Loikaw to get new hospital buildings funded by JICA

By Ye Myint

Yangon, 11 Feb — A commencement ceremony of improving Loikaw General Hospital took place on Monday, with officials driving stakes to start the project at the hospital in Loikaw, Kayah State.

Kayah State Chief Minister U Khin Maung Oo, Dr Akihiko Tanaka, President of Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), and Deputy Minister for Health Dr Daw Thein Thein Htay were among the participants at the stake-driving ceremony.

The project for improving the more than 50-year-old core medical facility of the state includes construction of two two-storey buildings funded by the JICA with about 1.945 billion yen. The project is scheduled to be completed in April 2016.

Having a high ratio of patients to available places in the existing buildings of the hospital built in 1964, there has been an increase in the number of in-patients with 194 in 2014, up from 155 in the previous year. In addition, the medical equipment is also inadequate in terms of quality and quantity.

According to the Ministry of Health, the 200-bed hospital is handling more than 1,600 operations (See page 2)

President Office issues notification on expiration of temporary identity cards

Nay Pyi Taw, 11 Feb— The president office issued a notification on expiration of temporary identity cards on Wednesday, announcing that holders of the temporary identity cards are required to hand over to authorities concerned and to be scrutinized in accordance with the laws, rules and regulations concerned. According to the notification, temporary identity cards, which were issued to some people residing in Myanmar as necessary under the Residents of Burma Act (See page 2)
National brethren to make . . .

(from page 1)

concentrated efforts to fill the gaps and overcome hardship and challenges in doing so.

Esteemed national brethren

The government has accelerated the momentum of reforms in political, economic, administrative and private sectors to promote stability and socioeconomic development, the two common wishes of the entire national people.

In doing so, there are achievements that have been recognized by the international community as well as challenges to be overcome. As so many reform measures are being taken simultaneously, the expectations of the national people have not yet been fulfilled to the full extent in some sectors.

It is of utmost importance for motherland Myanmar that all the national people cooperate in building the democratic nation after overcoming the hardships and challenges.

Therefore, on the auspicious occasion of the Union Day, I would like urge, with all seriousness, all national people such as the government, the Hluttaws, national race organizations, political parties and political forces to continue to make concerted efforts relentlessly to prevent the deceleration of momentum of reforms already achieved.

Nay Pyi Taw, 11 Feb

Union Election Commission Chairman meets Australian Electoral Commissioner

Nay Pyi Taw, 11 Feb — Union Election Commission Chairman U Tin Aye received Electoral Commissioner Mr. Tom Rogers and party of Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) at his office on Wednesday.

The UEC Chairman elaborated on organizational structure of the commission, electoral system, voting system, electoral roll which is underway, background on Myanmar’s politics and elections and work carried out for successful holding of 2015 general elections.

The Australian Electoral Commissioner also explained Australia’s experience of holding 2013 elections, election results and lessons learned from 2013 poll. Next, both sides had a frank exchange of views on voter training, voter education and voter information processes being taken by Myanmar for upcoming general elections.

Also present at the meeting were UEC members U Myint Naing, U Aung Myint, Dr Daw Myint Kyi, U Win Kyi, U Nyunt Tin, U Win Ko and secretary U Tin Tun and officials.— MNA

Biodiversity conservation workshop kicks off

Nay Pyi Taw, 11 Feb — Forest Department in Myanmar and National Institute on Biological Resources-NIBR of the Republic of Korea have been conducting biological resources in Myanmar at Mount Popa Park, Natmahtaw National Park and Alaungdaw Kathapa National Park since 2011, Union Minister for Environmental Conservation and Forestry U Win Tun told the workshop on studies in biodiversity at Mount Popa Park and biodiversity conservation strategy in Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam, here, on Wednesday.

The department in cooperation with NIBR has published the book entitled biodiversities at Mount Popa Park to provide information on wildlife, species of plants and biodiversities to the researcher, he said.

He added that thanks to the workshop, the delegates from Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam and Myanmar will have the opportunities to exchange views on biodiversity conservation, management and utilization in Southeast Asian countries to be able to raise cooperations with partner organizations in conservation of biodiversity and biological resources.

NIBR Chairman Dr Kim Sang Bae spoke words of thanks.— MNA

Loikaw to get new hospital . . .

(from page 1)

Upon completion of the project, there will be full health care coverage to locals in the state and health care services extended to those in the southern part of neighbouring Shan State as well.— GNLM

Public Announcement for remonstration

The Chin Progressive Party headquartered at Building No 147, 5th floor, 37th street (middle block), Kyauktada Township, Yangon Region, registered by the Union Election Commission as a political party under the Article 9 of the Political Parties Registration Law, submitted applications to change its flag and seal.

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

Union Election Commission

Flag of Chin Progressive Party

Seal of Chin Progressive Party

Kayah State Chief Minister U Khin Maung Oo and JICA President Dr Akihiko Tanaka observe a scale drawing of one of two reinforced concrete buildings for Loikaw general hospital.

Photo: Ye Myint

Loikaw to get new hospital . . .

annually and treating more than 20,000 out-patients.

Global New Light of Myanmar

President Office issues notification . . .

(from page 1)

NATIONAL

Registration Act (1949), will expire on 31 March 2015. Holders of the temporary cards are required to hand over the cards to authorities by 31 May 2015, and the process will be carried out in a fair and transparent manner by township registration officers who will be assisted by region/state, district, township, ward, village-tract supervisory committees. Township officers of Immigration and National Registration Department will act as township registration officers for townships concerned and the director-general of the department will act as the chief registration officer.

Citizenship scrutiny is being carried out under Moe Poin Project in accordance with the Citizenship Law, the notification said.

The notification also stated that an advisory committee will be formed to review laws, rules and regulations and tasks related to the temporary cards as temporary identity cards have been an issue among the public.— MNA

Seal of Chin Progressive Party

Flag of Chin Progressive Party

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Photo: Ye Myint

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Global New Light of Myanmar
Nay Pyi Taw, 11 Feb — Vice President Dr Sai Mauk Kham, who is also the chairman of Union Peace-Making Work Committee, hosted dinner to leaders of armed ethnic groups who are in Nay Pyi Taw to attend the 68th Anniversary Union Day celebration, at Hotel Max in Nay Pyi Taw Hotel Zone on Wednesday evening.

First, the Vice President cordially greeted leaders of the KNU, KNY/KNLA (PC), CNF, DKBA, NSCN (Kapitul), PNLO, ABSDF, NMSP, SSPP/SSA, RCSS/SSA, ALP, UWSA special region-2, NDAA and Shan State (East) special region-4.

In his greetings, the Vice President said that today’s meeting could contribute towards achieving lasting peace. He highlighted the disadvantages of engaging in military means instead of trying to address problems occurred in the post-independence period through political dialogue.

He continued that economic development is the most important means of raising a country’s education and health standards. He is of the view that meritocracy is of critical importance in realizing justice and equity and bringing the development to the country, he added.

He also called for sensible and pragmatic approaches, instead of being influenced by emotion and desire.

Next, the Vice President presented gifts to leaders of ethnic armed groups through RCSS/SSA Chairman U Yaw Serk.

The dinner was also attended by UPWC Vice Chairman U Aung Min, U Thein Zaw, the Union ministers, deputy ministers and officials.

NAY PYI TAW, 11 Feb — Pyidaungsu Hluttaw celebrated 100th birthday of General Aung San on Wednesday at Hluttaw Building.

The commemoration ceremony was attended by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, the daughter of deceased independence hero, speaking at the daughter of deceased independence hero, speaking at ceremony to mark centennial birthday of General Aung San at Pyidaungsu Hluttaw.

NAY PYI TAW, 11 Feb — An opening of a 500-ton cold storage plant for fruit and vegetables took place at 900-acre farmland in Ottarathiri Township in Nay Pyi Taw on Wednesday.

Union Minister at President Office U Soe Maung, Deputy Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann, Union Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation U Myint Hlaing, Union Minister for Commerce U Win Myint, deputy ministers, Nay Pyi Taw Council members, and responsible persons of Myanmar New Ayeayar Agriculture Company formally opened the plant.

Next, Union Minister U Myint Hlaing and Thura U Myint Maung, retired Religious Affairs Minister, unveiled the signboard of the plant.

Then, the Union ministers and officials viewed around the plant and observed farm machinery and hydroponic vegetable cultivation.

Farmers from eight townships in Nay Pyi Taw Council Area also observed services of the factory and farm equipment to be sold to those interested through an installment plan.

NAY PYI TAW, 11 Feb — Pyidaungsu Hluttaw celebrates centennial birthday of General Aung San

Cold storage plant for fruit and vegetables opened in Nay Pyi Taw

NAY PYI TAW, 11 Feb — Pyidaungsu Hluttaw celebrates centennial birthday of General Aung San

Vice President Dr Sai Mauk Kham hosts dinner to armed ethnic group leaders.

