

President U Thein Sein meets with Queen of Netherlands, US House Minority Leader

NAY PYI TAW, 1 April—President U Thein Sein received Queen Máxima of the Netherlands at the Credentials Hall of the Presidential Palace here Wednesday morning for talks on cooperation in small and medium-scale enterprises between the two countries.

They also discussed supply of electricity and potable water, environmental conservation, alleviation of poverty, improvement of micro-finance, investment from the international community and the peace-making process crucial to the stability of the state.

Also present at the call were union ministers U Soe Thane, U Tin Naing Thein, U Win Shein and U Ye Htut, Governor of the Central Bank of Myanmar U Kyaw Kyaw Maung, deputy minister U Tin Oo Lwin and officials. The queen was accompanied by the Netherlands Ambassador to Myanmar.



President U Thein Sein (R) meets Queen Máxima of the Netherlands at Credentials Hall of Presidential Palace.—MNA

The president also held a meeting at the same venue in the afternoon with Ms Nancy Pelosi, Minority Leader of the US House of Representatives during her five-nation Asian trip.

The president explained the reform process of political and economic sectors in Myanmar as well as the peace-making process. They exchanged views on security measures, human rights and the

holding of a free and fair election.

It was also attended by union ministers Lt-Gen Ko Ko and U Ye Htut, deputy minister U Tin Oo Lwin and officials. The US delegation was accompa-

nied by US Ambassador to Myanmar Mr. Derek Mitchell.

MNA

Myanmar's trade deficit hits nearly \$5 billion in 2014-15 FY

By Aye Min Soe

YANGON, 1 April — Myanmar's trade deficit in fiscal 2014-2015 reached more than \$4.9 billion on a trade volume of more than \$27.77 billion, according to Ministry of Commerce figures.

Myanmar imported goods worth more than \$16 billion and exported goods worth more than \$11 billion in the 2014-2015 fiscal year, beginning 1 April and ending 31 March.

Of total exports, normal trade accounted for \$7,224.121 million, de-

creasing \$896.667 million compared with normal trade for the same period of the 2013-2014 fiscal year, while border trade comprised \$4,221.176 million, increasing \$1,517.770 million. Of total imports, normal trade accounted for \$13,998.579 million, while border trade

stood at \$2,336.771 million.

Myanmar mostly exports agricultural produce, animal by-products and fishery products, as well as mine and forest products, while it imports consumer products, raw materials and investment goods.

To tackle the trade deficit, the government is planning to implement the National Export Strategy, which focuses on seven sectors — rice, peas and pulses, fisheries products, textiles, timber and forest products, rubber, and tourism.

Implementing the NES is expected to cost \$900 million over five years, said an official who participated in the workshop for its implementation in Yangon on 30 March.

The Ministry of Commerce will give priority to export sectors in an attempt to boost the country's economy, said U Win Myint, Union Minister for Commerce, at parliament recently.

GNLM



Imports of capital goods into Myanmar constitute 40-45 percent of the country's trade deficit in the 2014-2015 FY while the imports of oil stand at 30 percent and consumer goods 20 per cent), according to data of Ministry of Commerce.—PHOTO AYE MIN SOE

President U Thein Sein's radio message on air

NAY PYI TAW, 1 April—A radio message to be delivered by U Thein Sein, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, will be broadcast through radio programmes on 3 and 4 April 2015.

Myanmar Radio, Mandalay FM, Pyinsawady FM, Shwe FM, Cherry FM, Pad- amya FM, FM Bagan and Thazin Radio will broadcast the message at 7 am, 11 am, 6 pm and 8 pm respectively.

The full text of the message will be published in dailies to be issued on 3 April.

MNA

EU stands ready to continue supporting all parties towards reaching common goal of ending armed conflict

Local statement of the European Union and European Union member state embassies accredited to Myanmar

YANGON, 31 March—The Heads of Mission of the European Union accredited to Myanmar welcome the successful conclusion of the 7th round of negotiations between the Myanmar Government and the ethnic armed groups at the Myanmar Peace Centre. Preliminary agreement appears to have been reached among the negotiating teams of all parties on the text for a Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement. We hope that this will prove to be a milestone for the Myanmar peace process, all the more as the EU has been financing and politically supporting the peace process since its early beginnings in 2011. The EU has endeavoured to provide assistance in a balanced way to parties, including the ethnic stakeholders. Although we realize that challenges and concerns remain, having reached this far bears testimony to the political courage and commitment of all sides to resolve grievances through dialogue rather than armed conflict. We hope to welcome the signing of the National Ceasefire Accord in the coming weeks, and to see the start of inclusive work on a Joint Framework for Political Dialogue. The EU stands ready to continue supporting all parties towards reaching their common goal of ending decades of armed conflict and provide the foundation for a better future for all people in Myanmar.

Proper spending of government funds explained at Pyidaungsu Hluttaw

NAY PYI TAW, 1 April — Roads and bridges are built through the tender system in a transparent manner by forming various committees to invite tender, to estimate costs and to inspect quality, Deputy Minister for Construction U Soe Tint told the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw session on Wednesday.

The deputy minister

was responding to a motion urging the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and the union government to supervise the spending of public funds and quality of finished projects in accordance with rules and regulations.

Government funds are spent in accordance with the instructions of the government and guidance for

works to be carried out through contract system, the deputy minister added.

Deputy Minister for Finance Dr Lin Aung said that his ministry has been carrying out the reform for financial management system since 2012 and will complete the new rules and regulations for financial management in 2015-16 fis-

cal year. Currently, a supervisory committee for proper spending of public funds formed by the President Office is supervising the spending of public funds, according to the deputy minister. Deputy Auditor-General U Myo Myint said that Union Auditor-General Office will also supervise the spending of public funds. —MNA

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw



Deputy Minister for Finance Dr Lin Aung.—MNA



Deputy Minister for Construction U Soe Tint.—MNA

Pyithu Hluttaw

Term of legal affairs commission extended to 2016



Deputy Minister for Health Dr Daw Thein Htay.—MNA

NAY PYI TAW, 1 April — Pyithu Hluttaw approved on Wednesday extension of the term for the Legal Affairs and Special Issues Assessment Commission till January 31, 2016 after suggestion of Thura U Shwe Mann, Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw (Lower House).

The speaker said parliament has approved 149 laws with the help of the commission in which the members are well-experienced and qualified.

Regarding repairing

works of roads and bridges in Laikha Township in Shan State, Deputy Minister for Construction U Soe Tint said the road section of highway that passes in Laikha Township was being repaired with the budget of Shan State and it will be upgraded to 18-ft wide road.

To fill vacancies at the people hospitals of Panglong Township and Mongpaw Township, Deputy Minister for Health Dr Daw Thein Htay said the ministry has assigned a medical superintendent for Panglong hospital, while Shan State government will hire new doctors for Mongpaw hospital by this month. —MNA

Amyotha Hluttaw

Private mining company to release residential areas



Deputy Minister for Communications and Information Technology U Win Than.—MNA



Deputy Minister for Mines U Than Tun Aung.—MNA

NAY PYI TAW, 1 April — A private-owned mining company is making plans to hand over some residential areas included in its project to local authorities in Sagaing region, said Deputy Minister for Mines U Than Tun Aung to Amyotha Hluttaw on Wednesday.

The deputy minister said Htoo International Industry Group Co., Ltd., which is operating two coal mines in Kalewa Township

and Thitchauk region of upper Myanmar, has transferred a hospital, a 1.28 acre land plot and some buildings to regional department of health, added

that the company will also release a residential ward and a village to the local authorities.

On query about future plan on CDMA (450 MHz) mobile network, Deputy Minister U Win Than for Communications and Information Technology said the ministry will not develop this mobile network and its call-charges as GSM/UMTS system is more popular in the country.

He also answered the advanced money is being given out for the phones leased for public call offices in Thanetpin Township, Bago region. Representatives of Amyotha Hluttaw also approved each paragraph of Myanmar Nursing and Midwifery Council Bill presented by Pyithu Hluttaw. —MNA

178 service personnel sent abroad for scholarship courses in March 2015

YANGON, 1 April — According to the Scholarship Scrutiny Committee of the Union Civil Services Board, scholarship awards were shared to ministries and service organizations for capacity enhancement of service personnel and

raising their international experiences.

Ministries and service organizations sent 30 service personnel to doctorate, MA/MSc, degrees and diploma courses and 148 to training courses, totalling 178 to 19 countries, espe-

cially to Thailand, China and India in March 2015.

The committee has scrutinized sending of 369 personnel to doctorate, MA/MSc, degrees and diploma courses and 2,645 to training courses, totalling 3,014 to 44 countries in 2014-15 fiscal year. —GNLM

Statement by Myanmar National Human Rights Commission relating to agreement by the two sides on the draft text on nationwide ceasefire

Statement No (4/2015)

1. The Myanmar National Human Rights Commission would like to laud and honour the historic achievement that was accomplished by the signing of the agreed text on a Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement between the Union Peace-making Working Committee (UPWC) and the Nationwide Ceasefire Coordination Team (NCCT) on 31 March 2015 in Yangon.
2. As the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) will be signed after approval by the leaders of the Ethnic Armed Groups to the agreed text, the Commission hopes for the smooth and speedy implementation of the process.
3. The Commission is confident that the smooth and speedy signing of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) will pave the way for the political dialogue that will reflect the desire of the people for a long and lasting peace.

Myanmar National Human Rights Commission

Public information for remonstrations

The Mon National Party headquartered at No. 181 on Razadariz Road in Myaingthaya Ward, Mawlamyine Township, Mon State, registered by the Union Election Commission as a political party under the Article 9 of the Political Parties Registration Law, submitted an application to change its logo as below.

It is hereby announced that those who want to remonstrate with the UEC about the party's logo may submit a complaint along with the strong evidences within seven days starting from issuance of this announcement in line with Section 14 (d) of the Political Parties Registration Rules.

Union Election Commission

Logo of Mon National Party



Public information for remonstrations

The WA Democratic Party headquartered at No. Za-4/7 on Theinni Road, Ward 8, Lashio Township, Shan State, registered by the Union Election Commission as a political party under the Article 9 of the Political Parties Registration Law, submitted an application to change its flag and logo as below.

It is hereby announced that those who want to remonstrate with the UEC about the party's flag and logo may submit a complaint along with the strong evidences within seven days starting from issuance of this announcement in line with Section 14 (d) of the Political Parties Registration Rules.

Union Election Commission

Flag of WA Democratic Party



Logo of WA Democratic Party



President

**U Thein Sein poses
for documentary
photo with
Ms Nancy Pelosi,
Minority Leader of
the US House of
Representatives.
(News on page 1)**

MNA



Vice President U Nyan Tun visits Laos, national museums in Cambodia



NAY PYI TAW, 1 April— Vice President U Nyan Tun visited That Luang stupa and Wat Sisaket temple in Vientiane, Laos, on Wednesday.

The visiting Myanmar delegation then left Wataytay International Airport in

the capital for Cambodia.

U Nyan Tun and party landed Phnom Penh International Airport, Cambodia, in the afternoon and they were welcomed by the Cambodia's deputy minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Myanmar ambassador to Cambodia U Cho Tun Aung and Myanmar military attaché Col Aung Kyaw Oo.

In meeting with Cambodia's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Hor Namhong, Myanmar del-

egation discussed promotion of cultural ties, tourism sector, conservation of cultural heritages and energy sectors. Both sides also talk about the issues of CLMV and IE Mack, Medong River and the meeting of joint-meetings of commission.

Later, the vice president and delegation visited national museum of Cambodia.

U Nyan Tun and Myanmar visiting officials enjoyed state dinner hosted by the foreign ministry of Cambodia in the evening.

