MORE than 150 fishermen were repatriated from India on Monday as their prison sentences for illegally entering India’s territorial waters expired.

Myanmar officials brought back 158 fishermen, the first batch of a total of 243 fishermen, from India’s Port Blair by charter flight.

Authorities provided them with cash and gifts at the Yangon International Airport.

The remaining 85 fishermen will be brought back to Myanmar on Tuesday.

Out of 158, 137 are from Ayeyawady Region, 20 are from Rakhine State and one is from Taninthayi Region.

They were detained by the Indian navy while they were drifting in Indian territorial waters.

They illegally entered Indian waters when they were hit by storms. The engines of their fishing boats broke down, and they drifted into Indian territory.

At the Yangon International Airport, Deputy Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Re-settlement Daw Su Su Hlaing and other officials welcomed the fishermen and assisted them in their return home.

In its statement, the UEC urged the observers to abide by the UEC Code of Conduct drafted for observers and the existing laws of Myanmar in order to avoid bias.

The UEC’s committed to holding the upcoming election with transparency and democratic principles. The Monday statement said. The government requested diplomats and foreign election observers to refrain from activities that could be construed as being biased or that may negatively impact the country’s ability to hold free and fair elections.

At a meeting with diplomats and election observers held in Nay Pyi Taw about two weeks ahead of the 8 November election, Union Minister for Foreign Affairs U Wunna Maung Lwin said the diplomatic community has an obligation to abide by the Union Election Commission’s Code of Conduct. He said it also has an obligation to adhere to the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations and called for the cooperation and support of the diplomatic community for holding a general election that is peaceful, credible and transparent.

UEC chairman U Tin Aye called on ministries today to cooperate in providing observers with hospitality and convenience services and to announce the results of the election on time.

The UEC’s media centre and the Ministry of Information are currently working together to announce the results of the election on the election day.

A total of 6,065 candidates will compete for the seats in parliament. Male candidates make up the 86.8 percent of the total, with 5,274 women making up the rest, according to statistics from the UEC.

The UEC will not hold elections in five of the country’s 330 townships due to security concerns.—GNLM
Buddhist monk, emergency specialist win World Peace Award

A Buddhist monk and a layperson won the World Peace Award, selected by the World Peace Awarding Council, at a ceremony held at Karaweik Palace Hotel in Yangon on 1 November. Joint-founder of the council and leader of the assessment committee Dr Han Min Su and Abbot Dr Moktak of the Republic of Korea made speeches at the ceremony.

The Korean Sayadaw offered the World Peace Award to Bhamo Sayadaw Abhidhaja Maharattha Guru Abhidhaja Aggamaha Saddhammajotika Bhaddanta Kumarabhivamsa, Chairman of State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee, while Dr Han Min Su presented the award to Agga Maha Thirmuthdhamma Manjotadhara Wunna Kyawhtin Dr Khin Shwe, the chairman of the Rescue and Helping Committee in the Myanmar parliament.

Four persons from Myanmar, South Korea and Japan won World Peace Awards in 2015.

The World Peace Awarding Council was established by US president John F. Kennedy in 1961.—Yan Naing

IP rights seminar focuses on infringements and judicial matters


Deputy Minister for Science and Technology Dr Aung Kyaw Moe urged the participants to openly discuss infringements of intellectual property rights and judicial matters. Professor Dr Alexander Von Muehlendahl of Munich, Germany, discussed intellectual property rights infringements and judicial rules and regulations.

The seminar was attended by the director-general of the Atomic Energy Department, officials of the Supreme Court of the Union and the office of Attorney-General of the Union, legal experts, departmental officials and members of various associations.—Myanmar News Agency

Ethnic minorities, women, migrants, disabled persons at risk of vote rejection

Votes may be rejected in the upcoming election due to the weakness of voter education programmes.

Khaing Thanda Lwin

MANY people, including students, migrants and even returning officers, are in a position to lose their voting rights in the 8 November election, said U Chan Nyein Aung, President-cum-CEO of Charity-Oriented Myanmar (COM).

To promote inclusiveness of electoral process, COM, a Yangon-based civil service organisation, conducted a study from 1 September to 10 October this year and published its findings in a report yesterday.

The study is mainly focused on four groups—ethnic minorities, women, migrants and people with disabilities.

With the technical assistance of Democracy Reporting International (DRI), a total of 31 well-trained long-term observers from the organisation carried out the study in 28 townships in 11 regions, including Rakhine and Kachin states and the Naga Self-Administered Zone.

“According to the survey in the targeted areas, some townships see very few voter education activities, while some townships have none at all,” said U Chan Nyein Aung.

“The study points out that there is no voter education targeting ethnic [minority] groups,” he added.

“There may be many reject votes in the upcoming election due to the weakness of voter education programmes,” said U Aung Htike Min, external consultant for the COM.

Few ethnic minority individuals or women are members of township sub-election commissions, and there are no members with disabilities, the report says.

The target group faced problems such as errors in voter lists, language barriers, lack of information and security, lack of access to sub-commission offices and remote locations of sub-commission offices.

“Migrant workers in industrial zones face the most problems,” said U Aung Htike Min.

The COM will announce its preliminary election observation report on 11 November and the final report in December, with plans to monitor at over 450 polling stations in 48 townships and employing around 900 observers on the election day.
Vice-Senior General Soe Win attends selection for military corps

DEPUTY Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services and Command- er-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win attended the se- lection process for the 18th intake of the Defence Services Techno- logical Academy on Monday. Also present were Maj-Gen Tun Tun Naung of the office of the Commander-in-Chief (Army) and senior officers from the Cen- tral Command. The vice-senior general enjoyed lunch with the cadets and inspected them. The vice-senior general con- tinued observing the selection for the military corps in the after- noon. —Myawady

Deputy Minister attends 13th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Environment

DEPUTY Minister for Environ- mental Conservation and Forest- ry Dr Thet Thet Zin attended the 13th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on the Environment and relat- ed meetings in Hanoi, Vietnam, from 28 to 30 October.

The meeting was launched with an address by Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung. The deputy minister in her address said that Myanmar gov- ernment is drawing policy and work procedures for the reduc- tion of climate change, and it hopes for further cooperation with ASEAN countries and dia- logue partner countries in envi- ronmental conservation.

The delegates discussed the draft of the ASEAN Joint STATE- ment on Climate Change, to be submitted to the UN Confer- ence of Parties (COP 21) in Par- is, France. They also discussed terms of references for the ASE- AN Institute for Green Economy, established in Myanmar, and ASEAN Guidelines on Peatland Fire Management.

On 30 October, the dele- gates visited Tieng Anh national park. —MNA

Public Health Department holds coordination meeting

THE Public Health Department under the Ministry of Health held a work coordination meeting for the 2016-17 fiscal year in Nay Pyi Taw on Monday.

Deputy Minister for Health Dr Daw Thein Thein Htay made an opening speech at the meeting. The director-general of the department and other officials discussed financial and manage- ment issues at the meeting.

The deputy minister urged officials at the meeting to provide public healthcare services effec- tively and to make most benefi- cial use of health spending. —My- anmar News Agency

Hotel service courses conclude in Nay Pyi Taw

UNION Minister for Hotels and Tourism U Htay Aung gave a speech at the conclusion of ho- tel service courses, conducted by the Nay Pyi Taw Hotel Zone Entrepreneurs Association, in the Dekkhinathiri Hotel Zone yesterday.

He urged the trainees to continue their education on hotel services using the internet.

U Ohn Kyaw, vice chair- man of the association, presented completion certificates to trainees. The union minister greeted the trainees. —Myanmar News Agency

Myanmar, EU to jointly combat climate change

MYANMAR and the European Union committed to strength- ening cooperation on climate change in a workshop in Nay Pyi Taw on Monday.

At the workshop, officials from the Ministry of Environment and Forest, other key line ministries and the EU, civil society representatives, the private sector participants, and other development partners discussed the draft National Cl imate Change Strategy and Action Plan in Myanmar.

The National Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan is supported by the Myanmar Climate Change Alliance, a flagship programme of the Government of Myanmar to increase the insti- tutional and technical capacities to address climate change. The 4-year EU-funded programme is being jointly implemented by United Nations Human Settle- ments Programme (UN-Habitat) and the United Nations Envi- ronment Programme (UNEP) to raise the awareness around climate change and making sure government policies, plans and activities take climate change into consideration. —GNLM

Scout delegation leaves for Republic of Korea

A Myanmar scout delegation led by Myanmar Scout Com- mittee Chairman Dr Tin Nyo left for the Republic of Korea to attend the 25th Asia Pacific Regional Scout Conference on Monday.

They were seen off at Yang- gon International Airport by members of the committee and families of the scouts.

The delegation will discuss Myanmar’s bid for recognition as a member of the World Or- ganisation of the Scout Move- ment and tasks being carried out by the committee and future tasks at the conference, which will be held from 3 to 8 Novem- ber. —Ko Latt (MNA)

President U Thein Sein’s radio message on air

A radio message to be delivered by U Thein Sein, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, will be broadcast through radio programmes on both 3 and 4 November.

Myanmar Radio, Mandalay FM, Pynsawaddy FM, Shwe FM, Cherry FM, Padanya FM, FM Bagan, Thazin Radio and Yangon City FM will broadcast the message at 7 am, 11 am, 6 pm and 8 pm respectively. —Myanmar News Agency

Myanmar Scout Committee Chairman Dr Tin Nyo and party seen at the airport before departure for Republic of Korea. Photo: Ko Latt
Japan, China able to boost momentum of improving ties via summit

SEoul — Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said Monday he was able to strengthen the momentum of improving relations with China through his first meeting with Premier Li Keqiang.

