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FORCE OF NATURE

Strong gales claim lives, damage buildings in Mandalay and Sagaing



Military personnel from a local battalion in Yezagyo clear trees fallen because of gale-force wind. PHOTO: MOI WEBPORTAL

STRONG gales accompanied by heavy rains and hailstones struck two townships in Mandalay Region on 22 April, levelling trees, destroying houses and killing people and animals.

The water flowing downhill resulting from torrential rains caused havoc in the townships of Sintgaing and Kyaukse, blowing the roofs off over 450 buildings and killing six people and over

300 domesticated animals, with two children reported missing.

Central Command Commander Maj-Gen Win Bo Shein, teaming up with officials, visited the disaster-affected villages, where he offered words of comfort and encouragement and contributed financial assistance to the victims. Mobile military medical teams were found providing treatment to people in the affected are-

as, while local military personnel distributed relief.

Two religious buildings and over 100 houses were damaged in a fierce gale in Yezagyo Township, Magwe Region, on 21 April. Local military personnel, together with police and fire brigade members, conducted rescue operations under the supervision of the Northwest Command Commander Brig-Gen Than Hlaing.

Witnesses said the loss of life and the bulk of property damage were caused by hailstones, some of which were reportedly the size of coconuts.

Local officials and civil society organisations are carrying out rescue services by sheltering victims in monasteries and schools and providing financial assistance for recovery. —Aung Thant Khaing with Myawady

Heavy rain, lightning to likely hit northwest Myanmar this week

FOLLOWING severe weather patterns triggered by cumulus clouds forming in upper and central Myanmar, the weather bureau has urged the people to be alert on possible gale-force wind, squall, lightning strikes and thunder storm.

While daytime temperatures are high, cold winds from northern India are entering Upper Myanmar, causing atmospheric instability and forming cumulus clouds, which can cause severe weather patterns, announced the Meteorology and Hydrology Department yesterday.

Weather expert Dr Tun Lwin said the formation of thunderclouds in northwest Myanmar is due to troughs coming from Bangladesh, and they are expected to move eastward.

Thunderclouds are growing in strength and are predicted to cause lightning and heavy rain associated with strong winds in Chin and Kachin states and in Magwe, Sagaing and Mandalay regions in the next 24 hours, said the former director general of the Department of Meteorology and Hydrology.

Heavy rain is likely to be accompanied by wind blowing at a speed of 30 m.p.h on land, alongside lightning strikes and hail, he added.

According to images sent by the Himawari Satellite yesterday morning, the thunderclouds are hanging over the northwest of Myanmar. U Tun Lwin said there was no report of thundercloud development in other parts of the country.—GNLM

Traders' suggestions to be incorporated into economic policies

THE Ministry of Commerce will seek the suggestions of traders in drafting new economic policies.

At a meeting with traders from around the country in Yangon yesterday, Union Minister for Commerce Dr Than Myint said the new government will create fair competition for

traders, vowing to eradicate monopolies.

"There is competition in the business world, but we will take measures to create a business world with responsibility and accountability, without encouraging monopoly," Dr Than Myint.

During the meeting, trad-

ers shared their challenges and requirements for smooth commodity flow with the Union minister.

When traders recommended the abolition of mobile teams in regions and states, the Union minister promised to work together with the related ministries to do so.

The Ministry of Commerce is also planning to strengthen economic institutions to improve capacity and infrastructure. The government is planning to triple its export volume during its tenure and considers the export sector critical to the country's economic growth.—Ko Moe

Football qualifier to be held in Yangon

A QUALIFIER football match between selected Myanmar team and the new Myanmar National League team is scheduled to be held on 1 May, according to the Myanmar Football Federation.

As part of its preparation for the 2016 Suzuki Cup, this is the first qualifier for selected Myanmar team with the MNL team after the 2018 World Cup qualifying match.

The event will be held at Thuwunna YTC Stadium in Yangon at 5pm, and all Myanmar football fans are invited to view the event free of charge.

The MNL team members have not been selected by the organisers yet.

There are plans to establish the team with 20 foreign players who are currently involved in MNL clubs. The players will be coached by a local coach.—*Shine Htet Zaw*

Lanmadaw Junction overpass nearly completed



A view of the new Lanmadaw pedestrian overpass. Photo: Tin Win Lay

A NEW pedestrian overpass across two junctions in Lanmadaw Township is over 80 per cent complete and is expected to open soon, said U Tin Tun Oo, the assistant head of the Road and Bridge Department under the Yangon City Development Committee.

As part of effort to reduce traffic congestion downtown, the current project is being implemented by a private company under the supervision of the YCDC.

The overpass includes four pedestrian ladders facing four directions.

“Currently, we are finalising the construction project as all works are nearly complete,” a project engineer said.

An officer of the YCDC said: “The area around the overpass is crowded, as it is located in downtown Yangon. It is expected to ease traffic congestion to a certain degree after it is totally completed.”—*Tin Win Lay*

Crime NEWS

Bull killed in Bago road accident



The bull and the bullock cart seen. PHOTO: KHIN KO

A ROAD accident in Kyaukdaga Township, Bago Region, destroyed a bullock cart and killing a farm animal on Saturday, according to a police report.

According to the plaintiff, a public transport bus going at high speed along the Yangon-Mandalay road hit the back of a bullock cart driven by U Yan Si Ka Yan, 56, near mile post No 110/2, three miles from

the township police station.

The cart driver sustained minor injuries, while his cart was badly damaged, and a bull was killed on the spot after sustaining serious injuries.

After the collision, the unidentified driver fled the scene.

Local police are still investigating the case in an effort to arrest the reckless driver.—*Khin Ko*

Woman killed in traffic accident in Yangon

A 36-YEAR-OLD woman was killed in a road accident on Friday morning in Yangon, police reported yesterday.

According to a witness, the accident occurred while a motorbike driven by U Than Lwin, 61, heading west along the

Khayan-Thongwa road, was trying to overtake a car. Daw San San Nwe, from Mandalay Region, fell from the bike when it collided with back wheel of the car behind the bike. She died on the spot.

Local police are still investigating the case.—*Ko Kyaw*

Police attacked by timber smuggler

THREE police officers were attacked on Thursday by a driver of a green Pajero car loaded with illegal timber in Sagaing Region. Acting on a tip-off, local police were trying to stop a car driven by Thet Nway Oo on the Inda-Ban-

mauk road in order to search for illegal items on the vehicle.

The driver, wielding a 2-foot long sword, attacked police officers near Yaynartan Junction in Aungmyingala Ward, Indaw Township.

Police inspector Than Tun Hlaing and two constables named Kyaw Swe Win and Win Ko sustained injuries.

Police arrested the driver, who will be charged under the relevant law.—*Lu Aung*

Fire engulfs 18 houses in Natogyi Tsp

A FIRE broke out in Natogyi Township in Myingyan District, Mandalay Region, on Saturday, destroying 18 houses.

The fire started in a grocery store owned by U Maung Aye Tun, 52, in Ywathit Village at

around 3pm.

The blaze spread quickly, as homes in the area are positioned closely together.

Eighteen houses were engulfed by the flames. No injuries to people or animals have been

reported.

The fire was put under control by firefighters and members of the public within 45 minutes.

The grocery store owner is facing charges under the Criminal Law.—*Khin Zar Mon Myint*

Illegal drugs, heroin seized

ILLEGAL drugs, including heroin, were confiscated by a local anti-drug squad in Shan State on Thursday, and several smugglers were arrested.

Acting on a tip-off, local police searched a motorcycle driven by Zaw Win Tun with one passenger on board along the Muse-Mandalay Union Highway near mile post No 80/4. They found about 300 yaba pills and 0.4 grams of heroin in their possession.

Likewise, local police seized over 200 yaba tablets from a



Criminals seen together with drugs seized. PHOTO: KYEMON

man walking along Zeyathukha Street in Thingangyun Township, Yangon, and arrested him on the same day.

The suspects have been charged by police under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.—*Kyemon*

Nipa palm thatch industry vanishing for lack of workers

DESPITE the thriving demand for nipa palm thatch roofing in the Mon State capital of Mawlamyine, a diminishing workforce has put the industry on the verge of extinction, according to local craftspeople.

In the past, the entire village of Kyauktan in Mawlamyine was involved in the business of producing nipa palm thatch, with Kyauktan Nipa thatch gaining fame across the state, but these days only about five individuals in the village still practice the craft, according to Daw Myint Oo, a nipa palm thatch entrepreneur.

“There used to be five large nipa palm facilities in Kyauktan Village, which would weave palm leaves into thatch, with each facility boasting a work-

force of around 40 people. These days, though, no one plants nipa palm trees anymore, since those who used to pick and stitch the nipa palm leaves have travelled to other countries to find work. The whole nipa thatch industry is about to disappear into obscurity,” she said.

Nipa palm thatch is used throughout Mon State on the homes of elderly people; the buildings of independent, small-scale entrepreneurs; livestock pens; and middle-class homes designed to release heat. Though demand for the thatch remains high, the depletion of workers within the industry has raised prices year upon year.

Most crops cultivated on the Mon State islands of Hinthar, Kawmupun, Kyauktan, Katonepaw,



A woman makes nipa palm thatch in Kyauktan. PHOTO: MYITMAKHA NEWS AGENCY

Kyunkalay and Kinkyaung were, at one time, nipa palm trees. After being made into thatch in Kyauktan Village, the product was then transported and sold throughout the state, as well as in Bago and Ayeyawady regions.

“The aftermath of Cyclone Nargis saw an increase in the cutting and planting of nipa palms—

workers had come from the delta regions to work.

For the picking and stitching of nipa palm, though, skill is required. It’s not a skill everyone can apply. That’s the reason behind the scarcity of workers, which has caused people to shift to planting beans and pluses instead,” said U Hla Shein, a

Kyauktan Village resident.

In previous years, the price for a hundred sheets of nipa thatch would fetch approximately K4,000, but the recent scarcity of the thatch as resulted in the same quantity costing K6,000, and even more during the rainy season. —Myitmakha News Agency

Waste from Myitkyina factory wreaking public health havoc

WASTE discharged from a cassava starch factory located near Wahyar Hsut Village, in the Kachin State capital of Myitkyina, has begun affecting the health of local residents.

The waste discharged from the Yuzana cassava starch factory, owned by local businessman

U Htay Myint from Bankauk Village, is polluting the nearby Nantkham Stream, a source of water for local residents.

As a result, villagers are reportedly suffering from severe diarrhoea as well as sore throats from their continual inhalation of foul odours.

“People here are suffering from diarrhoea. Itchy and painful lumps and bumps are also appearing on people’s skin. We want this factory closed up,” said U Zaw Saing, a resident from Bankauk village. Local residents have also said the underdeveloped and remote location of their village has

meant legal action and subsequent punishment rarely take place. “Fish die when chemicals pollute the water supply. When lead, mercury and arsenic are diluted into the water, it makes it poisonous, potentially causing cancer in the long term,” said Dr Aung San Win of Yangon General Hospital.

The Yuzana Company held over 300,000 acres of land near the Kachin State village of Wahyar Hsut in 2006 before beginning the cultivation of cassava plants and the construction of the cassava starch factory, according to local residents. —Myitmakha News Agency

Govt planning recreation centre in Mandalay



A site where a recreation centre will be established in Mandalay. PHOTO: AUNG THANT KHAING

THE Mandalay Region government is planning to build a public recreation centre near the southern wall of the Mandalay Palace, according to Mandalay mayor Dr Ye Lwin.