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw celebrates centennial birthday of General Aung San

Vice President Dr Sai Mauk Kham delivers speech at dinner to armed ethnic group leaders. — MNA

Vice President Dr Sai Mauk Kham delivers speech at dinner to armed ethnic group leaders. — MNA

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann speaking at ceremony to mark centennial birthday of General Aung San at Pyidaungsu Hluttaw. — MNA
Photo and art galleries mark centennial birthday of General Aung San

Myawady, 11 Feb —
To mark the centennial birthday of General Aung San, the photo and art gallery and souvenir showroom were opened at Zeyathayi Ground in Ward 4 in Myanaung Township, Ayeyawady Region, on Wednesday.

Chairman of the leading committee for organizing General Aung San’s centennial birthday Township Administrator U Min Min Tun and officials formally opened the showroom.

Officials of the showroom explained displays of photos and arts, rare documentary photos and paintings of General Aung San and his biography.

Township level officials visited the showrooms.—Nay Win Zaw (Myanaung)

Myawady Township inaugurates upgraded Bogyoke Road

As a gesture of honouring the 68th Anniversary Union Day, Bogyoke concrete road was commissioned into service in Myawady, Kayin State, on 10 February.

Assistant Director U Kyaw Kyaw Oo reported on facts about development tasks and Assistant Director U Soe Lwin, construction of the concrete road.

Deputy commissioner U Lwin Ko Oo and officials formally opened the upgraded road and strolled along it.

Myawady Township Development Affairs Committee spent K330 million on construction of 2,710 feet long concrete road, seven other roads and three other construction tasks in 2014-15 fiscal year.

Hein Lin Aung (IPRD)

Petrified wood garden attracts tourists in Natogyi

Natogyi, 11 Feb —
A ceremony to open Tree Jade petrified wood restaurant was held beside Myingyan-Mandalay-Bagan-NyaungU road in Ward 8 in Natogyi, Mandalay Region, on 10 February.

The restaurant displays four large petrified wood trunks and over 100 pieces of fossils, owner of the restaurant U Min Shwe told media.

Over 20 companies are trading petrified woods in Natogyi Township. Of them, Tree Jade Company spent over K60 million on construction of the Petrified Wood Garden to be able to seek international and internal markets.—Huay Myint Maung; Photo: Khin Zar Mon Myint (Law)

Mohnyin Township to mark centennial birthday of General Aung San

Mohnyin, 11 Feb —
Townselders, political parties, civil society organizations and national races literature and culture committees will jointly organize the centennial birthday of General Aung San in Mohnyin, Kachin State. Township administrator U Kyaw Swa Aung told members of the organizing committee on 9 February.

The ceremony will be held at Shwethalyaung Theatre in Mohnyin on 12 and 13 February.

In commemoration of the birthday, the organizing committee will open the exhibition and organize the 12 events of sports contest, talks and traditional dances.
Ethnics enjoy market festival, traditional dances in Mandalay

MANDALAY, 11 Feb—
The 4th ethnics market festival in commemoration of the 68th anniversary Union Day was held at Shan national Dhammayon on 35th Street in Chanayethazan Township on 9 February.

People from 15 ethnics attended the festival to open sales of traditional products and foods to the people. Belles of national races entertained dances with traditional costumes. The festival was aimed at forging the union spirit among national brethren, chairman of the organizing committee U Sai Pan Hsai told media.

“National races will have chances to meet among them at the festival and exchange traditions and culture in addition to traditional foods. So, we will try hard to organize similar festival yearly,” the chairman said.

The market festival was held in the morning and the traditional dancing in the evening.

Children from pre-primary school take part in skills contest

MYAWADY, 11 Feb—
In commemoration of Myanmar Children’s Day which falls on 13 February 2015, Myawady District Committee of the Rights of Child and Social Welfare Department jointly organized the skill contests for children at Thaungyin Hall in border town Myawady, Kayin State, on 10 February.

Children from 20 pre-primary schools participated in the sports contests, painting, poem recitation, story telling and singing contests.

Chairman of District Committee of the Rights of the Children Deputy Commissioner U Lwin Ko Oo made a speech, and Assistant Director U Than Aung of Social Welfare Department explained purpose of organizing the contests.

Officials presented prizes to the winners in the contests.

Township authorities honour three senior citizens in Myaungtha Township

MYAUNG, 11 Feb—
The government has a plan to honour senior citizens of above 100 years old across the nation.

According to the statistics, three senior citizens emerged in Myaungtha Township. They were U Ngwe Dah of Pantoe Village, Daw Saw of Shagon Village and Daw Than Sein of Gwaygon Village in the township.

Township level officials gave certificates of honour presented by the President and K200,000 each as cash assistance to them.

Rice offering to monks marks centennial birthday of General Aung San

 Mandalay, 11 Feb—
Mandalarians will offer rice to 1,000 members of the Sangha in front of the centennial birthday committee in Mandalay on 13 February.

After offering rice to 1,000 monks, the organizing committee will donate meals to 100 venerable monks at U Hla Thein Beikman in Mandalay. In the evening, Mann Padertha variety dances will be performed for the local people, said committee member U Shwe Htoo.

Meritorious deeds will be carried out thanks to cash donations of wellwishers. The birthday ceremony for General Aung San will be held from 10 to 15 February. Moreover, an exhibition on photo, painting, sculpture and documentary shows will be staged from 10 to 15 February at U Hla Thein Beikman.

The committee member said that arrangements are being made to stage entertainment of Myoma Band and organize the literary talks.—Min Htet Aung (Mandalay Sub-printing House)
**Regional**

- **Bangkok,** 11 Feb — Opponents of former Thai leader Yingluck Shinawatra are trying to discredit her by spreading false rumours that she would flee abroad before she is due to face criminal charges in court later this month, her lawyer said on Wednesday.

  Yingluck became Thailand’s first female prime minister in July 2011 but was removed from office days before a May 2014 coup led by then-army chief Prayuth Chan-ocha. That followed months of street protests in Bangkok against her government.

  Last month, she was banned from politics for five years over her role in a state rice-buying scheme, which had won her many voters in the rural heartland but which cost Thailand billions of dollars in losses.

  Yingluck, the sister of former prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra, was also indicted on criminal charges over the scheme, charges her supporters say were aimed at crippling her powerful family’s political influence.

  Thailand’s attorney-general will submit a subpoena to the Supreme Court on 19 February and wants Yingluck to be present.

  Her lawyer, Norawit Laeng, said Yingluck was planning to fight the charges in person even though Thai law does not stipulate that she needs to present for the subpoena.

  Rumours that Yingluck would flee were being spread by her critics to jolt the military into action, Norawit told Reuters.

  “If she had a plan to flee she would not have publicly asked for permission to go abroad,” he said.

  Yingluck had hoped to travel to Hong Kong from Sunday until 22 February.

  “The opposition is trying to make out that she wants to flee abroad in order to discredit her,” Norawit said.

  “This is simply not true.”

  Thailand’s military government denied Yingluck permission to travel overseas on Sunday to ensure she is in the country to face the criminal charges.

  She faces up to 10 years in jail if found guilty.

  The charges are the latest twist in 10 years of turbulent politics that have pitted Yingluck and her brother against the royalist military establishment that sees the Shinawatras as a threat and reviles their populist policies. Thaksin, who remains hugely influential in Thailand, was ousted in a coup in 2006 and fled into exile to avoid jail over a corruption conviction two years later on charges he says were politically motivated.— Reuters

- **Singapore,** 11 Feb — Singapore reported fewer international visitors last year, the first annual fall since 2009, hurt by stronger Singapore dollar output, is often a pitstop for travellers who combine it with trips to neighbouring countries.

  But two mishaps involving Malaysian Airlines flights, political unrest in Thailand and a new Chinese law that clamps down on ultra-cheap tour packages have taken their toll. VIP volumes are also under pressure at Singapore’s two glitzy casinos, Las Vegas Sands’ Marina Bay Sands and Genting Singapore’s Resorts World Sentosa, as China’s corruption crackdown and economic slowdown reduce the number of wealthy players at their tables.

  The STB did not give a forecast for 2015 on Wednesday, but said it would not be able to meet a 10-year plan to grow visitor arrivals to 17 million this year due to unforeseen circumstances such as the 2008 global financial crisis.— Reuters

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**Antigraft party posts landslide win in Delhi assembly poll**

**New Delhi, 11 Feb** — The Aam Aadmi Party, or Common Man’s Party, led by former Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, scored a landslide victory in the Delhi legislative assembly election held over the weekend, winning 67 of the 70 seats at stake, results showed on Tuesday.

  The outcome of the polls in the Indian capital is seen as a major setback to the country’s ruling Bharatiya Janata Party, which managed to win just three seats, according to the election commission’s official website.

  The AAP got over 54 percent of the total votes cast Saturday, while the BJP got nearly 32 percent.

  Kejriwal is seen as a reformist, rising in Delhi politics through an anti-corruption crusade. He became Delhi’s chief minister of a minority government after the assembly elections in December 2013 and resigned after 49 days in office over a controversial citizen’s ombudsman bill aimed at stemming corruption.

  Delhi has been under central government rule for almost a year.

  The AAP, formally launched in November 2012, emerged as the second-largest party in the 2013 Delhi assembly election, winning 28 seats.— Kyodo News

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**Singapore tourism suffers first annual decline since 2009**

**Singapore, 11 Feb** — Singapore reported fewer international visitors last year, the first annual fall since 2009, hurt by a stronger Singapore dollar and a drop in the number of Chinese tourists amid slower regional tourism growth.

