Dr Sai Mauk Kham calls for speedy completion of renovation work at YGH

By Aye Min Soe

YANGON, 17 May — The Securities and Exchange Commission of Myanmar will announce listing criteria and securities companies for the Yangon Stock Exchange in the near future, according to SECM.

The Yangon Stock Exchange will debut in October this year.

Union Minister for Finance U Win Shein called on the commission for timely completion of the companies as he made a tour of inspection Sunday of a building where the Yangon Stock Exchange will be established.

Establishing the stock exchange is not just for show and the project is being implemented in the interest of the country and the peoples, said the union minister.

The Securities and Exchange Commission of Myanmar has received 57 service provider applications for the Yangon Stock Exchange, SECM chairman and deputy minister for Finance Dr Maung Maung Then said last month.

Among the applications, 20 are for underwriters, 30 for consultants or advisers and seven for brokers and dealers.

SECM invited applications for the service licensees — underwriters, dealers, brokers and consultants — setting different levels of capital requirements for each in January.

A license for underwriting requires K15 billion (around $15 million); for dealing K10 billion; for brokerage K7 billion and for consultancy business K30 million as paid-up capital, according to the deputy minister.

An underwriting license, which tops the capital requirements, also allows operation in the other three businesses areas.

The four kinds of service providers are also allowed to have joint ventures with foreign firms in anticipation of speeding up the development of the stock market.

The Yangon Stock Exchange, Myanmar’s first, will have the abbreviation YEX.

Japan’s Tokyo Stock Exchange and Daiwa Institute of Research Ltd signed an agreement with the Myanmar Economic Bank to develop the stock market.

Samsung debuts Galaxy Tab A series in Myanmar

By Khaing Thanda Lwin

YANGON, 17 May— Samsung Myanmar on Sunday has launched two new tablets in Myanmar.

Its new 8-inch and 9.7-inch Galaxy Tab A tablets are priced at K376,000 and K430,000 each respectively, but a discount and a 16-GB microSD card will be offered to buyers of the latest gadgets on 17 and 18 May.

The new tablets come with S Pens, and their 4:3 screen aspect ratio will enchant tablet users with particular interest in e-book readers, games and internet surfing, said U Zarni Win Htet, head of IM Channel at Samsung Myanmar.

2 GB of RAM, 16 GB of storage, a 5 MP back camera and 2 MP selfie shooter are all in the new version. Both tablets can extend their external storage to up to 128 GB. The new tablets made with 7.5 mm in dimension are six grams lighter than their earlier versions.

Galaxy Tab A series are available in Samsung brand shops and retail mobile shops across the country starting today.

Both tablets come in two colours—white and smoky Titanium.

Samsung’s latest products can draw the attention of tablet lovers as they have such functions as quick connect and smart switch, a Samsung official said.
**Diversity Conference-Myanmar contributes to ceasefire and peace process**


In the afternoon, Dr. Tin Maung Kyi discussed preservation of historical heritages. The conference was aimed at solving the difficulties, exchanging views on diverse sector, overcoming challenges and contributing to ceasefire and peace process in the nation.

**People get clean water in rural areas of Taungtha Tsp**

*Mandalay* — As the hot summer causes drying lakes and wells one after another in Taungtha Township this year, Mandalay Region, wellwishers donate drinking water to the local residents.

On 16 May morning, township authorities and departmental officials distributed 2,100 bottles of purified drinking water to the local residents in Kyaukchaw, Byaingin, Thantan and Hsimeekan villages.

In the afternoon, the township officials supplied water to local people in Hsekon, Khizin and Wagyi-aung villages. While supplying water to the locals, the rain showered in the villages, so local people were happy in raining.

**Literacy campaign helps local residents become literates**

*Myitkyina, 17 May —* A ceremony to honour those who participated in the basic literacy campaign 2015 was held at the central hall of Myitkyina University in Myitkyina, the capital of Kachin State, on 15 May morning.

On behalf of the Chief Minister of Kachin State, State Minister for Social Affairs Dr Daw Bauk Ja spoke on the occasion and presented certificates of honour to two faculty members and 17 students through Dean of Mathematics Department of the University, a total of 156 local illiterates became literates in Myitkyina Township after the campaign.

**Myanmar, Japanese businessmen to cooperate in SME development in Mandalay**

*Mandalay, 17 May —* A delegation led by Managing Director Mr. Takeshi Shiraishi of Nagata Myanmar Co., Ltd. of Japan held a meeting with Vice Chairman U Kyaw Min Oo of Mandalay Region Chambers of Commerce and Industry and party at Yadanaung Super Centre at the corner of 78th and 34th streets in Chanayethazan Township on 15 May to discuss prospects of Myanmar and Japan on business cooperation between the two countries.

They also focused on development of small- and medium-scale industries in Mandalay.

The Japanese guests donated garbage bins to be used for beautifying Mandalay. They will cooperate with Mandalay City Development Committee in city development tasks.

**Action to be taken against those who throw waste water into Taungthaman Lake**

*Amarapura, 17 May —* Taungthaman Lake in Amarapura Township, Mandalay District is one of tourist attractions in Mandalay Region.

Fisheries Department releases fingerlings into the lake and conserve fish species for local food sufficiency.

On 12 and 30 April, waste water was harmful to environment of the lake, causing death of fish due to lack of oxygen.

As a result, the Fisheries Department warned the entrepreneurs and owners of factories, industries and restaurants around the lake not to throw waste water into the rivers, creeks, lakes, dams and reservoirs. If not, action will be taken against offenders under the Fresh Water Fish Law and regional laws.
Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann discusses regional development in Bago Region

NAY PYI TAW, 17 May — Speaker of the Pyithu Hluttaw Thura U Shwe Mann met with local people at Ottamayon Sarthintaik monastery in Kyauktaga, Bago Region, and discussed regional development on Saturday morning.

Present at the meeting were Chief Minister U Nyan Win of Bago Region, Chairman U Thein Swe of the Pyithu Hluttaw Transportation, Communication and Construction Committee, Pyidaungsu Hluttaw representatives, officials and local people.

At the meeting, the speaker urged officials to exert efforts for the development of the town as if they were natives.

Then, local people reported to the speakers on requirements for regional development and the chief minister attended to the needs.

After the meeting, the speaker greeted local people warmly.

Before the meeting, the speaker paid homage to abbots at Ottamayon Sarthintaik and donated offerings.

Then, the speaker and party proceeded to Nyaunglebin and met with local people at Thiri Yadana Hall. At the meeting, the speaker said that he came there to listen to the voice of the public and explained the tasks and procedures of Hluttaws.

Then, officials reported to the speaker on requirements for regional development.

The chief minister and officials fulfilled the requirements.

Myaungmya residents unveil Deedok U Ba Cho statue

NAY PYI TAW, 17 May — The government has appropriated over K 3.5 billion to upgrade airports in Rakhine State including Sittway, Kyawkyu, Thandwe, Manaung and MraukU in 2015-2016 fiscal year.

