

President U Thein Sein meets Malaysian prime minister

YANGON, 13 March — President U Thein Sein met with Prime Minister of Malaysia Mr Najib Razak at the latter's office in Putrajaya on Friday morning.

They discussed a range of issues including Myanmar migrant workers in Malaysia, visa exemptions between the two countries, investment and trade, and human resources development.

Also on the agenda was aviation, promotion of hotels and tourism, as well as cooperation in the banking, education and energy sectors.

The two sides will later this year hold the first meeting of a joint commission on economics, science and technology, following its establishment at the ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting in January 2014.

Malaysia is the sev-



enth-largest foreign investor in Myanmar, having invested US \$1.6 billion in

50 businesses in the country. Trade volume between the two countries reached

US \$861.97 million this year, an increase of 46.16 percent from last year.

Government employees have been sent to (See page 3)

*President
U Thein
Sein
holds
talks with
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ter of
Malaysia
Mr Najib
Razak.
MNA*

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Commerce Ministry to permit import of wines in March

By Aye Min Soe

NAY PYI TAW, 13 March— The Ministry of Commerce will allow the importation of wines into Myanmar in an attempt to meet rising demand and control illegal trade in the beverage, according to the ministry.

The rules on importation have been written and the ministry will announce the plan in March, allowing local registered companies to apply for import licenses, said Daw Tin San Yi, the Director of the Directorate of Trade of the Ministry of Commerce.

Local registered com-

panies who have export and import licenses, the Foreign Alcoholic Liquor License or FL-11 license from the General Administration Department of the Home Affairs Ministry, and a dealership contract with foreign partner companies are entitled to apply for the wine import license at the Directorate of Trade.

Licenses will be valid for one year and importation will be allowed only via sea and air routes, according to the ministry's rules, with wines of 7 to 20 per cent alcohol content allowed, the director said.

GNLM

Academics recommend people-centered ASEAN-India partnership

By Ye Myint

NEW DELHI, 12 March — The second and final day of the forum between members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and India focused on connecting Delhi's Act East Policy with the ASEAN community, which has a GDP of more than \$2.2 trillion and a population of 620million people.

In his recommendations for the future of strategic partnership between India and Southeast Asia, Tan Sri Rastam Mohd Isa, chairman and chief executive of the Institute of Strategic and International Studies Malaysia called for people-centred relations be-

tween the two sides, highlighting the importance of the business sector's role.

Recognizing relations with the ASEAN as one

of the cornerstones of India's foreign policy and the foundation of its Act East Policy, which focuses on ties with Southeast Asian

nations, Mr. Anil Wadhwa, Secretary (East) of India's Ministry of External Affairs, affirmed that India (See page 2)



The Red Fort, photographed Friday, is one of the most popular tourist destinations in Old Delhi, India.—PHOTO: YE MYINT



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Pyidaungsu Hluttaw

Joint Bill Committee suggests exclusion of microenterprises in SME bill



NAY PYI TAW, 13 March — The Joint Bill Committee at the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw on Friday put forward its findings with respect to the bill of the development of small and medium enterprises on which two Houses held different opinions.

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw continues for 26th day session.—MNA

The bill should exclude the section of microenterprises as it is mainly for SMEs, the joint bill committee said in its report of findings, suggesting the deletion of its definition of the term 'worker' in order not to contradict the existing staff regulations and rules.

The union taxation bill of 2015 came under discussion, with union-level officials making clarifications on the bill.

The Ministry of Home Affairs, the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, the Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development, the Ministry of Electric Power, the Ministry of Commerce and the Ministry of Mines explained their tax collection systems across the country.

The parliament will meet on 16 March.—MNA

Drafting bills must comply with existing laws: Amyotha Hluttaw's bill committee

NAY PYI TAW, 13 March — The Amyotha Hluttaw on Friday heard suggestions and opinions voiced by political parties on the national education amendment bill, officials said.

The Bill Committee said the national education bill is concerned with all the people residing in the country and as a result deserves special care and thorough consideration. Drafting bills needs to comply with the constitutional legislation and other existing laws while taking into consideration their practicality and benefits to the country and the people,



Amyotha Hluttaw Bill Committee hears suggestions and opinions from political parties on national education amendment bill.—MNA

the committee explained. Representatives from 11 political parties shared their ideas and opinions on the education amendment bill.—MNA

Ceasefire talks likely to resume in a few days

YANGON, 13 March — The Union Peace Working Committee is reported to have its seventh meeting in a few days with the Nationwide Ceasefire Coordination Team at Myanmar Peace Centre here, according to officials at MPC.

The five-day meeting will focus on eight remaining points of the draft nationwide ceasefire deal, including conflict reduction, ceasefire supervision and restrictions of military operations.

U Aung Naing Oo, joint director of peace talks at MPC, said the meeting is expected to take place on 17 March.

The two sides coordinated the draft nationwide ceasefire agreement at the same venue from 22-23 last December.

Ye Khaung Nyunt, Myat Thanda Maung; Photo: Po Htaung

Photo shows recent meeting of peace-making process.

Myanmar welcomes extension of India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway to link up with Cambodia, Lao PDR and Vietnam

NAY PYI TAW, 13 March — U Tin Oo Lwin, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs arrived back in Yangon on Friday morning after attending the Delhi Dialogue VII held in New Delhi, India, on 11 and 12 March 2015.

The dialogue was officiated by Smt Sushma Swaraj, Minister of External Affairs of India. She delivered a keynote address under the theme: "ASEAN-India; Shaping the post 2015 Agenda". Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, Minister of Education, Youth and Sport of Cambodia and Vice Foreign Minister of Indonesia also made their keynote addresses.

In DD VII inaugural session, there were two panel discussions on "Building Connectivity between India and ASEAN" and "Future Direction on In-

dia-ASEAN Strategic Partnership". U Tin Oo Lwin, discussed under the connectivity theme.

The deputy minister, in his panel discussion, mentioned how ASEAN Connectivity is playing an important component in the ASEAN Community that will emerge by the end of this year and said that Myanmar serves as ASEAN's gateway to South Asia and also India's gateway to ASEAN. He welcomed the extension of India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway to link up with Cambodia, Lao PDR and Vietnam. He stressed that part of regional connectivity will serve as a key in prompting ASEAN-India economic activities. He viewed that ASEAN-India Strategic Partnership should be enhanced by seizing the opportunity of India's Act East Policy transformed

from the Look East Policy, in view of mutual benefits. Lao PDR, Vietnam, Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines and Deputy Secretary General of ASEAN also exchanged their views and comment respectively on the above-mentioned panel discussions.

After attending the dialogue, the deputy minister met Myanmar Ambassador, military attaché and staff at their offices and explained reform measures taken by the government and development in Myanmar.

The deputy minister also visited Bodhi Gaya on 12 March and inspected two stone inscriptions and a guest house for Myanmar pilgrims at Bodhi Gaya built by King Bagyidaw and King Mindon and had the meeting with the government of Bihar State for renovation.—MNA



Academics recommend...

(from page 1)
continues to support ASEAN's central role in the evolving regional architecture. In his keynote address before the academic sessions, the secretary stressed the need for India-ASEAN cooperation for maritime and cyber security, freedom of navigation, and the peaceful settlement of disputes in accordance with international law.

The seventh dialogue's second day, held at the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA), in New Delhi on Thursday, com-

prised of academic sessions on geopolitical, socio-cultural and economic issues and the way forward for ASEAN-India relations.

During the sessions, policy makers, think tanks, academics and opinion makers made their presentations on maritime and cyber security, establishment of knowledge societies and economies and enhancement of cultural linkages and people-to-people contacts, energy cooperation, integration of regional production networks and value chains.

According to the Min-

istry of External Affairs of India, the India-ASEAN Free Trade Agreement in services and investments will come into force later this year. With the volume of trade and investments increasing at a healthy pace, India-ASEAN trade has grown 20 times in the last 20 years to reach over US \$74 billion in 2013-2014.

Setting as targets trade worth \$100 billion by 2015 and \$200 billion by 2020, negotiations for a common ground on the regional comprehensive economic partnership (RCEP) are underway, the ministry said.

GNLM

NATIONAL

President U Thein Sein...

(from page 1)

Malaysia for short-term courses and human resources development under the Malaysia Technical Cooperation Programme since 2000, with expansion of the programme discussed during the meeting.

Afterwards, the president and wife arrived at the residence of the Myanmar ambassador in Malaysia and met with staff, families and students studying there. The president presented stipends for Myanmar students in Malaysia.

Daw Khin Khin Win, Wife of President U Thein Sein, visited the handicraft museum in Kuala Lumpur on Friday morning.

The president and party arrived backed in Yangon at 4.20 pm in the afternoon.

The president was welcomed back at Yangon International Airport by Union ministers U Nyan Tun Aung, Dr Daw Khin San Yi, Dr Than Aung, U Kyaw Lwin and U Than Htay, Chief Minister of Yangon Region U Myint Swe, the commander of Yangon Command and officials.

Union Ministers U Wunna Maung Lwin, U Tin Naing Thein, U Zeyar Aung, U Aye Myint, U Htay Aung, U Ye Htut and officials accompanied the president on the trip.

MNA



Myanmar delegation led by President U Thein Sein holds talks with Malaysian delegation led by Malaysian Prime Minister Mr Najib Razak.—MNA



Daw Khin Khin Win, wife of President U Thein Sein, meets with wife of the Malaysian Prime Minister.—MNA

Speaker of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw meets visitors

NAY PYI TAW, 13 March—Speaker of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Thura U Shwe Mann explained parliamentary affairs to faculty members and students of Yangon University of Economics at the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Friday.

A total of 136 students and faculty members from

YUE, 108 members of Union Solidarity and Development Party and war veterans of Magway Region and 64 from Thongwa USDPA visited the Hluttaw complex. From 20 January to date, 7,747 visitors have observed the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw.

MNA

Govt increases annual spending on better health care:

Vice President Dr Sai Mauk Kham

NAY PYI TAW, 13 March — Vice President Dr Sai Mauk Kham met doctors and staff at a 1,000-bed hospital here on Friday, hearing brief accounts of the hospital's background history, the government's assistance, the ministry's guidance and health care services.

The medical superintendent of the hospital gave clarifications on the use of budget allotment for the

construction of new surgical operations theatres, staff accommodations and other facilities.

Officials reported to the vice president on progress of construction of a maternity hospital, an orthopaedic hospital, a children's hospital, and an eye, ear, nose and throat hospital.

Vice President Dr Sai Mauk Kham spoke of the government's efforts to promote health care through

annually increased spending on the health sector, calling for collective cooperation in providing better health care.

The vice president urged officials to give greater emphasis on keeping the hospital and its environs clean and pleasant.—MNA

Vice President Dr Sai Mauk Kham comforts a patient at Nay Pyi Taw General Hospital (1000-bed).—MNA



MRTV re-transmission comes into operations in Hinthada

HINTHADA, 13 March—An MRTV re-transmission station (Hinthada) was commissioned into service in Hinthada, Ayeyawady Region, on Friday, with Deputy Minister for Information U Pike Htway in attendance.

