

Vice President Dr. Sai Mauk Kham delivers speech at Special Refresher Course for Senior Officials



Vice President Dr Sai Mauk Kham delivers speech at opening of special refresher course for senior officials of ministries.—MNA

NAY PYI TAW, 9 March — Vice President Dr Sai Mauk Kham delivered an address at the opening of Special Refresher Course No. (2) for Senior Officials at the President Office Ministry in Nay Pyi Taw on Monday.

In his speech, the vice president said that senior government officials are to

realize the goal of the government elected through democratic process in accordance with the law since they are people who steer the government mechanism.

He added that it is necessary for a country to possess competent government mechanisms and human resources staff, who

are one of the important parts of government mechanism, are required to be competent.

Then, the vice president pointed out that the competence of senior government officials are more important as they are to adjust and monitor the activities of other staff.

The purpose of conducting the course is to

enable heads of government departments to take their responsibilities of the changing times and administrative system, according to the vice president.

It is necessary for heads of government departments to understand not just the situation in his or her organization but also

local and international situations comprehensively.

There will be differences in memorizing subjects, discussions and PowerPoint among the trainees depending on their memorization power, effort, interestedness and experience, but the course will benefit the trainees as much as they can learn, the vice president explained.

The trainees who can learn from the course should be praised as they have only a little time to

study so many subjects, discussion and Power Points amidst their various responsibilities, the vice president said.

There are achievements as well as challenges in the government's ongoing efforts for clean government and good governance, raising the socioeconomic status of the entire people, rural development and poverty reduction, combat against corruption, internal peace and national

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Ayeyawady Delta becomes major tourism hub

By Aung Khin

NAY PYI TAW, 9 March — Known for its long sandy beaches, the Ayeyawady Delta has become one of Myanmar's major tourist destinations.

In addition to its traditional Pathein umbrella and clay pot painting workshops, the region lining the

Bay of Bengal is also renowned for the quality of its rice.

Ngwehsaung (Silver Beach), the newest beach resort of Myanmar, is located nearly 48 kilometres west of Pathein, the capital city of the region. Beautiful sunsets over the Bay of Bengal can be viewed from Lover's Island, accessible by walking along the 4.5-

mile beach.

Government and private sector development along Ngwehsaung beach has been aimed at attracting more local and foreign visitors, while also generating income for local people.

Among the recreational activities on the beach, visitors can take a ride on a horse or on a bullock cart, while local seafood is also

readily available.

Visitors can also ride elephants at an elephant camp in the forest to the east of the beach. Unspoiled beach, underwater creatures and Padaung Village make Ngwehsaung a unique destination with huge potential for tourism development.

A three-day or two-night trip to Ngwehsaung is

(See page 3)

Japanese firm wins gas turbine deal for Thilawa SEZ

YANGON, 9 March — Sumitomo Corporation has won a 5 billion yen (US\$41 million) contract to build two thermal power generation facilities in Thilawa Special Economic Zone, about 23 kilometres south-east of Yangon.

A combined output of highly efficient H-25 each gas turbine with 50 megawatts (25 megawatts each) will help reduce fuel consumption significantly and decrease carbon dioxide emissions, according to the corporation.

Mitsubishi Hitachi Power Systems Ltd. (MHPS) also said that it will deliver a gas turbine and a generator to each of the two facilities through Sumitomo, which is also in charge of procuring the

equipment. The contract has been awarded by state-owned power provider Myanmar Electric Power Enterprise.

The No.1 facility is scheduled to start operation in March 2016 and No.2 in July the same year to supply electricity to the economic zone and to the business hub of Yangon.

Experts estimate demand for electricity in Myanmar will quintuple by 2030 due to the country's rapid economic development.

Thilawa Special Economic Zone is a joint venture between Myanmar and Japan aimed at attracting direct overseas investment and creating local employment opportunities.

GNLM



A panoramic view on Ngwehsaung Beach, nearly 48 km west of Pathein, with visitors.

PHOTO: MoHT

Myanmar to sign ASW legal framework

NAY PYI TAW, 9 March—Pyidaungsu Hluttaw has decided Monday that Myanmar will sign the legal framework establishing the technical architecture of the ASEAN Single Window.

Union Minister for Finance U Win Shein said that the Legal Framework Agreement (LFA), once adopted, will set a common legal framework in ASEAN to strengthen the coordination and partnership among ASEAN Customs Administrations and relevant line

ministries and agencies, and economic operators (importers, exporters, transport operators, express industries, customs brokers, forwarders, commercial banking entities and financial institutions, insurers, and those relevant to the international supply chain) to effectively and efficiently implement the ASEAN Single Window.

As a concrete step towards the establishment and implementation of the ASEAN Single Window, the ASEAN Economic

Ministers have signed the Agreement to Establish and Implement the ASEAN Single Window on 9 December 2005 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

The ASW Agreement mandated Member Countries, by means of a protocol, to adopt relevant internationally accepted standards, procedures, documents, technical details and formalities for the effective implementation of the ASEAN Single Window.

Later, Deputy Minister for Home Affairs Brig-



Pyidaungsu Hluttaw

Pyithu Hluttaw

Four townships in Kayah State, Ayeyawady Region to get inter-town asphalt roads in March



Deputy Minister U Soe Tint.—MNA

NAY PYI TAW, 9 March—Pyithu Hluttaw (Lower House) continued its 23rd day session Monday.

With regard to the question raised by U Htay Maung of Saw Constituency on number of townships facilitated with inter-town asphalt roads in the nation, Deputy Minister for Construction U Soe Tint replied that so far, Ministry of Construction has constructed inter-town roads



Deputy Minister U Ohn Than.—MNA

in 248 townships of 330 across the nation. Upgrading of inter-town roads will be completed in Shadaw in Kayah State, Thabaung, Wakema and Mawlamyinegyun townships in Ayeyawady Region in March this year.

Deputy Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation U Ohn Than replied to a question sufficiency for quality paddy seeds raised by U Thein Tun of Kyaunggon Constituency that region and state administrative bodies need to invite

investors for establishment of paddy seed production, while the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation will provide assistance to them in controlling quality of seeds, registration and inspection of seed farms under the seeds law.

Thura U Aung Ko of Kanpetlet Constituency asked whether there is a plan to arrange flow of foreign direct investment to Myanmar for development of agriculture sector. He also explained that the ministry cooperates with foreign experts with their expertise and technology for development of agro-based industries. Now, the ministry is holding talks with 65 foreign companies for investment in agriculture sector. At present, 21 projects worth US\$78 million are being implemented while over US\$370 million foreign loans are being spent on four projects.

MNA

Gen Kyaw Zan Myint told Pyidaungsu Hluttaw to allow Yuan 246 million loan from Exim Bank of China for procurement of vehicles for Myanmar Police Force to ensure rule of law,

drug-trafficking control measures and security of public.

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw has invited parliamentarians for discussion this issue.

MNA

Representatives of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw discuss legal framework of ASEAN Single Window.

MNA

Amyotha Hluttaw

Education Ministry to allot budget for construction of school building in Launglon Tsp



Deputy Minister U Thant Shin.

MNA

NAY PYI TAW, 9 March—At the Amyotha Hluttaw session Monday, Dr Aye Maung of Rakhine State Constituency No 1 asked about losses of land owners in construction of a market at corner of Strand Street and Zaygyi mar-



Deputy Minister U Kyaw Kyaw Win.

MNA

ket in Kyaybingyi Ward, Sittway.

Deputy Minister at the President Office U Kyaw Kyaw Win replied that in the time of the government of the State Law and Order Restoration Council, local authorities built a market in the above-mentioned place but allowed the land owners to purchase one apartment each at Ngwe Nadi housing near the market. Twelve land owners purchased the apartments and three did not buy the apartment. With regard to submissions of 15 land owners, the deputy minister retold a decision adopted by Rakhine State land

utilization committee at its meeting on 10 October 2014 that priority will be given to 15 land owners when the committee implements the land reclamation and housing projects.

U Tin Maung Myint of Taninthayi Region Constituency No 3 asked whether or not an 120x30 feet RC building will be constructed in the place of an old building at Sakhantit Basic Education Primary School in Launglon Township.

Deputy Minister for Education U Thant Shin explained that the Ministry of Education has earmarked to allot K48.60 million from the capital expenditure in 2015-16 fiscal year for construction of a new RC school building at Sakhantit Village BEPS.

A video clip on hearing the bill amending the National Education Law among officials of Amyotha Hluttaw Bill Committee, Action Committee for Democracy Education Movement, representatives of political parties was presented to all MPs.

MNA

Public Announcement for remonstrations

The New Society Party headquartered at No. 106/108 at the corner of Myanma Gonyi Road and 91st street in Mingala Taungnyunt Township, Yangon Region, registered by the Union Election Commission as a political party under the Article 5 of the Political Parties Registration Law, submitted an application to register and to use title, flag and logo of the party

on 9-3-2015.

It is hereby announced that those who want to remonstrate with the UEC about the party's title, flag and seal may submit a complaint along with the strong evidences within seven days starting from issuance of this announcement in line with Section 14 (d) of the Political Parties Registration Rules.



Flag of New Society Party



Logo of New Society Party

Union Election Commission

Political parties apply for registration at UEC

NAY PYI TAW, 9 March—The Union Election Commission scrutinizes and allows registration for political parties. On 9 March 2015, New Society Party submitted an application to register at the Union Election Commission.—MNA

NATIONAL

Vice President . . .

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reconciliation, according to the vice president.

Then, the vice president told the officials that it is important to remember in solving the ongoing problems that solving superficial problems will not be helpful in overcoming the challenges, which can be overcome only when the root cause of the problem is found.

Politics and economy of a country is interrelated as only when political stability is maintained, its economy will grow. Only when the economy grows, infrastructure can be built, job opportunities can be created and rural development tasks can be realized, the vice president continued. Only then, the problems of Myanmar migrant workers

in other countries, human trafficking, drug trafficking, health and education and salaries for government employees and pensioners can also be solved, the vice president explained. These conditions will in turn contribute to political stability of the country, the vice president added.

The vice president urged the senior officials to solve problems in their departments by finding out the root cause of them in accordance the law through innovative approach.

Experts from the World Bank and the UNDP will also teach at the course, according to the vice president. Present were union ministers, deputy ministers and the trainees.

A total of 68 senior officials are taking the course from 9 March to 3 April.

MNA

Yangon Region Women's Affairs Organization calls a halt to students marching

YANGON, 9 March — Yangon Region Women's Affairs Organization issued a statement Monday, requesting protest students to halt their marching from Letpadan, Bago region, to the former capital as ma-

tricolation exam nears.

The statement also appreciated the government's attempts to amend the National Education Law and urged the students to go back their homes and universities.—MNA

A map shows armed clashes in Laukkai region



Myanmar to submit report to UN Human Rights Council on 20 July



The meeting on compilation of human rights report in progress.—MNA

NAY PYI TAW, 9 March — The Leading Committee for Compiling the Human Rights Report on Myanmar held the second meeting at the Ministry of Home Affairs, here, on Monday, with an address by Chairman of the leading committee Union Minister for Home Affairs Lt-Gen Ko Ko.

Attendees discussed frameworks for compilation of the report that will be submitted to the UN Human Rights Council on 20 July 2015.—MNA

Civil Service Training to improve officers' capacity in reform process

NAY PYI TAW, 9 March — Course instructors will share their international experiences and techniques

on reform process to the trainees, U Ye Tint, Director-General of Information and Public Relations De-

partment told the opening ceremony of the Civil Service Training (Train the Trainers) at the Ministry of Information on Monday.

Professor Dr. N Ganesan and three instructors from the German founda-

tion will give lectures to 40 trainees from central organizations and ministries during the six-day long course.

Ministry of Information and Konrad Adenauer Foundation of Germany have jointly conducted the training course for 23 times.

MNA

Solar flights starts first round-the-world trip

NAY PYI TAW, 9 March — The Swiss-designed Solar Impulse-2 left Abu Dhabi airport of the United Emirates United on Monday morning as an attempt of flying around the world .

It will spend one day in Muscat of Oman, four days in Ahmedabad and one day in Varanasi in India, and ar-

rived at Mandalay International Airport on 16 March to spend three nights.

According to Solar Impulse team, departmental staff, university and high school students will be allowed to meet with pilots in the talks on solar energy and to observe the aircraft.

GNLM

Fierce fighting continues near strategic hills in Kokang SAZ

NAY PYI TAW, 9 March — Tatmadaw columns have been combing Point 1753 hill and nearby hill-tops from which Kokang insurgents launch attacks to harass the safe travelling of local people since 7 March.

Tatmadaw columns were able to capture strategic hills after launching air and artillery strikes but fierce fighting continued until 8 March in the area.

One officer and seven

other ranks sacrificed their lives during the fighting and 51 others were injured.

Kokang insurgents take foothold in the hills between Point 1753 hill and border post 141 and often attack local travelers and Tatmadaw convoys. In February, Kokang insurgent attacked vehicles flying the Red Cross Flag, vehicles of the media and departmental staff on the route.—Myawady

Appointment of Ambassador agreed on

YANGON, 10 March — The Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has agreed to the appointment of H.E. Mr. Marat YESSENBAYEV as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar with residence in Bangkok.

