It is an opportune time to speed up efforts for national interests comprehensively including agriculture sector with strength of honest and hardworking peasants

Nay Pyi Taw, 2 March — The following is a translation of the speech delivered by President U Thein Sein on the occasion of the Peasants’ Day which falls on 2 March 2015.

Esteemed peasants,

Today, the second of March, is a historic day that represents the entire peasant farmers all over the country. I would like to extend my warmest greetings to all peasant farmers and wish them all peace of mind and body, and greater success in their agricultural work.

The democratically elected government started taking office on 30 March 2011 and will soon enter its fourth year in office.

Over the past four years, the government has prioritized two primary objectives of national stability and social-economic development. With a view to long-term national interests, an eight-point plan to combat poverty is underway. Tangible achievements have been witnessed in our constant efforts mainly exerted on agricultural development for rural farmers who constitute 70% of the entire population.

Being an agricultural country, Myanmar hugely relies on the farm workforce, which is why the government has made efforts to provide farmers with agricultural loans, enable them to secure vibrant markets for their produce and products, facilitate their technical input and productivity, support them with their losses claimed by natural disasters, and enact laws to protect the rights and interests of smallholders.

More workers have come to Singapore this year for domestic works compared with previous years as this job can generate between $400 and $600 per month, while hard labourers earn $20 to $22 each day.

However, most of the Myanmar workers enjoyed salary increment this year. He also said a basic salary of security staff in this year reached to $1,100, increased from $950 last year.

“Many Myanmar migrant workers enjoyed salary increase about $100 this year. I feel safe working here. Migrant workers can take medical leave 14 days each year by law and the company strictly observes labour law. If a worker does not have a certificate of safety measure course, it is almost sure that he would not get any job in Singapore,” another Myanmar migrant worker said.

When Singaporean companies could not produce profit in 2013 and 2014, the government subsidized them, especially for labour bonus as companies and workers have to give their income taxes to the government.

However, some migrant workers also made complaints of long hours, bad pay and even abuse. While the majority of Singaporean households want foreign domestic workers to live in their homes, there are also concerned possible labour abuses behind the doors.

The estimated number of 150,000 to 200,000 Myanmar migrant workers are working in Singapore, grants workers also made complaints of long hours, bad pay and even abuse. While the majority of Singaporean households want foreign domestic workers to live in their homes, there are also concerned possible labour abuses behind the doors.

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Japan grants US$ 761,450 for four health and education projects in Kachin and Kayah States

YANGON, 1 March — Mr Tateshi Higuchi, Ambassador of Japan to Myanmar, and Chairman of the Committees from states concerned, signed the grant contracts for four projects on 18 February. Under these contracts, Japan’s Grant Assistance for Grass-roots Human Security Projects (GASHP) scheme will provide a total of US$ 761,450.

The project for construction of rural health centre in Mansay Village, Putao Township, Kachin State will be provided with US$ 170,616; construction of Lon Sha Tang Village Basic Education High School Branch in Putao Township, US$ 273,520; construction of Sumparabum BEHS in Sumparabum Township, Kachin State, US$ 181,920; and construction of Loilem Lay Village BEHS in Loikaw Township, Kayah State, US$ 125,394.

The rural health centre in Mansay Village, Putao Township was built in 2005. It had no delivery room, no medical storage room, and insufficient medical equipment. The Japanese government will support construction of one rural health centre building with staff quarters, lavatories, medical equipment and full furniture.

The government will support a two-storey RC building with eight classrooms and full furniture for Lon Sha Yang BEHS Branch in Putao Township. Likewise, with the assistance of the Japanese government, Sumparabum BEHS will have a one-storey RC building with five classrooms and furniture to admit 450 students. Loilem Lay BEHS in Loikaw Township will have support of the Japanese government with one two-storey RC building comprising eight classrooms and furniture so as to admit over 1,400 students.—GNLM

Tatmadaw columns reopen Laukkai-Kongyan road for secure transport after occupying hills

NAV P'T T'AW, 1 March — Military columns bravely fought and occupied important hills near border post 129 and 23rd-mile area.

On Sunday, the Tatmadaw columns could reopen the Laukkai-Kongyan communication route for secure transport after occupying six hills of Kokang insurgents.

On 28 February, military columns discharging security duty seized 60 bullets of M-22, two berry caps, one photo album and two vehicles at a building in Napan Village.

At 11.30 am, Tatmadaw columns clashed with some Kokang insurgents in a place, southwest of Lauk- kai and seized one dead body of the insurgents, one M-23 sub-machine gun, one pistol, one .22 rifle, two mines, ammunition and related materials and equipment.

At about 1.15 pm, Tatmadaw columns, acting on tip-off, searched 15 suspects believed to be heroin, two rocket shells, two mines, 3,000 electronic detonators, two vehicles, two white powder packets believed to be heroin, 65 sets of uniforms and military equipment and arrested 15 persons. Four officers and other ranks who sacrificed life for the nation and seven servicemen were injured.

In the incidents, Tatmadaw columns seized three dead bodies, 331 rounds of ammunition, one Icon communication device, one Motorola communication device, one communication device, and two packets of heroin (about four grams).

In the investigation, the Tatmadaw columns combed the surrounding area and seized two boxes containing 1,000 electronic detonators each, eight black bullet proof coats, 30 bullet proof plaque, 50 uniforms with MNDAA badges, two caps with MNDAA titles, five bags of equipment and related materials, two packets of 30 green knapsacks and five bales of camouflage beds from the building.

At 8 pm, Tatmadaw columns searched 15 suspected persons near Sinkyaing Village but two of them opened fire at servicemen. In combing the area, the military columns seized one dead person, 12 suspects including two injured, three uniforms with MNDAA badges, 12 sets of uniforms without badges, four hats, one peak cap, three gun proof caps, one MOTOROLA communication device, one Motorola communication device, one communication device, and two packets of heroin (about four grams).

The Tatmadaw columns seized one dead body of the insurgents, one M-23 sub-machine gun, one pistol, one .22 rifle, two mines, ammunition and related materials and equipment.
It is an opportune time to... (from page 1)
In conclusion, he urged all to cooperate for development of the country without racial, regional and ideological bias.
Then, officials reported to the speaker on regional development tasks and Thura U Shwe Mann fulfilled the requirements.
After the meeting, the speaker cordially greeted the attendees. — MNA

Ninth white elephant emerges in Pathein Township

The conference was organized with the aims of exchanging ideologies and experience on library, science, cooperating and understanding in encounters challenged by libraries, and promoting friendship among librarians and the role of libraries and librarians.
Chairman of Myanmar Libraries Foundation U Maung Maung, Chairman of Myanmar Libraries Association U Than Aung made speeches at the conference.
Deputy Speaker of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw U Nanda Kyaw Swa, Union Minister for Information U Ye Htut, officials of Yangon Region Government and about 400 librarians attended the conference.
Group discussions were held at the conference and it will continue tomorrow. — MNA

Kokang nationals in... (from page 1)
It is an opportune time to speed up efforts for national interests comprehensively including the agriculture sector with the strength of very honest and hardworking peasants under the favourable weather conditions for agriculture with abundance of land and water resources.
In making the most effective use of the favourable conditions and take advantage of the opportune time, changing the mind-set to personally participate with the will for success in the efforts for keeping abreast of neighbouring countries, shifting to modern irrigated farming system, changing from traditional farming system to the mechanized one, substituting traditional seeds with modern high-yield seeds, educating peasants to reduce losses and wastage during the period from cultivation to harvest seasons, and production of high quality value-added products can realize the comprehensive development of the agriculture sector.

Esteemed peasants
The government has been accelerating its momentum to build the peaceful modern and developed democratic nation, which is the genuine will of all citizens, after finding out various ways and means.
I would like to urge all with all seriousness to march towards the goal by overcoming future challenges, barriers and difficulties after joining hands through thick and thin as travel companions aboard the same boat toward the same destination in the long-term interests of all citizens including peasant farmers.
Lectures on electoral security process given to police officers

Specialists provide free eye care services to patients

Jivitadana Sangha Hospital (Mandalay) marks seventh anniversary

Bus lines elect new supervisory committee members

Students can choose best school for their learning
ASEAN to remove more nontariff barriers to boost economic integration

KOTA BHARU, (Malaysia), 1 March — Trade ministers from 10 Southeast Asian countries gathered on Sunday to break down further nontariff barriers to boost intra-regional trade as they seek closer economic integration.