The deputy minister said that Information Ministry gives priority to public service works for serving the interests of the State and the people, adding that DVBT2 set top boxes will be

provided to low income families free of charge.

The re-transmission station will cover Thayawady, Kwinkauk and Aingthabyu villages in Letpadan Township, Danubyu, Ingapu and Htugyi towns through digital system.

The deputy minister handed over DVB T2 set top boxes for Ayeyawady Region to the region development affairs minister and books to the region minister for forestry and mines.—MNA

Mon ethnics in Mandalay Region develop language education



MANDALAY, 13 March — Under auspices of venerable Mon ethnic Buddhist monks, the Central Mon Ethnic Education Committee held a meeting with Mandalay Region

committee on education movements of Mon ethnics, at Khemalawka Mon monastery in Chanmyathazi Township, Mandalay, on Thursday.

Chairman of the Man-

dalay Region committee Nai Maung Myint briefed all attendees on the status of Mon ethnics in the education sector in Mandalay Region.

Officials discussed

financial statements, the organisational setup of the committee, and the teaching of the Mon language to youths.

Tin Maung (Mandalay)

Matriculation examination runs smoothly in Mandalay Region



MANDALAY, 13 March — A total of 87,057 students, accounting for 95.39 percent of the student body, are sitting the matriculation examination for the 2014-15 fiscal year in Mandalay as of 11 March.

Local authorities are providing assistance for the examination centres to ensure the convenience of students sitting the tests.

The Mandalay Region education officer said, "District and township supervi-

sory committees check the exam centres to achieve a smooth examination process. Exam supervisors are assigned duty inside and outside classrooms."

The education department has opened 161 exam centres in the townships of Mandalay Region, in addition to the exam centre at Mandalay General Hospital where two student patients are sitting the exam.

Min Htet Aung (Mandalay Sub-printing House)

Rural area in Tatkon Township illuminated with solar panels

TATKON, 13 March — Thabyegon, Natmar and Kwantaw villages, 10 miles northeast of Tatkon Township, received supply of electricity through solar panels as of Thursday.

Nay Pyi Taw Council members U Phone Zaw Han and U Myint Shwe and Nay Pyi Taw Council Area electrical engineer U Kyaw Nyein launched supply of electricity to the three villages, while township administrator U Kan Saw Hlaing handed over documents related to the electrification project to the village authorities.

Nay Pyi Taw Council spent K168 million from the 2014-15 additional budget on power supply facilities so as to improve the living standard of local residents, allowing them to

use electric lighting instead of oil lamps. Min Yazar Aung Company was assigned duty to install solar panels and related equipment at 840 houses from

the village-tract.

"We did not need to spend money on installation of solar panels thanks to arrangement of the Nay Pyi Taw Council. All

the people from the village-tracts are very happy in enjoying the supply of electricity," a local resident said at the ceremony.

Tin Soe Lwin (Tatkon)



Home for the aged invites donations



NYAUNGLEBIN, 13 March — Cetana social association has established a home for the aged on Setyon Street in Myoma Ward 1, Nyaunglebin, Bago Region.

Members of the association take care of the food, health and social needs of residents with contributions from well-wishers from around the country.

On Thursday, U Nay Lin and family of Nyaunglebin donated cash to be

spent on serving meals to the aged. Patron of the association Dr. Myint Than (Nyaunglebin) accepted the cash donation.

Well-wishers may donate cash and kind for the home's 25 aged residents by calling the office of the home on 052-50772, patron Dr. Myint Than on 09-5385689, chairman U Than Aye on 09-5385396, or head of office U Cho Tu on 09-33488051.

Nay Lin (Nyaunglebin)

LOCAL NEWS

Royal Haskoning DGV Co. provides internship awards to MMU students

YANGON, 13 March—Royal Haskoning DGV, a Netherlands-based engineering company, on Wednesday provided internship awards to outstanding students from Myanmar Maritime University, a source reported.



The two female students, who received the Bachelor of Engineering (Port and Harbour) in the 2013-2014 academic year, will attend the six-month internship programme in Vietnam at the branch office of Haskoning DGV Co.

With the aim of developing human resources in education, the Netherlands-based company started its internship programme last year, recognising two outstanding students each year. It has pledged to continue the programme.

Myanmar Maritime University under the Ministry of Transport made necessary arrangements for nearly 1,000 graduates to find employment at shipping companies and international maritime companies.—GNLM

Well-wishers donate cash and kind to nunnery



MANDALAY, 13 March — Women's Affairs Organizations at different levels in Mandalay Region, together with well-wishers, donate rice, edible oil, salt and groceries to nunneries in downtown Mandalay monthly.

On Thursday, Patron

of Mandalay Region WAO and officials donated provisions and K410,000 each to Atulawady, Thitsakami, Thitalayanthi and Dhamma

Wihayi nunneries.

The cash and kind donations totalled K2.191 million.—Maung Pyi Thu (Mandalay)

Cancer foundation to admit patients at three new building

PATHEINGYI, 13 March — A ceremony to inaugurate three new buildings of U Hla Tun Hospice Cancer Foundation was held in Patheingyi Township, Mandalay Region, on Thursday, with Chief Minister of the region U Ye Myint and wife in attendance.

Mandalay Region minister Dr Win Hlaing, Vice-chairman of the Hospice Cancer Foundation and Prof. Dr Yee Yee Myint, and well-wisher Dr Khin Khin Yi, of Shine Hope Company, cut the ribbon to open new buildings.

Patron of the foundation Brig-Gen Abel (Rtd) extended greetings. The chief minister explained the

brief history of the foundation and its provision of health care to patients.

On the occasion, the patron of the association donated K2.5 million for the soldiers who are discharging defence duty in Laukkai region and their families through the chief minister.

The foundation spent K150 million on construction of the two-storey "U Hla Phaw Hall" and K175 million on construction of the three-storey "Maykhalat Hall". Well-wisher Dr Daw Khin Khin Yi donated a three-storey building named for her by spending K175 million on construction.

Thiha Ko Ko (Mandalay)

Rural road improves living standard of residents

INGAPU, 13 March—The recent completion of a 1.5-mile long concrete road by the Ingapu Township Department of Rural Development will reduce travel time and provide a smoother journey between three villages and surrounding areas that are home to more than 900 people.

Construction of the inter-village road passing Gyeiktaw, Alesu and Hsingaung-in villages was a rural development task conducted by the Department of Rural Development under the Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development.

Win Bo (TIPRD)



MCDC allows construction of water-throwing pandals around moat

MANDALAY, 13 March — Mandalay City Development Committee on Thursday allotted plots for water-throwing pandals and decorated pandals to be built along the moats surrounding the Mandalay Royal Palace during the 2015 Maha Thingyan festival.

The head of the Revenue Department of the committee said, "The

committee allows construction of 10 pandals on each moat, but it allotted plots to build the pandals on the eastern and southern moats due to a larger number of applicants. The committee has allotted five pandals for the western moat and one for northern moat."

The committee permitted construction of the pandals as of 12 March and

ordered the applicants to complete the construction no later than 9 April. The applicants will not be allowed to rename the pandals and hand over or sell them to others.

Applicants must each pay a K500,000 fee to the MCDC for use of water to be supplied by the committee.

Min Htet Aung (Mandalay Sub-printing House)



Bangladesh rescuers search factory rubble after collapse kills seven



Rescue workers are seen at the scene of a collapsed cement factory in the port town of Mongla, southwest of Dhaka, on 12 March, 2015.—REUTERS

DHAKA, 13 March — Rescuers in Bangladesh searched through the wreckage of a factory warehouse on Friday, a day after it collapsed killing at least seven

people, but far fewer people were trapped than an initial estimate of 100.

Soldiers and sailors in the port town of Mongla helped emergency services

search through rubble of the cement factory warehouse and pull out nearly 50 survivors as well as two more bodies overnight.

Senior district official Mohammad Shah Alam Sardar later told *Reuters* the search had finished.

“The rescue operation has been called off as no more bodies were found,” Sardar said by telephone from the scene. Thirty people were injured, some critically, officials said.

The warehouse at the Mongla Cement Factory facility was under construction in the town, 335 km (210 miles) southwest of the capital, Dhaka, when the acci-

dent happened. The Mongla Cement Factory is a subsidiary of the Bangladesh army.

The cause was still being investigated but one survivor told media the building’s roof had come down first, adding that there might have been problems in setting up scaffolding.

Bangladesh has a poor record for building safety.

A complex of shops and small factories collapsed in 2013 killing more than 1,130 people, most of them garment workers.

The collapse of Rana Plaza, built on swampy ground outside the capital, Dhaka, ranked among the world’s worst industrial accidents and prompted a global outcry for improved safety in the world’s second-largest exporter of ready-made garments.—*Reuters*

Stronger ties with ASEAN vital to Japan’s security: ODA paper

TOKYO, 13 March — Japan called for stronger ties with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in an annual report on foreign aid Friday, saying they were vital to ensuring its national security at a time when China’s influence in the region is growing.

Seeing the 10-member regional bloc not only as an “extremely important market” and “place for investment,” the ODA White Paper for 2014 said, “Achieving growth and stability in ASEAN has a great significance as well to Japan’s security when thinking about how the dis-

tribution network for goods underpinning the Japanese economy runs through the region.”

The report was approved by the Cabinet a month after the country’s Development Cooperation Charter, revised for the first time since 2003, highlighted Japan’s stance of using official development assistance to protect its national interests in the wake of the changing global environment.

Under the charter, Japan’s ODA can be used to support foreign armed forces in noncombat operations such as disaster relief, infra-

structure building and coast guard activities. Until then, ODA was usually disbursed for projects to build infrastructure and reduce poverty in recipient countries.

Looking back at how Japan has been appreciated by its aid recipients over the past 60 years, the white paper said ODA is “not only contributing to recipient countries and the international community but Japan’s peace, stability and prosperity too.”

On China, the paper said Japanese ODA will be disbursed in “limited” cases such as grants and technical cooperation to tackle issues

such as pollution, infectious diseases and food security in China.

The report showed that Japan’s ODA in 2013 totaled about \$22.53 billion, up 20.7 percent from the previous year and ranking second after the United States.

With a combined population of over 600 million, Southeast Asian nations are among the key recipients of Japanese ODA, notably Myanmar and Vietnam. The other ASEAN members are Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand.—*Kyodo News*

S Korea honours ex-Nagasaki mayor over support for A-bomb survivors



Sueko Motoshima (in wheelchair), wife of the late Nagasaki Mayor Hitoshi Motoshima, receives a letter of commendation from Park Jin Woong (L), South Korean consul general in Fukuoka, in the western Japanese city of Nagasaki on 12 March, 2015. The South Korean government honoured Hitoshi Motoyama, who died last year at the age of 92, in recognition of his support for Korean atomic bomb survivors.—KYODO NEWS

NAGASAKI, 13 March — The South Korean government on Thursday honored the late Nagasaki Mayor Hitoshi Motoshima in recognition of his support for Korean atomic bomb survivors.

