

President U Thein Sein receives Vietnamese guests

NAY PYI TAW, 19 March — Vietnam Communist Party Politburo member and Chairman of the Vietnam Fatherland Front Mr Nguyen Thien Nhan paid a courtesy call on President U Thein Sein in Nay Pyi Taw on Thursday.

Their discussions focused on promoting friendship between the two countries, Vietnamese investment, and the promo-

tion of cooperation in the agriculture, finished-wood manufacturing, communications and transport sectors.

Also in attendance were Union Ministers U Wunna Maung Lwin, U Soe Thane, U Myint Hlaing, U Zeya Aung, Dr Kan Zaw, U Ye Htut and officials. The Vietnamese ambassador accompanied the Vietnamese delegation.—MNA

President U Thein Sein poses for documentary photo together with Vietnamese delegation led by Vietnam Communist Party Politburo member and Chairman of the Vietnam Fatherland Front Mr Nguyen Thien Nhan.—MNA



Agreement reached on most differences over NCA

YANGON, 19 March — Agreement has been reached between the Union Peacemaking Working Committee and the Nationwide Ceasefire Coordination Team on terms and conditions on armed forces of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement, according to sources.

Both sides continued their negotiations for the third day of the seventh meeting in Yangon on Thursday.

The single text of the ceasefire agreement includes seven chapters and negotiations for the first three chapter has been completed so far.

Both sides agreed to accept the term “revolution”, according to one of the representatives of national races who considered that the recognition of the revolution of national races is a big step forwards.

The negotiations will continue tomorrow.

MNA

Left or right? India, Myanmar, Thailand must pick side before highway can proceed

By Ye Myint

YANGON, 19 March — A trilateral highway linking India, Myanmar and Thailand promises major economic gains for the three countries, but the project must first negotiate a significant traffic barrier — the question of which side of the road vehicles will use.

In India and Thailand,

traffic travels on the left, but Myanmar, where the bulk of the highway will be laid, drives on the right.

Deciding which side of the highway to use is one of the challenges for the trilateral project, said Ameising Luikham, Secretary of North Eastern Council of the Government of India.

The three-nation highway project is part of India's efforts to improve transport links with ASEAN, its fourth-largest trading partner. The Kaladan Multimodal Transit Transport Project in Myanmar is also one of key connectivity projects between the two sides.

“The (trilateral highway) project is slated for completion in 2017,” an NEC member told the Global New Light of Myanmar, adding the three-nation highway would be a vast improvement on existing road connections that have hindered India's trade with ASEAN.

Following the decision by India and ASEAN nations

in 2013 on further extension of the India-Myanmar-Thailand trilateral highway to other member countries, the highway is also planned to expand to Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam, where cars also drive on the right.

The highway is set to start from Manipur's Moreh on the Indian side and reach Mae Sot in Thailand after passing through Myanmar, where it will traverse Tamu in the northwest and Mandalay in the country's centre.

ASEAN is India's fourth-largest trade partner, with a GDP of more than \$2.2 trillion and a population of 620 million people. India and ASEAN had a combined GDP of \$2.4 trillion, with bilateral trade valued at US\$74 billion in 2013-2014.

India, the world's largest democracy and second-most populous nation, is aiming to increase bilateral trade with the ASEAN community to \$100 billion by 2015 and \$200 billion by 2020.—GNLM



Vehicles travel on a road in Shillong, Meghalaya in India, where traffic drives on the left.

PHOTO: YE MYINT

Solar Impulse-2 arrives in Mandalay



Solar Impulse-2 pilots wave at the welcoming party.—MNA

MANDALAY, 19 March — After flying 15 hours from Varanasi in India, Solar Impulse-2 arrived in Mandalay, cultural capital of Myanmar, at 8:30 pm on Thursday.

The pilots of the air-

craft, Bertrand Picard and Andre Borschberg, were greeted aboard by Union Minister U Soe Thane, Chief Minister of Mandalay Region U Ye Myint, Deputy Minister for Transport U Zin Yaw and the ambassa-

dor of Switzerland to Myanmar while traditional dance troupes of national races, bands and media welcomed the aircraft at the airport.

A dinner was hosted at Mandalay International Airport for the aircraft, at-

tended by the union minister, the chief minister, Commander of Central Command Maj-Gen Soe Htut, the deputy minister, members of region government, the ambassador and the officials.—MNA

U Khin Aung Myint receives New Zealand Professor



Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw U Khin Aung Myint receives New Zealand delegation led by Pro-Vice Chancellor Professor Nigel Hemmington of Auckland University.—MNA

NAY PYI TAW, 19 March — Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw U Khin Aung Myint received a New Zealand delegation led by Pro-Vice Chancellor Professor Nigel Hemmington of Auckland University at the Hluttaw complex on Thursday. Also present together with

the speaker were Hluttaw representatives U Ne Win Tun, chairman of Amyotha Hluttaw Vietnam-Myanmar Parliaments Friendship Association and who is also member of Ministers and Environment Conservation Committee; Daw Nan Ni Ni Aye, Secretary of the Hluttaw

Rights Committee; U Tin Shan, member of Government's Guarantees, Pledges, Undertakings Vetting Committee; U Kan Nyunt, member of Education, Health, Women and Children Affairs Committee; and officials of Amyotha Hluttaw office.—MNA

UEC issues rules for election monitoring teams

NAY PYI TAW, 19 March — The Union Election Commission on Thursday issued Notification No.2/2015 of its requirements for members of international election monitoring teams.

Members of the teams are required to respect the sovereignty of Myanmar, the fundamental rights of citizens and the authority of the UEC, sub-commissions and staff of voting booths.

In addition, they must also abide by the instructions of the UEC and police forces of states and regions, security personnel and authorities.

Furthermore, members of monitoring teams are prohibited from having bias toward state authorities, political parties, candidates and election issues and cannot support or oppose a political party or candidate.

While allowed to ask questions concerning the election, they cannot hinder the process and must wear their accreditation cards issued by the UEC.

Only those in charge of the teams can release their assessments and opinions to the media, after submitting their findings and advice to the UEC.

Team members are required to be professional and to respect other people

and their customs.

Monitoring teams are responsible for training their staff on the ethics, rules and regulations.

They must obey the conditions of their visas and follow the advice of security personnel for their own safety.

The UEC can decide to revoke accreditation if the rules are breached, according to the notification.

GNLM

Communications Ministry seeks to allay mobile phone health fears

By Khaing Thanda Lwin

YANGON, 19 March — Mobile phone antennas in Myanmar pose no health risk to the community, while all of the country's network providers are operating



Ooredoo billboard seen hanging at a bus stop in downtown Yangon.

PHOTO: KHAING THANDA LWIN

Amyotha Hluttaw

Suspension bridge construction resumes in Kayin State: Amyotha Hluttaw

NAY PYI TAW, 19 March — The Amyotha Hluttaw on Thursday was urged to build a suspension bridge in the township of Thantaungyi, Kayin State, with Deputy Minister U Kyaw Kyaw Win responding that soil tests are under way ahead of its construction. The suspension bridge will have two lanes, he said.

An MP proposed compensation for farmlands destroyed by seawater in some parts of Rakhine State, with the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation saying farmland management committees will examine the damage in the



Deputy Minister U Khin Zaw.—MNA

affected areas and report to the central government for recompense, pledging technical assistance.

The parliament has agreed to discuss two proposals concerning its election amendment bill and



U Khin Maung (a) U Aung Kyaw Oo.—MNA

a bill calling for the central government to form a commission to investigate the recent shipwreck in Myepon, a township in Rakhine State, and compensate the victims for their losses.—MNA

Pyithu Hluttaw

Pyithu Hluttaw urged to create global market for local rubber

NAY PYI TAW, 19 March — U Saw Ba Thein of the Thaton constituency asked the Pyithu Hluttaw on Thursday about the prospect of creating a global market for local rubber and the disbursement of loans.

Turning rubber into finished products is the first priority for the country to enter the international market, responded U Ohn Than, Deputy Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation, adding that his ministry is working in tandem with companies from Malaysia, Thailand and Singapore in a bid to build more facto-

ries to manufacture finished products as well as enabling growers to earn more.

Myanmar Agricultural Development Bank has not made any plan to disburse loans to rubber growers, according to the deputy minister.

U Ye Htun of the Sibaw constituency asked the lower house the number of total miles of roads across the country, their total cost and the possibility of contracting private companies.

Deputy Minister for Construction U Soe Tint responded that his ministry

has constructed over 24,900 miles of roads nationwide and that their annual maintenance requires over K390 billion.

So far 27 private companies owned by Myanmar nationals have been permitted to construct 3,490 miles of roads under the BOT (build, operate and transfer) system, with new private companies invited, the deputy minister said.

MPs also discussed the marriage bill on Myanmar Buddhist women and the population control health-care bill.

MNA

within international safety standards, the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology said Wednesday at a workshop to address public concerns.

"The Myanmar public and the environment are not being exposed to any harmful electromagnetic radiation," Deputy Minister U Thaung Tin said.

Spot inspections of Myanmar mobile operators' networks have confirmed that all equipment is in compliance with international technical and safety standards, he said.

The measurements in public areas in Yangon and Mandalay were conducted by the ministry in coop-

eration with experts from global GSM Association (GSMA) and Ericsson Research in late 2014. They found levels of electromagnetic fields (EMF) were below the limits regarded as harmful to health by the World Health Organization.

Dr Jack Rowley, the GSM Association's Senior Director of Research and Sustainability, said there are "no established health risks from the low-level radio signals used by the mobile phone and antenna sites."

"Therefore there is no need to be worried about living near antennas or using a mobile phone," he said. Mobile operators in Myanmar are using the same technol-

ogies employed in Europe, North America and Asia, he added. Currently, there are three mobile providers—Myanmar Posts & Telecommunications (MPT), Ooredoo and Telenor—operating in Myanmar.

Dr Rowley told the workshop, "Risk communication skills are needed where concern is high and the level of trust is low."

To reduce public anxiety, the Health Ministry and the Ministry of Science and Technology have developed easy-to-read pamphlets about radio communication stations and public health to provide accurate information about antennas.

GNLM

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing receives Israeli Ambassador

NAY PYI TAW, 19 March — Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing received Ambassador of the State of Israel to Myanmar Mr Daniel Zonshine at Zeyar Thiri Hall in Nay Pyi Taw on Thursday.

Promoting and further strengthening relations between the two armed forces, and exchanging study tour of delegations

and goodwill delegations of both countries were at the top of the agenda at the meeting.—Myawady

Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing receives Ambassador of the State of Israel to Myanmar Mr Daniel Zonshine.—MYAWADY



Myanmar, Japan sign funding agreement for port, water projects



Union Minister for National Planning and Economic Development Dr Kan Zaw witnesses signing of funding agreement between Myanmar and Japan.—MNA

NAY PYI TAW, 19 March — Japan on Thursday agreed to provide some 6.38 billion yen (K 54.68 billion) for a port modernization project and the upgrading of water systems in Yangon and Mandalay.

Myanmar and Japan signed three exchanges of notes — 1.72 billion yen as-

sistance for Project for Port EDI for Port Modernization, 2.1 billion yen for Reduction of Non-Revenue Water in Mayangone Township in Yangon, and 2.56 billion yen for Improvement of Water Supply System in Mandalay.

The exchange of notes were signed by Deputy Minister for National Planning

and Economic Development Daw Lei Lei Thein and Japanese Ambassador to Myanmar Mr Tateshi Higuchi in the presence of Union Minister for National Planning and Economic Development Dr Kan Zaw, and the directors general of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Transport, Ministry of Fi-

nance, Union Attorney General Office, and Yangon and Mandalay City Development Committees.—MNA

Army captures strategic hill in Laukkai area

NAY PYI TAW, 19 March — Fierce fighting broke out Thursday between the Myanmar Army and Kokang insurgents for control of a hilly zone in the Laukkai region, with government forces seizing the strategically important point.

