Defence Services Commander-in-Chief promises to support elections in November

NAY PYI TAW, 27 March — Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing said Friday the Tatmadaw will work hand in hand with election organisers and the people to ensure a successful ballot in November, warning that the armed forces will not tolerate any attempts to disrupt voting.

“Any disturbances to the stability of the State and prevalence of the rule of law, any armed pressure or any threats for voting, won’t be allowed in the General Election,” he said at the 70th Anniversary Armed Forces Day Parade in Nay Pyi Taw.

He also said the general election scheduled for November would be “a landmark for the implementation of democracy in Myanmar.”

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing called on ethnic armed groups to solve their conflicts with the government through negotiation based on a spirit of brotherhood and trust. He said the Tatmadaw would not tolerate any attempts to turn political disagreements into armed conflict.

He urged ethnic people to work with each other to create a harmonious and interdependent community through negotiation. If ethnic armed groups have a true desire for peace, they should keep their promises and solve problems caused by political means, the commander-in-chief said.

He also promised that the Tatmadaw will make efforts for integration of the national peoples, national reconciliation and peace without fail, as the Tatmadaw is tasked to defend the Union. “The Tatmadaw is doing its duties, risking lives and limbs of military officers and Tatmadawmen (soldiers) for stability in border areas,” he said.

(See page 3)

Regional environmental group seeks deeper involvement with Myanmar

YANGON, 27 March — The International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development, an eight-nation group that promotes ecologically sustainable projects in the Himalayan region, showcased its work in Myanmar at an event in Nay Pyi Taw, the organisation said Thursday.

Myanmar-ICIMOD Partners Day was aimed at strengthening Myanmar’s involvement with the eight-member ICIMOD, which works closely with the national peoples, national reconciliation and peace without fail, as the Tatmadaw is tasked to defend the Union. “The Tatmadaw is doing its duties, risking lives and limbs of military officers and Tatmadawmen (soldiers) for stability in border areas,” he said.

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(See page 3)

Myanmar hosts international media at IPI World Congress

YANGON, 27 March — The International Press Institute opened its 65th World Congress at the Chatrium Hotel here on Friday, bringing together journalists from around the world under the theme “On the Path to a Free Media.”

Union Minister for Information U Ye Htut extending greetings at the conference, while other speakers including Mr David Kaye of the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression, Executive Director Mr Toby Mendel of the Centre for Law and Democracy of Canada, and U Phyo Min Thein of the National League for Democracy of Canada, and the challenges print media faces in maintaining economic viability and public trust.

More than 200 local and foreign journalists attended the IPI World Congress in Yangon, which will continue until 29 March.

On the sidelines of the 65th World Congress, Union Minister U Ye Htut separately met Managing Director Al Anstey of Al Jazeera (English), Programme Director Dr Andrew Dodd of Australia’s Department of Media and Communication, and Nathan Vander Klippe, Beijing bureau chief for Canada’s Globe and Mail.

(See page 3)
Images of 70th Anniversary Armed Forces Day parade 2015 in Nay Pyi Taw

Military attaches of foreign missions attend 70th Anniversary of Armed Forces Day parade 2015.
MNA

Missile carriers marching into parade ground where 70th Anniversary of Armed Forces Day parade 2015 is being held on 27 March 2015.
MNA

Military servicemen from Myanmar Navy participate in parade of 70th Anniversary of Armed Forces Day parade 2015.
MNA

Armoured vehicles rolling into the parade ground where 70th Anniversary of Armed Forces Day parade 2015 is being held on 27 March 2015.
MNA

Military servicewomen marching in parade ground in Nay Pyi Taw.—MNA
Defence Services Commander-in-Chief promises to support elections...

(from page 1)

More than 10,000 troops from the Army, Navy and Air of Defence Services paraded during the 70th Anniversary Armed Forces Day, which commemorates the start of the country’s resistance to Japanese occupation in 1945.

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and families of Defence Services (Army, Navy and Air) paid respects to retired senior military officers at Zeyathiri Beikman on Friday afternoon.

The senior general and his family members visited many different units of the Defence Services during the parade, which was held in Yangon City Hall grounds.

Navy and Air of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Air) General Hla Htay Win and other Defence Services commanders led the parade.

Vice-Chief of Defence Services (Army) Major General Soe Myint Soe, Vice-Chief of Defence Services (Navy) Rear-Admiral Aye Maung and Vice-Chief of Defence Services (Air) General Hla Htay Win handed out the flags of honour to the Defence Services commanders.

The general presenters also presented the best military song award to First Wing of the 70th Anniversary of Armed Forces Day Parade.—MNA

Myanmar hosts international...

(from page 1)

Prior to the press conference, journalists staged a rally in front of the hotel, calling for freedom of expression, which they said was crucial to the flow of information to the people.

U Kyaw Zeyar Tun, editor of Mawgun Magazine, decried the beating and arrest of some journalists in a recent police crackdown on student protesters in Letpadan.

U Win Zaw Naing, an editor of Myintakha news agency, said he joined the rally to spread a message to the world that freedom of the press is still repressed in the country.

Discussions at the IPI conference should mainly focus on how to provide security and safety for journalists, said Ko Aung Min Nyo, a freelance reporter.

Union Minister for Transparency in Myanmar.

Mr. Tun also emphasised the importance of transparency in Myanmar.

Mr. Tun was concerned about the situation in the country, with the government discussing problems facing the media in the country.—MNA

Media accreditation cards available for journalists

Mandala International Airport, can take out media accreditation cards at the Sub-printing House between 20th and 21st streets and between 82nd and 83rd streets in Aungmyethazan Township from 9 am to 2 pm on 29 March.

Journalists will be transported from Mandala Railway Station to the airport at 7 pm on the same day.—MNA

Soft opening of Myaynigon overpass held in Yangon

Yangon, 27 March — Soft opening of Myaynigon overpass built for convenient travelling of the public by easing traffic congestion was held at the overpass in Sanyang Township, Yangon, on Friday morning.

Yangon Region Chief Minister U Myint Swe and officials presented gifts to the public who travelled on the overpass to mark the opening.

Regional environmental group seeks...

The Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry on Wednesday, Union Minister U Win Tun highlighted the importance of regional and international partners for making progress in the country’s priority areas including agriculture and tourism.

He acknowledged that cooperation with ICIMOD supports the government’s commitment to ensuring sustainability of mountain environments and addressing problems facing the mountain areas that make up 42 percent of the country.

“We seek guidance from you on how to deepen our engagement and ensure that we are responding to your priorities,” said ICI-

MOD’s Director General Dr David Molden, who urged stronger collaboration between member nations and Myanmar.

The centre in recent years has expanded its programmes in Myanmar, which hosted the ICIMOD annual board meeting in 2012.

Myanmar is a founding member of the ICI-

MOD, which also includes Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India Nepal and Pakistan.
Myanaung’s rural area receives new BEMS branch

Thakhtukwin Village, a laterite road in Bawdigon Village, a bridge in Tagwa Village, a laboratory at BEHS Branch in Htanbonbin Village, and construction of floor at the school building at Zibygon BEPS. They also looked into construction of dispensaries, school buildings and the Inbin-Kanaung laterite road.

Win Bo (Myanaung IPRD)

K100m fund allotted by Pyidaungsu Hluttaw shared to development tasks

Myanaung, 27 March — The Pyidaungsu Hluttaw has allotted K100 million each for undertaking development tasks in all constituencies in Ayeyawady Region in the 2014-15 fiscal year to combat rural poverty.

The Township Department of Rural Development is putting a new laterite surface on Inbin-Kanaung road for smooth transport of local residents.

On 25 March, Region Hluttaw MPs U Aung Win Swe and U Aung Myo Nyunt, Township Administrator U Min Min Tun and officials inspected construction of a building at Basic Education Middle School Branch in Thakhtukwin Village, a laterite road in Bawdigon Village, a bridge in Tagwa Village, a laboratory at BEHS Branch in Htanbonbin Village, and construction of floor at the school building at Zibygon BEPS.

