State Counsellor attends New Year luncheon

STATE COUNSELLOR Union Minister for Foreign Affairs Daw Aung San Suu Kyi attended the New Year luncheon hosted by the Foreign Diplomatic Corps in the Padauk Hall, Park Royal Hotel in Nay Pyi Taw at 12:30 pm yesterday to deliver New Year greetings.

Dean of the Diplomatic Corps Singaporean Ambassador to Myanmar Mr. Robert Chua extended greetings at the New Year luncheon.

Before having lunch together with members of the diplomatic corps, the State Counsellor extended her New Year greetings, calling the luncheon “an opportunity to exchange ideas”.

“I don’t doubt that this year ahead will be – challenging and very, very interesting,” she said.

“This year is a great challenge for our country. We need stability. We need national reconciliation and we need peace. We have not had peace, total peace since we became an independent nation. This is our most important goal. Because without peace, there can be no sustainable prosperity,” she said.

“Your understanding on all situations will help us define the right solutions because whatever solution we adopt for our own country, it has to meet the standard of humanity and human needs,” said the State Counsellor.

She also appreciated previous discussions between the Myanmar officials and diplomats, saying that “we all understand that different views only help us in finding the best solution,”

While having lunch, diplomats sang songs played by the Rainbow musical band. Afterwards, the State Counsellor and the members of the diplomatic corps had documentary photos taken. Then, the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps presented a New Year present to the State Counsellor. – Myanmar News Agency

Licenses issued for more than 280 trawlers, 161 boats in Maungtaw Tsp to overcome fishing challenges

DESPISTE resumption of fishing which was suspended following deadly violent attacks in November and October and November last year, fishermen in Maungtaw District, Rakhine State, are facing challenges for nearshore fishing at night due to curfew order and labourers who have not yet received the National Verification cards.

“More than four-month ban on fishing has caused challenges for both fishing business men and workers,” said U Maung Myint, a local fishing business man in Maungtaw.

As part of efforts for remove the constraints, the authorities have issued fishing licenses to trawlers and boats in the district including 83 above 20-horse power trawlers, 203 trawlers under 20-horsepower and 161 boats from Maungn, Nyangyinjyi, Ale Thanlyaw, Myinhl, Kyaukpanu, Inndin and Thayetchaung villages in Maungtaw Township from 11th to 20th January.

About 300 fishing trawlers and about 1,300 manageable-level fishing boats operate in Rakhine State for nearshore fishing to fulfil domestic demand for fishery products per year. The district depends heavily on fishing industry in which more than 70,000 families are relying for income from fishing, or a combination of fishing and farming.

A 2014 Oxfam report on Rakhine’s fisheries estimated that 43 per cent of the population gained income from fishing, or a combination of fishing and farming.
Senior General visits head of Shwekyin Religious Order at hospital

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing visited the Head of Shwekyin Buddhist Religious Order Abhidhaja Maharatha Guru Abhidhaja Maharattha Guru Abhidhaja Agga Maha Saddhama Jotika Bhaddanta Viriyananda, 47, aged 33, acting village administrator of the Sayadaw and rewarded staff who were taking care of the health of the Sayadaw round the clock.

The Sayadaw has been receiving medical treatment at the hospital since 12 January and he will turn 100 years in April.—Myanmar News Agency

Assailant suspected of attack on Kyikanpin violence arrested

POLICE acting on a tip-off, arrested a man yesterday morning on suspicion of involvement in the attack on the Kyikanpin violence.

A combined team from Taungbazar police station interrogated those involved in the Kyikanpin violence and arrested Yawshi Armad, 32, at his house at 4 am yesterday.

A case has been filed against Yawshi Armad involved in Kyikanpin violent attack, it is learnt.—Myanmar News Agency

Missing village administrator in Maungtaw found dead of knife wounds

THE body of Zawki Muhammad aged 33, acting village administrator of Kyetyoeypin Village, was found in a swamp yesterday.

He had been reported to Nganchaung Police Station for unusual disappearance.

