We must all be committed to undertaking reforms desired by the public

NAY PYI TAW, 2 Feb—The following is the full text of the monthly radio message delivered by President U Thein Sein.

My Fellow Citizens,

As I have done previously, I would like to give you the monthly update on the work of my government, and the developments that have taken place in our country.

This February is an important historical milestone for ethnic unity. The tasks we are currently undertaking are a continuation of the Pinlon-initiated processes of ethnic unity and national reconciliation. Although the current peace process has encountered challenges, there is steady progress and preparations are clearly being made to hold political dialogue to solve armed conflict through political means.

I urge all national political forces involved with the peace process to understand that they each have a role to play for the success of the peace process the whole nation desires.

It is now apparent to all that since my government took office, political liberalization and nurturing of a new political culture are not merely words, but tangible achievements. To progress further, political guarantees must be secured by political agreements at each stage. With this message, I begin this month’s radio address.

I spoke of 2015 being an important year in my New Year address, and we saw important political developments in January. Just as there were positive developments, we also faced challenges. I have previously said that these challenges are faced by every reforming country, and are a product of the current political system and prevailing situation. We must accept that since this is an election year, there will be challenges due to heightened expectations of the public and political forces.

The success of the democratic reforms, strengthening of democracy, and the emergence of a developed and open society are goals our society has set. To achieve these goals will require overcoming difficulties and challenges. There are many examples of countries that had to overcome these obstacles as they reformed. Indeed, these difficulties and challenges must be overcome, no matter what. I urge members of the government, political parties, political forces, civil organizations and the public to pledge to work for a smooth and peaceful reform process based on mutual understanding, trust, and patience.

Independence Day, which symbolizes Myanmar people’s struggle against colonialism, falls during the first week of January. This year’s ceremonies were noteworthy in many ways. Although the occasion has been celebrated in various formats over the years, this year’s ceremony included a Grand Parade, showcasing our nation’s national unity, for the first time in many years. After these events, I hosted meetings with political leaders and leaders of ethnic armed groupsto discuss national reconciliation and internal peace.

I have frequently stressed that dialogue between political forces is the correct way to resolving issues. To further facilitate this dialogue, representatives of the government, Parliament, political parties, political (See page 2)

Parliament of Poland to help develop Hluttaw staff capacity

NAY PYI TAW, 2 Feb—Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw (Upper House) U Khin Aung Myint received Mr Zenon Kuchciak, Ambassador of Poland, at his hall in Hluttaw Complex, here, on Monday afternoon.

They discussed exchange of MPs for further strengthening of the two countries and assistance of (See page 3)

Agricultural company demonstrates pivot irrigation system

Technicians use modern pivot irrigation system in growing crops in farmlands in Wethitagon Station, Pyay Township.

Byline: Ko Myo (Shwepaukkan)
Photo: Min Lwin (Pyay)

PYAY 2 Feb—Shwe Pyay Myay agricultural company showed pivot irrigation system in Wethitagon station, Pyay Township, Monday. U Nyo Oo, spokesperson of the joint-venture company, said the water spray system using irrigation is introduced for effective use of water from irrigation channels by March this year.

He noted the pivot irrigation system is like spraying artificial rain and 30 gallons of water is enough for 100 acres of farmland, reducing the loss of water. He also sought assessment of farmers on the suitability for this system for industrialized agricultural system, adding that the establishment of their joint-venture company is aimed to earn access to (See page 9)

Petrified wood on display in Natogyi

By GNLM-018

NATOGYI, 2 Feb—Petrified sal trees and their pieces also known as fossilized shorearobusta are mainly mined in Natogyi of Upper Myanmar and exported to China in the past. However, as businessmen in China are trying to buy the rare natural resources at lower prices, local people in Natogyi are now beginning find new markets for their local products.

An exhibition of art works of fossilized sal trees is being opened at the compound of Tree Jade Companay of U Min Shwe in Htanzin Village in Ward-8 in Natogyi.

Millions of years ago, the region was teemed with sal trees which later were trapped under ground and turned into petrified trees.

However, it has been only a few years since a market for fossilized sal tree emerged in 2000. Then, fossilized sal trees were mainly exported to China for decorative use.

Sal tree rocks are of five colours including green, red, blue, white and transparent yellow. Green fossilized sal trees are of highest prices among them and exported to China. Transparent yellow fossilized sal trees are exported to the UAE, Europe and India.

Major mines of fossilized sal trees are found in Phayagi, Tarpel, Htanzin, Daikmoe, Ottwin and Ywa-thaye villages and the residents of the villages are of living standards than nearby villages as the rare natural resource can be mined there. There are over 20 companies trading fossilized sal trees in the area. (See page 9)
We must all be committed to... (from page 1)

groups and Tatmadaw met on January 12th, 2015. This discussion followed an agreement during the October 30th, 2014 meeting to hold further talks. On this occasion, the meeting also included twenty-nine elected ethnic-affairs ministers to provide an ethnic voice, and for more inclusive discussions.

Although the participants may have different opinions and perspectives, there was consensus for the success of democratic reforms, the peace process, and the smooth holding of the 2015 elections. Participants were able to offer their viewpoints on these topics. There was also agreement to hold further meetings.

On a related note, I would like to comment on the Union Parliament’s proposal for six-party talks. I officially welcome the Union Parliament’s proposal because it reflects the new political culture of addressing issues through dialogue that my government is helping to nurture. The first of two points proposed by Parliament, relates to amending the constitution in line with the current system and norms. This is consistent with my statements that the constitution will be amended under the right conditions and at the appropriate time for the benefit of the nation. I have also said that some of the proposed amendments may require the electorate to decide in referendums, and the amendment process should follow the procedures set forth in the Constitution.

The second point of the proposal relating to creating the groundwork for successful present and future nation-building will require the participation of the government, parliament, Tatmadaw and other stakeholders. For this reason, ethnic affairs ministers were invited to the January 12th meeting. Discussions about our country’s future are likely to involve many issues, and will need to be inclusive. Enough time must be given. This is not a rejection of Parliament’s proposal, but rather a viewpoint that discussions will need to be flexible in structure, broad-based and inclusive. As conditions dictate, further discussions with flexible formats will be held.

Students are currently voicing their opinions about the national education bill. To discuss amendments to the bill, a delegation headed by a Union Minister, and including government officials and members of parliament held an introductory meeting with students on January 28th. Agreement was reached to hold further talks to resolve issues. Parents are concerned that since this is an exam season, exams will be postponed, schools closed or there will be other school disruptions. Protests need to cease, and serious discussions started. Dialogue is the only practical way ahead. Consultative meetings are currently under way in order to fulfill the wishes of the students. Moreover, as examinations are drawing near, I would like to urge that a discussion on finding a solution to revise the National Education Act – the measure demanded by student protestors – be undertaken in a speedy manner.

Years of deteriorating practices and failure to adopt a culture of dialogue and negotiation are the sad narrative of our country. We have all seen that because of this, there was a great deal of difficulty overcoming certain challenges. It was only through patience, tolerance and restraint that we were able to prevail. Dialogue and negotiations are attributes of democracy that must be nurtured, and we must strive to increase participation, representation, and achieve results through these processes. Everyone must firmly grasp the political opportunities that are present today.

Clearly, we have had to cope with developments, challenges, and uncertainty due to the prevailing situation. My point is that instead of arguing over differences, we should seek common ground. By accepting patience as a political virtue, we must all be committed to undertaking reforms desired by the public.

I would like to conclude by saying that my commitment to achieving peace, promoting economic development and building a better future for future generations.
Rural people get electricity in Maubin Township

**Nay Pyi Taw, 2 Feb**—Union Minister at the President Office U Thein Nyunt attended the ceremony to launch electrification for Thongwa, Wadaw, Pabesu and Bayingyisu villages in Maubin Township on 1 February. The union minister presented books and publications and a light fire engine to Doh Ywa library in Kyaungywa Model Village.

The Ayeyawady Region electrical engineer explained electric safety for the people.

The union minister donated one light fire engine each to Thongwa, Kawetkin and Khanaunghtaw villages. He presented cash assistance to patients at the station hospital in Kyaungywa Village.

Power lines and three transformers were built for supply of electricity to 500 villages in Thongwa Village-tracts.

---

**Myanmar, Japan discuss disbursement of ODA loans**

**Nay Pyi Taw, 2 Feb**—Union Minister for Rail Transportation U Than Htay held talks with Chairman of Japan-Myanmar Association Mr Hideo Watanabe and party at the ministry, here, on Monday.

A total of 142 candidates who secured the highest points in Aptis test are to join the interview in Yangon at 9 am on 17 February. The candidates are to send their updated CV to schoolarrm2015@gmail.com not later than 5 February. They entered the interviews at Diamond Jubilee Hall, University of Medicine-1, Yangon, Yangon University of Education and Yangon Institute of Economics.

The union minister approved the rules for the interview.

The union minister for Rail Transportation U Than Htay and party held talks with Japan’s Minister of Transport and Minister of Safety, and Peoples Welfare Tasks.

---

**Judicial ethics workshop conducted for judicial officers**

**Nay Pyi Taw, 2 Feb**—The workshop on judicial ethics, jointly conducted by the Supreme Court of the Union and International Commission of Jurists, was held at Thangha Hotel, here, on Monday.