H.E. Mr. Marat YESSENBAYEV was born in Karagana City, Kazakhstan on 17 April 1954. He attended the Moscow machine tool institute in 1976 and Bauman Moscow High Technical School in 1981 where he obtained the PhD degree in Technical Science. He began his career in the academic field, serving as a teacher, Associated Professor and Chair of the Department

of the Kazakh Polytechnic Institute from 1982 to 1992. He then served as the Director-General of the Kazakh-American joint venture from 1992 to 1993. He joined the Kazakhstani Ministry of Foreign Affairs as a First Secretary in 1993. He then served in various capacities up to the post of Minister Counsellor at the Kazakhstani Ministry of Foreign Affairs, being assigned to various posts in Kazakhstani Embassies and Permanent Mission in USA, Russian Federation, Czech, Norway and the Netherlands. From 2013 to present, he has been serving as the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the Kingdom of Thailand. He is married and has four children.—MNA

Ayeyawady Delta becomes . . .

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enough for visitors to look around and get a taste of nearby rural life. China, France, Germany, the United States and the

United Kingdom accounted for the largest number of international visitors in 2014.

Two-mile long Chaungtha is the second

beach resort of the Ayeyawady region. It is located 35 miles west of Patheingyi, some five hours' drive from Yangon. Chaungtha can be literally translated as Pleasant Stream in Myanmar lan-

guage and it is relatively more affordable than Ngwehsaung and Ngapali beaches. Peak season for visitors to Chaungtha is from October to April.

The pagoda known as Myat Maw Tin or Maw

Tin Zun is also a destination for visitors. The pagoda festival is held for one month near the beach, with accommodation very comfortable for both local and foreign guests.

The Ministry of Ho-

tels and Tourism has created its Master Plan, outlining its expectation for promotion of tourism industry from a baseline of US\$534 million in 2012 to \$10.8 billion by 2020.

GNLM

University of Traditional Medicine turns out practitioners



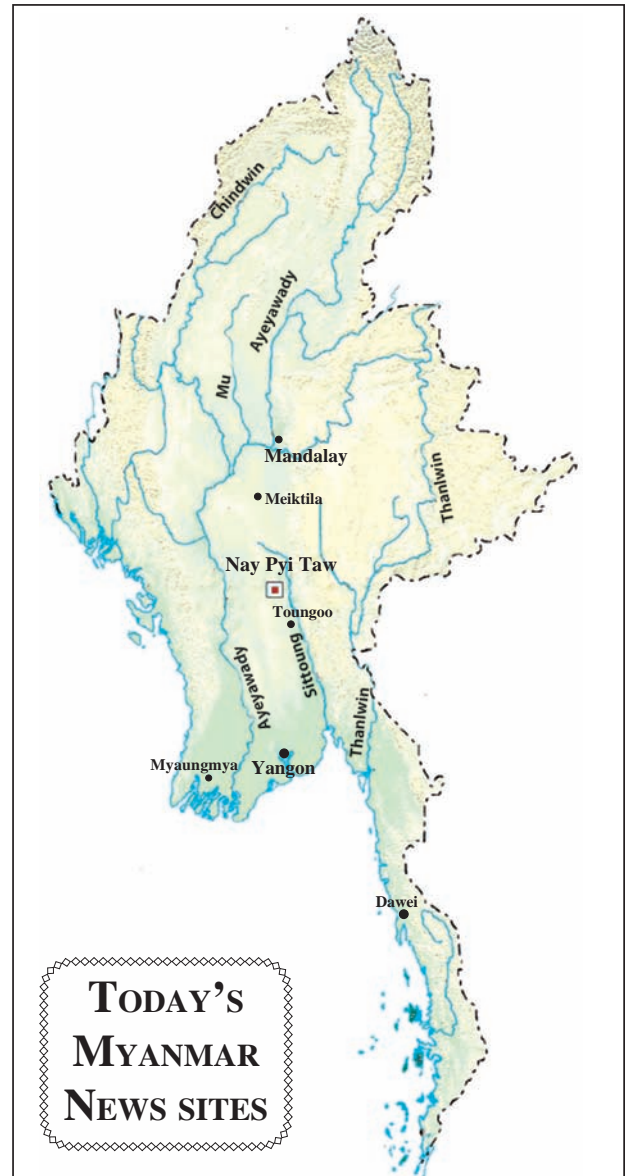
MANDALAY, 9 March — The latest crop of graduates from Mandalay's University of Traditional Medicine received their degrees recently at a convocation ceremony at the higher learning institution. Rector of the univer-

sity Prof. Dr. Than Maung conferred master's degrees on six graduates and bachelor degrees on 81 graduates on Sunday.

So far, the university has furnished 16 master's degree holders and 1,220 bachelor degrees.

The University of Traditional Medicine, Mandalay (UTM), located in the city's Aungmyethazan Township, is a public university under the Department of Traditional Medicine. The university, administered by the Ministry of Health, offers a five-year Bachelor of Myanmar Traditional Medicine degree.

Tin Maung (Mandalay)



Social association donates cash to child patients

MANDALAY, 9 March — To mark its second anniversary, the Myat Cetanamon social association donated K550,000 to 10 patients under treatment at the Children's Hospital in Mandalay on Sunday.

The social association collects a monthly K1,000 fee from its members for donations to the health and education sectors, orphans and victims of natural disasters.

The association has so far made 25 separate donations of K19.26 million to needy recipients. To be able to extend its donations, the association invites well-wishers to contact it on 09-73040000 and 09-2166097.—*Tin Maung (Mandalay)*



DINR has issued citizenship scrutiny cards to some 5 million people

MEIKTILA, 9 March— Some 5 million people have so far received citizenship scrutiny cards under the Moe Pwint plan to provide proof of identification to all of Myanmar's citizens, De-

partment of Immigration and National Registration Director-General U Maung Maung Than said Sunday.

Addressing a ceremony in Kyauktaga Tawya monastery in Meiktila Township, Mandalay Region, he explained that the Department of Immigration and National Registration is overseeing the issuance of the cards to eligible citizens.

The special Moe Pwint plan is being implemented from January to June. At the ceremony, staff of the department delivered cards to 231 eligible citizens.

Tin Maung (Mandalay)



Paved roads improve access for 10,000 in Dawei Township

DAWEI, 9 March — Two new asphalt roads recently opened to traffic in Dawei Township, Taninthayi Region, improving access to the Shwethalyaung reclining Buddha image in Kutoh Village and Yaungmaw Village.

A ceremony marked the opening of the thoroughfares, with Chief Minister of the region U Myat Ko and region minister U Than Aung in attendance.

The region government assigned local en-

International Women's Day ceremony hears message from UN chief

DAWEI, 9 March — A ceremony to mark International Women's Day was held at the city hall in Dawei, Taninthayi Region, on 8 March, with a speech by Chief Minister of the region U Myat Ko.

Taninthayi Region Minister for Agriculture and Livestock Breeding Dr Win Aung read out the message sent by the secretary-general of the United Nations.

Head of Region Department of Social Welfare Daw Khin San Yi and officials spoke about the pro-

gress of women in society and the emergence of the international day.

The second session of the ceremony was followed by a discussion highlighting violence against women, and the national level strategic plan (2013-2022) for development of women.

Deputy Speaker of the regional Hluttaw, U Kyi Win, Chief Justice of the regional High Court, U Myint Win, and departmental officials attended the ceremony.

Po Shwe Thun (Dawei)

In 2014-15 fiscal year, Dawei Township authorities have spent K976 million on construction of roads in total length of 10 miles and one 100-foot long wooden bridge, K130 million on sinking tube-wells and water supply tasks, K97 million on installation of solar panels for supply of electricity and K48 million on construction of 17 rural residential buildings.

Po Shwe Thun (Dawei)

REGIONAL

Thai PM says security must come first to boost foreign confidence



Thailand's Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha

BANGKOK, 9 March — Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha on Monday called on Thais to be the “eyes and ears” of security forces in order to boost international confidence in Thailand after the second explosion in the capital Bangkok in just over a month.

Police have detained

three people in connection with the grenade explosion which occurred on Saturday night outside Bangkok's Ratchadaphisek Criminal Court. No one was hurt in the attack.

“We ask the public to be the eyes and ears of authorities because security must come first. We must rebuild confidence for foreigners,” Prayuth told reporters. “I will not bow to bad people.”

Thailand remains under martial law and military leaders say they have no plans to lift it. The law has kept away some visitors, as they are unable to buy travel insurance for countries under martial law.

Thailand has been under martial law since the

military seized power on May 22 last year to end months of sometimes deadly street protests.

Chief of Royal Thai Police General Somyot Poompanmuang said those behind Saturday's attack were from “the same political background” as those responsible for the twin explosions outside Bangkok's Siam Paragon shopping mall last month.

One of the suspects, Mahahin Khunthong, told reporters on Sunday that he and another man were hired for 20,000 baht (\$614) to carry out the attack and that other attacks were planned in order to “prompt United Nations intervention.”

“One of us rode the motorcycle and another

threw the grenade. There were plans to stage attacks at other locations so that UN intervenes in Thailand,” Mahahin told reporters. “I did not want to do this but in order to support my family I offered to be the driver.”

Political gatherings are banned under martial law, but that has not stopped some university students from staging public protests against the ruling junta, known as the National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO).

The NCPO has justified martial law by saying security in Thailand is unstable, citing certain groups' opposition to military rule.

Reuters

Cambodia releases details of new draft election law

PHNOM PHENH, 9 March — Cambodia's ruling and opposition parties on Monday announced details of a draft election law, along with a draft law on the formation of a National Election Committee (NEC), before they are sent to the National Assembly for approval.

The two draft laws have been made by experts of the ruling Cambodian People's Party (CPP) and the opposition Cambodia National Rescue Party (CNRP) following a July agreement struck between Prime Minister Hun Sen and CNRP President Sam Rainsy that ended the opposition's 10-month boycott of parliament.

The laws are aimed at ensuring free and fair elections and preventing post-election deadlock in the future.

CNRP's senior official Eng Chhay Eang told seminar that in the next elections in 2018, the number of parliamentary seats will be increased to 125 from 123.

The electoral campaign will be reduced from 30 days to 21 days, he said, adding that civil society groups and foreigners are not allowed to conduct campaigns for any political parties.

CPP's senior official Sek Bunhok said the new draft law also added rule that would see parties lose their seats for boycotting parliament after an election.

“After the official results of election, any party, that wins one or more parliamentary seats but boycotts the parliament when the king convenes, will be deemed to have abandoned seats,” he said.

According to the draft law, the NEC will comprise of nine members, including four from the CPP, four from the CNRP and an independent representative.

“NEC members must have only Cambodian nationality,” said CNRP's senior official Yem Pongharith, adding that the NEC president will be in the rank equaling to a deputy prime minister, NEC's deputy president with the rank of a senior minister, and NEC's members with the rank of ministers. The NEC will have independent budget for its operations.

Cambodia holds national election in every five years. The last election was conducted on July 28, 2013. The parliament comprises of 123 seats, including 68 from the CPP and 55 seats from the CNRP.

Reuters

Forecasters warn of possible Australia cyclone

SYDNEY, 9 March — A low pressure system off northeastern Australia holds up to a 50 percent chance of intensifying to cyclone strength over the next two days and slamming into a region devastated two weeks ago by Cyclone Marcia, according to meteorologists.

“This low is expected to deepen during the next few days and has a moderate potential to develop into a tropical cyclone on Tuesday or Wednesday,” Australia's Bureau of Meteorology said on Monday.

‘Moderate’ is the second-highest classification for a cyclone threat, mean-

ing the chances range from 20 to 50 percent.

So far no cyclone ad-

vice has been issued by the bureau in the projected track of the low heading towards Queensland state, where Marcia flooded homes and businesses and knocked out power lines on Feb. 20.

Insurance Australia Group is facing 3,500 claims totaling up to A\$90 million (\$70 million) from damage caused by Marcia.

Queensland's A\$25 billion mining and agricultural sectors suffered little damage as the cyclone lost much of its power shortly after making landfall.

Reuters



A home damaged by Cyclone Marcia is pictured without a roof and with some walls gone in the coastal town of Yeppoon, on 21 Feb, 2015.—REUTERS

Malaysia Airlines says expired battery on MH370 did not hinder search

KUALA LUMPUR/SYDNEY, 9 March — Malaysia Airlines said on Monday that an expired battery in the underwater locator beacon of the “black box” flight data recorder on missing Flight MH370 would have made no difference in the search for the plane. Lawyers acting for some of the families of those on board said earlier that the fact the battery had not been replaced - revealed in a weekend report on the anniversary of MH370's disappearance — could be key in any legal action against the airline.

MH370 vanished shortly after taking off from Kuala Lumpur, bound for Beijing, early on March 8 last year, becoming one of the greatest mysteries in aviation history.

A 584-page interim report into the disappearance of the Boeing 777-200ER

(BA.N), released on Sunday, said the beacon battery for the flight data recorder had expired in December 2012 and was not replaced. The beacon is designed to send a signal if a crash occurs in water. Malaysia Airlines (MAS) said in a statement on Monday that a similar beacon was also installed with the solid state cockpit voice recorder (SS-CVR) and its battery life was still good.