Nay Pyi Taw Council assists residents of damaged homes

Tatkon, 27 March — Strong winds hit four villages in Thaphanchaung Village-tract in Tatkon Township on 25 March, blowing roofs of schools and houses. A total of 129 houses, one monastic education school and a Post-Primary School in Thaphanchaung Village lost their roofs while 16 houses and one BEMS branch were damaged during the unseasonable weather in Phethanthaung village.

Nay Pyi Taw Council members U Myint Shwe and U Phone Zaw Han inspected the damage to houses and schools in the villages and arranged support for local people on 26 March.

Win Bo (Myanaung IPRD)

Asphalt road opens to traffic in Nyaunglebin

Nyaunglebin, 27 March — In honour of the 70th Anniversary of Armed Forces Day, a ceremony to commission the new asphalt road was held at the thoroughfare in Nyaunglebin, Bago Region, on 25 March.

Executive Officer of Township Development Affairs Committee U M Hla Thaung explained construction of the new asphalt road. Region Hluttaw MPs and township departmental officials opened the 977-foot-long and 10-foot-wide asphalt road, built by the Township DAC for more than K19 million.

Nay Lin (Nyaunglebin)

Taninthayi Region chooses five townships to accept stipends for students

Dawei, 27 March — Education officers held a meeting Thursday with residents of Dawei, Taninthayi Region, to explain the selection of townships to be provided with stipends for students in the 2015-16 academic year.

Region Minister for Social Affairs Dr Win Aung attended the meeting at the hall of No. 3 Basic Education High School. Region Education Director U Tun Yi explained the plan to hold public consultation meetings, as well as the arrangements for selecting the schools for stipend-granted students.

Deputy Director Daw Myint Sein (Admin/Finance) of the region education department supervised discussions of township officials in groups. The meeting selected Yebua, Kyunsu, Taninthay, Bokpyin and Kawthoung townships to be provided stipends for students.

It was also attended by Region Hluttaw MPs, education officers and staff, social organization members, and political parties.

Po Shwe Thun (Dawei)
Local News

Mandalay, 27 March — The Mandalay Brokers and Millers Association held its 80th annual general meeting at its hall on 86th street in Chanayethazan Township on 25 March to elect a new executive committee. The chairman and executives presented certificates of honour to well-wishers for their donations at the 80th Kathina robe offering ceremony last year. At the meeting, members elected U Thet Tin as the new chairman for next term.

New chairman U Thet Tin explained his future plans including election of women executives for development of the association.

Thiha Ko Ko
(Mandalay)

Myingyan District General Hospital to receive new building

Myingyan, 27 March — A two-storey building is under construction in the compound of Myingyan District General Hospital in Mandalay Region.

District Construction Supervisory Committee chairman Deputy Commissioner U Myint Thin Aung and authorities inspected the progress of construction and instructed officials to give priority to worksite safety, use of quality materials and completion of all tasks on time.

An official of the construction company explained the progress of construction using scale models.

Zaw Min Naing
(Myingyan)

Fire brigade supplies water to local residents

Myanaung, 27 March — As most of the earthen lakes and wells are dried out in Myanaung, Ayeyawady Region, the local fire brigade distributed water from a pump to local residents on 25 March.

The water pump was donated by local residents and Union Minister U Than Htay for fire fighting purposes.

The Township Development Affairs Committee built the water supply system for local residents in Yan Naing Aye Ward. However, water cannot be supplied to the residents due to damaged water pipelines.

Local authorities plan to supply water from Ayeyawady River to areas of need.—Nay Win Zaw (Myanaung)

Myanaung, 27 March — The sixth Buddhist cultural course kicked off at Weluwun Pariyatti monastery in Myanaung, Ayeyawady Region, on 26 March, with a speech by presiding abbot of Latmyethna Mahasi monastery Bhaddanta Panmiadvavamsa.

Township administrator U Min Min Tun called on the youths to study the lectures of abbots to become authentic Buddhists.

More than 400 youths are attending the Buddhism lectures given by venerable abbots from 7 am to 10.30 am up to 7 April.

Win Bo (Myanaung IPRD)

Youths studying Buddhist culture in Myanaung

Brokers, millers elect new chairman to develop association

Mandala, 27 March — The Swiss-designed Solar Impulse-2 is preparing to continue on its global circumnavigation and will depart Mandalay for Chongqing in China on March 30 if weather permits.

The aircraft remains grounded at Mandalay International Airport due to poor weather.

The aircraft built with the use of 17,000 solar cells worth US$ 130 million can fly five days successively.

The impulse arrived at Mandalay International Airport on the fourth leg of its journey from Varanasi Airport in India on 19 March.

If the weather is fine, the aircraft will leave Mandalay International Airport for Chongqing of China 29 March night to fly over Mandalay Hill.

Thiha Ko Ko
(Mandalay)

Solar Impulse-2 to leave Mandalay on 30 March if weather is fine
**Senior Japanese LDP lawmaker to meet China President Xi possibly Saturday**

Boao, (China), 27 March — Senior Japanese ruling lawmaker Toshihiro Nikai said on Friday he is likely to meet with Chinese President Xi Jinping possibly on Saturday to discuss efforts to improve the bilateral relationship.

Nikai, chairman of the Liberal Democratic Party’s General Council who is visiting China to attend the annual meeting of the Boao Forum for Asia in Hainan Province, told reporters that the two countries will “find ways to cooperate and develop” their relations.

Former Japanese Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda, chairman of the Boao Forum for Asia, is also expected to join in Nikai’s talks with Xi.

Nikai expressed hope for a bilateral summit meeting, previously held last November, to be re-established in the near future, saying, “The moment is gathering gradually.”

China has been keeping Japan in check over recognition of history, particularly because Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe is planning to issue a statement this summer on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of Japan’s surrender in World War II.

Xi is scheduled to give a speech at a ceremony on April 15.

**Indonesia prepares to transfer Philippines drug convict for execution**

Jakarta, 27 March — Indonesia is preparing to move a Filipina death row inmate for execution after she lost her appeal in the Supreme Court earlier this week, the attorney general’s spokesman said on Friday.

The planned executions of Mary Jane Fiesta Veloso and nine other mostly foreign drug traffickers has drawn international criticism after repeated pleas for mercy from the United Nations and various governments have gone unheeded by President Joko Widodo.

Veloso will be moved from the city of Yogyakarta to the maximum security prison on Nusakambangan Island in Central Java, where the rest of the group awaits execution by firing squad.

“We can say that (Veloso’s) case is done,” the attorney general’s spokesman Tony Spontana told reporters.

“There will be preparations to move her soon because the plan to execute all (10 convicts) at once hasn’t changed.

The attorney general’s office has yet to announce a date for the executions.

Four other foreign nationals in the group have also lodged last-minute motions against their death sentences, forcing the attorney general to hold off on the executions until all legal processes are seen through.

Two Australian prisoners are among those appealing their sentences. The Australian government has been pursuing an eleventh-hour campaign to save their lives, but Widodo has refused to budge, ramping up diplomatic tensions between the neighbours.

Indonesia has harsh penalties for drug trafficking and resumed executions in 2013 after a five-year gap.

**Abe to attend state funeral for ex-Singapore leader Lee**

Tokyo, 27 March — Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe will visit Singapore on Sunday for a state funeral for former Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew, the government said on Friday.

Taking into account Lee’s “significant contribution to peace and prosperity of the Asia-Pacific region and the world for more than half a century,” Abe has decided to directly offer Japan’s heartfelt condolences to the government and people of Singapore, Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga said at a news conference.

Other regional leaders, such as South Korean President Park Geun Hye, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Indonesian President Joko “Jokowi” Widodo and Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott, are also expected to attend the funeral, a Singaporean news channel reported.

