MINGALA Market shopkeepers have been offered low-interest loans and more spacious stall areas after their stalls were rebuilt at a meeting with President U Thein Sein at the Yangon City Bank yesterday. The president offered words of encouragement to the shopkeepers, whose stalls were damaged or destroyed by a fire at Mingala Market in Yangon on 9 January.

The president called for the construction of tidy, durable temporary stalls for the vendors to use until the reconstruction is complete. He also promised them low-interest loans, monetary assistance and the development of a new market that will be built according to modern architectural designs and less susceptible to natural disasters.

Yangon mayor U Hla Myint reported to the president on plans for the resettlement of the shopkeepers and for the reconstruction of the market.

Authorities have permitted the shopkeepers to collect their belongings from floors that were not destroyed in the blaze from 10 to 17 January.

The cause of the fire and cost of the devastation are currently under investigation.—Myanmar News Agency
Hluttaw Round-up

THE Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, Pyithu Hluttaw and Amyotha Hluttaw continued their sessions in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

The joint bill committee of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw submitted its findings and remarks related to the Specific Goods Tax Bill and to the bill amending the Legal Supports Bill.

The speaker of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw asked MPs to sign up to discuss the two bills at the next meeting of the hluttaw.

In the Pyithu Hluttaw, members sought approval for a bill on nuclear prevention, a bill to amend the Land Confiscation Act and another to amend the Protection of the Constitution Law.

The bills on industrial design copyright, innovation copyright, and other types of copyright and trademarking were also submitted for approval.

The Pyithu Hluttaw agreed to send back the Myanmar Statistics Bill, the Private Education Bill, the Prison Bill and the bill amending the Weapons Act with the remarks of the Amyotha Hluttaw. The bill to amend the 1950 Emergency Provision Act was recorded. The bill to amend the 1949 Suppression of Prostitution Act was approved by the hluttaw.

At meeting of the Amyotha Hluttaw, MPs approved a bill amending the 1951 Factories Act, the 2015 Shops and Worksites Bill and the Payment of Wages Bill. —Myanmar News Agency

C-in-C talks peace with Chinese special rep

THE Union Peace Conference is expected to bring long-lasting peace and stability, said the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing in a meeting with Mr Sun Guoxiang, the Asia Affairs Special Representative for the People’s Republic of China, at 2pm yesterday at Bayint Naung Hall.

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing explained to Mr Sun that the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement is an agreement to usher in eternal peace, not just the cessation of violence. He said the non-signatory armed groups must sign the NCA, urging them to live within the bounds of the law. He added that the military will never change its attitude, and that the achievement of eternal peace will benefit Myanmar’s neighbours as well as the region in general.

The Chinese guest said he is committed to improving relations between Myanmar’s and China’s military, and that he is in favour of China’s policy towards Myanmar, which has respect for Myanmar’s sovereignty and territorial integrity. The Chinese official said his country will continue to provide assistance for Myanmar’s development. The two dignitaries also discussed matters relating to peace-building and ensuring stability along the border between Myanmar and China.—Myawady

FIFA Kicks Off Program For School Children

MYANMAR Football Federation and FIFA have been starting FIFA 11 for health program 2016 with 8 basic education schools in Yangon at Thuwana Youth Training Center (YTC) yesterday.

The program will reach out to 288 schools in total in Yangon and Mandalay within this year. Under the program, the Physical Instructors from Basic Education Schools have been receiving training since 2012. In late 2014, the training was also conducted to school children.

FIFA 11 for health program is set up for 10 years and it is planned to reach out about 200,000 students throughout the nation so far. Myanmar is one the most successful countries out of 21 countries that are implementing this program.—Kay Khaing

Fire destroys four houses, damages ten

A fire broke out yesterday in Myathida Road in Sanchaung, engulfing four houses and damaging ten more yesterday.

Yangon Fire Services Department categorized the fire level four.

The fire started at a grocery store at around 10.55.

The fire was under control after half an hour. No casualty was reported and cause of the fire and cost of damages are still under investigation.

This is latest fire, following the huge fire which destroyed the Mingalar wholesale market on Saturday, engulfing three floors of the market.—Kay Khaing
President U Thein Sein visits Kyaikhtiyo Pagoda

PRESIDENT U Thein Sein instructed the board of trustees of the Kyaiktiyo Pagoda not to build additional hotels, guesthouses, shops or homes on the platform of the pagoda.

During his visit to the pagoda in Kyaito, Mon State, yesterday, the president also stressed the need to inspect the durability of buildings on the mountain and to build containing walls in order to prevent landslides, if necessary.

The president instructed the authorities to build hotels, guest houses and free shelters for pilgrims at the Kinpon Camp, a base camp at the foot of the mountain.

He also urged the authorities to strictly supervise the hotels, guest houses and shops around the pagoda to ensure cleanliness and good service.

President U Thein Sein urged the pagoda’s board of trustees to cooperate with the Mon State government and non-governmental organisations in conserving the environment and carrying out the afforestation of the mountain.

He left the pagoda for Yangon by helicopter later that day.—Myanmar News Agency

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Senior General Min Aung Hlaing holds talks with UK military chief

COMMANDER-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing held talks with General Sir John Nicholas Reynolds Houghton, the Chief of the Defence Staff of the British Armed Forces, in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

At the meeting, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing expressed his delight at the promotion of the friendship between the armed forces of the two countries through the goodwill visit to Myanmar.

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing welcomed General Sir John Nicholas Reynolds Houghton with an honour guard.

During their meeting, the senior general said the Tatmadaw endeavours for the success of Myanmar’s democratic system while working to end armed conflicts.

The British general honoured the Tatmadaw for its role in Myanmar’s reform process.

He also discussed the promotion of cooperation between the two armed forces and plans to exchange visits and conduct non-military trainings.

After the meeting, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing hosted a dinner in honour of the British delegation.—Myawady

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Vice President U Nyan Tun receives UK military delegation

Vice President of the Union of Myanmar U Nyan Tun received a military delegation from the UK led by General John Nicholas Reynolds Houghton, the Chief of the Defence Staff of the British Armed Forces, at the Presidential Palace in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

VICE President of the Union of Myanmar U Nyan Tun poses for documentary photo with UK military delegation led by General John Nicholas Reynolds Houghton. Photo: MNA

During the meeting, the two discussed measures related to the success of the election in Myanmar, the peace processes and promoting relations between the armed forces of the two countries.

Also present at the meeting with the vice president were Deputy Minister Brig-Gen Aung Thaw and U Thant Kyaw. The British military delegation was accompanied by British Ambassador to Myanmar Mr Andrew Patrick.—Myanmar News Agency

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Union Peace Conference to be broadcast live

A CEREMONY to open the Union Peace Conference on 12 January will be broadcast live by Myanmar Radio and Television on its News Channel and on Myanmar Radio beginning at 8:45am today.—Myanmar News Agency
Thai king leaves hospital for first outing since admission last year

BANGKOK — Thailand’s King Bhumibol Adulyadej left hospital yesterday to visit his Bangkok palace, his first such outing since he was admitted last year.

His trip to the Chitralada Palace follows a Royal Household Bureau announcement on Sunday that the 86-year-old king was recovering from a blood infection and swollen lung.

King Bhumibol, the world’s longest serving monarch, has been in hospital since May and has received treatment for multiple illnesses. Nervousness over his health and the succession has formed the backdrop to a decade of political crisis in Thailand, where the military took power in a coup in May 2014. “His Majesty will go to the Chitralada Palace for a change of atmosphere and will return today,” said a palace official, who declined to be identified. The king, who came to the throne in 1946, is widely revered and his absence will cause a problem.

The palace issues notices on the king’s health and keeps tight sentences have become harsher.

