

Six-way talks tackle country's pressing political issues

NAY PYI TAW, 10 April— Six-way talks aimed at solving Myanmar's political issues took place Friday at the Presidential Palace in response to an urgent call by the parliament a few months ago.

The talks involved President U Thein Sein, Pyithu Hluttaw Speak-

er Thura U Shwe Mann, Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker U Khin Aung Myint, Defence Services Commander-in-Chief Senior-General Min Aung Hlaing, National League for Democracy Chairperson Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and Amyotha Hluttaw Representative Dr Aye Maung, who represented

the country's ethnic parties.

President U Thein Sein said the talks were aimed at ensuring inclusive participation in the politics of Myanmar as a nascent democracy.

Meetings that preceded the six-way talks focused on peace building, national consolidation,

improving the nation's socioeconomic status and holding free and fair elections — all national goals requiring immediate action, the president said.

He said the decision-making process should be objective and impartial.

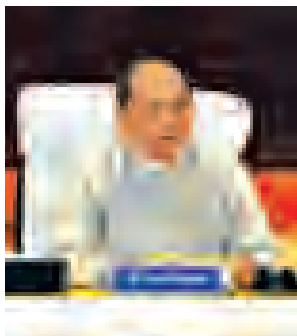
Thura U Shwe Mann,

U Khin Aung Myint, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and Dr Aye Maung had open and frank discussions.

Following the six-way talks, Union Minister for Information U Ye Htut, who is also spokesperson for the president, said the talks reached an

agreement on the form and timetable of follow-up meetings. He described the meeting as successful, citing the ties of kinship among the participants. The next round of talks will be announced after coordination at parliament, he told the media.

MNA



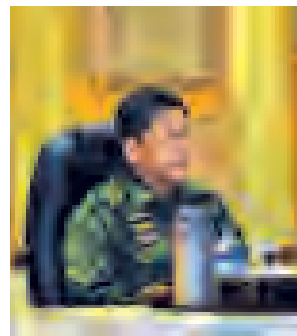
President U Thein Sein.
MNA



Pyithu Hluttaw speaker Thura U Shwe Mann.—MNA



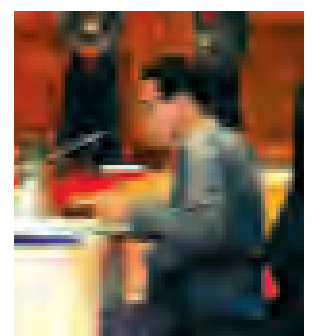
Amyotha Hluttaw speaker U Khin Aung Myint.—MNA



Senior General Min Aung Hlaing.
MNA



NLD Chairperson Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.
MNA



Amyotha Hluttaw representative Dr Aye Maung.—MNA

Charity aims to house more residents at aged care home

By Khaing Thanda Lwin

YANGON, 9 April—A philanthropic organization caring for the elderly in Yangon said it plans to increase the number of residents at its assisted living home this year, member Daw Phyto Thiri said Thursday.

Save the Aged currently cares for more than 30 needy senior citizens every month, 16 of whom are at its home in Dagon Myothit established in January.

"The facility can house up to 50 persons," Daw Phyto Thiri told the Global New Light of Myanmar. "This year, STA is focused on bringing other needy elderly into this safe place."

She said the home has no access to the electricity grid, but is powered by solar panels. The organization plans to install a transformer with the contributions of well-wishers in the future.

STA member Daw

Aye Aye Than said the group will make arrangements for those elderly who wish to attend meditation centers during the water festival.

Founded by local youths, Save the Aged has helped needy older people for five years, with plans to build more homes for the aged, a group leader said at the opening of the Dagon Myothit home.

A home-care provider said there are many neglected older persons in the country who are in urgent need of health care and accommodation.

Some local aged care agencies said they have been hindered by a lack of volunteers.

According to a survey, 9 percent of the country's total population is more than 60 years old, 10 percent of whom are in need of care.—GNLM

HAGL Myanmar Centre on track for 2017 completion, first phase soft opening set for July

By Ye Myint

YANGON, 10 April— Construction is progressing as planned on the 73,000-square-metre Hoang Anh Gia Lai Myanmar Centre in Yangon, with completion of the final phase set for 2017, according to the Vietnamese developer undertaking the more than half-a-billion-dollar retail, office and residential project in Yangon.

Mr. Cao Duy Thinh, managing director of Hoang Anh Gia Lai Myanmar Co Ltd, revealed this information, along with the scheduled completion dates for the first phase and start date for the second phase, to The Global New Light of Myanmar on Friday.

"The project's first phase, which is 90 percent completed now, is slated to complete this September and the second phase is set to start after the country's New Year water festival," said the managing director, adding that a soft opening

of office buildings and a shopping mall included in the first phase is scheduled to be held this July.

HAGL Myanmar Centre is the 100 percent Vietnam-backed project being developed on a 73,358-square-metre block including a five-star hotel,

four office towers, a shopping centre, and five blocks of apartments. The development project began about two years ago.

The first phase includes two office towers, a retail mall, and a 400-room five star hotel, while the second phase comprises an-

other two office towers, as well as three residential and two serviced apartments.

Rent will be priced at between \$40 and \$85 a square metre per month for shops and between \$50 and \$65 for offices, the managing director said.

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Construction in progress at the worksite of HAGL Myanmar Centre Phase I, for which a soft opening of office buildings and a shopping mall is scheduled for July.— PHOTO: YE MYINT

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Pyidaungsu Hluttaw

Deputy minister seeks approval for US\$ 400 million loan



Pyidaungsu Hluttaw MPs discuss borrowing of loans from World Bank.—MNA

NAY PYI TAW, 10 April — Deputy Minister for Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development U Tin

Ngwe explained US\$ 400 million loans to be offered by the World Bank at the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Ses-

sion on Friday.

People-centred projects were implemented

in Kanpetlet Township in Chin State, Namhsam Township in Shan State and Kyunsu Township in Taninthayi Region in 2013-14 fiscal year and Pinlebu Township in Sagaing Region, Sedoktara Township, Htantabin Township in Yangon Region, An Township in Rakhine State, Laymyethna Township in Ayeyawady Region and Tatkon Township in Nay Pyi Taw Council in 2014-15 fiscal year, according to the deputy minister.

Arrangements are underway to choose a township in Kachin State

in May and a total of 350 business enterprises in 390 villages are being carried out by local people in Kanpetlet, Namhsam and Kyunsu townships under the project, the deputy minister added.

As the World Bank viewed the project a success, it offers US\$ 400 million loans for implementation of similar projects in other eleven townships, the deputy minister said.

Then, the deputy minister sought the approval of the Hluttaw.

Deputy Minister for Finance Dr Lin Aung and Deputy Minister for Na-

tional Planning and Economic Development Daw Lei Lei Thein supported the request.

The Pyidaungsu Hluttaw session discussed the motion calling for the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and the Union Government to fulfill the rights of farmers under Protection and Promotion of Farmers' Interests Law.

The session also put on record the tours of the president to Malaysia and Singapore, cancellation of holding joint portfolio and appointment of a state minister in Mon State.

MNA

Public information for remonstrations

The Myanmar New Society Democratic Party headquartered at No 6 on Htanbington Road in Htanbington Ward, Thanlyin Township, Yangon Region, registered by the Union Election Commission as a political party under the Article 9 of the Political Parties Registration Law, submitted an application to change its flag as below.

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

Union Election Commission



Flag of Myanmar New Society Democratic Party

Union FM receives Honorary Directorate Degree of Political Science from Gyeongsang National University



Union Minister U Wunna Maung Lwin greets ROK Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr Yun Byung-se.—MNA

NAY PYI TAW, 10 April — U Wunna Maung Lwin, Union Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and party paid a visit to the Republic of Korea from 6 to 8 April, and arrived back Yangon on 10 April.

During the visit, the union minister called on Korean Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr Yun Byung-se at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of ROK on 6 April. The two ministers discussed further strengthening the bilateral ties, enhancing the existing cooperation and promoting the collaboration of commemorative events as this year marks

the 40th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries. Also present at the meeting were Myanmar Ambassador to ROK U Soe Lwin and Korean Ambassador Mr Lee Baek-soon.

On 7 April, the union minister received the Honorary Directorate Degree of Political Science conferred to him by the Gyeongsang National University (GNU) at the university campus in Jinju, Republic of Korea. In the evening, the President of the university and heads of faculty members hosted a dinner in honour of the union minister in Jinju.

MNA

Myanmar, India discuss to bring their peoples home from Yemen

NAY PYI TAW, 10 April — Myanmar and India are engaged in discussions aimed at bringing peoples of their countries back home from Yemen, following internal conflicts there,

the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has said.

Migrant workers of both countries are expected to be back in Mumbai, India, on the INS Mumbai, an Indian destroyer,

in five days. The Myanmar Embassy in New Delhi is making efforts to bring two Myanmar nationals back home in coordination with the Indian Embassy in Yangon.—MNA

HAGL Myanmar Centre on track . . .

(from page 1)

When asked about the Singaporean real estate and investment firm Rowsley's cancellation of its 50 percent stake in the \$550 million property project, he confirmed the termination of the heads of terms agreement between HAGL group and the Singapore developer, but made no further comment.

"Actually, negotiation for Rowsley was done by a management team in Vi-

etnam," he said.

A February announcement from the Singapore-listed firm said Rowsley had decided to pour \$275 million into a 50 percent stake in the project.

In 3 April press releases of HAGL Group and Rowsley Ltd, the two companies separately announced they had agreed not to proceed with the joint venture deal signed last February and would

explore other potential partners. Hong Kong investors have shown interest towards the project with many proposals, Mr. Cao Duy Thinh said.

Situated 11km from the airport and 7 km from downtown overlooking Inya Lake in Yangon, the HAGL Myanmar Centre project is being developed under a Built-Operate-Transfer model with a land lease term of 50 years, plus an option to extend the lease by 10 years, twice. —GNLM



Myanmar scouts arrive back at Yangon International Airport on 10 April after attending 20th Scouts Gathering at Bajiravudh National Scout Camp in Chonburi in Thailand in commemoration of 60th birthday of HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn.—MNA

NATIONAL

President U Thein Sein accepts credentials from newly-accredited Ambassadors of State of Qatar, Hungary



NAY PYI TAW, 10 April—Mr Hassan Bin Mohamed Rafei Al-Emadi, the newly-accredited Ambassador of the State of Qatar to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar presented his credential to U Thein Sein, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar at the Presidential Palace, Nay Pyi Taw, at 11 am on Friday.

Dr. Peter Jakab, the newly-accredited Ambassador of Hungary to the

Republic of the Union of Myanmar also presented his credential to U Thein Sein, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar at 11.30 am.

Present on the occasions were Union Minister at the President Office U Thein Nyunt, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs U Thant Kyaw and Director-General U Thurain Thant Zin of the Protocol Department.

MNA

President U Thein Sein accepts credentials of Mr Hassan Bin Mohamed Rafei Al-Emadi (L) and Ambassador of the State of Qatar and Dr. Peter Jakab, Ambassador of Hungary (R).

MNA



President U Thein Sein, Pyithu Hluttaw speaker Thura U Shwe Mann, Amyotha Hluttaw speaker U Khin Aung Myint, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, NLD Chairperson Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and Amyotha Hluttaw representative Dr Aye Maung hold a six-way talk.

(News on page 1)

MNA



NAY PYI TAW, 10 April—Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla and congregation donated offertories to 294

monks and 39 novices together with 18 members of the Sangha led by Abhidhaja Maha Rattha Guru Bhaddanta Vicarindabhivamsa of Maha Wizitayon Monastery

from Mandalay in front of Anawrahta Hall of the Office of the Commander-in-Chief (Army), here,

Friday. The senior general and wife also donated provisions to venerable Sayadaws.

The senior general and wife, together with senior military officers, shared merits for the third

novitiation and ordination of the families of Defence Services (Army, Navy and Air).—*Myawady*

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and wife attend ordination and novitiation of Tatmadaw families

Nearly 90 percent of Lapadaungtaung copper mine project investigation commission's report implemented, committee says



Union Minister U Hla Tun outlines implementation of investigation commission's report.—MNA

NAY PYI TAW, 10 April—Of 42 points, 37 that account for 88.10 percent of the report had been implemented, said Union Minister at President Office U Hla Tun at a meeting of the committee that implements the report of the investigation commission for Lapadaungtaung Copper mine project meeting on Friday.

