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President U Thein Sein sends messages of felicitations to the Netherlands

NAY PYI TAW, 28 April — U Thein Sein, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, has sent messages of felicitations to His Majesty King Willem-Alexander of the Netherlands and His Excellency Mr. Mark Rutte, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, on the occasion of the His Majesty's Birthday, which falls on 27 April 2015.—*MNA*

Regional leaders open 26th ASEAN Summit in Malaysia

*President U Thein Sein being welcomed by officials at 26th ASEAN Summit.—***IPRD**

KUALA LUMPUR, 27 April — President U Thein Sein and first lady Daw Khin Khin Win attended the opening ceremony of the 26th ASEAN Summit at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre here on Monday.

The event started at 9 am at the Plenary Hall of the KLCC with all 10 ASEAN Leaders in attendance, as well as ASEAN Secretary-General Le Luong Minh.

In his opening remarks, Malaysian Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said 2015 would be a milestone in the history of ASEAN, as the vision of creating a single community would be realized by year-end.

Mr Najib said, "This is ASEAN's time right here, right now. Let us work together to ensure that when we say an Asian Century, it is also ASEAN Century."

"Malaysia holds the privilege to serve as ASEAN Chairman once again in a decisive year for the organization.

"It is essential for the regional grouping to continue with the measures to establish the ASEAN Economic Community."

He stressed it was also imperative for the 10-member bloc to become more politically cohesive.

"Our potential, after all is huge," Mr Najib said. "We already have the third-largest workforce in the world. We have a largely youthful, talented and increasingly skilled population of over 600 million people."

Mr Najib said the burgeoning middle classes of ASEAN countries have made the region one of the world's most dynamic areas.

Regarding tax exercise, he emphasized barriers to trade would be removed, including the elimination of non-tariff

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Comparative legislation workshop held to enhance heritage protection

YANGON, 27 April — Yangon City Development Committee on Monday hosted a workshop on comparative legislation on Heritage Protection.

The workshop is a part of the Project on "Capacity building of YCDC Urban Planning Unit", which is a collaboration of European Union, YCDC and two local NGOs of the Yangon Heritage Trust and Myanmar Egress.

During the workshop, Elizabeth Vines, an expert of heritage protection, said, "There is a lot of heritage building still surviving in the city and a lot of consistence straight guide collection of these buildings and there is established really unique place in Yangon."

Experts also suggested the need of legislative protections on demolishing the heritage buildings and construction of modernized buildings near the ancient architecture designs.

The two-day workshop also includes a practical works at the heritage buildings around Maha Bandoola Road.

Myanmar ancient building have survived war, natural disaster, and numerous changes of ownership. While many of them have been repurposed over the years, the neglect and protection has included the biggest threat to these buildings, said a high court lawyer in Yangon.

According to the Yangon Heritage Trust (YHT), as much as 35% of downtown Yangon was destroyed between 1990 and 2011 to make way for new development projects. That's about 1,800 buildings.—*GNLM*

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More than 500,000 tourists forecast to visit Mandalay in 2015

MANDALAY, 27 April — Tourist arrivals in Mandalay City, the nation's cultural hub, are increasing year by year. More than 400,000 tourists visited Mandalay in 2014. Travel agencies and the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism predict a rise to more than 500,000 in 2015.

According to the Mandalay Region Immigration and National Registration Department, 464,577 foreign tourists visited from January to December 2014, marking an increase of 60,385 from the previous year. Most of the tourists came from China, South Korea and Japan, a tour guide said.

The top tourists attractions in the city include the Maha Muni Buddha Image, Mandalay Hill, Yankin Hill, Taungthaman Lake, Myanan Sankyaw Golden Palace, Golden monastery, ancient Inwa city, Kuthodaw Pagoda and Taungthaman Bridge.

Min Htet Aung (Mandalay Sub-printing House)

TODAY'S MYANMAR NEWS SITES

Immigration officers, NGO deliver citizenship scrutiny cards to residents

DAWEI, 27 April — Amyotha Hluttaw representative U Tin Maung Myint and staff officer U Maung Maung of Launglon Township Immigration and National Registration Department, together with Norwegian Refugee Council officials, recently visited Lower Kyaukwat and Kyaukmatat villages in Launglon Township, Taninthayi Region, to deliver citizenship scrutiny cards.

They issued 174 cards and 12 household registration on 25 and 26 April to local people in Lower Kyaukwat village, while delivering 18 cards and five household registrations in Kyaukmatat village.

Po Shwe Thun (Dawei)

Teak saplings marketable in Wuntho Township

WUNTHO, 27 April — Local residents have been contributing to environmental conservation by nurturing teak saplings for sale at commercial farms in Wuntho Township, Sagaing Region.

Local horticulturists paid K4,000 per basket of teak seeds from Pinlebu Township in 2013 to cultivate 20,000 saplings.

The horticulturists sold teak saplings for K800 in 2014. Agriculturists from Monywa and Nay Pyi Taw ordered the saplings in 2015. In light of purchase orders from entrepreneurs in Katha District, local farmers plan to increase teak sapling cultivation, according to a local resident.

Shwe Lin Pyae Sone

Dredging enables long-dry lake to store rainwater

BAGO, 27 April — After being dry for 30 years, Kanthaya Lake in Phayagyi Town, Bago Region, will store rainwater for use by local people after undergoing dredging. Town Administrator U Thiha Nay Thway and officials led local people in dredging the lake from 24 April.

Mudon Maung Maung Company helped the local people dredge the lake with the use of excavators to be able to store rainwater in the monsoon season.

Thiha Yazar (Phayagyi)

Authorities urge residents not to throw garbage into drains

YANGON, 27 April — Authorities are urging people not to throw garbage into drains, after accumulated waste blocked the Aung Chan Tha drain on Shin Saw Pu Road in Sangyoung Township.

The Township Development Affairs Committee has been supervising removal of garbage from the drain since the beginning of the month.

"If people abide by discipline elsewhere, the environment will be clean and pleasant," head of the Township Development Affairs Committee U Tin Oo said.

As Aung Chan Tha drain flows into the Hline River, which passes through Sangyoung, Ahlon and Kyimyindine townships, people must cooperate with departmental personnel in maintenance of the drain, an official said.

Workers of Township DACs are trying hard to clean the drains for proper flow of water through the coming rainy season.

Kyemon (597)

Regional leaders open . . .

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barriers, such as overly burdensome regulation that hampers free and fair trade.

After posing for group photos, ASEAN delegates watched Mr Najib launch GOASEAN, the first ASEAN-focused travel channel, with hologram presentations of iconic buildings in each ASEAN member country on the stage.

During the Plenary Session at Conference Hall 2 of KLCC, President U Thein Sein pledged Myanmar will fully cooperate in implementation of eight principles adopted by the rotating chairmanship of ASEAN in accordance with its slogan 'Our People, Our Vision, Our Community'.

U Thein Sein noted that member countries of the bloc need to implement ASEAN Beyond 2015 as per the Nay Pyi Taw Declaration, along with the Post-2015 Development Agenda of the United Nations.

ASEAN leaders then held separate discussions with representatives of the ASEAN Inter-Parliament Assembly, ASEAN Business Advisory Council, ASEAN Youth and social organizations.

President U Thein Sein left the capital for Langkawi where the 26th ASEAN Summit continued at 7 p.m. local time.

The closing ceremony of the two-day summit was held at the same venue with the Malaysian premier hosting a dinner for leaders and their spouses.

MNA

***President U Thein Sein poses for documentary photo with leaders of ASEAN countries.*—IPRD**

Parliamentary speaker visits Guangzhou

***Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann shakes hands with Wang Jiarui, the head of International Department of the Communist Party of China.*—MNA**

Guangzhou, 27 April — A Myanmar delegation led by Thura U Shwe Mann, the speaker of the Pyiduangsu Hluttaw and Pyithu Hluttaw, visited Canton Tower here on the evening of April 25.

From Asia's third-highest tower, at 118 storeys and 600 metres height, Thura U Shwe Mann and the visiting Myanmar delegation looked at the aerial view of Guangzhou, the capital and largest city of Guangdong province in South China.

On April 26, the Myanmar delegation visited Leafun Hi-Tech Company in the provincial capital.

Thura U Shwe Mann left Guangzhou for Beijing where Myanmar ambassador and diplomats welcomed the speaker who later stayed at the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse in the capital.

The speaker also held talks with Wang Jiarui, the head of the International Department of the Communist Party of China, at 6 p.m. on April 26 at the guesthouse concerning bilateral relations between the two countries.

MNA

UEC allows registration of political party

Nay Pyi Taw, 27 April — The Union Election Commission allowed registration of Danu Nationals League Party, headquartered at the residence of U Tin Maung Oo, No. I/348 on Thitsa Street in southern Saytan Ward, Ywangan, Shan State, under Section 9 of the Political Parties Registration Law on 27 April. Its registration number is 81.—*MNA*

Union FM sends message of felicitations to the Netherlands

Nay Pyi Taw, 28 April — U Wunna Maung Lwin, Union Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, has sent a message of felicitations to His Excellency Mr. Albert Gerard Koenders, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, on the occasion of the Birthday of His Majesty King Willem-Alexander, which falls on 27 April 2015.—*MNA*

KBZ Bank receives prize at regional financial sector awards

Hong Kong, 27 April — Myanmar's Kanbawza Bank Ltd recently received a regional award in recognition of its implementation of a new electronic banking system at a ceremony in Hong Kong.

Singapore-based finance industry publisher The Asian Banker presented its Best Core Banking Implementation for Emerging Banks award 2015 to KBZ Bank and its partner Oracle Financial Services Software at Hong Kong's Convention and Exhibition Centre in Hong Kong on 15 April.

The publisher lauded KBZ Bank's implementation of the Oracle Flexcube Core Banking System. KBZ Bank previously won Best Core Banking System Initiative of the Year in Myanmar 2014 awarded by Singapore-based Asian Banking and Finance in 2014.—*MNA*

An official of KBZ Ltd accepts award in Hong Kong.

Department of Agriculture introduces six new paddy species to farmers

KUNGYANGON, 27 April — The Department of Agriculture introduced six new paddy species to local farmers in Kamapa village in Kungyangon Township, Yangon, on 21 April.

The Plant Bio-Technology Centre of the Department of Agriculture produced the new species. Head of the centre Dr Pa Pa Aung spoke about research to cultivate the Paw Hsan Hmwe paddy species in any season.

Deputy Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation, U Ohn Than told officials to submit the new paddy species to the seed committee and distribute them to farmers as soon as possible.—*Soe Win (Kyauktan)*

Local residents receive citizenship scrutiny cards

TAUNGTHA, 27 April— Under the Special Moe Pwint Project of the Ministry of Immigration and Population, a ceremony to deliver citizenship scrutiny cards to local people was held at the hall of Basic Education Middle School Branch in Nanmyint Village in Taungtha Township, Mandalay Region, on 25 April.

Staff of the Township Immigration and National Registration Department led by Staff Officer U Kyaw Kyaw Khaing prepared the issuing of the cards.

Mandalay Region Minister for Security and Border Affairs Col Aung Kyaw Moe, Myingyan District's deputy commissioner U Myint Thin Aung and Head of Myingyan District INRD U Sein Myint presented cards to 108 people in Nanmyint village and 75 in Phayahla village.

Kyaw Myo Naing (Taungtha)

Residents work to upgrade road before monsoon

YEDASHE, 27 April — Villagers have helped upgrade the Yedashe-Myethnapyin rural road in Yedashe Township, Bago Region, ahead of the rainy season.

"Local people including students faced difficulties in using an earthen road. So, local residents contributed K3.2 million to buying gravel to be placed on the road," a resident said.

The local residents from villages on both banks of the Sittoung River mainly use the earthen road. However, they still require financial and technological assistance to complete the roadworks.

