

Myanmar Autism Association (Mandalay) celebrates Autism Awareness Day

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100 DAYS OF FOCUS

Talks held over NLD's 100-day period in Nay Pyi Taw

A DEBATE to discuss what issues President U Htin Kyaw's administration should give priority to during his first 100-day period was held in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

The debate was organised by the Democratic Voice of Burma-DVB with U Zaw Htay alias Hmu Zaw, deputy director-general of the president's office, Dr Yan Myo Thein, a political analyst, U Oo Hla Saw, a Pyithu Hluttaw representative from the Rakhine National Party and U Jimmy from the 88 Generation Students and Open Society participating in the talks.

NLD did not take part in the debate.

"As state institutions are not very strong we find it difficult to make up our minds about what the NLD government can do in just 100 days," said U Zaw Htay.

"The NLD administration looks worried. In fact, the



Dr Yan Myo Thein. PHOTO: MNA



U Mya Aye. PHOTO: MNA



U Zaw Htay. PHOTO: MNA



U Oo Hla Saw. PHOTO: MNA

regional and state governments should already have strategic plans for the first 100 days. But now, we aren't seeing much planning," remarked Dr Yan Myo Thein.

"The NLD regime needs to build a culture under which it should meet the indigenous po-

litical parties for discussion of important matters. Such a culture is in need of being established," noted U Oo Hla Saw. He went on to say, "The army and the ethnic armed groups are going into battle which cause casualties. But they are also discussing the ceasefire and holding peace

talks. Such a culture is required on the part of NLD administration and the ethnic parties."

Regarding the Myitson Dam, U Mya Aye from the 88 Generation and Open Society said, "The new regime should continue to suspend the construction of Myitson Dam. They

should also declare general amnesty and invite those armed groups that haven't signed the peace accord to come to the table."

He continued, "Peace and political prisoner issues deserve priority on the part of the new administration."—*Thein Ko Lwin*

Yangon Government denies pavilion construction on Kaba Aye Pagoda road



People participate in the Thingyan Festival in Yangon last year. PHOTO: SAW THEIN WIN

PERMISSION will not be granted for the construction of water pavilions on Kaba Aye Pagoda Road during this year water festival according to Yangon Region Kayin Ethnic Affairs Minister Naw Pan Thinzar Myo.

The minister said that the regional government would build four central pavilions in its four districts, with small water-throwing pavilions being distributed across 45 townships in the region.

The Yangon Region government denied 305 proposals for the construction of commercial pavilions on Kaba Aye Pagoda Road for reasons of security and traffic congestion. The denial was seen as an attempt to reduce the use of water in the festival as part of preventive measures against possible water scarcity, most likely resulting from El Nino.

Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein stressed he would not allow exploitation

of Thingyan Festival for commercial gain, warning of zero tolerance on alcohol use by young people over the course of the festival.

The Yangon Region Police Force will deploy over 8,000 policemen to provide security and safety for revelers, according to Yangon Region's Security and Border Affairs Minister Col Tin Aung Tun.

Traffic police will also be deployed to help ease traffic congestion and halt the violation of traffic rules in crowded places.

Last year, there were 78 commercial pavilions of various sizes on Kandawgyi Circular Road and Kaba Aye Pagoda Road in Yangon.

The people in Myanmar will celebrate Thingyan or Water Festival from 12 to 16 April to mark in the New Year according to the Myanmar lunar calendar. —*Ko Moe*

Finland seeks trade opportunities in Mandalay



MRCCI officials present gifts to the Finnish delegation.

PHOTO: THIHA KO KO

JARMO Kuuttiala, a trade and economic attaché for the Embassy of Finland, led an economic mission at a meeting with the chairman and the secretary of the Mandalay Region Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MRCCI) at the Yadanabon Super Centre on 29 March.

During the meeting, the two parties exchanged views on Myanmar-Finland cooperation in trade and investment conditions in Mandalay.

The vice chairman and executives of the MRCCI presented gifts to the economic attaché and his party.—*Thiha Ko Ko*

Police save explosion in Muse

THE police have arrested a man named Than Aung who allegedly attempted to explode at Kaung Hmu Tone ward, Muse town, Shan State Northern, on 30 March.

Police found a man seeking shelter in a dark area with explosives. The suspect ran away, and the police pursued him to catch him. The suspect was arrested together with a 9 MM pistol gun, 15 bullets, two gunpowder, two detonators, two batteries and a remote control.

When interrogated, he admitted that he is a member of SSA Warmhi group. He is said to have attended two-month training course for small arm firing. He was sent back to the village after completion of the training.

On 30 March, he received a phone call from SSA Warmhi group to come to a graveyard at Swan Saw ward. Then, he met with one of the members from SSA group and gave him two mines, a gun with bullets. SSA gave him the instruction to ex-

plode on Muse highway. SSA threatened Than Aung with severe action being taken if he

failed to do the explosion. Police have filed charges against Than Aung.—*Han Htay (Lashio)*



Than Aung. PHOTO: HAN HTAY (LASHIO)

Motorbike accident injures four

A motorbike collided head on with another motorbike between mileposts 89/1 and 89/2, Yangon- Mawlayine old highway, Kyaikto township, Mon State, on 27 March, leaving four injured.

The motorbike heading for Mokpalin from Theinzayat driven by Ko Zin, 40, with Than

Htaik, 20, and Khin Win Htet, 20, crashed into the motorbike being driven by U Thet Yout, 38, while the former driver lost control.

The collision injured four people and they are taking medical treatment at Theinzayat Chaung Kauk station hospital.—*Ye Khaung Oo*

Uncensored movie sellers arrested

Police seized uncensored movies at a shop owned by Thura, 34, in Aung Nan Yeit Thar East ward, Chanayethasan township, Mandalay region, on 31 March. Acting on a tip-off, members of

the police searched the shop and found uncensored videos. Local police station has filed charges against Thura under Television and Video Law Section 32(B). —*Myanmar Police Force*

Police arrested two-digit lottery gamblers

Police have arrested a woman who allegedly played two-digit lotteries in her house at sintgaing township, Mandalay region on 31 March. The police searched the house owned by Tin Tin Nyo, 42, and found Ks 106,200 and the relevant documents items of two-digit lottery.

Similarly, the police searched the house owned by Moe Moe Win, 29, and found Ks 41,200 and the relevant documents and items of two-digit lottery. Also, the police arrested Maung Tun alias Yay Paw, 42, with Ks 107,000 and the relevant documents and items of two-digit lottery at his house. Local police have filed charges against them.—*Myanmar Police Force*

Crime NEWS

A man charged for stealing money



Hein Zaw. PHOTO: KO TIN MAUNG Oo (AHLON)

Police have filed charges against a man on suspicion of stealing money on Ahlone road, Ahlone township on 29 March, according to the local police.

Hein Zaw was stopped and brought to the Thakayta police station for interrogation. He admitted that he had stolen U Phyo Hein Kyaw's money.

Interrogation revealed that U Phyo Hein Kyaw hired Hein Zaw's taxi to take money from Shwe Taung Company. U Phyo Hein Kyaw bought a cold drink

on his way home. When U Phyo Hein Kyaw got off to buy the cold drink, Hein Zaw drove away the car with Ks 7.6 million, six bank cards, two ATM cards, National ID and driven licenses. U Phyo Hein Kyaw informed to the police station.

The police arrested Hein Zaw at wad 8, Thakayta township according to the information given by a local. The local police station has charged him with the theft case.—*Ko Tin Maung Oo (Ahlone)*

A passenger bus turned over in Karathuri town



A passenger bus seen being turned over in Karathure town.

PHOTO: KARATHURI (IPRD)

A passenger bus en route to Myeik from kawthaung driven by U Aung Win with passengers on board turned over on 31 March near Karathure town, Kawthaung- Bokepyin PyiHtaungsu road, Taninthayi region when the driver lost con-

trol.

The accident injured 47 passengers who are undergoing medical treatment at Karathure and Bokepyin general hospital. The driver was deemed guilty of careless driving by the police station.—*Karathuri (IPRD)*

A fire destroys a motorbike in Pakokku

A motorbike was destroyed by a fire in ward 2, Damazedi road, Pakokku town on Thursday. According to the investigation, the fire started to break out when the motorbike's oil pipe got off at Damazedi road. The motor-

bike driven by Kyaw Thu Oo, 17, with Kaung Myat Thu, 17, on board. The fire was put out by the firemen with the help of local residents. Local police have filed charges against Kyaw Thu Oo.—*District IPRD*

IDP Camps in Kyaukme closing as displaced villagers depart for home

WITH the return home of the last villagers from camps in Kyaukme in northern Shan State, built for internally displaced persons, all camps in the town will be officially closed down as of 25 March, said local authorities yesterday.

The remaining villagers are from the villages of Tawt Hsan and Mong Ngot, located in the vicinity of Kyaukme.

They have decided to return back home as there is no fighting in the vicinity of their villages at the moment and the time for the tea crop harvest is coming up, according to volunteers at the camps.

"The remaining funds that were donated to the IDPS project are currently saved at the Ayay-awady Bank and they will be spent on rebuilding homes which were destroyed in Tawt Hsan Village," said U Tin Win, Chairman of the township's supporting committee for development.

All remaining aid food left at the camps will be distributed to people in conflict-afflicted villages, it has been learned.



Displaced persons leave IDP camps in Kyaukme for home in mid-March. PHOTO: AUNG THANT KHAING

More than 4,000 IDPs arrived at the town to shelter within camps that were set up at monasteries. The camps came into being on 9 February. At the height of the conflict in northern Shan State over the last few months, there was a total of 22 IDP camps in the township. As of 13 March just 14 IDP camps, which shelter around 1,000 remaining IDPs, are left in Kyaukme Township. Displaced villagers began to arrive after fighting erupted in the surrounding area of Tawt Hsan Village on the morning of 7 February. Fighting broke out between the Restoration Council of Shan State/Shan State Army-South and the Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA) in early February and has driven local villagers from their homes to seek refuge from the conflict. Local authorities and NGOs are providing them with food and health care services.

The villagers who have returned home mostly live in mountainous regions where they earn their living by cultivating tea crops.—Aung Thant Khaing

Special pre-Thingyan train services to run between Yangon, Mandalay and Naypyidaw

STARTING from 2 April, special trains services will be in operation between Yangon, Mandalay and Naypyidaw in order to increase the capacity of train services to accommodate increased number of travellers heading home for the Thingyan holiday period, according to Myanmar Railways.

"There hasn't been this kind of service in the past. Each train service will be able to transport approximately 730 passengers.

Those seeking upper class seats must purchase their tickets three days prior to departure, while only ordinary class need only do so a day in advance," said U Kyaw Soe Lin, assistance general manager of Myanmar Railways.

The special daily train service will run along the Yangon-Mandalay line between April 2-5. Each service will depart from Yangon Central Station at 4:00pm, with each train being comprised of three

upper class, and ten ordinary class, carriages. It is known that plans are in place for a continuation of the service between April 6-11.

Furthermore, a special Thingyan train will run between Yangon-Naypyidaw on April 6 and Naypyidaw-Yangon on April 8 for government staff stationed in the capital.

The price of tickets for the Yangon-Mandalay service will be K4,650 for ordinary class and

K9,300 for upper class, while a seat in ordinary class on the Yangon-Naypyidaw service will fetch K2,600 with upper class tickets costing K5,600. Myanmar Railways has made it known 17 of the 23 trains which service the Yangon circle and suburb lines will be halted during Thingyan celebration between April 13-16 but the city will still be serviced by 6 trains which will run a total of 69 daily trips.—Myitmakha News Agency

500,000 children diagnosed with autism in Myanmar

MYANMAR has around 500,000 children who are diagnosed with autism, according to the Myanmar Autism Association (MAA).