Monitoring and evaluation process for environmental matters, compensation and assistance to be paid to those who have still remained to receive compensation and assistance and creation of small and medium-sized businesses are included in the remain-

ing five points, he said.

The remaining works will be carried out under close supervision of the Joint Management Committee-JMC which will also monitor the project, he added. The Union minister who led the committee called on the JMC to follow the environmental and social impact assessments while monitoring the project and coordinating with CSD representatives for regional development. He also stressed the need of achieving ISO certificates within schedule.

Next, Sagaing Region Chief Minister U Tha Aye who is also the vice-chair-

man of the committee, Union Minister U Soe Win, Union Minister U Myint Aung and Union Minister U Win Tun who are committee members elaborated on work progress.

Then, JMC Chairman Maj-Gen Zar Ni Win, managing director the Union of Myanmar Economic Holdings Limited, made a presentation of administrative measures to be taken for the success of the project.

Before the committee chairman's concluding remarks, those present including officials from Myanmar Wanbao Company reported their respective matters.

MNA

Chief Minister of Ayeyawady Region outlines boosting production of crops



HINTHADA, 10 April —The Ayeyawady Region government plans to open a development bank for local farmers, Chief Minister

of Ayeyawady Region U Thein Aung told local residents at Dambi Station, Hinthada Township on 9 April.

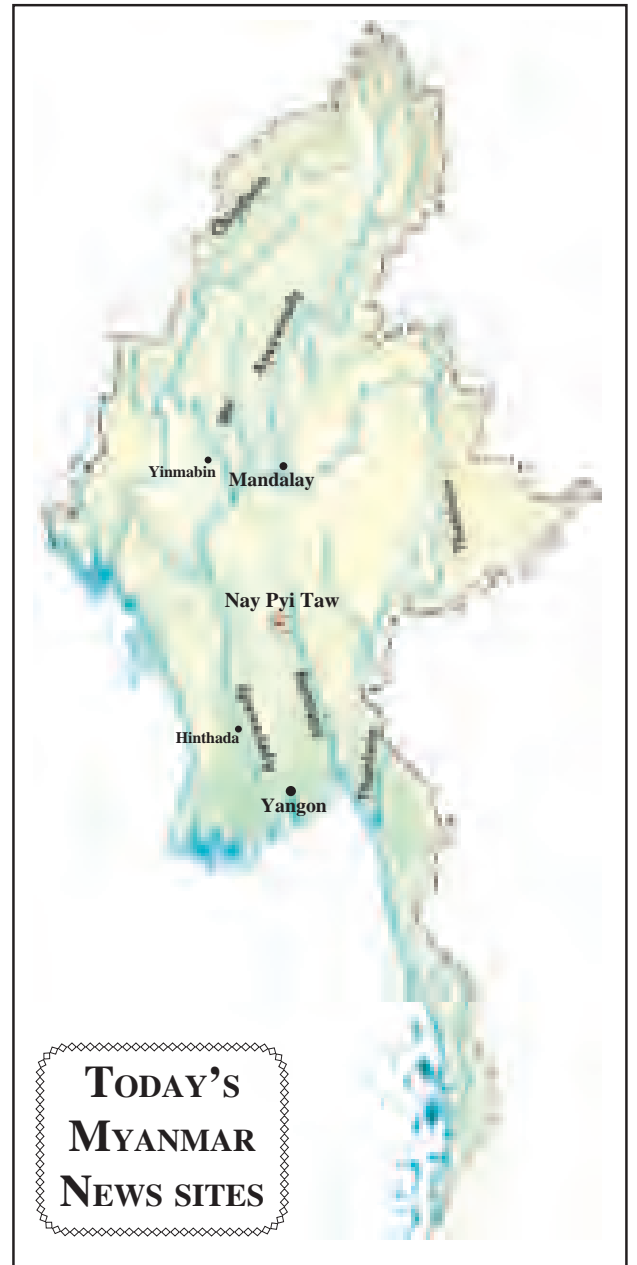
He explained that a 100-acre model plot will be designated for cultivation of paddy at the station, as modern agricultural machinery

can be used to minimize loss and waste in cultivation and production of crops.

Region Minister for Development Affairs U Kyaw Win Naing handed over citizenship scrutiny cards delivered by the Immigration and National Registration Department to local residents of Dambi Station. Region Minister for Commerce U Hla Khaing presented a certificate of honour to Hinthada Township through officials for its repayment of agricultural loans to Myanma Agricultural Development Bank.

Local residents reported on development tasks in education, health, agriculture and construction sectors.

Kyaw Kyaw (Hinthada)



Mandalay Region judicial staff receives cash assistance for Thingyan Festival

MANDALAY, 10 April — Staff paid respect to the chief justice of Mandalay Region High Court, region judges and the region law officer Thursday ahead of Myanmar's traditional Maha Thingyan festival.

Chief Justice of the region U Soe Thein gave words of advice and Region Law Officer U Kyin Tin presented cash assistance for the Thingyan festival to staff.

The ceremony was attended by 85 law officers and staff.

Tin Maung (Mandalay)

Forever Group introduces programmes of MTRV-4 to Mandalay's entrepreneurs



MANDALAY, 10 April — Forever Group outlined the expansion of its Mandalay FM and 4TV programmes to local entrepreneurs in Chanayethazan Township, Mandalay, on 8 April evening.

Managing Director Daw Khin Khin Lay of

Forever Group extended greetings while manager Daw Hla Yin Aye introduced presenters of Mandalay FM to the audience.

General Manager Dr Khin Lin Maw explained HD quality of 4TV and Channel 7 and MRTV-4 channel.

Daw Cho Nwe Oo spoke about online TV channels, and presenter Ko Myo Myint Myat clarified opportunities of entrepreneurs from Mandalay in the super offer TV stop programme being broadcast by MRTV-4.

Thiha Ko Ko (Mandalay)

Summer badminton course improves sport skills of youths

MANDALAY, 10 April — A summer badminton course, jointly organized by Mandalay Region Sports and Physical Education Department and Mandalay Region Badminton Subcommittee, concluded at the hall of Mandalay Education College on Thursday evening.

Deputy Director of Region SPED U Wai Zin and Gold Future badminton club chairperson Daw

Nang Htwe Kham gave speeches. The deputy director presented certificates to the trainees. Officials presented prizes to winners in the men's doubles regulation and women's doubles regulation events.

Coaches from Gold Future Club gave training to local youths in the one-month course from 8 March to 9 April.

Tin Maung (Mandalay)



Police Captain Maung Maung Tar and departmental officials checking medical stores and roadside shops not to sell narcotic drugs and hormone drugs at Nay-gi Market in Myauauang on 9 April.

WIN BO (TOWNSHIP IPRD)



REGIONAL



Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (2nd from L) attends a government meeting on science, technology and innovation at the prime minister's office in Tokyo on 10 April, 2015. —KYODO NEWS

Abe watches performance of voice translator for use at 2020 Olympics

TOKYO, 10 April — Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on Friday watched a performance using a pendant-shaped multilingual voice translator the government aims to introduce in time for the Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics in 2020. The translator, which is under development by the government and the private sector, is part of Japan's efforts to better assist foreign nationals when

they visit the country for the 2020 events.

In the performance, a Japanese volunteer spoke through the translator with a man presumed to be from China, assuming that he has lost his wallet. The performance ended when the man found the wallet.

Abe hailed the performance, saying, "The Olympics will generate dreams for not only athletes but our country's science and tech-

nology and innovation."

"I would like the government and the private sector to join forces so that (Japan) can show the world (its) technology power that makes dreams a reality at the Tokyo Olympics," he said.

The performance took place during a government meeting on science, technology and innovation at the prime minister's office.—Kyodo News

Singaporeans call for Changi airport to be renamed after late Lee

SINGAPORE, 10 April— Nearly 12,500 people have signed an online petition calling on the Singapore government to rename Changi airport after Singapore's founding Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew who died last month, the organizer of the petition said this week.

The petition to rename the airport to "Lee Kuan Yew (LKY) International Airport" on the "Change.org" website was handed to Singaporean Transport Minister Lui Tuck Yew on Tuesday, the organizer said. Lui was quoted as saying that he will bring the proposal up to the government for consideration.

Lee, who was prime minister from 1959 to 1990, died 23 March after a bout with pneumonia. He has been credited for Singapore's success as one of Asia's most prosperous economies. Hundreds of thousands of Singaporeans queued to pay their respects at Parliament House where his casket was placed during a week of national mourning after his death, and thousands also lined the streets on the day of his state funeral on 29 March.—Kyodo News

India freezes foreign funding to Greenpeace, cites violations

NEW DELHI, 10 April— India has blocked foreign funding to the local branch of Greenpeace and restricted some activities, a government statement said on Thursday, with New Delhi accusing the environmental group of misusing funds.

Bank accounts of Greenpeace India were frozen as they were found violating financial regulations, the interior ministry said in the statement.

"We have evidence to prove that Greenpeace has been misreporting their funds and using their unaccounted foreign aid to stall crucial development projects," a senior government official, who asked not to be named, told Reuters.

Greenpeace India rejected the restrictions on it as "clear attempts to silence criticism and dissent".

"As an organization

registered to receive foreign funds, we have been and will continue to remain transparent and in compliance of the FCRA," its Executive Director Samit Aich said in a statement, referring to the law governing foreign contributions.

India's intelligence service said in June last year that Greenpeace and other lobby groups were hurting the country's economy by using foreign funds to campaign against economic projects.

The government has asked the central bank to block foreign fund flows into Greenpeace accounts but a court order in January quashed the move.

In recent months, Greenpeace activists have accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government of watering down environmental rules after



A policeman stops school children, brought together by Greenpeace for a climate change demonstration, carry placards near the venue where US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton is scheduled to meet India's foreign minister in New Delhi on 20 July, 2009. —REUTERS

it allowed industries to operate closer to protected green zones.

"We are being repeatedly targeted because we are protesting against

government's unlawful policies," said Divya Raghunandan, Greenpeace India's programme director.

Since coming to power in May last year, Modi

has pushed through a series of long-awaited reforms and new policies making it easier for companies to win approval for new projects.—Reuters

North Korea seen intent on provocation but no sign of nuclear test

SEOUL, 10 April — North Korea is intent on using missile launches to increase regional tension but it does not appear to be preparing for a fourth nuclear test or long-range missile launch, the US and South Korean defence ministers said on Friday.

North Korea fired two surface-to-air missiles off its west coast just before US Secretary of Defence Ash Carter arrived in the region on Tuesday to visit staunch US allies Japan and South Korea.

The North launched four short-range missiles off its west coast on 3 April. "As it demonstrated once again with its recent missile launches, North Korea is intent on continued provocation," Carter told a news conference in the South Korean capital,

Seoul. North Korea is under heavy sanctions over its nuclear and ballistic missile programmes.

Not all North Korean short-range missile launches are in defiance of a UN ban on ballistic missile technology. The isolated country has, however, previously launched a long-range rocket it said was designed to carry a satellite into space.

Carter said the US military was developing and preparing to deploy new weapons in the region including new stealth bombers and different classes of naval vessels.

North Korea accuses the United States of building up forces in the region with the aim of invading it and it denounces annual military exercises by the United States and South

Korea as a prelude to war.

Carer and his South Korean counterpart, Han Min-koo, said they did not discuss the possible deployment of an advanced missile defence system, the THAAD, in the South to counter the North's nuclear missile threat. "We're not at the point yet where we would begin discussions with anyone around the world about where the THAAD batteries in production are going," Carter said. China and Russia have both spoken out against placing THAAD, or Terminal High Altitude Area Defence, in South Korea.

Han said North Korea did not appear to be preparing for another long-range rocket launch or nuclear test any time soon.

Reuters

Japan, China resume parliamentary exchange, discuss concerns

TOKYO, 10 April — Lawmakers representing the Japanese and Chinese parliaments on Thursday exchanged comments in Tokyo regarding China's military buildup and Japan's perception of history as they resumed meeting after a two-year hiatus.