Abe aiming to win upper house election, promote Pacific trade deal

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe visits a Shinto shrine in the western Japan city of Shimonomori, part of his constituency, on 11 January. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

TOKYO — Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said yesterday he aims to strengthen his political base by winning an upper house election this summer, while underscoring the importance of the recently agreed free trade area among Pacific nations.

“In order to achieve results, we need a stable base. We have to win the House of Councillors election,” Abe told a meeting of supporters in Shimonomori, Yamaguchi Prefecture.

As members of the Trans-Pacific Partnership broadly agreed in October to create a 12-nation free trade bloc, covering 40 per cent of the world economy, Abe said it will bring a “significant change for Japan.”

While expected to help boost Japanese exports, the trade liberalization deal will also likely expose domestic farmers to fierce competition with cheaper imports, sparking criticism of the government in rural areas where agriculture is a key industry.

Abe arrived in his constituency in western Japan on Sunday and attended meetings with supporter, in which he said he will continue pushing his policy of stimulating the country’s economy.

Abe also indicated he will step up unilateral sanctions against North Korea following its fourth nuclear test last year.—Kyodo News

South Korea to hold six-party talks with China, US, Japan on DPRK nuke programme

SEOUL — Representatives of South Korea, China, the United States and Japan in six-party talks to dismantle the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea’s (DPRK) nuclear programme will meet this week to discuss the DPRK’s fourth nuclear test, Seoul’s foreign ministry said yesterday.

Hwang Joon-Kook, who represents South Korea at the aid-for-disarmament talks, will hold a meeting with his US and Japan counterparts on Wednesday in Seoul.

During the meeting, the diplomats will make an in-depth discussion on bilateral and multilateral countermeasures against what the DPRK claimed was its fourth test of a "hydrogen bomb" last Wednesday, including comprehensive and strong resolutions from the UN Security Council.

Hwang will visit China on Thursday to meet Wu Dawei, China’s special representative for the Korean Peninsula affairs, and discuss countermeasures following the DPRK’s fourth nuclear test.

Schedules for the meeting between Hwang and his Russian counterpart are under coordination between the two sides, the ministry said.

The six-party talks involve South Korea, the DPRK, China, the United States, Japan and Russia.

The ministry said that right after the DPRK’s nuclear test, Hwang made emergency phone calls with his six-party-talks counterparts, noting that Seoul will make efforts to bring concerted response of the international society via such series of consultations.—Xinhua
Thousands march in HK in support of missing booksellers

HONG KONG — Thousands of people marched in Hong Kong on Sunday protesting against China’s alleged abduction of five bookellers, a case drawing concerns over China’s proclaimed commitment to the rule of law and to the territory’s autonomy.

The Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movements in China, the organiser of the protest, said 6,000 people took part. It ended with protesters tying yellow ribbons outside the locked gate of the Central Liaison Office, Beijing’s representative here, to call for the release of the five men whose mysterious disappearances have pointed to China’s alleged cross-border hunting of persons of interest. “End white terror, defend freedom of publication! No to political kidnapping, defend ‘one country, two systems’!” the protesters chanted as they marched.

The group included Lee Bo, owner of Causeway Bay Books that sold books critical of Chinese leaders banned on the mainland, Gui Minhai, owner of publishing house Mighty Current that owns the bookstore, and three associates. Lee, a British national who disappeared in Hong Kong on 30 December, is feared to be late last missing. He is believed to have been abducted and smuggled out of Hong Kong by mainland agents operating here as there is no record of him leaving. In a faxed letter and later a taped video message reportedly received by Lee’s wife following his disappearance, Lee is purported to have said he had recently travelled to China to help with an investigation by mainland authorities and questioned the intent of people who hold a demonstration for his release.

“One day I will come home,” said Daniel Chu, an information technology worker. “One case is too many. I don’t want to see a lot of effort by the Hong Kong government defending ‘one country, two systems’,” he said.

Beijing promised a semiautonomous status for 50 years under the “one country, two systems” principle for the former British colony. The statement returned to Chinese rule in 1997.

But cases of Chinese agents operating in Hong Kong have been reported occasionally since the handover, with the recent disappearances of the booksellers raising concerns that China is breaking its promises by boldly interfering in the territory’s affairs. “Chinese police arresting people in Hong Kong amounts to blatant disrespect and trampling on the ‘one country, two systems’ principle,” said Catherine Yung, a bank clerk. “We are coming out to show our support for Lee and the other bookstore associates, also to defend our unique system and freedom of speech.”

“If doing such simple things (as publishing books) could lead to being disappeared, I’d also worry that I, my family and friends could also one day disappear,” said a 53-year-old woman named Wong. “Freedom is about having no fear. I am so worried that Hong Kong is becoming a place of communism.”

Guo of Mighty Current, a Swedish citizen, is said to have failed to return from a holiday in Thailand in October. Bookstore manager Lam Wing-kei, general manager of the publishing house Lui Bo and business manager Cheung Jiping were all reportedly apprehended in mainland China. Despite Hong Kong’s requests for information and concerns raised by the British, Swedish and US governments, China has yet to confirm if the five men were detained, and if so, for what cause.—Kyodo News

New Zealand steps up help in battle against Australian fires

WELLINGTON — New Zealand fire authorities almost doubled the deployment of firefighters yesterday to help combat fires burning in the Australian state of Victoria.

Twenty-two New Zealand firefighters flew to Australia, joining 23 colleagues who left on 2 January, for fires in a hilly bush near the coastal town of Lorne, 150 km southwest of Melbourne, the state capital. National Rural Fire Officer Kevin O’Connor said crews already there were making good progress building containment lines around the fires, which were still burning on a 40-km front around Victoria’s south-west coast.

The fire danger in the area remained very high, O’Connor said. Both deployments were scheduled to last three weeks, with a possible extension depending on conditions. Lightning strikes late last month started the fires, which are still burning in dense forest.

The fires have destroyed about 2,500 hectares and dozens of homes.—Xinhua

South Korea to limit access to joint industrial zone in North Korea

SEOUL — South Korea will limit access by its nationals to a joint industrial zone in North Korea to a minimum level from Tuesday, South Korea’s Unification Ministry spokesman said yesterday.

The measure is aimed at ensuring the safety of South Koreans in the zone, located in the North’s border town of Kaesong, amid heightened tensions created following Pyongyang’s fourth nuclear test last week, Jong Jooh Hee told reporters.

For the sake of their safety, the government has decided to limit the type of workers who are to enter the Kaesong industrial zone to those engaging in production, the spokesman said.

About 54,000 North Koreans are employed by about 120 South Korean companies operating factories in the industrial zone, which opened in 2004 to combine South Korea’s capital and technology, and North Korea’s cheap labour.

South Korea on Friday restarted loudspeaker broadcasts of anti-North Korea propaganda across the inter-Korean border in retaliation to the North’s latest nuclear test.

The resumption of what North Korea has previously denounced as “smeared broadcasting” and “psychological warfare” is certain to draw a fierce reaction from the country, which has in the past threatened to fire artillery at the speakers.—Kyodo News

Congress proposes Philippine retail bond to fund military modernisation

MANILA — Congress yesterday asked the Philippine government to study a proposal to issue a 150 billion peso ($3.2 billion) retail bond to fund a long-term military modernisation plan to secure its strategic reserves in the South China Sea.

Amer Ty, deputy minority leader at the lower house of Congress, said Congress will ask the Treasury to consider a bond issue to enable Filipinos to save and at the same time help secure the Philippines’ maritime borders against China’s rapid expansion in the South China Sea.

“The bulk of the additional funds raised from the bond offering may be set aside to acquire new warships, like frigates and corvettes, for deployment to the West Philippine Sea (South China Sea),” Ty told reporters.