The victim’s brother, who had been looking for him, found the body in swamp southwest of Pyaungpaik Village and reported to the police.

The victim’s body was found with one cut on the cheek, two cuts on the throat, one knife wound on the knee, two stabs on the chest and one stab on the left wrist in the swamp.

Action has been taken against perpetrators in the case, according to the Information Committee of the State Counselor’s Office.—Myanmar News Agency

Domestic gold prices continue to decline due to slumping global gold price

THE local gold prices have declined to Ks 861,000 a tical on 27 January because the global gold price decreased, it is learnt from the local gold market.

The price of global gold has increased to US$ 1,218 per ounce on 24 January, up from US$ 1,200 per ounce on 12 January. But, the price of global gold has fallen to US$ 1183 per ounce on 27 January, down from US$ 1197 per ounce on 15 January. The price of global gold has been decreasing by over US$ 30 during the past three days.

The price of local gold reached Ks 900,200 per tical on 4 October because the value of gold on the global market and US dollar have appreciated.

Although the price of global gold has decreased, the US exchange rate is still rising. So, the price of local gold was Ks 850,000 per tical on 22 December.

The price of local gold was Ks 860,000 per tical on 10 January, up from Ks 850,000 per tical on 8 January. Then, the local gold price reached over Ks 869,000 per tical on 17 January, Ks 875,000 per tical on 18 January and Ks 877,700 per tical on 24 January.

The price of local gold was closed at Ks 861,800 per tical on 27 January.—Min Min

Naga ethnic people perform at the charity event yesterday at the National Theatre in Yangon to raise money for rehabilitation relief to the Naga People who have been adversely affected by serious infectious diseases. Between June and August of last year, 45 people were killed by measles, a highly infectious viral illness, in Naga-Self Administered Zone in Sagaing Region, according to a spokesperson of the council, saying that people in the area also experienced several fire accidents and loss of farmlands.—Ye Htet

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing visits the Head of Shwekyin Buddhist Religious Order Abhidhaja Maharatha Guru Abhidhaja Agga Maha Saddhama Jotika Bhaddanta Agghiya. PHOTO: MNA
Children in garden of literature as happy as butterflies in colourful garden

“I did not think that the Children Literature Festival would be as crowded as now although I saw advertisements for it on the television and in newspapers. My son and daughter cannot choose where to go first as they have too many choice to participate. Their happiness even spread to me,” said Daw Ni Ni Aye, who visited the festival with her children.

The literary festival, being held at Myanmar Information and Institution Technology in Chanmyathazi Township in Mandalay from 27 to 29 January is being visited by students from all schools in Mandalay Region, including public schools, private schools and monastic schools who also participated in various events of the festival.

“I can’t help comparing children participating in the festival with butterflies flying in a colourful garden,” said a writer in Mandalay.

The festival is being organized jointly by the Ministry of Information and the Mandalay Region Government, with the assistance of Hepta Mix run by Ko Kyaw Wunna Swe.

Golden Duck Restaurant donated 1,500 lunch boxes, bottles of drinking water and soft drinks for attendees at the first day of the event and a total of 1,000 lunch boxes and bottles of drinking water and soft drinks for another two days of the event. In addition, the company will provide 10,000 tins of Asia soft drinks and Lucy Purified Drinking Water will supply 10,000 bottles of drinking water for the festival, according to Ko Wunna Swe.

Although it was estimated that about 20,000 visitors would come to the festival, the actual number of visitors reached 27,000 on the first day of the festival and more than 40,000 on its second day. Book stalls at the festival could also sell books worth more than K 24 million at the festival.

“Although the festival opens at 9 am, people are waiting to visit the festival at about 8 O’Clock with their cars and motorbikes. It is an amazing success. Book stalls owner are also very happy as they can sell many books. The festival is as crowded as the Thingyan Festival around the moat,” Director-General U Maung Pe of the Information and Public Relations Department said.

