US President Barack Obama phoned President U Thein Sein on Thursday morning to commend his Myanmar counterpart and his administration for the success of the country’s historic general election on 8 November.

The US president said that the cooperation that existed between the Union Election Commission, the international community, political parties and civil society groups contributed to the country’s ability to hold peaceful elections.

The US president said the general election was an important step in solidifying Myanmar’s reforms. He said the brave reforms initiated by Myanmar’s president have brought about significant change for the future of Myanmar. President Obama promised to continue cooperating with U Thein Sein’s government until a new government takes office.

The US president, who visited Myanmar in 2012 and 2014, expressed hope that the US will be able to promote further cooperation and to help ensure stability and prosperity for the people of Myanmar.

President U Thein Sein reportedly replied that he was proud of Myanmar for holding such a peaceful and smooth general election and acknowledged the contribution made by members of the government, the UEC, political parties, the public and international organisations. He also pointed out the importance of peace and stability throughout the post-election period.

U Thein Sein added that he plans to meet with the political parties and will take measures to transfer power within the period stipulated by the country’s constitution. He then thanked the US administration for its commitment and continued cooperation to Myanmar during its reform process.

—Myanmar News Agency

Govt to lay foundations for peace during remaining term

Representatives from the government and more than 80 political parties held talks on the role of political parties in upcoming political dialogue and the selection of 16 representatives from political parties for the Union Political Dialogue Joint Committee.

There will be a total of 48 representatives on the committee, with 32 already selected to represent the government and ethnic minority armed groups. The remaining 16 will be chosen from various political parties on 21 November.

The meeting was aimed at selecting 16 representatives from political parties for the joint committee set to be formed with 16 members each from the government, ethnic signatories and political parties.

While the government, including the Tatmadaw, and ethnic signatories have already named 16 members each for the committee, the selection of political representatives from Myanmar’s 91 political parties is expected to be finalised during the next meeting, which is scheduled for 21 November. It will take place at the Mingala Hall of Yangon Region Government, said U Hla Maung Shwe, senior adviser at Myanmar Peace Centre.

“A tripartite meeting of 16 representatives from political parties, the government and ethnic signatories is also set to meet at Myanmar Peace Centre on 24 November in order to form a committee to draw up a framework for political dialogue,” he said.

If all things go to plan, the framework will be set up before 14 December this year, with the first round of political dialogue beginning before 14 January next year, he added.

The purpose of the joint committee is to facilitate political dialogue, which was included as one of steps to be undertaken after the signing of a ceasefire agreement between the government and eight ethnic signatories on 15 October.

According to the terms of the truce pact, both sides are required to draw up a framework for political dialogue within 60 days of the signing and to hold political dialogue within 90 days.
MCDC shapes Mandalay to become garden city

AS of early November, workers from the Parks and Playgrounds Department of the Mandalay City Development Committee have been carrying out landscaping tasks near Sagaing Bridge, on traffic islands and along both sides of Strand Road between 26th Street and Shangalekyun Junction.

The department did landscaping work on the nearby section of the Yangon-Mandalay Highway, as well as around moats, on the roundabout of the Mandalay Railway Station and on traffic islands on 78th Street.

The department built parks and recreation centres for the public and is nurturing saplings at city nurseries.—Thiha Ko Ko

Nyaungpingyisu village library in Pobbathiri nears completion

THE 24-foot by 16-foot brick library being built in Nyaungpingyisu village in Pobbathiri Township, Nay Pyi Taw, has reached 70-per cent completion. The construction of the one-story library has been funded by the government and the local community.

Patrons of the library construction committee say the library will enhance the knowledge and education of local villagers of all ages. He expects village youths to develop healthy reading habits because of the library.—Shwe Ye Yint

EU election observation group visits Tatkon township election sub-commission office

VOTES won by the candidates for upper and lower house parliament seats in Tatkon Township following Sunday’s general election were displayed on the notice board of the Tatkon Township election sub-commission office on 10 November.

The European Union’s long-term election observation group’s Nay Pyi Taw representative Mr Roger Fane Bryant and other members visited the office and met with sub-commission chairman U Soe Tint Thein and other members. They discussed a range of election matters.

The observers also analysed the township’s voting data.—Tin Soe Linw (IPRD)

Farmers select top paddy for display

THE Department of Agriculture and Sichuan-Nonda Hybrid Paddy Seed Company of the Sichuan Province of China displayed 12 varieties of hybrid paddy at field No. 1814 in Aungbukha Village, Dekkiniathiri Township, Nay Pyi Taw Council Area on Wednesday.

The farmers’ variety selections were on display during the event, which was attended by around 140 local farmers and the deputy director-general U Naing Kyi Win of the department, which lies under the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation.

Department staff and local farmers selected the best ears of paddy. The department will extend the farmlands of paddy seed production in 2015-16 fiscal year to distribute the quality paddy strain to local farmers.—Ko Pauk

Nyaungpingyisu village library in Pobbathiri being built nears completion

IPRD official inspects progress of library building. PHOTO: SHWE YE YINT

EU election observers view voter lists in Tatkon. PHOTO: TIN SOE LINW
President chairs financial commission meeting

PRESIDENT U Thein Sein addressed the Financial Commission’s second meeting in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday, focusing on allowances and expenditures agreed by the union budget.

As Chairman of the Financial Commission, the president spoke of demanding additional budget allowances for 2015-16 fiscal year, stating that the exchange gap between the dollar and the kyat led to budget deficits.

The exchange rate stood at K1,020 to the US dollar at the time the budget was drawn up and rose to K1,285 by the time additional budget allowances were being requested, he said. He pledged to increase expenditure on ongoing projects for rural development, power supplies, education and health.

He said that inflation is a problem for Myanmar and many other countries around the world, and that it hampers macroeconomic growth. The president said that additional expenditures are unavoidable given the costs of recovery and rehabilitation measures being taken in areas hit by natural disasters in July and August.

The president quoted the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank as stating that Myanmar is regarded as moderate in terms of its level of debt resistance. He stressed the need to maintain the status quo by receiving foreign loans with adequate scrutiny and managing local loans.

President U Thein Sein called for the effective use of budget allowances and the early return of unused budget allowances, urging officials to pool ideas for the additional budget bill.

