Myanmar, IRI focus on holding 2015 elections in free and fair manners

Nay Pyi Taw, 24 March—President U Thein Sein received a delegation led by Ambassador Mark Green, President of International Republican Institute (IRI) at the Presidential Palace, here, Tuesday to hold talks on the process of holding 2015 elections in free and fair manners.

They also discussed assistance for flourishing of democracy.

Also present at the call were Union Ministers U Wunna Maung Lwin and U Soe Thane and departmental heads.—MNA

YANGON circular railroad to receive 100 new air-conditioned cars within year

YANGON, 24 March—Myanmar Railways has bought about 100 air-conditioned coaches from Japan to replace ordinary cars currently in use on Yangon’s circular railroad, a Ministry of Rail Transportation official said.

The Ministry, which controls the railway operator, spent $207 million of ODA loans from Japan to buy the coaches, he added.

The coaches will arrive in Myanmar in September and the ministry will complete the replacement in 2015.

YANGON, 24 March—Myanmar’s ambitious structural reform program has underpinned strong growth in recent years that is set to continue in 2015, the Asian Development Bank said in its economic report released Tuesday.

The ADB’s flagship annual economic publication, Asian Development Outlook 2015, forecasted Myanmar’s economic growth at 8.3 percent in fiscal year 2015 ending 31 March 2016.

“ADB also expects growth to remain over 8 percent in fiscal year 2016, propelled by investments stimulated by the ongoing reforms, an improved business environment, and the country’s integration into Southeast Asia,” said Peter Brimble, ADB deputy country director in Myanmar.

Inflation will likely accelerate to 8.4 percent in FY 2015, propelled by higher fiscal spending and expected higher wages, which will increase domestic demand. Consumer price (See page 2)

Reforms to continue to drive growth, inflation to accelerate in Myanmar: ADB

Nav Pyi Taw, 24 March—Members of Joint-Bill Committee, parliamentarians and union level officials discussed paragraphs of 2015 Union Taxation Bill at 32nd day session of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw’s 12th session on Tuesday.

The bicameral assembly agreed the proposal of Union Minister for Finance U Win Shein for the approval of the whole bill. The Pyidaungsu Hluttaw finalized decisions on a legal translation bill and a Myanmar Medical Council bill, on which the Amyotha Hluttaw and the Pyithu Hluttaw held different views.—MNA

Union FM sends message to Hellenic Republic

Nav Pyi Taw, 25 March—U Wunna Maung Lwin, Union Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, has sent a message of felicitations to His Excellency Mr. Nikolaos Kotzias, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Hellenic Republic, on the occasion of the National Day of the Hellenic Republic, which falls on 25 March 2015.—MNA

Reforms to continue to . . .

(from page 1) pressure should then ease slightly in FY 2016 to 6%. Risks to Myanmar’s economic outlook come from thin external and fiscal buffers, ethnic and sectarian tensions, extreme weather events and a possible slowing of reform momentum ahead of elections.

The ADO stated that the country made positive steps in 2014 to improve its economic data collection, a move badly needed to support policy formulation and planning.

“While the country has made big strides under its economic reform program, many development challenges remain, including improving infrastructure, strengthening governance and public sector capacity, developing human capital, building a dynamic private sector, and revitalizing agriculture,” said ADB country director Winfried Wicklein.

The ADO highlighted the low levels of education and skills among many young people entering Myanmar’s workforce, with employers citing inadequate human resources as a serious barrier to business.

“One of the most critical challenges is to develop the country’s youth, better equipping them for roles in a modern economy and society,” said Chris Spohr, ADB principal social sector specialist in Myanmar.

Letpadaung copper mine project implementation committee meets

Nav Pyi Taw, 24 March — A coordination meeting was held here on Tuesday by the committee responsible for implementing the investigative report on the Letpadaung copper mine project, according to officials. Union Minister U Hla Tun at President Office quoted the investigation the Amyotha Hluttaw here on Tuesday, with members of parliament speaking with one voice on the bill, which they said must emphasize suitability, adaptability and practicality for the long-term interests of the country.

U Thein Swe from No.10 Constituency of Ayeyawady Region, MNA education amendment bill came under discussion at the Amyotha Hluttaw and with one voice on the bill, which they said must emphasize suitability, adaptability and practicality for the long-term interests of the country.

U Min Oo of the Bago Region constituency No.7, MNA described the national education as a national concern, saying the education law must pave the way for a better education system.

U Saw Ohn, who represents No.9 Constituency in Mon State, said education must be reconstructed for the country to become modern and prosperous.

Amyotha Hluttaw MPs urge education amendment bill must serve national interests

U Thein Swe from No.10 Constituency of Ayeyawady Region, MNA said the education amendment bill must serve national interests when we could overcome the challenges, according to U Khin Maung Latt of Rakhine State’s No.6 Constituency.

U Min Oo of the Bago Region constituency No.7 described the national education as a national concern, saying the education law must pave the way for a better education system.

U Saw Ohn, who represents No.9 Constituency in Mon State, said education must be reconstructed for the country to become modern and prosperous.

Pyithu Hluttaw MP urges parliament to construct Kalewa independence obelisk with park

Nav Pyi Taw, 24 March—U Soe Thein of the Kalewa constituency on Tuesday put forward a motion demanding the Pyithu Hluttaw that an independence obelisk be erected in the township of Kalewa, Sagaing Region, before Independence Day, 4 January, in 2016.

U Aung Thein, Deputy Minister at President Office, responded that the local management committee under the supervision of the region’s chief minister is making arrangements for the construction of the obelisk alongside a park on 0.064 acre of land near the Myittha bridge.

U Nyi Nyi Myint of the Ottwin constituency urged the parliament to construct a bridge across Sittoung River linking Ottwin and Hauntabin, with U Khin Maung Aye, Deputy Minister for Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development, rejecting the proposal.

He said the cost of constructing the bridge is not included in the ministry’s budgets for 2014-2015 financial year.

He said that an independent commission responded that an increase of travel allowances would be made through coordination with departments concerned.—MNA

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President U Thein Sein sends messages of felicitations to Hellenic Republic

NAY PYI TAW, 25 March—U Thein Sein, President of the Union of the Republic of Myanmar, has sent messages of felicitations to His Excellency Mr. Nicos Anastasiades, President of the Republic of Cyprus; to His Excellency Mr. Klaus Schwab, President of the World Economic Forum; to His Excellency Mr. Havel Vojtech, President of the Czech Republic; to His Excellency Mr. Giorgi Margvelashvili, President of Georgia; to His Excellency Mr. Kassim Mohamed Moini, President of the United Republic of Tanzania; to His Excellency Mr. Khaltmaa Elbegdorj, President of Mongolia; to His Excellency Mr. Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, President of Mali; to His Excellency Mr. António Carneiro, President of Angola; to His Excellency Mr. Nana Siribhume, President of Thailand; to His Excellency Mr. Evo Morales Ayma, President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia; to His Excellency Mr. Miguel Arabo, President of the Panama Canal Authority; to His Excellency Mr. Giorgio Napolitano, President of the Italian Republic; to His Excellency Mr. Abdoulaye Wade, President of Senegal; to His Excellency Mr. George B. Weah, President of the Republic of Liberia; to His Excellency Mr. Jacob Zuma, President of the Republic of South Africa; to His Excellency Mr. Joaquín Gianni Fertitta, President of the Argentine Republic; to His Excellency Mr. Xi Jinping, President of the People’s Republic of China; to His Excellency Mr. Barham Salih, President of the Republic of Iraq; to His Excellency Mr. Ramaphosa Cyril, President of the Republic of South Africa; to His Excellency Mr. Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, President of the State of the United Arab Emirates; to His Excellency Mr. Yrjo Katainen, President of Finland; to His Excellency Mr. Reuven Rivlin, President of the State of Israel; to His Excellency Mr. Peter K. Mutharika, President of the Republic of Malawi; to His Excellency Mr. Xi Jinping, President of the People’s Republic of China; to His Excellency Mr. Francois Hollande, President of the French Republic; to His Excellency Mr. Xi Jinping, President of the People’s Republic of China; to His Excellency Mr. Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates; to His Excellency Mr. Joko Widodo, President of the Republic of Indonesia; and to His Excellency Mr. Hassan Rouhani, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

