Myanmar needs to adopt the most appropriate primary healthcare services: Vice President Dr Sai Mauk Kham

By Aung Khin

El Niño conditions have caused an adverse impact on crop cultivation in the central Myanmar region, farmers say. The cultivation of sesame, beans, peas and other crops have started in the dry zone of the country such as Monywa, Magway and Pakokku. However, the impact of El Niño conditions has caused a lack of water for farm and in these areas.

A farmer from Magway Region said: “I have scattered bean seeds. But there is not enough rain for the soil to grow the plant. I worry about the yield in the coming harvest.”

Myanmar meteorologist U Tun Lwin warned in May to make preparations for the effects of El Niño, which is forecast to last from this month until June next year, with the worst conditions in December.

The effects of El Niño include declining rainfall, hot weather, drought, a late monsoon and the early departure of the monsoon.

The current price of mung bean FAQ is about K740,000 per ton and green gram is K1.2 million per ton.

An exporter from Bayintaung Brokerage said: “The prices of beans and peas are quite cool since three weeks ago. However, these current prices are higher than those of summer.”

He added that the demand for green gram is highest from China, while India is purchasing pigeon peas and mung beans.

In his speech, the vice president said that with the aim of providing primary healthcare services for all human beings, all the countries agreed to take measures to provide primary healthcare services to all at the international conference on primary healthcare held in Alma Ata in 1978 under the motto “Health for all by the year 2000”.

Primary healthcare services are essential, scientific and affordable basic healthcare for everyone irrespective of their social classes, races and religions, the vice president continued. The best example of providing primary healthcare was barefoot doctors in a neighbouring country who took six-month to one-year courses and went to remote rural areas to provide the cheapest and closest healthcare services, he said.

The vice president also said that Myanmar needs to adopt the most appropriate primary healthcare services. About 70 percent of the about 60 million people in Myanmar live in rural areas and most of them are poor. A rural healthcare centre has to take care of about 38 villages as there are only 1,684 rural healthcare centres for more than 64,000 villages across the country.

To provide primary healthcare services for rural people, Myanmar must build more rural health centres and train more health workers as well as assistant midwives and Community Health Workers, the vice president pointed out.

In conclusion, the vice president urged the participants in the workshop to cooperate with other ministries and local and international NGOs to provide primary healthcare services to all.

The workshop will continue until 10 June.—MNA

El Niño affects crop cultivation in Myanmar’s arid region

Press Release on ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) Defence Officials’ Dialogue, ARF Security Policy Conference and ARF Senior Officials’ Meeting

Yangon, 9 June—As the Chair of the ASEAN during 2014, Myanmar hosted the ASEAN Regional Forum Defence Officials’ Meeting, ARF Security Policy Conference and ARF Senior Officials’ Meeting at Parkroyal Hotel as well as Sedona Hotel, Yangon, from 7th to 9th June 2014 respectively.

The meetings were attended by ARF Defence Officials, ARF Security Policy Officials as well as ARF Senior Officials.

ASEAN Regional Forum Defence Officials’ Dialogue (ARF DOD)

The ARF Defence Officials’ Dialogue was held on 7 June 2014 in Parkroyal Hotel in Yangon. The Meeting was chaired by the Major General Tin Maung Win, Vice-Chief of Armed Forces Training. During the meeting, Defence Officials discussed on the role of the armed forces in Non-Traditional Security Challenges as well as role of the Military in Human Security.

ASEAN Security Policy Conference (ASPC) AN

The ARF Security Policy Conference was held on 8 June 2014 in Parkroyal Hotel in Yangon chaired by H.E. Commodore Aung Soe Win, Deputy Minister for Defence. At the meeting, the officials exchanged the views on regional and international security situation and also discussed on contribution of armed forces to Confidence Building Measures in the wake of growing friction among nations.

Furthermore, they were also briefed on the outcomes of the 8th ASEAN Defence Ministers’ Meeting which was held at last May 2014 in Nay Pyi Taw and report of ARF Defence Officials’ Meeting held on 8 April 2014 in Brussels respectively.

ASEAN Regional Forum Senior Officials’ Meeting (ARF SOM)

The ARF Senior Officials’ Meeting (ARF SOM) was held on 9 June 2014 chaired by Myanmar SOM Leader, Director-General U Aung Lynn from ASEAN Affairs Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs. At the meeting, ARF Senior Officials exchanged views on regional and international issues, reviews of Confidence Building Measures and Preventive Diplomacy, the recommendations of the (See page 3)
Progress of roads, bridges inspected on Nay Pyi Taw Council Area

NAY PYI TAW, 9 June—Union Minister for Construction U Kyaw Lwin on Sunday inspected progress in placing asphalt on Muntegwin-Kyidaung-Khawma-Nay Pyi Taw ringroad in Nay Pyi Taw Council Area and progress of Paunglaung Bridge being built by Bridge Construction Project Special Group (3).

The Union minister gave instructions on timely completion of the road and bridge meeting set standards.

He also viewed upgrading of 5th road linking the Yangon-Mandalay Expressway and the Yangon-Mandalay Highway (Nay Pyi Taw-Mandalay section), construction of earthen pavement.

The Union minister also inspected prevention against erosion at the mile post No 12/2 and 12/3 on the highway.—MNA

Union ministers enjoy sports activities in Kayin State

Union Minister U Tint Hsan handed over gifts and sports gear presented to Kayin State government.

Upper House Relief and Victim Rehabilitation Committee Chairman Vice-Chairman of MOC Dr Khin Shwe presented K2.5 million to the referral, K2.5 million to the challenge and K5 million to Kayin State sports committee fund, vice president of Myanmar boxing federation U Khin Oo K2.5 million to Kayin State sports committee fund, other wellwishers cash to the same fund to Kayin State Sports Committee U Saw Sa Law Hla.

The Union minister, the chief minister, General Mutu Sae Poe of KNU and Kayin State Chief Minister U Zaw Min.

In the early morning, the cycling demonstration was performed, and the Union ministers presented prizes to the winners.

On Tuesday, Dr Tin Maung Maung Than, Dr N Ganesan and Daw Seint Yi Htet will give the lectures to the trainees in the three-day course. On Monday, Dr Tin Maung Maung Than, Dr N Ganesan and Daw Seint Yi Htet will give the lectures to the trainees in the three-day course.

Civil Service Training kicks off at Ministry of Information

The Ministry of Information and Konrad Adenauer Stiftung jointly organized the Civil Service Training at the hall of the ministry in Nay Pyi Taw on Monday.

Director-General U Ye Tint of Information and Public Relations Department made a speech and German Foundation Dr Thomas Lawo explained understanding self and others and the skills for team leadership.

Altogether 52 trainees from ministries are attending the course. The similar course will be conducted in Yangon from 12 to 14 June.—MNA

Union FM felicitates Portuguese counterpart

NAY PYI TAW, 10 June—U Wunna Maung Lwin, Union Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, has sent a message of felicitations to His Excellency Mr. Rui Machete, Minister of State and Foreign Affairs of the Portuguese Republic, on the occasion of the National Day of the Portuguese Republic, which falls on 10 June 2014.—MNA

Serbian Embassy in Myanmar opens account at MFTB

The Embassy of Serbia in Myanmar takes this opportunity to inform the friendly Myanmar citizens that Serbia has recently been hit by unprecedented natural disaster caused by heavy floods, resulting with the loss of many human lives and huge devastation of the country. Tens of thousands of Serbia citizens have been displaced from their homes and they are in need of humanitarian relief.

Regarding that, the Embassy has opened a Special Foreign Currency Account (in US Dollar) at the Myanmar Foreign Trade Bank in Yangon at which those who are willing to help can deposit their financial donations.

The account of the embassy is 1 DA 02 00116 and account name is The Embassy of the Republic of Serbia (Donations to the flood victims in Serbia).

The embassy takes this opportunity to express its profound gratitude to all those who wish to help the victims of floods in Serbia and removal of their consequences.—NLM

Third leg of Myanmar Golf Tour to be held 19-22 June

The golfers are to take part in the sports qualifier on 16 June and to register at the club not later than 14 June. Women golfers are to contact the club on 17 June. You can find more information at 092037671, 09420017835 and 0973130474.

Those who stood from the first to 20th positions in the tours held in Yangon do not need to join the qualifier.—NLM
Government considers property taxes to further control real estate market

NAY PYI TAW, 9 June—As there is no restriction as to how many plots of land a person can buy in Myanmar, wealthy and well-to-do people invest in and speculate on land as if it were a commodity, resulting in unstable and skyrocketed land prices in Myanmar, Union Minister for President Office U Soe Maung told the lower house session in Nay Pyi Taw on Monday.

The union minister said although the government allows first time buyers to pay lower taxes, it is controlling land prices by levying 30 percent property transaction taxes and income taxes on those who speculate on land. However, he admitted that the government is losing taxes because land speculators buy land form owners under general power or special power without official registration of the transaction with the Yangon City Development Committee, which is responsible for collecting taxes on land transactions.