A total of 52 judges and law officers of Supreme Court of the Union, region and state high courts, district and township courts are attending the workshop on 2 and 3 February.

---

**Rules of interview for candidates of President’s scholarship approved**

**Yangon, 2 Feb**—Union Minister for Education Dr Daw Khin San Yi attended the coordination meeting on holding the interview for candidates of President’s scholarship award at the hall of Higher Education Department (Lower Myanmar), here, on Monday.

A total of 142 candidates who secured the highest points in Aptis test are to join the interview in Yangon at 9 am on 17 February. The candidates are to send their updated CV to schoolarrm2015@gmail.com not later than 5 February. They entered the interviews at Diamond Jubilee Hall, University of Medicine-1, Yangon, Yangon University of Education and Yangon Institute of Economics.

The union minister approved the rules for the interview.

Officials discussed duty and functions of interview committee and scholarship recommendation committee.

---

**Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw U Khin Aung Myint cordially greets Mr Zenon Kuchciak, Ambassador of Poland.**

---

**Parliament of Poland to . . .**

---

**Union Minister for Education Dr Daw Khin San Yi highlights rules of interviews for candidates of President’s scholarship award.**

---

**Union Minister U Thein Nyunt switches on transformer to supply electricity to local people in rural areas of Maubin Township.**

---

**Nay Pyi Taw, 2 Feb**—Chairman Mr Hideo Watanabe gave suggestions on improvement of Yangon’s circular railroad sections, runs of circular trains with air-conditioned carriages, reducing driving hours of trains and exchanges of experiences among international level jurists.

The workshop focused on international judicial ethics and practices, and capacity enhancement of service personnel and raising their international experiences.

Ministries and service organizations sent 36 service personnel to doctors, MA/MSc, degrees and diploma courses and 211 training courses, total-
LaKhaCha market in Myitnge ready to sell various products to customers

Mandalay, 2 Feb — LaKhaCha market located in Aungchantha Ward, Myitnge, Mandalay Region is crowded with vendors and customers on the pay day of government offices and departments monthly.

The market is opened with the aim of enabling the workers and staff of Carriage and Wagon Shed of Myanmar Railways to conveniently buy goods and products as they like on the pay day only. Vendors and shopkeepers from various regions arrive there to sell their products as they know good sales on the single day. As such, vendors from Mandalay sell their products at the market, said Ko Myo Aung, a vendor from Mandalay, told media. “I came from Mandalay to sell textile at the market. But I sell the products at the market on the pay day, larger than daily sales in Mandalay. Likewise, vendors from Kalay, Aungpan and Taunggyi sell dried tea and those from Madaya, Sagaing and Monywa display their products for sales,” he said. “This market has been in Myitnge for over 50 years. Gradually, vendors and shopkeepers sell their products at the market on the pay day. So, the market is crowded with larger vendors and customers. The market is stretching from the entrance of the shed to Sagaing-Myitnge road. It may be a four-furlong long distance,” said a local vendor Ma Yi Yi Soe, a customer at the market said, “My husband is a worker from Myanmar Railways. I waited for his salary on the pay day to buy necessary products at the market. We are convenient as we can buy any products at the market.”

About 1,400 workers and staff are discharging duty at the Carriage and Wagon Shed in the workers’ city Myitnge. Min Htet Aung (Mandalay Sub-printing House)

Outstanding students from Yaw region get stipends

Mandalay, 2 Feb — The stipend presentation of Yaw education assistance committee was held at Memory Hotel in Chanayethazan Township, Mandalay, on 1 February. Chairman of the committee U Kyaw Than Tun made a speech and wellwishers donated cash to the fund.

Tun Tun holds a speech and presents K100 million to development fund.

Tun Tun, Vice Chairman of the committee U Kyaw Than Tun spoke words of thanks. Officials shared stipends to 17 outstanding students from University of Medicine, University of Agriculture, University of Veterinary Science and University of Veterinary Science.

The committee grants stipends to outstanding university students from Saw, Htilin, Gangaw and Pale townships from Pachi Hill to Gangaw township.

Min Htet Aung (Mandalay)
Military medics give health care services to rural people

MYAUNG, 2 Feb — A mobile medical team from naval vessel Shwe Pyayin Village arrived at Shwepyin Township, Ayeyawady Region, on 1 February to provide health care services to the local people.

A specialist team led by Major Myo Min from the floating hospital gave healthcare and surgical treatment to about 1,000 local people from Shwepyin, Yite, Kyudaw and Daungkya villages.

Commanding Officer Lt-Col Aung Kyaw Lwin of local battalion, Township Administrator U Min Min Tun and Ayeyawady Region Hluttaw MP U Aung Win Swe and local authorities provided assistance to the medical team.

Win Bo (Myaung Township IPRD)

Tourists from MV Silver Wind visit Myanmar

YANGON, 2 Feb — With the assistance of the Ministry of Transport and Ministry of Hotels and Tourism and under the arrangement of Myanmar Voyages International Tourism Co Ltd, MV Silver Wind moored at Yangon Port on 31 January. Tourists from the vessel went sightseeing in Yangon on 31 January. They left for Bago and Kyauktan. After visiting Yangon downtown, they left for Phuket Port in Thailand by MV Silver Wind.

The 72-passenger vessel visited Yangon Port in 1995 for the first time. —Aung Thura

Literary talks mark Sarsodaw Day in Tatkon

TATKON, 2 Feb — Tatkon Township Writers Association organized a literary talk at Aung San Hall in Tatkon Township on 31 January.

Writers U Phone (Chemistry), Khin Khin Htoo, Kyaw Yin Myint and Nyi Min Nyo gave talks on literary affairs.

It was attended by over 1,000 enthusiasts and local authorities. —Tin Soe Lwin (Township IPRD)

International tennis tournament awards winners

MANDALAY, 2 Feb — The final match of the 7th invitational tennis tournament organized by Horizon International School was held at the gymnasium of the school in Chanayet-hazan Township on 1 February afternoon.

A total of 214 student athletes from basic education schools, universities, international schools, clubs and sports plus education school in Mandalay participated in the tournament.

The tournament was classified as U-12, U-15, U-45, open and amateur men's and women’s events on 31 January and 1 February.

Patron and chairman of Mandalay Region table tennis subcommittee, the principal of Horizon International School and officials were in attendance.

Deputy Director U Wai Zin of Sports and Physical Education Department, deputy principal of Sports and Physical Education Institute (Mandalay) U Myint Khaing, Principal of Horizon International School Mr Ahmet and officials presented prizes to the winners.

Tin Maung (Mandalay)

Farmers get compensation for loss of farmlands in construction of Chaungzon Dam

MAHLAING, 2 Feb — A ceremony to present compensation for the land plots located in the axis of embankment for Chaungzon Dam and wetland areas of the dam in Nyaunghintha Village, Mahlaing Township, was held at the hall of the dam in Mahlaing Township on 31 January.

Mahlaing Township Land Utilization Management Committee scrutinized the loss of land plots from farmers in the township.

Township Administrator U Aung Thein Hlaing and in-charge of the dam U Cho Oo presented K180 million for 290 acres of farmland in wetlands and 80 acres of tenant farmland to 115 farmers.

The Irrigation Department delivered K600,000 per acre of farmland, K120,000 per acre of cropland and K80,000 for crops to farmers.

Chaungzon Dam was built as a supporting dam for Alaungsithu Dam in Wundwin Township in 2013. The construction was completed in January 2015.

Wellwishers offer dry rations to Buddhist monks

DAWEI, 2 Feb — A ceremony to donate dry rations to 131 members of the Sangha was held on Mingala Street in Dawei.

Tin Win and wellwishers donated rice and dry rations to the Buddhist monks.

In the evening, Kan-yon Monastery Abbot Ashin Pandita from Maungma-gan Village of Launglon Township administered Desana to the disciples.

Po Shwe Than

GNLM-018
Thai PM tightens security after mall bombs rattle Bangkok

Bangkok, 2 Feb — Thai Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha ordered security to be tightened in Bangkok on Monday after two small bombs rattled a luxury shopping mall and stoked tension in a city under martial law since a coup in May.

Two people were slightly hurt but the blasts caused little damage on Sunday evening. They were the first to shake the capital since the military seized power to end months of sometimes deadly street protests.

“I have ordered security to be tightened because this case involves the well-being of the people,” Prayuth told reporters.

“Case shows that we still need martial law ... there are still bad people disrupting the peace. We must find ways to severely punish them.”

There was no claim of responsibility. CCTV footage showed two possible suspects near where the pipe bombs exploded in the heart of one of Bangkok’s busiest shopping districts but the images were unclear and they had not been identified, police said.

Defence Minister Prawit Wongsuwan said two people were slightly hurt but the blasts caused little damage on Sunday evening. They were the first to shake the capital since the military seized power to end months of sometimes deadly street protests.

“I have ordered security to be tightened because this case involves the well-being of the people,” Prayuth told reporters.

“Case shows that we still need martial law ... there are still bad people disrupting the peace. We must find ways to severely punish them.”

There was no claim of responsibility. CCTV footage showed two possible suspects near where the pipe bombs exploded in the heart of one of Bangkok’s busiest shopping districts but the images were unclear and they had not been identified, police said.

Defence Minister Prawit Wongsuwan said such violence “inflicts loss of confidence” in the country. Tourism accounts for about 10 percent of Thailand’s economy.

