Japan eyes Myanmar for agricultural machinery sales

Participants in an agriculture business-matching seminar are in deep conversation for better understanding of the Myanmar agricultural machinery market, at Chatrium Hotel in Yangon.—Puorlo: Yz Myint

By Ye Myint
YANGON, 3 Feb—Nineteen Japanese farm equipment makers are exploring the possibility of networking business partners to sell their farm equipment in Myanmar through an agriculture business seminar.

The seminar held in Yangon on Tuesday focused on agriculture machinery presentations of Japanese firms which are seeking business ties with potential candidates for sales of their products in Myanmar, an agriculture-rich country in Southeast Asia. It also featured a business matching, bringing together around 40 local farm equipment distributors to match with Japanese suppliers.

It was organized by the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) in cooperation with the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI) to build a foundation for market opportunities for manufacturers and distributors from agricultural machinery and materials sector.

“I got into conversation with a Japanese counterpart on a matter to import used tractors from Japan, sharing information with each other on which horsepower of tractors can work well for mechanization of the fields here”, said Nay Myo Lwin of Smart Mission International Co., Ltd that specializes in tractors, spare parts and agricultural equipment.

Despite higher prices that make less affordable Japanese farm equipment to be purchased by Myanmar farmers, product quality may boost sales, he said as the market potential for Japanese tractor in the country. But, it is essential to have easy access to spare parts for users to maintain the used tractors they bought, he added.

Bean prices up due to lower local stock and increasing demand from India

By Aye Min Soe
YANGON, 3 Feb — The year 2015 is looking rosy for Myanmar’s pea and bean growers as the price of beans has increased since the start of the year.

A farmer sprays tonic on bean plants in Kawa.—Photo: Aye Min Soe

Press release on meeting on amendment of national education law

NAY PYI TAW, 3 Feb.—The government has issued a statement on the deferral of the four-way talks as follows:

1. The Government, the Parliament, the Leading Committee for Democratic Education Movement and the National Network for Education Reform made joint efforts to hold four-party talks in relation to the amendment of the National Education Law as students demanded.

(See page 3)
MPs debate on drafting tax reform bill

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw speaker meets Chairman of Japan-Myanmar Friendship Association

Pyithu Hluttaw

National transport master plan comprising 142 projects to seek approval of Hluttaw

DICA issues company registration, work licences, permission within three days

Japan eyes Myanmar for agriculture...
President U Thein Sein sends messages of felicitations to Sri Lanka

Nay Pyi Taw, 4 Feb—On the occasion of the 67th Anniversary of Independence Day of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka which falls on 4th February 2015, U Thein Sein, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, has sent messages of felicitations to His Excellency Mr Maithripala Sirisena, President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka and His Excellency Mr Ranil Wickremesinghe, Prime Minister of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka.—MNA

4th GEGG Forum focus...

(from page 1)

environmentally friendly and follow the practices of low carbon emission. Myanmar pays complete attention to the aspects of energy efficiency and renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, fisheries, livestock, forests, biodiversity, water resources, ecosystems, systematic use and management of land, disaster risk reduction, green cities projects, disaster risk reduction, and management of land, livestock, forests, bio-diversity, water resources, ecosystems, systematic use and management of land, disaster risk reduction, green cities projects, hazardous waste management, conservation of oceans, seas and coastal areas, and environmentally sound technology.

To achieve desired results, Myanmar has formulated policies, legislations and action plans, adopting the national energy policy, the national water policy, the land use policy, the environmental conservation law and the disaster management law.

Myanmar, Bangladesh to cooperate in energy sector

Nay Pyi Taw, 3 Feb—Vice President U Nyan Tun received Dr. Tawfiq-E-Elahi Chowdhury, Hon’ble Energy Adviser to the Prime Minister of Bangladesh and the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) in 2014 in a bid to utilize natural resources effectively and transparently between the two countries.

Union FM receives Energy Adviser to the Bangladeshi PM

Union Minister U Wunna Maung Lwin receives Dr. Tawfiq-E-Elahi Chowdhury, Hon’ble Energy Adviser to the Bangladeshi PM.—MNA

Press release on meeting...

(from page 1)

1. Arrangements were made to continue the talks at the Ministry of Education in Nay Pyi Taw on 3 February, based on the agreement reached at the talks held at the Diamond Jubilee Hall of Yangon University on 1 February.

2. The four-way meeting scheduled at the ministry on 3 February was delayed as a result of different points of view on the agenda.

3. Representatives of the government, the ministry and the parliament negotiated with great patience.

4. Officials of the government decided to resume the talks until agreement is reached on the type and agenda of the meeting, which will take some time in order to avoid unnecessary conflict.

5. A decision has been made to postpone the talks until later 12 February on the grounds that preparations should be made to ensure preconditions agreed among all sides involved for negotiation to yield desired results. The government side will arrange for the resumption of the talks on the date set by students after 12 February.

6. The Government, the Parliament, the Leading Committee for Democratic Education Movement and the National Network for Education Reform have all made an agreement to focus on required preconditions for talks to be productive and successful.

Press Release Team
Buddha Pujaniya, rice offering ceremony held at Maha Muni Buddha Image

MANDALAY, 3 Feb — The 56th Buddha Pujaniya festival is being held from the 1st Waxing Day to 8th Waning Day of Tabodwe, (from 20 January to 11 February) at Maha Muni Buddha Image in Mandalay.

The Pathana treatise was recited from 20 to 28 January at the Buddha image. The Htamané making festival was held on 2 February. The gates of the precinct at the Buddha image were opened the whole night on that day.

Shwe Nyahko performing arts troupe entertained the visitors at night.

In the early morning of the Fullmoon Day of Tabodwe, 3 February, wellwishers donated meals to Yaydaw Sayadaw and members of the Sangha and offered alms.

The 26th rice offering ceremony will be held at the platform of the Buddha image in the afternoon of 11th February. Wellwishers and social organizations can donate provisions to 853 Buddhist monks at over 60 pavilions. Min Htet Aung (Mandalay Sub-printing House)

Quadripartite football tournament changed to tripartite one

YANGON, 3 Feb — As part of preparation of Myanmar U-20 team to take part in the FIFA U-20 World Cup, the schedule of quadripartite football tournament was changed to the tripartite tournament in Mandalay.

The tournament will be held at Mandalay Thiri Stadium in Mandalay from 17 to 21 February. Although football teams from Europe and Asia were invited to join the tournament, the new schedule will be implemented to hold the tripartite football tournament with participation of Uzbekistan U-20 and Fijian U-20 teams together with host Myanmar U-20 team.

The invited teams will arrive in Myanmar on 15 February. The preparation meeting and pre-match press conference will be held on 16 February.

The location of press conference and its timetable will be released to the media, according to the Myanmar Football Federation.

The fixtures of the tournament have been arranged as follows—

- Myanmar will play against Fiji on 17 February;
- Fiji will meet with Uzbekistan on 19 February and Uzbekistan will meet with Myanmar on 21 February.