At the Japanese Diet building, 12 representatives from Japan, including Motoo Hayashi of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party, and eight Chinese lawmakers, including Ji Bingxuan, vice chairman of the Standing Committee of China's National People's Congress, attended a meeting of the Japan-China Parliamentary Exchange Commission. It last met in January 2012.

The commission which started in 2005 had been held almost annually

until Japan angered China by purchasing in September 2012 a major part of the Senkaku Islands, which are controlled by Japan but claimed by China.

According to the participants, the Japanese lawmakers expressed concerns over China's defence spending, which has grown by double digits for five consecutive years, with one saying China's military spending "appears to lack transparency."

A Chinese participant argued the spending is "smaller than that of Japan in per capita terms."

Hayashi noted the need for "continuing dialogue" between the two countries "from a broad standpoint" even if problems emerge, while Ji said Japan should "squarely face its past history," apparently in con-

nection to a statement Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe plans to issue for the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II.

China, which sees Abe as a historical revisionist, has been wary that he may water down in his forthcoming statement the apologies that have been included in past war anniversary statements for the suffering Japan inflicted on its Asian neighbours through colonization and wartime aggression. On the first day of their two-day meeting, the Japanese and Chinese lawmakers also reiterated their country's position over the sovereignty of the Senkaku Islands in the East China Sea. China and Taipei claim the uninhabited islets, calling them Diaoyu and Tiaoyutai respectively.—Kyodo News

US urges Japan, China, other major economies to boost growth

WASHINGTON, 10 April — The Treasury Department on Thursday urged Japan, China and other major economies to enhance growth measures, warning that the United States should not be the single engine of the global economy.

In its semiannual Report to Congress on International Economic and Exchange Rate Policies, the department called on Japan not to try to reduce national debt too hastily but be fully mindful of ensuring a steady recovery.

Asserting that “the global economy should not again rely on the United States to be the only engine of demand,” the department called on other countries to “use all levers,” including fiscal stimulus, accommodative monetary policy and structural reforms.

“Balanced approaches to macroeconomic policy are particularly needed in large surplus countries, notably in Germany, China, Japan, and (South) Korea” consistent with commitments agreed on among Group of Seven industrialized nations and the Group of 20 developing and developed economies, the department said.

On Japan, the department warned that domestic demand is weak and urged the Japanese government to implement fiscal stimulus, monetary easing and structural reforms to secure “a balanced and durable recovery.”

But relying too much on monetary policy “will put Japan’s recovery and escape from deflation at risk and could generate negative spillovers,” it said.

Japan’s national debt has reached nearly 1,000 trillion yen, roughly double nominal gross domestic product. But the department said the deficit reduction targets “should be sufficiently flexible to respond to weakness in domestic demand growth.”

The department maintained that the Chinese yuan remains significantly undervalued against the US dollar but stopped short of labelling the country a currency manipulator.

Kyodo News

Ukraine military, rebels accuse each other of increased attacks

KIEV, 10 April — Ukraine’s military and rebels accused each other on Friday of intensifying attacks in separatist eastern territories despite a two-month-old ceasefire deal.

The conflict has

reached stalemate in recent weeks with the truce, brokered in the Belarusian capital of Minsk in mid-February, still technically in force though casualties are reported almost daily.

“The enemy has significantly intensified firing on our positions from weapons that according to the Minsk agreement are meant to have been withdrawn,” Kiev’s military spokesman Andriy Lysenko

said in a televised briefing, adding that the majority of attacks had taken place around the airport of rebel-held Donetsk.

He said in the past 24 hours rebels had fired at government troops 18 times with weapons of between 120 mm and 122 mm caliber.

According to the Minsk deal, weapons bigger than 100 mm caliber, including large artillery, heavy mortar and powerful rocket systems, are meant to have been withdrawn from the frontline.

The conflict erupted a year ago when rebels opposed to a new pro-Western leadership in Kiev and the ousting of a Moscow-backed president occupied state buildings in two big cities of Ukraine’s

east, Donetsk and Luhansk.

More than 6,000 civilians, rebels and Ukrainian servicemen have been killed since then in a crisis in which Kiev has accused its former Soviet master of arming and supporting the rebels, a charge Moscow denies.

On the rebel side, separatist forces accused government troops in the town of Avdiivka of firing from tanks at rebel positions near Donetsk airport about 7 km (4.4 miles) away, rebel news agency DAN reported early on Friday.

Ukrainian military spokesman Vladislav Seliznyov said it was not possible for government troops to fire tank rounds that distance.

Reuters



Members of the Ukrainian Defence Ministry’s assault battalion “Aydar” take part in tactical exercises during a military drill near Zhytomyr on 9 April, 2015.
REUTERS

Obama, Castro to share stage at summit as detente takes hold

PANAMA CITY, 10 April — US President Barack Obama and Cuban President Raul Castro will share the same stage on Friday in an encounter rich with symbolism as their countries set aside decades of mistrust and attempt to restore diplomatic relations. The rapprochement is set to dominate the Summit of the Americas meeting, held in Panama, less than four months after they announced they would seek to lower tensions and boost trade and travel between the two Cold War enemies.

Obama and Castro have separate agendas for most of the day but they will both attend the start of the summit along with other regional leaders on Friday evening. Apart from a couple of brief, informal encounters, the leaders of the United States and Cuba have not had any significant meetings since Castro’s older brother Fidel Castro toppled US-backed dictator Fulgencio Batista in a 1959 revolution.

But the two nations’ top diplomats — Secretary of State John Kerry and Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodriguez — held talks at a

Panama City hotel on Thursday night, the first meeting of its kind since John Foster Dulles and Gonzalo Guell got together in Washington in 1958. Sitting face-to-face in a room visible through a large glass window, Kerry and Rodriguez talked for over two hours. A senior State Department official described it as a “lengthy and very constructive discussion” and said they made progress. Obama appears to be close to removing Cuba from the US list of countries that it says sponsor terrorism. Cuba’s inclusion on the list has exacerbated tensions

and made it harder for US firms to do business with Cuba.

The US State Department has now recommended that Cuba be taken off the list, a US Senate Foreign Relations Committee aide said on Thursday. Obama is expected to agree although it is not clear whether he will announce his decision during the summit.

A US official said Kerry and Rodriguez used their meeting to smooth the way for Cuba’s removal from the list. The United States has pushed for Cuban assurances of no future support for terrorism, and Cuba has made the same demand of Washington.

Reuters

Rand Paul up, Clinton down in 2016 presidential poll

WASHINGTON, 10 April — Democrat Hillary Clinton has slipped against leading 2016 Republican candidates in Colorado, Iowa and Virginia, according to a poll released on Thursday that cited damage from the furor over the former secretary of state’s emails.

The Quinnipiac University Swing State Poll also showed Clinton in a close race with US Senator Rand Paul, the Kentucky Republican who declared his candidacy on Tuesday.

Clinton, who is expected to announce her White House bid this month, is tied with all the Republican

candidates in Colorado and almost all of them in the early voting state of Iowa, the poll said.

“It isn’t just one or two Republicans who are stepping up; it’s virtually the entire GOP field that is running better against her” since the last swing state survey on 18 February, pollster Peter Brown said in a statement.

He attributed the drop to the controversy that erupted in March over Clinton’s use of personal email for work when she was America’s top diplomat. Republicans have raised the prospect of congressional hearings on

the issue.

Paul led Clinton by 44 percent to 41 percent in Colorado and 43 percent to 42 percent in Iowa, the Quinnipiac poll showed. In Virginia, Clinton led 47 percent to 43 percent.

“These numbers are a boost for US Senator Rand Paul of Kentucky as he formally launches his campaign,” Brown said.

The poll cited a bright spot for Clinton in Virginia, where she led all Republicans, including former Florida Governor Jeb Bush, whom she led with 47 percent to 40 percent, compared to a 42-42 percent tie in February.



US Senator Rand Paul

The telephone poll of 2,803 likely voters was conducted from 29 March through 7 April and had an error margin of 3.2 percentage points in Iowa and Virginia and 3.3 points in Colorado.

Reuters

S Korea, US to hold joint air force exercises for two weeks

SEOUL, 10 April — Combined forces of South Korea and the United States plan to hold the joint air force exercises for two weeks to beef up their combined defence capability, the South Korean Air Force said on Friday.

The first round of “Max Thunder” drill kicks off from Friday, scheduled to run until 24 April, the Air Force said in a statement. The first round will mobilize about 100 warplanes and some 1,400 soldiers from the two countries. The exercise is held twice a year on the Korean Peninsula to simulate air battles with enemy forces through realistic training. This year, it will be conducted three times.

Among them would be some 550 South Korean soldiers and 50 fighter jets, including F-15K, KF-16, F-4E, F-5, C-130 and E-737. The country-developed FA-50 light attack warplane would join the drill for the first time.

The US Air Force will mobilize some 850 troops and 50 fighter jets, including F-16, F-15, FA-18 and EA-18 as well as AWACS, or an early warning aircraft.—Xinhua

WORLD

Senior Japan, S Korea, US diplomats to meet Thursday in Washington

TOKYO, 10 April — Senior diplomats from Japan, South Korea, and the United States will meet next Thursday in Washington, Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida said on Friday.

“We hope to exchange our views on issues of common interest in the East Asian region and the world, and make the vice-min-

isterial level meeting a meaningful opportunity to reaffirm our trilateral cooperation,” Kishida said at a Press conference.

Japan’s Vice Foreign Minister Akitaka Saiki, South Korean First Vice Foreign Minister Cho Tae Yong, and US Deputy Secretary of State Antony Blinken will attend the

meeting, Kishida said.

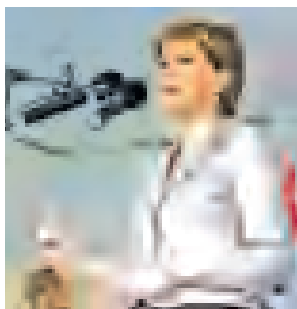
Meeting ahead of the updating of Japan-US defence cooperation guidelines in late April, the diplomats could also discuss how to work together in dealing with North Korea’s nuclear and missile development programmes, Japanese officials said.

Kyodo News

In UK election, Scottish nationalists may win 53 of 59 Scottish seats

LONDON, 10 April — The Scottish National Party may win 53 out of 59 Scottish seats in the British parliament, according to calculations made by *The Times* newspaper based on a YouGov poll showing an increase in support for the nationalists ahead of the 7 May election.

Though Scots voted to stay part of the United Kingdom in a 18 September referendum, the Scottish National Party (SNP) is hoping to harness a surge in support to win more powers from the govern-



Nicola Sturgeon, the leader of Scottish National Party (SNP), speaks at a CND Scotland anti-trident rally in Glasgow, Scotland, on 4 April, 2015.

REUTERS

ment in London, possibly from a kingmaker position.

If there was a uniform swing in accordance with a poll showing a rise in support for the SNP, Labour would only win 4 of the seats in Scotland and the Liberal Democrats one, according to *The Times*.

Such a strong result for the SNP could place them in a kingmaker position if both Labour and the Conservative parties failed to win an overall majority in the 650-seat parliament.

Reuters

Mexico says only holding North Korea ship to comply with UN rules

MEXICO CITY, 10 April — Mexico’s foreign ministry said on Thursday it is only holding a North Korean ship that ran aground in its waters last year in order to comply with United Nations rules. The 6,700-tonne freighter *Mu Du Bong*, which had come from Cuba, hit a reef near Tuxpan in Mexico’s eastern Veracruz state in July last year. North Korea’s Deputy UN

Ambassador on Wednesday accused Mexico of illegally detaining the ship and crew, warning it would take “necessary measures” to release the vessel.

In a statement explaining why it had not yet released the vessel, Mexico’s foreign ministry said authorities had originally fined the ship’s owners for the environmental damage it caused. But before re-

leasing the ship, the United Nations told Mexico there was evidence it belonged to blacklisted North Korean firm, Ocean Maritime Management Company.

The foreign ministry said a UN delegation had visited the ship to investigate, adding that under the UN Charter it could not release the ship until the investigation was over.

