

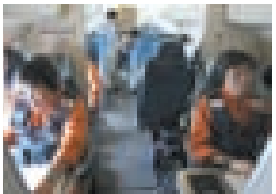
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Pro-gov't group holds rally, vows to fight for Yingluck



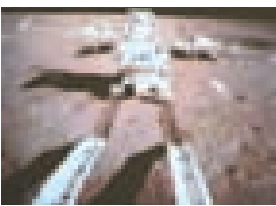
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President promises "free society" during Kachin visit



President U Thein Sein cordially greets local people and officials at the town hall in Myitkyina.—MNA

NAY PYI TAW, 16 March—Building a free and open society that encourages full participation of all national races was one of the promises made by President U Thein Sein during his inspection tour of Kachin State on Sunday. Talking about "sweeping reforms" and "equality in the nation-building endeavours," he addressed parliamentarians, ethnic leaders and local people at the town hall in Myitkyina.

He called for resolute action to resolve the disputes, drawing comparisons with the past and stressing that a "blame game creates evil consequences."

He assured the people in Kachin State of his determination to move towards a lasting peace inspired by all people. Apart from reaching a ceasefire, a political dialogue is imperative to bringing about political dialogue between

the two sides in making peace, he added.

The President pledged to start political dialogue shortly after signing a nationwide ceasefire agreement. He guaranteed that the Defence Services and the government stands united in working on peace.

He stressed that the implementation of peace and stability are his administration's main goals. He also gave accounts of ongoing political, econom-

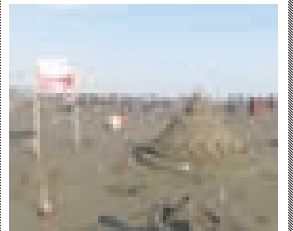
ic and administrative reforms.

The President received reports on the current situation from the Kachin State Chief Minister, Union Ministers Dr Daw Khin San Yi, Dr Ko Ko Oo, Dr Pe Thet Khin, U Kyaw Lwin and Dr Daw Myat Myat Ohn Khin. The reports focused on ongoing projects in education, health, transportation, electrifications and potable water supply.

MNA

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Artists and locals celebrate Rakhine sand pagoda festival



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Ancient Yokesone Yun Monastery needs renovation



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Asian Highway construction reaches Kawkaik in Kayin State



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Delta dwellers get new bridge

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Myanmar joins search for missing Malaysian passenger jet

NAY PYI TAW, 16 March—Myanmar on Saturday joined the search for the missing Malaysian passenger plane which disappeared off the radar after departing from Malaysia's capital Kuala Lumpur for Beijing International Airport on 8 March, the Defence Ministry said.

Three warships of the Myanmar Navy have begun search and rescue

operations focusing on two areas in Myanmar waters in the Andaman Sea.

The Myanmar navy has been cooperating with the search and rescue authorities of the Malaysian and Indian navies in order to provide humanitarian assistance and assist the investigation into the disappearance of the Boeing 777-200ER, officials said.

Myawady



A warship of Myanmar Navy searching missing Malaysian passenger airplane at Andaman Sea.—Myawady

Ancient Yokesone Yun Monastery needs renovation

MYINGYAN, 16 March—Yokesone Yun Monastery is situated in Hsimekhon village in Myingyan Township in Mandalay Region, in the central Myanmar. It was built around 1862 and thus now it turned 152 years. The Yokesone Yun Monastery came after building of Yun Monastery in Mandalay. The village

was also founded in the times of Myanmar kings and it possesses several ancient pagodas and monasteries. Lack of renovation led the precious items into ruins. The Abbot of the monastery as well as locals are hoping for donors who will contribute to renovation of the monastery.

U Zaw Min Naing

Delta dwellers get new bridge

HINTHADA, 16 March—A bridge spanning Daka Creek in Ayeyawady delta region was commissioned into service on 14 March. The wooden-type bridge is shouldering 240 feet long motorway which is 12 feet wide with 20 feet high. It was built at a cost of nearly

80 million kyat. Thanks to the commissioning of the bridge people living in nearby around 60 villages have easy access to Hinthada and Kyonpyaw as the bridge is located on the road linking the two towns in Ayeyawady Region.

Hinthada District IPRD



Mingin in Sagaing Region to get new tower for GSM service

MINGIN, 16 March—Our correspondent in Kalay quoted Sagaing Region Chief Minister U Tha Aye as saying that GSM tower will be installed in Mingin in the coming FY. As Mingin is situated in hard-to-access area in Sagaing Region in upper Myanmar, only McWill and CDMA mobile phone services are available. One of Mingin

dwellers told our correspondent that they can afford to buy GSM mobile phone but there is no GSM tower in the area, nobody can use it and locals are desperately in need of fine connection to communicate with the outside world. Mingin is 104 miles upstream from Monywa, the capital of Sagaing Region.

NLM-005

Parliamentarian makes final payments for 2013-2014 FY

MOHNYIN, 16 March—Parliamentarian U Kyaw Soe Lay of Mohnyin presented about 300 million kyat as a final payment for development fund to the chairman of township supporting committee who handed over the funds to representatives of wards and villages on 14 March.

About 30 development projects—six water supply projects, 12 road construction projects, 10 education-

al projects, one health project and others—are now being implemented in Mohnyin Township.

K Sai Naw (Phakant)

Asian Highway construction reaches Kawkareik in Kayin State

KAWKAREIK, 16 March—The construction of Asian Highway in Myanmar starts in Myawady. Now it reaches Kawkareik in Kayin State. Heavy machineries are busy on 45 KM between Myawady

and Kawkareik. With the assistance of Asian Development Bank, the project started in 2004. For various reasons, the project came to a halt in 2005. But in 2012 the project was re-implemented. Upon completion

of the highway it is sure that there will be more investment flowing into the country and trade with other neighbouring countries improve.

Naing Naing Tun (Kyondoe)



HTAN PAUK-LETPAN HLA-KONGYI ROAD IN PYAY TOWNSHIP: Head of Rural Development Department U Min Maung inspects construction on Htan Pauk-Letpan Hla-Kongyi road undertaken by Khit Oo Yin Co. Ltd in Pyay on 8 March, 2014. The Rural Development Department is funding the road construction.—KYAW KYAW (PYAY)



Equipment for disabled donated in Bago

BAGO, 16 March—Bago Region Minister for Security and Border Affairs Col Thet Tun attended a ceremony during which equipment for disabled persons was donated to social organizations at the town

hall of Bago Region on March 14. Latter-day Saint Charities (Myanmar), Social Development Affairs (SDA), War Veterans Organization in Bago Region and Myanmar Physically Handicapped Associa-

tion-MPHA donated artificial limbs, wheelchairs and children's toilet seats.

Officials, town's elders and members of social organizations attended the ceremony.

Min Htet Naing



Pro-gov't group holds rally, vows to fight for Yingluck



Members and supporters of the United Front for Democracy against Dictatorship (UDD) gather in the ancient city of Ayutthaya, Thailand, on 15 March, 2014, to show their support for Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra, who has been under severe political pressure aimed at unseating her. —KYODO NEWS

AYUTTHAYA, (Thailand), 16 March — Over 10,000 government supporters on Saturday held a large rally

in central Thailand to show their support for the caretaker government led by Prime Minister Yingluck

Shinawatra.

At the gathering at a stadium in Ayutthaya, the members of the

United Front for Democracy Against Dictatorship (UDD), known as red-shirts, vowed to step up their movement if the government is ousted in an undemocratic way.

Thida Thawornseth, president of the UDD, told *Kyodo News* that the red-shirts still prefer peaceful means rather than confronting antigovernment protesters led by former Deputy Prime Minister Suthep Thaugsuban, who have been staging rallies in Bangkok for several months.

Thida said a civil war might break out if there are signs of an undemocratic solution to the country's political turmoil.

"What we need is democracy. We do not care which political party forms a government but they have to be elected," she said.

Kyodo News

Venezuela's Maduro gives ultimatum to Caracas protesters

CARACAS, 16 March — Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro warned protesters in Caracas on Saturday to clear a square they have made their stronghold, or face eviction by security forces. Plaza Altamira, in upscale east Caracas, has been a focus of anti-government protests and violence during six weeks of unrest around Venezuela that has killed 28 people.

"I'm giving the Chuckys, the killers, just a few hours," Maduro said, using the name of a murderous child-doll in a horror film to describe anti-government demonstrators who have made the normally genteel 1940s square a base of operations.

"If they don't retreat, I'm going to liberate those spaces with the security forces," Maduro added. "They have a few hours to go home ... Chuckys, get ready, we're coming for you." Students and other protesters have been using the square, in the pro-opposition Chacao district of Caracas, as a rallying point since a wave of protests started to gather steam in mid-February.

Most nights around dusk, a hard core of several hundred demonstrators has been fighting police and army lines there, in an attempt to access a nearby highway and block traffic.

On Friday night, for example, security forces used water cannon and teargas in a battle against protesters using stones and petrol bombs, *Reuters* witnesses said. At least a dozen people were arrested, and the noise of the fighting echoed across east Caracas for several hours.

Reuters

Syria's crisis enters 4th year with no drastic solution in sight

DAMASCUS, 16 March — Three years has passed since the Syrian crisis began in mid-March 2011. Tens of thousands of people have been killed and millions displaced. Severe damages have befallen the country's economy, social fabric and last but not least its infrastructure.

The prolonged crisis began with anti-government protests. It rapidly evolved into armed conflicts joined by radical jihadist movements, inflicting negative impact on almost every aspect of Syrians' life.

In a report marking the third anniversary of the Syrian crisis, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) said "the situation (in Syria) has developed into a humanitarian disaster of appalling dimensions."

It said more than nine million Syrians are in need of urgent assistance, including 6.5 million people displaced inside their own country. Half of them were children struggling to survive amid the fighting. Another 2.4 million people have fled Syria since January 2012. They are seeking refugee in Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, Iraq and Egypt. Thousands more families have left for countries further afield.

Xinhua

Tense Crimea chooses whether to leave Ukraine for Russia

SIMFEROPOL, (Ukraine), 16 March — Crimeans decided on Sunday whether to break away from Ukraine and join Russia in a referendum that has alarmed the ex-Soviet republic and triggered the worst crisis in East-West relations since the Cold War. Thousands of Russian troops have taken control of the Black Sea peninsula, and Crimea's pro-Russian leaders have sought to ensure the vote is tilted in Moscow's favour.

That, along with an ethnic Russian majority, is expected to result in a comfortable "Yes" vote to leave Ukraine, a move that could prompt US and European sanctions as early as Monday against those seen as responsible for the

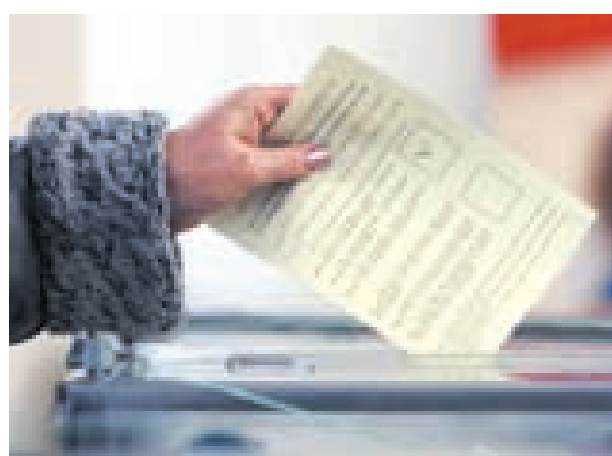
takeover of Crimea.

Polling stations opened at 8 am (0600 GMT) and close 12 hours later. Provisional results will be released late on Sunday with the final tally expected one or two days later.

At a polling booth inside a high school in Simferopol, the Crimean regional capital, dozens of people lined up outside to cast their ballots early.

"I have voted for Russia," said Svetlana Vasilyeva, a veterinary nurse who is 27. "This is what we have been waiting for. We are one family and we want to live with our brothers".

"We want to leave Ukraine because Ukrainians told us that we are people of a lower kind.



A woman casts her ballot during the referendum on the status of Ukraine's Crimea region at a polling station in Sevastopol on 16 March, 2014. —REUTERS

How can you stay in such a country?" The majority of Crimea's 1.5 million electorate, like Svetlana, support leaving Ukraine and becoming part of Russia,

citing expectations of better pay and the prospect of joining a country capable of asserting itself on the world stage.

