Vice President U Nyan Tun visits industrial park in Ayutthaya

Vice President U Nyan Tun looks around rice quality promotion factory of Khao C.P Co., Ltd.—MNA

NAY PYI TAW, 31 Jan—Vice President U Nyan Tun visited Rojana Industrial Park in Ayutthaya, Bangkok in Thailand on Saturday.

Managing director of the industrial park welcomed the vice president and explained the facilities. U Nyan Tun and delegation visited small and medium scaled industries and power supply system to these factories.

Rojana Industrial Park established in 1988 on 15,000 acres of land has employed 120,000 workers to manufacture auto parts, electronic gadgets, machine parts and food items.

Vice President and party then looked around Panasonic Electric Works (Ayutthaya) Co., Ltd, F&N Dairies (Thai Land) Co., Ltd and Khao C.P Co., Ltd.

U Nyan Tun and party arrived back Yangon International Airport in the evening and were welcomed by Yangon region’s chief minister and officials of Thai embassy in Yangon. —MNA

Little danger of Yangon’s housing bubble deflating soon, say market experts

By Ye Myint

YANGON, 31 Jan—Despite dire predictions of the imminent bursting of the Yangon property bubble, some housing agents and experts have rejected the hypothesis that Yangon’s real estate boom is about to burst. Although housing prices skyrocketed in many parts of Yangon, the country’s commercial city, in the past few years, the overheated property market has cooled with sales slumping since the start of this year. But housing prices remain unchanged.

“I don’t believe the forecasts on the property market, which is stalling, may cause housing bubbles to burst,” Yangon-based economist U Khin Maung Nyo told The Global New Light of Myanmar.

“House sales might be muted this month compared to last month. There may be a seemingly stagnant property market over a few months, but it is impossible to exert downward pressure on prices in the market”, he said. (See page 3)

President U Thein Sein’s radio message to be broadcast on 1-2 February

NAY PYI TAW, 1 Feb — A radio message by U Thein Sein, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, will be broadcast on radio on 1 and 2 February.

Myanmar Radio, Mandalay FM, Pyinsawady FM, Shwe FM, Cherry FM, Padayma FM, FM Bagan and Thazin Radio will broadcast the message at 7 am, 11 am, 6 pm and 8 pm.

The full text of the message in Myanmar Language will be published in Myanmar dailies to be published on 1 February.—MNA

Joint Press Conference
The 3rd Myanmar—Thailand Joint High-level Committee Meeting for the Comprehensive Development in the Dawei Special Economic Zone and Its Related Project Areas

30 January 2015 Bangkok, Thailand

The Third Myanmar–Thailand Joint High-level Committee Meeting regarding the Dawei Special Economic Zone (Dawei SEZ) was held in Bangkok on January 30, 2015.

The meeting was co-chaired by His Excellency M.R. Pridiyathorn Devakula, Deputy Prime Minister of Thailand, and His Excellency U Nyan Tun, Vice President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

During the meeting, both countries reaffirmed their commitment to the development of the Dawei SEZ, located in the Taninthayi Region in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar. With a total size of 196 square kilometers, Dawei SEZ is a strategic development project, with the objective to sustainably boost the economic development of Myanmar and the region overall.

Showcasing the commitment to Dawei SEZ and the strong ties between the two countries, His Excellency M.R. Pridiyathorn Devakula stated that “Today bilateral relations between Thailand and Myanmar are at their best. Given its scale and economic significance, the successful implementation of Dawei SEZ project will further enhance our cooperation to a new height, not only for mutual benefit of our two countries, but also for the entire region”.

As part of the Joint High-level Committee Meeting, an Official Tri-lateral Meeting with Japan also took place, during which Japan offered its support to the development of Dawei SEZ and to contribute financial and technical assistance.

In order to accelerate job creation in the short term short show the benefits of the project to the local communities and kick-start the development of Dawei SEZ, an initial phase will first be launched. The initial phase, which is expected to see construction works start in 2015, will consist of industrial estate (up to 27 km2), a two-lane road between Dawei SEZ and Thailand, initial township for the workers, LNG terminal, telecom landline, power plant, small port, and water reservoir.

Exclusive negotiations are currently ongoing with a Thai consortium regarding the concession agreements for this initial phase development.

In parallel, a long-term master plan for Dawei SEZ is being developed, with the support of Neighbouring Countries Economic Development Cooperation Agency (NEDA) from Thailand. This long-term master plan will be in line with the initial phase development and will include (See page 3)
GGP provides over US$ 1.1 million for construction of schools, bridge, health centres

YANGON, 31 Jan—Mr Tateshi Higuchi, Ambassador of Japan and chairman of the committee from regions and states signed grant contracts for six projects on 27 January.

Japan’s Grant Assistance for Grass-roots Human Security Projects (GGP) Scheme will provide US$ 1.155.251 to regions and states.

GGP gave US$ 271,893 to construction of Basic Education High School to admit over 1,200 students in Tonanz Town-ship, Chin State; US$ 343,494 to construction of BEHS to give seats to 760 students in Falam, Chin State; US$ 119,413 to construction of a rural health branch to provide medical treatment to the local people in Yay-thaung Village in Sedok-tara Township, Magway Region; and US$ 181,692 for construction of a bridge for smooth transport of local people in Kektyayseik Village in Kyaukkyi Township, Bago Region.

Wellwishers donate cash to fund of education foundation

TATKON, 31 Jan—Organized by Shwe Thinkha education foundation, the book show and sales 2015 was held at Alin Ein library in Anawrahta Ward, Tatkon, Nay Pyi Taw Council Area.

Over 3,000 books are displayed at the show from 30 January to 8 February.

The book show and sales is aimed at enabling the readers to save time and money in purchase of books in cities like Yangon, writer Maung Taw Lu (U Po Than Win) of Yangon told media.

Tin Soe Lwin (IPRD)

Hockey players under sports trial for taking joint training in Malaysia

YANGON, 31 Jan—A tentatively selected hockey team was formed with 20 players from Army, five from Navy, two from Air Force, two hockey technical officers of the Ministry of Sports and one from Theinbyu Youth team, totalling 30.

Arrangements are being made for a one-month joint training of Myanmar team with Malaysian clubs in Malaysia. Twenty players and five manager and coaches of the tentatively selected team will be chosen to take joint training in Malaysia. In Malaysia, the Myanmar team will play at least 10 tune-up matches with Malaysian teams.

The remaining players of Myanmar team will be under training.

Reporter Than Swe (Pabedan)

Construction of low-cost housing in Yangon’s suburb Shwepyitha 60% completed

YANGON, 31 Jan—Construction of a low-cost housing in Shwepyitha, one of Yangon’s suburban townships, is 60 per cent complete and the project is expected to be finished in March, according to the Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC).

The project was implemented the previous year.

It will have 192 apartment units, an official from the YCDC engineering department said.

“Those apartments will also be sold to the public at around K10 million each through a draw-lot system this year,” the official added.

But Ma Thuza, a company accountant, said that in her opinion the price of a low-cost apartment “should be lower than K10 million”.

The YCDC on Tuesday provided permission to buy condominium apartment to winners among applicants for the Shwem- yara Condominium in Mingala Taungnyunt Township in Yangon.

Construction of this joint venture project between the YCDC and Ngapali Construction Co., Ltd is 80 per cent completed. It has 76 apartments at 2,203 sq ft and 2,683.5 sq ft, pricing out at K264.36 million and K322.02 million, according to the department.

The YCDC is also developing an “affordable housing” project in Dagon Seikkan Township in Yangon, which will be sold at more than K20 million each.

It also has a plan to develop additional housing in the future.

GNLM

Book show and sales attracts readers in Tatkon

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Tin Soe Lwin (IPRD)

Wellwishers donate cash to fund of education foundation

TATKON, 31 Jan—A ceremony to donate books to libraries was held in conjunction with the ceremony to set up the fund for library at Alin Ein Library in Anawrahta Ward, Tatkon, Nay Pyi Taw Council Area, on 39 January morning.

Shwe Thinkha education foundation donated books and journals to eight libraries.

Officials of the foundation presented prizes to the winners in the Thakhabon community welfare, essay contests (central level) in World Teacher’s Day and the International Literacy Day.

U Tun Oo and family of Meiktila donated K 540,000, U Po Than Win and family of Yangon K 700,000 and Lt-Col Maung Maung Tin (Rtd) and family K100,000 to Shwe Thinkha education foundation.

Tin Soe Lwin (IPRD)

Photo: Khaing Thanda Lwin
Protest students reach Chauk Township

CHAUk, 31 Jan— Students who are protesting against National Education Law reached Chauk, Magwe region, on Saturday morning after an overnight stay in Kyaukpataung.

They continued marching into Chauk Township after defying suggestions of the elder and officials of Chauk Township near the milepost 391/2 to make protest legally. About 100 protesters, including monks, stayed at the monastery of Hanchaung village at 7 p.m. for night.

Myanmar, Laos hold collaboration meeting on friendship bridge project

NAy Pyi Taw, 31 Jan— Senior ministers of Myanmar and Laos held a collaboration meeting Saturday on the project of friendship bridge that crosses Mekong River.

The ministerial meeting at the Myanmar side was attended by U Kyaw Lwin, Union Minister for Construction, U Sao Aung Myat, Shan State’s Chief Minister and U Sai Naw Lwin, Union Minister for Transport. They looked into the project of friendship bridge that crosses Mekong River in order to facilitate and enhance road connectivity between the two countries on the occasion of a visit to Myanmar of Lao Prime Minister Thongsing Thammavong in July 2011.

Myanmar and Laos established diplomatic ties in July 1955. However, the volume of trade between the two countries is still low compared to that with Laos’ other neighbouring countries.

Myanmar Maritime University hosts scholarship presentation ceremony

NAy Pyi Taw, 31 Jan— A scholarship award presentation ceremony took place at Myanmar Maritime University in Yangon on Wednesday.

MJ Technology Co., Ltd from Japan presented scholarship to 60 students. The presentation of scholarship awards is held annually.