After taking Point 1479, army columns continued their attacks on Point 1564 to the east of Point 1479. Army battalions also confronted the enemy at a hill located to the north of Shin Khot

Htan village overlooking the road leading to Border Post No. 132.

In the morning Kokang troops attacked Point 1468 hill which is under the control of the army. Tatmadawmen bravely repelled the enemy. The Myanmar Air Force also attacked insurgents, taking a stronghold near villages to the north of Kongyan town. One army soldier died and 30 others were wounded in the fighting.

Myawady

Indian navy vessel makes call at Thilawa port

YANGON, 19 March — An Indian Navy hydrographic survey ship docked Thursday at Myanmar International Terminals Thilawa.

On a friendly visit from 19 to 22 March, the INS Darshak arrived in Myanmar under the command of Cdr Amal Gopal Merwade together

with 20 officers and 200 other crew. They were welcomed at the port by Commodore Min Thein.

Ko Ko Zaw (MNA)



An Indian Navy hydrographic survey ship docks at Myanmar International Terminals Thilawa.—MYAWADY

UEC issues codes of practice for election observers

NAY PYI TAW, 19 March — The Union Election Commission has issued the codes of practice for domestic observers in general elections, under Notification No. 1/2015 dated 19 March 2015..

The announcement requires observers to respect the sovereignty of the country, the birthrights of the citizens and the cultures and traditions of ethnic groups, while following the country's existing laws and the UEC's rules, regulations and instructions. Observers are to maintain an unbiased attitude to candidates and political parties and avoid

wearing or using any symbols that represent a particular candidate or party.

They are not allowed to ask voters for whom they voted, especially in polling station precincts. According to the announcement, supervisors to observers are required to attend Union Election Commission press conferences. Observers need to wear ID cards issued by the Commission, and they are to express their points of view on the election observation process through their spokespersons. Organizations observing the general elections are responsible for educating their members on the codes

of practice. These organizations are not allowed to bring arms and other explosive materials into polling booths during their observation tours, nor interfere in vote casting, vote counting, announcements of voting results, or decisions concerning electoral disputes.

In the announcement, the UEC urged observers to be honest with reporting but allowed them to exchange information with other observers, urging them not to interfere with the duties of the booth officers in order keep intact the secret-ballot system.

GNLM

Medical team gives free treatment, health talks to villagers



YAMETHIN, (Mandalay Region) 19, March — Specialists, assistant surgeons and nurses gave health talks and provided free treatment to residents of Indaing village near the foot of a mountain east of Yamethin town, Mandalay

Region on 16 March.

The team led by District Medical Officer Dr Moh Myint Win and nurses treated some 250 patients. The team was assisted by Region Maternal and Child Welfare Association Supervisory Committee chairperson Daw Su Su Lwin and others.

After treating patients, the physicians shared knowledge with villagers on human trafficking, malaria and diseases common in women. They also demonstrated making snacks as one of the ways to generate income. At a respect-paying ceremony, the team honoured 11 elders in the village.

Thiha Ko Ko (Mandalay)

Thayet-Kanma-Pyay route boosts local commerce

KANMA, 19 March — With paving now complete on the 50-mile long Thayet-Kanma-Pyay Road in central Myanmar, people and goods can move more freely on the west bank of the River Ayeyawady.

In the past, people living in the area had to rely mostly on water transport. The flow of goods in the region was therefore slow, causing it to lag behind in development. Thanks to the completion of the road, commerce has improved with the faster movement of commodities.

Kyaw Zeya Win



Police seize stimulant tablets in Mandalay

MANDALAY, 19 March — Police seized 300 stimulant tablets after ambushing two suspects recently in Mandalay.

Acting on a tipoff, the police from Mandalay Anti-Drug Squad No. 18 lay in wait at a teashop on 78th Street on 15 March. They searched suspects Yan Kyaw Chin and Kan Tun after they arrived at the shop by bike and found

300 stimulant tablets on the former, the police said.

He confessed to buying the tablets from Ah Phu, a resident of Upper Maingai Village, Ward 5, Lashio, northern Shan State, they said. Kan Tun was helping Yan Kyaw Chin in return for a share of the profits from selling the tablets, the police said. Police have charged the pair.

Maung Pyithu (Mandalay)



SOUTH OKKALARPA BRANCH OF TUN FOUNDATION BANK IN SERVICE: The 20th branch of Tun Foundation Bank was opened in South Okkalarpa Township, Yangon Region, on 18 March. Tun Foundation Bank was established in 1994 and has since then engaged in philanthropic activities such as building a non-profit hospital, opening monastic education schools and founding libraries, according to senior general manager of the bank Daw Moe Marlar.

AUNG THURA



LOCAL NEWS

Mya Ceti stone inscriptions, Popa Lady , 37 Nat spirits attract tourists



BAGAN, 19 March – For the growing number of tourists visiting Myanmar, the most popular attractions include the Mya Ceti stone inscriptions in Bagan Archaeological Region, as well

as the Popa Lady and 37 Nat spirits in Popa, according to tourist guide Ko Thiha.

The Mya Ceti stone inscriptions are in four languages — Pyu, Myanmar, Mon and Pali — and

provide an important connection to Bagan history. “We need to learn more about our history because tourists are very knowledgeable and interested in Myanmar history, and they have learnt the histo-

ry before visiting Bagan” Ko Thiha said.

A recent visitor from the United States said he was “very interested in Myanmar history.”

“I have visited Bagan three times and the Mya

Ceti Stone Inscriptions attract my attention most, because they are inscribed in four languages,” said US tourist Mr Robert. “In Popa I visited the Nat shrine at the foot of the mountain.”

Foreign tourists visiting Bagan are most commonly from the United States, Germany, France, Australia, China, Japan and South Korea.

Min Htet Aung (Mdy Sub-printing House)

Women of MMCWA and MWAO combat human trafficking



YAMETHIN, (Mandalay Region), 19 March – Members of the Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association and the Myanmar Women’s Affairs Organization met local women in Yamethin, Mandalay

Region and gave talks on the menace of human-trafficking on 16 March.

A female doctor of the team explained about prenatal care. Before the talks, MWAO and MMCWA uniforms were provided

to members. The members also demonstrated making soap and aloe juice to local women. They also presented cash and kind to elders from nearby villages.

Thiha Ko Ko (Mandalay)

Clean water key to closing rural development gap

By Khaing Thanda Lwin

YANGON, 19 March—A nationwide project for economic development in rural communities through improved access to clean water will soon be in full swing across the country, the Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development said.

The Rural Water Supply project for the 2015-2016 fiscal year will soon be implemented in every region and state, the ministry said, with the goal of narrowing the development gap between urban and rural areas.

“During the project, we plan to mainly construct shallow tub wells, deep tube wells, dug wells, ponds and gravity flows in over 3,000 villages with the use

of K3,000 million budget,” said Dr Win Min Oo, assistant director of the Department of Rural Development.

The department of rural development is still implementing the current RWS project for 2014-2015 FY in 3559 villages and it is 90 per cent complete.

“We mostly improved ponds in central dry zones

and delta regions that can get good rainfall density, and widely used gravity flow system in mountainous areas,” said Dr Win Min Oo.

Funded by the government, the project has been implemented since 2011.

Upon completion of the five-year plan, over 5 million people from 8,310 villages will have access to rural water facilities.

GNLM

Library multiplier training course opened



TATKON, 19 March — To increase the efficiency of staff, a library multiplier training course was opened in Tatkon, Nay Pyi Taw Council Area on 18 March.

At the opening ceremony, a Tatkon Township official urged the trainees to

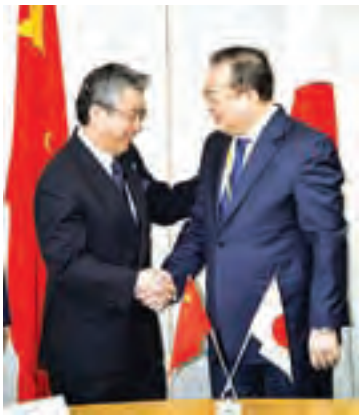
keep open the libraries in rural areas, because cultivating reading habits among youths will surely bring prosperity to nation. Fifty librarians in the township attended the three-day course which covers various library subjects.—*Tin Soe Lwin*



SUMMER PADDY THRIVES IN NAY PYI TAW

COUNCIL AREA: *Farmer U Aye Myint from Bawdigone village, Lewe Township, Nay Pyi Taw Council Area put 12 acres of land under summer paddy using Palethwe strains of hybrid paddy seed.*

Now he has seen outcome of his efforts. KO PAUK (OKKAMYAY)



Japanese Deputy Foreign Minister Shinsuke Sugiyama (L) shakes hands with Chinese Assistant Foreign Minister Liu Jianchao ahead of talks between defence and foreign affairs officials from the two countries in Tokyo on 19 March, 2015.—KYODO NEWS

Japan, China to speed up work on maritime communication mechanism

TOKYO, 19 March — Japan and China agreed on Thursday to speed up work for early implementation of a communication mechanism between the two countries' defence authorities to avoid unintended and accidental clashes at sea and in the air. In the first bilateral security dialogue since January 2011, foreign affairs and defence officials from the two countries shared the view that it is desirable that the two sides hold such talks "once a year" as part of efforts to ease tensions over a group of Japanese-administered, Chinese-claimed islets in the East China Sea, according to a Japanese Foreign Ministry official.

"Both Japan and China expressed the view that it is important that they increase efforts to achieve

early implementation of a maritime and aviation communication mechanism," the official told reporters after the meeting in Tokyo.

But the two sides did not discuss specifics such as when to launch the envisaged mechanism, the official said, requesting anonymity. Japan urged China to boost transparency in its defence policy including the double-digit annual growth in the defence budget for a quarter of a century, except in 2010, the official said.

Earlier this month, Beijing unveiled a 10.1 percent jump in its defence outlays for this year.

Thursday's meeting came as China Coast Guard vessels continue to intrude into Japanese territorial waters around the Senkaku

Islands even after the first meeting between Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Chinese President Xi Jinping last November in Beijing. Japan demanded that China stop sending ships into the areas in Thursday's talks, the Foreign Ministry official said.

Speaking at the meeting, Japanese Deputy Foreign Minister Shinsuke Sugiyama said, "It can be said that Japan-China relations appear to be advancing gradually through events such as the summit" between Abe and Xi, but that "it is a fact that Japan and China have concern about their respective security policies." "We expect that (the two countries) will significantly promote communications in the security and defence fields," Sugiyama told the meeting, the start of which was open to the media.

Chinese Assistant Foreign Minister Liu Jianchao said it is meaningful for the two countries to strengthen communications on their foreign and defence policies for improvement and development of bilateral ties, as well as peace and stability in the region.

The hiatus in security talks came after China voiced opposition to Japan's purchase of a major part of the Senkaku Islands from a private Japanese owner in 2012.

The Senkakus, a group of uninhabited islets, are claimed by China and Taipei. Beijing calls them Diaoyu and Taipei refers to them as Tiaoyutai.

Kyodo News

Thai court accepts Yingluck's rice case, sets hearing for 19 May

BANGKOK, 19 March — Former Thai Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra will go on trial after the Supreme Court on Thursday decided to accept a case relating to a controversial rice subsidy program and set a date of 19 May for the first hearing, according to a court release.

Prosecutor Surasak Srirattanakul said in a press conference that a court writ and case files will be brought to the defendant within seven days and on the day of the first hearing Yingluck must appear before court to hear the charge and to testify.

