Dr Sai Mauk Kham and wife attend ceremony to assign duties to medical doctors in Lashio

NAI PYI TAW, 21 March—Vice-President Dr Sai Mauk Kham this morning attended a ceremony to assign duties to medical doctors newly appointed by the Shan State government in Lashio. The event was held at Myanmar Medical Association (Lashio) in Shan State. The Shan State Chief Minister highlighted the State efforts to provide healthcare services for the people in parallel with the health standards of the regional countries, adding that medicines and medical equipment are distributed to all states and regions on an equal basis. He said 42 medical doctors had been appointed under the arrangement of the regional government. He then urged the doctors to perform their medical duties out of goodwill. Deputy Health Minister Dr Win Myint also called on the new employees to provide public healthcare in a patient and duty-conscious manner while trying to become brilliant doctors. Dr. Sai Mauk Kham in his speech said Myanmar had turned out over 30,000 medical doctors but some of them are in foreign countries due to various reasons while some have been out of the medical field. He stressed the need to train more doctors as there are only about 10,000 health staff members across the country. (See page 3)

Vice President U Nyan Tun on inspection tour of Thilawa special economic zone (A)

YANGON, 21 March—In the afternoon on Saturday, Vice President U Nyan Tun went on an inspection tour of the Thilawa special economic zone (A) in northern Yangon. The vice president visited the Koyorad Myanmar factory project and the Golden Tokyu construction project, both of which are being undertaken with Japanese investments.

Officials briefed the vice president on employment opportunities, prospects of foreign investments and arrangements for power supplies. The zone has employed 1,936 people, of whom 1,900 are Myanmar citizens. The vice president urged officials to create the zone as a pleasant environment for investments, stressing the need to make the area a model economic zone by building mutual trust with the people. The zone (A), located on an area of 396 hectares, is 78% complete and its completion is expected in June this year. So far, 39 companies from 11 countries including Japan, Thailand, China, Malaysia, Singapore, Sweden, the US and Australia, have shown their interest in running business in the zone. Of them, 21 have been awarded licences for investments, with seven others already starting their construction projects.

According to reports, arrangements are under way to put five factories into operation in September. The entire facility, which is expected to complete in 2016-2017, will create some 40,000 jobs. In the morning of the same day, Vice President U Nyan Tun met heads of sports federations and urged them to set their ambitions high on bagging medals home in as many events as possible. The vice president stressed strong team spirit, mutual respect and cooperation are all critical. (See page 3)

National ceasefire negotiators move closer to deal despite unresolved points

U NAING HONG HAS at the press conference following the fifth day of the seventh round of nationwide ceasefire accord talks on 21 March—The deadline for payment of advance income tax for this fiscal year is 31 March, the Internal Revenue Department said Saturday. Those who receive total income chargeable to income tax must pay either monthly or quarterly within the fiscal year according to the Income Tax Law Section 15 (a) and 16 (a), the department under the Ministry of Finance and Revenue said. Those who fail to pay on time incur a 10 per cent penalty.—GNLM

Deadline approaches for advance income tax payment

INSIDE

Government dignitaries, schoolchildren study Solar Impulse 2 in Mandalay

PSCs signed for four oil fields off Rakhine State

Myanmar observes International Day of Forests in capital city

Clean water essential for sustainable development

By Ye Myint

YANGON, 21 March — Government negotiators and ethnic armed groups wrapped up a fifth day of nationwide ceasefire talks Saturday, making solid progress despite leaving two points of the prospective peace agreement unresolved, both sides said.

On Day 5, the government’s Union Peacemaking Work Committee and the Nationwide Ceasefire Coordination Team of ethnic armed groups concluded the fifth chapter, entitled “Political guarantees and political dialogue,” of the seventh ceasefire pact. Of the two unresolved points, one relates to all-inclusive political dialogue and the other to the roadmaps for the political dialogue, said U Hla Maung Shwe, senior adviser at the Myanmar Peace Centre.

It may be possible to reach agreements on the two points on Day 6, which is scheduled to include discussions on chapters 5 and 6, said NCCT member Daw Saw Mya Yazar Lin, who accompanied U Hla Maung Shwe and NCCT leader.
Meiktila rises from ashes

Meiktila, 21 March—Two years after the riots in Meiktila, residents are returning to their homes in ThiriMingalar and Aung Zeya Wards, where houses have been rebuilt. Altogether 350 one-unit houses have also been built in Chanaye Tharyar Ward. Residents are determined to live in peace and avoid repeating the bitter communal violence that resulted in a state of emergency. —GNLM-018

Peace Funfair in Mandalay

Mandalay, 21 March—Mandalay-based political parties hand in hand with local people organized the Peace Funfair on 20 March. The fair will be held from 20 to 24 March. During the fair, comedy plays, performances to honour Myanmar armed forces and circus events will be staged. Organizers include the Union Solidarity and Development Party, Nation Unity Party, National Democratic Force Party, Wuntharh Democratic Party, Democratic Party (Myanmar), National Political Alliance League and Federal Union Party. —Tin Maung (Mdy)

Library built with Union Parliament fund

Nay Pyi Taw, 21 March—A new library is under construction in Zaibuthiri Township, Nay Pyi Taw Council area, funded by K4.9 million from the Union Parliament’s Town- ship Development Fund. The construction works started on 18 March and are scheduled for completion on 27 March 2015 (Armed Forces Day). KoPauk (Okkamyay)

Talks to commemorate World TB Day on 29 March

Yangon, 21 March—Medical specialists and experts on tuberculosis will give talks about the disease on 29 March at Nursing University in Yangon. The event, to commemorate World TB day, which falls on 24 March, is being organized by Myanmar Medical Association. Speakers will include TB specialist Dr Tin Mi Mi Khaing, Professor U Win Naing and Professor U Ye Myint Kyaw. —AungThura
Dr Sai Mauk Kham and wife attend ceremony...
(from page 1)
The Vice-President said new medical doctors were usually assigned duties in large hospitals so that they could gain experiences. He then urged them to study further to become doctorates.

Dr Sai Mauk Kham and wife Daw Nan Shwe Hmon attended a ceremony to open Thukha Wihara Kanmein Ordination Hall.

The ceremony was attended by venerable Buddhist monks, lay people, Shan State Chief Minister U Sao Aung Myat and wife and his cabinet members. The Vice-President and wife donated K 10 million and the chief minister and wife K 5 million for the ordination hall.

Vice President U Nyan Tun on inspection tour of Thilawa special economic zone...
(from page 1)

Vice President U Nyan Tun talks to officials of a construction project on his tour of Thilawa special economic zone.—MNA

Real estate seminars aim to hone agents’ skills

By Khaing Thanda Lwin

YANGON, 21 March—Myanmar real estate website House.com.mm will hold seminars in March and April in Yangon with the aim of developing the country’s property market and helping agents sharpen their skills, the site’s PR and marketing manager Kaung Htike said.

At the first seminar on 26 March, house.com.mm managers will share their experience of customer relationship management. Marketing, online promotion and advertising techniques will be discussed at the second seminar on 9 April.

Each seminar allows a maximum of 50 people, with the organiser inviting real estate service providers to take part.

Property prices in Yangon skyrocketed amid a real estate boom, but the market has been in decline since late 2014 due to falling demand.

“The Myanmar property market is expected to be cool this year,” said Daw Moh Moh Aung, secretary of Myanmar Real Estate Services Association. House.com.mm, the top online marketplace for property listings in Myanmar, launched in 2012.

Mandalay, 21 March—Basic education students are visiting the Mandalay International Airport to study Solar Impulse 2, the first round-the-world flight of solar-power aircraft sitting at the airport after arriving in Myanmar on Thursday. The aircraft began its journey around the world from Abu Dhabi on March 9, stopped over in Oman and India and arrived in Myanmar.

Nearly 500 students as well as civil servants and trainees from training schools including the Defence Services Academy in PyinOoLwin studied the solar-powered aircraft today.