“There is no public recreation facility in the city centre,” Dr Ye Lwin said, adding that the

park will serve dual purposes as a centre for sport and recreation.

Hsu Hnget, an author, suggested that the park have a place where statues and biographies of famous nationalists and artistes are displayed and arts exhibitions are organised. —Aung Thant Khaing

Teachers’ federation seeks elimination of promotion exams

THE Myanmar Teachers’ Federation (MTF) has announced that it will hold negotiations with the director general of the Department of Basic Education over the matter of school teachers having to sit exams in order to earn promotions, saying the negotiations will proceed, even “should there be a thousand protesters on the issue”.

Dr Thet Naing Oo, chair of the MTF, said the federation will hold discussions because of the objections it received from female kindergarten teachers with a college or university degrees who have had to re-sit examinations in order to receive job promotions.

“The current job promotion policies of the Ministry of Education and of the Department of Basic Education are contradic-

tory. The expenses incurred are cumbersome for teachers who must travel from far reaches of the country to sit the exams, and they’re not guaranteed to pass. We will request permission to meet with the [Education] Ministry on this issue. Discussions will also be held with the director general of the Department of Basic Education. We will negotiation for an amicable solution for both sides,” she explained.

Teachers who attend training colleges for between three and five years and then work as kindergarten teachers can eventually earn promotions to become high school teachers.

Many in the teaching community argue that this system works best without the imposition of examination requirements for teachers.

“If we sit the exam and fail, we don’t receive a promotion. I don’t favour this policy. As a teacher, I’m also posted to far away parts of the country. I still have to incur all the expenses involved in taking the exam, even if I don’t pass it. Travel is not easy.

That’s why I’m protesting over this issue,” said one kindergarten teacher.

The names of teachers who object to taking promotion exams and the schools at which they work will be kept anonymous. A minimum of 1,000 objections are required in order for the MTF to proceed with its effort to amend the policy.

The MTF has announced that it has so far received about 500 objections. —Myitmakha News Agency

LOCAL Business



Union Minister for Industry U Khin Maung Cho visits the caustic soda plant in Thaton. PHOTO: MOI WEBPORTAL

Eols for caustic soda plant to be announced soon

EXPRESSIONS of interest will be invited soon from entrepreneurs to build infrastructures for a caustic soda (sodium hydroxide) plant in Thaton, according to Ministry of Industry.

At a meeting with officials

involved in the project in Thaton yesterday, Union Minister for Industry U Khin Maung Cho called on businesspeople to closely supervise the project in order to avoid malpractices.

He also urged officials to

give jobs to local people as a priority when the plant comes into operation. During his tour of Thaton, the Union minister also inspected the No 21 Heavy Industry Plant, which produces tyres.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Freshwater prawn exports to reach US\$20 million



FRESHWATER prawn exports are expected to reach a value of US\$20 million this fiscal year, said U Hnin Oo, a senior vice

president of the Myanmar Fisheries Federation.

The export of freshwater prawns has earned around \$12

million per year in previous fiscal years, and the volume of exports will continue to rise this year.

To increase the volume of exports of freshwater prawns, the breeding process of freshwater prawns must improve because new breeds species are vulnerable to a lack of nutrition in currently used methods.

“The deaths [of prawns] are due to the hot temperature as well as to the lack of nutrition. The aquatic feed for them might not meet the required amounts of nutrients,” U Hnin Oo added.

Currently, however, freshwater prawn farming continues to utilise traditional methods.—200

Well packaged, half sold

PACKAGING is an important factor in the promotion of exports, said U Aung Soe, the director general of the Myanmar Trade Promotion Board.

To make export products more attractive, the board is making arrangements to conduct awareness campaigns to give

employees technical packaging skills. The awareness campaigns will be conducted by South Korean experts.

Export products not only require high quality but also attractive packaging because the quality of a product can be seen only when the package is

unwrapped. As such, attractive packaging is essential, said the director general.

Technical know-how plays an essential role in determining which materials are used in packaging and, said J Young Oh, an expert from South Korea.—200

Thornless rose gains popularity

FLOWER growers are cultivating more thornless roses on a commercial scale in response to rising domestic demand.

“Roses with thorns bloom better, but they are not durable when offered to the Lord Buddha.

Thornless roses can last longer than roses with thorns do. Besides, they can bear the brunt of weather. Thornless roses are in high demand. They can be marketable after three

or four months of cultivation,” said U Swe Ohn, a rose grower from Hmawbi Township, Yangon Region.

Thornless roses originate in South Korean. One-foot-high local wild rose plants are tied to thornless varieties in plastic bags for pollination.

Thornless roses can be grown in all weather conditions. Pollination with wild roses can make hybrid thornless roses more durable.—200

Snakebite insurance sells better

SNAKEBITE insurance has been selling better since the beginning of 2016, according to a representative from Myanmar Insurance.

This year, rural farmers have been buying more snakebite insurances from among eight types of life insurances than during previous years, according to the representative.

The premium for snakebite insurance is K500, and it is

valid for up to a year. If a person is killed by a snakebite, his family will receive a maximum K500,000, while the insurance will cover at least K80,000 for injuries, depending on the type of injury. Villagers in Ayeyawady, Magwe and Bago regions have been driving the rise in insurance purchases.

Fire premiums purchases are also on the rise this year.—200

Local pomelo farming to upgrade for export

THE cultivation method of a local variety of pomelo (pantit) will be upgraded to meet the standard size required for export in order to boost farmers' earnings.

Pomelo farms in Myanmar aim to receive GAP certification that would guarantee the quality of the fruit. Exports to Singapore and China do not earn better prices than domestic sales. Fruit growers will export pomelos

only after the fruits are upgraded to meet export standards, said an official from the Myanmar Fruit Flower and Vegetable Producers and Exporters Association. The pomelo is mainly grown in Mon State, Taninthayi Region and Bago Region.

The upgrading process of pomelo farming is slated to be conducted in a two-year project. The project is expected to be raise export prices.—200

Gold prices expected to rise

WITH gold mines around the country on the verge of shutting down, 16-carat gold is in high demand in the Yangon gold market, said U Myint Aung from the Myanmar Gold Entrepreneurs Association.

Gold entrepreneurs are making advanced purchases of 16-carat gold in anticipation of higher

prices due to the low supply of raw gold, as most of the gold mining sites are likely to shut down in June, July and August.

This time of year is the preferred time for gold entrepreneurs to buy gold in advance because the prices of 15-carat and 16-carat gold are currently on the decline.—200

Macho mayor Duterte widens gap in Philippine presidency survey

MANILA — An outspoken mayor running for the Philippine presidency on promises of a crack-down on crime and drugs has increased his lead in an opinion poll released on Sunday, just two weeks away from the election.

Rodrigo Duterte was the number one choice of 34 per cent of Filipinos in the Pulse Asia survey, gaining by two percentage points from last week and widening the gap from his closest rival Senator Grace Poe.

Poe, the adopted daughter of movie stars, slipped from 25 per cent to 22 per cent support among the 4,000 people polled from 12-17 April.

Duterte's image as a gun-toting provincial hard man who tackles crime by petrifying would-be offenders is endearing him to many Filipinos.

The former prosecutor has promised to end drugs, crime and graft within six months if elected and has voiced support for vigilantism and extra-judicial kill-



Philippine presidential candidate and Davao city mayor Rodrigo 'Digong' Duterte delivers a statement during a campaign rally at Pandacan city, metro Manila on 23 April 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

ing of criminals in Davao City, where he is mayor.

His rating will be a big boost to his campaign as it comes just a few hours ahead of Sunday's final televised debate between the candidates.

It follows a tricky week for Duterte, who has been trying to manage the fallout from controversial remarks he made at a rally about an Australian mis-

sionary murdered and raped during a 1989 prison riot.

A video clip of the comment surfaced online last weekend and caused an uproar. He initially refused to say sorry but later apologised, insisting he was not joking but was simply expressing anger using "gutter language".

It was unclear whether the rape comment had

impacted views of the respondents as news about it emerged on and around the final day the survey was taken. It showed Vice President Jejomar Binay slipping one point to 19 per cent and Manuel Roxas, who is backed by outgoing President Benigno Aquino, staying at 18 per cent. About 54 million Filipinos are eligible to vote in the 9 May elections. —Reuters

China says Brunei, Cambodia, Laos agree sea dispute must not hurt ties

BEIJING — China has agreed with Brunei, Cambodia and Laos that the South China Sea territorial dispute should not affect relations between China and the Association of South East Asian National (ASEAN), China's Foreign Ministry said on Sunday.

Four members of the 10-member ASEAN — the Philippines, Viet Nam, Malaysia and Brunei — have rival claims to parts of the South China Sea with China, which says virtually the entire sea belongs to it. China is the biggest trade partner of many ASEAN nations.

China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi spoke to reporters in the Lao capital, Vientiane, on Saturday and was quoted by his ministry as saying China had reached "an important consensus" with Brunei, Cambodia and Laos. The South China Sea problem was not a China-ASEAN dispute and it "should not affect China-ASEAN relations", the ministry said in a statement, referring to their agreement.

China's maritime

claims are ASEAN's most contentious issue, as its members struggle to balance mutual support with their growing economic relations with China.

The grouping, which also includes Singapore, Indonesia, Thailand and Myanmar, expressed in February its serious concern about growing international tension over the disputed waters. Land reclamation and escalating activity has increased tension and could undermine peace, security and stability in the region, ASEAN said in a statement at that time.

The United States has criticised China's building of artificial islands and facilities in the sea and has sailed warships close to disputed territory to assert the right to freedom of navigation. China seeks to keep the South China Sea off of the agenda at multilateral forum, but other claimant countries, such as the Philippines, have sought to raise the issue at ASEAN summits. The dispute has been divisive for ASEAN.—Reuters

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Seychelles says helping worldwide probe into Malaysia's 1MDB fund

VICTORIA — The Seychelles is helping an international investigation into the troubled state fund 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB), the state's Financial Intelligence Unit on the Indian Ocean archipelago said.

Transactions involving 1MDB, which has piled up \$11 billion in debt, are at the centre of corruption and money laundering investigations in jurisdictions that include the United States, Switzerland, Singapore, Luxembourg and the United Arab Emirates.

"The Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) has been assisting in an international investigation into allegations surrounding the strategic Malaysian fund called 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB)," the FIU said in a statement emailed to Reuters. "Detailed information relating to offshore entities registered in Seychelles and other matters were passed to the competent authorities of investigating states," it said.

The statement was sent to Reuters by Seychelles president's office on behalf

of the FIU. It is the first public acknowledgement that Seychelles has joined the widening investigation into 1MDB, whose advisory board is chaired by Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak. The FIU did not name any entities involved in the investigation. The nation's Financial Services Authority said a search of companies registered in Seychelles would not provide information regarding shareholders or company directors. A Malaysian parlia-

mentary investigation found that \$4.2 billion of 1MDB's money is unaccounted for or went to overseas bank accounts whose owners could not be ascertained.