The MJ Technology Co., Ltd which was named as the best international maritime company, presented scholarships to MJ Technology Co., Ltd employees to support education to MJ Technology Co., Ltd.

Little danger of Yangon’s housing bubble deflating...

NAy Pyi Taw, 31 Jan— Despite slowing sales in the real estate market triggered by various measures to cool down the escalating housing prices, it is hard to see that there will be a drop in prices in the housing market this year,” a senior property agent added.

Despite seeing increased interest in the booming property market, foreign developers and potential investors who are gathering information about the market tend to hesitate for an appropriate amount of time, some sources said.

“Yangon’s economy is expected to continue to grow and the country is also expecting to more see vast throng of foreign investors in a range of sectors, including construction and hospitality, he continued.

Despite seeing increased interest in the booming property market, foreign developers and potential investors who are gathering information about the market tend to hesitate for an appropriate amount of time, some sources said.

“Yangon’s economy is expected to continue to grow and the country is also expecting to more see vast throng of foreign investors in a range of sectors, including construction and hospitality, he continued.

Despite seeing increased interest in the booming property market, foreign developers and potential investors who are gathering information about the market tend to hesitate for an appropriate amount of time, some sources said.

New salaries and fringe benefits to MPs with effect from April

NAy Pyi Taw, 31 Jan— President U Thein Sein signed a law approved by Pyidaungsu Hluttaw to amend the law on salaries and fringe benefits to members of parliament Saturday, with effect on April 1.

Salaries for members of parliament at different levels range from K1 million to K100,000, the law stated.

MPs with a monthly salary of K300,000 will now receive K1 million those with K200,000 will receive K500,000; those with K200,000 will receive K500,000; and those with K100,000 will receive K300,000.

The 3rd Myanmar—Thailand...

(from page 1)

infrastructure such as a deep sea port and a highway connecting the Dawei SEZ with Thailand. It will also elaborate on phased industrial development plan.

To support the further development of Dawei SEZ, the Thai government would offer financial assistance to Myanmar for the Two-lane Road connecting DSEZ project to Myanmar-Thailand border which will not only promote regional connectivity by completing the Southern Economic Corridor on the Myanmar side, but will also enhancing international investors’ confidence in the Dawei SEZ project. Both countries agreed to continue exploring the possibility of such financial assistance, which may also bring in Japan as a financial contributor.

Both the Myanmar and Thai governments are committed to the development of Dawei SEZ and fully support the project. His Excellency U Nyan Tun, concluded by stating that “The Dawei SEZ project will significantly accelerate the economic growth of Myanmar and ASEAN region while ensuring compliance with international best practice on social and environmental matters, create jobs and opportunities for international as well as local companies, and foster an even further cooperation between the countries in the region”.

KNU/KNLA (PC) members return to legal fold

10 members of KNU/KNLA (PC)’s Battalion 709 seen in Myawady on 30 January.

MYAWADY, 31 Jan— A group of 10 member from KNU/KNLA (PC)’s Special Commando Battalion 709 returned to the legal fold together with three family members on Friday night.

The 10-member group led by Saw Black (a) Saw Win Myint handed over their arms including 10 small weapons, one mine and eight sets of equipment and ammunition to Police Ltd-Col Moe Nyo, commander of Myawady District Police Force.

They were warmly welcomed by the district police commander and members and their families.
RU’s Physics Dept pays respect to old teachers

Yangon, 31 Jan — Old students from all classes of the Physics Department of Yangon University paid respect to their teachers at the age of 65 and above on Saturday on the university campus.

Among over 1500 old students majoring in Physics who attended the ceremony were Union Minister for Electric Power U Kyaw Maung Soe, Union Minister for Science and Technology Dr Ko Ko Oo, and Parliamentarian U Htay Oo, on behalf of the teachers, gave admonition to his pupils and Parliamentarian U Htay Oo spoke words of thanks. After the respect paying ceremony, a dinner was hosted under the Thitpoke tree, a symbol of Yangon University.

Physics Department of Yangon University was established in 1920. — MNA

Commerce minister witnesses signing MoUs in Thailand

Nay Pyi Taw, 31 Jan — Union Minister for Commerce U Win Myint attended signing memorandums of understanding between Myanmar and Thailand in Tak province, on Thursday.

Before signing ceremony of these agreements, Union Minister and delegations attended the business meeting held at Centara Mae Sot Hill Resort.

At the meeting, Tak province governor explained Thai authorities’ efforts in implementation of ‘Sister City’ between Mae Sot and Myawady, plans to open new Asia highway in July 2015, construction of second Mae Sot-Myawady bridge and cooperation in bilateral trades.

Officials from both sides signed Thailand-Myanmar Business Meeting 2015 Joint Statement.

CDIA pledges financial assistance to heritage conservation project in Yangon

By: Khin Yadana

Yangon, 31 Jan — The Cities Development Initiative for Asia (CDIA) has pledged US$350,000 for a heritage conservation project in Yangon, saying it plans to carry out its pre-feasibility study in cooperation with the Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC) and the Yangon Heritage Trust (YHT).

With the participation of international and local experts, the pre-feasibility study is expected to start in the first week of February and last six months.

The project will be of great help to upgrading historic buildings as well as delineating a more comprehensive heritage regeneration initiative among investors, architects and developers.

Dr Toe Aung of YCDC said, “Lack of knowledge has led to scores of heritage losses, for example ancient pagodas in Bagan,” adding that great care should be taken as cultural heritage is prone to vulnerability.

YHT Chairman Dr Than Myint U said ways should be sought to combine heritage conversation projects with cities development initiatives.
Japan says hostage negotiations with militants ‘deadlocked’

Tokyo, 31 Jan — Efforts by Japan and Jordan to secure the release of two of their nationals held captive by Islamic State militants remain “deadlocked” and the situation remains highly unpredictable, Japanese officials said.

Militants had threatened to kill Jordanian pilot Muath al-Kasasbeh unless a would-be suicide bomber being held on death row in Amman was handed over by sunset on Thursday.

Japanese journalist Kenji Goto was also being held by the militants.

“The situation is deadlocked,” Japan’s deputy foreign minister, Yasuhide Nakayama, said in Jordan late on Friday according to Japanese public broadcaster NHK.

Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida said in Tokyo on Saturday that the situation was unpredictable and that anything could happen, NHK reported.

“Anything could happen,” he said. “We can’t predict it at all. While preparing for every situation, I want to make every effort for Mr. Goto’s release.”

Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga arrived at the Prime Minister Shinzo Abe’s office on Saturday afternoon, and the prime minister is on standby to receive regular updates on the situation, NHK said.

Jordan’s army said on Friday state agencies were “working round the clock”.

An audio message purportedly from Goto said the pilot would be killed if Jordan did not free Sajaad al-Rishawi, jailed for her role in a 2005 suicide bomb attack that killed 60 people in Amman.

The message extended a previous deadline set on Tuesday in which Goto said he would be killed within 24 hours if al-Rishawi was not freed.

The hostage crisis comes as Islamic State, which has already released videos showing the beheadings of five Western hostages, is coming under increased military pressure from US-led air strikes and by Kurdish and Iraqi troops pushing to reverse the Islamist group’s territorial gains in Iraq and Syria.

Abe has repeatedly said Japan would not give in to terrorism and would keep cooperating with the international community.

The hostage crisis erupted after Abe announced in Cairo $200 million in non-military aid for countries opposing Islamic State, but his government has rejected suggestions it acted rashly and stressed the assistance was humanitarian.

Goto went to Syria in late October. According to friends and business associates, he was attempting to secure the release of Haruna Yukawa, his friend and fellow Japanese citizen who was captured by Islamic State in August.

In the first video purportedly of Goto, released just over a week ago, a black-clad masked figure with a knife said Goto and Yukawa would be killed within 72 hours if Japan did not pay Islamic State $200 million.

A video last Saturday appeared to show Goto with a picture of a decapitated Yukawa, saying his captors’ demands had switched to the release of al-Rishawi. Tuesday’s video featured an audio track over a still picture that appeared to show Goto holding a picture of Kasasbeh.

Deadly clash in Philippines a setback to peace with Muslim rebels

Kuala Lumpur, 31 Jan — A deadly clash between Philippines police and Muslim rebels in the south of the country has dealt a temporary setback to peace talks, Manila’s chief peace negotiator said on Saturday, appealing for renewed efforts to keep the process on track.

The government has described last Sunday’s clash, which shattered a three-year ceasefire, as a “misencounter” and a bid by police to arrest two wanted militants who had taken refuge with Moro Islamic Liberation Front fighters. Forty four police commandos were killed in the assault. “We have been temporarily set back by the Mamasapano incident,” Miriam Coronel-Ferrer, the government’s chief peace negotiator, told a news conference in Kuala Lumpur.

“Please stay the course with us,” she said. “The other alternative is simple unthinkable ... I don’t think we want to go back to the 1970s.”

Government and rebel peace panels met in Malaysia on Friday to sign protocols for the surrender of weapons by the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in a bid to underscore their commitment to the peace process, brokered by Kuala Lumpur.

The two sides signed an agreement in March 2014, ending a conflict that has killed more than 120,000 people, displaced 2 million and stunted growth in one of the poorest but resource-rich regions in the country.

India testfires longest-range nuclear-capable missile

NEW DELHI, 31 Jan — India on Saturday successfully test-fired its home-made, nuclear-capable, longest-range Agni-5 ballistic missile off the coast of eastern Odisha state, sources said. “The missile, with a range of 5,000 km, was test-fired from a mobile launcher at the Integrated Test Range. The test-firing was successful,” the sources said. The three-stage missile can travel faster than a bullet and can carry 1,000 kg nuclear weapon, but it can be fired only on orders from Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

This was the third successful test of the missile with the previous in 2012 and 2013, though the development started five years back.

National workshop on reproductive health closes in Brunei

Bandar Seri Begawan, 31 Jan — A two-day workshop on a plan of action to address issues related to Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI), including HIV or AIDS, and teenage pregnancy in the country has been closed, the state broadcaster Radio Television Brunei (RTB) reported on Friday.

