

Ceasefire agreement, election dominate discussions between president, political parties

By Aye Min Soe

YANGON, 18 May —The nationwide ceasefire agreement, this year's general election and land disputes dominated discussions Monday when President U Thein Sein met with representatives of political parties.

In his opening speech at the meeting, the president expressed his willingness to begin political dialogues before the upcoming elections, pledging that any constitutional amendments prior to the election would be carried out through such dialogue.

He urged all political parties to participate in the process of the Deed of Commitment for Peace and National Reconciliation, which was signed on 12 February, and to make efforts toward conducting political dialogues.

Nearly 130 politicians from 68 parties attended the meeting. Some have suggested a timeframe for holding political dialogues.

Some participants of the meeting urged the government to hold the upcoming general election, slated (See page 3)



President U Thein Sein shakes hands with a representative from a political party.—PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE

Human trafficking behind boat people crisis: president's spokesman

By Aye Min Soe

YANGON, 18 May —The Myanmar government pledges cooperation with regional and other international counterparts to tackle the ongoing boat people crisis, which is a consequence of human trafficking of people from Rakhine State and Bangladesh to Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia, the president's spokesman said Monday.

The Myanmar government will scrutinize the boat people and bring back those who can show evidence of citizenship, said the President's Spokesman and Union Minister for Information U Ye Htut at a meeting between ministers and diplo-



Union Minister U Ye Htut explains consequence of human trafficking of people from Rakhine State and Bangladesh to Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia.—PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE

mats in Yangon.

not assume the boat people The government does to be refugees fleeing the

conflict in Rakhine State, which shares a border with Bangladesh, he added.

Myanmar has begun to repatriate more than 500 trafficking victims who were forced onto fishing boats in Indonesia, after they were found to be citizens, the spokesperson said.

The second bi-monthly meeting also focused on preparation for the upcoming 2015 general election and the revocation of temporary identity cards, also known as white cards.

More than 400,000 of the roughly 700,000 white cards have been collected by authorities across the country, said U Khin Yi, Union Minister for Immigration and Population.

GNLM

President U Thein Sein sends commemorative message to President of ROK

NAY PYI TAW, 19 May—U Thein Sein, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, sent a commemorative message to Her Excellency Madame Park Geun-Hye, President of the Republic of Korea on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Myanmar and the Republic of Korea which falls on 19 May 2015.

Her Excellency Madame Park Geun-Hye, President of the Republic of Korea also sent a commemorative message to U Thein Sein, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar on this occasion.—MNA

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Pyithu Hluttaw

Plan to dredge six main drains in Myawady

NAY PYI TAW, 18 May—At the 47th-day session of Pyithu Hluttaw Monday, Daw Khin Than Myint of Ngaputaw Constituency asked about breeding of fish, prawn and crab by Kyaw Hlwan Moe and Brothers Company

on the sandbank of Thet-kethaung Village-tract in Hainggyikyun, Ngaputaw Township.

Deputy Minister at the President Office U Kyaw Kyaw Win replied that Hainggyikyun Township Fisheries Department did

not issue permit for the company. The department allowed work licence for the sandbank through tender yearly but the sandbank has been designated as a common fishing plot since 2011. Arrangements will be made for convenience

Amyotha Hluttaw

Region and state governments release orders and directives for reducing use of plastic bags

NAY PYI TAW, 18 May—Amyotha Hluttaw continued for the 49th-day session Monday.

With regard to the question raised by U Phone Myint Aung of Yangon Region Constituency No 3 on change of system for releasing the result of matriculation examination, Dep-

uty Minister for Education U Thant Shin said that the Ministry of Education will release the result of matriculation examination through its website and hardcopy on the designated date.

U Myint Hlaing of Rakhine State Constituency No 12 asked about annual fund, equipment, genera-

tor and related materials for completion of Thahtay hydropower project in Rakhine State in 2018-19 fiscal year. Deputy Minister for Electric Power U Aung Than Oo said that funds will be sought for implementation of the project. Generator and related equipment will be import-

of fishing workers.

U Myint Shwe of Waw Constituency asked whether there is a plan to re-allow the road area as entrance and exit of the market of Waw or not as a land plot was allotted at the entrance to the market. Deputy Minister U Kyaw Kyaw Win replied that if the entrance and exit of the market are included in the

original plan, the grant for the land plot will be cancelled.

U Than Oo of Myawady Constituency asked about dredging of main drains in Myawady with the budget of the union government. The deputy minister said that a plan is underway to dredge six drains in 4.5 miles long from 2014-15 to 2020-21

fiscal year with K985.20 million fund.

The Hluttaw invited MPs to discuss the bill on second amendment of Pyithu Hluttaw Election Law, the bill on second amendment of Amyotha Hluttaw Election Law and the bill on second amendment of Region or State Hluttaw Election Law.

MNA

ed in coming fiscal year for timely completion of the project.

U Khin Maung (a) U Aung Kyaw Oo of Rakhine State Constituency No 3 asked about measures against use of plastic bags by the State. Deputy Minister for Health Dr Daw Thein Thein Htay replied that region and state governments released orders and directives on prohibition of using plastic bags under the environmental conservation law. The De-

partment of Health cooperates with Development Affairs Committee in reducing use of plastic bags for environmental conservation.

The Amyotha Hluttaw decided to submit controversial points between two Hluttaws in the bill amending the National Education Law to the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw.

U Min Oo of Bago Region Constituency No 7 discussed it needs to improve the 1954 Buddhist Women

Special Marriage and Inheritance Act in conformity with the present time. If not, the new law should be drafted in line with the human rights of the constitution, Universal Declaration of Human Rights and international treaties signed by Myanmar.

Daw Khin Waing Kyi of Yangon Region Constituency No 1 also discussed that it is necessary to draft a marriage law for Myanmar women to protect their rights.—MNA

Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker holds talks with Chinese Vice FM



Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw Thura U Shwe Mann shakes hands with Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr Cheng Fengxiang.

MNA

NAY PYI TAW, 18 May—Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw Thura U Shwe Mann received Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr

Cheng Fengxiang and party of the People's Republic of China at the hall of Hluttaw Complex, here, on Monday.

Also present at the call

were Pyithu Hluttaw Committee Chairmen Thura U Aung Ko and U T Khun Myat and officials of the Pyithu Hluttaw Office.—MNA

Certificate Course in Basic Diplomatic Skills concludes

YANGON, 19 May—The inauguration ceremony of the Certificate Course in Basic Diplomatic Skills (35/2015) conducted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was held at the hall of the ministry, here, on Monday,

with an address by Permanent Secretary U Aung Lynn.

The 12-week course includes contemporary international affairs, holding and attending fo international conferences,

negotiation skills, international law, international economic relations, international etiquette, diplomatic and official correspondence and communication skills.

MNA

Commander-in-Chief: no artillery shells by Tatmadaw landed on Chinese territory

NAY PYI TAW, 18 May—Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing denied accusations that artillery shells fired by Myanmar forces fell onto Chinese territory on May 14 and 15.

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing received Chinese Ambassador to Myanmar Mr Yang Houlan and explained the incidents by using a map that shows positions of the military and the insurgents of the MNDAA, the targets of government troops, and the distance of Chinese villages in Yunnan province from Myanmar troops.

The Commander-in-Chief said Myanmar troops informed military

relations officer in Lincang military region about artillery shells fired from the Point 2071 hill held by the MNDAA in the night of May 14 and in the morning of 15 May. He said that the Myanmar military was not involved in the alleged firing of 40 artillery shells onto Chinese territory the same night and agreed that the incident should be investigated.

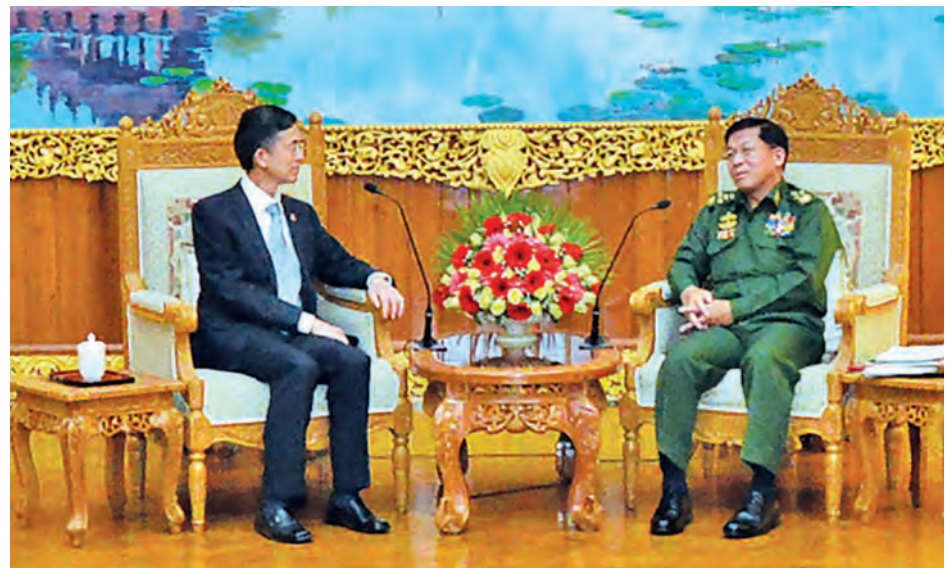
Mr Yang Houlan said the Chinese government wants to avoid border tensions between the two countries and that MNDAA forces are disturbing the two neighbouring countries.

He also said news spread on social media is putting pressure on their

government, calling for prevention of further incidents at the border.

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing insisted the MNDAA group is spreading rumours to both Chinese and Myanmar news agencies, and urged the Chinese government not to allow passage to MNDAA troops.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Vice-Senior General Soe Win and senior military officials, while the Chinese ambassador was accompanied by Senior Colonel Wang Jinbo of the Chinese military attaché in Myanmar.—Myawady



Senior General Min Aung Hlaing holds talks with Chinese Ambassador to Myanmar Mr Yang Houlan.—MYAWADY

NATIONAL

Republic of the Union of Myanmar

President Office

Ordinance No. (3/2015)

1st Waxing Day of Nayon, 1377 ME
(18 May, 2015)

Announcement on extension of ordinance

1. For the safety and security of the public, a state of emergency had been declared in Kokang Self-Administered Zone since 17 February 2015 under Ordinance (1/2015), as stability had deteriorated due to violent attacks of Kokang insurgents since 9 February 2015.
2. As administration, community peace and tranquility and the rule of law in the area have not been restored to the former situation, despite the expiration of the 90 days' period of the ordinance on 17 May, 2015, extension of the ordinance was submitted to the 12th Regular Session of the First Pyidaungsu Hluttaw on 15 May, 2015, in accordance with the state constitution, and it is announced that the ordinance has been extended until 17 August, 2015, with the approval of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw.