MNA

**Vice President
U Nyan Tun holds
talks with Deputy
Prime Minister and
Minister for Foreign
Affairs and Interna-
tional Cooperation
Hor Namhong of
Cambodia.—MNA**

Eni signs exploration deal for two offshore blocks in Myanmar's waters

By Kyaw The-ein (MNA)

NAY PYI TAW, 1 April—Italian oil and gas multinational Eni will conduct offshore exploration in the Bay of Bengal and the Andaman Basin after signing contracts Wednesday in the presence of Myanmar's Energy Minister in Nay Pyi Taw.

Following its participation in the competitive international bid round, Eni signed production sharing contracts for two offshore blocks. The exploration will be undertaken through a joint venture between Eni, which holds an 80 per cent stake through its local unit, and Petro Vietnam.

The first block, covering 10,330 square kilometres, is in the southern

part of the Bay of Bengal in the Rakhine Basin. Located some 135 km from the coast, it lies to the west of the Yadana field, the major offshore discovery in Myanmar, at depths ranging from 500 to 2400 metres.

The second block is in the Moattama-South Andaman Basin, west of the Yetagun gas field, roughly 230 km from the coast. It covers a 5,900 square km area in waters ranging from 1,500 to 2,200 m deep.

"With the contracts signed today, we have further expanded our exploration portfolio through new and important opportunities, which allow Eni to strengthen its presence in a Country with a significant potential and a rapid-

ly developing economy," Eni CEO Claudio Descalzi said.

"Today we become one of the largest operators in the exploration activities in Myanmar, taking a further step in our organic growth strategy in South-east Asia, where we are already present in China, Vietnam and Indonesia."

The contracts for the two blocks foresee a study period of two years, followed by an exploration period of six years, subdivided in 3 phases.

Eni entered Myanmar in July 2014, signing production sharing contracts for the two onshore blocks in the prolific Salin Basin and the unexplored Pegu Yoma-Sittoung Basin, respectively.

(AGI)

Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker meets Minority Leader of the US House of Representatives



Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw Thura U Shwe Mann receives Ms Nancy Pelosi, Minority Leader of the US House of Representatives.—MNA

NAY PYI TAW, 1 April—Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw Thura U Shwe Mann held talks with Ms Nancy Pelosi, Minority Leader of the US House of

Representatives and party at Zabuthiri Hall of the Hluttaw Complex, here, on Wednesday.

They discussed further strengthening of bilateral

relations and mutual cooperation between the two countries.

After the meeting, they exchanged gifts.

MNA

Immigration officials issue citizenship scrutiny cards to eligible residents



MYAWADY, 1 April — Chief Minister of Kayin State U Zaw Min presented citizenship scrutiny cards to local residents as a ceremony at Tawakyaung Monastery in Ward 4, Myawady, Kayin State, in the last week of March.

The chief minister told residents that citizenship entailed responsibilities as well as rights.

Director of Kayin State Immigration and National Registration Department U Win Zaw Aung clarified issuance of the cards and requirements for card holders.

The chief minister and officials delivered cards to 142 eligible citizens.

Htein Lin Aung
(IPRD)

Arrangements of fire prevention discussed in Myanaung Tsp

MYANAUNG, 1 April — The township fire prevention work committee held a meeting at the Dhammayon of Shwemyintin Pagoda in Ward 4, Myanaung, Ayeyawady Region, on 31 March.

Chairman of the work committee U Aye Thaung discussed an annual report of the committee and said water resources needed to be secured for fire-fighting purposes during the hot season. The treasurer submitted the financial report of the committee in 2014. Members of the subcommittee explained pumping of water from Ayeyawady River to the urban area.

An official of the local fire station outlined the



supply of water to local residents by water bows- er, as most wells and lakes season.—Nay Win Zaw (Myanaung)

Mandalay Mayor's pandal to draw crowds in Maha Thingyan festival



MANDALAY, 1 April — A total of 3,000 students from 49 basic education schools will enjoy the entertainment at the Mandalay Mayor's pandal during the Maha Thingyan festival, together with famous vocalists, the Mandalay City Development Committee said.

An official said that basic education students will participate in dancing at the opening ceremony of the Mayor's pandal to the accompaniment of the Mann Sibin band and the Mingala drum troupe of the Fine Arts Department.

Mandalay-based bands will perform in the afternoon while 34 staff of

MCDC will present songs and dances at the pandal, he added.

Famous vocalists Phyo Gyi, Zaw Paing, Graham, Soe Paing, Thar Soe, Wai Hlyan, L Seng Zi, Son Thin Pa, Po Po, Suzi and Khin Su Su Naing will also perform.

This year, water-throwing and entertainment pandals have been allotted in Mandalay city, with 10 pandals on 26th street, 10 on 66th street, three on 80th street, one on 12th street, five at downtown and four at Kandawgyi Lake.

Min Htet Aung
(Mandalay Sub-printing House)



Locals say Mandalay-Bagan services not to be reduced

NATOGYI, 1 April — Myanmar Railways has exceeded its revenue targets for the Mandalay-Bagan route and will continue running six trains on the section, the railroad operator said.

Myanma Railways

allayed fears about a reduction in services among residents who rely on the Bagan-Mandalay ordinary and express trains, saying services will be maintained at present levels.

Khin Zar Mon Myint
(Law)

LOCAL NEWS

Electricity improves livelihoods of local residents in Twantay Tsp



TWANTAY, 1 April — Supply of electricity on a self-reliant basis was launched in conjunction with the opening of a concrete road in Tamatakaw village, Twantay Township, Yangon Region, on 28 March.

Pyithu Hluttaw MP, Region Hluttaw MPs and local authorities commissioned the supply of electricity and new concrete road. An 11KV power line and a 315KVA transformer were installed at the village as part of efforts to develop the western part of Twantay Canal in the region.

The power supply project, funded with a K31 million contribution from local authorities, benefits more than 1,500 local people of the village.

With the supply of electricity, local residents are able to earn a living making robes for Buddhist monks using motorised sewing machines.

The Department of Rural Development allotted K287 million in the 2014-15 fiscal year for construction of a 2.2-mile-long and 10-foot-wide concrete road in the village.

Myo Hlaing (Twantay)

Villagers learn to make bamboo products

TAUNGTHA, 1 April— As part of efforts to develop small-scale industries in rural areas, the Mandalay Region Trade Promotion Department organized a basic bamboo works course at the Dhammayon in Aungmye Shwebon Mahaoak monastery in Tamaiktha village, Taungtha Township, on 27 March.

Mandalay Region Minister for Planning and Economy U Aung Zan made a speech, after which Director of Mandalay Region Trade Promotion Department U Myo Thu and Township Administrator U Aung Kyaw Nyunt extolled the virtues of the course.

Altogether 30 trainees from the village attended the course. Upon completion, they will have the skills to manufacture products made of bamboo for earning increased income.

Kyaw Myo Naing (Taungtha)

Alumni to pay respects to English faculty of Dagon University on 1 May

YANGON, 1 April— English alumni of Dagon University will organize a ceremony to pay respect to past and present faculty members of the university's English department.

The ceremony will take place at Shwe Shan Kan Restaurant in Inya Street on the bank of Inya Lake from 8 am to 12 noon on 1 May.

All of the English specialization students from all batches of the university are invited to the ceremony. Those who want to contribute cash and kind to the ceremony may contact Maung Maung Oo (1992) on 09-5404756, Myo Than Tun (1993) on 09-5031131, Lei Lei Win Than (1993) on 09-73122647, Soe Thu Ya (2000) on 09-43168468, Sai Min Latt (2005) on 09-420003985 and Htet Arkar Kyaw (2008) on 09-421012261.—GNLM

Cooperative Department sells Korean-made tractors to farmers

NATMAUK, 1 April — Under the guidance of Magway Region Cooperative Department, a demonstration on the use of tractors manufactured by Daedong Company of South Korea was held at Natmauk Township Cooperative Syndicate office on 29 March.

Staff Officer U Htay Lin Aung of Natmauk Township Cooperative Department said the township department will sell 12 tractors to local farmers.

The buyers need to pay 10 percent of the price in cash for a tractor worth more than K20 million, while paying off the remainder through a six-year installment system.—Zin Wai Yan Lin (Natmauk)



Referees, well-wishers donate cash to family of late football referee

MANDALAY, 1 April — A ceremony to provide cash to the family of referee U Maung Maung, who died suddenly during a match at the Taungthaman open football tournament, was held at the hall of Mandalay Region Sports and Physical Education Department on 31 March.

Mandalay Region Minister for Social Affairs Dr Win Hlaing donated

K100,000, President of Myanmar Football Federation U Zaw Zaw, K1 million, owner of Zwegabin FC U Htay Htay K1 million and MFF K1 million to the family. Moreover, the Taungthaman football tournament committee donated K285,000, while Mandalay region football referees presented K90,000 to the family.

Tin Maung (Mandalay)



Personal goods seized from illegal trade auctioned in Tachilek



TACHILEK, 1 April — Mobile teams comprising departmental officials are assigned at Meiyen, Hweye, Waihlelan and Loidawkham checkpoints to control illegal trade in eastern Shan State's Tachilek Township.

These teams have confiscated illegally traded goods 62 times

in 2014.

On 30 March, these confiscated goods were auctioned at the office of Tachilek Township Customs Department.

U Khin Maung Cho, U Aung Soe Tun, U Aung Myo Kyaw, Daw Tin Tin Toe Nwe and Daw Nyein Nyein Ei won the auctions for motor cars, motor-

cycles, electronic parts and textiles worth K92.9 million under supervision of Deputy Director U Kyaw Nyunt of Township Customs Department and Staff Officer U Aung Than Sein of the Commercial and Consumer Affairs Department.

Maw Gyi (Triangle Region)



Cambodian Foreign Minister Hor Namhong (R) shakes hands with his Indonesian counterpart Retno Marsudi in Phnom Penh, Cambodia on 1 April, 2015. Cambodian and Indonesian foreign ministers discussed ways to further enhance ties and cooperation between the two countries on Wednesday.—XINHUA

Typhoon heads towards central Philippines as country breaks for holiday

MANILA, 1 April — The Philippines put troops on alert on Wednesday and prepared food and medical supplies as it warned residents and tourists along its eastern coasts to be ready for a super typhoon expected to land some time in the next 72 hours.

Typhoon Maysak is currently a category five storm — the highest rating — hovering over the Pacific Ocean with winds gusting as high as 250 km per hour (155 mph).

It is expected to weaken once it hits the central or northern parts of the main Philippine island of Luzon on Saturday or Sunday, the weather bureau said, as the Philippines celebrates the Easter long weekend.

“This is very strong and it will maintain its strength as it nears, although we expect that the typhoon will weaken,” Esperanza Cayan, an officer at the weather bureau, said in a televised briefing.

“But this will still be typhoon intensity so it will bring strong winds when it makes landfall on the eastern coast,” Cayan said.

British-based Tropical Storm Risk said Maysak

would likely weaken to a category 2 typhoon, with maximum winds of up to 175 kmh (110 mph), when it hits land.

The typhoon could damage rice and corn crops in central and northern areas of the Philippines, although damage is likely to be minimal because the major harvest of the national staple rice was finished around February.

Alexander Pama, executive director of the national disaster agency, said the biggest challenge for authorities would be keeping foreign and Filipino tourists travelling to northern provinces for the weekend safe when Maysak makes landfall.

Thousands of Filipinos have already begun travelling to the provinces and popular tourist spots before public holidays begin on Thursday. “Because of our holiday mode, some of us may not give proper attention to the warnings,” Pama said. Maysak was moving northwest and was about 1,220 km (760 miles) from the eastern town of Guiuan in the central Philippines early on Wednesday.