“I believe that we were able to enhance the improving trend of Japan-China relations in line with the principle of mutually beneficial relationship based on common strategic interests,” Abe told reporters in Seoul a day after the meeting with Li.

With regard to various outstanding issues, we frankly discussed and, of course, I said what I had to say,” Abe said, when asked if China’s rapid island-building activities in the South China Sea were on their agenda.

His meeting with Li took place after they attended a trilateral summit with South Korean President Park Geun-hye, during which the three countries, for the first time in more than three years, confirmed together their commitment to boosting cooperation for regional stability and prosperity.

Abe said he cannot disclose details of what he discussed with Li, citing an agreement between Japan and China.

But he said, “Also with Japan-China relations, I believe it is important to say each side thinks it necessary.”

Before Abe’s arrival in the South Korean capital, Japanese government officials said that among other issues Abe would tell Li that China’s ongoing massive reclamation projects in the disputed sea area are “unilateral attempts to change the status quo,” and would urge Beijing to respect freedom of navigation and international rules.

To challenge China’s continuation with the projects in defiance of regional opposition, the USNavy recently sent a guided-missile destroyer to an area close to one of Beijing’s man-made islands in the Spratly archipelago. Following the dispatch of the warship, there has been growing tension between China and the United States, Japan’s foremost security ally.

China claims sovereignty over most of the South China Sea, one of the world’s busiest shipping lanes. It has repeatedly said disputes with smaller Asian claimants, including the Philippines and Vietnam, should be dealt by the parties themselves, urging outsiders, including Japan and the United States, to stay out.—Kyodo News

Thai military sees red over critical comments, warns dissident

BANGKOK — Thai soldiers warned the daughter of an assassinated dissident commander on Monday not to do anything to disturb the country after she staged a symbolic protest in support of ousted former Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra.

The army seized power in a coup in 2014, toppling Yingluck’s government in another convulsion in a decade of confrontations between the establishment and Yingluck’s brother, former telecoms tycoon and ousted pro-military establishment rival Thaksin Shinawatra.

The military government has banned gatherings and put controls on the media while Thaksin remains abroad to avoid a graft conviction he says was politically motivated and Yingluck faces her own corruption charges that she too denies.

Khattiyah Sawasdipol, daughter of a prominent pro-Thaksin military commander, posted a picture of herself on Sunday wearing a red shirt, the colour Thaksin and his supporters adopted to set themselves apart from the yellow of their rival pro-military establishment rivals.

She also posted comments critical of junta leader Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha, prompting the warning.

“They wanted to meet me over comments I posted and told me not to do anything to disturb the country,” Khattiyah told Reuters.

“I said I am a politician, and if I see something wrong, I need to speak.”

Junta spokesman Colonel Winthai Suvaree declined to comment. A sniper shot dead Khattiyah’s father, Major-General Al Khattiya Sawasdipol, on a Bangkok street while he was overseeing a protest by Thaksin’s supporters against the then pro-establishment government in May, 2010. No one has been charged with his killing.

Thaksin has been keeping a low profile, and has told his supporters to hide their time, since last year’s coup but on Sunday he also posted a picture of himself wearing red.

“I, like the red shirts, want to see the return of justice and democracy,” Thaksin said on Instagram.

“Whoever wants to win the heart of red-shirted people can do it easily. You don’t have to use a gun ... Just use a kind heart,” he said. Any call by Thaksin to his disgruntled supporters to confront the military would ramp up tension at a time the country is apprehensive about the health of King Bhumibol Adulyadej.

There is no sign Thaksin has any intention of doing that but the military is wary, an analyst said.

“Thaksin’s message hit a chord of the reality which is there has been no attempt to address the grievances of the red shirt movement since the coup,” said Sunai Phasuk, researcher at Human Rights Watch.—Reuters

UN body rules Anwar’s detention in Malaysia is arbitrary

KUALA LUMPUR — The United Nations’ Human Rights Council has ruled that Malaysian opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim is being detained arbitrarily and called for his immediate release, according to information released by his family on Monday.

Anwar’s case was brought to the attention of the Human Rights Council’s Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, which deliberated on the matter in September.

“The deprivation of liberty of Mr Ibrahim is arbitrary,” read to the opinion adopted by the working group, “Taking into account all the circumstances of the case, the working group considers that the adequate remedy would be to release Mr Ibrahim immediately and ensure that his political rights that were removed based on his arbitrary detention be reinstateed.”

The working group arrived at its findings based solely on communications from Anwar’s legal team, as the Malaysian government chose not to respond, despite a request for information from the UN body.

Anwar, 68, is currently serving a five-year jail term after the Federal Court, the country’s highest court, in February upheld a conviction and five-year jail term after the former male aide, Saiful Bukhari Azlan.

He also lost his last chance for freedom when his petition for a royal pardon was rejected in March.

This is his second time in jail. In 1999, the former deputy prime minister was slapped with charges of corruption and sodomy and sentenced to a total of 15 years in jail after being found guilty on both counts.—Kyodo News
Japan's Abe says wants US, South Korea cooperation over South China Sea

SEUL — Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe told South Korea's president on Monday he wanted cooperation between the two countries and the United States in maintaining an open and peaceful South China Sea, a Japanese government spokesman said.

Abe has in the past been critical of China's assertiveness in the South China Sea, through which much of Japan and South Korea's trade and energy supplies pass.

“Japan would like to cooperate with South Korea and the United States at various occasions to preserve the open, free and peaceful sea,” Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Koichi Haguida told reporters after Abe held talks with President Park Geun-hye of South Korea in Seoul.

Haguida did not elaborate, but on Friday, Japanese Defence Minister Gen Nakatani reiterated that Tokyo had no plan to take part in US-led “freedom of navigation patrols” in the South China Sea.

A US warship sailed within 12 nautical miles of one of China's man-made islands in the area last Tuesday in the most significant US challenge yet to territorial limits China claims around the Spratly archipelago.

The voyage triggered an angry rebuke from China and a warning that a minor incident in the area, one of the world's busiest sea lanes, could spark war if the United States did not stop what it called “provocative acts”.

China claims most of the energy-rich South China Sea. The Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Taiwan and Brunei have overlapping claims. Japan has long been mired in a territorial dispute with China over tiny, uninhabited islands in the East China Sea.

Abe told Park the situation in the South China Sea was “a common cause of concern for international society”, Haguida told reporters.

Asked for remarks about the row, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying said that recently “some people” had expressed concerns about the South China Sea, but she did not know why they were worried as there were no problems with freedom of navigation.—Reuters

Iran has begun implementing nuclear accord

TOKYO — Iran’s vice president said Monday his country has begun implementing an accord struck with major powers referring to steps such as reducing international attention is now focused on Iran’s Atomic Energy Organisation, said in an interview with Kyodo News in Tokyo at the residence of the Iranian ambassador to Japan.

Salehi said he was detailing for the first time Iran’s implementation of the deal reached in July, referring to steps such as reducing the number of centrifuges at the Natanz and Fordow plants which was “by the order of the president” of Iran. For the whole deal to be implemented, though, he said it will still “take some time.”

Under the historic agreement between Iran and six major pow- ers — the United States, Britain, China, France, Germany and Russia — economic sanctions will be lifted in stages in return for Iran agreeing to long-term reductions in its nuclear programme.

Based on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, Iran pledged to curb activities such as uranium enrichment and reduce its centrifuges.

Regarding the redesigning and conversion of the Arak heavy water reactor to a light-water reactor, Salehi said, “We will not start right away” with the process as there are still “a number of stages” that will have to take place.

The plan of action states that the redesigned and rebuilt reactor in Arak, western Iran, will not produce weapon-grade plutonium and will be used for medical purposes. The plan, according to the US State Department, is for Iran to slash its number of centrifuges from 19,000 to about 6,000. Iran has been accused of nuclear weapons development but it has claimed that its nuclear programme is for peaceful purposes. As the July accord has diplomatically resolved the issue of Tehran’s nuclear development program after more than a decade of negotiations and the agreement was officially adopted 1 October, international attention is now focused on whether Iran will stick to its promises.

Salehi, who is in Japan to attend events such as the Pugwash Conference on Science and World Affairs being held in Nagasaki, said when he speaks at the conference on Wednesday, he plans to share Iran’s experience in dealing with the nuclear issue and stress how “engagement is a better approach than confrontation.”—Kyodo News

Australia PM scraps knighthood honours, shows republican colours

SYDNEY — Australia’s pro-republic Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull on Monday scrapped knighthoods and dames from the nation’s honours system, less than a year after a furore sparked the redesigned and rebuilt reactor in Arak, western Iran, will not produce weapon-grade plutonium and will be used for medical purposes. The plan, according to the US State Department, is for Iran to slash its number of centrifuges from 19,000 to about 6,000. Iran has been accused of nuclear weapons development but it has claimed that its nuclear programme is for peaceful purposes. As the July accord has diplomatically resolved the issue of Tehran’s nuclear development program after more than a decade of negotiations and the agreement was officially adopted 1 October, international attention is now focused on whether Iran will stick to its promises. Salehi, who is in Japan to attend events such as the Pugwash Conference on Science and World Affairs being held in Nagasaki, said when he speaks at the conference on Wednesday, he plans to share Iran’s experience in dealing with the nuclear issue and stress how “engagement is a better approach than confrontation.”—Kyodo News

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Iran’s Abe shakes hands with South Kore-
an President Park Geun-hye before bilateral summit at the Presidential Blue House in Seoul, South Korea, on 2 November 2015. Photo: Reuters

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Prince Charles and his wife Camilla are expected to receive a warm welcome when they visit Australia and New Zealand next week.—Reuters

Nepali police clear protesters from India border post

KATHMANDU — Nepali police cleared protesters from a key checkpoint on the border with India on Monday in an attempt to end a border blockade that has badly damaged relations with the country’s big southern neighbour.

