

UV threat rises as temperatures soar weeks before the start of the hottest period

By: Ye Myint

Daily temperatures are about to reach their peak in April, the hottest month of Myanmar, with a well-known meteorologist warning on local TV that Yangon is likely to see a higher UV index than in the previous year which saw the index rise to nearly 13. UV indexes between 10 and 11 can be harmful to the human skin.

People living in the country's commercial city have become trapped in the scorching heat and have been warned of skin cancer and permanent blindness.

"I am a native anyarthar. I am not afraid of heat. But, I have noticed the fierce heat of the midday sun earlier this week. If no passenger calls me, I always park my car in the nearby park in order to escape from the rising mid-day heat," said a taxi driver of three children who moved to Yangon ten years ago from a small town in the country's dry zone for a better life.

Most of the Myanmar people are always in



People should avoid direct sunlight until the late afternoon. —PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE

short-sleeves or sleeveless clothes and vests during the hot weather.

"I have to leave my

skin on the right side exposed to strong sunlight while driving in the baking sun. But, the late af-

ternoon, I am not afraid of over exposure and bright sunlight as I know that my dark skin with stands

ultraviolet radiation to a certain extent", he said with a laugh.

(See page 3)

Social paradigm shifts driven by special economic zone

Houses all standing in line on a 1,250 square feet area shimmer in the mid-day heat of the month of Tabaung. It is a new ghetto called Myaingtha on the side of Kyauktan motorway near Bantbway Dam.

New wooden houses numbering 68 have emerged recently in this ghetto that is said to have been built by the Department of Human Settlement and Housing Development of the Ministry of Construction.

With the Myanmar economic reform, the first-ever special economic zone located 20 kilometers away from the country's commercial hub, Yangon, is set to emerge in early 2015. Due to the special

By: Ye Khaung

Nyunt &

Myat Thanda Maung

Photo: Po Htaung

economic zone project, urbanization is coming to local people who have lived in thatched houses, now they are relocated to Myaingtha new ward.

"We received about K 18 million in compensation. Although we used to live in the farmland plot that gave us a feeling of space, we now have seen changes in social conditions that enable us to have access to clean water and electricity," said U Myint Thu, administrator of the new ward.

(See page 9)

Villages near Mt. Popa experience water scarcity

KYAUKPADAUNG, 21 March — Villages around Mt. Popa are experiencing scarcity of drinking water as springs in the area are drying up.

The board of trustees of the pagoda atop the volcanic peak of Popa Taung Kalat (Pedestal Hill) located southwest of Mount Popa is delivering drinking water to the Popa Taung Kalat Village and shops at the pedestal hill by tankers.

"We are digging a

6-ft-in-diameter well at the village.

We have found water at a depth of 24ft", said a member of the board of trustees.

The village has over 170 households.

Popa Taung Kalat or Popa destal hill is a sheer-sided volcanic plug, which rises 737 metres

(2,417 ft) above sea level. Mt Popa is well known as "the oasis of the dry zone" and is one of the tourist attractions in Myanmar.

Ko Nay (Kyaukpadaung)

Local people collect drinking water supplied by water tankers at Mount Popa in Kyaukpadaung Township in Mandalay Region.

PHOTO: KO NAY
(KYAUKPADAUNG)

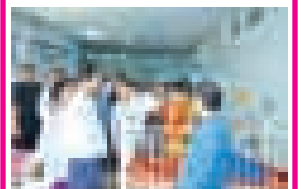


INSIDE

President U Thein Sein felicitates Pakistani counterpart, PM

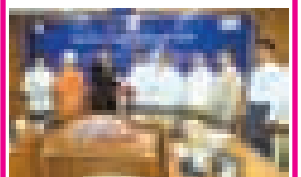
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Children's hospital in Yangon visited by Vice-President



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MoU on successful holding of ASEAN Leadership Forum signed



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Dekkhina district dwellers enjoy wall magazines, photos

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Commander-in-Chief inspects activities of Combined Fleet Exercise-Sea Shield 2014

NAY PYI TAW, 22 March — Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing inspected activities of servicemen who participated in the “Combined Fleet Exercise-Sea

formation arrow head and line abreast formation to attack a possible enemy.

In his remarks, the Senior General said that the naval exercise proved its capability to safeguard Myanmar’s water to some ex-

the State’s territory is of great importance for Myanmar. He expressed words of praise to the service personnel who took part in the combined fleet exercise, saying that the exercise is milestone for Myanmar na-

vy’s role.

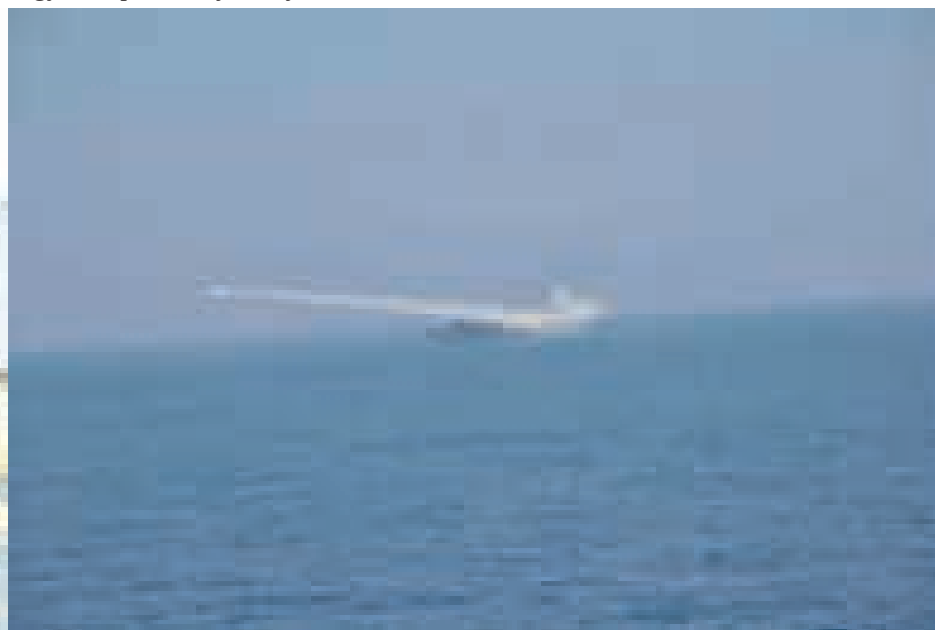
The Senior General presented cash and gifts to defence services men who participated in the exercise and inspected construction of extended run way of Cocogyun airport.—*Myawady*

President U Thein Sein felicitates Pakistani counterpart, PM

NAY PYI TAW, 23 March—On the occasion of the Pakistan Day of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan which falls on 23 March 2014, U Thein Sein, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, has sent messages of felicitations to His Excellency Mr. Mamnoon Hussain, President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and His Excellency Mr. Nawaz Sharif, Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.—*MNA*



Senior General Min Aung Hlaing views activities of Myanmar navy at “Combined Fleet Exercise-Sea Shield 2014”.—MYAWADY



Shield 2014” at Cocogyun in Yangon on Saturday.

The combined fleet exercise is aimed at improving the Myanmar navy’s proficiency to safeguard Myanmar’s water, and fight against intruders. The servicemen conducted exercises with the use of single line formation, diamond formation, circular formation, cruising formatting,

tent, but that the water is huge and wide, and therefore Defence Services (Army) and (Air) are to join hands with the Defence Services (Navy) for safeguarding the territorial water.

The Senior General continued that Myanmar is strategically located in the Asia Pacific Region, adding that the safeguarding of

Strengthening good relations with Korea discussed

NAY PYI TAW, 22 March — Dr Khin Shwe, Chairman of Amyotha Hluttaw Relief and Resettlement Committee met with Mr. Park Byeong Seug, Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea, to hold talks over further strengthening amity between the two countries and closer cooperation be-

tween the two parliaments in Nay Pyi Taw on Thursday.

Mr Park Byeong Seug was accompanied by Mr Lee Baek Soon, Ambassador of Republic of Korea to Myanmar.

The Korean delegation donated Korea-made medicine worth \$ 10,000 to Myanmar.

MNA



Readers to share knowledge on converting library into a vibrant community space in Myanmar: Union Information Minister

YANGON, 22 March—The first Myanmar librarians conference was held on Saturday at the University of Nursing in Bogyoke Aung Sun Street in Yangon.

In his speech, Union Minister for Information U Aung Kyi said that the librarians must go hand in hand with the work of increasing the reader population at the libraries and the participants will share knowledge on converting a library into a vibrant community space.

He believed that the conference will find means and ways through broader discussions to address the issues.

Myanmar will witness rapid ICT development in the coming few years. The majority of the population



Union Minister U Aung Kyi poses for documentary photo with attendees at first Myanmar librarians conference.—*MNA*

may use hand phones at that time. Initially, the method of sharing with libraries through hand phones using the digital platform will be costly, but it will be much beneficial in the long-run, he added.

Israeli Ambassador to Myanmar Mr. Hagay Moshe Behar donated publication to the Vice-Chairman of Myanmar Library Foundation after elaborating the various kinds of libraries in Israel, public li-

braries and their roles.

The conference was jointly organized by the Ministry of Information, Myanmar Libraries Foundation and Myanmar Library Association up to 23 March.—*MNA*

Relief supplies provided to fire victims in Ngapudaw Tsp

NGAPUDAW, 22 March —Officials led by Ayeyawady Region Minister for Planning and Economic U Hla Khaing and well-wishers from the township presented relief supplies

to the fire victims at the relief camp in Kantbala Village, Ngapudaw Township, Ayeyawady Region on 19 March.

The officials and well-wishers donated 341 bags

of rice, 15 packages of instant noodle, 200 drinking water containers, 89 bales of clothes, six pieces of blankets, 254 pieces of bamboo and K 145,000 to the fire victims.

A fire broke out in Kanbala Village of Ngapudaw Township on 18 March evening.

A mobile medical team of local station is giving medical treatments to the victims at relief camp.

Township IPRD

NATIONAL

Children's hospital in Yangon visited by Vice-President



Vice-President Dr Sai Mauk Kham comforts child patients at Children's Hospital.—MNA

YANGON, 22 March—Vice-President Dr Sai Mauk Kham visited a Children's Hospital in Yankin Township in Yangon on Saturday, inspecting the emergency ward, blood donation center, infant care ward, operation room and medical store.

The 550-bed facility, formerly known as the Ministry of Mines' building was redecorated with medical equipment, furniture, excavators and staff quarters by Max Myanmar Group of Companies and Ayeyawady Foundation at a cost of over K 10 billion in 2001 and commissioned into service on 13 March 2011.

The Vice-President and his delegation went to the Yangon Children's Hospital in Dagon Township and Yangon Central Women's Hospital in Lanmadaw Township and inspected patient's wards,

operation rooms, medical stores and infant care wards.

The Vice-President also visited the Specialist Hospital of 500 beds and a New Yangon General Hospital in Lanmadaw Township where he gave words of encouragement to the patients who are receiving medical treatment there.

Speaking at the meeting with doctors, nurses and medical staffs, the Vice-President highlighted that the government has allocated more budget for the health sector. The hospital under the Ministry of Health is required to keep on top with advanced technology and the medical staffs is urged to maintain a good image of the hospitals, he added. He put emphasis on fire preventive measures for medical stores and buildings.—MNA

UV threat rises as temperatures soar weeks before the start of the hottest ...

(from page 1)

Most of the Myanmar people have little awareness of the risk of UV rays and they lack a wide knowledge about the impact of UV radiation on their skin health. Statistics indicate that the worldwide annual deaths of about 66,000 people and some 12 to 15 million who go blind annually are due to UV-related diseases like skin cancers and cataracts.

