THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Volume I, Number 176 | 6th Waxing Day of Tagu 1376 ME | Wednesday, 25 March, 2015

Myanmar, IRI focus on holding 2015 elections in free and fair manners

NAY PYI TAW, 24 March—President U Thein Sein received a delegation led by Ambassador Mark Green, President of International Republican Institute (IRI) at the Presidential Palace, here, Tuesday to hold talks on the process of holding 2015 elections in free and fair manners.

They also discussed assistance for flourishing of democracy.

Also present at the call were Union Ministers U Wunna Maung Lwin and U Soe Thane and departmental heads.—*MNA*

***President U Thein Sein poses for documentary photo with Ambassador Mark Green, President of International Republican Institute (IRI).*—MNA**

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Yangon circular railroad to receive 100 new air-conditioned cars within year

By *Aye Min Soe*

YANGON, 24 March—Myanma Railways has bought about 100 air conditioned coaches from Japan to replace ordinary cars currently in use on Yangon's circular railroad, a Ministry of Rail Transportation official said.

The Ministry, which controls the railway operator, spent $207 million of ODA loans from Japan to buy the coaches, he added.

The coaches will arrive in Myanmar in September and the ministry will complete the replacement in 2015.

The Japanese government has also given some 15 air conditioned trains to Myanmar as a gift.

Myanma Railways currently operates about 23 ordinary trains and four AC trains on Yangon's circular railroad.

The US$2.5 billion Yangon Central Railway Station comprehensive project is in the pipeline as part of the ministry's push to improve rail transportation systems.

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Reforms to continue to drive growth, inflation to accelerate in Myanmar: ADB

YANGON, 24 March—Myanmar's ambitious structural reform program has underpinned strong growth in recent years that is set to continue in 2015, the Asian Development Bank said in its economic report released Tuesday.

The ADB's flagship annual economic publication, Asian Development Outlook 2015, forecasted Myanmar's economic growth at 8.3 percent in fiscal year 2015 ending 31 March 2016.

"ADB also expects growth to remain over 8 percent in fiscal year 2016, propelled by investments stimulated by the ongoing reforms, an improved business environment, and the country's integration into Southeast Asia," said Peter Brimble, ADB deputy country director in Myanmar. Inflation will likely accelerate to 8.4 percent in FY 2015, propelled by higher fiscal spending and expected higher wages, which will increase domestic demand. Consumer price

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***Winfried F. Wicklein, Asian Development Bank's country director for Myanmar, speaks at the press conference on Asian Development Outlook 2015: "Financing Asia's future growth and implications for Myanmar" in Yangon on Tuesday.*—PHOTO: YE MYINT**

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw

Joint bill committee, MPs discuss taxation bill

NAY PYI TAW, 24 March — Members of Joint-Bill Committee, parliamentarians and union level officials discussed paragraphs of 2015 Union Taxation Bill at 32nd day session of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw's 12th session on Tuesday.

The bicameral assembly agreed the proposal of Union Minister for Finance U Win Shein for the approval of the whole bill.

The Pyidaungsu Hluttaw finalized decisions on a legal translation bill and a Myanmar Medical Council bill, on which the Amyotha Hluttaw and the Pyithu Hluttaw held different views.—*MNA*

Union Minister for Finance U Win Shein.

MNA

Pyithu Hluttaw

Pyithu Hluttaw promises Kalewa independence obelisk with park

NAY PYI TAW, 24 March— U Soe Thein of the Kalewa constituency on Tuesday put forward a motion demanding the Pyithu Hluttaw that an independence obelisk be erected in the township of Kalewa, Sagaing Region, before Independence Day, 4 January, in 2016.

U Aung Thein, Deputy Minister at President Office, responded that the local management committee under the supervision of the region's chief minister is making arrangements for the construction of the obelisk alongside a park on 0.064 acre of land near the Myittha bridge.

U Nyi Nyi Myint of the Ottwin constituency urged the parliament to construct a bridge across Sittoung River linking Ottwin and Htantabin, with U Khin Maung Aye, Deputy Minister for Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development, rejecting the proposal.

He said the cost of constructing the bridge is not included in the ministry's budgets for 2014-2015 financial year.

U Sai Tin Maung of the Laikha constituency proposed providing reasonable allowances from state's budgets to trustworthy personnel assigned to election commissions, which the Pyithu Hluttaw accepted.

U Win Ko of the Union Election Commission responded that an increase of travel allowances would be made through coordination with departments concerned.—*MNA*

Deputy Minister for Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development U Khin Maung Aye.

MNA

Deputy Minister at President Office U Aung Thein.

MNA

Union FM sends message to Hellenic Republic

NAY PYI TAW, 25 March — U Wunna Maung Lwin, Union Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, has sent a message of felicitations to His Excellency Mr. Nikolaos Kotzias, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Hellenic Republic, on the occasion of the National Day of the Hellenic Republic, which falls on 25 March 2015.—*MNA*

Reforms to continue to . . .

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pressure should then ease slightly in FY 2016 to 6%.

Risks to Myanmar's economic outlook come from thin external and fiscal buffers, ethnic and sectarian tensions, extreme weather events and a possible slowing of reform momentum ahead of elections.

The ADO stated that the country made positive steps in 2014 to improve its economic data collection, a move badly needed to support policy formulation and planning.

"While the country has made big strides under its economic reform program, many development challenges remain, including improving infrastructure, strengthening governance and public sector capacity, developing human capital, building a dynamic private sector, and revitalizing agriculture," said ADB country director Winfried Wicklein.

The ADO highlighted the low levels of education and skills among many young people entering Myanmar's workforce, with employers citing inadequate human resources as a serious barrier to business.

"One of the most critical challenges is to develop the country's youth, better equipping them for roles in a modern economy and society," said Chris Spohr, ADB principal social sector specialist in Myanmar.

GNLM

Amyotha Hluttaw

Amyotha Hluttaw MPs urge education amendment bill must serve national interests

***U Min Oo of the Bago Region constituency No.7.*—MNA**

U Thein Swe from No.10 Constituency of Ayeyawady Region.

MNA

NAY PYI TAW, 24 March — The national education amendment bill came under discussion at the Amyotha Hluttaw here on Tuesday, with members of parliament speaking with one voice on the bill, which they said must emphasize suitability, adaptability and practicality for the long-term interests of the country.

U Thein Swe from No.10 Constituency of Ayeyawady Region suggested participation of experienced specialists rather than independent specialists.

The education reform would enable Myanmar to catch up with others when we could overcome the challenges, according to U Khin Maung Latt of Rakhine State's No.6 Constituency.

U Min Oo of the Bago Region constituency No.7 described the national education as a national concern, saying the education law must pave the way for a better education system.

U Saw Ohn, who represents No.9 Constituency in Mon State, said education must be reconstructed for the country to become modern and prosperous.

MNA

Letpadaung copper mine project implementation committee meets

NAY PYI TAW, 24 March — A coordination meeting was held here on Tuesday by the committee responsible for implementing the investigative report on the Letpadaung copper mine project, according to officials.

Union Minister U Hla Tun at President Office quoted the investigation commission as suggesting that the copper mine project must continue as a national project, saying that the committee has implemented 37 of 42 points suggested by the investigative commission in its report.

The five remaining points require close supervision in the monitoring and evaluation process throughout the project, the union minister said, adding that the report of Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) has gained approval from the Union government and that it will be streamed over the internet for public observation.

An independent monitoring team (IMT) will carry out supervision to ensure that the copper project follows the ESIA report to the letter, with the union minister saying that steps will be taken to receive certification from International Organization for Standardization (ISO).

He urged officials to speed up vocational training courses for local people to secure jobs and convince them that the project will benefit them and contribute to the development of their region. The union minister was briefed on security measures in the project area, removal and reconstruction of religious edifices, and environmental conservation activities.

MNA

Union Minister U Hla Tun highlights report of Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA).

MNA

President U Thein Sein sends messages of felicitations to Hellenic Republic

NAY PYI TAW, 25 March—U Thein Sein, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, has sent messages of felicitations to His Excellency Mr. Mr. Prokopis Pavlopoulos, President of the Hellenic Republic, President of the Hellenic Republic, and His Excellency Mr. Alexis Tsipras, Prime Minister of the Hellenic Republic, on the occasion of the National Day of the Hellenic Republic, which falls on 25 March 2015.—*MNA*

U Zaw Myint presents his Credentials to Sultan of Malaysia

NAY PYI TAW, 25 March—U Zaw Myint, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to Malaysia, president his Credentials to His Majesty Almu'tasimu Billahi Muhibbuddin Tuanku Alhaj Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah ibni Almarhum Sultan Badlishah, the Yang Di-Pertuan Agong XIV of Malaysia, on 18 March 2015 in Kuala Lumpur.—*MNA*

Veteran artistes perform entertainment on second day

NAY PYI TAW, 24 March—Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla enjoyed entertainment of veteran artistes for the second day at Zeyathiri Beikman, here, on Tuesday.

Among the audiences were Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win and wife Daw Than Than Nwe, the union minister for Border Affairs, senior military officers, servicemen and families.

The veteran artistes presented songs to the accompaniment of Myawady Band. The senior general and wife presented a flower basket and cash award to the artistes.

Myawady

President's Excellent Award scrutinizing committee hold third meeting

NAY PYI TAW, 24 March — Scrutinizing Committee for President's Excellent Award held its third meeting at President Office on Tuesday, and was attended by U Tin Naing Thein, chairman of the committee, deputy ministers and members of working committees.

U Tin Naing Thein, also Union Minister at President Office, said the committee is scrutinizing the candidates suggested by State/Region governments for these awards, urging the committee to finalize the processes by the last week of April as the award ceremony is due in the first week of May 2015.

The awards in this year will include the best township supporting committee, the best municipal committee, the best social welfare works, the best researchers, the best urban and rural development committees and the best entrepreneurs.

Ministers from respective states and regions also discussed their scrutinizing processes through video conferencing, followed by suggestions of the chairman of committee.—*MNA*

WB Group launches Myanmar Investment Climate Assessment Report

NAY PYI TAW, 24 March—World Bank Group held an official launch of Myanmar Investment Climate Assessment Report at Thingaha Hotel, here, on Tuesday, with Union Minister at the President Office U Tin Naing Thein and union ministers in attendance.

The report book covers reform process in creation of good investment environs in Myanmar, raising responsible investment.

MNA

Myanmar joins Sphere Conferences in its second aviation development conference

YANGON, 24 March—The Department of Civil Aviation in partnership with Singapore-based Sphere Conferences organized the second Myanmar Aviation Development Conference here on Tuesday, with an opening speech by U Zin Yaw, Deputy Minister for Transport, according to officials. The three-day conference will focus on such key issues as aviation safety, domestic and international network expansion, digital engagement in airports, and aircraft growth of maintenance, repair and overhaul market (MRO).

The conference has drawn 300 business people of aviation industries from 20 countries. —*Aung Thura*

***More than 100,000 people (about three per cent of more than six million population of Yangon) rely on the circular trains for their daily transportation needs.*—PHOTO AYE MIN SOE**

Yangon circular...

(from page 1)

To implement the project, Myanma Railways is working together with an international consulting firm to decide whether the project should be undertaken as a joint venture or on a build-operate-transfer basis.

MR plans to carry out the development on more than 62 acres close to Yangon Central Railway Station.

The government pays some K40-45 billion in annual subsidies to Myanma Railways.—*GNLM*

20 detainees from Letpadan incident released

***Officials meet with detainees before releasing them at Thayawady District Police Force Office.*—MNA**

NAY PYI TAW, 24 March—Authorities released 19 men and one woman Tuesday who were detained during a crackdown on student protestors earlier this month in Bago Region's Letpadan, 90 miles north of Yangon.

