President U Thein Sein arrives in Australia

Nay Pyi Taw, 17 March—President U Thein Sein left Auckland of New Zealand at 12.45 pm local time today and arrived in Sydney of Australia at 2.15 pm local time. Officials of the Governor Office of New South Wales, Prime Minister Office and Ministry of Foreign Affairs welcomed the President at the airport.

Next, the President and party flew to Canberra from Sydney by the aircraft of Australian Armed Forces and arrived at a military airfield in Canberra where they were welcomed by officials of the Prime Minister Office and Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Then the President and party proceeded to Hyatt Hotel in Canberra in a motorcade.

In the evening, the President and party met with the Myanmar ambassador, families of embassy staff and Myanmar citizens in Australia, and presented gifts to them.

Next, the President and party attended a dinner hosted by the Myanmar Ambassador to Australia.

MNA

Belgian Dy PM and party conclude visit

YANGON, 17 March—Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and European Affairs Mr Didier Reynders of Belgium and party left here by air this afternoon.

They were seen off at Yangon International Airport by Yangon Region Minister for Electric and Industry U Nyan Tun Oo and officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.—MNA

MNA

UniNet launched

YANGON, 17 March—UniNet was launched this morning at Yangon Technological University in Insein Township here, attended by Yangon Region Chief Minister U Myint Swe, Deputy Minister for Science and Technology Dr Zaw Min Aung and Deputy Minister for Communications and Information Technology U Thaung Tin.

Deputy Minister Dr Zaw Min Aung extended greetings, followed by the speech of Chairman of Technological Universities Administration Committee U Nyi Hla Nge.

Next, Professor Carl V Thompson from Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) gave talks on materials for micro and nano-systems.

Online courses and video conferencing are available with the use of UniNet between Yangon Technological University and Yangon University of Computer Studies (Bahan Region) through wireless network.

MNA

Muse to be upgraded to a modern town

YANGON, 17 March—Muse is the major town for the border trade between China and Myanmar as a major check-point for importing products by road from China is located at the town.

Meanwhile, the check point also plays a major role in exporting Myanmar products to China.

Shan State government will supervise and take a leading role in implementing the project of upgrading the town.

The project includes building condos though there were single buildings in the town. Besides, to upgrade the town, ring roads in the town would be upgraded, an airport would be added and high-rise buildings would be constructed in the town.

Myanma Alinn: 11-3-2013 (Trans: AMS) ****


**Local News**

**New Light of Myanmar**

**Monday, 18 March, 2013**

**Young man dies of drowning after falling into Bago River**

**Bago, 17 March**— A young man drowned as falling into Bago River at Hmawlon village-tract in Bago Township at about 5 am on 11 March.

Hla Soe, 38, of Kyatrat village in Kawa Township fell into the water as his left ankle got hopelessly tangled in the anchor rope while dropping anchor from a motorized boat and died of drowning in the river. The fatal accident happened to the victim while he was waiting for high tide together with his colleagues, Myo Naing and Kyaw Aung before their departure for Kyatrat village.

His dead body was taken out of the water and sent to Bago Hospital for further investigation into his drowning death whether there is foul play and other suspicious. Investigating into the case is ongoing by Inndaw police station.

**Cambodian pilgrims come in flocks to visit pagodas in Myanmar**

**Magway, 17 March**— Cambodian pilgrims visited Myathalun Pagoda in Magway on their way back from Shwesettaw Pagoda Festival in Münüba Township of Magway Region on 13 March morning.

A group of 138 Cambodian pilgrims led by two Myanmar monks and one Cambodian travel agent offered light, joss-sticks, fruit, flower, water and alms to the pagoda and made recitation of Parittas. Then they had photos taken in the precinct of the pagoda.

“We started our pilgrimage from Yangon on 6 March. Our journey took us Kyantitbye, Mandalay, PyinOoLwin, Monywa, Bagan-Nyaung U and Shwesettaw. We will proceed to Nay Pyi Taw when our visit to Magway Myathalun Pagoda concludes. Then we will return to Yangon. There were Cambodian pilgrims who have been to Myanmar before. This time sees the most. There are 138 pilgrims in the group. We make the pilgrimage on a coach tour. It is a journey of 10 days,” says Ashin Uttara of Tipitaka Maha Gannnayon monastery in Kaba-Aye Pagoda who led the pilgrimage with another monk.

“I see more foreign visitors recent days. We are doing a brisk trade. I am happy to see more foreign tourists here. Business is good,” says a vendor in the precinct of Pagoda.

**Installation of water pipeline in progress**

**Yangon, 17 March**— Aided at supplying more drinking water to dwellers of Dagon Myothit (North) and (East) townships, installation of water pipelines is being carried out under the arrangement of Engineering Department (water and sanitation) of Yangon City Development Committee.

The water pipeline is 40 inches in diameter. Works are underway in the canal on Bohmuy Tun Sein street between Mingaladon Township and North Okkalapa Township.

**Fuel shop fire in Mandalay**

**Mandalay, 17 March**— An outbreak of fire at a private fuel shop on 19th Street between 86th and 87th in Mandalay caused a public panic as a haul of fuel containers which are being kept stored were found at the shop after the flame flickered and went out.

A fire broke out at That-tant-yaung fuel shop at about 3.20 pm on 12 March. According to the responsible persons of fire services department, the outbreak of fire was due to static electricity while filling fuel from a plastic container to a metal jar. Although the fire did not spread to nearby houses, the it gutted the whole shop, destroying furniture, 50 gallons of petrol and 25 gallons of diesel. As soon as the fire started, the crowds of local people fought the fire with the use of fire extinguishers and they were joined by about 100 fire fighters accompanied by 11 fire trucks. They struggled to control the fire and put out it at about 3.15 pm. Soon after the flame went out, the news of finding out the fuel storage came as a shock to local people. But the fire did not lick the fuel containers. Two women and one fire officer were wounded in the fire. Shop assistant Hein Thaha, 24, was charged with the cause of fire by police.

**Upgradeation of each road section on Yangon-Mandalay Expressway in progress**

**Nay Pyi Taw, 17 March**— According to the Ministry of Construction, each road section of Yangon-Mandalay Expressway is being upgraded paving it with asphalt. Tarmacking of each road section is being carried out mainly at accident-prone road sections with turns and weak foundation. “It is found that car accidents are frequent at the road sections with turns and weak foundation on the expressway. That’s why the expressway is being upgraded to be equipped with standard characteristics of a road with the aim of winding down road accident and ensuring road safety along the expressway”, an official of Yangon-Mandalay Expressway Police Commander Office said.

The Yangon-Mandalay Expressway was put into service in March 2009 and an average number of vehicles running on the expressway are 10000 a day.

**Photo shows students who were about to sit for their examination, waiting outside before the school bell rang at Basic Education High School No (1) exam centre in Yezagyo Township on 13 March. A total of 3599 students are taking their examinations peacefully at designated exam centres in the township. — MNA**

**Photo shows students, who were about to sit for matriculation examinations in Pakokku Township on 13 March. A total of 5911 students—are taking their examinations happily. — Kyemon**

**Medical staff of Workers’ Hospital make field trip in Yangon**

**Yangon, 17 March**— A 30-member medical team comprising specialists, surgeons and nurses led by Medical Superintendent Dr Daw Khan Pyin Win of Workers’ Hospital (Yangon) provided staff with health care at the assembly Hall of Printing and Publishing Enterprise on Theinbyu Street in Botataung Township, here, on 14 March morning.

Next, the medical superintendent gave talks on rights of staff under social security and activities of Workers’ Hospital (Yangon).
Obama pledges cooperation with new Israeli government

WASHINGTON, 17 March—US President Barack Obama on Saturday congratulated Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on the formation of a new government and pledged cooperation on shared challenges.

"President Obama looks forward to working closely with the prime minister and the new government to address the many challenges we face and advance our mutual interests in peace and security," the White House said in a statement.

"The United States places a high value on its deep and enduring bonds with Israel and the Israeli people," the statement said.

"The president looks forward to continuing to strengthen those bonds when he travels to Israel next week to meet with Israeli officials and to speak directly with the Israeli people." A new coalition government was formed in Israel on Friday, two months after the Israelis voted in the country’s 22 Jan elections, after Netanyahu’s Likud Party signed agreements with Yesh Atid and the Jewish Home on Friday. The new coalition will be inaugurated on Monday.

Obama will leave Washington on Tuesday for a three-day overseas trip after he took office in January for his second term, which will take him to Israel, the West Bank and Jordan.

The Israeli-Palestinian peace process, the two-year-old conflict in Syria and Iran’s controversial nuclear programme are expected to dominate his agenda.—Xinhua

US aims to clinch Afghan deal on prisoner transfer

WASHINGTON, 17 March —US Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel and Afghan President Hamid Karzai spoke in a call on Saturday about efforts to quickly resolve one of the most vexing issues in the two countries’ relations, the delayed transfer to Afghan control of a key detention centre. The Pentagon said the two men “agreed to use the next week to conduct intensive work with a view to concluding an agreement,” spokesman George Little said in a statement.

The transfer of the detention centre at Bagram air base is a persistent source of tension, with Karzai’s office warning in a statement on Wednesday that “any more delays could harm the bilateral relations.”

US commanders want to ensure that dangerous prisoners will not be released back to the battlefield. But Karzai has raised alarms by

warning that any “innocent” prisoners being held at the facility would be released.

Little’s statement said an agreement on the detention facility would be one that both “fully recognizes Afghan sovereignty and our mutual interests in security of the Afghan people and our respective forces.”