"On 19 May, the defendant must come to hear the charge in court and the judge will consider whether to free her on bail or to detain her, so it will be a big day," said the state attorney. Asked if Yingluck could travel abroad from now on, Surasak said any decision on that would rest with the court.

The former prime minister and Thailand's first female ruler has been



Chutichai Sakthakorn (L), Attorney Director General, Department of Special Litigation, and Surasak Threerattrakul, Director General, Department of Investigation, attend a news conference at the office of the Attorney General in Bangkok on 19 March, 2015.

REUTERS

accused of mismanaging a government rice policy, under which farmers could pledge their crops in return for payment.

Critics say the plan was riddled with corruption and that the government ran up huge bills when farmers were paid overly high rates for their rice.

Yingluck faces accusations of dereliction of duty and negligence. If the court finds her guilty she could face up to 10 years in jail.

In response to the court move, Yingluck protested her innocence via her Facebook page, saying as prime minister she had done her job honestly in accordance with law and regulation for the benefit of people, especially for agriculturists.

"I'm confident in my innocence...I did nothing wrong and hope to reach the real justice in the Supreme Court," she said in a statement released on the social media site.—*Kyodo News*

Cambodian parliament passes two new election laws

PHNOM PENH, 19 March — The National Assembly of Cambodia on Thursday unanimously adopted two new election laws, which aim to govern free and fair elections and to prevent post-election impasse.

All 103 lawmakers in attendance, including Prime Minister Hun Sen and Sam Rainsy, president of the opposition Cambodia National Rescue Party (CNRP), passed the election law and the law on the formation of a National Election Committee (NEC). The laws

were drafted following a July agreement reached between Hun Sen and Sam Rainsy that ended the opposition's 10-month boycott of parliament.

They will be sent to the senate for a final review before submitting to the Constitutional Council and then, King Norodom Sihamoni for promulgation. "The laws aim at ensuring free and fair elections in the future," CPP's lawmaker Bin Chhin said during the session. Under the election law, in the next elections in 2018, the

number of parliamentary seats will be increased to 125 from the current 123. The electoral campaign will be reduced from 30 days to 21 days, and civil society groups and foreigners will not be allowed to round up votes for any political parties.

It also stated that any party, that wins one or more parliamentary seats in the election but boycotts the parliament when the king convenes, will be deemed to have abandoned seats.

Xinhua

Malaysia's internet speed below world's average

BEIJING, 19 March — Malaysia's average internet connection speed was 4.1 Mbps in the third quarter of 2014, still below the world's average, according to Statista's article as quoted by Malaysian media.

According to the Sta-

tista, the German statistics website, South Korea was ranked the first with 25.3 Mbps, which was 5.6 times of the average global connection speed (4.5 Mbps) in the third quarter last year.

The speed ranking of

countries and regions in the Asia Pacific for the quarter is as follows: South Korea, Hong Kong(China), Japan, Singapore, Taiwan (China), Australia, Thailand, Malaysia, China, Indonesia, Vietnam, the Philippines and India.—*Xinhua*

Indonesian court delays decision on Australian death row convicts

JAKARTA, 19 March — Two Australian drug convicts on death row in Indonesia will not be executed this month after a court on Thursday postponed their appeal hearing against the rejection of a request for presidential clemency.

Australians Myuran Sukumaran and Andrew Chan have already been transferred to the prison island of Nusakambangan where the executions would take place.

The two Australians are among a group of 10 drug convicts due to be executed together by firing squad on Nusakambangan. Others in the group include citizens of France, Brazil, the Philippines, Ghana, Nigeria and Indonesia.

At least half of the convicts have ongoing legal challenges.

Sukumaran and Chan were arrested in 2005 as the ringleaders of a plot to smuggle heroin out of Indonesia.

Australia has been pursuing an eleventh-hour campaign to save the lives of the two members of the so-called Bali Nine, but President Joko Widodo has refused to budge.

"The hearing for both cases has been delayed un-



Michael Chan (R), brother of Australian death row prisoner Andrew Chan, and Chintu Sukumaran (L), brother of the other Australian death row prisoner Myuran Sukumaran, speak to the media before visiting the prison island of Nusakambangan, where upcoming executions are expected, in Cilacap, Central Java on 9 March, 2015. —REUTERS

til 25 March for our side to submit evidence. 30 March will be their (the defence) turn," said Leonard Arfan, lawyer for the two Australians.

Judge Ujang Abdullah said final arguments would be heard on 1 April and a verdict would be announced soon afterwards.

The attorney general has said it would not set a date for the executions until after all of the legal processes are completed for all 10 on death row.

Vice President Jusuf Kalla told *Reuters* on Wednesday it could take

weeks or even months for the executions to take place.

Indonesia has harsh penalties for drug trafficking and resumed executions in 2013 after a five-year gap. Five foreigners were among six people executed in January, the first executions since President Widodo took office in October.

With the upcoming executions, Indonesia will have exercised the death penalty more times in a single year than ever before.

Reuters

US first lady highlights cooperation with Japan on girls' education



US first lady Michelle Obama (C) shakes hands with participants after a meeting on strengthening assistance for girls' education in developing countries at the Foreign Ministry's Iikura Guest House in Tokyo on 19 March, 2015.

KYODO NEWS

TOKYO, 19 March — US first lady Michelle Obama and Japanese first lady Akie Abe on Thursday reaffirmed bilateral cooperation in helping girls around the world to complete their education and fulfill their potential.

During her first visit to Japan as US first lady,

Obama was present as the two countries announced a new partnership to support girls' education globally, involving closer collaboration between the US volunteer organization Peace Corps and its equivalent, the Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers.

Michelle Obama is

visiting Japan as part of a five-day Asia trip from Wednesday, which will also take her to Cambodia, after launching with her husband President Barack Obama earlier in the month the "Let Girls Learn" campaign to help about 62 million girls around the world who are unable to attend school — half of whom are adolescents.

"Today we are pleased to announce that the United States and Japan will partner in this critical area, elevating the issue of girls' education on their shared development agenda," said a Japan-US statement released at a function attended by the first ladies. "As two of the largest economies in the world, our combined efforts can make a difference."

Under the strengthened partnership deal, the Peace Corps and the JOCV directed by the Japan International Cooperation Agency will enhance cooperation to facilitate girls' participation in the fields

of primary and secondary education, sports and physical education.

The "first lady diplomacy" comes ahead of Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's planned visit to the United States during the Golden Week holidays in Japan from late April through early May.

Akie Abe has also been promoting education in developing countries by supporting the Asian University for Women in Bangladesh, a liberal arts college providing high-quality English education to young women from across Asia, and school building in Myanmar.

Later in the day, Michelle Obama is scheduled to meet with Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, as well as Shinzo Abe.

On Friday, she will tour the ancient capital city of Kyoto, including the UNESCO World Heritage-listed Kiyomizu temple, before leaving for Cambodia.

Kyodo News

US central bank hints possible rate hike after April

WASHINGTON, 19 March — The US Federal Reserve hinted on Wednesday it could exit from the multiyear monetary easing after April if economic conditions permit.

The Federal Open Market Committee, the central bank's policy-setting panel, said in a statement following a two-day meeting that it "judges that an increase in the target range for the federal funds rate remains unlikely at the April FOMC statement."

Previously the Fed said it could be "patient" about starting to hike rates but the language disappeared in the latest statement.

Fed chairwoman Janet Yellen earlier indicated an interest rate hike would not take place at least until after two policy-setting meetings ahead as long as the committee uses the word in an FOMC statement. The Fed plans to hold policy meetings in April and June.

On Wednesday, Yellen told reporters, "This change does not mean that an increase will necessarily occur in June, although we cannot rule that out."

"The decision to raise the target range will depend on our assessment of realized and expected progress toward our objectives

of maximum employment and 2 percent inflation," Yellen said.

The Fed retained its policy of ultralow short-term interest rates at zero to 0.25 percent on Wednesday.

"Economic growth has moderated somewhat," the Fed said in reference to the overall economic assessment.

The Fed revised downward the outlook for the overall US growth in 2015, measured by gross domestic product adjusted for inflation, to "2.3 to 2.7" percent from 2.6 to 3.0 percent in an earlier projection in December.

The unemployment rate for 2015 will stay at "5.0 to 5.2" percent compared with "5.2 to 5.3" percent in the Fed's earlier estimate.

For 2016 the Fed expected economic growth to slow to "2.3 to 2.7" percent from the earlier forecast of "2.5 to 3.0" and estimated jobless rate in the year is "4.9 to 5.1" percent, better than "5.0 to 5.2" percent in the previous estimate.

The Fed set the target range of short-term interest rates at almost zero in 2008 in a bid to deal with the global financial crisis.

Kyodo News

S Korea still mulling whether to join China-led development bank

SEOUL, 19 March — South Korea is still reviewing whether to join a China-led development bank, South Korea's Foreign Ministry spokesman said on Thursday.

"Our financial authorities are mulling the issue in a careful and comprehensive manner with an emphasis on what substantial national interests could be gained (by joining)," Noh Kwang Il told reporters.

His comment was made when asked to confirm news reports claiming South Korea has decided to participate in the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and has informed the United States about it.

The United States, as well as Japan, has been cautious about taking part in the bank that has China as the largest shareholder, citing concerns about its

ability to screen projects before lending money to make sure that its loans do not result in corruption and overdevelopment. Seeing the AIIB as a rival to the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank, the United States is pressuring allies to stay away from joining. In a blow to the United States, Britain, Germany, France and Italy announced their decision to join the bank in recent days.

China and 20 other countries, including Thailand, India, Kuwait and Kazakhstan, agreed last year to launch the \$50 billion development bank by the end of 2015. The number of countries has since grown while China has said it will regard nations announcing participation by the end of this month as the founding members of the bank.

Kyodo News

Global population growth threatens to outstrip fresh water supply

ROME, 19 March — Global demand for fresh water is set to outstrip supply as a result of population growth by the middle of this century if current levels of consumption continue, a study said.

Fears of water shortages could intensify although this is not the first time in history that demand is poised to outpace supply, Tony Parolari, the study's lead author, said on Wednesday.

"Global water consumption per capita has been declining since 1980 which means efficiency is increasing," Parolari, a researcher at Duke University, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

"But if population growth trends continue, water use will have to decline more substantially."

The world's population is expected to hit 9.6 billion by 2050 from more than 7 billion now, according to UN estimates.

Whether humans can adapt to declining water supplies depends on what new technologies for finding water are developed,



A girl looks up as she stands at a dried well in a village of Weining county, Guizhou Province, on 16 March, 2013. More than one million people in Guizhou and Gansu provinces are facing a drinking water shortage due to two lingering droughts, according to Xinhua News Agency. —REUTERS

and whether population growth levels off, the study said.

The paper, published in the journal *WIREs Water*, analysed historical information on water consumption and demographics with the help of mathematical models to chart changes over time.

Shortages are already affecting millions in Sao

Paulo, Brazil, where residents have been hoarding water in their apartments following a drought, and the US state of California which is entering its fourth year of drought.

In past eras of water scarcity, during the expansion of European cities such as London and Paris in the 19th and early 20th century, technological solutions to

the problem were developed — such as expanding pipeline networks to pump in water from further afield.

Current pressures could be solved or at least mitigated with new expertise, including improved ways of removing salt from ocean water to produce fresh drinking water, Parolari said.

Reuters

PERSPECTIVES

Friday, 20 March, 2015

Time to leave old, bad habits

By Myint Win Thein

When a person has difficulty dropping an old, bad habit and starting a new, good one, we tend to say, “You can’t teach an old dog new tricks.” It is an old English adage which means it is difficult for a person with

life-long bad habits to abandon them easily. However, it is important that such habits are dropped as soon as possible, since they are of no benefit.

With ongoing democratic transition after decades of a one-party political system and military rule, people in Myanmar need to adopt good practices in every sector in keeping with the international community. At the same time, it is also necessary for them to leave behind bad practices of the past.

