

President U Thein Sein, wife enjoy Akyat Day of water festival

NAY PYI TAW, 15 April— President U Thein Sein and his wife Daw Khin Khin Win enjoyed Akyat Day, the second day of the Myanmar New Year Water Festival, at the Presidential Palace on Wednesday.

Representatives from the Office of Commander-in-Chief (Army), Nay Pyi Taw Command Headquarters, the President's Office and the Ministry of Culture performed traditional Thingyan dances alongside an ethnic Danu cultural group and musicians from Myanma Radio and Television at the Ngu Shwe Wah Hall of the Presidential Palace. The two vice presidents Dr Sai Mauk Khan and U Nyan Tun, together with their wives, gave awards to the dance troupes.

Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Ser-



vices Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win and Chief of the General Staff (Army, Navy

and Air) General Hla Htay Win gave presents to the dance troupes.

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President U Thein Sein and wife Daw Khin Khin Win enjoy Maha Thingyan water festival on Akyat Day.—MNA

Myanmar minister confident of cease-fire deal with ethnic rebels in May



TOKYO, 15 April — Myanmar President Office Minister U Aung Min expressed confidence Wednesday that a peace process between the government and ethnic rebel groups in his country is moving forward, saying a comprehensive cease-fire deal between the two parties could take place by next month.

Visiting Japan on a four-day visit through Friday to explain Myanmar's peace efforts and thank Tokyo for its instrumental role in the process, U Aung

By May Masangkay

Min said in an interview with Kyodo News that he also hopes to see more of Japan's support in such efforts.

His remarks came after Myanmar's government and representatives of 16 ethnic groups signed a draft agreement March 31 for a nationwide cease-fire in a bid to end decades of armed conflict in the country.

"We should be able to sign a nationwide cease-fire agreement formally sometime in May" after leaders of the ethnic groups agree on the draft and hold a political dialogue soon after that, he said.

To help make strides in the peace process, Japan pledged in January last year 10 billion yen (\$83.5 million) in aid to Myanmar over the next five years to improve the livelihoods of ethnic minorities in conflict-affected areas.

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By Aye Min Soe

YANGON, 15 April— The Meteorology and Hydrology Department issued a severe weather warning Wednesday, telling the public to be alert to the possibility of thunderstorms, lightning, gale force winds and hail.

Such weather patterns can follow the movement of cumulus clouds in the pre-monsoon period from mid-April to mid-May, the department said.

Cumulus clouds form in the afternoon and evening across the country in the current pre-monsoon season as daytime temperatures increase, it said.

Surface wind speeds may reach 35 to 40 miles per hour, the department said. A man was killed by lightning Monday as a thunderstorm hit Tatkon in Nay Pyi Taw District, with 40 mile-per-hour winds tearing roofs from houses.

Gale force winds also hit other regions on the same day. One man was

Weather bureau warns of thunderstorms, strong winds

injured while buildings and billboards were destroyed as powerful winds hit Hinthada, Ayeyawady Region.

Thunderstorms are most common in April and May in Myanmar.

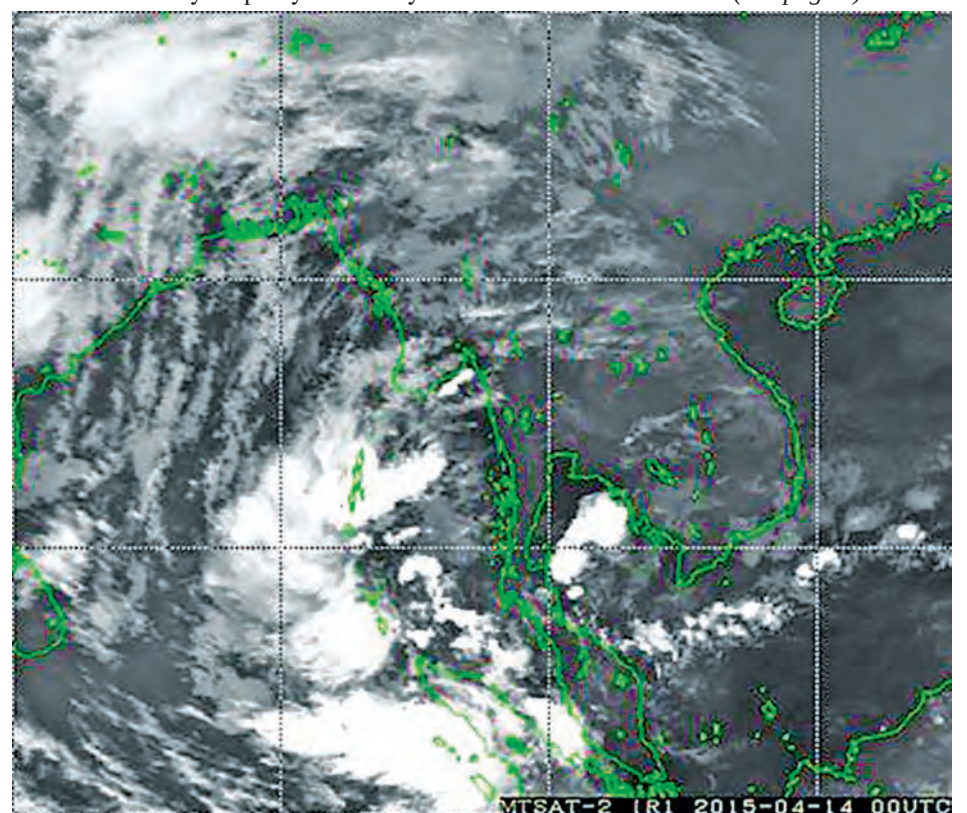
The department's forecast for Thursday is partly

cloudy in Kayah and Kayin states and rain or thunder-showers are expected to be isolated in the remaining regions and states, with 60-percent likelihood.

Rain or thundershowers have been scattered from Tuesday afternoon in Chin

State while they have been isolated in upper Sagaing, Magway, Bago, Yanon and Taninthayi Regions, as well as Shan, Rakhine and Kayah states. The weather has been partly cloudy in the remaining regions and states.

(See page 3)



Landslide-prevention work under way in Mandalay Region

MANDALAY, 15 April — Mandalay Region Minister for Transport U Kyaw Hsan inspected landslide-prevention work in several villages funded by the region and union governments.

Under the supervision of Mandalay Region Directorate of Water Resources and Improvement of River Systems, six companies are taking measures to prevent landslides at 28 villages in fiscal 2014-15.

The companies are

carrying out works in seven villages in Singu Township, eight in Madaya Township, four in Amarapura Township, two each in Ngazun, Myingyan and Singaing Townships and one each in Mahlaing and NyaungU townships.

*Maung Pyi Thu
(Mandalay)*

***Ships in Ayeyawady
River seen near
sandbanks in
waterway of summer.***



Region minister supervises development work in TadaU Township



MANDALAY, 15 April — Mandalay Region Minister for Agriculture and Livestock Breeding U Myint Than made an inspection tour of TadaU Township, Mandalay Region, on 11 April to check development tasks and departmental works.

The minister viewed the stand at the Township Sports Ground and a recreation room for athletes. He also assessed work to lay gravel at the lake of Paun-

glegyi Pagoda. Chairman of the Township Development Affairs Committee U Phone Kyaw reported on the sinking of a tube-well to supply water to the lake, as well as the gravel-laying work.

At the township hospital, the minister donated cash to a fund for providing breakfast to patients and visited the labour room and operation theatre. He instructed officials to construct drains around the

hospital building and lay wall tiles inside rooms.

The minister also inspected repairs to Paungka Lake near Leikkon Village and the laying of asphalt on Htanaunggaing-Ngazun Road. In Khwaygon Village, an official reported on the supply of water to croplands in the village. The minister urged local farmers to use water efficiently.

*Thiha Ko Ko
(Mandalay)*

Storm destroys houses, school in Natmauk Tsp

NATMAUK, 15 April—A powerful storm hit Pinmyo village in Natmauk on 13 April, tearing the roof from the Basic Education Prima-

ry School and damaging staff quarters.

The roofs of some 50 houses in the village were damaged, with the homes

of Daw Than Hmi and Daw Saw Nu completely destroyed.

A tree branch fell on a 15-foot-high pagoda in the precinct of Pobbayon Pagoda, while a prayer hall of the monastery lost corrugated iron sheets.

The executive officer of the Township Development Affairs Committee and officials assessed damage and made plans to assist victims.

Hla Win



Local residents fund power lines, roads in Amarapura Tsp

AMARAPURA, 15 April — Local residents funded the recent installation of power lines in Nwanodawsu, Ywathit, Tenantha, Thayettan and Thayaaye villages in Amarapura Township, Mandalay Region.

Well-wishers U Aung Kha, Daw Paing and family donated K6.9 million for construction of the Thayaaye concrete road, together with K4.6 million from local villagers.

The Abbot of Shitpa monastery spent K40 mil-

lion on construction of a concrete road linking Thayettan village and Myitnge.

Connecting the concrete roads in Myitnge has made it easier for residents to transport goods to brokerages in the urban area.—*Tein Taman*



Concrete products marketable in Myinmu

MYINMU, 15 April — Concrete tanks in a variety of sizes are in high demand in Myinmu, Sagaing Region.

Local residents use the tanks to store water after sinking tube-wells. Moreover, some entrepreneurs produce concrete posts in

the urban area.

“We make 10 reinforced concrete posts with the use of moulds at the same time. We can supply demand of local residents for fencing their property,” a concrete product maker said.

Fence post fetch

K4,000 each, while tanks range from K9,500 to K13,000. Concrete conduits range from K 18,000 to K45,000. The workshop owners pay K5,000 each as daily wage to workers, the owner of the Shwe Hsin-min concrete workshop said.—*Kyemon (624)*



Construction of new fire buildings concludes in Myinmu Township



MYINMU, 15 April — Myinmu Township has completed construction of a township fire station and staff quarters funded by Sagaing Region government. The region government spent K151.1 million on construction of a two-storey building for the township fire station. The region government

also assigned duty to Kyaw Swa Construction Company to build two buildings to house staff worth K180 million each.

Aung Soe Pe

Summer sports course wraps up in Chanmyathazi Tsp



MANDALAY, 15 April — Summer sports course conducted by Chanmyathazi Township Sports and Physical Education Department concluded at the township sports ground on 11 April.

Pyithu Hluttaw MP U Tin Maung and Head of Township SPED Daw Naing Naing Win spoke on the occasion. Deputy Director U Wai Zin of Mandalay Region SPED presented certificates to trainees.

Trainers taught football, Sepak Takraw, volleyball, Taekwondo and Karate to 120 trainees during the

month-long course from 10 March.

Also present at the ceremony were Amyotha Hluttaw MP U Win Maung, Township Administrator U Aung Kyaw Soe, officials and trainers.

Tin Maung (Mandalay)

Saya Zawgyi library encourages students to study Myanmar literature

PYAPON, 15 April — In honour of renowned poet and writer Saya Zargyi, the library in Pyapon Township, Ayeyawady Region, presents annual awards to students who secure distinction in the Myanmar language subject of the matriculation examination.

The latest prize presentation was held at the library on 12 April.

Pyapon District's deputy commissioner U Soe Tint and Chairman of the library committee U Wai Myint gave awards to nine outstanding students.

Since 2008, the library has given out 69 awards with the aim of increasing appreciation of Myanmar literature among students.

