

President U Thein Sein: smooth transition to democracy govt's first priority



President U Thein Sein addresses Consultative Workshop on Developing a Framework for Administrative Reform.—MNA

NAY PYI TAW, 23 May—The smooth transition to democracy is the government's first priority among its reforms, President U Thein Sein said Saturday, in an address to

a workshop to establish a framework for administrative reform.

"We were able to ensure a smooth transition between the old system and the new one in building a

new, modern and developed democracy," the president said. The second priority is far-reaching reforms in politics, administration, econo-

my and further encouragement to the private sector, the president said, adding the government has put more effort into the emer-

gence of a good administrative system, with which democracy goes hand in hand.

As in other countries, Myanmar is likely to face

challenges in its transition to a good administrative system, a process the president described as broad and

(See page 3)

Myanmar approves investment worth \$2.2 billion in April

By Ye Myint

YANGON, 23 May—Myanmar approved foreign direct investment worth US \$2.23 billion in the first month of fiscal 2015-2016 in four sectors — oil and gas, manufacturing, hotel and tourism, and other services, according to the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration.

Oil and gas received approved capital of \$2.05 billion from 10 companies, followed by manufacturing with \$116.84 million from nine companies, while the

hotel and tourism sector drew \$50.75 million and other services \$13.19 million.

From fiscal 1988-89 to 30 April this fiscal year, the approved amount of foreign investment in Myanmar totaled \$56.466 billion, coming from 915 permitted companies in 38 countries.

Oil and gas attracted \$19.641 billion, accounting for 34.79 percent, from 151 permitted companies in the list of approved foreign investment by permitted enterprises.

(See page 3)

As Bangladesh is friendly neighbour of Myanmar, issue of boat people will be resolved amicably

NAY PYI TAW, 23 May — The Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nay Pyi Taw on 23-5-2015 issued a news release stating: A press release on Myanmar's view and efforts on illegal migrants and boat people in the Andaman Sea and the Straits of Malacca was issued on 19 May 2015. As mentioned in the press release, Myanmar Navy and Air Force are regularly patrolling Myanmar Territorial water to provide humanitarian assistance to bat people adrift.

In this regard, U Tin Oo Lwin, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Myanmar, met the Ambassador of Bangladesh to Myanmar at 11:00 hrs on 23 May 2015 at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Yangon. At the meeting, the Deputy Minister informed him that, during its regular patrol mission, Myanmar Navy intercepted two suspected fishing trawlers off the western coast of Maung Taw Township, Rakhine State on 21 May 2015; one of the trawlers has (208) people onboard and the other one has no passenger; the two trawlers are now docking at the Annumaw port; a temporary camp has been set up at Ale Than Kyaw Village and they were provided with temporary shelter, food, health care and other humanitarian assistance; according to the joint verification by the officials from the Ministry of Immigration and Population and other departments concerned, it is found out

that the said boat people are from Bangladesh. He has also encouraged members of the Bangladeshi Consulate in Sittwe to seek consular access to see them and urged the Ambassador to immediately convey this message to the Government of Bangladesh for necessary action.

The Bangladeshi Ambassador replied that responsible officials from the Bangladeshi Consulate in Sittwe already called on the Chief Minister of Rakhine State and that an official request for seeking consular access would be submitted to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

As Bangladesh is friendly neighbour of Myanmar, Myanmar is confident that the issue of boat people will be resolved amicably.

Myanmar like other affected countries will be difficult to continue receiving and temporarily sheltering more boat people. Rescue and providing temporary shelter and humanitarian assistance to the boat people is solely on the humanitarian ground.

Myanmar will continue to work hand in hand with other countries to address the issue of irregular movement at sea and boat people. A delegation of senior officials from Myanmar will be participating in the meeting on irregular migration in the Indian Ocean to be held on 29 May 2015 in Bangkok, Thailand.—MNA



Dr Sai Mauk Kham makes inspection tours of housing projects in Lashio



Vice President Dr Sai Mauk Kham arrives in Lashio to inspect two housing projects.—MNA



NAY PYI TAW, 23 May— Vice President Dr Sai Mauk Kham and wife Daw Nan Shwe Hmon, paid homage and presented offertories to

members of the Sangha led by Presiding Sayadaw Maha Saddhamma Jotikadhaja Bhaddanta Sujata at a Pariratti monastery in Lashio, Shan State, on

Saturday.

The vice president and his entourage also visited a meditation centre, where he presented offertories in cash and

kind to monks.

In the afternoon, the vice president went on inspection tours of two housing projects, Htinshu Myaing and

Cherry Myaing, where officials briefed on progress of construction works, water and electricity supplies, and construction of roads and buildings.

The vice president gave instructions on arrangements for systematic dumping and sewage treatment.

MNA

Boat people receive humanitarian assistance in western Myanmar

MAUNGTAU, 23 May— Rakhine State's Chief Minister U Maung Maung Ohn on Saturday visited temporary camps for boat people in Ale Thankyaw village, Maungtau Township, accompanied by United Nations officials and representatives of UN agencies.

The chief minister said Myanmar will abide by UN regulations regarding the treatment of boat people and pledged to provide humanitarian assistance.

Deputy Minister for Immigration and Population U Win Myint explained the plans for providing humanitarian assistance to the boat people.

The UN Secretary's Special Advisor on Myanmar, Mr. Vijay Nambiar, thanked the Myanmar

government and Rakhine State officials for rescuing boat people and allowing UN officials to meet with them. UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator Ms. Renata Dessallien called for international cooperation to prevent human trafficking.

Some boat people recounted their anxiety at the sea, and answered queries of UN officials and media before receiving humanitarian assistance.

U Maung Maung Ohn and the UN officials then discussed the issue of boat people with local communities in Maungtau Township. The temporary camps are now sheltering 200 people from Bangladesh and eight Bengalis from Kyauktaw Township.—MNA

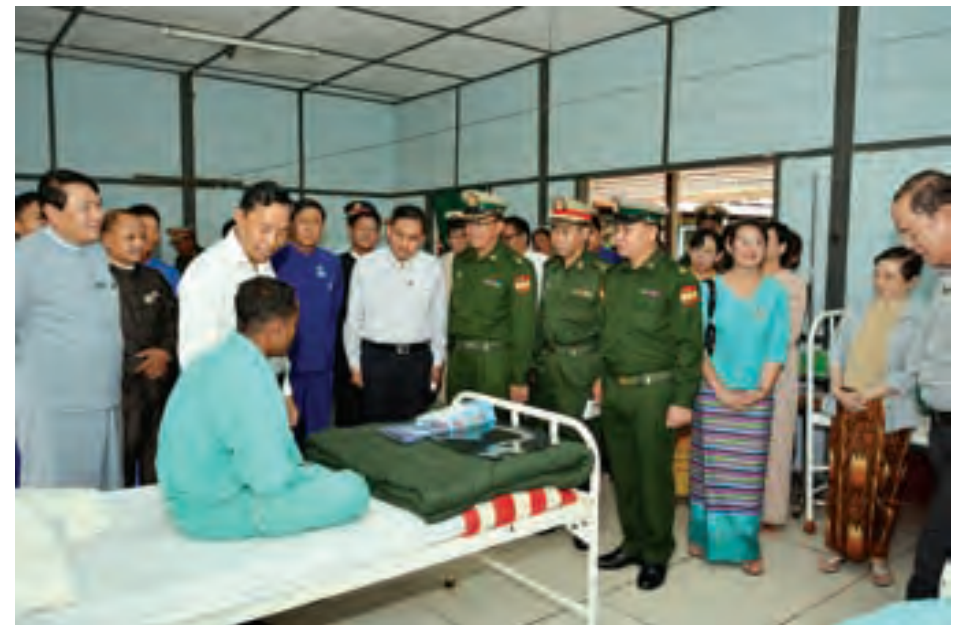
Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann honours wounded army members in Lashio

LASHIO, 23 May— Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann, accompanied by chairmen and members of parliamentary committees, visited the military hospital in Lashio, Shan State, on Saturday, presenting gifts in cash and kind in honour of officers and soldiers wounded in defence of the country.

At the Northeast Command, the speaker met local authorities, leaders of self-administered areas, political parties, and families of the command.

Speaking at the meeting, he said the Tatmadaw has won public support and adulation for its justified warfare. In April, he comforted wounded military personnel receiving medical treatment at the military hospital in PyinOoLwin.

People wanting to grasp power in an unfair



Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann comforts wounded soldiers in Lashio military hospital.—MNA

way used ethnic youths for their self-interest, he said, referring to clashes in Laukkai that have inflicted heavy losses on the army and left the region unstable with in-

ternally displaced people.

U Kyaw Ni Naing, an MP from Laukkai, said the Kokanginsurgents are nearing their end as the army is accelerating its attacks. He said he had witnessed losses on both sides and the plight of innocent locals including young children. He urged all ethnic armed groups to exchange arms for peace as the general elections approach.

U Thein Zaw, chairman of the Internal Peace Building Committee, said the army's strenuous effort has brought about stability in the Kokang area despite some sporadic outbreaks of conflict among local ethnic groups. He described some

ethnic leaders' craze for power as the reason for recent clashes in the Kokang area, adding negotiations are the best way to solve armed conflicts.

Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann presented assistance in kind for the army members shouldering military operations in Laukkai. Fuli Light company donated K10 million for army members in the line of duty in the area. Local people should help the army with regional stability and peace, with the speaker urging the army to improve itself and win public respect and support. He laid wreaths at the memorial to fallen heroes in Lashio and saluted them.—MNA

'Pleasant time of May' welcomes advent of monsoon

By Khaing Thanda Lwin

YANGON, 23 May—A joint exhibition featuring diverse works by local artists, with the theme of welcoming the advent of the monsoon, opened Saturday at River Ayeyawady Gallery.

The exhibition brings together artists with a wide range of styles, organizer U Nay Min Latt from the gallery said.

Running until 27 May,

"Pleasant time of May" showcases nearly 50 paintings by 25 artists including the renowned veteran U Win Pe. All exhibited works are for sale, with prices ranging from US\$120 to \$3,000, U Nay Min Latt said. Two acrylic paintings by 80-year-old U Win Pe have already sold to a local collector for \$2,000, he added.

The subjects of paintings at the exhibition in-

clude Buddhist culture, ethnic nationalities of Myanmar, traditional arts and culture, seasonal fruits and landscapes.

"I feel very proud to have the opportunity to present my works together with Saya Win Pe and other well-known artists," said artist Nyi Nyi, otherwise known as U Ah Lain Mar.

He created four watercolor paintings for the exhibition and said he is

willing to negotiate prices with those who cannot purchase expensive works, as he hopes to encourage local people to begin collecting paintings.

"Some proceeds of the painting sold will be donated to orphans," Nyi Nyi said. River Ayeyawady Gallery is situated on 35th Street (middle block) in Kyauktada Township in downtown Yangon.

GNLM

NATIONAL

President U Thein Sein: smooth transition to democracy...*(from page 1)*

delicate, but he pledged to overcome all obstacles and reaffirmed there would be no regression.

A good administrative system entails transparency and accountability, the president noted, pointing out the need to build capacity for civil servants

through a meritocratic system.

Efforts are under way to enhance the calibre of local governments as part of the decentralization of power.

As for transparency in extractive industries, Myanmar is working to become a member of the Ex-

tractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), with its ministries taking steps to release information.

The president called for collective efforts to undertake the process of administrative reforms, noting that it is impossible for a government to fulfil all public desires in a single tenure.

Union Minister U Hla

Tun at the President Office said proper and systematic administration changes take time in the world, adding that the government is making efforts to ensure the quick wins and a good groundwork for the long term in addressing challenges in accordance with the laws and the wills of people.

He also noted that the workshop is aimed to lay

a solid foundation for the betterment of the State in the future.

UNDP Country Director Toily Kurbanov said: Let us also remember that administrative reforms are not only about bureaucratic and procedural improvements. They are also, and most importantly, about who gets to take decisions; who has the resources; who has the authority. By promoting the administrative modernization the Government will not only accelerate the Third Wave of Reforms but also contribute to the comprehensive multi-dimensional agenda of the nation's rejuvenation, across the entire reform package.

Topics discussed at the meeting were capacity building for public service, decentralization, transparency and accountability.

Dr Zaw Oo, adviser to the president, said the discussions were designed to sharpen the potential of government staff, while Prof Dr Aung Tun Thet

stressed government employees should get themselves ready to serve the people.

The workshop will continue on 24 May.

In the afternoon, the president, accompanied by union ministers and deputy ministers, inspected the reclamation of Meiktila (North) Lake in Meiktila, Mandalay Region. The president and his entourage listened to the religious protection verses recited by members of the Sangha to ensure a safe reclamation of the lake. The president also presented offertories to the monks.

At a temporary briefing hall, Union Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation U Myint Hlaing gave a progress report to the president, including the history of the lake.

The reclamation of the lake is expected to finish in two months with the use of heavy machinery. On completion, the lake will be able to irrigate 7,350 acres of paddy plantations.—MNA



Upon completion of reclamation of Meiktila (North) Lake, it will benefit over 7000 acres of paddy field. —MNA

Co-op ministry provides K224 bn in loans to 2 million households

YANGON, 23 May—The Ministry of Cooperatives has provided a total of more than K224 billion in loans to over two million households in 307 townships and 23,000 villages across the country, according to the ministry.

The new loans were given out to the cooperatives in Yangon region on Saturday morning, witnessed by Vice President U Nyan Tun at the National Indoor Stadium (1) Thuwunna in Thingankyun Township.

At the event, the vice president said Myanmar is creating laws and bylaws to promote the livelihoods of farmers through agricultural loans and modern technologies, markets for agricultural produce and input items.

He said the cooperative system is aimed at helping its members reduce their financial dependency on the state by developing their own capital.

The Ministry of Coop-

eratives has given out the low-interest loans on three occasions to help farmers.

U Nyan Tun urged the members of cooperatives in Yangon Region to take lessons from the past and to maintain good practices in the future.

Union Minister for Cooperatives U Kyaw Hsan also explained rural development activities, promoting socioeconomic development and poverty alleviation schemes of the ministry by implementing eight activities of the ministry across the country.