The FIFA U-20 World Cup will be held in New Zealand from 30 May to 20 June.—GNLM

Agriculture Department grows quality Palethwe hybrid saplings

NAY PYI TAW, 3 Feb — Officials of the Agriculture Department under the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation are striving for disseminating knowledge about agricultural technology to local farmers so as to use quality paddy strains.

Agricultural technicians cultivate quality Palethwe hybrid paddy saplings on the 100 acres farmland for production of paddy seeds on 3,000-acre mechanized farming area in Dekkhinathiri Township on 2 February.

Over 90 paddy transplanters from Lewe, Pyinmana and Dekkhinathiri townships transplanted paddy saplings in the designated farmlands.

Likewise, the agricultural technicians grew Palethwe paddy plants on 440 acres of farmlands in Alyinlo Village, Pyinmana Township on 27 January.

Ko Pauk (Okkar Myay)

Tourists caravan arrives in Nyaungshwe

NYAUNGSHWE, 3 Feb — Under the arrangements of Journey Adventure Travelling company, a 37-member tourist team led by German citizen Mr Marc Alexander Thyseengebar arrived in Nyaungshwe, Shan State, on 2 February afternoon, by driving 17 tourist vans.

They left Kalaw, Shan State, on 2 February morning. The caravan of the tourists stopped over at the Myoma sports ground in Nyaungshwe. The tourists visited significant attractive scenes in Nyaungshwe and Inlay areas and observed traditional culture of the people.

Nay Myo Thurein
Nay Pyi Taw Health Department turns out public health supervisors

Yamethin dwellers provided with free healthcare services, given health talks

Pigeon pea price rises up in Natogyi Tsp

Township officials present cash assistance, certificates to older persons

MOGE compensates over K15 million for loss of croplands to farmers

Edutactives talks hail centennial birthday of General Aung San, Myanmar Children’s Day

Myanmaung, 3 Feb—Ayeyawady Region Hluttaw representatives U Aung Win Swe and U Aung Myo Nyunt, Township Administrator U Min Min Tun and officials presented certificates of honour presented by the President and K200,000 each to senior citizens of above 100 years old in Myanmar Township, Ayeyawady Region, on 1 February. They presented certificates and cash assistance to U Ngwe Dah of Panto Village, Daw Saw of Shagon Village and Daw Than Sein of Gwegon Village.

Win Bo (Myanmaung Township IPRD)

Taungtha, 3 Feb—Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise under the Ministry of Energy presented compensations to farmers at Township General Administration Department in Taungtha, Mandalay Region, on 2 February. MOGE had laid a 20 inches in diameter natural pipeline from the offshore point in Taungtha to Hsakha GCS passing the 14.10 acres of croplands of 78 farmers in eight village-tracts in the township. Township Administrator U Aung Kyaw Nyunt made a speech. Project Engineer U Thet Tun explained presentation of compensation for the farmers. Officials presented K15,402,144 for 13.97 acres of croplands to 77 farmers.

Kyaw Myo Naung (Taungtha)

Mandalay, 3 Feb—An educative talks on centennial birthday of General Aung San and Myanmar Children’s Day which falls on 13 February was held at the hall of No 26 Basic Education High School in Chammyathazi Township, Mandalay, on 2 February. Staff Officer Daw Than Thaw of Mandalay District Information and Public Relations Department gave talks on General Aung San: Symbol for children.

Teacher Daw Aye Aye Myint sang a song “Bogyoke Aung San”.


The school arranged to hold the extempore talks, painting, poem and essay contests to mark the centennial birthday of General Aung San, according to Headmaster Dr Than Huak Soe. —Tin Maung (Mandalay)
Bombs in Thai capital seen having minimal tourism impact: PM

BANGKOK, 3 Feb — Two small bombs outside a Bangkok shopping mall over the weekend will have a minimal impact on Thailand’s vital tourism industry, the prime minister said on Tuesday, while promising better security to avoid any more such incidents. Two people were slightly injured in the twin explosions on Sunday outside the Siam Paragon mall in a busy shopping district, the first blasts in Bangkok since the military seized power on 22 May to end months of sometimes deadly street protests.

The tourism ministry told the cabinet that the explosion will have a minimal impact on tourism,” Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha told reporters. “However, we must look after the security situation better to ensure this does not happen again.”

Thailand’s tourist sector accounts for about 10 percent of the economy. It was hit last year by a drawn-out political crisis, including protests in which nearly 30 people were killed, that culminated in the coup.

The military-led government has struggled to revive growth in Southeast Asia’s second-largest economy as exports are sluggish and consumer demand remains subdued.

The explosions come at a politically sensitive time, just over a week after a junta-appointed assembly banned ousted Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra from politics for five years, something that has left many of her supporters fuming.

The country remains under martial and military leaders say they have no plans to lift it.

There was no claim of responsibility and the military said the blasts appeared to have been aimed at creating panic.

Police said they were trying to identify two suspicious-looking people caught on CCTV footage.

Prayuth dismissed talk that the army was behind the blasts as a way to justify martial law.

“Anyone who believes that has brain damage,” he said.—Reuters

Sri Lanka says judiciary must be strong to avoid international war crimes probe

COLOMBO, 3 Feb — Sri Lanka’s new government said on Tuesday that the country’s judiciary must be strong in order to convince the international community that Sri Lanka is capable of dealing with human rights concerns on its own through domestic mechanisms.

Foreign Minister Mangala Samaraweera said that the government needed to convince the world that the island’s judiciary is competent, independent and impartial which can rank among the best anywhere in the world. “An international inquiry, initiated last year, is now courageously completing its report. The results of this inquiry could lead to Sri Lankan armed forces and other civilians appearing before an international tribunal, unless tangible steps are swiftly taken to restore judicial credibility,”Minister Samaraweera said in a statement. “It is the previous administration’s failure to set-up credible domestic mechanisms that has led to our current difficulties. It is the present government’s position that the most effective way of beginning the process of healing between communities and preventing international prosecution, which many feel would be a violation of sovereignty, would be to institute a credible domestic mechanism as soon as possible,” he said. The minister further said the challenge today is to ensure that Sri Lanka is able to effectively enjoy the rights, privileges and benefits of re-entering the community of civilized nations and ensure that Sri Lanka, as a country, does not suffer economic sanctions, ill-dignity and a tarnished reputation.

The foreign minister also defended the removal of the country’s controversial Chief Justice Mohan Peiris saying Peiris had acted in complete violation of the international standards of judicial conduct and therefore could not be expected to command the respect and confidence of the international community.—Xinhua

Malaysia says UN must make conflict zone air risk reporting mandatory

MONTREAL, 3 Feb — Malaysia, which suffered two commercial air disasters last year after one jet disappeared and another was shot down over Ukraine, said on Monday the United Nations must make reporting of risks to airlines over conflict zones mandatory. The International Civil Aviation Organization, the UN’s aviation agency, been under pressure to come up with new systems to protect aircraft from risks in conflict zones after Malaysia Airlines flight MH17, traveling from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur, was shot down in eastern Ukraine last July, killing all 298 people on board.