During Hagel’s visit to Afghanistan last weekend, Karzai accused the United States of colluding with the Taliban and of holding unilateral negotiations with the insurgents—all allegations the United States readily denied and which exposed deep tensions after 11 years of war. The United States plans to pull out just over half of its 66,000 troops from Afghanistan by early next year and leave a relatively small force after 2014, focusing on training Afghan forces and conducting limited counterterrorism operations.—Reuters

Bulgarian centre-right hold lead in March, poll shows

SOFIA, 17 March—Support for Bulgaria’s centre-right GERB led by ex-Prime Minister Boiko Borisov fell in March after protests about living standards but it held a lead over the Socialists ahead of May elections, a poll showed on Saturday.

Support for GERB was 19.7 percent in March, down from 22 percent in February. But a poll for the Socialists fell to 18.6 percent from 22 percent in the previous month, according to the Gallup International poll.

Borisov’s government is facing a vote of no confidence in the parliament, according to the poll of 1,013 people carried out between 7 and 12 March. Tens of thousands of people have protested for more than a month in the European Union’s poorest country against rising unemployment and low living standards. The demonstrations led to Borisov’s government resigning last month, and the Balkan country will hold parliamentary elections on 12 May.

Support for the ethnic Turkish MRF party fell to 5.2 percent in March from 7.3 percent a month earlier, the poll showed.

US Secretary of Defence Chuck Hagel speaks at his news conference on the Pentagon in Washington on 15 March, 2013.—Reuters

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"The president looks forward to continuing to strengthen those bonds when he travels to Israel next week to meet with Israeli officials and...
Space trio lands in Kazakhstan after bad weather delay

Almaty, 17 March—A Russian Soyuz capsule made a “bull’s eye” landing in the steppes of Kazakhstan on Saturday, delivering a Russian-American trio from the International Space Station, a day after its originally scheduled touchdown was delayed by foul weather.

NASA’s Kevin Ford and Russian cosmonauts Oleg Novitskiy and Evgeny Tarelkin, who had manned the $100 billion orbital outpost since October as Expedition 34, landed in cloudy weather at 7:06 am Moscow time (0306 GMT) on Saturday, almost 61 million miles (98 million km).

“The landing was energetic and exciting,” Russian space agency Roscosmos said, as saying. NASA television said: “Everything seems to be in order.” Due to hampered visibility, it took a few minutes before helicopters with Russian search and recovery teams that the crew is feeling good.” NASA television said.

The three smiling cosmonauts were seated on semi-reclined chairs and covered with blue thermal blankets. They were then carried to a nearby inflatable medical tent. On Friday, fog and freezing rain at the landing site in Kazakhstan prevented helicopters from setting up for the crew’s return to Earth. In preparation for their departure, Canadian astronaut Chris Hadfield took the helm of the space station on Wednesday, becoming the first Canadian to take command of the outpost. It is only the second time in the 12-year history of the station, a project of 15 nations that has been permanently staffed since November 2000, that command has been turned over to someone who is not American or Russian.
BUSINESS & HEALTH

New device keeps human liver alive outside body

LONDON, 17 March—

The technology, developed at Oxford University and now being trialed at the liver transplant centre at King’s College Hospital, could preserve a functioning liver outside the body for 24 hours by stimulating the natural environment-providing body temperature and oxygenated red blood cells, etc. Once on the machine, a liver functions normally, regaining its colour and producing bile.

Superseding results from the first two transplants, carried out at King’s College Hospital last month, suggest that the device could be beneficial for all patients needing liver transplants.

“The device is the very first completely automated liver perfusion device of its kind,” said Professor Constantin Cossions of Oxford University’s Department of Engineering Science, one of the machine’s inventors, “what was even more amazing was to see the same liver transplanted into a patient who is now walking around.”—Reuters

The King’s College Hospital, Oxford University and OrganOx team pose for a photograph following the successful connection of the first human liver for transplant onto the OrganOx Metra device, in this undated picture provided by the University of Oxford in southern England on 15 March, 2013.

Toyota to recall defective cars in China

BEIJING, 17 March—

The Japanese automaker Toyota will recall some 4,400 units of FJ Cruiser cars in China over seat belt flaws, China’s consumer quality watchdog said on Saturday.

The General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine (AQSIQ) said in its website that Toyota China will recall these imported cars produced between December 2007 and March 2013. Toyota is busy working on the solution to the flaw and will release improvement methods before 15 April, according to the administration.

This marks Toyota’s second recalling this year after the auto giant announced in January that it would recall 22,869 units of Lexus IS cars in China due to wiper arm problem.

China’s private auto ownership reached 93.09 million units by the end of 2012, up 18.3 percent year on year. Along with the fast expanding auto market, Chinese drivers grow more concerned about the quality of their cars.

Also on Saturday, the AQSIQ urged German automaker Volkswagen to recall defective cars after China Central Television (CCTV) exposed Volkswagens’ gearbox defect on Friday. To better protect the interests of Chinese consumers, the AQSIQ announced late last year that it would formulate a guideline to regulate a recall system for faulty cars.—Xinhua

Britain to close offshore payroll tax loophole

LONDON, 17 March—

Britain will close a loophole that has allowed some employers to avoid paying payroll taxes by routing wages through overseas intermediaries, the Treasury said on Saturday.

It said over 100,000 people working for British firms were employed through payroll agents based in offshore tax havens such as Jersey, which the government almost 100 million pounds ($150 million) a year in lost revenue.

In many cases the workers, who were temporary agency staff such as teachers, nurses and oil and gas crew members were unaware of the taxes they could lose their entitlement to state sickness or maternity benefits.

Treasurer Danny Alexander said measures to end the practice would be introduced in the government’s budget statement on 20 March.

“British firms employing British workers must pay British taxes. This is just one part of a bigger package we will introduce at the budget next week,” he said. The new measures would come into force from April 2014, the Treasury said.

North Dakota Senate approves “heartbeat” abortion ban

BISMARCK, 17 March—

The North Dakota Senate approved what would be the most restrictive abortion law in the United States on Friday, a measure banning the procedure in most cases once a fetal heartbeat can be detected, as early as six weeks.

Senators also approved a second bill on Friday that bans abortions based solely on genetic abnormalities, the first state ban of its kind if signed into law. The bill would also ban abortions based on the gender of the fetus, which would make North Dakota the fourth state to ban sex-selection based abortions.

The bills, which passed the state House of Representatives last month, now head to Republican Governor Jack Dalrymple, who has not indicated whether he would sign them into law. He is expected to receive the bills on Monday.

The “heartbeat” bill provides exceptions if an abortion would prevent the death or irreversible impairment of a pregnant woman but no exceptions for rape. It sets up a direct challenge to the Supreme Court’s decision in Roe v. Wade that legalized abortion in 1973.

Several states ban most abortions after 20 weeks of pregnancy. Arkansas lawmakers earlier in March approved a ban on most abortions after 12 weeks of pregnancy that could take effect in August if it survives expected legal challenges.

Republican state Senator Spencer Berry, a bill sponsor, said 40 years of medical advancements should not be ignored.

“The images and heartbeat from the womb provide strong and overwhelming evidence of the very least—potential life,” Berry said. “And we have been instructed by the Supreme Court to protect that very potential.”

At six weeks, the ban would take effect before many women would know they were pregnant, said the Centre for Reproductive Rights, which represents North Dakota’s only clinic that provides abortions, the Red River Women’s Clinic in Fargo.

Statehouses across the nation approved 92 restrictions on abortion in 2011 and another 43 in 2012, which was the second-highest figure on record, according to the Guttmacher Institute, a research group that supports abortion rights.

Payment of taxes has become a hot political issue in Britain as the government squirms seeking to reduce its budget deficit.

Multinationals such as Starbucks, Amazon and Google have some underestimating for using legal maneuvers to cut their tax bills, although there was no suggestion they were using the payroll loophole.—Reuters

China demands Volkswagen to recall defective cars

BEIJING, 17 March—

China’s consumer quality watchdog said that all functions in the DSG transmissions could cause a sudden loss or gain in engine power, which can pose safety hazards.

Volkswagen China warned on official microblog late Friday that it has taken the report seriously and will contact consumers as soon as possible to resolve the problem. According to Zhang, AQSIQ has been investigating the company’s DSG transmissions since last March. In May, Volkswagen extended its DSG quality guarantee period in China to ten years under pressure from the administration.

Toyota sold over 22,869 units of Lexus IS cars in China due to wiper arm problem.

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One killed, five injured in fuel tank blast in SE Turkey

ANKARA, 17 March—One person was killed and five others injured on Saturday evening when a fuel tank exploded in southeastern Turkey, private Dogan news agency reported.

The explosion took place in the electrical section of the fuel tank in a garden in Saniurfa, leaving one person killed and five others injured, including two children, according to the report.

Reasons behind the blast remained unknown. The wounded were taken to a private hospital for medical treatment, said the report, adding that the investigation into this incident was underway.

Congoles rebels surrender, flee after defeat by rivals

Kinshasa, 17 March—Hundreds of Congolese rebels loyal to warlord Bosco Ntaganda have fled into neighboring Rwanda—surrendered to United Nations peacekeepers after being routed by a rival faction, rebel and UN sources said Saturday.

Ntaganda’s apparent defeat comes after weeks of infighting within the region’s ethnic minorities, which has slowed in past months. It will not happen this year.

Defection of high-ranking military and political figures has slowed in past months. It will not happen this year.

French oppose pension changes, diesel tax

Paris, 17 March—Most French people oppose ending inflation-linked rises for private-sector pensioners, a poll showed on Saturday, highlighting the challenge facing the government as it prepares broader changes to the pension system.