"It is estimated that the number of children diagnosed with autism could be between 500,000 and 600,000 as the rate is increasing from about one in a hundred in the past to one in sixty eight at present," said Daw Ni Ni Aung, Secretary-2 of the Myanmar Autism Association at a ceremony held yesterday to mark the World's Autism Day in Yangon.

The association is planning to establish a vocational training school for those who are diagnosed with autism.

"We have communicated with experts from Thailand regarding the establishment of a vocational training school and we will carry out the operation by linking schools for autism in Myanmar on a trial period," said U Nay Myo Naing, Executive of the MAA.

Currently, the association and Social Welfare Department are jointly conducting teacher training.

There are 16 schools for autism in Myanmar.

Autism Day falls on 2 April and the ceremony to mark the day as National Autism Awareness day is held across the world.—Ye Kaung

Unlicensed fishing boats auctioned off in Kyauk Phyu

FISHING vessels confiscated in Rakhine State's township of Kyauk Phyu for not paying taxes for their fishing licenses will be put up for auction, in accordance with the fisheries act, resulting in unlicensed fishing vessels calling their fishing activities to a halt for

fear of reprisals.

"I know the near-shore fishing vessels that will go up for auction are those which have neither extended their [fishing license] nor paid tax. This has resulted in nearly all unlicensed motorized and non-motorised

fishing boats from daring to venture out to catch fish. More than such a hundred unlicensed fishing boats, that plough the waters of the Thansit river, have been confiscated. Family livelihoods are really feeling the pinch," said U San Thein, a fisherman from Taungyin village facing a law suit for not extended his fishing license.

Three fishing vessels were confiscated in Kyauk Phyu on March 9 found to be in breach of article 33 of the fisheries act. According to the district level Department of Fisheries, the township level department pressed charges against the owners of the fishing vessels on March 14 under article 42 of the same fisheries act.

"We informed all near-shore fishing boats of the need to extend licenses and pay taxes back in December 2015. We reminded these fishing boat owners time and again to extend their licenses and pay their taxes, but it's

fallen on deaf ears. That's what has prompted the pressing of legal charges," said U Khin Saw, deputy head of the district level Department of Fisheries.

The three fishing vessels in question originate from the Taungyin village tract and all plough the waters of Kyauk Phyu's Thansit river. The taking of legal action against the owners of confiscated fishing vessels is the first time such an incident has taken place during this 2015-16 fiscal year.

Local residents have made it known the confiscation of fishing vessels in this manner has resulted in demise of fish within local markets, driving up the price.

According to the district level Department of Fisheries, until the end of last year, there were 208 licensed motorized near-shore fishing vessels and 482 non-motorised vessels, while unlicensed non-motorised fishing boats numbered approximately 1,000.—Myitmakha News Agency



Fishing boats are seen in Sittway. PHOTO: MYITMAKHA NEWS AGENCY

LOCAL Business

Macau to invest over K3 billion in Myanmar's construction industry

MACAU will invest over K3 billion into the sales and distribution of construction materials within Myanmar, according to the Macau-Myanmar Friendship Association.

"The majority of Macau businessmen are keenly interested in Myanmar's changing economic climate. Construction materials from Macau such as cement, hammers, iron and household paint will be imported and sold. An investment totaling over K3 billion has been planned, with implementation to commence in May," said Jose Wong, chair of the Macau-Myanmar Friendship Association.

It is known there is also much interest being generated in Macau for investment in Myanmar's tourism and industrial zone sectors.

"Construction materials are currently being imported into Myanmar from China and India. I'm not completely sure on the market or technical side of things but interest in our tourism sector from Macau is a good thing. If the Myanmar tourism industry could reach a higher plateau then I think we'd be doing okay," said U Sein Win Aung, chair of the Myanmar-Chinese Friendship Association. More than 30 Macau businessmen arrived in Myanmar on March 30 for the purpose of investing in Myanmar's economy. During their trip they



Workers are seen at a construction site in Yangon.

PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE

will tour around and study industrial zones within the country, it is known.

A welcoming ceremony

was held for the aforementioned group at Yangon's Olympic hotel on March 31.—*Myitmakha News Agency*

Thailand to build fish processing factory in Myanmar

A COMPANY from Thailand is reportedly planning to build a processing factory to produce high quality dried fish for sale in Myanmar supermarkets nationwide, according to the Myanmar Fishery Federation.

Local seafood producers are

able to preserve dried fish only, finding it hard to fetch higher prices for their products.

Local fishery enterprises are trying to penetrate new markets on foreign soil, especially in Thailand and Viet Nam, said U Han Tun, assistant director of the

Myanmar Fishery Federation.

"Some categories of dried fish are cheap and abundant in our country but they are expensive and unavailable in other countries," he said, adding that such products should be exported.—200

Cucamelon farmers in Chaung Oo seeing high income

FARMERS in Cucamelon, Chaung Oo Township, Sagaing Division, have seen higher income as of late following a growing demand for their fruit abroad.

"Local farmers mostly

plant cucumber because it can resist the hot temperature and produce high yields. Though cucamelons are priced at K900 per kilogram, growers earn a good income thanks to steady prices and a good harvest", said

local cucumber dealer U Soe Lwin.

Currently, farmers export nearly 200 truckloads per day to China via Muse Township in northern Shan State.—*CHN/Union Daily*

Mandalay Region project contracts to be scrutinised

CONTRACTS for projects within Mandalay Region signed during the administration of the previous government will be scrutinised by a group of experts, U Zaw Myint Maung, Chief Minister of Mandalay Region, said to press on March 31 after a session of Hluttaw.

"We can amend [these contracts] should they prove not to be of benefit to the public. But, this will involve the conduction of an investigation. Following the scrutiny [of these contracts] by experts, we'll be able to concretely say whether or not they will be of benefit or not. But first we need to source these experts," stated U Zaw Myint Maung.

Dr Zaw Myint Maung, representative of Amarapura township for Mandalay Region Hluttaw, was sworn in as Chief Minister of Mandalay Region in front of the speaker of Hluttaw during the 8th day of the first regular session of the Second Hluttaw under State and Region Hluttaw Law 55 and By-law 60.

The Hluttaw session was attended by speaker of the Hluttaw, U Aung Kyaw Oo, deputy speaker, Dr Khin Maung Htay, 54 Regional Hluttaw representatives, one ethnic Shan representative, 18 representatives of the military, totalling 75 lawmakers.—*Myitmakha News Agency*

Chiangmai Company to invest \$20 million in agriculture



Workers water plants at the organic farm in Nay Pyi Taw.

PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE

A FOOD processing company from Chiangmai, Thailand plans to invest \$20 million in the agricultural sector in the Nay Pyi Taw Council area.

"We hope that our project will accelerate the economy of both countries as Myanmar's economy is based on the agricultural sector," said Ankoon Pholpipattanaphong, director of the Chiangmai Company.

The company will work on 100 acres of land for its project in partnership with local compa-

ny Sei Taung Yar. The land lease will last for 50 years with options for two 10-year extensions. The company is expected to start its operation in 2018.

The country's political opening has been seen as a magnet for foreign investment and has propelled the Thai company to invest in the agricultural sector.

The Chiangmai Company is engaged in frozen food production and is an official member of the Stock Exchange in Thailand.—*PPN/Union Daily*

Tran Dai Quang elected Viet Nam's new President

HANOI — The National Assembly (NA) of Viet Nam on Saturday elected Tran Dai Quang as the country's president in capital Hanoi.

Quang has been elected and sworn in as the president with 452 "yes" votes out of 481 valid ballots at the ongoing 11th session of the 13th NA.

Prior to the election, Quang has been serving as Vietnamese Minister of Public Security from 2011.

A resolution on electing Quang as Vietnamese President was later adopted by the NA.

Earlier on Thursday afternoon, the newly-elected NA Chairwoman Nguyen Thi Kim Ngan delivered a proposal on the nomination of candidate for the position of Vietnamese president.

Tran Dai Quang, member of the 12th Central Committee of the Communist Party of Viet Nam (CPVCC) and member of the 12th CPVCC Politburo, and Minister of Public Security, was the sole nominee to the post.

After the election, in his sworn-in statement, Quang said "In front of the sacred national flag, the National Assembly and voters nationwide, I, Tran Dai Quang, president of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, swear: To be absolutely loyal to



Viet Nam's new President Tran Dai Quang (front) delivers the sworn-in statement after being elected as the country's president in Hanoi, capital of Viet Nam, on 2 April. The National Assembly (NA) of Viet Nam on Saturday elected Tran Dai Quang as the country's president in capital Hanoi. PHOTO: XINHUA

the nation, the people and the Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam. I will make efforts and try my best to well fulfill the duty assigned by the party, the state and the people."

On Thursday afternoon, Truong Tan Sang was relieved

from duty of Vietnamese President.

In late January, Sang was not elected to be among 200 members of the new CPVCC.

At the second session of the 12th CPVCC in early March, Vietnamese party chief Nguyen

Phu Trong said the central committee reached high consensus that it is needed to soon replace and re-arrange key leadership positions in order to promptly implement the resolution of the 12th national party congress. —Xinhua

South Korea demands North Korea stop jamming GPS signals

SEOUL — South Korea on Friday demanded that North Korea stop jamming GPS signals, which could affect planes and ships that rely on GPS for navigation and could cause mobile phones to malfunction.

"It is a dangerous and reckless act that defies relevant international norms and poses threats to our people's safety. It should be halted immediately," the presidential office said in a statement.

The Defence Ministry, in a separate statement, said North Korea has been conducting radio jamming operations against the South from four locations, including Haeju, a port city in the country's southwest area, and Mt. Kumgang on the east coast.

Calling the GPS jamming "a clear provocation that violates the inter-Korean armistice agreement and the regulations of the International Telecommunication Union," the ministry warned that if it continues despite South's warnings, "we will make the North pay a due price through close co-ordination with the international community." —Kyodo News

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China braces for 'severe' flooding on Yangtze River

BEIJING — Severe floods are expected on China's Yangtze River this year due to a strong El Niño weather pattern, state media said, raising the risk of deaths and damage to property and crops along the country's longest waterway.

The El Niño conditions are the strongest since records collection began in 1951, and resemble a 1998 weather pattern that flooded the river and killed thousands, the official Xinhua news agency said on Friday, citing vice minister of water resources, Liu Ning.

"Precipitation in the upper, middle and lower reaches of the river is forecast to be as much as 80 percent more than normal from May to August," Xinhua said.

Some Yangtze tributaries had already begun flooding and the flood control and drought relief situation was "extremely severe", Liu said, according to the news agency. Provinces and cities along the river needed to make contingency plans, Xinhua cited Wang Guosheng, the governor of central Hubei Province, as saying.

China has frequently been devastated by natural disasters, particularly by floods and earthquakes that have claimed millions of lives over the centuries.

Flooding, an annual problem, has been exacerbated by urban sprawl and poor drainage infrastructure in many cities.

Xinhua said 1,320 people died in the 1998 floods, though estimates vary and some put the death toll at more than

4,000. Floods could be a test of the water management capabilities of the controversial \$59 billion Three Gorges Dam, which was finished in 2012.

Along with power generation and navigation, the dam was designed for controlling the Yangtze's water levels.

The ongoing El Niño, a warming of sea-surface temperatures in the Pacific, has been linked to serious crop damage, forest fires

and flash flood and drought around the world.

Experts have warned that changing global climate leading to extreme weather will likely have an impact on the world's most important commodity crops — maize, soybean, wheat and rice.