Political tension has been high since last month when a national assembly hand-picked by the junta banned former Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra from politics for five years.

The decision angered supporters of Yingluck and her self-exiled brother, Thaksin Shinawatra, although there has been little sign of a return to the protests that have dogged Thailand for years. The military has been tough on dissent since the coup.

Thailand has weathered turbulent politics for a decade as former telecommunications tycoon Thaksin and his allies have vied for power with the Bangkok-based royalist-military establishment that sees the Shinawatras as a threat and reviles their populist policies.

The bombs were just a few hundred metres away from the site of a military crackdown on “red shirt” supporters of the Shinawatras in 2010.

Occasional crude bombs similar to those used on Sunday kept the capital on edge for months after the 2010 crackdown.

The motive for the Sunday blasts appeared to be to create panic, said junta spokesman Winthai Suvarae. The bombs were behind power transformers on a walkway linking an overhead rail line to the Siam Paragon mall, police said.

Sporadic violence during the six months of protests that preceded the 22 May coup claimed almost 30 lives. Thailand’s Muslim-dominated south has for years been racked by insurgency that has claimed thousands of lives. There was no indication the Sunday explosions were linked to the south.

Nut rage: Korean Air boss’s daughter treated ‘like slaves’

Seoul, 2 Feb — The daughter of the boss of Korean Air, on trial in a case popularly known as “nut rage”, treated flight crew like “feudal slaves”, a chief steward said in court on Monday.

Heather Cho, daughter of Korean Air Lines chairman Cho Yang-ho and the former head of in-flight service, is on trial for breaking aviation laws and conspiring with other company executives to force crew members lie about the 5 December incident.

Cho had demanded the chief steward, Park Chang-jin, be removed from a flight at New York’s John F Kennedy airport after a first class flight attendant served her macadamia nuts in a bag, not on a dish.

The plane, already taxing towards the runway, returned to the gate.

Park said Cho “was like a beast that found its prey gritting its teeth as she became abusive, not listening to what I had to say at all”.

“I don’t think Cho showed an ounce of conscience, treating powerless people like myself like feudal slaves, forcing us to sacrifice and treating it as if it was the natural thing to do,” Park said, fighting back tears.

Cho resigned from her posts at the airline, including vice-president, in the face of public anger and ridicule over her behaviour, which raised questions about the power of the country’s “chaebol” conglomerates.

Park appeared in court in his uniform after returning to work over the weekend after a leave of absence.

Cho’s father apologized in court on Friday to Park and prosecutors had said he was forced to kneel down and Cho poked his palm several times with a folder.

Heather is the oldest of Cho Yang-ho’s three children. Her siblings are also executives with the airline.

Communist Party of Vietnam celebrates 85th anniversary of founding

HANOI, 2 Feb — The establishment of the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV) 85 years ago marked a turning point in the country’s revolution, said Vietnamese party chief on Monday.

Nguyen Phu Trong, general secretary of the CPV made the remarks at a ceremony held in capital Hanoi on Monday to observe the 85th anniversary of the party building.

“The 85-year journey has proved that the proper and wise leadership of CPV is the leading factor of every victory in Vietnam’s revolutionary career,” Trong said.

“In Vietnam, there is no other political force but the Communist Party of Vietnam that has enough wisdom, experience and ability to lead the country to overcome difficulties and challenges,” the party chief emphasized.

The year 2015 also marks nearly 30 years of the country’s opening up and reform with significant achievements, said Trong, adding that the country has transformed from a poor country to a middle-income one.

Over the past years, the CPV has made great efforts in party building, preventing the negatives and enhancing its leadership, Trong added.

Currently, the party, nation and army are striving to boost the industrialization and modernization process, develop the socialist-oriented market economy and promote international integration, he said.

The CPV was established on 3 February, 1930. There are currently around 4.4 million party members across Vietnam, according to information released by CPV’s Central Organizing Committee at a meeting last month.

Philippine customs collects over 8 bln USD in 2014

MANILA, 2 Feb — The Philippine Bureau of Customs (BOC) revenue collections rose by 21 percent to 369.044 billion Philippine pesos (8.37 billion US Dollars) in 2014, a senior government official said on Monday. Customs Commissioner John Sevilla said this was based on the preliminary reports that his office collected.

He attributed the increase to the effort of BOC to curb smuggling, but acknowledged that much has still to be done to improve the performance of BOC.

Sevilla said that processing of documents by the importers and exporters should be accelerated to maximum of four hours by the end of this year. In 2013, the BOC collected 304.926 billion Philippine pesos (6.92 billion US Dollars).—Xinhua

Cambodia’s ruling Cambodian People’s Party’s spokesman and Cambodian information minister Karmenu Vithouldhore Sihanouk at a Press conference in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, on 1 Feb, 2015. The Cambodian People’s Party has added 306 new members to its central committee during a three-day congress, which ended on Sunday.—Xinhua

Heather Cho, also known as Heather Cho

Heather Cho, daughter of Korean Air Lines chairman Cho Yang-ho and the former head of in-flight service, is on trial for breaking aviation laws and conspiring with other company executives to force crew members lie about the 5 December incident.

Cho had demanded the chief steward, Park Chang-jin, be removed from a flight at New York’s John F Kennedy airport after a first class flight attendant served her macadamia nuts in a bag, not on a dish.

The plane, already taxing towards the runway, returned to the gate.

Park said Cho “was like a beast that found its prey grinning its teeth as she became abusive, not listening to what I had to say at all”.

“I don’t think Cho showed an ounce of conscience, treating powerless people like myself like feudal slaves, forcing us to sacrifice and treating it as if it was the natural thing to do,” Park said, fighting back tears.

Cho resigned from her posts at the airline, including vice-president, in the face of public anger and ridicule over her behaviour, which raised questions about the power of the country’s “chaebol” conglomerates.

Park appeared in court in his uniform after returning to work over the weekend after a leave of absence.

Cho’s father apologized in court on Friday to Park and prosecutors had said he was forced to kneel down and Cho poked his palm several times with a folder.

Heather is the oldest of Cho Yang-ho’s three children. Her siblings are also executives with the airline.

Nut rage: Korean Air boss’s daughter treated ‘like slaves’
Japan, Russia to hold talks next week to discuss Putin’s visit

TOKYO, 2 Feb — Senior officials from Japan and Russia will meet on 12 February in Moscow to lay the groundwork for a planned visit to Japan by Russian President Vladimir Putin this year, the Foreign Ministry said on Monday.

Deputy Foreign Minister Shinsuke Sugiyama and his Russian counterpart Igor Morgulov are also expected to discuss the crisis in Ukraine and a territorial dispute involving four Russian-held, Japanese-claimed islands off Hokkaido.

The vice minister-level meeting, initially set for August last year, was postponed after Japan imposed additional sanctions on Russia following Moscow’s annexation of Crimea in March. Sugiyama and Morgulov last held such talks in January last year.

The territorial dispute has prevented Tokyo and Moscow from concluding a post-World War II peace treaty.

Australia PM drops parental leave plan, says no intention to quit

SYDNEY, 2 Feb — Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott on Monday dropped a signature plan for paid parental leave and promised a more consultative approach on economic and security problems, seeking to stave off mounting criticism of his leadership.

Abbott, 16 months in the top job, has faced a series of challenges including an economy battered by a plunge in commodity prices as well as broken election promises, policy backflips and perceived gaffes.

Pressure on him soared after last week’s decision to award a top honour to Prince Philip, the Queen’s husband.

“Abbott is a test of character,” Abbott said in response to a question about his leadership at Canberra’s National Press Club.

“Politics pass the test when they do what is best for the long-term, not when they give in to short-term fear and make a difficult situation worse,” Abbott said.

The Prime Minister said he had not considered stepping down.

“Of course I will be a test of character,” Abbott said in response to a question about his leadership at Canberra’s National Press Club.

“Politics pass the test when they do what is best for the long-term, not when they give in to short-term fear and make a difficult situation worse,” Abbott said.

The Prime Minister said he had not considered stepping down.

“Of course I will be a test of character,” Abbott said in response to a question about his leadership at Canberra’s National Press Club.

“Politics pass the test when they do what is best for the long-term, not when they give in to short-term fear and make a difficult situation worse,” Abbott said.

The Prime Minister said he had not considered stepping down.

Photo shows the beautiful scenery of the Phoenix (Fenghuang) ancient city, in central China’s Hunan Province. The Phoenix city, located in Xiangxi Tujia-Miao Autonomous Prefecture in Hunan, enjoys a growing reputation among tourists for its picturesque landscape, exotic customs and historical sites.

Chinese media blames hostage’s death on Japanese foreign policy

BEIJING, 2 Feb — Chinese media on Monday took aim at Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe’s foreign policy in the wake of the weekend announcement by the militant group Islamic State that it had killed its second Japanese hostage.

“The Abe government lacks the ability to cope with the perplexities in the Middle East,” nationalist newspaper the Global Times wrote in an editorial titled “Abe lacks experience of Mideast strategy.”

The purported beheading of journalist Kenji Goto, the paper argued, occurred because Japan’s “foreign policies are closely tied to the US,” adding that Tokyo’s support for American policies in the region will lead to “a loss of interests of its own.”

The perspective was echoed in reporting by Communist Party mouthpiece the People’s Daily, which quoted Chinese foreign policy experts attributing blame for the tragedy to Abe’s January announcement that Japan would provide $200 million to Middle Eastern countries opposed to the militant group.

