President U Thein Sein meets with Queen of Netherlands, US House Minority Leader

NAVPYITAW, 1 April—President U Thein Sein received Queen Máxima of the Netherlands at the Presidential Hall of the Presidential Palace here Wednesday morning for talks on cooperation in small and medium-scale enterprises between the two countries.

They also discussed supply of electricity and potable water, environmental conservation, alleviation of poverty, improvement of microfinance, investment from the international community and the peace-making process crucial to the stability of the state.

Also present at the call were union ministers U Soe Thane, U Tin Naing Win, U Win Shein and U Soe Thane, U Tin Naing Win, deputy minister U Tin Oo Lwin and officials. The queen was accompanied by the Netherlands Ambassador to Myanmar.

Myanmar’s trade deficit hits nearly $5 billion in 2014-15 FY

Yangon, 1 April — Myanmar’s trade deficit in fiscal 2014-2015 reached more than $4.9 billion on a trade volume of more than $27.77 billion, according to Ministry of Commerce figures.

Myanmar imported goods worth more than $16 billion and exported goods worth more than $11 billion in the 2014-2015 fiscal year, beginning 1 April and ending 31 March.

Of total exports, normal trade accounted for $7,224.121 million, decreasing $896,667 million compared with normal trade for the same period of the 2013-2014 fiscal year, while border trade comprised $4,221.176 million, increasing $1,517.770 million. Of total imports, normal trade accounted for $13,998.579 million, while border trade stood at $2,336.771 million.

Myanmar mostly exports agricultural produce, animal by-products and fishery products, as well as mine and forest products, while it imports consumer products, raw materials and investment goods.

To tackle the trade deficit, the government is planning to implement the National Export Strategy, which focuses on seven sectors — rice, peas and pulses, fisheries products, textiles, timber and forest products, rubber, and tourism.

Implementing the NES is expected to cost $900 million over five years, said an official who participated in the workshop for its implementation in Yangon on 30 March.

The Ministry of Commerce will give priority to export sectors in an attempt to boost the country’s economy, said U Win Myint, Union Minister for Commerce, at parliament recently.

EU stands ready to continue supporting all parties towards reaching common goal of ending armed conflict

Local statement of the European Union and European Union member state embassies accredited to Myanmar
Proper spending of government funds explained at Pyidaungsu Hluttaw

NAT PYI TAW, 1 April — Roads and bridges are built through the tender system in a transparent manner by forming various committees to invite tender, to estimate costs and to inspect quality, Deputy Minister for Construction U Soe Tint told the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw session on Wednesday.

The deputy minister was responding to a motion urging the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and the union government to supervise the spending of public funds and quality of finished projects in accordance with rules and regulations.

Government funds are spent in accordance with the instructions of the government and guidance for works to be carried out through contract system, the deputy minister added.

Deputy Minister for Finance Dr Lan Aung said that his ministry has been carrying out the reform for financial management system since 2012 and will complete the new rules and regulations for financial management in 2015-16 fiscal year. Currently, a supervisory committee for proper spending of public funds formed by the President Office is supervising the spending of public funds, according to the deputy minister. Deputy Auditor-General U Myo Myint said that Union Auditor-General Office will also supervise the spending of public funds. —MNA

Term of legal affairs commission extended to 2016

NAT PYI TAW, 1 April — Pyithu Hluttaw approved on Wednesday extension of the term for the Legal Affairs and Special Issues Assessment Commission till January 31, 2016 after suggestion of Thura U Shwe Mann, Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw (Lower House).

The speaker said parliament has approved 149 laws and regulations in 2014-15 fiscal year. The commission has approved 149 laws with the help of the commission in which the members are well-experienced and qualified.

Regarding repairing works of roads and bridges in Laikha Township in Shan State, Deputy Minister for Construction U Soe Tint said the road section of highway that passes in Laikha Township was being repaired with the budget of Shan State and it will be upgraded to 18-ft wide road.

To fill vacancies at the people hospitals of Panglong Township and Mongawgun Township, Deputy Minister for Health Dr Daw Thein Thein Htay said the ministry has assigned a medical superintendent for Panglong hospital, while Shan State government will hire new doctors for Mongawgun hospital by this month. —MNA

178 service personnel sent abroad for scholarship courses in March 2015

YANGON, 1 April — According to the Scholarship Scrutiny Committee of the Union Civil Services Board, scholarship awards were shared to ministries and service organizations for capacity enhancement of service personnel and raising their international experiences.

Ministries and service organizations sent 30 service personnel to doctorate, MA/MSc, degrees and diploma courses and 148 to training courses, totalling 178 to 19 countries, especially to Thailand, China and India in March 2015.

The committee has scrutinized sending of 369 personnel to doctorate, MA/ MSc, degrees and diploma courses and 2,645 to training courses, totalling 3,014 to 44 countries in 2014-15 fiscal year. —GNLM

Statement by Myanmar National Human Rights Commission relating to agreement by the two sides on the draft text on nationwide ceasefire

Statement No (4/2015)

1. The Myanmar National Human Rights Commission would like to laud and honour the historic achievement that was accomplished by the signing of the agreed text on a Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement between the Union Peace-making Working Committee (UPWC) and the Nationwide Ceasefire Coordination Team (NCCT) on 31 March 2015 in Yangon.

2. As the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) will be signed after approval by the leaders of the Ethnic Armed Groups to the agreed text, the Commission hopes for the smooth and speedy implementation of the process.

3. The Commission is confident that the smooth and speedy signing of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) will pave the way for the political dialogue that will reflect the desire of the people for a long and lasting peace.

Myanmar National Human Rights Commission
Nay Pyi Taw, 1 April— Vice President U Nyan Tun visited That Luang stupa and Wat Si-saket temple in Vientiane, Laos, on Wednesday.

The visiting Myanmar delegation then left Wattay International Airport in the capital for Cambodia. U Nyan Tun and party landed Phnom Penh International Airport, Cambodia, in the afternoon and they were welcomed by the Cambodia’s deputy minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Myanmar ambassador to Cambodia U Cho Tun Aung and Myanmar military attaché Col Aung Kyaw Oo.

In meeting with Cambodia’s Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Hor Namhong of Cambodia, Vice President U Nyan Tun held talks with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Hor Namhong of Cambodia.—MNA

Vice President U Nyan Tun visits Laos, national museums in Cambodia

Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker meets Minority Leader of the US House of Representatives

Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw Thura U Shwe Mann receives Ms Nancy Pelosi, Minority Leader of the US House of Representatives.—MNA

Nay Pyi Taw, 1 April—Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw Thura U Shwe Mann held talks with Ms Nancy Pelosi, Minority Leader of the US House of Representatives and party at Zabathiri Hall of the Hluttaw Complex, here, on Wednesday.

They discussed further strengthening of bilateral relations and mutual cooperation between the two countries.

After the meeting, they exchanged gifts. MNA

Eni signs exploration deal for two offshore blocks in Myanmar’s waters

By Kyaw The-ein (MNA)

Nay Pyi Taw, 1 April—Italian oil and gas multinational Eni will conduct offshore exploration in the Bay of Bengal and the Andaman Basin after signing contracts Wednesday in the presence of Myanmar’s Energy Minister in Nay Pyi Taw.

Following its participation in the competitive international bid round, Eni signed production sharing contracts for two offshore blocks. The exploration will be undertaken through a joint venture between Eni, which holds an 80 per cent stake through its local unit, and PetroVietnam.

The first block, covering 10,330 square kilometres, is in the southern part of the Bay of Bengal in the Rakhine Basin. Located some 135 km from the coast, it lies to the west of the Yadana field, the major offshore discovery in Myanmar, at depths ranging from 500 to 2400 metres.

The second block is in the Moattama-South Andaman Basin, west of the Yetagun gas field, roughly 230 km from the coast. It covers a 5,900 square km area in waters ranging from 1,500 to 2,200 m deep. “With the contracts signed today, we have further expanded our exploration portfolio through new and important opportunities, which allow Eni to strengthen its presence in a country with a significant potential and a rapidly developing economy,” Eni CEO Claudio Descalzi said.

“Today we become one of the largest operators in the exploration activities in Myanmar, taking a further step in our organic growth strategy in Southeast Asia, where we are already present in China, Vietnam and Indonesia.”

