

Defence Services Commander-in-Chief promises to support elections in November

NAY PYI TAW, 27 March—Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing said Friday the Tatmadaw will work hand in hand with election organisers and the people to ensure a successful ballot in November, warning that the armed forces will not tolerate any attempts to disrupt voting. “Any disturbances to

the stability of the State and prevalence of the rule of law, any armed pressure or any threats for voting, won’t be allowed in the General Election,” he said at the 70th Anniversary Armed Forces Day Parade in Nay Pyi Taw.

He also said the general election scheduled for November would be “a landmark for the implementation of democ-

racy in Myanmar.”

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing called on ethnic armed groups to solve their conflicts with the government through negotiation based on a spirit of brotherhood and trust. He said the Tatmadaw would not tolerate any attempts to turn political disagreements into armed conflict.

He urged ethnic people to work with each other

to create a harmonious and interdependent community through negotiation. If ethnic armed groups have a true desire for peace, they should keep their promises and solve problems caused by political issues through political means, the commander-in-chief said.

He also promised that the Tatmadaw will make efforts for integration of the national peoples, na-

tional reconciliation and for peace without fail, as the Tatmadaw is tasked with defending the Union. “The Tatmadaw is doing its duties, risking lives and limbs of military officers and Tatmadawmen (sol-

diers) for stability in border areas,” he said.

(Please visit globalnewlightofmyanmar.com to read the full text of the speech delivered by the Senior General. Ed)

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Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing takes salute of military columns at 70th Anniversary Armed Forces Day.—MNA

Regional environmental group seeks deeper involvement with Myanmar

YANGON, 27 March—The International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development, an eight-nation grouping that promotes ecologically sustainable projects in the Himalayan region, showcased its work in Myanmar at an event in

Nay Pyi Taw, the organisation said Thursday.

Myanmar-ICIMOD Partners Day was aimed at strengthening Myanmar’s involvement with the eight-member ICIMOD, which works closely with (See page 3)



A boy drinks water from a pot after playing with his friends in this image captured by Myanmar photographer Thandar Soe for a photo contest organised by ICIMOD. In some villages in Myanmar, traditional drinking water pots are found throughout the village for all to use.

PHOTO: CREDIT TO THANDAR SOE

Myanmar hosts international media at IPI World Congress

YANGON, 27 March—The International Press Institute opened its 65th World Congress at the Chatrium Hotel here on Friday, bringing together journalists from around the world under the theme “On the Path to a Free Media.”

Union Minister for Information U Ye Htut extending greetings at the conference, while other speakers including Mr David Kaye of the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression, Executive Director Mr Toby Mendel of the Centre for Law and Democracy of Canada, and U Phyo Min Thein of the National League for Democracy spoke on the topic of “press freedom through laws and conventions”.

Discussions covered Myanmar’s significant development, legal support for independent media, the licensing of private dailies, abolition of press censor-

ship, and threats of old laws to press freedom. The conference, the first of its kind to be hosted in Myanmar, saw local and foreign journalists discuss reporting on sensitive conflicts, religious sensitivities in news reporting, and the challenges print media faces in maintain-

ing economic viability and public trust. More than 200 local and foreign journalists attended the IPI World Congress in Yangon, which will continue until 29 March.

On the sidelines of the 65th World Congress, Union Minister U Ye Htut separately met Managing Direc-

tor Al Anstey of Al Jazeera (English), Programme Director Dr Andrew Dodd of Australia’s Department of Media and Communication, and Nathan Vander Klippe, Beijing bureau chief for Canada’s Globe and Mail at the same hotel.

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Union Minister for Information U Ye Htut meets Programme Director Dr Andrew Dodd of Australia’s Department of Media and Communication, and Nathan Vander Klippe, Beijing bureau chief for Canada’s Globe and Mail.—MNA



Images of 70th Anniversary Armed Forces Day parade 2015 in Nay Pyi Taw

Military attaches of foreign missions attend 70th Anniversary of Armed Forces Day parade 2015.

MNA

Missile carriers marching into parade ground where 70th Anniversary of Armed Forces Day parade 2015 is being held on 27 March 2015.

MNA



Military servicemen from Myanmar Navy participate in parade of 70th Anniversary of Armed Forces Day parade 2015.

MNA

Armoured vehicles rolling into the parade ground where 70th Anniversary of Armed Forces Day parade 2015 is being held on 27 March 2015.

MNA



Military servicewomen marching in parade ground in Nay Pyi Taw.—MNA



NATIONAL

Defence Services Commander-in-Chief promises to support elections...

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More than 10,000 troops from the Army, Navy and Air of Defence Services paraded during the 70th Anniversary Armed Forces Day, which commemorates the start of the army's resistance to Japanese occupation in 1945.

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and families of Defence Services (Army, Navy and Air) paid respects to retired senior military officers at Zeyathiri Beikman on Friday after-

noon.

The senior general honoured servicemen who are discharging defence duty in all areas of the nation and their family members and prayed for victory in all battles on the occasion of the 70th Anniversary of Armed Forces Day.

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla hosted a dinner in honour of the 70th Anniversary of Armed Forces Day at the square of Zeyathiri Beikman

in the evening.

Chief of the General Staff (Army, Navy and Air) General Hla Htay Win presented best camp award to the company representing Office of the Commander-in-Chief (Air), best military song award to the company-1 representing Office of the Commander-in-Chief (Navy), best military discipline award to the company representing Directorate of Signals, best parade award to the company representing Directorate of Supply and Transport, first to third model company awards to

the Office of the Commander-in-Chief (Air), Office of the Commander-in-Chief (Navy) and Directorate of Military Engineers at the parade ground, here, on Friday.

Chairman of the leading committee for observance of the 70th Armed Forces Day Chief of Armed Forces Training Lt-Gen Yar Pyae and Adjutant-General Maj-Gen Hsan Oo also gave awards to outstanding parade companies.

General Hla Htay Win attended the ceremony to honour artistes, musicians and literati who participated in the film entitled "40-day Kunlong Battle", at the hall of Zeyathiri Beikman, here.

The general presented certificates of honour and gifts to film director Bagyi Soe Moe, writer U Hla Thaung and film script writer academy Nyein Min for the film.

Lt-Gen Myint Soe of the Office of the Commander-in-Chief (Army) and Adjutant-General Maj-Gen Hsan Oo gave certificates of honour and gifts to artistes, technicians and musicians.

Chief of Armed Forces Training Lt-Gen Yar



General Hla Htay Win presents award to an outstanding parade company in 70th Anniversary of Armed Forces Day Parade.—MNA

Pyae and Commander of Nay Pyi Taw Command Maj-Gen Maung Maung Aye also presented prizes to winners in the military song contest, short story and poem contests. In the morning, General Hla Htay

Win unveiled the signboard of 1212 call center (Nay Pyi Taw) for the MECTEL CDMA 800 MHz mobile communications at Nay Pyi Taw Zeyathiri Department Store.

Aye Min Soe-GNLM



People garlands military servicemen of parade columns.—MNA

Myanmar hosts international...

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Prior to the press congress, journalists staged a rally in front of the hotel, calling for freedom of expression, which they said was crucial to the flow of information to the people.

U Kyaw Zeyar Tun, editor of Mawkun Magazine, decried the beating and arrest of some journalists in a recent police crackdown on student protesters in Letpadan.

U Win Zaw Naing, an editor of Myitmakha news agency, said he joined the

rally to spread a message to the world that freedom of the press is still repressed in the country.

Discussions at the IPI conference should mainly focus on how to provide security and safety for journalists, said Ko Ant Min Nyo, a freelance reporter.

Union Minister for Information U Ye Htut expressed his delight at the rally, saying it was proof for international delegates at the conference of media transparency in Myanmar.

The union minister

recognised the concerns of correspondents over their safety, saying weaknesses concerning the Letpadan incident must be investigated.

He defended the police action in the crackdown but hinted at a review of the possible overuse of force by police.

He went on to say that journalists who boycotted the conference wasted the opportunity to ask international experts, including him, their views on the situations in the country, with the conference discussing problems facing the media in the country. —MNA

Media accreditation cards available for journalists

MANDALAY, 27 March — Media organizations that would like to take photographs of Solar Impulse-2, which is leaving for Chongqing, China, at 10 pm on 29 March from

Mandalay International Airport, can take out media accreditation cards at the Sub-printing House between 20th and 21st streets and between 82nd and 83rd streets in Aungmyethazan

Township from 9 am to 2 pm on 29 March.

Journalists will be transported from Mandalay Railway Station to the airport at 7 pm on the same day.—MNA

Soft opening of Myaynigon overpass held in Yangon

YANGON, 27 March — Soft opening of Myaynigon overpass built for convenient travelling of the public by easing traffic congestion was held at the overpass in Sangyoung Township, Yan-

gon, on Friday morning. Yangon Region Chief Minister U Myint Swe and officials presented gifts to the public who travelled on the overpass to mark the opening.

2310-foot long and 48-foot wide four-lane overpass withstand 75 tons and it was built by JTE Engineering of Japan and Capital Development Ltd. —Min Thit

Regional environmental group seeks...

(from page 1)

the Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry. The event also provided networking opportunities and promoted the work of ICIMOD's partners in Myanmar.

In his address at the event on Wednesday, Union Minister U Win Tun highlighted the importance of regional and international partners for making progress in the country's priority areas including ag-

riculture and tourism.

He acknowledged that cooperation with ICIMOD supports the government's commitment to ensuring sustainability of mountain environments and addressing problems facing the mountain areas that make up 42 percent of the country.

"We seek guidance from you on how to deepen our engagement and ensure that we are responding to your priorities," said ICI-

MOD's Director General Dr David Molden, who urged stronger collaboration between member nations and Myanmar.

The centre in recent years has expanded its programmes in Myanmar, which hosted the ICIMOD annual board meeting in 2012.

Myanmar is a founding member of the ICIMOD, which also includes Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India Nepal and Pakistan.

GNLM



A journalist in protest calling for freedom of expression at IPI World Congress.

MNA

Myanaung's rural area receives new BEMS branch



MYANAUNG, 27 March — An upgraded branch of the Basic Education Middle School was inaugurated in Pyisinkwin Village, Kyangin Township, Ayeyawady Region, on 27 March.

Township Education Officer U Maung Maung Aye formally unveiled the signboard of the school.

Ayeyawady Region Hluttaw MP U Aung Win Swe urged members of the school board of trustees and education staff to improve the education standards of local students.

Local authorities and residents contributed cash towards construction of a 40-foot-long and 20-foot-wide building to be able to admit more students at the newly upgraded school.

Nay Win Zaw (Myanaung)

K100m fund allotted by Pyidaungsu Hluttaw shared to development tasks

MYANAUNG, 27 March — The Pyidaungsu Hluttaw has allotted K100 million each for undertaking development tasks in all constituencies in Ayeyawady Region in the 2014-15 fiscal year to combat rural poverty.

The Township Department of Rural Development is putting a new laterite surface on Inbin-Kanaung road for smooth transport of local residents.

On 25 March, Region Hluttaw MPs U Aung Win Swe and U Aung Myo Nyunt, Township Administrator U Min Min Tun and officials inspected construction of a building at Basic Education Middle School Branch in

Thakhtukwin Village, a laterite road in Bawdigon Village, a bridge in Tagwa Village, a laboratory at BEHS Branch in Htan-

thonbin Village, and construction of floor at the school building at Zibyugon BEPS.

They also looked into

construction of dispensaries, school buildings and the Inbin-Kanaung laterite road.

Win Bo (Myanaung IPRD)



Nay Pyi Taw Council assists residents of damaged homes

TATKON, 27 March — Strong winds hit four villages in Thaphanchaung Village-tract in Tatkon Township on 25 March, blowing roofs of schools

and houses.