Yangon Region's Chief Minister U Myint Swe also clarified rural development programmes and promotion of the socio-economic lives of the people in the region.

The union minister and the chief minister then disbursed the loans to the cooperatives in Yangon region.

U Khin Maung Aye, the chairman of the Central



Vice President U Nyan Tun addresses ceremony aiming at rural area development and raising socio-economic development in Yangon Region.—MNA

Cooperative Society and the CB Bank, gave K 6,530.926 million to the cooperatives to purchase 784 motorcycles, 77 trishaws, 1,751

sewing machines and 1,564 units of agricultural equipment.

Along with 150,000 members of cooperatives

from four districts of Yangon Region, Vice President U Nyan Tun and officials viewed photos displayed to showcase the activities

of the cooperative ministry and the agricultural equipment to be sold in installments.

MNA

Myanmar approves investment worth...*(from page 1)*

At the end of the previous fiscal year, the power sector topped the list with more than \$19.32 billion, accounting for 34.22 percent, followed by oil

and gas with more than \$17 billion.

Other sectors in the top five of Myanmar's FDI are manufacturing with approved capital of \$5.61 billion from 485 enterpris-

es, transport and communication with \$3.183 billion coming from 28 and mining with 2.868 from 70.

At the last year's ending, the approved amount of foreign investment in Myanmar reached a total \$54.23 billion, coming

from 895 permitted companies from 38 countries.

DICA's data showed approved foreign direct investment nearly doubled from \$4.1 billion in fiscal 2013-2014 to \$8.01 billion in 2014-2015. Myanmar expects to receive \$6 billion in the current fiscal

year.

China remains the top foreign investor, with 94 permitted enterprises having committed to invest \$14.754 billion in Myanmar and with 74 firms having invested \$14.676 billion since 1988-89.

As of 30 April 2015,

Singapore is the second-largest source of FDI in Myanmar with \$9.89 billion in terms of foreign investment by existing firms, while having the largest number of companies, 124, investing in the country, according to DICA statistics. —GNLM.

Diamond orb, umbrella to be reinstalled at Pahtodawgyi Pagoda in Amarapura

AMARAPURA, 23 May — Preparations are under way to reinstall an umbrella and diamond orb dislodged by powerful winds at Pahtodawgyi Pagoda in Amarapura Township, Mandalay Region.

The religious objects were recovered after being blown away during the extreme weather on the night of 8 May.

Under the guidance of the Ovadacariya Sayadaws and permission of the region government, the umbrella and diamond orb will be hoisted atop the pagoda, according to the chairman of the pagoda board of trustees.

“The largest tier of



the umbrella is 14.5 feet in diameter. The whole umbrella is 36.5 feet high. It

was hoisted on 23 March, 2014,” he said. “We renovated all parts of the pagoda spending more than K200 million.”

Tin Maung (Mandalay)

Police crack down on alcohol-related crime around moat

MANDALAY, 23 May — Police officers are on patrol around the Mandalay moat in the evening to prevent crime, according to the Mandalay District Police Force.

“Some people drink liquor on the pavement of the moat in the evening,” District Commander Lt-Col Sein Tun said. “Police educate them not to do so and order them to go home.”

While many people enjoy the scenic beauty of the moat, walking or exercising around it at sunset, some people

have been drinking alcohol in the area and causing trouble, according to the police.

To prevent crime, officers from police stations Nos. 1, 2, 4 and 5 are on patrol around the moat at night.

In 2014, police took action against people in 3,858 cases involving alcohol and public nuisance around the moat. From January to third week of May 2015, the police have taken action against lawbreakers in 949 cases.

Min Htet Aung (Mandalay)

New bridge links villages in Hinthada Tsp



HINTHADA, 23 May — The Thazi-Thoungngu Bridge was commissioned into service in Hinthada Township, Ayeyawady Region, on 19 May, with the aim of improving accessibility for local residents.

Abbot of Mokaung monastery Bhaddanta Sudhammacarabivamsa, District Deputy Commissioner U San Htay and well-wisher U Win Zaw formally opened the bridge.

The newly opened bridge links Thazi and Pyakatat village-tracts in the township.

Well-wisher U Win Zaw, wife Daw San Shin and family donated K10 million toward construction of the bridge, in addition to K5 million from Hlutaw representatives of Hinthada Township and K25 million from local residents

Kyaw Kyaw (Hinthada)

Tree-planting project aims to increase shade in Mandalay

MANDALAY, 23 May — Zartiman Youth Readers Association in Shwelaungnyunt Ward, Aungmyethazan Township, plans to plant shade trees in public places in Mandalay District as of

5 June, 2015.

“We set a goal of growing the shade trees to encourage local people to conserve the environment and reduce high temperature in Mandalay,” said an official of the

association. “Our association has been growing trees since 2013 as part of efforts for environmental conservation. “We planted trees in the public places in Mandalay Region annually.

“We plan to cultivate more than 5,000 saplings of shade trees in the rainy season.”

Tin Maung (Mandalay)

New school buildings opened in Ayeyawady Region

KYAUNGKON, 23 May — Japan-funded two new school buildings in Kyaunggon Township and one in Hinthada Township were opened on Thursday, in Ayeyawady Region, with aims to promote educational standards of rural schoolchildren.

The two one-storey RC buildings in Kyaunggon Township were constructed at a cost of US\$112,859 financed by the Japan’s Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects (GGP) Scheme. Also under the same scheme, Thamine BEPS in Hinthada Township was built at a cost of US\$ 118,122.

A 120’ x 30’ building is located in Byikegyi Village and a 70’ x 30’ building in Zeengu villages. All are equipped with six classrooms, toilet and full furniture each.

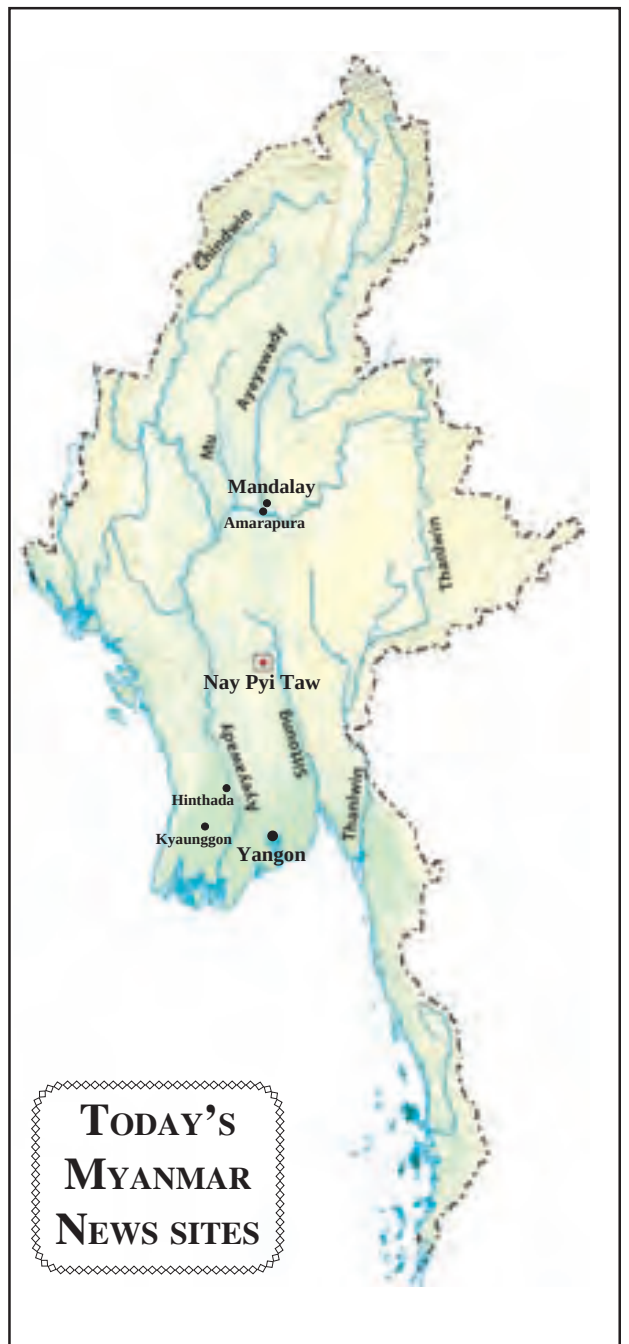
At the opening ceremony, Mr

Sachio Otaki, Second Secretary of the Embassy of Japan, handed over the documents relating to the new buildings to the Township Department of Education.

The government of Japan

has assisted 726 various grassroots projects in Myanmar under the GGP scheme since 1993 with the aim of promoting relations between the two countries.

David (Kyaunggon) & GNLM



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Xi calls for friendly cooperation at Sino-Japanese event

BEIJING, 23 May — Chinese President Xi Jinping on Saturday showed up at a ceremony aimed at expanding the country's people-to-people exchanges with Japan, calling for friendly cooperation between Asia's two biggest economies.

Xi's attendance at the ceremony in Beijing's Great Hall of the People is the latest sign of thawing relations between Japan and China.

But at the event, in which senior Chinese officials and a Japanese delegation of about 3,000 people participated, Xi said at the same time that China will never accept words and actions by Japanese leaders that distort history.

Xi denounced Japan's past militarism, as this year marks the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II.

Toshihiro Nikai, a 76-year-old lawmaker from Japan's ruling party bearing a personal letter to Xi from Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, heads the delegation, including lawmakers, local government officials and representatives from the tourism industry.

Nikai, who is known for his good relations with China among lawmakers of the Liberal Democratic Party, played a major role in organizing the delegation's trip to Beijing in his belief that the number of Japanese tourists to China should be increased



Toshihiro Nikai (C), an influential Japanese lawmaker, visits the Palace Museum in Beijing on 23 May, 2015. He hopes to hand a personal letter from Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to Chinese President Xi Jinping during his trip through the following day as the two countries try to secure a broader thawing of relations.

KYODO NEWS

for public diplomacy to work more effectively in the future. Affected by years of frosty government-to-government relations due to disagreements over territory and wartime history, demand among Japanese citizens to travel to China has stagnated since hitting a record 3.98 million visits in 2007.

In stark contrast, despite remaining political problems, Chinese visitors to Japan have reached all-time highs in recent months.

The number of Chinese visitors to Japan in the first four months of 2015 nearly doubled from a year earlier to 1.33 million, supported by the weakness of the Japanese

yen and more relaxed visa regulations.

The data released by the Japan National Tourism Organization on Wednesday showed that Chinese traveller arrivals topped 400,000 in April, the first time to do so on a monthly basis.

Last month, Abe and Xi held talks, the second in the last five months, on the sidelines of a regional conference in Jakarta.

During the talks, Abe and Xi agreed to prevent the disagreements from impairing the overall relationship between the two countries and to promote exchanges in various fields, according to Japanese government officials.—Kyodo News

Ranking female leftist rebel, five others nabbed in S Philippines

DAVAO CITY, (Philippines), 23 May — The military on Saturday said it has arrested a ranking leftist rebel and five others in southern Philippines.

A female political instructor of the New People's Army (NPA) identified only as Carla, and five others were apprehended on Friday by soldiers from the army's 28th Infantry Battalion at a hinterland community in Don Mariano village, Lupon township in Mindanao's Davao Oriental province

around 3 pm local time, said Eduardo Gubat, spokesperson of the military's Eastern Mindanao Command.

The soldiers were on security operations when they arrested the six people, and recovered from them improvised bombs, a fragmentation grenade, two cal 45 pistols with ammunition and backpacks full of subversive documents.

"Our soldiers fired a warning shot and surrounded the suspects who did not resist," said Benjamin Tiang-

co, a local army commander. Tiangco said the suspects were now at the custody of the local police for the filing of appropriate charges.

Since January, at least 36 NPA members have been arrested by police and military in Eastern Mindanao, the Eastmincom official said. The 4,000-strong NPA, armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines, is fighting a leftist insurgency in 60 Philippine provinces since 1969.

Xinhua

Abe vows more than 55 bil yen to Pacific island nations over 3 yrs

IWAKI, (Japan), 23 May — Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe announced on Saturday at a summit with Pacific island nations a fresh aid package worth more than 55 billion yen (\$452 million) over the next three years to deal with the impact of climate change and natural calamities.

Delivering his keynote speech on the final day of the seventh Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting in northeast Japan, Abe said the aid aims to "foster resilient capabilities that will not be defeated by climate change or disasters." The two-day meeting, which brings together Japan and the 16-member Pacific Islands Forum, takes place amid an increase in China's maritime assertiveness and economic clout in the resource-rich region.

"What we should have are two-way relations that are...entirely free of threats using force or coercion. That is the order for a society of Pacific citizens," Abe said in unveiling a new vision for Tokyo's diplomacy toward Pacific island states, apparently with China in mind.

To better tackle climate change and natural calamities, Abe called for a "community committed to the equality of all before the law, which places importance on democracy and has great regard for the human rights of each individual."

"It is a commitment to make our ocean a sea that is both pacific and prosperous and a place that brings

a promising future to each and every person living there," he said.

At the end of the summit in Fukushima Prefecture's Iwaki city, the 17 nations adopted a leaders' declaration vowing to maintain maritime order in line with international law as well as to cooperate on fisheries.

Experts familiar with Japan's ties with the Pacific island states say Japan is keen to boost its presence in the region, where it has been involved economically since the late 1980s, amid China's increasing presence there in recent years. The latest aid package exceeds Japan's pledge of around 40 billion yen made at the previous summit in 2012 in Okinawa Prefecture.

On top of the new financial aid, Abe announced boosting people-to-people exchanges between Japan and the region to the scale of roughly 4,000 people, saying, "We will also push forward in two-way exchanges and training of human resources to serve as assistance in cultivating both expertise and technical skills." The forum groups Australia, the Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. To more frequently discuss maritime and other issues of common interest, Abe said that Japan and Pacific island leaders will meet again when the UN General Assembly convenes in fall.

Japan has hosted the summit with the Pacific island nations once every three years since 1997.