The contracts for the two blocks foresee a study period of two years, followed by an exploration period of six years, subdivided in 3 phases. Eni entered Myanmar in July 2014, signing production sharing contracts for the two onshore blocks in the prolific Salin Basin and the unexplored Pegu Yoma-Sittoung Basin, respectively.

(AGI)
Immigration officials issue citizenship scrutiny cards to eligible residents

MAYAWADY, 1 April — Chief Minister of Kayin State U Zaw Min presented citizenship scrutiny cards to local residents as a ceremony at Tawyakaung Monastery in Ward 4, Myawady, Kayin State, in the last week of March.

The chief minister told residents that citizenship entailed responsibilities as well as rights.

Director of Kayin State Immigration and National Registration Department U Win Zaw Aung clarified issuance of the cards and requirements for card holders.

The chief minister and officials delivered cards to 142 eligible citizens.

Htein Lin Aung (IPRD)

Arrangements of fire prevention discussed in Myanaung Tsp

MYANAUNG, 1 April — The township fire prevention work committee held a meeting at the Dhammayon of Shwemyint Pagoda in Ward 4, Myanaung, Ayeyawady Region, on 31 March.

Chairman of the work committee U Aye Thaung discussed an annual report of the committee and said water resources needed to be secured for fire-fighting purposes during the hot season. The treasurer submitted the financial report of the committee in 2014.

Members of the subcommittee explained pumping of water from Ayeyawady River to the urban area.

An official of the local fire station outlined the supply of water to local residents by water bowser, as most wells and lakes are dried out in the hot season.—Nay Win Zaw (Myanaung)

Mandalay Mayor’s pandal to draw crowds in Maha Thingyan festival

MANDALAY, 1 April — A total of 3,000 students from 49 basic education schools will enjoy the entertainment at the Mandalay Mayor’s pandal during the Maha Thingyan festival, together with famous vocalists, the Mandalay City Development Committee said.

An official said that basic education students will participate in dancing at the opening ceremony of the Mayor’s pandal to the accompaniment of the Mann Sibin band and the Mingala drum troupe of the Fine Arts Department.

Mandalay-based bands will perform in the afternoon while 34 staff of MCDC will present songs and dances at the pandal, he added.

Famous vocalists Phyo Gyi, Zaw Paing, Graham, Soe Paing, Thar Soe, Wai Hlyan, L Seng Zi, Son Thin Pa, Po Po, Suzi and Khin Su Su Naing will also perform.

This year, water-throwing and entertainment pandals have been allotted in Mandalay city, with 10 pandals on 26th street, 10 on 66th street, three on 80th street, one on 12th street, five at downtown and four at Kandawgyi Lake.

Min Htet Aung (Mandalay Sub-printing House)

Locals say Mandalay-Bagan services not to be reduced

NATOGYI, 1 April — Myanma Railways has exceeded its revenue targets for the Mandalay-Bagan route and will continue running six trains on the section, the railroad operator said.

Myanma Railways Locals say Mandalay-Bagan services not to be reduced allayed fears about a reduction in services among residents who rely on the Bagan-Mandalay ordinary and express trains, saying services will be maintained at present levels.

Khin Zar Mon Myint (Law)
Electricity improves livelihoods of local residents in Twantay Tsp

Twantay, 1 April — Supply of electricity on a self-reliant basic was launched in conjunction with the opening of a concrete road in Tamatakaw village, Twantay Township, Yangon Region, on 28 March.

Pyithu Hluttaw MP, Region Hluttaw MPs and local authorities commissioned the supply of electricity and new concrete road. An 11KV power line and a 315KVA transformer were installed at the village as part of efforts to develop the western part of Twantay Canal in the region.

The power supply project, funded with a K31 million contribution from local authorities, benefits more than 1,500 local people of the village.

With the supply of electricity, local residents are able to earn a living making robes for Buddhist monks using motorised sewing machines.

The Department of Rural Development allotted K287 million in the 2014-15 fiscal year for construction of a 2.2-mile-long and 10-foot-wide concrete road in the village.

Myo Hlaing (Twantay)

Villagers learn to make bamboo products

Taungtha, 1 April — As part of efforts to develop small-scale industries in rural areas, the Mandalay Region Trade Promotion Department organized a basic bamboo works course at the Dhammayon in Aungmye Shwebon Mahaoak monastery in Taungtha village, Taungtha Township, on 27 March.

Mandalay Region Minister for Planning and Economy U Aung Zan made a speech, after which Director of Mandalay Region Trade Promotion Department U Myo Thu and Township Administrator U Aung Kyaw Nyunt extolled the virtues of the course.

Altogether 30 trainees from the village attended the course. Upon completion, they will have the skills to manufacture products made of bamboo for earning increased income.

Kyaw Myo Naing (Taungtha)

Cooperative Department sells Korean-made tractors to farmers

Natmauk, 1 April — Under the guidance of Magway Region Cooperative Department, a demonstration on the use of tractors manufactured by Daedong Company of South Korea was held at Natmauk Township Cooperative Syndicate office on 29 March.

Staff Officer U Htay Lin Aung of Natmauk Township Cooperative Department said the township department will sell 12 tractors to local farmers.

The buyers need to pay 10 percent of the price in cash for a tractor worth more than K20 million, while paying off the remainder through a six-year installment system.—Zin Wai Yan Lin (Natmauk)

Personal goods seized from illegal trade auctioned in Tachilek

Tachilek, 1 April — Mobile teams comprising departmental officials are assigned at Meryan, Hweye, Waihlelen and Loidawkham checkpoints to control illegal trade in eastern Shan State’s Tachilek Township.

These teams have confiscated illegally traded goods 62 times in 2014.

On 30 March, these confiscated goods were auctioned at the office of Tachilek Township Customs Department. U Khin Maung Cho, U Aung Soe Tun, U Aung Myo Kyaw, Daw Tin Tin Toe Nwe and Daw Nyein Ei won the auctions for motor cars, motor-cycles, electronic parts and textiles worth K92.9 million under supervision of Deputy Director U Kyaw Nyunt of Township Customs Department and Staff Officer U Aung Than Sein of the Commercial and Consumer Affairs Department.

Maw Gyi
(Triangle Region)

Referees, well-wishers donate cash to family of late football referee

Mandalay, 1 April — A ceremony to provide cash to the family of referee U Maung Maung, who died suddenly during a match at the Taungthaman open football tournament, was held at the hall of Mandalay Region Sports and Physical Education Department on 31 March.

Mandalay Region Minister for Social Affairs Dr Win Hlaing donated K100,000, President of Myanmar Football Federation U Zaw Zaw, K1 million, owner of Zwegabin FC U Htay Htay K1 million and MFF K1 million to the family. Moreover, the Taungthaman football tournament committee donated K285,000, while Mandalay region football referees presented K90,000 to the family.

Tin Maung (Mandalay)

Alumni to pay respects to English faculty of Dagon University on 1 May

Yangon, 1 April — English alumni of Dagon University will organize a ceremony to pay respect to past and present faculty members of the university’s English department.

The ceremony will take place at Shwe Shan Restaurant in Inya Street on the bank of Inya Lake from 8 am to 12 noon on 1 May.

All of the English specialization students from all batches of the university are invited to the ceremony. Those who want to contribute cash and kind to the ceremony may contact Maung Maung Oo (1992) on 09-5404756, Myo Than Tun (1993) on 09-5031131, Lei Lei Win Than (1993) on 09-73122647, Soe Thu Ya (2000) on 09-43164868, Sai Min Latt (2005) on 09-420003985 and Htet Arkar Kyaw (2008) on 09-421012261.—GNLM

Naymyipin: Electric power system.—GNLM

Electricity and new concrete road were installed at the village, Twantay Township, as part of efforts to develop the western part of Twantay Canal. (Photo: GNLM)

Local News

Thursday, 2 April, 2015

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Typhoon heads towards central Philippines as country breaks for holiday

MANILA, 1 April — The Philippines put troops on alert on Wednesday and prepared food and medical supplies as it warned residents and tourists living on its eastern coasts to be ready for a super typhoon expected to land some time in the next 72 hours.

