Building Better Roads
Arterial road to link up Myanmar over 20 years

Aye Min Soe

THE Ministry of Construction is planning an integrated arterial road network that would be built over the next 20 years and includes a highway between Yangon and Myitkyina, said a ministry spokesperson at a press conference in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

A master plan for Myanmar Expressway and Arterial Roads was completed with joint cooperation between Korea International Cooperation Agency and the Ministry of Construction from as part of KOICA’s grant programme.

Presented to the ministry in May, the arterial road network development project contains 7x5 Expressway Network spanning 9,470km, a Main Arterial Road Network (a union highway spanning 13,224km), and a Sub-Arterial Road Network (State/Region Road: 11,684 km) with a total length of 34,378km.

Over the next 20 years, the road will be developed in stages laid out by the master plan.

The master plan project also includes a feasibility study for improving roads between Monywa and Gangaw (180km).

The Ministry is planning to request a concessional loan from Korea and other donor countries for the construction of new roads spanning 15.8 km, including Pon Taung tunnel and Ponnya Taung tunnel.

The Ministry is also planning to issue rules for construction work-site safety and will take actions against construction companies that fail to comply.

The ministry has borrowed Japanese Yen equivalent to US$ 208 million at 0.01 percent interest rate from Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) for 40 years for the construction of road and bridges, $138 million at 0.01 percent interest rate from Korea to build the yet-to-exist Yangon-Dala bridge and $80 million from Asia Development Bank to upgrade Maubin-Kyaiklat Road in Ayeyawady Region.

The ministry is also making efforts to obtain a $120 million loan from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to upgrade a 66.4 km section of road connecting the towns of Eindu and Kawkareik in Kayin state, the missing link of the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) East-West Corridor.

The ministry will finish 110 bridges in the current fiscal year, which ends on 31 March.

Heed children’s voices
Delivery on promises, children urge future parliamentarians

Ye Myint

CHILDREN met with parliamentarians from political parties that won seats in the 2015 general elections yesterday, urging them to fulfill earlier pledges made to advance child welfare in Myanmar.

Children also proposed their own recommendations to the newly-elected politicians about possible policies for improving the lives of children.

They also called for an end to the violation of child rights, such as forced labour and exploitation.

“Increased commodity prices are linked to child labour and school drop-out rates,” said Ma Swe Zin Htike, a children who took part in the event. She said that a reduction of commodity prices would allow children in poor households to remain in school.

Adequate legal protection must be available for children who are forced to work for their survival, said a young person called Wai Yan Paein Min.

“Politicians need to turn their commitments into actions; not only for the children but also for the country,” said Mr Bertrand Bannvel, UNICEF Representative to Myanmar. He said he hoped that the rights of all children in Myanmar will be a focus among the country’s new parliamentarians.

In August this year, UNICEF called on campaigning politicians to put children at the centre of their election pledges.
Pyithu Hluttaw roundup

A representative from the 13th Pyithu Hluttaw (Lower House) highlighted that the Rule of Law and Tranquility Committee was unable to process more than 3,700 complaints from the public due to the absence of representatives during the session. The lower house session then approved the bill amending the Myanmar Lighthouse Act.

The Tranquility Committee was unable to process more than 3,700 complaints from the public due to the absence of representatives during the session.

A discussion was held about the importance of the incumbent government’s pledges being followed through by the incoming government.

—Myanmar News Agency

UEC announces two winning Pyithu Hluttaw candidates in Kachin State

The Union Election Commission yesterday issued Announcement 92/2015 that two Pyithu Hluttaw candidates in Kachin State were elected as the winners in their respective constituencies.

The elected candidates were:

- U Chan Tan Khin, 1/NaMaNa (N) 000343, of Union Solidarity and Development Party in Khaunglanphu Constituency, Kachin State, and one from Lisu National Development Party in Khaunglanphu Constituency.

UEC announces winning Amyotha Hluttaw candidate in Kachin State

The Union Election Commission yesterday issued Announcement 93/2015 that U J Yaw Wu, 1/PaTaAh (N) 032348, of National Unity Party, was elected as the winning Amyotha Hluttaw candidate in Kachin State constituency No 1 in the 2015 general election under Section 49 (b) of the Amyotha Hluttaw Election law.

UEC announces eight winning state and region candidates in Kachin State

The Union Election Commission yesterday issued Announcement 94/2015 that eight Region/State Hluttaw candidates in Kachin State were elected as the winning representatives in their respective constituencies in the general election under Section 49 (b) of the Pyithu Hluttaw Election law.

The elected candidates were:

- U Pe Than of Myebon Constituency, 1/PaTaAh (N) 000343, of Union Solidarity and Development Party.
- Deputy Minister for Education Dr Zaw Min Aung, 1/NaMaNa (N) 000343, of Union Solidarity and Development Party in Nagmon Constituency, Kachin State, and one from Lisu National Development Party in Khaunglanphu Constituency.
- Two USDP candidates were elected for Nagmon Constituency No 1 and No 2 in Kachin State, one candidate from LNDP in Khaunglanphu-1 constituency and one from NLD in Khaunglanphu-2 constituency for the region and state parliaments. Four NLD candidates were elected for Bamar, Lisu, Shan and Rawan ethnic seats in the region and state parliaments. In total, the UEC has announced 323 candidates for Pyithu Hluttaw, 168 for Amyotha Hluttaw, 630 for Region/State Hluttaw and 29 ethnic seats for Region/State Hluttaw.

Trade directorate, Frederick Norman Foundation sign MoU

The Directorate of Trade under the Ministry of Commerce and the Frederick Norman Foundation of Germany inked a memorandum of understanding in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. Union Minister for Commerce U Win Myint gave a speech during the signing ceremony.

The minister said the Frederick Norman Foundation of Germany has contributed to Myanmar by ensuring a smooth trade process, rule of law and progress in the country’s reforms. He said the signing of the MoU will strengthen their bilateral cooperation. Director-General U Naing Aung of the Directorate of Trade and regional director of the foundation Mr Siegfried Herzog signed the MoU on the promotion of cooperation.

—Myanmar News Agency
President in Malaysia for ASEAN Summit

PRESIDENT U Thein Sein left Nay Pyi Taw yesterday to attend the 27th ASEAN Summit as well as related summits in the Malaysian capital of Kuala Lumpur. The president was seen off by Vice Presidents Dr Sai Maung Kham and U Nyan Tun, Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services and Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win, union ministers, deputy ministers and Malaysia’s Ambassador to Myanmar.

The president, together with delegation members Union Ministers U Soe Thane, U Ye Htut and U Zeyar Aung and officials were welcomed in Kuala Lumpur by Malaysian Minister of Women, Family and Community Development YB Dato Sri Rohani Binti Abdul Karim with Guard of Honour at the airport in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Photo: IPRD

UNDP discusses parliamentary research with speaker

SPEAKER of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Pyithu Hluttaw Thu-Ra U Shwe Mann met with the United Nations Development Program and Joint Coordination Committee for Inter-Parliamentary Development at Hluttaw complex in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

The speaker said that after parliament’s term comes to an end on 30 January, Myanmar has an opportunity to strengthen the efficacy of parliament.

The speaker thanked the UNDP and international donors for their ongoing assistance with Myanmar’s parliament, which he said strives hard to serve the interests of the people.

UNDP Resident Representative Mr Toily Kurbanov spoke at the event, while officials from international organisations explained the research being undertaken with a view to improving the functions of parliament.

The meeting was also attended by Chairperson of Pyithu Hluttaw Rule of Law and Tranquility Committee Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, who is also the leader of the incoming National League for Democracy, the Chairman of Joint Coordination Committee for Inter-Parliamentary Development U Hla Myint Oo and officials of UNDP and international donor organisations.

—Myanmar News Agency

Heed children’s voices

Delivery on promises, children urge future parliamentarians

>> From page 1

A roundtable event was also held to strengthen public understanding and adherence to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, improving children’s health and access to education and to eliminate child labour.

A monitoring process is set to be launched on whether the commitments made by politicians before and after elections are followed through, said U Myo Myint Tun, programme manager for child rights and protection at Plan International (Myanmar).

Yesterday’s event was held at Novotel Yangon Max in Yangon which was jointly organised by UNICEF, the NGO Child Rights Working Group (NCRWG), and Myanmar National Human Rights Commission, in cooperation with the Union Election Commission.

According to UNICEF, more than 4.4 million children between 5 and 18 years of age do not attend school in Myanmar – which represents 34 percent of all Myanmar children. Another 1.6 million children aged between 10 and 18 are labourers and 10 million live in poverty.

—Myawady

Tatmadaw seizes KIA camp

In response, the army combed the area of the KIA, launching an attack on the KIA camp starting from 15 November. Air and artillery fire was used.

Tatmadaw columns occupied the KIA camp, seizing over 90 landmines, one motorcycle, one generator, one dynamo, three pump motors, one chainsaw, one barrel of gasoline, one barrel of diesel and documents.

—Myawady

Photo shows a camp of KIA occupied by Tatmadaw columns.

Photo: Myawady

Photo shows a camp of KIA occupied by Tatmadaw columns.

Photo: Myanmar
Mandalay to hold walkathons in December

MANDALAY Region Government will hold public walkathons on Saturdays in December.

Participants will gather at the junction of 26th and 73rd streets in Mandalay to walk along the route to the junction of 66th and 19th streets.

Departmental personnel, students, teachers, faculty members and members of social organisations are encouraged to participate.

Participants will take part in exercises at the grounds of Mandalay Education College and Mandalay Thiri Stadium after the walking from first to third Saturday of December. On the last Saturday of December, physical exercises will take place at Bahtoo Stadium.

Township authorities will also organise volleyball, sepak takraw, table tennis, badminton, futsal and athletics events on Saturdays and Sundays. Those interested can sign up at the Township Sports and Physical Education Departments.—Tin Maung

Fire at oil factory causes $11,000 in damage

A FIRE that engulfed Shwe Groundnut Cooking Oil factory on Prince Mekkhaya Road in Hlinethaya Industrial Zone on Thursday caused K15 million (USD$11,600) in damage but did result in any injuries.