Thuzar Nwe (Pyapon)

Chin journalists hold meeting to network, develop media

MINDAT, 15 April — The fourth gathering of the Chin Media Network took place at the hall of Basic Education High School No 1 in Mindat, southern Chin State, from 10 to 12 April.

The network was formed with the aim of raising cooperation among Chin media across the nation. The gathering is beneficial to the development of journalism for Chin ethnics, an official of the organizing committee said.

Staff Officer U Lein Kee of Mindat District Information and Public Relations Department spoke about the important role of media and the need to report accurately, abide by media ethics, uphold Our Three Main National Causes adopted by the government, and avoid controversial issues among ethnic and religious groups.

Zo Hay Hsar



Road upgrade eases transport problems in Sagaing Region

KYUNHLA, 15 April — Kyunhla Township Rural Development Department in Sagaing Region has constructed an earthen road section, bridge and culverts on Indine-Kywete-Leiksin-taung Road with funding from the government.

Myo Myat Chan Tha Company, assigned construction duty, built a 5-mile-long earthen Indine-Kywete section, five 60-foot-long culverts and one 15-foot-long culvert on

the road section, while Design Mandalay Company constructed the 9.5-mile-long earthen road section linking Inhla and Leiksin-taung villages.

A 200-foot-long and 15-foot-wide wooden bridge was built on Kywete-Inhla Phonhmwa creek. Eight more bridges were also constructed between Inhla and Leiksin-taung villages, engineer U Khin Maung Win of Design Mandalay Com-

pany said. "Local people from the western part of Thaphanseik Dam relied on waterway transport in the rainy season," a local resident said. "The region is teeming with many creeks, and whenever it rains, local people and students have to wait for water levels to subside."

"Thanks to bridges and culverts in the region, all the people enjoy fruits of smooth transport."

Myo Win Nyo (Kyunhla)



REGIONAL



People take part in water-splashing battles in Vientiane, Laos on 14 April, 2015. People celebrated the water-splashing festival or the traditional New Year from 14 to 16 April. —XINHUA

US to deploy advanced air, naval equipment to Philippines: official

MANILA, 15 April — The United States plans to deploy advanced air and naval equipment in the Philippines to strengthen its military presence in the region, Philippine Foreign Secretary Albert del Rosario said on Wednesday.

Del Rosario said in an interview with the television station ANC that the US military buildup plan has been outlined by Defence Secretary Ashton Carter.

“They are already looking at deploying to the Philippines various advanced equipment, air force

equipment, naval equipment, maritime domain equipment,” del Rosario said, without elaborating.

US President Barack Obama has vowed to pivot the US military presence in the Asia-Pacific region, home to some of the world’s fastest growing economies that is increasingly important to US interests.

The Asia-Pacific security environment, however, has been shadowed by territorial disputes in the East China Sea as well as the South China Sea, where the Chinese military has been playing an assertive role in

the eyes of Manila and other countries with conflicting territorial claims.

Del Rosario said the Philippine government has asked Washington to give the Philippines “stronger support,” including defence equipment and military training.

Del Rosario said he plans to visit the United States shortly to discuss the US military deployment plans with Secretary of State John Kerry, Carter and members of the US Congress.

He said he will also take up China’s land recla-

mation projects in the disputed South China Sea.

On Monday, the Philippines accused China of bolstering its military presence in the South China Sea through land reclamation on some of the strategic significant isles in the Spratlys, which it said would “raise the specter of increasing militarization.”

China has asserted sovereignty over most of the South China Sea, which is also claimed in whole or in part by Taipei, Vietnam, Brunei, Malaysia and the Philippines.

Kyodo News

Vietnam Expo 2015 kicks off in Hanoi

HANOI, 15 April — The 25th Vietnam International Trade Fair, or Vietnam Expo 2015, kicked off here on Wednesday, with the participation of around 600 international and domestic companies.

During the four-day event, a total of 720 booths showcased products from 27 countries and regions, including Algeria, Australia, Bangladesh, Belgium, Cambodia, China, China’s Taiwan, Cuba, Czech Republic, Indonesia, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Laos, Malaysia, Nepal, Poland, Russia, Singapore, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Switzerland, Thailand, the United Kingdom and Vietnam.

Bui Huy Son, head of Vietnam’s Ministry of Industry and Trade’s Trade Promotion Agency, organizer of the expo, said at the opening that the expo, themed “Enhancing cooperation in Association of Southeast Asian Nation (ASEAN) economic community,” is a practical trade promotion activity which helps to boost export of Vietnamese companies into regional countries, especially in border areas.

Vietnam Expo, held for the first time in 1991, is expected to be an effective bridge linking producers, investors and companies who are seeking business opportunities, said Son.

Xinhua

Cambodia breaks Guinness World Record for largest Madison dance

PHNOM PENH, 15 April — Cambodia on Wednesday broke Guinness World Record for the largest Madison dance, a judge announced. The 2,015 participants performed the Madison dance for five minutes at the complex of the Angkor world heritage site in northwest Cambodia’s Siem Reap City to celebrate Khmer New Year, which began on Tuesday for three days. The dance was organized by the Union of Youth Federations of Cambodia, which is led by Prime Minister Hun Sen’s youngest son Hun Many.

“I have the pleasure to announce that the largest Madison dance was achieved by the Union of Youth Federations of Cambodia in Cambodia’s Siem Reap with 2,015 participants,” Seyda Subasi Gemici, a Guinness World Records judge from Germany, declared the result, which was live broadcast on local Bayon TV channel.

She said it was a historical day for the Cambodian participants to make a successful attempt of setting a new Guinness World Record for the largest Madison dance, beating the last record of the largest Madison dance with 1,155 participants in Australia in 2014.—Xinhua

Probe begins after Asiana Airlines failed landing in Hiroshima

HIROSHIMA, 15 April — Japanese investigators began analyzing on Wednesday how and why an Asiana Airlines aircraft from Seoul ran off the runway at Hiroshima airport the night before, leaving more than 20 passengers injured.

The aircraft’s landing gear is thought to have struck 6.4-metre-tall wireless communication equipment located 325 metres away from the runway, a transport ministry official said.

It may have also lost too much altitude amid poor visibility in low cloud, or got caught up in turbulence. The passengers and crew got off the damaged aircraft after the landing just after 8 pm on Tuesday night.

Minister of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism Akihiro Ota told a Diet committee on Wednesday he had instructed Asiana Airlines soon after the accident to “determine the cause, and report the steps it will take to prevent this from happening again.”

Hiroshima police said on Wednesday they have investigated the accident site as a crime scene, potentially involving corporate negligence resulting in injury.

The Japan Transport Safety Board dispatched five investigators to the site on Wednesday afternoon. Their probe into the cause of the accident is likely to hinge on determining why the aircraft came in too low.

Their tasks will include assisting investigators from South Korea’s Aviation and Railway Accident Investigation Board, also dispatched to the scene.

The injury count is still unclear, with the transport ministry reporting 27 people injured, and Hiroshima police saying on Wednesday afternoon that 23 passengers and 2 crewmembers had sustained minor injuries.

Apart from two infant girls — an 11-month-old and a three-year-old — and a five-year-old boy, the injured are 12 men and 10 women ranging from their 20s to their 60s, the police said.

The police said 17 of the injured are Japanese,

five are South Korean, two are Chinese and one is a US national.

According to Asiana Airlines, the aircraft was carrying 73 passengers from 10 countries, including 46 Japanese, nine Chinese and eight South Koreans.

The airline said the pilot had logged over 8,000 hours’ flying time and the copilot over 1,500 hours.

Hiroshima airport is known to be prone to fog and clouds, according to the transport ministry. It is equipped with a high-level instrument landing system to help pilots land safely in reduced visibility, but this could not be used in the Tuesday evening landing.

Most landings at the



Photo taken from a Kyodo News helicopter on 15 April, 2015, shows an Asiana Airlines Airbus A320 from Seoul, which ran off of runway soon after landing at Hiroshima Airport in the evening of 14 April, 2015. Marks from the tires are seen on the grass. It was reported that more than 20 people on board sustained minor injuries.—KYODO NEWS

airport are from the west, but because of northwesterly winds the aircraft instead came in to land from

the east, outside the path of the system’s ground transmitter.

Kyodo News

China applauds US move to drop Cuba from terror list

BEIJING, 15 April — China spoke positively of US President Barack Obama's decision on Tuesday to remove Cuba from a list of state sponsors of terrorism.

"We have noticed the report," Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hong Lei said at a regular Press conference on Wednesday, adding China welcomes and supports the two countries' positive engagement and efforts to promote normalization of their relations.

It has been a consistent stance of China that the United States should lift sanctions toward Cuba as early as possible and promote the normalization of ties, Hong said.

It is in the interests of both countries and peoples, as well as the peace, stability and development of the region, he said. Cuba has been on the US list of state sponsors of terrorism since 1982 and was one of only four countries on the list — the others are Iran, Syria and Sudan.—*Xinhua*

Congress will not derail nuclear talks, Iran says



US Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) (L) walks to closed door briefings with US Senators and Secretary of State John Kerry (not pictured) on nuclear negotiations with Iran on Capitol Hill in Washington on 14 April, 2015.—REUTERS

DUBAI, 15 April — Iran will not allow US domestic politics to derail nuclear negotiations, Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Marzieh Afkham said on Wednesday, after US President Barack Obama conceded that Congress will have the power to review any final deal.

Republicans and some Democrats in Congress had pressured Obama to allow legislative oversight of the nuclear negotiations.

India builds first 'smart' city as urban population swells

GANDHINAGAR, (India), 15 April — India's push to accommodate a booming urban population and attract investment rests in large part with dozens of "smart" cities like the one being built on the dusty banks of the Sabarmati river in western India.

So far, it boasts modern underground infrastructure, two office blocks and not much else.

The plan, however, is for a meticulously planned metropolis complete with gleaming towers, drinking water on tap, automated waste collection and a dedicated power supply - luxuries to many Indians.

With an urban population set to rise by more than 400 million people to 814 million by 2050, India faces the kind of mass urbanization only seen before in China, and many of its biggest cities are already bursting at the seams.

Ahead of his election last May, Prime Minister Narendra Modi promised 100 so-called smart cities by 2022 to help meet the rush.

At a cost of about \$1 trillion, according to estimates from consultants

KPMG, the plan is also crucial to Modi's ambition of attracting investment while providing jobs for the million or more Indians who join the workforce every month.

His grand scheme, still a nebulous concept involving quality communications and infrastructure, is beginning to take shape outside Gandhinagar, capital of the state of Gujarat, with the first "smart" city the government hopes will provide a model for India's urban future.

"Most (Indian) cities have not been planned in an integrated way," said Jagan Shah, director of the National Institute of Urban Affairs which is helping the government set guidelines for the new developments.

Among the challenges to getting new cities built or existing cities transformed is the lack of experts who can make such huge projects work and attracting private finance.

"To get the private sector in, there is a lot of risk mitigation that needs to happen because nobody wants a risky proposition," he told *Reuters*, stressing the need for detailed planning. To build smart cities, India allocated 60 billion rupees (\$962 million) in its annual federal budget for the financial year starting on 1 April, even as it spent just a fraction of last year's allocation of 70.6 billion



Engineers walk past a cooling system plant under construction inside Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT) at Gandhinagar, in the western Indian state of Gujarat on 10 April, 2015.—REUTERS

rupees, said Shah.

Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT), as the smart city is called, will double up as a financial hub, with tax and other breaks to lure banks, brokerages and other businesses.

