. He said parliament had failed to fight “terrorists”, echoing Haftar’s rhetoric.

“I don’t recognise the (General National Congress) anymore,” Amin told Reuters. Tripoli residents reported several loud explosions early on Wednesday near the al-Yarmouk air defence barracks after air defence top commander Juma al-Abani released a video message saying he was joining “Operation Dignity”, Haftar’s campaign against Islamists.

Heavy fighting involving anti-aircraft machine guns mounted on trucks also broke out overnight near the al-Yarmouk air defence barracks after air defence top commander Juma al-Abani released a video message saying he was joining “Operation Dignity”, Haftar’s campaign against Islamists.

At least two people from Mali died in the fighting, a health ministry source said.

Composing the political chaos, state news agency LANA said on Wednesday the interior ministry had also joined Haftar’s campaign, a report that was dismissed minutes later by the acting interior minister.

Reuters

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff US Army General Martin Dempsey listens to testimonies from fellow service chiefs during a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing on Defence Department proposals relating to military compensation, on Capitol Hill in Washington on 6 May, 2014. —Reuters

BRUSSELS, 22 May — The future of US military ties with Egypt, curtailed after a crackdown on opponents by the army-backed leaders, will depend on the actions of the future government, the top US military officer said ahead of Egyptian elections next week.

“I think we should maintain a relationship with the US military and Egyptian military. I think that that relationship will be affected by their actions and whether they make progress on their political transition,” said General Martin Dempsey, chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff.

“Intensifying sanctions against Egypt could open an axis towards the south in recent days after rebels pulled out of Homs city, relieving pressure on the army there. The reinforcements reflect Assad’s determinations, on the eve of a June 3 presidential election likely to extend his power for another seven years, not to lose control of the towns of Quneitra and Quneitra in the Golan Heights,” said Reuter.

Syrian al-Qaeda reach footholds of Israeli-held Golan

ASSAN, 22 May — Atop the hill of Tel Alman just a few kilometres from Israeli forces on the Golan Heights, Syrian Islamist fighters hoist the al-Qaeda flag and praise their mentor Osama bin Laden. One of the men, a leader of al-Qaeda’s Nusra Front, compares their battlefield — a lush agricultural region where dead soldiers lie on the ground near a charred Soviet-era tank — with the struggles their comrades waged years ago in Afghanistan.

“This view reminds us of the lion of the mughal, Osama bin Laden, on the mountains of Tora Bora,” he can be heard saying in a video posted by the group, which shows the fighters in sight of Israeli jeeps patrolling the fortified frontier. Last month’s capture of the post was followed days later by the seizure of the Syrian army’s 61 Infantry Brigade base near the town of Nawa, one of the biggest rebel gains in the south during the three years of Syria’s war.

“The advances are important not just because they expand rebel control close to the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights and the Jordanian border, but because President Bashar al-Assad’s power base in Damascus lies just 40 miles (65 km) to the north. They have brought heavy retaliation from Assad’s forces, including aerial bombardment. The army has also sent elite troop reinforcements to the south in recent days after rebels pulled out of Homs city, relieving pressure on the army there. The reinforcements reflect Assad’s determinations, on the eve of a June 3 presidential election likely to extend his power for another seven years, not to lose control of the towns of Quneitra and Quneitra in the Golan Heights,” said Reuters.

The rebels last year briefly took the Quneitra border crossing with Israel and now control many rural villages in the area.

“The regime has rung alarm bells, fearing that the fall of Nawa and Quneitra could open an axis towards Damascus,” said Brigadier General Assad Zoubi, who headed an air force academy before defecting in early 2012. —Reuters

A firefighter stands near smoke and rubble of buildings damaged after explosions that took place at midnight, in the Salaheddin district of Tripoli on 21 May, 2014. —Reuters

US-Egypt military ties will depend on Egypt’s actions: US general

US partner in the Arab world.

US support for Cairo was expedited by the political transformations triggered by the 2011 popular uprising that toppled President Hosni Mubarak.

Last month, the Obama administration announced it would resume some military assistance suspended when the Egyptian army ousted the elected Islamist president, Mohamed Morsi, last year. Washington also said it would provide attack helicopters to help Egypt fight militants based in the Sinai peninsula.

General Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, who is expected to be named president after the elections early on Wednesday, has promised to reform the ruling Muslim Brotherhood, which shows the struggle their comrades waged years ago in Afghanistan.

He said it would provide attack helicopters to help Egypt fight insurgents rather than a sign of tolerance for the harsh treatment of dissent.

Egypt has cracked down on the Muslim Brotherhood, the Islamist party that propelled Mursi to power, and other opposition groups. Western officials have condemned mass death sentences passed on Brotherhood supporters.

The Obama administration has repeatedly criticized such actions and continues to withhold hundreds of millions of dollars more in aid, along with other hardware that Egypt had requested, including Harpoon missiles and fighter jets.

Dempsey was confident Egypt would use the sophisticated US weapons for their intended purpose and that Washington would check that they were not used to commit rights abuses.

“If they were to use them for purposes that violated the end-use agreement, then we have the ability to interdict the supply chain and that system would not be much use to them any longer,” Dempsey said. —Reuters
Brains of simple sea animals could help cure neural disorders

A comb jelly is pictured in this undated handout photo courtesy of Whitney laboratory for Marine Biosciences, University of Florida. — Reuters

Ocala, Fla., 22 May — A Florida scientist studying simple sea animals called comb jellies has found the road map to a new form of brain development that could lead to treatments for Parkinson's, Alzheimer's and other neurodegenerative diseases.

"There is more than one way to make a brain," University of Florida researcher Leonid Moroz, who led an international research team, told Reuters.

Moroz said his research, published on Wednesday in a report in the magazine Nature, also places comb jelly-like creatures on the first branch of the animal kingdom's "tree of life," replacing and bumping up sponge-like species from the bottom rung of evolutionary progression.

Moroz said that finding should lead to a reclassification of the animal kingdom's "tree of life" and reshape two centuries of zoological thought.