Typhoon Maysak is currently a category five storm — the highest rating — hovering over the Pacific Ocean with winds gusting as high as 250 km per hour (155 mph).

It is expected to weaken once it hits the central or northern parts of the main Philippine island of Luzon on Saturday or Sunday, the weather bureau said, as the Philippines celebrates the Easter long weekend.

“This is very strong and it will maintain its strength as it nears, although we expect that the typhoon will weaken,” Esperanza Cayanan, an officer at the weather bureau, said in a televised briefing.

“But this will still be typhoon intensity so it will bring strong winds when it makes landfall on the eastern coast,” Cayanan said.

British-based Tropical Storm Risk said Maysak would likely weaken to a category 2 typhoon, with maximum winds of up to 175 km/h (110 mph), when it hits land.

The typhoon could damage rice and corn crops in central and northern areas of the Philippines, although damage is likely to be minimal because the major harvest of the national staple rice was finished around February.

Alexander Pama, executive director of the national disaster agency, said the biggest challenge for authorities would be keeping foreign and Filipino tourists travelling to northern provinces for the weekend safe when Maysak makes landfall.

Thousands of Filipinos have already begun travelling to the provinces and popular tourist spots before public holidays begin on Thursday. “Because of our holiday mode, some of us may not give proper attention to the warnings,” Pama said.

Maysak was moving northwest and was about 1,220 km (760 miles) from the eastern town of Guian in the central Philippines on Wednesday. Reuters

Indonesian court to decide on Bali Nine execution appeal on 6 April

JAKARTA, 1 April — An Indonesian court hearing the appeals of two Australian death row convicts will announce a verdict on 6 April, one of the judges determined the case said on Wednesday.

Myuran Sukumaran and Andrew Chan are among a group of 10 prisoners, mostly foreigners, facing imminent execution for drug offenses after President Joko Widodo rejected their pleas for clemency.

“Both sides have been given ample opportunity to present evidence and testimony,” Ujang Abdullah, one of a panel of three judges, told the court. “The judges will decide on the case after studying the evidence and the arguments.”

The judges will adjourn on Tuesday, when they will read their verdicts in both cases, he said. The Australian government has repeatedly asked Indonesia to spare the lives of Sukumaran and Chan.

Sukumaran and Chan were arrested in 2005 as the ringleaders in a plot, which came to be known as the Bali Nine, to smuggle heroin out of Indonesia. At least four other death row inmates have appealed against their sentences.

Indonesia’s attorney general has said all 10 prisoners would face the firing squad together but has yet to set a date for their executions. The group awaiting execution includes citizens of Brazil, France, Ghana, Nigeria, the Philippines and Indonesia.

Vice President Jusuf Kalla told Reuters last month that it could take weeks or even months for the executions to take place.

Indonesia has harsh penalties for drug trafficking and resumed executions in 2013 after a five-year gap. With the upcoming executions, Indonesia will have exercised the death penalty more times in a single year than ever before.

Singapore clamps down on late-night public drinking

SINGAPORE, 1 April — Singapore on Wednesday began imposing a new law to curb late-night drinking in public places in a move aimed at averting public disorder caused by drunkenness.

The new law to control the supply and consumption of alcoholic drinks was passed in Parliament in January this year, more than a year after a major riot by mostly foreign workers in 2013 that was blamed on intoxication.

Under the new law, the consumption of liquor is banned in all public places nationwide from 10:30 pm to 7 am daily.

Tighten laws will be applied to the Geylang night entertainment district and also to Little India, a commercial enclave heavily frequented by foreign workers where the riot erupted in December 2013, sparked by the death of a foreign worker in a road accident.

In these two “liquor control zones,” the public consumption of alcohol is banned at all times of the day as well as at night.

Those convicted for the first time could be fined up to $31,000 (about $730), while repeat offenders face a $82,000 fine or up to three years in months jail or both.

Singapore’s Deputy Prime Minister Teo Chee Hean has said the new law is a response to consistent complaints from Singaporeans about drunkenness in the common areas of housing estates, the Straits Times reported.

He said that a survey by the government’s feedback hub unit shows that more than 80 percent of those surveyed are supportive of the new law. In contrast, the Straits Times daily’s online poll showed that 75 percent are against the law.

Malaysia rejects jailed opposition leader’s petition for royal pardon

KUALA LUMPUR, 1 April — Malaysia rejects a petition seeking a royal pardon for jailed opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim, who is serving a five-year prison term for sodomy, court officials and his lawyers said on Wednesday.

The petition was filed by Anwar’s family in February after his sentence was upheld by Malaysia’s highest court. A pardons board said Anwar’s sentence would be maintained but gave no explanation for the decision.

“We would definitely be appealing on leave rejection, and we will be asking for further information as to what is going on,” said Lathiffa Koya, one of Anwar’s lawyers.

Anwar, who once posed the greatest threat to Malaysia’s long-ruling coalition, was found guilty of sodomizing a former aide, a charge that he said was a politically motivated attempt to end his career.

He was head of a three-party opposition alliance that made stunning gains in the 2013 election, which for the first time raised the prospect of a genuine challenge to the coalition that has ruled Malaysia since independence in 1957.

Anwar was the ruling party’s rising star in the 1990s until he fell out with then prime minister Mahathir Mohamad. His family and political party have voiced concern about his health and conditions in prison since his sentence was upheld.

His last legal option is to file a judicial review with the Federal Court. His lawyers said no decision had been made yet on such an application.

The rejection of the royal pardon came after a series of rallies organized by Anwar’s People’s Justice Party (PJP) after his imprisonment, although turnout was low at the last rally last week.

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Netanyahu calls for “better deal” with Iran over nuclear programme

BEREJME, 1 April — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Wednesday it was not too late for world powers still locked in nuclear negotiations with Iran to demand a “better deal.”

He made the comments before a planned meeting of the “family of victims,” the speak of the US House of Representatives, John Boehner, a leading Republican and strong critic of the White House’s policy on Iran.

“Now is the time for the international community to insist on a better deal,” Netanyahu said in a televised statement delivered in English.

“A better deal would significantly roll back Iran’s nuclear infrastructure. A better deal would link the eventual lifting of the restrictions on Iran’s nuclear programme to a change in Iran’s behaviour,” he said, citing threats to annihilate Israel and accusing Teheran of fomenting regional conflict.

Netanyahu said on Tuesday that a framework agreement sought by international negotiators to rein in Iran’s nuclear programme would leave it with the capability to develop atomic weapons within a year.

Six world powers and Iran went beyond a midnight deadline and were continuing to negotiate in the Swiss city of Lausanne on Wednesday, having failed to agree on crucial details such as the lifting of UN sanctions.

Boehner, whose invitation to Netanyahu to address Congress drew accusations that both men were pursuing partisan politics at the expense of traditional bi-partisan support for Israel in Washington, has kept his visit to Israel low-key.

He was due to speak to reporters, alongside Netanyahu, later in the day at the presidential residence.

“Congress has caution it would consider imposing new sanctions on Iran if there was no agreement in Lausanne this week. President Barack Obama has threatened to veto any such sanctions move.

Senior Majority Leader Mitch McConnell has said that if a framework deal is reached, lawmakers would consider a bill that would require Obama to submit a final accord for Congress’ approval.

Israel’s Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu

South Korea to pay about $380,000 for each student killed in ferry disaster

SEOUL, 1 April — The South Korean government said on Wednesday it would pay about 420 million won ($380,000 for each of the 476 passengers on board the Sewol ferry were students on a trip to Jeju island, 1 April — Major powers and Iran were closer to a preliminary accord on reining in Teheran’s nuclear programme as marathon talks ran into Wednesday, but they hit an impasse over key details such as the lifting of UN sanctions and Iran’s future atomic research.

The negotiators ended talks in the Swiss city of Lausanne in the early morning hours with an air of chaos, assassinations and cyberattacks, as delegations scrambled to get contradictory viewpoints across.

The six powers — the United States, Britain, France, Germany, Russia and China — aimed to stop Iran from gaining the capacity to develop a nuclear bomb in exchange for easing international sanctions that are crippling its economy. Iran says its nuclear programme is peaceful.

France’s foreign minister, often seen as making the most stringent demands of Iran, returned to Paris because things had not advanced enough for “immediate deal”.

