President U Thein Sein visits Myanmar Software Showcase 2015

NAY PYI TAW, 3 April—President U Thein Sein on Friday morning visited the Myanmar Software Showcase 2015 in Nay Pyi Taw and viewed booths displaying locally developed software and projects of technological universities.

In a speech at the showcase, the president said today is an age of technological wonders, adding that technological development is essential for national development.

Technological backwardness hinders national development, he said, urging students to make innovations not only for Myanmar nationals but also for citizens of the world.

Afterwards, local information technology experts U Thaung Su Nyein, U Zaw Min Oo, U Thar Htet, U Ye Myat Thu and Dr Tun Thura Thet held discussions under the topic “Youths and Opportunities.”

Eight new members added to UEC

NAY PYI TAW, 3 April—Eight new members of the Union Election Commission were appointed on Friday.

The new UEC members include U N Zaw Naw, U Sai Kham Win, U Saw Ba Hlaing, U Harki, Dr Maung Maung Kyi, U Sai Nwan Tawng, U Sai Tun Thein and Dr Sai San Win and they were appointed under Sub-section (a) of Section 398 of Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, Para (viii) of Sub-section (b) of Section 16 of Union Government Law and Section 3 of UEC Law, according to Order No 1/2015 of the President Office.

Air Mandalay resumes flight services after upgrading planes

Air Mandalay shows off new Embraer fleet to press with a special flight to Ngapali on Friday.—PHOTO: YE MYINT

Air Mandalay has resumed charter services after a months-long hiatus to upgrade its fleet.

Air Mandalay resumed flight services after

Air Mandalay flew local media to Ngapali beach in western Myanmar on the new Embraer jets, which replace its old ATR fleet.

With two 50-seat Embraer ERJ 145s, Yangon-based Air Mandalay will recommence daily services to Sittwe, NyaungU and Heho while operating flights to Mandalay and Myitkyina three times a week, on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday.

It will also offer direct flights to Nay Pyi Taw three times a week, on Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

The airline, founded in 1994, also plans to add new ATR aircraft to the fleet, the CEO said. He also revealed the airline’s 2018 mission of expanding its fleet with the introduction of up to ten Mitsubishi Regional Jets seating 70-90 passengers.—GNLM
Pyidaungsu Hluttaw approves more appointees to UEC

**NAY PYI TAW, 3 April—** The Pyidaungsu Hluttaw on Friday approved the appointment of more members to the Union Election Commission and the Myanmar Port Authority bill, on which the Pyithu Hluttaw and the Amyotha Hluttaw held differing views.

Brig-Gen Tint Hsan, defence services personnel representative, urged the parliament to honour and put on record all stakeholders and organizations engaged in the signing of the draft nationwide ceasefire agreement, a move he described as priceless for national solidarity. The Pyidaungsu Hluttaw welcomed the successful signing of the draft nationwide ceasefire agreement between the Union Peacemaking Working Committee (UPWC) and the Nationwide Ceasefire Coordination Team (NCCT), he added, citing President U Thein Sein as saying that the desire for peace is a shared goal by all citizens and organizations.

The successful implementation of internal peace processes will quicken the establishment of national consolidation and reconciliation, the army officer noted.

Foreign embassies and UN agencies congratulated on the signing of the draft ceasefire agreement and pledged continuous support and cooperation. —MNA

MoH rejects hospital upgrading in Pakokku: Amyotha Hluttaw

**NAY PYI TAW, 3 April—** U Thaw Zin Oo of Mon State constituency No. 9 proposed a motion at the Amyotha Hluttaw on Friday calling for upgrading a hospital in Pakokku township, with Deputy Minister for Health Dr Daw Thein Thein Htay rejecting the proposal and explaining that the facility does not need upgrading considering the number of hospital admissions.

Regarding a question of the publication of Unique Constructions as references, Deputy Minister for Construction U Soe Tint responded that his ministry will publish construction references in volumes in 2015-2016 financial year.

Maj Aung Kyaw Zaw, defence services personnel representative, called for the reform of the Public Works under the Ministry of Construction. The deputy minister responded that the Public Works has been restructured into three—road, bridge and building departments—as of 1 April this year. The ministry has hired foreign consultant teams for supervision and quality control at construction projects implemented with foreign loans from Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and Asian Development Bank (ADB).

The Amyotha Hluttaw approved the inland waters bill, which was sent back with some changes by the Pyithu Hluttaw. —MNA

**Pyidaungsu Hluttaw welcomes signing of draft agreement for nationwide ceasefire**

**NAV PYI TAW, 3 April—** The Pyidaungsu Hluttaw on Friday approved the signing of draft text of nationwide ceasefire agreement — an important milestone for ending armed conflict and initiating political dialogue. Personally attended the signing ceremony. I congratulate and praise the delegates from the government, Tatmadaw, and ethnic armed groups for resolving issues during the peace talks with patience, mutual understanding and respect. My message to the public that so desires peace is that the nationwide ceasefire agreement is expected to be formally signed soon, paving the way for solving issues through political dialogue.

On a related note, my government is working to restore peace and stability in Kokang Self-Administered Zone. Since we are striving to build a nation that respects and protects ethnic and minority rights, our efforts must be to bring political, economic, and social stability and development to the Kokang Region.

The stability of our border is of utmost importance and we will not allow this conflict in one part of country effect our broader strategic interest - which is to have the best possible relations with all our neighbors and all the great powers of the world.

I was saddened by the events surrounding the protests to change the education law. The one lesson we should take away from these events is the consequence of straying away from the democratic practice of tolerance. All the parties involved must in the future act consistently with democratic norms, balancing the right of freedom of expression with respect for prevailing laws and rules.

I offer my condolences to the families that lost their loved ones in the sinking of the Aung Takon 3 ferry. The accident is being investigated to ensure that in the future, precious lives will not be lost to accidents due to negligence, administrative oversight or lack of equipment maintenance. Public travel and transport should be safe and secure, and any failures must be corrected.

In March, events marking the 70th anniversary of the founding of the Tatmadaw were held in Naypyidaw. As world events prove, it is important for a nation like ours, small but strategically situated, to have a strong and professional armed forces. I urge the public to welcome and support efforts by the Tatmadaw to modernize, and carry out its duties of safeguarding national unity, protecting sovereignty, and providing humanitarian relief work.

Our aim is to build a modern nation with a vibrant democracy. I urge everyone not to lose sight of this goal.

Solar energy is now widely held as a practical and sustainable solution to solve mankind’s energy needs. In March, the Solar Impulse, powered by solar energy, made its South-East Asian stop in Mandalay. I am honored that Myanmar was able to help promote this leading-edge technology to citizens of the world. I traveled to Mandalay to offer my support, and was especially delighted to see youth from Mandalay Region and beyond given the opportunity to study this world-class technology.

Soon, the people of the nation will be celebrating the Myanmar New Year Thingyan festival. I wish everyone fulfilled and contentment in the New Year. I urge everyone to celebrate responsibly so as to promote friendship and the nation’s image.

I would like to conclude by reaffirming my commitment to achieving peace, promoting economic development and building a better future for future generations.

**Tender issues dominate Pyithu Hluttaw**

Pyithu Hluttaw on Friday discussed a number of issues, including setting floor prices, supervising quality control, and making contracts. An MP proposed more flight services in the air port in Mawlamyine, Mon State, with Deputy Minister U Zin Yaw rejecting the proposal by citing a small number of passengers as economic disadvantage.

Currently, the Department of Civil Aviation has invited register of interest (ROI) from interested private airlines in a bid to encourage the private sector in aviation.

The deputy minister spoke of the possibility of upgrading the airport in Thaton in the future, given its convenient location.

MNA
President U Thein Sein visits...

Vice President U Nyan Tun visits... (from page 1)

U Soe Thane, U Myat Hein, U Hla Tun, U Ye Htut and Dr Ko Ko Oo made speeches.