The government spent over K 3 billion to expand SECM to announce . . .

(from page 2)

The help establish and run the exchange in December, 2014.

The market will be run

Government to spend over K 3.5 billion to upgrade airports in Rakhine State

NAY PYI TAW, 17 May — The government has appropriated over K 3.5 billion to upgrade airports in Rakhine State including Sittway, Kyawkyu, Thandwe, Manaung and MraukU in 2015-2016 fiscal year.

The government spent over K 3 billion to expand the runway of Sittway Airport so that Embraer 190-100s and A 320-100s can land and take off from the airport during 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 fiscal years. For the safety of aircraft, Doppler VHF Omnidirectional Range (DVOR) and Distance Measuring Equipment (DME) will be installed at the runway of Sittway Airport.

The government has been spending K 4 billion, and expansion work of the runway will be completed in 2015-2016 fiscal year.

Maintenance tasks of Thandwe Airport has been carried out for a number of years as the airport is mainly used by tourists who visit Ngapali Beach. The government will spend over K 2 billion for the airport in the fiscal year.

Manaung Airport is mainly used for travelers from far-flung areas of Rakhine State and the government spent K 3 billion to upgrade the airport in 2013-2014 fiscal year. Remaining task of the project will be implemented in 2015-2016 fiscal year.

The number of flights has also increased in Rakhine State and arrangements have been made to add more flights from and to various cities in the country.

Than Oo (Lemyathna)

125 Myanmar fishing slave workers arrive back home

NAY PYI TAW, 17 May — Indonesian and Myanmar governments cooperated in transport back of 125 Myanmar fishermen who were forcibly enslaved in human trafficking in Benjina Island of Indonesia and the first batch of the victims arrived back in Yangon on 14 May.

With the assistance of Kanbawza Bank Ltd, Myanmar fishing slave workers were transported to Yangon free of charge by MAI’s chartered flight.

The bank will provide assistance for transport of remaining slave workers on 17, 18 and 22 May.

Kanbawza Bank also donated cost for transport of more than 3,000 Myanmar fishermen from Port Blair of India to Myanmar by MAI chartered flights. — MNA

SPED

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SPED
Bawlakhe Township to get equipment and medicines soon

**Bawlakhe, 17 May** — Union Minister for Health Dr Than Aung met health staff from Bawlakhe region at the Township People’s Hospital in Bawlakhe, Kayah State, on 13 May.

Township Medical Officer Dr Hsan Win reported on common diseases in the region and requirements of hospital equipment and medicines. The union minister kept a promise to provide assistance for improvement of health staff as much as possible.

Also present at the meeting were Kayah State Minister for Social Affairs U Koe Rei, Tactical Operations Commander Lt-Col Hlaing Win and departmental officials. *Hla Shwe (IPRD)*

Library ready to provide service to locals

**Nay Pyi Taw, 17 May** — “Altinpya” Library was put into service in Aungthukha Village in Dekkhinathiri Township on 16 May.

Authorities, Township Administrator U Nyi Nyi, Staff Officer of Dekkhinathiri District Information and Public Relations Department Daw Thida Aye and library committee member U Hla Moe formally opened the library.

Deputy Director Daw Thin Thin Zin of Nay Pyi Taw Information and Public Relations Department spoke about advantages of reading and important role of the library. Well-wishers donated furniture and books for the library through officials.

The 22-foot-long and 15-foot-wide library was constructed with K4.2 million fund. *Shwe Kokko*

Electrification improves living standard of rural people

**Kawa, 17 May** — A ceremony to launch supply of electricity on a self-reliant basis was held in Aleywa Village-tract in Kawa Township, Bago Region, on 12 May.

With the assistance of Kayin State Chief Minister U Zaw Min and Bago Region Chief Minister U Nyan Win, local authorities installed two transformers to electrify 270 houses in the village, spending K180 million.

Two chief ministers and officials switched on the supply of electricity to the local residents.

Chief Minister U Nyan Win pressed the button to launch the transformers. Chairman of the electrification committee U Kyaw Naing Lwin spoke about the efforts of power supply. *Aung Thita (Bago)*

Norwegian Ambassador visits Indawgyi Lake sanctuary in Kachin State, makes feasibility for environmental conservation

**Mohnyin, 17 May** — Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry of Myanmar and Norway’s Ministry of Climate and Environment are jointly implementing the Norway-Myanmar environmental cooperation project.

Norwegian Ambassador Ms Annolestad and five Norwegian representatives visited Indawgyi Lake and its surrounding villages for conservation of Indawgyi Lake sanctuary.

Sanctuary Warden U Htay Win of the lake spoke about progress of conserving the lake.

In meeting with local residents and members of social organizations in Lonton and Lonsant villages, the Norwegian Ambassador said that they have a plan to provide technical assistance for conservation of Indawgyi Lake and watershed forests. The ambassador stressed the need for local residents to carry out protection of natural resources, adding that a plan is underway to conduct capacity enhancement course for the locals. *GNLM-001*
Singapour, 17 May — Singapore’s President Tony Tan Keng Yam is set to make a state visit to France on Sunday to mark the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

President Tan will also meet with French President Francois Hollande. The visit was made by the Cambodian police official told Kyodo News.

Sergei Polonsky, 43, was deported to Moscow via Vietnam, east Asian country, a Cambodian police official told Kyodo News.

Polonsky was arrested on charges of over-staying his visa in the South-east Asian country, a Cambodian police official told Kyodo News.

The Polonsky possession weapons and caused disorder in the southwestern province of Sihanoukville where he reportedly owns some real estate, he said.

Sela also said authorities have so far arrested 23 people who allegedly conspired with Polonsky, eight of whom are being detained at Phnom Penh’s immigration department for further interrogation and could face deportation if they are found to be staying illegally in Cambodia or have committed social disorder.

The remaining 15 are detained by Sihanoukville province police, and 14 of them have presented documents and passports that show they can continue to live in Cambodia, according to provincial police chief Chouen Narin. One has yet to show his original passport.

Cambodian authorities arrested Polonsky on Friday on Koh Dambong island in Sihanoukville together with five friends who were on a cruise to the island.

The tycoon’s Cambodian lawyer, Benson Samay, hung up his phone when contacted for comment on his client’s case.

The arrest was made following a request dated 20 April made by the Cambodian Foreign Ministry to the Justice Ministry to examine Polonsky’s case in response to a new extradition request by the Russian Embassy in Phnom Penh.

In April last year, Cambodia’s top court denied Russia’s extradition request by the Russian authorities on suspicion of committing embezzlement in Moscow in 2008-2009, and was released on bail in January this year. He was on an international wanted list accused of defrauding dozens of people in a housing construction project, Russian media have reported.

According to Cambodian police sources, Polonsky swindled more than $175 million from his partners working in construction projects in Moscow.