Nepal has faced an acute fuel crisis for more than a month since protesters in the lowland south, an-
gered that a new constitution fails to reflect their interests, prevented supply trucks from entering from India. Many in Nepal see India’s hand in the protests, although New Delhi denies any role. With the Himalayan nation of 28 mil-

lion still recovering from its worst earthquake on record, the govern-

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Police cleared protesters who were staging a sit-in on a “friend-

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Erdogan says Turks voted for stability, world must respect result

ISTANBUL — Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan said on Monday the nation had voted for stability in a parliamentary election that saw the AK Party he founded win almost 50 percent of the vote, and said the world should respect the result.

The Islamist-rooted AKP swept to an unexpected landslide victory on Sunday, returning Turkey to single-party rule in an outcome that will boost Erdogan’s power but may deepen social divisions.

“The national will manifested itself on 1 November in favour of stability,” Erdogan said in comments to reporters after praying at a mosque in Istanbul.

“Let’s be as one, be brothers and all be Turkey together.”

But in characteristically pugnacious form, he also attacked the global media and its criticism of him.

“Is this your understanding of democracy?” he said. “Now a party with some 50 percent in Turkey has attained power... This should be respected by the whole world, but I have not seen such maturity.”

The AKP took just shy of 50 percent of the votes on Sunday, initial results showed, comfortably enough to control about 316 of the 550 seats in parliament and a far higher margin of victory than even party insiders had expected. Erdogan said earlier the outcome was also a message to Kurdish insurgents in the restive southeast that violence could not coexist with democracy.

Security forces have been battling militants of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) in the country’s predominantly Kurdish southeast in a renewed surge in violence since a ceasefire collapsed in July.—Reuters

Bush relaunches campaign with e-book, tour

WASHINGTON — Battered by weeks of negative headlines, Republican Jeb Bush launches a campaign reboot on Monday with a “Jeb Can Fix It” tour and release of an e-book that reveals a more personal side to a 2016 candidate who has struggled on the public stage.

Bush’s dismal performance at a debate last week in Colorado was an added burden to a candidate once considered the favourite for the nomination and now suffering drooping poll numbers and fund-raising.

In Tampa on Monday, Bush hopes to begin a political comeback. He will give a speech presenting himself as a problem-solving politician who carried out conservative reforms as Florida’s governor from 1999 to 2007.

A campaign aide said the speech will be a “rejection of the competing pessimisms” created in the (President Barack) Obama era in favour of leadership that solves problems.

He will take the message to South Carolina and then on a three-day bus tour of New Hampshire.

The tour coincides with the release of a 730-page e-book, entitled “Reply All.” It is a compilation of many of the email exchanges he had with Floridians during his time as governor.

The emails cover everything from his drive for tax cuts and education reform in Florida to dealing with hurricanes.

Beyond the work issues, there was plenty of the comical, such as when a 9-year-old girl wrote to tell him she did not like her piano lessons because “my teacher smells of dead alligators.” She wanted to know if Jeb and brother George had taken piano while growing up.

“Yes, I had piano lessons,” Bush emailed her. “It was tough and I didn’t enjoy it. In fact, I wasn’t that good at it. But you know what? It gave me discipline which helped me as an adult.”

Another writer wanted to know how the bilingual Bush became so fluent in Spanish.

“I learned Spanish by marrying a Mexican girl, by living in Venezuela and by taking Spanish courses in school. The first two were the most important,” Bush replied.

Bush makes clear in a 2006 exchange with a reporter his support for comprehensive immigration reform, an issue that has roiled the Republican race this year as billionaire Donald Trump has pledged to build a wall along the US-Mexican border and deport 11 million illegal immigrants.

Bush said a more secure border is needed “but the notion that we would felonize folks that have been here and that are contributing to our progress is just plain wrong.”—Reuters

Four refugees drown, six missing off Greece-coastguard

ATHENS — Four refugees drowned and another six were missing off the Greek island of Farmakonisi after their boat sank, the Greek coastguard said on Monday.

Four people were rescued, the coastguard said in a statement. The vessel the migrants were travelling on sank in an unknown location north of the island, it said.

Eleven people, including six infants, drowned on Sunday when their boat capsized off the island of Samos, trapping them in the cabin. The toll from drowning among thousands of refugees making the short but dangerous crossing from Turkey to Greece’s outlying eastern islands has risen in recent weeks from the onset of colder weather. There were near-gale force winds blowing in the Aegean at the weekend.—Reuters

Six suspected members of Basque group ETA go on trial in France

PARIS — Six suspected members of the Basque separatist group ETA go on trial in France on Monday over the killing of a policeman in a shootout in the eastern suburbs of Paris in March 2010, a judicial source said.

Sergeant Jean-Serge Nerin was killed when shooting broke out between police and ETA members after the armed group tried to steal cars from a used car store and locked up the salesman.

It was the last killing attributed to ETA before it called a unilateral ceasefire in 2011 and pledged to turn in its weapons.

Investigators believe up to nine activists were involved in the incident, but only six were identified. One was arrested at the scene, the others managed to escape but were arrested between May 2010 and July 2015.

Only two, Xavier Goyenexea Iraragi and Mikel Kahikoita Carrera Sarobe, have been charged with the policeman’s murder. The others are charged with various crimes, including weapons theft and kidnapping. The trial is expected to continue until 11 December. ETA was formed in the late 1950s during the dictatorship of Francisco Franco and aimed at establishing an independent Basque state in northern Spain and southern France. The group killed more than 800 people over several decades, according to the Spanish government. ETA has been severely weakened in recent years after hundreds of its members were arrested and some of its weapons seized.—Reuters
First bodies delivered to Russia after Egypt plane crash

ST PETERSBURG — The first bodies from a plane crash in Egypt in which all 224 passengers, most of them Russians, died over the weekend arrived in St Petersburg early on Monday morning aboard a Russian government plane.

The crashed Airbus A321 plane, operated by Russian airline Kogalymavia, was carrying holidaymakers from the Red Sea resort of Sharm el-Sheikh to St Petersburg when it crashed in the Sinai Peninsula on Saturday morning.

Russian officials have said the plane likely broke up in mid-air but have stressed that it is too early to draw conclusions from this. President Vladimir Putin declared Sunday a national day of mourning.

Russian news agencies reported that a first IL-76 Emergency Situations Ministry plane flew into St Petersburg’s Pulkovo Airport a little before 6 a.m. local time, carrying 144 bodies.

The ministry said the next plane carrying bodies would leave Cairo on Monday evening for St Petersburg. On arrival, the first bodies were loaded onto stretchers and carried into a large white lorry waiting on the runway at Pulkovo Airport.

A Reuters photographer then saw the white lorry leaving the airport, escorted by police cars. It was heading for a St Petersburg morgue, where the bodies were to be identified. The identification process was meant to start around 11 a.m. local time.

At Pulkovo Airport on Sunday, grieving Russians piled flowers high in memory of their dead compatriots. Mourners in Moscow arranged candles to spell out 7K-9268, the number of the flight that crashed.

Russia and other former Soviet republics have poor air safety records, notably on domestic flights. Some accidents have been blamed on the use of ageing aircraft, but industry experts point to other problems, such as poor crew training and lax government controls.

St Petersburg authorities have decided that official mourning events will last until Tuesday in Russia’s second city.—Reuters

Iraq parliament bars government from passing reforms unilaterally, in blow to PM Abadi

CAIRO — Iraq’s parliament voted on Monday to bar the government from passing key reforms without its approval in an effort to restrict Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi, parliamentarians said.

The chamber took the step after Abadi unilaterally passed reforms in August it considered a violation of the constitution such as sacking the vice presidents and deputy prime ministers and cutting the salaries of government employees.

“What we have warned against in our letter to Abadi last week of taking unilateral reforms now came to an end. Under this resolution no more absolute authorities for the prime minister,” an MP, who asked to remain anonymous, told Reuters.

Last week more than 60 members of Iraq’s ruling State of Law coalition threatened to withdraw parliamentary support for Abadi’s reforms if he does not respond to their demands for wider consultation. Growing political tensions could undermine efforts to tackle an economic crisis and form a united front against Islamic State militants, who pose the biggest security threat to Iraq since a US-led invasion that toppled Saddam Hussein in 2003. Abadi announced a reform campaign in August after protests erupted over graft and poor water and electricity services in Iraq, a leading OPEC oil producer.

The steps are intended to scrap senior political offices that have become a vehicle for patronage and for some of the most powerful people in Iraq and combat incompetence which has undermined the battle against militancy.

Some of the measures have been implemented, while others appear to have stalled. Iraq’s three vice presidents, whose positions were to be cut, remain in place.—Reuters

Rebels free kidnapped workers in South Sudan, no sign of stolen fuel

GENEVA — South Sudanese rebels have released 13 contractors a week after kidnapping them and seizing the fuel barge they were taking to a UN base in South Sudan, the United Nations said.