“We have to invest in new warships to secure the potential huge oil and gas deposits in the West Philippine Sea, which are the key to our energy independence,” National Treasurer Rober-to Tan told Reuters. He still has to be familiarised with the proposal.

National Treasurer Rober-to Tan told Reuters he had not been advised about the sub-mission, saying “I still have to be familiarised with the proposals”.

Last month, President Be-nigno Aquino has said he will leave behind a stronger and more capable military to face maritime challenges in the contested Spratly Islands when he leaves office on 30 June, announcing an 83.9 billion peso five-year spending plan extending to 2017.

China claims almost all the South China Sea, believing it to have huge deposits of oil and gas, through which about $5 trillion in ship-borne trade passes every year. Brunei, Ma-laaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan and Viet Nam also have claims in the strategic waters.

In 2012, a Chinese patrol ship harasssed a survey ship hired by an Anglo-Filipino con-sortium exploring for oil and gas in the Philippines’ Reed Bank, an area Beijing claimed to be part of its territory. Last year, Manila suspended oil and gas activities in the Reed Bank area.

Ty said Congress has passed a revised military modernisation law, allocating 75 billion pesos for a five-year period until 2017. Since coming to office in 2010, Aquino has spent about 50 billion pesos on military equipment.

This year, Congress approved almost 25 billion pesos to acquire two frigates, three anti-submarine helicopters, six close air support planes and munitions for the South Ko-rean-made FA-50 light fighter planes. The military has an ambitious 15-year modernisation plan to spend about 998 billion pesos to acquire submarines, advanced missile systems, and surveillance aircraft to put the country on par with its Southeast Asian neighbours.—Reuters

PHNOM PENH — More than 40 pieces of Chinese paintings and calligraphy were displayed here yesterday aimed at promoting cultural ties between China and Cambodia, an organise said.

Wang Baoxin, director of China Culture and Art Research Institute, said some 11 Chinese artists showcased their works at the one-day event, held at the Beijing International Academy in Phnom Penh.

“The exhibition is aimed to exchange cultural relations between China and Cambodia,” he said.

Through the event, I’m confident that Cambodian people will better understand about Chinese paintings and calligraphy.” He said the exhibition will next head to Vientiane, Laos on 17 January.—Xinhua

People march in Hong Kong on Jan. 10, 2016, protesting against China’s alleged abduction of five bookellers, a case drawing concerns over China’s proclaimed commitment to the rule of law and to the territory’s autonomy. Photo: Kyodo News
Putin wants global cooperation against terrorism

MOSSCOW — Russia wants to fight terrorism jointly with the rest of the world, President Vladimir Putin said in an interview published yesterday, while again accusing the West of exacerbating international crises that had contributed to it.

“We are faced with common threats, and we still want all countries, both in Europe and the whole world, to join their efforts to combat these threats, and we are still striving for this,” Putin said in a wide-ranging interview with Germany’s Bild newspaper.

“I refer not only to terrorism, but also to crime, trafficking in persons, environmental protection, and many other common challenges,” he said.

“Yet this does not mean that it is us who should agree with everything that others decide on these or other matters.”

Russia’s air force is attacking targets in Syria and Moscow says it aims to undermine Islamic State, which has been joined by thousands of Russian citizens and now poses a serious threat to national security. The group claimed responsibility for downing a Russian airliner over Egypt in October, killing 224 people.

But Russia has not joined a US-led coalition carrying out strikes on Islamic State in Syria and Iraq, and Washington and its allies say Moscow’s strikes are only aimed at helping embattled Syrian President Bashar al-Assad stay in power.

Putin said previous Western military interventions in Iraq and Libya had contributed to an upsurge in terrorism in these countries and elsewhere, reiterating what he had told the United Nations General Assembly in September.

He hit out at NATO’s expansion toward Russia’s borders after the Soviet Union’s demise in 1991 and at an anti-missile shield being erected by the United States, accusing the West’s expansion after the Cold War of exacerbating international crises.

Putin has repeatedly called the toppling of Ukraine’s former President Viktor Yanukovich in 2014 after months of pro-European street protests “a coup d’état”, and has accused the West of inspiring and assisting it.

In February last year, France, Germany, Russia and Ukraine agreed on a set of peace accords, known as the Minsk agreements, which have helped to stop the war in eastern Ukraine and Moscow separatists and government troops in southeast Ukraine.

But a key clause of the peace deal, which stipulates a new Ukrainian constitution that enshrines the autonomy of the rebel regions, remains unfulfilled, Putin said.

“Everyone says that the Minsk Agreements must be implemented and then the sanctions issue may be reconsidered,” Putin told Bild, referring to Western sanctions imposed on Russia.

“This is beginning to resemble the theater of the absurd because everything essential that needs to be done in implementing the Minsk Agreements is the responsibility of the current Kiev authorities.”

But Putin’s commitment to a clause in the peace agreement that required Ukraine to introduce constitutional reform by the end of last year, calling this “the main, the key issue in the settlement process”.

The leaders of France and Germany, he added, “should scrutinize these matters more thoroughly”.

On the economic front, Putin acknowledged that the country’s economy had been hard hit by the plunge in oil prices but also said that there was a positive side insofar as it would force Russia to improve the structure of its public finances.

“I believe that our non-oil and gas deficit had risen to a very dangerous level. So now we are forced to lower it. And this is healthy,” he said.

“It is very difficult ... to resist spending oil and gas revenues to cover current expenses. (But) it is the reduction of these expenses that improves the economy.” — Reuters

US may deploy more strategic assets to Korean peninsula: South Korea

SEOUL — The United States and its ally South Korea are in talks toward sending further strategic US assets to the Korean peninsula, a day after a US B-52 bomber flew over South Korea in response to North Korea’s nuclear test last week.

“The United States and South Korea are continuously and closely having discussions on additional deployment of strategic assets,” Kim Min-seok, spokesman at the South Korean defense ministry said yesterday, declining to give specifics.

South Korean media said strategic assets Washington may utilize in Korea included B-2 bombers, nuclear-powered submarines and F-22 stealth fighter jets.

Seoul also said yesterday that it would restrict access to the jointy run Kaesoong industrial complex just north of the heavily militarised inter-Korean border to the "minimum necessary level" starting from Tuesday.

North Korea says it exploded a hydrogen bomb last Wednesday, although the United States and outside experts doubt that the North had achieved such a technological advance in its fourth nuclear test. The test angered China, the North’s main ally, which was not given advance notice, and the United States.

In a show of force and support for its allies in the region, the United States on Sunday sent a nuclear-capable B-52 bomber based in Guam on a flight over South Korea.

Separately, South Korea and Japan used their shared military hotline for the first time in the aftermath of North Korea’s nuclear test, Seoul’s defense ministry said, a sign the North’s provocation is pushing the two longtime rivals, which are Washington’s main allies in the region, closer together.

South Korea has also resumed anti-North propaganda broadcasts over loudspeakers along the border, a tactic that the North considers insulting and results in an armed standoff that included an exchange of artillery fire the last time South Korea used the speakers in August.

South Korea’s president Park Geun-hye plans to make a speech to the nation on Wednesday in which she is expected to express strong will to respond to North Korea’s nuclear test, a presidential official said.

North Korea’s Rodong Sinmun newspaper, the mouthpiece of the ruling Workers’ Party, said that the United States was bringing the political situation to the brink of war by sending strategic bombers to South Korea.

The chairman of South Korea’s Joint Chiefs of Staff said on Monday that North Korea was likely to carry out further sudden provocations, a South Korean defense ministry official said.

Leon Simin’s comments were made during a visit with General Curtis Scaparrotti, the commander of US forces in Korea, to the Osan Air Base operated jointly with US and South Korea. — Reuters

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On Benin’s voodoo holiday, followers pray and sacrifice for peace

COTONOU — The national voodoo holiday in the West African country of Benin had a distinctively political accent this year as practitioners from Africa and the Americas gathered on Sunday to offer prayers and sacrifices for peace.