Reuters

Malaysia rejects jailed opposition leader’s petition for royal pardon

KUALA LUMPUR, 1 April — Malaysia has rejected a petition seeking a royal pardon for jailed opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim, who is serving a five-year prison term for sodomy, court officials and his lawyers said on Wednesday.

The petition was filed by Anwar’s family in February after his sentence was upheld by Malaysia’s highest court. A pardons board said Anwar’s sentence would be maintained but gave no explanation for the decision.

“We would definitely be appealing on the leave rejection, and we will be asking for further information as to what is going on,” said Latheefa Koya, one of

Anwar’s lawyers.

Anwar, who once posed the greatest threat to Malaysia’s long-ruling coalition, was found guilty of sodomizing a former aide, a charge that he said was a politically motivated attempt to end his career.

He was head of a three-party opposition alliance that made stunning gains in the 2013 election, which for the first time raised the prospect of a genuine challenge to the coalition that has ruled Malaysia since independence in 1957.

Anwar was the ruling party’s rising star in the 1990s until he fell out with then prime minister Mahathir Mohamad. His

family and political party have voiced concern about his health and conditions in prison since his sentence was upheld.

His last legal option is to file a judicial review with the Federal Court. His lawyers said no decision had been made yet on such an application.

The rejection of the royal pardon came after a series of rallies organized by Anwar’s People’s Justice Party (PJP) after his imprisonment, although turnout was low at the latest rally last week.

Anwar’s daughter, PJP member of parliament Nurul Izzah, was caught up in a recent crackdown by the government and police



Malaysia’s opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim speaks to the media ahead of the verdict in his final appeal against a conviction for sodomy in Kuala Lumpur on 4 Feb, 2015.

REUTERS

under Malaysia’s Sedition Act. She was held in detention for one night for comments made in parliament that were deemed “contemptuous” of Malaysia’s judiciary.—Reuters

Indonesian court to decide on Bali Nine execution appeal on 6 April



Indonesian Judge Ujang Abdullah watches as a witness is sworn in during a hearing for two Australian death row inmates in the East Jakarta administrative court on 30 March, 2015.—REUTERS

refused to budge, ramping up diplomatic tensions between the neighbours.

Lawyers for the two Australians have been trying to convince the court since February that it has the jurisdiction to hear their appeal against the president’s rejection of a plea for clemency for the pair.

Judges rejected that ar-

gument last month.

“We will respect the judges who are now considering everything before ruling on the case,” Leonard Arfan, a lawyer representing the two Australians, told reporters. “We respect the ongoing process and we’re just waiting for the decision.” Sukumaran and Chan were arrested in 2005

as the ringleaders in a plot by a group, which came to be known as the Bali Nine, to smuggle heroin out of Indonesia. At least four other death row inmates have appealed against their sentences.

Indonesia’s attorney general has said all 10 prisoners would face the firing squad together but has yet to set a date for their executions. The group awaiting execution includes citizens of Brazil, France, Ghana, Nigeria, the Philippines and Indonesia.

Vice President Jusuf Kalla told Reuters last month that it could take weeks or even months for the executions to take place.

Indonesia has harsh penalties for drug trafficking and resumed executions in 2013 after a five-year gap. With the upcoming executions, Indonesia will have exercised the death penalty more times in a single year than ever before.

Reuters

Singapore clamps down on late-night public drinking

SINGAPORE, 1 April — Singapore on Wednesday began imposing a new law to curb late-night drinking in public places in a move aimed at averting public disorder caused by drunkenness.

The new law to control the supply and consumption of alcoholic drinks was passed in Parliament in Jan-

uary this year, more than a year after a major riot by mostly foreign workers in 2013 that was blamed on intoxication.

Under the new law, the consumption of liquor is banned in all public places nationwide from 10:30 pm to 7 am daily.

Tighter laws will be applied to the Geylang

night entertainment district and also to Little India, a commercial enclave heavily frequented by foreign workers where the riot erupted in December 2013, sparked by the death of a foreign worker in a road accident.

In these two “liquor control zones,” the public consumption of alcohol is banned on weekends until 7

am on Monday, and also on the eve and on public holidays. Alcohol can still be consumed at home and also in restaurants, cafes and bars that are licensed to sell alcoholic beverages. But over-the-counter or take-away retail sales of liquor will not be allowed during the restricted hours.

Those convicted for the

first time could be fined up to S\$1,000 (about \$730), while repeat offenders face a S\$2,000 fine or up to three months in jail or both.

Singapore Deputy Prime Minister Teo Chee Hean has said the new law is a response to consistent complaints from Singaporeans about drunkenness in the common areas of hous-

ing estates, the *Straits Times* reported.

He said that a survey by the government’s feedback unit shows that more than 80 percent of those surveyed are supportive of the new law. In contrast, the *Straits Times* daily’s online poll showed that 75 percent are against the law.

Kyodo News

Netanyahu calls for “better deal” with Iran over nuclear programme

JERUSALEM, 1 April — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Wednesday it was not too late for world powers still locked in nuclear negotiations with Iran to demand a “better deal”.

He made the comments before a planned meeting in Jerusalem with the speaker of the US House of Representatives, John Boehner, a leading Republican and strong critic of the White House’s policy on Iran.

“Now is the time for the international community to insist on a better deal,” Netanyahu said in a televised statement delivered in English.

“A better deal would significantly roll back Iran’s nuclear infrastructure. A better deal would link the eventual lifting of the restrictions on Iran’s



Israel’s Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu

nuclear programme to a change in Iran’s behaviour,” he said, citing threats to annihilate Israel and accusing Teheran of fomenting regional conflict.

Netanyahu said on Tuesday that a framework agreement sought by international negotiators to rein in Iran’s nuclear programme would leave it with the capability to

develop atomic weapons within a year.

Six world powers and Iran went beyond a midnight deadline and were continuing to negotiate in the Swiss city of Lausanne on Wednesday, having failed to agree on crucial details such as the lifting of UN sanctions.

Boehner, whose invitation to Netanyahu to ad-

dress Congress drew accusations that both men were pursuing partisan politics at the expense of traditional bi-partisan support for Israel in Washington, has kept his visit to Israel low-key.

He was due to speak to reporters, alongside Netanyahu, later in the day at the prime minister’s office.

Congress has cautioned it would consider imposing new sanctions on Iran if there was no agreement in Lausanne this week. President Barack Obama has threatened to veto any such sanctions moves.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell has said that if a framework deal is reached, lawmakers would consider a bill that would require Obama to submit a final accord for Congress’ approval.

Reuters

S Korea reaffirms claim to islets disputed with Japan

SEOUL, 1 April — South Korea on Wednesday reaffirmed its claim to disputed islets in the Sea of Japan ahead of the publication of Japan’s annual foreign policy report in which Tokyo is expected to reiterate its claim over them.

“Dokdo is our territory in terms of historical facts and international laws,” a Foreign Ministry official told journalists, referring to the islets by their Korean name. The islets, which are controlled by South Korea, are known

as Takeshima in Japanese. “We will sternly respond to Japan’s provocation,” the official said.

The draft of the Diplomatic Bluebook for 2015, a copy of which was obtained by *Kyodo News* on Tuesday, says Japan is determined to protect its territorial sovereignty as well as its territorial seas and airspace.

Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida is expected to present the report to the Cabinet next week.

Kyodo News

Lew views US dialogue with China over new bank as important

WASHINGTON, 1 April — US Treasury Secretary Jack Lew indicated on Tuesday it is important to engage in dialogue with China over a new Beijing-led investment bank, an apparent new take on the issue about which Washington had been cautious. “I would like to discuss today why working together to maintain high standards is in our shared interest,” Lew said in a lecture he delivered in San Francisco, referring to the need to ensure the quality of governance of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank through dialogue. His speech text was distributed to the media in Washington.

The US finance chief made the remark after he met with top Chinese officials including Premier Li Keqiang in Beijing earlier this week. In mid-March,

Lew was cautious about taking part in the China-led development bank in a congressional hearing, even saying “new players are challenging US leadership in the multilateral system.”

“I am encouraged by my conversations with China’s leaders,” which reflect a strong desire to benefit from the lessons learned over the past 70 years as new organizations are launched, Lew said in the lecture. Lew said that neither the United States nor China can afford to walk away from the institutions that make up the international economic architecture.

The China-led AIIB will be launched with initial capital of around \$50 billion and more than 40 participating countries, including some Group of Seven industrialized countries.—*Kyodo News*

South Korea to pay about \$380,000 for each student killed in ferry disaster

SEOUL, 1 April — The South Korean government said on Wednesday it would pay about 420 million won (257,174 pounds) as compensation for each of the 250 students who died or remain missing from last year’s ferry disaster, in the first settlement offer to victims’ families.

The families of 11 teachers who died in the disaster will each receive about 760 million won, the higher amount to account for lost income, the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries said. Other passengers will receive between 150 million won and 600 million won, depending on their age and income, it said.

More than two-thirds of the 476 passengers on board the doomed Sewol ferry were students on a school trip. Many of them died trapped in the vessel following orders by the crew to stay in their cabins as it capsized and sank on 16 April last year.

The Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries said a compensation committee had set an average payout of 425,810 won to the families of each of the students who died or remain missing.—*Reuters*

Okinawa official appointed Foreign Ministry adviser on base issue

TOKYO, 1 April — Japan’s Foreign Ministry on Wednesday appointed a former senior official of the Okinawa prefectural government as an adviser to help deal with the contentious relocation of a key US base in the southern island prefecture.

Susumu Matayoshi headed the Okinawa governor’s office under former Gov Hirokazu Nakaima, who lost to current Gov Takeshi Onaga in an election last November after endorsing the Japan-US plan to relocate the US Marine Corps’ Futenma air base within Okinawa.

Matayoshi is rich in



Former Okinawa prefectural government official Susumu Matayoshi

his experience of Okinawa’s US base issues, Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga said as he unveiled the appointment at a Press conference.

The move comes amid

confrontation between the central and local governments over the relocation, with fisheries minister Yoshimasa Hayashi suspending on Monday Onaga’s instruction for the Okinawa Defence Bureau to halt work at the relocation site.

Matayoshi, who joined the prefectural government in 1979 and headed the governor’s office for nearly five years between April 2010 and this January, was in charge of negotiations with the national government to reduce Okinawa’s burden of hosting the bulk of US military installations in Japan.—*Kyodo News*

Despite progress, Iran nuclear talks hit impasse on details

LAUSANNE, (Switzerland), 1 April — Major powers and Iran were closer to a preliminary accord on reining in Teheran’s nuclear programme as marathon talks ran into Wednesday, but they hit an impasse over key details such as the lifting of UN sanctions and Iran’s future atomic research.

The negotiators ended talks in the Swiss city of Lausanne in the early morning hours with an air of chaos, disunity and cacophony as delegations scrambled to get contradictory viewpoints across.

The six powers —

the United States, Britain, France, Germany, Russia and China — aim to stop Iran from gaining the capacity to develop a nuclear bomb in exchange for easing international sanctions that are crippling its economy. Iran says its nuclear programme is peaceful.

France’s foreign minister, often seen as making the most stringent demands of Iran, returned to Paris because things had not advanced enough for “immediate deal”.

But as top negotiators from the powers met Iranian Foreign Minister Moham-

mad Javad Zarif again on Wednesday, Russia and Iran expressed optimism that an initial agreement was within reach.

British Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond sounded a note of caution. “I think we have a broad framework of understanding, but there are still some key issues that have to be worked through,” he told the BBC.