While the international community has been encouraging Myanmar to adopt good practices, we should also reap the benefits of abandoning those that have been detrimental to the interests of the people.

If the people cannot adopt good practices and

instead maintain the old, bad ones, they are sure to disappoint the international community by proving the aforementioned adage true. It is time to leave behind the old, bad habits of the past.

Write for us

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

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

Nanyang Technological University of Singapore: Vital aspect of Technology in Education.

By Sayar Mya

Why students should be using technology in their education can be a complex issue, and there are many small points to be made in this article about the value of learning, understanding and using technology. It can be compared to science in general. Science is responsible for almost all of our advances around the world. It is difficult to think of any current tools, information and discoveries that are not the direct result of science. From the paint used in any art or commercial product to the increasing understanding of the origins of the cosmos and ourselves; science is at the root of it all. Similarly, technology is becoming the foundation upon which nearly everything is being built.

Nanyang Technological University (NTU) is a young, research-intensive university in Singapore. It is one of the largest public universities in Singapore.

NTU was inaugurated in 1991, originally as an

English-medium technical and teaching college occupying the grounds of the former “Nanyang University”, a Chinese-medium university which had been consolidated into the “National University of Singapore (NUS)” in 1980. Over the years, NTU has grown to become a full-fledged research university, and currently provides a high-quality global education to close to 33,000 undergraduate and postgraduate students. The student body includes top scholars and international Olympiad medalists from the region and beyond. Hailing from more than 70 countries, the university’s 4000-strong teaching and research staff also bring dynamic international perspectives and years of solid industry experience.

Recent statistics show that it has (1,700) academic staff; (2,800) administrative staff; (23,500) undergraduates; and (10,000) postgraduates.

In recent years, various college and university rankings have placed NTU amongst the top universities in Asia and beyond. In

the 2014 “QS World University Rankings”, NTU is ranked 39th globally (6th in Asia), and is placed 1st in the world among young universities according to the 2014 QS Top 50 Under 50. NTU’s “College of Engineering” is also ranked 9th in the world according to the latest 2014 QS World University Rankings by Faculty. In the 2014 “Times Higher Education World University Rankings”, NTU is ranked at 61st globally (10th in Asia). NTU’s business school, “Nanyang Business School”, was rated 64th in the world (4th in Asia, 1st in Singapore) by the Economist Intelligence Unit in 2013.

Campuses of NTU

NTU’s primary campus is the 200-hectare named “Yunnan Garden Campus” which is situated adjacent to the Jurong West district of Singapore. It is the largest university campus on the island of Singapore and also houses Singapore’s largest on-campus residence infrastructure including 18 halls of residence for undergraduates and two graduate halls.

Clean Tech Park of Singapore

Singapore’s first eco-business park, “Clean Tech Park”, is situated next to NTU’s main campus. It is proposed to be developed in three phases with an estimated completion year of 2030. The park’s first multi-tenanted building, “CleanTech One”, was opened in October 2010.

NTU@one-north in Singapore

Apart from the Yunnan campus, NTU also operates a satellite campus at the one-north business park. It comprises two wings with respective educational and alumni clubhouse facilities primarily allowing the university to enhance its delivery of continuing education programmes as well as for external collaborations.

Novena Campus

A third campus, Novena Campus, is situated close to “LKC Medicine” (Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine) partner teaching hospital, Tan Tock Seng Hospital in downtown Novena.

(See page 9)

The Peace Process

Following the Nationwide elections of late twenty ten The new Government was formed, in early twenty eleven

A major goal of the new Government has been to undertake the process for attainment of peace with the various armed groups of Myanmar that for decades past, have tried, in vain to achieve their Agenda.

Recently at last, there’s a glimmer of hope for peace for the new Government nearing the end of its lease.

The armed groups have come to the peace talks with positive attitude and a desire for the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement to conclude, followed by political talks, for all to live in harmony in the Golden Land of Myanmar till eternity. The layman’s fervent prayer, is for the peace process, to be eventually crowned with success.

Lokethar

GOLD PRICE, FE RATE

(19-3-2015)

Yangon Gold Price

Buying K667,800 per tical: Selling K668,800

Mandalay Gold Price

Buying K667,500 per tical: Selling K668,500

FE RATE

USD Buying K 1035: Selling -----

SGD Buying K 777: Selling K787

Euro Buying K 1,135: Selling K1,160

We are too nice to one another

U Hla Maung

Myanmar people are always “arr nar de”, which means we are always unwilling to upset anyone or make anyone feel bad. We ask someone “Do you like it?”, and the response will be “Yes, it’s good.” A psychiatrist will probably tell this is due to deep seated fears and longings, but, for the short term anyway, it leaves everyone feeling happy.

I believe however that it is rooted in our culture. We are taught from a very early age, as soon as we are able to crawl in fact, to pay respect to our parents, grandparents, and of course, to the Sangha or Order of Monks. “Oo daw”, meaning “bow in respect”, is one of the first phrases we learn to respond to as babies, and all babies learn to bow down to monks and grandparents before they learn anything else.

When we are a little

older and off to primary school, we stand up with folded arms when teacher walks in and chant, or shout as loudly as possible, “Good morning’ teacher and you” without understanding any word. Rote learning starts early. No thinking is required or encouraged. All this by the way has nothing to do with “laws”, and anyone who thinks passing laws will solve the problem of rote-learning in schools is in for a surprise. It is our cul-

ture of respect for teachers. “Fold your arms and bow your heads when you pass before teachers.”

For a tiny majority of children who go to expensive private schools, the roles may be somewhat reversed. In these private schools, the kids rule the classrooms. Perceptive kids know their parents are paying high fees and expect to be pampered. The teachers are careful not to upset the kids. They know the kids’ parents are paying their salaries. Habits learned early are

hard to change. For most children, respect for teachers continues into high school and university, and later into respect for authority. We become habituated into responding with “Yes Sayar” and “Very good Sayar”. It pleases everyone and requires no thinking on our part. Government officials too are a product of this culture, and expect compliance and agreement from one another.

But clearly, if we are to learn and grow in knowledge as individuals, and to prosper as a nation, we need to be more honest with one another.

Strange though it may sound, it is not always good to be so nice to one another. Sometimes, we need to make an effort to think carefully, and to speak honestly. In the long run, it will prove better for everyone.

About author : U Hla Maung went to school in London and graduated from London’s Imperial College of Science and Technology in 1966.

ARTICLE

Nanyang Technological University of Singapore: . . .

(from page 8)

The new 20-storey Clinical Sciences Building (CSB) is expected to be completed in 2016, and is expected to facilitate the LKC medicine students' seamless integration into clinical settings by providing state-of-the-art future classrooms, including a learning studio, alcove clusters, clinical skills and communication centre, which boasts its own four-bed mock ward as well as several consultation rooms, so that students can practice their skills in a realistic and safe environment. The CSB will also be home to LKC Medicine researchers, with the laboratories interconnected through collaborative spaces.

Colleges, Schools and Institutes

NTU is organized into several colleges and schools, each corresponding to different fields of study. The various engineering schools, which were consolidated to form the **College of Engineering** in 2001, together with **Nanyang Business School**, the **Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information** and the **National Institute of Education** have been part of NTU from its inception. More recently, NTU has established additional schools for the **Biological Sciences** (2001), **Humanities and Social Sciences** (2004), **Physical & Mathematical Sciences** (2005), and **Art, Design and Media** (2009). In 2013, NTU and Imperial College London jointly established a new medical school, the **Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine**, which is based in the Novena campus.

Nanyang Business School (College of Business)

Nanyang Business School (NBS) is consistently ranked as the top business school in Singapore. NBS currently has more than 3,000 undergraduates and over 470 postgraduates from Singapore and around the world and offers undergraduate degrees in Accountancy and Business, as well as one of the world's top MBA programmes and other post-graduate degrees. It is the only business school in Singapore and one of only three in Asia to

be awarded both the **EFMD EQUIS (European Quality Improvement System)** and **AACSB (Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business)** accreditations – international hallmarks of quality.

College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences

The College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences consists of three schools.

- **The Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information** is a school of communication studies and offers courses in Journalism, Broadcast, Advertising, Communication Policy and Information Studies. It originally established in 1992 and it was named after Singapore's former president Wee Kim Wee in 1995.

- **The School of Art, Design and Media** is Singapore's first professional art school and offers an undergraduate programme in Art, Design, and Media, as well as graduate degrees in arts research. Its building, which features a sloping grassy roof surrounding a central courtyard, is frequently featured in NTU's promotional materials.

- **The School of Humanities and Social Sciences** offers programmes in a wide variety of fields including Chinese, Economics, English Literature, History, Linguistics, Philosophy, Psychology, Public Policy and Sociology.

College of Engineering

The **College of Engineering** is NTU's largest subdivision. It is claimed to be the world's largest engineering college, with a student population of more than 10,000 undergraduates and 3,500 graduates. It consists of six schools focused on technology and innovation.

- School of Chemical and Biomedical Engineering
- School of Civil and Environmental Engineering
- School of Computer Engineering
- School of Electrical and Electronic Engineering
- School of Materials Science and Engineering



- School of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering

College of Science

The **College of Science** in NTU is a young and dynamic institution that has grown phenomenally in its relatively short history. Today, the college consists of two schools and is home to about 150 faculty members (more than 15 of which are Singapore National Research Foundation Fellows), 340 research staff, and 110 administrative and technical staff, 3700 undergraduate and 540 graduate students.

- **The School of Biological Sciences** was established in 2002 and offers a variety of programmes in the Biological Sciences and also a unique and innovative "East meets West" double degree programme in Biomedical Sciences and Traditional Chinese Medicine with the Beijing University of Chinese Medicine in China.

- **The School of Physical and Mathematical Sciences** was established in 2005 and offers various disciplines in Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics, as well as Earth Sciences in collaboration with the Earth Observatory of Singapore.

Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine

The **Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine** was established in 2013 in collaboration with Imperial College London. Prior to its opening in 2013, the school received record donations of Singapore \$400 million, including Singapore \$150 million from the Lee Foundation. The School's primary clinical partner is the National Healthcare Group, a

leader in public healthcare recognized for the quality of its medical expertise, facilities and teaching.

Interdisciplinary Graduate School

"**The Interdisciplinary Graduate School (IGS)**" focuses on the key research areas within NTU's Peaks of Excellence in Sustainable Earth, New Media and Future Healthcare. The research project in these areas have span across different disciplines beyond the conventional school-based programmes. IGS leverages on professors from all the schools and colleges in NTU to undertake interdisciplinary research and to act as advisors for IGS PhD students. With this approach, IGS aims to train a new generation of PhD students, who are exposed to an intensive seminar culture with ample interaction opportunities.

Autonomous Institutes

NTU hosts a number of autonomous research and educational institutes.

- **The National Institute of Education (NIE)**, occupying 16 hectares in the western part of NTU's Yunnan Garden campus, is Singapore's main teaching college and is run in close collaboration with Singapore's Ministry of Education. Full-time teachers in Singapore's public schools are typically required to complete a post-graduate diploma course at NIE, sponsored by Singapore's Ministry of Education. NIE is also internationally acclaimed and provides educational consultancy to countries from Indonesia to UAE.
- **The S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS)**, named after Singapore's former Deputy

Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, offers graduate programmes in international relations and is an autonomous graduate institution of NTU. The school has the Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies—long recognized as a world authority on strategic studies and terrorism. RSIS was ranked second among university-affiliated think tanks in Asia in the 2011 Global Go-To Think Tank Rankings.