But as top negotiators from the powers met Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif again on Wednesday, Russia and Iran expressed optimism that an initial agreement was within reach.

British Foreign Secre- tary Phillip Hammond said there was a “very strong framework” of understanding, but there were “still key issues that have to be worked through,” he told the BBC.

Western diplomats said Iran had on Tuesday reaffirmed its “nuclear rights,” suggesting the talks were again getting bogged down as they entered their seventh day.
Caring & Sharing

By Kyi Mun

Caring means: Feelings of loving kindness, interest, anxiety, sorrow for others; Looking after, providing food, attention, etc.

Sharing means: Giving a share (or) to others; divide & distribute; Having (something) & using in common; Having a part/ share of something, e.g. I’ll share in the cost with you. She shares (in) my troubles as well as (in) my joys; Having equal shares with others in the use, enjoyment, expense, etc. of something.

RESPECT FOR INDIVIDUALS

1. Do good
2. Be Kind, and
3. Love One Another

INTENTIONALLY TAKING CARE OF OTHER’S NEEDS

In caring and sharing with other people, we should:

1. Love all
2. Serve all
3. Hurt never
4. Help never

We should intentionally take good care of vital needs of the have-not and the have-less.

NETWORKING WITH OTHERS

Success in life is outside-in, whereas happiness in life is inside-out. So, for success in our jobs, in our relationships and in our lives, we cannot but respect people, regard them as our partners or comrades or friends and be in touch with them. In networking with people, mutual benefits and satisfaction should always be taken into consideration. No one should benefit at the expense of another or others.

Altruism is a principle of considering the well-being and happiness of others first. It also means unselfishness. Caring and sharing itself is the product of altruism. Altruism is the queen, and the queen has FOUR beautiful daughters, viz.:

1. Metta in Pali which means Loving kindness
2. Karuṇā in Pali which means Compassion
3. Muditā in Pali which means Sympathetic Joy
4. Upekkhā in Pali which means Equanimity

RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

Caring and Sharing should be the cause, and the effect should be building relationships. According to the Independent Origination, all phenomena are conditioned by some other existing causes and conditions. All things are interdependent. All the effects have relevant causes; and all the fruits are the products of the seed, earth/soil, water/moisture, light/heat and the cultivator, of course. So, also relationships are being built by the act of caring and sharing.

INSPIRING OTHERS

The caliber of a caring and sharing deed will determine the quality of inspiration for others. The sincerity of the caring and sharing act will also cause the strength and force of inspiring others. Although the genuine act of caring and sharing is an inside-out activity, it can cause an impact that is outside-in motivation. The important point is the degree of disinterestedness in the act of caring and sharing.

GIVE ALL TO LOVE

Emerson said: “Give all to love, obey thy heart.”

Every Caring and Sharing deed should be done in love, with love and by love. In caring and sharing and rejoicing, we all should live and move and have our being. We can transform our lives by the renewal of our minds. And we can renew our minds only if we have genuine, pure and disinterested love in our hearts.

CONCLUSION

Let’s do some caring and sharing deeds, with dear love in our hearts!
Roadmap aims for more inclusive financial sector

Union Attorney-General Office stages seminar on IP enforcement

Visa opens Myanmar office, aims to increase card services in country
Over 100 business bosses back PM Cameron’s Conservatives ahead of British election

LONDON, 1 April — Over 100 British company bosses publicly backed Prime Minister David Cameron’s Conservative-led government on Wednesday and warned of a change of course for Britain’s $2 trillion economy under a Labour government would put the recovery at risk.

Opponents say many business leaders have been keen to block the inquiry into a motivation appeal, in which 85 people are calling for low taxes for big businesses, “No one will be surprised that some business people are calling for low taxes for big businesses,” said Labour’s business spokesman Chuka Umunna.

“We don’t believe, as David Cameron does, in more tax cuts for the richest in society — the priority is tax cuts for small firms, working people and saving our NHS.”

In total the company bosses who signed the letter employ more than half a million people.

The CEO of Costa owner Whitbread Andy Harrison, chairman of engineer Meggitt Nigel Rudd, the chairman of Dixons Carphone Charles Dunstone and the CEO of oil firm Tullow Aidan Heavey were amongst the FTSE 100 leaders who signed the letter.

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Thursday, 2 April, 2015

Venezuela’s anti-Obama signature drive passes 6 million

CARACAS, 1 April — President Nicolas Maduro decreed a new annual “anti-imperialist” day on Tuesday and said a signature drive denouncing the repeal of US measures against Venezuela had passed 6 million.

In the ideological enemies’ worst spat of Maduro’s two-year rule, President Barack Obama’s government this month declared the OPEC nation a “security threat” and sanctioned seven officials accused the US of corruption.

Venezuela had passed six years ago but did not explain why.

In an email correspondence about submitting medical documents to resume his flight training, the co-pilot informed the aircraft that crashed into the French Alps had reported his “severe depression” to his mental state and raises questions about the carrier’s oversight of its crew.

Deutsche Lufthansa AG earlier said the co-pilot was “one hundred percent fit to fly without any restrictions. His flight performance was perfect. There was nothing to worry about.”

Kyodo News

Germanwings co-pilot reported his depression to pilot school: Lufthansa

BERLIN, 1 April — The co-pilot of the Germanwings aircraft that crashed in the French Alps had reported his “severe depression” to his flight training pilot school in 2009, the parent company Lufthansa announced on Tuesday.

The revelation suggests that the co-pilot, Andreas Lubitz, 27, was allowed to fly despite the company’s knowledge of his mental state and raises questions about the carrier’s oversight of its crew.

Deutsche Lufthansa AG earlier said the co-pilot, a Germanwings pilot with 625 flight hours, had been depressed for years and could be suffering from a mental illness.

Two days after the crash that killed 150 people, Lufthansa CEO Carsten Spohr told a press conference Thursday that the co-pilot was “one hundred percent fit to fly without any restrictions. His flight performance was perfect. There was nothing to worry about.”

Kyodo News

Prosecutors push again to investigate Argentine leader in bombing case

BUENOS AIRES, 1 April — Argentine prosecutors pushed for a conspiracy investigation against President Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner on Tuesday in the second appeal of a court decision that cleared her administration of blame to block the inquiry into a deadly 1994 bombing.

The accusation, that Fernandez conspired to cover up Iran’s alleged role in a truck bombing of the AMIA Jewish community centre in Buenos Aires, threw her administration into turmoil when the claim was levied on 14 January by state prosecutor Alberto Nisman.

It turned into a full-blown political scandal when Nisman shot dead under murky circumstances four days later.

Nisman said Fernandez had worked behind the scenes to clear Iran and normalize relations in order to clinch a grain-for-oil deal with Tehran.

She was exonerated by a judge in February, and a review panel agreed by a 2-1 vote this month that there was not enough evidence to formally investigate the president.

On Tuesday, the case was brought to Argentina’s top appeals court by newly assigned prosecutor Germán Moldes, who helped organize a march of tens of thousands last month to honour Nisman and protest what demonstrators called a culture of intimidation and meddling in Argentinia’s justice system.

In his appeal, Moldes accused Fernandez of being involved in “a hidden plan that benefited another country while going against the objectives and interests of Argentina.”

The president’s cabinet chief Anibal Fernandez told reporters Moldes committed “malfeasance as big as a truck” by bringing a baseless and politically motivated appeal.

On 18 January, hours before he was scheduled to appear before Congress to outline his case against the president, Nisman was found dead in his apartment, shot in the head and a gun by his side. His death spawned conspiracy theories, some involving Fernandez.

A poll in February by consultancy Management & Fit showed 55 percent of voters believed Nisman’s accusation against Fernandez was true and that Fernandez called the current investigation a “grotesque farce.”

Argentina’s President Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner waves as she leaves after the opening session of the 133rd legislative term of Congress in Buenos Aires on 1 March, 2015.— REUTERS

Argentina’s President Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner waves as she leaves after the opening session of the 133rd legislative term of Congress in Buenos Aires on 1 March, 2015.— REUTERS

Argentina’s President Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner waves as she leaves after the opening session of the 133rd legislative term of Congress in Buenos Aires on 1 March, 2015.— REUTERS
Iraqi forces drive Islamic State out of central Tikrit — PM

Tikrit, (Iraq), 1 April — Iraqi troops aided by Shi’ite paramilitaries have driven Islamic State militants out of central Tikrit, Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi said on Tuesday, but the fight to retake all of Saddam Hussein’s hometown continued.