Reuters

Iran thwarts "sabotage" against nuclear facility

TEHERAN, 16 March — Iran has detected and thwarted "sabotage" against its heavy water Arak reactor facility, a senior Iranian official said on Saturday.

"With the help of Intelligence Ministry and other security agencies of the country, a number of industrial sabotages, including that against part of the Arak site, were thwarted over the past months," Asghar Zarean, deputy chief of Atomic Energy Organization of Iran, was quoted as saying by local media. —*Xinhua*

Indonesia starts election campaign, voters set to choose radical change

JAKARTA, 16 March — Indonesia's raucous election season kicks off on Sunday with the promise of a fresh style of leadership in the world's third largest democracy, whose economic promise has been sapped by rampant graft, confusing policy and weak rule. An uncertain election outlook abruptly changed on Friday when the main PDI-P opposition party named the hugely popular governor of Jakarta as its candidate for July's presidential election. That lifted even further its chances of dominating the parliamentary election on 9 April.

Opinion polls suggest

the presidency is governor Joko Widodo's to lose, with old-style contenders ex-general Prabowo Subianto and tycoon Aburizal Bakrie trailing far behind.

A hint of the euphoria attached to the nomination of the charismatic Widodo, popularly known as Jokowi, was shown in the 3.2 percent jump in Jakarta share prices after the announcement.

"(It was) driven by sentiment that Indonesia will have a good president who is willing to take difficult decisions, has a good and clean historical track record ... and most of all an expectation of a smooth

transition of power," said Wilianto Ie, head of research at Maybank Kim Eng in Jakarta.

It will only be Indonesia's third direct election since it tumbled into democracy 16 years ago amid social and economic chaos in the wake of the downfall of former dictator Suharto.

Nearly 190 million Indonesians are registered to vote to choose a new parliament and so decide which parties meet a threshold to field a candidate in the presidential election three months later. Though close to 90 percent of the population identifies itself as Muslim, none of the

Islamic parties are expected to win a major chunk of the vote, including the current leading Muslim

party, PKS, whose reputation has been hit hard by a highly publicized corruption scandal. —*Reuters*



Indonesia's President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono attends the first session of ASEAN-Japan Commemorative Summit Meeting at the state guest house in Tokyo on 14 Dec, 2013. —REUTERS

Japan eyes confab with US, China, S Korea to curb nuclear terrorism

TOKYO, 16 March — Japan is making arrangements to hold its first working-level talks with the United States, China and South Korea in July to curb nuclear terrorism, a growing major threat to global security, a Japanese government source said on Saturday.

Japan hopes to use the multilateral dialogue, expected to be held in Washington, to pave the way for mending its strained relations with China and South Korea through “an issue of common concern,” according to the source.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, when he attends the Nuclear Security Summit scheduled for 24 to 25 March in The Hague, the Netherlands, is set to announce during the summit Japan’s policy of increasing its commitment to addressing nuclear proliferation and terrorism in cooperation with other countries, bearing in mind frameworks such as the four-nation dialogue.

Kyodo News

Voting under way in Ishikawa gubernatorial election

KANAZAWA, 16 March — Voting in the Ishikawa gubernatorial election began Sunday, pitting the incumbent, who is seeking his sixth four-year term, against two independent challengers.

Incumbent Gov Masanori Tanimoto, 68, is supported by the opposition Social Democratic Party and faces challenges from Yoshinobu Kimura, 62, a senior member of a citizens group who is backed by the Japanese Communist Party, and Yuichiro Kawa, 42, a former prefectural assembly member.

Tanimoto was first elected as governor in 1994. If he wins the election, he would be the country’s longest-serving governor along with Ibaraki Gov. Masaru Hashimoto, 68.— *Kyodo News*

Syrian forces fully control rebel stronghold near Lebanon

BEIRUT, 16 March — Government forces backed by Hezbollah fighters took full control of the Syrian town of Yabroud on Sunday after driving out rebel fighters, state media said, helping President Bashar al-Assad to secure the land route linking the capital Damascus to the former commercial hub of Aleppo and the Mediterranean coast.

The fall of Yabroud, the last rebel bastion near the Lebanese border, would also choke off a vital insurgent supply line from Lebanon and consolidate government control over a swath of territory from Damascus to the central city of Homs.

State television SANA said government forces had won “complete control” over the town, killing or capturing many rebels.

A military source told *Reuters* most of the rebels had pulled out of Yabroud

around dawn, a day after government forces entered its eastern districts and captured several hilltops.

Troops had dismantled a large number of explosive devices planted by the rebels, SANA said.

A fighter from the Nusra Front, al-Qaeda’s official affiliate in Syria, confirmed to *Reuters* the rebels had decided to pull out. They were heading towards nearby villages including Hosh Arab, Rankos and Fleita, he said.

Fighters from the Lebanese Shi’ite Muslim militant group Hezbollah supported the Syrian army and pro-government fighters in sealing off the frontier area with Lebanon.

He said they did not plan to withdraw across the Lebanese border to Arsal, a crossing point 20 km (13 miles) to the northwest which rebels and refugees have used regularly.

Thousands of civil-



People search for survivors under rubble of collapsed buildings at a site hit by what activists said was a barrel bomb dropped by forces loyal to Syria’s President Bashar al-Assad in Aleppo’s al-Sakhour District on 6 March, 2014. —REUTERS

ians fled Yabroud, a town of about 40,000 to 50,000 people roughly 60 km (40 miles) north of Damascus, and the surrounding areas after it was bombed and shelled last month ahead of

the government offensive.

Scenes broadcast by Al Mayadeen television from a main thoroughfare inside Yabroud showed empty streets, shuttered shops and abandoned homes.

Heavy gunfire could be heard in the background, which a reporter said came from a nearby area where government forces were clashing with rebel holdouts.—*Reuters*

Venezuelan president proposes dialogue with US

CARACAS, 16 March — Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro on Saturday proposed establishment of a commission for “peace and mutual respect of sovereignty” between the United States and his country to start a dialogue to re-establish diplomatic ties. Maduro headed a rally where thousands of supporters of the Bolivarian Revolution, a leftist social movement and political process that Maduro led now, expressed their support to the Armed Forces and the National Guard after more than a month of violent protests in certain areas of the nation. The president said he would seek to name National Assembly leader Diosdado Cabello to lead talks with the US and asked for the mediation of representatives of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR). Over the last few weeks, both countries have traded accusations but Maduro has consistently insisted on a dialogue based on mutual respect to end years of tense links between the two countries.

Xinhua



A moment of silence is observed at US Marine Corps’ Camp Foster in Okinawa Prefecture, Japan, for the victims of the Great East Japan Earthquake on its third anniversary on 11 March, 2014. —KYODO NEWS

Libyan port rebels say ready for talks, demand Tripoli suspend offensive

TRIPOLI, 16 March — Libyan rebels controlling three oil export ports said on Saturday they were ready to negotiate with the

government over ending their six-month blockade if Tripoli abandoned plans for a military offensive.

Libyan officials on

Wednesday gave the armed protesters two weeks to clear the ports they have seized, or face a military strike. Pro-government and rebel forces clashed briefly this week in central Sirte city linking western and eastern Libya. The rebels, who are calling for a greater share in the OPEC nation’s oil wealth, managed last week to load oil on to a tanker, which escaped the Libyan navy. The incident embarrassed the weak central government and prompted parliament on Tuesday to vote the country’s prime minister out of office.

Abb-Rabbo al-Barassi, the eastern autonomy

movement’s self-appointed “prime minister”, told *Reuters* by phone that talks could only begin if the central government withdrew any troops it had sent to central Libya to confront them. “This is the condition,” he said.

He also said the tanker that had loaded oil last week at one of the rebel-held ports had reached its destination, though he declined to say where. He said more ships were expected at the seized ports.

Earlier on Saturday, he gave a speech on the rebel-controlled television channel showing him in front of several vessels

docking in what the station said was Es Sider port, from where the first tanker sailed. Those details could not immediately be independently confirmed.

The Libyan navy lost contact with the North Korean-flagged tanker after firing on it on Monday or Tuesday, officials said. The tanker’s exact whereabouts since then have not been confirmed by Libyan officials. The standoff over control of Libya’s oil is part of wider turmoil that has engulfed the vast North African country since the fall of Muammar Gaddafi nearly three years ago.

Reuters



A view of Es Sider export terminal in Ras Lanuf, where a North Korean-flagged tanker had loaded crude oil, on 11 March, 2014. —REUTERS

Investigators look for motive in Malaysia plane disappearance



Japan Coast Guard personnel work in their Gulfstream V Jet aircraft, customized for search and rescue operations, as they search for the missing Malaysia Airlines MH370 plane over the waters of the South China Sea on 15 March, 2014.—REUTERS

KUALA LUMPUR, 16 March — Police are combing through the personal, political and religious backgrounds of pilots and crew

of a missing Malaysian jetliner, a senior officer said on Sunday, trying to work out why someone aboard flew the plane hundreds of miles

off course.

No trace of the Malaysia Airlines Boeing 777-200ER has been found since it vanished on 8 March with

239 people on board, but investigators believe it was diverted by someone who knew how to switch off its communications and tracking systems.

“We are not ruling out any sort of motivation at the moment,” a senior police official with knowledge of the investigation told *Reuters*.

Satellite data revealed by Malaysia’s prime minister on Saturday suggests the plane could be anywhere in either of two arcs: one stretching from northern Thailand to the border of Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan, or a southern arc heading from Indonesia to the vast southern Indian Ocean.

A source familiar with official US assessments said it was thought most likely the plane had headed south into the Indian Ocean, where it would presumably

have run out of fuel and crashed. Air space to the north is much busier, and the plane would likely have been detected.

As authorities desperately try to re-focus the multinational search, India said it was suspending operations around island chains northwest of the Malay Peninsula, at the request of Malaysian officials.

Indian defence officials said Malaysia wanted to reassess priorities. Malaysian officials coordinating the search could not be reached for comment. The disappearance of Flight MH370 has baffled investigators, aviation experts and internet sleuths since the plane vanished from civilian air traffic control screens off Malaysia’s east coast less than an hour after taking off from Kuala Lumpur en route to Beijing.—*Reuters*

Abductee’s parents met granddaughter in Mongolia this month

TOKYO, 16 March — The parents of Megumi Yokota, who was abducted to North Korea in 1977 at age 13, met their granddaughter for the first time in Mongolia recently, a Japanese government source said on Sunday. According to the source, Shigeru and Sakie Yokota met in Ulan Bator from last Monday through Friday 26-year-old Kim Eun Gyong, also known as Hye Gyong, who was born to Megumi Yokota and Kim Young Nam, a South Korean man abducted to North Korea.

Kyodo News

Two stampedes in Nigeria kill at least 11

LAGOS, 16 March — At least 11 people have been confirmed dead in two stampede incidents that occurred during the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS) recruitment exercises in Abuja and Rivers State.

Tayo Haastrup, spokesperson for the National Hospital in Abuja, Nigeria’s capital city, told reporters Saturday that seven people were brought in dead from the venue of exercise. He said the hospital was stabilizing those brought in unconscious from the stampede, while other casualties had been taken to other hospitals, including Asokoro General Hospital.—*Xinhua*

Cyprus says it monitors tanker with oil from Libya

NICOSIA, 16 March — Cyprus said on Saturday it is monitoring the course of a tanker, which is suspected of transporting quantities of oil loaded at the Sidra port of Libya.

The Foreign Ministry said in a statement that a request by the Libyan authorities and other neighbouring countries was received on 11 March to provide assistance in returning the oil to Libya. The statement added that the “Morning Glory” tanker, suspected of carrying the oil cargo which has been provided by armed groups, was detected on Friday in international waters 18 nautical miles off the Cypriot coast.

Xinhua

US closely eyes Ukraine on eve of Crimea’s referendum

WASHINGTON, 16 March — The United States is closely watching the crisis in the Ukraine on the eve of a historic referendum that could see that country’s autonomous region of Crimea break away and join Russia.

The US and Russia have been at loggerheads during the last two weeks over Moscow’s deployment of troops to the embattled Crimea region in what Russian President Vladimir Putin said was a bid to protect more than one million ethnic Russians in the area.

As a result, Washington has been ratcheting up pressure on Moscow, as the US believes Sunday’s vote violates the Ukraine’s

sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Earlier this week, the White House indicated that Moscow would be booted out of the Group of Eight (G8) industrialized nations over the controversy, and a bill is working through US Congress to enact financial sanctions on Russia.