ICAO has proposed testing a central website where states and agencies could publish public warnings about conflict zones. But crucially, the proposal does not require ICAO member states to provide information. “We cannot delay implementing changes in the way global commercial aviation operates,” Azharuddin Abdul Rahman, director general of Malaysia’s Department of Civil Aviation, told an ICAO assembly at a high-level safety meeting in Montreal. He said reporting should be “mandatory and timely.” The MH17 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, but Russia has said that a Ukrainian military aircraft downed the jet. Last month, Reuters reported that the United States would back the ICAO proposal on flight safety over conflict zones. The Netherlands, which lost 196 citizens aboard flight MH17, said on Monday the ICAO plan was an important first step and called on all ICAO member states to back it.

“Flying should be associated with freedom and safety not with luck, and airline tickets should not be a lottery ticket,” said Netherlands secretary of state Wilma Mansveld, adding quick action was needed on conflict zone risks.

“Mr Chairman, my country is impatient,” she said.—Reuters

Seven killed in Bangladesh after petrol bombs thrown at bus

DHAKA, 3 Feb — Opposition activists in Bangladesh trying to enforce a transport boycott threw petrol bombs at a bus early on Tuesday setting off a fire that engulfed the vehicle killing seven people, a fire department officer said.

The opposition rejected a general election just over a year ago and stepped up its protests last month in a bid to force Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to step down and hold a new election. At least 51 people have been killed in political violence over the past month including the seven on the night-bus to Dhaka. “Seven died on the spot after opposition activists hurled petrol bombs,” fire department official Monir Hossain told reporters in the southeastern district of Comilla.

Sixteen people were injured, several of them critically, he said. Spokesmen for the opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) were not available for comment. They routinely reject accusations that their activists are responsible for violence.

Bangladeshi politics has been mired for years in bitter rivalry between Hasina and BNP leader Begum Khaleda Zia. Both women are related to former national leaders and they have alternated as prime minister for most of the past two decades. Analysts say the renewed political turmoil could threaten the country’s $24-billion garment export industry, already under pressure after a string of fatal accidents.

Reuters

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Reuters
Tokyo, 3 Feb — The threat of terrorism is more realistic following the recent murder of two Japanese nationals by Islamic State.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga said on Tuesday, calling for stepped-up antiterrorism measures both at home and abroad.

“The threat of terrorism has become more realistic for our country,” Suga said at a vice ministerial meeting aimed at finding ways to better protect Japanese citizens from international crimes and terrorism.

Two days after the militant group released an online video purporting to show journalist Kenji Goto beheaded with a warning to Tokyo of “carnage wherever your people are found,” Suga, who chaired the meeting, said, “I ask all of you to work together to strengthen antiterrorism measures.”

The video with the Islamic State logo said, “Let this be a warning to the rest of the world.”

The militant group also killed Haruna Yukawa, another Japanese hostage, according to an online video released earlier.

Speaking to the House of Councilors budget committee, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said it is important to strengthen information-gathering capabilities as nuclear power ministry has engaged with the industry “at a fraction” of its usual rate.

In the event of a nuclear disaster, experts have called for separate national schemes to protect nuclear workers and other transportation centres.

To prevent the funding of terrorism, Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Taro Aso said he has called on domestic financial institutions to strengthen their surveillance of banking transactions.

As, conversely serving as financial services minister, also indicated at a press conference that Group of 20 finance chiefs may discuss how to deal with money-laundering at their upcoming meeting.

India would pay premiums to the US for its installed nuclear capacity, with a combined capacity of 10,000 megawatts.

New Delhi also proposed setting up an insurance pool with a capital hike of $15 billion rupees ($244 million).

India has 21 nuclear projects, while GE Hitachi offers access to relief funds.

India’s Ministry of External Affairs, “There are no policy barriers left,” India said.

As the days counted down to Obama’s visit, Indian officials persuaded their US counterparts that their law was “not incompatible” with international standards.

The United States, China, Japan and Russia, was last held in 2008.

US President Barack Obama and India’s Prime Minister Narendra Modi (R) shake hands after giving opening statements during a at Hyderabad House in New Delhi on 25 Jan, 2015.—Reuters

US-India nuclear ‘breakthrough’ could be finalized within year

The US official said Washington expects the Indians to ratify with the IAEA in the near future, along with documentation “stating what their law intends” on the issue of liability, which should offer further reassurance to US firms.

The US industry would have preferred the issue to be settled by amending the liability law, something considered politically impossible for Modi to achieve at the moment.

“We want to see all the detail before we say: ‘Yes, it works for us’,” Westinghouse President and CEO Daniel Roderick, who joined Obama’s delegation, told Reuters. That note of caution, however, masks the extent to which negotiators engaged with the industry to address fears that it could end up on the hook in a disaster on the scale of the 2011 reactor blasts at Tepco’s plant in Fukushima, Japan.

“For the first time, we had a comprehensive inventory of concerns,” said the Indian negotiator.

Westinghouse has been granted land in Modi’s home state of Gujarat to build six reactors, while GE Hitachi Nuclear Energy is eying a similar project in Andhra Pradesh. The liability roadblock has prevented commercial talks from starting on the projects, with a combined capacity of 10,000 megawatts.

India has 21 nuclear reactors with an installed capacity of 21,300 MW. It plans to launch construction of 40,000 MW of capacity in the next decade.—Reuters

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev have expressed their intention to expedite the implementation of a joint project on nuclear energy.

India-Canada nuclear deal: Carter to review.
Healthy living is important for a happy life. Doing good practices, keeping the thoughts away from miserable experiences, living in suitable surroundings and having hygienic food are fundamentals for a healthy life.

The number of life-threatening diseases is increasing in the world. Modern medical science has provided treatments and medicines to cure these diseases even though they are not totally wiped out. Many acute diseases can be prevented or cured in these days. Cancer is one of them. It is not beyond us.

World Cancer Day takes place on 4 February to raise awareness there is much that can be done at an individual, community and governmental level to harness and mobilize these solutions and catalyze positive change.

Empowering people to make healthy choices and reducing the social and environmental risk factors for cancer are key to achieving the global goal of reducing premature deaths from non-communicable diseases (NCDs) by 25 per cent by 2025 and reaching the targets of the World Cancer Declaration.

The World Cancer Declaration Targets are to be achieved by 2025 through four key areas of focus: Choosing healthy lives. Delivering early detection, Achieving treatment for all and Maximizing quality of life.

To reach the goal, awareness programmes are being launched for better health systems to ensure sustained delivery of effective and comprehensive, patient-centred cancer control programmes across the life-course. Various types of tobacco consumption, obesity, unhealthy diet, alcohol intake, and levels of physical inactivity, as well as exposure to other known risk factors are related with cancer.

Indeed, one-third of the most common cancers can be prevented through reducing alcohol consumption, healthier diets and improved physical activity levels. If smoking is included the figure is about 50 per cent. An early detection programme also helps improving knowledge of cancer among communities, health professionals and policy makers and increase awareness around the options for early detection.

Therefore, the government should invest in health systems that support healthy lives of the people through awareness programmes.

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@tnun@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.