Lee, the first and longest-serving leader of the city state, died on Monday aged 91.

**Modi government puts brakes on India’s universal health plan**

NEW DELHI, 27 March — Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has asked for a drastic cutback of an ambitious health care plan after cost estimates came in at Rs18.5 billion over five years, several government sources said, delaying a promise made in his election manifesto.

Modi has had to make difficult choices to boost economic growth — his government’s first full annual budget, announced last month, ramped up infrastructure spending, leaving less federal funding immediately available for social sectors.

The health ministry developed a draft policy on universal health care in coordination with the prime minister’s office last year.

The National Health Assurance Mission aims to provide free drugs, diagnostic services and insurance for serious ailments for India’s 1.2 billion people.

The health ministry proposed rolling out the system from April 2015, and in October projected its cost as Rs25.5 billion over four years. By the time the project was presented to Modi in January, the costs had been pared to Rs11.6 trillion rupees ($18.5 billion) over five years.

That was still too much.

The programme was not approved, three health ministry officials and two other government sources told Reuters. Three officials said the health ministry has been asked to rework the policy, but work is yet to start.

“The constraint on India’s financial resources was conveyed to health officials, and even to those from other ministries,” said one government official who is not from the health ministry but attended the meeting where Modi was present.

The meeting was held in January and the discussions were not made public.

All of the sources declined to be named because of the sensitivity of the discussions.

Officials at the prime minister’s office and the finance ministry, as well as the health ministry, did not respond to requests seeking comment.

Modi’s manifesto ahead of the election that brought him to power last year accorded “high priority” to the health sector and promised a universal health insurance plan.

The manifesto said previous public health schemes, that have been mired in payment delays recently, had failed to meet the growing medical needs of public.

Modi has another four years left in his first term to fulfill the promise.

India currently spends about 1 percent of its gross domestic product (GDP) on public health, but the badly-managed public health system means funds are not fully utilised. A health ministry vision document in December proposed raising spending to 2.5 percent of GDP but did not specify a time period.

So health experts were dismayed when the federal budget for the full-year starting April raised the allocation for the country’s main health department only by about 2 percent from the previous year, less than the inflation. The meagre increase dimmed prospects for the massive health plan, they said. “How can it happen when you have truncated resources?” one health ministry official asked.

The health plan was drafted in consultation with Modi’s office and an expert panel, including an expert from the World Bank. The proposal included insurance to cover more expensive and serious ailments such as heart surgeries or organ failure.

Two government officials said this benefit will be withdrawn. The health ministry was also asked why the new plan could not be simply combined with existing health schemes.

The decision to slash the level of insurance coverage will have an impact on India’s thriving private health sector, which would have seen huge business growth as the programme channelled millions of new patients into private hospitals. Currently only 17 percent of India’s population has some form of health insurance.

Anirn Bose of NAT-HEALTH, a group that represents such private firms, said the delays in the programme would disappoint both the industry and the public.

“Greater availability of funds for public health care under this programme would have further boosted growth of the private medical industry,” Bose said.

**Prime Ministe**

India’s Prime Minister Narendra Modi

Reuters

Prime Ministe

India’s Prime Minister Narendra Modi

Prime Ministe
South Koreans detained in North swiftly send back two
missionary who has been a South Korean Christian
immediately released
and humanitarian. “has violated internation-
citedLim Byeong-Choel told reporters.
North Korea “should immediately set them free and repatriate them,” he said, adding that the North “has violated interna-
tional practices, human rights which are universal values and humanitarianism.”

Lim also demanded the immediate release of a South Korean Christian missionary who has been in detention in the North for

Nearly a year. His remarks were made a day after North Korea presented the two men and
media the same day.

Foreign ministers of Japan, other non-nuclear nations to meet April

Cuba proposes quick start to human rights dialogue with US

The diplomatic talks began with great fan-
fare in January. Since then, they have turned more se-
cutive and now both sides are privately downplaying prospects for opening emb-
assies in each other’s coun-
tries before a regional sum-
mit set for 10-11 April.

The proposed human rights meeting would be the first of its kind for the former Cold War rivals. US critics of President Barack Obama’s opening to Cuba have blasted the human rights record of the country’s Communist government, pointing to the one-party system and repression of free speech and assembly. Cuba in turn has criticized the United States for racial disparities and treatment of detainees held at the US military base in Guantan-
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vides at home and abroad. “There are different political systems and models for de-
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should apply to the case of Cuba as well,” Pedrosa said.

Cuba first proposed the human rights talks last year and reiterated its idea even before representatives from each side met in Havana in January to discuss diplomat-
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Singapore Management University

By Sayar Mya

Singapore Management University was established in 2000 as a National University. The type of university is public and autonomous as the institution is able to govern itself. It has (349) academic staff; (7541) undergraduates; and (1257) postgraduates. The City Campus is in the urban area of Singapore.

The Singapore Management University is located at the heart of the city. It is home to some 8,800 undergraduate and postgraduate students. The University comprises six Schools offering undergraduate, graduate, and PhD programmes in Business Management, Accountancy, Economics, Information Systems Management, Law and the Social Sciences.

The University has nearly 50 research institutes and centers of excellence. It customized corporate training and lifelong learning for individuals are available through the university’s professional and executive development programmes. SMU is built on the model of the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, USA. Their collaboration is augmented by the Wharton-SMU Research Center, giving Wharton a physical presence in Asia.

SMU fully believes in the importance of values such as Commitment, Integrity, Responsibility, Collegiality, Leadership, and Excellence. SMU distinguishes itself from other universities in the region by giving students a holistic undergraduate education that comprises an out-of-classroom and values-based programme. The plan aims to define, prepare, and inspire SMU students to be their best for others and themselves.

History

The former Raffles College is the site of SMU’s first campus. The idea of setting up a third university in Singapore was first mooted by the Singapore government in 1997.

Ho Kwon Ping, a Singaporean business entrepreneur, was appointed to chair the SMU task force. It was determined that the new institution would follow the American university system featuring a more flexible, broad-based education. Following a review of undergraduate business schools to serve as a model for SMU, the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania emerged as the best candidate. The Wharton-SMU agreement was signed in February 1999 followed in June by the Wharton-SMU Research Center collaboration.

Academics

The Singapore Management University follows a course credit system similar to that used in most American universities. Each individual course within the University is assigned a certain credit weightage (the value or importance of something) and students are usually required to take a specified number of units to fulfill requirements for graduation. Courses are typically conducted as small group seminars of fewer than 50 students so as to allow for a high degree of interactive discourse between students and lecturers.

Double Degree

Undergraduates who are offered a double degree programme have five combinations to choose from. They can combine any of two disciplines: Accountancy, Management, Economics, Law, Information Systems Management or Social Sciences. Graduates will receive two degree certificates upon successful completion of the double degree programme.

International rankings

Singapore Management University was ranked 116th in QS Top Universities 2013 Faculty Areas in Social Sciences and Management with a score of 67.

School of Accountancy

The School of Accountancy was launched in 2001 with the Bachelor of Accountancy (BAcc) undergraduate degree as its sole offering. Since that time, the School has received strong endorsement from the industry and the accounting profession in general. The School followed then up on its initial success in 2005, launching the Master of Professional Accounting (MPA) programme for professionals intending to join the accounting profession but did not possess an undergraduate accounting qualification.

Lee Kong Chian School of Business

The Lee Kong Chian School of Business (LKCSB) is the largest School within the University’s smallest school with a highly selective total annual intake of around 125 students. Establishment of the School of Law was announced in August 2007 following the encouragement of the Singapore Government, which had, during a major review, discovered a shortage of qualified legal personnel in Singapore. Previously, the School existed as the Department of Law at the university’s Business School.