US President Barack Obama said Friday he still hoped that “there is a diplomatic solution to be found,” but that “the United States and Europe stand united, not only in its message about the Ukrainian sovereignty but also that there will be consequences if, in fact, that sovereignty continues to be violated.”

Xinhua



Eleventh-ranked maegashira Osunaarashi of Egypt (R) thrusts down 14th-ranked maegashira Masunoyama at Bodymaker Colosseum in Osaka on 15 March, 2014, the seventh day of the 15-day tournament. The first sumo wrestler from Africa collected a seventh consecutive win.

KYODO NEWS

Slovak PM Fico, political novice advance to run-off presidential vote

PRAGUE, 16 March — Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico and political newcomer Andrej Kiska won the most votes in the first round of a presidential election on Saturday, setting up a run-off that will either cement the ruling party’s power or usher in an independent.

A Fico victory in a second-round vote on 29 March would give his centre-left Smer party full control of all the main power centers, even if the Slovak constitution does not grant the president himself a huge political role.

Fico, who has led the central European country

since sweeping a parliamentary election in 2012, won 28 percent of the vote to Kiska’s 24 percent on Saturday, a smaller margin

than opinion polls had indicated.

Kiska, a 51-year-old businessman-turned-philanthropist, has seen his

chances grow with voters worried over giving Fico too much power. The Smer party already has a parliamentary majority and runs the government without the need of a coalition.

Fico would have to give up his post of prime minister if he wins, but his party would replace him with a Smer nominee.

Fico, 49, took Slovakia into the euro zone in 2009 and has kept the country of 5.5 million friendly to investors despite levying extra taxes on banks and utilities.

The president has the power to name or approve some of the main figures in

the country’s prosecution and judicial branches, and this right has led to political clashes in the past.

Rule of law is a key concern for investors.

Slovakia has lured big foreign manufacturers such as carmakers Kia and Volkswagen, which have helped keep growth at decent levels even as others in central Europe slipped into recession amid the euro zone crisis. Analysts say Fico, the favorite going into the election with a 9-15 point lead in most opinion polls, would be tempted to increase the powers of the presidency if he wins.

Reuters



Candidate for the presidential election Andrej Kiska arrives at a party election centre to observe the ongoing election results in Bratislava on 15 March, 2014.

REUTERS

Brunei to hold Energy Exhibition 2014 focusing on efficiency, conservation

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, 16 March — The first-ever Energy Exhibition 2014, which will showcase new energy-related technologies, products and appliances, will be held here from 24 to 29 March. With the theme “Energy Efficiency and Conservation (EEC)”, the Energy Exhibition 2014 will act as an awareness programme by EDPMO that aims to educate and encourage members of the public to conserve energy for a sustainable future.

According to the EDPMO’s website, the exhibition will feature relevant government agencies, major oil and gas operators, international and local vendors, non-governmental organizations and those from the transport sector such as car dealers that have hybrid models. The Energy Exhibition 2014, organized by the Energy Department at the Brunei’s Prime Minis-

ter’s Office (EDPMO), will also be used as a platform for Energy Club students to present their findings on the effectiveness of an inverter air conditioner as an energy-saving appliance.

The Energy Club students are from the Science, Technology and Environment Partnership (STEP) Centre of the Ministry of Education. Through their study, the students will determine the best temperature setting for the air conditioners in each school.

In supporting Brunei’s Vision 2035, the exhibition is expected to help international companies explore business opportunities that will produce a dynamic and sustainable economy. As the first exhibition of its kind, it also hoped to educate and encourage people to make a change by switching to affordable, energy-efficient products.

Xinhua

NATO websites hit in cyber attack over Crimea stance

BRUSSELS/LONDON, 16 March — Unidentified hackers brought down several public NATO websites with cyber attacks on Saturday, the alliance said, in what appeared the latest escalation in cyberspace over growing tensions over Crimea. A group calling itself “cyber berkut” said the attack had been carried out by patriotic Ukrainians angry over what they saw as NATO interference in their country.

The claim, made at www.cyber-berkut.org, could not immediately be independently verified. Cyber berkut is a reference to the feared and since disbanded riot squads used by the government of ousted pro-Russian Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich.

As well as the main NATO website www.nato.int, the website of a NATO-affiliated cyber security center in Estonia was also affected.

The alliance said none of its essential systems were compromised. Occupied by Russian forces for over a week, the largely Russian-speaking Crimea holds a referendum on seceding from Ukraine to join Russia on Sunday. NATO states have opposed the move, calling it unconstitutional

and effectively an annexation of Ukraine’s sovereign territory.

NATO spokeswoman Oana Lungescu said the websites had been taken down by distributed denial-of-service (DDoS) attacks.

“Our experts working to restore normal function,” she said via the social networking site Twitter. “No operational impact... The attack hasn’t affected the integrity of NATO’s systems.” She made no comment on where the attack might have originated.

John Bumgarner, chief technology officer at the U.S. Cyber Consequences Unit, a non-profit research institute, said initial evidence strongly suggested that these cyber attacks were launched by pro-Russian sympathizers.

“One could equate these cyber attacks against NATO as kicking sand into one’s face,” he said.

Tensions between Moscow and the West have been rising steadily since Russia intervened following the ouster of Yanukovich. Ukrainian and Russian websites have both been targets for cyber attacks in recent weeks but this appeared the first major attack on a Western website since the crisis began.—Reuters

Jade Rabbit: China’s robotic lunar adventurer

BEIJING, 16 March — In China’s previous space missions, astronauts like Yang Liwei emerged as heroes, but in the country’s third lunar exploration, a robot has unexpectedly grabbed the nation’s heart.

Lunar rover Yutu, or Jade Rabbit, roused from its third lunar night slumber on Friday, stretching its wings in the sun after its dormancy in temperatures as low as minus 180 degrees Celsius. People on Earth were relieved by its greeting on an online diary posted under the name “Lunar Rover Yutu.”

“Don’t poke me... I’m already up!” the six-foot robot told the 600,000-strong followers of the blog, who had been crossing their fingers that the rover would survive its second sleep since a mechanical abnormality was spotted at the end of January.

“Any carrot pie for me?” Yutu asked upon waking on 14 March, a day celebrated by mathematics

enthusiasts as “Pi Day” in honor of the famous ratio’s first few digits, 3.14.

Named after the pet rabbit of moon goddess Chang’e from Chinese legend, the lunar rover largely stayed out of the spotlight until news came that a mechanical control abnormality prior to its second dormancy might cripple the

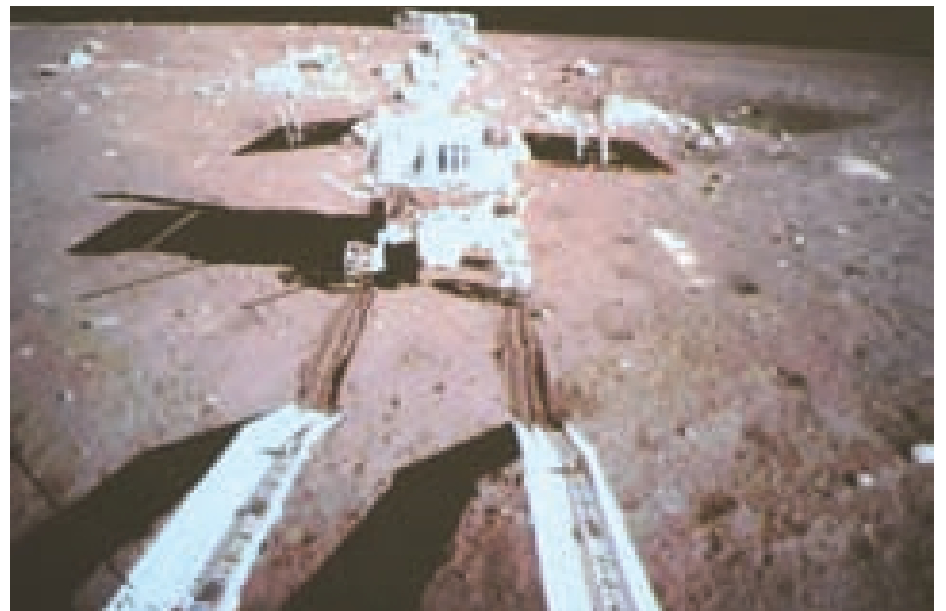
robot. The news meant that Yutu might never wake up when dawn greeted the moon.

The vehicle had been on the moon for 42 days and traveled for more than 100 meters when its second lunar night, equivalent to a fortnight on Earth, fell on 25 January. The mechanical errors posed a survival

challenge for the country’s first moon rover.

Online communities worried about the fate of Jade Rabbit after a post on Sina Weibo, China’s answer to Twitter, said, “Ah, I’m broken,” telling people that the rover “might not make it through this moon night.”

Xinhua



Jade Rabbit

Japan’s Mizuho in US, Canada suits over Mt Gox bitcoin losses

TOKYO, 16, March — Mizuho Bank, one of Japan’s largest lenders, has become ensnared in North American legal fallout from Mt. Gox, once the world’s biggest bitcoin exchange, which collapsed last month after losing nearly half a billion dollars worth of customers’ digital currency. Lawsuits in the United States and Canada represent a new legal front - and a deep-pocketed defendant — in the battle over Mt Gox, which claims hackers stole huge amounts of its own and its customers’ assets.

Mizuho, the core unit

of Mizuho Financial Group Inc, Japan’s second-biggest “megabank” by assets, was added as a defendant on Friday to an existing US lawsuit against MtGox for allegedly aiding in a fraud by providing banking services to the exchange.

Also on Friday, Mizuho was named in a class-action lawsuit in Canada against Mt Gox, alleging a lengthy security breach at Mt Gox resulted in “the pilfering of millions of dollars’ worth of its users’ bitcoins. A Mizuho spokeswoman in Tokyo declined comment on Sunday on the lawsuits, filed in

Chicago federal court and the Ontario Superior Court of Justice.

Tokyo-based Mt Gox closed its virtual doors on 25 February and three days later filed for Chapter 11-style bankruptcy protection with a Japanese court.

The company said it had likely lost all 750,000 customer bitcoins it was holding, as well as 100,000 of its own and 2.8 billion yen in cash. That represents \$567 million of vanished assets at current market prices, as well as about 7 percent of the bitcoins in circulation.

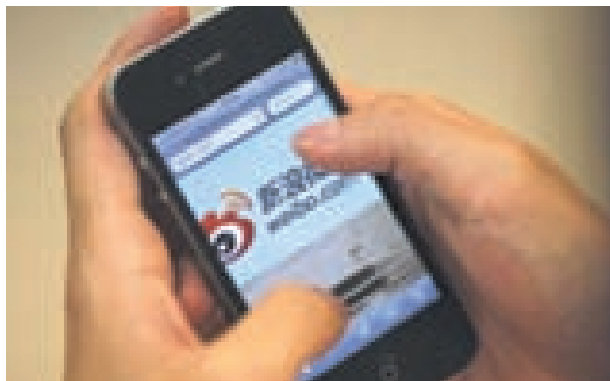
Mt Gox blames

systematic attacks on what it acknowledges was lax computer security. Customers—more than 99 percent of whom are non-Japanese — suspect a massive fraud.

On Monday, Mt. Gox filed for a US Chapter 15 bankruptcy, which shields the company from lawsuits in US courts as the Tokyo case proceeds.

Mizuho held non-bitcoin currency on behalf of Tokyo-based Mt Gox and its customers, according to the amended US complaint by Gregory Greene, an Illinois resident who has said he lost \$25,000 when Mt-Gox shut down.—Reuters

Sina Weibo files for \$500 million US IPO



A man holds an iPhone as he visits Sina’s Weibo microblogging site in Shanghai on 29 May, 2012.

REUTERS

SAN FRANCISCO, 16 March — Twitter-like messaging service Weibo Corp filed on Friday to raise

\$500 million via a US initial public offering, as Chinese companies flock to the American market in record

numbers to take advantage of soaring valuations.

Weibo, owned by Sina Corp, becomes the latest Chinese Internet giant to tap US markets, following on the heels of search service Baidu and its own corporate parent. Alibaba, which owns a stake in Weibo, is expected to raise about \$15 billion in New York this year, in the highest-profile Internet IPO since Facebook’s in 2012.