Sixty participants who are school leaders from across the country received certificates from the Acting Director General at the Ministry of Education, Awang Haji Abdul Rahim bin Haji Derus.

During the two-day course, they discussed measures already implemented or are being implemented by several government and non-government agencies in preventing and eliminating social issues.

The issues included high-risk behaviour, prevention of STI and pregnancy among young girls.

There were also talks and briefings on the status of and basic on STI including HIV/AIDS and teenage pregnancy in the country.
Russia says nuclear arms to keep military edge over NATO, United States

**Moscow, 31 Jan** — Russia’s top general said on Friday a strong nuclear arsenal will ensure military superiority over the West as Moscow forges ahead with a multi-billion-dollar plan to modernise its forces by 2020.

Russia, facing a likely recession because of a fall in oil prices and sanctions over Ukraine, must deal with new forms of Western aggression, including economic confrontation, said Chief of the Armed Forces General Staff Valery Gerasimov.

"Support for our strategic nuclear forces to ensure their high military capability combined with growth of the military potential of the general forces will assure that the United States and NATO do not gain military superiority over our country," said Gerasimov. "Tensions between Russia and the West have risen over the conflict in eastern Ukraine, where the United States and Europe say Moscow is fuelling an insurgency by sending in troops and weapons. Moscow denies this."

Russia has criticized NATO expansion in eastern Europe and President Vladimir Putin has accused the Ukrainian army, which is fighting separatists in eastern Ukraine, of being puppets of NATO with a policy of "containing" Russia.

Russia’s top general said Moscow was fuelling an insurgency by sending in troops and weapons. Moscow denies this. "Russia has criticized NATO expansion in eastern Europe and President Vladimir Putin has accused the Ukrainian army, which is fighting separatists in eastern Ukraine, of being puppets of NATO with a policy of "containing" Russia."

Russia warplanes have increasingly been spotted over Europe in recent months. Britain summed the Russian ambassador on Thursday to complain about two Russian long-range bombers that flew over the English Channel, forcing British authorities to reroute civil aircraft.

Russia promises to push through by 2020 a more than 20-trillion-rouble (190.27 billion dollars) military modernization plan conceived by Putin, and military expenditures will remain unchanged even in the face of a growing economic crisis that has cut the budgets of other ministries. The modernisation project aims to revamp Russia’s weapons systems to assure that 70-100 percent of the armed forces weapons and equipment has been modernized by the end of the decade — a plan confirmed by Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu.

"We plan to fulfil the government armament programme and reach by 2020

***Russia says nuclear arms to keep military edge over NATO, United States***

**A man surrenders to the police in a TV studio of Dutch national broadcaster NOS in Amsterdam in this still image taken from a 29 Jan, 2015 video.** — Reuters

**Australia wants clear UN rules on extended searches after MH370**

More than two dozen countries have been involved in the air, sea and underwater search for the Boeing 777. The current phase is focused on the search and rescue zone that is not the responsibility of the State with the onus to conduct the investigation, Australia said in documents released ahead of a major UN International Civil Aviation Organization conference on airline safety in Montreal on 2-5 February.

"In the case of MH370, the aircraft was believed to have gone missing in Australia’s search and rescue zone but Malaysia had responsibility for the accident investigation (under ICAO rules). ‘In the event that a similar tragedy happens in the future... without ICAO guidance, there may be uncertainty on how to proceed.’" The Australia-based Joint Agency Coordination Centre (JACC) is running the search operations which involve Australian, Chinese and Malaysian search equipment. Australia had set aside A$80-A$90 million last year for the search, already the most expensive ever under taken. Malaysia has said it would split the costs. Malaysia declared the flight’s disappearance an accident on Thursday, clearing the way for airlines to pay compensation to victims’ families, Malaysia said it, China and Australia remained committed to the search. — Reuters

**Brussels, 31 Jan** — NATO defence ministers are expected to agree next week to set up command units, staffed with national and NATO soldiers, in six eastern European countries as part of a new strategy in response to the Ukraine crisis, NATO’s chief said on Friday.

"Creating the units in Poland, Romania, Bulgaria and the three Baltic countries is one of the most concrete steps NATO has taken to show that the alliance will protect its eastern allies, some of which are nervous about Russian intentions following Moscow’s annexation of Ukraine’s Crimea region."

"The creation of the units could be considered provocative by Russia. “It is completely within all our international obligations and what we are doing is defensive and it is proportionate,” he told an interview. The posting of small numbers of NATO soldiers at existing bases in eastern European countries falls short of requests by Poland to have a large NATO base on its soil but creates a symbolic NATO presence and would help the alliance to reinforce the countries rapidly in a crisis. A NATO diplomat said the units were expected to consist of 40-50 people, split roughly equally between soldiers from the host nation and those from other NATO allies. The units will organise exercises and plan for NATO reinforcement if required.

NATO is working on setting up a rapid reaction force, with some elements able to deploy within two days, that could be sent to eastern Europe in a crisis. Stoltenberg said the situation on the ground in eastern Ukraine was getting worse and separatists were gaining some ground thanks to "heavy support" they had received from Moscow.

"They have received heavy equipment during a long period of time, hundreds of new pieces of heavy equipment, tanks, rocket systems, artillery and additionally we have seen Russian forces in eastern Ukraine," he said.

"This is in violation of the Minsk ... ceasefire agreements and it undermines the efforts of creating a negotiated peaceful solution based on the Minsk agreements," he said, referring to a peace deal reached in September in the Belarus capital.

Russia denies having soldiers in eastern Ukraine.

Stoltenberg said NATO would remain the “strongest military alliance in the world,” but Russia’s spending, including on nuclear weapons, showed Moscow was determined to improve its capabilities. — Reuters

**Hostage-taker at Dutch TV had no terrorist links: police**

**Amsterdam, 31 Jan** — A man who forced his way into the studios of Dutch national broadcaster NOS and demanded to go live on television had no known links to terrorist organizations and acted alone, police said on Friday.

During the incident on Thursday evening the 19-year-old took a hostage, waving a replica pistol and demanding to address the nation, apparently about a conspiracy theory. Television footage showed the youth, who wore a suit, offering no resistance when a police arrested him at gunpoint.

Police said on Friday he had admitted fabricating claims of having explosives and belonging to a ‘hackers’ organization. “There is no evidence of any connection with other events in the Netherlands or abroad,” a police statement said.

No one was harmed in the incident in Hilversum, 20 kilometers (12 miles) east of Amsterdam. But it raised questions about the effectiveness of security measures in the wake of the deadly attacks on satirical newspaper Charlie Hebdo in Paris. It also forced the NOS off the air for the 8 pm news — the most widely viewed evening news programme in the country.

The suspect, whose name is not being released due to Dutch privacy laws, was briefly questioned in a closed court hearing later on Friday.

Police spokeswoman Hilde Veenhuis said the man faces charges of kidnap and attempted murder. — Reuters

**A man surrenders to the police in a TV studio of Dutch national broadcaster NOS in Amsterdam in this still image taken from a 29 Jan, 2015 video.** — Reuters

**Toronto, 31 Jan** — Australia, which has led a nearly year-long hunt for a missing Malaysian airliner, wants the United Nations’ aviation agency to issue clear guidelines on who should be responsible for such searches once rescue efforts are called off.

Malaysia Airlines flight MH370, with 239 passengers and Chinese people on board, was en route from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing last March when it vanished over the sea in the world’s greatest aviation mystery.

**NATO set to create new joint units in eastern Europe**

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"There is no evidence of any connection with other events in the Netherlands or abroad,” a police statement said.
Russia wants UN Security Council help on conflict zone flight risk

TORONTO, 31 Jan — Russia is calling on the United Nations Security Council to help protect civilian jets from anti-aircraft weapons after thedowning of a Malaysian airliner in Ukraine last year.

The Russian position comes after it dismissed proposals by the UN’s aviation body, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), as “superficial.” The Security Council is much more powerful than Montreal-based ICAO, a specialised agency that sets safety standards for global aviation. Its guidelines typically become regulatory requirements in its 191 member states.

ICAO needs “a mechanism of cooperation with the UN Security Council, state military authorities and military-political unions in order to timely detect potential threats to aviation safety and to respond to these threats,” said Russia’s Interstate Aviation Committee, which oversees civil aviation in the former Soviet Union.

Russia outlined its stance in documents referred ahead of its UN air safety conference in Montreal on 2-5 February. ICAO’s proposal, which is on next week’s agenda, has got UN backing.

ICAO has been under pressure to come up with new systems to protect aircraft from risks in conflict zones after Malaysia Airlines MH17, flying from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur, was shot down in Ukraine last July, killing all 298 people on board.

The incident occurred during fighting between Ukraine and pro-Russian separatist rebels in eastern Ukraine. The United States said the plane was hit with a ground-to-air missile by rebels. Russia says a Ukrainian military aircraft downed it.

Last week, Reuters reported that the United States would back an ICAO proposal on flight safety over conflict zones, which would test a central website where states and agencies could publish public warnings about conflict zones.

Russia has not commented on that proposal, but in October the country lashed out in a paper obtained by Reuters, calling ICAO’s ongoing work on conflict zones “superficial” and outside its mandate.

The Russian position is in an unusual position at ICAO. Blamed by the West for supplying rebels with anti-aircraft missiles, a charge it denies, it must still work closely with Ukraine and other powers at ICAO to keep the global aviation system running smoothly.

US’s Kerry to visit Ukraine next week — State Department

WASHINGTON, 31 Jan — US Secretary of State John Kerry will visit Kiev on Thursday for talks with President Petro Poroshenko and other Ukrainian officials, the US State Department said on Friday.

President Barack Obama this week voiced deep concern about renewed fighting between Russia-backed separatist and government forces in eastern Ukraine and said the United States is considering all options short of military action to isolate Russia.