Developed in partnership with IL&FS Engineering and Construction, it aims to compete with India's own financial capital of Mumbai as well as overseas rivals like Dubai and Singapore.

Pressure on India's existing urban centers is already intense, with cities like Mumbai gridlocked by traffic and hampered by poor infrastructure and a

lack of amenities like parks and effective public transport.

Yet some experts believe that building new cities may not be the answer to India's swelling urban population.

"To address India's urbanization challenge we have to start looking at our existing cities," said Shirish Sankhe, director at consultant McKinsey and Company, India.

He added that new cities would be only a small part of the solution relative to brownfield projects.

India has built planned cities in the past, including Chandigarh, designed by French architect Le Cor-

busier, and Gandhinagar itself. But the scale of its current push is unprecedented.

A bird's eye view from atop one of the two office buildings on the 886-acre GIFT site, a venture which began when Modi was chief minister of Gujarat, shows little sign yet of the 9 billion rupees spent on the first phase.

But the sandy plain hides infrastructure including an underground tunnel for utilities, a first in India.

The government has yet to decide what exactly will make a city "smart", but the program is expected to include building new centers as well as adapting existing ones.—*Reuters*

'We will never forget you,' Malala writes to kidnapped Nigerian girls

NEW YORK, 15 April — Pakistani teenager and Nobel laureate Malala Yousafzai on Tuesday told Nigerian schoolgirls who were kidnapped a year ago by Boko Haram militants they will never be forgotten and to never lose hope.

"Please know this: we will never forget you. We will always stand with you," 17-year-old Yousafzai wrote in an open letter to the missing girls. "We will not rest until you have been reunited with your families."

Yousafzai was shot in the head on a school bus in Pakistan by the Taliban in 2012 for refusing to quit school and won global acclaim for her passionate advocacy of women's right to education.

Last year, she was awarded the Nobel Peace

Prize jointly with Indian children's rights activist Kailash Satyarthi.

In her letter, Yousafzai called on Nigerian authorities and the international community "to do more" to free the more than 200 schoolgirls abducted by Boko Haram Islamist militants a year ago.

Their abduction from a secondary school in Chibok in the country's Northeast last April drew international attention to the humanitarian crisis caused by attempts by the militants to establish a medieval-style caliphate in religiously mixed Nigeria.

Celebrities, including US singer-songwriter Mary J Blige and First Lady Michelle Obama, joined in a global #BringBackOurGirls campaign last year to draw attention to the kid-

napping as public outrage spread across the world.

While some of the girls managed to escape the militants' grip, the majority of them remains missing.

"In my opinion, Nigerian leaders and the international community have not done enough to help you," wrote Yousafzai.

On the occasion of the one-year anniversary of the kidnapping on Tuesday, Nigeria's President-elect Muhammadu Buhari vowed to make every effort to rescue the girls, but conceded that it was not clear whether they would ever be found.

Earlier this week, Amnesty International said in a report that Boko Haram has kidnapped at least 2,000 Nigerian women and girls since the start of 2014, many of whom were

sexually abused or trained to fight. In July last year, Yousafzai visited some of the abducted girls' parents in Nigeria and met five girls who had escaped the kidnapping.

"Your parents are grief-stricken. They love you, and they miss you," she wrote to the missing girls. However, she said there were reasons to be optimistic about rescuing the girls and encouraged them to "never lose hope."

To mark the anniversary of the kidnapping, The Malala Fund, the charitable organization founded by Yousafzai and her father Ziauddin to empower girls through education, launched the #DearSisters initiative to gather messages of hope and support for the abducted girls.

Reuters

WORLD

Israel happy at compromise deal between Congress-Obama: minister

JERUSALEM, 15 April—Israel is pleased at a compromise deal achieved between the United States Congress and the administration of President Barack Obama, Israeli Intelligence Minister Yuval Steinitz said on Wednesday.

“We are certainly happy this morning, this is an achievement for Israeli policy ... (Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s) speech in Congress ... was decisive in achieving this law, which is a very important element in preventing a bad deal, or at least, in improving the agreement and making it more reasonable,” Steinitz told Israel Radio. Obama dropped his opposition on Tuesday to a bill giving Congress a voice on a nuclear deal with Iran, after members of his Democratic

Party negotiated changes to the bill that had won strong support from both parties.

The bill that passed cut to 30 days from 60 the time in which Congress can review any final nuclear agreement and eliminated the requirement that Obama certify that Iran is not supporting acts of terrorism against the United States.

Instead, it requires the administration to send Congress regular, detailed reports on a range of issues including Iran’s support for terrorism, ballistic missiles and nuclear programme.

Obama has invested enormous political capital throughout his presidency in securing an international agreement to ensure Iran does not develop a nuclear weapon, relying on tight sanctions that crippled

Iran’s economy and forced it to negotiate. “This is more pressure and another barrier in the face of a bad agreement and therefore the administration and the negotiating team will make more of an effort to seal gaps and to achieve an agreement that looks better, or at least more reasonable, so that it will pass in Congress,” Steinitz said. Netanyahu and Obama have differed sharply over an agreement with Iran which Israel fears will not be stringent enough and would allow the Islamic Republic to develop nuclear weapons.

Iran says its nuclear programme is peaceful, but it has never welcomed intrusive inspections and has in the past kept some nuclear sites secret. Securing proper inspections is cru-



cial for the United States and other Western powers to ensure a final deal, due by 30 June, is effective and to persuade a skeptical US Congress and Israel to accept the agreement.

Reuters

Israel’s Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (C) and Strategic Affairs Minister Yuval Steinitz (L) attend the weekly cabinet meeting in Jerusalem

on 14 Dec, 2014.

REUTERS

Obama tells Congress he plans to remove Cuba from terrorism list

WASHINGTON/HAVANA, 15 April —President Barack Obama told Congress on Tuesday he intends to remove Cuba from a US list of state sponsors of terrorism, clearing the main obstacle to restoring diplomatic relations and reopening embassies shut for more than half a century.

Obama and Cuban President Raul Castro sat down at a Western Hemisphere summit in Panama on Saturday for the first meeting of its kind between US and Cuban leaders in nearly 60 years. Cuba’s communist government had said normal relations between the two former Cold War foes would be impossible as long as it remained on the US blacklist. Obama ordered a review of Cuba’s status after he and Castro announced a diplomatic breakthrough on 17 December.

Cuba was placed on the list in 1982 when it was

aiding rebel movements in Africa and Latin America, but Havana long ago ceased supporting foreign insurgencies. Presence on the list, however, has continued to limit its access to international banking and overseas financial markets.

Foreign investors in Cuba said delisting the country would prove positive for the Caribbean island’s economy. Banks could legally do business with Cuba while it was on the list but the regulations proved onerous, leading 20 banks to stop doing business with the Cuban government or Cuban interests in third countries over the past 18 months, Cuba said. “The Cuban government recognises the fair decision made by the president of the United States to eliminate Cuba from a list that it never should have been included on,” Josefina Vidal, the Cuban foreign ministry’s chief of US affairs, said in a

statement. US Secretary of State John Kerry said in a statement welcoming Obama’s decision that “circumstances have changed since 1982,” when Cuba was listed “because of its efforts to promote armed revolution by forces in Latin America.”

In his report to Congress, Obama certified that “the government of Cuba has not provided any support for international terrorism during the preceding six-month period,” and “has provided assurances that it will not support acts of international terrorism in the future.”

Congress has 45 days to consider Obama’s decision before it takes effect, but lawmakers cannot stop it unless both chambers approve a joint resolution, a move that is highly unlikely.

Many of Obama’s fellow Democrats hailed his decision and some experts said it was long overdue.

But US Senator Marco

Rubio, a Cuban-American lawmaker from south Florida and newly announced Republican presidential candidate, denounced it as a “terrible” decision, saying Cuba was helping North Korea evade sanctions and harbouring fugitives from American justice.

The fugitives include Joanne Chesimard, wanted in the slaying of a New Jersey state trooper in the early 1970s.

Republican US Representative Mario Diaz-Balart, another Cuban-American lawmaker from Florida, accused Obama of “capitulating to dictators.”

Obama could have announced his intention to lift the terrorism designation and move forward on restoring diplomatic relations at last weekend’s summit.

But US officials privately said they saw the issue as leverage in broader normalization negotiations.

Cuba’s removal from the list will ease certain economic sanctions on the island, but the broader US embargo on Cuba will remain in place because only Congress can end it. Iran, Sudan and Syria remain on the list.

Some experts said US banks would remain cautious for now. “Banks are certainly watching for further developments, but the Cuban government has a lot more steps to take until the industry can take action,” said Rob Rowe, vice president of the American Bankers Association.

The two countries have made headway toward an agreement on embassies. A US official expressed optimism but added, “We’re still not quite there yet.” Among the unresolved issues is a US demand for freedom of movement for its diplomats.

Cuba’s human rights record still draws criticism from Washington, and Ha-

vana has shown little if any sign of political opening in the one-party system.

“We will continue to have differences with the Cuban government,” the White House said.

Geoff Thale of the Washington Office on Latin America, a private group that promotes democracy in the hemisphere, said: “Taking Cuba off the list of terrorist states is a sensible, and long-overdue step.”

Cuba was added to the list at the height of the Cold War when it was aiding leftist insurgencies such as the FARC rebels in Colombia. The most recent State Department report in 2013 also accused Havana of providing safe haven to the armed Basque separatist group ETA, which is now inactive and last year pledged to disarm. Cuba is now hosting peace talks between the Colombian government and the FARC.—Reuters

Poland’s President Komorowski leads as election nears

WARSAW, 15 April—With less than one month to go before Poland’s presidential election, an IBRIS poll on Wednesday showed incumbent Bronislaw Komorowski ahead with a 42-percent backing, with his conservative challenger Andrzej Duda supported by 29 percent of the voters.

The poll, conducted for the Rzeczpospolita daily, showed support for Komorowski up by 1 percent-



Poland’s President Bronislaw Komorowski age point since IBRIS’ last poll, with support for Duda increasing by 2 percentage points.

Trailing them are former rock musician Pawel Kukiz, right-wing politi-

cian Janusz Korwin-Mikke, Magdalena Ogorek, supported by the leftist SLD party, Janusz Palikot, who heads the liberal-leftist Ruch Palikota party, and Adam Jarubas who is supported by PSL, the junior partner in the ruling coalition.

The vote, planned for 10 May, will go to a second round unless any of the candidates secures at least 50-percent backing.

Reuters

Greece rules out early election

ATHENS, 15 April—Greece’s state minister on Wednesday ruled out that the leftist government was considering an

early election.

Speculation has been rife in recent days that Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras’s cash-strapped



A woman makes her way in front of the Greek Finance Ministry in Athens on 30 March, 2015.
REUTERS

government may call snap polls if it does not reach a deal on reforms with its European Union and IMF lenders that will unlock further aid under its bailout.

“There is no point in calling elections,” Alekos Flabouraris told Greek TV. “They took place two months ago, we received a specific mandate which we will serve. We do not need elections, I rule it out 100 percent,” he said.

Reuters

PERSPECTIVES

Thursday, 16 April, 2015

Beware of health hazards of drinking in summer

By Aung Khin

Myanmar has a hot season from March to May with scorching daytime temperatures. During this period, drinking too much alcohol can damage health. Drinking impairs both physical and mental abilities and it also decreases inhibitions.