But underscoring challenges facing Internet firms operating in a heavily censored and tightly controlled media environment, Weibo warned investors in its Fri-

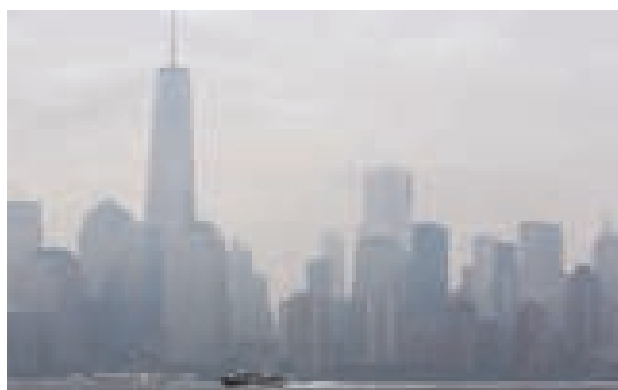
day IPO filing about uncertainty arising from Chinese government regulation.

It highlighted in particular a regulation that came into effect in September, under which Internet users who knowingly make or share information considered defamatory or false could face up to three years’ jail time in China.

“The implementation of this newly promulgated judicial interpretation may have a significant and adverse effect on the traffic of our platform and discourage the creation of user generated content,” the company said in its filing.—Reuters

HEALTH & BUSINESS

New York takes London's crown as top financial centre



Ferry boats navigate through flowing ice on the Hudson River past the New York City skyline as seen from Jersey City, New Jersey on 10 Jan, 2014.

REUTERS

LONDON, 16 March —New York has knocked London from its position as the world's leading global financial center after seven years, according to the Global Financial Centres Index compiled by London-based consultancy Z/Yen. London slipped from the top of the global rankings, scoring 784 against 786 for New York, because a series of own goals had tarnished its reputation, the report said. "London sees the largest fall in the top 50 centres," said Mark

Yeandle, report author and associate director of Z/Yen, in a statement on the group's website.

"This seems to be based on a number of factors including ... uncertainty over Europe, the perception that London might be becoming less welcoming to foreigners and perceived levels of market manipulation."

Hong Kong and Singapore took third and fourth spots respectively, the same as a year ago, the survey showed.

But the gap between the "Big Four" and the chasing pack, led by Zurich, Tokyo and Seoul, was narrowing, it said.

Middle East centres, such as Qatar, Dubai and Riyadh, which took places 26, 29 and 31

respectively, continued to rise in the index, while 23 of the 27 European centres declined in rank.

TheCityUK, a lobby group for British financial and professional services, said London slipping from the top spot should be a wake-up call for Europe's policymakers.

"London is Europe's financial center and is hugely important to the continent's ability to finance growth and create jobs by attracting global investors," said Chris Cummings, chief executive of TheCityUK.

The Global Financial Centres Index is compiled from assessments completed by 3,246 financial services professionals, Z/Yen said.

Reuters

Emaar to list shopping malls at stock exchange in UAE

DUBAI, 16 March — Emaar Properties, the biggest developer in the Middle East by market value, said here on Saturday it plans to list up to 25 percent of its shopping malls and retail business on the stock market in Dubai.

According to the media release, Emaar aims to raise between eight to nine billion Dirham or two to 2.4 billion US dollars through the planned secondary offering of its retail unit.

Emaar group is listed on the local bourse Dubai financial market (DFM) and considered a bellwether stock. The release did not disclose if the secondary will be launched on the DFM or on its sister market Nasdaq Dubai, the only international bourse by regulation in the Middle East.

Emaar's retail

business which includes the world's biggest shopping center the Dubai Mall that hosted 75 million visitors in 2013, generated last year a revenues worth 2.837 billion Dirham (772 million dollars), representing an increase of 20 percent. The Dubai Mall is located adjacent to the world's tallest tower Burj Khalifa which was also developed by Emaar.

Mohamed Alabbar, the chairman of Emaar, said: "the proposed listing of Emaar malls and retail and the distribution of funds raised through the sale of shares as dividend underlines our commitment and gratitude to our shareholders, including the government of Dubai, for their unwavering support to the company since its inception in 1997."—Xinhua

Children at scandal-hit kindergartens show "abnormal" health results

XI'AN, 16 March — The health indexes of 65 children who attended two kindergartens in China accused of illegally administering antiviral drugs were found to be "abnormal" during a health examination, local government told Xinhua on Sunday.

However, the abnormalities were not consistent from child to child.

"We haven't found that the 65 samples shared common abnormal index," said an official with the health department under the government of Xi'an City, capital of northwest

China's Shaanxi Province.

The official said he wouldn't give further comment before health examination of all 1,455 children is completed and professionals have finished studying the "abnormal" cases.

By Saturday, 664 children had undergone the free examination in six hospitals. The examinations started on Wednesday.

The official promised the comprehensive examination results would be published in time.

The Hongji Xincheng and Fengyun kindergartens in Xi'an are accused of

having administered antiviral drugs to children since 2008.

Investigation has so far confirmed that the kindergartens gave children moroxydine ABOB to prevent colds and enhance resistance to improve their attendance.

Police detained the legal representative, principals and doctors of the kindergartens for illegal medical practice.

Police are investigating the sources of the prescription antiviral drugs, as well as the quantity and scale of their use.

It is suspected that the kindergartens bought the drugs under the name of a medical organization.

Meanwhile, a similar scandal emerged at another private kindergarten in northeast China's Jilin Province.

Investigation confirmed that Fanglin kindergarten in Jilin City had given some children the prescription medicine moroxydine ABOB to prevent them from catching colds and other infectious diseases, local authorities announced on Saturday afternoon.—Xinhua

Philippine gov't to distribute condoms in capital to prevent HIV/AIDS

MANILA, 16 March — The Philippine Department of Health (DOH) launched on Friday a massive campaign to distribute condoms in leisure business establishments in Metro Manila, in a move to prevent HIV/AIDS in the country as the confirmed cases of the disease rapidly increased in January.

Undersecretary Teodora Herbosa said that under the campaign, each of the establishments will be given a box full of free condoms and flyers where essential information about HIV/AIDS can be read. Customers can get from the box, which will be strategically placed in the entrance or front desk.

The campaign was firstly launched in Quezon, a city of Philippine capital of Metro Manila, because it has the biggest number of AIDS patients and asymptomatic cases, said Herbosa, citing that in Quezon City alone, there were 54 asymptomatic and six confirmed cases last January.

"We will be flooding

Metro Manila with condoms if it is the only way we can prevent the rapid spread of HIV/AIDS," she said. "It is a critical and the only effective element in the prevention and control of the disease and available tool in reducing the transmission of sexual infections and diseases," she added.

Xinhua

Polytechnic institutes play key role in Finnish economic development

HELSINKI, 16 March — Although Finland's economic base is evolving more and more towards knowledge-based sectors, the country's polytechnics continue to answer labor market needs and promote regional development.

According to the latest data on graduate employment released by Statistics Finland, the weak economic climate following the global recession continued to erode employment prospects.

The numbers showed that 85 percent of men and 87 percent of women with polytechnic degrees were able to find jobs in 2012, the latest year for which figures are available.

Having been introduced in the 1990s, the Finnish polytechnic—or

University of Applied Science as they prefer to be called—is an alternative to traditional university education that has established itself as an important institution providing quality training that is highly responsive to the labour market and local development.

Ritva Laakso-Manninen is head of the Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences, which she says is the largest business-oriented polytechnic in Scandinavia, with 10,500 students and 650 staff members on six campuses.

According to Laakso-Manninen, intimate ties with the local business community are central to the success of Haaga-Helia graduates in the world of work.

Xinhua

Ten anti-aging food



1. Broccoli
2. White gourd
3. Onion
4. Cabbage
5. Carrot
6. Tomato
7. Spinach
8. Mushroom
9. Coriander
10. Orange

Xinhua



A woman, named Urmila Sharma, gave birth to what seemed to be a girl with two heads in northern India.

XINHUA

PERSPECTIVES

Monday, 17 March, 2014

Honour to those who deserve it

As Myanmar is a Buddhist country, followers have been promoting, purifying and perpetuating the Sasana, with one important ritual being the presentation of religious titles.

In other words, honour is given to whom honour is due, which is an act of auspiciousness.

Historical records say that the tradition of conferring religious titles on monks, nuns and laymen began in the Bagan era, and continued throughout the Sagaing, Pinya, Inwa, Toungoo,

Nyaungyan and Konboun periods.

The religious titles ancient Myanmar kings conferred included Agga Maha Pandita, Agga Pandita, Disapamokkha, Sirimaha Çatu Ringabhala, Sudhamma Maha Sami, Rajaguru, Maha Dhamma Raja Guru, Maha Dhamma Raja Dhiraja Guru and Dhammasenapati.

Every year the government in office is also conferring religious titles on monks, nuns and laypersons for their outstanding accomplishments in Pariyatti and Patipatti. On 15 March this year, or the fullmoon day of Taboung, the government held the religious ceremony in a grand pavilion at Uppatasanti Pagoda of Nay Pyi Taw.

At the ceremony, President U Thein Sein and officials conferred religious titles on 108 monks of Myanmar and 15 monks from abroad totaling 123 monks, as well as on nine nuns, 10 laymen and 13 laywomen.

When Myanmar was under British rule, the colonial government conferred only one title and that was Agga Maha Pandita. Leti Sayadaw of Monywa was the first to receive this title. After the nation regained independence, the then government added one more title—the Abhidhaja Maha Guru title. And during the Tatmadaw government, there were four categories of titles for missionary services. The titles are an important gesture and symbolic for the huge importance of Buddhism. Due to the tradition of giving honour to whom honour is due, Buddhism will continue to flourish in this country.

Write for us

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

Exports of beans and pulses rise rapidly



Union Minister U Win Myint observing beans and pulses on display at Merchants' Association in Yangon.—MNA

YANGON, 16 March—Exports of beans and pulses have increased as production has been on the rise in Myanmar following a relaxation of restrictions on agriculture, said Union Minister U Win Myint at the meeting with a Merchants' Association in Yangon on Sunday.

More than 1.17 million tons of beans and pulses

were exported in the period from January to the end of February, a whopping increase from the 1.5 million tons exported in the 2013-2014 fiscal year, he added.

He warned officials in the sector not to manipulate the market, saying that action will be taken against those who get involved in wrongdoings. Collaboration is key to boost trade

and promoting market shares, he said.

The Union Minister continued to say that plans are underway to hold talks with US officials for the second time to further discuss the US Generalized System of Preferences, with officials saying they hope a Myanmar Trade Organization will be established in the future.—MNA

Major housing project planned in Yangon



Yangon Region Chief Minister U Myint Swe cuts ribbon to introduce housing project of United GP Development Co Ltd.—MNA

YANGON, 16 March—United GP Development Co., Ltd said on Friday it is planning a housing project that will see the construction of 68 buildings in Yangon.

Officials from six construction companies signed an agreement during the ceremony, which was attended by Yangon Region Chief Minister U Myint Swe, Yangon Mayor U Hla Myint, Singaporean Am-

Myanmar Golf Tour-2014 award ceremony held

NAY PYI TAW, 16 March—An award ceremony was held for the first leg of the 2014 Myanmar Golf Tour at the Royal Myanmar Golf Club in Nay Pyi Taw.

A total of 49 golfers—23 professionals, 20 amateurs, and six women golfers—participated in the final matches.

At the ceremony, MGF Vice-President U Min Thein presented prizes to the winners in the amateur event.

The general manager of Ayeyawady Bank Ltd presented K 1 million to professional golfer Thint Zin, a Hole in One award for the third day event.

Maj-Gen Zarni Win from the Ministry of Defence awarded first, second and third prizes in the Women event and Adjutant-General Lt-Gen Khin Zaw Oo in the Men's.

Union Minister U Tint Hsan awarded first, second and third prize winners in

the professional-level golf event. First-prize winner Soe Kyaw Naing was presented K 2 million plus K 2.5 million by Ayeyawady Bank Ltd.

Myanmar Golf Tour-2014 was mainly organized by Myanmar Golf Federation and Myanmar PGA. Its main sponsors were Ayeyawady Bank, United Amara Bank, Myawady Bank, Asia Green Development Bank and Inwa Bank.—MNA



Union Minister U Tint Hsan awards prize to winners in the professional-level golf event.—MNA

Travel Tip: ...

