New Light of Myanmar

**Vice President Dr Sai Mauk Kham hails newly launched National Archives Department**

**Nay Pyi Taw, 22 May**— Vice President Dr Sai Mauk Kham on Friday attended the first-phase launch of the National Archives Department (Nay Pyi Taw) in Nay Pyi Taw, describing the centre as integral to preservation of the country’s historical records and documents of political, cultural and administrative arenas, as well as national identity and heritage.

The archives can be used as testimony in courts and arbitrations, the vice president said, adding that the centre is essential to the smooth operation of the government mechanism, because it can provide information of how government ministries have functioned.

The centre will have the National Archives Information System (NAIS) to enable researchers to easily access required information.

The vice president, accompanied by union ministers, toured the centre, inspecting the installation of data servers, storage of non-paper records and digitization processes.

In the afternoon, he went to Lashio in Shan State to meet local ministers, leaders of self-administered areas, parliamentarians, departmental officials and community leaders.

At the meeting, he spoke of the government’s efforts to promote education, health, religious and social affairs, transportation and disaster preparedness measures.

Officials presented K5 million each to literature and cultural organizations from Shan, Kachin, Kokang, Wa, Palang, Lisu, Lahu, Bamar, Mawon-Bamar and Myanmee-see. The chief minister of Shan State also presented K3 million to a free inter-faith funeral service.

---

**By Ye Myint**

**Yangon, 22 May**— Leaders of Myanmar’s ethnic armed groups will hold a conference 2-6 June in Lawkheelah, Kayin State, to seek final approval of a draft nationwide ceasefire accord (NCA), Daw Saw Mya Yazar Lin, one of the ethnic peace negotiators, said Friday.

The NCA draft, the culmination of 16 months of peace talks, was approved by the Nationwide Ceasefire Coordination Team, representing 16 ethnic armed groups, and the government’s Union Peace-making Work Committee on 31 March in Yangon in the presence of President U Thein Sein.

Leader of all ethnic armed groups—NCCT members and non-NCCT members—are expected to be present at the Lawkheelah Summit, the peace negotiator told The Global New Light of Myanmar in a phone interview, adding that final approval of the draft deal by ethnic leaders is expected at the summit.

Prior to seeking final approval of the deal from all ethnic leaders, the NCCT is set to meet in Chiang Mai on 25-27 May. The meeting was firstly scheduled for 23 May.

The meeting in late May will be the first gathering of NCCT members since the final round of ceasefire talks with the UPWC in March, Daw Saw Mya Yazar Lin said.

The three-day pre-summit meeting of the NCCT will be attended by all members, including the team’s leader U Naing Hong Sa and deputies U Padaw Saw Kwe Htoo Win and Maj-Gen U Guan Maw, she added.

At the meeting, he spoke of the government’s efforts to promote education, health, religious and social affairs, transportation and disaster preparedness measures.

Officials presented K5 million each to literature and cultural organizations from Shan, Kachin, Kokang, Wa, Palang, Lisu, Lahu, Bamar, Mawon-Bamar and Myanmee-see. The chief minister of Shan State also presented K3 million to a free inter-faith funeral service.

---

**Vice President U Nyan Tun meets Myanmar sports contingent to 28th SEA Games**

---

**Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker meets Indian Foreign Secretary**

---

**UEC releases dates for electoral roll announcements**

---

**Consumption of basic necessities should not be discouraged**

---

**Investing in Myanmar’s People and Ending Poverty**

---

**Myanmar navy rescues hundreds of boat people off western coast**

**Maw, 22 May**— The Myanmar navy has rescued over 208 Bangladeshi boat people to officials in the village of Angumaw on Friday morning after rescuing them off the western coast aboard two fishing trawlers the previous afternoon.

One of the trawlers, belongs to a Thai national Umint of Runong in southern Thailand left the town on 8 April and entered Bangladeshi waters on 13 April. Small boats transported Bangladeshi in groups to the vessel anchored at an offshore island in Bangladesh.

The trawler operator planned to set off for Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia but was forced into a U-turn as a result of sea patrols on 15 May.

According to reports, the second trawler was hired to deliver supplies to the first. The second vessel was in Bangladeshi waters on 12 May after leaving Kawthoung on 4 May. It was intercepted in Myanmar waters on 21 May.

The boat belongs to Ko Khine of Myeik, a town in Taninthayi Region.

Aboard the trawlers were 208 Bangladeshis from Cox’s Bazar, Chittagong and northern Dhaka. 17 boatmen from both Bangladesh and Ayeyawady regions, and three Bangladeshi interpreters.

(See page 3)
Pyidaungsu Hluttaw

Urgent proposal submitted to suspend tender invitation for land plot of Yeku broadcast station

NAV PYI TAW, 22 May — Union Minister for Construction U Kyaw Lwin discussed borrowing $137.833 million from Economic Development Office of the Autonomous Karen National Organization to prepare the sub-base and recent fighting between the government forces and some ethnic armed groups, she told The Global New Light of Myanmar (GNLM). The minister invited MPs to discuss the loans.

48th-day session of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw in progress. — MNA

Ethnic armed groups to discuss ceasefire accord . . .

(from page 1)

“The NCCT meeting is aimed at preparing the submission of a draft NCA to ethnic leaders at the planned summit, and discussing the current political affairs in the country, matters related to the team and recent fighting between the government forces and some ethnic armed groups,” she told The GNLM.

Together with Myanmar Peace Centre’s U Hla Maung Shwe and NCCT leader Naing Hong Sa, Daw Saw Mya Yazar Lin (far right) answers queries at a press conference during the final round of nationwide ceasefire talks in Yangon. PHOTO: YE MYINT

Tatmadaw captures Point 1788 hillock

NAV PYI TAW, 22 May — Defence services personnel are launching military operations against remnants of MNDA insurgents led by Phone Kya Shin after occupying their footholds in Shinkothetan, Sekawhlian and Santaeikshan hill areas.

Dy FM attends 13th East Asia Forum in ROK

NAV PYI TAW, 22 May — Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs U Tin Oo Lwin arrived back Yangon Thursday evening after attending the 13th East Asia Forum in Jeju, Republic of Korea on 20 and 21 May.

Myanmar to host 7th Summit of CLMV, 6th Summit of ACMECS in Nay Pyi Taw

NAV PYI TAW, 22 May — The 7th Summit of Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam (CLMV), the 6th Summit of Asean Plus Three — Cooperation Strategy (ACMECS) and related meetings will be held at Myanmar International Convention Centre-1, here, on 22 and 23 June.

Local and foreign correspondents wishing to attend the summits are to fill in media registration forms for the 7th CLMV Summit and 6th ACMECS Summit through registration link of www.moi.gov.mm from 15 to 31 May.

The 13th East Asia Forum was commenced at the meeting hall of the Haevichi Hotel, Jeju. The forum deliberated on three sessions namely trust building in East Asia through soft security cooperation; and enhancing security in East Asia through terrorism response.

In his speech at the session one, the deputy minister spoke about illicit drug trafficking, communicable diseases like Ebola and natural disasters, among others.

At the session two, the deputy minister pointed out threats of terrorism and extremism in the East Asia region, promotion of tolerance, peaceful co-existence and harmony among and between different communities and faiths.

KOF Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr Yun Byung-se, hosted a welcoming dinner to the participants to the 13th forum. While in Seoul, the deputy minister met ambassadors of Myanmar and officials as well as Myanmar community living in the Republic of Korea and scholars and explained the recent developments in Myanmar. He also met with the Korea-Myanmar Friendship Association and discussed issues of mutual interest and areas of cooperation to promote bilateral relations between Myanmar and Korea. — MNA
NAY PYI TAW, 22 May — A ceremony for handover of national flag to Myanmar sports contingent to the 28th SEA Games in Singapore was held at Wunna Theikdi Stadium on Friday, attended by Vice President U Nyan Tun.

In his address, the Vice President called on debutants of Myanmar contingent to make the best of their times and opportunities not only for winning medals but also for gaining valuable experiences from the Games.

He also stressed the need to be fair players while playing the games with the aim of accomplishing the task to win victory.

Next, the Vice President handed over the State Flag to Deputy Minister for Sports U Zaw Win, chairman of the committee for ensuring victory in the Games, and cordially greeted Myanmar sports contingent members.

During the ceremony attended by the Union ministers, deputy ministers and presidents of sports federations, well-wishers made cash donations for the Myanmar contingent.

Myanmar hosted the 27th SEA Games in Nay Pyi Taw in 2013 on a grand scale, bagging 233 medals—86 gold, 62 silver and 85 bronze—and ranking second among 11 countries.—MNA

Vice President U Nyan Tun views sports equipment to be used by athletes who will take part in 28th SEA Games.—MNA

Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker meets Indian Foreign Secretary

Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann shakes hands with Foreign Secretary of India Dr. S. Jaishankar.

NAY PYI TAW, 22 May — Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann on Friday met new Foreign Secretary of India Dr. S. Jaishankar at his office here.

Also present at the call were Chairman of Pyithu Hluttaw International Relations Committee U Hla Myint Oo, member of Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment Commission U Ko Ko Naing and officials from the Pyithu Hluttaw Office.

The Indian Foreign Secretary was accompanied by Mr Shri Gautam Mukhopadhaya, Indian Ambassador to Myanmar.

Myanmar, India to promote cooperation in new sectors

NAY PYI TAW, 22 May — Union Minister for Defence Lt-Gen Wai Lwin held talks with Foreign Secretary of India Dr. S. Jaishankar at the ministry, here, on Friday.

The Indian foreign secretary discussed more cooperation in new sectors between the two countries, material and technical assistance and further cooperation in training and border affairs.