People visit the Palace Museum, also known as the Forbidden City, in Beijing, capital of China, on 17 May, 2015. The Forbidden City will restrict the number of visitors to no more than 80,000 everyday starting from 13 June this year, or the 10th China Cultural Heritage Day, as a trial to reduce its serving pressure.—Xinhua
Chinese president meets US secretary of state on Sept visit

**BEIJING, 17 May —** Chinese President Xi Jinping met with US Secretary of State John Kerry in Beijing, capital of China, on 17 May, 2015.— **REUTERS**

**Nepal faced with economic challenges after powerful quake**

**KATHMANDU, 17 May —** The Nepalese government has painted a bleak picture for the country’s economy, saying that almost all major economic fundamentals have been battered by the earthquake, local media reported on Sunday.

The Himalayan country’s economy is expected to face a serious setback due to the powerful 7.9-magnitude earthquake which rattled the country on 25 April. The quake has killed nearly 8,500 people. “It’s too early to calculate the exact damage and the impact of the earthquake on the economy. However, the economic growth target that we set earlier will be hard to achieve,” said Aryal.

First responders arrived at the scene and found the plane engulfed in fire. Four victims, who were later identified as a family, were confirmed dead.

Local TV footage showed the wreckage mangled in a tree. Witnesses said the plane nose-dived down. The cause of the crash remained unknown but an investigation by the Texas Department of Public Safety and FAA is underway.

**Abe vows to welcome tourists with more tax-free shops, speedy customs**

**Prime Minister Shinzo Abe answers reporters’ questions during a visit on 16 May, 2015 to Mt Koya, a Buddhist pilgrimage site and tourist spot in Wakayama Prefecture. Abe said he wants to increase the number of tax-free stores in provincial cities around Japan and improve border facilities to attract more tourists from overseas.— **KYODO NEWS**

**Tokyo, 17 May —** Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said on Saturday he wants to increase the number of tax-free stores in provincial cities around Japan and improve border facilities to attract more tourists from overseas. Abe made the comments at a press conference during a visit to Mt Koya, a Buddhist pilgrimage site and tourist spot in western Japan’s Wakayama Prefecture. An increasing number of foreign tourists are visiting Mt Koya for its key attraction, Kongobuji, the head temple of Koyasan Shingon Buddhism. “I have seen how people from all over the world are coming together here, drawn by the beauty of Mt Koya,” Abe said. This year marks 1,200 years since the establishment of Mt Koya by Japanese monk Kukai, who founded the Shingon school. Abe expressed a desire to expand customs and quarantine facilities at airports and seaports to speed up border procedures. The prime minister said he will instruct government agencies to include these points in an “action programme” to promote tourism. The government also aims to increase the number of overseas tourists visiting more regions of Japan under a new growth strategy to be compiled in June. **Kyodo News**
US ‘deeply concerned’ over Mursi death sentence bid by Egyptian court

WASHINGTON, 17 May —The United States is “deeply concerned” about an Egyptian court decision to seek the death penalty for former President Mohamed Mursi, a State Department official said on Sunday.

The US criticism follows condemnations from Amnesty International and Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan after the court ruling on Saturday against the deposed president and 106 supporters of his Muslim Brotherhood in connection with a mass jail break during the 2011 uprising.

“We are deeply concerned by yet another mass death sentence handed down by an Egyptian court to more than 100 defendants, including former President Mursi,” the State Department official said, speaking on condition of anonymity. “We have consistently spoken out against the practice of mass trials and sentences, which are conducted in a manner that is inconsistent with Egypt’s international obligations and the rule of law,” he said.

The official, noted, however, that Saturday’s death sentence ruling was “preliminary.” Mursi and his fellow defendants were convicted on charges of killing and kidnapping policemen, attacking police facilities and breaking out of jail during the uprising.

In late March, US President Barack Obama lifted a hold on a supply of arms to Egypt, authorizing deliveries of US weapons valued at over $1.3 billion.—Reuters

West clings to fraying Ukraine peace deal despite Kiev doubts

Kiev, 17 May —Western powers are clinging to a fraying peace deal in Ukraine and forcing Kiev to follow suit, even though Russian President Vladimir Putin showed no sign of weakening and NATO is warning that Moscow may be preparing for a new offensive.

The United States and European Union are still backing the three-month old ceasefire, despite a growing feeling that it is in its death throes, telling Putin that sanctions will remain if he does not honour his promises.

This offers little consolation to Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko who, while under pressure at home for a steady loss of troops fighting pro-Russian rebels in the east, has to keep in diplomatic step with the West whose political and economic needs. His feelings showed in Berlin on Wednesday when a German journalist suggested eastern Ukraine was relatively calm.

“I’d like to contradict that because Ukraine is paying a very high price today for this pseudo-peace fire,” he retorted, noting 83 Ukrainian servicemen had died since a second peace deal was signed in the Belarus capital of Minsk in February.

“Ukraine is losing heroes every day but we continue to absolutely support the Minsk agreements,” he told ZDF TV.

Few people in Kiev believe Putin will lessen his support for the separatists in a conflict that has killed more than 6,100 people in just over a year. He may simply be waiting till the EU decides in June on extending sanctions on Russia’s financial, defence and energy sectors before showing his hand.

While it has been sickly from birth, no-one wants to administer the last rites on the ceasefire.

“Based on the Minsk agreement from February, we have to note that we are not yet where we want to be. We still don’t have a complete ceasefire,” German Chancellor Angela Merkel said in Berlin alongside Poroshenko.

Lithuania’s anti-Russian government ordered air strikes against the separatists last week.

However, the United States has accused Russia of failing to withdraw heavy equipment such as air defence systems, tanks and artillery from eastern Ukraine in violation of the Minsk plan.

Russia’s military might be using the truce to prepare for a new offensive in support of the separatists.

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The EU’s top commissioner, General Philip Breedlove, told the US Congress last month that Moscow may be preparing for a new offensive. "They try to cling to this mirage and move things in that direction," he said, referring to the Minsk agreement from February, we have to note that we are not yet where we want to be. We still don’t have a complete ceasefire."

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"Based on the Minsk agreement from February, we have to note that we are not yet where we want to be. We still don’t have a complete ceasefire," German Chancellor Angela Merkel said in Berlin alongside Poroshenko.

Lithuania’s anti-Russian government, which founded a Carmelite order in 1921 and died in 1927 and 1878 respectively, were an example for Christians, Muslims and Jews.—Reuters

Pope Francis canonizes two Palestinian women

VATICAN CITY, 17 May —Pope Francis named two Palestinian women as saints on Sunday, in a ceremony in Saint Peter’s Square just days after the Vatican formalised its de facto recognition of the State of Palestine.

The canonization of Sister Marie-Alphonsine Danil Ghattas, founder of the Sisters of the Most Holy Rosary of Jerusalem, and Maryam Baouardy, who founded a Carmelite convent in Bethlehem, was not directly connected with the Vatican’s Wednesday announcement of a new accord with the State of Palestine. But the ceremony, attended by Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and a delegation of senior clergy including the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem Fouad Twal, highlighted Pope Francis’ longstanding drive to help embattled Christian communities in the Middle East.