  International visitor arrivals fell 3 percent last year to 15.1 million, missing the Singapore Tourism Board’s forecast of an increase of 5 to 8 percent from 2013.

  However, visitors stayed longer and spent more, helping tourism receipts stay flat at S$23.5 billion ($17.3 billion), according to preliminary estimates.

  Singapore, which relies on tourism for about 4 percent of its economic output, is often a pitstop for travellers who combine it with trips to neighbouring countries.

  But two mishaps involving Malaysian Airlines flights, political unrest in Thailand and a new Chinese law that clamps down on ultra-cheap tour packages have taken their toll. VIP volumes are also under pressure at Singapore’s two glitzy casinos, Las Vegas Sands’ Marina Bay Sands and Genting Singapore’s Resorts World Sentosa, as China’s corruption crackdown and economic slowdown reduce the number of wealthy players at their tables.

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**China’s President to visit US in September**

**Beijing, 11 Feb** — Chinese President Xi Jinping will make a state visit to the United States in September, state-run media said on Wednesday.

  Xi accepted US President Barack Obama’s invitation during a phone conversation between the two leaders earlier in the day, according to Xinhua News Agency.

  US National Security Adviser Susan Rice revealed at an event in Washington last week that Obama has invited Xi and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe for state visits this year, without specifying when they are scheduled to take place.

  Japan and the United States are trying to arrange Abe’s visit starting in late April or early May, according to diplomatic sources.— Kyodo News

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**Sound recordings of news conferences by key figures unveiled**

- **File photo taken in October 1978 shows then Chinese Vice Premier Deng Xiaoping (C) after a Press conference at the Japan National Press Club in Tokyo. Historic sound recordings of news conferences by a number of world figures, including Deng, have been unveiled on the press club’s website by 10 Feb, 2015.— KYODO NEWS**

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**Tourists take pictures next to the Merlion statue in the central business district of Singapore on 6 Feb, 2015.— REUTERS**
Australian anti-terror police say imminent IS-linked attack thwarted

SYDNEY, 11 Feb — Australi-\nan counter-terrorism police said on Wednesday they had thwarted an imminent attack linked to Islamic State after arresting two men in Sydney and seizing knives, a video and a flag associated with the militant group.

Australia, a staunch ally of the United States and its act against the Islamic State group in Syria and Iraq, has been on heightened alert for attacks by home-grown Islamist radicals since last year.

It raised its national terror threat level to “high” for the first time in September, when hun-
dreds of police conducted raids after receiving information that IS supporters planned to conduct a public beheading.

Police said the men, aged 24 and 25, were arrested after a raid on a home in a western Sydney suburb on Tuesday and had been charged with planning a terrorist act.

“When we did the search of the premises, a number of items were located, including a mac-\nchete, a hunting knife, a home-\nmade flag representing the pro-\nscribed terrorist organization IS, and also a video which depicted a man talking about carrying out an attack,” New South Wales Deput-\ny Police Commissioner Cath-\nerie Burn told reporters.

“We will allege that both of these men were preparing to do exactly that,” she said.

The men were not known to police, Burn said.

This is indicative of the threat that we now have to live with and which we are now hav-\ning to deal with,” she said.

Australia believes at least 70 of its citizens are fighting with the Islamic State group in Syria and Iraq, backed by about 100 Aus-\nralia-based “facilitators.”

Obama and Xi discuss cyber issues, prepare for US visit

WASHINGTON, 11 Feb — US President Barack Obama called for “swift work” by Beijing to narrow their differences on cyber issues, the White House said, as the two sides start planning for Chinese Pres-\ident Xi Jinping’s visit to Wash-\ington in September.

The world’s two big-\ngest economies have been trying to ease tensions amid mutual accusations of hacking and Internet theft.

In a phone call with Xi, Obama said he looked for-\ward to welcoming him to Wash-\nington for a state visit later this year, the statement added. Chinese state news agency Xinhua said that Xi would visit in September.

“During the conversa-\ntion, both sides agreed to make full preparations to en-\sure the success of the trip,” the report said.

The White House add-\ned: “The two leaders reaff-\rmed their commitment to coordinate closely on se-\curity challenges, including by jointly encouraging Iran to seize the historic opportu-\nities presented by P5+1 negotia-\tions.”

The nuclear talks with the United States, Russia, China, Britain and France are aimed at clinching an ac-\cord that would ease West-\rern concerns that Tehran could pursue a covert nu-\clear weapons programme, in return for the lifting of sanctions that have ravaged the Iranian economy.

Negotiators have set a 30 June final deadline for an accord, and Western of-\ficials have said they aim to agree on the substance of that deal by March.

G-20 finance chiefs vow to take policy actions decisively if needed

Istanbul, 11 Feb — The Group of 20 finance chiefs agreed on Tuesday to take monetary and fiscal actions decisively if needed, with a plunge in crude oil prices and an economic slowdown in the eurozone and Japan souring the out-\nlook for the world economy. In a statement re-\leased after they wrapped up their two-day meet-\ing in Istanbul, the G-20 economies also reaffirmed monetary easing should not be used to control for-\eign exchange rates, warn-\ing against competitive currency devaluations.

“Growth in the global \neconomy remains uneven and although the recov-\ery is in progress, it is slow, especially in some advanced economies, no-\tably the euro area and Japan,” the statement said.

“We will continuous-\ly review our monetary and fiscal policy settings and act decisively, if need-\ed,” it added. The G-20 finance ministers and cen-\tral bank governors gath-\ered after the International Monetary Fund in January cut its 2015 growth for-\cast for the world econo-\my to 3.5 percent, down 0.3 percentage point from its previous projection.

The eurozone econo-\my has been sluggish and faced the risk of de-\flation in the aftermath of the sovereign debt crisis, and Japan’s economy has been significantly hurt by the 3-percentage-point consumption tax hike to 8 per-\\nt cent in April last year.

A downturn in crude oil prices has also cast a shadow over world eco-\nomic growth. “We note that the sharp decline in oil prices, reflecting both supply and demand fac-\\ tors, will provide some boost to global growth, but with varying implica-\\tions across economies,” the G-20 said.

“We will continue to closely monitor develop-\iments in commodity markets and their impact on the global economy,” it said.

Since crude oil prices started to drop in June last year, many G-20 mem-\\bers, including the euro-\zone, Japan, China, Russia and Australia, have imple-\\mented credit easing steps as inflation expectations have fallen significantly.

With concern ris-\\ing over the outlook for energy exporting econo-\\mies and deflationary risks, the G-20 supported monetary easing aimed at underpinning domestic growth while calling for the avoidance of currency manipulation.

“We agree that cons-\sistent with central banks’ mandates, current eco-\\nomic conditions require accommodative monetary policies in some econo-\\mies,” the statement said.

But the G-20 added, “In an environment of diverging monetary pol-\\ icy settings and rising fi-\\nancial market volatility, both sides agreed to speed up their compli-\\ance with international standards, in par-\\ticular, concerning the exchange of information and the freezing of terror-\\ist assets,” the G-20 said.

Representing more than 80 percent of the world’s gross domestic product, the G-20 groups Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Britain, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Ja-\\pan, Mexico, Russia, Sau-\\di Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Turkey, the United States and the Eu-\\ropean Union.

Taipei says 10 of 49 ATR pilots fail test, will be suspended

Taipei, (China), 11 Feb — Taipei’s aviation reg-\\ulator said on Wednesday that 10 of TransAsia’s 49 ATR pilots have failed oral profi-\\ciency tests on handling an aircraft during engine failure following a fatal air-\\line crash in the capital last week. The 10 pilots will be suspended, the CAA said.

The tests were ordered after an ATR jet operat-\ed by TransAsia, the is-\\land’s third-biggest carrier, crashed into a river in Tai-\\pei, killing at least 40 of the 58 on board.

Initial data from the flight recorders indicate that the plane lost power in one engine just after take-\off from Taipei’s Songshan airport.

N Korea names new point man on US affairs

SEOUL, 11 Feb — The former deputy chief of North Korea’s mission to the United Nations, Han Song Ryol, has been named the new head of the North American affairs department at the nation’s Foreign Ministry, Yonhap News Agency said Wednesday, citing a diplomatic source.

Han, who assumed the No 2 post at the North’s UN mission from 2009-2013, will replace Ri Kyun, the source said.

The appointment was made as Ri has been named North Korea’s new ambas-\\sador to Poland. “His ex-\\periences in the US seem to have been taken into ac-\\count for the appointment,” the source said, according to Yonhap.

Kyodo News

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**Perspectives**

**Thursday, 12 February, 2015**

**“Unsplit” spirit for infinite unity**

By Aung Khin

U nity in diversity is the highest possible attainment of a civilization. In another term, we can define society as unity in diversity.

Independence leader General Aung San emphasized on union spirit as a soft power to regain sovereignty of the country. To ensure the same status among national people after independence, Panglong Agreement was signed in Panglong, Southern Shan State, on February 12, 1947.

Even in an individual family, the members are of different views and habits though they have grown up under a single shelter. They also have varieties of hopes and expectations for life. However, most of them try to live lovingly and perfectly, except black sheep.