In the latest summit at Spa Resort Hawaiians, a Hawaii-style leisure complex, the leaders of 14 Pacific island states and ministers from Australia and New Zealand are participating.

The declaration sets out seven pillars of cooperation — disaster risk reduction, climate change, the environment, people-to-people exchanges, sustainable development, maritime issues and fisheries, and trade, investment and tourism.

Measures to help the Pacific island nations combat climate change include Japan's establishment of the Pacific Climate Change Centre and disaster-resilient infrastructure building. A new programme to train young leaders in the Pacific will also be launched, the declaration said. Japanese officials said the centre will help train people as a "regional hub" for climate change countermeasures, while the new programme will see 100 young government officials from the Pacific island countries studying in Japanese universities.

The declaration noted as well that Japan and members of the forum will speed up efforts to collect the remains of Japanese war dead in the island states, the sites of fierce battles during World War II, and reaffirm their cooperation over reforming the UN Security Council.

Kyodo News

UN chief says to continue support Vietnam in fulfilling MDGs, SDGs



Nguyen Phu Trong (R), general secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam, meets with visiting United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon in Hanoi, Vietnam, on 22 May, 2015. UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon is on his 2-day official visit to Vietnam. —XINHUA

HANOI, 23 May — Visiting United Nations (UN) Secretary General Ban Ki-moon on Friday said the UN will continue to support Vietnam in socio-economic development, fulfilling Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The UN chief made the remark while meeting with General Secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam Nguyen Phu Trong in Vietnam's capital Hanoi on Friday. Speaking at the meeting, the UN chief praised Vietnam's efforts in joining in UN's activities, especially the

country's participation in UN Peacekeeping mission, reported Vietnam's state-run news agency VNA.

The Vietnamese party chief, for his part, expressed his gratitude for the UN's supports in the country's post-war rehabilitation, financial aid, as well as financial, personnel and technical assistance in poverty reduction, hunger elimination and socio-economic development.

The visit of Ban Ki-moon to the country plays an important role in boosting the cooperation between Vietnam and the UN, Trong said, adding that Vietnam will continue to participate into UN's activities for peace, security and development in the region and the world. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon is paying a visit to Vietnam on Friday and Saturday at the invitation of Vietnamese President Truong Tan Sang.—Xinhua

US, Cuba make progress on restoring ties but no deal yet

WASHINGTON, 23 May — Cuba and the United States reported making progress toward restoring diplomatic relations following two days of talks and pledged on Friday to continue informal negotiations in the coming weeks.

The chief US negotiator said the two sides may not need another formal round of talks to reach agreement, indicating major differences had been resolved.

If the former Cold War rivals ultimately reach a deal to end more than half a century of estrangement, it would fulfill a pledge they made five months ago when US President Barack Obama and Cuban President Raul Castro announced détente.

The so-called interests sections in Washington and Havana could be upgraded to embassies, and ambassadors could be named in place of the current chiefs of mission. Washington severed diplomatic relations with Cuba in 1961, soon after Cuba's revolution that steered the island into alliance with the Soviet Union and decades of hostility with its northern

neighbour.

"We have made significant progress in the last five months and are much closer to reestablishing relations and reopening embassies," Roberta Jacobson, the US assistant secretary of state for Western Hemisphere affairs, told reporters after two days of talks at the State Department.

Since Obama and Castro's landmark announcement in December, the two sides have met twice in Havana and twice in Washington, and the two presidents have also met for talks during a regional summit in Panama in April.

The chief Cuban negotiator, Josefina Vidal, also reported progress had been made.

Neither side gave details publicly although Vidal, the director of US affairs at the Cuban Foreign Ministry, said they had discussed "aspects related to the functioning of embassies and the behaviour of diplomats," a reference to two areas of difference.

Cuba, wary of outside efforts to change its one-party Communist system, has objected to US training courses in jour-



Assistant US Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs Roberta Jacobson (3rd L) and Josefina Vidal (4th R), director general of the US division of the Cuban foreign ministry, sit with their delegations at the fourth round of closed talks to re-establish diplomatic relations between the United States and Cuba at the State Department in Washington on 21 May, 2015.—REUTERS

nalism and information technology given at the US interests section in Havana, saying they violate the Vienna Convention ban on diplomats interfering in the internal affairs of a host nation.

Cuba, which tightly controls its media and blocks websites run by independent journalists, views the courses as subversive.

The Americans want freedom of movement for their diplomats, who are banned from travelling outside Havana without permission.

One important Cuban demand was to be removed from the US list of state sponsors of terrorism, a designation that imposed sanctions on some companies doing business with Cuba.

Obama announced on 14 April he would take Cuba off the list, subject to a congressional notification period that ends on 29 May.

That has allowed Cuba to once again find a bank to handle its accounts in the United States. Cuba reached a deal with Stonegate Bank of Florida.

Reuters

UN disarmament talks flop over nuke-free zone plan for Middle East

NEW YORK, 23 May — A four-week UN review conference on the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty ended on Friday without adopting a consensus document, with negotiators failing to narrow differences over a proposal to make the Middle East a nuclear weapons-free zone.

The failure to produce an outline for actions for the next five years at the meeting, which took place in the 70th anniversary year of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, will likely raise concerns that efforts to advance disarmament toward a world free of nuclear arms will lose momentum.

The conference president, Taous Feroukhi, admitted a lack of consensus at a plenary meeting that was held after hours of delay. Citing "diverging expectations of state parties for a progressive outcome," the Algerian ambassador said "it would be impossible for any single consensual document to possibly meet the highest aspirations of all parties."

With the current meeting — held once every five years — not the first to close without adopting a final document, the conference's effectiveness in promoting its agenda of disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy may be thrown into question.

At the plenary meeting, the proposal for a Middle East zone, which would involve Israel — an undeclared but acknowledged nuclear power — was raised by a number of speakers.

Rose Gotemoeller, the US undersecretary for arms control and security policy,

rejected a plan to hold a conference on establishing such a zone by 1 March next year contained in the final draft for an outcome document, with the idea having been put forward by the Russians.

The US official called it "an arbitrary deadline" and blasted Egypt and a number of other states, saying they were not willing to let go of this and other "unrealistic and unworkable conditions" in the text.

Britain and Canada also criticized the conference deadline language in the final text.

Egyptian Ambassador Hisham Badr slammed the United States, saying it "blocked" an agreement on the nuclear-free zone. It is "a sad day" for the NPT, he said, pointing out how three countries, had blocked the agreement.

"By blocking consensus we are depriving the world, but especially the Middle East, of even one chance of a better future, away from the horrors and the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons," he added.

Mikhail Ulyanov, the Russian head of delegation, said it was a "shame that such an opportunity for dialogue had turned out to be missed, perhaps for a long time to come." In the closing days of the conference, some observers said nuclear "haves" and "have-nots" in the NPT framework were narrowing some differences over nuclear disarmament in working out a final document. But consensus was blocked over the issue of Israel, which is not party to the treaty but attended the review meeting as an observer for the first time in 20 years.—Kyodo News



Japanese architect and Pritzker laureate Fumihiko Maki speaks in German Architecture Museum in Frankfurt, Germany, on 22 May, 2015. In his lecture, Maki presented his firm's latest projects. The office portfolio includes worldwide well-respected projects like the Aga Khan Museum (Ontario, Canada) and the 4 World Trade Centre (New York City, USA).—XINHUA

In Spain, grassroots movements revive interest in politics

MADRID, 23 May — In an apartment block in central Madrid, homeowners and tenants in danger of being evicted gather every Thursday to plan awareness campaigns and get free advice from lawyers.

'The Mortgage Victims' Association', or PAH — its initials in Spanish, has stopped hundreds of evictions and is one of many grassroots campaigns to rise from Spain's brutal six-year economic downturn in a popular revival of political involvement.

"People come to us with difficult problems," says Felicitas Velaquez, an activist who often stays the night with homeowners to prevent dawn evictions by police. "Once those problems are resolved, they become empowered and politically aware."

This resurgence of street-level politics on issues from the privatization of healthcare to corruption will draw more voters to Spain's



A cyclist rides past electoral banners by Solidaritat Catalan independence party (SI) and Convergencia i Unio (CIU) party in Vilassar de Mar near Barcelona, Spain, on 21 May, 2015.—REUTERS

new parties, anti-austerity Podemos ('We Can') and market-friendly Ciudadanos ('Citizens'), when the country goes to the polls in local elections on Sunday, analysts say. It also makes an electoral outcome harder to predict as new parties fragment the vote and destroy traditional allegiances, with polls showing 30 to 45 percent of voters still undecided, as much as double the level of the previous, 2011 local vote.

"Before the arrival of the new parties, these social movements had no political party to satisfy their demands," says Jose Pablo Ferrandiz of polling firm Metroscopia, who expects participation to rise 3 or 4 percentage points as a result.

The new parties have sought to harness these campaigns, with Podemos joining forces in Madrid with a group of social movements under the name 'Ahora

Madrid' with 71-year-old retired magistrate Manuel Carmona as candidate for mayor.

In Barcelona, Mortgage Victims' Association founder Ada Colau is the favorite to win municipal elections on Sunday on a combined ticket including Podemos.

The 'Indignados' movement, which swept through Spain four years ago when thousands of mostly young Spaniards camped out in Madrid's Puerta del Sol central square, has matured from protests to political engagement, she told Reuters.

"The terrible situations many have gone through have made people realize that for things to change they have to get involved," she said, noting that to the country's credit, populist movements in Spain have not veered toward the xenophobic extreme right as in other European countries.

Reuters

Clinton emails show concern about image after Benghazi

WASHINGTON, 23 May — Top aides to former US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton fretted over how she would be portrayed after the 2012 Benghazi attacks that killed the US ambassador to Libya and three other Americans, emails released on Friday showed.

The emails also showed Clinton received information on her personal email account about the Benghazi attacks that was classified “secret” by the FBI just prior to their release.

Clinton, the frontrunner for the Democratic presidential nomination in 2016, has come under criticism for using a personal email account, hosted on a private server in her New York state home, instead of a government one for messages she sent and received as secretary of state.

The move by the FBI to classify some of the material could further fuel criticism that she handled sensitive information on her private email.

But State Department spokeswoman Marie Harf told that the information classified by the FBI amounted to “less than two sentences.”

“The email and the in-

formation in this email ... was not classified at time it was sent,” Harf said.

The emails released on Friday did not appear to support for Republican accusations that Clinton was involved in efforts to downplay the role of Islamic militants in the attacks on a US diplomatic compound and CIA base in Benghazi. Nor did they indicate that Clinton was personally involved in decisions that resulted in weak security at the Benghazi outposts.

But the correspondence did offer a glimpse into how Clinton’s team was concerned about her image immediately afterward.

A senior adviser to Clinton, Jake Sullivan, forwarded an email from a State Department official about positive media coverage of a statement she gave on 12 September, 2012, the day after the killings.

“Really nice work guys,” State Department official Matthew Walsh wrote in an email to other staffers, which linked to a story on the Slate news site praising Clinton’s comments about Benghazi as “her most eloquent news conference as secretary of state.”

Sullivan, Clinton’s dep-

uty chief of staff, passed the email on to her with the letters “FYI.”

In another email from September 2012, Sullivan assured the secretary of state that she had used the correct language to describe the lead-up to the Benghazi attacks.

US officials’ exact wording of the attackers’ motivation had become important because the Obama administration initially said the assaults were a spontaneous protest against an anti-Islamic film posted on the Internet.

The US ambassador to the United Nations at the time, Susan Rice, drew heavy criticism from Republicans for making this claim on several Sunday TV shows, even though intelligence indicated within hours after the attacks that they had been the carefully planned work of Islamist militia members.

Sullivan assured Clinton that her language when discussing the attacks in public had been correct.

“You never said spontaneous or characterized the motives, in fact you were careful in your first statement to say we were assessing motive and method,” he



Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton talks to the media after a campaign appearance at the Smuttynose Brewery while campaigning for the Democratic presidential nomination in Hampton, New Hampshire on 22 May, 2015.—REUTERS

wrote in an email.

A number of the emails to Clinton, some from high-ranking officials, are flattering to the former first lady.

After Clinton appeared on television the day after the Benghazi attack, Liz Sherwood-Randall, a White House official, sent a message to her via Sullivan which described Clinton’s performance as “emphatic and unflinching and inspiring; she was wise and steady and strong. My 80 year old mother called from LA to say, ‘She was like our rock of Gibraltar.’”

Long a focus of Republican investigators in Congress, accusations that Clinton was negligent on Benghazi are putting her under more intense scrutiny now that she is running for the Democratic Party nomination in the 2016 presidential election.

Republicans say the Obama administration was lax about the security of US personnel in Libya and then misled the public about the nature of the attacks, but various congressional probes have produced little damaging evidence.

State Department

spokeswoman Marie Harf said that the 296 emails released on Friday “do not change the essential facts or our understanding of the events before, during or after the attacks.”

They were the first instalment of a rolling release of 55,000 pages of emails from her time as secretary of state between 2009 and 2013 that are due to be released in the coming months.

Clinton or her aides have deleted another 30,000 emails which she has termed as personal from the same private account, causing Republicans in Congress to accuse her of picking and choosing what she wants to make public.

Rep Trey Gowdy, the Republican who heads the Benghazi probe in the House of Representatives, said the emails made public on Friday “continue to reinforce the fact that unresolved questions and issues remain as it relates to Benghazi.”

He also complained that there was a significant gap in the emails between late April and 4 July, 2012, a period when threats from militants in Benghazi were being more regularly reported.—Reuters

Mexico gunfight kills 43 as government hits gang hard

ZAMORA, (Mexico), 23 May — Government security forces killed 42 suspected drug cartel henchmen and suffered one fatality in a firefight in western Mexico on Friday, an official said, one of the bloodiest shootouts in a decade of gang violence wracking the country. National Security Commissioner Monte Alejandro Rubido said one federal policeman died and another was injured in the three hour battle on a ranch just inside the Michoacan state border with Jalisco, home of Guadalajara, Mexico’s second-biggest city.