SMU School of Social Sciences

The School of Social Sciences (SoS) was established in July 2002 as part of the then School of Economics and Social Sciences (SESS). Following a restructuring exercise, the University’s economics faculty was separated from the social sciences to form a school of its own. This restructuring was largely accepted as a sound decision in keeping with the fact that SoS’s curriculum had been modeled on that of the Wharton School instead of following the traditional social science-type economics curriculum found at most other institutions.

School of Information Systems

The School of Information Systems (SIS) was formed in 2002 with the aid of Carnegie Mellon University (CMU) Pittsburgh USA. When SMU and CMU forged a four-year strategic partnership to establish the expertise of the CMU faculty in the School’s initial establishment. Through this partnership, CMU aided SIS in establishing and developing the BSc Information Systems Management undergraduate programme. Within this programme, three main majors are offered, namely Political Science, Psychology and Sociology. In addition, the school offers a PhD in Psychology.

Executive Development

In addition to its traditional academic programmes, the University also runs executive education and development programmes for leaders at four stages of their career: (1) emerging leaders, (2) general managers, (3) senior executives and (4) corporate directors. These courses include Executive Skills for Board Members in Challenging Times.

Professional Studies

The Centre for Professional Studies (CPS) was established in 2012 to advance the competence and career aspirations of working professionals in target industries and disciplines. CPS provides a range of professional certification programmes which aim to enhance the industries’ manpower capabilities. Programmes offered by CPS include SMU-Sing Health Graduate Diploma in Healthcare Management and Leadership, SMU Production and Leadership Development, Analytical Professional (Modeling and HR) Graduate Certification, International Trading Institute.

The institute is a unique collaboration between SMU and industry and provides a series of professional education programmes in shipping and international trade.
Press Release

A resolution on the situation of human rights in Myan-
mar tabled by European Union was adopted today at
the 28th session of the Human Rights Council in Gene-
va, Switzerland.

2. The resolution does not adequately and objectively
reflect and apprise of the efforts and achievements in
promoting and protecting human rights of the peo-
ple of Myanmar. In addition to this drawback, it gives
facts amount to infringing on the sovereignty and in-
terfering in the internal affairs of Myanmar. It includes
criticizing and prejudging the holding and the outcome
of upcoming general elections, turning a blind eye on
the efforts being made for a free, fair and transparent
election. It also contains a terminology which is not
accepted by the nation and its entire people. It is also
learnt that expressions on Myanmar’s cooperation with
the United Nations agencies and the international hu-
manitarian community are misleading.

3. Against this backdrop, the Permanent Representative
and Ambassador of Myanmar to the United Nations
Office and other International Organizations in Gene-
va made a statement before the adoption of the said
resolution. The statement reserves, reserves and clarifies
Myanmar’s position on the paragraphs in which the
above-mentioned facts were included. In addition, the
Ambassador stated clearly that Myanmar dissociates
itself from the entire resolution.

4. As Myanmar is in the fourth year of implementing
political, socio-economic and administrative reforms,
visible progresses have already been achieved. At the
same time, Myanmar has been striving to overcome
the challenges common to a young democracy. At this
same time, Myanmar has been striving to overcome

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Iran’s Rouhani intervenes as deadline for nuclear deal approaches

LAUSANNE, (Switzerland), 27 March — Iran’s president spoke with the leaders of France, Britain, China and Russia on Thursday in an apparent effort to break an impasse in the long-standing nuclear deal between Tehran and major world powers.

He also raised the Saudi-led military operation against Yemen and aired Houthi fighters in Yemen, as did US Secretary of State John Kerry ahead of nuclear negotiations in Switzerland with Teheran’s Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif. The United States is pushing for a nuclear deal between six nations and world powers before a 31 March deadline, and officials close to the talks said some kind of preliminary agreement was possible. However, a senior British diplomat acknowledged: “There are still important issues where no agreement appears to be possible. Our task, therefore, for the next few days is to see if we can bridge the gaps and arrive at a political framework which could then be turned into an agreement,” the diplomat told reporters on the sidelines of negotiations in Lausanne, Switzerland. The six powers, which include Germany and the United States, hope to reach a comprehensive nuclear agreement by 30 March. Western powers fear Iran wants to build nuclear bombs, though Teheran says its atomic research is for peaceful purposes. The powers hope to persuade Iran to scale back its nuclear activity in return for the removal of economic sanctions.

Israel is believed to have the Middle East’s only nuclear arsenal and has in the past threatened Iran with military attack. The spokesman for Barack Obama’s National Security Council, Bernadette Meehan, confirmed that “a letter from President Rouhani to President Obama was passed to the US negotiating team in Lausanne.” She offered no details. In a rare diatribe exchange between Paris and Teheran, French President Francois Hollande said Iran had a right to civilian nuclear power but insisted on a “lasting, robust and verifiable Iranian nuclear programme that guarantees Iran will not get an atomic weapon”, a statement from the French presidency said. Last week officials close to the negotiations said France was demanding more stringent conditions than its Western allies for any future agreement. Rouhani reiterated Teheran’s principal demand — that the most crippling sanctions be lifted immediately.

“All unjust sanctions against the Iranian nation should be lifted,” he said on Twitter, “lifting all sanctions is the main issue that can help us reach the final solution.” Western powers insist that sanctions relief felt he felt they were giving up too much of European and US measures against Iranian energy and financial sectors and some UN sanctions could be suspended quickly, officials close to the talks said.

British Prime Minister David Cameron’s spokeswoman told reporters after the call that the two sides agreed it was possible to conclude a framework nuclear deal by end-March. Rouhani also spoke with Russian President Vladimir Putin, the Kremlin said. On his Twitter feed, Rouhani said he raised military operations in Yemen launched by Iran’s rivals Saudi Arabia with all four leaders. Kerry and Zarif met twice on Thursday in Lausanne and Kerry reported at the Yemen crisis, a State Department spokesman said, though a senior US official told Reuters the issue did not have any impact on the nuclear negotiations.

Washington and Teheran take opposite stands on Iranian-led air strikes in Yemen against Shi’ite Houthi rebels allied to Iran who are fighting to oust Yemen’s president. Earlier, Iranian maks quoted Zarif as denouncing the Saudi-led military operation and demanding that it stop. Kerry spoke to the foreign ministers of Saudi Arabia and other Gulf Cooperation Council members and welcomed their action against the Houthis, a senior US official said.

Iran and the six powers are seeking a political framework accord by the end of this month that would lay the foundations for a full nuclear deal by 30 June. Under a final settlement, Teheran would halt sensitive nuclear work for at least a decade in exchange, internation observers said. VAT would be lifted. Speaking to reporters travelling with Kerry from Washington on Wednesday, a State Department official said the six powers would not rush to complete a framework agreement just because there was a 31 March deadline. He added: “We very much believe we can get this done by the 31...” We see a path to do that — official added, however, that there was no guarantee of success.

Ali Akbar Salehi, head of Iran’s Atomic Energy Organization, said there was no motive for why Andreas Lubitz, 27, would take the controls of the Airbus A320, lock the captain out and deliberately set it veering down from cruising altitude at 3,000 feet per minute. Citing internal documents, Salehi said Bild spent a total of one and a half years in psychiatric treatment and received psychiatric treatment for a “serious depressive episode” six years ago. Germanwings co-pilot had serious depressive episode

BERLIN, 27 March — The pilot who appears to have deliberately crashed a plane carrying 149 others has a history of mental illness, Germanwings co-pilot had serious depressive episode six years ago. Germanwings co-pilot had serious depressive episode

Inhabitants of Chile and Peru, from the south to the north of the country, have been stunned by the earthquake on Thursday, while 19 others were killed and 200 injured. A suspected Germanwings co-pilot Lubitz entered the cockpit of the Airbus A320, locked the captain out and deliberately set it veering down from cruising altitude at 3,000 feet per minute. Citing internal documents, Salehi said that Lubitz spent a total of one and a half years in psychiatric treatment and received psychiatric treatment for a “serious depressive episode” six years ago.