Sd/Thein Sein
President
Republic of the Union of Myanmar

Republic of the Union of Myanmar

President Office

Ordinance No. (4/2015)

1st Waxing Day of Nayon, 1377 ME
(18 May, 2015)

Announcement on extension of ordinance entitled
Extension of Military Administrative Order

1. In order to restore administration, community peace and tranquility, and prevalence of law and order to its former situation in Kokang Self-Administered Zone, where an extension in the state of emergency has been announced under Ordinance No. (3/2015), military administrative order has been extended and powers and duties have been conferred on the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services in accord with sub-section (b) of Section 413 of the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.
2. The Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Services may exercise the said powers and duties himself or empower any suitable military authority to exercise thereof.

Sd/ Thein Sein
President
Republic of the Union of Myanmar

Ceasefire
agreement,
election . . .

(from page 1)

for late October or early November, in a free, fair and transparent manner.

Some have called on the government to speed up its efforts to settle land disputes in the remaining term.

In his replies to the suggestions, President U Thein Sein has pledged to speed up the government's efforts to deal with some issues raised at the meeting and continue to discuss some issues.—GNLM



U Zoram of Chin
National Democratic
Party.—MNA

NAY PYI TAW 18 May — Knowledge of the latest technology will be crucial in responding to a natural catastrophe, Vice President U Nyan Tun said Monday at a meeting to discuss disaster management strategies.

In his opening remarks at the headquarters of the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, U Nyan Tun said Myanmar is implementing disaster reduction and response projects including the creation of laws covering disaster management across the country.

He called for public education programmes in order to improve the country's disaster readiness.

Myanmar is now co-operating with the international community in disaster reduction programmes, including the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015, adopted at the Second World Conference on Disaster Reduction in Kobe, Japan, in 2005.

International bodies also announced the Sendai Framework for Disaster Reduction 2015-2030 in March this year to promote disaster management and recovery

Vice President U Nyan Tun advocates
education for disaster readiness

Vice President U Nyan Tun addresses meeting on disaster management strategies.—MNA

programmes.

The vice president said responsible persons must have knowledge of modern technologies for disaster management to be able to adopt appropriate methods for the country. Union Minister Dr Daw Myat Myat Ohn Khin, the vice chairwoman of National Disaster Preparedness Central Committee, explained her ministry's activities includ-

ing educative programmes and preparedness measures. Deputy Minister U Phone

Swe, the secretary of the committee and training programmes of staff under the

ministry, and the chairmen of sub-committees also gave presentations.—MNA

Mongolia to continue supports to
Myanmar for reform process

NAY PYI TAW, 18 May — U Wunna Maung Lwin, Union Minister for Foreign Affairs paid an official goodwill visit to Mongolia from 14 to 17 May 2015 at the invitation of Minister for Foreign Affairs of Mongolia Mr. Lundeg Purevsuren.

The Union Minister called on Mr. Tsakhia Elbegdorj, President of Mongolia, and Mr. Chimed Sai-khanbileg, Prime Minister of Mongolia respectively at the State House on 15 May in Ulaanbaatar. During the meetings, Mongolian

125 workers returned to Myanmar on 14 May. The remaining fishery workers will be repatriated to Myanmar on 22 May.—MNA

leaders reiterated to continue their supports to Myanmar government and to the people of Myanmar for the further achievements in democratic reform process undertaken in Myanmar.

The Union Minister also met with Mongolian Foreign Minister Mr. Lundeg Purevsuren and discussed promoting the bilateral relations and mutual beneficial cooperation between two countries. The Mongolian Foreign Minister hosted a dinner to the Union Minister.

Mongolian Minister for Mining Mr. Jigjil Rentsendoo also hosted a luncheon to the Union Minister and party at Central Tower on May 15. They agreed pro-

motion of cooperation in mining sector.

Chairman of the General Election Committee of Mongolia Mr. Ch. Sodnomtseren received the Union Minister at (15:30) hrs at his office on May 15. The Union Minister spoke about preparation work of Myanmar Union Election Commission for the forthcoming general elections in Myanmar and the commitment of UEC to conduct the elections in free and fair manner.

On May 16, the Union Minister and party visited Khentii province and attended the Mongolian "Mini Naadam" festival held in Delgerkhaan.

MNA

Second group of trafficked fishermen
repatriated from Indonesia

NAY PYI TAW, 18 May — A second group of Myanmar fishery workers, freed after being used as slave labour in Indonesia, arrived at Yangon International Airport on Sunday evening.

The repatriated citizens, comprising 128 out of a total 535, received donations including K100,000

from Joint Secretary Pol Brig-Gen Win Naing Tun on behalf of the Central Committee against Human Trafficking of Myanmar, K50,000 and a shirt from Air KBZ, K10,000 from IOM, as well as SIM cards and or handsets from MPT.

The fishery workers included 33 from Mon State, 21 From Ayeyawady Re-

gion, 19 from Taninthayi Region, 15 each from Yangon and Bago regions, 9 from Rakhine State, 2 from Mandalay Region, and one each from Sagaing and Magway regions.

The fishery workers have been taken back to Myanmar under the arrangements of the government. The first group of

BAGO, 18 May — The pottery industry is thriving in Bandagon village, Bago Township, with local producers supplying earthen pots of all sizes.

Despite consumers in Myanmar shifting toward modern personal and household goods, earthenware pots remain an important product in the country.

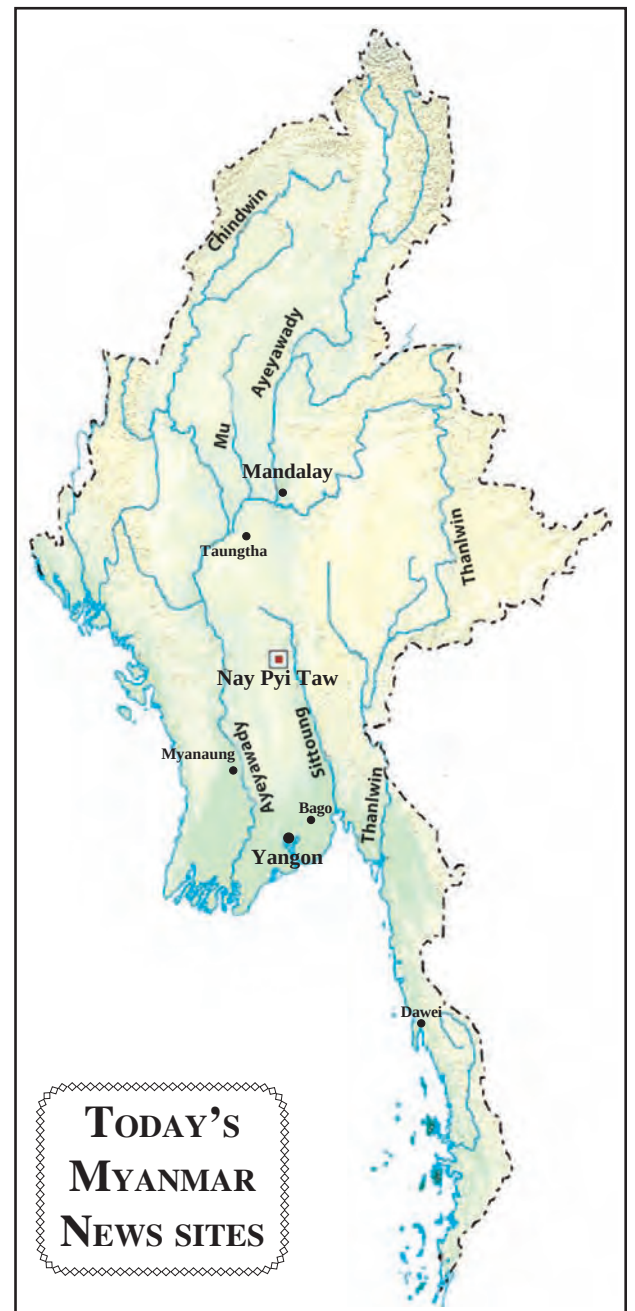
The majority of residents in Bandagon Village, located beside Bago-Yangon road, are involved in earthenware production.

"In summer, earthen pots decorated with glaze are in high demand," a local pottery owner said. "We sell various sizes of pots ranging from K 1,500 to K30,000 to pot brokerages in Yangon."

Many people in Myanmar people prefer to use earthen pots to store drinking water.

Myo Thein (Bago)

Bandagon village's earthen pots remain in high demand



Local authorities, personnel of Fire Services Department, police and World Vision distribute 26,800 gallons of water to local residents in villages, Kyangin Township, Ayeyawady Region on 17 May.

AYEYA U THAR

Local residents receive eye care services

NAY PYI TAW, 18 May — Local residents with eye complaints received eye care services at Pobbathiri Township People's Hospital (50-bed) on 16 May.

Eye specialists from Pinyinmana Township Hospital (200-bed) and Pobbathiri Township Hospital (50-bed) together with health staff and members of Maternal and Child Welfare Association performed eye checkups on about 200 patients from Pobbathiri Township.

Shwe Ye Yint



World Bank to provide \$400 million for national electricity project

MANDALAY, 18 May — The Ministry of Electric Power and the Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development held a consultation in conjunction with the World Bank for the national electricity project at Hotel Mandalay in Mahaaungmye Township on 15 May.

Project Manager U Aung Myint of the Ministry of Electric Power and Senior Environment Engineer Mr Frank Woerdan of the World Bank Group

gave talks about the project.

Attendees also heard reports from Senior Engineer Daw Hnin Thiri of the Ministry of Electric Power and consultant Miss Charlotte Alice Cantor of the World Bank Group.

The World Bank Group will provide US\$400 million and technical assistance for Myanmar's national electricity project.

Tin Maung (Mandalay)

Residents, authorities take part in tsunami preparedness drill

DAWEI, 18 May — Emergency personnel and local residents in Dawei District took part in a drill to prepare for tsunami on 15 May.