The death toll was one of the heaviest to hit Mexico since President Enrique Pena Nieto took office in December 2012 pledging to put an end to years of gangland violence that have claimed more than 100,000 lives since 2007 alone. Government officials said the 42 killed by security forces near the town of Tanhuato were suspected members of the Jalisco New Generation (JNG) cartel, a gang based in the neighbouring state that has seriously undermined Pena Nieto’s pledge.

The gunfight began after security forces alerted to an “invasion” of the ranch approached the 112 hectare property and were fired upon by a group of armed men, Rubido said.

After calling in air and ground support, government forces ground



A convoy of federal policemen patrol near a ranch where a gunfight between hitmen and federal forces left several casualties in Tanhuato, state of Michoacan, on 22 May, 2015.—REUTERS

down their opponents with the aid of a helicopter, in the end capturing three suspected gang members and seizing a grenade launcher and 39 guns of varying calibres, he added.

Earlier, a government official told Reuters that two federal police had died in the exchanges near Tanhuato, where a week ago, federal forces replaced local police after the assassination of a candidate for mayor in a nearby town.

Rubido said officials from the national human rights commission (CNDH) had been sent to the ranch, where the number of dead was the highest in any clash between the government and suspected gangsters since a controversial incident last June.

Then, the government first reported that 22 gang members

were killed in a shootout with soldiers in central Mexico. However, subsequent investigations showed that more than half of the dead had been executed, embarrassing the government. Jalisco is one of the engines of the Mexican economy, but the state’s southern border turned into a battleground between the JNG and the Michoacan-based Knights Templars, a gang whose leadership has been shattered over the past 18 months.

Capitalizing on the Templars’ losses, the JNG has become the biggest threat to the government, killing at least 20 police since March. On 1 May, its gunmen shot down an army helicopter in southwestern Jalisco, claiming the lives of six military personnel.

Reuters

APEC ministers seek to push new free trade area

BORACAY ISLAND, (Philippines), 23 May — Trade ministers from 21 Asia-Pacific economies kicked off a meeting in the Philippines on Saturday, seeking to accelerate efforts toward the creation of a region-wide free trade zone and boosting regional integration.

During the two-day conference on the resort island of Boracay, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum ministers are expected to agree on details of how to proceed with a study that will look into the possibility of implementing a new trade scheme known as the Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific, according to a draft of their declaration, obtained by Kyodo News, which will be adopted on Sunday.

The APEC members are continuing efforts toward crystallizing FTAAP following their leaders’ summit held in November in Beijing, where they affirmed commitment to realizing the initiative “as early as possible” and agreed to launch a “collective strategic study” whose results are expected to be reported by the end of 2016.

The meeting comes at a time when negotiations for a Trans-Pacific Partnership free trade initiative — which include the United States, Japan and 10 other coun-

tries but not China — have stalled despite Washington striving to secure a deal by this summer.

Other agenda items include promotion of service trade, fighting protectionist movement in world trade, and building better infrastructure in the fast-growing region.

During the gathering, Japan is advocating an initiative to plan and build infrastructure based on considerations of safety, long-term durability and the environment, arguing that saving on initial costs for infrastructure development often results in higher overall costs for maintenance, according to government officials.

The idea is strongly supported by the United States amid China’s growing influence in the region’s infrastructure development, underscored by the establishment of the Beijing-led Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, the officials said.

The 21-member APEC forum, established in 1989, groups Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Peru, the Philippines, Russia, Singapore, Taipei, Thailand, the United States and Vietnam.

Kyodo News

PERSPECTIVES

Sunday, 24 May, 2015

Residents can play part in tackling seasonal floods

By Aung Khin

As the rain starts falling on Yangon, the city is experiencing floods that are fueling traffic congestion, despite the Yangon City Development Committee's efforts to improve the drainage system, especially in six downtown areas.

The city of more than 6 million people is prone to flooding whenever heavy rains fall due to a drainage system that has been poorly maintained for many years,

and a rising population that is using more water and creating a greater amount of waste. Much of the matter clogging canals and drains is waste that has not been properly thrown away.

The YCDC said it has faced difficulties in the digging process, as it seeks to avoid old and new underground cables, water pipes and sewerage. While some residents are very optimistic about the projects of the YCDC, others say the floods are the same every rainy season, and they don't see this year being any different.

Workers feel upset when they are late to the office due to the traffic gridlock, which has become familiar to those who have been commuting for many years. With the inundated roads come other deadly hazards, such as electrical and traffic accidents.

YCDC has announced that it has been working to prevent flooding through measures including the dredging of canals above and below ground, the building of new drains and extension of existing ones, as well as cov-

ering roadside canals across the entire city. The measures are expected to cost billions of kyats from state funds.

While the city development committee is aiming to address the garbage problem to mitigate floods, in addition to creating an effective drainage system, people should also join hands with YCDC in making Yangon a clean and green city free from floods during the rainy season by properly disposing of their waste in dustbins.

Write for us

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

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

The last old Myanmar capital city "Ratanapon" [Mandalay] Part V

Maha Saddhamma Jotika dhaja
Sithu Dr. Khin Maung Nyunt

King Mindon's royal paddy fields and ploughing ceremony

Three securities for a country and its people are (1) Life security (2) Food security and (3) Water security. A good strong army is the first and foremost need for life security. Food production, agriculture, is the second need and water source and storage is the third. In all civilizations these three needs were the primary concerns of the rulers or governments. Myanmar was no exception. In any period of Myanmar history, the first thing that the kings did, once they came to the throne were setting up defence frontier outposts, reorganizing army, repairing arable lands and reclaiming new agricultural lands, repairing old irrigation systems and water storages and building new ones.

In addition to these practical down-to-earth activities Myanmar kings turned also to their ritual and ceremonial aspects of these activities, such as rain calling rites and harvest promoting rites. When monsoon approaches in the month of Nayone [June] farmers are busy with agricultural activities beginning with ploughing. Myanmar kings were accustomed to initiate the yearly ploughing of the farmers to inspire and encourage the growers and to gain good harvest. So they unfailingly performed at least once, if not yearly, in their reigns. In Bagan dynasty of 55 kings, four kings were recorded to have performed ploughing ceremony yearly during their reigns. They were known by names prefixed with the word "Htun" [Plough]. (1) Htun-taik [569-581 A.D], his son (2) Htun-Pyit [582-597 A.D], (3) Htun-chit, son, [598-612 A.D] and (4) Htun-twin [753-761 A.D].

Besides, Myanmar kings followed the precedent of ploughing ceremony of King Sudhodana, father of Prince Siddhartha [Bodhisatta]. Sudhodana held the royal ploughing ceremony while Siddhartha was still a babe. Caretakers, nurses and maids laid the royal babe in the shade of a Jabu-thabyey Tree, as they watched the ceremony. In the evening, when returned to the royal babe they witnessed two miracles (1) the royal babe was sitting up cross-legged in meditation mood, (2) the shade of the Jabu-thabye tree did not change, but still umbrella-ing the royal babe though the sun was setting in.

King Mindon's predecessors, Bodawpaya, Bagyidaw, Kings Thayawady and Bagan performed the ploughing ceremony at least once in their reigns. They left records of their performances. The court bards were obliged to compose special verses or songs to mark the occasion. When King Mindon performed his ploughing ceremony, the following song was composed:-

ယမဏထ၊ ရွှေကြိမ်လုံးရယ်နဲ့၊ With a golden whip of Yamatha cane,
ထွန်တုံးကိုတဲခြေတော်တင်၊ Royal legs stepped on the plough
နွားကြန်စုံအင်၊ Pulled by milky-white bullock twin,
ပျိုခင်းကိုဝင်၊ Entering royal paddy field for good
harvest of grain

ကောင်းကင်ကရွှေပိန်ညှင်းရယ်၊ Pray, Shwe bein nyin
[King fisher] bird in the sky

မိုးခေါ်လို့ဆင်း

Bring down rain.

*Yamatha is the best species of cane of Myanmar forest.

There were two eyewitnesses who recorded graphically King Mindon's ploughing ceremony. One was the famous court artist Saya Chone who painted the scene he saw on a white papyrus [Parabike Hpyu]. It is now kept in the British museum, London. The other was a high-ranking British serviceman J.G Scott who wrote many books on Myanmar one of which he pen-named Shway Yoe was "The Burman, his life and notions". In it he detailed his record of his eye-witnessed description of King Mindon's "Gracious Ploughing Ceremony". The painter and the writer tallied in their respective pictorial and literary depiction of the great event.

The following is the reproduction of the paragraph on this subject from the book Mandalay Gazetter Vol.14. p.p 66-67 compiled by Mr H.F Searle, Settlement Officer, No. III Party, published by Rangoon Supdt. Government Printing and Stationery, Burma, 1928.

"The Lehtunmigalar pwé was held by the custom in fields under the Aungbinle Tank and after the founding of Mandalay it took place on a site east of the city on the road to Yankintaung. Starting from a point immediately west of the north end of Thayetkon Village a square plot was marked out towards the sough containing 20 pés [၁၀၆] 10 for the king and 10 for the queen. Bazaar stalls were erected along the road from the east gate [Uteik]. The king came out in royal state with the court and proceeded down the Nadi chaung to a temporary palace in the Mingala Uyin. Shrines were erected for the 37 nats near the place where the ploughing was to take place. When the auspicious moment arrived, the king wearing his royal robes and regalia himself ploughed in a large field on the west side of the area marked out and was followed by the princes and ministers and members of the court doing likewise, also in full dress, according to their precedence. The ploughs and bullocks were richly ornamented and were called gold and silver ploughs. The king then returned to his temporary palace and remained there for three days with the court; during this period pwes and bands were kept going night and day and continued offerings made to the thirty seven nats. The king then returned to the palace. The ceremony usually took place in the latter half of Nayon; the object was to obtain a good agricultural season."

There were two rain calling rites performed by Myanmar kings and people since Bagan dynasty. First was the propitiation of Nat-Spirit "Moe Khaung Kyaw Swa" by holding a tug of war to invoke and request him to release rain clouds. The second was the propitiation of Nga Yant Min Fish idol by washing or sprinkling it with clear scented water and chanting Nga Yant Min paritta to bring down rain. This rite was originated by Prince Min Shin Saw of Bagan dynasty who founded a new town at Htun ton pu-tet [Bo tet kon today] near Yan Kin hill to the due east of Mandalay palace city. After heavy rain came down on the performance of this rite, the prince was advised by the monks to place the Nga Yant Min idol in a natural pond formed by springs in the mouth of a big cave on the summit of Yankin hill. King Mindon promoted these two rain calling rites. Till today Manda-

lay people hold these rites when there is scarcity of rain and they believe rain does come.

Apart from the repair and constant maintenance of Aung bin le and Nanda lakes and many other reservoirs and dams around Mandalay which previous kings constructed, King Mindon dug a new river "Yatana Nadi" to the east of the palace city. It is one of the main sources of water supply for the city dwellers. There are also springs, streams and falls in the offshoots of Shan plateau in the near distances e.g. Yeytagun hill.

Sanctification of the palace city and capital city

Myanmar kings, being Buddhist, were promoters of Buddhism. Besides, taking the role model of Emperor Asoka, they aspired to become "Sasana dayika" [The inheritor of Buddha Sasana] by becoming themselves at least a temporary monk to preach dhamma or by ordaining monks for dhamma preaching. Maintenance and renovation of old religious monuments and building new ones were also part of their religious activities. In performing such religious merits, King Mindon had three categories. Firstly, sacred images and statues he brought from Amarapura to his new capital city Ratanapon. Secondly, religious edifices and sacred images already located in Mandalay areas long before he moved there. Thirdly, monuments and images he built and made during his reign.

To begin with the first category, we have two sacred Buddha images brought from Amarapura and Anya Thihataw pagoda on an island near Thabeik-kyin town north of Mandalay. The former was an iron image of a medium size and weight named "Sanda Mani". The latter was small statue of Buddha carved out of a thrakhan wood, about 2 ½ inches. Each has its legend and story. Regarding the iron image it was cast by King Bodawpaya in 1802. While he was personally supervising the construction of a gigantic brick stupa at Mingun on the west bank of the Ayeyawady River, he was residing in a temporary palace on the island now known as Nantaw ya kyun [Palace Island]. There he cast an iron sitting Buddha Image of 11368 viss in weight, probably to be installed at the brick stupa. But the stupa was left unfinished. The iron image was taken to his capital city Amarapura. When his successor King Bagyidaw moved his capital to Inwa, the iron image was taken there. Then again when his successor King Thayawaday moved back his capital city to Amarapura, the iron image was returned there. After King Mindon founded Ratanapon, he moved the iron image there in 1867, a year after the Palace Rebellion of 1866.

Today, the iron image Sanda mani is enshrined on the site of King Mindon's temporary palace "Nan Myey Bontha". In 1866, a rebellion broke out at Nan Myey Bontha led by Mindon's two sons Princes Myin Kun and Myin Khone Taing. Though King Mindon narrowly escaped assassination, his brother Crown Prince Kanaung, and Princes Malun, Saku, and Pyinsi were killed in defence. Nan Myey Bontha was dismantled, the fallen princes were entombed on the site. A year later in 1867, Sandar mani iron image was enshrined in a brick temple about two cubits afar from the tombs. As the iron image is now heavily gilt, it looks like a gold image.