Comb jellies are different from common jellyfish. Moroz said his team found that comb jellies' molecular makeup and the way they developed was radically different — although still complex — from other animals, involving different genes and neural transmitters.

Traditional scientific reasoning has held that simple nerve nets evolved along the way to a human level of complexity along a single path. But it now appears that comb jellies took a different route, using neurochemical language that does not exist in other animals.

"All other animals have the same chemical language and these guys have completely different language. It's not only different grammar, it's a different alphabet," Moroz said. Comb jellies, for example, don't use dopamine, implicated in Parkinson's disease, to control brain activity. They also can regenerate their brains in less than four days.

In one experiment, a comb jelly regenerated its brain four times. — Reuters

Deutsche Bank to defend capital increase at annual meeting

Frankfurt, 22 May — Deutsche Bank (DBKGn. DE) will defend plans to raise 8 billion euros ($11 billion) in equity on Thursday when management stands before shareholders at an annual general meeting, less than a week after announcing the surprise plan.

Germany's largest bank launched the capital increase in a surprise move only weeks after first hinting that it was unable to retain enough profit to fortify its finances ahead of a regulatory health check slated for later this year.

Shareholder approval is not required but some investors will express anger with the issue and with the lack of progress on resolving a long list of investigations published that has dogged the bank since the 2008-2009 financial crisis. "With the capital hike, the bank builds an extra cushion so it is better prepared for the ECB test," said Stefan Best, managing director at Standard & Poor's in Frankfurt.

Announcing the hike, Deutsche diluted and delayed its turnaround target of 2015, pleading for patience as the bank, like many of its rivals, struggles to restructure and restore profitability.

Management has pointed to "tectonic shifts" that have opened opportunities in new investment banking European rivals UBS (UBSN.VX) and Barclays (BARC.L) have withdrawn from areas such as bond trading where Deutsche believes it can succeed as a big European player on a stage dominated by US rivals like Goldman Sachs (GS.N) and JPMorgan (JPM.N).

"Whether Deutsche Bank comes out of the financial crisis as a winner in investment banking remains to be seen," Best said.

Separately, management will ask shareholders to approve a proposal permitting senior staff to receive bonuses worth twice base pay. — Reuters

Lloyds sues RBS for $709 million over rights issue

London, 22 May— Lloyds Banking Group is joining a class-action lawsuit against government-owned Royal Bank of Scotland, seeking 420 million pounds ($709 million) over the bank's handling of its 12-billion-pound rights issue, the Herald Scotland newspaper reported.

The Scottish daily said on Wednesday that Lloyds is suing RBS through one of its pensions and investment management subsidiaries along with 40,000 individual and institutional investors already seeking redress from RBS.

Hundreds of investors had previously joined an unprecedented group legal action against RBS, alleging they were misled during an emergency cash call in 2008, and claiming damages of about 4 billion pounds ($6.7 billion).

RBS Action Group, which represents the largest group of shareholders, last week filed claims and said it would lodge more this week. "The management in the relevant insurance businesses gave careful consideration as to whether it was in the interests of policyholders to join the legal proceedings and decided it was in their best interests," a spokesman for Lloyds insurance arm, Scottish Widows, as saying.

The newspaper counted Lloyds entities that filed papers to sue RBS earlier this week as Scottish Widows Plc, Scottish Widows Unit Fund Ltd, Pensions Management Ltd, Scottish Widows Unit Trust Managers Ltd, Clerical Medical Investments Group, Halifax Life, Clerical Medical Management Fund Ltd, HBOS Investment Fund Managers Ltd and St Andrews Life Assurance.

15 May marked the six-year anniversary of when the shares RBS sold in its emergency rights issue began trading and could be the cut-off point under British law after which damage claims can no longer be accepted. — Reuters

Too little sleep can affect many aspects of young kids' health

New York, 22 May — In a new study, children who regularly got too little sleep had worse physical, emotional and social health than those who slept the average amount.

"Sleep is important for a lot of reasons, and can influence health and well-being and cognitive functioning," said lead author Christopher A Magee. "The typical sleep pattern appeared to have the best outcomes as measured in this paper," he told Reuters Health in an email.

But since this is a relatively new area of research, the researchers can't say for sure that this pattern of sleep causes better health and wellbeing, said Magee, of the University of Wollongong in Australia.

Genetics do regulate the speed of sleep, but the results suggest that environmental and social factors, like household financial hardship, may play a role as well, he said.

The researchers used Medicare Australia data from a group of almost 3,000 children to track the kids' health and quality of life at four points between birth and seven years of age.

GM adds 284,000 older cars as number of US recalls this year hits 29

Detroit/Washington, 22 May — General Motors Co is recalling more than 284,000 older Chevrolet small cars in the United States and other markets because of a potential fire hazard, bringing US recalls at the automaker this year to 29 and a record number of vehicles.

The two recalls are the latest announced by GM, the largest US automaker. The recall with the highest profile was of cars with defective ignition switches linked to at least 13 deaths.

The Detroit company has been criticized by safety advocates and fined by US safety regulators for its delayed response in catching the faulty switch.

A day after recalling 2.6 million vehicles globally, mostly in the United States, GM is recalling 284,913 Chevrolet Aveo and Optra cars in the United States and other markets from model years 2004 to 2008.

The problem with the cars stems from a faulty part in their daytime running lights that could overheat and cause a fire, according to documents filed with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).

GM said it was aware of some fires related to the problem but did not say how many. It said there were no reports of injuries or fatalities.

Meanwhile, GM Chief Executive Mary Barra met on Wednesday with Democratic Senator Claire McCaskill of Missouri, who chairs a Senate panel investigating GM's ignition switch recall, as well as other Democratic lawmakers including Senator Charles Schumer of New York, Senator Edward Markey of Massachusetts, Rep. Diana DeGette of Colorado and Rep. John Dingell of Michigan. — Reuters

The 2007 Chevrolet Aveo makes its global debut at the 2006 Los Angeles Auto Show in Los Angeles, California in this file photo taken on 5 Jan, 2006. — Reuters
Measures to reduce poverty

By Myint Win Thein

Myanmar is taking measures to reduce poverty from the current level to between 26 and 16 percent in 2015. In other words, urgent efforts are required to achieve this goal and to reduce poverty by up to 10 percent during 2014.