The union minister also said that land prices tend to rise in early stages of economic liberalization as factories, hotels and houses are being built hastily, but they will later fall and become stable since the government is drawing town plans for factories, hotels and houses.

The union minister said that the government is considering property taxes adopted in the international community by consulting with state/region governments, state/region parliaments and businessmen. The Ministry of Finance will also consider drafting a bill for property taxes if necessary, he concluded.

At the Monday session, the proposal submitted by Lower House Representative U Thein Nyunt to adopt a special law safeguarding the lives of about 3 million Myanmar migrant workers abroad was not approved by the lower house.

At the upper house session in Nay Pyi Taw on Monday, representative debated the proposal to adopt proportional representation system for the upcoming elections for the upper house, and most representatives participated in the debate rejected the proposal as the system is new and complicated for Myanmar voters.

MNA

Press Release on ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) Defence Officials’ Dialogue, ARF Security ...

(from page 1)

ARF Experts and Eminent Persons (EEPs) as well as stakeholders on implementation of the Hanoi Plan of Action to implement the ARF Vision Statement.

The meeting discussed on activities and initiatives on Confidence Building Measures and Preventive Diplomacy for the inter-sessional year 2014-2015, ARF Statements and Work Plans and ARF Security Outlook 2014 to be published the upcoming 21st ASEAN Regional Forum that will be held on 10 August 2014. Furthermore, the meeting exchanged views on the Provisional Agenda and Tentative Programmes of Activities for the 21st ARF at the same time.

MNA

Vice-Senior General Soe Win with Lieutenant General Wang Guanzhong, Chinese Deputy Chief of the General Staff of PLA and party.—MYAWADY

NAY PYI TAW, 9 June—Deputy Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win received Lieutenant General Wang Guanzhong, Deputy Chief of the General Staff of the People’s Liberation Army of the People’s Republic of China and party at the hall of the Bayintnaung Avenue in Nay Pyi Taw on Monday to hold discussion on further strengthening friendly relations between the armed forces of Myanmar and China.

Both sides exchanged views on military technological training and cooperation, and stability in border regions.

MNA

Vice-Senior General Soe Win receives Deputy Chief of General Staff of PLA

Representatives attending Lower House session.—MNA

Rural & urban planning course opened

NAY PYI TAW, 9 June—The opening ceremony of the rural and urban regional planning course (2/2014) was held in Nay Pyi Taw on Monday morning.

Union Minister for National Planning and Economic Development Dr Kan Zaw made an opening speech at the ceremony.

The union minister urged the trainees to draw plans that are in accord with the policies of the state and the ministry, international norms and the needs of the people.

A total of 90 trainees are attended the course, which lasts until 17 June.

Officials of the Planning Department of the Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development, Human Settlement and Housing Development Department of the Ministry of Construction and Rural Development Department of the Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development will give lectures to the trainees.

MNA

Union Minister Dr Kan Zaw speaking at opening ceremony of rural and urban regional planning course.—MNA

President U Thein Sein sends felicitations to Portugal President, PM

NAY PYI TAW, 10 June—U Thein Sein, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, has sent messages of felicitations to His Excellency Professor Anibal Cavaco Silva, President of the Portuguese Republic, and His Excellency Mr. Pedro Passos Coelho, Prime Minister of the Portuguese Republic, on the occasion of the National Day of the Portuguese Republic, which falls on 10 June 2014.—MNA
**Mandalay, 9 June—** The 33rd Meeting of the Greater Mekong Sub-region Tourism Working Group took place at Mandalay Hill Resort Hotel in Mandalay on Monday.

Delegates from six Mekong sub-region countries, officials of Ministry of Hotels and Tourism and the Asia Development Bank attended the meeting, focusing on market promotion in the GMS tourism industry and attractions, tourism package tours among GMS countries, development of human resources in GMS tourism industry, alleviation of poverty, sustainable development of tourism industry, implementation of GMS tourism strategy, cooperation among partner organizations and private sectors.

The meeting continues till 12 June.

Tin Maung (Mandalay)

**Medical team delivers free health care to locals in South Dagon Tsp**

**Yangon, 9 June—** A medical team of Dagon Myothit (South) Township Union Solidarity and Development Party gave free medical treatment to the local people at Basic Education Middle School No 7 Branch in Ward 57 of the township on Sunday.

The medical team led by Dr U Aung Naing Oo comprised of general practitioners, dentists and eye specialists. They provided health care services free of charge to 138 patients of the ward.

Myint Than (Oxygen)

**Dredging drain to be proper flow of water in rainy season**

**Kawthoung, 9 June—** With the aim of ensuring proper flow of water in the rainy season, the drains were dredged in front of Basic Education Middle School (Branch) in Shwezirnyaw Ward of Kawthoung in Taninthayi Region on Sunday. As water improperly flowed in the drain in front of the school, the retaining walls of the school collapsed last year. Thus, the regional authorities and local people funded reconstruction of the retaining walls. That is why an over 200-foot-long drain was dredged for proper flow of water.

Kyaw Soe (Kawthoung)

**GMS tourism working group meeting focuses on tourism HRD**

**Mandalay, 9 June—**

The 33rd Meeting of the GMS tourism Working Group continued at Mandalay on Monday.

**Human rights knowledge shared to police in Mandalay**

**Mandalay, 9 June—**

Provisions on human rights are included in the existing laws and regulations being practiced by the Myanmar Police Force, said Police Col Zaw Win Aung of Mandalay Region Police Force at the opening ceremony of the Human Rights Course, jointly conducted by the MPF and the UNO-HCHR at Ye Thurein Hall of the region police force in Mandalay on Monday.

Abiding by the police code of conduct is practicing the human rights, the police colonel added.

Human Rights Officer Tin Maung (Mandalay)

**Mini book corners fulfilled with new books in Lashio**

**Lashio, 9 June—** Lashio District Information and Public Relations Department of northern Shan State keeps mini book corners in public places in Lashio.

On Monday, staff of the department delivered 1,764 books to 28 mini book corners for raising reading habit of local people. —Lashio District IPRD

Mr Fred Rowski of the UN- OHCHR extended greetings. Altogether 75 police officers are attending the course up to 10 June.

Tin Maung (Mandalay)

**Inspection teams check highway buses for traffic safety in Kyaukse**

**Kyaukse, 9 June—** Under the arrangements of Transport Planning Department, Directorate of Road Transport, the Central Transport Supervisory Committee, the inspection teams performed surprise checks at buses at the highway bus terminal in Kyaukse of Mandalay on Saturday aiming at declining traffic accidents and ensuring roadside safety. The teams comprising officers of Transport Planning Department and Police squads checked the highway buses passing Kyaukse along the routes from Mandalay to Nay Pyi Taw, Yangon, Meiktila, Magway, Myintgyaw, Myittha and Kume whether there are fire extinguisher, driver licence and bus conductor licences. In addition, the buses must have emergency exit and good maintenance.

Action will be taken against the buses and bus workers who do not abide by the traffic rules and inspections of the inspection teams. The surprise checks will be performed twice a week.

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Tin Maung (Mandalay)
Militants attack airport in Pakistan’s Karachi, 27 dead

ISLAMABAD, 9 June — A group of heavily armed gunmen stormed Pakistan’s biggest airport on Sunday and at least 27 people were killed in a night-long battle at one of the country’s most high-profile targets.

The assault on Jinnah International Airport in Karachi, Pakistan’s sprawling commercial hub of 18 million people, took place as Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif’s government tries to engage Taliban militants in talks to end years of fighting. The attack began just before midnight when 10 gunmen wearing military uniforms shot their way into the airport.

Gun battles went on for five hours and television pictures showed fire raging as ambulances ferried casualties away. By dawn on Monday, the army said the airport had been secured. “Ten militants aged between 20 and 25 have been killed by security forces,” said a spokesman for the paramilitary Rangers force. “A large cache of arms and ammunition has been recovered from the militants.”

Pakistan’s paramilitary force said that the attackers were ethnic Uzbeks, Pakistani officials often blame foreign militants holed up in lawless areas on the Afghan border for staging attacks alongside the Pakistani Taliban around the country.

“Three militants blew themselves up and seven were killed by security forces,” Rizwan Akhtar, the regional head of the paramilitary Rangers, said in televised remarks. “The militants appear to be Uzbek.” Officials said no aircraft had been damaged.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility, but Pakistan Taliban militants, allied with but separate from the Afghan Taliban, are battling to overthrow the Pakistani state and impose their hard-line vision of Islam. Early officials said all flights had been diverted.

China talks trade, economic potential on visit to new government

NEW DELHI, 9 June — China’s Foreign Minister Wang Yi promised on Sunday to help India’s economic development and emphasized that the two countries see eye-to-eye on issues of their shared Himalayan border.