They were turned over to their parents and relatives this morning, according to the Ministry of Home Affairs.

The authorities have so far released 28 students and two reporters arrested in the crackdown after determining their roles in the protests.—*MNA*

Gov't troops clash with KIA during operations against timber trafficking

NAY PYI TAW, 24 March — Government troops fought against KIA (Kachin) forces which are protecting timber traffickers in Bhamo district, Kachin state, during the three-day operations.

During training session of Myanmar air force on March 20, fighter jets detected a convoy of truck carrying trafficked logs and informed to the military columns.

Army columns were fired by KIA (Kachin) forces on March 21, and clashes continued to March 23. With assistance of aerial attacks, government troops cleared the ethnic armed forces from their positions and seized a total of 27 logging trucks and timbers after nine clashes, including one airplane attack.

Military is continuing operations to control timber trafficking in northern Myanmar state.—*Myawady*

A map shows clashes in Mansi, Kaikhteik, Manweingyi regions

Indian pharmaceutical firm promotes medicine in Myanmar

MANDALAY, 24 March — A ceremony to introduce new pharmaceutical products manufactured by Cipla medical company from Kolkata, India, was held at Sedona Hotel on 26th street in Chanayethazan Township, Mandalay on Monday, with Chairman of the Myanmar Medical Association (Mandalay) Dr Than Win and the Indian Consul in attendance.

Marketing manager to Myanmar Mr Ashwani Bagga of Cipla Company, managing director Mr Christos Kartalis and Asia-Pacific Region head Ms Jaswinder Gill spoke about the company's new products.

The company exports over 200 types of medicine to the international market.

Thiha Ko Ko (Mandalay)

Myaungmya District marks World TB Day

MYAUNGMYA, 24 March — A ceremony to mark World Tuberculosis Day 2015 was held at the hall of Myaungmya District General Hospital on Tuesday, with an address by the district's deputy commissioner U Htwe Myint.

Medical Superintendent Dr Toe Toe read out a message sent by the World Health Organization.

TB control project leader Dr Thin Thin Htay gave lectures on tuberculosis infection in the community and efforts of health staff to control the disease in cooperation with departmental personnel and social organizations.

Members of the Women's Affairs Organization and the Maternal and Child Welfare Association, local authorities and health staff took part in the ceremony.—*Aung Min (IPRD)*

Monastic building under construction in rural area of Nyaunglebin Tsp

NYAUNGLEBIN, 24 March — Construction is under way on a new concrete building for the Bawana monastery in Kyuchaung Village, Nyaunglebin Township, Bago Region.

Upon completion, the monastery will admit more novices and monks to perform religious tasks. Laypersons of the construction committee invite cash donations to fund the construction.

Well-wishers may contact U Tejavamta of Bawana Monastery on 09-255837740 and 09-31502375, U Nay Lin (reporter) on 09-428161763 and U Htay Naing of Banda electronic service on 09-31614208.

Nay Lin (Nyaunglebin)

Concrete road helps develop rural area

NAY PYI TAW, 24 March — Nay Pyi Taw Council member U Than Htay and Nay Pyi Taw Development Committee member U Kyaw Myint officially opened a concrete road leading to the entrance of Ywathit Village in Pobbathiri Township on Tuesday.

Nay Pyi Taw Council shared its budget for construction of a 3,600-foot-long and 10-foot-wide concrete road to improve transportation to local people.—*Shwe Ye Yint*

Secretary of Kayah State General Administration Department U Khin Maung Htay and party inaugurate Mawchi-Nwalawoe Ywama inter-village road in Loikaw Township on 21 March.
LOIKAW IPRD

Shwe Htilar news journal reports on Meiktila District

MEIKTILA, 24 March —Under the leadership of experienced reporter Tin Hlaing, the "Shwe Htilar" news journal will launch in the third week of April.

The journal will cover events including regional development and crime in the townships of Meiktila, Wundwin, Mahlaing and Thazi in Meiktila District.

The journal invites advertisements on 09-402543313.

Htay Myint Maung

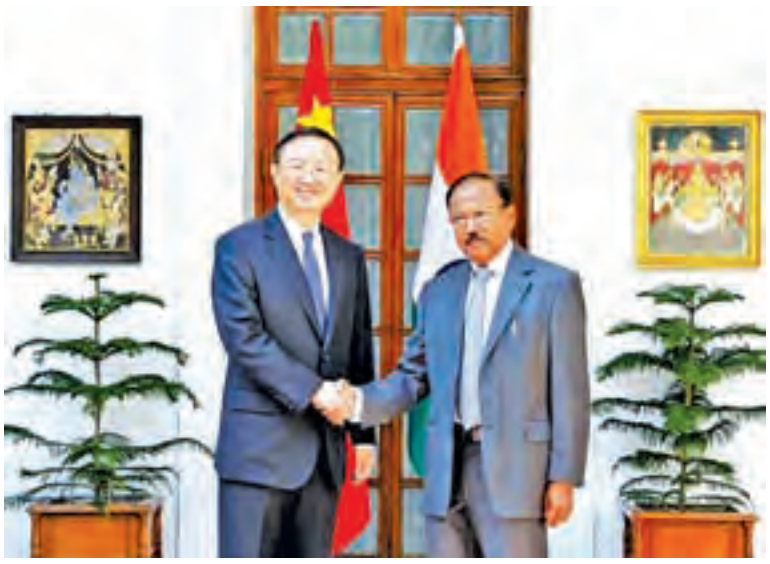
Firefighters join fire drill at Cherry Market in Zabuthiri Township Tuesday under supervision of Head of Township Fire Services Department U Thant Zin. A US citizen reacts when he sees the drill as he thinks it is a real fire outbreak.
THAN NAING (ZABUTHIRI)

China says it agrees with India to maintain border peace

BEIJING, 24 March — China and India have agreed to maintain peace and tranquillity along their Himalayan border while they work on resolving a long-festering boundary dispute, China's foreign ministry said after talks in New Delhi.

The talks are aimed at fixing a dispute over the border that divides Asia's largest nations, part of a push to make progress on the festering row before Prime Minister Narendra Modi visits China.

China's foreign ministry said in a statement released on Monday both countries would build on the results of previous negotiations and push forward in "the correct direction".



China's State Councilor Yang Jiechi (L) and India's National Security Advisor Ajit Doval shake hands during a photo opportunity before their meeting in New Delhi on 23 March, 2015. REUTERS

"Both sides reiterated the appropriate management and control of the dispute and joint maintenance of the peace and tranquillity of the border region before the border issue is resolved," the ministry said.

As major neighbours and developing countries, the development of relations is good for both peoples as well as for regional and global peace and development, it said.

"Both sides ought to work together to push for practical cooperation in all areas, and further increase coordination on global and international issues."

The talks are the first since Modi took office. The nationalist Indian prime minister is keen to resolve a dispute that has clouded rapidly expanding commercial links. Any progress would throw a positive light on his expected visit to Beijing in May.

However, there is no simple solution to a conflict that largely dates back to British colonial decisions about Tibet.

The disagreement over the 3,500-km (2,175-mile) border led to a brief war in 1962 and involves large swaths of remote territory.

China claims more than 90,000 sq km (35,000 sq miles) disputed by New Delhi in the eastern sector of the Himalayas. Much of that forms the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh, which China calls South Tibet.

India says China occupies 38,000 square km (14,600 sq miles) of its territory on the Aksai Chin plateau in the west.

In September, the two armies faced off in the Ladakh sector in the western Himalayas just as Chinese President Xi Jinping was visiting India for the first summit talks with Modi.

Reuters

Indonesia President Jokowi calls for more investment from Japan

TOKYO, 24 March — Indonesian President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo called on Japanese companies on Tuesday to boost investment in his country, with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations eager to bolster its infrastructure to advance regional connectivity.

As Indonesia plans to improve its infrastructure such as ports, airports and high-speed railways, Jokowi emphasized investment in Southeast Asia's largest economy will provide investors with a "chance" to capture returns.

"I do not want you to miss the chance," Jokowi said in a speech at a business seminar in Tokyo, hosted by the government-backed Japan External Trade Organization.

"Indonesia is a very attractive country" as the nation's economy is likely to keep expanding, Jokowi said, adding, "I am looking forward to your further investment in Indonesia."

Former Japanese Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda, now serving as head of the Japan Indonesia Association, said in a separate speech, "Indonesia is attractive as a hub of production and exports in Asia," with the country's population expected to continue growing.

Since taking office last October, Jokowi has focused primarily on strengthening Indonesia's maritime security and transforming

Indonesian President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo makes a speech at a business forum in Tokyo on 24 March, 2015, during his first visit to Japan since becoming president in October 2014. KYODO NEWS

it into a "global maritime axis" by upgrading port infrastructure and enhancing inter-island connectivity.

In addition, he has pledged to improve transportation facilities at home, while implementing measures to shore up the domestic economy, including power plant projects aimed at satisfying Indonesia's huge demand for electricity.

During a bilateral summit in Tokyo on Monday, Jokowi and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe agreed their "mutually beneficial economic partnership" would "contribute to the economic development not only of their countries but also of the entire region," according to a joint statement.

Japan is the second-biggest investor in Indonesia after Singapore, with about 1,440 Japanese companies operating in the nation as of 2013, Indonesian data showed. Japan is the largest export market for Indonesia, followed by China and Singapore, though China is the biggest origin country of imports.

On Wednesday, Jokowi will travel to Nagoya in central Japan by shinkansen bullet train to visit Toyota Motor Corp's headquarters. The shinkansen could be an option for an Indonesian high-speed railway project to connect Jakarta and Surabaya.

Toyota, the world's largest automaker by volume, has expressed willingness to increase its investment in Indonesia.

A thermal power plant construction project in Indonesia, meanwhile, has been promoted by a consortium formed by the Japanese government-linked Electric Power Development Co and Japanese trading house Itochu Corp.

Indonesia's economy is forecast to grow more than 5 percent in 2015 and over 7 percent in the future, Jokowi said. His government has also said the nation's population is projected to exceed 300 million by 2035, compared with around 250 million at present.

Jokowi is scheduled to visit China late Wednesday following the trip to Japan.

Kyodo News

Japan awards 7 new assistance projects to Philippines' Mindanao

Japanese Ambassador to the Philippines Kazuhide Ishikawa (L) signs on 24 March, 2015, in the Philippine capital Manila seven Japan-funded grant assistance projects to conflict-affected areas on the southern island of Mindanao.—KYODO NEWS

MANILA, 24 March — The Japanese government on Tuesday awarded seven assistance projects to conflict-affected areas in the Philippines' southern island of Mindanao to aid peace and development there.

Japanese Ambassador to the Philippines Kazuhide Ishikawa signed grant contracts for the projects related to education, agriculture and health, to be implemented in the provinces of Zamboanga del Sur, North Cotabato, South Cotabato, and Sultan Kudarat, and in the city of Cotabato. "These will provide 14 classrooms, one health facility, 168 units of medical equipment, and seven units of post-harvest equipment," Ishikawa said during the signing ceremony in the capital Manila for the projects worth a total of around $650,000.

The new package of assistance forms part of the Japan-Bangsamoro Initiatives for Reconstruction and Development launched in 2006 to support peace and development in conflict-affected areas in Mindanao and surrounding areas in the Muslim Mindanao region. Bangsamoro refers to generally Muslim ethnic groups concentrated in the southern Philippines.