It said about \$700 million was sent without board approval to an account with private banker RBS Coutts in Geneva under the name of Good Star Ltd. The report said could not determine who owned the Good Star account. RBS Coutts has declined to comment. In February, the Swiss attor-

ney-general's office said it believed \$4 billion had been misappropriated from Malaysian state companies. Singapore announced it had seized a "large number of bank accounts" as part of investigations into a company closely linked to 1MDB. The Seychelles and other offshore financial centers have increasingly come under the spotlight as global leaders seek to clamp down on money laundering and the use of so-called tax havens.—Reuters



A man walks past a 1 Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB) billboard at the funds flagship Tun Razak Exchange development in Kuala Lumpur in 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

North Korea says submarine ballistic missile test 'great success'

SEOUL — North Korea said on Sunday it had conducted a submarine-launched ballistic missile test supervised by leader Kim Jong Un and it was a "great success" that gave the country "one more means for powerful nuclear attack."

North Korea fired one missile from a submarine off its east coast on Saturday, South Korea's military said, amid concerns that the isolated state might conduct a nuclear test or a missile launch ahead of a rare ruling party meeting in May.

The missile flew for about 30 km (18 miles), a South Korean Defence Ministry official said late on Saturday, adding its military was trying to determine whether the launch may have been a failure for unspecified reasons.

But the North's official news agency KCNA said an underwater test-fire of a ballistic missile was "another great success," without disclosing the date and place of the event which was guided by leader Kim.

"It fully confirmed and rein-

forced the reliability of the Korean-style underwater launching system and perfectly met all technical requirements for carrying out ... underwater attack operation," KCNA said.

"The successful test-fire would help remarkably bolster the underwater operational capability of the KPA navy, he said, adding that it is now capable of hitting the heads of the South Korean puppet forces and the US imperialists anytime as it pleases," it said, quoting Kim. KPA refers to the North's military.

The US Strategic Command said on Saturday it had detected and tracked a North Korean submarine missile launch but it did not pose a threat to North America. State Department spokesman John Kirby said launches using ballistic missile technology were "a clear violation of multiple UN Security Council resolutions."

France on Saturday called on the European Union to unilaterally adopt additional sanctions on North Korea if the missile launch



North Korean leader Kim Jong Un guides on the spot the underwater test-fire of strategic submarine ballistic missile in this undated photo released by North Korea's Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) in Pyongyang on 24 April 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

was confirmed. North Korea first attempted a launch of the submarine-based missile last year and was seen to be in the early stages of developing such a weapons system, which could pose a new threat to its neighbours and the United States if it is perfected.

However, a series of test launches were believed to have been failures, and its state media carried footage that appeared to have been edited to fake success, according to experts who have seen the visuals. North Korea is banned from nuclear tests and

activities that use ballistic missile technology under UN sanctions dating to 2006 and most recently adopted in March but it has pushed ahead with work to miniaturise a nuclear warhead and develop an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM).

North Korea will hold a congress of its ruling Workers' Party in early May for the first time in 36 years, at which leader Kim is expected to formally declare the country is a strong military power and a nuclear state.

North Korea's Foreign Min-

ister Ri Su Yong told the Associated Press in New York on Saturday that his country is ready to halt nuclear tests if the United States suspends its annual military exercises with South Korea. North Korea made a similar demand in January after its fourth nuclear test. Asked if the United States would consider a halt, Katina Adams, a spokeswoman for the State Department's East Asia bureau, said the exercises demonstrate the US commitment to the alliance with South Korea and enhance "combat readiness."—Reuters

China's Xi warns of foreign infiltration through religion

BEIJING — China must be on guard against foreign infiltration through religion and stop "extremists" spreading their ideology, President Xi Jinping told a top-level meeting on managing religion, state media reported on Sunday.

China must also manage the Internet to promote the Communist Party's religious theories and policies, the official Xinhua news agency cited Xi as saying.

"We must resolutely resist overseas infiltration through religious means and guard against ideological infringement by extremists," Xi was quoted as saying at a two-day national working conference on religion that ended on Saturday.

The ruling Communist Party says it protects freedom of religion, but it keeps a tight rein on religious activities and allows only officially recognised religious institutions to operate.

The government is concerned about what it sees as the growing influence by Islamists in the Xinjiang region in the far west where hundreds of people have been killed over the past

few years in violence between members of the Muslim Uighur community and majority Han Chinese.

Officials there have stepped up regulations banning overt signs of religious observance, like veils or beards.

Separately, some Chinese Christians say authorities are limiting their activities and taking down crosses on churches in coastal Zhejiang Province.

Authorities have said crosses are removed because they violate regulations against illegal structures.

Protests broke out in 2014 in the heavily Christian city of Wenzhou, also in Zhejiang, over the government's cross demolition campaign.

In January, authorities also said a Christian pastor was being investigated for suspicion of embezzling funds. The investigation came after the pastor opposed the campaign to remove crosses. Communist party members must adhere to Marxist principles and remain "staunchly atheist", Xi said in his remarks.—Reuters

Bangladesh professor hacked to death by Islamist militants

DHAKA — A university professor was hacked to death on Saturday in northwestern Bangladesh, police said, with Islamic State claiming responsibility for the latest in a series of attacks on liberal activists. Two assailants on a motorcycle attacked Rezaul Karim Siddiquee, 58, an English professor at Rajshahi University, slitting his throat and hacking him to death, Rajshahi city police chief Mohammad Shamsuddin told reporters, quoting witnesses.

He was found lying in a pool of blood near his home, where he was apparently waiting for a bus to the university campus

about 200 kilometres (125 miles) northwest of Dhaka when he was attacked. Islamic State claimed responsibility for the killing of the professor for "calling to atheism", the US-based SITE monitoring service said quoting the militant group's Amaq Agency.

Police said the murder was similar to other recent attacks on secular bloggers by Islamist militants. But fellow university teachers said Siddiquee, while active in cultural events, never spoke or wrote anything about religion or Islam. "Professor Rezaul was killed in a similar fashion as the killings of blog-

gers," Shamsuddin said, adding he was a peaceful person and had no enemies.

The Muslim-majority nation of 160 million has seen a surge in violent attacks over the past few months in which members of minority Muslim sects and other religious groups have also been targeted. Five secular bloggers and a publisher have been hacked to death in Bangladesh since February last year. A group affiliated with al Qaeda claimed responsibility for the killing of a liberal Bangladeshi blogger earlier this month, the SITE has said.—Reuters

Nepal marks 1st quake anniversary

KATHMANDU — Nepal marked Sunday the first anniversary of its deadliest quake on record, with Prime Minister Khadga Prasad Sharma Oli and others observing a minute of silence at the 19th century Dharahara tower in central Kathmandu.

According to the Bikram Sambat calendar that the Himalayan nation officially follows, Sunday is the anniversary of last year's 25 April quake that, along with aftershocks, left 8,961 people dead and over a million houses in ruins.

At least 753 heritage monuments were either damaged or destroyed.

Oli, members of his Cabinet, foreign diplomats and civil servants also offered flower garlands at what remains of the Dharahara tower which collapsed in the quake. The nine-story view tower was originally built in 1832.

The anniversary was being observed in 14 districts affected by the temblor and its aftershocks. Commemorative events include condolence meetings, a foundation stone laying cere-

mony for building an earthquake memorial park and a candlelight vigil.

Later Sunday, Oli flew to Chautara town in central Nepal's Sindhupalchowk district to lay the foundation stones of a house.

"Today, I laid foundation stones of the private house of Sarbe Tamang and Sarita Tamang in Chautara," Oli tweeted. The stones were laid exactly at 11:56am local time, matching the time the quake struck on 25 April, 2015, local media reported.—Reuters

Economy, crises in focus as Obama heads to Germany



US President Barack Obama. PHOTO: REUTERS

LONDON — US President Barack Obama is set to visit Hanover, Germany on Sunday to hold talks with German Chancellor Angela Merkel, one of his closest allies in dealing with a shaky global economy and security crises in the Middle East and Ukraine.

It will be the last stop on a six-day foreign journey where Obama has sought to shore up US alliances he views as key to grow trade, defeat Islamic State militants, and offset Russian aggression in Ukraine and Syria.

Obama, who is in the last nine months of his presidential term, spent three days in London where he urged Britons to remain part of the European Union in a June referendum, a vote that could send shockwaves through the economy.

Earlier in the week, he met

with Gulf leaders in Riyadh to try to allay fears that Washington had become less committed to their security.

In Hanover, he will tour and speak at a massive industrial trade fair with Merkel. The leaders want to breathe life into a US-European free trade agreement which supporters say could boost each economy by some \$100 billion.

Their push comes at a time when many Europeans and Americans alike are deeply suspicious the deal could cost jobs and affect standards.

"But time is not on anyone's side at the moment," said Heather Conley, a former State Department official in the George W. Bush administration, now with the Centre for Strategic and International Studies think tank in Washington.

Leaders are trying to wrap up complex talks on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) before Obama, a Democrat, leaves office on 20 January.

Getting a sign-off from the Republican-controlled US Congress in the heat of an election campaign will be a tall order. Obama has yet to secure approval for the sweeping Trans-Pacific Partnership trade pact, which is at a much more advanced stage.

"Getting trade deals done is tough, because each country has its own parochial interests and factions. And in order to get a trade deal done, each country has to give something up," Obama said at a London event on Saturday.

In Hanover, thousands of protesters holding placards with slogans like "Stop TTIP" marched on Saturday to express their opposition to the deal.

Before Obama returns to Washington late Monday, he and Merkel will get together with Cameron, French President Francois Hollande, and Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi to talk about beefing up intelligence sharing after recent attacks in France and Belgium.

The leaders are set to talk about how best to find a political settlement in Syria. Hundreds of thousands of people have fled the war-torn region for Europe, where countries have grappled with the flood of refugees.—Reuters

Republican financier Koch says Clinton might make better president

WASHINGTON — Billionaire industrialist Charles Koch, a key source of financing for conservative Republican causes along with his brother, said Democrat Hillary Clinton might make a better president than the candidates in the Republican field.

Koch, in an interview to air on Sunday on ABC's "This Week" programme, said that in some respects Bill Clinton had been a better president than George W. Bush, who Koch said had increased government spending. Then when asked if Hillary Clinton would be a better president than the Republicans currently running, he said, "It's possible, it's possible."

ABC said Koch, who along brother David leads an influential political organisation called Freedom Partners, has been displeased so far with the tone of the Republican presidential race, in which billionaire Donald Trump leads US Senator Ted Cruz of Texas and Ohio



US Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton speaks during a campaign rally in Central Falls, Rhode Island, on 23 April 2016.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Governor John Kasich.

Asked if he could support Clinton over the Republicans, Koch responded, "We would have to believe her actions would be quite different than her rhetoric. Let me put it that way."

While many conservatives have questioned Trump's commitment to their agenda, a spokesman for the Koch brothers said last month that they would not use any of their money to block him from winning the Republican nomination.—Reuters

NEWS IN BRIEF

Obama says he hopes he has persuaded British voters not to leave EU

LONDON — US President Barack Obama said he hoped he would be able to influence some British voters' decisions at a 23 June referendum on Britain's membership of the European Union, speaking after making a series of pro-EU interventions during a trip to London.

"My hope is, is that this is something that would have some influence on how voters think," he told the BBC in an interview broadcast on Sunday.

"For ordinary voters I thought it would be relevant to hear what the president of the United States, who loves the British people and cares deeply about this relationship, has to say about it." —Reuters

Anniversary of Second Serbian Uprising marked in Takovo

TAKOVO — The 201st anniversary of the Second Serbian Uprising against Ottoman rule was commemorated in Takovo, near Gornji Milanovac, central Serbia, on Saturday.