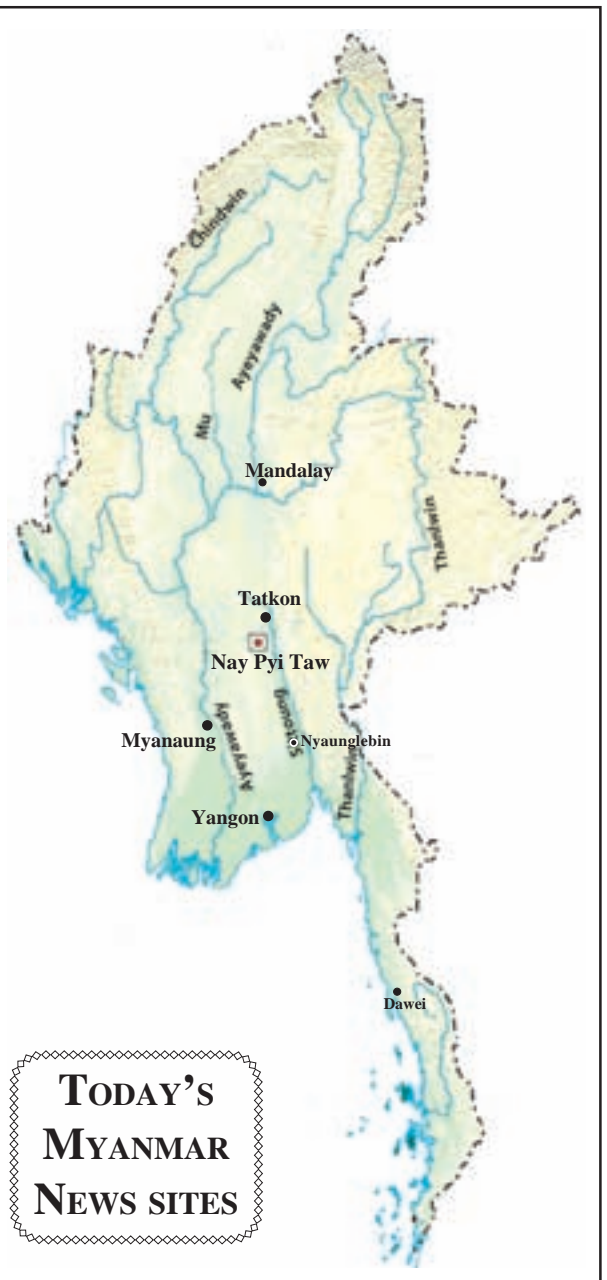
A total of 129 houses, one monastic education school and a Post-Primary School in Thaphanchaung Village lost their roofs while

16 houses and one BEMS branch were damaged during the unseasonable weather in Pheththantaung village.

Nay Pyi Taw Council members U Myint Shwe and

U Phone Zaw Han inspected the damage to houses and schools in the villages and arranged support for local people on 26 March.

Tin Soe Lwin (Tatkon)



TODAY'S
MYANMAR
NEWS SITES

Taninthayi Region chooses five townships to accept stipends for students

DAWEI, 27 March — Education officers held a meeting Thursday with residents of Dawei, Taninthayi Region, to explain the selection of townships to be provided with stipends for students in the 2015-16 academic year.

Region Minister for Social Affairs Dr Win Aung attended the meeting at the hall of No. 3 Basic Education High School. Region Education Director U Tun Yi explained the plan to hold public consultation meetings, as well as the arrangements for se-

lecting the schools for stipend-granted students.

Deputy Director Daw Myint Sein (Admin/Finance) of the region education department supervised discussions of township officials in groups. The meeting selected Yebyu, Kyunsu, Taninthayi, Bokpyin and Kawthoung townships to be provided stipends for students.

It was also attended by Region Hluttaw MPs, education officers and staff, social organization members, and political parties.

Po Shwe Thun (Dawei)

Asphalt road opens to traffic in Nyaunglebin

NYAUNGLEBIN, 27 March — In honour of the 70th Anniversary of Armed Forces Day, a ceremony to commission the new asphalt U Myat Tun Aung Road into service was held at the thoroughfare in Nyaunglebin, Bago Region, on 25 March.

Executive Officer of Township Development Af-

fairs Committee U M Hla Thaug explained construction of the new asphalt road.

Region Hluttaw MPs and township departmental officials opened the 977-foot-long and 10-foot-wide asphalt road, built by the Township DAC for more than K19 million.

Nay Lin (Nyaunglebin)

LOCAL NEWS

Myingyan District General Hospital to receive new building

MYINGYAN, 27 March — A two-storey building is under construction in the compound of Myingyan District General Hospital in Mandalay Region.

District Construction Supervisory Committee

chairman Deputy Commissioner U Myint Thin Aung and authorities inspected the progress of construction and instructed officials to give priority to worksite safety, use of quality materials and completion of all

tasks on time.

An official of the construction company explained the progress of construction using scale models.

Zaw Min Naing (Myingyan)



Fire brigade supplies water to local residents



MYANAUNG, 27 March—As most of the earthen lakes and wells are dried out in Myanaung, Ayeyawady Region, the local fire brigade distributed water from a pump to local residents on 25 March.

The water pump was donated by local residents and Union Minister U Than Htay for fire fighting purposes.

The Township Development Affairs Committee built the water supply system for local residents in Yan Naing Aye Ward. However, water cannot be supplied to the residents due to damaged water pipelines.

Local authorities plan to supply water from Ayeyawady River to areas of need.—Nay Win Zaw (Myanaung)

MANDALAY, 27 March — The Mandalay Brokers and Millers Association held its 80th annual general meeting at its hall on 86th street in Chanayethazan Township on 25 March to elect a new executive committee.

The chairman and executives presented certificates of honour to well-wishers for their donations at the 80th Kathina robe offering ceremony last year. At the meeting, members elected U Thet Tin as the new chairman for next term.

New chairman U Thet Tin explained his future plans including election of women executives for development of the association.

Thiha Ko Ko (Mandalay)

Youths studying Buddhist culture in Myanaung



MYANAUNG, 27 March — The sixth Buddhist cultural course kicked off at Weluwun Pariyatti monastery in Myanaung, Ayeyawady Region, on 26 March, with a speech by pre-

siding abbot of Latmyethna Mahasi monastery Bhaddanta Pannindabhivamsa. Township administrator U Min Min Tun called on the youths to study the lectures of abbots to become authen-

tic Buddhists.

More than 400 youths are attending the Buddhism lectures given by venerable abbots from 7 am to 10.30 am up to 7 April.

Win Bo (Myanaung IPRD)

Brokers, millers elect new chairman to develop association



Solar Impulse-2 to leave Mandalay on 30 March if weather is fine

MANDALAY, 27 March — The Swiss-designed Solar Impulse-2 is preparing to continue on its global circumnavigation and will depart Mandalay for Chongqing in China on March 30 if weather permits.

The aircraft remains grounded at Mandalay International Airport due to poor weather.

The aircraft built with the use of 17,000 solar cells worth US\$ 130 million can

fly five days successively.

The impulse arrived at Mandalay International Airport on the fourth leg of its journey from Varanasi Airport in India on 19 March.

If the weather is fine, the aircraft will leave Mandalay International Airport for Chongqing of China 29 March night to fly over Mandalay Hill.

Thiha Ko Ko (Mandalay)





People queue in line at Singapore's Padang to get into Parliament House to pay their last respects to Singapore's founding Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew on 26 March, 2015. The body of Singapore's founding Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew will be laid in state at Parliament House from 25 March to 28 March for public to pay their last respects.—XINHUA

Senior Japanese LDP lawmaker to meet China President Xi possibly Saturday

BOAO, (China), 27 March — Senior Japanese ruling lawmaker Toshihiro Nikai said on Friday he is likely to meet with Chinese President Xi Jinping possibly on Saturday to discuss efforts to improve the bilateral relationship.

Nikai, chairman of the Liberal Democratic Party's General Council who is visiting China to attend the annual meeting of the Boao Forum for Asia in Hainan Province, told re-

porters that the two countries will "find ways to cooperate and develop" their relations.

Former Japanese Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda, chairman of the Boao Forum for Asia, is also expected to join in Nikai's talks with Xi.

Nikai expressed hope for a bilateral summit meeting, previously held last November, to be realized in the near future, saying, "The moment is

gathering gradually."

China has been keeping Japan in check over recognition of history, particularly because Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe is planning to issue a statement this summer on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of Japan's surrender in World War II.

Xi is scheduled to give a speech at a ceremony of the Boao forum on Saturday.

Kyodo News

Modi government puts brakes on India's universal health plan

NEW DELHI, 27 March — Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has asked for a drastic cutback of an ambitious health care plan after cost estimates came in at \$18.5 billion over five years, several government sources said, delaying a promise made in his election manifesto.

Modi has had to make difficult choices to boost economic growth — his government's first full annual budget, announced last month, ramped up infrastructure spending, leaving less federal funding immediately available for social sectors.

The health ministry developed a draft policy on universal health care in coordination with the prime minister's office last year. The National Health Assurance Mission aims to provide free drugs, diagnostic services and insurance for serious ailments for India's 1.2 billion people.

The health ministry

proposed rolling out the system from April 2015, and in October projected its cost as \$25.5 billion over four years. By the time the project was presented to Modi in January the costs had been pared to 1.16 trillion rupees (\$18.5 billion) over five years.

That was still too much. The programme was not approved, three health ministry officials and two other government sources told Reuters. Three officials said the health ministry has been asked to revamp the policy, but work is yet to start.

"The constraint on India's financial resources was conveyed to health officials, and even to those from other ministries," said one government official who is not from the health ministry but attended the meeting where Modi was present.

The meeting was held in January and the discussions were not made public. All of the sources declined



India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi

to be named because of the sensitivity of the discussions.

Officials at the prime minister's office and the finance ministry, as well as the health ministry, did not respond to requests seeking comment.

Modi's manifesto ahead of the election that brought him to power last year accorded "high priority" to the health sector and promised a universal health

assurance plan. The manifesto said previous public health schemes, that have been mired in payment delays recently, had failed to meet the growing medical needs of public.

Modi has another four years left in his first term to fulfil the promise.

India currently spends about 1 percent of its gross domestic product (GDP) on public health, but the badly-managed public health

Abe to attend state funeral for ex-Singapore leader Lee

TOKYO, 27 March — Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe will visit Singapore on Sunday for a state funeral for former Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew, the government said on Friday.

Taking into account Lee's "significant contribution to peace and prosperity of the Asia-Pacific region

and the world for more than half a century," Abe has decided to directly offer Japan's heartfelt condolences to the government and people of Singapore, Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga said at a news conference.

Other regional leaders, such as South Korean President Park Geun Hye, Indian

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Indonesian President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo and Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott, are also expected to attend the funeral, a Singaporean news channel reported.

Lee, the first and longest-serving leader of the city state, died on Monday aged 91.—Kyodo News

Indonesia prepares to transfer Philippines drug convict for execution

JAKARTA, 27 March — Indonesia is preparing to move a Filipina death row inmate for execution after she lost her appeal in the Supreme Court earlier this week, the attorney general's spokesman said on Friday.

The planned executions of Mary Jane Fiesta Veloso and nine other mostly foreign drug traffickers has drawn international criticism after repeated pleas for mercy from the United Nations and various governments have gone unheeded by President Joko Widodo.

Veloso will be moved from the city of Yogyakarta to the maximum security prison on Nusakambangan Island in Central Java, where the rest of the group awaits execution by firing squad.

"We can say that (Veloso's) case is done," the attorney general's spokesman Tony Spontana told reporters.

"There will be preparations to move her soon because the plan to execute all (10 convicts) at once hasn't changed."

The attorney general's office has yet to announce a date for the executions.