The fire broke out at around 4 am and destroyed a steel structure building, oil production machinery, 2,000 bags of groundnut, 1,000 bags of groundnut expeller cake and cooking oil.

The fire was caused by electrical problems at the control board. Hlinethaya Myoma Police Station has opened an investigation into factory manager U Myint Thein, which could lead to a law suit.

A total of 300 Fire Services Department personnel, 180 auxiliary fire brigade members and 50 Red Cross members put out the fire at 6.10 am with the use of 55 fire trucks, said Deputy Director U Thawda of Yangon Region Fire Services Department said.—Zaw Gyi (Panita)

Martial arts course held in Meiktila

MYANMAR Martial Arts Federation and Meiktila Township Martial Arts Sub-committee held a referee and coaching course at a gymnasium in Meiktila, Mandalay Region, from 17 to 21 November.

Mandalay Region Minister for Social Affairs Dr Win Hlaing and Deputy Director of Mandalay Region Sports and Physical Education Department U Wai Zin visited the training session, and the minister provided K500,000 to fund the training session.—Tin Maung

Residents in flood-hit villages receive financial assistance

FINANCIAL assistance was given to residents in 24 houses damaged by heavy rains in July and August in Hilaung, Chat and Khonein villages in Mindat Township.

Township Administrator U Ngwe Dor on presented cash assistance to the villagers on 18 November. Township officials inspected the area where Hilaung village will be rebuilt.

“We thank government organisations and non-governmental organizations for their donations to our village. Their donations contributed much to our villagers for reestablishment,” village administrator U Awm Naing said.—Mindat District IPRD

Buddhist monks recite Pathana treatises

THE recitation of the Maha Pathana treatise prior to the ceremony of enshrining religious relics and consecration was held yesterday at Maha Thakayayanti Pagoda on Po Zaung Hill in Ottarathiri Township, Nay Pyi Taw Council Area.

The president abbot of Maha Withutayama Zaygon Monastery in Pyinmana Abhidhaja Maha Rattha Guru Bhaddanta Kavisara and members of the Sangha recited Metta Sutta.

Nay Pyi Taw Council member U Than Haiy offered books on Pathana treatises and donated provisions to the Buddhist monks.

Members of the Sangha will recite Pathana treatises from 20 to 24 November.—Shwe Ye Yint
Two Koreas set to hold talks next week

SEOUL — North and South Korea are set to hold talks next week, with the South having accepted a North Korean proposal made earlier Friday to hold such meeting on Thursday, according to South Korea’s Unification Ministry.

At the upcoming working-level talks at the truce village of Panmunjeom, the two sides are expected to hold discussions to prepare for higher-level dialogue aimed at improving inter-Korean relations after tensions had heightened in August.

The North’s overture for the talks was made in response to Seoul’s offers made by the South in September and October.

Earlier Friday, North Korea made the offer to South Korea to hold working-level talks in a notice that the North’s Secretariat of the Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of Korea sent to the South Korean Unification Ministry through Panmunjeom, according to the North’s official Korean Central News Agency.

Under the offer, the two sides will hold “working-level contact for the talks between authorities of the north and the south of Korea at the Thongil House in the north side of Panmunjeom on 26 November,” according to the report.

The talks, if realised as proposed, would be a follow-up to an agreement reached in late August between the two Koreas that pulled them back from the brink of armed conflict.

Tensions had escalated after South Korea accused the North of planting landmines in the demilitarized zone, seriously injuring two South Korean soldiers in early August. The two sides also fired artillery shells at each other later that month.

The two sides are still technically in a state of war as the 1950-53 Korean War ended in an armistice and not a permanent peace treaty. —Kyodo News

China’s navy ‘restrained’ in face of US provocations: admiral

SHANGHAI — China’s top admiral said his forces have shown “enormous restraint” in the face of US provocations in the South China Sea, while warning they stand ready to respond to repeated breaches of Chinese sovereignty.

Beijing, which claims almost the entire energy-rich South China Sea through which $5 trillion in ship-borne trade passes yearly, has stepped up a programme of land reclamation and construction in disputed islands and reefs that has sparked concern in the Asia-Pacific region.

The United States has called for a halt to China’s artificial island building, and in recent weeks has tried to signal its determination to challenge Beijing over the disputed sea by sending military ships and planes near the islands.

“The Chinese navy has closely monitored the provocative actions of the United States and issued several warnings, while exercising enormous restraint in the interests of safeguarding the overall situation in bilateral relations,” said Wu Shengli, commander of the People’s Liberation Army Navy, according to a report on the defence ministry’s website late on Thursday. “If the United States carries out repeated provocations despite China’s opposition, we have the ability to defend our national sovereignty and security.”

Wu made the comments in a meeting in Beijing on Thursday with Admiral Scott Swift, commander of the United States’ Pacific fleet.

Vietnam, the Philippines, Taiwan, Malaysia and Brunei also claim parts of the South China Sea.

In the Philippines on Wednesday, US President Barack Obama said China must stop the land reclamation. Obama’s main Asia policy adviser said he planned to raise the South China Sea dispute at another summit meeting this weekend in Malaysia.

Swift was in Shanghai earlier this week where the USS Stethem, an Arleigh-Burke class destroyer, made a port call. It was the third visit first to China by a US navy vessel this year and the first since a similar guided missile destroyer, the USS Lassen, angered Beijing by sailing near one of China’s man-made islands late last month to challenge the 12-nautical-mile territorial limits China claims around the artificial islands.—Reuters

Philippine senator Poe widens lead in presidential polls

MANILA — A Philippine senator abandoned in a church when a baby has widened her lead as the top contender to succeed President Benigno Aquino at elections next May, an opinion poll showed yesterday.

The election will be closely watched by investors, who fear the political succession in one of the world’s most corrupt nations despite China’s opposition, while warning they stand ready to respond to repeated breaches of Chinese sovereignty.

The result cements Poe’s position as front-runner to become the third woman leader of the poor Southeast Asian state. Poe was adopted by a popular movie star couple, but her election as a senator was challenged by a losing candidate who questioned her citizenship.

21 percent. Poe, the adopted daughter of a late popular movie action hero, this week defeated a legal bid to unseat her from the Senate because she was not a Filipino citizen, boosting her chance to win other cases seeking to block her presidential run.

The poll result showed people had not been swayed by the negative propaganda against Poe, her spokesman said. “Instead, the Filipino public decided to focus on the message of good governance, inclusive growth and improving competitiveness of our industries,” Rex Garchalian told broadcaster GMA News.

The Cabinet Office had been working to revise the standards after disaster management minister Taro Kono instructed it to do so in late on Thursday. “If the United States carries out repeated provocations despite China’s opposition, we have the ability to defend our national sovereignty and security.”

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commander of the air force of the Chinese people’s liberation army Ma Xiexian and commander of the Chinese people’s liberation army (PLA) Navy Wu Shengli. photo: reuters

Japan toughens rules for nuclear ship accidents

TOKYO — The Japanese government yesterday lowered the level of radiation that triggers the evacuation of residents in case of an accident on a nuclear vessel, bringing it to the same level as in accidents at nuclear power plants.

Under the new rules, residents will start evacuating when the radiation level exceeds 5 microsieverts per hour in the area near a nuclear-powered aircraft carrier or submarine is located, significantly lower than the previous standard of 100 microsieverts per hour.

The government also revised its emergency manual to reflect the change, and local authorities will now order or advise residents to evacuate based on these new rules.

Japanese cities hosting US Marine Corps bases with nuclear vessels are Yokosuka, Kanagawa Prefecture, Sasebo, Nagasaki Prefecture, and Uruma, Okinawa Prefecture.

The Cabinet Office had been working to revise the standards after disaster management minister Taro Kono instructed it to do so in October.

The government will also consider making further amendments as there are still discrepancies between the rules for nuclear vessel accidents and nuclear plant accidents, with people within a 30-kilometre radius of a nuclear plant urged to stay indoors in case an accident occurs, while the radius is set at 3 km for a nuclear vessel accident.

The evacuation rules for nuclear power plant accidents had been revised in the wake of meltdown at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant in 2011. —Kyodo News

commander of the air force of the Chinese people’s liberation army Ma Xiexian and commander of the Chinese people’s liberation army (PLA) Navy Wu Shengli. photo: reuters

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Summit host Malaysia yet to confirm information on suicide bombers

SYDNEY — As the snow falls in Beijing, Sydney is sweltering in heat with the mercury set to test temperature records as Austral- ia’s heatwave passes.

The forecasted 41 degree Celsius temperature on Friday is less than one degree short of the November record of 41.8 degrees Celsius set in 1982. The extreme heat has been caused by a cold front moving up from the south of Australia, bringing stormy weather to the southern parts of the nation, meeting a sluggish high pressure system over the Tasman sea that is drawing hot, dry air from central Australia.

“It’s a classic scenario of very hot and dry westerly winds with no sea breeze, followed by a blustery southerly that brings up a sea breeze,” Bureau of Meteorology NSW Severe Weather Manager Michael Logan said in a statement yesterday.

“The severe weather manager at Weatherzone told Xinhua temperatures will “plummet” by 10 to 12 degrees when the “south- easterly” hits at around 2100 local time (AEDT).

“It’s a classic scenario of very hot and dry westerly winds with no sea breeze...”
—Severe Weather Manager Michael Logan
Bureau of Meteorology NSW

Authorities have been urge- ing local residents to avoid strenuous activity and drink plenty of water to avoid serious harm such as heatstroke and dehydration, suggesting they play it cool like the chimps at Taronga zoo.