During their study, the students and other visitors were briefed by crew members on the accounts of the aircraft such as use of solar power only to fly the aircraft, challenges and difficulties in its round-the-world trip, the importance of weather conditions during flight and cooperation of governments in respective countries where the flight is scheduled to stop over.

News and Periodicals Enterprise under the Ministry of Information is distributing visitors its daily newspapers free of charge, including The Global New Light of Myanmar in English version.

Union Election Commission Chairman U Tin Aye, Union Home Affairs Minister Lt-Gen Ko Ko, Mandalay Region Chief Minister U Ye Myint and regional ministers also visited the airport to study the aircraft today.

Two pilots and crew members of the aircraft were hosted dinner by First Myanmar Investment and Yoma Strategic Holdings Co.

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PSCs signed for four oil fields off Rakhine State

NAY PYI TAW, 21 March — Production sharing contracts (PSCs) were signed here on 20 March for four oil fields located off Rakhine State, according to officials.

The contracts for offshore blocks A-4 and AD-2 was signed by the Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise (MOGE) under the Ministry of Energy and BG Exploration & Production Myanmar Pte Ltd with Woodside Energy (Myanmar) Pte Ltd reached an agreement on production sharing for offshore oil fields A-7 and AD-5 with BG Exploration & Production Myanmar Pte Ltd and Myanmar Petroleum Exploration & Production Company Ltd.

Two oil fields on shallow water drilling will take one year for observation and six years for exploration at a cost of $545.5m, and the other two on deepwater drilling two years for observation and six years for exploration at $353.1m.—MNA

Tatmadaw seizes Kokang insurgent stronghold

NAY PYI TAW, 21 March — Tatmadaw forces captured a Kokang insurgent stronghold near the Chinese border Saturday, where they found three dead rebels along with stores of weapons and ammunition.

Equipped with bunkers and bomb shelters, Point-1564 Hill, some 1500 meters from the border, fell under Tatmadaw control this morning after fierce fighting. The Tatmadaw forces seized guns, grenades, ammunition and uniforms.

Eleven government soldiers died in the battle, while another 11 were wounded. The Tatmadaw offensive against the insurgents is ongoing.

Myanmar sport athletes leave for China for training in the run-up to SEA Games

NAY PYI TAW, 21 March — Some people took to the streets Saturday in protest against the crackdown on protesters who demanded to amend the National Education Law.

With the permission of local authorities, around 120 people, holding placards and shouting slogans, staged a protest around 9 am in Mandalay against the crackdown and dispersed about noon.

Similarly, about 60 people, though they were allowed to stage a protest at a designated place in Tamway Township, gathered at the Inya Lake in Yangon around 4.30 pm, holding placards and hot-air ballons, and recited poems and shouted slogans. They dispersed themselves around 6.30 pm.

Myanmar observes International Day of Forests in capital city

NAY PYI TAW, 21 March — The Ministry of Forest observed International Day of Forests 2015 under the theme for this year “Forests and Climate Change” here on Saturday, according to officials.

In an opening address, Union Minister U Win Tun described forestation as the most effective and simplest way to tackle environmental issues facing the world.

Some 1.6 billion of the world’s population depend on forests, which he said are home to over 80% of biodiversity, adding that 75% of freshwater comes from forested catchment areas.

Forests provide climate-resilient services with equal proportions of oxygen, carbon dioxide and humidity, he said.

Two decades of annual deforestation in Myanmar from 1990 to 2010 accounted for 0.55% of the country’s total forest area, with annual global deforestation reaching over 13 million hectares.

Myanmar is making strategic arrangements for its deforestation to come to zero in 2030 in a bid to sustain forest resources, with emphasis being placed on green industries.—MNA

People stage protests against crackdown on NEL amendment protesters

NAY PYI TAW, 21 March — Some people took to the streets Saturday in protest against the crackdown on protesters who demanded to amend the National Education Law.

A total of 89 sports consortiums from various fields left in the first batch the Yangon International Airport by China Airline today. Their training will finish in the end of May and proceed to Singapore where the sports and games are due to commence on 5 June.

The second batch will leave for China on 8 April.

Myanmar selections seen at the airport before departure for China to take training.—MNA

Yangon, 21 March — Under a government-to-government training programme, Myanmar is sending its athletes to Kunming, Nanning and Guangzhou of the People’s Republic of China in batches for their training so that they could achieve a victory in the 28th SEA Games to be hosted in Singapore this year.

Based in Britain and registered in Singapore, BG Exploration & Production Myanmar Pte Ltd will be an operator of the A-4 and AD-2 blocks, while Australia-based and Singapore-registered Woodside Energy (Myanmar) Pte Ltd will serve as an operator of the A-7 and AD-5 blocks. Myanmar will earn a US$82.4 million as a signature bonus and $3.7m as data fee from signing the contracts.

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Japan, China, S Korea foreign ministers meet after 3-year hiatus

SEOUL, 21 March — The foreign ministers of Japan, China and South Korea gathered together on Saturday for the first time in nearly three years in the hope of breathing new life into their three-way cooperation, despite persistent difficulties stemming from wartime issues.

A major focus is on whether the foreign ministers will be able to build momentum toward an annual trilateral summit that has been suspended since May 2012 as Japan’s relations with China and South Korea have sunk to their lowest levels in decades over historical and territorial issues.

A foreign ministers’ meeting of the three Asian powers had traditionally served as an occasion to set the stage for summits among their leaders, in addition to discussing regional affairs, particularly North Korea, and collaborating on matters in other areas such as a free trade agreement and environmental protection.

Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida has expressed hope of realizing a trilateral summit at an early date to help foster “future-oriented” relations, before meeting his Chinese and South Korean counterparts, Wang Yi and Yun Byung Se, in Seoul.

In reality, however, the chance of Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe being accepted in the immediate future by China and South Korea are not very high as the two countries see him as having revisionist historical views.

This year is political- ly delicate for Japan, China and South Korea as it marks the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II.

Although tensions between Japan and China have somewhat eased since Abe’s long-cherished first meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping materialized in November, it appears that the time is yet not ripe to resume a three-way summit.

China has already told Japan it cannot decide when to hold the summit until seeing the content of a statement to be released this summer by Abe to mark the 70th anniversary, according to people with knowledge of the situation.

China is apprehensive about warming ties with Abe’s government out of concerns that he may water down Japan’s past official apologies for its militaristic past in his upcoming statement.

Not just China, where an untold number of people were killed before Japan’s defeat in 1945, South Korea has shared the same perception, claiming that Abe’s government lacks sensitivity toward the suffering of other Asian countries before and during the war.

A major sticking point in relations between Tokyo and Seoul in recent years has been the issue of “comfort women,” who were recruited to work in wartime brothels for the Japanese military, many of whom were from the Korean Peninsula that was under Japan’s colonial rule from 1910 to 1945.

South Korea has criticized Japan for not doing enough to atone for the suffering it caused those women. Partly because of that, its president, Park Geun Hye, has yet to hold formal talks with Abe since she took office in early 2013.

In a speech on 1 March, Park urged Japan to address the “human rights violations” against comfort women, calling it “a historic task to lead the way summit.

Earlier Saturday, Kishida, together with Yun and Wang, met with Park, the first contact between the South Korean president and a Japanese Cabinet member in Seoul since she held talks with Tarō Asō, deputy prime minister and finance minister, at her inauguration ceremony in February 2013.

It is possible that the Chinese and South Korean foreign ministers will raise wartime issues when they meet trilaterally with Kishida.

During Yu’s bilateral talks with Kishida, the South Korean foreign minister raised the issue of comfort women, according to a Japanese diplomat.

Earlier this month, Japan similarly renewed calls for Abe’s government to properly face up to Japan’s past misdeeds, with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe’s government calling it “the more the victimizer is conscious of his guilt, the easier the victimized can recover from the suffering.”