The discussions concluded with remarks by the president, in which he discussed measures being taken by the government to encourage students to help build a peaceful, modern and developed democratic nation. He also described goals of the government including restoration of sustainable peace by 2020 and graduating from less-developed to middle-income country status. The president then posed for documentary photographs with faculty members and students before watching the flight of a UAV drone developed by the MAU.

Local information technology experts spoke about mobile communications, social networking media and job opportunities in ICT.

Myanmar Software Showcase 2015 is being organized with the aim of promoting the ICT industry to raise GDP and make Myanmar into a software-exporting country that can provide applied IT services to other nations.

A total of 39 Myanmar entrepreneur teams and 21 IT companies are displaying their services for various sectors including health, education, finance and e-commerce. The exhibition also aims to turn youth participants into successful entrepreneurs.— MNA

Vice President U Nyan Tun wraps up Laos and Cambodia tours

Yangon, 3 April — A Myanmar delegation led by Vice President U Nyan Tun arrived back in the country Friday evening after visiting Laos and Cambodia, respectively, at the invitations of Laotian Vice President Mr Bounnhang Vorachith and Cambodian Prime Minister Mr Samdech Hun Sen.

The delegation led by the vice president and wife Daw Khin Aye Myint arrived at the Office of the Authority on Thursday. The vice president and delegation arrived at Bayon Temple, Ta Prohm Temple and a museum of traditional Mekong-Ganga textiles in Cambodia. — MNA

2 Japanese banks to open branches in Myanmar in late April

Tokyo, 3 April — The Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi UFJ and Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corp. said Thursday they will set up branches in Myanmar later this month as the country’s central bank has issued permission for foreign banks to begin operations.

BTMU and SMBC will open the branches April 22 and 23 respectively.

YANGON, 3 April — In accord with the Notification No. (19/2015) dated 11 February 2015 issued by the President Office regarding the formation of The Advisory Commission to review laws, rules and regulations and tasks related to the temporary identity cards, “The Advisory Commission for Reviewing Laws, Rules, Regulations and Tasks Relating to Temporary Identity Cards” has been formed with nine members under the Notification No. (31/2015) dated 3 April 2015 issued by the President Office. — MNA

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Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and wife hoist umbrella, diamond orb, pennant shape vane atop pagodas

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NDF, UMFCCCI welcome draft nationwide ceasefire agreement

A political party and a trade organization have welcomed the recent draft nationwide ceasefire agreement between the government and ethnic armed groups.

The Union Peace-making Working Committee (UPWC) and the Nationwide Ceasefire Coordination Team (NCCT) signed the draft nationwide ceasefire agreement before President U Thein Sein on 31 March.

MNA
NRC hands over office to INRD in Dawei

DAWEI, 3 April—A ceremony to hand over a record office of Taninthayi Region Immigration and National Registration Department was held at the Dawei District INRD on 2 April.

Mr Christopher Bleers of the Norwegian Refugee Council handed over documents related to the building, valued at K 38.2 million, to Deputy Director U Tin Htwe of the district INRD.

New airline launches domestic services

DAWEI, 3 April—Apex Airlines, a new carrier entering the domestic aviation market, held its launch ceremony at Dawei Airport, Taninthayi Region, on 2 April.

Taninthayi Region Chief Minister U Myat Ko, Speaker of Region Hluttaw U Htin Aung Kyaw and Chairman of Apex Airlines U Khin Soe formally launched the carrier.

Chairman U Khin Soe spoke about the services of the airline, which will fly from Nay Pyi Taw to Yangon, Dawei, Myeik and Kawthoung as of 7 April.

ADPC stages national disaster reduction workshop in Mandalay

MANDALAY, 3 April—The Asian Disaster Preparedness Center has been assessing natural disaster response plans in Mandalay City since 2011, Mandalay Mayor U Aung Moung told a workshop at the Swan Hotel on 1 April.

The mayor said the ADPC surveyed soil information in cooperation with the Myanmar Geologists Association after drawing the integrated hazard action plan.

Instructors of the MCDC, Relief and Resettlement Department, and ADPC gave lectures on connectivity between development tasks and natural disasters, solutions to natural disasters, and the possible impact of disasters.

Departmental officials and staff of MCDC join workshop on natural disaster response plans.

58 midwives graduate from Hpa-an course

HPA-AN, 3 April—A graduation ceremony for midwifery course No 3 took place at Hpa-an Nursing and Midwifery Training School in Hpa-an, Kayin State, on 30 March.

Chief Minister of the state U Zaw Min spoke on the occasion. Officials presented the graduates with nursing caps.

The chief minister and the state minister for social affairs presented awards to outstanding trainees.

The midwifery course, attended by 58 trainees, started in November 2014.
Indonesia’s political elite ‘plotting to cripple anti-graft agency’

JAKARTA, 3 April — Indonesia’s political elite have closed ranks to undermine President Yudhoyono’s anti-graft commission, which has already been weakened by a bitter dispute over the president’s choice for police chief, a senior official of the agency said. Johan Budi, acting deputy chairman of the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK), also took a swipe at President Joko Widodo, who was elected last year amid hopes that he would confront the corruption that plagues Indonesia, for dithering over the row and allowing the commission’s work to be delayed.

“I think the KPK is now a common enemy for high-ranking politicians,” he told Reuters in an interview in his Jakarta office late on Thursday. “I don’t know what the future holds for the KPK, but it will depend on the president’s determination.” Some members of parliament were pressing for the laws empowering the KPK to be watered down, he added. The KPK is popular among ordinary Indonesians for being a thorn in the side of a establishment in a country that Transparency International’s corruption perception index ranks below China and Niger.

The attack on the KPK started in January, when the agency declared police general Budi Gunawan a corruption suspect, just days after he was named the president’s choice for police chief. The police, the attorney general’s office and members of President Yudhoyono’s administration sharply criticized the KPK for that decision, saying it was politically motivated.

Gunawan is close to former President Megawati Sukarnoputri, Widodo’s chief patron and head of his party, the Indonesian Democratic Party-Struggle (PDI-P).

Indian PM may expand Cabinet next week

NEW DELHI, 3 April — Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi is likely to expand his Cabinet next week, for the second time since he came to power, and members of President Pranab Mukherjee’s administration have been briefing senior ministers on possible inductees, officials said.

The Cabinet expansion may take place on 8 April, where at least two ministers are likely to be inducted and one junior minister to be elevated when the senior most minister may be shown the door, the reports said.

China condemns terrorist attack on Kenyan university

BEIJING, 3 April — China has condemned Thursday’s terrorist attack on Garissa University College in Kenya, which has claimed 147 lives.

“We are against terrorist attacks in any form, and condemn the terrorists in the strongest terms,” Foreign Ministry spokesman Hua Chunying said on Friday.

Gunmen stormed into Garissa University College before dawn Thursday, shooting students and taking hostages in a terrorist attack that has left 147 people dead, according to Kenya officials.

“China extends heartfelt condolences to the victims and expresses deep sympathy to the wounded and their families,” Hua said. Stressing that China opposes terrorism in any form, Hua said China will continue to support Kenya’s efforts to counter terrorism and safeguard national and regional stability.

Syrian journalist Mazen Darwish winner of UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize

PARIS, 3 April —The winner of the 2015 UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize is Syrian journalist and human rights activist, Mazen Darwish, currently imprisoned. The Prize will be awarded during the celebration of World Press Freedom Day, 3 May, which will this year be hosted by Latvia (National Library, Riga, 6 pm).

An independent International Jury of media professionals recommended Mazen Darwish in recognition of the work he has carried out in Syria for more than ten years at great personal sacrifice, enduring a travel ban, harassment, as well as repeated detention and torture.

Led by Ko-ko U (Myanmar), chairman of the Yangon Media Group and publisher of the Yangon Times, the International Jury stressed the need to remember Mr Darwish, currently in prison, along with so many other human rights defenders and journalists.

Darwish, a lawyer and press freedom advocate, is the president of the Syrian Centre for Media and Freedom of Expression (CMFE), founded in 2004, and one of the founders of the Voice newspaper and syriaview.net, an independent news site banned by the Syrian authorities. In 2011, Darwish established Media Club, the first Syrian magazine about media affairs. He has been detained since February 2012, when he was arrested with colleagues Hani Al-Zitani and Hussein Ghareeb.