Hundreds of followers of the traditional religion gathered in the Atlantic coast town of Ouidah, once an important port in the slave trade, to pray for calm during the tiny country’s presidency election scheduled for February.

Benin has no history of significant electoral violence. But David Kofi Aza, a well-known priest, predicted dozens of deaths in post-electoral violence because the loser would refuse to cede to the winner.

The oracle did not reveal how the crisis would be resolved, Aza said. At the ceremony in Ouidah, spiritual leader Daagbo Hounan Houma II appealed to the dead to help keep order during the vote. “The elections will pass in a peaceful manner in the name of the bounties of the ancestors,” he said.

Further inland in Savalou, the hometown of Prime Minister Lionel Zinsou, priests and dignitaries set a chicken on fire at a ceremony before spreading its blood and palm oil on a fetish made out of cowrie shells and sand.

The election campaign has been overshadowed by a controversy over the ruling party’s choice of Zinsou as its candidate, a pick approved by outgoing president Thomas Boni Yayi.

Last Tuesday, politicians from the opposition and dissidents from the ruling party met for discussions on the formation of a coalition to prevent Zinsou’s run.

Zinsou is both French and Beninese and spent a large part of his life in France. Critics claim he is an outsider without a true understanding of the realities of life in Benin.

But he does enjoy local support. “Diversity must be a richness and exclusion is a source of war,” said Gabouidi Tossoh, the king of Savalou, said at the ceremony there.

Boni Yayi has been president since 2006, when he took over in a peaceful transition of power after 28 years under Marxist coup leader Mathieu Kerekou, who gradually came to embrace multiparty democracy.

Aside from Zinsou, prominent businessman Sebastien Ajayon and Abdoulaye Bio Tchané, a former senior official at the International Monetary Fund and a 2011 presidential candidate, have officially declared their runs for the office.

The celebrations of voodoo, a traditional African spirit religion that spread to the Americas with the slave trade, were declared a national holiday in 1992.

This year they drew practitioners from nearby countries such as Togo, Ghana and Nigeria and locations as far away as Haiti, Brazil and the United States. “For nearly 15 years, I have not missed this celebration,” said a man in his 60s from Brazil who gave his name only as Antonio.—Reuters

MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION AND FORESTRY MYANMA TIMBER ENTERPRISE EXPORT MARKETING & MILLING DEPARTMENT INVITATION FOR OPEN TENDER 1. MYANMA TIMBER ENTERPRISE WILL SELL TEAK & HARDWOOD ROUND LOGS AND SAWN TIMBERS BY OPEN TENDERS IN US DOLLARS. PARTICULARS OF THE OPEN TENDER SALES ARE AS FOLLOWS: (a) DATE & TIME: (22-1-2016) (12:00)Noon (25-1-2016) (13:00)pm (b) COMMODITIES & VOLUME: TEAK LOGS (251)TONS TEAK HANDSAW & CONVERSION (324)TONS HARD WOOD LOGS PADUAK (1380)TONS PYNKADO/THAYET/HNAW/THITYAR/INGYIN/KANYIN/TINGHANTUKKYAN ABOUT 19664TONS HARD WOOD HANDSAW CONVERSION PADUAK/UTAMALA/ABOUT (350)TONS (c) PLACE: MYANMAR TIMBER ENTERPRISE HEAD OFFICE AND ALSO VISIT MYANMA TIMBER ENTERPRISE WEB-SITE (www.myanmatimber.com.mm) Contacts:Office Ph:01528771, E-mail:Marketing 1 ppy@gmail.com
Good governance brings happiness

Khin Maung Aye

PEOPLE in developed nations seem to be happier than those in the developing ones. People in the least-developed countries (LDCs) must be the least-happy people.

According to research on this subject, average happiness differs remarkably across nations, and there seems to be a pattern in these differences. A study of 127 countries conducted in 2006 indicates a strong correlation between the quality of governance and the average happiness of citizens. The correlation between technical quality and happiness is +0.75, whereas that between democratic quality and happiness is +0.60. Another noteworthy finding is that technical quality correlates with happiness in both rich and poor nations, whereas democratic quality correlates with happiness only in rich nations.

That being the case, what Myanmar should expect from its new government is not democratic quality but the improvement of the technical quality of governance; this may cause Myanmar people to grow happier.

Furthermore, the quality of governance appears to have a stronger relationship with happiness than the size of a government: the correlation between quality and happiness is independent of the size of a government, while the correlation between size and happiness fully depends on quality.

In this regard, it is also worth noting that the correlation between technical quality and happiness seems to be independent of culture, meaning all people, regardless of country of origin, have stronger likelihood of being happy as long as the technical quality of governance where they live is high. This indicates that technically good governance is a universal condition for happiness, not just a figment of western ideology.

Also, when the democratic quality of governance in a country improves, it has been shown to add substantially to the positive effects of technical quality once technical quality has reached a certain threshold.

Therefore, with the incumbent regime having not enough time to improve the quality of governance in the country, The Global New Light of Myanmar would like to urge the new administration to prioritise improving the technical quality of governance in Myanmar, therefore promoting the democratic quality later, in order to ensure that people’s happiness improves as quickly as possible.

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 khinmaungaye.hotmail@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.

The Spirit of An Administration

Kyi Mun

MIND is the key to life. You can elevate your life with your mind, and You can degrade your life with your mind - Bhagavad Gita

Whatever you can believe and Conceive, you can achieve. - Napoleon Hill

Morale is to material as 3 is to 1. - Napoleon Bonaparte

The purpose of an organization is to make common men do uncommon things. - Lord Beveridge

Do small things with great love. - Mother Teresa

The Eisenhower Administration had been dubbed as the Management Administration. In my opinion, a good administration should be based both on Management and Leadership. Leadership is for the effectiveness of an administration, and management is for the efficiency of an administration. Peter F. Drucker has defined:

Effectiveness means doing the RIGHT things, and efficiency means doing the things RIGHT. For a good administration to be effective as well as efficient, it should be purposefully guided by the following FOUR FACTORS OF SUCCESS: burning desire; indomitable spirit; unyielding effort; and insight wisdom. For a good administration to be brilliantly successful, the whole administration should be inspired by the following FOUR ASPECTS OF PRIORITY: focus; insight; results; and execution. For a good administration to be victorious in its battle for PEOPLE, PLANET AND PROSPERITY, it should always give emphasis to strengthening the following FOUR PILLARS OF VICTORY: The quality and capability of the leader; the quality and capability to the followers; morale; and resources. For a good administration to be able to give consistently effective leadership, it should always cultivate the following LEADERSHIP CHARACTERISTIC: being visionary and having core values; having insight and inspiration; having sterling character and competence; having trustworthiness and tough-mindedness; being able to outthink and outperform; being revolutionary in spirit and resourceful; being innovative and inclusive; having objectives and outstanding resources; being unique and unrivalled; and having strategy and strengths. Besides, for a good administration to be able to develop people, planet and prosperity, it should successfully carry out the following Management Functions: making things happen and getting things done; accountability; goal-driven; innovation; and commitment-oriented. Besides, it also needs six Leadership Functions: persuading; organizing; enacting; enabling; teaching; inspiring; and caring. For a good administration to be able to bring about greater, better, faster, more economical and more sustainable results for REACH, PROGRESS AND PROSPERITY, it should always valiantly and meticulously practice the following ELEPHANT PRINCIPLES OF VICTORY: the principle of objective; the principle of concentration; the principle of offensive; the principle of cooperation; the principle of economy of force; the principle of security; the principle of surprise; and the principle of mobility. For a good administration to be able to stand tall, to add value and to create wealth for the people and the nation as a whole, it must always scrupulously avoid the following Eight Factors of Failure: greed; arrogance; complacency; inconsistency; myopia; apathy; inertia; and ignorance.