The chimp santuraries started the day with ice blocks for breakfast, while zoo keepers have hidden ice tea flavoured and raspberry flavoured treats filled with fruits and vegetables around the exhibit for them to discover throughout the morning. Firefighters have raised an alert level at Firemark as the high alert is the hot and dry conditions bring extreme fire condi- tions to New South Wales, where a total fire ban is now in place until the threat eases. Local au- thorities are investigating a small bushfire in the Blue Mountains on the outskirts of Sydney overnight after it spread over from an area that was burning before it took hold. Meanwhile the estimated damage from the bushfire in Esquerrane, Western Australia that has killed 23 peo- ple and destroyed 14 buildings has increased to 132,000 hectares yesterday. Damage assessments are ongoing as access to the fire ground becomes easier and prop- erty owners report back, a De- partment of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) spokesman told local media yesterday.—Xinhua

KUALA LUMPUR — The chief of Malaysian police said late Thursday that they have yet to confirm information about the presence of alleged Islamic State suicide bombers in Kuala Lum- pur, where leaders from 18 coun- tries including the United States, Japan and China gather this weekend for a series of meetings.

In a press statement, Inspec- tor General of Police Khalid Abu Bakar responded to the disclosure by Malaysia’s, an online news daily, of an internal police circu- lar warning of the presence of su- cide bombers in Kuala Lumpur and Sabah state in the Borneo. Khalid had earlier confirmed the authenticity of the circular.

“There have been reports of imminent terrorist incursions in Mal- aysia,” he said. “At this point, I would like to underline that they have yet to be confirmed.”

The circular, dated Monday, was reportedly originated from Sabah police based on intel- ligence gathered from a meeting held Sunday between the IS and its Philippine-based allies, the Abu Sayyaf terrorist group and the Moro National Liberation Front, who is fighting for an in- dependent Muslim state.

The meeting in Sulu, south- ern Philippines was attended by “14 leaders from the three outfits and 50 members of Abu Sayyaf and separate armed group or Abu Sayyaf and Sabah state in the Borneo,” Khalid had earlier confirmed the authenticity of the circular.

They reportedly resolved among others, to recruit more members and to dispatch their followers to Sabah and Kuala Lumpur.

The circular said that Abu Sayyaf and IS already have eight suicide bombers in Sabah and 10 in Kuala Lumpur and called for tightening of surveillance and pat- rol, according to Malaysia’s.

“This suicide bombers underwent military training in Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as prepared to receive orders from their leaders to launch at- tacks/bombings,” the online daily quoted the circular as saying.

Malaysia has already been placed on high security alert for inter- national leaders’ meetings this weekend in the wake of a re- cent spate of attacks around the world including those in Paris last week.

“Following the recent spate of terrorist attacks in France, Egypt and the Philippines, the Royal Malaysia Police have intensified the existing com- prehensive security arrangements for the ASEAN and related mit- imates in Kuala Lumpur. Security checks in all entry and exit points to Malaysia have been stepped up,” Khalid said in the statement.

Malaysia, which holds the rotating chair of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, will be hosting the second and last summit of the year on Saturday. The first summit was held in April also at the same venue but security then was not as tight. The ASEAN leaders will later hold their annual talks, sep- arately and jointly, with their dialogue partners, Australia, Chi- na, India, Japan, New Zealand, South Korea, Russia and the United States.

The joint summit of 18 leaders, known as the East Asia Summit, will take place on Sun- day. Among the participants are US President Barack Obama, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Chinese Premier Li Keqiang.

Malaysian Defence Minis- ter Hishammuddin Hussein on Monday voiced concern over conflict zones in Southeast Asia that are hotbeds for militancy that could impact Malaysia.

“If see certain areas in this region are not being managed well, particularly southern Thai- land and southern Philippines, not to mention the free move- ment of peoples and smuggling of weapons. These are all issues which need to be taken seriously based on recent developments in Europe and the Middle East,” he said.

The Friday terror attacks in Paris that killed over 120 people were “shocking and despicable,” he added, “Do not think that a similar fate won’t befall us in Malaysia.”—Kyodo News

Manila asks Japan for ships to patrol South China Sea

MANILA — Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe may consider a request from the Philippines for large coastguard ships to patrol the disputed South China Sea, after the two allies reached a deal on defence equipment and technol- ogy.

China has overlapping claims with Brunei, Malaysia, the Philip- pines, Taiwan and Vietnam in the South China Sea, through which $5 trillion in ship-borne trade passes every year.

The Philippines is the South- east Asian nation most at odds with China over the South China Sea. Tokyo has no claims in the waterway, but worries about Chi- na’s growing military reach into sea lanes through which much of Japan’s ship-borne trade passes.

The deal will mark the first time Japan has agreed to direct- ly donate military equipment to another country, and is the latest example of Abe’s more muscular security agenda.

“A recent request from President Benigno Aquino regarding the provision of large patrol vessels to the Philippine Coast Guard and Japan would like to consider the specifics,” Abe said in a statement.

The two leaders met on Thursday night at the close of the Asia-Pacific Economic Coopera- tion (APEC) summit in Manila. Abe said he welcomed the deal and “agreed to work together for the early signing of the agree- ment and the realisation of coop- eration in defence equipment”.

There have been media re- ports that Tokyo would supply Manila with three used Beechcraft TC-90 King Air aircraft suitable for maritime surveillance in the South China Sea. Manila had also sought Lockheed Martin subma- rine-hunting P-3C patrol planes.

Rather than challenge Beijing directly by sending warships or planes to patrol the South China Sea, Japan is helping to build the military capacity of friendly na- tions with claims to parts of the waterway.

“These negotiations take some time,” a senior Japanese of- ficial told Reuters, saying it could take one or two years before the two sides sign a deal on defence equipment and technology.

“Japan wants an assurance that any equipment it will give will not be transferred to a third country.”

To allow the donation, Japa- nese lawmakers will either have to tweak laws on sales of govern- ment-owned equipment, or set up a separate financing mechanism.

Japan is also building 40- metre (131-ft) -long vessels for the Philippine coastguard.

Japan’s Prime Minister Shinzo Abe is greeted by Filipino President Benigno Aquino III as he arrives for the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) leaders meeting in Manila, Philippines, on 19 November. Photo: REUTERS

Manila needs 100-metre (328-ft) -long patrol ships.

Japan changed defence poli- cy this year in a shift that could let troops fight overseas for the first time since 1945.

The move was welcomed by the United States, but fed con- cer in China, where memories of Japan’s wartime aggression run deep.—Reuters

A police officer patrols outside the venue for the 27th Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) summit in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, on 20 November. Photo: REUTERS

April also at the same venue but security then was not as tight. The ASEAN leaders will later hold their annual talks, sep- arately and jointly, with their dialogue partners, Australia, Chi- na, India, Japan, New Zealand, South Korea, Russia and the United States.

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April also at the same venue but security then was not as tight. The ASEAN leaders will later hold their annual talks, sep- arately and jointly, with their dialogue partners, Australia, Chi- na, India, Japan, New Zealand, South Korea, Russia and the United States.

The joint summit of 18 leaders, known as the East Asia Summit, will take place on Sun- day. Among the participants are US President Barack Obama, Japanese Prime Minister Shin- zo Abe and Chinese Premier Li Keqiang.

Malaysian Defence Minis- ter Hishammuddin Hussein on Monday voiced concern over conflict zones in Southeast Asia that are hotbeds for militancy that could impact Malaysia.

“I see certain areas in this region are not being managed well, particularly southern Thai- land and southern Philippines, not to mention the free move- ment of peoples and smuggling of weapons. These are all issues which need to be taken seriously based on recent developments in Europe and the Middle East,” he said.

The Friday terror attacks in Paris that killed over 120 people were “shocking and despicable,” he added, “Do not think that a similar fate won’t befall us in Malaysia.”—Kyodo News
**John Lewis weekly department store sales up 1.5pc**

LONDON — John Lewis, Britain’s biggest department store group, said yesterday its sales rose 1.5 percent year-on-year in the week to 14 November, delivering its first 100 million pound week of the festive trading season.

The employee owned firm said, however, that unseasonably mild weather continued to soften sales of cold weather lines and outerwear, with overall fashion sales up 0.8 percent.

Homeware sales rose 2.8 percent, while sales in the electricals and home technology (EHT) department increased 1.6 percent.

John Lewis is the only major British retailer to publish weekly sales data, providing the most up-to-date snapshot of shopper health.

British consumers have seen a pick-up in wages, falling prices for goods in stores and record-low interest rates that markets do not expect to rise until late next year, or even 2017.

However, on Thursday official data showed British retail sales fell more than expected last month after surging in September, hurt by the biggest drop in food store sales since May 2014.

Separately on Thursday discount retailer Poundland (PLND.L) warned of “highly volatile” trading conditions, sending its shares tumbling.—Reuters

**Israel, Palestinians sign 3G mobile network agreement**

GAZA — Israel and the Palestinian Authority signed an agreement to allow a long-awaiting third-generation (3G) mobile network in Gaza and the West Bank, they said on Thursday.

Israel said the decision was made after it concluded a security examination as well as other work with the Communications Ministry. Under interim peace accords, Israel effectively has final say in allocating radio frequencies in the West Bank, where the Palestinian Authority exercises limited self-rule.

Palestinian mobile operators Paltel PALTEL.PL and Wataniya WATA.PL, still using 2G technology and losing money, want to offer 3G to meet surging demand for data bandwidth for social media applications.

3G is mobile phone technology that allows users to make calls, texts and access the internet. 2G allows calls and limited data transmission.

Thursday’s agreement “will enable the companies benefiting from the service to begin coordination with the Palestinian ministry of telecommunication to begin the implementation of the agreement on the ground,” said Hussen Al-Sheikh, Palestinian Minister of Civil Affairs, in a statement posted by the Palestinian official news agency WAFA.

In the past, Israel has told the Palestinians there were not enough frequencies for 3G and that they should lease access to them from Israeli providers.