Vice Presidents Dr Sai Mauk Kham and U Nyan Tun gave briefs on additional budget allowances for ministries and local governments. Union Minister U Win Shein explained the additional budget allowance and its renewed estimated budgets for the 2015-16 fiscal year.—Myanmar News Agency

Convening of parliament discussed in capital

A WORK coordination meeting was held by the Central Organising Committee of the convening Hluttaw Sessions and its sub-committees at the Hluttaw [parliament] building in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Speaking at the meeting was Speaker of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Thura U Shwe Mann, Speaker of the Amyotha Hluttaw U Khin Aung Myint, deputy speakers of the two Hlutaws, members of the central committee, work committees union ministers, deputy ministers and officials of the Hluttaw Office.

Thura U Shwe Mann said that Hluttaw sessions will begin on 16 November and will address the budget, among other important pieces of legislation.

Members of the central committee and work committee reported on preparations for the coming Hluttaw sessions.—Myanmar News Agency

NLD continues to dominate election results

THE Union Election Commission announced election results for 58 more Pyithu Hluttaw (Lower House) seats, 50 Amyotha Hluttaw (Upper House) seats and 166 State/Region Hluttaw seats yesterday.

According the 9 pm announcement, the National League for Democracy has won 217 out of 274 announced Pyithu Hluttaw seats, and the Union Solidarity and Development Party has won 28. Also, the Shan Nationalities League for Democracy has won 12 Pyithu Hluttaw seats, the Arakan National Party has won four, and the Ta-aung (Palaung) National and the Pa-O National Organisation have each secured three seats. Zomi Congress for Democracy has won two seats and the Wa Democratic Party, the Kachin State National League for Democracy, the Liberal Democratic Party and an independent candidate have each won one seat.

Of the 494 confirmed seats in State and Region parliaments, the National League for Democracy has won 382 seats, the Union Solidarity and Development Party won 54, while the Shan Nationalities League for Democracy has won 26. The Pa-O National Organisation and Ta-aung (Palaung) National Party has won six State and Region parliament seats, and the Arakan National Party and Kachin State Democracy Party have each won three. The Mon National Party, the Zomi Congress for Democracy and the Wa Democratic Party have each won two seats. The Kayin People’s Party, the Kokang Democracy and Unity Party, the Unity and Democracy Party (Kachin State), the Democratic Party (Myanmar), the All Mon Region Democracy Party, the Wa National Unity Party, the Lahu National Development Party and an independent candidate each won one State or Region seat.

The UEC also held a press conference on the general election at its media centre in Nay Pyi Taw at 4pm yesterday. At the press conference, commission member U Myint Naing explained the process for announcing election results and responded to questions raised by journalists.—Myanmar News Agency

Govt to lay foundations for peace during remaining term

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“…We held discussions on how to select representatives from political parties, but no decision was made at today’s meeting,” said Democratic Party’s U Thu Wai.

Some proposed to choose one representative each from all 91 parties before selecting 16 members through voting, while others expressed different views, he added. During his address at the meeting, Deputy Minister for Defence Rear Admiral Myint Nwe insisted that the Tatmadaw [army] will continue to uphold its commitment to undertake the post-signing steps and adhere to the terms of the ceasefire agreement.
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413. Salingyi-13 | U Myo Kyi | National League for Democracy |

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242 fishermen return to Myanmar

Aye Min Soe

AFTER being detained for seven months in Indonesia, 42 fishermen have returned to Myanmar. They were arrested during a raid by the Indonesian navy on illegal fishing boats in Indonesian waters after the enslavement of more than 500 migrant fishermen in far-flung islands of Indonesia was exposed by the AP news agency in March 2015. The fishermen were detained at a detention centre managed by the Indonesian immigration department to testify in the legal case against their captain and other fishing company staff in the Indonesian courts. “They did not all receive salaries. Myanmar authorities will take measures to assist them to get back their salaries,” said Police Col Khin Maung Hla to The Global New Light of Myanmar.

The Indonesian navy found the fishermen on a fishing boat owned by a Thai company operating in Indonesian waters. The Indonesian Navy demolished the fishing boat after rescuing the workers. Myanmar authorities have repatriated more than 340 fishermen between early September and November 12 this year.

Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Union Election Commission
Nay Pyi Taw
Notification No. (82/2015)
14th Waning Day of Thadingyut, 1377 MY
(11 November, 2015)

Two Defence Services Personnel representatives substituted

According to a request made in accordance with Section 33 of the Amyotha Hluttaw Election Law to substitute the two Defence Services Personnel Representatives who are parliamentarians, the Union Election Commission scrutinized and substituted the following two Amyotha Hluttaw representatives under the Notification No. 2/2011 of the commission dated 20-1-2011.

The Defence Services Personnel Representatives of Amyotha Hluttaw to be substituted were nominated by the Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Services in the first multi-party general election held on 7 November 2010.

(1) BC 26164
Major Aung Myint Han
Major Ko Ko Naing

(2) BC 25309
Major Toe Min Tun
Major Win Naing Oo

(Tin Tun)
Secretary
Union Election Commission
### 2015 General Election of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar

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#### Myanmar News Agency

**Australian PM says Indonesia welcome in TPP as frictions ease**

*Jakarta — Australia would welcome Indonesia into the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) trade deal, Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull said yesterday, as the two countries set aside past friction to focus on building closer economic ties. Turnbull met Indonesian President Joko Widodo in Indonesia’s capital, Jakarta, as part of an effort to re-store diplomatic and economic relations, which reached a historic low under the previous Australian prime minister.*

“The closer we are, the higher the intensity in our relationship, and the higher also the potential for frictions,” Widodo said at the presidential palace at the beginning of their meeting. Turnbull, who replaced Tony Abbott as prime minister in September, inherited ties strained by rows over spying, the execution of Australian citizens in Indonesia and a tough Australian asylum-seeker policies.

“With our great meeting, we have really strong momentum to work in making our two great nations, greater still,” Turnbull told reporters as the two leaders toured Indonesia’s biggest retail market, in central Jakarta. He said Australia would support any effort by Indonesia to join the TPP, which will set common standards on issues ranging from workers’ rights to intellectual property protection in 12 Pacific nations.

“If Indonesia chooses to apply to the Trans-Pacific Partnership, we would support the application, absolutely,” Turnbull said.

Widodo said last month during a visit to Washington he intended to join the TPP. But government officials in Jakarta said it could take years for Indonesia to be ready.

Turnbull and Widodo also discussed improving cooperation in fighting terrorism and education. The two countries cooperate closely on counter-terrorism, an area of growing concern as Islamic State militants seek footholds outside the Middle East, where Australia is bombing the group as part of a US-led military campaign. Indonesia is Australia’s 10th-largest overall trading partner and is the largest export market for Australian wheat worth A$1.3 billion ($917 million) in 2014, as well as a major destination for live cattle and sugar.