“The Secretary’s visit will highlight the United States’ steadfast support for Ukraine and its people,” the State Department said in a statement. It said Kerry will then travel to Germany from 6 to 8 February for the 51st Munich Security Conference. While in Munich, he will meet Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, US State Department spokesman Jen Psaki told reporters.

While Psaki did not provide any detailed description of the subjects they will discuss, they are likely to include Ukraine, Syria and nuclear negotiations with Iran.

Mexico tests DNA of babies who survived blast in search for parents

MEXICO CITY, 31 Jan — Plunged into chaos just hours after entering this world, nine babies found alive after a gas blast in a Mexican maternity hospital underwent DNA tests on Friday in a bid to reunite them with their parents.

Thursday’s blast devastated the hospital on the western edge of Mexico City, sending a fireball into the air and killing a nurse and two infants. But dozens of people, including mothers and newborns, who were inside at the time survived, many cut by broken glass.

“We have nine DNA tests pending,” Mexico City Mayor Miguel Angel Mancera said. “There are parents who have identified their children, as the babies do not have bracelets on, we have to follow a protocol to identify them.”

Mancera said several babies survived because their mothers sheltered them with their own bodies during the blast.

A leak in a hose from a gas truck, which was fuelling the hospital’s tanks, was believed to have triggered the explosion, officials said.

Many areas of Mexico City have no mains gas supply and rely on deliveries from gas trucks. Mancera said the gas company involved had been working in Mexico City since 2007.

Ukraine peace talks aborted as civilians die in east

DONETSK, (Ukraine)/ MIKHAIL SLEDNIAKOV, 31 Jan — Civilians were killed on both sides in heavy fighting in eastern Ukraine on Friday, while attempts to reopen peace talks in neighbouring Belarus was aborted before it began.

Rebel delegates flew to the Belarus capital Minsk, only to announce that no talks would take place on Friday and they were flying straight back to Moscow. Any talks would be the first since a five-month-old ceasefire collapsed with a new rebel advance last week.

The main civil street in Donetsk echoed to the sound of heavy artillery fire, including salvos from multiple rocket launchers and heavier shells from artillery coming from the direction of the airport, a constant battlefield.

A Reuters cameraman in Donetsk saw four covered bodies near a cultural centre that had been hit by artillery while residents were queuing outside for humanitarian aid. A fifth body lay in a badly-damaged car nearby. A woman was weeping by one of the bodies. A kilometre (half mile) away, a siwed dead person lay where a trolleybus had been hit.

The separatists said the total death toll in those two strikes was seven, blaming government forces. Kiev said the shelling was carried out by the rebels to ruin the chance of peace talks. Both sides have obliged international agreements throughout the conflict, which are impossible to verify.

“We are already used to this artillery and there’s nothing we can do about it. Our boys are defending us,” said Alla, a shopkeeper in downtown Donetsk.

In Debaltseve, east of Donetsk, seven civilians were killed on Friday by separatist shelling of their homes, regional police chief Vyacheslav Abroskin said in a Facebook post. Earlier he reported another seven civilians killed in and around the town in the previous 24 hours.

The government-held town is a key rail and road junction in the east. It and nearby Vuhlehirsk have come under fierce attack from rebels encircling government garrisons there, with water and electricity supplies cut off.

In the nearby rebel-held frontline town of Horlivka, eight civilians were killed in rocket attacks the previous day, the mayor’s office said.

Kiev’s military said five of its servicemen had also been killed and 23 wounded in fighting in the past 24 hours, describing the situation in the conflict zone as “hard.”

The past week has seen by far the worst fighting since the ceasefire was signed five months ago, with rebel announcing an offensive that Kiev says amounts to a repudiation of the truce.

NATO and Kiev accuse Russia of sending thousands of troops to support the rebel advance with heavy weapons and tanks. Moscow denies it is directly involved in fighting over territory that the Kremlin refers to as “New Russia.”

European Union foreign ministers agreed at an emergency meeting on Thursday to extend for another six months economic sanctions against Russia that had been due to expire soon. Washington has promised to tighten its own sanctions, which have helped feed an economic crisis in Russia.

The arrival of two rebel negotiators in Minsk was the first sign of a reopening of negotiations since the rebels launched their latest advance. But neither Kiev nor Moscow confirmed that they were ready for talks, and one of the rebel delegates, Denis Pushilin, swiftly announced they were heading back to Moscow. He said the rebels were prepared to press on with their offensive and seize more territory if artillery continues to fall on their cities.

“If the shelling resumes, then we reserve for ourselves the right to continue the offensive and go to the very borders of Donetsk and Luhansk regions,” he said, referring to the two provinces where separatists have declared “people’s republics”.

The Ukrainian foreign ministry said it was ready to participate in talks either Friday or Saturday but was waiting for an agreement on draft documents.
Sunday, 1 February, 2015

A community should not retain divide and discrimination

By Aung Khin

Community represents all the people living in a particular area or region and sharing feeling and things belonging to a group by another. If groups of people or countries are presumed to be a community, no words such as ‘divide’ or ‘discrimination’ are worth to be used together with community.

ASEAN member countries are now making efforts to form a community at the end of 2015. However, some senior government officials have forecast it would be able to operate as a single market in full swing till 2020. He pointed out income gaps and different economic levels.

While some member countries are standing atop in the list of world’s most developed and wealthiest countries, few countries remain under poverty line. In this circumstance, financial and material supports of developing countries for least developed countries are very fundamental for development.

Adequate infrastructure has long been viewed as an important issue in economic development. Actually, better infrastructure, both equality and quantity, promotes income equality, while the link between investment and income distribution is weak.

There are strong evidences in many countries that infrastructure improves productivity and growth at both macroeconomic and microeconomic levels. Infrastructure development is an underlying reason to promote equality through enhancing access to productive opportunities by the poor and the disadvantaged.

Investment is the only reason to promote income equality. Enhancement of equality also relies on the policies to promote education, employment in formal sectors and financial development.

The development divide within ASEAN is multi-faceted, while a striking feature is differences in per capita incomes. The difference of per capita income among the member countries are up to 40 times among some countries. However, a community should not have divides and discrimination to ensure a solid unity.

Write for us

We appreciate your feedback and contributions. If you have any comments or would like to submit editorials, analyses or reports please email wallace. tun@gmail.com with your name and title. Due to limitation of space we are only able to publish “Letter to the Editor” that do not exceed 500 words. Should you submit a text longer than 500 words please be aware that your letter will be edited.

Sunday, 1 February, 2015

SELF - RELIANCE

Attā hi attano’ nātho’
- Gotama Buddha

Self - reliance means: Main faith in oneself, Overwhelming belief in oneself; certain about one’s uprightness. Using One’s own ability to do something or to attain some achievements.

S for Self-Confidence
E for Energetic Effort
L for Learning
F for Fortitude
L for Live & Love & Laugh
I for Inspiration
A for Audacity
N for Never-Giving-Up
C for Commitment
E for Earnest Fervour

SELF-CONFIDENCE

Self-confidence is the basic prerequisite for any worthwhile achievement. In the Bible, it is said:

“If you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you can remove the mountain”.

“Be bold and mighty forces will come to your aid”.

“Be strong and of good courage; Be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed.”

ENERGETIC EFFORT

A Self-reliant person usually has:

• Positive Mental Attitude
• Can-Do-Spirit
• Habit of Going the Extra Mile

A Self-reliant person always follows the advice:

“Be resolute, fear no sacrifice, and surmount all difficulties to win victory.”

Such a person is always active, earnest and enterprising.

LEARNING

A Self-reliant person is never complacent. Such a person is neither apathetic nor inert. He or she is always alert, agile, awake and careful. They usually have a strong passion to learn from practice, from life, from people, from experience and also from books. Since self-reliant people are more practical-minded than theoretical, or academic, they prefer to learn from trial and error, from testing, experimenting, from exploration, from travelling and observing. Their motto is: “Learn More & Earn More”.

FORTITUDE

Fortitude means calm courage, self-control, in the face of pain, danger or difficulty. They usually have FIRE in their heart, FIRE being:

• F = Fearlessness
• I = Iron Mind
• R = Resilience
• E = Endurance

Self-reliant people are usually “Do or Die” types; and they are not quitters, they love to be winners:

LIVE AND LOVE AND LAUGH

Self-reliant people are emotionally stable, strong and passionate. They have strong emotions to live and love and have laughter. They usually want to live to a full hilt, to love with great passion and to laugh heartily. They are people with inside-out strength and creative power. They have strong inclination to live and have laughter. They usually want to live to a full hilt, to love with great passion and to laugh heartily. They are people with inside-out strength and creative power.

INSPIRATION

Inspiration means: (1) influence arousing creative activity in literature, music, art, etc: Many poets and artists have drawn their inspiration from nature. (2) Person or thing that inspires, i.e. that puts uplifting thoughts, feelings, or aims into somebody with hope, enthusiasm, and confidence. Self-reliant people usually are both inspiring people as well as people who seek or receive inspiration from outside powers or influences or experiences.

AUDACITY

Synonyms of audacity are courage, bravery, boldness, temerity, valiance, fearlessness. Self-reliant people are more or less daring people. They usually dare to think, dare to do, dare to fight and dare to win. They also dare to sacrifice, to adventure, to explore, to test, to experiment, to create new and better ways of things and to innovate to get greater, better, faster, cheaper and more sustainable products, services or results or relationships.

NEVER GIVING UP

Self-reliant people are people who:

• “Never give up
Never give in
Stand up to it,
And fight it through.”

U Kyi Mun residing in Yangon is a consultant of NAING Group Capital Co., Ltd.

“Dare nobly,
Will strongly, and
Never falter in the path of duty.”

“Have the determination and Capability to turn heaven and earth up side-down in order to win victory.”

COMMITMENT

Commitment means: Promise, Pledge. Undertaking. Self-reliant people are usually committed people, dedicated souls who promise to WALK THE TALK. Self-reliant people with commitment are people who are trustworthy, loyal, consistent who never waver in their commitment to deliver it to deliver value. People with commitment are people who have self-respect, ability and willingness to be always upright, straightforward, and honest under all circumstances.