The richer countries of the world would be passed to French investigators once they had been examined by German authorities. —Reuters

Airlines introduce two-person cockpit rule after Alps crash

BERLIN/PARIS, 27 March — Airlines rushed on Thursday to change rules to require a second crew member to be at the cockpit at all times, hours after French prosecutors suggested a co-pilot who barricaded himself alone at the controls of a Germanwings flight at all times, hours after French prosecutors suggested a co-pilot who barricaded himself alone at the controls of a Germanwings flight seemed to have set the controls to crash into a mountain, killing all 150 people on board.

Airlines including Norwegian Air Shuttle (NWC.OL), Britain’s easyJet (EZJ.L), Air Canada (AC.TO) and Air Berlin (AB1.DE) all said within hours that they had introduced a requirement that two crew members be in the cockpit at all times.

Canada said it would immediately impose such a rule on all its airlines. “We have a lot of concerned customers,” an Air Berlin spokesman said. Airlines including Ryanair (RYA.I) that already had such rules in place rushed to reassure customers. —Reuters

Cameron wins first TV encounter of close election — poll

LONDON, 27 March — Prime Minister David Cameron won the first TV encounter of a close national election in Britain, an opinion poll showed, but back-to-back in their toughest cross-examinations in years, and subjected to question and answer sessions from a studio audience on Sky News and Channel 4.

A snap Germanwings co-pilot had serious depressive episode

The pilot who appears to have deliberately crashed a plane carrying 149 others has a history of mental illness, Germanwings co-pilot had serious depressive episode six years ago. Germanwings co-pilot had serious depressive episode

A damaged car covered in mud lies on a street at Copiapo City, on 26 March, 2015. The death toll in Chile rose to 228 as rain battered the north and central region on Saturday, while 19 others were unaccounted for as the military rushed to rescue stranded villagers. The downpours in the usually arid region have been the heaviest in about 80 years, although the worst of the bad weather appeared to be over, meteorologists said. —Reuters

A damaged car covered in mud lies on a street at Copiapo City, on 26 March, 2015. The death toll in Chile rose to 228 as rain battered the north and central region on Saturday, while 19 others were unaccounted for as the military rushed to rescue stranded villagers. The downpours in the usually arid region have been the heaviest in about 80 years, although the worst of the bad weather appeared to be over, meteorologists said. —Reuters
Planes of Saudi-led alliance hit Yemen capital, Houthi heartland

SANAA, 27 March — Warplanes hit Yemen’s Houthi-controlled capital and the Shi'ite group’s northern heartland on Friday, the second day of a Saudi-led campaign to stop the Houthis establishing their rule across the country.

Residents said aircraft targeted Republican Guards bases around San’a, including one near the Houthis’ main ballistic missile installations also affiliated with Saleh.

Warplanes also attacked two districts in the northern home province of the Houthis, tribal sources said. The strikes hit a market in Kafaf al-Bokaa in the north of Saada province, killing or wounding 15 people, they said. Shada district was also struck, they said.

The Saudi-led coalition began air strikes on Thursday to try to roll back Houthi gains in the Arabi-an Peninsula country and to shore up the authority of embattled President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi.

Throughout the day, warplanes from Saudi Arabia and Arab allies struck at the Shi’ite Houthis and allied army units, who have taken over much of the country and seek to oust Hadi, who has now left the country.

Houthi leader Abdul-Malek al-Houthi called Saudi Arabia a bad neighbour and “Satan’s horn” and said in a televised speech that Yemenis would confront the “criminal, unjust and unjustified aggression”.

The Saudi-led military intervention marked a ma-jor escalation of the Yemen crisis, in which Iran is al- lied to the Shi’ite Muslim Houthis, and Sunni Mus-lim monarchies in the Gulf back Hadi and his fellow Sunnis in Yemen’s south.

Iran denounced the surprise assault on the Houthis and demanded an immediate halt to Saudi-led military operations.

BEIRUT, 27 March — An alliance of Syrian Is-lamist rebels including al-Qaeda’s Nusra Front have overun 17 defence posts around Idlib in an offen-sive to take the city from the army and allied militia, a monitoring group said on Thursday.

Idlib, which is close to the main strategic high-way linking Damascus to Aleppo, is the capital of a northwestern province of the same name. The army controls the city of at least 100,000 people and rebels are stationed on the out-skirts.

The Syrian Obser-vatory for Human Rights, which tracks the violence from Britain, said the Nus-ra Front, the powerful Ah- har al-Sham movement and the hardline Jund al-Aqsa were advancing, taking a total of 17 army posts on the outskirts. It said 11 sol-diers and allied militia as well as 17 insurgents were killed on Wednesday and violent clashes continued on Thursday.

Syria’s state news agency said on Thursday that government forces had “targeted terrorist gatherings in the surroundings of Idlib city”. It said dozens of insurgents were killed and 11 vehicles were destroyed.

State television said the army foiled an at-tempt by terrorists to enter the city, citing a military source.

The group of Isla-mist brigades have called the operation Army of Fa-tah, a reference to the Mus-lim conquests that spread the faith through the Mid-dle East starting in the sev-enth century.

The Islamic Front, an alliance involved in the op-eration, posted videos on YouTube of battlefield de-velopments on Thursday. It showed insurgents in cam-ouflage running through olive groves.

The Islamic Front’s Twitter account said that a top military leader in Ahrrar al-Sham had been killed during the offensive. Is-lamic State, the most pow-erful anti-government mili-tia, was not involved in the clashes.

Syria slid into civil war after a crackdown on peaceful protests against President Bashar al-Assad in March 2011. The United Nations says more than 220,000 people have been killed.—Reuters

Cutting losses on Iran nuclear deal, Israel eyes small print

JERUSALEM/paris, 27 March — Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has begun to signal that Isra-el could resign itself to an Iranian nuclear deal that would leave its enemy with some uranium enrichment capability, a compromise he has long opposed.

The shift seems surpris-ing given Netanyahu’s conten-tious trip to the US Congress earlier this month in which he argued against world powers let-ting Tehran keep thou-sands of uranium centrifug-es and remain on possible course to a bomb.

But faced with West-ern impatience and White House wrath over the calls to avoid a “very bad deal” — while offering no de-tailed alternative of his own — Netanyahu and his like-minded Arab states might accede to Iran not giving up of all its uranium centrifuges.

Iran insists its nuclear drive is peaceful and wants to keep at least 9,000 of the centrifuges, which are used to process uranium to energy-yielding purity but could potentially make warhead fuel too.

World powers have spoken of allowing Iran to have 6,500 centrifuges, a number they assess would allow the “break out” peri-o-d Iran would need to build a bomb to a year — time enough to intervene.

The Israelis, who are not a party to the talks but have been heard out in Western capitals due to their fears of a nucle-ar-armed Iran and their threats — now looking increasingly hollow — to launch a unilateral war of last-resort, have made clear they want their foe left with much less.

But they have not pre-sented a comprehensive counter-proposal, a reti-rence that one Israeli nucle-ar official told Reuters was designed to avoid providing a “bottom line” that negoti-ators might try to stretch in their talks with Iran.

Instead, officials say, Israel has been challenging Western powers on specif-ic details of a deal, such as strong technical safeguards and extending the breakout time.

“We think to leave Iran one year from the bomb or 1.5 years is too dangerous because sooner or later they will dash to the bomb,” Strategic Affairs Minister Yuval Steinitz, Netanya-hu’s point-man on Iran, told Reuters this week dur-ing a visit to Europe, when he conferred with French and British counterparts.

Israel, Steinitz said, preferred a 2- to 3-year breakout time - a disclosure in itself reflecting the re-calibration by Netanyahu, whose advisers previously said that Iran, if stripped of all nuclear projects, could reconstitute them in five years.

Steinitz argued the one-year breakout could apply even if Iran were left with just 3,000 to 4,000 centrifuges, given its ca-pacity, known by the ru-bric “research and develop-ment”, to improve their performance and manufac-ture more at short notice.