The trade ministers of member countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations gathered for their annual retreat in Kota Bharu, one of Malaysia’s northeastern Kelantan state, to chart the way forward for the grouping as it is poised to mark the formal establishment of the ASEAN Economic Community by end of this year.

Under the AEC blueprint, the grouping with a combined population of over 625 million people — envisions an integrated market and production base with free flow of goods, services and investments, skilled labour and capital.

It aims to boost intra-ASEAN trade further. In 2013, trade between ASEAN members amounted to $608.6 billion, accounting for 24.2 percent of total trade in the region. It was a 32.9 percent increase from the $458.1 billion recorded in 2008 when the AEC blueprint was first launched.

“The implementation of the AEC measures does not mean that ASEAN will become a single economic entity by 1 January, 2016, rather it sends a strong signal that positive measures have been put in place towards a more liberalized and integrated economic region,” the ministers said in a statement at the end of the one-day retreat.

At present, ASEAN members have substantially eliminated customs import duties and beginning 2015, 97.3 percent of the products traded in the region are duty-free.

The focus for the year, they added, will be on removing further nontariff barriers that impede trade, such as simplification of customs procedures, harmonization of standards, further liberalization of services and trade facilitation.

At a joint press conference, ASEAN Deputy Secretary-General for ASEAN Economic Community Lim Hong Hin illustrated some of the common problems like multiple testing required for a product by different countries in the region and labeling requirements such as the use of local language. Some of these have been resolved but there were still cases cropping up, he said.

Malaysian International Trade and Industry Minister Mustapa Mohamed who chaired the retreat said they have identified 69 nontariff barriers and have resolved 45.

“We are committed to see more progress in the (removal of) nontariff barriers,” he said.

Meanwhile, Mustapa said the negotiation for a trade pact between ASEAN and its six regional partners — Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand and South Korea — is on track for conclusion by the end of this year.

The eighth round of talks for the initiative known as the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership will be held in June in Kyoto, western Japan. Before that, some of the negotiating committees will hold a smaller “intersessional” meeting in April in Jakarta, Indonesia, he added.

RCEP is touted as the largest free trade deal as it will cover half the world’s population and almost 30 percent of the global economy.

“We will make sure that the deadline of end-of-2015 is achieved,” Mustapa said. “The closer economic integration will make ASEAN an attractive region to do business.”

The ministers also discussed concerns over the impact of falling oil prices for net-oil exporting economies in ASEAN like Indonesia and currency volatility including possible capital flow reversal.

“This is where the implementation of ASEAN’s regional economic integration can help member states overcome the challenges posed by global economic volatility,” the ministers said in the statement.

“We expect ASEAN’s economic performance to improve in 2015 to 5.1 percent, above the 3.5 percent global growth of last year. We based this on the stronger demand in advanced economies, energized by the robust US recovery and several policy stimulus measures in the Eurozone and Japan,” the ministers added.

ASEAN groups Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

Kyodo News

India raises fiscal 2015 defence budget nearly 8%

NEW DELHI, 1 March — India announced on Saturday an increase of almost 8 percent in the budgetary allocation for its defence for fiscal 2015 starting April to 2,467.27 billion rupees (about $40 billion).

“We are pursuing a ‘Make-in-India’ policy to achieve greater self-sufficiency in the area of defense equipment, including aircraft,” Finance Minister Arun Jaitley said, adding that the country plans to manufacture defence equipment not only for its own use but also for export.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the “Make-in-India” initiative after assuming power last year in a bid to increase foreign investments with the objective of increasing production, employment and income.

Laying a roadmap to achieve a fiscal deficit of 3 percent of gross domestic product in three years, the finance minister set the targets for the figure at 3.9 percent in fiscal 2015, 3.5 percent in fiscal 2016 and 3 percent in fiscal 2017.

To boost tourism in the South Asian country, Jaitley also proposed providing visa-on-arrival services to visitors from 150 countries, up from the current 43.

Concerning nuclear energy, he said the second component of the Kundankulam nuclear power plant, set up in cooperation with Russia, will be commissioned during fiscal 2015 through 31 March next year.—Kyodo News

Indonesia to host APEC summit in 2013

JAKARTA, 1 March — Indonesia will host the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit next year in Jakarta.

President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, who is also the APEC chairman, said Jakarta will host the summit in September.

The APEC, which was established in 1989, is a regional economic forum of 21 countries and economies.

SECURITY TENSIONS

Bengal Chinese forces raid militant hideout in Chittagong town

DHAKA, 1 March — Bangladesh special forces on Saturday raided a militant hideout in the southeast town of Chittagong, arrested four suspects and seized five people on 22 February.

“Last Sunday, the specially armed forces raided a training camp in Chittagong district operated by an Islamist militant network that was planning to carry out attacks in the country,” the police said.

On Saturday, the Rapid Action Battalion recovered 150 kg (330 pounds) of high explosives and a range of bomb-making material from the first floor of a five-storey residential building in the city.

The battalion said that the material was enough to make more than 2000 bombs.

“The raid on the building was launched after special forces arrested five people on 22 February in Bhashkhali, a remote, hilly area of Chittagong, and found firearms, ammunition and other training material,” said Lieutenant Colonel Miflah Uddin.

Last month, Bangladeshi police arrested four suspects of Islamic State in the capital, Dhaka, including a regional coordinator for the militant group who told police they had been trained in Pakistan.

Reuters
Abe views Fukushima site for radioactively contaminated waste

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on Sunday viewed a site in Fukushima Prefecture for interim storage facilities for radioactive waste generated in cleanup work following the 2011 nuclear disaster.

"I hope to speed up the decontamination work to ensure reconstruction," Abe said as he looked at the facilities under construction from the roof of the Futaba town hall under the guidance of Futaba Mayor Shiro Izawa.

The mayor asked Abe for constant support for the town’s reconstruction given that the local authorities took the bitter decision to host the facilities.

The central government plans to begin delivery of the waste to the interim storage site on 13 March, two days after the fourth anniversary of the Great East Japan Earthquake that triggered the nuclear crisis.

The facilities are being built on about 16 square kilometres of land in Futaba and Okuma, both in the Fukushima Prefecture.

They are expected to be capable of storing 30 million tons of soil and other radioactive waste, such as burned ash, but they will not store highly radioactive waste generated in the crippled Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant of Tokyo Electric Power Co.

Under the government plan, the radioactively contaminated waste will be kept at the interim facilities and be permanently disposed of outside the prefecture within 30 years, as requested by the prefectural government in accepting the storage plan.

Abe views Fukushima site for radioactively contaminated waste

Obama to veto bill letting Congress weigh in on Iran deal

US President Barack Obama said Sunday that he would veto a bill recently introduced in the US Senate allowing Congress to weigh in on any deal the United States and other negotiating countries reach with Iran on its nuclear capabilities, the White House said on Saturday.

"The president has been clear that now is not the time for Congress to pass additional legislation on Iran. If this bill is sent to the president, he will veto it," said Bernadette Meehan, a spokeswoman for the White House’s National Security Council.

The United States and five other major powers are seeking to negotiate an agreement with Iran to curb its nuclear programme in exchange for relief from economic sanctions.

The Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act would require to submit to Congress the text of any agreement within five days of concluding a final deal with Iran.

The bill would also prohibit Obama from suspending or waiving sanctions on Iran passed by Congress for 60 days after a veto. Meehan said United States “should give our negotiators the best chance of success, rather than complicating their efforts.”

Negotiations between the United States, Russia, China, France, Germany, Britain and Iran have reached a crucial stage, with a basic framework agreement due by the end of March. Republican Senator Bob Corker, one of the bipartisan group of sponsors of the bill, said it was “disappointing that the president feels he is the only one who speaks for the citizens of our country.”

Australia announces new trial to improve aircraft tracking

The governments of Malaysia and Indonesia have agreed in principle to join the trial with Australia.

Both governments are expected to have further talks in two weeks with the Australian government on how to implement.

The reporting rate will automatically increase in altitude or two nautical miles to the original route if the automatic tracking of the aircraft.

Truss said the new system in place for MH370, heightened surveillance would have been triggered seven hours earlier when the aircraft changed direction and therefore left the search and rescue teams with more accurate information.

Houston warned that the new system is not a “silver bullet”. However, it is an important step forward toward early identification for any irregularities of aircraft.

“Aircraft is not a silver bullet”, but it is an important step in delivering immediate improvements to the way we currently track aircraft while more comprehensive solutions are developed, Houson said.