The group initially claimed that the decision had motivated it to take Goto and a second Japanese man Haruna Yukawa hostage.

Chinese media also questioned how the incident would affect Japan’s defence policy.

Abe’s willingness to become involved in the Middle East, the Global Times said, “is very likely out of consideration to sending Japanese troops abroad.”

Since taking office in 2012, Abe has pushed to loosen constitutional restrictions on Japan’s Self-Defence Forces’ ability to participate in “collective self defence” — defending an ally under attack.

China has strongly opposed the efforts, which it claims point towards a resurgent Japanese militarism.

Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott

Australia’s nuclear-powered submarine arrives in S Korea for joint drill

SEOUL, 2 Feb — A nuclear-powered US submarine has arrived in South Korea to participate in an annual joint military drill this week, a South Korean Defence Ministry spokesman said on Monday.

“The submarine has arrived on a regular visit to hold an annual South Korea-US military drill,” Nah Seung Yong said during a press briefing. He declined to provide specifics on the drill.

Earlier Monday, Yonhap News Agency reported that the USS Olympia, a Los Angeles-class submarine carrying some 120 sailors, arrived on Friday in the southern port city of Jinhae, 410 kilometres south of Seoul.

The submarine is scheduled to take part in the three-day naval drill starting on Thursday, an unidentified naval officer was cited in the report.

“The submarine will join a South Korean fleet to launch the drill focusing on detecting enemies’ submarines and surface vessels in waters near the Korean Peninsula in order to boost interoperability between the two nations and to check joint readiness,” the officer was quoted as saying.

The 7,000-ton Olympia, equipped with Tomahawk land attack missiles and without any nuclear missiles, was forward deployed from Pearl Harbor at the invitation of the South Korean Navy, Yonhap said.

Kyodo News
Two among many!
by Myo Myint

In the evenings, the over one mile-long Inya lake bund near Pyay road with its beautiful view of the Inya lake, clean air and a backdrop consisting of a few islets with clumps of trees and tall buildings with their bright lights attracts people of all ages from the nearby townships of Kamayut, Mayangon and beyond. Older people come there to take a walk; stylishly clad young couples, who monopolize the few available benches facing the lake, come to the lover’s paradise to enjoy each other’s company; and on special occasions like those of children coming there to celebrate their birthdays, groups of male and female teenagers come there to celebrate their birthdays; groups of females come there to pose for photographs; males come in groups to gather there to play the guitar and sing songs, or to have snacks and get drunk; lonely young males and females come there to sit by the lake and stare at their mobile phones, or the lake as if the answers to their problems can be found there; local tourists come there to find out what the Inya lake bund’s fame is all about; families with young children come there to let loose their kids so that they can enjoy the spacious grounds, and stray dogs come to feast on the discarded leftover food. Sometimes, there are also groups of foreign tourists, some young, and some old, talking in their native languages and a few foreign lasses with their local beaus, who keep reminding the lads that the relationships are just to have some fun in halting English.

Mingling among the motley crowd are persons, ranging from age eight to fifty, mostly girls and mostly in their early teens, holding heavy plastic baskets. They are not there to enjoy each other’s company, or the view, or the breeze, or to sing, or to play games. They are there with more serious intent. They are on the bund to earn their daily bread, or to be more precise, their daily rice. They sell pure water, cigarettes, potato chips, fish crackers, sunflower seeds, also sour stuff, and tissues. Older vendors are bold enough to sell bottled and canned beer and hard liquor. The vendors walk from one end of the bund to the other; tiredly, announc- ing their wares incessantly and competing with each other to make a sale. They make their way home only when the number of those who have come for rest and recreation dwindles. Some lucky ones manage to sell all that they have brought and the unfortunate ones only manage to make small profit.

Among the vendors, a small thin boy with a huge basket stands out. It is af- ter ten p.m. when I am able to talk to him while he is sitting on one side of the concrete path after walking up and down the bund for the umteenth time. Next to him sat an unhappy looking girl ven- dor slightly older than the boy, without slippers and dressed in old clothes. He is reluctant to talk to me until I buy a packet of sunflower seeds for 300 kyats from him. I am particular- ly interested in his age as he is rather small made, and because it is surprising to find a child of his age out at this time of the night selling snacks. He tells me that his name is Kyaw Zeyar and is eight years old. He lives in Hlmethaya, one of the sat- ellite industrial towns about one and half hour’s ride by bus from where the bund is. I also learnt how he happens to be selling things so late at night. He is together with his father, mother, and eleven year old elder sister who are all vendors like him. His youngest sister who is nearly five comes along with them. It relieves me a bit to learn that he is att- ending school and is in the first grade and that his elder sister is in the seventh grade, and his eldest sister has given up vending to concentrate on her matriculation ex- amination. Tonight, he has earned a little over five thousand kyats and is hop- ing to earn a bit more, be- fore he goes back home with his family. He is not very happy with the amount of money he earns. Older persons, he says, earn as much as twenty thousand kyats. He looks down at little Kyaw Zeyar with him whether he is feeling happy, he says, “Yes,” but, he says he gets home at round about twelve midnight and his parents do not let him sleep unless he has learnt his lessons. I next turn to the grubby barefooted girl next to him. She isn’t particularly interested in my questions. As she has finished selling everything she brought, I cannot buy anything from her. As an involuntarily talk, I give her three hundred kyats as pocket money. Htet Hlaing takes the money and becomes more willing to share with me a bit about her life. She lives with her family and has five siblings. Her step- father is an unskilled la- bourer and her mother does not work. She is eleven years old and has only attended grade one. Htet Hlaing is wait- ing to go home with Kyaw Zeyar and his family be- cause they live in the same area. Probably because she is fed up with answ- ering my questions, she says she wants to look for her friends and leaves. After she leaves, Kyaw Zeyar comments that her stepfa- ther never buys her slip- pers. Kyaw Zeyar too leaves saying he has to try to find something to eat before it is time to go home.

Their departure left me wondering how many children like them there are in the country. It might not be possible to say ex- actly how many child workers there are in Yangon, or the country, but gauging from the number of children working in the same area, the number be- nor does not seem to be small. There are child vending flowers, drinking water bottles, magazines and trays of cigarettes. There are children serving as waiters in restaurants and helping in food stalls nearby. There are boys working in workshops and helping in garment work- ing in cottage industries. There are many girls working as domestic helps. All of them seem to have to work long hours. Those who work at tea- shops and restaurants seem to be well-fed and appear not too happy. From the stories I hear, I do not think many of the children working as do- mestic helps fare as well as those working in res- taurants, especially those working for big families. Most of those vending things at traffic lights live with their families or rela- tives in outlying towns- ships. Most of those serv- ing as waiters ranges from about age eleven to late teens live at the res- taurants where they work sleeping on the floor or on tables at night. Many of the children working in Yangon come from villag- es in the delta region and they come from families of average income and tend to have many sib- lings. In general, child workers are either or- phans, or come from poor families, or from poor families with many children. Some lucky ones have completed their pri- mary education, while others have only attended grade one and cannot read or write. The lives of many of the child workers are un- doubtedly tough and filled with misery and hopeless- ness. For some, a happy child, that there is no need better than ensuring a se- cure and promising future for a child, and that there is a need to invest more money and becomes more possible than a nation than investing in the holistic education for children to ensure national prosperity as well as individual pros- perity, and so in whatever way we can to creatively improve the lives of the many children in need.
Union minister explains measures of government to staff in Bago

BAGO, 2 Feb—Union Minister at the President Office U Hla Tun, together with deputy ministers U Maung Maung Thein, Daw Thein Thein Huy, and Daw Win Maw Tun, met with over 600 government employees in Bago Region at the city hall in Bago on Monday and explained the measures taken by the government.

At the meeting, the union minister said that the government is placing an emphasis on increasing salaries of government employees while taking other measures to provide housing and healthcare for them when they retire. In addition, the government has planned to set up a provident fund so that government employees can enjoy benefits from the measures taken by the government, according to the union minister.

Then, the union minister said the government has arranged to provide free high school education to students starting from 2015-16 fiscal year.

Afterwards, the deputy ministers explained the arrangement for a stock share market, increases in health spending, and social security benefits to the government employees.

The meeting concluded with remarks by the union minister.

Also present at the meeting were Chief Minister of Bago Region U Nyan Win and officials.

MNA

Deputy Culture Minister welcomes cultural troupes from regions and states

NAI PYI TAW, 2 Feb—Delegates of cultural troupes from regions and states arrived at No 7 Transit Centre in Nay Pyi Taw on Monday.

Chairperson of Dinner Union Minister at the President Office U Hla Tun, together with deputy ministers of the union minister, explained measures of government to staff in Bago Region.

Deputy Culture Minister Daw Sanda Khin cordially welcomes members of cultural troupes from regions and states, states arrived at the centre, and those from Mon and Rakhine states will arrive in the evening.

Tin Tun Aung (MNA)

Cultural troupes from Chin State, Bago Region, Kayah, Shan and Kayin States arrived at the centre, and cultural delegates from Rakhine, Tanintharyi, Mon, Rakhine, Tanintharyi, and Mon will arrive on Monday.

Chairperson of Dinner Union Minister at the President Office U Hla Tun, together with deputy ministers of the union minister, explained measures of government to staff in Bago Region.