It is easier said than done to reduce poverty. There are many challenges to establish good living conditions for those who struggle to survive. There are several measures for poverty reduction, namely upgrading infrastructure and guaranteeing water and electricity supply, construction of schools, hospitals and roads and creating financial capital to set up businesses for people. If these measures are implemented effectively, poverty will be reduced considerably.

At present, measures are being taken to foster the development of rural regions including under-developed border areas. Infrastructures such as roads, schools, hospitals, clinics, etc. are being built, repaired or upgraded with added momentum, officials claim. At the same time, measures are reportedly being taken to improve availability of clean drinking water and electricity in the rural areas.

In addition, the Ministry of Cooperatives is accelerating its efforts to lend financial capitals to low-income families in rural areas and is selling farm machinery such as tractors, winnowing machines and sewing machines, motor vehicles, motorcycles and trishaws in installments.

The Ministry of Cooperatives has lent around K145 billion for financial capital to people and has sold a total of 4,765 farming machineries with an installments payment system.

The more effectively the above-mentioned measures are implemented, the faster poverty can be reduced.

Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Union Election Commission
Nay Pyi Taw
Announcement No. 14/2014
9th Waning of Kason, 1376 ME
(22nd May, 2014)

Ten representatives of Armed Forces substituted

According to a request made in accordance with Section 33 of the Lower House Election Law to substitute ten representatives of the Armed Forces who are parliamentarians, the Union Election Commission scrutinized and substituted the following ten Lower House of representatives under the Notification No. 1/2011 of the commission dated 20-1-2011, the Notification No. 2/2012 of the commission dated 6-1-2012, the Notification No. 22/2012 of the commission dated 22-4-2012, the Notification No. 41/2012 of the commission dated 16-10-2012, the Notification No. 6/2013 of the commission dated 11-3-2013, the Notification No. 16/2013 of the commission dated 24-6-2013 and the Notification No. 27/2013 of the commission dated 27-9-2013.

The Lower House representatives to be substituted were nominated by the Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Services in the first multi-party general election held on 7 November 2010.

(1) BC 20255
Brig-Gen Kyaw Shwe

(2) BC 27015
Lt-Col Aung Myat Thein

(3) BC 27066
Lt-Col Kyaw Kyaw Lwin

(4) BC 27439
Lt-Col Thant Zin

(5) Navy 3626
Cdr Kyaw Kyaw

(6) Navy 3779
Cdr Soe Naing

(7) BC 27506
Major Tin Tun

(8) BC 31594
Major Kyaw Soe Min

(9) BC 33184
Major Tin Kyaw Oo

(10) Navy 3649
Lt-Cdr Than Zaw Oo

By Order,
Tin Tun (Tin Tun)
Secretary
Union Election Commission

Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Union Election Commission
Nay Pyi Taw
Announcement No. 15/2014
9th Waning of Kason, 1376 ME
(22nd May, 2014)

Eight representatives of Armed Forces substituted

According to a request made in accordance with Section 33 of the Upper House Election Law to substitute eight representatives of the Armed Forces who are parliamentarians, the Union Election Commission scrutinized and substituted the following eight Upper House of representatives under the Notification No. 2/2011 of the commission dated 20-1-2011, the Notification No. 23/2012 of the commission dated 22-4-2012, the Notification No. 13/2013 of the commission dated 12-6-2013, the Notification No. 17/2013 of the commission dated 24-6-2014 and the Notification No. 28/2013 of the commission dated 27-9-2013.

The Upper House representatives to be substituted were nominated by the Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Services in the first multi-party general election held on 7 November 2010.

(1) BC 28284
Lt-Col Myo Thin Oo

(2) BC 28148
Lt-Cdr Than Zaw Lin

(3) Navy 3606
Cdr Kyaw Kyaw Htoo

(4) BC 23270
Major Zaw Myint

(5) BC 12372
Major Win Kyaw Kyaw

(6) BC 30426
Major Aung Naing Oo

(7) BC 25168
Major Khin Maung Cho

(8) BC 28310
Major Myo Aung

By Order,
(Tin Tun)
Secretary
Union Election Commission

Yangon Command clinches title in Hockey League

Yangon Command clinched the title in Hockey League on 22 May—The 11th National Sports Committee Chairman Cup Hockey League reached the final match that was held at Thein Byou Hockey Turf Pitch in Yangon on Thursday afternoon.

In the final match, Yangon Command team emerged champion with a 3-0 win over Central Command team.

Yangon Command team secured the championship trophy, followed by Sky Wings and Central Command team.

Officials of the Myanmar Hockey Federation President U Htin Zaw Win presents championship trophy to Yangon Command team in Hockey League.

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Officials of the Myanmar Hockey Federation President U Htin Zaw Win presents championship trophy to Yangon Command team in Hockey League.
The Ministers noted with satisfaction the implementation progress of the ASCC Blueprint, particularly on the Action Lines concerning labor issues, by SLOM and its subsidiary bodies. The Ministers agreed with the initiatives of the ASCC Blueprint, SLOM to accelerate the implementation of labor-related strategic objectives of the ASCC Blueprint through the facilitation of projects and activities to be carried out under the ASEAN Labour Ministers’ Work Programme 2015-2016 in a timely and efficient manner.

5. The Ministers applauded SLOM for the completion of a data collection for the set of indicators developed for the ASCC Scorecard to track the implementation of the ASCC Blueprint Strategic Objectives concerning the labor sector. The Ministers supported the initiative of SLOM to update the data to serve as feedback to the planned final evaluation of the ASCC Blueprint.

Implementation of the ASEAN Labour Ministers’ Work Programme (2010-2015)

1. The Ministers noted the achievements made by SLOM and its subsidiary bodies under the ASEAN Labour Ministers’ Work Programme 2010-2015 since the 22nd ALMM held on 10 May 2012 in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. The Ministers lauded the initiatives and commitment of ASEAN Member States to lead the implementation of various projects and activities.