A book house from Yangon named as Naing Naing, which also sold books at the similar event in Yangon, came to the festival bringing about 4,000 books, all of which were sold out on the first day of the event and had to bring more books for the festival. A service provider as the book store said that it was a great pleasure to see parents who buy every books their children asked for. Children, parents and teachers are looking forwards to another children literature festival like this one. —Min Hyet Aung (Mandalay Sub-printing House)

Children enthusiastic about colouring and proverb contests at Children Literature Festival in Mandalay

COLOURING and proverb contests have been found to be most popular among other features of Children Literature Festival being held at the Myanmar Information and Institution Technology in Chanmyathazi Township, Mandalay Region. A total of 27 children can participate in one session of the contests, according to a member of the organizing committee for the event. He also said that these contests are a test of creativity of children, and notebooks were presented to all participants but eight prizes will be presented on the last day of the festival, he added.

Children are also interested in programs like drawing caricature of them and having their faces coloured. Book stall are also crowded with people who bought children literature books. —Tin Maung (Mandalay Sub-printing House)

Second day of Children Literature Festival crowded in Mandalay

THE Children Literature Festival jointly organized, with the aim of nurturing children who will become leaders of Myanmar to become ones who possess intelligence, creativity, conceptual and verbal skills and love of literature, by the Ministry of Information and the Mandalay Region Government was packed with more than 45,000 visitors at the Myanmar Information and Institution Technology in Chanmyathazi Township, Mandalay Region, yesterday. Students and teachers from private schools and public schools in the region and families of residents visited the festival from the opening hour to the closing hour and bought books there all day.

The festival features children poems and literature written by Poet Laureate Sayagyi Min Thu Wun, book stalls of children literature, face colouring, making toys with malleable rubber and various games for children.

On the first floor of the university, entertainment programs of private school were presented including story-telling, impromptu talks, children’s library and pictures of characters in power rangers, Spiderman and superman films.

At the literary talks and workshops, Poet Maung Naing Lin (Kawlin), Saya Soe Bar Dine, Saya Thike Tun Thet, Sayama Khan Thida Latt (Man Takkatho), Sayama Khayan Pyar, Saya Nyi Nyi Zaw and Sayama Cho Cho Aye explained their views and participated took part in the discussions. —Aye Mya (Mandalay)

More than 280 trawlers, 161 boats licensed in Maungtaw Tsp...

While Myanmar and international trawlers operate off the coast, most local communities rely on medium to small-scale fishing operations. The local fishing sector has been beset by a number of problems, most importantly a dramatic decline in catch and a lack of storage technology and transport options so its produce can be sold in Myanmar’s cities or in neighbouring Bangladesh.

The Oxfam report cites a study by the Department of Fisheries and Norwegian researchers that estimates a decline of fisheries in Rakhine of about 65 per cent in the last 30 years, though other estimates are even higher.

The number cold storage facilities have also decreased in recent years due to high cost of electricity, while there has been no improvement in road connections to Yangon. As a result, most of the catch is sold locally at relatively low prices, according to a research paper on small-scale fishermen in Rakhine published in the Journal of Burmese Scholarship last August. —Zin Oo (Myanmar Amin)

A child sees books on children literature at the Children Literature Festival in Mandalay. —Photo: Min Hyet Aung (Mandalay Sub-Printing House)
Garden of medicinal plants to be built in Nawngkio

A new medicinal plant garden will be built starting at the end of February in Bant Bway village, Nawngkio Township, northern Shan State, according to Dr. Sein Sein Thein, chairman of the Natural Environmental Conservation Association (Evergreen).

“The medicinal plants are rare because of deforestation. So we will plant the medicinal plants,” said Dr. Sein Sein Thein.

The project involves construction of medicinal plant gardens in the upper and lower gorges in Nawngkio Township.

The first medicinal plant garden was opened on 6 November in Nawngkio Township at a cost of Ks3.5 million. There are over 50 species of medicinal plants native to Myanmar.

“Well-wishers can contribute plants to the garden. Also, people who need medicinal plants can come and get plants at the garden,” said Daw Myat Myat Khine, the leader of the garden’s organising committee.