Reuters

Venezuela’s president sees opportunity for better US ties

CARACAS, 10 April — Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro on Thursday said he saw an opportunity to improve strained ties with the United States, softening his stance toward US President Barack Obama in the run-up to a hemispheric summit in Panama.

The two nations historically tense relations took a turn for the worse last month when Washington slapped sanctions on seven Venezuelan officials over alleged human rights violations and declared the OPEC nation a security threat.

Maduro, who has said he will protest that measure

NATO hones response time of its rapid reaction units



An Abrams main battle tank, for US troops deployed in the Baltics as part of NATO’s Operation Atlantic Resolve, leaves Riga port on 9 March, 2015. —REUTERS

EINDHOVEN, (The Netherlands), 10 April — Dutch troops gathered at an air base on Thursday as part of an 11-nation exercise to test NATO’s new rapid response targets that have been tightened following concern over new Russian assertiveness.

Given just 48 hours to deploy, around 200 soldiers arrived at the air base near Eindhoven with the vehicles, weapons, equipment, food and water they would need if they had to fly abroad at short notice to confront an emergency.

Previously, NATO’s rapid reaction force was expected to respond within five to seven days, but leaders of the Western military alliance decided last September that faster times were needed to meet new geo-political threats.

“We are able to get everybody processed and supplied to be on the airplane within 48 hours,” said Captain Rob Morsink, from the Dutch 11th Air

Manoeuvre Brigade. “We basically confirmed that that’s not an issue at all.”

The rehearsal was part of a Europe-wide exercise involving more than 1,500 soldiers. A rapid reaction unit in the Czech Republic was also told to prepare to move, while nine other NATO allies tested their headquarters’ responses to alert procedures.

“We have 900 German troops being recalled to four garrisons right now and checking their ability to deploy,” said Polish Colonel Mariusz Lewicki, a top NATO military planner. After being given notice to deploy on Tuesday, the Dutch and Czech units recalled their soldiers to base and had the lead troops ready to move in as little as eight hours, Lewicki said.

Surprised by the speed of Russia’s military intervention in Crimea last year, NATO leaders have approved wide-ranging plans to boost the alliance’s defences in eastern Europe

and create a new “spearhead” rapid reaction force with 5,000 soldiers.

While that force is not expected to be fully operational until 2016 or 2017, NATO is trying to hasten the response time of its existing reaction force, whose troops are supplied this year by Germany, the Netherlands and Norway.

NATO disappointed some eastern European allies who wanted the US-dominated organization to station large numbers of troops on their territory following Russia’s actions in Ukraine.

NATO hopes the rapid reaction force will nonetheless prove a deterrent by demonstrating its resolve to defend swiftly any ally that should come under attack.

Although they undoubtedly had east Europe in mind when they agreed to the new plan, the force could also respond to “risks emanating from the Middle East and North Africa,” NATO has said.—*Reuters*



Venezuela’s President Nicolas Maduro carries a box containing signatures to ask US President Barack Obama to lift sanctions against a group of Venezuelan army members during a rally outside Miraflores Palace in Caracas on 9 April, 2015. —REUTERS

during the summit in Panama, commended Obama for saying in an interview that the United States did not in fact see Venezuela as a threat.

“The statements by President Barack Hussein Obama ... could temporarily open a door to begin a new era of historic relations between Venezuela, a free and sovereign Latin America and the empire of the United States,” Maduro said at a rally.

Caracas and Washington have had frequent spats over the last 15 years, with diplomatic expulsions common during the rule of

late socialist leader Hugo Chavez.

Thomas Shannon, counselor to Secretary of State John Kerry, on Wednesday met with Foreign Minister Delcy Rodriguez in Caracas in an apparent effort to ease tensions in the run-up to the summit.

“We do not believe that Venezuela poses a threat to the United States, nor does the United States threaten the Venezuelan government,” Obama said in a written interview with EFE news in advance of his arrival in Panama.

The sanctions primarily targeted Venezuelan offi-

cialists who were believed to be involved in a crackdown on four months of opposition protests in 2014. They did not apply to the country as a whole.

Venezuelan officials called the often violent demonstrations an effort to destabilize the country.

Maduro on Thursday said more than 10 million people had signed a petition asking that Obama repeal the executive order that created the sanctions. Opposition critics have cast doubt on that figure, with some alleging that civil servants have been coerced into signing.—*Reuters*

PERSPECTIVES

Saturday, 11 April, 2015

Success of talks rests on common interestsBy *Myint Win Thein*

Six leaders held talks in Myanmar today aimed at solving the country's political problems.

Myanmar people have long been waiting for the talks involving President U Thein Sein, Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann,

Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker U Khin Aung Myint, Commander in Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, National League for Democracy Chairperson Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and Dr Aye Maung, representing ethnic political parties, hoping that they can fix the country's pressing political issues.

These include constitutional amendment, free and fair elections, and stability after the election. It is clear that people are sick of the problems that continually hinder the development of the country.

It cannot be denied that political talks are important to solving issues. However, the success of the talks depends on all participants sharing common interests. If the participants make bar-

gains in the common interests of the country and people, the talks will lead to an improvement of the political situation. It is therefore important that all participants place the common interests of the country and people ahead of any party or organization.

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

Health Hazards: Smoking, betel-chewing, drinking, etcBy *Arakan Sein*

There are a lot of health hazards in our daily life; I would like to single out three major cancer-causing menaces which men get addicted to, trapped and are likely to go to an early grave. These problems should be tackled in a nation-wide scale and taken seriously on a personal experience.

Let us start with smoking; it is a deeply-rooted habit in human societies. It can be dated to as early as 5000 BC and has been recorded in many different cultures across the world. Many people, young or old, wise or foolish, educated or uneducated, intelligent or stupid, happen to get hooked on smoking one way or another. Most tobacco smokers develop the habit during adolescence or early adulthood. The presence of high-status models and peers may also encourage smoking among the young. Sigmund Freud got his oral cancer caused by ci-

gar-smoking and Adolf Hitler condemned smoking as a waste of money. UN Secretary-General U Thant and Sir Winston Churchill, British Prime Minister and Nobel Prize winner for literature were believed to be chomping on cigars while working late into nights. The former died of throat cancer at the age of 65; the latter was exceptional and he died aged over 90. US President Barack Obama has recently quit his bad habit because he said he was afraid of his wife. In addition, I would like to talk about my next-door neighbor who did not drink and chew betel nuts; but he was very fond of smoking cigarettes. As he was a successful businessman, he chain-smoked two packets a day. He kept that life-long habit until he was struck down with a series of strokes, leaving him bedridden for more than three years. In Yangon alone, roadblocks which are set up to give way for

traffic lanes in downtown become reddened with betel-spittings from passers-by such as drivers and passengers alike. This is an ugly scene for locals as well as for tourists who are often seen wandering around this commercial city. In our country as a whole, the consumption of betel leaves and nuts is believed to be as high as in such countries as Taiwan, India and Thailand. These countries have launched campaigns to discourage betel-nut chewing; we should follow suit as business for leaves and nuts has become booming in towns and villages alike.

How about betel-chewing? According to a news report from Taiwan, it is used by almost by a tenth of the world's population. The habit is also culturally rooted in human societies and it was visibly seen in the palaces of Myanmar kings. Regular betel-chewers stand out from the crowd with their lips and teeth. The betel nut is a key part of many Asian cultures and can be consumed dried, fresh or

wrapped up in a package known as a quid. Although the exact preparation varies across countries and cultures, the quid is usually a mixture of the slaked lime, a betel leaf and flavorings such as cardamom, cinnamon and tobacco. Among the ingredients, the slaked lime is seen as a particular problem as it causes hundreds of lime abrasions to form in the mouth. This is thought to be a possible entry point for many of the cancer-causing chemicals. It is hard to find concrete evidences of how to develop these bad habits. The reasons are somewhat weird: "I started chewing because everyone else did, one said; we shared it with each other to build good relations, others said; and unfortunately these men still don't know betel nuts can cause oral cancer, a survey said. My close friend suffered from Bell's palsy, an illness characterized by a distorted facial expression some years ago. Accordingly, he was given a medical prescription by a qualified physi-

cian and advised to practice daily movements of his jaws without fail. Instead, he discarded all the drugs and started chewing betel quids all day long, possibly in the hope of doing jaw-movement exercises. After several years, the bad habit led him to a total kidney failure; he has completely gone thin, becoming physically and psychologically devastated. Last but not least, I am going to discuss about drinking which can be roughly divided into social drinking and problem drinking. It is somewhat like, I would say, an invisible thin line between love and hate; you never notice when your drinking has crossed the line. Alcoholism and alcohol abuse can sneak up on you secretly or willingly, so it's important to be aware of the warning signs. Frankly speaking, I tried the above three when I was young. I gave up the first two because I was struck down with heart attacks and quit betel-chewing because of red-stained lips and teeth when I embarked on a

teaching profession which demands a clean personality. But I still maintain and enjoy drinking, presumably social drinking – a glass of beer or two pegs of whisky at social gatherings. The problem is even after so-called social gatherings. I continue to sneak a glass of beer at nearby beer pubs which are ubiquitous at every corner of the streets in downtown Yangon. My wife and my sons scolded me at the expense of my reputation in a rather friendly neighborhood. So I have to stay away from the pubs even if am forcibly invited to join them or my thirst is irresistible. Generally speaking, people know what kinds of risks involved in the health hazards I have discussed. I don't expect them to these bad habits right away after this article. But it is never too late to mend. If you come to know pros and cons of what you are doing, then I will be much satisfied. After all, the essence of life is satisfaction, once said Irish-born writer Oscar Wilde.

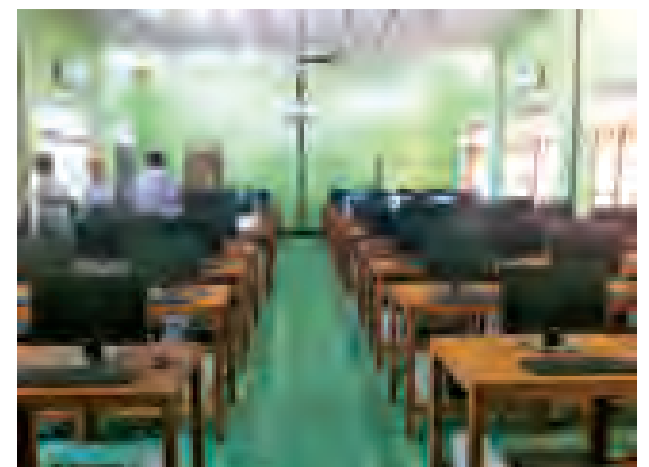
India supports Myanmar Central Land Records Development Training Centre (CLRDTTC) Taikkyi, Yangon Region

YANGON, 10 April—The Embassy of India announced the successful completion of the project for augmentation of the infrastructure of the Myanmar, Central Land Records Development Training Centre (CLRDTTC), situated in Taikkyi Township of Yangon Region, with financial and technical assistance from Government of India.

The project included supply and installation of state-of-the-art equipments, computers and accessories such as operating system along with audio-video cards and ports for connectivity, display and integrated optical media device. They have been installed with augmented backup power supply.

The upgradation of this important training institute with advance equipments would go a long way in strengthening Myanmar's capacity building efforts especially for land records. The subject of keeping efficient land record has acquired vital importance and urgency for the political and economic reforms undergoing in the country. The

CLRDTTC is expected to contribute towards this goal by providing well organized service in terms of record keeping and quick retrieval by utilizing the electronic resources. This would also contribute to Myanmar's endeavour to implement e-governance in the country. Government of India attached great importance to its development coopera-



tion with Myanmar. It seeks to share with its strategic partner the best that India could, including the experience and expertise of the

'Digital India' Programme. India is committed to cooperate with Myanmar Government in all such endeavours.—GNLM

LOCAL NEWS

Football match raises funds for aged home



MANDALAY, 9 April — A charity football match took place at Bahtoo Stadium in Mandalay on Wednesday between artists and former selected players of Mandalay Region to raise funds for the construction of a home for the aged.

Artists performed music before the match, which was won 6-5 by the former selected players. Mandalay Region Minister for Social Affairs Dr Win Hlaing and officials greeted players of both teams.