Some 75 per cent of respondents reject a deal on Wednesday in which unions and employers agreed on adjusting private sector pensions by less than the rate of inflation, the Ifop poll for the Journal du Dimanche newspaper showed. The agreement was seen as a test of the government’s chances of making similar changes to the broader system when it unveils a reform in July to rein in an overall annual pension deficit set to hit 20 billion euros (17.3 billion pounds) by 2020.

The poll, carried out among 1005 people on 14-15 March, also showed that nearly three quarters of respondents would oppose increasing taxes on diesel, another possible step for plugging fiscal shortfalls proposed by the government’s auditor.

Any tax rise would be a controversial move in a country where diesel accounts for 80 percent of road fuel consumption, and ministers have insisted that it will not happen this year.

Evacuation orders lifted as Colorado wildfire eases

DENVER, 17 March—Evacuation orders were lifted on Saturday for hundreds of Colorado residents forced to flee their homes due to a wind-driven wildfire in a canyon northwest of Denver, as firefighters made progress in containing the blaze, officials said.

Calmer winds, higher humidity levels and cooler temperatures allowed firefighters to cut containment lines around 45 percent of the so-called Galena Fire, said Nick Christensen, spokesman for the Larimer County Sheriff’s Office.

The blaze, signaled an end to the wildfire season in the drought-stricken region, which last year had its worst fire year on record.

In 2012, forest and brush fires scorched 384,803 acres in the state, destroyed 650 homes and killed six people, according to the Colorado Division of Fire Prevention and Control. The latest wildfire erupted on Friday about 75 miles northwest of Denver near the city of Fort Collins and Lory State Park and has charred between 750 and 1,000 acres. But no injuries were reported and no structures were lost, Christensen said.

He added that all evacuees would be permitted to return to their homes by Saturday evening. Hundreds of residents were ordered out of their homes on Friday afternoon after erratic winds quickly spread the flames near populated areas.

A customer fills-up his car with diesel at a gas station in Nice on 4 March, 2013.—Reuters

Rebels fight Sudanese government troops in south Darfur

KHARTOUM, 17 March—Sudanese rebels said Saturday they had killed more than 200 soldiers in south Darfur, but the government said its troops had suffered only a “number” of casualties and repulsed an ambush.

War broke out in the western region of Darfur over a decade ago and has raged ever since despite two peace accords and the presence of the world’s largest peacekeeping mission.

The main insurgent groups, which accuse the government of marginalising the region’s ethnic minorities, have refused to join a Qatarg brokered peace process that led to a deal between Khartoum and an umbrella of smaller rebel factions in 2011. While violence is down from its peak in 2003 and 2004, new fighting has forced more than 130,000 people to flee their homes since the start of the year, according to the United Nations.

On Saturday, rebels of the Sudan Liberation Army faction loyal to veteran fighter Minni Minnawi said they attacked a government convoy near Nyala, the capital of South Darfur state.

“Nothing of note survived of the convoy,” they said in a statement. They said they killed 260 government troops and militia fighters—an unusually high number to claim. The army contradicted this account, saying it had repulsed the ambush and killed and wounded around 100 rebels. The armed forces only suffered “a number” of casualties, the army’s spokesman said in a report by state news agency SUNA.

Both sides frequently give conflicting reports of fighting, each claiming victory over the other. Events in Darfur are hard to independently verify because of restrictions on media access to the region.—Reuters

Syrian general, 20 soldiers defect

BRUSSELS, 17 March—A brigadier general and about 20 soldiers defected from the Syrian army in two separate incidents on Saturday, activists said, in another sign that the strength of President Bashar al-Assad’s armed forces is diminishing.

Brigadier General Mo- hammad Hamed, who dressed in a camouflage military uniform in a video on Al Arabiya news channel—and said he had planned his escape with the opposition movement for some time.

“It is not possible for anyone to accept any of the ideas of this regime unless they have achieved special interests,” he said in the video. There was no comment about the defectors on Syrian state news outlets.

Defection of high-ranking military and political figures has slowed in past months.

But a study by the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) published this week estimated that Assad’s forces, thought to be more than 300,000-strong at the start of the uprising two years ago, were now at a much lower effective strength and were likely to diminish further.

The IISS said that perhaps 50,000 of the Syrian army’s elite troops could be depended on for loyalty. Most of them were likely to be from Assad’s minority Alawite sect, which has dominated the country for more than four decades.

Many deserters report that their units were held inside bases to prevent their escape.

Syria’s civil war began as a popular street movement but has evolved into an increasingly sectarian conflict. The opposition has been mostly led by the Sunni Muslim population, with Alawites and other minori- ties mostly throwing their weight behind Assad.

A customer fills-up his car with diesel at a gas station in Nice on 4 March, 2013.—Reuters

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A customer fills-up his car with diesel at a gas station in Nice on 4 March, 2013.—Reuters
Jordan to select technology for first nuclear reactor in May

AMMAN, 17 March—Jordan said on Saturday it will select the technology for its first planned nuclear reactor in mid-May, the state-run Petra news agency reported.

Khaled Toukan, chairman of the Jordan Atomic Energy Commission, said there is a “strong competition” between two offers that Jordan has prequalified recently to provide the technology for the reactor.

Russia’s Atomstroyexport and a consortium of France’s Areva and Japan’s Mitsubishi were prequalified, Toukan said, adding that the winning offer will be announced in mid-May.

Regarding the location of the reactor, Toukan said studies will be completed by the end of this month on three possible sites, and the final site will be jointly determined by the cabinet, the Lower House and the local communities. Also in May, Jordan will select the strategic partner of the project, Toukan said, adding that the final agreement to build the nuclear reactor will be signed in the second half of 2013.

Jordan, which imports about 96 percent of its energy needs annually, plans to build several nuclear reactors for power generation.

Khartoum, Juba’s joint political, security committee to resume meetings on Sunday

KHARTOUM, 17 March — The joint political and security committee between Sudan and South Sudan is to resume its meetings on Sunday in the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa, Khartoum’s Al Ray Al Am daily reported on Saturday.

The preparatory panel of the joint committee has started arrangements for resuming the committee’s meetings with the participation of the two countries’ defence ministers, the paper said.

It added that the two sides would discuss topics related to the security arrangements and get acquainted with progress in the withdrawal of the two countries’ armies from the demilitarized zone together with the issue of breaking the link between South Sudan’s army and the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement (SPLM)/northern sector.

Last week Khartoum and Juba signed in Addis Ababa a matrix deal of modality to implement the security arrangement deal as well as the cooperation agreement signed between them in Ethiopia in September last year.

Two days later, the two sides started withdrawing their forces from the joint border prior to establish a safe demilitarized zone as a practical step toward the implementation of the signed agreements.

The two sides further agreed to resume South Sudan’s oil exportation through Sudan’s pipeline in two weeks’ time.

EU’s Ashton urges caution on lifting arms ban for Syria rebels

BRUSSELS, 17 March—The European Union’s foreign policy chief urged caution on Saturday about a Franco-British drive to lift an EU arms embargo to help rebels in Syria, questioning the impact such a step might have on attempts to reach a political settlement there.

Other EU governments rebuffed efforts by Paris and London at an EU summit on Friday to lift the Syrian arms embargo to help opponents of President Bashar al-Assad, although they asked for foreign ministers to discuss it again next week.

EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton said the EU needed to think “very carefully” about French and British arguments that lifting the embargo would encourage Assad to negotiate.

The EU should also consult UN mediator Lakhdar Brahimi and Moaz al-Khatib, head of the opposition Syrian National Coalition, about what impact lifting the embargo might have on their efforts to start talks to end the Syria crisis, she said. “We’ve got to make sure of is anything we do we do not make that (work) harder,” she said, speaking at a conference organized by the German Marshall Fund of the United States, a group committed to strengthening transatlantic cooperation.

Germany led opposition to the Franco-British move to lift the embargo to help the rebels after two years of civil war that have killed 70,000 people, according to UN estimates.

Opponents argue that arming the rebels could encourage Assad’s backers, Russia and Iran, to step up weapons deliveries to the government, fueling an arms race, and they also fear that weapons could fall into the wrong hands, such as militants in the rebel ranks.

Ashton said she had told EU leaders at Friday’s summit that they must think through very carefully the implications of lifting the arms embargo. “Would putting weapons into the field make it more or less likely that others will do the same? What would be the response of Assad based on what we know about his response so far? Would it stop people being killed or would it kill people faster?” she said.

Although Ashton did not mention it, Western governments are concerned about chemical weapons the Syrian government is believed to hold.

US President Barack Obama has warned Assad he would be held accountable if such weapons were used. EU diplomats think it is unlikely France and Britain will be able to persuade its EU partners to back lifting the arms embargo to help the rebels, a decision that needs unanimity. But a compromise allowing some increased aid to Assad’s opponents might be possible before current sanctions expire on 1 June.

IMF chief welcomes joint loan programme for Cyprus

WASHINGTON, 17 March—Christine Lagarde, Managing Director of the Washington-based International Monetary Fund (IMF), on Saturday said she welcomed the joint loan programme with the eurozone for Cyprus to help the nation tackle its economic challenges.

“After about 10 hours of negotiations, the eurozone and the IMF early Saturday morning agreed on a 10-billion-euro (about 13 billion US dollar) bailout package for Cyprus,” Lagarde said in a statement.

“The IMF has always said that we would support a solution that is sustainable, that is fully financed, and that appropriately allocates the burden sharing. I believe that the agreed package meets these three objectives,” Lagarde said in a statement.

“On this basis, I intend to make a recommendation to our Executive Board for the IMF to contribute to the financing of the package,” she noted.