Numerous human rights and press organizations around the world have issued calls for the release of Darwish and his fellow journalists.

On 15 May, 2013 the UN General Assembly adopted Resolution 67/262 demanding that “the Syrian authorities immediately release all persons arbitrarily detained, including the members of the Syrian Centre for Media and Freedom of Expression.” In January 2014, the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (WGAD) addressed a communication to the Syrian authorities denouncing the arbitrary detention of Darwish and his Media Centre colleagues and called for their immediate release.

Created by UNESCO’s Executive Board in 1997, the annual UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize honours a person, organization or institution that has made an outstanding contribution to the defence and, or promotion of press freedom anywhere in the world, and especially when this has been achieved in the face of danger.

The $25,000 Prize is named in honour of Guillermo Cano Isaza, a Colombian journalist who was assassinated outside of the office of El Espectador, in Bogotá, on 17 December 1986. It is funded by the Cano Foundation (Colombia) and the Helsinge Sanomat Foundation (Finland).

Volcano eruptions in Indonesia’s Sumatra, triggering evacuation

JAKARTA, 3 April — Mount Sinabung volcano in Karo District of Indonesia’s North Sumatra Province erupted on Thursday afternoon, spewing a column of ash by up to 2 km to the sky and triggering small-scale evacuation, officials said earlier on Friday.

Powerful burst of hot ash was spread from the rumbling volcano, heading 4 km away to the south of the crater and 1 km away to the southeast, Sutopo Purwo Nugroho, spokesman of national disaster management agency said. Some of villages living near the volcano have been evacuated to the safe places, Sutopo disclosed. “Some of residents of Sibintun village have to be evacuated by force by officials to other places,” he told Xinhua via phone.

Others villages at Si-grang Garang, Kutagunggun- ng, and Sukanalau villages located 3 km from the cra- ter were panic and scared as they prepared for evac- uation, said Sutopo. “The officials keep conducting patrol and monitoring at the field,” he revealed.

Lava floods also hit the district and damaged roads, said Sutopo.

The 2,475-metre Mount Sinabung erupted on 29 June after erupting on 30 March 2013 and 29 June 2014, which left 15 people dead and more than 30,000 internally displaced. Mount Sinabung is among more than 120 active volcanoes in Indonesia, which is prone to seismic upheaval due to its location on the “Pacific Ring of Fire.”

A visitor looks at a Shanghai Sunlong Bus at the Seoul Motor Show in Seoul, South Korea, on 2 April, 2015. Shanghai Sunlong Bus, a Chinese automaker, showcases its strategic model CT Boo for the first time at this year’s Seoul Motor Show. —XINHUA

A visitor looks at a Shanghai Sunlong Bus at the Seoul Motor Show in Seoul, South Korea, on 2 April, 2015. Shanghai Sunlong Bus, a Chinese automaker, showcases its strategic model CT Boo for the first time at this year’s Seoul Motor Show. —XINHUA
China evacuates foreign nationals from Yemen in unprecedented move

BEIJING, 3 April — A Chinese naval frigate has evacuated 225 foreign citizens from strife-torn Yemen, its foreign ministry said, marking the first time that China’s military has helped other countries evacuate their people during an international crisis.

Ten different nationalities were among the evacuees picked up on Thursday afternoon from Aden, Yemen’s second city, and transported to Djibouti, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement on its website late Thursday.

The ministry said foreign governments — Pakistan, Ethiopia, Singapore, Italy, Germany, Poland, Ireland, Britain, Canada and Yemen — had requested China’s help. A spokesman said it was the first time China had carried out a specific evacuation of foreign nationals from a danger zone.

A diplomatic source familiar with the operation said it was “very risky” and that fighting had come close to the Chinese warship.

“The Chinese ship was in the right place at the right time,” the source said.

Violence has been spreading across Yemen since last year, when Iran-backed Shi’ite Houthi fighters seized the capital, Sanaa, and effectively removed President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi. A Saudi-led coalition has hit the rebels with air strikes over the past week.

A state television report on Friday showed evacuees, who were mostly Palestinians, arriving in Djibouti.

“We are really thankful to the Chinese government, who really helped us, and took us out (with) the school children,” one woman told China Central Television.

The broadcaster showed footage young children stepping off a Chinese warship. It waved flags, and in one case, kissing a seaman on the cheek.

The evacuation of foreigners bolsters China’s image at home and abroad, according to Shen Dingli, an international relations professor at Fudan University in Shanghai.

“We wouldn’t look very good if we have the capacity to help others but no heart to do it,” Shen said.

“Now we look really good,” he added.

China had earlier evacuated 571 of its own nationals, along with eight foreigners who worked for Chinese companies.

Once-remote China has become increasingly active in disaster relief and humanitarian aid abroad as its global economic interests expand.

“China has been keen to learn from the experience of other countries on how to evacuate people, especially after Libya,” said one senior Western diplomat in Beijing. “It’s good to see China taking more of an interest in this.”

A low-key diplomatic player in the Middle East despite its reliance on oil from the region, China has voiced concern at the surge in violence in Yemen and called for a political solution.

Beijing drew international praise last year when it sent elite troops to help Ebola-hit Liberia by building a treatment centre and help transport medical supplies.

China also sent a state-of-the-art hospital ship to the Philippines in 2013 after one of the world’s biggest typhoons killed thousands.

Iran, world powers reach initial deal on reining in Teheran’s nuclear programme

BEIRUT, 3 April — French investigators believe there is a “reasonable hope” that a ‘black box’ data recorder recovered from the crash site of a Germanwings (LHAG, DE) jet can provide useful evidence despite suffering some damage, the lead French prosecutor said on Thursday.

Marseille prosecutor Brice Robin also said 130 sets of DNA had been found in the wreckage, corresponding to the number of passengers and crew on board the Airbus A320 jet that crashed in the French Alps on 24 March.

He stressed, though, that the discovery of 150 DNA sets did not mean that all the victims had been found.

At each matching of a DNA set to a victim, families will immediately be informed, he said in a news briefing in Marseille, monitored on live television.

President Barack Obama described the agreement as “a historic understanding with Iran” and compared it to nuclear arms control deals struck by his predecessors with the Soviet Union that “made our world safer” during the Cold War. He also cautioned, however, that “success is not guaranteed.”

The framework is contingent on reaching an agreement by 30 June. All sanctions on Iran remain in place until a final deal.

Celebrations erupted in the Iranian capital Teheran. Videos and pictures posted on social media showed cars in Teheran honking horns as passengers clapped. In one video posted on Facebook, a group of women could be heard clapping and chanting “Thank you, Rouhani.” in praise of President Hassan Rouhani.

French prosecutor of Marseille, Brice Robin (L) and French Gendarmerie General David Galtier (R), who holds an image of the black box data flight recorder, attend a news conference in Marseille on 2 April, 2015.— Reuters

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France sees ‘reasonable hope’ Germanwings black box data intact

Iranian and French negotiators reached a framework agreement on Thursday on curbing Iran’s nuclear programme for at least a decade, a step towards a final deal that could end 12 years of brinkmanship, threats and confrontation.

The tentative agreement, after eight days of marathon talks in Switzerland, clears the way for negotiations on a settlement aimed at allaying Western fears that Iran was seeking to build an atomic bomb and in return lift economic sanctions on the Islamic Republic.

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China, Canada sign social security agreement

OTTAWA, 3 April — The Agreement on Social Security between China and Canada was signed here on Thursday.

Under the deal, Chinese companies and their employees sent to work temporarily in China will continue to contribute to Canada Pension Plan while Chinese companies operating in Canada and their posted employees will continue contributing to China’s pension programme. Signed by Hu Xiaoyi, vice minister of China’s Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security and Alice Wong, Canada’s Minister of State, the agreement will eliminate situations in which individuals and their employers have to contribute to both Canada Pension Plan and the comparable pension programme of China for the same work.