The union minister said that cooperation will be promoted in medical and IT fields between the two countries.

Also present at the call were Deputy Minister Commodore Aung Thaw and officials.—MNA

UEC releases dates for electoral roll announcements

NAY PYI TAW, 23 May — The Union Election Commission on Friday issued a statement listing dates and locations for the announcement of electoral rolls for the 2015 general elections.

Voter lists will be announced for the second time at the offices of ward and village election sub-committees in Yangon Myothit (South, North and East), North Okkalapa, Thingangyin, Thanlyn, Kyauktan, Thongwa, Kayan, Insein, Mingaladon, Shwepyitha, Hlinate and Hlatatban townships in Yangon Region, as well as Tatkon, Pyinmana, Lewe, Pobbathe, Zeyathiri, Ottarathiri, Zaibuthiri and Dekkhinathiri townships in Nay Pyi Taw Council Area from 25 May to 7 June 2015.

Voters whose names are absent from rolls must submit form No. 3, the statement said, while those listed with incorrect information must use form No. 4-C. People may contest the nomination of unsuitable persons, such as those who are deceased or imprisoned, with form No. 4.

Visitors’ names will be included in voter list of permanent residences provided they submit household registration form No. 66/6. Political parties should cooperate with the Union Election Commission in assisting voters to be properly enrolled, the statement said.

Myanmar navy rescues hundreds of boat people...

(from page 1)

Ten teenage children were among the boat people, with the rest believed to be between the ages of 30 and 40.

Investigations are ongoing at a temporary camp in the village of Ale Than-kyaw, where the UNHCR is providing humanitarian assistance to the boat people.—MNA

A boat with Bangladeshi boat people on board rescued by Myanmar Navy in Myanmar seas.—MNA

Saturday, 23 May, 2015 | 3

GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

NATIONAL
Nay Pyi Taw, 22 May — A ceremony to inaugurate a new bridge across Palway Creek linking Okshithline and Ywathit villages was held in Lewe Township on 21 May.

The 280-foot-long, 5-foot-wide wooden bridge was built by local residents at a cost of K9.5 million.

Myitta Paungkyu Bridge was built as of 28 April to give smooth transport to local people, especially students.

Okshithline Village is 17 miles west of Lewe. About 2,000 local residents from the village are engaged in cultivation of crops.
A year after Thai coup, stability trumps growth for business

Bangkok, 22 May — When Thailand’s army seized power in a bloodless coup, much of the business establishment cheered them on. A year on, the captains of Thai industry remain firmly behind the junta, despite a lacklustre economy and a delayed return to democracy.

For businesses, calm on the streets of a city that was engulfed in chaos for months leading up to a military coup is more important than finding a cure for the malaise in Southeast Asia’s second-largest economy.

“I am satisfied. At the very least it has made the country peaceful and it has brought order,” Puj Aree Wattanawatton, President of Thai Frozen Foods Association (TFFA), told Reuters. In the early months of 2014, Thailand’s government was paralysed, parts of Bangkok were clouded by tear gas and state buildings fortified to look like army barracks.

Conditions for growth are better now, reckons Puj. “There is an attempt to reform according to the junta’s road map,” he said. “Thailand was on pause for a long time because of political problems. Now the economy has a chance to re-bound.”

A year ago, pro-government protesters closed the outskirts of the capital, with the water supply to the city interrupted to remove the elected government.

In the city’s heart, anti-government protesters, mostly southern Thais and middle-class Bangkok residents aligned with the anti-military establishment, were equally determined to get rid of Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra.

On 22 May the military took control, detaining hundreds of politicians and activists on charges of divide and dissolving the protests. Investors welcomed the calm imposed on Thailand’s febrile politics, and the stock market rallied.

Heavy-handed tactics by the military and police since the coup have ensured that the junta, or National Council for Peace and Order, has ruled largely unchallenged.

Romachet Mahatana-panurat, senior vice president for finance at hotel and food group Central Plaza Hotel PCL, said what the private sector wanted most was se-curity.

“We want political stability so that businesses can project long-term investment plans,” he said. “Countries like China, Vietnam and Myanmar, their governments can implement key economic policies to keep investments going.”

Coup leader and Prime Minister General Prayuth Chan-ocha has talked much about healing Thailand’s deep political divisions. Reconciliation is a mandate in his weekly televised address “Returning Happiness to the People”.

When asked to comment on the military’s year in power this week, he said: “I am satisfied but I am not proud.”

Critics say politics and economic reform are being sidetracked by a regime that bans political gatherings, and that divisions remain as sharp as ever. They say the blueprint for Thailand in a new draft constitution is an attempt by Prayuth and the powers that back him to prevent a comeback of ousted former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra and his allies.

Thaksin this week broke his silence on the junta that removed the remnants of his sister Yingluck’s government from office. First year in power was “not so impressive”, he said, but he had no plans gradually easing his “Red Shirt” supporters.

The junta on Tuesday delayed a planned election by at least six months to August 2016, to allow a referendum on the new charter.

Executives appear unperturbed by the delay. “We don’t need elections quickly,” said Puj. “If the roadmap is prolonged because of the referendum then so be it.”

Pornsil Patchrin-tanakul, President of the Thai Feed Mill Association and an adviser to the Thai Chamber of Commerce, scored the junta highly for political governance, but less well on the economy. “I would give political management a 10 out of 10. We have to compare this to before... things were not peaceful,” said Pornsil, but added that “investment and stimulating the economy have been slow”.

Despite hopes that the generals would unleash a splurge of infrastructure spending, state investment has failed to keep pace even with the levels the paralysed government had set a year ago. It has been managed, partly because bureaucrats fear an anti-graft drive by the junta.

Domestic consumption is hobbled as Thai households are saddled with record-high debt and the export-driven economy is suffering as its biggest trade partner, China, grows at its slowest pace in 25 years.

Thailand downgrad- ed its growth forecasts on Monday by 0.5 percentage points to 3.0 to 4.0 percent for the year, but the coun- try’s central bank governor said last week that even 3 percent expansion in 2015 would be “a challenge”.

For some analysts, the junta has missed the oppor- tunity to use its almost un- tramelled power to drive through investment and eco- nomic reforms. — Reuters
Despite Obama endorsement, US concerns grow over Iraqi premier

WASHINGTON, 22 May — The Obama administration is publicly voicing confidence in Iraq’s prime minister in the fight against surging Islamic State militants, but privately some US officials question whether he is too weak to bridge the sectarian divide.

Washington is still betting on Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi, who stands at the center of President Barack Obama’s strategy to roll back the latest conquests of Islamic State while keeping the United States from being pulled deeper into a conflict US combat troops left in 2011.

But even if Abadi’s forces manage to repel the provincial capital of Ramadi after its capture last weekend by Islamic State, his reliance on Iran-backed Shi’ite militias could strengthen his political rivals in Baghdad and signify US acquiescence to greater Iranian influence in Iraq.

That underscores how few options Washington has to beat back Islamic State, a few weeks by Islamic State, mean-while, appears to have the momentum, with the Sunni radicals on Thursday seizing the central Syrian city of Palmyra, one of the most important cultural centres of the ancient world, and over-running Iraqi government forces east of Ramadi.

Iraq’s Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi (L) calls on a reporter at the end of remarks with US President Barack Obama following their bilateral meeting in the Oval Office at the White House in Washington on 14 April, 2015.—REUTERS

International Day for Biological Diversity 2015 (22 May): Message from the Director General, David Molden

Celebrating the International Day for Biological Diversity: Biodiversity for Sustainable Development

Each year, ICIMOD joins the world on the Internation-al Day for Biological Diversity to appreciate the world’s rich diversity of living beings. This day provides us with an opportunity to reaffirm our commitments, strengthen our actions, and celebrate our achievements to protect, con-serve, and sustainably use biodiversity – the foundation of life on Earth and the basis for sustainable development.

Biodiversity and human wellbeing are inextricably linked. The goods that sustain our lives – food, fibre, timber, and medicine – depend largely on a diversity of plant and animal life. The world’s rich biodiversity is also the basis for a wide array of ecosystem services on which we depend: air and water purification, climate regulation, erosion control, and nutrient cycling. According to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organ-ization, 40% of the global economy is based on biological products and processes. This includes the economic sectors that drive development, including agriculture, for-estry, fisheries, pharmaceuticals, and tourism. A healthy ecosystem, and the biodiversity that forms its foundation, can also increase the resilience of the people who depend on it, particularly vulnerable groups, to withstand, cope with, and recover from disasters.

The Hindu Kush Himalayan (HKH) region – located at the convergence of three global biodiversity hotspots: the Himalayas, Indo-Burma, and mountains of Southwest China – is known for its biological diversity. The region’s biodiversity is the basis of ecosystems and services that contribute to the region’s economy and wellbeing. It is also a key to sustaining livelihoods and industries that support more than 200 million people in the mountains and up to 1.3 billion people in downstream river basins and benefit the global community. However, despite our understanding of its importance, biodiversity at local, regional, and global levels is being depleted at an unprecedented rate to feed a growing human population and an increasingly unsustainable level of consumption. This is further exacerbated by unsustainable development models.

This year’s theme for the International Day of Biological Diversity reflects the complex and inseparable link between the protection of biodiversity and the sustainable development of our region. The sustainable use of natural resources is one of the strongest assurances for the protection of biodiversity for long-term social, economic, and ecologi-cal benefits, and consequently for sustainable development. It also recognizes the efforts made at all levels to establish a Set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including one focused on biodiversity for sustainable development, as part of the United Nations Post-2015 Development Agenda for the period of 2015-2030.