Saint Peter’s Square was decked out for the occasion with portraits of the Palestinians and two other newly canonised nuns — the French Jeanne-Emilie de Villeneuve and Italian Maria Cristina of the Immaculate Conception Brando.

In a statement as he departed for the Vatican last week, Twal said Ghattas and Baouardy, who entered religious orders as teenagers in the late 1800s and died in 1927 and 1878 respectively, were an example for Christians, Muslims and Jews.—Reuters

Greek PM warned lenders of not repaying IMF debt in May — report

ATHENS, 17 May — Greece’s Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras had at one stage warned foreign creditors that Athens would not repay 750 million euros (546.33 million pounds) due to the IMF in May unless they provided it with immediate liquidity, the Kathimerini newspaper reported on Saturday.

Athens ultimately made the 12 May payment by emptying an International Monetary Fund holding account.

While the newspaper said Tsipras made the threat in a 8 May letter to EU Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker, IMF head Christine Lagarde and ECB President Mario Draghi.

The Greek government did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

In his letter, Tsipras said Greece was starved of domestic sources of liquidity as it has been meeting its domestic and foreign debt obligations despite not having received any aid under its 240 billion euro bailout since last August, the newspaper said.

To restore liquidity, Tsipras proposed the ECB raise Greece’s treasury bill issuance ceiling: a partial disbursement of loan tranches worth 7.3 billion euros; the return of 1.9 billion euros in profits the ECB made by buying Greek bonds since 2010; and the return of 1.2 billion euros in the Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras delivers a speech during the Economist Conference on “Europe: The comeback, Greece: How resilient?” in Athens on 15 May, 2015.—Reuters

Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras delivers a speech during the Economist Conference on “Europe: The comeback, Greece: How resilient?” in Athens on 15 May, 2015.—Reuters

Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras delivers a speech during the Economist Conference on “Europe: The comeback, Greece: How resilient?” in Athens on 15 May, 2015.—Reuters
Monday, 18 May, 2015

On Tuning Age 74

For us, the world, and all our emotions and physical sensations. And life is a series of moments, all of which are fleeting.

When the body begins to age, the mind starts to slow down. And the mind, in turn, starts to become less flexible. Which means that the body becomes less capable of coping with stress.

The body is a machine, and the mind is its computer. And the mind is the one that keeps the body running. Which means that when the mind starts to slow down, the body starts to slow down too.

The body and the mind are connected in a way that is hard to put into words. Because they are both part of the same thing: the self. Which means that when one starts to slow down, the other follows suit.

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A communique was issued after the Fourth Ethnic Leaders’ conference held at Pang Seng in Wa Autonomous Region from May 1-6. Much has been expected on the outcome of that particular conference by the public as a final step for nation-wide cease fire and the most probable follow-up of peace. Yet, it has become clear that all the search for peaceful solution by the 12 ethnic armed groups reached nowhere and actually ended up in a demand for a Wa state by the UWSA.

In fact, the aim of that particular conference was to review the draft of Nation-wide Ceasefire Agreement-NCA, worked out together by Union Peace Working Committee-UPWC and Nation-wide Ceasefire Co-ordination Team-NCCCT and to listen to the ideas and advice of individual armed groups. Looking back at the whole peace process the UWSA- United Wa Solidarity Party was never involved in the discussion of the draft cease fire agreement and occasionally attended these meetings as an observer.

In this matter, it is quite questionable why the UWSA, which has never involved in the United Nation-alities Federal Council-UNFC top level meetings, holds the conference of the final stage of the process the UWSA- United Wa Solidarity Party was never involved in the discussion of the draft cease fire agreement and occasionally attended these meetings as an observer.

It has been alarmingly reported that U Bao Yu, the Chief of Staff and War-monger-in-Chief of the United Wa Solidarity Army-UWSA, demanded the attending ethnic armed group leaders to recommend a notion to upgrade the Wa Autonomous Region into a Wa State. As a result, it has been reported that there were heated debates pointed out by the ethnic armed group leaders and the whole public of the Union of Myanmar and even the oppositions would never accept that notion and that this could be the start of the disintegration of the Union of Myanmar.

It came as a surprise that in the paragraph 4 of the communique it was written that “Myanmar Army’s violation of human rights and harsh treatment on the people in regions of Ethnic minorities, especially in war zones is strongly condemned and it is demanded that it must be controlled so that these matters do not happen again” and which is quite the opposite of the reality in accusing the Myanmar Tatmadaw in these matters. The Myanmar Armed Forces which has been protecting the state and its citizens, and would never have done such acts and the accusing party-the Wa organization-also has to consider how much of its accusations are lawful and true in the first place.

The Wa organization was formed during the waning years of the Burma Communist Party- BCP on April 17, 1989 after occupying the whole of the BCP at Pang Seng. At first they declared that they would make peace with the government and live in harmony with the Tatmadaw, at the same time striving to be stronger by doing legal as well as illegal businesses. The overall strength of the Wa army was just thousands when they revolted against the BCP.

The troop strength expanded after extensive manufacturing and distribution of illicit drugs and forced recruitment of school-age children, forced conscription of the locals- against all international and national legal norms- which is a clear violation of the human rights by the Wa leaders.

The region under the control of the UWSA and Mong La Army have been quite notorious since late seventeenth century for opium production region to a world record and it still holds the title as the biggest manufacturing area of opium and Amphetamines.

Even the leader of the UWSA U Bao Yu Xiang and 21 others have rewards in millions of US dollars on their heads by US Drug Enforcement Agency as drug kingpins. Of all the menace to mankind, illicit drugs are the greatest and most lethal to all and that’s why all kinds of drugs are denounced as a common enemy by the world body. Drug growing and abuse were legacies of the colonial rule with the worst impact morally, socially, economically, and militarily.

Consequently, countless lives of the promising youth were ruined by the illicit drugs. The Union of Myanmar in conjunction with other international bodies has been fighting drugs as a national responsibility. Tatmadaw has been involved in the eradication of illicit drugs and regards it as the protection of national interest.

Yet, in some remote areas many kinds of drugs have been grown, manufactured and distributed by some parties who care just their own selfish interests. The Autonomous region of Wa became the largest region of manufacturing illicit drugs.

When hearing the word “UWSA”, it is seen associated with all kinds of drugs by the world. If one tries to Google or yahoo or use any search engine UWSA could be seen associated with all kinds of drug related activities. UWSA leaders are still on the most wanted list by the US police with million dollar rewards.

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It is quite evident that the Wa leaders who are infamous for their drug related activities try their best to cover their true identity with the Pang Seng Conference.

On the account of falsely accusing the Myanmar Armed Forces members of human rights violation and harsh treatment of the minorities, it is a fact that all armed forces members have to follow the military law as well as national laws and the international laws also.

