President U Thein Sein visits Kengtung Cultural Museum, Loimwe hill station

By Aye Min Soe

BAGO, 7 May — The Denmark-based Carlsberg Group, in a joint venture with local partner Myanmar Golden Star, officially opened its factory in Bago on Thursday, marking the beginning of its beer brewing operation in Myanmar.

The joint venture invested US $75 million in the brewery, which has a production capacity of 60 million liters per year.

In addition to the flagship Carlsberg brand, the brewery will produce the Tuborg brand sold in more than 70 countries, and YOMA, a new brand developed for the Myanmar market.

Carlsberg Myanmar has not yet made plans to export products from the plant and will focus on the beer market in Myanmar’s major cities, said U Thant Zin Tun, the Vice-Chairman of MGS and the executive director of Carlsberg Myanmar.

According to the company’s research, Myanmar’s beer consumption, at 6 litres per head on average per year, is very low compared with 38 litres for Thailand and 100 litres for Europe. Carlsberg signed an agreement with Myanmar Golden Star (MGS) Group in February, 2013, retaining 51 per cent of the joint venture, according to the company.

Carlsberg says its presence in Myanmar will bring employment to (See page 2)

Peace in Myanmar must precede further investment, EU ambassador says

By Ye Myint

YANGON, 7 May — The European Union wants to help Myanmar end conflicts and achieve peace as its first priority, EU Ambassador to Myanmar Mr Roland Kobia said Thursday at a press lunch in Yangon to mark Europe Day 2015.

Europe Day highlights the principles of democracy and freedom which the EU wishes to share with Myanmar, Mr Kobia said.

The EU is one of the major foreign donors to Myanmar, providing a US $1.1 billion grant for the period of 2014-2020 to implement development projects in the country.

“The great majority of the money will go to education and rural development,” the EU ambassador said.

He said spending money on other areas is a waste until peace is achieved.

“If you don’t have peace, if you have conflict and if you have war, all this money will be wasted because war is not a conducive environment to develop the country or to develop democracy,” he said. (See page 2)
Union Industry Minister meets Malaysian, Thai delegations

NAV PYI TAW, 7 May —Union Minister for Industry U Maung Myint received President Elect Mr Yap Mew Sang and party of International Council of SME & Entrepreneurship (ICSMEE) of Malaysia at the ministry, here, on Thursday.

They discussed establishment of ASEAN Council of Small Business (ACSB) and International Council of SME & Entrepreneurship (ICSMEE) Myanmar for cooperation among ASEAN countries for development Myanmar’s SMEs, and participation of Myanmar’s Ministry of Industry in the 3rd ASEAN Council of Small Business (ACSB) Conference in Malaysia from 26 to 29 October.

The union minister also held talks with Chairman Mr Vikrom Kromadit and party of Thailand’s Amata Corporation PCL at his office on Wednesday.

They focused on investment opportunities in Thalawa, Kyaikkamy and Dawei special economic zones, Myotha, Pathein and Myawady industrial zones.

Bago brewery marks . . .

(from page 1) —Photo: Aye Min Soe

thousands of people countrywide in the coming years, with the company already employing more than 150 staff.

Guests who spoke at the opening included U Nyan Win, the Chief Minister of Bago Region, and the Danish Ambassador to Myanmar, Peter Lysholt Hasen.—GNLM

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and party arrive at Benazir Bhutto International Airport in Islamabad

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing being welcomed by senior military officers from Pakistan at Benazir Bhutto International Airport.

Peace in Myanmar must . . .

At the press lunch, the ambassador said the EU is going to help prepare for the Myanmar’s upcoming elections in cooperation with other international organizations.

The European Union comprises 500 million people from 28 countries. In a vote of support for Myanmar’s reform steps, the EU lifted sanctions and opened an office in the country in 2012. In 2013, a full-fledged delegation in Yangon was established with the arrival of its ambassador to Myanmar, with the country also regaining access to the EU’s generalized system of preferences.—GNLM

Performers show skills in dancing, music and song contests

NAV PYI TAW, 7 May — Various events of 21st Myanmar National Races’ Performing Arts Competitions kicked off at designated venues, here, on Thursday, with participation of performers from regions and states including Nay Pyi Taw Council Area.

At the convocation hall of University of Veterinary Science, two contestants took part in the amateur level (first class) women’s orchestra contest, one troupe in higher education level and four troupes in the amateur level (second class) event.

Three troupes took part in the amateur level (first class) Ozi contest while three women participated in the amateur level (first class) dancing contest.

At the assembly hall of Forest Research Department, two troupes showed their skills in the amateur level (second class) women’s orchestra contest, one troupe in amateur level (first class) women’s event and one troupe in higher education level contest.

United Overseas Bank provides its first onshore loan in Myanmar to finance hotel project

Mr Harry Loh, Executive Director and Country Manager for UOB Myanmar speaks about functions of UOB, Photo: Khaing Thanda Lwin

U Thein Tun, Chairman of MGS, (4th from left), Danish Ambassador to Myanmar Peter Lysholt Hansen (3rd from left) and Bagon Region Chief Minister U Nyan Win (6th from left) celebrates to officially open Carlsberg Myanmar brewery facility in Bago.—PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE

By Khaing Thanda Lwin

YANGON, 7 May — United Overseas Bank Group (UOB) on Wednesday announced that it has offered an onshore loan to a French-Myanmar joint venture company for refurbishing a new hotel in downtown Yangon but the amount of the loan was not disclosed.

The loan to Rangoon Excelsior Co. will help turn a former colonial building in downtown Yangon into a five-storey hotel, according to a news release issued by UOB.

“The financing of a local banking branch. It opened its branch at Park Royal Hotel in the centre of Yangon on 4 May, aiming to provide services to foreign companies such as trade and project financing, corporate loans and cash management solutions.

Within the first month of its Yangon branch opening, UOB expects to offer several more onshore loans to its clients in the manufacturing, hospitality and infrastructure sectors. These loans will help finance the setting-up of factories, retail shops and hotels.

Mr Harry Loh, Executive Director and Country Manager for UOB Myanmar, said at a media briefing on Wednesday in Yangon that UOB will focus on helping companies invest in four sectors—energy, manufacturing, construction, and hospitality.

GNLM
Nay Pyi Taw, 7 May — Vice President U Nyan Tun delivered a speech at the opening ceremony of the 21st Traditional Performing Arts Competition of National Races of Myanmar on Thursday in Nay Pyi Taw.

The competition at Myanmar International Convention Centre-2 aims to promote national spirit among all of the country’s people and help preserve national cultural characteristics and heritage through fine arts.

The ceremony was attended by union ministers, deputy ministers, members of the organizing committee and sub-committees, team managers, contestants and enthusiasts of Myanmar culture.

Organizing committee chairman, Union Minister U Aye Myint Kyaw, explained the arrangements for the competition. In his speech at the ceremony, patron of the leading committee Vice President U Nyan Tun said the government every year organizes the competition of traditional cultural music, dance and song-composing because such cultural aspects must be preserved alongside the territorial integrity of the nation.

Various national races have been living side by side in Myanmar for ages and have been building the union with solidarity which, like water, cannot be divided, according to the vice president.

Although there are slight differences in language, cultures and arts, all share the basic common principles of helping one another, empathy, respect and unity, the vice president added.

As cultural standards of countries are not identical, it is impossible to coercively unify and compare different cultures, as attempting to do so may result in cultural clashes, undermining weaker cultures, the vice president pointed out.

As Myanmar nationals appreciate the cultures of others and while loving their own, they have exerted efforts to promote, preserve and protect their cultural heritages, the vice president said.

The fine arts competition is also a festival to preserve cultural traditions of national races, sharing talents of older generations with younger ones, the vice president said.

The traditional Myanmar dance of Kabyalit has been introduced to the competition this year and traditional dances and rural local dances of other national races will also be invited to participate in the competition, the vice president said.

In conclusion, the vice president said he was proud of those who preserve traditions and cultures of the nation including artists who hand down traditions and culture to new generations.

The categories of the competition include amateur (first class), amateur (second class), higher education level and two basic education levels. — MNA
**Township officials disseminate knowledge about drug elimination to residents**

**Myingyan, 7 May —** An educative talk on drug abuse and crime reduction was held at Shwe Pyi Soe Sasana Beikman in Myingyan, Mandalay Region, on 2 May.

Township Administrator U Tun Thein Aung and Commander of Township Police Force Police Major Tin Htoo spoke about drug-related cases. Head of Township Health Department Dr Zin Mar Than Tun about narcotic drug and psychotropic substances law and IP Kyaw Soe Lin of Mandalay Region Anti-Drug Squad about drug elimination and traffic rules.

The talk was attended by township departmental officials, restaurant and lodge owners, businessmen and local enthusiasts.—Zaw Min Naing (Myingyan)

---

**Industrial Training School teaches local youths to become technicians**

**Myingyan, 7 May —** No 6 Industrial Training School (Myingyan) under the Technical Cooperation Department kicked off its No 2 course in Myingyan, Mandalay Region, on 4 May morning.

Deputy Minister for Industry U Thein Aung spoke on the occasion.

Altogether 165 trainees are attending a one-year course.