It will result in substantial savings and increase the economic competitiveness of Canadian companies operating in China. Chinese companies and their employees sent to work in Canada will benefit from the same advantages.

The agreement will enter into force once Canada and China have completed the approval procedures specified in their respective legislation.

“Our government is committed to creating an environment that will help facilitate increased trade between Canada and China. This social security agreement represents yet another step forward in strengthening the relationship and cooperation between our two countries,” said Alice Wong. —Xinhua

Israel finds man reported missing, accuses him of staging abduction

JERUSALEM, 3 April — Israeli soldiers stop a car as they search for a missing Israeli near the West Bank city of Hebron on 2 April, 2015.— Reuters

Israel poured troops into a Palestinian village in occupied land on Thursday in search for a man reported missing, then found him unscathed at a nearby Jewish settlement and accused him of having staged an abduction, police and military spokesmen said.

Police spokeswoman Luba Samri said the man, Niv Asraf, and an unidentified friend who sparked a crisis by telephoning police a phoney emergency call would face investigation.

The military launched dozens of house-to-house searches in a village near the West Bank city of Hebron where Asraf, 22, was said to have disappeared while looking for a wrench to fix a flat tyre.

“Initial indications of abduction were proven false,” the army said later in a statement, after police said Asraf had been found camping in a riverbed in the Kedma Arba settlement.

Israeli media said Asraf was from southern Israel.

The searches were the most widespread by Israeli forces in the territory since a June dragnet for three abducted Israeli teens whose bodies were found two weeks later in the same area, near the West Bank city of Hebron.

The teens’ deaths and the rescue of a Palestinian youth in Jerusalem were part of a chain of events that led to last summer’s 50-day Gaza war.

Al Shabaab kills at least 147 at Kenyan university; siege ends

SOMALIA, (Kenya), 3 April — Gunmen from the Islamist militant group al Shabaab stormed a university in Kenya and killed at least 147 people on Thursday, in the worst attack on Kenyan soil since the US embassy was bombed in 1998.

The siege ended nearly 15 hours after the Somali group’s gunmen shot their way into the Garissa University College campus in a pre-dawn attack, sparing Muslim students and taking many Christians hostage.

Interior Minister Joseph Nkaissery said four gunmen strapped with explosives were behind the attack, the same number that killed 67 people during the 2013 bloodbath at a shopping mall in Nairobi. “The operation has ended successfully. Four terrorists have been killed,” Nkaissery told Kenyan media. Kenyan police chief Joseph Boinet said the attackers had “shot indiscriminately” when they entered the university compound.

Police and soldiers surrounded the campus and exchanged gunfire with the attackers throughout the day but were repeatedly repelled. At least 79 people were injured and many airlifted to Nairobi, Kenya’s national disaster body said.

Al Shabaab, who carried out the deadly attack on the Westgate shopping mall in Nairobi in 2013 from responsibility for the raid on the campus in Garissa, a town 200 km (120 miles) from the Somali border. The group has links to al-Qaeda and a record of raids on Kenyan soil in retaliation for Nairobi sending troops to fight it in its home state of Somalia.

Al-Qaeda bombed the United States embassies in Kenya and Tanzania on the same day in 1998, killing 224 people and wounding thousands of people. The United States condemned the latest attack and offered Kenya help in fighting al Shabaab. One image provided by a local journalist showed a dozen blood-soaked bodies strewn across a single university classroom in Garissa. But some students managed to escape unaided. “We heard some gunshots and we were sleeping so it was around five and guys started jumping up and down running for their lives,” an unnamed student told Kenya’s state-run KTN TV.

Authorities offered a 20 million shilling ($145,042) reward for information leading to the arrest of a man called Mohamed Mohamed, described as “most wanted” and linked to the attack. Police chief Boinet said Kenya had imposed a dusk-to-dawn curfew on four regions near the Somalia border. —Reuters

California used 70 million gallons of water in fracting in 2014

SAN FRANCISCO, 3 April — California oil producers used 214 acre-feet of water, equivalent to nearly 70 million gallons, in the process of fracting for oil and gas in the state last year, less than previously projected, state officials told Reuters on Thursday.

The practice of fracting, or fracking, occurs when water and some chemicals are injected deep underground at high pressure to break up rock and release oil and gas into wells.

Environmentalists argue that fracting is an unusual use of water, given the state’s ongoing, multi-year drought. They also say it has the potential to contaminate fresh drinking water supplies.

Bohlen said that not all of the water used for fracting is fresh water. Some portion of it is "produced" water, or water that comes to the surface during oil drilling that is not suitable for drinking or agricultural use.

The industry brought 387,000 acre-feet of produced water to the surface last year, Bohlen said. Of that, two-thirds was put back into the aquifers from which it came or was used to produce more oil through drilling techniques including steam flooding and cyclic steam injection.

The remaining third was put into underground injection, evaporated in surface ponds, or cleaned up for beneficial use, he said.

About 25,000 acre-feet of produced water is used for beneficial use in the San Ardo, Caswell, and Arvin water districts, he said. A law passed last year requires oil producers to report the sources of water used in all oil and gas extraction as well as where the water goes.

The first data report is due 31 April and will be made public soon after, Bohlen said.— Reuters

A digital traffic sign usually used for commuter travel information informs travellers southbound on interstate highway 5 to conserve water as they pass through Del Mar, California on 10 Sept, 2014.— Reuters
Food safety: from farm to PLATE make food SAFE

Dr. Aung Soe @ Aung Kyaw Moe
Retired State Medical Superintendent

T he above mentioned theme is meant for World Health Day 2015 which falls on coming Tuesday 7th April, this is, on the birthday of World Health Organization (WHO). WHO constitution was adopted unanimously by UN member nations on 7th April 1948, and selected 7th April as World Health Day to be celebrated all over the world. As such, 7th April 2015 is 67th annual occasion. Today WHO has 193 member nations, including Myanmar. Myanmar joins WHO on first July 1948, soon after its existence, whose headquarters situates in Geneva, Switzerland.

Every year, the World Health Organization selects a priority area of global public health concern as the theme for World Health Day. The theme for World Health Day 2015, Food Safety is a theme of high relevance to all people on the planet, and multiple stakeholders, including government, civil society, the private sector, an inter-governmental agencies, WHO states.

Safe food underpins essential public health. Food safety is thus a prerequisite for food security. WHO statement continues.

New threats to food safety are constantly emerging. Changes in food production, distribution and consumption (i.e. intensive agriculture, globalization of food trade, mass catering and street food), changes to the environment, new and emerging bacteria and toxins, antimicrobial resistance—all increase the risk that food becomes contaminated. Increases in travel and trade enhance the likelihood that contamination can spread, WHO noted.

The World Health Organization helps and encourages countries to prevent, detect and respond to food-borne disease outbreaks in line with the Codex Alimentarius, a collection of international food standards, guidelines and codes of practice covering all the main foods. Recognizing that food safety is a cross-cutting issue and shared responsibility, the World Health Organization welcomes the participation of non-public health sectors i.e. agriculture, trade and commerce, environment, standardization) in this campaign and seeks support of major international and regional agencies and organizations active in the fields of food, emergency aid, and education, it learnt.

World Health Day 2015 is an opportunity to alert governments, manufacturers, retailers and the public to the importance of food safety—and the part each can play in ensuring that the food on peoples’ plates is safe to eat, it is believed.

Access to sufficient amounts of food and nutritious food is key to sustaining life and promoting good health. Unsafe food— containing harmful bacteria, viruses, parasites or chemical substances—causes more than 200 diseases, ranging from diarrhoea to cancers! Another alarming fact is Food-borne and waterborne diarrhoeal diseases kill an estimated 2 million people annually, including many children. Food safety, nutrition and food security are inextricably linked. Unsafe food creates a vicious cycle of disease and malnutrition, particularly affecting infants, young children, the elderly and the sick. Food-borne diseases impede socioeconomic development by straining health care systems, and harming national economies, tourism and trade. Food now crosses multiple national borders from where it is produced to where it is consumed. Good collaboration among governments, producers and consumers help ensure food safety.