The residents undertook rescue and relief work drills in Pyingyi beach of Thabawseik Village in Launglon Township. Head of Taninthayi Region Relief and Resettlement Department U Nay Myo Tun supervised the exercise involving departmental personnel, firefighters, Red Cross Brigade members, medical officers,

health workers and local authorities.

A plan is under way

to organize similar exercises for local residents of a village near Pulonton-

tone Beach in Kawthoung Township.

Region IPRD



REGIONAL

Indonesian court backs tycoon Bakrie to lead main opposition party

JAKARTA, 18 May — An Indonesian court on Monday ruled that tycoon Aburizal Bakrie was leader of the country's largest opposition party, dashing rivals' hopes the party would defect to the ruling coalition under a different leader.

The party, Golkar, controls nearly 15 percent of seats in parliament and has been embroiled in a leadership dispute for months. Some top party members have suggested joining President Joko Widodo's minority ruling coalition.

The dispute ended up in court and on Monday, Judge Satya Bakti told a

hearing in Jakarta the court recognized Bakrie's leadership of the party.

Golkar Secretary General Idrus Marham, a Bakrie supporter, said the ruling meant the party would remain in opposition.

"From the start, we've been committed to the opposition and this decision confirms it," he said. "We will stay outside the government but ... we have no intention to disrupt government."

Bakrie, patriarch of the family-owned Bakrie Group conglomerate, backed defeated presidential candidate Prabowo Sub-



Golkar Party Chairman and Bakrie Group's former Chairman Aburizal Bakrie attends a news conference with Indonesia's then-President elect Joko Widodo after a meeting in Jakarta on 14 October, 2014.

REUTERS

ianto a presidential election last year.

But disgruntled party members mounted a bid to oust him when Golkar, the political vehicle of former authoritarian ruler Suharto, failed to make it into government for the first time ever.

The Ministry for Law and Human Rights in March issued a decree recognizing Bakrie's rival as party chief, paving the way for Golkar to join the governing coalition.

A ministry spokesman declined to comment on Monday's court ruling.

Reuters

Power shortage within conditions for collective self-defence: Abe

TOKYO, 18 May — Japan could exercise the right to collective self-defence if attack on a friendly country led to power shortage in Japan, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said on Monday in reference to two security bills the government submitted to the Diet on Friday.

Japan would exercise the right "in the event of occurrence of shortage of daily commodities and disruption of lifelines stemming from electricity shortage, cases that pose critical impacts on people's lives," Abe said in a plenary session of the House of Councillors.

Abe was apparently referring to a possible dispatch of the Self-Defence Forces for minesweeping operations should the Strait of Hormuz in the Middle East be closed, a vital sea lane to transport crude oil.

He made the comment when asked by an opposition lawmaker about one of three conditions that would allow Japan to exercise the right to collective self-defence, or coming to the aid of its ally the United States and other friendly countries under armed attack even if Japan itself is not attacked.

The condition involves when an armed attack against a foreign country that is in a close relationship with Japan occurs and as a result threatens Japan's survival and poses a clear danger to fundamentally overturn people's right to life, liberty and pursuit of happiness.

Two other conditions are when there is no other appropriate means available to repel the attack and ensure Japan's survival and protect its people, and use of force must be limited to

the minimum extent necessary.

Speaking during the upper house session, the prime minister stressed use of force "will be limited to only when the three conditions are met."

The conditions serve as a "clear and strict curb" in line with the war-renouncing Constitution on Japan's potential use of force for collective self-defence, he said.

Meanwhile, the steering committee of the House of Representatives decided on Monday to set up a special panel on Tuesday to deliberate the two bills.

Abe has vowed to get the bills passed during the current Diet session through 24 June, a period speculated by lawmakers to be extended for a month or so. But opposition parties are calling for sufficient time for Diet deliberations to ease public concerns about the legislation.

If passed, the bills would significantly expand the scope of overseas operations by the SDF including exercising the right to collective self-defence amid an increasingly severe security environment in the Asia-Pacific region, with concerns over China's muscle-flexing in the East and South China seas and military buildup, as well as North Korea's missile and nuclear weapons development.

The bills consist of a new permanent bill that would allow the SDF to provide logistical support for foreign militaries in international peacekeeping activities and the other comprising revisions to 10 existing security-related laws.—Kyodo News

Singapore calls on Iran to investigate tanker incident

SINGAPORE, 18 May — The Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore said on Monday that it has requested the Iranian maritime authorities to investigate an incident last week when Iranian vessels fired shots at

a Singapore-flagged tanker in the Gulf. Alpine Eternity, the vessel that came under fire, had collided with an Iranian oil drilling platform in March, which triggered a call from Iran to its neighbours to seize the ship and

hand it over to Iran.

Singapore's MPA said that it requested its Iranian counterpart prevent future recurrences, as the freedom of navigation and free flow of commerce are of critical importance to Singapore and

other countries. "Such interference with navigational rights is a serious violation of international law," it said in a statement, adding that Singapore was deeply concerned by such actions.

Reuters



A ceremony is held to mark the 125th birth anniversary of late Vietnamese leader Ho Chi Minh in Hanoi on 18 May, 2015. —XINHUA

Quake-stricken Nepal readies plans to reconstruct heritage sites

KATHMANDU, 18 May — Nepal's Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation has come up with an action plan for the protection and reconstruction of heritage sites damaged by the deadly 25 April quake and its aftershocks, local media reported on Monday.

At a meeting arranged by the International Relations and Labour Com-

mittee of the Parliament to discuss the quake-caused damage to heritage sites of archeological importance and future plans for their refurbishment, Deepak Chandra Amatya, minister for culture, tourism and civil aviation said that the ministry has prepared a three-phase plans, short-term, mid-term and long-term, for the protection of damaged heritage sites, local

newspaper the *Rising Nepal* reported.

Prabhu Shah, chairperson of the committee, underscored the need of collecting complete details of damage to cultural heritage sites caused by the recent quakes and intensifying a search operation for the missing objects, adding that experts' feedback are necessary in carrying out reconstruction works.

Naryanman Bijukchhe, a lawmaker, said historic and ancient form of heritage sites should be maintained while reconstructing the damaged monuments.

According to Nepal's Department of Archeology, of 581 heritage sites in the Himalayan country, 137 were devastated and 444 sustained partial or minor damage in the earthquakes.

Xinhua

Thai economy barely grows in Q1 on poor demand for exports

BANGKOK, 18 May — Thailand's gross domestic product in the first quarter of 2015 expanded 0.3 percent from the previous quarter, while it grew 3 percent on a year-on-year basis, according to government statistics released on Monday.

The National Economic and Social Development Board said private consumption and public spending continued to increase

in the first three months of 2015, while the manufacturing, tourism and construction sectors performed well.

But such positive factors were offset by decreased exports, increased imports and poor performance of the agricultural sector. The NESDB cut its forecast for Thailand's GDP this year from 3.5-4.5 percent to 3.0-4.0 percent.—Kyodo News

Kerry says US-S Korea alliance “stronger than ever”



Korean Foreign Minister Yun Byung-se and US Secretary of State John Kerry hold a joint Press conference following meetings at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Seoul, Korea on 18 May, 2015. —REUTERS

SEOUL, 18 May — US Secretary of State John Kerry on Monday praised US-South Korea ties as being “stronger than ever” amid North Korea’s growing mil-

itary threats.

“There is no daylight, not an inch, not a centimeter, not a microscope of difference between the United States and the Republic of

Korea in our approach to the question of North Korea’s provocations and its nuclear programme,” Kerry said at a joint press conference with South Korean Foreign Minister Yun Byung-se after they held talks.

Kerry, who arrived in South Korea on Sunday from Beijing, met with President Park Geun-hye earlier in the day.

He rapped North Korean leader Kim Jong Un for continuing to make military threats and waging a reign of terror against his own people.

“They have grown the threat of their program and have acted with a kind of reckless abandon,” Kerry said.

Kim has had more than 70 senior officials

killed since he took power in December 2011, South Korea’s state intelligence agency reported to parliament last week.

The National Intelligence Service, in a closed-door report, said North Korea’s Defence Minister Hyong Yong Chol was executed for treason by anti-aircraft gunfire around 30 April.

Kerry called the reported killings “grotesque, grisly, horrendous, public displays of executions on a whim and fancy.”

North Korea announced on 9 May its successful test-firing of a submarine-launched ballistic missile. The announcement raised concerns in South Korea that the North could deploy SLBMs in a year

or two after completing the last stages of development.

Kerry said North Korea’s recent provocations fail to meet standards for it to resume talks with the United States.

“To date, to this moment, particularly with recent provocations, it is clear the DPRK is not even close to meeting that standard,” Kerry said, referring to North Korea by its official name, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea.

Yun said he discussed with Kerry North Korea’s threats and uncertainty about the North Korean leadership.

On the strained ties between South Korea and Japan, Kerry also expressed hope the two neighbours can find “a mutually accept-

able solution” to conflicts stemming from Japan’s 1910-1945 colonial rule of the Korean Peninsula.

He said the United States has said “the history legacy issues” of South Korea and Japan should be solved in a way to promote “healing and reconciliation.”

“Constructive relations between Japan and the Republic of Korea, our most important allies in East Asia, are critical to being able to promote peace and prosperity in this region,” he said. Relations between Japan and South Korea have deteriorated to their worst level in many years mainly due to a territorial dispute and differing perceptions of the history of Japan’s colonization.—Kyodo News

Venezuela opposition holds primaries for high-stakes parliament vote

CARACAS, 18 May — Venezuela’s opposition coalition held primaries on Sunday for this year’s high-stakes parliamentary election, its best shot in over a decade at recouping the National Assembly at one of the ruling Socialist Party’s lowest ebbs.

With Venezuela in recession, annual inflation possibly heading to triple digits, basic goods from milk to medicines running short and crime rates sky-high, government candidates may face a backlash.

But the perpetually fragmented MUD umbrella coalition has struggled to articulate policy proposals and shake an elitist aura, so Sunday’s low-profile primaries were largely a show of mobilization against President Nicolas Maduro.

The 42 winning candidates include veteran politicians, a respected economist and a former mayor jailed for allegedly stoking violent protests last year.

“Today change begins!” MUD head Jesus Torrealba thundered to cheers on Sunday night.

The opposition must now lure disillusioned supporters of the late Hugo Chavez, face a formidable state propaganda machine, overcome electoral district geography seen helping the socialists, and excite its base.