Tin Tun Aung (MNA)

Agricultural company demonstrates pivot irrigation

The company is also working in partnership with foreign companies, and has a large market, increases in health spending, and social security benefits to the government employees.

The meeting concluded with remarks by the union minister.

Also present at the meeting were Chief Minister of Bago Region U Nyan Win and officials.

MNA

Petrified wood on display in Natogyi

On display at the exhibition are four fifty-foot tall petrified wood each of which worth billions of kyat and bracelet, beads, necklaces, statues and decorative tile made of petrified wood.

Manufacturing of products from petrified wood is also on display at the exhibition which aims to attract foreign tourists who wish to buy petrified wood instead of exporting them to China, where businessmen buy them at lower prices. U Win Shwe, owner of the exhibition with patriotism, even brought petrified wood trees back from China.

******

Chairman of Organizing Committee for 68th Anniversary Mon National Day Nai Maung Toe and party at press conference.

PHOTO: KHAING THANDA LWIN

68th Anniversary Mon National Day celebration to come in February

Chairman of Organizing Committee for 68th Anniversary Mon National Day Nai Maung Toe and party at press conference.

PHOTO: KHAING THANDA LWIN

By Khaing Thanda Lwin

YANGON, 2 Feb —The 68th Anniversary of Mon National Day will be celebrated on a grand scale at the People’s Square and People’s Park here on 3 and 4 February, according to the Mon National Day Executive Committee.

“The celebration aims to show unity and solidarity among Mon people,” said Nai Soe Kyi, secretary of the organizing committee.

“The special day for the Mon people is marked on the date of the establishment of Hanthawaddy, the first Mon dynasty, by two Mon princes Samala and Vimala on 1st Waning Day of Tabodwe, 1116 of the Sasana Era, according to the Mon history. Since 1947, Mon National Day has been observed on that day.

The committee has invited all ethnic nationalities to enjoy a popular Mon drama troupe, which will entertain visitors with traditional songs, dances and cultural shows.

To mark the day, sports competitions have now been held in the town of Ye in Mon State for a week, with committee’s secretary saying that they include bulllock-cart race, boat race, football, and track and field events.

Nai Maung Toe, chair of the committee, said, “They have received messages of felicitations from Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.”

The annual event formally sweeps Mon State, Yangon Region and some foreign countries, with the committee saying that nearly K40 million will be spent on this ceremony.

Mon nationalities are commonly spread all over such regions as Taninthayi, Yangon, Bago and Ayeyawady as well as along the southern border of Thailand and Myanmar.

According to a survey in 2014, Myanmar has a population of five million Mon nationalities, with over 40,000 in Yangon.
WASHINGTON, 2 Feb — Resilience, innovation and advances in technol-
ogy will be key factors as NATO maps out a multibil-
dion-dollar effort to replace its aging fleet of 17 Boeing Co E-3 Sentry Airborne Warning and Control Sys-
tem (AWACS) aircraft, a top NATO official told Reuters.

French General Jean-Paul Palomeros, Supreme
Allied Commander Trans-
formation, said NATO was starting to map out
its requirements for the next-generation of weap-
ons to detect air and surface
threats, which will be need-
ed between 2030 and 2035.

Growing threats and a greater ability to share in-
formation pointed to a so-
called “system of systems”
approach, rather than a
straight one-for-one repla-
cement of a few, highly
visible aircraft that would
be vulnerable to attack.

“This is a very crucial project for NATO for the
next two decades,” Palomo-
eros told Reuters last
week at a conference in Washington hosted by the
Centre for a New American
Security.

Rapid weapons devel-
-opment by Russia and oth-
er potential foes meant the
next-generation weapons
system would have to be
more resilient to attacks,
Palomeros said. Officials
were also looking potential
other uses for the aircraft,
and whether intelligence
analysts would be stationed
on board, he said.

Boeing, Europe’s Air-
bus, and other big weap-
ons makers are keeping
a close eye on NATO’s
emerging plans to buy new
early-warning capabilities,
one of the few larger acqui-
sition programmes in sight.

Palomeros said the programme would be a test
case for many NATO pri-
orities, including a push for
more innovation, expanded partnerships among mem-
bers, and a drive to better
balance spending among
NATO members.

“The replacement for
AWACS is a perfect pro-
ject for trans-Atlantic co-
operation. It opens a lot of
doors,” he said, adding of-
ficials had begun early con-
ceptual work to shape the
requirements for the new
programme.

France, Britain, the United States and other
countries have their own
early-warning systems,
which could translate into
more demand for the new
weapons system in the fu-
ture.

He said it would be crucial for NATO to care-
fully define what was ex-
pected from the new sys-
tem or it could result in a
“very complex, unafforda-
ble system” that would
carry risk in development,
production and even oper-
ations.

Palomeros acknow-
edged problems with some
past multinational weapons
development programmes,
like the Airbus A400M
military transport plane.

But he said the success of the NATO Air Com-
mand and Control System,
developed by a joint ven-
ture of France’s Thales and US weapons maker Ray-
theon Co, had proven that
cooperative development
programmes could work.

Reuters

An AWACS aircraft is seen on the tarmac during a visit of new NATO Secretary-
General Jens Stoltenberg of Norway (not pictured) at Lask air base on 6 Oct, 2014.

Reuters

NATO sees resilience as key issue in AWACS replacement

BRAZILIA, 2 Feb — Brazil’s Congress elected a
conservative as speaker of the Chamber of Deputies on Sunday in a setback for
the ruling Workers’ Party that split President Dilma Rousseff’s coalition and
will complicate her legisla-
tive agenda.

Eduardo Cunha belongs to Brazil’s largest
party, the PMDB. Rousseff’s
camp saw Cunha as a sign of
instability for the government.

Cunha backs a bill that
would make it harder for the
federal government to block
spending proposed by
lawmakers, which would
counter Rousseff’s efforts to
eliminate Brazil’s fiscal deficit with
austerity measures as she
begins her second term.

“We seek the inde-
dependence of Congress. We
will not become opponents
of the government, but we
won’t be submissive either,” he said. Rousseff
still enjoys a majority that
ensures her government’s
stability, he added.

Rousseff, however,
will not be able to count
on Cunha to shield her ad-
ministration from renewed
congressional inquiries
into a corruption scandal
at state-run oil company
Petroleo Brasileiro SA
that threatens to implicate
members of her party.

Rousseff has denied any
knowledge of the scheme
though she was chairwom-
an of the company’s board
when much of the alleged
graft took place.

Cunha also opposes a
controversial plan by the
Worker’s Party to regulate
Brazilian media.

The new speaker, a
56-year-old economist
who follows the Evan-
gelical faith, is known for
diggings that represent the
interests of lobby groups in
negotiating legislative pro-
posals, which has often put
him at odds with Rousse-
ff’s policies.

His critics have
dubbed him Brazil’s Frank
Underwood, in reference to
the ruthless politician in
the American television se-
 ries “House of Cards.”

Earlier on Sunday, the
Senate re-elected a loyal
Rousseff ally, Renan Cal-
heiro of the PMDB party,
as president of the upper
chamber.

The heads of the
Chamber of Deputies and
the Senate are third and
fourth in the line of presi-
dential succession.

They will preside over
more fractious Congress
with 28 parties, fewer
members representing la-
bour and environmental in-
terests, and more Christian
conservatives and farm
lobby representatives.

Reuters

US taking new look at giving
arms to Ukraine forces: NYT

WASHINGTON, 2 Feb — President Barack Obama’s
administration is taking a new look at providing
Ukrainian forces with de-
fensive weapons and equip-
ment in the face of a rebel
offensive that shattered a
five-month truce, the New
York Times reported on Sunday.

The newspaper quoted US officials as saying Sec-
retary of State John Kerry
and US Joint Chiefs Chair-
man Martin Dempsey were
open to discussions of the
idea and that NATO mil-
tary commander General Philip Breedlove now sup-
ported providing such lethal
aid. One official was quoted as saying that US nation-
al security advisor Susan
Rice was also prepared to
reconsider her previous re-
sistance to providing such
assistance.

Kerry will visit Kiev on
Thursday for talks with
President Petro Poroshen-
ko and other Ukrainian
officials. Obama voiced
concern last week about
renewed fighting between
Russian-backed separatist
government forces in
eastern Ukraine and said
the United States was con-
sidering all options short
of military action to isolate
Russia. The Times said
eight former senior US of-
ficials would issue an inde-
pendent report on Monday
urging Washington to send

US Secretary of State
John Kerry addresses the media in Boston, Massachusetts on 31 Jan, 2015.—REUTERS

S$3 billion in defensive arms and
equipment to Ukraine,
including anti-armour mis-
siles and reconnaissance
drones.

Fighting raged in east-
ern Ukraine on Sunday
as pro-Russian separatists
used artillery fire to try to
dislodge government forces
from a strategic rail hub af-
fter peace talks collapsed.

NATO and Kiev ac-
cuse Russia of sending
thousands of troops to sup-
port the rebel advance with
heavy weapons and tanks.

Moscow denies it is direct-
ly involved in fighting over
territory that the Kremlin
refers to as “New Russia.”

