

Pan Hlaing river conservation project will benefit 20,833 households



President U Thein Sein inspects waterway conservation of the 35-mile long Pan Hlaing River—MNA

YANGON, 14 March — President U Thein Sein on Saturday inspected waterway conservation of the 35-mile long Pan Hlaing River that passes through Yangon

and Ayeyawady regions. In the morning, the President, Union Minister U Myint Hlaing and Yangon region's chief minister U Myint Swe arrived at

Kathabaung village monastery in Twantay Township, Yangon Region, to meet locals and hear their views regarding conservation of the river and rural develop-

ment programmes. U Thein Sein also visited the project site of conservation works where the locals, including a 94-year old man, expressed

appreciation for the government's improvement of transport and communication programmes.

The president said the area would be able to triple its crop growth in a year thanks to water management programmes, urging the locals to educate their

children for a better community in the future.

The government expects conservation of the river will help promote transportation and prevent flooding, he said.

Union Minister U Myint Hlaing explained the (See page 3)

Govt, MPs seek ways to speed up settling land confiscation issues

By Aye Min Soe

NAY PYI TAW, 14 March — The Land Use Management Central Com-

mittee of the government and the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw's Land Confiscation Investigation Commission held a meeting in Nay Pyi

Taw on Saturday to seek ways to improve the settlement of land confiscation disputes.

A total of 186 gov-

ernmental departments concerned with land confiscations and 11 groups of the parliamentary investigation commission took part in separate meetings in an attempt to speed up the settlement of land confiscation issues.

Vice-President U Nyan Tun, the chairman of the Land Use Management Central Committee, blamed the country's current land confiscation problems on weaknesses of the rules related to land acquisition and land use laws, as well as insufficient coordination between authorities related to land management.

A lack of accurate statistics and maps had also caused land disputes, including those involving landless and squatters, between the authorities and the people, the Vice-President said.

(See page 3)

Presidential Scholarship Selection Committee meets

YANGON, 14 March — The Presidential Scholarship Selection Committee discussed selection criteria, short- and long-term scholarship programmes, personal interviews to students with a good command of English and scholarships to students who excel in

specific subject matters.

The British Council helped conduct proficiency tests on the English language last December, with 873 students passing the tests that drew 2773 candidates. The interviews have been scheduled for April.

MNA

CSOs discuss education amendment bill at Amyotha Hluttaw

NAY PYI TAW, 14 March — Civil society organizations offered suggestions on the national education amendment bill at the Amyotha Hluttaw on Saturday, with the chairman of the Bill Committee giving a detailed account of matters related to writing a law on education and participating

groups in the process.

Officials said four social organizations—Myanmar Christian Council of Churches, Rakhine Fellowship Organization, Free Funeral Service Society (Yangon) and Myanmar Disabled Leading Group—shared their opinions on the education amendment bill.—MNA



A farmer works in a cabbage field near Nay Pyi Taw. Local farmers grow mainly cabbage, onions and peas and pulses as second crops of the year.

PHOTO: BY AYE MIN SOE

Dy Minister urges increase in library lending



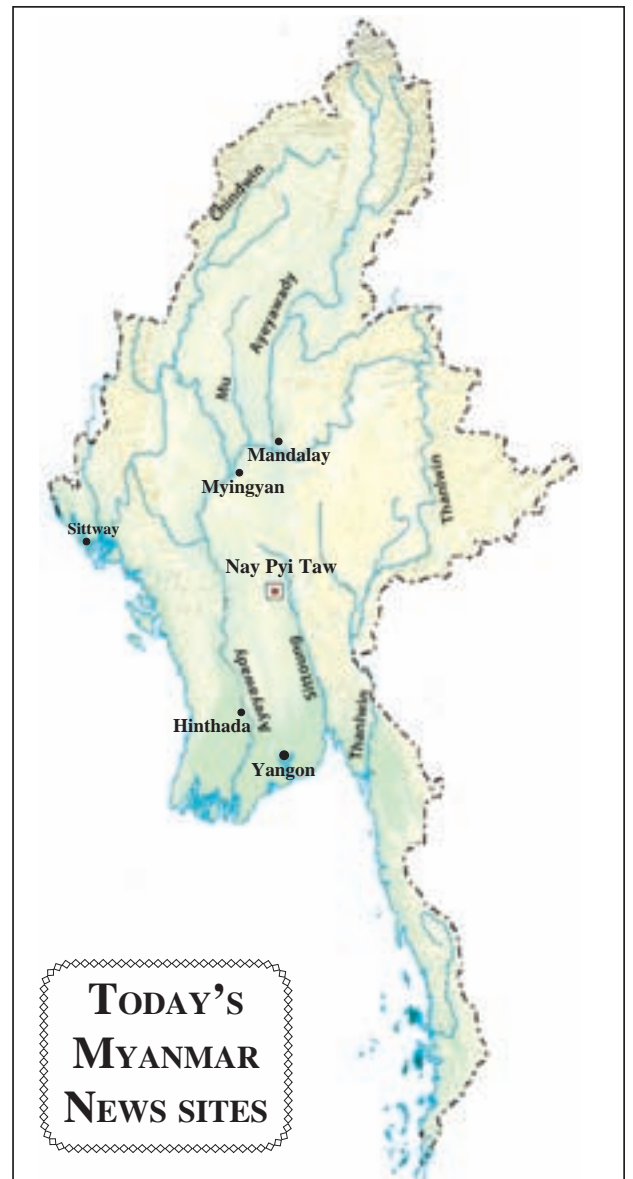
HINTHADA, 14 March — Deputy Minister for Information U Pike Ht-way on his trip to Hinthada Township on 12 March instructed officials and

staff of the Information and Public Relations Department to deliver daily newspapers to the township library, schools and offices, increase subscribers of dailies and encourage borrowing of books at the library.

At Hinthada District IPRD Office, the deputy minister spoke with Internet users and viewed magazines and a photo gallery.

He urged staff to emphasize increasing the number of books and publications at the library and to take care of electricity safety.

Win Bo (IPRD)



Rakhine State honours victorious athletes in National Sports Festival

SITTWAY, 14 March—A ceremony to honour victorious athletes who participated in the 4th National Sports Festival 2015 was held at U Ottama Hall in Sittway on 12 March, with Chief Minister of Rakhine State U Maung Maung Ohn in attendance.

A total of 308 Rakhine athletes bagged 13 gold, 23 silver and 33 bronze medals in 23 sports events, finishing 11th among 14 regions and states, as well as Nay Pyi Taw Council Area.

The Rakhine State Chief Minister presented awards worth K 9.1 mil-



lion to the victorious athletes. Later, the chief minister and party watched a video of athletes compet-

ing at the festival.
Rakhine State IPRD

Central Myanmar farmers turn to CP maize

MYINGYAN, 14 March—A growing number of farmers in central Myanmar, especially in Myingyan Township, have

been growing maize from Thai multinational CP Group on a commercial scale for livestock feed.

Generally, three

members of a family can grow one acre of maize on a manageable scale. The croplands can be used in cultivation of these plants

three times a year.

A local farmer recounted his experiences on cultivation that “Cultivation of CP maize costs



K75,000 per acre including expenses for seeds, ploughing, water supply and tractor fuel. The maize plot can yield 900 to 1,000 viss per acre. In the market, farmers can sell K350 per viss, so they can earn 350,000 per acre.”

He added, “By-products of maize plants can be used as foodstuff for cows. So they can earn surplus income from the stocks of plants.”

Zaw Min Naing (Myingyan)

Vets raise awareness of breeders for avian influenza

YANGON, 14 March—Ministry of Livestock, Yangon North District Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department and Hlegu Township Livestock Breeding Federation jointly organized a talk on prevention of outbreak of avian influenza to breeders at special zones in the Livestock Breeding Zone in Nyaunhnapin Village, Hlegu Township, on 12 March.

Head of the District Department Dr Kyaw Thu and Head of Hlegu Township LBVD Dr Kan Htay explained efforts of the

Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development to develop the livestock breeding sector, prevent the outbreak of bird flu diseases and raise awareness of bio-security.

Officials and veterinarians shared knowledge about preventive measures being taken at poultry farms at the special zone and contaminated diseases.

Later, veterinarians distributed pamphlets on avian influenza disease to attendees.

District IPRD



NATIONAL

Pan Hlaing river conservation...

(from page 1)
conservation project and waterway transport along the river which flows through Hlaingtharyar, Htantabin and Twantay townships in Yangon region. The project will also benefit people in more than 100 villages of Nyaung-done Township.

Upon completion of the conservation project, Pan Hlaing River will have a total of 14 sluice gates—the existing nine and the five more facilities in the near future—that will be able to prevent more than 120,000 acres of cultivated land from flooding.

The development programmes of the area will also include construction of six bridges.

U Kyaw Myint Hlaing, director gener-

al of the Department of Irrigation, explained the design, provided by the Dutch government, of the Pan Hlaing sluice gate at the confluence of the Pan Hlaing and Hlaing rivers.

The government has plans to create a modern agricultural zone, including organic farming and development programmes, along the Pan Hlaing River.

In the past, double-decker ships could ply across the Pan Hlaing River up to Pan Hlaing Golf club in Yangon, with sandbanks blocking the shipping lane near Ohonbinsu village of Ayeyawady region.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation has implemented the conservation project since April



President U Thein Sein discusses construction of an international standard artistic centre with artistes in Yangon—MNA

2014 with the use of 349 units of machinery. It has completed 98 percent of the project, which is estimated to benefit 20,833 households and a total of 120,164 acres of land in 35 village-tracts along the

river at its completion in May.

In the afternoon, President U Thein Sein discussed with U Lu Min, chairman of Myanmar Motion Picture Association, U Tin Oo Lay, chairman of

Myanmar Musicians Association and U Mya Kyi, chairman of Myanmar Artists Association, about possible construction of international standard artistic center and the elder care programmes for vet-

eran artistes.

The meeting was attended by union ministers U Soe Thane, U Tin Naing Thein and U Ye Htut; Yangon region's chief minister U Myint Swe and department heads.—MNA

Vice President Dr Sai Mauk Kham receives Chinese Ambassador

NAY PYI TAW, 14 March—Vice President Dr Sai Mauk Kham on Saturday met Mr Yang Houlan, Chinese Ambassador to Myanmar, at the Presidential Palace here to discuss bilateral relations between the two nations.

Present at the call together with the vice president were Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs U Thant Kyaw and officials.

The Chinese ambassador was accompanied by Military Counsellor Mr Wang Jingbo.

MNA



Vice President Dr Sai Mauk Kham and Mr Yang Houlan, Chinese Ambassador, seen at Presidential Palace on March 14.—MNA

Govt, MPs seek ways...

(from page 1)

Vice-president U Nyan Tun has also called for reforms in the land management sector to be able to get a stronger land management system. Land confiscation issues happened during the time of the previous government because the authorities at lower level turned a blind eye to the law, said a Member of Parliament and is also a member of the parliamentary investigation commission, quoting the Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw Thura U Shwe Mann and the Chairman of the investigation commission.

The Land Use Man-

agement Central Committee has handled 6445 cases included in seven parts out of the 10-part report of the investigation commission said Brig-Gen Kyaw Zan Myint, the Secretary of the committee. So far, more than 300,000 acres of land in total have been returned to farmers he added.

Currently, the parliamentary land confiscation investigation commission is working as a negotiation in conformity with the 1984 Land Acquisition Act between the government and those whose land has been confiscated, a source said.—GNLM

Students handed over to parents

LETPADAN, 14 March—Local authorities have been handing over students detained in Letpadan protest on March 10.

Official statement said that a total of 26 students and two reporters have been released from March 11 to 13, with the release of a second-year student Mg Okka Maung Maung from Taunggyi University on Saturday morning, accounting for the release of 29 protesters in total.—009

Mg Okka Maung Maung seen with his parents on March 14.—009



34 dead as ferry capsizes, search for survivors continues

By Aye Min Soe

NAY PYI TAW, 14 March—The search for missing passengers continued Saturday after rescuers recovered 34 bodies—two men, 31 women and one monk—following the capsizing of a ferry off western Myanmar the previous day, a police source said.

The state-owned passenger ferry Aung Ta Gon-3 was carrying 214 passengers and crew when it capsized around 7.15 pm Friday about 60

miles south-east of the town of Myaybon, Rakhine State.

The vessel, carrying a load of 129 tons, was heading to Sittway after leaving the town of Kyaukphyu, according to its owner, the Ministry of Transport's Inland Water Transport agency.

Water flooded the ship from its bow due to severe

weather, with crew and passengers pumping water out of the ship before it sank, according to survivors.

A police source said 167 passengers including 103 men and 64 women had been rescued.

GNLM

Military columns rout Kokang insurgents

NAY PYI TAW, 14 March—Government troops dislodged Kokang insurgents from southwest of Laukkai Township after clashes on Saturday morn-

ing.

During the fighting, the troops recovered two bodies in Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army uniform, two pistols

and ammunition.

In the afternoon of March 13, military columns raided a building in Laukkai Township, seizing military uniforms and equipment bearing the MNDA logo.