U Zaw Myint presents his Credentials to Sultan of Malaysia

NAY PYI TAW, 25 March—U Zaw Myint, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to Malaysia, presented his Credentials to His Majesty Almu’tasimu Billahi Muhibuddin Tuanku Alhaj Abdul Halim Mu’adzam Shah ibni Almarhum Sultan Badlishah, the Yang Di-Pertuan Agong XIV of Malaysia, on 18 March 2015 in Kuala Lumpur.—MNA

More than 100,000 people (about three per cent of more than six million population of Yangon) rely on the circular trains for their daily transportation needs.—PHOTO AYE MIN SOE

20 detainees from Letpadan incident released

NAY PYI TAW, 25 March—Authorities released 19 men and one woman Tuesday who were detained during a crackdown on student protestors earlier this month in Bago Region’s Letpadan, 90 miles north of Yangon. They were turned over to their parents and relatives this morning, according to the Ministry of Home Affairs.

The authorities have so far released 28 students and two reporters arrested in the crackdown after determining their roles in the protests.—MNA

Veteran artistes perform entertainment on second day after award ceremony

NAY PYI TAW, 25 March—Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla enjoyed entertainment of veteran artistes for the second day at Zeyathiri Beikman, here, on Tuesday. Among the audiences were Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win and wife Daw Than Than Nwe, the union minister for Border Affairs, senior military officers, servicemen and families.

The veteran artistes presented songs to the accompaniment of Myawady Band. The senior general and wife presented a flower basket and cash award to the artistes. Myawady

President’s Excellent Award scrutinizing committee hold third meeting

NAY PYI TAW, 24 March—Scrutinizing Committee for President’s Excellent Award held its third meeting at President Office on Tuesday, and was attended by U Tin Naing Thein, chairman of the committee, deputy ministers and members of working committees.

U Tin Naing Thein, also Union Minister at President Office, said the committee is scrutinizing the candidates suggested by State/Region governments for these awards, urging the committee to finalize the processes by the last week of April as the award ceremony is due in the first week of May 2015.

The awards in this year will include the best town ship supporting committee, the best municipal committee, the best social welfare works, the best researchers, the best urban and rural development committees and the best entrepreneurs.

Ministers from respective states and regions also discussed their scrutinizing processes through video conferencing, followed by suggestions of the chairman of committee.—MNA

WB Group launches Myanmar Investment Climate Assessment Report

NAY PYI TAW, 24 March—World Bank Group held an official launch of Myanmar Investment Climate Assessment Report at Thirgahla Hotel, here, on Tuesday, with an opening speech by U Zin Yaw, Deputy Minister for Transport, according to officials. The three-day conference will focus on such key issues as aviation safety, domestic and international network expansion, digital engagement in airports, and aircraft growth of maintenance, repair and overhaul market (MRO).

The conference has drawn 300 business people of aviation industries from 20 countries.—Aung Thu

Myanmar joins Sphere Conferences in its second aviation development conference

YANGON, 24 March—The Department of Civil Aviation in partnership with Singapore-based Sphere Conferences organized the second Myanmar Aviation Development Conference here on Tuesday, with an opening speech by U Zin Yaw, Deputy Minister for Transport, according to officials. The three-day conference will focus on such key issues as aviation safety, domestic and international network expansion, digital engagement in airports, and aircraft growth of maintenance, repair and overhaul market (MRO).

Gov’t troops clash with KIA during operations against timber trafficking

NAY PYI TAW, 24 March—Government troops fought against KIA (Kachin) forces which are protecting timber traffickers in Bhamo district, Kachin state, during the three-day operations.

During training session of Myanmar air force on March 20, fighter jets detected a convoy of truck carrying trafficked logs and informed to the military columns.

Army columns were fired by KIA (Kachin) forces on March 21, and clashes continued to March 23. With assistance of aerial attacks, government troops cleared the ethnic armed forces from their positions and seized a total of 27 logging trucks and timbers after nine clashes, including one airplane attack.

Military is continuing operations to control timber trafficking in northern Myanmar.—Myawady

A map shows clashes in Mansi, Kaikhteik, Manweingyi regions

Yangon circular... (from page 1)

To implement the project, Myanma Railways is working together with an international consulting firm to decide whether the project should be undertaken as a joint venture or on a build-operate-transfer basis. MR plans to carry out the development on more than 62 acres close to Yangon Central Railway Station.

The government pays some K40-45 billion in annual subsidies to Myanma Railways.—GNLM

Officials meet with detainees before releasing them at Thayawady District Police Force Office.—MNA
Indian pharmaceutical firm promotes medicine in Myanmar

Mandalay, 24 March
— A ceremony to introduce new pharmaceutical products manufactured by Cipla medical company from Kolkata, India, was held at Sedona Hotel on 26th street in Chanayethazan Township, Mandalay on Monday, with Chairman of the Myanmar Medical Association (Mandalay) Dr Than Win and the Indian Consul in attendance. Marketing manager to Myanmar Mr Ashwani Bagga of Cipla Company, managing director Mr Christos Kartalis and Asia-Pacific Region head Ms Jaswinder Gill spoke about the company’s new products. The company exports over 200 types of medicine to the international market.

Tintha Ko Ko (Mandalay)

Myaungmya District marks World TB Day

Myaungmya, 24 March — A ceremony to mark World Tuberculosis Day 2015 was held at the hall of Myaungmya District General Hospital on Tuesday, with an address by the district’s deputy commissioner U Htwe Myint. Medical Superintendent Dr Toe Toe read out a message sent by the World Health Organization.

TB control project leader Dr Thin Thin Htay gave lectures on tuberculosis infection in the community and efforts of health staff to control the disease in cooperation with departmental personnel and social organizations. Members of the Women’s Affairs Organization and the Maternal and Child Welfare Association, local authorities and health staff took part in the ceremony.—Aung Min (IPRD)

Concrete road helps develop rural area

Nay Pyi Taw, 24 March — Nay Pyi Taw Council member U Than Hay and Nay Pyi Taw Development Committee member U Kyaw Myint officially opened a concrete road leading to the entrance of Ywathit Village in Pobathiri Township on Tuesday.

Nay Pyi Taw Council shared its budget for construction of a 3,600-foot-long and 10-foot-wide concrete road to improve transportation to local people.—Shwe Ye Yin

Monastic building under construction in rural area of Nyaunglebin Tsp

Nyaunglebin, 24 March — Construction is under way on a new concrete building for the Bawana monastery in Kychaung Village, Nyaunglebin Township, Bago Region. Upon completion, the monastery will admit more novices and monks to perform religious tasks. Laypersons of the construction committee invite cash donations to fund the construction. Well-wishers may contact U Tejavamta of Bawana Monastery on 09-255837740 and 09-31502375, U Nay Lin (reporter) on 09-428161763 and U Htay Naing of Banda electronic service on 09-31614208.

Nay Lin (Nyaunglebin)

Shwe Htilar news journal reports on Meiktila District

Meiktila, 24 March — Under the leadership of experienced reporter Tin Hlaing, the “Shwe Htilar” news journal will launch in the third week of April. The journal will cover events including regional development and crime in the townships of Meiktila, Wundwin, Mahtaing and Thazi in Meiktila District. The journal invites advertisements on 09-402543313.

Nay Lin (Meiktila)

Secretary of Kayah State General Administration Department U Khin Maung Htay and party inaugurate Mawchi-Nwalawoe-Ywama inter-village road in Loikaw Township on 21 March. Loikaw IPRD

Firefighters join fire drill at Cherry Market in Zabathiri Township Tuesday under supervision of Head of Township Fire Services Department U Thant Zin. A US citizen reacts when he sees the drill as he thinks it is a real fire outbreak.