Also present at the ceremony were Deputy Commissioner U Myint Thin Aung, Commander of District Police Force Police Lt-Col Maung Win and officials.—Zaw Min Naing (Myingyan)

---

**Contestants from Bago Region make preparations for Performing Arts Competition**

**Bago, 7 May —** A ceremony to hand over a victory flag to the performers team of Bago Region was held at the city hall in Bago on 6 May.

Secretary of the organizing committee U Win Aung reported on preparations for enabling the region’s team to secure achievement in the competition.

Chief Minister of the region U Nyan Win presented cash assistance to the performers team.

At the ceremony, contestants performed traditional dances and Kayin Don dance to the audiences.

A total of 94 contestants from the team of Bago region will take part in 16 events in the 21st Myanmar National Races’ Performing Arts Competition.—Bago Region IPRD

---

**Emerald Green Project gaining momentum in rural areas**

**Nay Pyi Taw, 7 May —** A team led by Staff Officer U Than Win Soe of the Department of Rural Development visited Thagala, Ywadaw and Ywagyi villages in Pobbathiri Township and Wetsu village in Zeyathiri Township on 6 May.

They checked the progress of the Emerald Green Project in the villages.

The staff officer spoke about correct and accurate accounts for the project and undertaking of agriculture and livestock breeding.

The staff distributed posters and pamphlets on implementation of the project to local residents. —Shwe Ye Yint

---

**Thai Chinlone team under training of Myanmar coaches in Mandalay**

**Mandalay, 7 May —** A Thai Chinlone team is taking training at Bahtoo Gymnasium in Mandalay till 20 May with the assistance of the Myanmar Chinlone Federation.

The team comprising eight selected players led by one manager and one coach arrived in Mandalay on 1 May. They have been undertaking two sessions of training a day under Myanmar coaches U Maung Maung Myo and U Tin Win Naing.

The Thai team will take part in two of four Chinlone sports events in the coming SEA Games in Singapore. —Tin Maung (Mandalay)

---

**Women’s vocational courses aim to improve livelihoods**

**Loikaw, 7 May —** Women’s Vocational Training School in Loikaw, the capital of Kayah State, opened courses on domestic science, advanced tailoring, knitting and Kayah traditional weaving on 5 May.

In a talk at the school, Kayah State Minister for Security and Border Affairs Col Zaw Myo Tin said the training courses could improve the living standards of local women.

The principal of the training school reported to the minister on arrangements for the courses. —Township IPRD

---

**Departmental personnel present pamphlets on implementation of Emerald Green Project in rural areas in Pobbathiri Township, Nay Pyi Taw Council Area.**
**Australian man could face death penalty in China drug trial**

**WASHINGTON, 7 May —** Scholars of Japanese studies from the United States and other countries have urged Japan to address its wartime history as this year marks the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II, according to an letter released by them on Wednesday.

“This year presents an opportunity for the government of Japan to show leadership by addressing Japan’s history of colonial rule and wartime aggression in both words and action,” said the letter signed by 187 such scholars including Ezra Vogel, professor emeritus at Harvard University, and John Dower, professor emeritus at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

“We must leave as full and unbiased an accounting of past wrongs as possible.”

The move comes as divergent perceptions of wartime history have left bilateral ties soured between Japan and both China and South Korea. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe will deliver a statement on the 70th anniversary this summer, as he seeks to rebuild the relationships.

The letter applauded Japan’s postwar approach, noting that postwar Japan’s history of democracy, civilian control of the military, political tolerance, contributions to science and generous aid to other countries are all things to celebrate.

“Yet problems of historical interpretation pose an impediment to celebrating these achievements,” the scholars said in the letter, referring to the issue of the so-called “comfort women” who were forced to work at wartime Japanese military brothels as one of the most divisive.

“Exploitation of the suffering of former ‘comfort women’ for nationalist ends in the countries of the victims (including South Korea and China) makes an international resolution more difficult and further insults the dignity of the women themselves,” they said. “Yet denying or trivializing what happened to them is equally unacceptable.”

In the letter, they also noted that the exact number of “comfort women” is never likely to be known for certain.

“But ultimately, whether numbers are judged to have been in the tens of thousands or the hundreds of thousands will not alter the fact of the exploitation carried out throughout the Japanese empire and its war zones,” the scholars said.

“This issue has become so distorted by nationalist invective in Japan as well as in Korea and China,” they said.—Kyodo News

**Scholars urge Japan to address wartime history on 70th anniversary**

**Singapore teen pleads not guilty over blog critical of former premier Lee**

**SINGAPORE, 7 May —** A Singaporean blogger was charged in the Singapore State Courts after his arrest in March for comments he made about former premier Lee Kuan Yew.

Amos Yee, 16, appeared shackled in the Singapore State Courts after his arrest in March for comments he made about Lee. When he saw the bags containing the charges of spreading obscenity and offending a religious group, but was not required to enter a plea on a harassment charge for comments he made about late former premier Lee Kuan Yew.

Amos Yee, 16, appeared shackled in the Singapore State Courts after his arrest in March for comments he made about Lee. When he saw the bags containing the charges of spreading obscenity and offending a religious group, but was not required to enter a plea on a harassment charge for comments he made about late former premier Lee Kuan Yew.

Amos Yee, 16, appeared shackled in the Singapore State Courts after his arrest in March for comments he made about Lee. When he saw the bags containing the charges of spreading obscenity and offending a religious group, but was not required to enter a plea on a harassment charge for comments he made about late former premier Lee Kuan Yew.

Amos Yee, 16, appeared shackled in the Singapore State Courts after his arrest in March for comments he made about Lee. When he saw the bags containing the charges of spreading obscenity and offending a religious group, but was not required to enter a plea on a harassment charge for comments he made about late former premier Lee Kuan Yew.

Amos Yee, 16, appeared shackled in the Singapore State Courts after his arrest in March for comments he made about Lee. When he saw the bags containing the charges of spreading obscenity and offending a religious group, but was not required to enter a plea on a harassment charge for comments he made about late former premier Lee Kuan Yew.
Ceremony marks return of Peace Bell to Japanese Garden at UN

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon (L) and his wife Yoo Soon Taek ring the Peace Bell, donated 61 years ago by peace activist and former Japanese Garden at the UN headquarters in New York on 6 May, 2015. Kyodo News

Friday, 8 May, 2015

New York, 7 May — UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon on Wednesday joined other officials and guests in celebrating the return of the Peace Bell, donated 61 years ago by peace activist and former mayor Chiyoji Nakagawa, to the renovated Japanese Garden at the UN headquarters in New York on 6 May, 2015. Kyodo News

Iran releases
Maersk ship and its crew — IRNA

ANKARA, 7 May — Iran has released a Marshall-Islands flagged container ship and its crew which were seized last week in one of the world’s major oil shipping lanes, the official IRNA news agency reported on Thursday.

The agency reported an informed source as saying the Iranian Ports and Shipping Organization would issue a statement in a few hours on the details of the release of the Maersk Tigris. The vessel was diverted on 2 April by Iranian patrol boats in the Strait of Hormuz, prompting the United States to send vessels to monitor the situation and to accompany US-flagged vessels passing through the strait. Danish shipping giant Maersk had insisted on the release of the vessel and its 24 crew members. IRNA report did not give details on whether a years-old debt case was settled, as demanded by Iran for the release of the ship.

Iran’s foreign ministry had said on Wednesday that the negotiations between “the private complainant and the other party were going on”. The Maersk incident coincided with heightened tension between regional arch-rivals Iran and Saudi Arabia over the civil war in Yemen, in which they support opposing sides.

The US Navy had quietly stopped accompanying commercial ships on Tuesday, Pentagon spokesman Colonel Steve Warren said, noting that the original order to carry out the mission had only been for a brief period, which had ended.

US Navy ships started accompanying US-flagged commercial vessels through the Strait on 30 April, a decision taken following the Maersk Tigris’ seizure and after Iranian ships shadowed the US-flagged Maersk Kensington on 24 April. Maersk, the world’s largest container shipping company, chartered the ship, which according to ship operator Rickmers is owned by undisclosed private investors. —Reuters

Paris, 7 May — Spain has topped the global ranking of tourism competitiveness due partly to its cultural resources, the World Economic Forum said on Wednesday in a report that placed Japan at ninth in the list of 141 countries and regions.

Spain, also recognized for airport and other infrastructure strength as well as adaptation to wireless Internet services, has ranked top of the biannual report on tourist-friendly economies for the first time, followed by France, Germany, the United States, Britain and Switzerland.

Japan climbed to ninth in the competitiveness ranking from 14th in 2013. By indicator, it was ranked first globally in terms of both “treatment of customers” and “quality of railroad infrastructure,” a positive sign for a country whose government has been promoting the tourism industry for economic growth.

A record number of foreign tourists are visiting Japan, helped by a cheaper yen as well as government policies of easing visa rules and expanding the range of tax-free items. The boom is expected to accelerate toward the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

The WEF, known for its annual meeting in Davos of the world’s leaders, attributed Japan’s advance in the rankings to its “unique cultural heritage,” efficient ground and air transport infrastructure, and a newly launched wireless Internet service.

But the institution also pointed out that relatively higher prices are a less positive note for Japan as a tourist destination.