When the level of evil intent becomes immense, it is very dangerous for unity. A closely knit community is a peaceful world. Society is knit together by certain commonly held beliefs despite different background or traditions. Even a slight difference may turn into conflicts if suspicion and mistrust cannot be wiped out.

Unity can prolong the independence of individuals. No man is an island. There is no doubt at all that an infinite unity cannot be willed by mere declarations. Unity is not a tangible material. Unity can be sustained by selflessness, mutual trust, understanding, and wisdom.

It is easier said than done, but it is not always an open sesame. Unity does not depend only on verbal or paper agreement. It can be achieved by an “unsplit” spirit.

**Financial Deepening and Economic Growth**

By Kyaw Win Tin

Fi nancial deepening generally means an increase ratio of money supply to GDP or some price index. It refers to liquidity money. The more liquid money is available in an economy, the more opportunities exist for continued growth. Financial deepening theory also defines the positive role of the financial system on economic growth by the size of the sector’s activity. That means that an economy with more intermediary activity is assumed to be doing more to generate efficient allocation. In development studies, financial deepening is very often referred to the increased provision of financial services with a wider choice of services geared to the development of all levels of society.

The size of the financial sector is usually measured by two basic quantitative indicators—monetization ratio and intermediation ratio. Whereas monetization ratio includes money-based indicators or liquid liabilities like broad money supply to GDP ratio, intermediation ratio consists of indicators concerning to bank-based measures like bank credit to the private sector and capital market-based measures such as capitalization ratio of stock market.

Economic growth and development of a country depends on the role of financial deepening. It also simply means an increase in the supply of financial assets in the economy. It can also play an important role in reducing risk and vulnerability for disadvantaged groups and increasing the ability of individuals and households to access basic services like health and education, thus having a more direct impact on poverty eradication.

Financial Deepening is measured by ratio of gross domestic capital formation to GDP, ratio of gross domestic saving to GDP. Some countries especially USA and India have to intensify the financial sector and carry out crucial measures to reinforce the long run relationship between financial deepening and economic growth in order to maintain sustainable economic growth. These measures embrace more financial integration, minimization of government intervention in the financial system, disintermediation of funds of financial institutions etc. If it is recommended that financial system need developed financial markets which may complete its deepening to affect economic growth optimistically.

Therefore, the sum of all the measures of financial assets gives us the approximate size of financial deepening. That means that the wide range of such assets as bank credit, liabilities of non bank financial intermediaries, treasury bills, value of shares in the stock market, money market funds etc., will have to be included in the measure of financial deepening. If the increase in the supply of financial assets is small, it means that the financial deepening in the economy is most likely to be shallow, but if the ratio is big, if means that financial deepening likely to be high. If an increase in the real size of the monetary system will generate opportunity for the profitable operation of other institutions as well via bill dealers to industrial bank and insurance companies.

Supply-leading hypothesis suggests that financial deepening spurs growth. The existence and development of the financial markets brings about a higher level of saving and investment and enhance the efficiency of capital accumulation. This hypothesis contends that well-functioning financial institutions can promote overall economic efficiency create and expand liquidity, mobilize savings, enhance capital accumulation, transfer resources from traditional (non-growth) sectors to the more modern growth inducing sectors and also promote a competent entrepreneur response in these modern sector of the economy. The demand-following view of the development of the financial market is merely a lagged response to economic growth (growth generates demand for financial products). This implies that any early efforts to develop financial markets might lead to a waste of resources which could be allocated to more useful purposes in the early stages of growth. As the economy advance this triggers an increased demand for financial services and thus leads to greater financial development.

The economist Okolo (2010) examines the relationship between financial deepening and stock market returns and volatility in Nigeria stock market for the period 1980-2009. The empirical results revealed that financial deepening measured as the ratio of value of stock traded to GDP do not affect the stock market and there is no news about volatility. But financial deepening measured as the ratio of market capitalization to GDP affect the stock market.

It indicated that financial deepening reduces the level of risk (volatility) in the stock market. Result also recorded that the conditional volatility of return is slightly persistent. The study employs co-integration and error correction model (ECM) by making Gross Domestic Product as a function of lending rate, exchange rate, inflation rate, financial deepening (M2/ GDP) and degree of openness as its financial liberalization indices. The study therefore concludes that financial deepening liberalization has a growth-stimulating effect on the developing countries.

**References:**

**Striking workers warned of legal action if they break the law**

By Aye Min Soe

YANGON, 11 Feb — Authorities have warned striking workers in Hlinethay Township not to violate the law or they will face legal action as labour disputes between the workers and employers are on negotiation table.

Blocking the entrance to factories and disturbing other workers by striking workers during the protests are not acceptable and have reached beyond the tolerance of authorities, said U Htin Aung, deputy minister for Labour, Employment and Social Security, at a negotiation meeting between representatives of workers, owners of the factories and officials of the ministry in Yangon.

If they (workers and owners of the factories) cannot reach agreement during negotiation, they can go to the Dispute Settlement Arbitration Council, he added.

The striking workers sought better pay in early days of their strikes, but later they are off their original course, threatening to disrupt the community peace, an official of the Hlinethay Township General Administration Department claimed.

Workers from Eland Myanmar Garment Factory, Costec Garment Factory, Ford Glory Garment Factory, and Red Stone Garment Factory are striking against the employer, seeking wages and their basic salaries and allowances for high living costs.

“We are urging our factory to increase our basic salary from K30,000 to K60,000 and our monthly allowance for high living cost to K20,000,” said Thi Dar Pyone, a worker from the Red Stone Garment Factory.

The disputes between the workers from Hang Jin Garment Factory and Chamzom Garment Factory and the owners of the factories have been solved at the negotiation table recently, according to the Factories and General Labour Laws Inspection Department.

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Due to limitation of space we are only able to publish “Letter to the Editor” that do not exceed 500 words. Should you submit a text longer than 500 words please be aware that your letter will be edited.
Senior General Min Aung Hlaing back home

YANGON, 11 Feb— The forces of the Tatmadaw carried out military operations in Monesi, Nantkyun, Wawchon, Monkeoe and Moneyer areas in 2014 and in many parts of Laukkai area in January, 2015. However, the Tatmadaw drove out them thanks to the cooperation of local people.

On 17 December, 2013, Kokang rebellion group, with the use of explosive laden tricycle-motorized vehicle, also tried to blast Kunlong suspension bridge which is a main facility for public transportation, but their attempts failed.—Myanwady

Tatmadaw forces in hot pursuit of Kokang renegade troops

NAY PYI TAW, 11 Feb—The forces of the Tatmadaw are hot in pursuit of the Kokang renegade troops and there was no fighting between the troops of the Tatmadaw and Kokang renegade troops on Wednesday.

On tips-off, the forces of the Tatmadaw combed the area for the Kokang troops that sneaked into Laukkai through Nyochan Jetty and prepared for operations of Staff of Defence Logistics, Brig-Gen Dato’ Mohd Azmi Borhan, Armed Forces Provost Marshall, and the Myanmar Ambassador to Malaysia and military attaches.

During his stay in Malaysia, the Commander-in-Chief attended a dinner hosted by Chief of Defence Force of Malaysia General Tan Sri Dato’ Sri Dr. Zulkifleli Bin Mohd Zin and wife on Tuesday. Also present at the dinner were Daw Kyu Kyu Hla, wife of the Commander-in-Chief, Myanmar military delegation members, Chiefs of Defence Forces of ASEAN countries and their wives and members.

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing enjoyed dinner with the Chiefs of Defence Forces of ASEAN countries and their wives and members.

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing poses for documentary photo with chiefs of defence forces of ASEAN countries.—MYANWADY

Four-party talks result in agreements

YANGON, 11 Feb—Representatives of the Government of the Union of Myanmar, the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, the National Network for Education Reform (NNER) and the Action Committee for Movement of Education for Democracy held talks at the building of Yangon Region Hluttaw in Yangon from 9.30 am to 4.40 pm on 11 February and issued a joint statement.

According to the joint statement, four parties agreed in principle to include representatives of students and teachers in drafting policies, laws and rules related to education, to exclude the formation of national education commission from the national education law, to allow independent administration to schools and regions, to review the current examination system, to adopt teaching methods that encourage independent and critical thinking, to adopt mother-tongue based multi-lingual education system, and to adopt inclusive education system. Details of the points agreed will be discussed by working groups of the parties.

According to the joint statement, recognition of the legal existence of students and teachers unions will be included in the national education law and legal action will not be taken against students who took part in the protests while students who were expelled from schools because of protests will be allowed to continue their studies. Free compulsory education will be raised from the current primary school level to the middle school level.

The four parties also agreed to continue cooperation until all points of agreement have been successfully implemented including during the Hluttaw debates for amendment of the national education law and recognized the difficulty to stop the protests and concerns for difficulty to hold examinations and other undesirable incidents. Student representatives will explain the outcomes of the talks to the protesting students and will submit the altitude of the students to the four-party talks to be held on 14 February 2015.—MNA

Third four-party talks on amendment of National Education Law

YANGON, 11 Feb—Third four-party talks on amendment of National Education Law was held here Wednesday among the government, National Network for Education Reform and students.