2015 World Health Day theme aims to encourage countries to improve food safety through public awareness campaigns and highlight their ongoing actions in this area. Another aim is to encourage consumers to ensure the food on their plate is safe by asking questions, checking labels, following hygiene tips etc.

WHO has set a timeline for World Health Day 2015 as:

(a) February – March: Launch social media drive, including promotion of multimedia material (video and public service announcement)
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(c) 5 – 1 May: A global movement of multimedia events organized in Italy and elsewhere.
(d) 7 July: Codex Alimentarius Commission (CICOG, Geneva).
(e) October: Publication and launch of WHO global food-borne disease burden estimates which surely be of prime value for public health

WHO proposes a guideline for policy makers as to make food safe a top priority and to integrate food safety into broader food policy, integrate food safety into nutrition and food security policies and programmes. So also to build trust through sound and transparent communication, ensure transparent communication between risk assessors, risk managers and risk communicators, promote awareness and understanding of food safety issues among the general public and to design educational campaigns targeting food handlers and the consumers.

Guideline calls for foster multi-sectoral collaboration to achieve sustainable and solid food systems, foster closer collaboration between the various sectors involved in food (agriculture, human health, animal health, trade, tourism, etc.) to strengthen prevention, promotion, and response to food-borne diseases, to promote the appropriate involvement of all interested parties and to build networks that are prepared to respond efficiently to food safety emergencies.

Why would public demonstration be considered old-fashioned in this day and age? The answer may lie with social media, which allows people to express their wishes independent of their location. Although social media is another way to express the desire of the people, it still lacks the impact of a street demonstration. For ordinary people, taking to the street still remains the easiest and most effective way to express their common desire. As a result, people around the world, however much their country has developed, still gather to protest. This practice may not change in the foreseeable future.

What is indeed anachronistic today is the use of violence in response to such public displays. Authorities in some countries still use violent means to disperse crowds, but most nations oppose such use of force, since it cannot solve the underlying problem and may worsen the situation. Such violence benefits neither the demonstrators nor the authorities. We can therefore say that while there is still place in the world for public demonstrations, the use of violence to suppress peaceful gatherings is truly anachronistic.

Is it anachronistic to take to the street?

By Myint Win Thein

Some analysts and politicians think it is anachronistic for people of today to take to the street in order to voice their demands or protest. However, people around the world still choose to demonstrate publicly when they feel the need, whether they live in a communist state or in an advanced democracy.

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Officials seek best strategy for safe delivery of health care

Mandalay, 3 April—The Ministry of Health, the Myanmar Red Cross Society and the International Committee of the Red Cross jointly organized a seminar on safe delivery of health care at the hall of the Mandalay Region Health Department on 2 April.

Secretary of the MRCS Dr Aung Mon made a speech, after which Chairman of Mandalay Region Red Cross Society Dr Win Naing explained the vision of the seminar. Also present at the seminar were Mandalay Region Red Cross Brigade Staff Officer Grade-I U Phone Kyaw, officials of social organizations, medical superintendents and departmental officials.

Tin Maung (Mandalay)

Supply of electricity extends to villages

Tatkon, 3 April—A ceremony to launch the supply of solar electricity to Thanbayagon village in Tatkon Township took place at a local high school on 2 April.

Township Administrator U Kan Saw Hlaing handed over documents to the village administrator before Nay Pyi Taw Council members U Myint Shwe and U Phone Zaw Han and Nay Pyi Taw Deputy Chief Engineer U Than Tun Aung switched on the supply of electrification.

Thanbayagon Village is located 25 miles northwest of Tatkon. Nay Pyi Taw Council allotted K85 million for installation of solar panels at 425 houses. Thanks to solar panels, Htantabin, Aingkye, Thabyegon, Natmar and Kwantaw villages in Tatkon Township have a reliable electricity supply.

Tin Soe Lwin (Tatkon IPRD)

Nine dead, three injured in traffic accident

Nay Pyi Taw, 3 April—A Forland vehicle driven by Chan Aye of Kyundaw Village in Kyaikti Township violently hit a Hilux driven by an unknown person on the opposite way at Tadabyu Junction near mile post 110/0 on Yangon-Mawlamyine road in Taungthu Ward, Kyaikti Township, on Thursday morning.

Three men, two women and four children totaling nine of nine men and three women on board the Hilux were dead on the spot. One man and two children in serious conditions were referred by Kyaikti People’s Hospital to Bago General Hospital.

Kyaikti Myoma police station filed a lawsuit against driver Chan Aye under the law.—MNA

Dispensary, library put into service in YeU Tsp

YeU, 3 April—Under the auspices of the abbot of Aungzabu Tawya monastery in Hmauwy, Yangon Region, a ceremony to open Aungzabu dispensary and library was held in Pangon Village in YeU Township, Saging Region, in the last week of March.

Chairman of Township Management Committee U Myo Chit, Maj Aung Kyaw Oo (Rtd) and Head of Township Information and Public Relations Department Daw Aye Myint San formally opened the facilities. Well-wisher Major Aung Kyaw Oo-Daw Tin Tin Khaing and family donated a chest of drawers and books worth K500,000 and Township IPRD head Daw Aye Myint San copies of magazines and books to librarian U Soe Thein.

Tin Htay (YeU)
Yemen’s Houthis seize central Aden district, presidential site

SANAA, 3 April — Yemeni Houthi fighters and their allies seized a central Aden district on Thursday, striking a heavy blow against the Saudi-led coalition that has waged a week of air strikes to try to stem advances by the Iran-aligned Shi’ite group.

Hours after the Houthi’s took over Aden’s central Crane neighbourhood, they marked another symbolic victory by fighting their way into a presidential residence overlooking the neighbour- hood, residents said.

The southern city has been the last major hold-out of fighters loyal to Saudi-backed President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi, who fled Aden a week ago and has watched from Ri- yadh as the vestiges of his authority have crumbled.

By nightfall the Iran-al- lied Shi’ite fighters had reached the edge of Aden’s port district of Mualla, they said. The Houthi and their supporters swept into the heart of Aden despite an eight-day air campaign led by Riyadh trying to stem their advances and ultimate- ly return Hadi to power.

Although the Saudi air strikes have had little ap- parent impact on halting the Houthi advance, a senior US military official in Washing- ton played down the pos- sibility that Saudi Arabia would send in ground forces.

“I don’t think they’re go- ing to do that. I think they are araying their forces along their border to prevent a Houthi incursion,” the offi- cial told a group of reporters, speaking on condition of un- anonymity. “They’re posted defensively.”

By midday on Thurs- day the Houthis were in con- trol of Aden’s Crane neigh- bourhood, deploying tanks and foot patrols through its otherwise empty streets after heavy fighting in the morn- ing.

It was the first time fighting on the ground had reached so deeply into cen- tral Aden. Crane is home to the local branch of Yemen’s central bank and many com- mercial businesses.

“People are afraid and terrified by the bombard- ment,” one resident, Farouq Abda, told Reuters by tele- phone from Crane. “No one is on the streets — it’s like a curfew.” Hadi loyalists had few heavy weapons to halt the Houthi advance, al- though the remains of one smouldering tank in Crane showed they had put up a defence in some places. Aden residents re- ported three air strikes against a Houthi position north of Crane on Thursday.

After Tikrit, Iraqi forces may turn back to Baiji — US official

WASHINGTON, 3 April — Declaring victory in the city of Tikrit, the next significant operation for Iraqi forces will likely be clearing out Islamic State fighters from the refinery city of Baiji, a US military official said on Thursday.

“I just happen to think that’s really the next sig- nificant military manoeu- vre,” the senior official said, speaking on condition of un- anonymity to a small group of reporters.

Last November, Iraqi security forces backed by Shi’ite paramilitary groups managed to break a months- long siege of the Baiji re- finery that had forced it to shut down operations.

But parts of the city and surrounding area remain contested, the official said, and Iraqi forces were divert- ed from Baiji to bolster the battle in nearby Tikrit.