Than Naing (Zabathiri)
China says it agrees with India to maintain border peace

BEIJING, 24 March — China and India have agreed to maintain peace and tranquility along their Himalayan border while they work on resolving a long-festering boundary dispute, China’s foreign ministry said after talks in New Delhi.

The talks are aimed at fixing a dispute over the border that divides Asia’s largest nations, part of a push to make progress on the festering row before Prime Minister Narendra Modi visits China.

China’s foreign ministry said in a statement released on Monday both countries would build on the results of previous negotiations and push forward in “the correct direction”.

Indonesian President Jokowi calls for more investment from Japan

Tokyo, 24 March — Indonesian President Joko “Jokowi” Widodo called on Japanese companies on Tuesday to boost investment in his country, with the Association of South-east Asian Nations eager to bolster its infrastructure to advance regional connectivity.

As Indonesia plans to improve its infrastructure such as ports, airports and high-speed railways, Jokowi emphasized investment in Southeast Asia’s largest economy will provide investors with a “chance” to capture returns.

“I do not want you to miss the chance,” Jokowi said in a speech at a business seminar in Tokyo, hosted by the government-backed Japan External Trade Organization.

“Indonesia is a very attractive country” as the nation’s economy is likely to keep expanding, Jokowi said, adding, “I am looking forward forward to further investment in Indonesia.”

Former Japanese Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda, now serving as the head of the Japan Indonesia Business Association, said in a separate speech, “Indonesia is attractive as a hub of production and exports in Asia,” with the country’s population expected to continue growing.

Since taking office last October, Jokowi has focused primarily on strengthening Indonesia’s maritime security and transforming the development of relations is good for both peoples as well as for regional and global peace and development, it said.

“Both sides reiterated the appropriate management and control of the dispute and joint maintenance of the peace and tranquility of the border region before the border issue is resolved,” the ministry said. As major neighbours and developing countries, China’s State Councilor Yang Jiechi (L) and India’s National Security Advisor Ajit Doval shake hands during a photo opportunity before their meeting in New Delhi on 23 March, 2015. REUTERS

Japan awards 7 new assistance projects to Philippines’ Mindanao

Manila, 24 March — The Japanese government on Tuesday awarded seven assistance projects to conflict-affected areas in the Philippines’ southern island of Mindanao to aid peace and development there.

Japanese Ambassador to the Philippines Kazuhide Ishikawa (L) signs on 24 March, 2015, in the Philippine capital Manila seven Japan-funded grant assistance projects to conflict-affected areas on the southern island of Mindanao.—Kyodo News

A thermal power plant in central Japan by shin-Etsu Electric Power Development Co and Japanese trading house Itochu Corp, both owned by a China-Japan joint venture, has started operations.

Ishikawa said not only the legitimacy of, but the need for, the Bangsamoro peace process, she added. Noting Japan’s de-velopment assistance and other roles in the Mindanao peace process, Sandoval said, “We thank Japan for being a steady partner in our pursuit of peace. Such a partner is invaluable in any peace process.”

Japenese Ambasssador to the Philippines Kazuhide Ishikawa (L) signs on 24 March, 2015, in the Philippine capital Manila seven Japan-funded grant assistance projects to conflict-affected areas on the southern island of Mindanao.—Kyodo News

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The disagreement over the 3,500-km (2,175-mile) border led to a brief war in 1962, and involves large swaths of remote territory.

China claims more than 90,000 sq km (35,000 sq miles) disputed by New Delhi in the eastern sector of the Himalayas. Much of that forms the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh, which China calls southern Tibet.

India says China occupies 38,000 square km (14,600 sq miles) of its territory on the Aksai Chin plateau in the west.

In September, the two armies faced off in the Ladakh sector in the western Himalayas just as Chinese President Xi Jinping was visiting India for the first summit talks with Modi.
**Germanwings Airbus crashes in France, 148 feared dead**

24 March — An Airbus operated by Lufthansa’s Germanwings budget airline crashed in a remote area of the French Alps on Tuesday and all 148 on board were feared dead.

French President Francois Hollande said he believed none of those on board the A320 had survived, while the head of Lufthansa spoke of a dark day for the German airline.

“There were 148 people on board,” Hollande said. “The conditions of the accident, which have not yet been clarified, lead us to think there are no survivors.”

Hollande said there was likely to be a significant number of Germans on the flight from Barcelona to Duesseldorf.

He added: “The accident happened in a zone that is particularly hard to access.”

It was the first crash of an airliner on French soil since the Concorde disaster just outside Paris in July 2000. Lufthansa Chief Executive Carsten Spohr said it would be a “dark day” for the airline if the crash were confirmed.

“We do not yet know what has happened to flight 4U 9525. My deepest sympathy goes to the families and friends of our passengers and crew,” Lufthansa said on Twitter, citing Spohr.

“If our fears are confirmed, this is a dark day for Lufthansa. We hope to find survivors,” a spokesman for France’s DGAC aviation authority said the airliner crashed near town of Barcelonnette about 100 km (65 miles) north of the French Riviera city of Nice.

French accident investigators were heading for the crash site in Meos-Relaves, a remote and sparsely inhabited commune in the foothills of the French Alps. Airbus said it was aware of reports about the crash.

“We are aware of the media reports,” Airbus said on Twitter. “All efforts are now going towards assessing those reports. We will provide further information as soon as available.”

Officials at Barcelona airport said the flight took off at 0855 GMT.

The crashed A320 is 24 years old and has been with the parent Lufthansa group since 1991, according to on-line database airfleets.net. Reuters

**Indian PM says ardently expecting to visit China**

New Delhi, 24 March — Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday said he is ardently expecting to visit China soon to exchange views with Chinese leaders on furthering India-China relations.

During a meeting here with visiting Chinese State Councilor Yang Jietchi, Modi said Indian people have fresh memories of the successful visit to India by Chinese President Xi Jinping last year. He also asked Yang to convey his sincere greet- ings to President Xi and Premier Li Keqiang.

He said he would like to have in-depth exchang- es of views with Chinese leaders on the furthering of bilateral ties when he visits China.

This would also send a positive message to the international community on the efforts being made by the two countries in developing friendship coop- eration, he said.

Modi said the bilateral relations are moving on a fast track and in the correct direction set by the leaders of the two countries.

This would not only benefit the two countries and their peoples, but also exert a positive influence on Asia and the whole world, he pointed out. Yang conveyed cordial greetings from Chi- nese leaders to the prime minister.

He said both China and India are working to implement the outcomes from the visit of President Xi Jinping to India last year and the two sides are also actively preparing for the visit of Prime Minister Modi to China.

Yang said that as two biggest developing countries in the world, by carrying out cooperation and building a tighter de- velopment partnership, China and India will help enhance their own develop- ment and at the meantime contribute to promoting peace, stability and development of the region as well as the world.

He said that China is willing to work with In- dia to continuously deep- en mutual trust, actively expand cooperation fields and lead China-India stra- tegic cooperative part- nership to move to higher stages. — Xinhua

**Rifts deepen over Okinawa base transfer as gov’t ignores local calls**

A Germanwings Airbus A320 registration D-AIPX is seen at the Berlin airport in this 29 March, 2014 file photo. — Reuters

Okinawa’s instruction, there is an increasing potential for Okinawa Gov Takeshi Onaga to revoke the permission the local government granted to the Okinawa Defense Bureau for a military base in the prefecture, effectively ignoring instructions to stop the work ordered by the local governor the previous day. — Kyodo News

The move prompted about 100 local citizens to stage a protest before the US Marines’ Camp Schwab adjacent to the planned rec- lamation site against the Okinawa Defense Bureau, effectively ignoring instruc- tions by the local governor to stop the work and deepening their rift over a land reclama- tion project.

The Defence Ministry continued the undersea research off the coast of Henoko where the central government plans to build a replacement facility for the US Marine Corps’ Futenma base in the southwestern prefecture under a bilat- eral accord.