2. The Ministers took note of the results of the Workshop on Mid-term Review of the ASEAN Labour Ministers’ Work Programme 2010-2015 held in Da Lat, Viet Nam on 29-30 April 2014 and supported the recommendations on the SLOM to accelerate implementation. The Ministers supported the initiative of SLOM to embark on initiatives to promote labor-related corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives in the region. The Ministers also supported the closure of various projects and activities.

3. The Ministers supported the initiative of SLOM to the ASEAN Occupational Safety Network (ASEAN-OSHNET) Awards aimed at raising OSH profile in the workplace and in ASEAN countries and tasked SLOM to finalise the Terms of Reference.

Relevant Decisions of Other ASEAN Meetings

6. The Ministers noted the achievement of the 23rd ALMM in convening on 9 October 2013 in Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam, and on 11 May 2014 in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar, respectively, and other related ASEAN Meetings convened since last year. The Ministers expressed views on strategies to effectively implement these directives.

7. The Ministers were satisfied to note the progress of the SLOM’s Working Group on Progressive Labour Practices to Enhance the Competitiveness of ASEAN (SLOM-WG) under its current Work Plan 2010-2015. The Ministers noted the progress made in the ASEAN-OSHNET Awards aimed at raising OSH profile in the region, and tasked SLOM to finalise the Terms of Reference.

8. The Ministers were satisfied with the progress of the WSTC’s Group on Progress in the field of the ASEAN-OSHNET Awards aimed at raising OSH profile in the workplace and in ASEAN countries and tasked SLOM to finalise the Terms of Reference.

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11. The Ministers applauded SLOM for the completion of a data collection for the set of indicators developed for the ASCC Scorecard to track the implementation of the ASCC Blueprint Strategic Objectives concerning the labor sector. The Ministers supported the initiative of SLOM to update the data to serve as feedback to the planned final evaluation of the ASCC Blueprint.

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13. The Ministers expressed satisfaction with the progress made thus far in developing the SLOM’s Working Group on Progress in the field of the ASEAN-OSHNET Awards aimed at raising OSH profile in the workplace and in ASEAN countries and tasked SLOM to finalise the Terms of Reference.
VIOLENT PROTESTS

Former telecommunications tycoon Thaksin has lived in exile since 2008 to avoid a jail term for graft, but still commands the loyalty of legions of rural and urban poor and exerts a huge influence over politics, most recently through a government run by his sister, Yingluck Shinawatra.

Yingluck was forced to step down as premier by a court two weeks ago, but her caretaker government remains formally in power, despite the declaration of martial law and six months of sometimes violent protests aimed at ousting it.

Thailand’s gross domestic product contracted 2.1 percent in January-March from the previous three months, largely because of the unrest, adding to fears it is stumbling into recession.

The protesters say Thaksin is a corrupt crony capitalist who commandeered Thailand’s fragile democracy, using taxpayers’ money to buy votes with populist giveaways.

They wanted a “neutral” interim prime minister to oversee electoral reforms aimed at ridding the country of the Shinawatra family’s political influence before any new vote.—Reuters

Abu Sayyaf bomber captured in S Philippines

ZAMBOANGA CITY, (Philippines), 22 May — A bomb expert belonging to terrorist group Abu Sayyaf was captured by the government security forces on Thursday morning in southern Philippines, a security official said.

Senior Inspector Joseph Ortega, police regional spokesman, identified the suspect as Najir Ajilul who uses several aliases including Arab-Arab, Jamil and Abu Robin. Ajilul was arrested in a secluded village of Siocon town, Zamboanga del Norte Province.

Ortega said Ajilul was the second Abu Sayyaf bomber who was captured in a week. Police said the suspect fired at approaching soldiers. Ajilul was cornered following a brief exchange of fire with the government security forces.

Troops recovered from the suspect a fragmentation grenade and his handgun, a .45 caliber pistol. Police said the suspect is a member of the Abu Sayyaf’s urban terror group, the terrorist group’s hit squad.—Xinhua

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Technology reveals details of thousand-year-old mummies

LONDON, 22 May — The British Museum will unveil eight mummies from ancient Egypt and Sudan through high technology to visitors in London from Thursday on. At this new exhibition named Ancient Lives New Discoveries, the British Museum will display the bodies of the eight people who have been preserved naturally or by deliberate embalming, however, after scanned by the advanced CT scanner.

The exhibition will unlock hidden secrets of those people, as well as people’s lives about 4,000 years ago that have never been revealed before.

“Those CT scans have been specially processed to produce amazing 3D images of the mummies what’s inside them. So we can learn about how old these people were, what were their state of health, how were they treated side them. So we can learn of the mummies what’s inside them. So we can learn about how old these people were, what were their state of health, how were they treated. Through the unprecedented innovation, scientists gained some unexpected developments.

One mummy, which is found in a woman’s coffin and generally believed for hundreds of years to be female, was proved a man through latest CT scanners, while a spatula was found inside the skull of a female mummy, which was believed belonging to ancient Egyptian embalmers.

Qinghai-Tibet Plateau glaciers shrink 15 pct in 30 yrs

A smartphone user shows the Facebook application on his phone in the central Bosnian town of Zenica, in this photo illustration, on 2 May, 2013. — Reuters

Photo taken on 20 April, 2014 shows the shrinking Karuola glacier, southwest China’s Tibet Autonomous Region. According to the Institute of Tibetan Plateau Research of the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS), glaciers on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau and surrounding areas have shrunk by 15 percent from 53,000 to 45,000 square kilometers over the past three decades. — Xinhua

Hackers raid eBay in historic breach, access 145 million records

A smartphone user shows the Facebook application on his phone in the central Bosnian town of Zenica, in this photo illustration, on 2 May, 2013. — Reuters

BOSTON, 22 May — EBay Inc said that hackers raided its network three months ago, stealing some 145 million user records from a database in what is poised to go down as one of the biggest data breaches in history based on the number of accounts compromised.