So far, 82 grassroots assistance projects worth $7.19 million have been implemented under J-BIRD.

"Japan will continue to work hand-in-hand with all stakeholders. Our efforts may seem small, and each project is considered a small win. But one day, we would realize that the power of small wins, in due time, will reward us with big triumphs," Ishikawa said.

Maria Cleofe Sandoval of the Philippine government's peace process agency noted the significance of the latest assistance at a time when the peace process in Mindanao is being challenged following a tragedy in January that involved government forces, combatants of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, and other armed rebels.

"We know, and we have always said, that the road to peace requires not only an agreement, but full and unhampered development on the ground. We cannot escape the vicious cycle of poverty and conflict without both," Sandoval said.

"The overwhelming support from the international community is heartening, and we take this as a clear and unmistakable sign that our neighbours recognize not only the legitimacy of, but the need for, the Bangsamoro peace process," she added. Noting Japan's development assistance and other roles in the Mindanao peace process, Sandoval said, "We thank Japan for being a steady partner in our pursuit for peace...Such a partner is invaluable in any peace process." Safrullah Dipatuan of the Bangsamoro Development Agency said Japan's intervention will show the people in the Muslim-dominated Bangsamoro region, which has been trapped in extreme poverty due to the decades-long conflict, the fruits of the ongoing peace process between the government and the MILF.

Dipatuan said not only are these "dividends of peace" a "quick win," they will also help "liberate the people from poverty" in the long-term. The armed conflict in Mindanao, which is rooted to the native Muslims' resistance to Spanish colonization in the mid-16th century and attacks against the Muslims beginning in the 1960s, has left tens of thousands of people killed, displaced millions, and stunted the island's economy despite its having rich natural resources. To address these problems, the MILF, the country's largest Muslim rebel group, signed a comprehensive peace agreement with the government in March last year after 17 years of negotiations. Key components of the agreement that will grant self-governing powers to the regional government, however, have yet to be fully implemented.—*Kyodo News*

Germanwings Airbus crashes in France, 148 feared dead

MARSEILLE, 24 March — An Airbus operated by Lufthansa's Germanwings budget airline crashed in a remote area of the French Alps on Tuesday and all 148 on board were feared dead.

French President Francois Hollande said he believed none of those on board the *A320* had survived, while the head of Lufthansa spoke of a dark day for the German airline.

"There were 148 people on board," Hollande said. "The conditions of the accident, which have not yet been clarified, lead us to think there are no survivors."

A Germanwings Airbus A320 registration D-AIPX is seen at the Berlin airport in this 29 March, 2014 file photo. —REUTERS

French officials said there were 142 passengers and six crew on board and the plane issued a distress call at 0947 GMT, about 52 minutes after take-off.

Hollande said there was likely to be a significant number of Germans on the flight from Barcelona to Duesseldorf.

He added: "The accident happened in a zone that is particularly hard to access."

It was the first crash of an airliner on French soil since the Concorde disaster just outside Paris in July 2000. Lufthansa Chief Executive Carsten Spohr said it would be a "dark day" for the airline if the crash were confirmed.

"We do not yet know what has happened to flight 4U 9525. My deepest sympathy goes to the families and friends of our passengers and crew," Lufthansa said on Twitter, citing Spohr.

"If our fears are confirmed, this is a dark day for Lufthansa. We hope to find survivors," it said.

A spokesman for France's DGAC aviation authority said the airliner crashed near the town of Barcelonnette about 100 km (65 miles) north of the French Riviera city of Nice.

French accident investigators were heading for the crash site in Meolans-Revel, a remote and sparsely inhabited commune in the foothills of the French Alps.

Airbus said it was aware of reports about the crash.

"We are aware of the media reports," Airbus said on Twitter. "All efforts are now going towards assessing the situation. We will provide further information as soon as available."

Officials at Barcelona airport said the flight took off at 0855 GMT.

The crashed *A320* is 24 years old and has been with the parent Lufthansa group since 1991, according to online database airfleets.net.

Reuters

Indian PM says ardently expecting to visit China

NEW DELHI, 24 March — Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday said he is ardently expecting to visit China soon to exchange views with Chinese leaders on furthering India-China relations.

During a meeting here with visiting Chinese State Councilor Yang Jiechi, Modi said Indian people have fresh memories of the successful visit to India by Chinese President Xi Jinping last year.

He also asked Yang to convey his sincere greetings to President Xi and Premier Li Keqiang.

He said he would like to have in-depth exchanges of views with Chinese leaders on the furthering of bilateral ties when he visits China.

This would also send a positive message to the international community on the efforts being made by the two countries in developing friendship cooperation, he said.

Modi said the bilateral relations are moving on a fast track and in the correct direction set by the leaders of the two countries.

This would not only benefit the two countries and their peoples, but also exert a positive influence on Asia and the whole world, he pointed out.

Yang conveyed cordial greetings from Chinese leaders to the prime minister.

He said both China and India are working to implement the outcomes from the visit of President Xi Jinping to India last year and the two sides are also actively preparing for the visit of Prime Minister Modi to China.

Yang said that as two biggest developing countries in the world, by carrying out cooperation and building a tighter development partnership, China and India will help enhance their own development and at the meantime contribute to promoting peace, stability and development of the region as well as the world.

He said that China is willing to work with India to continuously deepen mutual trust, actively expand cooperation fields and lead China-India strategic cooperative partnership to move to higher stages.—*Xinhua*

Rifts deepen over Okinawa base transfer as gov't ignores local calls

People stage a rally on 24 March, 2015, in front of the gate of the US Marine Corps' Camp Schwab in Nago, Okinawa Prefecture, against the Japanese government's continued preparations for relocating a US military base in the prefecture, effectively ignoring instructions to stop the work ordered by the local governor the previous day.—KYODO NEWS

NAHA, (Japan) 24 March — The government on Tuesday continued preparations for relocating a US military base in Okinawa Prefecture, effectively ignoring instructions by the local governor to stop the work and deepening their rift over a land reclamation project.

The Defence Ministry continued the undersea research off the coast of Henoko where the central government plans to build a replacement facility for the US Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station in the southwestern prefecture under a bilateral accord.

The move prompted about 100 local citizens to stage a protest before the US Marines' Camp Schwab adjacent to the planned reclamation site against the planned transfer of the Futenma base to the Henoko coastal area.

Before the gate of Camp Schwab in Nago, citizens gathered in protest against the continued offshore work by the defence bureau, with some saying, "This is totally unacceptable," and "Don't surrender to the Abe administration. Support the governor." With the central government paying little heed to Okinawa's instruction, there is an increasing potential for Okinawa Gov Takeshi Onaga to revoke the permission the local government granted to the Okinawa Defence Bureau for the destruction of reefs in a designated area unless the bureau stops the work within a week, as he warned on Monday.

In Tokyo, Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga said at a Press conference, "There is no reason to stop the operation at this moment." The top government spokesman stressed the importance of relocating the Futenma base, located in a densely populated area in Ginowan, to reduce dangers for people living nearby.

The central government is requesting from the Okinawa government for an opportunity to explain the ministry's views on the matter, Suga said.

If Okinawa withdraws the permission, the government of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe would not hesitate to take the matter to a court, sources close to the matter said.

Based on its own research, the prefectural government has claimed it is likely that the defence bureau damaged coral reefs with concrete blocks in areas where permission had not been given during work to prepare to resume the boring survey.

Tokyo says placing the concrete blocks did not require the local government's permission, and the defence bureau sent a statement explaining that stance to the Okinawa government.

Onaga won gubernatorial election in November after pledging to block the planned base relocation, beating his predecessor Hirokazu Nakaima, who had approved landfill work necessary for the relocation.

In Okinawa, which hosts the bulk of US military installations in Japan, opponents of the plan to build the base on reclaimed land off Henoko also saw their candidates win all four of the prefecture's single-seat constituencies in December's general election.

Defence Minister Gen Nakatani expressed displeasure over the governor's move, saying at a Press conference in Tokyo, "We have been proceeding with the construction in accordance with an agreement with Okinawa Prefecture," adding, "This is extremely regrettable."—*Kyodo News*

S Korea rebukes North for again denying role in warship's sinking

SEOUL, 24 March — South Korea on Tuesday slammed North Korea's latest denial of its involvement in the sinking of a South Korean warship in a torpedo attack near their tense maritime border five years ago.

"It has been concluded (the sinking was the act of) North Korea's submarine, and thus North Korea's claim is unacceptable," South Korea's Defence Ministry spokesman Kim Min Seok told reporters.

The sinking of the *Cheonan* happened near the western sea border on 26 March, 2010, killing 46 South Korean sailors and marking one of the deadliest incidents between the two Koreas since the end of the 1950-1953 Korean War.

A panel of international investigators has said the sinking was caused by a torpedo launched by a North Korean submarine, while North Korea has strongly denied its involvement in the incident.

As a retaliatory action, South Korea has suspended all large-scale aid to the North and economic cooperation with the North, widely known as "24 May Steps." South Korea has demanded an apology from North Korea and a promise not to repeat a similar provocation.

Kim's remarks were in response to a North Korean statement issued on Monday, in which it reiterated its denial of involvement.

"We remain unchanged in our stand that the south has to immediately lift the ill-famed 'step' which they cooked up under the absurd pretext of the *Cheonan* warship sinking case, not dragging on time," a spokesman for the Policy Department of the National Defence Commission of North Korea said in a statement carried by the official *Korean Central News Agency* on Tuesday.

"This is because the 'step' is based on the fictitious story about the north's 'involvement in the sinking," the statement said.— *Kyodo News*

British PM Cameron says won't seek third term in power

LONDON, 24 March — British Prime Minister David Cameron on Monday ruled out seeking a third term in office if he won a second mandate in a tightly fought national election on 7 May, saying it would then be time for a new leader of his right-leaning Conservatives.

His comments are designed in part to underscore his party's message that it believes its job of rebuilding the economy and reforming Britain is only half-done and that it needs another five years "to finish the job".

Cameron, whose party is neck-and-neck in opinion polls with the opposition Labour Party, also said he would like to serve a full five-year second term from 2015-2020 if re-elected, scotching persistent speculation that he would stand down after a possible European Union membership referendum in 2017.

But he suggested his political ambitions would then have run their course.

"I'm putting myself forward for the full five years. I feel fit enough and healthy enough to do the job. I've got a real passion for it and I'm really keen to win. If I fall short I'll be disappointed," he told BBC TV.

But asked whether he wanted a third term, he said: "No ... The third term is not something I'm contemplating."

Cameron, 48, said possible successors included Theresa May, the interior minister, London mayor Boris Johnson, and finance minister George Osborne, saying the time would then come for "a fresh pair of eyes and fresh leadership".

Britain's Prime Minister David Cameron addresses a news conference during a European Union leaders summit in Brussels on 20 March, 2015.
REUTERS

If Cameron does win re-election, his comments are likely to spark a lengthy leadership contest to succeed him.

Cameron became prime minister in 2010 and has headed Britain's first coalition government since World War Two, with the centre-left Liberal Democrats as the junior partner to his Conservatives.

Reuters

Sarkozy passes French poll test but has long way to go

PARIS, 24 March — Former French president Nicolas Sarkozy has put a faltering comeback back on track by steering his conservatives to victory over the far-right National Front in local elections, but major obstacles remain to his presidential ambitions.

Sunday's results in the first round of voting mean his UMP party is well placed to make sweeping gains in the 29 March run-off for councillors in France's "departements", at the cost of President Francois Hollande's Socialists.