The trip came two weeks after Prime Minister Narendra Modi won a resounding majority in a general election on promises of reviving a flagging economy.

“China stands by your side throughout your efforts of reform and development,” Wang told the Hindu newspaper. “No country can choose its neighbour, but friendship may be fostered,” he said, calling for innovative solutions to resolve the two countries’ vastly differing perception of where large stretches of their shared Himalayan border lies.

Modi is seeking to strengthen India’s armed forces and economy, in part to enable him to react more decisively in foreign relations than his predecessor, the mild-mannered Manmohan Singh.

Wang met his Indian counterpart Sushma Swaraj on Sunday for talks that lasted more than three hours, the first high-level meeting between the two countries since Modi assumed office.

“Both leaders felt that there was tremendous untapped potential for the growth of economic ties,” Syed Akbaruddin, spokesman for Ministry of External Affairs, told a media briefing following the talks.

Akbaruddin said China and India are looking at least six more visits at ministerial level or above this year, a significant intensification of bilateral meetings.

China dealt India a humiliating defeat in a short border war in 1962, an event that has cast a shadow over relations ever since, with occasional flare-up along disputed patches of the border to this day.

India runs a $40 billion trade deficit with China and Modi meets Wang on Monday is expected to renew India’s demands for greater market access to reduce that gap.

China’s own embrace of an export-led model has helped its economy outgrow India’s fourfold since 1980.

At the meeting on Sunday, Swaraj and Wang raised the possibility of China investing in industrial parks in India, a move that could help rebalance trade.

India to engage with neighbours, China — President Mukherjee

NEW DELHI, 9 June — India’s new government will engage energetically with its neighbours, including China, the president said on Monday in a speech to parliament setting out Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s policy agenda.

Modi, elected in a landslide last month, invited South Asian regional leaders to his inauguration. He was due to meet China’s foreign minister on Monday. — Reuters

Suspected Abu Sayyaf member nabbed in S Philippines

MANILA, 9 June — Government security forces arrested on Monday morning a suspected member of terrorist group Abu Sayyaf who is believed to be involved in several atrocities in southern Philippines, a police official said.

Benjamin Magalong, chief of the Philippine National Police’s Criminal Investigation and Detection Group, identified the suspect as Moraham Ameng, alias Ameng Alamirsul and Rabang. Ameng was nabbed at Bulan-bulan village in Lanawan town, Basilan Province.

Magalong said Ameng was arrested by virtue of warrants issued by the Basilan Regional Trial Court for the crime of kidnapping and illegal detention. He said Ameng was involved in the kidnapping of a doctor and his family, kidnapping of 105 teachers and pupils also involved in the killing of three coconut plantation workers many years ago.

The Abu Sayyaf group, founded in the early 1990s, is a violent terrorist group operating in southern Philippines.

Xinhua
Kerry says freed Taleban inmates would target US at ‘enormous risk’ —CNN

WASHINGTON, 9 June — If the five Taleban inmates released from Guantanamo Bay prison in exchange for a captive American soldier rejoined the fight against the United States, they would do so at great risk, US Secretary of State John Kerry said on Sunday. "I’m not telling you they don’t have some ability at some point to go back and get involved," Kerry said in an interview with CNN’s “State of the Union” programme. "But they also have the ability to kill Americans.

"These guys pick a fight with us, in the future or now or at any time, at enormous risk." Concern that the five former inmates might return to fight has been a factor in controversy in the United States over the deal, under which Army Sergeant Bowe Bergdahl was handed over to US troops in Afghanistan on 31 May after nearly five years in captivity and the five Taleban members were flown from Guantanamo to Qatar.

Kerry said the United States has proven its ability to target al - Qaeda fighters in western Pakistan and Afghanistan in the war on terrorism and that nobody should doubt the capacity of the United States to protect Americans.

US officials have referred to release of the Islamists in exchange for Bergdahl as a transfer. They said the men would be subject to certain restrictions in Qatar, which brooked the deal. One official said that would include a minimum one-year ban on travel outside of Qatar as well as monitoring of their activities.

“They’re not the only ones keeping an eye on them,” Kerry told CNN.

The five had been held at the US Guantanamo Bay prison in Cuba since 2002. Their release drew criticism from members of the US Congress, who complained they were not notified in advance by the Obama administration.

Adding to the controversy, some of Bergdahl’s former comrades have alleged he was captured by the Taliban after deserting his post.—Reuters

Japan co-op official to oversee unions in Asia

Tokyo, 9 June — Having been sent to the International Labour Organization, Satoko Horiuchi is tasked with studying cooperative unions’ medical care and welfare businesses in Asian countries. “I think connections with people can produce some great power,” the 34-year-old official of the Japanese Consumers’ Co-operative Union said in an interview before leaving Tokyo.

Horiuchi was dispatched to the Switzerland-headquartered organization in April to support the operation of cooperative unions, which are nonprofit mutual support entities, in Asia for the next two years. “I’m looking forward to experiencing the culture in Europe,” she said. She probably never expected to pursue an international career in the future when she entered university.

Horiuchi disliked studying English until she took part in a summer language training program in the United States when she was a freshman. After returning to Japan, she joined an English language circle. While enrolled in a graduate program, she visited countries such as Thailand and Cambodia to do research on co-operative unions’ efforts to promote local businesses.

She said she had always felt frustrated at "not being able to return any favors to local people who had supported my research for a long time." To repay them for their favour, Horiuchi flew to the Philippines in 2003 as a member of the Japan International Cooperation Agency’s Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers programme.

While there, she helped a local association producing sausages to turn a profit by better calculating what prices to charge to offset costs. She said that the job was quite well suited to her time to look at what she can do to help others. In 2007, Horiuchi entered Japan’s cooperative union and took charge of educational training for officials of co-operative organizations in Asia.

Satoko Horiuchi, an official of the Japanese Consumers’ Cooperative Union —Kyodo News

Taleban storms NATO logistic compound in E Afghanistan, 4 killed

JALALABAD, 9 June — Four people were killed as gunmen broke into a NATO logistics compound in Jalalabad, the provincial capital of eastern Afghan province of Nangarhar overnight, sources said on Monday.

The attack occurred at midnight when one militant set off a car bomb at the entry of the compound in third police district to pave the way for two other armed militants to break into the building, a security source told Xinhua anonymously.

The casualties included three militants and one police with one policeman wounded, the source said.

No foreign soldier was in the complex when the incident took place in the city, 120 km east of Afghan capital of Kabul, he noted.

The Taleban insurgent group claimed responsibility for the attack. The Taleban-led insurgency has been rampant since the militant group launched an annual rebel offensive against the Afghan government forces and more than 51,000 NATO-led troops stationed in the country in mid-May.

The Taleban urged civilians to stay away from official gatherings, military convoys and centres regarded as the legitimate targets by militants besides warning people not to support the government and foreign troops.—Xinhua

China confirms attendance at US-hosted naval exercises in June

Beijing, 9 June — China on Monday confirmed that it will participate for the first time in a major US-hosted naval drill this month, sending four ships including a destroyer and frigate, even as deep military distrust persists between the two countries.

Beijing’s agreement to join the drills comes at a moment of heightened tension in the disputed East and South China Seas, and growing unease in the United States over China’s rapid military buildup and its cyber capabilities.

The Rim of the Pacific exercise, known as RIMPAC, is billed as the world’s largest international maritime exercise, with 22 nations and more than 40 ships and submarines participating the last time it was held off Hawaii in 2012.

Not all the participants are treaty allies with the United States. Last year’s participants included Pakistan and India. But China has never participated in the event, although it did send US dollars on search-and-rescue operations in 1998, the Pentagon says.

US officials said in March that China had accepted the invitation.—Reuters

Malaysia spends over 9 mln USD on flight MH370 search operations

KUALA LUMPUR, 9 June — Malaysia has so far spent about RM27.6 million (some 9 million US dollars) on search-and-recovery operations for missing Malaysia Airlines Flight MH370, a government official said on Monday.

Transport Minister Hishammuddin Hussein told reporters that the cost was for food and fuel for five Malaysian agencies that took part in the search.

The five agencies were the Royal Malaysian Airforce, Royal Malaysian Navy, Royal Malaysian Police, Fire and Rescue Department and the Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency. “The cost that we had to bear is relatively small compared with the other assets given by other countries used in the search,” he said.

MH370, carrying 227 passengers and 12 crew, left the KL International Airport for Beijing, China, at 12.41 am on 8 March 8 and disappeared from radar screens about an hour later while over the South China Sea.