The deal was announced by Eurogroup head Jeroen Dijsselbloem after a meeting of eurozone finance ministers, which is also attended by Lagarde.—Xinhua
In a period of less than two years the incumbent government has been in office it has been striving to strengthen democracy in every aspect as aspired by the people. This means not only ending repression and creating the legal framework that can guarantee political freedom, but also enabling the development of civil society organizations, and nurturing a new democratic culture. During this transition period, it has been able to lay a foundation for democratic institutions such as constitution, governance system with check and balance, national and local legislatures, judiciary, political parties and independent press.

Proper implementation is required to give these democratic institutions life. Here it is important to change the mindset of the people so that people can take root in the democracy culture. In solving problems arising from armed conflicts to industrial relations, the most honourable and valuable achievement is the start of a culture of solving all problems through dialogues and discussions.

In fact, recent political progress can be attributed to four crucial factors: building confidence and mutual understanding among political forces that were previously hostile and confrontational to each other; re-embracing political tolerance; creating mechanism for peaceful participation of citizens in political process; and regaining trust and support from international community for the reform process.

But we are one of the poorest countries in the world. So, we still have shortage of the institutions that are necessary to manage our transition. In consequence, a lot of challenges and set-backs lie ahead. But the government has already committed itself to continuing the path to democracy until we all can understand, value and embrace democracy culture. The government in office will do everything in its powers to see Myanmar become the democratic, prosperous, and peaceful nation which we all know that the entire country deeply desires, and deserves.

Pathein University, NITE of Japan sign MoU on research cooperation

HANOI, 17 March—An MoU on cooperation in doing research for conservation and sustainability of biodiversity was signed between Pathein University and National Institute of Technology and Evaluation of Japan today.

At the signing ceremony held at the Higher Education Department (Lower Myanmar), Director-General of the HED (Lower Myanmar) U Zaw Htay and Dr Itaru Yasui, President of NITE of Japan signed the MoU.

Dr Nyunt Pe, Rector of Pathein University, and Mr Junichi Nakagawa, Director-General of the NITE signed the agreement for the project.

The MoU has renewed the 2004-MoU signed between the university and NITE.

Pathein University, NITE of Japan sign MoU on research cooperation

Monday, 18 March, 2013

ARTICLE

Fine traditions in successive eras

Kyaw Min Khuang

30 March, 2011. It is the fine tradition of Tatmadaw.

My son Kyaw Thura,

You have joined Tatmadaw since you decided and got appointed to the Company Commander. I myself have allowed you to join Tatmadaw although I want you to stay under my eye. I really thought you as you have become a good soldier. And your father will take pride for you as you could follow in the step of him.

My son Kyaw Thura,

Myanmar Tatmadaw formed with all national races is Union’s Tatmadaw. Its prime duty is to safeguard our motherland. At present, Tatmadaw’s duty is to safeguard the country in addition to safeguarding the Constitution. And Tatmadaw also has to safeguard Our three main national causes which is a backbone of the country.

Myanmar Tatmadaw has the fine tradition of safeguarding the country along the course of history whenever the country faces any hurdle. Myanmar Tatmadaw led by our national hero General Aung San joined hands with the people in the independence struggle and could try to regain independence.

And Tatmadaw always safeguards the country whenever the country is on the verge of losing independence and sovereignty. For instance, Tatmadaw could save the country from the outbreak of the internal multi-coloured armed insurgency in 1948 only with ten battalions. In 1950, Tatmadaw could fight against the invading forces with many military operations, risking many lives of soldiers. Myanmar sovereignty and independence could be safeguarded.

Tatmadaw took control of the State, formed caretaker government. That was to prevent bloodshed from government split-up. Tatmadaw would safeguard the country as the country faced the disintegration of the Union due to Federal policy in 1962. The Tatmadaw was compelled to assume the duties of the State in the 1988 Uprising. Then, Tatmadaw held the multiparty general election as promised and handed over State’s duties to the democratic government on principle of “brotherhood” towards each other.

All the world countries are building modern armies with the use of sophisticated technologies for their sovereignty and security. But in Myanmar, we all need to build a modern Tatmadaw. Only when Tatmadaw has skills and strength, could the nation and our three main national causes be safeguarded. Myanmar had fallen under British colonial reign due to the lack of a modern Tatmadaw. And losing independence is the best example for Myanmar.

My son Kyaw Thura,

Every nation has its own armed forces. What makes Myanmar Tatmadaw different from others is it is a Union Armed Forces made of national brethren who love their mother land with strong Union spirit. Strict adherence to military disciplines, the lifeblood of the armed forces, and willingness to obey the orders of superiors are also the distinct features of Myanmar Tatmadaw. Taking a look at the history of Myanmar Tatmadaw, it is clear that Tatmadaw with strong armed strength thwarted the threats inside and outside the nation.

My son Kyaw Thura,

Why do Tatmadawmen get on with tough tasks in remote places, without caring about money? What makes them to choose a path of thorns, leaving their parents, wives, sons and in-laws behind and relatives? The answer is much simpler. The Tatmadawmen of Myanmar Tatmadaw are blood brethren of the nation. Therefore, they choose to safeguard their motherland to protect their motherland which they share.

My son Kyaw Thura,

Unavoidably, the Tatmadaw have to engage with both friendly and unfriendly groups. Whenever it did so, it always held the attitude of “brotherhood” towards them. Except necessary military operations, it never tried to annihilate them with grudge nor used chemical weapons against them. It also welcomed back in wariness those returned to legal fold for their livelihood but also for their future. While the death of a soldier in an unavoidable confrontation means a loss of good citizen to the nation, the death of a member from the opposing sides is also a loss of a member to the Union. The Tatmadaw truly do not want to fight with own brothers except to protect the motherland from inside and outside threats. Moreover, stability is essential in building a new, modern, developed nation.

So, it is doing its fair share with genuine goodwill for building peace at present. The Tatmadaw which have devoted to national security at the risk of life and limb want to see lasting peace and development of the nation more. With true Union spirit, it would join hands with the government until the internal peace is established.

My son Kyaw Thura,

I felt glad and took pride in when I read the letter you sent me from somewhere in orders of Darwin. In your letter, you said: I with my company reached a small Kachin mountain village called Mayan last month just to come across one of my old friends. We took a rest there and donated some of our savings to the village head to spend for the festival. It was a cold winter night and we joined the villagers for Manaw dances in happiness. It was wonderful time, but then we saw blaze from the south of the village followed by cries of “fire!”

I rushed to southern part of the village where the fire broke out. A traditional two-storey frame house was in the roaring fire. “I’m here. Help me!” I heard a voice. It was an old woman aged over 70 on the ground floor of the house. The house caught fire from the fallen oil lamp of that old lady. No villager dared to save the old lady in the raging fire. Wasting no time, I made up my mind to save that helpless lady, gave my equipment and with company warrant officer Shwe Htay and run into the burning house. I found the grandma losing consciousness with burns and brought her out of fire. She came very close to escape from fire before I was hit by the fallen wooden truss at the chest and made unconscious.

When I regained consciousness, I found myself in my camp with caring eyes of my paramedic Captain Arkar and fellow soldiers and a pair of weeping eyes of an old lady with burns. It was Daw Ma Htu Luan I had saved. She said with a local accent, “You have given me a new lease of life, my son. May god bless you. May you be able to serve our Kachin region more and more!” Thanks to care of the paramedic and the soldiers, I recovered from the burns in a few days. But the burn left my chest right upon my heart a scar forever. Though, I’m proud of it, mom. I will regard it as a life-long present of Kachin land. For me, I was also swollen with pride that tears welled up in my eyes.

It serves as a boost for the dignity of the Tatmadaw and an example of...
**Objectives of the 68th Anniversary Armed Forces Day 2013**

1. To uphold the national policy namely non-disintegration of the Union, non-disintegration of national solidarity, and perpetuation of sovereignty
2. To play the leading role in the national politics by the Tatmadaw joining hands with all national races with Union Spirit and the true patriotism in line with the Constitution
3. To crush all destructive elements at home and abroad through the strength of State, People and Tatmadaw
4. To build up a strong, competent, modern, patriotic Tatmadaw to safeguard the security and sovereignty of the nation

**Fine traditions in successive...**

(from page 8)

Tatmadaw’s goodwill towards the national brethren. You strictly followed one of 10 codes of conduct towards the public that goes, “Safeguard life and property of the people.” Your late dad Sergeant Ba Hein will surely take pride of you as well, son. The land of Kachin has rich natural resources and scenic natural beauties. It is also the origin of Ayeyawady River from Maykha-Malikha confluence. I would like to urge you to continue obeying the codes of conduct, learn and respect the religious and cultural customs of ethnic Kachin people and even sacrifice your life while discharging duties in Kachin State.

“I hereby salute Tatmadawmen who sacrificed their lives for the State along the course of the history on 68th anniversary Armed Forces Day.”

May you and your fellow soldiers be healthy and happy.

Yours lovingly,

Mom

**Relief aid reached out to Yedasse fire victims**

**YEDASSE, 17 March—** Relief aid was distributed to fire victims of the Village of Tatsoe in Dauk-im-gon village-tract in Yedasse Township in Toungoo District on 11 March.

It started from the forest fire that destroyed 19 houses, leaving 76 people from 19 households homeless on 10 March.

Households were provided with K 30,000 each, 57 bags of rice, 38 viss of edible oil, instant noodles, clothes and foodstuffs worth K 1.95 million donated by departments in the township, officials, local people and NGOs.

Region Hluttaw Representative U Maung Maung Thet, Head of Yedasse Township General Administration Department U Hay Kyaw, Commander of Yedasse Township Police Force Police Major Nyan Win and officials concerned handed over the relief aids to the victims. —NLM

**Illegal commodities confiscated**

**NAWNKHIO, 17 March—** The mobile team based near the toll gate on Mandalay-Lashio Road, east of Nawnkhiyo, discharges duties of checking commodities. The team recently exposed 72 cases and confiscated various kinds of commodities worth K 342.1 million without customs duties so as to control import of illegal commodities.