“Seventy years ago Japan lost the war. Seventy years afterward, Japan must not only recognize past aggression, but also past aggression? Ultimately, the choice is Japan’s.”

Kyodo News

Singaporeans wish ex-PM Lee Kuan Yew speedy recovery

SINGAPORE, 21 March — The Singapore General Hospital (SGH) has designated an area outside Block 7, known as the Quad, for those who want to place cards or flowers for Singapore’s ex-Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew, who remains critically ill according to the latest statement from Singapore’s Prime Minister’s Office (PMO).

SGH set up this special zone on Friday afternoon, and people who wish a speedy recovery for Lee Kuan Yew started coming in to support him.

Representatives from Positive Intentions (PI), a social enterprise, training and development agency, stopped by with a poster filled with messages of support, saying “Thank you” and “We love you.”

“If there’s no Lee Kuan Yew, there’s no Singapore,” said Ethan Ong Yongsen, co-founder of the PI, “there’s no way for us to thank him personally, but we need to do something.”

“I love Lee Kuan Yew very much. He developed our country. He has done very good things to make Singapore one of the No.1 nations in Asia,” said Ram, a Singaporean who came to pray for Lee.

Ram also told Xinhua that he hoped Lee Kuan Yew can celebrate Singapore’s Golden Jubilee this year with them.

When asked why they came to pray for Lee, the couple of Nnrs Raju said that they wanted to thank the founding father for what he has done for the Singaporeans.

“We have beautiful homes, everyone has a home which is affordable. He has built a nation where every Singaporean can own a home,” said Mrs Nnrs Raju.

It is estimated that about 80 percent of Singaporeans live in the public housing units developed by the Housing and Development Board, a government department that plans and provides Singaporeans with quality homes and living environments.

Typically, the prices of these units are much lower than that of homes built by private developers.

Besides providing a living of good quality that “only other people can dream about everyday” in Koh Swee Kew’s words, Koh thinks Lee has contributed in so many ways.

“Whatsoever the colour of your skin, the religion you believe in, one race can’t have an advantage. We just respect each other,” said Koh. “I can’t pick out only one aspect.” She thought Lee has laid a good foundation for the city state.

Koh added that the former prime minister propelled a lot to make sure everybody is equally treated in Singapore although the country has Malaysians, Indians and Chinese, among others.

“Whatever the colour of your skin, the religion you believe in, one race can’t have an advantage. We just respect each other,” said Koh. —Xinhua

China opens sea shipping for overseas direct purchase in e-shopping push

QINGDAO, 21 March — An eastern Chinese port city on Friday saw the arrival of the country’s first parcel booked through overseas direct purchase and transported by sea.

The arrival of nearly 6,000 South Korean parcels in Qingdao, Shandong Province, shows China and South Korea’s ambitions to tap into the potential for bilateral e-commerce.

China introduced the direct purchase importation model in 2014 to ensure quicker customs clearing for foreign goods purchased by Chinese online shoppers in the “Haitao” market, which allows direct purchase of foreign goods that are unavailable or excessively priced in China.

Prior to the launch of the sea shipping service for overseas direct purchase, most parcels were transported via air or mail routes.

Customs officials in Qingdao say the short marine distance between Shandong and South Korea — 340 nautical miles — means transportation only takes 17 hours, compared to three or more days after placing their order.

China’s e-commerce has seen explosive growth in recent years. Online retail sales rocketed up 2.6 trillion yuan in 2014, up 41 percent, and cross-border trade by e-commerce companies is forecast to reach 6.5 trillion yuan in 2016.

However, South Korea’s Joongang Daily reported that South Korea only accounted for less than 1 percent of China’s Haitao market, thus, the government and business sectors were eager to make progress on the market boost by China-S Korea free trade area. On Wednesday, e-commerce giant Alibaba said it would launch logistics service in South Korea to make it easier for Chinese consumers to purchase Commodities from South Korean sellers. —Xinhua
China invites S Korea’s Park to attend war anniversary in September

SEOUL, 21 March — Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi on Saturday extended an invitation to South Korean President Park Geun-hye to attend a ceremony in China to mark the 70th anniversary of victory in World War II on 3 September, according to South Korea’s Foreign Ministry.

Wang offered the invitation in a meeting with South Korean Foreign Minister Yun Byung-se in Seoul. The meeting was held hours ahead of the ministerial talks between Wang, Yun and Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida.

Chinese President Xi Jinping made the war anniversary day also as the “victory against the war” day, a day of remembrance added to the national calendar last year as part of a campaign to raise national awareness of war history.

On North Korea, Wang and Yun reaffirmed a common stance that Pyongyang’s nuclear weapons program should never be tolerated and that the North should be denuclearized.

The two ministers agreed to make joint efforts to resume “meaningful talks” in efforts to prevent North Korea from advancing its nuclear weapons program and achieve North Korea’s denuclearization.

Wang and Yun also agreed to further promote communication and consultations at various levels, including those of the chief delegates to the six-party talks aimed at denuclearizing North Korea.

The six-party talks, involving the two Koreas, the United States, China, Japan and Russia, have been deadlocked since late 2008.

“The two ministers also agreed to exert joint efforts to make a trilateral cooperative relationship (along with Japan) return to normal at an early date and develop it as a model example substantially to help stabilize the region and bring about a common prosperity,” a Foreign Ministry statement said.

Meanwhile, the statement did not mention whether Wang reaffirmed his country’s opposition to the deployment of the Terminal High Altitude Area Defence (THAAD) in South Korea which was not an agenda for Saturday’s talks and thus the issue was not discussed.

China has been protesting against the deployment of the THAAD system in South Korea, claiming it will target China as part of US efforts to expand its military presence in East Asia.

South Korea has maintained strategic ambiguity on the issue so far, saying there have been no consultations with the United States and no decision has been made.

US officials maintain the system is purely defensive and its deployment in South Korea would be aimed at exclusively dealing with threats posed by North Korea.

A senior South Korean Foreign Ministry official later told reporters the deployment of the Terminal High Altitude Area Defence (THAAD) in South Korea was not an agenda for Saturday’s talks and thus the issue was not discussed.

The effort will use America’s nearly 7,000 Peace Corps volunteers live and work in developing countries across the globe to help expand access for schooling for girls.

Carrie Hessler, director of US Peace Corps, said: “An investment in girls’ education is about giving girls like you here a voice in your community and in your country,” she said.

According to the UNESCO, literacy rates among female males in Cambodia is much lower than males, only 70.9 percent of females are literate, compared with 85.1 per cent of males.

“The ‘Let Girls Learn’ initiative, launched by the first lady earlier this month, aims at reducing the number of girls who do not attend school.

The first lady, who is a Princeton graduate in sociology, encouraged girls to focus on schooling, saying that their success would not happen without education.

“Let Girls Learn is about giving girls like you here a voice in your community and in your country,” said the first lady.

She is scheduled to visit the famed Angkor Wat Temple on Saturday afternoon before leaving for the United States on Sunday morning.

France says nuclear deal with Iran must be robust, guarantee no atomic bomb

PARIS, 21 March — France’s foreign minister said on Saturday that his country wanted an agreement over the Iranian nuclear programme that was sufficiently robust to guarantee that Tehran could not acquire an atomic bomb.

Iran is a world power — the United States, Britain, France, Germany, Russia and China — snapped negotiations on a nuclear agreement on Friday and are set to meet again next week to break a deadlock over sensitive atomic research and lifting of sanctions.

France has been demanding more stringent restrictions on the Iranians, under any deal than the other Western delegations and at one point during the talks French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius phoned his Israeli counterpart to ensure it made no more concessions, officials said.

The Europeans and US Secretary of State John Kerry plan to meet in London on Saturday to help bridge differences, negotiators said, before a end-March deadline for a political framework agreement and a full nuclear deal by 30 June. Officials have expressed concerns that the French might block a deal.