ICIMOD has been an advocate for biodiversity conservation and its sustainable manage-ment in the Hindu Kush Himalayan (HKH) region for decades. Its Transboundary Landscapes Regional Programme has been an important vehicle for promoting conserva-tion and the sustainable use of biodiversity in a holistic and integrated manner. Activities under the programme encourage the adoption of conservation-linked livelihood options that contribute to the sustainable development of the region.

Furthermore, ICIMOD’s HKH Conservation Portal serves as a regional repository of biodiversity and conservation-related information from the Hindu Kush Himalayan region. By providing free and open access to primary biodiversity data and information, ICIMOD facilitates the exchange of knowledge to better understand drivers of change, and thereby develop effective programmes for conservation, sustainable use of biodivers-ity, and therefore sustainable development.

Healthy ecosystems and biodiversity provide a firm foundation to support sustaina-ble development and resilient communities. In the aftermath of the recent Gorkha Earth-quake in Nepal, biodiversity will play a key role in the process of rebuilding – including the homes and livelihoods that were disrupted by the earthquake. However, emphasis must be placed on ensuring that the process supports in sustainable development, more resilient communities, and responsible use and conservation of the region’s biodiversity.

This year, and in the years ahead, what Nepal does to recover from the Gorkha Earth-quake while building resilient communities and ecosystems can provide valuable lessons for other countries and communities across the Hindu Kush Himalayan region.

ICIMOD would like to urge the people of the region to commemorate the Interna-tional Day for Biological Diversity by making efforts to build more sustainable societies and economies through the responsible use of biodiversity, to enhance resilience through the conservation of biodiversity, and to raise awareness of the overall value of biodiversi-ty among the public at large.

With best wishes on the International Day of Biological Diversity.

David Molden
Director General

Fresh fighting erupts in east Ukraine, three Ukrainian soldiers killed

KIEV, 22 May — Three Ukrainian servicemen have been killed and 12 wounded in the latest clashes be-tween government forces and separatists, further eroding a three-month-old ceasefire, Kiev’s military said on Friday.

Military spokesman Andriy Lysenko said gov-ernment forces had come under attack from sepa-ratists using large-caliber guns and mortar in sev-eral parts of the east and southeast, including near the rebel-controlled city of Donetsk.

“In the past 24 hours we have lost three Ukrainian heroes, and another 12 have been wounded,” Ly-senko told a briefing.

There was no word on casualties among the sep-aratists, who Kiev, NATO and Western countries say are being provided with arms and men by Russia, something Moscow denies.

Ukraine’s largest steel company, Metinvest, said one worker had been killed and two wounded when its Avdiivka coke plant, which is on govern-ment-controlled territo-ry, was hit by heavy shelling on Thursday. The plant is not able to receive supplies of raw materials or ship out finished products, and damage to equipment has further hampered pro-duction, Metinvest said in a statement.

S Korean court suspends prison term of ex-Korean Air exec

SEOUL, 22 May — The Seoul High Court on Fri-day suspended a prison term imposed on a former Korean Air vice president earlier this year for breaking aviation law in the so-called “nut rage” case.

The court sentenced Cho Hyun Ah to a 10-month prison term with a stay of execution for two years, effectively ordering her release. Cho has been in prison since 30 December and was in Feb-ruary sentenced by a lower court to a one-year jail term for obstructing aviation safety.

Cho, 40, gained note-riety worldwide over the 5 December incident at New York’s John F Kennedy International Airport in which she threw a tantrum over being served macada-mia nuts in a bag instead of on a dish.

The Seoul Western District Court found her guilty of violating air safe-ty and other laws by order-ing the Seoul-bound flight to return to the gate it had already left to offload the chief purser over the inci-dent.—Kyodo News

Former Korean Air Lines executive Heather Cho (C) is surrounded by reporters as she is released at a courthouse in Seoul, South Korea, on 22 May, 2015.—REUTERS

International Day for Biological Diversity 2015 (22 May): Message from the Director General, David Molden

Celebrating the International Day for Biological Diversity: Biodiversity for Sustainable Development

Each year, ICIMOD joins the world on the Internation-al Day for Biological Diversity to appreciate the world’s rich diversity of living beings. This day provides us with an opportunity to reaffirm our commitments, strengthen our actions, and celebrate our achievements to protect, con-serve, and sustainably use biodiversity – the foundation of life on Earth and the basis for sustainable development.

Biodiversity and human wellbeing are inextricably linked. The goods that sustain our lives – food, fibre, timber, and medicine – depend largely on a diversity of plant and animal life. The world’s rich biodiversity is also the basis for a wide array of ecosystem services on which we depend: air and water purification, climate regulation, erosion control, and nutrient cycling. According to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organ-ization, 40% of the global economy is based on biological products and processes. This includes the economic sectors that drive development, including agriculture, for-estry, fisheries, pharmaceuticals, and tourism. A healthy ecosystem, and the biodiversity that forms its foundation, can also increase the resilience of the people who depend on it, particularly vulnerable groups, to withstand, cope with, and recover from disasters.

The Hindu Kush Himalayan (HKH) region – located at the convergence of three global biodiversity hotspots: the Himalayas, Indo-Burma, and mountains of Southwest China – is known for its biological diversity. The region’s biodiversity is the basis of ecosystems and services that contribute to the region’s economy and wellbeing. It is also a key to sustaining livelihoods and industries that support more than 200 million people in the mountains and up to 1.3 billion people in downstream river basins and benefit the global community. However, despite our understanding of its importance, biodiversity at local, regional, and global levels is being depleted at an unprecedented rate to feed a growing human population and an increasingly unsustainable level of consumption. This is further exacerbated by unsustainable development models.

This year’s theme for the International Day of Biological Diversity reflects the complex and inseparable link between the protection of biodiversity and the sustainable development of our region. The sustainable use of natural resources is one of the strongest assurances for the protection of biodiversity for long-term social, economic, and ecologi-cal benefits, and consequently for sustainable development. It also recognizes the efforts made at all levels to establish a Set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including one focused on biodiversity for sustainable development, as part of the United Nations Post-2015 Development Agenda for the period of 2015-2030.

ICIMOD has been an advocate for biodiversity conservation and its sustainable manage-ment in the Hindu Kush Himalayan (HKH) region for decades. Its Transboundary Landscapes Regional Programme has been an important vehicle for promoting conserva-tion and the sustainable use of biodiversity in a holistic and integrated manner. Activities under the programme encourage the adoption of conservation-linked livelihood options that contribute to the sustainable development of the region.

Furthermore, ICIMOD’s HKH Conservation Portal serves as a regional repository of biodiversity and conservation-related information from the Hindu Kush Himalayan region. By providing free and open access to primary biodiversity data and information, ICIMOD facilitates the exchange of knowledge to better understand drivers of change, and thereby develop effective programmes for conservation, sustainable use of biodivers-ity, and therefore sustainable development.

Healthy ecosystems and biodiversity provide a firm foundation to support sustaina-ble development and resilient communities. In the aftermath of the recent Gorkha Earth-quake in Nepal, biodiversity will play a key role in the process of rebuilding – including the homes and livelihoods that were disrupted by the earthquake. However, emphasis must be placed on ensuring that the process supports in sustainable development, more resilient communities, and responsible use and conservation of the region’s biodiversity.

This year, and in the years ahead, what Nepal does to recover from the Gorkha Earth-quake while building resilient communities and ecosystems can provide valuable lessons for other countries and communities across the Hindu Kush Himalayan region.

ICIMOD would like to urge the people of the region to commemorate the Interna-tional Day for Biological Diversity by making efforts to build more sustainable societies and economies through the responsible use of biodiversity, to enhance resilience through the conservation of biodiversity, and to raise awareness of the overall value of biodiversi-ty among the public at large.

With best wishes on the International Day of Biological Diversity.

David Molden
Director General

Fresh fighting erupts in east Ukraine, three Ukrainian soldiers killed

KIEV, 22 May — Three Ukrainian servicemen have been killed and 12 wounded in the latest clashes be-tween government forces and separatists, further eroding a three-month-old ceasefire, Kiev’s military
Washington should stop acting as back driver over S China Sea

BEIJING, 22 May — Recent statements made by some US military officials are contrary to regional peace and stability, and it is Uncle Sam who should explain what its irresponsible behavior over the South China Sea.

During an interview in Singapore last week, US military commander Michelle Howard, vice-chief of the US Naval Operations, said China needs to explain what is really going on in the South China Sea amid reports of construction activities there.

The senior US military official also gave assurance about her country’s support to ASEAN members who have territorial disputes with China, saying the US Navy is capable of sending ships within 12-nautical miles where China’s reclamation works are in progress.

In fact, it is not the first time for the US military to flash such threatening signals in an attempt to overthrow China to stop its legal construction activities in its own territory.

Before Howard’s remarks, a US official told the Pentagon is considering sending US military aircraft and ships to "assert freedom of navigation" in the South China Sea.

Those irresponsible, to some extent, provocative statements equal a flame stoker for instability that may further lead to miscalculation and misinterpretation and deteriorate the situation in the sea, instead of asserting freedom of navigation.

The South China Sea disputes, to which the United States is not a party, are between China and other claimants and should be handled by those directly involved in a peaceful way. Moreover, it can hardly be accepted as a coincidence that the previously calm South China Sea has lost its tranquility since Washington embarked on its "Pivot to Asia" strategy.

As a matter of fact, China’s construction in the South China Sea is its sovereignty, aiming to provide service for marine search and rescue, disaster prevention and protection, and navigation safety, as well as fulfilling the country’s international responsibilities and obligations.