Reuters

Chinese navy sailor (R) guides a helicopter to land on Chinese destroyer Harbin during the Joint Sea-2014 naval drill outside Shanghai on the East China Sea, on 24 May, 2014.—Reuters

Aerial views show the US military’s USS Green Bay LHD-5 amphibious assault ship as part of the Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) exercise in San Diego, California, July 17, 2014.—Reuters

A Chinese navy sailor on flight flight during the Joint Sea-2014 naval drill outside Shanghai on the East China Sea, on 24 May, 2014.—Reuters

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The five agencies were the Royal Malaysian Airforce, Royal Malaysian Navy, Royal Malaysian Police, Fire and Rescue Department and the Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency. “The cost that we had to bear is relatively small compared with the other assets given by other countries used in the search,” he said.

MH370, carrying 227 passengers and 12 crew, left the KL International Airport for Beijing, China, at 12.41 am on 8 March 8 and disappeared from radar screens about an hour later while over the South China Sea.

Xinhua
World leaders face pressure to act against sexual violence at UK summit

LONDON, 9 June — The kidnapping of 200 Nigerian girls by Islamist extremist Boko Haram, the stoning to death of a woman by Islamist Boko Haram, the kidnap of schoolgirls against women including the kidnapping of schoolgirls by Islamist Boko Haram, the stoning to death of a woman by Islamist Boko Haram, and the kidnap of schoolgirls against women is expected to raise pressure on the world community to take concrete action to punish these behemoths of sex abuse for sexual violence at a global summit in London this week.

Invited by Hollywood actress Angelina Jolie and British Foreign Secretary William Hague, government ministers, military and judicial leaders and aid workers from about 150 nations will join the first global summit to end sexual violence in conflicts.

The 10-13 June summit follows a run of shocking cases of violence against women including the kidnapping of schoolgirls by Islamist Boko Haram, the stoning to death of a pregnant woman in Pakistan in a so-called "honor killing", and the gang-rape and murder of two Indian teenagers who were hanged from a tree. Hague said too often those who committed these crimes never faced justice and the summit would agree on an international protocol on how to document and investigate sexual violence in conflicts.

"Often it is the lack of evidence that means that these things go unpunished," Hague told Sky television on Sunday. "Now this will lead to prosecutions. None of this will be achieved overnight but this is a problem which has been getting worse in recent decades and is utterly unacceptable in the 21st century."

The conference, with 1,200 attendees including US Secretary of State John Kerry, will be co-hosted by Hague and Jolie, special envoy of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), who joined forces in 2012 to tackle rape and sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict situations.

Oscar-winner Jolie’s involvement in humanitarian issues dates back to 2001 when she traveled to Sierra Leone as a UNHCR Goodwill Ambassador and was horrified to see the impact of years of civil war when an estimated 60,000 women were raped.

The unlikely pair have traveled together to witness the legacy of sexual violence in war and the work to help victims.

Earlier this year they went to Bosnia where more than 100,000 people, most of them civilians, were killed in the 1992-95 war when an estimated 20,000 women were believed raped.

FIGURES FROM UNICEF estimate an average of 36 women and girls are raped daily in the Democratic Republic of Congo where up to 200,000 women have suffered sexual violence since 1998.

Alice Allan, head of advocacy at CARE International, said the world had been horrified by several recent cases of violence on women which would raise the bar at the summit.

"Violence against women is not new but social media has helped bring these cases to the fore and helped galvanize governments to commit to taking action," Allan told Reuters. "These cases have been horrific but hopefully they will lead to greater action this week and public commitments from governments to which they will be held accountable."

The summit comes after Hague and Jolie last year launched a Declaration of Commitment to End Sexual Violence in Conflict that pledged to end impunity, promote accountability, and provide justice and safety for victims of sexual violence.

So far about 150 countries have signed the declaration that calls for funding to tackle violence and help survivors, improved collection of data and evidence for court action, and a ban on amnesties for sexual violence in peace agreements.

All signatory countries were invited to the London summit where the fate of the missing Nigerian schoolgirls will be debated at a ministerial meeting on Thursday.

But the need for concrete action after four days of discussion at the summit was seen as critical if there was to be progress.

"Just because Myanmar signed the international declaration on sexual violence, it doesn’t mean they will do anything about it. There should be a six-month deadline for seeing implementation of the declaration in Myanmar," said Zoya Phan, campaign manager at Burma Campaign UK.

UK’s Cameron seeks school inspection clampdown after alleged extremist plot

LONDON, 9 June — British Prime Minister David Cameron said he wants snap inspections at schools in response to “deeply concerning” allegations of a plot by extremist Muslims to take over schools in the English city of Birmingham.

In March an anonymous, unverified letter was made public, detailing a scheme to force state schools to adopt a more Islamic culture by installing Muslim teaching staff who would support a conservative Islamic religious agenda. Teaching staff would be “good” or “outstanding”, a statement from the Department for Education said.

Last week the issue took on increased political significance for Cameron after two of his most senior ministers, Education Secretary Michael Gove and Home Secretary Theresa May, publicly criticised each other for their handling of the affair.

Seeking to reassert his control of the issue and his party, Cameron convened both ministers over the weekend and on Monday released a pre-emptive statement ahead of the publication of an investigation by Ofsted schools inspectors into the alleged plot, known as Operation Trojan Horse.

"Protecting our children is one of the first duties of government and that is why the issue of alleged Islamist extremism in Birmingham schools demands a robust response," Cameron said in a statement issued by his office.

The Prime Minister said he wanted to deny schools the opportunity to cover up “activities that have no place in our society”, amid suggestions that schools had hastily arranged lessons to include Christianity teaching after being given notice of an inspection.

Cameron asked the government’s school inspector to examine the practicalities of allowing school inspections without prior notice. He also said he was convening a meeting of the government’s extremism task force and that inspectors would maintain a regular presence in the schools, reporting back directly to him.

The opposition Labour party said Cameron’s response was “weak and inadequate”.

Previous inspections of five of the schools in 2012 and 2013, when they were given up to two days’ notice, had found them to be “good” or “outstanding”, a statement from the Department for Education said.

The surge in arrivals is straining the ability of the Italian naval mission — called Mare Nostrum or “Our Sea” — to patrol the waters between Africa and Italy on its own. It has prompted local officials in Sicily, where most of the migrants are taken, to call for more European support.

“Europe can’t just turn its back on Lilliput First, to, mayor of the Sicilian port city of Porto Empedocle, said in a television interview on Sunday. “This isn’t just Sicily’s border, but it’s Europe’s border, too.”

Italy has repeatedly asked for more European countries to join Mare Nostrum, which is Europe’s biggest ever search-and-rescue mission, but so far only Slovenia has chipped in, offering one ship for two months last year.

Mare Nostrum began last October after 366 migrants fleeing African countries drowned when their boat capsized a mile from shore. After the tragedy the EU pledged 30 million euros ($40.85 million) in emergency funding, mainly to improve immigration facilities on land. The number of boat migrants who have reached Italy this year has already topped the total of more than 40,000 for the whole of 2013. The pace of arrivals is on track to exceed the record of 62,000 set in 2011 during the Arab Spring uprisings.

Italy rescues 5,200 boat migrants since Thursday, three dead

ROMA, 9 June — Italy has rescued about 5,200 men, women and children and recovered three dead bodies from overcrowded boats in the Mediterranean Sea since early Thursday.

Calm seas have led to the latest wave of migrants who have left North African shores for Italy over just three days, a navy spokesman told Reuters, with merchant ships and a Maltese vessel also aiding in the rescue efforts.

The merchant tanker Norient Star recovered three bodies from one of the migrant boats, the spokesman said, adding that he had no details about the cause of the death or identity of the victims.

Three merchant ships, including the Norient Star, took aboard a total of 700 migrants, a navy statement said, and is taking them to ports in Sicily.

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Peaceful reconciliation among Myanmar citizens

By Aung Khin

The State Constitution guarantees any citizen to enjoy the right to vote, work and live in the country, the right to own real estate and legal protections without favour for any citizen based on race, birth, religion, official position, status, culture sex and wealth.

Despite some controversial sections in the constitution, it prescribes equal rights for the citizens in terms of civil service, occupation, trade, business, and technical know-how professions.

In return, any citizen with different backgrounds of religion, race, sex and race are responsible for certain duties to follow the country’s law and integration with other communities.

Although the constitution recognizes the special position of Buddhism, it also recognizes Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Animism as the religions existing in the country, forbidding any abuse of religion for political purpose.

Therefore, every citizen should not discriminate against others from another religion, ancestry or race. All Myanmar citizens should regard each other as a part of single community.

Actually, any act intended or is likely to provoke feelings of hatred, enmity or discord between racial or religious communities or sects is contrary to the constitution. Such activities and behaviours could not help to establish a democratic society in which everyone can enjoy trust and respect each other.

Racial or religious prejudice may have negative impacts on the development of the country, leading to mistrust among the citizens. Those who accept themselves as Myanmar citizens should maintain peace and trust without differentiating each other based on colourism or race.