(from page 16)

hotter in Myanmar, the number has decreased to 100 per day even during weekends.

According to restaurant

bassador to Myanmar Mr. Robert Chua.

The CEO & Founder of United GP Development Co., discussed details of the projects which have not been made available to the public.—MNA

owners at the hot spring resort, among the visitors are tourists from other regions and some foreigners.

Most restaurants have not had any customers in a while, but they said most of their income is secured during the busy winter months. Some can make between K 50,000 to K 100,000 per day during peak season.

The owners of the restaurants consider their income as a barometer.

“The resort will become more popular in the future,” said Ma Moe Moe, one of the restaurant owners.

Entrance fee to the resort is K 500 per person, with accommodation available for K 20,000 per night. The resort has three renovated bungalows. The hot spring can be reached within one hour by car from Kin-tha Junction, with the resort located about 27 miles north-east of Nay Pyi Taw.

LOCAL NEWS

Consecration of Shwekyeena Pagoda in Bhamo from 17-26 March



BHAMO, 16 March—As part of an annual Pagoda festival, the 142nd consecration of the Shwekyeena Pagoda in Bhamo Township will be held from 17 to 26 March on a grand scale, according to the pagoda board of trustees.

Officials said over 400 booths around the pagoda will provide entertainment and catering, with the Shwe Mandalay theatrical drama troupe expected to perform for 10 nights at the festivities.

Wellwishers from 50

villages will make offerings of rice to the monks and nuns from the district on 27 March.

The pagoda, one of the ancient pagodas in Kachin State, is located in Shwekyeena Village.

Simikhon-Nan Yi

Solar panels donated in Indaw Tsp

INDAW, 16 March—Solar panels were donated to the General Administration Department in Indaw Township on 15 March.

The solar panels will be used for electrification

of the villages in the township.

Sagaing Region Government paid for half of the cost of the 350 solar panels, with the donor of the others panels unknown at this

stage.

A total of 3,684 of the 660 households in the villages will profit from the solar panels and have electricity, officials said.

U Ko Min (Indaw)

New bridge to be built at Meiktila Lake

MEIKTILA, 16 March—The Ministry of Construction is planning to build a new bridge at Meiktila Lake.

Union Minister for Construction U Kyaw Lwin and officials have recently paid an inspection tour of

the site. The new bridge will be completed next year and is expected to be 600 feet long. Upon its comple-



Census-taking process explained to locals in Indaw Township

INDAW, 16 March—Officials gave talks on the upcoming census in Indaw Township of Katha District, Sagaing Region on 15 March, conveying to locals the importance of the country's first census in more

than three decades.

Deputy Administrator U Min Min Latt of Indaw Township General Administration Department and Head of Township Immigration and National Registration Department U

Aung Thu urged the public to cooperate in order for the census to be taken as accurately as possible, with the data used for further development of the country. The ceremony held at the hall of Township General Ad-

ministration Department in Indaw was also attended by the medical staff and ward/village administrators.

The national census will be taken from 30 March through 10 April, officials said.—*Ko Min (Indaw)*

Artists and locals celebrate Rakhine sand pagoda festival

SITTWAY, 16 March—The traditional sand pagoda festival Thebon Zedi was held in Rakhine, with artists creating sand sculptures along the beach in the coastal town of Sittway, attracting hundreds of visitors.

Following the recital

of Buddhist verses, around 1,000 visitors built intricate and sculptures showing, with one artist explaining the fascination of the festival.

“We make pagodas using only sand, which doesn't cost anything and everyone can participate.

We feel happy to celebrate the festival and want to disseminate facts about the festival to other countries,” he said.

Rakhine people have been celebrating Thebon Zedi sand pagoda festival since 2005.

Laywady Tun Saw Khaing



Library in Myingyan Township gets book donation

MYINGYAN, 16 March—A library in Simikhon Village in Myingyan received book donations on Saturday, with Head of the Myingyan

tion, locals will also have more access to public services, officials said without giving further details.

Chantha (Meiktila)

District Information and Public Relations Department Daw Hnin Yi donating several books.

Librarian U Pyay Htay reported that fees

are collected from library members to get money for the trust-fund of the library.

U Zaw Min Naing (Myingyan)

Renovation of primary school in Nay Pyi Taw completed

NAY PYI TAW, 16 March—Renovation of the Basic Education Primary School in Wunna Theikdi Ward, Zabuthiri Township in Nay Pyi Taw Council Area has been completed, with parliamentarians visiting the facility.

A ceremony was held to mark the overhaul, with Amyotha Hluttaw Representative U Khin Maung Htay and Pyithu Hluttaw Representative Daw Sandar Min among other officials attending.

Ko Pauk (Okkamyay)



HOLIDAY-MAKERS TAKE RELAXATION:

Female globetrotters enjoying dances together with local children in Maha Bandoora Park at downtown Yangon on Fullmoon Day of Tabaung, 15 March evening.

PHOTO: SOE WIN (SP)

Magnitude 6.3 earthquake strikes northwestern Peru

LIMA, 16 March — A magnitude 6.3 earthquake struck northwestern Peru near its border with Ecuador on Saturday, the US Geological Survey reported.

Peru's National Civil Defence Institute (INDECI) said it had not received reports of serious damage or injuries, and authorities did not issue a tsunami alert.

The quake struck at 6:51 pm local time (2351 GMT). Its epicentre was 28 miles south-southwest of Piura and it occurred at a depth of 6.1 miles, the USGS said.

Brazilian construction company Odebrecht SA said its \$700 million irrigation project in the area was unaffected.

Still, the quake jolted the northern coastal region of Peru, with local media reporting that some people ran into the street after the tremor, fearing their homes could cave in.

A witness on local radio RPP said the cross on the dome of a local church fell off.

The quake was also felt in parts of neighboring Ecuador, according to Peruvian newspaper *El Comercio*.—Reuters



A flag-raising ceremony is held in front of the building of the Parliament on the National Day commemorating the 1848 Hungarian Revolution against the Habsburg monarchy in Budapest, Hungary on 15 March, 2014. —XINHUA

Rebels say deployment of regional troops to South Sudan 'ill advised'

ADDIS ABABA, 16 March — South Sudan's rebels on Saturday criticized plans by east Africa's regional bloc to deploy troops to South Sudan, questioning its neutrality.

Neighbouring states fear that unrest in the world's newest country could spill beyond its borders and destabilize a volatile region that has in recent years enjoyed strong economic growth.

Leaders from the IGAD bloc agreed on Thursday to deploy troops to enforce a much-violated ceasefire between government and rebels, though no details were provided about the size of the contingent.

The force was also

given the job of protecting South Sudan's oilfields, on which the government depends for almost all its revenue. Oil production has been reduced by a third since violence broke out on 15 December.

Rebels attending faltering peace talks in Ethiopia criticized IGAD for failing to secure the withdrawal of the Ugandan troops who are supporting President Salva Kiir's government. Uganda is also a member of IGAD.

"We consider this decision to be ill-advised," delegation head Taban Deng said in a statement, adding that the deployment of regional troops had not been mentioned in the

negotiations that led to the ceasefire agreement in January.

"The UN is an over-arching and an inclusive

body. Why should another force be created and deployed, if it has the same intentions as the UNMISS peacekeeping force?"

Taban said.

The UN Security Council approved plans late last year to boost the strength of the UN mission in South Sudan to 12,500 troops and 1,323 police, from its previous mandate of 7,000 troops and 900 police.

The talks in Addis Ababa, due to resume on 20 March, have made little headway beyond the ceasefire.

Major sticking points are rebel demands that four political detainees jailed on suspicion of plotting a coup with former vice president Riek Machar be freed, and the withdrawal of the Ugandan troops.

Reuters



South Sudan's President Salva Kiir attends a session during the 25th Extraordinary Summit of the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) on South Sudan in Ethiopia's capital Addis Ababa on 13 March, 2014. — REUTERS

Algerian troops in desert city to calm escalating violence

ALGIERS, 16 March — Algeria has decided to deploy more anti-riot troops to cope with escalating sectarian violence in the southeastern desert city of Ghardaia, local officials said on Saturday.

The governor of Ghardaia Province said more troops have been sent in to restore calm in the city, but he did not provide the

detailed number of the backup forces. Earlier Wednesday 26 anti-riot officers and 16 citizens were injured when violence erupted again in this desert city between the Chaamba community of Arab origin and Mozabite Berbers of the Muslim Ibadi sect, the governor said.

About 53 stores, 11 homes and 16 vehicles were destroyed or burned

on Thursday and Friday during the escalating clashes. Violence between Mozabite and Arabs started in December last year in different parts of the city and in neighbouring localities. After weeks of clashes, a shaken truce led by the government and elders of the two disputing parties was reached.

A security source in

Ghardaia previously said that as many as 14 police units had been deployed in the city. In all, more than 2,000 anti-riot troops have been assigned the mission of restoring law and order.

So far, more than ten people have been killed during these clashes. About one hundred stores, farms and homes were set on fire.

Xinhua

Liberals win state election in Tasmania

CANBERRA, 16 March — The Liberals won Saturday's state election in Australia's island state of Tasmania by a large margin, ending the 16-year rule by the Labour, election results showed on Sunday. The Liberals led by Will Hodgman have won at least 14 seats in the 25-member Assembly, taking government for the first time since losing the 1998 state election.

With 75 percent of the vote counted in most electorates, voters ended four years of minority Labor-Greens government with a statewide swing of about 13 percent to the Liberals.

Hodgman thanked Labor voters who had switched to his party for the first time.

"I extend my sincere thanks to you — thank you for your confidence; we will repay you," he said. Labor's defeat brings an end to the nation's longest-serving administration.

New South Wales Labor Leader John Robertson said both Tasmanian and South Australian governments have suffered from being in office so long.

Federal Labour leader Bill Shorten said in a press release that Lara Giddings and the Labor team in Tasmania "have much to be proud of."

"Tasmania is a stronger, fairer society for their contribution. I am confident Labour will rebuild and be a strong and united opposition — that is what Tasmanians need," he said.

Xinhua



Somali security forces and residents gather at the scene of the car bomb that hit the parking lot of Maka Almukrama hotel in Mogadishu, Somalia, on 15 March, 2014. At least three people were injured Saturday after a car bomb went off at the parking lot of a hotel in the Somali capital Mogadishu, police and witnesses said.

XINHUA

Senior Chinese military official visits Cambodia on ties

PHNOM PENH, 16 March — Sun Jianguo, deputy chief of general staff of the Chinese People's Liberation Army and chairman of the China Institute for International Strategic Studies, arrived here on Saturday night for a three-day visit to further enhance bilateral ties and cooperation.

At the Phnom Penh International Airport, Sun Jianguo was cordially welcomed by Gen Eth Sarath, deputy commander-in-chief of the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces (RCAF), and senior colonel Wang Ximao, military attache of the Chinese Embassy in Cambodia,

as well as other dignitaries. "The visit is very important to further strengthen and expand long-lasting military relations and cooperation between our two countries," Eth Sarath said at a greeting ceremony at the airport, expressing sincere and heartfelt thanks to China for continued support to the RCAF in human resources development.

Meanwhile, he also extended deep concerns over the safety of the passengers aboard the Malaysia Airlines flight MH370, which vanished over south Vietnam on 8 March, and expressed condolences to the Chinese

government and the family members of the passengers on board the missing plane.

During the visit, Sun Jianguo is scheduled to meet separately with RCAF's commander-in-chief Gen. Pol Saroeun and Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Gen. Tea Banh on Monday.—Xinhua

Sun Jianguo (L front), deputy chief of general staff of the Chinese People's Liberation Army and chairman of the China Institute for International Strategic Studies, arrives in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, on 15 March, 2014.—XINHUA



Somali President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud (2nd from R) tours the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park in Hiroshima on 15 March, 2014. Mohamud arrived in Japan on 11 March for a five-day visit.—KYODO NEWS

China hails Sri Lanka's rapid post war progress

COLOMBO, 16 March — The Chinese government on Saturday hailed what it noted as considerable progress following the end of the war in Sri Lanka.

Chinese Ambassador to Sri Lanka, Wu Jianghao, speaking at the opening of the second phase of a Chinese funded highway, said that notable development can be seen in the entire country.

Wu said that over the past two years since he has been ambassador to

Sri Lanka, he was able to personally witness the development of the country, which was not confined to capital Colombo. "People used to ask me if Sri Lanka is a country which is not progressing. I tell them Sri Lanka is progressing at a rapid pace," he said.