The trial will use technology called Automatic Dependant Surveillance Contract (ADS-C) which establishes links between aircraft and air traffic control systems to provide information such as an aircraft’s position, speed, altitude and direction of flight. About 90 percent of the world’s long-haul, wide-bodied aircraft have been equipped with the technology.

As per the current search off the western coast of Australia, Houston said it is quite confident that the search for the 60,000 square kilometres priority area will be completed by the middle of the year. He also warned that as the southern hemisphere’s winter months coming, the weather conditions can be very challenging.

Cargo train links China’s Heilongjiang with Russia

Prime Minister Warren Truss said Sunday that the first cargo train to link northeastern China’s Heilongjiang Province to central Russia left on its maiden voyage on Monday.

The cargo train, which was carrying oil exploration equipment, pulled out of Xiangfang Railway Station in the provincial capital of Harbin at 10:50 am. It is expected to arrive in Bikiyan, Russia, in 10 days.

Using the 6,578 km route costs 75 percent less than air transportation, said Li Tie from the Harbin Railway Bureau. It is expected that the service will result in increased exports from Heilongjiang to Russia. So far a number of mainland cities — including Chongqing and Chengdu in southwest China; Wuhan, Zhengzhou and Changsha in central China; and Shenyang in northeast China — have rail freight services to Europe.

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Australia announces new trial to improve aircraft tracking
**Police in Germany’s Bremen heighten security citing possible Islamist threat**

**CARACAS, 1 March** — Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro said on Saturday his government had detained US citizens, including a pilot, on suspicion of espionage, and probably some US officials from entering Venezuela in retaliation for a similar US measure last year. Venezuela would also require US citizens to obtain visas before visiting, he told a rally in Caracas.

Maduro also said his government would order a reduction in the number of US embassy staff in Caracas and prohibit some US officials from entering Venezuela in retaliation for a similar US measure last year. Venezuela would also require US citizens to obtain visas before visiting, he told a rally in Caracas.

The Venezuelan president, long at odds with Washington, has renewed accusations in recent weeks that the United States is seeking to topple him.

**TALLINN, 1 March** — Estonians voted on Sunday in a parliamentary election with centre-right Prime Minister Taavi Roivas favoured to form a new pro-NATO coalition and fend off a challenge by an opposition party that wants better ties with neighbour- ing Russia.

Roivas’ Reform Party, which has stressed fears of Russian interference in Estonia after Moscow annexed Ukraine’s Crimea region last year, led with 26 percent support in a final TNS EMOR poll on Friday against 22 for the centre-left Centre Party.

A free-market and the youngest European Union leader at 35, Roivas is likely to be best placed to form a new coalition, even if the Centre Party wins the most votes.

Other big parties say they will not work with the Centre Party, which signed a 2004 cooperation deal with Russian President Vladimir Putin’s United Russia Party.

“Cooperation after the elections with the Estonian Centre Party would be very difficult for any of the other parties,” Roivas told Reuters.

The Centre Party says other parties may drop cooperation after Sunday’s vote in the northernmost Baltic state of 1.3 million people, where about a quarter are Russian speakers.

Estonians voted in partly sunny weather in temper- atures above freezing, in a likely boost for turnout.

Other parties accuse Centre Party leader Edgar Savisaar, the mayor of Tallinn, who was an interim prime minister from 1991-92, of failing to condemn Putin’s actions in Ukraine.

They also say his party has misused public funds in Tallinn, a charge his Tallinn city controlled government denies.

**Greek PM accuses Spain, Portugal of anti-Athens ‘axis’**

**ATHENS, 1 March** — Greece’s leftist Prime Min- ister Alexis Tsipras accused Spain and Portugal on Saturday of leading a conserva- tive conspiracy to topple his anti-austerity government, saying they feared their own radical forces before elec- tions this year.

Tsipras also rejected criticism that Athens had staged a clampdown to se- cure an extension of its fi- nancial lifeline from the euro zone, saying anger among German conservatives showed that his government had won concessions.

Greeks have directed much of their fury about years of austerity dictated by international creditors at Germany, the biggest contributor to their country’s 240-billion-euro bailout.

But in a speech to his Syriza party, Tsipras turned on Madrid and Lisbon, ac- cusing them of taking a hard line in negotiations which led to the euro zone extend- ing the bailout program last week for four months.

“We found oppos- ing us an axis of powers — led by the governments of Spain and Portugal which for obvious political rea- sons attempted to lead the entire negotiations to the brink,” said Tsipras, who won an election on 25 January. “Their plan was and is to wash away our government to unconditional surrender before the Greek example affects other coun- tries,” he said, adding: “And mainly before the elections in Spain.” Spain’s new an- tistitutional Podemos movement has topped some opinion polls, making it a se- rious threat to the conserva- tive People’s Party of Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy in an election which must be held by the end of this year.

Rajoy went to Athens less than a fortnight before the Greek election to warn voters against believing the “impossible” promises of Syriza. His appeal fell on deaf ears and voters swept the previous conservative premier from power.

Portugal will also have elections after the summer but no anti-austerity force is as potent as Syriza or Podemos has so far emerged there. In an interview pub- lished before Tsipras made his speech, Prime Minister Pedro Passos Coelho denied that Portugal had taken a hard line in negotiations on the Greek deal at the Euro- group of euro zone finance ministers. “There may have been a political intention to create this idea, but it is not true,” he told the Expresso newspaper. Passos Coelho aligned himself with euro zone governments which have called for poli- cies to promote economic growth but were trying to walk away from austerity as in Greece.

“We were on the same side as the French govern- ment, with the Italian and Irish governments. I think it’s bad to stigmatize southern European countries,” he said.

**Greek PM accuses Spain, Portugal of anti-Athens ‘axis’**

**Estonians vote; pro-NATO premier faces pro-Russian opposition**

**REUTERS**

**Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras**

**GREECE**

**BREMEN**

**WASHINGTON**

**SPAIN**

**PORTUGAL**

**REUTERS**
The importance of economic equality and growth

By Kyaw Thura

When it comes to social and economic inequality deeply entrenched in our country, the blame lies with the internal armed conflict, which has long weakened the administrative mechanism of successive governments. Clearly, persistent economic retardation can have negative effects on all ethnic groups and the nation as a whole. In addition, slow-moving economy will not be able to create new job opportunities for fresh graduates. It is undeniable that sluggish economic growth is capable of destroying the dreams of the generations of today and tomorrow.

The root cause of economic inequality is likely to result from the unequal sharing of natural resources and their benefits. To avert national hazard, the central government should decentralize authority and administration in all the regions and states of the country. In every sense, the people of a state or region where resources are exploited should have the rights to enjoy the benefits derived from extractive projects. Yet, local governments are required to seek approval from the central government.

For instance, the central government should do everything in its capacity to satisfy the two goals of human resources development and economic growth by laying down firm policies that will guarantee better life for the ethnic groups and create a more vibrant future for the economy as a whole.

All things considered, for national reconciliation to become a reality, there must be economic equality and growth, which will no doubt ease racial and political tensions.

Coca-Cola to bring the happiness journey to more cities across Myanmar in 2015

Tens of thousands more consumers to enjoy the Coca-Cola Uplifting Break experience through popular afternoon music shows

Yangon, 1 March — Coca-Cola Myanmar is extending its series of popular Happiness Journey music concerts aimed around the “Coca-Cola Uplifting Break” experience to more cities this year. The Coca-Cola Happiness Journey was launched in Myanmar in 2013 with stops in Yangon and Mandalay and last year, the brand made successful Happiness Journey stops in other cities for the first time — Monywa, Pyay, Taunggyi, Pathein and Mandalay.

Coca-Cola will once again hit the roads of Myanmar with its special-ly-designed convoy of Coca-Cola trucks to host entertaining afternoon music shows featuring performances by popular artists Sai Sai Kham Leng, Eaint Chit, Mi Sandi, Bunny Phyo, Me N Ma Girls and Jet San Htun.

“Based on customer demand, we are continuing the Coca-Cola Happiness Journey, bringing our ‘Uplifting Break’ experience to even more cities in 2015,” said Rommel P. Fuentebel-la, Marketing Director, Coca-Cola Myanmar. “Throughout the year, fans will have the opportunity to take a break and share an ice-cold refreshing Coca-Cola with friends, family and their favourite artists.”