Government forces have been in a month-long fight for the city, which became a bastion for the Sunni jihadists who are at war with Baghdad and have been targeted by US-led air strikes.

Hundreds of insurgents ready to fight to the death are still held up in Salahuddin province’s capital city and at least three neighbourhoods remain under Islamic State control, along with a palace complex in the city’s north.

The further Iraqi forces push into the city, the greater the risk of ambushes.

“Our security forces have reached the centre of Tikrit and they have liberat- ed the southern and western sides and they are moving towards the control of the whole city,” Abadi said in a statement.

The US Defence Department said it could confirm Iraqi security forces’ “advancement into Tikrit to liberate the city centre as well as other parts of the city” from Islamic State.

In their push from southern Tikrit, security forces and paramilitary fighters entered the city near Saddam Hussein’s headquarters and the main hospital, which had been occupied by Islamic State.

Reuters journalists travelling with the police passed houses scarred by bullets, mortars and rockets as well as five or six corpses that security officers said were Islamic State fighters, adding that they might be rigged with explosives.

Iraqi officials suspect the militants have planted scores of bombs and are using snipers and a network of underground tunnels and bunkers to slow the government advance.

Tuesday saw Shi’ite militia groups launch another battle after suspending operations last Thursday when US-led air strikes were requested by Prime Minister Haidar al-Abadi.—Reuters

Yemen air strikes kill 25 in factory: residents

Aden, 1 April — An air strike on Yemen’s Red Sea port of Houdaia destroyed a dairy factory on Tuesday night, killing 25 workers, medical sources said, in what appeared to be one of the biggest cases of civilian deaths in a Saadi-led campaign against Houthi militias.

The operation by Sa’udi Arabia and other Sunni Muslim states is aimed at stopping the Houthis and former president Ali Abdullah Saleh winning control of the country and at reinstating Saadi-backed President Abdu-Rabbu Mansour Hadi.

However, after seven nights of air strikes targeting both the Houthis and forces loyal to Saleh, the coalition has not managed to secure Hadi’s control over his last remaining enclave of rule in the southern port of Aden, a key aim of the campaign.

The sound of gunfire and several large blasts were heard in Aden throughout the night, a Reuters reporter said. Videos posted online, which Reuters could not immediately confirm, appeared to show fighting at an army base loyal to Saleh in the northeast of the city.

Residents near the Houdaia dairy factory said it was located near an army camp loyal to Saleh, while medical sources in the city said the 25 casualties had all been workers at the plant and that the strike had destroyed a fuel store.

A raid at a coastal defence station at Madii port in Hajja province north of Houdaia killed six soldiers, workers there said, while further strikes hit an army camp in Sanaa and a government facility in Saadah in the north of Yemen.

In New York, UNICEF said late on Tuesday that at least 62 girls and 30 wounded in fighting over the past week, and the United Nations said an attack on a refugee camp in northern Yemen, on which medics blamed on an air strike, broke interna- tional law.

Reuters

Israel expects hundreds of civilian casualties in next war with Hezbollah

Israel is preparing to launch a large-scale attack on Lebanon, military sources said, days after a Katyusha rocket fired from Lebanon hit an Israeli army base near the border.

The Israeli military had said it was investigating the attack, but aSenior Israeli military official said on Tuesday that there was no indication of a coordinated attack against Israel, but that the army was not ruling out the possibility of a larger conflict.

The official, who asked not to be named, told the Associated Press that the army would react “within minutes” to any hostile action.

Meanwhile, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is set to meet with US President Barack Obama on Wednesday to discuss the situation in the region, including the possibility of a pre-emptive strike.

Netanyahu has said he is considering launching a military operation against Iran, which he accuses of trying to develop a nuclear weapon.

Obama has warned that any such action would violate the United Nations Security Council’s resolutions on Iran’s nuclear program.

The Israeli military has also stepped up its preparedness for a possible war with Lebanon, which has been under a state of emergency since October.

The military has deployed additional tanks and aircraft to the northern border, and has increased the number of troops on alert.

Reuters

Israel is preparing for a conflict with Lebanon, which it accuses of providing a safe haven for Iranian-backed Hezbollah fighters.

Israel has been lobbying the international community to impose sanctions on Iran, which it says has a nuclear program.

The Israeli government has also been pushing for a regional offensive against Iran, which it says is a threat to Israel and its security.

In a statement on Tuesday, Israeli Defense Minister Moshe Yaalon said that the country was taking all necessary precautions to protect its citizens.

Yaalon said that the military was ready to respond to any threat and that it was working closely with the US and other countries to ensure the safety of its citizens.

The statement came as the United Nations Security Council was set to vote on a resolution that would impose sanctions on Iran for its nuclear program.

The resolution, which was introduced by the US, would extend sanctions on Iran for a year and allow the UN to impose additional penalties if Iran does not comply.

Reuters

Japan sends a team of experts to Turkey over IS hostages

Tokyo, 1 April — Japanese police have sent a team of experts to Turkey to investigate the fate of two Japanese men kidnapped by Islamic State militants in Syria.

The team, led by a senior police official, arrived in Istanbul on Tuesday to look into the case after the militants released a video showing the beheading of a 21-year-old Japanese tourist.

The team will also look into the possibility of other hostages being held by the militants, who have been demanding a ransom of $200 million for the two men.

The Japanese government has said it will do everything possible to secure the release of the hostages.

Reuters

Opposition leader Buhari set to win Nigeria presidential election

YOLA, Nigeria, 1 April — Nigeria’s opposition challenger Muhammadu Buhari is certain to defeat incumbent Goodluck Jonathan in the presidential election, according to vote counting nearing completion on Tuesday, paving the way for the country’s first transfer of power since the 1999 end of military rule.

A spokesman for Buhari’s All Progressives Congress said Jonathan, 57, telephoned Buhari, the 72-year-old former president of the Supreme Military Council, on Tuesday to congratulate him on winning this weekend’s election, according to Reuters news service.

Nigeria has the largest population and biggest economy in Africa. It is also the largest producer of oil on the continent. The south of the country has a large population of Christians and is relatively well off with oil revenues, while Muslims are concentrated in the north, which is lagging behind in development.

The election was effectively a one-on-one fight between Jonathan from the south and Buhari from the north.—Kyodo News

Young people celebrate in Yola, northeastern Nigeria, on March 31, 2015, as Muhammadu Buhari, former military council head, defeated President Goodluck Jonathan in the nation’s presidential election. It is the country’s first regime change since the shift to civilian rule in 1999.—Kyodo News

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South Korea charges attacker of US envoy with attempted murder

SEOUL, 1 April — Prosecutors have formally charged a South Korean man with attempted murder after the US ambassador in Seoul was slashed in the face in a knife attack last month, leaving him with wounds needing 80 stitches, prosecutors said on Wednesday.

Kim Ki-jong, 55, attacked US ambassador Mark Lippert with a fruit knife during a forum on Korean reunification in Seoul on 5 March. Lippert, 42, suffered deep gashes to his face and wrist and was in hospital for five days.

Kim has been charged with attempted murder, the assault of a foreign envoy, and obstruction of duty, an official at the Seoul Central District Prosecutors’ Office told Reuters.

He could face life in prison or even the death penalty, which is rarely used in South Korea, if found guilty of attempted murder.

Prosecutors were still investigating whether Kim had infringed the National Security Act, a 67-year-old statute that prohibits support for North Korea. Critics have said the potential use of the act is an attempt to politicise the case.

The attack prompted a large outpouring of public support in South Korea. Lippert returned to work late last month, and responded to messages of support in a blog post on Wednesday.

“...It has meant a great deal to me, Robyn, Sejun, and Grigsby to feel the warmth and caring from the community here in Korea,” Lippert said, referring to his wife, newborn baby and pet Basenji hound.—Reuters

World’s oldest person Misao Okawa dies at 117

OSAKA, 1 April — Misao Okawa, a Japanese woman recognized by Guinness World Records as the world’s oldest living person, died of natural causes at the age of 117 on Wednesday morning at a nursing home in Osaka, nursing home officials said.