Most of the global production of these four crops comes from a small number of countries such as China, the United States and India. —Reuters



People look at the Yangtze River as they stand on a bridge in Badong city, 100km (62 miles) from the Three Gorges dam in Hubei Province on 7 August 2012. PHOTO: REUTERS

US plans third patrol near disputed South China Sea islands



The US Navy guided-missile destroyer USS Curtis Wilbur patrols in the Philippine in 2013. PHOTO: REUTERS

WASHINGTON — The US Navy plans to conduct another passage near disputed islands in the South China Sea in early April, a source familiar with the plan said on Friday, the third in series of challenges that have drawn sharp rebukes from China.

The exact timing of the exercise and which ship would travel inside a 12-nautical mile limit around a disputed island was not immediately clear.

The United States has conducted what it calls “freedom of navigation” exercises in recent months, sailing near disputed islands to underscore its right to navigate the seas. US Navy officials have said they plan to conduct more and increasingly complex exercises in the future.

The USS Stennis carrier strike group is currently operating in the South China Sea. The next freedom of navigation exercise is unlikely to be conducted by a carrier like the Stennis, but rather by

a smaller ship, the source said.

Experts predict the next US challenge to the various claims in the South China Sea could occur near Mischief Reef, a feature claimed by the Philippines and which was submerged at high tide before China began a dredging project to turn it into an island in 2014.

Mischief Reef is now the site of one of three military-length airfields China has built on man-made islands in the Spratly Islands archipelago.

US Navy ships regularly patrol the South China Sea, through which more than \$5 trillion of world trade travels every year. China claims most of the area, and Viet Nam, Malaysia, Brunei, the Philippines and Taiwan have rival claims.

In recent months, with tensions rising around China’s reclamation activities, US ships have been frequently and routinely shadowed by Chinese ships and

regular communications with Chinese vessels have often been tense.

News of the planned exercise comes a day after US President Barack Obama met with Chinese President Xi Jinping at a nuclear summit in Washington.

During the meetings, Xi told Obama that China would not accept any behaviour in the guise of freedom of navigation that violates its sovereignty, in a clear warning to the United States.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Hong Lei told Reuters on Saturday that China opposed any such exercise.

“China consistently respects and supports the freedom of navigation and fly over that all countries’ enjoy in the South China Sea under international law, but resolutely opposes any country using so-called ‘freedom of navigation’ as an excuse to damage China’s sovereignty, security and maritime rights,” Hong said.—*Reuters*

Five people detained in India as flyover collapse toll mounts to 25

NEW DELHI — Indian officials said on Friday that five people belonging to the construction company that was building a flyover in the eastern state of West Bengal were arrested for questioning.

A 60-metre portion of the overpass collapsed Thursday afternoon at Vivekananda Road in the busy capital city of Kolkata, killing 25 and injuring scores of others.

Rescuers using heavy machinery safely pulled over 90 people from the debris of concrete and mangled steel. The flyover’s massive steel girders and concrete slabs crumpled vehicles and rickshaws under it.

The number of people trapped

underneath the debris was unknown. However, hopes of finding more survivors seem to be fading with every passing hour.

The flyover was being constructed by a Hyderabad-based construction company IVRCL.

Police has sealed the Kolkata office of the company and sent a team to Hyderabad for questioning higher officials of IVRCL.

“IVRCL faces charges of attempted murder, mischief and criminal conspiracy in connection with the collapse of an overpass in Kolkata,” a senior police official told Xinhua.

“We would be investigating the company officials for alleged

culpable homicide and criminal breach of trust.”

The company signed a contract for constructing the overpass in 2009 and was supposed to complete the project in August 2010.

It has missed nine deadlines with the latest deadline being August 2016. Reports say 80 per cent of the work on the flyover has been completed so far. K Panduranga Rao, an official of IVRCL, described the accident “an Act of God” following the deadly incident. “It’s nothing but a God’s act,” Rao told media. “So far in 27 years we have constructed several number of bridges, it (today’s collapse) never happened.”—*Xinhua*

DPRK test-fires new-type guided rockets

PYONGYANG — The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) has test-fired “new-type anti-air guided rockets” under the observation of its top leader Kim Jong Un, the country’s official KCNA news agency reported Saturday.

The rockets accurately hit the aerial targets of the simulated enemy, the KCNA said without specifying when and where the test was carried out.

Kim was satisfied with the test, saying it demonstrated the DPRK’s rapidly growing defence capability.

The DPRK on Friday fired a ground-to-air missile into its eastern waters, according to South Korea’s Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS). The launch came just three days after Pyongyang fired a rocket in northeastern direction.

Pyongyang’s frequent projectile launches in recent weeks are said to protest the ongoing US-South Korea joint military exercises and newly-adopted international sanctions on the DPRK.

In early March, UN Security Council adopted tougher-than-ever sanctions on Pyongyang over its fourth nuclear test on 6 January.

On 7 March, South Korea and the United States kicked off their joint annual war games “Key Resolve” and “Foal Eagle.” The “Key Resolve” exercise ended last month, but the “Foal Eagle” field training exercise is scheduled to last till 30 April.

Pyongyang has repeatedly denounced the US-South Korea military exercises as a dress rehearsal for northward invasion. —*Xinhua*



Photo provided by Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) on 24 March 2016 shows the top leader of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) Kim Jong Un guiding a ground test for heavy-lift, solid-fuel rocket engine and its separation. PHOTO: XINHUA

Four Malaysian crewmen abducted near South Philippines

KUALA LUMPUR — Four Malaysian crewmen were abducted in Malaysian waters off southern Philippines, police said on Saturday.

State news agency *Bernama* reported that the four Malaysians were taken away Friday evening by eight armed militants in the waters of Sabah state on North Borneo. The four men, aged between 21 and 34, were onboard a boat on the way back to Malaysia after transporting timber to the Philippines capital of Manila, according

to the report quoting a police official. Police said the identities of the abductors remained unknown. Earlier this week, the authorities said 10 Indonesian crewmen were kidnapped by terrorist group Abu Sayyaf off Tawi-tawi in southern Philippines. The 400-strong Abu Sayyaf, founded in the early 1990s by Islamic extremists, is a violent terrorist group operating in southern Philippines. The group is notorious for a series of kidnappings, bombings and beheadings over the decades.—*Xinhua*

Five policemen injured in landmine blast by rebels in central India

NEW DELHI — Five policemen were injured by a landmine planted by suspected leftwing guerrillas in the central Indian state of Jharkhand on Saturday, said local media.

The attack took place in Topchanchi town of the state’s Dhanbad District, when suspected Naxalite rebels detonated

the landmine against a security personnel patrol, the Indo-Asian News Service quoted Jharkhand police spokesperson S.N. Pradhan as saying in the state capital Ranchi. The injured policemen have been hospitalised, with condition of two of the injured being serious, said the news service.—*Xinhua*



President Obama takes centre stage as world leaders gather for for a family photo. PHOTO: REUTERS

‘Madmen’ must not be allowed to get nuclear material — Obama

WASHINGTON — US President Barack Obama urged world leaders on Friday to do more to safeguard vulnerable nuclear facilities to prevent “madmen” from groups like Islamic State from getting their hands on an atomic weapon or a radioactive “dirty bomb.”

Speaking at a nuclear security summit in Washington, Obama said the world faced a persistent and evolving threat of nuclear terrorism despite progress in reducing such risks. “We cannot be complacent,” he said.

Obama said no group had succeeded in obtaining bomb materials but that al Qaeda had long sought them, and he cited actions by Islamic State militants behind recent attacks in Paris and Brussels that raised similar concerns.

“There is no doubt that if these madmen ever got their hands on a nuclear bomb or nuclear material, they would certainly use it to kill as many innocent people as possible,” he said. “It would change our world.”

Obama hosted more than 50 world leaders for his fourth and final summit focussed on efforts to lock down atomic materials to guard against nuclear terrorism, which he called “one of the greatest threats to global security” in the 21st century.

Obama has less than 10 months left in office to follow through on one of his signature foreign policy initiatives. While gains have been made, arms-control advocates say the diplomatic process — which Obama conceived and championed — has lost momentum and could slow further once he leaves the White House in January.

A boycott by Russian President Vladimir Putin, unwilling to join in a US-dominated gathering at a time of increased tensions between Washington and Moscow over Ukraine and Syria, may have contributed to summit re-

sults marked by mostly technical measures instead of policy breakthroughs.

At the closing news conference, Obama, a Democrat, made clear that the raucous Republican presidential race, particularly controversial comments by party front-runner Donald Trump, weighed on leaders’ discussions on the summit sidelines.

Obama sternly dismissed as proof of foreign-policy ignorance Trump’s recent suggestion that Japan and South Korea should be allowed to build their own nuclear arsenals, putting him at odds with decades of US policy.

“The person who made the statements doesn’t know much about foreign policy or nuclear policy or the Korean peninsula, or the world generally,” Obama said, adding that Americans don’t want anyone with such views to occupy the White House.

Deadly bomb attacks in Brussels last month have fuelled concern that Islamic State could eventually target nuclear plants, steal material and develop radioactive dirty bombs. Militants were found to have videotaped the daily routine of a senior manager of a Belgian nuclear plant, Obama said.

Obama said the required 102 countries have now ratified an amendment to a nuclear security treaty that would tighten protections against nuclear theft and smuggling. “We have measurably reduced the risks,” he said.

But he acknowledged that with roughly 2,000 tons of nuclear material stored around the world, “not all of this is properly secured.”

Obama, wrapping up the summit, said leaders had agreed to strengthen their nuclear facilities against cyber attacks, something that outside experts see as a major weak point.

The United States and Japan also announced they had com-

pleted the long-promised task of removing all highly enriched uranium and separated plutonium fuels from a Japanese research reactor. Japan is an avowedly anti-nuclear-weapons state as the only country to have ever suffered a nuclear attack.

Despite significant strides by Obama in persuading dozens of countries to rid themselves of bomb-making materials or reduce and safeguard stockpiles, much of the world’s plutonium and enriched uranium remain vulnerable to theft.

Obama convened a separate meeting of world powers to take stock of the landmark nuclear pact they negotiated with Iran last July. It is a critical component of his nuclear disarmament agenda and a major piece of his foreign policy legacy.

Obama inaugurated the first Nuclear Security Summit nearly six years ago, after a 2009 speech in Prague laying out the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. There is no guarantee that Obama’s successor will keep the issue a high priority.

Obama made no public mention of Putin as a summit no-show. But he did say that because of the Russian’s leader’s emphasis on building up his military, there was unlikely to be any further deals for reducing the two countries’ vast nuclear weapons stockpiles during what is left of the Obama presidency.

For now, US experts are less concerned about militants obtaining nuclear weapons than about thefts of ingredients for a low-tech dirty bomb that would use conventional explosives to disperse radioactive material and sow panic.

US officials said they had no doubt that Islamic State, which controls swaths of Syria and Iraq, was interested in obtaining such materials, but authorities had no explicit evidence that the group had tried to do so.—Reuters

NEWS IN BRIEF

Int’l experts confirm 17 bodies burned at rubbish dump in southern Mexico

MEXICO CITY — At least 17 bodies had been burned at a rubbish dump in the southern Mexican city of Cocula where 43 college students went missing nearby in 2014, said an international team of fire experts here on Friday.

“There is sufficient evidence, which can even be physically seen, to confirm that there was a large, controlled fire in the place known as the Cocula rubbish dump,” Ricardo Damian Torres, spokesperson for the team of experts, told a news conference at the office of Mexico’s attorney general.

The forensic report, the third of such since the students’ disappearance, was released after the team, comprising two fire experts from Mexico, three from the United States and one from Peru, worked six weeks on it.