Alcoholic beverages contain different percentages of alcohol. A standard beer contains about 5 percent alcohol; wine contains 12 percent and spirits have 40 percent. Distilled alcohol is classified by “proof,” with 100-proof alcohol containing 50 percent alcohol, 80-proof containing 40 percent and so on.

Medical experts say a standard drink is considered to be 5 ounces of wine, 12 ounces of wine cooler, 12 ounces of beer or 1.5 ounces of 80-proof distilled liquor. Doctors recommend men limit daily alcohol consumption to two drinks, while women should have no more than one drink per day.

However, all need to assume responsibility not only for health, but also the safety of others in terms of driving and other actions under the influence of alcohol, as consumption can cause mental and physical problems.

Some effects of drinking to excess are not reversible and can cause permanent damage to health. Health problems include high blood pressure, liver disease, cancer, particularly breast cancer, cancer of the gullet, mental health problems, such as depression and anxiety, infertility, heart disease, stomach ulcers, damage to an unborn child, osteoporosis (thinning of the bones), pancreatitis, stroke, dementia and brain damage.

As alcohol is a powerful chemical, organs known to be damaged by long-term misuse in-

clude the brain and nervous system, heart, liver and pancreas. In the long term, alcohol can weaken the immune system, making heavy drinkers more vulnerable to serious infections.

Alcoholics are more likely to have relationship problems, particularly with their immediate families. This often makes life hard for their dependents. Many young people have lost their lives in vain due to excessive drinking. Some ASEAN countries have already limited the time for selling alcohol. The move has seen some benefits such as reducing traffic accidents and criminal cases. Myanmar should also consider something similar, while also taking action against producers of substandard beverages.

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.

Carpe Diem, my boys! But, be prudent!

By Kin Mg Oo

Time consumed a year and a day of our Myanmar Calendar. Every individual wish to have peaceful life and future from the new year onward, praying that misfortunes and unlucky things in the last year will vanish with the ခြံနံရေ (=the water poured on each other as a symbol of lessening impact of the summer hot season’s scorching heat). Undeniably, each of our lives is a mixture of happiness and sufferings. We try to relieve our sufferings in our own ways, during the Water Festival. Most elders and some younger ones go to monasteries and meditation centers doing meritorious deeds whereas most of the youths visit about entertainment pavilions in cities and towns. Our ways to refrain ourselves from worries and sufferings are in fact brief. To put it simply, our minimal attempts do not help us liberate from our actual problems to the full. After our summer retreat, we usually return to our original fold. That is to say, we the elders have to engage ourselves in our daily routines for our survival again, with the younger busying themselves with preparations for their future and hopes.

During my free hours, my mind wandered about, especially to my childhood days, my school life, my

contemporaries, my career, my family and the society I was involved. As a boy, I was recognized to be at the top of the educational totem pole. Though being indulged by well-to-do parents, I managed myself not to go astray. Like my peers, I had had an ambition. However, I failed to accomplish the edifice of my hope. I would not like to ascribe my failure to bad luck. Some of my inferiors and juniors acquired impressive educational attainments. Some could create wealth to some extent. Why? We need to deploy our resources—abilities, talents, skills and opportunities. They did, unlike me. There was no jealousy conceived towards them in my mind. Their gain was not a fluke, and they did not achieve their present status overnight, by dubious ways and means. I respect and admire them for their willingness to help our society by contributing tidy money to philanthropic organizations, monastic educational institutions and medicinal aids to the needy. Much as we could not afford to do ourselves likewise, we were never conspicuous by our absence when it came to giving voluntary labor in their unadulterated donations. Almost every day, we can get such a vicarious thrill or something out of watching news media. In fact, we all prefer seeing the best news of its kind. This is the very basic na-

ture of humans who want peace and happiness.

During the years prior to my middle school days, I had ever seen my brothers and my seniors taking active part in the Scout and Wolf Cub activities such as weekends’ town-wide sanitation work, giving aids to the old and etc., hand in hand with their fellow members, under the guidance of teachers. As far as I know, there lived in our native-town, Tada-U, the then All Burma Scout’s Vice or 2ndnd Commissioner Dr U Hla Gyi. Occasionally, he made us gather at his house to show foreign movies and give some snacks. Somehow we loved him, but later we came to know we liked his charming face and his generosity. We regarded those scouts to be our ideals in our minds, hoping to emulate them in our mature years. Unluckily, the practice ceased to exist at that time. I firmly believe in the importance of those organizations. We can say for sure that these activities can implant love of collective works and helpfulness in us and simultaneously get rid of selfishness from us. Now is the time when we are marching towards a democratized nation. There can be seen many youths giving voluntary work and humanitarian aids to sufferers and people in need nationwide. Last year saw the reactivation of the Scout activity by the government. Scout is an organization

that trains young people in practical skills and does a lot of activities with them, for example camping. In my opinion, the Scouts is not a secluded organization. The government should encourage all interested youths to join such organizations and activities so that our country will abound with selfless citizens in future.

As a sexagenarian, I want to claim that we, especially our younger generation, are having a better world. When and why? We always say that future belongs to youths. We were youths, but we groped in the dark. Due to living in the backwater of the advanced technology and surviving under the suppression and news blackout imposed by the then government, we had gloomy days of more than half a century and lost our future. We were not left to starve to death but we did not have the education we deserved. Despite that we held our education bonafides, we had to experience uneasiness of unemployment. Free as we were from the above-said unemployment, we found it difficult to be in a right post because of anointed candidates on the priority list. Knowingly who created these, we had no chance to and dared not disclose it. Fear governing us drove away our desire to disclose our hopes and dreams. A bad system ruined not only the future of

every individual but also that of the whole country. Now is not the time when we should blame to each other. We all are responsible for taking part in building up our nation into a democratized nation.

Youths are surely to replace the aging generation. In other word, they will lead the country to the nation of the utmost peace and prosperity. To be able to do so, the leaders-to-be must be equipped with skills and qualifications. Ways of ruling a country is not like that of a family or a camp. In dealing with household affairs, a household leader has responsibilities to solve its problems. A leader of a country, being the one of millions of nuclear families, will have innumerable duties to perform. Here I want to adopt a well-known catchphrase of Hillary Clinton who will run for US presidency in 2016. Everyday we, Myanmar people need champions and I want you to be those champions. Rome wasn’t built in one day. And we need thousands and thousands of champions to lead our country in their respective sectors. Carpe Diem, my boys!

An opportunity cannot reach you for two consecutive times. Youthfulness, enthusiasm, activeness and daring are the things of youths. We had already had these qualities. We can no longer attain those. So we, the elders, must acknowl-

edge the role of the younger. Plus, we must be ready and get ready to hand over responsibilities to them. Mother Teresa once said, “Yesterday is gone. Tomorrow has not yet come. We have only today. Let us begin”. Quite right in saying so! We should not look mournfully into the past. There also is a noteworthy saying of Mahatma Gandhi that the future depends on what you do today. Throughout our history, we had many heroes and unsung ones whom we will keep in our minds. You will belong to those kinds. You should not forgo an opportunity to take part in the nation-building. Carpe diem means “seize the day” or “pluck the day as it is ripe”. It is generally rendered as follows: take advantage of the opportunities arising in the day. Here I would not like you to misconstrue advantage of the opportunities as self-interest. A leader-to-be needs to fortify his or her attitudes—moral, spiritual and intellectual ones regarded to be criteria. Moral bankruptcy can reduce anyone to a man of disgrace and dishonor. Deterioration of these abilities begets inexorability of bribery and corruption, thus ruining our society. On our side, we should help best practices develop among younger minds. Recently, there was a literary debate between two writers seen on face-book pages. (See page 9)

Thingyan revellers converge on Kandawgyi Ring Road for Akyat Day



Thingyan revellers celebrate the Myanmar New Year Water Festival in front of a water-throwing pavilion on the Kandawgyi Ring Road's Kanyeiktha Street. — PHOTO: YE MYINT

By Ye Myint

YANGON, 15 April — Revellers packed streets across Yangon, including Kandawgyi Ring Road, on Wednesday for Akyat Day, the official second day of Myanmar's Thingyan New

Year Water Festival.

Kandawgyi Ring Road, where many of the biggest festival sites are located, was bursting with merry-makers dancing to music and splashing water for a third day of celebrations beginning with festi-

val eve on Monday.

Revellers have one day of Thingyan partying left, with celebrations culminating 16 April.

Many soaking festival-goers chose to walk along the ring road's drenched Kanyeiktha

Mandalarians enjoy water festival on Akyat Day

Street, lined with water-throwing pavilions built close to one another.

Kandawgyi Park was also filled with Thingyan partygoers gathering for a free concert by band Iron Cross.

Similar scenes of revelry also played out on drenched Pyay Road, Kaba-Aye Pagoda Road and downtown streets, with merry-makers soaked in water.—GNLM

MANDALAY, 15 April — Buddhist people performed meritorious deeds such as practising meditation, taking Sabbath at religious edifices and paying homage to pagodas in Mandalay on Akyat Day of Maha Thingyan festival on Wednesday.

Revelers enjoy water festival the pandals around moats in Royal Mandalay City. Chief Minister of Mandalay Region U

Ye Myint and wife Daw Myat Ngwe, authorities and artists participated in the water festival, dousing each other.

Vocalists and artists performed entertainment to the accompaniment of modern music bands at the pandals.

Local residents served meals and refreshments to people from four corners.

Tin Maung (Mandalay)



Thingyan revellers enjoy water festival in Mandalay on Akyat Day. TIN MAUNG (MANDALAY)

Market festival assists women with HIV, low-income youth



By Khaing Thanda Lwin

YANGON, 15 April — A non-profit organization helping women living with HIV and disadvantaged youth will hold a fundraising market festival on 9-10 May at Marketplace by City Mart, a premium supermarket in Bahan Township, the NPO's director said.

Twenty kinds of handicraft including plush toys, ornaments and wallets made by women with HIV will be

Customers show their interest in handicrafts made by Action for Public that displayed at last year's art expo in Yangon.—PHOTO: KHAING THANDA LWIN

displayed for sale at the two-day event, Action for Public director Daw Kyi Pyar Chit Saw told The Global New Light of Myanmar on Monday.

"At the event, those handmade materials will be sold at fair prices and two-thirds of the products are expected to be sold," she said.

"Most of them are traditional handmade dolls which can draw the attention of people."

She said Action for Public will spend the proceeds from the festival on improving the circumstances of women and young people, with plans to send its members to attend a pattern

drafting and design course in Yangon after Myanmar's New Year Water Festival.

Established in 2008, the organization aims to promote the lives of women with HIV as well as youth from disadvantaged backgrounds. For some women with HIV, the organization provides micro-financing programs to set up small businesses. It also empowers women through training and helps provide jobs in which they can use their newly acquired skills.

The NPO is currently helping set up sewing and other small-scale businesses for people receiving its assistance.—GNLM

Carpe Diem, my boys! But . . .

(from page 8)

Frankly speaking, we welcome such a kind. I cannot help acknowledging astuteness of the young writer, but I am afraid it would be tantamount to attacking ad hominem. Only if we have mutual respect and understanding between the two

generations, can we go smoothly to our destination. The elder should not despise the younger. Thus the latter should not challenge our respected savants. I firmly believe that such a learned-cum-experienced person as Sayargyi can share invaluable knowledge

and advice to us all. We need leading young persons of great charisma, persuasiveness and ebullience in every field. Prudence will lead you to success.

I remembered a few lines in a primer which reads as follows: Cart-wheels are stuck, In the mud. Help push it on to

the land, Too heavy to lift up from the swamp? With concerted effort in unison, It sure will be in motion.