Today, Serbia needs unity, work, stability, strength, unification and peace, which it will protect with diplomacy, the army and new jobs, schools and hospitals, Minister of Labour, Employment and Veteran and Social Affairs Aleksandar Vulin said.

Heading a state delegation at a government ceremony marking the anniversary, Vulin laid a wreath in a memorial complex dedicated to the Second Serbian Uprising of 1815.

"Whenever they were not in uprisings, the Serbs were expellees. The Serbs know that, whenever they were not deciding on their own fate, the decisions, made without them, were bad for them. The Serbs know that only free people give birth to free people and that slaves have never given birth to free people," Vulin said.

No generation in the history of Serbia has wanted to trade freedom for something else, "and that is why the Serbs will continue to protect their country and defend it," Vulin said.

Just like two centuries ago, the Serbs today want a strong and united state, a powerful army and strong diplomacy and they seek to develop their country, Vulin said.—Tanjung

France calls on EU to adopt new sanctions against North Korea

PARIS — France called on the European Union on Saturday to adopt additional sanctions on North Korea after South Korea said the isolated state had launched a ballistic missile from a submarine.

"We call on the international community to adopt a firm and united reaction so that North Korea stops its provocations," a spokesman for the French Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

"In particular, France calls on the European Union to unilaterally adopt additional sanctions," he said, adding that if the launch was confirmed, it would be a new violation of UN resolutions.—Reuters

Three die, 5 hospitalised in biogas leakage in southern Viet Nam

HO CHI MINH CITY — A biogas cellar in the Viet Name province of Ca Mau leaked, killing a couple, their neighbour and left five other neighbours hospitalised, local media reported Sunday.

On Saturday morning, Nguyen Van Tang, 51, in Cai Nuoc district, found his biogas cellar leaking and went to the cellar to fix it, then fainted. His 51-year-old wife and six of the neighbours, including 35-year-old woman named Tran My Hanh, her husband and her father-in-law, came to help later but all fainted, daily newspaper *Tien Phong* (Pioneer) reported.

Local doctors said Tang, his wife and Hanh died of biogas poisoning, Hanh's father-in-law was in critical conditions, and five other patients were in stable conditions.

Tang raised many pigs whose droppings were used to make biogas he used as fuel for his family's daily use. His family was in financial difficulty.—Xinhua

Turkey will take all measures to stop rocket fire on border town — PM

ANKARA — Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu said on Saturday all necessary measures will be taken to prevent missile fire in Kilis, a Turkish town bordering a region controlled by Islamic State militants in Syria.

Kilis has repeatedly come under rocket fire in recent weeks. On Friday, two people died and four were injured in such an incident.—Reuters

OPINION

Free to hurt oneself, but not others

Khin Maung Aye

MANY would contend that they are free to hurt themselves because it is them who are the victims. As long as they do not harm other people, they can do what they like.

However, it is also necessary to consider the emotional and cognitive disturbances of our self-harm to our families and our society at large. A family can be deeply affected by having a drug addict in the family. Naturally, a family wants to see all of its members leading healthy lives. Drug addictions among individuals can all affect an entire society.

In the case of mercy killing, too, it cannot be said that assisting suicide does not violate any laws. Although such actions may not be directly harmful to others, these actions can also affect families indirectly, as the family of the euthanised person can be psychologically harmed by the loss of their loved one. No doubt, the harm principle is a controversial element in the legislation process.

This being so, the enactment of traffic rules and regulations that require people to wear seatbelts in cars and helmets on motorbikes can be justified because the intention of such a law is to protect the lives of the drivers and passengers against death and injury.

However, the harm principle may consider laws requiring seatbelts and helmets to encroach on personal freedom. *The Global New Light of Myanmar* dissents from this claim.

If harm can cause grief to a family or to society, the government ought to intervene, taking necessary actions, including the promulgation of laws, rules and regulations to secure the lives of the people. If a policeman or a doctor on duty gets drunk, he needs to be disciplined according to the law because in the case of the former, he has the duty to enable the public to do their jobs, and in the case of the latter, he has the duty to save the lives of his patients. In such cases, it would be inappropriate to say that the government should not intervene to restrict the people's freedom. Quite obviously, no citizen would want a drunken policeman or a drunken doctor on duty.

Some of individual liberties must be limited by the law in order to ensure the wellbeing of the whole society. Thus, the government must promulgate laws to protect the basic rights of individuals.

Write for us

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The Telephone Sector Should Have Been Privatized Long Ago

Khin Maung Myint

WE are about sixteen years late in privatizing the telephone sector. It should have been done by the year 2000. The International Telecommunication Union (ITU), a specialized agency of the United Nations based in Geneva, Switzerland, had been advising all its member countries, of which we are one, as early as 1994 to privatize them. In October, 1994, "The Telecommunication Towards The Year Two Thousand Seminar" was held in Bangkok under the joint aegis of the World Bank and the ITU. A senior executive of the ITU, in his keynote speech said, "Whether you like it or not, the telephone entities of all the countries attending the seminar, should be in the hands of the private sector by the year 2000". He pointed out that those who do not get it done by then would lagged behind".

Representatives from the Asian Pacific nations attended the seminar and I represented Myanmar at that seminar. The countries that had already privatized and those in the process of planning to privatize spoke about their procedures and plans. In those days the Myanmar Post and Telecommunications (MPT) had no immediate plan to privatize, thus I spoke about the present situations of our entity only, in my presentation. Apart from being an interested observer, I did not actively participate in discussing the privatization, while others were enthusiastically asking questions to those who had privatized. However, I followed the discussions with great interests and made notes of the salient points, so that I would be able to prepare a comprehensive report on my return.

We were not the only ones who were not ready for privatization but there were many Asian countries like us. As far as I can remember, only



Women using their mobile phones seen in Yangon. PHOTO: YELAY (GNLM)

Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand had already privatized. India was still in the process of privatizing. All the other Asian countries had no immediate plans to privatize. As for the Pacific nations, I will not be discussing them.

At that time I was serving dual roles: as the Deputy General Manager (Admin) of the MPT and also as the Head of Office at the Ministry of Communications,

Post and Telegraph. As I wanted to submit a comprehensive report I was preparing it meticulously, describing in detail what and how the countries that had already privatized, did. On the other hand, as I had to see to the smooth running of the two offices under my charge, my report was a bit delayed. As my superior was anxious to know about the seminar, I had to report verbally, before I could submit the written report.

In doing so, I mentioned in detail, the two good examples of privatizations, which I learned at the seminar. One was that of the Philippines. They have a Commission headed by a Commissioner who is directly responsible to the President to handle the privatization process. The Minister of Telecommunications had no authority over him. In my opinion he has more freedom and also free from conflict of interests in carrying out his duties. That

arrangement would surely promote free and healthy competition among the different telephone servers, including the state-owned entity. As the Commissioner is the sole authority for the private sectors, the state organization has no authority over them. That would afford an equal and fair competition. The tariff rates would be significantly reduced and the services would be more efficient, benefiting the subscribers. The second example was that

of India. They also formed a special Commission headed by a Commissioner, who is directly responsible to the President (Prime Minister?) and not to the Minister of Telecommunications; somewhat similar to that of the Philippines. In both the countries all investors are required to take on local partners to be eligible to bid for the right to invest. One interesting thing in India's case was, they gave priority to the security measures in allowing foreign servers into the telecommunication sector, as it is a vulnerable spot that could jeopardize the independence and sovereignty of the country.

In reporting to my superior, I emphasized the necessity to consider planning for the privatization immediately. However, as he had his own ideas for telephone sector developments, he was not convinced the privatization was urgently needed.

In those days the MPT was fulfilling the needs of the public by introducing the subscriber self-help scheme. That scheme required the subscribers to bear all the costs necessary to install the telephone. A lump sum of money, supposed to be the total cost for one telephone had to be paid in advance, before the project was implemented. That amount included the expenses for the infrastructures, such as: the telephone exchange equipments and accessories. Along with them, motor vehicles too were bought with those funds. Actually, the expenses for the infrastructures and vehicles should be borne by the server; in this case it was the MPT.

The introduction of the subscriber self-help scheme started with the manual exchanges in the Bago Region around 1993/94. Some twenty or so manual exchanges were installed. The equipments were bought from a local trader who purchased them from China, just across the border. It was undeniable that the

newly sprung-up exchanges caused noticeable network congestions. The second time was in Mandalay. This time it was the automatic telephones, so they cost more than those in Bago. As far as I can remember, the amount was about kyat three lakh per telephone. However, the subscribers were happy and willing to pay in advance the amount asked by the MPT.

At that time, as the demands for automatic telephones in Yangon were very high, the MPT expanded the capacity of the existing exchanges with own expenses. So the subscribers need not pay in advance, but the price was raised to five lakh per telephone. Even then the public was ready to pay that amount gladly, if they were lucky or well connected to get the privilege of installing one. In the past, a subscriber need to pay only one thousand two hundred Kyats as deposit to get one telephone installed.

When the mobile phones were first introduced, they cost only five lakh including the hand sets. Later the official price of a sim card shot up to fifteen lakh. That price compared to other countries in the region was very high. However, even at such high prices, the demands were so great that we couldn't fulfil all the needs. That led to the black marketing to set in and the price of one sim card rose to around forty lakh on the black market. The sim cards became commodities of trade.

I am of the opinion that the reluctance to privatize in those days must be due to the state policies, which I was in no position to know. The introduction of the subscriber self-help schemes, which were ready remedies to overcome the inability to fulfill the telephone demands due to lack of state budgets, provided some relief for the MPT and also pleased the public to certain extents. However, such practices are unheard of in other countries as far as I know.

Provision of a viable communications system is the responsibility of the state and if the state is not capable of doing it on its own, privatization should be considered. Due to the reluctance to privatize in time and the continuation of the monopoly on the telephone sector, and above all, the introduction of the subscriber self-help schemes are the root causes that led to the rampant corruptions that plagued the MPT in the long run. As actions are dictated by the prevailing situations, I don't want to pin the blame on any individual for those shortcomings.

Today, we are witnessing the advantages of privatization. The most significant are the drastic reduction in the costs and more availability of the sim cards. The private servers started selling sim cards for one thousand five hundred Kyats each and the tariff rates are cheaper. The MPT followed suit. Thus making it affordable and easily accessible for more people to own telephones. The telephone density or penetration rate today is over 50 per cent, a vast increase from the 0.02 per cent in 1994, which was mentioned in my country paper presented at the aforementioned seminar. Also the quality of the services had greatly improved and had become more efficient.

We should have privatized earlier, however, I must agree that being late has its advantages. The subscribers are able to get the more modern, advanced and efficient services straight away. With the new technologies rapidly developing, the late comers provide the more advanced technologies. Now we are using the 3G networks, not very much behind other countries in the region and hopefully, it wouldn't be long before the 4G networks would be introduced. My intentions in writing this article is not to condemn any individual, but to afford lessons to be learned from the past experiences.

We will be back

Aung Myint Oo

EVERY now and then organisations change either structurally or functionally which is termed as reorganisation or 're-org' in short. Reorgs usually take place when there is a change of management in an organisation with an aim to enhancing its efficiency by cutting costs or increasing productivity.

If one thinks that reorg is simple and straight forward which is all about moving boxes and lines either solid or dotted around, it will be utterly wrong. Even for a small business entity, a reorg may pose a real challenge depending on its complexity. In fact, a reorg should not

simply start with juggling of boxes and lines.