Australia, ranked seventh overall, is the only country ahead of Japan in the Asia-Pacific region. Singapore came 11th, with Hong Kong standing at 13th, China at 17th and South Korea at 29th.

Singapore appoints Jackie Chan as anti-drug ambassador

SINGAPORE, 7 May — Hong Kong movie star Jack- ie Chan said on Wednesday he was ashamed and angry when he learned of his son’s involvement with drugs as he addressed a huge crowd of teens in Singapore as the city-state’s first celebrity anti-drug ambassador.

Speaking to hundreds of students at the auditorium of the Nanyang Polytechnic, where his appointment as Singapore anti-drug ambassador was announced, Chan urged youths not to use drugs, saying, “It will harm yourself, harm your family.”

“And now it has even hurt myself too, and my family. So that’s why I am so angry,” the renowned kung-fu action hero said.

Chan’s son Jaycee Chan recently served six months in a China prison for drug offences for allowing people to use marijuana in his apartment.

The senior Chan, who was appointed China’s anti-drug ambassador in 2009, said the incident has made him determined to campaign harder against drug abuse.

“When I was young, faced a lot of temptations...when 16...I had to confront drugs, secret societies and gambling. But I remember what my father told me — don’t get involved with drugs (or) join secret societies and no gambling,” he said.

Pentagon notifies Congress of potential $3 billion Osprey sale to Japan

WASHINGTON, 7 May — The US government has notified Congress of a potential $3 billion sale to Japan of 17 V-22 Osprey tilt-rotor aircraft and support equipment, according to the Defence Department.

Pentagon spokesman Col Steven Warren told reporters on Wednesday that the aircraft has actually been used in reaffirming their safety.

The proposed sale “will greatly enhance the Japan Ground Self-Defense Forces’ humanitarian and disaster relief capabilities and support amphibious operations,” the Defence Security Cooperation Agency said in a news release on Tuesday.

Japan plans to procure and deploy 17 Ospreys at Sasebo, a city-state’s first celebrity anti-drug ambassador in 2009, was appointed China’s anti-drug ambassador in 2009, said the incident has made him determined to campaign harder against drug abuse.

“When I was young, faced a lot of temptations...when 16...I had to confront drugs, secret societies and gambling. But I remember what my father told me — don’t get involved with drugs (or) join secret societies and no gambling,” he said.

File photo taken in July 2014 shows a US Marine Corps’ Osprey aircraft flying. The US government notified Congress on 5 May, 2015, of a potential $3 billion sale to Japan of 17 V-22 Osprey tilt-rotor aircraft and support equipment, according to the Defence Department. —Kyodo News

US Marine Corps' Osprey aircraft flying. The US government notified Congress on 5 May, 2015, of a potential $3 billion sale to Japan of 17 V-22 Osprey tilt-rotor aircraft and support equipment, according to the Defence Department. —Kyodo News

Kyodo News
Baltimore asks Justice Department to investigate police practices

WASHINGTON, 7 May — Baltimore Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake asked the US Justice Department on Wednesday to investigate the city’s police department for civil rights violations after the death of a black man from injuries sustained in police custody. The investigation will look into police practices such as frisks, street stops of suspects and arrests to see if they violate the US constitution, Rawlings-Blake said at a news conference.

The request follows the 19 May shooting of Freddie Gray, 25, who sustained spinal injuries after being arrested. His death sparked protests and a day of arson and looting in the largely black city.

Maryland Governor Larry Hogan lifted a state of emergency for Baltimore on Wednesday. “We cannot be timid in addressing this problem and I am a mayor that does not shy away from our city’s big challenges,” Rawlings-Blake said.

Six officers were charged last week in the case, which involves the latest in a series of US deaths of unarmed black men involving police officers. The mayor said the city would seek to have its 3,200-member police department equipped with body cameras by the end of the year. Advocates see cameras as a way to monitor police encounters with civilians. Attorney General Loretta Lynch is considering Rawlings-Blake’s request, the Justice Department said.

Lynch met the mayor, police officials and community leaders on Tuesday. Rawlings-Blake, a Democrat who took office in 2010, said she requested part of her years-long effort to reform police. She said the department had made progress, with complaints last year of excessive force down by 46 percent. But improvements had not gone far enough, Rawlings-Blake said.

Gray’s death provoked a day of rioting on 27 April in which a number of businesses were looted and a CVS Health Corp (CVS.N) store was burned. The pharmacy chain said on Wednesday that it would rebuild the store.

The Justice Department has conducted similar reviews of US police departments. An investigation of police in Ferguson, Missouri, where an officer shot dead an unarmed black teenager last year, concluded that the department routinely engaged in racially biased practices.

The Justice Department is investigating possible civil rights violations in Gray’s death.

Last October, officials in Baltimore asked the Justice Department to begin an informal collaborative review of the city’s police department after the Baltimore Sun reported that Baltimore had paid almost $6 million since 2011 to settle lawsuits alleging police brutality and other misconduct.—Reuters

United Kingdom votes in most unpredictable election in decades

LONDON, 7 May — British voters get to decide on Thursday who they want to rule the world’s fifth-largest economy in a tight election that they hope will yield weak government, propel the United Kingdom towards a vote on EU membership and stoke Scottish desire for secession.

Prime Minister David Cameron’s Conservatives and Ed Miliband’s opposition Labour Party have been neck and neck in opinion polls for months, indicating neither will win enough seats for an outright majority in the 650-seat parliament.

“The race is going to be the closest we have ever seen,” Miliband told supporters in Pendle, in northeastern England, on the eve of the vote. “It is going to go down to the wire.”

Cameron said only his Conservatives could deliver strong, stable government. “All other options will end in chaos.”

The Conservatives portray themselves as the party of jobs and economic recovery, promising to reduce income tax for 30 million people while forcing through further spending cuts to eliminate a budget deficit still running at 5 percent of gross domestic product. Labour says it will cut the deficit each year, retaining the highest 1 percent of earners and defend the interests of hard-pressed working families and the treasured National Health Service.

If neither wins an overall majority, talks will begin on Friday with smaller parties in a race to strike deals. That could lead to a formal coalition, like the one Cameron has led for the past five years with the centrist Liberal Democrats. Or it could produce a fragile minority government making trade-offs to guarantee support on key votes.

British stock and bond prices were moderately higher on the final trading day before polling, with election jitters still failing to register any significant investor selling.

The pound was slightly weaker, but remained ahead of the US dollar, while British stock and bond prices were moderately higher on the final trading day before polling, with election jitters still failing to register any significant investor selling.

If that proved correct, either of the two big parties would need support from at least two smaller ones in order to get laws through parliament.

If a durable government could not be formed, Britain could face political instability and even possibly a second election.

At heart, Britain’s political system is based on a Westminster-style political consensus, which saw the Conservatives and Labour take turns in government, is crumbling as once marginal parties in Scotland and England steal significant chunks of voters from established parties.

The Scottish nationalists, who lost an independent vote last September, are likely to win the lion’s share of seats in Scotland, capturing dozens from Labour, and making Miliband’s chances of winning an overall majority much slimmer.

In England, UKIP has courted Conservative and Labour voters, but is likely to suffer damage to Cameron’s chances of a majority.

Cameron has warned that Miliband will only be able to rule with the help of the Scottish National Party (SNP), a result Cameron has warned could place the United Kingdom in peril.

Miliband has ruled out doing a deal with the nationalists, despite their overtures to form an alliance against the Conservatives.

“If we come together we can lock out the Tories. We will work with others across the United Kingdom, that is my pledge,” SNP leader Nicola Sturgeon said in Edinburgh.

If Cameron fails to win a majority, he could try to strike a deal with the Liberal Democrats, a repeat of the 2010 coalition, and possibly also with Northern Irish unionists and UKIP.

Cameron has promised an in-out referendum on Britain’s membership of the European Union by the end of 2017. Polls open at 7 am BST for the United Kingdom’s 48 million registered voters and close at 10 pm BST. An exit poll will be published as soon as polls close, and most results are expected in the early hours of Friday.—Reuters

Netanyahu clinches deal to form new Israeli government

JERUSALEM, 7 May — Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu clinched a deal to form a new government on Wednesday just before a deadline expired, but his coalition will rule by the slimmest of majorities in Israel’s turbulent parliament.

“Israel now has a government,” Naftali Bennett, the head of the far-right Jewish Home party announced at parliament after a late-night meeting of parties ahead by a single per-cent point, and one gave Labour a two-point lead.

Leading pollster Peter Kellner of YouGov predicted the Conservatives would end up with 284 seats to Labour’s 263, with the Scottish Nationalists on 48, Liberal Democrats 31, the anti-European Union UK Independence Party (UKIP) two, Greens one, and Welsh and Northern Irish parties 21.

That left Netanyahu’s ruling Likud-Bnei Brak, one, and Yisrael Beiteinu two, Greens one, and Welsh and Northern Irish parties 21.

Netanyahu had struggled to put together a coalition for nearly two months after winning an easy election victory, after a formal notice to President Reuven Rivlin that he had failed to achieve a deal to form a government.

Barely two hours before the 11:00 GMT (9:00 AM EDT) deadline mandated by law, Netanyahu’s right-wing Likud sealed an agreement with ultra-nationalist Jewish Home, which advocates annexation of parts of occupied territory Palestinians seek for a state.