On our way to a democratic nation, we are now facing deteriorating situations. To overcome these, we are to work hand-in-

hand even with those holding views of polar difference. Nation-building is not a one-man mission. We need to recruit, or rather produce more and more active citizens. With the advent of the Myanmar New Year, I want to urge that our leader embryos make their own capacity-building, share their knowledge, relay

the practice of performing their duties conscientiously without procrastination to their juniors. I want to repeat one more time, "Carpe Diem, my boys! But, be prudent! Then, it is just a matter of time before we reach a peaceful and prosperous country.

May all citizens have a promising future each!

Egypt and Saudi Arabia discuss maneuvers as Yemen battles rage



The Russian ambassador to the United Nations Vitaly Churkin abstains from a vote in the United Nations Security Council attempting to halt the escalating conflict in Yemen in New York on 14 April, 2015.

REUTERS

ADEN, 15 April—The UN Security Council on Tuesday imposed an arms embargo targeting the Iran-allied Houthi rebels who now control most of Yemen as battles in the south of the country intensified.

Egypt said it and Saudi Arabia had discussed holding a “major military

maneuver” in Saudi Arabia with other Gulf states, following talks on the progress of the three-week-old Saudi-led campaign of air strikes against the Houthis in Yemen.

The statement from the Egyptian presidency appeared to be a sign that members of the Sunni Arab coalition attacking the

Houthis may carry through on threats to eventually follow their air campaign with a ground intervention or at least have a show of force next door.

Arab states have been bombing the Houthis in support of militias resisting an advance by the group and army units loyal to ousted former president

Yemen President Ali Abdullah Saleh.

The conflict, though rooted in local rivalries, has become a proxy battlefield for Sunni-ruled Saudi and mainly Shi’ite Iran, the main regional powers.

The UN resolution also demanded the Houthis stop fighting and withdraw from areas they have seized, in-

cluding the capital Sanaa.

On the ground, southern militiamen claimed gains against the Houthis on several battlefronts across southern Yemen, including districts of the port city of Aden, the last stronghold of loyalists to Saudi-backed President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi.

Iran meanwhile prepared to submit a four-point peace plan for Yemen to the United Nations on Wednesday, state media said.

Teheran’s proposal includes a call for an end to Saudi-led air strikes against the Houthis and is likely to anger Riyadh, which accuses Iran of meddling in the affairs of its southern neighbour.

The Security Council on Tuesday imposed a global asset freeze and travel ban on Ahmed Saleh, the former head of Yemen’s Republican Guard, and on Abdulmalik al-Houthi, a Houthi leader.

Saleh’s father, former president Saleh, and two other senior Houthi leaders, Abd al-Khaliq al-Huthi and Abdullah Yahya al Hakim, had been blacklisted by the Security Council in November.

The Security Council also expressed concern at

what it called “destabilizing actions” taken by former President Saleh, including supporting the Houthis.

The elder Saleh, who was forced to step down in 2012, is widely seen as having a behind-the-scenes role in the conflict in league with the Houthis.

The resolution imposed an arms embargo on the five men and “those acting on their behalf or at their direction in Yemen” — effectively the Houthis and soldiers loyal to Saleh who are fighting alongside the Houthis.

A statement from the Houthi leadership condemned the resolution, which it said supported “aggression”.

The council voted 14 in favour, while Russia abstained, saying some of its proposals for the resolution drafted by council member Jordan and Gulf Arab states were not included.

“The co-sponsors refused to include the requirements insisted upon by Russia addressed to all sides to the conflict to swiftly halt fire and to begin peace talks,” Russian UN Ambassador Vitaly Churkin told the council after the vote.

Reuters

400 migrants die in shipwreck off Libya, survivors say

ROME, 15 April—About 400 migrants died in an attempt to reach Italy from Libya when their boat capsized, survivors said on Tuesday, the latest tragedy in the Mediterranean where the death toll from shipwrecks has surged this year.

The boat, carrying about 550 migrants in total, flipped about 24 hours after leaving the Libyan coast, according to some of the 150 survivors who were rescued and brought to a southern Italian port on Tuesday morning, Save the Children reported.

Before this incident there had already been more than 500 deaths of migrants crossing the Mediterranean from Africa this year, up sharply from 47 in the same period of 2014, said the Geneva-based International Organization for Migration (IOM).

The survivors of the latest shipwreck were mostly sub-Saharan Africans, but no further details were available, a Save the Chil-

dren spokesman told Reuters. It was not clear exactly when the boat had capsized.

The number of boats carrying migrants aiming to reach the EU from Africa has picked up in recent weeks as fine spring weather makes the passage safer. In February, more than 300 drowned when attempting the crossing in cold weather and rough seas.

Save the Children, the IOM and other humanitarian organizations have called for the European Union to bolster its sea rescue operations before the migrant flows soar as they usually do in the summer months.

On Monday, 2,851 migrants were saved in rescue operations in the Mediterranean, the Italian coastguard said, adding to at least nine who died and 5,629 who were saved over the weekend.

Italy, which handled the largest number of migrant arrivals in the EU, has become increasingly

alarmed about the breakdown of law and order in Libya, which has greatly exacerbated the task of tackling the migrant flows. Libya is home to two rival governments, loosely aligned militia forces and a growing militant Islamist movement.

Separately, the EU border control agency Frontex said on Tuesday that migrant traffickers had fired shots to prevent their wooden boat being confiscated after rescuers saved the 250 people it was carrying off the coast of Libya.

After the migrants had been transferred, a speedboat approached and its crew fired several shots into the air before the assailants sped away with the empty migrant boat, Frontex said.

Frontex said the episode marked the second time this year that armed smugglers had taken back a vessel used to transport migrants following a rescue in the central Mediterranean.—Reuters

Four Britons who sought to get to Syria arrested on return to UK

LONDON, 15 April—Four Britons who were detained in Turkey on suspicion of trying to cross illegally into Syria were arrested on their return to England on Wednesday, police said.

The four were part of a group of nine people, all members of the same family, who were detained in Turkey at the beginning of the month.

One of the nine, a 21-year-old man named in the media as Waheed Ahmed, the son of a British local politician, was arrested when he returned to Britain on Tuesday.

They were arrested on suspicion of the commission, preparation or instigation of acts of terrorism, police said. Thousands of foreigners have joined the ranks of Islamic State and

other militant groups in Syria and Iraq, many of them crossing via Turkey.

Turkish and other security services estimate some 600 are Britons, including Mohammed Emwazi, named “Jihadi John” in the British media, who has appeared in several Islamic State beheading videos.

About half of the 600 are thought to have returned home.—Reuters



A still image of a video shows Waheed Ahmed, the son of a Labour councillor in Britain, sitting inside a bus after leaving a police station in Hatay on 12 April, 2015.

REUTERS

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

SpaceX rocket blasts off, then lands - too hard - on ocean barge



The unmanned SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket with Dragon lifts off from launch pad 40 at the Cape Canaveral Air Force Station in Cape Canaveral, Florida on 14 April, 2015.—REUTERS

WASHINGTON, 15 April — An unmanned SpaceX rocket blasted off from Florida on Tuesday to send a cargo ship to the International Space Station, then

flipped around and made a hard landing on a platform in the ocean.

The booster's flyback, years in the making, marks another step in the company's quest to develop rockets that can be refurbished and reflown, potentially slashing launch costs.

"This might change completely how we approach transportation to space," SpaceX Vice President Hans Koenigsmann told reporters during a prelaunch Press conference. The 208-foot (63-meter) tall Falcon 9 rocket, carrying a Dragon capsule, thundered off its seaside launch pad at Cape Canav-

eral Air Force Station at 4:10 pm. A launch attempt on Monday was delayed by poor weather.

After sending the capsule on its way to orbit, the rocket's first stage flipped around, fired engines to guide its descent, deployed steering fins and landing legs and touched down on a customized barge stationed about 200 miles off the coast of Jacksonville, Florida.

"Rocket landed on droneship, but too hard for survival," SpaceX founder and Chief Executive Elon Musk posted on Twitter. During a previous landing attempt in January, the

rocket ran out of hydraulic fluid for its steering fins, causing it to crash into the platform.

A second attempt in February was called off because of high seas, but the rocket successfully ran through its pre-programmed landing sequence and hovered vertically above the waves before splashing down and breaking apart.

The primary purpose of Tuesday's launch was to deliver more than 4,300 pounds of food, clothing, equipment — including an Italian-made espresso machine — and science experiments to the station, a

\$100 billion research laboratory about 260 miles (418 km) above Earth.

SpaceX is one of two companies hired by NASA to fly cargo to the station following the retirement of the space shuttles. In addition to a recently extended 15-flight NASA cargo delivery contract, worth more than \$2 billion, SpaceX is working on a passenger version of the Dragon capsule and has dozens of contracts to deliver commercial communications satellites into orbit.

It hopes to be certified to fly US military payloads by June.

Reuters

Robot chef serves up the future of home cooking

LONDON, 15 April — A robotic chef that can whip up professional quality meals in a matter of minutes has been developed by engineers in the UK, who call it the world's first Automated Kitchen.

The system was created by UK-based Moley Robotics, which aims to develop a consumer version with an affordable price tag within two years, supported by an iTunes-style library of recipes that can be downloaded for the robo-chef to cook in the home.

It features two fully articulated hands, made by the Shadow Robot Company, whose products are used in the nuclear industry and by NASA. The dextrous hands are able to faithfully reproduce the movements of a human hand, cooking up Michelin-starred delicacies with all the skill and flair of a master chef.

Key to the robot's kitchen prowess is the way its movements have been 3D-mapped to those of pro-

fessional chef Tim Anderson. To transfer his knowledge into the machine, Anderson was recorded in a special studio cooking while wearing motion-capture gloves. Every motion, no matter how subtle, was captured by the motion-capture technology; from the way Anderson stirred the liquids to the way he controlled the temperature of the hob. His actions were then translated into smooth digital movement using bespoke algorithms developed by Moley in collaboration with Shadow and the Universities of Stamford (USA) and SSSUP Pisa (Italy).

For the current demonstration, the team has mapped the exact movements Anderson uses to make a crab bisque.

"If it can mimic my hands and any chef's hands, then with some work on it there's no reason why it can't do just about anything; kneading bread, making sushi — all these things that are very hands-on, for lack

of a better term. The scope of what it can do is almost endless," said Anderson.

He added that, instead of putting their human counterparts out of business, the robot chef could be an important tool for getting recipes prepared in people's homes the way they intended them to be. "I think that this is going to be an incredible tool for chefs, especially chefs who want to have a wide audience for their food. You can write a cook book, you can get recipes out there in different ways, you can make ready meals and meal kits, things like that. But this is a really good way of getting food into people's homes in the way that you would want them to be prepared. And it takes some of the guesswork out of things like people following recipes."

Moley Robotics is now looking to develop a robot chef that can be easily integrated into people's homes. Founder and inventor of the robot chef, Mark Oleynik,

said it's the human-like hands that make the robot chef unique, and a crucial factor in establishing it as a product that people want in their homes.

"The best way to make universal things; it's make it the way people do it. Because people are universal things; everything they create, they create by hand. So this was a key point of transferring their human intelligence, and the product based on this," he said.