The UN mission in the world’s youngest country said it sent helicopters to pick up the South Sudanese workers on Sunday, and recovered the barge — but not the $5,000 litres of fuel it was carrying.

“This release was the result of a week-long dialogue...with members of the opposition at all levels,” Shantial Persaud, a spokeswoman for the UN mission, said on Monday.—Reuters

Al Qaeda chief urges militant unity against Russia in Syria

CAIRO — Al Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri called on Muslims to band together to confront the threat from the West and Russia in Syria and Iraq, the latest recording suggesting greater unity between al Qaeda and Islamic State.

“The Americans, Russians, Iranians, Alawites, and Hezbollah are coordinating their fight against us — are we not capable of stopping the fighting amongst ourselves so we can direct all our efforts against them?” Zawahiri said in an audio recording released on the Internet on Sunday.

It was not clear when the recording was made but references to Russian aggression suggest it was made after Russia, an ally of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, launched air raids against opposition groups and Islamic State in Syria on 30 September.

In a recording released in September, Zawahiri dismissed Islamic State and its leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi as illegitimate but said his followers would join them in fighting the Western-led coalition in Iraq and Syria if possible. “My mujahideen brothers in all places and of all groups ... we face aggression from America, Europe, and Russia ... so it’s up to us to stand together as one from East Turkestan to Morocco,” Zawahiri said. Islamic State, the ultra-hardline group that controls large parts of Iraq and Syria, has called for a holy war against both Russia and the United States in response to air strikes on its fighters in Syria.

Any cooperation between al Qaeda and Islamic State would further complicate efforts to stabilise the Middle East, where militant groups have gained influence and escalated attacks since the Arab uprisings of 2011 topped autocrats who had contained them.—Reuters

Zanzibar opposition to meet army chief over political crisis

DAR ES SALAAM — The main opposition leader in Tanzania’s semi-autonomous Zanzibar archipelago will meet the country’s army chief to discuss the political situation in the islands, amid unrest after a disputed election.

Tanzania held national elections on 25 October, which included a vote for local authorities in Zanzibar, traditionally a bastion of opposition to the central government.

But Zanzibar’s election commission annulled the vote for the island’s president, citing “gross violations”. The main opposition Civic United Front (CUF) rejected the move, saying it had won that poll.

Two bombs exploded minutes apart in Zanzibar on Saturday without causing casualties.

In a statement late on Sunday, Tanzanian President Jakaya Kikwete’s office said the president had ordered talks between CUF leaders and the Chief of Defence Forces, General Davis Mwamumuya, following a request from the opposition party.

It is unclear what opposition leaders plan to discuss with the army chief in the meeting scheduled for this week.

Kikwete has also instructed the country’s police chief to investigate opposition complaints against the conduct of policemen during the elections.

The presidency dismissed opposition claims that Kikwete had refused to meet with CUF’s presidential candidate in Zanzibar, Seif Sharrif Hamad, to discuss the situation on the islands.

“President Kikwete would like to express his readiness to do whatever is in his powers to regularise the situation in Zanzibar,” the presidency added in a statement.—Reuters
The Impact of watching Violent Movies and playing Violent Games

Tommy Pauk

Movies, known as motion pictures and computer games are produced for pastime, pleasure and entertainment. Various kinds of violence in the electronic games are produced with the help of modern technology. Special effects and some backdrops are created by computer in film industry as well. Nowadays, youngsters are so addicted to violent games and violent movies. The stories of the violent movies and games portray homicide, cruel killings, vendetta, kidnap, act of terrorism, sexual assaults and serial killings and the people or characters in the stories neglect the law enforcement blatantly. The scenes and stories are almost horrific and violent from the beginning to end of the story. Amid the occurrences of racial conflicts and religious conflicts in some western countries and in Middle East countries, the violent movies escalate the conflicts rapidly. Surprisingly, the acts of cruelty, brutality or violence in the regions in the world are identical to the stories in the violent movies. It seems that the terrorists’ horrendous and atrocious acts of brutality may be connected to the content of violent movies. The violent movies produce negative impacts to the viewers especially the youngsters.

The negative effects of the violent movies are that some people do not hesitate to kill other people when conflict or dispute arises and do not obey the law in the society. The violent T.V games and violent movies also influence the youngsters and even the emotions of children of under 10 year olds. Evidently, in America, school violence is a great panic for the parents concerned as some school children committed killing spree or shooting at class-rooms, frequently attributing to their parents’ guns. These miserable incidents frequently occur in some states of America. It is learned that the impact of watching violent movies and playing violent games is greater in western countries than in eastern counties.

The kids and adolescents in every society across the world prefer to watch violent movies and to play violent games rather than other kinds of movies and games. This situation is still a mystery. Why do they enjoy watching violent movies rather than non-violent movies?

In Myanmar, school children also like to play games on T.V or computer or smart phone. Of the school children, school boys are more addicted to games than the school girls. After doing their homework, Myanmar school boys play games on any available electronic devices at home. The parents of Myanmar parents cannot limit the duration of playing games as their offspring are extremely addicted to games. Sometimes, the children even fail to do their homework and the excessive game-playing does affect their study. Once the games are exposed to video games, they will have passion for playing video games. Mostly, the children play violent games which are captivating with unusual characters and special effects. Not only the graphic and realistic stories of the games, but also the graphic descriptions of characters are attractive and appealing to the players. During summer vacation in Myanmar, parents usually send their children to take basic computer course in urban areas. As soon as the children obtain the knowledge of how-to-operate-computer, they start playing computer games, installed in it. Myanmar adolescents tend to play modern games and addicted to violent games. They play a video game at least once per day, either on a large console, tablet computer or smart phone, spending about three hours more per day. Normally, they play at home but they like to sit and play in video games center or shops. While staying at home, they hardly ever help their parents in household tasks. Normally, they always stick to playing video games especially violent games. Some of the names of popular violent games are “Counter strike”, “Assassins”, “Grand Theft Auto”, “Halo” and “Mortal Kombat”, etc. An exposure to games with violent content may turn ordinary children and adolescents into violent people in the real world. Due to influence of violent games, the US has the highest homicide rate in the world. While attending classes at school, the students may accidentally turn their children’s tablets, smart phones and other electronic devices and returns them to the school children when the school is over. Laptop computer is allowed to bring into the classrooms and logical studies is done. Consequently, the teachers have to prohibit playing games in the classroom. Otherwise, the school children might use these electronic devices for playing games and disturb the teachers who teach in the classroom.

Most of the settings and themes of the violent games are created in battle fields or killing fields or traps between two or more groups using sophisticated weapons or normal weapons or magical power etc. The electronic games are created by writers, computer specialists, artists and graphic designers. We recognize their innovation and their art of creation of non-violent stories, but such a violent type of violent movies they have written or drawn can mislead to the youngsters.

The graphics of non-violent games are rather amazing and the stories are amusing, fantastic, appealing and entertaining to all of us regardless of age. We, the elders cannot blame and obstruct our children to play modern games played on T.V or on computer for enjoyment. Actually, playing these games can make them more concentrated to their environments—school and friends. The adolescents, certain unwise adults and children are victimized by the contents, acts and the themes of the violent movies produced especially from the western countries.

Nobody can say that the violent movies and games are harmless to the viewers or players in the world. Isn’t it? Why don’t governments of different countries make laws to prohibit playing violent games? The violent movies can make stronger impact to their environment than what others accuse that person of. Violence is the easiest way to express oneself. Special care should be taken before saying anything. The pride and reputation of the story. Amid the occurrences of killings and the people or characters in the violent games, the US has the highest homicide rate in the world. While attending classes at school, the school children may happen to be violent or inhumane torture or cold blooded murder or sexual assaults. People like to watch violent movies because they are captivating with unusual stories or strange stories. Psychologists say that watching violent movies really does make people more aggressive, but only if they have an abrasive personality to start with.” Those who watch violent movies a lot can turn to be aggressive and unkind persons as their minds are influenced by the content of violent movies.

According to The Lord Buddha’s analysis, naturally a man has two types of minds—the mind which takes delight in good deeds or meritorious deeds and the mind which is obsessed by bad deeds. In secular world, man is usually urged or stimulated to commit sins or breed cruel or unkind or aggressive or violent deeds. In the meantime, some people watch a lot of violent movies and their minds get obsessed with atrocious acts, seen on the screen. Then these people do not hesitate to commit brutal and cruel killings or theft or sexual assaults or misdeeds in real world. Moreover, the children who watch violent movies are prone to aggression and this can make them impact to their environment—school and friends. The adolescents, certain unwise adults and children are victimized by the contents, acts and the themes of the violent movies produced especially from the western countries.

About the author

Tommy Pauk, the pseudonym of U Thinn Swe, who is B.A (English) and (Registered Law) R.L. I. degrees holder. He has English Teaching experience at Yangon University English Department and Teachers College in Yangon, and now is working as freelance writer and English Teacher cum Translator/Interpreter for foreign firms.

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New Meiktila Lake bridge to open in February 2016

SPECIAL Bridge Construction Group No. 4 has been assigned to the construction of a second 600-foot bridge across Meiktila Lake with a budget of K2 billion for the 2015-16 fiscal year, according to superintendent engineer U Thein Aung of the Department of Bridges under the Ministry of Construction.

He said the construction will start on 9 November, and a plan has been set to complete the bridge in February next year.

“The bridge will be 600 feet long and 24 feet wide and flanked by three-foot pedestrian walkways on either side. The western approach road will be constructed by the Department of Highways. Both bridge and road will be completed in March 2016,” the superintendent engineer said.