“France wants an agreement, but a robust one that really guarantees that Iran can have access to civilian nuclear power, but not the atomic bomb,” Fabius told Europe 1 radio on Saturday. Iran denies all Western powers and their allies that it harbors nuclear weapons ambitions. It wants all UN sanctions to be lifted immediately, including those targeting its nuclear programme.

While the talks have made progress over the past year, differences on sticking points are still wide enough to potentially prevent an agreement in the end.

There was no break-through work. Disagreements arose among the powers, with France insisting on a longer period for Iran’s nuclear work. It also opposed the idea of suspending some UN sanctions relatively quickly if a deal is struck.
Japanese, S Korean top diplomats agree to defuse tensions

Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida (L) and his South Korean counterpart Yun Byung Se shake hands at the Foreign Ministry in Seoul on 21 March, 2015. They aim to explore the possibility of arranging the first summit between their leaders amid lingering tensions over wartime historical issues.

Kyobo News

EU leaders pledge security cooperation, aid for Tunisia

Brussels, 21 March — European Union leaders pledged to step up help for Tunisia on Friday, worried that a terrorist attack and thousands of foreign tourists showing Islamic State militants spreading their influence from Libya and posing a growing threat to Europe.

EU governments are already deeply worried about chaos in Libya which has fuelled an exodus of migrants that are putting a heavy strain on southern EU countries such as Italy. Wednesday’s attack in Tunisia, regarded in Brussels as a rare bright spot among countries swept up by the Arab uprisings, increased the EU’s concern about threats to stability among its southern neighbours. Islamic State blamed responsibility for the museum attack and Tunisia’s government said the two gunman had trained at a jihadist camp in Libya.

Events in the southern Mediterranean are dangerous for Europe,” European Council President Donald Tusk told a news conference after an EU summit.

“We have to offer everything we can to stabilise the situation in Tunisia. We can’t say Tunisia is destabilised after this terrorist attack, but the risk is quite obvious that Tunisia will be the next step of activity and violence from Islamic State activists,” he said.

Tusk said he had invited EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini to join him on a visit to Tunisia, Malta and Italy at the end of March. In a statement condemning the Tunisia attack, EU leaders pledged to intensify cooperation with Tunisia to counter terrorism and strengthen Tunisia’s democracy and to help with its economic and social development.

Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi said the attack in Tunisia was “new evidence that we are facing a global threat, the threat of terrorism. We need to concentrate our attention a bit more on the Mediterranean.” “It is very important to help Tunisia also in terms of economic support so that it can face the negative impact on the tourism sector and on Tunisian GDP,” Renzi told reporters.

EU leaders backed UN-brokered peace talks in Libya, where two rival governments and armed factions are battling for power and oil. The US Secretary of State helped out Muammar Gaddafi. They urged all sides to quickly agree on a government of national unity, which the EU was ready to support. German Chancellor Angela Merkel said Islamic State’s influence in Libya was growing.

“If the problems in Libya are not solved, the EU as a whole has a big problem,” she said. EU officials are drawing up proposals for a possible EU mission to Libya if the UN talks reach a deal. Mogherini has suggested from a team of EU soldiers or civilians could monitor a cease-fire or protect airports and other infrastructure if the talks succeed, or EU member states are cautious about the idea.—Reuters

UNSG’s Message on World Water Day

22 March 2015

This year, as the United Nations prepares to adopt a new post-2015 sustainable development agenda in September, World Water Day highlights the essential and irreplaceable role of water. We rely on water for public health and equitable progress, it is essential for food and energy security, and it underpins the functioning of industries.

The onset of climate change, growing demand on finite water resources, agriculture, industry and cities, and increasing pollution in many areas are hastening a water crisis that can only be addressed by cross-sectoral, holistic planning and policies—internationally, regionally and globally.

Among the most urgent issues are access to safe drinking water and sanitation. Despite progress under the Millennium Development Goals, adopted in 2000, some 750 million people — more than one in ten of the world’s population — remain without access to an improved water supply. Women and children, in particular, are affected by this lack, as not only is their health compromised, but considerable hours are wasted in the unproductive — and sometimes dangerous — business of collecting water.

The statistics on sanitation are even less encouraging. Some 2.5 billion people still live without improved sanitation, and a billion people practice open defecation, making the least successful area of the MDGs. We cannot achieve a world of dignity, health and prosperity for all until we address this urgent need.

Our sustainable future is also jeopardized by climate change, which is why United Nations Member States are working hard towards a meaningful, universal climate agreement this December in Paris. Over the coming years, greenhouse gas emissions will have to significantly decline in order to avert the worst impacts of climate change, which include changed weather patterns and the threat of water scarcity in large parts of the world.

To address the many challenges related to water, we must work in a spirit of urgent cooperation, open to new ideas and innovation, and prepared to share the solutions that we all need for a sustainable future. We do so, we will ensure global prosperity and well-being, protect the environment and withstand the threat of climate change. —UNIC/Yangon

Sunday, 22 March, 2015
Clean water essential for sustainable development

By Aung Khin

The world is expected to face a 40 per cent shortfall in water supply by 2030 unless global organisations dramatically improve management of this precious resource.

Global water use is projected to increase by 55 per cent through 2050, with growing demands from manufacturing, thermal electricity generation and domestic use in cities around the world, especially in developing countries, according to surveys of the water management research department.

Water is essential for sustainable development in sectors from food and energy security to human and environmental health. It plays a vital role in strengthening the resilience of social, economic and environmental systems amid rapid and momentous changes in the world.

Furthermore, clean water is crucial for the health of new generations across the globe. While the world population is rapidly increasing, the planet’s water resources are limited and often shared between several countries. For example, many of the world’s rivers are shared by two or more states. Throughout history, conflicts have arisen over how water resources are to be shared.

Water treatment technologies are making advances. However, a lack of clean water and sanitation are still life-threatening problems for millions of people in the world, especially in dry zones and desert regions.

While a relatively small number of people have ready access to purified water for drinking and hygiene, large numbers at grassroots rely on tap water and lakes in many areas of Myanmar.

Clean, reliable water resources are crucial for human life. Likewise, a clean and hygienic water supply and treatment infrastructure is essential for the sustainable development of the country.

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Due to limitation of space we are only able to publish "Letter to the Editor" that do not exceed 500 words. Should you submit a text longer than 500 words please be aware that your letter will be edited.

The Himalayan waters: complex challenges and regional solutions

Santosh Nepal and Arun Bhakta Shrestha, ICIMOD

It is difficult to think of a resource more essential to the wellbeing of people and their economies than water, yet managing water resources is a complex and challenging task. The Hindu Kush Himalayan (HKH) region heavily depends on water resources for irrigation, energy generation, water power, sanitation, and industry, as well as for the functioning of many important ecosystem services. Water thus directly contributes to the national GDP and to livelihoods and income generation at the local level. Although water is the foundation of sustainable development, water management in the HKH region remains fragmented and uncoordinated, and does not take relevant regional issues into account.

Many big rivers like the Indus, Ganges, and Brahmaputra originate from the snow and glacier covered high mountains, and have abundant seasonal and annual water supply. Despite this, mountain people living on the ridges and hill slopes have limited access to water for drinking and agriculture. Throughout the mountain region, springs are reported to be drying, and mountain agriculture has suffered from drought. The shortage of water has placed an increasing burden on mountain communities, particularly on women. Furthermore, the communities face loss of property and lives due to water-intensive economic changes, the growing population will require more water and food, and equitable access to vital resources has become a major question. Sustainable solutions to these problems require efficient use of water resources for agricultural and ecological innovation plays a vital role.

Regional cooperation in sustainable development of water resources

The examples above show that water has both beneficial and adverse traits, its management is complex, and often a regional approach is necessary. The hydropower potentials are primarily concentrated in the mountain regions have but the major users of the energy are the urban areas and industries in the plains. Strong technical and political barriers separate those regions, which is one of the major reasons of slow progress in hydropower development. However, recent trends have shown some positive change in the re-
The Himalayan waters:... (from page 8)
There are strong indications the HKH region is going to be warmer in the coming years. Precipitation is likely to increase in different places and have more inter-annual and intra-annual variability. What does the change in temperature and precipitation mean to water availability in the HKH region? What complexities do the cryosphere dynamics add to this equation? Should these changes be of concern to water resources development in the region? These questions cannot be answered without concerted efforts of the regional countries.