(See page 9)

ARTICLE

The Glorious Spirit

By Kyi Mun

* *It is glorious to be fully alive.
It is more glorious to serve the people fervently.
It is most glorious to live and move and
have our being in freedom.*

-Anonymous

Glorious means :

- (1) Deserving or bringing great fame or success: a glorious victory or **a glorious chapter in our country's history.**
- (2) Very beautiful and impressive: a glorious sunset.
- (3) Extremely enjoyable: **a glorious trip to Rome.**
- (4) Hot with the sun shining: **they had three weeks of glorious sunshine.**

Spirit means:

- (1) The part of a person that includes their mind, feelings and character rather than their body: **the power of the human spirit to overcome difficulties.**
- (2) Spirits: a person's feelings or state of mind: to be in high/low spirit. **You must try and keep your spirits up (=stay cheerful) My spirits sank at the prospect of starting all over again.**
- (3) A brave spirit (soul); Free spirit (mind).
- (4) Courage, determination or energy: **Show a better fighting spirit. Although the team lost, they played with tremendous spirit. They took away his freedom and broke his spirit.**
- (5) Loyal feelings: Community spirit, team spirit.
- (6) Attitude: a state of mind or mood: **We approached the situation with the wrong spirit.**
- (7) Typical quality: The typical or most important quality or mood of something: **The exhibition captures the spirit of the age/times.**

- Oxford Dictionary

* *It is glorious to fight:*

FOR:	AGAINST:
• Freedom	• Oppression
• Independence	• Aggression
• Liberation (National)	• Colonialism
• Democracy	• Imperialism
• Liberty	• Subversion
• Equality	• Racial Segregation
• Fraternity	• Instigation
• Justice	• Corruption
• Peace	• Bribery
• Progress	• Reactionary Policies
• Prosperity	• Self-serving practices

* *It is also mightily glorious to struggle:*

FOR:	AGAINST:
• Stainlessness (Morality)	• Avarice
• Letting Go/Flow (Concentration)	• Ill-will
• Seeing Through (Wisdom)	• Delusion

* *It is also glorious to opt:*

FOR:	AGAINST:
• Humility	• Arrogance
• Altruism	• Greed
• Diligence	• Complacency
• Consistency	• Inconsistency
• Insight / Far-sightedness	• Myopia
• Enthusiasm	• Apathy
• Energy	• Inertia
• Knowledge	• Ignorance

* *It is a glory to decide :*

FOR:	AGAINST:
• Action	• Passivity

- Dynamic Spirit
- Positive Attitude
- Proactive Mindset
- Change & Transformation
- Can-do-spirit
- Going Extra Mile Habit
- Creative Ideas
- Tolerance
- Patience
- Courage
- Fortitude
- Endurance
- Static Spirit
- Negative Attitude
- Reactionary Mindset
- Status quo
- Can't-do-spirit
- Mercenary Habit
- Dogmatic Ideas
- Intolerance
- Impatience
- Cowardice
- Feeble-mindedness
- Chicken-heartedness

* *It is glorious to struggle:*

FOR:

- Love
- Pardon
- Joy
- Hope
- Faith
- Light
- Selflessness

* *It is a glory to :*

- Think clearly
- Speak sincerely
- Act purely
- Love dearly
- Live cheerfully

* *It is surely a great glory to :*

**“Do all the good you can,
By all the means you can,
In all the ways you can,
In all the places you can,
To all the people you can,
As long as ever you can.”**

Just as it was said by – John Wesley

* *It is glorious to choose :*

- **To console than to be consoled;**
- **To understand than to be understood;**
- **To love than to be loved; and**
- **To pardon than to be pardoned;**
- **Just as St. Francis of Assissi said.**

* *It is a glory in business to have :*

- Financial viability
- Operational efficiency
- Managerial effectiveness
- Customer & Employee Satisfaction
- Competitive Advantage

* *It is personally glorious to have :*

- Health and Happiness
- Vision and Strategy
- Passion and Values
- Selflessness and Service
- Character and Competence

* *It is glorious to thoroughly understand and to be able to distinguish between:*

- | | | |
|-------------|---|-----------|
| • Good | & | Evil |
| • Right | & | Wrong |
| • Love | & | Hatred |
| • Gain | & | Loss |
| • Cause | & | Effect |
| • Means | & | End |
| • Light | & | Darkness |
| • Primary | & | Secondary |
| • Important | & | Urgent |

- | | | |
|--------------|---|------------|
| • Personal | & | Impersonal |
| • Objective | & | Subjective |
| • Universal | & | Particular |
| • Liberation | & | Bondage |

* *It is indeed mightily glorious to know and follow the right way:*

Two Ways

**To every soul there openeth,
A high way and a low;
The high soul climbs the high way,
The low soul gropes the low;
And in between, on the misty flats,
The rest drift to and fro
To every soul there openeth,
A high way and a low;
And every man decideth
Which way his soul shall go.**

-John Oxenham

* *It is tremendously glorious to :*

- Love All
- Serve All
- Help Ever
- Hurt Never

* *It is immensely glorious to :*

- Never Give Up
- Never Give In
- Stand Up To It, and
- Fight It Through To Victory
- Dare Nobly
- Will Strongly, and
- Never To Falter in the Path of Duty

* *It is really glorious to:*

- Make the most of your life,
- A superb character, and
- A masterpiece.

* *Now, please let's try to explore some more meanings of having a Glorious Spirit as follows :*

- | | | |
|------------|-----|--------------------------|
| • G | for | Greatness of Spirit |
| • L | for | Loftiness of Heart |
| • O | for | Open-Big-Sky-Mind |
| • R | for | Respectability |
| • I | for | Integrity |
| • O | for | Opulence of Wisdom |
| • U | for | Unconquerable Spirit |
| • S | for | Strength & Staying Power |
| • S | for | Strategy |
| • P | for | Purpose |
| • I | for | Insight |
| • R | for | Revolutionary Ideas |
| • I | for | Invincible Mind |
| • T | for | Tough-mindedness |

Conclusion

It is really glorious to fully understand and consistently practice the following four greatest things in life:

- **Health is the Greatest Gain**
- **Contentment is the Greatest Wealth**
(Contentment in the enjoyment of sensual pleasures)
- **Affection is the Best Relative**
- **Purity of Mind is the Greatest Bliss**

-Dhammapada

Ref : Treasury of Courage and
Confidence by
Norman V.Peale

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

The last old Myanmar capital city “Ratanapon” ...

(from page 8)

The second statue was a tharakhan wood statue of 2 ½ inches, said to be one of the statues carved out of the Thiknet wood which King Alaungsithu of Bagan dynasty received as a gift from Sakka deva, during his maritime journey along Myanmar sea coasts. It was enshrined in Anya Thiha taw pagoda on an island near Thabeikkyin town. This pagoda was the favourite place for pilgrimage

by Myanmar kings not only because of the sublimity of the pagoda but also of the scenic beauty of the island. It was during his visit to this pagoda that King Singu was overthrown by his cousin Prince of Phaungka who took over the Inwa Palace with his armed followers. On rushing back to Inwa, King Singu met his untimely end by the sword of Bodawpaya.

Since then, Anya Thiha taw pagoda became associated with that tragic event. No later Myanmar king dared visit it for fear of losing thron and life. But when and why the little thanakhan statue enshrined there, appeared in the shrine room of Mandalay palace. It may have been

either King Mindon or one of his predecessors who brought the said statue to the palace to worship as he dared not risk losing life and throne like King Singu. When the British occupied Mandalay palace, after deposing and deporting King Thibaw and royal family to Ratanagiri, India, all treasures in the palace were looted including images and statues made of gold and precious stones. The remainders were collected and sent to Shwe Kyi Myint pagoda located in the south-west outside the palace city. The small statue is now on display in the sanctorum of Shwe Kyi Myint temple.

(To be continued)

Suicide bomber kills 21 at Saudi Shi'ite mosque, Islamic State claims attack



Family members of victims and well wishers are seen after a suicide bomb attack at the Imam Ali mosque in the village of al-Qadeeh in the eastern province of Gatif, Saudi Arabia on 22 May, 2015. — REUTERS

DUBAI, 23 May — A suicide bomber killed 21 worshippers on Friday in a packed Shi'ite mosque in eastern Saudi Arabia, residents and the health minister said, the first attack in the kingdom to be claimed by Islamic State militants.

It was one of the deadliest assaults in recent years in the largest Gulf Arab country, where sectarian tensions have been frayed by nearly two months of Saudi-led air strikes on Shi'ite Houthi rebels in neighbouring Yemen.

More than 150 people were praying when the huge explosion ripped through the Imam Ali mosque in the village of al-Qadeeh, witnesses said.

A video posted online showed a hall filled with smoke and dust, with

bloodied people moaning with pain as they lay on the floor littered with concrete and glass. More than 90 people were wounded, the Saudi health minister told state television.

"We were doing the first part of the prayers when we heard the blast," worshipper Kamal Jaafar Hassan told *Reuters* by phone from the scene.

Islamic State said in a statement that one of its suicide bombers, identified as Abu 'Ammar al-Najdi, carried out the attack using an explosives-laden belt that killed or wounded 250 people, US-based monitoring group SITE said on its Twitter account. It said it would not rest until Shi'ites, which the group views as heretics, were driven from the Arabian peninsula.

Saudi officials have said the group is trying hard to attack the kingdom, which as the world's top oil exporter, birthplace of Is-

lam and champion of conservative Sunni doctrine, represents an important ally for Western countries battling Islamic State and a symbolic target for the militant group itself.

In November the Sunni group's leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi called for attacks against the Sunni rulers of Saudi Arabia, which has declared Islamic State a terrorist organization, joined international air strikes against it, and mobilised top clergy to denounce it. Last week Baghdad issued another speech laden with derogatory comments about the Saudi leadership and the country's Shi'ite minority.

Friday's bombing was the first attack targeting minority Shi'ites since November, when gunmen opened fire during a religious celebration in al-Ahsa, also in the east where most of the group live in predominantly Sunni Muslim Saudi Arabia.

The Saudi Interior Ministry described the attack as an act of terrorism and said it was carried out by "agents of sedition trying to target the kingdom's national fabric", according to a statement carried by state news agency SPA.

The agency quoted an Interior Ministry spokesman as saying the bomber detonated a suicide belt hidden under his clothes inside the mosque.

"Security authorities will spare no effort in the pursuit of all those involved in this terrorist crime," the official said in a statement carried by state news agency SPA.

A hospital official told *Reuters* by telephone that "around 20 people" were killed in the attack and more than 50 were being treated, some of them suffering from serious injuries. He said a number of other people had been treated and sent home.

Reuters

Iran's Yemen-bound aid ship docks in Djibouti, WFP to deliver aid cargo

LONDON, 23 May — An Iranian aid ship docked on Friday in Djibouti, where its cargo will be inspected by the United Nations before being moved to conflict-torn Yemen, Iran's semi-official *Fars* news agency reported.

"The ship docked a few minutes ago in Djibouti," *Fars* said.

"The ship entered Djibouti waters yesterday and after inspection by the international organization will head towards Yemen."

Teheran agreed this week to allow an international inspection of the vessel, the Iran Shahed, averting a potential

showdown with Saudi-led forces who are enforcing searches of ships entering Yemeni ports to stop arms reaching Houthi rebels.

Shi'ite power Iran backs the dominant Houthi militia in Yemen's civil war while regional arch-rival Saudi Arabia and its Sunni Muslim allies have carried out almost two months of air raids against them and want Yemen's president reinstated.

Teheran has rejected Saudi accusations it is arming Houthi fighters.

The ship had originally been bound for the Yemen's Red Sea port of Hodaida, which is controlled by the Houthis,

but its aid cargo will now be delivered by the World Food Programme, the UN agency said on Friday. "The cargo of the ship will be handed over to WFP in Djibouti and will be transferred to WFP-chartered vessels for shipment to the Yemeni ports of Hodaida and/or (the southern port city of) Aden," WFP spokeswoman Abeer Etefa said.

"It will be delivered to humanitarian partners on the ground for distribution," Etefa said the WFP had been told the 2,500 tonne cargo included supplies of rice, flour, canned fish, medicine, water, tents and blankets.—*Reuters*

UN Security Council slams "violent seizure" of Syria's ancient city

UNITED NATIONS, 23 May — The UN Security Council on Friday "strongly condemned the ongoing barbaric terrorist acts" by the Islamic State (IS) in Syria, including its violent takeover of Palmyra, an ancient city in Syria.

The members of the Security Council expressed "deep concern for the thousands of Palmyra residents inside the city, as well as for those displaced" as a result of IS's advance, the

15-nation council said in a statement.

"The members of the Security Council call for the safe passage of civilians fleeing the violence, and reaffirms that the primary responsibility to protect its populations lies with the Syrian authorities," said the statement.

The IS has consolidated its grip on the historic city of Palmyra and other swaths of territory in eastern Syria, fresh from its

decisive victory over forces loyal to the Syrian government.

IS militants in Syria have entered the World Heritage site of Palmyra after seizing the town next to the ancient ruins, reports said. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) said its destruction would be "an enormous loss to humanity," but no damage has been reported there yet.—*Xinhua*

Islamic State fighters press advance east of Iraqi town

BAGHDAD, 23 May — Islamic state fighters pressed an advance east of Ramadi on Friday after breaching Iraqi defences outside the city the insurgents overran last weekend in a major defeat for the Baghdad government. The fall of Ramadi is the most significant setback for Iraqi forces in almost a year and has cast doubt on the effectiveness of US strategy in helping Iraq to fight Islamic State.

While pro-government forces are seeking to retake the town, Islamic State fighters have been pushing forward in the direction of Fallujah in a bid to take more territory in Anbar Province that would bring them closer to the Iraqi capital. Amir al-Fahdawi, a leader of the pro-government Sunni trib-

al force in the area, said the militants were now around 5 km (3 miles) from the town of Khalidiya next to the Habaniya military base where security forces and members of the Hashid Shaabi (Popular Mobilisation) Shi'ite militia are massing.

"We are running short of arms and ammunition and we appealed yesterday for reinforcements. Zero additional troops plus zero ammunition back-up lead to zero morale for our fighters," Fahdawi told *Reuters*.

"Today we retreated to Siddiqiya and I'm not sure if my fighters will hold up for much longer: they are tired and broken".

Hundreds of people were fleeing as the militants drew closer, Anbar provincial council member Azzal

Obaid told *Reuters*.

Obaid said the insurgents were exploiting low morale among the security forces, and that the only way to stop them would be to deploy Shi'ite paramilitaries in large numbers.

Iraq's top Shi'ite cleric, Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, called for a plan to purge the country of Islamic State militants after they overran Ramadi.