Officials of Mandalay Region government donated K 1 million and the minister and family K1 million to fund the building of the Tumataung YGW Home for the Aged in Yekyi Village, Patheingyi Township.

Ko Ah Wai, Ko Myo Gyi and Ko Po Zaw donated K200,000 to the Mandalay Region former selected players team and K1 million to the artists' team. The artists' team manager, film director Maung Bay Dah, and actor Aung Zaw, handed over the donation to the home.

Tin Maung (Mandalay)

Mandalay Region marks World Health Day

MANDALAY, 10 April — A ceremony to mark World Health Day was held at the hall of Mandalay Region Health Department on 7 April.

Deputy Director Dr Kyaw Kyaw of Mandalay Region Food and Drug Administration read out the message sent by Union Minister for Health Prof Dr Than Aung. Officials gave talks on safety and hygiene in food preparation.

Thiha Ko Ko (Mandalay)

Onion growers look to expand export market

MANDALAY, 10 April — A workshop to expand export markets for Myanmar onions and improve cultivation, staged by the Trade Promotion Department, took place at the city hall in Mandalay on 8 April.

Mandalay Region

Minister for Planning and Economy U Aung Zan delivered an opening address while Director-General U Myint Soe of the department spoke about expanding onion markets and the development of onion cultivation.

The chairman of the

Myanmar Onion, Garlic and Kitchen Crops Exporters Association and officials discussed cultivation in Mandalay, Sagaing and Magway regions.

Deputy Head of Mandalay Region Cooperative Department Daw Nu Nu Win explained the formation of cooperative production societies and disbursement of loans to farmers.

Officials discussed cultivation techniques for onion plants, pests and germs, value-added onion foods, and market prospects of Myanmar's onion.

Myanmar exported 35,358 tons of onion to India, Pakistan, Indonesia, Malaysia and China in the 2014-15 fiscal year.

Thiha Ko Ko (Mandalay)



Myanmar-Thai trade fair hails Maha Thingyan festival



CHANAYETHAZAN, 10 April — A trade fair at Mandalay's Sky Walk Shopping Mall is showcasing goods from entrepreneurs in Thailand's Mae Hong Son Prov-

ince until 12 April.

The Myanmar-Thai Friendship Association's Pre-Maha Thingyan Myanmar-Thai Trade Fair features leather products,

textiles, foodstuffs, slippers and shoes, soft drinks, women's wares, toys, watches, personal goods and kitchen goods.

Thiha Ko Ko (Mandalay)

Election sub-commissions review compilation of voter lists

YINMABIN, 10 April — A meeting to clarify the compilation of voter lists for Yinmabin, Kani, Salingyi and Pale townships in Sagaing Region was held at the hall of Township General Administration Department in Yinmabin on Friday.

Secretary of District Election Sub-commission U Soe Win stressed the need to check all complaints related to the voter lists after releasing them to the public.

District commission officer U Aung Zaw Thant and officials recounted their experiences in compiling the voter lists in re-

spective townships.

The meeting was attended by 200 people including chairmen and members of township elec-

tion sub-commissions and officials from Yinmabin, Kani, Salingyi and Pale townships.

Tun Ko Ko (Yinmabin)



Mandalay Region CCI to attend trade fair in China

MANDALAY, 10 April — At the invitation of a trade association in China's Yunnan Province, a 15-member delegation led by Mandalay Region Chambers of Commerce

and Industry vice chairman U Kyaw Min left for Ruili on Friday.

They plan to attend the Dehong Prefecture festival and trade fair in Mansi from 12 to 15 April.

In early March, officials of Dehong Prefecture and Mandalay Region CCI signed a memorandum of understanding on economic cooperation.

Thiha Ko Ko (Mandalay)

Red Cross demands access to Islamic State-held Yarmouk camp in Syria

GENEVA, 10 April — The International Committee of the Red Cross called on Thursday for immediate access to a Palestinian refugee camp in Syria which has largely been seized by Islamic State and where 18,000 people are caught up in fighting.

The independent aid agency said that emergency medical care was urgently needed at Yarmouk camp, which lies on the outskirts of Damascus. The ICRC has not had access to Yarmouk since October 2014.

“The ICRC is calling on all involved in fighting to allow the immediate and unimpeded passage of urgent humanitarian aid and to permit civilians who wish to leave the camp for safer areas to be able to do so at any time,” it said in a statement.

Marianne Gasser, head of the ICRC delegation in Syria, said: “People



Children eat food distributed to them in the besieged al-Yarmouk camp, south of Damascus on 7 April, 2014. Picture taken on 7 April, 2014. —REUTERS

were already worn down by months of conflict and constant shortages of food, water and medicine and they need urgent help.”

Islamic State has taken most of Yarmouk from rival groups while the Syr-

ian army surrounds the district, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights. Islamic State rules swathes of Syria and Iraq and is the target of US-led air strikes.

Some families have

managed to escape from Yarmouk to the nearby district of Yelda, the ICRC said. Along with the Syrian Arab Red Crescent it has delivered 9,500 food parcels to people in Yelda.

Reuters

UN chief urges Syria mediator to focus on political process

UNITED NATIONS, 10 April— United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said on Thursday he had asked his Syria mediator to “focus much more to re-launch a political process” in a bid to end the four-year civil war that has killed some 220,000 people and displaced millions.

Mediator Staffan de Mistura had been working since October on a local truce in the northern city of Aleppo and announced on 17 February that the Syrian government was willing to suspend its aerial bombardment and shelling for six weeks to test the plan.

But the local truce has failed to materialise. The Syrian government expelled three UN aid workers at the end of February and days later Syrian rebels rejected de Mistura’s plan, saying it would only benefit the Syrian government.

“I have asked Staffan de Mistura now to focus much more to re-launch a political process,” Ban told reporters. “I need the full support. There is no military solution. Only a political solution, dialogue, can

be an answer to this.”

De Mistura is due to brief the UN Security Council later this month.

He replaced Lakhdar Brahimi as mediator last year. Brahimi was appointed in 2012 to replace former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, who had quit after six months in the role. Brahimi and Annan both expressed frustration at the global deadlock, particularly in the Security Council, over how to end the war.

Russia, supported by China, has vetoed several Security Council resolutions threatening action against Syria, its ally.

“The international community must have full moral, political responsibility,” Ban said. “The Syrian war long ago exceeded words to describe the mayhem.”

Syrian troops cracked down on a pro-democracy movement in 2011, sparking an armed uprising. The United Nations said some 4 million Syrians have fled the country and an estimated 7.6 million are internally displaced.

Reuters



A man runs with an injured child at a damaged site after what activists said was shelling by forces loyal to Syria’s president Bashar al-Assad on Al-Dubeit neighbourhood in Idlib city, after rebels took control of the area on 5 April, 2015. —REUTERS

Taleban attack on Afghan court kills police chief, seven others



Afghan security members arrive at the site of an attack in Mazar-i-Sharif city, the capital of northern Afghan province of Balkh, on 9 April, 2015. —XINHUA

MAZAR-I-SHARIF, (Afghanistan), 10 April — Militants armed with rocket-propelled grenades and other weapons stormed a court in Afghanistan’s northern city of Mazar-i-Sharif on Thurs-

day and killed eight people including the district police chief, authorities said. Taliban insurgents claimed responsibility for the attack, in which at least 60 others were wounded.

The insurgents have increased assaults on government targets following the withdrawal of most foreign combat troops last year.

The raid started mid-morning when a group of fighters stormed the court and clashed with security forces. The battle continued for two hours and by late afternoon was still going on.

The court is located in a central part of Mazar-i-Sharif, the provincial capital of Balkh, close to the governor’s office and other government buildings.

The district police chief was killed along with two other police, according to a statement from the provincial governor’s office. A total of at least eight people were killed and 60

were wounded in the attack, which finally ended early in the evening, said Deputy Minister of Interior Ayoub Salangi in a statement.

The Ministry of Interior said that dozens of people, including the court’s chief prosecutor, were rescued by police during the battle.

A spokesman for the Taliban, Zabihullah Mujahid, claimed the attack on his official Twitter account.

The insurgents are fighting to topple Afghanistan’s US-backed government more than 13 years after their hardline Islamist regime was toppled by an American-led military intervention for sheltering al-Qaeda leaders who plotted the 11 September, 2001 attacks on US cities. —Reuters

Air strikes hit military targets in Yemen capital

SANAA, 10 April — Saudi-led air strikes hit Yemen’s capital Sanaa early on Friday, targeting weapons storage sites used by soldiers loyal to former president Ali Abdullah Saleh, a powerful supporter of Iranian-allied Houthi militias.

The air raids, which targeted parts of the Defence Ministry and other facilities lasted several hours,

residents told Reuters by telephone.

“The sky was lit up,” Sanaa resident Fadel Muhammad said. “We heard big explosions.” Houthi fighters who control the capital have also been trying to seize the southern city of Aden from local militias.

Saudi Arabia launched air strikes against the Houthis in neighbouring Yemen

two weeks ago with a coalition made up mainly of the kingdom and four Gulf Arab allies. The United States said on Tuesday it is speeding up arms supplies to the coalition.

Saleh is still highly influential in the military despite having given up power in 2012 after mass protests against his rule, and troops loyal to him are backing Houthi forces

fighting his successor President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi.

Hadi, a former general seen by the Shi’ite Muslim Houthis as a pawn of Sunni Gulf Arab monarchies and the West, fled Yemen for Saudi Arabia.

The conflict in Yemen has raised concerns that regional proxy wars between Sunni Saudi Arabi and Iran could intensify.—Reuters



People gather at the site of an air strike in Sanaa on 8 April, 2015. —REUTERS

BUSINESS & HEALTH

Bird flu outbreaks reported in two Mexican states



MEXICO CITY, 10 April—Two Mexican states have reported outbreaks of bird flu at poultry farms, local media reported on Thursday. Poultry farms in the central state of Puebla and

southern state of Oaxaca reported incidents of the “highly pathogenic H7N3 bird flu,” news network Radio Formula reported on its website.

“Mexico’s Agriculture Ministry, in a report released by the Paris-based World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), reported 139 infected birds were found at the farms,” the agency reported.

Government veterinary services began the

epidemiological research confirming the bird flu virus, the agency said, adding no links have been found between the two outbreaks.

In Oaxaca, where the incident marks the first ever outbreak of bird flu, 96 chickens were destroyed at farms in the region of Juquila, the area has been placed under quarantine, and vehicles used to transport the chickens are set to be disinfected, the agency reported.—Xinhua

Nikkei ends lower after hitting 20,000 for 1st time in 15 years

TOKYO, 10 April—Tokyo stocks ended slightly lower on Friday as investors locked in gains after the Nikkei index hit 20,000 points for the first time since 17 April, 2000, amid heightened expectations for further corporate earnings growth in Japan.

The 225-issue Nikkei Stock Average edged down 30.09 points, or 0.15 percent, from Thursday at 19,907.63. The broader Topix index of all First Section issues on the Tokyo Stock Exchange finished 4.65 points, or 0.29 percent, lower at 1,589.54. Major losers included marine transport and pharmaceutical, while retail and communications gained ground.—Kyodo News

Shorter height directly linked to higher risk of heart disease

WASHINGTON, 10 April—The shorter you are, the more your risk of coronary heart disease, according to a new study out Wednesday that attributed the link in part to genetics, rather than purely to nutrition or lifestyle factors.

The study, published online in the US journal *New England Journal of Medicine*, examined 180 genetic variants that affect height in almost 200,000 persons with or without coronary heart disease, which is the commonest cause of premature death worldwide.

It showed that for every change in height of 6.5 cm caused by these variants the risk of coronary heart disease changed on average by 13.5 percent.

“The more height increasing genetic variants that you carry the lower your risk of coronary heart disease and conversely if you were genetically shorter the higher your risk,” Christopher Nelson, one of the researchers from Britain’s University of Leicester said, in a statement.

For example, compared to a 1.68-metre tall person, a 1.52-metre tall person on average has a 32 percent higher risk of coronary heart disease because of their relatively shorter stature.