The meeting at the Yangon region government’s head office was attended by Union Ministers U Hla Tun, Dr Khin San Yi and Dr Ko Ko Oo, Deputy Ministers U Thant Shin, Dr Aung Kyaw Myat and U Thaung Htike, chairman of Hluttaw affairs committees, parliamentarians and members of NNER, together with moderators Dr Aung Tun Thet and Dr Kyaw Thu.

Dr Aung Tun Thet said the meeting to focus on major issues of students at both sides of government and protest students.

U Hla Tun, Union Minister at President Office, said that negotiation is pivotal to settle disputes as students and parents are worrying about the existing confrontation.

U Thein Zaw, MP of Pyithu Hluttaw, said his great expectation on the result of meeting before introducing with parliamentarians.

Dr Thein Lwin of NNER suggested government officials seriously consider the demands of students who are leaving away from classrooms to stage protest against the education law.

He was no longer invited in drafting education bill despite his earlier contribution.

Ma Phyo Phyo Aung, a member of Action Committee for Movement of Education for Democracy, said students protests will not threaten stability of the country due to peaceful demonstrations, urging the participants in the four-party talks to make a good sense in the discussions.

The discussion emphasized on 11 points demanded by protest students. At the end of meeting, a press conference was held with a joint statement that includes holding the next meeting on February 14 in Yangon.—MNA

Signatures of four-party talks’ participants.—MNA

A map shows clashes in Laukkai region
Obama seeks some limits on ground troops for Islamic State fight

WASHINGTON, 11 Feb — US President Barack Obama will propose to Congress on Wednesday a new three-year authorization for the use of force against Islamic State with limits on US combat troops’ involvement, lawmakers and congressional aides said.

Obama has defended his authority to lead an international coalition against Islamic State since 8 August when US fighter jets began attacking the jihadists in Iraq. But he has faced criticism for failing to seek the backing of Congress, where some accuse him of breaching his constitution al authority.

Facing pressure to let lawmakers weigh in on an issue as important as the deployment of troops and chastened by elections that handed power in Congress to Republicans, he said in November he would request formal authorization for the use of military force (AUMF).

An outline of that request, expected to be handed to Congress on Wednesday, could stir debate over how US troops would be deployed and the extent of US engagement in Iraq and Syria.

The proposal would allow the use of special forces and advisors for advise and assist purposes but bar “enduring offensive ground forces,” lawmakers and aides said. It would not, however, set geographic limits for the deployment of the group. Until now, Obama has justified US air strikes in Iraq and Syria under a 2001 authorization passed after the 11 September attacks and a 2002 authorization issued by President George W Bush in the Iraq war.

The new proposal would repeal the 2002 authorization but leave in place the 2001 AUMF, which has been invoked by the White House to carry out drone and missile strikes against sus pected al-Qaeda militants in Yemen and Somalia.

Fueled by outrage over the death of aid worker Kayla Mueller, the last-known US hostage held by Islamic State militants, as well as the slayings of journalists and a Jordanian pilot, Munckmers said they planned quick hearings on the authorization, and a vote within weeks of Congress’ return from a 16-20 February recess.

Both Republicans and Democrats said there had been unusually close consultations between the administration and Capitol Hill on the authorization.

Many of Obama’s fellow Democrats, war-weary after more than a dozen years of fighting in Afghanistan and Iraq, said they will oppose any AUMF that includes “boots on the ground.”

Obama’s opposition to the Iraq War helped propel him to victory in the 2008 campaign and bringing troops home from Iraq and Afghanistan has been a focus of his presidency.

“I worry that this AUMF gives the ability for the next president to put ground troops back into the Middle East,” said Senator Chris Murphy, adding that that would be a sticking point for himself and many other Democrats.

Some hawkish Republicans oppose restrictions on military commanders as a ban on ground troops. Others are calling for a more extensive authorization allowing US forces to challenge the Islamic State beyond Syria, where a four-year-long civil war has fueled the rise of the Islamic State group.

If the authorization doesn’t let us counter Assad’s air power, I think it will fail,” said Senator Lindsey Graham, a leading Republican foreign policy voice.

The House has declined to discuss the specific time frame or details of its planned AUMF. —Reuters

American hostage Mueller’s family, US government say she is dead

WASHINGTON, 11 Feb — US aid worker Kayla Mueller, held hostage by Islamic State militants for 18 months, is dead, her family said on Tuesday, but circumstances were unclear and President Barack Obama vowed to hunt down the culprits.

Mueller’s family received an email and photograph over the weekend from her captors that enabled American intelligence to determine that she had been killed, US officials said.

Islamic State said on Friday that Mueller, 26, was killed when Jordanian fighter jets bombed a building where she was being held outside Raqqa, a stronghold in Syria of the Islamist militant group. Jordan and US officials have expressed doubt about Islamic State’s account of her death.

Mueller, from Prescott, Arizona, was thought to have been the last American held hostage by Islamic State, an al-Qaeda offshoot which has been invoked by the White House to carry out drone and missile strikes against suspected al-Qaeda militants in Yemen and Somalia.

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Britain withdraws embassy staff from Yemen over security concerns

LONDON, 11 Feb — Britain has withdrawn staff from its embassy in Yemen and temporarily suspended operations there over security concerns, the Foreign Office said on Wednesday, a day after the United States shut its embassy.

“The security situation in Yemen has continued to deteriorate over recent days,” Minister for the Middle East Tobias Ellwood said in a statement.

State authority in Yemen has unravelled since a Shi‘ite Muslim militia formally seized power last week and the Sunni al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) group has sworn to destroy it, stoking fears of sectarian civil war.

“Our Ambassador and diplomatic staff have left Yemen this morning and will return to the UK,” Ellwood said. — Reuters

United States closes its embassy in conflict-hit Yemen

SANAA, 11 Feb — The United States is closing its embassy in Yemen, the Arabian peninsula state that is a front line in Washington’s war against al-Qaeda, embassy employees and US officials said on Tuesday.

US officials in Washington confirmed the embassy would close because of the unpredictable security situation in a country where a rebel group has seized control of the capital, Sanan.

State Department spokeswoman Jen Psaki declined comment. But she noted that the embassy staff had been gradually reduced and said the safety of the personnel was a top priority. “We take steps in order to make sure we do everything we can to protect that,” she told a regular briefing. — Reuters

France to close embassy in Yemen over security concerns

PARIS, 11 Feb — France will close its embassy in Yemen from 13 February due to security concerns and has asked its citizens to leave the country as soon as possible, the embassy said on Wednesday.

“Given the latest political developments and for security reasons, the embassy asks you to temporarily leave Yemen as quickly as possible,” the embassy said in a statement on its website.

It said the embassy would close from Friday until further notice. — Reuters

Gunmen in Central Africa Republic free kidnapped government minister

BANGUI, 11 Feb — Gunmen in Central African Republic have freed the minister for youth and sport who was kidnapped in January, the minister’s spokesman said on Wednesday.

Armel Ningatoum Sayo was kidnapped on 25 January as part of a spate of hostage-taking linked to the anti-balaka militia that included the brief kidnapping of a UN staff member and a French charity worker.

The seizures highlight insecurity in the impoverished country where thousands have been killed and around a million displaced from their homes since the mainly MuslimSeleka rebels took power in March 2013.

The group gave up power last year in the face of diplomatic pressure and violence by the “anti-balaka” militia, who are mainly Christian or animist, but it still controls the northeastern portion of the country.

Sayo was returning from church with his wife and brother in north Bangui when four gunmen in a taxi stopped his vehicle, shot in the air and seized him before fleeing towards an anti-balaka stronghold, said his spokesman Tatiana Yangeko at the time.

Yangeko said Sayo was freed overnight. In January, the anti-balaka denied they played a role in Sayo’s kidnapping.

Sayo was a senior officer in the presidential guard before being arrested by former president Francois Bozize.

He led a northern rebel group called “Revolution and Justice” but was named minister in the 2014 peace deal in the former French colony.

Security sources said soldiers in Diffa, a town on Niger’s border with Nigeria, shot dead a suicide bomber heading on foot towards a military base and warned that militants had infiltrated groups of civilians who had crossed into Niger.

The government later declared a 15-day state of emergency in the Diffa region with an 8 pm (1900 GMT) to 6 am (0500 GMT) curfew.

Nigeria, Niger, Cameroon, Chad and Benin agreed at the weekend to send a joint 8,700-strong force to battle the Nigerian Boko Haram, which has killed thousands of people and kidnapped hundreds more in a jihadist campaign to carve out a mediaveal-style caliphate.

Nigeria has postponed its 14 February presidential election by six weeks, citing security concerns.

In the last few days, Niger has massed more than 3,000 troops in Diffa on its southeastern frontier with Nigeria, awaiting approval to go on the offensive. — Reuters

How the Houthis drove Yemen into a political vacuum

SANAA, 11 Feb — When Yemen’s Houthi fighters scaled the rooftops surrounding former president Ali Abdullah Mansour Hadi’s home, killed his guards and put him under house arrest, they left no doubt that negotiating a political settlement with them would be difficult.