Law of Armed conflict-LOAC and International Humanity Law-IHL defined that humanity means prohibition of using weapons and ammunitions as well as military tactics so as to avoid unnecessary sufferings towards the non-combatant civilians. In war zones, Tatmadaw has always acted in accordance with these laws, by transporting non-combatants to safe areas, screening and arresting armed insurgents in the disguise of civilian non-combatants, counter attacking insurgents who did harm the national sovereignty and the livelihood of the populace. Thus, it is quite obvious that there can be no acts of human rights violations as accused and speculated.

The UWSA neither accept the formation of Border Guard Forces nor allow the 2010 nation-wide election to be held in their autonomous region area. Even for this conference the Government of the Union of Myanmar informed them not to invite the insurgent groups who has been fighting the Tatmadaw which they ignore and invited those groups.

In careful analysis of the behavior of the UWSA, it is quite evident that they are out of Central government control and with the expansion of their troop strength, antagonist characteristics became obvious. It can be concluded that whatever they have been saying about non-secession from the union their true intention is the opposite. It is plainly simple that they have been going on the path towards secession from the union for the whole time.

At the present time the Wa Autonomous region is out of central government control and also in possession of anti-aircraft missile. News reports also indicated that they are in the possession of helicopters and armoured cars with the help of their friends across the border. Their army is reported to have a force of 30,000 troops with another 10,000 in reserve.

The Government allowed the Wa’s an autonomous region due to their population base. Getting stronger everyday with drug money and other illegal businesses, they now have the confidence to challenge the central government by demanding for a state. With this last demand it cannot be wrong to assume that UWSA is in total defiance of the government of the Union of Myanmar and willing to engage a military challenge.

Reports have emerged about thousands of tons of illicit drugs trapped in KOKANG rebel area jointly owned by UWSA, MNDA and NDAA because of the fightings in Laukkai where government forces are launching military operations against Kokang Rebels. The Wa is leading this battle.

Earlier expected as a quick victory by Peng Jiasheng, the war expenses rose as the Battles dragged on and mounting to USD 1.5 billion, up until now.

Recent reports indicated that to pay for medical expenses for wounded soldiers getting treatment at Nammsam hospital in China and for compensation of the killed mercenaries, it became very urgent for Peng Jiasheng to sell the trapped drugs and Wa organizations have already agreed to take responsibility of selling-out the drugs. The Myanmar public has already realized that there cannot be smoke without fire and that this news is highly probable. Ethnic Leaders’ Pang Seng conference could also be a mask for (selling out and distribution) of the trapped drugs.
Car bomb on EU vehicle kills at least three in Afghan capital

The bomber struck a European Union vehicle rammed a foreign vehicle on the road from Kabul’s main airport to a NATO military installation nearby.

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At least 10 killed in overnight fighting in Yemen's Taiz

A conference between Yemeni political groups has been scheduled by President Hadi's government for Monday in Riyadh asking for Saleh to step down as president of Yemen's former political party, the General People's Congress (GPC), and declared they would take part in the Riyadh talks.

US conducts raid in Syria, says it kills senior Islamic State leader

The official said President Barack Obama ordered the overnight operation, which killed a dozen Islamic State fighters and had been planned for several weeks.

The al-Qaeda-affiliated Islamic State has scored high-profile gains in Iraq and made advances in Syria. But he has left open the prospect of special forces raids.

The official said President Barack Obama ordered the overnight operation, which killed a dozen Islamic State fighters and had been planned for several weeks.

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US and Arab forces have carried out almost daily air raids against hardline Islamist militant groups in Syria including Islamic State since last September, and US-led forces are also targeting the group in Iraq.

Defence Secretary Ash Carter said the operation was intended to capture Abu Sayyaf but he was killed “when he engaged US forces.” His wife, Umm Sayyaf, was captured, then placed in US military detention in Iraq and was being questioned about Islamic State operations and hostages held by the group.

No US forces were killed or wounded during the operation, Carter said.

The operation represents another significant blow to ISIL, and it is a reminder that the United States will never waver in its military strategy of relying primarily upon air strikes to target militants there. Delta Force commandos used UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters and V-22 Osprey tiltrotor aircraft to punch deep into eastern Syria from Iraq. They engaged in a firefight and hand-to-hand combat with Islamic State fighters, killed a key figure in the group named as Abu Sayyaf and captured his wife, US officials said.

The officials described Sayyaf, a Tunisian, as an Islamic State commander who helped manage the group’s black-market sales of oil and gas to raise funds.

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Mozart-loving chickens may answer quest for healthier nugget

YONG PENG, (Malaysia), 17 May — In barns filled with classical music and lighting that changes to match the hues outside, rows of chickens are fed a diet rich in probiotics, a regimen designed to remove the need for the drugs and chemicals that have tainted the global food chain.

As food giants face growing pressure to offer healthier produce, Southeast Asian poultry firm Kee Song Group says its use of “good” bacteria in feed and water means it can meet one of the industry’s biggest challenges: how to mass produce drug and hormone-free poultry at a reasonable price.

A series of scandals in the last few years from melamine-tainted milk powder in China, horse meat supply in Europe and growth drugs causing lameness in US cattle has triggered a consumer backlash over food standards and safety.

Recently, Tyson Foods Inc pledged to eliminate the use of human antibiotics in chicken by 2017, one of the most aggressive timetables yet by a US poultry firm.

The top American poultry producer, which supplies fast-food chains such as McDonald’s Corp, is among a number of groups globally incorporating probiotics into feed. “For meat producers, reputation risks are becoming stronger driving companies to focus on safe ingredients especially in Europe and the United States,” said Pawan Kumar, director for food and agricultural research at Rabobank in Singapore.

Kee Song says the cost to produce drug-free chickens using probiotics is now only 10-12 percent more than antibiotic-fed poultry. It sells these birds at 30 percent premium in stores, far less than expensive free-range organic chicken.

The firm annually produces around 4 million drug-free birds at its Malaysian farms in Yong Peng, 125 km southwest of Sinagpore, and aims to expand sales to China and the West.

“Probiotics, either alone or in combination with essential oils and organic acids, are at the forefront of international approaches to replace antibiotics,” said Wayne Bryden, Professor of Animal Science at the University of Queensland.

Probiotics populate the gut with healthy bacteria in a bid to curb bad bacteria, while oils and organic acids are also often included in feed to aid digestion.

A team at the Australian university, partly funded by feed maker Ridley AgriProducts, have found in preliminary trials that using a probiotic can double the efficiency of use of protein from feed to boost weight gain in livestock.

“Probiotics are looking at similar steps in Asia,” said Chen. “In Asia Pacific, we are seeing apps WeChat and QQ, holds a 30 percent majority stake in it. Taipei, Chinese customers will not be prepared to pay more for drug-free poultry, though China could be a promising market after high-profile food scares.”

Honda Motor to recall 11,381 cars in India to replace air bags

NEW DELHI, 17 May — Honda Motor Co’s (7267.T) local unit will recall 11,381 vehicles in India to replace potentially faulty air bags, the company said in a statement on Friday, a day after its Japanese parent said it would recall 5 million vehicles for the same reason.