Venezuela has become “a crazy country,” said Roxany Rodriguez, a physiotherapist and opposition supporter, after spending an hour in line and around 8 percent of her monthly wage on a dozen basics at a pharmacy.

But Rodriguez, who only learned of the primaries on Friday, is not inspired by opposition candidates. “They should be offering something new. I’m very disheartened,” she said, though she still preferred to vote.

Polls show the opposition favourites to win the assembly, though the ruling party has for the last 16 years shown itself adept at winning elections.

While institutions are stacked with “Chavistas” and Maduro is currently ruling by decree, an opposition-controlled parliament would boost momentum for a referendum next year to recall the leader whose popularity has tumbled.

Fueling opposition suspicion of an unfair playing field, no date has been set for the parliament election, though it will be in the last quarter. “The opposition’s challenge now is to guarantee unity,” Luis Vicente Leon, head of pollster Datanalisis, said after results were announced. “Divisions, as small as they may be, would risk



A woman folds up her marked ballot before casting it in a box during opposition coalition primaries for parliamentary election in Caracas on 17 May, 2015. —REUTERS

gangrene.” Maduro, lacking Chavez’s magnetism, is himself wrestling with divisions in the “Chavista” bloc.

A dissenting Socialist faction that berates his government for corruption and bureaucracy has bro-

ken ranks and sought to become its own party.

That request was denied, Marea Socialista leader Gonzalo Gomez told Reuters on Sunday, adding his group would fight the decision.

Reuters

US carrier George Washington leaves for home after 7-yr deployment

YOKOSUKA, (Japan), 18 May — The US aircraft carrier George Washington left a US naval base in Yokosuka, southwest of Tokyo, for the United States on Monday, ending its seven-year deployment to Japan.

The carrier, which was sent to Yokosuka Naval Base as the US Navy’s first nuclear-powered aircraft carrier to be based overseas, is expected to undergo a fuel exchange and large-scale overhaul in Virginia after joining patrols and drills in the western Pacific. Its replacement, the Ronald Reagan, a nuclear-powered carrier of the same class, is slated to be deployed at Yokosuka as early as this autumn. Sent off by some 200 people, such as US military personnel and their family members, seamen aboard the George Washington formed Japanese letters spelling “Sayonara,” or goodbye, on the deck.

The Japanese Maritime

Self-Defense Force flattop Izumo also sailed nearby in a farewell to the departing US carrier.

Capt Timothy Kuehhas, commanding officer of the carrier, said at a Press conference ahead of the departure that roughly 2,000 of the around 5,350 crew members of the departing carrier will become crew aboard the Ronald Reagan.

Deployed at Yokosuka in September 2008, the George Washington played a key role in the US Seventh Fleet, which covers the western Pacific and the Indian Ocean. Meanwhile, the Ronald Reagan, which came into service in 2003, was engaged in the Operation Tomodachi relief mission immediately after the March 2011 earthquake and tsunami that struck north-eastern Japan. At Yokosuka, three additional Aegis-equipped destroyers are scheduled to be deployed by 2017.—Kyodo News



The US aircraft carrier George Washington (front) sails off the Boso Peninsula, east of Tokyo, on 18 May, 2015, accompanied by Japanese escort vessel the Izumo after leaving a US naval base in Yokosuka, southwest of Tokyo, following a seven-year deployment. —KYODO NEWS

KYODO NEWS

Pope Francis extends agenda of change to Vatican diplomacy

ROME, 18 May — Pope Francis' hard-hitting criticisms of localization and inequality long ago set him out as a leader unafraid of mixing theology and politics. He is now flexing the Vatican's diplomatic muscles as well.

Last year, he helped to broker an historic accord between Cuba and the United States after half a century of hostility.

This past week, his office announced the first formal accord between the Vatican and the State of Palestine — a treaty that gives legal weight to the Holy See's longstanding recognition of de-facto Palestinian statehood despite clear Israeli annoyance.

The pope ruffled even more feathers in Turkey last month by referring to the massacre of up to 1.5 million Armenians in the early 20th century as a "genocide", something Ankara denies.

After the inward-looking pontificate of his scholarly predecessor, Pope Benedict, Francis has in some ways returned to the active Vatican diplomacy practiced by the globetrotting Pope John Paul II, widely credited for helping to end the Cold War.

Much of his effort has concentrated on improving relations between different faiths and

protecting the embattled Middle East Christians, a clear priority for the Catholic Church.

However in an increasingly fractured geopolitical world, his diplomacy is less obviously aligned to one side in a global standoff between competing blocs than that of John Paul's 27-year-long papacy.

This is reinforced by his status as the world's first pope from Latin America, a region whose turbulent history, widespread poverty and love-hate relationship with the United States has given him an entirely different political grounding from any of his European predecessors.

"Under this pope, the Vatican's foreign policy looks South," said Massimo Franco, a prominent Italian political commentator and author of several books on the Vatican.

He said the pope has been careful to avoid taking sides on issues like Ukraine, where he has never defined Russia as an aggressor, but has always referred to the conflict between the government and Moscow-backed rebels as a civil war.

That approach is intended to ensure he remains more credible with countries like Syria, Russia or Cuba, all nations where



Pope Francis talks during a special audience with nuns of Rome's diocese in Paul VI hall at the Vatican on 16 May, 2015.—REUTERS

Francis feels he can help local Christians best by steering an independent course.

Francis already has his hands full overhauling the Vatican's complex internal bureaucracy after a series of financial and sexual scandals involving abuse of children by priests which date back decades.

But clearly deeply interested in how the world outside the walls of the Vatican works, he appears determined to use his position and the huge global audience he commands to challenge entrenched diplomatic positions as well.

The former secretary of state, Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone,

a veteran insider whose office formerly controlled both relations with foreign powers and many internal Vatican affairs, has been replaced. His office has been downgraded to resemble a more classical diplomatic service while Francis has set a bolder, more personal stamp on Vatican foreign policy.

"He's someone who's capable of praying in the Blue Mosque in Istanbul and then talking about the Armenian genocide. He's not someone who's bound by political correctness," said former Italian Foreign Minister Franco Frattini.

"It's the diplomacy of a real leader."

Whether it is to the taste of all the world's 1.2 billion Catholics, world politicians with priorities of their own or even the many layers of the Church's own administration is another matter.

With many conservative Catholics unhappy about the pope's focus on issues like economic injustice and his relatively tolerant tone on sensitive social topics like homosexuality and the status of divorced people, pronounced views on delicate diplomatic issues could cause further division in the Church.

It is a point where he will

be particularly tested in September on his upcoming visit to the United States, where some conservative US Catholics are openly hostile.

After helping to foster last year's agreement reviving diplomatic relations between Havana and Washington, Francis reaped criticism from many US conservatives, including Marco Rubio, a candidate for the Republican nomination for president.

Rubio, the son of Cuban immigrants and a practicing Catholic, avoided directly admonishing the pope, but said he should "take up the cause of freedom and democracy" in Cuba.

That kind of veiled criticism from a politician who would normally be considered a staunch Church ally reflects the wider unease some Catholics feel at the change Francis has ushered in at one of the world's most conservative institutions.

"Bishops complain that he becomes popular by attacking the Church," said Franco.

"He speaks directly to the people and doesn't respect the usual command structures. He decides on his own or with people who are not those who previously had a central role."

Reuters

First shipment of Fiat cars to Russia maybe already in May



Minister of Economy Zeljko Sertic

SUBOTICA, 18 May — The first shipment of Fiat cars made in Kragujevac could be exported to Russia already in May or early June, Minister of Economy Zeljko Sertic has said.

"This is not a simple issue, as each country that is a member of the Customs Union should give its consent, but we have reasons to believe that the first shipment would be approved very fast, already in May, or in early June," Sertic said during his visit to Subotica on Sunday.

He did not want

speculate about the number of vehicles that the first shipment may include, underscoring that the political framework and readiness of the Customs Union to "give such a privilege to Serbia and open up such an opportunity" is much more important.

"In these difficult times and strained relations between Russian and European Union, this will certainly be an indicator that, thanks to the good cooperation, economy can always be a step ahead of politics," Sertic said.—Tanjung

Nine killed in gun battle among Texas biker gangs

WACO, (Texas), 18 May — Nine people were killed and 18 were injured on Sunday when a simmering feud among rival biker gangs boiled over at a sports bar in Waco, Texas, leading to a gun battle in the parking lot, police said.

The clash took place outside the Twin Peaks Sports Bar and Grill at a shopping mall in the central Texas city, police said. Eighteen people were taken to area hospitals with injuries that included gunshots and stab wounds, said Waco Police Sgt Patrick Swanton.

The fight, which involved members of at least three gangs, erupted shortly after noon and quickly escalated into a brawl involving clubs, knives and chains, Swanton said. The fight may have been tied to a dispute over a parking spot, Swanton said.

When the bikers began shooting, officers moved in, some of them also firing their weapons. When the shooting ended, bodies were scattered across two parking lots.

"These are very dangerous, hostile biker gangs,"

Police escort a man at the scene of a shooting in Waco, Texas, in this handout photo provided by the Waco Police Department on 17 May, 2015. REUTERS



Swanton told reporters. "A lot of innocent people could have been injured today."

There would likely have been more casualties, Swanton said, but police were on the scene when the fight erupted, anticipating "issues" with what he called "criminal" gangs.

Eight people were killed at the scene and one died at an area hospital, Swanton said. All of the fatalities were bikers, and no officers were hurt.

The spokesman could not say if any of the casualties were the result of police gunfire.

It was unclear if any of

the injured were non-gang members.

Swanton said police were frustrated with the management of Twin Peaks, a chain restaurant that bills itself as the "ultimate sports lodge" and features scantily clad female servers. He said police had warned the bar that there might be trouble.

Jay Patel, Twin Peaks franchise operating partner, posted a statement on Facebook saying the company shared in the "community's trauma" and was cooperating with police.

"We are horrified by the criminal, violent acts that occurred outside of our

Waco restaurant today," Patel said on Facebook.

Some area businesses closed early Sunday after police warned people to stay away from the area. Swanton said police had received intelligence that other gang members might be coming to the area for "payback."

Three gang members were arrested trying to enter the crime scene, Swanton said. It is not clear if more arrests will be made, he said.

Police from multiple jurisdictions were helping with security and the investigation, Swanton said.

Reuters

PERSPECTIVES

Tuesday, 19 May, 2015

Problems, like doors, can be approached from two sides

By Aung Khin

From human trafficking, to territorial disputes, the world is facing an array of problems. When such obstacles concern more than one country, it is counterproductive to apportion blame to a single nation.