Four other foreign nationals in the group have also lodged last-minute appeals against their death sentences, forcing the attorney



Officers take the death row inmate of a drug case, Mary Jane Fiesta Veloso (C) of the Philippines, to her first judicial review trial in the District Court of Sleman, Yogyakarta, on 3 March, 2015.

REUTERS

general to hold off on the executions until all legal processes are seen through.

Two Australian prisoners are among those appealing their sentences. The Australian government has been pursuing an eleven-hour campaign to save their lives, but Widodo has refused to budge, ramping up diplomatic tensions between the neighbours.

Indonesia has harsh penalties for drug trafficking and resumed executions in 2013 after a five-year gap.—Reuters

system means funds are not fully utilised. A health ministry vision document in December proposed raising spending to 2.5 percent of GDP but did not specify a time period.

So health experts were dismayed when the federal budget for the full-year starting April raised the allocation for the country's main health department only by about 2 percent from the previous year, less than inflation. The meagre increase dimmed prospects for the massive health plan, they said. "How can it happen when you have truncated resources?" one health ministry official asked.

The health plan was drafted in consultation with Modi's office and an expert panel, including an expert from the World Bank. The proposal included insurance to cover more expensive and serious ailments such as heart surgeries or organ failure.

Two government offi-

cialists said this benefit will be withdrawn. The health ministry was also asked why the new plan could not be simply combined with existing health schemes.

The decision to slash the level of insurance coverage will have an impact on India's thriving private health sector, which would have seen huge business growth as the programme channelled millions of new patients into private hospitals. Currently only 17 percent of India's population has some form of health insurance.

Anjan Bose of NAT-HEALTH, a group that represents such private firms, said the delays in the programme would disappoint both the industry and the public.

"Greater availability of funds for public health care under this programme would have further boosted growth of the private medical industry," Bose said.

Reuters

S Korea demands N Korea repatriate detained S Koreans

SEOUL, 27 March — South Korea on Friday demanded that North Korea swiftly send back two South Koreans detained in the North for alleged espionage activities.

“It is deeply regrettable” that North Korea has detained the two men and made “nonsensical claims” about their activities, South Korea’s Unification Ministry spokesman Lim Byeong Cheol told reporters.

North Korea “should immediately set them free and repatriate them,” he said, adding that the North “has violated international practices, human rights which are universal values and humanitarianism.”

Lim also demanded the immediate release of a South Korean Christian missionary who has been in detention in the North for



A South Korean man (C) identified as Kim Kuk Gi, 60, who has been allegedly detained as a “spy” since September 2014 in North Korea, attends a Press conference flanked by two North Korean officials in Pyongyang on 26 March, 2015. The country presented two South Korean men captured as “spies,” including Kim, before domestic and foreign media the same day. — KYODO NEWS

nearly a year. His remarks were made a day after North Korea presented before domestic and foreign media the two South Kore-

an men captured as “spies.”

A North Korean official identified them as Kim Kuk Gi, 60, and Choe Chun Gil, 55.

The official of the Ministry of State Security said the two men, who lived in China for many years, stole North Korea’s state secrets

with the backing of South Korea’s spy agency and the United States.

According to their explanations at the media event in Pyongyang, Kim was detained last September in the North Korean capital, while Choe was captured by border patrol agents after entering North Korea on 30 December.

About one year ago, North Korea similarly presented before news media a South Korean missionary who has been detained since 2013 on espionage charges.

South Korea has demanded that North Korea immediately release the missionary, Kim Jeong Uk, who was sentenced to life in prison with hard labour in May last year. But North Korea has rejected the request.—Kyodo News

Top military officers of S Korea, US discuss no THAAD deployment

SEOUL, 27 March — Top military officers of South Korea and the United States had no discussions on Friday about whether to deploy on the Korean Peninsula the advanced US missile defence system, called Terminal High-Altitude Area Defence (THAAD), the South Korean Defence Ministry said.

Gen Martin Dempsey, chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, arrived in Seoul on Thursday for a three-day visit to the country.

Dempsey met on Thursday here with South Korean President Park Geun-hye, who presented him with the Order of National Security Merit Medal for his contributions to the security on the Korean Peninsula, the ministry said.

The top US military officer met with his South Korean counterpart Adm Choi Yun-hee on Friday morning, and they reviewed preparations for the transition of the conditions-based wartime command of combined forces from Washington to Seoul, measures to strengthen Seoul-Washington combined defence posture and the future of the South Korea-US alliance, according to the ministry.

The Defence Ministry said the THAAD deployment was not on the dialogue table between Dempsey and Choi. But Dempsey was quoted by *Yonhap News Agency* as saying during his courtesy visit to South Korean Defence Minister Han Min-koo that he talked with Choi about various issues, including an integrated air missile defence.

His comments indicated that they could have an unofficial discussion about the deployment of the US missile defence system on the Korean Peninsula.

Heading for Japan, the first leg of his Asian tour, Dempsey told reporters on Tuesday that progress is being made in establishing an “integrated air and missile defence umbrella” in the Asia-Pacific region. The general said South Korea and Japan have made some commitments in procurements on their side to make them interoperable, according to *Yonhap*.

Xinhua

Foreign ministers of Japan, other non-nuclear nations to meet April

TOKYO, 27 March — The foreign ministers of Japan and 11 other non-nuclear states will likely hold a meeting next month to affirm their resolve to pursue nuclear disarmament ahead of a key UN conference to discuss related issues, diplomatic sources said on Thursday.

The members of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative are expected to meet in the Netherlands possibly around the same time the foreign min-

isters of the Group of Seven industrialized nations will gather in Germany for a two-day meeting starting 14 April.

During the NPDI meeting, the non-nuclear countries hope to come up with a message that is intended to help yield concrete results at the UN conference to review the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, which will start 27 April in New York, the sources said.

Japanese Foreign Min-

ister Fumio Kishida plans to attend the G-7 meeting as well as the gathering of the NPDI, a framework launched in 2010 at the initiative of Japan and Australia — both of which rely on the US nuclear deterrent to protect them from potential attacks.

According to the Japanese Foreign Ministry, the NPDI submitted a joint working paper to the UN secretariat on Friday that includes recommendations for consideration in an

outcomes document at the NPT review conference.

In the recommendations, the NPDI members call on not only the United States and Russia but also other nuclear-weapons states to take part in nuclear disarmament negotiations, apparently mindful of China’s moves to reinforce its nuclear weapons deployment. They also highlighted the importance of improving the transparency of information relating to nuclear weapons, among

other issues.

Kishida told a parliamentary committee on Thursday he hopes to lead the NPT review conference to a “success” by making the NPDI recommendations a “shared recognition” among the participants.

Other NPDI members are Canada, Chile, Germany, Mexico, the Netherlands, Nigeria, the Philippines, Poland, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates.

Kyodo News

Cuba proposes quick start to human rights dialogue with US

HAVANA, 27 March — Cuba on Thursday proposed that a pending human rights dialogue with the United States begin on Tuesday in Washington, parallel to ongoing negotiations about restoring diplomatic ties that were severed in 1961.

“These conversations about human rights constitute an example of Cuba’s disposition to approach any topic with the United States, despite our differences,” Pedro Luis Pedroso, a foreign ministry official specializing in international law, told reporters in Havana.

The proposal came at a time when progress towards restoring diplomatic relations between the longtime adversaries appears to have slowed. US officials had no immediate comment on Cuba’s proposal, which would put the human rights talks on a separate track from ongoing discussions aimed at re-establishing diplomat-

ic relations. The diplomatic talks began with great fanfare in January. Since then, they have turned more secretive and now both sides are privately downplaying prospects for opening embassies in each other’s countries before a regional summit set for 10-11 April.

The proposed human rights meeting would be the first of its kind for the former Cold War rivals. US critics of President Barack Obama’s opening to Cuba have blasted the human rights record of the country’s Communist government, pointing to the one-party

system and repression of free speech and assembly. Cuba in turn has criticized the United States for racial disparities and treatment of detainees held at the US military base in Guantanamo Bay. Cuba also says health care and education are human rights that it pro-

vides at home and abroad. “There are different political systems and models for democracy. ... We live in a plural world and that pluralism should apply to the case of Cuba as well,” Pedroso said.

Cuba first proposed the human rights talks last year and reiterated its idea even before representatives from each side met in Havana in January to discuss diplomatic relations.

Those talks continued in Washington in February and again in Havana this month, but the two sides have not announced when they might have their next session. Obama and Cuban President Raul Castro are both due to attend the Summit of the Americas in Panama on 10-11 April, which could mark their first face-to-face meeting since the two leaders simultaneously announced the new direction for US-Cuban relations on 17 December.—Reuters



A man stands near the national flags of the US and Cuba (R) on the balcony of a hotel being used by the first US congressional delegation to Cuba since the change of policy announced by US President Barack Obama on 17 December, in Havana, on 19 Jan, 2015. — REUTERS

PERSPECTIVES

Saturday, 28 March, 2015

Labour organizations are legal

By Myint Win Thein

Myanmar's constitution recognises freedom of association, which can be defined as the right of citizens to come together and collectively defend their common interests.

Section 354 of the Constitution of the Re-

public of the Union of Myanmar stipulates every citizen shall be at liberty in the exercise of the right to form associations and organizations, if not contrary to the laws enacted for Union security, prevalence of law and order, community peace and tranquillity or public order and morality.

In addition, the Labour Organization Law stipulates that every worker of legal age shall have the right to join or leave a labour organization according to their own desire.

The Labour Organization Law defines a worker as a person who relies on his labour to engage in economic activity or to generate a livelihood, including a daily wage earner, temporary worker, worker engaged in agriculture, domestic worker, government employee and apprentice, but does not include the Defence Services person-

nel, member of the Myanmar Police Force or members of the armed organizations under the control of the Defence Services.

In some countries, however, including those in Scandinavia, members of defence and police forces are recognized as workers and allowed to form trade unions to protect their fundamental rights.

Write for us

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

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.

Singapore Management University

By Sayar Mya

Singapore Management University was established in 2000 as a National University. The type of university is public and autonomous as the institution is able to govern itself. It has (349) academic staff; (7541) undergraduates; and (1257) postgraduates. The City Campus is in the urban area of Singapore.

The Singapore Management University is located at the heart of the city. It is home to some 8,800 undergraduate and postgraduate students. The University comprises six Schools offering undergraduate, graduate, and PhD programmes in Business Management, Accountancy, Economics, Information Systems Management, Law and the Social Sciences.

The University has nearly 30 research institutes and centers of excellence. It customized corporate training and lifelong learning for individuals are available through the university's professional and executive development programmes. SMU is built on the model of the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, USA. Their collaboration is augmented by the Wharton-SMU Research Center, giving Wharton a physical presence in Asia.

SMU firmly believes in the importance of values such as **Commitment, Integrity, Responsibility, Collegiality, Leadership, and Excellence.** SMU distinguishes itself from other universities in the region

by giving students a holistic undergraduate education that comprises an out-of-classroom and values-based programme. The plan aims to define, prepare, and inspire SMU students to be their best for others and themselves.

History

The former **Raffles College** is the site of SMU's first campus.

The idea of setting up a third university in Singapore was first mooted by the Singapore government in 1997.

Ho Kwon Ping, a Singaporean business entrepreneur, was appointed to chair the SMU task force. It determined that the new institution would follow the **American university system** featuring a more flexible broad-based education. Following a review of undergraduate business schools to serve as a model for SMU, the **Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania** emerged as the best candidate. The Wharton-SMU agreement was signed in February 1999 followed in June by the Wharton-SMU Research Center collaboration.