European Union for-
eign ministers agreed on
Thursday to extend for an-
other six months eco-
nomic 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.—Reuters

Brazil’s Congress elects Rousseff
critic as speaker

Deputy Eduardo Cunha (C) reacts after being elected as the President of the
Chamber of Deputies during a session in the plenary of the House of Representatives
in Brasilia on 1 Feb, 2015.—REUTERS
At least 10 killed in attacks led by Yemen’s Ansar al-Sharia

SANA‘A, 2 Feb — At least 10 people have been killed in Yemen over the past four days in attacks led by Al-Qaeda’s affiliate against Shi‘te Houthi fighters and the Yemeni army, local officials and the group said.

Yemen has been in limbo since its president and prime minister resigned less than two weeks ago after the Houthis seized the presidential palace and confined the head of state to his residence in a struggle to tighten control over Yemen.

The rise of the Houthis has antagonized Sunni tribesmen and Sunni al-Qaeda militants, who regard them as heretics.

On Sunday, Ansar al-Sharia said its members targeted and killed Aba Abdullah al-Ayadi, a Houthi commander in Yemen’s central city of Ibb, according to the group’s Twitter account.

Local officials in the city confirmed the death of the commander without giving further details.

The militants targeted Yemeni soldiers on Saturday and said it had killed two at a checkpoint in the southern city of Abyan and wounded two others, according to a post on its Twitter account.

Local officials in the region said that clashes between the army and the militants had also led to the death of at least three Ansar al-Sharia members.

The group also said on Twitter it shot an army officer in the southern province of Lahij on Friday and killed three other Houthi fighters in the central province of al-Hayda on Thursday.

Yemen has been in turmoil since 2011, to the dismay of neighbouring Saudi Arabia and Western powers, who want to prevent instability in the Arabian peninsula threatening their oil supplies or giving Al-Qaeda a base for overseas attacks.—Reuters

Tokyo, 2 Feb — The only way to fight terrorism is by working with the international community and using all mechanisms to ensure the safety of Japanese people, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said on Monday.

Abe made the comments a day after Islamic State militants said they had beheaded a second Japanese hostage, journalist Kenji Goto, after the failure of international efforts to secure his release through a prisoner swap.

Abe reiterated his determination of the militants and said Japan was firmly committed to fulfilling its responsibility as a member of the global community in fighting terrorism.

“If we don’t move together because we’re terrified of terrorists it will just be as the despicable people scared of terrorists it will be just as the despicable people scared of terrorism,” he said.

The hardline Islamist group, which controls large parts of Syria and Iraq, on Sunday released a video purportedly showing the beheading of Goto, 47, a veteran war correspondent who was captured by the militants in late October.

The video was released a week after footage was issued appearing to show the beheaded body of another Japanese hostage, Haruna Yukawa.

The kidnappings are fanning calls to allow Japan’s long-constrained military to conduct overseas rescue missions as part of Abe’s push for a muscular security posture.

Abe’s government had put high priority on seeking the release of Goto, who was captured when he went to Syria to try to seek Yukawa’s release. Yukawa was seized by militants in August after going to Syria to launch a security company.

Goto’s wife, Rinko, who had appealed for his safe release, said she and the family were devastated.

“I remain extremely proud of my husband, who reported the plight of people in conflict areas like Iraq, Somalia and Syria,” she said in a statement posted on the Roky Peck Trust, a London-based organisation supporting freelance journalists.

“It was his passion to highlight the effects on ordinary people, especially through the eyes of children, and to inform the rest of us of the tragedies of war.”—Reuters

Netanyahu criticises UN over Lebanon flare-up

Jerusalem, 2 Feb — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu accused United Nations peacekeepers on Sunday of failing to enforce a resolution barring Hezbollah guerrillas from smuggling weapons into Lebanon.

In a phone call with UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, Netanyahu blamed Iran, Hezbollah’s main sponsor, for Wednesday’s flare-up that killed two Israeli soldiers and a Spanish peacekeeper in the worst fighting along the Israeli-Lebanese frontier since a 2006 war.

He said that a resolution ending that 34-day conflict was “not being implemented,” and that the peacekeepers, known as the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) “aren’t reporting on weapons smuggling into southern Lebanon.”

The soldiers and peacekeeper died when guerrillas fired rockets at unmarked Israeli vehicles at the frontier, and Israel responded with artillery shells and an air strike.

Israel’s Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu attends the weekly cabinet meeting at his office in Jaffa, 2 Feb, 2015.—REUTERS

Israel’s Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu expressed “sorrow” for the UN soldier’s death and said he had agreed with Spain to jointly investigate the circumstances, a statement for the Israeli leader’s office said.

The UN peaceforce launched southern Lebanon since a deal achieved after a 1978 Israeli incursion.

Hezbollah’s attack was seen as revenge for a 18 January raid blamed on Israel that killed several Hezbollah members and an Iranian general in southern Syria.

The exchange of fire triggered concerns the conflict could escalate, with Israeli nerves at Hezbollah’s deployment not only in Lebanon but now also across the Syrian frontier, where the guerrillas have been helping Syria’s embattled President Hafez Asad fight a civil war.

In his remarks to Ban, Netanyahu accused Teheran of trying to widen the conflict against Israel, and complained that “until now the world community has not pointed an accusatory finger at Iran, which was behind the attack on the northern border.”

Israel and Hezbollah have signalled that despite the violence, they are not interested in a further escalation, and despite increased vigilance on both sides the border area has been calm for the past four days.

Hezbollah’s leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah said in a speech on Friday “we do not want a war” but would remain ready to respond to any Israeli violence.

Reuters

Islamic State was not sincere in hostage swap talks

AMMAN, 2 Feb — A senior Jordanian parliamentarian said on Sunday that Islamic State militants could not be trusted to follow through on a possible hostage swap deal which was seen as tied to the release of Japanese hostage Kenji Goto.

“There was no guarantee that Mr Goto would have been freed even if their demands were met,” Bassam Al-Manaseer, chairman of the Arab International Affairs Committee, said in an interview with Kyodo News in Amman, after a video purported to show the killing of 47-year-old journalist Goto was posted online that day.

The militants had demanded the release of the convicted Iraqi terrorist Sajida al-Rishawi from prison in Jordan in exchange for Goto. Al-Manaseer said linkages to the Islamic State group were not serious and that the group himself was just as the despicable people scared of terrorism, he said.

The hardline Islamist group, which controls large parts of Syria and Iraq, on Sunday released a video purporting to show the beheading of Goto, 47, a veteran war correspondent who was captured by the militants in late October.

The video was released a week after footage was issued appearing to show the beheaded body of another Japanese hostage, Haruna Yukawa.

The kidnappings are fanning calls to allow Japan’s long-constrained military to conduct overseas rescue missions as part of Abe’s push for a muscular security posture.

Abe’s government had put high priority on seeking the release of Goto, who was captured when he went to Syria to try to seek Yukawa’s release. Yukawa was seized by militants in August after going to Syria to launch a security company.

Goto’s wife, Rinko, who had appealed for his safe release, said she and the family were devastated.

“I remain extremely proud of my husband, who reported the plight of people in conflict areas like Iraq, Somalia and Syria,” she said in a statement posted on the Roky Peck Trust, a London-based organisation supporting freelance journalists.

“It was his passion to highlight the effects on ordinary people, especially through the eyes of children, and to inform the rest of us of the tragedies of war.”—Reuters

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe enters his office in Tokyo on 2 Feb, 2015, a day after Islamic State posted online a video purported to show the killing of a Japanese hostage.

KYODO NEWS

Working with global community only way to fight terrorism — Japan PM

JAPAN, 2 Feb — Abe made the comments a day after Islamic State militants said they had beheaded a second Japanese hostage, journalist Kenji Goto, after the failure of international efforts to secure his release through a prisoner swap.

Abe reiterated his determination of the militants and said Japan was firmly committed to fulfilling its responsibility as a member of the global community in fighting terrorism.

“If we don’t move together because we’re terrified of terrorists it will just be as the despicable people scared of terrorism,” he said.

The hardline Islamist group, which controls large parts of Syria and Iraq, on Sunday released a video purported to show the beheading of Goto, 47, a veteran war correspondent who was captured by the militants in late October.

The video was released a week after footage was issued appearing to show the beheaded body of another Japanese hostage, Haruna Yukawa.

The kidnappings are fanning calls to allow Japan’s long-constrained military to conduct overseas rescue missions as part of Abe’s push for a muscular security posture.

Abe’s government had put high priority on seeking the release of Goto, who was captured when he went to Syria to try to seek Yukawa’s release. Yukawa was seized by militants in August after going to Syria to launch a security company.

Goto’s wife, Rinko, who had appealed for his safe release, said she and the family were devastated.

“I remain extremely proud of my husband, who reported the plight of people in conflict areas like Iraq, Somalia and Syria,” she said in a statement posted on the Roky Peck Trust, a London-based organisation supporting freelance journalists.

“It was his passion to highlight the effects on ordinary people, especially through the eyes of children, and to inform the rest of us of the tragedies of war.”—Reuters

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe enters his office in Tokyo on 2 Feb, 2015, a day after Islamic State posted online a video purported to show the killing of a Japanese hostage.

KYODO NEWS

Islamic State was not sincere in hostage swap talks

AMMAN, 2 Feb — A senior Jordanian parliamentarian said on Sunday that Islamic State militants could not be trusted to follow through on a possible hostage swap deal which was seen as tied to the release of Japanese hostage Kenji Goto.