Meteorologists believe that the impact of UV radiation on human health is further aggravated by ozone depletion. They attribute acute and chronic UV-related health effects on the skin, eye and immune system of the human body to the ozone layer that becomes thinner on a yearly basis.

On his Facebook page, U Tun Lwin, a well-known retired meteorologist in Myanmar, warned people in Yangon, Mandalay and other dwellers in the six big cities in Myanmar against the dangerous level of UV as it is expected to reach its highest level.

Maximum outdoor ultraviolet indexes at noon for the six big towns on 19 March showed that the index had reached 13.8 in Kawthoung, 12.8 in Dawei,

12.4 in Mawlamyine, 12.6 in Yangon, 12.3 in Nay Pyi Taw and 11.5 in Mandalay. It is expected to reach higher temperatures in the upcoming days.

He was quoted in a local press as saying that Myanmar, especially Yangon and Mandalay, have been brought face-to-face with the danger of higher UV level.

He repeated the health hazards of UV radiation already mentioned during the previous year. He cautioned that the trigger for UV-related health effects on the skin, eye and immune system of the human body was due to overexposure to UV radiation from the sun.

"I felt nothing on my skin while my trishaw is moving on the road in the midday heat. Sometimes, I noticed the heat made my arms and back hurt just after arriving back to the gate from the passenger services," said a three-wheeled bike driver who wears only a bamboo hat as protection. "I don't know the relation between severe UV rays and skin diseases or blindness," he added.

The retired meteorologist stressed the need for strict adherence to sun protection measures while

going out during the day. It is required not to leave the bare skin exposed to direct sunlight, he added.

According to local newspapers, nearly 60 per cent of patients at skin-related clinics in Yangon have been given special treatment to chronic skin diseases triggered by dangerous UV rays.

Recently, readers of local newspapers have been warned to stay away from too much exposure to UV rays and harmful effects of the sun. This rule should be kept in mind: "Watch Your Shadow — short shadow, seek shade!"

As the sun's UV rays are the strongest at noon and afternoon, shade, clothing and umbrellas or hats are the best protection while going out in the sun. In order to limit exposure to direct sunlight during these hours, we need to search for shade under the scorching heat and wear tight woven, loose fitting clothing and sunglasses, and take cover under an umbrella or hat that offers good sun protection.

The outdoor UV index is likely to increase during the period of Myanmar's Water Festival. So, the use of quality sunscreen and sunglasses is imperative while moving around the city during this time. The best way for Thingyan to protect them is to seek shade until the late afternoon.

Myanmar Interfaith Group gives talk on peaceful coexistence

YANGON, 22 March—The Myanmar Interfaith Group gave talks to mark the 60th anniversary of establishment of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence.

The talks held in Yangon on Saturday were aimed at achieving peace and disseminating knowl-

edge on religions to people to ensure getting rid of extreme thinking that can cause conflicts, said U Thar Nyan, Secretary of Myanmar Interfaith Group.

Responsible personnel from the MIG gave talks on essence of the respective religion.

The five principles are (1) Mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty, (2) Mutual non-aggression, (3) Mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs; (4) Equality and cooperation for mutual benefit and (5) Peaceful co-existence.

MNA

Union FM hosts dinner to officials, donors for recent BIMSTEC Summit



Union Minister for Foreign Affairs U Wunna Maung Lwin delivers speech at dinner to those who contributed to successfully hosting Third BIMSTEC Summit and its related meetings.—MNA

NAY PYI TAW, 22 March—Union Minister for Foreign Affairs U Wunna Maung Lwin hosted a dinner to those who contributed to successfully hosting the Third BIMSTEC Summit and its related meetings held in Nay

Pyi Taw from 1 to 4 March at Myanmar International Conventional Centre (II), here, on Saturday.

At the dinner, the Union Minister spoke words of honour.

It was attended by Union Ministers, Deputy

Ministers and senior officials who participated in the Central Committee, Working Committee, and Subcommittees for organizing the summit and related meetings, officials and donors.

MNA

Festivals & Events

The following is the reproduction of the Myanmar Hotel and Tourism Guide 2013. Please visit www.tourismguide.com.mm for further information. — Ed



January

Ananda Pagoda Festival

Dates: Full moon Day of Pyatho to 15th Waxing of Pyatho

Location: Bagan

Duration: 15 days

Naga New Year Festival

Dates: Usually 14 to 16 January

Location: Either Lahe or Layshi, Sagaing Region

Duration: Three days

February

Maha Muni Pagoda Festival

Dates: 14th Waxing and Full moon Day of Tabodwe

Location: Mandalay

Duration: Two days

Sticky Rice Cooking, or Hta-ma-ne

Dates: anytime during Tabodwe

Location: Throughout the country

Shwe Settaw Pagoda Festival

Dates: Begins 5th Waxing Moon Day of Tabodwe
Location: Shwe Settaw, Magway Region, Central Myanmar

Duration: 11 days but this holiday site remains open until April

March

KoGyi Kyaw Spirit Festival

Dates: 3rd Waxing Moon Day of Tabaung

Location: Pakhan, YayzaGyo Township

Duration: Eight days

Kekku Pagoda Festival

Dates: Begins 14th Waxing Moon Day of Tabaung
Location: Kekku ancient pagoda complex, near Taunggyi, southern Shan State

Duration: Three days

Pindaya Shwe Oo Min Pagoda Festival

Dates: 11th Waxing Moon Day of Tabaung

Location: Pindaya, southern Shan State

Duration: Eight days

Maw Tin Zun Pagoda Festival

Dates: 1st Waxing Moon Day of Tabaung

Location: The southwest coast of Myanmar

Duration: 10 days

April

Water Festival and Myanmar New Year

Dates: Usually 13 to 17 April

(New Year's Day)

Location: Throughout the country

Duration: Four days of throwing water and the last day.

Shwe Maw Daw Pagoda Festival

Dates: Begins day after New Year's Day

Location: Bago

Duration: Seven days

Search for Malaysian jet steps up in remote Indian Ocean

KUALA LUMPUR/PERTH, (Australia), 22 March — Two weeks after a Malaysia Airlines jet carrying 239 people vanished, an international search deep in the southern Indian Ocean stepped up on Saturday even as Australia cautioned the investigation's best lead remained a tentative one.

Officials are bracing for the "long haul" as searches by more than two dozen countries turn up little but frustration and fresh questions about Flight MH370 which vanished on a scheduled flight from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing on 8 March.

Six aircraft and two merchant ships are now scouring an area of the remote southern Indian Ocean where suspected debris was spotted by satellite earlier this week.

Australia, which announced the potential find and is coordinating the rescue, has cautioned the objects might be a lost shipping container or other debris. "Even though this is not a definite lead, it is probably more solid than



International television crews film alongside a Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) AP-3C Orion aircraft which had just returned from a search for Malaysian Airlines flight MH370 over the Indian Ocean, at RAAF Base Pearce north of Perth, on 21 March, 2014.—REUTERS

any other lead around the world and that is why so much effort and interest is being put into this search," acting Australian Prime Minister Warren Truss told reporters at a Perth airforce base.

China, Japan and India are sending more planes and Australian and Chi-

nese navy vessels are also steaming towards the zone, more than 2,000km (1,200 miles) southwest of Perth.

Weather conditions are good, with 10 km (6 miles) of visibility, according to search officials — a crucial boost for a search that is relying more on human eyes than the technical wizardry

of the most advanced aircraft in the world.

"While these aircraft are equipped with very advanced technology, much of this search is actually visual," said Truss, who also warned that the objects detected by satellites may now be at the bottom of the Indian Ocean.—Reuters

Furious reaction, political split after Turkey bans Twitter



Demonstrators, members of the Turkish Youth Union, shout anti-government slogans during a protest against a Twitter ban, in Ankara on 21 March, 2014.—REUTERS

ANKARA, 22 March — Turkey's ban on Twitter ahead of bitterly contested elections brought a furious reaction at home and abroad on Friday, with users of the social networking service denouncing the move as a "digital coup" and the president expressing his disapproval.

A court blocked access to Twitter after Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan's

defiant vow, on the campaign trail on Thursday ahead of 30 March local elections, to "wipe out" the social media service, whatever the international community had to say about it. Industry Minister Fikri Isik said talks with Twitter were taking place and the ban would be lifted if the San Francisco-based firm appointed a representative in Turkey and agreed to block

specific content when requested by Turkish courts.

"We stand with our users in Turkey who rely on Twitter as a vital communications platform. We hope to have full access returned soon," the company said in a tweet.

A company spokesman declined to say whether it would appoint someone in Turkey but said it was moving forward in talks with

the government.

Tech-savvy Turks — President Abdullah Gul apparently among them — quickly found ways to circumvent the ban, with the hashtag #Twitterisblocked-inTurkey among the top trending globally on Friday. "One cannot approve of the complete closure of social media platforms," Gul tweeted, voicing his hope that the ban would be short-lived and setting himself publicly at odds with the prime minister.

Erdogan, who has dominated Turkish politics for 11 years, is battling a corruption scandal that has been fed by social media awash with alleged evidence of government wrongdoing. He did not mention the Twitter ban at two campaign rallies on Friday.

Turkey's main opposition party said it would challenge the ban and file a criminal complaint against Erdogan on the grounds of violating personal freedoms. The country's bar association filed a separate court challenge.—Reuters

LOCAL NEWS

Importance of census taking explained in Ottarathiri Tsp



NAY PYI TAW, 22 March—Officials from the Information and Public Relations Department gave talks on the importance of the upcoming census taking process in Tatshein Village of Ottarathiri Township in the Nay Pyi Taw Council Area on Thursday.

The officials elaborated on 41 points of questions in the country's first census in more than three decades.

The census taking process will be held from 30 March through 10 April.

The officials also talked about the vital role of libraries in the villages and their development.

District IPRD

Talks on child care given to Myingyan dwellers

MYINGYAN, 22 March—The Social Welfare Department and Save the Children jointly organized to hold educative talks on Early Child Care and Childhood Development in Myingyan Township in Mandalay Region on Thursday.

Social Welfare Department Director U Aung Kyaw Moe said the educative talks will be held only in Myingyan of Mandalay Region and MraukU of

Rakhine State in Myanmar 2014.

Myingyan will be the first ever township to host such talks, he added. He also attached great importance to invest in early child care and childhood development.

Officials explained about the development of the brain during childhood, and early child care.

A total of over 200 people including heads of district and town-

ship also attended the meeting.—*U Zaw Min Naing (Myingyan)*

Dekkhina district dwellers enjoy wall magazines, photos

NAY PYI TAW, 22 March—To Mark the 69th Anniversary of Armed Forces Day, the Dekkhina District Information and Public Relations Department displayed magazines, photo exhibitions and publications in Aungthukha Village in Dekkhina District, Nay Pyi Taw Council Area, on Saturday.

Head of the department, Daw Thidar Aye explained the role of the library for the people and the benefits of reading.

Significant documentary photos including activities of ASEAN Summit, Armed Forces Day and National Census 2014 were also displayed in the photo show.

In the publications show, new copies of books were put on display and will be borrowed free of

charge. Officials also allowed readers to borrow over 100 photos and 200 publications and distrib-

ute pamphlets and various kinds of journals to the attendees free of charge.

Shwe Kokko



Rural road, rural library put into service

YANGON, 22 March—Kyonkan, one of the villages in Kyauktan Township, is "gaining development momentum" as a concrete road and a library were opened in the last couple of days. The

road was built with a K 4.2 million contribution by the State, K 18 million by three private donors and K 7.8 million from other people.