The first medicinal plant garden is located on Mandalay-Lashio Highway. Although medicinal plants may interest only a few people, the organising committee will try to persuade the local populace in different ways to engage their interest.

“There are many medicines imported from various countries, so Myanmar people do not know the potency of the traditional medicines,” Dr. Sein Sein Thein said.

Women’s Support Centre to launch in Mandalay in February

THE Social Welfare Department is planning to launch a One Stop Women’s Support Centre in Mandalay next month for the purpose of offering care to women and children who are experiencing any form of violence, its spokesperson said.

A similar centre was opened in the commercial capital Yangon in December, helping 11 women and one child from lower Myanmar.

Daw Naw Tha Wah from the department said that women and child victims need such centres to receive necessary cares and assistance. The new centre in Mandalay will provide services for those from upper Myanmar.

The centre will provide a wide range of support including healthcare, legal advice and financial assistance to the target victims,” Daw Naw Tha Wah said.

“My spouse, who is a gambler, frequently hit me, especially my face with his hands, and nobody in our village dared to help me because the villagers are afraid of him,” said a victim from Hlaingthaya Township.

“My spouse has several times intimidated me over the phone when I was under care of the group working for women and children.” People may call the department’s hotline 0967 404 666 and 0977 404 777 when they face different types of violence, including physical, psychological, sexual, financial and cultural violence.—Myitmakha News Agency

Myanmar railways to upgrade circular train tracks

MYANMA Railways will upgrade the tracks used by the circular trains and fix the new signal system that will allow trains to run at a speed to 60 km/h with the assistance of Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), according to the railway.

“Previously, the trains were running at 20 km/h, but now the speed will be 60 km/h (36 mph) which is much faster. When we are running the train up to 36 mph, accidents can happen. So we need to conduct awareness training courses for the passengers. Usually, accidents occur because of careless actions,” said U Zaw Lwin, traffic manager of Division 7 of Myanmar Railways.

Myanmar Railways is conducting an awareness training courses to prevent train accidents from January 23 to 29 together with JICA.

“Currently, Myanmar Railways has issued warning signs at the railway station. Also, they are distributing pamphlets to the passengers. The vendors who are selling on the railway platforms have to move out.

Also, we can see the Japanese from JICA upgrading the railway lines and the signal systems,” said U Tin Maung Hla, a train user.

Currently, Myanmar Railways has 23 trains plying a total of 215 rounds daily. —Myitmakha News Agency

2nd literary talks held in Dawbon Tsp

WITH an aim to have youths value literature, a ceremony for the literati and book-lovers was held for the second time at Yameinna (1) Ward in Dawbon Township on Saturday 21 January under the sponsorship of bookworms and bibliophiles.

Present at the ceremony were U Pyone Cho, Pyithu Hluttaw representative for Dawbon constituency, U Thant Zin, Yangon Region Hluttaw representative, responsible officials from NLD Dawbon Township and literature lovers. Altogether, the gathering grew a crowd of about 700.

“Now that writers already had a great chance to link with readers and lovers of literature, it is necessary to observe any events and occasions with good intentions. I would like all people to take part in the transitional movement. Provided that powers will emerge among writers and the reading audience and ideas and the avant-garde will result from literary talks, the talks will be more beneficial. In the near future, I want all the populace to exploit the knowledge and ideas out of these literary talks for the betterment of the country,” said Pyithu Hluttaw parliamentarian U Pyone Cho in his opening address.

During the literary talks, cartoonist Win Aung’s discussion was titled “Time to get rid of stupidity.” Composer and poet Naing Myanmar’s was “With Unity and Life-long Friendship,” and the movie actor Sayar Beiluwa’s talk was titled “Myanmar Introduction.”

The talks included matters on making youths love reading and helping the youth’s judgement abilities accumulated from reading in building up the nation into a strengthened democratic Union, developing the spirit of practicing responsibility and accountability and joining the process of peace and national reconciliation.—Ye Htut Tin (Dawbon)

Crime NEWS

Yaba seized in Lashio

POLICE from Lashio Myoma station seized Yaba from a house at Yadanaobon road, ward 4, Lashio on 27 January. Acting on a tip-off, the police searched the house of Moe Thu and found 6,555 Yaba tablets.