The leader and all the followers should always bear in mind the following sayings of the wise with all their minds, with all their hearts with all their strengths:

- To dare nobly,
- To will strongly, and
- Never to falter in the path of duty.
- * Think the most noblest,
- * Feel the noblest, and
- * Act the best.
- * Be strong inside,
- * Permit no defeat, and
- * Fight all you can.

Shwe Bank opened

Shwe Bank (Shwe Rural and Urban Development Bank) was opened yesterday at its head office at the corner of Merchant Road and Pansodan Street in Yangon.

Shwe Bank offers local banking services as well as international banking services. It also has Money Changer Counters, issuing Master Card and Visa Card.

Shwe Bank became a member of MPU on 15th January 2015, a member of Central Bank’s Cheque Clearing House on 1st July, 2015, a member of Myanmar Banks Association on 30th November 2015. Shwe Bank has installed Oracle Flexcube Universal Core Banking System and its data centre has been built on proper system.—Myanmar News Agency

Same Bridge in Magway nearly complete

CONSTRUCTION on the Same Bridge near Saytoktaya Township in Magway Region is nearly completed, according to a project manager.

With a budget of K$2.55 billion provided by the regional government, the project began last October and is expected to be finished in February this year. The two-way road bridge will be 1,000 feet long and 30 feet wide.

Construction was initially meant to begin last April, but the project was delayed due to heavy rainfall in June and July in the township, said project engineer U Hlaing Phyo Win.

The project is meant to benefit residents living beside Saytoktaya Creek by improving their access to nearby markets.

Currently, local residents face various difficulties traveling to Ngaphe and Minbu for work and other daily needs.—Zin Oo
New houses built in flood-hit Kalay

The construction of new houses for people who lost their homes during heavy flooding in July and August 2015 in Kalay, Sagaing Region, is nearly complete. Some residents started moving into the new houses in a relocation site within the town on 31 December 2015, according to local authorities.

A total of 358 houses have been built in several relocation sites in Kalay Township. The floods, caused by torrential rain, destroyed 358 houses in Kalay Township, 91 in Kalaywa Township and 24 in Minkin Township in Sagaing Region.—Ju Naing

World War II-era cargo coach discovered in Swar River

A WORLD War II-era cargo coach was discovered in a river in Yedashe Township, Bago Region.

The coach was revealed by the silting of the Swar River causing the water level in part of the river to drop.

The cargo coach fell into the river when the train and the bridge it ran on were hit by bombs dropped by during WWII, according to an old woman who witnessed the event while she was hiding in the forest during the war.

There are some bullet holes on the left side of the car, according to people living in the area.—Ko Lwin

Buffalos seized in Katha

ELEVEN buffalos—nine male and two female—worth K5.5 million (US$4,255) were seized in Kawlin Township, in Katha District, Sagaing Region.

Local police arrested four men who were transporting the buffaloes in a car near Intabin Village on 8 January after they were unable to procure documents proving their ownership of the buffaloes.

The four suspects—Kyaw Soe Aung, Kan Win, Maung Cho and Kan Htoo—have been charged under the law.—U Ye

Illegal wood cutting machines seized in Kawlin

ILLEGAL wood cutting machines and pieces of lumber were found within the Thaw Forest Reserve in Kawlin Township, Katha District, Sagaing Region on 7 January.

They discovered the two men named Maung Tun, 52, and Zaw Zaw Zin, 32, in possession of pieces of teak weighing 0.0634 tonnes, other timber weighing 0.03 tonnes, an engine and a chainsaw.

Action was taken against the two suspects under the law by the police.—La Aung

Three-wheel motorbike collides head-on with two-wheel motorbike

A three-wheel motorbike collided head-on with a two-wheel motorbike in Mohnyn Township, Kachin State, on Friday, leaving four people injured.

The three-wheeler was driven by Bo Myint Naing, 23, and the two-wheeler was driven by Thein Soe, 25, according to Ko Lwin.

The four suspects—Kyaw Soe Aung, Kan Win, Maung Cho and Kan Htoo—have been charged under the law.—Ni Toe

Drug News

Heroin, opium, yabba seized in Naungcho

A LOCAL anti-drug squad in Naungcho, Shan State, seized 65 grams of heroin, 3 kilos of opium and 23,350 yabba tablets hidden in a motorbike on 8 January 2016, according to local police.

Si Thu, 28, was driving the motorbike from Hupaw to Naungcho when the police intercepted him. He will face charges under the Anti-Narcotics Act.—Myanmar Police Force

Crime News

Thai taxi driver robbed Myanmar couple

A THAI taxi driver threatened and stole money from a Myanmar couple working in Bangkok, according to Ko Sai Aye from the Bangkok MAT office on 6 January. MAT is an organisation that assists Myanmar people living in Thailand.

According to the MAT office, Nyi Nyi Zaw and Chaw Su were waiting at a taxi gate when a taxi driver forced them to hire his taxi.

When they were halfway to their destination, the couple asked the driver to stop the car because the driver tried to charge them 5,000 baht (US$138) for the journey.

However, the driver refused to stop and began driving away from the couple’s requested course.

The couple told the driver that they would borrow money from their friend.

The taxi driver agreed, and took them to the friend’s house. While they were hiding in their friend’s house, Nyi Nyi Zaw called the MAT office for help, and the taxi driver brought the Thai police to the house to arrest the couple.

The MAT office brought other Thai police officers to the house, who discovered the driver had been using the drugs and that he had demanded an exorbitant rate.

The MAT said legal action will be taken against the taxi driver.—Kyaw Soe

Four men arrested with drugs in Htan Taw

Four men—Tun Naing, 23, Tun Min, 46, Tun Thu Oo, 26, and Tun Hla, 23—were arrested in Htan Taw area in Sagaing Region with drugs seized from them, according to the local police.

Three young men from the Lusen area were driving a car when they were stopped by the police in Htan Taw area in Sagaing Region.

Police searched the car and found 23,350 yabba tablets, 3 kilos of opium and 65 grams of heroin without paying any consideration, according to police.

They were arrested under the Narcotics Act and the anti-narcotics law.—Police

Three-gallon of methanol seized in Htan Taw

Three gallons of methanol were seized from a place in Htan Taw area in Sagaing Region, according to the local police.

The methanol was found in a plastic sack in Mar Aung’s house, a resident of Htan Taw area in Sagaing Region, according to police.

They were under investigation for possession of methanol in the area.—Police

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Tesla curbs autopilot feature, but Musk says better than human driver

DETROIT — Tesla Motors said on Sunday it was updating the Autopilot driving systems in Model S sedans to put new limits on its hands-free operation, which has been both praised for its innovation while criticised for having been launched too early.

The function will now be restricted on residential roads or roads without a centre divider, meaning the car cannot drive faster than the speed limit maximum plus five miles (8 km) per hour.

Tesla Chief Executive Elon Musk said the car will now reduce its speed in anticipation of curves on the highway, but added he was not aware of any accidents caused by the earlier version of the software.

Tesla announced the Autopilot upgrade the day before the start of Detroit’s North American International Auto Show, where traditional carmakers — which in general have lagged Tesla in unveiling semi-autonomous technology — launch new models.

When Autopilot launched in October, Musk cautioned the hotly anticipated function was in beta mode, or a test phase of development, with full ‘hands-off’ driving not recommended.

Still, a host of subsequent videos posted by Tesla drivers on YouTube showed near-miss-crashes on the road with Autopilot, prompting Musk to say he might curb the function to minimize the possibility of people doing “crazy things.”