That will silence critics who had written off Sarkozy's comeback only four months after he emerged from retirement, pointing to policy bickering in the UMP and surveys which show even right-leaning voters are not sure they want him back.

"Advantage Sarkozy", *Le Parisien* daily wrote on its front page with a smiling Sarkozy on its cover. "For his first electoral test since his comeback, the UMP leader has pulled it off." But his victory came partly thanks to a fragile alliance with centrist parties well removed from his tough line on issues such as immigration and national identity. This means questions remain as to how the UMP will position itself for the 2017 presidential election — and who will be its candidate.

"It's not in the bag for Sarkozy," Jerome Fourquet of pollster Ifop said. "The UMP will still be hit by tensions and divisions between those who want a more right-wing line and those who want alliances to the centre.

The UMP and its allies together took just over 29 percent of Sunday's vote, ahead of Marine Le Pen's National Front on 25 percent and the Socialists on 22 percent.

But the UMP tally was boosted by candidates of the centrist UDI and MoDem parties. While there was no official score for the UMP alone, it would have been at least a few percentage points less without them — as *Le Pen* pointed out on Sunday night.

It is not Sarkozy but ex-prime minister Alain Juppe, a rival for the UMP presidential ticket, who has pushed hardest to bring the party closer to middle-of-the-road voters through such alliances. Sarkozy's strategy has been to lure far-right voters back into the UMP fold.

"Sarkozy is trying to make this appear as his victory," said analyst Thomas Guenole, an expert on the French right. "But in fact it is the Juppe line which has which won."

Nicolas Sarkozy, former French president and current UMP conservative political party head, attends a political rally in the Essonne department as he campaigns for French departmental elections in Palaiseau, near Paris on 16 March, 2015.—REUTERS

Before his defeat by Hollande in the 2012 presidential election, Sarkozy was known for his aggressive style and strong hold on his party. However, he had failed in the past few months to garner the enthusiasm he expected within the UMP and opinion polls have also shown he was struggling to convince.

Only 40 percent of right-wing voters want Sarkozy, who is also dogged by various legal cases, to run for the 2017 presidential election, one survey showed last month. This was down from 62 percent in July 2014 while he was in retirement. Juppe, now 69 and until now known for being forced to drop unpopular welfare reforms in the 1990s, has shaped an elder statesman image for himself which works well with voters — who in one recent poll made him France's most popular politician.

Assuming the UMP capitalises on the first round and wins a majority of departements next Sunday, the next test for Sarkozy is a party congress in May where he wants to re-launch the party with a new name and start rebuilding its platform for 2017. In recent weeks he has signaled a line promoting national identity, controversially suggesting that a ban on wearing veils in schools should be extended to universities and by opposing alternative choices in school canteens when pork is on the menu.

Reuters

UN Secretary-General's Message on The International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade

25 March 2015

To mark this International Day, I will unveil a permanent and fitting Memorial to honour the victims of slavery and the Trans-Atlantic slave trade at the United Nations in New York.

The "Ark of the Return" Memorial will bring home to visitors from around the world, the terrible legacy of the slave trade. It will enable them to reflect on a core goal of the United Nations: the promotion and preservation of the dignity, freedom and equality of all human beings.

This year we pay a particular tribute to the many women who suffered and died during the slave trade. They experienced appalling violence, including sexual and reproductive enslavement, prostitution, repeated sexual assault, as well as forced childbearing and the sale of their own children. They were deprived of the right to choose whether, and with whom, to have sexual relationships; and whether, when, and with whom, to have children.

Yet women slaves played a key role in maintaining the dignity of their communities. Too often their leadership and brave resistance has been under-estimated, or forgotten.

In all, some 12 million Africans were shipped across the Atlantic over four centuries, although the number purchased by slave traders was far higher.

The Transatlantic slave trade remains a monstrous crime and a stain on human history.

Tragically, slavery has still not ended. In the past year, thousands of women, men and children in Syria and Iraq have been abducted. Many women have been sold to fighters in public slave-markets. Slavery stubbornly persists in other parts of the world.

This despicable trade could not exist without deep-seated racism. It is absolutely vital that the dangers inherent in racism are made crystal clear to all.

On this important day we must re-double our efforts to end modern slavery, once and for all.

UNIC/Yangon

Conservative Republican Cruz says will run for presidential election

WASHINGTON, 24 March — Ted Cruz, an outspoken Republican senator backed by the conservative Tea Party group, said on Monday he will run for the US presidential election next year, becoming the first major candidate to announced a bid for nomination.

Cruz made the announcement in a gathering in Virginia as he has lagged in polls behind other Republicans believed to be aspirants for the party's nomination, such as former Florida Gov Jeb Bush and Wisconsin Gov Scott Walker.

"I believe in the power of millions of courageous conservatives rising up to reignite the promise of America and that is why today I am announcing that I am running for the presidency of the United States," Cruz said.

Hillary Clinton, a popular Democratic politician who formerly served as US first lady and secretary of state, is expected to announce her bid to become president next month.

Kyodo News

PERSPECTIVES

Wednesday, 25 March, 2015

What will we leave behind for new generations?

By *Aung Khin*

When we die, the words on our tombstones mean far less than those spoken about us by the people we leave behind. While we are still alive, we can determine through our actions whether the stories future generations share about us will be good or bad.

A person's lifetime achievements have repercussion for their offspring or relatives. If they work for the welfare of society, their descendents will be proud of their connection. In contrast, those infamous for their ill deeds cast a shadow on those who share their name.

On the world stage, new generations of dictators and tyrants inherit public hatred from their ancestors, while the offspring of beloved leaders also receive the people's love. While new generations may not have proven themselves as worthy as their ancestors, the praise and popularity they inherit could motivate them to good deeds.

William Shakespeare said, "No legacy is so rich as honesty." Honesty is a better inheritance than power or money. While the latter two can help the bearer exert a certain influence, they cannot guarantee peace and safety.

If a state leader can turn his country into a developed nation, he will impress his own citizens and the global community. Such a reputation is more valuable than money and property, which can be taken away.

When leaders focus on enriching their society, rather than themselves, they can create a legacy that ensures future generations share positive stories about them long after they have gone.

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Avoid or stop associating with Jerks, jive-persons, cheapskates, snobs, thugs and rapscallions

By:*Tommy Pauk*

THE individual differences are found in humans such as characters, habits, hobbies, IQ level, EQ levels etc. However, the ultimate goal of human beings is the same i.e. 'survival of the fittest.' Since man is a social animal, we humans associate with each other within our community or from international communities for common interests. In this regard, we have to be clever enough to deal with the persons who act differently from simple and ordinary persons. The characters of such persons are nasty, awkward and disgusting. We need to behave each other harmoniously for our human endeavor and social welfare in the society together. The characters or behaviors of some persons do not contribute to the benefit of others as they are categorized in the bad characters. The following types of anti-social behaviors can be obviously found in human beings in human society.

A contemptibly foolish person or a jerk never does any good thing or contribute to anyone on earth. In other words, he is a worthless or despicable person. No one wishes to associate with this type of person for any reason or purpose. Although he is a human being, his reasonable power is beneath consideration. The word' foolish' in the sense that a person is not being sensible or lack of common sense. Actually, this type of person is neither mad nor insane. If we deal or make friends with him, it will be of no use for us. He will not help us for social dealing and social welfare. His way of thinking and behavior annoy us and disturb us. Moreover, he makes us disappointed badly and deals with others dishonestly or unfairly.

The jive-persons are not reliable to be as friends or associates or partners as they do not practice or behave honestly among their friends. The jive-persons usually bluff and talk nonsense to others. They are deceitful or worthless persons. They wait for the chance to take advantages upon his friends. Instead of fulfilling the needs and wants of their friends, they selfishly find the benefit and personal gain for them. They do not contribute to the welfare of the society too.

The cheapskates are the ones who are stingy enough to give money to charity. They do not wish to be as donors for charitable activities. They are reluctant to spend money and avoid paying a fair share of costs or expenses in the community. Actually, the cheapskates are not paupers, but well-to-do persons. Even though they are being rich persons, they are extremely stingy to pay for charity and for social welfare activities for their society or other societies. The cheapskates are unfriendly, insincere and unsupportive to their colleagues or friends. Their mindsets and behaviors towards others are totally unfit for genuinely social dealing. Therefore, the ordinary or general people are awfully aware of the unsociable characters of the cheapskates.

Snobs are the ones who have the exaggerated respect for high social positions or wealth or elite and who look down on those regarded as socially inferior. Their snobbish behavior and manner depict the discrimination between the haves and the have-nots. The snobs always pay respect to the powerful persons or wealthy person or aristocrats, expecting some benefit or personal gain rather than for social welfare indeed. They will never contribute to the welfare of middle class people or the poor. Normally, they make friends with the people who hold higher rank positions in the government or in the powerful political party or top in social positions. The snobs have the feeling that the normal people or the underprivileged or the proletariat are worthless or beneath consideration or despicable. The attitude of the snobs is absolutely inhumane and selfish. They are also untrustworthy persons in the society. The snobbish persons never ever contribute to the prosperity of the society concerned as they have no goodwill-spirit. Therefore, it is advisable to avoid or stop associating with snobs totally.

Thugs are the criminals who are aggressive and violent. They can be found in any society in the world. Since they are criminals, they earn their living by committing crimes whenever they have chance to commit. Moreover, they are outlaws and they do not hesitate to commit any kind of crimes such as robbery, pick-pocketing, rape, mugging and kidnapping etc. These bad guys usually threaten the daily life of the good guys. The bad guys organize or persuade the tramp or vagabonds to commit crimes for their survival. They have formed or organized certain gangs which run illegal businesses known as piracy or mafia gangs or IS militant groups. Some of the thugs serve as lackeys for those who are tyrants or despots in the world. Normal or decent people avoid associating with them. Thugs do not confront the law enforcement agencies or police and they also do not obey the laws of society. They are the small groups when we compare with the decent majority people in a certain society, but their threat is immense in daily life. They act or move or commit crimes in the darkness and sometimes even in broad-day-light. The innocent people are fully aware of this danger so they demand firm security or legal protection for them. They feel insecure about the potential danger if there is no security. Nowadays, in some countries, the thugs frequently commit gang-rape, kidnapping and robbery. They are dangerous persons for the human society. They make the atmosphere in the society gloomy and unpleasant. The movements of thugs are in disguise of certain ideology or radicalization and they even persuade the international youths to join their illegal organizations by using internet as their communication tool. Their sacrifice for their ideology or so-called radicalization is usually posted online. Actually, they are merely ruffians who disrupt the global peace. This is a great threat to the parents across the world. The parents in the world are deeply concerned about their offspring because they might be caught in the cunning trap set by the thugs known as terrorists or inhumane thugs. The parents must warn their children to avoid associating with any type of thugs and point out their tricky tactics.

Rapscallions are dishonest and untrustworthy persons in the human society. The innocent people do not know their dishonest way or cheating technique while dealing with them for doing business or making contract etc. They pretend to be as decent persons when they deal with simple people. They intend to exploit or cheat the innocent people whenever they have chances. They deliberately exploit or cheat their associates for personal gain and benefit.