MGF officials award winners
in Junior Golf Myanmar Tournament

YANGON, 3 Feb—President of Myanmar Golf Federation U Ko Ko Aye awarded first prize to Ye Lwin Oo with 151 strokes, second to Thihau Htaw with 152 and third to Zin Min Thu with 153 in the U-24 golfers event in the 5th Junior Golf Myanmar Tournament 2015 at Yangon Golf Club in Insein Township on 30 January. U Myint Aung of Junior Golf Myanmar presented first, second and third prizes to Min Thanlwin Aung, Tun Myat Thu and U Aung Kyi also gave prizes to the winners in the U-12 and U-15 events.

The golf tournament was mainly sponsored by members of Junior Golf Myanmar.

U Kyi Mun residing in Yangon is a consultant of NAING Group Capital Co.,Ltd.
Letpadaungtaung implementation committee holds coordination meeting

NAV PYI TAW, 3 Feb—Implementation committee on the report of Letpadaungtaung copper mine investigation committee held a coordination meeting at President Office on Tuesday.

U Hla Tun, Union Minister at President Office, the chairman of the committee, said the investigation committee has suggested the mining project must be continued as a state-level project. He also said that the implementation committee is to cooperate with the regional government in the project; that compensations are to be given out to the remaining farmers; the implementation of project is to be continued in accordance with EIA Report.

The union minister urged to proceed vocational training courses for the locals to be able to create job opportunities for them, while giving out financial support them under the contribution plan before the mining extraction is in operation.

Union Minister Li-Gen Ko Ko explained preparatory measures on security at the project. He said that discussion Union Minister U Soe Win about relocation and reconstruction of religious buildings in the area and Union Minister Dr Myint Aung about environmental conservation works.

Representatives from committees on scrutinizing land confiscation, environmental conservation and socio-economic plans for the mining project, members of regional governmental, MEHL and Myanmar-Wanbao Company explained the implementation works of respective sector, before conclusion remarks of Union Minister U Hla Tun.—MNA

Green Economy, Green Growth (GEGG) Forum kicks off

NAV PYI TAW, 3 Feb—The Green Economy, Green Growth (GEGG) Forum took place at Myanmar International Convention Centre-II, here, on Tuesday. Experts discussed expanding cooperation & deepening integration for sustainable national resources, social and economic development, water resources management, energy, rights, technology, ecosystem and environmental conservation.

Union Minister for Foreign Affairs U Winna Maung Lwin, Union Minister for Environmental Conservation and Forestry U Win Tun and Union Minister for Science and Technology Dr Ko Ko Oo presided over the sessions of the forum.—MNA

Bean prices up due to . . .

(from page 1)

The price of one basket of green beans has risen to between K36,000 to K37,000 in February from about K30,000 per basket in the same period last year, according to farmers in Kawa, a country town about 40 miles north-east of Yangon.

Bean prices are heavily dependent on the Indian market, with about 80 per cent of locally grown beans exported to India, and about 12 to 13 per cent exported to the ASEAN market yearly, according to the Myanmar Pulses, Beans and Sesame Seeds Merchants Association.

Bean prices opened at around K75,000 per ton in December 2014, up sharply from around K50,000 to K60,000 per ton in the same period the previous year.

Bean prices usually fall in November and December. However, the prices have been surging this year due to demand from India and lower stock at home. The most popular kinds were black mung bean, green gram and chickpeas. Most beans are grown in Bago, Yangon, Mandalay, Ayeyawady and Sagaing regions from November to February.

Farmers grow peas and beans as a second crop.

GNLM

Union FM sends message of felicitations to Sri Lanka

NAV PYI TAW, 4 Feb—On the occasion of the 67th Anniversary of Independence Day of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka which falls on 4th February 2015, U Winna Maung Lwin, Union Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, has sent a message of felicitations to His Excellency Mr Mangala Samaraweera, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka.—MNA

Press Release

At the end of her visit to Myanmar from January 6 to 16, 2015, Ms. Yang Hye Lee, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights situation in Myanmar, made some observations when she met the press on 16 January 2015. Many of the concerns she raised in her statement do not reflect the overall positive aspect of an issue. Selectivity is often exercised. On some occasions, interfering on issues which falls raised in her statement do not reflect the overall position of the people.

On the use of term “Rohingya” in her statement, Myanmar rejects such use of nomenclature unequivocally. Myanmar never recognizes such terminology which as never been included among over 100 national races of Myanmar or even in the census records of the British colonial period. Insistence on using this controversial terminology will only pose a barrier on the road to resolving this important issue. Use of such term by the United Nations would certainly draw strong resentment of the people of Myanmar making the government’s efforts more difficult in addressing the issue.

On a package of four draft bills, they are being drafted in pursuant to the will of the people of Myanmar. They are widely published, and views and feedbacks from the public are also considered and incorporated, as appropriate, to the bills.

Consequently, they have been forwarded to the Parliament for a debate, consideration and a decision. They are subject to stringent scrutiny by the people’s representatives in the Hluttaws. It will be done with the view to serving the best interest of the Myanmar people. This due process on the bills is far from completion. Prejudging the outcome if this domestic legislation process constitutes an attempt to make undue influence on the public opinion and incitement among the people.

On land issue, it should be reminded that Myanmar is an agro-based country, and as such the land and the farmers are primary assets of the country and are highly valued. In order to deal with land issues with transparency and efficiency, the Central Committee on land use management has been endeavouring its utmost. In this mission, a great number of land disputes are caused by hindrances including out-dated laws, rules and procedures, lack of concrete evidences for ownership. However, the government is committed to implement land reforms which will ensure effective resolution, and safeguarding the interest of people and returning the land to their rightful owners. In light of vast land in the country, such process cannot be completed overnight.

On the mentioning of political prisoners, the scrutiny process on a few remaining has been carried out with special consideration. Release of political prisoners is done with a view to enabling them to participate in political process, stability of the State and implementation of durable peace. In order to continue looking into the affairs of political prisoners, the membership has been expanded and reconstituted. It will continue in line with relevant existing law.

Greater media freedom has been granted in the country by abolishing press censorship, permitting the publication of private daily newspaper and enacting new media laws in line with international norms and practices. Accusations of backtracking in some areas have been made. The arrests of some journalists were cited previously. No journalists were apprehended for exercising their due rights but for the offences they had committed such as breaking into a restricted area. No country will tolerate a breach of national security by any person. The state of Myanmar’s media freedom can be compared not only with that of countries’ in the region but also rest of the world.

The special Rapporteur should fulfill her mandate in a professional and prudent manner. Her visit should not leave the country and people of Myanmar with discord, distrust and incitement.

In relation to the media statement by UN High Commissioner for Human Rights released on 21 January 2015, it is firmly reiterated that Myanmar will not tolerate any acts or expressions that would lead to hatred between religions and races.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nay Pyi Taw 3rd February 2015

Joint Press Statement

Singapore-Myanmar Joint Ministerial Working Committee to Reconvene to Strengthen Economic Relations

1. Singapore and Myanmar will reconvene the bilateral Joint Ministerial Working Committee (JMWC) this year to strengthen bilateral economic ties.