Ko Lwin (Swa)

Taninthayi Region Real Estate Service Association meets

DAWEI, 27 April—The Taninthayi Region Real Estate Service Association held an annual general meeting in Dawei on 26 April, with a speech by Region Minister for Finance U Than Aung.

Chairman of Taninthayi Region Chambers of Commerce and Industry U Ye Htut Naing, Daw Maw Maw Tun of Myanmar Real Estate Service Association and Chairman of the region association U Swan Shein spoke about the roles of their respective associations.

Secretary of the region association U Soe Thein submitted the annual report of the association while treasurer Dr Yin Yin Tun read out the financial report.

Po Shwe Thun (Dawei)

Teachers undergo additional training

NAY PYI TAW, 27 April — The basic primary teacher training course was conducted at Basic Education High School in Kyidaunggan Village, Pobbathiri Township, on 27 April.

Ottara District Education Officer U Tha Tun and Township Education Officer U Hla Thaung spoke at the course.

A total of 89 trainees will attend the course until 26 May.

Shwe Ye Yint

Cargo train derails on Mandalay-Myitkyina railroad section

MANDALAY, 27 April— No 934 Mandalay-Myitkyina cargo train derailed between Bonchaung and Mezar stations in Sagaing Region at 11 a.m. on 21 April.

There was no casualty of passengers and train crew. Officials of Naba and Namkham stations repaired the rail trucks. As of 5.30 p.m., the trains run the railroad as usual.

Shwe Lin Pyae Sone

Thai parties receive charter for review, unable to debate it

BANGKOK, 27 April — Thailand's draft constitution went to political parties for review on Monday, but there's a catch — they are forbidden by the junta from meeting to debate the charter.

The National Reform Council (NRC) completed a week-long debate on the charter on Sunday, before drafters sent the text to the cabinet, the junta and political parties for their feedback.

Thailand has been divided for a decade between supporters of ousted former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra and the Bangkok-based royalist-military establishment, which reviled Thaksin's popularity.

The military seized power on 22 May after months of street protests aimed at ousting Thaksin's sister, then-Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra.

The charter, Thailand's 20th since 1932, was written by a 36-member Constitution Drafting Committee appointed by the junta.

Since the coup, the National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO), as the junta calls itself, has kept a tight lid on dissent and political activity, including party meetings.

"If they really want views from political parties then the NCPO should lift or relax rules for parties to hold meetings," Chamni Sakdiset, deputy leader of the conservative Democrat party, told Reuters.

"The NCPO's order still is — 'no meetings'," he said. "They would only get views from the party leader or party secretary-generals and not from all members of a party."

Yingluck's Pheu Thai party echoed its rival's call to lift the ban on meetings to discuss the charter.

"It would be a good thing to gather views from everyone in the party," Chavalit Vichayasut, acting deputy secretary-general of the party, said.

General Lertrat Rattanvanich, a spokesman for the Constitution Drafting Committee, said there was no need for parties to meet as they had been airing their opinions on the constitution in the media.

The drafters say they hope the charter would guard against "parliamentary dictatorship," but critics say it will weaken political parties and usher in a period of short-lived coalition governments.

The most controversial provisions allow for an unelected prime minister and establish a proportional representation electoral system.

The power of senators, two-thirds of whom would be appointed rather than elected, was another contentious issue, Alongkorn Polbutr, a member of the NRC, told *Reuters* on Monday.

The charter will be returned to drafters with feedback for possible revision on 25 May. The text must be endorsed by Thailand's king by September if a general election promised for early 2016 is to take place.

Reuters

China opens consulate office in Malaysia's Sabah state

KUALA LUMPUR, 27 April — China on Monday officially opened a consulate office in Malaysia's resort city of Kota Kinabalu, the capital of Sabah state on North Borneo.

China's Ambassador to Malaysia Huang Huikang, who announce the opening on behalf of the Chinese government, said the consulate in Kota Kinabalu represents the fast development of bilateral relationship between China and Malaysia, as well as China's commitment to all-around cooperation with Malaysia.

China's Consul-General in Kota Kinabalu Chen Peijie said the consulate will be committed to closer cooperation between China and Thailand's Sabah state.

Sabah, famous for its beach and rain forests, has become a main attraction for Chinese tourists in recent years.

Xinhua

Nuclear power still cheaper than other power sources

TOKYO, 27 April — Despite rising safety costs following the 2011 Fukushima meltdowns, nuclear power generation is still cheaper than other electricity sources such as fossil fuels, wind and solar energy, the industry ministry said on Monday. The ministry will present a proposal for the country's best energy mix on Tuesday based on the estimate and other factors. Sources have said Japan aims to set the ratio of nuclear power generation to total electricity production in 2030 at 20 percent to 22 percent, although antinuclear activists have called for further lowering the percentage from 28.6 percent in fiscal 2010. According to the latest estimate of power generation costs unveiled by the ministry, nuclear power would cost 10.1 yen per kilowatt-hour in 2030. The figure was raised from 8.9 yen projected in 2011, taking into account the huge expenses needed for power companies to boost the safety of nuclear plants under the more stringent post-Fukushima regulations introduced in 2013.

But that is cheaper than the 12.9 yen for coal-fired power generation, up to 16.4 yen for solar, and up to 33.1 yen for wind, said the ministry, maintaining the view that nuclear power is still competitive.

The government of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has pledged to lower the country's dependence on nuclear power and promote renewable energy as much as possible following the March 2011 nuclear crisis.

At the same time, however, it is striving to restart nuclear reactors that have met the new regulations, saying stable energy supply is vital for economic growth. The majority of the public remain opposed to restarting the country's nuclear reactors that had gone offline by the end of September 2013.

The ministry said additional safety measures required to operate a nuclear reactor would cost an average of 60.1 billion yen, while costs for plant decommissioning and compensation payments in the event of a severe accident would jump to 9.1 trillion yen from 5.8 trillion yen estimated in 2011, reflecting costs for the Fukushima accident.—*Kyodo News*

ADB to provide $3 mil grant to Nepal as immediate earthquake relief

MANILA, 27 April — The Asian Development Bank said on Monday it will provide a $3 million grant to Nepal to meet immediate humanitarian needs such as for tents, medical assistance, food and drinking water in earthquake-hit areas.

ADB President Takehiko Nakao said in a statement that the bank will provide up to $200 million in additional resources for projects in the first phase of rehabilitation.

Nepal was hit by a massive earthquake on Saturday that has killed more than 3,300 people and caused widespread property destruction.

"ADB stands together with the people of Nepal and the government at this challenging time," Nakao said in a letter of condolence to Nepal's Prime Minister Sushil Koirala.

An ADB statement said the bank has established a Nepal earthquake response team and will join UN agencies and other development partners to assess the damage and the long-term investment needs in Nepal for reconstruction and rehabilitation.

The ADB, based in Manila, has around $2 billion in ongoing projects in Nepal and provided $350 million in financial assistance to the country in 2014.—*Kyodo News*

Photo taken on 26 April, 2015, in Kathmandu shows a historic building that was partly destroyed by an aftershock following the magnitude 7.8 earthquake that struck Nepal on 25 April. The guard held back people.—KYODO NEWS

Quake death toll in Nepal tops 3,200 as relief aid pours in

KATHMANDU, 27 April — The confirmed death toll in Nepal from a magnitude 7.8 earthquake that struck on Saturday topped 3,200 on Monday and is expected to rise considerably, according to reports from Kathmandu.

Dozens more people have also been reportedly killed in neighbouring India, China and Bangladesh.

As the Nepalese government continues its search-and-rescue activities, relief aid has begun arriving in the capital, but access to badly hit remote areas is said to be extremely difficult.

The earthquake was particularly brutal to densely populated Kathmandu and its neighbouring Lalitpur and Bhaktapur districts where many centuries-old temples and monuments were flattened. More than 1,000 people died in these areas alone. In Kathmandu, the destruction of Basantapur Durbar Square and the 61-metre Dharahara tower were the starkest reminders of the quake's ferocity. Saturday's quake was the biggest Nepal has experienced since 1934 when a magnitude 8.2 quake killed over 10,000 people in Nepal and India's Bihar state.—*Kyodo News*

UNICEF says nearly a million children "severely affected" in Nepal

MUMBAI, 27 April — Nearly a million children have been "severely affected" by a severe earthquake in Nepal that has killed more than 3,200 people, a spokesman for the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) said, as rescue and aid workers struggle to cope.

With hundreds of thousands of Nepalis sleeping out in tents or in the open, UNICEF said its relief workers were watching for waterborne and infectious diseases.

"What we know that at this point is there are nearly a million children who are severely affected. Our biggest concern for them right now is going to be access to clean water and sanitation, we know that water and food is running out," UNICEF's Christopher Tidey said by telephone.

A total of 3,218 people were confirmed killed in Saturday's 7.9 magnitude quake, a police official said on Monday, the worst in Nepal since 1934 when 8,500 died. More than 6,500 were injured.

Reuters

Japan, US to revise defence cooperation guidelines amid security challenges

New York, 27 April — Japan and the United States are set to issue their revised defence cooperation guidelines when their defence and foreign ministers meet on Monday in New York for security talks, with the two allies likely to agree on how to deal with the changing regional security environment.

The first updating of the guidelines in 18 years will be finalized during the "two-plus-two" meeting in New York involving Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida and Defence Minister Gen Nakatani and their US counterparts — Secretary of State John Kerry and Defence Secretary Ashton Carter.

The four are expected to discuss ways to strengthen their bilateral alliance through the Japanese Self-Defence Forces' greater cooperation with the US military by getting rid of geographical constraints for SDF activities and ensuring their forces can deal with the changing security environment in a "seamless" manner from peacetime to contingencies.

The revision comes at a time when Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe is trying to loosen the constitutional constraints on the SDF's operations overseas.

The updating of the 1997 guidelines — which were designed to prepare for contingencies in the Korean Peninsula — comes amid China's increasing assertiveness at sea and in the air and Abe's push for his policy of making "proactive" contributions to global peace and giving SDF troops a greater security role abroad.

In the previous two-plus-two meeting in October 2013 in Tokyo, Japan and the United States agreed to revise the guidelines, which set the roles and missions of the SDF and US military.

Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (R) shakes hands with US Secretary of State John Kerry in front of Kerry's private residence in Boston on 26 April, 2015. During an eight-day official visit, Abe will hold talks with President Barack Obama and deliver a speech to a joint session of Congress, the first Japanese prime minister to do so.—Kyodo News

Last October, the two allies issued an interim report saying the envisaged new guidelines will reflect the Japanese Cabinet's landmark decision last July to reinterpret the war-renouncing Constitution to enable the use of collective self-defence, or defending an ally even when Japan is not under attack.

In what will constitute the exercise of the right to collective self-defence, the new guidelines are expected to refer to Japan-US cooperation in minesweeping operations in international sea lanes in the absence of a ceasefire agreement, sources close to Japan-US relations said, with the Strait of Hormuz in the Middle East seen as a possible area of operation.

With China's repeated incursions in Japanese territorial waters near the Senkaku Islands since the Japanese government purchased a major part of the Senkakus from a private Japanese owner in 2012, Tokyo was apparently keen to put the defence of remote islands into writing, the sources said.

China also claims the Senkakus which it calls Diaoyu.

Tokyo and Washington will also boost their cooperation in dealing with emerging security threats in space and cyberspace, which are new areas not covered under the 1997 guidelines.

The defence chiefs of Japan and the United States have said they will look into setting up a working-level group to bolster space cooperation.

Kyodo News

Prosecutors question Obuchi over suspected political fund misuse

Tokyo, 27 April — Prosecutors have questioned former industry minister Yuko Obuchi on a voluntary basis over suspected misuse of political funds linked to the former rising star of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's Cabinet, sources close to the matter said on Monday.

Obuchi, 41, resigned last October to take responsibility for the money scandal that involved her former secretary. In quitting, she admitted that a great deal of suspicion remains over her financial reports, but denied that she had been aware of it.