The Chinese Ambassador said that the opening of the second phase of the southern highway will help further boost the economy and tourism in Sri Lanka.

Xinhua

31 cops injured in S Philippine road mishap

MANILA, 16 March — At least 31 members of the Philippine police elite force were hurt when a vehicle carrying them overturned in a curve road in southern Philippines early on Saturday, local police said.

Police Office of Southern Philippine Province of Sarangani said that a Mitsubishi Elf with 36 personnel of the Special Action Force of the Philippine National Police (PNP-SAF)

on board was traversing the national highway in the province's Kiamba town before dawn.

However, the driver lost control of the steering wheel at around 2:50 am local time, causing the vehicle to overturn.

As a result, 31 PNP-SAF personnel sustained injuries and they were brought to different hospitals, while five others were unharmed, the police said.

Xinhua

Japanese "Thunder" strikes Taiwan

TAIPEI, 16 March — Taiwanese are not particularly fond of chocolate, but now things have changed with the introduction of Japan's "Thunder" series of chocolate bars.

Since the 7-Eleven convenience store chain introduced the "Big Thunder" in September last year, sales have surged to a new one-day record of 100,000 pieces, making it one of the much talked about confection on the Internet.

The chain has sold over 3 million pieces since September and its sudden popularity has helped the sale of "Black Thunder" grow twofold, said Ada Fan, a public relations specialist of the chain.

Japanese confections are usually popular in Taiwan, though few Taiwanese

associate Japan with chocolate.

The 7-Eleven chain first introduced the Meiji Meltykiss chocolates in 2008 and more recently the Tiro-Choco chocolates, along with other exotic chocolates from Europe.

Taiwan imported over 4.6 million kilograms of chocolate products from abroad last year, including 212,000 kg from Japan, which trailed the United States and Russia.

Seeing the popularity of the Thunder chocolate bars, Japan Medical, a retail chain store that sells Japanese products in Taiwan, began to import the products late last year. The dramatic demand in the Taiwanese market has surprised Yuraku Confectionery Co in Japan, which has had trouble keeping up

with orders.

Japan Medical placed its first order in December, but it did not get that shipment until the end of last month, said Maggie Liu, the company's marketing manager in Taiwan.

After the products hit the shelves, they were sold out in three days, she said, adding that they have ordered more and its 14 shops should be able to get them next week.

Yuraku Confectionery launched the "Thunder" series of chocolate bars in 1994. They are available in different fillings covered with black or white chocolate. The newest line of the product is "Pink Thunder," black chocolate with strawberry filing, specially designed for Valentine's Day.

Kyodo News



A woman poses for photos at a grain booth during the second Beijing agriculture carnival held in the Changping district of Beijing, capital of China, on 15 March, 2014. More than 500 new species of agricultural products were presented during the carnival, which kicked off on Saturday.—XINHUA

Indian supreme court stays death sentence for 2 convicts in Delhi gang rape

NEW DELHI, 16 March — Indian Supreme Court on Saturday stayed the death penalty till 31 March of two of the four convicts in the December 2012 sensational Delhi gang rape.

The two men, identified as Mukesh and Pawan, were two of the four men

convicted in the case. They had approached the Supreme Court after the Delhi high court on Thursday upheld the death sentence for all four men convicted by a trial court.

Delhi high court Thursday confirmed the death penalty awarded to

the four men convicted for the gang rape and murder of a 23-year-old medical student on a moving bus in December 2012.

The gang rape triggered widespread protests over violence against women in India.

Xinhua

Ancient Fengjing charms visitors with culture

BEIJING, 16 March — Located in the southwestern tip of the city, Fengjing water town boasts a history of more than 1,500 years. Local farmers drink home-made yellow rice wine, wear homespun cloth, paint pictures on clay ovens and make paper-cuttings to decorate windows and lanterns for festivals. Known as the birthplace of the Jinshan farmer paintings, the art village in Fengjing Old Town displays an array of paintings created by farmer artists from Shanghai and Jiangsu and Zhejiang Provinces.

The Museum of Folk Marriage Traditions was recently opened and is free to visitors. Located near the village's 700-year-old Zhihe Bridge and covering an area of more than 400 square meters, the museum displays more than 600 folk marriage items from the late Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) to the early 1990s.

These include a bridal sedan chair, beautifully carved wedding beds, red-painted nightstools, camphorwood chests, big red wedding dresses and various marriage certificates from different times.

In Fengjing, visitors can also relive childhood memories through various games, including spinning tops, hoop rolling, paper-fold planes, rubber band skipping and hunt-the-thimble. Visitors to Fengjing can get a town passport. If they can collect all the stamps of the water town's 11 scenic spots, such as the former residence of the artist Cheng Shifa and the old East Region Fire Station, they receive a gift.

Xinhua

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**THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR
MINISTRY OF ENERGY
MYANMA OIL AND GAS ENTERPRISE
(INVITATION FOR OPEN TENDER)
(6/2014)**

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

<u>Sr.No</u>	<u>Tender No</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Remark</u>
(1)	IFB-197(13-14)	Maintenance/Retest Service for CNG Cascade Jumbo Tube	US\$
(2)	IFB-198(13-14)	Spares for AB 100 Well Servicing Truck	US\$
(3)	IFB-199(13-14)	Spares for KB 150 Well Servicing Truck	US\$
(4)	IFB-200(13-14)	Electrical Spares (4)Items for ZJ70LSR-I Rig	US\$
(5)	IFB-201(13-14)	Spares for SAFE Compressor	US\$
(6)	IFB-202(13-14)	Spares for Komatsu Dozer	US\$
(7)	IFB-203(13-14)	Spares for CAT D3512B Engine	US\$
(8)	IFB-204(13-14)	Spares for CAT D3306 DI Engine	US\$
(9)	IFB-205(13-14)	40 Ton Hydraulic Crawler Crane	US\$
(10)	IFB-206(13-14)	4 1/4" & 3 1/2" Square Kelly with Drive Bushing	US\$
(11)	DMP/L-066(13-14)	Spares for F-1000 Rig Pump Ex D3 T2 SR I & II Rig	Ks
(12)	DMP/L-067(13-14)	Reinforcement Hose Pipes	Ks

Tender Closing Date & Time - 9-4-2014,16:30 Hr

Tender Document shall be available during office hours commencing from 13th March, 2014 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

Albanian PM vows to support agricultural development

TIRANA, 16 March — Albanian Prime Minister Edi Rama said on Saturday the government would try the best to promote the development of the country's agriculture.

"The Albanian government will support in every aspect the sector of agriculture to pass from the stage of survival to development and transformation," Rama told a meeting with entrepreneurs from agribusiness held in the city of Lushnja, south of Albania, according to ATA.

Rama was informed by an entrepreneur that after this investment,

Albanian products are delivered to the regional market in "Made in Albania" packaging.

"We have a clear goal based on a new approach towards agriculture. Our objective is not to throw money at a surviving agriculture but to invest on these engines of transformation and entire pathway of agricultural products, to assure any producer that his production will not remain unsold," the prime minister said.

Not only do agriculture and agro-industry make a significant contribution to Albania's GDP,

they are also assessed as the most potential sectors of employment, which still use traditional methods of production and trading, Rama said

The government has a clear vision for development of agriculture by supporting the producer, innovation and investments through all the stages of the output, added Rama.

Bank of Albania suggests that agriculture should be the foundation of the new economic model that the country needs, Governor of the Bank of Albania Ardian Fullani said in Lushnja.—Xinhua

Steiner reappointed as UNEP chief

UNITED NATIONS, 16 March — The UN General Assembly has extended for two years the appointment of Achim Steiner as executive director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), beginning on June 15, 2014, the UN Spokesperson's Office said here Friday.

The General Assembly made the decision following the recommendation of UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, the UN Office said in an emailed message to the press here.

Nominated by the UN secretary-general, Steiner was first elected to a four-year term in 2006, winning re-election in 2010.

Before joining the UNEP, Steiner served as director general of the International Union for Conservation of Nature from 2001 to 2006, and prior to that as secretary general of the World Commission on Dams.

"His professional career has included assignments with governmental, non-governmental and international organizations across the globe, including India, Pakistan, Germany, Zimbabwe, USA, Vietnam, South Africa, Switzerland and Kenya," it said. "He worked both at grassroots level as well as at the highest levels of international policy-making to address the interface

between environmental sustainability, social equity and economic development," it said.

Steiner, a German and Brazilian national, was born in Brazil in 1961. His educational background includes a BA from the University of Oxford as well as an MA from the University of London with specialization in development economics, regional planning, and international development and environment policy.

He also studied at the German Development Institute in Berlin, Germany, as well as the Harvard Business School in the United States.

Xinhua

**Ministry of Energy
Myanma Petroleum Products Enterprise
Invitation for Opened Tender (1/2014)**

1. Open tenders are invited for supply of the following respective items in United State Dollars (CIF Yangon).

<u>Sr.No</u>	<u>Tender No</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Qty</u>	<u>Remark</u>
(1)	MPPE/MCY/CAP/T/4 (2013-2014)	New 7000 Imperial Gallons Capacity Rigid or Semi-Trailor Aircraft Refueller	2 Nos.	US\$
(2)	MPPE/MCY/CAP/T/5 (2013-2014)	Two-Stage Vertical Filter/Water Separator	4 Nos.	US\$
(3)	MPPE/MCY/CAP/T/6 (2013-2014)	400 IGPM Fuel Transfer Centrifugal Pump (Motor Driven) and 300/GPM Fuel Transfer Centrifugal Pump (Engine Driven)	2 Items (each 2 nos)	US\$
(4)	MPPE/MCY/CAP/T/7 (2013-2014)	Fire Fighting Angus Engine Driven Pump With Trailer Inductor	2 Sets	US\$
(5)	MPPE/MCY/T/2 (2013-2014)	Aviation Fuelling Equipment Spare Parts	75 Items	US\$

2. Tender Closing Date & Time - 8-4-2014,12:00 Hrs

3. Tender documents are available at our office starting from 14-3-2014 during office hours and for further detail please contact Phone: 067-411487.

Planning Department
Myanma Petroleum Products Enterprise
Ministry of Energy, No(6) Complex, Nay Pyi Taw



Police dogs attack "suspect" in a drill at the Kashgar SWAT police station on the police camp open day, in Kashgar, northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, on 15 March, 2014. The Kashgar SWAT police team held a police camp open day on Saturday. Citizens were invited to see the training and life of policemen during the event.—XINHUA

Seven killed, 32 wounded in Baghdad bombings

BAGHDAD, 16 March — At least seven people were killed and 32 others wounded in four bomb attacks in Iraq's capital Baghdad on Saturday, police said.

Three people were killed and 10 others

wounded when a car bomb went off near a market in Baghdad's southern neighbourhood of al-Ameen.

Two people were killed and seven others wounded in a car bomb attack in Alamil district of southwestern Baghdad,

while another car bomb in the city's northern Cairo district killed one and injured nine others.

In Baghdad's eastern district of Sadr City, one civilian was killed and six others wounded in a car bomb attack.—Xinhua

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ENTERTAINMENT



The lead singer of British rock band The Rolling Stones Mick Jagger (front) performs with his band at Singapore's Marina Bay Sands Expo and Convention Centre, on 15 March, 2014. The Rolling Stones held a sole concert in Singapore on Saturday.—XINHUA

Comedian and 'Tonight Show' regular David Brenner dies at 78

NEW YORK, 16 March — David Brenner, a stand-up comedian who appeared regularly on "The Tonight Show Starring Johnny Carson," died on Saturday in New York, a family spokesman said. He was 78. Brenner, who had been battling cancer and performed most recently on New Year's Eve, passed away at his home in New York surrounded by his family, publicist Jeff Abraham said.

The Pennsylvania

native appeared on "The Tonight Show" more than 150 times and was known for poking fun at the commonplace aspects of life.

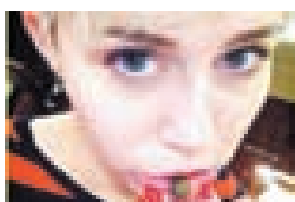
Brenner said his last wish was that \$100 in small bills be placed in his left sock "just in case tipping is recommended where I'm going," according to the publicist. Abraham said Brenner's final resting spot will carry the epitaph: "If this is supposed to be a joke - then I don't get it!"