People stage a rally on 24 March, 2015, in front of the gate of the US Marine Corps’ Camp Schwab in Nago, Okinawa Prefecture, against the Japanese government’s continued preparations for relocating a US military base in the prefecture, effectively ignoring instructions to stop the work ordered by the local governor the previous day. — Kyodo News

The central government is requesting from the Okinawa government for an opportunity to explain the ministry’s views on the matter. Suga said.

If Okinawa withdraws the permission, the government of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe would not hesi- tate to take the matter to a court, sources close to the matter said.

Based on its own re- search, the prefectural gov- ernment has claimed it is likely that the defence bureau damaged coral reefs with concrete blocks in areas where permission had not been given during work to prepare to resume the boring survey.

Tokyo says placing the concrete blocks did not re- quire the local government’s permission, and the defence bureau sent a statement ex- plaining that stance to the Okinawa government.

Okara won gubernatorial election in November after pledging to block the planned base relocation, beating his predecessor Hi- rokazu Nakaima, who had approved landfill work nec- essary for the relocation.

In Okinawa, which hosts the bulk of US military installations in Japan, oppo- nents of the plan to build the base on reclaimed land off Henoko also saw their can- didates win all four of the prefecture’s single-seat con- stituencies in December’s general election.

Defence Minister Gen Nakatani expressed disapproval over the gov- ernor’s move, saying at a Press conference in Tokyo, “We have been proceeding with the construction in ac- cordance with an agreement with Okinawa Prefecture,” adding, “This is extremely regrettable.” — Kyodo News

**South Korea rebukes North for again denying role in warship’s sinking**

Seoul, 24 March — South Korea on Tuesday slammed North Korea’s latest denial of its invo- lvement in the sinking of a South Korean warship in a torpedo attack near their tense maritime border five years ago.

“It has been concluded (the sinking was the act of) North Korea’s submarine, and thus North Korea’s claim is unacceptable,” South Korea’s Defence Ministry spokesman Kim Min Seok told reporters.

The sinking of the Cheonan happened near the western sea border on 26 March, 2010, killing 46 South Korean sailors and marking one of the dead- liest incidents between the two Koreas since the end of the 1950-1953 Korean War.

A panel of international investigators has said the sinking was caused by a torpedo launched by a North Korean submarine, while North Korea has strongly denied its involve- ment in the incident.

As a retaliatory action, South Korea has suspend- ed all large-scale aid to the Koreas, including economic co- operation with the North, widely known as “24 May Steps.” South Korea has demanded an apology from the Abe administra- tion not to repeat a similar prov- ocation. Kim’s remarks were in response to a North Korean statement issued on Mon- day, in which it reiterated its denial of involvement.

“We remain un- changed in our stand that the south has to immedi- ately lift the ill-famed ‘step’ which they cooked up un- der the absurd pretext of the Cheonan warship sink- ing case, not dragging on time,” a spokesman for the Policy Department of the National Defence Commis- sion said. North Korea said in a statement carried by the official Korean Central News Agency on Tuesday.

“This is because the ‘step’ is based on the fic- titious story about the north’s ‘involvement in the sinking,’” the statement said.— Kyodo News
British PM Cameron says won’t seek third term in power

PARIS, 24 March — Former French president Nicolas Sarkozy has put a faltering comeback back on track by steering his conservatives to victory over the far-right National Front in local elections, but major obstacles remain to his presidential ambitions.

Sunday’s results in the first round of voting mean his UMP party is well placed to make sweeping gains in the 29 March runoff for councillors in France’s “departements”, at the cost of President Francois Hollande’s Socialists.

That will silence critics who had written off Sarkozy’s comeback only for months after he emerged from retirement, pointing to policy bickering in the UMP and surveys run-off for councillors in France’s “departements”, at the cost of President Francois Hollande’s Socialists.

“Advantage Sarkozy”, Le Parisien daily wrote on its front page with a smiling Sarkozy on its cover.

“For his first electoral test since his comeback, the UMP leader has pulled it off.” But his victory came partly thanks to a fragile alliance with centrist parties well removed from his tough line on issues such as immigration and national identity. This means questions remain as to how the UMP will position itself for the 2017 presidential election — and who will be its candidate.

“It’s not in the bag for Sarkozy,” Jerome Fourquet of pollster Ifop said.

“The UMP will still be hit by tensions and divisions between those who want a more right-wing line and those who want alliances to the centre.

The UMP and its allies together took just over 29 percent of Sunday’s vote ahead of Marine Le Pen’s National Front on 25 percent and the Socialists on 22 percent.

But the UMP tally was boosted by candidates of the centrist UDI and Modem parties.

While there was no official score for the UMP alone, it would have been at least a few percentage points less without them — as Le Pen pointed out Sunday night.

It is not Sarkozy but ex-prime minister Alain Juppe, a rival for the UMP presidential ticket, who has pushed hardest to bring the party closer to middle-of-the-road voters through such alliances. Sarkozy’s strategy has been to lure far-right voters back into the UMP fold.

“Sarkozy is trying to make this appear his victory,” said analyst Thomas Guencoul, an expert on the French right. “But in fact it is the Juppe line which has shaped an elder statesman image for himself which works well with voters who in one recent poll made him France’s most popular politician.

Before his defeat by Hollande in the 2012 presidential election, Sarkozy was known for his aggressive style and strong hold on his party. However, he had failed in the past few months to garner the enthusiasm he expected within the UMP and opinion polls have also shown he was struggling to convince.

Only 40 percent of right-wing voters want Sarkozy, who is also dogged by various legal cases, to run for the 2017 presidential election, one survey showed last month.

This was down from 62 percent in July 2014 when he was in retirement. Juppe, now 69 and until now known for being forced to drop unpopular welfare reforms in the 1990s, has long way to go

Sarkozy passes French poll test but has

London, 24 March — British Prime Minister David Cameron on Monday ruled out seeking a third term in office if he won a second mandate in a tightly fought national election on 7 May, saying it would then be time for a new leader of his right-leaning Conservatives.

His comments are designed in part to underscore his party’s message that it believes its job of re-building the economy and reforming Britain is only half-done and that it will take another five years “to finish the job”.

Cameron, whose party is neck-and-neck in opinion polls with the opposition Labour Party, also said he would like to serve a full five-year second term from 2015-2020 if re-elected.

The 46-year-old Cameron — who announced a bid for nomination next year, becoming the first major candidate to announce a bid for nomination in 2017. In recent weeks he has signaled a line promoting national identity, contrasting it with the centre-left Liberal Democrats on immigration policies.

His remarks were timed to scotch persistent speculation that he would stand down after a possible European Union membership referendum in 2017.

But he suggested his political ambitions would then have run their course.

“I’m putting myself forward for the full five years. I feel fit enough and healthy enough to do the job. I’ve got a real passion for it and I’m really keen to win. If I fall short I’ll be disappointed,” he told BBC TV.

But asked whether he wanted a third term, he said: “No ... The third term is not something I’m contemplating.

Cameron, 48, said possible successors included Theresa May, the interior minister, London mayor Boris Johnson, and finance minister George Osborne, saying the time would then come for “a fresh pair of eyes and a fresh leadership”.

If Cameron wins re-election, his comments are likely to spark a lengthy leadership contest to succeed him.

Cameron became prime minister in 2010 and has headed Britain’s first coalition government since World War Two, with the centre-left Liberal Democrats as the junior partner to his Conservatives.

British’s Prime Minister David Cameron addresses a news conference during a European Union leaders summit in Brussels on 20 March, 2015.

Reuters

UN Secretary-General’s Message on The International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade

25 March 2015

To mark this International Day, I will unveil a permanent and fitting Memorial to honour the victims of slavery and the Trans-Atlantic slave trade at the United Nations in New York.

The “Ark of the Return” Memorial will bring home to visitors from around the world, the terrible legacy of the slave trade. It will enable them to reflect on a core goal of the United Nations: the promotion and preservation of the dignity, freedom and equality of all human beings.