Therefore, Washington’s bolderation over the so-called maritime safety is groundless and ill-motivated. The freedom of navigation in the sea has been fully guaranteed, since China’s construction is peaceful and beneficial to the public.

Actually, it is the United States that should make a reasonable explanation about its repeated, unflogging and unprovoked interferences in territorial disputes involving China and other countries. Such senseless meddling not only hamper the search for solutions to such disputes, but also aggravate regional instability.

As an influential country, the United States should take an objective and fair view on the disputes in the South China Sea, honour its commitment of not taking sides, and stop acting as a back driver on the issue.

Gov't to choose sites for final disposal of high-level nuclear waste

Tokyo, 22 May — The Cabinet adopted on Friday a revised basic policy on the final disposal of highly radioactive nuclear waste, introducing a scheme in which the government will choose candidate sites based on scientific grounds, rather than waiting for municipalities willing to host a final depository.

Under the policy, revised for the first time in seven years, the government is to take such a step given the little progress made in selecting candidates that began in 2002 due to safety concerns.

The move indicates the government’s attempt to address the unresolved issue as Japan gets closer to the reset of idle nuclear reactors after the 2011 Fukushima meltdowns.

The outlook, however, still remains highly uncertain over when such a final depository would be built, with no specific time frame mentioned in the policy. The government also plans to expand the storage capacity for spent nuclear fuel by constructing new interim facilities as a short-term fix.

"We will steadily proceed with the process as (resolving the problem is) the current generation’s responsibility," industry minister Yoichi Miyazawa told reporters.

The minister added that the number of candidate sites suitable for building a final depository to be chosen by the government will be "quite a few." Prime Minister Shinzo Abe’s administration is seeking to revive the country’s nuclear plants and following the Fukushima crisis, although the majority of the public remains opposed to the use of atomic power. The government has been under criticism over its stance of promoting nuclear power without resolving the issue of the final disposal of nuclear waste, especially after the 2011 disaster.

For permanent disposal, high-level nuclear waste needs to be stored at a final depository more than 300 meters underground for up to some 100,000 years until radiation levels fall and there is no harm to humans and the environment.

Currently, around 17,000 tons of spent nuclear fuel are being kept on the premises of nuclear plants and elsewhere in Japan, but some nuclear plants would run out of space to keep nuclear waste in three years if idle reactors go back online.

In the revised policy, the government also said it will allow future generations to retrieve high-level radioactive waste from a final disposal facility should there be possible nuclear policy changes or development of new technologies.

Worldwide, only Finland and Sweden have been able to decide on the final disposal site, Finland is constructing the world’s first permanent disposal site for high-level radioactive waste in Olkiluoto, aiming to put it in operation around 2020.

But many other countries with nuclear plants are struggling to find a site for such a facility. In the United States, President Barack Obama decided in 2009 to call off a plan to build a disposal site in Nevada’s Yucca Mountain due to local opposition.

Italy passes law to tackle rampant corruption

Rome, 22 May — Italy made a fresh attempt at tackling rampant corruption on Thursday when the Chamber of Deputies approved a strongly worded anti-corruption package, including new penalties for various types of graft and balance sheet fraud. Corruption has long undermined the country’s economically stagnating economy by deterring foreign investors and pushing up costs.

A previous “anti-corruption” package in 2012 proved to have little impact.

The last year has seen high-profile arrests of politicians and businessmen over graft allegations connected with the 2015 Expo in Milan, a 5 billion euro (£3.5 billion) Venice flood barrier, and public contracts awarded by the city of Rome.

The new anti-corruption law, which will guide the electoral registration process is a critical issue.

The new NEC was officially established last month after Prime Minister Matteo Renzi, president of the opposition Cambodian National Rescue Party, agreed on an arrangement with the European Union to reform Cambodia’s National Election Committee (NEC) in its reform process in order to ensure free and fair elections in the future, a senior EU official said on Friday.

Speaking at a Press conference marking the conclusion of his 10-day mission to Cambodia, Director for Human Rights and Democracy at the European External Action Service Silvio Gonzato said his mission was to show EU’s continued support to the Cambodian government in reforming its electoral process.

“Cambodia is at a critical juncture in its electoral history. There is a window of opportunity for the country to take real positive steps in improving its electoral process and in strengthening the democratic process,” he said. “The EU stands ready to support the country in this task.”

During his mission in Cambodia, Gonzato had met with a wide range of Cambodian and international stakeholders, including the NEC, government representatives, political parties and civil society organizations.

In a statement released at the Press conference, the mission said the NEC is facing many challenges ahead, notably the establishment of a new professional secretariat, the setting up of independent electoral structures at the provincial and communal levels, and the adoption of new, streamlined regulations and procedures which will guide the electoral process.

The mission also noted some concerns about various articles of the new Law on the Election of Members of the National Assembly, including those relating to transparency in the financing of electoral campaigns, offenses by political parties, and the role of civil society in the election process.

In addition, the mission emphasized that the voter registration process is a critical issue.

The new NEC was officially established last month after Prime Minister Hun Sen, vice president of the ruling Cambodian People’s Party, and Sam Rainsy, president of the opposition Cambodia National Rescue Party, reached an agreement on 22 July last year to end the opposition’s 10-month boycott of parliament following the 2013 elections.

Its 15-member leadership comprised four people chosen by each party, and one “neutral” person, who is not related to political parties.

Italy passes law to tackle rampant corruption

It is not surprising that Rome made another attempt at fighting corruption, which has plagued the country for years. But it is also not surprising that the new law is not yet fully implemented and that the government is struggling to enforce it.

The law includes new penalties for various types of graft and balance sheet fraud. It also makes it easier for prosecutors to launch investigations and seize assets.

However, the law is still being challenged in court and it remains to be seen whether it will have a significant impact on tackling corruption in Italy.

In a statement, the European Union’s representative in Cambodia, Philippe Hugonnet, said the new law is an important step forward.

However, he also noted that more needs to be done to ensure that the law is effectively enforced.

"The law is a major step forward, but more needs to be done to ensure that it is effectively enforced," Hugonnet said.

"We are encouraged by the government’s commitment to implement the law and we look forward to working closely with them to ensure its success."

Unfortunately, corruption remains a persistent problem in Italy, and the new law is unlikely to completely solve the problem. But it is a step in the right direction, and it is to be hoped that it will lead to more transparency and accountability in the future.
Consumption of basic necessities should not be discouraged

By Myint Win Thein

Humans beings, rich or poor, consume basic necessities like food, clothing, shelter, education, healthcare, water, electrical power and communication services all over the world.

It is evident that most people consume these fundamental goods and services for their daily survival rather than to profit from them.

For instance, while poor families enjoy their ordinary dinner at home, rich people may eat out at expensive restaurants where taxes are added to the price of food. Similarly, poor families use electricity to light their homes for their children’s studies but some rich people may use electricity to run factories for profit. There is nothing wrong with collecting taxes from rich people when they consume more than their basic needs and use goods and services to manufacture products for their own benefit.

In this regard, collecting taxes from the poor for their basic consumption of necessities is not the same as levying taxes on the rich. In addition, most basic human needs coincide with fundamental rights of human beings. Consumption to fulfill fundamental human needs should therefore be encouraged and not subject to commercial taxes.

Write for us

We appreciate your feedback and contributions. If you have any comments or would like to submit editorials, analyses or reports please email wallace.tun@gmail.com with your name and title.

Due to limitation of space we are only able to publish “Letter to the Editor” that do not exceed 500 words. Should you submit a text longer than 500 words please be aware that your letter will be edited.

Investing in Myanmar’s People and Ending Poverty

By Ulrich Zachau

On a visit to a school in Myanmar’s Mon State last summer, I looked in the faces of young students and saw curiosity, expectation, hope, and promise. Mostly from poor families in one of the world’s poorest places, they bubbled over with energy and optimism.

How will Myanmar shape its future? Emerging from decades of military rule, isolation and conflict, the country faces extraordinary development opportunities and formidable challenges. The eager learners in Mon state epitomized to me a vision for Myanmar’s future: a Myanmar free of poverty, with opportunities and prosperity shared by all.

The World Bank Group shares this vision. Our new country partnership framework with Myanmar, the first in three decades, focuses on openness, inclusion and ending poverty. Investing in Myanmar’s people will be the key, so that more people can get a good education, skills and jobs; more families have access to affordable health care, reliable electricity, and community infrastructure and services; and everyone benefits from development regardless of who they are, where they live and what they do.

Myanmar has introduced programs that provide grants to local schools for teaching aids and equipment, as well as stipends to help 30,000 children stay in class. Myanmar’s Decentralizing Funding to Schools Project, funded by the Australia and the World Bank Group, lets principals, teachers and parents decide together on classroom purchases, giving parents a stake in the future of their children, as well as the future of the country.

Of every thousand babies born in Myanmar in 2012, 41 died within a year. Each year, 2,000 pregnant women and 50,000 children die from preventable causes. Myanmar seeks to provide access to basic health services to all the people living in the country by 2030. The Essential Health Services Access Project, launched with World Bank Group support, provides $100 million in funding for more and better health care coverage across the country’s 330 townships.

The project is expected to benefit more than 3 million pregnant women and their young children. For example, midwives will be able to visit the homes of pregnant women, infants and young children more often to provide needed care.

Two-thirds of Myanmar’s people lack a reliable source of electricity. That means students don’t have light to study, clinics can’t refrigerate medicines and businesses can’t steadily manufacture goods.

Myanmar has an ambitious goal of reaching universal access to electricity by 2030. In the next several years, along with Japan, the Asian Development Bank, the U.S. Agency for International Development, the Netherlands, Norway and other development partners, the World Bank Group will finance investments and programs to provide new or improved access to electricity for 3 million people, while more than doubling national power generation capacity to 660 gigawatt hours by 2017.