Earlier this year, Israel’s Communications Ministry allocated a number of high-speed 4G frequencies to Israeli mobile phone operators.—Reuters

**Tech group rejects post-Paris call for data encryption ‘backdoors’**

WASHINGTON — A leading US-based technology industry group on Thursday, in its first statement since last week’s Paris attacks, rejected calls to give US law enforcement authorities backdoor keys to let them circumvent encryption technology for cellphones.

Weakening encryption to help the government monitor electronic communications in the name of national security “simply does not make sense,” the Information Technology Industry Council said in a statement released to Reuters.

“Af the horrific tragedy like the Paris attacks, we naturally search for solutions: weakening encryption is not a solution,” said Dean Garfield, president of the Washington-based organisation, which represents Apple (AAPL.O), Google (GOOGL.O), Microsoft (MSFT.O) and dozens of other blue-chip tech companies.

The attacks in Paris last Friday killed 129 and wounded hundreds. The Islamic State militant group has claimed responsibility.

Some US intelligence officials and lawmakers have seized on the assault to rekindle a debate about whether tech companies should cooperate with authorities by building “backdoors” into encrypted devices and platforms.

Government authorities have said the growing prevalence of encrypted email and messaging platforms, such as iMessage and WhatsApp, hamstring their ability to monitor criminal suspects and thwart terrorist plots.

Despite early reports the Paris attackers relied on encryption, no hard evidence has emerged they used any particular form of secure messaging.

A mobile phone recovered by French authorities at the scene of one of the attacks and believed to be linked to one of the suspects was found with an unencrypted text message, according to French media.

Last month, the White House abandoned an effort to lobby tech companies and Congress to allow law enforcement and intelligence officials backdoor access to encrypted messaging.

The idea has re-emerged in the wake of Paris, but congressional aides say federal legislation on the issue remains unlikely.

Privacy advocates, tech companies and security researchers say backdoors would expose data to malicious hackers.

“Encryption is a security tool we rely on everyday to stop criminals from draining our bank accounts, to shield our cars and airplanes from being taken over by malicious hacks,” Garfield said in his statement.

“We deeply appreciate law enforcement’s and the national security community’s work to protect us, but weakening encryption or creating backdoors for use by the good guys would actually create vulnerabilities to be exploited by the bad guys.”—Reuters

**Financial Times staff vote to strike over pension change plan by Nikkei**

LONDON — Financial Times reporters have overwhelmingly supported in a vote to go on a strike over changes to pensions proposed by its new owner Nikkei Inc., a Japanese media company.

Almost 92 percent of members of the National Union of Journalists who took part in the voting endorsed industrial action, according to The Guardian newspaper. With a member turnout of 66 percent, the ballot closed midday on Thursday, it said. Management has put new proposals, and the unions chapter will discuss the latest offer to decide whether to go ahead with action, the NUJ said in a statement.

Nikkei initially planned to reduce contributions to employ-ee pensions by 4 million pounds (S6.12 million), representing a nearly 30 percent cut, and use the savings to pay for rent on FT’s building and other costs.

Nikkei agreed to buy out Financial Times Group from the UK media and education services group Pearson PLC for 844 million pounds in July. —Kyodo News
When Yangon becomes a megacity

Myint Win Thein

In recent years, many people from regions across the country moved to Yangon in search of better work opportunities. It seems likely that this trend will continue for many years to come. Myanmar’s commercial capital has a population of about six million. This figure is sure to increase rapidly due to urban migration and less focus on developing small towns elsewhere. Urban planners in Yangon are preparing for a higher population and aim to ensure there is an adequate supply of housing, transportation, utilities and jobs.

As a result, many development projects are in the pipeline for Yangon, such as new river crossing bridges and high speed railways. Sooner or later, Yangon will turn into a mega city – so it’s important that we’re prepared for that.

One aspect that has been overlooked is the ratio of people to police. It should come as no surprise that crimes are rampant. Some criminals even attack the police—who are largely unarmed—and many have been killed in service. Security measures for the general public needs to be addressed. Authorities should start preparing a strategy for the future, so that the citizens of Yangon can go about their lives in comfort and safety. The police need to upscale their presence to an appropriate level. It would be unfortunate indeed if Yangon were to turn into another crime haven of Southeast Asia.

Write for us

We appreciate your feedback and contributions. If you have any comments or would like to submit editorials, analyses or reports please email thantunnaungnn@gmail.com with your name and title.

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

VISION & STRATEGY for the New Myanmar

Kyi Mun

Myanmar has jubilantly encountered a new radiant dawn in its history. The democratization process and the nation building tasks in Myanmar have entered a whole new chapter. The following suggestions are the fundamental factors of the grand strategic proportions that would be essential in facing the challenges and opportunities in the national reconciliation and reconstruction in Myanmar.

VISION

The new government should have the following vision for Myanmar:
To become a Fully Developed People’s Democratic Republic.
The name of the new State could be: The People’s Democratic Republic of the Union of Myanmar

The essence of the future vision of the new government should be to build a strong, peaceful and prosperous sovereign state with fully developed democratic principles and core values. The new government should be solemnly and passionately committed the democratic core values of:
- Liberty, Equality and Fraternity
- Freedom of Speech, Assembly and Publication
- Freedom of Faith and Religion
- Justice and the Rule of Law
- The Full Establishment of the Independence and Separation of the Executive, Legislative and Judiciary Organs of Power
- Civil Rights and Human Rights
- National Unity and Reconciliation

MISSION

The reason for being or the Higher Purpose of the new democratic government in Myanmar should be:
- To Progressively Develop the Nation Politically
- To Progressively Develop the Nation Economically
- To Progressively Develop the Nation Socio-culturally
- To Progressively Develop the Nation Technologically
- To Progressively Develop the Nation Educationally
- To Progressively Develop the Nation Legally

These strategic requirements for the national reconciliation and reconstruction should be given top priorities. This will be the GRAND PURPOSE of the new government in its strong commitment to the triple bottom lines of:
PEOPLE, PLANET & PROSPERITY.

GOAL

The goal of the new government should be:
To Catch Up With The More Advanced Nations of the ASEAN.

There is no valid reason why Myanmar would not be able to position itself to catch up with the more advanced members of the ASEAN, given Myanmar’s natural and human resources, and the historical track records of the past achievement in the dynamics of politics, economy, education, military exploit, socio-culture and the like. Myanmar people and the new government only need: “To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield”, as the poet Tennyson said.

OBJECTIVE

The objective or one of the most important economic objectives of the new government should be:
“To Double the GDP per capita by 2025”

To achieve this objective successfully, the new government should have the resolute determination to turn heaven and earth upside down in order to win victories in the national reconciliation and reconstruction.

STRATEGY

The new government should adopt the following strategy:
“TThe Dynamic Mobilization of Excellent Resources, Opportunities, and Results” (MEROR). It is the historical responsibility of the entire masses of the Myanmar people and the new government to:
“Be resolute, fear no sacrifice and surmount all difficulties to win victory after victory in this historic transformation of Myanmar.”

TACTICS

The new government and the broad masses of the entire Myanmar people should rise up with resolute will and pride in the historical GREAT STRUGGLE of:
- DRIVE
- STRIVE
- THRIVE
- ARRIVE
- REVIVE

CONCLUSION

“Man Matters Most;
Mind Is The Key to Life;
and
Morale Is To Material as 3 Is to 1”

About the author
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May All Myanmar Citizens be Happy and Healthy

Htun Tin Htun

Myanmar citizens had been proud to vote at November 8th 2015 election with many wishes.
All have been looking for a just, free and fair election for gaining good image in this world.
You yourselves must strive on with diligence and vigilance; the Buddhas only point the way.
Almost all of us in this planet love genuine democracy, peace, security and justice.
Lifetime learning is of paramount importance for everybody in this planet.
Loving-kindness and compassion in action need to be cultivated for peace and happiness.
May you all be free from dangers, enmity and aversion, and physical and mental sufferings.
Young people today are leaders for the future so that youth civic engagement is important.
Always be active, brave, creative, disciplined, energetic, faithful, good, and humble.
Nothing is impossible to one with a wish-to-do, work-hard, will and wisdom (4 W’s).
Man matters most out of 6 M’s (Man, Money, Material, Machine, Method and Market).
Awareness, advocacy, assessment, analysis, action are 5 A’s for plan, do and review.
Right man in the right place is crucial for good government and good governance.
Cooperation, coordination, collaboration and compromising are 4 C’s for better performance.
Innovation is a must for the survival, sustenance, success and significance of any business.
Team work is effective when team members are energetically working together.
Income and expenditure need to be controlled for the thriving and viability of any enterprise.
Zealousness makes the one to help reach to the zenith. Equity, empowerment, environment and employment are 4E’s of requisites for development.
No one is perfect but practice makes perfect.
Something is better than nothing and start our own enterprises now is our motto nowadays.
Be good to others, keep our mind pure and be endowed with mindfulness, effort & wisdom.
Efficiency and effectiveness is one of the key requisites of good governance.
Hard is it to be born a man and health is the precious gain.
A worst taint than other taints is ignorance, the worst of all taints.
Promote peoples’ participation is one of the practices of democracy.Participation, peace, prosperity and posterity are of importance for sustainable development.
You are the leader who (knows the way, goes the way, shows the way and leads the way).
A fool who knows his foolishness is wise at least to that extent.
Not by matted hair, nor by lineage, nor by birth does one become a holy man.
Do not associate with evil companions; do not seek the fellowship of the vile.
He who drinks deep the Dhamma lives happily with a tranquil mind.
Easy to do are things that are bad and harmful to oneself.
A bee gathers honey from the flower without injuring its colour and fragrance.
Let a man guard himself against irritability in speech; let him be controlled in speech.
A worst taint than other taints is ignorance, the worst of all taints.