Park Jin Woong, South Korean consul general in Fukuoka, handed a letter of commendation to Motoshima’s wife Sueko in Nagasaki. Motoshima died last year at the age of 92.

According to Nobuto Hirano, co-leader of a support group for atomic bomb survivors living overseas who were in Hiroshima and Nagasaki during the attacks in 1945, Motoshima visited

South Korea in 1992 and met with some of the survivors. He also extended support for a South Korean atomic bomb survivors group.

Sueko expressed gratitude for the letter of commendation, while the consul general said he hopes both countries will cooperate in supporting South Korean A-bomb survivors.

Motoshima was shot in 1990 while in office by a member of a right-wing group after saying Emperor Hirohito, posthumously known as Emperor Showa, bore responsibility for World War II.

Kyodo News

DPRK fires 7 surface-to-air missiles into eastern waters on 12 March

SEOUL, 13 March — The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) fired seven surface-to-air missiles into its eastern waters on Thursday, South Korea’s Defence Ministry said on Friday.

A Defence Ministry official said by phone that the DPRK conducted the missile-firing exercises on Thursday evening observed by top DPRK leader Kim Jong Un.

The seven surface-to-air missiles were launched from Seonduk in South Hamkyung Province between 6 pm and 7 pm Thursday into its eastern waters. Seonduk is located in the DPRK’s east coast.—*Xinhua*

Modi passes first major economic reform with insurance overhaul

NEW DELHI, 13 March — Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi passed his first major economic reform almost a year after coming to power, as parliament voted late on Thursday to allow more foreign investment in the insurance sector.

Lawmakers in the upper house agreed to increase the foreign investment limit in local insurers to 49 percent from 26 percent after the opposition Congress party swung behind the bill which cleared the lower house last week.

The passage of the bill represents a rare victory for Modi, who was elected last

May on a promise of jobs and economic growth, but has seen other initiatives stymied by clashes with the opposition in parliament.

The opening of the insurance sector — which has languished in parliament for more than six years — is one of a series of measures that Modi hopes will make it easier for overseas firms to bet on India’s growth story.

“I don’t see massive inflows into the sector immediately from foreign investors. Nevertheless, it will be a very positive signal,” said Dhirendra Kumar, chief executive of funds and insurance ad-



India’s Prime Minister Narendra Modi attends an event organized by the Christian community to celebrate the beatification of two Indians by Pope Francis late last year, in New Delhi on 17 Feb, 2015.—REUTERS

visory service Value Research.

The legislation will

shake up India’s overcrowded life insurance sector, allowing global

insurers such as Britain’s Prudential — which holds a minority stake in India’s biggest private life insurer ICICI Prudential Life — and others to increase their Indian stakes.

It could also pave the way for the year’s biggest initial public offering, as HDFC Life, a joint venture between India’s HDFC and Britain’s Standard Life Plc, has said it would move towards a listing once the rule change is in place.

Congress sources said that, while the party remained opposed to a land acquisition bill that the government was trying to get through parliament,

they had backed the insurance bill as they had first proposed the measure in 2008.

Modi needed both houses of parliament to pass the bill in the current session to prevent an executive order he issued in December to implement the insurance measure from lapsing.

Efforts by former prime minister Manmohan Singh’s government to raise the investment cap were thwarted by rival political parties, including Modi’s, which at the time opposed private companies having greater control over insurance funds.—*Reuters*



Russian President
Vladimir Putin

Russian state TV shows Putin for first time in days

Moscow, 13 March — Russian state television aired what it said was footage of President Vladimir Putin working at his residence outside Moscow on Friday, a first appearance since he dropped out of sight days ago, triggering rumors he was ill or sidelined by internal conflict.

In the footage, Putin was shown in his office at his Novo-Ogaryovo residence, where he conducts many of his meetings, sitting across a table from Supreme Court head Vyacheslav Lebedev and talking about plans to reform the judicial system.

Dressed in grey suit and a blue patterned tie, he looked in no way different from usual. In the brief footage, he was shown nodding and smiling as Lebedev spoke and could be heard saying a few words about the court system. A visit by Putin to the Kazakh capital, which was to have taken place this week, was canceled with no official explanation, while a meeting in Moscow with a delegation from the Georgian separatist region of South Ossetia was also called off. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told *Reuters* on Thursday that Putin, who is 62, was in good health and was working as usual. However, the cancellation of engagements sparked feverish speculation on Russian social media — though most mainstream organizations, which are deferential to the Kremlin, steered clear of the issue. The rumours fed into an atmosphere among Moscow's political classes that was already more than usually febrile because of the conflict in Ukraine, and the 27 February killing of opposition figure Boris Nemtsov.

There was no hard evidence that Putin was ill, or that there was any crisis inside the Kremlin. Markets were unruffled by the rumors. The rouble strengthened slightly on Monday, after the central bank cut rates by one percentage point, slightly less than some analysts had expected.—*Reuters*

Major nations hold talks on ending UN sanctions on Iran

UNITED NATIONS, 13 March — Major world powers have begun talks about a United Nations Security Council resolution to lift UN sanctions on Iran if a nuclear agreement is struck with Teheran, a step that could make it harder for the US Congress to undo a deal, Western officials said.

The talks between Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States — the five permanent members of the Security Council — plus Germany and Iran, are taking place ahead of difficult negotiations that resume next week over constricting Iran's nuclear ability.

Some eight UN resolutions — four of them imposing sanctions — ban Iran from uranium enrichment and other sensitive atomic work and bar it from buying and selling atomic technology and anything linked to ballistic missiles. There is also a UN arms embargo.

Iran sees their removal as crucial as UN measures are a legal basis for more



US Secretary of State John Kerry (L) and foreign ministers, Laurent Fabius of France (2nd L), Philip Hammond of Britain (R) and Frank-Walter Steinmeier of Germany (2nd R), meet in Paris on 7 March, 2015.—REUTERS

stringent US and European Union measures to be enforced. The US and EU often cite violations of the UN ban on enrichment and other sensitive nuclear work as justification for imposing additional penalties on Iran.

US Secretary of State John Kerry told Congress on Wednesday that an Iran nuclear deal would not be legally binding, meaning future US presidents could

decide not to implement it. That point was emphasized in an open letter by 47 Republican senators sent on Monday to Iran's leaders asserting any deal could be discarded once President Barack Obama leaves office in January 2017.

But a Security Council resolution on a nuclear deal with Iran could be legally binding, say Western diplomatic officials. That could

complicate and possibly undercut future attempts by Republicans in Washington to unravel an agreement.

Iran and the six powers are aiming to complete the framework of a nuclear deal by the end of March, and achieve a full agreement by 30 June, to curb Iran's most sensitive nuclear activities for at least 10 years in exchange for a gradual end to all sanctions on the Islamic

Republic.

So far, those talks have focussed on separate US and European Union sanctions on Iran's energy and financial sectors, which Teheran desperately wants removed. The sanctions question is a sticking point in the talks that resume next week in Lausanne, Switzerland, between Iran and the six powers.

But Western officials involved in the negotiations said they are also discussing elements to include in a draft resolution for the 15-nation Security Council to begin easing UN nuclear-related sanctions that have been in place since December 2006.

"If there's a nuclear deal, and that's still a big 'if', we'll want to move quickly on the UN sanctions issue," an official said, requesting anonymity.

The negotiations are taking place at senior foreign ministry level at the six powers and Iran, and not at the United Nations in New York.

Reuters

Attacker of US envoy in S Korea targeted symbolic American figure

SEOUL, 13 March — The man who assaulted and injured US Ambassador to South Korea Mark Lippert in Seoul last week has told South Korean police that he targeted the envoy as a "symbolic figure" representing the United States, the police said on Friday.

Kim Ki Jong also said he thought of attacking the envoy as he believed the United States was to blame for the deterioration in inter-Korean relations that

prevented the reunion of family members separated between the North and South from taking place in February to coincide with the Lunar New Year holidays, the police said.

The suspect, however, denied having had the intention to kill or having worked with any accomplices in implementing the attack on Lippert with a knife on 5 March, they said.

Kim, a South Ko-

rean ultranationalist and pro-Pyongyang civic activist arrested over attempted murder and other charges, has expressed opposition to South Korea-US joint military exercises that began 2 March as a factor that caused the relations between the two Korea to sour.

The police have confiscated material that praise North Korea from Kim's residence and are investigating whether the suspect

acted based on an order by pro-North Korean forces as he was found to have spoken on the phone prior to the assault with an individual formerly convicted of violating the National Security Law.

Lippert sustained cuts to his face and hand in the attack, which occurred during a breakfast event at a lecture hall in downtown Seoul where he was scheduled to give a speech.

Kyodo News

Japan, France eye antiterror, defence cooperation

TOKYO, 13 March — Japan and France will hold a meeting of their defence and foreign ministers Friday evening in Tokyo at which they are expected to affirm increased cooperation between their defence forces and in their fight against terrorism.

In the so-called two-plus-two security meeting, the four ministers plan to agree to start talks with a view to reciprocal provision of supplies and services between the Self-Defence Forces and French armed forces as Japan moves to give the SDF a greater role in its pursuit

of contributing more proactively to world peace, according to Japanese officials. In the wake of Japan's easing of the ban on the overseas transfer of arms and military technology, the two sides are also likely to reach agreement on the transfer of defence equipment and technology, sources familiar with bilateral relations said.

The meeting, a second of its kind following the inaugural session in January last year in Paris, brings together Japanese Defence Minister Gen Nakatani and Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida and their French

counterparts Jean-Yves Le Drian and Laurent Fabius.

Given that Japan and France were both hit by terror incidents earlier this year, the four ministers are likely to agree to boost efforts in partnership with the international community to curb extremism and activity by the Islamic State group that killed two Japanese nationals it took hostage.

According to the Japanese officials, the Japanese ministers are expected to call for France's increased engagement in the Asia-Pacific region. The two sides are likely to affirm con-

tinued cooperation in the training for humanitarian assistance and disaster relief being organized by French forces units stationed in the South Pacific and attended by SDF observers.

They are to compare notes on regional issues such as the crisis in Ukraine, the security situation in East Asia and developments in Africa and the Middle East, according to the officials.

Japan also plans to explain its efforts to develop seamless security legislation.

Kyodo News

45 immigration offenders arrested for overstaying in Singapore

SINGAPORE, 13 March — A total of 45 immigration offenders (IO) were arrested for overstaying in a three-day multiple enforcement operations in Singapore, the Immigration & Checkpoints Authority (ICA) said in a press release on Friday.

The operation, conducted from 10-12 March, arrested 28 males and 17 females, ages between 20 and 50 years old. Among those arrested, most were from Bangladesh, China and Nepal, ICA said.