At least 70 percent of Myanmar’s poor live in rural areas, and 50 percent of the poor depend on agriculture for their livelihood. Increasing agricultural productivity and opportunities will be essential for ending poverty in Myanmar. Under the new partnership framework, the World Bank Group expects to support Myanmar’s efforts to increase rice yields and improve access to infrastructure and services in rural areas.

Even more remarkable, rural communities in 15 townships now have the power to manage development resources. They now have a previously unrealized voice in local development and can choose how money gets spent on roads, bridges, irrigation systems, schools, health clinics, and rural markets. The six-year Community Driven Development (CDD) project began in 2012 with $80 million in International Development Association funding, and has already reached 390 villages in three townships.

“The reason I chose this hospital is because there are skilled doctors and comprehensive care including for child delivery.” — May Zin Mo, Mother

Ulrich Zachau is the World Bank’s Country Director for South East Asia, including Cambodia, Laos PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar and Thailand.
Phone Creek bridge under construction in Yinmabin

YINMABIN, 22 May—A 90-foot-long and 24-foot-wide bridge is under construction across Phone Creek, which divides eastern and western parts of Yinmabin in Sagaing Region.

The bridge on Monywa-Pale-Gangaw Road will have a 2.5-foot-wide footpath on each side and a 24-foot-wide motorway. The bridge will withstand a 60-ton load.

Approach structures of the bridge have been completed but construction tasks are currently suspended. Local residents hope for timely completion of the bridge so they may avoid using a temporary bridge, which is already beginning to erode, during the rainy season.—Min Min Tun

Mandalay Region’s Chief Justice addresses judges

Mandalay, 22 May—Chief Justice of Mandalay Region High Court U Soe Thein held a meeting with judges at different levels in the region at his office in Mandalay on 21 May. The chief justice spoke about judicial matters, reducing the number of cases, prison sentences for corruption and bribery cases, safeguarding the judicial pillar and abiding by State policies. The chief justice outlined the need to uplift the prestige of courts by exercising authority in a responsible manner. —Tin Maung (Mandalay)

ESE official distributes stoves to conserve environment

Mandalay, 22 May—The Republic of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry and Mandalay Region CCI jointly held the Myanmar Business Forum at MRCCI Office in Chanayethazan Township on Friday.

Speakers included MRCCI Chairman U Aung Than and UMFCCI President U Win Aung. Joint general secretary Dr Thet Thet Khaing spoke about the forum’s contribution to the reform process in the private sector.

An economist of the International Financial Corporation reported on Myanmar’s investment situation. President U Win Aung and officials of UMFCCI outlined future tasks for the federation.

The Myanmar Business Forum is held twice a year.—Thiha Ko Ko (Mandalay)

Rural Development Department manages upgrading of inter-village road

TAUNGTHA, 22 May—More than 300 families in Taungta Township in central Myanmar, one of the country’s driest areas, recently received cooking stoves as part of a programme aimed at preventing deforestation.

In the 2014 rainy season, the township received just 16.90 inches of rain during a 34-day period, impacting cultivation of crops in the region.

Deforestation is one of the root causes limiting rainfalls in the region.

On 21 May, General Manager Colonel Tint Wai (Rtd) of Electricity Supply Enterprise under the Ministry of Electric Power donated more than 300 stoves for families in three villages of the township without electricity. The stoves are designed to run with a minimum of firewood.—Ko Hein (Taungtha IPRD)

MYANANG, 22 May—An inter-village road linking Htugyi in Ingapu Township and Zalokyi Village in Myanmar Township, Ayeyawady Region, is being paved with concrete.

Ingapu Township Rural Development Department assigned duty to Shwe Dana Oo Co-Company for construction of a 3.5-mile-long road in fiscal 2014-15.

Upon completion, the inter-village road will contribute to smooth transport of agricultural produce from rural areas to Htugyi, Mezaligon, Hinthada and Ingapu.—Win Bo (Myaing IPRD)
Yemen struggles with food shortages as shipments stay slow

LONDON, 22 May — A trickle of aid, medicine and commercial food cargoes reaching Yemen yet the process remains slow, and more ships await clearance to discharge at ports and logistical chains buckle due to fuel shortages and war. Before Saudi Arabia launched air strikes in Yemen in March, the Arabian Peninsula’s poorest country imported more than 90 percent of its food — most of it by sea.

It faces increasing problems as many shipping companies have pulled out and those still willing to bring cargoes endure a long wait for clearance from Saudi-led warships trying to prevent arms supplies reaching Iran-allied Houthi fighters.

In recent days over 130,000 tonnes of wheat has reached Yemen in commercial ships as well as other supplies including sugar and fuel. Aid has been helped by a five-day truce which expired last on Sunday. But aid groups say it is not enough, warning of growing hunger and a worsening humanitarian crisis.

“12 million people out of the total population of 26 million need food assistance now and this number will continue to increase,” said Jonathan Cunliffe, Yemen-based country director with non-profit aid group International Medical Corps.

“But aid groups say it is not enough, warning of growing hunger and a worsening humanitarian crisis. "12 million people out of the total population of 26 million need food assistance now and this number will continue to increase," said Jonathan Cunliffe, Yemen-based country director with non-profit aid group International Medical Corps.

“People can’t afford it and people displaced from their homes, don’t have any means to and are dependent on international aid, which is scarce," Shaher said.

Saudi Arabia and its Sunni Muslim allies have carried out almost two months of air raids on Houthi fighters it says are armed by Shi’ite power Iran. Teheran, which denies the allegation, has sent a ship to Yemen which is says is carrying thousands of tonnes of aid.

Aid sources say the delays caused by coalition inspections were adding to challenges of importing goods into the conflict zone. "You don’t have any clarity on the situation and there are so many hiccups, which means more disruptions to come,” one trade said.

Eight ships were waiting in open waters outside the Yemeni Red Sea ports of Hodaida and Salif, including vessels carrying wheat, corn, sugar and fuel, Reuters ship tracking data showed on Friday. Several ships had been able to discharge in recent days although for some had waited weeks.

The Lycavitos, carrying 31,000 tonnes of wheat, arrived outside Hodaida on 2 May and only berthed on 18 May. It plans to sail from the port on 23 May. "The situation keeps changing on a daily basis. So, for ships trying to enter Yemeni ports, it is still hard to give any timescale over the whole process or procedure," the ship owner’s agent Helikon Shipping Enterprises Ltd said.

Air strikes kill 15 suspected militants in northwest Pakistan

PARACHinar, Pakistan, 22 May — Air strikes killed at least 15 suspected militants in Pakistan’s northwest Shawal Valley on Thursday, intelligence officials said. A week after security forces moved towards Taleban stronghold there.

The deeply forested ravines are a major smuggling route from Pakistan into Afghanistan and are dotted with Taleban bases used to launch attacks on Pakistani forces.

A local security commander and two intelligence officials said that between 15 and 16 suspected militants were killed in Thursday’s strikes in the Datta Khel area of North Wazirstan.

The Taleban used to control all of North Wazirstan, a mountainous region that includes the Shawal Valley and runs along the Afghan border. But the Pakistani military launched an operation there last June and has recaptured most of it.

NATO forces had long urged Pakistan to launch such an offensive, saying Taleban safe havens in Pakistan were being used to attack NATO and Afghan forces in Afghanistan.

Now locals say that the military is gearing up for an operation in Shawal Valley, where the Taleban still freely operate.

The area is a bastion of Khan "Sajna" Said, a leader of a Taleban faction whose name was added to a sanctions list of "specially designated global terrorists" by US authorities last year.

There have been a number of air strikes in the Shawal Valley over the past week and two drone strikes, but no sign of a large ground offensive.

Most phone lines to the area have been cut off and military roadblocks prevent civilian movement.

New Zealand designates Egypt-based militants terrorist group

WELLINGTON, 22 May — New Zealand government has designated the Egypt-based Ansar Bayt al Maqdis militant organization as a terrorist group, Prime Minister John Key said on Friday.

The designation was made under New Zealand’s own Terrorism Suppression Act 2002 rather than as an obligation under United Nations Security Council resolutions.

"The group has committed various terrorist acts, including the indiscriminate killing of civilians," Key said in a statement.

"As a result of this designation, any assets the groups may have in New Zealand, either now, or in the future, will be frozen. It will also be a criminal offence to carry out property or financial transactions with them."

Forms of support, such as fundraising and recruiting or harboring terrorists, were criminal offences in New Zealand, regardless of whether a group is designated as a terrorist entity or not.

"These designations are not a response to domestic terrorist threats in New Zealand and nor are they influenced by New Zealand’s relationship with other countries. However, they do form part of our government’s support against terrorism activities," said Key.

"Our ability to designate terrorist entities not listed by the United Nations is an important counter-terrorism measure. Our government is determined that New Zealand will not be used to support terrorist activities."

To date, New Zealand had designated under UN Security Council resolutions more than 400 terrorist groups and individuals listed by the United Nations, and the designation of Ansar Bayt al Maqdis brought the number of terrorist entities not listed by the UN to 20.

US sending 2,000 anti-tank weapons to Iraq

WASHINGTON, 22 May — US Defence Department announced on Thursday it is sending 2,000 anti-tank weapons to Iraq to help Iraqi forces in fighting the Islamic State (IS).

The weapons will arrive as early as next week, the department spokesman Steve Warren said in a statement, adding that the US is also expediting the delivery of ammunition and other equipment in order to counter IS’s increasing reliance on vehicle-borne bombs.