Lead author Sir Nilesh Samani, professor of cardiology at the University of Leicester, said: “For more than 60 years it has been known that there is an inverse relationship between

height and risk of coronary heart disease.”

“Now, using a genetic approach, researchers ... have shown that the association between shorter height and higher risk of coronary heart disease is a primary relationship and is not due to confounding factors,” Samani said.

Coronary heart disease is the condition where the arteries that supply blood to the heart muscle become narrowed due to a deposition of fatty material, or plaque, in the walls of the arteries. If a blood clot forms over the plaque then the artery can become completely blocked suddenly giving rise to a heart attack. The researchers said further exploration of genes that affect height may suggest new ways to reduce the risk of heart disease. “While we know about many lifestyle factors such as smoking that affect risk of coronary heart disease, our findings underscore the fact that the causes of this common disease are very complex and other things that we understand much more poorly have a significant impact,” Samani said.

“While our findings do not have any immediate clinical implications, better and fuller understanding of the biological mechanisms that underlie the relationship between shorter height and higher risk of coronary heart disease may open up new ways for its prevention and treatment.”

Xinhua

Gold near one-week low as US rate hike bets buoy dollar

SINGAPORE, 10 April—Gold remained near a one-week trough on Friday and was expected to end a three-week rally, pressured by renewed expectations for a US rate hike this year despite recent soft economic data.

Bullion has surrendered gains inspired by a weak US employment report last week as Federal Reserve officials suggest a US rate hike in June could still be in play, lifting the dollar to three-week highs versus a basket of major currencies.

Spot gold was steady at \$1,194.10 an ounce by 0645 GMT, after hitting a session low of \$1,192.30 on Thursday. Bullion is down 1.3 percent so far this week after pulling back from Monday’s seven-week top of \$1,224.10.

US gold for June delivery was also little changed at \$1,193.90 an ounce.

“What is changing rapidly is people’s expectations as the actual rate hike timing approaches,” said Mark To, head of research at Hong Kong’s Wing Fung Financial Group, who believes the Fed is on track to raise rates in June.

Data on Thursday showed the number of



A woman looks at a gold bangle inside a jewellery showroom at a market in Mumbai on 15 Jan, 2015.—REUTERS

Americans filing new claims for jobless benefits rose less than expected last week and the four-week moving average of claims hit its lowest level since 2000, suggesting an abrupt slowdown in job growth in March was likely a fluke.

Investors tend to shun gold, which doesn’t pay interest, when market expectations point to US interest rates rising.

“Whether the Fed raises rates in June or decides to wait till September is a moot point in our view since we think that once the first rate hike takes place,

the Fed will likely stand aside for a period of time to see what the repercussions of its move will be,” INTL FCStone analyst Edward Meir said in a note.

Gold could drop to a five-year low of \$1,100 this year, before a recovery in 2016 spurred by Asian demand, GFMS analysts at Thomson Reuters said.

Demand from India and China, the world’s top two gold consumers, has been slack so far this year, with Beijing’s anti-corruption drive hurting Chinese appetite.

Gold buying in Asia

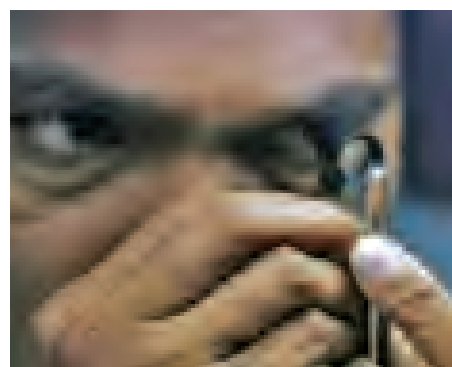
was slow this week as firmer spot prices turned off buyers, especially in China, and a potentially weak monsoon threatened demand in India.

Premiums for physical gold at the Shanghai Gold Exchange stood at a modest \$1-\$2 an ounce over the global spot benchmark on Friday.

In India, gold demand risks falling for a second straight year as millions of Indian farmers hit by erratic weather and falling commodity prices trim purchases.

Reuters

IndusInd Bank to buy RBS’s India jewellery financing business



A supervisor checks the shape of a polished diamond inside the diamond processing unit at Surat, in Gujarat on 5 Jan, 2013. REUTERS

MUMBAI, 10 April—IndusInd Bank Ltd (INBK.NS) said it would buy Royal Bank of Scotland’s (RBS.L) diamond and jewellery financing business in India and the related deposit portfolio. RBS’s India diamond and jewellery financing loan book is about 45 billion rupees (\$721.7 million) in size, IndusInd

said in a stock exchange filing on Friday. It did not give a value for the deal.

RBS employees within the business will also move to IndusInd Bank, the Indian lender said, adding it had also signed a pact with ABN AMRO Bank NV for cooperation in diamond and jewellery financing business.—Reuters

Mali says rebels to initial peace deal, prompting Tuareg denial

BAMAKO / DAKA, 10 April — Mali announced on Thursday that northern rebels would give preliminary approval to a UN-brokered peace proposal next week but a northern Tuareg separatist group said it was not ready to back a deal.

Despite mounting pressure from the government and Algerian-led mediators, the Tuareg-led separatist coalition has so far refused to initial the accord, saying it did not grant enough concessions to the desert region they call Azawad.

President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita's government said in early March it would sign the proposal.

Diplomats hope a deal will lead the separatists to disarm, freeing up Malian and international forces to tackle Islamic militants, who remain a threat despite a 2013 French-led military intervention in the country.

"The Coordination



Fighters from the Tuareg separatist rebel group MNLA take shade under a tree in the desert near Tabankort, on 15 Feb, 2015.—REUTERS

of Azawad Movements (CMA) will initial the proposal on 15 April, according to the prime minister," Malian state television said, referring to the Tuareg-dominated body that brings together five sepa-

ratist groups. A spokesman for Prime Minister Modibo Keita also confirmed this.

Earlier this month, representatives of the northern movements and mediators returned to the Algerian capital Algiers, where the

document was hammered out after months of talks, in an effort to salvage the peace process.

The deal aims to prevent future revolts by Tuareg-led insurgents who have risen up four times

since Mali's independence in 1960.

In the most recent rebellion in 2012, they allied with Islamist militants and briefly seized the desert north.

A letter sent by Algerian Foreign Minister Ramtane Lamamra to the CMA coalition on 6 April and seen by *Reuters* expressed "satisfaction" with its decision to initial the accord.

Lamamra invited them to a ceremony on 15 April in Algiers alongside the government to initial the agreement and discuss the next steps for a final signature.

But Moussa Ag Acharatoumane, spokesman for the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA), said that CMA had since changed its mind. The MNLA is the dominant armed group within the CMA.

"There are not enough assurances, not enough ex-

planations and too many unknown factors following this letter," he told *Reuters*. "Once our proposed amendments are taken into account then we can initial this and possibly sign it later."

Attaye Ag Mohamed, MNLA human rights representative, also dismissed the government's announcement. "No decision has been taken by the MNLA on whether or not to initial (the document)."

Mali Foreign Minister Abdoulaye Diop criticized what he said was a small group of "radical, extremist individuals" for blocking progress toward peace in a speech before the UN Security Council on Thursday.

"Those who, in spite of everything, chose to stand in the way of peace will give the international community no other choice than to isolate them ... and impose sanctions."

Reuters

Argentina plans lawsuits against UK oil firms near Falklands

LONDON / BUENOS AIRES, 10 April — Argentina said it would begin legal action on Thursday against British energy firms operating near the Falkland Islands, in a growing war of words over the disputed South Atlantic territory.

The move is the latest diplomatic spat between Britain and Argentina, who fought a short war over the Falklands in 1982, and has led to both countries summoning the other's ambas-

sador for a dressing down.

Last week, British firms Premier Oil Plc (PMO.L) and Falkland Oil and Gas Ltd (FOGL.L) said they had made an oil and gas discovery at a well off the south Atlantic islands, the first in a nine-month drilling campaign.

Argentina's President Cristina Fernandez called the announcement "almost provocative", and Argentine officials warned they were planning legal action

against British energy firms exploring off the shores of the Falklands, which lie 300 miles off the Argentine coast and 8,000 miles from Britain.

The two companies declined to comment about any legal action on Thursday. In a further development, Argentina has also demanded answers over media reports Britain had spied on Argentine military and political leaders from 2006 to 2011, based

on intelligence documents provided by the US whistle-blower Edward Snowden.

After summoning Britain's ambassador over the alleged spying, Argentine Deputy Foreign Minister Eduardo Zuain told him legal action would begin against the British firms on Thursday.

Argentina's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement: "A lawsuit will be presented today against

companies carrying out petroleum exploration activities on the Argentine continental shelf."

The discovery of oil has further raised tensions over control of the Atlantic archipelago more than 30 years after Argentine forces seized the islands and Britain sent a task force to retake them in a brief war which saw more than 600 Argentine and 255 British servicemen killed.

Britain said on Thurs-



Argentina's President Cristina Fernandez

day it had summoned the Argentine ambassador to explain the threat to prosecute British energy firms.

Reuters

130 dolphins get beached on shore in Ibaraki



A woman pours water on a beached dolphin to keep its skin moist on the shore of Hokota, Ibaraki Prefecture, northeast of Tokyo, on 10 April, 2015. According to the local branch of the Japan Coast Guard, which received an emergency call earlier in the day from a man who lives nearby seeking a rescue for the beached dolphins, more than 130 dolphins are beached in an area of more than 10 kilometres and are weakened.—KYODO NEWS

Freed Dutch al-Qaeda captive describes three-year desert ordeal

AMSTERDAM, 10 April — A Dutchman freed from captivity in Mali by French soldiers this week described his struggle to remain mentally and physically well during the three and a half years he spent sleeping outside in the desert as an al-Qaeda hostage.

In his first statement since being freed on Monday, Sjaak Rijke said the years of captivity had been difficult although he had mostly been well treated by his captors.

"The past years have been tough, both physically and mentally," he said in a statement issued via the Dutch foreign ministry on Thursday in which he asked for privacy as he and his family recovered from



Sjaak Rijke, a former Dutch hostage freed from an al-Qaeda-linked group in Mali arrives at the airport in Bamako, on 7 April, 2015.—REUTERS

the ordeal.

"Life in the desert is hard, food is often scarce and monotonous. It will be a while before I want to see pasta again," he added.

The years of captiv-

ity took their toll on the 54-year-old, who had worked as a train conductor in the Netherlands before he was abducted in Timbuktu in 2011 while on holiday with his wife.

"Sleeping outside in the sand, sitting in the sand. I'm not the youngest — it gives you stiff limbs," he said, adding that he had improvised exercises and sports to stay fit.

"I don't know how much longer I'd have survived. I want to thank the French elite troops who freed me," he added. "I'm alive, and I'm free."

French forces killed two militants and captured two others in Monday's raid on the al-Qaeda-linked militant group.

France led a military intervention in 2013 against Islamists who had seized the desert north a year earlier, following a Tuareg uprising and a military coup in Bamako.—*Reuters*

ADVERTISEMENT & GENERAL

**CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
MV KULTHARA VOY NO (04/15)**

Consignees of cargo carried on MV KULTHARA VOY NO (04/15) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 14.4.2015 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of S.P.W where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S KULNATEE CO**

Phone No: 2301186

**CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
MV HONG DE VOY NO (BSL002)**

Consignees of cargo carried on MV HONG DE VOY NO (BSL002) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 13.4.2015 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S BRILLIANT SKY**

Phone No: 2301186

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MV PUTRI ASIA VOY NO (04/15)**

Consignees of cargo carried on MV PUTRI ASIA VOY NO (04/15) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 14.4.2015 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.F.S.L where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S K-MARINE CO LTD.**

Phone No: 2301186

**CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
MV DYNASTY SHANG VOY NO (020)**

Consignees of cargo carried on MV DYNASTY SHANG VOY NO (020) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 15.4.2015 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S BRIGHT SAIL**

Phone No: 2301186

**CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
MV ASSAD ULLAH VOY NO ()**

Consignees of cargo carried on MV ASSAD ULLAH VOY NO () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 14.4.2015 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of S.P.W where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S BAY LINE**

Phone No: 2301186

**CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
MV KULNATEE VOY NO (02/15)**

Consignees of cargo carried on MV KULNATEE VOY NO (02/15) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 17.4.2015 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of S.P.W where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S KULNATEE CO**

Phone No: 2301186

One dead as tornadoes sweep through northern Illinois

ROCHELLE, 10 April — A dangerous storm system rolled through the Midwest on Thursday evening, killing at least one person and leveling houses and businesses northwest of Chicago, local officials said.