—Chan Thar (Meiktila)

Muse IPRD photographers briefed elections

THE Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development allocated a budget for the 2015-16 fiscal year for rural development tasks in Maukmei Township, Shan State.

Engineers from the township’s Department of Highways are repairing two 50-foot bridges, one 35-foot bridge, one 30-foot bridge and one 20-foot bridge on the Maukmei-Namluk road.

Township Administrator U Tin Maung Soe, who chairs the Township Management Committee, and other officials inspected the bridge repairs and encouraged workers to finish on time.—Sai Myo Thant (IPRD)

Election police course concludes

AN police course for special police for the election period concluded at the hall of the Border Area and National Races Development School in Dawei, Taninthayi Region, on 31 October.

The commander of the township’s police force, Police Major Sein Dway, said in his address that additional police will be assigned to carry out security tasks at polling stations during the election period. The head of the Dawei Police Station Police Captain Myo Myint Oo announced the assignments of the police, while the commander presented a prize to outstanding trainee Han Nyunt. A total of 87 trainees attended the additional police course, which ran from 20 to 31 October.

—Po Shwe Thun (Dawei)

Department of Highways upgrades inter-township road

THE Sagaing Region government allotted K378.391 million to upgrade a two-mile road section on the Kyunhla-Chatt Thin-Kawlin road in Kawlin Township.

The Department of Highways is placing asphalt on the 18-foot-wide road section from mile posts 35/6 to 38/6.

The department is also building a 60-foot Bailey bridge near the Daungmyu Creek bridge between mile posts 33/7 and 34/7 with a budget of K29.75 million, provided by the regional government.

Moreover, the department also built a 40-foot earthen embankment and paved a one-mile road section with a budget of about K200 million.

Upon completion, the upgraded roads will create smooth transport access for the local people from Kyunhla, Kanbalu and Kawlin townships.

—Ko Ko Maung (Kawlin)
EU proposes savings bank exemption from deposit guarantee scheme

FRANKFURT — European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker has proposed that savings banks and cooperative banks be made exempt from a European guarantee for bank deposits, a German newspaper reported.

The proposal may help to win German approval for such a system, which is highly controversial in the country because it is seen as a scheme under which money to guarantee German deposits could be used to rescue savers elsewhere.

“The cooperative banks and savings banks will not be touched by the deposit guarantee,” Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung quoted Juncker as saying at an event in Germany. Juncker told the newspaper that it was “people who did not follow the virtues of a social market economy” who caused the financial crisis and cooperative banks and savings banks were not to blame.

The commission intends to set up a European guarantee for bank deposits based on a reinsurance system for national schemes.

EU states are already obliged to protect bank deposits up to 100,000 euros, but with several credit institutions undergoing there are concerns that this guarantee may not be enough in some states.

The reinsurance system will guarantee national deposit protection schemes and the Commission plans to set out details in a legislative proposal before the end of the year.

The joint scheme would be the third and final pillar of the European banking union project, which has resulted in the setting up of a common supervisory body for banks and a shared resolution mechanism for troubled credit institutions. —Reuters

Asian shares slide as soft China surveys, US data sap risk appetite

TOKYO — Asian stocks slid to their lowest level in nearly three weeks on Monday, as profit taking set in after soft Chinese factory surveys and US consumer spending data raised concerns over the global economic outlook.

MSCI’s broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan fell as much as 0.7 percent, hitting its lowest level since Oct 14. Tokyo’s Nikkei retreated 2.1 percent.

European shares are expected to open weaker, with spread-betters looking for Germany’s DAX to fall 0.8 percent, France’s CAC 40 to drop 0.9 percent, and FTSE to start 0.6 percent down.

Mainland China markets fell, with the main Shanghai index falling 1.2 percent, hurt by the factory survey results and the government’s crackdown on illegal futures trading.

China’s factory activity fell for an eighth straight month in October, the Caixin purchasing manager’s index (PMI) showed, fuelling fears the economy may still be losing momentum in the fourth quarter despite a raft of stimulus measures.

The Caixin figures followed Sunday’s official survey, which showed activity in China’s manufacturing sector unexpectedly contracted in October for a third straight month.

On Friday, in the United States, data showed consumer spending in September recorded its smallest gain in eight months as personal income barely rose, suggesting some cooling in domestic demand after recent hefty increases.

“When the Fed says it is still considering a rate hike in December, there’s limited room for share prices to rise further,” said Ayako Sera, senior market economist at Sumitomo Mitsui Trust Bank.

The dollar lost 0.2 percent to 120.32 yen as the fall in Tokyo shares cooled risk appetite and favoured the safe-haven Japanese currency.

With most central banks except the US Federal Reserve committed to an easing bias, focus now falls on this week’s run of US data, including the all-important non-farm payrolls due on Friday, and how they could affect the Fed’s stance on hiking interest rates.

The Fed did not hike rates last month but caused a stir by leaving the door open for a hike in December, raising the divergence in monetary policies between the Fed and other central banks such as the European Central Bank and the BOJ.

“US economic data bear significance for the December FOMC decision and could result in higher FX and rate volatility in the coming weeks,” strategists at Barclays wrote.

“The October FOMC statement was somewhat more hawkish than our expectations, and with the assessment on global risk having been removed, we think there is a clear attempt by the FOMC to keep a December hike on the table.”

The euro extended its Friday gains, rising 0.3 percent to $1.0808.

By far the biggest winner in the currency market was the Turkish lira, which soared 5.6 percent to 3-month high of 2.758 lira per dollar after the ruling AK Party swept to an unexpected election victory on Sunday.

The results will return the country to single-party rule after the election in June, but could sharpen social divisions.

In commodities, crude oil prices slipped, unable to sustain gains made on Friday on the latest decline in the US oil rig count. US output may be declining but global supplies of crude and refined oil products continue to grow, weighing down the market.

US crude was down 0.5 percent at $46.36 a barrel. Spot gold touched a 4-week low of $1,134.60 an ounce, hurt by lingering worries of a potential rate hike by the Fed. Higher interest rates tend to diminish the appeal of non-yielding bullion. —Reuters

Walking Chinese robot breaks Guinness world record

CHONGQING — A quadruped robot in the southwestern muni-
ciﬁcity of Chongqing walked its way on to the pages of the Guinness World Records book on Sunday.

“Xinghua No. 1” was developed by Li Qingdu, a profes-
sor with the college of automa-
tion under the Chongqing University of Post and Tele-
communications. Starting on 24 Octo-
ber, it took 340,000 con-
tinuous steps over 54 hours cov-
ing a distance of 134.03 km and used 0.8 kwh of power.

The previous record was set by Ranger, a quadruped ro-
bot developed by Cornell Uni-
versity in America, which walked 65 km in 30 hours con-
suming 0.5 kwh.

Li and his team began de-
veloping the robot in November 2014.

The ﬁrst prototype was produced in January

Tech firms on alert as US top court takes up class action case

WASHINGTON — The US Supreme Court will consider on Monday whether to nip in the bud a class action lawsuit against online search service Spokeo Inc, a case closely watched by Silicon Valley companies that face similar claims.

If the court rules for Pasadena, California-based Spokeo and ﬁnds that a consumer law-
suit cannot proceed when the plaintiff cannot show he is being harmed, it could curtail a recent wave of class action cases against online companies.

Google Inc, Facebook Inc, eBay Inc and Yahoo Inc ﬁled court papers backing Spokeo, a people search website.

If similar cases are allowed to proceed against other companies, any user of their services who alleges a legal violation based on a technical viola-
tion of a federal statute could “pursue a multi-billion dollar statutory damages claim despite the lack of injury,” the brief said.

The case gives the conserv-
aving-leaning Supreme Court another chance to limit class ac-
tion litigation as it has in a se-
ries of rulings including a major 2011 victory for Wal Mart Stores Inc.

“While we think this case pre-
sents the opportunity … to close the door on non-injury class ac-
sions,” said Jason Matthes, Spokeo’s general counsel.

Facebook, Google and Ya-
hoo have all faced similar law-
suits over violations of different federal laws. As many online companies have millions of users, a case can quickly snowball into a multimillion dollar class action.

Without class action status, a case involving an individual plaintiff presents a much smaller risk to a company.

Kate Todd, an attorney with the US Chamber of Com-
mence’s legal arm, called the Spokeo dispute an example of plaintiffs’ lawyers “pushing the boundaries” of the types of cases that can be pursued.

In the Spokeo case, plain-
tiff Thomas Robins sued in Cal-
ifornia on behalf of himself and a potential class under the Fair Credit Reporting Act, which re-
quires consumer reporting agencies to provide correct in-
formation. There is a maximum $1,000 penalty per violation.

Robins, who was unem-
ployed when he sued in 2010, had claimed his Spokeo entry had damaged his job-seeking prospects because it contained inaccurate information. The en-
try, for example, said Robins has a graduate degree, which he called incorrect.

“In today’s age, consumers are increasingly concerned about their online reputation,’’ said Robins’ attorney, Jay Edel-
son, whose ﬁrm specializes in suing tech companies for priva-
cy violations.

The high court is currently considering two other class ac-
tion cases. One involving claims against advertising ﬁrm
Campbell-Ewald Co was ar-
gued last month.