NSANAA, 27 March — People gather at the site of an air strike at a residential area near Sanaa Airport on 26 March, 2015.—Reuters

Anasr Al-Sham Brigade fighters rest with their weapons near Jir al- Shoghour, Idlib Province on 25 March, 2015. — Reuters

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu speaks during a ceremony at President Reuven Rivlin’s residence in Jerusalem on 25 March, 2015.—Reuters
Putin says Western spies plot against Russia before polls

MOSCOW, 27 March — President Vladimir Putin accused Western spies on Thursday of plotting to undermine his rule and “destabilise” Russia before elections by using public organisations for their own goals.

At a meeting of Russia’s Federal Security Service, a successor to the Soviet-era KGB, Putin took aim at non-governmental groups which receive foreign funding, saying Moscow would not relax its scrutiny of their activities.

“The attempts by Western security services to use public, non-governmental organisations and non-political groups for their own benefit, mostly to discredit the authorities and destabilise the situation in Russia, have not stopped.” Putin was quoted as saying by Interfax news agency.

“Actions are being planned for the time before the election campaigns in 2016 and 2018,” the former KGB spy told leading members of the FSB, referring to next year’s parliamentary election and a later presidential poll.

In 2012, after mass protests against him, Putin approved a law to force non-governmental organisations which engage in “political activity” to register with the Justice Ministry as “foreign agents” and file a report to officials every quarter.

Opposition groups say Putin is trying to silence groups which criticise his human rights record and fuelled the biggest protests against him in 2011-2012.

Since then, critics say he has raised pressure on foreign-funded groups which criticise his stance on Ukraine, where pro-Russian separatists in the east are fighting government forces.

Putin said he was always open to dialogue with the opposition, which since the protests has lacked the unity to pose a real threat to the Russian leader and whose leaders fear for their security after the murder last month of Boris Nemtsov, one of the organisers of the mass protests three years ago.

“We always listen to constructive criticism of the authorities’ action or lack of action at any level and this dialogue is always useful and simply necessary,” he said.

“But it would be pointless to have debates with those who take orders from an outsider, in the interest of … another country.”

He praised the security services for thwarting the work of more than 300 foreign spies and agents and called on them to tighten procedures to protect state secrets, especially about the military, as today “it was especially important.” — Reuters

Displacement doubles in north Cameroon in flight from Boko Haram

A girl waits in line for water at the Minawao refugee camp, northern Cameroon, on 18 Feb, 2015. Picture taken by Reuters

There are some 117,000 displaced people in northern Cameroon, UN Sahel coordinator Robert Piper said, almost double the 60,000 recorded a month ago, adding to the strain on scarce resources in an area still recovering from a decade of periodic drought.

The northern part of Cameroon was already under severe strain due to deteriorating climate conditions over the last three years. The growing insecurity has further exacerbated that situation,” Piper told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

There has been a 300 percent increase in food insecurity in Cameroon since 2012, and three-quarters of those affected are in the north.

Some 228,000 Cameroonian children are believed to be malnourished and 80 percent of them are in the north, according to the United Nations.

Cameroon’s Agriculture and Rural Development Ministry has warned there may be famine in the Far-North Region in the coming months as many of those displaced have abandoned farms and moved further from the border for their safety.

Yaounde estimates some 66,000 refugees have fled to Cameroon from northern Nigeria since the start of the Boko Haram insurgency in the three Nigerian states of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa, putting further pressure on the region.

Cameroon has been prioritised as an emerging crisis in 2015 because of the combination of conflict and climate-related problems in the region, the UN said in its 2015 summary of a meeting of UN agencies and charities in December, seen by the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

Cameroon has a further 290,000 refugees in the east of the country as a result of insecurity in neighbouring Central African Republic, according to the UN refugee agency (UNHCR).—Reuters

New York buildings collapse in possible gas blast, 19 hurt

New York, 27 March — Four apartment buildings in New York’s East Village neighbourhood caught fire from an apparent gas explosion on Thursday and three collapsed, causing 19 injuries, authorities said. The blast shortly after 3 pm sent flames leaping into the sky and rocked the residential area in Manhattan. Bloodied victims ran from the buildings, collapsing on the street, witnesses said.

New York Mayor Bill de Blasio told a news conference that preliminary evidence indicated it was a gas-related explosion.

A Fire Department spokesman said late on Thursday that three of the four buildings had collapsed or partially collapsed.

The fourth building “is still involved with some pockets of fire, it’s still an active scene. Investigation is still ongoing,” he said.

Sixteen people were hurt. Four, all civilians, were in critical condition, the spokesman said.

The Con Edison utility said it was launching its insurgency in 2009.

Displacement doubles in north Cameroon in flight from Boko Haram

One out of every 10 women in Japan victim of harassment

Tokyo, 27 March — One out of every 10 Japanese women has become the victim of harassment or stalking, the Cabinet Office said in a report released on Friday.

The government conducted the survey for the first time last December, covering both adult men and women, of whom 3,544 responded. Of the respondents, 11 percent of the women and 4 percent of men said they had been harassed by people of the opposite sex. Among the victims, 29 percent of the women said they feared their lives were in danger while 16 percent of the men replied similarly.

The victims were mainly in their 30s. Current and former boyfriends and girlfrends account for 39 percent of harassers, followed by acquaintances and friends at 21 percent and people linked with their workplaces at 20 percent, the report said.

Of the victims, 38 percent said they received offensive e-mails or had harassing messages posted on the Internet, while 57 percent said they did not, suggesting they were physically stalked or suffered other forms of harassment.

Of all the female victims, 62 percent said they had made changes in their daily lives. In a multiple-choice question, 27 percent of those female victims said they feared to go out, 20 percent said they suffered psychological or physical disorders, 18 percent said they could not sleep and 15 percent said they took some time off work or quit their jobs, according to the survey.

The report also showed that 78 percent of female victims and 41 percent of male victims have consulted someone about their situation. But only 10 percent of the women and 3 percent of the men have reported their cases to police. A separate survey conducted by the Cabinet Office last September showed only 40 percent of 1,558 local governments that responded to the poll had provided consultation services for victims of harassment or stalking.

Asked about reasons for the lack of consulting services in a multiple-choice question, 66 percent of the local governments cited difficulties hiring staff with knowledge of how to deal with such victims, while 43 percent said the police would respond to inquiries from these victims and 29 percent said they cannot afford to run such services. Haruko Arimura, minister in charge of women’s empowerment, told reporters that she will deliver the survey results to local governments and urge them to strengthen support for victims.—Kyodo News
THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR
MINISTRY OF ENERGY
MYANMA OIL AND GAS ENTERPRISE
(INVITATION FOR OPEN TENDER) (5/2015)

Opens tenders are invited for supply of the following respective items in United States Dollars.

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<td>Spares for Doosan Natural Gas Engine</td>
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<td>Ex Daewoo Gen. Set (53) Items</td>
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Tender Closing Date & Time: 27-4-2015, 16:30 Hrs

Tender Call Available during office hours commencing from 24th March, 2015 at the Finance Department, Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise, No(44) Complex, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar.

Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise
Ph. +95 67 - 411097 / 411206

Employees protect their heads as they evacuate during the Nationwide Simultaneous Earthquake Drill in Marikina City, the Philippines, on 27 March, 2015. — Xinhua

Challenges facing wildlife protection remain following int’l meeting

Tom De Meulenaer, scientific support officer of Secretariat of Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), echoed by saying that one of the main challenges in protecting wildlife in Africa is putting words into actions.

“Many countries have made a lot of commitments and plans but resources are not there, and sometimes political will,” Meulenaer told Xinhua.

The southern Africa is being the leading region in Africa for elephant conservation. Nonetheless, according to Jason Bell, program director of Elephants and Regional Director of South Africa World of International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), waves of poaching are slowly moving from East Africa to the south including Zambia. Potential poaching in the region could be a big problem.