The sacred Mahacinapaba Pagoda (Cetiya) of 108 feet in height, the Replica of the famous Shwedagon Pagoda of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar which has already been built in Luoyang, the capital of Henan Province of the People’s Republic of China

Ba Sein

According to the concrete historical records, the close and friendly relations including religious relations between the two Nations, the People’s Republic of China and the Republic of the Union of Myanmar have been existed since years ago. As we all Buddhist throughout the Republic of the Union of Myanmar know, the sacred Tooth Relic of the Buddha from the People’s Republic of China has been conveyed to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar for four times in order to be able to be paid deep homage closely by Buddhist people in the Republic of Myanmar according to the request of the President Office of the Republic of China.

Furthermore, it is known that the respective Buddhist buildings of Thailand, India and Japan are situated in the precinct of the White Horse Temple in Luoyang, and now, the People’s Republic of China is interested to the building of the sacred Mahacinapaba Pagoda of 108 feet in height, the Replica of the famous Shwedagon Pagoda of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, and it is further learnt that the whole building of the sacred Pagoda will be completed within two years.

The Myanmar cultural handicrafts for construction of the sacred Pagoda, must be the best ones in agreement with Buddhist traditions and culture, and also must be stable and exist for long time. Those finished materials associated with Myanmar culture and traditions relating to the construction of the sacred Pagoda must be safely sent to the People’s Republic of China in accordance with agreements and co-operations of the two Nations.

The construction of this Pagoda in the People’s Republic of China must be concrete and sustainable protection from danger of natural disaster and sustainable protection, and also must be specific and highly record-ed. All these tasks must be viewed and inspected by the Myanmar Ambassador to the People’s Republic of China and authorities concerned.

Furthermore, it is known that the respective Buddhist buildings of Thailand, India and Japan are situated in the precinct of the White Horse Temple in Luoyang, and now, the People’s Republic of China is interested to the building of the sacred Mahacinapaba Pagoda of 108 feet in height, the Replica of the famous Shwedagon Pagoda of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, and according to the kind request of the President of China, the Vice President, Dr Sai Mauk Kham stressed that there were two parts for construction of the sacred Pagoda to be carried out. The first part was to make diamond orb, golden umbrella, pen-ni-shaped vane and religious objects to be enshrined, Buddha images made of teak, jade and bronze which were to be made and crafted by Myanmar artists and sculptors. All the above-mentioned tasks must be carried out at home. The second part was to carry out the construction of the main structure of the sacred Pagoda must be carried out and conducted in the People’s Republic of China.

The noble tasks of the construction of the sacred Pagoda started in April 2012, and it was further learnt that the whole building of the sacred Pagoda would be completed within two years.

The Myanmar cultural handicrafts for construction of the sacred Pagoda, must be the best ones in agreement with Buddhist traditions and culture, and also must be stable and exist for long time. Those finished materials associated with Myanmar culture and traditions relating to the construction of the sacred Pagoda must be safely sent to the People’s Republic of China in accordance with agreements and co-operations of the two Nations.

The construction of this sacred Pagoda in the People’s Republic of China and the close relations of the chief monks of the two nations, the noble tasks for the construction of the sacred Pagoda, the Replica of the famous Shwedagon Pagoda could be deeply and perfectly carried out and the situations of these noble tasks were reported in time.

Afterwards, the Chairman and the Vice Chairman of the Working Committee for construction of the Pagoda, the Union Minister for the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Union Minister for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Chairman of the Working Committee for construction of the Pagoda, Deputy Minister for the Ministry of Religious Affairs Dr. Maung Maung Htay and chairman and authorities of respective sub-committees explained and reported the present situation for construction of the sacred Pagoda respectively.

Furthermore, the Vice President said that, in order to be able to respect fully and deeply pay homage to this sacred Pagoda, all necessary requirements for the construction of the Pagoda must be the best and complete and beside, all religious materials needed for the sacred Mahacinapaba Pagoda will be firstly paid homage at the Shwedagon Pagoda in Yangon and Upatattasi Pagoda in Nay Pyi Taw before conveying them to the People’s Republic of China.

In this regard, it was known to all internal and external well-wishers in order to donate for these sacred religious materials being paid homage there.

It is further learnt that the sacred Mahacinapaba Pagoda, the Replica of the famous Shwedagon Pagoda was built on the land of 1.73 acres in the precinct of the White Horse Temple in Luoyang, the capital of Henan Province of People’s Republic of China starting from 10th April in the year of 2012, and the construction of the sacred Pagoda was undertaken by the Asia World Co., Ltd of Myanmar and the construction of the sacred Pagoda was completed in the year of 2013.
Thai army officers donate alms to Buddhist monks in Khamaukkyi

KHAMAUKKYI, 9 June—A 15-member team led by senior officers of No 25 Division of the Royal Thai Army and those of Ranong District of Thailand made donations at Maha Zeyathiri Monastery in Ward 4 of Khamaukkyi Sub-Township in Taninthayi Region on 6 June. They were welcomed by officials of Khamaukkyi Sub-Township and departmental officials. The Thai delegation offered robes and alms to Buddhist monks at the monastery and shared merits gained.

ChaungU police arrest nine suspects within 24 hours

CHAUNGU, 9 June—Police of ChaungU Township arrested nine suspects who beat four persons including Nay Myo Tun and robbed K80,000, one mobile phone and a hand drill at 2 am on Saturday near Ngashan Village of Monywa-Mandalay Road in ChaungU Township.

The incident happened on the way of Nay Myo Tun and party who came back from their work of ceiling decoration at Shwedahkan monastery in Dabayin Township.

According to further investigation, the police officers of ChaungU Township and those of Monywa Myoma police station arrested Pauksi (a) Thiha of Yongyi Ward of Monywa, Myauk Zeegwet of Shwetheindaw Ward in ChaungU Township.

The incident happened on the way of Nay Myo Tun and party who came back from their work of ceiling decoration at Shwedahkan monastery in Dabayin Township.

After investigating, the police and local authorities seized three motorbikes used by the robbers in the bush near Monywa-Mandalay railroad at 6.10 am. They also arrested two suspects namely Nyi Nyi Hlaing and two others.

It was aimed at ensuring durability of Buddhism and further strengthening relations between the peoples of two nations.

Dabayin Township Forest Department organizes tree growing ceremony

DABAYIN, 9 June—The tree growing ceremony for the rainy season took place in Dabayin of Sagaing Region on Monday.

The ceremony organized by the Township Forest Department was attended by township authorities, departmental personnel, members of social organizations and students, totalling about 300.

They planted 520 teak, eucalyptus, neem, raintree and white jute saplings at the designated places.—Thein Tun (IPRD)

Nine distinction winners in Myanmar subject emerge in Sagaing Tsp

SAGAING, 9 June—Nine Myanmar subject distinction winners emerged from the 2014 matriculation examination result from Model Ywathitgyi Village in Sagaing Township of Sagaing Region, according to the Sagaing District Education Office. A total of 900 students of 3,498 students from 19 Basic Education High Schools passed the examination in the township.

“This year, nine distinction winners in Myanmar subject came out from the result in Sagaing Township. Significantly, they all are from Model Ywathitgyi Village—four from Ywathitgyi BEHS and five from the BEHS of University for Development of National Races,” said District Education Officer U Min Oo.

The students from Sagaing Township may enter the Magway University of Medicine.

Khamaukkyi IPRD

Township IPRD

Nanda Min Lwin
Female suicide bomber hits Nigerian barracks

ABUJA, 9 June — A female suicide bomber killed herself and a soldier outside an army barracks in Nigeria’s northeastern city of Gombe on Sunday, the military said, as local leaders reported the death count from a string of earlier militant attacks had reached 110.

No one claimed responsibility for the blast or last week’s assaults but Islamist group Boko Haram has set off bombs and killed thousands in its five-year-old bid to carve out a independent state not to attend the inauguration was a reminder of how Sisi came to power and of the challenge he faces in proving that he is a democrat after winning last month’s election.

The elusive men who rule Equatorial Guinea, Chad, and Eritrea are shunned by the international community and do not often receive such invitations given their lack of allies, while the president of Mali rules a nation facing divisions within its army and Islamist extremist threats in its desert expanses. The United States only sent a senior advisor to Secretary of State John Kerry and most European countries only planned to send ambassadors.

Just having ambassadors shows very clearly that while the governments are recognizing the new transfer of power they are certainly not doing so with a huge amount of enthusiasm,” said HA Hellyer, a professor of political science at Cairo University. Egypt has been a less enthusiastic partner to fellow African states since the heady days when President Gamal Abdel Nasser welcomed liberation leaders to Cairo in the 1960s as many states gained independence from colonial rule.

CAIRO, 9 June — Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi said in his first speech to the nation on Sunday that he will focus on fighting terrorism in the “coming phase”.

“Defeating terrorism and addressing the past is the top priority in our coming phase,” said Sisi, hours after being sworn in, referring to his Islamist opponents.

Gunmen kidnap foreign oil expert in Yemen

 SANAA, 9 June — Armed Yemeni tribesmen kidnapped a foreign expert working for a U.S. oil company in the country’s central province of Marib on Sunday, an official of the interior ministry told Xinhua.