Western diplomats said Iran had on Tuesday reaffirmed its “nuclear rights”, suggesting the talks were again getting bogged down as they entered their seventh day. Officials cautioned that

any agreement would probably be fragile and incomplete.

“We hope to wrap up the talks by Wednesday night ... We insist on lifting of financial, oil and banking sanctions immediately ... for other sanctions we need to find a framework,” senior Iranian negotiator Abbas Araqchi told state television. “We insist on keeping research and development with advanced centrifuges,” he said.

Zarif said the talks had been “very good”, though he acknowledged that there were issues to be smoothed

over. A preliminary deal would be a major milestone toward a final accord, with an end-June deadline, that could end a 12-year standoff between Iran and world powers and reduce the risk of another Middle East war.

The United States threatened on Tuesday to walk away if the current talks yield no political framework accord.

The talks have stalled on the issues of Iran’s nuclear centrifuge research, the lifting of UN sanctions and their restoration if Iran breaches the agreement.

Reuters

PERSPECTIVES

Thursday, 2 April, 2015

Conflicts should be left behind in the past

By Aung Khin

The people of Myanmar have thirsted for peace for decades. We do not want to see war and hostilities between ethnic groups. Such conflicts have been borne of misunderstanding among national brethren living in Myanmar. Through the spread of propaganda, some people have come to misidentify civil conflicts as intrusions from outside forces.

In a closed society, previous governments failed to transfer the notion of peace from paper

into the real world. They may have won many wars by defeating enemies in combat, but they did not win the hearts and minds of ordinary people.

Without sharing power and resources to guarantee a better livelihood for the people, peace was unable to take hold. In the meantime, many lost their lives, not at the hands of outside forces, but through internal conflicts.

Mistrust has prevented friendship between national brethren for decades. Some foreign countries have benefited from this situation, turning a blind eye to illegal logging, human trafficking of ethnic people and drug trade.

The bitter past continues to make an impact on several fronts, in the form of poorer education, health and livelihood opportunities in some areas of the country. As times have changed, Myanmar urgently needs to establish a peaceful society for the sake of the country's development.

Myanmar has now seen a bright daybreak of

peace after marathon efforts from respective groups since the government took office on March 31, 2011. A draft ceasefire deal has been signed with the administration in its fifth term.

Development and peace are interdependent. One person's interests should be in line with the entire nation's interests. No one wants to separate from their family to take part in conflicts. We genuinely thirst for peace. Promises written on paper must be backed by real world action, so that conflicts become a thing of the past.

Write for us

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

Caring & Sharing

By Kyi Mun

Caring means: Feelings of loving kindness, interest, anxiety, sorrow for others; Looking after, providing food, attention, etc.

Sharing means: Giving a share (of) to others; divide & distribute; Having (something) & using in common; Having a part/ share of something. e.g. *I'll share in the cost with you. She shares (in) my troubles as well as (in) my joys*; Having equal shares with others in the use, enjoyment, expense, etc. of something.

C for Consideration for others

A for Attention to Win-Win relationships

R for Respect for Individuals

I for Intentionally Taking Care of Other People's Needs

N for Networking with Others

G for Goodwill for Others

&

S for Sincerity

H for Helping Hand

A for Altruism

R for Relationship Building

I for Inspiring Others

N for No ILL-WILL

G for Give All To Love

CONSIDERATION

Consideration means: Quality of being considerate; thoughtful attention to the wishes, feelings, etc of others.

In the Win-Win principle, consideration is to be given to others on the one hand, and courage is to be tactically used to protect one's own interest on the other. Consideration or thoughtful caring should be especially exercised in relation to the have-less and have-not. Aside from charity and philanthropy, utmost consideration must be directed towards the needs and requirements of the broad masses of the people, politically, economically, technologically, socio-culturally, legally, educationally, environmentally and ecologically. Ethical and moral considerations should also be given to all the internal racial and ethnical contradictions and conflicts of all kinds. The principle of "One for All and All for One" should be applied in the matter of consideration for others.

ATTENTION TO WIN-WIN RELATIONSHIPS

Caring for the benefits and welfare of others prompts us to practice the principle of thinking Win-Win relationship. In Myanmar socio-culture, there has all along flourished the principle of "Sahajāta - Iññamjīñña" in Pali, meaning: "Being together, Mutual Benefits must be sought for". Especially, wisdom and compassion compel us human beings to regard all the beings with a sense of

caring and sharing.

RESPECT FOR INDIVIDUALS

All the religions teach us to respect people of all stations in life. Jesus Christ taught that all human beings have a **divine spark** in them. Hinduism teaches that there is a **core purity of self** in all human beings. Buddhism teaches that there is a **Bodhi-nature** in all humans. So, as the appearance is deceitful, we should not hesitate to regard all human beings with all due respect.

INTENTIONALLY TAKING CARE OF OTHERS'S NEEDS

In caring and sharing with other people, we should:

- Do good
- Be Kind, and
- Love One Another

In other words, we all should:

- Love all
- Serve all
- Hurt never
- Help never

We should intentionally take good care of vital needs of the have-not and the have-less.

NETWORKING WITH OTHERS

Success in life is outside-in, where as happiness in life is inside-out. So, for success in our jobs, in our relationships and in our lives, we cannot but respect people, regard them as our partners or comrades or friends and be in touch with them. In networking with people, mutual benefits and satisfaction should always be taken into consideration. No one should benefit at the expense of another or others.

GOODWILL FOR OTHERS

Goodwill or Good Will means: Friendly feeling; e.g. a policy of goodwill in international relations; the good reputation of a well-established business.

In Myanmar traditional Socio-culture, right thinking, right intention, and right contemplation are always given emphasis. In Pali, it is called **Yoniso'manasikāra**, meaning right thought, right mindfulness and positive attitude. If we put an "a" to it the word becomes **Ayoniso'manasikāra**, meaning wrong thinking and negative attitude.

SINCERITY

Sincerity means: (1) Being genuine, not pretended (in feeling, and behavior); (2) Straightforward; not in the habit of expressing feelings that are pretended, (of person) (3) Honesty

In the matter of caring for and sharing with other people, sincerity is of utmost importance. Sense of caring and sharing is the product of a soft, tender heart. So, caring and sharing must be seamlessly integrated with loving kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity.

HELPING HAND

Caring for and Sharing with other people is, indeed, offering a helping hand. So, let's try to clarify the meaning of helping. Helping means: Doing part of the work of another person; making it easier for somebody to do something or for something to happen; doing something for the

benefit of (somebody in need.)

In caring and sharing, the spirit of helping people in sorrow and in suffering is to be appreciated most. As the saying, "A friend in need is a friend indeed," goes; caring and sharing should be offered to those most in need.

ALTRUISM

Altruism is a principle of considering the well-being and happiness of others first. It also means unselfishness. Caring and sharing itself is the product of altruism. Altruism is the queen, and the queen has FOUR beautiful daughters, viz.:

- Mettā in Pali which means Loving kindness
- Karuṇā in Pali which means Compassion
- Muditā in Pali which means Sympathetic Joy
- Upekkhā in Pali which means Equanimity

RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

Caring and Sharing should be the cause, and the effect should be building relationships. According to the Dependent Origination, all phenomena are conditioned by some other existing causes and conditions. All things are interdependent. All the effects have relevant causes; and all the fruits are the products of the seed, earth/ soil, water/ moisture, light/ heat and the cultivator, of course. So, also relationships are being built by the act of caring and sharing.

INSPIRING OTHERS

The caliber of a caring and sharing deed will determine the quality of inspiration for others. The sincerity of the caring and sharing act will also cause the strength and force of inspiring others. Although the genuine act of caring and sharing is an inside-out activity, it can cause an impact that is outside-in motivation. The important point is the degree of disinterestedness in the act of caring and sharing.

NO ILL-WILL

There should not be no ill-will in any deed of caring and sharing. An act of caring and sharing should be genuinely influenced by a sense of liberality, generosity and goodwill, reinforced by a charitable spirit. Any act of caring and sharing should be governed by the true spirit of giving cash and kind and oneself for the benefit of others.

GIVE ALL TO LOVE

Emerson said: "Give all to love, obey thy heart."

Every Caring and Sharing deed should be done in love, with love and by love. In caring and sharing and rejoicing, we all should live and move and have our being. We can transform our lives by the renewal of our minds. And we can renew our minds only if we have genuine, pure and disinterested love in our hearts.

CONCLUSION

Let's do some caring and sharing deeds, with dear love in our hearts!

U Kyi Mun residing in Yangon is a consultant of NAING Group Capital Co.,Ltd.

NATIONAL

NAY PYI TAW, 1 April — A national roadmap launched Wednesday in Nay Pyi Taw aims to improve access to the financial sector, including loans and insurance, for low-income families and small to medium enterprises.

The roadmap for an inclusive financial sector seeks to increase the usage rate for financial services of an internationally acceptable standard from 30 percent in 2014 to 40 percent in 2020, and the level of people using more than one financial service from 6 percent to 15 percent.

At the ceremony at Myanmar International Convention Centre (1), Union Minister at the President Office U Soe Thane said cooperation between the Netherlands and Myanmar will con-

tribute to sustainable development and an improvement in financial sector access for people of all income levels.

Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General, Queen Máxima of the Netherlands, said the roadmap is being implemented with firm commitments in Myanmar.

Deputy Minister for Finance Dr Maung Maung Thein said the roadmap seeks to strengthen the financial sector and places emphasis on the development of small and medium enterprises, agriculture, and helping poor households.

UN Resident Coordinator Ms Renata Lok-Dessallien gave a speech before the ceremony concluded with remarks by Union Minister for Finance U Win Shein.

Roadmap aims for more inclusive financial sector



He said the Ministry of Finance was cooperating with the UNDP-UNCDF to carry out the roadmap.

A more-inclusive financial sector will contribute to low-income

families and small and medium enterprises by making financial services available to them at low risks, according to the union minister.

MNA

Union Minister at the President's Office U Soe Thane poses for documentary photo with Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General, Queen Máxima of the Netherlands.—MNA

Union Attorney-General Office stages seminar on IP enforcement



Attorney-General of the Union Dr Tun Shin speaking at opening of seminar on IP enforcement in Asian countries and training on product identification for well-known brands.—MNA

NAY PYI TAW, 1 April — Office of the Attorney-General of the Union

assists in drawing four laws on IP by Ministry of Science and Technology,

Attorney-General of the Union Dr Tun Shin told the seminar on IP enforcement

in Asian countries and training on product identification for well-known brands, at the Lake Garden Hotel, here, Wednesday.

Co-Managing Partner and Managing Director Mrs Darani Vachanavutivong of Thailand-based Tilleke & Gibbins International Co. Ltd pledged to discuss prevention of fake IP products.

Directors Dr Daw Su Su Hlaing and Daw Tin Yi Win of the office of the Attorney-General of the Union focused on legal system of Myanmar according to the laws on trademarks and logos and international legal experts, general knowledge on IP law.

MNA

Myanmar set to test short-course TB therapy

By Khaing Thanda Lwin

YANGON, 1 April — The Ministry of Health will launch a short-course therapy test for multi-drug resistant tuberculosis patients in May, an officer for the National TB Programme said Sunday.

The test may start “as soon as the health ministry gets medicines from the World Health Organization,” Dr Tin Mi Mi Khaing, the TB programme’s Lower Myanmar officer, said.

The programme, using a short 10-month regimen, will be implemented with the assistance of Three Millennium Development Goals Fund under independent monitoring by the World Health Organization, with plans to treat

about 200 MDR-TB patients.