Australia will send its largest business delegation to Indonesia next week, with more than 300 companies expected to be represented.—Reuters
**The Craving and The State of Woe**

**Hun Tin Htu**

"The craving of one given to heedless living grows like a creeper. Like the monkey seeking fruits in the forest, he leaps from life to life (tasting the fruit of his karma)."

He who checks rising anger as a charioteer checks a rolling chariot, him I (the Buddha) call a true charioteer. Others only hold the reins. "Whoever is afflicted by this wetheated and sticky craving, his sorrors grow like grass after the rains."

Even though he be well-attired, yet if he is posed, calm, controlled and established in holy life, having set aside violence towards all beings-he, truly, is a holy man, a renunciate, a monk. "But whoever overcomes this wetched craving, so difficult to overcome, from him sorrows fall away like water from a lotus leaf."

Calm is his thought, calm is his speech and calm is his bodily action, when wrongfully done, perfectly tranquil and wise. This the Buddha (the Enlightened One) says to you: good luck to all assembled here! Dig up the root of craving, like one in search of the fragrant roots of biriana grass. Let not Mara (the Destroyer) crushes you again and again, as a flood cuts a reed."

Realizing that this body is as fragile as a clay pot, and knowing that this mind like a well-fortified city, fights out Mara (the Destroyer) with the sword of wisdom. Then guard the conquest, remain unattacked. "Just as a tree though cut down, sprouts up again if its roots remain uncut ad firm, even so, until the craving that lies dormant is rooted out, sprouting springs up again and again."

A worst taint than there is ignorance, the worst of all taints. Destroy this one taint and become taintless. "The misguided man in whom the thirty-six currents of craving (The three cravings—sensual pleasure, for perpetual existence and for annihilation—in relation to each of the twelve bases—the six sense organs, including mind, and their corresponding objects.) strongly rush toward pleasurable objects, whose current is driven by the flood of his passionate thoughts."

Victory begets enmity; the defeated dwell in pain. Happily the peaceful life, discarding both victoi and killing, the one by whose current flows and the other by whose current flows and the creeper of craving) sprouts and grows. Seeing that the creepcr has sprung up, cut off its root with wisdom. "To do is that action doing which one repents later, and the fruit of which one, weeping, reaps with tears. "Flowing in (from all objects) and watered by craving, feelings of pleasure arise in being's consciousness. Enjoying these men fall prey to birth and decay."

Neither mother, nor father, nor any other relative, can do one greater good than one's own well-directed mind. "Beset by craving, people run about like an entrapped hare. Held fast by mental fetters, they come to suffering again and again for a long time. When need arises; good is content with just what one has; good is er good than one's own well-directed mind. One gains a mastery that is hard to acquire. "An evil deed is better left undone, for such a deed tortures one afterwards. But a good deed is better done, which one repents not later. Just as a border city is closely guarded both within and without, even so, guard yourself. Do not let slip this opportunity (for spiritual growth). For those who let slip this opportunity grieve indeed when consigned to hell."

Easy to do are things that are bad and harmful to oneself. But ex- cepting the things that are good and beneficial. "Those who are ashamed of what they should not be ashamed of, and are not ashamed of what they should be ashamed of-upholding false views, they go to state of woe. Those who see something to fear where there is nothing to fear, see nothing to fear where there is something to fear-upholding false views, they go to states of woe. Those who imagine evil where there is none, and do not see evil where it is-uptolding false views, they go to states of woe. "Such a man acquires demerit and an unhappy birth in the future. Brief is the pleasure of the frightened man and woman, and the king imposes heavy punishment. Hence, let no man consort with another's wife. Just as kausa hemp wrongly handled cuts the hand, even so, a reclusive's life wrongly lived drags one to states of woe."

Sources close to the president’s office, the parliament and the defence services said that these three institutions have expressed their recognition of the people’s choice and have vowed to ensure a stable transition of power in line with the State Constitution. However emerging victorious in the polls does not necessarily mean a handover of power from the sitting government to the incoming one. It should instead be viewed as a democratic consolidation.

It is important to note that the transitional process is more complex than we realise, especially in a nascent democracy like Myanmar. The new cabinet members alongside the new parliamentarians will inevitably have to overcome daunting challenges in establishing dynamic local administrative bodies and enhancing political capacity.

Unfortunately, we have lost some incumbent prominent, qualified parliamentarians as a result of the NLD’s overwhelming triumph. Many people still want to remain in parliament on account of the efforts and contributions they have made for the country. It is however hoped that the new government will offer those political figures senior roles in parliament-related committees. After all, the people across the country have paved the way for change to materialise. The onus is now on the incoming government to repay its gratitude the people and avoid acting in a way that would abuse public trust.

**Write for us**

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Due to limitation of space we are only able to publish “Letter to the Editor” that do not exceed 500 words. Please be aware that your letter will be edited.

**About the author:**

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Putting children first

Jessica Mudditt
BERTRAND BAINVEL has served as the United Nations Children’s Fund Representative to Myanmar since October 2012. He spoke to The Global New Light of Myanmar about the gains made over the past three years – and the challenges that remain.

“What has been very exciting for us to see is the space created for reforms for children, which include improving education, health and social protection,” Mr Bainvel said.

However he emphasised that such reforms are about generating long term changes and building on ‘quick wins’ that benefit current and future generations.

**Alarming child mortality rates prevail**

Child mortality rates in Myanmar remain among the highest in the region – only Afghanistan and Pakistan fare worse. When in 2014 Myanmar held its first census in 30 years, the readjusted population figures meant that under-five mortality rates increased further still.

“We don’t believe we saw an actual increase over the last few years, even though the new data increases the previous rate. But in both scenarios, [the under-five mortality rate] is still very high.”

Mr Bainvel said that the biggest killers are neonatal conditions, diarrhoeal diseases, acute respiratory infections and malaria.

“The lack of access to sanitation and clean water needs to be significantly improved. Very often families lack access to health services and the percentage of children born in health facilities is very low. We know that being born in a home is always riskier than a health facility. And being born in a home is always riskier than a health facility. And being born in a home is always riskier than a health facility.”

Mr Bainvel added that some children are moving to poor urban areas on their own, which makes them vulnerable to trafficking and being recruited as child soldiers.

“Another risk facing Myanmar’s children is the unprecedented influx of foreign tourists, which are expected to number five million this year.”

When Cambodia opened up, for example, many tourists came and the country possibly didn’t anticipate the problems they would face, such as sexual exploitation and the proliferation of orphanages.”