Studies also show that at least 17 people were burned in the rubbish dump, Torres said without specifying whether the burned bodies were those of the missing students.—Xinhua

IAEA chief praises Iran for fulfilling nuke deal

VIENNA — IAEA chief Yukiya Amano on Friday lauded Iran for fulfilling its obligations under a landmark nuclear deal reached last July to prevent Tehran from acquiring nuclear weapons.

“Iran is now subject to the strongest nuclear verification regime in the world,” the director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency said in a statement issued after his talks with world leaders in Washington. Iran, he said, is implementing not just the safeguards agreement with the IAEA but also an additional protocol allowing the Vienna-based nuclear watchdog to carry out unannounced inspections of nuclear facilities.—Kyodo News

Ex-German Foreign Minister Genscher dies at 89

BERLIN — Former German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher, who played a pivotal role in reuniting East and West Germany in 1990, has died, German media reported Friday. He was 89.

He died of heart failure on Thursday night at his home near Bonn. He served as West German foreign minister from 1974 until reunification, continuing in the role until 1992.

Genscher’s early recognition of former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev’s perestroika reforms that started in the mid-1980s is credited with clearing the way for Germany’s reunification.

He was also a strong advocate of European unity.

Genscher proposed turning the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe into a formal intergovernmental organisation, leading to the creation of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe later.—Kyodo News

Mass grave found in Syria’s Palmyra after city recaptured from Islamic State

DAMASCUS — Syrian troops found a mass grave containing around 40 bodies in Palmyra city, captured from Islamic State last Sunday, Syrian state news agency SANA said on Friday.

SANA said the grave, which contained many women and children, was in the north-eastern edge of Palmyra. Some of the bodies had been beheaded.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights which monitors the five-year-old Syrian conflict through a network of sources on the ground, said that Islamic State had killed a number of people at an earlier time and buried them on the outskirts of the city.—Reuters

Saudi-owned newspaper Beirut office attacked after cartoon

BEIRUT — Protesters attacked the Beirut office of Saudi-owned newspaper *Asharq al-Awsat* on Friday in response to a cartoon published by the paper criticizing the Lebanese state.

The cartoon depicted the Lebanese flag with the words “an April fool...” written above it. Inside the flag were the words “the Lebanese state”, which form a rhyming pair in Arabic.

Protesters entered the building and left papers and upturned chairs on the floor of the offices.

The cartoon and attack come amid political tensions between Riyadh and Beirut.

On Friday the Saudi-owned television news channel Al Arabiya shut its offices in Lebanon and dismissed 27 employees.—Reuters

OPINION

Viewing farms as small enterprises

Kyaw Thura

AS a predominantly agricultural country, Myanmar still relies on its agricultural sector as a constant source of its GDP growth and a major generator of employment and income. Since 70% of the country's population live in rural areas, the gov-

ernment needs to assign a higher priority to encouraging financial services and investments so as to ensure food security and poverty reduction.

The majority of rural people have no alternative but to depend on working on the farm for their livelihood. There has been a lot of literature portraying the rural life as peaceful and farmers as common benefactors of mankind. We all owe them a great debt of gratitude for their generosity. However, it is one thing to know the gratitude, but it is quite another to express our gratitude by repaying them for their role of food suppliers.

Strange as it may seem, farmers remain poor while merchants of agricultural products get richer and richer. They will never be able to escape poverty as long as there is no improvement in agricultural planning. There is every reason to believe that the government will be wise enough to develop long-term strategies to finance agricultural development plans and

projects designed to increase food production and food security.

In other words, providing financial services to the agricultural community is an indirect way of feeding the whole country and helping rid the rural people of poverty. In addition, the rural development projects should encompass such activities as supply of quality seeds for high yields and necessary assistance to processing, production, distribution and marketing.

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Challenges for BCIM-EC: Bangladesh & Myanmar in perspective

Bahauddin Foizee

WHILE the opportunities for the "Bangladesh, China, India and Myanmar Economic Corridor" (BCIM-EC) have been a good topic among the diplomatic and foreign affairs circles and also among the general watchers of Southern Asian politics, less has been heard about the challenges faced by the BCIM-EC. There happen to be bad things to all good things. While there are opportunities in this BCIM-EC, there are challenges too. With regard to Bangladesh and Myanmar, there are few challenges to make it operational: (i) armed insurgencies; (ii) lack of people to people communication; (iii) the Rohingya (Bengali) issue; (iv) sincerity from governments; & (v) relationship between China and India.

Why BCIM-EC?

The BCIM-EC connects the relevant countries through a network of airways, railways, roads and waterways. It is supposed to connect China's Kunming (Yunnan province) to India's Kolkata through Myanmar's Mandalay, Bangladesh's Dhaka and Chittagong and India's Northeast. The BCIM countries are inhabited by 2/5 (two-fifth) of the planet's human population and in-

cludes 21st century's new superpower China. BCIM-EC is aimed at improving the relevant countries' infrastructures, energy resources, agriculture and trade-&-investment. As Bangladesh and Myanmar would be able to access the markets in India's seven Northeast states and China's Yunnan province through this BCIM-EC, both Bangladesh and Myanmar would become a lucrative destination for foreign direct investment. These two small countries may export their typical local products into the other two BCIM countries that are big enough to consume them in no time. Moreover, as China would be developing the infrastructure of BCIM countries for its own economy's sake, such voluntary infrastructure-buildup would help progress the potential economies of Bangladesh and Myanmar.

Challenges

The relevant countries in BCIM-EC, especially Bangladesh and Myanmar, will only benefit from BCIM-EC if it becomes operational after balancing all the challenges posed to its stable and uninterrupted functioning. The major challenge is undoubtedly the armed insurgencies in Myanmar that might act violently against the interests of the BCIM-EC and

interrupt violently in the movements of consignments from one place in BCIM region to the other. There are a good number of armed insurgent groups across Myanmar. There is presence of such groups around the proposed BCIM-EC's route that crosses over the country.

Among many insurgent groups in Myanmar, the notable ones are: the Kachin insurgents, the Karenni (Kayah) insurgents, the Karen (Kayin) insurgents and the Arakanese/Rohingya insurgents. Myanmar has been at armed conflict with these insurgent groups for decades and all sides have suffered way too much to carry on the fighting much longer. That is why Myanmar's government has repeatedly tried to reach ceasefire agreement with the insurgents and attempted to persistently work for peaceful settlement. Most of the times, the ceasefires that were maintained by all sides had short lived. This time, a ceasefire deal has been reached at the last quarter of 2015 and this ceasefire has been largely continuing for a while now.

Another challenge is the cross-border communication of general people from the two sides of Bangladesh and Myanmar. People to people connection between two sovereign countries are the most effective

ways to progress together and to keep a peaceful relationship between the concerned countries. This factor is particularly important when the concerned countries are next-door neighbours. There was a smooth and vibrant relation between the people of these two territories in the pre-Mughal era that continued till the British era. However, the post-British era saw degradation in the relationship between the people from both sides and circumstances only got worse when the Rohingya (Bengali) issue took the centre stage in shaping up Bangladeshis' perceptions towards Myanmar. A large number of people from Bangladesh have some sort of anger against Myanmar because of the same.

Progress made by the governments within BCIM region, except China, are too slow to make BCIM-EC operational anytime soon.

It is also worth mentioning that there is lack of full confidence between China and India in their relations with each other. While China has been blamed by many Indian political analysts to cooperate with the Indian North Eastern armed groups, Chinese counterparts have accused India of assisting the West in continuously attempting to make China's southwest border

(precisely Tibet) unstable. The two giant neighbours fought a war in 1962 apart from the border-area conflicts that happen in intervals. China and India's "lack of full confidence" in their relations with each other is a challenge for BCIM-EC. Such relationship between China and India is a hindrance for BCIM-EC to become operational and, thereby, functional.

Wrapping up

Bangladesh and Myanmar may work for reducing the mistrust between China and India, making it easier for these two Asian giants to cooperate with each other in order to make the BCIM-EC a reality. Moreover, taking a step towards genuine solution regarding the Rohingya (Bengali) issue would likely to normalize relation between people of Bangladesh and Myanmar. As Bangladesh and Myanmar governments have good relations, a good relation between the general mass from both sides would help to make progressive ideas like BCIM-EC to become operational and, thereby, functional.

Bahauddin Foizee [primarily a legal practitioner, teaches law at Dhaka Centre for Law & Economics and regularly writes columns on international affairs]

Myanmar Autism Association (Mandalay) celebrates Autism Awareness Day



Children with autism and participants celebrate Autism Awareness Day. PHOTO:THIHA KO KO (MDV)

WITH the aim of encouraging people to take measures to raise public awareness and understanding of children with autism the Myanmar Autism Association (Mandalay) held a mass walk and education talk to mark Autism Awareness Day at the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) in Mandalay yesterday.

Children with autism, their mothers and other participants who lend their time and effort to activities relating to autism awareness and care started to

walk from a designated place between 26 street and 72 street. They walked along the 26 street until reaching the YMCA on 75 street.

At the ceremony, held at the local YMCA, Dr. Than Soe, a Mandalay Region Hluttaw Representative, U Kyaw Win, director of the Social Welfare and Relief Department, made opening speeches. Author Sayar U Nyi Pu Lay counseled to the attendees while the chairman of the Myanmar Autism Association (Mandalay) gave an education talk on

autism.

Mandalay Region Hluttaw Representative, U Kyaw Win, director of Social Welfare and Relief Department presented documents of participation in honour of the event. One out of every 68 new born babies worldwide is affected by Autisms. According to the Myanmar Autism Association (Mandalay), some 67 million people are living with autism across the world. The characteristics associated with autism appear during childhood.—*Thiha Ko Ko (Mandalay)*

POEM:

Together we will cross the road

Hold my hand, child, and together we will cross the road
Tread boldly on the paved path, child, no stones there to hurt your fragile feet
See the clear blue sky, child, not a wispy cloud in sight
Hear the music, child, of leaves singing along with the breeze
Sit on the green, green grass, child and feel the cool, cool dew
Let your thoughts float free, child, and dream of things that will all come true
Listen to me, child, of my weary days now swept away
No roads made smooth to hasten my journeys, child
Just rocky paths for unshod feet, child
Grey, grey sky always in mourning, child, for sweet thoughts blown away by angry storms
Roaring thunder and piercing lightening every day, child, that chased our childhood far away
No sunbeams to cheer us up, child, no water to quench the roots, no silky grass to caress the soil, nor buds to bloom into poetry
Just thorny branches, child, to flog the weary cattle to toil
Now let go of my hand, child, so that you can bravely seek your destiny bright, and I can hail your triumphant march

Myo Myint

Foreign Tourists are Flocking In. But !

Khin Maung Myint

THE news of the explosion at Sithar village in Pyin Oo Lwin township a few days ago prompted me to write this article. I had pointed out the pros and cons of the increase of foreign visitors to the country in my previous article: "Foreign Tourists are Flocking In. But!". That article was written after I happened upon a post on the social media that displayed a photo of some foreigners dressed inappropriately and wearing footwear on the Shwe Dagon Pagoda platform. In that article I had warned that though the tourism trade is beneficial for our economy and generate more jobs for our citizens, there are risks of cultural and behavioral invasions and breach of our security. Now, this latest incident proved me right about the security risks.

My analysis was based on the experiences of Thailand. Our neighbour had been promoting tourism and is very successful. However, the successes had their dark sides. There had been many cases of cultural and security breaches. Their cultural heritages are being vandalized or damaged by some unruly tourists from a populous country to their north. Those same people are causing nuisances everywhere they go

with their bad manners and behaviours. Though the breach to the cultural norms and values may be excusable or tolerable for the sake of the tourism trade, the security risks that country had been facing had become very high.