- **The Singapore Centre on Environmental Life Sciences Engineering (SCELSE)** is a unique interdisciplinary Research Centre of Excellence (RCE), funded by National Research Foundation, Singapore Ministry of Education, Nanyang Technological University and National University of Singapore.
- **The Earth Observatory of Singapore (EOS)** is an autonomous research institute specializing in Earth Sciences and conducts fundamental research on earthquakes, volcanoes, tsunamis & climate change in and around Southeast Asia, towards safer and more sustainable societies.

Institutes and Centers

NTU has a large number of subsidiary research and educational institutes, including the following:

- Chinese Heritage Centre
- Confucius Institute
- Cornell-Nanyang Institute of Hospitality Management
- Energy Research Institute at NTU
- Institute of Advanced Studies
- Institute for Media Innovation

- Institute for Sports Research
- Institute on Asian Consumer Insight
- Lien Chinese Enterprise Research Centre
- Nanyang Centre for Public Administration
- Nanyang Environment and Water Research Institute
- Nanyang Institute of Technology in Health and Medicine
- Nanyang Techno-premiership Center
- SAF-NTU Academy
- Singapore Centre for Chinese Language
- Centre for Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CLASS)
- Institute for Media Innovation

Academics Undergraduate Education

NTU has a total undergraduate population of around 23,500. Approximately 80% of undergraduates are Singaporean citizens and permanent residents. The remaining 20% of international students are mostly from the ASEAN nations, China, and India.

Undergraduate tuition is heavy subsidized by the Government of Singapore. Singaporean citizens pay around 27 percent of the base tuition cost. A reduced subsidy is optionally available to Singaporean permanent residents and international students, but with a stipulation: the recipients are contractually required to work for a Singapore-based company for three years after graduation.

Post-graduate Education

NTU has approximately 10,000 graduate students pursuing Master's degrees, doctorates, and other post-graduate degrees. The graduate student population is largely international.

(To be continued)

Rousseff declares war on corruption in midst of Petrobras scandal



Brazil's President Dilma Rousseff attends the launching ceremony for the Anti-Corruption Package at the Planalto Palace in Brasilia on 18 March, 2015. — REUTERS

BRASILIA, 19 March — Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff launched an anti-corruption offensive on Wednesday to counter rising discontent over a kickback scandal engulfing state-run oil company Petrobras that has implicated her allies and undermined her popularity.

Her anti-corruption proposals, contained in bills submitted to Congress, include the criminalization of slush funds — known in Portuguese as “Caixa 2” — that are widely used by Brazil's political parties to finance their campaigns.

Other steps would hasten the seizure of assets from people convicted of corruption and from government officials who accumulate wealth out of proportion with their income.

As part of the anti-corruption drive, Rousseff also signed a decree implementing an anti-bribery

law passed more than a year ago that stiffens fines for companies but has not been applied for a lack of finalised rules.

Rousseff said she would not brush the latest corruption scandal under the carpet and sought to divert criticism.

“I’m sure all Brazilians of good faith, even those who did not vote for me, know that corruption in Brazil was not invented recently,” she said in a speech.

Many Brazilians, however, hold her responsible. On Sunday, about 1 million people took to the streets of Brazil's largest cities in anti-government protests triggered by the Petrobras scandal and discontent over economic stagnation.

Some demonstrators called for her impeachment. Rousseff was chairwoman of Petrobras during the years when most of the corruption took place.

She has denied knowing about a multibillion-dollar scheme in which kickbacks on overpriced contracts with some of Brazil's top engineering and construction firms were paid to politicians and Petrobras executives.

Opinion polls show most Brazilians believe she knew.

Less than three months into her second term, Rousseff's popularity has sunk to the lowest for a Brazilian leader since 1992, shortly before President Fernando Collor was impeached for corruption, according to a new poll published on Wednesday. The year-old investigation has so far led to the indictment of 103 people on racketeering, bribery and money laundering charges, including three former Petrobras senior managers and executives from six leading builders. Forty-seven politicians, mostly from Rousseff's coalition, are under investigation too.

Opposition leaders have said impeachment is unlikely since Rousseff has not been personally accused of wrongdoing in the Petrobras scandal.

Still, the investigation came closer to the president on Monday when prosecutors charged the treasurer of her Workers' Party with corruption for soliciting donations from executives accused of funneling money from the oil company. — Reuters

EU's Tusk discussing Russia sanctions idea with Merkel, Hollande

BRUSSELS, 19 March — European Council President Donald Tusk is discussing a proposal with Germany and France to link European Union sanctions on Russia to full implementation of a Ukraine ceasefire, a senior EU official said on Wednesday.

Tusk is working with German Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President Francois Hollande on a compromise proposal on the future of EU sanctions that he believes all 28 EU leaders would support at a summit on Thursday.

“The direction of that proposal will go into building very strong links between full implementation of Minsk and sanctions that are already in place being in place until full implementation of Minsk,” the official told reporters on condition of anonymity.

An uneasy ceasefire is in place in eastern Ukraine after a new truce agreement was agreed in Minsk last month. Agreement of all EU governments is needed to renew economic sanctions on Russia expiring in July, but governments are sharply divided.

More hawkish member states wanted an agreement to extend those sanctions now, while other governments wanted to wait until a June summit to give the Minsk accord a chance to work. Linking sanctions to full implementation of Minsk would effectively mean extending them at least until the end of the



German Chancellor Angela Merkel (L) and French President Francois Hollande arrive to attend a joint news conference after talks at the Elysee Palace in Paris on 20 Feb, 2015. — REUTERS

year, because the Minsk accord contains a year-end deadline for Ukraine to recover full control over its border.

The EU official said all governments were ready to agree that Merkel and Hollande, having helped negotiate the Minsk agreement, “should have a specific role in the process of defining further steps which should support implementation of Minsk”.

“That is why right now Tusk is working together with Merkel and Hollande on that proposal,” the official said. One EU diplomat said leaders would likely agree at the summit to signal now that they would keep sanctions on Russia until the Minsk terms were fully met, while leaving a formal decision on renew-

ing sanctions until June.

“It makes no sense to reduce the pressure on Russia ... if their commitment to the full implementation of Minsk hasn't been tested,” he said.

“We think there are clear advantages to sending a signal on rollover (of sanctions) early on.” A German government official said that implementation of the Minsk agreement was the benchmark for Berlin.

Merkel made clear when she met Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko in Berlin on Monday “that the implementation of the Minsk agreement and sanctions are closely bound politically,” the official said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Reuters

Multiple deaths after restaurant shooting in Sweden



A police officer stands at the scene of a fatal shooting in Gothenburg on 18 March, 2015. — REUTERS

STOCKHOLM, 19 March — Several people were killed in a restaurant shooting in the Swed-

ish city of Gothenburg on Wednesday in what police say was likely to be a gang-related shooting. Po-

lice said there was no indication that the shooting in Sweden's second biggest city was terror-related.

“There's absolutely nothing suggesting this would have anything to do with terrorism,” police spokeswoman Ulla Brehm said.

Police said there were multiple deaths in the shooting in which automatic weapons were used, but would not say how many, adding the death toll was likely to rise.

Brehm said the area on Hisingen, an island off Gothenburg, had seen a lot of gang violence and that was a likely explanation for the shooting.

“We have had a targeted police operation in this area because we have gang crime here. There has been shootings in the past,” Brehm said.

Reuters

Dutch ruling parties pledge to continue despite Senate loss



Netherlands' Prime Minister Mark Rutte

AMSTERDAM, 19 March — Leaders of the Dutch ruling coalition pledged to remain in government on Thursday despite losing provincial elections that will leave them scrambling to command a majority in the country's Senate.

The local ballot determines the composition of the upper house because the winners get to chose

new senators in May. According to a forecast made after more than 97 percent of votes had been counted, the Liberal party of Prime Minister Mark Rutte and its Labour coalition partner together will lose almost a third of their seats in the 75-member upper house.

Even before the result, the two parties did not hold an absolute Senate majority, but were able to pass laws with the support of three “constructive opposition” parties. Now, Rutte's government lacks a majority even with their support, meaning it will have to do deals with different parties if it wants to proceed with an ambitious reform of the tax system or pass a budget later this year. — Reuters

WORLD

19 killed in Tunisia museum attack, including at least three Japanese

CAIRO/TOKYO, 19 March — Tunisian Prime Minister Habib Essid said on Wednesday 17 foreign tourists, including five Japanese, and two Tunisians were killed after gunmen stormed a museum in Tunis, state media reported.

In Tokyo, a government official said on Thursday morning three Japanese were killed and another three injured, saying the report of five Japanese killed was incorrect.

“We will never tolerate despicable acts of terror and firmly denounce terrorism,” Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida

told reporters. “We will continue the fight against terrorism in cooperation with the international community.”

Visitors from Italy, Germany, Poland and Spain were also among the dead in the assault on the Bardo National Museum, which left dozens of people injured, according to the Tunisian government and media reports.

In what the interior ministry called a terror attack, two of the assailants were killed by security forces, reports said.

Essid said a manhunt was under way for two or



A woman (L), believed to be a Japanese national, receives treatment at a hospital in Tunis on 18 March, 2015, after gunmen stormed a museum in the Tunisian capital. Nineteen people — 17 foreign tourists and two Tunisians — were killed in the attack.—KYODO NEWS

three other gunmen. The attackers’ affiliation remains unknown.

“All Tunisians should be united after this attack which was aimed at destroying the Tunisian economy,” Essid was quoted by *Reuters* as saying in a national address.

The attack on the high-profile tourist destination is likely to be a serious blow to the North African country, whose economy largely depends on tourism. It has avoided major upheavals since the 2011 antigovernment rallies that ousted former President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali.

A number of Islamist militant groups have emerged in Tunisia since the uprising, according to media reports.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility, but a website linked to Islamic State militants praised Wednesday’s attack.

The Japanese government has set up a taskforce to collect information and confirm Japanese casualties, officials said.

Essid also told state television that another four Japanese were injured, including one seriously.

Kyodo News

US likely to delay planned closure of two Afghanistan bases

WASHINGTON, 19 March — The US military bases in Kandahar and Jalalabad are likely to remain open beyond the end of 2015, a senior US official said, as Washington considers slowing its military pull-out from Afghanistan to help the new government fight the Taliban.

The anticipated policy reversal reflects the US embrace of Afghanistan’s new and more cooperative president, Ashraf Ghani, and a desire to avoid the kind of collapse of local security forces that occurred in Iraq after the US pull-out there.

It coincides with new efforts backed by Pakistan and China for peace talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban. Washington has welcomed greater engagement by China, which has helped create a diplomatic opening for reconciliation.

The US official said conditions had changed since May when President Barack Obama declared that by the end of 2015 the US force would be rough-

ly halved from the current total of about 10,000 and would operate only from bases in Kabul and Bagram.

The White House had no immediate comment on the possibility of maintaining the Kandahar and Jalalabad bases into next year.

Obama is expected to decide in the next few days whether to slow the pace of the US troop withdrawal, possibly by next week when Ghani and Afghan Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah travel to Washington. US officials hope the visit will garner American public support for a longer military mission and display a contrast to their prickly dealings with former president Hamid Karzai. Ghani is getting a warm welcome. He meets the secretaries of state, defense and treasury at the Camp David presidential retreat on Monday, lunches with Obama at the White House on Tuesday, and speaks to a joint session of Congress on Wednesday.

Reuters



US soldiers from 5-20 infantry Regiment attached to 82nd Airborne walk while on patrol in Zharay District in Kandahar Province, southern Afghanistan on 24 April, 2012.—REUTERS

Fighting between Yemeni president supporters and opponents halts Aden flights

ADEN, 19 March — Clashes broke out between militia loyal to Yemeni President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi and rival security forces on Thursday near the airport in the southern city of Aden, bringing air traffic to a halt, local officials said.