Fund reports of four political groups related to Obuchi have shown that expenses for outings to theaters and baseball games to entertain her supporters between 2008 and 2013 exceeded money booked as received from participants by more than 60 million yen ($505,000).

That suggests Obuchi shouldered the expenses in violation of the election law, which bans politicians from providing benefits to voters.

In addition, no outlays or income were reported for a 2012 theater visit, a possible breach of the political funds law.

Undated photo shows Yuko Obuchi, who resigned as minister of economy, trade and industry in October 2014 to take responsibility for the alleged misuse of political funds. Prosecutors have questioned the daughter of the late Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi on a voluntary basis over the scandal, sources close to the matter said on 27 April, 2015.
Kyodo News

The Tokyo District Public Prosecutors Office's special investigative arm is expected to judge soon whether Obuchi should be held criminally responsible.

Last October, the prosecutors searched the home of Kenichiro Orita, Obuchi's former secretary who claims to have prepared her funds reports, as it formally began investigating the matter.

The sources also said on Monday that Obuchi's political fund-management body has allegedly made false donations to other political groups, in another possible violation of the law regulating such funds.

A report by the management body, headed by Obuchi, shows it donated a total of 66 million yen to two political groups, both linked to her, between 2008 and 2013. But suspicion has emerged that part of the transfer was not conducted as reported, the sources said.

Obuchi — daughter of former Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi who was being groomed as a possible future leader — was among five female members of Abe's second Cabinet. But she quit in less than two months after taking office in a blow to the premier's policy of promoting women's empowerment.

Kyodo News

Freak storm kills 45 in Pakistan

Peshawar, (Pakistan), 27 April — A freak "mini-cyclone" tore roofs of buildings and brought down trees and power poles in Pakistan, killing 45 people and injuring more than 200, officials said on Monday.

Army teams were on their way to the area of Peshawar city to help with the rescue, a military spokesman said.

"We've never experienced such a devastating wind storm before in this region," said Mushtaq Shah, director general of the Meteorological Office in Peshawar.

"Its speed in the open was more than 120 kph (75 mph) and that's what caused destruction on such a large scale.

It's a completely new phenomenon in this region." The wind, accompanied by heavy rain and hail late on Sunday, disrupted power supplies and telecommunications services and damaged infrastructure and crops, said district official Riaz Mehsud.

The injured overwhelmed Peshawar's main Lady Reading Hospital, a spokesman said.

Heavy weather on Monday forced the Pakistani military to cancel two flights to Nepal taking supplies to survivors of Saturday's earthquake.

They were rescheduled to Tuesday.

Reuters

S Korea approves supply of 15 tons of fertilizer to N Korea

Seoul, 27 April — South Korea has approved a request by a private organization to supply 15 tons of fertilizer to North Korea, for the first time in about five years, the government said on Monday.

The Unification Ministry said a seven-member group of officials from Ace KyungAhm will cross the border on Tuesday to make a five-day visit to Sariwon in North Hwanghae Province to deliver the fertilizer aid and other materials like vinyl and pipes for use in a project to create greenhouses.

"The South Korean government will continue to approve requests to provide aid on humanitarian grounds for agricultural, livestock and forestry sectors of North Korea if such aid helps North Korean people and distribution of materials is transparent," a spokesman of the ministry told reporters.

The government's approval of the fertilizer provision to North Korea is the first such case since the South Korean government imposed a ban on large-scale aid to the North as part of punitive measures following the sinking of a South Korean warship in 2010, blamed to a North Korean torpedo attack.

North Korea's strongly denied its involvement in the incident which claimed the lives of 46 South Korean sailors.

Kyodo News

German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras go to shake hands after addressing a news conference at the Chancellery in Berlin on 23 March, 2015. REUTERS

Merkel-Tsipras phone call confirmed amid cash squeeze report

BERLIN, 27 April — A German government spokesman confirmed on Monday that Chancellor Angela Merkel and Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras had a telephone conversation on Sunday but declined to comment on the contents of their conversation.

"I can confirm the conversation took place," a spokesman said.

Bild newspaper reported on Monday that Tsipras had called Merkel as well as Euro group head Jeroen Dijsselbloem to try to convince them of the need for more help for Greece and for the need for an emergency meeting of EU leaders this week.

Bild said the reason for the call is that the Greek government has run out of money. The newspaper quoted an EU diplomat saying: "It's on fire and there's no water there to put out the fire. The situation is more than dramatic."

German government spokesman confirmed Tsipras-Merkel phone call on Sunday evening, however, no comment was issued on content of talks. —*Reuters*

Leftist Akinci wins north Cyprus election, seeking peace deal

Turkish Cypriot leadership candidate Mustafa Akinci and his wife Meral Akinci walk outside a polling stastion at an elementary school in northern Nicosia on 26 April, 2015.—REUTERS

NICOSIA, 27 April — A leftist moderate promising to press for a peace deal in ethnically-split Cyprus swept to victory in a Turkish Cypriot presidential election runoff on Sunday.

Mustafa Akinci, standing as an independent, won 60.3 percent of the votes, according to figures provided by the election commission. His rival was incumbent president Dervis Eroglu, a conservative elected five years ago.

Akinci, 67, has said he would work with fresh urgency to find a peace deal on Cyprus, split in a 1974 Turkish invasion that was triggered by a short-lived Greek-inspired coup aimed at union with Greece.

Peace talks were suspended last October, when Greek Cypriots walked out of the process in a row with Turkey over natural gas exploration off the island.

Cyprus is represented internationally and in the European Union by the Greek Cypriot government that controls the southern portion of the island. The northern Cyprus state is recognised only by Turkey and subject to international sanctions.

Speaking to *Reuters* on Saturday, Akinci said natural gas finds in the eastern Mediterranean represented a "new dynamic" that could benefit countries in the region, and that confidence-building measures were needed between the two sides. "There is a possibility for all sides to win," he said. Cyprus's lingering division is a source of tension between NATO allies Greece and Turkey and also weighs on Turkish relations with the European Union, where Greek Cypriots represent the entire island.

"We've suffered a lot in the past. We don't want our children to suffer as well," said Huseyin Sefketoglu, 80, as he cast his vote on Sunday.

Reunification talks have limped on for years, leaving Turkish Cypriots in political isolation and tens of thousands of Cypriots on both sides internally displaced.

The United Nations says it expects talks to restart next month on the island, a British colony until 1960, after a six-month hiatus.

Reuters

Kerry, Iran's Zarif to meet at UN anti-nuclear arms conference

UNITED NATIONS, 27 April — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif will meet US Secretary of State John Kerry at the opening of a UN conference on the global anti-nuclear weapons treaty on Monday, as they try to make progress in talks on a long-term atomic deal.

Iran's top diplomat will be the first state party to the 1970 nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty to address its 190 signatories at the United Nations headquarters in New York on behalf of 118 non-aligned nations that have signed the NPT, the world's benchmark disarmament pact.

Zarif and Kerry will meet on the sidelines to discuss negotiations on a landmark nuclear deal with the United States and five other global powers as they try to secure a final agreement with Iran by a 30 June deadline.

In a tentative deal reached on 2 April in Lausanne, Switzerland, between Iran and the six powers, Teheran, which denies seeking nuclear weapons, agreed to curb sensitive nuclear work for at least a decade in exchange for ending sanctions that have crippled its economy.

Diplomats need to iron out details about the timing of sanctions relief, the future of Iran's atomic research and development programme, the exact nature of the IAEA's monitoring regime and what kind of uranium stockpiles Teheran will be allowed to keep under any final accord.

Sanctions are proving to be one of the biggest hurdles at the moment.

Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has said all sanctions, including the most severe restrictions on its energy and financial sectors, should be lifted the moment a deal is signed. Western officials say that this is not what Teheran agreed to in Lausanne. At that meeting, Zarif and European Union foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini read a joint statement that said the implementation of sanctions would be halted "simultaneously with the IAEA-verified implementation by Iran of its key nuclear commitments."

US Secretary of State John Kerry (L) and Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif pose for a photograph before resuming talks over Iran's nuclear programme in Lausanne on 16 March, 2015. REUTERS

Western officials say that means sanctions will be lifted only after the IAEA verifies compliance.

A senior Iranian negotiator said last week that the latest round of nuclear talks in Vienna between Iran and the six powers made good progress.

US Republican senators have pledged to try to toughen a bill giving Congress the power to review a nuclear agreement with Iran, a move that could further complicate the talks. During this month's NPT meeting, Austria is leading an initiative to ban nuclear weapons due to the immense humanitarian suffering they cause. Over 70 countries are backing it.

Israel, which opposes the nuclear deal with Iran, will be attending the conference as an observer for the first time since 1995 as it eyes closer ties with Arabs, who also fear Teheran's nuclear ambitions.

Israel is widely believed to have the Middle East's only nuclear arsenal. Like nuclear-armed India and Pakistan, Israel is not a signatory to the NPT. North Korea, which signed but later withdrew from the NPT, has tested nuclear devices.

Reuters

Israel issues tenders for 77 settler homes in East Jerusalem

JERUSALEM, 27 April — Israel has issued tenders for the construction of 77 housing units in Jewish settlement neighbourhoods in East Jerusalem, settlement watchdog Peace Now said on Monday.

The tenders, published on Sunday by the Ministry of Housing and Construction, invited bids for building 41 housing units at Pisgat Ze'ev and 36 others at Neve Ya'akov. Hagit Ofran, Peace Now director, said that this was the first such announcement in East Jerusalem since the 17 March parliamentary elections.

"The fact that the tenders for East Jerusalem are published during Prime Minister Netanyahu's interim government could signal us what would happen when the new government would be formed," Ofran said.

"Netanyahu is continuing his election strategy and settlement policy that aims to prevent the possibility of peace and the two-state solution," she added.

The move came amidst soaring tensions between Israelis and Palestinians in Jerusalem over access to the al-Aqsa mosque compound, or the Temple Mount, a holy site to both Muslims and Jews.

Israel seized Jerusalem and the West Bank in the 1967 Mideast war and has controlled it ever since. The settlements are illegal under international law. Several rounds of peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians reached a deadlock over the continued construction in the settlements.—*Xinhua*

PERSPECTIVES

Tuesday, 28 April, 2015

How should maturity be measured?

By *Myint Win Thein*

Maturity is the quality of thinking and behaving in a sensible, adult manner, according to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary. Some scholars also define it from the perspectives of their respective disciplines. As it is can be defined differently, how to measure it may be a matter of dispute.

Generally speaking, we grow from a baby to an adult. As we grow old we drop some of our behaviours and adopt new ones. At first, we depend on our parent for everything. Before we develop the faculty of speech, they must gauge our feelings without us telling them. They have to think whether we are hungry, thirsty, sleepy or sick. Even when we learn to speak, they still have to find out what we want, since we still lack the ability to clearly express ourselves.

As we grow or mature year by year, we gradually reduce the burden we place on our parents, performing more and more tasks for ourselves. They no longer need to feed us. They no longer need to make our beds. Eventually, they no longer need to support our education and living. We no longer depend on our parents and even repay the gratitude we owe to them.

Similarly, we depend on our society for our lives, too. As we grow old and attain maturity, we try not to depend on society, reducing our burden upon it and even trying to contribute back to it. This is the process all mature human beings undergo in our society. In our society today, many people talk about maturity but only a few of them understand how to measure it. As a result, some people continue to burden society and fail to contribute to it.

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

Thinking in Advance for Better Tomorrow

Water Scarcity and Water Security

By *San Shwe Aung*

We human being will not survive without drinking any water in a day. Scientists say human body itself contains 75% of water. There is a Myanmar saying that "One human life span is only half a day without water and seven days without food".

Imagine your body as a container. If you were to take all of the water in your body and store it together, the water level would be at your shoulders as the illustration shows.

That's right — almost 75% of the human body is water!