Over the last 30 days, the US also helped deliver coalition donations of 22 million rounds of small arms ammunition and 12,000 mortar rounds to the Iraqi army, Warren said.

"Since Iraq Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi’s visit to Washington in April, the US has also delivered 250 mine-resistant, ambush-protected (MRAP) vehicles, 2,000 Hellfire missiles, 10,000 sets of body armor and helmets, and millions of rounds of ammunition, including small arms, tank artillery and anti-tank weapons."

"The weapons are for the central government of Iraq to distribute to its army, as well as Kurdish Peshmerga and Sunni forces, according to Warren.

The US has insisted that its strategy of bolstering the central government in Iraq, rather than sending arms directly to the Kurds and Sunnis, is the best course of action against IS."
India sets April-June oil subsidy rules, no discounts if oil below $60

NEW DELHI, 22 May — India’s oil ministry has set interim rules that exempt state-run upstream companies from giving any discount on crude and refined fuel prices if global oil prices average up to $60 a barrel this quarter, two sources with direct knowledge of the matter said.

Oil and Natural Gas Corp (ONGC.NS), Oil India (OIL.NS) and GAIL (GAIL).NS sell crude and fuels like cooking gas at discounted rates to wholly or partly compensate retailers for losses they incur on selling fuels at government-set cheaper rates.

Under the new rules, which are applicable only for the three months to June and would need finance ministry approval to be extended, upstream firms will not have to pay any subsidy for crude prices averaging $60 or less, the sources said.

For prices between $60 and $100 a barrel, the companies will have to give a discount of 85 percent of the incremental price, said the sources who declined to be named as they are not authorized to speak to media.

“The oil ministry on Wednesday informed the upstream companies about the formula that they should consider while giving subsidy to fuel retailers in April-June,” one of the sources said.

Last quarter, the government had exempted ONGC, Oil India, and GAIL from paying a subsidy after a 1-trillion-euro stimulus program, and an absence of inflation pressures suggested Asian authorities could inject more stimulus if needed.

New properties are seen in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, China on 12 May, 2015.—Reuters

New method helps identify stem cell for heart repair

LONDON, 22 May — By using a new identifying protein, British researchers have discovered a particular type of stem cell that could help repair the damage caused by a heart attack when injected in mice, according to a report recently released by the Imperial College London (ICL).

In the last decade, stem cells isolated from the heart have demonstrated potential for encouraging the heart to repair itself, an approach called regenerative medicine. But there has been uncertainty among researchers about the best type and combination of stem cells.

In a study published in Nature Communications, a team from ICL and British Heart Foundation found that stem cells with heart repairing properties carry an identifying protein on their surface, called PDGFR alpha.

They were able to use this protein to find a particular type of stem cell that could have the most potential yet for heart regenerative medicine.

Researchers said mice treated with these stem cells were able to recover and repair a significant proportion of their damaged heart muscle after 12 weeks, preventing heart failure.

The researchers now hope to find a similar cell in human hearts, using PDGFR alpha and other proteins to identify and purify the best stem cells to repair the damage caused by heart attacks.

“Future treatments could be injections of stem cells, as in our current experiments, or use of the healing proteins that these cells make,” said British Heart Foundation Professor Michael Schneider, who co-led the study.—Xinhua

US bird flu causing egg squeeze, emergency measures

CHICAGO/New York, 22 May — As a virulent avian influenza outbreak continues to spread across the Midwestern United States, some egg-depend-ent companies are contemplating drastic steps: importing eggs from overseas or looking to egg alternatives.

A spokeswoman for grain giant Archer Daniels Midland Co said that when supplies have tightened and prices risen, the company has received numerous inquiries from manufacturers about the plant-based egg substitute it makes.

And with a strong dollar bolstering the buying power of US importers, some companies are scouting for egg supplies abroad.

“If the US has never imported any significant amount of eggs, because we’ve always been a very low-cost producer,” said Tom Elam of FarmEcon, an agricultural consulting company. “Now, that’s no longer the case.”

Still, companies wanting to import eggs may have to look far afield.

“Canada is short on eggs and has been buying heavily from the US for the last several years,” said Rick Brown, a senior vice-president of Unr-er Barry, a commodity market analysis firm. “Mexico has been dealing with its own outbreaks of avian influenza, so they’re banned from importing into the US. The logical place people will be looking now would be Europe.”

Avril, a farmer-controlled agri-food group that owns France’s largest egg brand, Mat-ines, said it has seen an increase recently in demand from the United States and elsewhere in the Americas and plans to start making shipments in June.

Meanwhile, companies sticking with eggs suppliers closer to home are facing sharply higher prices as a result of the outbreak, which has so far affected some 39 million birds. Nearly one-quar-ter of the hens that lay “breaker eggs” — which include liquid, dried or frozen eggs used by food manufacturers — have either died or are slated to be euthanized.

The outbreak has led to a sharp uptick in the wholesale price of such eggs, from 63-cents a dozen in late April, when the first egg-laying flock was report-ed infected, to $1.83 a dozen this week, Brown said.

The wholesale price of “shell eggs,” typically sold in cartons at grocery stores, has also ris-en, from $1.19 a dozen in late April to $2.03 a dozen this week, Brown said.

Nevertheless, some food makers are turning to the more expensive shell eggs to supplement supplies, although that means an additional cost to send the eggs to a breaking facility that will crack the shells, Elam said.

Analysts at Goldman Sachs predict consumers will ultimately spend an additional $7.5 billion to $8 billion because of the egg supply squeeze.

Nestle SA — which uses eggs for some of its Dreyer’s ice cream and Haagen-Dazs ice cream products — said it is braced for shortages and working with suppliers to help protect hens.

Dunkin’ Brands Group Inc told Reuters it will leave it up to franchisees to decide whether to swallow the cost hikes they’re seeing or pass them on to con-sumers.—Reuters
Emancipated from the rubble of his childhood home, Ghale said, “Ninety percent of our work here is done.”

Further up the mountains, where the road ends, help has been more limited, and some “lower caste” villagers, those at the bottom of a centuries-old social hierarchy that classifies people by bloodline, complain of getting too little relief. Aid organizations are scrambling to fly in supplies before the incoming rains trigger fresh landslides. Not everyone in Barpak is getting the help they say they need.

Seventy-year old Maya Ghale joked, “I had enough of building a house,” when referring to the skeleton of a building remaining on the site of the old house. About half a million men had returned to the countryside, the officials said. About half a million had returned to the countryside after the quake, in the struggle to rescue loved ones and begin rebuilding.

Back in the ruins of Barpak village, high in the Himalayas, which was demolished by last month’s earthquake, Ghale had been working as a plumber a full day’s journey away in the Nepalese capital Kathmandu, but with his brother overseas and father away for work, he fell to him to remake the family home at the epicenter of the 7.8 magnitude quake that killed 8,633 people nation-wide.

“I came back to rebuild and to help my mother. I had to,” said the 30-year old, who put off the promise of a job in Japan to return to the rubble of his childhood home.

Ghale is one of tens of thousands of his countrymen to have returned — including many of the more than 2.2 million Nepalis living abroad — to remote villages to help with reconstruction. On the reopened dirt track that takes a tortuous 60-kilometre climb to Ghale’s home at 6,235-feet (1,900-metres), one village after another lies in ruins in the forested mountains. Here, in the sparsely settled Gorkha region, 440 people died in the country’s deadliest natural disaster.

Women are clearing debris to retrieve belongings, men are fixing makeshift iron roofs ahead of the monsoon rains, and the army is constructing a school in Barpak to replace the skeleton of a building remaining on the site of the old house. About half a million homes were destroyed in Nepal by the 25 April quake and a series of aftershocks. The government has estimated reconstruction costs of $7 billion, a third of the government’s GDP.

In the villages, the sheer number of absentees working in Kathmandu or overseas — remittances account for nearly 30 percent of the economy — was keenly felt after the quake, in the struggle to rescue loved ones and begin rebuilding.

Nepal’s labour ministry does not know how many have returned to the countryside since the quake, but the numbers going abroad to work have fallen to a daily average of 950, down from 1,500 before the disaster.

In Barpak, famed for its fearless Gurkha soldiers, the head of the armed police force’s rescue operation, Sub-dan Acharya, said more than 60 men had returned to the village to help. It is difficult to know how many are away, but about most every family. Reuters spoke with in the village, where 90 percent of the 1,200 houses were leveled, a male member was away serving in the army in the ruins on the street. “This village has had a lot more help than other villages,” Acharya said. “Ninety percent of our work here is done.”

In a separate meeting with the inhabitants of the town, Deputy Prime Minister Vu Van Ninh was quoted as saying he hopes to see Japanese firms investing in the farming sector of Vietnam, given that 70 percent of the population in his country are involved in farming.

Abe also met Indonesian Vice President Muhammad Jusuf Kalla and the two agreed to boost cooperation on the Southeast Asian country’s infrastructure building, the officials said. The deputy prime ministers and vice president are in Japan to attend the conference on Thursday and Friday. Japan has been offering support for infrastructure development to members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations — of which Thailand, Vietnam and Indonesia are part — to help the regional bloc’s efforts to increase regional connectivity as they try to establish a more integrated ASEAN Economic Community this year.

Kyodo News

**Earthquake victims carry wood recovered from a collapsed house at Barpak village at the epicenter of the 25 April earthquake in Gorkha District, Nepal, on 21 May, 2015.** Reuters

**Nepalis return to quake epicenter to rebuild stone by stone**

**Cambodian court sentences French organization director for indecent assaults against 5 boys**

Battambang, Cambodia’s Preah Sihanouk Provincial Court on Thursday convicted 50-year-old French national Philip Barakat to 14 months in prison, but suspended five-month prison term, on the charge of indecent assaults against five boys (including four minors) and one woman. The verdict also ordered him to pay 5,500 US dollars compensation to the three civil plaintiffs and 1,500 US dollars fine.