Academics

The Singapore Management University follows a course credit system similar to that used in most **American universities.** Each individual course within the University is assigned a certain credit weightage (the value or importance of something) and students are usually required to take a specified number of units to fulfill requirements for graduation. Courses are typically conducted as small group

seminars of fewer than 50 students so as to allow for a high degree of interactive discourse between students and lecturers.

Double Degree

Undergraduates who are offered a double degree programme have 15 combinations to choose from. They can combine any of two disciplines: Accountancy, Business Management, Economics, Law, Information Systems Management or Social Sciences. Graduates will receive **two degree certificates** upon successful completion of the double degree programme.

International rankings

Singapore Management University was ranked 116th in QS Top Universities 2013 Faculty Areas in Social Sciences and Management with a score of 67.

School of Accountancy

The School of Accountancy was launched in 2001 with the Bachelor of Accountancy (BAcc) undergraduate degree as its sole offering. Since that time, the SoA has received strong endorsement from the industry and the accounting profession in general. The School followed then up on this initial success in 2005, launching the Master of Professional Accounting (MPA) programme for professionals intending to join the accounting profession but did not possess an undergraduate accounting qualification.

Lee Kong Chian School of Business

The Lee Kong Chian School of Business (LKCSB) is the largest School within the Universi-

ty. The LKCSB holds the status of being SMU's founding School with it having opened its doors to its pioneer batch of Bachelor of Business Management (BBM) students in August 2000. The School was named after Lee Kong Chian in appreciation for the sizeable donation provided by The Lee Foundation to establish the School.

School of Economics

The School of Economics (SoE) was established in July 2002 as part of the then School of Economics and Social Sciences (SESS). Following a restructuring exercise, the University's economics faculty was separated from the social sciences to form a school of its own. This restructuring was largely accepted as a sound decision in view of the fact that SoE's curriculum had been modeled on that of the Wharton School instead of following the traditional social science-type economics curriculum found at most other institutions.

School of Information Systems

The School of Information Systems (SIS) was formed with the aid of **Carnegie Mellon University (CMU) Pittsburg USA,** when SMU and CMU forged a four-year strategic partnership intended to use the expertise of the CMU faculty in the School's initial establishment. Through this partnership, CMU aided SIS in establishing and developing the BSc Information Systems Management undergraduate programme.

SMU School of Law

The School of Law (SoL) stands out as the



(Photo from Google.com)

University's smallest school with a highly selective total annual intake of around 125 students. Establishment of the School of Law was announced in August 2007 following the encouragement of the Singapore Government, which had, during a major review, discovered a shortage of qualified legal personnel in Singapore. Previously, the School existed as the Department of Law at the university's Business School.

SMU School of Social Sciences

The School of Social Sciences (SoSS) was established in July 2002 as part of the then, School of Economics and Social Sciences (SESS). Through a restructuring exercise in 2007, the School of Economics and School of Social Sciences were separated to form independent Schools within the University. The School's primary offering is the Bachelor of Social Science, a broad-based multidisciplinary social sciences undergraduate programme. Within this programme, three main majors are offered, namely Political Science, Psychology and Sociology. In addition, the school offers a PhD in Psychology.

Executive Development

In addition to its traditional academic pro-

grammes, the University also runs executive education and development programmes for leaders at four stages of their career: (1) emerging leaders, (2) general managers, (3) senior executives and (4) corporate directors. These courses include Executive Skills for Board Members in Challenging Times.

Professional Studies

The Centre for Professional Studies (CPS) was established in 2012 to advance the competence and career aspirations of working professionals in targeted industries and disciplines. CPS provides structured certification programmes which aim to enhance the industries' manpower capabilities. Programmes offered by CPS include SMU-Sing Health Graduate Diploma in Healthcare Management and Leadership, SMU Productivity and Leadership Development, Analytical Professional (Modeling) and HR Graduate Certification.

International Trading Institute

The institute is a unique collaboration between SMU and industry and provides a series of short professional education programs in **shipping and international trade.**

(See page 9)

NATIONAL

Press Release

1. A resolution on the situation of human rights in Myanmar tabled by European Union was adopted today at the 28th session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva, Switzerland.

2. The resolution does not adequately and objectively reflect and apprise of the efforts and achievements in promoting and protecting of human rights of the people of Myanmar. In addition to this drawback, some facts amount to infringing on the sovereignty and interfering in the internal affairs of Myanmar. It includes criticizing and prejudging the holding and the outcome of upcoming general elections, turning a blind eye on the efforts being made for a free, fair and transparent election. It also contains a terminology which is not accepted by the nation and its entire people. It is also learnt that expressions on Myanmar's cooperation with the United Nations agencies and the international humanitarian community are misleading.

3. Against this backdrop, the Permanent Representative and Ambassador of Myanmar to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva made a statement before the adoption of the said resolution. The statement rejects, reserves and clarifies Myanmar's position on the paragraphs in which the above-mentioned facts were included. In addition, the Ambassador stated clearly that Myanmar dissociates itself from the entire resolution.

4. As Myanmar is in the fourth year of implementing political, socio-economic and administrative reforms, visible progresses have already been achieved. At the same time, Myanmar has been striving to overcome the challenges common to a young democracy. At this critical juncture, only constructive contributions and advices should be made for further progress towards reaching the goal of the whole process rather than focusing and criticizing on some incidents.

5. Myanmar will maintain its efforts in promoting and protecting of human rights of its people. In so doing, cooperation with friendly nations and the international organizations which support Myanmar with constructive views will be continued.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Nay Pyi Taw
Dated: 27 March 2015

Timetables arranged for candidates to join subject-wise interviews

NAY PYI TAW, 27 March — Candidates selected for the second and third batches of President's scholarship are to join interview on anaesthetics at the medical teaching centre in Lanmadaw, Yangon, at 9 am on 1 and 2 April, engineering at meeting room of main building-1 of Yangon Technological University at 9 am from 5 to 9 April, computer

science at room 202, Diamond Jubilee Hall, Yangon, at 9 am from 1 to 3 April, veterinary at University of Veterinary Science at 10 am on 1 April, agriculture at University of Agriculture (Yezin) at 9 am on 1 April, forestry at University of Forestry (Yezin) at 10 am on 7 April, economics at room-7 of Yangon University of Economics at 10 am on

2 and 3 April, education at learning hub, Yangon University of Education at 9.30 am from 2 to 4 April, arts at showroom of Diamond Jubilee Hall at 10 am on 1 April, science at room 206 of the Diamond Jubilee Hall at 10 am from 1 to 3 April, English literature and language at Myanmar UNESCO Office, Yangon University of Foreign Languages, at 9 am from 1 to

3 April, information technology at room 207 of Diamond Jubilee Hall, Yangon, at 10 am on 1 April, law at room No 202 of the same hall in Yangon at 10 am on 4 April, hotels and tourism at the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism in Nay Pyi Taw at 2 pm on 2 April and maritime at Myanmar Maritime University at 10.30 am on 7 April.

MNA

Rally staged in protest of police crackdown



YANGON, 27 March — An unauthorized mass rally against the police crackdown on demonstrators of the National Education Bill took place near the Theingyi Market flyover here at 10 am on Friday, according to officers.

A procession of some 52 people from social organizations and student groups staged a protest march, carrying banners and placards.

The rally dispersed at around 11 am.

Min Thit

Some people stage unauthorized protest near Theingyi Market flyover in Pabedan Township.
YE HTUT

Letter to the Editor

Dear Sir,

My deep appreciation in your publication on page 2 of your esteemed paper dated the 13th March 2015, under the caption "Union Supreme Court responds to legal action against unjust verdicts by Judges" with the reply to a query in Pyithu Hluttaw by the Supreme Court saying "... and that judges imposing unlawful decisions are punished regarding the severity of their wrongful verdicts". This kind of very needy action by the Supreme Court had been unprecedented. So my Congratulations and Heartfelt Wishes to the Supreme Court for its future success in this meritorious work, although it will not be easy. Needless to say, this is an excellent start to build our main pillar of Myanmar's legal system which must be correct, clean and fast to sup-

port our Government's reforms towards our new, secure way of life in future democratic society which would become a very good example for other countries, too.

However, to complete its investigations, I am sure the Supreme Court will go deeper and expose those who are also guilty of being part and parcel of any wrongful verdicts. Unscrupulous legal advisers, who do not abide by their Sworn Oaths of Office, corrupt witnesses, influential individuals and organizations, etc, must all be exposed and punished to stop others from doing the same. For this to be successful, the Supreme Court definitely deserves the cooperation and coordination of other individuals and organizations which must also do their duty towards the country.

Regarding wrongful or delayed verdicts, I notice

that most of the judges are often very slow, or perhaps neglect on purpose, to visit the places of dispute or crime, but sometimes, only a representative who is not the decision authority. Therefore, unless the judges visit such places for themselves the moment cognizance should be considered, they will be at a loss to visualize the real situation and scene when the time comes up for the witnesses to be examined. In addition, the visit will also help them to think about Summary Disposals which can reduce the load of cases in Courts, and shorten the time to come to decision, avoiding unnecessary delays which seem to have taken hold in Courts now-a-days, brought about by selfish legal advisers and corrupt witnesses, resulting in helpless clients being fleeced mercilessly for years.

A reader

Singapore Management . . .

(from page 8)

SMU School of Law

On 20 January 2014, the School of Law held the ground-breaking ceremony for its own building, which is to be built at the open space between Armenian Street and Canning Rise. The building is expected to be completed by 2017. A key feature integrated into the new building is the Kwa Geok Choo Law Library, named in memory of the late Madam Kwa Geok Choo, wife of former Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew. The 2,600 square meters Law Library will take on a distinct architectural form that is reminiscent of a pearl. It will seat more than 500 people, and will be fully equipped with modern technology and wired for legal research in the 21st century.

Graduate employment

In the Joint Graduate Employment Survey of 2014, graduates of SMU's undergraduate university

programmes achieved higher employment rates and higher incomes than their peers from two other autonomous universities. A total of 1,214 participants of the 1,577 SMU alumni who graduated in 2014 took part in the survey. It revealed that 91.6 per cent of SMU's graduates from the 2014 cohort were employed within six months after completing their final examinations; with more than half the total number surveyed being offered jobs from before graduation. The average gross monthly salary of SMU graduates in full-time employment was Singapore \$3,592, the highest since SMU graduated its pioneer cohort in 2004. The top 20% of wage earners commanded a mean gross monthly salary of Singapore \$5,441.

Conclusion

It goes without saying that higher level thinking skills are extremely impor-

tant but the problem is that many schools across the globe do not allocate sufficient time to develop these skills. One reason for this is that it can be challenging for teachers to promote the development of higher thinking skills in the classroom. This is the reason so many traditional classrooms continue the rote learning of facts and figures. But in an age when most facts are just a 'Google' away, it makes simply filling students heads with facts all the more pointless. What students need to be able to do is **create, analyze, evaluate and apply.**

The 21st Century is becoming an increasingly difficult world to prepare for and too many schools are ill prepared to equip their students for these challenges. But fortunately today's students are already busy developing the essential skills to thrive in this environment and they are doing this away from their outdated, industrial era classrooms.

Iran's Rouhani intervenes as deadline for nuclear deal approaches

LAUSANNE, (Switzerland), 27 March — Iran's president spoke with the leaders of France, Britain, China and Russia on Thursday in an apparent effort to break an impasse to a nuclear deal between Teheran and major world powers.

He also raised the Saudi-led military operation against Iranian-backed Houthi fighters in Yemen, as did US Secretary of State John Kerry ahead of nuclear negotiations in Switzerland with Teheran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif. The United States is pushing for a nuclear deal between Iran and major powers before a 31 March deadline, and officials close to the talks said some kind of preliminary agreement was possible. However, a senior British diplomat acknowledged: "There are still important issues where no agreement has so far been possible. "Our task, therefore, for the next few days is to see if we can bridge the gaps and arrive at a political framework which could then be turned into an agreement," the diplomat told reporters on the sidelines of

negotiations in Lausanne, Switzerland. The six powers, which include Germany and the United States, hope to reach a comprehensive nuclear agreement by 30 June. Western powers fear Iran wants to build nuclear bombs, though Teheran says its atomic research is for peaceful purposes. The powers hope to persuade Iran to scale back its nuclear activity in return for the removal of economic sanctions.