Mr Bainvel stressed that “orphanage tourism” often arises as a result of tourists’ best intentions.

“Many tourists feel they have a responsibility to not just visit the beaches and temples of Myanmar but to also leave something behind. But if it’s not done in the correct way, it can have very bad consequences.”

He said that families struggling with poverty may feel that foreigners can help lift them out of it. The problem is that it’s often the children that are put on the front line of such efforts – whether it be selling postcards, begging at busy intersections or the proliferation of orphanages, particularly in Yangon’s impoverished Dala Township.

UNICEF is unequivocal in its advice to tourists about visiting orphanages: don’t do it.

Mr Bainvel said that surveys have found that more than 70 percent of children living in Myanmar orphanages are not actually orphans – one of their parents is alive.

“By far, the family is the best place for child. Only in an extreme case such as domestic violence should a child be separated from their family and placed in temporary foster care. So to help a child, you should help their family,” he said.

UNICEF has a campaign underway in collaboration with Myanmar’s tourism and hotels sector. It aims to discourage tour operators from including orphanage visits on their itineraries and to highlight the better options that exist.

Community organisations are being twinned with hotels in tourist hot-spots such as Bagan: guests are provided with information about local NGOs and how they can donate. This may include providing social workers with the necessary funds to make home visits and ensure that children are attending school.

“It’s very much a grassroots campaign. It’s about showing the alternatives,” Mr Bainvel said.

UNICEF is also working with the transport industry to issue educational pamphlets when tickets are issued by airlines, and plans to create videos screened by international in-bound flights are in the pipeline.

“We have an opportunity to put things in place before it is too late,” said Mr Bainvel.
Refugee haven Sweden imposes temporary border controls in EU migration crisis

STOCKHOLM — Sweden will impose temporary border controls from Thursday in response to a record influx of refugees, a turnaround for a country known for its open-door policies that also threw down the gauntlet to other EU nations hit by a migration crisis.

The decision by a Nordic state that touts itself as a “humanitarian superpower” underscores how the flow of refugees into the European Union is straining its prized system of open internal borders close to breaking point.

Germany warned it could start sending Syrian refugees back to other EU states from which they came, prompting Hungary to insist it would take none, while Sweden’s neighbour Denmark said it was tightening immigration rules and Slovenia began to emerald Budapest in erecting new border fences.

Sweden has welcomed more asylum-seeking refugees and migrants per capita than any other EU country and authorities forecast that up to 190,000 asylum seekers could arrive this year, double the previous record from the early 1990s.

“Our signal to the rest of the EU is crystal clear - Sweden is the country that has shouldered the greatest responsibility for the refugee crisis,” Interior Minister Anders Ygeman told a news conference hastily called by the centre-left government.

“If we are to cope with this mutual challenge, the other countries must take their responsibility.” Sweden’s border controls will primarily extend to the bridge across the Oresund strait separating Sweden and Denmark and ferry routes in the region. They will be imposed from Thursday for a period of 10 days and could be extended by 20-day periods.

The government acted on the same day as EU leaders, at a summit in Malta with African counterparts, offered them aid and better access to Europe for African business and other travellers in return for help in curbing chaotic bouts of migration across the Mediterranean from Africa and promises to take back migrants expelled by EU states.

After African delegations departed on Thursday, EU leaders will hold an emergency summit of their own to review slow progress in implementing steps meant to control the flow of refugees entering the EU via Greece, and negotiations with Turkey to get its help in slowing departures of Syrian refugees.

In Berlin, Finance Minister Wolfgang Schaeuble described Germany’s refugee crisis as being like an avalanche. Chancellor Angela Merkel has come under fierce pressure since offering shelter to close to a million asylum-seekers this year.

“Aviances can be caused if a careless skier ... sets some snow on the move,” Schaeuble told an event on European integration held in Berlin. “Whether we are at the stage where the avalanche has already reached the valley below, or whether we are at the stage at the top of the slope, I don’t know.”

Sweden’s government had warned last week that it could no longer guarantee finding accommodation for newly-arrived refugees. The minority government has faced pressure also from the centre-right Sweden Democrats who are rising in polls — to tighten up on refugees.

The Swedish Migration Agency already plans to shelter thousands of refugees in heated tents due to a housing shortage, while some people may be accommodated in venues such as ski resorts and a theme park. Some 10,000 refugees arrived last week, and 2,000 in one day — both records for the EU states.

“Much of the world's problems are going to be there in the future, whether we like it or not,” Schaeuble said.

The government has also applied to the European Commission to arrange for some of those to be moved to other EU countries. The UN refugee agency UNHCR said last week that refugees and migrants were likely to continue to arrive in Europe at a rate of up to 5,000 per day via Turkey this winter. — Reuters

US maternal mortality rate is twice that of Canada

GENEVA — Women are twice as likely to die in the United States than in Canada, a new global survey of maternal mortality published by the United Nations and the World Bank showed yesterday.

The United States was also one of only 13 countries to have worse rates of maternal mortality in 2015 than in 1990 — a group that also includes North Korea, Zimbabwe and Venezuela.

The survey, led by the World Health Organisation, aims to track progress against the UN Millennium Development Goals. It estimated there would be 303,000 maternal deaths globally this year, down from 532,000 in 1990.

The UN target is to get the global average number of maternal deaths below 70 per 100,000 live births by 2030, with no country averaging worse than 140.

The United States and other developed countries are already far ahead of the target, but the US average has slipped from 12 deaths to 14 per 100,000 live births over the past 25 years, while Canada’s is where it was in 1990, at seven.

Over the same period Belarus has cut its maternal death rate from 33 to four, making it one of the safest places to have a baby, just behind the world leaders - Iceland, Finland, Poland and Greece - where only three mothers die for every 100,000 births. The world average is 216 deaths, ranging from 12 in rich countries to 546 in sub-Saharan Africa. — Reuters

17 arrested in European anti-terror operation

ROME — Italian police said yesterday 17 people had been arrested in various European countries as part of a joint operation against suspected members of a terrorist group.

A statement gave no details about the operation code named “JWEB,” saying they would be disclosed at a news conference later on Thursday. The statement said they were suspected of “international terrorism.”

A spokesman declined to say how many arrests were made in Italy but added that none of the arrested were Italian. — Reuters

Russian border guards’ return ‘not on agenda’

ASTANA — A possible return of Russian border guards to Tajikistan to re-establish Moscow’s control over the border with Afghanistan “is not on the agenda,” the coordinator of the CIS border guard services said yesterday. “This issue is not on the agenda,” Russian Colonel-General Alexander Manilov told reporters in the Kazakh capital Astana.