Honda Cars India Limited said it would replace the driver side air bag inflator of 10,805 Accord sedans made in the years from 2003 to 2007, and passenger side air bag inflator of 2004 models of 575 CR-V sports utility vehicles and one Civic sedan.

The Indian company said no incident relating to this had been reported in the country so far.

China’s Internet bank launches its first loan product

SHENZHEN, 17 May — WeBank, China’s first Internet-based bank, launched its first loan product on Friday night.

The product, named “Wellidai”, provides small credit loans to users free of guarantee or collateral, said Chen Jing, an executive at WeBank. It could provide 24/7 service via QQ wallet, a mobile payment service, and allows users to borrow and repay the money any time with a daily interest of around 0.05 percent.

The Internet bank does not specify the loan ceiling of this service. Currently, the service on trial is not available to all users.

Chen said WeBank will expand its use gradually in the future.

The bank will control default risks via big data collected by social networking platforms or by the third party.

In the next step, WeBank will launch more services related to money management and payment to meet the demands of users, said Chen.

Based in the southern city of Shenzhen, WeBank has registered capital of 3 million yuan (482.276 US dollars), Tencent, which operates the popular messaging apps WeChat and QQ, holds a 30 percent majority stake in it.

Gold steadies near three-month high after soft US data

NEW YORK / LONDON, 17 May — Gold held near three-month highs on Friday, heading for its biggest weekly gain since mid-January, as soft US consumer sentiment data weighed on the dollar and further diluted expectations for a near-term rise in US interest rates.

The dollar eased against the euro in the wake of the report, allowing gold to extend a three-day rally that took prices to their highest since mid-February on Thursday at $1,227.04.

Spot gold XAU= was up 0.3 percent at $1,224.53 an ounce at 2:33 pm EDT (1833 GMT), while US gold futures GCv1 for June delivery settled up 10 cents an ounce at $1,225.30. Prices are up 5 percent this week.

Recent economic reports have supported market expectations that the economy is not strong enough for the Fed to start raising record-low rates from June.

Data released on Friday showed US consumer sentiment fell more than expected this month, though an earlier report showed manufacturing activity growth in New York State accelerated in May after weakening for three consecutive months.

“If the data remains soft in the United States, this rally has potential,” Commerzbank analyst Eugen Weinberg said. “When data is more on the soft side, the market will be looking for indications on when the Fed will be raising interest rates.”

Gold is sensitive to rate expectations, as higher rates increase the opportunity cost of holding non-yielding bullion, while boosting the dollar, in which it is priced.

“Our view is that the underlying data is getting weaker and it has been weak for a while but I think there are still some in the market that seem to be holding out hope that maybe we will get a rebound in the US,” said Mike Dragosits, senior commodities strategist at TD Securities in Toronto.

“But that doesn’t appear to be the case and that’s why we’re trading at the top end of these ranges.”

Holdings in the world’s largest gold-backed exchange-traded fund, SPDR Gold Shares (GLD), fell 0.61 percent on Thursday to 723.91 tonnes.

Gold steadied near three-month high after soft US data.
We would like to congratulate

U Aung Ko Win,
Chairman of Kanbawza Bank Ltd.,

on his achievement of President’s Special Honourary Award for Excellent Performance (Highest Taxpayer First Prize) for three consecutive years, and

Daw Nang Lang Kham,
Chairperson of the Myanmar Brighter Future Foundation of the Kanbawza Group of Companies,

who has been awarded President’s Award for Excellent Performance (Best Philanthropic Organization Award) at the Ceremony of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar President’s Awards for Excellent Performance in Nay Pyi Taw on 15 May, 2015. We believe that both of you continue to be the highest taxpayers in the years to come and contribute toward the betterment of the society and the development of the country.

Chairman and Working Committee
Myanmar Banks Association
Japanese shiitake mushrooms introduced at world expo in Milan

MIAMI, 17 May — Japanese growers of shiitake mushrooms introduced on Saturday their production and cooking methods for dried shiitake at the food-themed world exposition that opened earlier this month in the northern Italian city of Milan.

A 32-year-old company worker from France, who lives in Milan, said after tasting shiitake stewed in soy sauce and sake at the fair that the mushrooms had a savory and tasty good.

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WEATHER REPORT

BAY INERENCE: Monsoon is moderate in the Andaman Sea and Southeast Bay and weather is partly cloudy to cloudy elsewhere in the Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL EVENING OF THE 18th May, 2015: Rain or thundershowers will be isolated in Mawrathu, scattered in Lower Sagraing and Mandlay Regions, Shan, Chin, Kayah and Rakhine States, fairly widespread in Upper Sagraing, Bago, Yangon and Ayeyarwady Regions, Kachin and Kayin States and widespread in the remaining Regions and States. Degree of certainty is (80%).

A woman serves ginger candy, produced by a confectionery maker with a 300-year history in Izumo in western Japan’s Shimane Prefecture, to visitors at Japan’s pavilion during the world exposition in Milan, Italy on 16 May, 2015. The food-themed Expo Milano 2015 will run for six months through 31 October.

Kyodo News

Ground level in Mt Hakone’s volcanic area rises by up to 12 cm

MIYAZAKI, Japan, 17 May — The ground level in the Owakudani hot spring area of Mt Hakone has risen by up to 12 centimetres from mid-April, days before volcanic activity intensified in the popular tourist spot, according to a geographical survey institute.

The alert level for Mt Hakone, some 80 kilometres southwest of Tokyo, has been raised to 2, which advises entry to areas around the volcanic vent, from 1, or a “normal” situation.

An analysis of satellite data found that the ground level has been lifted by up to 12 cm between 17 April and 15 May, the Geospatial Information Authority of Japan said on Saturday on its website.

So far, the agency has observed the ground raised by crustal deformation in an area around 200 metres in diameter in the volcano’s Owakudani district, but it said the scope of such activity has not changed drastically.

The number of volcanic earthquakes at Mt Hakone has spiked since 25 April, leading the Japan Meteorological Agency to advise local residents and tourists to stay on alert against a possible steam eruption.

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Kyodo News
Van Sant not too fazed by harsh reviews on ‘The Sea of Trees’

CANNES. (France), 17 May — "The Sea of Trees", Gus van Sant’s metaphysical tale set in Japan’s ‘suicide forest’, got a harsh reception from the critics at the Cannes Film Festival, but the Palme d’Or winner seemed unperturbed by the few boos that greeted his latest oeuvre after Friday’s press screening.

In “The Sea of Trees”, an American, by played Matthew McConaughey, travels to Japan to enter the Aokigahara forest and kill himself after his wife’s (Naomi Watts) death. There he meets a Japanese (Ken Watanabe) and both start a journey of self-reflection and survival.

“It’s an isolation to get to salvation, how facing death helps you find life,” McConaughey told a news conference on Saturday. The effort was dubbed a ‘dishonest tear-jerker’ by The Guardian and Variety called it “a visibly long-winded drama”.