“The shorter drug therapy is a popular treatment among other countries. It, if successful, would significantly reduce time on treatment as compared to the current 20-month regimen,” a 3MDG official said. The report said Myanmar is one of the 22 high TB-burden countries and the 27 high MDR TB burden countries.

Currently the ministry provides regular treatment to MDR-TB patients, and it has a plan to treat around 1,700 patients in Yangon for the whole year, Dr Tin Mi Mi Khaing said at a seminar to mark World Tuberculosis Day in Yangon.—GNLM

Visa opens Myanmar office, aims to increase card services in country

By Khaing Thanda Lwin

YANGON, 1 April — Visa announced the opening of its office in Myanmar on Wednesday, saying it aims to expand access to electronic payments across the country.

“Together with our clients we work to bring the benefits of electronic payments to everyone, everywhere across Myanmar,” Mr Hiro Taylor, the newly appointed country manager

for Visa in Myanmar, said.

Visa is operating its card business in connection with eight local banks—Kanbawza Bank, Myanmar Apex Bank, Myanmar Citizens Bank, Asian Green Development Bank, Ayeyawady Bank, United Amara Bank, Myanmar Oriental bank and Co-operative Bank.

Mr Taylor said there are over 1,800 retailers ac-

cepting electronic payments and 1,150 ATMs across the country, with plans to develop online payment systems in Myanmar in the future.

Since entering the country in 2012, transactions on Visa cards by tourists, inclusive of ATM withdrawals, have accounted for more than US\$160 million, he added.

Myanmar leads the way as the fastest-growing market for Visa globally. Last year, transaction volume,

payment volume and the number of cards in use have all seen triple-digit growth. It is the highest in any Visa market globally, according to the company.

Visa’s global network connects thousands of financial institutions with millions of merchants and cardholders every day. The California-based payments giant operates in 200 countries and territories.—GNLM

Credit card users draw cash from ATM machine of CB Bank.—PHOTO: KHAING THANDA LWIN



Over 100 business bosses back PM Cameron's Conservatives ahead of British election

LONDON, 1 April — Over 100 British company bosses publicly backed Prime Minister David Cameron's Conservative-led government on Wednesday and warned a change of course for Britain's \$2.8 trillion economy under a Labour government would put the recovery at risk.

Opinion polls ahead of the 7 May election indicate neither Cameron's Conservatives nor the opposition Labour Party will win an overall majority in the 650-seat parliament as millions of voters turn to once marginal parties.

"We believe this Conservative-led Government



Leader of the opposition Labour Party Ed Miliband and British Prime Minister David Cameron.

has been good for business and has pursued policies

which have supported investment and job creation,"

the business leaders said in an open letter published in the *Telegraph* newspaper.

"We believe a change in course will threaten jobs and deter investment. This would send a negative message about Britain and put the recovery at risk," they warned.

Among the 103 signatories were the boss of Arcadia retail group Philip Green, BP's CEO Bob Dudley, entrepreneur Luke Johnson and the outgoing boss of insurer Prudential Tidjane Thiam, who is due to become the CEO of Credit Suisse.

The closest British election in at least a gen-

eration has flummoxed seasoned politicians and City of London financiers who are poring over opinion polls and Westminster seat predictions to see who might rule Britain.

Labour, whose relationship with business is fraught with tensions over policies which promise tighter regulation for big businesses, dismissed the letter as "nothing new".

"No one will be surprised that some business people are calling for low taxes for big businesses," said Labour's business spokesman Chuka Umunna.

"We don't believe, as

David Cameron does, in more tax cuts for the richest in society — the priority is tax cuts for small firms, working people and saving our NHS."

In total the company bosses who signed the letter employ more than half a million people.

The CEO of Costa owner Whitbread Andy Harrison, chairman of engineer Meggitt Nigel Rudd, the chairman of Dixons Carphone Charles Dunstone and the CEO of oil firm Tullow Aidan Heavey were amongst the FTSE 100 leaders who signed the letter.

Reuters

Venezuela's anti-Obama signature drive passes 6 million

CARACAS, 1 April — President Nicolas Maduro decreed a new annual "anti-imperialist" day on Tuesday and said a signature drive demanding the repeal of US measures against Venezuela had passed 6 million.

In the ideological enemies' worst spat of Maduro's two-year rule, President Barack Obama's government this month declared the OPEC nation a "security threat" and sanctioned seven officials accused of rights abuses and corruption.

Maduro, the 52-year-old socialist successor to Hugo Chavez, said the 9 March measures would from 2016 be commem-

orated in Venezuela with a new "Day of Bolivarian Anti-Imperialism," a reference to independence hero Simon Bolivar.

"History will remember you, President Obama, as the one who sought to intimidate a people, but instead arose their nationalist, patriotic and Bolivarian spirit," Maduro said in a weekly TV programme, from the western city of Coro.

Buoyed by plenty of international support, especially from Latin American neighbours, Maduro is leading a "house-by-house" campaign to obtain 10 million signatures against the measures to take to the upcoming Summit of the



A supporter of Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro holds a placard during a protest against imperialism, in Caracas on 24 March, 2015. —REUTERS

Americas in Panama.

Opponents say many Venezuelans are being coerced to sign, especially in state institutions, and decry the move as a waste of time

intended to hide the nation's economic crisis and boost the government's popularity ahead of parliamentary elections.

Reuters

Germanwings co-pilot reported his depression to pilot school: Lufthansa

BERLIN, 1 April — The co-pilot of the Germanwings aircraft that crashed into the French Alps had reported his "severe depression" to his flight pilot training school in 2009, the parent company Lufthansa announced on Tuesday.

The revelation suggests that the co-pilot, Andreas Lubitz, 27, was allowed to fly despite the company's knowledge of his mental state and raises questions about the carrier's oversight of its crew.

Deutsche Lufthansa AG earlier said the co-pilot interrupted his training six years ago but did not explain why.

In an email correspondence about submit-

ting medical documents to resume his flight training, the co-pilot informed the flight training pilot school in 2009 about a "previous episode of severe depression," Lufthansa said on Tuesday in a statement.

After he went through resumed training, Lubitz was medically certified to fly and became a co-pilot in 2013.

Two days after the crash that killed 150 people, Lufthansa CEO Carsten Spohr told a press conference Thursday that the co-pilot was "one hundred percent fit to fly without any restrictions. His flight performance was perfect. There was nothing to worry about."

Kyodo News

Prosecutors push again to investigate Argentine leader in bombing case

BUENOS AIRES, 1 April — Argentine prosecutors pushed for a conspiracy investigation against President Cristina Fernandez on Tuesday in the second appeal of a court decision that cleared her of trying to block the inquiry into a deadly 1994 bombing.

The accusation, that Fernandez conspired to cover up Iran's alleged role in a truck bombing of the AMIA Jewish community centre in Buenos Aires, threw her administration into turmoil when the claim was levelled on 14 January by state prosecutor Alberto Nisman.

It turned into a full-blown political scandal when Nisman was shot

dead under murky circumstances four days later.

Nisman said Fernandez had worked behind the scenes to clear Iran and normalize relations in order to clinch a grains-for-oil deal with Teheran.

She was exonerated by a judge in February, and a review panel agreed by a 2-1 vote this month that there was not enough evidence to formally investigate the president.

On Tuesday, the case was brought to Argentina's top appeals court by newly assigned prosecutor German Moldes, who helped organize a march of tens of thousands last month to honour Nisman and protest what demonstrators called

a culture of intimidation and meddling in Argentina's justice system.

In his appeal, Moldes accused Fernandez of being involved in "a hidden plan that benefited another country while going against the objectives and interests of Argentina."

The president's cabinet chief Anibal Fernandez told reporters Moldes committed "malfeasance as big as a truck" by bringing a baseless and politically motivated appeal.

On 18 January, hours before he was scheduled to appear before Congress to outline his case against the president, Nisman was found dead in his apartment, shot in the head and



Argentina's President Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner waves as she leaves after the opening session of the 133rd legislative term of Congress in Buenos Aires on 1 March, 2015. —REUTERS

a gun by his side. His death spawned conspiracy theories, some involving Fernandez.

A poll in February by

consultancy Management & Fit showed 55 percent of voters believed Nisman's accusation against Fernandez was true and that she

had something to do with his death.

But the political impact has softened since then, with Management & Fit's March survey showing Fernandez's popularity recovering to 36 percent versus 29 percent in February.

Fernandez calls the conspiracy accusation absurd, and Iran denies any involvement in the bombing, in which 85 people died. Constitutionally barred from running for a third term in an October general election, the 62-year-old Fernandez has made it no secret that she plans to remain a public figure after stepping down in December.—Reuters

WORLD

Iraqi forces drive Islamic State out of central Tikrit — PM

TIKRIT, (Iraq), 1 April — Iraqi troops aided by Shi'ite paramilitaries have driven Islamic State out of central Tikrit, Prime Minister Haidar al-Abadi said on Tuesday, but the fight to retake all of Saddam Hussein's hometown continued.

Government forces have been in a month-long fight for the city, which became a bastion for the Sunni jihadists who are at war with Baghdad and have been targeted by US-led air strikes.

Hundreds of insurgents ready to fight to the death are still holed up in Salahuddin province's capital city and at least three neighbourhoods remain under Islamic State control, along with a palace complex in the city's north.

The further Iraqi forces push into the city, the greater the risk of ambushes.

"Our security forces have reached the centre of Tikrit and they have liberated the southern and western sides and they are moving towards the control of the whole city," Abadi said in a statement.

The US Defence Department said it could confirm Iraqi security forces' "advancement into Tikrit to liberate the city centre as well as other parts of the city" from Islamic State.

In their push from southern Tikrit, security forces and paramilitary fighters retook the governor's headquarters and the main hospital, which had been occupied by Islamic State.

Reuters journalists travelling with the police passed houses scarred by bullets, mortars and rockets as well as five or six corpses that security officers said were Islamic State fighters, adding that they might be rigged with explosives.

Iraqi officials suspect the militants have planted scores of bombs and are using snipers and a network of underground tunnels and bunkers to slow the government advance.

Tuesday saw Shi'ite militia groups return to the battle after suspending operations last Thursday when US-led air strikes were requested by Prime Minister Haidar al-Abadi.—*Reuters*

Yemen air strikes kill 25 in factory: residents

ADEN, 1 April — An air strike on Yemen's Red Sea port of Hodaïda destroyed a dairy factory on Tuesday night, killing 25 workers, medical sources said, in what appeared to be one of the biggest cases of civilian deaths in a Saudi-led campaign against Houthi militia.

The operation by Saudi Arabia and other Sunni Muslim states is aimed at

stopping the Houthis and former president Ali Abdullah Saleh winning control of the country and at reinstating Saudi-backed President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi.

However, after seven nights of air strikes targeting both the Houthis and forces loyal to Saleh, the coalition has not managed to secure Hadi's control over his last remaining enclave of rule in the southern port of Aden, a

key aim of the campaign.

The sound of gunfire and several large blasts were heard in Aden throughout the night, a *Reuters* reporter said. Videos posted online, which *Reuters* could not immediately confirm, appeared to show fighting at an army base loyal to Saleh in the northeast of the city.

Residents near the Hodaïda dairy factory said it was located near an army

camp loyal to Saleh, while medical sources in the city said the 25 casualties had all been workers at the plant and that the strike had also destroyed a fuel store.

A raid at a coastal defence station at Maidi port in Hajja province north of Hodaïda killed six soldiers, workers there said, while further strikes hit an army camp in Sanaa and a government facility in Saadeh

in the north of Yemen.

In New York, UNICEF said late on Tuesday that at least 62 children had been killed and 30 wounded in fighting over the past week, and the United Nations said an attack on a refugee camp in northern Yemen, which medics blamed on an air strike, broke international law.