Israel is believed to have the Middle East's only nuclear arsenal and has in the past threatened Iran with military attack. The spokeswoman for US President Barack Obama's National Security Council, Bernadette Meehan, confirmed that "a letter from President Rouhani to President Obama was passed to the US negotiating team in Lausanne." She offered no details. In a rare direct exchange between Paris and Teheran, French President Francois Hollande said Iran had a right to civilian nuclear power but insisted on a "lasting, robust and verifiable Iranian nuclear programme that guarantees Iran will not get an atomic

weapon", a statement from the French presidency said. Last week officials close to the negotiations said France was demanding more stringent conditions than its Western allies for any future agreement. Rouhani reiterated Teheran's principal demand — that the most crippling sanctions be lifted immediately.

"All unjust sanctions against the Iranian nation should be lifted," he said on Twitter. "Lifting all sanctions is the main issue that can help us reach the final solution." Western powers insist that sanctions relief must come gradually, though European and US measures against Iranian energy and financial sectors and some UN sanctions could be suspended quickly, officials close to the talks said.

British Prime Minister David Cameron's spokeswoman told reporters after the call that the two sides agreed it was possible to conclude a framework nuclear deal by end-March.

Rouhani also spoke with Russian President Vladimir Putin, the Kremlin said. On his Twitter feed,

Rouhani said he raised military operations in Yemen launched by Iran's regional rival Saudi Arabia with all four leaders. Kerry and Zarif met twice on Thursday in Lausanne and Kerry raised the Yemen crisis, a State Department spokesman said, though a senior US official told *Reuters* the issue did not have any impact on the nuclear negotiations.

Washington and Teheran take opposing stands on Saudi-led air strikes in Yemen against Shi'ite Houthi rebels allied to Iran who are fighting to oust Yemen's president. Earlier, Iranian media quoted Zarif as condemning the Saudi-led military operation and demanding that it stop. Kerry spoke to the foreign ministers of Saudi Arabia and other Gulf Cooperation Council members and welcomed their action against the Houthis, a senior US official said.

Iran and the six powers are seeking a political framework accord by the end of this month that would lay the foundations for a full nuclear deal by 30 June. Under a final settlement, Teheran would halt sensitive nuclear

work for at least a decade and in exchange, international sanctions would be lifted. Speaking to reporters travelling with Kerry from Washington on Wednesday, a senior State Department official said the six powers would not rush to complete a framework agreement just because there was a 31 March deadline. But the official said: "We very much believe we can get this done by the 31st ... We see a path to do that." The official added, however, that there was no guarantee of success.

Ali Akbar Salehi, head of Iran's Atomic Energy Organisation, also said a deal was possible but not certain. "It is difficult to forecast whether we can reach a result at this round of talks but we are moving towards reaching a mutual understanding in all technical issues," he told Iranian state television.

Israel, Saudi Arabia, France and the US Congress have all raised concerns that the Obama administration might be willing to conclude a deal that would allow Iran to develop a nuclear weapons capability in the future.

Germanwings co-pilot had serious depressive episode

BERLIN, 27 March — The pilot who appears to have deliberately crashed a plane carrying 149 others into the French Alps received psychiatric treatment for a "serious depressive episode" six years ago, German tabloid *Bild* reported on Friday.

Prosecutors in France, after listening to the cockpit voice recorders, offered no motive for why Andreas Lubitz, 27, would take the controls of the *Airbus A320*, lock the captain out of the cockpit and deliberately set it veering down from cruising altitude at 3,000 feet per minute.

Citing internal documents and Lufthansa sources, *Bild* said Lubitz spent a total of one and a half years in psychiatric treatment and that the relevant documents would be passed to French investigators once they had been examined by German authorities.—*Reuters*

Airlines introduce two-person cockpit rule after Alps crash

BERLIN/PARIS, 27 March — Airlines rushed on Thursday to change rules to require a second crew member in the cockpit at all times, hours after French prosecutors suggested a co-pilot who barricaded himself alone at the controls of a jetliner had crashed it on purpose. The United States already requires two crew members to be in the cabin at all times, but many other countries do not, allowing pilots to leave the flight deck, for example to use the toilet, as long as one pilot is at the controls.

That is precisely what French prosecutors suspect happened on the Germanwings flight on Tuesday. They say Andreas Lubitz, 27, locked the captain out and appears to have set the controls to crash into a mountain, killing all 150 people on board.

Airlines including Norwegian Air Shuttle (NWC.OL), Britain's easyJet (EZJ.L), Air Canada (AC.TO) and Air Berlin (AB1.DE) all said within hours that they had introduced a requirement that two crew members be in the cockpit at all times.

Canada said it would immediately impose such a rule on all its airlines. "We had a lot of concerned customers," an Air Berlin spokesman said. Airlines including Ryanair (RYA.I) that already had such rules in place rushed to reassure customers.—*Reuters*

Cameron wins first TV encounter of close election — poll

LONDON, 27 March — Prime Minister David Cameron won the first TV encounter of a close national election in Britain, an opinion poll showed, but opposition Labour leader Ed Miliband leveraged a rare opportunity to promote himself on a national stage.

With Cameron's Conservatives neck-and-neck in the opinion polls with Labour, both are trying to grab an elusive lead over the other before the 7 May ballot to avoid another possible coalition or even a minority government.

Britain's future in the European Union and its territorial integrity could ride on the outcome as Cameron is pledging an EU membership referendum and Miliband may need to do a deal

with Scottish nationalists intent on breaking up the United Kingdom.

Cameron and Miliband were interviewed separately but back-to-back in their toughest cross-examinations in years, and subjected to question and answer sessions from a studio audience on Sky News and Channel 4.

A snap Guardian/ICM poll afterwards showed 54 percent of those asked thought Cameron, the leader of the Conservative Party, had won, compared to 46 percent who judged Miliband had triumphed.

Cameron refused to debate Miliband head-to-head, saying he felt the leaders of other minor parties should be included too. His aides are thought to have advised him that there was no

upside to such a debate which they feared could help Miliband look like more of a prime-minister-in-waiting.

Cameron, 48, initially appeared uncharacteristically unsettled and conceded he'd made mistakes during his five years in power, but asked voters to give him a second term to finish the job of rebuilding the economy.

"If you're saying we haven't gone fast enough to cut the deficit, I would agree. We need to complete the job," said Cameron, who was unable to give precise borrowing figures for the government. With most of the British press set against him, Thursday's TV appearance — which covered everything from immigration to economic policy — was a rare opportunity for Miliband to talk

to voters directly.

He duly used the opportunity to reject persistent criticism from some of his own MPs and the country's mostly right-wing press that his image as "a geek" made him an electoral liability, saying he didn't care what people said about him.

"The thing is they see you as a North London geek," Jeremy Paxman, a famously robust interviewer, told Miliband.

"Who cares? Who does?" came the reply. "You know, I don't care what the newspapers write about me."

Miliband, 45, said he had been underestimated before.

"People have thrown a lot at me over four and a half years, but I'm a pretty resilient guy and I've been underestimated at every turn. People said I wouldn't become leader and I did. People said four years ago he can't become prime minister; I think I can." Stuart Thomson, a public affairs consultant at Bircham Dyson Bell, said both men had got through the encounter without making a serious mistake, but that Cameron, the incumbent, had more to lose than Miliband, the challenger.

"There's no doubt that Miliband exceeded expectations but Cameron held his own," Thomson told *Reuters*. "The debate has really started the firing gun on the election and all sides know they are in a real battle."—*Reuters*



A damaged car covered in mud lies on a street at Copiapo City, on 26 March, 2015. The death toll in Chile rose to seven after rains battered the north and caused flooding, the government said on Thursday, while 19 others were unaccounted for as the military rushed to rescue stranded villagers. The downpours in the usually arid region have been the heaviest in about 80 years, although the worst of the bad weather appeared to be over, meteorologists said.

REUTERS

WORLD

Planes of Saudi-led alliance hit Yemen capital, Houthi heartland



People gather at the site of an air strike at a residential area near Sanaa Airport on 26 March, 2015.—REUTERS

SANAA, 27 March — Warplanes hit Yemen's Houthi-controlled capital and the Shi'ite Muslim group's northern heartland on Friday, the second day of a Saudi-led campaign to stop the militia establishing its rule across the country.

Residents said aircraft targeted Republican Guards bases around Sanaa, including one near the presidential compound in a southern district, around dawn and also struck near a military installation that houses missiles.

The Republican Guards are loyal to former president Ali Abdullah Saleh, the Houthi's main ally.

Earlier air strikes south of the city and in the oil-producing Marib region appeared to target military

installations also affiliated with Saleh.

Warplanes also attacked two districts in the northern home province of the Houthis, tribal sources said. The strikes hit a market in Kataf al-Bokaa in the north of Saada province, killing or wounding 15 people, they said. Shada district was also struck, they said.

The Saudi-led coalition began air strikes on Thursday to try to roll back Houthi gains in the Arabian Peninsula country and to shore up the authority of embattled President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi.

Throughout the day, warplanes from Saudi Arabia and Arab allies struck at the Shi'ite Houthis and allied army units, who have taken over much of the

country and seek to oust Hadi, who has now left the country.

Houthi leader Abdel-Malek al-Houthi called Saudi Arabia a bad neighbour and "Satan's horn" and said in a televised speech that Yemenis would confront the "criminal, unjust and unjustified aggression".

The Saudi-led military intervention marked a major escalation of the Yemen crisis, in which Iran is allied to the Shi'ite Muslim Houthis, and Sunni Muslim monarchies in the Gulf back Hadi and his fellow Sunnis in Yemen's south.

Iran denounced the surprise assault on the Houthis and demanded an immediate halt to Saudi-led military operations.

Reuters

Syrian Islamist insurgents advance around Idlib city

BEIRUT, 27 March — An alliance of Syrian Islamist rebels including al-Qaeda's Nusra Front have overrun 17 defence posts around Idlib in an offensive to take the city from the army and allied militia, a monitoring group said on Thursday.

Idlib, which is close to the main strategic highway linking Damascus to Aleppo, is the capital of a northwestern province of the same name. The army controls the city of at least 100,000 people and rebels are stationed on the outskirts.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, which tracks the violence from Britain, said the Nusra Front, the powerful Ahrar al-Sham movement and the hardline Jund al-Aqsa

were advancing, taking a total of 17 army posts on the outskirts. It said 11 soldiers and allied militia as well as 17 insurgents were killed on Wednesday and violent clashes continued on Thursday.

Syria's state news agency said on Thursday that government forces had "targeted terrorist gatherings in the surroundings of Idlib city". It said dozens of insurgents were killed and 11 vehicles were destroyed.

State television said the army foiled an attempt by terrorists to enter the city, citing a military source.

The grouping of Islamist brigades have called the operation Army of Fatah, a reference to the Muslim conquests that spread the faith through the Mid-

dle East starting in the seventh century.

The Islamic Front, an alliance involved in the operation, posted videos on YouTube of battlefield developments on Thursday. It showed insurgents in camouflage running through olive groves.

The Islamic Front's Twitter account said that a top military leader in Ahrar al-Sham had been killed during the offensive. Islamic State, the most powerful anti-government militia, was not involved in the clashes.