A good reorg should not automatically begin with the idea of 'changing' which is why starting point should be a set of well-thought-out strategies or policies or even decisions if the picture is to be at a higher resolution. Then there should be a comparison to be made between existing and desired layout of the organisation which is required to be able to successfully implement the policies or execute the decisions. If there are indeed gaps between the existing and the desired, reorg can be considered as one of the possible remedies.

Recent change of government in Myanmar is parallel to a reorg in a business world but on a mammoth

scale as it involves several agencies at a national level. Not like a business entity, the objectives of reorgs after a change of government won't be just about cost saving or increasing productivity. It could well be beyond economic reasons and be politically driven, for example to bring about national reconciliation.

'Time for change', the slogan of the National League for Democracy resonates the need for a series of reorg to take place in the government agencies after the president trimmed down the size of his cabinet from 36 in previous term to 21 ministries. Preceding those upcoming changes, there has been an ever-most-important political development took place on 6 April 2016 which is the appointment of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi as 'State Counsellor', a new role embedded with necessary powers for her to be able to work with any individual or agency in pursuance

of objectives set in the constitutions.

About two weeks after assuming her new role, the State Counsellor seems to be in a hurry urging the union ministers to expedite the reform which she has already expected to be completed ahead of schedule. If anyone wonders why, the answer is "Her country 'Myanmar' for which she sacrificed her entire life has been about five decades behind its neighbours who were used to be its fans of its wealth and prosperity."

Therefore, it is no surprise as to why seventy-year-old "The Lady" desperately needs her "machinery" up and running. Very few will be doubtful that with her unwavering leadership and unprecedented level of unity, trust, hope and enthusiasm she instilled in her people, Myanmar will be back on stage as a pacesetter of the ASEAN in a jiffy.

Myanmar wins bronzes at Southeast Asia track and field event

MYANMAR track and field athletes earned three bronze medals on the first day of the 11th Southeast Asian Youth track and field contest, hosted by Thailand.

The event included 13 events and took place on 23 April.

Pyae Phyoe Aung and Phyo Kyaw Zin Oo won prizes in the men's event, while a female team member placed third in the women's 400-meter event.

Over 200 athletes from 11 ASEAN countries, including Myanmar, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Brunei, East Timor and the Philippines, are taking part in the tournament.

The final contests will continue on 24 April, and Myanmar track and field athletes will participate.—200



Germany seeking 'safe zones' in Syria to shelter refugees

GAZIANTEP (Turkey) — Germany is seeking the creation of "safe zones" to shelter refugees in Syria, Chancellor Angela Merkel said on Saturday, an idea Turkey has long championed in the face of UN caution.

Keeping refugees on the Syrian side of the border would help Brussels and Ankara, which hosts 2.7 million Syrian refugees, stem the flow of migrants to European shores. The UN has warned against the plan unless there was a way to guarantee the refugees' safety in the war-torn state. Aid workers have opposed it.

The cessation of hostilities in Syria which began at the end of February and was sponsored by Russia and the United States to allow for peace talks, has since faltered. The opposition, which walked out of negotiations in Geneva said the truce, which excluded powerful jihadist groups such as Islamic State and the Nusra Front, al Qaeda's branch in Syria, was no longer in place.

At a news conference in the Turkish city of Gaziantep, Merkel called for "zones where the ceasefire is particularly enforced and where a significant level of security can be guaranteed."

As tens of thousands of refugees fleeing the fighting in Syria are unable to cross into Turkey, and instead are camped near the Azaz border crossing where local agencies offer humanitarian support, some have accused Turkey

of stealthily forming such a zone.

The EU-Turkey agreement to send back thousands of migrants from the Greek islands to Turkey has also been fiercely criticised by United Nations refugee and human rights agencies, as immoral and a violation of international humanitarian law. Rights groups say Turkey is not a country where returnees can be guaranteed proper protection.

The agreement, coupled with border closures in Europe that meant smugglers could not secure passage to northern Europe, initially slowed the numbers of new arrivals to Greece.

But boats have been arriving with about 150 people a day, indicating the "hermetic sealing" of the route appears to be over, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) said.

One side of the bargain, used to sell the migrant deal to the Turkish public, was Turks winning quicker visa-free travel to Europe, a pledge that now could go unfulfilled, at least by the June deadline Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu had wanted.

On Saturday Davutoglu said there would be no more readmissions if visa liberalisation was not enacted, but that he believed the EU would take the necessary steps.

"We have said that Turkey naturally must fulfil the conditions, these are 72 projects that must be implemented," Merkel said. "My aim is that we stick to



German Chancellor Angela Merkel (2L), EU Council President Donald Tusk and Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu (R) receive flowers during a welcoming ceremony at Nizip refugee camp near Gaziantep, Turkey, on 23 April 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

those understandings. Provided that Turkey delivers the relevant results."

Davutoglu, Merkel, EU Council President Donald Tusk and Vice-President of the European Commission Frans Timmermans visited a refugee camp in Nizip and the inauguration of a child protection centre in Gaziantep.

Following comments from a Turkish officials that there were problems in releasing the 3 billion euros (\$3.37 billion) promised to Turkey to look after refugees, Tusk said access to the funds was being accelerated.

Hundreds of thousands of

Syrian children in Turkey have no access to education. Davutoglu said Turkey had met all its responsibilities, including giving refugees the right to work.

But a work permit scheme for refugees designed to protect them from exploitation has been slow to gain traction, with many Syrians unable to apply without the support of their bosses.

Yet Tusk on Saturday praised Turkey as a refugee host.

"Today Turkey is the best example in the entire world of how to treat refugees. I am proud that we are partners. There is no other way," he said.

Amnesty International has

said Syrians are being shot at trying to enter Turkey while others are being deported to Syria against their will, a claim Davutoglu refuted on Saturday.

"While Turkey and Europe haggle over long standing political battles like visa free travel, refugees continue to suffer with little chance of protection in Europe and serious violations against them in Turkey," said Gauri van Gulik, deputy Europe director at Amnesty International.

"All states have a duty to protect refugees that can't be traded away for political expediency." —Reuters

At least 12 killed in two Baghdad car bomb attacks — sources

BAGHDAD — At least 12 people were killed on Saturday in two separate car bomb attacks in Baghdad targeting security forces, police sources said.

Islamic State was behind the larger blast, according to the Amaq news agency which supports the group.

The attack on a security checkpoint in the northern al-Husseiniya district killed nine people and wounded 28 others.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the second bombing, which targeted an army convoy in Arab al-Jabour, an area of date palm groves on Baghdad's southern outskirts.

Three people were killed there, and 11 others were wounded.

The Iraqi government has retaken several major cities

from Islamic State in the past year, including the western cities of Ramadi and Hit, and slowly pushed the militants back towards the Syrian border.

Security has gradually improved in Baghdad, which witnessed daily attacks a decade ago, though bombings against the security forces and Shi'ite residential or commercial areas are still a regular occurrence.

A blast claimed by Islamic State hit a Shi'ite Muslim mosque on Friday.

The rise of the ultra-hard-line Sunni group, which is battling government forces over control of vast territory in northern and western Iraq, has exacerbated a long-running sectarian conflict, mostly between Shi'ites and Sunnis, that emerged after the US-led invasion in 2003. —Reuters

Syrian opposition coordinator blasts UN Envoy, defends peace talks pause

GAZIANTEP (Turkey) — Syrian opposition coordinator Riad Hijab defended his body's decision to walk out of peace talks in Geneva and criticised UN envoy Staffan de Mistura over the rise in violence, during a high level EU visit to the Turkish border province.

Hijab's public criticism of de Mistura, who must be seen as neutral while trying to negotiate peace in Syria, highlights the tensions and fragility of a peace process which has limped on despite the opposition declaring a "pause" in talks with nearly all of its delegation leaving Geneva.

"For two years, Mr de Mistura was appointed in his task as a UN envoy and during this period the killing was increased or doubled in Syria and also the number of villages and areas that were under siege also increased where is Mr De Mistura and his team," Hijab told reporters in Gaziantep where he was visiting a refugee camp alongside German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu.

Despite a breakdown in a truce, the failure of which Hijab said must prompt a reevaluation



Riad Hijab, chief coordinator High Negotiations Committee (HNC) addresses a news conference aside of Syria peace talks in Geneva, Switzerland, on 19 April 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

by world powers, and signs that both sides are gearing up to escalate the five-year-old civil war, De Mistura vowed to plough on with peace talks.

Some diplomats called on de Mistura to exert pressure to make the talks successful.

On Saturday Hijab, a former prime minister, defended the op-

position's decision to suspend the talks: "We put our participation in the negotiations on hold to respect the Syrian blood that is shed under strike from the regime and its allies and to respect the Syrians who are killed of hunger following the siege and to respect Syrians who are killed under torture." —Reuters

Bees born with the ability to collect pollen by buzzing

LONDON — Wild bumblebees are born with the ability to remove pollen from nectar-less flowers using high-frequency vibrations, a new study has found.

The study is the first to show that the ability to vibrate flowers to extract pollen is an innate behaviour in bumblebees and one that is refined over time and gives a rare insight into the complexity of the pollination services provided by these creatures.

“We studied captive bumblebees from their very first exposure to flowers that need to be vibrated to extract pollen and found the creatures instinctively and almost immediately begin vibrating,” said Dr Mario Vallejo-Marin from the University of Stirling in the UK.

“We also found that over time and with practice, bees are able to tune down their vibrations, removing pollen while potentially saving energy,” said Vallejo-Marin.

“Initially bees tend to vibrate on the flower petals, but after two or three visits they focus their efforts exclusively on the part of the flower where pollen is produced.

“This shows the extensive capacity of these insects to learn complex motor skills to maximise their rewards from each flower they come into contact with,” said Vallejo-Marin.

Although bumblebees’ ability to learn how best to collect nectar is well documented, this study is the first to show how vibrations change while foraging pollen. The study also proves that the buzz bees produce during flight and during pollen collection have clearly distinct acoustic signals.

“Our research suggests that bumblebees learn to reduce the frequency of the vibration they are using during pollen extraction as they gain more experience manipulating flowers that require vibrations to release pol-

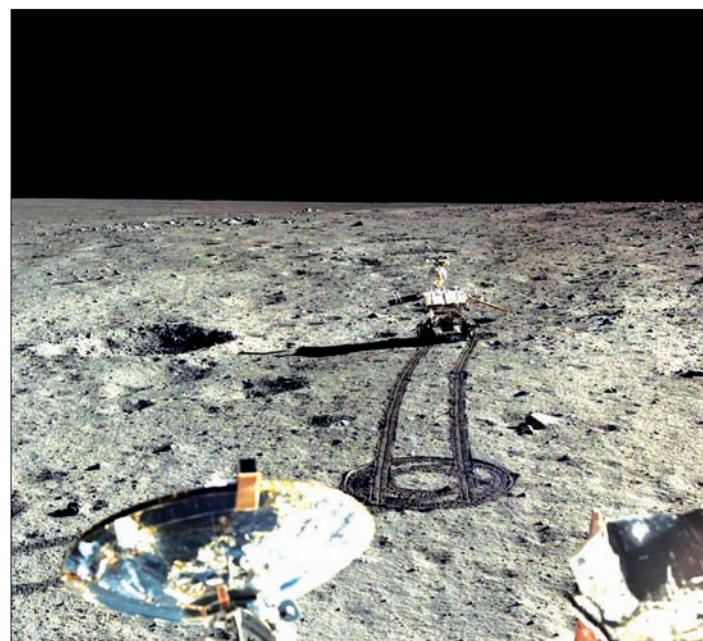
len,” Vallejo-Marin said.