“There was no guarantee that Mr Goto would have been freed even if their demands were met,” Bassam Al-Manaseer, chairman of the Arab International Affairs Committee, said in an interview with Kyodo News in Amman, after a video purporting to show the killing of 47-year-old journalist Goto was posted online that day.

The militants had demanded the release of the convicted Iraqi terrorist Sajida al-Rishawi from prison in Jordan in exchange for Goto. Al-Manaseer said linkages to the Islamic State group were not serious and that the group himself was just as the despicable people scared of terrorism, he said.

The hardline Islamist group, which controls large parts of Syria and Iraq, on Sunday released a video purported to show the beheading of Goto, 47, a veteran war correspondent who was captured by the militants in late October.

The video was released a week after footage was issued appearing to show the beheaded body of another Japanese hostage, Haruna Yukawa.

The kidnappings are fanning calls to allow Japan’s long-constrained military to conduct overseas rescue missions as part of Abe’s push for a muscular security posture.

Abe’s government had put high priority on seeking the release of Goto, who was captured when he went to Syria to try to seek Yukawa’s release. Yukawa was seized by militants in August after going to Syria to launch a security company.

Goto’s wife, Rinko, who had appealed for his safe release, said she and the family were devastated.

“I remain extremely proud of my husband, who reported the plight of people in conflict areas like Iraq, Somalia and Syria,” she said in a statement posted on the Roky Peck Trust, a London-based organisation supporting freelance journalists.

“It was his passion to highlight the effects on ordinary people, especially through the eyes of children, and to inform the rest of us of the tragedies of war.”—Reuters

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe enters his office in Tokyo on 2 Feb, 2015, a day after Islamic State posted online a video purported to show the killing of a Japanese hostage.

KYODO NEWS
Major snowstorm hits Chicago, heads toward New England

Bitter cold weather is forecast to follow the snow across the country. In Grand Island, Nebraska, the temperature plunged to 7 Fahrenheit (-14 Celsius) by mid-afternoon on Sunday, according to the statement. The storm knocked out power to nearly 20,000 customers in Illinois, the office said. The storm path extends from which forecast up to 18 inches (45 cm) of snow in the Chicago area. Bitter cold weather.

Britain urged to go ‘beyond aid’ for global impact

LONDON, 2 Feb — Aid handouts alone are not enough to help poor countries and Britain must find ways to move “beyond aid” to have a global impact, a parliamentary watchdog said on Monday.

While aid remains crucial in lifting countries out of poverty, it is not the only answer for fragile states that may need complex interventions, the International Development Committee said in a report.

At the same time, while aid is no longer provided for middle income countries like India, new forms of cooperation should be developed with links to British institutions.

Greece starts drive to sell new debt deal to doubting Europe

VARIOUS GREECE government began its drive to persuade a sceptical Europe to accept a new debt agreement on Sunday while it starts to roll back on austerity measures imposed under its existing bailout agreement.

“A few weeks ago, the country was on the brink of default,” a senior European official said. “Now we are talking about the possibility of a return to normalcy.”

A woman carries a shovel through a parking lot during blizzard conditions in Chicago, Illinois on 1 Feb, 2015.— REUTERS

Hammer out a new agreement with its partners in about six weeks. He said he wanted to deal directly with European partners, the ECB and IMF rather than go through inspectors from the troika.

Varoufakis went to London to see British Finance Minister George Osborne on Monday and travels to Rome on Tuesday. A meeting with German Finance Minister Wolfgang Schaeuble, who has repeatedly demanded that Greece meet all its bailout obligations, would follow in the coming days, he said.

Sapin repeated that Greece could not expect its partners to accept a straight debt write off. He left the door open to other options that could include giving Athens more time for repayments and new forms of cooperation should be developed with links.

The storm followed a blizzard last week that pummeled parts of the East Coast, especially New England states, where up to three feet (90 cm) of snow piled up. New York City had prepared for a major storm but was spared the brunt.

In Massachusetts, the forecasted snow prompted officials to postpone proceedings scheduled for Monday in the murder trial of ex-New England Patriots star Aaron Hernandez. In Chicago, proceedings at the US District Court, Northern District of Illinois, were canceled for Monday.

Slippery and snowy roads were reported in numerous states and the Ohio Turnpike banned travel on Sunday for some traffic accidents with trailers. In South Dakota, a woman died on Saturday when her car slid off an icy road, the state Department of Public Safety said on Sunday.
Egypt frees Al Jazeera journalist Greste, two others still held

CAIRO, 2 Feb — Al Jazeera journalist Peter Greste was released from a Cairo jail on Sunday and left Egypt after 400 days in prison on charges that included aiding a terrorist group, security officials said. There was no official word on the fate of his two Al Jazeera colleagues — Canadian-Egyptian Mohamed Fahmy and Egyptian national Baher Mohamed — who were also jailed in the case that provoked an international outcry.

The three were sentenced to seven to 10 years on charges including spreading lies to help a terrorist organisation — a reference to the outlawed Muslim Brotherhood. One month ago, however, a court ordered their retrial. A security official said Fahmy was expected to be released from Cairo’s Tora prison within days. His fiancée said he hoped he would be free soon and deported to Canada. “His deportation is in its final stages. We are hopeful,” Marwa Omara told Reuters. Canada’s foreign ministry welcomed what it called positive developments. “We remain very hopeful that Mr Fahmy’s case will be resolved shortly,” it said in a statement.

Many Egyptians see Qatar-based Al Jazeera as a force set on destabilising the country, a view that has been encouraged in the local media which labelled the journalists “The Marriott Cell”, because they worked from a hotel of the US-based chain.

Australian farmer grows record 743 kg pumpkin

SYDNEY, 2 Feb — An Australian farmer has set a new national record with the heaviest pumpkin in Australia and New Zealand.

Dale Oliver’s winning pumpkin weighed at 743 kg during the Summerland Pumpkin Competition held in northern New South Wales (NSW).

Oliver has been the nation’s top pumpkin grower for many years and in 2013 broke his 575 kg record with a 619 kg pumpkin. He told the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) on Monday that his record-breaking Atlantic Giant pumpkin only took 75 to 80 days to grow. However, Oliver needs to grow them bigger in order to make a world record.

The Guinness World Records must have 1120 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.

SHIPMING AGENCY DEPARTMENT MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY AGENT FOR: M/S REGIONAL CONTAINER LINES

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE MV KYO HSIUING VOY NO (1028)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV KYO HSIUING VOY NO (1028) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 2.2.2015 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of H.P.T where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses 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.

SHIPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY AGENT FOR: M/S CHINA SHIPPING LINES

Phone No: 2301185

WEATHER REPORT

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL EVENING OF THE 3rd February, 2015: Weather will be partly cloudy in Bago, Yangon and Taninthayi Regions, Kachin, Shan, and Mon State and generally fair in the remaining Regions and States.

STATE OF THE SEA: Strong easterly winds with moderate to rough sea are likely at times off and along Mon-Taninthayi Coasts. Surface wind speed in strong wind may reach (30) m.p.h. Seas will be moderate elsewhere in Myanmar waters.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Generally fair in the whole country.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYITA TWA AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 3rd February, 2015: Generally fair weather.

C. al Jazeera journalist Peter Greste poses for a photograph in Kibati village, near Goma in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo on 7 Aug, 2013. REUTERS

Egyptian authorities accuse Al Jazeera of being a mouthpiece of the Muslim Brotherhood, the Qatar-backed movement which President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi toppled in 2013 when he was Egypt’s army chief. The timing of Greste’s release came as a surprise, just days after Egypt suffered one of the bloodiest militant attacks in years. More than 30 members of the security forces were killed on Thursday night in Sinai, and ongoing comments from Sisi suggested he was in no mood for compromise.

The Interior Ministry said on its Facebook page that Sisi released Greste under a decree issued in November authorising the president to approve the deportation of foreign prisoners. —Reuters

Advertise with us!

For inquiries to place an advertisement in the GNLM, please email wallace.tun@gmail.com(+95) (01) 8604532
Scarlett Johansson flaunts skinny post-baby figure

LOS ANGELES, 2 Feb — ‘Avengers’ star Scarlett Johansson flaunted her post-baby body just four months after giving birth to her daughter Rose Dorothy.

The 30-year-old actress showed off her slim and toned body in a figure hugging mini dress when attending the G’Day USA Gala and AACTA International Awards, reported Ace Showbiz. Styling her short blonde hair in voluminous updo, the ‘Captain America: The Winter Soldier’ actress completed her look with a pair of black heels and some accessories.

Johansson attended the event to present her ‘Avengers: Age of Ultron’ co-star Chris Hemsworth with the Excellence in Film Award. The actor was joined by his wife Elsa Pataky and his brother Liam Hemsworth.

Jay-Z bids USD 56 Million for music streaming services

LOS ANGELES, 2 Feb — Rapper Jay-Z is expanding his empire into music streaming business.

Through Project Panther Bidco Ltd. owned by his company Sean Carter Enterprises (SCE), the rapper has placed a USD 56 million bid for Aspiro, a Swedish company that developed two emerging high-quality music streaming apps, reported Ace Showbiz.

Jay-Z has reportedly got preliminary approval from the Aspiro board.