Reuters



Comedian David Brenner and his girlfriend, champion figure skater Tai Babilonia, pose at an after party at the premiere of US singer-songwriter Barry Manilow's show 'Manilow: Music and Passion' at the Las Vegas Hilton Theatre in Las Vegas, Nevada in this on 24 Feb, 2005, file photo.—REUTERS

Pop star Miley Cyrus inks sad cat on her inner lip



LONDON, 16 March — Pop star Miley Cyrus has got a colourful sad cat inked on her inner lip.

The 21-year-old singer, who has been grabbing eyeballs with her bizarre stage antics during her on-going Bangerz tour, posted a close-up selfie on Instagram revealing her "sad kitty" tattoo, reported *Daily Mirror*.

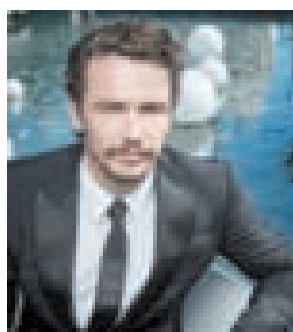
"Sad Kitty," Cyrus captioned the photo.

PTI

James Franco finds Broadway more refreshing

LOS ANGELES, 16 March — Funnyman James Franco says Broadway makes him feel more refreshing as it gives him time to make a deeper connection with the character.

The 39-year-old TV personality, who will make his Broadway debut in "Of Mice and Men", said it is



different than films as it gives you time to rehearse, said the *Hollywood Reporter*.

"There's something really refreshing about that where you feel a deeper connection to the character."

PTI

James Franco

'Captain America' emoticons added to Skype

LOS ANGELES, 16 March — Marvel Comics-themed emoticons have been added to Skype to coincide with the cinematic release of 'Captain America: The Winter Soldier'. Users who install the latest version of the Microsoft-owned messaging service can make use of Captain America, Bucky, Nick Fury and Black Widow emoticons, reported *Ace Showbiz*. The emoticons can be accessed by typing (captain), (bucky), (nickfury), and (blackwidow) within the message window.—PTI

Joel Edgerton joins James Dean biopic 'Life'

LOS ANGELES, 16 March — 'The Great Gatsby' actor Joel Edgerton has joined the cast of Anton Corbijn's 'Life'.

The 39-year-old actor will star alongside Dane DeHaan, Robert Pattinson, Ben Kingsley and Alessandra Mastronardi in the James Dean biopic, reported *Variety*.

The film's script was written by Luke Davies (Candy) and shooting has begun in Ontario, Canada.

PTI

'The Americans' dresses TV family drama in KGB disguise

LOS ANGELES, 16 March — As a former CIA agent in training, Joe Weisberg knows a moral dilemma when he sees it.

But instead of pressing on the weaknesses of would-be informants, Weisberg now writes them into the characters of his Cold War spy drama "The Americans," which is currently in its second season on US cable network FX.

Like many of today's cable dramas, the series takes its shape from anti-heroes with serious flaws. But "The Americans" poses a unique reversal of US television convention as Soviet KGB agents take a turn as the protagonists trying to



Cast members Keri Russell (L), Matthew Rhys and Noah Emmerich (R) of drama series "The Americans" participate in a panel during FX Networks' part of the Television Critics Association (TCA) Winter 2014 presentations in Pasadena, California, on 14 Jan, 2014.—REUTERS

get a leg up on their Cold War adversaries.

Although the fictional series is set in the 1980s, the recent spate of feuds between the United States and Russia gives it a current-day relevance. The political upheaval in Ukraine, Russian asylum for NSA contractor turned leaker Edward Snowden and recent conflicts in the Middle East have all brought back a bilateral diplomatic chill reminiscent of the Cold War era.

But at its heart, "The Americans" is less about cloak and dagger tales and politics than a domestic drama that uses lies, spooks and love to face down

moral quandaries.

"The show is conceptually about what it is to be an enemy and have an enemy, and how to think about enemies," Weisberg said alongside fellow executive producer and writer Joel Fields, who added that they wanted "The Americans" to focus on the characters' interior lives.

The series stars Keri Russell and Matthew Rhys as Elizabeth and Philip Jennings, Soviet spies paired together by their bosses in an arranged marriage and sent to the suburbs of Washington, DC to raise a family and run a local travel agency as their cover.

Reuters

Chelsea lose after pair see red, victory for 10-man City

LONDON, 16 March — The race for the Premier League title was blown wide open when leaders Chelsea had two players sent off in a 1-0 defeat at Aston Villa on Saturday and Manchester City overcame a red card to win 2-0 at Hull City.

Chelsea also had manager Jose Mourinho sent to the stands in stoppage time as the match exploded into life in the last few minutes but the normally loquacious Portuguese bit his tongue after the game.

"I prefer not to talk," he told Sky Sports television. "If I talk I will bring the game into disrepute and I don't want to be in big trouble."

Mourinho was clearly unhappy Brazil midfielder Willian was sent off by referee Chris Foy for a minor shoving



Chelsea manager
Jose Mourinho

Pennetta to face Radwanska in Indian Wells final

INDIAN WELLS, 16 March — Italian veteran Flavia Pennetta upset China's Australian Open champion Li Na on Friday to join Poland's Agnieszka Radwanska in the women's final of the BNP Paribas Open at Indian Wells.

The 32-year-old Pennetta qualified for the biggest singles final of her career after a 7-6(5), 6-3 drubbing of an out-of-sorts Li.

Pennetta will face Radwanska in Sunday's final after the Pole avenged her loss to Romania's Simona Halep in Qatar last month with a 6-3, 6-4 win on the Californian desert hardcourts.

Radwanska, ranked third in the world, sealed the first set with an ace after she broke Halep's opening service game but found herself trailing the second when the Romanian broke.

But the 25-year-old Pole regained control,

getting back on level terms then getting a second break and serving out her victory to reach her first final at Indian Wells.

"What I was trying to do was play aggressively from the beginning of the match and just try to go for my shots," said Radwanska.

"I was lucky. I think I was serving better than other days, so that helped today as well. I think it was a pretty good match."

Halep took some consolation from her defeat as she will rise to fifth place in the world when the new rankings are released on Monday.

"It was a tough match," said Halep. "She played really well."

"She deserved to win today. Every ball was in for her, and I had to run a lot. I think I started the match a bit too soft. I was not ready to play."

Reuters

offence, his second caution, in the 68th minute - a decision that played a key role in deciding the outcome of the match.

Second-placed Manchester City, who had skipper Vincent Kompany dismissed for hauling back Hull striker Nikica Jelavic after 10 minutes, won with goals from David Silva and Edin Dzeko. City had started the day nine points behind Chelsea with three matches in hand but cut the gap to six points after Fabian Delph back-heeled a clever winner for Villa in the 82nd minute.

Chelsea have 66 points with eight matches to play

while City are on 60 with 11 games remaining.

Liverpool, third on 59 points, and Arsenal, fourth on the same total, both have 10 games to go and visit Manchester United and Tottenham Hotspur respectively on Sunday.

Chelsea's second red card was handed to Brazil midfielder Ramires in stoppage time for a two-footed stamp on Karim El Ahmadi that Villa manager Paul Lambert described as "a leg-breaker".

Manchester City went to Hull after a bad week when they were knocked out of the FA Cup by Wigan Athletic and

eliminated from the Champions League by Barcelona but they may now have the upper hand in the Premier League title race.

"It was a very difficult week," said City manager Manuel Pellegrini. "We needed to win today and playing with one player less for 80 minutes was very difficult."

"But we played very well, we defended well with and without the ball and created chances so I am very happy."

Mourinho watched his Chelsea side lose in the league for only the fourth time this season, and for the first time in 15 matches

since they slumped 3-2 at Stoke City on 7 December.

Midfielder Nemanja Matic forced the ball home at the far post just before halftime but the goal was chalked off because he handled, and worse was to follow for the Londoners. "It was a good solid performance against a good team," said Mourinho. "Defensively we were really strong".

"We had no problems with the danger from Aston Villa but apart from that I don't want to comment."

Villa manager Lambert was delighted with his team's display but condemned Ramires.—Reuters

Federer and Djokovic to meet in Indian Wells final

INDIAN WELLS, 16 March — Roger Federer and Novak Djokovic set up another mouthwatering final at the BNP Paribas Open at Indian Wells after winning their semis on Saturday.

Federer ended the giant-killing run of Ukrainian Alexandr Dolgoplov when he cruised to a 6-3, 6-1 victory in a one-sided semi-final that lasted just a tick over an hour.

Then Djokovic succeeded in blunting the booming serve of John Isner to beat the American 7-5, 6-7(2), 6-1 and join Federer in Sunday's championship match.

It will be the 33rd time overall and the ninth time in a final that the pair have locked horns. Federer holds a 17-15 lead in their head-to-head matches and they are tied 4-4 in finals.

The Swiss master has already won the Indian Wells title four times and made it through to a fifth

final without dropping a set in the California desert this week.

Relaxed and super confident after winning his 78th singles title in Dubai earlier this month, Federer pounced on Dolgoplov from the outset, breaking him once to snatch the opening set.

"I was ready physically, mentally," said Dolgoplov.

"I wasn't nervous much, but I wasn't sharp enough. My concentration was going away for maybe one, two points every game, and you can't afford to have that in these matches."

The Ukrainian had beaten three higher ranked players, including world number one Rafa Nadal, to reach the semis but was powerless to stop the 32-year-old Federer, who fired down seven aces in a brilliant serving performance.

"(It was) tough conditions for both of us," Federer said in a court-side

interview. "I think I really served well when I had to and that allowed me to take more chances".

"Alexandr's had a wonderful tournament so it's really a big win for me today. I was going for it and I served a lot of aces, it was one of the best serving performances of my career." Later, at his news conference, Federer said he was in a good frame of mind, having made his third final this year.

"Now it's just a matter of keeping that up, taking the right decisions not to

overplay, not to underplay, and enjoy yourself. Because at the end of the day, it's also very important," he said.

"But having the fire and wanting to win every single match you go out there and in the practice trying to improve as much as you can, I think I've got the good balance right now, so it's very encouraging."

Isner upset Djokovic in the semi-finals at Indian Wells two years ago but the Serbian was better prepared this time.

Reuters



Roger Federer, left, shakes hands with Alexandr Dolgoplov.

Real, Atletico pressure Barca after taking 3 points each

MADRID, 16 March — Real Madrid will entertain FC Barcelona with a lead of at least four points after winning 1-0 away to Malaga in the Spanish Primera Liga on Saturday night.

Cristiano Ronaldo's 23rd minute goal was the difference between the two sides but if Real Madrid had travelled south expecting an easy win against a side locked in the battle to avoid relegation they were in for a nasty shock as Malaga made them work every inch of the way and had an error-prone Madrid pegged

back in their own half, especially after the break.

Ronaldo had chances to score a second goal and former Malaga midfielder, Isco should have done better when clean through on goal, but in the end the home side lacked the quality in the final pass and as a result, despite their courage, they failed to work Madrid keeper Diego Lopez.

Atletico Madrid remain three points off the lead as they responded to the challenge by beating a tough Espanyol 1-0 thanks

to a second half goal from Diego Costa, who scored with a trademark low finish.

Barcelona are at home to Osasuna on Sunday and have no option other than to win if they want to remain in the title race.

The day kicked off with Nolito's first half goal giving Celta Vigo a 1-0 win away to Levante in an exciting game in which both goalkeepers had outstanding performances and David Barral missed a penalty for the home side.

Rayo Vallecano took

a huge step towards Primera Liga safety as they followed last Monday's 3-2 win away to Real Sociedad with a 3-1 home win over Almeria. Alberto Bueno opened the scoring, before Larrivey scored two more to assure the points.

The result lifts Rayo out of the bottom three, but leaves Almeria staring at the abyss and coach Francisco Jose Rodriguez in danger of becoming the next top flight coach to lose his job. Getafe and Granada drew 3-3 on Friday night.

Xinhua

GENERAL

In Colombia war zone, peace talks raise new fears

TORIBIO, 16 March — For farmers like Angel Escue, Colombia's bid to end half a century of war with Marxist rebels may come at too high a price.

Stripping leaves from an illegal coca bush at his small plot in the mountains of central Cauca department, Escue says a peace deal with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC, could sink him deeper into poverty even if it ends almost daily firefights in the area.