At present, the smugglers transport their illegal commodities by van, express bus and Hilux. Therefore, passengers faced delay of their trips due to the fact that the authorities of the mobile teams check unscrapulous person’s illegal goods onboard the vehicles. —Myanma Alinn

**Belgian Dy PM meets MNHKC Chairman**

**NAW PYI TAW, 17 March—** Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and European Affairs Mr Didier Reynders of Belgium and party met with Chairman of Myanmar National Human Rights Commission U Win Mya and members.—MNA

**Dinner parties allowed in Bagan at places separated from precincts of ancient buildings**

**NAW PYI TAW, 17 March—** Some recommendations made at Systematic Management and Conservation of Ancient Heritage Workshop held at Ministry of Culture on 31-11-2012 as regards tourism suggested that dinner should be allowed at the request of package tours without affecting pagoda precincts and pagodas and stupas.

Taking in consideration of such recommendations, hotelsier and tour operators in Bagan on condition that they take full responsibility will be allowed to organize dinner parties in such places separated from the precinct of the ancient buildings in Bagan Ancient Cultural Region as the farmland in northwest of Dhamma- yangyi Pagoda, Mt. Ohhtein and the southern part of Shwenen Yintaw Pagoda. It is required to inform and seek approval from Archaeology, National Museum and Library Department in Bagan. No rent and service charges will be taken for holding party but sanitation must be carried out within the next day.

The Ministry of Culture says the service is just intended for tourists’ satisfaction. —MNA

**Job opportunities created for dwellers in Sagaing**

**SAGAING, 17 March—** Sagaing Industrial Zone Management Committee held the press conference on tasks of the zone at its office in Padamya Ward on 9 March.

Chairman of the supervisory committee U Ko Ko Myint explained establishment of the industrial zone and progress of production and conducted the media persons round the factories and workshops.

Sagaing Industrial Zone is located on 888.52 acres of land with 194 plots in Padamya Ward and Nilar Ward, west of Minwun Hill and north of Sagaing. A total of 43 workshops and factories are going into operation on the industrial zone. Eighteen personal goods factories, five foodstuff factories, nine foundry plants and two automobile assembling factories are manufacturing their respective products.

The 10 MVA power station from Monywa Industrial Zone Branch (Sagaing) is supplying electricity to Sagaing Industrial Zone. The factories and workshops are also installed with twenty-seven 500 KVA transformers and eighteen 315 KVA transformers.

Social Security Board is providing health care services of workers from the industrial zone.

Workers’ families are facilitated with day care centre, clinic and purified water tanks in addition to the fire station.

Sagaing Industrial Zone branch of Sagaing-Monywa Industrial Zone is being upgraded to a full fledged industrial zone.

At present, the newly-emerged industrial zone is creating job opportunities for the local people. —Myanma Alinn
Budget deadlock squeezes military members seeking education

SAN ANTONIO, 17 March—For Airman First Class Stephen Sinatra, the budget cuts prompted by deadlock in Washington have turned his plans upside down.

Sinatra, who is in the US Air Force stationed in Washington, DC, is taking online college classes through a tuition assistance programme for members of the military that has been halted as a money-saving move. “I don’t make much money,” Sinatra said.

“To be able to utilize this money to go to school and better myself, it helps a lot. That’s almost what keeps me to be motivated to keep going in the military.”

The tuition assistance programme, which provides up to $4,500 a year per student, is one victim of across-the-board cuts known as sequestration that are forcing government agencies to reduce spending.

President Barack Obama, last week, introduced legislation to bring back the tuition assistance programme, which is not a part of the military contract, like the GI Bill for veterans benefits, but is considered an incentive to enlist.

“I have seen a lot of people who have lost their motivation to be in the military when they take away the one perk that people seem to enjoy,” Sinatra said.

Several colleges have moved to defer tuition charges for the coming term to help military members who are already enrolled, and two senators, one Democrat, one Republican, have introduced legislation to re-evaluate the tuition assistance programme.

Students who have already enrolled in classes using the tuition assistance programme will be allowed to complete those classes, according to a memo from the Army announcing the cancellation of the programme.

“This suspension is necessary given the significant budget execution challenges caused by the combined effects of a possible year-long continuing resolution and sequestration,” the Army memo said.

The Army understands the impacts of this action and will re-evaluate should the budgetary situation improve.” The Marines, Air Force and Coast Guard have also suspended their tuition assistance programme.

Russia military helicopter crash kills three

MOSCOW, 17 March—A military helicopter crashed Saturday morning in Russia’s North Caucasus republic of Chechnya, killing three of the four people on board, local authorities said. The Mi-8 chopper of the Russian Border Service hit the ground and was burnt out in the Khankala military airfield as it attempted to land despite poor visibility, a spokesperson for the Southern Military District prosecutor’s office told reporters.

The only survivor was being treated for injuries in hospital, the spokesperson added. Investigators were working at the scene to determine whether the crash was caused by violations of flight safety rules, according to the spokesperson.

Three killed, nine wounded in attacks in Iraq

BAGHDAD, 17 March—Two soldiers and a civilian were killed, and nine people wounded in separate bombings and shootings in Iraq on Saturday, the police said.

Two soldiers were killed and another wounded when gunmen attacked their checkpoint in northern the city of Mosul, some 400 km north of the Iraqi capital of Baghdad, a local police source told Xinhua on condition of anonymity.

One of the attackers was also wounded by the exchange of fire between the soldiers and the gunmen, the source said.

In a separate incident, gunmen broke into the house of Ali Abdullah, a local leading figure in Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki’s Shiite party of al-Dawa, in a village located some 15 km south of Mosul, wounding four of his family members before they fled the scene, the source added.

Abdullah was not at home when the gunmen attacked his house, he said.

Separately, a taxi driver was wounded when a roadside bomb detonated near his car in western Mosul, he said, adding that the blast apparently missed a police patrol which had just past and hit the taxi car instead.

Elsewhere, unidentified gunmen using silenced weapons shot dead a young man in front of his house in central the city of Fallujah, some 50 km west of Baghdad, a police source in the city anonymously told Xinhua.

Meanwhile, a roadside bomb struck an Iraqi army vehicle in Tarmiyah area, some 40 km north of Baghdad, damaging the vehicle and wounding two soldiers aboard, a local police source said.

Violence is still common in Iraq’s cities despite the dramatic decrease since its peak in 2006 and 2007, when the country was engulfed in sectarian killings.

Syrian troops advance to Damascus’ rebellious suburb

DAUMASCU, 17 March—The Syrian troops have advanced to the rebel-held Jobar suburb of the capital Damascus, the state news agency SANA reported on Saturday.

Troops have eliminated numbers of “armed terrorists” and restored stability and security to the Barlamand Roundabout, the Cultural Center, and the municipal building, SANA said.

Jobar is part of the sprawling al-Gouta countryside outlining the eastern part of Damascus. The area has witnessed intense fighting over the past year before the rebels took hold of large swathes of the area and other adjacent suburbs.

The rebels in that area have unleashed several mortar attacks recently, causing injuries and property losses in nearby districts such as the Christian-dominated al-Qassa neighbourhood.

Opposition activists, meanwhile, reported government troops’ renewed shelling on the Damascus’ suburb of al-Qaboun and villages of the southern Province of Daraa on Saturday. The Syrian crisis has started in March 2011. The crisis has begun with peaceful protests demanding reforms and freedoms and quickly evolved into an armed insurgency. The UN says that more than 70,000 people have been killed and millions of others were displaced internally and externally during the two-year-old crisis.

Passengers aboard the cruise ship GTS Millennium watch a lion dance performance at the Kai Tak Cruise Terminal in south China’s Hong Kong, on 16 March, 2013. GTS Millennium arrived at Hong Kong’s Kai Tak Cruise Terminal on Saturday and became the first cruise ship to berth at the terminal prior to its official opening in June 2013.—Xinhua

A stamp collector presents the “peach blossom” stamps at the Beijing Botanical Garden in Beijing, capital of China, on 16 March, 2013. China Post published a set of “peach blossom” stamps on Saturday. —Xinhua

Syrian troops advance to Damascus’ rebellious suburb

Bus crash kills two in Pennsylvania, US

WASHINGTON, 17 March—Two people died on Saturday after a bus went off a highway and crashed into a tree in the US state of Pennsyluania, a US media said.

The 61-year-old bus driver was dead at the scene and a pregnant woman died later from injuries after being flown to Penn State Hershey Medical Centre, according to local media reports. The bus was carrying 23 people, who were players or coaches of Seton Hill University women’s lacrosse team, when it went off the Pennsylvania Turnpike and crashed at around 9 am local time in Cumberland County, Pennsylvania.

All passengers with minor injuries were also sent to hospitals for treatment. It remains unknown what caused the crash. —Xinhua
Chinese, Pakistani presidents discuss relations, cooperation

BEIJING, 17 March—Newly-elected Chinese President Xi Jinping and his Pakistani counterpart Asif Ali Zardari on Saturday discussed over phone topics concerning the development of bilateral relations and cooperation.

While congratulating Xi on his election to the presidency, Zardari said Pakistan and China are all-weather friends and that the Pakistani people love China.

Pakistan would like to maintain its high-level exchanges with China and to strengthen communication and cooperation between the two countries in bilateral and international affairs, Zardari said.

Pakistan will continue to firmly support China when needed, said the president. Xi thanked Zardari for his congratulations, and said that China and Pakistan are all-weather strategic cooperation partners.

Since the establishment of diplomatic ties 62 years ago, the two countries have been respecting and supporting each other and have carried out comprehensive cooperation, Xi said.