Today, Coca-Cola brought the Happiness Journey to Bago for the first time. Thousands of people enjoyed an afternoon of entertaining music performances by Eaint Chit, Mi Sandi and Ah Moon at a field near Bago City Hall, Phattaun Street, Hanthawady Ward. The next stop of the Happiness Journey will be in Mawlamyine, Mon State, in end-March. To be part of the Happiness Journey activities and attend the concerts in the various cities, people can redeem tickets by simply collecting six (6) Coca-Cola, Sprite or Max+ plastic bottle caps or cans and presenting them to the redemption booth staff to receive two (2) tickets to the event. Submitting a mix of bottle caps and cans is also allowed and the number of tickets a person can redeem is only limited by the amount of caps and cans they can collect.

The location of the ticket redemption booth in each city is advertised on promotional banners placed at participating consumer goods stores and provision shops across each of the cities. For the Coca-Cola Happiness Journey stop in Bago, consumers visited redemption booths located at the entrance of Bago My- om Market, the south entrance of Shwemawdaw Pagoda and in front of Bago University from 18 to 28 February.

“I was delighted to be part of each and every Coca-Cola Happiness Journey stop in 2014 and am glad to be involved again this year. I felt appreciative see my fans in Bago enjoying a music-filled afternoon with Coca-Cola,” said singing sensation, Eaint Chit.

Coca-Cola is promoting its “Uplifting Break” campaign across various media channels including television, print, radio and Facebook throughout the year. For the latest information on the upcoming Happiness Journey activities and details on the locations of the ticket redemption booths in the various cities, please visit the Co-ca-Cola Myanmar Face- book page- www.facebook.com/CocaColaMyanmar.

U-15 team thrash women’s team 3-0 in tune-up match

Yangon, 1 March—Myanmar U-15 men’s team played a tune-up match with Myanmar national women’s team at Youth Training Centre in Thu-wunna, here, on 28 Februa-ry morning.

The U-15 team routed the women’s team 3-0 in the match. The U-15 team will play the China-ASEAN youth football tournament to be held in Dongxiang, Guangxi Province of China from 4 to 11 March 2015. The Myanmar national women’s team will join the Brazil Olympic football qualifier in 2016 —GNLM

Players of both U-15 team and women’s team controlling the ball to win over each other.—MFF

Write for us

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**Businesses of residents, banking services rely on each other**

Kanbawza Bank Ltd. opened its 207th branch in Natogyi, Mandalay Region, in the second week of February. CB Bank and Ayeyawady Bank will give banking services at their branches to be opened in 2015 in Natogyi Town.

Local residents said that as various businesses including over 20 companies engaging in petrified wood trading are booming day by day in Natogyi, banking services are also gaining development momentum.

*Htay Myint Maung*

**University of Forestry (Yezin) turns out over 300 graduates in 2015**

The University of Forestry (Yezin) held the sixth convocation at its hall in Zeyathiri Township on Saturday. Rector Dr. Myint Oo conferred certificates of M.Sc. degree on two graduates and B.A. degree on 333 graduates individually. Faculty members, members of academic and management boards, guests and relatives of graduates were also in attendance.

Since 1982, students have been learning the forestry subject in the Yezin campus, under the purview of the Department of Forestry at the Yezin Institute of Agriculture. In 1992, the Forestry Department was carved out and founded as the Institute of Forestry (Yezin). In 2002, it was renamed the University of Forestry (Yezin). The Bachelor of Science (Forestry) degree programmes used to take six years to complete but it has since been changed to five years.—Shwe Ye Yint

**IKBZ Insurance presents compensation for damages of building**

International Kanbawza Insurance (Mandalay Head Office) gave a compensation for damages in an earthquake at its office in Chanayethazan Township, Mandalay, on 27 February.

A building of U Aye Gyi and wife Daw Thein Thein Wai in Sagoing Township who took fire and earthquake insurances for their building at International Kanbawza Insurance Ltd.

An earthquake of Richter Scale 5 that hit in the region at 5.47 p.m. on 27 November 2014 caused damages at the ceilings and walls of the building. The insurance company gave K8.073 million as the cost of repair to the owner of building.—Thiha Ko Ko (Mandalay)

**Law officers must be reliable in ensuring rule of law and order**

Law officers need to abide by Union Attorney-General Law, procedures, order and instructions in serving interests of the State and the people. Advocate-General of Mandalay Region U Ye Aung Myint told district and township law officers at a coordination meeting at his office on 27 February.

The advocate-general of the region stressed the need for law officers to improve their individual capacity and try hard to become reliable law officers for the people in discharging duty of ensuring rule of law and order in their respective townships. The law officers must provide assistance for tasks of the respective election sub-commissions, he added. A total of 58 law officers from district and township offices including Mandalay Region Law Officer U Soe Naing discussed administration, prosecution and judicial affairs.—Thiha Ko Ko (Mandalay)
Kurdish rebel leader in Turkey calls for disarmament congress

Turkey's Deputy Prime Minister Yalcin Akdogan, accompanied by Interior Minister Efkan Ala (3rd L) meets with pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) lawmakers Sirri Sureyya Onder (3rd R), Pervin Buldan (2nd R) and Idris Baluken (R) in Istanbul on 1 Feb, 2015.— Reuters

ISTANBUL, 1 March
— Jailed Kurdish militant leader Abdullah Ocalan called on his followers to take a “historic” decision to lay down their arms, according to a statement on Saturday, a crucial step in Turkey’s drive to end a 30-year insurgency by Kurdish rebels.

Turkey’s president, Tayyip Erdogan, welcomed the call but cautioned the rebels had failed to deliver on previous pledges. Sirri Sureyya Onder, a lawmaker from parliament’s pro-Kurdish People’s Democratic Party (HDP), read a statement from Ocalan that urged the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) to attend a congress on disarmament in the spring months.

“I invite the PKK to attend an extraordinary congress in the spring months in order to make the strategic and historic decision to abandon the armed struggle,” Onder said, quoting Ocalan, with whom an HDP delegation met this week.

Onder spoke live on television alongside Deputy Prime Minister Yalcin Akdogan, who said the move towards disarmament showed “an important phase in the resolution process has been reached,” after the two sides met briefly in Istanbul.

“We view this statement as important to accelerate the work on disarmament and for democratic politics to come to the forefront,” Akdogan said.

The statement also attributed to Ocalan 10 measures that Kurds want to ensure peace, including a new constitution which Erdogan is also seeking — to imbue his office with more executive powers and to replace a charter drawn up by technocrats after a 1980 military coup.

Erdogan has risked a nationalist backlash to pursue an end to the insurrection that has claimed more than 40,000 lives, mostly Kurdish, since 1984, launching jailhouse talks with Ocalan — once derided as a “baby killer” — in low 2012.

“Of course calls are good, but what is most important is implementation,” Erdogan said at a news conference. “I hope (they) will stand behind these statements.” — Reuters

CCTV shows British schoolgirls at Istanbul bus station on way to Syria — media

ISTANBUL, 1 March
— Security footage appears to show three British schoolgirls, believed to be on their way to join Islamic State militants, waiting for hours at a bus station in Turkey before travelling to a city near the Syrian border, media reported on Sunday.

British police and the girls’ families have issued urgent appeals for their daughters to return home after they flew to Istanbul from London on 17 February, Friends Amira Abase, 15, Shamma Begum, 15, and Kadiza Sultana, 16, are thought to have entered Syria, British police have said.

European governments have called on Turkey to stem the flow of foreign fighters to Syria, and British Prime Minister David Cameron has urged social media firms to do more to deal with online extremism, saying the girls appeared to have been radicalised “in their bedrooms.”

The CCTV pictures, dated on 17 February and 18 February, are from Bayrampasa bus station on the European side of Istanbul, which the girls reached by metro from the airport, Millyet news newspaper said, citing police sources.

They say the girls spent 18 hours at Bayrampasa before boarding a bus to travel to Sanliurfa, 50 km (30 miles) from the Syrian border region controlled by Islamic State militants.

Turkish police are trying to identify people seen in the footage helping the girls with their luggage at the bus station.

“Turkey has complained that Britain was late in notifying it about the girls’ arrival,” Erdogan said at a news conference. “Security forces estimate that about 600 British Muslims have travelled to the region to join the conflict, some with Islamic State, the extremist Sunni Muslim group that controls a vast swathe of territory in Syria and Iraq.” — Reuters

US-led coalition launches air strikes on Islamic State targets

BEIRUT, 1 March
— Syrian government forces have taken control of villages in southern Syria, state media said on Saturday, part of a campaign they started this month against insurgents posing one of the biggest remaining threats to Damascus.