Netanyahu dispatched a formal notice to President Reuven Rivlin, telling him “I am honoured to notify you I have succeeded in forming a government, which I would like to present to parliament as soon as possible.”

With Jewish Home, the ultra-Orthodox United Torah Judaism and Shas parties and Kulanu, a centrist faction, the Likud-led government will control 61 of parliament’s 120 seats.

Such a narrow majority will make Netanyahu vulnerable to policy demands from even his most junior partners, continuing a long tradition of instability in Israeli politics.

Netanyahu said he would seek to enlarge the coalition. “Sixty-one is a good number, 61-plus is better,” he said, without elaborating as to which party he would seek to add.

Jewish Home seems certain to push for the ex-pansion of Jewish settlement in occupied territories, a policy that could deepen Israel’s rift over the issue with its main ally, the United States, and the European Union.

Bennett, the party’s leader, has called for the annexation of parts of the West Bank. That goes be-yond Netanyahu’s pledge to continue to build in settlements only in areas Is-rael intends to keep in any future peace deal with the Palestinians.

In return for Jewish Home’s support, Netanyahu bowed to its demand for the justice ministry portfolio, a post critical to putting through cabinet-approved legislation to parliament for ratification.

Under a compromise, essential to Bennett’s authority may be curbed, Is-raeli political sources said.

The exact job definition for the likely bound Netanyahu is in talks expected to take place overnight until the agreement between the parties is signed.

Bennett, a long-time supporter of a bill, promoted by Netanyahu, that would allow in the law the status of the nation-state of the Jewish people. Critics, among them Rivlin, have said it runs counter to the founding fathers’ vision of equality for all citizens.

Another proposed legis-lation likely to be pur-sued would seek to limit the power of the Supreme Court to overturn laws passed by parliament and tighten controls over for-eign donations to left-wing organizations.

Shortly after the 17 March election, Netanyahu appeared to be coasting towards a right-leaning government with control of 67 parliamentary seats and voiced confidence he would be able to form one quickly. Rivlin initially gave him 28 days to do so.

But on Monday, For-eign Minister Avigdor Lieberman, whose once strong relationship with the Israeli leader turned sour long ago, took his far-right Vremei Beiteinu party out of the coalition talks.

That left Netanyahu with only 53 seats, making Jewish Home’s backing essential to ensure the unexpected election win would result in a fourth term for the 65-year-old leader.

Reuters
Asia: Stabilizing and Outperforming

Yu Ching Wong
IMF Resident Representative to Myanmar

A sia and the Pacific are doing well, with the region expected to remain a growth leader. This contrasts with the global economic landscape, where growth remains uneven against a backdrop of falling oil prices, sharp variations in exchange rates of major currencies, and potential market volatility. While momentum in advanced economies has picked up, several major emerging markets have lost steam. In addition, the prospect of a new mediocre for the world economy lingers, with medium-term forecasts being marked down again and potential growth constrained.

According to our latest Asia and Pacific Regional Economic Outlook, growth in the region is expected to hold steady at 5.6 percent in 2015, easing slightly to 5.3 percent in 2016 as the correction in the real estate sector continues to compress investment. In contrast, growth in Japan is expected to recover to 1.0 percent in 2015 and 1.2 percent in 2016, buoyed by consumption and exports. Thanks to recent policy reforms and lower oil prices, India will be one of the fastest growing economies in the world, expanding by 7.5 percent in 2015 and 2016. Across most of the region, lower commodity prices are expected to boost incomes and reduce inflation, although commodity exporters such as Australia, Indonesia, and Malaysia will be adversely impacted.

Sharp exchange rate swings in advanced economies reflecting in particular divergent monetary policies are also felt within the Asia and Pacific region. While commodity exporters Australia, Malaysia, and New Zealand have seen their currencies depreciate sharply against the U.S. dollar, other currencies have weakened by considerably less or remained stable. These divergent exchange rate movements may create a dilemma for some policymakers seeking to balance competitiveness considerations with financial stability concerns.

Growth momentum in the largest economies in Asia and the Pacific, while good overall, is expected to remain mixed. China’s economy is slowing to a more sustainable pace, with GDP projected to expand by 6.8 percent in 2015 and 6.3 percent in 2016 as the correction in the real estate sector continues to compress investment. In contrast, growth in Japan is expected to recover to 1.0 percent in 2015 and 1.2 percent in 2016, buoyed by consumption and exports. Thanks to recent policy reforms and lower oil prices, India will be one of the fastest growing economies in the world, expanding by 7.5 percent in 2015 and 2016. Across most of the region, lower

KDI discusses research on policies

NAY PIT TAW, 7 May — The 2014 Knowledge Shar- ing Programme with My- anmar Final Reporting Workshop took place at Thanghaung Hotel, here, on Thursday morning. 
Deputy Minister for National Planning and Eco- nomic Development Daw Lei Lei Thein and Senior Consultant Dr Won-dong Cho of Korea Development Institute spoke on the occa- sion.

Republic of Korea provided four work pro- jects—Public Sector Re- search & Development in Myanmar; Review of the system and suggestions for development; vocational training system for a skilled workforce; training on pro- ject appraisal technique, monitoring of the project, application software and introduction to credit guarantee sys- tem in Myanmar.

Experts from Korean Development Institute-KDI spoke about findings over policies while officials of the Ministry of National Planning and Eco- nomic Development, Min- istry of Labour, Employment and Social Security, and Ministry of Science and Technology participated in discussions.—MNA
Thai university students tour Tachilek, Mongla, Kengtung in eastern Shan State

Mae Sai, 7 May — A group of students from Thai-land’s Mae Fah Luang University recently completed a tour of eastern Shan State. After arriving in Tachilek on 2 May, the 57 students from the university in Chiang Rai visited a number of sites including the Wamun monastery, Swamkhun Pagoda and Kengtung Myoma market.

On 3 May, they made a single-day trip to Mongla where they visited the Dwe Nagara Pagoda, Drug Elimination Museum and Karuna Myitta Pagoda.

On 4 May, they called on officials of the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism. In the afternoon, they left for Thailand via Mae Sai.

MoHT

Activities mark UN Global Road Safety Week

Dawei, 7 May — Chief Minister of Taninthayi Region U Myat Ko gave a talk as part of UN Global Road Safety Week activities at the city hall in Dawei, Taninthayi Region, on 6 May.

Deputy Commander of the region police force Police Col Chit Sein and Head of Region Directorate of Road Administration U Kyaw Sein also spoke at the event.

After the talks, the chief minister and party viewed booths displayed by various departments.

Po Shwe Thun (Dawei)

Township Golfers Association compensates farmers for loss of land

Myaunng, 7 May — Farmers who lost land due to the expansion of a golf course received compensation at a ceremony in Myanmar Township on 7 May. The Myanmar Golf Course in Shadaw village-tract was expanded from five to nine holes on the land plots of local farmers under an agreement in 2001.

Some of the farmers recently sought to regain their land from the golf course, on the grounds that they had not been properly compensated. A government investigation found the farmers had not received any payment.

After negotiations between local farmers and the Township Golfers Association, a ceremony to present compensation was held at the hall of the Myanmar Township Administrator.

Officials of the golf course presented K370,000 per acre to 12.8 acres to farmers U Nyunt, U Thaung Hlaing and U Myint Oo through township level officials.

Nay Win Zaw (Myaunng)

Plan to hoist golden umbrella atop Jade Pagoda

Mandalay, 7 May — A ceremony to hoist a golden umbrella atop Weirawsana Jade Pagoda, located in Hsinywa Myinhmu village, Amarapura Township, will be held in the first week of June.

In commemoration of the umbrella-hoisting ceremony, arrangements have been made to hold a Chinlone contest.

Chinlone teams across the nation may enlist at Myanmar Chinlone Federation, Yangon, on 01-393420 and its Mandalay branch on 09-6801744, 09-6801744, 09-6801744, 09-6801744, 09-6801744, 09-6801744, 09-6801744, 09-6801744, 09-6801744.

Tin Maung (Mandalay)

MBED receives public digital library service machine

Nay Pyi Taw, 7 May — Ottara District Information and Public Relations Department installed a public digital library service at Office No 52 of the Myanmar Board of Examinations Department under the Ministry of Education in Ottarathiri Township on 6 May.

A technician explains usage of public digital library service for readers to staff.

Shwe Ye Yint

Readers may take e-books from the PDLs machine in a 650-m radius area through download access and read-only access.

Usage of the application is described on the vinyl board at the office. IPRD staff explained usage of the machine to office personnel.

So far, the department has installed three machines in Pobbathi-ri Township, four in Zeyathiri Township and one in Ottarathiri Township.
Yemen urges ground intervention to save country— letter to UN

Friday, 8 May, 2015

United Nations, 7 May — Yemen urged the international community “to quickly deploy land forces to save” the country, specifically in the cities of Aden and Taiz, according to a letter sent to the United Nations Security Council on Wednesday.

The letter from Yemen’s UN Ambassador Khalid Al Yemany, seen by Reuters, could provide legal cover for such a move. A Saudi Arabia-led coalition launched air strikes against Houthi rebels a day after Yemen notified the 15-member Security Council in a 24 March letter that it had requested military help from Gulf Arab states.