At first, the simple and gullible people want to befriend such persons without knowing their inner bad characters clearly. Later, they realize that these persons are not worthy of true friends or associates. They really do not deserve as their reliable or trustworthy friends of the simple and honest people. There are many so-called friends in the world. Therefore, we must be cautious enough to deal or select true friends or reliable associates for achieving sustainable fraternity or mutual-benefit. We should know their tricky or deceitful or crafty behavior and practice. Vividly, the aforesaid persons are not virtuous ones but stupid scoundrels indeed. Actually these practices are immoral and cunning. These types of persons are dangerous for the simple people in their daily life . They do neglect the essence of sincerity, friendship and fraternity, but they care for their benefit and think how to take advantage on the simple people. In addition, these persons are unfriendly and unsympathetic. To analyze the behavior, practice and mindsets of these persons, they are almost anti-social and inhumane because they violate the rules and norms of social animal.

In conclusion, if we intend to build a pleasant and peaceful society, we should avoid or stop associating with above-stated persons. They cannot be tamed or punished as they are churlish or ill-bred or ill-disposed. !!!!!!

*****

Tommy Pauk is the pseudonym of U Thein Swe, who is B.A (English) and (Registered Law) R.L I. degrees holder. He has English Teaching experience at Yangon University English Department and Workers' college in Yangon, and now is working as freelance writer and English Teacher cum Translator/Interpreter for foreign firms.

Solar Impulse-2 to leave for China on 27 March

MANDALAY, 24 March — The groundbreaking Swiss-built aircraft Solar Impulse-2 is preparing to depart for China after nearly a week in Mandalay.

The plane, powered entirely by the sun, landed at Mandalay International Airport on 19 March at 8 pm. University and basic education students, along with other members of the public, have been given the opportunity to view the plane, with officials from the aircraft's support team giving talks on the use of solar power.

At present, the aircraft is making preparations to proceed to China on 27 March. On its way to China, the solar impulse will pass over Sagaing Hill, Mandalay Hill and Ayeyawady River.—*Maung Pyi Thu (Mandalay)*

Asphalt roads in Myeik Township improve transportation for local residents

MYEIK, 24 March — To mark the 70th Anniversary of Armed Forces Day, new asphalt and concrete streets were officially opened in Myeik Township, Taninthayi Region, on 22 March, with Region Minister for Transport Dr Kyaw Hsan in attendance.

Already-opened Nawarat Road is 1740 feet long and 12 feet wide, having been built with K32 million from the township development affairs committee and local residents.

The region minister and officials cut the ribbon to open the 750-foot-long Sibinthaya road worth K7 million in Yaybone Ward, the 1,100-foot-long 10th street worth K19.2 million in Naukle Ward, the 700 foot-long Yaynantaik road worth K9.3 million in Tatpyin Ward, and the 730-foot-long Khatta road worth K8.3 million in Parami Ward 2.

The paved roads will provide much more reliable transport, particularly during monsoon season.

In the 2014-15 fiscal year, the township development affairs committee and local people cooperated in construction of 38 asphalt roads in the township.—*Khaing Htoo (Myeik District IPRD)*

Villages receive electricity supply

NAY PYI TAW, 24 March — Vice Mayor of Nay Pyi Taw Council Area U Than Kyaw Htoo launched a 100 KVA transformer to supply electricity to Kyonpadaw Village in Pantanaw Township, Ayeyawady Region at a ceremony on 22 March.

The vice mayor and Ayeyawady Region Minister U Than Tun attended the ceremony to electrify six villages in Ohbo and Kapaing village-tracts.

The vice mayor donated K4.2 million to the fund for power supply process of Kyonpadaw Village.

Local authorities installed four transformers to benefit over 1,200 houses in the villages. They have a plan to supply electricity to the 32 remaining villages in the township.—*Zaw Min Aung (107)*

TODAY'S MYANMAR NEWS SITES

Central Command HQ renovates ancient monuments in Royal Mandalay City

MANDALAY, 24 March — Military servicemen of the Central Command Headquarters recently carried out cleaning and maintenance work around ancient monuments in Mandalay.

Among the sites cleaned were the Mya Nan Sankyaw Golden Palace, the coin factory and the North Garden Lake, as well as the graveyards of King Mindon, King Bagan's mother, and the queens Hsinbyumashin, Nanmadaw and Laungshay.

Officials of the Central Command Headquarters have spent K29.3 million on renovation of nine wells, the North Garden Lake and Boktaloke Lake built by King Mindon in October 2014.—*Maung Pyi Thu (Mandalay)*

South Syrian rebels say Assad foes are supplying more arms

BEIRUT, 24 March — Mainstream rebels in southern Syria say foreign states have stepped up weapons supplies to them since Damascus launched an offensive early last month to regain the frontier zone near Jordan and Israel.

This suggests President Bashar al-Assad's Arab and Western enemies want to help preserve the last major foothold of what they call the moderate opposition, although the rebels say the equipment still falls short of their needs.

The Syrian army backed by allied militia including the Lebanese Shi'ite group Hezbollah are trying to regain territory which is vitally important to Assad and his allies in Iran; both attach great importance to the struggle with Israel, which borders Syria to the southwest.

At first they advanced rapidly through the southwestern corner of Syria. State TV broadcast from several villages captured from the insurgents, who are among the last remnants of the mainstream rebellion against Assad that has been crushed elsewhere by government forces or jihadist groups such as Islamic State and the Nusra Front, a wing of al-Qaeda.

But the push then appeared to slow. Three rebel officials said foreign states had increased their help in response to the advance. "We are asking for more," said Saber Safar, a colonel who defected from the Syrian army and now heads a group called "The First Army", part of "The Southern Front" rebel alliance. He spoke via Skype from inside Syria. The rebels declined to give details, or say which states had supplied the weapons. The Southern Front groups have previously received military aid via Jordan, a staunch US ally.

Some of the southern rebel groups have received US-made anti-tank weapons, though they have long described the quantities as small. In addition to the United States, Assad's foreign opponents include Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Turkey.

Smoke rises after what activists said was an airstrike on Atimah, Idlib Province on 8 March, 2015. —REUTERS

A Syrian military source said the army was working according to a new plan "focussed on directing concentrated blows against some of the positions of the terrorist gangs". "These strikes are achieving excellent results," the source said.

Mainstream rebels in northern Syria suffered their most recent setback with the collapse of the Hazzm movement, a US-backed group that dissolved itself earlier this month after coming under attack from the Nusra Front.

The weakness of the mainstream groups is a big complication for US planners who want to arm and train rebels to fight Islamic State. The Nusra Front is also active in the south but has avoided conflict with the mainstream groups there.—*Reuters*

US pledges to keep funding Afghans amid calls for slower pullout

CAMP DAVID, 24 March — The United States assured Afghanistan's leaders on Monday it would keep funding Afghan security forces at a targeted peak level of 352,000 personnel at least into 2017 to provide stability as foreign troops withdraw from the country.

The announcement by US Defence Secretary Ash Carter came ahead of talks at the White House on Tuesday at which Afghan President Ashraf Ghani is expected to press his case for a slowing of the withdrawal of US forces.

After a day of talks at the US presidential retreat at Camp David, Carter, US Secretary of State John Kerry and Afghan leaders were at pains to avoid getting ahead of the White House talks, at which Obama is expected to respond to Ghani's plea. However, in response to a question at a joint news conference, Kerry said, "It's our knowledge that President Obama is actively considering that request."

Ghani replaced Hamid Karzai as Afghan president last year and enjoys a much smoother relationship with Washington.

US Secretary of State John Kerry (R) and Afghanistan President Ashraf Ghani approach reporters before their diplomatic meetings at Camp David, Maryland on 23 March, 2015.—REUTERS

Earlier on Monday, he delivered an address to US soldiers and military families at the Pentagon and sought to reassure Americans of the value of their sacrifice in lives lost and money spent in the battle against al-Qaeda and other extremists in more than 13 years of war in Afghanistan.

Noting that more than 2,215 Americans had been killed and 20,000 wounded, he said, "Each one of you has left a legacy, but I also understand that Afghanistan has marked you."

Ghani's words of gratitude marked a sharp contrast with Karzai, who left office last year accusing the United States of inflicting a war on his country that intensified with the drawdown of US forces.

With a more friendly partner in Ghani, US officials acknowledge that conditions have changed since May when Obama declared that by the end of 2015 the US force would be roughly halved from the current total of about 10,000 and would operate only from bases in Kabul and Bagram.

The US military has been drawing up revised options and a senior US official told Reuters last week the US military bases in Kandahar and Jalalabad were likely to remain open beyond the end of 2015.—*Reuters*

Japan, Tunisia confirm cooperation in antiterrorism efforts

TUNIS, 24 March — Japanese Parliamentary Vice Foreign Minister Kazuyuki Nakane on Monday held talks with top Tunisian officials and confirmed that the two countries will work together on antiterrorism in the wake of a deadly shooting rampage at a landmark museum in Tunis last week.

Nakane, who met Prime Minister Habib Essid and Foreign Minister Taieb Baccouche, said he also requested that measures be taken to ensure safety for Japanese living in, and travelling to, the country.

Three of the 21 people killed in the attack by gunmen at the Bardo National Museum were Japanese.

Baccouche expressed condolences over the deaths of the three Japanese and noted the importance of building peace, not just stepping up military capability, in the fight against terrorism. He said it is necessary to direct attention to young people getting radicalized and stressed the need for measures to address poverty and unemployment.

The Tunisian government believes that three people were involved in the attack, with two of them having been killed at the scene. It has launched a major investigation and a manhunt for the third suspect. After arriving in Tunisia on Sunday, Nakane visited the museum in the capital and paid tribute to the victims of the attack. He denounced the act, saying Japan "will never give in to terrorism."

The Japanese diplomat visited a hospital where injured Japanese were being treated on Monday. He told reporters that they were on their way to recovery.

Kyodo News

Japanese Parliamentary Vice Foreign Minister Kazuyuki Nakane (L) talks with Tunisian Foreign Minister Taieb Baccouche (R) at the Japanese Embassy in Tunis on 23 March, 2015. KYODO NEWS

Samsung to pre-install Microsoft apps on Android tablets

SEATTLE, 24 March — Microsoft Corp's Office apps will be pre-installed in some Samsung tablets running Google Inc's Android system, extending an agreement to put some Microsoft apps on the new Samsung Galaxy S6 phone.

The move is the latest sign that Microsoft is pushing to get its cloud-enabled software into the hands of as many customers as possible, regardless of the platform or device.

Microsoft said on Monday that Samsung will pre-install Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Skype and its note-taking and cloud storage apps on certain tablets in the first half of this year.

Customers can use the apps free of charge but must pay for premium features.

The companies said in February the new Samsung Galaxy S6 phone would be pre-installed with some Microsoft apps.

In the past, Microsoft preferred to pair its lucrative Office applications with its ubiquitous Windows operating system, but with the rise of mobile computing, Microsoft has been working hard to make its software available to users of Apple Inc's iOS and Google's Android, which dominate the tablet and smartphone markets.—*Reuters*

***A shadow of a man using his mobile phone is cast near Microsoft logo at the 2014 Computex exhibition in Taipei on 4 June, 2014.*—REUTERS**

US, SpaceX focus on second stage engine to wrap up certification

WASHINGTON, 24 March — The US Air Force said on Monday it was on track to certify privately held SpaceX to launch US military and spy satellites by June, with the final efforts focused on qualifying the second stage engine and structure of its Falcon 9 rocket.

The Air Force said it had worked closely with Space Exploration Technologies, or SpaceX, to map out the "relatively small amount of work" that needs to be done before completing the certification process.

Once certified, SpaceX will be allowed to compete for some of the launches now carried out solely by United Launch Alliance, a joint venture of Lockheed Martin Corp and Boeing Co, the two largest US weapons makers.

Officials also are looking at contamination control as they wrap up the SpaceX certification process, the Air Force said.