Correction

Please read “The second parliamentary elections were held on the 27th of April 1956 in accord with the 1947 constitution” in the article written by Tommy Pauk on page 8 in this daily issued on 19-11-2015.—GNLM
Myanmar delegation responds to draft resolution on situation of human rights in Myanmar

AMBASSADOR/PERMANENT Representative of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to the UN Yaw Win Kyaw Tin explained the Draft Resolution A/C.3/70/L.39 / Rev.1 entitled, “Situation of human rights in Myanmar” under the Agenda Item 72(c): Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in the Third Committee of the 70th Session of the UN General Assembly in New York on 18 November. Excerpts of his explanation are as follows:-

I would like to underline that the Special Rapporteur proposed visit to Rakhine State during her last visit was not materialized because of severe weather condition preventing a safe flight there.

With regard to opening of an OHCHR country office, Myanmar believes that terms and conditions of such an office must be mutually agreed. In particular, it must meet with the needs of the host country, not the other way around.

Myanmar has come a long way. Political reforms have made Myanmar far freer and open than it was in the past. In the post-election period, all leaders and politicians are now embracing the political-cultural dialogue of peace.

In this regard, we are pleased with the concluding message of the draft which urges the international community to continue to give support and encouragement to Myanmar’s efforts for peace, democratization and economic development.

We see the most significant new element in OP 20. The new element requested the Secretary-General to bear in mind the considerations contained in his report A/70/332 relating to the future of the mandate of his Special Adviser. The relevant paragraph invites the member states to assess the feasibility of the continuation of good offices mandate, including its gradual scaling-down by the end of 2016. We hope that these exemplary changes in Myanmar should be duly responded by corresponding changes at this Committee. As Myanmar has advanced further on its journey of democratic transition bringing better standard of protection and promotion of human rights for our people, the time has come to put an end to tabling of this country specific resolution.

New 12-storey building for Yangon General Hospital in 2016

A 12-storey building is under construction at Yangon General Hospital’s compound and is expected to be completed by March next year.

A 12-storey building will provide accommodation to patients and teachers of medical studies. Once completed, the medical wards will admit about 400 patients,” said medical superintendent Dr Aye Kyaw Ko Ko.

The building is 350 feet long and 80 feet wide and construction started in September.

A plan is underway to allocate the ground floor to an emergency unit, X-ray unit, CD screen unit and medical training hall. The building will also have an operation theatre, surgical and medical units.

Taw Win Company won the construction tender and is implementing the project with funds of K10.61 billion (US$ 8.22 million) provided by the government.

At present, Yangon General Hospital has a 1,500-bed capacity and provides medical care to around 1,000 out-patients and more than 1,200 patients at in-patient department every day.—Wai Yaw Oo

A 12-storey building under construction at Yangon General Hospital.

PHOTO: TIN SIE (MYANMAR ALIN)
BAMAKO — Malian special forces stormed a luxury hotel in Bamako yesterday after Islamist gunmen took 170 people including many foreigners hostage in the capital of the former French colony, which has been battling rebels allied to al Qaeda for several years.

“They’ve penetrated inside the hotel. The operations are under way,” a police source told Reuters.

State television said 80 hostages had been freed but the French newspaper Le Monde quoted the Malian security ministry as saying at least three people had been killed in the initial attack. A witness outside the hotel said gunfire could be heard from time to time.

A senior security source said the gunmen had burst into Radisson Blu hotel at 7 am (0700 GMT), firing and shouting “Allahu Akbar”, or “God is great” in Arabic, and begun working their way through the building, room by room and floor by floor.

Some hostages escaped under their own steam while others were freed after showing they could recite verses from the Koran, one security source said.

Twelve Air France (AIRF. PA) flight crew were in the hotel, but all were extracted safely, the French national carrier said.

A Turkish official said three of six Turkish Airlines staff who had been in the hotel had managed to flee.

The Chinese state news agency Xinhua said several Chinese tourists were among those trapped inside the building.

Malian President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita cut short a trip to a regional summit in Chad to return to Bamako, his office said.

French President Francois Hollande said France would “use all the means available to us on the ground to free the hostages”.

The raid on the hotel, which lies just west of the city centre near government ministries and diplomatic offices, comes a week after Islamic State militants killed 129 people in Paris.

“We saw two of the attackers. One was wearing a balaclava. The other was black-skinned. They forced the first barrier,” Dembele told Reuters.

Within minutes of the assault, police and then soldiers had surrounded the hotel and were blocking roads leading into the neighbourhood.

It is not the first time Bamako has come under attack.

An Islamist group claimed responsibility for the death of five people last March in an attack on a restaurant in Bamako that is popular with foreigners.

And in August, 17 people were killed during an attack on a hotel in Sevare in central Mali, some 600 km (375 miles) north-east of Bamako, that was claimed by the Sahara-based Islamist militant group al-Mourabitoun.

The dead in Sevare included nine civilians, five of whom worked for the UN mission in Mali (MINUSMA), as well as four Malian soldiers and four militants.

In the wake of last week’s Paris attacks, an Islamic State militant in Syria told Reuters the organisation viewed France’s military intervention in Mali as another reason to attack France and French interests.

“This is just the beginning. We also haven’t forgotten what happened in Mali,” said the non-Syrian fighter, who was contacted online by Reuters.

“The bitterness from Mali, the arrogance of the French, will not be forgotten at all.”

Islamic State militant

The identity of the Bamako gunmen, or the group to which they belong, is not known.

Northern Mali was occupied by Islamist fighters, some with links to al Qaeda, for most of 2012. They were driven out by a French-led military operation, but sporadic violence has continued in Mali’s central belt on the southern reaches of the Sahara, and in Bamako.

One security source said as many as 10 gunmen had stormed the building, although the company that runs the hotel, Rezidor Group, said it understood that there were only two attackers.

The hotel’s head of security, Seydou Dembele, said two private security guards had been shot in the legs in the early stages of the assault.

“We have been working non-stop to prevent and suppress terrorist acts committed specifically” by the group, which is also known as ISIS and ISIL.

The bitterness from Mali, the arrogance of the French, will not be forgotten at all.” — Reuters

UNITED NATIONS — France wants the United Nations Security Council to push all able states to join the fight against the Islamic State group in Syria and Iraq after the militants claimed responsibility for downing a Russian plane over Egypt and attacks in Paris, Lebanon, Turkey, and Tunisia.

France circulated a draft resolution to the 15-member council on Thursday that calls on countries “to redouble and coordinate their efforts to prevent and suppress terrorist acts committed specifically” by the group, which is also known as ISIS and ISIL.

The action rivals a Russian bid for UN approval of international military action against the militant group. On Wednesday, Russia submitted an edited draft of a text initially circulated to the council on 30 September.

That draft urged countries to coordinate military activities with Syrian President Bashar al-Assad’s government and has been dismissed by veto-power Britain and other members.

Diplomats said the French draft was modeled on a resolution adopted after the 11 September, 2001, attacks on the United States.

PARIS — The top suspect behind the Paris attacks has been seen on CCTV footage recorded at a metro station while the massacre that killed 129 people was still under way, a police source said yesterday.

Abdelhamid Abaaoud was killed in a gun battle on Wednesday when police raided a house in a Paris suburb where he was holed up. Prosecutors said a total of three people were killed in the pre-dawn operation.

Abaaoud can be seen on closed circuit TV footage at the Croix de Chavaux metro station in the Paris suburb of Montereul.
to support fight against IS

Russian UN Ambassador Vitaly Churkin described the French text as a “good draft” and suggested on Thursday that the two proposals could be adopted separately. “If you think back to the events after 9/11, first there was a short draft and then a couple of weeks later there was a more comprehensive draft, so it may well be we are going to go down that route,” he told reporters.

British UN Ambassador Matthew Rycroft, president of the council for November, said on Thursday the shorter French draft focused on areas of the fight against Islamic State on which the Security Council could agree. “The Russian draft ... does still talk about issues that do divide the Security Council so I don’t see that having much prospect,” he said. “It seeks to legitimize the authority of Assad.”

Russia, which views Syria as its closest Middle East ally, has been at odds with Western powers over the future of Assad.

French UN Ambassador Francois Delattre said he hoped for a swift adoption of the French text, which had been put “in blue,” meaning it could be put to a vote as soon as 24 hours later.

The French draft, seen by Reuters, “calls upon member states that have the capacity to do so to take all necessary measures ... on the territory under the control of ISIS ... in Syria and Iraq.”

It also urges Member States to intensify efforts to stem the flow of foreigners looking to fight with Islamic State in Iraq and Syria and to prevent and suppress financing of terrorism. A US-led coalition has been bombing Islamic State in Iraq and Syria for more than a year, while Russia began air strikes in Syria in September.—Reuters

Indonesian speaker resigns amid ethics probe

JAKARTA — Indonesia’s speaker of the house, Setya Novanto, has resigned as speaker amid an ethics probe into a meeting with management of the Indonesian unit of Freeport McMoran Inc, a senior official in Novanto’s party said yesterday. “Setya Novanto has resigned as speaker of the house but he still remains a member of parliament,” Fahmi Idris, a senior Golkar official, told Reuters by phone. Novanto is also a member of the Golkar party.—Reuters

Mt. Hakone warning lifted amid lessening volcanic activity

 TOKYO — The national weather agency yesterday lifted its volcanic activity warning for Mt. Hakone, located in a popular hot spring resort area south-west of Tokyo, as it deemed the risk of eruptions to have reduced after the last small-scale eruption observed in July.

As the number of volcanic earthquakes remains low, the Japan Meteorological Agency changed the volcanic alert level to its lowest level 1, indicating the situation has returned to normal and only calling on people in the vicinity to be “mindful” of the volcano’s potential activity. The alert level had been at 2, which advises people not to approach the crater.—Kyodo News

Thai PM seeks Japan’s support to join US-led free trade deal

KUALA LUMPUR — Thai Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha sought Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe’s cooperation during their talks yesterday over his country’s possible participation in a US-led free trade initiative.

Meeting on the sidelines of summits involving the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and their dialogue partners in Kuala Lumpur in the weekend, Prayut said Thailand has interest in joining the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade pact, Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Hiroshige Seko said.

Abe was quoted by Seko as welcoming Thailand’s interest and saying, “If Thailand joins the TPP, this would significantly contribute to regional stability and prosperity.”