To cite one example of the security risk, I would like to mention the bombing incident last year at the Erawan Shrine in the busy downtown area of Bangkok. That shrine is one of the world-famous tourist attractions in Thailand. It attracts tourists of every race and religion who visit Thailand. Some come to pay homage and some for sightseeing. The shrine is crowded with foreigners at all times and the evenings are the most crowded times. The perpetrators planted explosives, packed in a back pack left on a bench close to the shrine. The explosion was so intense that even the pedestrians walking along the nearby skywalk high above the ground and vehicles traveling along the roads passing by that place were hit. There were many casualties and severe damages to many vehicles.

That incident was not an isolated case, because that very same day a security camera at a river ferry jetty, where foreign tourists frequented caught images of a man throwing an object into the river from a bridge close

to the jetty. When the authorities retrieved that object with the help of the divers, it was found to be explosives. On further investigations by the experts, the explosives were found to be of the same type as the one that exploded at the Erawan Shrine. According to some media reports, the perpetrators were nationals from the populous country to their north and in my opinion it wasn't a coincidence that the majority of the tourists who used to visit the shrine and the river ferry are from the same country.

Then, there was another incident early this month in Bangkok, related to security, which involved four foreigners from that same country. The four men wearing face masks and safety helmets armed with BB toy guns tried to rob a gun shop. They demanded the shop owner to handover some guns to them. When the employees of the gun shop noticed that the guns were just toys, they attacked the robbers. The robbers used daggers to retaliate the attack by the employees and tried to escape on two motor bikes. At the nick of time, a Thai police man showed up on the scene and fired shots at the fleeing men when the men on the rear seats pointed the BB guns at the police. One was killed on the spot and three others were wounded and were caught.

Another person, who was thought to be the mastermind of that incident was apprehended in Phuket. He was based in Thailand for sometimes with a business as a cover. It's quite clear what their motives were to get the real guns.

Yet another news emerged a few days ago about two nationals of that same country who were killed during a gun battle between the Indonesian security forces and a terrorist group. According to the media reports, those two were getting training from the terrorists. It was learned from the media reports of Thailand and Indonesia, that the people involved in all the three incidents belonged to a minority race in their native country.

Based on the above incidents it could be deduced that some dissidents from a country to our north are trying to settle their scores on foreign soils. Thus, the fact that the incident at Pyin Oo Lwin could have some connections to those incidents should not be ignored. I'm not being paranoid, but I'm trying to point out the possibility of terrorist acts on our soil. Thorough investigation should be made what caused the explosions and to identify who those foreigners found at the house, where the explosion occurred, actually were and what were their intentions.

Recently, Thailand is banning entry of tourists with their own motor vehicles, especially from the north, as there were many undesirable incidents of disregard for the traffic rules by the visitors. These may be due to the ignorance of the traffic rules or disregard for the rules and regulations of the host country by the arrogant visitors. We are seeing more and more tourists being allowed to enter our country with their own vehicles. Strict instructions concerning the obedience of the traffic rules of our country should be given to such entries to avoid undesirable accidents occurring on our soil. Disregards for traffic rules could endanger human lives.

I would, again, like to express my concerns, which I had outlined in the aforementioned article, about the invasion of culture and behaviorisms and risks to our safety and security that would accompany the influx of the foreign tourists. The authorities concerned should be wary of the consequences of the tourism trade. In my humble opinion, though tourism could benefit our economy and create more job opportunities, there could be many negative impacts, not only those already mentioned, but also on the social and moral norms of our people and on many other aspects.

US weighs ramping up deployment of special forces to Syria

WASHINGTON — The US administration is considering a plan to greatly increase the number of American special operations forces deployed to Syria as it looks to accelerate recent gains against Islamic State, US officials told Reuters.

The officials, with direct knowledge of the proposal's details, declined to disclose the exact increase under consideration. But one of them said it would leave the US special operations contingent many times larger than the around 50 troops currently in Syria, where they operate largely as advisors away from the front lines.

The proposal is among the military options being prepared for President Barack Obama, who is also weighing an increase in the number of American troops in Iraq. A White House spokeswoman declined comment.

The proposal appears to be the latest sign of growing confidence in the ability of US-backed forces inside Syria and Iraq to claw back territory from the hard-line Sunni Islamist group.

Islamic State, also known as ISIS or ISIL, controls the cities of Mosul in Iraq and Raqqa in Syria and is proving a potent threat abroad, claiming credit for major attacks in Paris in November and Brussels in March.

But there are mounting indications that the momentum in Iraq and Syria has shifted against Islamic State.

US officials say the group is losing a battle to forces arrayed against it from many sides in the vast region it controls. In Iraq, the group has been pulling back since December when it lost Ramadi, the capital of the western province of Anbar. In Syria, the jihadist fighters have been pushed out



US soldiers stand guard beside a US Patriot missile system at a Turkish military base in Gaziantep in 2013. PHOTO: REUTERS

of the strategic city of Palmyra by Russian-backed Syrian government forces.

Since US-backed forces recaptured the strategic Syrian town of al-Shadadi in late February, a growing number of Arab fighters in Syria have offered to join the fight against the group, the US officials said.

US forces have also had increased success in eliminating top ISIS leaders. Air strikes in recent weeks killed a top official called Abd al-Rahman Mustafa al-Qaduli, and an Islamic State commander described as the group's "minister of war" — Abu Omar al-Shishani, or Omar the Chechen.

The United States announced last December it was

deploying a new force of special operations troops to Iraq to conduct raids against Islamic State there and in neighbouring Syria. That followed its announcement in October that dozens of US special forces would be deployed in Syria, the first US ground troops to be stationed there.

The additional US forces in Syria would be primarily assigned to establishing sites where they would train Arab tribesmen who have been volunteering to fight ISIS. The tribesmen eventually would be provided weapons, paving the way for offensive against the de facto ISIS capital of Raqqa under US air cover.

The dozens of US special operations forces now in Syria are working closely with a collec-

tion of Syrian Arab groups within an alliance that is still dominated by Kurdish forces. The United States has been supplying Arabs in the thousands-strong alliance with ammunition since October.

While the strategy is showing results so far, US officials and Kurdish leaders agree that a predominately Arab force is needed to take Raqqa, a majority Arab city whose residents would consider Kurds as occupiers.

The new push by US special operations forces in Syria would be separate from a revised US military effort under way to train a limited number of Syrian fighters in Turkey. That effort is focused on teaching them to identify targets for US-led coalition air strikes.—Reuters

Renewed fighting in Lebanon Palestinian refugee camp kills one

BEIRUT — One person was killed and others injured late on Friday in a Palestinian refugee camp in south Lebanon after a dispute erupted into gunfire between rival political groups for the second time this week, Reuters witnesses and state media said.

The outbreak of violence comes after two men were shot dead in the same camp on Monday because of tensions between members of the mainstream Palestinian faction Fatah and a hard-line Islamist group.

Fatah member Hussein Othman was killed in Friday's fighting between groups of armed men from rival factions, Lebanon's National News Agency said.

Gunfire erupted again Saturday morning after having died down during Friday night, a Reuters witness said.

Ain al-Hilweh camp, near the southern Lebanese coastal city of Sidon, has regularly seen factional disputes spiral into deadly violence.

Lebanon's Palestinian camps mainly fall outside the jurisdiction of the Lebanese security services.—Reuters

Turkish police capture suspected car bomber who targeted police

ISTANBUL — Turkish authorities on Saturday detained a key suspect in a bombing that killed seven people and wounded 23 in the biggest attack of its kind in months in the strife-hit south-east, security sources said.

The outlawed Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) claimed responsibility for Thursday's bombing in the mainly Kurdish city of Diyarbakir, one day before Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu visited the city and outlined plans to confiscate and rebuild a historic neighbourhood ruined in clashes since July.

Sources said police apprehended a man they believe parked the bomb-laden car and detonated it when a minibus carrying police officers passed it on a busy street. On Friday, authorities arrested nine people in connection with the bombing.

Separately, militants late on Friday used a car bomb to strike a

military outpost near the town of Kiziltepe by the Syrian frontier. One civilian was killed and 13 people wounded, including three children and two soldiers.

A police officer from a combat unit was killed on Saturday in Yuksekova near the Iraqi border, where security forces began operations and imposed a round-the-clock curfew on 13 March.

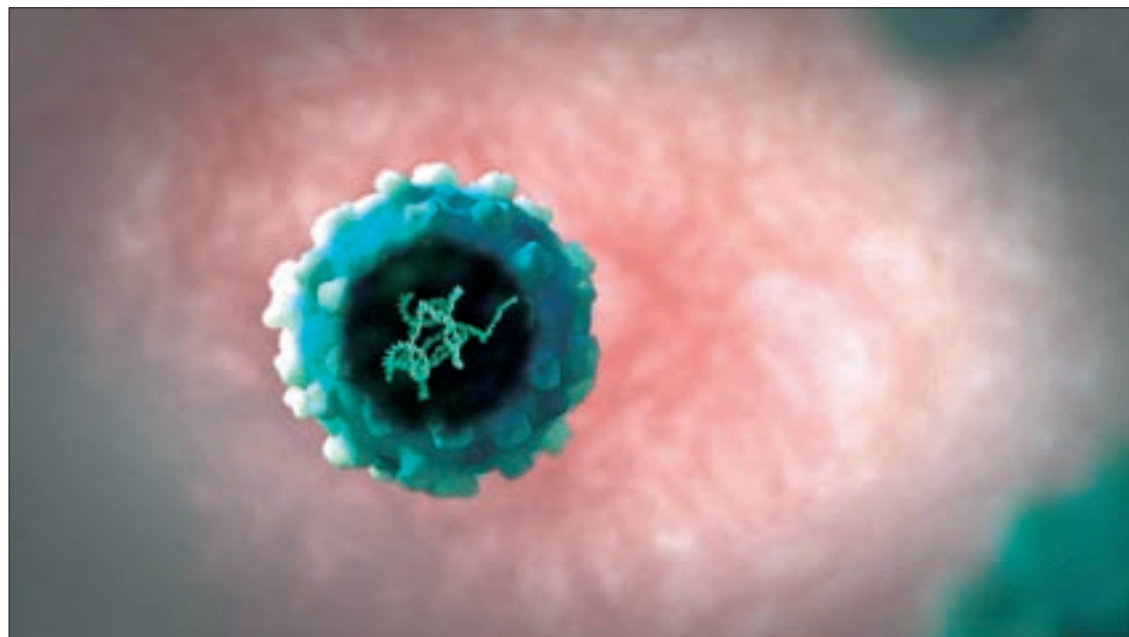
The predominately Kurdish southeastern region of Turkey has seen the worst violence in two decades after the PKK abandoned a two-year ceasefire in July and resumed its armed campaign for autonomy. The government says more than 5,000 militants and almost 400 soldiers and police officers have been killed.

Opposition parties estimate that between 500 and 1,000 civilians have also been killed in the fighting, largely focused in densely populated urban centres.—Reuters



A member of the police special forces stands next to vehicles, which were damaged by a car bomb attack that targeted a minibus (not pictured) carrying members of the police special forces, occurred in the Kurdish-dominated southeastern city of Diyarbakir, Turkey on 31 March 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Europe gives green light to first gene therapy for children



A vector, which is used to transport the healthy gene into the patient's cells, is seen in this undated handout image provided by GlaxoSmithKline, on 1 April. PHOTO: REUTERS

LONDON — The world's first life-saving gene therapy for children, developed by Italian scientists and GlaxoSmithKline, has been recommended for approval in Europe, boosting the pioneering technology to fix faulty genes.