One person was killed and at least seven people were injured in the tiny town of Fairdale, Illinois,

located some 75 miles (120 km) from Chicago, according to local media, citing emergency officials.

Les Bellah, village president of nearby Kirkland, said that there was "extensive damage" to Fairdale, which has about 300 people. "I sent all our equipment there to help — backhoes, genera-

tors," said Bellah. Damage was also reported in and around Rochelle, Illinois, about 81 miles (130 km) west of Chicago, according to Rochelle Councilman Bill Hayes. The Red Cross opened a shelter in the town of about 10,000 people, and more than a dozen state agencies were providing help, according to the Illinois Emergency Management Agency.

"There's some houses that have been completely destroyed," Hayes said. He saw a tornado touch down while he was driving and raced off to warn people in its path.

Ogle County Sheriff Brian VanVickle told reporters on Thursday night that his house, and the home of relatives living nearby, were among the roughly 20 in Rochelle that were destroyed or significantly damaged. He said no one was taken to the hospital or reported missing.

Roads were closed all around the area due to downed power lines, said Illinois Department of Natural Resources Conserva-

tion Police Officer Phillip Wire, who was directing traffic near Rochelle.

Hayes said the popular Grubsteakers Restaurant in Rochelle was hit by the storm. People were rescued from the basement.

Fred McBride of Rochelle said he was working about half a mile from his house when the storm hit. He texted his family to "hit the basement." Everyone in his home was safe, but windows were broken and a dozen downed trees lit-

tered his yard.

Nearly 900 flights were canceled at O'Hare International Airport and Chicago Midway International Airport because of the weather, the airport said.

Storm spotters reported two tornadoes each in Peoria and Lee, Illinois, along with twisters in Clinton and Scott, Iowa, according to the weather service.

The storm brought with it strong winds as

well as golf ball- and baseball-sized hail in the Midwest and Northeast, the weather service said.

The National Weather Service Storm Prediction Centre is forecasting a risk of severe thunderstorms Friday afternoon and evening from southern Texas east along the Gulf Coast and northeast to the Mid-Atlantic states. Damaging winds and large hail are the main threats.

Reuters

WEATHER REPORT

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL EVENING OF THE 11th April, 2015: Rain or thundershowers are likely to be isolated in Sagaing, Mandalay and Taninthayi Regions, Kachin, Shan, Rakhine (North), Kayin and Mon States and weather will be partly cloudy in the remaining Regions and States. Degree of certainty is (60%).

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Continuation of likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers in the Southern Myanmar areas.

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Firefighters plan rescue at a gear station in Fairdale, Illinois, the United States, on 9 April, 2015. A tornado ripped through the town on Thursday night, killing one person and injuring seven others. —XINHUA

Singer Taylor Swift says mother has cancer, urges screening



Singer Taylor Swift poses at the 2015 iHeartRadio Music Awards in Los Angeles, California on 29 March, 2015.—REUTERS

NEW YORK, 10 April — Pop star Taylor Swift, famous for sharing important events in her life, said on Thursday her mother is suffering from cancer and urged her millions of fans to tell their parents to get screened for the illness.

The “Shake It Off” singer said in a post on the microblogging site Tumblr that her mother was feeling fine, but she and her brother asked her to go for a check-up.

“The results came in and I’m saddened to tell you that my mom has been diagnosed with cancer,” she said. “I’d like to keep the details of her condition and treatment plans private, but she wanted you to know.”

The 25-year-old Grammy winner who has more than 70 million fans on Facebook, said her mother, Andrea Finlay, wanted the news to be known so other “busy” parents will be reminded to get checked for the disease.

As soon as Swift made the announcement fans responded quickly at #PrayForMamaSwift, which was trending on Twitter.

Swift’s “1989” was the top-selling album of the 2014 and sold 3.66 million copies in the first nine weeks after its release, according to Billboard.—Reuters

Malayalam singer Ayiroor Sadasivan dies in road accident

KOTTAYAM, 10 April — Playback singer and music director Ayiroor Sadasivan, who has given many hit songs in Malayalam, was today killed in a road accident at Manakkachirayil on the Alappuzha-Changanassery road.

The mishap occurred when the car in which he was travelling and driven by his son, went out of control and fell into a roadside canal, police said.

Ayiroor Sadasivan (78) was returning to Adoor after a programme at Angamali in Ernakulam district.

His son Sreekumar, who sustained injuries, has been admitted to the NSS Mission Hospital at Changanassery.

Sadasivan started his career as singer in drama troupes and later rendered several songs in films.

He has worked with veteran music directors like G Devarajan and Dakshinamoorthy. He was a music director at Aakashvani and also an audition committee member.—PTI

Ed Sheeran performs at primary school

LONDON, 10 April — Singer Ed Sheeran performed a secret gig at a primary school in New Zealand after it re-named itself in his honour.

The 24-year-old British singer performed a selection of his hits and took part in a Q&A session with students at the Redcliff School in Christchurch, New Zealand yesterday.

He admitted during



the session he sometimes finds fame tough but said, “It’s still the best job in the world”.—PTI

Sandra Bullock’s 911 call heard at accused burglar’s hearing

LOS ANGELES, 10 April — Joshua Corbett, the man accused of breaking into Oscar-winning-actress Sandra Bullock’s Los Angeles home, appeared in court on Thursday for a preliminary hearing during which dramatic audio of her 911 emergency call was played.

Bullock, the star of “The Blind Side,” “Gravity” and other films, was at home during the reported break-in. The audio played in court was taken from her on 8 June, 2014, call to police. In it, a frantic and fearful Bullock is heard describing the events.

“Someone has broken into my house. I’m hiding in the closet,” says Bullock, in the recording. “I’m locked in my closet. I have a safe door in my bedroom, and I’ve locked it, and I’m locked in the closet right now,” she adds.

Later, she describes hearing the suspect banging on her

bedroom door.

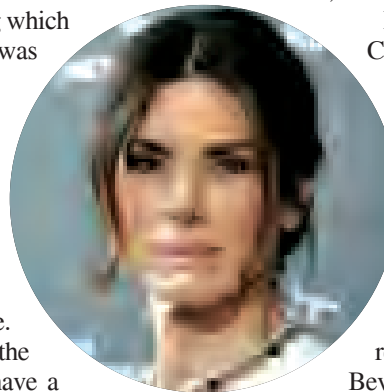
“I hear — I hear them. I hear someone banging on the door,” Bullock says.

In court on Thursday wearing prison garb, Corbett sat idly while the call was replayed.

Corbett, 39, has pleaded not guilty to several charges, including felony charges of burglary, stalking and possession of a machine gun, and 19 additional felony weapons charges.

Police reported finding a weapons cache, including several machine guns, at the Montrose, California, home of Corbett following his arrest at Bullock’s residence in an upscale neighbourhood near Beverly Hills. Prosecutors say Corbett was unarmed at the time of his arrest.

Corbett, whose bail last July was set at over \$2 million, is being held in Los Angeles County Jail.—Reuters



Amanda Seyfried turns flight attendant for a day



Amanda Seyfried

LOS ANGELES, 10 April — Actress Amanda Seyfried turned flight attendant during her recent flight from New York City to Los Angeles.

The 29-year-old actress chatted with a friend before springing into action in the airplane aisle, reported *Us* magazine.

“Amanda just took over and served cookies for the flight attendants! She was super friendly, laughing and joking with the flight attendants for a while. Then she came out with a tray passing everyone the chocolate chip cookies,” a fellow traveller said.

Seyfried joked around with her fellow passengers.

“She was just like, ‘Would you like a cookie? Would you like a cookie?’ to everyone,” recalled the insider.—PTI

Vin Diesel, Chris Tucker to join Ang Lee’s film

LOS ANGELES, 10 April — Actors Vin Diesel and Chris Tucker are in negotiations to join the growing cast of Billy Lynn’s “Long Haul,” the adaptation of the Ben Fountain novel being directed by Ang Lee.

TriStar and Film4 are partnering with Studio 8 on the feature project, according to *The Hollywood Reporter*.

Newcomer Joe Alwyn is starring as the title character with Steve Martin, Kristen Stewart and Garrett Hedlund in various stages of negotiations to join the roll call.

Simon Beaufoy wrote the screenplay telling the story of a 19-year-old private (Alwyn) who survives a battle in Iraq that is captured by news cameras.

He and his company



Actor Vin Diesel

of soldiers are brought back to the US for a promotional tour culminating in a half-time show at a Thanksgiving Day football game. Most of the movie takes place during the day of the game, with flashbacks to the wartime events.

Diesel will play a professional soldier while Tucker will play a movie producer who is intent on

making a movie about the soldiers. Production begins later this month. The studio is planning a shoot in native 3D and 4K, and will look to innovate with revolutionary new high-frame-rate technology.

Producers are Marc Platt, Ink Factory’s Stephen Cornwell, Rhodri Thomas and Simon Cornwell. Lee is also producing.—PTI

GENERAL

New Zealand's forests shrinking, warns greenhouse gas emissions report

WELLINGTON, 10 April — New Zealand's greenhouse gas emissions fell by 1.4 percent year on year in 2013, but deforestation is continuing apace, according to a government report out Friday.

The Greenhouse Gas Inventory report from the Ministry of the Environment estimated New Zealand's total carbon dioxide equivalent emissions at 81 million tons in 2013. The five sources that contributed most to the rise in total emissions were carbon dioxide from road transport and electricity generation, nitrous oxide from agricultural soils,

hydrofluorocarbons from industrial and household refrigeration and air-conditioning systems, and methane from livestock digestive systems. "New Zealand's total emissions peaked in 2005, decreased from 2006 to 2009, and showed an increasing trend from 2009 to 2012 before lessening again in 2013," it said.

However, it warned that the area of forests, which act as a carbon sink, had been shrinking since 2004 due to deforestation of planted forests. "Since 2008, annual deforestation has averaged approximately 8, 500 hectares. This is more than the

average area of new forest planting over the same period," it said.

However, Minister for Climate Change Issues Tim Groser, announcing the report, said, "For the past six years, our level of afforestation has exceeded our rate of deforestation."

The country was "well on track" to meeting its international commitment to reduce emissions to 5 percent below the 1990 level of 66.7 million tons by 2020, Groser said in a statement.

New Zealand farmers were also getting more efficient at improving their emissions intensity, Groser

said in a statement.

The opposition Green Party said the report contrasted with Groser's "misleading comments."

"Trees were cut down on twice the amount of land than they were planted in 2013," Green Party co-leader Russel Norman said in a statement.

"The key driver of this is the low carbon price, which is largely a result of the government weakening the emissions trading scheme," he said.

"This government's failure to make afforestation viable is resulting in a chain-saw catastrophe." —Xinhua

Ibrahimovic gets four-game ban for rant

PARIS, 10 April — Paris St Germain striker Zlatan Ibrahimovic has been banned for four Ligue 1 games for insulting match officials.

Sebastien Deneux, head of the French League's (LFP) disciplinary committee, told reporters on Thursday that the Swede was found guilty of "using insulting language" after a Ligue 1 game last month.

Ibrahimovic launched his expletive-laden rant after PSG lost 3-2 at Girondins Bordeaux on 15 March.

He also said France was a "shit country" but those comments fell outside the LFP's jurisdiction.

Ibrahimovic had already been suspended for PSG's quarter-final first leg against Barcelona in the Champions League next week. The Ligue 1 ban starts on Tuesday, meaning he can take part in Saturday's League Cup final against Bastia at the Stade de France.