On the same day, a combined team comprising officers and staff form Mandalay (South) anti-narcotic drug unit 18 seized 887 Yaba tablets from Win Thant in front of the No.12 high school, 76th street between 28th and 29th streets, Chanyathazan town- ship. Police have filed charges against all suspects under the Anti-Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Laws.—Myanmar Police Force
Indian PM dub main opposition party as “sinking ship”

NEW DELHI — Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has again taken a jibe at the country’s main opposition Congress party, calling it a “sinking ship.”

Modi said as he kicked off a massive political rally in the northern Indian state of Punjab on Friday. Vowing not to vote for the Congress in the upcoming state assembly polls, Modi said: “The Congress is a sinking ship. It has no principles or rules.”

TheJCCJ is highly encouraged by last year’s establishment of a new government in Myanmar led by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, and would like to promote Japan’s responsible investment, particularly from the perspective of SMEs, to contribute to the sustainable development of Myanmar.

“Japanese SMEs have a variety of technologies and experiences and thus will be able to provide opportunities of employ- ment, skills transfer and self-realization for Myan- mar people in a wide range of business sectors,” the statement said.

YANGON — A visiting Japanese business delega- tion proposed policy meas-ures to address major chal- lenges impeding Japanese investment into Myanmar in a meeting Friday with the country’s main oppo- sition party, the Indian Na- tional Congress, headed by global development lead- ers. The delegation was attended by Yangon Region Chief Min- ister U Phyo Min Thein, the Indian Chamber of Com- merce U Myint Shwe. U Phyo Min Thein urged the Chinese people in Myanmar to collaborate for the country’s development. The event has been the grandest in several decades in Chintanaya.

The ribbon-cutting ceremony was attended by Yangon Region Chief Min- ister U Phyo Min Thein, the Indian Chamber of Com- merce U Myint Shwe. U Phyo Min Thein urged the Chinese people in Myanmar to collaborate for the country’s development. The event has been the grandest in several decades in Chintanaya.

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N Korea likely to have restarted plutonium reactor: US think tank

WASHINGTON — North Korea is suspected of having resumed operations at its plutonium production facility, a US institute monitoring the site said on Friday.

Commercial satellite imagery from 22 January showed “a water plume originating from the cooling water outlet of the reactor, an indication that the reactor is very likely operating,” the US-Korea Institute of Johns Hopkins University said on its 38 North website, referring to the Yongbyon Nuclear Scientific Research Center.

A river running along the nuclear site that is usually frozen at this time of the year was not frozen where the water plume mixes with the river, the institute said.

North Korea is keen to improve its nuclear weapons including those to be mounted on intercontinental ballistic missiles to counter what Pyongyang claims is the threat from the United States.

“Without being able to measure the water temperature rise or water flow from the reactor, it is impossible to estimate at what power level the reactor is running, although it may be considerable,” the institute added.

According to the institute, the nuclear facility at Yongbyon has been stalled since the second half of 2015.

The United States, Japan and South Korea have been on alert for possible provocations by North Korea such as missile launches and nuclear tests. —Kyodo News

Japan should push for Asia cooperation in Trump’s absence

TOKYO — With US President Donald Trump apparently paying little attention so far to regional order in Asia, Japan should push for cooperation with other Asian countries to seek long-term co-existence with a rising China, according to a Japanese expert on international relations.

Trump’s apparent indifference to maintaining order in Asia has triggered concern in the region, but the birth of the Trump administration “should rather be seen as an opportunity for Asian countries to think about regional cooperation with other Asian countries such as Japan,” said Yoshihide Soeya, professor at Keio University.

Soeya, a former diplomat who also served as foreign minister in the administration of former Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, said the United States would pull out of the Trans-Pacific Partnership free trade deal, an 11-member bloc, if it continues against the strategy taken by Japan and the United States.