Phillom Pesso, 22 May — Cambodia’s Preah Sihanouk Provincial Court on Thursday convicted 50-year-old French national Philip Barakat to 14 months in prison, but suspended five-month prison term, on the charge of indecent assaults against five boys (including four minors) and one woman. The verdict also ordered him to pay 5,500 US dollars compensation to the three civil plaintiffs and 1,500 US dollars fine.

The government has estimated reconstruction costs of $7 billion, a third of the government’s GDP.

In a separate meeting with the inhabitants of the town, Deputy Prime Minister Vu Van Ninh was quoted as saying he hopes to see Japanese firms investing in the farming sector of Vietnam, given that 70 percent of the population in his country are involved in farming.

Abe also met Indonesian Vice President Muhammad Jusuf Kalla and the two agreed to boost cooperation on the Southeast Asian country’s infrastructure building, the officials said. The deputy prime ministers and vice president are in Japan to attend the conference on Thursday and Friday. Japan has been offering support for infrastructure development to members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations — of which Thailand, Vietnam and Indonesia are part — to help the regional bloc’s efforts to increase regional connectivity as they try to establish a more integrated ASEAN Economic Community this year.

Kyodo News

**Baltimore grand jury indicts police in death of Freddie Gray**

Baltimore, 22 May — A grand jury has brought charges against six Baltimore police officers in the death of a black man who suffered fatal neck injuries while in police custody, a prosecutor said Tuesday, in a case that touched off angry protests and a day of loot ing and arson in the Maryland city. The charges, including a count of second-degree murder against one of the officers involved in the arrest of Freddie Gray, were announced on Thursday by Baltimore City State’s Attorney Marilyn Mosby.

The officers, three white men and three African Americans including a woman, will formally hear the charges and enter pleas at a 2 July arraignment.

Gray, 25, died on 19 April of injuries he suffered while in police custody. A prosecutor said the driver of the vehicle stopped four times, arrested and driven in a police van to a station house for booking. On the way, the vehicle stopped four times, the prosecutor has said, and Gray sustained injuries sometime during the ride. Mosby said officers repeatedly ignored Gray’s pleas for medical attention.

His death set off weeks of largely peaceful protests in Baltimore punctuated by a day of unrest after his funeral on 27 April, when rioters threw rocks at police and set buildings and cars on fire.

It followed a string of police killings of unarmed black men, notably in Ferguson, Missouri, New York City and North Charleston, South Carolina. The cases have fuelled waves of protests across the United States over what civil rights activists say is law enforcement’s unjustified use of lethal force against minority groups.

In Baltimore, the grand jury charged Officer Caesar Goodson Jr, the driver of the police van, with second-de gree “depraved heart” mur der, manslaughter and reck less endangerment. Reuters

**People gather at city hall in Baltimore, Maryland on 2 May, 2015.** Reuters

**Portland grand jury indicts police for indecent assaults against 5 boys**

**Nepalis return to quake epicenter to rebuild stone by stone**

**Cambodian court sentences French organization director for indecent assaults against 5 boys**

**Baltimore grand jury indicts police in death of Freddie Gray**

**People gather at city hall in Baltimore, Maryland on 2 May, 2015.** Reuters

**Nepalis return to quake epicenter to rebuild stone by stone**

**Cambodian court sentences French organization director for indecent assaults against 5 boys**

**Baltimore grand jury indicts police in death of Freddie Gray**

**People gather at city hall in Baltimore, Maryland on 2 May, 2015.** Reuters

**Nepalis return to quake epicenter to rebuild stone by stone**

**Cambodian court sentences French organization director for indecent assaults against 5 boys**

**Baltimore grand jury indicts police in death of Freddie Gray**

**People gather at city hall in Baltimore, Maryland on 2 May, 2015.** Reuters

**Nepalis return to quake epicenter to rebuild stone by stone**

**Cambodian court sentences French organization director for indecent assaults against 5 boys**

**Baltimore grand jury indicts police in death of Freddie Gray**

**People gather at city hall in Baltimore, Maryland on 2 May, 2015.** Reuters

**Nepalis return to quake epicenter to rebuild stone by stone**

**Cambodian court sentences French organization director for indecent assaults against 5 boys**

**Baltimore grand jury indicts police in death of Freddie Gray**

**People gather at city hall in Baltimore, Maryland on 2 May, 2015.** Reuters

**Nepalis return to quake epicenter to rebuild stone by stone**

**Cambodian court sentences French organization director for indecent assaults against 5 boys**

**Baltimore grand jury indicts police in death of Freddie Gray**

**People gather at city hall in Baltimore, Maryland on 2 May, 2015.** Reuters
The Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Ministry of Energy

Myanma Petrochemical Enterprise

Invitation for the Letter of Expression of Interest

Title: Joint Venture Project for the Construction of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) terminal and Supply Chain of LPG Business (Importation, Storage, Distribution and Marketing)

Myanma Petrochemical Enterprise (MPE) hereby announces an invitation for the Letter of Expression of Interest to implement a joint venture project between MPE and interested investors who shall be a consortium of a local company (or companies) and a foreign company (or companies) and shall have the ability in terms of worldwide experiences in LPG importation, storage, wholesales distribution, marketing and services, financial capability, reliability for long term cooperation.

The scope of the business shall include the construction of a new LPG terminal (i.e storage tank(s), jetty, etc) on available land area in No. (1) Refinery (Thanlyin) and the supply chain of LPG business of importation, storage, wholesales distribution, marketing and services.

Detailed information for LOE submission and information related to the joint venture project are available in the Ministry of Energy’s website (www.energy.gov.mm/index.php/en/information/announcement) and the Facebook (www.facebook.com/MinistryOfEnergyMyanmar) as well as at the following address during office hour starting from 27.5.2015:

Planning Department
3rd Floor, Myanma Petrochemical Enterprise Building No (44), Nay Pyi Taw
lpgbusinessv@gmail.com

Letter of Expression of Interest must be delivered together with all the necessary materials requested in the detailed information to the following address in person before 12:00 noon on 15.7.2015:

Managing Director
Myanma Petrochemical Enterprise Building No (44), Nay Pyi Taw

No telephone enquiries shall be facilitated.

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Ministry of Energy
Myanma Petrochemical Enterprise

Invitation for the Letter of Expression of Interest (LOE) for Joint Venture Project of laboratory services for petroleum and petrochemical products

1. Myanma Petrochemical Enterprise (MPE), Ministry of Energy of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar is planning to establish a Joint Venture Project of laboratory services which analyses the specification and qualification of the petroleum and petrochemical products and certifies or recertifies in accordance with the standard of International Organization of Standardization (ISO). 2. MPE hereby announces an invitation to submit the Letter of Expression of Interest (LOEI) for the Joint Venture Project of laboratory services between MPE and a company which shall have the accreditation of International Organization of Standardization (ISO) and also have experience(s) for the analysis of specification and qualification of the petroleum and petrochemical products.

3. The required data for LOEI submission and information related to the above Joint Venture Project are available in the Ministry of Energy website (http://www.energy.gov.mm/index.php/en/information/announcement) and the Facebook (www.facebook.com/MinistryOfEnergyMyanmar) as well as at the following address during the office hours starting from 27.5.2015:

Director LOEI
Fax: 067-411124
Myanma Petrochemical Enterprise
Email: labjvp@gmail.com
Building No 44, Nay Pyi Taw

No telephone inquiries shall be facilitated.

LOEI shall be submitted to following address in person no later than 12:00 noon on 15.7.2015:

Managing Director
Myanma Petrochemical Enterprise
Building No 44, Nay Pyi Taw

For inquiries to place an advertisement in the GNLM, please email advertise@lightofmyanmar.com

Advertise with us!

For news related to Moscow’s annexation of Crimea last year.

Under the rescheduled exchange programme, former Japanese residents of the islets will be able to travel to see the remnants of their old homes and other places from 5 June, while Russian residents and former Japanese residents will be able to visit each other without visas from 2 July.

The visa-free visit programme began in 1992 as part of efforts to promote relations between present and former residents.

About 12,000 Japanese and 8,600 Russians had taken part in the exchange programme by last year.

Japan and Russia are locked in a longstanding dispute over the ownership of four isles off Hokkaido — Etorofu, Kunashiri, Shikotan and the Habomai islet group, which were seized by the Soviet Union following Japan’s surrender in World War II on 15 August, 1945.

The dispute has prevented the two countries from signing a postwar peace treaty.—Kyodo News
Taylor Swift shares failed stunt from ‘Bad Blood’ video

Los Angeles, 22 May — Taylor Swift has posted a short clip on her Instagram which shows the singer running through a wall and falling to the ground during the shooting of “Bad Blood” music video.

In the painful-looking Instagram clip, however, she runs through the wall and falls right to the ground. “Yeah, I forgot to keep running,” she says before assuring everyone she’s “fine.”

“Bad Blood,” widely believed to be about Katy Perry, is a song off Swift’s massively successful “1989” album.

Swift debuted the music during the 2015 Billboard Music Awards, featuring appearances from more than a dozen famous faces including Cara Delevingne, Gigi Hadid, Ellie Goulding, Cindy Crawford, Jessica Alba, Karlie Kloss, Lily Aldridge, Hailee Steinfeld, Ellen Pompeo and Mariska Hargitay.