All the IO had overstayed in Singapore, the release said, adding that a 31-year-old Bangladeshi national who had sublet his room to other IO was arrested for suspected harboring offences. Investigations are ongoing. Under Singapore's Immigration Act, the penalties for overstaying or illegal entry are a jail term of up to six months plus a minimum of three strokes of the cane, while the penalties for illegal departure is a fine of up to 2,000 Singapore dollars (1,440 US dollars), a jail term of up to six months, or both.—*Xinhua*

PERSPECTIVES

Saturday, 14 March, 2015

Rote learning is not for entire life

By Myint Win Thein

Rote learning means memorisation of basic facts through repetition. It is a good way of learning new words and spelling for children, but it is not a learning method appropriate for their entire lives.

When they become students of upper primary, middle or high school levels, they need another learning method known as critical thinking. This is because in everyday life, they will face challenges and problems that require them to formulate their own solutions. To do so, they need to understand concepts and principles and apply them to the given problem.

Without critical thinking, students are not able to apply what they have learnt to real-life situations. It can be seen clearly that rote learning alone is not an appropriate method for higher education institutions. Emphasizing it too much produces so many graduates who just do what they are told.

At the root of the problem is a teaching method that emphasises studying for examinations that only test rote learning skills. It is necessary to train teachers on how to help children think critically, and to adopt examination systems that test this ability.

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COMPETENT Workers

Kyaw Win (Labour)

Competency is the ability to perform a task, in a job or occupation to the required standards. It is therefore an essential element of high labour productivity. Economists have maintained that increasing labour productivity is the key to sustained economic and social development.

At any level of technology, workers of course need to acquire the functional competencies in order to perform a task to required standards in their jobs or occupations. In ad-

dition, generic competencies which are applicable to a range of jobs or occupations are in demand by employers with a progressive workforce in mind. This is true of all occupations whether in the agriculture, industry or service sectors.

Many key competencies have been suggested by academics and practitioners. They are spelled out under various headings such as Basic, Generic and Specific competencies. The acronym 'COMPETENT' would perhaps describe in

a nutshell, the most needed competencies:-

Communication & Cooperation Competency- Ability to communicate and cooperate with people in a constructive way.

Organizational Competency- Ability to organize and coordinate work and group activities.

Methodological Competency- Ability to apply appropriate procedures to assigned tasks.

Participatory Competency- Ability to work in a team, take

decisions and assume responsibility.

Environmental Competency- Ability to comply with environmental requirements. **Teaching & Learning Competency-** Ability to impart knowledge and skills as well as acquire new knowledge and skills.

Ethical Competency- Ability and willingness to observe professional and occupational ethics.

Negotiation Competency- Ability to negotiate in resolving conflict situations or solving problems at work.

Technical Competency- Mastery of the task and content of the work and the knowledge and skills necessary to perform it.

Given of course, there

may be some other competencies, for example Social Competencies, which may be added to the above list.

The 'level' of the required competencies would vary with the type and hierarchy of the jobs or occupations in the organization, from semi-skilled workers up the scale to management level personnel.

Training and certification based on competency standards can ensure that the worker has the necessary knowledge, skills and abilities required for adequate performance in the job or occupation concerned.

Acquiring technical competency, particularly in occupations that require a range of 'hands-on' performance, entails not just knowing how to do the job (as can be learned during a demonstration of the job by a skilled person or In-

structor) but an adequate period of practice either on-the-job or in a simulated situation under supervision of an Instructor, till the practical skills are developed to the level required. It may also involve, after the completion of the training, a period of actual performance 'on-the-job' under supervision. Training should also include the 'generic skills' which are required for adequate performance in the occupation at the competency level concerned.

Employers will benefit by employing trained and/or certified COMPETENT workers through enhanced productivity of labour and improved quality of their products or services. At the same time by being certified as COMPETENT, workers can enhance their own employability, incomes and upward mobility.

JAPAN grants US\$228,659 for monastic school, rural health branches in Mon and Kayin States

YANGON, 13 March—The Japanese Government, under its Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects (GGP) Scheme, has extended assistance of US\$228,659 for two humanitarian assistance programs. It shared US\$121,025 for construction of new building for Thaw Ka Myaung Youth Development Center and Monastic Middle School in Bilin Township, Mon State and US\$107,634 for construction of two rural health branches in Hpa-an Township, Kayin State.

The handover and opening ceremonies of the two projects took place in Bilin Township, Mon State and in Hpa-an Town-

ship, Kayin State on 9 and 10 March 2015 respectively.

Mr. Taro WATANABE, Second Secretary of the Embassy of Japan, U Zaw Min, Kayin State Chief Minister, U Saw Aung Kyaw Min, Kayin State Hluttaw Speaker, Hpa-an Township Medical Officer, Bilin Township Administrator, committee members of the construction projects, and local residents attended the ceremonies for the projects.

The school buildings in Thaw Ka Myaung Monastic Middle School were outdated and monestry buildings were used as student classrooms. Under such conditions, the Japanese Government

supported construction of a two-storey R.C building with full furniture. The project will benefit 286 students of the school.

There were no rural health branches in Pa-on village and Pawt-Htaw village of Hpa-an Township prior to this project. The medical staff had to provide medical health-care services in rented residential houses. Under such conditions, the Japanese Government supported construction of two Sub Rural Health Centers including staff quarters with medical equipment and furniture. The project will benefit 7,745 people from four villages.

GNLM



Officials cut the ribbon to inaugurate rural health branch in Paww-Htaw village in Hpa-an Township.

NATIONAL

Myanmar, Indonesia focus on bilateral cooperation

NAY PYI TAW, 13 March — Union Minister at the President Office U Hla Tun received Abdurrahman Mohammad Fachir, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Indonesia, and party at the President Office, here, on Friday. They discussed bilateral cooperation between Myanmar and Indonesia. Also present at the call were officials of the President Office and members of the Indonesian delegation.—MNA

Authorities return nine students to parents



Protestor students and parents leave Thayawady District General Administration Department after handover ceremony.—MNA

NAY PYI TAW, 13 March — Authorities on Friday released nine students and two reporters engaged in recent protests at the National Education Law in the township of Letpadan, Bago Region, according to officials. Considering their pursuit of education, authorities pardoned their offences and returned them to their respective parents. On 12 March, authorities returned 17 students to their parents, making a total of 28 including two reporters.—MNA

Mitsubishi becomes first private sector donor to the Livelihoods and Food Security Trust Fund in Myanmar

TOKYO, 13 March — The Mitsubishi Corporation has signed an agreement with UNOPS to provide funding to improve food security and livelihoods for rural communities in Myanmar. The agreement, signed by United Nations Under-Secretary General and UNOPS Executive Director, Ms. Grete Faremo, and Mitsubishi's Executive Vice President, Mr. Yasuhito Hirota, is the first private contribution to the multi-donor Livelihoods and Food Security Trust Fund (LIFT), which is managed by UNOPS. LIFT has been working in Myanmar since 2009 to assist the country in its efforts to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger. "Despite good progress, poverty and food security continue to be major challenges in Myanmar," said United Nations Under-Secretary General and UNOPS Executive Di-

rector Ms. Grete Faremo. "One in four people live below the national poverty line. The challenge is immense. The new agreement between UNOPS and Mitsubishi will help LIFT continue its crucial work to reduce rural poverty in the country, which remains one of the poorest in Asia," she added.

With a contribution of \$200,000, Mitsubishi is the first private sector donor to LIFT, which is also funded by the European Union and the governments of Australia, Denmark, France, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United



Ten Buddhist monks who participated in the student protests in Letpadan on 10 March pledged to abide by the instructions issued by the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee. On 11 March, the monks left Aungmyay Beikman, a monastery, in Letpadan for their respective regions.—009

Matriculation students sit mathematics on third day

NAY PYI TAW, 13 March — The matriculation examination 2015 continued for the third day, Friday when students sat the mathematics. exam in regions and states in addition to Nay Pyi Taw Council Area, decreasing 1,143 students than those sitting Myanmar subject.

A total of 596,625 students sat the

MNA

States of America. To date, donors have committed \$205 million to LIFT. In the spirit of aid effectiveness, funds are pooled to allow for better programme coherence. "We believe that agriculture is, and will continue to be, a key industry in Myanmar. It is our pleasure to contribute to LIFT, which works for the livelihoods of farmers and supports the development of agriculture in Myanmar. We are proud to be able to become the first private sector donor to LIFT," said Mitsubishi's Executive Vice President, Mr. Yasuhito Hirota.

Since 2009, LIFT has reached nearly three mil-

lion people, or roughly five percent of Myanmar's population, improving the food security of over 1.3 million people. An estimated 60,000 households have reported an increase in their incomes as a result of LIFT support, and 183,000 households have accessed LIFT-funded microfinance loans for both farming and non-farming purposes. Women represent 87% of people taking microfinance loans.

For more information please contact LIFT's Communication Officer, Jacquetta Hayes jacquetah@unops.org

www.lift-fund.org
www.unops.org.

UNOPS

Huawei gives scholarships to 50 Myanmar students, donates new ICT curriculum

**By Khin Yadana;
Photo: May Oo Moe**

YANGON, 13 March — Chinese telecom giant Huawei Technologies on Friday awarded scholarships to 50 students at four Myanmar universities to assist their further study of information and communication technology.

The students from West Yangon Technological University, Technological University (Hmawby), Technological University (Thanlyin) and National Management College were recognised at a ceremony

at the Sedona Hotel.

At the ceremony, Huawei also signed a donation agreement with Technological University (Thanlyin) to implement a new curriculum (Huawei Authorized Network Academy-HANA) aimed at raising the skill level of graduates and increasing the number of ICT practitioners and trainers.

Huawei Managing Director Mr. Li Zhao said the "scholarships and HANA programmes are a key part of our continued investment in the educational development of Myanmar"

"We are confident that the Huawei HANA programme will serve students and faculty members in the universities in growing their expertise in the ICT field," Mr. Li Zhao said.

The investment builds on a memorandum of understanding signed in November, 2014 with the Ministry of Science and Technology to train young people in the country's ICT Excellence programme and collaborate on regional telecommunication development in order to prepare the next generation of ICT professionals.

Huawei recognizes that in the rapidly growing field there is an increasing need to support talented graduates who can take on the responsibilities of shaping Myanmar's industry, Mr. Li Zhao said.

Ma Thiri Wai was one of the students awarded a scholarship through the Huawei Programme. Currently in her final year at the information technology department at West Yangon Technological University, she plans a career in ICT upon graduation.

"Myanmar is chang-

ing very quickly and there are so many more opportunities opening for my generation," Ma Thiri Wai said. "I look forward to being able to give back to the development of this country with the skills I am gaining in my studies."



Centre-left opposition rides a solid lead into Israeli election

JERUSALEM, 13 March — Israel's centre-left opposition is poised for an upset victory in national elections next week, with the last opinion polls before the 17 March vote giving it a solid lead over Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's party.