Xinhua

Cyrus announces second failure by ENI-KOGAS to discover natural gas

NICOSIA, 27 March — The Italian-South Korean ENI-KOGAS consortium has failed in its second attempt to discover natural gas in Cyprus’ offshore gas fields, the eastern Mediterranean island’s president said on Thursday.

President Nicos Anastasiades confirmed to reporters after a cabinet meeting that after a four-month exploratory drilling, ENI-KOGAS had failed to discover significant quantities of gas that could offer prospects of further development.

The announcement is considered to be a setback to Cyprus’ plans to develop hydrocarbon reserves in its exclusive economic zone that could help it return to growth after its 2013 bailout by international lenders.

But Anastasiades brushed away disappointment and pointed to the experience of Norway where rich gas deposits were discovered after three failed drillings.

He added that the government’s plans to develop the island’s offshore hydrocarbon deposits “do not change at all.”

Xinhua

UN authorizes 1,000 more peacekeepers in Central African Republic

UNITED NATIONS, 27 March — The Security Council on Thursday adopted a resolution authorizing an increase of more than 1,000 personnel for its mission in the Central African Republic (CAR).

Determining that the situation in CAR continues to constitute a threat to international peace and security, the 15-member body “decides to authorize an increase of 1,000 military personnel, 280 police personnel and 20 corrections officers for MINUSCA (the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic),”

The resolution follows the Council’s call on the CAR government, its Italian General Ban Ki-moon for another 750 troops and 280 police in view of the situation in CAR amid continuing violent clashes between the mainly Muslim Seleka alliance and anti-Balaka militia, which are mostly Christian.—Xinhua

WEATHER REPORT

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL EVENING OF THE 28th March, 2015: Rain or thundershowers are likely to be scattered in Upper Sagarin Region and Kachin State, isolated in Lower Sagarin, Mandalay, Bago, Yangon, Ayeyawady and Taninthayi Regions, Shan, Chin, Kayah, Kayin and Mon States and weather will be partly cloudy in the remaining Regions and States.

Degree of certainty is (60%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Strong easterly winds with moderate to rough sea are likely at times Deltaic, Gulf of Mottama, off and along Mon-Taninthayi Coasts. Surface wind speed in strong easterly wind may reach (35) m.p.h. Seas will be moderate elsewhere in Myanmar waters.
'Iron Man' writer duo working on 'Alien Nation' remake

New Delhi, 27 March — Kangana Ranaut today said winning her career’s second National award for “Queen” came as a special but sweet surprise. The actress was shooting for her upcoming film “Tanu Weds Manu Returns” when she got the news. “This award is special for me. I had no clue about it because a day before I was busy with my birthday and the poster launch of ‘Tanu Weds Manu Returns’. It’s a real thing for me because unlike other awards there was no pre-nomination party and ‘ho haa’ about it,” she told PTI in an interview.

Kangana was a front-runner for the honour for her powerful-yet-subtle portrayal of a traditional girl who goes on a journey of self-realisation after being ditched at the altar in the Vikas Bhahl-directed movie. The actress won her first National award in the best supporting actress category for “Fashion”.

“To be honest, I really don’t remember the day I won my first National award. I was watching TV and came to know that I won it. I was young at that time. I am glad that ‘Queen’ connected everyone. I think the cheer from the people when the award was announced on 24th March was something which all actor wants,” she said.

The “Gangster” star, who faced a lot of criticism for her accent and fashion style initially, is happy to have made a successful career and wants to be more careful while selecting her future roles. “I was earlier criticised for my fashion sense and accent. But as an actor, it never discouraged me because I had other reasons to be happy. I won my first National award when I was 19 and it has been the most amazing part of my career,” she said.

“I am careful with my projects. I will choose my future roles with a lot of care. I can do this. I am a front runner for the next Oscar, but as an actor, it never discouraged me because I had other reasons to be happy. I won my first National award when I was 19 and it has been the most amazing part of my career,” she said.

Kangana has been on a career high as she has a check-a-block diary filled with interesting projects, most recent one being the sequel of “Tanu Weds Manu” which releases on 29 May.

She will next be seen in “Katti Batti” and Sujay Ghosh’s movie. Four other projects, including one with Hansal Mehta, are in the pipeline.

‘Furious 7’ should win best picture at Oscars: Vin Diesel

Los Angeles, 27 March — Vin Diesel says ‘Furious 7’ should win the Best Picture at the Academy Awards. The actor sounds off his optimism when talking about his movie, reported Ace Showbiz.

“Universal is going to have a car accident in 2013.—PTI

‘Pretty Woman’ cast reunites to celebrate its 25th anniversary

Los Angeles, 27 March — The cast of Pretty Woman were reunited on a TV show, to celebrate the film’s 25th anniversary.

Stars Julia Roberts, Richard Gere, Hector Elizondo and Laura San Giacomo joined director Garry Marshall for a chat with Matt Lau- er of the “Today” show about how they all came together to make the classic film. During the interview the cast revealed some secrets about the movie, including that initially Gere was not keen on the part of Ed- ward at all. “The joke was you could put a suit on a goat and it would work,” Gere said of his character in the original script. “So I didn’t get it.” But all it took for Gere to get onboard was a meeting with Roberts, who had already signed on to play Vivian, as the two realised they had instant chemistry. “We loved each other immediately, it was a really great thing,” Gere said.

Director Marshall also recalled that the film was originally titled “3,000” and focused more on drug addiction.

It was only when the director came along that the film began to resemble what we now remember as “Pretty Woman”. —PTI

Always knew Taylor Swift would be my child’s godmother: Jaime King

Los Angeles, 27 March — Actress Jaime King says singer and close friend Taylor Swift’s “thoughtfulness and kindness” is so effective that she could not think of anyone else as her upcoming baby’s godmother.

“I always knew she was going to be the godmother if I had another baby,” King told ELLE in an interview.

The 35-year-old actress is currently pregnant with her second child with husband Kyle Newman. The couple, who has been married since 2007, has had a son James Knight Newman, born on 6 October, 2013. King announced her second pregnancy back in February.

The following month, she confirmed through Instagram posts that Swift would become her upcoming baby’s godmother.

“Choosing a godmother is a very special thing in our family. They’re going to be guiding your child, and they’re responsible for them if something was to ever happen,” she said.

“We try and choose people who we know would raise our child the way that we would raise our child and her thoughtfulness, her kindness, her authenticity… is so powerful to me. She’s so uninhibited in her giving… it’s just beyond.”

Recalling the day she asked Swift to take on the significant role, King said she did not have a grand plan.

“We were hanging out on the couch and I was like, ‘Hey, would ever want to be a godmother?’ And she was like, ‘Oh, yes!’ And the creepiest and, you know, all the fun things that best friends do,” she said.—PTI
Falcao scores twice as six-goal Colombia crush Bahrain

Riffa, (Bahrain), 27 March — Captain Radamel Falcao scored twice in five minutes as World Cup quarter-finalists Colombia crushed Bahrain 6-0 in a Copa America warm-up match at the National Stadium in Riffa on Thursday.

Falcao, who is lacking regular first team football at Manchester United, leapt at second-half passes from Arturo Vidal and Mauro Zarate to net twice in five minutes.

The Copa America in Chile will be held from 11 June-4 July.

New Delhi, 27 March — Sher Singh, a farmer from India’s desert state of Rajasthan, prays to Varuna, the Hindu god of water, for a bountiful harvest. Now, he is also looking to the heavens for satellite imaging to boost his crop.

Prime Minister Narenda Modi wants to promote a “per drop, more crop” approach to farming to make better use of scarce water, and aims to have a new satellite crop monitoring system working in time for the peak of this year’s monsoon in July.