The 4,200 feet long road, was inaugurated by

the Yangon Region Parliament MP U Tun Hla Shwe and his delegation.

Kyauktan Township is famous for its pagoda, one of the major sights in the Yangon Region.

On 21 March, town-

ship authorities also commissioned the Alinyaung self-reliant library into service in the same village.

The library was funded with K 1 million by the Myanmar Libraries Foundation, K 1.5 million by two donors and K 1 million by local people.

Than Win (Thanlyin)



As a gesture of hailing 69th Anniversary Armed Forces Day, Nawin Kwinthit 8th Street, built by Pyay Township Development Affairs Committee in 2013-14 fiscal year, was commissioned into service on Friday. Township Administrator U Aung Zaw Htet and officials formally open the newly-built street.—NLM-017



Renovation of historic Zajam Kanmye Lake to be completed in March

MEIKTILA, 22 March—Zajam Kanmye Lake is being renovated in Taungtha Township with the use of heavy machinery and it is expected to be completed in March. Upon completion, water storage capacity of the earthen type Zajam Kanmye Lake will be 45 million gallons of water. Its embankment is 4,800 ft long and 26 ft high and water spread area is 18-acre wide.

Taungtha Township is located in the dry zone in central Myanmar, with the

local people in the region solely relying on rainwater for agriculture and drinking water.

Under the guidance of the President, Union Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation U Myint Hlaing, Deputy Minister U Khin Zaw and Director-General U Kyaw Myint Hlaing made a recent field trip to Taungtha Township to ensure water supply for Zajam Kanmye Lake.

Electric motors are installed at thirteen tube-wells instead of diesel

engines to supply water to nearby villages and construction of power intake structures and water tanks are being carried out.

The Ministry of Electric Power is constructing power lines in the region to supply electricity to the locals from eleven villages. Over 20,000 locals from fifteen villages in Zajam Kanmye region, Taungtha Township in Mandalay Region will enjoy sufficient drinking water in the near future.

NLM-018

Future of G-8 framework could be topic in talks on Monday

WASHINGTON, 22 March — Leaders of the Group of Seven major nations will discuss the Ukrainian crisis on Monday in The Hague, while Russia's status as a member of the Group of Eight framework could also be a topic, senior US officials said on Friday.

Susan Rice, national security adviser, told a Press conference the G-7 summit will be an opportunity to "consider the optimum disposition of the

G-8/G-7 mechanism going forward in light of recent developments."

Ben Rhodes, deputy national security adviser who joined the press conference at the White House, said, "This G-7 meeting has obviously been added on to the schedule as part of our continued response to the situation in Ukraine."

"Of course, the meeting itself is part of our isolation of Russia for its actions in Ukraine," Rhodes

said, referring to Russia's annexation of Crimea following a military deployment and a referendum in the peninsula.

The G-7 nations decided to hold a summit on the sidelines of the Nuclear Security Summit in the city of the Netherlands.

It will be the first G-7 summit without Russian participation since a summit in Houston, Texas, in 1990. Russia plans to host a G-8 summit in Sochi in June but the G-7 has al-

ready announced it will suspend preparations.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel has said any G-8 functions including a summit should not take place unless Russia changes its policy on Crimea.

British Prime Minister David Cameron has warned Russia about being expelled from the framework, which Russia formally joined in 1997. The G-7 invited Russia to summits from 1991 but not as a formal member. A US government

official said earlier that the G-7 leaders will focus on what support they can provide and how they can "coordinate the assistance for Ukraine" in their meeting next week.

The United States and the European Union have levied a series of sanctions against Russia since earlier this month in protest at its bid to annex Crimea, including travel bans and asset freezes targeting Russian government officials.

Kyodo News

Putin completes Crimea's annexation, Russia investors take fright

MOSCOW / BRUSSELS, 22 March — President Vladimir Putin signed laws completing Russia's annexation of Crimea on Friday as investors took fright at a US decision to slap sanctions on his inner circle of money men and security officials.

Putin promised to protect a bank partly owned by an old ally, which Washington has blacklisted, and his spokesman said Russia would respond in kind to the latest financial and visa curbs after producing one blacklist of its own.

His allies laughed off the US sanctions, but shares on the Moscow stock exchange — which have lost \$70 billion of their value this month — fell sharply after President Barack Obama also threatened to target major sectors of the economy if Russia moved on areas of Ukraine beyond the Black Sea peninsula.

Obama's national security adviser said the world was reassessing its relationship with Russia and Wash-

ington was skeptical of Russian assurances that troop movements on the Ukraine border were no more than military exercises.

The financial noose began tightening with Visa and MasterCard stopping processing payments for a Russian bank owned by two brothers on the US blacklist. Finance Minister Anton Siluanov said Russia might cancel its foreign borrowing for 2014 and raise less domestically if the cost of issuing debt rose. European Union leaders — who like Obama insist Crimea is still part of Ukraine — imposed their own sanctions on 12 people, including Russian deputy prime minister Dmitry Rogozin and two aides to Putin. Canada sanctioned 14 people.

Shaken by the worst East-West crisis since the Cold War, the EU also pledged to cut its reliance on Russian energy and signed a political deal with the pro-Western Ukrainians who took power after



Armed men, march outside a military base in Perevalnoye, near the Crimean city of Simferopol, on 21 March, 2014. —REUTERS

Moscow-backed President Viktor Yanukovich's overthrow last month.

In a Kremlin ceremony shown live on state television, Putin signed a law on ratification of a treaty making Crimea part of Russia and another creating two new Russian administrative districts: Crimea and the port city of Sevastopol, where Moscow keeps part of its Black Sea fleet.

Thousands of Russians marked the annexation

with fireworks and celebrations in Simferopol, capital of Crimea where the population is around 58 percent ethnic Russian. "Many people wanted this, to go back, not to the USSR, but to that big country of ours," said Anna Zevetseva, 32. "We are waiting for things to improve and for investment from Russia."

Ukrainian and Tatar residents stayed behind closed doors. Sergey, a 64-year-old Ukrainian

businessman who did not want to give his surname, saw no reason to celebrate. "An occupying force is in my country and we have been annexed," he said.

A referendum last Sunday after Russian troops seized control of Crimea overwhelmingly backed union with Russia but was denounced by Washington and the European Union as a sham. It opened the way for annexation within a week. —Reuters

Abe willing to prepare legislation for collective self-defence

TOKYO, 22 March — Prime Minister Shinzo Abe showed willingness Saturday to prepare legislation to allow Japan to exercise the right to collective self-defence.

Citing a possible attack against a US Aegis-equipped vessel in the open sea near Japan, Abe said in his address at the graduation ceremony of the National Defence Academy of Japan that it is "not just a desk plan but a situation that could actually happen."

"What we need is to adopt behaviour theory in line with reality and prepare legal infrastructure," the premier said.

Kyodo News

North Korea fires 30 short-range rockets

SEOUL, 22 March — North Korea fired 30 short-range rockets into the sea off the east of the Korean peninsula early on Saturday, South Korea's Yonhap news agency reported, citing the Joint Chiefs of Staff in South Korea.

The rockets, which are believed to be old Soviet-developed FROG rockets that North Korea has had since the 1960s, flew for 60 km (37 miles) before crashing into the sea, Yonhap said. —Reuters

Venezuela says street protests have caused \$10 billion in damage

CARACAS, 22 March — Venezuela's president said on Friday that street protests for the past month have caused at least \$10 billion in damage, accusing hardline foes of carrying out terrorist acts to sabotage public assets.

President Nicolas Maduro did not say how the government arrived at that figure from the clashes between demonstrators barricading roads, pro-government radicals and security forces that have killed at least 31 people. "The minority who want a coup have done so much damage to the country ... they burnt

a public university where hundreds of young people studied," he said in a nationally televised speech.

"This isn't protest. It's vandalism. It's terrorism." Maduro was referring to a military college affiliated with the Venezuelan armed forces that authorities say was torched by demonstrators in the western city of San Cristobal, near the border with Colombia.

San Cristobal has been harder hit by the violence than anywhere else since the protests began early last month. On Wednesday, intelligence agents arrested the city's opposition mayor

and accused him of "civil rebellion."

The Supreme Court has ordered the mayors of several opposition-run municipalities to dismantle street barricades set up by protesters that have become flashpoints for clashes.

One opposition mayor from central Carabobo state was jailed for 10 months for failing to comply with a similar order. The protesters say they want political change and an end to high inflation, shortages of basic foods such as milk and flour, and one of the highest rates of violent crime in the world. —Reuters



Anti-government protesters clash with riot police during a protest against Nicolas Maduro's government in Caracas on 20 March, 2014.

REUTERS

Festivals & Events

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January

Ananda Pagoda Festival

Dates: Full moon Day of Pyatho to 15th Waxing of Pyatho

Location: Bagan

Duration: 15 days

Naga New Year Festival

Dates: Usually 14 to 16 January

Location: Either Lahe or Layshi, Sagaing Region

Duration: Three days

February

Maha Muni Pagoda Festival

Dates: 14th Waxing and Full moon Day of Tabodwe

Location: Mandalay

Duration: Two days

Sticky Rice Cooking, or Hta-ma-ne

Dates: anytime during Tabodwe

Location: Throughout the country

Shwe Settaw Pagoda Festival

Dates: Begins 5th Waxing Moon Day of Tabodwe
Location: Shwe Settaw, Magway Region, Central Myanmar

Duration: 11 days but this holiday site remains open until April

March

KoGyi Kyaw Spirit Festival

Dates: 3rd Waxing Moon Day of Tabaung

Location: Pakhan, YayzaGyo Township

Duration: Eight days

Kekku Pagoda Festival

Dates: Begins 14th Waxing Moon Day of Tabaung
Location: Kekku ancient pagoda complex, near Taunggyi, southern Shan State

Duration: Three days

Pindaya Shwe Oo Min Pagoda Festival

Dates: 11th Waxing Moon Day of Tabaung

Location: Pindaya, southern Shan State

Duration: Eight days

Maw Tin Zun Pagoda Festival

Dates: 1st Waxing Moon Day of Tabaung

Location: The southwest coast of Myanmar

Duration: 10 days

April

Water Festival and Myanmar New Year

Dates: Usually 13 to 17 April

(New Year's Day)

Location: Throughout the country

Duration: Four days of throwing water and the last day.

Shwe Maw Daw Pagoda Festival

Dates: Begins day after New Year's Day

Location: Bago

Duration: Seven days

Search for Malaysian jet steps up in remote Indian Ocean

KUALA LUMPUR/PERTH, (Australia), 22 March —

Two weeks after a Malaysia Airlines jet carrying 239 people vanished, an international search deep in the southern Indian Ocean stepped up on Saturday even as Australia cautioned the investigation's best lead remained a tentative one.

Officials are bracing for the "long haul" as searches by more than two dozen countries turn up little but frustration and fresh questions about Flight MH370 which vanished on a scheduled flight from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing on 8 March.

Six aircraft and two merchant ships are now scouring an area of the remote southern Indian Ocean where suspected debris was spotted by satellite earlier this week.

Australia, which announced the potential find and is coordinating the rescue, has cautioned the objects might be a lost shipping container or other debris. "Even though this is not a definite lead, it is probably more solid than



International television crews film alongside a Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) AP-3C Orion aircraft which had just returned from a search for Malaysian Airlines flight MH370 over the Indian Ocean, at RAAF Base Pearce north of Perth, on 21 March, 2014.—REUTERS

any other lead around the world and that is why so much effort and interest is being put into this search," acting Australian Prime Minister Warren Truss told reporters at a Perth airforce base.