The Houthi militia battled its way into Aden’s Tawahi district on Wednesday despite Saudi-led air strikes, strengthening its hold on the city whose fate is seen as crucial to determining the country’s civil war. The letter sent to the Security Council also urged human rights groups to document “barbaric violations against a defenceless population.” It accused the Houthis of killing civilians and blocking medical teams.

The fighting across Yemen killed 120 people on Wednesday, mostly civilians, including at least 40 who were trying to flee the southern port city of Aden by a boat that was struck by Houthi shells, rescue workers and witnesses said.

The Houthis and ex-army forces loyal to former president Ali Abdullah Saleh have besieged Aden for weeks in an effort to resist resistance in the city where President Abdrabuh Mansour Hadi briefly based his government before fleeing to Saudi Arabia. “Everyone that has committed a crime will not escape punishment and the government will employ all means to bring the Houthis and forces loyal to former President Saleh to international justice as war criminals,” Alyemany wrote in the letter to the Security Council.— Reuters

Nigerians fleeing Lake Chad in Niger say some have died from lack of food, water

Gedam, (Nigeria) / Niamey, (Niger), 7 May — Some of thousands of Nigerians told to leave neighbouring Niger in the past week due to threats from Boko Haram militants have died en route, and some are dying of dehydration in their arms, evacuees said.

Niger has evacuated Nigerians living around Lake Chad, military and aid officials told Reuters on Tuesday, as the armies of four west African nations battle to quash the Islamist militants.

“I counted over 500 people that died on our way out of (the town of) Lakewa when the Nigerian soldiers were chasing us as if we are animals,” said 45-year-old Ibrahim, one of the group who was originally from Nigeria’s Kebbi state.

The United Nations humanitarian coordinator OCHA said that 25,000 people had arrived in the towns of N’Guigmi and Bosso in southeastern Niger after fleeing their island homes on Lake Chad. OCHA said most of these families needed shelter, food and water.

The governor of Niger’s Diffa region initially told people to leave by Monday for security reasons after an attack by Niger-geria-based Boko Haram, which killed 74 people. The deadline has been extended to Thursday evening.

A six-year insurgency by Boko Haram in Nigeria has seen thousands killed and displaced about 1.5 million people in the country.

Nigerians who fled to the Nigerian border said they had been called out of their homes, lined up and brutally hurried out with no supplies.

Nigeria’s National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) said on Wednesday that about 6,000 people had fled to Nigeria.

Musa Samaila, a fisherman from Lakewa, said he had walked for three days and his son had died of dehydration in his arms. “I can’t believe what happened that the government of Niger just woke up and decided to chase us out of a place where we have been doing business for years,” Samaila said.

Niger’s prime minister said the government was supplying food and healthcare to those who arrived at the camps in N’Guigmi and Bosso while thousands of other Nigerians had been repatriated.— Reuters

Southern Popular Resistance fighters gather on a road during fighting against Houthi fighters in Yemen’s southern city of Aden on 3 May, 2015.—— Reuters

Libya’s coast guard detains almost 600 African migrants

Tripoli, 7 May — Libyan Navy boat carries illegal migrants who attempted to flee the coast to Europe back to the coastal city of Tripoli on 5 May, 2015.—— Reuters

Tripoli, 7 May — Libya’s coast guard detained on Wednesday almost 600 illegal African migrants, among them pregnant women and 18 children, who had tried to sail to Europe on a fishing boat, a security official said.

The North African country, gripped by violence and a breakdown of state authority four years after the ousting of Muammar Gaddafi, has turned into a major hub for human traffickers smuggling African migrants by boat to Italy.

As many as 900 people may have died last month off Libya’s coast when their packed boat capsized as they were trying to reach the Italian island of Lampedusa. Many thousands more have managed to make the crossing in an almost daily exodus of boats.

“The coast guard arrested early this morning 585 illegal migrants from different African countries such as Somalia, Eritrea, Ghana and Mali,” said Mohamed al-Ghwaili, a spokesman for a police department tasked with tackling immigration. He said the Africans had tried to set off to Italy in an old fishing boat in Sabha, a town west of the capital Tripoli. Libya’s coast guard, under pressure from Europe, had intercepted several boats carrying around 500 migrants and brought them back to shore.

Captured immigrants are held in often cramped detention centres in Libya, sometimes for months on end, human rights groups say.

“I am worried that many of them who say they are from Africa often die,” a Libyan coast guard official said, adding that they have few resources and rely on fishing and tug boats to combat human trafficking as the central state authority has collapsed across the oil producer, with competing governments and dozens of armed groups battling each other.— Reuters

Chile’s president to reshuffle entire cabinet as popularity falls

Santiago, 7 May — Chile President Michelle Bachelet said she will reshuffle her entire cabinet today to try to shore up her flagging popularity, which has hit an all-time low in recent weeks after a series of corruption scandals.

Chile’s President Michelle Bachelet speaks at a news conference after her welcoming ceremony in the presidential palace in Santiago, on 30 Jan, 2015. — Reuters

Chile President Michelle Bachelet said she will reshuffle her entire cabinet today to try to shore up her flagging popularity, which has hit an all-time low in recent weeks after a series of corruption scandals.

Earlier on Wednesday, the latest poll showed that disapproval of the president was still growing.

As well as a scandal over illicit campaign financing that has mostly drawn in opposition politicians, Bachelet herself has been tainted by questions over a bank loan and lucrative land deal that benefitted her daughter-in-law.

Although she has always maintained she was unaware of the deal, in an interview on Wednesday night - titled ‘What is going on with Chile?’ - Bachelet said she made “important mistakes” in not returning from holiday or comment- ing on the case in a timely way. The fuss over the scandals has overshadowed her political agenda at a time when she is trying to push through ambitious labour, education and other reforms.

Most politicians from within Bachelet’s party welcomed the move. “Well done, President!,” tweeted left-wing senator Carlos Montes. “The resignation request marks a new stage.”

It is not clear who, if any, of the ministers will stay. Traditionally the finance minister, currently Alberto Arenas, remains in place for the entire four years of an administration.— Reuters

Libya’s coast guard detains almost 600 African migrants
India and Iran sign port deal despite US warning about haste

NEW DELHI, 7 May — India reached a deal on Wednesday to develop a strategic port in southeast Iran despite US pressure not to rush into any such trade agreements before world powers clinch a final nuclear accord with Tehran.

Shipping Minister Nitin Gadkari and his Iranian counterpart Abbas Ahmad Akhoundi signed a memorandum of understanding to develop the Chabahar Port on the Gulf of Oman, near Iran’s border with India’s arch-rival Pakistan.

“Indian firms will leave two existing berths at the port and operation- alise them as container and multi-purpose terminals,” the Indian govern- ment said in a statement, adding that a commercial accord would be needed to implement the pact.

India and Iran agreed in 2003 to develop the port, but the venture has made little progress due to Western sanctions tied to Tehran’s disputed atomic programme.

Now, spurred on by Chinese President Xi Jin- ping’s signing of energy and infrastructure agree- ments with neighbour Pakistan worth $46 billion, Indian Prime Minister Nar- endra Modi wants swiftly to sign trade deals with Iran and other Gulf countries.

Encouraged by a pro- visional, 2 April deal over Tehran’s nuclear pro- grame, India recently sent a delegation to Iran to scout for trade, energy and infrastructure deals.

However, the United States has expressed con- cern that India is moving too fast and could under- mine a sanctions regime imposed on Iran to try to bring it to the negotiating table.

Washington has said there is no guarantee that a final deal will be secured with Tehran by a 30 June deadline.

“Sanctions won’t solve the problem, but they certainly will continue to bring Iran to a final agree- ment,” Richard Verma, the US ambassador to India, said earlier on Wednesday.

For India, one advan- tage in a seven-lane free- way terminal at Chabahar is that it would provide land- locked Afghanistan with access to the sea, reducing its reliance on Pakistan.

Iran has also proposed a free-trade agreement with India, a trade minis- try source said. Rupee-de- nominated trade with Iran, started in 2012 because of complications arising from sanctions, has almost dou- bled Indian exports to Te- heran in the past two years to $4 billion.

Now, Indian export- ers are trying to build on that using a free-trade zone being developed near Chaba- har to export more to the Commonwealth of Inde- pendent States, made up of former Soviet Republics, said Mumbai-based Khalid Khan, regional head of the Indian Export Organizations.

WASHINGTON, 7 May — US private employers in April hired the few- est number of workers in more than a year, further diminishing hopes of a strong rebound in eco- nomic growth after the first-quarter slump.

The tepid job growth gains combined with oth- er data on Wednesday showing a second straight quarterly decline in pro- ductivity make it less like- ly the US Federal Reserve will raise interest rates in June as had been expected at the start of the year.

“The data pile onto recent evidence suggest- ing increased odds that, by the time the June pol- icy meeting rolls around, the hope of a great spring rebound in real growth will have faded,” said Ste- ve Blitz, chief economist at ITG Investment Re- search in New York.

Private payrolls in- creased 160,000 jobs, the smallest gain since January 2014, the ADP National Employ- ment Report showed. That was well below econo- mist’s expectations for an increase of 200,000 jobs.