In his first sermon since then, Sistani's representative Sheikh Abdulmehdi al-Karbala'i did not refer explicitly to the city. But he said: "We must have a precise and wise plan drawn up by professional and patriotic figures ... to resolve the military and security issues and begin to purge Iraqi lands of all terrorists."—*Reuters*



A car is engulfed by flames during clashes in the city of Ramadi on 16 May, 2015. REUTERS

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Scientists want you to know plankton is not just whale food

WASHINGTON, 23 May — Scientists on Thursday unveiled the most comprehensive analysis ever undertaken of the world's ocean plankton, the tiny organisms that serve as food for marine creatures such as the blue whale, but also provide half the oxygen we breathe.

The researchers spent 3-1/2 years aboard the schooner *Tara*, taking 35,000 samples of plankton from 210 sites globally, determining the distribution of the organisms, tracking how they interact with one another and carrying out genetic analyses.

Plankton include microscopic plants and animals, fish larvae, bacteria, viruses and other micro-organisms that drift in the oceans.

"Plankton are much more than just food for the whales," said Chris Bowler, a research director at France's National Centre for Scientific Research, and one of the scientists involved in the study published in the journal *Science*.

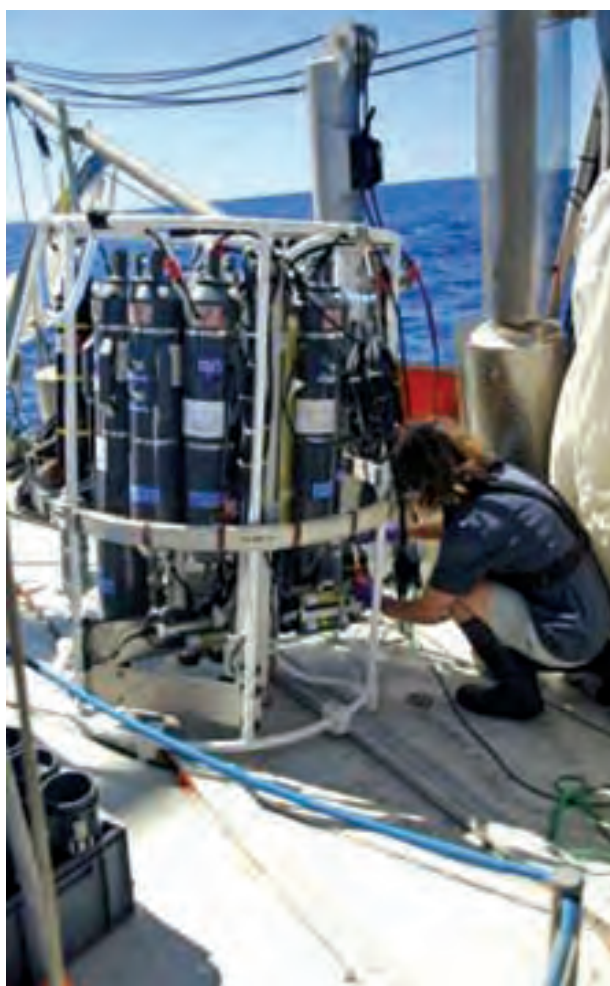
"Although tiny, these organisms are a vital part of the Earth's life support system, providing half of the oxygen generated each year on Earth by photosynthesis and lying at the base of marine food chains on which all other ocean life depends."

The scientists conducted the largest DNA sequencing effort ever done in ocean science, pinpointing around 40 million plankton genes, most previously unknown.

Much of the plankton was more genetically diverse than previously known. However, the genetic diversity of marine viruses was much lower than anticipated.

By removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and converting it into organic carbon via photosynthesis, plankton provide a buffer against the increased carbon dioxide being generated by the burning of fossil fuels, Bowler said.

Tara Expeditions Executive Director Romain Troublé said the schooner



Scientists aboard the *Tara Oceans* vessel prepare to lower a CTD device into the ocean depths in this handout photo provided by the University of Arizona on 21 May, 2015.—REUTERS

sailed about 87,000 miles (140,000 km) during the research voyage.

Those aboard endured hardships such as being locked for 10 days in Arctic ice, storms in the Mediterranean Sea and in the Magellan Strait, and sailing through the Gulf of Aden with protection from the French navy against pirates.

The scientists found that most of the interactions between plankton organisms were parasitic. They also found evidence for widespread dispersal of viruses in the oceans.

"Since the most numerous members of the plankton are bacteria, the majority of viruses in the ocean are thought to infect bacteria," University of Arizona oceanographer Jennifer Brum, another of the researchers, said.

"A good way of thinking about this is that there are roughly 200 million viruses in every mouthful of seawater, and most of those viruses are infecting the roughly 20 million bacteria found in every mouthful of seawater."—Reuters

35,000 Belgian companies in danger from hackers

BRUSSELS, 23 May — Cyber criminals have devised ways of infecting the computers of thousands of Belgian companies, *De Tijd* reported on Friday.

Around 35,000 companies and professionals that use online banking via the Isabel system are potential targets.

Prosecutors in Brussels and Veurne have already opened investigations into the hacking threat after some Isabel customers reported the loss of considerable sums of money.

Bart Van Opstal of the Royal Federation of Belgian Notaries told *De Tijd* that "a large sum of money" has been stolen by computer hackers through the Isabel system.

Isabel also confirmed that the number of computer hacking attempts has "increased in recent months."—Xinhua

Contest for Nokia's HERE seen as a three-way race



Uber logo is seen on a smartphone in front of a displayed logo of HERE, Nokia Oyj's map business, in Zenica, Bosnia and Herzegovina, in this 8 May, 2015 photo illustration.—REUTERS

NECKARSULM, (Germany), 23 May — The contest for Nokia's (NOK1V.HE) maps business has become a three-way race between German carmakers, a consortium including Uber and Baidu, and a third group including China's Tencent and Navinfo, people familiar with the process said.

Finland's Nokia has started an auction of its maps business HERE whilst it completes its 15.6 billion euros (\$17.2 billion) takeover of network equipment maker Alcatel Lucent (ALUA.PA).

German automakers Daimler (DAIGn.DE), BMW (BMWG.DE) and Volkswagen's (VOWG_p.DE) premium brand Audi

have teamed up with private equity firm General Atlantic to form what is being described as the "Industry consortium", two sources familiar with the matter told *Reuters* on Thursday.

Nokia, Daimler, BMW and General Atlantic declined to comment.

The automakers have agreed to contribute potentially more than 700 million euros, but below 1 billion euros, said one auto industry source, who declined to be named. The consortium could be widened to include more carmakers, the source added.

Another group consists of Chinese media, mobile and Internet services firm

Tencent Holdings (0700.HK), Chinese map maker Navinfo Co 002405.SZ, and Swedish buyout firm EQT Partners AB, three sources who declined to be named said.

Navinfo and Tencent were not immediately available for comment. EQT declined to comment.

Private equity firm Apax has joined US-based taxi service Uber and China's Baidu (BIDU.O) in a third consortium, a financial source who declined to be named said.

Apax and Uber declined to comment. Baidu was not immediately available for comment.

Analysts put the potential value of HERE at 2 billion euros to 4 billion euros.

Audi R&D boss Ulrich Hackenberg on Friday said he could imagine adding more partners to the consortium headed by luxury carmakers.

"There are many possibilities, it's still too early," Hackenberg said.

Nokia is in no hurry to sell HERE despite receiving high quality bids, the Finnish company's chief executive said in a trade magazine interview.—Reuters

Oldest stone tools known to date found in Kenya

BEIJING, 23 May — The oldest stone tools by far have been found on the western shore of Lake Turkana in Kenya. However, who made them or why are still not discovered.

The Kenyan tools, which have been existed for 3.3 million years, are much older than the current earliest known Homo fossils (2.8 million years old) and they are remarkably big.

On average, the cores stretch about 6 inches (15

cm) long and wide and weigh some 7 pounds (3.2 kg), according to the report made by Sonia Harmand and Jason Lewis of Stony Brook University in New York.

Scientists remain confused about the usage of the Kenyan tools. Harmand believed the purpose was to make sharp-edged flakes for cutting, but exactly how the tools were used is not known.

As to the question that who made the tools, candi-

dates include some Homo species, the skeleton nicknamed Lucy and a creature called Kenyanthropus platyops, known from remains found not far from the site of the stone tools.

It was long assumed that tools were only made by our genus, "Homo" members, but the new finding proves that tool-making may have begun with smaller-brained forerunners and the Kenyan tools may constitute a pre-Homo tool culture.—Xinhua

Chinese scientists develop world's 1st oral HDAC inhibitor

Lu Xianping uses a microscope at Shenzhen Chipscreen Biosciences Ltd in Shenzhen, south China's Guangdong Province on 20 May, 2015. Lu Xianping, together with other four returned overseas scientists, spent 14 years to develop Chidamide, the world's first oral HDAC inhibitor, which was given regulatory approval in January.

XINHUA



Activists damage habitat in Seattle bay during Shell oil protests

SEATTLE, 23 May — Environmental activists who fanned out in small boats across a Seattle bay over the weekend in a protest over Royal Dutch Shell (RDSa.L.)'s plans for Arctic oil exploration in the have damaged "precious habitat" on the sea floor, a state official said on Friday.

Cables used to moor a 4,000 square foot (370 square metre) floating barge dubbed "The People's Platform" to the floor of Elliott Bay became wrapped around an old steel piling and pulled it over, disturbing aquatic habitat, Department of Natural Resources spokesman Joe Smillie said.

"It's a pretty precious habitat down there," Smillie said. "Anytime you disturb it and move it there are implications to the food web."

The area is a popular underwater "dive park" for people who venture below the waves to see octopuses, sea stars and anemones, among other aquatic life.

Environmental groups have vowed to disrupt the Anglo-Dutch oil company's efforts to use Seattle's port as a home base for two of its drilling rigs destined for the Chukchi Sea off Alaska, saying drilling in the remote Arctic waters could lead to an ecological catastrophe.

The solar-powered barge was used as a platform for speeches and a musical "jam session" over the weekend, said John Sellers, founder of the activist group Mosquito Fleet.

Sellers said he apologised for the damage, which was limited, and said crews have anchored the barge in a new area deemed by divers to be a less sensitive "underwater desert," and materials used to moor the barge were left on the sea floor.

Activists will not face a fine, though they will have to pay for any cleanup costs, which have not yet been calculated, Smillie said, adding that activists have submitted an application for an extend-



Activists protest the Shell Oil Company's drilling rig Polar Pioneer which is parked at Terminal 5 at the Port of Seattle, Washington on 16 May, 2015.—REUTERS

ed-use permit for the barge from the state.

"Of course the last thing

we wanted to do was to do any harm to the sea life,"

said Bill Moyer, executive

director of the Backbone Campaign. "If we could do damage by putting down an

anchor, imagine how much damage an oil rig could do in the Arctic."—Reuters

UN investigates reports of executions, abuses in Mali

BAMAKO, 23 May — The United Nations said on Friday it was investigating reports of serious human rights abuses, including the execution of civilians, in northern Mali following clashes this week between northern Tuareg separatist rebels and pro-government militia.

UN-brokered peace efforts in Mali's north are in danger of unravelling because of repeated vio-

lations of a ceasefire between the Tuareg-led Coordination of Movements of Azawad (CMA) and the pro-government factions around the flashpoint northern town of Menaka.

The clashes on Thursday killed at least six civilians, including a Malian aid worker, rebels and a local source said.

The UN mission in Mali said on Friday it had sent a team of investigators

to verify reports of serious abuses and the execution of civilians, possibly including an aid worker in Tin-Hamma, in Gao region.

"These abuses followed as a result of the clashes on 20 May between members of the Platform (pro-government militia) and the Coordination of Movements of Azawad," the mission said.

The National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad, a member of the CMA coalition, said in a statement that nine people including two who worked for international aid agencies were arrested by pro-government militia and executed. It added that several others were missing.

"The execution took place in public, at the town's cattle market and the bodies were still exposed in the public square

as of 1500 GMT," MNLA said in the statement, listing the names of the nine.

The Malian government rejected accusations that its troops were involved in the abuses. It said in a statement late on Friday that Malian soldiers had intervened in Tin-Hamma to drive out insurgents who had killed three civilians in the attack.

"The government is surprised by the allegations of abuses on the population attributed to the armed forces following the events in Tin-Hamma," it said. "The government rejects such accusations."

The UN mission said it was concerned about an alarming escalation of fighting in several areas of northern Mali, which was in violation of the ceasefire and could jeopardise the peace deal.—Reuters

US suspends Burundi peacekeeping training over protests



A protester sits in front of a burned barricade during a protest against Burundi President Pierre Nkurunziza and his bid for a third term in Bujumbura, Burundi, on 21 May, 2015. — REUTERS

WASHINGTON, 23 May — The United States said on Friday it had suspended training of Burundi soldiers for African peacekeeping missions over concerns that political violence in the country would hamper their ability to participate in such operations.

A decision by Burundi President Pierre Nkurunziza last month to stand for a third term has triggered violence protests, a failed coup and caused thousands of refugees to flee into neighbouring countries.

"The US has temporarily halted peacekeeping training activities such as the Africa Contingency

Operations Training and Assistance programme," State Department spokeswoman Marie Harf told a daily briefing.

"Continued instability and violence in Burundi, and in particular the commission of human rights violations and abuses by security forces, could jeopardize Burundi's ability to continue to contribute to the AMISOM peacekeeping mission," she added.

Harf said, however, that Burundi's military has largely acted "professionally and neutrally" during the protest, and some had lost their lives.

Reuters



UN peacekeepers stand guard in the northern town of Kouroume, Mali, on 13 May, 2015. Kouroume is 18 km (11 miles) south of Timbuktu. —REUTERS

Japan, S Korea finance ministers agree to boost economic ties

TOKYO, 23 May — Japanese and South Korean finance ministers agreed on Saturday to boost momentum in financial and economic ties, resuming their regular bilateral talks after more than two years of hiatus amid strained diplomatic relations.

Japanese Finance Minister Taro Aso and South Korean Strategy and Finance Minister Choi Kyung Hwan also agreed

on the importance of responding to the rapidly increasing need for infrastructure investment in Asia, Aso said.

"We affirmed we would continue promoting multilateral and bilateral cooperation" after holding a "vigorous exchange of views" on various topics including global and regional economies as well as fiscal issues, Aso told a Press conference after the

meeting.