Okawa was born to the family of a kimono shop owner in Osaka in 1898, the same year the United States annexed the Hawaiian Islands and Pepsi-Cola was launched.

She was recognized by Guinness as the oldest living woman in February 2013 at 114 and became the oldest living being at 115 in June the same year, when Jiromen Kimura, a Japanese man who was then the world’s oldest, died at 116 in Kyoto.

Okawa got married in 1919 and had a son and two daughters. She had four grandchildren and six great-grandchildren as of March, according to the Guinness website. She entered the nursing home in 1997 as nursing care was required. “Eating delicious things is a key to my longevity,” said Okawa who loved ramen noodles and beef stew, as well as hashed beef and rice. She ate some cake to celebrate her 117th birthday in early March, the officials said.

But she lost her appetite some 10 days ago and died in her sleep while being watched by relatives and nursing home officials, they said. “I feel lonely as I have lived with her since her entry here in 1997,” said Tomohito Okada, acting president of the nursing home. “I thank her for teaching various experiences to me.”—Kyodo News

Korean Air chief’s daughter seeks leniency in ‘nut rage’ appeal

SEOUL, 1 April — The former Korean Air Lines executive jailed for her outburst over in-flight service, known as the “nut rage” case, asked for leniency during an appeal hearing on Wednesday as she sought to reduce her one-year prison term.

Heather Cho, the daughter of the airline’s chairman, was sentenced in February over the 5 December incident at New York’s John F Kennedy airport, where she forced a Korean Air flight crew chief off the plane because she was unhappy about the way she was served macadamia nuts.

On the opening day of Cho’s appeal hearing in Seoul High Court on Wednesday, her lawyers said Cho admitted to the abusive acts towards a flight attendant and the plane’s chief steward but she did not have any intent to disrupt flight operations. “Let me take this chance to ask the victims for forgiveness ... I am repenting for what I have done. I am asking for leniency,” said Cho, wearing a light green prison uniform and glasses, her hair tied back.

A lower court had ruled that the former vice president and head of in-flight service at the airline had violated South Korean aviation law by ordering the plane to return to the gate after it had started to taxi.

Cho demanded the crew chief be expelled from the flight after she was served macadamia nuts in a bag, and not on a dish. The plane bound for Incheon, South Korea, which had started to move away from the gate, had to return.

The incident sparked widespread ridicule, as well as outrage over the conduct of the country’s powerful family-run conglomerates called chaebol.

On Wednesday, prosecutors said her sentence was too light, questioning whether Cho had apologized sincerely as she also claimed in court that she was trying to do her job as the executive in charge of service. A flight attendant at the centre of the case has separately filed a civil lawsuit against her in New York.

Heather Cho is the eldest of Korean Air chairman Cho Yang-ho’s three children. Her siblings are also executives with the airline.—Reuters

Japan aims to host 2020 UN congress on crime prevention

TOYOKO, 1 April — Japan will bid to host a UN congress on crime prevention in 2020 in Tokyo during an upcoming gathering in Doha later in April, government officials said on Wednesday.

The UN Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice is the largest international conference in the field of criminal justice, held every five years since 1955, and has been held in Japan only once, in 1970 in Kyoto.

Japanese Prosecutor General Kōtarō Ono will announce Japan’s candidacy in the conference slated in the Qatari capital on 12-19 April, it said.

It would be only the second time Japan has hosted the conference. The United Nations in New York last hosted it in 1980.

Japan aims to host the conference in partnership with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the Japanese National Police Agency. The conference has been held in Asia only once, in 2009 in Hong Kong.

Japan is the only Asian nation to have hosted the conference, and the only country in Asia to have adopted the goals and resolutions of the 1999 Yalta Conference on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, the government said.

Ono will announce the candidacy after the ministerial meeting of the Yalta Conference last month in the Qatari capital, with the support of South Korea and other countries, the government said.

A vehicle runs in water in Hanzhong City, northwest China’s Shaanxi Province on 1 April, 2015. The provincial meteorological bureau issued a blue alert of heavy rain on Wednesday morning. XINHUA

Malaysian police release media CEO, editor held under sedition

KUALA LUMPUR, 1 April — Police released the publisher of a Malaysian media group and a senior executive on bail on Wednesday, after arresting them for sedition related to a news report published last month, their company’s lawyers said.

Publisher and group CEO of The Edge Media Group, Ho Kay Tat, and chief executive of the group’s The Malaysian Insider news portal, Jahabar Sadiq, were released early on Wednesday, about 24 hours after they were arrested.

The police did not ask for a remand for Ho and Jahabar, the company’s lawyer Syahredzan Johan said.

“The investigating officer decided that most of the investigation was done,” he said.

On Monday evening, three other editors from the Malaysian Insider, also arrested in connection with the same case, were released after the magistrate rejected a remand application by the police.

The arrests were over an article published on the web portal on 25 March that said the a Conference of Rulers — Malaysia’s monarchy — had rejected a proposal to amend a federal law that could allow the use of the Islamic punishment, hudud, in Malaysia.

An official of representing the Conference of Rulers filed a police report on 26 March, denying that the rulers had discussed or ruled on the issue. The youth wing of the ruling United Malays National Organization party also filed a police complaint over the report, media reports said. Reuters
Countries emitting 40% of global greenhouse gas file reduction goals

WASHINGTON, 1 April — A total of 33 countries, which together produce 40 percent of the world’s greenhouse gas emissions, have submitted their emission reduction targets to the UN climate body, possibly giving a boost to efforts to reach a new global climate change deal later this year.

Christiana Figueres, executive secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, which received the submissions from countries including the United States and Russia, hailed the move as a very good start.

But Japan, the fifth largest greenhouse gas emitter, was among the countries that missed the 31 March deadline, with no clear prospects on when to file its own reduction goal because it is still working out the details of its energy policy in the wake of the 2011 Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant disaster.

We are not in a situation to specify the timing of filing (our climate action plan),” Environment Minister Yoshio Mochizuki said, apparently referring to the fact that Japan has not yet decided the composition and proportions of its future energy production, such as nuclear power, which accounted for around 30 percent of energy production before the Fukushima crisis.

The end-of-March deadline was set for countries that have been ready to submit their emission reduction targets. Other countries that have successfully met the deadline were the 28 members of the European Union, Norway, Switzerland and Mexico. China, the world’s largest greenhouse gas emitter, meanwhile, pushed back the planned date of submitting its pledge to June from the end of March.

The United States, the second largest emitter, on Tuesday pledged to cut its emissions by 26 to 28 percent below 2005 levels by 2025, calling it an “ambitious” target, although it is below Europe’s goal to slash emissions by 40 percent by 2030 compared with 1990 levels.

US Secretary of State John Kerry said his country “took an important step” through the submission of its target, and added “Now it’s time for other nations (to) come forward with their own targets to help ensure we can reach a global agreement at the UN Climate Conference in Paris later this year.”

Kyodo News

Grandson of Getty oil founder discovered dead in Los Angeles home

Los Angeles, 1 April — The grandson of billionaire Getty oil founder J Paul Getty was found dead on Tuesday afternoon at his home in Los Angeles, the family said in a statement. Andrew Getty’s parents, Ann and Gordon, confirmed the 47-year-old’s death and requested privacy for the family during “this extremely difficult time”, adding that further details would be released as they became available.

Los Angeles Police Department spokesman Andrew Smith said it was very early in the investigation and witnesses were being questioned, but no one was in custody.

“At first glance, it does not appear to be a criminal type of act. But that could change,” Smith said on Tuesday night.

The death appeared to be either accidental or natural, Los Angeles County Coroner’s Office spokesman Ed Winter told reporters in a news conference broadcast by TV station KTLA 5.

“He had some medication that we recovered and don’t know if he had taken the medication or what his medical history is, we do have a doctor’s name that we’re also going to follow up,” Winter said.

The cause of Andrew Getty’s death was not immediately known.

Celebrity news website TMZ.com reported that Getty, an heir to his grandfather’s oil fortune, was found without life signs in a bathroom of his Hollywood Hills home about 2 pm in suspicious circumstances, and that a former girlfriend was being detained as a potential victim or suspect.