They said both sides used medium and light weapons in the fighting near a base that is used by special forces loyal to former President Ali Abdullah

Saleh, an ally of the Shi’ite Muslim Houthi movement that controls northern Yemen. The fighting around the base in the Khor Maksar district of Aden spread to residential districts and prompted roads to the airport to be closed.

There were no details on casualties in the clashes. Airport authorities could not immediately be reached for comment.

The rise to power of

the Iran-backed Houthis since September has deepened divisions in Yemen’s complex web of political and religious allegiances, and left the country increasingly cut off from the outside world.

Tensions have been heightened in Aden since Hadi fled there in February after escaping a month of house arrest in Sanaa by Houthi forces who seized the capital in September

2014. Hadi has been trying to consolidate his control over Aden since he fled there, ordering the sacking of the commander of the city’s garrison, General Abdel-Hafez al-Saqqaf, and replacing him with one of his officers.

Saqqaf, however, has refused to hand over command of the force, estimated between 1,500-2,000 troops culminating in a standoff.—*Reuters*

Islamic State militants kill 10 pro-Tripoli fighters in central Libya

TRIOLI/MISRATA, (Libya), 19 March — Ten fighters loyal to the self-proclaimed government that controls Tripoli were killed by Islamic State militants in central Libya on Wednesday, as the Islamists spread their reach in the divided country.

Islamist militants in Libya who have allied themselves to the Islamic State group that controls

parts of Iraq and Syria had until recently been mostly active in the east, where the internationally recognized government is now based.

But in recent weeks they have expanded westwards to the city of Sirte, taking government buildings, a hospital and the university, posing a challenge to the Tripoli-based government and its allied fac-

tions which have engaged them in battle.

“A number of our hero army members were assassinated this morning by the Islamic State in the Nawfaliyah area,” said Osama Abu Naji, a senior official in the Tripoli-based government, referring to a town southeast of Sirte.

“The victims were assassinated, it was not confrontation,” he told report-

ers, without elaborating.

Anticipating more clashes, Sirte residents were seen leaving in a column of cars on the main highway to Misrata, a *Reuters* reporter said.

In the evening, more than 1,000 people, some weeping, gathered in the centre of Misrata, some 200 km (120 miles) west of Sirte, for the dead fighters’ funeral.—*Reuters*

Central, West African leaders to meet over Boko Haram in April

ACCRA, 19 March — Central and West African states will hold a summit next month to agree a common strategy to combat the Boko Haram insurgency, their leaders said on Wednesday.

Armies from Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad and Niger have launched an offensive to end the Islamic militant group’s six-year campaign, which has killed thousands in northern Nigeria and spilled over into Cameroon and Niger.

Ghana’s president John Dramani Mahama and his Chadian counterpart Id-

riss Deby told reporters in Accra that the 7-8 April summit, for which the host country has yet to be chosen, was needed to sustain the regional offensive.

Mahama chairs the West African regional bloc Ecowas, while Deby heads the Economic Community of Central African States (Eccas).

“Single-handedly, no country can overcome this threat and therefore through pooling our resources together ...we are going to overcome this challenge,” Deby told reporters.—*Reuters*



Chadian soldiers walk 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

New UN framework seen as insufficient to combat disaster



Japan's minister for disaster management Eriko Yamatani (R) marks the adoption a framework to mitigate the risks and damage of disasters on 18 March, 2015, at the UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in the northeastern Japan city of Sendai. At left is Margareta Wahlstroem, the UN secretary general's special representative for disaster risk reduction. —KYODO NEWS

SENDAI, 19 March — A UN conference that wrapped up early Thursday in Sendai was the highest-level world meeting on disaster risk reduction held so far, but the resulting set of seven goals to combat disasters are far from ambitious, critics say.

The new action plan, adopted after midnight Wednesday following prolonged negotiations, was initially expected to include specific numbers or percentages

on reducing deaths and economic losses and boosting financial aid for developing countries.

But the post-2015 Sendai framework only said national governments will aim to “substantially” reduce such losses in the next 15 years compared with the 10 years through 2015, as earlier proposals made by host Japan and others on percentage goals were rejected by Western countries, including the United States,

delegation sources said.

A Japanese official said participants from developed countries were generally very careful about what they commit to, as the decisions in Sendai are likely to affect the directions of global negotiations on development and climate change later this year.

The once-in-a-decade UN gathering was the first in a series of international meetings this year, including the UN summit for adoption of the post-2015 development agenda to be held in September, and the 21st Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change at the end of the year.

“It is just not possible to hammer out something perfect... but we came up with something that everybody can swallow,” the official said, referring to the framework.

The start of the Sendai conference on Saturday coincided with Cyclone Pam that tore through the Southern Pacific archipelago of Vanuatu and neighbouring islands. Participants in various sessions hence underscored calls for pre-emptive investment against disasters amid increased threats from climate

change. More and more climate change-related natural hazards and resulting damage are widely projected to take a toll on global communities and people.

Margareta Wahlstroem, the UN secretary general's special representative for disaster risk reduction, told a Press conference on Thursday the Sendai framework is critical for tackling the situation.

It “opens a major new chapter in sustainable development as it outlines clear targets and priorities for action,” she said, referring to the seven goals.

Activists and experts also hailed the adoption of the seven new goals which were not included in the previous action plan worked out in 2005.

But they were disappointed that the governments have “diluted the targets at the expenses of the poor and vulnerable communities” in the framework, according to their statement.

“There needs to be more specific, numerical targets if we really were to address disasters,” said Masaaki Ohashi, chairman of the Japan NGO Centre for International Cooperation.

The outcome shows that “None of the nations wanted

to be held accountable” for the framework's level of attainment, he added.

Hannington Alatoa, president of Vanuatu Red Cross Society, said a lack of unity seen between developed and less developed economies during the negotiations shows a “grim picture of the future.”

The world needs to recognize the “reality and make a difference in terms of commitment and having a positive impact... especially on the developing nations,” he said.

A drastic reduction of disaster-related losses, as pledged in the framework, may prove to be difficult without a stronger commitment, suggested a new study by risk modeling software provider Air Worldwide which showed the present situation allows little prospect of reducing economic losses from the current levels of \$240 billion per year.

Milan Simic, senior vice president of the firm, said, “The study tells us that it is next to impossible to reduce existing levels of economic losses but that they provide a baseline and a context for improving on key areas of development over the lifetime of the new framework.”—Kyodo News

Psychologist links disaster-affected children around the world

SENDAI, 19 March — New York-based clinical psychologist Judy Kuriansky, a specialist in helping children traumatized by disasters, says the same techniques work for stricken kids wherever they are and that making them feel connected with their counterparts abroad is part of the healing process.

“We’ve used the same exercises and games for children who suffered the disasters in Japan and Haiti, and for children suffering the effects of Ebola in Sierra Leone. It can also apply to nonbiological disasters such as the nuclear crisis in Fukushima,” Kuriansky said in an interview.

Both Japan and Haiti have suffered major natural disasters in recent years. In Japan's case, a massive earthquake and tsunami struck northeastern areas in March 2011, triggering meltdowns at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant. Haiti was struck by a massive quake in 2010.

Kuriansky, who is chairwoman of the Psychology Coalition at the United Nations, was invited to speak at the Children and Youth Forum, which was held as part of the UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction that ended on Thursday in the northeastern Japan city of Sendai in Miyagi Prefecture. The forum focused on how to empower youth in reducing disaster risks.

Founder of the Global Kids

Connect Project, Kuriansky said she was happy to see the issue of ensuring the mental health of survivors mentioned in an action plan on the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction that was adopted at the UN conference.

The 68-year-old psychologist first visited Japan's northeast in 2012, a year after the calamity, and held healing workshops with the Recovery Assistance Centre of Miyagi, a nongovernmental organization, for disaster-affected Japanese schoolchildren.

She said she was surprised at how actively engaged the students were during her workshops and observed how open the Japanese students were about sharing their feelings.

In one exercise, children who caught a ball thrown to them had to share their dreams. “One boy said he wants to be a president, another boy said he wanted to be rich, while a girl said she wanted to live happily with her family,” Kuriansky said.

One of her workshops also had children offer each other reassuring words, saying “I’m safe,” “You are safe” and “We are safe.”

“They think they are playing a game but it’s actually doing something significant,” she said, adding the simple techniques worked for children in Haiti as well as in Sierra Leone, one of the West African countries worst affected by the deadly Ebola virus.

Kyodo News

‘The people survived’: Vanuatu says death toll won’t jump

PORT VILA, 19 March — The death toll from the devastating storm that pummeled Vanuatu last weekend will not rise significantly, the prime minister of the South Pacific island nation said on Thursday.

“The important thing is that the people survived,” Prime Minister Joe Natuman told *Reuters* in an interview in the capital Port Vila. “If the people survived, we can rebuild.”

Cyclone Pam roared across the island chain last Friday and Saturday, bringing winds of up to 300 kph (185 mph), torrential rain and massive storm surges. But almost a week later, the officially reported death toll is still a remarkably low

11 people.

“It’s not going to rise dramatically,” the prime minister's private secretary Bakoa Kaltongga said of the toll.

With widespread destruction in Port Vila and across nearby islands, relief workers had feared the number of dead could rise significantly once they were able to more thoroughly inspect the outer islands of the scattered archipelago.

Aid workers and residents described how people buried food and fresh water as one of the strongest storms on record bore down on them, fleeing to churches, schools and even coconut drying kilns as winds and massive seas ripped their flimsy houses to the ground.



A worker chops up fallen trees next to a destroyed boat at a resident's compound days after Cyclone Pam in Port Vila, capital city of the Pacific island nation of Vanuatu on 19 March, 2015. —REUTERS

Speaking from outside his office on a hill overlooking the hard-hit capital, Natuman said the storm was the strongest in Vanuatu's history. “This one, Cyclone Pam, the whole group was affected right from the north down to the south,” he said.

“Hurricanes or cyclones are not a new thing, since when people started living in these islands maybe about 5000 years, ago this type of event occurs every year. We have learned to adapt to the situation”.

However, the severity of storms appears to be increasing and global action is needed to combat the effects of climate change thought to contribute to more powerful cyclones, he said.

“Maybe this is something to do with the climate change matter and I hope that the world will come together at COP21 in Paris and make some concrete decisions on the way forward,” he said, referring to the United Nations Climate Change Conference scheduled for later this year in France.

“As far as we are concerned we need to sign a more legally comprehensive and legally binding document to lessen the emission of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere... I hope the whole world can take an example — Vanuatu has been damaged by a severe category 5 storm and we should do something to prevent this happening.”—Reuters

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**REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST
(CONSULTING SERVICES-Individual Consultant)**

**The Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Myanmar Electric Power Project
Credit No.: 5306-MM**

Assignment Title: International Financial Management Consultant

Reference No.: MEPE-CS-7

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar has received financing from the World Bank toward the cost of the Electric Power Project, and intends to apply part of the proceeds for consulting services.

The Services are expected to be carried out over a period of twelve months, possible starting in May 2015,

The Myanmar Electric Power Enterprise (MEPE) now invites eligible individual consultants to indicate their interest in providing the Services. Interested Consultants should provide information demonstrating that they have the required qualifications and relevant experience to perform the Services. The minimum qualifications requirements are:

1. At least a bachelor degree in accounting, finance or relevant field and holding IFAC recognized accounting professional qualification
2. At least 10 years of professional experience in accounting and/or other relevant field
3. Previous experience in conducting similar engagement within the region or other regions
4. Experience in FM capacity development and training
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6. Experience working with the World Bank financed projects or other major donors is an advantage
7. Good PC/systems literacy, including strong Excel skills and accounting software applications
8. Excellent interpersonal skills and result oriented
9. Reliable, independent and dynamic worker with high social competence and good team spirit
10. Willing and able to travel to remote areas' in Myanmar

The attention of interested Consultants is drawn to paragraph 1.9 of the World Bank's *Guidelines: Selection and Employment Consultants under IBRD Loans and IDA Credits & Grants by World Bank Borrowers* dated January 2011 ("Consultant Guidelines"), setting forth the World Bank's policy on conflict of interest.