It advised customers to change their passwords immediately, saying they were among the pieces of data stolen by cyber criminals who carried out the attack between late February and early March.

EBay spokeswoman Amanda Miller told Reuters those passwords were encrypted and that the company had no reason to believe the hackers had broken the code that scrambled them.

“There is no evidence of impact on any eBay customers.” Miller said. “We don’t know that they decrypted the passwords because it would not be easy to do.”

She said the hackers copied a massive user database that contained those passwords, as well as email addresses, birth dates, mailing addresses and other personal information, but not financial data such as credit card numbers.

The company had earlier said a large number of accounts may have been compromised, but declined to say how many.

Security experts advised EBay customers to be on the alert for fraud, especially if they used the same passwords for other accounts. “This is not a breach that only hurts EBay. This is a breach that hurts all websites,” said Michael Coates, director of product security with Shape Security.

He said there is a significant risk that the hackers have or will unscramble those passwords. Companies typically only ask users to change passwords if they believe there is a reasonable chance attackers may unscramble encrypted passwords, he added.

EBay said it had not seen any indication of increased fraudulent activity on its flagship site and that there was no evidence its PayPal online payment service had been breached.

EBay said the hackers got in after obtaining login credentials for “a small number” of employees, allowing them to access eBay’s corporate network.

It discovered the breach in early May and immediately brought in security experts and law enforcement to investigate, Miller said.

“We worked aggressively and as quickly as possible to insure accurate and thorough disclosure of the nature and extent of the compromise,” Miller said when asked why the company had not immediately notified users. — Reuters
Court orders flight suspension at Atsugi base over plane noise

YOKOHAMA, 22 May — A Japanese court on Wednesday ordered the government to suspend nighttime flights by Self-Defense Force aircraft at a base near Tokyo due to excessive aircraft noise but rejected the plaintiffs’ demand to halt the flights of US military planes. The Yokohama District Court decision involving Atsugi air base marks the first time a ruling on the suspension of flights has been made since noise pollution suits involving air bases in Japan started being filed in the 1970s.

In the landmark decision, Presiding Judge Hiroyuki Samura said residents’ health is “seriously affected” as a direct result of aircraft noise because their sleeping and other aspects of their daily lives are disturbed.

To ease their suffering, the court ordered the state to suspend flights of SDF aircraft daily from 10 pm to 6 am, with exceptions made for cases which the defense minister deems “necessary.”

The ruling shocked the government, with Defence Minister Itsunori Onodera releasing a statement that the decision is “partially unacceptable” and that the government will respond properly.

A senior Defence Ministry official told Kyodo News that the government has no other choice but to appeal the ruling as it could affect SDF operations. The court’s decision is a “step forward although not a 100 percent” victory, Eiji Fujiwara, the 80-year-old head of the plaintiffs, said after the ruling regarding Atsugi, which is jointly used by the US Navy and Japan’s Maritime Self-Defense Force.

The plaintiffs live in eight cities in and around Atsugi, which is a major US military base near Tokyo. The plaintiffs have been demanding a halt to nighttime flights at the base since 2007, claiming that noise pollution has caused serious health problems for local residents.

The court also urged the state to pay about 7 billion yen in damages, which the Justice Ministry said is a record high for aircraft noise suits involving bases. The amount of compensation does not include future damages. The plaintiffs had asked for flights to be suspended from 8 pm to 8 am, but this was rejected by the court because the time slots 8 pm to 10 pm, and 6 am to 8 am would affect the operations of the base and would not be beneficial to the public.

As for US planes, the court said the state has no jurisdiction over the US military’s use of Atsugi that as use is based on an accord between Japan and the United States. In Washington a Defence Department spokesman played down the ruling. “It is my understanding that this decision does not apply to the United States Navy,” Col Steven Warren, head of the Pentagon’s Defence Press Operations, told reporters at the Pentagon on Wednesday.

The suit was the first to seek the suspension of flights and the banning of US military aircraft, and the timeframe since 2007 involving the base which occupies roughly 5 million square meters of land straddling the densely populated cities of Ayase, Ebina, and Yamato in Kanagawa Prefecture, southwest of Tokyo. The court decided that the time period for which flights have been suspended will not affect MSDF operations as the MSDF has already voluntarily refrained from conducting flight exercises from 10 pm to 6 am at Atsugi.

But the MSDF said its planes take off and land at Atsugi even at night sometimes, for example when natural disasters occur.

The plaintiffs, who number around 7,000 and come from eight cities including Ayase and Yamato, have called for the suspension of nighttime and early morning flights at the base, saying the noise of the aircraft is a violation of their personal rights as guaranteed by the Constitution.

The plaintiffs live in areas with a noise level greater than 75 on the Weighted Equivalent Continuous Perceived Noise Level, an international index for gauging airplane noise.—Kyodo News

Iran, IAEA agree to resolve more key issues of Iranian atomic plan

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Director General Yukiya Amano

VIENNA, 22 May — The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and Iran agreed to take further steps to resolve the possible military dimensions of Teheran’s nuclear programme, the Vienna-based UN nuclear watchdog announced on Wednesday.

IAEA said in a statement that it has agreed with Iran on five practical measures to be implemented by Iran by 25 Aug, 2014, including two concerning a long-stalled investigation into the allegation that Iran may make efforts to develop atomic weapons secretly, so-called the possible military dimensions (PMD) of its nuclear plan.

The two new measures in next step of cooperation concerning probe into PMD issues are “exchanging information” with the agency on allegations related to the initiation of high explosives, and providing “mutually agreed relevant information and explanations” on neutron studies and “associated modelling and calculations and their alleged application to compressed materials”. The statement said “good progress” has been made on the seven practical measures of providing greater transparency of Iran’s nuclear plan, which has already met its deadline on 15 May. Under the landmark deal Iran and IAEA made last November, Teheran would provide greater transparency of its nuclear plan, resolving the unresolved issues concerning the alleged that Iran may make efforts to develop atomic weapons secretly.