Reuters

Israel expects hundreds of civilian casualties in next war with Hezbollah



Israeli soldiers carry their belongings in an area near the Israel-Lebanon border on 29 Jan, 2015.—REUTERS

JERUSALEM, 1 April — Israel could suffer hundreds of civilian dead and damage to its vital infrastructure from Hezbollah rockets if it fights another war with the Iranian-backed Lebanese guerrilla group, according to Israeli military assessments.

The scenario, published by Israeli media on Wednesday, reflected concern among security planners that since the last Lebanon war, in 2006, Hezbollah has expanded its rocket arsenal and gained battle experience helping Damascus fight the insurgency in Syria.

The publication of the assessments could help build a case for more investment in Israeli civil defences and in US-backed rocket interceptors like Iron Dome, which has proven effective outside Gaza, and the longer-range David's Sling, which is in final testing stages.

According to the military assessments, between 1,000 and 1,500 rockets could hit Israel daily in the next full-blown conflict, killing hundreds of people and potentially paralysing

key installations like airports, sea ports and power stations.

The 2006 war killed around 160 Israelis, most of them troops fighting Hezbollah inside Lebanon, while 1,200 people in Lebanon, mostly civilians, died in Israel's military barrages.

Another conflict could see Israeli attacks 15 times more devastating for Lebanon, Israel's air force chief, Major-General Amir Eshel, said in a speech last year aimed at keeping Hezbollah in check.

While not making details public, Hezbollah says its military capabilities have been significantly boosted since 2006. Neither side appears keen on resuming hostilities. The restraint has been tested, however, by occasional flare-ups in fighting.

Worried that Hezbollah was entrenching forces on its Syrian front, Israel carried out a Jan. 18 air strike that killed six of the Lebanese guerrillas — one of them a field commander — and an Iranian general. Hezbollah retaliated with a cross-border guided-mis-

sile salvo that killed two Israeli troops.

Since its July-August war with Palestinian Hamas guerrillas, where eight Iron Dome batteries helped fend off rockets from the Gaza Strip, Israel has been trying to improve those interceptors. It has also accelerated the development of David's Sling, a system designed to shoot down the more potent missiles of Hezbollah, Syria and Iran, with hopes of deploying it by 2016.

Israeli officials last month asked US lawmakers for \$317 million in additional funding for David's Sling and other Israeli missile defence programmes, on top of \$158 million in funding already requested by the Obama administration in its fiscal 2016 budget.

A group of 32 US senators last week urged fellow lawmakers to fully meet Israel's missile defence funding request. The issue was expected to be on the agenda of John Boehner, speaker of the US House of Representatives, who arrived in Israel on Tuesday at the head of a delegation of Republican lawmakers.

Reuters

Japan to send investigators to Turkey over IS hostage crisis

TOKYO, 1 April — Japanese police will send investigators to Turkey probably next week to seek cooperation in an effort to learn how two Japanese men killed by Islamic State militants entered Syria, an investigative source said on Wednesday.

The police investigating the hostage crisis that ended in January with the online releases of footage of beheaded freelance journalist Kenji Goto, 47, and Haruna Yukawa, 42, aim to hear from the Syrian guide who was with Goto before he disappeared, among other people, the source said. Both men are believed to have entered Syria via Turkey. Yukawa is believed to have been captured in northern Syria last August and Goto went missing after entering the area in October.

Islamic State militants demanded a ransom of \$200 million for the release of the two men in a video released online on 20 January. Images apparently showing the killing of Yukawa and Goto appeared on the Internet on 24 and 31, respectively.—*Kyodo News*

Opposition leader Buhari set to win Nigeria presidential election

YOLA, (Nigeria), 1 April — Nigeria's opposition challenger Muhammadu Buhari is certain to defeat incumbent Goodluck Jonathan in the presidential election as vote counting neared completion on Tuesday, paving the way for the country's first transfer of power since the 1999 end of military rule.

A spokesman for Buhari's All Progressives Congress said Jonathan, 57, telephoned Buhari, the 72-year-old former president of the Supreme Military Council, on Tuesday to congratulate him on winning this week-end's election, according to *Reuters* news service.

Nigeria has the largest population and biggest economy in Africa. It is also the largest producer of oil on the continent. The southern part of the country has a large population of Christians and is relatively well off with oil revenues, while Muslims are concentrated in the north, which is lagging behind in development.

The election was effectively a one-on-one fight between Jonathan from the south and Buhari from the north.—*Kyodo News*



Young people celebrate in Yola, northeastern Nigeria, on 31 March, 2015, as Muhammadu Buhari, former military council head, defeated President Goodluck Jonathan in the nation's presidential election. It is the country's first regime change since the shift to civilian rule in 1999.—KYODO NEWS

South Korea charges attacker of US envoy with attempted murder



US ambassador Mark Lippert

SEOUL, 1 April — Prosecutors have formally charged a South Korean man with attempted murder after the US ambassador in Seoul was slashed in the face in a knife attack last month, leaving him with wounds needing 80 stitches, prosecutors said on Wednesday.

Kim Ki-jong, 55, attacked

ambassador Mark Lippert with a fruit knife during a forum on Korean reunification in Seoul on 5 March. Lippert, 42, suffered deep gashes to his face and wrist and was in hospital for five days.

Kim has been charged with attempted murder, the assault of a foreign envoy, and obstruction of duty, an official at the Seoul

Central District Prosecutors' Office told *Reuters*.

He could face life in prison or even the death penalty, which is rarely used in South Korea, if found guilty of attempted murder.

Prosecutors were still investigating whether Kim had infringed the National Security Act, a 67-year-old statute that prohibits support for North Korea. Critics have said the potential use of the act is an attempt to politicise the case.

The attack prompted a large outpouring of public support in South Korea. Lippert returned to work late last month, and responded to messages of support in a blog post on Wednesday.

"It has meant a great deal to me, Robyn, Sejun, and Grigsby to feel the warmth and caring from the community here in Korea," Lippert said, referring to his wife, newborn baby and pet basket hound.—*Reuters*

Malaysian police release media CEO, editor held under sedition

KUALA LUMPUR, 1 April — Police released the publisher of a Malaysian media group and a senior executive on bail on Wednesday, after arresting them for sedition related to a news report published last month, their company's lawyers said.

Publisher and group CEO of The Edge Media Group, Ho Kay Tat, and chief executive of the group's *The Malaysian Insider* news portal, Jahabar Sadiq, were released early on Wednesday, about 24 hours after they were arrested.

The police did not ask for a remand for Ho and Jahabar, the company's lawyer Syahredzan Johan said.

"The investigating officer decided that most of the investigation was done," he said.

On Monday evening, three

other editors from the Malaysian Insider, also arrested in connection with the same case, were released after the magistrate rejected a remand application by the police.

The arrests were over an article published on the web portal on 25 March that said the a Conference of Rulers — Malaysia's monarchy — had rejected a proposal to amend a federal law that could allow the use of the Islamic punishment, hudud, in Malaysia.

An official of representing the Conference of Rulers filed a police report on 26 March, denying that the rulers had discussed or ruled on the issue. The youth wing of the ruling United Malays National Organization party also filed a police complaint over the report, media reports said.

Reuters

World's oldest person Misao Okawa dies at 117

OSAKA, 1 April — Misao Okawa, a Japanese woman recognized by Guinness World Records as the world's oldest living person, died of natural causes at the age of 117 on Wednesday morning at a nursing home in Osaka, nursing home officials said.

Okawa was born to the family of a kimono shop owner in Osaka in 1898, the same year the United States annexed the Hawaiian Islands and Pepsi-Cola was launched.

She was recognized by Guinness as the oldest living woman in February 2013 at 114 and became the oldest living being at 115 in June the same year, when Jiroemon Kimura, a Japanese man who was then the world's oldest, died at 116 in Kyoto.

Okawa got married in 1919 and had a son and two daughters. She had four grandchildren and six great-grandchildren as of March, according to the Guinness website. She entered the nursing home in 1997 as nursing care was required. "Eating delicious things is a key to my longevity," said Okawa who loved ramen noodles and beef stew, as well as hashed beef and rice. She ate some cake to celebrate her 117th birthday in early March, the officials said.

But she lost her appetite some 10 days ago and died in her sleep while being watched by relatives and nursing home officials, they said. "I feel lonely as I have lived with her since her entry here in 1997," said Tomohito Okada, acting president of the nursing home. "I thank her for teaching various experiences to me."—*Kyodo News*

File photo taken on 5 March, 2015, in the city of Osaka shows Misao Okawa celebrating her 117th birthday as the Guinness World Records-recognized world's oldest living person. She died on 1 April at a nursing home there.
KYODO NEWS



Korean Air chief's daughter seeks leniency in 'nut rage' appeal

SEOUL, 1 April — The former Korean Air Lines executive jailed for her outburst over in-flight service, known as the "nut rage" case, asked for leniency during an appeal hearing on Wednesday as she sought to reduce her one-year prison term.

Heather Cho, the daughter of the airline's chairman, was sentenced in February over the 5 December incident at New York's John F Kennedy airport, where she forced a Korean Air flight crew chief off the plane because she was unhappy about the way she was served macadamia nuts.

On the opening day of Cho's appeal hearing in Seoul High Court on Wednesday, her lawyers said Cho admitted to the abusive acts towards a

flight attendant and the plane's chief steward but she did not have any intent to disrupt flight operations.

"Let me take this chance to ask the victims for forgiveness ... I am repenting for what I have done. I am asking for leniency," said Cho, wearing a light green prison uniform and glasses, her hair tied back.

A lower court had ruled that the former vice president and head of in-flight service at the airline had violated South Korean aviation law by ordering the plane to return to the gate after it had started to taxi.

Cho demanded the crew chief be expelled from the flight after she was served macadamia nuts in a bag, and not on a dish. The plane bound for Incheon,

South Korea, which had started to move away from the gate, had to return.

The incident stoked widespread ridicule, as well as outrage over the conduct of the country's powerful family-run conglomerates called chaebol.

On Wednesday, prosecutors said her sentence was too light, questioning whether Cho had apologized sincerely as she also claimed in court that she was trying to do her job as the executive in charge of service. A flight attendant at the centre of the case has separately filed a civil lawsuit against her in New York.

Heather Cho is the oldest of Korean Air chairman Cho Yang-ho's three children. Her siblings are also executives with the airline.—*Reuters*

Japan aims to host 2020 UN congress on crime prevention

TOKYO, 1 April — Japan will bid to host a UN congress on crime prevention in 2020 in Tokyo during an upcoming gathering in Doha later in April, government officials said on Wednesday.

The UN Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice is the largest international conference in the field of criminal justice, held every five years since 1955, and has been held in Japan only once, in 1970 in Kyoto.

Japanese Prosecutor General Kotaro Ono will announce Japan's candidacy in

the conference slated in the Qatari capital on 12-19 April, it said.

Attended not only by justice ministers and prosecutors general of UN member states but also academics, experts and members of nongovernmental organizations, the congress has had an impact on policies and strengthened international cooperation on transnational organized crime.

The last congress, held in Brazil in April 2010, had around 3,000 participants from some 100 countries.—*Kyodo News*

A vehicle runs in water in Hanzhong City, northwest China's Shaanxi Province on 1 April, 2015. The provincial meteorological bureau issued a blue alert of heavy rain Wednesday morning.
XINHUA



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Countries emitting 40% of global greenhouse gas file reduction goals

WASHINGTON, 1 April — A total of 33 countries, which together produce 40 percent of the world's greenhouse gas emissions, have submitted their emission reduction targets to the UN climate body, possibly giving a boost to efforts to reach a new global climate change deal later this year.