If the trafficking and abuse of illegal drugs cannot be controlled by authorities in destination countries, opium growing will never be totally eliminated in producer nations. Likewise, if countries where counterfeit goods are sold can-

not prevent the inflow of such products, producers will not abandon this illegal business.

A door can be opened from inside or outside by pulling or pushing it. Similarly, every problem can be approached from different directions.

In human-trafficking cases, economies that can manage and control illegal immigration through law enforcement and effective policies are less likely to be chosen as destination countries by traffickers.

As the world is a global community, issues affecting one country are likely to have an impact on others. Governments should therefore not only consider the interests of their own lands, but also earnestly think of the welfare of other countries.

Making accusations against others seems to be less painful than reviewing one's own policies and stance. Failure in family planning schemes can result in high population density, while po-

tentially causing social issues that extend beyond borders, from illegal immigration to healthcare problems.

As developing countries compete for business, they find themselves becoming destinations for illegal migrants and markets for drugs. To avoid or reduce such dilemmas, coordinated acts are needed not only in a single region, but also throughout the world, instead of pointing one's finger at others.

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Do and Deliver

Kyi Mun

Old saying	:	Do or Die! Swim or Sink!
New saying	:	Do and Deliver! Swim and Win!
It is said that:		Life is a struggle. Life is a fight. Life is a journey. To live is to fight, to suffer and to love. Actions are ours; consequences belong to heaven. You reap what you sow.

All these sayings emphasize and highlight the importance of deed, action, performance. The point is to get the desired results. Let's now explore the meanings of "Do and Deliver" in the following manner:

D for Dare to struggle & dare to win

O for Objectives

&

D for Dedication

E for Excelling

L for Learning

I for Innovation

V for Values

E for Exceeding Expectations

R for Results

Deliver, here, means: Do something you should do. To do or provide the things you are expected to, because you are responsible for them, or they are part of your job. e.g. Local councils are responsible to deliver most basic services. DELIVER THE GOODS: (=do or provide what you are expected to). e.g. They make all kinds of promises before the election, but have since failed to deliver the goods. To deliver on a promise (=to do what you promised to do.)

❖ **DARE TO STRUGGLE AND DARE TO WIN**

Many people are faint-hearted and are full of fears. They are afraid to take risk, to adventure or to plunge into the unknown. Some people are timid, hesitant, indecisive and ambivalent. Some people harbour doubt, scepticism, disbelief, very conservative ideas or reactionary notions. So, it is very important for those who want to do and to deliver to:

- Dare to struggle and dare to win,
- Dare to scale the heights!
- Be resolute, fear no sacrifice and surmount all difficulties to win victory.
- Think the most, feel the noblest and act the best

It is said that: **"The test of a man is he fight he makes, and the grit that he daily shows."**

So, it is important to:

Dare nobly

**Will strongly, and
Never falter in the path of duty.**

❖ **OBJECTIVE means:** (1) An aim that you are trying to achieve, especially in business or politics: e.g. *The main objective of this policy is to reduce unemployment.* (2) A place that you are trying to reach, especially in a military attack. e.g. *The valley was our primary objective.*

There is a style of management called Management By Objectives—MOB in short. Without an objective or a goal, you will be like groping in the darkness, or you will be like going on a journey without a clear and definite destination. In business, in war and in politics, if there is no objective, there can be no strategy. No strategy means no definite, clear-cut Plan of Action.

❖ **DEDICATION**

Dedication means hard work or effort that someone puts into a particular activity because they care about it a lot. e.g. *the success of the festival is a tribute to the dedication of one man. Single-minded dedication to her art.* If you are dedicated to something, you go all-out for it, aiming high and giving all you have got, investing every bit of yourself, holding nothing back. It also means you breathe and live the thing for which your whole mind, your whole heart and your whole life have been entrusted without any reservation. With the power of dedication, you cannot but be resolute, fear no sacrifice and surmount all difficulties to win victory.

❖ **EXCELLING**

To excel means: (1) To be very good at doing something. e.g. *She has always excelled in foreign languages. As a child, he excelled at music and art. The team excels at turning defense into attack.* (2) *To do extremely well and even better than you usually do.* e.g. *Rick's cooking was always good but this time he really excelled himself.*

A man of high caliber will never be contented to remain a mediocrity. He or she surely would like to become a celebrity. If you aim high in your life, you have got to be a expert in something. You have got to excel at something. You must become a really proficient professional in your chosen field of endeavour. Formerly, it is said: **NO PAIN, NO GAIN.** Now, it is said: **More Pains, More Gains!**

❖ **LEARNING**

Learning means: (1) To gain knowledge or skill by studying, from experience, from being taught, etc. (2) To become aware of something by hearing about it from somebody else. (3) To study and repeat something in order to be able to remember it. (4) To gradually change your attitudes about something so that you behave in a different way.

Anyway, you have got to continue learning all the way to your retirement age. You must learn to make a difference in your life, in your job and in your relationships. You must learn to differentiate your products or services from those of the competitors. You must deeply learn to be unique and stay ahead with a winning edge in your specialized field of discipline. You have to unlearn,

relearn and focus on learning.

❖ **INNOVATION**

Innovation means: (1) A new idea method or invention. e.g. Recent technological innovations. (2) Introduction of new ideas or methods. An innovative process, method or plan, etc. is new, different and better than those that existed before. (3) Using clear new ideas and methods. Ours is an age of innovation. Innovation is an effective strategy that can differentiate you from the rest. To stand out from the crowd, you are compelled to innovate. To be able to innovate, you have got to be creative, and imaginative.

❖ **VALUES**

Value means: (1) How much something is worth in money or other goods for which it can be exchanged. (2) How much something is worth compared with its price. (3) The quality of being useful. If we value something, it means we cherish it, we hold it in high esteem and we price it high in terms of money. Some of the common basic values of life are Honesty, Health, Happiness, Hard working, Knowledge & Education, Friendliness, Companionship and Peace of Mind. In business, we value Productivity, Progress, Profit, Prosperity, and Protecting the Planet.

❖ **EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS**

We should not be satisfied and contented by just doing and delivering something. We should be able to go beyond the call of duty and conduct our affairs beyond due diligence. We should have the habit of going the extra mile. We should stand out from the crowd. We should always be improving our caliber of capabilities. We must make it our duty to exceed expectations of the stakeholders such as Customers, Employees, Owners/ Shareholders, the Community and the whole National Economy.

- Ordinary expectations are doing and delivering good results.
- Extraordinary expectations are doing and delivering best results.

❖ **RESULTS**

We all work for results and must deliver results. If you are not able to deliver results for any reason, we are sure to be deemed incompetent, irresponsible, substandard or mediocre in ability and sincerity. So,

- Do well and Deliver Superior Results.
- Be creative and innovative to be able to deliver innovative Results.
- Get superior resources to deliver best Results.
- Surround yourself with superior minds for excellent Results.

CONCLUSION

Do and Deliver

Swim and Win

Stand Out From the Crowd.

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

LOCAL NEWS

Nantmwe Bridge completed on Tahley-Pahlyo-Kenglak road

TAHLEY, 18 May—The Ministry of Construction recently completed the 300-foot-long Nantmwe Bridge on Tahley-Pahlyo-Kenglak road in eastern Shan State.

Construction of the bridge, which can withstand a 75-ton load, was carried out under the ministry's programme to improve transport infrastructure across the country. The ministry built 456 bridges, including 87 large bridges,

between fiscal 2001-2012 and 2014-15.

In Eastern Shan State, Special Construction Project Group No 9 built eight bridges, including the Myanmar-Lao Friendship Bridge, with union funds, and nine bridges with the Shan State funds in fiscal 2014-15. The ministry spent K394 million on construction of the Nantmwe Bridge which was completed on 15 June.

Kayan Soe Myint



Miss Universe Mandalay 2015 contestants introduced at press conference



MANDALAY, 18 May—A ceremony to introduce 20 shortlisted contestants for the inaugural Miss Universe Mandalay 2015 was held in conjunction with a press

conference at Hotel Shwepyithar in Chanayethazan Township on 15 May.

Director Daw Soe Yu Wai spoke about the Miss Universe Mandalay contest, which will be sponsored by Weint Sein goldsmith shop.

Officials introduced the contestants who will take part in the pageant on 16 June.

According to an announcement at the press conference, the Miss Universe Mandalay winner will receive K3 million, the first runner up K2 million and the second runner up K1 million. Weint Sein goldsmith shop will award a crown worth K2.5 million to the winner.

Tin Maung (Mandalay)

Blood donors association elects new chairman

MYANAUNG, 18 May—Myittashin blood donors association in Myanaung Township elected a new committee on 17 May.

The association formed in 2008 has enjoyed successful operations since.

Treasurer U Ohn Myint read out the financial report of the association

while secretary U Nyein Chan Nyunt reported on its progress.

The attendees elected U Khin Maung Win as chairman. The chairman assigned duties to the new secretary and treasurer.

The association also increased the number of patrons for the association.

Nay Win Zaw (Myanaung)



Young hopefuls gun for places in football academy squads

MANDALAY, 18 May—Myanmar Football Academy (Mandalay) on 16 and 17 May recruited new trainees for the U-11 and

U-13 football teams for the 2015-16 academic year.

The academy tentatively recruited 44 trainees for the U-11 team

and 88 for the U-13 team under the supervision of Technical Director U Tin Myint Aung of Myanmar Football Federation

and officials.

Myanmar Football Federation will announce both teams on 22 June.

The technical director

and party held a meeting with the academy management board members on education and training for the young players.

They viewed a test match between two U-15 teams and gave guidance.

Tin Maung (Mandalay)



Saudi-led air strikes hit Yemen's Aden after truce expires

ADEN, 18 May — Air strikes by Saudi-led forces hit Houthi rebel positions in and around the southern Yemeni city of Aden overnight, residents said, after a five-day humanitarian truce expired on Sunday night.

Bombings struck the rebel-held presidential palace in the downtown area, groups of militiamen on the western and eastern approaches to the city as well as the international airport, which is disputed between the Houthis and local fighters. There was no word on any casualties in the strikes.

Saudi Arabia and its Sunni Muslim allies have been conducting an offensive against the Houthis for more than six weeks, saying they are backed by Shi'ite power Iran.

The campaign has yet

to reverse the group's advance into Aden and along battlefronts across Yemen's south.