China, Japan and India are sending more planes and Australian and Chi-

nese navy vessels are also steaming towards the zone, more than 2,000km (1,200 miles) southwest of Perth.

Weather conditions are good, with 10 km (6 miles) of visibility, according to search officials — a crucial boost for a search that is relying more on human eyes than the technical wizardry

of the most advanced aircraft in the world.

"While these aircraft are equipped with very advanced technology, much of this search is actually visual," said Truss, who also warned that the objects detected by satellites may now be at the bottom of the Indian Ocean.—Reuters

Furious reaction, political split after Turkey bans Twitter



Demonstrators, members of the Turkish Youth Union, shout anti-government slogans during a protest against a Twitter ban, in Ankara on 21 March, 2014.—REUTERS

ANKARA, 22 March — Turkey's ban on Twitter ahead of bitterly contested elections brought a furious reaction at home and abroad on Friday, with users of the social networking service denouncing the move as a "digital coup" and the president expressing his disapproval.

A court blocked access to Twitter after Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan's

defiant vow, on the campaign trail on Thursday ahead of 30 March local elections, to "wipe out" the social media service, whatever the international community had to say about it. Industry Minister Fikri Isik said talks with Twitter were taking place and the ban would be lifted if the San Francisco-based firm appointed a representative in Turkey and agreed to block

specific content when requested by Turkish courts.

"We stand with our users in Turkey who rely on Twitter as a vital communications platform. We hope to have full access returned soon," the company said in a tweet.

A company spokesman declined to say whether it would appoint someone in Turkey but said it was moving forward in talks with

the government.

Tech-savvy Turks — President Abdullah Gul apparently among them — quickly found ways to circumvent the ban, with the hashtag #Twitterisblocked-inTurkey among the top trending globally on Friday. "One cannot approve of the complete closure of social media platforms," Gul tweeted, voicing his hope that the ban would be short-lived and setting himself publicly at odds with the prime minister.

Erdogan, who has dominated Turkish politics for 11 years, is battling a corruption scandal that has been fed by social media awash with alleged evidence of government wrongdoing. He did not mention the Twitter ban at two campaign rallies on Friday.

Turkey's main opposition party said it would challenge the ban and file a criminal complaint against Erdogan on the grounds of violating personal freedoms. The country's bar association filed a separate court challenge.—Reuters



Sunday, 23 March, 2014

Things starting to look up

In the old days, the country lacked transparency. People could not put their finger on the government's undertakings openly. Once we didn't dare to talk about the political affairs in public. And we used to think that we might face possible arrests. It was a nightmare. The year 2011 is a historic year for all Myanmar people as the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) handed over its power to the civilian government. Since

then, People have had freedom of speech and the freedom of expression.

The decade-long national races armed conflicts have left the country lag behind development. Since the current government took office, a series of democratic reforms has been taking place. Due to the government's democratic openings, the country sees the easing of economic sanctions imposed on Myanmar, the writing off debts owed and massive inflow of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). Some say Myanmar's reform is the top-down while others say it is the bottom-up. And some criticize that the current government is a quasi-civilian government or military-turned-government. It doesn't matter whether the democratic reform is either top-

down or bottom-up. But making the reform is a crucial point.

The government ministries have been making reforms under the leadership of the President. All citizens including government staff need to change their mindsets and old habits which are deeply rooted in Myanmar's society. And they should serve the interest of the people and the country in a dutiful manner.

Write for us

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

You Are Unique

Yes, you are unique. There is no one like you in the whole world. As a matter of fact, you are quite different from other people. You can be differentiated in five ways:

1. First, you have a body. This body of yours can be quite different by nature.

And you can make that unique body of yours more different from others, by nurturing it. It is within your power to take care of your body to be healthy and strong by means of diet and exercise a prudent, well-disciplined diet and a regular diligent exercise that suits your state of health and age. In short, you can be different physically by the state of your health and strength. For instance, you can be healthy and strong even if you are in your seventies or eighties.

2. Secondly, you have a mind. That mind of yours can be very unique. To make your naturally unique mind even more differentiated, you have to develop a vision. You must dare to have a dream that is very different from workaday, bland wishes. A vision or a dream is what you want to become in the future. You can become what you want to be, if you have in yourself the four factors of success: (a) a burning desire, (b) an indomitable mind, (c) an unyielding effort and (d) an insight wisdom.

Besides, you have got to formulate a strategy to translate your vision into re-

ality. You have got to have a unique strategy. You must be able, with that unique strategy of yours, to outperform others. You have to stand out from the crowd. You have got to be a Best-of-Breed, with a cutting edge in your chosen field. There must be no trace of complacency, apathy, inertia and ignorance in your personality. You have got to dare to struggle and dare to win. In short, you must be a unique strategist.

3. Thirdly, you have a heart. That heart of yours is already unique. But, you can make it more different by being very passionate for your core values. You have got to have a tremendous passion for your beliefs and for your values. You must stand for something with real passion. Your beliefs and your values will stand the test of time if you have a heart that is thoroughly imbued with love and service for a great cause. If you have a true heart in you, you will have good passion and values.

4. Fourthly, you have a spirit. That unique spirit of yours can be very different. You can, in fact, make it more differentiated by being selfless and by giving service. Selflessness

is, indeed, a very rare product. You can only be selfless if you really want to serve humanity with humility. You can be a selfless person if you dare to make things happen with a great love in your heart. You can also be a selfless human being if you can get things done in the service of mankind. In short, you are indeed a selfless servant if you dare to serve a noble cause.

5. Finally, you have a life. That life of yours is, in fact, quite unique. But you definitely can improve your unique life with character and competence. Your life is different because you have a unique character. Your character means what you are. And your competence means what you can do. What you are is, let us say, your own quality of mental attitude which has some differentiated value. What you can do is your own capability that can serve a good purpose with a worthy contribution to the world.

In conclusion, dare to scale the heights with your unique Physical Strength (PS), Mental Strength (MS), Emotional Strength (ES), Spiritual Strength (SS), and Achievement Strength (AS).

U Kyi Mun residing in Yangon is a consultant of
NAING GROUP CO., LTD.

Profile of Minister for Foreign Affairs Fumio KISHIDA



Fumio KISHIDA

Liberal Democratic Party of Japan (LDP)

Member of the House of Representatives

Hiroshima Prefecture, 1st Electoral District (elected seven times)

Biography

Date	Curriculum Vitae
July 29, 1957	Born
1982	Graduated from the School of Law, Waseda University Joined Long-Term Credit Bank of Japan, Ltd.
1987	Secretary to a member of the House of Representatives
1993	Elected to the House of Representatives for the first time (40 th General Election) (Elected seven times as of present)
1999	Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Construction (2 nd Obuchi Cabinet)
2000	Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Construction (Mori Cabinet)
2001	Parliamentary Senior Vice-Minister for Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (Koizumi Cabinet)
2005	Chairman of the Committee on Health, Labour and Welfare of the House of Representatives
2007	Minister of State for Special Missions (1 st Abe Cabinet) (Okinawa and Northern Territories Affairs, Quality-of-Life Policy, "Challenge Again" Initiative, Science and Technology Policy, and Regulatory Reform) Minister of State for Special Missions (Fukuda Cabinet) (Okinawa and Northern Territories Affairs, Science and Technology Policy, Quality-of-Life Policy and Regulatory Reform)
2008	Minister for Consumer Affairs (Fukuda Cabinet) Minister for Space Policy (Fukuda Cabinet)
2011	Chairman of the LDP's Diet Affairs Committee
December 2012	Minister for Foreign Affairs (2 nd Abe Cabinet)

Family: Wife and three children (sons)

GOLD PRICE, FE RATE (22-3-2014)

Yangon Gold Price

Buying K 675,700 per tical: Selling K 676,700 per tical

Mandalay Gold Price

Buying K 675,500 per tical: Selling K 676,500 per tical

Foreign Exchange Rate

USD	Buying	K 960:	Selling	K 965
SGD	Buying	K 755:	Selling	K 763
Euro	Buying	K 1315:	Selling	K 1332

INTERVIEW & ARTICLE

Japanese Foreign Minister to visit Myanmar with aid, cooperation top of agenda

Interviewer Dr. Tha Sein

Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida will visit Myanmar for two days from March 23 to hold talks with government officials on a wide range of issues, including aid.

The following text is a direct translation of an interview with Mr Kishida via the Japanese Embassy in Myanmar.

Q: How significant will your visit be at a time when both countries are in the process of extending deeper relations in various areas?

A: Football is a popular sport in Myanmar. Japan will compete in the World Cup which will be held in Brazil this year. Japan's football is famous for its close playing style. In fact, this playing style originated from Myanmar scholarship student Ko Kyaw Din.

He gave training to some selected Japanese footballers. After the incumbent government took

office in 2011, Japanese Prime Minister Mr Shinzo Abe visited Myanmar in May 2013 and President U Thein Sein went to Japan in December, 2013. Their exchange of visits between the leaders of the two countries could further cement the decades-long ties between the two countries. I also exchanged views on a bilateral cooperation policy with Union Minister for Foreign Affairs U Wunna Maung Lwin in New York in September, 2013.

Japanese people generally know that Myanmar has verdant mountain ranges and fields and diverse national races and culture and traditions. And Myanmar has a history of very close relations with Japan. This is the first-ever visit to Myanmar. I am very happy because I am going to embrace Myanmar's development. I have a desire to frankly exchange views on further promoting relations between the two countries and relation policy.

Q: What is the main purpose of your visit?

A: This trip has three main purposes. The first point is that the diplomatic relations between Myanmar and Japan turn 60 this year. We have a plan to normalize and boost the relations and to exchange views on new cooperation.

As a second point, Myanmar is ASEAN chair for the first time this year. Myanmar is going to host a series of meetings including the Foreign Ministers' meeting between Japan and ASEAN and the summit. Japan would give its advices on noticeable issues at the meeting.

The last point is that Japan is exercising a Pro-active Contributor to Peace Policy. Plans are under way to provide necessary assistances to national races. In January, Japan issued its announcement on providing aid worth 10 billion Japanese yen in the coming five years. Japan frequently sends Japanese

government special envoy to Myanmar's National Reconsolidation Mr Yohei Sasakawa to Myanmar for Myanmar's peace-making process. During this trip, Japan will exchange views on swift implementation of the peace-making process.

I strongly believe that these points could further promote friendly ties between the two countries. And I hope my visit to Myanmar will help support it.

Q: To which extent will bilateral relations between Myanmar and Japan be promoted?

A: From my standpoint, I think thanks to these three points, there are good prospects for better friendly ties between the two countries.

The first point is that Myanmar's strategy is crucial. For the establishment of ASEAN Community (2015), Myanmar linking ASEAN and the South Asia is strategically important. Japan has been providing ODA to ASEAN countries

for ensuring the links between ASEAN. And Japan will make all-out efforts for cooperation with Myanmar.

As a second point, Myanmar's basic manufacturing has an original attraction. Under the new development strategy of Japan, special emphasis is being placed on cooperation in the economic sector of ASEAN countries. Especially, we have a firm belief that it will bring a win-win situation for economic development.

The third point is that both countries have a long history. Exchanges of cultures and traditions could further cement cooperation and create the trusts between the two countries.

Q: What is your focus on the future economy of Myanmar and the economic cooperation between Myanmar and Japan?