As many as 20,000 species of plants including major crops, such as tomatoes and potatoes, rely on vibrating bees for pollination services. This function is one that only bees — and limited to certain types of bees — can fulfil. “Gaining this insight into how bumblebee pollination behaviour is innate, and yet perfected through learning, is essential to comprehend the complexity of pollination services provided by bees.

“There is a sense of urgency to understand how different species of bees use specialised and complex motor skills to pollinate flowers. Only by studying how bees achieve these specialised behaviours we can really understand the consequences of declining bee populations for natural and agricultural systems,” Vallejo-Marin added.

The study was published in the *Journal of Insect Behaviour*. —PTI

Chang’e 3, Yutu rover shoot high-resolution image of lunar surface



BEIJING — Photo provided by National Astronomical Observatories of Chinese Academy of Sciences shows a high-resolution image of lunar surface on the moon. The image is shot by Chinese Chang’e 3, an unmanned lunar exploration probe, and Yutu rover. PHOTO: XINHUA

Oklahoma lawmakers approve bill to revoke licenses of abortion doctors



Oklahoma Republican Governor Mary Fallin makes remarks before the opening of the National Governors Association Winter Meeting in Washington in 2014. PHOTO: REUTERS

OKLAHOMA CITY — An Oklahoma bill that could revoke the license of any doctor who performs an abortion has headed to the governor, with opponents saying the measure is unconstitutional and promising a legal battle against the cash-strapped state if it is approved.

In the Republican-dominated legislature, the state’s House of Representatives overwhelmingly approved a Senate bill late on Thursday. Governor Mary Fallin, a Republican, has not yet indicated whether she will sign it.

Under the bill, doctors who perform abortions would risk

losing their medical licenses. Exemptions would be given for those who perform the procedure for reasons including protecting the mother or removing a miscarried fetus.

“This is our proper function, to protect life,” said Senator Nathan Dahm, the Republican who authored the bill.

A handful of representatives argued against the bill, saying it violated the Constitution by prohibiting a doctor from performing a medical procedure that was legal under law.

“Oklahoma politicians have made it their mission year after year to restrict women’s access vital health care services, yet this total ban on abortion is a new low,” said Amanda Allen, senior state legislative counsel at the Centre for Reproductive Rights.

The lobbying group and several other abortion rights organisations have promised court challenges if the bill is enacted.

Supporters of the bill said it will help protect the sanctity of life. “If we take care of morality,” bill supporter David Brumbaugh, a Republican, said during deliberations, “God will take care of the economy.” —Reuters

More evidence links heartburn drugs to serious kidney problems

WASHINGTON — People taking common heartburn medications known as proton pump inhibitors (PPIs) are at increased risk of new and severe kidney disease, according to a US study.

Among hundreds of thousands of patients in Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) databases, new users of PPIs without kidney disease were 30 per cent more likely to develop chronic kidney disease over the course of five years. Their risk of kidney failure was doubled.

PPIs like Nexium and Prevacid are prescribed to treat ulcers, heartburn and acid reflux and are some of the most effective forms of treatment available, the study authors write in the *Journal of the American Society of Nephrology*.

These drugs are generally viewed as safe and may be overprescribed and continued for long periods without being necessary, they note.

“We suggest judicious use of PPI, and that use be limited to when it is medically necessary and to the shortest duration possible,” said senior author Dr. Ziyad Al-Aly, associate chief of staff for research and education at the VA Saint Louis Health Care System. The study team analysed data in national VA

databases on 20,270 people who had recently started taking PPIs. They compared this group to 173,321 people who had started taking H2 blockers, a group of drugs that reduce stomach acid by a different mechanism, blocking histamines in the stomach. All patients were free of kidney problems at the start, and were followed for five years to see if their kidney function changed.

After adjusting for personal, social and economic factors as well as health conditions that could influence kidney disease risk, the study team found that people taking PPIs were at significantly higher risk of new kidney problems compared to those taking H2 blockers.

The risk of a decline in kidney function was 32 per cent higher for people taking PPIs and the risk of new cases of chronic kidney disease was 28 per cent higher.

Patients taking PPIs were 96 per cent more likely to experience end-stage renal disease — kidney failure — than those who took H2 blockers.

The risks also increased with the time that someone was taking PPIs, leveling off after about two years of use.

Because many PPIs are available over the counter, peo-

ple may take them without the input of a doctor, Al-Aly said. He recommends limiting the use of over the counter PPIs to only times when it is necessary.

“If people find themselves taking over the counter PPI frequently, then a doctor consultation is definitely needed to determine best and safest options available to that patient,” Al-Aly told Reuters Health by email.

H2 blockers are much less likely to cause kidney problems but often aren’t as effective as PPIs, said Dr. David Juurlink, a clinical pharmacologist and drug safety researcher at the University of Toronto, said by email. “For many patients, dietary modification (less fat and alcohol) would make acid-lowering drugs unnecessary and would impart other long-term benefits as well,” said Juurlink, who was not involved in the study.

“Patients should appreciate that, like all drugs, PPIs carry risk. The fact that they’re available over the counter doesn’t mean they’re safe,” Juurlink said. “People who take PPIs and are later found to have kidney problems should ask their physicians whether the drugs might be playing a role,” he advised. — Reuters

Travel bosses want a single Australia-New Zealand tourist visa

SYDNEY — A trans-Tasman Sea regional visa, granting entry to both Australia and New Zealand, could encourage more travellers to the region, tourism chiefs in the two nations said.

Australia and New Zealand, both former British colonies with strong cultural ties, are geographically close and trialled a regional visa during last year's Cricket World Cup, which they jointly hosted.

Citizens from the two nations already enjoy reciprocal work and travel rights, but international tourists need to obtain separate visas for each country.

During the 39-day trial of a trans-Tasman visa, more than 7,000 visitors entered New Zealand using the arrangement, official statistics from New Zealand showed. Of that number, 43 per cent were Chinese nationals, whose country was not represented at the cricket event.



Five ships from the P&O Cruise line meet for the first time on Sydney harbour, Australia, on 25 November 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

In a joint statement on Saturday, the heads of two tourism bodies, TTF Australia and Tourism Industry

Association New Zealand (TIA), welcomed a visa that would make it easier for travellers to visit both coun-

tries. "Australia and New Zealand are long-haul destinations — it makes a lot of sense for us to package

the two countries together," said TTF Chief Executive Margy Osmond.

"The reality is that if

you are coming halfway around the world to Australia or New Zealand you want to make it worth your while," she said.

The two tourism bodies said they had written to Australian immigration minister Peter Dutton asking for the trans-Tasman visa to be made permanent by the end of the year.

A spokeswoman for the minister told Reuters by phone that she could not comment on whether the idea would be considered.

"At the moment it's just a conversation by the tourism bodies," she said.

Chris Roberts, chief executive of the TIA, said the Cricket World Cup showed the arrangement can work.

"We just need the will of our governments to bring down this travel barrier between our countries permanently," he said.

New Zealand's immigration ministry could not immediately be reached for comment.—Reuters

North Korea to halt nuke test if US war games suspended: minister

NEW YORK — North Korea is ready to halt its nuclear tests if the United States suspends its military exercises with South Korea, Foreign Minister Ri Su Yong said Saturday.

"Stop the nuclear war exercises in the Korean Peninsula, then we should also cease our nuclear tests," he said in an interview with the Associated Press in New York.

Ri made the remarks amid signs that North Korea may be preparing for a fifth nuclear test ahead of the first congress in 36 years of the reclusive country's ruling

party in early May. The annual large-scale military drills have been underway between the United States and South Korea since 7 March.

This year's war games come after the UN Security Council endorsed 2 March tougher sanctions on the North for conducting a fourth nuclear test in January and launching a long-range rocket in February using banned ballistic missile technology.

If the exercises are halted "for some period, for some years," "new opportunities may arise for the two

countries and for the whole entire world as well," Ri added.

Ri's comments came after North Korea fired Saturday what appears to be a submarine-launched ballistic missile from the Sea of Japan. He referred to the launch in the context of current tensions caused by the military exercises.

"The escalation of this military exercise level has reached its top level. And I think it's not bad — as the other side is going for the climax — why not us, too, to that level as well?" he said.—Kyodo News

Serbia's Vucic seeks mandate for EU talks, nationalists fight back

BELGRADE — Prime Minister Aleksandar Vucic is asking Serbian voters on Sunday for four more years in power to pursue European Union membership, but he may have to contend with a resurgent ultra-nationalist opposition demanding closer ties with Russia.

Vucic called early parliamentary elections just two years after his conservative Progressive Party won a landslide election victory, propelling him into office.

The 46-year-old former hardline nationalist who converted to EU-friendly policies in 2008 says he needs a clear mandate from Serbia's seven million people for reforms to complete EU membership talks launched in December.

Both EU rules and a 1.2 billion euro (\$1.35 billion) loan agreement with the International Monetary Fund oblige Vucic to privatise or downsize big loss-making state-run companies, potentially throwing thousands out of work.

"We want to complete the process of privatisation, speed up (private) investments and above all to spur the entrepreneurial spirit of the people," Vucic told Reuters in an interview this week.

Opinion polls suggest

Vucic's party is on track to win 48 per cent — about the same share of the vote it won two years ago — giving him another absolute majority in parliament.

Analysts think Vucic will continue a coalition with the second-biggest party, the Socialists, even though he does not need to, to broaden his base.

Whereas until now there has been a broad consensus in parliament in favour of EU membership, Sunday's election looks likely to bring

a return to parliament of ultra-nationalists who oppose EU membership and favour closer ties with Russia.

Vojislav Seselj, a nationalist firebrand who was acquitted by the UN tribunal in The Hague last month of war crimes during the 1990s breakup of Yugoslavia, could emerge as the effective leader of the opposition. His Radicals are tipped to become the third largest party, returning to parliament for the first time since 2012.—Reuters



Serbian Prime Minister and leader of the Serbian Progressive Party (SNS) Aleksandar Vucic gestures during a rally ahead of Sunday's election, in Belgrade on 21 April 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR MINISTRY OF ELECTRIC POWER AND ENERGY MYANMA OIL AND GAS ENTERPRISE (INVITATION FOR OPEN TENDER) (5 / 2016)

Open tenders are invited for supply of the following respective items in United States Dollars.

Sr.No	Tender No	Description	Remark
(1)	IFB-001(16-17)	Spares for Well Surveying Tool (1) Item	US\$
(2)	IFB-002(16-17)	Mud Chemicals (7) Items	US\$
(3)	IFB-003(16-17)	4" ERW Steel Line Pipe (16,100) MTR	US\$
(4)	IFB-004(16-17)	10" ERW Steel Line Pipe (37,030) MTR	US\$
(5)	IFB-005(16-17)	20" LSAW Steel Line Pipe (11,270) MTR	US\$

Tender Closing Date & Time - 19-5-2016, 16:30 Hr

Tender Document shall be available during office hours commencing from 21ST April, 2016 at the Finance Department, Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise, No(44) Complex, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar.

Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise
Ph. +95 67 - 411097 / 411206

G-7 pledges to promote sharing info on livestock diseases

NIIGATA — Farm ministers from Group of Seven countries agreed Sunday to promote information-sharing on livestock diseases, as they wrapped up a two-day meeting in Japan.