The regional nature of the natural hazards requires a regional approach to the solution. Effective flood management requires sharing data and information between the upstream and downstream areas, not only within the country, but also at the transboundary level. Technological innovations based on satellite information, in combination with ground-based data, can be transformed into information that can prove vital in saving lives and properties. For example, the Koshi Flood Outlook (www.icimod.org/kf) was developed by the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) and its national partners in Nepal and India has high potential for saving lives and properties in the basin. Such efforts should be promoted widely in the region. During the Jure landslide event of August 2014 in Nepal, during which the Sun Koshi River was blocked for several days, a great concern emerged from the Indian side regarding the status of the landslide and the likelihood of an outburst flood. The flood outlook was helpful in providing important information. This example shows that disaster risk reduction could be an entry point for immediate regional cooperation. This will create trust, which can be a basis for future cooperation for maximizing benefits such as energy trade. Countries of the HKH region should recognize the potential of water resources for sustainable development. These resources can help reduce poverty, improve livelihoods, conserve ecosystems and contribute to global water management in the region. This will not only help us face the present crisis, but also open up avenues to deal with issues of future water availability amidst climate and socioeconomic changes. Regional cooperation should be based on the three pillars of sustainability: governance, environmental integrity and social equity, both at the national and local level. 

(Nepal) santosh.nepal@icimod.org) is Water Resources Specialist at ICIMOD. (Saruna.shrestha@icimod.org) is Programme Manager for the River Basins and Cryosphere and Atmosphere Regional Programmes at the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD).
US fears Islamic State is making serious inroads in Libya

Washington, 21 March — The United States is increasingly concerned about the growing presence and influence of the Syria-based Islamic State movement in Libya, according to US officials and a State Department report.

The officials said what they called “senior” Islamic State leaders had travelled to the country, which is wrecked by civil war, to help recruit and organise militants, particularly in the cities of Derna and Sirte.

Since late January, Islamic State militants have carried out attacks, including a car bombing and siege at the Corinthia, a luxury hotel in Tripoli, and an attack on the Mahbuk oilfield south of Sirte.

According to a report circulated this week by the State Department’s Diplomatic Security Bureau.

The militants also posted on the Web images of the beheading of 21 abducted Egyptian Coptic Christians on a Libyan beach.

The State Department document said estimates of the number of Islamic State fighters operating in Libya ranged from 1000 to 3000.

Around 800 fighters were based in the Derna area alone, the report said, including up to 300 who previously fought in Syria or Iraq.

US officials said that because of its strategic position, Libya had become a springboard for would-be fighters from across North Africa wanting to link up with the Islamic State. They could travel from Libya for frontline experience.

The State Department assessment, whose existence was first reported by the Washington Free Beacon website, said that the disintegration of central authority in Libya “has given IS the opportunity to establish a legitimate foothold.”

The report said Islamic State had only had limited success in capturing and holding territory in Libya.

US officials said Libya Dawn, an Islamist, but non-Jihadist movement based in the city of Misurata, was mounting a counter-attack against Islamic State forces, a development which the United States considered encouraging.

Islamic State has also endorsed, or received expressions of loyalty, from other militants around the region, including factions based in Nigeria, Yemen, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Egypt’s Sinai Peninsula.

US agencies are evaluating evidence that appears to tie Islamic State to the militants who killed 20 foreign tourists on Wednesday at a museum in Tunisia, the capital of Libya’s western neighbour Tunisia.

Reuters

Libya seizes half a tonne of radioactive sanitary towels

Beirut, 21 March — More than 550 kilograms of sanitary towels containing a radioactive substance were confiscated at Beirut international airport, officials said on Friday.

The Ministry of Finance said in statement that 30 cartons of confiscated pads will be sent to the Lebanese Atomic Energy Agency for checks before being returned to the exporter. It declined to name the company that made the pads or the name of the substance, which was discovered by customs officers during regular checks on freight arriving at the airport. Officials did not say what level of radioactivity had been detected.

Customs officials, speaking on condition of anonymity as they were not allowed to talk to the media, said that the sanitary towels were Chinese-made and delivered to Lebanon through Dubai.

There has been a public outcry in recent months over contaminated goods in Lebanon. A Ministry of Health inspection last year into food hygiene found that hundreds of restaurants, supermarkets and slaughterhouses had unsatisfactory hygiene conditions. The uproar led to several restaurant closures and calls for stricter standards on imports and business practices.

Reuters

Tunisia arrests suspected militants after museum attack

Tunis, 21 March — Tunisian authorities have arrested more than 20 suspected militants following the Bardo museum attack when gunmen killed foreign tourists, leading to a nationwide security crackdown.

Hundreds of Tunisians gathered for a mass commemorative service in Tunis on Saturday, lighting candles to remember the victims — 20 foreign tourists and three Tunisians — in a ceremony attended by government ministers. Outside, there was a heavy police presence along the capital’s central Habib Bourguiba boulevard.

Wednesday’s assault — the most deadly attack involving foreigners in Tunisia since a 2002 suicide bombing in Djerba — came at a fragile moment for a country just emerging from full democracy after its pioneering popular uprising.

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Reuters

Italy wants North African countries to rescue migrants at sea

Brussels, 21 March — Italy wants Egypt and Tunisia to play a role in rescuing stricken migrant vessels in the Mediterranean, a government planning paper showed, so that survivors could be taken back to African instead of European ports.

The plan, which calls for the European Union to support the proposed Egyptian and Tunisian operations, was prepared by the Italian home affairs ministry and seen by Reuters.

It represents an attempt to stem the growing flow of people risking their lives to reach Europe, most of whom try to get to Italy, often on overcrowded or defective vessels.

Last April Italy rescued 4,000 migrants from boats trying to reach European shores in only 48 hours in a deep migration crisis that is being made worse by the turmoil in Libya, which hasRAPIDITY with chaos and rampant militias since the ousting of Muammar Gaddafi in 2011.

In one of the worst such tragedies in October 2013, a boat carrying migrants from Libya to Italy sank off the Italian island of Lampedusa. The Italian Coast Guard managed to rescue 155 survivors but more than 360 migrants drowned.

Italy is already in bilateral talks on sea-rescue operations with Tunisia and Libya, but joint diplomatic action of the EU is crucial to get them involved, the paper said.

According to the plan, Tunisian and Egyptian naval units would intervene to rescue migrants in areas close to Libya, which is the main departing point for migrants bound for Europe, but has no effective control of its territorial waters because of the ongoing conflict between its warring factions. Once the migrants are taken out of the sea by the Egyptians or the Tunisians, they could be taken to North African ports, the paper said.

The Tunisian and Egyptian operations should be carried out in cooperation with Italian and European authorities and be adequately financially and technically supported by the EU, Italy said.

Last November, Italy stopped its Mare Nostrum search-and-rescue missions in the Mediterranean, citing cost concerns.

Since then, Triton, a European border control operation, was launched under the lead of the European border agency Frontex.

Italy says that the number of migrants that arrived at its shores in the first two months of 2015 was almost twice as big as in the same period of last year, when the Mare Nostrum operation was in place, the paper said. — Reuters
Dude, why is my mushroom glowing? Scientists have the answer

WASHINGTON, 21 March — If you think you see a glowing mushroom, you might not be having a psychedelic hallucination. Some mushrooms indeed are bioluminescent, including one that sprouts among the decayed leaves at the base of young palm trees in Brazilian coconut forests.

Scientists have long wondered for a reason there could be a fungus to glow. They now have an answer.