“The (Russian) state has not set such a task.” — Reuters

Russia’s Putin to miss APEC summit

MOSCOW — President Vladimir Putin has decided not to attend a summit of Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation nations in Manila and Russia will be represented there instead by Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev, a Kremlin spokesman said yesterday.

The spokesman said the decision was taken because Medvedev had a series of meetings planned in the region any way. — Reuters

BAE Systems sees flat earnings in 2015

LONDON — British defence company BAE Systems plc warned yesterday it would see no growth in earnings in 2015 after it reduced the rate of production of Typhoon aircraft.

The company said that including a benefit of 2 pence from tax provisions, it expected underlying earnings per share for 2015 of around 38 pence.

BAE said in February that for 2015 it expected underlying earnings per share to be marginally higher than the 38 pence per share it made in 2014, a figure that was partly dependent on new orders in the shape of more Eurofighter Typhoons for Saudi Arabia and work for its shipyards in Australia.

The company said that overall it expected good sales growth in 2015 and a robust order backlog at the half-year mark that was part of the reason why it increased its dividend 4%.

Turkish election board confirms AKP won

ANKARA — Turkey’s ruling AK Party won the 1 November parliamentary election with 317 seats in the 550-seat assembly, High Election Board Chairman Sadi Guven told a news conference yesterday to announce the official results.

He said the main opposition CHP won 134 seats, the pro-Kurdish HDP 59 seats and the nationalist MHP 59 seats in the election, which enabled the AKP to regain the one-party rule which it had lost in a June 2015 election. — Reuters

UNESCO initiative aims to promote ASEAN’s shared history education

BANGKOK — A United Nations First Technical Advisory Committee meeting on the promotion of peace was held on Tuesday and Wednesday in Bangkok, with the hope of emphasizing innovative history education in South-East Asian countries, with a focus on shared history.

Prominent scholar participated in the “Promoting Inter-cultural Dialogues and a Culture of Peace in South-East Asia through Shared Histories” meeting, which looked promoting historical education for 12 and 13 year old children.

The initiative is being supported by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation and South Korea’s “Funds-in-Trust,” and will receive funding of $3 million between now until 2018. It will encourage school students in Association of Southeast Asian Nations member countries to learn more about the shared history in their region, to help promote mutual understanding. — Kyodo News
Malaysia PM to give statement about transferred funds ‘soon’

KUALA LUMPUR — Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak said yesterday he will give a statement to the anti-graft agency soon over funds worth 2.6 billion ringgit ($595.58 million) that were transferred into his bank accounts.

The Wall Street Journal reported in July that investigators looking into debt-laden state investor 1MDB found that funds were moved into Najib’s accounts, sparking a political crisis for Najib and his government.

Najib denies wrongdoing or taking any money for personal gain and the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) said the money was a political donation from an unidentified Middle East benefactor.

“If I will provide my statement to MACC soon with regards to the political donation,” Najib wrote on his Facebook page. “It is my intention to provide full cooperation in this case’s investigation as it has caused various accusations and slander.”

At the end of August, tens of thousands of Malaysians rallied to call for his resignation. Malaysia’s troubled economy and weakened currency have spooked investors as local authorities promise to wrap up 1MDB investigations by the end of the year.—Reuters

EU countries are willing to do a deal on UK reforms: Swedish PM

LONDON — European Union leaders are willing to find a way to reform Britain’s ties with the bloc but there are limits to what can be done, Swedish Prime Minister Stefan Löfven said yesterday.

British Prime Minister David Cameron set out on Tuesday his objectives for renegotiating Britain’s relationship with the EU before a membership referendum which he plans to hold by the end of 2017.

“Everybody has a will to solve this of course because we believe it is important that the UK stays within the European Union. I think it is good for the UK as well so we have a positive attitude,” Löfven told BBC radio.

The Swedish leader backed Cameron’s call for safeguards for EU members which are outside the euro zone, such as Britain, but said restricting EU migrants’ access to welfare payments, another of Cameron’s proposals, could be more problematic.

“The most sensitive point is the one which is about the free movement of people and that is the most difficult issue,” Löfven said. “There are always limits ... so let’s start the discussion and see where it ends.”—Reuters

Bleak job prospects drive South Korean youth to vocational schools

BUCHEON — Living in a country obsessed with academic success, Jang Dong-hae did what every South Korean parent dreads when he dropped out of university a year into a finance degree, doubting whether it would get him a job with a top firm.

Five years on, and midway through a nursing course at a community college, Jang’s parents are happy and his employment prospects are good.

“First when I told my parents, they asked me: ‘why would you quit the university that you are in now and restart?’”, Jang said at the campus in Bucheon, on the outskirts of Seoul.

“Since the employment rate is much higher than other majors, my parents support me and really like it.”

Their priorities will have been influenced by South Korea’s unemployment rate. In February it had come down to 7.4 percent but was still more than double the overall unemployment rate.

Jang, who pays his nursing tuition with money earned from part-time jobs, has joined a growing number of young South Koreans who are foregoing a more prestigious university education in favour of either vocational training or seeking work straight from school.

On Thursday, South Korea won’t shut down but it will be running late, as final year high school students sit annual entrance exams for universities and colleges.

Families will pray for their children’s success. The stock market will open an hour late, to help reduce traffic congestion so that students reach examination halls on time.

And for 35 minutes, there will no commercial airline flights landing or taking-off, so that noise is reduced during the English aural section of the exam.

These are all demonstrate South Korea’s single-minded approach to education, and the stress that goes with it.

Yet, somewhat surprisingly for a nation where parents have something of a “Tiger Mom” reputation, the number of high school graduates that go on to tertiary education has fallen from 77 percent in 2008 to 70.8 percent this year.

That is still higher than the average for the developed nations in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

But, with a sluggish economy and a rigid job market that makes it hard to get on a career track, high entrance exam scores don’t carry the same promise of future success that they once did.

“Parents’ ambition to send their kids to good universities has peaked and is slowly declining,” said Son Jong-chil, economics professor at Hankuk University of Foreign Studies in Seoul. “Little by little people are now thinking that not everyone should go to universities.”

The “Youth Hope Fund” recently launched by President Park Geun-hye is a sign of the hard times faced by young South Koreans. The fund aims to help create jobs for them with support from the private sector, and last month Samsung Group and Hyundai Motor Group executives donated a combined 45 billion Korean won ($39 million).