“The expert, working as a manager at a U.S. oil company in the country’s oil-rich Marib, was snatched along with his two Yemeni security bodyguards late Sunday while they were driving to the capital Sanaa,” the official said on condition of anonymity.

He also said security forces have cordoned off the areas, adding that the police have set up several checkpoints along the Sanaa-Marib highway. The official did not reveal the expert’s nationality.

Foreigners are frequently kidnapped in Yemen by al-Qaeda militants or tribesmen, who usually demand for ransoms or release of their jailed fellows. Most of the hostages have been freed unharmed.

Altogether six foreigners were kidnapped in Marib over the past three months. Last month, the tribesmen in Marib province released a German hostage who was detained for nearly four months. In return, they were paid for a ransom and the relatives were freed from the jail, according to Yemeni officials.

Four of the five African leaders who congratulated Sisi either came to power by coup d’etat decades ago, have recently faced coup attempts—or both, a reminder of how Sisi came to power and of the challenge he faces in proving that he is a democrat after winning last month’s election.

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Now everyone is hoping...that gradually there will be another transition to a true democratic state, but there are some fears of another dictatorship, another coming back of the old regime,” said Hassan Nafaa, a professor of political science at Cairo University. Egypt has been a less enthusiastic partner to fellow African states since the heady days when President Gamal Abdel Nasser welcomed liberation leaders to Cairo in the 1960s as many states gained independence from colonial rule.

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Israel joins major EU scientific initiative

Jerusalem, 9 June — Israel joined on Sunday Horizon 2020, a major EU research programme, though its guidelines bar Israel from transferring funding to settlement-related projects, officials said in a statement sent to media.

The signing ceremony, which took place in Jerusalem, was witnessed by European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

“Israel is a strong player in research and innovation and for this reason an important partner for the EU,” Barroso said in the statement. “I am pleased that we are signing the agreement today since it reflects the mutual importance we attach to cooperation and partnership in research and innovation,” he added.

Israel is the first non-European member in the 80-billion-euro programme. “Under the terms of the agreement,” a statement issued by the EU said, “Israel will have the same access to the programme as EU Member States and other Associated Countries.”

European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso said in the EU programme. “Israel will have the same access to the programme as EU Member States and other Associated Countries.”

In August, the EU said that in order to take part in the programme, Israel would have to accept its guidelines, which restrict European businesses and other entities from conducting trade or cooperating with Israeli organizations and companies operating in the West Bank territories.

The guidelines also bar Israel because the document forced it to acknowledge — in a written official form — that the settlements are not part of Israel.

But in November, Israeli officials announced they reached understanding which would allow Israel to take part of the programme. According to the agreed formula, the project would only apply within Israel’s pre-1967 border and would only apply within Israel’s pre-1967 border and would only apply within Israel’s pre-1967 border and would only apply within Israel’s pre-1967 border and would only apply within Israel’s pre-1967 border.

The agreement would include a clause stating Israel’s objection to the guidelines.

Israel occupied the West Bank and East Jerusalem during the 1967 Mideast War and has held this territory ever since, despite international criticism, — Xinhua

Apple to make 3-5 million smartwatches monthly, sales begin in October

San Francisco, 9 June — Apple Inc is preparing to sell its first wearable device this October, aiming to produce 3 million to 5 million smartwatches a month in its initial run, the Nikkei reported on Friday, citing an unidentified parts supplier and sources familiar with the matter.

Specifications are still being finalized, but the devices are likely to sport curved OLED (organic light-emitting diode) displays and sensors that collect glucose and calorie consumption to sleep activity, the Japanese news service cited industry sources as saying.

The industry has long expected Apple to unveil some sort of smartwatch, following the release of Samsung Electronics’ Galaxy Gear watches.

Wall Street is hoping to see a new Apple product this year to galvanize the former stock market darling’s share price and end a years-long drought of groundbreaking devices. CEO Tim Cook has promised “new product categories” in 2014.

Apple declined to comment. — Reuters

Uber snags $1.2 billion in new funding; seen valued at $18 billion

San Francisco, 9 June — Uber Inc has raised $1.2 billion from mutual funds and other investors in a funding round valuing the fast-growing rides-on-demand service at $18.2 billion, one of the highest valuations ever for a Silicon Valley startup.

Uber Chief Executive Officer Travis Kalanick announced the funding round on Uber’s blog on Friday.

The funding, eclipsed only by the likes of Facebook Inc before it went public, is a vote of confidence by investors in four-year-old Uber’s growth potential.

“Uber is one of the most rapidly growing companies ever, and we believe there are opportunities for continued tremendous growth,” Joan Miller, a spokeswoman for Summit Partners, an investor in the funding round, said by telephone.

Investors hope the company, which allows users to summon a ride on their smartphones, can expand globally and diversify into logistics.

The investors in the round valued Uber “pre-money” at $17 billion, the blog post said. The $1.2 billion infusion took the startup’s valuation to $18.2 billion.

An Uber app is seen on an iPhone in Beverly Hills, California, on 19 Dec, 2013. Uber has entered more than 60 markets, ranging from its hometown of San Francisco to Berlin to Tokyo. Leaked financials in December indicate that the company, which began connecting passengers with drivers of vehicles for hire about 3-1/2 years ago, is generating not $200 million a year in revenue beyond what it pays to drivers. — Reuters

Big data could help battle flu outbreaks

Beijing, 9 June — The Chinese Centre for Disease Control and Prevention is working with online search giant Baidu to tap its huge user database to help forecast flu outbreaks.

Gao Fu, deputy director of the centre, said a data-crunching prediction tool might be available as early as this year to track flu outbreaks nationally. “Big data will play a major role in safeguarding and improving public health.”

The tool is expected to provide the public with estimated flu epidemic levels and help boost prevention measures as well as aid authorities with more targeted responses, said Lai Shengjie, a researcher at the CDC’s infection prevention and control department.

Previous reports said that Baidu’s search engine had more than 100 million users a day, making it the most popular site of its kind in the country.

Users often search for flu-related information like symptoms and medications when they come down with the ailment and the data gleaned from such activity can be faster than that collected through traditional flu surveillance based in hospitals, Lai said. Key words in searches such as “cold” and “fever” as well as a combination of these can be applied to gather useful data.

Xinhua

Game of Thrones might need more seasons, says George R R Martin

New Delhi, 9 June — This might not have been the most violent season of Game of Thrones — the body count for the Red Wedding and the Battle of the Blackwater would’ve been pretty high too — but the last couple of episodes certainly feel like that.

After the brutal ending of Episode 8: The Mountain and the Viper, the next episode didn’t let up on things much either.

Episode 9: The Watchers on the Wall keeps the action up, as expected; after all, the show’s had a tradition of having big events take place in the ninth episode of each season.

As a book reader though, it’s interesting to see how much ground has already been covered by the shows. So far, each season has been roughly the contents of one book, and the show’s fourth season looks to be set to close around the end of the fourth book, A Feast for Crows.

That means that the next season of the show is going to take us through all the written material so far, if its creators continue at this pace. While readers are still waiting for the sixth book, Winds of Winter, the author, George R R Martin recently suggested in an interview with Entertainment Weekly that he might need eight books to complete the story of A Song of Ice and Fire, the name of the book series. — PTI

Fidelity Investments put in about $425 million, Wellington Management added $209 million and BlackRock Inc contributed $175 million, according to a person familiar with the matter.

Venture firms Summit Partners, Kleiner Perkins Caufield & Byers, Google Ventures and Menlo Ventures also participated in the round, a person familiar with the matter said.

Kleiner’s investment came from its Digital Growth Fund, run by former stock analyst Mary Meeker, known for her bullish recommendations during the first dot-com boom. Her fund has had recent hits, including traffic app Waze, acquired last year for $1.1 billion by Google.

Uber, which did not give details about its latest investors, operates in 128 cities across 37 countries.

Kalanick said he expected to close a second round of funding from strategic investors of about $200 million.

Uber originally started with a luxury town-car service, but in many cities has since added UberX, a low-frills service with non-professional drivers using personal cars.
British phone-hacking trial nears conclusion

LONDON, 9 June—The jury in the seven-month trial of two ex-Rupert Murdoch editors, one the media mogul’s head of British newspapers and the other a close aide to the prime minister, is expected to retire to consider its verdict this week.

Judge John Saunders is likely to finish his summing up of the high-profile case on either Monday or Tuesday, leaving the eight women and three men of the jury to decide the fates of Rebekah Brooks, Andy Coulson and five others.

The two were both editors of Murdoch’s brash News of the World Sunday tabloid which was shut three years ago as the hacking scandal engulfed his company.

Three former senior news editors from the paper have pleaded guilty to phone-hacking, and the jury at London’s historic Old Bailey court will have to decide whether Brooks and Coulson were complicit in the activity.