In October, 12 nations reached a broad agreement on the TPP, which groups the United States, Australia, Brunei, Chile, New Zealand, Singapore, Vietnam, Peru, Canada, Japan, Malaysia and Mexico.—Kyodo News

Pakistan, Russia agree to $2bn gas pipeline

ISLAMABAD — Pakistan and Russia signed a memorandum of understanding yesterday to lay a nearly 1,000-kilometre pipeline to transport imported liquefied natural gas from Karachi to Lahore.

The signing ceremony was witnessed by Pakistan’s Finance Minister Ishaq Dar and Victor P. Ivanov, co-chairman of the Russian-Pakistani Intergovernmental Commission on Economic, Trade and Scientific Cooperation, at the conclusion of a two-day meeting.

Ivanov told a joint press conference with the finance minister that the South-North Pipeline, costing $2 billion, is the single biggest investment by Russia in Pakistan to date.—Kyodo News

Swedish police arrest man suspected of planning terrorist attack

STOCKHOLM — Swedish police on Thursday arrested a man suspected of planning a terrorist attack after a manhunt that saw security tightened across the country days after the attacks in Paris that killed 129 people.

Security police left the country’s terrorist risk assessment level at its highest ever, four on a scale of five, meaning there is a high probability that “persons have the intent and ability to carry out an attack”.

On Wednesday, Sweden’s Security Police (Sapo) said they had concrete information about a possible attack. Police later named Mutas Muthanna Majid as a suspect. Sapo spokesperson Sirpa Franzen said the arrest had taken place without violence. “We are still very interested in the suspect’s activities while in Sweden,” she said. She declined to comment on media reports that the suspect had accomplishments.—Reuters
Five dead in Palestinian attacks in Tel Aviv, West Bank

JERUSALEM — A Palestinian fatally stabbed two people in a Tel Aviv office building and three other people were killed in an attack in the occupied West Bank on Thursday, Israeli police and the army said.

In the latest attack near the Gush Etzion settlement bloc in the West Bank, a police commander said a Palestinian drove along the shoulder of the main road and shot at crawling traffic, killing three people and wounding others. Police spokesman Micky Rosenfeld said the attacker’s car stopped when it hit another vehicle and the driver was seized. He said an American citizen was one of three people killed. The others were a Palestinian and an Israeli. At least seven other people were wounded, a medical source said. The attack brought to 18 the number of Israelis and others who have died, along with 80 Palestinians, in a wave of violence over the past seven weeks.

The American was identified as Ezra Schwartz, 18, who was studying in Israel, according to a Facebook post by the American Jewish Committee. CBS’s Boston affiliate said Schwartz was from Sharon, Massachusetts.

In the Tel Aviv attack, a police spokeswoman said the assailant who had attacked worshippers gathered for afternoon prayers in a shop that sells Jewish religious items in the build-

Syrians flee war to brave smugglers’ gauntlet in volatile Latin America

TEGUCIGALPA — A group of five Syrians paid smugglers $10,000 each to travel through multiple countries before being detained for carrying false Greek documents in Honduras, their epic journey exposing a little-known southern smuggling route for Syrians fleeing war in their homeland.

The young men have told human rights activists their final destination was next-door Guatemala, because their Turkish people smuggler who guided them through the unfamiliar continent told them they had jobs and a house waiting for them there.

But relatives of one of the men, 19-year-old Lou-rans Samaan, said he was trying to reach his brother in the United States and find work. They said Sa-

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US House passes bill to slow Syrian refugees despite Obama veto threat

WASHINGTON — The US House of Representa- tives, defying a veto threat by President Barack Oba- ma, overwhelmingly passed Republican-backed legis- lation on Thursday to sus- pend Obama’s programme to admit 10,000 Syrian refu- gees in the next year and then intensify the process of screening them.

The measure, quickly drafted this week following the Islamic State attacks in Paris on Friday that killed 129 people, was approved on a vote of 280-137, with 47 of Obama’s 188 fellow Democrats breaking with the White House to support it. It would require that high-level officials of the FBI director, the director of national intelligence and homeland security secretary — veri- fied that each Syrian refugee poses no security risk.

Republican House Speaker Paul Ryan said the bill would pause the pro- gramme for a year and he announced in September to admit 10,000 Syrian refu- gees over the next year. He said it was important to act quickly “when our national security is at stake.”

After the House vote, Obama’s attorney general, Loretta Lynch, called such screening both impractical and impossible. “To ask me to have my FBI director or other members of the administration make personal guarantees would effectively grind the programme to a halt,” Lynch told reporters at the White House briefing with FBI Director James Comey. The vote re- sult came despite a last-ditch appeal for Democratic votes from Jeh Johnson, Obama’s secretary of homeland secu- rity, and Denis McDonough, his chief of staff.

It followed a testy ex- change at a House hearing between lawmakers and Anne Richard, the assistant secretary of state for popu- lation, refugees and migra- tion, that exists between the Shin- ning Path terrorist group in Vraen,” stated the report. The armed forc- es have sought to break or weaken the tacit agreement that exists between the Shin- ning Path guerrillas and the coca farmers, as it has made the task of government or- ganisations in the region far harder. Peruvian authorities are determined to press on with joint operations between the police and the army to dismantle interna- tional drug cartels.

The Peruvian govern- ment is carrying out a pacifica- tion campaign in the troubled Vraen region against guerrilla units and groups linked to drug trafficking.

Peru’s remote regions are home to installations processing cocaine and sending it by air and sea to prime drug consumption markets, including the US and Europe. —Xinhua

Norway tightens asylum rules as anti-migrant sentiment strengthens

OSLO — Emergency laws tightening Norway’s asylum rules came into force on Fri- day as the government tries to stem a sharp rise in the number of people arriving that has led support among voters for an anti-immigra- tion party to surge.

The laws, affecting a country of 5.2 million people, which is a member of the pass- port-free Schengen area but not of the European Union, expand to cover up to 35,000 asylum applica- tions this year. That figure has been revised upwards several times since August as Europe grapples with its biggest migrant crisis since World War Two.

The ruling minority col- lation, made up of the cen- tre-right Conservatives and the anti-immigration Pro- gress Party, announced the legislation only last Friday.

It was passed in parliament lat- er on Thursday with the help of the main opposition Labour Party and several centrist parties and given formal approval by the cabi- net and king on Friday.

Support for the Prog- ress Party has surged by 7.3 percentage points to 17.5 percent since October, a poll by Ipsos MMI for tab-loid Dagbladet showed on Friday, while Conservative support fell by 3.3 points to 20.7 percent. The sur- vey, conducted from 16-19 November, marked a big turnaround from municipal elections held in September when Progress recorded its worst result in 22 years.

“The debate over refu- gees has shifted significant- ly during the autumn, from a discussion marked by sympathy and compassion to one concerned with the problems that refugees and immigrants bring,” political scientist Johannes Bergh of the Institute for Social Re- search told the newspaper.

The law will be in force for two years, it may ease to re- fuse to process an asylum application if the asylum seeker has already resided in a third country deemed safe. Other measures allow foreign nationals to be ar- rested and detained in cases where it is most likely that their asylum applications will not be processed, or to impose a duty to report to authorities and stay in a specific place. Separately, a majority of parliamentarians agreed on a deeper, more long-term reform of Nor- way’s asylum policy that includes fast-track deporta- tion of asylum seekers with a criminal record.—Reuters

Peru destroys 15 illegal runways in fight against drug trafficking

LIMA — Peruvian authorities have destroyed 15 illegal runways in the region known as the Valley of the Apurimac, Ene and Mantaro Rivers (Vraen), the joint command of Peru’s armed forces announced Thursday.

The official report into the campaign stated that these improvised runways had been built in the Ama- zon area of the Cuzco, Alto Ene, Sol Naciente, Pampa Alegre and Boca Mantaro, which are home to Peru’s largest illicit coca leaf plantations. “This is a hard blow to delinquent drug traffickers, who are de- pendent on them, and the Shining Path terrorist group in Vraen,” stated the report. The armed forc- es have sought to break or weaken the tacit agreement that exists between the Shin- ning Path guerrillas and the coca farmers, as it has made the task of government or- ganisations in the region far harder. Peruvian authorities are determined to press on with joint operations between the police and the army to dismantle interna- tional drug cartels.

The Peruvian govern- ment is carrying out a pacifica- tion campaign in the troubled Vraen region against guerrilla units and groups linked to drug trafficking.

Peru’s remote regions are home to installations processing cocaine and sending it by air and sea to prime drug consumption markets, including the US and Europe. —Xinhua

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION
DEVELOPMENT OF IRRIGATION AND LAND CONSOLIDATION SCHEMES IN MYANMAR
UNDER THE LINE OF CREDIT FROM
EXPORT-IMPORT BANK OF INDIA
INVITATION FOR OPEN TENDER

1. Sealed bids are invited by Agricultural Mechanization Department (AMD), Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation (MOAI), the Republic of the Union of Myanmar (hereinafter called the employer), from the qualified and resourceful Contractors (hereinafter called the bidders) registered in India for procurement of farm machinery and implements for Development of Irrigation and Land Consolidation Schemes in Myanmar.

2. The bidding documents may be purchased by the interested bidders upon submission of a formal request on payment of a non-refundable fee indicated above for each set of tender documents.

3. The bidding documents will be available from the office as noted in paragraph 8 on any working day with effect from 27.11.2015 to 7.1.2016 (from 9.00 hr. to 16.00 hr. local time).

4. Pre-bid meeting will take place at the below address at 10.00 hr (local time) on 21st De- cember, 2015 for discussions of various issues raised by the prospective bidders. The matters requiring clarification shall preferably be intimated by the bidders to the employer through email at aunngwinam@ymail.com, (seven) days in advance of the date of pre-bid meeting, with a copy to the Project Management Consultant, i.e. WAPCOS Ltd. (commercial@wapcos.gov.in)

Building No.15 Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation
Nay Pyi Taw, The Republic of The Union of Myanmar.