Unable to find jobs, an increasing number of university graduates and dropouts, like Jang, are entering mostly two- and three-year vocational schools to gain qualifications in nursing, physical therapy, social welfare and early childhood education.

“Employment conditions are pretty tough and young people are seeking a job that is connect ed to their major, not irrelevant, so that is why many people are choosing nursing,” You So-young, a nursing professor at Bucheon University.

Care-givers are in high demand due in part to South Korea’s ageing population; and Bucheon University, which despite the name is categorised as a junior college, says it has an 88 percent job placement rate for nursing graduates.

During the past three years the number of university graduates who have gained admission to vocational school has risen by 25 percent to 1,379, according to the Korean Council of University College Education.

It is a miniscule percentage of the total number of students entering universities and colleges — 356,000 and 214,000 respectively — but still reveals some change in the mind-set among the youth.

More would make the switch if they could. About 40 holders of bachelor degrees have applied for five places set aside for them next semester in Bucheon’s nursing programme.

“I think I’ve made a right decision,” said Jang.—Reuters
Hundreds more flights grounded as Lufthansa strike enters sixth day

BERLIN — Hundreds more flights were grounded yesterday when a strike by Lufthansa’s main cabin crew union entered its sixth day, with no sign of compromise to resolve the longest walkout in the history of the German airline.

Cabin crew staff started a series of strikes at the airline’s core Lufthansa brand last Friday to fight for an improved pension offer for employees. Lufthansa, which says it needs to cut costs in order to compete with budget rivals and leisure Gulf carriers, has said it is open to mediation, provided the union calls off the strikes.

Lufthansa cancelled 933 flights yesterday, affecting 107,000 passengers, and equivalent to around 430,000 Lufthansa customers on Friday from midday, union head Nicoley Baublies told Reuters.

“If there is no movement from management then maybe we will have to say that there will be more strikes,” Baublies said. Lufthansa has condemned the strikes as counter-productive.

“With this strike, they’re only making it harder for us all,” personnel head Bettina Volkmans said in an interview with best-selling daily Bild. “The only ones that are happy about the situation are our rivals.”

In total, the walkouts have now forced the cancellation of almost 4,000 flights, disrupting the travel of more than 430,000 Lufthansa customers. — Reuters

Paris climate talks not just hot air, France tells US

PARIS — Any global climate change deal reached in Paris next month will be legally binding and have a concrete impact, France’s foreign minister said yesterday, reactivating to US comments that questioned the status of the accord.

US Secretary of State John Kerry was quoted as telling Wednesday’s Financial Times that December’s agreement was “definitely not going to be a treaty.”

His French counterpart Laurent Fabius said on Thursday that, unlike previous negotiations, the Paris talks were not just “hot air” and Kerry was perhaps “confused”.

“Juristic will discuss the legal nature of an accord on whether it should be termed as a treaty or an international agreement,” Fabius told reporters.

“But the fact that a certain number of positions should have a practical effect and be legally binding is obvious so let’s not confuse things, which is perhaps what Mr Kerry has done,” said Fabius, who spoke to Kerry on Wednesday. Senior officials from almost 200 nations will meet from 30 November to 11 December to try to rise above the collapse of the last global climate-change conference in Copenhagen in 2009 and nail down a final agreement to limit global warming.

However, while the European Union and developing nations are urging an internationally binding text, others, such as the United States want only national enforcement.

Kerry said the text would not set “legally binding reduction targets like Kyoto”.

The Kyoto protocol, signed in 1997, imposed on all signatory countries an obligation to cut their carbon dioxide emissions by at least 5 percent in the period 2008-2012 versus 1990, a treaty that Washington refused to sign up to. “This is not a political discussion. This is a real accord with facts,” Fabius said. He acknowledged, however, that the US had to take account of domestic political sensitivities. — Reuters

UK leads on anti-corruption push, US and China lag: campaigners

LONDON — Britain has done more to tackle secretive company ownership practices which facilitate corruption than other leading economies, while the United States and China are falling short of their promises, a leading anti-corruption group said.

Britain has made good progress on making beneficial ownership information accessible, having legislated for a central registry of individuals who ultimately control companies, but its progress risks being undermined by continuing secrecy in its overseas territories, Transparency International said on Wednesday.

The United States and China, the world’s biggest economies, were among the worst performers in the campaign group’s ranking of beneficial ownership transparency among Group of 20 countries, which includes many of the world’s largest economies.

“Pick any major corruption scandal in recent history ... and you will find a secret company was used to pay a bribe, shift and hide stolen money, or buy luxury real estate in places like London and New York,” Transparency International Managing Director Cobus de Swardt said.

“It makes no sense that this gaping loophole for the corrupt remains open. What is stopping G20 countries from actually shutting down this vital avenue to corruption, despite promises to do so?” — Reuters
Greeks strike against austerity in test for Tsipras

ATHENS — Greek workers stayed at home yesterday to protest austerity measures, in the biggest domestic challenge to Alexis Tsipras’ government since he was elected in September on a promise to cushion the impact of years of economic hardship.

Many flights were grounded, hospitals ran on skeleton staff, ships were docked at port and public offices stayed shut across the country in the first nationwide walkout called by Greece’s largest private and public sector unions in a year.

Tsipras came to power in January promising to end the austerity imposed by Greece’s international lenders, then accepted the unpopular terms of a third bailout when faced with the prospect of an exit from the euro zone.

Talks with EU and IMF inspectors resumed in Athens on Wednesday as part of Greece’s first bailout review.

Tsipras was re-elected two months ago on a mandate to implement that agreement, vowing to work hard to buffer its impact, particularly on vulnerable Greeks.

Illustrating the political juggling act, Tsipras is trying to pull off, his own Syriza party came out in support of the strike, saying industrial action strengthened the government’s hand in talks with lenders.

The strike will be the people’s “response to the dogmatic insistence in dead-end and destructive policies that have squeezed out workers and have led young people to leave homes”, private-sector union GSEE said in a statement.

Central Athens was bustling with commercial activity early Thursday, with little sign of disruption. Two police buses were parked off a central square with a stack of riot shields resting against one. Greek mass protests in the past have been marked by violence. Some people opted to work. “If I don’t work, I don’t get paid,” said a 23-year-old waitress in downtown Athens.

Government spokeswoman Olga Gerovasili denied suggestions that leftist Syriza, which fought against austerity when it was in opposition, was trying to play both sides in supporting the anti-austerity strike.