2. The JMWC was established in 1995 as a platform to promote bilateral economic cooperation and forge new business opportunities. The revived JMWC will focus on collaboration in three areas of mutual interest: (a) trade and investment, (b) finance and (c) legal sectors. Minister for Trade and Industry Lim Hng Kiang and Union Minister for Energy and Chairman of the Myanmar Investment Commission U Zeyar Aung will be the co-chairs for the JMWC.

3. Singapore and Myanmar enjoy strong economic links with bilateral trade growing steadily in recent years. In 2014, trade rose by 6.6% year-on-year to reach S$32.3 billion. Myanmar moved up eight places to become Singapore’s 29th largest trading partner in 2014, while Singapore was Myanmar’s 3rd largest trading partner in 2013. Singapore was also Myanmar’s third largest foreign investor in 2014, with a cumulative investment of US$8.3 billion. Singapore companies have made significant investments in Myanmar with projects across various sectors such as hotel and tourism, industrial and real estate.

3 February 2015

Joint Ministerial Working Committee (JMWC)
WASHINGTON, 3 Feb — Facing new security challenges in the Middle East and Ukraine, the Obama administration on Monday proposed an increased $534 billion Pentagon budget plus $51 billion in war funds as it urged Congress to end cuts it says erode US military power.

Defence officials said the higher spending level was necessary to carry out President Barack Obama’s national security strategy, including the planned stationing of more forces in the Asia-Pacific in response to the rise of China.

The proposed base budget exceeded the $499 billion federal spending cap for fiscal year 2016, forcing a debate with Congress over whether to continue deep cuts to federal discretionary spending cap.

Defence officials said the higher spending level was necessary to carry out President Barack Obama’s national security strategy, including the planned stationing of more forces in the Asia-Pacific in response to the rise of China.

The proposed base budget exceeded the $499 billion federal spending cap for fiscal year 2016, forcing a debate with Congress over whether to continue deep cuts to federal discretionary spending or to amend the limits set in a 2011 law that sought to narrow the US budget deficit.

Defence officials acknowledged the request exceeded federal spending limits, but General Martin Dempsey, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said the budget “represents the minimum resource level necessary to remain a capable, ready and appropriately sized force able to meet our global commitments.”

Defence officials said the budget included funding for additional P-8 sub-marine-hunter aircraft and development of a new long-range strike aircraft seen as necessary for the Asia-Pacific region.

The proposed budget included $5.3 billion to fund operations against Islamic State militants in Syria and Iraq, including $1.3 billion to train and equip Syrian opposition fighters.

US President Barack Obama speaks about the FY2016 budget at the Department of Homeland Security on 2 Feb, 2015.—Reuters

The warning by Vidal suggested there were obstacles to restoring diplomatic ties, which has been seen as a relatively easy step before the two sides try to resolve deeper differences on matters such as human rights and the US economic embargo of Cuba.

Vidal said the conduct of Cuban diplomats in Washington was “impeccable”, while suggesting the Americans were meddling in internal Cuban affairs.

“The way those (US) diplomats act should change in terms of stimulating, organizing, training, supplying and financing elements within our country that act against the interests of ... the government of the Cuban people,” Josefina Vidal said.

“The total freedom of movement, which the US

Cuba sounds warning ahead of next round of US talks

HAVANA, 3 Feb — Cuba warned the United States on Monday that it wants American diplomats to scale back aid for Cuban dissidents before the two countries can remove embassies in each other’s capitals.

The long-time adversaries are negotiating a restoration of diplomatic relations as a first step toward reversing more than five decades of confrontation. Officials for both governments met in Havana in January and a second round of talks is expected to be held in Washington this month.

But Cuba’s lead negotiator said in an interview broadcast on state television that if the United States wants free movement for its diplomats in Cuba, it must stop using them to support the political opposition.

“This is the way those US diplomats act should change in terms of stimulating, organizing, training, supplying and financing elements within our country that act against the interests of ... the government of the Cuban people,” Josefina Vidal said.

“The total freedom of movement, which the US

UN’s highest court to rule on Serb, Croat genocide cases

The Hague, 3 Feb — The United Nations’ highest court will rule on Tuesday in genocide cases filed by Serbia and Croatia over atrocities allegedly committed during the violent breakup of Yugoslavia in the 1990s.

The countries filed complaints against each other at the International Court of Justice (ICJ), which could award financial compensation if it finds either side violated the 1948 Genocide Convention.

CROATIA

The Peace Palace, which houses The International Court of Justice, is seen in The Hague on 22 July, 2010.—Reuters

The ruling, which is due to start at 0900 GMT (4:00 am ET), could stoke political tensions in both countries.

“What’s really at stake is both states trying to justify their wars,” said Eric Gordy, a professor at London’s School of Slavonic and East European Studies.

“Those strong arguments they have to say they are justifying their wars is that they were defending their citizens against genocide,” he added.

The UN tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, which is also in The Hague, has long since ruled that genocide was committed in Bosnia, where more than 8,000 Bosnian Muslim men and boys were killed when the UN ‘safe haven’ of Srebrenica fell to Bosnian Serb forces in 1995.

Despite widespread atrocities against all sides, no court has ruled that ethnic Croats or Serbs were victims of genocide. Recent acquittals of suspects at the Yugoslav tribunal stoked anger in the two countries.

Many experts believe Tuesday’s ruling is unlikely to find Croatia or Serbia liable for genocide of no individuals from either country have been convicted of the crime.

Croatia alleges that Serbia’s destruction of towns and expulsion of ethnic Croats in Slavonia amounted to genocide. In turn, Serbia accuses Croatia of genocide over the expulsion of Serbs from Krajina.

In an earlier ruling from 2007 in a case brought by Bosnia, the same court found that Serbia was not responsible for genocide, but that it had breached the genocide convention by failing to prevent the massacre in Srebrenica.

Britain’s Labour party to lose 30 seats in Scotland to nationalists

London, 3 Feb — Britain’s opposition Labour party will lose as many as 30 Scottish seats to nationalists in the 7 May election, a poll showed on Tuesday, reducing Labour leader Ed Miliband’s chances of unseating Prime Minister David Cameron.

Scots voted to stay part of the United Kingdom in a 18 September referendum, but support for the Scottish National Party has since soared on the perception that London will not deliver the extra powers it promised to the result.

The Times/YouGov poll shows the Scottish National Party has a 21-point lead in Scotland and would take 48 percent of the vote to Labour’s 27 percent, the Times newspaper reported.

The Liberal Democrats were on 4 percent and Conservatives on 15 percent in Scotland, the poll showed.

The Times said when plugged into a mod-
**Egypt could free jailed journalist Fahmy within hours: Al Jazeera**

**Doha, 3 Feb** — Egypt could free Canadian-Egyptian journalist Mohamed Fahmy within hours, Qatar-based news channel Al Jazeera English reported on Tuesday.

Fahmy’s colleague, Peter Greste, an Australian citizen, was released on Sunday. A third journalist, Baher Mohamed, an Egyptian national, is still in prison in Cairo.

The three men were sentenced last June to between seven and 10 years on charges including spreading lies to help “a terrorist organization” — a reference to the now-outlawed Muslim Brotherhood.

On Monday, Canadian Foreign Minister John Baird told the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation that Fahmy’s release was “imminent”. Baird did not elaborate, however, as to whether he meant hours or days.