A: Development of basic infrastructures is crucial for Myanmar's economic development. Last year, Japan has decided to grant a total of ODA worth over 150,000 million of Japanese

yen to Myanmar. And Japan is also providing assistances for higher living standards of people and human resources development. On the other hand, Myanmar needs huge investments of private companies for sustainable economic development. Since last year, Japan is extending a helping hand to the government as well as to private companies for the Thilawa Special Economic Zone (SEZ) at full pelt. I hope it will help support the creation of more job opportunities there. Both Myanmar and Japan could sign a first-ever free investment agreement last year. In addition, both countries could amend an air line agreement for extension of flight schedules and are creating a favorable investment climate. It is also planning to create a favorable investment environment after establishing a framework for the government and private dialogue called "Japan-Myanmar preliminary cooperation".

Social paradigm ...

(from page 1)

According to an official announcement of Thilawa Special Economic Zone management committee, local people have been compensated financially and provided with other assistance.

Critics pointed out that job creation for ensuring sustainable livelihood is imperative as they gave up their main source of livelihood such as farmlands and livestock.

Dr Than Than Thwe, joint secretary of the management committee, said many relief plans have been arranged for the suffering caused. Surveys have been conducted to know whether or not their lives have returned to normalcy. Plans are underway for the opening of vocational courses for local dwellers who had to relocate through the implementation of IRP.

"They think they don't need to have certificates in their professions. They have already known what to do when we taught them at the course. They said they can build a house. We would like them to get certificates in their professions. We want them to

know that certificates could facilitate getting jobs from foreign companies," said an official.

But, Ko Thein Zaw, father of four children, said: "Jobs are available without having certificates. Who would take care of my household expenditure when I took the course? I was paid on a daily basis while working at the site of building drains. I had stayed away from work for nearly one month. Of K 7 million I got as compensation for my losses, I spent about K 3 million on housing. Only K 500,000 is left in my hand after spending money on the birth of my child and the house warming ceremony."

In response to the demand of dwellers who are unwilling to attend courses that are open on weekdays, most courses will be opened during weekends.

"My husband can do only farming and livestock breeding. He is sick and it is impossible for him to do hard work. So, we have to run a small shop at home apart from sewing to supplement our incomes," Ma Thin of the new ward voiced.



Photo shows new ghetto called Myaingtha on the side of Kyauktan Township in Yangon Region.

An IRP announcement revealed that 90 percent of the total population who had to relocate have poor educational background.

"They are easily swayed. Despite many workshops and presentations on vocational education, only 25 persons are now taking the vocational training course, but they were given talks about their future liveli-

hoods," an official said.

"Some households earn rent from their property in Myaingtha while others sold their property for K 20 or 14 million. The rent is about K 30, 000 here. Compensations vary and are based on the condition they lived in Thilawa village before", U Myint Thu explained.

According to Professor Dr Aung Tun Thet's

comment on Special Economic Zones and Sustainable Development, the emergence of the Thilawa special economic zone could lead to land disputes and relocation problems; local people would have to suffer losses. But also new job opportunities would emerge together with the project; it could thereby contribute towards better living standards and in-

frastructure development; and they would be able to run their own business with the use of compensations. Many NGOs have, however, reported that compensation has and is in many cases not paid or only insufficiently. He said that only if rules and regulations are taken obeyed will displaced persons really be helped.

Trs: YM

Photo taken on 21 March, 2014 shows the site of a bomb attack in Lebanon's northern port city of Tripoli. The death toll of the continuing clashes in north Lebanon's port city of Tripoli between the Sunni Bab el-Tebbaneh neighborhood and the rival Alawite Jabal Mohsen rose to 18 killed and more than 100 injured, including 22 soldiers of the Lebanese army.

XINHUA



Mother's Day in Syria reminds bereaved moms of their loss

DAMASCUS, 22 March —Like people in most Arab countries, Syrians celebrate the Mother's Day on 21 March. But in a country that embroiled in a three-year war, such a holiday sometimes brings more harm than good, as it reminds bereaved mothers of their lost children during the grinding war.

"The terrorists have taken my two sons a year and a half ago. I haven't seen them since then. A couple of days ago, I was told that they had killed my sons," said Fatima Ibrahim, a 60-year-old mother at a displacement shelter near the capital Damascus.

With a sorrow-weary face, she said her sons were accused by the armed militant groups of being snitches for government's security forces.

Shahira Meidani, a mother of four, said her three brothers have been kidnapped by the militant groups three months ago, "we know nothing about them."

"I have four children, including a six-year-old girl who was killed when a mortar shell slammed our neighborhood," she said.

Sitting right next to her at the displacement shelter was an old woman who shared the same grief. She said her two sons were taken into custody by the security forces because of alleged links to the rebel groups.

Xinhua

OSCE to send monitoring mission to Ukraine

VIENNA, 22 March—The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) agrees on Friday to send a half-year monitoring mission to Ukraine. The mission will initially compose of 100 observers, the OSCE's Permanent Council on Friday decided in a special session on Ukraine, aiming to contribute to reducing tensions and fostering peace, stability and security.

"The mission will gather information and report on the security situation as well as establish and report facts regarding incidents," the OSCE noted. The monitoring mission foresees deployment throughout Ukraine, advance teams will be deployed within 24 hours. The mission may be expanded to a total of up to 400 additional monitors according to the situation. Its mandate can be renewed for further six month periods by decision of the Permanent Council if requested by Ukraine.

Xinhua

No grounds for any criminal charges against South Africa's Zuma

CAPE TOWN, 22 March —South Africa's ruling African National Congress (ANC) on Friday downplayed moves by the opposition to lay criminal charges against President Jacob Zuma, saying there are no grounds for such charges.

No court would convict Zuma of any criminal acts, ANC national spokesman Jackson Mthembu said in a statement.

The Democratic Alliance (DA) and the Economic Freedom Fighter (EFF) on Thursday laid criminal charges of corruption against Zuma at different police stations following the release of Public Protector Thuli Mandonela's report on the final findings into the controversial renovation of Zuma's private home in Nkandla, KwaZulu-Natal Province. The project cost over 240 million rands (about 23 million US dollars) in public funds, the report revealed.

"There can be no doubt that this Nkandla palace was

built on corruption by the President, and for the President — with our money," DA national spokesperson Mmusi Maimane said after laying the charges.

Responding to the move, Mthembu said the charges were void acts carried out in desperation.

"The hurried act by some of these parties to lay charges is indicative of desperation by them clutching at straws and willing to do and say anything based on prejudice," he said.

"We are confident that President Zuma will not be found guilty by any courts on the charges laid by the two parties," Mthembu said even police service will have no grounds to pursue the charges against the president based on the outcome and final reports of both the Public Protector and the Inter-Ministerial Task Team appointed by Zuma to investigate the Nkandla project. "The president has not been found guilty of corruption, maladministration or impropriety by the two reports," Mthembu said. Slandering Zuma is a tactic by the opposition during their election campaigns, said Mthembu.

"We have noted the statements they have used continuously on television and other media which are calculated to mislead the public by suggesting that president Zuma used tax monies to build his private dwelling at the expense of the poor," he said.

"This is clearly a desperate and opportunistic character assassination of president Zuma who is the face of the ANC elections campaign. This is meant to discredit him and ANC in the eyes of the voters on the eve of the 7 May elections."

Madonsela released the report about six weeks before the 7 May elections. The ANC said the report's release was timed to give ammunition to the opposition parties which have nothing to offer to the electorate.—Xinhua

UN adopts Japan-led resolution to empower women in disaster response

NEW YORK, 22 March —A Japan-led initiative pressing the international community to better incorporate women and girls into strategies to cope with the consequences of large scale natural disasters was adopted by consensus at the United Nations on Friday.

"Since the last adoption (of the resolution for the first time in 2012) to include the women's perspective into this disaster prevention plan the movement has been intensified," Japan's representative to the Commission on the Status of Women, Hiroko Hashimoto, told reporters at a press conference.

The Jumonji Junior and Senior High School

principal was referring to the first time the resolution was presented by her country at the annual UN conference, in the aftermath of the devastating 11 March, 2011 earthquake and tsunami that impacted northeastern Japan and drew 50 cosponsors at that time.

"In light of this new resolution I expect (the concepts) to be applied more widely," she said.

Hashimoto was pleased that over the two week period Japan was able to garner 79 cosponsors, including from the United States and South Korea for the first time. All 28 members of the European Union joined as well.

Kyodo News

Taleban gun down Kabul diners in pre-election attack

KABUL, 22 March—A Taleban assault on the restaurant of a luxury hotel, considered one of the safest places in Kabul and frequented by foreigners and Afghan officials, has swelled a tide of violence sweeping Afghanistan two weeks before a presidential election.

Taleban gunmen smuggled tiny pistols past the Serena hotel's heavy security cordon and waited for the restaurant to fill up for an Afghan New Year dinner before emerging to shoot diners point-blank. Three children between two and five were found with bullets in their heads.

Four of the nine dead were foreigners.

Hours later, a bomb attack in the southerly Kandahar Province wounded the deputy governor and left his chief of staff in critical condition.

The Islamist Taleban movement has ordered its fighters to use "full force" to disrupt the vote and threatened to kill anyone who participates in what it calls a Western-backed sham.

This week alone, seven or eight suicide bombers killed at least 11 people in the eastern city of Jalalabad, while 18 were killed by a bomb in a marketplace

in northern Afghanistan.

The April 5 vote is intended to mark the first democratic transfer of power in Afghanistan's history. It will be a pointer to prospects for stability as the NATO-led force that has been reinforcing security since the Taleban were driven from power in 2001 prepares to withdraw most of its troops this year.

With President Hamid Karzai constitutionally barred from seeking a third term, the front-runners include former finance minister Ashraf Ghani and two ex-foreign ministers, Zalmay Rassoul and Abdullah Abdullah.—Reuters



A girl looks at puppets at an exhibition celebrating 100th anniversary of puppetry in Slovenia at the National Museum in Ljubljana, capital of Slovenia, on 21 March, 2014. More than 200 historic puppets were on display at the exhibition.

XINHUA

WORLD

Three malnourished, bruised children rescued from California home

NEW YORK, 22 March — Three young children with bruises and signs of malnourishment, one of whom was regularly chained to a wall, were rescued by police from their parents' "cluttered and dirty" home in northern California, the local sheriff's office said on Friday.

Officers went to check on the two boys, aged 3 and 5, and a girl, 8, on 14 March at their home in Salinas, 100 miles south of San Francisco, after two of the children missed medical appointments, arousing concern.

After speaking with the children's two mothers, officers found the children with "obvious bruising and discoloration consistent with malnourishment, and signs of mistreatment," said John Thornburg, a Monterey County sheriff's office spokesman.

"At times the parents had chained the 8-year-old to the wall while she was in the house," he said in a telephone interview, describing an attachment on the wall to which she would be bound to prevent her from getting food.

Police arrested the children's mothers, Eraca Dawn Craig, 31, and Christian Jessica Deanda, 44, the following day on charges of child abuse, neglect and false imprisonment.

A police report said there was "very little food" in the house, which was described as "cluttered and dirty."—Reuters



Algerians shout slogans during a sit-in protest at the Harcha Hall in downtown Algiers, Algeria, on 21 March, 2014. Leaders and members of opposition parties staged a sit-in rally on Friday to protest against the campaign of incumbent Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika for a fourth term in office. Thousands of protesters wave banners, calling for boycott of presidential elections. The presidential election will be held in 17 April. —XINHUA

Exodus from CAR results in regional food crisis: UN food agency

UNITED NATIONS, 22 March — The UN food agency said on Friday that the exodus of almost 300,000 people from the Central African Republic (CAR) is creating a regional crisis in neighbouring countries which are already short of food.