“The SSCVR battery would have been transmitting for 30 days upon activation when immersed in water,” MAS said in the statement. US law firm Kreindler & Kreindler LP, which is representing around 20 families, had said the expired battery was “potentially very significant” in determining compensation if it had hurt the search for the missing plane. The

oversight was blamed on a failure to properly update a computer system in the engineering department of Malaysia Airlines (MLYAF.PK), Malaysia's Department of Civil Aviation said in Sunday's report. “This airline, which allowed

its crew and plane to fly with expired batteries on critical equipment, continues to reject offering any kind of meaningful settlement to the families without them first proving the losses they suffered, without any actual evidence of a crash,” Kreindler

& Kreindler LP aviation attorney Justin Green said in an email to Reuters.

“The airline ... even more clearly now may be responsible for the unsuccessful search for this plane.”

In January, Malaysia Airlines officially declared the disappearance of MH370 an accident, clearing the way for the airline to pay compensation to victims' relatives while the search for the plane goes on. Investigators believe the plane, carrying 227 passengers and 12 crew, was flown thousands of miles off course before eventually crashing into the ocean off Australia. The search along a rugged 60,000 sq km patch of sea floor some 1,600 km (1,000 miles) west of the Australian city of Perth has found nothing so far.

The search in this area, which experts believe is the

plane's most likely resting place, could be wound up in May after Australia's deputy prime minister said last week discussions were under way between Australia, China and Malaysia on whether to call it off soon.

However, Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak and the Chinese government said they remained committed to the search. Most of the passengers were from China.

The interim report offered no definitive cause for the plane's disappearance, adding there was nothing suspicious in the financial, medical or personal histories of the pilots or crew. “The disappearance of MH370 is without precedent, and so too is the search - by far the most complex and technically challenging in aviation history,” Najib said in a statement.—Reuters



Catherine Gang, whose husband Li Zhi was onboard the missing Malaysia Airlines flight MH370, holds a sign during a gathering of family members of the missing passengers outside the Malaysian embassy in Beijing on 8 March, 2015.—REUTERS

Merkel in Japan, to meet Abe over Ukraine, anti-terror steps

TOKYO, 9 March — Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and German Chancellor Angela Merkel are set to hold talks on Monday during which they are expected to affirm cooperation on the crisis in Ukraine, the fight against terrorism and reform of the UN Security Council.

Abe and Merkel, who is visiting Japan for the first time in seven years, also plan to touch on negotiations between Japan and the European Union for a free trade agreement, which the two sides aim to conclude this year, the situation in East Asia, as well as bilateral issues, according to Japanese officials.

Merkel is on a two-day official visit to Tokyo through Tuesday as part of bilateral talks with her Group of Seven counterparts ahead of a G-7 summit she will host in June.

Merkel is likely to call for increased investment in the renewable energy sector, as she suggested in a weekly online address on Saturday.

“Germany has taken a number of far-reaching actions, namely to phase out nuclear energy faster,” Merkel was quoted as saying by the *German Press Agency*. “We now have great hopes for renewable energy. And I think Japan should go down this path,

too.”

Referring to Merkel’s visit, Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga said on Monday, “The government would like to make it an opportunity to send a message to the world that Japan and Germany, as partners sharing basic values, will proactively contribute to peace and prosperity of the region and the world.”

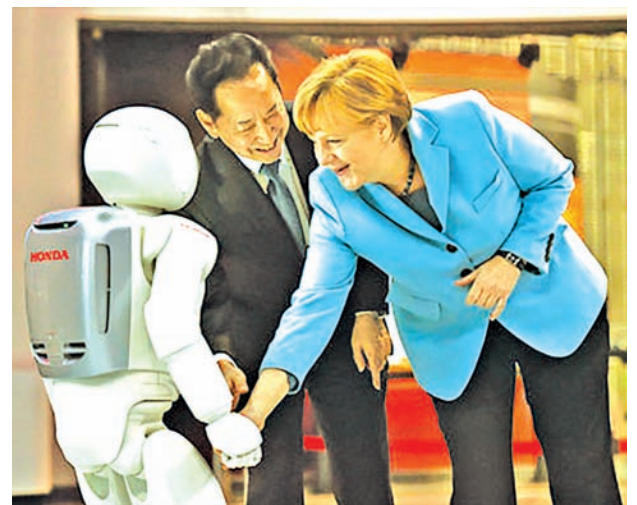
Merkel, who is to have an audience with Emperor Akihito before talks with Abe, is “one of the most important leaders in the European Union and the international community,” the top government spokesman said.

With Germany and Japan hosting G-7 summits this year and next year, respectively, it is important that the two governments promote cooperation, Suga said.

After arriving in Tokyo on Monday morning, the German leader toured the National Museum of Emerging Science and Innovation and was greeted by Honda Motor Co’s ASIMO humanoid robot.

Merkel last visited Japan in 2008 for a Group of Eight summit in Hokkaido. The G-7 — Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United States — is a G-8 minus Russia.

Kyodo News



German Chancellor Angela Merkel (R) shakes hands with an ASIMO humanoid robot, developed by Honda Motor Co, at the National Museum of Emerging Science and Innovation in Tokyo on 9 March, 2015, urged by Mamoru Mori, chief executive director of the museum and former astronaut.—KYODO NEWS

Brazil’s Rousseff says austerity drive to last as long as needed

BRASILIA, 9 March — President Dilma Rousseff appealed to Brazilians on Sunday to back fiscal austerity policies, while saying that the belt-tightening will last as long as needed and positive results will only start showing at the end of this year.

With the economy stalled and relations with her coalition allies in disarray due to a massive corruption investigation at state-run oil company Petrobras, Rousseff needs support for unpopular steps to reduce a gaping deficit and save Brazil’s investment grade rating on its debt from a downgrade by ratings agencies.

“This is a process that will last as long as necessary to rebalance our economy,” Rousseff said in a nationally televised speech marking International Women’s Day. She said she expected the economy to start recovering at the end of this year.

The leftist leader said the belt-tightening started with cutbacks in government spending and has moved on to reducing tax breaks and subsidies for credit.

Rousseff’s plans to cut unemployment and social security benefits, however, have met with resistance from within her own Workers’ Party. And a decree to raise payroll taxes paid by businesses was thrown out by her main ally in the Senate last week.

That almost unprecipitated congressional



Brazil’s President Dilma Rousseff

maneuver was a sign of how fallout from the multi-billion-dollar kickback scandal at Petroleo Brasileiro SA, as Petrobras is formally known, threatens Rousseff’s agenda.

Rousseff told Brazilians that temporary sacrifices would be needed to restore the government’s overdrawn accounts, saying, “We are doing some corrections and adjustments to the economy.”

She blamed a prolonged international economic slowdown and a severe drought for Brazil’s current woes. There was no admission of mistakes in the economic policies of her first term that undermined investor confidence and helped push the world’s seventh economy toward recession.

In an attempt to spur investment, Rousseff said her government plans to grant new concessions to build roads, railways, ports and airports this year and enter into new partnerships with the private sector.

Reuters

Iran, IAEA officials meet in Teheran ahead of March nuclear deadline — ISNA

ANKARA, 9 March — Iran and the UN nuclear watchdog hold talks in Teheran on Monday, the Iranian *Students News Agency (ISNA)* reported, ahead of a March deadline for a framework agreement on Iran’s nuclear programme between Teheran and six major powers.

“Officials from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) will discuss remaining issues like explosives testing and neutron calculations,” *ISNA* said, without giving a source.

“Also issues alleged by the IAEA, related to the framework agreement, will be discussed during their one day visit.”

The IAEA says Iran has still not addressed specific issues that could feed suspicions it may have researched an atomic bomb, including questions on alleged research activities into explosives testing and neutron calculations.



Iran’s ambassador to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Reza Najafi arrives for a board of governors meeting at the IAEA headquarters in Vienna on 2 March, 2015.—REUTERS

Iran has rejected the accusations as baseless, but has promised to work with the IAEA as part of its efforts to end the country’s decade-long nuclear standoff with the West.

US Secretary of State John Kerry and his Iranian counterpart Mohammad Javad Zarif will meet on 15 March in Switzerland, an Iranian official told Reuters.

“Then there will be bilateral and trilateral meetings with other members of the P5+1 countries ... followed by meetings between the seven countries,” said the official, adding that “most probably the venue is (the Swiss city of) Lausanne”.

Iran, the United States, France, Germany, Russia, China and Britain are trying to seal some form of

understanding by the end of March before a final deal in June.

The negotiations are aimed at persuading Iran to curb its nuclear programme in exchange for relief of sanctions which have badly damaged its economy.

Iran denies any intention of seeking atomic weapons, saying its nuclear energy programme is solely for peaceful purposes. Teheran says the sanctions are illegal and wants them to be lifted swiftly.

“The imposed sanctions on Iran are cruel and illegal ... Lifting all the sanctions is the only way to reach a nuclear deal,” said secretary of Iran’s Supreme National Security Council Ali Shamkhani, the official *IRNA* news agency reported.

“Iran has given an opportunity to the other party (P5+1) to end the artificial (nuclear) crisis.”

Reuters

Park visits US envoy Lippert at Seoul hospital

SEOUL, 9 March — South Korean President Park Geun Hye on Monday visited US Ambassador to South Korea Mark Lippert at a Seoul hospital where he is recovering after being slashed in his face and hand last Thursday, according to the South Korean presidential office.

Park made the visit immediately after returning from a nine-day trip to the Middle East. The move is

widely seen as an effort to minimize the fallout of the knife attack to South Korea’s alliance with the United States.

Hospital officials said the US envoy is recovering quickly and could be released on Tuesday.

The assailant, identified by police as 55-year-old Kim Ki Jong, is believed to be a pro-Pyongyang South Korean civic activist who visited North

Korea seven times between 1999 and 2007.

Kim has told the police that he attacked Lippert to protest the South Korea-US joint military exercises that began on 2 March, saying they hinder the mood for inter-Korean reconciliation, according to the police.

Lippert had an 11-centimeter-long, 3-cm-deep cut on the right side of his face and wounds on his left arm and fingers and

received about 80 stitches at the hospital after being assaulted with a 25-cm fruit knife shortly after arriving at a lecture hall in downtown Seoul to give a speech.

Kim was formally arrested last Friday on charges of attempted murder, violence against a foreign envoy and obstruction of official business, according to the police.

Kyodo News

Netanyahu denies report he's backed off two-state solution

JERUSALEM, 9 March — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office denied reports on Sunday he has backed away from a 2009 commitment to seek a two-state peaceful solution with the Palestinians.

A statement by Netanyahu's right-wing Likud party widely reported by Israeli media said he had said that a speech he gave six years ago agreeing for the first time to Palestinian statehood as a solution to decades of conflict was now "irrelevant." Netanyahu "never said such a thing," his office said in a statement responding to the reports.

Likud had apparently issued the remarks to debunk earlier Israeli media reports suggesting Netanyahu had in a previous term of office negotiated a broad withdrawal from land Israel captured in a 1967 war. The party's statement, apparently issued by hardliners, said Netanyahu had also suggested "there would be no withdrawals or concessions, that this is simply irrelevant," referring to swapping any occupied land for peace.

Netanyahu's office denied this, too, saying he has long adhered to a policy that "under current conditions



Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (L) arrives at the weekly cabinet meeting at his office in Jerusalem on 8 March, 2015.—REUTERS

in the Middle east any land that is handed over would be grabbed by Islamist extremists." The Israeli leader had repeatedly said he would not hand over land at risk of falling into the hands of Islamist extremists since the collapse of peace talks in April and after fighting a July-August war with Hamas militants in Gaza. The media accusations against Netanyahu over the Palestinian conflict come as part of a bitterly fought campaign for a 17 March election. Polls show Netanyahu running neck and neck with leading rival Isaac Herzog of the left-of-center Zionist Union, which says it would seek a resumption of regional peace talks.

Reuters

Early Greek election, referendum possible if EU rejects debt plan — Varoufakis

ROME, 9 March — Greece could call a referendum or have early elections should its euro zone partners reject its debt and growth plans, Greek Finance Minister Yanis Varoufakis said in a newspaper interview on Sunday.

The new Greek government, led by Alexis Tsipras, won an election in January promising to renegotiate a bailout agreed with the International Monetary Fund and its European Union partners that requires strict budget discipline and sweeping economic reforms.

The government reached a temporarily deal with its lenders last month and Athens has until the end of April to specify the reforms it will make in exchange for further aid. Euro zone finance ministers are meeting on Monday in Brussels to discuss a letter of pledged reforms sent by Athens last week.

Should Brussels ultimately reject Greece's proposals, Varoufakis told Italian daily *Corriere della Sera*: "There could be problems. But, as my prime minister has said, we are not yet glued to our chairs. We can return to elections, call a referendum."

In a statement released



Greek Finance Minister Yanis Varoufakis leaves following a news conference to present the ministry's new general secretaries at the ministry building in Athens on 4 March, 2015.—REUTERS

later on Sunday, the Greek Finance Ministry said that Varoufakis was responding to a hypothetical question and that any referendum would "obviously regard the content of reforms and fiscal policy" and not whether to stay in the euro, as *Corriere della Sera* had suggested. Most Greeks want the country to keep the euro, but two-thirds also continue to back the government's tough stance to renegotiate the bailout package.