5. The bids duly completed in all respects as described in the bidding document shall be submitted, in a sealed envelope, to the employer on or before Friday 8.1.2016 at 10.00 hr (local time), and shall be valid for a period of 90 days from the date of opening of bid initially, subject to the extension from time to time. The bids will be opened thereafter in the presence of the bidder’s representatives at 10.00 hr. (local time) on 8.1.2016 at the address mentioned above.

6. The bid must be accompanied, in a separate envelope duly sealed, by a bid security of as indi- cated above with validity of 118 days initially, subject to the extension from time to time as desired by the employer in the form of a Bank Guarantee issued by a Myanmar Foreign Trade Bank (MFTB). The bid without the bid security shall be summarily rejected.

7. The bid received after the expiry of the stipulated time of submission shall not be consid- ered. The employer reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids at its discretion without assigning any reason whatsoever. The employer is not bound to accept the lowest offer / bid and reserves the right to negotiate with bidders.

8. Contact Address is as mentioned the following.

Office of Director General,
Agricultural Mechanization Department,
Building No. 50, Nay Pyi Taw, The Republic of The Union of Myanmar.
Telephone No. +9567-431172, Fax: +95-67-431246
www.moai.gov.mm
**Pay attention 007: In India, you can kill — but don’t kiss**

MUMBAI — If the Indian censors have their way, James Bond can make liberal use of his licence to kill. But he’ll have to cut back on the kissing — by exactly half.

The latest installment of the 007 franchise, “Spectre”, will be released on Friday with heavy cuts after censors deemed the romantic encounters between Daniel Craig, and co-stars Monica Bellucci and Lea Seydoux, inappropriate for the viewing public.

“The committee which was to certify the film thought some of the kissing scenes were too long,” said a source familiar with the application to the censors, who asked Sony Pictures cut the kissing scenes by 50 percent.

“The studio either had the choice to accept the cuts or apply for an A certificate, which significantly cuts down reach and exhibition,” The Censor Board is controlled by India’s nationalist government and has turned a disapproving eye on films with steamy sex scenes.

It is currently headed by Pahlaj Nihalani, a Bollywood producer who made a campaign video for Prime Minister Narendra Modi last year, and released another promotional video for him last week.

Its ruling has been panned by critics on social media, who accuse it of serving the government’s conservative moral agenda, stifling freedom of expression. Nihalani could not be reached for comment.

Under Indian law, films with an A - or adult - certificate can’t be shown on TV. India still accounts for a fraction of Hollywood’s revenues, but franchises like James Bond and the Avengers can beat Bollywood’s own productions at the box office.

“50 Shades of Grey”, the film based on E.L. James’s erotic novel, was never released in India even after the studio cut every sex scene. The board rejected it by the film in an exhibition. “The Censor Board has significantly cut down reach and appeal for an A certificate, which could be the largest number of new release CDs shipped in the past decade.

Adele, who took a career break to have her first child, says in a BBC television interview to be aired on Friday that the success of “21” was daunting, but she was determined to make a comeback.

“I just got really worried that I was never going to make anything that anyone liked again,” she said, according to quotes from the interview posted on the BBC website.

“I started to wonder if ‘21’ was as successful, was enough for everyone,” she says. “But I realised it wasn’t enough for me. So, sorry, I’m here to make your ears bleed again.”

Early indications are she need not have worried. In addition to “Hello” topping the US charts, advance sales of “25” have made it the best-selling album on Amazon.com’s British and US sites, according to the retailer.

“I think the odds are in favour of ‘25’ being a huge success because there’s so much anticipation,” British-based music industry consultant Mark Mulligan of MIDiA Research said.

Critical reaction from music journalists who had access to advance copies suggest fans won’t be disappointed. But perhaps “25” will not be the seminal experience “21” was for listeners. Alexis Petridis, writing in the Guardian, said the album’s success was a foregone conclusion, but its content was patchy. – Reuters

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**Huckabee sued for playing ‘Eye of the Tiger’ at Kim Davis rally**

CHICAGO — The co-writer of 1980s hit “Eye of the Tiger” has filed a federal lawsuit against Republican Mike Huckabee’s presidential campaign for playing the song at a rally for Kim Davis, the Kentucky county clerk who refused to sign gay marriage licenses.

Frank Sullivan, a guitarist and founding member of the band Survivor, sued Huckabee for President for unauthorised public performance of the song. The lawsuit, filed on Wednesday, claims the campaign infringed on Sullivan’s copyright, which he holds through his publishing company, Rude Music. Sullivan, who filed the suit in federal court in Illinois, where he lives, asked that Huckabee’s campaign be prohibited from unauthorised performances of the song and asked a federal judge to determine damages.

The song was played as Huckabee, the conservative former Arkansas governor, escorted Davis out of the Carter County Detention Center, where she had spent six days in jail in September for contempt of court.

Davis became a controversial figure after refusing to issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples following a Supreme Court ruling legalizing such unions around the country. – Reuters

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**It’s my job to love Brad Pitt: Angelina Jolie**

LONDON — Actress Angelina Jolie considers it her job to love husband Brad Pitt.

“As much as we can argue and fight, and we all have our challenges, at the end I say, ‘My job is to love him,’” The Oscar-winning actress, 40, thinks the 52-year-old heartthrob gets better with age and is looking forward to growing old with him.

“I’m more interested in his 50-year-old self than his 40 year-old self. And then you look forward to even more years together. Brad and I are fortunate because we see the beauty in each other’s changes.”

The couple have six children, Maddox, 14, Pax, 11, Zahara, 10, Shiloh, nine, and seven-year-old twins Vivienne and Knox. – PTI

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**Adele’s ‘25’: Streaming or not, a monster hit before its release**

LONDON — Adele’s album “25” is released worldwide on Friday, and even though it will not be on streaming services like Spotify and Deezer, industry analysts are expecting it to be the hit of the year.

Following in the footsteps of Taylor Swift, who withheld her album “1989” from Spotify because she did not want it streamed for her 2011 hit album “21,” which sold 30 million copies worldwide and won six Grammys, is available for download or as a CD, but not for streaming.

Spotify and Deezer, two of the main streamers, said on Thursday they would not carry it, though they hoped that would change. There was no immediate comment from Apple Music or Google Play.

“My own personal view is that record is so massive it wouldn’t make any difference” if it were available for streaming or not, industry analyst Keith Jopling told Reuters, speaking hours before it was known the album would not be streamed.

“Hello,” the first single from the album, released at the end of October, has logged more than 400 million plays on YouTube and topped the US charts for the past three weeks.

Trade publication Billboard, citing unidentified sources, said Columbia Records will ship 3.6 million physical copies of the new album in the United States, which could be the largest number of new release CDs shipped in the past decade.

Adele, who took a career break to have her first child, says in a BBC television interview to be aired on Friday that the success of “21” was daunting, but she was determined to make a comeback.

“I just got really worried that I was never going to make anything that anyone liked again,” she said, according to quotes from the interview posted on the BBC website.

“I started to wonder if ‘21’ was as successful, was enough for everyone,” she says. “But I realised it wasn’t enough for me. So, sorry, I’m here to make your ears bleed again.”

Early indications are she need not have worried. In addition to “Hello” topping the US charts, advance sales of “25” have made it the best-selling album on Amazon.com’s British and US sites, according to the retailer.

“I think the odds are in favour of ‘25’ being a huge success because there’s so much anticipation,” British-based music industry consultant Mark Mulligan of MIDiA Research said.

Critical reaction from music journalists who had access to advance copies suggest fans won’t be disappointed. But perhaps “25” will not be the seminal experience “21” was for listeners. Alexis Petridis, writing in the Guardian, said the album’s success was a foregone conclusion, but its content was patchy. – Reuters
US agents recover N.C. Wyeth paintings stolen in Maine

BOSTON — The last two of six N.C. Wyeth paintings stolen from a Maine collector in 2013 have been recovered by agents from the FBI, closing the book on what officials say was the most significant art theft in that state’s history.

The paintings were recovered by the Federal Bureau of Investigation in the Boston area in October, a federal official said on Thursday. The FBI in August had offered a $20,000 reward for tips leading to their recovery.

The six oil paintings by Wyeth, the patriarch of a line of painters known for Maine seascapes, were taken in May 2013 from the home of a prominent real estate developer in the state. The paintings were estimated to be worth up to tens of millions of dollars, officials said.

Four were recovered in a Beverly Hills, California, pawn shop in 2014, according to the FBI. Three men pleaded guilty in federal courts in Maine and California to charges of trafficking in stolen goods for transporting the paintings. No one has yet been charged with stealing the art, and an investigation is ongoing.

Born in Needham, Massachusetts, in 1882, Wyeth got his start as an illustrator of books and magazines. He gained acclaim for painting seascapes after settling on the rugged coast of Port Clyde, Maine, where he lived until his death in 1945. Three of Wyeth’s five children — Andrew, Henriette and Carolyn — also became noted artists, as did his grandson, Jamie.

While the family is associated with Maine seascapes, the missing paintings are of other subjects. One, “The Encounter on Freshwater Cliff,” features a swordsman dressed in Renaissance-style clothing standing over what appears to be a slain foe. The other, “Go, Dutton, and that right speedily,” features men in medieval-looking attire peering out from a doorway.

It is not the only case of stolen artwork facing the Boston FBI office. The agency is still working to determine who stole $500 million worth of art from Boston’s Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in a 1990 theft that stands as the largest art heist in US history.—Reuters

Vincent Lisi (R), Special Agent in Charge of the FBI’s Boston Division, speaks at a news conference in Boston, Massachusetts, on 18 August 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

A-bomb victim’s paper crane donated to Truman’s library

INDEPENDENCE — A paper crane made by Japanese girl Sadako Sasaki, an iconic victim of the 1945 US atomic bombing of Hiroshima, was donated Thursday to a Missouri library housing documents of former President Harry Truman, who authorised the attack.