A security source said on Sunday that Fahmy was expected to be released and deported to Canada within days. Egyptian authorities accuse Qatar-based Al Jazeera of being a mouthpiece of the Muslim Brotherhood, the Qatari-backed movement which President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi toppled in 2013 when he was Egypt’s army chief.

**Blast kills one in Alexandria, bombs found at Cairo airport**

**Cairo, 3 Feb** — A man was killed in a bomb blast in Egypt’s second city of Alexandria on Tuesday, hours after two devices were discovered at Cairo airport and another went off in the centre of the capital without casualties, security sources said.

A bomb exploded in front of Alexandria’s Mustafa Al-Assad Hospital, killing a 27-year-old man and wounding three others, the city’s assistant interior minister said.

Earlier, Cairo airport authorities tightened security after finding two unexploded bombs near the arrivals hall. Security officials were reviewing video footage to try to determine who planted them, security sources said.

**Egypt could free jailed journalist Fahmy within hours: Al Jazeera**

**Al Jazeera journalist Mohammed Fahmy stands behind bars at a court in Cairo on 15 May, 2014.**

State news agency MENA quoted Cairo security chief Khaled Youssif as saying a device that detonated in central Cairo was a sound bomb and that there were no casualties.

Islamist militants seeking to topple the government have carried out numerous bomb attacks on soldiers and police since the army toppled President Mohamed Mursi of the Muslim Brotherhood in July 2013.

Last week, Islamic State’s Egyptian affiliate claimed responsibility for coordinated attacks in the Sinai Peninsula which killed more than 30 security personnel.

Egypt has been trying to project an image of stability ahead of an investment conference in the resort of Sharm el-Sheikh in March that the government hopes will generate ventures worth billions of dollars.

The bulk of attacks on security forces have occurred in the Sinai, which borders Israel and the Gaza Strip, but the insurgency has spread to other parts of Egypt, a US ally. Over the past year, police have frequently discovered homemade bombs planted near their vehicles and in public places in Cairo. Political turmoil and militant violence since the 2011 uprising that toppled autocrat Hosni Mubarak have hampered tourism, a pillar of the economy. — Reuters

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**French police arrest eight in anti-jihadi operation**

**Paris, 3 Feb** — French anti-terrorism police arrested eight people on Tuesday on suspicion of being part of a network linked to recruitment for jihad in Syria. Interior Minister Bernard Cazeneuve said.

The suspects, who can be held for up to 96 hours without charge, were arrested in the northern suburbs of Paris and the Lyon region, he said, according to remarks published on the ministry’s Twitter feed.

“They are now in the hands of the police. It is a Syrian issue,” an official at the Paris prosecutor’s office said.

The government estimates that about 1,300 French citizens have links to recruitment networks for Syria and Iraq, of which about 400 are already fighting alongside militants.

The arrests come after President Francois Hollande’s Socialist government unveiled a raft of new security measures in response to attacks in Paris in January by homegrown Islamist militants in which 20 people were killed, including the three attackers. — Reuters

**Blast in northeast Nigeria kills woman, injures five**

**Bauchi (Nigeria), 3 Feb** — A bomb blast that went off just minutes after Nigeria’s President Goodluck Jonathan left an election campaign rally was the work of a female suicide bomber, police said on Tuesday. The bomb exploded near a stadium in the northeastern Nigerian city of Gombe on Monday, setting a car ablaze, killing one person and wounding 18.

Gombe state police spokesman Fwaje Atajiri said by telephone that the bomb had been a female with explosives strapped to her, a sign it was the work of Islamic militant group Boko Haram, although no one has claimed responsibility.

Nigeria is due to hold a presidential election on 14 February, pitting the ruling People’s Democratic Party’s (PDP) Jonathan against former military ruler Muhammadu Buhari for the opposition All Progressives Congress (APC).

Boko Haram militants are stepping up their campaign of violence ahead of the election. The military repelled an attack by insurgents on the outskirts of the northeast’s main city of Maiduguri on Sunday, their second assault in a week on a city they hope to make the capital of a breakaway Islamic state. — Reuters

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**French troops kill around a dozen Islamist militants in Mali**

**Dakar, 3 Feb** — French forces in northern Mali have killed around a dozen Islamist militants in the region of the Adrar des Ifoghas mountains, France’s defence ministry said on Monday. No French soldiers were killed in the attack which took place on Saturday night, the statement said.

Malian military sources said the French operation was conducted between Bouréaissa and Abeissa, some 120 km (75 miles) from the northern desert town of Kidal, a stronghold of Tuareg separatists. Rebels have been spotted by aerial surveillance, and engaged by French ground forces, one Malian source said. — Reuters

**Iraqi cabinet approves draft law to set up national guard**

**Baghdad, 3 Feb** — Iraq’s cabinet approved on Tuesday two draft laws aimed at ending sectarian rifts: one creating a national guard and the other reforming governing policies towards ex-members of the Baath party.

The bills will now be passed on to the parliament for approval, said Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi’s spokesman, Rafid Jafoori.

The creation of a national guard has been a key demand of Sunni politicians in order to fight Islamic State. Ending the ban on ex-members of the Baath party, which ruled Iraq before the US-led invasion in 2003, from public service has also been a key Sunni demand. — Reuters

**WFP alarmed by pictures of ISIS logos on its Syria food parcels**

**Geneva, 3 Feb** — The UN World Food Programme (WFP) has declared itself “extremely concerned” by photographs showing its food parcels being handed out in Syria with Islamic State logos on them.

Images circulating on social media show food being distributed from cardboard boxes with “Islamic State in Syria” labels pasted over the WFP logo.

The militant Islamist group, which controls large swathes of Syria and northern Iraq, is known as Islamic State or Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS).

WFP condemns this manipulation of desperately needed food and inside Syria,” said Michael Fadhel, WFP Emergency Regional Coordinator, in a statement late on Monday. The agency was trying to confirm the authenticity of those images, it said.

The photographs seemed to have been taken in Deir Hafl village, about 50 km from Aleppo, where WFP last August delivered enough food to feed 8,500 people for a month. WFP rations are distributed in many areas by the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC). In September, ISIS raided SARC warehouses where food rations may have been stored, WFP said. — Reuters
Cuba’s Fidel Castro appears in first photographs since August

HAVANA, 3 Feb — Photographs of former Cuban leader Fidel Castro, 88, appeared in official media on Monday for the first time since August, showing him slightly hunched over while seated, but appearing animated as he spoke with a student leader.

Speculation over Castro’s health has intensified since the historic 17 December announcement by his younger brother, and current president, Raúl Castro, and US President Barack Obama, that the two longtime adversaries would restore diplomatic ties.

Castro, who periodically writes a column, went silent after the announcement until finally commenting a week ago, when he offered lukewarm support for the pact his brother reached with Obama.

The pictures of Castro, which appeared in public for more than a year, showed him slightly hunched over while seated, but appearing animated as he spoke with a student leader.

A Brazilian theologian who met Castro last week said the former leader was in good health, appearing skinny but lucid.