This year we pay a particular tribute to the many women who suffered and died during the slave trade. They experienced appalling violence, including sexual and reproductive enslavement, prostitution, repeated sexual assault, as well as forced childbearing and the sale of their own children. They were deprived of the right to choose whether, and with whom, to have sexual relationships; and whether, when, and with whom, to have children.

Yet women slaves played a key role in maintaining the dignity of their communities. Too often their leadership and brave resistance has been under-estimated, or forgotten.

In all, some 12 million Africans were shipped across the Atlantic over four centuries, although the number purchased by slave traders was far higher.

The Transatlantic slave trade remains a monstrous crime and a stain on human history.

Tragically, slavery has still not ended. In the past year, thousands of women, men and children in Syria and Iraq have been abducted. Many women have been sold to fighters in public slave-markets. Slavery stubbornly persists in other parts of the world.

This despicable trade could not exist without deep-seated racism. It is absolutely vital that the dangers inherent in racism are made crystal clear to all.

On this important day we must redouble our efforts to end modern slavery, once and for all.

Conservative Republican Cruz says will run for presidential election

WASHINGTON, 24 March — Ted Cruz, an outspoken Republican senator backed by the conservative Tea Party group, said on Monday he will run for the US presidential election next year, becoming the first major candidate to announce a bid for nomination.

Cruz made the announcement in a gathering in Virginia as he has laggard in polls behind other Republicans believed to be aspirants for the party’s nomination, such as former Florida Gov Jeb Bush and Wisconsin Gov Scott Walker.

“I believe in the power of millions of courageous conservatives rising up to re-ignite the promise of America and that is why today I am announcing that I am running for the presidency of the United States,” Cruz said.

Hillary Clinton, a popular Democratic politician who formerly served as US first lady and secretary of state, is expected to announce her bid to become president next month.
Avoid or stop associating with Jerks, jive-persons, cheapskates, thugs and rascals

By: Tommy Pauk

The individual differences are found in humans such as characters, habits, hobbies, IQ level, EQ levels etc. However, the ultimate goal of human beings is the same i.e. ‘survival of the fittest.’ Since man is a social animal, we humans associate with each other within our community or from international communities for common interests. In this regard, we have to be clever enough to deal with the persons who act differently from simple and ordinary persons. The characters of such persons are nasty, awkward and disgusting. We need to behave each other harmoniously; our human endeavor and social welfare in the society together. The characters or behaviors of some persons do not contribute to the benefit of others as they are categorized in the bad characters.

The following types of anti-social behaviors can be obviously found in human beings in human society.

A contemptibly foolish person or a jerk never does any good thing or contribute to anyone on earth. In other words, he is a worthless or despicable person. No one wishes to associate with this type of person for any reason or purpose. Although he is a human being, his reasonable power is beneath consideration. The word ‘foolish’ in the sense that a person is not being sensible or lack of common sense. Actually, this type of person is neither mad nor insane. If we deal or make friends with him, it will be of no use for us. He will not help us for social dealing and social welfare. His way of thinking and behavior annoy us and disturb us. Moreover, he makes us disappointed badly and deals with others dishonestly or unfairly.

The jive-persons are not reliable to be as friends or associates or partners as they do not practice or behave honestly among their friends. The jive-persons usually bluff and talk nonsense to others. They are deceitful or worthless persons. They wait for the chance to take advantages upon his friends. Instead of fulfilling the needs and wants of their friends, they selfishly find the benefit and personal gain for them. They do not contribute to the welfare of the society too.

The cheapskates are the ones who are stingy enough to give money to charity. They do not want to be as donors for charitable activities. They are reluctant to spend money and avoid paying a fair share of costs or expenses in the community. Actually, the cheapskates are not partners, but well-do-to persons. Even though they are being rich persons, they are extremely stingy to pay for charity and for social welfare activities for their society or other societies. The cheapskates are unkind, insincere and unsupportive to their colleagues or friends. Their mindsets and behaviors towards others are totally unfit for genuine social dealing. Therefore, the ordinary or general people are awfully aware of the unsociable characters of the cheapskates.

The snobs are the ones who have the exaggerated respect for high social positions or wealth or elite and who look down on those regarded as socially inferior or their snobbish behavior and manner depict the discrimination between the haves and the have-nots. The snobs always pay respect to the powerful persons or wealthy person or aristocrats, expecting some benefit or personal gain rather than for social welfare. They do not contribute to the welfare of middle class people or the poor. Normally, they make friends with the people who hold higher rank positions in the government or in the powerful political party or top in social positions. The snobs have the feeling that the normal people or the underprivileged or the poor are worthless or beneath consideration or despicable. The attitude of the snobs is absolutely inhume and selfish. They are also untrustworthy persons in the society. The snobbish persons never contribute to the prosperity of the society concerned as they have no goodwill-spirit. Therefore, it is advisable to avoid or stop associating with snobs totally.

The thugs are the criminals who are aggressive and violent. They can be found in any society in the world. Since they are criminals, they earn their living by committing crimes whenever they have chance to commit. Moreover, they are outlaws and they do not hesitate to commit any kind of crimes such as robbery, pick-pocketing, rape, mugging and kidnapping etc. These bad guys usually threaten the daily life of the good guys. The bad guys organize or persuade the trap or vagabonds to commit crimes for their survivial. They have formed or organized certain gangs which run illegal businesses as known as piracy or mafia gangs or IS militant groups. Some of the thugs serve as goons for those who are tyrants or despots in the world. Normal or decent people avoid associating with them. Thugs do not confront the law enforcement agencies or police and they also do not obey the laws of society. They are the small groups when we compare with the decent majority people in a certain society. Their threat is immense in daily life. They act or move or commit crimes in the darkness and sometimes even in broad-day light. The innocent people are fully aware of this danger so they demand firm security or legal protection for them. They feel insecure about the potential danger if there is no security. Nowadays, in some countries, the thugs frequently commit gang-rage, kidnapping and robbery. They are dangerous persons for the human society. They make the atmosphere in the society gloomy and unpleasant. The movements of thugs are in disguise of certain ideology or radicalization and they even persuade the international youths to join their illegal organizations by using internet as their communicaion tool. Their sacrifice for their ideology or so-called radicalization is usually posted online. Actually, they are merely ruffians who disrupt the global peace. This is a great threat to the parents across the world. The parents in the world are deeply concerned about their offspring because they might be caught in the cunning trap set by the thugs known as terrorists or inhumane thugs. The parents must warn their children to avoid associating with any type of thugs and point out their tricky tactics.

Rascals are dishonest and untrustworthy persons in the human society. The innocent people do not know their dishonest way or cheating technique while dealing with them for doing business or making contract etc. They pretend to be as decent persons when they deal with simple people. They intend to exploit or cheat the innocent people whenever they have chances. They deliberately exploit or cheat their associates for personal gain and benefit.

At first, the simple and gullible people want to be friends with such persons without knowing their inner bad character and personal gain. Later, they realize that these persons are not worthy of true friends or associates. They really do not deserve as reliable or trustworthy friends of the simple and honest people. There are many so-called friends in the world. Therefore, we must be cautious enough to deal or select true friends or reliable associates for achieving sustainable fraternity or mutual-benefit.

We should know their tricky or deceitful or crafty character or practice. Vividly, the aforesaid persons are not virtuous ones but stupid scoundrels indeed. Actually these practices are immoral and cunning. These types of persons are dangerous for the simple people in their daily life. They do neglect the essence of sincerity, friendship and loyalty, but care for their benefit and think how to take advantage on the simple people. In addition, these persons are unfriendly and unsympathetic. To analyze the behavior, practice and mindsets of these persons, they are almost anti-social and inhumane because they violate the rules and norms of social animal. Therefore, if we intend to build a pleasant and peaceful society, we should avoid or stop associating with above-stated persons. They cannot be tamed or punished as they are churlish or ill-bred or ill-disposed. !!!!!