- Blood is 83% water
- Muscles are 75% water
- The brain is 95% water
- Lungs are 90% water

Actually, that might seem like a lot of water, but the truth is, we're made up this way naturally. Therefore it is very evident and certain that why we can survive many days without food, but we can't survive without drinking water? On the other hand water can be very dangerous if a person consumes a contaminated drinking water. Drinking water has to be free from disease causing gems at all time, especially for the babies and under five children whose immune system and body resistance to expel the diseases particularly diarrhea disease, are weak. Water, particularly fresh water, is a finite resource we have been endowed with by mother earth. Theoretically, although hydrological cycle in our earth generally maintains the quantity of fresh water, due to human interventions, such as industrial waste water and emission of pollutants, over usage of chemical in agricultural and food production, fresh water rivers, ground water sources and even rain water (acid rain in some part of the world) are contaminated and cannot be consumed by the people without expensive water treatments. Seasonal fluctuation of fresh water sources due to global warming is another problem faced by the people in many parts of the world. When the summer sets in, it has been not unusual to see news of water shortages in the villages and towns of our country. People queuing with their buckets and pots at the water sources such as ponds and hand pumps are more and more happening as the summer heat and temperature increase. Just across the Yangon river, 30 minutes by ferry, many families in Dala town and nearby villages face water shortage in the dry season annually. News of water scarcity in Ayeyawady Region has appeared in local news few days ago. Villages in southern part of Ayeyawady Region are mostly surrounded by rivers with sea water, where fresh water can be obtained only by collecting rain water in the man-made ponds. In most villages shallow and deep groundwater is saline and not drinkable. Once the ponds dry up in the summer, it is extremely difficult for the communities to get fresh water. It is a vicious cycle of facing water shortages in many villages in our country during the summer, which lasts more than 4 months a year. Once rain starts to fall, people are happy to collect rain water and at the same time water storage tanks and ponds are getting filled with rain water day by day. And everybody forgets about water shortages and scarcity faced during summer, when people suffer difficulties as well as water (scarcity) related diseases. The worst affected region in our country is central Myanmar or Dry Zone, where annual rain fall is very low. We face annual water scarcity in many parts of the nation. Well wishers, as usual, are not hesitant to donate water to the needy people, living near and far off, using trucks, water bowsers and boats. Donation of water brings 10 merits without wishful praying, believed by the majority Buddhist people of Myanmar. Although not able to cover all affected villages with water shortage, many citizens will come forward to donate cash and in kind to provide drinking water to the vulnerable people.

Talking of graveness about water scarcity in many parts of our country during the dry season will be a never ending story. It is a fact that fresh water resources are gradually depleting not only in our country but in many parts of the world including our neighboring countries. River systems are natural occurring and do not limit themselves within the geographical and man-made borders of the countries. Many rivers in the world originate from one country and flow into other countries. In world history there have been conflicts due to unfair sharing and utilization of river water among the countries and peoples. We need to keep the catchment area, forest and natural habitat flourishing in order not to disturb the natural process of river basins. Deforestation in the catchment areas of river basin and natural lakes must be avoided. Pollution of water sources and air must be controlled and reduced to keep the natural balance of hydrological systems and avoid acid rains. Regional and international efforts are made through UN and other forums. Nevertheless, we need to develop own national policies, strategies, frameworks and action plans how to make our fresh water resources sustainable and supply the whole year round adequately to our citizens regardless of living in the urban, rural and remote villages.

What is Water Security?

"Water security is defined as the capacity of a population to safeguard sustainable access to adequate quantities of acceptable quality water for sustaining livelihoods, human well-being, and socio-economic development, for ensuring protection against water-borne pollution and water-related disasters, and for preserving ecosystems in a climate of peace and political stability. This definition implies that water is managed sustainably throughout the water cycle and is done so through an inter-disciplinary focus, so that it contributes to socio-economic development and reinforces societal resilience to environmental impacts and water-borne diseases without compromising the present and future health of populations and ecosystems. Achieving water security requires allocation among users to be fair, efficient and transparent; that water to satisfy basic human needs is accessible to all at an affordable cost to the user; that water throughout the water cycle is collected and treated to prevent pollution and disease; and that fair, accessible and effective mechanisms exist to manage or address disputes or conflicts that may arise. The concept operates at all levels, from individual, household and community, to local, sub-national, national, regional and international settings, and takes into account the variability of water availability over time." That was the definition by the UN-Water Task Force on Water Security worldwide in 2013, which was designated as UN International Year of Water Cooperation. Key aspects of water security are as follow.

- Access to safe and sufficient drinking water at an affordable cost in order to meet basic needs, which includes sanitation and hygiene and the safeguarding of health and well-being;
- Protection of livelihoods, human rights, and cultural and recreational values;
- Preservation and protection of ecosystems in water allocation and management systems in order to maintain their ability to deliver and sustain the functioning of essential ecosystem services;
- Water supplies for socio-economic development and activities (such as energy, transport, industry, tourism);
- Collection and treatment of used water to protect human life and the environment from pollution;
- Collaborative approaches to trans boundary water resources management within and between countries to promote freshwater sustainability and cooperation;
- The ability to cope with uncertainties and risks of water-related hazards, such as floods, droughts and pollution, among others; and,
- Good governance and accountability, and the due consideration of the interests of all stakeholders through: appropriate and effective legal regimes; transparent, participatory and accountable institutions; properly planned, operated and maintained infrastructure; and capacity development

(See page 9)

President's wife attends social business forum in Malaysia

***President U Thein Sein's wife Daw Khin Khin Win poses for documentary photo with wives of leaders of ASEAN countries at Forum for Spouses of ASEAN Heads of State/Government Empowerment through Social Business.*—IPRD**

NAY PYI TAW, 27 April — President U Thein Sein's wife Daw Khin Khin Win attended the Forum for Spouses of ASEAN Heads of State/Government Empowerment through Social Business Monday at the Plenary Theatre of the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre in Malaysia.

The visiting first lady witnessed the opening remarks of Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor, the wife of the Malaysian prime minister, and talk by Lamiya Morshed, executive director at Bangladesh's Yunus Centre.

At the forum, Parveen Mahmad, director general of Bangladesh's Telecom Trust, gave a speech on socioeconomics, policies and finance.—*MNA*

Illegal drugs worth about K 2.77 billion seized in Laukkai

NAY PYI TAW, 27 April—Tatmadaw columns, in addition to performing security duties, have been combating drug trafficking alongside members of the Myanmar Police Force.

In a surprised check at an apartment building near a children's skating rink to the west of Lower Market in Ward-2 in Laukkai on 25 April, members of the Tatmadaw and the MPF seized half a kilogram of methamphetamine, or "Ice", worth about K10 million, 174,000 stimulant tablets bearing the letters "WY" and worth over K 2.6 billion, 0.3 kg of red-brown stimulant powder worth K 6 million and 0.2 gram of heroin from 21 men and 2 women.

The accused were handed over to authorities.—*Myawady*

***21 men and two women arrested for seizures of narcotic drugs at Lower Market in Ward-2 in Laukkai.*—MYAWADY**

MSF meets survivors and victims' families in sinking of MV Dalniy Vostok

YANGON, 27 April—Representatives of the Myanmar Seafarers Federation met Monday with survivors from the MV Dalniy Vostok, which sank in Russia's Okhutsk Sea on 1 April, as well as family members of sailors who lost their lives.

At Yangon's Yuzana Hotel, the chairman and a vice chairman of the federation expressed sympathy to the sailors and families before explaining claims procedures for compensation and insurance.

Police Captain Myo Thein spoke about human trafficking before the survivors and families of shipwreck victims filed their claims.

The federation promised to ensure all entitlements are received as soon as possible.

Ministry of Transport News Team

Water Scarcity and Water ...

(from page 8)

Three Factors Driving Water Scarcity

Throughout much of the world (1) an unprecedented rise in the demand for food as population grows, (2) rapid urbanization and (3) climate change are the drivers of increasing water scarcity. "If we fail today to make water an instrument of peace, it might become tomorrow a major source of conflict," warns UNESCO director-general Irina Bokova in her foreword to the UN World Water Development Report released in March 2012. Issued every three years since 2003 at the triennial World Water Forum, the UN World Water Development Report offers an overview of the state of the world's freshwater resources and aims to provide decision makers with the tools to make sustainable use of water a reality. "No water users, anywhere in the world, can be guaranteed they will have uninterrupted access to the water supplies they need or want or to the water-derived benefits from key developmental sectors such as agriculture, energy and health," the report warns. While UNICEF and the World Health Organization issued a separate report showing that the world has achieved the Millennium Development Goal of halving the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water in advance of the 2015 deadline, water scarcity is still a big problem for millions of people around the world. The world's "urban" population is forecast to grow to 6.3 billion people in 2050, from 3.4 billion in 2009, increasing problems of adequate water supply, sanitation and drainage, especially in urban slums already faced with a backlog of unserved populations. World total population will also increase from 6 billion in 2000 to 9 billion in 2050. Agriculture accounts for 70 percent of all water withdrawn by the agricultural, municipal, industrial and energy sectors, according to the report, which says, "Responsible agricultural water management will make a major contribution to future global water security." The report projects a 70 percent increase in demand for food by the year 2050 when the world population is forecast to be 9 billion and warns that this level of demand will lead to a 19 percent surge in agricultural water use. In response to growing demand, countries have tapped into underground water sources, with water extraction tripling over the past 50 years. In some underground basins, water cannot be replenished and is now at critically low levels.

Climate change will have a growing impact on water resources as it alters rainfall patterns and soil humidity, melts glaciers and causes water-related disasters such as floods and droughts, which impact food production. It is projected that by 2070, these climate impacts will affect up to 44 million people all over the world. In the short term, the shrinking of glaciers is adding water to streamflows over and above annual precipitation and thus increasing water supply, the report states, but warns that as glaciers disappear those additional sources of water will diminish and the buffering effects of glaciers on streamflows will lessen. There are "major uncertainties" about the amount of water required to sustain ecosystems and to meet human demands for food and energy, adding, "These uncertainties are compounded by the impact of climate change on available water resources." In April 2015 there was a so called flagship event held at the World Bank Headquarters on "Water Security for All in a World of Scarcity". The seminar has highlighted that water security is emerging as the number one global risk in terms of development impact. While the impacts are felt most acutely in the arid, water scarce regions of the world, climate change and rapid urbanization have increased water scarcity for other regions as well. Fast growing cities in water-scarce environments are the most vulnerable. The meeting focused some of the most innovative management approaches and technologies now being deployed in the sector and some of the key challenges as well as positive lessons learned on how these can be used internationally to enhance "water security" globally.

In Myanmar, fortunately there has been great interest and support from the highest Government level in ensuring the security and sustainability of water resources in the nation. In 2014 National Water Resource Committee [NWRC] was formed and the national level committee was chaired by the Vice President of Union of Myanmar. The vision of National Water Policy is Myanmar to become a water Efficient Country by implementing Integrated Water Resources Management System together and to bring benefits of income generation, better quality of life, greener environment, peace and stability for Myanmar people. As there is certainly population growth in Myanmar like many countries in the world, there is increased water demand in urban as well in rural areas. It is now extremely important for all water related ministries, departments, rural and urban authorities, boards, universities, research organizations, NGOs to collaborate and coordinate to promulgate water laws, by-laws, regulations, strategies and action plans to efficiently utilize & make sustainable our fresh water resources for current and future generations. In practical terms, all stake holders need to work hard to protect, develop, sustain and avoid wastage, pollution into all fresh water resources for continuous adequate consumption of clean drinking water, domestic water for personal hygiene, food preparation, watering of cattle, gardens and application in the production of food, poultry, agricultural produce, crops and consumer goods. Surface and groundwater use needs to be planned efficiently and effectively to meet the demand by increasing population and agriculture, food production and various industries including tourism. It is a long term continuous process for successive Governments, relevant authorities, public members, local well wishers, business communities and all stakeholders including multi-national bodies and international donors to realize in meeting water security in our country in short period.