In a separate incident, some members of the Restoration Council of Shan State/Shan State Army set fire to a Circle Force mining company project site in the Mong Yang area of eastern Shan State, on the night of 12 March, while also taking captive seven mining workers. The workers were later released by security forces.

Heavy machinery, a 10-wheeled truck, a Toyota Hilux and two shelters were destroyed in the blaze set by the insurgents, who were pursued by the security forces.

Myawady

Japan offers \$4 bil aid to global disaster-control efforts



Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe speaks in the opening session of the UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in the northeastern Japan city of Sendai on 14 March, 2015. The meeting began three days after Japan marked the fourth anniversary of the 11 March, 2011, earthquake, tsunami and nuclear disasters that devastated the area.—KYODO NEWS

SENDAI, (Japan) 14 March — Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said on Saturday Japan will offer \$4 billion in aid for global efforts to enhance disaster management over four years through 2018, including support for building infrastructure in developing countries.

Delivering a speech at a UN conference on disaster risk reduction, which began in Sendai, a northeastern Japanese city affected by the March 2011 earthquake and tsunami, Abe also announced Tokyo's plans to help train a total of 40,000 experts across the globe on disaster prevention as well as reconstruction from natural calamities.

"Disaster risk reduction is the most important challenge for both developed and developing

countries," Abe said. "For developing countries in particular, where 90 percent of disaster victims are concentrated, disaster risk reduction is a great challenge with a view toward sustainable development and adaptation to climate change."

The five-day conference is partly aimed at showcasing Japan's initiative to foster international cooperation in disaster reduction as a quake-prone country that has learned a lot from past disasters, including the 2011 catastrophe that also triggered meltdowns at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant.

Japan is specifically planning to send experts around the world to give advice and other help in introducing relevant legislation and drawing up plans

for disaster prevention, and offer technological support on disaster prediction.

"Japan will contribute to the international community with our knowledge and technology," Abe said, promising to "further advance our cooperation for disaster risk reduction."

The Japanese government says international cooperation in preventing disasters would also help the world adapt to the fallouts of climate change, such as rising temperatures, the retreat of glaciers and sea-level rises. It aims to offer strong support especially for countries seen vulnerable to the impact of climate change.

Delegates from over 160 countries are gathering in Sendai for the third UN Disaster Risk Reduction conference through Wednesday.—Kyodo News

Brueni's navy ship to join maritime exercise in Malaysia

MUARA NAVAL BASE, (Brunei), 14 March — Brunei's navy ship *KDB DARULEHSAN* has set sail for the multilateral maritime exercise in Langkawi in conjunction to the 13th Langkawi International Maritime & Aerospace Exhibition 2015 (LIMA'15) in Malaysia.

The event will run from 17 March to 21 March, the Defence Ministry said on Saturday on its website.

The deployment is led by Commanding Officer Lt Col (L) Willie Padan, the ship will be involved in the multilateral maritime exercise along with ships from over 13 countries.

It is the second participation for *KDB DARULEHSAN* in the event. The first participation was in 2011.

Xinhua

Cambodia rebukes 'labour abuse' report

PHNOM PENH, 14 March — Cambodia has rejected a US — based Human Rights Watch's "labour abuse" report, saying the report is groundless, according to a statement released by the Ministry of Labour late on Friday.

"Currently, Cambodia has been closely cooperating with the International Labour Organization's Better Factories Cambodia to inspect and assess labour conditions in addition to the ministry's existing inspection mechanism on labour conditions, safety and hygiene," said the statement.

"The international community, buyers, and International Labour Organization have supported and recog-

nized that labour conditions in Cambodia have improved in line with international standards," it said.

The statement said last year, the ministry's working groups inspected more than 900 factories for 7,191 times and had fined 128 factories for violating labour law."

"Therefore, the report of this organization is unacceptable," it said.

The rejection came after the Human Rights Watch issued a 140-page report on Thursday, claiming that systemic labour violations, union busting and corruption are the norm in Cambodia's 5.75 billion US dollars garment sector.

Xinhua

Japan, China eye maritime crisis management mechanism talks in May

TOKYO, 14 March — Japan and China envision holding a meeting in Singapore around May to discuss a maritime crisis management mechanism aimed at avoiding clashes around East China Sea islands, diplomatic sources said on Friday.

At the meeting of senior officials, Japan and China will aim to agree on how it should operate, with an eye to putting the mechanism into practice by year-end, they said.

In November, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Chinese President Xi Jinping agreed to talks over a mechanism to ease tensions over the sovereignty of the Senkaku Islands — uninhabited islets in the East China Sea controlled by Japan but also claimed by China, which calls them the Diaoyu.

So far, Japan and China have agreed to use a common radio frequency for their ships and planes around the Senkaku when they get abnormally close to each other.

Chinese patrol ships have repeatedly been spotted around the Senkaku, and fighters jets from both countries have at times flown unusually close to each other in the East China Sea, raising fears of an accident.

Officials from Japan's Defence Ministry and Maritime Self-Defence Force, and China's Defence Ministry have clarified that the mechanism is designed to avoid clashes at sea and in the sky.

Japan and China have also agreed to set up a hot line between senior defence officials of the two countries and to hold

regular meetings between defence authorities.

At the pending meeting in May, officials are expected to discuss more details, including which ships and airplanes should be able to communicate via radio, and what rank should officials of Japan's Defence Ministry and China's military be to communicate via the proposed hot line, according to the sources.

The May meeting, eyed to take place on the occasion of the annual Asia Security Summit in Singapore, is likely to take place at the vice minister level, they said.

However, if an agreement is deemed certain, the talks may be upgraded to a ministerial level, the sources said.

Kyodo News

Pakistan successfully test-fires missile from indigenous drones

ISLAMABAD, 14 March — Pakistan has successfully test-fired laser-guided missiles from indigenous drones, the Defence Ministry announced on Friday.

The ministry's spokesman Lt Gen Asim Bajwa said in a statement posted on Twitter that Chief of Army Staff Gen.

Rahael Sharif witnessed the firing of the missiles from the drones, but his tweet did not say

where the tests took place.

"Missiles were fired at moving and static targets" and results were "impressively with pin-point accuracy," the spokesman said.

The tweet said the native drones are expected to greatly enhance the Pakistan Army's capabilities amid its ongoing operation against militants in tribal areas bordering Afghanistan.

In recent years, the United States has been

carrying out drone attacks against the militants, which has led many Pakistanis to accuse it of violating their country's sovereignty.

Pakistan has sought the transfer of drone technology from the United States and the sharing of intelligence information about militants' hideouts so as to enable it to effectively carry out its own strikes against them.

Kyodo News



Smoke rises from a burning power plant in east Beijing, capital of China, on 13 March, 2015. By far, the fire has been brought under control. No casualties were reported. —XINHUA

UN forum calls for more investment to reduce disaster risks

SENDAI, (Japan), 14 March — Amid growing concern that climate change may bring more natural calamities, the international community highlighted the need to boost measures and investment on disaster risk reduction at a UN conference that began Saturday in the northeastern Japan city of Sendai.

More than 5,000 participants, including government leaders and high-level officials from around the world, are expected to attend the five-day meeting in Japan's Tohoku region hit hard by the 11 March, 2011, earthquake, tsunami and nuclear disasters, three days after the country marked their fourth anniversary.

During the once-in-a-decade UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, delegations from over 160 countries are slated to adopt a new action plan aimed at mitigating the impact of disasters to replace the Hyogo Framework for

Action that covered the past 10 years.

"Climate change is intensifying the risks for hundreds of millions of people particularly in small island developing states and coastal areas...Disaster risk reduction is a frontline defence against the impacts of climate change. It is a smart investment for business and a wise investment in saving lives," UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon told the opening session.

According to a report by the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, global economic losses from disasters such as earthquakes, tsunami, cyclones and flooding are estimated at \$250 billion to \$300 billion on average each year and will increase to as much as \$314 billion in the future, highlighting the need for more disaster-related measures and investment.

"We can watch that number grow as more people suffer. Or we can dramatically lower that figure



Emperor Akihito (L) and Empress Michiko attend the opening session of the UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in the northeastern Japan city of Sendai on 14 March, 2015. The meeting began three days after Japan marked the fourth anniversary of the 11 March, 2011, earthquake, tsunami and nuclear disasters that devastated the area.—KYODO NEWS

and use the savings to invest in development," Ban added.

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe announced that Japan will offer \$4 billion in aid for global efforts to enhance disaster management over four years through 2018, including support for building infrastructure in developing countries.

"Our nation, which has

accumulated knowledge and technologies of disaster prevention as we experienced many natural hazards, has promoted cooperation with international society to reduce the number of victims of disasters," Abe said in his speech delivered at a plenary session of the conference.

"It is important that we place disaster prevention as our highest-priority

in the post-2015 Development Agenda as well as the new framework on climate change," Abe said.

The UN conference is also seen as an important opportunity to highlight the mainstreaming of disaster risk reduction and to prod many countries to prioritize addressing such risk to ensure sustainable economic growth, especially in developing economies. About 90 percent of disaster victims around the world are from those countries.

The world has experienced a number of natural disasters in the past 10 years — including a massive earthquake in Haiti in 2010 that killed more than 300,000 people and super typhoon Haiyan that hit the Philippines in 2013.

Around 700,000 people were killed and 1.7 billion affected by disasters between 2005 and 2014, with the economic damage totaling an estimated \$1.4 trillion during the period, according

to the United Nations.

The new action plan to be adopted in Sendai is expected to set numerical targets for the first time for reducing the number of victims and economic losses so progress in international efforts against natural hazards can be assessed, conference officials said.

A total of seven targets will likely be laid out, including for reducing disaster damage to infrastructure, raising the number of countries with anti-disaster strategies and enhancing financial aid for developing economies. On the sidelines of the plenary meetings, ministerial roundtables will be held with over 30 working sessions as well as high-level dialogue sessions covering a wide range of disaster issues.

About 350 symposiums and seminars organized by international nongovernmental bodies and others will also take place during the conference.

Kyodo News

Russia rejects US concerns over Vietnam base role in bomber flights

MOSCOW / WASHINGTON, 14 March — Russia on Friday rejected US concerns about its use of a former American base in Vietnam for the refueling of Russian bomber flights around US territory in the Pacific, dismissing recent US statements as "puzzling" and "strange".

Reuters reported on Wednesday that the United States had asked Vietnam to stop letting Russia use Vietnam's Cam Ranh Bay for tanker aircraft that have refueled nuclear-capable bombers engaged in shows of strength over the Asia-Pacific region.

"It is strange to hear such statements from representatives of the state whose armed forces are permanently stationed in a number of Asia-Pacific countries and which continues to increase its level of military activity in the region," Russia's Defence Ministry said.

It said US statements that the refueling of Russian bombers from Vietnam could lead to increased regional tensions was "puzzling."

The ministry said Russian Air Force activities and cooperation with Vietnam were "carried out in strict accordance with international norms and bilateral agreements are not directed

against anyone whatsoever and shall not be a threat to peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region."

General Vincent Brooks, commander of the US Army in the Pacific, told *Reuters* last week the planes had conducted "provocative" flights, including around the US Pacific Ocean territory of Guam, home to major American bases.

Russia's Defence Ministry said on 4 January that Russian *Il-78* tanker aircraft had used Cam Ranh Bay in 2014, enabling the refueling of nuclear-capable *TU-95* "Bear" strategic bombers, a statement also reported in Vietnam's state-controlled media.

On Thursday, US State Department spokeswoman

Jen Psaki said the United States did not want Russia to use Cam Ranh Bay.

"We have urged Vietnamese officials to ensure that Russia is not able to use its access to Cam Ranh Bay to conduct activities that could raise tensions in the region," she told a regular news briefing.

The Voice of America radio station quoted a spokeswoman for the US embassy in Hanoi as saying on Thursday that the US request was conveyed to Vietnamese officials last week and that she was unaware of a Vietnamese government response.

The Vietnamese government has not responded to requests by *Reuters* for comment.—*Reuters*



A Russian TU-95 bomber flies through airspace northwest of Okinoshima island, Fukuoka prefecture in the southern island of Kyushu, in this picture taken by Japan Air Self-Defence Force and released on 22 Aug, 2013.—REUTERS

Kerry says unclear whether deal with Iran can be reached by end March



US Secretary of State John Kerry speaks at a news conference in Sharm el-Sheikh on 14 March, 2015. REUTERS

SHARM EL-SHEIKH, (Egypt), 14 March — US Secretary of State John Kerry said on Saturday on the eve of fresh talks with Iran over its nuclear-power programme that it was unclear whether an interim

could be deal reached by the end of the month.

"I can't tell you whether or not we can get a deal," Kerry told a news conference.

The United States and five other major powers

will resume negotiations with Iran in Lausanne, Switzerland on Sunday ahead of a deadline at the end of March for a framework deal, with a final agreement in June.

Reuters

India's pre-independence icon Mahatma Gandhi's statue unveiled in Britain

NEW DELHI, 14 March — India's pre-independence icon Mahatma Gandhi's statue was on Saturday unveiled in London's Parliament Square by British Prime Minister David Cameron and Indian Finance Minister Arun Jaitley.