Ertharin Cousin, executive director of the World Food Program (WFP), said while the international community urgently needs to step up and address the disaster in the CAR, support is also required for the regional refugee crisis.

Cousin just finished a visit to the CAR's north-

western town of Bossangoa. "WFP says that Cameroon, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and the Republic of Congo, which are hosting refugees, are themselves confronted with food insecurity and pockets of malnutrition," deputy UN spokesman Farhan Haq said here at a daily news briefing.

"The influx of refugees significantly increases pressure on the host communities and governments, as well as on WFP operations which are severely under-funded," he said.

Thousands of people are believed to have been

killed, and 2.2 million, about half the population of CAR, need humanitarian aid as a result of the conflict that began in December 2012, when mainly Muslim Seleka rebels launched attacks.

More than 650,000 people are still internally displaced, and over 290,000 have fled to neighboring countries in search of refuge from the conflict, which has taken on increasingly sectarian overtones as mainly Christian militias known as anti-Balaka (anti-machete) have taken up arms.

So far this year, despite immense logistical

and security challenges, the WFP has provided food to more than 250,000 people per month in the CAR, including specialized nutritious foods to help prevent malnutrition among children. But the scale of the disaster requires deeper engagement from the international community, the agency stressed. In the coming weeks most roads will become impassable with the rainy season. The rains will also increase the risk of diarrhea and illness for tens of thousands of displaced people in unsanitary, makeshift camps.

Xinhua

Brazilian govt to send troops to help Rio fight organized crime

RIO DE JANEIRO, 22 March — The Brazilian government announced on Friday that it will send troops to Rio to help local police deal with a wave of attacks to police outposts in slums. The announcement came after suspected local gang members assaulted three Pacifying Police Units (UPPs), injuring two officers and setting on fire the UPP headquarters in the Manguinhos slum.

The flare-up of violence has put Rio's police on highest alert, and officers on vacation were called to be on stand-by. After the attacks, Rio's governor Sergio Cabral left for Brasilia to meet with President Dilma Rousseff and Justice Minister Jose Eduardo Cardozo to ask for security help. The federal government was solidary to Rio and approved the troops, Cabral said after the meeting. "We never lacked President Rousseff's support and solidarity."

"It is clear that criminals want to weaken our policy of pacification. The state will not back down," said Cabral, who did not disclose the number of security forces to be sent to Rio for strategy reasons. The UPPs are Cabral's most famous accomplishment and helped him win re-election for a second four-year term in 2010. There are a total of 38 such units in Rio's shantytown, aimed at uprooting crime gangs plaguing those communities. —Xinhua

Eight trucks carrying aid cross into Syria from Turkey

UNITED NATIONS, 22 March — The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs said eight trucks, out of a total of 79, have crossed the border from Turkey into Syria and are being off-loaded at humanitarian agencies' warehouses in northeast Syria, a UN spokesman said here on Friday.

The convoy which carried humanitarian aid supplies from Turkey to north Syria was first of its kind since the Syrian crisis broke out in March 2011.

Four trucks carrying blankets for 12,000 people, and four others with wheat flour for 20,000 people arrived Thursday at Qamishli city, deputy UN spokes-

man Farhan Haq said here at a daily briefing.

Other components of the food parcels, like oil and rice, are expected to reach the areas in the coming days, in addition to water kits, medicines, children's clothes, hygiene kits and sleeping mats, he said.

Nigel Fisher, the regional humanitarian coordinator, said earlier Friday that no convoy movements are expected in the day, but agencies are hoping that operations can continue on Saturday. Asked how the aid is being distributed, the deputy spokesman said UN agencies are working with local partners on the ground.

There are 500,000 people who urgently need aid in the Hassakeh area, including local families and those displaced from other parts of Syria, who cannot be reached from inside the country due to insecurity and fighting, he said.

Three weeks ago, the UN Security Council ordered Syria's warring parties to let aid workers deliver food and medicine to the people in need.

More than 100,000 people were killed and the UN estimates that some 6.3 million people have been internally displaced since the conflict broke out in March 2011 in the Middle East country.—Xinhua



Visitors watch peach blossom during the 25th Canal Peach Blossom Festival in Tianjin, north China, on 21 March, 2014. People in north China started embracing the spring. —XINHUA

Singapore PM to attend nuclear summit

SINGAPORE, 22 March — Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong will attend the third Nuclear Security Summit in The Hague, the Netherlands, from 24 to 25 March, at the invitation of Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte.

The Prime Minister's Office said in a statement on Saturday that thereafter, the prime minister will visit Luxembourg on 26 March and Britain from 26 to 29 March.

The third Nuclear Security Summit in The Hague is a follow-up to the first two summits, which Lee also attended, held in Washington DC, the United States, and Seoul, South Korea, in 2010 and 2012 respectively.

Leaders attending the summit in The Hague will assess the progress made over the past four years on national and international measures to enhance nuclear security, identify unmet objectives from the previous two summits and propose how these can be achieved.—Xinhua

Philippine gov't, MILF firm up preparations for final peace deal

MANILA, 22 March — The Philippine government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) said on Friday that they are firming up preparations for the historic signing of the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro (CAB) on 27 March in Malacanang, the presidential palace.

Government peace panel chairman Miriam Coronel-Ferrer said more than 1,000 people are expected to attend the event. Ferrer and MILF panel chairman Mohagher Iqbal will sign the agreement with Malaysian Third Party Facilitator Tengku Dato' Ab Ghafar Tengku Mohamed signing as witness. Philippine President Benigno Aquino III, Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process Teresita Quintos Deles and MILF chief Al Haj Murad Ibrahim will deliver messages before attendees from various sectors and the international community.

Xinhua



Teachers tell children how to sleep at Huifeng Kindergarten in Yinchuan, capital of north-west China's Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, March, 2014. An activity aiming to guide children sleeping well is held at the kindergarten to mark the World Sleep Day which falls on Friday. XINHUA

Tsunami ruled out after five quakes hit India's Nicobar Islands

PORT BLAIR, (India), 22 March — Indian government has ruled out tsunami after the country's Andaman and Nicobar islands at the Bay of Bengal were jolted by a series of earthquakes Friday evening.

An earthquake measuring 6.4 on Richter scale took place some 70 km east of Indira Point at 19:11 pm local time. No casualty has been reported so far, said government officials here.

The quake was at a depth of 9.92 km about 108.8 km southeast of Mishra, Nicobar Islands, in the Indian Ocean, said the US Geological Survey earlier. According to the State

Control Room of Local Disaster Management, it was followed by four other quakes from 19:14 pm to 21:18 pm all at Nicobar islands.

"We do not see any threat of a Tsunami warning due to this. However, we have issued a general warning and have kept our system on high alert," Shailesh Nayak, secretary of the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES), told the media.

The MoES officials said the Andaman and Nicobar Islands are prone to earthquakes as the area is part of the Pacific "Ring of Fire," an arc of volcanoes

and fault lines encircling the Pacific Basin.

While no tremors were felt at Car Nicobar island, where the headquarters of the Indian military forces on the islands are located, the jolt was greatly felt in the Central Nicobars where people started feeling giddy following the tremors.

Phone lines in the entire Nicobar District showed poor connectivity, with government telecom BSNL being the only service provider. No damage to lives and properties was reported so far.

Real-time measurements of wave activity indicated that no

significant tsunami was generated. When no major waves have occurred at least for two hours after the estimated arrival time, the local authorities can assume that the threat is passed.

As local conditions can cause a wide variation in tsunami wave action, "cancellation" of national warnings and the "all clear" decision or "all clear" determination must be made by national or state or local authorities.

The Indian government officials in Delhi said earlier that tsunami has been ruled out from the quake.—Xinhua



Members of the 100th class of the Takarazuka Revue Company, an all-female musical theater troupe, make a debut in costumes featuring violets in Takarazuka, Hyogo Prefecture, western Japan, on 21 March, 2014. KYODO NEWS

Kishida hopes for positive N Korean stance at talks with Japan

DHAKA, 22 March — Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida expressed hope on Friday for a positive stance from North Korea at an intergovernmental talks with Japan later this month that he said will handle a wide range of issues.

Speaking to reporters in the Bangladesh capital Dhaka, visiting Japanese minister said, "We'd like to produce results at the meeting. We hope North Korea will take a forward-looking approach."

"We are assuming that a broad range of topics will be discussed," Kishida said. "Among the, the abduction issue, I believe, will be a major topic."

The Japanese Foreign Minister announced on Friday that diplomats from Japan and North Korea will hold talks in Beijing on 30-31 March, the first official intergovernmental contact since November 2012.

Kishida also said North Korean issues will "naturally" be at the top of topics discussed at a summit of Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, South Korean President Park Geun Hye and US President Barack Obama, who will be meeting on the sidelines of a nuclear security summit in The Netherlands on Monday and Tuesday.—Kyodo News

Indonesia plans to record value of smuggling activities

JAKARTA, 22 March — A senior official at the Statistics Indonesia (BPS) said on Friday his office had planned to record the value of commodities from smuggling activities so as to complete the country's economic data and potential loss related to the illegal activities.

BPS Distribution and Service Statistic Deputy Sasmito Hadi Wibowo said that smuggling activities have a significant impact on a country's economy.

If the value of smuggling activities was taken into account, Indonesia may have a larger economy size than official statistics, he added. "Currently the data from smuggling activities submitted by the customs office only covers 20 percent of all smuggling activities," he said in the Ministry of National Development Planning's office here.—Xinhua

Chinese army to raise military training standards

BEIJING, 22 March — The level of Chinese military training will be raised to actual combat standard to improve the army's capabilities, according to a guidance issued by the country's military leadership. The Central Military Commission (CMC) issued the guidance after approval by Xi Jinping, Chinese president and chairman of the commission.

The guidance outlined concepts, principles, major tasks and measures to raise the military training level.

The guidance said strengthening combat readiness should be viewed as a top priority. It also called for improved mechanisms for training.

The guidance clarified tasks that need to be carried out for improving standards, and stressed that problems in military training should be addressed through mechanisms and systems with innovative ideas and measures. The guidance came after news that President Xi is heading a leading group for deepening reform on national defence and the military.—Xinhua

GENERAL

Arson suspected in fatal E China fire

QINGDAO, 22 March —A fatal fire that broke out at about 2 am on Friday in a village in east China's Shandong Province was most likely the result of arson, said local authorities on Saturday.

A police investigation into the tent fire on a farm in Dujiatuan Village, Pingdu County, found evidence that the fire, in all likelihood, had been set deliberately.

One person was killed and three others were injured in the blaze.

Since last year, frequent land disputes have occurred in the village.

Further investigation is underway.—Xinhua



Peng Liyuan (3rd R), wife of Chinese President Xi Jinping, and US First Lady Michelle Obama (4th R) look at students demonstrating their robots while visiting the Second High School Attached to Beijing Normal University, in Beijing, capital of China, on 21 March, 2014.

XINHUA

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Participating countries' negotiators meet ahead of Nuclear Security Summit

THE HAGUE, 22 March —Chief negotiators of the participating countries at the upcoming Nuclear Security Summit (NSS) had their final meeting in The Hague on Friday, three days before the start of the event.

The so-called Sherpa's and sous-Sherpa's have prepared the summit and will advise their attending leaders.

Since the last NSS that was held in Seoul in 2012, the negotiators of participating countries had general meetings in Istanbul (Turkey), The Hague, Vienna (Austria), Ottawa (Canada) and Pat-

taya (Thailand).

The meetings are led by Piet de Klerk, the lead coordinator and negotiator from the Netherlands, the host country.