The event was also attended by Clifton Truman Daniel, the eldest grandson of the former US president, who has joined calls for the abolishment of nuclear weapons.

The event is important to understand both his grandfather’s decision to drop the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 and the losses suffered by the Japanese cities.

Many in the United States believe the nuclear attacks were necessary to bring a quick end to the war and saved the lives of many American soldiers.

The United States dropped the first atomic bomb on Hiroshima on 6 August, 1945, and the second on Nagasaki three days later. Around 210,000 people are estimated to have died from the attacks by the end of 1945. Japan surrendered on 15 August that year, bringing World War II to an end.

Sadako survived the bombing in Hiroshima about 1.7 kilometres away from the hypocenter but was subsequently diagnosed with leukemia, known to be induced by atomic bomb radiation.

She began making paper cranes inspired by a Japanese saying — if a person folds 1,000 paper cranes, his or her wish will become true — but succumbed to the illness.

Sadako was also the model for the Children’s Peace Monument at Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park.

Her brother has donated the cranes to countries around the world. In the United States, the cranes have been offered to a memorial for the 2001 terrorist attacks in New York and a war memorial center at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii. —Kyodo News

An original origami crane made by Sadako Sasaki. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

Myanmar International

(21-11-2015 07:00 am – 22-11-2015 07:00 am) MST

Today Fresh

07:05 Am News
07:26 Am Great Swedagon- Historic And Mysterious Places
07:54 Am Young Talents “Animator Swan Thu Huu”
08:03 Am News
08:26 Am Annually Held Hot-Air Balloon Releasing Festival
08:39 Am Kambawzathardi Golden Palace - A Treasured Legacy Of Golden Days
08:54 Am Myanmar Traditional Art Bronze Casting
09:03 Am News
09:26 Am Po O in the Union
09:49 Am PRE-PLF 2015
10:03 Am News
10:26 Am Ngapali, Unique Spot To Relax
10:44 Am Kyauk Gu Unin Cave Gu Pha Ya
(11:00 Am – 03:00 Pm) - Friday Repeat (07:00 Am – 11:00 Am)
(03:00 Pm – 07:00 Pm) - Today Repeat (07:00 Am – 11:00 Am)
Prime Time

07:03 Pm News
07:26 Pm Yathe Taung Township In A Nut-Shell
07:50 Pm Today Myanmar: Fish Feed Production
08:03 Pm News
08:26 Pm Myanmar National Poet And Literary Icon; Prolific Writer of Poems & Prose - Min Thu Wun (Ep-2) Student Life & Early Literary Career
08:52 Pm Myanmar Masterclass: Still Life (Glass)
(09:00 Pm – 11:00 Pm) - Today Repeat (09:00 Am – 11:00 Am)
(11:00 Pm – 03:00 Am) - Friday Repeat (07:00 Am – 11:00 Am)
(03:00 Am – 07:00 Am) - Today Repeat (07:00 Am – 11:00 Am)
(For Detailed Schedule – www.myanmaritv.com/schedule)

Entertainment Channel

(21-11-2015, Saturday)
6:00 am • Classical Songs
6:10 am • Real Story, Real Movie
6:30 am • Myanmar Series
6:50 am • Cartte Drama
8:10 am • Nay Ma Win Ah Hla Myar
8:40 am • Myanmar Video
Myanmar wins medals in ASEAN Civil Service Games

Players of victorious Myanmar sports team seen with medals. Photo: SPED

The First ASEAN Civil Service Games (ACSG) took place in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, from 15 to 19 November. Myanmar’s Ye Htet, Maung Maung Oo, Tun Lin Latt and Aung Kyaw stood second in the team’s golf event. Myanmar’s Zaw Lin Tun and Aung Win secured the silver medal in the men’s doubles bowling event, while a Myanmar team won bronze in the bowling championships.

Myanmar’s athletes returned home yesterday.—Sports and Physical Education Department

Martial arts course held in Meiktila

MYANMAR Martial Arts Federation and Meiktila Township Martial Arts Sub-committee held a referee and coaching course at a gymnasium in Meiktila, Mandalay Region, from 17 to 21 November.

Mandalay Region Minister for Social Affairs Dr Win Hlaing and Deputy Director of Mandalay Region Sports and Physical Education Department U Wai Zin visited the training session, and the minister provided K500,000 to fund the training session.—Tin Maung

Federer repels Nishikori fightback to win group

LONDON — Roger Federer’s enduring brilliance and his sheer hatred of losing allowed him to withstand a stunning fightback by Kei Nishikori and remain undefeated at the ATP World Tour Finals on Thursday.

The 34-year-old Swiss maestro was on autopilot when he led 4-1 in the second set, having snatched an absorbing opener, but needed every shot in his formidable armoury to eventually claw out a 7-5, 4-6, 6-4 victory.

Japan’s Nishikori had looked the more likely winner after reeling off five consecutive games to take the six-times former champion into a deciding set, but his stirring efforts proved in vain as Federer squeezed home.

Federer topped Stan Smith Group with a 100 percent record — the ninth time in 14 consecutive appearances at the elite event he has won all three of his round-robin matches.

World number one Novak Djokovic, beaten emphatically by Federer on Tuesday, joined the Swiss in the semi-finals when he beat Tomas Berdych 6-3, 7-5 in the evening match at the O2 Arena.

The Serb, bidding for a fourth straight title at the season-ender, could have qualified with a three-set defeat, but took no chances in a businesslike display to finish runner up in the group and set up a clash with a resurgent Rafael Nadal.

Federer will play either Andy Murray or Stanislas Wawrinka who complete the round-robin matches in the Ill Nastase group on Friday. Nishikori bowed out, having only managed to beat Berdych, but he got aリング endorsement from the 34-year-old Federer.

“It’s amazing what he’s able to produce on the court. Today was another showcase of that, how he’s able to return second serves, staying on top of the baseline and getting forehands and backhands up the line. It was impressive,” Federer said of the 2014 US Open champion.

Seven times grand slam champion Federer had already sealed a semi-final spot before walking on court on Thursday, but there was never a chance of him letting up.

He jumped into a 3-1 lead before 26-year-old Nishikori began striking the ball with real venom, breaking twice in a row.

Federer squared the set at 4-4 with some rock-solid baseline play wearing down Nishikori.—Reuters

Real’s Bale fit and ready for ‘Clasico’ battle

MADR — Real Madrid forward Gareth Bale is confident he is back to full fitness and says he is “ready for battle” when leaders and champions Barcelona visit the La Liga ‘Clasico’ on Saturday.

Wales international Bale has been plagued by niggling muscle injuries since moving to Spain in 2013 but said he was ready again to put his “strength and speed” at the team’s disposal after shaking off a calf problem.

Bale sustained the injury in the La Liga win at home to Levante on 17 October and missed four matches before returning for the 3-2 defeat at Sevilla in Real’s last outing. “I haven’t had a chance to play much this season,” he told Real’s website (wwwrealmadridcom) on Thursday.

“Nowhere near as much as I would have liked anyway, but I’m feeling strong and fit for this game,” added the 26-year-old.

“I’m ready for battle. I want to keep trying to give my best, to work hard and to help the team win.”

Real surrendered top spot to Barca when they were beaten at Sevilla and another defeat Saturday will see them drop six points behind their arch rivals after 12 games.

Atletico Madrid, the 2014 champions, are a point behind Real in third ahead of their match at Real Betis on Sunday.

Bale noted that Real, who replaced coach Carlo Ancelotti with Rafa Benitez at the end of last season, have lost only one match this term but said there was “some room for improvement”.

“We could still be better, play better, and I’m hoping that as the season goes on, our form continues to improve and that we lead us to winning La Liga,” Bale said.

“I’m certain you’ll see an improved side from both teams and it makes sense that the team that scores a lot of goals will win.”

“We know they don’t score many. It will be an even contest, it’s always tough against them, but fingers crossed we’re able to get more goals than them.”

Anthony Martial, Wayne Rooney, Michael Carrick and Marouane Fellaini.

Anthony Martial, Wayne Rooney, Michael Carrick and Marouane Fellaini. Photo: Reuters

LONDON — Manchester United will be without skipper Wayne Rooney, Marouane Fellaini, Michael Carrick and Anthony Martial for their visit to Watford on Saturday when the Premier League resumes after the international break.

Manager Louis van Gaal confirmed their absences at his pre-match briefing on Friday, saying that 19-year-old James Wilson, who has only played for eight minutes in the league this season, would lead the front line.

But, Van Gaal added that Wilson would not play for the whole match at Vicarage Road because he has “a lack of match rhythm.”

Rooney, who scored his 51st goal for England when they beat France 2-0 on Tuesday, has not trained since because of illness, though Van Gaal hopes he will be fit for United’s Champions League match against PSV Eindhoven next week. Martial, who also played in Tuesday’s international at Wembly, left the stadium on crutches after taking a heavy blow to the top of his foot.

Carrick suffered an ankle injury when England played Spain last Friday while Fellaini will miss his second successive league match after picking up a leg injury.

Van Gaal added that France international Morgan Schneiderlin and Germany’s Bastian Schweinsteiger could both play against Watford, despite being involved in the France-Germany friendly in Paris during last week’s terror attacks which left at least 129 people dead.

“I think for every human being in this world, it was a big blow,” so I don’t think I have to mention what our discussions were, but Schweinsteiger and Schneiderlin can play, “he said.

United go to Watford fourth in the table, and have not conceded a goal in any of their last five matches, although goals have been hard to come by with only three scored.

There will be a minute’s silence and the French national anthem will be played before every Premier League match this weekend, which Van Gaal says shows support to the French people.

English also fans joined in singing La Marseillaise at Wembly on Tuesday and Van Gaal said: “We, as a member of the sport of football, cannot do too much — we can give support in symbols and this is a nice thing for the French people, the victims, their relatives to give them force and strength to survive.”—Reuters