The nine-foot bronze statue now stands alongside a statue of Britain's wartime Prime Minister Winston Churchill

in a rare honour given to the Mahatma by Britain, local TV channels reported.

The statue has been funded by donations of over 1 million pounds to the Gandhi Statue Memorial Trust, headed by an Indian-origin Labour Party peer.

Gandhi helped India gain independence from Britain in 1947 through his non-violence movement.—*Xinhua*

Japan, Thailand to speed up talks on railway development

SENDAI, (Japan), 14 March — Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and his Thai counterpart Prayut Chan-o-cha agreed on Saturday to speed up bilateral talks on developing high-speed railway in the Southeast Asian country.

Abe was quoted by Japanese officials as telling Prayut, when they met on the sidelines of the UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai, that Japan wants to “proactively cooperate” in the railway project.

Last month the two countries signed a memorandum of intent on cooperation in developing three routes, including one connecting Bangkok and Chiang Mai, and they are now discussing the specifics of the cooperation.

Japan is offering support for infrastructure development in Thailand as part of efforts to increase regional connectivity, as Thailand and nine other members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations are trying to establish a more integrated ASEAN Economic Community this year.



Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (R) and his Thai counterpart Prayut Chan-o-cha shake hands when they meet on the sidelines of the UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai, northeastern Japan, on 14 March, 2015. The two leaders agreed to speed up bilateral talks on developing a high-speed railway in the Southeast Asian country.—KYODO NEWS

The other ASEAN members are Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, and Vietnam.

Prayut had arrived in Sendai using the Tohoku Shinkansen bullet train, the officials said. Japan has been pitching its technology for high-speed rail to the developing world.

The leaders’ meeting was the second in about a month. During the 40-minute talks, Abe also urged Thailand to abolish at an

early date the country’s restrictions on Japanese food imports due to fears of radioactive contamination following the 2011 nuclear crisis in Fukushima.

Prayut said, in response, that his country is accelerating work to consider easing the restrictions, adding he hopes to give Japan “good news soon,” according to the Japanese officials.

Prayut also said Thailand will create an environment that would help attract more investment from Japa-

nese firms, the officials said.

Abe and Prayut reiterated their cooperation over the development of the Dawei Special Economic Zone in southern Myanmar, a joint project between Thailand and Myanmar.

On reducing natural disaster risks, the two leaders agreed their countries will cooperate under a framework involving governments, industries and academia. “Both Japan and Thailand need to apply the lessons they have learned” from past disasters, Prayut told Abe at the outset of their meeting which was open to the media.

Abe also made a renewed call to Prayut for Thailand to make “steady progress in the democracy process which includes holding an election as soon as possible,” the officials said.

Prayut seized power in a coup in May, ousting the government led by Yingluck Shinawatra.

Abe and Prayut agreed to continue their cooperation in security issues through dialogue between their foreign and defence officials.—Kyodo News

Senior US diplomat to return to Havana for new Cuba talks

WASHINGTON, 14 March — The US government is moving as quickly as possible to decide whether to remove Cuba from the US list of terrorism-sponsoring countries, a senior State Department official said on Friday ahead of a new round of talks in Havana next week.

The official, speaking on condition of anonymity, offered no timetable for a decision but said that Washington disagreed with Havana’s effort to link the issue to broader negotiations on reopening embassies and restoring diplomatic relations that were severed more than 50 years ago.

Assistant Secretary of State Roberta Jacobson will travel to Havana on Sunday for discussions likely to begin on Monday aimed at normalizing ties, the official told reporters on a conference call.

US and Cuban diplomats have met twice this year, the last time in Washington at the end of February, since President Barack Obama and President Raul Castro made a breakthrough announcement on 17 De-

cember that upended decades of enmity.

Washington still hopes that the United States and communist-ruled Cuba will be able to reopen their embassies, as Obama said in a *Reuters* interview last week, by the time of a Western Hemisphere summit in Panama in mid-April, the US official said.

Cuba’s presence on the US terrorism blacklist remains a point of contention, and US officials have made clear that a review ordered by Obama is being expedited.

“All I can continue to say is the review is under way and we’ll complete that as quickly as we can,” the State Department official said, adding that this would also require getting “information that is needed from the government of Cuba.—Josefina Vidal, head of the US division of the Cuban Foreign Ministry, told state media last week that Cuba is willing to restore relations as soon as the Obama administration declares its intent to take Cuba off the list.

Reuters

EU executive warns of Grexit ‘catastrophe’, urges euro solidarity

BRUSSELS, 14 March — The European Commission warned of “catastrophe” if Greece has to abandon the euro and its chief executive, Jean-Claude Juncker, urged EU governments to show solidarity as Athens struggles to secure more credit.

A day after German Finance Minister Wolfgang Schäuble said Greece might stumble out of the euro zone because new, left-wing leaders failed to negotiate new borrowings, Juncker’s economics commissioner said EU hardliners underestimated the risk that this would start a fatal domino collapse of the common currency.

“All of us in Europe

probably agree that a Grexit would be a catastrophe — for the Greek economy, but also for the euro zone as a whole,” Pierre Moscovici told *Der Spiegel* — a view not in fact shared by some conservative allies of Chancellor Angela Merkel who favour amputating the bloc’s troubled Greek limb.

Moscovici, a French Socialist, countered the argument that protective mechanisms put in place in the three years since the last major debt crisis meant Grexit — or an inadvertent “Grexident” — could be contained, or even strengthened the euro.

“If one country leaves this union, the markets will



European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker welcomes Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras (L) ahead of a meeting at the EU Commission headquarters in Brussels on 13 March, 2015.—REUTERS

immediately ask which country is next,” Moscovici told the German magazine. “And that could be the beginning of the end.”

Moscovici’s comments reflect alarm in the

new Commission formed under Juncker in November that brinkmanship by leaders on both sides of the dispute in the euro zone risks getting out of hand, and a fear governments

underestimate the potential damage.

Pledging to help find a compromise, Juncker spent some 90 minutes hosting Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras, reinforcing a relationship that has irked some in Berlin who fear the EU executive, which is not itself a lender to Greece, may muddy the debt negotiations and try to water down the lenders’ terms.

An EU official told *Reuters* that Juncker urged Tsipras, 20 years his junior, to do much more to show creditors he was meeting their demands for savings and free market reforms. If he did not, he told Tsipras, there was “a distinct

danger” Greece could find itself shut out of the euro monetary system.

In public, Juncker sounded a note of urgency to other EU governments: “This is not a time for division,” he said.

“This is the time for coming together.”

Tsipras is trying to satisfy conditions from lenders who last month extended until June a 240-billion-euro (\$250 billion) bailout deal while also retaining the support of voters who elected him to end years of austerity. He said Greece was doing its bit and others must now help ease its “humanitarian crisis”.

Reuters

The price Kiev must pay for IMF rescue: tackling vested interests

KIEV, 14 March — With the first billions of dollars foreign aid in its pocket, Ukraine’s government can now stay afloat long enough to embark on its radical reform drive, but the hard part is only just beginning.

Ukraine received the first \$5 billion (3.4 billion pounds) on Friday of \$17.5 billion in aid promised by the International Monetary Fund. But to receive the rest, it

must implement reforms that mean taking on vested interests including pensioners, public sector workers and some of the country’s most powerful oligarchs.

Even if it manages to placate those groups and can start turning around the economy, all its work could be undone by another nosedive in the hryvnia currency, or by a renewal of fighting with separatists in eastern Ukraine.

“Without reforms today we will not have a tomorrow. Our government is fighting for tomorrow. The government isn’t fighting for an approval or popularity rating,” Prime Minister Arseny Yatseniuk said on Wednesday.

Restructuring the energy sector is probably the most urgent task, but also potentially the trickiest in an economy still built on cheap fuel from its days

as part of the energy-rich Soviet Union. Energy intensive industries are owned by powerful businessmen who influence political parties and the media. “It will be very difficult to carry out reforms as there will be conflicts of interests,” said Mykhailo Gonchar, the director for energy programmes at the Nomos Centre thinktank.

Reuters

Two placed under investigation for links to Paris killings



PARIS, 14 March — Two suspects have been placed under formal investigation by French magistrates for alleged links to the Paris attacks of January, the Paris prosecutors' office said in a statement on Friday.

Named only as Amar R, 33, and Said M, 25, the two men had been detained for questioning since Monday along with two

other people, a man and a woman, who were released earlier this week, the prosecutors said.

In French law, the opening of a formal investigation means that magistrates have grounds for suspicion but does not necessarily mean that a trial will result.

Amar R met in prison and exchanged over 600 text messages with Amedy Coulibaly, one of

the perpetrators of the January attacks in which 17 people were killed at French satirical newspaper *Charlie Hebdo* and a Jewish supermarket. Said M's DNA was found on a taser electroshock weapon retrieved from the Paris foodstore where Coulibaly was killed by French security forces after a siege that claimed the lives of four hostages.—Reuters

People hold a placard which reads "I am Charlie Copenhagen" as they gather to pay tribute outside the Danish embassy in Paris on 16 Feb, 2015.

REUTERS

Canada PM's anti-Islam talk is a Putin-like tactic

OTTAWA, 14 March — A Canadian opposition leader on Friday compared Prime Minister Stephen Harper's handling of Islam to Russian President Vladimir Putin's crackdown on gays, ratcheting up political rhetoric over the religion as Harper's ruling Conservatives seek re-election in October.

Harper said this week that the niqab, a face-covering veil worn by some Muslims, was "rooted in an anti-women culture" as he defended the government's desire to ban women from wearing a niqab during the oath of citizenship.

While Canadians and Harper himself typically celebrate multiculturalism, the sudden furor over wearing the niqab comes as Harper's Conservatives warn Canadians they are under threat from "jihadist terrorism," a threat best met by new tougher security legislation Harper will campaign on.

Thomas Mulcair, leader of the left-of-centre opposition New Democratic Party, on Friday told Ottawa radio station CFRA that Harper was pandering to Islamophobia.

"It's not dissimilar to what we see with the president of Russia, who uses a minority there, the lesbian, gay, bisexual community ... and he goes after them with great relish because he knows that it's going to resonate with a part of the population," Mulcair said.

Harper spokesman Rob Nicol said Mulcair was fearmongering.

"The comparison to Putin is absurd. No Western leader has stood up to Putin's regime and called him out as strongly as Prime Minister Harper and our Conservative government," Nicol said.

The government, on heightened alert after two attacks last year on Canadian soldiers in Ottawa and Quebec by Canadian converts to Islam, in January introduced legislation that would allow Canada's spies to interrupt suspected terrorists' travel plans and communications.

But the political debate over the bill, broadly condemned by pundits as unnecessary but supported by skittish Canadians, has shifted from security to the place of Muslims in Canadian society, with the



Canada's Prime Minister Stephen Harper

niqab as a Conservative vote-winning target.

Amira Elghawaby, human rights coordinator at the National Council of Canadian Muslims, said she was very concerned with how Islam was being discussed. "It is extremely important to weigh our words carefully and to be sure that when we're talking about violent extremism and criminal behaviour, that we do so without alienating, marginalizing and casting this pall of suspicion over the more than 1 million Canadian Muslims," she said.

The opposition Liberals and New Democrats, both to the left of Harper politically, said Canadian women do not need to consult the prime minister on their clothing choices.

Reuters

Spain arrests eight suspected Islamist militants in dawn raid

PIERA, (Spain), 14 March — Eight suspected Islamist militants accused of planning attacks in Spain and recruiting fighters to send to Syria and Iraq were arrested in dawn raids across Spain on Friday, the Interior Ministry said in a statement.

The six men and two women were connected to the Islamic State militant group via one of their operatives who organized activity from Syria and Iraq, the ministry said.

All those arrested had Spanish nationality, and five were of Moroccan heritage. "The group represented a serious and definite threat to national security," the ministry said in a statement, adding that the network aimed to carry out attacks on the mainland. The Spanish government has renewed its focus on Islamist militant activity since the attacks on French satirical newspaper *Charlie Hebdo* in Paris in January in which gunmen killed 17 people.

Islamist militants killed nearly 200 people in March 2004

in an attack on a commuter train, setting off bombs hidden in rucksacks as the train drew in to Madrid's main station.

Including Friday's arrests, Spanish police have arrested 23 people linked to such activity so far this year, according to government data — more than half the total arrested in the whole of last year. The arrests on Friday were made in Barcelona and Girona in the north east of Spain and Ciudad Real and Avila in the centre, the ministry said.

The mother of one of those arrested, who gave her name as Maria, told *Reuters* heavily armed police had raided her house in the Catalan village of Piera at 4 am, herding members of the family into the dining room before arresting her 18-year-old son.

The mother of 11, a Spaniard converted to Islam who teaches Spanish and Catalan to Arab-speaking children in the basement of her house, said the police searched the house and removed the hard drives from computers.

Reuters

US to send \$70 million in non-lethal aid to Syrian opposition

WASHINGTON, 14 March — The US State Department said on Friday it was working with Congress to provide about \$70 million in new non-lethal assistance to the Syrian opposition fighting President Bashar al-Assad.

The aid comes as the US military separately prepares to train and equip Syrian rebels to fight Islamic State militants in Syria.