The China-Pakistan relations have withstood the test of time and the fluctuations of international situation, and have achieved healthy and steady development over past decades, Xi said.

He stressed that China attaches great importance to the China-Pakistan relations, and that it is an established policy of the Chinese government to develop the friendly and cooperative relations between the two countries.

China will continue to support Pakistan’s efforts to safeguard its national sovereignty and independence, and to realize national stability and development, Xi said. He hoped that the two countries could cooperate closely to maintain and develop their sound relations so that the traditional friendship between the two sides could be passed on from generation to generation.

Xi, general secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC), was elected Chinese president and chairman of China’s Central Military Commission on Thursday at the plenary meeting of the first session of the 12th National People’s Congress (NPC).

Xi’s congratulations to his Pakistani counterpart, President Asif Ali Zardari, were extended on Saturday. Zardari said.

Chinese, Pakistani presidents discuss relations, cooperation

BEIJING, 17 March—Chinese President Xi Jinping speaks at a Press conference after the closing meeting of the first session of the 12th National People’s Congress (NPC) at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, capital of China, on 17 March, 2013. Chinese Premier Li Keqiang and Vice Premiers Zhang Gaoli, Liu Yandong, Wang Yang and Ma Kai met the Press and answered questions here on Sunday. —Xinhua

Government to increase care for most needed

BEIJING, 17 March—Chinese Premier Li Keqiang said on Sunday that the Chinese government needs to increase care for the most needed to prevent them from challenging the society.

The government has to ensure the people’s rights to existence and their human dignity, Li said at a Press conference.

24 soldiers killed as van falls into ravine in Northern Pakistan

ISLAMABAD, 17 March—At least 24 soldiers were killed and four others injured when a van fell into a ravine in Pakistan’s north-west Kohistan District on early Saturday morning, police said.

Akbhri Ali, District Police Officer of Kohistan said that the van carrying 29 soldiers fell into a ravine while negotiating a sharp turn at Karakorum Highway in Kohistan area, an administrative district in the country’s north-west Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province.

The soldiers’ van was on its way to Gilgit Baltistan from northern Rawalpindi city when it met the accident, he said.

Rescue workers together with local police recovered the injured people and bodies from the ravine and shifted them to a nearby rural health center from where they would be airlifted to army hospital Rawalpindi via Army helicopter, said the DPO.

Pakistan is among the countries having worst record of fatal traffic accidents, mainly due to poor roads, lack of driving skills, badly maintained vehicles and violation of road safety rules.—Xinhua

Helmet crash kills one ISAF service member in S Afghanistan

KABUL, 17 March—One NATO-led ISAF soldier was killed on Saturday when a helicopter went down in southern Afghanistan, the coalition forces confirmed on Sunday.

“An International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) service member died following a helicopter crash in southern Afghanistan yesterday,” the ISAF said in a statement.

“The cause of the incident is under investigation, but initial reports indicate there was no enemy activity in the area at the time of the crash,” it added.

Afghan officials said that the chopper had gone down in Daman District of southern Kandahar Province. On 11 March, five US soldiers were killed when an ISAF Black Hawk helicopter crashed in Daman in the province 450 km south of Kabul.—Xinhua

Thai Airways aircraft tyre burst at Bangkok Airport

BANGKOK, 17 March—A front tyre of a Thai Airways International plane burst on Saturday morning as it landed at Bangkok’s international Airport, causing no casualties, Thai News Agency reported.

The accident occurred at around 6.20 am with the Air- bus A-330/Blight TG341 from Kolkata, India to Bangkok. The plane, however, landed at Baggijj Suvarnabhumi International Airport safely with no casualties among passengers or crew.

The THAI staff rushed to repair the front tyre of the aircraft which was parked on the airport runway before relocation for further investigation and maintenance. An initial investigation found no irregularities and the plane is ready to resume service.—Xinhua

Fire fighters try to extinguish fire as a huge fire erupts in a cotton warehouse in southern Pakistani port city of Karachi, on 16 March, 2013. Cotton worth millions of rupees was burnt to ashes due to a fire in a cotton warehouse here on Saturday, local media reported.

Chinese research vessel on 4th Indian Ocean journey

GUANGZHOU, 17 March—The Shiyan 1 scientific research vessel has set sail for its fourth journey to the Indian Ocean, where it will conduct a two-month expedition.

The South China Sea Research Institute under the Chinese Academy of Sciences said on Saturday that more than 40 researchers from a dozen Chinese research institutes will carry out research pertaining to marine hydrology, ocean currents, meteorology and biological studies in the Indian Ocean. The Shiyan 1 is China’s best-equipped scientific research vessel and went into operation in 2010.—Xinhua

Helicopter crash kills one ISAF service member in S Afghanistan

Local fishers arrange fishing net in Huanghua, north China’s Hebei Province, on 16 March, 2013. Fishers by China’s Bohai Sea are busy preparing for a new fishing season which comes around the corner in the second Lunar month. —Xinhua

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Kerry voices conditional US support for UN arms treaty

UNITED NATIONS, 17 March—US Secretary of State John Kerry voiced support on Friday for an international treaty to regulate the $70 billion global arms trade, but restated Washington’s “red line,” affirming that it would not accept limits on US domestic gun ownership.

The UN General Assembly voted in December to hold a final round of negotiations from 18 to 28 March on what could become the first international treaty to regulate international weapons transfers after a drafting conference in July 2012 collapsed because the United States and others wanted more time.

Arms control campaigners say one person every minute dies worldwide as a result of armed violence and that a convention is needed to prevent the unregulated and illicit flow of weapons into conflict zones fuelling wars and atrocities.

“The United States is steadfast in its commitment to achieve a strong and effective Arms Trade Treaty that helps address the adverse effects of the international arms trade on global peace and stability,” Kerry said in a statement.

“An effective treaty that recognizes that each nation must tailor and enforce its own national export and import control mechanisms can generate the participation of a broad majority of states, help stem the illicit flow of conventional arms across international borders and have important humanitarian benefits.”

But he repeated that the United States — the world’s No1 arms manufacturer — would not accept any treaty that imposed new limits on US citizens’ right to bear arms, a sensitive political issue in the United States.

“We will not support any treaty that would be inconsistent with US law and the rights of American citizens under our Constitution, including the Second Amendment,” he said.

Airliner catches fire at Aalborg Airport

COPENHAGEN, 17 March—A passenger plane caught fire on Friday morning at Denmark’s Aalborg Airport before takeoff.

A fire broke out at an international chain hotel in Kingston’s main business district on Thursday, forcing evacuation but causing no causalities.

The blaze, which erupted around midnight, produced a thick blanket of smoke covering the entire lobby, forcing guests and hotel staff to move out.

Police have not yet determined the cause of the blaze, but suggested the fire might have started in the main kitchen. Traffic around the hotel, part of the Wyndham chain, was also disrupted.

Swiss tourist gang-raped while camping in India

BHOPAL, 17 March—Four men raped a 39-year-old Swiss woman camping with her husband in an Indian forest, police said on Saturday, turning the spotlight anew on the security of women in the world’s largest democracy.

The attack on Friday night in the central state of Madhya Pradesh comes three months after a 23-year-old physiotherapy student was gang-raped and beaten in a moving bus and thrown blazing on to the street in a case that sparked outrage in the country. She died later in hospital in Singapore.

One woman is raped every 20 minutes in India, according to the National Crime Records Bureau. But police estimate only four out of 10 rapes are reported, largely due to victims’ fear of being shamed by their families and communities.

The Swiss woman and her husband were touring the state by bicycle and were camping overnight in the forest.

Seven men attacked the couple in their tent and four of them raped the woman. Dilip Arya, deputy inspector general of police, told Reuters. They also stole their valuables.

The woman has since been discharged from hospital, he added. No arrests have been made.

Heavy rainfalls lead to flooding across Albania

TEKANA, 17 March—Heavy rains which started in Albania on Thursday have caused serious flooding in the country, forcing residents to leave their houses.

In the worst-hit region of Shkodra hundreds of hectares of land were inundated, dealing serious damages to the sown fields and houses.

Rail transport was also disturbed throughout the day, and Minsk Airport was closed because of the snowfall.

Heavy snow causes power outages, traffic jams in Belarus

MINSK, 17 March—Heavy snow and strong winds plagued Belarus on Friday, causing power outages in 500 villages and traffic jams on major highways.

Meteorologists said the winds reached a speed of up to 30 metres per second in some regions. Poor visibility, snowdrifts and icy roads added to the troubles.

The fire department quickly extinguished the fire, and passengers were evacuated with no casualties, said Rikke Moelgaard, sales and marketing director at Aalborg Airport.

“The plane is now grounded and must be examined by engineers and KLM has rebooked the passengers on other flights,” Moelgaard said.

Aalborg Airport is Denmark’s third largest airport with approximately 1.4 million travellers per year.
Rapper Lil Wayne says he is fine after health scare

LOS ANGELES, 17 March—US rapper Lil Wayne said on Friday he was fine and thanked fans for their concern after a reported seizure that led celebrity website TMZ.com to claim he was in a medically induced coma and near death.

“I’m good everybody. Thx for the prayers and love,” Wayne said in a Twitter posting earlier that Wayne was in critical condition, and near death, at Cedars-Sinai hospital in Los Angeles.

Rapper Mack Maine said on a Twitter message on his official account.

The 30-year-old rapper’s spokeswoman Sarah Cunningham said in an email that “Lil Wayne is recovering,” but did not specify what he was suffering from.

She was responding to a TMZ.com report citing unnamed sources which said Wayne was in critical condition, and near death, at Cedars-Sinai hospital in Los Angeles.