Ricardo Medina Jr arrested for murder

LOS ANGELES, 2 Feb — ‘Power Rangers’ star Ricardo Medina Jr is facing murder charges. The 37-year-old actor, who played the Red Ranger in ‘Power Rangers Wild Force’ and returned to the franchise as Deker in ‘Power Rangers Samurai’, was taken into police custody in Palmdale, California, reported TMZ.

Medina Jr reportedly got involved in an altercation with his roommate named Joshua Sutter. He decided to retreat to his bedroom with his girlfriend, but Sutter forced his way into the room. The retaliate and stabbed Sutter with a sword in the abdomen.

The actor, who is the son of Brazilian boxer Ricardo Medina, called 911 and waited for the cops to arrive. He was ultimately arrested and booked for murder, while Sutter was taken to hospital and pronounced dead. Medina Jr’s bail is set at USD 1 million.

‘Uptown Funk’ holds onto British music chart top spot

LONDON, 2 Feb — “Uptown Funk” by English DJ and producer Mark Ronson secured a seventh week at the top of the British singles chart on Sunday, the Official Charts Company said.

The single, which features Hawaiian-born singer Bruno Mars, outsold Irish artist Hozier’s song about love and religion “Take me to Church”, which came in second place, and “LA Love” by Fergie in third.

The top five was completed by “Lips are Movin” by Meghan Trainor in fourth and new entry “Four Five Seconds” by Barbadian star Rihanna, which also features Kanye West and Paul McCartney.

Ronson could not hold on to number one position in the album charts, where Trainor’s new entry “Title” earned her a chart-topping debut studio album. Ed Sheeran’s “X” continued its long spell in the top five, charting in second place ahead of Ronson’s “Uptown Special”.

Scarlett Johansson

Scott Foley injures foot on ‘Scandal’ set

LOS ANGELES, 2 Feb — Actor Scott Foley has suffered an injury during the filming of political thriller TV series ‘Scandal’. The 42-year-old actor’s wife Marika Dominczyk shared on Twitter a picture of her husband wearing a cast on his foot, reported Ace Showbiz. “Btw- aftermath of running with no shoes. On the street #Scandal @scottkfoley #dasboot #foleyfangirls.”, she captioned the photo.

He reportedly continued the filming despite his twisted ankle.
Fresh reports circulate on China’s second aircraft carrier

BEIJING, 2 Feb — Fresh reports that China is building a second aircraft carrier circulated over the weekend on a city government microblog and a state-owned newspaper, as the country scrambles to modernise its military.

China wants to develop an ocean-going “blue water” navy capable of defending the growing interests of the world’s second largest economy as it adopts a more assertive stance in territorial disputes with neighbours in the South China and East China seas.

A power cable maker in the eastern city of Changzhou has won a deal to provide equipment for the second aircraft carrier, according to the reports, which appeared on the official microblog of the government of Changzhou and the state-backed Changzhou Evening News, but have since been deleted.

Chinese military analysts said the reports were a tacit acknowledgement the carrier was being built. Media reports last year cited the top party official in the northern province of Liaoning as saying that China was building the carrier, and aimed for a future fleet of at least four aircraft carriers. But the government has consistently sought to keep news about a second aircraft carrier quiet, and the military has not formally acknowledged its development.

The country’s first aircraft carrier, the Liaoning, a Soviet-era ship bought from Ukraine in 1998 and refitted in a Chinese shipyard, has long been a symbol of China’s naval build-up. Successfully operating the 60,000-tonne Liaoning is the first step in what state media and some military experts believe will be the deployment of domestically-built carriers by 2020.

Sri Lanka looks to mend ties with US

COLOMBO, 2 Feb — The newly elected Sri Lanka government on Monday said it is keen to work more closely with the United States on various issues. Sri Lanka’s newly appointed External Affairs Minister, Mangala Samaraweera, made the remarks after his meeting with the visiting US Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs Nisha Biswal, who is currently on a two-day visit in Sri Lanka.

Samaraweera also said that he will be travelling to Washington next week for talks with US Secretary of State John Kerry and also extend an official invitation for Kerry to visit the island.

Biswal told reporters after her meeting with Samaraweera in Colombo that Kerry is looking forward to his meeting with Samaraweera and is ready to assist Sri Lanka in addressing human rights issues and good governance.

A major diplomatic rift has emerged between the United States and Sri Lanka during the previous government, headed by Mahinda Rajapakse, over the island nation’s human rights record. The United States last year sponsored a resolution against Sri Lanka at the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva. The resolution mandated a UN-led investigation on the war in Sri Lanka and a report on the investigation is scheduled to be submitted to the UN Human Rights Council in March this year.

The dispute focused on possible war crimes that occurred during the final phase of Sri Lanka’s bloody civil war against the Tamil Tiger rebels, with the United States pressing for an independent probe into the alleged wartime atrocities. The previous government had denied any wrongdoing and had rejected calls for an international inquiry.

The new Sri Lankan government led by President Maithripala Sirisena, which came to power following the 8 January presidential elections, is looking at mending ties with the United States by launching a fresh domestic investigation into the war which meets international expectations.

Gas blast kills one, injures nine in southeast Mexico

MEXICO CITY, 2 Feb — At least one person was killed and nine others injured on Sunday in a gas blast in southeasten Mexico, local authorities said.

The blast occurred around 3 am (0900 GMT) at a butcher shop in downtown Xalapa, capital of the southeastern state of Veracruz, the local Attorney General’s Office said.

The butcher shop and another house were destroyed.

Investigators believed that the blast might have been caused by an accumulation of gas.

On Thursday, a powerful gas explosion in a hospital in Mexico City killed three people and injured more than 70 others, 10 of whom are still in serious condition.

Police bust drug gang in central China

CHANGSHA, 2 Feb — Police in central China’s Hunan Province on Monday announced that they had apprehended eight suspected members of a drug gang.

Police also seized 50 kilograms of ketamine, a pistol, 8 bullets and 3 knives in the crackdown in Changde City in late January.

It is alleged that the gang has dumped drugs in the forest or vacant houses, according to Li Li, head of the anti-drug detachment with the municipal public security bureau...—Xinhua
Gulf in class as Arsenal hit hapless Villa for five

Arsenal's Theo Walcott celebrates his goal against Aston Villa during their English Premier League soccer match at the Emirates Stadium in London, on 1 Feb, 2015. — Reuters

Swansea glad to see back of miserable January

Swansea's captain Ashley Williams' superb double-goalie clearance from two Sadio Mane strikes in the dying moments of the game to maintain their lead epitomised the dogged spirit of the visitors.

It was their first league win since 26 December and came after a tough January in which striker Wilfried Bony joined champions Manchester City, leaders Chelsea thumped them 5-0 at their own Liberty Stadium and they crashed out of the FA Cup with a loss at second tier Blackburn Rovers. Monk said his team were tactically perfect to overcome high-flying Southampton and ensure a better start to February.

"We frustrated them in the first half, then we went for the three points in the second. And what a goal by Jonjo Shelvey — that's a goal worthy of winning any game," Monk told a news conference.

"I'm happy with the three points after what has been a difficult month for us. We spoke about getting back to basics in the week, and we executed the plan very well.

"We've been in a difficult moment, especially in the last two games (against Chelsea and Blackburn). We didn't show the commitment we've shown all season. But today was a very committed performance.

"There are periods in a season when you have to adapt. We've played some fantastic football this season, but you have to adapt sometimes, and we did that very well today.

"Victory moved Swansea to ninth in the table with 33 points. They host Sunderland next in the league on Saturday. — Reuters

Southampton's Maya Yoshida (R) challenges Swansea City's Bafetimbi Gomis during their English Premier League soccer match at St Mary's Stadium in Southampton, southern England, on 1 Feb, 2015. — Reuters

Swansea manager Garry Monk said.

Messi hits winner as Barca keep up pressure

Barcelona's Neymar celebrates his goal against Villarreal during their Spanish first division soccer match at Nou Camp Stadium in Barcelona on 1 Feb, 2015. — Reuters

Barcelona, 2 Feb — Lionel Messi struck the winner for Barcelona who twice came from behind to beat Villarreal 3-2 at home and move a point behind leaders Real Madrid in La Liga on Sunday.

Barcelona dominated possession and Luis Suarez had several early chances but it was Villarreal who took the lead with Denis Cheryshev redirecting a Mario Gaspar shot past keeper Claudio Bravo on the half hour.

The Catalans side have been looking more resilient in recent weeks and in-form Neymar knocked in a rebound before halftime after Rafinha's shot had been saved by keeper Sergio Asenjo.

Luciano Vietto restored the visitors' advantage after being set up well by Giovani dos Santos but Barca again bounced back.

Rafinha knocked the ball back into Messi's header which had been blocked by Victor Ruiz and then

Messi hit a 20-metre shot into the top corner with his weaker right foot after 55 minutes.

Barcelona coach Luis Enrique was pleased with the performance but admitted they lacked concentration for a spell.

"It was a very positive match except for the goals that we conceded," he told reporters.

"At 1-0 we lost our composure for about ten minutes and gave the ball away but up until the first goal we didn't face any danger.

"When the score was at 3-2 we continued to attack as we wanted to finish the match off. We obviously tried to keep hold of the ball but if the rivals leaves you space then you have to attack it.

"Barcelona have 50 points from 21 games while Real, who have also played a game less, beat Real Sociedad 4-1 on Saturday to stay top as Villarreals are sixth on 38 points. — Reuters