The large offensive is backed by the Lebanese Shi’ite group Hezbollah and initially made swift progress before slowing. The gains, made on Friday and Saturday, mark a new push in the government campaign.

A man reacts as he stands on debris from his collapsed home after what activists said were air strikes by forces loyal to Syria’s President Bashar al-Assad in Marj Al Sultan, in the eastern Damascus suburb of Ghouta on 27 Feb, 2015.— Reuters

Syria’s state news agency SANA said the village of Tal Al-Majda in Sweida province and Tal Antar in Deraa were taken. Both are near Jordan.

The south is the last notable stronghold of the mainstream, non-jihadist opposition to President Bashar al-Assad, who has consolidated control over much of western Syria after almost four years of civil war. Al-Qaeda’s Syrian branch, the Nusra Front, is also active in the south and has clashed with western-backed rebels. Rival Islamic State jihadists control most of the north and east of the country.

The offensive aims to shield the capital Damascus, a short drive to the north. The insurgents have made significant gains in the south in recent months, taking several military bases.

Hezbollah, a powerful Shi’ite Islamist group backed by Iran, has offered crucial military support to the Syrian government during the civil war, which has killed around 200,000 people. — Reuters

Two billion euros of Egypt-French arms deal financed by loan from Paris: Sisi

Egypt’s President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi said in an interview on al-Arabiya TV on Saturday that Egypt signed an agreement this month to buy 5.2 billion euros worth of French weapons, including 24 Rafale combat jets made by Dassault Aviation, a multi-mission naval frigate, and air-to-air missiles.

“The last equipment we got from France was with a French loan worth 3.2 billion euros and this loan was extended from the French government,” President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi said in the interview. France said at the time the deal was agreed to that more than half the purchase price would be financed by French banks with a state-backed Coface guarantee.
Hyundai recalls more than 200,000 Elantras over steering problem

WASHINGTON, 1 March —Hyundai Corp is recalling 204,768 Elantras because of a power steering defect that might cause the cars to suddenly revert to manual steering, the company said Saturday in a report filed with US auto safety regulators.


It said the defect might affect an estimated 3 percent of those cars.

"Steering control can be maintained; however, there is a risk of steering assist loss in steering mode, requiring greater driver effort, particularly at low speeds. This could result in an increased risk of a crash," Hyundai said in its report.

The carmaker said it had understood that the loss of power steering assist has not been considered a safety defect in the United States when manual steering was maintained. "More recently, however, the industry has increasingly handled similar issues through safety recalls due to greater driver effort at low vehicle speeds," Hyundai said. "To remain consistent with that industry trend, Hyundai has decided to conduct this campaign as a safety recall." The company did not say whether there had been any incidents involving the defect. —Reuters

China says to implement drug distribution reforms

BEIJING, 1 March —China said on Saturday it would implement drug distribution reforms including centralization measures designed to cut prices and reduce corruption.

"The State Council, China’s cabinet, said it urged drug manufacturers to negotiate directly with hospitals on payment for pharmaceuticals instead of going through middle men," the State Council said on its website.

Authorities should also work to ensure the distribution of drugs to remote rural areas with underdeveloped modes of transportation in a timely fashion, the State Council said on its website.

Authorities should push forward centralization and standardization measures in an effort to weed out corruption and low prices, it added.

Fragmentation in China’s drug distribution has caused market inefficiencies. High drug prices have fueled a gray market for pharmaceuticals and caused tension with patients.

Beijing has said it plans to invest in rural healthcare to improve access to care for those in remote areas.

Critics say bribery and other forms of corruption are rife in the healthcare sector, fueled by low pay for doctors and nurses.

China has cracked down on high prices and corruption in the sector over the past year and in September lined GlaxoSmithKline Plc a record 3 billion yuan ($489 million) for paying bribes to doctors to use its drugs. —Reuters

Job fair targeting Myanmar students in Japan held in Tokyo

TOYOKO, March Japanese companies held a job fair in Tokyo on Saturday targeting students from Myanmar as they seek to recruit personnel who can become a bridge to expand their business in the Southeast Asian country.

The job fair was held as an increasing number of Japanese companies are making inroads into the Myanmar market, including through infrastructure investment, seeing the large growth potential of the country’s economy.

A total of 17 companies that have already begun business in Myanmar in fields such as electronics, construction and railway operations participated in the forum, seeking to hire personnel with knowledge of technology or management as well as of the two countries.

But the companies tended to offer positions in Myanmar, while some participating students expressed a desire to work in Japan.

“We are looking for personnel who are familiar with Japanese culture and have management skills. We want to expand our operations launched in Myanmar together,” an official of Panasonic Corp. said.

The electronics giant’s booth was especially crowded with students seeking to hear the company’s explanation.

A 31-year-old student of a Japanese language school said getting a job at a Japanese company is attractive because of the high salary and opportunity to brush up his Japanese. —Kyodo News

Growth in farmer-turned-labourers slows

BEIJING, March —Growth in the number of former farmers working in agrarian work has slowed as more people are reluctant to leave their hometowns, official data showed on Saturday.

China had 274 million farmer-turned-labourers as of the end of 2014, and 168 million of them had moved to cities to seek work, according to data from the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security (MHRSS).

However, growth in the number of total non-agricultural workers and migrant workers slowed to 1.9 percent and 1.3 percent respectively in 2014, from 2.4 percent and 1.7 percent the previous year.

China has the world’s largest population of farmers.

But their willingness to grow crops has waned as returns from the land are typically much smaller than those from working in cities, posing threats to the country’s food security. The trend is slowing, however, thanks to the government’s efforts to boost agricultural production.

The annual increase of workers’ wages has also slowed down. Monthly salaries of migrant workers in 2014, down from 13.9 percent registered in 2013 and much lower than the 20 percent increase five years ago.

Despite a growing population rushing to cities, experienced farmers are still badly needed in China, which is trying to move up the global value chain by stimulating high-tech sectors with high value added.

The majority of migrant workers in China lack skills — only one third of workers have received training before employment. Workers that can be counted as having expertise in their field accounted for 19 percent of all those employed nationwide, while highly-skilled talent made up merely 5 percent, the MHRSS data showed.

Chinese factories have started to meet trouble in finding qualified workers, while former farmers are familiar with the experience of being turned for jobs on the grounds that they lack skills.

The structural contradiction has become a normal situation, Yang said.

The problem has emerged as a hurdle to industrial upgrading in China, which is nulling measures to reverse the situation.

The country plans to launch a mass training program to train 20 million migrant workers each year, according to Yang. “As of 2020, all young migrant workers will be able to learn a trade with subsidies from the government,” he said.

Measures including tax reduction will also be maintained to support companies in the tertiary sector, small and medium-sized enterprises and labor-intensive factories, usually generous employers of workers from the countryside.

In addition, seasonal migrant workers will be encouraged to return to their hometown and set up their own businesses, Yang said, estimating the size of this group at 2 million currently.

China’s Feburay non-manufacturing PMI up, consumption robust

BEIJING, 1 March —China’s non-manufacturing activity picked up in February due to robust consumption during the Spring Festival holiday, an official monthly survey showed on Sunday.

The purchasing managers’ index (PMI) for the non-manufacturing sector recovered to 53.9 in February from 53.7 in January, according to a report released jointly by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) and the China Federation of Logistics and Purchasing (CFLP).

The subindex of new orders climbed to 51.2, up from 50.2 a month ago.

China’s non-manufacturing PMI mainly tracks the business activities of the service and construction sectors. A reading above 50 indicates expansion, while a reading below 50 represents contraction.

The service sector sub-index increased to 53.2 in February from 52.9 a month earlier. Zhao Qinghe, an NBS senior statistician, said the figure had been stable over the recent three months, indicating steady expansion. "Surging holiday consumption was one of the major driving factors as domestic spending in retail, catering, telecom and transportation grew rapidly in the period," he added.

Another H7N9 human case reported in E China

HANGZHOU, 1 March —February’s fourth human case of the H7N9 strain of avian flu has been confirmed in eastern China’s Zhejiang Province, the provincial health authorities said.

All four patients are confirmed to have had contact with live poultry, according to local authorities.

H7N9 is a bird flu strain first reported to have infected humans in March 2013. Humans are most susceptible to the virus in winter and spring.

So far at least 60 cases have been reported in southern China’s Guangdong Province since. Several other Chinese localities including Shanghai, Fujian, Guizhou and Zhejiang have also reported cases of H7N9.

The national centre has urged people to brush up their Japanese.