A Consultant will be selected in accordance with the procedures set out in the Consultant Guidelines.

Further information can be obtained from the address below during 10:00 to 15:00 hours on working days.

Expressions of Interest must be delivered in a written form to the address below (in person, or by mail, or by e-mail) by April 7, 2015.

Attn: Daw Zaw Zaw Than
The General Manager
Finance Department
Myanmar Electric Power Enterprise (MEPE)
Office Building No. 27
Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar
Email: mepefin@moep.gov.mm

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US working with Japan in wake of threats to ambassador

WASHINGTON, 19 March — A State Department official said on Wednesday the US government has been working with the Japanese government following reported death threats against Ambassador Caroline Kennedy.

"We are working with the Japanese government to ensure the necessary measures are in place," Jen Psaki, a spokeswoman for the department, said in a statement.

The move came after investigative sources in Japan said the US Embassy

in Tokyo received several calls in February threatening to kill Kennedy. There have also been calls threatening to kill the US Consul General in Naha, Okinawa Prefecture, Alfred Magleby.

"We take any threats to US diplomats seriously.

We take every step possible to protect our personnel," Psaki said. But Psaki said, "We will not comment on the specific details of any threats or the steps we take to address them."

The reports on death threats against the Amer-

ican diplomats in Japan drew attention in the United States following an incident in South Korea earlier this month in which US Ambassador Mark Lippert was assaulted and injured by a blade-wielding man.—Kyodo News

WEATHER REPORT

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL EVENING OF THE 20th March, 2015: Light rain or thundershowers are likely to be isolated in the Upper Sagaing Region and Kachin State, weather will be partly cloudy in the Mandalay, Magway and Taninthayi Regions, Northern Shan and Chin States and generally fair in the remaining Regions and States.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Likelihood of isolated light rain in the Northern Myanmar Area.

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Employees present garments made of waste metal buckets during a garment show held by a company in Chongqing, southwest China on 19 March, 2015. More than 1,000 employees took part in the show and displayed the creative garments made of waste materials.—XINHUA

Paul McCartney to induct Ringo Starr into rock Hall of Fame

NEW YORK, 19 March — Paul McCartney will induct his former Beatles band mate Ringo Starr into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame next month at a ceremony in Cleveland, organizers said on Wednesday.

Starr, who was selected in the music excellence category, is among the 2015 music greats who will join the Hall of Fame at a ceremony on 18 April that will mark 30 years of inductions.

He was inducted as a member of the Beatles in 1988 but this year marks his entry as the last member of the group to enter as a solo artist. John Lennon was inducted in 1994, followed by McCartney in 1999 and George Harrison in 2004.

The late rocker Lou Reed, whose work with the Velvet Underground made them one of the most influential groups in rock, along with punk group Green Day, "Ain't No Sunshine" singer Bill Withers and the Paul Butterfield Blues Band will also be inducted.

Other 2015 inductees include rockers Joan Jett & the Blackhearts, who sang the rock classic "I Love Rock 'n Roll," rhythm and blues band the "5"



Paul McCartney (L) and Ringo Starr perform during the taping of "The Night That Changed America: A GRAMMY Salute To The Beatles", which commemorates the 50th anniversary of The Beatles appearance on the Ed Sullivan Show, in Los Angeles in this 27 Jan, 2014 file photo.—REUTERS

Royales, who performed from 1945 to 1965, and the late blues guitarist Stevie Ray Vaughan and the band Double Trouble.

Singer Stevie Wonder will be on hand to welcome Withers, Patti Smith will induct Reed and John Mayer will usher in Vaughan.

Performers at the show, which will debut on the premium TV cable network HBO on

30 May, include singer Beck, rock musician Dave Grohl and Oscar-winning songwriter/singer John Legend.

More than 700 artists, music industry professionals and historians help to decide who will be inducted in the Hall of Fame, which was established in 1983. Artists are eligible for induction 25 years after the release of their first record.—Reuters

'Goodfellas' to close Tribeca Film Festival with cast reunion

NEW YORK, 19 March — Actor Robert De Niro and director Martin Scorsese will reunite with the cast of "Goodfellas" for a special screening to mark the 25th anniversary of the gangster film that will close the Tribeca Film Festival next month.

Organizers of the festival said on Wednesday that Joe Pesci, Ray Liotta, Lorraine Bracco and Paul Sorvino will discuss the 1990 Oscar-nominated film with comedian Jon Stewart after the screening on 15 April at the Beacon Theatre.

Scorsese, who won the best-director Academy Award in 2007 for "The Departed," said he was moved to learn that the film based on the best-selling book "Wiseguy" by Nicholas Pileggi will be closing the festival.

"We wanted to make a movie that was true to Nick Pileggi's book and to the life of (gangster) Henry Hill and his friends, which means we broke some rules and took some risks," Scorsese said in a statement.

Nearly 100 feature-length films from 31 countries will be screened during the 14th Tribeca Film Festival. The world premiere of "Live from New York!," about the NBC late-night comedy sketch show "Saturday Night Live," will open the festival on 15 April.



Robert De Niro (L) receives the 'Goldene Kamera' lifetime achievement award from director Martin Scorsese given by a popular German television magazine in Berlin on 6 Feb, 2008. —REUTERS

The slate will include films starring Richard Gere, James Franco and Dakota Fanning and documentaries on topics ranging from drag racers in Cuba and an expose of the impact of the financial crisis to a couple's efforts to make a videogame about their son's battle against cancer.

The festival was founded in 2001 by De Niro, producer Jane Rosenthal and investor Craig Hatkoff to revitalise the downtown New York neighbourhood following the 11 September, 2001, attacks on the nearby World Trade Centre.

Reuters

'Empire' soundtrack eclipses Madonna for Billboard No 1 album

LOS ANGELES, 19 March — "Empire," the Fox television hip-hop drama that became a hit in its first season, made its mark with music fans as the show's soundtrack debuted at No 1 and beat Madonna for the top slot in the weekly US Billboard 200 album chart on Wednesday.

The soundtrack scored 130,000 sales units, ahead of 121,000 units for Madonna's 13th studio album, the brand new "Rebel Heart," for the week ended 15 March, according to figures from

Nielsen SoundScan.

Madonna sold more albums, 116,000, to the "Empire" soundtrack's 110,000. The Billboard 200 chart tallies album sales, song sales (10 songs equal one album) and streaming activity (1,500 streams equal one album).

"Empire," the story of a hip-hop recording dynasty, is the first TV soundtrack to debut at No 1 since 2010, when three albums from another Fox show, "Glee," arrived, Billboard said.—Reuters

Ricky Martin uses music to tackle trafficking of children



Singer Ricky Martin performs at the iHeartRadio Theater Los Angeles in Burbank, California on 10 Feb, 2015. —REUTERS

LOS ANGELES, 19 March — Thirty years after Ricky Martin got his start in music in the Puerto Rican kids' group "Menudo," the Grammy-winning singer uses his music and celebrity to help fight against the trafficking of children.

Fresh off a new album, "A Quien Quiera Escuchar," the 43-year-old Martin said he relishes getting in front of a crowd to talk about children forced into prostitution and pornography.

"Not only in Puerto Rico, all over the world, here in the United States, huge numbers, when it comes to kids that are becoming slaves," Martin told Reuters in an interview this week.

The "Livin' la Vida Loca"

singer opened a centre in Puerto Rico last year to combat oppression against children.

His other big cause, he said, is the "fight of my community, the LGBT community, it's something that I won't get tired of."

Martin, father of twin boys born via surrogate, expressed his disappointment on social media and joined Elton John's campaign in boycotting Italian fashion designers Domenico Dolce and Stefano Gabbana after Dolce described children born to gay couples through fertility treatment as "synthetic."

Martin declined to discuss further the Dolce & Gabbana controversy.—Reuters

'Games of Thrones' stars storm Tower of London

LONDON, 19 March — Mediaeval fantasy "Game of Thrones" met some mediaeval reality on Wednesday at the Tower of London where stars from the hit HBO television show walked a red carpeted moat for the premiere of the fifth season.

The buzz around the 11th century building, one of the oldest in London, centred on how far season five would stray from the books of George RR

Martin after the author suggested it might not be as faithful as in seasons past.

"Like every season there are a lot of shocks but there will probably be even more, particularly for the book readers," said Michael McElhatton, who plays Roose Bolton in the cut-throat, blood-soaked drama about warring kingdoms.

Stars like Kit Harington and Nikolaj Coster-Waldau took pains not to ruin any surprises for

fans, who take to the Internet and social media to theorize about twists and turns.

Iwan Rheon who plays the psychopathic Ramsay Snow, did allow that religion and spirituality bring a new dynamic to the show.

"It's really scary and quite sinister and everything gets closer to boiling point as well. The pressure cooker is being turned up and it's getting full on," he said.—Reuters

GENERAL

USJ plans to open new theme park in Okinawa

OSAKA, 19 March — The chief executive officer of the operator of Universal Studios Japan said on Wednesday it plans to open a new theme park in Okinawa, one of the most popular tourist destinations in Japan, to expand its entertainment business in Asia.

USJ Co CEO Glenn Gumpel said that the company will build a large-scale park, though it will not be as big as the Universal Studios that it runs in Osaka. It will be a park that fits the ambience of Okinawa, not based on movies or television programmes, he told reporters



Glenn Gumpel, chief executive officer of Universal Studios Japan operator USJ Co, speaks to reporters in Osaka on 18 March, 2015. He said USJ plans to build a new theme park in Okinawa but not a movie theme park. —KYODO NEWS

in Osaka. The CEO stopped short of commenting on where and when it will be built. Nago in the northern part of the prefecture is considered as a potential location as the company has conducted a feasibility study there several times.

The plan comes after USJ said last year that it plans to open one or more new theme parks by 2020 in Japan and other Asian countries. The Kyushu and Okinawa areas as well as Jakarta, Mumbai and Taipei are among the potential sites.

Currently, the only

Universal Studios theme park in Asia outside Japan is in Singapore.

Japan's top government spokesman Yoshihide Suga welcomed the decision, saying that the new park will "have an extremely big impact on the promotion of Okinawa."

USJ has been considering relisting on the Tokyo Stock Exchange to raise funds needed to build the new theme park, sources close to the matter have said. The CEO said only that his company has yet to firm up such a plan.

Kyodo News

(20-3-2015 07:00 am~ 21-3-2015 07:00 am) MST

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'Lost' Ruskin Venice photos offer insight into famous critic

LONDON, 19 March — Early daguerreotype photos of Venice that were auctioned off as an odd lot belonged to John Ruskin and provide new insight into the Victorian art critic's work, the authors of a book about the images said on Thursday.

The Venice scenes, taken around 1850 and purchased at an auction in the northern English Lake District in 2006, coincide roughly with Ruskin's work on his epic three-volume treatise "The Stones of Venice" about Venetian art and architecture.

They are being reproduced, along with other images taken or owned by Ruskin, in "Carrying Off the Palaces: John Ruskin's Lost Daguerreotypes", published by the rare book and manuscript dealer Bernard Quaritch.

"The discovery of 188 previously unknown John Ruskin daguerreotypes has been the most exciting of our career," photograph-



Saint Mark's Basilica and the Piazza in Venice are seen in this handout photograph of a daguerreotype circa 1845, released in London on 18 March, 2015.