A referendum over a deal with lenders that keeps the country in the euro zone but falls short of Tsipras's promises could give the government cover to accept a deal even though it

was elected with a different mandate. But even floating the idea of a referendum is politically risky.

In 2011, then-prime minister George Papandreou suggested calling a referendum over the bailout and was later forced to make way for a unity coalition led by a former central banker.

With the Tsipras government's popularity level above 40 percent, Varoufakis said "people understand" that the government is fighting the "establishment that said it was saving Greece while it put everything on the backs of the poor".

Former prime minister Antonis Samaras, who is

now head of the main opposition party, said a referendum would be "a very bad development" and allow the government to shrug off its responsibilities.

The now much-diminished Greek Socialist PASOK party, also in the opposition to Tsipras' radical left alliance, said in a statement that Varoufakis's statement was "irresponsible, thoughtless and contradictory".

In the interview, Varoufakis said that the response so far by euro zone partners to his proposals to replace its current debt with bonds linked to nominal growth is "silence." "I'd like for Europe to understand that this would be a way of paying back more money, not less," Varoufakis said of the growth-linked bonds.

In 2011, Greece tipped the entire euro zone into crisis until it accepted the bailout. Now the concern is that the failure of Greece to reach a new deal with lenders will throw the euro region back where it was. There has been growing uncertainty over Greece's cash position. It faces a decline in tax revenues, while aid from EU/IMF lenders remains on hold until Athens completes promised reforms.—Reuters

Two charged with Nemtsov killing include former Chechen policeman

MOSCOW, 9 March — Russian authorities said on Sunday they had charged two men over the killing of Kremlin critic Boris Nemtsov and said one of them was a former senior policeman from the mainly Muslim region of Chechnya who had confessed to involvement in the crime.

The two were among five men, all ethnic Chechens, frogmarched into a Moscow courtroom on Sunday, forced by masked security officers gripping their bound arms to walk doubled over, a Reuters reporter at the court said.

The men stood in metal cages as television crews were ushered in to film them.

Nemtsov was shot dead on the night of 27 February within sight of the Kremlin walls, in the most high-profile killing of an opposition figure in the 15 years that President Vladimir Putin has been in power.

Judge Natalia Mush-



Tamerlan Eskerkhanov, detained over the killing of Boris Nemtsov, is escorted inside a court building in Moscow on 8 March, 2015.—REUTERS

nikova ordered that all five men should remain in custody.

Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov, a Putin ally, said the former policeman, Zaur Dadayev, was a pious Muslim who had been angered by cartoons of the Prophet Mohammad in the French satirical newspaper *Charlie Hebdo*.

Nemtsov, a liberal, had defended the cartoons after Islamist gunmen killed 12

people at the *Charlie Hebdo* office in Paris in January. Russian investigators said last week they were looking into the possibility that Islamist militants had killed Nemtsov.

"All who know Zaur confirm that he is a deep believer and also that he, like all Muslims, was shocked by the activities of Charlie and comments in support of printing the cartoons," Kadyrov wrote on his Ins-

tagram account.

Kadyrov described Dadayev as "a true patriot of Russia" who had received several medals for bravery but had subsequently resigned from his interior ministry regiment for reasons the Chechen leader said were unclear.

There have been cases in the past where employees of Russian law enforcement agencies have been prosecuted after moonlighting for organized crime groups.

"Dadayev's involvement in committing this crime is confirmed by, apart from his own confession, the totality of evidence gathered as part of this criminal case," Mushnikova told Sunday's court hearing.

The other man charged is Anzor Gubashev. The three other suspects are his brother Shagid Gubashev, Ramzan Bakhayev and Tamerlan Eskerkhanov. Previously, investigators said they only had two suspects

in custody.

Separately, Russia's *Interfax news agency*, quoting a Chechen law enforcement source, said a man killed in a standoff with police in the Chechen capital Grozny late on Saturday had also been wanted by police in connection with Nemtsov's killing.

When police arrived at an apartment block, the man threw one grenade at officers and then blew himself up with a second, *Interfax* said.

Some associates of Nemtsov, a 55-year-old former deputy prime minister who became a Putin critic, say the Kremlin stands to gain from his death. Russian officials deny involvement and Putin has condemned the killing.

The court hearings on Sunday were given extensive coverage on state-controlled media, and presented as proof the authorities were conducting a thorough investigation —

not the cover-up some of Nemtsov's friends say they anticipate.

But associates of Nemtsov say they will not be satisfied unless prosecutors track down whoever orchestrated the killing, rather than just the people who pulled the trigger.

There was no word from investigators on who the suspects were alleged to have been working for.

Several other high-profile killings in Russia, including the 2006 shooting of journalist Anna Politkovskaya, have been attributed to gunmen from Chechnya and other parts of the North Caucasus region, while those who ordered the crimes were never firmly identified.

Chechnya has seen violent separatist insurgencies over the past two decades. It is now firmly under the control of Kadyrov, a former rebel who changed sides and pledges loyalty to Putin.

Reuters

PERSPECTIVES

Tuesday, 10 March, 2015

Two different meanings of forceBy *Myint Win Thein*

Force and strength may be synonymous, but a display of force is not always a sign of strength. On the contrary, it can often indicate weakness. Those whose claims are legit-

imate and recognised as such do not need to use force.

For instance, most people nowadays do not need to use force to prove they are the equal beings, but it was not always the case. Centuries ago, many people fought to gain recognition as equal beings, having been held as slaves before revolting against their masters. They used force to stake a claim whose legitimacy could never rightfully be questioned. However, when used for less lofty claims, force can undermine the actor and indicate their weakness.

Slave owners who fought to maintain their status over other human beings were ultimately

unsuccessful. The more force they used to hold their position, the weaker they ultimately appeared in the eyes of history.

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TEACHER PUJA, TEACHER CULTUREBy *Ba Than*

The end of monsoon in the tail-end of October ushers in a flurry of activities and festivities in our exotic land of glittering pagodas, vast stretch of lush paddy fields, and interesting habitat of multi-ethnic peoples of the hills and the plains. It is commonly known as 'the open season' where the sky is bright and sunny, with only remnants of lingering post-monsoon showers and most pleasant chilly weather to tingle the cheeks of countrymen and stir their itch to travel. Many festivities: religious, social and pujas abound in the entire country, a real time for tour and pilgrimage. Mandalay, the seat of the last reigning Myanmar king of the Konbaung dynasty and centre of endearing art and culture is thronged by national tourists from all over the country and the hills especially the Shan races, who visit Mandalay as holy pilgrimage to the famous Maha Muni Pagoda to gain merit. Another regular tourist spot is Yangon the heritage site of the imposing solid colonial structures of the last hundred years standing witness to the grandeur of the British Raj. Standing side by side is the cosmopolitan metropolis, with high-rise modern buildings of concrete, aluminum, glass and steel, characteristic of the booming urban jungle, teeming urban population, roads congested with cars and frustrated passengers waiting for hours as they inch towards their destinations day by day. Such manifestation stands witness to the opening of the political and economic landscape of modern 21st century with global reach. International tourism also enjoyed a phenomenal upsurge with the number of visitors nearing the two million mark oh la la!

This is just a short prelude to the momentum of change to introduce the main theme of my article: "Teacher puja, teacher culture" Our Myanmar society pay deep respect and puja to the venerable teachers all along the course of history. Teachers are also held in high esteem by pupils and parents through successive generations with due respect and obeisance honored to them. Nowadays in our modern society such ceremony commonly known as "Acariya Puja" was celebrated in the open season from November to February of every year. Almost every high school up to the universities hold such puja ceremonies. In the universities there are two main pujas: university and the faculties or department of various subjects offered in the universities year after year. The author was an alumnus of the Mandalay university college. The university began as a Mandalay Intermediate college in 1925 during the days of colonial rule. At the end of World War II a nationalist movement to establish a full-fledged university in Mandalay, the second capital and seat of Myanmar sovereignty and centre of Myanmar art and culture. Eventually in July 1947, the university college (MUC) opened its doors to the aspiring students of Upper Myanmar. The principal was U Ko Lay, a dedicated academic, who with 23 founding members as well as academicians helped the Mandalay UC to grow into a four year degree college and in 1985 to the status of a self-sustained full fledged

university for upper Myanmar. The author belonged to the 1947 pioneer batch of first year intermediate class which numbered less than 100. In 1951 these 1947ers, became the pioneer first degree graduates in Arts and Science subjects. Principal U Ko Lay gave first appointments as tutors and demonstrators in the respective faculties of their choice. Some branch out to various departments, business and professions. The author served as English tutor for 2 academic years (1951-53) and opted the career of the BCS administrative service.

Time passed swiftly when new generation of highly qualified academics took over as old generation faded away into retirement and oblivion. Intrinsic Myanmar profess Hteravada Buddhism, couched in the revered teachings of Lord Buddha the Self-Enlightened Omniscient One since a thousand years ago beginning from the first Bagan Empire of King Anawratha. Somewhere among the teachings was the dictum to pay respects to the teachers (acariya) in their old age and infirmity. Thus began the tradition of acariya Puja ceremonies, all over the country especially in the open season months from October to March of the ensuing years.

The students of the respective high schools and universities have become affluent, and thus were generous enough to pay respects to these teachers. Such meets also help to regenerate camaraderie spirit to meet old friends and talk over the olden days of freedom joy and hilarity.

Our alma mater also followed the revered trend of paying respects to the retired teachers: the main ceremony involving all faculties pooling their resources, and held once in three years. The 11th puja ceremony was held in 27th December 2014. Where 438 teachers above 68 years were most respectfully honoured among whom only 298 could attend in person. The author attended as the faculty staff of the English Department. Many elder invitees slowly entered the Convocation hall. Only a very few came unattended. Many had to be assisted to their allotted chairs, aging and feeble. A surge of deep emotion welled up my heart, a mixed feeling of sadness and joy, joy at meeting my old colleagues, where only very few remain alive, and sadness at the toll overwhelming them, progressive aging and senility. But all seemed to enjoy every moment, meeting friends again, the precious moments to treasure. The ceremony began with the serving Rector delivering the keynote speech followed by other speakers who had contributed their share of puja most voluntarily. Then all students clasped their hands in prayer and presents were offered. Fellow teachers including my colleague, Shan Scholar Dr. Sai Aung Tun delivered speech of thanks. Finally the main puja ceremony was over as all dispersed. A few lingered in the Hall as they talked about the lively years of the past.

The English Department held a special puja ceremony on 28th in the Dhammayone, Prayer Hall. A small number of retired teachers attended as the present Professor, teaching staffs and students paid their respects and presents. On behalf of the retired English teachers, I gave a brief talk recounting the joy of the pioneer student of 1947, and tutor of 1951 with fond memories. Only a very few of us remained alive, particularly

NawAgnesKlaipo, Dr Chit Maung and myself. Among the 24 founding academic members, only Sayagyi U Ba Toke remained at the age of 95, memory as fresh and alert as ever. I recounted my experience to him on my return to Yangon, and he relished every moment with nostalgia. In my short talk, I reminded the audience to the importance of English as a medium of communication and in-depth study. While talking most randomly and intimately, I remembered our most learned scholar and guru, Dr. Htin Aung and his lectures. Omar Khayyam still remained fresh in my memory through all these 60 years, though sadly the scholar has passed away a long-time ago. Extemporaneously I recited a stanza which I cherished, reminding them of the passing of time:

"The moving finger writes
And having writ moves' on,
Nor all thy piety nor wit,
Can lure it back
To cancel half a line,
Nor all thy tears
Wash a word of it"
"Unborn tomorrow,
Dead yesterday
Why fret about them
If today be sweet!"

Sayagyi U Ko Lay lived to a ripe old ninety in prayer, in contemplation and meditation. He taught Buddhism in English to aspiring monks who chose to become missionaries to propagate Buddhism abroad. He was also honoured for his literary contributions. Finally Sayagyi passed away peacefully in 2003. His devoted pupils organized and held Sayagyi's birthday centenary ceremony at Mandalay on August 2013. A bust bronze statue was erected on the entrance lawn, where he will always give a warm welcome to students for generations to come.

Finally I concluded my small talk with a refrain from Lord Tennyson's famous poem. "The Brook" thus: "I chatter, chatter as I flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on forever."

I pray that the Mandalay University, born 1947 having reached 67 years will go on forever.

In Myanmar deeply couched in the teachings of Buddhism and morality, the teacher 'Acariya' holds a revered place in our society. Therefore a special ceremony to pay respects to the venerable teachers are held every year in the open season. Such puja can only be found in Myanmar most uniquely and nowhere else. Thus 'Teacher Culture' holds a predominant place in our Myanmar society. Such tradition may be sustained and preserved in societies of future generations.

U Ba Than is a seasoned writer of English regularly contributing hundreds of articles of lasting interest in both English and Myanmar for decades. His career began as English tutor in Mandalay and Yangon Universities. He then joined the Burma Civil Service and retired as Director-General. Accredited with many literary awards and citations, he was also honoured with Literary Life time Award in 2013 by Pakokku Sarpay for his lifelong contribution to literature.....