A five-day truce that started on Tuesday night halted the air strikes and allowed humanitarian aid in to the blockaded country, though residents of the remote southern provinces of Shabwa, Dhalea and Abyan said heavy ground fighting persisted despite the agreed pause. The United Nations has called for an extension of the truce to allow humanitarian supplies to be delivered in sufficient quantities.

The Houthis and troops loyal to former President Ali Abdullah Saleh welcomed that proposal but the Saudi-led forces have said any extension depended on how the other side behaved.—Reuters



Anti-Houthi fighters of the Southern Popular Resistance stand near a tank in Yemen's southern port city of Aden on 16 May, 2015.—REUTERS

Kenya's Kenyatta asks Burundian President to postpone poll



Burundi's President Pierre Nkurunziza (C) walks before a news conference in Bujumbura, Burundi, on 17 May, 2015.—REUTERS

NAIROBI, 18 May — Kenya's President Uhuru Kenyatta has told Burundi leader Pierre Nkurunziza he should postpone a presidential election due next month after last week's failed military coup, Kenyatta's spokesman said on Monday.

Manoah Esipisu said the two leaders, whose na-

tions belong to the East African Community (EAC) common market, had spoken by phone on Sunday. Kenyatta's counterparts in the region shared his view, he added. Regional leaders want the election date changed from 26 June to create a "conducive environment" but the vote should still be held within

the current electoral cycle, which comes to an end in late August, Esipisu said.

The landlocked east African nation has been plunged into crisis since Nkurunziza pushed for a third term of office, a move his opponents say breaks the constitution and a 2005 peace agreement that ended an ethnically driven civil war. As many as 300,000 people died in the war, and there are fears the current crisis could inflame lingering tensions between the majority Hutu population and the Tutsi minority.

More than 105,000 people have fled to neighboring states, including Rwanda, which has the same ethnic mix as Burundi and which was torn apart by a genocide in 1994 that killed 800,000 mostly Tutsis and moderate Hutus.

Reuters

Explosions hit pro-Kurdish party offices in southern Turkey, six wounded — party

ANKARA, 18 May — Simultaneous explosions hit the offices of Turkey's opposition pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) in two southern cities on Monday, wounding six people weeks ahead of a parliamentary election, an HDP official said.

The explosion in the city of Adana, where the six were injured, appeared to have come from a package delivered to the office, the official told Reuters.

There were no immediate reports of injuries at the second explosion in the nearby city of Mersin.

Footage broadcast by CNN Turk showed windows smashed in a three-storey building, with broken glass and rubble covering the street. It showed one man sitting on a kerb with blood on his head, but it was not clear which city the footage was from.

HDP co-leader Se-

lahattin Demirtas, who spoke at an election rally in Adana on Sunday and was due to address another rally in Mersin on Monday, has said the party's offices have been hit by some 60 attacks in the build-up to the 7 June election.

The HDP is betting on new-found appeal beyond its Kurdish base to propel it into parliament for the first time, but will need to exceed a 10 percent threshold of votes to do so.—Reuters

Nigerian military says it destroyed 10 Boko Haram camps

LAGOS, 18 May — Nigeria's military destroyed 10 Boko Haram camps in the country's remote northeast on Sunday as it pressed on with an offensive against militant Islamist fighters now confined to a final hideout there, the army said.

A military statement said troops had killed many Boko Haram militants in the Sambisa forest and captured several armored vehicles and anti-aircraft guns. One soldier was killed by a landmine explosion.

Thousands of people

Shi'ite forces ordered to deploy after fall of Iraqi city

BAGHDAD, 18 May — Shi'ite paramilitaries were preparing to deploy to Iraq's western province of Anbar on Monday after Islamic State militants overran the provincial capital Ramadi in the biggest defeat for the Baghdad government since last summer.

A spokesman for the paramilitaries, which are known as Hashid Shaabi, told Reuters they had received orders to mobilize, but details could not be revealed for security reasons.

"Now that the Hashid has received the order to march forward, they will definitely take part," said Ali al-Sarai, a member of the Hashid Shaabi's media wing. "They were waiting for this order and now they have it." Ramadi is dominated by Sunni Muslims. Prime

Minister Haider al-Abadi signed off on the deployment of Shi'ite militias to attempt to seize back the area, a move he had previously resisted for fear of provoking a sectarian backlash.

About 500 people have been killed in the fighting for Ramadi in recent days and between 6,000 and 8,000 have fled, a spokesman for the provincial governor said.

The city's fall marked a major setback for the forces ranged against Islamic State: a US-led coalition and the Iraqi security forces, which have been propped up by Iranian-backed Shi'ite militias.

It was also a harsh return to reality for Washington, which at the weekend had mounted a successful special forces raid in Syr-

ful' in the Hausa language, has hit back with a series of raids over the last week, including two assaults on the regional capital Maiduguri.

"The Nigerian Air force is maintaining an active air surveillance to track the movement of terrorists for appropriate action as the operation continues," army spokesman Chris Olukolade said in the statement. There has been no comment from Boko Haram, which occasionally puts out statements and videos via the Internet.

Reuters

ia in which it said it killed an Islamic State leader in charge of the group's black market oil and gas sales, and captured his wife.

While the Iraqi government and Shi'ite paramilitaries recaptured the city of Tikrit from Islamic State last month, the major northern city of Mosul remains under the control of the Islamists.

Islamic State said that in Ramadi it had seized tanks and killed "dozens of apostates", its description for members of the Iraqi security forces.

Earlier, security sources said government forces evacuated a military base after it came under attack by the insurgents, who had already taken one of the last districts still holding out.

Reuters

BUSINESS & HEALTH

Gold climbs to fresh three-month high on sluggish US data

SINGAPORE, 18 May — Gold jumped for a fifth straight session on Monday, climbing to fresh three-month highs, as soft US data bolstered hopes the Federal Reserve would not hike interest rates soon.

Spot gold jumped to \$1,232.20 an ounce, its highest since February, before paring some gains to trade at \$1,229.55 by 0644 GMT. The fifth day of gains is gold's longest winning streak since March.

The metal has been supported in recent days by sluggish US economic data, which has hurt the dollar and altered expectations regarding the Fed's monetary policy.

The dollar languished around a three-month low against the euro on Monday,



Gold bars from the vault of a bank are seen in this illustration picture taken in Zurich on 20 Nov, 2014.—REUTERS

day, after weak data on US industrial production and consumer sentiment.

"In addition to con-

structive technicals, we see no change in our weaker dollar outlook; this in turn should continue to provide

an element of support to commodities in general and to gold in particular," said INTL FCStone analyst Ed-

ward Meir. The weak data bolstered views the economy was not recovering strongly enough for the US central bank to raise rates from record lows. This has supported non-interest-paying bullion, which would have seen demand decline with higher rates.

Markets had earlier expected the Fed to act in June. Economists cut their forecasts for US economic growth in the second quarter and full year, and trimmed expectations for US labour market gains, according to the Philadelphia Federal Reserve's quarterly survey.

Investors are now awaiting minutes of the Fed's April policy meeting, due on Wednesday, for clues on the central bank's

opinion on the economy and when it could raise rates.

Dovish minutes from the Fed and more soft US data could send gold to \$1,250, said Howie Lee, an analyst at Phillip Futures.

In news on investor positioning, hedge funds and money managers increased net long positions in silver and gold in the week ended 12 May, US Commodity Futures Trading Commission data showed on Friday. Hedge fund Paulson & Co kept its stakes unchanged in most of its gold investments in the first quarter, when the precious metal's price pared its gains, a filing with the US Securities and Exchange Commission showed.

Reuters

China to further improve public hospital services



BEIJING, 18 May — China will push forward reform in more public hospitals amid a broader overhaul of its health care system, according to a guideline issued by the State Council on Sunday.

China launched a pilot medical reform on public hospitals in 17 cities in 2010, and the guideline stipulates the reform should cover all of the country's 6,800 public hospitals by 2017.

The reform is aimed to change public hospitals' reliance on medicine sales to supplement their income. Public hospitals should establish a reasonable drug pricing system and retune recruitment and salary policies, said the guideline.

Health insurance should cover most of the medical expenditure, while out-of-pocket money, the private bills paid by each patient should be lower than 30 percent by 2017.

The wider plan is to establish a modern hospital management system, eliminating drug price-added

profits and standardizing referral procedures.

Public hospitals should be operated for the public good, instead of seeking lucrative gains, and the service should be accessible, equal and efficient for the people, the guideline said.

It also said social medical care should be encouraged through improved policies and strengthened supervision.

The guideline urged reform at the grassroots-level and nurturing more capable doctors.

Authorities will ensure the optimal distribution of medical resources, establish a scientific subsidy mechanism, and regulate the price of drugs and medical services, according to the guidelines.

Full scale reform of the health care system began in 2009. Pilot projects for public hospital reform were a priority, along with a basic medical security system, improvement at grass roots level and equal access to basic public health services.—Xinhua

Oil prices rise on Middle East fighting; OPEC output in focus

SINGAPORE, 18 May — Oil prices edged up on Monday following fighting in Iraq and Yemen, but Iranian comments that OPEC was unlikely to cut output as well as signs of strengthening US production capped gains.

Front-month Brent futures were up 12 cents at \$66.93 a barrel by 0556 GMT. US crude rose 26 cents to \$59.95.

Prices were supported by concerns that conflict in Iraq and Yemen could disrupt supplies after Islamic State militants said they had taken control of the Iraqi city of Ramadi in a big blow to the government.

In Yemen, a Saudi-led coalition resumed air strikes against Houthi militia in Aden, a port-city on the shores of key Middle East oil routes.

Despite these Middle East conflicts, analysts said oil markets remained oversupplied, and that the glut could worsen if US-production picked up and output by producer-club OPEC remained strong.

"Oil prices appear to have outpaced the improvement in underlying fundamentals," Barclays said on Monday.

"We expect selling interest in the \$65.00/67.00 area to cap WTI crude oil (\$70.00/\$72.00 area for Brent crude) and look for a move lower in range over the coming weeks. Our downside targets for WTI and Brent are \$54.24 and \$63 respectively."

Iran's Deputy Oil Minister Rokneddin Javadi told Reuters on Monday that OPEC was unlikely to cut output at its next meeting in June, and that Iran hoped

its crude exports would return to pre-sanctions levels of 2.5 million barrels per day (bpd) within three months once a deal to lift an oil embargo is finalized.