If the hands can be taught to cook, according to the designers, there's no reason they couldn't play the piano, learn carpentry and more. But the company's primary aim is to produce a technology that addresses basic human needs and improves day-to-day quality of life. "If you can make the right model, the robot does not make mistakes. So it's fun for humans to make a creative process and keep the boring process for the machine," said Oleynik.

Reuters

Utility Enel considers joining Italy's broadband market — sources



People walk past the logo of Italy's biggest utility Enel at their Rome headquarter on 11 Nov, 2014.

REUTERS

ROME, 15 April — Italy's biggest utility Enel is considering entering the broadband telecommunications market, three sources close to the matter said on Monday, as the government looks to kick start a 12 billion euro plan to roll out fast networks across the country.

The sources did not disclose a figure, but said it was unlikely debt-laden Enel would put money into laying fibre cables. It could instead provide lines and cabinets from its nation-wide power distribution network as well as technology.

"Enel would make its infrastructure available... to help speed up the process of digitalisation," one of the sources said, asking not to be named because no decision has yet been made.

"Enel could provide its cutting edge digital metering technology," a second source said. Enel is a world leader in smart digital me-

tres which allow customers to monitor and programme their power consumption.

Enel, which is 25.5 percent owned by the state, declined to comment.

Italy's multi-billion euro broadband plan has run into regulatory and governance problems and after months of talks there is still no deal on how to proceed between Rome and Italy's largest phone network Telecom Italia.

Disagreements have raised the possibility that Telecom Italia and Metroweb, a fibre optic network provider partly owned by the state, could end up building rival networks, duplicating costs and slowing down roll out.

Enel entering the ring could potentially be a threat for Telecom Italia especially if rivals such as Vodafone and broadband provider Fastweb joined the project.

Vodafone declined to comment.—Reuters



An exhibitor introduces 3D printing technology at the Hong Kong Electronics Fair (Spring Edition) in south China's Hong Kong, April 13, 2015. The four-day fair, Asia's largest of this industry, kicked off here Monday at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre. XINHUA

N Korea marks late founder's birthday in jovial mood

PYONGYANG, 15 April — North Korea on Wednesday marked the 103rd anniversary of the birth of its late founder Kim Il Sung in a jovial mood, at a time when the outside world is gauging whether a recent absence of major provocations from Pyongyang is a prelude to its broader diplomatic engagement later this year.

The anniversary, known in the country as the “Day of the Sun,” is a major holiday. There were numerous national flags and placards alongside major streets of Pyongyang celebrating the birthday of the founder, who died in 1994.

While piles of “Kimilsungia,” a purple flower of the orchid family named after him, were put on display in hotel lobbies and other places, new political slogans in public space had no indications that

North Korea plans to make new threats of military action.

North Korea also had a series of sports and cultural events over the last few days. On Sunday, around 650 foreigners were allowed to take part in a Pyongyang marathon organized for the commemoration.

Women clad in chima-jogori, traditional Korean jacket and skirt, were seen dancing in circles outside a major hotel in the capital and elsewhere.

As always for the anniversary, citizens and military personnel on Wednesday laid flowers and bowed deeply before giant statues of the founder and Kim Jong Il, North Korea's previous leader who died in 2011, on Mansu Hill in the heart of Pyongyang and other monuments from early morning. North Korean



North Korean citizens and military personnel lay flowers before giant statues of Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il on Mansu Hill in Pyongyang on 15 April, 2015, as the country marked the 103rd anniversary of the birth of the late founder, Kim Il Sung.—KYODO NEWS

leader Kim Jong Un visited the Kumsusan Palace of the Sun, where the preserved bodies of the two late leaders — his grandfather and father — are placed, at

midnight with senior military officials, Pyongyang's official Korean Central News Agency said.

A day before the anniversary, China, North

Korea's most important ally, confirmed that it has invited Kim to attend commemorative activities in Beijing this summer for the 70th anniversary of the end

of World War II.

Kim has yet to travel overseas since taking over his father's role and foreign diplomats are closely watching if he will choose Moscow for his international debut, from which he has also been invited to participate in WWII ceremonies in May.

North Korea very often raises tensions around when South Korea and the United States conduct joint military exercises each spring. In late March 2013, North Korea threatened to carry out a “new form of nuclear test.” But it has not done so until now, two years after its third nuclear test that aggravated instability on the divided Korean Peninsula.

The joint drills are ongoing. Yet North Korea has been somewhat refraining from acts of belligerence this spring.—Kyodo News

Reporter thanks Abe for encouragement while under S Korea travel ban



Tatsuya Kato, the former Seoul Bureau chief of Japan's Sankei Shimbun daily, speaks to reporters after meeting with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in Tokyo on 15 April, 2015. Kato thanked Abe for giving encouragement while he was under a travel ban in South Korea for allegedly defaming President Park Geun-hye in August 2014.—KYODO NEWS

TOKYO, 15 April — A Japanese journalist visited Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on Wednesday and thanked him for giving encouragement while he was under a travel ban in South Korea for allegedly defaming President Park Geun Hye in August last year.

“I thanked him for giving me encouragement by communicating timely with South Korea and the international community,” Tatsuya Kato, a former Seoul Bureau chief of the Sankei Shimbun daily, told reporters after visiting the premier at the prime minister's office.

Kato, who returned home Tuesday after South Korea lifted the eight month travel ban, quoted Abe as telling him to “take good care of yourself” as his trial

continues in Seoul.

Kato is on trial at the Seoul Central District Court on charges of defaming Park in an online article after Seoul prosecutors indicted him in October, a move that raised questions about South Korea's media freedom.

In a statement issued on Tuesday, the Sankei Shimbun demanded that South Korean authorities drop Kato's indictment as soon as possible since it is a “grave infringement” on freedom of speech and the press. Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga, who met Kato separately on Wednesday, told reporters afterward that the Japanese government “will continue to call on the South Korean side for an appropriate response at various opportunities and levels.”—Kyodo News

Police find phishing website on Internet servers seized last year

TOKYO, 15 April — Police said on Wednesday that they have found a phishing website purporting to be the official website of a major Japanese bank on Internet servers seized last year in connection with the alleged aiding of unauthorized computer access from China.

The Tokyo police have also found IDs and passwords likely to have been stolen through the phishing website of 30 people

and provided the information to relevant entities.

They allege that people in China and elsewhere tried to illegally transfer money from the victims' bank accounts using the IDs and passwords, while concealing their identities behind the proxy servers.

In November, the police seized the servers during a raid on a proxy server operator in Tokyo's Toshima Ward. Eighteen

of them contained a counterfeit website of a major Japanese bank and personal information on 30 people.

About 13,000 connections had been made to the phishing website in March 2014 alone. Personal information on about 300 people who are believed to be South Korean has also been found on a separate server owned by the operator, the police said.

Kyodo News

Mexican court backs reporter fired after Pena Nieto property scoop

MEXICO CITY, 15 April — A court ruling issued on Tuesday may force a broadcaster to negotiate the reinstatement of a high-profile journalist fired last month after helping uncover a scandal involving President Enrique Pena Nieto's family.

The Mexico City judge ordered a 27 April hearing that may determine whether Carmen Aristegui and her popular show return to the air.

Late last year, Aristegui revealed that Pena Nieto's wife, Angelica Rivera, was in the process of acquiring a luxury house from a government contractor that won millions of dollars in state business.

Aristegui was dismissed by MVS Radio after it accused her and her team of offering, without prior authorization, the broadcaster's name and funding for a new platform for investigative journalism called Mexicoleaks,



Mexican journalist Carmen Aristegui speaks with journalists outside MVS radio station in Mexico City on 16 March, 2015.

REUTERS

Aristegui, who also hosts a show on CNN's Spanish-language network, argued that her dismissal was politically motivated.

In Tuesday's ruling, the

judge imposed an injunction against the broadcaster's guidelines for its news hosts. Aristegui argued those guidelines were not consistent with her contract.

Reuters

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MV LINDAUNIS VOY NO (0001S)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV LINDAUNIS VOY NO (0001S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 16.4.2015 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY

AGENT FOR: M/S CHINA SHIPPING LINES

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV IRRAWADDY STAR VOY NO (1007W)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV IRRAWADDY STAR VOY NO (1007W) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 19.4.2015 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY

AGENT FOR: M/S CONTINENTAL SHIPPING
LINE PTE LTD

Phone No: 2301185

China exports bullet trains to Argentina

BEIJING, 15 April — China has finished building and shipped its first bullet train to Argentina, China North Railway (CNR) announced on Wednesday.

The contracted diesel multiple-units (DMU) shipped to Argentina mark China's biggest DMU order in South America, CNR said. The CNR's subsidiary in Tianjin Municipality won the bid for Argentina's Belgrano Sur railway contract in November, 2013, involving 21 lines with 81 DMUs.

Painted in blue and white like Argentina's national flag, the shipped DMU's highest speed can reach 100 kilometres per hour, faster than the same type of DMU made in other countries. The trains applied special paint and rubber to resist strong ultraviolet light and corrosion in accordance with Argentina's climate and local operation, said the company.

Meanwhile, the DMU also has special areas for wheelchair and bicycle access. Controlling China's entire high-speed rail market, CNR and its counterpart China South Railway announced a merger on 30 December, 2014.—Xinhua

Whale genealogy gives new insight into evolution

WELLINGTON, 15 April — New Zealand researchers said they have developed the world's most comprehensive family tree into one of the largest and most unusual animals ever to live.

The evolutionary history of baleen whales went back almost 40 million years and indicated periods of intensive evolution and extinction, University of

Otago researchers said on Wednesday.

While most other mammals feed on plants or grab a single prey animal at a time, baleen whales use the baleen in their gigantic mouths to gulp and filter an enormous volume of water and food.

Dr Felix Marx and Professor Ewan Fordyce said similar family trees had been constructed before, but

theirs was by far the largest and the first to be directly calibrated using many dated fossils.

"We find that the earliest baleen whales underwent an adaptive radiation or sudden 'evolutionary burst'," Fordyce said in a statement.

The early phase of whale evolution coincided with a period of global cooling when the Southern

Ocean opened and gave rise to a strong current circling the Antarctic that today provided many of the nutrients sustaining the modern global ocean. "Rather surprisingly, many of these early whales were quite unlike their modern descendants. Although some had baleen, others had well-developed teeth and actively hunted for much bigger prey than

is taken by modern species," said Fordyce.

But, after a few million years, the toothed baleen whales disappeared — perhaps because of growing competition from other newly evolved toothed marine mammals, such as dolphins and seals — leaving behind only their filter-feeding cousins, he said.

Xinhua

Taiwan KMT chairman to attend mainland forum

BEIJING, 15 April — Eric Chu, chairman of the Kuomintang (KMT) party in Taiwan, will lead a delegation to the upcoming Cross-Strait Economic, Trade and Culture Forum in Shanghai, a mainland official said on Wednesday.

Chu's itinerary will be released as soon as it's available, Ma Xiaoguang, spokesperson for the State Council Taiwan Affairs Office (SCTAO), said while answering questions on whether General Secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee Xi Jinping will meet with Chu.

The mainland will communicate closely with the KMT to arrange activities for Chu's visit, Ma said.

He said he hoped Chu's visit will help maintain the momentum of exchanges between the Communist Party of China (CPC) and the KMT and strengthen Party-to-Party and cross-Strait ties.

The 10th Cross-Strait Economic, Trade and Culture Forum is scheduled to be held on 3 May. The forum, initiated in 2006, is sponsored by the KMT and CPC.

Officials from the CPC, the KMT and other political parties from the island and involved government agencies will attend.