Hiring slowed almost across the board, in manufacturing losing 10,000 jobs after elimi- nating 3,000 positions in March, likely reflecting the impact of a strong dollar. Private sector job growth has slowed since November.

March private pay- rolls were revised down to show 14,000 fewer jobs created than previ- ously reported. The re- port jointly developed with Moody’s Analytics was released ahead of the government’s more compre- hensive employment report on Friday.

The ADP has a poor track record of predict- ing nonfarm payrolls, and most economists are maintaining their fore- cast for a bounce back in job growth after March’s sharp slowdown, which was blamed on bad weather.

They, however, acknowledged there was a slight downside risk. According to a Reuters survey of economists, nonfarm payrolls likely fell 224,000 in April after rising by 126,000 in March.

“ADP typically doesn’t do a good job of picking up short-term swings from weather and other temporary factors,” said Ted Wiesman, an economist at Morgan Stanley in New York.

“After over-predict- ing the nonfarm payrolls number in March, ADP will probably undershoot in April as weather swings in the positive direction.”

Workers prepare outgoing shipments at an Amazon Fulfillment Centre, ahead of the Christmas rush, in Tracy, California, on 30 Nov, 2014. —Reuters

Safety switches may redeem potent CAR T cancer therapies

NEW YORK, 7 May — New therapies that clini- cal data show can elimi- nate blood cancers such as leukemia and lymphoma in 40 percent to 90 percent of patients may have to be genetically modified to in- clude a switch that shields healthy cells from attack.

The therapies could generate tens of billions of dollars in annual sales for drugmakers including Kite Pharma and Juno Therapeutics Inc, once they are approved.

The therapies involve using vehicle known as CAR T cells, which are white blood cells taken from the body and genet- ically modified to have the cancer-spotting traits of antibodies. These cells can circulate inside a per- son for years, even a life- time, relentlessly seek- ing out cancerous growth.

But a third of the pa- tients in some trials given CAR T cells have devel- oped life-threatening fe- vers and inflammation. Doctors say the reason is that the modified T cells cause inflammation be- cause they kill so many cancer cells so quickly. Another concern is that the therapies are eventually targeted at sol- id tumors such as lung or kidney cancer, they could also attack healthy cells.

The concept that solid cancers are not expected to develop the switches that kill healthy cells is one of the main reasons that the modified T cells are relatively inefficient at attacking solid tumors.

The modifications are designed to overcome this 

S Africa HIV treatment covers nearly half of the infected

CAPE TOWN, 7 May— Three million people living with HIV/AIDS in South Africa are receiv- ing antiretroviral treatment in South Africa, meaning treatment coverage for nearly 50 percent of the in- fected, the health minister has said.

“The high available- ability of the antiretroviral drugs and the fact that the country is on its way to- wards universal access to the treatment,” Aaron Mot- souleli said when address- ing parliament on Wednes- day.

South Africa has an es- timated 6.4 million people living with HIV/AIDS, one of the countries with high- est prevalence in the world. Many have said the antiretroviral programme has increased the patients’ chances of survival, but the logistics of supplying drugs for the 3 million have be- come a challenge.

“(Medicine) demand may always exceed sup- ply, but the programme in the country because of logistical problems,” he said.

According to a nation- al development plan, the generation of under-20s will be largely free of HIV by 2030, the minister said.
Hundreds of bodies may be buried in Nepal avalanche, official says

KATHMANDU, 7 May — Body parts are strewn on the slopes of a mountain in Nepal, and up to 300 people, many of them foreigners, are believed buried there by an avalanche set off by last month’s devastating earthquake, an official said on Thursday.

Rescuers pulled out six bodies from the Langtang village area, 60 km (40 miles) north of Kathmandu, on Wednesday but operations were being hampered by bad weather, said Gautam Rimal, assistant district administrator in the area.

About 100 bodies were recovered in the area on Saturday and Sunday and Rimal had previously said about 120 more were buried there.

But on Thursday he said the number could be as high as 300, including 110 foreigners. “There are body parts, broken limbs and pieces of flesh scattered in the area,” he said.

The government has said 7,759 people were killed in the on 25 April earthquake and more than 16,000 injured.

Langtang is on a trekking route popular with Westerners and the village had 55 guest houses catering for visitors. The village was wiped out by the avalanche but it was not clear how many people were there at the time. — Reuters

People work on top of the collapsed house to salvage belongings after the 25 April earthquake at Bhaktapur on 7 May, 2015. — Reuters

Cuba says to send 48-member medical team to Nepal

HAVANA, 7 May — The Cuban government will send a 48-member medical team including 22 doctors to Nepal in response to the 25 April earthquake that killed more than 7,600 people, official Cuban media said on Wednesday, citing Health Ministry officials.

The Communist government has traditionally sent medical teams abroad in response to disasters, including last year when Cuba sent 256 doctors and nurses to three West African countries to treat patients in the Ebola outbreak.

The team would depart with diagnostic equipment including an x-ray and ultrasound machines, the official website Cubadebate said.

While Cuba provides doctors and nurses for disaster relief for free, it also exchanges them for cash or goods on more routine missions. The island receives an estimated 115,000 barrels of oil per day from Venezuela, where some 30,000 Cuban medical professionals are posted. In all, more than 50,000 Cuban health workers are posted in more than 60 countries.

The death toll from the 25 April quake in the Himalayan mountain nation has reached 7,765, with more than 16,300 people injured, the government of Nepal said. — Reuters

Tornadoes, severe flooding hit Oklahoma City area, injuries reported

OKLAHOMA CITY, 7 May — A series of tornadoes, including a major twister, touched down southwest of Oklahoma City on Wednesday, injuring several residents of a trailer park, causing severe flooding and the escape of bears from a wildlife park, officials said.

No deaths were reported, but some residents of a south Oklahoma City trailer park were injured during the storm and treated at local hospitals, said Dee Patty, a police spokeswoman.

The Oklahoma newspaper reported 12 people were hurt in the incident, though there was no word on their specific injuries.

“I think we got lucky,” Patty said. “We’ve seen a lot worse come through these same areas.”

Patty also said two people were hurt during a weather-related road accident. The newspaper reported a third was injured when entering a storm shelter and a fourth person was hurt by flying debris and treated at hospital.

Bears briefly escaped from a wildlife park, officials said on Thursday.

The tornadoes flipped cars, downed power lines and snapped trees. Several roads were closed because of debris, the Oklahoma Department of Emergency Management said.

The National Weather Service issued a flash flood emergency for downtown Oklahoma City amid storms and heavy rain in the broader area. It said the airport received 8.9 ins (17.5 cm) of rain for the day.

Severe flooding was reported in the downtown Oklahoma City business district and South Oklahoma City, where local media reported a possible drowning victim after a flash flood.

Grady County officials said 10 homes in the nearby town of Amber were damaged along with 25 homes in Bridge Creek. South Oklahoma City reported a hotel along Interstate 35 was among other structures damaged.

The Oklahoma Corporation Commission said more than 10,000 homes and businesses were without power statewide. — Reuters

Woman surveys remains of farmstead she grew up in after it was destroyed by a tornado near Wichita, Kansas on 7 May, 2015. — Reuters

Rome airport closed after terminal fire, no serious injuries

ROME, 7 May — Rome’s main Fiumicino airport was closed on Thursday after a fire broke out in a baggage storage area but there were no serious injuries, officials said.

The airport would remain closed until 2 pm (2100 GMT), they said, noting that many flights would be cancelled or delayed.

Altitalia, Italy’s national carrier, said all flights to and from Fiumicino had been cancelled until the re-opening except some inter-continental flight arrivals.

The closure came at one of the busiest times of the day for the airport, when most trans-Atlantic flights are scheduled to arrive and depart.

Passengers who had arrived for early morning flights were not allowed inside any of the terminals. The main highway linking the airport to Rome was closed to allow emergency vehicles to pass and train service from the city centre was suspended.

The fire broke out shortly after midnight (2200 GMT) in an underground baggage area of Terminal 3, which is used for international flights.

Pictures posted in the Internet showed thick clouds of smoke emerging from the terminal, which officials said suffered serious damage.

At least three people suffered smoke inhalation, a fire brigade official said, adding that injuries could have been much more numerous had the fire broken out during the day when the terminal is crowded.

He said the fire was under control and that its cause was still unknown. — Reuters

Airplanes are parked on the tarmac at the international Fiumicino airport in Rome on 7 May, 2015. — Reuters

Global New Light of Myanmar
WEATHER REPORT

BAY INFERENCE: Weather is partly cloudy in the Andaman Sea and Bay of Bengal.

STATE OF THE SEA: Seas will be moderate in Myanmar waters.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL EVENING OF THE 8th May, 2015: Weather will be partly cloudy in Yangon and Ayeyawady Regions, Rakhine State and rain or thundershowers are likely to be isolated in the remaining Regions and States. Degree of certainty is (60%).

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Likelihood of continuation of isolated rain or thundershowers in the Upper Myanmar areas.

M7.1 quake hits PNG, local tsunami threat passes

SYDNEY, 7 May — A strong earthquake with a magnitude of 7.1 struck off Papua New Guinea on Thursday afternoon, but no tsunami alert was issued for the wider Pacific region and experts said the threat to coasts located near the quake’s epicenter has passed.