The Air Force said it and SpaceX planned to revise a June 2013 agreement about the certification process to adopt recommendations made after the first phase of an independent review ordered by Air Force Secretary Deborah James in January.

The Air Force said the panel, led by former Air Force Chief of Staff Larry Welch, had recommended ways to better focus the certification process on the new entrant's ability to deliver hardware, support and processes to meet requirements.

It said the panel carried out in-depth discussions with key personnel at the Air Force's Space and Missiles Systems Center and SpaceX, and a close review of the certification documents and data, during the first phase of the review.

No further details about specific recommendations were immediately available.

James praised the review team's diligent and prompt work and said she remained committed to "bold innovation, competitive space launches, and improved partnership with industry."

***The unmanned Falcon 9 rocket, launched by SpaceX and carrying NOAA's Deep Space Climate Observatory Satellite, lifts off from launch pad 40 the Cape Canaveral Air Force Station in Cape Canaveral, Florida on 11 Feb, 2015.*—REUTERS**

SpaceX Chief Executive Elon Musk welcomed the Air Force's decision to review and revise the certification process.

The Air Force said the second phase of the independent review would examine the broader process for certifying new entrants to the space launch business.

On Monday, United Launch Alliance said it would let Americans vote over the next two weeks whether to name its new rocket Eagle, Freedom, or GalaxyOne. The name will be announced 13 April, it said.

ULA is reacting to the rapid rise of SpaceX by racing to lower launch costs and attract more commercial customers.

Reuters

Apple or pear? Scientists discover new gene linked to your body shape

WASHINGTON, 24 March — Scientists have found a new gene linked to body fat distribution in research that may help explain why you have an apple or pear shape.

Researchers from the Duke University reported on Monday in the US journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences that a gene called Plexin D1 could control both where fat is stored and how fat cells are shaped, known factors in health and even the risk of future disease.

"This work identifies a new molecular pathway that determines how fat is stored in the body, and as a result, affects overall metabolic health," said senior author John Rawls, associate professor of molecular genetics and microbiology at Duke University School of Medicine. "Moving forward, the components of that pathway can become potential targets to address the dangers associated with visceral fat accumulation." The researchers chose zebrafish for this study since their transparent bodies were easy to observe and found those genetically engineered to lack Plexin D1 had less abdominal or visceral fat, the kind that lends some humans a characteristic apple shape, than their normal counterparts.

Previous research has shown that people with an apple shape are more likely to develop diabetes and heart disease than those who have bigger hips and thighs, also described as being pear-shaped.

The same effect was observed in zebrafish. Those who were knocked out of the gene were protected from insulin resistance, a precursor of diabetes, even after eating a high-fat diet.

And that may be because that the visceral fat tissue of the mutant zebrafish was composed of smaller, but more numerous cells, which the researchers said are known to decrease the risk of insulin resistance and metabolic disease in humans.

In contrast, their normal siblings had visceral fat tissue containing larger, but fewer fat cells of the kind known to be more likely to leak inflammatory substances that contribute to illness.

Bolstering the zebrafish findings, collaborators at the Karolinska Institute in Sweden analyzed human patient samples and showed that levels of Plexin D1 were higher in individuals with type 2 diabetes, suggesting it may play a similar role in humans.

The researchers also used mice to study the function of Plexin D1, but all of the animals altered to lack the gene died at birth.

Next, they planned to search for other genes as well as environmental factors that are involved in the biology of body fat, again using zebrafish models.

"Our results indicate that the genetic architecture of body fat distribution is shared between fish and humans, which represents about 450 million years of evolutionary divergence," Rawls said. " For these pathways to have been conserved for so long suggests that they are serving an important role."—*Xinhua*

***Researchers measure a cowfish on the Poyang Lake, east China's Jiangxi Province, on 19 March, 2015. Cowfish, the only hydrophilous mammal in the Yangtze River, is facing extinction as there are only about 1,000 left in China and is reducing at a rate of 13.7% each year. To call for protection of cowfish, the Ministry of Agriculture has started a programme recently. As part of the programme, researchers began to choose 8 cowfishes in Poyang Lake and change their habitat to nature reserves in Hubei and Hunan Provinces from 19 March.*—XINHUA**

India's Mars mission completes six months in space

NEW DELHI, 24 March — India's Mars mission has completed six months in space and all scientific instruments are in good working condition, sources said on Tuesday.

"The mission, called Mangalyaan, uses nearly two kgs of fuel every year and 37 kgs of fuel is still there to be exhausted. So, the mission is expected to last long," the sources said. Moreover, all five scientific instruments on board the mission, including the satellite, are also in good condition, they said. The mission has been taking spectacular pictures of the surface of Mars, including mountains and dead volcanoes, and sending the images back to Earth. India on 24 September last year successfully launched its maiden Mars mission, said to be the world's cheapest space mission.—*Xinhua*

Boston bomb suspect influenced by al -Qaeda — expert witness

Evidence from the Boston Marathon bombing trial, including a pressure-cooker bomb recovered from the Watertown crime scene and a diploma for Tamerlan Tsarnaev, is seen at the Moakley Federal Courthouse in Boston, Massachusetts on 19 March, 2015.—Reuters

Boston, 24 March — Boston Marathon bombing suspect Dzhokhar Tsarnaev was heavily influenced by al-Qaeda literature and lectures, some of which was found on his laptop, a counterterrorism expert testified at his trial on Monday.

The testimony cut to the heart one of America's most closely watched court battles, with prosecutors painting Tsarnaev as a home-grown terrorist and his defence arguing he was a mostly normal American kid who came under the influence of his radical older brother.

Matthew Levitt, a senior fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Studies, said some of Tsarnaev's Twitter posts and parts of a note he scrawled inside a drydocked boat where he was captured several days after the deadly marathon attack resembled Islamist publications.

"We see in them (concepts from) al-Awlaki's statements and other writings from the radicalizers," Levitt said, referring to Anwar al-Awlaki, a US-born al-Qaeda figure who published lectures and a glossy English-language magazine about violent jihad found on Tsarnaev's computer.

Awlaki was killed in a US drone strike in 2011.

Levitt added that the marathon bombing appeared to fit into a broader "global jihad movement" that encourages Muslims to commit violence targeting the United States.

Tsarnaev is accused of killing three people and injuring 264 with a pair of homemade pressure-cooker bombs at the race's crowded finish line on 15 April, 2013, and with fatally shooting a police officer three days later as he and his 26-year-old brother, Tamerlan, tried to flee the city.

Tamerlan Tsarnaev died following a gunfight with police later that night and Dzhokhar was arrested, severely wounded by gunfire, after a homeowner in the suburb of Watertown found him hiding in a boat in his backyard. He left a note in that boat suggesting that the attacks were an act of retribution for US military campaigns in Muslim-dominated countries and that he viewed his brother as a martyr.

"We Muslims are one body you hurt one you hurt us all," the message read, citing what it said was aggression in Muslim lands. "I don't like killing innocent people it is forbidden in Islam, but due to said (...) it is allowed," the message read, with a word missing due to a bullet hole.

Defence attorneys have admitted that the 21-year-old defendant committed the crimes he is accused of, but are trying to save his life in the capital case by arguing that his brother masterminded the attacks.

FBI computer specialist Kevin Swindon testified earlier that copies of al-Qaeda's "Inspire" magazine were found on Tsarnaev's laptop, including one with an article titled: "How to Make a Bomb in the Kitchen of Your Mom." It also included several audio files of Awlaki lectures, he said.

Swindon said the laptop also had backup files of Tsarnaev's iPhone that showed he texted a friend, Dias Kadyrbayev, shortly after the attack, saying: "U saw the news?... Better not text me my friend."

Defence attorney William Fick grilled Swindon in cross-examination in an attempt to point out that it was unclear where the files on Tsarnaev's computer originated, and that there was a chance that some were placed there by Tamerlan or others.

Fick asked Swindon about a thumb drive investigators had found at a landfill along with other items belonging to Dzhokhar, which contained files on how to make explosives: "Isn't it true that every file and folder on this drive was created by Tamerlan's computer?"

"I don't know," Swindon replied.

Separately, a poll released on Monday found that more Boston-area residents would prefer to see Tsarnaev sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole rather than death. Some 49 percent of respondents to a poll conducted for WBUR radio by MassInc Polling said they preferred a life sentence, with 38 percent wanting to see a death sentence.

The bombing killed restaurant manager Krystle Campbell, 29, graduate student Lingzi Lu, 23, and 8-year-old Martin Richard. Massachusetts Institute of Technology police officer Sean Collier, 27, was shot dead three days later.

Reuters

China executes three men convicted in mass stabbing at train station

Beijing, 24 March — China executed three accused separatists on Tuesday for their role in an attack that killed 31 people at a train station in the southwest last year, a court said.

The government has said the attack, in the southwestern city of Kunming, was carried out by knife-wielding separatists from the far western region of Xinjiang, which is strategically located on the borders of Central Asia.

The three men who were executed, Iskandar Ehet, Turgun Tohtunyaz and Hasayn Muhammad, were sentenced to death in September after being convicted of homicide and leading a terrorist organization, the Kunming Intermediate People's Court said. A higher court later upheld the sentence, the official *Xinhua* news agency reported.

Police shot four other assailants dead during the knife attack, which injured 141 people on 1 March, 2014.

Xinjiang, home to the Muslim Uighur minority group, has been plagued by unrest in recent years. Some Uighurs have chafed under Chinese restrictions on their culture and religion.

Rights groups have expressed concern about executions and mass-sentencings carried out regularly since an upswing in violence blamed on Xinjiang militants took place last year.

Police stand near luggage left at the ticket office after a group of armed men attacked people at Kunming railway station, Yunnan Province on 2 March, 2014.
Reuters

Another female attacker, Patigul Tohti, who was pregnant when she was arrested, received a life sentence, *Xinhua* said.

Reuters

Gov't to offer free legal consulting to victims of major disasters

Tokyo, 24 March — The government endorsed a bill Tuesday to enable an official legal service centre to provide free legal consulting to victims of all major disasters irrespective of their income levels.

The government-run Japan Legal Support Centre now offers such free services only to victims of the devastating earthquake-tsunami disaster in northeastern Japan in March 2011 under a special law.

The government hopes to see the bill to revise the legal support law, which was adopted at a meeting of the Cabinet on Tuesday, become law during the current parliamentary session ending in late June.

"Based on experiences with the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake, we should be prepared to meet the diversification of service required for legal solutions to disputes," Justice Minister Yoko Kamikawa said at a Press conference.

Under the bill, the centre would provide free services to those affected by disasters designated by the government as serious within one year after the disasters without checking their income levels.

Usually, the centre screens income levels of citizens and offers free legal consulting only to low-income people. The special services for disaster victims are designed to support reconstruction from serious disasters.

The bill would also allow high-income citizens affected by stalking or domestic violence to receive paid legal consulting from the centre, in response to recent growth in stalking and domestic violence.

The current law limits the centre's services regarding stalking or domestic violence to free legal consulting for low-income citizens.—*Kyodo News*

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NOSTALGIA

(for the spearheaded Teacher of Garden City) (1923-2015)

With deepest heart and soul condolences of the international and me for the most admired leader in the world: His Excellency MR. LEE KWAN YEW: whom had paved me towards Pioneer of Tat-ma-daw – khan-ma exhibition hall; I.B.C; International wise Exhibitions .....etc .....etcs.

"Life is short, art is long"

" Cowards die a thousand times before their death, but LEE the brave once."