EARNEST ENSERVICE

Earnest means serious, determined; and fervor means strength or warmth of feeling, passion or efficaciousness. A self-reliant person usually is a person whose heart is usually aglow with a fervor for some uncommon accomplishment, or even perfection. If he or she is in religion, he or she aims to be a saint; if in the military career, to be a top general, if in teaching to be a guru. A self-reliant person usually aims to be a master-piece.

CONCLUSION

A Self-reliant person usually becomes a first-rate person with superb character and competence who always strives for perfection.

GOLD PRICE, FE RATE (31-1-2015)

Yangon Gold Price
Buying K699,000 per tical: Selling K700,000
Mandalay Gold Price
Buying K699,000 per tical: Selling K700,000
FE RATE
USD Buying K 1023: Selling K1028
SGD Buying K 761: Selling K771
Euro Buying K 1,145: Selling K1,170

U Kyi Mun
Introduction of Singapore e-governance

In line with the "eGov Masterplans" over the past three decades, various e-Government programs have been or will be launched to realize Singapore visions. These programs will cater to the needs of one or more groups of users including Citizens, Businesses and Government.

A number of such programs capitalize on the strong leadership of the "eGov Council", the highest approving authority for e-Government in Singapore, to enable a whole-of-government approach to ICT to realize greater integration and efficiency across government agencies. Separately, government agencies also embark on developing their own e-Government initiatives, and this flexibility allows agencies to meet the different needs of their customers. They are aligned with the vision and thrusts of "eGov Masterplans".

The section describes some of the main programs that are ongoing in implementation or have been launched. Some programs have undergone revamp and enhancement. They are grouped according to user groups (Citizen, Business and Government). Program information can also be found under each "eGov Masterplan".

The ultimate goal of the e-government is to be able to offer an increased portfolio of public services to citizens in an efficient and cost-effective manner. E-government allows for government transparency. Government transparency is important because it allows the public to be informed about what the government is working on as well as the policies they are trying to implement. Simple tasks may be easier to perform through electronic government access. Many changes, such as marital status or address changes can be a long process and take a lot of paper work for citizens. E-government allows these tasks to be performed efficiently with more convenience to individuals. E-government is an easy way for the public to be more involved in political campaigns. It can cost significantly less to increase voter awareness, which could lead to an increase in citizen participation in elections. It is convenient and cost-effective for businesses, and the public benefits from getting easy access to the most current information available without having to spend time, energy and money to get it.

E-government helps simplify processes and makes access to government information more easily accessible for public sector agencies and citizens. For example, the Indiana Bureau of Motor Vehicles simplified the process of certifying driver records to be admitted in county court proceedings. Indiana became the first state to allow government records to be digitally signed, legally certified and delivered electronically by using Electronic Postmark technology. In addition to its simplicity, e-democracy services can reduce costs. Alabama Department of Conservation & Natural Resources, Wal-Mart and NIC developed an online hunting and fishing permit service utilizing an existing computer to automate the licensing process. More than 140,000 licenses were purchased at Wal-Mart stores during the first hunting season and the agency estimates it will save $200,000 annually from service fees.

The anticipated benefits of e-government include efficiency, improved services, better accessibility of public services, sustainable community development and more transparency and accountability.

Conclusion

This article is merely a plain and simple presentation on ICT in brief and pragmatic application of E-Governance in Singapore to the esteemed readers of The Global New Light of Myanmar as well as government officials and business executives who are looking forward to have e-governance in our country to witness the advantages of its application.
Islamic State attacks
Kurdish outposts across Iraq

BAGHDAD, 31 Jan — Islamic State militants struck at Kur-
dish forces southwest of the Iraqi city of Kirkuk on Friday, while
bombs in Kirkuk, Baghdad, Sa-
narra and Ramadi killed at least
27 people.

The Sunni Islamists have
often battled Iraqi security forc-
es and Kurdish fighters in four
districts.

Militants later detonated a
car bomb at a hotel in Kirkuk
city centre and clashed with
peshmerga forces.

A peshmerga officer told
Reuters his forces had recap-
tured the district of Marzian Bek
but said clashes were ongoing in
Tel al-Ward, Maktab Khalid
and Mullah Abdullah.

Kurdish military sources
said the pesherga had repelled
dawn attacks by Islamic State
at different points along a more
than 1,000 km frontline, includ-
ing Khazer, west of Arbil, and
Makhmour, further south.

“They are afraid the fight for
Mosul has start-
ed so they are trying to show
they can operate close to Arbil or Kirkuk,” Roj Nuri Shaways,
Iraq’s deputy prime minister
and a peshmerga commander,
told Reuters.

Senior Kurdish official
Hemin Hawrami said on Twitter
45 militants and seven Kur-
dish “martyrs” were killed.

But that was among the
dead.

At least seven other Kur-
dish fighters were killed by a su-
icide bomb at a checkpoint near
the eastern town of Jalawla, 160
km (100 miles) southeast of
Kirkuk, peshmerga and medical
sources said.

More than 800 peshmer-
ga have been killed in combat
since Islamic State overran their
defenses in northern Iraq last
summer, prompting US-led air
strikes.

The Kurds have now re-
gained most of the ground they
lost, but commanders complain
they remain ill-equipped com-
pared with Islamic State mili-
tants, who plundered Iraqi arms
depots when they overran Mo-
sul in June.

Kurdish Prime Minister
Nechirvan Barzani told Re-
ters in an interview on Thurs-
day that the US-led coalition
against Islamic State was inade-
quately and said US policy would
at best contain the resilient and
carefully structured group.

Security sources said at least
18 people were killed by
two bombs in Baghdad’s Bab
al-Sharqi shopping district on
Friday.

Three civilians were later
killed and at least 10 wounded
in northwestern Baghdad when
mortars landed in residential
neighbourhoods, police and
medics said.

People gather at the scene of bomb attack in Baghdad on 30 Jan,
2015.—Reuters

US drone strategy in trouble as Yemeni al-Qaeda gathers support

SANAA, 31 Jan — Mohammed
Taeim died this week on a remote Yemeni road,
a casualty of a US drone campaign against the
local branch of al-Qaeda that seems to be sliding into dis-
array.

The sixth-grader’s
death as he returned home
with a family friend aroused
the kind of anger that has
long helped al-Qaeda in the
Arabian Peninsula (AQAP)
to recruit fighters.

But in recent months
convulsions in Yemeni pol-
itics have pushed President
Barack Obama’s strategy
close to failure as the group,
known locally as Ansar
al-Shari’ah, has broken out
of its mountain bastions
to stage attacks across the
country.

While the exact
enemies’ incident remain un-
elucidate, relatives say the boy
was travelling in a car with his
family friend, Zindani, to his village in the
central province of Marib.

Returning from visiting
an acquaintance in southern
Yemen, they were driving
along a 160 km (100 mile)
road that threads its way
between mountains and de-
sert. But just after 11 am,
mobile phones of people in
their home area began beep-
ing with pictures showing
the remains of a black Su-
zuki, hit by what appeared
to have been a devastating
fire.

“Zindani’s name start-
ed circulating, and I knew
my brother was with him,”
said Mohammed’s 17-year-
old brother, Ezz el-Den.

“My brother was not armed.
Mohammed was killed, he
was a child,” said Ezz el-
Dow, who himself survived
a drone strike that killed his
father and brother in 2011.

“Bring justice to those
who killed him otherwise
we will be saboteurs. We
will join Ansar al-Shari’ah,”
his father yelled down the phone
to Reuters.

The drone campaign
against AQAP, Obama’s
preferred tactic in fighting
the Sunni Muslim group that
claimed responsibility for the
attack on Charlie Heb-
d newspaper in Paris on 7
January, has always caused
public anger in Yemen.

Critics say the attacks often
kill low-level militants and
sometimes civilians, not the
top plotters Washington says it
goes after.

But AQAP has begun
winning more allies among
Yemeni’s majority Sunni
since Shi’ite Houthi rebels
began pushing into the cap-
tal Sanaa and other areas in
September.

Mohammed Saleh Qayed Taeim (R) poses for a photo with his younger brother outside their family’s house in Marib Province, Yemen, in this 29 Oct, 2013
photo.—Reuters

Next round of Syria talks
in Moscow in a month

MOSCOW, 31 Jan — The next
meeting between some Syrian
opposition figures and the Damas-
cus government in Moscow will take
place in about a month, Qadri Ja-
mil, a participant in this week’s
consultations, said on Friday.

The Moscow talks, which
ended on Thursday, are not seen
as yielding a breakthrough as they
were shunned by the key political
opposition that refuse to involve
the main insurgent groups fighting
on the ground in Syria.

“The key thing is that the
process started rolling,” said Jamil,
chairman of Syria’s tolerated inter-
national opposition who served as
deputy prime minister from 2012 to
2013. He was speaking through a
translator at a news conference.

At the end of the talks, Rus-
sian moderator Vitaly Naumkin,
presented what he called the “Mos-
cow principles” — a list of provi-
sions that the government and
the opposition delegations endorse
in principle.

The 10-point list largely echoes
Moscow’s own stance on the
conflict, which has killed more
than 200,000 people since protests
against President Bashar al-Assad
started in early 2011 and then
descended into a war in which radi-
Cal Islamist have now gained the
upper hand among the anti-Assad
forces.

“We hope for better results
than those reached in the end,”
Majid Habib of the opposi-
tional National Coordination
Committee said, speaking through
a translator.

“But it is very important that
it creates better conditions to con-
tinue the Geneva process,” he said
of peace talks that stalled early last
year.

The “Moscow principles”,
among others, urge fighting ter-
orism should be a top priority in
Syria. It called on the opposition
to join forces with Assad to that
day and criticised Washington for
refusing to cooperate with Damas-
cus over air strikes on Islamic State
positions.

Syria opposition figures who
shunned the meeting in Moscow
dismissed it as an attempt to prop
up Assad and quoted Russia’s
backing for the Syrian president
as the main reason. They said they
would only take part in talks that
lead to his dismissal.