The other, concerning a lawsuit against food producer
Tyson Foods Inc, will be argued on 10 November.—Reuters

Businessmen look at their mobile phones in front of an electronic stock quotation board outside a brokerage in Tokyo, Japan. PHOTO: REUTERS

““We can apply the technol-
y and processes involved to a wide range of robotic devices, to make them more efﬁcient, durable and reliable. In the future we could be able to use these robots for dangerous or remote tasks,” Li said.—Xinhua
Drugged up: GSK, Roche and Sanofi to set out their stalls

LONDON — Three of Europe’s top drugmakers — GlaxoSmithKline, Roche and Sanofi — are expected to get trips at investor days this week at high-profile presentations designed to show they can overcome daunting market threats.

The unusual confluence of investor days comes at a testing time for the $1 trillion-a-year global drugs industry, as deal-making sweeps a sector facing mounting competitive pressures.

Chief executives at the three companies face different challenges, but they all have a point to prove.

GSK’s Andrew Witty and Sanofi’s new boss Olivier Brandicourt both need to demonstrate recovery potential, after recent disappointments, while Roche’s Severin Schwan must show he can withstand future cut-price competition to his group’s top biotech drugs. “Roche probably has the easiest job, since we know they have good data with new multiple sclerosis (MS) and oncology drugs, whereas GSK and Sanofi have quite a lot to prove,” Berenberg Bank analyst Alstair Campbell said.

Roche’s three most anticipated drugs — ocrelizumab for MS, atezolizumab for cancer and ACE-910 for haemophilia — are together expected to rake in annual sales of some $5 billion by 2020, according to consensus forecasts from Thomson Reuters Cortellis, which is well above rivals.

Roche is particularly bullish on ocrelizumab, after it succeeded in the hard-to-treat progressive form of MS and set a new benchmark for treating relapsing disease.

Like its Swiss rival, GSK is also seeking to showcase its research and development (R&D) prowess at its first R&D event in more than a decade. But after past setbacks in clinical trials, investor expectations are relatively low.

Much of the focus is expected to be on GSK’s experimental shingles vaccine Shingrix, which will be released on the final day of the conference. GSK’s pipeline to see whether the company’s R&D can deliver the well-preserved partial skull and skeleton of a giant monkey that lived 11.6 million years ago in Spain is shedding new light on the evolutionary history of modern apes.

Scientists on Thursday announced the discovery in Catalonia of fossil remains of a small, fruit-eating female ape that lived in a warm, wet forest region teeming with animals including elephant relatives, rhinos and saber-toothed predators.

The well-preserved partial skull and skeleton of a giant monkey that lived 11.6 million years ago in Spain is shedding new light on the evolutionary history of modern apes.

Scientists on Thursday announced the discovery in Catalonia of fossil remains of a small, fruit-eating female ape that lived in a warm, wet forest region teeming with animals including elephant relatives, rhinos and saber-toothed predators. They gave the ape, weighing 9.1 pounds (4.5 kg), the scientific name Pliobates cataloniae and the nickname “Laia.” “There is no living primate like Pliobates, which exhibits a unique combination of modern ape-like features with other, more primitive ones,” said paleontologist David Alba of the Catalan Institute of Paleontology near Barcelona.

“We can imagine a small ape, like the smallest living gibbons, with a gibbon-like appearance regarding the craniofacial proportions: less elongated arms and hands.”

Int’l confab of scientists begins in Nagasaki to seek nuke abolition

NAGASAKI — Scientists and nuclear experts from around the world gathered in southwestern Japan on Sunday to push for the abolition of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, with this year marking the 70th anniversary of the US atomic bombings of Japanese cities.

Nagasaki, one of the two cities devastated by an atomic bomb at the end of World War II, is hosting for the first time the Pugwash Conference on Science and World Affairs, which originated from calls for such a meeting by eminent scientists such as Albert Einstein about 60 years ago.

With the momentum toward nuclear disarmament seen to have suffered a setback after a UN conference on the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty ended in failure in May, organisers hope once again to call attention to the inhuman nature of nuclear arms and encourage dialogue in a world plagued with conflicts.

The five-day international conference, which is the 61st of its kind, brings together nearly 200 participants from about 40 countries, including US and Russian officials and the head of Iran’s Atomic Energy Organization, Ali Akbar Salehi, according to the organisers.

On Sunday morning, participants met at the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum with Yoshio Yamawaki, 81, an atomic bomb survivor, to hear firsthand about the horrors of nuclear weapons.

Topics to be discussed at the conference include the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons, paths toward a world free of nuclear weapons and risks involved in the civilian use of nuclear energy in light of Japan’s Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant disaster triggered by a huge earthquake and tsunami in March 2011. A declaration will be released on the final day of the event. Some sessions are open to the public, including a speech by Osamu Shimomura, who won the Nobel Prize in chemistry in 2008. He was in a city adjacent to Nagasaki when the atomic bomb was dropped.—Kyodo News

Fossil unearthed in Spain sheds light on ape evolution

WASHINGTON — The well-preserved partial skull and skeleton of a giant monkey that lived 11.6 million years ago in Spain is shedding new light on the evolutionary history of modern apes.

Scientists on Thursday announced the discovery in Catalonia of fossil remains of a small, fruit-eating female ape that lived in a warm, wet forest region teeming with animals including elephant relatives, rhinos and saber-toothed predators.

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“We can imagine a small ape, like the smallest living gibbons, with a gibbon-like appearance regarding the craniofacial proportions: less elongated arms and hands.”
South Korea, US agree not to tolerate North Korean provocations

SEOUL — US Defence Secretary Ashton Carter and South Korean Defence Minister Han Min Koo agreed in annual security talks held here Monday not to tolerate any further North Korean aggression or military provocations.

“The minister and the secretary reaffirmed that any North Korean aggression or military provocation is not to be tolerated and that the ROK and the United States would work shoulder to shoulder to demonstrate our combined resolve,” the two sides said in a joint statement issued after the 47th Security Consultative Meeting.

They cited such incidents as the North Korean warship Cheonan and the artillery shelling of Yeonpyeong Island in 2010, North Korea’s long-range missile launches in 2012, its nuclear test in February 2007, but it was subsequently postponed several times, “at an appropriate time and in a stable manner,” implying it could happen after the South becomes better prepared to counter the North’s military threat. The transfer was originally scheduled to take place in 2007, but it was subsequent-ly postponed until sometime after 2020, taking into ac-count North Korea’s growing military threat including its nuclear weapon tests and missile launches.

During peacetime, South Korea is in charge of its own forces. Under the current arrangement, however, US commanders would take command of all US and South Korean troops on the Korean Peninsula in the event of war. North Korea, Carter and Han agreed to bolster US-South Korean collaboration to better cope with growing threats in space and cyber-sphere, as well as to promote the security of critical infra-structure including information and space systems.

The US defence secre-tary said his visit to the DMZ on Sunday made him realise North Korea is an “up-close, dangerous and continuing threat.” As for the escalating tensions in the South China Sea, Carter reiterated his country’s stance the disputes be resolved peacefully. “We don’t take sides in the mar-itime disputes. But we do staunchly stand on the side of resolving them peacefully,” he said. Tensions between the United States and China have spiked af-ter a US-guided missile de-stroyer moved through Bei-jing-chained waters in the South China Sea last week, triggering a sharp reaction from China.

US Navy's warship came to the loss of propulsion likely as it was unable to steer course on the sea floor. It preserves the last contact on the sea floor. The wreckage consistent with the ship sank. Tote has said 28 Americans and five Britons were aboard. The wreck site is now beyond the reach of divers, a decision that has baffled shipping experts.

The El Faro, a tugboat, appeared to be a collision that has been postulated as part of an investigation into its loss, according to the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB). If human remains are found only one body. The crew included 28 Americans and five Poles.

It was unclear on Sun-day what plans were in place to recover remains of the crew. The wreck site is at a depth of nearly 3 miles beneath the surface, far be-yond the reach of divers, Knudson said.

A week-long search and rescue mission launched by the US Coast Guard after the ship went missing found only one body.

Some relatives of the crew complained that not enough was being done to find their loved ones after the Coast Guard called off its search.

“We still don’t have any closure. I feel it’s not really any better until they find some bodies,” Schmio-Hill, 33, of Jacksonville, said on Sunday. Hill is a cousin of Roosevelt Clark, a veteran seaman who was aboard the El Faro.

The NTSB said in a statement on Saturday that wreckage consistent with the missing 790-foot (241 metres) cargo ship was found using sonar equip-ment, lying up right and in-tact on the sea floor.

The submersible, known as CURV-21, is equipped with a video cam-era and could be launched as early as Sunday, the NTSB said.

The voyage data re- corded attached to the aft of the ship’s bridge is de-signed to be removable by a remotely controlled device, according to shipping experts. It preserves the last 12 hours of engine ordered and communications from the bridge and could provide vital clues as to why the ship sank. Tote has said the loss of propulsion likely resulted in the ship sinking as it was unable to steer clear of high seas whipped up by Joaquin.—Reuters
Beijing — China must continue to enforce its one-child policy until new rules allowing all couples to have two children go into effect, the top family planning body said.

The ruling Communist Party said last week that Beijing would loosen its decades-old one-child policy. The plan for the change must be approved by the rubber-stamp parliament during its annual session in March.

Several parents interviewed by Reuters were lukewarm about the idea of having a second child after the new policy was announced last week.

But e-commerce giant Alibaba Group Holding Ltd, which runs China’s most popular online shopping websites and collects reams of data about consumers, said searches for books about conception and pregnancy leapt 100-times the day after the announcement and continued to grow.

The online statement by the National Health and Family Planning Commission contradicts a remark by a family planning official in the southern province of Hunan, who said last week that couples currently pregnant with a second child will not be punished, according to the Hunan Daily newspaper.