The case has been one of the country’s most high profile in years.

Saunders told the jury at the start of the process the matter of British justice itself was on trial, due to the close relationships that existed between the media elite and members of government and the police.

Brooks and Coulson are on trial for conspiring to hack into voicemails to generate exclusive news and for paying public officials.

Brooks, once one of the most influential women in Britain, faces a separate charge of conspiring to pervert the course of justice with her husband and staff.

The issue of voicemail interception at the 168-year-old Murdoch paper first broke into the public conscience in 2007 when its royal editor Clive Goodman and a private detective went to jail for tapping into the messages of aides to the British royal family.

Saunders, the former British royal editor, is on trial for conspiring to hack into voicemails on Monday, private Dogan news agency reported.

The accident occurred early on Monday morning as a gas cylinder exploded in a house at a village in Lice town of Diyabakir Province, leaving one woman dead and four others injured, including two in serious conditions, according to the report.

An investigation was underway.— Xinhua

India puts top priority on safety of Indians abroad

NEW DELHI, 9 June — Indian rescuers were searching on Monday for 20 students and a professor swept away by waters released from a dam while the group was bathing in a river in the mountainous northern state of Himachal Pradesh.

Rescuers found four bodies and officials say prospects of finding the rest alive are bleak for the students, who were on a college trip from southern India, were swept away when the waters of the river Beas spiked dangerously high on Sunday.

“I think they were playing in the water,” said a police official, who declined to be named because he was not authorized to speak to the media. “The water rose and they were washed away.”

Whether warning signals were sounded before the dam released water is a matter of dispute.

“There was no warning,” said D Naidu, principal of the VNR Vignana Jyothi Institute of Engineering and Technology, the south Indian college from which 65 students had set off on the trip.

“They were trying to take photos on the banks when they were washed away,” he told Reuters, saying he spoke to the survivors.

Others disputed the account.

Mandeep Singh, an engineer on the dam’s power plant, told news channel CNN-IBN that staff sound ed warnings before releasing the water and local residents “definitely warned the students to come out of the river” several times.

Officials have launched an investigation to determine the sequence of events, said police official Rajesh Kumar, but are now focused on rescue operations to find the rest of the group.

“The chances are minimal” to find them alive, he said, “but we’re trying.”— Reuters

Five people, including two police, dead in Las Vegas ambush shooting

LAS VEGAS, 9 June — An armed man and woman shouting about a “revolution” opened fire and killed two Las Vegas policemen who were eating lunch in a pizza parlour on Sunday, then fatally shot a civilian in a nearby Wal-Mart store before killing themselves, police said.

The two uniformed patrol officers, later identified as Alyn Beck, 42, and Igor Soldo, 32 — both described as family men — were ambushed without provocation shortly before 11:30 am local time inside a CiCi’s Pizza shop, authorities said.

One of the two officers managed to return gunfire before the suspects fled to an adjacent Wal-Mart, where they killed a bystander inside the front door, then exchanged gunfire with police who pursued them further into the store, Clark County Sheriff Douglas Gillespie said.

Moments later, the female suspect shot her accomplice to death, then took her own life, Gillespie told reporters at a late-afternoon news conference.

A city police spokeswoman, Laura Meltzer, earlier told Reuters that the two suspects died after they “engaged in what is being described as a suicide pact.”— Reuters

Indian river bathers swept away as dam releases water, four dead

ANKARA, 9 June — One person was killed and four others wounded in an explosion in southeastern Turkey on Monday, private Dogan news agency reported.

The accident occurred early on Monday morning as a gas cylinder exploded in a house at a village in Lice town of Diyarbakir Province, leaving one woman dead and four others injured, including two in serious conditions, according to the report.

An investigation was underway.— Xinhua

Metro Police officers are shown outside a Wal-Mart after a shooting in Las Vegas on 8 June, 2014.— Reuters

One killed, four injured in explosion in SE Turkey

Metro Police officers are shown outside a Wal-Mart after a shooting in Las Vegas on 8 June, 2014.— Reuters

Former News International chief executive Rebekah Brooks arrives with her husband Charlie at the Old Bailey courthouse on London on 6 June, 2014.— Reuters
Chinese party newspaper says Western democracy only brings chaos

China’s top newspaper on Monday warned against aping Western-style democracy just a week after the 25th anniversary of the Tiananmen crackdown, pointing to Thailand and Ukraine as examples of the kind of chaos the system can bring.

President Xi Jinping’s ascendency in a once-in-a-decade generational leadership transition had given many Chinese reason to hope for political reform, mainly due to his folksy style and the legacy of his father, Xi Zhongxun, a former reformist vice-premier.

But the repeated message the party has given out since Xi became president last year is that there will be no political liberalization. China has been on high alert over the past few weeks in the run-up to the 25th anniversary of the bloody suppression of pro-democracy demonstrations around Beijing’s Ti-ananmen Square, detaining dissidents and tightening Internet controls.

In a lengthy commentary, the ruling Communist Party’s official People’s Daily newspaper said the country needed to be on guard against falling into the “trap” of Western-style democracy. “Over the past few months, from Kiev to Bangkok, the politics of the street and public clashes have caused deep sorrow,” the newspaper said.

Mexico’s President Enrique Pena Nieto speaks during the third Caribbean Community (CARICOM)-Mexico summit in Merida on 29 April, 2014. — Reuters

Mexico City, 9 June — Mexico and the United States cannot pursue diverging policies on marijuana legalization, Mexican President Enrique Pena Nieto was quoted as saying on Sunday, hinting he may be open to following the lead taken by some US states in changing drug laws.

Political pressure has grown in Mexico to take a more liberal stance on marijuana since Washington and Colorado decided to legalize possession and sale of the drug for recreational use in 2012. Other US states plan votes soon.

Marijuana, along with contraband like cocaine and crystal meth, has been a major source of income for violent drug cartels responsible for thousands of deaths in Mexico in recent years.

Proponents of reform say legalizing marijuana would both reduce the gangs’ economic power and help generate more tax revenue.

French’s Marine Le Pen rebukes father in new anti-Semitism row

PARIS, 9 June — Marine Le Pen, leader of France’s far-right National Front (FN), rebuked her father and former party head on Sunday for remarks reviving long-standing allegations of anti-Semitism soon after a major poll victory.

“Marine Le Pen, who took over the anti-immigrant and anti-EU party from Jean-Marie Le Pen in 2011, said a controversial quip he made about a French Jewish singer that included an implied reference to concentration camp ovens had been misinterpreted.

But for an experienced politician like her father, she said, “not to have foreseen how this phrase would be interpreted is a political mistake the National Front (is) now paying for.”

Marine Le Pen, who has made the FN more acceptable to voters by playing down some hardline traditions, led the party last month to first place in French voting for the European Parliament, the first time it has ever won a nationwide poll.

French and European Jewish groups denounced her father’s comments as anti-Semitic. Another prominent leader of the FN, speaking out before Marine Le Pen, said his attack was “politically stupid and deplorable.”

The controversy began on Friday with a video posted on the FN website in which Jean-Marie Le Pen lashed out at several celebrities — including US singer Madonna, French comedian Guy Bedos and tennis star Yannick Noah — for expressing alarm that the party had swept 25 percent of the European Parliament vote.

Reminded by his interviewer that Jewish singer Patrick Bruel was among the critics, Le Pen chuckled and said: “That doesn’t surprise me. Listen, we’ll do up a batch next time.”

Reuters
Tamannaah Bhatia toned down, lost five kilograms for Humshakals

Mumbai, 9 June — Actress Tamannaah Bhatia, who is part of upcoming comedy film Humshakals, believes in including fitness regime in everyday life and says she lost five kg for her role in the laugh riot.

“Fitness is like brushing your teeth. You must include fitness to your daily life. For Humshakals, I had to lose 5 kg. So, I went to famous dietician — Pooja Makhija — and she gave me a new diet plan,” Tamannaah told IANS.

“I am allowed to eat everything — rice, pastas, and nuts, but controlled portions. At one point of time you don’t eat too much of anything and it really helped me to lose weight,” she added.

A known name down south, the actress started working out “six years back”. She said: “I was a fussy eater. I had to pull down a few kilos to look a certain way. People should not enter into dieting without any guidance. You should take professional help”.

“I always kept myself fit compared to other people because I feel if your lifestyle is not fit, then you can’t work properly. If your lifestyle is unhealthy, it will reflect on screen,” she added.


Teen tearjerker ‘Fault in Our Stars’ trounces Tom Cruise flick

Los Angeles / New York, 9 June — “The Fault in Our Stars,” a heart-wrenching love story about teens who meet in a cancer support group, won over moviegoers with a stellar $48.2 billion (28.67 million pounds) at US and Canadian theaters over the weekend, handily beating the new Tom Cruise sci-fi action film, “Edge of Tomorrow.”