Researchers said on Thursday that experiments in Brazil involving the big, yellow mushroom called flor de coco, meaning coconut flower, showed its “flor de coco,” meaning in Brazil involving the big, yellow mushroom called flor de coco, meaning coconut flower, showed its bioluminescence, glow at nighttime bioluminescence and a second set of plastic mushroom replicas, one with LED lights replicating its bioluminescence, glowing only at nighttime.

They created two sets of plastic mushroom replicas, one with LED lights replicating its bioluminescence, glowing only at nighttime.

“The answer appears to be that fungi make light so they are noticed by insects who can help the fungus colonize new habitats.”

Geneticist and molecular biologist Jay Dunlap of Dartmouth College’s Geisel School of Medicine said bioluminescence had independently evolved many times in such diverse life forms as bacteria, fungi, insects and fish.

“Most of these make light in their own way, that is, with biochemistry that is unique to each organism,” Dunlap said.

Of the 100,000 known fungus species, 71 are bioluminescent. The species in the study, published in the journal Current Biology, is one of the biggest and brightest of them.

The researchers found a circadian clock regulates its bioluminescence, glowing only at nighttime.

The officials reviewed the flurry of technology deals luxury watchmakers announced this week to tackle the Apple Watch threat are more a way to hedge their bets in case the smartwatch market takes off than a strategic U-turn.

The costs of development of these hybrid watch, combining elements of traditional watchmaking with digital know-how and wireless connectivity, will likely be mostly financed by the technology providers, industry specialists predicted. Therefore, the partnerships unveiled at the Baselworld fair actually involve little investment for luxury brands — aside from their marketing efforts — but represent potentially high returns in terms of image and sales.

On Thursday, LVMH’s Tag Heuer and Bulgari, and Kering’s Gucci were among the more than dozen or so watch brands that announced partnerships with technology companies.

“Swiss brands like TAG are hedging their bets — just in case ‘wrist computers’ become popular and they are totally out of the game,” said BNP Paribas analyst Luca Solca.

But while the announcement helped Tag Heuer make headlines and project the image of a brand in tune with its times, the project has many limitations, and could, in fact, fail to ever yield a product, Richard Windsor said. Many luxury watchmakers, including Patek Philippe and Breguet, said this week smartwatches were incompatible with their brands’ values and the timeliness of their products.

Luxury brands hedge their bets with smartwatches

WASHINGTON, 21 March — The United Arab Emirates have agreed to work toward greater civil and national security space cooperation after officials from the two countries met in Washington this week, the US State Department said on Friday.

The officials reviewed a “broad list of potential areas of space cooperation,” department spokesman Jeff Rathke said in a statement.

“They agreed on developing a strategic approach that would focus on building mutual confidence and understanding of space systems on which both countries rely for economic, environmental, security and social well-being,” Rathke said.

“Because it has evolved so many times in so many different organisms, each with their own biology, studying bioluminescence gives one a window on living things in all their wonderful diversity, and it sends you off to questions that you did not know existed,” Dunlap said.

The officials reviewed a “broad list of potential areas of space cooperation,” department spokesman Jeff Rathke said in a statement.

“If you see a glowing mushroom, you might not be having a psychedelic hallucination. Some mushrooms indeed are bioluminescent, including one that sprouts among the decayed leaves at the base of young palm trees in Brazil.

Researchers said on Thursday that experiments in Brazil involving the big, yellow mushroom called flor de coco, meaning coconut flower, showed its night-time bioluminescence attracted insects and other creatures that could later spread its spores around the forest.

“Our research provides an answer to the question, ‘Why do fungi make light?’ that was first asked, at least first asked in print, by Aristotle more than 2,000 years ago,” said biochemist Casius Stevani of Brazil’s Institute de Quimica-Universidade de Sao Paulo.

“Why do fungi make light?”

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“Why do fungi make light?”
Gunfight kills 10 after ambush on Mexican police

MEXICO CITY, March — Ten people were killed in a gunfight in western Mexico when suspected gang members ambushed a police convoy in one of the deadliest attacks on security forces since Mexican President Enrique Pena Nieto took office in December 2012.

Five members of Mexico’s new militarized police, or aצ, were killed in the shootout on Thursday night in Ocotlan, Jalisco state, and eight others were wounded, the National Security Commission said in a statement on Friday.

Two bystanders who apparently had nothing to do with the ambush and three suspected gang members were also killed. Units of the gendarmerie were patrolling the town south-east of the state capital Guadalajara, the commission said.

At least 10 vehicles took part in the attack on police, with the assailants firing with high-powered rifles before being beaten back, the security commission said.

Some of the attackers then fled.

Police confiscated seven firearms and four fragmentation grenades at the scene, as well as five vehicles believed to have belonged to the assailants, the government said.

Jalisco has been plagued by fighting between the Jalisco New Generation drug cartel and the Knights Templar, a drug gang from the neighbouring state of Michoacan that has been gradually weakened by the capture or killing of its leaders.

More than 100,000 people have been killed in gang-related violence in Mexico over the past eight years.

Officer shoots man who attacked TSA agents at New Orleans airport

NEW ORLEANS, March — A law enforcement officer at a airport attacked several Transportation Security Administration (TSA) agents while armed with a machete and wasspray at a New Orleans airport on Friday night, officials said.

Jefferson Parish Sheriff Newell Normand said the man, who he identified as 62-year-old Richard White, approached an agent at a boarding pass screening area in the Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport and sprayed the officer in the face around 8 pm local time (0100 GMT).

White then pulled out the machete, which was tucked in his pants, and started swinging it. He approached more agents, spraying one in the face, Normand said.

A lieutenant with the sheriff’s office who was manning the checkpoint responded to the melee and sprayed one in the face, Normand said.

Two bystanders who apparently had nothing to do with the ambush and three suspected gang members were also killed. Units of the gendarmerie were patrolling the town south-east of the state capital Guadalajara, the commission said.

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Some of the attackers then fled.

Police confiscated seven firearms and four fragmentation grenades at the scene, as well as five vehicles believed to have belonged to the assailants, the government said.

Jalisco has been plagued by fighting between the Jalisco New Generation drug cartel and the Knights Templar, a drug gang from the neighbouring state of Michoacan that has been gradually weakened by the capture or killing of its leaders.

More than 100,000 people have been killed in gang-related violence in Mexico over the past eight years.


Canadian jury finds two men guilty in plot to derail train

TORONTO, March — A Canadian jury on Friday found two men guilty of planning to derail a passenger train travelling between Canada and the United States in a plot intended to instil fear and force the two countries to withdraw troops from Muslim lands.

The case against Tunisian postdoctoral student Chiheb Esseghaier, 32, and Raed Jaser, 37, a permanent Canadian resident of Palestinian descent, relied heavily on intercepted conversations between them and an undercover FBI agent.

The agent posed as a wealthy businessman with radical views who could help pull off the train attack and other violent plots, including plans to target political leaders.

After 10 days of deliberations, Canadian media reported the jury found the two men had five charges he faced and found Jaser guilty on three of the four charges he faced. Both were found guilty on the key charges of conspiring to murder and participating in a terrorist group.

The jury was deadlocked on the charge against Jaser of conspiring to damage transportation property with the intent to endanger safety.

The two men will be sentenced at a later date.

The conspiracy charges carry a maximum sentence of life, while participating in a terrorist group carries a maximum sentence of 10 years.

Jaser’s lawyer had argued that his client was a con man feigning interest in the alleged plots to scam money out of his co-accused and the agent.

Canadian jury finds two men guilty in plot to derail train

Officer shoots man who attacked TSA agents at New Orleans airport

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Fewer food items to be tested for radioactive cesium

TORONTO, March — The government released on Friday a shorter list of food items to be tested for radioactive cesium, after finding more items without it.

Based on test results so far, the health ministry will exclude 20 items, such as broccoli, plums and tea, starting in April. That will reduce the number of food items on the list to 45.