Christiana Figueres, executive secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, which received the submissions from countries including the United States and Russia, hailed the move as a very good start.

But Japan, the fifth largest greenhouse gas emitter, was among the countries that missed the 31 March deadline, with no clear prospects on when to file its own reduction goal because it is still working out the details of its energy policy in the wake of the 2011 Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant disaster.

"We are not in a situation to specify the timing of filing (our climate action plan)," Environment Minister Yoshio Mochizuki said, apparently referring to the fact that Japan has not yet decided the composition and proportions of its future energy production, such as nuclear power, which accounted for around 30 percent of energy production before the Fukushima crisis.

The end-of-March deadline was set for countries that have been ready to submit their emission reduction targets. Other countries that have successfully met the deadline were the 28 members of the European Union, Norway, Switzerland and Mexico.

China, the world's largest greenhouse gas emitter, meanwhile, pushed back the planned date of submitting its pledge to June from the end of March.

The United States, the second largest emitter, on Tuesday pledged to cut its

emissions by 26 to 28 percent below 2005 levels by 2025, calling it an "ambitious" target, although it is below Europe's goal to slash emissions by 40 percent by 2030 compared with 1990 levels.

US Secretary of State John Kerry said his country "took an important step" through the submission of its target, and added "Now it's time for other nations (to) come forward with their own targets to help ensure we can reach a global agreement at the UN Climate Conference in Paris later this year."

Kyodo News



Participants of a friendship walk event to reenact a procession of Korean envoys to Japan dispatched by the Joseon Dynasty during Japan's Edo period leave Gyeongbokgung (back), a former royal palace in downtown Seoul, and walk along the historic route on 1 April, 2015.—KYODO NEWS

Grandson of Getty oil founder discovered dead in Los Angeles home

LOS ANGELES, 1 April — The grandson of billionaire Getty oil founder J Paul Getty was found dead on Tuesday afternoon at his home in Los Angeles, the family said in a statement.

Andrew Getty's parents, Ann and Gordon, confirmed the 47-year-old's death and requested privacy for the family during "this extremely difficult

time", adding that further details would be released as they became available.

Los Angeles Police Department spokesman Commander Andrew Smith said it was very early in the investigation and witnesses were being questioned, but no one was in custody.

"At first glance, it does not appear to be a criminal type of act. But that could

change," Smith said on Tuesday night.

The death appeared to be either accidental or natural, Los Angeles County Coroner's Office spokesman Ed Winter told reporters in a news conference broadcast by TV station KTLA 5.

"He had some medication that we recovered and don't know if he had taken the medication or what his medical history is, we do have a doctor's name that we're also going to follow up," Winter said.

The cause of Andrew Getty's death was not immediately known.

Celebrity news website TMZ.com reported that Getty, an heir to his grandfather's oil fortune, was found in a bathroom of his Hollywood Hills home about 2 pm in suspicious circumstances, and that a former girlfriend was being detained as a

potential witness or suspect.

Andrew Getty had sought a restraining order against a woman two weeks earlier, *The Los Angeles Times* said.

Getty appeared to have suffered blunt force trauma, though the cause was unclear, the paper reported, citing an anonymous law enforcement official.

Police blocked off the street outside the home with yellow crime-scene tape as more than a dozen news crews and photographers gathered.

Getty's grandfather, J Paul Getty, merged several smaller oil companies into Getty Oil in the 1960s.

At one time one of America's richest men, he was also an avid art collector who established the trust that funds the J Paul Getty Museum and several other institutions.

Reuters



The Los Angeles County Coroner van arrives at the house of Andrew Getty, 47, in the Hollywood Hills section of Los Angeles, California on 31 March, 2015.

REUTERS

WEATHER REPORT

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL EVENING OF THE 2nd April, 2015: Rain or thundershowers are likely to be isolated in Sagaing, Mandalay and Taninthayi Regions, Kachin, Northern Shan, Chin and Rakhine States and weather will be partly cloudy in the remaining Regions and States. Degree of certainty is (60%).

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Continuation of likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers in the Northern Myanmar areas.

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Joni Mitchell in 'good spirits' at LA hospital

LOS ANGELES, 1 April — Groundbreaking musician Joni Mitchell, one of the stars of the Woodstock era, was "in good spirits" at a hospital in California on Tuesday after being found unconscious at her home, her official website said.

A statement on her website said the 71-year-old singer-songwriter had regained consciousness while being transported by ambulance to a Los Angeles-area hospital.

Mitchell was undergo-



Musician Joni Mitchell performs during the filming of a television tribute to her in New York, in this file photo taken on 6 April, 2000. — REUTERS

ing medical testing in the hospital's intensive care unit but was "awake and in good spirits," the statement said. Further details on her condition and the nature of the medical emergency were not immediately provided. Representatives for the musician did not respond to requests for comment.

Celebrity news website TMZ.com said that Mitchell was taken to hospital after authorities received a 911 call from her Los Angeles

home about an unconscious woman.

The Canadian-born Mitchell was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1997 and is best known for her highly influential albums in the late '60s and '70s, including "Clouds," "Ladies of the Canyon" and "Blue."

Mitchell was a pioneering female rock artist, breaking into an industry previously dominated by men, and selling millions of albums. —Reuters

Difficulties make you stronger, mature



Actress-director Angelina Jolie, who recently underwent cancer preventative surgery and had her ovaries and fallopian tubes removed, feels by overcoming difficulties, one gains strength and maturity. —PTI

LOS ANGELES, 1 April, — Actress-director Angelina Jolie, who recently underwent cancer preventative surgery and had her ovaries and fallopian tubes removed, feels by overcoming difficulties, one gains strength and maturity. Jolie, 39, reflected on what she learned from the late Louis Zamperini, a World War II war survivor who was the focus of her directorial venture "Unbroken", reported *Us*

magazine.

"I do believe in the old saying 'What does not kill you makes you stronger'. Our experiences, good and bad, make us who we are.

"Like many of the greatest human stories, it is about the capacity of regular men and women to rise above adversity," Brad Pitt's wife answered when asked about the greatest lesson she learned from Zamperini's story.

PTI

The Rolling Stones return to US with 15-city 'Zip Code' tour

LOS ANGELES, 1 April, — British veteran rockers The Rolling Stones are bringing their classic rock'n'roll to the United States in a 15-city tour beginning in May, the band said on Tuesday.

Band members Mick Jagger, Keith Richards, Ronnie Wood and Charlie Watts will kick off the "Zip Code" tour in San Diego on 24 May and head east, making stops in cities including Minneapolis, Atlanta, Detroit and Buffalo.

The band will also be making a pit stop in Indiana's Indianapolis Motor Speedway, despite the state's controversial new "religious freedom" law that would allow businesses a right to refuse services on religious grounds. Activists said the law could be

used to discriminate against gays. Indiana Republicans pledged on Monday to clarify the law and said it was not intended to discriminate. "We are excited to be back in North America playing stadiums this summer! We are looking forward to being back on stage and playing your favourite songs," Jagger, 71, said in a statement.

The tour coincides with the release of a remastered version of the band's 1971 album "Sticky Fingers" on 26 May. It will conclude on 15 July in Quebec.

The Rolling Stones last performed across North America for "A Bigger Bang Tour" between 2005 and 2007. The band more recently toured Europe, Asia, Australia and New Zealand in 2014, but was



Mick Jagger, Keith Richards, Ron Wood and Charlie Watts of The Rolling Stones perform during their "14 on Fire" concert at Santiago Bernabeu Stadium in Madrid on 25 June, 2014. —REUTERS

hampered by the death of Jagger's girlfriend, fashion designer L'Wren Scott, and Jagger being diagnosed with a throat infection.

Formed in 1962 in London, The Rolling Stones were part of the British in-

vasion music phenomenon that took the United States by storm in the 1960s and has become one of the world's biggest rock bands, with more than 20 studio albums under its belt.

Reuters

Will Smith reunites with 'The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air' co-star

LOS ANGELES, 1 April — Will Smith and his "The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air" co-star Tatyana Ali were reunited at the 2015 Black Girls Rock event.

Smith, 46, who was at the show to present an award to his wife, actress Jada Pinkett Smith, ran into his co-star Ali backstage at the show in Newark, New Jersey. Ali, 36, played Smith's cousin Ashley Banks on the popular sitcom from 1990 to 1996.

The actress shared a quick selfie of the duo on Instagram, writing "Backstage @blackgirlsrock @mbib #imagineafuture #nofilter #fam #tatyanaali #willsmith #FRESH-PRINCE."

The TV cousins have been reunited before, with Ali joining another "Fresh Prince" star Alfonso Ribeiro at the premiere of Smith's 2008 film "Seven Pounds".

PTI



Tatyana Ali shared a quick selfie of her and Will Smith on Instagram. —PTI

Princess Diana's nephew wants to marry me: Nicki Minaj



Nicki Minaj joked that one of her Instagram photos with Louis Spencer was their "wedding photo." —PTI

LOS ANGELES, 1 April — Rapper Nicki Minaj has an admirer in Princess Diana's nephew, who wants to get married to her. Minaj, 32, spent time with Louis Spencer on Saturday at her London concert, and the pair hit it off, reported *People* magazine.

The rapper joked that one of her Instagram photos with Louis Spencer was their "wedding photo." Spencer, 21, is a viscount and the heir to his family's earldom. While Spencer is all smiles, Minaj strikes a

more serious pose in another shot that she captioned, "The Royal Family stopped by @louisspencer Nephew of Princess Diana — he said he wants to marry me."

His sister, Lady Kitty Spencer, is also a fan of Minaj. Their father, Diana's brother Charles, wrote, "Thank you @NICKIMINAJ for being so kind, meeting my son Louis after your @O2music concert last night — love the Instagram 'wedding' picture!" he tweeted.

PTI

Zayn Malik's first song out post split from One Direction



Singer Zayn Malik

LOS ANGELES, 1 April — Demo of singer Zayn Malik's first song "I Won't Mind", post his departure from band One Direction, has been released. The song is a collaboration between Malik and Naughty Boy and its demo was posted by the British producer on his SoundCloud page.

"Let the music do the talking guys. Thank us later," Naughty Boy tweeted along with a link to the song. "There is nothing but love for what was left behind. that's why we don't mind. #2016 #zaughty #zindabad," he added in the Soundcloud description. The #2016 hashtag apparently hints at the year the finished version of the

track will be released.

"I Won't Mind" is a slow-tempo ballad on which Malik sings over the simple but beautiful acoustic guitar. "We are who we are when no one's watching/And right from the start, you know I got you," he croons.

Naughty Boy began teasing his collaboration with Zayn earlier this year. Most recently, he promoted it by retweeting a bizarre video made by a fan while Directioners were still saddened by Zayn's departure from One Direction. Tomlinson then called him out on Twitter, calling him "inconsiderate" and telling him to "grow up."

PTI

GENERAL

Sale of 7.5 million Olympic tickets begins in Rio

RIO DE JANEIRO, 1 April — Tickets for the 2016 Rio Olympics went on sale in Brazil on Tuesday, with top prices comparable to those at the London Games and more than half costing 70 Brazilian reais (\$22) or less.

The most affordable of the 7.5 million tickets are 40 reais and all purchases can be paid for in up to five installments. The cheapest tickets at London 2012 were 20 pounds, at the time about \$32. The most expensive tickets in Rio — for the athletics, basketball, beach volleyball and volleyball finals — are priced at 1,200 reais, far above Brazil's minimum monthly wage of 788.

Tickets for the popular opening ceremony will cost up to 4,600 reais.