Polls in two of Israel's leading newspapers predicted the Zionist Union would secure 25 or 26 seats in the 120-seat Knesset, against 21 or 22 for Likud. All polls in the past three days have given the same margin of victory.

No party has ever won an outright majority in Israel's 67-year history, making coalition-building critical to the formation of

a government.

Because there are more parties on the right and far-right of the political spectrum, Netanyahu was expected to be able to cobble together a coalition more easily than the centre-left, even if he narrowly loses the vote.

But there was positive news for the Zionist Union on that score too, with a poll of Israeli-Arabs showing the overwhelming majority would favour their united Arab party joining a center-left coalition government.

The survey showed 71 percent thought the Joint Arab List, which groups four Arab parties and enhances their electoral clout,



Isaac Herzog (C) is escorted by bodyguards during a campaign stop at a fruit and vegetable market in Lod near Tel Aviv on 3 March, 2015. REUTERS

should sign up with the Zionist Union, while 16 percent said it should support the coalition from the outside.

With the Joint Arab List expected to win 13 to 15 seats, it has become an important player in the election — it could end

up being the third largest group in parliament, giving a powerful voice to Israel's 20 percent Arab minority.

If the Zionist Union, jointly led by Labour party leader Isaac Herzog and former justice minister Tzipi Livni, wins, it is expected to link up with the far-left Meretz party (5 or 6 seats) and the centrist, secular Yesh Atid (13 seats).

With the Arab list on side too, it would need the support of just one more party with around 5 or 6 seats to cross the threshold of 61 and form a coalition.

That said, while the arithmetic is possible, it is still challenging. Israel's coalition-building is a messy and convoluted game that can spring surprises at the last minute.

Reuters

OSCE will extend Ukraine mission one year, may expand its size

VIENNA, 13 March — The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) will extend its observer mission to Ukraine for one year, until March 2016, and may double its size to 1,000 observers, a spokeswoman said on Thursday.

Ukraine's military said on Tuesday *pro-Russian* rebels were amassing heavy weapons in depots around separatist-held Donetsk city despite last month's ceasefire deal, which calls for the withdrawal of heavy weapons from the front line.

The OSCE said then that it could not confirm the withdrawal of weapons by either side, because it had not been given access to all locations where weapons might be stored. The OSCE monitoring mission



A vehicle of Special Monitoring Mission of the Organization for Security and Cooperation (OSCE) to Ukraine rides along a convoy of Ukrainian armed forces in Paraskoviivka, eastern Ukraine, on 26 Feb, 2015. REUTERS

to Ukraine was first deployed a year ago following a request from Ukraine. It delivers public reports on fighting between *pro-Russian* groups and Ukrainians loyal to Kiev as well as on movements on border

crossings between Russia and Ukraine.

The OSCE currently has around 470 civilian monitors on the ground in Ukraine, the spokeswoman said.

Reuters

US Army helicopter crash off Florida kills 11; most bodies recovered

PENSACOLA (Florida), 13 March — Search teams found the wreckage of an Army Black Hawk helicopter that crashed off Florida's Gulf Coast and have recovered the bodies of most of the seven Marines and four soldiers on board, authorities and local media said on Thursday.

A UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter plunged into the Santa Rosa Sound along the Florida Panhandle during a training exercise in foggy conditions Tuesday night. Officials said they had not determined the cause of the crash. The Louisiana National Guard said on Thursday that two of the soldiers' bodies had been recovered and the other two were likely still in the submerged aircraft.

The remains of the seven Marines also were recovered,

the *Pensacola News Journal* reported, citing the Guard. A Marine spokesman told *Reuters* he could not immediately confirm the recovery of the bodies.

Officials at the nearby Eglin Air Force Base were notified of the crash at around 10 pm on Tuesday, said Mark Giuliano, fire chief at the base. A second helicopter in the exercise had turned back due to the weather and was able to land safely. Sonar equipment helped locate the missing helicopter on Wednesday in the middle of the bay, Giuliano said. "It was certainly a high-impact crash," he said, adding the helicopter had broken into multiple pieces.

The Marines on board were part of a special operations unit from Camp Lejeune in North Carolina. They were conducting training

involving "helicopter and boat insertion and extraction" with an experienced Army air crew providing the helicopter support, a Marine Corps spokesman said. The soldiers and the helicopter were part of the Louisiana National Guard assigned to an Army unit based in Hammond, Louisiana. Grieving families have started sharing the names of the dead, whose identities have not yet been released by the military. Among the dead Marines were Marcus Bawol, of Warren, Michigan, and Kerry Kemp, formerly of Port Washington, Wisconsin, local media reported. Bawol was engaged to be married in October, the *Detroit Free Press* reported. Kemp was the married father of a baby girl, according to WISN-TV in Milwaukee.

Reuters

EU unlikely to agree next week to prolong Russia sanctions

BRUSSELS, 13 March — European Union leaders are unlikely to reach agreement at their summit next week to prolong economic sanctions on Russia that expire in July, a senior EU official said on Friday.

New sanctions on Russia are also off the table for now because EU governments want to give a chance to a fragile ceasefire in eastern Ukraine.

But some of the EU's 28 member states had pushed for an early decision on extending sanctions on Russia's financial, energy and defence sectors adopted in July last year

over Russia's annexation of Crimea and support for separatists in eastern Ukraine. While leaders will discuss sanctions at next week's summit, the senior EU official said a majority would probably want to hold over discussion of renewing the economic sanctions on Russia until July.

"What will be the final point we will see in the Council (summit) but I don't think there is unanimity at all for the rollover of sanctions, the sanctions that are due in July," the official, briefing reporters on condition of anonymity, said.



European Union Foreign Ministers pose for the media during their informal European Union Ministers of Foreign Affairs meeting (Gymnich) in Riga on 6 March, 2015.—REUTERS

EU governments did agree on Friday to prolong sanctions against Ukrainian and Russian people and companies accused of undermining Ukraine's sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence.

The asset freezes and travel bans on 150 people and 37 organizations were extended for a further six months, until 15 September. Details will be published in the EU's Official Journal on Saturday.

The decision was a legal formality after EU foreign ministers agreed in January to extend these sanctions.—Reuters

WORLD

UK girls helped by spy from anti-Islamic State coalition — Turkish minister



British teenage girls Shamima Begun, Amira Abase and Kadiza Sultana (L-R) walk through security at Gatwick airport before they boarded a flight to Turkey on 17 Feb, 2015, in this combination picture made from handout still images taken from CCTV and released by the Metropolitan Police on 22 Feb, 2015.—REUTERS

ANKARA, 13 March — Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu was quoted as saying on Thurs-

day that a spy working for a country in the US-led coalition fighting Islamic State helped three British girls

thought to have crossed into Syria via Turkey.

“Do you know who was the person who helped

these girls? This person was caught. It turned out to be someone who worked in the intelligence services of a country in the coalition,” state-run Anatolian news agency reported Cavusoglu as saying in an interview with broadcaster A Haber.

Thousands of foreigners from more than 80 nations including Britain, other parts of Europe, China and the United States have joined the ranks of Islamic State and other radical groups in Syria and Iraq, many crossing through Turkey.

Turkey has said it needs more information from foreign intelligence agencies to intercept them, pointing to cases such as the three London schoolgirls who fled Britain to join Islamic State last month.—Reuters

Left alone against Syrian army, US-trained rebels cannot beat Islamic State — opposition

BEIRUT, 13 March — US-trained rebels due to fight Islamic State will fail if they are not also protected from the Syrian army, the main Western-backed political opposition said on Thursday, after Washington said it might lack the legal authority to defend them from Syrian troops.

A fledgling US military-led training programme starting in coming weeks aims to train upwards of 5,000 fighters a year to battle the hardline militant group, also known as ISIS, which controls large parts of Syria and Iraq. But US Defence Secretary Ash Carter said on Wednesday that the United States did not appear to have clear-cut legal authority to protect Syrian rebels against attacks by Syrian government forces.

Monzer Akbik, a representative for the National Coalition, based outside Syria, said mainstream rebels had repeatedly found themselves attacked by Syrian forces while confronting Islamic State, and that the same would happen to US-trained rebels.

“(The rebels) don’t have anywhere to go, they have to fight on two fronts ... if they are attacked from the rear by the regime, it will undermine their fight against ISIS, leading to a long war of attrition rather than a war

that you can win.” Akbik said the Western-backed Free Syrian Army rebel alliance had pushed Islamic State back from parts of northwest Syria in early 2014, but had then been pummelled simultaneously by Islamic State and Syrian forces after the Islamists regrouped with supplies from neighbouring Iraq.

Washington says Syrian President Bashar al-Assad has lost legitimacy, but it has in effect made common cause with him by leading air attacks against the Islamic State insurgency with Damascus’s tacit blessing, forcing it to tread very warily.

Assad said in January that “any troops that don’t work in cooperation with the Syrian army are illegal and should be fought”.

It is not clear what relationship the new force, which will be trained in Jordan, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and later Qatar, will have to the US-led regional coalition, which has provided air support to anti-Assad rebels fighting alongside Kurdish forces in Syria against Islamic State.

Akbik said the coalition should also defend the new force against Assad’s forces. More than 200,000 people have been killed in the four-year-old civil war.

Reuters

Indonesia confirms another group of citizens try to cross into Syria

JAKARTA, 13 March — The Indonesian government confirmed on Friday that another group of 16 Indonesians, currently detained by Turkish authorities, tried to cross into Syria on a route frequently used by sympathizers of the Islamic State militant group.

Lalu Muhammad Iqbal, subdirector for Middle East affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said the group was different from that of 16 Indonesians who

recently disappeared in Istanbul while on a group tour arranged by a Jakarta-based travel agent.

“The detained 16 people confessed they were going to go to Syria.

However, we have not been able to clarify whether they are going to join ISIS or not,” Iqbal said, referring to the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria.

The Turkish authorities did not give any details on the reasons for their detention.

Iqbal said, however, the latest group was similar to the previous one — consisting of 16 people coming from three families. According to him, the whereabouts of the previous group is still unknown.

The 16 missing persons were part of a group of 25 people travelling to Turkey in late February.

They parted from the nine others and promised to rejoin them in early March before going back to Jakarta but never reappeared.

As Turkey borders Syria and Iraq, many foreign fighters have been using it as a transit to reach the war zone in those countries. Indonesian authorities said an estimated 514 Indonesians have gone to Syria and Iraq to fight for Islamic State, with around half of them consisting of Indonesian citizens who were already living in nearby countries as students or migrant workers prior to the rise of Islamic State.

Kyodo News

African states want UN trust fund for Boko Haram force

UNITED NATIONS, 13 March — African states want the United Nations to set up a trust fund to finance a force to fight Boko Haram in Nigeria and called on the international community to supply intelligence and equipment, according to a draft UN resolution.

The draft UN Security Council text endorses the creation of a force by Nigeria and its neighbours Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Benin to take on Boko Haram. The 54-nation African Union has already approved a force of up to 10,000 troops.