IAEA has identified 12 PMD issues in its 2011 November report, which said Iran might carry out nuclear weapon programme under the cover of its civilian atomic plan.—Xinhua

Chinese FM encourages more investment in Bangladesh for diversified cooperation

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi (R) meets with his Bangladeshi counterpart AH Mahmood Ali in Shanghai, east China, on 21 May, 2014.—XINHUA

SHANGHAI, 22 May — Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi on Wednesday met with his Bangladesh counterpart Abul Hassan Mahmood Ali in Shanghai, pledging to support more Chinese investment in Bangladesh. Wang congratulated Bangladesh on its new membership of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA) and China is a partner for Bangladesh in south Asia and the Indian Ocean region.

China treasures traditional friendship with Bangladesh and highly values the progress of bilateral ties, Wang said, adding that China is willing to work with Bangladesh to maintain high-level engagement and upgrade bilateral relations. “China will encourage more enterprises to invest in Bangladesh, support them to carry out pragmatic cooperation in various sectors and make joint efforts in building the economic corridor among Bangladesh, China, India and Burma,” Wang said.

Ali voiced hope to cooperate with China in various fields, including investment, economic and trade, and personnel training, and play a positive role in promoting the economic corridor construction.—Xinhua
CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
MV ESM CREMONA VOY NO (098)
Consignees of cargo carried on MV ESM CREMONA VOY NO (098) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 23.5.2014 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.
Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claims Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.
No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: MS ORINET OVERSEAS CON-TAINER LINES
Phone No: 2301185

A citizen speaks to Thai soldiers patrolling the bustling district of Bangkok, Thailand, on 20 May, 2014, after martial law was declared in the country the same day.—KYODO NEWS

Extension of the Request for Letter of Expression of Interest (LOEI)
Title: Joint Venture Project of LNG Production, Storage, Distribution and Marketing for Liquefied Petroleum Gas Plant (Nyang Don)
Myanmar Petrochemical Enterprise (MPE) had invited the interested foreign investors for the request of the Expression of Interest regarding the above title from 1.04.2014 to 7.04.2014 in the New Light of Myanmar newspaper and to be submitted by 15.05.2014 during office hours.

Now, MPE hereby announces that the additional information for LOEI shall be as follows:
(a) The submission of LOEI shall be extended up to 26.05.2014 from 15.05.2014.
(b) The endorsement from the respective embassy of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar at the place of company’s registration or nearest shall be submitted.
(c) Only the companies that submitted LOEI shall be considered in Tender Process and only the companies who had met MPE’s requirements shall be proceeded for the Invitation to Tender.

One dead, three injured in shooting near Dallas mall
Houston, 22 May — One person was killed and three others were wounded in a shooting near a shopping centre on Wednesday night in the US city of Dallas, local media reported. Police responded to the incident around 20:00 CST (0100 GMT Thursday) and pronounced a victim dead on the scene in south Dallas.

Police later identified two people who were hurt in the shooting but refused to be sent to hospital because their injuries were minor. A fourth victim was later found receiving treatment in a local hospital.

Police did not release the identities of the victims. There is so far no word on possible motives or how exactly the shooting happened and no arrests have been made.

Police said they had dispatched a helicopter to hunt down the suspect.—Xinhua
Ocean advocate and documentary filmmaker Susan Rockefeller was given the Sustainability Steward award on 15 May by New York during “Sustainability Week NYC” for her work to protect the oceans. “My hope is that in the future there will not be a need for a sustainability award, that it will be part and parcel of everyone’s life and all business practices,” Rockefeller told Kyodo News ahead of receiving the award in Manhattan.

Rockefeller was honored in part for her film “Mission of Mermaids,” which was first shown in 2011 to the Japanese Diet as part of the launch of Sailors for the Sea, an organization started by her husband, David, encouraging boat owners to protect oceans. The short documentary looks at the current state of the oceans and how to care for them.

“Susan is really a renaissance woman and when I reviewed her film, ‘Mission of Mermaids,’ I thought this is a lady who is creating imagination and love (for oceans) in her work,” Sustainability Week founder Pamela Peeters told the gala audience at Tesla Motors Inc.’s Manhattan showroom.

The award ceremony was on the fourth day of a week-long event created by the Belgian-born Peeters to encourage New Yorkers to make eco-friendly habits a way of life.

“Right now, people are disassociated with nature. I call it ‘nature deficit disorder.’ And when you don’t have a relationship with nature, you won’t feel that need to save it,” she explained to Kyodo News.

Apart from programmes focusing on subjects such as business, art and fashion, Peeters wanted to honor a person whose projects such as business, art and fashion, Peeters wanted to encourage New Yorkers to make eco-friendly habits a way of life.

Ocean advocate and documentary filmmaker Susan Rockefeller (L) accepts the Sustainability Steward award from Sustainability Week NYC founder Pamela Peeters (R) on 15 May, 2014, during a gala at Tesla Motors Inc.’s Manhattan showroom in New York as part of the weeklong event to promote environmental lifestyle and business practices.

Francois Godard at 83 screens a 3D ‘Adieu’ at Cannes

CANNES (FRANCE), 22 May — Oscar-nominated French film director Jean-Luc Godard sent a film full of 3D images that looked like moving paintings to say what may have been “adien” to the Cannes film festival on Wednesday, while staying away himself.

It was hard to make much of “Adieu au Langage” (Goodbye to Language), except to say it features a man and a married woman having an affair, a stray dog and what preservation and conservation looks like.”

Peeters, who came to New York in 1999 to start a green television show “Our Planet,” said she chose Rockefeller for the prize because of the filmmaker’s ability to engage audiences about the importance of saving the world’s water.

Apart from film, Rockefeller designs jewelry using environmentally friendly materials to inspire conversation about the ocean. The jewelry is also sold several times a year at Japan’s Takashimaya Co department stores as a fundraiser for her husband’s nonprofit group.

Rockefeller also sits on the board of the marine conservation advocacy organization Oceana and has a motto to “protect what is precious” that guides her.