Tommy Pauk is the pseudonym of U Thein Swe, who is B.A. (English) and (Registered Law) R.L. I degrees holder. He has English Teaching experience at Yangon University and Workers’ college in Yangon, and now is working as freelance writer and English Teacher cum Translator/Interpreter for foreign firms. 
Solar Impulse-2 to leave for China on 27 March

Mandalay, 24 March — The groundbreaking Swiss-built aircraft Solar Impulse-2 is preparing to depart for China after nearly a week in Mandalay.

The plane, powered entirely by the sun, landed at Mandalay International Airport on 19 March at 8 pm. University and basic education students, along with other members of the public, have been given the opportunity to view the plane, with officials from the aircraft’s support team giving talks on the use of solar power.

At present, the aircraft is making preparations to proceed to China on 27 March. On its way to China, the solar impulse will pass over Sagaing Hill, Mandalay Hill and Ayeyawady River.—Maung Pyi Thu (Mandalay)

Asphalt roads in Myeik Township improve transportation for local residents

Mandalay, 24 March — Military servicemen of the Central Command Headquarters recently carried out cleaning and maintenance work around ancient monuments in Mandalay. Among the sites cleaned were the Mya Nan Sankyaw Golden Palace, the coin factory and the North Garden Lake, as well as the graveyards of King Mindon, King Bagan’s mother, and the queens Hsinbyumashin, Namnaw and Laungsaw.

Officials of the Central Command Headquarters have spent K29.3 million on renovation of nine wells, the North Garden Lake and Boktaloke Lake built by King Mindon in October 2014.—Maung Pyi Thu (Mandalay)

Villages receive electricity supply

Mandalay, 24 March — Vice Mayor of Nay Pyi Taw Council Area U Than Kyaw Htoo launched a 100 KVA transformer to supply electricity to Kyonpadaw Village in Pantanaw Township, Ayeyawady Region at a ceremony on 22 March.

The vice mayor and Ayeyawady Region Minister U Than Tun attended the ceremony to electrify six villages in Ohbo and Kapaing village-tracts. The region minister and officials cut the ribbon to open the 750-foot-long Sibinlaya road worth K7 million in Yaybone Ward, the 1,100-foot-long 10th street worth K19.2 million in Naukle Ward, the 700 foot-long Yayantaik road worth K9.3 million in Taipyin Ward, and the 730-foot-long Khatta road worth K8.3 million in Para-mi Ward 2.

The paved roads will provide much more reliable transport, particularly during monsoon season.

In the 2014-15 fiscal year, the township development affairs committee and local people cooperated in construction of 38 asphalt roads in the township.—Khaing Htoo (Myeik District IPRD)
South Syrian rebels say Assad foes are supplying more arms

BEIRUT, 24 March — Mainstream rebels in southern Syria say foreign states have started supplying weapons to them since Damascus launched an offensive last month to regain the frontier zone near Jordan and Israel.

This suggests President Bashar al-Assad’s Arab and Western enemies want to help preserve the last major foothold of what they call the moderate opposition, although the rebels say the equipment still falls short of their needs.

The Syrian army backed by allied militia including the Lebanese Shi’ite group Hezbollah are trying to regain territory which is vitally important to Assad and his allies in Iran, both attach great importance to the struggle with both Assad and his allies in Iran; although the rebels say the equipment still falls short of their needs.

At first they advanced rapidly through the southwestern corner of Syria. State TV broadcast from several villages captured from the insurgents, who are among the last remnants of the mainstream rebellion against Assad that has been crushed elsewhere by government forces or jihadist groups such as Islamic State and the Nusra Front, a wing of al-Qaeda.

But the push then appeared to slow. Three rebel officials said foreign states had increased their help in response to the advance. “We are asking for more,” said Saber Safar, a colonel who defected from the Syrian army and now heads a group called “The First Army”, part of “The Southern Front” rebel alliance. He spoke via Skype from inside Syria. The rebels declined to give details, or say which states had supplied the weapons. The Southern Front groups have previously received military aid via Jordan, a staunch US ally.

Some of the southern rebel groups have received US-made anti-tank weapons, though they have long described the quantities as small. In addition to the United States, Assad’s foreign opponents include Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Turkey.

A Syrian military source said the army was working according to a new plan “focused on directing concentrated blows against some of the positions of the terrorist gangs”. “These strikes are achieving excellent results,” the source said.

Mainstream rebels in northern Syria suffered their most recent setback with the collapse of the Hazzm movement, a US-backed group that dissolved itself earlier this month after coming under attack from the Nusra Front.

The weakness of the mainstream groups is a big complication for US planners who want to arm and train rebels to fight Islamic State. The Nusra Front is also active in the south but has avoided conflict with the mainstream groups there.—Reuters

US pledges to keep funding Afghans amid calls for slower pullout

CAMP DAVID, 24 March — The United States assured Afghanistan’s leaders on Monday it would keep funding Afghan security forces at a targeted peak level of 352,000 personnel at least into 2017 to provide stability as foreign troops withdraw from the country.

The announcement by US Defence Secretary Ash Carter came ahead of talks at the White House on Tuesday at which Afghan President Ashraf Ghani is expected to press his case for a slowing of the withdrawal of US forces.

After a day of talks at the US presidential retreat at Camp David, Carter, US Secretary of State John Kerry and Afghan leaders were at pains to avoid getting ahead of the White House talks, at which Obama is expected to respond to Ghani’s plea. However, in response to a question at a joint news conference, Kerry said, “It’s our knowledge that President Obama is actively considering that request.”

Ghani replaced Hamid Karzai as Afghan president last year and enjoys a much smoother relationship with Washington.

Earlier on Monday, he delivered an address to US soldiers and military families at the Pentagon and sought to reassure Americans of the value of their sacrifice in lives lost and money spent in the battle against al-Qaeda and other extremists for more than 13 years of war in Afghanistan.

Noting that more than 2,215 Americans had been killed and 20,000 wounded, he said, “Each one of you has left a legacy, but I also understand that Afghanistan has proved you.”

Ghani’s words of gratitude marked a sharp contrast with Karzai, who left office last year accusing the United States of inflicting a war on his country that intensified with the drawdown of US forces.

With a more friendly partner in Ghani, US officials acknowledge that conditions have changed since May when Obama declared that by the end of 2015 the US force would be roughly halved from the current total of about 10,000 and would operate only from bases in Kabul and Bagram.

The US military has been drawing up revised options and a senior US official told Reuters last week the US military bases in Kandahar and Jalalabad were likely to remain open beyond the end of 2015.—Reuters

Smoke rises after what activists said was an airstrike on Atimah, Idlib Province on 8 March, 2015. —Reuters

TUNIS, 24 March — Japanese Parliamentary Vice Foreign Minister Kazuyuki Nakane on Monday held talks with top Tunisian officials and confirmed that the two countries will work together on antiterrorism in the wake of a deadly shooting rampage at a landmark museum in Tunis last week.

Nakane, who met Prime Minister Habib Essid and Foreign Minister Taieb Baccouche, said he also requested that measures be taken to ensure safety for Japanese living in, and travelling to, the country.

Three of the 21 people killed in the attack by gunmen at the Bardo National Museum were Japanese.

Baccouche expressed condolences over the deaths of the three Japanese and noted the importance of building peace, not just stepping up military capability, in the fight against terrorism. He said it is necessary to direct attention to young people getting radicalized and stressed the need for measures to address poverty and unemployment.

The Tunisian government believes that three people were involved in the attack, with two of them having been killed at the scene. It has launched a major investigation and a manhunt for the third suspect.

After arriving in Tunisia on Sunday, Nakane visited the museum in the capital and paid tribute to the victims of the attack. He denounced the act, saying Japan “will never give in to terrorism.”

The Japanese diplomat visited a hospital where injured Japanese were being treated on Monday. He told reporters that they were on their way to recovery.