Set to begin, US plan for Syrian rebels already mired in doubt

REYHANLI, 27 April — Hundreds of Syrian rebels are approaching the start of US training to battle Islamic State, without knowing whether or how Washington would come to their aid on the battlefield and as other rebel leaders say the proxy army could spark opposition infighting.

The US plan to train and arm a force that is expected to eventually total more than 15,000 troops and to get underway in the coming weeks is a major test of President Barack Obama's strategy of engaging local partners to combat extremists.

But administration officials are already scaling back expectations of its impact and some rebel leaders say the force risks sowing divisions and cannot succeed without directly targeting Syrian government forces.

Senior US officials said Obama has not yet decided how extensively and under what circumstances Washington will back the force militarily — a commitment that would risk the very entanglement in Syria that Obama has long sought to avoid. Senior US military officials say protecting the forces will be vital to drawing new recruits and ensuring the success of the program.

The hardline Sunni Muslim Islamic State movement has seized swathes of Syria and Iraq and proclaimed a caliphate.

In the face of its brutal offensive through northern Iraq last June, Obama asked Congress for an initial $500 million to "train and equip" Syria's opposition fighters, whom he later described as "the best counterweight" to Islamic militants and a key pillar in his campaign to defeat them. The total request so far is $1.1 billion.

Ten months later, it is just getting off the launch pad.

US officials say several hundred US and coalition personnel are preparing to start training, initially at sites in Jordan, Turkey, and later in Saudi Arabia and Qatar. The sessions, which were originally expected to

A rebel fighter stands on a damaged building near the frontline during what the rebel fighters called a battle to unite rebel factions against forces loyal to Syria's President Bashar al-Assad in Jobar, a suburb of Damascus on 21 April, 2015.—REUTERS

start in March, will cover everything from the rules of war to small-arms skills.

The plan reflected the priorities of a president reluctant to get entrenched in another Middle East conflict, but who needed a ground force to complement US air strikes against Islamic State in Syria. Congress approved it last year with two primary goals: to fight Islamic State and boost the chances of a negotiated settlement in the Syrian war by raising pressure on President Bashar al-Assad's forces.

Opposition fighters and some of their backers, including Turkey and Saudi Arabia, say the plan will only succeed if it focuses more directly on fighting Assad's forces and allied militias.

"For Syrians, the biggest motive is to stop the killing, and the biggest killer is the regime," said Abu Hamoud, head of operations at Division 13, a non-Islamist opposition brigade which has received training under a separate CIA-led programme.

While fighting Islamic State may be the priority in eastern Syria, the same is not true elsewhere in the country, according to Abu Majid, commander of the Fursan al Haq brigade which has also been helped under the CIA operation launched last year.

"It's a matter of priority. People in the east are suffering

most from Islamic State. In our area, we are suffering from the regime," he said. Part of the US strategy, according to Obama administration documents seen by *Reuters*, is to pressure Assad by steadily increasing the opposition's prowess and territory under control. But the documents acknowledge that the US-trained rebel force's impact is likely to be modest — at least initially.

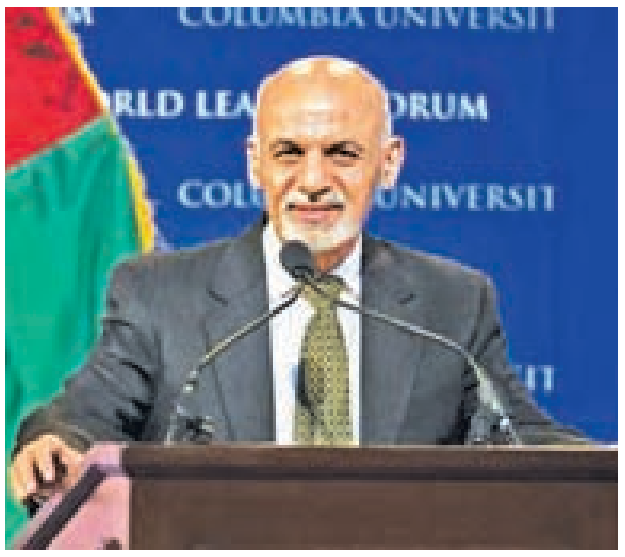
"Even when considered as a whole, US government assistance to the moderate armed opposition will not be decisive in defeating regime forces," the State Department wrote to Sen John McCain, the Senate Armed Services Committee chairman, in March. "Nor will the fighters who receive this assistance, on their own, force Assad to change his calculus about trying to hold on to power," the letter states.

Obama has also yet to announce whether he will go beyond resupplying and financing the proxy force, and protect them with US fighter jets if they clash with Assad's forces. The United States is already conducting near daily air strikes against Islamic State targets in Syria and Iraq. Assad, in a January interview with Foreign Affairs magazine, said his army will fight the "illegal" US-backed rebels.

US military officials favor defending them. Army Gen Lloyd Austin, commander of the US military's Central Command, told a Senate committee last month that he recommended US protection for the force against all adversaries.

"Currently," he added, "that decision has not been taken."—*Reuters*

Taleban attack major Afghan city, Ghani delays India trip



Afghan President Ashraf Ghani participates in "The New Beginning in Afghanistan: A Conversation with HE Dr Mohammad Ashraf Ghani, President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan'' at Columbia University in New York on 26 March, 2015.
REUTERS

KABUL, 27 April — Heavy fighting between Afghan security forces and Taleban insurgents that killed more than 30 combatants on Monday threatened a major northern city, prompting President Ashraf Ghani to delay a state visit to India.

Officials said hundreds of Taleban insurgents had attacked police and army checkposts in the province of Kunduz, the militants' last stronghold before US coalition forces drove them from power in 2001.

Now they threaten to overrun parts of the provincial capital, after fighting that killed eight Afghan security forces and at least two dozen Taleban in the area, a spokesman for the provincial governor said.

"The threat level is very high, but with new reinforcements, our security forces have gained morale and god willing, we will win the fight," said Abdul Waseh Basel, the spokesman. The insurgents have overrun seven army and police checkposts in central Kunduz and two districts, Taleban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said in an email statement.

Ghani postponed his planned departure for New Delhi and called NATO's Gen John Campbell to a meeting at the presidential palace to discuss the Kunduz fighting, the general said.

It was unclear how long the delay would be. Ghani's spokesman was not immediately available for comment.

Battles were raging about 6 km (4 miles) south of Kunduz city, officials said. Insurgents also broke into the city itself, in the southern district of Gul Tepa, Basel told *Reuters*.

Afghan security forces used artillery to defend the city, another official said.

"The sound of heavy weapons fired by Afghan forces can be heard in the city," said Kunduz police spokesman Sayed Sarwar Hussaini.—*Reuters*

Iranian general accuses Saudis of following in Israeli footsteps

ANKARA, 27 April — The commander of Iran's elite Revolutionary Guards accused Saudi Arabia on Monday of following in Israel's footsteps in the Islamic world by carrying out air strikes in Yemen, the official *IRNA* news agency reported. A Saudi-led alliance began bombing Iranian-allied Houthi militia in Yemen last month, seeing a threat from their advances across the Arabian Peninsula state. Riyadh also wants to restore Yemen's president, forced into exile by the Houthis.

General Mohammad Ali Jafari, commander of Shi'ite Muslim Iran's elite Revolutionary Guards, said Sunni Saudi Arabia—Teheran's arch regional adversary—was "shamelessly and disgracefully bombing and killing a nation". "Saudi Arabia is following in the Zionist (Israel) regime's footsteps in the Islamic world," Jafari was quoted as saying by *IRNA*.

The United States and Saudi Arabia have accused Iran of arming the Shi'ite Houthis. The Islamic Republic says it gives only political and humanitarian support to the Houthis.—*Reuters*

Islamist rebels say capture army base in Syria's Idlib province

AMMAN, 27 April — A coalition of Islamist rebels said they seized a Syrian army base in northwestern Idlib province at dawn on Monday after a suicide bomber from al-Qaeda's Nusra Front drove a truck packed with explosives inside and set it off.

Syrian state media said the army had inflicted heavy casualties on rebels in the area and launched air strikes, but did not say the base had fallen.

The capture of Qarmeed camp, if confirmed, would be the latest in a series of setbacks for the army in the region. It would allow the rebels to tighten their siege on the major Mastouma army base nearby which has seen heavy fighting in recent weeks.

"A truck with two tonnes of explosives penetrated one of the entrances of the camp that made it easier to take over the camp," Sheikh Husam Abu Bakr, a rebel commander from Ahrar al Sham said via Skype.

Insurgents have been trying to push the army out of the few remaining government areas in the province, bringing them closer to Latakia, the ancestral home of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad.

Hardline Sunni Islamist rebels seized Idlib city, the provincial capital, last month after forming an alliance that includes Nusra, the Ahrar al-Sham movement and Jund al-Aqsa, but not the rival Islamic State group which controls large tracts of Syria and Iraq. On Saturday, the coalition captured the northwestern town of Jisr al-Shughour for the first time in the four-year-old conflict. The Islamist alliance calls itself the Army of Fatah, a reference to the conquests that spread Islam across the Middle East from the 7th century.

Reuters

Canon first-quarter profit falls 29 percent as compact camera sales slump

TOKYO, 27 April — Canon Inc on Monday said net profit fell 28.7 percent in its first quarter, falling short of analyst estimates, as the Japanese company faced slumping sales of digital compact cameras.

Profit was 33.93 billion yen (187.88 million pounds) in January-March, compared with the 53.64 billion yen average estimate of 5 analysts according to Thomson Reuters data.

The result comes as the world's biggest camera maker seeks growth opportunities, in part to offset a drop in demand for compacts as consumers increasingly rely on smartphone cameras.

It plans to buy Swedish surveillance firm Axis AB for $2.7 billion — offering 340 crowns ($39.31) a share until the extended deadline of 5 May — and as of Friday owned 84 percent. It does not plan to up its offer even though hedge fund Elliott Management has since raised its ownership to 10 percent.

"Sales volume for low-end (digital camera) models declined due to the ongoing contraction of the market in all regions from the previous year," said Canon in its earnings release. Sales of high-end models increased, it said.

Canon also said it expects to sell 7.0 million compact cameras in 2015, versus a previous forecast of 7.8 million and 22.5 pct less than in 2014.

It projects sales of cameras with interchangeable lenses to reach 5.8 million units rather than its previous view of 6.4 million.

The firm, which earns about 80 percent of revenue overseas and is a major beneficiary of a weaker yen, maintained its view of the Japanese currency trading at 120 versus the US dollar in the second to fourth quarters.

Shares of Canon closed 0.7 percent higher ahead of the earnings release, versus a 0.2 percent fall in the broader market.

Reuters

***Canon's logos are seen on compact digital camera on display at an electronics retail store in Tokyo on 24 July, 2014.—*REUTERS**

Decline in US science spending threatens economy, security: MIT

NEW YORK, 27 April — Warning of an "innovation deficit," scientists at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology say declining government spending on basic research is holding back potentially life-saving advances in 15 fields, from robotics and fusion energy to Alzheimer's disease and agriculture.

Science funding is "the lowest it has been since the Second World War as a fraction of the federal budget," said MIT physicist Marc Kastner, who led the committee that wrote "The Future Postponed" report, issued on Monday. "This really threatens America's future."

The report lands at a time when federal spending on research has become unusually politicized.

Cuts mandated by the White House's and Congress's failure to reach agreement on reducing the federal deficit have chipped away at the budgets of the National Institutes of Health and other science agencies; legislation on research spending is tied up in debates over, among other things, climate change.

Federal spending on research as a share of total government outlays has fallen from nearly 10 percent in 1968, during the space program, to 3 percent in 2015. As a share of gross domestic product, it has dropped from 0.6 percent in 1976 to just under 0.4 percent.