The actions of the Shi‘ite Muslim fighters have drawn criticism from across Yemen’s political spectrum, especially after their declaration on Friday that they were dismissing the national assembly and would form a new government.

The move, condemned by Washington and Gulf Arabs, has added to fears in the United States and neighbouring oil giant Saudi Arabia that Yemen, which is home to an active al-Qaeda wing, is on the verge of becoming a failed state.

Even after the United Nations managed to bring political factions to the negotiating table again, two parties walked out, complaining of threats from the Houthis.

“The problem isn’t in selecting a new president... but it’s tied to the militias’ control of the capital and on decision-making,” said Abdullah Noman, secretary general of the leftist Nasserist party.

“So any new president will be at the mercy of these militias who are still holding Hadi, the prime minister and a number of officials under house arrest,” he added.

Indeed when the 69-year-old president assumed office after Arab Spring protests ousted his predecessor, he never would have guessed that two years later he would be under control of rebels who had overrun Sanan and became Yemen’s new de facto rulers.

Hadi tried to accommodate the rebels even after they took over the capital in September, but the crisis reached a critical point in mid-January that began with battles at the presidential palace and brought Hadi’s resignation.

The Houthis began as a revivalist group for Yemen’s Zaydi Shi‘ite Muslim sect in the north, before morphing over the past decade into a revolutionary movement with national ambitions, and an ally of Iran.

In a lightning push through northern Yemen and into Sanan last year, the group took advantage of splits in the ruling and tribal elite and of widespread anger at years of government malfeasance.

They portrayed their move as a “people’s revolution” against corruption which they say was empying state coffers. Their decision to dissolve parliament and set up an interim government was denounced as a coup by one political faction.

Reuters spoke to sources close to Hadi to draw a picture of what led Hadi to leave office. — Reuters

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Reuters spoke to sources close to Hadi to draw a picture of what led Hadi to leave office. — Reuters

Niger approves sending troops to Nigeria to fight Boko Haram

NIAMEY, 11 Feb — Niger’s parliament has unanimously approved sending troops to Nigeria as part of a regional offensive against the Islamist Boko Haram insurgent group that has staged several cross-border attacks over the past week.

Security sources said soldiers in Diffa, a town on Niger’s border with Nigeria, shot dead a suicide bomber heading on foot towards a military base and warned that militants had infiltrated groups of civilians who had crossed into Niger.

Reuters
Massachusetts struggles to remove snow after massive storms

BOSTON, 11 Feb — Massachusetts officials called out National Guard troops on Tuesday to help dig out from a trio of massive snowstorms in the past two weeks, noting that at least seven roof collapses had been reported, a result of the heavy accumulation.

The head of the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority defended the decision to shut Boston-area subways and rail service as schools remained closed across much of the area.

Some 500 National Guard troops were to deploy across the state, Massachusetts to help clear the roughly 6 feet (1.8 metres) of snow that has fallen in the past two weeks, Massachusetts Governor Charlie Baker told reporters.

“We need to get the Commonwealth back to work and we need to get the kids back to school,” Baker told reporters, adding that his counterparts in New York and Vermont had agreed to lend heavy equipment to help with snow removal. Baker also said he had approved the purchase of two snow-melting machines capable of melting 120 tons of snow per hour.

The city’s rail system will reopen on a limited schedule on Wednesday, and public schools will hold classes, Boston Mayor Marty Walsh told reporters.

“We’ve been informed that the MBTA will be operating tomorrow on a limited schedule, as of right now,” Walsh said.

Beverly Scott, general manager of the MBTA, said she had no choice on Monday afternoon but to order all rail services shut down, an announcement that came right before the evening rush hour and a few hours before the 7 pm shutdown.

“We do not control Mother Nature,” Scott told reporters, visits back and forth about criticism of her handling of the storm.

“I was surprised at the MBTA shutdown. You can’t just shut down the city,” Ariel Freiberg, 32, of Somerville, said as she waited at the main train station for an Amtrak train to New York. The Amtrak service was running at full capacity despite the MBTA’s shutdown.

Heavy snow on tracks had caused trains to lose contact with the electricity-carrying third rail across the system’s 800 miles (1,290 kilometres) of tracks, prompting the shutdown, Scott said.—Reuters

Some 300 migrants missing at sea, feared dead: UN agency

ROME, 11 Feb — An estimated 300 people probably died this week after attempting to reach Italy from Libya in stormy weather, an UN agency said on Wednesday after speaking to a handful of survivors.

An Italian tug boat rescued 9 people who had been on two different boats on Monday and Tuesday and had to stay put, and a sandstorm continued to hit Mideast.

Serbian Prime Minister Aleksandar Vucic: I expect negotiations with EU to open soon

BELGRADE, 11 Feb — Serbian Prime Minister Aleksandar Vucic said Tuesday that he expects negotiations on Serbia’s accession to the European Union (EU) to open soon.

During the first conference of a new project titled Belgrade Dialogues (Beogradski dijalozi), Vucic said that he thought that the first chapters to be opened could be Chapters 23 and 24, aimed at fully introducing the rule of law and democracy.

“I expect the first chapters to be opened very soon,” said the prime minister, stressing at the same time that “what we want is to do with the country and how much we will be able to change is far more important than just opening the chapters.”

Vucic said that the international community had already recognized the efforts Serbia had made in the economic field and had lauded the economic measures and reforms undertaken by the government. “I believe that the international community will recognize the efforts that Serbia is making in the political sphere,” he said.

In the latest round of dialogue on the normalization of relations with Kosovo, in Brussels last night, the Belgrade delegation had long and difficult talks and they did everything they could to come to an agreement on the judiciary issue, Vucic said.

Sandstorm continues to hit Middle East with ports closed, flights grounded

CAIRO / JERUSALEM, 11 Feb — A sandstorm continues to blow hard in parts of the Middle East on Wednesday, where authorities have remained sea ports closed and briefly grounded flights. In Egypt, the dusty wind has caused serious lack of sight along the desert roads. In Cairo, skies turned yellow while the sun has almost been blotted out, yet people’s daily actions in the capital go on as usual.

The storm has also raised wave levels in both the Red and Mediterranean seas, and has thus halted the marine activities.

Weather forecasters expect that the awful weather would go on for a couple of days, which may result in a complete shutdown of the country at night.

The cargo mainly concerns the next humanitarian convoy to the Rostov Region where the next convoy of vehicles is being formed for the citizens of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, a ministry spokesman said.

Later on Wednesday, the ministry’s aircraft will deliver a humanitarian cargo of more than 70 tons from the Ramenskoye airfield near Moscow to Rostov-on-Don, in southern Russia.

The cargo mainly consists of medicines and medical equipment, which will be then loaded on the vehicles in Rostov-on-Don that are to become part of the convoy.

Since mid-August 2014, Russian convoys have delivered to Donbas more than 18,000 tons of humanitarian aid, mainly foodstuffs, medicines, building materials and primary necessity items.
CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
MV MOROTAI VOY NO (YF 256R)
Consignees of cargo carried on MV MOROTAI VOY NO (YF 256R) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 12.2.2015 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.
Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claims Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.
No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.
SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: MS/ CMA CGM
Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
MV KOTA TAMPAN VOY NO (TPN617)
Consignees of cargo carried on MV KOTA TAMPAN VOY NO (TPN617) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 12.2.2015 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.
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SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S ADVANCE CONTAINER LINES
Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
MV CHINDWIN STAR VOY NO (1003)
Consignees of cargo carried on MV CHINDWIN STAR VOY NO (1003) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 12.2.2015 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.
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SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S CONTINETAL SHIPPING LINE PTE LTD
Phone No: 2301185

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**WEATHER REPORT**

**BAY INERENCE:** Weather is generally fair in the Andaman Sea and partly cloudy to cloudy in the Bay of Bengal.

**FORECAST VALID UNTIL EVENING OF THE 12th FEBRUARY, 2015:** Light rain are likely to be isolated in Upper Sagarin Region, Kachin and Shan States, weather will be partly cloudy in the remaining Regions and States. Degree of certainty is (60%).

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

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**Supporters of Indonesian domestic helper Erwiana Sulistyaningsih (3rd from L) hold a Press conference in Hong Kong on 10 Feb, 2015, after the District Court convicted Law Wan-tung, Erwiana’s employer for eight months in 2013, of torturing her. Erwiana’s plight put the international spotlight on the “slave-like” working conditions for many live-in maids in Hong Kong.—Kyodo News**

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**Two killed, 65 injured in 100-car pileup near S Korea main airport**

**Seoul, 11 Feb** — Two people were killed and 65 injured, seven seriously, on Wednesday morning in a pileup involving about 100 vehicles in foggy weather on a bridge near Incheon International Airport, police said.

**Yonhap News Agency** said among those injured seven were Chinese, five Thais, two Vietnamese, two Japanese, one Russian, one Bangladeshi and one Swiss national. Both fatalities were South Koreans.

The accident occurred around 9:40 am on the Seoul-bound side of the bridge linking the western port city with an island where the airport is located. South Korean police believe the initial pileup was caused by a collision between an airport limousine bus and a passenger car on an icy stretch of the road, Yonhap said.