A deal over Iran's disputed nuclear programme between Teheran and world powers could see sanctions on Iran lifted if a more permanent pact is finalized in June. Because of the sanctions, Iranian oil exports have fallen to about 1 million bpd since 2012, mainly to Asia. In the United States, Goldman Sachs said that despite an expected dip in output in the second half of this year, production

would increase by 205,000 bpd in 2016. Yet most producers require higher prices. Deutsche Bank said that of major exporters only the United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Kuwait still have a balanced budget at current prices.

"With forward markets suggesting that the drop in prices is more permanent than temporary, a period of adjustment will therefore be necessary," it said. Brent for delivery in May 2017 is only \$4 per barrel costlier than spot prices, implying an expectation that prices will not rise sharply soon.

Reuters



An oil refinery is seen at sunrise with the Rocky Mountains in the background in Denver on 14 Oct, 2014.

REUTERS

Ford to recall vehicles in China

BEIJING, 18 May — Ford (China) will recall 1,399 cars in China due to defective fuel pumps and door handles, China's top quality watchdog said on Monday.

The recall involves imported models of the Edge and Explorer, the General

Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine (AQSIQ) said in two separate statements on its website.

Defects in the fuel pump of 1,099 Edge 2.0L vehicles manufactured between 30 April, 2014 and 21 May, 2014 may cause

engine failure, AQSIQ said. Additionally, 300 Explorer 3.5L vehicles, produced between 1 February, 2011 and 30 November, 2012, may have faulty door handles that could unlock spontaneously, posing a danger to passengers, according to the administra-

tion.

The company will start recalling the Edge vehicles from 26 June and the Explorer model from 29 May, according to the statements.

Faulty parts in the affected vehicles will be replaced free of charge.

Xinhua

Congratulations!

Our sincere congratulations to
**U Aung Ko Win, Patron of the Republic of the
Union of Myanmar Federation of
Chambers of Commerce and Industry and also
Chairman of Kanbawza Bank Ltd.,**
on his achievements of **President's Award
for Excellent Performance and President's Special
Honorary Awards for Excellent Performance**
as the three-time winner of **Highest Taxpayer Award** of
the country for three consecutive years.

In the time of the new government, he was recognized
as the three-time winner of **Highest Taxpayer Award** for
paying K 6,015.397 million in income tax in 2010-2011
fiscal year, K 10,827.70 million in 2011-2012 FY,
and K 17,010.37 million in 2012-2013 FY.

Our dearest wishes are to witness your greater
contributions to the interests of the country than ever before.



Chairman and Central Working Committee/Working Committee

**The Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of
Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI)**

ADVERTISEMENT

Congratulations!

Our sincere congratulations to
**Daw Nang Lang Kham, Chairperson of Brighter Future Myanmar
 Foundation of Kanbawza Group of Companies**
 who has been awarded **President's Awards for Excellent Performance**,
 for her donations of over K 6.4 billion in various sectors in five years
 after 2010 in the time of the new government.

Her generous donations were to:

- disaster-hit areas across the country,
- the efforts to bring back home over 3,000 Myanmar citizens who faced social hardships in Malaysia, over 270 Myanmar fishermen who stranded in Port Blair, India, for various reasons, in 2013 and 2014, and
- about 500 Myanmar fishermen who were put to forced labour in Benjina Island, Indonesia, on 14, 17, 18 and 22 May 2015, and
- noble deeds such as digging tube wells in the townships of Taunggyi, Heho, Aungban, Kalaw, Pintaya, Hopone, Namhsan and Bawsai in southern Shan State for local people to have easy access to clean water, in addition to the construction of roads and hospitals.

We would like to congratulate
**Daw Nang Lang Kham, Chairperson of Brighter Future Myanmar
 Foundation of Kanbawza Group of Companies**, who has achieved
**President's Awards for Excellent Performance
 (Best Philanthropic Organization Award)**,
 which she accepted in Nay Pyi Taw on 15 May 2015,
 for her generous contributions to various sectors including religion,
 education, health, social activities and sports, people living in disaster-
 hit areas and internally displaced persons, all of which are aimed at the
 betterment of the society
 and the development of the country as a whole.



Chairman and Central Working Committee/Working Committee
**The Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of
 Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI)**

history.
Reuters

GENERAL

Djokovic over-runs Federer, Sharapova wins in Rome

ROME, 18 May — Novak Djokovic boosted his hopes of completing a career Grand Slam at Roland Garros after he lived up to his top billing at the Italian Open by brushing aside old rival Roger Federer in the final on Sunday.

After dropping a set in each of his three previous matches in Rome, the world number one showed that he was back to his best as he humbled Federer 6-4, 6-3 to capture his fifth title of the year.

Earlier, Russian Maria Sharapova ground down Carla Suarez Navarro 4-6, 7-5, 6-1 to claim the 35th WTA Tour victory of her career.

Djokovic and Federer were meeting for the 39th time and top seed Djokovic narrowed his opponent's overall lead to 20-19.

With one week to go until the French Open, the Serb extended his unbeaten run to 22 matches as



Novak Djokovic of Serbia holds his trophy after winning the final match over Roger Federer of Switzerland at the Rome Open tennis tournament in Rome, Italy on 17 May, 2015.—REUTERS

he added to the Australian Open, Indian Wells, Miami and Monte Carlo titles he has won this season.

"So far, this is the best season of my life," Djokovic, who needs to win the French Open to complete his grand slam collection, told reporters. "I don't know how it will go at Roland Garros, but I'm very confident."

"I'm playing with

great joy and concentration and I hope to continue.

"This has been a very exciting week and today was my best match. It's always a big challenge to play Roger and obviously I'm very pleased."

World number two Federer admitted there was not much he could do.

"Novak was rock-solid today, he played great throughout. He made very

few unforced errors. I'm happy, feeling good and healthy."

The first set went with serve until the final game when Djokovic rifled a return winner that clipped the edge of the tramline and converted his first set point.

The Serb never looked in danger after breaking again in the second game of the second set and wrapped up the title when Federer hit a forehand out on match point.

Third seed Sharapova looked sluggish against her Spanish opponent in the first set and Suarez Navarro fought back from 1-3 and 3-5 down in the second to level at 5-5.

But Sharapova reeled off the next two games and tore through the decider against the tiring 10th seed, sealing victory in more than two and a half hours with her 39th winner.

Reuters

Taylor Swift, Sam Smith win top Billboard Music awards

LAS VEGAS, 18 May — Taylor Swift dominated the 2015 Billboard Music Awards on Sunday, winning eight awards including top artist, while British soul singer Sam Smith took the honours for top male artist and new artist.

Swift, 25, one of the top-selling musical acts in the United States last year, also picked up awards for top female artist, top Billboard 200 artist and album and top hot 100 artist, among others. Swift, whose video of her latest single "Bad Blood" premiered at the awards, also took home a special achievement award chosen by fan voting.

"This is such a good night," Swift enthused as she collected the night's big prize, top artist. Earlier, after winning top Billboard 200 album for "1989," she said "you guys embraced change, embraced me doing something new. I'll never forget it."

Swift and Smith

competed directly in several top categories, with Swift prevailing. Smith, 22, who had received 13 nominations to Swift's 14, also won for top radio songs artist.

The British band One Direction was another multiple winner, winning top touring artist and top duo or group, while Iggy Azalea was a triple winner for top rap artist, rap song and top streaming artist.

Rock band Van Halen opened the show with a throwback performance of their hit song "Panama," while Hozier later performed his smash hit "Take Me to Church." Other musical highlights included Kelly Clarkson's "Invincible," Britney Spears and Iggy Azalea who let loose with "Pretty Girls" and Nicki Minaj rapping "The Night is Still

Young." Little Big Town also teamed up with Faith Hill for their hit song, "Girl Crush."

Pharrell Williams swept the R & B categories, taking honours for song, album and artist while Jason Aldean took the prizes for top country song and album. Florida

George Line was named top country artist. Hozier won top rock artist and top rock song, while Coldplay took the award for top rock album. The awards, hosted by rapper Ludacris and supermodel Chrissy Teigen, were handed out in a live broadcast from the MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas. *Billboard* magazine, which covers the music industry, said the finalists were based on fan interactions with music, including album and digital sales, touring, radio airplay, streaming and interactions on social media websites and other online sites for music.—Reuters



mitv Myanmar International

(19-5-2015 07:00 am ~ 20-5-2015 07:00 am)

- | | |
|---|---|
| * News | "Food Safety" |
| * Insight Myanmar: Library (Ep-2) | * News |
| Beyond Access | * Taste of Myanmar (Noodle Salad) |
| Libraries Powering Development | * Tea Leaves |
| * MONASTERY (Bargayar Kyaung) | * Lady Pilot |
| * News | * News |
| * Director: Kyi Phyu Shin | * Myanmar Handicrafts |
| * Products of Myanmar — Pottery Business | * News |
| Dengue Fever | * Director: Maung Myo Min (Yin Twin Pyit) |
| * News | * Chanmyay Yeiktha Meditation Centre-Chaw Dwin Gone |
| * Choral Dance By Female Dancers | * Myanmar Puppet |
| * Marvelous Solo Cane Ball Playing | * News |
| * Talented Musicians | * Flying Without Wings- My Great Limitless Adventure — Mandalay & Sagaing |
| * News | * Ywar Thit's Monhinkhar |
| *Changes | * News |
| * Beach Food Delivery | * Youth Filmmaker: Khin Su Kyi |
| * Indian Footsteps | * Products of Myanmar — Seashells Products |
| * News | * School for the Blind |
| * The Most Prominent Resort And Residence — Ngapali | |
| * Today Myanmar | |

MRTV Entertainment Channel

(19-5-2015, Tuesday)

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------------------|
| 6:00 am | 8:30 am |
| • Mono Classical Songs | • Musical Programme |
| 6:15 am | 9:05 am |
| • Myanmar Series | • Radio Teleplay |
| 6:50 am | 9:55 am |
| • Fashion Show | • ASEAN CULTURAL FAIR (2014) |
| 7:10 am | 10:25 am |
| • TV Drama Series | • Myanmar Video |
| 7:55 am | |
| • TV Drama Series | |

Iranian navy escorts aid ship to Yemen

TEHERAN, 18 May— An Iranian aid ship destined for Yemen is currently in the Gulf of Aden, escorted by the Iranian navy, *Tasnim* news agency reported on Monday.