" The forest is lovely and deep,

But LEE had struggled before he goes to sleep"

Now that he had rested in Peace,

Heaven is the place for him to keep.

Together with the heavy rain fall of tears with Singaporeans.

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MV MOROTAI VOY NO (YF259R)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV MOROTAI VOY NO (YF259R) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 25.3.2015 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S CMA CGM LINE
Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
MV PANJA BHUM VOY NO (046N)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV PANJA BHUM VOY NO (046N) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 25.3.2015 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.W.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S WAN HAI LINES PTE LTD
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Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claims Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S KULNATEE CO
Phone No: 2301186

NOTIFICATION TO APPLY BUILDING CONSTRUCTION PERMIT

Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC) is hereby scrutinizing and accepting relevant applications and files for construction of buildings and has opened a "One Stop Service" office at the City Hall to carry out matters accordingly on Monday, Wednesday and Friday of every week between 10:00 am in the morning to 2:00 pm in the afternoon.

Similary, for some of the citizens who are coming from far and distant townships, measures are being taken so that applications will be scrutinized and accepted starting from 2.4.2015, on Tuesday and Thursday of everyweek between 10:00 am in the morning to 2:00 pm in the afternoon at the respective Township Engineering (Building) office which is jointly opened at the relevant YCDC Township Executive Office, to provide smooth and quick services to all the citizens of Yangon City.

Head of Department
Engineering Department (Building)
Yangon City Development Committee

THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR
MINISTRY OF ENERGY
MYANMA OIL AND GAS ENTERPRISE
(INVITATION FOR OPEN TENDER)
(5/2015)

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

Sr.No	Tender No	Description	Remark
(I)	IFB-171(l4-15)	Spares for Doosan Natural Gas Engine Ex Daewoo Gen ; Set (53) Items	US$
(2)	IFB-172(14-15)	Metering System Up Grade at Kanbauk (GRS)	US$
(3)	IFB-173(14-15)	24" Pipe Line System Up Grade at PLC (Daw Nyein)	US$
(4)	IFB-174(14-15)	4" Dia Steel Line Pipe (5000)M	US$
(5)	IFB-175(14-15)	4" Dia Steel Line Pipe (9000) M (3 LPE Coated)	US$

Tender Closing Date & Time - 27-4-2015, 16:30 Hr

Tender Document shall be available during office hours commencing from 24th March, 2015 at the Finance Department, Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise, No(44) Complex, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar.

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Gunmen kill 13 in eastern Afghanistan

MAIDAN SHAR, (Afghanistan), 24 March — Some 13 passengers were killed and two others wounded after gunmen shot at three vehicles in the eastern Afghan province of Wardak early on Tuesday morning, an official source said.

"Gunmen shot at three vehicles, including a bus, killing 13 passengers and injuring two others," the provincial government said in a statement. One woman was among the killed and his nine-year-old son aboard the bus was wounded, the statement added.

The firing took place in Haft Hasyab locality, Sayyed Abad district along the main road connecting national capital of Kabul to southern Kandahar Province. The injured were shifted to hospitals, the statement said. No group has claimed responsibility for the attack yet. About 10,000 civilians were killed and injured in Taleban-led insurgency and conflicts in the central Asian country in 2014, according to UN mission officials.—*Xinhua*

Rock legend David Crosby hits California jogger with car

Musician David Crosby performs during a benefit concert to help defeat Proposition 32 on the State of California's November election ballot at Nokia theatre in Los Angeles, California on 3 Oct, 2012.—REUTERS

LOS ANGELES, 24 March — Legendary rock musician David Crosby struck and injured a jogger while driving his car in southern California at the weekend, police said on Monday.

Crosby hit 46-year-old Jose Jimenez while driving his Tesla sedan in Santa Ynez, some 30 miles (50 km) northwest of the coastal city of Santa Barbara, on Sunday evening, California Highway Patrol Sergeant Don Clotworthy said in a statement.

Crosby, 73, was cruising at the posted speed limit of 55 mph (90 kph) into the direction of the sun when he struck Jimenez, who was then airlifted to a local hospital with multiple fractures and cuts, Clotworthy said. Jimenez's injuries were not considered life-threatening.

Authorities did not believe alcohol or drugs were factors in the crash, which is still under investigation, Clotworthy said. Crosby stopped after the collision and cooperated with authorities. Crosby was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame for his work as part of the folk rock trio Crosby, Stills and Nash and rock group the Byrds, according to its website.

Reuters

Lily James opens up about late father

LOS ANGELES, 24 March — "Cinderella" actress Lily James has revealed the heartbreaking memory of losing her father aged 19 helped her relate to her latest film role.

Revealing the personal tragedy recently, Lily, 25, who also stars as Lady Rose in "Downton Abbey", said she identified well with Cinderella because her own father died while she was young, after battling cancer, reported Daily Mirror.

"I had a scene where I was told my dad had died, so it was really hard, but I feel what's important in the film is that Cinderella gains strength from her loss and that was something I could … That was in me," James said.

Speaking to the *Sunday Times* Style magazine, James, who stars alongside Cate Blanchett and Helena Bonham Carter in Kenneth Branagh's re-imagining of the classic fairytale, said processing her father's death would take "the whole of my life". "That's sort of why my experience of drama school is pretty unique – it happened while I was there."

The actress, whose father was also an actor, added she was sad that he had not lived to see her success.—*PTI*

Lily James said she identified well with Cinderella.—PTI

Tom Hanks, Mila Kunis help James Corden take over 'Late Late Show'

Actor James Corden, from the film "Into the Woods,'' arrives at the 20th Annual Critics' Choice Movie Awards in Los Angeles, California on 15 Jan, 2015.
REUTERS

NEW YORK, 24 March — Award-winning British actor James Corden settled in to his new late-night gig on US television on Monday, welcoming stars Tom Hanks and Mila Kunis to his first show as host of CBS' "The Late Late Show."

Corden, not widely known in the United States before he landed the high-profile job, also got a boost from a host of household names in a taped sketch that showed him preparing to become the face of a popular talk show.

Meryl Streep, Arnold Schwarzenegger and former "Tonight Show" host Jay Leno alternately trained, inspired and worked the new guy over, with Leno slapping him repeatedly before saying: "In three months, this job will be mine."

Earlier the neophyte host, in a nod to his relative anonymity, joked: "However shocked you are that I am doing this job, you will never be as shocked as I am."

Corden brought out Kunis and Hanks together, in a break from late night talk show tradition, and both stars remained on set for the programme's duration. He also conducted his interviews seated alongside them, instead of behind a desk. After congratulating Kunis on her new baby, who she had with Ashton Kutcher, Corden asked if they had gotten married. Kunis replied: "I don't know, maybe."

Hanks pointed to a ring on her finger and Corden exclaimed: "They got married!" and congratulated her. Kunis didn't confirm it but appeared to thank him before the show cut to a commercial.

Other sketches included Corden and Hanks paying rapid-fire tribute to Hanks' hit films, including "Forrest Gump," "Big" and "Sleepless in Seattle," for which Corden wore a blonde wig to stand in for co-star Meg Ryan.

The show ended with Corden crooning about his new gig and thanking his first-night guests.

Corden, a Tony award-winning actor who recently starred in the hit movie musical "Into the Woods," replaced Scottish comedian Craig Ferguson, who left the late-night show that airs nightly after veteran David Letterman's "Late Show."

Letterman will step down soon, with Stephen Colbert taking the reins.

Guests scheduled later this week include Will Ferrell, Kevin Hart and Chris Pine. Michael Douglas, David Beckham and Simon Cowell are all slated to appear in coming weeks.

"The Late Late Show" will continue taping in California, unlike NBC's "Tonight Show" which moved to New York from its longtime home in Burbank last year when new host Jimmy Fallon took over from Leno.—*Reuters*

Victoria Beckham bans David's snacking habbit?

Victoria Beckham

LOS ANGELES, 24 March — Victoria Beckham has reportedly banned her husband from eating snacks.

The 40-year-old fashion designer allegedly cleared out the treats she keeps for kids Brooklyn, 16, Romeo, 12, Cruz, 10, and three year-old Harper, because retired soccer star David kept tucking in to them, reported Femalefirst.

"He says he would rather just eat what he wants and not be bothered, that's why he sneaks food when Victoria isn't looking.

"It's got to the point where she's stopped buying so many carb-loaded goods. She used to keep granola bars and treats for the kids, but she's chucked it all out because David was binging on them," a source said.

PTI

Kerry Washington honoured at GLAAD Awards

LOS ANGELES, 24 March — Actress Kerry Washington has received the Vanguard Award for supporting the LGBT community at the 26th GLAAD Media Awards.

The 38-year-old "Scandal" star was presented the prize by comedienne Ellen DeGeneres at the ceremony held on 21 March at the Beverly Hilton.

Washington said people from LGBT community should be encouraged in Hollywood.

"We need more diverse LGBT representation (in the media). "And this is big — we need more employment of LGBT people, in front of and behind the camera," she said during her acceptance speech.

Washington said she does not understand when black people tell her they do not believe in gay marriage, as she feels that the LGBT community's current struggles mirror the battle faced by interracial couples 30 years ago.

"We can't say that we believe in each other's fundamental humanity and then turn a blind eye to the reality of each other's existence and the truth of each other's hearts," she said.

"Independence Day" director Roland Emmerich, whose forthcoming drama Stonewall centers on the Stonewall riots staged by New York's gay community in 1969, picked up the Stephen F Kolzak Award from presenter Channing Tatum.

Actress Kerry Washington has received the Vanguard Award for supporting the LGBT community at the 26th GLAAD Media Awards.
PTI

The award honours those, who strive to get rid of homophobia in Hollywood.

ABC's "How to Get Away With Murder" was named outstanding drama series, Amazon's "Transparent" picked up the prize for outstanding comedy series and "The Imitation Game" was selected in the outstanding film category.

In other categories, HBO's "The Normal Heart" was honoured for outstanding TV series or miniseries, "Days of Our Lives" picked up the award for outstanding daily drama, rock band Against Me! was named outstanding music artist.

The New York leg of the awards ceremony takes place on 9 May at the Waldorf Astoria New York.

PTI

Young Thais practicing skiing in Hokkaido town for Olympics

SAPPORO, 24 March — Three young athletes from Thailand are practicing cross-country skiing in the town of Higashikawa in Japan's northernmost main island of Hokkaido, hoping to compete in the 2018 Winter Olympic Games in South Korea. The Thais, all in their 20s, arrived in Higashikawa in October last year under the town government's programme to train competitive cross-country skiers from snow-free countries. The training will last until March 2016. The town government has allocated a budget of 7 million yen for the programme to offer skis and other gear as well as lodging in a town-owned dormitory.

In the town, located at the foot of Daisetsuzan National Park, skiing is possible from late October through May the following year. While cross-country skiers of Japan's national team engage in intensive training in the town, a large number of residents enjoy the sport.

The town, which has accepted many foreign students wishing to learn the Japanese language, launched the cross-country skiing programme to promote the sport in snow-free nations, hoping that it can increase its name recognition if skiers from such countries compete in Olympics.