Rapper Mack Maine said in a Twitter posting earlier that Wayne was “alive and well. We watching the Syracuse (basketball) game...thanks for the prayers and concern.”

Maine said fans should “believe the nonsense about comas and tubes to breathe.”

TMZ said the rapper was admitted to Cedars-Sinai for seizures and released on Wednesday. But the website said he was admitted a few hours later after his bodyguard found him unconscious on the floor of his room. It said his mother was flying to Los Angeles on Friday to be at his bedside.

Wayne, whose real name is Dwayne Michael Carter Jr, has suffered several unexplained seizures in the past few months, including two in January while on a plane flight.

“Burt Wonderstone” writers tap rivalries of Vegas magicians

LOS ANGELES, 17 March—The screenwriting duo behind raunchy workplace comedy “Horrible Bosses” have tapped the competitive world of Las Vegas magicians to bring the absurd antics of “The Incredible Burt Wonderstone,” to the screen.

Los Angeles on Friday to be at his bedside.

Wayne, whose real name is Dwayne Michael Carter Jr, has suffered several unexplained seizures in the past few months, including two in January while on a plane flight.

“Burt Wonderstone,” out in US movie theaters on Friday, is the creation of screenwriters John Francis Daley and Jonathan Goldstein, who made their writing debut with 2011’s “Horrible Bosses.”

The duo found inspiration in the cutthroat industry of Las Vegas magicians for their latest film, which stars Steve Carell and Jim Carrey.

“It’s a fascinating world, outrageous comedic roots that rocketed him to fame in films such as 1994’s “Ace Ventura: Pet Detective” and “The Mask,” bringing an unpredictable edge to street illusionists Gray’s absurd stunts, such as slicing his face open for a trick.

“(Jim’s) role in this is a throwback to the stuff he did in the ’90s, where it’s very big and physical, and that is my favorite kind of Jim Carrey character,” Dailey said.

Steven Spielberg ropes in another director for Jurassic Park 4

LOS ANGELES, 17 March—Steven Spielberg has roped in director Colin Trevorrow to helm the next installment of blockbuster dinosaurs series Jurassic Park 4.

Spielberg, who directed the first two films in the series, will serve as an executive producer on the film. Trevorrow, behind indie drama Safety Not Guaranteed, will direct from a script by Rick Jaffa and Amanda Silver, the Hollywood Reporter said.

The first three films in the series, which was launched in 1993, have earned USD 1.9 billion at the box office. Jurassic Park 4 is slated to hit theatres in June 2014.—PTI

New musical on songstress Carole King Broadway-bound

NEW YORK, 17 March—A musical about the life of legendary singer-songwriter Carole King will open on Broadway next year, producers said on Friday.

“Beautiful: The Carole King Musical,” will chart the journey of Carol Klein from Brooklyn to the top of the pop music world, producers Paul Blake and Sony/ATV Music Publishing said.

Featuring songs written by Carole King and her first husband and collaborator, Gerry Goffin, as well as Barry Mann and Cynthia Weil, the musical was set to open in the spring of 2014.

King “brought her way into the record business as a teenager and, by the time she reached her twenties had the husband of her dreams and a hot career writing hits for the biggest acts in rock’n’roll,” the producers said in a statement.

King, 71, said musicals had been a major influence on her. “When Gerry and I first met, we made a bargain that I would write music for the Broadway show he wanted to write if he wrote lyrics for my rock’n’roll songs.”

The songs took off, and the show idea never came to fruition. Now that our songs have merged with a Broadway show, we’ve come full circle,” she said in a statement.

King shot to fame in the early 1970s when her second album, “Tapestry,” swept the Grammy awards, winning best album, song of year (“You’ve Got a Friend,” later covered by James Taylor) and record of the year (“It’s Too Late”).

Other hits included “I Feel the Earth Move,” “(You Make Me Feel Like) A Natural Woman,” and “Sweet Seasons.” More recently, King appeared in a recurring role on the US television series “Gilmores Girls.”

No casting decisions were announced.

Reuters
Manchester United 15 points clear after City fail at Everton

LONDON, 17 March—Manchester City’s fingertips hold on their Premier League title was further loosened when a 2-0 loss at Everton followed by runaway leaders Manchester United’s 1-0 win over Reading left them praying for a football miracle.

Last Saturday, City’s swerving 32nd-minute shot put Everton in front at a raucous Goodison Park and, although the home side were reduced to 10 men after Steven Pienaar was red-carded for a rash tackle after 61 minutes, City could not reply.

Substitute Nikica Jelavic sealed victory in stoppage time despite being set up by a rampaging Marouane Fellaini.

United needed no second invitation to open a 15-point lead in the title race although only Wayne Rooney’s deflected early shot separated them and second-bottom Reading at Old Trafford.

Alex Ferguson’s side never required top gear as they rolled on towards a 20th English title with their 24th victory in 29 league games this season, although the Scot refused to accept that the race was won.

“We have got Sunderland away in our next game, which is always a tough place to go, and then we face Manchester City at home,” he told ESPN.

“You don’t get points and medals for being complacent,” added Ferguson whose side have 74 points ahead of City on 59.

Everton briefly rose above Arsenal into fifth spot with 48 points in the battle for a top-four position but the Gunners responded with a 2-0 victory at an empty City.

That took Arsen Wenger’s side to 50 points within two of fourth-placed Chelsea, who host West Ham United on Sunday, and four behind local rivals Tottenham Hotspur, who are third ahead of their home game against Fulham also on Sunday.

Boosted by a surprise, if ultimately fruitless, Champion’s League exit in their last 16, second leg tie at Bayern Munich on Wednesday, Arsenal struck late through Nacho Monreal and Gervinho.

Athletics: Bleasdale proving she has a head for heights

LONDON, 17 March—Yelena Isinbayeva took women’s pole-vaulting to new heights and now American Jenn Suhr is threatening to soar higher still.

Waiting in the wings, Holly Bleasdale of Britain reacts after competing in the Pole Vault Women Final at the European Athletics Indoor Championships in Gothenburg on 2 March, 2013.—Reuters

knowing her time will come, the Briton Holly Bleasdale.

Compared to the Russian, twice an Olympic and world champion and also world record holder outdoors and Suhr, the current Olympic champion who set a new indoor world record this month, Isinbayeva is keeping her head down again to get on with that. British Mark Weir, still looking for his first home victory at the 123rd attempt, also put in a blistering final lap on dry weather tires to finish second fastest in 1:27.827.

“It’s going to be just another grand prix when the helmet’s on,” he said. “I’ve got to focus very hard on getting the most out of the strategy. A podium will still be good but the middle step would be sensational.”

Lewis Hamilton (1:28.087) confirmed the pace of his car in his first qualifying session for new team Mercedes and was third fastest to take a place on the second row of the grid with Ferrari’s Felipe Massa.

“What an incredible job the team has done to come from last year where they were struggling a lot,” 2008 world champion Hamilton said. “I said yesterday it was a blessing that they had moved (qualifying) to today, and it really was.

“It’s going to be massively challenging with the tides, I’ve already had graining,” he added.

Manchester United’s Chris Smalling (R) challenges Reading’s Hal Robson-Kanu during their English Premier League soccer match at Old Trafford in Manchester, northern England on 16 March, 2013.—Reuters

US pro footballer Stallworth hurt in balloon accident

Miami, 17 March—National Football League wide receiver Donnie Stallworth suffered serious burns when a hot air balloon carrying him and his girlfriend hit power lines near Miami on Saturday, but is expected to recover fully, his agent said.

“He has suffered some burns to his body. However he is expected to make a full recovery in the near future,” agent Drew Rosenhaus told Reuters.

“We expect him to be able to resume his football activities in a few weeks, most likely,” he said.

Stallworth, who was signed by the New England Patriots as a free agent in December, has a home in South Florida.

New England Patriots’ wide receiver Donnie Stallworth advances with the ball during second half pre-season NFL action in Charlotte, North Carolina, on 24 Aug, 2007.—Reuters

Davis and White reclaim ice dance crown

LONDON, 17 March—Ontario - Americans Meryl Davis and Charlie White capped a perfect season by reclaiming the ice dance title from Canadians Tessa Virtue and Scott Moir at the Grand Prix figure skating world championships on Saturday.

While the title will change hands, it will not go far with the good friends and training partners sharing a coach and practise rink in Detroit.

Meryl Davis and Charlie White of the US perform their dance at the European Figure Skating Championships in Gothenburg, on 2 March, 2013.—Reuters

“It marked the fourth consecutive year the two couples have swapped gold and silver medals, Virtue and Moir winning the title in 2010 and 2012 and White and Davis taking home the big prize in 2011 and again on Saturday.”

The win added to a friendly rivalry that will now continue on to the Sochi Winter Games where the Americans will try to retain the Canadians with their Olympic crown.

“These are performances to build off of; we have utterly dominated the ice dance scene the last four years providing a massive roadblock for anyone trying to scratch their way to the top of the podium.”

While the Americans had to settle for silver behind the Canadians at the 2010 Winter Games and again at last year’s world championships, Davis and White have had the better of their good friends this season finishing in first place at the Grand Prix finals.

Sochi Winter Games where Virtue and Moir took home the gold and Davis and White taking home the big prize in 2011 and again on Saturday.

The balloon operator, a man in his late 20s, who was not hurt, the newspaper said.

Drew Rosenhaus said Stallworth had made a full recovery in the mandatory six-month preparatory period to resume his football career.

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Drew Rosenhaus said Stallworth had made a full recovery in the mandatory six-month preparatory period to resume his football career.

The rivalry between the two of us seems to have heated up a little bit now and should be fun going into the Olympics.”