The party has said it will implement its side of the bargain with lenders, but has long maintained that the bailout terms are excessively harsh. “We are implementing an agreement which includes (bailout) measures which are unfair,” Gerovasili said.

In the first major sign of disagreement since signing up to the new bailout accord, Greece and lenders are at odds over tightening the protection threshold for homeowners late with their mortgages.

At stake is the release of a two billion-euro tranche it needs to pay off state arrears and another 10 billion for the country’s four big banks.—Reuters

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CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
MV BANGSAOTONG VOY NO (175)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV BANGSAOTONG VOY NO (175) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 13.11.2015 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of AWPT(2) where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Shipping Agency Department
Myanmar Port Authority
Agent for: M/S Wongsamut Ocean Shipping Co Ltd

Phone No: 2301186

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
MV BEHSHAD VOY NO (1007)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV BEHSHAD VOY NO (1007) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 13.11.2015 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M/LP where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Shipping Agency Department
Myanmar Port Authority
Agent for: M/S Land and Sea Shipping Line

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
MV SHIPPIN No (044 7JR)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV SHIPPIN No (044 7JR) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 13.11.2015 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M/LP where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Shipping Agency Department
Myanmar Port Authority
Agent for: M/S CMA CGM

Phone No: 2301185

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Institut Français de Birmanie hosted a lively reggae-themed festival last Friday night, featuring performances by One Love – a local Bob Marley tribute band – and DJ Zaw Gyi DJ Akat, who spun controversial mixes of house, dubstep, reggae and tropical tunes. The crowd came together at one point to create some art dedicated to peace, which may or may not have worked. Since it was one of the warmest nights in recent memory, the music made the people sweat ‘til they couldn’t sweat no more.

The Spa Vila’ge, Yangon’s newest spa for men and women, held its opening party on 6 November, attracting locals, expats, and even some celebrities, including Cristina, Chit Snow Oo and Thiri Shin Thant. Around 200 guests attended the function, which served complimentary beer, wine and snacks.

The new spa is located in a tasteful villa just south of the Novotel Hotel in the Hledan area, in a secluded lot away from the road, offering a calm, green atmosphere.

The Spa Vila’ge features four spa rooms, one couple room with a Jacuzzi, three shampoo beds, a four-person mani-pedi room and a hair studio with four chairs. The spa is also child-friendly.

The spa uses high-end products, and its therapists are well-trained.

The spa is open from 9am to 9pm daily. Appointments can be made by calling 09420029606 or 0101512207. The spa also accepts appointments via Facebook message or by email at thespavillage@gmail.com.

On 21 November, The Startup Stage will celebrate Global Entrepreneurship Week 2015 by hosting a forum focusing on Myanmar’s most creative and promising startups. Participating entrepreneurs will explain how their new businesses will change Myanmar and influence its new, post-election economy. The event, in cooperation with USAID and Project Hub Yangon, will provide an opportunity for Myanmar’s leading entrepreneurs, hopeful entrepreneurs, to meet potential investors, mentors, cofounders, partners, and customers.

The event will be held at New Treasure Art Gallery – 84A Thanlwin Road, Golden Valley, Bahan Township. Drinks and will be served.

Please RSVP to projecthubyangon@gmail.com by November 19.

Want to have your event featured on our Social Page? Send a friendly email to jgold.news@gmail.com.
Blue Moon Diamond’ sells for record $48.4m

GENEVA — The rare and flawless “Blue Moon Di- amond” sold for 48.6 million Swiss francs ($48.4 million) to a Hong Kong buyer on Wednesday, setting a world record for a gemstone at auction, Sotheby’s said.

The cushion-shaped diamond, mounted on a ring, has the top grading of fancy vivid blue and weighs 12.03 carats. It had a pre-sale estimate of $35 million to $55 million.

“It is a new record price for any gemstone and per carat,” David Bennett, worldwide chairman of Sotheby’s international jewellery division, told a packed showroom in Geneva that erupted into applause.

The Hong Kong buyer promptly renamed it “The Blue Moon of Josephine”, Bennett told reporters, noting that it had also set a world record for any jewel at more than $4 million per carat.

At rival Christie’s on Tuesday, a large diamond of a rare pink hue fetched 28.725 million Swiss francs ($28.55 million). Christie’s said the stone, named “The Sweet Josephine” by the Hong Kong-based Chinese client who bought it, set a world record for any pink diamond ever offered at auction.

The same buyer was believed to have bought both star lots at the semi-annual sales in the Swiss city.—Reuters

U ‘Underground lake’ in Utsunomiya luring adventure-minded tourists

UTSUOMIYA — A former stone quarry site in the Oya area in Utsunomiya, Tochigi Prefecture, is attracting adventure-minded tourists as an “underground lake.”

A group of 13 men and women from Tokyo and other places arrived at a local hill aboard a minibus in late September. Quarry- ing operations ended there about 30 years ago.

The tourists wore life jackets and entered a tunnel through an entrance about 5 metres high and 10 metres wide.

It was so dark that they had to walk slowly with their hands on the shoulders of the person in front.

The air in the tunnel is wintry as temperatures remain stable at 5 to 10C all year round, according to tour operators. When the visitors reached the lake formed by rainwater and groundwater, they were stunned to see a cavern illuminated with lights placed on the ground. “Wow, it’s like a holy temple,” one of them said.

With two tour guides, they explored the lake aboard two rubber boats for about 20 minutes. The deepest part of the lake is 4 metres deep, said Nao Muromachi, 38, one of the guides.

The entire digging site is estimated to be as big as 2,000 square metres. Muromachi said, adding that no one knows the full layout of the tunnels because they were dug fairly randomly.

The former mining site was pitch-dark and the lights carried by the guides were the sole tools enabling visitors to see inside.

“I think there’s no other place as dark as this,” one of the visitors, Masaharu Nishi, 43, murmured to his wife.

After exploring, the visitors got off the boats and walked through a narrow space to reach a place where light came through a hole above them. They also saw a large vertical pit with a depth of about 30 metres which contained lots of garbage, such as automobile tires and window frames, dropped through the hole.

The garbage has been left in the pit because “we want visitors to see reality in addition to enjoying the exploration,” said 37-year-old Miwa Tezuka, the other guide. The pitch darkness in the cavern evidently sharpened the participants’ visual and auditory senses, enabling them to recognize the sound of the wind and chirping of insects when they came of the former quarry site. Someone asked whether there were living things in the cavern. “It’s said that no living things are there,” Tezuka said. “But who knows?”

Stones quarried in the Oya area are a type of pumiceuff. As they can be readily processed, they have been widely used to build storage houses for foodstuffs or as exterior walls of houses.