The European Medicines Agency (EMA) said on Friday it had endorsed the therapy, called Strimvelis, for a tiny number of children with ADA Severe Combined Immune Deficiency (ADA-SCID) for whom no matching bone marrow donor is available.

Around 15 children a year are born in Europe with the ultra-rare genetic disorder, which leaves them unable to make a type of white blood cell. They rarely survive beyond two years unless their immune function is restored with a suitable bone marrow transplant.

SCID is sometimes known as "bubble baby" disease, since children born with it have immune systems so weak they must live in germ-free environments.

Strimvelis is expected to secure formal marketing authorization from the European Commission in a couple of months, making it the second gene therapy to be approved in Europe, after UniQure's Glybera, which treats a rare adult blood disorder.

The US Food and Drug Administration has yet to approve any gene therapies but a growing number of US biotech companies, such as Bluebird Bio, have products in development.

Other large pharmaceutical companies are also eyeing the field, including Bristol-Myers Squibb, which has a tie-up with UniQure.—Reuters

Belly fat may increase heart failure risk

LONDON — A few extra kilos especially around the gut can increase the risk of heart failure, a new study has found.

Researchers believe that the obesity wave, combined with an ageing population, will lead to a significant increase in heart failure in the future.

A Body Mass Index (BMI) over 30 is considered obese, and the connection between obesity and the risk of heart failure has been established in several studies.

Now, researchers from the Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Imperial College London and the Oslo University Hospital have conducted a new meta-analysis that shows

that a BMI between 25 and 30 kilogrammes per square metre, which is considered overweight, is also associated with increased risk.

"Overweight individuals had a 35 per cent increased risk of heart failure as compared with normal weight individuals, and our findings indicate that overweight should be considered a clear risk factor for heart failure," said Dagfinn Aune from Norwegian University of Science and Technology.

BMI shows the relationship between weight and height and is used internationally as a measure of body fat. The risk of heart failure rose on average by 41 per cent for an increase of five BMI units,

researchers said.

Obesity increased the risk two to three times compared with normal weight. Researchers found no differences between men and women in the analysis, which included 23 studies with a total of almost 650,000 participants.

Four studies looked at the link between BMI and the risk of death from heart failure, and the results suggested a 26 per cent higher risk for an increase of 5 BMI units.

Researchers saw that every 10-centimetre increase in waist circumference was linked to a 29 per cent higher risk of heart failure. These analyses were based on 12 studies with a total of just over 360,000 participants.—PTI

Obesity can be predicted at six months of age: study

WASHINGTON — Severe obesity can be predicted using a simple body mass index (BMI) measurement as early as six months of age, a new study has found.

"BMI at 6, 12 or 18 months of age above the 85th percentile on the growth chart can accurately predict children at risk for early childhood obesity," said Allison Smego from Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Centre in the US.

"These children have a high lifetime risk for persistent obesity and metabolic disease and should be monitored closely at a very young age," Smego said.

Researchers studied several groups of lean and obese children under the age of six, including a group of severely obese children referred for specialised care.

All participants were se-

lected based on BMI between the ages of 2 and 6. In all, 783 lean and 480 severely obese participants were included, researchers said.

The trajectories of BMI in children who become severely obese by six months of age began to differ from children who remain normal weight at about four months of age, they said.

"It is not currently recommended to measure BMI in children under the age of 2, but we say it should be because we now know it predicts obesity risk later," said Smego.

"Pediatricians can identify high-risk infants with BMI above the 85th percentile and focus additional counselling and education regarding healthy lifestyles toward the families of these children. Our hope in using this tool is that we can prevent obesity in early childhood," Smego said.—PTI

Women who prefer smarter men likely to avoid science careers

WASHINGTON — Women with a preference for more intelligent partners are less likely to show interest in male-dominated fields such as math and science, a new study has found.

The research builds upon previous findings which found that thinking about romantic goals affected women's attitudes toward careers in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM).

"What we found is that not all women reacted equally to these romantic goal primes," said study's lead author Lora Park, from the University at Buffalo in the US.

"Women who had a traditional romantic partner preference of wanting to date someone smarter than themselves were the ones who distanced themselves the most from STEM fields when they thought about romantic

goals," Park said.

The women in the study also performed worse on a math test and tended to show less identification with math, an academic discipline at the base of science and technology careers.

The diluted interest and identification is specific to the perceived masculine fields of math and science and is not a general effect.

Participants did not show less interest in careers often considered feminine, such as those in social work or elementary education, said Park.

"This suggests there might be something strategic about the lack of interest or perhaps women are downplaying their interests in these fields," she said.

"On the other hand, it could be a process they're not even conscious of. It could be an automatic

reaction," Park said.

"In general terms, women have made many advancements, but in certain fields of STEM they haven't made that much progress," she said.

The research published in the *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* includes four studies.

One study involving more than 900 participants established a link between a preference for dating smarter partners and traditional gender roles.

Women show greater preference for dating smarter partners compared to men and the more they endorsed this preference the more traditional they were in their gender roles.

The three additional studies examined math performance, math identification and interest in STEM when thinking about romantic goals.—PTI



A surgeon examines an obese patient in his office as she prepares for surgery at a hospital, in Saint Jean d'Angely, southwestern France. PHOTO: REUTERS

Protests mount before EU-Turkey migrant deal takes effect

ISTANBUL/ATHENS —

Migrants protested on a Greek island and rights groups raised legal objections on Friday three days before a disputed EU deal to return rejected asylum seekers from Greece to Turkey was due to go into action, with neither side completely ready.

Hundreds of migrants and refugees on the island of Chios tore through a razor wire fence surrounding their holding centre and set off for the port in protest against planned deportation, police said. Police did not immediately intervene.

Clashes broke out at the site late on Thursday, during which windows were smashed and 10 people were injured lightly, a police official said. Some 300 women and children broke out of the camp on Friday carrying their belongings.

"They say that they don't want to go back to Turkey and that they are afraid for their safety after yesterday's clashes between migrants in the hot spot," a police official said, using the EU term for registration centres that have become detention camps.

The tension on Chios raised



Migrants and refugees with their mouths taped stage a protest at a makeshift camp at the Greek-Macedonian border near the village of Idomeni, Greece, on 1 April. PHOTO: REUTERS

the possibility of resistance when the EU-Turkey plan to send back all migrants and refugees who have reached the Greek islands since 20 March goes into effect from Monday.

Although arrivals have slowed, more than 1,900 people have crossed from Turkey to Greece so far this week and a total of 5,622 have been registered since 20 March.

The European Union plans to send hundreds of police and migration officers to Greece over the weekend to help carry out the first returns under a deal meant to end the uncontrolled influx of

migrants.

More than a million people fleeing war and poverty in the Middle East and beyond have poured into Europe in the last year, most ending up in Germany, triggering a political backlash and pitting EU governments against each other.

However, the UN refugee agency and rights group Amnesty International raised objections, with Amnesty accusing Turkey of sending thousands of people trying to flee Syria back into the war-racked country in recent months.

"In their desperation to seal their borders, EU leaders have wilfully ignored the simplest of facts: Turkey is not a safe country for Syrian refugees and is getting less safe by the day," said John Dalhuisen, Amnesty International's director for Europe and Central Asia.

The European Commission said it was investigating the Amnesty charge and would raise the issue with the Turkish authorities, who had promised to apply the principle of non-refoulement under the Brussels pact. —Reuters

Obama, Republicans urge Trump to soften tone

WASHINGTON — Donald Trump is facing bipartisan pressure to adopt a more presidential tone in his White House run including from Democratic President Barack Obama and Republicans who worry his missteps may do irreparable harm to the party and his campaign.

The Republican front-runner came under fire from Obama on Friday over Trump's recent comments that he would not rule out using nuclear weapons in Europe and that Japan and South Korea might need nuclear weapons to ease the US financial commitment to their security.

"The person who made the

statements doesn't know much about foreign policy or nuclear policy or the Korean peninsula, or the world generally," Obama told a news conference at the conclusion of a nuclear security summit in Washington.

"I've said before that people pay attention to American elections. What we do is really important to the rest of the world," he said.

Trump lost ground on the online prediction market after drawing fire for his suggestion earlier in the week, which he later dialed back, that women be punished for getting abortions if the procedure is banned.

Those who marveled at Trump's rise are now warning the New York billionaire that his shoot-from-the-lip approach to campaigning could jeopardize his chance to win the Republican nomination for the 8 November election.

Tuesday could be a turning point when Wisconsin hosts its nominating contest. Trump, 69, trails his leading rival, US Senator Ted Cruz, 45, of Texas in the Upper Midwestern state.

A Cruz win would make it harder for Trump to reach the magic number of 1,237 delegates needed to secure the nomination before the Republican national convention in July. The winner will get to claim all of Wisconsin's 42 delegates.

"If he continues to fumble the ball, he risks everything," said David Bossie, who as president of the conservative group Citizens United has helped to introduce Trump to grassroots activists. "These types of ham-handed mistakes give his opponents even greater opportunity."

But losing the Republican nomination may not keep Trump out of the November election.

In excerpts of an interview on "Fox News Sunday" to be aired this Sunday, Trump said he wanted to run as a Republican but declined to rule out a third-party candidacy.

Asked what he would do if he didn't get the Republican nomination, Trump replied: "We're going to have to see how I was treated." —Reuters



Republican US presidential candidate Donald Trump speaks at a town hall event in Appleton, Wisconsin, on 30 March. PHOTO: REUTERS

US State Department halts review of Clinton emails at FBI request

WASHINGTON — The US State Department has suspended plans for an internal review of whether classified information was properly handled in former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's emails at the request of the FBI, a spokeswoman said on Friday. Clinton, the front-runner in the race for the Democratic Party nomination in the 8 November presidential election, has apologised for using a private email server for official business while in office from 2009 to 2013 and said she did nothing wrong. The Federal Bureau of Investigation is probing the arrangement.

On 29 January the State Department said 22 emails sent or received by Clinton had been upgraded to top secret at the request of US intelligence agencies and would not be made public as part of the release of thousands of Clinton's emails. It said that none of the emails was marked classified when sent. At the time, the department also said it would conduct an internal review on whether the information in the emails was classified at the time it passed through Clinton's private clintonemail.com account run on a server in her New York home.

The State Department consulted the FBI about this in February, and in March the law enforcement agency asked the State Department to halt its inquiry.

"The FBI communicated to us that we should follow our standard practice, which is to

put our internal review on hold while there is an ongoing law enforcement investigation," State Department spokeswoman Elizabeth Trudeau told reporters. "The internal review is on hold, pending completion of the FBI's work," she added. "We'll reassess next steps after the FBI's work is complete."

A US State Department official who spoke on condition of anonymity said the State Department had really only done "administrative work" on its review but had held off while waiting for a response from the FBI. "It took a little bit of time for the FBI to respond to our request for advice and in the interim we did not pursue the review out of prudence," said the official, who declined further comment on the State Department review.

The government forbids handling of classified information, which may or may not be marked that way, outside secure government-controlled channels, and sometimes prosecutes people who remove it from such channels. The government classifies information as top secret if it deems a leak could cause "exceptionally grave damage" to national security. Two judges have allowed a group suing for Clinton's records to seek sworn testimony from officials.

On Tuesday, one judge said there was "evidence of government wrongdoing and bad faith" over the arrangement. —Reuters

Global regulators eye climate risk disclosure for listed companies

LONDON — A global task force unveiled plans on Friday for all listed companies to disclose in financial reports how climate-related risks could hit their bottom line. The planned regime will be voluntary, but companies could use it to comply with existing mandatory disclosure rules in most G20 countries on material risks to a company, including from climate change.