The Iranian navy will escort and support the vessel to the Yemeni port of Hodeidah, its captain Masoud Qazi Mirsaeed was quoted as saying.

The ship will arrive in Hodeidah in three days, he added.

Last Monday, an Iranian aid ship carrying 2,500 tons of food supplies and medicine left the southern Iranian port city of Bandar Abbas for Yemen.

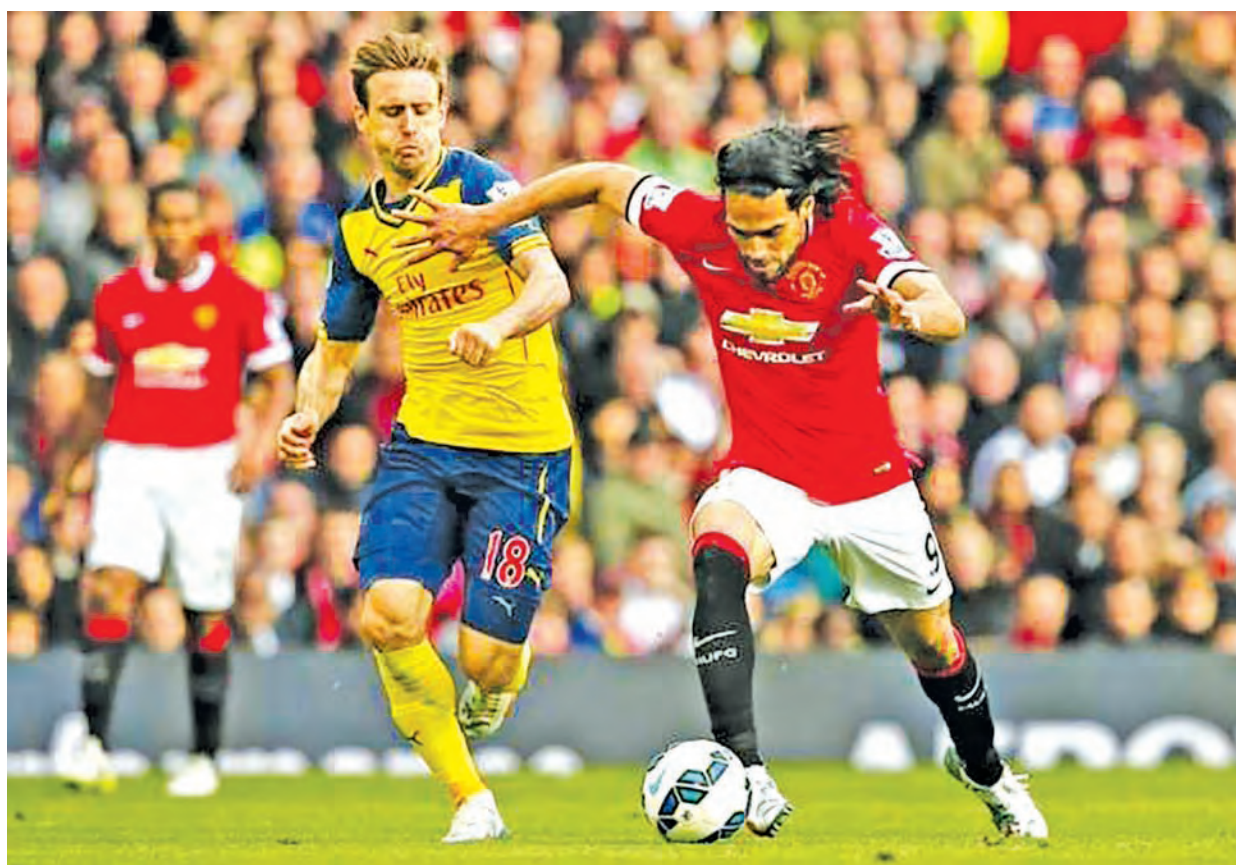
Iran has warned against any attempt to target its aid ship to Yemen. Deputy Chief of Staff of the Iran's Armed Forces Brig Gen Masoud Jazayeri said last week that attacking the ship will start a war in the region.

Saudi Arabia, along with eight other Arab states, has been bombing Houthi rebels and forces loyal to former president Ali Abdullah Saleh since 26 March, aiming to reinstate the government of President Abd Rabbu Mansour Hadi, who was forced to flee the country.

Riyadh has long been accusing Iran of arming and financing the Houthi fighters, an accusation strongly rejected by Teheran.

The death toll from the battles between Houthis and Hadi supporters and the airstrikes have exceeded 1,200, while more than 3,000 people were wounded across the country, according to statistics released by the Yemeni government. —Xinhua

Arsenal stay ahead of United, City win thriller



Manchester United's Radamel Falcao in action with Arsenal's Nacho Monreal during their Barclays Premier League at Old Trafford on 17 May, 2015.—REUTERS

LONDON, 18 May—Arsenal stayed ahead of Manchester United in the race to qualify directly for next season's Champions League when they drew

1-1 at Old Trafford on Sunday while Manchester City made sure of their place in the group stage with a 4-2 win at Swansea City.

United are now left hoping Arsenal slip up in their last two home games so they can catch them, finish third and avoid a play-off for a place in Europe's

top club competition.

With the season ending next weekend and the title already Chelsea's, the three behind them are still jockeying for

the final positions.

Chelsea have 84 points with two games to play, City have 76 with one to play, Arsenal have 71 with two matches remaining while United have 69 with one to go.

Chelsea and City have guaranteed their direct qualification to the Champions League group stage, while Arsenal just need a point from their last two games, at home to Sunderland and West Bromwich Albion to make sure they join them.

Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger told Sky Sports after the game: "It was very important today not to let Manchester United get in front of us, even if we have a game in hand."

United manager Louis Van Gaal seemed to accept that United would most probably finish fourth and told Sky: "Then we will have to play a round to qualify because we have not qualified for the Champions League yet."

"What Arsene Wenger has said is right, it's always stressful because you can

meet an opponent who are halfway through their season already and we are just starting our season, so it's not so easy.

"But of course I am satisfied, We set our goal at the beginning of the season and we have reached our goal. The fans seem pleased with us, that's fantastic, but I want more."

United went ahead when Ander Herrera volleyed in a cross from Ashley Young that beat David Ospina.

Arsenal equalised in the 82nd minute when a shot from Theo Walcott took a deflection off Tyler Blackett and flew past Victor Valdes, who had only come on seven minutes earlier to make his United debut.

The former Barcelona keeper, who has been at United since January, replaced the injured David De Gea, who could have made his last appearance at Old Trafford as a United player following widespread conjecture he will join Real Madrid next season.

Reuters

New Ethiopian star Ayana targets world record in Beijing

SHANGHAI, 18 May — Almaz Ayana has been left astonished by her own success as she looks poised to become the latest Ethiopian distance runner to challenge the record books.

Yet despite seeming almost bewildered by coming so close to breaking the world 5,000m record in the Diamond League meeting in Shanghai on Sunday, her performance has convinced the shy Ayana that the landmark could fall to her at the world championships in August.

In the month when the country's greatest runner Haile Gebrselassie retired, Ayana's brilliant solo effort signalled that Ethiopia has yet another rare talent ready to beat the world.

The 23-year-old had previously shown her ability with a bronze medal at the 2013 Moscow world championships but it had not prepared athletics for her remarkable breakthrough run of 14 minutes 14.32 seconds, the third fastest ever, on a windy evening in the Shanghai Stadium.

If it was a performance which left athletics sur-

prised, it felt like nothing compared to Ayana's own response to coming so close to breaking her compatriot and heroine Tirunesh Dibaba's seven-year-old mark of 14min 11.15sec.

"I didn't know I was so close to the world record," Ayana said, admitting that she did not actually know what the record was.

"I was looking at running about 14:20 but during the race, I went faster and faster. I was surprised my body could do that and I was surprised when I heard it was close (to the record)."

Given that she went it alone with five laps to go, breaking the spirit of all her rivals and eventually finishing 26 seconds clear of her nearest pursuer, Kenyan Viola Jelagat Kibiwot, it seemed as if she is capable of much faster.

"Now I want to try to break the world record at the world championships in Beijing," said Ayana, who seemed a little overwhelmed by the attention that greeted a run which knocked 11 seconds off her previous best time.

Reuters



Winner Meseret Defar of Ethiopia embraces her third placed compatriot Almaz Ayana (R) after the women's 5000 metres final of the IAAF World Athletics Championships at the Luzhniki stadium in Moscow on 17 Aug, 2013.—REUTERS

Barcelona wrap up 23rd La Liga crown with Messi goal

MADRID, 18 May — Treble-chasing Barcelona are La Liga champions for the fifth time in seven years after a clinical Lionel Messi strike secured a 1-0 victory away to Atletico Madrid that wrapped up the title with a game to spare on Sunday.

Cristiano Ronaldo hit a record-extending 26th La Liga hat-trick for Real Madrid in their 4-1 victory away to Espanyol but Barca cannot be caught now with a four point lead.

Messi combined with Pedro Rodriguez and then slotted home from the centre of the penalty area with 65 minutes gone.

It had been a cagey game but the talent of the Argentine shone through again to break the deadlock and help Luis Enrique to his first piece of silverware at the helm of Barcelona.

The Catalan side have dominated the list of La Liga titles in recent years and remain on course to repeat their trophy treble of 2009.

They are through to the Champions League final on 6 June to face Ju-



Barcelona's Lionel Messi celebrates his goal against Atletico Madrid during their Spanish first division soccer match at Vicente Calderon stadium in Madrid, Spain on 17 May, 2015.—REUTERS

ventus and will play Athletic Bilbao in the King's Cup showpiece on 30 May.

"Last year was tough for us and we were not good enough to be champions but this year we are doing well," midfielder Sergio Busquets told reporters.

"This is the first trophy for us and we are going to celebrate it as it is the most difficult tournament because we face all the teams.

"It is the most important although the Champions League is the most prestigious," he added.

Barcelona were missing Luis Suarez from their

devastating attacking trio due to a hamstring injury with Pedro stepping into the forward line.

Atletico provided their usual aerial threat and keeper Claudio Bravo clawed away a Jose Maria Gimenez header from a corner early on while Messi wasted a golden chance with a weak header in front of goal that went straight to keeper Jan Oblak.

The game settled into a contest where Barca had plenty of possession, but lacked precision in the final third of the pitch, against an Atletico side that looked to soak up the pressure.—Reuters