During peak demand, there were more than 200 quaries in the area. But the number has decreased to less than 10 at present as inexpensive alternative materials have become available. As one old mining site has been turned into a history museum, local people began considering how to utilize other sites. As a result, a group of local businesses launched exploration tours in the underground lake last year.

The group conducts four to six tours per month. When tour schedules are posted on its website, they are fully booked within a few hours, a group official said.—Kyodo News

Visitors take a raft tour on an underground lake in Utsunomiya, Tochigi Prefecture, eastern Japan.

Photo: Kyodo News

MRTV News Channel in Brief

(13-11-2015, Friday)

6:00 am • Paritta by Venerable Mingun Sayadaw 6:35 am • Physical Exercises 6:50 am • Documentary 7:35 am • People’s Talks 8:00 am • News/International News 8:35 am • Current Affairs 9:00 am • News/International News 10:40 am • MRTV’s Youth Programme 11:30 am • Head Line News 11:35 am • Science and Technology Programme 12:00 noon • News/International News/Weather Report 1:20 pm • TV Drama Series 2:00 pm • Talk on Old Film (Part-2) 2:35 pm • Myanmar Traditional Boxing 3:00 pm • News/Weather Report 3:40 pm • Clever 4:00 pm • News/Weather Report 5:30 pm • Head Line News 5:35 pm • Hyper Sports 6:00 pm • News/Weather Report

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Sharapova ready to play underdog against Czechs in Fed Cup final

PRAGUE — Maria Sharapova is happy to cast herself as the underdog in her first Fed Cup final appearance when Russia seeks to take the trophy from holders Czech Republic this weekend.

The Russian team, led by the world number four, is looking to prevent the Czechs from claiming a fourth title in five years, a feat last accomplished by Russia in 2004-08.

“We are coming into this final as the underdogs,” said Sharapova when asked about playing in Prague, where the Czech team anchored by Petra Kvitova and Lucie Safarova won the title a year ago. “We expect a stadium full of Czechs. I’m sure there will be some Russian flags flying around,” added the winner of five grand slam events.

“As we are the underdogs, our full concentration will be on the opponent ahead of us and the matches ahead of us and not so much about what is going on around us,” she said.

The teams last met in the final in 2011 when the Czech Republic defeated Russia in Moscow to lift the Fed Cup trophy for the first time since 1988 when it was still part of communist Czechoslovakia. The Czechs repeated as champions in 2012, while in 2013 Italy defeated Russia in the final.

Russia earned a finals berth after Elena Vesnina and Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova triumphed in the decisive doubles match against Germany in the semi-finals. Sharapova and Ekaterina Makarova, who both missed the last round, will join the team against the Czechs.

“We have a great team. All the girls are playing really good,” captain Anastasia Myskina said.

Hobbled by injury, Sharapova played her first matches since July at the WTA finals in Singapore last month and was beaten in the semi-finals by world number six Kvitova. She has also lost in 2015 to Safarova, who cracked the top 10 this year.

Sharapova said playing against them again was a great way to finish the year.

“It will be a great opportunity and a great challenge,” she said. “It is definitely a very new experience (in the finals)... I hope we as a team can have a good weekend.” — Reuters

Rosberg out to deny Hamilton a first in Brazil

SAO PAULO — Triple world champion Lewis Hamilton has never won the Brazilian Grand Prix and Mercedes team mate Nico Rosberg intends to keep it that way for another year.

“With all due respect to his ambitions, I want to win there as well,” said the German, last year’s winner at Interlagos from pole position after he had lapped fastest in every practice session.

With Hamilton feeling sufficiently upbeat about his flight to Brazil by a day on doctors’ orders, Rosberg will fancy his chances of a Latin American double after his recent triumph in Mexico.

With both titles decided, Hamilton having wrapped up his third Formula One championship in Texas last month after Mercedes retained the constructors’ crown in Russia, Sunday’s race is all about the winner on the day.

Hamilton has now tried eight times to win in Sao Paulo, his best result coming last year when he was runner-up, and has only twice finished on the podium.

But he did clinch his first title there in 2008, when he finished fifth with a pass at the end of the last lap, and the race has a special place in his heart as home to his late boyhood idol Ayrton Senna.

“It was a dream of mine to race in Sao Paulo when I was younger and I always feel his presence when I’m there,” the Briton said this week.

“If I can change that this weekend it would be a salute to him and another highlight to add to this amazing year, so I’ll be going all out to make that happen,” he added.

Rosberg will again be the man to beat, the German chasing a fifth successive pole position to again deny Hamilton a career 50th, even if his team mate has no pressure on him.

The German said he was “pumped” after Mexico, where he completed his first career hat-trick of pole, fastest lap and victory.

“Last year was a good battle with Lewis, when I came out on top. Standing on the top step after a hard-earned win, following in the footsteps of so many great drivers who have won there and with the passionate Brazilian crowd cheering on — that was a great feeling,” he said.

“I’d love to experience that again, so the aim is to put on another good show for the fans and to carry my form from Mexico into this race.”

Ferrari’s Sebastian Vettel, who won in Brazil in 2013 and 2010, can still deny Rosberg second place in the championship and will be determined to finish strongly after both he and team mate Kimi Raikkonen retired in Mexico.

That failure ended a record run of 183 races with at least one finish for the Scuderia, who are likely to end the season strongly after both he and team mate Kimi Raikkonen retired in Mexico.

Mercedes Formula One driver Nico Rosberg of Germany. PHOTO: REUTERS

Putin says Russia needs own investigation into doping allegations

SOCHI — President Vladimir Putin said on Wednesday Russia needed to conduct its own investigation into allegations its athletes had systematically taken performance-enhancing substances and that someone needed to take personal responsibility for the problem.

Putin, in his first comments since an independent commission from the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) levelled its accusations, said Russia needed to cooperate with international organisations looking into the issue as openly as it could.

“I ask the minister of sport and all our colleagues who are linked in one way or another with sport to pay this issue the greatest possible attention,” Putin said ahead of a meeting with sports officials in the Black Sea resort of Sochi. — Reuters

FIFA World Cup Qualifying Football Match For Russia 2018
(12-11-2015)
S Korea 4-0 Myanmar

S Korean Kim Young-Gwon (2nd L) celebrates with team mates after scoring the opening goal during their FIFA World Cup 2018 Qualifying football match against Myanmar at My Dinh National Stadium in Hanoi, Vietnam, 12 October 2015.

S Korea won 4-0. — Reuters

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