The non-lethal aid will go toward basic community services, supporting "vetted units of the armed opposition," digital security training, and documentation of war crimes and other violations by the Syrian regime, the State Department said.

"As we have long said, Assad must go and be replaced through a negotiated political transition that is representative of the Syr-

ian people," said Alistair Baskey, a spokesman for the White House National Security Council, in a statement.

The non-lethal aid, announced on the fourth anniversary of the revolution against Assad, brings total US support to the Syrian opposition to nearly \$400 million since the start of the revolution, the State Department said.

Reuters



A general view shows a damaged street with sandbags used as barriers in Aleppo's Saif al-Dawla District on 6 March, 2015.

REUTERS

PERSPECTIVES

Sunday, 15 March, 2015

Playing by rules does not always equal good sportsmanship

By Aung Khin

In competition, victory is attained by defeating one's opponent. Although a competition might be fair and square in principle, when one side is clearly stronger and more skilful than the other, victory is a formality.

For the sake of the losing team, their coaches, and their families, victors should conduct them-

selves in a way that allows everyone to maintain their dignity. If a victory is too one-sided, it can be distasteful to the audience.

Athletes can be both fierce and friendly during a competition. While a football team might put several goals past the opposing keeper, or a boxer might dominate the judges' scorecard, humiliating their opponents in the process is unnecessary. Though doing so might be within the rules of the game, it falls outside the bounds of common decency.

Losers still deserve dignity and grace, and should be allowed to avoid humiliation. Respect for opponents underpins the very notion of good sportsmanship. Without them, there would be no competition at all.

In most competitions, there can only be one

winner. While one side gains the upper hand, the dignity of the opponent should not be neglected.

Playing fair or by the rules is not enough to guarantee a good game. Even in war, vanquished enemies should be treated with respect, lest their humiliation provide further motivation for revenge.

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

Many Hands Make Light Work

By Maung Phyto (WYU)

The word 'philanthropy' derived from Greek word "philanthropos" or Latin root "philanthropia" literally falling into two segments "Phil" meaning "Love" and "Anthropos or anthropia" standing for "human beings". Therefore, it etymologically means "Love of Humanity". In this sense, the meaning of it goes to the extent of caring, nourishing, developing and enhancing "what is to be human" on both the benefactors' and the beneficiaries' parts. According to Encyclopedia Britannica (2014), it is defined as *voluntary, organized efforts intended for socially useful purposes*. However, the most modern meaning, as Wikipedia defines, is *"private initiative, for public good, focusing on quality of life"*.

It is said that playwright Aeschylus (525/524 BC-456/455 BC) (the first of classical Athens' great dramatists, who raised the emerging art of tragedy to great heights of poetry and theatrical power.) started to coin that word in his "Prometheus Bound" in about 5th Century BC. He depicted the character of Prometheus as humanity loving for the latter's having given to the earliest proto-human "fire" (symbolizing technological civilization) and "blind-hope" (optimism) so as to save mankind from destruction.

However, there might have been an ambiguity among us as to the demarcated boundary between charity and philanthropy. Sometimes, both tend to overlap to some extent although not all charity is philanthropy or vice versa. To the best of my knowledge, it is commonly regarded that charity relieves the pains of the social problems whereas philanthropy tries to solve them out.

Therefore, suffice it to say that, giving away money to a hungry man is an act of charity but showing him or her how to earn it, philanthropy.

It is almost a shame for the author of this article to have carried the topic so far just to bring the reader into notice that Myanmar's philanthropic organizations are in dire need of the Government's and the public support although a countless number of marvelous jobs already done on their parts also having proved "fruitful results" to each beneficiary across the country. However, "Many Hands Make Light Work" as a saying goes, there seems a strong possibility for these organization to improve and expand their undertaking if they are endowed with governmental support and other public support. In fact, the philanthropic groups play a pivotal part in the improvement of the health, educational and social wellbeing of the citizenry in Myanmar. They need donation and cooperation from the public and sponsorship or support in terms of financial, moral or administrative ones and accreditation from the Government in order that they might continue their selfless endeavor without any hindering or backsliding obstacles.

Myanmar is best known to the world for her ever-smiling, incredibly generous and kind-hearted people. According to NPQ (Non-profit Quarterly) (Written by Ruth McCambridge on Wednesday, 19 November 2014), the new World Giving Index was released and the findings proved that Myanmar was ranked first for the year 2014 under the category of making cash donation. The comparative data were collected from the surveys conducted in more than 140 countries representing approximately 94 percent of

the world's population. The report described that the United States and Myanmar are tied for the first place. Myanmar's high rank across all three "giving" categories reportedly contributes largely to her very high rate (91%) of making cash donations. The result is accounted for by the religious traditions of the country and the report said *"Nine out of ten people within Myanmar follow the Theravada school of Buddhism, under which the lives of the Sangha (ordained monks and nuns) are supported by Dana (charitable giving) by lay followers of the religion. This clearly translates into a strong culture of charity, with Myanmar ranked first for donating money and 13 percentage points ahead of the second placed country"*. In the light of this report, it is clear that Myanmar abounds in a myriad of selfless donors whose generous and magnanimous contributions only require to be properly channeled to the needy so as to avoid "making charity where there is already plenty" reflected by the Myanmar Proverb /jei mja: ja mou: jwa/.

Once, I have come across a certain poem on the Internet composed by a man called Chuck in honor of an American lad who is running across the United States to raise funds for the impoverished children. His program is named "Compassion Run". It seems that he would run each (750 square miles) of the major four parts of the United States thereby raising public awareness on the childhood poverty issue and in the meantime collecting charity from the supporters on the way. He is from Detroit, Michigan and is only 23 of age. His name is in the poem which reads really moving. The readers can enjoy the poem by visiting the webpage- [\[passionrun.org/author/jub/\]\(http://www.compassionrun.org/author/jub/\). With the poem, what I want to touch on here is to pinpoint the inflow of the supports in various forms for his Compassion Run. At the time of writing this article, his part one of running has already been brought to completion and part two is on progress.](http://www.com-</p>
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On the same vein, in Myanmar, with the exception of State-run Hospices and Homes for the Aged, there also is an increasing number of nonprofit organizations that attempt to launch, in their own way, activities that would benefit the poverty-stricken people under the categories of health-care services, education and other social activities. In addition, there are a few who have been trying to improve the social welfare of people to the highest possible extent each of their ability permits. Such people comprise both lay people and monks such as Ven. Ottamasara of Thanlyin Thabarwa Dhamma Center, Dr. Ashin Pyin Nyaw Bha Tha of Pann Pyo Let Monastic Education School, U Kyaw Thu of Free Funeral Service Society (Yangon) and Daw Than Myint Aung of See Zar Yeik Home for the Ailing Aged". For want of space, there may be a few other philanthropists left, which does not mean any disrespect towards their selfless contributions. Each of the organizations is set up on the basis of each of its founder's initiative and operated with the help of well-wishers across the country and abroad. Of them, Thabarwa Dhamma Center in Thanlyin, Yangon has been established by Ven Ottamasara and is a safe and peaceful refuge to over 2400 Yogis including more than 700 old-aged persons with a greater portion of the sick, blind, infirm, deaf, disabled and invalid. Pan Pyo Let is situated at Kyauktan Village, Bago and founded by Dr

Ashin Pyin Nyaw Bha Tha. Since 2004, the Monastic Education School has been creating an access for more than 400 students not only from the nearby villages but from the remote and conflicting areas like Kachin and Shan States. In general, it has been running with the objective of nurturing a better education generation capable of struggling Myanmar out of Poverty Trap. Free Funeral Service Society was established by U Kyaw Thu and Daw Shwe Zee Kwet in collaboration with the famous actor and movie director, U Thu Kha. FFSS started to render FOC funeral services to people regardless of any race, religion and background since 2001. At least 120000 funeral services have been undertaken by FFSS approximately from 2001 to 2012. Commencing from 2003 and 2007 respectively, medical-cost donation to poor people and free healthcare services with Thukha Charity Clinic and Emergency Aids have also been launched. Later, FFSS also started to render free educational and vocational training classes to the poor children and youths. See Zar Yeik is located at 803-805, Mahawthada Road, 12 Ward, East Dagon Myothit, Yangon. It has been established in about 2010 by Writer (Daw) Than Myint Aung and (Daw) Su Htar (Dr Htar Htar) (Both of them are also running "Thu Kha Yeik Myone Humanitarian Center for the HIV-infected Children" established in the same year) with a few other colleagues with a shared interest. It has been welcoming the ailing and old-aged people. Currently, the organization offers accommodation, food and healthcare services to 24 old men and 60 old women with the aid of 53 staff. It is indeed a safe haven for the old and infirm.

All the said organizations and other remaining

NGOs are making their own nonprofit and philanthropic ends meet in cooperation with the generous donors, local and foreign. No doubt, their contributions to the society are truly effective. However, the effectiveness will be doubled if the Government is able to see that there is no barrier on the path these organizations are keeping forward for the social welfare of the State administratively with the help of humanitarian law. It is really heart-wrenching to see that some organizations like "Thabarwa Dhamma Center", are precariously struggling for the survival. Sometimes, I am lost in my own fancy that they could carry on with progressive momentum if they are supported to the possible extent by the Government. I have no doubt that any sensible person in Myanmar would have such idea in common. There lacks, so far, a few brushworks to fill in the Myanmar Humanitarian Picture. I firmly believe that very soon, the able and responsible hands would perfect the Picture by painting these top-down brushworks.

Ref;

- <https://nonprofitquarterly.org/philanthropy/25190-2014-world-giving-index-findings-ranks-us-in-9th-place-for-donations.html>
- <http://www.compassionrun.org/author/jub/>
- <http://www.thabarwa.org>
- <http://www.mmtimes.com/index.php/in-depth/5633-children-with-hiv-find-sanctuary.html?start=1>
- en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kyaw_Thu
- Encyclopedia Britannica 2014 Ultimate Reference Suite
- Merriam Webster Dictionary
- A Telephone Interview with Cashier U Min Thein of See Zar Yeik Home for the Ailing Aged

ARTICLE

Raffles Institution in Singapore: Alma Mater of State Leaders

By Sayar Mya

Raffles Institution (RI) of Singapore

Raffles Institution in Singapore was founded in 1823. It is the oldest school in Singapore for pre-tertiary learning. RI is an independent school in Singapore providing secondary and pre-university education. The institution consists of “boys-only” for Year 1 to 4 classes and a coeducational for Year 5 and 6 classes. Its current campus is in Bishan. The area is a neighborhood in the city-state of Singapore situated in the Central Region, measuring approximately three by three kilometers.

RI was among the first schools to receive the Ministry of Education’s School Excellence Award. It is a member of various academic partnerships and alliances, such as the G20 Schools and the Global Alliance of Leading-Edge Schools.

RI was awarded the Singapore Quality Award in 2011. RI is notable for having produced 90 President’s Scholars, 3 out of 7 Presidents, 2 out of 3 Prime Ministers, including the first elected Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew, 4 Speakers of Parliament, 6 out of 18 members of the current Cabinet and 13 CEOs of government-linked statutory boards and agencies.

History of RI

Initially named as Singapore Institution, Raffles Institution was founded by Sir Stamford Raffles on 5 June 1823. He had secured a grant from the British East India Company, drafted the curriculum and set up the structure for the board of trustees headed by patron William Wilberforce. The purpose was to provide education for the sons of the Company’s employees and the children of local leaders in the new British colony of Singapore.

The curriculum serves to “seek to nurture the best and brightest into men and women of scholarship who will be leaders of distinction, committed to excellence and service in the interest of the community and nation.”

This subsequently led to the merging of RI’s Gifted Education Program (GEP) and Special/Express streams to form a single Raffles Program stream.

RJC moved to its new Bishan campus located next to RI at the start of the 2005 school year, after attaining independent status and becoming the first Pre-University Institution in Singapore to be awarded the School Excellence Award.

In 2009, RI and RJC re-integrated to form a single institution under the name Raffles Institution to facilitate the running of the Raffles Program and better align processes and curriculum.

Motto

The school motto “*Auspiciis Melioris Aevi*” comes from the coat of arms of its founder, Sir Stamford Raffles. The official translation by the school is “*Hope of a Better Age*”.

Mission & Values

The school’s mission is in nurturing thinkers, leaders and pioneers of character who will serve by leading. Moreover, the lead in serving is further supported by the institution’s adopted values — “*Fortitude, Integrity, Respect and Enterprise (FIRE)*”.

Rafflesian Principle of Honor

In intellectual pursuit, I shall reflect discipline and passion for learning, and in personal conduct, I shall live in integrity and regard individuals, groups and the community with kindness and respect, and in so doing uphold the Rafflesian Principle of Honor.

Prefectural Board

The “*Raffles Institution Prefectural Board (RIPB)*” aims to serve as role models of character, committed to inspiring and rallying the school, so as to forge a united Rafflesian community.