In their first meeting since November 2012, the two finance ministers also confirmed they will facilitate bilateral communication channels and explore ways to resume personnel exchanges between the two ministries after they were suspended in 2013.

Choi also said the two ministers were able to hold "meaningful discussions" on various matters in-

cluding the two countries' structural reforms, adding that the dialogue became "an opportunity to deepen cooperative ties" in infrastructure investments as well as the Chinese-led infrastructure investment bank.

Following their sixth meeting, the next regular bilateral dialogue is expected to be held in South Korea next year, the ministers said.—Kyodo News

ADVERTISEMENT & GENERAL

**CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
MV MERATUS GORONTALO
VOY NO (102N)**

Consignees of cargo carried on MV MERATUS GORONTALO VOY NO (102N) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 24.5.2015 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.W.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S YANG MING LINE**

Phone No: 2301185

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Ministry of Energy

Myanma Petrochemical Enterprise

Invitation for the Letter of Expression of Interest

Title: Joint Venture Project for the Construction of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) terminal and Supply Chain of LPG Business (Importation, Storage, Distribution and Marketing)

Myanma Petrochemical Enterprise (MPE) hereby announces an invitation for the Letter of Expression of Interest to implement a joint venture project between MPE and interested investors who shall be a consortium of a local company (or companies) and a foreign company (or companies) and shall have the ability in terms of worldwide experiences in LPG importation, storage, wholesales distribution, marketing and services, financial capability, reliability for long term cooperation.

The scope of the business shall include the construction of a new LPG terminal (i.e storage tank(s), jetty, etc) on available land area in No. (1) Refinery (Thanlyin) and the supply chain of LPG business of importation, storage, wholesale distribution and marketing.

Detailed information for LOEI submission and information related to the joint venture project are available in the Ministry of Energy's website (www.energy.gov.mm/index.php/en/information/announcement) and the facebook (www.facebook.com/MinistryOfEnergyMyanmar) as well as at the following address during office hour starting from 27.5.2015;

Planning Department

3rd Floor, Myanma Petrochemical Enterprise
Building No (44), Nay Pyi Taw
lpgbusinessjv@gmail.com

Letter of Expression of Interest must be delivered together with all the necessary materials requested in the detailed information to the following address in person before 12:00 noon on 15.7.2015;

Managing Director

Myanma Petrochemical Enterprise
Building No (44), Nay Pyi Taw

No telephone enquiries shall be facilitated.

**CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
MV VEGA KAPPA VOY NO (1527)**

Consignees of cargo carried on MV VEGA KAPPA VOY NO (1527) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 24.5.2015 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 MCC TRANSPORT
(S'PORE) PTE LTD**

Phone No: 2301185

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Ministry of Energy
Myanma Petrochemical Enterprise

Title: Invitation for Letter of Expression of Interest (LOEI) for Joint Venture Project of laboratory services for petroleum and petrochemical products

1. Myanma Petrochemical Enterprise (MPE), Ministry of Energy of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar is planning to establish a Joint Venture Project of laboratory services which analyses the specification and qualification of the petroleum and petrochemical products and certifies or recertifies in accordance with the standard of International Organization of Standardization (ISO).

2. MPE hereby announces an invitation to submit the Letter of Expression of Interest (LOEI) for the Joint Venture Project of laboratory services between MPE and a company which shall have the accreditation of International Organization of Standardization (ISO) and also have experience(s) for the analysis of specification and qualification of the petroleum and petrochemical products.

3. The required data for LOEI submission and information related to the above Joint Venture Project are available in the Ministry of Energy website (<http://www.energy.gov.mm/index.php/en/information/announcement>) and Facebook (www.facebook.com/MinistryOfEnergyMyanmar) as well as at the following address during the office hours starting from 27.5.2015;

Director (Planning) Fax: 067-411124

Myanma Petrochemical Enterprise

Email: labjvp@gmail.com

Building No 44, Nay Pyi Taw

4. No telephone inquiries shall be facilitated.

5. LOEI shall be submitted to following address in person no later than 12:00 noon on 15.7.2015;

Managing Director

Myanma Petrochemical Enterprise

Building No 44, Nay Pyi Taw

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**CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
MV XITHA BHUM VOY NO (1051E)**

Consignees of cargo carried on MV XITHA BHUM VOY NO (1051E) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 24.5.2015 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 REGIONAL CONTAINER
LINES**

Phone No: 2301185

**CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
MV BLUE MOON VOY NO (1507)**

Consignees of cargo carried on MV BLUE MOON VOY NO (1507) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 24.5.2015 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T/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 MCC TRANSPORT
(S'PORE) PTE LTD**

Phone No: 2301185

**Eiffel Tower closes as staff
strike over pickpockets**

PARIS, 23 May — A strike closed the Eiffel Tower for most of Friday as staff demanded more help to deal with pickpockets operating around the Paris landmark, tower officials and unions said.

"There have always been pickpockets at the Eiffel Tower, but we are now facing an organized network", said a union representative.

The strikers want additional police to be deployed.

The company said it was already cooperating with police to improve security at one of the world's

best known tourist draws. The site was closed from around 930 local time (0730 GMT) and reopened to visitors in the late afternoon.

The protest came a day after Paris authorities launched a drive to improve tourist protection and said theft around Paris' main attractions was on the decline compared to last year.

The Louvre art museum closed for a day two years ago — also because of strikes related to aggressive pickpocketing that targeted both visitors and employees.

France is the most visited country in the world, welcoming almost 85 million foreigners a year, according to government figures. Paris had 47 million visitors in 2014, about half of them from abroad.

Reuters

**A jogger enjoys a run
near the Eiffel Tower on
a warm and sunny day in
Paris on 8 April, 2015.**

REUTERS

**WEATHER REPORT**

BAY INFERENCE: Monsoon is strong to vigorous in the Andaman Sea, South Bay and East Central Bay and weather is partly cloudy to cloudy elsewhere in the Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL EVENING OF THE 24th May, 2015: Rain or thundershowers will be isolated in Lower Sagaing, Mandalay and Magway Regions and Chin State, scattered in Upper Sagaing Region, Kachin and Shan States, fairly widespread in Bago Region, Rakhine and Kayah States and widespread in the remaining Regions and States with regional heavy falls in Mon State and isolated heavy falls in Bago, Ayeyawady and Taninthayi Regions, Rakhine and Kayin States. Degree of certainty is (80%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Squalls with moderate to rough sea are likely at times off and along Myanmar Coasts. Surface wind speed in squalls may reach (35) m.p.h to (40) m.p.h.

Vienna shakes off fusty image as Eurovision carnival hits town

VIENNA, 23 May — Vienna hopes the final of the Eurovision Song Contest will show a new liberal and light-hearted side to the opulent Austrian capital when the jamboree of glitter, capes and power ballads hits town this weekend.

Tourists associate Vienna with classic architecture, composers, traditional coffee houses and the Blue Danube Waltz, composed in 1866 — conservative images which the city is now trying to move beyond.

It has recently begun promoting its culture and imperial history to a wider audience including lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) travellers with money to spend.

Hosting Eurovision, a kitsch contest popular with gay fans — and won last year by Austria's bearded drag queen Conchita Wurst — should give that strategy a big boost.



Singer Monika Kuszyńska representing Poland performs the song 'In The Name Of Love' during the second semifinal on 21 May, 2015.—REUTERS

"I have not felt any dustiness at all. I think the liberal image fits, it's not artificial," said Ralf, 49, a German graphic designer with a nose piercing who spent more than 1,500 euros (\$1,700) on his trip to Vienna to celebrate Euro-

vision.

"We know that in some people's minds Austria is still seen as fusty, boring and everything other than cosmopolitan," Ulrike Rauch-Keschmann, a spokeswoman for Austria's national tourism organiza-

tion, told Reuters.

Vienna hit the headlines this year when the famous Cafe Prueckel ejected a lesbian couple for kissing in public.

Some conservative politicians in Austria cried foul last year when broad-

caster ORF picked Wurst to represent the traditionally Roman Catholic country.

But Wurst won by a landslide and in a sign of her instant popularity has since been gracing adverts for Bank Austria splashed across the city.

"I personally feel that Austria is really coming out of the dark," said 29-year-old Ciaran Tuttiott from Britain, sipping a beer at one of Vienna's public viewing spots. "They use Conchita to promote themselves. It's fantastic."

The city is also known for the Rainbow Parade and the Life Ball, one of the world's biggest AIDS charity events, this year attended by stars like Charlize Theron and Sean Penn, Kelly Osbourne, Mary J Blige and of course, Conchita Wurst.

For Eurovision, it has even changed some of its traffic lights to show same-sex couples instead of the

usual single, gender-neutral figure.

"Vienna is...known by some communities as one of the most open cities," said Martin Stanits, a hotel association spokesman. "But with Conchita Wurst and Eurovision, this image is finally reaching a wider audience."

Vienna's tourist office is investing 1.2 million euros in connexion with the contest and hopes it will bring around 26.5 million euros in revenues and benefits.

Tourism authorities believe Wurst's victory and its staging of the show, watched by more people worldwide than the Super Bowl, will have a lasting effect on Austria and its image.

"No marketing campaign in the world would have meant such a positive image boost for the country," Rauch-Keschmann said.—Reuters

Taylor Swift's 'Bad Blood' breaks Vevo record

LOS ANGELES, 23 May — Taylor Swift's latest single "Bad Blood" has garnered 20.1 million views in just 24 hours, setting a new Vevo record.

The action-packed music video, guest-starring

A-listers Cindy Crawford, Ellen Pompeo, and Mariska Hargitay among others, dropped at the Billboard Music Awards following much social media hype, reported *Entertainment Weekly*. Vevo noted in a release

that Swift's collection of videos, which include hits like 'You Belong With Me', 'Shake It Off', and 'Mean', currently stand at five billion total views.

Nicki Minaj formerly held the title for "Anaconda"

back in August 2014 with 19.6 million views. Swift took to her official Twitter account to share the news, sending out a special thank you to those involved.

PTI

Taylor Swift's



Jane Fonda proud to be a fashion icon



Veteran actress Jane Fonda

LONDON, 23 May — Veteran actress Jane Fonda finds it weird that she is still considered a fashion icon at the age of 77.

The former model,

who was famous for her range of home fitness videos in the '80s, thinks it's hilarious she is still considered to be a style and health inspiration as she ap-

proaches her 80th birthday, reported *Daily Express*.

"Isn't it weird? In my dotage! I think it's a hoot that, at my age, people are calling me a fashion icon," Fonda said.

The "This Is Where I Leave You" actress said she felt pressured into having cosmetic surgery at one stage in her life — something she is now not proud of — because she was a star who was always defined by how she looked.

"I did have plastic surgery. I'm not proud of the fact that I've had it. But I grew up so defined by my looks. I was taught to think that if I wanted to be loved, I had to be thin and pretty. That leads to a lot of trouble," she said.—PTI

Loved having my kids on set: Arnold Schwarzenegger

LONDON, 23 May — Actor and fitness-icon Arnold Schwarzenegger says he loved having his kids on set when they were younger as they saw watching him make action movies like "Christmas".

Admitting that although being known as an action star can get frustrating, the 67-year-old "Terminator: Genisys" actor said he liked his children's enthusiasm about seeing him at work, reported *Femalefirst*.

"People know me as kind of the action star, and how many actors or people have their own M47 tank? I used to drive an American tank when I was in the Austrian army and they handed it over when it was outdated. They wanted to de-



stroy the tanks completely but they shipped this one over and I drive it around. It works 100 per cent! "My kids' friends, every time we did an action scene, they said, 'Make sure you're gonna be on the set when

your Daddy blows things up'. It was king of Christmas for them, so I think people would enjoy driving around and crushing things in a tank," said former Mr Olympia," Schwarzenegger said.—PTI

2015 Hong Kong Youth Music Festival to kick off next month

HONG KONG, 23 May — Hong Kong Youth Music Festival 2015 will kick off on 6 June at Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, bringing the exhilarating singing and dancing performances to the city.

Not only the famous singers from Chinese mainland, Hong Kong and Taiwan, the musicians and singers from South Korea will also join in the festival, such as popular artist Kim Jong Kook, the hosts of the festival told reporters on Wednesday.

Other performers scheduled to hit the stage are Hong Kong artist Kenny Bee, Adason Lo, Vincy Chan and so on. As the festival also wants to establish a platform for Asia youths to achieve their singing dreams, many young singers from Hong Kong and Chinese Mainland will be invited to take singing contest during the festival.

Upholding good reputation among all circles of society in Hong Kong, 2014 Hong Kong Youth Music Festival with a theme of "light young dreams in May" has attracted more than 10,000 audiences. Sponsored by Hong Kong-based Asia Pacific Daily and Hua Jing Society, this year's festival will be free to audiences and it will be dedicated to culture interaction in Asia and spreading the optimism.—Xinhua

GENERAL

I would never choose to leave Chelsea, says Mourinho

LONDON, 23 May — Chelsea manager Jose Mourinho would not choose to leave the club he has just steered to another Premier League title but he is prepared to manage another English team, the Portuguese coach has told the BBC.

Mourinho, 52, said in an interview with the Football Focus programme, to be shown on Saturday, that having come back to Stamford Bridge in 2013 for a second spell in charge he would only leave if owner Roman Abramovich did not want him.

"I see myself coaching another club, yes, but I love Chelsea and I am in Mr Abramovich's hands and until then I'm here," he said. "The day Mr Abram-



Chelsea manager Jose Mourinho

ovich thinks I'm not good enough for Chelsea, I want to work, and if possible in England too.

"Until Mr Abramovich says, I don't see myself going. Any club comes to me now and offers me a fantastic project, offers me twice my wages in the contract at Chelsea, no chance."

Mourinho's first spell in charge from 2004 to 2007 ended when his relationship with Abramovich broke down but the former Porto manager has enjoyed a suc-

cessful return to the club.

Mourinho will receive a third Premier League winners' medal on Sunday but he is not feeling so charitable this time — meaning no surprise souvenir for a lucky fan at Stamford Bridge.