Ministers and representatives from Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United States also confirmed in a joint statement the need to attract more women and young people to agriculture and to deal with food supply disruptions from climate change.

During the meeting in the Sea of Japan coastal city of Niigata, the G-7 farm ministers discussed what efforts are needed to raise global food output to meet demand from the world's growing population.

World agricultural production would need to increase by about 60 per cent by 2050, as the global population is projected to grow more than 20 per cent to around 9.2 billion by then, according to the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations.

The outcome of the farm ministers meeting, the first such gathering since 2009, will be reflected in discussions at the G-7 leaders summit on 26 and 27 May in Mie Prefecture, central Japan. "We recognise that the agricultural sector plays an important role in

ensuring global food security, particularly in an era of rapid urbanization," the farm chiefs said in their "Niigata Declaration."

"In Niigata, we came together to address emerging challenges to our agricultural sectors, with the hope that the actions we undertake will benefit other countries facing similar challenges."

To cope with food supply problems caused by the cross-border spread of major animal diseases, such as bird flu and foot-and-mouth disease, the ministers agreed to set up an international framework to smoothly share information on livestock epidemics, according to the statement.

Under the framework, they will also exchange information on the rise of antimicrobial resistance amid concerns that long-term use of antibiotic drugs to prevent livestock infections is contributing to the emergence of resistance in livestock.

The aging farm labour population remains important to maintain stable food supply. The ministers decided to hold a meeting in Tokyo in autumn with developing countries to discuss concrete steps to strengthen women and young people's active participation in the farm industry, Japanese farm ministry officials said. —Kyodo News

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Daw May Thwe Hlaing, LL.B., LL.M., (H.G.P.)

For **Philip Morris Products S.A.**

Tilleke & Gibbins Myanmar Ltd. No. 1608, 16th Floor, Sakura Tower, 339 Bogyoke Aung San Road, Kyauktada Township, Yangon, Myanmar

Email address: myanmar@tilleke.com

Date: 25.4.2016.

PICTURE OF THE DAY



Tourists watch flowers at International Flower Port in Beijing, capital of China, on 23 April 2016. More than four million flowers are in full bloom here, attracting a good many tourists. PHOTO: XINHUA

Japan told US it won't seek apology for atomic bombings

TOKYO — Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida said Saturday Japan had informed the United States that it is not seeking an apology for the 1945 atomic bombings, as President Barack Obama is expected to visit Hiroshima next month.

"We're not asking for an apology," Kishida said in a speech delivered in Hokkaido.

Senior US officials

said Friday that Obama is likely to become the first sitting American president to visit Hiroshima, which he is expected to do immediately after attending the G-7 summit in Mie Prefecture, central Japan.

US Secretary of State John Kerry visited the Peace Memorial Park in Hiroshima earlier this month along with other Group of Seven foreign ministers, be-

coming the first US secretary of state to do so while in office.

Kishida said that before Kerry's visit, Japan informed the US government of its position, underscoring that "a tragedy for mankind should not be repeated" and that "we hope (Kerry) would visit Hiroshima to confirm our desire to create a world without nuclear weapons."

Obama's planned visit to Hiroshima is regarded as a signal that the outgoing president is renewing his campaign to seek a world free of nuclear weapons.

The Japanese government has expressed its position that it is more important to continue with steady efforts toward nuclear disarmament than to demand an apology from the United States.—Kyodo News

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Date: 25.4.2016

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Leonardo DiCaprio terrified about climate change

LONDON — Oscar-winning actor Leonardo DiCaprio has applauded United Nations leaders for signing a historic climate change agreement.

The 41-year-old “The Revenant” star, who is a United Nations Messenger of Peace, spoke at a landmark gathering held in New York City on Earth Day, and saluted the representatives from 175 countries, who came to the meeting to sign the Paris Agreement on climate change into international law, reported *Daily*

Telegraph. DiCaprio admitted his recent research into the issue left him “absolutely terrified” about what will happen to the planet if greenhouse gas emissions are not addressed.

“Our planet cannot be saved unless we leave fossil fuels in the ground where they belong.

“After 21 years of debates and conferences, it is time to declare: no more talk, no more excuses, no more 10-year studies, no more allowing the fossil fuel companies to manipulate and dic-

tate the science and policies that affect our future,” he said.

The longtime environmental advocate also suggested the issue of climate change was similar to that of American slavery, citing historical US leader President Abraham Lincoln, who served during the abolition of slavery and the Civil War.

“(Lincoln) was speaking before the US Congress to confront the defining issue of his time: slavery,” he said.

“Remarkably, his words ring

as true today when applied to the defining crisis of our time: climate change.” The Paris Agreement is a non-binding treaty existing within the framework of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The document was created in an attempt to slow down the effects of greenhouse gases, such as carbon dioxide, on the earth’s temperature, which is rising rapidly.—PTI

Prince cremated; family, friends honour him at ceremony in Minnesota

CHANHASSEN, (Minn) — Prince’s remains have been cremated and his family and friends attended a private ceremony on Saturday to pay their respects to the late pop superstar at the studio complex where he died in a suburb of Minneapolis, a Prince spokeswoman said.

Among those seen entering the Paisley Park Studios complex, where Prince lived in Chanhassen, Minnesota, were his sister, Tyka Nelson, musician and former collaborator Sheila E., his former bass player Larry Graham and model Damaris Lewis.

The service came two days after Prince, whose hits included “Purple Rain” and “When Doves Cry,” was found dead in an elevator at the complex at age 57.

His death shocked millions of fans around the world and prompted glowing tributes from fellow musicians and public figures, including President Barack Obama.

“Prince was celebrated by a small group of his most beloved: family, friends and his musicians, in a private, beautiful ceremony to say a loving goodbye,” Prince publicist Anna Meacham said in a statement. Meacham said Prince’s remains have been cremated and their final resting place will remain private. Plans are under way for a musical celebration of Prince, with details to be announced later, she said.

On Saturday, Graham stood at a gate of Paisley Park Studios and thanked some of the hundreds of fans gathered on the lawn outside to show their admiration of Prince, a seven-time Grammy winner whose

music blended rock, funk, R&B, jazz and disco.

“Prince made us all better musicians and spiritually is the most important thing, but as musician he pushed us and he made us better and we listened deeply,” Graham told the fans. Participants in the ceremony handed some fans outside gift boxes that contained items such as Prince-themed apparel and a compact disc of music. An autopsy on Prince was conducted on Friday and authorities are investigating his death. Police said on Friday no signs of suicide or obvious trauma were found in Prince’s death.

The local medical examiner’s office said it could take weeks before autopsy and toxicology results reveal how the groundbreaking performer died. Prince had been on a US tour as recently as last week.

But he was briefly hospitalised a week ago, suffering from what his representative told celebrity news website TMZ was the flu, after his plane made an emergency landing in Moline, Illinois.

—Reuters

Scarlett Johansson to play original flapper Zelda Fitzgerald

LONDON — Actress Scarlett Johansson is reportedly set to play Zelda Fitzgerald in upcoming romantic drama “The Beautiful and the Damned”. Zelda has been described as “the first American flapper” and was known for her tempestuous relationship with husband F Scott Fitzgerald and her 1932 semi-autobiographical novel “Save Me the Waltz”, reported Contactmusic.

“The Beautiful and the Damned” is being produced by studio Millennium films, who are best known for “The Expendables” franchise, as well as “Olympus Has Fallen”.

The script has been written by Hanna Weg and producing will be Mark Gil and Beth Bruckner. A film based on Weg’s script has been talked about for quite some time and it featured on Hollywood’s Black List, an annual survey of the “most liked” screenplays not yet produced, in both 2007 and 2008.

Zelda rose to fame during the decadent Jazz Age of the 1920s and she and her writer husband were hailed as the era’s most iconic couple. He was known for drawing on the couple’s relationship in his work, while Zelda struggled to escape from his shadow.—PTI

Beyonce releases surprise album ‘Lemonade’ as much-anticipated TV special airs

LOS ANGELES — Beyonce cemented her status as the queen of surprise releases on Saturday, releasing a completely new album and videos called “Lemonade” via a widely anticipated one-hour special on cable network HBO.

During the show, which ignited social media as fans breathlessly enthused about, and debated, the programme and its content, Beyoncé appeared to address long-standing rumors of trouble in her marriage with rapper Jay Z.

After leveling accusations in her song lyrics about being cheated on, Beyonce made clear in the last tracks of the new album that she has decided to reconcile with him and continue in the marriage.

In a preview earlier this week, the singer teased fans with a snippet promoting the show, mysteriously intoning

“The past and the present merge to meet us here. What are you hiding? Why can’t you see me? You’re the love of my life.”

Fans, who wondered if Saturday’s show was to be a concept video with new music from the R&B star, found out on Saturday that was pretty much the case, with chapters carrying titles that riffed on the grieving process stages such as anger, denial and forgiveness.

Before the end of the programme, which featured a compilation of music videos, vignettes, vintage, home-movie style footage and poetry, Beyonce, 34, had dropped “Lemonade” onto the Tidal streaming service. The film was also available via Tidal.

Videos also featured appearances by the mothers of two black men, Michael Brown and Trayvon Martin, whose shooting deaths, in Brown’s case by

a Missouri police officer, have trained a spotlight on US racial tensions.

Fans posting on social media such as Twitter were especially engaged with speculation about the content of the show and songs as they related to Beyonce and Jay Z, making references in postings about “women scorned” and the singer “dropping” both an album and a divorce, seemingly at the same time. Beyonce previewed work from the new album just before his Super Bowl appearance this year when she debuted her single, “Formation.” Beyonce’s last album, in 2013, was also marked by a surprise release.

She kicks off her new tour this week in Miami.

—Reuters



Scarlett Johansson. PHOTO: REUTERS

Bolivia celebrates World Book Day with 100,000 books

LA PAZ — Bolivia was united in a celebration of literature on Saturday with a series of activities across the country to promote reading on World Book Day.

23 April was chosen by UNESCO as World Book Day, since it is anniversary of the death of a number of writers, including Miguel de Cervantes, William Shakespeare and Garcilaso de la Vega.

President Evo Morales chose to launch the “Bolivia reads” campaign on this day, to gather donations of 100,000 books from

various households. The donation will then serve to create 50 new community libraries.

Soldiers and police were deployed Saturday at 8:30am in major cities.

The Ministry of Education also allowed state education offices and even telephone booths to be used as book deposit points.

The Vice Minister of Alternative and Special Education, Noel Aguirre, stated in La Paz at the launch of the event that UNESCO first celebrated World Book Day in 1995 as a universal

homage to books and authors, in order to encourage people to read and value literature. The capital city, La Paz, organised several reading sessions throughout the city as well as an apthapi, a traditional Bolivian community gathering, for people to enjoy reading together. La Paz’s libraries also organised activities to encourage readers to visit, find books and take them home. Stands were even set up where people would donate books to the public, or exchange one for another. —Xinhua

Los Angeles eyes 1.05 lakh Indian visitors in 2016



A general view of the Downtown skyline with the 110 Freeway in the foreground in Los Angeles, California on 30 March 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

NEW DELHI — Los Angeles is looking to attract around 1.05 lakh Indian visitors in 2016 as it undertakes various initiatives to hard-sell itself as a preferred tourist destination.

“We are expecting 4.8 per cent growth year-on-year in numbers of Indian visitors to Los Angeles in 2016 amounting to around 1.05 lakh visitors,” Los Angeles Tourism & Convention

Board President and CEO Ernest Wooden Jr. Told PTI.