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**Road pileup kills seven in north China**

**Taiyuan, 11 Feb** — A road pileup left seven people dead and another two injured on Tuesday in north China’s Shanxi Province, local government said on Wednesday.

The traffic accident in Lianshan County was caused by collision of a heavy-duty truck and three sedans at 5:50 pm, said the county government’s information office.

The injured are in stable condition. The cause of the collision is being investigated.—Xinhua
Jon Stewart leaving Comedy Central’s ‘The Daily Show’

Los Angeles, 11 Feb — Comedian Jon Stewart, famed for his biting television satire of politicians and the media, will leave his job as host of Comedy Central’s parody news show "The Daily Show" later this year, he told his studio audience at the end of Tuesday night’s episode.

Stewart, 52, who has starred on the show since 1999, said he had no specific plans for his next career move, but was thankful for the opportunity to host the programme.

"It’s been an absolute privilege," said an emotional Stewart. "It’s been the honour of my professional life, and I thank you for watching it, for hate-watching it, whatever reason you are tuning in for."

The announcement came after Comedy Central’s other big name, former "Daily Show" contributor Stephen Colbert, ended his tenure as star of companion show "The Colbert Report" and left the network in December to succeed the retiring David Letterman as host of the "Late Show" on CBS.

The New York-based "The Daily Show," which airs weeknights at 11 pm on the Viacom Inc-owned Comedy Central, is expected to continue in some form, but a replacement for Stewart has yet to be named.

"Through his unique voice and vision, ‘The Daily Show’ has become a cultural touchstone for millions of fans and an unparalleled platform for political comedy that will endure for years to come," Comedy Central President Michele Ganeless said in a statement. Stewart replaced Craig Kilborn roughly 15 years ago as host of the late-night cable programme, which has won Peabody and Emmy awards.

"17 years is the longest I have ever in my life held a job, by 16 years and five months," Stewart said on Thursday's broadcast.

"The upshot there being I am a terrible employee. But in my heart, I know it is time for someone else to have that opportunity," he added, prompting boos from the audience.

"The Daily Show" averages slightly more than 1 million viewers a night, a far smaller audience than his late-night competition on broadcast networks, but Stewart became disproportionately influential in US politics and culture.

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Director Jon Stewart arrives at the Canadian premiere of "Rosewater" at the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) in Toronto on 8 Sept, 2014. — Reuters

Angelina Jolie opens UK centre to fight warzone violence against women

London, 11 Feb — Hollywood actress-director Angelina Jolie has opened Europe’s first academic centre to combat the brutality faced by women in warzones.

Jolie, a special envoy for the UN high commissioner for refugees (UNHCR), has just returned from northern Iraq, where she met some of the millions of refugees forced to flee from their homes due to Islamic State (ISIS) violence, reported Guardian online.

The 39-year-old mother of six said students of the centre on women, peace and security at the London School of Economics (LSE) had the chance to change the world. “If you were to ask me who I think this centre is for, I picture someone who is not in this room today, I think of a girl I met in Iraq three weeks ago. She is 13-year-old, but instead of going to school, she sits on the floor in a makeshift tent,” she said.

The girl was captured by ISIS as a slave, and repeatedly raped, Jolie said. “Now she may never be able to complete her education, or get married or have a family, because in her society victims of rape are shunned, and considered shameful. To my mind, what we have begun today at LSE is for that Iraqi girl and others like her,” she added.

The new centre will work to achieve the aims of the Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative (PSVI), which Jolie and the former UK foreign secretary William Hague co-founded back in 2012.—PTI

Ringo Starr announces 18th album

Los Angeles, 11 Feb — Beatles icon Ringo Starr has revealed his 18th studio album will be out on 30 March via Universal Records. The drummer’s album will contain 11 original tracks, recorded by Starr and his All Starr Band containing Steve Lukather, Todd Rundgren, Gregg Rolie, Richard Page, Warren Ham and Gregg Bissonette, reported the Rolling Stone magazine.

There will also be guest appearances from Joe Walsh, Benmont Tench, Dave Stewart, Ann Marie Simpson, Richard Marx, Amy Keys, Peter Frampton, Nathan East, and Glen Ballard among others. Starr will be inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in April, while also receiving the Award for Musical Excellence.

“It means recognition. Finally, the four of us are in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame even though we were the biggest pop group in the land,” he said.—PTI

Australia granted wildcard entry to 2015 Eurovision Song Contest

Canberra, 11 Feb — Australia has been invited to join the glitz, glamour and theatrics of the Eurovision Song Contest after being granted a wildcard entry to this year’s event by contest organizers.

The announcement was broadcast on Australian television on Wednesday morning, but Eurovision organizers were coy about the reasons for admitting Australia to a largely European event — to be held this year in Vienna.

“It is a daring and at the same time incredibly exciting move. It is our way of saying ‘let’s celebrate this party together’” said Jon Ola Sand, Executive Supervisor of the contest.

The move does have a precedent, however, as Australian singer Jessica Mauboy made a guest appearance in 2014.

Australian ratings for the contest have soared in recent years, drawing an average nightly viewership of over 750,000 people in 2013 and over one million in 2014.

Australia’s Eurovision broadcaster, SBS, released a statement on Wednesday confirming the news.

“The deal is a result of SBS’s ambition to increase Australia’s presence at Eurovision following the success of Jessica Mauboy’s performance last year in Denmark,” the release said.

“Australia’s enthusiasm for the contest has been embraced by the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) and the 2015 host broadcaster ORF, who have invited SBS to send an artist to compete as a wildcard entry for 2015 in celebration of the 60th anniversary of the contest.”

Those watching from home will be able to get into the spirit of the contest, after it was announced that Australian fans will be able to vote in the proceedings.

A performer is yet to be announced by SBS, however according to the broadcaster’s Eurovision host Julia Zemiro, a decision will be made “very shortly.”—Xinhua

Sony and Marvel to partner on Spider-Man movie

Los Angeles, 11 Feb — Sony Pictures and Marvel Studios have reached a deal to partner on the next instalment of the $4 billion (3 billion pounds) Spider-Man franchise, uniting the web-slinging superhero with Marvel’s comic book universe.

Kevin Feige, president of Walt Disney Co’s Marvel Studios, will co-produce the next film set for July 2017 release with Sony’s Amy Pascal, according to a statement from the firms. Under the agreement, the Spider-Man will be brought into the Marvel Cinematic Universe. Kevin Feige, president of Walt Disney Co’s Marvel Studios, will co-produce the next film set for July 2017 release with Sony’s Amy Pascal, according to a statement from the firms. Under the agreement, the Spider-Man will be brought into the Marvel Cinematic Universe. Kevin Feige, president of Walt Disney Co’s Marvel Studios, will co-produce the next film set for July 2017 release with Sony’s Amy Pascal, according to a statement from the firms. Under the agreement, the Spider-Man will be brought into the Marvel Cinematic Universe. Kevin Feige, president of Walt Disney Co’s Marvel Studios, will co-produce the next film set for July 2017 release with Sony’s Amy Pascal, according to a statement from the firms. Under the agreement, the Spider-Man will be brought into the Marvel Cinematic Universe. Kevin Feige, president of Walt Disney Co’s Marvel Studios, will co-produce the next film set for July 2017 release with Sony’s Amy Pascal, according to a statement from the firms. Under the agreement, the Spider-Man will be brought into the Marvel Cinematic Universe. Kevin Feige, president of Walt Disney Co’s Marvel Studios, will co-produce the next film set for July 2017 release with Sony’s Amy Pascal, according to a statement from the firms. Under the agreement, the Spider-Man will be brought into the Marvel Cinematic Universe. Kevin Feige, president of Walt Disney Co’s Marvel Studios, will co-produce the next film set for July 2017 release with Sony’s Amy Pascal, according to a statement from the firms. Under the agreement, the Spider-Man will be brought into the Marvel Cinematic Universe. Kevin Feige, president of Walt Disney Co’s Marvel Studios, will co-produce the next film set for July 2017 release with Sony’s Amy Pascal, according to a statement from the firms. Under the agreement, the Spider-Man will be brought into the Marvel Cinematic Universe. Kevin Feige, president of Walt Disney Co’s Marvel Studios, will co-produce the next film set for July 2017 release with Sony’s Amy Pascal, according to a statement from the firms. Under the agreement, the Spider-Man will be brought into the Marvel Cinematic Universe. Kevin Feige, president of Walt Disney Co’s Marvel Studios, will co-produce the next film set for July 2017 release with Sony’s Amy Pascal, according to a statement from the firms. Under the agreement, the Spider-Man will be brought into the Marvel Cinematic Universe. Kevin Feige, president of Walt Disney Co’s Marvel Studios, will co-produce the next film set for July 2017 release with Sony’s Amy Pascal, according to a statement from the firms. Under the agreement, the Spider-Man will be brought into the Marvel Cinematic Universe. Kevin Feige, president of Walt Disney Co’s Marvel Studios, will co-produce the next film set for July 2017 release with Sony’s Amy Pascal, according to a statement from the firms. Under the agreement, the Spider-Man will be brought into the Marvel Cinematic Universe. Kevin Feige, president of Walt Disney Co’s Marvel Studios, will co-produce the next film set for July 2017 release with Sony’s Amy Pascal, according to a statement from the firms. Under the agreement, the Spider-Man will be brought into the Marvel Cinematic Universe.