“Sustainability: it’s really taking care of the resources, the air, the water, all of the life on this planet so that there’s enough for future generations,” she said. Rockefeller’s next film, “Food for Thought. Food for Life,” will focus on food and how the world must tackle the problem of a rapidly growing population on a planet with limited resources. It will premiere in Shanghai this October.—Kyodo News

Superman and Batman face off in ‘Dawn of Justice’

LOS ANGELES, 22 May — Time Warner Inc’s Warner Bros studio on Wednesday unveiled the title of director Zack Snyder’s anticipated superhero sequel, “Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice,” in which the two legendary DC Comics heroes will face off. The film, scheduled for release on 6 March, 2016, is the follow-up to last year’s “Man of Steel,” which grossed $668 million in worldwide ticket sales. “Dawn of Justice” will see Henry Cavill reprise his role as Superman opposite “Argo” actor and Ben Affleck as Batman, a choice that split many fans of the franchise. —Reuters

Black Keys members Dan Auerbach and Patrick Carney (R) accept their awards for best rock album and best rock song at the 55th Annual Grammy Awards in Los Angeles, California, on 10 Feb, 2013. REUTERS

French’s Godard at 83 screens a 3D ‘Adieu’ at Cannes

Black Keys score Billboard No. 1, hold off Jackson and Parton

LOS ANGELES, 22 May — Grammy-winning rockers the Black Keys debuted at the top of the Billboard 200 weekly album chart on Wednesday, coming in ahead of an album of original songs from late singer Michael Jackson and country music star Dolly Parton’s latest album.

“Turn Blue,” the eighth studio album from the Ohio duo, sold 164,000 copies in its first week, according to figures from Nielsen SoundScan.

“Xscape,” a posthumous collection of eight unreleased tracks from Jackson, sold 157,000 copies, boost by a high-profile performance featuring a singing and dancing Jackson as a hologram at Sunday’s televised Billboard Awards.

Other new debuts in the top 10 of the Billboard 200 include country music group Rascal Flatts at No 5 with “Rewind,” Dolly Parton’s “Blue Smoke” at No 6 and singer-songwriter Tori Amos at No 7 with “Unrepentent Geraldines.” Christian music singer Michael W. Smith rounded out the top 10 with “ Sovereign.”

For the week ended on 18 May, overall album sales totaled 4.5 million, down 11 percent from the comparable week in 2013. Billboard said.

Superman and Batman face off in ‘Dawn of Justice’

CANNES (FRANCE), 22 May — Oscar-nominated French film director Jean-Luc Godard sent a film full of 3D images that looked like moving paintings to say what may have been “adien” to the Cannes film festival on Wednesday, while staying away himself.

Godard, the onetime enfant terrible of French film who was a founder of New Wave cinema with his 1960 film “Breathless,” might be waving goodbye.

In a video message to festival director Thierry Fremaux, Godard explained his absence from the red carpet, saying: “Dear old friend, once again thank you for inviting me to climb your 24 majestic steps, slightly lost in the herd.”

His words were accompanied by images of a herd of cattle. “Adieu au Langage” was the second French film to be shown on the eighth day of the festival, the other being “The Search,” set in Chechnya and directed by Michel Hazanavicius, an Oscar winner for “The Artist.”

But fans of the Hollywood fairy tale will be in for a shock with Hazanavicius’s latest. “Welcome to this big shit-hole - Chechnya,” are the movie’s opening words, uttered by a Russian soldier videotaping scenes of burnt-out buildings, dead livestock and, later, the murder of villagers in a war seen by some as Russia’s Vietnam.

Chechnya fought a war in 1994-96 to shake off Russian rule, but was brought back under Moscow’s control by then-prime minister Vladimir Putin in another war in 1999-2000.—Reuters

What preservation and conservation looks like.”
Virginia to help companies hit by anti-China riots

HANOI, 22 May — Vietnam has promised to provide financial help to businesses hit by anti-China riots which erupted last week.

The tax relief will include a maximum 30-per-cent cut in special consumption tax this year and a two-year delay in payments for taxes that arose before May 2014, it said.

Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung had asked the finance ministry to press in- surees to speed up damage assessments and payouts to affected enterprises.

Vietnam would also ease visa requirements for foreign workers and allow early credits for affected businesses, among other relief measures.

Thousands of people attacked businesses and factories in Vietnam last week, targeting Chinese workers and Chinese-owned businesses after Beijing parked an oil rig in a part of the South China Sea claimed by Hanoi. Many Taiwanese-owned firms bore the brunt because the crowds believed they were owned by mainland Chinese.

The Vietnamese government said two people were killed and 140 others were wounded in Ha Tinh Province. Metallurgical Corporation of China Ltd said four were killed and 130 injured in the protests.

Tiger Woods is a great dad, ex-wife says four years after divorce

LOS ANGELES, 22 May — The ex-wife of Tiger Woods said she has a good relationship with the golfer and called him a “great father” in her first media comments on their relationship since their marriage was dissolved four years ago after his serial cheating.

Elin Nordegren, 34, told People magazine in an interview published on Wednesday that she has put Woods’ publicized affairs in the past.

“I have moved on, and I am in a good place,” Swedish born Nordegren said. “My relationship with Tiger is centered around our children, and we are doing really good — we really are — and I am so happy that this is the case. He is a great father.”

Woods, 38, and Nordegren divorced in 2010, less than a year after his string of at least a dozen affairs came to light in one of the biggest sex scandals in the world of sports.

The revelations tarnished the highly crafted image of Woods, one of the world’s richest and most popular athletes, costing him tens of millions of dollars in endorsements at the time and providing months of fodder for tabloids.

The couple has two children — daughter Sam, 6, and son Charlie, 5 — and live near each other in Florida. Nordegren, a former model and nanny, married Woods in 2003 and their divorce settlement with Woods was estimated to be worth $100 million.

“In the beginning, you tamp down the animosity for the kids’ sake,” she said. “But then I realized I need to move on.”