The US pioneer in luxury electric cars charged by batteries was one of the first companies to offer steering that could be operated hands-free, one of the first steps to full self-driving that industry experts say may be available by 2020.

In an interview with reporters, Musk said Tesla’s system was “probably better than human at this point in highway driving,” able to keep to its lane using cameras, radar and mapping.

The company’s expertise in software has allowed it to add the hands-free functionality — and to correct any glitches — through a software update, but critics have suggested the company should have delayed Autopilot until it was perfect.

At the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas last week, the head of GM’s global product development, Mark Reuss, said his company would “never” use over-the-air upgrades in safety-critical systems like steering and braking.

Tesla said improvements were made to help the car better stay in lanes even with faded markings, and when passing highway exits. In cruise control mode, the car will now anticipate exits by slowing down if the turn signal is activated.

Using a feature called “summon,” Model S drivers can park their cars from outside the vehicle in tight spots and the cars can also park themselves in perpendicular spots to the curb.

In a bold pronouncement characteristic of Musk, who also has interests in space travel, he said advances in the “summon” technology would allow Tesla owners to summon their cars from New York to Los Angeles within two years.—Reuters

Asian shares extend losses as China sows confusion

SYDNEY — Asian shares sank to their lowest in over four years yesterday as doubts mounted about Beijing’s ability to manage the world’s second-biggest economy.

The absence of Tokyo for a holiday only made liquidity even harder to come by, heightening volatility. Currency markets saw some wild swings with the South African rand ZAR=D3 collapsing to record lows at one point before bouncing.

MSCI’s broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan .MIAPJ00000PUS slid 1.8 per cent to its lowest since late 2011.

China’s main indexes .CSI300/SSEC dipped more than 3 per cent at one point, Australia 1.25 per cent and the Philippines .PSI dropped 3.8 per cent.

Financial spreadbets IG predicted opening losses of 0.5 per cent for the FTSE 100 .FTSE, 1.5 per cent for the DAX .GDAXI and 1.2 per cent for France’s CAC .FCHI. E-mini futures for the U.S. S&P 500 .ESc1 fared better, turning flat after an early loss of 0.8 per cent.

Commodities were again on the ropes as Brent crude oil LCOc1 shed 79 cents to $32.76 a barrel, while US crude CLc1 was 69 cents lighter at $32.47.

China was again the epicenter of unease as the People’s Bank confirmed analysts by guiding the yuan’s midpoint rate sharply stronger, a move that might calm concerns about a competitive devaluation but only added to market confusion as to Beijing’s ultimate intent on its currency policy.

The move was an apparent reversal of the midpoint’s recent weakening trend which included the biggest one-day drop in the guidance rate in five months on 7 January.

“Authorities are reluctant to let market forces rule, which along with their indecisiveness and lack of transparency is exacerbating uncertainty,” said Tapas Strickland, an economist at National Australia Bank.

“Undoubtedly, amidst this global markets are selling Chinese policymaker’s ability to control their economy.”

That only heightened tensions ahead of China trade data on Wednesday where declines are expected in exports and imports, underlining just how anemic world trade flows are right now.

Both the Dow .DJII and the S&P 500 .SPX had their worst five-day starts in history last week, and the corporate news flow is unlikely to get any cheerier with the coming results season expected to be anything but.

S&P 500 earnings are forecast to have dropped 4.2 per cent in the fourth quarter, a second straight quarterly decline led by the hard-hit energy and materials sectors.

The pain in stocks and worries over China even outweighed the positive impact of December’s upbeat US payrolls report and burnished the appeal of higher-rated government bonds.

Yields on 3-, 7- and 10-year US Treasuries had shot up 5 basis points by 100 basis points since early October last year, while five-year yields dropped by the most since September 2013.

The gains continued on Monday with US day 10-year Treasury futures TYc1 up 3 ticks, while Fed fund futures <0#FF:0> were pricing in a slightly shallower upward path for rates.

In currency markets, the main early news was the yen which is often favored in times of stress as Japan remains the world’s largest creditor nation.

The dollar initially fell half a yen to a near-five-month low of 116.70 yen JPY=, before steadying around 117.22.

 Dealers said Japanese investors seemed to be bailing out of long positions in the South African rand by selling rand for dollars and then those dollars for yen.

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SHWE BANK

HEARTFELT THANKS

Shwe Bank (Shwe Rural and Urban Development Bank) was formally opened on 11.1.2016. We would like to express our heartfelt thanks to all those who attended the opening ceremony, especially to Union Minister for Religious Affairs U Soe Win, Governor of the Central Bank of Myanmar U Kyaw Kyaw Maung, Minister for Finance and Revenue of the Yangon Region Government Daw San San Nwe and ministers of Yangon Region Government, Japanese Ambassador to Myanmar His Excellency Tateshi HIGUCHI and diplomats from foreign embassies, officials of the Central Bank of Myanmar, Patron of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry and Chairman of Kanbawza Bank U Aung Ko Win, Chairman of Myanmar Banks Association and Chairman of Cooperatives Bank U Khin Maung Aye and responsible personnel, chairmen of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry and brotherhood organisations of UMFCCCI, chairmen and senior managers of local banks, entrepreneurs within and without the country, responsible personnel from branches of foreign banks, resident representatives of foreign banks, executives of Myanmar Media Council and media organisations, local journalists and foreign correspondents, chairmen and responsible personnel of the religious and social associations, distinguished guests and those who lended a helping hand to make the opening ceremony a success.

“SHWE BANK”
Chairman, members of Board of Directors, and bank employees
MEXICO CITY — Mexico is formally starting extradition proceedings against captured drug lord Joaquin ‘El Chapo’ Guzman, the government said late on Sunday, in the strongest sign yet it intends to send him to the United States.

Guzman, the infamous boss of the Sinaloa drug cartel and the world’s most prominent drug trafficker, was arrested in northwestern Mexico on Friday after a months-long manhunt.

On Sunday, Interpol served two extradition warrants, the Mexican attorney general’s office said, kick-starting the latest attempt to have Guzman face US justice for the hundreds of tonnes of cocaine, meth-amphetamines and heroin he has exported across the border.

Mexico regularly extradites leading traffickers but the government of President Enrique Pena Nieto resisted handing over Guzman after his February 2014 arrest as a point of national pride.

That position changed after he escaped from a maximum security prison in July — for the second time in his career — by slipping away through a mile-long tunnel that surfaced in his cell.

Guzman has been taken back to the same facility over the weekend but, to avoid a repeat of that humiliation, Mexico’s government says it aims to hand Guzman over to US justice as soon as possible. His lawyers are trying to block extradition.

The US government wants Guzman, who is believed to be 58 years old, tried on charges ranging from money laundering to drug trafficking, kidnapping and murder.

Guzman, who is blamed for thousands of deaths in Mexico and the United States from addiction and gang warfare, is facing open federal indictments in seven US jurisdictions.

Chicago and Brooklyn, New York are leading contenders to host what would be one of the most high-profile US criminal trials in years, former US law enforcement officials said.

Chicago, which in 2013 dubbed Guzman its first Public Enemy No.1 since Al Capone, has a sweeping 2009 indictment against him, including several counts of conspiring to smuggle and distribute drugs, as well as money laundering charges.

“It will be a fight between each jurisdiction but logic would say that Chicago is the way to go,” said former US Drug Enforcement Administration agent Robert Mazur, who spent five years undercover infiltrating the criminal hierarchy of Colombia’s drug cartels and is now president of a Florida private investigations agency.

Mexico could extradite Guzman by mid-year, sources familiar with the situation said. However, the timing will likely depend on any injunctions filed by Guzman’s lawyers, meaning that a US trial could still be a year or more away.