The quake, which had a depth of 23.2 kilometres, was centered about 144 km southsouthwest of Panguna on the PNG’s Bougainville Island and 642 km west-northwest of Honiara, the capital city of Solomon Islands, according to the US Geological Survey, which monitors global seismic activity.

The Hawaii-based Pacific Tsunami Warning Centre, having initially issued a tsunami warning for areas within 300 km of the quake’s epicenter, later said there was “no longer a tsunami threat.”

Chris McCee, the assistant director of the Geological Observatory in the PNG capital Port Moresby, told Kyodo News there were no immediate reports of any casualties or damage.

The remote area, one of the most seismically active on the planet, has experienced significant seismic activity in recent weeks, including at M7.5 quake that struck the PNG island of New Britain on Tuesday.

The USGS said the latest quake occurred as the result of normal faulting at the plate boundary between the Pacific and Australian tectonic plates.

Kyodo News

WASHINGTON, 7 May — Lieutenant Colonel Christine Mau, a US Air Force pilot who was part of the first all-female combat sortie over Afghanistan in 2011, this week became the first woman to fly the Lockheed Martin Corp F-35 jet, the Air Force said on Wednesday.

Mau, deputy commander of the 33rd Fighter Wing Operations Group, on Tuesday completed her first training flight in the single-seat stealth fighter after 14 virtual training missions in a simulator, said spokeswoman Lieutenant Hope Cronn.

Mau joined 87 F-35A pilots who have been trained over the last four years at Eglin Air Force Base in Florida.

“It felt great to get airborne. The jet flies like a dream, and seeing the systems interact is impressive,” Mau said in a statement.

She said flying with the F-35’s complex helmet, which fuses all sensor data from the jet on a mounted display on the helmet rather than in the jet’s cockpit, took some adjustment.

Women have served in combat aviation roles in a wide range of US aircraft for over 20 years, but they still represent only a small fraction of US military pilots. “Flying is a great equalizer,” said Mau. “The plane doesn’t know or care about your gender as a pilot, nor do the ground troops who need your support. You just have to perform. That’s all anyone cares about when you’re up there — that you can do your job, and that you do it exceptionally well.”—Reuters

Ex-AUM cult member appeals life sentence over 1995 sarin attack

Tokyo, 7 May — A former AUM Shinrikyo cult member has filed an appeal against a life sentence given by a lower court last week for his involvement in the 1995 sarin nerve gas attack on the Tokyo subway system, according to his lawyers.

Katsuya Takahashi’s defence team filed the appeal with the Tokyo High Court last Friday after a day and a half of arguments, including the defence team’s plea for an acquittal, dismissing the claim that the 57-year-old did not know about the plan to release sarin in subway cars on March 20, 1995.

A defence lawyer said the court’s fact-finding process and the outcome were not acceptable, and that the defendant’s constitutional rights had been infringed upon by the court rejecting the team’s call to have cult founder Shoko Asahara testify as a witness.

Captured in Tokyo in June 2012 after 17 years on the run, Takahashi was the last to be arrested among the AUM Shinrikyo members put on the special wanted list after the subway attack, which was masterminded by Asahara.

Takahashi has described Asahara as “guru” during the trial, suggesting that he was still under the influence of the founder’s teachings. Asahara, 60, whose real name is Chizuo Matsumoto, is on death row.—Kyodo News

For inquiries to place an advertisement in the GNLM, please email — wallace.tun@gmail.com

Call — (+95) (01) 8604532

Advertise with us!
Brad Pitt, Angelina Jolie selling new Orleans mansion

LOS ANGELES, 7 May — Hollywood couple Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie are placing their three-story French Quarter mansion in New Orleans, Louisiana on the open market with an asking price of USD 6.5 million.

The couple bought the mansion back in 2006 for USD 3.5 million in the hideous wake of Hurricane Katrina. The 7,645 square feet mansion, which has five bedrooms, five full and three half bathrooms, are finely finished with Venetian plaster walls, custom designed marble mantels and fireplaces, a grand spiral staircase plus elevator and a “gourmet kitchen with top of the line appliances”, reported Ace Showbiz.

While no interior pictures are available online, the property also has two off-street parking spaces, on site laundry facility and a spacious, private central courtyard with a small swimming pool.

After buying the mansion, Pitt started spending a lot of time in New Orleans to help revamp homes in the Lower 9th Ward through his Make It Right foundation. He has also filmed some movies in the city including 1994’s “Interview with the Vampire” and 2008’s “The Curious Case of Benjamin Button”. —PTI

Mariah Carey to perform at 2015 Billboard Music Awards

LOS ANGELES, 7 May — Pop diva Mariah Carey is another name announced as a performer for the 2015 Billboard Music Awards.

Between her shows at Las Vegas’ Caesars Palace, the 45-year-old diva will be taking the BMA stage at the MGM Grand on 17 May, reported Ace Showbiz. This will be Carey’s first time to appear at the annual event in 17 years.

She joins previously-announced performers including Britney Spears, Iggy Azalea, Ed Sheeran, Meghan Trainor, John Legend, Kelly Clarkson, Wiz Khalifa and Sam Smith.

Carey’s residency at the Colosseum at Caesars Palace starts on 6 May and will run through to 26 July. “#1 to Infinity”, a compilation album to accompany her shows, is coming out on 18 May via Epic Records.—PTI

Zac Brown Band beats Groban to take top spot on Billboard 200

LOS ANGELES, 7 May — Country group Zac Brown Band scored a third chart-topping album on the weekly US Billboard 200 album chart on Wednesday, beating singer Josh Groban to the coveted top spot.

“Jekyll + Hyde,” the fourth album by the Atlanta-based band, sold 214,000 albums, 115,000 songs and was streamed online 3.9 million times, totalling 228,000 units according to figures from Nielsen SoundScan.

Groban came in at No 2 with his latest album “Stages,” covering songs made famous in musicals such as “The Phantom of The Opera,” and “Les Misérables,” which sold 180,000 units.

The Billboard 200 chart tallies album sales, song sales (10 songs equal one album) and streaming activity (1,500 streams equal one album).

The only other new entry to crack the top ten of the Billboard 200 chart this week was country artist Tyler Farr’s “Suffer in Peace,” at No 4. Last week’s chart-topper, “Sound & Colour,” by Alabama Shakes, dropped to No 7.

On the Digital Songs chart, which measures online download sales, Wiz Khalifa and Charlie Puth’s “See You Again,” from the “Furious 7” soundtrack held steady at No 1 with a further 285,000 digital sales in the past week.—Reuters

Rolling Stones’ Jagger, Wood record Nepal quake charity single

LONDON, 7 May — The Rolling Stones’ Mick Jagger and Ronnie Wood have joined forces with British soul singer Beverley Knight to record a charity single in aid of victims of last month’s earthquake in Nepal.

The track, entitled “Look Into Your Heart” will raise funds for charity Save The Children’s Nepal Earthquake Appeal.

Wood said he was “delighted” to be able to take part in the recording, which features Knight on lead vocals and Jagger on backing vocals. They are accompanied by a 100-strong assembled choir of the charity’s supporters.

“The terrible events in Nepal show just how vulnerable our fellow man can be in the face of nature,” Knight said.

“My hope is that the proceeds of this song will go some way to help raise urgently needed funds to repair homes and restore lives.”

The track was produced by Pink Floyd drummer Nick Mason.

More than 7,500 people were killed and hundreds of thousands left homeless by the quake, which struck on 25 April.—Reuters

Korean pop band Bigbang back with new single after three years

SEOUL, 7 May — Popular South Korean boy band Bigbang is back on the music scene after a three-year hiatus, with a new single delving into the stresses of daily life.

The track, entitled “Loose”, has dominated South Korea’s online music charts since its release on 1 May and its video has been more than 12 million hits on YouTube. It has also ranked top on the iTunes single charts of Hong Kong, Macau, Singapore and Taipei, where the band has many fans.

The quintet had taken time off while band members focused on their solo careers. They hope to release a single a month until August, culminating in a new album in September.

“Society is very competitive. I think the word ‘loser’ can explain many problems from competition and many people are struggling to survive,” band member Taeyang said in an interview on Wednesday. “It is comforting that we are singing on their behalf and that is why people love this song.”

While Korean pop, known as “K-pop,” projects a wholesome image to its fans, it has also been criticised by some of the public for its cut-throat competition and the way it treats young talent, such as excessively long hours and low pay until they make it big.

“Many training places churn our the same people,” Taeyang said. “I believe music must show the identities that each of us has.”

The “Korean Wave” of music has swamped Asia, winning fans from Tokyo to Singapore and beyond but it has had little impact in Europe and the United States with the exception of Psy’s “Gangnam Style” hit in 2012.—Reuters
Social capital encouraged in water pollution control

BEIJING, 7 May — China will encourage more social investment to team up with the government in water pollution prevention and control, according to a guideline issued on Wednesday.

The efforts will focus on drinking water sources, and additional areas of water pollution prevention and control will be opened for public investment, said the guideline, jointly issued by the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Environmental Protection (MEP). Water pollution prevention and control, including river protection, drinking water safety and environmental monitoring, currently depend on government investment.