In July 2012, the RIPB engaged the school in a comprehensive review of the role of prefects in RI. It was the first in many years for the Board to take up this issue. And after 3 months of dialogues with students, teachers, alumni and the school management, the RIPB are now comprises of 2 key branches namely “*Standards and Spirit*”. It is reflecting the core mission of all prefects. The work of these 2 branches is supported by the Development Branch. The Board is headed by the Head Prefect and Deputy Head Prefect, together with 4 members of the RIPB Executive Committee. They work

closely with the prefects and a team of RIPB teachers to fulfill the mission of the Board.

Class Executive Committee

Every class in Raffles Institution has its own “*Class Executive Committee (CEC)*”. This consists of three students namely a Chairman and two Vice-Chairmen. Often, students vote for classmates to take up these positions, but some Form Teachers may choose to select students themselves.

Discipline

The school continues to maintain strong discipline with a strict set of rules and regulations. Disciplinary measures are based on the Raffles Online Discipline System, introduced in 2011 and adapted from the Year 5 - 6 classes. Prior to the present system, student records were maintained based on a demerit point system, with Reformatory Work Order and detention sessions for repeat offenders. These systems are primarily targeted at petty offences. Current school rules include prohibitions on eating and possessing sweetened drinks outside the canteen, physical activity in school uniform, and changing uniform in class. The discipline framework is administered by the Discipline Master, in collaboration with the Raffles Institution Prefectural Board (RIPB), for Year 1-4 students, and the Assistant Department Head (ADH) for Discipline for Year 5-6 students. For more serious offences, all students are liable to receive corporal or physical punishment in the form of caning if necessary.

Curriculum

Raffles Academy

The Raffles Academy (RA), implemented in 2007, is a program for students with higher capabilities in specific subjects. RA offers a curriculum pitched at a deeper level. During the academic periods, RA students leave their normal classes to join a special pull-out class. Furthermore, compulsory extra classes are held. The subjects available are History, Geography, Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Literature. RA has also offered Music starting in 2010.

At Secondary 2, students can apply for RA via

a submission of portfolio of achievements, selection tests and interviews, before they are identified for RA.

Raffles Leadership Program

The “*Raffles Leadership Program (RLP)*” is an initiative of the Leadership Development Department, aimed at preparing Rafflesians to take on positions of leadership in school and in life. All Year 3 pupils go through the program which includes going through the Leadership Challenge Workshop and taking the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator Instrument.

Student activities

Co-curricular activities

Raffles Institution offers about a hundred CCAs under the Co-curricular activity (CCA) program, including sports, uniformed groups, performing arts, and clubs and societies.

CCAs are categorized as either core or merit CCAs. Core CCAs comprise all sports, uniformed groups and performing arts, as well as Raffles Debaters while merit CCAs consists of all other clubs and societies.

Student Interest Groups

In 2004, “*Student Interest Groups (SIGs)*” were introduced by the Prefectural Board. These were defined as interest groups formed by students themselves. However, SIGs are not considered to be CCAs and do not receive school funding like CCAs do. Also, as with members of Merit CCAs, students are still required to take up at least one core CCA. Currently, many of the original SIGs no longer exist. Exceptions include the Raffles Institution Student Entrepreneurship (RISE) SIG, which has been successful in nationwide competitions.

Boarding at RI

Raffles Institution Boarding is housed in a Boarding Complex consisting of five blocks. These are named after the five Houses; **Bayley, Buckley, Hullett, Moor and Morrison**. Each block, apart from the new Hullett block, can accommodate 90 students. All blocks have their own staff, and the Boarding Complex is overseen by several Boarding Mentors.

History of Boarding

The foundation stone of the Boarding Complex was laid by Lee Kuan Yew on 25 March 1994. The first batch



(Photo from Google.com)

of boarders moved into the Complex in 1995.

During the upgrading works in 2006, the former Moor block was demolished to make way and space for a 13-storey twin tower hostel, the Hullett block, completed in July 2007. The former Hullett block was renamed Moor and, together with Bayley, caters to girls.

Hullett Memorial Library

The library possesses around 50,000 books in English, Chinese, Malay and Tamil (plus a few in French, German, and other languages), and around 40 computers with wireless internet access. It employs full-time staff for administrative purposes, and other tasks are performed by the members of the Hullett Memorial Library Club as well as parent volunteers.

Sports facilities

Raffles Institution offers sports facilities, including an Olympic-size swimming pool. The former 400-metre track and field was replaced by a rugby union field and a softball diamond during the school’s upgrading works in 2006.

IT facilities

The school has six general-purpose computer labs, one music studio with “*Prodikeys*”, and one X-lab, short for Experimental Lab for research in computer studies.

Connectivity is supplied to all buildings by the campus LAN (local area network) with additional wireless access covering most areas such as the Administrative Block, the Hullett Memorial Library (HML) and the S. Rajaratnam Block. Tablet PCs are supplied by the IT department to facilitate the use of eLearning in a classroom setting.

Notable alumni of Raffles Institution

Politics

• Heads of State:

- Yusof bin Ishak, first President of Singapore.

- Benjamin Henry Sheares, second President of Singapore.

- Wee Kim Wee, fourth President of Singapore.

• Heads of Government:

- Abdul Razak Hussein, second Prime Minister of Malaysia.

- David Marshall, first Chief Minister of Singapore.

- Haji Omar Lim Yew Hock, second Chief Minister of Singapore.

- Lee Kuan Yew, first Prime Minister of Singapore and former Minister Mentor.

- Goh Chok Tong, second Prime Minister of Singapore and former Senior Minister.

• Speakers of Parliament:

- Four High Dignitaries

• Retired Politicians:

- Eight High Dignitaries

• Current Singaporean Politicians:

- Seven High Dignitaries

• Non-Singaporean Politicians:

- Six High Dignitaries

• Civil Service and Legislative Officers:

- Seven High Dignitaries

• Business:

- Four High Dignitaries including billionaires

• Others spheres:

- Fifteen High Dignitaries

Conclusion

When one is desirous to assess and evaluate an educational institution in the region or across the globe, the criterion could be outlined as follows. They are (1) Mission; (2) Integrity, Ethical and Responsible Conduct; (3) Teaching and Learning, Quality, Resources and Support; (4) Evaluation and Improvement; (5) Resources, Planning, Institutional Effectiveness.

Last but not least, the article could be summed up that the Raffles Institution is the Alma Mater of state leaders and high dignitaries of Singapore.

Dollar powers to fresh highs; stocks and oil fall



US dollar bank notes are seen in a bank in Budapest on 8 Aug, 2011.— REUTERS

NEW YORK, 14 March — The dollar surged on Friday as weak inflation data failed to stem expectations the Federal Reserve will move to tighten monetary policy, and the greenback's rise pressured stocks and commodities.

The dollar index .DXY rose 0.8 percent, setting up its first close above 100 since April 2003. The Fed's policy-setting committee meets next week.

Stocks fell on Wall Street on concerns of the impact of higher rates and a stronger dollar on corporate profits. The S&P 500 was down for a third straight week, though it is just 3 percent below its record high set early this month.

"The stronger dollar, the continued hammering of the euro equals continued lower equity prices ahead of the Fed comments next week," said Michael James, managing director of equity trading at Wedbush Securities in Los Angeles. "We'll know more of the Fed's thinking on Wednesday but right now most people are expecting a rate hike to come in June and the equity markets not to be very receptive of that."

The Dow Jones industrial average .DJI fell 145.91 points, or 0.82 percent, to 17,749.31, the S&P 500 .SPX lost 12.55 points, or 0.61 percent, to 2,053.4, and the Nasdaq Composite .IXIC dropped 21.53 points, or 0.44 percent, to 4,871.76.

For the week, the Dow was down 0.6 percent, the S&P 500 was off 0.9 percent and the Nasdaq was down 1.1 percent.

The MSCI All-Country World equity index .MIWD00000PUS fell 0.6 percent. The FTSEurofirst 300 pan-European index .FTEU3 closed up 0.3 percent. Stocks in Europe con-

tinued to be supported by the massive bond-buying program at the European Central Bank.

The divergence in monetary policy between the ECB and the Fed pushed the euro EUR= further down against the greenback, with the bloc's currency hitting a 12-year low of \$1.0460. It was last down 1.3 percent at \$1.0496.

The dollar rallied even after disappointing US inflation and consumer sentiment data, which normally would weaken the currency. "This isn't so much about the data, rather the Fed and what to expect from next week's meetings," said Camilla Sutton, chief currency strategist at Scotia Capital in Toronto.

The dollar index .DXY added 0.7 percent to 100.16.

US crude CLc1 fell 4.4 percent to \$45 per barrel, while Brent crude LCOc1 fell 4.6 percent to \$54.43. The global oil glut is getting bigger and US production shows no sign of slowing, the International Energy Agency said.

Largely because of the oil selloff, the Thomson Reuters/CRB Commodities Index .TRJCRB settled at a six-year low.

The US benchmark 10-year Treasury note yield US10YT=RR rose to 2.1192 percent from late Thursday's 2.096 percent, with the price down 7/32.

"The market's consolidating," said Kim Rupert, managing director of global fixed income at Action Economics in San Francisco. "It's hard to be a buyer at this point."

Spot gold XAU= edged up 0.2 percent to \$1,156 an ounce, following nine consecutive sessions of declines. Copper CMCU3 gained 0.25 percent to close the week up 2 percent.— Reuters

Three Kansas patients die after eating tainted ice cream

KANSAS CITY, 14 March — Three Kansas hospital patients have died and two have been sickened by listeriosis linked to single-serve Blue Bell Creameries ice cream products since last year, health officials said on Friday.

The five adults became ill from January 2014 to January of this year with one of four rare strains of *Listeria monocytogenes* bacteria while hospitalized with unrelated illnesses, Kansas health officials said in a news release.

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment declined to identify the hospital.

Three strains of the bacteria were found in products made at privately held Blue Bell Creameries' main facility at Brenham, Texas, said the US Food and Drug Administration, which is investigating the contamination.

Hospital records that were available on four of the patients showed they had been served Blue Bell ice cream products, but it

was not clear if these products came from Brenham, the FDA said. Blue Bell said it traced the problem to one machine that produced a limited number of snack items, and that it has shut down the line where the products were made. It was the first product recall for the 108-year-old company, it said. The FDA contacted Blue Bell about the illnesses four weeks ago and the company has retrieved the products, said Ricky Dickson, Blue Bell vice president of sales.

"You shouldn't find any of this product on the market," Dickson said in a telephone interview.

Listeriosis is a rare, potentially fatal illness caused by food contaminated with *Listeria monocytogenes*.

The condition, which primarily affects older adults, pregnant women, newborns, and adults with weak immunity, causes fever and muscle aches.

It is sometimes preceded by diarrhea and other gastrointestinal symptoms.— Reuters

American in Honduras isolated pending tests for Ebola

TEGUCIGALPA, 14 March — A US citizen has been hospitalized in Honduras while he is screened for Ebola, health authorities in the Central American country said on Friday.

The 66-year-old American, who has not been identified, had spent time in Liberia before coming to Honduras on 11 March, authorities said.

Although he didn't have any symptoms when he arrived in the country, he was hospitalized with a 100.4 degree fever on Friday in Comayagua, about an hour north of the capital Tegucigalpa, an owner of the hospital, Juviny Ochoa, told Reuters.

The deputy minister of health, Francis Contreras, told local television that authorities were taking precautions because the patient had been in an African country.

"We have adopted international health protocols to treat these kinds of cases," Contreras said.— Reuters

US seeks billions from global banks in currency investigation — Bloomberg

NEW YORK, 14 March — The US Justice Department is seeking about \$1 billion each from global banks being investigated for manipulation of currency markets, Bloomberg reported on Friday, citing people familiar with the talks.

The figure is a starting point in settlement discussions, with some banks being asked for more and some less, Bloomberg said.

One bank that has co-operated from the beginning is expected to pay far

less and penalties of about \$4 billion are on the table, Bloomberg reported, adding that the number could change markedly.

With banks pushing back harder than in some previous negotiations, including those for mortgage-backed securities, the final penalties could be lower, Bloomberg said.

The discussions, which have begun in earnest in recent weeks, could lead to settlements that would resolve US accusations of criminal activity

in the currency markets against Barclays Plc, Citigroup Inc, JP Morgan Chase & Co, Royal Bank of Scotland Group Plc and UBS Group AG, Bloomberg said.

Prosecutors are also pressing Barclays, Citi, JPMorgan Chase and the Royal Bank of Scotland, to plead guilty, Bloomberg reported.

Last year, regulators fined six major banks, including HSBC Holdings Plc, JPMorgan Chase and Bank of America Corp, a

total of \$4.3 billion (2.9 billion pounds) for failing to stop traders from trying to manipulate the foreign exchange market.

UBS, the first bank to notify US authorities of possible misconduct, has been granted immunity from prosecution for anti-trust violations, Bloomberg reported.

Barclays, JP Morgan Chase and UBS declined to comment. Citi and Royal Bank of Scotland could not be immediately reached for comment.—Reuters

Japan's TDK to remove neon sign from London's Piccadilly Circus

Photo taken on 13 March, 2015, shows electronic signboards in London's Piccadilly Circus. Japanese electronics maker TDK Corp is taking down its neon sign from Piccadilly Circus on 24 March, spelling the end of a Japanese presence in one of the world's most prestigious advertising locations. KYODO NEWS



Apple Watch not on shopping list for 69 percent of Americans

SAN FRANCISCO, 14 March — Apple Inc's (AAPL.O) new smart-watch may be a tough sell, with 69 percent of Americans indicating they are not interested in buying the gadget, according to a Reuters/Ipsos poll.