Boko Haram has killed thousands of people in northeastern Nigeria in its six-year insurgency and has also pledged allegiance to the Islamic State, which has created a self-declared caliphate in parts of Iraq

and Syria.

The text drafted by Chad, Nigeria and Cameroon, and obtained by Reuters, has not yet been circulated to the 15 Security Council members.

Chad’s UN Ambassador Mahamat Cherif has said he hoped the council could vote on a resolution by end-March.

The draft is under Chapter 7 of the UN Charter, allowing decisions to be enforced with economic sanctions or force.

A UN diplomat, speaking on condition of anonymity, said once negotiations begin among the 15 council members some of the key issues would likely be how to finance the operation and whether or not it needs to be a Chapter 7 resolution.

The draft resolu-

tion “requests the Secretary-General to establish a trust fund ... which shall be managed by the LCBC

(Lake Chad Basin Commission) Member States and Benin under the supervision of the AU (African

Union), and encourages Member States to contribute to such a fund”.

It “calls upon donors to

support (the force) through the provision of funding for troop stipends, equipment, technical assistance, and uncaveated funding for (the force) to the United Nations trust fund”.

The text calls for international support for the operational capability of the force by providing equipment and sharing intelligence and urges states “to provide personnel, equipment and services if required, for the successful deployment (of the force)”.

The draft resolution also threatens sanctions on anyone supporting Boko Haram. Chad’s military is already spearheading an operation against the Islamist militant group that in recent months has mounted an increasing number of cross-border raids.

Reuters



Debris is scattered in front of a building that Boko Haram insurgents used as their base before being driven out by the Chadian military in Dikwa on 2 March, 2015.

REUTERS

Police hunt suspects after officers shot in Ferguson, Missouri

FERGUSON, 13 March — The shooting of two police officers at a protest in Ferguson, Missouri, triggered a sweeping manhunt for suspects on Thursday and ratcheted up tensions in a city at the centre of a national debate over race and policing.

US President Barack Obama said there could be no excuse for the attack on the officers, who were released from a hospital after being treated for wounds. Attorney General Eric Holder called it a “pure ambush.”

“This was not someone who was trying to bring healing to Ferguson; this was a damn punk,” Holder told reporters.

The pair were hit by gunfire outside the police headquarters in the St Louis suburb during a rally by protesters demanding comprehensive changes after a scathing US Justice Department report detailed deep-rooted racial bias within Ferguson’s mostly white police force.

It was the latest of

many rallies held in the city since the killing in August of an unarmed black teenager by a white police officer, which also prompted protests around the country, and the federal investigation.

About 100 people demonstrated again outside the police station late on Thursday, some banging drums while other chanted “If we don’t get no justice, they won’t get no peace!”

One woman wore a T-shirt that read: “Is my son next?”

The crowd blocked traffic at times and was told to clear the road by police using loudspeakers, but there were no arrests and by midnight local time the protesters were gone.

Activists who condemned the shooting had also earlier held a candle-light prayer vigil for peace, which was attended by about 40 people a short distance up the road.

“We deplore all forms of violence,” said Reverend Osagyefo Sekou, who was in the crowd when shots rang

out. “But we also deplore the findings of the Department of Justice report and the suffering and the misery that this community has endured.”

Throughout the day, St Louis County investigators canvassed streets near the police station, peering into trash cans, down drains, and quizzing residents about what they saw or heard.

Several people were brought in for questioning, but all of them were later released and no arrests were made, police said. Two Missouri congressman offered a \$3,000 reward for information leading to the culprit.

The shooting left a 41-year-old St Louis County police officer with a shoulder wound, and a 32-year-old officer from nearby Webster Groves Police Department with a bullet lodged near his ear, St Louis County Police Chief Jon Belmar said.

Belmar said the shooter used a handgun and that shell casings were recovered, and he said the bullets came from the middle of the



Police officers respond to a fellow officer hit by gunfire outside the Ferguson Police Headquarters in Ferguson, Missouri on 12 March, 2015. —REUTERS

crowd of protesters.

“I don’t know who did the shooting ... but somehow they were embedded in that group of folks,” he told a news conference.

Demonstrators at the scene insisted the shooter had been behind them, on a street leading away from the police station.

“The shooter was not

with the protesters. The shooter was atop the hill,” activist DeRay McKesson said on Twitter.

Obama said the recent events in Ferguson were worthy of protests, but there was no excuse for criminal acts.

“Whoever fired those shots shouldn’t detract from the issue,” he said on the

ABC programme “Jimmy Kimmel Live.”

The shooting came less than three months after a man ambushed two New York City patrolmen, apparently seeking to avenge the killings of 18-year-old Michael Brown in Ferguson and an unarmed black man in New York.

Reuters

Delivery of tainted soil to interim storage begins in Fukushima

FUKUSHIMA, (Japan), 13 March — Workers on Friday began delivering radiation-contaminated soil and other waste, generated in cleanup work since the 2011 nuclear crisis, to a makeshift storage yard on the premises of the construction site for interim storage facilities in Fukushima Prefecture.

The government plans to build the depositories on around 16 square kilometres of land in the towns of Okuma and Futaba, which host the crippled Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant, to eventually store a massive amount of contaminated waste. But the planned storage remains highly uncertain amid slow progress in negotiations with landowners.

The Environment Ministry decided to move the waste — still being stored near residents’ homes and other places across Fukushima four years after the nuclear crisis — to the makeshift storage yard for the time being.

Environment Minister Yoshio Mochizuki told a news conference Friday, “The start of delivery marks a major step forward for the rebirth and recon-



Photo taken from a Kyodo News helicopter on 13 March, 2015, shows workers making preparations for the transfer of decontamination waste from a temporary shortage space in the northeastern Japan city of Okuma to a planned construction site for interim storage facilities. The starting date of construction remains unknown. —KYODO NEWS

struction of Fukushima. I’d like to thank local communities for accepting it.”

Over the next year, a total of around 43,000 cubic metres of waste — equivalent to less than 1 percent of the estimated total of 22 million cubic meters generated following the Fukushima Daiichi meltdowns — will be delivered, according to the ministry.

The government is ne-

gotiating with about 2,400 landowners to secure the land needed for the facilities, but many local people have voiced strong concern that the storage could end up being permanent if the land is owned by the state, while others are refusing to sell land their families have owned for generations.

In response to a local request, the central government enacted a law under which the contaminated

soil will be permanently disposed of outside the prefecture within 30 years, even though the issue of a final disposal site remains unresolved.

The central government plans to spend around 1.1 trillion yen (\$9.1 billion) on the interim storage facilities. The site is not for storing highly radioactive nuclear waste generated within the crippled Fukushima plant.—Kyodo News

Venezuela’s Maduro says may go to US to challenge Obama

CARACAS, 13 March — Ridiculing the US qualification of Venezuela as a security threat, President Nicolas Maduro said on Thursday he may travel to Washington to challenge American counterpart Barack Obama.

“We demand, via all global diplomatic channels, that President Obama rectify and repeal the immoral decree declaring Venezuela a threat to the United States,” Maduro said.

In the worst flare-up between the ideological enemies since Maduro took power in 2013, Washington earlier this week declared a “national emergency” over “the unusual and extraordinary threat” from Venezuela and sanctioned seven officials over allegations of rights abuses and corruption.

The Maduro government has demanded evidence of how it threatens US security. Conversely, it accuses Washington of helping coup plotters and preparing a military invention. US officials say the Obama government’s intention is to make Venezuela’s government change its ways, not fall.

Speaking at a book fair, Maduro, the 52-year-old successor of firebrand US adversary Hugo Chavez, said Venezuela was preparing an event in Washington to press its case.

“Maybe I’ll appear in Washington at that exhibition, to show my face for my country and tell the government in Washington they are committing grave mistakes,” he said.

No more details of the event were given.

With Venezuela also demanding that the United States slash its Caracas embassy from 100 to 17 staff, the dispute has dominated local headlines and overshadowed an economic crisis.

Opposition leader Henrique Capriles accused Maduro of using the spat as a smokescreen. “Inflation through the roof. Scarcities too. Murders and poverty up. And the shameless rulers talking to us of an invasion,” he tweeted.—Reuters

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WEATHER REPORT

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL EVENING OF THE 14th March, 2015: Likelihood of isolated light rain or thundershowers in Taninthayi Region, weather will be partly cloudy in Kachin and Mon States and generally fair in the remaining Regions and States. Degree of certainty is (60%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Seas will be moderate in Myanmar waters.

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Former Brazilian soccer player Edson Arantes do Nascimento "Pele" takes part in the launch of the book "Segundo Tempo", a compilation of the player's life, written by journalist Odir Cunha, at Pele Museum in Santos municipality, Sao Paulo state, Brazil, on 12 March, 2015. — XINHUA

Honduran police detain alleged drug kingpin 'Chepe' Handal

TEGUCIGALPA, 13 March — Honduran military police arrested on Thursday Jose Miguel "Chepe" Handal, the alleged leader of a drug trafficking organization that coordinated the shipment of tons of Colombian cocaine via Mexican cartels to the United States.

Handal, a prominent Honduran businessman, was taken into custody without a struggle in the northwestern city of San Pedro Sula near a hospital where his father was receiving treatment, President Juan Orlando Hernandez said in a television

interview. Hernandez said Honduran judges would likely be in charge of the case because there has not yet been an extradition request from the United States.

Since 2013, the US government has identified Handal as a drug trafficking kingpin who supplied Colombian cocaine to Mexico's Sinaloa and rival Los Zetas cartels using clandestine airstrips as well as land-based routes into Guatemala, where the Mexican gangs have a presence. Handal's father and his wife were also designated as leaders of the organization

by the US Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control. "After several months of searching, today Chepe Handal has been detained and will now be judged," Hernandez said in a post on his Twitter page.

Drug-related violence in Honduras has increased in recent years since Mexico's drug cartels expanded there, enlisting Honduran gangs and using its Caribbean coast to transport South American cocaine to consumers in the United States.—Reuters

Manhunt underway after jewelry shop shooting in HK

HONG KONG, 13 March — Hong Kong's police have launched a manhunt for a gunman who shot a salesman and got away with 5.5 million HK dollars worth of watches in Hong Kong's Tsim Sha Tsui Area. The injured salesman was sent to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital on Thursday night and was still fighting for his life on Friday morning. According to the police, the suspect entered one watch and jewelry shop on Perking Road at around 10 pm local time on Thursday night. He requested to see a selection of nine luxury watches, but suddenly shot a staff member in the left chest and got away with the nine watches. Police are now searching for the suspected robber, described by one source as being about 1.6 metres tall, well-dressed, in a silver grey suit and wearing a surgical mask on his face. Staff said the suspect had visited the shop twice on Thursday afternoon, and had appeared suspicious. —Xinhua

New Zealand, India still face significant gap on FTA: Kiwi trade official

WELLINGTON, 13 March — New Zealand and India are still facing a significant gap on reaching a bilateral free trade agreement (FTA), a senior New Zealand trade official said on Friday.