Castro stepped down from power due to poor health, handing over to his brother provisionally in 2006 and definitively in 2011.

Though he receives visitors, he has not appeared in public for more than a year. — Reuters
Snow batters Northeast US for second time in week

New York / Boston, 3 Feb — A deadly winter snowstorm brought travel to a standstill and snarling air traffic at several major airports. The second storm in less than a week pummelled residents from New York City to Boston with snow, freezing rain and gusty winds. Weather conditions were a factor in at least 10 deaths, including some in the Midwest where the storm hit heaviest on Sunday into Monday. Boston, already blanketed by 2 feet (60 cm) of snow from a blizzard last week and predicted to get a further foot, set a record for the snowiest seven-day period in the city’s history. The 34.2 inches (87 cm) measured by 1 pm on Monday surpassed the 31.2 inches (79 cm) set in January 1996. Deep snow prompted Mayor Marty Walsh to postpone by one day until Wednesday the parade to celebrate the New Year, except for the 2014 Super Bowl win over the Seattle Seahawks in Sunday’s Super Bowl. Jury selection for the federal trial of accused Boston Marathon bomber Dzhokhar Tsarnaev was also delayed until Wednesday.

Reuter's
Bradley Cooper says surprised by ‘American Sniper’ debate

Clint Eastwood, best director nominee for his film “American Sniper”, poses with Bradley Cooper, best actor nominee from the same film, upon arrival at the 87th Academy Awards nominees luncheon in Beverly Hills, California on 2 Feb, 2015. REUTERS

‘Uptown Funk’ holds onto British music chart top spot

LONDON, 3 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”. —Reuters

Lindsay Lohan sues Fox for defamation over cocaine comments

NEW YORK, 3 Feb — Actress Lindsay Lohan and her mother Dina on Monday sued the Fox News Network, TV host Sean Hannity and commentator Michelle Fields for defamation over a comment by Fields accusing the Lohans of doing cocaine with each other. According to a complaint filed in a New York state court in Manhattan, Fields made the comment on Hannity’s show during this difficult time.” said in a statement. “As our request for privacy our family said in a statement. “As her father already stated, we are asking you to honour our request for privacy during this difficult time.”

Whitney Houston’s daughter ‘fighting for her life’ — family statement

ATLANTA, 3 Feb — The daughter of late pop star Whitney Houston is fighting for her life two days after being found unresponsive in a bathtub at her suburban Atlanta home, her family said on Monday.

Bobbi Kristina Brown, Houston’s 21-year-old daughter with singer Bob by Brown, was rushed to a hospital in Roswell, Georgia, Saturday morning after her husband and a friend found her in the tub and her husband performed CPR.

“Bobbi Kristina is fighting for her life and is surrounded by immediate family,” the Houston family said in a statement. “As her father already stated, we are asking you to honour our request for privacy during this difficult time.”

Veteran actors share gratitude for Oscar nominations

BEVERLY HILLS, 3 Feb — As the nominees for this year’s Oscars gathered at a luncheon in Beverly Hills on Monday, industry veterans took the opportunity to reminisce on their journey, some for the first time, to the Academy Awards platform.

“This nomination would not have come when I was in my twenties, because I was figuring out how to do this,” said JK Simmons, best supporting actor favourite for “Whiplash.”

His sentiments were echoed by fellow nominees including Michael Keaton, Steve Carell, Laura Dern and Reese Witherspoon, all of whom have been acting for more than two decades.

“At 46, it’s really beautiful, I can appreciate how meaningful it is,” said “Boyhood” best supporting actress contender Arquette, a first-time Oscar nominee.

Simmons and Arquette joined more than 200 nominees across all branches of the film industry at the annual power lunch hosted by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, organizers of the glittery Oscars ceremony on 22 February, hosted by Neil Patrick Harris.

Most of this year’s 20 acting contenders are veterans of the film industry, who shared their appreciation at being recognised for Hollywood’s top honour at later stages in their career.

“The word grateful, I’m just going to keep saying it,” said best actor frontrunner Keaton, who at 63, earned his first Oscar nod for dark showbiz comedy “Birdman.” —Reuters
Dancers perform during the groundbreaking ceremony of Shanghai Disneyland in Pudong on 8 April, 2011. — Reuters

Work begins to build interim nuclear soil storage in Fukushima

FUKUSHIMA, 3 Feb — Workers on Tuesday launched the construction of interim facilities near the crippled Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant to store contaminated soil and other waste collected during radiation cleanup activities within Fukushima Prefecture.

The storage facilities on around 16 square kilometres of land in the seaside towns of Okuma and Futaba are expected to be capable of storing 30 million tons of soil and other radioactive waste, such as residues, and are for storing tainted waste generated within the crimped plant. Construction work has been delayed due to difficulties in obtaining agreement from the local municipalities and residents.

The government, which had planned to begin moving radioactive waste to the interim storage sites in January, now plans to begin doing so by 11 March, the fourth anniversary of the 2011 earthquake-tsunami disaster that triggered the nuclear crisis.

The government plans to spend 1.1 trillion yen on the project.

By the morning session following the deaths of two workers at the site on 21 January to conduct safety checks following the deaths of two workers at the Daiichi and nearby Dan-i sites.

The company had suspended all of work at the site on 21 January to conduct safety checks following the deaths of two workers at the Daiichi and nearby Dan-i sites.

Meanwhile, Tokyo Electric Power Co on Tuesday announced plans to decommission work at its Fukushima Daiichi complex, which has been completed, two weeks after a new indication of the wake of two separate fatal accidents last month.

Super Bowl draws US record 114.4 million TV audience

New York, 3 Feb — Walt Disney Co’s theme park in Shanghai, which was previously slated to open at the end of the year, has been pushed to the first half of 2016, the Wall Street Journal reported, citing people close to the project.

The media company has not specified a particular launch date for the $5.5 billion theme park in China’s largest city by population, the WSJ said.

Shanghai’s mayor had said last week that basic construction should be completed in 2015, while Chief Executive Officer Robert Iger had also affirmed in April that the park would open in 2015, the WSJ added.

Beijing will start on the construction of a Universal Studios theme park this year, which will be open to the public in 2019, the China Daily newspaper reported.

Neither Walt Disney’s spokesman nor Shanghai Disney were immediately available to comment on the report.— Reuters

Wednesday, 4 February, 2015

Eto’o “lacked respect” in missing training, says coach

MILAN, 3 Feb — Sampdoria coach Sinisa Mihajlovic said forward Samuel Eto’o had shown a “serious lack of respect” by missing an extra training session on Monday following their 5-1 Serie A defeat at Torino.

Mihajlovic had scheduled two training sessions on Monday, one in the morning and one in the afternoon, as a reprimand for his team’s performance.

But Eto’o, who only joined Sampdoria last week from English club Everton, left after the morning session without speaking to the coach and did not return, Italian media reported.

“I don’t know where he’s gone and I don’t know what the club intends to do,” Mihajlovic was quoted as saying in the Gazzetta dello Sport.

“The only thing that is certain is that the player did not give me any explanation; I consider it to be a serious lack of respect to myself and the rest of the team.

“That’s the only truth today, the rest is pure fantasy.