"We pray for an end to the violence, but not at any cost," 61-year-old Escue says as he hunches over the bright green coca scrub in Toribio, a rebel stronghold that processes the leaves into cocaine. "They want us to switch to crops that won't bring enough money to feed a family; we can't do that."

Three months before the presidential election, government envoys and FARC commanders are working through the third item on a five-point peace agenda — the illegal drugs industry, and how to rid Colombia of coca.

Negotiations to end the conflict that has killed more than 200,000 — mostly civilians — since the 1960s is a campaign battleground



Soldiers stand guard as a woman walks past during a congressional election in Toribio in Cauca Province on 9 March, 2014.—REUTERS

ahead of the first round of voting on 25 May.

President Juan Manuel Santos is favored to win a second term and continue the peace talks that began in 2012, although he will be hard pressed to match his comfortable victory in 2010 given criticism of the talks and his economic policies.

This is the first election held during a peace process, so convincing farmers like Escue and others that an end to the conflict will also bring jobs is key.

The scion of one of

Colombia's most powerful families, Santos says investors are awaiting the talks' outcome before pouring cash into the Andean nation.

His biggest challenge comes from right-wing contender Oscar Ivan Zuluaga, an ally of conservative former President Alvaro Uribe who says he would scrap the FARC talks. Leftist candidate Clara Lopez, Marta Lucia Ramirez of the Conservative Party, and Enrique Penalosa from the Green Alliance will also run.

Santos is seeking to compensate millions of people displaced by the war and has returned land stolen by the FARC and right-wing paramilitaries. The measures helped bring the rebels to the negotiating table, although many of those he has pledged to help are unlikely to vote for him. Farmers from across the country last year led violent protests against a free-trade deal with the United States and other reforms they say have left them even poorer than before.—Reuters

Israel reopens crossing with Gaza for fuel supplies

GAZA, 16 March — Israel reopened its commercial crossing with Gaza on Sunday after a three-day halt to allow fuel into the enclave, a Palestinian official said.

The official said that Israel has reopened the Kerem Shalom with Gaza and started to transfer

cooking gas, gasoline and industrial fuel for Gaza's idle power plant.

The crossing was opened only one day after Hamas-run Energy Authority announced that Gaza's sole power plant has stopped working due to lack of fuel caused by closure of the terminal.

But the official said that Israel has barred transfer of other basic supplies and commodities.

Israel closed Kerem Shalom crossing on Thursday after Gaza militants fired a volley of rockets last week before a de-facto ceasefire was restored. The terminal is now the only

entrance for basic supplies into Gaza, as Egypt has shut down hundreds of smuggling tunnels under its border with Gaza that were used to bring in fuel and other supplies. Israel regularly has shut down the crossing in response to rocket attacks from Gaza militants.—Xinhua

Transfer controversy may have affected Neymar form

BARCELONA, 16 March — Controversy over Neymar's transfer to Barcelona could be the reason behind the Brazilian striker's below-par displays for the Spanish champions, coach Gerardo Martino said.

Neymar has hit the back of the net once for Barca this year and while the team as a whole has struggled for consistency, he has been singled out by fans.

They take on Osasuna on Sunday buoyed by their Champions League victory over Manchester City on Wednesday but seeking an upturn in their league form, having lost two of the last three La Liga matches to drop to third, four points

off leaders Real Madrid.

Neymar was sidelined for a month with an ankle injury picked up midway through January but even before his enforced break his performances did not match the expectations of fans of their marquee signing.

In January, president Sandro Rosell was forced to resign in the aftermath of revelations that Neymar's signing from Santos, initially stated at 57.1 million euros (\$79.51 million), was considerably greater and now appears to be closer to 90 million euros.

The accusations that the board has tried to withhold the truth from fans has

created a dark cloud over the club which also seems to be affecting the 22-year-old, who has not shown the same level of talent that he has produced for Brazil.

There were some whistles from the Camp Nou crowd when he played in the win over Almeria a fortnight ago and more from a section of the crowd when he was substituted against City. "In his best moments he has played on the left or as a centre-forward and the other day (against City) he was on the right where I also thought he did well. When a player has been out injured a month it is not easy to get back to their best form straight away. It is

not like a day, or three days but a month," Martino told a Press conference.

"There has also been the situation and the problems over his signing. If I had to give an explanation for (his form) then I was say it is to do with that."

Osasuna held Barca to a scoreless draw in October, and Martino said they needed to ensure they remained tight defensively in the absence of injured centre-halves Gerard Pique and Carles Puyol.

Barcelona have conceded seven goals from corners this season and in Oriol Riera Osasuna have a player who can threaten with his height. "The injury to Pique isn't too

MYANMAR TV

(17-3-2014, Monday)

6:00 am

1. Paritta By Hilly Region Missionary Sayadaw

6:25 am

2. Physical Exercise

7:00 am

3. News/Weather Report

8:30 am

4. Documentary

9:00 am

5. News/International News

9:30 am

6. Cartoon Series

10:00 am

7. News

11:10 am

8. New Melody

12:00 pm

9. News/International News/Weather Report

12:30 pm

10. Myanmar Movies

3:00 pm

11. News

3:20 pm

12. Joint Performance by State Traditional Orchestra and State Traditional Orchestra

4:30 pm

13. University of Distance Education (TV Lectures) - Third Year (Home Economic)

5:00 pm

14. News

5:30 pm

15. India Drama Series

6:00 pm

16. News/Weather Report

6:40 pm

17. TV Drama Series

7:00 pm

18. News

8:35 pm

19. People Talks

8:45 pm

20. Hit Songs of Stars

9:00 pm

21. News

22. Documentary

23. TV Drama Series

MYANMAR INTERNATIONAL

(17-3-14 07:00am~ 18-3-14 07:00am) MST

* Local News

* Tapestry: A Unique Combination of Painting and Craftsmanship

* World News

* Myanmar Masterclass: Portraiture

* Local News

* Taste Of Myanmar (Mandalay Noodle Salad)

* World News

* In The Studio (Win Lei Thu)

* Local News

* Journey To Unimaginable Spots (Ep-7)(1)

* World News

* Colonial Buildings and a New Yangon

* Local News

* Myanmar Social & Charitable Association (Ep-2)(Jivitadana Hospital)

* World News

* Brilliant Woman "Dr. Mya Thidar Sway Tin"

* World News

* Cosplayer

* Local News

* A Visit to Kyauk Kyi

* World News

* Crocodile Keeper

* Local News

* Strolling Along A Memory Link - U Pein Bridge

* World News

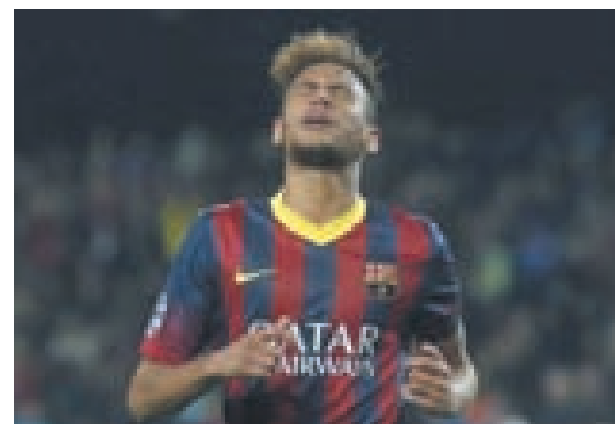
* Manaw Festival

* Local News

* The Stories Of The Great Souls (Mar Mar Aye)

* World News

* Myanmar Masterclass: Art Teacher



Barcelona's Neymar reacts after missing a chance to score against Manchester City during their Champions League last 16 second leg soccer match at Camp Nou stadium in Barcelona 12 March, 2014.—REUTERS

serious but we thought it would be better to leave him out against Osasuna. If there is the need then aside from (Javier) Maschera-

no and (Marc) Bartra we also have Adriano, (Sergio) Busquets and (Alex) Song," said Martino.

Reuters

President U Thein Sein calls for building “Unity in Diversity” among religions groups

NAY PYI TAW, 16 March—President U Thein Sein has called for building “Unity in Diversity” among different religious groups at a meeting with Christian leaders in Myitkyina on Sunday.

He said the move was crucial as the “country has to achieve the common goal of stability, peace and unity of all national people of different faiths.”

He also expressed his hope that the whole of Kachin State would participate in the peace making process as the signing of a nation-wide ceasefire agreement was imminent, adding that all parties must be able to sit at the negotiating table following the signing.

The constitution guarantees religious freedom and freedom of speech, the

president added.

He reiterated the teachings of Buddha, saying that kindness, tolerance and truth can overcome cruelty and destruction.

Quoting the holy bible, John-14:27, the President said “Peace I bequeath to you; My peace I give to you. Do not allow your hearts to be distrusted or intimidated.”

All parties, including the Kachin Independent Organization-KIO and Kachin Independent Army-KIA, must take part in the peace-making process, the president said.—MNA

**President
U Thein Sein cordially
greets Christian
leaders in Myitkyina.**

MNA



State of media here comparably good: Thai expert



Chairman of Southeast Asian Press Alliance (SEAPA) Kavi Chongkittavorn from Thailand.

NAY PYI TAW, 16 March—Discussing Myanmar’s media reforms, the Chairman of the Southeast Asian Press Alliance (SEAPA) Kavi Chongkittavorn from Thailand attended the recent International Media Conference on “Challenges of a Free Press” in Yangon.

The following is a transcript of parts of his speech:

Myanmar’s media reform is the most remarkable within the Southeast Asian content, as Myanmar is the only country that uses media reform as a diplomatic tool.

The Myanmar government uses diplomatic tools to change its international profile.

This is important because in Myanmar the reform fulfills two purposes—one is to improve domestic communication, the other one to transform its reputation internationally.

Domestically the reform is important to increase dialogue between the government and the people of this country in transition. During the transition period it is very important to help communication between the government and the people.

It is also important to facilitate dialogue with the ethnic groups. This is very important because now the peace process is in progress. And the talk yesterday was very good. So this good atmosphere is helpful to reform the media.

Outside media resources are important. Outside resources mean international media outlets and organizations. If foreign media organizations were not present in Myanmar that would be a failure.

Outside media resources are important.

Media reform in Myanmar has shown good progress. My last point is this. Media reform is very good for business. Last year I was in Laos, and there was a representative from the Myanmar Tourism Federa-

tion that visited Laos. How do you promote Tourism in Myanmar? One of the leaders from Myanmar said the key is Political Reform. Political Reform is the answer. Political Reform is very good to promote Tourism.

At the moment there are 26 media freedom indexes in the world. All of them have labelled the Southeast Asian media as not free. Our region, especially ASEAN, likes to stress freedom you know. So we don’t say you are not free. We say that we have freedom. It is the amount of freedom that matters.

Countries like Laos and Vietnam are too struggling with local media exiled in Paris, and based in California.

So media reform in Myanmar has shown good progress.

Myat Thandar Maung

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Myat Thandar Maung

Travel Tip: Nay Pyi Taw Hot Spring Resort popular daytrip destination



By Aye Min Soe

A Hot Spring Resort located on top of the north-eastern mountain range in Nay Pyi Taw has become a popular day trip destination for civil servants and foreign businessmen here.

“I learnt about the hot spring here one year ago,” said visitor Ma Sun Shine from Lewe, about 10 miles south of Nay Pyi Taw, “and I have already come here three times.”

She said visiting the hot spring along with her husband and two daughters was a great way to shake off the stress from her job at the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation. One of the benefits of soaking in the water is that all sorts

of physical problems, including backache, can be helped, she said, adding that she fell in love with the place during her first visit. The water in the pools is mixed with bubbling hot spring water and fresh water with a refreshing dip guaranteed.

Not just the soothing water, but also the scenic views overgreen forests, streams and little waterfalls attract many visitors.

“We find it is a great pleasure to see green forests on the mountain range. And also streams that are winding their way down the mountain. All that can be seen in the car on the drive up to the top,” said

Ko Zeya Maung, staff at a construction company based in Nay Pyi Taw. He is visiting the hot spring with his family, and employees from his company visit the hot spring every month in groups.

“I love forests and mountains. I’m very happy to see the natural environment here that has been destroyed in other areas,” he said.

The number of visitors to the hot spring resort reached its peak in December, the coldest month in Myanmar. Around 200 holiday makers per day visited the resort during that time. But as the weather is getting

(See page 8)