Those who attended broadly
agree that fighting Islamic State
and other extremist Islamic groups
on the ground comes first, and that
the fate of Assad could only be de-
cided later.

Reuters

Syrian opposition group National Coordination Committee senior representative Majet Habo speaks during an interview with Reuters in Moscow on 26 Jan, 2015.—Reuters

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Reuters
Saudi Arabia reports two new MERS cases

RIYADH, 31 Jan — Two new Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) coronavirus cases were reported in Saudi Arabia in the last 24 hours, Saudi Health Ministry said on Friday. The new cases were reported in Riyadh and Hafol that brought the total cases up to 845 since first case in 2012. There are six cases receiving treatment, with 475 recovered and 364 died. The ministry announced last week the appointment of US experts to halt the spread of infectious and noncommunicable diseases, including MERS coronavirus. The experts hail from the Atlanta-based Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in the United States.

Brasilia, 31 Jan — Brazil registered a primary deficit in 2014, the first since records began, the Federal Reserve Bank said on Friday.

Last year’s deficit valued at 32.536 billion reals (12.524 billion US dollars) accounted for 3.29 percent of gross domestic product (GDP). According to a Central Bank report, the figure took into account dividends from state companies and deficits at all government levels, from federal to state and local, as well as in state-owned firms, with the exception of banks, oil giant Petrobras and energy company Eletrobras. In December alone, the deficit amounted to 12.894 billion reals (around 4.884 billion dollars), up 24 percent year-on-year.

At the beginning of 2014, the government had set a primary surplus target of 1.9 percent of GDP. But in September, due to a rise in public spending in an electoral year, the government succeeded in getting the Congress to approve a law that authorized reversing that target. Adding interest payments on the public debt to the primary deficit pushed the nominal deficit to 434.3 billion reals (129.434 billion dollars) in 2014, or 6.7 percent of GDP. Brazil’s new Finance Minister Joaquim Levy pledged on Friday to rein in spending and balance the budget, with an eye to achieving a primary surplus of 1.2 percent of GDP in 2015. Levy said the government plans to spur investment and economic activity by pushing infrastructure development.

Addressing a business group in Sao Paulo, Brazil’s largest city, Levy stressed that port building is one area that could draw foreign investment. “We need to re-optimize the state-owned ports,” he said, “the cargo transport industry has changed dramatically over the past 20 years, as have the demands of our partners. So their physical condition is something that we have to resolve as quickly as possible.” Officials are also looking to expand trade accords with other countries to boost exports and trade exchange, he said, adding that Brazil has “to think about reentering deeper into the international market.”

China Focus: Chinese smartphone makers rise to rival Samsung, Apple

BEIJING, 31 Jan — China’s top smartphone companies challenged Samsung and Apple with surging sales and revenue in 2014, vowing to scramble for a marketplace dominated by Samsung and Apple with surging sales and revenue in Asia, as demand for sophisticated devices.

Xiaomi is now market-leading products in six foreign countries and regions. More than one million units have been sold in India, for example, one of the company’s most successful markets abroad. “We will enter more overseas markets in 2015 and strive for better performance there,” said Xiaomi founder Lei Jun, who is also China’s ‘Steve Jobs’ by fans. Stefan Koeing, director of Industry Analysis of the Consumer Electronics Association, said Chinese smartphone brands are putting pressure on their global competitors.

President Xi Jinping, who is also China’s ‘Steve Jobs’ by fans, is expected to be in California next month and travel to the US West Coast, where he is expected to discuss business and investment deals with US technology companies. The visit is expected to be an important part of the Chinese president’s trip, which is also expected to include visits to the Silicon Valley region. The visit comes as China’s tech industry continues to grow rapidly, with smartphone sales in the country expected to top 1 billion units in 2015.

Sun Pharmaceutical wins US approval to buy Ranbaxy

WASHINGTON, 31 Jan — India’s Sun Pharmaceutical Industries Ltd has won US approval to buy Ranbaxy Laboratories Ltd on conditions that it sell off its US $4.3 billion Ranbaxy in the US by 2015, according to market tracker Gartner. Sun Pharmaceutical Industries Ltd, the Indian pharmaceuticals company, said on Friday that it is of the view that the Ranbaxy acquisition will bring synergies between the two companies. Sun Pharmaceutical Industries Ltd is expected to sell off its interest in generic medicines and vaccines to generate $700 million in the US by 2015, according to the US Federal Trade Commission.

Oil rallies on US rig count drop; dollar up seventh month

NEW YORK, 31 Jan — Oil prices rallied on Friday following the sharpest weekly drop in US oil rig count in nearly 30 years, while the dollar index ended January with its longest streak of monthly gains since the greenback was floated in 1971. US stocks finished the day down more than 1 percent as data showed US economic growth slowed sharply in the fourth quarter. Major US stock indexes posted losses for the week and month, with the declines driven by falling oil prices and concern about weak overseas demand. The S&P 500 was down 3.1 percent for January, its biggest monthly slide since January 2014.

In a rally that may spur speculation that a seven-month price collapse has ended, US crude futures jumped 8.3 percent to settle at $48.24 a barrel and Brent crude shot up 7.9 percent to settle at $52.99, its biggest one-day gain since 2009. Sparking the rally was data that showed drillers were cutting back on shale activity.

European stocks ended lower, but registered their biggest monthly gain in three years. The US dollar index advanced for a seventh straight month in January, marking the longest streak of monthly gains since the greenback was floated in 1971. It was up 5.0 percent for January, but off 0.1 percent for the day. Weighing on stocks and the dollar, US gross domestic product expanded at a weaker-than-expected 2.6 percent annual pace after the third quarter’s spectacular 5.8 percent rate, the Commerce Department said in its first snapshot of fourth-quarter GDP.

The headline number was “well below consensus expectations and that is definitely one of the data points that many bulls were looking for to justify staying bullish,” said Peter Kenny, chief market strategist at Clearpool Group in New York.

For the day, the Dow Jones industrial average fell 251.9 points, or 1.45 percent, to 17,164.95, the S&P 500 lost 26.26 points, or 1.3 percent, to 1,994.99 and the Nasdaq Composite dropped 48.17 points, or 1.03 percent, to 4,635.24.

Sun Pharmaceutical Industries Ltd said on Thursday that it has won US approval to buy Ranbaxy Laboratories Ltd on conditions that it sell off its US $4.3 billion Ranbaxy in the US by 2015, according to market tracker Gartner. Sun Pharmaceutical Industries Ltd, the Indian pharmaceuticals company, said on Friday that it is of the view that the Ranbaxy acquisition will bring synergies between the two companies. Sun Pharmaceutical Industries Ltd is expected to sell off its interest in generic medicines and vaccines to generate $700 million in the US by 2015, according to the US Federal Trade Commission.
EU-wide toll could end road spat with Germany — transport chief

BRUSSELS, 31 Jan — A European-wide road toll could be a solution to a dispute between the EU and Germany over its plans to introduce a tolling system Brussels believes may be illegal, the bloc’s transport chief said on Friday.

The European Commission and Berlin are in a stand-off over Berlin’s plan to introduce a toll in 2016 at aimed foreign drivers using Germany’s Autobahn motorways. German drivers would also pay the toll but would be compensated with a reduction in existing automobile taxes.

Some other EU member states already have toll systems to help fund the upkeep of their motorways but the Commission fears the German plan discriminates against non-German EU citizens.

European Transport Commissioner Violeta Bulc said the issue Germany was trying to address was one facing Europe as a whole.

“That’s why we started to think about a universal European toll system that could address especially the needs of the users for small travel throughout Europe,” she said.

The scheme would be voluntary, meaning member states could decide whether to opt in, she said.

The EU toll system would be based on distance travelled instead of time travelled and all revenues would go back to member states, ideally for channelling into spending on infrastructure, Bulc said.

The Commission is monitoring any national schemes closely to make sure they are in line with EU law, she added.

Any attempt to introduce a pan-EU tolling system would be sure to face political resistance in many member states.

The Commission also wants to reverse what Bulc referred to as decades of short-term thinking by governments that has resulted in the neglect of infrastructure.

“We now are faced with obsolescent, old ... infrastructure which is really hurting our industry,” she added. Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker has launched an investment package designed to mobilise up to 315 billion euros ($356 billion) of public and private investments to kickstart growth in the 28-member bloc.

The Commission has drawn up a wish list of over 2,000 projects worth more than 1.3 trillion euros ($1.47 trillion), of which just under a third are in the transport sector.

Bulc said the EU needed to cut the contribution of transport to greenhouse gas emissions, saying it accounted for almost a third of all energy use in Europe. But 94 per cent of that is oil-based, she added.

“We are working in the direction of electrification of transport,” she added.

EVRAZ, 1 February — President Cristina Fernandez hunkered down in her presidential residence for a week before speaking about the mysterious death of a state prosecutor who claimed she sought to whitewash Iran’s alleged involvement in a 1994 bomb attack on Argentine soil.

When she did, Argentinians were left in little doubt who she viewed as the victim in the scandal.

It was not Alberto Nisman, whose body was found in a pool of blood with a single bullet to the head a day before he was to detail his investigations, and to whose family Fernandez offered no condolences.

It was herself, the target of a murky plot to smear her name orchestrated by rogue agents kicked out of a spy agency that she said had failed to act in the interests of the country.

“Twenty one years after the attack and today somebody comes up with a baseless claim that we wanted to derail the investigation,” Fernandez said in her hour-long televised address, dressed all in white and seated in a wheelchair.

“They let them make any allegations they want, let judges summon me. I’m not bothered.”

Nisman’s death has triggered one of the biggest political crises of Fernandez’s seven-year rule and may bolster the opposition’s chances of a win in October’s presidential election.

Fernandez herself is barred from running, but some officials close to the president worry her handling of the scandal is denting the government’s credibility.

“This is going to hurt us,” said one government source close to the presidency who is not authorized to talk publicly. “How badly, we don’t know. Only she decides what she is going to do.”