The pullback comes as other countries are increasing science spending, scoring achievements that leave the US in the dust. The European Space Agency landed the first spacecraft on a comet, and China developed the world's fastest supercomputer, both in 2014.

Among the areas of research that are languishing, said the MIT report, are new drugs to combat antibiotic-resistant bacteria. Drug companies see little profit potential in antibiotics, leaving government as the funder of last resort.

Other areas ripe for breakthroughs include engineering viruses to identify and destroy cancer cells; quantum computing (where China is investing heavily) to improve speed and cybersecurity; and artificial photosynthesis to boost food production.

The report does not include price tags for any of this, and the authors do not plan to push policymakers for any specific legislation, Kastner said. Experts said that would limit its impact.

"It's fine to talk about research opportunities," said Michael Lubell, director of public affairs at the American Physical Society. "But the report is long on identifying needs and short on identifying policy that will get us there."

Asked what it might take to reverse the decline in federal support for science, Kastner said, "I wish I knew the answer."

Reuters

Nokia denies return to phone manufacturing

***A view of Nokia's head offices in Espoo, Finland, on 15 April, 2015.—*REUTERS**

HELSINKI, 27 April — Finland's Nokia (NOK1V.HE) denied reports in Chinese media that it planned to return to manufacturing phones.

"Nokia notes recent news reports claiming the company communicated an intention to manufacture consumer handsets out of a R&D facility in China. These reports are false," Nokia said in a statement posted on its website.

"Nokia reiterates it currently has no plans to manufacture or sell consumer handsets." However, Nokia has said it is looking into returning to the smartphones business by brand-licensing.

Nokia sold its phone business to Microsoft (MSFT.O) last year, but just months after that it launched a new brand-licensed tablet computer, produced under licence by Taiwan's Foxconn (2354.TW), with an intention to follow up with more devices.

Nokia has agreed with Microsoft that it will not enter the mobile phone business before 2016.

"It would be crazy not to look at that opportunity. Of course we will look at it," Sebastian Nystrom, the head of products at Nokia's Technologies unit, told *Reuters* in November.

Nokia this month announced a takeover of France's Alcatel-Lucent (ALUA.PA), a bid to boost its mainstay network equipment business, and also said it could hive off its map business, which has reportedly drawn interest from carmakers as well as Facebook and online taxi service Uber.—*Reuters*

India's Ratan Tata buys stake in Chinese phone maker Xiaomi

MUMBAI, 27 April — Ratan Tata, chairman emeritus of the holding company of India's Tata conglomerate, has acquired a stake in Xiaomi Technology [XTC.UL], a deal that is likely to bolster the Chinese phone maker's presence in the world's third-largest smartphone market.

Financial details of the unspecified stake bought by Tata in Xiaomi, the first by an Indian, were not disclosed in the statement issued by the Chinese company on Sunday.

Xiaomi, the No 3 global smartphone maker, was valued at $45 billion after a December funding round.

Tata, a respected business leader who was the chairman of salt-to-software Tata Sons for more than two decades, has previously invested in Indian start-ups, including online retailer Snapdeal. Tata'a investment in Xiaomi comes against the backdrop of an aggressive push by Xiaomi in India after entering the market, which has huge growth potential with just one in 10 people using smartphones, in July 2014.

On Thursday, Xiaomi hosted its first global launch outside of China in the Indian capital New Delhi, unveiling its feature-heavy Mi 4i model that supports six Indian languages at 12,999 rupees (£134).

Xiaomi and other Chinese smartphone makers are drafting in cricket teams and Bollywood stars to conquer India, their largest overseas market and a key testing ground for their international expansion.

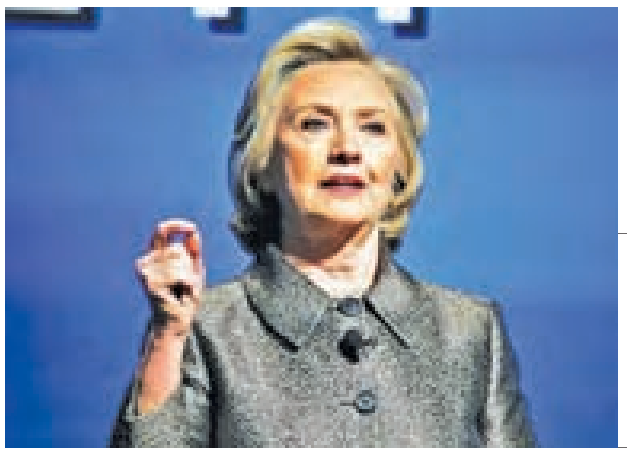
"Mr Tata is one of the most well-respected business leaders in the world. An investment by him is an affirmation of the strategy we have undertaken in India so far," Lei Jun, founder and chief executive officer of Xiaomi said in the statement.

"We are looking forward to bringing more products into India," he said.

Reuters

***Three models of China's Xiaomi Mi phones are pictured during their launch in New Delhi on 15 July, 2014.* REUTERS**

Clinton Foundation admits making mistakes on taxes



Former US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton speaks during a Gates Foundation event in New York on 9 March, 2015.—Reuters

Washington, 27 April — The Clinton Foundation's acting chief executive admitted on Sunday that the charity had made mistakes on how it listed government donors on its tax returns and said it was working to make sure it does not happen in the future.

The non-profit foundation and its list of donors have been under intense scrutiny in recent weeks. Republican critics say the foundation makes Hillary Clinton, who is seeking the Democratic presidential nomination in 2016, vulnerable to undue influence.

After a *Reuters* review found errors in how the foundation reported government donors on its taxes, the charity said last week it would refile at least five annual tax returns.

"So yes, we made mistakes, as many organizations of our size do, but we are acting quickly to remedy them, and have taken steps to ensure they don't happen in the future," Clinton Foundation acting Chief Executive Officer Maura Pally said in a statement.

The errors appeared on the tax forms 990 that all non-profit organizations must file annually with the US Internal Revenue Service to maintain their tax-exempt status.

Pally said the foundation did accurately report its total revenue but government grants were mistakenly combined with other donations.—*Reuters*

Fire at Taiwan nuclear power plant prompts reactor shutdown

Taipei, (China) 27 April — A reactor at a nuclear power plant in southern Taiwan was shut down following a fire that broke out at around midnight Sunday, its operator said on Monday.

Taiwan Power Co spokesman Lin Te-fu told *Kyodo News* the fire broke out at 23:58 pm at the Maanshan Nuclear Power Plant at Hengchun, apparently caused by a short-circuited supplementary transformer.

Firefighters extinguished the fire in 17 minutes and there was no leakage of radiation, Lin said.

Unit 2 reactor of the facility has been shut down and repair is estimated to take about two weeks. But because the facility has two reactors, the shutdown will not affect the supply of power. A probe is under way to determine the cause of the short circuit in the transformer, Lin said.

Taiwan has three operating nuclear power stations — two in the north and one in the south. All have operated safely for many years, while providing nearly 20 percent of the island's electricity.

A fourth plant is under construction, also in the north. However, various shutdowns due to engineering problems and policy reversals have delayed its completion.

The Taiwan said last year that it will freeze construction of the fourth facility pending endorsement of the project by voters in a national referendum.

Taipower, as the power utility is commonly known, said in January that construction will enter a three-year hiatus on 1 July.

Concerns about the safety of nuclear power flared up again in the wake of the 2011 Fukushima nuclear disaster in Japan.

Apart from apprehension over the growing stockpile of nuclear waste, critics say adding a new nuclear power facility in earthquake-prone Taiwan's heavily populated north will only make matters worse.—*Kyodo News*

A-bomb survivors, peace group members march for nuke-free world

New York, 27 April — Atomic bomb survivors from Japan and peace campaigners from around the world marched through the streets of New York on Sunday to push for the abolition of nuclear weapons on the eve of a UN conference to promote nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation.

Around 7,500 people, holding banners and signs, chanted slogans such as "No nukes!" and "No more Hiroshima!" as they walked about 3 kilometres toward the United Nations, where the conference to review the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty will start on Monday.

Although observers say it will not be easy for NPT members to produce a final document by consensus amid differences on disarmament and other issues, aging atomic bomb survivors hope discussions at the conference will bring nuclear weapons abolition within sight.

During a rally held ahead of the parade, Yuko Nakamura, an atomic bomb survivor, recalled that more than 200 students at her school died when the United States dropped the bomb on Hiroshima on 6 August, 1945. She was 13 years old at the time.

Atomic bomb survivors from Japan and peace activists from various countries march on a street in New York to push for nuclear weapons abolition on 26 April, 2015, the day before the start of a conference to review the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty that will continue through 22 May. —Kyodo News

"The students were ready to die for their country (because it was wartime), but, deep down, they wanted to live...I want you to know that an atomic bomb will destroy a city instantly and take away people's lives with no mercy. It is not something that can be allowed from a humanitarian point of view," she said.

Hiroshima Mayor Kazumi Matsui also joined the rally. "Now is the time to transform your power into a concrete movement to create a world without nuclear weapons," he said in an address to the participants.

Toward the end of the event, more than seven million signatures on petitions from Japan and other countries seeking negotiations for the elimination of the world's nuclear arsenals were submitted to Taous Feroukhi, the Algerian ambassador who will chair the NPT review conference, and Angela Kane, top UN official for disarmament affairs. The conference will continue through 22 May.

Noting that the average age of atomic bomb survivors is reaching around 80, Kane said, "We really must renew our commitment to carry the heavy torch of responsibility for achieving this goal — a world free of nuclear weapons."

Some participants expressed disappointment that the event was not joined by as many people as before and that they did not see enough young people.

Kim Bergier, a 64-year-old activist of the Michigan Stop the Nuclear Bombs Campaign, said she feels the overall number of participants in the event was "not big enough" compared with 2010, when the previous NPT review conference was held. "I feel a stronger commitment for those who do show up...but there are also too many gray hairs, there are too many hibakusha (atomic bomb victims) that this will be the last time we'll probably see them," she said.—*Kyodo News*

Collapsed pedestrian bridge kills 7 in Nigeria

Lagos, 27 April — At least seven people lost their lives in northwest Nigeria's Kano State on Sunday when a pedestrian bridge collapsed, the police said on Monday.

State police spokesperson Magaji Majiya, who confirmed the incident to *Xinhua*, said the bridge, which was still under construction, caved in and collapsed on a car, which was passing underneath it.

He said the workers at the site had warned motorists not to pass because they were working on the bridge but the driver of the taxi allegedly ignored the warning.

"So, the moment he moved; before he passed, the bridge caved in and collapsed on the vehicle, which led to the death of seven people," he added.

The vehicle has since been evacuated from the scene while the corpses have been deposited at a hospital morgue, he added.

Majiya said the police had launched an investigation into the cause of the incident.—*Xinhua*

S Korea ex-premier urges Abe to learn from his grandfather, father

Seoul, 27 April — Former South Korean Prime Minister Kim Jong Pil urged Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to learn from his grandfather and father and look squarely into the history of Japan's 1910-1945 colonial rule of Korea, according to an interview published by the *JoongAng Daily* on Monday.

Kim, 89, premier in 1971-1975 and in 1998-2000, said former Japanese Prime Minister Nobusuke Kishi, Abe's grandfather, "had a deep understanding of Korea."

Kim recalled that Kishi had acknowledged that "Japan tormented Korea" and offered his apology "as a Japanese" for Japan's brutal colonial rule in Korea.

The late Kishi, who served as minister of munitions in the war cabinet, was held as a Class-A war crimes suspect after World War II but was not indicted or tried by the International Military Tribunal. He went on to serve as prime minister from 1957 to 1960.

Kim, who played a pivotal role in paving the way for normalization of diplomatic relations between South Korea and Japan in 1965, said he was very close to Abe's father, the late Shintaro Abe, a former foreign minister in the 1980s.

Shintaro Abe "tried in his own way to improve Korea-Japan relations," Kim said and described him as "a very good person who avoided hurtful words or actions."