Delegates from small and medium-sized businesses, young people and representatives of the financial, sci-tech, cultural and educational fields will also take part in the event.

Xinhua



A man takes part in a rally for better wages in Los Angeles on 14 April, 2015. The union representing home care workers demanded better wages as many of those workers in LA County live in poverty despite their heavy task of caring for the elderly and disabled people at home. —XINHUA

Japan peace group collects 4.26 mil signatures for nuke ban petition

Tokyo, 15 April — A petition calling for a nuclear weapons ban gathered some 4.26 million signatures in Japan ahead of a UN conference to review the operation of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, a peace organization said on Wednesday.

The signatures, collected from February 2011, will be submitted to Taous Feroukhi, ambassador of Algeria, who will chair the upcoming NPT review con-

ference, and Angela Kane, top UN official of disarmament affairs, in New York on 26 April, the eve of the conference, the Japan Council against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs said.

The petition urges all countries to "swiftly start negotiations for a nuclear weapons ban treaty," saying that it is time to put into action an agreement reached at the previous NPT review conference in 2010 that countries resolve

to achieve the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons.

"We will make all-out efforts so that this year, which is the 70th anniversary of the atomic bombings (of Hiroshima and Nagasaki) will become a decisive turning point toward achieving a world without nuclear weapons," said Hiroshi Takakusaki, representative director of the organization known as Gensuikyo.—Kyodo News

WEATHER REPORT

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL EVENING OF THE 16th April, 2015: Weather will be partly cloudy in Kayah and Kayin States and rain or thundershowers are likely to be isolated in the remaining Regions and States. Degree of certainty is (60%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Strong easterly winds with moderate to rough sea are likely at times Deltaic, Gulf of Mottama, off and along Mon-Tanintheyi Coasts. Surface wind speed in strong easterly wind may reach (35) mph. Seas will be moderate elsewhere in Myanmar waters.

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Graduates look for employment opportunities at a job fair in Anhui University in Hefei, capital city of east China's Anhui Province on 15 April, 2015. A total of 190 companies offered vacancies at the fair.—XINHUA

Kate Winslet takes on Versailles gardens in new film role

LONDON, 15 April — Oscar winner Kate Winslet returns to the big screen as a landscape designer tasked with constructing the grand gardens of Versailles, but the British actress says she is not so green-fingered when it comes to her own backyard.

The 39-year old star of “Titanic” plays Sabine De Barra in romantic period drama “A Little Chaos”, who is commissioned to create the Rockwork Grove in the gardens of the French palace under King Louis XIV. The film stars Alan Rickman as the king, Stanley Tucci as his brother Philippe, Duc d’Orleans and Mathias Schoenaerts as landscape artist Andre Le Notre.

Winslet can be seen weeding and chopping down plants in the film but says the experience does not mirror real life.

“I’m not a gardener. I wish I was,” Winslet



Oscar winner Kate Winslet

told reporters at the London premiere of the film on Monday night. “Every year I say ‘Right, this year we’re going to do raised beds, this year we’re going to grow carrots, this year we’re going to do tomatoes,’ and somehow life gets in the way and we never get around to it.”

Winslet reunites in the film with her “Sense and Sensibility” co-star Rickman, who also directed the fictional and loosely historical “A Little Chaos”.

“Working with Alan again after 20 years ... was really a fantastic experience,” said the actress, who was dressed in a midnight blue dress.

Asked how they had both changed since then, she said: “Well I think we’re probably both fatter and we’re definitely older but that’s the way it goes.”

“A Little Chaos” is due for release on 17 April in Britain and at the end of June in the United States.

Reuters

Actress Rita Wilson undergoes double mastectomy for breast cancer



Actor Tom Hanks and his wife Rita actress Wilson

LOS ANGELES, 15 April — Rita Wilson, the actress and wife of actor Tom Hanks, said she underwent a double mastectomy and reconstructive surgery after being diagnosed with an invasive form of breast cancer.

“I am recovering and most importantly, expect to make a full recovery. Why? Because I caught this early, have excellent doctors and because I got a second opinion,” the 58-year-old said in a state-

ment given to People magazine on Tuesday.

Wilson said she had been regularly monitoring an underlying condition when a development in a breast biopsy showed no cancer, but prompted her to get a second opinion.

Two other pathologists diagnosed invasive lobular carcinoma. That type makes up a small portion of breast cancers and can spread cancer cells to other areas of the body, according to the Mayo Clinic.

“I share this to educate others that a second opinion is critical to your health,” said Wilson.

Wilson’s disclosure echoes Angelina Jolie’s decision to share news of a double mastectomy two years ago and removal of her ovaries last month after tests revealed a mutation in the BRCA1 gene that increases her risk for breast and ovarian cancer.

Wilson took leave from the Broadway play “Fish in the Dark,” starring Larry David, to undergo surgery last week and will return on 5 May, her publicist said.

Wilson has worked since the 1970s in television and film, including roles in movies “Sleepless in Seattle” and “Runaway Bride.”—Reuters

Sylvester Stallone bans daughters from dating?

LONDON, 15 April — Hollywood action star Sylvester Stallone says he has barred his three teenage daughters from dating until they are in their 40s.

The 68-year-old ‘Expendables’ actor — who has Sophia, 18, Sistine, 16, and Scarlet, 13, with wife Jennifer Flavin, realized he was not going to be an “accepting” father when his eldest daughter was called by a boy four years ago, reported Female First.

“I told my three daughters they weren’t allowed to date until their mid-40s but that’s not going down well... The first time a boy called Sophia was when she was 14. I realised I wasn’t going to be an accepting father.

“He said, ‘Where’s Sophia?’ I said, ‘She’s in Egypt and she’ll be there forever.’ Everyone started yelling at me.”

The 68-year-old star said his daughters have not listened to his warning and he ended up in a “battle” with Sophia’s current boyfriend when they met for the first time.

PTI

HBO tells jury it was ‘generous’ to British firm suing for libel

NEW YORK, 15 April — HBO on Tuesday sought to turn the tables on the British sporting goods company suing it for libel over a report about child labour in India, telling a federal jury in Manhattan the claims against it were baseless.

The trial, which opened on Monday, follows years of litigation over the report on “Real Sports with Bryant Gumbel,” which first aired in September 2008.

The report accused British sporting goods company Mitre Sports International of turning a

blind eye to contractors or subcontractors who allegedly used underaged workers to produce Mitre-branded footballs in India.

Mitre denies the claims and says it opposes child labour.

In his opening statements, HBO’s lawyer Dane Butswinkas acknowledged that the report may not have been “perfect.” But he said it took two years and “careful detective work and follow-up” to produce the 21-minute report.

“The report was responsible, if not generous to Mitre,” Butswinkas said,

rebutting claims by Mitre’s attorney that it was “fraudulently irresponsible journalism.”

Mitre, which is owned by the London-based Pentland Group, has called the report a “hatchet job.”

In opening statements for Mitre on Monday, attorney Lloyd Constantine said evidence would show that children depicted in the report as stitching Mitre footballs together for 5 cents per hour or less were induced by HBO to pretend on camera that they were child labourers.

HBO has disputed this

claim. The defamation trial against Home Box Office, a Time Warner Inc (TWX.N) subsidiary, is the first in years featuring a U.S. national broadcaster. Mitre has said it is seeking “tens of millions of dollars” in damages.

Following HBO’s opening statements on Tuesday, the 12-member jury saw a videotaped deposition from India’s Kailash Satyarthi, who shared the 2014 Nobel Peace Prize for his work as a children’s rights activist and campaigner against child labour.—Reuters

Daniel Craig gets ‘license to save’ as UN envoy on mines

UNITED NATIONS, 15 April — As secret agent James Bond, Daniel Craig has a license to kill, but on Tuesday the United Nations gave the British actor a “license to save” by appointing him as the first global advocate for the elimination of mines and explosive hazards.

Craig — who has been filming his fourth movie as the dapper, martini-drinking agent 007 — will spend the next three years raising awareness for the UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS) and political and financial

support for the cause.

“You have been given a license to kill (as James Bond), I’m now giving you a license to save,” UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon told Craig at United Nations headquarters in New York.

The United Nations said 162 States are parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. Last year, the United Nations said it destroyed more than 400,000 land mines and explosive remnants of war and more than 2,000 tons of obsolete ammunition.

“I am honoured to ac-

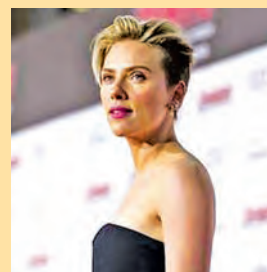


Actor Daniel Craig

cept this role, I’m humbled that I will get the chance to work next to people who are risking their lives every

day to help ordinary people live ordinary lives,” said Craig. “I will do my very best.”—Reuters

Hollywood hosts superheroes for much-anticipated Avengers sequel



Cast member Scarlett Johansson

LOS ANGELES, 15 April — Marvel superheroes assembled on the Hollywood red carpet on Monday night for the premiere of the much-anticipated blockbuster “The Avengers: Age of Ultron”.

Robert Downey Jr (Tony Stark/Iron Man), Chris Hemsworth (Thor), Scarlett Johansson (Black Widow) and Chris Evans (Captain America) drew loud cheers from fans outside the Dolby Theatre.

The expected cinema hit is the sequel to 2012’s “The Avengers”, the fastest film to pass the \$1 billion mark in box office takings.

The plot sees Tony Stark try to jumpstart a peacekeeping programme. When things go wrong, the superheroes — Iron Man, Captain America, Thor, The Incredible Hulk, Hawkeye and Black Widow — have to stop villain Ultron’s destructive plans.—Reuters

GENERAL

Southern California to cut water wholesale deliveries by 15 percent



A Caltrans information sign urges drivers to save water due to the California drought emergency in Los Angeles, California on 13 Feb, 2014. —REUTERS

LOS ANGELES, 15 April — Southern California's water wholesaler voted on Tuesday to cut its deliveries to cities and communities by 15 percent as the state clamps down on water usage amid a devastating four-year drought.

The Metropolitan Water District's plan aims to put cities in the greater Los Angeles area in compliance with an order by Governor Jerry Brown to reduce water use by 25 percent, the first mandatory statewide reduction in California history.

Beginning in July, two-dozen member agencies will be fined up to four times their regular rates for demanding excess water. Those penalties will range from \$1,480 to \$2,960 per acre-foot of water.

The cutbacks are expected to last a year, with opportunities each month to amend the system. A formal reconsideration is scheduled for December, during the rainy season. If Brown's statewide plan succeeds, businesses and residents will use only three-quarters

of the amount they used in 2013. The savings would amount to some 1.5 million acre-feet of water in the next nine months, just as the state snowpack is at its lowest level on record.

The Metropolitan Water District (MWD) has imposed its own restrictions only four times since 1977. The last instance was in 2008, when Southern California succeeded in reaching a 10 percent reduction goal. Officials are optimistic local agencies will again meet their targets.

"I have a lot of faith that

Southern Californians will rally toward this," MWD General Manager Jeffrey Kightlinger said, adding, "It's not time to panic."

Some board members had pushed for a higher cutback rate of 20 percent — a difference of 100,000 acre-feet, or 326,000 gallons (1.2 million liters). Just one acre-foot can provide for two average households a year.