Merits shared for late royal families of Konbaung Dynasty



Deputy Minister for Culture U Than Swe attends ceremony to share merits gained from donations to late King Mindon and his royal relatives.

MANDALAY, 9 March — The Ministry of Culture held a ceremony Sunday to offer meals to members of the Sangha, or monastic community, at Myanan Sankyaw golden palace in Royal Mandalay City, Aungmyethazan Town-

ship, in memory of the late King Mindon and his relatives.

The ceremony was attended by Deputy Minister for Culture U Than Swe, Mandalay Region Minister for Finance Dr Myint Kyu, Region Advocate-General

U Ye Aung Myint, departmental officials and relatives of royal families.

After offering meals to venerable senior monks, officials shared merits dedicated to the royal family members.

The merit-sharing cer-

emony for relatives and royal families of the Konbaung Dynasty in Mandalay was the first in six decades, and was attended by relatives of King Thibaw, the last emperor of Myanmar.

Thiha Ko Ko (Mandalay)

Departmental staff to join community-led sanitation tasks

MYAUNGMYA, 9 March — Health staff received training on community sanitation Monday at the hall of the Myaungmya District Health Department, Ayeyawady Region.

The five-day course is being organized under the Ministry of Health and the World Health Organization.

Manager U Tun Myint of Nay Pyi Taw Health Department and Health Officer U Aye Yi will give

lectures to 50 trainees from the health department, the Red Cross and other relevant departments.

The trainees will visit 10 villages in the township for practical training session to practise undertaking community-led sanitation tasks, according to Township Health Assistant U Than Htay of Myaungmya Township Health Department.

Aung Min (IPRD)

MPs share allotted funds for development tasks

MANDALAY, 9 March — The Pyidaungsu Hluttaw allotted funds to representatives for development tasks in their respective constituencies in the 2014-15 fiscal year.

Pyithu Hluttaw (Lower House) member Dr. Kyaw Myint of Chanayethazan Township, Amyotha Hluttaw representative Dr. Soe Tun and Region Hluttaw representatives Dr. Kyaw

Hla and Daw Tin Tin Mar inspected development works in Chanayethazan Township.

The MPs have spent the fund on sinking tube-wells and lake, construction of toilets, concrete roads, brick drains, concrete culverts, asphalt roads, car parks for fire trucks and laying of water pipelines in the township.

Thiha Ko Ko (Mandalay)

Training course improves capacity of police officers in Mandalay Region

MANDALAY, 9 March — Mandalay Region Police Force officers undertook a professional development course Monday organized by the Ministry of Home Affairs.

On behalf of the commander, deputy commander of Region Police Force Police Col Thet Nang instructed the trainees to improve their policing



On-job training given to police officers to be able to discharge duty of rule of law and order.

abilities by implementing new knowledge obtained through the course.

Senior police officers gave training on investigation and surveillance to 21 police officers who were transferred from security police branches to the Mandalay Region Police Force.

Thiha Ko Ko (Mandalay)



Rural people get electricity on self-reliant basis

TOUNGGOO, 9 March — As a gesture of hailing the 70th Anniversary of Armed Forces Day, a self-reliant supply of electricity was launched for local residents in Letpankhon Village, Ottwin Township, Bago Region, recently.

Commander of Southern Command Maj-Gen Aung Kyaw Zaw unveiled the stone plaque in commemoration of switching on the supply of electricity.

An official of the power supply committee briefed all attendees on processes of electrifying the village.

Regiments and units in Ottwin station and the Southern Command headquarters assisted in installation of power lines for the village. Local people funded K61 million for undertaking the power supply tasks.

Maung Shwe Win (Pyay)



With BMWs common in Gangnam, Koreans splurge on Bentleys, Maseratis

SEOUL, 9 March — Flashy Maseratis and Bentleys are fast becoming the cars of choice for young, monied South Koreans, eclipsing German luxury brands now so commonplace that some in Seoul's upscale Gangnam district jokingly refer to a BMW 5-series as a Hyundai Sonata.

Driving the sales of six-figure plus cars is a growing acceptance of conspicuous consumption in the conservative home of Hyundai Motor Co (005380.KS), where more younger, affluent Koreans are turning their backs on their parents' frugal ways.

"While our parents saved a lot in the past, younger people nowadays spend on things they can enjoy," said chef-restaurateur Song Ji-hoon, who last year sold his Mercedes-Benz CLS to buy a Maserati Ghibli.

"The street is now flooded with German cars. My car is not something one can see often," Song, 34, told *Reuters*.

Last year, the Seoul



A car dealer checks a Maserati Ghibli car at its dealership in Seoul on 2 March, 2015.—REUTERS

dealership of Volkswagen (VOWG_p.DE) unit Bentley Motors was the top global seller of Flying Spur sedans, which start at just under quarter of a million dollars. The outlet, in Gangnam, ranked second in overall sales behind one in Dubai.

South Korea is also the seventh-largest market for Fiat Chrysler's (FCHA.MI) Maserati, which saw sales increase five-fold last year to a record 723 cars after the brand introduced its Ghibli

sports sedan, which starts at around \$90,000.

"Korean consumers now want to flaunt themselves," said Kevin Kang, chief operating officer of the joint dealership for British luxury brands Aston Martin and McLaren Automotive which will open in the first half of this year in Gangnam.

"There lingers antipathy towards the wealthy, but at the same time there is aspiration to be wealthy," he said.

Imported luxury vehicles were relatively scarce in South Korea before a trade deal which took effect in 2011 unleashed an influx of high-end mainstream German cars from the likes of BMW (BMWG.DE), Audi AG (NSUG.DE), and Daimler AG's (DAIGN.DE) Mercedes-Benz.

While South Korea is the 11th largest car market, it ranks in the top four for certain top-end models such as Audi's A8 and the Mercedes-Benz S Class

line, according to the companies.

Sales of imported vehicles priced above 100 million won (\$91,100) grew by a third in 2014 from a year earlier to 14,975, the Korea Automobile Importers and Distributors Association says, a figure that excludes Maserati, Lamborghini and Ferrari, which are not association members.

Sales of foreign brands priced 150 million won (\$136,339) and above nearly doubled last year, as more wealthy drivers sought "ultra-premium" cars to flaunt their status, a trend mocked and celebrated in Psy's 2012 hit song "Gangnam Style".

"There is a strong me-too-ism in Korea. People follow what other people are buying," said Andy Bae, senior analyst at automotive research firm IHS, which expects South Korea's ultra-luxury car market to grow 45 percent by 2017. South Korea's overall car market grew 8 percent last year.

The number of South Koreans with assets exceed-

ing 1 billion won doubled to about 167,000 in 2013 from five years earlier, according to KB Research. This rising wealth, coupled with younger peoples' desire to stand out in a traditionally conformist society, is encouraging luxury automakers. Koreans are also marrying later and often rely on parents for housing, leaving many with the means to splash out on flashy purchases.

"As consumers get younger, they are less shy about something that stands out," said Kim Eui-young, a sales manager at the Maserati dealership in Gangnam, which opened in 2007.

Some ultra-luxury car owners, however, prefer discretion.

A businessman in his 40s, who did not want to be identified, said he bought a blue Ferrari 355 Spider to enjoy on weekends. He also owns a Porsche and a Maserati, but drives a Hyundai SUV to work every day. "People are looking at my cars," he said. "But my employees do not know."

Reuters

Chinese expert gives lecture on malignant blood diseases in Japan

OSAKA, 9 March — Huang Xiaojun, a Chinese expert on blood diseases, gave a special lecture in Kobe on Friday, unveiling his team's advanced achievements in preventing and treating relapse of malignant blood disease.

Huang, head of the Institute of Hematology at Peking University, was invited to give a special lecture at the 37th Annual Meeting of the Japanese Society for Hematopoietic Stem Transplantation, held in the Kobe International Conference Centre from Thursday to Saturday.

Huang presented the audience a novel immunomodulatory strategy used

by his team, which uses G-CSF-mobilized peripheral blood progenitor cells instead of static lymphocytes to treat patients, supplemented with six to eight weeks' short-term immunity dampening drugs.

This new strategy, according to Huang, could largely improve the survival rate of patients with recurrent malignant blood diseases, and reduce the relapse rate with the help of advanced monitoring methods.

The strategy has been systematically used since 2012. By the end of 2014, three-year disease-free survival rate for standard-risk leukemia patients in

Huang's institute reached 68 percent, and that for high-risk leukemia patients reached 49 percent, both higher than world renowned transplant centers such as MD Anderson and Johns Hopkins University.

"Our strategy of preventing and treating relapse of malignant blood diseases is advanced in the world. Our next goal is to find out the cytological mechanism of the immunomodulatory strategy, and by doing that, we could not only cure malignant blood diseases better, but also make progress in immunological studies and contribute to human welfare," said Huang.

Xinhua

Dollar holds firm in upper 120 yen range after upbeat US jobs data

TOKYO, 9 March — The US dollar traded in the upper 120 yen zone for most of Monday in Tokyo, holding on to gains from Friday's strong US monthly jobs data, amid expectations the US Federal Reserve is gearing up for an interest rate hike that would further underpin dollar demand against the Japanese currency.

At 5 pm, the dollar fetched 120.87-89 yen compared with 120.79-89 yen in New York and 120.10-12 yen in Tokyo at 5 pm Friday. It moved between 120.62 yen and 121.14 yen during the day, changing hands most frequently at 121.03 yen.

The euro was quoted at \$1.0864-0865 and 131.32-36 yen against \$1.0841-0851 and 130.92-131.02 yen in New York and \$1.1024-1026 and 132.40-44 yen in Tokyo late Friday afternoon.

The US currency remained in the upper 120 yen zone for most of the day, rising just above the 121 yen line at times in the afternoon, after gaining ground on Friday's US monthly jobs data that surprised the market with its

strength.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics said 295,000 jobs were added to US nonfarm payrolls in February and the unemployment rate fell from 5.7 percent to 5.5 percent, the lowest rate since May 2008.

Many market observers now expect Fed policymakers to drop a reference to being "patient" in considering the timing of a rate hike in their guidance at next week's Federal Open Market Committee meeting, signaling a hike could come as early as June, said Shinichiro Kadota, foreign exchange strategist at Barclays Bank.

The dollar briefly jumped to a nearly three-month high of 121.29 yen immediately following the jobs data release and rose above the 121 yen line again briefly in Tokyo, but it is unlikely to find a firm footing above the line until solid US inflation growth is seen in addition to labor market recovery, Kadota said.

The dollar-yen pair will likely trade narrowly in the run-up to the FOMC meeting, with Fed policymakers expected

to stress that some weak points remain amid the US economic recovery, said Masayuki Hoshina, chief economist at Okasan Securities Co.

"The labour situation is less than clear-cut when we include marginally employed people in the unemployment rate, and hourly wages are still lagging, so (Fed chair Janet) Yellen is likely to retain an air of caution in her statements," Hoshina said.

The euro remained subdued against the dollar and yen in Tokyo, having sunk in early morning Oceania trading below Friday's New York low of \$1.0841 to levels not seen since September 2003.

"The situation in the eurozone is contributing to a sustained trend of weakness in the euro, and we expect it to hit parity with the dollar by the end of the year," Barclays' Kadota said.

Traders will be looking to the outcome of a meeting of eurozone finance ministers later in the day for hints on how the currency bloc intends to deal with Greece's bailout.

Kyodo News

Singapore stocks close 0.38 pct lower

SINGAPORE, 9 March — Singapore stocks finished lower on Monday, with the benchmark *Straits Times Index* (STI) down 12.94 points, or 0.38 percent, to close

at 3,404.57.

A total of 1.18 billion shares changed hands with turnover of 1.21 billion Singapore dollars (889.7 million US dollars).

Decliners outnumbered

gainers 287 to 144, while 502 others finished unchanged.

The STI index gained 22.24 points, or 0.66 percent, to close at 3,417.51 on Friday.—*Xinhua*

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

At long last, Dow gets a taste for Apple

NEW YORK, 9 March — Apple Inc (AAPL.O), the largest US company by market value, will join the Dow Jones industrial average .DJI, replacing AT&T Inc (T.N), in a change that reflects the dominant position of the iPhone maker in the US consumer economy.

The decision to nudge aside AT&T, which has been part of the Dow for the better part of a century, is a recognition of how communications and technology have evolved. It's also a marker of Apple's transformation, from a struggling company with a small, fervent following two decades ago, into the nation's predominant consumer tech company.

"This is a sign of the times, and it might get everyone to look at the Dow more than they have been," said Richard Sichel, who oversees \$2 billion as chief investment officer at Philadelphia Trust Co. "It would be difficult to pick any 30 companies that would cover the entire economy, especially compared with the S&P 500, but it does give the Dow more credibility."

The action, by S&P Dow Jones Indices, had been widely expected since Apple split its shares seven-for-one in June of last year.

AT&T declined to comment on its removal from the average, of which it has been a member for most of the last 100 years. The stock was added to the Dow in 1916, the year after the first-ever transcontinental telephone call. It was removed in 2004, but after

SBC Communications re-named itself AT&T following a 2005 merger, it was reinstated.