"Japana is an attractive country because of the high attractiveness of the low salary and worry. We plan to offer positions in Japan," an official of an electronics giant’s booth was especially crowded with students seeking to hear the company’s explanation.

A 31-year-old student of a Japanese language school said getting a job at a Japanese company is attractive because of the high salary and opportunity to brush up his Japanese. —Kyodo News

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US-Israel ties fraying over Netanyahu speech, Iran talks

WASHINGTON, 1 March — As relations between President Barack Obama and Benjamin Netanyahu hit a new low over the Israeli prime minister’s planned speech to Congress and a looming deadline for a nuclear deal with Iran, there are growing signs it could damage the broader US-Israeli alliance. Already there has been some fraying of the usually strong relationship amid the frosty personal ties between the two leaders and a deepening divide over the Iran talks, which Israel fears will allow its arch foe to develop an atom bomb.

US officials are fuming over what they see as an affront by Netanyahu over Obama’s Iran diplomacy ahead of an end-of-March deadline for a framework nuclear agreement.

Israeli officials and hard-line US supporters are just as adamant in defending Netanyahu’s right to take centre-stage in Washington on Tuesday to sound the alarm over the possible deal.

US and Israeli officials insist that key areas of cooperation from counter-terrorism to intelligence to cyber security have been unaffected and will remain so.

But the rift — shaping up as the worst in decades between the allies due to its partisan nature — could have a real impact in some areas, making it harder for Israel to press concerns directly with senior US officials, for example.

As one former US official put it: “Sure, when Netanyahu calls the White House, Obama will answer. But how fast will he be about responding (to a crisis)?”

US officials last month even went as far as accusing the Israeli government of leaking information to the Israeli media to undermine Iran negotiations and took the unusual step of limiting further sharing of sensitive details about the talks. The rift is considered potentially far-reaching because it marks a dramatic departure from Israel’s long tradition of carefully navigating between Republicans and Democrats.

A US official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the “politicized nature of Netanyahu’s visit threatens “what undergirds the strength of the relationship”, though he said there was shared interest in keeping the alliance strong. People on both sides, including current and former officials, US lawmakers, independent experts and Washington lobbyists, expressed concern about a broader fallout on ties.

At the same time many of them point to the two countries’ history of being able to “compartmentalize” diplomatic disputes to preserve cooperation on other shared priorities.

Blast in Kosovska Mitrovica downtown

KOSOVSKA MITROVICA, 1 March — An unidentified individual threw a hand grenade in the downtown of northern Kosovo Mitrovica and although certain damage was done, nobody was injured in the incident.

The blast occurred in front of a confectionery of a Gorani owner in the main street early on Saturday, around 6.30 am.

The grenade caused damage to eight cars parked in the street, as well as nearby shops and private apartments.

The window of the shop in front of which the blast occurred was also damaged in the incident.

According to reports by Tanjug’s correspondent, the Kosovo Police Service has blocked the street and investigation is underway. In addition to members of the Kosovo police, KFOR troops are also present at the scene. The motives and the identity of the perpetrator are not known at this point.

The Serbian government Office for Kosovo-Metohija (KIOM) condemned on Saturday the attack on the passenger bus near Banjica and warned the blast to be part of the violent clashes in the town.

The blast happened near Banjica, southern KIM, and in the blast to the northern, Serb-populated part of Kosovska Mitrovica are not contributing to this end.

The Office called on the authorities not to allow the blast from Saturday day early on Saturday, the fifth one that occurred in Kosovska Mitrovica since the beginning of the year to remain unsolved. We call on the Kosovo Police Service and EULEX, to act within their very extensive mandate and finally solve at least one incident that caused jealousy to human lives and Serb property, such as the blast that hit Kosovska Mitrovica at dawn and caused damage to nine cars and 11 shops, and the stoneing of the bus near Banjica late on Friday (in which one woman was injured), the Office stated in the release.

The Office recalled that EULEX said on Friday that the Kosovo police have matured enough to live up to international tasks, noting that it expects the identification of the attackers on the bus and the individual who threw the hand grenade in downtown Kosovska Mitrovica to prove this. — Tanjug

Britain’s Prince William meets Japan quake-tsunami survivors

SAGAMIHARA, 1 March — Britain’s Prince William expressed his sympathy on Sunday as he met survivors of the 2011 quake and tsunami during a visit to Miyagi Prefecture, northeastern Japan.

The 32-year-old Duke of Cambridge told a couple who lost their children in the disaster that he had also lost a loved one, referring to his mother Princess Diana’s death in a traffic accident in 1997, during their meeting in Ishinomaki, a Pacific coastal city severely hit by the disaster.

The couple gave the prince some decorations made of wood from the tsunami debris and an English oak for his family, as his pregnant wife, Prince George Catherine, and his son Prince George are not with him on this trip.

At the Ishinomaki Hibi Shimbon newspaper, the prince viewed handwritten wall newspapers issued by the Ishinomaki Hibi Shimbon newspaper after the 11 March, 2011, Great East Japan Earthquake, as he visits the publisher in the city of Ishinomaki, Miyagi Prefecture, northeastern Japan on 1 March, 2015.

Britain’s Prince William talks with people as he visits an improvised shopping area for survivors of the 11 March, 2011, Great East Japan Earthquake in the town of Onagawa, Miyagi Prefecture, northeastern Japan on 1 March, 2015.

Britain’s Prince William watches handwritten wall newspapers issued by the Ishinomaki Hibi Shimbon newspaper after the 11 March, 2011, Great East Japan Earthquake, as he visits the publisher in the city of Ishinomaki, Miyagi Prefecture, northeastern Japan on 1 March, 2015.

UNITED NATIONS, 1 March — UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on Saturday condemned the killing of Russian opposition leader Boris Nemtsov in Moscow.

A statement released by Ban’s spokesperson said the UN chief was shocked by the brutal killing of the Russian politician.

“The Secretary-General notes that an investigation into this murder has been announced, and he expects the perpetrators to be brought to justice swiftly,” said the statement.

Nemtsov was shot dead in downtown Moscow shortly before midnight Friday. Preliminary investigation shows that Nemtsov was hit by four shots and six shell casings have been found at the site.

The Russian Investigative Committee has launched a comprehensive investigation into the incident, which is pursuing several lines, including the possibility of an attempt to destabilize the political situation in Russia, the external situation in Ukraine and possible connections with Nemtsov’s business activities or personal animosity.

Israil’s Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu listens as US President Barack Obama (R) speaks, during their meeting in the Oval Office of the White House in Washington on 1 October, 2014. — Reuters
Bahrain charges 17 bombing suspects

MANAMA, 1 March — Bahrain’s public prosecutor has charged 17 people with forming a militant group and carrying out bombings that wounded security personnel, the state news agency said on Saturday.

The group had set off bombs in the island kingdom’s Maqha, Al-Janabia, Budaiya and Qarya villages, prosecutor Ahmed Al-Hammadi was quoted as saying.

“The members had agreed to set up a terror cell to make explosives and weapons to carry out terror acts, target security forces and spread panic among people,” he said, according to Bahrain News Agency.

Their trial will begin on 22 March and two of the defendants outside the country will be tried in absentia, he added. The Sunni Muslim-ruled country, home to the US Fifth Fleet, was swept by unrest in 2011 led by majority Shi’ites demanding political reforms. There have been a growing number of attacks using explosives, often targeting policemen.

Investigators search for what triggered Missouri rampage

KANSAS CITY, 1 March — What led Joseph Aldridge to gun down seven people in a southern Missouri hamlet remained uncertain on Saturday, though authorities speculated that the death of the gunman’s mother from cancer could have triggered the rampage.

Aldridge, 36, embarked on a shooting spree late on Thursday in the rural community of Tyrone, going door-to-door in the wintry night, killing four relatives and three neighbours, and wounding another, before fatally shooting himself, police said.

The massacre unfolded shortly after Aldridge’s mother, 74-year-old Alice Aldridge, died from complications of metastatic lung cancer. Texas County Coroner Tom Whittaker said an autopsy revealed the fatal condition.

Whittaker said Aldridge may have been triggered to carry out the killings by the discovery of his mother’s body, but he added that authorities were considering other possible explanations.

“My heart went to this extent, we don’t know and I don’t know that we ever will,” he said.

Most of the victims were found in their bedrooms, according to Whittaker.

At least two children in two separate homes escaped injury while their parents were slain, according to the Texas County Sheriff’s Office.

One of the children, a teenage girl, fled to a neighbor’s house where she called police. Her parents, Garold Aldridge, 52, and his wife, Julie Aldridge, 47, were found dead in their home, the sheriff’s office said.