Mexican government sources say security forces were helped in their efforts to recapture Guzman when he met with Hollywood star Sean Penn late last year. They said they were aware of the meeting, so kept track of Penn, allowing them to locate Guzman.

Neither Penn nor Mexican actress Del Castillo, who set up the meeting, have commented since their interview with Guzman was published in Rolling Stone magazine on Saturday.—Reuters

**Claims Day Notice**

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A resident reads a newspaper article about the recapture of Joaquin “Chapo” Guzman at a plaza in the municipality of Badiraguato, in Sinaloa state, Mexico, on 9 January.
Australia Pacific LNG ships first cargo from new terminal after delay

SYDNEY — The Australia Pacific LNG project has shipped its first cargo from its new northern Australia facility, the project’s co-owner said yesterday, following a delay of at least two weeks with another carrier waiting to be loaded.

Liquefied Natural Gas carrier The Methane Spirit left Curtis Island off Gladstone in Queensland State on Saturday in what is a milestone for the 25 billion Australian dollar (17.42 billion US dollar) project as two other coal seam gas to LNG plants have come online over the past year.

“These are incredibly large, complex projects and exporting the first cargo is a tremendous achievement,” Origin Energy managing director Grant King said in a statement yesterday.

The 9 million tonne-per-year plant is operated by the project’s co-owner ConocoPhillips, converting coal seam gas from Queensland state’s Surat and Bowen basins 530 kilometres away, where it’s converted to LNG for export to Asian customers.

The first shipment comes at a time when the spot price of LNG, closely linked to that of oil, continues to deteriorate as new projects in the Asia-Pacific come online, including ExxonMobil’s and Australia’s Oil Search Papua New Guinean LNG interests.

Australia is expected to rival Qatar and become the world’s largest LNG producer and exporter by 2018 as new coal seam gas and offshore projects come online.

The two-week delay in first shipment has come at significant cost to Sinopec which has had a ship waiting off Gladstone since 18 December to carry the company’s first cargo.—Xinhua

Dutch to push intelligence sharing after missed signals in Paris

THE HAGUE — The Netherlands will push for greater sharing of intelligence data, including lists of suspected foreign fighters, at a gathering of global counter-terrorism officials on Monday.

The Dutch, who hold the rotating European Union presidency, circulated a draft outlining the objective to roughly 250 delegates of the Global Counter Terrorism Forum (GCTF) and Anti-ISIS Coalition meeting in The Hague, an official said.

Although a framework for sharing confidential intelligence already exists, the Dutch hope to boost the use of databases at the European and international police agencies Interpol and Europol, in the wake of weak communication before the Paris attacks.

Several of the attackers, who killed 130 people on 13 November with guns and suicide vests, had been on the radar of authorities in various countries, providing opportunities to stop them.

“Turkish authorities detained suicide bomber Brahim Abdeslam and deport ed him to Belgium months before the attacks, warning that he had been “radicalized” and was suspected of wanting to join Islamic State fighters in Syria. “A lot has been said and agreed, but what they want to achieve on Monday is to turn it into action,” the Dutch Foreign Ministry official told Reuters, citing the draft proposal.

“There is a lack of trust and confidence that is preventing sharing of all information.” One example is the failure to effectively share lists of suspects whose assets have been frozen.

Another problem is that not all countries provide data or use information made available through systems at Europol and Interpol.

Foreign Minister Bert Koenders said on Sunday the “national terrorism” list in the Netherlands had doubled in a year to 42 Dutch citizens and organisations linked to militants in Syria and Iraq.—Reuters
BEVERLY HILLS — Revenge drama “The Revenant” and space adventure “The Martian” took the top film awards at Sunday’s Golden Globes, setting them up as formidable Oscar contenders after a night of surprises and stinging barbs from return host Ricky Gervais.

Pioneer-era tale “The Revenant” won three awards including best drama film, beating out front-runners “Carol,” a lesbian romance, and investigative journalism drama “Spotlight.” “Revenant” star Leonardo DiCaprio won best drama actor and Alejandro Inarritu was named best director.

“This is the most difficult journey I’ve embarked on,” said Inarritu, who last year won directing and best picture Oscars for “Birdman.”

“We struggled in low temperatures and difficult conditions to make this film happen, but we all know in this room that pain is temporary but a film is forever, so who cares?”

In a closely-contested men’s field, DiCaprio prevailed over “The Danish Girl” star Eddie Redmayne and “Concussion” lead Will Smith, to win best actor for his role as a fur-trapper seeking retribution.

DiCaprio, 41, who has yet to win an Oscar, received a standing ovation and said he shared his award with indigenous people around the world.

“It is time that we heard your voice and protected this planet for future generations,” the actor, an environmental activist, said.

Leonardo DiCaprio holds his award for Best Actor, Motion Picture, Drama, for ‘The Revenant’, at the 73rd Golden Globe Awards in Beverly Hills, California on 10 January. Photo: Reuters

There were a large number of bleeped-out words during the telecast of the show, from Jonathan Jak Hill swearing while pretending to be the bear from “The Revenant,” to Amy Schumer using an expletive while enaging in light-hearted banter with Lawrence.

Damon won best comedy actor for “The Martian,” about an astronaut stranded on Mars, and the film also won the best comedy/musical movie category.

“I’ve made a lot of movies that people just didn’t go to see, so to make a movie that people just enjoyed this much — it really came down to (director) Ridley Scott,” Damon said.

“Carol” went into the night with five nominations but came out empty-handed, as did “The Big Short,” about the financial crisis, and admired Catholic Church sex abuse probe film “Spotlight.”

Rising star Brie Larson, 26, beat veteran Cate Blanchett to win best drama actress for her role as a young woman held captive by a violent man in “Room,” while Lawrence won best comedy actress for “Joy,” about the Miracle Mop inventor.

Lawrence, 25, dedicated most of her speech to thanking “Joy” director David O. Russell, with whom she has made several films. “David, I want us to be buried next to each other. I really do.”

Other key winners included Sylvester Stallone, 69, who received a standing ovation as best supporting film actor for re-prising his iconic role as boxer Rocky Balboa in “Creed.”

“Steve Jobs,” a controversial look at the late Apple co-founder that floundered at the box office despite warm reviews, took home Golden Globes for supporting actors Kate Winslet and screenwriter Aaron Sorkin.

In the television categories, newcomers prevailed in key categories as USA Network’s “Mr. Robot,” a cybersecurity expert with social anxiety, won best TV drama series while Amazon’s musical show “Mozart in the Jungle” won best TV comedy series.—Reuters

Kakao to buy South Korea’s top music streaming operator for $1.6bn

SEOUL — Chat app operator Kakao Corp yesterday unveiled a $1.6 billion deal to buy control of South Korea’s top music streaming service provider, tapping the market for Korean pop to diversify revenues and even expand offshore.

The South Korean firm said it would pay a 76.4 per cent stake in MelOn streaming service operator Loen Entertainment Inc for 1.9 trillion won ($1.57 billion). Loen also owns its own record label with “K-Pop” artists such as IU.

The deal, Kakao’s biggest since its 2014 all-stock merger with web search operator Daum, gives the mobile chat company access to the biggest streaming service user base in South Korea as well as a library of popular music content.

It will also give the operator of the country’s dominant chat app, KakaoTalk, a head-start on Swedish music streaming service Spotify, which has yet to launch here. South Korea’s music streaming and download market was worth an estimated $406 million in 2015, according to Seoul-based brokerage Hanha Financial Investment.

“Kakao is trying to draw a pretty big strategic picture, but it’s not clear whether they will be able to successfully monetize,” HDC Asset Management fund manager Park Jung-hoon said.

As for its offshore ambitions, Kakao did not elaborate but Park said overseas expansion would not be easy as both MelOn and KakaoTalk lacked meaningful user bases outside of Korea.