"It was a new way of life: telephones, back then 100 years ago, these talking machines," said Howard Silverblatt, index analyst at S&P Dow Jones Indices. "Back then, AT&T was it, end of story."

After Apple's stock split, many investors felt it was only a matter of time before the company, whose high stock price had previously made it unsuitable for the price-weighted index, would join it.

The Dow industrials is the oldest US stock average, first published in 1896. Its compact size — just 30 names — and its mission to reflect the US economy means that many retail investors are more familiar with it than other indexes covering a broader cross-section of the market.

Even though professional managers generally benchmark against the S&P 500, additions and removals from the Dow are still a big event on Wall Street. It was last altered in September 2013 when Goldman Sachs Group Inc (GS.N), Visa Inc (V.N) and Nike Inc (NKE.N) were added.

Apple did not respond to requests for comment. The company has a market capitalisation of \$737 billion, making it twice the size of the second-largest Dow component, Exxon Mobil Corp (XOM.N).

Shares of Apple rose 0.15 percent to \$126.60 on Friday, while those of



An Apple retail store is shown at a shopping mall in San Diego, California on 10 Sept, 2014.—REUTERS

AT&T fell 1.5 percent to \$33.48.

In a twist of fate, Apple owes some of its success to its partnership with AT&T over the iPhone, the device that propelled Apple's dominance. The iPhone first hit the market in 2007 with AT&T as its exclusive carrier, a deal that continued for more than three years.

Since the iPhone's introduction, Apple's annual revenue has risen more than sevenfold, from \$24.6 billion in 2007 to \$182.8 billion most recently. AT&T saw 11 percent revenue growth over the same period to \$132.4 billion in 2014.

"There's irony in that they are replacing AT&T, which helped them lift off to begin with," said Neil Azous, founder of Stamford, Connecticut-based advisory firm Rareview Macro.

Despite Apple's size, as of Thursday's close it would only have a 4.66 percent weighting in the Dow because of its price, the index company said. Apple will join the average after the close of trading on 18

March.

Most of the assets indexed to the Dow industrials do so through the S&P Dow Jones Industrials exchange-traded fund (DIA.P), commonly known as the "Dow Diamonds." It had about \$12.5 billion in assets as of Thursday. By comparison, more than \$1.9 trillion in assets track the S&P, including mutual funds and ETFs.

Kevin Landis, chief investment officer of First-hand Capital Management, a Silicon Valley-based technology-investing specialist with \$300 million in assets under management, said he hopes that this is not a sign that Apple is past its prime.

"The Dow Jones is such a backwards-looking list, I cringed when Intel (INTC.O) and Microsoft (MSFT.O) were added," Landis said. "I'm cringing today. Let's hope Apple can defy the forces of history."

Intel and Microsoft joined the average in November 1999, and their performance was weak for years following.—Reuters

Rare seal twins born in NE China

DALIAN, 9 March — A rare pair of harbor seals were born at a marine park in the northeast province of Liaoning, China.

The first male pup was delivered at 1:40 am on Wednesday, the other arrived about an hour later, according to SunAsia Ocean World, Dalian City.

They are believed to be China's first harbor seal twins born in captivity, said a statement on the marine park's website. The park plays a major role in the seal breeding programme.

Harbor seals are under state-level protection.

The twins, weighing

8.8 kilograms and 8.2 kilograms, are in good health, according to the statement.

Their mother was found to be pregnant in December 2014 and has since been given special care, said breeder Sun Li.

It is very rare for this breed to have multiple pregnancies, as such the mother has rejected the second cub. Therefore, staff are caring for the younger pup.

Wild harbor seals are found off the coasts of North America, Northern Europe and Northeast Asia. In China, they can be found around Liaodong Bay in the Bohai Sea.—Xinhua



Newly-born harbor seal calves stay with their mother at Sunasia Ocean World in Dalian, northeast China's Liaoning Province, on 5 March, 2015. A harbor seal gave birth to twins on Wednesday morning, weighing 8.8 and 8.2 kilograms respectively. The elder calf was left to its mother and the younger one had to be sent to feeders for artificial breeding.—XINHUA

China's test spacecraft simulates orbital docking

BEIJING, 9 March — China has run tests close to the moon simulating an unmanned docking procedure needed in the country's next lunar mission.

The service module of the unmanned lunar orbiter currently in space to trial such techniques entered a target lunar orbit after breaking maneuvers, and flew to a suitable position for orbital docking between Tuesday and Saturday, said the State Administration of Science, Technology and Industry for National Defense (SASTIND) on Sunday.

Liu Jizhong, deputy chief commander of the SASTIND's lunar probe project, said that the service module has proven the reliability of key technology needed for the docking of two spacecraft in the Chang'e-5 mission.

The Chang'e-5 probe, expected to launch in 2017, will be tasked with landing on the moon, collecting samples and returning to Earth.

The current lunar or-

biter was launched on 24 October, 2014. A capsule designed to separate and return to Earth did so as planned in November, while the service module continues its lunar flight to carry out preset scientific tasks.

The service module is operating smoothly and will carry out further tests on capturing lunar images, and may conduct tests assessing lunar gravity depending how the mission progresses.

Liu told Xinhua that the SASTIND expects to test launching Chang'e-5 with a Long March-5 carrier rocket in south China's Hainan Province this year.

"In the tests of the service module, we have simulated three key procedures needed for Chang'e-5: re-entry [to the moon's orbit] at high speed, adjustment of lunar orbit and docking in lunar orbit, laying a solid foundation for China's three-step lunar program orbiting, landing and returning," said Liu.

Xinhua

First round-the-world solar flight takes off from UAE



The Solar Impulse 2 takes off at Al Bateen airport in Abu Dhabi, at the start of an attempt to fly around the world in the solar-powered plane on 9 March, 2015.—REUTERS

DUBAI, 9 March — Two pilots attempting the first flight around the world in a solar-powered plane began the maiden leg of their voyage on Monday, the mission's official website said.

Solar Impulse 2 took off from Abu Dhabi in the

United Arab Emirates en route to the Omani capital Muscat at the start of a five-month journey of 35,000 km (22,000 miles) organized to focus the world's attention on sustainable energy.

"Solar Impulse wants to mobilize public enthusiasm

in favour of technologies that will allow decreased dependence on fossil fuels, and induce positive emotions about renewable energies," said the mission website, which maps out the plane's location and broadcasts audio from the cockpit in real time.

The plane is only as heavy as a family car (2,300 kg, 5,100 pounds) and but has a wingspan as wide as the largest passenger airliner. Its journey will span approximately 25 flight days broken up into 12 legs at speeds between 50 and 100 km (30 to 60 miles) per hour.

Studies, design and construction took 12 years and a first version of the craft rolled out in 2009 broke records for heights and distances travelled by a manned

solar plane.

The flight will make stopovers in India, Myanmar and China before crossing the Pacific Ocean and flying across the United States and southern Europe to arrive back in Abu Dhabi.

"Miracles can be achieved with renewables such as solar power," Swiss pilot Bertrand Piccard, who also made the first non-stop circumnavigation of the globe in a balloon in 1999, told Reuters in January.

"We want to show we can fly day and night in an aircraft without a drop of fuel," he said.

Companies involved in the project include Bayer AG, Solvay, ABB, Schindler, Omega and Abu Dhabi's Masdar.

Reuters

Japan, Cuba agree to boost trade amid US-Cuba talks to restore ties

TOKYO, 9 March — Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida and Ricardo Cabrisas, vice president of the Council of Ministers of Cuba, agreed on Monday to boost bilateral trade and investment in the wake of the start of negotiations in January between the Caribbean country and the United States to restore diplomatic ties.

“I would like to continue to strengthen our relations in wide-ranging areas and hold a frank dialogue,” Kishida was quoted by the Foreign Ministry as saying



Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida (L) guides Ricardo Cabrisas, vice president of Cuba's Council of Ministers, into a room at the Foreign Ministry in Tokyo on 9 March, 2015.—KYODO NEWS

to the visiting Cuban official during their meeting in Tokyo.

Cabrisas, who is in charge of Cuba's foreign economic policy, told Kishida he hopes to see stronger bilateral economic ties through his interaction with Japanese companies, according to the ministry.

Arrangements are being made for Cabrisas to hold talks with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe during his weeklong visit to Japan through Saturday, ministry officials said.

Kyodo News

New kind of strawberry drawing attention in Japan



Photo taken on 5 March, 2015 shows a giant strawberry, called a "Skyberry," being sold at a fruit shop in Tokyo. Skyberry producers in the eastern Japan prefecture of Tochigi spent 17 years creating the new kind of strawberry.

KYODO NEWS

UN Secretary General Ban to attend disaster conference in Sendai

TOKYO, 9 March — UN Secretary General Ban Ki moon and UN General Assembly President Sam Kutesa will attend the upcoming UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in the northeastern Japanese city of Sendai starting later this week, the Foreign Ministry said on Monday.

Ban will be in Japan for five days from Friday and meet with survivors of the March 2011 quake and tsunami that hit northeastern Japan, the ministry said. Kutesa is visiting from Wednesday through Sunday and is scheduled to visit a disaster-hit area. Arrangements are also being made for Kutesa to hold talks with Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida on the sidelines of the 14-18 March conference, ministry officials said.—*Kyodo News*

UK plans airline laws to stop Britons from joining Islamic State

LONDON, 9 March — Britain will introduce new laws on Tuesday to try to stop airlines carrying passengers who may be traveling to join Islamic State militants in Syria and Iraq, a junior minister said on Sunday.

Security services estimate some 600 Britons have gone to Syria or Iraq to join militant groups, including the man known as “Jihadi John” who has appeared in several Islamic State beheading videos.

Under the proposed new laws, Home Secretary Theresa May would be able to prevent airlines from carrying passengers, including children, believed to be travelling to take part in “terrorism-related activity” on known routes, such as those into Syria, according to a Home Office statement.

“This important legislation will disrupt the ability of people to travel abroad to fight and then return,” James Brokenshire, a junior minister for security in May's department, said in the statement.

“It will also enhance our ability to monitor and control the actions of those who pose a threat,” he added.

The rules would re-

quire airlines to seek permission to carry such passengers. An automatic system based on passenger lists provided by airlines would flag high-risk travelers and stop them boarding aircraft.

The new powers are part of Britain's efforts to stop foreign fighters from entering Syria via commercial flights and come weeks after three London schoolgirls fled Britain to join up with Islamic State through Turkey.

Turkish Airlines has previously said it was helping a government investigation into the case but that it was only responsible for checking visas.

Prime Minister David Cameron has also urged internet firms to do more to tackle online extremism after it was revealed the three girls had used Twitter to contact other women involved with Islamic State.

Speaking in an online chatroom on Sunday, Britain's Senior National Coordinator for Counter Terrorism, Helen Ball, said that at least 22 families in Britain had reported young women and girls as missing in the past year, believing that they had travelled to Syria.—*Reuters*

S Korea seeks UN punishment of N Korea over firing missiles: Yonhap

SEOUL, 9 March — South Korea is seeking punitive action by the United Nations against North Korea over Pyongyang's recent test-launch of short-range missiles, *Yonhap News Agency* reported on Monday, citing

a South Korean government source.

The South Korean government “has sent a letter (to the United Nations) stating that the North's firing of two ballistic missiles on the starting day of the joint South Korea-US Key

Resolve exercise is a clear violation of a UN Security Council resolution and a counteraction is needed,” the source was quoted as saying.

On 2 March, North Korea fired two short-range missiles between 6:32 am and 6:41 am as the United States and South Korea began their annual military exercise, which runs through this coming Friday.

Pyeongyang has long decried the drills as a threat to its rule.

In a statement prior to the launches, it called the exercises “dangerous nuclear war drills for invading.”

The letter was sent to the North Korea sanctions committee under the UN Security Council, the source reportedly said.

Kyodo News

Air travel ‘safer’ in 2014 despite Malaysian disasters: IATA

SINGAPORE, 9 March — Last year was by some measures the safest in the history of commercial aviation, despite two high-profile crashes involving Malaysia Airlines aircraft in which hundreds of people were killed, a leading industry body said on Monday.

While more people died in air accidents in 2014 than the average in recent years, the number of fatal accidents compared with the total number of flights was a record low, according to the International Air Transport Association (IATA).

“While aviation safety was in the headlines in 2014, the data show that flying continues to improve its safety performance,” said Tony Tyler, IATA's director general and chief executive officer, in a statement.

IATA, which represents about 250 airlines, said in an annual safety report that there were 12 fatal accidents in 2014 with 641 fatalities, versus 19 fatal accidents and 517 fatalities per year in the five-year period between 2009 and 2013.



International Air Transport Association (IATA) chief Tony Tyler gestures during an interview with Reuters in Geneva on 11 Dec, 2014.—REUTERS

That translated into an accident rate, measured in “hull losses” per 1 million flights, of 0.23, or the equivalent of one for every 4.4 million flights. The 2013 rate was 0.41 and the five-year average rate 0.58 per million flights.

IATA's 2014 statistics did not include the loss of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH17, which was shot down by a surface-to-air anti-aircraft missile in Ukraine last June and so not classified as an accident.