Bee milk will continue to be tested for radioactive cesium given that the level of the substance in those foods depends heavily on how the cow were raised, including what they were fed. The tests are conducted in 17 prefectures mainly in northeastern Japan, and in Tokyo and the surrounding region, amid health concerns after massive amounts of radioactive materials were released into the air and sea in the March 2011 nuclear disaster.

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China to jointly march towards next industrial revolution

BOGOTA, 21 March — China has brought its in-depth cooperation with Germany into a new era as it decides to let its “Internet Plus” action plan join hand with the European nation’s “Industry 4.0” strategy.

Both nations have expressed strong willingness to deepen cooperation between “Internet Plus” and “Industry 4.0” in a bid to fuel innovation, foster new economic growth points and promote common development.

As new manufacturing concepts with web-based networking, the “Internet Plus” and “Industry 4.0” strategies share the same goal of revolutionizing the traditional manufacturing industry as well as all the other fields of human society.

Seeking to ride the tide of information technology, China has made a visionary move to strengthen cooperation with Germany in promoting the “Internet Plus” and “Industry 4.0” initiatives.

As this year’s CeBIT in Hanover, Germany, 21 March — China has its own advantages in developing “Industry 4.0.”

Xinhua
Rihanna’s songs from ‘Home’ land online

**Los Angeles, 21 March** — Rihanna’s two new soundtracks from upcoming animated film “Home” have landed online.

The tracks titled “Dancing in the Dark” and “As Real as You and Me”, arranged on 19 March, are both the Bajan beauty’s contributions to the soundtrack of the film, reported Ace Showbiz.

The “Home” soundtrack is set for release on 24 March. It will also include another song recorded by Rihanna called “Towards the Sun” and other cuts by Charlie XCX, Jennifer Lopez and Kiesza.

The film will hit US theaters later on 27 March. Other actors attached to the Dreamworks film include Lopez, Jim Parsons and Steve Martin.—**PTI**

930 global movies vie for Beijing festival award

**Beijing, 21 March** — The 5th Beijing International Film Festival, to be held on 16 to 23 April, has attracted 930 movies from across the globe to compete for the Ti Zhang award, organizers said on Thursday.

The participating films are from 90 countries and regions. In addition, 1,531 films from 103 countries and regions have registered for Beijing Film Panorama, an event during the festival, they said.

Famous French director Luc Besson will chair the jury of Tiantan Award, which also includes US Robert Mark Kamen, South Korean auteur Kim Ki-duk, Brazilian director Fernando Meirelles, Russia’s Yeforov Bondarchuk, Peter Chan from Hong Kong and Chinese actress Zhou Xun.—**Xinhua**

Harrison Ford to narrate aviation documentary

**Los Angeles, 21 March** — National Geographic Studios will release in April the Harrison Ford-narrated, large-screen film “Living in the Air of Airplanes”, about the history of aviation, the studio announced.

Directed by Brian J Tervilliger (“One Six Right”), the film shot in 18 countries. The pic features an original score by James Horner (“Avatar”) and cinematography by Andrew Waruszewski.

“With this film, we want to reignite people’s wonder for one of the most extraordinary aspects of the modern world,” Tervilliger said in a release.

Ford, 72, and his love of airplanes have been in the news recently. He is an experienced pilot, licensed to fly helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft.—**PTI**

Elisabeth Moss aims for it all in Broadway’s ‘The Heidi Chronicles’

**New York, 21 March** — After years playing the ambitious copywriter Peggy Olson in the acclaimed TV show “Mad Men,” Elisabeth Moss has traded the small screen for the Broadway stage in the Pulitzer Prize and Tony award-winning drama “The Heidi Chronicles.”

The feminist play, which opened on Thursday night at the Music Box Theatre, is a revival of Wendy Wasserstein’s work that opened on Broadway in 1989.

Women have made strides in gaining equality and juggling careers and family in the quarter century since it was written but many of its themes are relevant today.


The play follows the hopes, dreams and disappointment of Heidi Holland (Moss) and her busy-boomer generation. It begins with Heidi giving a lecture as an art historian and then looks back to high school in 1965 and then follows her through college, the feminist movement, relationships and career over more than two decades.

“Elisabeth Moss (waving goodbye to ‘Mad Men’) is effortlessly endearing — and wonderfully real — as the brainy, mixed-up heroine,” said the trade magazine Variety.

USA Today praised the “empathy and accessibility” Moss, 32, brings to the role along with a goodness and “a slight neurotic edge that suits the character.”

But The New York Post said she struggled in the role and The Daily News described her performance as “muddling.”

Byrce Pinkham, a Tony nominee for “A Gentleman’s Guide to Love and Murder,” is Heidi’s gay friend Peter, whom she meets at a high school dance. He becomes her best friend and a well-known paediatrician.

Scoop Rosenbaum, played by “American Pie” actor Jason Biggs, is an arrogant writer who picks up Heidi at a Eugene McCarthy campaign event. Despite his marriage and affairs they form a life-long relationship.

“Biggs manages to make a manipulative, self-serving philanderer oddly likeable, which is crucial to Heidi’s enduring affection for him, and Pinkham tooses off Peter’s bon mots with genial aplomb,” said The Hollywood Reporter.

But it is Moss who carries the play, particularly with a touching monologue to her high school alumnae.

“Ms Moss, her eyes moistening even as her voice remains strong, delivers this beautiful speech with a grace that grows strong as Heidi’s peppey, self-aware humour gives way to lacerating honesty,” said the New York Times.

‘Sleepy Hollow’ renewed for season 3

**Los Angeles, 21 March** — Sleepy Hollow has been renewed for a third season.

Fox confirmed that season three will be composed of 18 new episodes.—**PTI**

Everything is inspired by something: Pharrell Williams

**Los Angeles, 21 March** — Rapper Pharrell Williams is warning the entertainment industry could become “stifled” after the “Blurred Lines” copyright lawsuit.

In his first interview since being sued by Marvin Gaye’s family, Williams said it could mean other musicians face similar legal action.

“The verdict handicaps any creator out there who’s making something that might be inspired by something else. This applies to fashion… anything,” he said.

“If we lose our freedom to be inspired we’re going to look up one day and the entertainment industry as we know it will be frozen in litigation. This is about protecting the intellectual rights of people who have ideas,” he added.

Last week a court in LA ordered Pharrell, and Robin Thicke, to pay USD 7.3m in damages to the family of the late soul singer. The judge agreed with the family’s claim Gaye’s “Got To Give It Up” was copied by the pair’s “Blurred Lines” hit.

“Blurred Lines” was the biggest hit of 2013, selling millions of copies worldwide.—**PTI**
Raonic stuns Nadal, will face Federer in semis

MEXICO CITY, 21 March — The oldest woman in Latin America, Leandra Becerra, passed away on Thursday night at the age of 127 in Zapopan, a town in Mexico’s western state of Jalisco, family members said on Friday.

Becerra’s relatives held a wake for her at her home in the town’s Miramar district, and planned to have her cremated on Saturday.

Her family said Becerra, who liked eating chocolates and cookies, had said jokingly that the secret of her longevity was not having a husband, eating well and getting plenty of sleep.

Known as the last of the revolutionary-era “adelitas,” women who followed Pancho Villa’s men into battle, Becerra was born in 1887 in northeastern Jalisco, a state of Mexico.

She never married, Becerra had five children and some 200 descendents scattered across the states of Jalisco, Tamaulipas and Nuevo Leon, and in the United States.

Becerra couldn’t be registered in the Guinness Book of World Records as the longest-living woman for she lost all her official documentation.

Xinhua

Indian Wells, (Calif.), 21 March — Big-serving Milos Raonic fought back from a set down and saved three match points to upset Rafa Nadal 4-6, 7-6(10), 7-5 in a pulsating quarter-final at the BNP Paribas Open on Friday.