Davis and White Virtue and Moir

Davis and White of the US perform their ice dance free dance at the ISU World Figure Skating Championships in London, Ontario, on 16 March, 2013.—Reuters

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Four Continents and now the worlds.—Reuters

Manchester United's Chris Smalling (R) challenges Reading's Hal Robson-Kanu during their English Premier League soccer match at Old Trafford in Manchester, northern England on 16 March, 2013.—Reuters

Manchester United 15 points clear after City fail at Everton

Vettel on pole for Red Bull in Melbourne

Melbourne, 17 March—World champion Sebastian Vettel will start the Formula One season-opener from pole position on an all-Red Bull front row later on Sunday after posting the fastest time in the rain-delayed qualifying for the Australian Grand Prix.

The German, chasing a fourth successive world title this year, swept across the line in one minute 27.407 seconds to clinch his 37th pole as the flag dropped on the session, which was postponed from Saturday because of torrential rain.

“Definitely not easy in these conditions,” Vettel said. “I had two good runs and on the dry I got into the groove.”

“I am happy... but in a couple of hours the race is coming up, so it’s head down again to get on with that,” Australian Mark Webber, still looking for his first home victory at the 123rd attempt, also put in a blistering final lap on dry weather tires to finish second fastest in 1:27.827.

“It’s going to be just another grand prix when the helmet’s on,” he said. “I’ve got to focus very hard on getting the most out of the strategy. A podium will still be good but the middle step would be sensational.”

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“What an incredible job the team has done to come from last year where they were struggling a lot,” 2008 world champion Hamilton said. “I said yesterday it was a blessing that they had moved (qualifying) to today, and it really was.

“It’s going to be massively challenging with the tides, I’ve already had graining,” he added.

Formula One driver Lewis Hamilton of Britain, Red Bull Formula One driver Sebastian Vettel of Germany and Red Bull Formula One driver Mark Webber of Australia look on at the qualifying session of the Australian F1 Grand Prix at the Albert Park circuit in Melbourne on 17 March, 2013.—Reuters
Colombian army seizes 3.9 tons of cocaine

BOGOTA, 17 March—The Colombian army has seized 3.9 tons of cocaine from the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) in the country’s southwestern Cauca department, the military said on Saturday.

The drugs were stashed in a drug production laboratory located in a rural area of Cauca, it said.

According to a military report, the lab was hidden in a place known as Timbiqui (Cauca), where soldiers of the Special Anti-Narcotics Brigade, in coordination with the Attorney General’s Office, “were able to locate this complex which had the capacity to produce more than one ton of cocaine per day,” the report said.

The lab had a floor space of 500 square metres, enough to accommodate up to 70 people. It was also equipped with a power generator, extractor fans, industrial blenders and seven water pumps.

“Soldiers found 3.9 tons of cocaine, two tons of ground coca leaf, more than half ton of solid chemicals, more than 3,000 gallons of liquid supplies and plenty of material used for cocaine processing,” the army report said.

The collection centre served as a funding source for FARC segments “who commit crimes in the departments of Valle del Cauca, Cauca and Narino (southwest),” the report said, adding the seizure delivered “one of the most severe blows to the FARC’s finances.”—Xinhua

Sharapova ready for Wozniacki variety in final

INDIAN WELLS, 17 March—Plenty of lob shots, subtle changes of pace, marathon baseline rallies —Maria Sharapova is preparing for all of that and more when she faces Caroline Wozniacki in Sunday’s final at the BNP Paribas Open.

Denmark’s Wozniacki, like Sharapova a former world number one and an ex-champion at Indian Wells, is known for her baseline grit and the variety she draws upon, ingredients which make her a tough opponent.

“She’s a grinder,” second-seeded Russian Sharapova told reporters about the 22-year-old Dane.

“She makes you work really hard on the court and gets a lot of balls back and has a lot of different variety. “I certainly don’t want to give her that time or those opportunities, because she’s a really good player. She’s dangerous when she has the opportunities to open up court and she wants you running side to side.”

Asked how much it could help having played several ‘grinders’ so far at this year’s tournament, Sharapova replied: “I have had to work for all the points here, that’s for sure.

“I also feel like, in a way, in a couple of those matches I made my life a little more difficult than I should have been. I was forcing a few of my errors.”

Sharapova, champion here in 2006, booked her place in the final with a 6-4, 6-3 victory over fellow Russian Maria Kirilenko while eighth seeded Wozniacki advanced with a battling 2-6, 6-4, 7-5 win over fourth-seeded German Angelique Kerber.

Wozniacki effectively turned the tide against Kerber with a barrage of accurate lobs, or moonballs, on the slow-paced hardcourt surface at Indian Wells and sharapova took note.

“I saw some of those points,” the 25-year-old Russian smiled. “That was quite interesting.”

“They looked like they were really high and they all kept going in. I was like, ‘That’s really a good effort.’ I don’t think I can do that.”

Asked what adjustments were needed to cope with the “moonball strategy”, Sharapova replied: “Usually when your opponent has time to hit higher balls or a little bit of spin, that means you’re giving them a bit more time to do that.”

Wozniacki, who won the 2011 Wells title with a 6-1, 2-6, 6-3 victory over Frenchwoman Marion Bartoli in the final, trails Sharapova 2-4 in career meetings and knows she will have to contend with the Russian’s powerful ground strokes.

Parade participants march along the 5th Ave during the 252nd annual St Patrick’s Day Parade in New York City on 16 March, 2013.—Xinhua
Shwedagon Pagoda gets new escalator

YANGON, 17 March—Shwedagon Pagoda this morning commissioned the new western escalator to mark its 26th centenary.

Union Religious Affairs Minister U Hsan Hsint, Yangon region ministers, members of Pagoda Board of Trustees, donors and members of religious associations were present on the occasion.

The Union minister and Yangon Region Social Affairs Minister Dr Myint Thein and alternate patron of the Pagoda BOT Dr Tin Thein Lwin formally opened the new escalator at the western archway.

The Union minister then sprinkled scented water on the commemorative stone inscription before opening the newly installed escalator.

The Pagoda festival marking 2601 anniversary of the pagoda was also opened on the same day and will be held through 26 March.—MNA

Committee for implementing Latpadaungtaung copper mine report meets farmers in project area

NAY PYI TAW, 17 March —Chairman of the committee for implementing the investigation commission’s report on Latpadaungtaung copper mine Union Minister U Hla Tun and members of the committee yesterday visited the new villages for the local people who moved from the copper mine project.

During the visit, they inspected houses, roads, water and power supply there.

At the meeting with local farmers of the villages, they cordially discussed needs of the people and pledged to provide assistance for socio-economy development of the local people.

Committee Chairman Union Minister at the President Office U Hla Tun and members meet local farmers.—MNA

The committee for implementing the report met with farmers of the Latpadaungtaung copper mine to compensate for land confiscation to farmers.

So far, 69 farmers from the Phaungkatar Village-tract had received a total of over K 224.6 million for compensation for land confiscation. Bank branches of Myanmar Economic Bank, Yoma Bank and Myawady Bank have been set up so that the farmers can save their money.

They also visited Salingyi Township General Administration Department where officials were giving compensation for land confiscation to farmers.

At the meeting, they discussed the problem of farmers who accompanied Union Minister for Foreign Affairs U Wunna Maung Lwin and his New Zealand tour held discussions with authorities concerned for cooperation in respective sectors.

Union Minister for Foreign Affairs U Wunna Maung Lwin met New Zealand Foreign Minister Hon Murray McCully on 15 March to hold talks on promotion of bilateral ties and cooperation in international arena.

Union Minister at the President Office U Tin Naing Thein, Union Minister for Livestock and Fisheries U Ohn Myint and Union Minister for National Planning and Economic Development Dr Kan Zaw in Auckland yesterday held detailed discussions with CEO of Fonterra Co Mr Theo Spiering on his New Zealand tour held discussions with authorities concerned for cooperation in respective sectors.

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Union Minister for Foreign Affairs U Wunna Maung Lwin holds talks with New Zealand Foreign Minister Hon Murray McCully.—MNA

Union ministers hold talks on relevant sectors

YANGON mayor leaves for Japan

YANGON, 17 March—Yangon Region Development Affairs Minister Yangon Mayor U Hla Myint left for Tokyo of Japan yesterday evening to attend a seminar on Yangon regeneration project on 16-23 March.

It was the final seminar in a series of meetings conducting feasibility study for breeding milk cow and producing milk and dairy products on commercial scale in Myanmar. The Union ministers also visited the milk and dairy products factory of the company.

Union Minister for Mines Dr Myint Aung met Policy Advisor Mr Andrew Annakin of Department of the Prime Minister and Professor Mr Basil Sharp of the Department of Economics of the University of Auckland on 15 March and held talks on foreign investment law, mining law and bylaws, matters related to investment, human resources development and technical help for Myanmar.

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MNA

Belgian Dy PM meets UMFCCI President

YANGON, 17 March—Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and European Affairs Mr Didier Reynders of Belgium and party met President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry U Win Aung, Vice-Presidents U Zaw Min Win, U Mya Han and U Tun Aung at the office of the federation on Minye Kyawswa Road in Lannmadaw Township yesterday afternoon.

At the meeting, they focused on cooperation in economic and investment sectors between Myanmar and Belgium.

Acid Plant of Myanmar Economic Holdings Ltd and inspected health care services for employees, trainings for human resource development, production process of the factory and measures for environmental conservation.

MNA

Passport applicants no longer required submitting compensation certificate

It is hereby announced that applicants are no longer required to submit certificate detailing that they have compensated to the seat of education where they have learnt higher education, in applying for passport to passport issuance board of the Home Affairs Ministry as of 18 March 2013.

Higher Education Department (Lower Myanmar), Ministry of Education