“In order to do the Tikrit operation, the (Iraqi security forces) ... thinned the defence of Baiji and ISIL took advantage of that and has been pressuring them. But they’re holding,” the official said, using an acronym for Islamic State. The Iraqi government claimed victory over Is- lamic State insurgents in Tikrit on Wednesday after a month-long battle for the city supported by Shi’ite militia and US-led air strikes, saying that only small pockets of resistance remained.

The militiants captured the city, about 140 km (90 miles) north of Baghdad, last June as they swept through most of Iraq’s Sun- ni Muslim territories.

The US official also ac- knowledged “that there are pockets (of Islamic State fighters in Tikrit) that still have to be eliminated and they are working their way through those pockets.”

Recapturing Tikrit could give Baghdad mo- mentum for a pivotal stage of the campaign: recaptur- ing Mosul, the largest city in the north.

Still, the official re- newed US doubts that the battle for Mosul could hap- pen before the fall, given the mid-June start of Ramadan, the Muslim fasting month, and the extreme summer heat.

“Given the pace of events as I see them now, and the environmental fac- tors of Ramadan and the summer (heat), I think it’s probably going to be a little longer than we thought,” the official said.

Syrian aircraft bomb area near captured Jordan crossing

AMMAN, 3 April — Syr- ian military aircraft bombed areas close to its main cross- ing into Jordan on Thursday, witnesses and a group moni- toring the conflict said, hours after insurgents had captured the border post.

Insurgents fighting the government of President Bashar al-Assad said they had seized the Nasib cross- ing in southern Syria late on Wednesday, putting most of 370-km (230-mile) border area stretching up to Israel in the hands of the rebels.

The Syrian army has stepped up its operations along its border to prevent the flow of insurgents and weapons to the north. Jordan has pres- sured rebels in the past not to overrun the Nasib crossing so the highway could stay open to trade and traffic with Damascus.

Nasib, one of Syria’s last official border crossings, is a critical artery for goods into a country hit hard by the Syrian uprising, billions of dol- lars in goods traded between the Gulf, Turkey and Europe passed through the crossing. Nasib, one of Syria’s last official border crossings, is now crucial for importing goods into a country hit hard by Western sanctions.

Rebels said the Syri- an army had also escalated bombing raids on sever- al insurgent-held towns a few miles (km) away in the southern province of Deraa, which offers a direct route to Damascus 90 km (55 miles) to the north. Jordan has pres- sured rebels in the past not to overrun the Nasib crossing so the highway could stay open to trade and traffic with Damascus.

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Nissan to launch self-driving car in Japan in 2016: CEO Ghosn

NEW YORK, 3 April — Nissan Motor Co will launch a car with self-driving technologies in Japan under its namesake division, CEO Carlos Ghosn said on Thursday in New York. “There will be a Nissan product in Japan, which will carry autonomous drive,” Ghosn said at a Press conference on the sidelines of the second day of the annual New York International Auto Show. “Obviously when you have this kind of technology, you want also the Japanese market to enjoy it as soon as possible.”

Ghosn said the automaker, which has a five-year partnership with NASA to develop the emerging technology, set a timeline of 2016 for when it would launch its first self-driving car. Japan is the first market it has indicated that will have the car. Nissan will first introduce a technology that allows the car to drive on highways and by 2020 the company wants the car to be able to navigate through complex city traffic autonomously.

“It is going to happen step by step, because we need to make sure that the regulators in the different countries feel comfortable,” Ghosn said. “I think the regulators that you can take your hands off the wheel or your eyes from the road is going to take a lot of demonstration.”

Meanwhile, he said Nissan will continue its emphasis on "zero emission" technology, such as the Leaf electric car that will get a new battery with a longer range. But Ghosn said the main obstacle in overcoming consumer anxiety about the range of electric cars is to expand charging infrastructure.

"As long as you don’t have charging infrastructure, we’re not going to see a very strong development of the electric car," Ghosn said. "We need the consumer to get confident and for this, the key area is going to be the infrastructure." The CEO said he welcomes new entries into the electric car segment, such as media reports that Apple Inc is developing its own, because of the opportunities to develop infrastructure and reduce component costs.

“I consider anybody bringing electric cars to market even more an ally than a competitor, because today we have more opportunity into making the electric car mainstream,” Ghosn said, adding that he is “very curious” about how the tech giant could transform the segment.

While Nissan has a goal to have 10 percent of its annual sales volume to come from electric cars by 2020, Ghosn said all automakers will have to take their own approach to reducing carbon emissions as governments tighten regulations.

“If (emission regulations) get in my opinion, it’s going to get tougher,” Ghosn said. “Every car company is going to have to have a strategy in zero emission.”

Kyodo News

Kenyan research agency says Ebola vaccine effective

NAIROBI, 3 April — A candidate Ebola vaccine has demonstrated a high degree of efficacy, safety and could deal a final blow to the hemorrhagic fever that has killed so far about 10,000 people in West Africa.

Results from the phase one trial of the Ebola vaccine rVSV ZEBOV released by Kenya’s Medical Research Institute (KEMRI) on Thursday revealed its capacity to protect humans from the killer disease.

"Our studies on 138 volunteers have shown the Ebola vaccine is safe and has potential to offer protection against the disease. The vaccine will be tested further in countries affected by the epidemic," KEMRI Director Solomon Mpoke said in a statement released in Nairobi.

The Phase one trial of the rVSV ZEBOV vaccine was carried out in the Kenyan coastal town of Kilifi and three other sites in Switzerland, Germany and Gabon.

Kenya was selected to be part of the World Health Organization (WHO) led consortium funded by Wellcome Trust to undertake in-depth trials on the Ebola vaccine.

Researchers said that 138 volunteers who received the jab did not reveal any side effects. “The candidate vaccine was also able to raise antibody responses that neutralized Ebola like virus particles in the laboratory. This is a milestone in the war against a killer disease,” said Mpoke.

The research findings on the Ebola vaccine trials in Kenya, Germany, Gabon and Switzerland were published in the New England Journal of Medicine.

According to Kenyan researchers, the vaccine will undergo trial in Guinea to ascertain its capacity to protect individuals at risk of infection.

The WHO said Ebola has killed an estimated 10,000 people in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. A consortium of public and private bodies has financed the development of an Ebola vaccine.

Xinhua

Walking may help overweight people curb sugar cravings

Irvine, (California), 3 April — Walking for 15 minutes may help overweight people at least temporarily reduce cravings for high-calorie, sugary snacks, a small study suggests.

“This study showed that brisk walking can be used as a strategy to reduce momentary food craving,” said Adrian Meule, a psychologist at Ruhr University Bochum in Germany who wasn’t involved in the research. Exercise may provide some cognitive stimulation that interferes with thoughts about the craved food, and the discipline to regularly take walks to circumvent cravings might also improve the ability to follow through with healthy food choices, Meule said in an email.

Globally, almost 2 billion adults are overweight or obese, according to the World Health Organization. This increases their risk of premature death, breathing difficulties, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, hypertension, fractures and mental health issues.

The study, by Larissa Ledochowski at the University of Innsbruck in Austria and colleagues, examined the impact of a 15-minute treadmill walk on sugar cravings in a group of 47 overweight people who were on average about 28 years old.

To elevate sugar snack cravings, participants were asked to abstain from eating any sweets for three days at the start of the study. They were also asked to fast, drink nothing but water and refrain from any exercise for two hours prior to each assessment of cravings.

The researchers who exercised reported significantly lower cravings for sweets mid-way through the experiment and at the end than the participants who didn’t get on the treadmill.

Even when people unwrapped candy and held it in their hands, people who exercised first had fewer cravings than those who didn’t.

The study is small, and its limitations include relying on people to tell the truth about abstaining from sweets before the start of the experiment and a lack of measurements to track how much exertion was required by each participant to walk on the treadmill.

They were also exercising at a fairly low intensity, said Margaret Schneider, a researcher at the University of California, Irvine.

“The study only looks at the short-term impact, so really shouldn’t draw any conclusions about how one 15-minute exercise bout would impact eating behaviour throughout the day,” Schneider, who wasn’t involved in the study, said in an email.