“To the flying public an air tragedy is an air trag-

edy, regardless of how it is classified,” said Tyler. “In 2014 we saw a reduction in the number of fatal accidents — and that would be true even if we were to include MH17 in the total.”

Tyler, who called the loss of MH17 with the 298 passengers and crew on board an “unacceptable act of aggression”, added that governments and the industry should find ways to reduce the risk of over-flying conflict zones.

“This includes better sharing of critical information about security risks to civil aviation,” he said.

The other high-profile event of 2014, the disappearance of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH370 on a flight from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing on 8 March, 2014, with 239 passengers and crew, has become one of the biggest mysteries in the history of aviation.

An extensive search in the southern Indian Ocean, where satellite data showed that the Boeing 777-200ER ended up after being diverted from its original flight path, has not found any sign of the plane. An investigation report that was released on Sunday did not reveal anything new.

The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), a United Nations body that regulates global aviation, proposed after MH370 that commercial aircraft report their position every 15 minutes instead of the current norm of 30-40 minutes.

This will improve the ability to track commercial aircraft globally and find remote crash sites much faster.

IATA supported the move but balked at the proposed deadline of December 2015.—*Reuters*

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MV NINOS VOY NO (1030W)
 Consignees of cargo carried on MV NINOS VOY NO (1030W) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 9.3.2015 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of H.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.
 Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claims Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.
 No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.
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Toyama Pref ordered to pay damages to man acquitted of rape



Photo taken on 9 March, 2015, shows Hiroshi Yanagihara entering the Toyama District Court in the city of Toyama, central Japan.
 KYODO NEWS

TOYAMA, (Japan), 9 March — The Toyama District Court ordered the Toyama prefectural government on Monday to pay some 19.66 million yen (about \$163,000) in damages to a man who was cleared of rape charges, citing irregularities in the police investigation. The plaintiff, Hiroshi Yanagihara, 47, had sought some 104 million yen in damages from both the central and prefectural governments. A three-judge panel headed by Judge Asako Ata found inadequacies in aspects of the police investigation, including coercing Yanagihara into making a false confession.

But it rejected the demand for damages from the central government, saying there was no illegality in prosecutors' filing of criminal charges against Yanagihara. The prosecutors could not be held responsible for failing to recognize at the time that the case against Yanagihara resulted from a false confession, according to the ruling. Yanagihara, then a taxi driver, was arrested in April 2002 on suspicion of attempted rape and rearrested the following month on suspicion of raping a different girl. He was sentenced to three years' imprisonment, but freed in January 2005 after serving almost two years following the arrest in 2006 of another person who confessed to the rapes. Yanagihara was then acquitted in a retrial.

During the damages suit trial, Yanagihara complained of having suffered from posttraumatic stress disorder.—Kyodo News

Children's book author Matsutani dies at 89



File photo taken in October 2010 shows Japanese children's book author Miyoko Matsutani, known for her work "Tatsunoko Taro" (Taro the Dragon Boy) and the "Chiisai Momo-chan" (Little Momo) series. Matsutani died of old age at a Tokyo hospital on 28 Feb, 2015, at 89, her family said on 9 March.

KYODO NEWS

TOKYO, 9 March — Japanese children's book author Miyoko Matsutani died of old age at a Tokyo hospital on 28 February, her family said on Monday.

She was 89.

Among her works were "Tatsunoko Taro" (Taro the Dragon Boy), a fairy tale published in 1960 and later made into an animation film and adapted for the stage, and the "Chiisai Momo-chan" (Little Momo) series based on her parenting experience, which was first published in 1964 and became a best seller with sales of 6 million copies.

Matsutani began writing fairy tales after graduating from the predecessor of Toyojoshi Senior High School, studying literature under novelist Joji Tsubota (1890-1980), whom she met in Nagano Prefecture when she evacuated there from Tokyo to escape air raids during World War II.

Kodansha Ltd, one of the major publishers in Japan, gave her an award for new writers of children's literature for "Tatsunoko Taro." Matsutani was known as a collector of Japanese folk legends.

Kyodo News

Norwegian Air cancels Monday flights as strike drags on

OSLO, 9 March — Norwegian Air Shuttle, Europe's third biggest budget airline, cancelled dozens of flights scheduled for Monday as talks with striking pilots failed to yield a compromise, it said on Sunday.

Norwegian said it would cancel all domestic flights in Norway and Sweden, some flights within Denmark, and most flights between the three Scandinavian capitals, as the strike enters its tenth day. About 25,000 passengers will be affected.

However, it plans to

operate its long-haul routes and most flights originating or arriving in cities outside Scandinavia, it said in a statement.

The main point of contention is that the airline's 650 Scandinavian pilots want a collective agreement with the parent group instead of the current deal with its Norwegian Air Norway subsidiary.

They argue that the deal is needed to stop the airline from giving jobs to lower paid pilots from Asia and Spain, thereby "importing" lower wages to

Scandinavia, a region with some of the world's highest salaries.

The firm has rejected these demands as well as accusations of social dumping, and has instead offered to employ pilots through separate local subsidiaries in Norway, Sweden and Denmark.

The sides have not come closer to a deal, despite intervention from state mediator, but said they would continue to negotiate through Sunday night.

Reuters



Parked Boeing 737-800 aircrafts belonging to budget carrier Norwegian Air are pictured at Stockholm Arlanda Airport on 6 March, 2015. —REUTERS

Man arrested after stabbing frenzy leaves 5 dead in Hyogo

KOBE, 9 March — A 40-year-old man was arrested on Monday morning after a stabbing frenzy at two separate houses in Hyogo Prefecture, western Japan, left five people dead.

The man, identified as Tatsuhiko Hirano, allegedly attacked the five people

with a knife at around 7 am at the houses in the city of Sumoto on Awaji Island.

The suspect, who lives nearby, admitted to police he stabbed the people but said he would not speak until he has a lawyer, according to the Hyogo prefectural police.

The assaults occurred in a small town where people from other areas rarely move in and the residents know each other well, local people said.

Hirano was arrested after he was found near the site wearing clothes stained with blood.—Kyodo News

WEATHER REPORT

BAY INFERENCE: Weather is generally fair in the North Bay and partly cloudy in the Andaman Sea and elsewhere in the Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL EVENING OF THE 10th March, 2015: Light rain or thundershowers are likely to be isolated in Taninthayi Region and Mon State and weather will be partly cloudy in Yangon Region, Kachin and Kayin States, generally fair in the remaining Regions and States. Degree of certainty is (60%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Seas will be moderate in Myanmar waters.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Slight increase of day temperature in the whole country.

Actress Emma Watson urges more men to fight for gender equality



LONDON, 9 March — British actress Emma Watson urged more men and boys on Sunday to take a stand for women's rights and be proud to be feminists in a bid to add momentum to

a global campaign to unite men and women for gender equality. Watson, 24, a goodwill ambassador for UN Women, used International Women's Day to add impetus to the HeForShe campaign that was launched in September last year and encourages men and boys to join the fight for equal rights.

So far around 240,000 men have pledged their commitment online, according to the HeForShe website, including US President Barack Obama and actor Matt Damon, but there is a target to mobilise one billion men and boys by July this year.

"There has been a ground swell of support but we need more men to take a stand for gender equality," Watson told a discussion on gender equality at Facebook's London headquarters. "Men often think that

feminism is a women's word ... but if you stand for gender equality, you are a feminist."

Watson, who rose to fame as Hermione Granger in the Harry Potter films, said the campaign was not about men saving women and also called upon women to support the campaign.

"It's uncomfortable and awkward for women to acknowledge there is a problem, but we need to understand we are complicit," she said. The actress said she was pleased with the response to the IMPACT 10X10X10 initiative, a one-year pilot project launched in January seeking commitments from governments, companies and universities on women's empowerment and gender equality.

Several countries, including Sweden, the Netherlands and Sierra Leone,

have backed the campaign, Watson said. When asked about gender equality on a global scale, Watson praised the power of social media to allow girls and women to interact with others who can provide advice and support.

Audience members chosen by UN Women to attend the event submitted their stories online of what they had done to advance gender equality.

Jacob Anderson, 24, a Swedish designer, said he was an active supporter of women's rights on online forums and social media.

"Gender equality should be talked about far more than it currently is ... it doesn't make sense that women and men don't have equal rights," Anderson told the Thomson Reuters Foundation at the event in London.—Reuters

Will Smith imparts driving lessons to son Jaden

LOS ANGELES, 9 March — Will Smith's son Jaden has revealed his father is teaching him how to drive. The 'Focus' star's 16-year-old son Jaden has recently got his learner's permit and has revealed his 'awesome' father is teaching him 'a lot' about driving, reported *Billboard* magazine. "My dad is awesome. I wouldn't be where I am right now if it wasn't for all of the things he's taught me. He's taught me a lot about driving and just about life. And I love his songs, I go back and re-listen to those songs and the newer songs he's made in the studio too," Jaden said.

While Jaden takes musical inspiration from his father, his 14-year-old sister Willow revealed she takes inspiration from her mother Jada Pinkett Smith.

"When I was younger, my brother and I toured with my mom's band, Wicked Wisdom, so heavy metal was one of the first types of music I heard a lot and I'm still really inspired by it. "I'm into Lolawolf, Tune-Yards, the Runaways, Pink Floyd, and I freaking love Bikini Kill! My mom listens to my playlists on Hype Machine all the time and I listen to hers — that's how I found out about Radiohead and Lamb of God."—PTI



Will Smith's son Jaden has revealed his father is teaching him how to drive.—PTI

Lady Gaga wants family wedding

LOS ANGELES, 9 March — Pop star Lady Gaga reportedly wants her wedding to be a family celebration, a source said.

The singer, who is said to be eager to tie the knot at her USD 23 million mansion in Malibu, California later this year, has also started making her guest-list and plans to invite her good friend Elton John, 67, to the event, as well as Tony Bennett.

Gaga plans to serve her guests food from her parents' Italian restaurant in New York City, Joanne Trattoria, and wants her relatives to take key roles in her big day, reported *Us Weekly*.

"She's just coming up with ideas now. She's asked her sister Natali to be the maid of honour, and her dad can't wait to walk her

down the aisle. They want it to be a family celebration," a source said.

The singer, who is said to be eager to tie the knot at her USD 23 million mansion in Malibu, California later this year, has also started making her guest-list and plans to invite her good friend Elton John, 67, to the event, as well as Tony Bennett.

The singer, whose real name is Stefani Germanotta, released an album of duets, 'Cheek to Cheek,' with Tony last year and is said to have asked him to perform the title track at her reception.

PTI



Lady Gaga

'Suicide Squad' will blow people's brains out: Cara Delevingne



LOS ANGELES, 9 March

— Supermodel Cara Delevingne says DC Comics' 'Suicide Squad' will blow people's brains out. The 22-year-old model and actress is set to star in the film as The Enchantress and made a visit to set during pre-production.

Director David Ayer tweeted a picture of Delevingne with the caption, "Cara inspects the set." The model then replied with her own tweet saying, "This movie is going to blow people's brains out! LITERALLY! #SuicideSquad"

Also starring in the film are Will Smith as Deadshot, Jared Leto as The Joker and Joel Kinnaman as Rick Flagg. Margot Robbie as Harley Quinn, Jai Courtney as Captain Boomerang and Viola Davis as Amanda Waller round out the cast. Ayer also recently tweeted a picture of Leto ahead of losing his hair for his role as The Joker.—PTI

Justin Bieber spends USD 3,600 on party alcohol

LOS ANGELES, 9 March — Pop sensation Justin Bieber has reportedly splashed USD 3,600 on alcohol at a party.

Bieber, 21, hit a nightclub where DJ Khaled was hosting the weekly bash, reported TMZ. The 'Baby' hitmaker reportedly shelled out the amount to impress the women present with him at the party along with model Lira Galore.—PTI



Jennifer Lopez spends USD 25K for wrinkle-free skin?

LOS ANGELES, 9 March — Singer-actress Jennifer Lopez is reportedly using CACI non-surgical facial lift treatment to stay youthful.

The 45-year-old mother of two even splashed out USD 25,000 on the wrinkle eraser after being so impressed with its results, reported *Daily Express*.

The CACI, a non-invasive facial treatment is like a workout of the facial muscles that concentrates on the areas with wrinkles and lines, such as the jaw-line, mouth and eyes, and also enhances the skin's ability to neutralise bacteria.—PTI



GENERAL

Switzerland's Davis Cup reign ends swiftly

LONDON, 9 March — Switzerland's reign as Davis Cup holders was swiftly ended when they paid the inevitable price for fielding a second-string team and lost 3-2 to Belgium in the first round in Liege on Sunday.

Just over three months since Roger Federer and Stan Wawrinka drove them to an historic title in Lille, it was a different story without their big two as the Swiss became the first champions in 10 years to fall at the first hurdle.

Federer and Wawrinka had chosen to stand aside after achieving their ambitions and the stand-ins were not able to upset the odds against much higher-ranked players despite a heroic effort from 22-year-old Henri Laaksonen.

The world number 344, who previously played for Finland, levelled the tie at 2-2 with a 6-3, 3-6, 3-6, 7-6 (5), 6-1 win over Steve Darcis, a player ranked 242 places higher. For the second time in three days, the remarkable Laaksonen fought back to prevail in a five-setter.