Kakao shares pared gains and were up 0.6 per cent as of 0337 GMT as investors scrutinized the merits of the deal and factored in the dilution impact from new shares being issued to help finance the deal.

Kakao said the deal would be funded partly by issuing 754 billion won worth of new shares to top Loen shareholders Affinity Equity Partners and SK Planet Co Ltd.

“By combining Kakao’s various platforms and content services and Loen’s leading music content, we expect tremendous synergy that could establish a strong foundation for global expansion,” Kakao Chief Executive Jimmy Rim said in a statement.—Reuters

Scorsese developing biopic of classical pianist Byron Janis

LOS ANGELES — Oscar-winning filmmaker Martin Scorsese is developing a biopic about pianist Byron Janis.

The “Departed” helmer, 73, is producing the drama, based on a pitch by Peter Glanz, who is also writing the script.

Glanz’s credits include “The Longest Week,” a comedy with Jason Bateman, reported Variety. Janis was an American pianist who admired the work of Frederic Chopin, and who made a French film about him and even uncovered two of the composer’s previously unknown manuscripts in the 1960s. Janis, who is now 87, was selected by the US as the first American to be sent to the Soviet Union, in 1960. There is no word yet on whether Scorsese will direct. Casting details also have yet to be revealed.—PTI

David Bowie dies after 18-month battle with cancer

LONDON — Singer David Bowie has died after an 18-month battle with cancer, his publicity company said.

“David Bowie died peacefully today surrounded by his family after a courageous 18-month battle with cancer. While many of you will share in this loss, we ask that you respect the family’s privacy during their time of grief,” read a statement on Bowie’s Facebook page dated Sunday.

Stars, politicians and fans rushed online to pay their respects. British Prime Minister David Cameron tweeted: “I grew up listening to and watching the pop genius David Bowie. He was a master of re-invention, who kept getting it right. A huge loss.”

Steve Martin from Bowie’s publicity company Nasty Little Man confirmed the Facebook report was accurate. “It’s not a hoax,” he told Reuters.—Reuters
**M&S hopes man for all seasons can revitalise fashion**

At $1.3 billion, US Powerball jackpot in world record territory

**CHICAGO** — With Powerball’s jackpot now at $1.3 billion and likely to surge higher by Wednesday’s drawing, the US multi-state lottery is offering the world’s richest grand prize that could go to a single ticket holder, officials said on Sunday.

The pot pushed higher when no ticket holder had the winning combination of six numbers selected during Saturday’s drawing, when the grand prize reached nearly $950 million.

“It’s crazy how big this jackpot is,” said Alex Travero, a spokesman for the California Lottery, confirming that the current Powerball prize was record setting. “Buckle up: It’s going to be a crazy ride between now and Wednesday night.”

California is one of 44 states, plus Washington and two US territories, that participate in Powerball.

There is an asterisk next to the “world’s largest” status of Wednesday’s jackpot, however. While the $1.3 billion is by far the largest ever up for grabs in North America, Spain’s latest elGordo lottery, or “The Fat One,” had a prize pool of $2.4 billion.

But it was awarded to thousands of ticket holders, elGordo’s website said. Powerball’s riches could go to a single ticket holder.

Powerball’s grand prize has increased steadily for weeks after repeated drawings produced no big winners. But last week ticket purchases surged, driving up the size of the pot.

That in turn has persuaded some Americans who normally shun lotteries to join the long lines of people buying tickets at retail stores across the country. The excitement is only expected to grow ahead of the next all-drawing.

The grand prize in Wednesday’s drawing is worth $806 million if a winner chooses an immediate cash payout instead of annual payments over 29 years, the Multi-State Lottery Association said on the Powerball website.

Before the current Powerball jackpot started to bound higher, the previous world record for a lottery prize that a single ticket holder was eligible to win was $656 million in a 2012 Mega Millions drawing. But that jackpot eventually went to three different ticketholders.— Reuters

**Condolences**

Daw Khin Bann (92)

With deepest sympathy and heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family, Daw Khin Bann, 92, beloved mother of U Aung Kyaw, Chairman cum Managing Director (C.E.O) of WPG Group of Companies, passed away at 04:00am on 10 January 2016.

Mr Keane Lee Wei Meng

**Note/ Hourly News Bulletins (Local + International)**

(09:00 Pm ~ 11:00 Pm) — Today Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)

(11:00 Am ~ 03:00 Pm) — Monday Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)

(03:00 Pm ~ 07:00 Pm) — Today Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)

5:35 pm • Money Talks Myanmar

6:35 pm • People’s Talk

7:15 pm • TV Drama Series

8:00 pm • News / International News / Weather Report

8:45 am • National Peace Live Broadcast

11:35 am • Documentary

12:50 pm • Teleplay (Part-3)

4:35 pm • Socio Economic Scenes

1:10 pm • TV Drama Series

1:55 pm • TV Drama Series

2:25 pm • Sing & Enjoy

3:55 pm • University of Distance Education (TV Lectures) — Second Year (Philosophy)

10:43 Am • Squag: Gold Lead

10:50 Am • Today Myanmar: The Modernization Of Myanmar Customs

10:03 Am • News

10:27 Am • A Day Out With Sarah (Ep-3)

10:51 Am • Tea Leaves

08:03 Pm • News

08:26 Pm • Welcome To Naga Land

From 12.1.2016 (Tuesday) 06:00 Pm
To 13.1.2016 (Wednesday) 06:00 Pm
This schedule will be repeated four times in 24 hours.
Swansea shocked, Chelsea win, Kane saves Spurs

LONDON — Finally clinching an elusive English Premier League crown is Andy Murray’s number one goal for the new year but the Briton concedes that his hopes of success at Melbourne Park may rest on champion Novak Djokovic having an off-day.

World number one Djokovic holds three of the four grand slam crowns after a dominant 2015 and started the new season as favourite to win here, Murray who lost to Djokovic in last year’s Australian Open final at Roger Federer in 2010, told reporters in Melbourne on Monday.

“It mean a lot because of how many times I’ve been close.”

Murray hopes for Djokovic drop-off at Melbourne Park

Atletico surge back above Barca to the top of La Liga

MADRID — Antoine Griezmann and Yannick Carrasco each conjured moments of magic as Atletico Madrid recaptured top spot in La Liga from Barcelona with a hard-fought 2-0 victory at Celta Vigo on Sunday.

Chances were scarce on a cut-back pitch and both teams were denied a repeat of last season’s wild 4-2 FA Cup defeat at home to Bradford City, although at times they made hard work of their tie against another third-tier

Ruben Loftus-Cheek scores the second goal for Chelsea against Scunthorpe United during FA Cup Third Round at Stamford Bridge, London on 10 January. Photo: Reuters

Murray was under few illusions as to the scale of the task.

“Maybe he has a drop-off, it’s very difficult to maintain that level for such a long period.”

At the back and in attack we are doing things well and we have to keep going,” Vilharreal said.

Swansea shocked, Chelsea win, Kane saves Spurs

“You just have to keep trying to learn, watch his matches, try and see if there’s any weaknesses there that you can capitalise on.”

Franco Di Santo thought that the best way the team could do was to close in on the centre of the pitch and press for an equaliser, substituting Kevin van Veen.

Luis Enrique’s champions won 4-0 at home to Granada on Saturday and have a game in hand over their main rivals, at the halfway stage of the season.

Griezmann sent Luciano Vietto clear on the left four minutes into the second half and raced into the penalty area to sidefoot the Argentine’s low centre past stranded Celta goalkeeper Sergio Alvarez, the France forward’s 10th goal of the campaign.

With fifth-placed Celta pressing for an equaliser, substitute Carrasco, a Belgium international, picked up a loose ball 10 minutes from time and galloped forward before cracking a shot high into the net.

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