Nordegren, who went through intensive therapy at the time of the split and says she still sees a therapist weekly.

“I’m not going to deny that I went through the wringer. But I don’t think I have people to support me at the time of the split and I’m really thankful for the kids’ sake,” she said.

Alyson Slattery, an executive assistant at a building.

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Atletico bid to outwit wealthy neighbours Real

LISBON, 22 May — Atletico Madrid have a chance in Saturday’s Champions League final not only to claim their debut European crown but to deny their loathed and vastly wealthy city neighbours Real Madrid a record-extending 10th.

Atletico have already outperformed this season in securing a remarkable La Liga triumph, shattering the domestic dominance of Real and Barcelona and becoming the first team other than the big two to win the Spanish title since Valencia in 2004. They are also back competing with the continent’s elite after a lengthy absence and the first showpiece between teams from the same city in the 59-year history of the European Cup is their second final after they lost last year to Bayern Munich.

Real, the world’s richest club by income who have splashed more than 600 million euros (468.76 million pounds) on players over the past five years, are appearing in their 13th final, but the first since their last success in 2002.

Their vast outlay is proof that president Florentino Perez’s obsession with winning what is known in Spain as “la decima” (the 10th).

After Real’s La Liga campaign faltered in the final weeks of the campaign, failure in Lisbon would be a massive blow to the construction magnate’s prestige. “From the first day a player arrives at the club, he is already saying that he has come to win the ‘decima’,” former Real forward Predrag Mijatovic said in an interview with Marca sports daily published on Wednesday.

“There is too much pressure being put on the players,” added the Montenegrin, who scored the winner in Real’s 1-0 Champions League final triumph against Juventus in 1998.

“The best way to take the sting out of this obsession is winning and then we won’t be talking about the 10th anymore.”

Atletico, known as “the mattress makers” after their red and white-striped, shirts, and Real, who play in all-white and are nicknamed “the merengues”, have met only once before in continental competition, in the European Cup semi-finals in 1958-59.

Real went through to what was their fourth consecutive final after winning a replay in Zaragoza when Ferenc Puskas scored the winner in a 2-1 success.

The city neighbours have met four times this season. In La Liga, Atletico won 1-0 at Real’s Bernabeu stadium and they drew 2-2 at the Calderon in the return, while in the two-legged King’s Cup semi-finals Atletico were on the end of a 5-0 aggregate drubbing.

Former Atletico striker David Ferrer, the man he beat to become the first man to win a grand slam title eight years last time, surprised others when he normally sweats aside on the surface have pushed him mighty close.

Fellow Spaniard David de Gea, who has bought a second house claiming a second, known as “the meringues”, in all-white and are nicknamed “the mattress makers” after their red and white-striped, shirts, and Real, who play in all-white and are nicknamed “the merengues”, have met only once before in continental competition, in the European Cup semi-finals in 1958-59.

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Atletico’s coach Diego Simeone (C) and his players dance during a parade after winning the Spanish first division soccer league title in Madrid on 18 May, 2014.— REUTERS

Paris, 22 May — Say it quietly but some chalks are appearing in the suit of armour Rafael Nadal usually wears on a claycourt as the Spaniard sets his sights on a ninth French Open title.

By his high standards the 28-year-old Spaniard has suffered a mediocre season on Europe’s red dust courts so far and one or two players, chiefly Novak Djokovic, will arrive in Paris with genuine title hopes.

World number one Nadal has lost three matches on his beloved clay in the build-up to Roland Garros for the first time in a decade while others he normally sweeps aside on the surface have pushed him mighty close.

Fellow Spaniard David Ferrer, the man he beat to become the first man to win a single grand slam eight years last time, surprised others when he normally sweats aside on the surface have pushed him mighty close.

Beating him over five sets on clay has proved almost impossible and once he gets into his stride on Paris’s relative fast and bouncy claycourts he appears unstoppable.— Reuters

England, Italy cannot afford to lose Cup opener

VIIRGINIA WATER, (ENGLAND), 22 May — Neither England nor Italy can afford to lose next month’s World Cup opener in Brazil, former Italy and Chelsea striker Gianfranco Zola said on Wednesday.

England and Italy have been drawn in Group D alongside Costa Rica and Uruguay, and Zola believes the sweltering conditions of the Amazon jungle could take their toll when the sides meet in Manaus on 14 June.

“It (Manaus) is a tough place to go,” Zola, who was playing in golf’s BMW PGA Championship Pro-Am at Wentworth, told Reuters. “I think it is going to be tight because I think all the teams are more or less on the same level.

“A lot will be to do with the conditions when they get there. I don’t think England is favourite or Italy is favourite. I also think, psychologically, it is important not to lose the first game.”

With England’s young guns still cutting their teeth and Italy going through a period of transition under manager Cesare Prandelli, Uruguay are tipped to top Group D, especially given their formidable striking duo of Luis Suarez and Edison Cavani.

But Zola, who made 35 appearances for Italy, does not believe it is as clear-cut as many are predicting.

“I think the three teams stand the same chances really,” added the former Chelsea favourite.

“Uruguay has got quality players but Italy has got plenty and England has got a lot of young players so they can do well. I think they are on the same level so we will see.”

Reuters

Rafael Nadal of Spain

Crystal Palace’s manager Ian Holloway (L) celebrates next to Watford’s manager Gianfranco Zola following their Championship play-off final soccer match at Wembley Stadium in London on 27 May, 2013.— REUTERS

Predrag Mijatovic said in an interview with Marca sports daily published on Wednesday.

“Usually I’m like, ‘Oh my God, I have to defend’. This time I’m going to be cool with it,” Williams, who has bought a second Paris apartment near the Eiffel Tower, said recently when looking ahead to the French Open.— Reuters

Last weekend he was over-whelmed by Djokovic in the Italian Open final.

Even his 44th career title on clay, achieved in Madrid, earlier this month, was not totally convincing as he was outplayed for a set in the final by Kei Nishikori before the Japanese player retired with back problems.

That said, the alarm bells will not be ringing yet...

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Reuters