Switzerland's hopes, though, were extinguished in the deciding rubber when David Goffin, the world number 21 who was rested on Friday because of concerns over a back injury, proved too good for number 321 Adrien Bossel and won 6-4, 6-0, 6-4.

For the second year running Andy Murray led Britain to a first-round victory over



Great Britain's Andy Murray in action against United States of America during Davis Cup World Group First Round at Emirates Arena, Glasgow, Scotland on 8 March, 2015.—REUTERS

the United States when he beat John Isner 7-6 (4), 6-3, 7-6 (4) in Glasgow.

The former Wimbledon champion survived some early scares against the big-serving American before taking charge to steer Britain into an unassailable 3-1 lead.

In the quarter-finals they face a home tie against France who beat Germany with a day to spare.

"It's been incredible the whole week. To be in the quarter-finals for the second time in a row is a credit to everyone," said world number five Murray who revelled in front of a Scottish crowd.

Isner, beaten in five sets by British number two James

Ward on Friday, had three set points in the opener but could not convert and despite some fierce resistance in the third set he could not keep the 32-times champions alive.

Italy, who beat Britain in the quarter-finals last year, went down to Kazakhstan in Astana where Aleksandr Nedovyesov, ranked 130th in the world, stunned number 22 Fabio Fognini in five sets to seal a 3-2 victory.

Kazakhstan next travel to former Davis Cup heavyweights Australia who enjoyed a 3-1 victory over 2012 and 2013 winners Czech Republic in Ostrava, Bernard Tomic clinching the win with a 7-6 (4), 6-3, 7-6 (5) triumph

over Lukas Rosol.

Australia are through to the last eight for the first time since 2006.

World number one Novak Djokovic's Serbia crushed Croatia 5-0 and next take on Argentina or Brazil.

Leonardo Mayer kept Argentina in the tie against Brazil in Buenos Aires with a five-set win over Joao Souza in a match that set a competition singles record by lasting six hours and 42 minutes.

With the tie at 2-2, Argentina go into a fourth day on Monday with Federico Delbonis leading Thomaz Bellucci 6-3 in the deciding rubber after bad light ended play.—Reuters

McIlroy disappointed with form ahead of Masters



Rory McIlroy reacts to his tee shot on the second hole during the third round of the WGC in Cadillac Championship golf tournament at TPC Blue Monster at Trump National Doral, Miami, FL, USA on 7 March, 2015.—REUTERS

MIAMI, 9 March — With one tournament left to prepare for his bid to complete a career grand slam at next month's Masters, Rory McIlroy says he is disappointed with his form and his 'tentative' approach to shots.

The world number one shot an even-par 72 in the final round of the

WGC-Cadillac Championship on Sunday, leaving him one-under for the week and well back of the leaders.

A frustrating week, which included the Northern Irishman's infamous tossing of a three-iron into a pond and in which his ball-striking has been below his standards, ended with a double-bogey at the 18th.

"The game's just not quite there. I've got a week off now to try and work on it a little bit," said McIlroy, who missed the cut at last week's Honda Classic.

"I am pretty disappointed with how I played overall. I felt it was a little better again today for the most part but a bit of a disappointing finish. But it's just not quite 100 percent."

McIlroy will visit Augusta National next week for a friendly round with his father and Super Bowl winning-quarterback Tom Brady of the New England Patriots before heading to Bay Hill, Orlando, for the 19-22 March Arnold Palmer Invitational, his last scheduled event before the Masters.

Asked whether he had any alarm bells ringing ahead of the 9-12 April Masters, McIlroy was frank: "My inability to hit the ball right-to-left isn't something that you want going into

Augusta. It is something I want to try and work on a little bit.

"Statistically, I hit the ball better. Still it's just not quite as comfortable as I would like.

"I've got a week off now to try to work on the game a bit and get a little sharper for Bay Hill."

Having been in such consistently good form in the lead-up to the Honda Classic, McIlroy is having to adjust to his ball-striking being off and says some fear has crept into his game.

"(I'm) tentative, a little bit scared to play certain shots, because I feel like I can't at the minute. So, hitting away from flags, trying to make sure that I am missing it in the right areas. Just playing quite conservatively, which is very much unlike me," said McIlroy.

"I have just got to get back at it tomorrow and try to figure out what I need to do." —Reuters

mitv Myanmar International

(10-3-2015 07:00 am~ 11-3-2015 07:00 am) MST

- | | |
|--|---|
| * News | * News |
| * "Insight Myanmar" Migration Positive Phenomenon | * Taste of Myanmar (Shan Noodle Salad) |
| * Culture Shows: Composer Ma Mya Lay | * Ngapali Beach: Fishing Villages |
| * News | * Director: Maung Myo Min (Yin Twin Pyit) |
| * Human-Elephant Conflict, "Avoid Collision" | * News |
| * Products of Myanmar — Seashells Products | * Marketable Goods (Straw painting) |
| * News | * Pyin Oo Lwin Sweater |
| * Life In NightArt In Life (Ep-2) (Part-1) | * News |
| * News | * Size Does Matter (Ep-1) Human — Elephant Conflict |
| * Development Momentum of Sittway | * Products of Myanmar — Velvet Slippers |
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| * To The Land of Countless Temples — Bagan Trip (EP-1) | * An Oasis Trip to Mt Popa |
| * Today Myanmar "Booming Garment Industry" | * Culture Show: Theatrical Make Up |
| | * News |
| | * Youth of the Future (Ep-4) |
| | * Kindhearted Pet Lovers |

MRTV News Channel in Brief

(10-3-2015, Tuesday)

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|--|--|
| 6:00 am | 3:35 pm |
| • Paritta by Hilly Region Missionary Sayadaw | • 2015 University Entrance Examination (Geography) |
| 6:25 am | 4:35 pm |
| • Physical Exercise | • 2015 University Entrance Examination (Economic) |
| 7:00 am | 5:00 pm |
| • News/ Weather Report | • News / Weather Report |
| 7:30 am | 5:35 pm |
| • Head Line News | • Documentary |
| 8:00 am | 6:00 pm |
| • News / International News | • News / Weather Report |
| 9:35 am | 6:35 pm |
| • MRTV's Youth Programme | • One Vision Part-2 (B) (Part-B) |
| 10:35 am | 7:00 pm |
| • Science and Technology Programme | • News |
| 11:35 am | 7:35 pm |
| • Documentary | • People's Talks |
| 12:00 noon | 8:00 pm |
| • News / International News / Weather Report | • News/ International News/ Weather Report |
| 12:35 pm | 9:00 pm |
| • Hluttaw Image | • News/ International News/ Weather Report |
| 1:40 pm | • Hluttaw Image |
| • Sing & Enjoy | • TV Drama Series |
| 2:35 pm | |
| • Mono Classical Songs | |

MRTV Entertainment Channel

(10-3-2015, Tuesday)

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|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 6:00 am | 8:25 am |
| • Mono Classical Songs | • TV Drama Series |
| 6:20 am | 9:15 am |
| • TV Drama Series | • TV Drama Series |
| 6:45 am | 10:00 am |
| • TV Drama Series | • Musical Programme |
| 7:10 am | 10:10 am |
| • Honour of Cultural Show | • ASEAN China Cultural Show |
| 7:30 am | 10:30 am |
| • Kyae Pwint Myaye Yin Khone Than | • Myanmar Video |

Myanmar to meet with China in third-placed match



YANGON, 9 March — Myanmar U-15 men's football team secured three points in its first victory over host Chinese youth team in the China-ASEAN youth football tournament on Sunday.

At Dongxing city's stadium in the Guangxi

Province, the People's Republic of China, Myanmar beat China with a 1-0 win in the former third match, standing third position with one win and two losses.

Starting from the match, Myanmar could put pressure on host team. In the 73rd minute, Myanmar's Hein Htet Aung (9)

translated his opportunity to the opening goal. Although Chinese players declined tempo after giving a goal, Myanmar players missed chances to kick the balls into the opponent's net.

After the group matches, Vietnam stood

first with seven points in two wins and one draw and Malaysia with four points in one win, one draw and one loss. Both teams have to play the final match while Myanmar in third position and China in the fourth must meet in the third-placed match.—MFF

Nishikori slips to world No 5 in ATP rankings

NEW YORK, 9 March — Japan's Kei Nishikori dropped back from a career high world No 4 to No 5 with the release of the ATP Tour world rankings on Monday.

Andy Murray, who had two wins against the United States in Britain's first-round Davis Cup tie,

took over world No 4. Nishikori had two wins but earned no points in Japan's tie against Canada and trails Murray by 10.

Novak Djokovic, Roger Federer, and Rafael Nadal remained at first, second and third, respectively.

Kyodo News

Messi breaks Spanish hat-trick record as Barca go top



Barcelona's Lionel Messi during UEFA Champions League Second Round First Leg at Etihad Stadium, Manchester, England on 24 Feb, 2015.

REUTERS

BARCELONA, 9 March — Lionel Messi broke a Spanish hat-trick record and Luis Suarez struck twice as a rampant Barcelona took over top spot in La Liga with a 6-1 hammering of Rayo Vallecano on Sunday. Messi came alive after halftime at the Nou Camp to net his 32nd treble for Barca in all competitions in the space of just 12 minutes.

It meant he eclipsed the record of the most hat-tricks ever recorded in Spanish football that he had shared with Athletic Bilbao striker Telmo Zarra.

The Argentine's second half tour de force against a side reduced to 10 men with the dismissal of Tito — Barca themselves had Dani Alves sent off late in the game — included a goal scored from a retaken penalty after he had seen the first saved.

It helped put Barca back in control at the head of La Liga, after an equal amount of games played, for the first time since the start of November.

They moved on to 62 points, a point clear of Real Madrid, who were beaten by Athletic Bilbao on Saturday, and are now in pole position two weeks ahead of Madrid's visit to their Nou Camp fortress in El Clasico. Atletico Madrid stayed third after a 1-1 draw

at home to fourth-placed Valencia. "Being leaders is not something that we are concentrating on much at the moment as there is still a long way to go in the league," defender Gerard Pique told reporters.

"We started the season well, then we had a drop in form and it looks like we are playing well again now."

Barca scored with their first shot on goal after five minutes with Xavi releasing Suarez, who tucked a clinical shot into the corner with the outside of his right boot. Four minutes after halftime, the floodgates opened when Gerard Pique knocked in from close range following a Jordi Alba header from a corner which came back off a post.

When Suarez was felled in the penalty area in the 56th minute by Tito, who received a red card, Messi's penalty was saved by keeper Cristian Alvarez but the referee ordered a retake due to encroachment in the area. Inevitably, Messi made no mistake second time around and he then knocked in a rebound after 63 minutes, before completing his historic hat-trick, the 24th of his La Liga career, five minutes later. He now has 32 Spanish hat-tricks, compared to Cristiano Ronaldo's 27.

Reuters

Liverpool forced to replay by dogged Blackburn

LONDON, 9 March — Liverpool were left frustrated by Championship side Blackburn Rovers who defended heroically to draw 0-0 at Anfield on Sunday and force a replay in their FA Cup quarter-final.

Kolo Toure headed against a post, while Daniel Sturridge, Philippe Coutinho and Raheem Sterling failed to break down their second tier visitors despite relentless pressure.

Aston Villa — who beat West Bromwich Albion 2-0 on Saturday — are the only side to seal a semi-final spot so far while Manchester United host holders Arsenal on Monday.

Giant-killers Bradford City travel to Reading on 16 March for a replay after their 0-0 draw. "It's been difficult here against Championship teams, Blackburn deserve credit," Liverpool manager Brendan Rodgers told BT Sport. "But my players also deserve credit, they were missing sharpness but they kept going and tried to create chances."

While third tier Bradford had captured the imagination with their march to the quarter-finals, Blackburn had gone about their

business quietly in dumping Premier League Swansea and Stoke before they arrived at Anfield.

Pre-match renditions of 'You'll never Walk Alone' had barely ended when Liverpool lost their defensive rock Martin Skrtel.

The Slovakia defender contested a header against Blackburn's Rudy Gestede but fell heavily on his neck and, after an eight-minute delay, was carried off on a stretcher. Liverpool had lost just one of their previous 21 games in all competitions but Blackburn coped com-

fortably in the opening stages and led by the powerful Gestede were carving out opportunities of their own.

Craig Conway spurned the best chance of the opening period, blazing high and wide from close-range.

Sturridge's rasping shot in first half stoppage time drew a smart stop from Blackburn keeper Simon Eastwood. Immediately after the break the hosts were indebted to goalkeeper Simon Mignolet who produced a wonderful save to palm away Alex Baptiste's header but thereafter Liver-

pool were dominant. Toure hit the post and Sturridge became increasingly influential though he was thwarted by Blackburn's determined rearguard. Liverpool laid siege to Blackburn's goal in the closing stages but failed to force Eastwood into many meaningful saves.

"It was 90 minutes of concentration because they had a lot of the ball and they had some great players out there," said Blackburn captain Matthew Kilgallon. "It was just about concentration and working for each other."

Reuters



Blackburn Rovers Tom Cairney in action against Liverpool's Jordan Henderson.—REUTERS