Syria slid into civil war after a crackdown on peaceful protests against President Bashar al-Assad in March 2011. The United Nations says more than 220,000 people have been killed.—Reuters



Ansar Al-Sham Brigade fighters rest with their weapons near Jisr al-Shoghour, Idlib Province on 25 March, 2015. — REUTERS

Cutting losses on Iran nuclear deal, Israel eyes small print

JERUSALEM/PARIS, 27 March — Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has begun to signal that Israel could resign itself to an Iranian nuclear deal that would leave its enemy with some uranium enrichment capability, a compromise he has long opposed.

The shift seems surprising given Netanyahu's contentious speech to the US Congress earlier this month in which he argued against world powers letting Teheran keep thousands of uranium centrifuges and remain on possible course to a bomb.

But faced with Western impatience and White House wrath over the calls to avoid a "very bad deal" — while offering no detailed alternative of his own — Netanyahu and his



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu speaks during a ceremony at President Reuven Rivlin's residence in Jerusalem on 25 March, 2015.—REUTERS

envoys are now engaging with negotiators on the small print of what Israel hopes will be a better agreement.

Almost lost in the prime minister's 3 March denunciations in Congress was a line urging US President Barack Obama to seek

a "better deal" that "Israel and its neighbours may not like, but with which we could live, literally".

Pressed to elaborate, Netanyahu, who won a fourth term in Israel's 17 March election, told MSNBC in an interview two days later that Israel and

like-minded Arab states might accede to Iran not giving up of all its uranium centrifuges.

Iran insists its nuclear drive is peaceful and wants to keep at least 9,000 of the centrifuges, which are used to process uranium to energy-yielding purity but could potentially make warhead fuel too.

World powers have spoken of allowing Iran to have 6,500 centrifuges, a number they assess would slow the "break out" period Iran would need to build a bomb to a year — time enough to intervene.

The Israelis, who are not a party to the talks but have been heard out in Western capitals due to their fears of a nuclear-armed Iran and their threats — now looking

increasingly hollow — to launch a unilateral war of last-resort, have made clear they want their foe left with much less.

But they have not presented a comprehensive counter-proposal, a reticence that one Israeli nuclear official told Reuters was designed to avoid providing a "bottom line" that negotiators might try to stretch in their talks with Iran.

Instead, officials say, Israel has been challenging Western powers on specific details of a deal, such as strong technical safeguards and extending the breakout time.

"We think to leave Iran one year from the bomb or 1.5 years is too dangerous because sooner or later they will dash to the bomb," Strategic Affairs Minister

Yuval Steinitz, Netanyahu's point-man on Iran, told Reuters this week during a visit to Europe, where he conferred with French and British counterparts.

Israel, Steinitz said, preferred a 2- to 3-year breakout time - a disclosure in itself reflecting the recalibration by Netanyahu, whose advisers previously said that Iran, if stripped of all nuclear projects, could reconstitute them in five years.

Steinitz argued the one-year breakout could apply even if Iran were left with just 3,000 to 4,000 centrifuges, given its capacity, known by the rubric "research and development", to improve their performance and manufacture more at short notice.

Reuters

Putin says Western spies plot against Russia before polls

MOSCOW, 27 March — President Vladimir Putin accused Western spies on Thursday of plotting to undermine his rule and “destabilise” Russia before elections by using public organizations for their own goals.

At a meeting of Russia’s Federal Security Service, a successor to the Soviet-era KGB, Putin took aim at non-governmental groups which receive foreign funding, saying Moscow would not relax its scrutiny of their activities.

“The attempts by Western security services to use public, non-governmental organizations and non-political groups for their own benefit, mostly to discredit the authorities and destabilise the situation in Russia, have not stopped,” Putin was quoted as saying by *Interfax news agency*.

“Actions are being planned for the time before the election campaigns in 2016 and 2018,” the former KGB spy told leading members of the FSB, referring to next year’s parliamentary election and a later presidential poll.

In 2012, after mass protests against him, Putin approved a law to force non-governmental organizations which engage in “political activity” to register with the Justice Ministry as “foreign agents” and file a report to officials every quarter.

Opposition groups say Putin is trying to silence groups which criticise his human rights record and fuelled the biggest protests against him in 2011-2012.

Since then, critics say he has raised pressure on foreign-funded groups which criticise his stance on Ukraine, where pro-Russian separatists in the east are fighting government forces.

Putin said he was always open to dialogue with the opposition, which since the protests has lacked the unity to pose a real threat to the Russian leader and whose leaders fear for their security after the murder last month of Boris Nemtsov, one of the organizers of the mass protests three years ago. “We always listen to constructive criticism of the authorities’ action or lack of action at any level and this dialogue is always useful and simply necessary,” he said.

“But it would be pointless to have debates with those who take orders from an outsider, in the interest of ... another country.”

He praised the security services for thwarting the work of more than 300 foreign spies and agents and called on them to tighten procedures to protect state secrets, especially about the military, as today “it was especially important”. —*Reuters*

New York buildings collapse in possible gas blast, 19 hurt

NEW YORK, 27 March — Four apartment buildings in New York’s East Village neighbourhood caught fire from an apparent gas explosion on Thursday and three collapsed, causing 19 injuries, authorities said. The blast shortly after 3 pm sent flames leaping into the sky and rocked the residential area in Manhattan. Bloodied victims ran from the buildings, collapsing on the street, witnesses said.

New York Mayor Bill de Blasio told a news conference that preliminary evidence indicated it was

a gas-related explosion.

A Fire Department spokesman said late on Thursday that three of the four buildings had collapsed or partially collapsed.

The fourth building “is still involved with some pockets of fire, it’s still an active scene. Investigation is still ongoing,” he said.

Nineteen people were hurt. Four, all civilians, were in critical condition, the spokesman said.

The Con Edison utility said in a statement that its inspectors had been at the site on Thursday to

evaluate work a building plumber was doing in a building for a gas service upgrade. The work failed to pass inspection, it said.

The seven-alarm blaze in the neighbourhood of small businesses, restaurants and apartments involved more than 250 Fire Department personnel.

Moishe Perl, 64, who owns Moishe’s Bake Shop nearby, said he heard an explosion, ran outside and saw the lower floors of a building start to crumble.

Reuters



Police and firefighters surround the site of a building fire in the East Village neighbourhood of New York City on 26 March, 2015.

REUTERS

Displacement doubles in north Cameroon in flight from Boko Haram



A girl waits in line for water at the Minawao refugee camp, northern Cameroon, on 18 Feb, 2015. Picture taken on 18 Feb, 2015. —*Reuters*

DAKAR / YAOUNDE, 27 March — The number of people in northern Cameroon who have fled their homes fearing the violence in neighbouring Nigeria and cross-border raids by Islamist sect Boko Haram doubled in March to 117,000, a United Nations survey showed.

Boko Haram, which wants to carve out an Islamic caliphate in northern Nigeria, recently expanded its activities into Niger and Cameroon for the first time since launching its insurgency in 2009.

It has killed 6,400 people in 337 incidents since January 2014, the United Nations has said.

There are some 117,000 displaced people in northern Cameroon, UN Sahel coordinator Robert Piper said, almost double the 60,000 recorded a month ago, adding to the strain on scarce resources in an area still recovering from a decade of periodic drought.

“The northern part of Cameroon was already under severe strain due to deteriorating climate conditions over the last three years. The growing insecurity has further exacerbated that situation,” Piper told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

There has been a 300 percent increase in food insecurity in Cam-

eroon since 2012, and three-quarters of those affected are in the north.

Some 228,000 Cameroonian children are believed to be malnourished and 80 percent of them are in the north, according to the United Nations.

Cameroon’s Agriculture and Rural Development Ministry has warned there may be famine in the Far-North Region in the coming months as many of those displaced have abandoned farms and moved further from the border for their safety.

Yaounde estimates some 66,000 refugees have fled to Cameroon from northern Nigeria since the start of the Boko Haram insurgency in the three Nigerian states of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa, putting further pressure on the region.

Cameroon has been prioritised as an emerging crisis in 2015 because of the combination of conflict and climate-related problems in the region, according to the minutes of a meeting of UN agencies and charities in December, seen by the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

Cameroon has a further 250,000 refugees in the east of the country as a result of insecurity in neighbouring Central African Republic, according to the UN refugee agency (UNHCR).—*Reuters*

One out of every 10 women in Japan victim of harassment

TOKYO, 27 March — One out of every 10 Japanese women has become the victim of harassment or stalking, the Cabinet Office said in a report released on Friday.

The government conducted the survey for the first time last December, covering both adult men and women, of whom 3,544 responded. Of the respondents, 11 percent of the women and 4 percent of men said they had been harassed by people of the opposite sex. Among the victims, 29 percent of the women said they feared their lives were in danger while 16 percent of the men replied similarly.

The victims were mainly in their 30s. Current and former boyfriends and girlfriends accounted for 39 percent of harassers, followed by acquaintances and friends at 21 percent and people linked with their workplaces at 20 percent, the report said.

Of the victims, 38 percent said they received offensive e-mails or had harassing messages posted on the Internet, while 57 percent said they did not, suggesting they were physically stalked or suffered other forms of harassment.

Of all the female victims, 62 percent said they had made changes in their daily lives. In a multiple-choice question, 27 percent of those female victims said they

feared to go out, 20 percent said they suffered psychological or physical disorders, 18 percent said they could not sleep and 15 percent said they took some time off work or quit their jobs, according to the survey.

The report also showed that 78 percent of female victims and 41 percent of male victims have consulted with someone about their situation. But only 10 percent of the women and 3 percent of the men have reported their cases to police. A separate survey conducted by the Cabinet Office last September showed only 40 percent of 1,558 local governments that responded to the poll had provided consultation services for victims of harassment or stalking.

Asked about reasons for the lack of consulting services in a multiple-choice question, 66 percent of the local governments cited difficulties hiring staff with knowledge of how to deal with such victims, while 43 percent said the police would respond to inquiries from them and 29 percent said they cannot afford to run such services. Haruko Arimura, minister in charge of women’s empowerment, told reporters that she will deliver the survey results to local governments and urge them to strengthen support for victims.—*Kyodo News*

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CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
MV IRRAWADDY STAR VOY NO (1007N)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV IRRAWADDY STAR VOY NO (1007N) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 28.3.2015 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claims Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.

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MYANMA OIL AND GAS ENTERPRISE
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(5/2015)

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

Sr.No	Tender No	Description	Remark
(1)	IFB-171(14-15)	Spares for Doosan Natural Gas Engine Ex Daewoo Gen ; Set (53) Items	US\$
(2)	IFB-172(14-15) (GRS)	Metering System Up Grade at Kanbauk	US\$
(3)	IFB-173(14-15) (Daw Nyein)	24" Pipe Line System Up Grade at PLC	US\$
(4)	IFB-174(14-15)	4" Dia Steel Line Pipe (5000)M	US\$
(5)	IFB-175(14-15)	4" Dia Steel Line Pipe (9000) M (3 LPE Coated)	US\$

Tender Closing Date & Time - 27-4-2015, 16:30 Hr

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Cyprus announces second failure by ENI-KOGAS to discover natural gas

NICOSIA, 27 March — The Italian-South Korean ENI-KOGAS consortium has failed in its second attempt to discover natural gas in Cyprus' offshore gas fields, the eastern Mediterranean island's president said on Thursday.

President Nicos Anastasiades confirmed to reporters after a cabinet meeting that after a four-month exploratory drilling, ENI-KOGAS had failed to discover significant quantities of gas that could offer prospects of further development.

The announcement is considered to be a setback to Cyprus' plans to develop hydrocarbon reserves in its exclusive economic zone that could help it return to growth after its 2013 bailout by international lenders.

But Anastasiades brushed away disappointment and pointed to the experience of Norway where rich gas deposits were discovered after three failed drillings.