“After the announcement, all localities and departments must seriously implement the population and family planning laws and regulations currently in effect, maintain good order for births and must not act of their own accord,” an unnamed official with the commission said in the statement. About 90 million families may qualify for the new one-child policy, which would help raise the population to an estimated 1.45 billion by 2030, the planning commission has said. China, the world’s most populous nation, had 1.37 billion people at the end of last year.

For decades, China harshly implemented the one-child policy, leading to forced abortions and infanticides across the country.

Beijing loosened the policy in late 2013, allowing couples to have a second child where one parent was an only child, but as of June, only 1.5 million of the 11 million eligible couples had applied to expand their families, the official Xinhua news agency has reported.

In a report on one of its websites on Saturday, Alibaba highlighted data showing that people with relatively high incomes in small cities were most interested in books about conceiving babies while the lowest level of interest came from “first tier” cities, which include Beijing and Shanghai. It did not say how many searches overall there had been.—Reuters

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China says one-child policy stays in effect for now

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Beluga whales kiss their trainers during a performance at a aquarium in Harbin, Heilongjiang Province, China, on 1 November 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

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Okinawa files complaint against state overruling of US base decision

TOKYO — The Okinawa government on Monday filed a complaint against the state’s decision to overrule the local authority’s attempt to block landfill work for the relocation of a US military facility in the southern island prefecture.

The local government filed the complaint with a third-party panel tasked with handling disputes between the central and local governments, seeking to restore Okinawa Governor Takeshi Onaga’s revocation of his predecessor’s approval for the work related to the relocation of the US Marine Corps Air Station Futenma within the prefecture.

The Okinawa government plans to file a lawsuit if it is not satisfied with the decision of the third-party panel, the Central and Local Government Dispute Management Council. The state is proceeding with formerly invalidating Onaga’s revocation and is also planning to file a lawsuit.

Political wrangling has escalated since Onaga revoked on 13 October the approval for the landfill work granted by former Governor Hirokazu Nakaima, prompting land minister Keiichi Ishii last Tuesday to suspend the revocation.

The state launched the controversial landfill work Thursday at the base relocation site in the Henoko area of Nago, northern Okinawa.

The local government and many residents are opposed to the relocation plan and want the Marine base moved outside of Okinawa to reduce the burden on the prefecture from hosting the bulk of US forces in Japan.

Japan and the United States, which struck an accord in 1996 on the return of the Futenma site to Japanese control, say the existing relocation plan is the “only solution” for removing the dangers posed by the air station, currently located in the densely populated city of Ginowan, without undermining the deterrence of the two countries’ alliance in East Asia.—Kyodo News

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Powerful cyclone kills three on Yemeni island, heads for Queda-run city

ADEN — A rare tropical cyclone packing hurricane-force winds lashed the Yemeni island of Socotra on Monday, killing three people and injuring dozens, residents and officials said, as it headed for an Al Qaeda-controlled town on the mainland.

Amateur pictures and videos on social media, which could not be immediately verified, showed torrents of water washing through the provincial capital Hadibu’s streets.

“Three people were killed, around 100 have been injured and hundreds of families were forced to leave their homes in coastal regions for the mountains,” said a local official, without elaborating on the causes of death.

Situated in the Arabian Sea and slightly larger than Majorca or Rhode Island, isolated Socotra is home to hundreds of exotic plant species found nowhere else on earth. Its around 50,000 residents speak their own language.

Also cut off politically and under threat from the war, the island is known for the nearly 200 species found nowhere else on earth. Its around 50,000 residents speak their own language.

The centre projected the cyclone would make landfall on the mainland just west of the restive port city of Mukalla, which has been run by a tribal council and Al Qaeda militants since the army and government institutions withdrew in April.

Residents there worried that the power vacuum would mean no authorities were in a position to deal with the storm damage.

“The sea water level has risen by 9 meters and has destroyed the Mukalla seafront,” said resident Muhammad Ba Zuhair.—Reuters
Jennifer Lawrence says Hollywood pay gap complaint was self-critical

LOS ANGELES — Oscar-winning actress Jennifer Lawrence said on Saturday that her recent critique of the gender pay gap in Hollywood raised as many questions about herself, and her willingness to be assertive, as it did about bias in the US film industry.

“It was more of how did my mentality get in my own way of fighting just as hard as the men to get a better deal,” Lawrence said during a Los Angeles press conference for her latest film “The Hunger Games: Mockingjay — Part 2.”

Lawrence unleashed a highly-publicized attack on male-female pay discrimination in Hollywood earlier this month in an open letter published in Lena Dunham’s Lenny newsletter. She said that in the past she worried about being labeled a spoiled brat when negotiating movie deals, but she was now finished with trying to be “adorable” while getting shortchanged.

The actress added that her “American Hustle” male co-stars Bradley Cooper, Christian Bale and Jeremy Renner “all fought and succeeded in negotiating powerful deals for themselves,” and were praised for doing so.

“I hope to just write more about how about my own fears of ‘how am I going to be portrayed,’ or ‘how am I going to look,’ or ‘how will people judge me,’” Lawrence said on Saturday.

“(That) got in my way when obviously the men in the movie don’t think that way,” she said.

The actress added that one headline called her letter a “brat display.” “Thank you for completely making my point that if a woman goes and speaks up, and is assertive and has a voice, she’s going to be called a brat. I just don’t see a man being called a brat,” she said.

Lawrence, 25, was the world’s highest-paid film actress last year with an estimated $52 million in earnings from movies and endorsements, according to Forbes. She has been praised by her colleagues and fans alike for being open about an issue usually kept under wraps.

In response to her complaint, Cooper told Reuters he had already begun teaming up with female co-stars to negotiate salaries.

Lawrence is currently promoting the final installment of “The Hunger Games” franchise, out in theaters next month. She plays the young heroine Katniss Everdeen, who leads a rebellion against a tyrannical ruler of a dystopian society.—Reuters

Box Office: ‘Our Brand is Crisis,’ ‘Burnt,’ ‘Scouts Guide’ All Bomb

LOS ANGELES — Illustrating the limits of star power, “Our Brand is Crisis” and “Burnt” were both roundly rejected by audiences despite the presence of Sandra Bullock and Bradley Cooper.

“Our Brand is Crisis,” a political satire about a spin-doctor navigating a Latin American presidential election, is the worst wide release opening of Bullock’s career, sliding in below 1996’s “Two If By Sea” with $4.7 million. It debuted to a dreadful $3.4 million across 2,900 theaters. The Weinstein Company distributed the $28 million production.

“We’re proud of the movie, we had higher expectations, and we’re obviously disappointed,” said Jeff Goldstein, Warner Bros. distribution executive vice-president. Not that Cooper fared much better playing a down-and-out chef trying to score a comeback. “Burnt” made a measly $5 million bowing across 2,900 theaters. The Weinstein Company distributed the critically scorched dramedy. It cost roughly $20 million to make and was directed by John Wells (“August: Osage County”).

“It’s a small film and we didn’t spend a ton of money on it, but we were obviously hoping for more,” said Erik Lomis, the Weinstein Company’s distribution chief. “We love Bradley and he worked so hard on it with John Wells. It’s a passion project that hit a tough weekend.”

It wasn’t just star power at play. Both films debuted on Halloween weekend that fell at a particularly rough time on the calendar. The holiday happened to take place on Saturday, traditionally the busiest day for movie-going, so studios were bracing for a weekend that offered up more trick than treat. Their worst fears were realized. Overall ticket sales fell below $75 million, the worst results of the year. The weakness of “Our Brand is Crisis” and “Burnt” enabled a group of holdovers to maintain their grip on the top spots at the box office.

“The Martian” captured first place with $11.4 million. The Fox adventure story is on pace to be the biggest domestic grossing release of Ridley Scott’s career, having been one of the only adult dramas to connect, earning $45.2 million over the same period. The top five went to Sony’s “Goosebumps” and Dreamworks’ “Bridge of Spies” with $9.8 million and $8.1 million, respectively. “Goosebumps” has been praised by her colleagues and fans alike for being open about an issue usually kept under wraps.

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Lawrence is currently promoting the final installment of “The Hunger Games” franchise, out in theaters next month. She plays the young heroine Katniss Everdeen, who leads a rebellion against a tyrannical ruler of a dystopian society.—Reuters

North Korea’s girl with seven names still feels hunted

Lee Hyeon-seo. Photo: Reuters

UBUD — The girl with seven names is finding it hard these days to contact relatives in Stalinist North Korea on the under-ground mobile phone link defectors have used for years.

Hyeonseo Lee is also increasingly worried about her personal security since the July publication of the best-selling memoir about her escape from North Korea, “The Girl with Seven Names”.

Defectors living in South Korea claim that contacts in the North through Chinese mobile phones that are smuggled across the border. They communicate through transmission towers on the Chinese side of the border.

It’s all arranged through brokers on the Chinese side, who also help smuggle money from defectors to their relatives.

North Korea, however, has been cracking down on this lifeline, using phone signal detectors and interference devices, Lee said in an interview on the sidelines of the Ubud Writers and Readers festival. The signals can reveal the location of the speaker if the conversation lasts much longer than a minute.

Lee arranged for many of her family members to join her in exile after her own escape in 1998, but she still talks to an aunt there.

“Right now the signal is not so good. I can’t hear their voice clearly... And my aunt says after a minute, oh my god, we have to turn off the phone now we’ve been monitored.”