"Abe seems to have a very different personality from his father," Kim said, adding that it is "regrettable" that Abe "can't learn lessons from...his father and grandfather."

Many South Koreans view Shinzo Abe, in office since December 2012, as a hardliner who they say attempts to roll back past Japanese government apologies over the issue of "comfort women" — many of them from Korea — who were recruited to work at wartime Japanese military brothels.

Kyodo News

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THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR
MINISTRY OF ENERGY
MYANMA OIL AND GAS ENTERPRISE
(INVITATION FOR OPEN TENDER)
(7/2015)

Open tenders are invited for supply of the following respective items in United States Dollars.

Sr.No	Tender No	Description	Remark
(1)	IFB-003(15-16)	NDT Service for 10" Toe River Crossing Gas Pipe Line by HDD Rig (3200) Ft	US$
(2)	IFB-004(15-16)	NDT Service for 12" Hlaing River Crossing Gas Pipe Line by HDD Rig (3200) Ft	US$
(3)	IFB-005(15-16)	Electrical Spares for D_3 T_2 SR Rigs (29) Items	US$
(4)	IFB-006(15-16)	Spares for Cummins KTA 2300 C 1050 Engine (7) Items	US$
(5)	IFB-007(15-16)	Spares for GM 6V 71 Engine (4) Items	US$
(6)	IFB-008(15-16)	Spares for GM 6V 53 Engine (4) Items	US$

Tender Closing Date & Time - 25-5-2015, 16:30 Hr

Tender Document shall be available during office hours commencing from 27th April, 2015 at the Finance Department, Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise, No(44) Complex, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar.

Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise
Ph.+9567 -411097/411206

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV YANTRA BHUM VOY NO (954N)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV YANTRA BHUM VOY NO (954N) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 28.4.2015 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claims Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
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AGENT FOR: M/S REGIONAL CONTAINER LINES

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The Asia Foundation

The Asia Foundation in Myanmar is recruiting for three Yangon-based positions:

(1) Senior Program Officer, Governance
(2) Senior Program Officer, Economic Governance
(3) Senior Program Officer, Peace Process Support

Candidates should submit a cover letter and CV to Ms. Wine Wai Wai Win at wine.win@asiafoundation.org by May 4, 2015. Only short-listed applicants will be notified. Please mark clearly on your cover letter and application for which position you are applying.

WEATHER REPORT

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL EVENING OF THE 28th April, 2015: Rain or thundershowers will be scattered in Mandalay and Taninthayi Regions, Kayah, Kayin and Mon States and isolated in the remaining Regions and States. Degree of certainty is (80%).

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV HAI PHOUNG SUN VOY NO (06.HPSUN/2015)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV HAI PHOUNG SUN VOY NO (06.HPSUN/2015) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 27.4.2015 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of S.P.W (3) where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claims Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S RK SHIPPING & TRADING PTE LTD

Phone No: 2301186

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV UBC CANADA VOY NO (37)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV UBC CANADA VOY NO (37) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 27.4.2015 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claims Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S THALAMAR SHIPPING AG
Phone No: 2301186

Photo shows an information display apparatus called the "diversity waterfall" within the Japan Pavilion of the Expo Milano 2015 in the northern Italian city of Milan on 24 April, 2015, the day when the pavilion was unveiled to the press ahead of the opening of the world exposition themed on food on 1 May.
KYODO NEWS

Gas leak at Iran's Arak refinery injures seven workers

DUBAI, 27 April — A gas leak at the Arak oil refinery in central Iran injured seven workers on Sunday, four of them critically, the semi-official *Fars* news agency reported.

The leak at the sour water processing unit was blamed on workers failing to comply with health and safety protocols, *Fars* said.

The four critically injured workers were transferred to Arak hospital where they are being treated, *Fars* said. There was no immediate indication of whether the plant continued to function. Further details were not immediately available.

The 250,000 barrel per day (bpd) refinery has suffered several outages in recent years, as international sanctions have prevented Iran from securing foreign investment and expertise to update its ageing energy infrastructure.—*Reuters*

Chinese airlines deny price hike for Nepal flights

BEIJING, 27 April — China's major airlines dismissed rumours that they raised ticket prices for evacuation flights from quake-hit Nepal on Monday.

Air China, China Eastern and China Southern told *Xinhua* it is impossible for them to hike ticket prices, which are under tight control of the National Development and Reform Commission.

However, Air China said it can not be ruled out that some air ticket agents raised prices without approval. Rumors went viral online that Chinese visitors stranded in Nepal had to pay extra money for flight home.

About 4,000 Chinese tourists now remain in Nepal, where an 8.1-magnitude earthquake has killed at least 3,218 people, including four Chinese. Currently, Chinese carriers have the capacity to bring around 1,200 people home every day.—*Xinhua*

Two wardens abducted in Southern Philippines

MANILA, 27 April — Two wardens were abducted and two New People's Army (NPA) detainees were freed following an ambush in southern Philippines of Surigao del Sur on Monday, the military said.

Capt Joe Patrick Martinez, deputy public affairs officer of the Army's 10th Infantry Division, said personnel from the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP) of Surigao del Sur were transporting NPA detainees aboard a prisoner van when they were ambushed by at least 30 rebels around 7:45 am along a highway in Amontay village, Marihatag town.

According to official report, three wardens and one of the detainees were wounded in the ambush.

The two detainees were being brought to the Lianga regional trial court to attend a hearing. These two people were arrested on 12 February for possession of an improvised explosive device (IED), a revolver, a blasting cap, and firing wires, among others, in Lianga town.

A previous military statement said the two rebels "were on their way to lay land mine" in the town when they were arrested by joint forces of the Army's 2nd Scout Ranger Battalion and Lianga police station at a checkpoint.

Martinez said the military has deployed Special Forces and Infantry soldiers to conduct search and rescue operations for the abducted jail personnel. He said attack helicopters were also put on standby for close-air support. The NPA, armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines, has been waging a guerrilla campaign against the government in the countryside for four decades.—*Xinhua*

Vin Diesel confirms 'Fast and Furious 8'

Los Angeles, 27 April — Actor Vin Diesel has revealed Universal Studios is currently working on "Fast and Furious 8'.

"We're gonna make the best movie you've ever seen," Diesel, 47, told the audience. The eighth movie will hit theaters on 14 April, 2017, reported *Us* magazine.

The studio is yet to confirm which stars will join Diesel on the next adventure, but it was revealed where Dominic Toretto is headed to next.

A new movie poster features Dom and New York City's Empire State Building. "FF8," it reads. "New City Even Vengeance."

Earlier this month, the franchise's seventh installment, "Furious 7", broke records when it hit the USD 1 billion mark at the international box office.—*PTI*

"Furious 7" leads North American box office for 4th week

Los Angeles, 27 April — "Furious 7" beat newcomer "Paul Blart: Mall Cop 2" to top the North American box office for the fourth weekend in a row.

In doing so, "Furious 7" became the first film to lead the box office for four consecutive weekends since "The Hunger Games" did so back in 2012.

Starring Vin Diesel, Dwayne Johnson and the late Paul Walker, " Furious 7" grossed an estimated 18.3 million US dollars in North American theaters over the weekend, according to studio estimates on Sunday.

The seventh film in the stunt-filled "Fast and Furious" street- racing franchise also had another stunning weekend overseas, particularly in China, where it earned nearly 323 million dollars in 15 days.

"Furious 7" has now grossed 1.3 billion dollars worldwide, which ranks fifth all-time. In the domestic market, "Furious 7" has earned 320 million dollars.

Playing at 3,633 locations, the Kevin James comedy "Paul Blart: Mall Cop 2" took in 15.5 million dollars, bringing its total to nearly 44 million dollars.

The Blake Lively fantasy romance "The Age of Adaline" ranked third this weekend, with 13.4 million dollars from 2,991 locations.

Other popular films this weekend in the United States and Canada were "Home" (8.3 million), "Unfriended" (6.2 million), "Ex Machina" (5.4 million), "The Longest Ride" (4.3 million), "Get Hard" (3.9 million), "Monkey Kingdom" (3.55 million) and "Woman in Gold" (3.5 million).

Xinhua

Sophia Bush heartbroken after ex Dan Fredinburg dies in Nepal earthquake

Los Angeles, 27 April — "One Tree Hill" actress Sophia Bush is left heart-broken after her former boyfriend Dan Fredinburg, a Google executive, was tragically killed after the Nepal earthquake caused a Mount Everest avalanche.

The 32-year-old actress and Fredinburg dated in 2013 before calling it quits in February 2014. In a heartfelt Instagram post, Bush remembered Fredinburg as "one-of-a-kind."

There are no adequate words. Today I find myself attempting to pick up the pieces of my heart that have broken into such tiny shards, I'll likely never find them all.

"Today I, and so many of my loved ones, lost an incredible friend. Dan Fredinburg was one-of-a-kind. Fearless. Funny… He was one of my favourite human beings on Earth. He was one of the great loves of my life," Bush posted.

The exes clearly remained friends after the split because as Bush revealed she had plans to catch up with Fredinburg after his trek.

"I was looking forward to our planned download of 'all the things' when he got home. I am crushed that I will never hear that story," she wrote.

"Please remember that our time on this Earth is not guaranteed. Please tell those you love that you do. Right now. This very minute. And please send a kiss to the sky for my friend Dan. His energy is so big and so bright, and it's all around us, so put some love toward him today. And then hug your loved ones again."—*PTI*

"One Tree Hill" actress Sophia Bush is left heart-broken after her former boyfriend Dan Fredinburg, a Google executive, was tragically killed after the Nepal earthquake caused a Mount Everest avalanche.—PTI

Harry Styles will be next to leave One Direction: Lance Bass

Los Angeles, 27 April — NSYNC star Lance Bass thinks Harry Styles will be the next member to quit boyband One Direction.

Harry Styles

Speaking on The Meredith Vieira Show, Bass claimed that Styles, 21, has always planned on going solo, reported Billboard.

"I just see Harry Styles leaving soon, and I don't see another One Direction album happening after he leaves," Bass said.

He also noted that Styles has been recording on his own for some time and planned to leave One Direction before Zayn Malik broke away first.

"Harry Styles has been ready to go solo for many months. The Zayn thing was just spur-of-the-moment, but it was the best thing Zayn could have done because now he's a household name."—*PTI*

Kurt Cobain, Courtney Love's old apartment available to rent

Kurt Cobain and Courtney Love

Los Angeles, 27 April — Kurt Cobain and Courtney Love's old apartment in Los Angeles is available to rent on Airbnb.

The couple lived in the apartment from 1991-1992, reported the *Los Angeles Times.*

Love, 50, was pregnant with Frances Bean Cobain, Cobain's only child, when the couple resided in the apartment.

They were forced to leave after they encountered problems with the apartment's plumbing.

The apartment was apparently flooded and the leak damaged artwork and journals which Cobain was, quite bizarrely, storing in one of the apartment's two bathrooms.

Cobain also allegedly wrote 'Heart-Shaped' box whilst relaxing in one of the apartment's baths.

PTI

Nishikori eyes Roland Garros after retaining Barcelona crown

BARCELONA, (Spain), 27 April — Kei Nishikori believes he is ready to have his best French Open yet after defending the Barcelona Open title on Sunday.

Top-seeded Nishikori beat Pablo Andujar 6-4, 6-4 in the final for his second title of the season, also the ninth of his burgeoning career.

Nishikori, who stood at No 5 in the world rankings, fell at the first hurdle at Roland Garros last year but feels he is poised to do well in Paris having won 26 of 31 matches this year.

"My next goal is to produce a good result at the French Open," Nishikori said. "I'm really looking forward to it. The Grand Slams are unlike the other events in that they can go to five sets. But I think I'm close to being able to do well at the French Open."

"I just tried to play my best one match at a time, and that's what's led to this. I'm happy to have defended the title. This win is significant. It gives me great confidence."