Fernandez, who has been recovering from a fractured ankle in her residence, speculated in a rambling post on Facebook that Nisman’s death might be suicide. Days later she wrote that he had been murdered.

Her inconsistencies have helped fan conspiracy theories, some pointing directly to her. A poll by the local political consultancy Management & Fit showed 63 percent of respondents believed Fernandez’s image would be significantly weakened.

The day after Nisman’s death, protesters marched on Fernandez’s official residence. Some banged on the gate shouting “murderer.”

“She’s not in the habit of recognizing her errors, but it Nisman or inflation. And so she stays inside,” said Roberto Lavagna, a former economy minister under Fernandez’s late husband predecessor, Nestor Kirchner, now working with opposition presidential hopeful Sergio Massa.

Argentina’s Fernandez dents credibility by playing victim

BUENOS AIRES, 31 Jan — President Cristina Fernandez hunkered down in her presidential residence for a week before speaking about the mysterious death of a state prosecutor who claimed she sought to whitewash Iran’s alleged involvement in a 1994 bomb attack on Argentine soil.

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Republican Romney opts out of 2016 run for president

WASHINGTON, 31 Jan — Republican Mitt Romney bowed out of the 2016 US presidential race on Friday after considering a third run, telling supporters it was time for the next generation of party leaders to seek the White House.

Romney’s decision helps clarify an emerging Republican field split between potential establishment candidates like former Florida Governor Jeb Bush and conservative voices represented by Texas Senator Ted Cruz and former Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee.

The move will likely boost former Governor Scott Walker and New Jersey Governor Chris Christie of the former adviser said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Romney, the 2012 Republican nominee, announced he would not run in a statement he read to supporters in a conference call from New York.

“But putting considerable thought into making another run for president, I’ve decided it is best to give other leaders in the party the opportunity to become our next nominee,” Romney said in his statement.

He made clear he felt he would be able to raise enough money for a campaign, rejecting a narrative that has grown in recent days as some major 2012 fund-raisers expressed concern about another Romney run.

Those fund-raisers said that since Romney opened the door to a possible candidacy three weeks ago, he had not made clear how his message and inner circle would improve in 2016.

UN chief condemns bomb attack in Pakistan

UNITED NATIONS, 31 Jan — UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on Friday condemned the bomb attack on a Shiite mosque in Pakistan, which has reportedly killed at least 54 people.

“The Secretary-General is appalled by such vicious targeting of people on account of their religious affiliation,” said a statement issued by Ban’s spokesperson.

Ban also called upon the authorities to redouble their efforts to protect religious and ethnic minorities in Pakistan and to combat terrorism in all its forms, said the statement.

A suicide bomber on Friday ripped through a mosque of Shiite Muslims in Pakistan’s south Shikarpur district, Sindh Province, killing at least 54 people and injuring 50 others.

Reports said a teenage suicide bomber blew himself up in the mosque where around 400 people were offering prayers.

According to bomb disposal squad, at least 5 kilograms of explosives along ball bearings were used in the bomb and it was detonated with a remote-controlled device.—Xinhua

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**CLAIMS DAY NOTICE**

MV PANJA BHUM VOY NO (041N)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV PANJA BHUM VOY NO (041N) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 1.2.2015 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.W.P.T where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT**

**MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY**

**AGENT FOR:** M/S WAN HAI LINES PTE LTD

Phone No: 2301185

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**INVITATION FOR OPEN TENDER**

(TENDER NO. 1(T)MPE/LBO(1)/2015-2016)

1. Open Tender is invited for the Myanmar Petrochemical Enterprise, the Ministry of Energy for the supply of Lube Base Oils & Additives (403.73 Metric Tons).

2. Tender Closing Date: 6.3.2015 at (12:00) noon.

3. Tender Opening Date: 6.3.2015 at (13:00) hrs.


5. Tender Documents and details information are available at the Department of Finance, Myanmar Petrochemical Enterprise, Nay Pyi Taw, during office hours commencing 2.2.2015 on payment of the Myanmar Kyat One Hundred Thousand (Kyat 100,000) per set.

6. Only bid from tenderer who has purchased tender document officially from Myanma Petrochemical Enterprise will be accepted for evaluation.

Managing Director

Myanmar Petrochemical Enterprise

Contact Phone no. 067-41108/411193

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**Number of foreign travellers by cruise ships more than doubles in 2014**

**Tokyo, 31 Jan** — The number of foreign travellers arriving in Japan on cruise ships in 2014 more than doubled from a year earlier to around 416,000, the government said on Friday.

The number of dockings by such ships hit a record high at 1,203 due mainly to increasing services from China, the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism said in a preliminary report.

By destination, Yokohama port, near Tokyo, marked the highest number of dockings with 146, followed by Hakata in southwest Japan at 115 and Kobe in western Japan at 99, the report said.

In 2014, there was a marked rise in the number of tourists from Asian countries drawn by the weaker yen and the expansion of consumption-tax-free items, such as foods and cosmetics, for overseas visitors from October.

"Cruise ships are convenient for shoppers, as unlike aircraft, there is no limitation for carry-on items," said a ministry official.

The government plans to remove ports across Japan that can accept large ships, with a view to boosting foreign travellers by cruise ship to 1 million in 2020, when the Tokyo Olympic Games are scheduled to be held.

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**AirAsia resumes online promos, adverts after Indonesia jet crash**

**Jakarta, 31 Jan** — Budget airline AirAsia Bhd resumed online promotions and advertising this week, a month after a plane operated by its Indonesian affiliate crashed into the Java Sea, killing all 162 people on board.

"We were 50 percent where we were before the incident," Fernandes said from Davos. "We are now about 12 percent behind and it’s fast recovering."

Indonesia AirAsia, in which AirAsia has a 49 percent stake, declined to give details about passenger numbers for January or December.

One of its competitors, Garuda Indonesia, said it had seen an increase in passenger load factor this month.

Garuda Chief Executive Arif Wibowo told Reuters the average passenger load factor was around 74 percent for Garuda and 79 percent for its budget unit Citilink. This compares with 67.6 percent for Garuda Indonesia Group for January last year, according to the airline’s website.

Several travel agents said many customers were still afraid of flying AirAsia. Some passengers, like Jakarta-based finance executive Cynthia Nadeak, however, said they would continue to fly AirAsia.

"I’m not afraid to fly AirAsia because its reputation so far has been proven to be quite good," said Nadeak, who takes at least one AirAsia flight every three months.

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**Death toll rises to six from east China coal mine flooding**

**Hefei, 31 Jan** — The death toll from a coal mine flooding in east China’s Anhui Province has risen to six, as another body was retrieved on Saturday.

The accident happened at the Zhumianzhuang coal mine in Yongqiao District under Suizhou City at 6:55 pm on Friday when 34 miners were working underground. Twenty-seven miners managed to escape while seven others were trapped, according to the Huabei Mining (Group) Co Ltd, the owner of the coal mine.

Rescuers are continuing the search for another missing miner.

The cause of the accident is under investigation.

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**UN chief welcomes AU’s decision to deploy 7,500 troops to battle Boko Haram**

**Addis Ababa, 31 Jan** — UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on Saturday welcomed the decision by the African Union (AU) to deploy up to 7,500 troops to battle Boko Haram, a movement that has wreaked havoc in west Africa over the past years.

The UN chief made the remarks on the sidelines of the 24th AU summit, which is ongoing here in the Ethiopian capital.

The Peace and Security Council of the AU on Thursday decided to authorize the deployment of a multinational task force to address terrorism in west Africa.

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**WEATHER REPORT**

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

**FORECAST VALID UNTIL EVENING OF 1st FEBRUARY, 2015:** Light rain are likely to be isolated in Upper Sagarang Region, Kachin and Northern Shan State, weather will be partly cloudy in Taninthayi Region and Mon State and fair in the remaining Regions and States. Degree of certainty is (60%).

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

**OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS:** Slight increase night temperatures in the Upper Myanmar areas.
Miranda Lambert again leads ACM Awards with eight nods

Los Angeles, 31 Jan — Miranda Lambert on Friday led all nominees for the second consecutive year at the Academy of Country Music Awards (ACM), collecting eight nods, including entertainer of the year and top female vocalist, in some of country music’s highest honors.

Lambert, a 31-year-old Texan, will look to repeat her success from the duo Florida Georgia Line collected five nods.

The nominations were scheduled to be announced on Tuesday, but were pushed back due to a snow storm that swept through New York and the northeastern United States.

Lambert and seven nominations while duos Florida Georgia Line and Bryan as nominees for the fan-voted top prize of entertainer of the year.

The Academy of Country Music honors big stars as well as small market radio deejays and concert promoters, and the awards are voted on by members of the Encino, Calif.-based professional organization.

Lambert has been country music’s top female performer over the past half decade, so far winning a record five consecutive CMA and ACM female vocalist of the year awards.

Other top nominees include Bryan, Kenny Chesney and Eric Church with four nods apiece while Aldean, Kacey Musgraves and Carrie Underwood each scored three nominations.

The new artist of the year award is a combined fan and academy vote that will narrow the current eight semi-finalists down to three nominees and eventual winner.—Reuters

Michael Jackson’s family denied new trial in negligence case

Los Angeles, 31 Jan — A California state appeals court on Friday denied Michael Jackson’s family its latest attempt to reverse a jury’s decision that cleared concert promoter AEG Live of negligence in the singer’s death.

The three-judge panel ruled that Jackson’s mother and children did not have standing for a new trial after their attorneys argued last week that AEG Live was liable for Jackson’s treatment, and that jury instructions were confusing and not wide enough in scope.

A Los Angeles jury in 2013 cleared privately held AEG Live, the organizer of Jackson’s ill-fated 50 “This Is It” comeback concerts in London, of negligently hiring cardiologist Conrad Murray as Jackson’s personal physician.

The sensational five-month trial offered a glimpse into Jackson’s private life and final days in which Murray administered surgical anaesthetic propofol to the “Thriller” singer as a sleep aid.

The child star turned King of Pop, who set the world dancing but whose musical genius was overshadowed by a bizarre lifestyle and sex scandals, died in 2009 at age 50 in Los Angeles from an overdose of the powerful anaesthetic.