“There hasn’t been a row with Eto’o, simply because you need two people to have an argument and he has done everything on his own,” he added.

“I haven’t seen him since the morning training and haven’t spoken to him either.”

Mihajlovic, a notoriously tough taskmaster who has revived Sampdoria’s fortunes in his 15 months in charge, said he was ashamed by the comments.

Sunday’s performance, adding that his players needed to examine their consciences.

Former Cameroon forward Eto’o, 33, who was a free agent, joined the Sampdoria from Everton last week after only five months at the Merseyside club.

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Super Bowl draws US record 114.4 million TV audience
London, 3 Feb — Rory McIlroy may be able to stay calm on the golf course but the world number one must hold his nerve in the courtroom when a multi-million dollar legal battle with his former agent gets underway in Dublin on Tuesday.

The 25-year-old terminated his contract with Horizon Sports Management in September 2013 to form his own management company, prompting a protracted legal dispute that is expected to last six to eight weeks in Dublin.

The Northern Irishman signed a deal with Horizon until 2017, with the Dublin-based company expected to receive a percentage of his financial dealings. After signing a number of lucrative sponsorship agreements, including a deal with Nike in early 2013 worth a guaranteed $100 million (67 million pounds) over five years, McIlroy decided that his relationship with Horizon was no longer in his best interests. McIlroy, who may have to spend up to six days in the Dublin courtroom, is suing his former agents over the “unconsciousable” contract he signed, while Horizon are counter-claiming on the grounds that he owes them millions of dollars in commission on contracts up to 2017.

McIlroy said before last week’s Dubai Desert Classic that he would have to do his “homework” in the courtroom first. “There is the danger of a worse situation than they get relegated and end up in a worse situation than they are in now. They could find they go on-loan at a club who are a worse situation than they are in now.”

Colombia’s Juan Cuadrado celebrates after scoring a penalty goal against Japan during their 2014 World Cup Group C soccer match at the Pantanal arena in Cuiaba on 24 June, 2014. — Reuters

McIlroy prepares for multi-million dollar courtroom battle

Bony steps into Drogba’s big boots at Nations Cup

London, 3 Feb — Rory McIlroy of Northern Ireland in action during the final round of the Dubai Desert Classic on 1 Feb, 2015. — Reuters

London, 3 Feb — The last-minute shopping spree often associated with the closing of the January transfer window failed to materialise on Monday as Europe’s top clubs largely kept their powder dry.

Even in England, where the 20 Premier League clubs can usually be relied upon to splash some of the cash they earn from a mega TV deal, trading was unusually light, leaving presenters of Sky Sports News’ much-hyped deadline day coverage desperately searching for something to talk about.

Leaders Chelsea spent 35 million euros (26.42 million pounds) to bring Colombian Juan Cuadrado to Stamford Bridge, recouping most of that by selling Andre Schurrle to Bundesliga side VfL Wolfsburg, but Manchester United, Manchester City and Arsenal did no significant late business.

English champions City signed Ivory Coast striker Wilfried Bony from Swansea City last month for 25 million pounds ($37.6 million) while United’s only arrival of note was former Barcelona keeper Victor Valdes on a free transfer. While a few late deals could push the total January spend in the Premier League past the 100 million pounds mark, the head-spinning transfer frenzy, for now at least, appears to have been replaced by a calmer, more measured approach.

UEFA’s Financial Fair Play rules have made it less likely that clubs sign players without first off-loading some of their squad, stalling the usual merry-go-round. Transfers of players from the Premier League to other European leagues is also hindered by the huge salaries.

The reluctance of club managers to part with players at such a delicate phase of the season has also become an increasing factor in the mid-season window.

Money more than crown

More so than Queens Park Rangers boss Harry Redknapp, one of England’s most adept deadline day dealers.

Apart from Mauro Zarate from West Ham United, Redknapp failed to bolster QPR’s squad, having tried and failed with a late attempt to sign striker Emmanuel Adebayor from Tottenham.

Speaking to the BBC, former Hull City chairman Paul Duffen explained the lack of January activity.

“Getting players out in the market, there are problems such as liquidity. Clubs don’t have it, apart from Chelsea today,” he said. “There is the danger in January for a player that if it goes wrong, it could harm their career.”

“They could find they go on-loan at a club who get relegated and end up in a worse situation than they were.”

Reuters

McIlroy said before last week’s Dubai Desert Classic that he would have to do his “homework” on a “very tedious and nasty process.”

However, the four-time major winner has been seemingly unaffected on the course.

In his last seven European Tour events, McIlroy, who won the British Open and the US PGA titles last year, has claimed four wins and three runner-up finishes.

McIlroy shot a final-round 70 to win the Dubai Desert Classic title by three shots on Sunday, finishing the tournament record equaling 22-under-par.

“Let me enjoy this win for an hour or two,” McIlroy told reporters after claiming his 10th European Tour success. “It’s not the best thing to be looking forward to, but it will be all over in a few weeks.”

Dubai was McIlroy’s final European Tour appearance before he starts his preparations for April’s US Masters in Augusta.

“It’s important to get in some good performances... and feel what it’s like in the heat of the moment, because that’s when you really know how you are, how you game is and how it holds up under some pressure,” McIlroy said.

However, the world number one will have to deal with the pressure of the courtroom first.

Reuters

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Reuters

Bony steps into Drogba’s big boots at Nations Cup

Malaho, 3 Feb — Wilfried Bony was the main man on Sunday as Ivory Coast beat Algeria 3-1 in the African Nations Cup to set up a semi-final clash with Democratic Republic of Congo.

Ivory Coast are contesting their first international competition without former talisman Didier Drogba since the 2002 Nations Cup.

There were signs that they missed the Chelsea striker, who retired from international duty after last year’s World Cup, during the group stage as they stuttered to draws against Guinea and Mali.

“If Drogba is not here it’s not because of us but because of him,” coach Herve Renard told reporters. “However if you lose Drogba and find Bony you’re doing pretty well.”

Against Algeria, Bony demonstrated that after flattering to deceive for the national side he is finally ready to take up Drogba’s mantle.

“In the new Manchester City signing scored two fine headers, from a Max Gradel cross and a Yaya Toure free kick, ensuring the Ivorians progressed to the semi-finals.

“Bony was the top scorer in England in 2014,” Renard added. “When you say that, you understand everything.

“Things are much easier when you have players of his and Gervinho’s quality.”

Gervinho, who scored a late third for Ivory Coast, also acknowledged that Bony’s form was helping the team forget Drogba.

“We can’t think about Drogba anymore,” he said. “Bony is a different style of player he’s a player who brings us another dimension.

“He has a personality that works well with Ivory Coast he works hard for us and it suits us.”

Ivory Coast have reached the last four for the fourth time in Six Nations Cups and take on DR Congo in Bata on Wednesday. DR Congo advanced with a dramatic 4-2 victory over local rivals Congo on Saturday.— Reuters

Reuters

Ivory Coast’s Wilfried Bony celebrates his second goal during their quarter-final soccer match of the 2015 African Cup of Nations against Algeria in Malabo on 1 Feb, 2015.— Reuters