Andrew Getty had sought a restraining order against a woman two weeks earlier, The Los Angeles Times said.

Getty appeared to have suffered blunt force trauma, though the cause was unclear, the paper reported, citing an anonymous law enforcement official.

Police blocked off the street outside the home with yellow crime-scene tape as much as a dozen news crews and photographers gathered.

Getty’s grandfather, J Paul Getty, merged several smaller oil companies into Getty Oil in the 1960s. At one time one of America’s richest men, he was also an avid art collector who established the trust that funds the J Paul Getty Museum and several other institutions.
Joni Mitchell in ‘good spirits’ at LA hospital

LOS ANGELES, 1 April— Groundbreaking musician Joni Mitchell, one of the stars of the Woodstock era, was “in good spirits” at a hospital in California on Tuesday after being found unconscious at her home, her official website said.

A statement on her website said the 71-year-old singer-songwriter had regained consciousness while being transported by ambulance to a Los Angeles-area hospital.

Mitchell was undergoing medical testing in the hospital’s intensive care unit but was “awake and in good spirits,” the statement said. Further details on her condition and the nature of the medical emergency were not immediately provided. Representatives for the musician did not respond to requests for comment.

Celebrity news website TMZ.com said that Mitchell was taken to hospital after authorities received a 911 call from her Los Angeles home about an unconscious woman.

The Canadian-born Mitchell was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1997 and is best known for her highly influential albums in the late ’60s and ’70s, including “Clouds,” “Ladies of the Canyon” and “Blue.”

Mitchell was a pioneering female rock artist, breaking into an industry previously dominated by men, and selling millions of albums.— Reuters

The Rolling Stones return to US with 15-city ‘Zip Code’ tour

LOS ANGELES, 1 April— British veteran rockers The Rolling Stones are bringing their classic rock’n’roll to the United States in a 15-city tour beginning in May, the band said on Tuesday.

Band members Mick Jagger, Keith Richards, Ronnie Wood and Charlie Watts will kick off the “Zip Code” tour in San Diego on 24 May and head east, making stops in cities including Minneapolis, Atlanta, Detroit and Buffalo.

The band will also be making a pit stop in Indiana’s Indianapolis Motor Speedway, despite the state’s controversial new “religious freedom” law that would allow businesses a right to refuse services on religious grounds. Activists said the law could be used to discriminate against gays. Indiana Republicans pledged on Monday to clarify the law and said it was not intended to discriminate. “We are excited to be back in North America playing stadiums this summer! We are looking forward to being back on stage and playing your favourite songs,” Jagger, 71, said in a statement.

The tour coincides with the release of a remastered version of the band’s 1971 album “Sticky Fingers” on 26 May. It will conclude on 15 July in Quebec.

The Rolling Stones last performed across North America for “A Bigger Bang Tour” between 2005 and 2007. The band more recently toured Europe, Asia, Australia and New Zealand in 2014, but was hampered by the death of Jagger’s girlfriend, fashion designer L’Wren Scott, and Jagger being diagnosed with a throat infection.

Fomed in 1962 in London, The Rolling Stones were part of the British invasion music phenomenon that took the United States by storm in the 1960s and has become one of the world’s biggest rock bands, with more than 20 studio albums under its belt.— Reuters

Will Smith reunites with ‘The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air’ co-star

LOS ANGELES, 1 April— Will Smith and his “The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air” co-star Tatyana Ali were reunited at the 2015 Black Girls Rock event.

Smith, 46, who was at the show to present an award to his wife, actress Jada Pinkett Smith, ran into his co-star Ali backstage at the show in Newark, New Jersey. At 16, played Smith’s cousin Ashley Banks on the popular sitcom from 1990 to 1996.

The actress shared a quick selfie of the duo on Instagram, writing “Backstage @blackgirlrock @mhib #imagineafuture #nolilter #fam #tatyanaali #willsmith #FRESHPRINCE.”

The TV cousins have been reunited before, with Ali joining another “Fresh Prince” co-star, Alfonso Ribeiro at the premiere of Smith’s 2008 film “Seven Pounds.”

Princess Diana’s nephew wants to marry me: Nicki Minaj

LOS ANGELES, 1 April— Rapper Nicki Minaj has an admirer in Princess Diana’s nephew, who wants to get married to her. Minaj, 32, spent time with Louis Spencer on Saturday at her London concert, and the pair hit it off, reported People magazine.

The rapper joked that one of her Instagram photos with Louis Spencer was their “wedding photo.” Spencer, 21, is a viscount and the heir to his family’s earldom. While Spencer is all smiles, Minaj strikes a more serious pose in another shot that she captioned, “The Royal Family stopped by @louisspencer Nephew of Princess Diana – he said he wants to marry me.”

His sister, Lady Kitty Spencer, is also a fan of Minaj. The late father, Diana’s brother Charles, wrote, “Thank you @NICKIMINAJ for being so kind, meeting my son Louis after you @OZmusic concert last night – love the Instagram ‘wedding’ picture!” he tweeted.

Nicky Minaj joked that one of her Instagram photos with Louis Spencer was their “wedding photo.”— PTI

Difficulties make you stronger, mature

LOS ANGELES, 1 April— Actress-director Angelina Jolie, who recently underwent cancer preventative surgery and had her ovaries and fallopian tubes removed, feels by overcoming difficulties, one gains strength and maturity.— PTI

Actress-director Angelina Jolie, who recently underwent cancer preventative surgery and had her ovaries and fallopian tubes removed, feels by overcoming difficulties, one gains strength and maturity.— PTI

Zayn Malik’s first song out post split from One Direction

LOS ANGELES, 1 April— Demo of singer Zayn Malik’s first song “I Won’t Mind”, post his departure from band One Direction, has been released. The song is a collaboration between Malik and Naughty Boy and its demo was posted by the British producer on his SoundCloud page.

“Let the music do the talking guys. Thank you lat- er,” Naughty Boy tweeted along with a link to the song. “There is nothing but love for what was left behind, that’s why we don’t mind.” #2016 #naughty #zaynabed, he added in the Soundcloud description. The #2016 hashtag apparently hints at the year the finished version of the track will be released.

“I Won’t Mind” is a slow-tempo ballad on which Malik sings over the simple but beautiful acoustic guitar. “We are who we are when no one’s watching/And right from the start, you know I got you,” he croons.

Naughty Boy began teasing his collaboration with Zayn earlier this year. Most recently, he promoted it by tweeting a bizarre video made by a fan while Directioners were still sad by the band’s departure from One Direction. Tomlinson then called him out on Twitter, calling him “inconsiderate” and telling him to “grow up.”— PTI

Singer Zayn Malik
Sale of 7.5 million Olympic tickets begins in Rio

RIO DE JANEIRO, 1 April — Tickets for the 2016 Rio Olympics went on sale in Brazil on Tuesday, with top prices comparable to those at the London Games and more than half costing 70 Brazilian reais ($22) or less. The most affordable of the 7.5 million tickets are 40 reais and all purchases can be paid for in up to five installments. The cheapest tickets at London 2012 were 20 pounds, at the time about $32. The most expensive tickets in Rio — for the athletics, basketball, beach volleyball and volleyball finals — are priced at 1,200 reais, far above Brazil’s minimum monthly wage of 700 reais.

Tickets for the popular opening ceremony will cost up to 4,600 reais. The announcement came as many Brazilians struggle to keep their heads above water amid a deepening economic crisis. The economy grew 0.1 percent last year and is expected to shrink in 2015 as corruption scandals hit investment. The Olympics competition schedule was also released on Tuesday, with eight finals on the last day, Sunday 21 August.

The men’s football tournament is the first sport to kick off on 3 August, two days before the opening ceremony. Tickets for the seven soccer matches scheduled for Sao Paulo have been held back due to an impasse over who will foot the bill for the renovations at the Corinthians arena. — Reuters

Rio 2016 Olympic mascot Vinicius is seen on the top of the Sugarloaf cable car, to mark 500 days to go until the Opening Ceremony of the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro, in this handout photograph released on 24 March, 2015. — Reuters

Ko’s consistency a major topic at Mission Hills

RANCHO MIRAGE, (California), 1 April — World number one Lydia Ko has yet to win a major title but the 17-year-old prodigy has already achieved so much in golf that she enters this week’s ANA Inspiration envied by many of her rivals.