However, the survey also showed limited awareness of the watch. The poll was taken after Apple Chief Executive Tim Cook rolled out the product on Monday, and only about half of respondents said they had heard news of the time-piece in the last few days.

Also, in an encouraging sign for Apple, roughly 13 percent of survey respondents who did not own an iPhone said that they would consider buying one in order to buy an Apple Watch, which needs an iPhone to work fully.

Apple overcame scepticism about the iPad and iPod when they first debuted, but the survey suggests that the world's largest technology company has work to do to make the watch ubiquitous.

The new watch, a test of Cook's leadership, is the company's first new product in five years, and it hits stores on 24 April.

It allows users to check email, listen to mu-



Apple CEO Tim Cook introduces the Apple Watch during an Apple event in San Francisco, California on 9 March, 2015.—REUTERS

sic and make phone calls from their wrist. Apple will sell various versions, from a \$349 (236 pounds) 'sport' edition to a \$17,000 18-karat gold timepiece.

Ipsos surveyed 1,245 Americans online between 9 March and 13 March. The data was weighted to reflect the US population and has a credibility interval of plus or minus 3.2 percentage points.

Apple did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the poll.

More than half of respondents, 52 percent, agreed with the statement that smartwatches are a "passing fad."

One-quarter of respondents said they were

interested in purchasing the Apple Watch, but 69 percent said they had no desire, and 6 percent said they were unsure.

Initial demand for the watch is expected to come primarily from existing iPhone users, but its wider success is seen depending on whether developers create enticing apps tailored to the device, so-called killer apps.

Apple is among several large tech companies looking to jumpstart a new market for "wearable" electronic devices. Samsung Electronics (005930.KS), Sony Corp (6758.T) and LG Electronics (066570.KS) have all released their own smartwatches, many of them

powered by software developed by Internet company Google Inc (GOOGL.O).

But consumers have yet to cotton to the notion of wearable devices. Google recently halted sales to consumers of Glass, a \$1,500 screen attached to glasses which were routinely mocked for their awkward appearance.

Roughly 4.6 million smartwatches were sold globally in 2014, according to research firm Strategy Analytics, a fraction of the more than 1 billion smartphones sold worldwide.

Many in the tech industry hope that Apple, famous for its marketing savvy and loyal fans, will have the power to transform the smartwatches into a product that appeals to the general public.

Some 46 percent of respondents said that the Apple Watch had a "cool factor."

But only 29 percent said they were more interested in purchasing an Apple Watch than another brand of smartwatch.

Analysts expect that Apple will sell between 10 million and 32 million watches in 2015.

Reuters

Google to open first UK 'garage' to fix small firms' web problems

LEEDS, (England) 14 March — Google (GOOGL.O) on Friday launched its first "digital garage", a multi-million pound project it said would help 200,000 small British businesses harness the Internet to grow. The US company, which has been under fire in Europe for its dominance in search and other digital services, said last month it would train 1 million Europeans in Internet skills by 2016, including building an online hub to support small enterprises.

Its first "garage" — a drop-in centre that will advise on building a mobile website, developing e-commerce and optimising internet search rankings — will open in the northern English city of Leeds on 30 March for six months, be-

fore moving to the next of five British cities in total.

Eileen Naughton, Google's managing director of UK and Ireland, said less than 30 percent of small businesses had an effective online presence, and Google wanted to "jump start" the other 70 percent.

"We understand (small businesses) don't have the benefit of large IT tech infrastructure and development, and they need our assistance in this area disproportionately more than a large business would," she said in an interview.

"We've never set up an outpost in a city — in a garage — as we have here in Leeds, and offered these services openly. For us, it's an exciting experiment."

Reuters



A Google search page is reflected in sunglasses in this photo illustration taken in Brussels on 30 May, 2014.

REUTERS

Rocket blasts off with NASA magnetic field probes



CAPE CANAVERAL, 14 March — An Atlas 5 rocket blasted off from Florida on Thursday with a quartet of NASA science satellites designed to map bursts of energy and charged particles triggered by criss-crossing magnetic fields around Earth.

The 20-story-tall rocket, built and launched by United Launch Alliance, a partnership of Lockheed

Martin and Boeing, lifted off from Cape Canaveral Air Force Station at 10:44 pm EDT.

Perched atop the rocket were four identical satellites designed to fly in a pyramid formation high around Earth. The probes were successfully delivered into their initial orbits less than two hours after launch.

Each satellite is equipped with 25 sensors

to record in split-second detail what happens when the planet's magnetic field lines break apart and reconnect. Data from the four probes will be combined to produce three-dimensional maps of the process.

Magnetic reconnection, as the phenomenon is known, is commonplace throughout the universe, but poorly understood.

Magnetic fields are

generated by planets, stars, galaxies, black holes and other celestial objects. When field lines snap apart and reconnect, charged particles are sent soaring into space at nearly the speed of light, roughly 186,000 miles per second (300,000 km per second).

On the sun, magnetic reconnection unleashes solar flares, each as powerful as 1 million atomic bombs. Such solar activity can trigger magnetic storms and aurora displays on Earth.

NASA is spending about \$1.1 billion on the project, known as Magnetospheric Multiscale, or MMS, in an effort to understand how the energy is generated and released. The satellites will fly directly into reconnection zones 44,000 to 95,000 miles (70,811 to 152,888 km) above Earth and map what happens when magnetic field lines realign.

Reuters

SpaceX sees US approval for rocket launches by June

WASHINGTON, 14 March — Space Exploration Technologies expects the US Air Force to certify it to compete to launch national security satellites by June, President Gwynne Shotwell told Reuters on Friday.

Shotwell said the company's relationship with the Air Force was better than ever after the two sides in January settled a lawsuit filed by SpaceX. She said the US military was increasingly open to innovation by commercial firms.

SpaceX, founded by technology entrepreneur Elon Musk, had accused the Air Force of dragging its feet in ending the current launch monopoly held by United Launch Alliance, a joint venture of Lockheed Martin Corp and Boeing Co.

Air Force and Pentagon officials credit SpaceX

with energizing the government rocket launch market and pushing ULA to lower its prices, even before the privately held company has been certified to compete for rocket launches.

The Air Force missed its December target for completing the certification process, but a top US official told Reuters this week the process should be complete by June.

"We are really close to getting the work done and getting the agreements made," Shotwell said. "I'm hoping it can be a little bit sooner, but we'll see."

Shotwell also welcomed a request for information that the Air Force issued last month as it develops a plan to end US reliance on the RD-180, a Russian-built engine that powers the Atlas 5, one of two rockets used by ULA.—Reuters

Quick answers to double shooting elude police in Ferguson, Missouri



St Louis County Chief of Police Jon Belmar listens to a question during a media briefing in Clayton, Missouri, on 13 March, 2015.—REUTERS

FERGUSON, 14 March — Nearly 48 hours after two officers were shot in Ferguson, Missouri, investigators had dozens of leads but no arrests to report on Friday in the hunt for a gunman who turned a late-night protest against police into bedlam.

St Louis County Police Chief Jon Belmar said authorities had “a pretty good idea” where the gunshots that wounded the officers had originated, without providing specifics, but added that an arrest was not imminent.

The kind of gun used, the shooter’s motivation and

any connection to the protesters remained a mystery, prolonging uncertainty for a town that has come to symbolize America’s struggle with race and policing.

The latest bout of violence in the St Louis suburb, first rattled by the killing of unarmed black teenager Michael Brown by a white officer last summer, brought out signs of sympathy for police on Friday.

One protester stood opposite the Ferguson police department with a sign reading “Cops Lives Matter,” playing on the “Black Lives Matter” slogan that sprang up in the wake of police killings of unarmed black men in New York City and elsewhere.

Belmar said donations for rewards to help the investigation had poured in over the last two days.

The desire of some to move on from months of racial strife and protests played out in a chilly evening rain in front of the police department on Friday, where a dozen mostly white residents stood holding signs reading “I [heart]

Ferguson”.

“Obviously we have a lot of changes to make, but we’re very resilient and committed to do what’s right,” said Susan Ankenbrand, 72, a tour guide in St Louis and Ferguson resident for 40 years.

“But we want to put another face on our community.”

Though others, like The Organization for Black Struggle Executive Director Montague Simmons, are determined to continue the near-daily demonstrations.

“Some people are sick of it, sure,” Simmons said. “At the same time, others want us because of the change we bring.”

To that end, five residents signed an affidavit at Ferguson City Hall on Friday afternoon to start a petition for Mayor James Knowles’ recall, according to a statement from The Organization for Black Struggle.

Residents will have 60 days to gather signatures from 15 percent of registered voters in the last mayoral election to prompt a special

election, the statement said.

Ferguson’s police chief, city manager, municipal court judge and two police officers have resigned since the US Justice Department released a damning review last week of the police force in Ferguson, where a majority of residents are African-American and most of the police are white.

The report found that the force overwhelmingly arrested and issued traffic citations to black residents, creating a “toxic” environment with its policing practices.

But Knowles said on Friday that it would be up to voters to remove him.

“Somebody here has to be left standing to make sure the government continues to operate. There are ways to get rid of me as mayor,” Knowles said in an interview with National Public Radio.

Knowles, whose job as mayor is part-time, told NPR, “I’m giving it every last measure at this point and I will continue to do so, as long as the citizens will have me.”—Reuters

Floods in Angola kill at least 64, toll expected to rise

LONDON, 14 March — At least 64 people have died in flooding following heavy rain in western Angola, the state-run news agency reported on Friday.

Most deaths have been in the coastal city of Lobito in Benguela Province, with 35 children among the victims, Angop said.

“People were sleeping which was part of the problem, it surprised people,” Nuno Macedo, who works for Christian Aid in Angola, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. “Everyone is shocked.”

Macedo said the heavy rain on Wednesday night destroyed many buildings, which was a major cause of deaths. Angop reported that 119 houses collapsed.

“There are searches underway to try and find

those who are still missing, so it is anticipated the number of fatalities will rise,” Tomilola Ajayi, a Christian Aid spokeswoman in London, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

Angolan President José Eduardo dos Santos has promised assistance to the affected people in Benguela, Angop reported.

Springtime floods also hit Angola hard in 2009 and 2013.

In January, flooding affected nearly one million people in Mozambique, Malawi, Madagascar and Zimbabwe. More than 150 people died in Mozambique, and more than 250 in neighbouring Malawi. About a quarter of a million people were forced to leave their homes.

Reuters

Senior US diplomat to visit S Korea after attack on envoy

WASHINGTON, 14 March — Top US diplomat for Asia Daniel Russel will visit South Korea from 15 to 17 March, the State Department said on Friday.

While in Seoul, the assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs will meet with US Ambassador Mark Lippert, who was

discharged from hospital on Tuesday, said a statement issued by the State Department.

The US envoy was slashed in the face and hand on 5 March by a knife-wielding activist while he was preparing for a lecture at a function in central Seoul.

Washington has said its alliance with South Korea remains “strong”

and the two countries will not be “deterred by senseless acts of violence”.

During his visit, Russel will also meet with senior South Korean officials to discuss a range of issues “central to our strong alliance and growing global partnership,” said the statement.

Xinhua

UK applies to co-build Asian infrastructure bank

BEIJING, 14 March — The UK has applied to join the China-proposed Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank as a founding member.

China’s Ministry of Finance said it has received confirmation from the UK and is seeking the opinions of other

founding countries. The ministry said China welcomes the UK’s decision.

The AIIB will be an international financial institution that will provide support to infrastructure projects in Asia. The UK is the first Western country to have applied to join. China-UK economic coop-

eration has been robust in the past few years.

Last year, the UK announced plans to appoint a renminbi clearing bank in London. It also became the first Western country to issue sovereign renminbi bond.

Xinhua

EU considers foreign camps to handle asylum seekers

BRUSSELS, 14 March — European Union foreign ministers will on Monday consider helping set up camps in the Middle East and Africa where people can request asylum on site without having to risk their lives crossing the Mediterranean to reach Europe, officials said.

At least 3,500 people, many of them fleeing poverty and fighting, died trying to make the journey in 2014, according to the United Nations. Data suggest the number trying to reach the most common destination, Italy, is rising sharply.

The Italian coast guard said on Friday it had coordinated the rescue of 153 migrants who were being taken to Sicily aboard a Danish merchant ship after their rafts ran into trouble around 30 miles from the coast of Libya.

“The idea is to establish camps in Africa, on the other side of the Mediterranean Sea, that would deal with the requests of asylum seekers,” Italian Home Affairs Minister Angelino Alfano told reporters in



A crane lifts up a container at a construction site for a refugee centre to house asylum seekers in the Koepenick district of Berlin on 27 Nov, 2014.

REUTERS

Brussels.

“Requests for asylum should be made there, and the refugees who are accepted should be shared equally among EU countries,” Alfano said. “This would deprive human traffickers of an important share of their market.”