"I'm not a specialist on clay, so I'm very happy about having won here."

While Nishikori improved to 3-1 lifetime against Andujar, who defeated third seed David Ferrer in the semifinals, he admitted he was not at his best on Sunday.

Nishikori had three double faults and landed just 55 percent of his first serves in the 94-minute contest, and dropped his first service game in both sets.

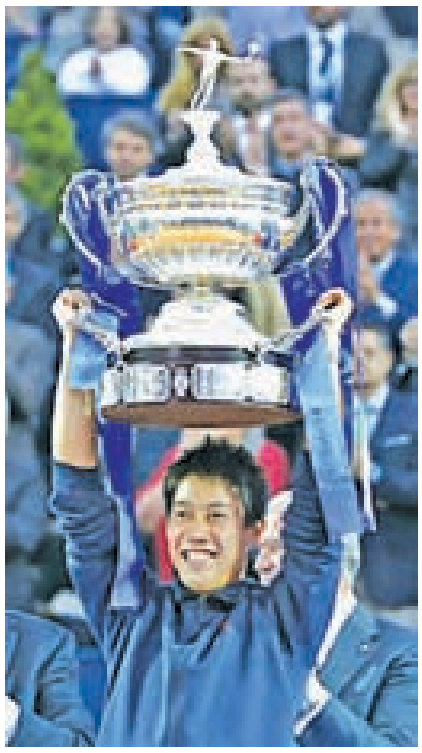
Still, the Japanese never gave in and down 4-2 in the second set, won four straight games before converting the first match point he had.

Nishikori gave himself a pat on the back for coming through despite not playing his best tennis on the afternoon.

"The second set was especially tough. He's been in good form, and I was prepared for the match to go into a third set," Nishikori said of his Spanish opponent.

"I was uptight and got off to a bad start. And I didn't feel 100 percent physically, either. But even when I wasn't at my best, I still found a way to play my game which is a sign that I've gotten stronger."

"I won all the important games. I won when I wasn't 100 percent, and that's the most important thing."—*Kyodo News*



Japan's Kei Nishikori raises the trophy after defeating Spain's Pablo Andujar 6-4, 6-4 during the Barcelona Open final in Barcelona on 26 April, 2015, to retain the title.
KYODO NEWS

Japanese para-athletes win bronze at London Marathon

LONDON, 27 April — Japanese wheelchair racer Masazumi Soejima and visually impaired Misato Michishita and Tadashi Horikoshi came in third at Sunday's London Marathon.

For the para-athletes, the London Marathon acted as a qualifier for the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Paralympic Games, awarding places to the top two finishers in each category.

Seven Japanese took part in the wheelchair marathon, attesting to the strength of the sport in the country, while many visually impaired athletes also came within the top 10.

In the closely contested male wheelchair category, Soejima finished third in 1:31:33 seconds — two seconds behind the winner, Joshua George of the United States.

"Of course I am happy to have come third, but I was hoping to be first or second," Soejima said.

Several in the lead collided a few metres away from the finish line, causing Kota Hokinoue, winner of this year's Tokyo Marathon, to crash and end up seventh.

Said Soejima, "We were very close to each other and that's why the crash happened. With seven of us coming in tight at the end, it was something I was anticipating."

Wheelchair racer Wakako Tsuchida, the Japanese team captain at the 2012 London Paralympics, was seventh in the women's race after suffering a punctured left tire.

Kyodo News

Kipchoge, Tufa win London Marathon

Britain's Prince Harry poses for a picture with winners of the Women's race Mary Keitany of Kenya(L) who came second, Tigist Tufa of Ethiopia(C) who came first and Tirfi Tsegaye of Ethiopia (R) who came third, at the 35th London Marathon, Sunday on 26 April, 2015. Tigist Tufa of Ethiopia won the gold with 2 hours 23 minutes and 22 seconds.
XINHUA

mitv Myanmar International

(28-4-2015 07:00 am~ 29-4-2015 07:00 am) MST

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* Youth Film Maker
* Tea Leaves

MRTV News Channel in Brief

(28-4-2015, Tuesday)

6:00 am
- Paritta by Venerable Mingun Sayadaw

7:00 am
- News / Weather Report

7:30 am
- Head Line News

8:00 am
- News / International News

8:45 am
- Documentary

9:35 am
- MRTV's Youth Programme

10:35 am
- Science and Technology Programme

11:35 am
- Documentary

12:00 noon
- News / Internationl News / Weather Report

12:35 pm
- TV Drama Series

1:25 pm
- Sing & Enjoy

2:35 pm
- Monoclassical Song (Part-129)

3:00 pm
- News / International News

3:35 pm
- Socio Economic Scenes

4:35 pm
- Myanmar Traditional Performing Arts Competition

4:45 pm
- University Of Distance Education (TV Lectures) —Second Year (Physics)

5:00 pm
- News / Weather Report

5:40 pm
- Documentary

6:00 pm
- News / Weather Report

6:30 pm
- Head Line News

6:35 pm
- Money Talk Myanmar

7:30 pm
- People's Talks

8:00 pm
- News / International News / Weather Report

8:35 pm
- Documentary

9:00 pm
- News / International News / Weather Report
- Pyi Thi Ni Ti
- TV Drama Series

MRTV Entertainment Channel

(28-4-2015, Tuesday)

6:00 am
- Mono Classical Songs

6:15 am
- Myanmar Series

7:00 am
- Fashion Show

7:15 am
- TV Drama Series

8:00 am
- TV Drama Series

8:40 am
- Musical Programme

9:00 am
- Pyi Thu Ni Ti

9:45 am
- Radio Teleplay

10:05 am
- China In Myanmar Cultural Show

10:20 am
- Myanmar Video

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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Tuesday, 28 April, 2015

Real battling hard to thwart Barca treble charge

MADRID, 27 April — Real Madrid have never won the Spanish treble and are fighting tooth and nail in La Liga to prevent arch-rivals Barcelona scooping Champions League and domestic league and Cup titles for a second time.

Barca became the first, and so far only, Spanish side to achieve the feat in 2009 and with coach Luis Enrique in his first year at the helm are well placed for a repeat performance with five matches left in La Liga.

Through to the Champions League last four to face Bayern Munich, Barca will seek a record-extending 27th King's Cup triumph when they play Athletic Bilbao in next month's final and have a two-point lead over Real at the top of the domestic standings.

Real, who have been depleted by injuries in recent weeks, battled to a 4-2 comeback victory at Celta Vigo on Sunday after Barca eased to a 2-0 success at neighbours Espanyol on Saturday.

In a busy week before the Champions League resumes, Barca host Getafe on Tuesday and Real are at home to Almeria on Wednesday before the leaders play at bottom side Cordoba and Real face a tough match at Sevilla on Saturday. "We're going to treat every game like a cup final and give our all in every one of them," Real fullback Marcelo told reporters after Sunday's win at Celta, when the European champions had to come back from a goal down.

Real Madrid's Marcelo Vieira tries to control the ball during their Spanish first division soccer match against Celta Vigo at Balaidos stadium in Vigo on 26 April, 2015.—REUTERS

"The team is in good shape and on incredible form," added the Brazil international.

"We're confident, we can't relax. We're going to be in there fighting.

"Our aim is really clear in our minds and we're going to give everything right up until the last moment."

Real have what is possibly the tougher run-in to the end of the campaign, with their trip to Sevilla followed by a game at home to Valencia, who can climb above the Andalusians into fourth if they avoid defeat at home to relegation-threatened Granada later on Monday.

Barca's trickiest remaining game is on the penultimate matchday at champions Atletico Madrid, who are seven points behind Real in third ahead of their game at sixth-placed Villarreal on Wednesday.

Reuters

Chelsea edge closer to title with Arsenal draw

Chelsea's Thibaut Courtois in action with Arsenal's Olivier Giroud during their Barclays Premier League at Emirates Stadium on 26 April, 2015.—REUTERS

LONDON, 27 April — The man selling 'Chelsea Champions 2015' scarves outside The Emirates was a little premature but he is unlikely to be asked for refunds after they ground out a 0-0 Premier League draw at Arsenal on Sunday.

Apart from three penalty appeals, the strongest of which saw Arsenal's goalkeeper clatter into Chelsea's Oscar in the first half and put the Brazilian in hospital, there was precious little to raise the pulse on a dreary afternoon in north London.

But while Arsenal's frustrated fans chanted "Boring Boring Chelsea" near the end, Blues boss Jose Mourinho will not care.

He extended his unbeaten record over Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger to 13 matches as Chelsea, with five games left, protected their 10-point advantage over the north Londoners whose eight-match winning league run came to an end.

"I think boring is 10 years without the title," Mourinho, whose side are the second-highest scorers in the Premier League this season, told reporters, referring to the last time Arsenal won the Premier League crown. "That's very boring."

Chelsea have 77 points from 33 games with third-placed Arsenal on 67. Last season's champions Manchester City also have 67 but have played a game more, while Manchester United have 65.

If Chelsea beat Leicester City on Wednesday they can clinch the title against Crystal Palace at Stamford Bridge next Sunday.

While Chelsea look unshakeable at the top, United are suffering some jitters as they bid to secure a top four spot and a return to the Champions League after a season absent.

Louis van Gaal's side were picked off ruthlessly by a clinical Everton outfit, losing 3-0 at Goodison Park a week after a 1-0 defeat at Chelsea.

IN CONTROL

First-half goals from James McCarthy and John Stones put Everton in control and substitute Kevin Mirallas sealed victory late on to push Everton into the top half of the table.

Fourth-placed United are seven points above Liverpool, who are fifth, although that gap could be sliced to four if the latter win their game in hand at Hull City on Tuesday.

Mourinho suggested United's defeat earlier on Sunday gave Arsenal the green light to attack but the home side never really loosened the shackles put on by Chelsea who controlled proceedings with captain John Terry in magnificent form.

"My team was phenomenal but John was one step ahead of every other player," said Mourinho.

"This point is almost like three points... It was a fair result if you forget the penalties."

Chelsea had two strong penalty claims before halftime.

The first arrived after 16 minutes when Oscar was played through by a superb pass from former Arsenal favourite Cesc Fabregas and as the Brazilian dinked the ball over David Ospina he was flattened by the stopper.

Reuters

Hazard wins England's PFA player of the year award

LONDON, 27 April— Chelsea's Belgium forward Eden Hazard won England's PFA player of the year award ahead of Tottenham Hotspur's Harry Kane and Manchester United goalkeeper David De Gea on Sunday.

England striker Kane, 21, was voted young player of the year at the Professional Footballers' Association awards dinner with Hazard, 24, second and Liverpool's Philippe Coutinho, 22, third.

"I'm very happy," Hazard said. "One day I wanted to be the best and this is what I did this season, I played very well, Chelsea played very well. I don't know if I deserved to win but it's good for me," the Belgian added.

"It's better to be voted for by the players because they know everything about football," added Hazard, who has played in all of table-topping Chelsea's 33 Premier League games this season, scoring 13 goals and 18 in all competitions.

"Personally I have played a good season, I have been there in the big games and I scored a lot of important goals, this is why I'm better this season."

Hazard has already helped Chelsea win the League Cup this term and they are two wins away from clinching the Premier League title for the first time since 2010.

Kane, who scored 79 seconds into his England debut, is the second-highest scorer in the league with 20 goals, one behind Manchester City's Sergio Aguero, and has 30 in all competitions.

"Amazing. A very proud moment for myself and my family as well. Hopefully, the first of many (awards) to come. I've got to keep working hard but to be recognized by the players is something special and definitely a night I won't forget.

"I've always believed in my ability and wanted to get the chance to prove myself. I've managed to ride the wave and this season has got better and better and this has topped it off. This is hopefully the beginning and there's more to come."—*Reuters*

Eden Hazard of Chelsea celebrates scoring against Aston Villa during their English Premier League soccer match at Villa Park, Birmingham on 7 Feb, 2015.
REUTERS

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