The aunt was sent to a labour camp for a few months last year, accused of trying to escape. “She was reported by her best friend. That’s how this regime works,” Lee said.

Sending money across the border—or private communications of any kind with the North—is also illegal in South Korea.

The money from defectors goes into North Korea’s increasingly established rural markets, which sprouted up during the famine years when the state food distribution system broke down. The markets are thriving hot spots of commerce, where people can buy or barter for things, including smuggled Hollywood and South Korean movies.—Reuters
Halloween poses new security challenge to Tokyo police

TOKYO — As the popularity of Halloween celebrations has grown markedly in Japan in recent years, the autumnal opportunity to have fun on the streets in outlandish costumes is increasingly posing a headache to police.

The Metropolitan Police Department made two arrests during last year’s Halloween festivities in Shibuya — the most popular destination for Halloween partygoers in Tokyo — one for punching a police officer in the face and another for groping a woman under the cover of the heaving crowd.

This year, numbers of police officers posted to the streets of Shibuya were doubled. In an effort to help dispense the crowd, an event called “Shibuya Fes” was held for the first time this year, taking place simultaneously at 20 locations in the area, including nightclubs and live music venues.

“There are no organizers (of Halloween festivities) and we cannot predict the course of moves of people who gather, or its peak time,” a senior MPD official said. “This is a new challenge in maintaining security.”

Another innovation introduced this year was a large tent set up near Shibuya Station as a temporary changing room. The facility was installed over the weekend, and was arrested at least two people. One was a 25-year-old unemployed man who hit a police officer on the head with an air gun near a crossing outside Shibuya Station around 10 pm on Saturday, and was arrested on the spot.

The following day, police also arrested a 36-year-old unemployed man on suspicion of stealing a wallet from a 22-year-old woman’s bag on the Shibuya streets the night before.

The victim was there to take part in the Halloween celebrations and the man admitted to the charge, saying he had only 200 yen ($1.65).

The suspect was not wearing a costume, according to the police. —Kyodo News

Prepare to listen to the hand drum and horse-head fiddle

BEIJING — In a spacious room of a five-star hotel in downtown Beijing, people are walking around, watching the streams of cars on Chang’an Avenue flow beneath a warm afternoon sun, and waiting. Suddenly, the sound of a hand drum erupts and the five members of the band Haya appear in the room.

As Zhang Quansheng pulls the strings of a ma-tuqin, a horse-head fiddle, lead vocalist Daiqing Tana, dressed in a long red gown with her hair braided, slowly steps forward.

Other members, including drummer and kholmeei (throat-singing) singer Bao Yin, guitarist and ma-tuqin player Chen Xibo and bassist Eric Lattanzio, speed up the music and Tana’s voice soars, reminding her audience of Mongolian women riding horses on the grasslands.

“That’s what we have been doing during the past 10 years, translating our traditional Mongolian music to the contemporary era,” says Zhang, who founded Haya in Beijing in 2006.

“Our music also expresses our love for the grasslands and nomadic people.”

Haya is launching a national tour in Beijing on 24 December.

“I hope our music will appeal to not just Mongolians, but also people of other ethnic groups,” he says.

During the past 10 years, the band has released five studio albums, including songs adapted from traditional Mongolian folk songs and their original compositions. Almost all songs are sung in the Mongolian language.

The band has won the established Golden Melody Awards of Taiwan three times; with its first album Wolf Totem in 2009; its CD Migration in 2012; and its album Crazy Horse last year.

Haya has also performed throughout the country and abroad in Sweden, Germany and Canada.

In the Mongolian language, haya means “the edge”, which is a metaphor for a nomadic lifestyle that has become so edgy today. “In our home, people used to live in harmony with nature. But this has been compromised by the industrialization of society,” Zhang says.

“Our traditional songs and instruments have also become edgy. When I started the band, I hoped to bring them back,” he adds.

Zhang grew up with his grandparents and moved to Hohhot, the capital of the Inner Mongolia autonomous region, with his parents at age 8, when he started to learn the violin and ma-tuqin.

The versatile singer-songwriter graduated from the music department of Minzu University of China in Beijing in 1991, and is now regarded as one of the best ma-tuqin players in the country.

Tana was born in Deqin, Qinghai Province, and studied vocal performance at Minzu University of China. —Xinhua
Kone treble inspires Everton, Southampton win

LONDON — Arouna Kone grabbed a hat-trick as Everton piled on the Premier League relegation worries for Sam Allardyce’s Sunderland with a 6-2 demolition job at Goodison Park on Sunday.

In the day’s other match, Ronald Koeman’s Southampton climbed to seventh in the table after first-half goals from Steven Davis and Graziano Pelle secured a 2-0 home win over south-coast rivals Bournemouth.

Everton were 2-0 up inside 31 minutes against Sunderland thanks to Kone and Spanish forward Gerard Deulofeu.

Kone sent a looping ball over the defence for Deulofeu to score the opener and the Ivory Coast international added a second goal following a one-two with strike partner Romelu Lukaku on the edge of the box.

Jermain Defoe inspired a Sunderland rally, volleying their first goal in stoppage time before playing a part in Steven Fletcher’s headed equaliser five minutes after the break.

The visitors, however, were always the more likely to score as Deulofeu won a series of corners that were cleared long by Everton and set up the fourth for Lukaku, with the Belgian rounding goalkeeper Costel Pantilimon to score.

Another Everton counter-attack led to Kone planting the ball into the net with his left foot in the 62nd minute before the Ivorian completed the rout with a close-range header following a left-wing centre by Dusan Tadic.

The only negative for Southampton was the late sending-off of Victor Wanyama for a second bookable offence.

“That was the best 45 minutes, maybe the best in more than one year,” said Koeman.

“It was a high tempo. We had good ball possession and if you watch the two goals it is all about a high quality of football.

“I am very pleased that but we know we still have to learn from mistakes and we know that you get a reaction from the opponent after half-time.”

Southampton went ahead against fourth from bottom Bournemouth when a sweeping passing move ended with Ryan Bertrand crossing for Steven Davis to volley home from close range in the 31st minute.

Pelle then made sure of the win with a towering header following a left-wing centre by Dusan Tadic.

Kone has won a hat-trick of his hat-trick during Barclays Premier League at Goodison on 1 November 2015. Photo: Reuters

Uchimura wins third 2015 world championships gold

GLASGOW — Japan’s Kohei Uchimura closed the 2015 world gymnastics championships with a win in the men’s horizontal bar on Sunday, taking his third gold medal in Glasgow and 10th worlds title of his career.

Uchimura scored 15.833 points to take gold ahead of the United States’ Danell Leyva (15.700) and men’s all-around silver medalist Manrique Larduet (15.600).

Uchimura’s routine on the high bar had to be perfect because he had a difficulty rating of 7.100, less than Leyva’s 7.300, and despite a brief fall on the handstand, he closed out his near-flawless routine to take gold.

“I was able to put on my performance at the very end. I just concentrated on stretching my arms and regrouping for my release,” said Uchimura after successfully executing the high-difficulty Cassina release, after failing to do so during Wednesday’s team competition.

It is the first time Uchimura has won gold on the horizontal bar. His previous best at the worlds on the apparatus was silver in 2014.

The team win at Rio is my biggest target. My performance won aesthetic appraisals this tournament and I believe the result will come our way if we don’t let our guard down.”

“T’ll give my best shot to hear the ‘Kimigayo’ anthem three times at the Olympics.”

The 26-year-old’s third gold of the tournament was the last of the five medals won by Japan, all in men’s, in Glasgow.

Japan won its first team gold in 37 years, Uchimura claimed his sixth straight individual all-around title before Kenzo Shirai’s gold on the floor exercise and Kazuma Kaya’s pommel horse bronze on Saturday.

Yusuke Tanaka was seventh in the parallel bars on 15.600 points on Sunday, while Shirai also finished seventh in the vault in 14.516.

Among the women, sixteen-year-old Sae Miyakawa narrowly missed the podium after marking 14.933 points on the floor exercise, 0.067 points shy of fourth place. American Simone Biles won to claim her fourth gold of the tournament on 15.800 points following her victories in team, all-around and parallel bars.

“I gave my all and was able to execute my performance at my biggest tournament so far, and that will give me confidence,” said Miyakawa. “I’m not losing on the height of (jumps) so it’s now down to landings. I’d like to get stronger and improve my skills and win gold in Rio.”

Carter and New Zealand scoop top awards

LONDON — Dan Carter completed a memorable weekend when, a day after being named man of the match in New Zealand’s World Cup final victory over Australia, he was voted the sport’s player of the year for a third time.

The All Blacks, the first team to win the tournament three times, were also named team of the year — for the sixth time in a row — at the ceremony in London on Sunday night.

Despite overseeing that back-to-back triumph, Steve Hansen missed out on a fourth successive coaching of the year award as that went to Michael Cheika after his impressive turnaround of the Wallabies over the last 12 months as he led them to the Rugby Championship title and runners-up spot in the World Cup. Carter, who also won in 2005 and 2012, joins team mate and All Blacks captain Richie McCaw as the only triple winners of the award, which was first given in 2001.

He received the award ahead of five other nominees — All Blacks team mate Julian Savea, Australia flanker Michael Hooper and number eight David Pocock, Wales lock Alun Wyn Jones and Scotland scrum half Greig Laidlaw.

Carter, 33, will now walk away from the international game after scoring a record 1,398 points from his 112 appearances — including 19 in the Twickenham final. — Reuters