The number of often rickety boats reaching Italy jumped 43 percent in the first two months of the year to 7,882 compared to a year earlier, according to the Italian Interior Ministry.

The EU’s foreign policy chief, Federica Mogherini, and the EU commissioner in charge of home affairs have sent EU for-

eign ministers a letter proposing the bloc should start talking to African and Middle Eastern governments to build “local capacity for migration governance”.

The letter, seen by Reuters, also suggests stepping up EU assistance to African and Middle East countries so that they can give better protection to refugees and asylum seekers and “provide safe alternatives to dangerous onward journeys”.

Tunisia, Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon are indicated in the letter as the first countries that the EU assistance should focus on.

Reuters

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 CONFERENCE & EXHIBITIONS**
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 Myanmar Cosmetics & Beauty Spa Exhibition,
 Myanmar Sports & Fitness Equipment Exhibition,
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will be held during 7-9 Aug 2015
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First direct flight from Havana to New Orleans opens

HAVANA, 14 March — Cuba will receive on Saturday the first direct flight between the southern US city of New Orleans and the Cuban capital of Havana in half a century, local media reported on Friday. The aircraft brings 80 business and community leaders seeking to explore avenues of cooperation between the US and Cuba, according to the official news website Cubadebate. This is historic as it is the first non-stop flight from New Orleans to Havana since 1958, Cubadebate said. For years, there have been charter flights from US to Cuba, mainly operating from the cities in the southern Florida state, with “humanitarian” character, as the US economic sanctions imposed in 1962 on the island country prohibited scheduled airline flights.

Xinhua

Huge Pacific cyclone devastates Vanuatu, at least eight dead



Local residents look through the remains of a small shelter in Port Vila, the capital city of the Pacific island nation of Vanuatu on 14 March, 2015. — REUTERS

SYDNEY, 14 March — One of the Pacific Ocean’s most powerful ever storms devastated the island nation of Vanuatu on Saturday, tearing off roofs, uprooting trees and killing at least eight people with the toll set to rise, aid officials said. The United Nations was preparing a major relief operation and Australia said it was ready to offer its neighbour whatever help it could. With winds up to 340 kph (210 mph), Cyclone Pam left Vanuatu cut off, with little power, poor communications and a looming threat of hunger and thirst. Unconfirmed reports said the number of dead could run into dozens but aid workers said it would be days or weeks before the full impact was known. “It felt like the world was going to end,” Alice Clements, a spokeswoman for the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF), said from Vanuatu. “It’s like a bomb has gone off in the centre of the town. There is no power. There is no water.” Tom Skirrow, country director for the Save the Children aid group, told Reuters that Vanuatu’s

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
MV PANJA BHUM VOY NO (045N)
 Consignees of cargo carried on MV PANJA BHUM VOY NO (045N) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 15.3.2015 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.W.P.T where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon. Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claims Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel. No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.
SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S WAN HAI LINES
PTE LTD
 Phone No: 2301185

WEATHER REPORT
BAY INFERENCE: Weather is partly cloudy in the South Bay and generally fair in the Andaman Sea and elsewhere in the Bay of Bengal.
FORECAST VALID UNTIL EVENING OF THE 15th March, 2015: Weather will be partly cloudy in Taninthayi Region and Kachin State and generally fair in the remaining Regions and States.
STATE OF THE SEA: Seas will be moderate in Myanmar waters.
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People walk in front of a mural in a street in Lima, capital of Peru, on 13 March, 2015. According to local press, Lima’s Mayor, Luis Castaneda, announced the elimination of all the murals painted in the streets of the Historical Downtown of Lima, in accordance with a bylaw of 1994, and because it is part of an agreement with the United Nations Education, Science and Culture Organization (UNESCO) for the Historical Downtown to be considered as World Heritage.—XINHUA

US using sanctions to ‘intimidate’ Venezuelan gov’t officials

National Disaster Management Office had confirmed eight dead and 20 injured. He said he expected those figures to rise substantially. Aid workers in Papua New Guinea said at least one person had been killed by the storm there. Satellite photographs showed the storm covering virtually all of Vanuatu, a sprawling country of 83 islands and 260,000 people 2,000 km (1,250 miles) northeast of the Australian city of Brisbane. The president of Vanuatu, Baldwin Lonsdale, told a disaster risk conference in Japan he had no confirmed report of the impact of the storm but he appealed to the world to “give a lending hand”. Australian Foreign Minister Julie Bishop said Canberra would be willing to offer Vanuatu whatever help it could. Formerly known as the New Hebrides, Vanuatu was jointly ruled by France and Britain until independence in 1980. It is among the world’s poorest countries and highly prone to natural disasters, such as earthquakes, tsunamis and storms.—Reuters

CARACAS, 14 March — The United States is using its sanctions regime to “intimidate” Venezuelan government officials, a Latin American legislator said on Friday. Roy Daza, a Venezuelan deputy of the Latin American Parliament (Parlatino), said the tactic was especially targeted at Venezuelan prosecutors investigating those responsible for the violent anti-government demonstrations in 2014 and their US links. The four months of protests claimed 43 lives. “What is the administration of (US President Barack) Obama seeking through the sanctions against Venezuelans?” asked Daza in an opinion piece published in the regional daily *Correo del Orinoco*. “Evidently it’s trying to pressure and intimidate officials working to defend the peace in our country and the legal branch, the Prosecutor’s Office.” Venezuela’s National Prosecutor Katherine Harrington is one of seven security and defense officials slapped by the US with sanctions on Monday for alleged human rights violations. The sanctions bar the individuals from entering the United States, freeze any assets they may have there and prohibit Americans from doing business with them. Harrington is investigating email exchanges between former Venezuelan right-wing deputy Maria Corina Machado and US Ambassador to Colombia Kevin Whitaker, among others. Officials say the emails uncover a plot to assassinate President Nicolas Maduro and topple his government. In announcing the third set of sanctions against the South American government in four months, Obama issued an executive order claiming “the situation in Venezuela ... constitutes an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States, and I hereby declare a national emergency to deal with that threat.” The aggressively-worded declaration has been condemned by the international community and should be retracted, said Daza.

Xinhua

‘Star Wars: Episode VIII’ to release on 26 May, 2017

LOS ANGELES, 14 March — Walt Disney chairman and CEO Bob Iger said “Star Wars: Episode VIII”, written and directed by Rian Johnson, will be released on 26 May, 2017.

A stand-alone movie based on the Star Wars world that is due on 16 December, 2016, and directed by Gareth Edwards, will be called “Rogue One”, according to *The Hollywood Reporter*.

Iger made the announcement at Disney’s annual meeting of shareholders in San Francisco.

Iger showed the attendees several trailers of upcoming Star Wars, Marvel and Pixar films, said

that Disney will introduce on TV next year the first Latina in its Disney Princess line, and said he has high hopes for the live-action “Cinderella” opening on Friday.

“We absolutely love this movie,” he said.



A stand-alone movie based on the Star Wars world that is due on 16 Dec, 2016, and directed by Gareth Edwards, will be called “Rogue One”.—PTI

He said “Big Hero 6” — this year’s best animated feature Oscar winner — has become Disney’s third-highest-grossing animated film of all time, behind “Frozen” and “The Lion King”.

PTI

Movie star Jackie Chan lends his voice to Beijing’s Olympics bid

BEIJING, 14 March — Internationally acclaimed movie star Jackie Chan has joined in the recording of a song, “Wake up Winter,” that will be used to promote Beijing’s bid for the 2022 Winter Olympic Games.

The first people to officially hear the song will be the International Olympic Committee (IOC) Evaluation Commission during their 24-28 March visit to Beijing.

“Wake up Winter” is actually a call to people around the world with an incessant eagerness for the Olympic Spirit, and a longing for friendship between people and countries,” said songwriter Wang Pingjiu.

A large number of well-known musicians both from home and abroad have been involved, including Zhao Jialin, one of the main composers for “Little Apple”, which was China’s most popular song last year.

It’s not Chan’s first foray into Olympic singing. The action star performed “We Are Ready”, recorded and released



Movie star Jackie Chan

a year before the beginning of the 2008 Olympics. He also sang at the closing ceremony of those Games.—Xinhua

Daniel Craig, Rodger Moore to poke fun at James Bond



James Bond depicts Daniel Craig and Rodger Moore are set to join forces to poke fun at the spy franchise in a skit for Comic Relief.—PTI

LONDON, 14 March — James Bond depicts Daniel Craig and Rodger Moore are set to join forces to poke fun at the spy franchise in a skit for Comic Relief.

The two actors are set to star in a mockumentary-style sketch which will leave viewers feeling shaking and stirred, reported *Daily Express*.

In the scene Craig is set to shock the world by revealing the biggest Bond secret yet.

The 47-year-old star will be joined by Ben Whishaw, Rory Kinnear, Naomie Harris, director Sam Mendes, and Bond producer Michael G Wilson for the exclusive skit besides Moore.

Speaking of his return to agent life, 87-year-old Moore said: “I think

viewers will most enjoy seeing that old Bonds never die.”

Written by comedy legends David Walliams and the Dawson Brothers viewers should expect surprises, laughs, and some very special appearances, as they finally learn the truth about James Bond.

Whishaw, who plays Secret Service boss Q, said: “When I first saw the script, I was returning home from the set, and it really made me laugh out loud. I was thrilled to be asked to be involved.”

Mendes added: “When I first saw the script, I was returning home from the set, and it really made me laugh out loud. I was thrilled to be asked to be involved.”

PTI

Ryan Gosling dismisses ‘Hey Girl,’ discusses new film at SXSW

AUSTIN, 14 March — With a drop of a microphone, Ryan Gosling dispelled his Internet infamy, saying he had never once uttered the phrase, “Hey Girl,” which has made him a viral phenomenon.

“I understand if you’re in a movie and you say something like ‘I’ll be back,’ you own that. But I never said it,” Gosling said while giggling with Mexican filmmaker Guillermo Del Toro at a panel conversation to a full house on Friday.

Gosling was the anticipated opening day guest at the annual South by Southwest (SXSW) Festival covering film, music and technology in Austin, Texas, being quizzed by Del Toro not on his Internet fame, rather his directorial debut, “Lost River.”

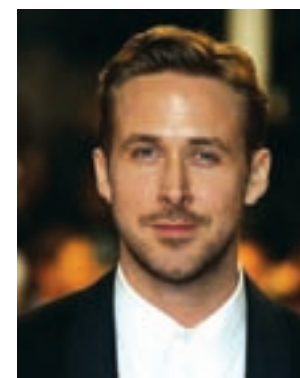
But Del Toro threw in cheeky references to the in-

fatuation with Gosling that has made him an online celebrity, such as his love for Disneyland, where he has been photographed on dates, riding rollercoasters.

On the Internet, photos of Gosling are captioned with quirky, romantic phrases beginning with “Hey Girl,” one of the earliest memes to emerge in the social networking age.

Gosling, 34, responded by blushing and hiding his face in embarrassment, and when Del Toro teased him for finally saying “Hey Girl” while telling a story about never having said the phrase, Gosling dropped the mic, joking he was done.

“Lost River,” out in theatres in April, sees Gosling, known for films such as “The Notebook” and “Crazy Stupid Love,” step behind the camera for a script he penned — a



Director Ryan Gosling poses on the red carpet as he arrives for the screening of the film “Lost River” in competition for the category “Un Certain Regard” at the 67th Cannes Film Festival in Cannes on 20 May, 2014. REUTERS

surreal, dark fairytale set in Detroit, inspired by his childhood imaginations of America while growing up in Canada.

Much of the conversa-

tion was about the actor’s process in writing and directing, and he candidly discussed working with a 4-year-old actor who did not like the camera.

“When he saw the camera, he went the other way, so we had to approach him like nature photographers,” Gosling said.

“You do more acting as a director than you do as an actor, because you act confident,” he quipped. “When everything’s going south, you’re always acting like it’s not a problem.”

Gosling is one of many filmmakers taking the stage to discuss movie-making over the course of SXSW’s nine-day film segment, now in its 20th year. Other notable names include “Selma” director Ava DuVernay and filmmaker Mark Duplass, who began his career in Texas.

Reuters

‘Frozen 2’ officially announced, cast rejoice

LOS ANGELES, 14 March — Disney has officially confirmed that a sequel to their highest-grossing animated film of all time, “Frozen (2013)”, is in development. “Frozen 2” was announced during the Mouse House’s annual shareholders meeting, reported Ace Showbiz.

Kristen Bell who voices Anna and Josh Gad who voices Olaf the Snowman gleefully respond to the news. “Dreams really do come to!!! #FROZEN2 #itsofficial,” the former tweeted along with a picture of her smiling while lying on a bag of ice.



“Frozen 2” was announced during the Mouse House’s annual shareholders meeting.—PTI

Gad, meanwhile, posted a picture which showed him smiling with Chief Creative Officer of Walt Disney and Pixar Animation Studios John Lasseter.

They were on hand for the announcement along with Disney CEO Bob Iger at the meeting. “We enjoyed making “Frozen Fever” (a short movie) so much and

being back in that world with those characters,” said Lasseter in a statement.

“Jennifer Lee and Chris Buck have come up with a great idea for a sequel and you will be hearing a lot more about it and we’re taking you back to Arendelle. We are so excited about that.”