The Indian government was still short on meeting New Zealand's bottom line of an FTA that was "gen-

uinely trade liberalizing," New Zealand Associate Trade Minister Todd McClay said in a published speech to the New Zealand India Business Council in Auckland. Officials had advised that both sides approach the recent 10th round of negotiations in New Delhi professionally

and respectfully, "but there is still a very significant gap which divides us." "It is going to take real time and commitment to close that gap," said McClay. "Our sense is that whilst India has an active economic reform agenda on its plate — and is actively taking measures to reform its economy —

'trade policy' as an instrument of reform does not yet seem central to the government's thinking. For that reason, making progress is difficult," he said.

"That said, New Zealand is patient — we will continue to work on this front, but it may require some broader policy shifts

within the India system (much broader than those simply pertaining to a New Zealand-India FTA) before we see the government of India feeling comfortable entertaining the sorts of reforms/changes required by New Zealand to land this FTA," he added.

Xinhua

Cyclone Olwyn's 200km/h winds hit west coast of Australia

SYDNEY, 13 March — The west coast of Australia was hit with 200km/h winds on Friday morning as Tropical Cyclone Olwyn smashed into the town of Exmouth.

More than 1,400 local residents were without power and the heavy winds had ripped down fences, and uprooted trees.

Police said there were no reports of injuries as residents stayed indoors and weathered the cyclone.

The Bureau of Meteorology said the cyclone, which has remained as a powerful Category Three storm, would continue down the west coast.

"The centre of Severe Tropical Cyclone Olwyn is tracking very close to the coast as it moves southwards across the Coral Bay area. The system is expected to remain a severe tropical cyclone until later this morning before slowly weakening," the BoM said in a statement.

"As it moves southwards it is expected to take heavy rain and squally winds into southern parts of Western Australia.

"Very destructive winds with gusts over 200km/h are likely near Exmouth, Coral Bay and surrounding areas on Friday morning."

Xinhua



A motorcycle built by students of Chelsea High School is seen at in Barber Vintage Motorsports Museum in Birmingham, Alabama, the United States, on 12 March, 2015. With a collection of over 1200 motorcycles, the Barber Vintage Motorsports Museum was named the largest motorcycle museum in the world by the Guinness Book of World Records in 2014. —XINHUA

Mariah Carey officially signs with Epic Records

LOS ANGELES, 13 March — Pop star Mariah Carey has officially signed with Epic Records, a division of Sony Music Entertainment.

The diva had reunited with LA Reid for a multi-album deal that would start with a greatest-hits set she announced last January. The compilation, titled “#1’s”, coincides with Carey’s upcoming residency at the Colosseum at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas. The record will include 18 of the singer’s chart-topping singles, reported Billboard.

There might be duets of her classic songs. Carey started her career as a signee of Sony’s Columbia Records. Under the label, she released six LPs and one holiday

set that were all huge success.

She then joined Island Records in 2003 and dropped several albums including “The Emancipation of Mimi” and “E=MC2” before moving with Def Jam when the label split.

Through Def Jam, she put out last year’s “Me. I Am Mariah... The Elusive Chanteuse” which didn’t perform too well commercially.

Carey’s Las Vegas residency starts on 6 May. While she’s gearing up for the upcoming shows and for the “#1’s” compilation, she has reportedly started working on another project for Epic. According to a source, the 44-year-old star is already recording new music in Los Angeles.—PTI



Pop star Mariah Carey

Visegrad Film Forum kicks off in Bratislava for the 4th year running

BRATISLAVA, 13 March — The Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava is hosting the Visegrad Film Forum for the fourth year, with Oscar-winning Christopher Newman as the main guest. The forum runs from 11 to 14 March.

Newman, a famous director who won three Academy Awards and worked as a sound engineer in the 1972 film, *The Godfather*, is opening with a screening of the legendary movie.

Newman is also screening the documentary *The Ambassador*, a film by Danish director Mads Brügger who was made

famous for directing and starring in the documentary as himself.

Brügger won an award at the Sundance Film Festival for his work wherein he posed as a fake Liberian diplomat and investigated the corruption of Western businessmen.

The forum’s main goal is to foster a creative dialogue amongst film and television industry professionals, and as a networking and educational platform for emerging film professionals, notably students majoring in film, media or audiovisual studies.—Xinhua

I’m quitting action movies in two years: Liam Neeson

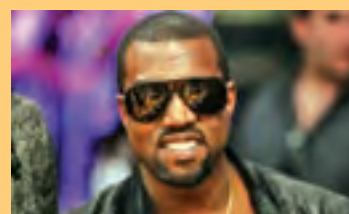


LOS ANGELES, 13 March — Irish actor Liam Neeson has confessed he plans to quit action films in another two years. The 62-year-old actor, who has become famous for starring in action-thrillers such as the ‘Taken’ trilogy despite having starred in films such as ‘Schindler’s List’ and ‘Star Wars’ in the past, said he wants to move on from the genre in the next couple of years, said the *Hollywood Reporter*.

“Maybe two more years — if God spares me, and I’m healthy. But after that, I’ll stop (the action), I think,” he said.

Neeson reprised his role as former secret agent and security expert Bryan Mills in ‘Taken 3’ earlier this year and admits the success of the action franchise has seen him inundated with offers for other movies but that he’s well aware it can’t go on forever.

“I’m in a very, career-wise, great place. The success certainly of the Taken films, Hollywood seems to see me in a different light. I get sent quite a few action-orientated scripts, which is great. I’m not knocking it. It’s very flattering. But there is a limit of course.”—PTI



Kanye West’s rep denies his laptop was stolen in Paris

LOS ANGELES, 13 March — Rapper Kanye West’s laptop was not stolen in Paris, despite multiple reports, says his representative. After the rapper’s song ‘Awesome’ was leaked online, reports surfaced that a sex tape involving West and his wife Kim Kardashian had been compromised as well, reported *Us* magazine.

“The stories circulating that Kanye West’s laptop has been stolen are com-

pletely false,” said West’s rep.

“His laptop has never been out of his possession. Hence, the laptop has not been hacked, and there has been no leak of personal data such as unreleased music, photographs, designs, videos or any other personal files. The leak today of the unreleased track ‘Awesome’ was unrelated and completely coincidental,” the rep added.

PTI

Tom Cruise sells Colorado home for USD 59m?



LOS ANGELES, 13 March — Superstar Tom Cruise is reportedly selling his Colorado home for USD 59 million. Cruise, 52, bought the 298-acre property back when he was married to Nicole Kidman and this week the “Mission Impossible” star finally listed the Colorado home for sale at a cool USD 59 million, reported *Inquisitr* online.

The estate agent, Bill Fandel, said he wants to sell the house because he “doesn’t use it very often”.

The 298-acre property is complete with four bedrooms and six bathrooms, and

boasts stunning woodwork throughout, as well as a log fires to heat up the home during those winter months. There’s also a stunning 1,600-square-foot guesthouse attached to the property, which will be perfect for a large family as it is complete with three big bedrooms and three bathrooms.

The Telluride mansion, which is just a 12-minute drive from downtown and the local ski resort, is nestled in a secluded spot for those who require the utmost privacy but gives off some of the most spectacular views of the mountains.—PTI

Comedian Andy Samberg chosen to host 2015 Emmy Awards



Actor Andy Samberg and wife, actress Joanna Newsom arrive at the 2015 Vanity Fair Oscar Party in Beverly Hills, California on 22 Feb, 2015. —REUTERS

NEW YORK, 13 March — Andy Samberg, a star of the comedy TV show “Brooklyn Nine-Nine,” will host the 2015 Primetime Emmy Awards, the highest honours in US television, organizers of the show said on Thursday.

The comedian, actor, writer and producer, whose breakthrough came on late-night sketch show “Saturday Night Live,” will emcee the show from the Nokia Theatre in Los An-

geles that will be broadcast live by Fox TV on 20 September.

“Andy has excelled in all aspects of the television universe, both from behind and in front of the camera,” said Bruce Rosenblum, the chairman and CEO of the Television Academy.

Samberg, 36, performed on “SNL” for seven seasons before joining Fox police sitcom “Brooklyn Nine-Nine” to play Det Jake Peralta, a role that

earned him a best comedy actor Golden Globe last year.

Samberg shared an Emmy for outstanding original music and lyrics in 2007 for an SNL sketch song “Dick In A Box,” alongside pop singer Justin Timberlake.

The Television Academy announced new rules last month that will increase the number of contenders in comedy and drama categories to seven nominees from

six in previous years.

Comedy series will also be defined as shows that are 30 minutes or shorter per episode and drama will be shows over 30 minutes. The mini-series was renamed “limited series” and changes were also announced in the variety series category.

Nominations for the 67th Primetime Emmy Awards will be announced on 16 July.

Reuters

GENERAL

LBJ letter to Martin Luther King Jr's widow sells for \$60,000

FALLS CHURCH, 13 March — A condolence letter from President Lyndon Johnson to the widow of slain civil rights leader the Rev Martin Luther King Jr was sold for \$60,000 at auction on Thursday after a legal battle over the 47-year-old piece of correspondence.

The typed letter from Johnson to Coretta Scott King is dated 5 April, 1968, the day after King was gunned down in Memphis, Tennessee, by a white supremacist, triggering riots in cities across the United States.

"We will overcome this calamity and continue the work of justice and love that is Martin Luther King's legacy and trust to us," Johnson, who had succeeded to the presidency after John F Kennedy was assassinated in November 1963, said in the letter on White House stationery.

Johnson won election to his own four-year term in 1964 but chose not to run again in 1968 after Kennedy's younger brother, Robert F Kennedy, then

a US senator from New York, entered the race for the Democratic nomination. RFK was himself assassinated in Los Angeles two months after King was slain.

Quinn's Auction Galleries in Falls Church, Virginia, set a minimum price at \$60,000, the sum an online bidder ultimately paid for it, though the item had been expected to fetch at least twice that amount, according to the company's website.

Auctioneer Matthew Quinn said the letter had special resonance given the 50th anniversary this month of the "Bloody Sunday" protest march at Selma, Alabama, a turning point in the US civil rights movement, and the release of the King-centered movie, "Selma."

Coretta Scott King held on to the letter until 2003, then gave it to singer and social activist Harry Belafonte. She died in 2006.

When Belafonte tried to auction it off in 2008, King's children objected, and the sale was canceled. The two sides became embroiled in a



Martin Luther King Jr memorabilia are shown in this image courtesy of Quinn's Auction Galleries in Falls Church, Virginia, and released to Reuters on 4 March, 2015.—REUTERS

legal battle.

A 2014 settlement allowed Belafonte to keep the letter and Belafonte gave it to his half-sister, Shirley Cooks. She and her husband, Stoney Cooks, a staff member of King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference, put it up for sale with other memorabilia.

Stoney Cooks said the letter was remarkable because Johnson, who had

signed landmark civil rights legislation into law, wrote it while grappling with the unrest unleashed by King's murder.