The lawsuit against AEG Live was filed by Katherine Jackson, 84, and the singer’s three children.

The Los Angeles Superior Court jury found that Murray was sufficiently qualified for the job he was hired to do as general practitioner.

Murray was convicted of involuntary manslaughter in 2011 for Jackson’s death and served half of his 4-year sentence in a Los Angeles prison.—Reuters

Jay-Z to snap up music streamer Aspiro in $56 million deal

Stockholm, 31 Jan — Hip-hop star Jay-Z is buying a Swedish music streaming company for $56 million to add to a business empire that has spanned clothing and sports bars.

Project Panther Bidco Ltd, a company controlled by the 45-year-old rapper, said on Friday it had agreed to buy Sweden-listed Aspiro for 464 million Swedish crowns ($56 million) in cash.

Shares in Aspiro, which runs music streaming service WiMP, lost 59 percent in early trading to the bid level of 1.05 crowns per share.

Jay-Z, real name Shawn Corey Carter, is one of the world’s best-selling music artists of all time, having sold more than 100 million records. Forbes estimated last year that his net worth was $520 million.

Married to pop star Beyoncé, Jay-Z has had a number of business interests, including 40/40 Club sports bars and Rocwear clothing.

His mix of music and entrepreneurial interests mirrors that of other rappers, including Dr Dre, who sold his Beats headphones business to Apple, and 50 Cent, who sold his vitamin water business to Coca-Cola.

Project Panther said it had followed the development of Aspiro for some time, believing it to be “an innovative high-quality company with strong future growth potential”.

Norwegian media house Schibsted, Aspiro’s main shareholder, said it had accepted the offer, while Aspiro’s board said it was united in recommending the bid, virtually ensuring its success. Schibsted owns around 75 percent of Streaming Media AS, which in turn owns about 76 percent of Aspiro.—Reuters

Selena Gomez to attend Grammys with Zedd?

Los Angeles, 31 Jan — Singer Selena Gomez will reportedly attend the upcoming Grammy Awards with rumoured boyfriend Zedd. The news has upset the 22-year-old singer’s ex Justin Bieber, reported Hollywood Life.

“Selena’s totally with Zedd now. They’re going to the Grammys together and Justin is super depressed about it,” a source said.

Grammy Awards will be held on 8 February at the Staples Centre in Los Angeles, California.—PTI

Shakira gives birth to second child

Los Angeles, 31 Jan — Pop star Shakira and her long-time partner Gerard Pique have welcomed their second child, a baby boy.—PTI

The 37-year-old Colombian superstar had her baby on schedule by Cesarean section in a Barcelona hospital, reported Billboard magazine.

Shakira, and Pique, 27, had reserved an entire floor for the birth at the Teknon clinic, which is in an upscale neighbourhood. The couple’s older son Milan, who turned two on 22 January, was delivered at the same hospital by the same doctor.

The name of the baby was not immediately known, but a Spanish radio DJ and friend of Pique announced earlier this week that it could be Andrea or Sacha.

Last week, Shakira and Pique invited fans to contribute to their on-line World Baby Shower to benefit UNICEF’s programmes for children.—PTI
Britain marks 50 years since wartime leader Churchill’s funeral

London, 31 Jan — Britain marked 50 years on Friday since the state funeral of wartime Prime Minister Winston Churchill, with the boat which carried his coffin under the dipping dockside cranes in 1965 retracing its journey along London’s River Thames.

Britain’s current leader, David Cameron, began the remembrance events at a ceremony in parliament, laying a wreath at a statue of Churchill, a man he described as “a great Briton” who should never be forgotten.

“A full fifty years since his funeral when the cranes along the Thames dipped low and the streets were lined with vast silent crowds, the sheer brilliance of Winston Churchill remains undimmed,” he said.

Winging it: Chicago man smashes Philadelphia eating record

Patrick “Deep Dish” Bertoletti celebrates after winning the 23rd annual Wing Bowl at the Wells Fargo Centre in Philadelphia on 30 Jan, 2015. Reuters

Philadelphia, 31 Jan — A professional competitive eater from Chicago downed 444 chicken wings in 30 minutes at the 23rd annual Wing Bowl in Philadelphia.

Art fair turns India’s capital into art hub

New Delhi, 31 Jan — India’s biggest art fair opened in New Delhi this week with a focus on homegrown artists and exhibits inspired by contemporary themes such as the worst floods in the Kashmir region in more than a century. A smorgasbord of works by 1,100 artists lured art lovers, gallerists and gawkers to a cavernous exhibition space in the capital, cementing the annual fair’s reputation as one of South Asia’s top cultural events.

Each year, an estimated 100,000 visitors flock to the four-day fair with entry tickets that cost no more than $6.

The city’s glitterati strolled past exhibits by 85 galleries at Thursday’s preview clutching glasses of red wine, with several displays sold before the seventh edition of the fair opened for public viewing on Friday. The show runs until Sunday. “We’ve had five or six sell-out booths and several galleries have done exceptionally well,” founder Neha Kirpal told Reuters.—Reuters

A visitor looks at an exhibit titled “The Threshold into a Dream” by Indian artist TV Santhosh at the India Art Fair in New Delhi on 29 Jan, 2015.—Reuters
**Troisi strikes in extra time to hand Australia Asian Cup**

SYDNEY, 31 Jan — Substitute James Troisi scored halfway through extra time to give tournament hosts Australia their maiden Asian Cup title with a 2-1 victory over South Korea in a pulsating final on Saturday.

South Korea’s Son Heung-min scored in stoppage time at the end of 90 minutes to send the match into the extra half hour, cancelling out Massimo Luongo’s strike on the stroke of halftime.

It was just before another break with 105 minutes on the clock that Troisi put the ball into the net from close range to make Australia champions of Asia nine years after they switched from the Oceania confederation.

Former World Cup semi-finalists South Korea had ridden their mean defence to a first Asian Cup final since 1988 despite being the better side for much of the game.

Troisi put the ball into the net for a first title in 55 years.

Luongo’s goal was the first they had conceded in the tournament and for most of the second half it looked the goal-shyness which characterised the start of their campaign had returned to haunt them.

With regulation time running out, though, substitute Han Kook Young dispossessed Trent Sainsbury on the edge of the box and Lee Jeong-hyeop fed the ball to Son who stroked it into the net under the challenge of two defenders.

South Korea had come out to attack as coach Ange Postecoglou had promised but in frenetic start to the match, the South Koreans showed they had threats up front too.

Son had his sights set just too high in the second and 37th minutes and Luongo was on hand to block his shot after Cha Du-ri’s charge down the right wing in the 38th.

Seven minutes later and Luongo was down the other end to take Sainsbury’s through ball with a deft touch and lash it into the back of the net from 25 metres.

The lead was barely deserved but that did not stop the green-and-gold clad majority of the sellout crowd of 76,385 at Stadium Australia celebrating in a frenzy.

South Korea pressed forward in search of an equaliser but were grateful for goalkeeper Kim Jin-hyeon for a fine save from Mathew Leckie on the hour mark, as they had been in the first half when he stopped a Tim Cahill shot.

After Son’s goal had provided a dramatic conclusion to normal time and sent the match into the extra half hour, Kim was again on hand to intercept Luongo’s cross with Socceroos lining up to put it into the net.

Five minutes later, though, Tomi Juric nutmegged Kim Jin-su on the edge of the box and Kim was only able to push the striker’s cross into the path of Troisi, who smashed the ball into the open goal.

**Serena continues mastery of Sharapova for magical 19th**

MELBOURNE, 31 Jan — Serena Williams gave a gallant Maria Sharapova another serving of grand slam heartbreak to win the Australian Open on Saturday and bolster her claims to be the all-time greatest player with her 19th major title.

Though sickly, wheezing and battling coughing fits, Williams’s serve was an inspiration as she closed out a magical 19th Australian Open on Saturday night, and after shaking hands with her opponent, bounded around the court like a woman possessed, squealing in delight.

Sharapova sat quietly in her chair, nursing the pain of a 16th straight defeat by Williams and a third loss in grand slam finals to the American champion.

“I’ve got to congratulate Serena on creating history and on playing some of her best tennis. It’s really an honour playing against her,” Sharapova, who lost the 2007 final to Williams and the title-decider at the 2013 French Open, said.

“I haven’t beaten her in a really long time, but I love every time that I step on the court to play against her because she’s been the best and, as a tennis player, you wanna play against the best.”

Steamrolled in the opening set, five-times grand slam champion Sharapova was magnified as she dragged herself off the canvas and staved off defeat twice on match points with brilliant down-the-line winners.

The “un-rivalry” with Williams continues, however, her last win over the American coming when she was a 17-year-old sensation still finding her feet on tour.

She admitted she had been on borrowed time after suffering a huge scare to countrywoman Alexandra Panova in the second round, and appeared tense before her centre court entrance.

“Shuffling from side to side on the spot, Williams stood behind her, stock-still and brooding.

There was little warmth as the pair posed for the pre-game pictures on court and Williams was all over Sharapova’s serve from the first point, thumping a backhand return down the line that the Russian could only net.

Second serves were despatched with contempt.

A break point was almost inevitable and Sharapova, already under pressure, double-faulted to concede serve.

At 30-30 with Williams leading 3-2, rain fell, forcing a break and the American bashed a ball away in disgust before marching to the exit and pacing a tunnel under Rod Laver Arena.

Xinhua

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**Australia’s James Troisi celebrates after scoring in the extra time during the final match against South Korea at the 2015 AFC Asian Cup in Sydney, Australia on 31 Jan, 2015.**

**Australia’s players celebrate with the Asian Cup trophy after winning their final soccer match against South Korea at the Stadium Australia in Sydney on 31 Jan, 2015.**

**Serena Williams (L) of the US and Maria Sharapova of Russia pose with their trophies after their women’s singles final match at the Australian Open 2015 tennis tournament in Melbourne on 31 Jan, 2015.**

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