Even so, exercise does have the ability to improve mood, and it’s possible that this could result in reduced cravings among individuals who eat for emotional reasons, she said. At the same time, mild exercise can also trigger metabolic processes that make more blood sugar available to the brain, reducing the craving for sugary foods.

And the study offers a reason to consider walking at a treadmill desk, also known as walking work stations, Schneider said. “Presumably, remaining active at a low intensity throughout the day will result in less snacking and enhanced mood among the overweight.”

Keeping healthy snacks on hand will also help, exercise may increase the intended effect on food choices, Meule said. “Otherwise, temporarily reducing food craving by brisk walking will be ineffective. Even if people successfully manage to control their food cravings, they still have to eat something.” — Reuters

Saturday, 4 April, 2015
Sandstorm sweeps over UAE, other Gulf states

Photo taken on 2 April, 2015 shows the street view amid a sand storm in Abu Dhabi, capital of the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The sand storm originated from Kuwait and Saudi Arabia hit Abu Dhabi on Thursday.—Xinhua

DUBAI, 3 April — An intense sandstorm hit the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and other Gulf states on Thursday, disrupting traffic and delaying flights. Fuelled by strong winds, the sandstorm reduced visibility to less than 500 metres and snarled traffic in Abu Dhabi.

The hazy weather conditions are expected to continue through Friday, according to UAE’s National Centre of Meteorology and Seismology.

Flight operations at Dubai and Al-Maktoum international airports were partially disrupted by the sandstorm.

The sandstorm was caused by a high pressure front from Saudi Arabia, which has shut many of its schools in several parts of the country, citing “extreme weather conditions.”

Flight delays also occurred in many other Gulf countries due to reduced visibility.—Xinhua

GREECE

Greece says ready to make IMF payment on 9 April

Greece will pay a loan tranche due on 9 April to the International Monetary Fund on time, its deputy finance minister said on Friday, seeking to quell fears of default after a flurry of contradictory statements on the issue in recent days.

Greece is fast running out of cash and its euro zone and International Monetary Fund lenders have frozen bailout aid until the new leftist-led government reaches agreement on a package of reforms.

That prompted the interior minister to suggest this week that Athens would prioritise wages and pensions over the roughly 450 million euro (330 million pound) payment to the IMF, though the government denied that was its stance.

Euro zone officials then said Greece told them it will run out of money on 9 April, which the finance ministry denied saying.

“We strive to be able to pay our obligations on time,” Dimitris Mardas told Greece’s Skai TV. “We are ready to pay on 9 April.”

Mardas had not received bailout funds since August last year and has resorted to last-ditch measures such as borrowing from state entities via repo transactions to tide it through the cash crunch.

The government is hoping approval of its latest reforms package will unlock remaining aid of 7.2 billion euros under its EU/IMF bailout and lead to the return of about 1.9 billion euros in profits made by the European Central Bank on Greek bonds.

Mardas said state revenue in March had topped targets without providing figures, adding that progress had been made in talks with the country’s official creditors on its latest reforms list.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel has said Greece would receive fresh funds only once its creditors approve the comprehensive list of reforms Athens has presented.
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MV THAI BINH BAY VOY NO (-)
Consignees of cargo carried on MV THAI BINH BAY VOY NO (-) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 4.4.2015 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of P.S.W (1) where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.
Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claims Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.
No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.
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AGENT FOR: MS G LINK EXPRESS PTE LTD
Phone No: 2301191/2301178

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MV HAN JIN SANTANA VOY NO (0043)
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Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claims Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.
No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.
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MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: MS CHUN AN SHIPING PTE LTD
Phone No: 2301186

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
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No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.
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AGENT FOR: MS TRANSFAR SHIPPING CORPORATION LTD.
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Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claims Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.
No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.
SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: MS BRILLIANT SKY SHIPPING CO LTD
Phone No: 2301186

WEATHER REPORT
BAY INFERENCE: 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 4th April, 2015: Rain or thundershowers will be scattered in Kachin and Chin States, isolated in Sagaing, Mandalay, Magway, Bago and Taninthayi Regions, Shan, Rakhine and Mon States and weather will be partly cloudy in the remaining Regions and States. Degree of certainty is (60%).
STATE OF THE SEA: Seas will be moderate in Myanmar waters.

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Poland expresses intention to become AIIB founding member

WARSAW, 3 April — Polish Deputy Minister of Finance Artur Radziwill on Thursday said that Poland intends to join the China-proposed Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) as a founding member.

According to the Polish Press Agency, Poland has sent a letter of intent to the Multilateral Interim Secretariat for AIIB. Radziwill added that Poland’s participation in the AIIB was part of the country’s engagement in global policies.

31 March was the application deadline. More than 40 countries have expressed the will to participate. The number of founding members will be confirmed on 15 April.

The AIIB will be an international financial institution aimed at funding infrastructure projects in Asia. The expected initial subscribed capital will be 50 billion US dollars with its headquarters to be located in Beijing.

Xinhua
**Lauren Bacall memorabilia, art sell for $3.6 million in two-day sale**

New York, 3 April — Art and memorabilia that belonged to the late Hollywood film star Lauren Bacall sold for $3.6 million (2.4 million pounds) during a two-day sale, according to Bonhams auction house. Proceeds from the marathon auction which ended late Wednesday and two bronze sculptures by British artist Henry Moore that were sold earlier at an auction in Hollywood, according to the publisher. No title or publication date revealed yet.

**‘Boyhood’ actress Patricia Arquette to write memoir**

Los Angeles, 3 April — Oscar-winning actress Patricia Arquette will write a memoir about her family and her personal take on Hollywood. Random House publisher announced it has signed a book deal by Arquette, 46, who won an Academy Award for “Boyhood”, reported Us magazine.

The memoir will deal with “her unconventional family, being a single mother at the age of 20, and her experience as a woman in Hollywood,” according to the publisher. No title or publication date revealed yet.

**Fans push ‘Furious’ franchise to record-setting pace**

Los Angeles, 3 April — Actor Vin Diesel admits he made a mistake turning down the second film in the “Fast & Furious” franchise because he didn’t like the script. “I realized later the audience didn’t give a shit about what I thought about the script. They wanted Dom Toretto,” Diesel said of his character, the leader of a team of street racers. It was the days of Diesel and his diverse crew drive Universal Pictures’ longest-running and most lucrative franchise, now with its seventh film, but the action star chalks up its longevity to “the audience claiming it as its own.”

As “Furious 7” opens Friday, its weekend haul could hit $122 million in US and Canadian ticket sales, predicted Phil Contrino, chief analyst at Boxoffice.com.

That would set three box office records: biggest debut for the franchise; for the month of April, and any movie so far in 2015. The first six movies earned $2.4 billion combined.

The cast of the family-friendly PG-13 franchise stoked interest on social media, posting photos from the set and taking fans feedback, Contrino said. The movie’s Facebook page has 54 million likes, higher than any other active film franchise.

“It just listens to its fans and incorporates what they say into the movies,” said Contrino. “In that sense, it is a very smart franchise.”

“Furious 7” features the final performance of franchise star Paul Walker, who died in a car crash in November 2013 at age 40 before filming finished. The cast said the movie sends off Walker with a touching tribute. At a time when Hollywood is under fire for lack of diversity, the franchise boasts one of the most diverse casts of any production — with blacks, whites, Hispanics, Asians, and women all breaking stereotypes.

“It is such a multicultural cast that I think our fans and audience globally see themselves in us,” said Jordana Brewster, who has played Dom’s sister Mia since the first film.

There is also the thread of family and brotherhood among the street racers who fight evil in far corners of the world.

“Not just in the movies, but off camera, we are a real family and I think that’s why the movie is so important,” actress Michelle Rodriguez said.

**One Direction not looking for Zayn Malik’s replacement**

Los Angeles, 3 April — One Direction will continue as a four-member band after the surprise departure of Zayn Malik from the group.

The British boyband is not planning to find a replacement for Malik, reported TMZ.