Van Sant, who won the Palme d’Or with ‘Elephant’ in 2003, did not appear too concerned. Academy Award winner McConaughey put on a relaxed face, too, telling a news conference about Saturday’s public premiere: “Anyone has as much right to boo as they do to ovate.”

Van Sant said: “I read one review this morning and it was very definitive. I was imagining everyone was the same person as the one who wrote it and I was like now I know where we stand — it was kind of nice but then I got nervous later.”

‘Elephant’ also had a mixed reception from the press before winning the highest distinction. “I remember... there was some kind of fight after Elephant’s screening, there was a listicuff’s about whether it was good or bad,” said Van Sant.

“They were punching each other and that was at Cannes.” Lionsgate/Roadside Attractions has acquired US rights to “The Sea of Trees”, an opus that is more reminiscent of Van Sant’s “Geary” than his more acclaimed “Good Will Hunting” or “Milk”, before the Cannes Festival.

Reuters

Matt Bomer to star in ‘The Magnificent Seven’

LOS ANGELES, 17 May — ‘White Collar’ alum Matt Bomer has joined Denzel Washington and Chris Pratt in “The Magnificent Seven”, a remake of the 1960 western film. The film centres on a woman (Haley Bennett), who hires a disparate group of gunfighters to protect her town from rampaging bandits that are led by a robber baron. Bomer will star as the woman’s husband, a man who tries to stand up to the robber baron, said The Hollywood Reporter.

Washington plays a bounty hunter, Pratt portrays a magician turned gambler, Vincent D’Onofrio stars as a mountain man, who used to be a killer, Wagner Moura will be seen as a caballero, Ethan Hawke as a sharpshooting war deserter and Jason Momoa as one of the villains. Antoine Fuqua directs the movie while John Lee Hancock rewrites the script which was originally written by “True Detective” writer Nic Pizzolatto.

Los Angeles, 2017—PTI

Sarah Silverman to star in Andy Samberg’s movie

LOS ANGELES, 17 May — American stand-up comedienne Sarah Silverman will be seen in an untitled film by American comedy group “The Lonely Island”. Silverman will play a rapper’s sharp and sarcastic publicist, who has to suffer many indignities, reported Aceshowbiz.

The 44-year-old satirist will join the comedy trio comprising Andy Samberg, Akiva Schaffer and Jorma Taccone. The film is set to take place somewhere “in the world of music.”

Besides, it will feature parodies of some music hits such as pop stars Justin Bieber’s “Never Say Never” and Katy Perry’s “Part of Me”—PTI
Man United reject Henriquez stays hot in Croatia

ZAGREB, 17 May — Chile striker Angelo Henriquez produced his best performance for Croatian champions Dinamo Zagreb after scoring a second-half hat-trick in a 4-0 home rout of traditional rivals Hajduk Split on Saturday. The 21-year old was signed by Manchester United in 2012 but has never played for the Premier League giants and was loaned to Dinamo last year after spells at Wigan Athletic and Spanish side Real Zaragoza.

Dinamo, who won their 10th successive league title this month with games to spare, took an early lead through 17-year-old forward Joan Adreij on Saturday. The Qatar-owned club needed only a point but ended the match 10 points clear of their closest rivals Olympique Lyonnais who were held to a 1-1 home draw by Girondins Bordeaux.

The game continued exactly the same way as it did in the French Cup final at the end of the month. Monaco stayed third on 63 points, four adrift of Lyon, after beating Metz 2-0 in the principality while Olympique Marseille and St Etienne also won to stay tied on 66 in the battle for a place in next season’s Champions League preliminary round.

Ezequiel Lavezzi, who was triggerman for the season but Montpellier were held to a 1-1 home draw by Girondins Bordeaux in their Europa League Group D soccer match at the Mosson Stadium in Montpellier, France on 16 May, 2015. — Reuters

Paris, 17 May — Paris St Germain clinched a third successive Ligue 1 title, with a game to spare, and stayed on course for an unprecedented domestic treble with a 2-1 win at Montpellier.

The title kept Laurent Blanc’s side on course for a sweep of domestic honours, with the Parisians already winners of the League Cup and facing second-tier side Auxerre in the French Cup final at the end of the month. Monaco stayed third on 68 points, four adrift of Lyon, after beating Metz 2-0 in the principality while Olympique Marseille and St Etienne also won to stay tied on 66 in the battle for a place in next season’s Champions League preliminary round.

Ezequiel Lavezzi, who was triggerman for the season but Montpellier were held to a 1-1 home draw by Girondins Bordeaux in their Europa League Group D soccer match at the Mosson Stadium in Montpellier, France on 16 May, 2015. — Reuters

Paris St Germain’s Ezequiel Lavezzi (hidden) celebrates with team mates after scoring against Montpellier during their French Ligue 1 soccer match at the Mosson Stadium in Montpellier, France on 16 May, 2015. — Reuters

Guyana swears in new president after multiracial bloc wins vote

GEORGETOWN, 17 May — Former army brigadier David Granger was sworn in as Guyana’s new president on Saturday after his multiracial opposition coalition narrowly won a national election, heralding a new chapter in the ethnically-divided South American nation.

Granger’s APNU-AFC coalition, a recent fusion between the traditional black party and a smaller third party, broke the ruling Indo-Guyanese PPP party’s 23-year grip on power in Monday’s election. Thousands flocked to Georgetown’s Parlia ment Square to welcome Granger, a 69-year-old Afro-Guyanese who has vowed to crack down on corruption and govern for citizens of both Indian and African descent.

“I shall be a good president for all the people of Guyana,” Granger said after taking the oath of office for his five-year term. Indo-Guyanese politician Moses Nagamootoo, who defected from the PPP, was tapped as prime minister.

The full cabinet will be unveiled on 26 May, when the former colony celebrates 49 years of independence from Britain. The coalition will have a one-seat majority in the 65-seat legislature.

“I am beyond happy,” said Aseef Balmacoon, a 26-year-old marketing manager who was celebrating in Georgetown. “I, like many others, longed for a better Guyana and a country where all its peoples can come together and live as one.” Former President Donald Ramotar, however, said he was “disappointed, hurt and aggrieved” by the outcome of the election, which was triggered by his suspension of parliament in November to avoid a no-confidence vote.

The veteran PPP politician has alleged the elections were rigged, though diplomats from the United Kingdom and the United States said they were fair and free.

Ramotar’s government was dogged by accusations of corruption and nepotism, putting a damper on Guyana’s economic growth buoyed by the gold, diamond and bauxite sectors.

The new administration plans to spearhead anti-money laundering leg-

 PSG clinch third French title in a row

PARIS, 17 May — Paris St Germain clinched a third successive Ligue 1 title, with a game to spare, and stayed on course for an unprecedented domestic treble with a 2-1 win at Montpellier.

The players on the pitch started the party when the final whistle was blown.