"We're spending down our savings account and hoping to win the lottery to pay it back," board member Judy Abdo, who represents Santa Monica, said at Tuesday's meeting. But the agency voted for the lower amount, deeming it a manageable target. The current plan will conserve about 300,000 acre-feet of water. Kightlinger said the water supply drop combined with incentives to conserve — such as rebates to rip out thirsty lawns — will help Southern California reach its state target of a 25 percent cutback.

It will be up to retailers to decide if they need to hike consumer rates to discourage use and deflect penalties, officials added.

Reuters

Thousands could survive West Coast tsunami by walking to safety

SEATTLE, 15 April — Thousands of people living along the US Pacific coastline from Northern California to Washington state could survive a powerful tsunami, as long as they are prepared to walk briskly to higher ground, a researcher said on Tuesday.

About 95,000 people live on a 620-mile stretch of the Pacific Northwest coast which is considered vulnerable to a tsunami triggered by an earthquake offshore, scientists said.

A research team assessing the risk to that population found that in many areas, people can be ready

to move out of danger in the minutes between the earthquake and the tsunami by simply walking, according to a study published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. "We've identified several towns where moving faster can mean the difference between life and death," said the lead author of the study, Nathan Wood, a geographer with the US Geological Survey.

The study said 49 cities, seven tribal reservations and 17 counties in Northern California, Oregon and Washington are "directly threatened by tsunami

waves" associated with a quake in the Cascadia subduction zone, an offshore undersea fault.

The study said the regional impact could be on par with Japan's 2011 earthquake, tsunami and nuclear disaster that devastated a wide swath of Honshu's Pacific coastline and killed nearly 20,000 people.

Because a quake would make car travel mostly impossible, the study focuses on walking people to safety, or higher ground.

In the coastal Washington cities of Aberdeen and Hoquiam, about 90 percent of the 20,000 residents

could have enough time to evacuate if they walked to safety at a minimum of 2.2 mph, Wood said. That percentage rises to 99 percent if they move faster, and know where to go, he said.

The study found the most people in coastal communities should have sufficient time to evacuate, and that high ground is reachable if people are aware of the threat and practice their routes. A small percentage of people who live too far from high ground would need tall, specially constructed structures to withstand the quake and tsunami, it said.—Reuters

mitv Myanmar International

(16-4-2015 07:00 am~ 17-4-2015 07:00 am) MST

- | | |
|--|--|
| * Myanmar Traditional Thingyan Festival (Live) | * Today Myanmar "YUFL" |
| * News | * News |
| * Aye Aye Soe: Myanma Pioneer Female Bodybuilder | * Innovative Handiworks Based on The Art of Line Drawing |
| * Myanmar's Traditions and Culture: Golden Land | * Sticky Shan Snack |
| * News | * Entrepreneur "Soe Nyi Nyi" |
| * Traditions and Customs of Inlay Thingyan | * News |
| * Thingyan Dance | * Myanmar Social & Charitable Association (Ep-2) (Jivitadana Hospital) |
| *Changes | * Black Gold (P - I) |
| * News | * News |
| * The Art of Making Glaze Ware | * Mon Traditional Thingyan Rice |
| * Pet Fish Biz | * Thingyan Dance |
| * News | * Lucrative Myanma Rattan Industry |
| * Karaweik Palace- A Symbol of Glorious Myanma Culture | * News |
| * Yatana Theinga City and Shwe Bon Yatanamingalar Palace | * Marketable Goods (Straw Painting) |
| * News | * Youth Film-Maker: Khin Su Kyi |
| * A Famous Pagoda in the Sea | * News |
| | * Super Traditional Fencing Form (Ep-3) |
| | * A Lucky Boy |

MRTV News Channel in Brief

(16-4-2015, Thursday)

- | | |
|--|--|
| 6:00 am | 2:30 pm |
| • Paritta by Venerable Mingun Sayadaw | • Head Line News |
| 6:25 am | 3:00 pm |
| • Physical Exercise | • Nay Pyi Taw Thingyan Festival (Live) |
| 6:45 am | 3:50 pm |
| • Documentary | • Sittway Thingyan Festival (Delay) |
| 7:00 am | 4:00 pm |
| • News / Weather Report | • Patheingyi Thingyan Festival (Delay) |
| 7:30 am | 4:50 pm |
| • Head Line News | • Taunggyi Thingyan Festival (Delay) |
| 8:00 am | 5:10 pm |
| • News / International News | • Monyar Thingyan Festival (Delay) |
| 8:35 am | 6:15 pm |
| • The Nine precept | • Songs of Thingyan Festival |
| 9:00 am | 7:00 pm |
| • Nay Pyi Taw Thingyan Festival (Live) | • News |
| 9:40 am | 8:00 pm |
| • Lashio Thingyan Festival (Delay) | • News / International News / Weather Report |
| 10:10 am | 9:00 pm |
| • Patheingyi Thingyan Festival (Delay) | • News |
| 11:10 am | • Myanmar Movies (Part-2) |
| • Mandalay Thingyan Festival (Live) | • Talk On Old Film (Part-1) |
| 12:00 noon | |
| • News / International News / Weather Report | |

MRTV Entertainment Channel

(16-4-2015, Thursday)

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| 6:00 am | Thingyan Festival |
| • Song and Dance of Thingyan Festival | 7:40 am |
| 6:35 am | • TV Drama Series |
| • Thingyan Song and Dance of Children | 8:20 am |
| 7:00 am | • Myanmar Video |
| • Do We Really Love Our Children (Cartoon) | 10:00 am |
| 7:05 am | • Song and Dance of Thingyan Festival |
| Song and Dance of | 10:25 am |
| | • Myanmar Video |

An exhibitor (L) communicates with a visitor at the London Book Fair in Olympia, London, Britain on 14 April, 2015. The London Book Fair will be held here from 14 to 16 April. XINHUA



EXHILARATING MATCHES AWAIT AT 28TH SEA GAMES FOLLOWING OFFICIAL TEAM DRAW



SINGAPORE, 15 April — The official team draw for the 28th Southeast Asian (SEA) Games was conducted today, finalising the groupings for Football (Men's) and Volleyball (Men's and Women's), as well as the order of play for Water Polo (Men's and Women's).

Conducted by stakeholders of the sports community and witnessed by more than 60 guests comprising athletes, coaches, officials as well as embassy and consular representatives of the participating nations, the draw pulled up results that will potentially see exhilarating matches being played at the Games.

For Men's Football, host nation Singapore and gold medallists at the 27th SEA Games Thailand were seeded across Group A and B. They will be joined by the remaining nations in their respective groupings:

Group A	Group B
A1: Singapore	B1: Thailand
A2: Indonesia	B2: Malaysia
A3: Myanmar	B3: Vietnam
A4: Cambodia	B4: Laos
A5: Philippines	B5: Brunei
	B6: Timor Leste

The Men's Volleyball event will see teams compete in the following groupings:

Group A	Group B
A1: Thailand	B1: Cambodia
A2: Malaysia	B2: Vietnam
A3: Philippines	B3: Indonesia
A4: Myanmar	B4: Singapore

The Women's Volleyball event will see teams compete in the following groupings:

Group A	Group B
A1: Singapore	B1: Vietnam
A2: Thailand	B2: Indonesia
A3: Myanmar	B3: Philippines
	B4: Malaysia

For Water Polo, the draw determined the teams' order of play in the event's single round robin format. The results were as follows:

Men	Women
M1: Singapore	W1: Indonesia
M2: Indonesia	W2: Philippines
M3: Thailand	W3: Thailand
M4: Philippines	W4: Malaysia
M5: Malaysia	W5: Singapore

Tickets to remaining team event events to be available from 21 April onwards

Fans will enjoy free admission to half of the 36 sports. Tickets to the sports competitions are priced as low as \$5, with concession prices made available to students, senior citizens and full-time National Servicemen. There is also a 20% discount off every purchase of four or more tickets, to encourage family and friends to catch the Games in action.

Tickets for most sports competitions are currently available for sale. The period of sales for the remaining team events are as follows:

- Netball and Volleyball on 21 April 2015 at 10am
- Basketball and Football on 6 May 2015 at 10am

Juve edge Monaco with Vidal penalty in absorbing tie

TURIN, 15 April — Juventus midfielder Arturo Vidal smashed home a second-half penalty to earn a 1-0 win at home to Monaco in an absorbing Champions League quarter-final first leg on Tuesday, leaving the tie on a knife-edge.

Vidal, who has missed two penalties this season, held his nerve and fired into the roof of the net in the 57th minute after Ricardo Carvalho bundled over Alvaro Morata, who had been sent clear by Andrea Pirlo's lofted through ball.

There was controversy surrounding the decision as television replays suggested that the initial contact by the Portuguese defender may have been

just outside the penalty box.

"Seeing the incident, it's outside the area," Monaco defender Andrea Raggi told Sky Sport Italia. "You could argue that it continues inside and it is without doubt a foul. The referee had only a few seconds to decide."

Monaco coach Leonardo Jardim also criticised the penalty.

"The result was created by an incorrect decision by the team (of officials) that referees," he told a news conference. "This result is not a fair reflection of what happened on the field."

Juventus coach Massimiliano Allegri, whose side faced a Monaco team

that had conceded only four goals in eight previous games in the competition, had predicted that the match could be boring but it was completely the opposite.

Although Italian champions Juve dominated possession, Monaco were always a threat on the break and forced Gianluigi Buffon into three top-class saves to deny them an away goal ahead of the second leg on 22 April.

Carlos Tevez and Vidal missed excellent openings for a jittery Juventus in the first half and the hosts were lucky to reach the break without conceding a goal.

Yannick Ferreira-Carasco should have given

Monaco the lead when he shot weakly at Buffon and the Belgian had another effort turned away by the veteran keeper shortly afterwards.

Juve playmaker Andrea Pirlo was thrown into the fray for his first match after a seven-week injury layoff and the risk paid off as he set up the winning goal by lofting a pinpoint ball over the defence for Morata. Carvalho clipped the striker right on the edge of the area and Czech referee Pavel Kravcek hesitated slightly, possibly consulting the goal line assistant, before pointing to the spot and booking the Portuguese defender before Vidal fired home.

Reuters

Sharapova pulls out of Fed Cup semi-final with leg injury



Maria Sharapova serves against Daria Gavrilova (not pictured) on day three of the Miami Open at Crandon Park Tennis Centre, Key Biscayne, FL, USA on 26 March, 2015. — REUTERS

Moscow, 15 April — Maria Sharapova has pulled out of Russia's Fed Cup semi-final against Germany in Sochi this weekend with a leg injury, the Russian Tennis Federation said on Tuesday.

"I was really looking forward to playing in Sochi and taking part in the Fed Cup," the world number two told the Russian Tennis Federation press service.

"For me, it would have been the first time I would have had the opportunity to play in the city where I grew up.

"My team and I specially changed my timetable so that I could represent my country in the semi-final.

"However, unfortu-

nately I picked up a leg injury and it did not allow me to be in the best condition to get ready for this tie," Sharapova added.

The 27-year-old's last appearance was in the Miami Open at the end of March, where she lost in the second round to world number 97 Daria Gavrilova in straight sets. She only returned to practice a few days ago after picking up an injury during in Miami.

"I need to be at the top of my game in order to help my team and play to the best of my ability in the Fed Cup semi-finals against such strong opponents. Unfortunately, I didn't have enough time to prepare," she said.

Reuters



Arturo Vidal scores the first goal for Juventus from the penalty spot during UEFA Champions League Quarter Final First Leg at Juventus Stadium, Turin, Italy on 14 April, 2015.—REUTERS