The Task Force on Climate-Related Financial Disclosures (TCFD) was called for by the Group of 20 economies (G20) and set up by the G20's Financial Stability Board (FSB).

The FSB is concerned that assets are being mispriced because the full extent of climate risk is not factored in, creating the risk of abrupt market corrections that could undermine financial stability.

When the initiative was announced last year, it pointed



Buildings under construction are seen during a hazy day in Rizhao, Shandong Province, China, on 15 March. PHOTO: REUTERS

ed to disclosures only for the financial sector, but in an initial report on Friday the TCFD flagged a much broader scope for the new regime which will be finalised by the end of this year.

Disclosures would show how a company is exposed to climate risk, such as from potential physical threats like floods, or liability risks, such as if an asset manager has large holdings

in fossil fuel companies that would be hit by curbs on greenhouse gas emissions.

Mary Schapiro, a member of the task force and a former chair of the US Securities and Exchange Com-

mission, said the aim was to help investors compare companies within sectors like agriculture, energy or finance. "We are going to be sector specific in order to make the disclosure really useful," she said.

Standard disclosures may help companies avoid clashes with shareholders as seen at US oil major Exxon Mobil, whose disclosures on climate change risks are being investigated.

Chaired by former New York mayor Michael Bloomberg, the task force said it was working on a standard for all listed companies and companies that issue securities like bonds, as well as listed and unlisted participants in the financial sector like asset managers.

Schapiro said it was only possible to understand the climate risk a bank or asset manager faces if the climate risks of customers are known too. "We would be

hopeful that our framework will work across the entire spectrum," Schapiro said.

There are 400 climate-related disclosure regimes across the world and many are mandatory in G20 countries but lack consistency in content and publication. The disclosure would be made in company filings like annual reports to regulators and investors in a standard way. The Institutional Investors Group on Climate Change (IIGC), which represents investors managing \$13 trillion, said there are significant gaps in existing disclosures.

"We strongly support the focus on more standardized disclosures and forward-looking quantitative and qualitative information. Disclosure needs to form part of mainstream financial filings and annual reports, as foreseen by the task force," IIGC chief executive Stephanie Pfeifer said.—Reuters

Activists decry Nairobi road project after two lions killed



A stray male lion falls after it was shot by a Kenya Wildlife Services (KWS) ranger in the Isinya area of Kajiado county after it attacked and injured a local resident on outskirts of the capital Nairobi, Kenya on 30 March 2016.

PHOTO: REUTERS

NAIROBI — A new road and rail project cutting through a nature reserve on the outskirts of Nairobi threatens wildlife, livestock and people, conservationists said on Friday, after two li-

ons were killed this week.

Kenyan wildlife rangers shot dead a male lion named "Mohawk" on Wednesday after it strayed from Nairobi National Park and attacked and injured a resident.

The next day rangers found the body of another lion outside the reserve, speared to death in a township south of Nairobi.

Conservationists said construction work on the transport projects was affecting animal behaviour and leading more big cats to try to escape in search of quieter hunting grounds.

"Before construction started in the park, the lions were not escaping, so there are indications that the noise and blasting is affecting their movements," said Robert Ndeti, species conservation manager at World Wildlife Fund's Nairobi office.

"If you don't plan properly, if you don't do proper environmental-impact assessments, then you are

doomed to fail, and at the Nairobi National Park this could lead to more lions and other animals coming into contact with a growing human presence," Ndeti told Reuters.

Nairobi National Park is home to about 35 lions. There are about 2,000 left in the whole of Kenya.

Kitili Mbathi, director general of Kenya Wildlife Service, agreed that the construction work was to blame for the increasing number of lions straying from the park.

"Yes, it has been disruptive but we are trying and they (the contractors) are trying to minimize the disruption," he told Reuters by phone.

He said the road was nearly complete, while the

main construction work on the railway should be finished in June, restoring some calm. "We have a temporary fence in certain places there, so now we will be able to put in a permanent electric fence. Eventually, when all the construction is finished, from that side of the park, we don't expect any more disruptions," he said.

Mbathi said the wildlife service had increased patrols along the perimeter of the park. "A key concern is that the developer is not taking proper care to ensure there is less disturbance of the habitat while also not securing the perimeter fencing," said Lucy Waruingi, acting secretary of the Conservation Alliance of Kenya.

Human settlements and

activity have long been encroaching on the Nairobi National Park, which was established in 1946 and gives visitors the chance to see lions, giraffes, zebras and other wildlife against a backdrop of high-rise buildings. The road under construction will link Nairobi airport with the city centre, while the new railway line will connect the capital with port city Mombasa.

Kenya's economy is expected to grow by 5.9 per cent this year and by 6 per cent in 2017, increasing pressure on the environment and exacerbating conflicts between humans and wildlife. Wildlife tourism is an essential foreign revenue earner for East Africa's largest economy.—Reuters

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV GSS YANGON VOY NO ()

Consignees of cargo carried on MV GSS YANGON VOY NO () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 3.4.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of H.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 Claim's Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT

MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY

AGENT FOR: M/S CHINA SHIPPING LINES

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV VEGA LUPUS VOY NO ()

Consignees of cargo carried on MV VEGA LUPUS VOY NO () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 3.4.2016 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 Claim's 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

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV HYUNDAI PROGRESS VOY NO ()

Consignees of cargo carried on MV HYUNDAI PROGRESS VOY NO () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 3.4.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.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 Claim's 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 FAR SHIPPING LINES

Phone No: 2301185

Musicians gather for Bowie tribute concert in New York

NEW YORK — Musicians joined David Bowie fans at New York's Carnegie Hall on Thursday night for the first of two sold-out benefit concerts paying tribute to the late veteran rock star.

Singers including Blondie's Debbie Harry and former R.E.M. frontman Michael Stipe belted out the pop chameleon's famous hits during the two-hour event commemorating Bowie who died from cancer in January at the age of 69.

Cyndi Lauper kicked things off with "Suffragette City"

while The Flaming Lips' singer Wayne Coyne performed "Life on Mars?" dressed in a suit adorned with lights while sitting on the shoulders of a "Star Wars" Chewbacca figure.

Harry paid tribute to Bowie with "Starman", Stipe performed a melodic version of "Ashes to Ashes" with Karen Elson while American singer Bettye LaVette sang "It Ain't Easy".

Other Bowie hits such as "Rebel Rebel" and "Let's Dance" had the crowd dancing and the show wrapped up with a

children's choir and the audience singing "Space Oddity".

"God bless David Bowie," singer Jakob Dylan said after his rendition of "Heroes".

The Carnegie Hall benefit concert, an annual event celebrating singers to raise money for music education for underprivileged children, was announced just hours before news of Bowie's death and tickets sold out quickly.

A second show will be held at Radio City Music Hall on Friday.—Reuters

Kerry Washington premieres 'Confirmation'



Cast member Kerry Washington poses at the premiere for the television movie 'Confirmation' in Los Angeles, California on 31 March 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

LOS ANGELES — Kerry Washington may be best known as political fixer Olivia Pope in ABC's hit drama "Scandal," but for her latest role, the actress explored the murky undertones of sexual harassment in US politics in HBO film "Confirmation."

Washington plays law professor Anita Hill, who became an international figure when she accused her former colleague, US Supreme Court nominee Clarence Thomas of sexual harassment in 1991. The film premieres on the premium cable network on 16 April.

"I think a lot of what the film is about is about the power of participation," said Washington. "We're so lucky to live in a democracy where our representatives, their job is to represent

us, but they don't get to do that unless we show up, unless we let our voices be heard to participate through voting, so I think that's a lot of what the film is about and I hope that people get a window into that process and realize their own power."

Washington was joined on the red carpet by Hill and actor Greg Kinnear, who plays current US Vice President Joe Biden — Biden had presided over the hearings for Thomas' nomination as chairman of the US Senate Committee on the Judiciary.

"Laws have changed in the last 25 years in a huge way and you would really look at his case as a seminal case that brought it into the consciousness of most Americans," Kinnear said.—Reuters

Captain America heading for China in April



BEIJING — Anthony and Joe Russo, the sibling director duo behind Marvel's Captain America franchise have announced plans to promote the latest "Captain America: Civil

War" in China. Russo Brothers have revealed on their weibo account that main cast Captain America-Chris Evans, Winter Soldier-Sebastian Stan and Falcon-Anthony Mackie are also

joining them.

They are scheduled to meet with media in Beijing on 19 April and unveil the release date of the superhero movie in China at the conference.

This is not the first time that Russo brothers promote their film in China.

They made their first trip to Beijing in 2014, promoting "Captain America: The Winter Soldier".

Russo Brothers have recently launched their plans for a startup studio that will be in partnership with two Chinese entertainment companies.

The startup studio, Anthem & Song, with offices in Los Angeles and Beijing, aims to produce and create Chinese language films.—Xinhua

Backstage with The Beatles at show re-staging Abbey Road recordings

LONDON — From the busy, brassy "All You Need is Love" to the softer "Yesterday", a new show takes audiences back in time to when The Beatles recorded their famous hits at London's Abbey Road Studios.

"The Sessions — A Live Restaging of The Beatles at Abbey Road Studios" features renditions of songs the Fab Four recorded in Studio 2, with songs from their debut album "Please Please Me" to 1969's "Abbey Road" performed as they were recorded.

Surrounded by transparent screens with projected recording details, actors portraying Paul McCartney, John Lennon, Ringo Starr and George Harrison belt out the tunes alongside musicians, to replicate the vocals

sung, instruments played and arrangements used at the time.

Organisers are billing the show, inspired by the memoir of former Abbey Road Studios sound engineer Geoff Emerick, as a musical documentary and "the closest an audience can get to experiencing The Beatles live and at the height of their glory".

"It's pretty true — the songs are being performed with ... with the things we would have overdubbed onto the records," Emerick, who serves as the show's creative consultant, told Reuters. "We have got like double track vocals, we've got all sorts of guitar effects and so forth."

The show is dedicated to music producer George Martin, who died last month at the age of 90 and an actor portraying the



Former Beatles producer Sir George Martin visits a sculpture of John Lennon in a Havana park named after the musician in 2002. PHOTO: REUTERS

"fifth Beatle" narrates the performance.

Martin worked on many of the group's best known hits like "I Want Hold Your Hand", "Can't Buy Me Love" and "Eleanor Rigby".

"It seems as though it was

only like eight weeks ago but when I've been hearing some of these songs performed I sort of tear up a bit because ... it brings back a lot of memories of the past," Emerick said.

"We never dreamt in a million years that these songs would

carry on forever." "The Sessions" premiered at London's Royal Albert Hall on Friday after a charity preview in The Beatles' home city Liverpool earlier this week. The show goes on tour around the UK and in certain European countries.—Reuters

Japan's Kinki University changes English name to avoid embarrassment

OSAKA — In a move aimed at sparing its students and faculty embarrassment, a Japanese private university on Friday ditched its distracting former English name for a more benign moniker.

With the new academic year starting the same day, the former Kinki University in Osaka Prefecture became "Kindai University," with the school holding a ceremony to unveil a new English nameplate at one of its gates. School athletes wearing uniforms bearing the new name attended the ceremony.

The name-change decision was made two years ago. As the university had been placing greater emphasis on foreign languages and international studies, it believed the previous English name, pronounced identically to "kinky," may have been off-putting to foreign students.

University President Hitoshi Shiozaki said at the time, "I did not

feel good about the giggles which were caused when introducing myself at academic meetings abroad."

"Kindai" is an abbreviation of the university's Japanese name, "Kinki Daigaku," which remains unchanged. Mei Ichinose, a 19-year-old student whose father is British, welcomed the new name saying, "My (paternal) grandmother gave me a bewildered look when I told her Kinki University."