The ball was sent down the middle and Verratti played through Grondona and placed a delicate pass to Blanc. “I love watching the scenes of joy, whether on the pitch or in the locker room,” said a delighted Blanc. “The players on the field earn the titles, we play a small part.”

“We must let the players express themselves and the coach must always be behind them. It’s not up to him to be at the front of the stage.”

Midfielder Blaise Matuidi put PSG ahead in the 17th minute, slotting past goalkeeper Jonathan Ligi until a defensive-splitting pass from Adrien Rabiot.

Ezequiel Lavezzi made it 2-0 in the 25th minute, from a cross by Serge Aurier, his eighth league goal of the season but Montpellier pulled one back five minutes before the break through Anthony Mounier’s shot to the top corner.

FILE PHOTO: angelo henriquez (r) and jorge fucundu of dinamo zagreb celebrate scoring against st etienne during their europa league group d soccer match at stade municipale de dinamo zagreb on 11 dez, 2014. reuters

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FILE PHOTO: David Granger, then leader of Guyana’s opposition A Partnership for National Unity (APNU) coalition, speaks during a rally in Georgetown on 14 Nov, 2014.—Reuters
**Djokovic moves up a gear to reach Rome final**

Rome, 17 May — On 16 May, for the first time this week Novak Djokovic needed only two sets to triumph at the Rome Masters, beating Spain’s David Ferrer 6-4, 6-4 as he reached the final to close in on a 24th Masters 1000 title.

The world number one will face Roger Federer or Stanislas Wawrinka in Sunday’s final at the Foro Italico where he will be bidding for a fourth title in this event.

In the women’s tournament there was better fortune for a Spanish player with Carla Suarez Navarro defeating Romaneix’s Simona Halep 2-6, 6-3, 7-5 to reach her ninth career final.

Suarez Navarro next meets twice Rome champion Maria Sharapova who downed Russian qualifier Daria Gavrilova 7-5, 6-3.

Djokovic’s winning streak now stands at 21 matches but he has been made to work hard this week with close-fought victories over Nicolas Almagro, Thomas Berdych and Kei Nishikori.

He seemed to move up a level against Ferrer with a clinical display. The top seed needed two breaks of serve to clinch a ninth consecutive win over the Spaniard.

“I played the best match of the week,” Djokovic said. “Sky Sports Italia. “I’m satisfied with the way I played and happy to be in another final in Rome.”

Djokovic’s only frustration was the state of the Centrale court and he repeatedly complained about the condition of the clay.

“That’s one thing I could have handled better.”

Novak Djokovic of Serbia celebrates after winning his semi-final match against David Ferrer of Spain at the Rome Open tennis tournament in Rome, Italy on 16 May, 2015.— Reuters

**Soccer-Saints’ Mane grabs fastest top-flight hat-trick**

London, 17 May — Southampton’s Sene- gal forward Sadio Mane scored the fastest English top-flight hat-trick in an extraordinary 6-1 win over relegation-threatened Aston Villa at St Mary’s on Saturday.

His treble was timed at two minutes and 56 seconds for the fastest treble scored in a club record of three minutes for forward Graham Leggat’s goal at two minutes and 56 seconds against Ipswich.

“This was one of those lucky things,” said an amazed Saints manager Ron- ald Koeman.

“It was incredible from Sadio Mane. A player like him, to get that kind of space, he will punish you. The whole team did a good job and I’m proud.”

Mane, who shook hands with some of the delighted Southampton fans at the end of the game before walking around the pitch with the match ball, struck in the 13th, 14th and 16th minutes.

It was the earliest a player has scored three goals in a Premier League game, beating the 22 minutes registered by Dwight Yorke for Blackburn Rovers in 2003.

Mane is the third Southampton player to score a Premier League hat-trick after James Beattie and Matt Le Tissier.

Southampton striker Shane Long grabbed a double in the 26th and 38th minutes to put Southampton 5-0 ahead before Villa got a consolation just before the break but Saints’ Italian striker Graziano Pelle added a sixth goal in the 81st minute.— Reuters

Southampton’s Sadio Mane celebrates scoring their third goal.— Reuters

**Phelps finishes distant seventh in 200 butterfly**

Charlotte, 17 May — Michael Phelps endured a difficult return to the 200 metres butterfly on Saturday by finishing a distant seventh, more than three seconds behind the winner, at the Arena Pro Swim Series meet in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Competing in the event for the first time since the 2012 London Games, the 18-times Olympic gold medalist came home in a time of 2:00.77, more than three seconds adrift of winner Chase Kalisz.

Phelps, who took silver in the event in 2012, had said he knew he needed to be in optimum condition to compete in the gruelling race again. The most decorated Olympian of all time, Phelps retired after London but has made a comeback and is eyeing a spot at the Rio Games next year.

He dropped out of his scheduled 100 backstroke earlier on Saturday to focus on the butterfly but the move did not pay off. Phelps is competing in his second meet following a six-month ban for drug driving and has endured mixed results.

On Friday he finished third in the 100 butterfly and failed to qualify for the 200 freestyle. Phelps is also expected to swim in the 200 individual medley and 100 freestyle.— Reuters

**Gerrard feels the Liverpool love as he bows out**

Liverpool’s Steven Gerrard as he walks on the pitch after his final game at Anfield during their Barclays Premier League match against West Bromwich Albion on 16 May, 2015.— Reuters

London, 17 May — Steven Gerrard spoke of dread, devastation and defeat on Saturday as the Liverpool captain said farewell to an adoring and emotional Anfield crowd after 17 years and more than 700 appearances.

Even if the former England skipper had to work hard on Saturday to focus on the individual medley and 100 backstroke earlier this week, he told Sky Sports Italia.

“I’ve loved every minute of it and I’m absolutely devastated I’m never going to play in front of you supporters again.”

The pre-match music set the mood — ‘Simply The Best’, ‘Heroes’, ‘Nothing Lasts Forever’, ‘The End Of The World As We Know It’, and a nod to his Los Angeles Galaxy future with ‘Kids In America’.

Even if the former England skipper has heard the chant of ‘You’ll Never Walk Alone’ more often than he can remember, the fans gave him an unforgettable 2005 Champions League success, as the 34-year-old midfield-er emerged from the tunnel to a guard of honour from both sides. High-flying each Palace player as he moved down the line, Gerrard applauded the stands on his 354th appearance at Anfield in all competitions.

“The first time you ever play for Liverpool Football Club is a dream come true,” he said later. “Everything else after that was a bonus for me. “Before I go, before the tears come...I’ve played in front of most supporters around the world but let me tell you, you are the best,” he told the crowd as the cheers rose to a crescendo.

Manager Brendan Rodgers promised it would be a match players would tell their grandchildren about and there could be no doubt about that, even if much of the action was far from memorable.

“I asked members of staff if they could describe Steven Gerrard in one word, what word would that be,” he added. “It’s Liverpool. Not just Liverpool as a football club but Liverpool the supporters and Liverpool fans.”

“I feel the love of the people here and an icon of the club.”

**Placard**

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