Kyodo News
United Launch Alliance said it and SpaceX planned to revise a June 2013 agreement about the certification process to adopt recommendations made after the first phase of an independent review ordered by Air Force Secretary Debrah James in January.

The Air Force said the panel, led by former Air Force Chief of Staff Larry Welch, had recommended ways to better focus the certification process on the new entrant’s ability to deliver hardware, support processes and meet requirements.

It said the panel carried out in-depth discussions with key personnel at the Air Force’s Space and Missiles Systems Center and SpaceX, and a close review of the certification documents and data, during the first phase of the review.

No further details about specific recommendations were immediately available.

James praised the review team’s diligent and prompt work and said she remained committed to “bold innovation, competitive space launches, and improved partnership with industry.”

SpaceX Chief Executive Elon Musk welcomed the Air Force’s decision to review and revise the certification process.

The Air Force said the second phase of the independent review would examine the broader process for certifying new entrants to the space launch business.

On Monday, United Launch Alliance said it would let Americans vote over the next two weeks whether to name its new rocket Eagle, Freedom, or GalaxyOne. The name will be announced 13 April, it said.

ULA is reacting to the rapid rise of SpaceX by racing to lower launch costs and attract more commercial customers.
Boston bomb suspect influenced by al-Qaeda — expert witness

Boston, 24 March — Boston Marathon bombing suspect Dzhokhar Tsarnaev was heavily influenced by al-Qaeda literature and lectures, some of which was found on his laptop, a counterterrorism expert testified at his trial on Monday.

The testimony cut to the heart one of America’s most closely watched court battles, with prosecutors painting Tsarnaev as a home-grown terrorist and his defence arguing he was a mostly normal American kid who came under the influence of his radical older brother.

Matthew Levitt, a senior fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Studies, said some of Tsarnaev’s Twitter posts and parts of a note he scrawled inside a drydocked boat where he was captured several days after the deadly marathon attack resembled Islamist publications.

“We see in them (concepts from) al-Awlaki’s statements and other writings from the radicalizers,” Levitt said, referring to Anwar al-Awlaki, a US-born al-Qaeda figure who published lectures and a glossy English-language magazine about violent jihad found on Tsarnaev’s computer.

Awlaki was killed in a US drone strike in 2011.

Levitt added that the marathon bombing appeared to fit into a broader “global jihad movement” that encourages Muslims to commit violence targeting the United States.

Tsarnaev is accused of killing three people and injuring 264 with a pair of homemade pressure-cooker bombs at the race’s crowded finish line on 15 April, 2013, and with fatally shooting a police officer three days later as he and his 26-year-old brother, Tamerlan, tried to flee the city.

Tamerlan Tsarnaev died following a gunfight with police later that night and Dzhokhar was arrested, severely wounded by gunfire, after a homeowner in the suburb of Watertown found him hiding in a boat in his backyard. He left a note in that boat suggesting that the attacks were an act of retribution for US military campaigns in Muslim-dominated countries and that he viewed his brother as a martyr.

“We Muslims are one body you hurt one you hurt us all,” the message read, citing what it said was aggression in Muslim lands.

“I don’t like killing innocent people it is forbidden in Islam, but due to said (…) it is allowed,” the message read, with a word missing due to a bullet hole.

Defence attorneys have admitted that the 21-year-old defendant committed the crimes he is accused of, but are trying to save his life in the capital case by arguing that his brother masterminded the attacks.

FBI computer specialist Kevin Swindon testified earlier that copies of al-Qaeda’s “Inspire” magazine were found on Tsarnaev’s laptop, including one with an article titled: “How to Make a Bomb in the Kitchen of Your Mom.” It also included several audio files of Awlaki lectures, he said.

Swindon said the laptop also had backup files of Tsarnaev’s iPhone thatあげも had texted a friend, Dias Kadyrbayev, shortly after the attack, saying: “U saw the news? … Better not tell me my friend.”

Defence attorney William Fick grilled Swindon in cross-examination in an attempt to point out that it was unclear where the files on Tsarnaev’s computer originated, and that there was a chance that some were placed there by Tamerlan or others.

Fick asked Swindon about a thumb drive investigators had found at a landfill along with other items belonging to Dzhokhar, which contained files on how to make explosives: “Isn’t it true that every file and folder on this drive was created by Tamerlan’s computer?”

“I don’t know,” Swindon replied.

Separately, a poll released on Monday found that more Boston-area residents would prefer to see Tsarnaev sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole rather than death. Some 49 percent of respondents to a poll conducted for WBUR radio by Massinc Polling said they preferred a life sentence, with 38 percent wanting to see a death sentence.

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**NOTIFICATION TO APPLY BUILDING CONSTRUCTION PERMIT**

Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC) is hereby scrutinizing and accepting relevant applications and files for construction of buildings and has opened a “One Stop Service” office at the City Hall to carry out matters accordingly on Monday, Wednesday and Friday of every week between 10:00 am in the morning to 2:00 pm in the afternoon.

Similarly, for some of the citizens who are coming from far and distant townships, measures are being taken so that applications will be scrutinized and accepted starting from 2.4.2015, on Tuesday and Thursday of every week between 10:00 am in the morning to 2:00 pm in the afternoon at the respective Township Engineering (Building) office which is jointly opened at the relevant YCDC Township Executive Office, to provide smooth working of every week between 10:00 am in the morning to 2:00 pm in the afternoon.

**Gunmen kill 13 in eastern Afghanistan**

MAIDAN SHAR, (Afghanistan), 24 March — Some 13 passengers were killed and two others wounded after gunmen shot at three vehicles in the eastern Afghan province of Wardak early on Tuesday morning, an official source said.

“Gunmen shot at three vehicles, including a bus, killing 13 passengers and injuring two others,” the provincial government said in a statement. One woman was among the killed and his nine-year-old son aboard the bus was wounded, the statement added.

The firing took place in Hal Hayasab locality, Sayyed Abadi district along the main road connecting national capital of Kabul to southern Kandahar Province. The injured were shifted to hospitals, the statement said. No group has claimed responsibility for the attack yet. About 10,000 civilians were killed and injured in Taleban-led insurgency and conflicts in the central Asian country in 2014, according to UN mission officials.—Xinhua
Kerry Washington honoured at GLAAD Awards

Los Angeles, 24 March — Actress Kerry Washington has received the Vanguard Award for supporting the LGBT community at the 26th GLAAD Media Awards.

Washington said she does not understand when black people tell her they do not believe in gay marriage, as she feels that the LGBT community’s current struggles mirror the battle faced by interracial couples 30 years ago.

“’We can’t say that we believe in each other’s fundamental humanity and then turn a blind eye to the reality of each other’s existence and the truth of each other’s hearts,’” she said.

“Independence Day” director Roland Emmerich, whose forthcoming drama Don Chotrow said in a statement.

Crosby hit 46-year-old Jose Jimenez while driving his Tesla sedan in Santa Ynez, some 30 miles (50 km) northwest of the coastal city of Santa Barbara, on Sunday evening, California Highway Patrol Sergeant Los Angeles, 23 March — Legendary rock musician David Crosby struck and injured a jogger while driving his car in southern California at the weekend, police said on Monday.

Tom Hanks, Mila Kunis help James Corden take over ‘Late Late Show’

Actor James Corden, from the film “Into the Woods,” arrives at the 20th Annual Critics’ Choice Movie Awards in Los Angeles, California on Jan 15, 2015. REUTERS

Corden brought out Kunis and Hanks together, in a break from late night talk show tradition, and both stars remained on set for the programme’s duration. He also conducted his interviews seated alongside them, instead of behind a desk. After congratulating Kunis on her new baby, who she had with Ashton Kutcher, Corden asked if they had gotten married. Kunis replied: “I don’t know, maybe.”

Hanks pointed to a ring on her finger and Corden exclaimed: “They got married!” and congratulated her. Kunis didn’t confirm it but appeared to thank him before the show cut to a commercial.