The three Thais had never skied before coming to the town. They were chosen for the programme by the Thai government because of their athletic ability and willingness to learn cross-country skiing. The town office has set up a team of five coaches including Yoshiyuki Yanbe, a 66-year-old former national coach, for them. For now, the three Thais wish to participate in international competitions authorized by the International Ski Federation. They dream of competing at the 2018 Pyeongchang Winter Olympics. Chehleh Arisaman, 24, the oldest of the three, said, "As lots of people support us, we will practice hard to participate in Olympics."—*Kyodo News*

Three young Thais pose during cross-country skiing practice in Higashikawa on Japan's northernmost main island of Hokkaido on 5 March, 2015. The town office has launched a training programme for cross-country skiers from snowless countries to enhance its name recognition overseas.—KYODO NEWS

Big box gyms may be fitter, when it comes to muscling out competition

NEW YORK, 24 March — Cut-rate clubs and small studios catering to niche tastes from barre classes to yoga have crowded the US fitness landscape, but big box gyms that can keep up with rapidly changing trends may be in a better position to flex their muscles in the future.

A brightening economy, public health initiatives and fitness-conscious consumers boosted US gym memberships from an estimated 40.3 million in 2009 to 54.1 million in 2014, according to the market research company IBIS World.

The report predicts the industry, which generated $26.5 billion in sales in the United States last year, revenue is projected to grow 2.8 percent annually over the next five years.

"The industry has certainly grown," said Jeff Bodnar, vice president of operations at New York Health and Racquet Club (NYHRC). "We have more members now and there's certainly more competition than ever before,"

Fitness boutiques, small studios that specialize in one or two activities such as spinning or yoga, capture 21 percent of the US market, the industry trade association IHRSA (International Health, Racquet & Sportsclub Association) reported in 2014.

Bodnar said all-purpose gyms are always adapting to members' changing tastes and needs by introducing boutique-like group fitness classes, such as barre and indoor cycling, and adding trendy "functional" fitness tools like monkey bars, TRX resistance bands and medicine balls.

"We're replacing selectorized equipment — weight machines where the placement of a pin determines resistance — with loaded movement that simulates what you do in everyday life," he said.

Shawn Perine, editor in chief of *Muscle & Fitness* magazine, said Gold's Gym, a 50-year-old chain with 700 locations in 38 states and 23 countries, is reconfiguring many of its gyms to incorporate the bands, cables and ropes of the breakout trend CrossFit, an ever-changing, demanding, back-to-basics regimen.

"Training styles have become more sophisticated," Perine explained. "In 60s, 70s it was all just theory. Now we do studies in labs."

The bigger gyms, he added, are in a position to deal with the changing trends.

IBIS said the market share of smaller-budget, low-amenity gyms like Planet Fitness, with membership fees as low as $10-$19 dollars a month, are also expanding.

Reuters

Jessica Desmond, an instructor at the Mile High Run Club (MHRC), leads a class in a Manhattan borough of New York on 14 Nov, 2014.—REUTERS

Austrian meteorology institute opens new weather knowledge park in Vienna

VIENNA, 24 March — The Central Institute for Meteorology and Geodynamics (ZAMG) in Austria has presented its newly-designed weather knowledge park to the media to coincide with World Meteorological Day on Monday.

The park is stationed on the Hohe Warte hill in Vienna, and is designed to provide visitors with knowledge on weather, climate, and the environment, with a focus on interactivity, the ZAMG stated in a Press release. "We have many school classes visit, but also a number of companies and private groups of adults," said ZAMG Director Michael Staudinger, emphasising the focus of the various stations of the park is not just on children. Visitors can learn about various things such as climate change and glacier formation, and explore the properties of various climate zones, as well as try out a variety of measuring equipment.

Guided tours centred on themes such as earthquakes and weather forecasts are also planned in future. The ZAMG said these belong to its "Citizen Science" programme, that the central weather institute hopes to use to open dialogue with the public and an information exchange with the sciences.—*Xinhua*

mitv Myanmar International

(25-3-2015 07:00 am~ 26-3-2015 07:00 am) MST

* News
* Continuation In Rural Tradition
* News
* Kayah Style
* News Extra (Ride for Climate Change)
* News
* Jeyyanandi (A Day in the Life of a Nun)
* Products of Myanmar — Shin Ma Taung Thanakhar
* News
* Those Who Never Give Up
* Atuladhipati Mahamunisacca Koe Htat Kyee Pagoda
* News
* A Visit To Kayah State
* Lucrative Businesses of Tanintharyi Region
* Today Myanmar "ASEAN Traditional Food"
* News
* Myanmar Delicate Artistic Handy Creations- Lacquer Ware Making
* Kyaikhteeyoe: Mountain Drivers
* News
* Insight Myanmar "Migrant Resource Centres"
* Tea
* News
* Trend of Kachin Dress
* Kyaikhteeyoe: Bamboo Guns
* News
* A Night of Dancing With Phoe Chit
* The Storytellers
* News
* A Novitiation Ceremony in a Rural Township
* Sweet Delicacy of Pathein

MRTV News Channel in Brief

(25-3-2015, Wednesday)

6:00 am
- Paritta by Hilly Region Missionary Sayadaw

6:30 am
- Physical Exercies

7:00 am
- News / Weather Report

8:00 am
- News / International News

8:35 am
- People's Talks

9:35 am
- Science and Technology Programme

10:00 am
- News / International News

11:35 am
- MRTV's Yoth Programme

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

12:35 pm
- Hluttaw Image

2:20 pm
- Songs In honour of 70th Annversity Armed Forces Day

2:35 pm
- Traditional Boxing

3:30 pm
- Head Line News

4:35 pm
- University of Distance Education (TV Lectures) — First Years (Physics)

5:30 pm
- Head Line News

6:00 pm
- News / Weather Report

7:00 pm
- News

7:35 pm
- Documentary

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

9:00 pm
- News / International News / Weather Report
- Hluttaw Image
- Fine Arts-Boson of Dramatic Performance

MRTV Entertainment Channel

(25-3-2015, Wednesday)

6:00 am
- Mono Classical Songs

6:25 am
- Myanmar Series

6:55 am
- Cultural Show For Soldiers

7:20 am
- TV Drama Series

8:00 am
- TV Drama Series

8:40 am
- Pyi Thu Ni Ti

9:20 am
- Orchestra Concert Myanmar

9:45 am
- Musical Programme

10:00 am
- Myanmar Movie

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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Wednesday, 25 March, 2015

Liverpool defender Skrtel charged with violent conduct

London, 24 March — Liverpool defender Martin Skrtel was charged with violent conduct for appearing to stamp on Manchester United goalkeeper David De Gea during Sunday's Premier League clash, the FA said.

The incident, in stoppage-time of United's 2-1 victory at Anfield, was missed by match officials.

Slovakia international Skrtel appeared to tread on De Gea's calf in the final seconds as Liverpool chased an equalizer.—*Reuters*

Liverpool's Martin Skrtel challenges Manchester United's David De Gea during Barclays Premier League at Anfield on 22 March, 2015.—Reuters

McAuley red card transferred after referee error

London, 24 March — The red card shown in error to West Bromwich Albion defender Gareth McAuley in the Premier League match against Manchester City on Saturday has been transferred to Craig Dawson, the FA said on Monday.

McAuley was sent off after 90 seconds when referee Neil Swarbrick failed to identify Dawson as the culprit in bringing down Wilfried Bony when he was through on goal.

Dawson will serve a one-match ban.

Reuters

Nadal returning to Queen's for Wimbledon warmup

Rafael Nadal (ESP) during his quarter final match against Milos Raonic (CAN) in the BNP Paribas Open at the Indian Wells Tennis Garden in India Wells, CA, on 20 March, 2015. Raonic won 4-6, 7-6, 7-5. —Reuters

London, 24 March — Rafa Nadal will return to his old routine in a bid to recapture the Wimbledon crown later this year, confirming he has entered the traditional warm-up event at Queen's Club.

The Spaniard has played at Queen's five times and on each occasion went on to reach the Wimbledon final a few weeks later, winning the grasscourt major in 2008 and 2010.

Since his last visit to the Queen's Club lawns in 2011, however, Nadal's luck at Wimbledon has run out, losing in the second, first and fourth rounds.

The world number three adds to an already strong cast at Aegon Championships at the select west London club where former home favourite Andy Murray, defending champion Grigor Dmitrov and US Open holder Marin Cilic are already committed to play.

"I'm very happy to be back. Queen's is a great event, I always enjoyed it, I had some great feelings there, the atmosphere of the club — a real tennis club — is very special, the courts are unbelievable and I'm very happy to be back," Nadal said in a statement on Monday.

"I enjoyed Halle but the results have not been perfect for me in Halle, so I want to try Queen's again where the grass courts are a little bit more similar to Wimbledon."

Britain's tax laws were cited as one reason nine-times French Open champion Nadal decided to stop playing at Queen's.

Tournament director Stephen Farrow said it was great to have the 28-year-old back. "Rafa is one of the greatest tennis players of all time and he is universally popular, so this is fantastic news for the Aegon Championships and our spectators," he said.

"We have stayed in contact with Rafa and his team over the years and we always hoped he would return one day." This year's Queen's tournament has been upgraded to an ATP 500 and will begin on June 15, a week later than usual to allow players more of a grasscourt swing.

Reuters

My Russian heritage is non-negotiable, says Sharapova

Maria Sharapova of Russia celebrates a point against Agnieszka Radwanska of Poland during their Fed Cup World Group quarterfinal tennis match between Poland and Russia at Tauron arena in Krakow on 8 Feb, 2015. —Reuters

London, 24 March — Maria Sharapova's life-changing move from Siberia to Florida as a seven-year-old propelled her on a path to fame and fortune but she says she would never turn her back on her mother country. It is sometimes easy to forget that five-times grand slam champion Sharapova, the world's highest-paid female athlete, is actually Russian until you witness her conduct a post-match Press conference in her native tongue.

With $32 million in prize money alone, a string of lucrative endorsements, her own candy business and even a famous boyfriend she is the living embodiment of the American dream.

Yet, Sharapova baulks at the idea that she would want to trade her Russian passport for an American one, as former Czech Martina Navratilova did early in her glittering career.

"I would have if I wanted to (change citizenships) but it's never been actually a question in my family or in my team whether I wanted to change citizenships," the Russian told CNBC in an interview to be screened on Wednesday. Sharapova, who won the Wimbledon title aged 17, still gives her all for Russia in the Fed Cup and was a torch bearer at the Sochi Winter Olympics a year ago.—*Reuters*

Sturridge and Lallana out of England games

London, 24 March — Liverpool pair Daniel Sturridge and Adam Lallana have withdrawn from the England squad for the Euro 2016 qualifier against Lithuania and a friendly against Italy because of injury.

Striker Sturridge sustained a hip injury and midfielder Lallana a groin problem in Liverpool's 2-1 defeat by Manchester United at Anfield on Sunday.

Tottenham Hotspur's Ryan Mason, who has represented England at under-19 and under-20 level, has been drafted in by manager Roy Hodgson as replacement for Lallana, the FA said on Monday. Sturridge's absence could mean a first cap for Spurs striker Harry Kane, the Premier League's joint top scorer this season.

Goalkeeper Fraser Forster and left back Luke Shaw have also withdrawn from Hodgson's squad because of injury. Goalkeepers Rob Green and Jack Butland and Tottenham Hotspur defender Danny Rose have been called up as replacements.

England, who top Group E with four wins from four matches, host Lithuania at Wembley on Friday before a friendly against Italy in Turin four days later.—*Reuters*

File photo of England's Daniel Sturridge (R) challenged by Norway's Stefan Johansen during their international friendly soccer match at Wembley Stadium in London on 3 Sept, 2014. Reuters

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www.facebook.com/globalnewlightofmyanmar

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

"R/489 Printed and published at the Global New Light of Myanmar Printing Factory at No. 150, Nga Htat Kyee Pagoda Road, Bahan Township, Yangon, by the Global New Light of Myanmar Daily."