“Spider-Man has more than 50 years of history in Marvel’s world, and with this deal, fans will be able to experience Spider-Man taking his rightful place among other Super Heroes,” the statement said.—Reuters
Sky pays record 4.2 billion pounds for top Premier League rights, BT takes the rest

LONDON, 11 Feb — Pay-TV group Sky (SKYB.L) has agreed to pay 4.2 billion pounds to show 126 live English Premier League matches a season from 2016 to 2019, pressured by fierce rival BT (BT.L) to smash analysts’ season from 2016 to 2019, showing 126 live English Premier League matches a season from 2016 to 2019, pressured by fierce rival BT (BT.L) to smash analysts’ forecasts and secure the best games.

After one of the most high-profile broadcast auctions of recent times, the Premier League said that Sky had won five of the seven rights packages, including the most popular Sunday afternoon matches showing the likes of Manchester United and Arsenal.

With BT paying 960 million pounds to show 42 matches, the governing body confirmed the date to be confirmed, “It is alleged his comments constitute improper conduct in that they allege and/or imply bias on the part of the match referee and/or bring the game into disrepute.”

Van Gaal denies FA misconduct charge

LONDON, 11 Feb — Manchester United manager Louis van Gaal has denied a Football Association misconduct charge relating to comments he made following last month’s FA Cup draw with Cambridge United, the governing body said on Tuesday.

“Louis van Gaal denies FA misconduct charge in relation to media comments and requests personal hearing, date to be confirmed,” the FA said on Twitter.

“It is alleged his comments constitute improper conduct in that they allege and/or imply bias on the part of the match referee and/or bring the game into disrepute.”

United were held to a 0-0 draw by the fourth-tier side but won the replay 3-0 at Old Trafford to set up a fifth-round tie away to Preston North End. — Reuters

Moon objects found in astronaut Neil Armstrong’s closet

WASHINGTON, 11 Feb — A treasure trove of objects that were supposed to have been left behind after the first moon landing have turned up in the closet of Neil Armstrong, the first man to step onto the lunar surface, the Smithsonian Institution has said.

Armstrong died in August 2012 and his wife, Carol, found the items from the 1969 lunar landing as she was cleaning out one of his home closets in Cincinnati, Allam Needell, a space historian and curator at the National Air and Space Museum, wrote in a recent blog.

Among the objects are a camera that was mounted in the window of the Eagle lunar module to record the landing and two waist tethers. Armstrong used one of the tethers to support his feet during his rest period on the moon, Needell said.

The items were stashed in a white storage bag informally known as a McDwitt Purse used aboard Eagle to store items.

“Needless to say, for a curator of a collection of space artifacts, it is hard to imagine anything more exciting,” Needell wrote.

The items were intended to be left behind on the moon but were instead brought back.

Needell said that as far as he knew Armstrong had never discussed them and no one had seen them in the 45 years since he returned to Earth.

According to mission transcripts, Armstrong described the objects to astronaut Michael Collins, who stayed in orbit around the moon aboard the command ship, as “just a bunch of trash that we want to take back - LM parts, odds and ends, and it won’t stay closed by itself.” — Reuters

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Arsenal into top four as Spurs lose at Liverpool  

LONDON, 11 Feb — Arsenal climbed into the top four with a laboured 2-1 win over a spirited Leicester City while Liverpool sealed a topsy-turvy game at Anfield that they twice led through Lazar Markovic and a Steven Gerrard penalty before being pegged back by the in-form Harry Kane and Mousa Dembele.

Arsenal, with a revitalised Mesut Ozil in a central role, led 2-0 through Laurent Koscielny and Theo Walcott before basement side Leicester’s record signing Andrej Kramarić got his first goal for the club as they dominated the second half.

Fourth-placed Arsenal have 45 points from 25 games — two clear of sixth-placed Spurs and three ahead of Liverpool in seventh — though they could be displaced by Manchester United in fifth who host lowly Burnley on Wednesday.

“The performance wasn’t the best at times but we got the three points and we ground it out in the end.” Arsenal goalscorer Walcott told Sky Sports.

“I can’t believe they’re bottom of the league as they played some very good football. I think they’re one of the best teams who have come to the Emirates this year. If they continue playing like that they won’t be there much longer.” Queens Park Rangers claimed their first points away from home this season with a 2-0 victory at Sunderland thanks to goals from Leroy Fer and Bobby Zamora.

Hull City climbed out of the relegation zone with a 2-0 victory at home to free-falling Aston Villa — courtesy of goals from Nikica Jelavic and Dame N’Doye — subverting the Midlands side to a fifth consecutive league defeat in the process.

At Anfield, striker Daniel Sturridge, on his first Premier League start after a long-term injury, was one of Liverpool’s liveliest players and could have scored twice inside 13 minutes.

First the England international’s tame shot was saved by Hugo Lloris before the France goalkeeper made a stunning, instinctive save to keep out his rasping drive minutes later.

Liverpool were not to be denied in the 15th minute though when Markovic’s low shot squirmed past Lloris.

Theo Walcott scores the second goal for Arsenal at Emirates Stadium on 10 Feb, 2015.—Reuters

Dortmund’s Reus extends deal to 2019

BERLIN, 11 Feb — Borussia Dortmund winger Marco Reus signed a surprise two-year contract extension with the Bundesliga club until 2019 on Tuesday, ending persistent speculation about a move to Spain or England at the end of the season.

Reus, who had an injury-plagued 2014 when he also missed the World Cup which Germany won, looked to be on his way out by Bayern Munich revealed he had a buyout clause in his contract, angering Dortmund.

With his club hovering in the relegation zone after a dismal first half to the season, speculation had been rife he would leave.

“I am happy to have extended the contract,” Reus said in a club video interview. “When I came here (in 2012) I said I wanted to do things. I have the feeling that it’s not over even in this situation.”

“We fall together and we win together. It is a decision for life. I did not think about it that long for no reason.”

Dortmund did not reveal details of the deal but it reportedly does not include a buyout clause.

Dortmund, German champions in 2011 and 2012, are struggling this season, lying in the relegation playoff spot and the news of the deal will further boost their confidence after their first win of the year on Saturday against Freiburg. —Reuters

Real Madrid’s Cristiano Ronaldo sits on the pitch during their Spanish first division soccer match against Atletico Madrid at the Vicente Calderon stadium in Madrid, on 7 Feb, 2015.—Reuters

Real Madrid forward Cristiano Ronaldo collected his third FIFA Ballon d’Or award last month he was enjoying a run of form that was spectacular even by his standards and the European champions were riding high.

Four weeks later and the Portuguese captain is mired in a rare slump. Real have been dumped out of the King’s Cup by Atletico Madrid and their lead over Barcelona at the top of La Liga has been cut to a point after Saturday’s humiliating 4-0 drubbing at their city neighbours.

Alarm bells are ringing at the world’s richest club by income and the sense that Real’s season may be coming off the rails was heightened by the storm that blew up this week after Ronaldo threw a lavish 30th birthday party hours after the defeat at the Calderon.

The Madrid club’s great rivals Barca, by contrast, are on a nine-match winning streak in all competitions led by club talisman Lionel Messi, who Ronaldo beat into second place in the Ballon d’Or vote.

Argentine captain Messi has scored or assisted 14 La Liga goals in 2015, at least twice as many as any other player, while Ronaldo has netted only four goals since the turn of the year.

He was sent off for kicking a Cordoba player in a La Liga match on 24 January and cut a forlorn figure when he returned for Saturday’s humilitating 4-0 drubbing at their city neighbours.

Tottenham’s Kane, fast becoming one of the Premier League’s most feared forwards, restored parity for the visitors in the 26th minute with a neat turn and low finish.—Reuters

Ronaldo slump hurts Real as in-form Messi drives Barca

Tottenham’s Kane celebrates after defeating Lleyton Hewitt of Australia during their men’s singles second round match at the Australian Open 2015 tennis tournament in Melbourne on 22 Jan, 2015.—Reuters

Tottenham’s Kane, fast becoming one of the Premier League’s most feared forwards, restored parity for the visitors in the 26th minute with a neat turn and low finish.—Reuters

Hewitt offered one last hurrah on London’s grasscourts

London, 11 Feb — Former champion Lleyton Hewitt will begin his preparations for his final bow at Wimbledon this year at the Aegon Championships after organisers of the Queen’s Club grasscourt event guaranteed the Australian a wildcard.

The unused wild cards to hand out a wildcard before the entry list is known is reward for the 33-year-old former world number one who has won the Wimbledon warm-up event four times.

Hewitt, who will retire after next year’s Australian Open, is winding down his career and will only play two tournaments this year, Queen’s and Wimbledon as well as the Davis Cup.

“It took us roughly two seconds to decide to guarantee Lleyton a wild card!” said tournament director Stephen Farrow. —Reuters

Benjamin Becker of Germany celebrates after defeating Lleyton Hewitt of Australia during their men’s singles second round match at the Australian Open 2015 tennis tournament in Melbourne on 22 Jan, 2015.—Reuters