During these meetings they discussed the progress made, key themes, work plans and measures, as well as first drafts of the final declaration, or a communique, which is expected to be adopted by world leaders at the summit.

The NSS 2014 will be held in The Hague on 24-25 March with an aim to prevent nuclear terrorism around the globe.

Xinhua

UN chief slams deadly terrorist attack in Afghanistan

UNITED NATIONS, 22 March — UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on Friday condemned "in the strongest terms" the deadly attacks that have killed more than 50 civilians in Afghanistan this week.

A bout of violence has rocked Afghanistan recently as a presidential election is two weeks away, including a suicide attack on a market in Faryab province, an attack on a police station in the eastern city of Jalalabad, and Thursday night's attack on a hotel in the capital Kabul.

"These attacks took place as Afghans prepare to celebrate Nowruz, the

start of the new year, and a time when Afghans celebrate the values of peace and solidarity among communities," said a statement issued here by Ban's spokesman. "The deliberate targeting of civilians is a flagrant breach of these values as well as of international humanitarian law."

The secretary-general sends his deepest condolences to the families and colleagues of those killed and his hopes for a swift recovery to those injured, the statement said.

"Afghans themselves demand an end to such violence," the statement said, citing a message delivered to Ban on Friday, calling

for peace and a ceasefire in Afghanistan, with nearly a quarter of a million women nationwide inking their signatures on it.

"The secretary-general welcomes this peace campaign, which is in the spirit of Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000), and is another indication of the strong demands of the Afghan people for peace in their country," the statement said. In a separate statement issued here on Friday, the UN Security Council condemned "in the strongest terms" the deadly terrorist attack on the hotel in Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan, which left at least 20 people dead, saying that "terrorism

in all its forms and manifestations is criminal and unjustifiable."

"The members of the Security Council reaffirmed that terrorism in all its forms and manifestations is criminal and unjustifiable, regardless of its motivation, wherever, whenever and by whomsoever committed, and should not be associated with any religion, nationality, civilization or ethnic group," the statement said. Insurgents attacked the hotel on Thursday night, taking many hostages. Kabul's police chief said 15 civilians, including hotel guests, died. All five insurgents were killed.—Xinhua

NE China city launches exchange programme with Russia

HARBIN, 22 March—Suifenhe City on the frontier with Russia in Heilongjiang Province has launched an exchange programme for young Chinese and Russian people.

The programme links provincial capital Harbin, the Russian city of Vladivostok, and Suifenhe to

promote tourism, economic cooperation and trade relations, Suifenhe authorities announced on Friday.

Suifenhe will hold activities every month this year, including an arts festival, summer camps, and a Halloween party. The Far Eastern Federal University in Vladivostok will hold

an open day. The border city already has sporting and academic exchange programs with Russia.

Suifenhe thrives through trade with Russia. In 2013, it became the first Chinese city authorized to use the rouble alongside the renminbi.

Xinhua

Five militants killed in shootout in SW Pakistan

ISLAMABAD, 22 March —At least five insurgents were killed and three others injured in exchange of fire with security forces in southwestern Pakistan on Saturday morning, local media reported.

Samaa TV said that the clash took place when

the paramilitary Frontier Constabulary conducted a search operation at suspected militants hideouts in Chahsar area in Turbat district in Balochistan province.

Some unknown militants opened fire at the troops who returned fire

and shot dead five militants.

The troops also arrested eight suspects who were taken into custody for investigations.

The forces also seized weapons from the possession of the militants.

Xinhua



Visitors walk in the Bastogne War Museum in Bastogne, southeast Belgium, on 21 March, 2014. The Bastogne War Museum was opened here Friday. Bastogne is one of the main fields of the Battle of the Ardennes during the World War II.

XINHUA

'Divergent' film earns \$4.9 million, Lions Gate green lights sequel



Cast member Mekhi Phifer and his wife Reshelet Barnes pose at the premiere of "Divergent" in Los Angeles, California on 18 March, 2014.

REUTERS

LOS ANGELES, 22 March — Lions Gate Entertainment Corp will move ahead with plans for a second movie in its new "Divergent" dystopian thriller series, the company said on Friday after the first film debuted with \$4.9 million in US and Canadian ticket sales from Thursday night showings.

"Divergent" stars Shailene Woodley in the story of a futuristic society that divides people into factions based on single personality traits. Woodley's character, teen heroine Tris Prior, has multiple dominant traits that make it difficult for her to fit in, and she becomes a threat to the government's faction system. Lions Gate had tentatively scheduled "Divergent" sequels for

March 2015 and March 2016. On Friday, the company said it gave the official green light to the second installment, "Insurgent". "We're confident that Divergent is on its way to becoming another important franchise for us," Lions Gate Chief Executive Officer Jon Feltheimer said in a statement.

"Divergent" is expected to sell between \$50 million and \$68 million worth of tickets at US and Canadian theaters through Sunday, according to pre-opening estimates from Wall Street and box office analysts.

The film is based on the first of a trilogy of novels by newcomer author Veronica Roth.

Reuters

'Dumb & Dumber To' posters unveiled

LOS ANGELES, 22 March — Universal Pictures has revealed the first posters for its upcoming 'Dumb & Dumber' sequel.

Jim Carrey, who will reprise his role as Lloyd, revealed the first poster on Twitter, which shows his character's infamous orange suit worn in the 1994 comedy, reported Deadline.

The second, belonging to co-star Jeff Daniels's Harry, was later added to the film's official website Dumblr.com.

In January, the first photo of the pair riding a statue of a deer emerged.

PTI

'Game of Thrones' screening draws throngs of fans to Brooklyn

NEW YORK, 22 March — Spring may finally be in the air, but the "Game of Thrones" fans who descended on New York's Barclays Centre on Thursday evening know different: winter is coming.

The fourth season of HBO's increasingly popular medieval fantasy-drama will premiere on 6 April, but 7,000 people who bought tickets to the Brooklyn event were treated to an advance screening of the season's first episode, along with a brief panel discussion with several cast members and author George R.R. Martin, whose books form the basis for the television show.

The show's plot combines a long war between

several noble houses in Westeros, but with elements of magic and fantasy — including dragons and the undead — in the mix.

"Winter is coming" is the motto of the Stark House, which saw several of its members killed in the climax

of the third season that aired in the spring of 2013. That event, known popularly as the "Red Wedding" among viewers, boosted interest in a show already known for surprising audiences with the unexpected demise of important characters.



Cast members Maisie Williams and Sophie Turner

Fans swarmed the arena for a chance to sit on the Iron Throne, the king's seat in the fictional world of Westeros, where the series takes place, see costumes used in the show, and buy merchandise, including a recently released hip-hop album, "Catch the Throne," inspired by the series. The rapper Common appeared at the arena to perform his song "The Ladder," which appears on the soundtrack.

The third season averaged 14.2 million viewers across all viewing platforms, according to HBO parent Time Warner, which makes it HBO's second-most-popular show of all time, trailing only "The Sopranos."

Reuters

Sunny Leone: I hope people change mindset about my acting



Sunny Leone during the promotions of her movie Ragini MMS 2.

MUMBAI, 22 March, — Indo Canadian adult film actress Sunny Leone, whose latest Bollywood project Ragini MMS 2 has hit the screens, hopes that her performance in the movie will help people change their mindsets about her acting skills.

"I don't know if I would be able to shut the mouth of those who criticize my acting, speak bad about me, but I hope they watch my this film and hopefully change their mind about my acting," Sunny told reporters.

Sunny made her Bollywood debut with erotica Jism 2 in 2012, and then featured in Jackpot last year. While both the films failed to do decent business at the box office, her performance was hardly lauded.

However, she feels

that with Ragini MMS 2, she has improved as an actor. "I believe that my acting in this film has got better. I am more comfortable now in front of the camera," Sunny said.

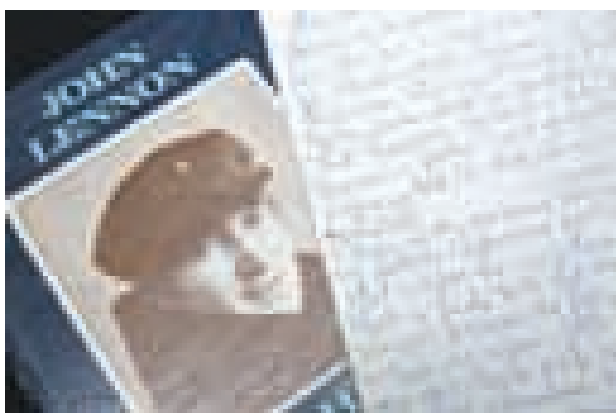
Talking about the difficulty she faced while shooting the climax scene for the film, Sunny said, "I can't tell you what all I had to do to shoot that (climax) scene. My whole body was exhausted.

I didn't have a body double to do bends and all that stuff. I was bruised, cut and bleeding," she added.

Meanwhile, Ragini MMS 2, produced by Ekta Kapoor's Balaji Productions and directed by Bhushan Patel, has got a good start at the box office and Sunny has so far received a mixed response for her performance in the film.—PTI

Lennon's doodles, drawings and nonsense poems to be sold in New York

LONDON, 22 March — The largest private collection of nonsense poems, doodles and comic drawings by the Beatles singer John Lennon will be sold



A manuscript written by John Lennon entitled 'Henry and Harry' is seen at Sotheby's, London on 21 March, 2014.—REUTERS

in New York in June, auctioneer Sotheby's said on Friday.

Ranging from gibberish descriptions of Lennon's native city Liverpool, in northern England, to a drawing of a "National Health Cow" in an apparent jab at Britain's national health service, the collection reveals a lesser known side of the celebrated British singer, who was shot dead in 1980.

The drawings and original manuscripts are part of the collection of publisher Tom Maschler, creator of the prestigious literary

award the Booker Prize, who published them in two books, "In His Own Write" (1964), and "A Spaniard in the Works" (1965).

The collection, named "You Might Well Ask", has a pre-sale estimate of around 800,000 dollars over 89 lots, Sotheby's said.

The sale coincides with the 50th anniversary of the Beatles' first appearance in America on the Ed Sullivan show in 1964. Watched by 73 million Americans, it shot the band to stardom.

Reuters

GENERAL

Professor merges East, West in new theatrical style



Photo taken in Nagoya on 2 Feb, 2014, shows Masaru Sekine, a professor at Waseda University's Faculty of International Research and Education who is pursuing an experimental project that fuses European opera with Kyogen Japanese comic theater.—KYODO NEWS

NAGOYA, 22 March — University professor Masaru Sekine is breaking

new ground on the stage by fusing European opera with Kyogen Japanese comic theater.

"I want the audience to experience a magical fusion of the eastern and western cultures," said the 68-year-old professor of Waseda University's Faculty of International Research and Education.

In his "Romeo and Juliet" performed on a Noh stage, the actor playing Romeo confesses his love in a peculiar Kyogen style of language, while the soprano playing Juliet responds with an aria accompanied by a koto Japanese zither.

In his experimental Theatre Project Si, Sekine usually does not employ large stage sets, relying instead on changes in lighting to stir the imagination of the audience.

Sekine also cut some

lines from the original play by Shakespeare to clarify themes.

"I condensed 'the beauty of simplification' as Zeami puts it," Sekine said, referring to the 14th to mid-15th century Noh performer and producer.

Sekine, who was born to a family of the Kanze school of Noh performance, has had a strong interest in western culture since childhood.

He majored in English literature at Waseda University in Tokyo and went to Britain to study literature and contemporary theater at the University of Manchester and the University of Stirling.