Sources close to Simon Cowell and the record label said that there will be only Harry Styles, Liam Payne, Niall Horan and Louis Tomlinson on their next album.

Zayn quit One Direction in order to become “a normal 22-year-old who is able to relax and have some private time out of the spotlight,” he said in a statement posted on Facebook last week.

He also denied any bad blood with his former bandmates, saying, “I know I have four friends for life in Louis, Liam, Harry and Niall. I know they will continue to be the best band in the world.” — PTI
Rio mayor says Olympic Park on schedule despite firm’s finances

RIO DE JANEIRO, 3 April — Work on the Deodoro Olympic Park in Brazil is on schedule and will not be affected by layoffs at the company building it, Rio de Janeiro Mayor Eduardo Paes said on Thursday.

The mayor told journalists the 2016 Olympic host city had put up money for the project and put more than 1,000 on alert because of difficulty obtaining the loan.

The company declined to comment on the press reports but a spokesman said work at Deodoro was on schedule. The 800 million reais (172 million pounds) park has been a major headache for organizers of next year’s Olympics.

During a visit to Rio de Janeiro in February, the Olympic Organizing Committee flagged delays in building a cross-country course for equestrian sports.

Deodoro will also host basketball, mountain biking and rugby competitions.

Ghana begins commercial gas production in China-built plant

Accra, 3 April — A Chinese bank-funded gas processing plant built for Ghana at Atuabo, some 218 km west of the capital Accra, saw its first full gas production on Wednesday, local media has reported.

This follows the success of the phased commissioning process that began in September under the supervision of the country’s energy commission. The facility, which was built by China’s SINOPEC Petroleum, consists of an offshore pipeline, the Atuabo Gas Processing Plant and an onshore pipeline.

“It’s important to note that commissioning completion does not necessarily imply that the Atuabo Gas Processing Plant will be operating at maximum capacity,” Adfel Oghaamey-Tetteh, public affairs manager for Ghana Gas, told local media.

He said the maximum production of the various gas products in the plant could only be achieved if the downstream off-takers or power-generating companies are ready to utilize entire volumes produced.

From last Monday, the plant with a capacity to produce 150 million standard cubic feet of gas per day (150 mscf/d), has started supplying about 80 mscf/d to the Aboadze Thermal Plant.

The plant also supplies 300 tonnes of Liquefied Petroleum Gas daily out of its projected maximum capacity of 500 tonnes onto the domestic market, while 30 tonnes of condensates are produced daily for power generation in the eastern power enclave in Tema, some 38 km east of Accra.—Xinhua

Five killed in sea accident in S Philippines

MANILA, 3 April — At least five people died when a passenger boat capsize in Sulu Province, Philippines on Thursday night, the military said on Friday.

Armed Forces of the Philippines public affairs office chief Lt Col Harold Canucan said the ill-fated MPB Walya was over loaded when it figured in the mishap at around 10 pm between Tapat and Pula islands. “The said boat was reportedly overloaded with hundreds of bags of cement, iron bars and with more or less 50 passengers, excluding the crew,” said Canucan. Canucan said Col. Allan Arrojado, commander of the Joint Task Group Sulu, directed the Naval Task Unit to send a Navy boat to the area after learning of the incident involving unregistered boat, which was coming from Jun D Wharf in Zamboanga City.—Xinhua

4 burglars dead after mine collapsed in SE China

FUZHOU, 3 April — Four burglars were killed and another two were injured after an abandoned mine collapsed in Fuzhou city in southeast China’s Fujian Province on Thursday night, city officials announced on Friday.

The mine collapsed at 9:05 pm Thursday when six burglars were stealing the famous Shoushan Stone by breaking through an abandoned mine in Shoushan village in the city’s Jin’an district.

One was killed at the scene and two were injured. Another three who were trapped in the mine were found dead by rescuers six hours later, officials said.

The injured burglars were sent to the hospital and are in stable conditions. Police are investigating the case.

Shoushan Stone, also known as as agalmalolite, is the material for Shoushan Stone Carving, an art originating in Fujian Province.

The use of the stone for carving can be traced back as far as the Southern Dynasties and have long been used to produce handicrafts and later on in the Ming Dynasty.

From 13:10 pm to 14:10 pm
12:00 noon
News / International
News

Entertainment Channel

News Channel in Brief

(4-4-2015, Saturday)
6:00 am
Paritta by Venerable Mingun Sayadaw
6:30 am
Physical Exercise
7:35 am
Hyper Sports
8:00 am
News/International News
8:50 am
Songs of Thingyan Festival
9:35 am
MRTV’s Youth Programme
10:35 am
Science and Technology Programme
11:35 am
Game for Children
12:00 noon
News / International News
1:10 pm
Round up of The Week’s TV News
2:10 pm
Round up of The Week’s Hlutaw News
3:00 pm
News
4:35 pm
University of Distance Education (TV Lectures)
7:00 pm
News / Weather Report
7:35 pm
Business News
8:00 pm
News / International News / Weather Report
9:00 pm
News
10:05 pm
Enchanting Rakhine Land
11:00 pm
Thingyan Festival
11:40 pm
Strange Arts
Ai Miyazato 1 shot off lead after ANA Inspiration 1st round

RANCHO MIRAGE, (Californi), 3 April — Japan’s Ai Miyazato fired a 4-under-par 68 to sit in second place after the opening round of the ANA Inspiration golf tournament, the first major of the year on the LPGA Tour.

Former world No 1 Miyazato chipped in an eagle and had three birdies against one bogey to trail American Morgan Pressel by one shot.

“I want to say I was pretty happy with my round today because I had a good start on 11. I chipped in for my eagle and that kind of kept my round going for that, so it was a good start,” said the 29-year-old Miyazato, a nine-time winner on the US tour.

“But, overall, I hit the ball well, and I hit the fairway and made the greens and made some putts. There were not many mistakes out there, so I was very happy.”

Also for Japan, Ayako Uehara was 26th, Sakura Yokomine was 39th, Mika Miyazato was 51st and Harukyo Nomura was 85th.—Kyodo News

Rodgers says Liverpool won’t be selling Sterling

LONDON, 3 April — England forward Raheem Sterling is not for sale and will not be leaving Liverpool at the end of the season despite media speculation over his future, manager Brendan Rodgers said on Thursday.

“I’m quite relaxed about it. It’s part of the modern game. He has got two and a half years left on his contract and is going nowhere this summer,” Rodgers told reporters ahead of Saturday’s Premier League match with Arsenal.

Sterling, in a non-permissioned interview with the BBC, denied on Wednesday he was a “money-grabbing 20-year-old” but said he was in no rush to sign a new contract.

The forward has been offered an eye-watering 100,000 pounds ($148,300) a week to sign a fresh deal, according to media reports.

Rodgers, who has had to deal with rumours about Sterling for most of the season, said Liverpool did not need to let the player go.

“If the club isn’t going to sell, it won’t sell — it’s as simple as that,” he added.

“For us it’s about continuing the nurturing and developing of a young player who has made huge strides in the last couple of years and for me that is the only thing to concentrate on over the remaining games until the end of the season.”

Rodgers confirmed a point made by Sterling in the BBC interview that a new contract would not be discussed until the end of the season at the earliest.

“The manager was aware of the reported interest shown in the player by Arsenal and I think that he wants with that serve. He is obviously very confident in his height and in the way he is able to hit any angle with that serve. He wants with that serve. He is obviously very confident in his height and in the way he is able to hit any angle on the court because he wasn’t going to give it to me,” said Djokovic, who expected a close battle with the Serb.

“John is probably the best server we have in the game currently. At his height he can hit any angle he wants with that serve. He is obviously very confident playing here. He played great against (Kei) Nishikori today.”

The six feet 10 inch-tall Isner delighted home fans when he blasted his way to a 6-4, 6-3 win over Japan’s fourth-seeded Nishikori. Isner never faced a break point during a dominant display where he held a 33-5 edge in winners and blasted 13 aces past his fourth-seeded opponent, including a rocket to close out the one-sided contest in a shockingly quick 70 minutes.—Reuters