“Frozen” is also supported by Idina Menzel as Elsa and Jonathan Groff as Kristoff. The movie collected USD 1.27 billion worldwide and won two Oscars for best animated film and best song for “Let It Go”.

PTI

GENERAL

Halilhodzic won't tolerate losing, confident he can revive Japan

TOKYO, 14 March — New Japan coach Vahid Halilhodzic said at his unveiling on Friday that he is confident of turning around a team that have disappointed at the last World Cup and Asian Cup.

Hours after arriving from France, Halilhodzic, the eighth foreigner to coach Japan, put pen to paper on a contract that sees him succeed Javier Aguirre, who was sacked last month after being named as a defendant in a criminal complaint for match-fixing in Spain.

Japan Football Association President Kuniya Daini said he expects "strong leadership" from the 62-year-old ex-Algeria disciplinarian, and Halilhodzic, who left his family behind in France to take the job, is more than willing to give it to him.

"I hate losing. When I



(From L) Japan Football Association President Kuniya Daini, Vahid Halilhodzic, the new coach of the Japan men's national soccer team, and JFA technical director Masahiro Shimoda pose for a photo during a press conference at a Tokyo hotel on 13 March, 2015, after Halilhodzic arrived from France earlier in the day.

KYODO NEWS

lose, I become ill," Halilhodzic said during a nationally televised Press conference attended by 242 journalists, ahead of his tempura dinner with Daini and JFA technical director Masahiro Shimoda.

"Victory is the first word that always comes out of my mouth."

"I've watched a lot of game film over the last two weeks. I saw every game from the World Cup and

Asian Cup and have analyzed it. The quality is there, despite the results. But what I didn't see is confidence. Restoring that confidence can be easy, other times not."

"Japan have not had the results since the World Cup in Brazil but they have what it takes to turn things around. When I started working with the Algerian team where I was before, they were ranked 52nd in the world. After working with them for three years, they climbed to 17th and I'm convinced I can do the same with Japan."

Japan were eliminated in the first round at last summer's World Cup with two defeats and a goalless draw, and under Aguirre as holders, went out in the Asian Cup quarterfinals after penalties against the United Arab Emirates.— *Kyodo News*

San Francisco pushes for health warning on soda bottles

SAN FRANCISCO, 14 March — Lawmakers in San Francisco are trying to apply the same health warning policy used with alcohol and tobacco products on sugary drinks.

If the elected officials have their way, San Franciscans will soon see labels on soda bottles warning consumers about the drink's potential damage to health if it contains at least 25 calories per every 35 centiliters.

The move was proposed by three members of the US west coast city's 11-member Board of Supervisors. As co-authors of the bill, supervisors Malia Cohen, Scott Wiener and Eric Mar are also pushing to ban advertisements of sugary drinks on city-owned properties. "We want to

avoid these industries from targeting their main consumers who belong, mostly, to society's low-income sectors, like Hispanics, African Americans as well as the Asian community, who have the highest risks of developing Type II diabetes of all the country's minorities," Cohen told *Xinhua* on Thursday.

The draft bill was presented this week during a board meeting. If enacted, it would make San Francisco the first US city to introduce such a policy.

This is not the city's first battle against sugary drinks. Lawmakers last year failed to introduce a tax on sodas that would have increased the cost of these beverages, when voters snubbed their proposal on

the ballot. "We can't afford to allow these companies to sell drinks loaded with sugar, it's hurting our community and it's hurting our society," Cohen said. "We truly hope this legislation passes later on this year, since consumers need to know that these beverages can cause obesity, tooth decay and diabetes. Many of them are not aware of the danger and drink outstanding amounts of these soda drinks per week," she said.

CalBev, which represents members of the non-alcoholic beverage industry in California, rebuked the supervisors' proposal earlier this week, arguing that they are targeting sugary drinks instead of other consumer goods loaded with sugar, like pastries or certain caf-

feine drinks.

A proposal to tax sugary drinks did succeed, however, in Berkeley last year, making the city north of San Francisco the first in the country to apply a taxing measure on sugary sodas and beverages.

Lawmakers in San Francisco and the Bay Area believe now that after voters in Berkeley approved the move, momentum is building up to bring out the big guns against soda companies.

"We think it's the right time for this proposal," Cohen said, "people are more aware of the health problem these drinks pose and we know that those companies are going to try to fight back to bury the bill, like they did last year." — *Xinhua*

mitv Myanmar International

(15-3-2015 07:00 am~ 16-3-2015 07:00 am) MST

- | | |
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| * News | * News |
| * Entrepreneur | * The Stories of The Great Souls (Mar Mar Aye) (EP-2) |
| * Paper Products... Plain but Pretty | * News |
| * A Monk's Robe | * Great Shwedagon: The Architectural Heritage |
| * News | * Kyeikhteeyoe: Welcome All |
| * The Man and The Elephant | * News |
| * Traditional Snacks | * Ar Khar New Year Festival |
| * News | * Size Does Matter (Episode - 6) "Human — Elephant Conflict, Escaping Tips" |
| * Short Trip With Steve (Mon State) | * Scented Buddha Images |
| * Kay Tu Mar Lar "The Decision" | * News |
| * News | * Crab Business (Part-I) Mud Crab |
| * Indonesia — Myanmar Bilateral Ties | * Mogok: The Colourful Land of Rubies |
| * Kambawzathardi Golden Palace — A Treasured Legacy of Golden Days | * Solar Impulse |
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| * Food Trip (Ep-5) (Part-1) | * My Great Limitless Adventure — Inle Lake (Part-2) |
| * Shaping Life with Music | |
| * Today Myanmar "Myanmar Quality Gold" | |

MRTV News Channel in Brief

(15-3-2015, Sunday)

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|--|---|
| 6:00 am | 12:50 pm |
| • Paritta by Venerable Mingun Sayadaw | • Myanmar Movies (Part-1) |
| 6:30 am | 2:35 pm |
| • Physical Exercise | • Myanmar Movies (Part-2) |
| 7:00 am | 3:00 pm |
| • News/ Weather Report | • News / International News |
| 7:35 am | 4:45 pm |
| • Business News | • FIFA Women's Olympic Football Tournament Rio 2016 (ASIAN Qualifiers) (LIVE) (Myanmar & India) |
| 8:00 am | 7:00 pm |
| • News / International News | • News |
| 8:35 am | 7:35 pm |
| • Documentary | • Documentary (Women's in Myanmar Society) |
| 9:35 am | 8:00 pm |
| • Weekly Entertainment | • News / International News / Weather Report |
| 10:30 am | 9:00 pm |
| • Head Line News | • News |
| 11:35 am | |
| • Amazing World | |
| 12:00 noon | |
| • News / International News / Weather Report | |
| 12:35 pm | |
| • Round Up of The Week's International News | |

MRTV Entertainment Channel

(15-3-2015, Sunday)

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|-----------------------------|---|
| 6:00 am | 8:45 am |
| • Alinka Wutyi Music Troupe | • Sing & Enjoy |
| 6:20 am | 9:30 am |
| • Myanmar Video | • Myanmar Movie |
| 7:55 am | 4:45 pm |
| • Fashion Show | • FIFA Women's Olympic Football Tournament Rio 2016 (ASIAN Qualifiers) (LIVE) (Myanmar & India) |
| 8:20 am | |
| • Pyi Thu Ni Ti | |



People visit the 2015 Canada Blooms in Toronto, Canada, on 13 March, 2015. As Canada's largest flower and garden festival, the 10-day event kicked off on Friday to exhibit the accomplishments in Canadian gardening and floral design.

XINHUA

Malaysian U-22 team to play two Myanmar youth teams

YANGON, 14 March — Malaysia's U-22 team will play tune-up matches against the Myanmar U-20 and U-22 teams as part of its preparations for the AFC U-23 Championship qualifiers.

After arriving in Myanmar on 16 March, the Malaysians will train with the Myanmar youth teams before playing the U-20 side, which is training for the 2015 U-20 World Cup, at the Youth Training Centre in Thunwunna at 4 p.m. on 19 March.

One more tune-up match between the Malaysian team and Myanmar U-22 will be played at the same venue on 22 March.

The visiting squad will consist of 11 managers and coaches together with 29 players. A match coordination meeting and the Press conference will take place at the office of the Myanmar Football Federation on 17 March.

Tickets for the games will be sold at K3,000 per spectator for grandstand and K1,000 per spectator for ordinary stand.—MFF



Serena makes winning return to Indian Wells

INDIAN WELLS, (California), 14 March — Serena Williams returned to Indian Wells on Friday after a 14-year boycott due to racist abuse she suffered in the 2001 final and got her bid for a third BNP Paribas Open title off to a winning, though somewhat error-prone, start.

On a sultry evening at the Indian Wells Tennis Garden in front of a sell-out crowd, the American world number one overcame a nervous start on the stadium court to battle past Romania's Monica Niculescu 7-5, 7-5 in the second round.

Poland's Agnieszka Radwanska, the seventh seed and a losing finalist at Indian Wells last year,

had a much easier time of it earlier in the day, storming into the third round with a 6-3, 6-1 demolition of American Alison Riske.

Williams said she was overwhelmed by the reaction coming back to play at the venue and that Niculescu's style had taken some getting used to.

"I have never played anyone like her, and I was struggling to find my rhythm," she said in a court-side interview after being repeatedly thwarted by an unorthodox opponent who used a heavily sliced forehand. "It was a really tough match."

Williams had skipped the showpiece event after winning her second title here in 2001, beating Kim

Clijsters in a final marred by some spectators who booed and heckled the American and her family.

The heckling was in apparent response to Serena's sister Venus having withdrawn from their semi-final that year just minutes before the match.

"It feels overwhelming, walking out and having everyone here cheering me," she said. "It's been really worth it, coming back here."

Williams, watched by her mother Oracene and sister Isha, was broken in the opening game and trailed 0-2 before gradually finding her range.

She won the next three games but was broken again in the seventh,

then trailed 3-5 before clawing her way back with a mixture of power serving and blistering ground strokes, helped by several unforced errors by the Romanian.

Spurred on by shouts of "Come on Serena" and "Go Serena" from the crowd, the American won four games in a row to take a topsy-turvy opening set in an hour.

After trading early service breaks in the second, Williams finally sealed victory on her fourth match point when her opponent netted a backhand, ending an encounter that lasted just over two hours.

Earlier in the day, Radwanska broke Riske twice in the opening set and three times in the second to triumph in just over an hour.

"I started very well," Radwanska said after hitting 15 winners on a hot afternoon at Indian Wells.

"I'm in trouble the end of the first set but I also finished very well, so that's the most important thing."

The Polish world number eight will next meet England's Heather Watson, who beat Camila Giorgi of Italy 7-5, 7-5.

In other matches, third seed Simona Halep of Romania fought back to beat Russian Daria Gavrilova 2-6, 6-1, 6-2, while eighth-seeded Russian Ekaterina Makarova breezed past compatriot Elena Vesnina 6-4, 6-0.

Reuters

Chelsea will win the league, Mourinho promises



Chelsea manager Jose Mourinho during the Chelsea Press Conference at Stamford Bridge, London, England on 10 March, 2015.—REUTERS

LONDON, 14 March — Chelsea will win the Premier League this season with the same players who are being criticised for going out of the Champions League to Paris St Germain, their manager Jose Mourinho promised on Friday.

The Portuguese said that adding the title to the team's League Cup final victory this month would make it "a brilliant season".

Chelsea could only draw 2-2 after extra time at home to the French champions on Wednesday despite playing against 10 men after Zlatan Ibrahimovic was controversially sent off. That meant they went out of the competition on away goals.

"The people that were out of the Champions League on Wednesday are the same people that won the League Cup and the same people that are going to win the Premier League," Mourinho told a news conference.

"The future now is to try and win the PL and if we finish the season winning the PL and the League Cup, then that is a brilliant season."

His team hold a five-point lead over second-placed Manchester City with a game in hand ahead of Sunday's match at home to Southampton.

Mourinho said he had discussed the Champions League failure with the players but refused to disclose what was said in a "good, interactive" meeting.

"We win together and we lose together," he added.

"We have 11 matches to play, We have an advantage of five points with a match in hand. We cannot promise we will win every game but we are optimistic."

Club captain John Terry echoed the theme of looking ahead when he told the club's website (www.chelseafc.co.uk): "We've got the Capital One Cup out of the way and now the Premier League is all we've got."

"It's a massive one to go for, we're a few points clear and we need to keep that gap. We can only do that by responding and picking up three points at the weekend."

After widespread criticism of the way nine Chelsea players surrounded the referee to demand that Ibrahimovic was sent off, Terry claimed other teams did the same.

"Once they're charging the referee, the only thing we can do is respond," he said.

"If I have to run 20 or 30 yards it doesn't look great but when you're standing back and seeing five or six of their players surrounding the ref I have to go and support my team mates."

Reuters



Serena Williams (USA) during her match against Monica Niculescu (ROU) at the BNP Paribas Open at the Indian Wells Tennis Garden, Indian Wells, CA, USA on 13 March, 2015. Williams won 7-5, 7-5.—REUTERS