French champions PSG top Ligue 1 with 62 points and have seven matches left this season.—Reuters



Paris St Germain's Zlatan Ibrahimovic runs for the ball during their French Cup semi-final soccer match against Saint Etienne at the Parc des Princes stadium in Paris on 8 April, 2015. —REUTERS

Real to appeal against Ronaldo caution for diving

MADRID, 10 April — Real Madrid have decided to appeal against a yellow card shown to forward Cristiano Ronaldo in Wednesday's 2-0 La Liga win at Rayo Vallecano that will result in a one-match suspension if it stands.

Ronaldo was booked after the referee ruled he had dived to try to win a penalty although television replays suggested the Portugal forward had been felled by a Rayo defender.

It was the league top



Real Madrid's Cristiano Ronaldo (L) at Vallecas stadium in Madrid on 8 April, 2015.

REUTERS

scorer's fifth yellow and means he will miss Saturday's game at home to Eibar if the appeal fails.

"Real Madrid will appeal the yellow card that Cristiano Ronaldo received in the game yesterday," the club said on their website on Thursday.

With a win against La Liga debutants Eibar, second-placed Real can close to within a point of leaders Barcelona who play at Sevilla later on Saturday.

Reuters

LA launches 'Save the Drop' campaign in face of record drought

LOS ANGELES, 10 April — Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti launched a "Save the Drop" campaign on Thursday, seeking to rally residents of California's most populous city behind water-saving measures in the face of a devastating, multi-year drought.

The public relations push comes as state officials tighten already strict rules on water usage and

ask cities and towns across California to enforce a 25 percent reduction in water usage before the hot, dry summer season begins.

California is entering its fourth year of a severe drought that has left mountain snow pack, which generally provides about a third of the state's water, at its lowest level on record and forced farmers to fallow thousands of acres of crop-

land. In Los Angeles, Garcetti's campaign implores residents of America's second-largest city to save water with ads on buses and trash trucks and an educational programmes at libraries and alerts them to programmes such as rebates for replaces water-gulping grass lawns with drought-tolerant plants.

"Because we acted strategically and acted early, we

have powerful tools in place to respond to this historic drought," Garcetti said in a statement released through his office.

"Now, through this unprecedented outreach campaign, we are taking action to make sure every Angeleno is informed and encouraged to harness those tools to lower their water use and their water bills," he said.— Reuters

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(11-4-2015 07:00 am~ 12-4-2015 07:00 am) MST

- | | |
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| * Great Shwedagon: The Prayer Halls and Buddha Images (Part-1) | * The Stories of The Great Souls (Daw Saw Mone Nyin- A Living Literary Legend of Myanmar) |
| * Distinguished Myanmar Lady "Kyin Po" | * Myanmar Masterclass: Art Teacher |
| * News | * News |
| * Myanmar Traditional Festival | * "Myanmar's Beauty and Nature" Beach |
| * News | * Crocodile Keeper |
| * Our World: Thailand's Slave Fishermen | * News |
| * Thingyan Dance | * The Long-Lasting Royal Tradition |
| * News | * Thingyan Dance |
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MRTV News Channel in Brief

(11-4-2015, Saturday)

- | | | | |
|-------------------|--|----------------|--|
| 6:00 am | • Paritta by Hilly Region Missionary Sayadaw | 2:10 pm | • Round up of the Week's Hluttaw |
| 6:25 am | • Myitta Pawana by Min gun Sayadaw Phaya | 2:45 pm | • Songs of Thingyan Festival |
| 7:35 am | • Hyper Sports | 3:00 pm | • News |
| 8:00 am | • News / International News | 3:35 pm | • Hyper Sports |
| 8:35 am | • Documentary | 4:30 pm | • Head Line News |
| 9:35 am | • MRTV's Youth Programme | 6:15 pm | • Songs of Thingyan Festival |
| 10:35 am | • Science and Technology Programme | 7:35 pm | • Business News |
| 11:35 am | • Game for Children | 8:00 pm | • News / International News / Weather Report |
| 12:00 noon | • News / International News / Weather Report | 8:35 pm | • Public Debate |
| 12:35 pm | • Hluttaw Image | 9:00 pm | • News |
| 12:50 pm | • Round up of the Week's Local TV News | | • Pyi Thu Ni Ti |
| | | | • Gitadagale Phwintbarohn |

MRTV Entertainment Channel

(11-4-2015, Saturday)

- | | | | |
|----------------|--|-------------------|--|
| 6:00 am | • Honour Song for Alinka Kyaw Swar Myoma Nyein | 7:30 am | • Radio Teleplay |
| 6:25 am | • Myanmar series | 8:20 am | • Dramatic Arts 0 |
| 6:40 am | • Song and Dance of Thingyan Festival | 9:40 am | • Songs and Dance of Thingyan Festival |
| 6:55 am | • Documentary | 9:55 am | • Myanmar Video |
| | | 12:00 noon | • Close Down |

Mandalay Region champion in MFF Nippon Foundation U-15 2015



YANGON, 10 April — Mandalay Region U-15 team held up championship trophy with a 5-3 win victory over Sagaing Region U-15 team in the final match of the MFF Nippon Foundation U-15 2015 at Youth Training Centre in Thuwunna, Thursday afternoon. At the end of first half, Sagaing Region U-15 team led the match with a 3-1 win over Mandalay Region. In the second half, Mandalay's players beefed up tempo of their plays by equalizing match with a 3-3 result till the final whistle. In the first 30-min extra time, Mandalay Region could translate its opportunities to two more goals.

Sai Saing Lyan of eastern Shan State won the best goalkeeper award, Thet Paing Oo of Ayeyawady Region the best defender

award, Bo Bo Aung of Sagaing Region the best midfielder award and Shin Thant Thu of Mandalay Region, the best forward award and best player of the tournament.

They also secured K100,000 each for their awards. Nippon Foundation officials presented bags to Shan State (East) that won the fair play award. Officials gave individual medals and K500,000 to third prize winner Ayeyawady Region team, medals and K1 million to second prize winner Sagaing Region and medals and K2 million to champion Mandalay Region. President of Myanmar Football Federation U Zaw Zaw presented championship trophy to Mandalay Region team.

MFF

Valencia lose ground in battle for third place

MADRID, 10 April — Valencia stumbled in the battle with Atletico Madrid and Sevilla for third place in La Liga when they conceded a late Aritz Aduriz equaliser in a bad-tempered 1-1 draw at Athletic Bilbao on Thursday.

The three clubs are battling it out for both third place and a lucrative automatic berth in the Champions League group stage and fourth, which carries a spot in qualifying for Europe's elite club competition.

With eight games left, Atletico are third on 65 points after they won 2-0 at home to Real Sociedad on Tuesday, three ahead of Valencia in fourth. Sevilla, 2-1 winners at Levante on Tuesday, are fifth on 61 points.

Barcelona, chasing a fifth title in seven years, lead on 74 points, four ahead of second-placed Real Madrid.

Bilbao, who are through to next month's King's Cup final to play Barca, came close to an opener in the 56th minute at the San Mames when an Aduriz header was cleared off the line by Valencia defender Nicolas Otamendi.

Substitute Rodrigo De Paul fired Valencia ahead five minutes later when Paco Alcacer cleverly let the ball run past him and De Paul clipped a shot past Gorka Iraizoz into the corner of the home goal.

Otamendi was shown a straight red card six minutes from time for a dangerous tackle on Mikel San Jose which prompted an unseemly bout of pushing and shoving between the two sides that delayed play for several minutes.

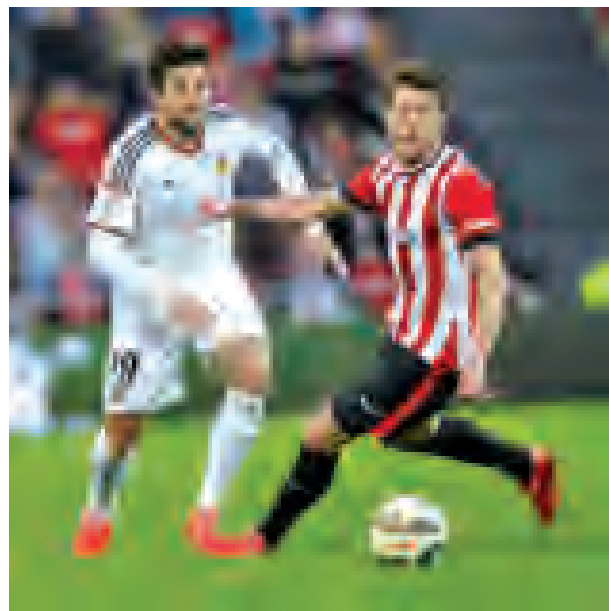
Bilbao made the extra man count and Aduriz pounced on a loose ball in the 90th minute to rescue a point for the Basque club, who have recovered well from a poor start to the campaign and are eighth on 40 points.

Aduriz appeared to be in an offside position and Valencia coach Nuno expressed his anger with the match officials at his post-match news conference.

"There were two results, the one which should have been, which was our victory, and the draw," the Portuguese told a news conference. "We are outraged and it's a disgrace," he added.

"If there is anyone who wants to prevent Valencia from achieving its goals they are out of line. Because the outrage we feel will make us stronger."

Villarreal, who are sixth, remain well placed to secure a place in the Europa League despite a 3-0 defeat at ninth-placed Espanyol, while Getafe pulled away from the relegation places with a 1-0 win at fellow strugglers Elche.—Reuters



Valencia's Antonio Barragan (L) challenges Athletic Bilbao's Ibai Gomez during their Spanish first division soccer at San Mames stadium in Bilbao, on 9 April, 2015.—REUTERS

Mourinho criticizes Ballon d'Or's negative impact

LONDON, 10 April — Chelsea manager Jose Mourinho has criticized FIFA's Ballon d'Or award given to the world's best player for glorifying the individual at the expense of the team.

The Portuguese coach found rare common ground with Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger, another critic of the award which has been dominated in recent seasons by Real Madrid's Cristiano Ronaldo and Barcelona's Lionel Messi. "I think Wenger said something that is interesting," Mourinho said in an interview on the Telegraph website.

"He is against the Ballon d'Or, and I think he's right, because in this moment football is losing a little bit the concept of the team to focus more on the individual.

"We are always looking at the individual performance, the individual stat,

the player that runs more. Because you run 11km in a game and I run nine you did a better job than I did? Maybe not. Maybe my 9km were more important than your 11. "For me, football is collective. The individual is welcome if you want to make our group better. But you have to work for us, not we have to work for you. "When the top player arrives, the team is already there. It's not him who comes to discover the team, like Columbus discovering America. No, no, you are coming now to help us be better." Messi and Ronaldo have hogged the award, formerly known as World Player of the Year, since 2008 and the last non-striker to take the honour was Italian defender Fabio Cannavaro in 2006.

Mourinho also spoke about his first job, teaching children with Down's syndrome and severe mental

disabilities.

"I wasn't technically ready to help these kids," he said. "And I had success only because of one thing, the emotional relation that was established with them.

"I did little miracles only because of the relationship. Affection, touch, empathy — only because of that. There was one kid that refused all his life to walk up stairs. "Another one that couldn't coordinate the simplest movement — all these different problems, and we had success in many, many of these cases only based on that empathy." Mourinho's Chelsea hold a seven-point lead over Arsenal at the top of the Premier League and are eight points clear of Manchester United in third, with a game in hand over both their title rivals.

They are away to west London rivals Queens Park Rangers on Sunday.

Reuters

Chelsea target Muto named J-League MVP for March

TOKYO, 10 April — Chelsea target Yoshinori Muto was named J-League first-division MVP for March on Friday after helping FC Tokyo get off to a solid start to the season.

The 22-year-old Japan striker scored three goals in three games in March and Tokyo are currently joint second in the table after four games on eight points, two

behind leaders Urawa Reds.

Tokyo club president Naoki Ogane on Wednesday revealed that the club had received a formal offer from Muto from English Premier League leaders Chelsea.

Muto, who won the monthly award for the first time, said he was happy about Chelsea's evaluation of him but that he had yet to make a decision on whether

he would accept the offer and leave Japan to join Jose Mourinho's men. "I haven't made any decision yet. Right now I am playing for FC Tokyo and I am only thinking about helping the club win the first stage (of the J-League championship). I have had a great offer and I am happy that I am rated (by Chelsea)," he said on Wednesday.—Kyodo News