Ticket prices varied for the awards ceremony taking place on 21 March at the Nokia theatre in Los Angeles, California on 3 Oct, 2012.—Reuters

Musician David Crosby performs during a benefit concert to help defeat Proposition 32 on the State of California’s November election ballot at Nokia theatre in Los Angeles, California, on 21 March at the ceremony, host Jay Leno alternate-ly trained, inspired and inspired Daily Mirror. “I had a scene where I was told my dad had died, so it was really hard, but what’s important in the film is that Cinderella gains strength from her loss and that was something I could … That was in me,” James said.

Speaking to the Sunday Times Style magazine, James, who stars alongside Cate Blanchett and Helena Bonham Carter in Kenneth Branagh’s re-imaging of the classic fairytale, said processing her father’s death would take “the whole of my life”. “That’s sort of why my experience of drama school is pretty unique — it happened while I was there.”

The actress, whose father was also an actor, added she was said that he had not lived to see her success.—PTI

Victoria Beckham bans David’s snacking habit?

Victoria Beckham Los Angeles, 24 March — Victoria Beckham has reportedly banned her husband from eating snacks.

The 40-year-old fashion designer allegedly cleared out the treats she keeps for kids Brooklyn, 16, Romeo, 12, Cruz, 10, and three-year-old Harper, because retired soccer star David kept tucking in to them, reported Female First.

“He says he would rather just eat what he wants and not be bothered, that’s why he sneaks food when Victoria isn’t looking.”

“It’s got to the point where she’s stopped buying so many carb-loaded goodies. She used to keep granola bars and treats for the kids, but she’s chalked it all out because David was binging on them,” a source said.
Young Thais practicing skiing in Hokkaido town for Olympics

SAPPORO, 24 March — Three young athletes from Thailand are practicing cross-country skiing in the town of Higashikawa in Japan’s northernmost main island of Hokkaido, hoping to compete in the 2018 Winter Olympic Games in South Korea. The Thais, all in their 20s, arrived in Higashikawa in October last year under a programme to train competitive cross-country skiers from snow-free countries. The training programme started in October last year under the leadership of the Thai Olympic Committee. The Thais, all in their 20s, are being trained in a town-owned dormitory.

Three young Thais pose during cross-country skiing practice in Higashikawa on Japan’s northernmost main island of Hokkaido on 5 March, 2015. The town office has launched a training programme for cross-country skiers from snow-free countries to enhance its name recognition overseas. — Kyodo News

While cross-country skiers of Japan’s national team engage in intensive training in the town, a large number of residents enjoy the sport. The town, which has accepted many foreign students wishing to learn the Japanese language, launched the cross-country skiing programme to promote the sport in snow-free nations, hoping that it can increase name recognition if skiers from such countries compete in Olympics.

The three Thai skiers, set to compete in international competitions authorized by the International Ski Federation, they dream of competing at the 2018 Pyeongchang Winter Olympics. Cheilehe Arisaman, 24, the oldest of the three, said, “As lots of people support us, we will practice hard to participate in Olympics.” — Kyodo News

Big box gyms may be fitter, when it comes to muscling out competition

NEW YORK, 24 March — Cut-rate clubs and small studios catering to niche tastes from barre classes to yoga have crowded the US fitness landscape, but big box gyms that can keep up with rapidly changing trends may be in a better position to flex their muscles in the future.

A brightening economy, public health initiatives and fitness-conscious consumers boosted US gym memberships from an estimated 40.3 million in 2009 to 54.1 million in 2014, according to the market research company IBIS World. The report predicts the industry, which generated $26.5 billion in sales in the United States last year, revenues of various climate zones, as well as try out a variety of measuring equipment.

Guided tours centred on themes such as earthquakes and weather forecasts are also planned in future. The ZAMG said these belong to its “Citizen Science” programme, that the central weather institute hopes to use to open dialogue with the public and an information exchange with the sciences. — Xinhua

The park is stationed on the Hohe Warte hill in Vienna, and is designed to provide visitors with knowledge on weather, climate, and the environment, with a focus on interactivity, the ZAMG stated in a Press release, “We have many school classes visit, but also a number of companies and private groups of adults,” said ZAMG Director Michael Staudinger, emphasising the focus of the various stations of the park is not just on children. Visitors can learn about various things such as climate change and glacier formation, and explore the properties of various climate zones, as well as try out a variety of measuring equipment.

Guided tours centred on themes such as earthquakes and weather forecasts are also planned in future. The ZAMG said these belong to its “Citizen Science” programme, that the central weather institute hopes to use to open dialogue with the public and an information exchange with the sciences. — Xinhua

Austrian meteorology institute opens new weather knowledge park in Vienna

VIENNA, 24 March — The Central Institute for Meteorology and Geodynamics (ZAMG) in Austria has presented its newly-designed weather knowledge park to the media to coincide with World Meteorological Day on Monday.

Austrian meteorology institute opens new weather knowledge park in Vienna

Three young Thais practice cross-country skiing in Higashikawa on Japan’s northernmost main island of Hokkaido on 5 March, 2015. The town office has launched a training programme for cross-country skiers from snow-free countries to enhance its name recognition overseas. — Kyodo News
Liverpool defender Skrtel charged with violent conduct

London, 24 March — Liverpool defender Martin Skrtel was charged with violent conduct for appearing to stamp on Manchester United goalkeeper David De Gea during Sunday’s Premier League clash, the FA said.
The incident, in stoppage-time of United’s 2-1 victory at Anfield, was missed by match officials.
Slovakia international Skrtel appeared to tread on De Gea’s calf in the final seconds as Liverpool chased an equalizer.—Reuters

Liverpool’s Martin Skrtel challenges Manchester United’s David De Gea during Barclays Premier League at Anfield on 22 March, 2015.—Reuters

Nadal returning to Queen’s for Wimbledon warmup

London, 24 March — Rafael Nadal (ESP) during his quarter final match against Milos Raonic (CAN) in the BNP Paribas Open at the Indian Wells Tennis Garden in Indio, CA, on 20 March, 2015. Raonic won 4-6, 7-6, 7-5.—Reuters

My Russian heritage is non-negotiable, says Sharapova

Maria Sharapova of Russia celebrates a point against Agnieszka Radwanska of Poland during their Fed Cup World Group quarter final tennis match between Poland and Russia at Tauron arena in Krakow on 8 Feb, 2015.—Reuters

McAuley red card transferred after referee error

London, 24 March — The red card shown in error to West Bromwich Albion defender Gareth McAuley in the Premier League match against Manchester City on Saturday has been transferred to Craig Dawson, the FA said on Monday.
McAuley was sent off after 90 seconds when referee Neil Swarbrick failed to identify Dawson as the culprit in bringing down Wilfried Bony when he was through on goal.
Dawson will serve a one-match ban.—Reuters

Sturridge and Lallana out of England games

London, 24 March — Liverpool pair Daniel Sturridge and Adam Lallana have withdrawn from the England squad for the Euro 2016 qualifier against Lithuania and a friendly against Italy because of injury.
Striker Sturridge sustained a hip injury and midfielder Lallana a groin problem in Liverpool’s 2-1 defeat by Manchester United at Anfield on Sunday. Tottenham Hotspur’s Ryan Mason, who has represented England at under-19 and under-20 level, has been drafted in by manager Roy Hodgson as replacement for Lallana, the FA said on Monday. Sturridge’s absence could mean a first cap for Spurs striker Harry Kane, the Premier League’s joint top scorer this season.
Goalkeeper Fraser Forster and left back Luke Shaw have also withdrawn from Hodgson’s squad because of injury. Goalkeepers Rob Green and Jack Butland and Tottenham Hotspur defender Danny Rose have been called up as replacements.
England, who top Group E with four wins from four matches, host Lithuania at Wembley on Friday before a friendly against Italy in Turin four days later.—Reuters

File photo of England’s Daniel Sturridge (R) challenged by Norway’s Stefan Johansen during their international friendly soccer match at Wembley Stadium in London on 3 Sept, 2014.—Reuters

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