Bangladesh pays tribute to American blogger killed in machete attack

DHAKA, 1 March — Bangladeshis on Sunday paid tribute to an American critic of religious extremism killed in Dhaka, in the latest of a series of attacks on writers who support free thinking values in the Muslim-majority nation.

Avijit Roy, a US citizen of Bangladeshi origin, was hacked to death by machete-wielding assailants on Thursday after a book fair, sparking widespread condemnation from home and abroad.

His wife and fellow blogger Rafida Ahmed suffered head injuries and lost a finger and remains in hospital in a serious condition.

The attack comes amid a crackdown on hardline Islamist groups, which have increased activities in recent years in the South Asian nation of 160 million people.

No arrest has been made.

People from all walks gathered with flowers at the Dhaka University premises on Sunday to pay their respect to Avijit, who came to his native city in mid-February and was due to go back to the United States.

“Free thinking in Bangladesh is become a great danger, all the free thinkers are at great risk,” writer Shahriar Kabir said.

“We want to know why the government failed to ensure the safety of him, despite knowing that he had been facing threats from the Islamist radicals.”

Family members donated the body of Avijit to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital for medical research to show respect for his wish.

Roy’s family said Islamist radicals had been threatening him in recent weeks because he maintained a blog, “Muktomona,” or “Freemind,” that highlighted humanist and rationalist ideas and condemned religious extremism.

US State Department spokeswoman Jen Psaki called it “a shocking act of violence” that was “horrific in its brutality and cowar­dice” and said the United States was ready to assist the investigation.

A UN spokesman said his colleague Qaeda Azad, a secular writer and professor at Dhaka University, was also attacked by militants while returning home from a Dhaka book fair. He later left for Germany while undergoing treatment.

Extensive tomb complex unearthed in suburban Beijing

BEIJING, 1 March — A massive tomb complex has been found in a southwest suburb in Beijing, the Beijing institute of cultural relics Protection measures mandates that all plots of land must be screened for relics before development.

Bangladesh 146th among 180 countries in a ranking of press freedom last year.

In 2013, religious extremists targeted several secular bloggers who had demanded capital punishment for Islamist leaders convicted of war crimes during Bangladesh’s war for independence.

Blogger Ahmed Raja Haider was killed that year in a similar attack near his home in Dhaka.

In 2004, Humayun Azad, a secular writer and professor at Dhaka University, was also attacked by militants while returning home from a Dhaka book fair. He later left for Germany while undergoing treatment.

BAY INFERENCE: Weather is partly cloudy in the Southeast Bay and generally fair in the Andaman Sea and elsewhere in the Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL EVENING OF THE 2nd March, 2015: Light rain are likely to be isolated in Taninthayi Region and Kachin State, weather will be partly cloudy in Upper Sagraing Region, Kayin and Mon States and generally fair in the remaining Regions and States. Degree of certainty is (60%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Seas will be moderate in Myanmar waters.

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FORECAST VALID UNTIL EVENING OF THE 2nd March, 2015: Light rain are likely to be isolated in Taninthayi Region and Kachin State, weather will be partly cloudy in Upper Sagraing Region, Kayin and Mon States and generally fair in the remaining Regions and States. Degree of certainty is (60%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Seas will be moderate in Myanmar waters.
Leonardo DiCaprio to play guy with 24 personalities

Leonardo DiCaprio will play Billy Milligan, who had 24 personalities, in his next film ‘The Crowned Room’.

LOS ANGELES, 1 March — Leonardo DiCaprio will play Billy Milligan, who had 24 personalities, in his next film ‘The Crowned Room’.

The film will be adapted from the non-fiction book about Milligan, who was the first person to successfully use multiple personality disorder as a defense in a court of law, said The Hollywood Reporter. DiCaprio, 40, has been interested in playing him stretching back to 1997.

Published in 1981, Keyes’ book chronicles Milligan’s story, including his court trial in the late 1970s in Ohio after being charged with robbery and raping three women on the Ohio State University campus.

In the preparation of his defense, Milligan, who died in December 2014, was diagnosed with multiple personality disorder. Pleading insanity, he and his lawyers contended that two of his alternate personalities committed the crimes without his knowledge.

He was the first to use this defense, and the first to be acquitted for this reason.

Milligan’s various personalities included Adalana, a lesbian taking responsibility for the rapes; Ragen, a Yugoslavian communist who admitted to the robbery; and Arthur, an upright Englishman.—PTI

Kardashians strike USD 100 million deal with E! network?

LOS ANGELES, 1 March — The Kardashian clan has reportedly signed a USD 100 million renewal deal with TV network E! for another four-year run of their family show ‘Keeping Up With the Kardashians’.

The stars had threatened to walk from their longtime cable home in a hardball move that ultimately led to the deal, reported Us magazine.

A source close to the deal said that Kris Jenner was a lead negotiator for her family.

“This has been in the works for almost a year. Kris is a fierce negotiator. She was playing major hardball and threatening to leave,” the source said.—PTI

William Shatner cannot attend friend Leonard Nimoy’s funeral

LOS ANGELES, 1 March — William Shatner cannot attend the funeral of his friend and “Star Trek” co-star Leonard Nimoy because of a prior commitment for a charity ball, the actor said on Twitter on Saturday.

Shatner and Nimoy portrayed the two best-known characters on the original “Star Trek” television series launched in 1966 and in a series of films, with Shatner playing the adventurous Captain Kirk and Nimoy as the logic-bound, half-alien Mr Spock Nimoy, who had battled chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), died on Friday at age 83 at his home in the Bel Air section of Los Angeles. Shatner said in a post on Twitter that he was in Florida, having previously agreed to appear at a Red Cross ball.

“Leonard’s funeral is tomorrow. I can’t make it back in time,” Shatner wrote, adding “I feel really awful. Here I am back in time,” Shatner wrote, adding “I feel really awful. Here I am back in time.”

The Florida Weekly reported the ball in Palm Beach would feature Shatner, actress Shirley MacLaine and singer Wayne Newton.

Leonardo DiCaprio will play Billy Milligan, who had 24 personalities, in his next film ‘The Crowned Room’.

PTI

Will Smith sings on TV show

LOS ANGELES, 1 March — Hollywood star Will Smith performed a song while visiting a chat show to promote his new film ‘Focus’.

Following his performances on ‘The Ellen DeGeneres Show’ and ‘Late Show with David Letterman’ earlier this month, the 46-year-old actor/rapper stopped by ‘Jimmy Kimmel Live!’ and treated the audience to his 1991 song ‘Summertime’ while DJ Jazzy Jeff danced in his seat as he appeared via video chat, reported Ace Showbiz. In an interview with the late-night show’s host Jimmy Kimmel, Smith talked about his plan to return to music.

California

Hollywood star Will Smith performed a song while visiting a chat show to promote his new film ‘Focus’.

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Smith talked about his plan to return to music.

‘Jimmy Kimmel Live!’ and another four-year run of their family show ‘Keeping Up With the Kardashians’.

PTI

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Kristen Stewart joins Michelle Williams’s film

LOS ANGELES, 1 March — ‘Twilight’ star Kristen Stewart has joined actresses Michelle Williams and Laura Dern in the indie drama known as the ‘Untitled Kelly Reichardt Project’.

Written and directed by Reichardt, the film is a series of vignettes that revolve around the lives of people in small-town Montana, reported Deadline. Stewart, 24, will play a young lawyer from Boise, who takes a teaching job several hours from her house. Despite her nerves about teaching, she is determined to prove to herself that she can do it. Soon after taking the job, Beth develops a close friendship with Jamie, a local woman, who is auditing her class.

James Le Gros and Jared Harris (Mad Men), and relative newcomer Sara Rodier also have been cast in the ensemble project, which is being produced by Neil Kopp and Anish Savjani.

Dern, 48, is set as Laura Wells, a lawyer in Helena who keeps going back into a bad relationship with Ryan Lewis (Le Gros), a married man who could not care less for his wife and daughter. Williams, 34, portrays Ryan’s wife, Gina Lewis, who works in advertising with her philandering husband.—PTI

Indonesia

Indonesian Fashion Week 2015 was held from 26 February to 1 March.

A model presents a creation by Indonesian designer Albert Yanuar during the Indonesian Fashion Week 2015 in Jakarta, Indonesia, 28 Feb, 2015. Indonesian Fashion Week 2015 was held from 26 February to 1 March.