In 2015, around 99,000 Indians visited Los Angeles, he added.

Detailing the type of visitors from India, Wooden Jr said: “It is a mix of leisure and business. Around 90 per cent of Indian visitors in 2015 were leisure while 10 per cent were business.”

On the initiatives that Los Angeles Tourism & Convention Board is taking to promote the city in India, he said: “Initially, the main focus is going to be to educate the travel trade community about what Los Angeles has to offer.”

After that the board will talk to retail operators and eventually to the consumers directly, he added.—PTI

Chinese beach resort woos Indian tourists

SANYA (China) — Sanya, a picturesque city on the southern end of China’s Hainan Island, famous for its bays with beach resorts, is wooing the Indian tourists who love adventure and duty-free shopping, officials have said.

“We welcome the Indian tourists with open arms. We have world class facilities here, secondly we have very good environment, there is clean air and we have no pollution, the sea water is pure and tourists can do a lot of shopping here,” Vice Mayor of Sanya City Council, Wu Peng told visiting journalists from India and some Asean countries here.

Sanya boasts of some top-of-the-line hotel chains who have set up shop along the beaches here.

Apart from being famous for its beach resorts, the tropical paradise is also famous for duty-free shopping.

“The tourists love the sun-kissed beaches and pollution-free environment here. Tourism is Sanya’s pillar industry,” he said.

Wu Peng also said that in 2015, there were about 50 million tourists who visited Sanya.

“The revenue from tourists industry was up to about 30 billion Yuan,” he said.

The inflow of tourists is not

only from China’s mainland now and many foreign tourists flock this town, said Wang Feifei, Deputy Director of the Sanya Tourism Development Commission.

She said there is Sanya Phoenix International Airport and flights to several destinations operate from there.

“The place is also a heaven for those who like seafood,” she added.

Sanya also has a lot to offer for the shoppers.

Notably, nearly one-and-a-half years back, China had opened world’s largest duty-free shop (DFS), attracting several international brands, in Sanya city.

Located in the Haitang Bay area the duty-free shopping centre has an area of 72,000 square metres.

“People are now moving beyond the established tourist destinations. They want to try out new places and when they visit Sanya they will realise that it has so much to offer,” said George Jin, a local tour guide.

Notably, the town is also well-connected by rail route. China’s Hainan Island Circling high-speed railway is the world’s first HSR circling an island in tropical zone.—PTI



**News Channel
in Brief**

(25- 4-2016, Monday)

6:00 am

• Paritta By Hilly Region Missionary Sayadaw

7:35 am

• People’s Talk

8:35 am

• Documentary (Women in Myanmar Society)

9:45 am

• Colour of SAEAN (2) (Philippines & Indonesia)

10:35 am

• Weekly Entertainment News

11:35 am

• MRTV’s Youth Programme

12:35 pm

• TV Drama Series

2:40 pm

• Teleplay

3:35 pm

• Documentary

4:35 pm

• University of Disance Education (TV Lecutres) — Second Year (Law)

5:35 pm

• Socio Economic Scenes

6:35 pm

• Teleplay (Part-2)

7:15 pm

• TV Drama Series

8:00 pm

• News / International News/ Weather Report

9:00 pm

• News

• TV Drama Series

Note / Hourly News Bulletins (Local + International)



**Entertainment
Channel**

(25- 4-2016, Monday)

6:00 pm

• Weather Report
• Music Programme

6:20 pm

• Pyi Thu Ni Ti

6:40 pm

• Music Programme

7:10 pm

• International Drama Series

7:50 pm

• International Drama Series

8:30 pm

• Cartoon Programme “Epic” (Part- 3)

9:10 pm

• Music Programme

9:20 pm

• U Kyaw Thu: From Artist to Philanthropist (Part-I)

9:40 pm

• Myanmar Movie

9:50 pm

• International Movie Songs

Midnight

• Close Down.

From 25-4-2016 (Monday) 6:00 Pm

To 26-4-2016 (Tuesday) 6:00 Pm



**Myanmar
International**

(25-4-2016 07:00am ~ 26-4-2016 7:00am) MST

Today Fresh

07:03 Am News

07:26 Am Myanmar Delicate Artistic Creations- Gem Stone Painting

07:45 Am MONASTERY (Bargayar Kyaung)

08:03 Am News

08:26 Am Chinlone and the dreams of the player

08:40 Am Buddha Image Built of Bamboo Strip

08:52 Am Independent Filmmaker

09:03 Am News

09:26 Am A Trip To The City of Rakkhita, Rakhine

09:46 Am Colourful Threads

09:54 Am Parents’ Day

10:03 Am News

10:26 Am Products of Myanmar - Stone of The Heavens

10:51 Am Writer

(11:00 Am ~ 03:00 Pm) - Sunday 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 Food Trip (EP-4) (Part-1)

07:45 Pm Pyin Oo Lwin Sweater

07:53 Pm Sticky Shan Snack

08:03 Pm News

08:26 Pm Taste of Myanmar (Shan - Flat -Rice- Noodle Soup)

08:41 Pm Kid’s Home

08:47 Pm Entrepreneur “Nan Ei Ei Zar”

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

(11:00 Pm ~ 03:00 Am) - Sunday 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)

Last-gasp Martial sends Man Utd into FA Cup final

LONDON — Anthony Martial snatched a late winner to send Louis van Gaal's Manchester United into a potentially season-redeeming FA Cup final as the favourites following a 2-1 victory over Everton at Wembley on Saturday.

After Marouane Fellaini's first-half strike for United against his former club was cancelled out by Chris Smalling's 75th-minute own goal, Martial struck three minutes into stoppage time.

United's opponents in what will be a record-equalling 19th FA Cup final will be Watford or Crystal Palace who play on Sunday. Everton, with manager Roberto Martinez's job looking increasingly on the line, could only rue what might have been after they missed a second-half penalty and then took the game to United.

David de Gea was as much the United hero as Martial, the Spain goalkeeper keeping out Romelu Lukaku's 57th-minute spot kick with a superb diving save after Timothy Fosu-Mensah

had felled Ross Barkley.

"Everton played really well and had some chances," said De Gea. "In one second Anthony Martial scores a goal and you win it in the last minute, it's unbelievable."

In a rollercoaster of a semi-final, with a string of missed chances keeping both sets of fans on a knife edge, United had a penalty appeal rejected in the 66th minute when Fellaini's shot was blocked by Phil Jagielka's arm.

Dutchman Van Gaal has faced endless debate about his United future, with media speculation that Jose Mourinho is waiting in the wings, after crashing out of Europe and poor performances in the Premier League.

The final, with United on course to lift the trophy for the first time since 2004, would be

a silver lining even if there are no guarantees he will still be in the job next season.

"When you see the joy in the eyes of the players it is fantastic to see but also

for the fans," said Van Gaal who has had all too few moments of such unbridled enjoyment during his tenure.

"We deserved to go to the final. I think the referee...we didn't have any fouls in our benefit. He changed the match I think."

Martial's goal, with the French forward perfectly placed to sweep in substitute Ander Herrera's through ball, unleashed the celebrations and he was also the key to United's

34th-minute opener.

He opened up the defence and provided the pass that midfielder Fellaini latched on to from six metres.

Fellaini was none too subtle about the goal celebration, making sure the Everton fans could see the name on his red shirt.

"It was a tough game. Everton asked a lot of questions but we are in a final which is most important," said the Belgian who joined United in 2013.

Everton, who were jeered at halftime, levelled thanks to Smalling's defensive clanger with the devastated England centre back sending Gerard Deulofeu's low cross into the net.

"It is a hard result to take," said Martinez who felt Everton were the better side in the second half. "Over the 90 minutes we at least deserved the right to go into extra time. We were a little sluggish in the first half, we got the equaliser but to concede in injury time is a blow nobody deserved." —Reuters



Manchester United's Anthony Martial celebrates scoring their second goal. PHOTO: REUTERS

Man City go third, Newcastle rally boosts hopes

LONDON — Manchester City moved up to third in the Premier League on Saturday while Newcastle United boosted their hopes of survival by coming back from two goals down at Liverpool to draw 2-2 and secure a precious point.

On an afternoon that reaped 19 goals from four matches, last season's Player of the Year Eden Hazard finally opened his league account for the season with two in Chelsea's 4-1 win at Bournemouth.

Manchester City's bid for a top-three finish picked up extra

momentum, a 4-0 demolition of Stoke City at the Etihad Stadium lifting them a point clear of fourth-placed Arsenal with 64 points from 35 matches.

Nigerian striker Kelechi Iheanacho, 19, scored in the 64th and 74th minutes and was brought down for the penalty in the 43rd from which Sergio Aguero netted his 22nd goal from his last 21 league appearances.

Fernando headed the opener from Jesus Navas' 35th-minute corner, with City now turning their attention to the Champions League and a home semi-final

first leg against Real Madrid on Tuesday.

Leaders Leicester City, who have 73 points from 34 games, host Swansea City on Sunday while Arsenal travel to third from bottom Sunderland. Second-placed Tottenham Hotspur, on 68, entertain West Bromwich Albion on Monday.

Liverpool stayed seventh in the table after their 2-2 draw at Anfield which marked the return of former manager Rafa Benitez with a combative Newcastle side.

The match was overshadowed

by the news that Liverpool's French defender Mamadou Sakho had failed a dope test last month.

Benitez, who managed Liverpool for six years and won the Champions League with them in 2005 when they came back from 3-0 down against AC Milan to draw 3-3 and win on penalties, had another rollercoaster afternoon.

Daniel Sturridge put Liverpool ahead after 76 seconds and it was 2-0 on the half-hour when Adam Lallana scored the second but Newcastle rallied after the

break through Papiss Cisse and Jack Colback to clinch their first away point of 2016.

Second from bottom Newcastle are level on 30 points with Sunderland, who have two games in hand, and one behind Norwich City.

"In the second half we were much better so a draw maybe is fair enough," said Benitez. "We have to keep working."

"I believe they (Newcastle) can play better and from what I have seen today in the second half they can do well. I think we can stay up." —Reuters

Nadal races into final as he chases Vilas record

BARCELONA — Rafael Nadal, bidding for a record 49th clay-court crown, reached the final of the Barcelona Open for the ninth time by beating German Philipp Kohlschreiber 6-3, 6-3 on Saturday.

The world number five from Spain next meets defending champion Kei Nishikori after the Japanese ousted Frenchman Benoît Paire 6-3, 6-2.

Nadal will equal former Argentine great Guillermo Vilas' record of 49 titles on clay if he wins on Sunday.

"Today I played my worst game of the tournament. I don't like the way I played because I

committed too many errors," said the former world number one.

"I messed up my backhands but it was also important I only conceded one break point in the whole game, that's the most positive thing."

Nadal won the Monte Carlo Masters crown last week and said the accumulation of games affected his performance against Kohlschreiber.

"I've been competing for two weeks in a row and it's normal for me to have a bad day. I hope that tomorrow I can do better," he added.

"This means I'm doing well and that every day I have found

solutions to winning."

Nadal has won the Barcelona Open eight times since 2005, last lifting the trophy in 2013.

Nishikori has triumphed in the last two editions and the Spaniard said the world number six would put him to the test on Sunday.

"He's having a good year," said Nadal. "He's a fast player and will be very difficult to beat, he gives you no time to react and is one of the best in the world." —Reuters



Rafael Nadal of Spain plays a shot. PHOTO: REUTERS