"I thought that quick response showed something about the nature of the relationship between the two men," Cooks said.

Sixteen MLK items in all sold for a total of \$99,668.

Reuters

No pressure a key for French Open success, says Djokovic



Tennis player Novak Djokovic of Serbia talks during an interview in Belgrade on 1 March, 2015.—REUTERS

INDIAN WELLS, 13 March — The French Open is the only grand slam title to have eluded Novak Djokovic and the steely-eyed Serb has adopted a philosophy of reverse psychology in a bid to claim the coveted crown at Roland Garros.

World number one Djokovic has twice been beaten in the French Open

final and believes he can end his barren run on the clay surface by reining back any hint of self-imposed pressure or specific goal-setting.

"The difference in my approach to my goals and priorities between now and a couple of years ago is that I don't put too much pressure on myself," Djokovic said on Thursday at Indian Wells

where he is seeking a fourth BNP Paribas Open title.

"I don't want to take away too much energy by spending time on thinking, 'Will I make it or not?' The French Open is the grand slam that I have never won but I have had a lot of good tournaments there.

"I have played a couple of times the finals and got always a step closer. I use these losses as a way to grow mentally, physically and emotionally and as a player in general to understand what I need to do better the next year."

Djokovic, who last month won a record fifth Australian Open title in the professional era to increase his career tally to eight grand slam crowns, feels he can only benefit from competing at the French Open with more personal freedom.

"This kind of approach allows me to enjoy my time there instead of going to the clay in Paris thinking, 'Will I make it this time or not?'," the 27-year-old Serb told reporters in the interview room at the Indian Wells Tennis Garden.

"Of course, the season starts much better for you if you win a grand slam in Australia and that was the case for me this year," Djokovic said, prompting loud roars of laughter.

"I have a strong wind at my back and a confidence that hopefully I can carry into these two large tournaments at Indian Wells and Miami, and then take it from there."

Djokovic, the top seed at Indian Wells, will launch his bid for a fourth BNP Paribas Open title in the second round on Saturday.—Reuters

Costa Rica volcano spews ash in most powerful eruption in 20 years

SAN JOSE, 13 March — Costa Rica's Turrialba volcano belched a column of gas and ash up to 3,280 feet (1 km) into the air on Thursday in its most powerful eruption in two decades, and local authorities started to evacuate residents from the surrounding area.

Four explosions em-

anated from the volcano in central Costa Rica on Thursday, and ash reached parts of the capital San Jose some 30 miles (50 km) away, where the airport was closed. It was the volcano's strongest eruption since 1996.

"We have recommended the evacuation of people

and small animals as a precaution. The last explosion was very strong," a spokesman for the Volcanological and Seismological Observatory of Costa Rica (Obsivori) said.

Costa Rica's emergency services ordered the closure of access roads near the volcano, which

is major tourist draw, and were evacuating a radius of just over a mile around the volcano.

Turrialba erupted in October, when it also sprinkled the capital with ash after it spewed magma for the first time since around 1863.

Reuters

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MRTV News Channel in Brief

(14-3-2015, Saturday)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 6:00 am | 1:20 pm |
| • Paritta by Hilly Venerable Mingun Sayadaw | • Round Up of The Week's Hluttaw News |
| 6:30 am | 2:35 pm |
| • Physical Exercise | • Teleplay |
| 7:00 am | 3:35 pm |
| • News/ Weather Report | • Hyper Sports |
| 7:35 am | 4:35 pm |
| • Business News | • University of Distance Education (TV Lectures) —Third Year (Philosophy) |
| 8:00 am | 5:00 pm |
| • News / International News | • News |
| 8:35 am | 6:35 pm |
| • Documentary | • MRTV's Youth Programme |
| 9:35 am | 7:00 pm |
| • Weekly Entertainment | • News / Weather Report |
| 10:00 am | 7:35 pm |
| • News / International News | • Business News |
| 11:35 am | 8:00 pm |
| • Amazing World | • News / International News / Weather Report |
| 12:00 noon | 9:00 pm |
| • News / International News / Weather Report | • News |
| 12:20 pm | • Cultural Show (Part-8) |
| • Round Up of The Week's International News | |

MRTV Entertainment Channel

(14-3-2015, Saturday)

- | | |
|---|---------------------|
| 6:00 am | 6:55 am |
| • Honour Song For Alinka Kyaw Swar Myoma Nyein Classical Song | • Teleplay |
| 6:25 am | 7:35 am |
| • Myanmar Series | • Play |
| 6:40 am | 9:10 am |
| • Classical Songs | • Musical Programme |
| | 9:30 am |
| | • Myanmar Video |

25 tentatively selected players of Myanmar start training

YANGON, 13 March— Myanmar national football team formed with 25 tentatively selected players is under training on 12 March as preparations for taking part in the international tune-up matches as well as the 2018 World Cup Qualifiers.

The team will play tune-up matches with some domestic football clubs before meeting with Indonesian national team in Indonesia on 30 March.

After 20 finalists have been chosen, Myanmar team will leave for Indonesia on 27 March.—MFF



Women's Olympic Football Tournament Rio 2016-Asian Qualifiers

India 4 - 0 Sri Lanka

Takayama to make 1st IBF minimumweight title defence in April

OSAKA, 13 March — IBF minimumweight champion Katsunari Takayama announced on Thursday he will make his first title defense against Thailand's Fahlan Sakkreerin Jr in Osaka on 22 April.

The fight at Osaka's Bodymaker Colosseum will be part of a world doubleheader, with Kazuto Ioka taking on WBA flyweight champion Juan Carlos Reveco of Argentina in a bid to claim a title at his third weight category. Takayama stopped Go Odaira with a seventh-round, technical knockout for both the IBF and WBO minimumweight vacant crowns to become the first Japanese to succeed in capturing titles in all four major boxing sanctioning bodies. He has already returned his WBO title.

"Each and every fight is a challenge," said the 31-year-old Takayama. "At my age if you lose the title it makes it difficult to win it again. I want to keep on fighting." Fahlan is currently ranked eighth in the IBF light flyweight division.—Kyodo News

Bale's Spanish adventure turning sour at Real

MADRID, 13 March — Gareth Bale may have been warned by his new employers about how fickle the Real Madrid fans can be when he signed for the Spanish giants for a world record fee in 2013.

Just how fickle is now painfully clear to the Wales winger, who has become a target for supporters angry with Real's recent slump and has been whistled along with captain and goalkeeper Iker Casillas in recent outings at the Bernabeu.

Bale has not scored for the European champions in nine matches since he converted a penalty against



Real Madrid's Gareth Bale celebrates after scoring against Cordoba during their Spanish First Division soccer match at El Arcangel stadium in Cordoba, on 24 Jan, 2015.—REUTERS

Cordoba on 24 January and is struggling to shake off a perception that he neglects

his defensive duties and sometimes selfishly opts to shoot himself when a team

mate is better placed.

That Bale had a successful debut season in Spain, scoring the winning goal against Barcelona in the King's Cup final and netting in the Champions League showpiece against Atletico Madrid, has quickly been forgotten.

While it is unfair to blame Bale for all of Real's recent woes, it cannot be denied that he appears to be struggling for form and confidence.

His travails have even prompted speculation he could be sold, with English Premier League side Manchester United said to be interested.

The 25-year-old, who barely made an impact in Tuesday's 4-3 Champions League reverse at home to Schalke 04, has a chance to set things right when second-placed Real host Levante in La Liga on Sunday. By the time the game kicks off, they could find themselves four points behind leaders Barcelona.

Barca leapfrogged their great rivals, who they host for the 'Clasico' on 22 March, into top spot last weekend and play at Eibar on Saturday.

Real centre back Pepe defended Bale, who he described as "shy", in an interview with Spanish radio

on Thursday. "Ball hog? A forward lives on goals," the Portugal international said.

"When he gets into a position to score it's the instinct of the killer. If you put me in front of the goal I will shoot."

Champions Atletico Madrid, six points behind Real in third, are looking to get back to winning ways after draws against Sevilla and Valencia when they play at Espanyol on Saturday.

Fourth-placed Valencia can climb above Atletico if they avoid defeat at home to Deportivo La Coruna on Friday.—Reuters

Higuain lifts Napoli, De Bruyne cheers Wolfsburg

LONDON, 13 March — Napoli's Gonzalo Higuain grabbed a treble for a 3-1 win over Dynamo Moscow while Kevin de Bruyne's double gave VfL Wolfsburg the same victory over Inter Milan in Europa League last 16, first leg ties on Thursday.

Sevilla midfielder Vitolo recorded the fastest goal ever scored in the competition (13.2 seconds) to lead the holders to a 3-1 triumph at La Liga rivals Villarreal and Fiorentina drew 1-1 with AS Roma in an all-Serie A tie.

Dnipro Dnipropetrovsk beat Ajax Amsterdam 1-0 in Ukraine thanks to Roman Zozulya's goal on the half-hour.

Torino had Marco Benassi sent off in the 28th minute as Zenit St Petersburg won 2-0 in Russia with goals from Axel Witsel and Domenico Crisc-

to on target.

Steven Naismith and Romelu Lukaku, with a penalty, struck in Everton's 2-1 home victory over Dynamo Kiev while Club Brugge also came from behind to beat Besiktas 2-1 in Belgium.

Kevin Kuranyi headed Dynamo Moscow into a surprise second-minute lead in Naples before the home team equalized when Higuain nodded in a centre from Faouzi Ghoulam.

The Napoli number nine then made it 2-1 from the penalty spot in the 31st minute after Dries Mertens was brought down.

Dynamo had Roman Zobnin sent off one minute into the second half before Higuain completed his treble with a sublime volley, his sixth goal in Europe this season.

Napoli coach Rafa



Napoli's Gonzalo Higuain (L) shoots and scores a penalty as Dynamo Moscow goalkeeper Vladimir Gabulov (C) tries to block during their Europa League round of 16 first leg soccer match at the San Paolo stadium in Naples on 12 March, 2015.

REUTERS

Benitez is aiming to win the Europa League for the second time in three seasons, having guided Chelsea to a 2-1 final victory

over Benfica in Amsterdam in 2013.

Triple former European champions Inter went in front against Wolfsburg

in Germany when Rodrigo Palacio slipped the ball under keeper Diego Benaglio in the sixth minute.

The hosts, who are

second in the Bundesliga, hit back in the 28th when Naldo levelled from a De Bruyne corner.

De Bruyne put Wolfsburg in front with a first-time finish from a Vierinha cross early in the second half before making sure of victory with a curling free kick.

The former Chelsea forward almost made it a hat-trick when he missed an open goal in the closing stages.

"It's a shame," Inter coach Roberto Mancini told reporters. "We knew it was going to be a tough game but we keep giving away cheap goals and in doing so we're making life difficult for ourselves."

"We dropped off too deep after taking the lead, then we left Naldo completely unmarked and let him have a free header two yards from goal."

Reuters