REUTERS

ic dealer Ken Jacobson, who co-wrote the volume with his wife Jenny, said in a statement. It said the images' provenance was determined after "years of research". Perhaps the most dramatic proof is that the numbers on the reverse of some of the daguerreotypes are the same, and in Ruskin's own hand, as those on Ruskin's manuscript at the Ruskin Library at Lancaster

University. The research also shows how Ruskin's use of the photographs influenced the style of his watercolors, the publishers said.

"We feel that the quality and unorthodox style of many of Ruskin's daguerreotypes will come as a major surprise to both photographic historians and those in the field of Ruskin scholarship," Jacobson said in the statement.

"Ruskin's daguerreotypes would be a sensational new revelation in the history of photography even if he were completely unknown."

The daguerreotypes, which used an early photographic process that captured images on a silvered copper plate, were sold as an essentially unidentified lot at an auction in Cumbria, near where Ruskin lived, with a starting price of 80 pounds. A bidding war with another collector who suspected what they were rapidly bumped up the price and they ended up selling for 75,000 pounds (\$110,000).

Ruskin, who lived from 1819 to 1900, was the most influential art critic of his day. In addition to his groundbreaking work on Venice, he wrote an influential essay in defense of the pioneering land and waterscape painter JMW Turner that helped to turn the tide of critical and public opinion in Turner's favour.

Reuters

Serena to meet Halep in semis at Indian Wells

INDIAN WELLS, (California) 19 March — Serena Williams took one step closer to a capping a remarkable return to Indian Wells after defeating Timea Bacsinszky 7-5, 6-3 on Wednesday to move into the semi-finals of the BNP Paribas Open.

Williams is playing in Indian Wells following a 14-year boycott of the event where she alleged she had suffered racist abuse from fans.

While Williams has said her appearance here has been a victory in itself, a third career tournament triumph would be special for the world number one.

"I'm just happy to still be here playing in front of you guys," Williams said

during her on-court interview, after finishing with 23 winners and seven aces. "I'm just happy to be here."

Williams extended her winning streak to 15 matches and will next face Romania's world number three Simona Halep, who is the last player to have beaten her at the season-ending WTA Championships in Singapore last October.

Halep turned up the aggression and rallied for a 5-7, 6-1, 6-1 victory over Carla Suarez Navarro to claim the first women's semi-finals berth.

The Romanian overcame a blistering start by 12th seed Suarez Navarro at Indian Wells to move a step closer to what would be her



Simona Halep (ROU) reacts after winning her quarterfinal match against Carla Suarez Navarro (ESP) in the BNP Paribas Open at the Indian Wells Tennis Garden. Halep won 5-7, 6-1, 6-1 on 18 March, 2015.—REUTERS

biggest tournament title.

Suarez Navarro could do no wrong in the opening

stages of the match, sweeping the first four games to go up 4-0. But Halep clawed back to 4-4, and then 5-5, before the Spaniard regrouped and unleashed a huge forehand winner to claim the first set. From then on, Halep dominated.

"She was opening the court pretty well with the angles, and it's really tough to play and hit the balls from wide in the court, so I knew I had to start playing more aggressively and hit more into the court," Halep said.

"I just tried to relax my body and my mind, fight for every point and play my best."

Halep finished the match in style, blasting a big ace.—Reuters

Australia's Great Barrier Reef braces for cyclone hit

SYDNEY, 19 March — Coastal residents in north-east Australia were urged on Thursday to prepare for dangerous tidal surges along the Great Barrier Reef and stay indoors when a powerful tropical cyclone hits.

Cyclone Nathan was about 300 km (185 miles) east-northeast of the holiday town of Cooktown, moving at 8 kph (5 mph) and intensifying as it approached land.

It is expected to hit the coast on Friday.

"Nobody's around," said David Smith, owner of the ScubaDave diving school. "Everyone that came to the reef to dive is gone and won't be back until after Nathan passes."

A month ago, Cyclone Marcia slammed into the southern part of the same coast, causing billions of dollars in damage and leaving thousands homeless or without electricity.

Meteorologists predict Nathan will churn up winds nearing 300 kph (185 mph) from late on Thursday.

The sea is likely to rise steadily up to a level well above the normal tide, with damaging waves and flooding of some low-lying but g areas, which could also extend some way inland," the Bureau of Meteorology said.

Emergency officials said hundreds of residents, along with workers at a silica mine and the Lizard Island resort on the Great Barrier Reef had been evacuated.

Queensland Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk said up to 9,000 people could be directly in the path of the cyclone by the time it builds to category four strength, the second highest level.

"A category four crossing is very serious," she told reporters. "To be safe, you must stay in your homes."

Queensland Fire and Emergency Services regional director Wayne Coutts said residents had limited time to prepare and people should be ready for a loss of power and water.

Reuters

(20-3-2015, Friday)

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------|
| 6:00 am | 8:20 am |
| • Mono Classical Songs | • TV Drama Series |
| 6:20 am | 9:05 am |
| • Teleplay | • TV Drama Series |
| 7:40 am | 9:50 am |
| • Myanmar Series | • Myanmar Video |

“U-15 Region and State Basic Education High School Football Tournament”

TOKYO, 19 March — BE FORWARD Co, Ltd, Japan’s one of the biggest used car exporters, is to make a contribution to The Nippon Foundation’s sponsorship for Myanmar’s Inter-high school soccer football match.

Myanmar Football Federation (MFF) and Ministry of Education is to hold “U-15 Region and State Basic Education High School Football Tournament” from 25 March, 2015 to 9 April, 2015. The tournament will be sponsored by a Japanese organization, The Nippon Foundation, known for its Corporate Social Responsibility activities abroad, including Myanmar. BE FORWARD Co, Ltd, Japan’s leading used car exporter, is to make a substantial contribution to their sponsorship for the tournament this year, expanding the horizons of their Corporate Social Responsibility activities.

954 high school soccer teams across the nation will compete against one another in this league game. 18 win-

ning teams after the local elimination will advance to the final games, of which Semi-finals and the Final games in Yangon are scheduled to be on air by Channel 7.

FOOTBALL MATCH OUTLINE

Match Title: U-15 Region and State Basic Education High School Football Tournament

Date of Match: from 25 March, 2015 to 9 April, 2015

Held by: Myanmar Football Federation (MFF) Ministry of Education

Sponsored by: The Nippon Foundation Special Contributions by BE FORWARD Co., Ltd.

GNLM

International Friendly Match

Myanmar U-20 3 - 0 Malaysia U-22

Nadal, Federer, join Murray in Indian Wells quarters



Rafael Nadal (ESP) during his match against Gilles Simon (FRA) in the BNP Paribas open at the Indian Wells Tennis Garden, Indian Wells, CA, USA on 18 March, 2015. Nadal won 6-2, 6-4.—REUTERS

INDIAN WELLS, (California), 19 March — Roger Federer and Rafa Nadal advanced to the quarter-finals of the BNP Paribas Open on Wednesday, joining Britain’s Andy Murray in the last eight, though Japan’s Kei Nishikori crashed out.

Federer dispatched American Jack Sock in a 6-3, 6-2 victory while Nadal beat Gilles Simon 6-2, 6-4.

Nadal captured his opening set quite easily, but fell behind 2-0 in the second set before rebounding with an accurate serve to beat Simon for the seventh time in eight meetings.

“After playing a bad game with my serve I was able to be completely focused and mentally ready to be back and ready for the next game,” Nadal told reporters.

“I was there mentally waiting for the opportunity. Lucky I played a good few points in that game to have the break back.”

Murray reached the quarter-finals with a land-

mark win over Adrian Mannarino, while Spain’s Feliciano Lopez upset fifth-ranked Nishikori.

Murray’s 6-3, 6-3 victory over Frenchman Adrian Mannarino put him level with Tim Henman as Britain’s most successful men’s player in the Open era on 496 singles victories.

“I thought I played well. It was a tricky match,” said Murray, who added that his 38th-ranked opponent’s low crosscourt backhand and short, flat forehand can be deceptive. “I thought I did a good job against a tough opponent.”

Murray will next face 33-year-old Lopez, who has reached his top ranking of 12th in the world.

Murray has never lost to the Lopez in nine previous meetings, though said he would not suffer from over confidence.

“He’s been playing the best tennis of his career these last 18 months or so,” said Murray. “And obviously had a great win today against Nishikori.”

Reuters

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City exit leaves English giants in Champions League cold



Manchester City’s Joe Hart saves from Barcelona’s Lionel Messi during their UEFA Champions League Second Round Second Leg at The Nou Camp, Barcelona, Spain on 18 March, 2015.—REUTERS

LONDON, 19 March — Manchester City were knocked out of the Champions League by Barcelona on Wednesday to leave the English Premier League without a representative in the last eight of Europe’s elite club competition for the second time in three years.

As three Spanish sides, two French and one each from Germany, Italy

and Portugal awaited the last-eight draw on Friday, England’s much-loved and cash-washed top flight will have no direct interest in the latter stages of the tournament.

Chelsea were the last English winners in 2012, Manchester United triumphed in 2008 and reached the final in 2009 and 2011 while Chelsea made the last four 12

months ago before losing to Atletico Madrid.

French sides proved to be the nemesis for Chelsea and Arsenal this season.

Premier League leaders Chelsea battled to a 1-1 draw in their last-16 first-leg game at Paris St Germain but were stunned when 10-man PSG fought back to draw 2-2 and progress on away goals.

Arsenal would have

been delighted to draw Monaco in the last 16 but imploded in a 3-1 defeat in the first leg in London, a spirited 2-0 victory in the Principality proving insufficient to stop the Ligue 1 team advancing on away goals.

At least Chelsea and Arsenal survived the group stage. Liverpool, Premier League runners-up behind Manchester City last season, failed to get to the knockout stages, finishing third in a group behind Real Madrid and Swiss champions Basel.

All of which left Everton as the only English side left in European competition this season.

They take a 2-1 lead to Dynamo Kiev in the second leg of their Europa League last-16 clash on Thursday.

But however far Roberto Martinez’s team go in the second-tier competition, it has been a chastening season for the Premier League abroad.—Reuters

Something has to give when Liverpool host United

LONDON, 19 March — Something will have to give when in-form Liverpool and bitter rivals Manchester United clash in one of the Premier League’s showcase fixtures at Anfield on Sunday.

Liverpool have won their last five league games and eight of their last nine and meet a United side who have won their last three league games and are undefeated in 17 of their last 19.

United produced their best performance of the

season to beat Tottenham Hotspur 3-0 last Sunday and have kept a clean sheet in their last three league games, despite the endless negative analysis of their style under coach Louis van Gaal.

While leaders Chelsea, who visit Hull City on Sunday, and second-placed Manchester City, who host West Bromwich Albion on Saturday, remain the main title contenders, neither can afford more slip-ups with Liverpool, United and Arsenal on their tails.

City can now join Chel-

sea and Arsenal in concentrating on the title after exiting the Champions League at the first knockout stage, although Arsenal are still hoping to retain the FA Cup.

Like Liverpool and United, Arsenal are on a roll domestically having won their last five league matches and 15 of their last 18 in all competitions and could well extend that run at mediocre Newcastle United.

Chelsea are top on 64 points — and have a game in hand on all the others — followed by City (58), Ar-

senal (57), United (56) and Liverpool (54).

Although Chelsea remain overwhelming favourites to win the title — something coach Jose Mourinho declared last week they will do — the race for a top-four finish is coming to the boil with little margin for error at Anfield for Liverpool or United.

Liverpool have improved after a sluggish start and manager Brendan Rodgers praised his side for a “remarkable” second-half performance in the 1-0 win



Liverpool fans during FA Cup Quarter Final at Anfield on 8 March, 2015.—REUTERS

at his former club Swansea City on Monday in which they kept a sixth successive clean sheet away.

Afterwards Rodgers said he was relishing their improved form and rise up the table.—Reuters