He added that the government's plans to develop the island's offshore hydrocarbon deposits "do not change at all."

Xinhua



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Incomplete applications will not be considered.



Employees protect their heads as they evacuate during the Nationwide Simultaneous Earthquake Drill in Marikina City, the Philippines, on 27 March, 2015. —XINHUA

Challenges facing wildlife protection remain following int'l meeting

KASANE, (Botswana), 27 March — As the Kasane Conference on the Illegal Wildlife Trade concluded on Wednesday, challenges remain for the protection of wildlife, despite a statement reached by delegates from 32 countries and more than 20 inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations.

While reviewing the implementation of the London Declaration reached at the 2014 conference, the Kasane Statement specified further actions to be taken by all parties on eradicating the market for illegal wildlife products, ensuring effective legal frameworks and deterrents, strengthening law enforcement, sustainable livelihood and economic development.

While the agreement on wildlife protection has been adopted, challenges still remain, according to officials and experts.

"Despite efforts to date for many species, the illegal trade, and the

poaching which fuels it, is an ongoing and growing problem," read the Kasane Statement released after the conference.

Botswana's Minister of Environment, Wildlife and Tourism Tshekedi Khama said challenges facing the fight against illegal trade of wildlife products include corruption and the lack of political will. "We are going to have an uphill battle to prevent this," he said.

Chinese delegate Meng Xianlin, who is executive director-general of Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora Import and Export Management Office, said protecting wildlife should not just be words, it takes cooperation across the world in line with the law.

There are many international meetings and announcements on wildlife conservation, Meng said, adding China is implementing resolutions seriously, and with results.

Tom De Meulenaer, scientific support officer of Secretariat of Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), echoed by saying that one of the main challenges in protecting wildlife in Africa is putting words into actions.

"African countries have made a lot of commitments and plans but resources are not there, and sometimes political will," Meulenaer told Xinhua.

The southern Africa is said to be the leading region in Africa for elephant conservation. Nonetheless, according to Jason Bell, program director of Elephants and Regional Director of South Africa Work of International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), waves of poaching are slowly moving from East Africa to the south including Zambia. Potential poaching in the region could be a big problem.

Xinhua

UN authorizes 1,000 more peacekeepers in Central African Republic

UNITED NATIONS, 27 March — The UN Security Council on Thursday adopted a resolution authorizing an increase of more than 1,000 peacekeepers for its mission in the Central African Republic (CAR).

Determining that the situation in CAR continues to constitute a threat to international peace and security, the 15-member body "decides to authorize an increase of 750 military personnel, 280 police personnel and 20 corrections officers for MINUSCA (the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic)."

The resolution follows the request of UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for another 750 troops and 280 police in view of the situation in CAR amid continuing violent clashes between the mainly Muslim Seleka alliance and anti-Balaka militia, which are mostly Christian.—Xinhua

WEATHER REPORT

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL EVENING OF THE 28th March, 2015: Rain or thundershowers are likely to be scattered in Upper Sagaing Region and Kachin State, isolated in Lower Sagaing, Mandalay, Bago, Yangon, Ayeyawady and Taninthayi Regions, Shan, Chin, Kayah, Kayin and Mon States and weather will be partly cloudy in the remaining Regions and States. Degree of certainty is (60%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Strong easterly winds with moderate to rough sea are likely at times Deltaic, Gulf of Mottama, off and along Mon-Taninthayi Coasts. Surface wind speed in strong easterly wind may reach (35) m.p.h. Seas will be moderate elsewhere in Myanmar waters.

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'Iron Man' writer duo working on 'Alien Nation' remake



Art Marcum and Matt Holloway, the writer duo behind hit film "Iron Man", have been attached to write the script for the remake of the sci-fi movie "Alien Nation".—PTI

LOS ANGELES, 27 March — Art Marcum and Matt Holloway, the writer duo behind hit film "Iron Man", have been attached to write the script for the remake of the sci-fi movie "Alien Nation". Unlike the original feature, Twentieth Century Fox plans to develop the remake as "a re-imagining akin to the studio's own commercial and critical hit franchise, "Planet of the Apes",," *The Hollywood Reporter* said.

Plot details are still being kept under wrap, but the first installment "will begin by telling how and why the aliens came to Earth". At the time of writing, the studio has not yet picked any producer. The original "Alien Nation" was produced by Gale Anne Hurd and released back in 1988. Its plot was set "in a near future where humans and a race of aliens are forced to co-exist, tenuously, as humans keep the newcomers mostly segregated and without rights. The story then told of the first alien police officer, who is paired with a racially insensitive partner. Soon, however, a case comes along that brings the two together in friendship and respect." The first film featured Mandy Patinkin as the alien officer and James Caan as the reluctant partner. The film was then made into a TV spin-off which lasted only one season, but leading to several TV movies, novels, and comic books.—PTI

Glad that 'Queen' connected with people

NEW DELHI, 27 March — Kangana Ranaut today said winning her career's second National award for "Queen" came as a special but sweet surprise.

The actress was shooting for her upcoming film "Tanu Weds Manu Returns" when she got the news. "This award is special for me. I had no clue about it because a day before I was busy with my birthday and the poster launch of 'Tanu Weds Manu Returns'. It's a real thing for me because unlike other awards there was no pre-nomination party and 'ho halla' about it," she told *PTI* in an interview.

Kangana was a front-runner for the honour for her powerful-yet-subtle portrayal of a traditional girl who goes on a journey of self-realisation after being ditched at the altar in the Vikas Bahl-directed movie.

The actress won her first National award in the best supporting actress category for "Fashion".

"To be honest, I really don't remember the day I won my first National

award. I was watching TV and came to know that I won it. I was young at that time. I am glad that 'Queen' connected everyone. I think the cheer from the people when the award was announced on 24th March was something which all actor wants," she said.

The "Gangster" star, who faced a lot of criticism for her accent and fashion style initially, is happy to have made a successful career and wants to be more careful while selecting her future roles. "I was earlier criticised for my fashion sense and accent. But as an actor, it never discouraged me because I had other reasons to be happy. I won my first National award when I was 19 and it has been the most amazing part of my career," she said.

"I am careful with my projects. I will choose my future roles with a lot of thought now," she added.

Post "Queen", Kangana has been on a career high as she has a chock-a-block diary filled with interesting projects, most recent one being the sequel of "Tanu Weds Manu" which



Kangana Ranaut

releases on 29 May.

She will next be seen in "Katti Batti" and Sujoy Ghosh's movie. Four other

projects, including one with Hansal Mehta, are in the pipeline.

PTI

Always knew Taylor Swift would be my child's godmother: Jaime King

LOS ANGELES, 27 March — Actress Jaime King says singer and close friend Taylor Swift's "thoughtfulness and kindness" is so effective that she could not think of anyone else as her upcoming baby's godmother.

"I always knew she was going to be the godmother if I had another baby," King told *ELLE* in an interview.

The 35-year-old actress is currently pregnant with her second child with husband Kyle Newman.

The couple, who has been married since 2007, has had a son James Knight Newman, born on 6 October, 2013. King announced her second pregnancy back in February.



Actress Jaime King says singer and close friend Taylor Swift's "thoughtfulness and kindness" is so effective that she could not think of anyone else as her upcoming baby's godmother. PTI

The following month, she confirmed through Instagram posts that Swift would become her upcoming baby's godmother.

"Choosing a godmother is a very sacred and important thing in our family. They're going to be guiding your child, and they're

responsible for them if something was to ever happen," she said.

"We try and choose people who we know would raise our child the way that we would raise our child and her thoughtfulness, her kindness, her authenticity... is so powerful to me. She's so uninhibited in her giving... It's just beyond."

Recalling the day she asked Swift to take on the significant role, King said she did not have a grand plan.

"We were hanging out on the couch and I was like, 'Hey, would ever want to be a godmother?' And she was like, 'Uh, yes!' And she cried and, you know, all the fun things that best friends do," she said.—PTI

'Furious 7' should win best picture at Oscars: Vin Diesel



Vin Diesel

LOS ANGELES, 27 March — Vin Diesel says 'Furious 7' should win the Best Picture at the Academy Awards. The actor sounds off his optimism when talking about his movie, reported *Ace Showbiz*.

"Universal is going to have the biggest movie in history with this movie. It will probably win best picture at the Oscars, unless the Oscars don't want to be relevant ever. This will win best picture. There is nothing that will ever come close to the power of this thing," he said. "Furious 7", the latest instalment of the "Fast & Furious" film series, will open wide in theatres across the nation on 3 April.

Diesel, Dwayne The Rock Johnson, Jason Statham, Michelle Rodriguez, Jordana Brewster and Tyrese Gibson return for the action flick, which marks Paul Walker's final film appearance before his sudden passing in a car accident in 2013.—PTI

'Pretty Woman' cast reunites to celebrate its 25th anniversary



The cast of *Pretty Woman* were reunited on a TV show, to celebrate the film's 25th anniversary.—PTI

LOS ANGELES, 27 March — The cast of *Pretty Woman* were reunited on a TV show, to celebrate the film's 25th anniversary.

Stars Julia Roberts, Richard Gere, Hector Elizondo and Laura San Giacomo joined director Garry Marshall for a chat with Matt Lauer of the "Today" show about how they all came together to make the classic film. During the interview the cast revealed some secrets about the movie, including that initially Gere was not keen on the part of Edward at all. "The joke was you could put a suit on a goat and it would work," Gere said of his character in the initial script. "So I didn't get it." But all it took for Gere to get onboard was a meeting with Roberts, who had already signed on to play Vivian, as the two realised they had instant chemistry. "We loved each other immediately, it was a really great thing," Gere said.

Director Marshall also recalled that the film was originally titled "3,000" and focused more on drug addiction.

It was only when the director came along that the film began to resemble what we now remember as "Pretty Woman".—PTI

GENERAL

Falcao scores twice as six-goal Colombia crush Bahrain

RIFFA, (Bahrain), 27 March — Captain Radamel Falcao scored twice in five minutes as World Cup quarter-finalists Colombia crushed Bahrain 6-0 in a Copa America warm-up match at the National Stadium in Riffa on Thursday.

Falcao, who is lacking regular first team football at Manchester United, leapt at the chance to lead his country's attack and responded

with goals in the 32nd and 36th minutes to take his tally to 23 in 55 internationals.

Carlos Bacca, Adrian Ramos, Johan Mojica and Andres Renteria were also on target for visiting Colombia who were without World Cup ace James Rodriguez for the friendly.

The Copa America in Chile will be held from 11 June-4 July.

Reuters



Colombia's Radamel Falcao

India turns to 'satellite god' for crop mapping

NEW DELHI, 27 March — Sher Singh, a farmer from India's desert state of Rajasthan, prays to Varuna, the Hindu god of water, for a bountiful harvest. Now, he is also looking to the heavens for satellite imaging to boost his crop.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi wants to promote a "per drop, more crop" approach to farming to make better use of scarce water, and aims to have a new satellite crop monitoring system working in time for the peak of this year's monsoon in July.

Using remote analysis to assess soil moisture and crop development has the potential to cut input costs and raise yields, say experts, in a country of 1.25 billion where half of workers make a living from agriculture.

Under the scheme, farmers would be able to access advisories on their mobile phones to help them to choose seed varieties, apply the right fertilisers or time irrigation 'shots', though some are skeptical about how effective the plan will be given natural or other obstacles.

"I hope to cut at least a tenth of input cost with the help of the 'satellite god'," said Singh, 55, who farms less than a hectare of rapeseed and hopes to use savings to educate his two grandchildren.

By his own admission,



R N Sahoo, a senior scientist at the Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI), prepares to install a high resolution remote sensor used for crop mapping in a wheat field at IARI in New Delhi, on 20 March, 2015.