PTI

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PTI

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The Florida Weekly reported the ball in Palm Beach would feature Shatner, actress Shirley MacLaine and singer Wayne Newton.

Irish model Emma McCarthy, left, and Indonesian model Josephine Suryani present a creation by Indonesian designer Albert Yanuar during the Indonesian Fashion Week 2015 in Jakarta, Indonesia, 28 Feb, 2015.
Murray scores twice and sees red as Palace beat West Ham

London, 1 March
Crystal Palace maintained their revival under new manager Alan Pardew with a 3-1 Premier League victory at West Ham United on Saturday — their fourth win in seven matches since their former midfielder took charge.

Glenn Murray scored twice, either side of Scott Dann’s header, and was sent off in an eventful afternoon for Palace strikers as his side climbed to the relative safety of 12th. Enner Valencia scored for West Ham after 76 minutes but it was too little too late for the Hammers whose season is unraveling after earlier challenges fell flat for four.

“Up until the sending off, we were in total control, but we don’t make it easy for ourselves,” said Pardew, who left Newcastle United to take over at Palace, told Sky Sports.

“We saw it out and

we had some scary moments but it was nothing less than what we deserved.”

Murray’s header, helped in by West Ham’s Aaron Cresswell’s attempted clearance, gave Palace a fortuitous lead in the 41st minute before Dann doubled their advantage in the 51st minute with a powerful header.

Murray, in the thick of the action all afternoon, added his second in the 63rd minute with a glancing header but was dismissed six minutes later for a second yellow card just moments before Pardew had planned to substitute him.

“It was a mixed after- noon for him wasn’t it,” Pardew added. “He could have had a hat-trick in the first half. He gets into the right positions.”

“The sending off was a little bit unlucky because,” he said, “we were just about to sub him off. He has to go for the ball, and I don’t think he deserved that. I spoke to him at halftime. We all knew he was on a knife edge. ‘But I’m absolutely delighted with him. He was terrific. It shouldn’t take away from a terrific performance.’”

Valencia’s goal was scant consolation for West Ham who have won just one of their last 12 league games since climbing to fourth in mid-December.

“I’m shocked,” West Ham boss Sam Allardyce, whose future the club has again been the subject of speculation, told the BBC.

“Our level of performance wasn’t where I expected it. I don’t think we’ve built expectation levels so high at home. It’s about the basics, really. If we don’t play to our best, we’ll struggle.”

“We warned the lads about Crystal Palace’s set plays because 50 percent of their goals have come from set-plays. And we’ve conceded from two corners and a free-kick.”

Nadal reaches first final of year in Argentine Open

Buenos Aires, 1 March — Rafael Nadal, pushed to the limit in a high octane first set, made up for his semi-final defeat at the Rio Open a week ago by reaching the Argentine Open final with a 7-6(7), 6-2 victory over Carlos Berlocq on Saturday.

The world number four will meet a fourth Argentine in succession in the tournament, 2007 champion Juan Monaco, in Sunday’s showpiece match looking for a 65th career title and record-equalling 46th on clay. The first set, with 74th-ranked Berlocq playing every bit as well as his

Gov’t to ask 48 entities to cooperate over cybersecurity

Tokyo, 1 March — The government will ask for cooperation from 48 entities in charge of the nation’s key infrastructure such as provision of information when they are hit by major cyberattacks as part of efforts to strengthen countermeasures against such threats, a government official said on Sunday.

The 48 entities designated by the basic law on cybersecurity enacted last November include Nippon Telegraph and Telephone Corp, operators of highways, some of the Japan Railways group, NIK, the

Bank of Japan and the Japanese Red Cross Society, the official said. Ahead of hosting the 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo, the government sees cooperation as necessary to better prepare for growing cybersecurity threats and prompt recovery from damage as well as investigation into the cause of trouble, according to the official. The 48 entities were designated on 10 February as targets with which the government is asking for cooperation in the event of cybersecurity attacks, the official said, adding they will receive a request through the Cabinet cybersecurity center set up in January. —Kyodo News

Federer claims seventh Dubai crown

Roger Federer of Switzerland poses with his trophy after winning the final match against Novak Djokovic of Serbia on the fifth day of the ATP Dubai Duty Free Tennis Championships on 28 Feb, 2015. Federer won 2-6, 7-6(6), 6-4 and claimed the title. —Xinhua

Monday, 2 March, 2015
Barca hot on Real's heels after Suarez shines in Granada

LONDON, 1 March — Wayne Rooney provided a timely reminder to Manchester United manager Louis van Gaal that he can be a prolific Premier League goalscorer after he netted a brace in a 2-0 win against Sunderland to help United go third.

Van Gaal restored Rooney to an advanced position after trialing him in a number of positions across United’s midfield — to accommodate misfiring pair Robin van Persie and Radamel Falcao — in the last two matches.

The decision paid instant dividends at Old Trafford as Rooney scored goals in the 66th and 84th minutes to end an eight-game scoring drought spanning his midfield deployment.

On Friday, Van Gaal attributed United’s struggles this season to the absence of a prolific forward such as Chelsea’s Diego Costa or Manchester City’s Sergio Aguero.

With his return up front and subsequent brace, however, Rooney became the first player to score at least 10 goals in 11 successive Premier League seasons.

Rooney has now netted 10 league goals, level with injured Netherlands captain Van Persie while struggling Colombia forward Falcao has four.

“I think every player needs confidence and Wayne scored two goals and it shall lift his confidence of course,” Van Gaal told Sky Sports.

Alongside Rooney’s return to a more attacking role, Van Gaal also deployed two natural wide players in Ashley Young and Antonio Valencia as part of his 3-5-2.

Van Gaal had used the system in the past with limited success but was impressed by the often-maligned Young.

“Ashley played a good match and he gives us power and security at that side so I was pleased with him,” the Dutchman said.

“We have played this system already against Chelsea and Manchester City and Crystal Palace.

At that time the balance was as well as it was today so that was a big step in the process. You cannot always play in this system because it depends on so many aspects of your team and your opponents.”

Before Rooney’s second-half goals, including the first from the penalty spot, United were booed by their supporters after another lethargic and unimpressive performance in the opening period.

“I think the first half could have been better,” Van Gaal added.

“But the second half we controlled the match and we scored goals, we created chances and we didn’t give any chances away. I’m very pleased.”

— Reuters

Lions fly from Yangon to China for U-15 football tournament

YANGON, 1 March — Myanmar U-15 football team that will take part in the China-ASEAN Youth Football Tournament in Dongxing of Guangxi Province, the People’s Republic of China, from 4 to 12 March 2015.

Members of the team in two groups will leave Yangon International Airport for China on 2 March. Both groups will meet in Kunming of Yunnan Province to go to Nanning International Airport, Guangxi Province.

On arrival at the airport, the football team will proceed to Dongxing in Guangxi Province — MFF

Players of Myanmar U-15 team that will take part in China-ASEAN youth football tournament pose for group photo.

— Xinhua

Barcelona’s Lionel Messi (2nd L) kicks the ball the ball next to Granada’s goalkeeper Oier Oizalab during their Spanish first division soccer match at Nuevos Carlenes stadium in Granada on 28 Feb, 2015.

Barcelona’s 45-year-old Ikeyama rewrites own record

OSAKA, 1 March — WBO atomweight champion Nao Ikeyama rewrote her own record as the oldest fighter in Japan to successfully defend a title with a unanimous decision over challenger Norj Guro of the Philippines in Osaka on Saturday.

Ikeyama, who is 45 years, 5 months, won her second title defence after outpunching Guro, who is 21 years her junior.

“I came close to getting a knockout but I didn’t get one, so I regret that part. My punches weren’t effective,” said Ikeyama, who improved to 8-2 with one knockout.

“My only goal is to keep winning bout after bout. I really want to make my next fight a good one.”

Ikeyama was impressed by the system in the past with limited success but was impressed by the often-maligned Young.

Barca热脚史上进球新纪录

巴塞罗那的莱昂内尔·梅西（左二）在加的斯的La Noria体育场与加的斯的门将奥耶尔·奥伊扎布多进行了一场西班牙第一级别的足球比赛。梅西打进了两球，帮助球队以2-0获胜。

巴塞罗那队59分9胜，领先于巴塞罗那队，紧随其后的是第二名的热刺队。梅西的进球帮助巴塞罗那队在两场中取得胜利。

“巴塞罗那队在第二场比赛中表现出色，”梅西说道。“梅西的进球帮助巴塞罗那队在两场中取得胜利。”