The 24-year-old Canadian’s win over Nadal in six meetings earned him a place in Saturday’s semi-finals where he will face Roger Federer who cruised through the last set in six meetings earned him a place in Saturday’s semi-finals where he will face Rafa Nadal whom he last beat in the 12th game of this year’s Australian Open.

Losing to Nadal in the 11th game when the Spaniard hit a backhand long and the Canadian advanced into the last four by comfortably holding in the 12th.

“With more opportunities than him in the first (set), and in the third too,” said Nadal, who had won all eight of his previous quarter-final matches at Indian Wells.

“I had a lot of chances to win,” said Nadal (ESP) who lost his 19 aces past Nadal before sealing victory in just under three hours. “There was a lot of up and down throughout that match, and all I could ask of myself was just keep competing and hope to find a way. I got fortunate a few times and it worked out. Nadal, a three-times champion at Indian Wells, broke Raonic once to clinch the opening set in 37 minutes and had further break point opportunities in the first, fifth and ninth games of the second — all five of them saved by the Canadian.

The set went to a nerve-jangling tiebreak where Nadal squandered three match points before Raonic, playing more aggressively, finally squared the match at his third attempt when the Spaniard netted a forehand.

Both players saved further break points in the third set before Raonic broke Nadal in the 11th game when the Spaniard hit a backhand long and the Canadian advanced into the last four by comfortably holding in the 12th.

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World No. 1 Novak Djokovic will face fourth-seeded Scot Andy Murray in Saturday’s semi-final after beating Milos Raonic in four sets.

Nevada wildlife managers reject ban on coyote-hunting contests

RENO, 21 March — Nevada wildlife managers rejected banning the hunts in a 7-1 vote during a meeting in Reno that heard several hours of emotional testimony, mostly from animal activists, said Commissioner Karen Layne.

Layne, who said her seat on the commission obliges her to represent the general public rather than sportsmen, said she voted against the prohibition because her constituents oppose the tournaments.

But she said her vote was largely symbolic, because the proposal from wildlife advocates was awkwardly worded and likely would not have passed legal muster in a state where coyotes are not a protected species subject to hunting restrictions.

Fauna Tomlinson, spokeswoman for the conservation group, Project Coyote, spoke in support of the ban.—Reuters

French court orders ex-employee to hand back Picasso works

GRASSE, (France), 21 March — Nearly 300 works by Pablo Picasso must be returned to the family of the late artist, a French court ruled on Friday, rejecting testimony from a former employee who said the painter’s last wife gave them to him as a gift over 50 years ago.

Pierre Le Guennec, 75, a retired electrician, and his wife Danielle, 71, were given a suspended sentence of two years in prison for handling stolen goods. They were also ordered to hand over the 271 works, estimated at between 60-120 million euros ($64-$128 million), to the heirs of Picasso, who died in 1973.

Le Guennec, employed by Picasso in his last home in Mougins in southeast France, told the court in Grasse that Jacqueline Picasso’s 2001 will’s conservation group, Project Coyote, spoke in support of the ban.—Reuters

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Cycling contests in Mandalay

MANDALAY, 21 March — The Myanmar Cycling Federation and Myanmar Shwepyi Tractor Limited (MSP CAT) will organize cycling races on 27 to 29 March in Mandalay.

The races include a night MTB XC races and a road race. The starting line for riders in the team night MTB XC race, starting at 7 pm, is Nature’s Life sports ground near Yankin Hill.

The road race event will be held on 28 March from Mandalay Sedona Hotel to the finish line at the office of MSP CAT. The MTB XC Race will be on 29 March at Nature’s Life sports ground from 8 am. The road race and MTB XC races are categorized into three groups — under 19, 19-25 and above 26. There will be no age limit for the team night MTB XC race, with teams comprising three to five riders. Cyclists competing in night events must have their own lights installed on their bikes.

Tin Maung (Mdy)

Summer sports training courses open in Mandalay

MANDALAY, 21 March — A number of sports training course are on offer to schoolchildren in Mandalay to help them make the most of their summer holidays.

The summer sports training courses give children the opportunity to improve their physical and mental fitness, while also lifting the standard of the nation’s athletes in the long term.

After the opening ceremony of the courses on 20 March, wushu, karate and taekwondo athletes demonstrated their skills.

Tin Maung (Mdy)

Ibrahimovic hat-trick puts PSG back on top

PARIS, 21 March — Paris St Germain striker Zlatan Ibrahimovic put his disciplinary woes aside on Friday, taking his side back to the top of Ligue 1 with a hat-trick in their 3-1 home victory over FC Lorient.

PSG’s talisman was banned for one match by UEFA’s Control & Disciplinary Body after being sent off during a Champions League last 16 match at Chelsea last week.

And he also faces French League’s (LFP) disciplinary commission to explain derogatory remarks he made about reining after PSG’s loss at Girondins Bordeaux last week.

However, Ibrahimovic returned to his good side as PSG moved a point clear of Olympique Lyon who play on Saturday.

After two minutes the pony-tailed Swede slotted a penalty after being up-ended by keeper Benjaem Lecomte up-ended him as he ran on to a long ball.

Lecomte received a yellow card for his challenge. Ezequiel Lavezzi missed a sitter for PSG half an hour in. A cheeky backheel from Ibrahimovic sent him clear on the edge of the box but he pushed the ball into the side netting for one of a series of missed opportunities for the league leaders.

Lorizet equalized midway through the second half when Benjamin Jeannot took a strike for Jordan Ayew.

Ayew had another shot cleared off the line a few minutes later, sparking the game into life with 15 minutes to go.

Ibrahimovic then showed his prowess from the spot again in the 82nd minute after Lamine Kone’s foul on Javier Pastore.

He completed his hat-trick on full time.

Lyon, one point behind PSG on 58 points, sat second at Nice on Saturday while third-placed Marseille, on 54, travel to second-from-bottom RC Lens on Sunday.

Messi would be in my team ahead of Ronaldo, says Pele

LONDON, 21 March — Brazil great Pele has stirred the pot ahead of this weekend’s Clasico, saying he would rather have Barcelona’s Lionel Messi as a team mate than Real Madrid’s Cristiano Ronaldo.

The 74-year-old Pele, who scored a record 1,281 goals, mostly for Santos, has watched the two phenomenal goal hunters jousting for the title of the world’s best player but said he preferred Messi because he was a superior team player.

“Messi is more for the team, preparing the game and assisting, but Ronaldo is maybe more like the Brazilian Ronaldo and scores more.

“But in my team I would decide Messi, but both are fantastic. Messi now is playing completely different to Ronaldo. Ronaldo plays only in front.”

Pele, in England to attend the Liverpool versus Manchester United Premier League game on Sunday at Anfield in his role as global ambassador for sandwich chain Subway, said both players would have scored bundles of goals in his era, even if they would have found defenders a little less accommodating.

Whereas the modern game is weighted towards attacking players, with tackling apparently a dying art, Pele was literally kicked out of the 1966 World Cup finals in England as defenders sought to rough him up. “I think the good players would score goals in any era,” he said. “After all I managed to score 1,000 goals!”

Messi, the all-time leading scorer in La Liga with 253 at more than one a game, has struck 32 league goals this season for leaders Barcelona with Ronaldo on 30.

Brazilian Neymar has 17 for Barcelona — a return that has impressed Pele, who watched him develop as a youngster at Santos alongside his own son Edinho. “Everybody had their fingers crossed for Neymar to keep going when he was a boy at Santos,” Pele said. “He needs a little more experience but has a great future.”

On Sunday Pele will get to run the rule over another young Brazilian, Livernpool playmaker Philippe Coutinho who is still to establish himself as part of the selecao.

“He is a good player and he is getting a good experience to play in Europe, but it’s too early to start talking about the national team because they have a lot of options,” he said.

File photo of Barcelona’s Lionel Messi (R) chased by Real Madrid’s Cristiano Ronaldo during their Spanish first division “Clasico” soccer match at Nou Camp stadium in Barcelona on 26 Oct, 2013.— Reuters