President Shiozaki said during the ceremony that with the new name, Kindai will "keep plugging away to become more globalized."

According to the university, "Kinki" derives from "Kinai," which referred to a large administrative district in western Japan dating back to the 7th century, roughly corresponding to parts of the current Nara, Kyoto, Osaka and Hyogo prefectures. "Kinki" means "the capital and surrounding areas." — *Kyodo News*



A ceremony is held 1 April 2016, to unveil a new nameplate of Kindai University in Osaka Prefecture, western Japan. In a move aimed at sparing its students and faculty embarrassment, the private university ditched its former English name, "Kinki University" — with "Kinki" pronounced identically to "kinky" — for a more benign moniker. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

China issues storm alert

BEIJING — China's meteorological authority on Saturday issued a blue alert, the lowest in a four-tier warning system, for rainstorms in the country's south.

From Saturday to Sunday, storms bringing 50 to 120 millimetres of rain will pelt parts of Hubei, Guizhou, Anhui, Hunan and Jiangxi provinces, the National Me-

teorological Center (NMC) said in a statement. Parts of Guizhou, Chongqing, Hunan, Hubei, Jiangxi, Zhejiang and Anhui will be hit by thunderstorms or hail from Saturday afternoon to Sunday, the NMC said. People affected by the rainstorms should take precautions against possible waterlogging and floods. — *Xinhua*

USJ attracts record visitors in FY 2015, Disney parks see slight fall

OSAKA — Universal Studios Japan in Osaka attracted some 13.9 million visitors in fiscal 2015 that ended Thursday, setting a record high for the second consecutive year thanks to the popularity of its "Harry Potter" attraction area, operator USJ Co. said Friday.

The continued popularity of the attraction area based on the

"Harry Potter" film series that opened in 2014 and limited-time events like Halloween contributed to the latest figure surpassing the previous record of 12.7 million set the year before.

An attraction featuring the Japanese manga-turned-anime "Attack on Titan" also helped boost visitor numbers. A roll-

er coaster based on the "Jurassic Park" film series began operating last month.

The number of foreign visitors to USJ in western Japan jumped 80 per cent to 1.4 million in fiscal 2015. USJ raised entrance fees in February, but the theme park operator said it has seen little effect on the number of visitors.

Meanwhile, the Tokyo Disneyland and Tokyo DisneySea amusement parks saw visitor numbers drop from the previous year for the first time in four years.

The parks drew a total of 30.19 million visitors in fiscal 2015, the third highest on record but down 3.8 per cent from the year before, which saw a record high, their operator Oriental Land Co. said Friday. The Disney parks marked a record number of visitors in fiscal 2014 thanks to popular events featuring the hit Disney movie "Frozen," and the second-highest number in fiscal 2013 when a series of events commemorating Tokyo Disneyland's 30th anniversary were held. — *Kyodo News*



A Coming-of-Age ceremony held at Tokyo Disneyland near Tokyo. Around 1,400 young adults attended the event organized by the municipal government of Urayasu. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS



News Channel
in Brief

3-4-2016 (Sunday)

6:00 am

- Paritta By Hilly Region Missionary Sayadaw

7:35 am

- Business News

8:35 am

- Meet The Successful

9:35 am

- Dances for Thingyan Festival

10:35 am

- Poem for Children

11:15 am

- Amazing World

11:35 am

- MRTV Migrant Women's Programme

12:35 pm

- Round Up of The Week's International News

12:50 pm

- Myanmar Movie

3:00 pm

- 2014-2015 Academy Awarding Ceremony for Motion Picture (LIVE Broadcast)

9:00 pm

- News
- Tasty Trip
- Sing & Enjoy

Note / Hourly News Bulletins (Local + International)



Myanmar
International

(3-4-2016 07:00am ~ 4-4-2016 7:00am) MST

Today Fresh

07:03	Am	News
07:25	Am	Myanmar Social & Charitable Association (Ep-1) Mingalar Byuha
07:49	Am	Kay Tu Mar Lar "The Family"
08:03	Am	News
08:26	Am	Travelogue "To the coastal region (Myeik - Kawthoung)" (Part- II)
08:41	Am	A Worth Studying Site For Ancient Myanmar Heritages
09:03	Am	News
09:26	Am	Travel To The Southern Part of Shan State (Kalaw)
09:44	Am	Thingyan Songs & Dances
10:03	Am	News

10:26	Am	Myanmar Agarwood
10:40	Am	Strolling Along A Memory Link - U Pein Bridge
10:57	Am	Black Gold (Part- II)

(11:00 Am ~ 03:00 Pm) - Saturday Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)
(03:00 Pm ~ 07:00 Pm) - Today Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)

Prime Time

07:03	Pm	News
07:26	Pm	Alaungdaw Kathapa
07:47	Pm	Today Myanmar "Online Shopping Food Delivery Service"
08:03	Pm	News
08:26	Pm	Hanthawaddy U Win Tin "A Fearless Man" (Episode - 2)
08:43	Pm	Cosplayer
08:48	Pm	Myanmar Masterclass: Artist Zay Yar Aye

(09:00 Pm ~ 11:00 Pm)- Today Repeat (09:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)
(11:00 Pm ~ 03:00 Am) - Saturday Repeat(07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)
(03:00 Am ~ 07:00 Am) -Today Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)

(For Detailed Schedule – www.myanmaritv.com/schedule)



Entertainment
Channel

(3-4-2016, Sunday)

6:00 pm	9:10 pm
• Weather Report	• Music Programme
• Music Programme	9:20 pm
6:30 pm	• International Movie Songs
• Thingyan Dances	9:30 pm
6:40 pm	• Myanmar Movie
• Special Movie "Transformer"	

* 3 : 00 pm (3-4-2016)

Live: 2014-2015 Academy Awarding Ceremony for Motion Picture

* Night 9 : 30 pm

Live: English Premier League "Manchester United Vs Everton"

From 3-4-2016 (Sunday) 6:00 Pm
To 4-4-2016 (Monday) 6:00 Pm

This schedule will be repeated four times in 24 hours.

Woods confirms he will miss next week's Masters

LOS ANGELES — Tiger Woods will miss the Masters for only the second time since his tournament



PHOTO: REUTERS

debut in 1995, saying he is "not physically ready" for the year's opening major next week.

The former world number one has been sidelined from competition since August as he continues his recovery from back surgeries, and was never likely to tee it up at Augusta National for the 7-10 April event.

"After assessing the present condition of my back, and consulting with my medical team, I've decided it's prudent to miss this year's Masters," Woods said in a statement on his official website (www.tigerwoods.com).

"I've been hitting balls and training daily, but I'm not physically ready. I've said all along that this time I need to be cautious and do what's best for my long-term health and career.

"Unfortunately, playing Augusta next week wouldn't be the right decision," said Woods, a four-times Masters

champion.

Now aged 40, Woods has not won a major title since he clinched the 14th of his career at the 2008 US Open and his form has slipped dramatically in recent years due to injuries and the mastering of a new swing.

A tie for 10th at the PGA Tour's Wyndham Championship in August, following a dismal season in which he missed three cuts in the majors, gave him encouragement

before his health again intervened.

Three weeks later, he had a second microdiscectomy surgery to alleviate pressure on a disc in his lower back, before needing another procedure on 28 October on the same area due to discomfort.

He has since been recuperating and in late February he posted a video of himself swinging a golf club in an effort to shoot down reports that suggested he had endured setbacks during his rehabilitation.

"I'm absolutely making progress, and I'm really happy with how far I've come, but I still have no timetable to return to competitive golf," said Woods, who won the Masters in 1997, 2001, 2002 and 2005.

He missed the event for the first time in 2014 after undergoing a microdiscectomy.

"I'd like to express my disappointment to (Masters chairman) Billy Payne, the Augusta National membership, staff, volunteers and patrons that I won't be competing," said Woods.

"It's a very important and special week to me, and it's upsetting to miss it. I do plan to attend the (Wednesday) Champions Dinner and see a lot of old friends."—Reuters

Djokovic beats Goffin to reach Miami Open final

MIAMI — Top seed Novak Djokovic overcame a strong challenge from Belgium's David Goffin to reach the Miami Open final with a 7-6(5), 6-4 victory on Friday as he continued his pursuit of a fifth title in six years on Key Biscayne.

The Serbian world number one shrugged off a slow start in tough on-court conditions before hitting his stride, and sealed the win with a powerful first serve that forced a wayward Goffin return to end an encounter that lasted just over two hours.

Australian Open champion Djokovic improved his stellar record for the year to 27-1 and will next face Japan's Kei Nishikori, who ousted Australian Nick Kyrgios 6-3, 7-5 in the second semi-final.

The 28-year-old Djokovic, a five-times champion in Miami, is bidding to match Andre Agassi's record of six titles at the event and earn a record 28th ATP World Tour Masters 1000 crown.

"It was windy, it was humid, it was warm," Djokovic told reporters. "It was like everything was thrown out there."

"And to overcome those obstacles and conditions was something that I'm proud of. I managed to stay tough in the right moments."

Djokovic, whose only defeat this year came in February when he retired against Spain's Feliciano Lopez in Dubai due to an eye infection, applauded Goffin's performance.

"He plays very clean," Djokovic said.

"Also, I think he improved his serve. I had difficulty reading it. Physically, it was a great battle with lots of exchanges from the baseline."

With Goffin initially playing much steadier from the baseline in the Miami heat, Djokovic came under intense early pressure and saved three break points in the opening game before holding serve.

Djokovic and Goffin traded service breaks in the seventh and eighth games before battling to a tie-break which the Serb clinched 7-5 after his opponent, reaching high for a lob, hit a backhand volley into the net.

The second set went with serve until the seventh game when 15th seed Goffin hit a forehand long before netting a backhand to be broken and trail 3-4.

Djokovic then comfortably served out to book his place in Sunday's final at Crandon Park where he will seek to add another Miami crown to his titles from 2007, 2011, 2012, 2014 and last year.

Goffin, 25, who reached his first Masters 1000 semi-final in Indian Wells two weeks ago, is projected to climb to a career-high 13th in the world rankings on Monday.

Nishikori made his first Miami final by taking out brash young Australian Kyrgios in some style. "It's a great feeling to be in my first final in Miami and it was very good playing today so I'm very happy," said the sixth seeded Japanese.—Reuters

Spaniard Fernandez retains men's world crown in Boston

BOSTON — Spain's Javier Fernandez produced a spectacular free skate to overhaul Olympic champion Yuzuru Hanyu and retain his men's title at the world figure skating championships in Boston on Friday.

Fernandez, who was second behind Japan's Hanyu after the short programme, was near flawless in the free skate on the way to a score of 216.41 points, skyrocketing his total to 314.93 and a clear victory.

"Emotion is everything," Fernandez said. "To repeat, a second title in a world championship is something not easy and these past months have been tough sometimes with some in-

juries and some pains. "So to be able to perform today and perform good in front of everybody ... it was unbelievable."

"I'm so glad I think the people enjoyed it and that for me is the most important thing."

Hanyu took silver with 295.17 points and Chinese teenager Jin Boyang won bronze on 270.99.

The Japanese was well below his best and posted just 184.61 in the free skate, falling and losing balance on other occasions.

Canadian Olympic silver medalist and Four Continents champion Patrick Chan settled for fifth place.—Reuters



Silver medalist Yuzuru Hanyu (L) of Japan, gold medalist Javier Fernandez (C) of Spain, and bronze medalist Jin Boyang of China pose for photographs on the awards podium during ISU World Figure Skating Championships, Mens Free Skate Programme at Boston, Massachusetts, United States on 1 April.

PHOTO: REUTERS