After claiming a second English title in 2006 following a 3-0 win against Manchester United, Mourinho launched his medal and blazer into the crowd.

Chelsea host Sunderland in their final game of the season on Sunday where they will be presented with the Premier League trophy for the first time since 2010.

"My son now is collecting all my stuff," the Portuguese told a news conference on Friday. "He keeps everything."

"At that time (2006) he

was too young, but in this moment he is collecting everything. Shirts, medals — he steals everything from me."

Mourinho was named Premier League manager of the season for the third time following previous triumphs in 2005 and 2006.

"I was not waiting for it, I was never manager of the month, but I'm happy with it," he said.

"It's a club trophy, not an individual one. It's for me, my assistants, my players, everybody who works with me. It's something you don't just get by yourself."

"It's the icing on the cake but I work for the cake. The Premier League is the real cake but obviously to be the manager of the season is nice."—Reuters

mitv Myanmar International

(24-5-2015 07:00 am~ 25-5-2015 07:00 am) MST

* News	Remembrance
* A Lucky Boy	* Myanmar
* Toddy Palm Product Shop	Masterclass: Portraiture
* Art Students : Their Dream	* News
* News	* Great Shwedagon: The Exhibition
* ID Show (Ep-3) Traffic	Hall of The Great Chronicle of Buddha
* A Traditional Doctor	* Nang
* News	* News
* Interesting Features of Rakhine	* Ar Khar New Year Festival
* Products of Myanmar — Kachin Traditional Knife	* Products of Myanmar — Kachin Traditional Knife
* News	* News
* Jade Industry: Myanmar Rewarding Business	* Crab Business (Part-I) Mud Crab
* News	* Products of Myanmar — Myanmar Circular Stone Slab
* Food Trip (Ep-10) (Part -2)	* Great Minds of Myanmar (Anthropologist U Kyaw Win)
* Today Myanmar	* News
* News	* Mesmerizing Scenes or Image of Japan (Part-2)
* Myanmar National Poet And Literary Icon; Prolific Writer of Poems & Prose — Min Thu Wun (Ep-4) Political Life &	

Safety measures ordered for failed oil pipeline in California

LOS ANGELES, 23 May — Owners of an oil pipeline that burst in California this week must take numerous corrective measures, including an in-depth analysis of factors contributing to the spill and a plan to fix any flaws found, before they can restart the line, US safety officials said on Friday.

The corrective action order issued on Thursday by the US Transportation Department's Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Administration, or PHMSA, is not regarded as a disciplinary enforcement sanction against the company, Plains All American Pipeline LP (PAA.N), officials said.

But it requires a detailed and lengthy list of actions before the oil line resumes operations, starting with removal of the failed pipe for metallurgical and mechanical tests, purging the line of remaining petroleum and an independent review of inspection results, past and present.

It also mandates a "root-cause analysis" that explores not only the direct cause of the spill but "every contrib-



Staff and volunteers work to clean a brown pelican at the International Bird Rescue centre in San Pedro, Los Angeles, California, United States, on 22 May, 2015.

REUTERS

uting factor" that may have played a part, such as any safety compliance issues, said Linda Daugherty, a deputy associate administrator for the agency.

The order sets deadlines for some actions: 45 days to complete tests of the failed pipe segment, 60 days for the root-cause analysis and 90 days to submit a plan for remedying any problems.

No overall time frame was given for putting the

pipeline back online, but Daugherty said she did "not anticipate a quick restart."

Word of the action came as Santa Barbara County's district attorney, Joyce Dudley, said she was consulting with federal and state prosecutors on the potential for bringing a criminal or civil case against the pipeline company. The company declined to comment. PHMSA generally issues corrective action orders for serious

pipeline spills when there is no clear understanding of the cause, as is the case in California, Daugherty said.

According to the agency, an estimated 1,700 to 2,500 barrels of crude petroleum gushed onto San Refugio State Beach and into the Pacific Ocean about 20 miles (32 km) west of Santa Barbara when the underground pipeline, which runs along a coastal highway, ruptured on Tuesday.—Reuters

Koons sculpture raises 12 million euros at Cannes AIDS auction

CANNES, (France), 23 May — A huge sculpture called "Coloring Book" by American artist Jeff Koons sold for 12 million euros (\$13.2 million) at a star-studded charity auction near Cannes that raised more than 33 million euros for AIDS research.

Sienna Miller, Jake Gyllenhaal, Diane Kruger, Michael Fassbender and Marion Cotillard were among the celebrities and

millionaires at the annual amfAR "Cinema Against AIDS" event on Thursday night at the luxury Hotel de Cap-Eden-Roc in Antibes.

At the gala, a highlight during the annual Cannes Film Festival, a work by British street artist Banksy, donated by actor Leonardo DiCaprio, fetched more than a signed Picasso.

"It's wonderful that you can gather a bunch of amazing, talented people

and a bunch of wealthy people with a bunch of amazing artists and that they can come together and have fun and at the same time give back," actress Michelle Rodriguez said on the red carpet.

"And now, we're getting closer to a cure," added Rodriguez, who stars in "The Fast and Furious" film franchise.

The Banksy work fetched 1 million euros,

nearly double the closing bid for Picasso's "L'Etreinte." Singer Andrea Bocelli also donated a dinner for 12 people with him, complete with a performance, which sold twice for 1 million euros each.

In addition to the auction, British singer/songwriter Charlie XCX, Bocelli and American singer Mary J Blige entertained guests at the gala, now in its 22nd year.—Reuters

MRTV News Channel in Brief

(24-5-2015, Sunday)

6:00 am	(Part-2)
• Paritta by Venerable Mingun Sayadaw	3:00 pm
6:35 am	• News / International News
• Documentary	4:35 pm
7:00 am	• University of Distance Education (TV Lectures) — Third Year (Philosophy)
• News / Weather Report	5:35 pm
7:35 am	• People's Talks
• Business News	6:35 pm
8:00 am	• Weekly Entertainment
• News / International News	7:00 pm
8:35 am	• News
• Documentary	7:35 pm
9:30 am	• Documentary (Women in Myanmar Society)
• Head Line News	8:00 pm
10:35 am	• News
• Documentary	International News / Weather Report
11:35 am	8:35 pm
• Amazing World	• Teleplay
12:00 noon	9:00 pm
• News / International News / Weather Report	• News
12:35 pm	• International News / Weather Report
• Round up of the Week's Local International News	• Tasty Trip
12:45 pm	• Sing & Enjoy
• Myanmar Movies (Part-1)	
2:35 pm	
• Myanmar Movies	

MRTV Entertainment Channel

(24-5-2015, Sunday)

6:00 am	8:35 am
• Alinka Wutyi Music Troupe	• Fashion Show
6:20 am	9:10 am
• Myanmar Video	• Sing & Enjoy
8:00 am	9:55 am
• Documentary	• Myanmar Movie

French Open leading seeds warn against writing off Nadal



Russian tennis player Maria Sharapova (2nd L) and Spanish tennis player Rafael Nadal (1st R) attend the draw for the 2015 French Open tennis tournament in Paris, France, on 22 May, 2015.—XINHUA

PARIS, 23 May — Maria Sharapova slammed the “disrespectful” decision on Friday to pick nine-time French Open champion Rafael Nadal as the sixth seed despite his domination of the event.

Nadal will kick off his defending campaign at Roland Garros as the sixth seed after having slipped to the seventh in the ATP world rankings. The 28-year-old Spaniard could thus face top-ranked Novak Djokovic in the quarterfinals, the toughest draw he has faced since becoming the “King of Clay.”

“Everyone expects so much of Rafa at this time of the year. An individual loses a few matches, someone who’s won this event, what is it nine times, I believe? To put so many question marks, I almost think it’s a little bit disrespectful,” the women’s singles second seed Sharapova told a Press conference. “He’s an incredible champion, ...and his will and motivation to keep doing it and to keep proving to himself that he can do it again is pretty remarkable,” said the Russian. “It’s actually been a little bit sad, because if I was in his shoes I’d be a pretty accomplished and satisfied player.”

“Here he is just grinding away

and proving everyone wrong. I think that’s pretty respectful,” she added.

Nadal has failed to win a claycourt title in Europe for the first time in the build-up to the tournament which gets underway on Sunday. His best result came earlier this month in the final of the Madrid Masters against Briton Andy Murray. Murray has rated Djokovic as the favourite to win the French Open but insisted it would be “stupid” to write off Nadal. “Nadal’s form changes things. Novak for me goes into the tournament as the favourite now,” said the Scott. “But on that court Rafa’s record is ridiculous.”

“It’s completely possible that he gets out there and feels great, especially if he gets himself into the tournament and wins his first few matches.

“He’s going to feel better and better. He obviously loves the conditions here, although the courts this week have been extremely slow,” added Murray. “If it gets warmer and starts to speed up, obviously he loves the conditions here.” Roger Federer, the second seeded Swiss who has collected 17 Grand Slam trophies, also played down the “unlucky” draw for Nadal.—Xinhua

Luis Enrique dismisses questions on Barcelona future

BARCELONA, 23 May — Barcelona coach Luis Enrique on Friday dismissed questions about whether he will stay on next season, saying he will comment once the current campaign, when the Catalan giants could secure a treble of trophies, is over.

Coming to the end of his first term in charge at the Nou Camp, Luis Enrique has a contract until June 2016 but the club is due to hold elections for president over the summer and a new regime could decide fresh faces are needed.

Barca wrapped up a fifth La Liga title in seven years last weekend and are through to the King’s Cup final to play Athletic Bilbao on 30 May and face Juventus in the Champions League final a week later.

They host Deportivo La Coruna in their final La Liga match of the season on Saturday.

“I have nothing to say,” Luis Enrique told a news conference

when asked about his future.

“I have three matches ahead of me and I will talk once the season is over,” added the former Barca and Spain midfielder.

He said he had not yet discussed preparations for next term with the club’s technical committee.

Luis Enrique said midfielder Xavi, who announced on Thursday he was leaving to join Qatari side Al Sadd, would start Saturday’s match against Deportivo, after which the club captain will present the La Liga trophy to fans. Defender Thomas Vermaelen, who has yet to debut for Barca after joining from Arsenal in the close season due to injury, would also feature, the coach added.

Asked about negotiations on extending the contract of Brazil right back Dani Alves, whose deal expires at the end of the season, Luis Enrique said the player and the club “have to talk”.



Barcelona’s coach Luis Enrique smiles during a news conference after a training session at the Barcelona training grounds Ciutat Esportiva Joan Gamper in Sant Joan Despi near Barcelona, Spain, on 22 May, 2015. REUTERS

If Barca win the domestic Cup and Europe’s elite club competition, they would repeat their achievement from 2008-09 under Pep Guardiola, when they became the first Spanish team to win the treble.—Reuters

Murray can win French after solving clay puzzle — Courier

LONDON, 23 May — Andy Murray looks like he has solved the puzzle of claycourt tennis and is a serious title challenger at the French Open, according to twice Roland Garros champion Jim Courier.

World number three Murray is in the same half of the draw as favourite Novak Djokovic and nine-times champion Rafa Nadal and could play gritty Spaniard David Ferrer in the quarter-finals.

Yet with back-to-back titles on the slippery red dust in the build-up, the first of his career on



Andy Murray of Britain

the surface, those obstacles will not feel insurmountable for the inform Scot who is unbeaten since getting married in April.

Courier, who will be commentating for British channel ITV Sport on what promises to be an intriguing fortnight, believes Murray’s title runs in Munich and in Madrid, where he outplayed Nadal, would have been an eye-opener. “I do think that in Madrid he was more offensive in the semi-finals and finals than we are used to seeing him,” the American told Reuters from Florida before jetting off to Paris.

“I loved his tactics in those matches and seeing him go on the attack. He is such a skilled tennis player that I’ve found it disappointing not to see him use all his assets.

“He’s a very good defensive player but sometimes relies on that too much and maybe underesti-

mates his offence. Maybe he trusts his defence more than his offence but it was an eye-opener to see him utilize that.

“He’s standing closer to the baseline, taking time away from his opponents and is beating people with ball speed. He’s always been a player who likes to solve puzzles, but he’s now hit on the formula that works for him on clay.” Murray has won Wimbledon and the US Open and appeared in numerous Australian Open finals whereas the French, despite two semi-final runs, has been his least favourite grand slam.

“Twice he’s had to play Nadal in the semis which is no fun for anybody,” Courier, who won the title in 1991 and 1992, said.

“Last year he got whacked pretty good but I don’t think his physical state was as good as now and confidence-wise he’s at a peak right now.”—Reuters

Hull boss Bruce hoping for a favour in survival fight

LONDON, 23 May — Hull City manager Steve Bruce is desperate for a favour in the fight for Premier League survival but friend and West Ham United boss Sam Allardyce



Hull manager Steve Bruce

may not be the man to offer it in the final round of matches on Sunday.

Hull are 18th with 34 points and not only have to beat Manchester United, having lost all their seven games against them in the Premier League, but must also hope 17th-placed Newcastle United fail to defeat West Ham.

Newcastle, who have 36 points, have picked up just one point from 10 matches but welcome a West Ham side to St James’ Park that have been given

most of the week off training by boss Allardyce.

“I speak to him (Allardyce) most weeks but not this one,” Bruce told a news conference on Friday. “It is Sam’s prerogative (giving his players time off), it can work for you and against you.

“What he does with his team is his business. I know it is the same for whoever they play that he wants to win the game.

“No game is ever a certainty in this league.”

Hull finished 16th last year following promotion from the Championship and they also reached the FA Cup final where they lost in extra-time to Arsenal.

Bruce, however, believes his side have suffered from second-season syndrome and their cause was not helped last week when midfielder Jake Livermore tested positive for cocaine.

“It’s gone down to the wire. We are up against it but we have still got a chance and have to believe we have a

chance,” Bruce said.

“First of all we have to beat Manchester United which is never easy. But there have been some strange results this season and we hope we can pull it off and get favour from elsewhere.

“We didn’t expect to be in this position but we are. Lets hope there is one final twist because not a lot has gone our way over the past couple of months.”

Reuters