The richly talented New Zealander has landed six LPGA titles and her astonishingly consistent game has helped her shoot under par for consecutive rounds, something she has done on one of the record set by former world number one Annika Sorenstam in 2004.

“I got to play with her last week and it’s just incredible,” reigning champion Lexi Thompson told reporters at Mission Hills Country Club on Tuesday while preparing for the first woman’s major of the season. “Her game is very consistent. There is not a weakness in her game. She’s very straight off the tee, and has a great short game. You can’t ask for anything better than that.”

“She has a great attitude on the golf course, and probably the best tempo I’ve ever seen on a golf swing or a putting stroke.”

US Women’s Open champion Michelle Wie, another golfing prodigy who turned professional shortly before her 16th birthday in 2005, agreed.

“A lot of people ask me what the strong point is about her game,” Wie, 25, said of Ko. “I think the strong point is that she really doesn’t have a weakness.”

Ko became the youngest golfer to hold top spot in the world rankings by tying for second place at the LPGA’s season-opening event in January and the lack of a major title is the only ‘blemish’ on her already impressive career resume.

“That’s really what she’s missing at the moment,” said Swede Sorenstam, a 10-time major champion. “Even though at that young age you would think she’d be missing a lot more, but she’s certainly done a lot. I am amazed how well Lydia is playing.”

While Ko will command much of the spotlight at Mission Hills this week, American Thompson is delighted to be back at the venue where she triumphed by three shots last year. — Reuters


Djokovic survives Miami scare; Murray claims 500th win

MIAMI, 1 April — Defending champion Novak Djokovic survived a scare from Alexandr Dolgopolov on Tuesday to reach the Miami Open quarter-finals while Andy Murray won the 500th match of his career to reach the last eight.

Djokovic was made to work for his 7-6(3), 7-6, 6-0 win over former number 65 Dolgopolov. After dropping the first set the top-seeded Serbian found himself in even deeper trouble by falling behind 4-1 in the second and facing the threat of an unexpected early exit.

But Djokovic dug deep to turn things around, breaking to get the set back on serve at 4-3 to the Ukrainian and then broke again for a 6-5 lead.

Having seen his chance of an upset slip through his hands, Dolgopolov faded quickly and badly dropped the third set where a dominant Djokovic won 24 of 27 points. “I was literally a game or two from losing the match, I’m just happy to be able to bounce back,” said Djokovic.

“These particular matches do help me in a certain way mentally to gain that confidence and self belief in a way that I never give up and battle till the very last point, and it sends a message to the other players, as well,” he added.

Djokovic, who is seeking a fifth title at Key Biscayne, will face Spaniard David Ferrer in the quarters. World number four Murray beat South African Kevin Anderson 6-4, 3-6, 6-3 to become the 46th man in the Open Era to reach 500 career wins and the first British male. He is one of only nine active players to have reached the milestone.

Anderson fought back well in the second but after trailing early breaks in the third the Scot took control breaking his South African opponent again to grab a 3-1 advantage and never looked back. Murray will face Australian Dominic Thiem, who reached his first Masters 1000 series quarter-final after beating France’s Adrian Mannarino 7-6(5), 4-6, 7-5.

Czech Tomas Berdych made it six quarter-finals out of six tournaments this year after he advanced when Frenchman Gael Monfils retired in the second set after a bad fall. Berdych was leading 6-3, 3-2.

Berdych will next face Argentine Juan Monaco, a 6-3, 6-3 winner over Spaniard Fernando Verdasco. — Reuters

Lydia Ko tees off on the 11th hole during round one action of the JTBC Founders Cup at Wildfire Golf Club at JW Marriott Phoenix Desert Ridge Resort & Spa. — Reuters

MITANewsChannelInBrief

(2-4-2015, Thursday)

6:00 am • Partly by Venerable Mingun Sayadaw
6:30 am • Health Programme
7:00 am • News/Weather Report
7:35 am • National Sport Games
8:00 am • News/International News
8:30 am • Headline News
9:35 am • Documentary (ASEAN)
10:00 am • News/International News
11:35 am • Science and Technology Programme
12:00 noon • News/International News/Weather Report
12:35 pm • Hluttaw Image
1:40 pm • Weekly Entertainment
2:15 pm • Cultural Dance
3:35 pm • University of Distance Education
4:35 pm • — First Years (Physics)
5:00 pm • News/Weather Report
6:35 pm • People’s Talks
7:35 pm • Current Affairs
8:00 pm • News/International News/Weather Report
9:00 pm • Hluttaw Image
9:15 pm • Clever
10:00 pm • Talks on Old Film

MRTVEntertainmentChannel

(2-4-2015, Thursday)

6:00 am • Mono Classical Songs
6:20 am • Pyi Tnu Ni Ti
6:45 am • Fashion Show
7:10 am • Myanmar Series
7:35 am • Song and Dance of Thingyan Festival
7:50 am • TV Drama Series
12:00 noon • Close down
Local youths have chance to join Taungthaman Cup

AMARPURA, 1 April — Aung Naing Thu team emerged champion with a 5-3 penalty decision over Paleik team in the open football tournament of the Taungthaman Cup in Bonoh Village, Amarpura Township, Mandalay Region, on 31 March.

Comet team stood first with a 2-0 result over Hsan Nyunt (B) team in the men’s open Sepak Takraw tournament. Maik Nyi Naung-Thabyayyo team secured the first prize in the junior bullet-card race while Let-pan won the first prize in the senior event.

Pyithu Hluttaw MP U Thein Tun Oo, Region Hluttaw MP U Moe Naing Kyaw and well wisher U Soe Naing, President of Myanmar Chinlone Federation, and officials presented prizes to winners in respective sports events.

Well-wisher U Soe Naing donated K1.2 million and other well-wishers K300,000 to Mandalay Region men’s football team that secured championship trophy in the 4th National Sports Festival.

Fellaini goal earns Belgium 1-0 win over Israel

Belgium’s players celebrate after scoring a goal against Israel during their Euro 2016 Group B qualifying soccer match at Teddy Stadium in Jerusalem on 31 March, 2015.—REUTERS

JERUSALEM, 1 April — Marouane Fellaini grabbed his first goal for Belgium in 100 caps in the 1-0 victory over Israel.

Israel, who struggled to contain Belgium throughout the game, were drawn without a clear goal until the 88th minute when the Belgian midfielder found the back of the net with a powerful header.

“I did look a little tired in the second half and we will have to see how we deal with this in our upcoming matches,” said Israel coach Eli Guttman, who was later sent off.

“This was our first goal in 10 matches, which we had to capitalise beyond Fellaini’s close-range effort in the ninth minute when he was teed up by captain Vincent Kompany who was later sent off. The visitors lacked urgency for the rest of the match and almost paid a high price for failing to increase their lead when defender Kompany was dismissed in the 64th for a second booking.

Israel, who struggled to find an opening against stout Belgian defending until Kompany’s departure, then found gaps and created chances, though most of their efforts were thwarted.

The fixture was the only Euro qualifier for Belgium since 2010 and the first this season after a bad first half and are in 10th place, with eight games left in the group, ahead of second-placed Wales.

Belgium leapfrogged Israel to move top of the group, ahead of second-placed Wales on goal difference with both teams on 11 points from five matches. Israel are third, with nine points.

Belgium coach Marc Wilmots said his team did enough to get the result but the performance could have been better.

“My players came to this away match and they knew what they had to do to get the three points,” he said.

Germany media have been full of reports in recent days of a possible move to the end of the season and an alleged promise he had made to the United coach that should he decide to move that he would join the English club.

But the central defender, who won the World Cup with Germany last year, said this was false.

“Just to be clear. This alleged “promise” is simply an invention... and that is saying it nicely,” he said on his official Twitter account on Wednesday.

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Hummels says made no promise to United’s Van Gaal

Berlin, 1 April — Borussia Dortmund’s Mats Hummels has shot down reports of a deal with Manchester United coach Louis Van Gaal to join the Premier League club, saying they were invented.

The Germany defender has long been a target for leading English clubs and he recently said he would like to play abroad at some point in his career.

Hummels’ current contract runs out in 2017.

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