After living abroad for about 25 years, he realized "Shakespeare's plays in which deep emotions are expressed are essentially similar to Noh and

Kyogen," and developed the idea of merging them.

In 2003, he staged an improvised session of "utai" Noh singing and pipe organ at an art festival in Paris.

Since 2008, he has directed a total of six Shakespeare plays as part of the project, including "Macbeth" and "Othello," at theaters across Japan.

His newest play based on his own script was performed at the National Noh Theater in Tokyo late in March.

"Japanese 'ukiyoe' prints went over to Europe and inspired impressionistic paintings," he said. "By bringing odd things to Japan, I want to create a new culture."

Sekine also hopes to advance into different fields such as film.

Kyodo News

Indonesia probes marines posing as bombers of Singapore building

JAKARTA, 22 March — Indonesia said on Friday it is investigating two of its marines who wore uniforms with badges with the names of two bombers involved in a deadly 1965 attack in Singapore during an international defence expo on Wednesday, provoking the Singapore delegation to withdraw participation from a parallel event.

The Singapore delegation immediately pulled out of the Jakarta International Defence Dialogue after the two Indonesian marines were seen wearing badges reading Usman and Harun on what appeared to be 1960s-style uniforms, at the expo on Wednesday.

They were posed in front of a new warship KRI named Usman Harun.

Indonesian marines Usman Haji Mohamed Ali and Harun Said took part in the bombing of the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank building in Singapore in 1965, which killed three people and injured 33 others. They were hanged as terrorists in the city-state in 1968 for their role in the bombing. In Indonesia, they have been regarded as heroes who acted on an order by the government amid regional confrontation.

"The incident was very much regretted," the Indonesian Defence

Ministry said in a Press statement, referring to the two marines. He described it as counterproductive with the objective of multilateral defence dialogue.

Defence Minister Purnomo Yusgiantoro "has instructed related parties to investigate the perpetrators and the motive behind their action," it added.

On Thursday, the Singaporean Foreign Ministry expressed disappointment over the incident in a Press statement, saying the Singapore Air Force's delegation withdrew from the event after learning of the incident.

Last month, the Indonesian navy announced it

will receive three new British-made frigates this year and name one of them after the two marines who attacked the historical building, which is now known as MacDonald House. It then housed the Australian High Commission and the Japanese consulate.

The two marines had been ordered by Jakarta to infiltrate Singapore during Indonesia's confrontation with Malaysia in the 1960s, at which time Indonesian President Sukarno opposed the merger of Malaya, Sabah, Sarawak and Singapore into the Federation of Malaysia, which he viewed as a British puppet state.

Kyodo News

MYANMAR TV

(23-3-2014, Sunday)

- 6:00 am**
1. Paritta By Hilly Region Missionary Sayadaw
- 6:20 am**
2. Myitta Pawana By Mingun Sayadaw
- 7:00 am**
3. News/Weather Report
- 7:25 am**
4. MRTV's Youth Programme
- 8:30 am**
5. Amazing World
- 9:00 am**
6. News
- 10:20 am**
7. Teleplay
- 11:15 am**
8. Gitadagale Phwintbarohn
- 12:00 pm**
9. News/International News/Weather Report
- 12:40 pm**
10. Myanmar Movies
- 2:50 pm**
11. Musical Programme
- 3:00 pm**
12. News
- 3:20 pm**
13. Alinka Wat Yi Music Troupe
- 4:00 pm**
14. News
- 4:25 pm**
15. University of Distance Education (TV Lectures) - Second Year (Physiology)
- 5:00 pm**
16. News
- 5:15 pm**
17. Sing & Enjoy
- 6:00 pm**
18. News/Weather Report
- 6:20 pm**
19. Cartoon Series
- 8:00 pm**
20. News/International News/Weather Report
- 8:35 pm**
21. Documentary
- 9:00 pm**
22. News
- 23. Tamayethnar Takwetsar**

MYANMAR INTERNATIONAL

(23-3-14 07:00am~
24-3-14 07:00am) MST

- * Local News
- * Sittway, Evergreen Seaside Town
- * World News
- * Art Students: Sculpture
- * Local News
- * Pride of Myanmar - Bagan Arts and Handicrafts
- * World News
- * Inspiration
- * Local News
- * Me N My Travel (Min Gun)
- * World News
- * Distinguished Myanmar Lady "Kyin Po"
- * Local News
- * The Stories Of The Great Souls (U Pyae Son)
- * World News
- * Entrepreneur "Kalayar Pyi Wai Shan"
- * Local News
- * Great Shwedagon - The Prayer Halls And Buddha Images (Part-2)
- * World News
- * The Photographer: Kyaw Kyaw Winn
- * Local News
- * Tazaungmone
- * World News
- * [Doctor][Painter]
- * Local News
- * Walking Along Orchard Road
- * World News
- * Kyaikhteeyoe: Bamboo Guns
- * Local News
- * Flying Without Wings- My Great Limitless Adventure - Pakokku
- * World News
- * Distinguished Myanmar Ladies "Tin Moe Lwin"

Red Bull appeal to be heard on 14 April

MELBOURNE, 22 March — Red Bull's appeal against Daniel Ricciardo's exclusion from the season-opening Australian Grand Prix will be heard by Formula One's governing body on 14 April, the International Automobile Federation (FIA) said on Friday.

The date of the Paris hearing of the FIA's International Court of Appeal is the Monday before the Chinese Grand Prix, the fourth round of the season.

Ricciardo was disqualified from second place in his home race in Melbourne last Sunday after stewards ruled



Red Bull Formula One team driver Daniel Ricciardo of Australia talks to a member of his pit crew on the starting grid before the start of the Australian F1 Grand Prix at the Albert Park circuit in Melbourne on 16 March, 2014.

REUTERS

that the fuel flow rate in his car had not complied with the regulations. Red Bull, world champions for the last four years, had argued that the flow meter

provided by the governing body was inaccurate. Should the disqualification be upheld, it will mean McLaren's Danish rookie Kevin Magnussen and Jen-

son Button are confirmed as the second and third placed finishers behind Mercedes' race winner Nico Rosberg.

Reuters

Freiburg stun Bremen 3-1 in German Bundesliga

BERLIN, 22 March — Relegation threatened Freiburg earned vital points as they upset Bremen 3-1 to open the 26th round in Bundesliga on Friday.

Christian Streich's men reaped their second straight win to climb out of the bottom meanwhile unimaginative Bremen suffered their 11th loss of the season. It's Freiburg's first home soil victory over Bremen since July 2001.

The hosts took the reins from the start where-as Bremen were unable to gain a foothold into the match. Julian Schuster marked thus the deserved opener for the hosts when

he slotted home into the far post corner, as Bremen failed to clear the ball from their box at the 15th minute.

After the opener things became untidy as Bremen lacked in ideas and Freiburg seemed content with the lead.

Things changed with the restart as both sides tried to amend their performances. Yet it were Freiburg that doubled their lead due to the fact that Bremen practically posed no threat to the hosts defence. Felix Klaus slotted home Admir Mehmedi's square pass into the box at the 53rd minute.—Xinhua

Ayeyawady United FC finds win in MNL 2014



Goalkeeper of Zwegabin United FC misses chance to save the ball kicked by strikers of Ayeyawady United FC.—SHINE HTET ZAW

YANGON, 22 March— Myanmar National League 2014 continued with its 8th fixture at Aung San Stadium and Monywa

Ground.

In the match at Aung San Stadium, Ayeyawady United FC overcame the pressure of previous bad

results to secure a victory, beating Zwegabin United FC 4-1, it was their second win of the season. Previous matches against the

leading clubs Zeyar Shwe Myay and Kanbawza FC ended in draws, with the players not able to show off their skills today.

In the previous fixture Ayeyawady scored the opening goal with a header from striker Clifford. In the 34th minute, Zwegabin United missed an equalizing opportunity failing to convert a penalty. In the second half, Ayeyawady finished the job with three more goals from Sa Sa in the 55th minute, Min Min Thu in the 86th minute and Nay Lin Tun at the 90th. In 73rd minute, Thein Zaw scored a consolation goal for his side. The match ended 4-1 to Zwegabin.

At Monywa Ground, Kanbawza beat Zeyar Shwemyay 1-0 with a strike from centre forward Soe Min Oo.—By Nyi Nyi Soe Nyunt

Chelsea 6-0 Arsenal



German Striker Andre Schurrle celebrates with his teammates after scoring second goal for Chelsea against Arsenal at Stamford Bridge in London on 22 March.

LONDON, 22 March— Arsenal were two behind after seven minutes, with first Samuel Eto'o and then Andre Schurrle benefiting from clinical Chelsea counter-attacking. Eden Hazard's penalty after a Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain handball all but finished the match as a contest. Oscar scored twice before Mohamed Salah inflicted more pain on Arsenal. Substitute Salah's strike completed a miserable afternoon for the Gunners, who appeared to have the wrong player sent off when Kieran Gibbs was dismissed following Oxlade-Chamberlain's first-half handball.

It was Jose Mour-

inho's biggest Premier League victory as Chelsea manager and also the first time in Chelsea's history that they have scored six times against their London rivals. During a week in which Wenger has received much acclaim for his longevity and success, the Frenchman also prophetically remarked that every defeat left "a scar in your heart that you never forget". Wenger also went on to say there had been "much suffering" - as well as joy - since he joined Arsenal in 1996 and watching his team beaten so convincingly by the Premier League leaders, severely damaging their title hopes in the process, would have

caused the 64-year-old much pain.

The visitors were caught dilly-dallying in possession on too many occasions, leaving Chelsea's powerful midfield to steal the ball with ease and ruthlessly surge forward to get the better of a ragged Arsenal defence. The story could have been different had Petr Cech not dived low to save Olivier Giroud's stabbed effort from close range in the opening minutes. But the Frenchman failed to make the most of Tomas Rosicky's through ball and Chelsea counter-attacked through Andre Schurrle and Eden Hazard before the ball fell to Eto'o, who cut in to score

with his left boot.

Nemanja Matic then nicked the ball from the lacklustre Santi Cazorla and put Schurrle through and the German found the bottom left corner, just as Eto'o had done two minutes earlier. Wenger, disheartened in the dugout, threw a bottle of water on to the sidelines but the afternoon would soon get worse for him. Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain conceded a penalty for tipping Hazard's curling effort away with his fingertips. The Belgian scored from the spot but referee Andy Marriner wrongly sent off Kieran Gibbs, despite Oxlade-Chamberlain telling Marriner he was the culprit.



The sailing boats compete during the first day of racing at the 2014 Round Hainan International Regatta in Sanya, south China's Hainan Province, on 21 March, 2014.—XINHUA



Sales al sheikh (R) of Kuwait's Qadsia SC vies with Osama Omari of Syria's Al Wahda SC during their AFC Cup football match in Kuwait City on 21 March, 2014. The match ended with a 1-1 draw. XINHUA



Mexico's Janae Gonzalez (L) celebrates after scoring against China during the group D match at the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup at Alejandro Morera Stadium, in Alajuela, Costa Rica, on 19 March, 2014. Mexico won 4-0.—XINHUA

UEFA Champions League and Europa League Quarter-final draw

The draw for the last eight of the UEFA Champions League is: 1 & 9 April: FC Barcelona v Club Atlético de Madrid, Manchester United FC v Bayern München.

2 & 8 April: Real Madrid CF v Borussia Dortmund, Paris Saint-Germain v Chelsea FC.

The draw for the last eight of the UEFA Europa League is: AZ Alkmaar v SL Benfica, Olympique Lyonnais v Juventus, FC Basel 1893 v Valencia CF, FC Porto v Sevilla FC.