Dwayne Johnson leaves honoured with handprint ceremony

Los Angeles, 22 May — Dwayne Johnson joined the likes of Meryl Streep and Bruce Willis by leaving his handprints in wet cement at the famous TCL Chinese Theater.

Movie actors and other celebrities have been leaving autographed cement handprints at the TCL Chinese Theater since the 1920s.

Posting about the ceremony a week ago on Twitter, Johnson, 43, simply said he felt “blessed,” reported People magazine.

Though the handprint ceremony celebrates a performer’s entire body of work, Johnson’s latest film “San Andreas,” hits theaters on 29 May.—PTI
China aims to capture first men's individual chess world title

BEIJING, 22 May — With trophies of two prestigious team chess tournaments already under their belt, Chinese male chess players are eying on an individual world title.

China won the FIDE men’s world team chess championship for the first time in April following its first men’s chess Olympiad cup triumph last year.

Chinese coach Ye Jianguang believes that his protégés are capable of winning more glories.

“Last year when we won the Olympiad Cup, many attributed it to a bit of luck, but we won the team championship this year, which demonstrated it’s not simply because of luck. Now the Chinese male players can be ranked among the best in the sport,” Ye said on Friday.

Unlike their male counterparts, China’s women players have already made their mark in the world stage, winning the team title several times and also bagged four individual world champions, namely, Xie Jun, Zhu Chen, Xu Yuhua and Hou Yifan.

The Chinese Chess Association has adopted a gradual approach in promoting the sport in the country with less chess tradition. After their women players’ success on the world stage, now they aim to emulate that on the men’s part.

According to Ye, the development of chess in China can be divided into three phases, firstly winning women’s titles, secondly claiming men’s team titles and finally the men’s individual championship.

“After a decade of hard work, now the Chinese male players have what it takes to win the pearl on the crown — the men’s individual world title,” Ye said.

Currently eight Chinese male players are in the world top 50, with Ding Liren being the highest at 11th.

Ding, 23, received an invitation last month from world number one Magnus Carlsen of Norway to train together, and he said he has learned many from Carlsen.

“There’s a big gap between the number one and Chinese players, so I think we have to do more in all aspects,” said Ding, who skipped Chinese chess league matches for the training. The Chinese Chess league, which has entered its 11th season this year, is seen as a platform for Chinese players to hone their skills. The league has even attracted world-class players from abroad.—Xinhua

Bayern confirm dates for China tour

MUNICH, 22 May — Bayern Munich will face Valencia, Inter Milan and Guangzhou Evergrande on their pre-season tour of China in July, the German champions have announced.

Pep Guardiola’s side, who were beaten in the Champions League semi-finals by Barcelona last week, will open their tour against Valencia at Beijing’s “Bird’s Nest” stadium on 18 July before moving to Shanghai to face Inter three days later.

They wind up the trip with a game against 2013 AFC Champions League winners Guangzhou Evergrande, who have won the Chinese Super League title four years in a row.

Bayern, Germany’s richest club with a turnover of more than half a billion euros in the previous season, are looking to Asia’s massive market to accelerate growth and previously toured China in 2012.

Bayern Munich coach Pep Guardiola

Wreckage found in HK harbor likely British warship

HONG KONG, 22 May — The Hong Kong government said that wreckage found in Hong Kong’s Victoria Harbor last year likely belongs to a British warship that sank during World War II, according to local media on Friday.

The government said in a statement issued on Thursday that according to a preliminary assessment by a marine archaeologist, the object may be part of the bottom of the wreck of a ship that sank in Victoria Harbor during World War II, and could be the remains of HMS Tamar, according to the reports.

The object, found 6 metres beneath the seabed last year while dredging work near the old Wan Chai Ferry Pier on Hong Kong Island’s northern shore was being conducted, measures approximately 40 metres in length, 2 to 11 metres in width, and 2 metres in height, with noticeable corrosion and cracks in certain parts, according to the government.

However, the government stopped short of confirming the identity of the object, as “the ship’s bell, name plate or any other unique features have not been found.”

The object will be located to a nearby seabed area for further underwater surveying to avoid corrosion if exposed to air, it said.

The HMS Tamar, with a displacement of 4,600 tons, arrived in the then-British colony in 1897. As the British army fought against and lost to the Japanese in the Battle of Hong Kong in 1941, the vessel was “towed out to deep water...scuttled to prevent her use by the invaders,” according to the British Royal Navy Research Archive.

Hokkaido melons fetch 1.5 million yen at season’s 1st auction

Toshiki Shimbo, a senior official at a supermarket in the central Japanese city of Niigata, holds a pair of melons, specialty of Yubari, Hokkaido, which fetched a winning price of 1.5 million yen in the year’s first auction in Sapporo on 22 May, 2015. The melons are scheduled to be showcased at Shimbo’s shop.—KYODO NEWS

MRTV News Channel in Brief

Entertainment Channel

(23-5-2015, Saturday)
Blatter challengers down to one after Figo, Van Praag withdraw

BERNE, 22 May — Luis Figo and Michael van Praag pulled out of the FIFA presidential election race on Thursday, leaving Jordan’s Prince Ali Bin Al Hussein as the only challenger to incumbent and runaway favourite Sepp Blatter.

Figo went out with a bang as he launched a blistering attack on the electoral system of soccer’s governing body, saying it was a “plebiscite for the delivery of absolute power to one man — something I refuse to go along with.”

The former Portugal forward added: “Over the past few months I have not only witnessed that desire (for change), I have witnessed consecutive incidents, all over the world, that should shame anyone who desires soccer to be free, clean and democratic.

“I have seen with my own eyes what incidents who, after one day comparing FIFA leaders to the devil, then go on stage and compare them with the people with Jesus Christ. Nobody told me about this. I saw it with my own eyes.

“I am firm in my desire to take an active part in the regeneration of FIFA and I will be available for prepared to go the distance now, and to beat someone like Carla who loves long matches, to come through that tournament with confi-

Robert van Praag pulled out of the election of absolute power was a “plebiscite for the governing body, saying it was a “plebiscite for the delivery of absolute power to one man — something I refuse to go along with.”

“Over the past few months I have not only witnessed that desire (for change), I have witnessed consecutive incidents, all over the world, that should shame anyone who desires soccer to be free, clean and democratic.

“I have seen with my own eyes what incidents who, after one day comparing FIFA leaders to the devil, then go on stage and compare them with the people with Jesus Christ. Nobody told me about this. I saw it with my own eyes.

“I am firm in my desire to take an active part in the regeneration of FIFA and I will be available for prepared to go the distance now, and to beat someone like Carla who loves long matches, to come through that tournament with confi-


Sharapova ready to go distance again in Paris

Paris, 22 May — Maria Sharapova has hit form at the perfect moment as she eyes a defence of her French Open crown but old nemesis Serena Williams is lurking in the Parisian shadows.

Russian Sharapova, who once despised clay-court tennis but transformed herself into the 2012 and 2014 champion, arrives in the French capital fresh from winning the Italian Open in Rome. The 28-year-old, beaten by Williams for a 16th consecutive time in the Australian Open final in January, defeated Spain’s Carla Suarez Navarro in the Rome final, a week after reaching the semi-finals in Madrid and will be full of confidence.

“I’m in an especially good spot physically. I’m prepared to go the distance now, and to beat someone like Carla who loves long matches, to come through that tournament with confidence,” Sharapova, winner of 20 of her last 21 matches at Roland Garros, said last week.

Yet most observers make twice French Open champions Williams the favourite — even if she has suffered nagging pro-

nuries of late and can be at her most beatable on the red dirt.

Romania’s Simona Halep, last year’s runner-up, will be in the mix too but few would be surprised if Williams and Sharapova served up a repeat of the 2013 final.

“This is going to be a very beatable, far from her to the 'A game’ in the days ahead.

“I hear you need to try to peak for the French,” McEnroe, who will form part of Eurosport’s commentary team at the championships, told Reuters by telephone on Thursday.

“He was out for a while, he came back, he has recovered his way back to the sort of level he needs and the confidence level he needs to win again.

“|I guess by Madrid or Rome he would at least like to have won one or two but it’s hard not to think that he’s gotta take it up to another level (at the French) unless there’s physically something wrong with him.

Former world number one McEnroe says everything points to Novak Djokovic winning has French Open and says the only player capable of stopping the in-form Serb is Nadal.

“Serena is amazing, and she will get to 20 slams for sure,” the 18-times grand slam singles winner told the Tennis Podcast.

“|I definitely gets harder when you are in your 30s but at the same time, the new generation hasn’t quite caught up to

Serena so she has a nice window there.”

Indeed, despite being a relative veteran, there is talk of a Williams grand slam, but Evert, thinks that is unlikely.

“I think Serena, when she has bad days, she’s very beatable,” the American said.

“When she has bad days, she loses her timing, consistency, everything just goes.”

The list of those wait-

ing to take advantage if the world number one stumble-

ses is not a long one, how-

ever.

Halep has the patience on clay, while Wimbledon champion Petra Kvitova has the power but not neces-

sarily the craft to survive two weeks at Roland Gar-

ros.

Former world number one Victoria Azarenka, coming back to best after injury, could be a dark horse.

The 10th French Open.

At nearly 29, Nadal is already four years younger than McEnroe was when he claimed his last grand slam title.

And after a season in which once rare defeats on his favoured claycourts have arrived with alarming frequency, no wonder many believe Nadal has reached a tipping point.

McEnroe, however, thinks it is foolishly to dismiss the Mallorcan as a fading force and fully expects him to find his ‘A game’ in the days ahead.

“He obviously wants to play for the French,” McEnroe, who will form part of Eurosport’s commentary team at the championships, told

...