REUTERS

Singh doesn't know how much to water his crops, the right fertilizer mix — or even the right crop to plant given the land's soil type.

After last year's landslide poll victory, Modi's government rolled out a national Soil Health Card scheme modeled on an initiative he launched as chief minister of Gujarat to help farmers plant crops suited to their farmland.

In addition, satellite analysis can assess vegetation cover down to field level, helping to determine how a crop is developing and whether it has been harmed by pests or needs more water.

"The idea is to integrate information under the Soil Health Card with satellite images to raise productivity," said N Chattopadhyay, a weather department official

who is involved in the project.

The approach seeks to apply 'precision' farming methods pioneered in North America that use geo-location technology to help farmers micro-manage exactly how much seed, fertilizer or pesticide they apply to their fields.

In countries such as the United States and Canada unmanned aerial vehicles, or drones, are also used to overfly farms to map soil and crops accurately.

The next-best option is satellite analysis, more affordable for India, that uses a method called Normalized Vegetation Difference Index assess how well a crop is developing.

Chattopadhyay said the analysis can be provided to farmers on a near real-time

basis and could also be used for impact assessment after natural hazards like floods.

India can use its own geostationary satellites, but some see obstacles to its plans including a need to check findings on the ground or the risk of cloud obscuring images.

"Don't be under any illusion that the remote sensing based crop mapping technique will be a panacea for all problems in the farm sector," said BC Barah, a New Delhi-based agriculture economist.

India's top bureaucrat Ajit Seth has urged wider use of remote sensing to benefit farmers, many of whom live a precarious existence on tiny plots of land.

Just over half of India's nearly 200 million hectares of arable land is rainfed, leaving farmers at the mercy of an often uncertain monsoon.

The remaining arable is under irrigation, which the government plans to expand by a tenth over three years.

The loss of more than half of a crop can trigger government payments to farmers, of \$72 per hectare for rainfed areas and \$144 for irrigated lands.

India is also preparing to use satellite based crop forecasts to develop insurance for farmers. Currently, insurance products cover primarily crop loans and exclude farm activities.

Reuters

More than 15,000 buildings without power after Oklahoma tornadoes

OKLAHOMA City, 27 March — About 15,000 homes and businesses in Oklahoma and Arkansas were without power on Thursday after tornadoes touched down in the states a day earlier, leaving at least one person dead and scores of structures damaged.

School were closed in parts of Oklahoma and

clean up was under way from the twisters that hit near Tulsa, Oklahoma City and in northwest Arkansas. Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin declared a state of emergency in 25 counties.

"Last night's storms led to widespread damage throughout a large portion of the state," Fallin said on Thursday.

In the Tulsa suburb of

Sand Springs, one person was killed in a trailer park when a tornado ripped through the area. At least 60 buildings were damaged, including a gymnastics studio with about 60 people inside that had its roof ripped off. No one was severely injured in that incident.

Another tornado was spotted in Moore, Okla-

homa, where police said multiple buildings were damaged and vehicles overturned. The Oklahoma City suburb was hit by a tornado in 2013 that killed 24 and injured more than 300.

The Moore Public School District said that one elementary school had its roof torn off, and several nearby homes were struck.

Reuters

mitv Myanmar International

(28-3-2015 07:00 am~ 29-3-2015 07:00 am) MST

- * News
- * Great Shwedagon — The Historic Bells
- * A Glimpse at a Naga Family Life
- * News
- * One Heritage.....One Festival
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- * Theatrical Performances in Honor of the Outstanding National Athletes in the 28th SEA Games (Live)

MRTV News Channel in Brief

(28-3-2015, Saturday)

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| <p>6:00 am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paritta by Hilly Region Missionary Sayadaw <p>6:20 am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical Exercises <p>7:35 am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hyper Sports <p>8:00 am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • News / International News <p>8:35 am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documentary <p>9:35 am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MRTV's Youth Programme <p>10:35am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Science and Technology Programme <p>11:30 am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head Line News <p>12:00 noon</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • News / International News / Weather Report <p>12:35 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Round Up of The Week's TV News | <p>1:15 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Round Up of The Week's Hluttaw News <p>2:20 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documentary <p>3:00 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • News <p>4:35 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Distance Education (TV Lectures) — Fourth Years (English) <p>5:30 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head Line News <p>6:00 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • News / Weather Report <p>7:30 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head Line News <p>7:35 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business News <p>8:00 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • News / International News / Weather Report <p>9:00 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pyi Thu Ni Ti • Gitadagale Phwintbarohn |
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MRTV Entertainment Channel

(28-3-2015, Saturday)

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| <p>6:00 am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Honour Song For Alinka Kyaw Swar Myoma Nyein <p>6:20 am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pyi Thu Ni Ti <p>6:40 am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Myanmar Series <p>7:00 am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classical Songs | <p>7:15 am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Radio Teleplay <p>7:45 am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Musical Programme <p>8:00 am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Double Art of Actor Swan Zarni <p>9:35 am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Myanmar Video <p>12:00 noon</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close Down |
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MFF issues finalist of Myanmar national team



YANGON, 27 March— Myanmar Football Federation recently announced the finalist of Myanmar national football team that will meet with Indonesian national team.

Myanmar team con-

sists of 20 players: goalkeepers Pyae Phyo Aung of Southern Myanmar and Vanlal Hruaia of Ayeyawady United, defenders Ye Win Aung of Yadanabon, Thein Naing Oo of Kanbawza, Zaw Lin of

Kanbawza, Aung Zaw of Hanthawady United, Win Min Htut of Kanbawza, Khin Maung Lwin of Yangon United and Nay Zaw Aung of Nay Pyi Taw; midfielders Pyay Moe of Rakhine United, Suan Lam

Mang of Chin United, Hein Zar Aung of Magway United, David Htan of Yangon United, Yan Aung Kyaw of Yangon United, Kyi Lin of Yangon United, Yan Aung Win of Kanbawza, forwards: Kyaw Ko Ko of Yangon United, Zin Min Tun of Yadanabon, Soe Min Naing of Magway and Nanda Lin Kyaw Chit of Ayeyawady United.

The players are under control of manager U Tin Myint Aung, head coach Mr Radojko Avramovic, assistant coaches Milovan Cirkovic and U Soe Myat Min and medical officer Dr Zarni Lin Kyaw.

Myanmar is scheduled to play against Indonesian national team at Delta Stadium on 30 March.—MFF

Venus and Wozniacki ease into third round in Miami



Caroline Wozniacki (R) shakes hands with Madison Brengle (L) after their match on day three of the Miami Open at Crandon Park Tennis Centre, Key Biscayne, on 26 March, 2015. Wozniacki won 6-0, 6-1. REUTERS

MIAMI, 27 March — Venus Williams eased into the third round of the Miami Open with a comfortable 6-3, 6-2 win over Poland's Urszula Radwanska on Thursday while Caroline Wozniacki also progressed. Williams has been away from competition for almost a month but she needed just 66 minutes to beat the younger sister of 2012 Miami winner Agnieszka Radwanska.

Williams was not at her best, she made 24 unforced errors but produced 22 winners to Radwanska's four and her passage to the next round was never in doubt.

"She's definitely a tricky player. She puts so many balls in play. And it was a little windy today — I just had to keep my feet moving and pray my balls were going in," said Williams, who will face Aus-

tralian Sam Stosur in the next round after she defeated French qualifier Pauline Parmentier 6-1, 3-6, 6-0.

Fourth seed Wozniacki had no trouble in dealing with American Madison Brengle 6-0, 6-1 to set up a meeting with Estonian Kaia Kanepi.

Agnieszka Radwanska had a tougher battle, surviving a strong test in the second set to earn a 6-4, 7-5 win over Slovakia's Anna Schmiedlova. Second seed Maria Sharapova suffered a shock 7-6(4), 6-3 defeat to compatriot and wildcard Daria Gavrilova in the second round of the Miami Open on Thursday. Top seed Serena Williams will be in action on Friday against Romanian Monica Niculescu, while third seed Simona Halep takes on Czech wildcard Nicole Pietrangeli.

Reuters

Mourinho has resuscitated Terry's Chelsea career

LONDON, 27 March — Two years after it looked like his Stamford Bridge career was on its last legs, John Terry has been given the vote of confidence he craved.

The runaway Premier League leaders announced on Thursday the captain, known as 'Mr Chelsea', had been handed a new one-year contract that will keep him with the club until the age of 35. Manager Jose Mourinho said the decision was not made out of loyalty or through deference to long service but simply because Terry's performances merited it. The centre half has been at his commanding best this year, a virtual ever-present at the back, a pillar of leadership strength and a prize asset at attacking corners and free kicks.

The short seven-month tenure of Rafa Benitez in season 2012-13 certainly seems a long time ago for Terry, who is playing so well this season that he must be a candidate for the Footballer of the Year award.

"This new contract is not to say 'thank you very much', it is because John continues to perform," Mourinho told the club website. "He is a top defender. I am happy that he completely deserves this new contract after a season where he has already played 40 matches."

They were dark days



Chelsea's manager Jose Mourinho and John Terry pose with the Capital One Cup in Capital One Cup Final at Wembley Stadium on 1 March, 2015.—REUTERS

under Benitez for Terry who, for the first time in his Chelsea career, was not regarded as a first-choice starter. The former England captain did struggle with injuries in season 2012-13 but even when he was fit, Gary Cahill and David Luiz were the preferred options in central defence. Terry did not have Benitez's 100 per cent trust and backing but that quickly changed when Mourinho returned for a second stint in charge at the beginning of last season.

The outspoken Portuguese acknowledged he had initial doubts about the skipper who served him so well when the pair linked up for successive Premier League title victories in 2005 and

2006 but they were soon dispelled.

Terry, for his part, said Mourinho has always known which buttons to press from the moment he first came to Stamford Bridge in 2004.

"He made a massive impact on the club, for sure. He made a group of players, good players at the time, feel like we were the best in the world," said the 6-foot-1 (1.87-metre) defender.

"Whether we were or not, we felt it...you could immediately tell he knew how to draw the best out of everyone. It's just inspiring and, for me, there's no better at drawing the best out of people than Jose Mourinho. "He knows what

makes me tick. He knows if I make a mistake he can tell me, some players you can't. It's about handling different players differently and he does it superbly," said Terry. Mourinho has already bagged the League Cup trophy earlier this month and the next task for manager and captain is to preserve their six-point lead at the top of the table and go on to capture Chelsea's first Premier League crown since 2010.

Beyond that Terry, who is third on the club's all-time list with 661 appearances, will hope his legs can keep going long enough for him to surpass Peter Bonetti (729) and Ron Harris (795).—Reuters

Brazil hand France first defeat since World Cup

PARIS, 27 March — Brazil inflicted France's first defeat since the World Cup when a perfectly executed second-half performance earned them a 3-1 win in a friendly game at the Stade de France on Thursday.

Neymar and Luiz Gustavo scored after the interval with Oscar having cancelled out Raphael Varane's first-half opener as the visitors notched a seventh consecutive win in the aftermath of their embarrassing World Cup campaign on home soil.

Brazil have now scored 17 goals and conceded two since they hosted the finals, which they finished in fourth place after a humiliating 7-1 semi-final defeat by eventual champions Germany and a 3-0 loss to the Neth-

erlands in the third-place match. World Cup quarter-finalists France enjoyed a great start in a lively clash but without the influential Paul Pogba through injury they were eventually overwhelmed in midfield.

"We were punished for our mistakes. They are very quick up front," said France coach Didier Deschamps, who skipped France to their 3-0 World Cup final win against a Brazil side captained by his counterpart Dunga in 1998. "We knew we would be playing a good team. We need to be more accurate, more efficient."

There was a minute's silence before the match in memory of the 150 people who died in the Germanwings flight 9525 that crashed in France on Tuesday. —Reuters