“Edge of Tomorrow,” which cost about $175 million, had to settle for third place with $29.1 million from Friday through Sunday, according to estimates from tracking firm Rentrak.

“Maleficent,” starring Angelina Jolie in Walt Disney Co’s reimagining of the Sleeping Beauty fairy tale, took in $33.5 million from Friday through Sunday to finish second.

“Fault in Our Stars,” produced for just $12 million, is based on John Green’s best-selling novel about a girl who wheels around a portable oxygen tank as she fights metastatic cancer, and her boyfriend who lost a leg to the disease. Shailene Woodley and Ansel Elgort, who played siblings in dystopian thriller “Divergent,” star as the couple. Fervent fans of the book turned the film into a social media phenomenon long before it hit theaters. The trailer was viewed more than 21 million times on YouTube, while Green, known for a YouTube video blog, tweeted to some 2.6 million followers.

“Fault in Our Stars” is the latest film to tap into a teen frenzy surrounding a best-selling book, following blockbusters like “The Hunger Games” and “Twilight.” — Reuters

Benedict Cumberbatch, Tom Hardy to star in Marvel’s Doctor Strange

Los Angeles, 9 June — Sherlock star Benedict Cumberbatch and Tom Hardy are set to star in Marvel’s Doctor Strange movie adaptation. The actors are on the producer’s early wish lists, although it’s unclear what roles they’re being lined up for, according to Deadline.

It was recently announced that Scott Derrickson will be directing the film, news he confirmed on Twitter earlier this week. Scott Derrickson’s previous credits include Sinister and The Exorcism of Emily Rose. Marvel Studios president Kevin Feige recently said that the film will show the supernatural side of the Marvel universe. “There’s a whole other side to the Marvel universe, which is the supernatural side. We haven’t done anything that mind-trippy yet and for me, Doctor Strange is our doorway into that,” he said.

The film is in line for Marvel’s “Phase Three” (a sequence of releases), which will also include Ant-Man, Captain America 3 and alleged Thor 3 and Black Panther movies. — PTI

Why Jennifer Aniston needs a confidence boost for George Clooney’s wedding

Los Angeles, 9 June — Actress Jennifer Aniston has reportedly been attending sessions with a confidence coach ahead of actor George Clooney’s wedding as she fears she will run into her ex-husband Brad Pitt at the celebrations.

Jennifer, who is engaged to Justin Theroux, is said to be nervous about coming face-to-face with Brad Pitt and his fiancée Angelina Jolie when their mutual friend Clooney ties the knot with lawyer Amal Alamuddin later this year, so she is doing everything she can to put her anxieties to rest, reports contactmusic.com.

“Jen’s no stranger to therapy, so she decided to seek some help,” a source was quoted as saying by Britain’s Grazia magazine.

“At the wedding, she’ll have Justin there for support, but the thought of seeing Brad and Angelina is quite overwhelming. The therapist has been helping to build her confidence and eliminate the fear she seems to have built up about coming face-to-face with them.

“She has also been having hypnotherapy,” the source added. Though Jennifer has been Brangelina’s best friend, at the 2008 Oscars, since they divorced nine years ago, she is said to be particularly concerned about the wedding as it will be so intimate. — PTI

Benedict Cumberbatch is famous for playing Sherlock on British TV series, while Tom has played Batman villain Bane in Christopher Nolan’s Netflix Dark Knight Rises. — PTI

Neil Patrick Harris, Cranston go for Tonys on Broadway’s big night

New York, 9 June — Broadway rolls out the red carpet on Sunday for the 66th annual Tony Awards, theatre’s top honours, in a star-studded ceremony at New York’s Radio City Music Hall with Hugh Jackman returning to host the show for the fourth time.

Clint Eastwood, Bradley Cooper and Orlando Bloom will be among those appearing while Tony nominees Neil Patrick Harris and Idina Menzel are set to perform during the show, along with Sting, who will give a preview of his upcoming Broadway debut musical “The Last Ship”.

The show will be broadcast live on the CBS television network.

Forty-four productions, ranging from “Act One,” an adaptation of American playwright Moss Hart’s autobiography, to “Rooftop”, the stage version of the Oscar-winning film, opened on Broadway during the 2013/2014 season.

“It’s a very even playing field, which means there is a lot of great stuff out there”, said Hal Luftig, the producer of last season’s Tony winning musical “Kinky Boots”.

“We had a lot more shows this season,” he added in an interview. “Nobody has an edge, which I think is really great.”

“A Gentleman’s Guide to Love & Murder,” a comedy of manners about a would-be heir and a family inheritance, leads the competition with 10 nominations, including two for best actor in a musical and best director.

Actor Neil Patrick Harris

PTI

Jennifer Aniston

PTI
Asleep in Jesus
Teacher Marjorie (72 years)
Teacher Marjorie, devoted wife of Eddie Khin Maung Thwin, loving Mother of Mi Mi Thwin, (Mg Mg Thwin), Nyi Nyi Thwin, Thitae Soe Thwin and Sundee Soe Thwin, loving grandmother of Krystal Marie Brown, Marc Mg Mg Thwin, (Emma-Rose) and Noel Nyi Nyi Thwin and Emmeline Thitae Soe Thwin, fell asleep in Jesus on 9th June, Monday.
Funeral service will be held at Yayway Christian Ecumenical Garden Church on 14th June, Saturday at 10:00 am at No. 8, Kabaung Road 51/2miles, Hlaing Township.

Loving family

Japan train in front of thousands at 1st practice in Brazil
Sorocaba, (Brazil), 9 June — As a police helicopter circled overhead to keep a watchful eye on scores of anti-World Cup demonstrators outside the stadium, over 5,000 fans turned out to watch Japan’s first practice session on Sunday, a day after the Asian champions arrived in Brazil for the soccer’s showpiece tournament.

Huge cheers went up as the likes of AC Milan attacker Keisuke Honda and as the likes of AC Milan attacker Keisuke Honda and Samurai have not come to Brazil for a vacation. "Samurai have not come to look at the World Cup," Kakitani told Kyodo News.

"It’s pleasing (for all the fans to come)," Kagawa, who has scored in Japan’s last two warm-up games for the finals, told Kyodo News after the practice. "We want to go into the first game motivated and in first-class condition both physically and mentally so it is great to get this kind of support from everybody and the Japanese fans."

"The important stuff starts from now. All my body is thinking about is the first game."

The players may have looked relaxed, but Cerezo Osaka striker Yoichiro Kakitani warned Japan’s Group C rivals that the Blue Samurai have not come to Brazil for a vacation. "I have been to Brazil before and know how passionate the country is about soccer but we are not on vacation," Kakitani told Kyodo News ahead of the team’s arrival in Brazil. "We have to show (fans) the brilliance of Japanese soccer."

"I think our toughest game is going to be the first one against Ivory Coast and I think it is the same for all the teams," said Kakitani, referring to the team’s opener in Recife on 15 July. — Kyodo News

Malaysian gov’t announces new measures to promote investment
Kuala Lumpur, 9 June — Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Tun Razak announced here on Monday new liberalization measures to further promote investments in the country.

In his keynote speech at Invest Malaysia 2014, the prime minister said one of the measures was the removal of the mandatory requirement for credit ratings effective on 1 Jan, 2017.

He said a gradual approach was being adopted to provide industry players sufficient time to further refine mechanisms necessary to operate under the new regime.

Najib also announced that the equity shareholding for credit rating agencies would be liberalized. International Credit rating agencies with full foreign ownership will be allowed in the Malaysian market from 1 Jan, 2017, he added. “The entry of international agencies will further enhance the quality and standard of rating services, introduce a more competitive fee structure and widen both expertise and the range of credit rating services on offer,” Najib said. — Xinhua
England manager Hodgson relieved to escape to Rio

Four-time world champion Novak Djokovic has announced his retirement from tennis, effective immediately.

Djokovic, who has been struggling with a number of injuries in recent years, said in a statement that he had decided to make the announcement to give himself time to recover and focus on his family.

"I have been struggling with injuries for quite some time now," Djokovic said. "I have tried everything to get back to my best form, but it hasn't been enough."

Djokovic, who has won three Grand Slam titles in 2013, said he would continue to compete in the Davis Cup and mixed doubles events for Serbia.

Djokovic's decision comes after he was forced to withdraw from the French Open due to a wrist injury.

"I am grateful to the fans for their support and I will miss the art of playing tennis," he added.

Djokovic's decision is likely to have a significant impact on Serbia's Davis Cup campaign, as he is the team's top-ranked player.

The announcement was met with widespread support from the tennis community.

"Novak has been an incredible athlete," said former world No. 1 Roger Federer. "He has pushed the sport to new heights and I know he will be missed."

Djokovic's decision comes after he won his third consecutive Australian Open title in January, and he was expected to challenge for his fourth title at the French Open later this month.

"I am sure he will continue to make a positive impact on tennis," Federer added.