Using remote analysis to assess soil moisture and crop development has the potential to help farmers reduce costs and raise yields, say experts, in a country of 1.25 billion where half of workers make a living from agriculture.

Under the scheme, farmers would be able to access advisories on their mobile phones to help them to choose seed varieties, apply the right fertilisers or time irrigation “shots”, though some are skeptical about how effective the plan will be given natural or other obstacles.

“I hope to cut at least a tenth of input cost with the help of the ‘satellite god’,” said Singh, 55, who farms less than a hectare of rape-seed and hopes to use savings to educate his two grandchildren. By his own admission, Singh doesn’t know how much to water his crops, the right fertilizer costs — or even the right crop to plant given the land’s soil type.

After last year’s land-slide poll victory, Modi’s government rolled out a national Soil Health Card scheme modeled on an initiative he launched as chief minister of Gujarat to help farmers plant crops suited to their farmland.

In addition, satellite analysis can assess vegetation cover down to field level, helping to determine how a crop is developing and whether it has been harmed by pests or needs more water.

“The idea is to integrate information under the Soil Health Card with satellite images to raise productivity,” said N Chattopadhyay, a weather department official who is involved in the project.

The approach seeks to apply ‘precision’ farming methods pioneered in North America that use geo-locational technology to help farmers micro-manage exactly how much seed, fertilizer or pesticide they apply to their fields.

In countries such as the United States and Canada unmanned aerial vehicles, or drones, are also used to overfly farmers plants suited to their farmland.

The loss of more than half of a crop can trigger government payments to farmers, of $72 per hectare for rainfed areas and $144 for irrigated lands.

India is also preparing to use satellite based crop forecasts to develop insurance for farmers. Currently, insurance products cover primarily crop loans and exclude farm activities.

More than 15,000 buildings without power after Oklahoma tornadoes

Oklahoma City, 27 March — About 15,000 homes and businesses in Oklahoma and northwest Arkansas were without power on Thursday after tornadoes touched down in the states a day earlier, leaving at least one person dead and scores of structures damaged.

Schools were closed in parts of Oklahoma and clean up was under way from the twisters that hit near Tulsa, Oklahoma City and in northwest Arkansas. Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin declared a state of emergency in 25 counties.

“Last night’s storms led to widespread damage throughout a large portion of the state,” Fallin said on Thursday.

In the Tulsa suburb of Sand Springs, one person was killed in a trailer park when a tornado ripped through the area. At least 60 buildings were damaged, including a gymnastics studio with about 60 people inside that had its roof ripped off. No one was severely injured in that incident.

Another tornado was spotted in Moore, Oklahoma, where police said multiple buildings were damaged and vehicles overturned. The Oklahoma City suburb was hit by a tornado in 2013 that killed 24 and injured more than 300.

The Moore Public School District said that one elementary school had its roof torn off, and several nearby homes were struck.
MFF issues finalist of Myanmar national team


The players are under control of manager U Tin Myint Aung, head coach Mr Radjojo Avramovic, assistant coaches Mlonvan Cirkovic and U Soe Myat Min and medical officer Dr Zarni Lin Kyaw.

Myanmar is scheduled to play against Indonesian national team at Delta Stadium on 30 March —MFF.

Mourinho has resuscitated Terry’s Chelsea career

London, 27 March — Two years after it looked like his Stamford Bridge career was on its last legs, John Terry has been given the vote of confidence he craved.

The runaway Premier League leaders announced on Thursday the captain, known as ‘Mr Chelsea’, had been handed a new one-year contract that will keep him with the club until the age of 35. Manager Jose Mourinho said the decision was not made out of loyalty or through deference to long service but simply because Terry’s performances merited it. The centre half has been at his commanding best this year, a virtual ever-present at the back, a pillar of leadership strength and a prize asset at attacking corners and free kicks.

The short seven-month tenure of Rafa Benitez in season 2012-13 certainly seems a long time ago for Terry, who is playing so well this season that he must be a candidate for the Footballer of the Year award.

“This new contract is not to say ‘thank you very much’, it is because John continues to perform,” Mourinho told the club website. “He is a top defender. I am happy that he completely deserves this new contract after a season where he has already played 40 matches.”

They were dark days under Benitez for Terry who, for the first time in his Chelsea career, was not regarded as a first-choice starter. The former England captain did struggle with injuries in season 2012-13 but even when he was fit, Gary Cahill and David Luiz were the preferred options in central defence. Terry did not have Benitez’s 100 percent trust and backing but that quickly changed when Mourinho returned for a second stint in charge at the beginning of last season.

The outspoken Portugueseacknowledged he had initial doubts about the skipper who served him so well when the pair linked up for successive Premier League title victories in 2005 and 2006 but they were soon dispelled.

Terry, for his part, said Mourinho has always known which buttons to press from the moment he first came to Stamford Bridge in 2004.

“He made a massive impact on the club, for sure. He made a group of players, good players at the time, feel like we were the best in the world,” said the 6-foot-1 (1.87-metre) defender.

“Whether we were or not, we felt it...you could immediately tell he knew how to draw the best out of everyone. It’s just inspiring and, for me, there’s no better at drawing the best out of people than Jose Mourinho.”

He knows what makes him tick. He knows if I make a mistake he can tell me, some players you can’t. It’s about handling different players differently and he does it superbly,” said Terry.

Mourinho has already bagged the League Cup trophy earlier this month and the next task for manager and captain is to preserve their six-point lead at the top of the table and go on to capture Chelsea’s first Premier League crown since 2005.

Beyond that, Terry, who is third on the club’s all-time list with 661 appearances, will hope his legs can keep going long enough for him to surpass Peter Bonetti (729) and Ron Harris (795).—Reuters

Venus and Wozniacki ease into third round in Miami

Miami, 27 March — Venus Williams eased into the third round of the Miami Open with a comfortable 6-3, 6-2 win over Poland’s Urszula Radwanska on Thursday while Caroline Wozniacki also progressed.

Williams has been away from competition for almost a month but she needed just 66 minutes to beat the younger sister of 2012 Miami winner Agnieszka Radwanska.

Williams was not at her best, she made 24 unforced errors but produced 22 winners to Radwanska’s four and her passage to the next round was never in doubt.

“Tennis has been away from competition for almost a month but she needed just 66 minutes to beat the younger sister of 2012 Miami winner Agnieszka Radwanska.”

Wozniacki was in action on Friday against Romanian Monica Niculescu, while third seed Sloane Stephenston Tuesday against Czech wildcard Nicole Vaidisova.

Brazil hand France first defeat since World Cup

Paris, 27 March — Brazil inflicted France’s first defeat since the World Cup when a perfectly executed second-half performance earned them a 3-1 win in a friendly game at the Stade de France on Thursday.

Nicolas and Luiz Gustavo scored after the interval with Oscar having cancelled out Raphael Varane’s first-half opener as the visitors notched a seventh consecutive win in the aftermath of their embarrassing World Cup campaign on home soil.

Brazil have now scored 17 goals and conceded two since they hosted the finals, which they finished in fourth place after a humiliating 7-1 semi-final defeat by eventual champions Germany and a 3-0 loss to the Netherlands in the third-place match. World Cup quartefinalists France enjoyed a great start in a lively clash but without the influential Paul Pogba through injury they were eventually overwhelmed in midfield.

“We were punished for our mistakes. They are very quick up front,” said France coach Didier Deschamps, who skipped France to their 3-0 World Cup final win against a Brazil side captained by their counterpart Dunga in 1998. “We knew we would be playing a good team. We need to be more accurate, more efficient.”

There was a minute’s silence before the match in memory of the 150 people who died in the Germanwings flight 9525 that crashed in France on Tuesday.—Reuters

Caroline Wozniacki (R) shakes hands with Madison Brengle (L) after their match on day three of the Miami Open at Crandon Park Tennis Centre, Key Biscayne, on 26 March, 2015. Wozniacki won 6-0, 6-1. —Reuters

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