The guideline said an investment-return system should be set up to attract social capital to expand financing channels.

Israel FA presses Blatter in effort to avert suspension

ZURICH, Jerusalem, 7 May — Israel’s top football administrators met FIFA President Sepp Blatter in Zurich on Wednesday in an attempt to avert a vote called by the Palestinians to suspend Israel from the world body.

The Palestine Football Association (PFA) accuses Israel of hampering its activities and restricting the movement of players between the Gaza Strip and the Israeli-occupied West Bank. It also cites security concerns for the restrictions it imposes.

Blatter met Israeli Football Association (IFA) chairman Ofer Eini and chief executive Rotem Kamer to discuss the PFA request for the vote at a FIFA Congress on 29 May. The IFA said it would host a further meeting between Eini and his Palestinian counterpart Jibril Rajoub in the next few days. “FIFA President Blatter reiterated his position that any member association that is fulfilling its statutory duties should not be suspended,” a FIFA statement said. “This would also apply to the IFA as long as they fulfil such duties.”

The vote is expected to be offered to hope for the IFA, who have not themselves been accused of violating any FIFA statutes and have argued that they cannot control the actions of Israel’s security forces.

Earlier, an IFA official told Reuters that Eini and Kamer would urge Blatter to use his influence to strike the PFA proposal from the Congress agenda.

If FIFA were to suspend Israel, it would bar all its teams and clubs from competing in international events, including World Cup qualifications.

Other suspensions are not uncommon, the world body has taken such action mainly when a government has intervened in its football association’s affairs.

Israel is currently competing in the Euro 2016 qualifying event and its clubs will join European club tournaments in July, when Israel is also due to host the European women’s under-19 championships. Suspension could force the event to be moved. For the Palestinian proposal to pass, it would need the approval of 75 percent of FIFA’s 209 member associations.

In a letter to all FIFA members, Eini appealed for them to reject the proposal, saying it was “a flagrant move that seeks to mix politics with sport — something that is completely contrary to FIFA’s vision.”

Before leaving Tel Aviv he added: “Our meeting with Blatter is very significant as we endeavour to prevent the possibility of a vote... it is a major part of our effort.”

The IFA official, who declined to be named, said Eini and Kamer would also discuss with German FA chief Wolfgang Niersbach to seek more support.

Deep-sea microbes called missing link for complex cellular life

WASHINGTON, 7 May — Deep beneath the Atlantic Ocean between Greenland and Norway, scientists have found microorganisms they call a missing link connecting the simple cells that first populated Earth to the complex cellular life that emerged roughly 2 billion years ago.

The researchers said on Wednesday a group of microorganisms called Lokiar- chaeota, or Loki for short, were retrieved from the inhospitable, frigid seabed about 1.5 miles (2.5 km) under the ocean floor at a site too far from a hydrothermal vent system called Loki’s Castle, named after a Norse mythological figure.

The discovery provides insight into how the larger, complex cell types that are the building blocks for fungi, plants and animals, including people, a group called eukaryotes, evolved from small, simple microorganisms.

The Lokiar- chaeota are part of a group called Archaia that have relatively simple cells lacking internal structures such as a nucleus.

But the researchers found the Lokiarchaeota share with eukaryotes a significant number of genes, many with functions related to the cell membrane.

These genes would have provided Lokiarchaeota with a ‘starter-kit’ to support the development of cellular complexity,” said evolutionary microbiologist Lionel Guy of Sweden’s Uppsala University.

“Archaea and bacteria, another microbial form, are together known as prokaryotes.

“Humans have always been interested in trying to find an answer to the question, ‘Where do we come from?’ Well, now we know from what type of microbial ancestor we descend,” said Uppsala University evolution- ary microbiologist Thys Ettema, who coordinated the study.

“Essentially, Lokiarchaeota represent a missing piece of the puzzle of the evolution from simple cells - bacteria and archaea, prokaryotes — to complex cells — eukaryotes, which includes us humans,” Ettema said.

“Earth’s wide diversity of life would have been impossible without this transition from rudimentary cells into the more complicated ones seen in multicellular life. Microbial life originated about 3.5 billion years ago. The first complex cellular life came roughly 2 billion years ago.”

How cellular complexity first developed has been one of the big puzzles of evolutionary biology, Guy said.

“The Lokiarchaeota were retrieved from oxygen-starved sediment layers during voyages of a Norwegian research vessel, said microbiologist Steffen Jorgensen of Norway’s Uni- versity of Bergen.

While the Loki’s Cas- tle geothermal vents spew fluids reaching about 570 degrees Fahrenheit (300 degrees Celsius) about 9 miles (15 km) away, the Lokiarchaeota’s locale was desolate, pitch dark and around the freezing point, Jorgensen added.

The research appears in the journal Nature.
Mesmeric Messi nets double as Barca romp past Bayern

Barcelona, 7 May — Two late moments of Lionel Messi magic and a goal from Neymar helped Barcelona break the resistance of Bayern Munich in a pulsating 3-0 victory in their Champions League semi-final first leg at the Nou Camp on Wednesday.

After Barca had been frustrated by the brilliance of Bayern goalkeeper Manuel Neuer for most of the match, Messi fired home a fine free-kick after 77 minutes and then doubled the lead with a delightful chip from six metres three minutes later.

Neymar completed a resounding late burst from the hosts when he raced clear and slotted calmly home in stoppage time. We were caught on the long periods of time but instead is allowing this season under Luis Enrique into a team that is no longer obsessed with maintaining possession and instead is allowing the forwards to be more creative. The German champions slowly woke up and should have scored on the counter when Lewandowski slid a Thomas Mueller cross wide after 17 minutes.—Reuters

Men’s football tournament marks 700th anniversary of founding Sagaing City

In commemoration of the 700th anniversary of founding Sagaing City, a men’s football tournament kicked off at Sagaing District sports ground on 6 May, with a speech by Thiri Pyaung U Khin Maung Myint, retired minister for construction. Deputy Minister for Sports U Zaw Win presented Brazuca brand footballs to chairman of the organizing committee U Myint Than.

Before the match, trainers of Sagaing Education College presented bouquets to players of both teams and referees. Patron of the organizing committee Thiri Pyaung U Khin Maung Myint kicked the ball into the ground as opening the match. Moe Min Club beat ABY Club 3-1 in the debut. — Tin Maung (Mandala)

Federer falls under Kyrgios spell in Madrid exit

Madrid, 7 May — Roger Federer became the latest big name to get sucked up by a whirlwind called Nick Kyrgios as the Australian tyro sent the Swiss top seed spinning out of the Madrid Masters in the second round on Wednesday.

Ten months after the then 144th-ranked Kyrgios overwhelemed Rafa Nadal in the Wimbledon fourth round with a fearless brand of tennis, the Australian showed that he is a force to be reckoned with on clay too.

Now ranked 35th on the back of contesting his first ever ATP final in Estoril last weekend, Kyrgios brought an abrupt end to Federer’s hopes of winning a fourth Madrid trophy with a heart-pumping 6-7(2), 7-6(5), 7-6(12) victory.

“I think he’s the greatest of all time... I knew before the match that I would have to play one of the greatest matches I have ever played, I wasn’t intimidated at all,” the remarkably composed 20-year-old said afterwards.

“Unfortunately I lost possession, they break and that should not happen,” Bayern’s Philipp Lahm told reporters.

Franck Ribery and Arjen Robben were among those sidelined in an injury crisis for Bayern, but a masked Robert Lewandowski started in attack despite fracturing his nose and jaw in his side’s recent defeat by Borussia Dortmund in the German Cup. Barcelona’s first clear sight of goal came after 11 minutes when Luis Suarez scampered clear of the Bayern defence and was denied by a superb block from the feet of Neuer.

Minutes later a close range effort from Neymar was deflectsed wide by Rafinha.

The German champions slowly woke up and should have scored on the counter when Lewandowski slid a Thomas Mueller cross wide after 17 minutes.—Reuters

Barcelona’s Lionel Messi scores their second goal during FC Barcelona v Bayern Munich, UEFA Champions League Semi Final First Leg, at the Nou Camp, Barcelona, Spain on 6 May, 2015.—REUTERS

Madrid Open champion Marin Cilic was knocked out of the Madrid Masters on Wednesday.

Cilic, who was just eight when he won the first of his record 17 grand slam titles in 2003, Federer wasted two match points in the tension-filled third set tie-break.

Instead Kyrgios was the one holding his arms aloft in victory after he wrapped up the contest on his sixth match point when Federer slammed a forehand wide.

Following a disappointing season in which he has claimed only one low-key title, Nadal went back to using his old racket model to record a 6-4, 6-3 win over American Steve Johnson.

He was joined in the third round by Tomas Berdych and 10th seed Grigor Dimitrov but US Open champion Marin Cilic followed Federer out of the exit door after a 6-7(5), 7-6(5), 6-3 defeat by Fernando Verdasco.

Kei Nishikori also progressed with a 6-2, 4-6, 6-4 victory over Belgian David Goffin, while second seed Andy Murray rounded out the day’s action with a 6-4, 3-6, 6-0 victory over Philipp Kohlschreiber.