The announcement came as many Brazilians struggle to keep their heads above water amid a deepen-



Rio 2016 Olympic mascot Vinicius is seen on the top of the Sugarloaf cable car, to mark 500 days to go until the Opening Ceremony of the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro, in this handout photograph released on 24 March, 2015. —REUTERS

ing economic crisis.

The economy grew 0.1 percent last year and is expected to shrink in 2015 as corruption scandals hit investment. The Olympics competition schedule was

also released on Tuesday, with eight finals on the last day, Sunday 21 August.

The men's football tournament is the first sport to kick off on 3 August, two days before the opening cer-

emony. Tickets for the seven soccer matches scheduled for Sao Paulo have been held back due to an impasse over who will foot the bill for the renovations at the Corinthians arena.—Reuters

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Ko's consistency a major topic at Mission Hills

RANCHO MIRAGE, (California), 1 April — World number one Lydia Ko has yet to win a major title but the 17-year-old prodigy has already achieved so much in golf that she enters this week's ANA Inspiration envied by many of her rivals.

The richly talented New Zealander has landed six LPGA titles and her astonishingly consistent game has helped her shoot under par for 28 consecutive rounds, one shy one of the record set by former world number one Annika Sorenstam in 2004.

"I got to play with her last week, and it's just incredible," reigning champion Lexi Thompson told reporters at Mission Hills Country Club on Tuesday while preparing for the first women's major of the



Lydia Ko tees off on the 11th hole during round one action of the JTBC Founders Cup at Wildfire Golf Club at JW Marriott Phoenix Desert Ridge Resort & Spa.—REUTERS

season. "Her game is very consistent. There is not a weakness in her game. She's very straight off the tee, and has a great short game. You can't ask for anything better than that.

"She has a great attitude on the golf course, and probably the best tempo I've ever seen on a golf swing or a putting stroke."

US Women's Open champion Michelle Wie, another golfing prodigy who turned professional shortly before her 16th birthday in 2005, agreed.

"A lot of people ask me what the strong point is about her game," Wie, 25, said of Ko. "I think the strong point is that she really doesn't have a weakness."

Ko became the youngest golfer to hold top spot in the world rankings by tying for second place at the LPGA's season-opening event in January and the lack of a major title is the only 'blemish' on her already impressive career resume.

"That's really what she's missing at the moment," said Swede Sorenstam, a 10-time major champion. "Even though at that young age you would think she'd be missing a lot more, but she's certainly done a lot. I am amazed how well Lydia is playing."

While Ko will command much of the spotlight at Mission Hills this week, American Thompson is delighted to be back at the venue where she triumphed by three shots last year.

Reuters

Djokovic survives Miami scare; Murray claims 500th win

MIAMI, 1 April — Defending champion Novak Djokovic survived a scare from Alexandr Dolgoplov on Tuesday to reach the Miami Open quarter-finals while Andy Murray won the 500th match of his career to reach the last eight.

Djokovic was made to work for his 7-6(3), 7-5, 6-0 win over world number 65 Dolgoplov. After dropping the first set the top-seeded Serbian found himself in even deeper trouble by falling behind 4-1 in the second and facing the threat of an unexpected early exit.

But Djokovic dug deep to turn things around, break-

ing to get the set back on serve at 4-3 to the Ukrainian and then broke again for a 6-5 lead.

Having seen his chance of an upset slip through his hands, Dolgoplov faded quickly and badly dropped the third set where a dominant Djokovic won 24 of 27 points. "I was literally a game or two from losing the match. I'm just happy to be able to bounce back," said Djokovic.

"These particular matches do help me in a certain way mentally to gain that confidence and self belief in a way that I never give up and battle till the last

point, and it sends a message to the other players, as well," he added.

Djokovic, who is seeking a fifth title at Key Biscayne, will face Spaniard David Ferrer in the quarters.

World number four Murray beat South African Kevin Anderson 6-4, 3-6, 6-3 to become the 46th man in the Open Era to reach 500 career wins and the first British male. He is one of only nine active players to have reached the milestone.

Anderson fought back well in the second but after trading early breaks in the third the Scot took control breaking his South African

opponent again to grab a 3-1 advantage and never looked back. Murray will face Austrian Dominic Thiem, who reached his first Masters 1000 series quarter-final after beating France's Adrian Mannarino 7-6(5), 4-6, 7-5.

Czech Tomas Berdych made it six quarter-finals out of six tournaments this year after he advanced when Frenchman Gael Monfils retired in the second set after a bad fall. Berdych was leading 6-3, 3-2.

Berdych will next face Argentine Juan Monaco, a 6-3, 6-3 winner over Spaniard Fernando Verdasco.

Reuters

MRTV News Channel in Brief

(2-4-2015, Thursday)

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| 6:30 am | 1:40 pm |
| • Healthy Programme | • Thingyan Festival |
| 7:00 am | 2:15 pm |
| • News/ Weather Report | • Cultural Dancer |
| 7:35 am | 3:35 pm |
| • National Sport games | • Weekly Entertainment |
| 8:00 am | 4:35 pm |
| • News/ Intrnational News | • University of Distance Education (TV Lectures) |
| 8:30 am | — First Years (Physics) |
| • Head Line News | 5:00 pm |
| 9:35 am | • News / Weather Report |
| • Documentary (ASEAN) | 6:35pm |
| 10:00 am | • People's Talks |
| • News / International News | 7:35 pm |
| 11:35 am | • Current Affairs |
| • Science and Technology Progamme | 8:00 pm |
| 12:00 noon | • News / International News / Weather Report |
| • News / International News / Weather Report | 9:00 pm |
| 12:35 pm | • News |
| • Hluttaw Image | • Hluttaw Image |
| | • Clever |
| | • Talks on Old Film |

MRTV Entertainment Channel

(2-4-2015, Thursday)

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 6:00 am | 8:40 am |
| • Mono Classical Songs | • TV Drama Series |
| 6:20 am | 9:20 am |
| • Pyi Thu Ni Ti | • Song and Dance of Thingyan Festival |
| 6:45 am | 9:35 am |
| • Fashion Show | • Pyi Thu Ni Ti |
| 7:10 am | 10:10 am |
| • Myanmar Series | • Myanmar Video |
| 7:35 am | 12:00 noon |
| • Song and Dance of Thingyan Festival | • Close down |
| 7:50 am | |
| • TV Drama Series | |

Local youths have chance to join Taungthaman Cup

AMARAPURA, 1 April — Aung Naing Thu team emerged champion with a 5-3 penalty decision over Paleik team in the open football tournament of the Taungthaman Cup in Bonoh Village, Amarapura Township, Mandalay Region, on 31 March.

Comet team stood first with a 2-0 result over Hsan Nyunt (B) team in the men's open Sepak Takraw tournament. Maik Nyi Naung-Thabyayoe team secured the first prize in the junior bull-oak-card race while Let-

pan won the first prize in the senior event.

Pyithu Hluttaw MP U Thein Tun Oo, Region Hluttaw MP U Moe Naing Kyaw and well-wisher U Soe Naing, President of Myanmar Chinlone Federation, and officials presented prizes to winners in respective sports events.

Well-wisher U Soe Naing donated K1.2 million and other well-wishers K300,000 to Mandalay Region men's football team that secured championship trophy in the 4th National Sports Festival.

Tin Maung (Mandalay)



Fellaini goal earns Belgium 1-0 win over Israel



Belgium's players celebrate after scoring a goal against Israel during their Euro 2016 Group B qualifying soccer match at Teddy Stadium in Jerusalem on 31 March, 2015.—REUTERS

JERUSALEM, 1 April — Marouane Fellaini grabbed an early goal as 10-man Belgium survived Israel's spirited second-half performance to earn a 1-0 win in Euro 2016 qualifying Group B in Jerusalem on Tuesday.

Belgium dominated the first half but could not capitalise beyond Fellaini's

close-range effort in the ninth minute when he was teed up by captain Vincent Kompany who was later sent off.

The visitors lacked urgency for the rest of the match and almost paid a high price for failing to increase their lead when defender Kompany was

dismissed in the 64th for a second booking.

Israel, who struggled to find an opening against stout Belgian defending until Kompany's departure, then found gaps and created chances, though most of their efforts were wayward.

The fixture was the only Euro qualifier of the

night. It was scheduled to be played last September but had to be postponed because of the war between Israel and Gaza militants.

Belgium leapfrogged Israel to move top of the group, ahead of second-placed Wales on goal difference with both teams on 11 points from five matches. Israel are third, with nine points.

Belgium coach Marc Wilmots said his team did enough to get the result but the performance could have been better.

"My players came to this away match and they knew what they had to do to get the three points.

"We did look a little tired in the second half and we will have to see how we deal with this in our upcoming matches."

Israel coach Eli Guttman rued his side's missed chances after Saturday's 3-0 defeat at home Wales and said their next match in Bosnia on June 12 would be crucial.

Reuters

Hummels says made no promise to United's Van Gaal

BERLIN, 1 April — Borussia Dortmund's Mats Hummels has shot down reports of a deal with Manchester United coach Louis Van Gaal to join the Premier League club, saying they were invented.

The Germany defender has long been a target for several top European clubs and he recently said he would like to play abroad at some point in his career. Hummels' current deal runs out in 2017.

German media have been full of reports in recent days of a possible move at the end of the season and an alleged promise he had made to the United coach that should he decide to move that he would join the English club.

But the central defender, who won the World Cup with Germany last year, said this was false.

"Just to be clear. This alleged "promise" is sim-



Borussia Dortmund's Mats Hummels addresses a news conference in Dortmund on 17 March, 2015.—REUTERS

ply an invention... and that is saying it nicely," he said on his official Twitter account on Wednesday.

Dortmund, German champions in 2011 and 2012, have been struggling this season after a bad first half and are in 10th place, chasing a European spot with eight games left in the campaign.

Dortmund take on Bayern Munich in the Bundesliga on Saturday.

Reuters

Venus falls to Suarez Navarro, Petkovic into Miami semis



Andrea Petkovic celebrates after her match against Karolina Pliskova (not pictured) on day nine of the Miami Open at Crandon Park Tennis Centre.

REUTERS

MIAMI, 1 April — Spain's Carla Suarez Navarro came back from a dreadful first set to defeat three-times Miami Open champion Venus Williams 0-6, 6-1, 7-5 at Key Biscayne on Tuesday and set up a semi-final clash with Germany's ninth seed Andrea Petkovic.

Petkovic booked her place in the last four after a 6-4, 6-2 win over 14th seeded Czech Karolina Pliskova.

Williams utterly dominated the first set, crushing the Spaniard 6-0 in

less than half an hour but her opponent was able to regroup and battle back in impressive style.

Suddenly regaining her confidence Suarez Navarro won the first four games and went on to take the second set 6-1.

The third set bucked the trend for one-sided exchanges until Suarez Navarro broke to go 5-4 up only for Venus to break back straight away.

The Spaniard won the last two games however to continue an impressive season that has seen her

reach two other semi-finals and make the last eight at Indian Wells for the first time.

"It was a crazy match, crazy first two sets. Venus was unbelievable at the beginning. I started a bit nervous but even if you lose the first set you are still in the competition and I am happy with the way I came back," said Suarez Navarro.

Williams said she had struggled to find consistency.

"I just made a little too many errors and I was go-

ing for it the whole match. Towards the end just never found the happy medium between being aggressive and putting the ball in the court," she said.

Petkovic made a blistering start, going up 4-1 in the first set but the 23-year-old Pliskova powered her way back to 4-4 and then had three break points, all of which were saved.

Petkovic, the 2011 Miami semi-finalist, won the next five games and wrapped up the match in one hour, 16 minutes.

Reuters