“His ‘America First’ policy is very likely operating,” Soeya said.

On assuming office on 20 January, Trump said the United States would pull out of the TPP, a signature policy of his predecessor Barack Obama which was signed by the United States, Japan and 10 other Pacific Rim countries.

The pact excludes China. It is very important that a new security and economic system in Asia is formulated by countries without China, utilizing a TPP without the United States if necessary, Soeya said.

“Worries about aggressive Chinese behavior are increasing, but ASEAN countries cannot antagonize China explicitly and would not want to take sides with Japan and the United States in opposing China,” he said.

Japan needs to keep in mind that if Abe tries to strengthen ties only with specific ASEAN countries as a way to counter China, it could hurt the unity of the 10-member bloc, Soeya said, adding that creating such rifts would benefit China.

“Even if the Prime Minister Abe may be playing into China’s hands if he is fixated on the China threat theory,” Soeya said.

On Trump’s overall foreign policy, Soeya said the president is unlikely to address North Korea’s nuclear threat or the South China Sea issue from the standpoint of maintaining order in the Asian region.

His ‘Americas First’ policy will continue and he does not have any principles regarding international order, while Japan and other countries in Asia, as residents of the region, need to think about ensuring regional order. So there is a big gap between Trump and Asian countries, Soeya said.

—Kyodo News

Kunming’s hospitable weather attracts visitors

People pose for photos at the Daguan park in Kunming, capital of southwest China’s Yunnan Province, on 28 January 2017. Kunming’s hospitable weather during the Spring Festival attracted many visitors.

Photo: Xinhua

Austrian ruling coalition continues crisis talks

VIENNA — The two parties to the Austrian federal coalition government will continue their crisis talks through the weekend, to determine whether early elections will need to be held, local media reported on Saturday.

Discussions about the viability of the present government have been ongoing this week, with officials from both the Social Democrats (SPÖ) and the People’s Party (OVP) at both state and federal levels arguing that the present government should be abandoned this year due to not seeing eye-to-eye.

Local media reports said opinions of officials have in recent days shifted back and forth from claims that the differences between the two parties are insurmountable and that the new elections could be held within just a few months, to a stabilizing of the situation following positive talks.

Chancellor Christian Kern had initially set a deadline for the negotiations to be concluded on Friday, though this will now be extended over the weekend, the chancellor himself having cancelled a planned trip to Israel and Palestine because of this.

The full term of the government would otherwise not require elections to be held until late 2018. Vice-Chancellor Reinhold Mittellehner of the OVP on Friday said that both sides “must be flexible” in the intense negotiations. —Xinhua
WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump on Friday put a four-month hold on allowing refugees into the United States and temporarily barred travellers from Syria and six other Muslim-majority countries, saying the moves would help protect Americans from terrorist attacks.

In the most sweeping use of his presidential powers since taking office a week ago, Trump paused the entry of travellers from Syria and the six other nations for at least 90 days, saying his administration needed time to develop more stringent screening processes for refugees, immigrants and visitors.

“I am establishing new vetting measures to keep radical Islamic terrorists out of the United States of America. Don’t want them here,” Trump said earlier on Friday at the Pentagon.

“We only want to admit those into our country who will support our country and love deeply our people,” he said.

The order seeks to prioritize refugees fleeing religious persecution, a move Trump separately said was aimed at helping Christians in Syria. That led some legal experts to question whether the order was constitutional.

“President Trump has cloaked what is a discriminatory ban against nationals of Muslim countries under the banner of national security,” said Greg Chen of the American Immigration Lawyers Association.

The bans, though temporary, took effect immediately, causing havoc and confusion for would-be travellers with passports from Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen.

Trump has long pledged to take this kind of action, making it a prominent feature of his campaign for the 8 November election, but people who work with Muslim immigrants and refugees were “shocked” on Friday night to determine the scope of the order.

Even legal permanent residents — people with “green cards” allowing them to live and work in the United States — were being advised to consult immigration lawyers before travelling outside the country, or trying to return, said Muslim Advocates, a civil rights group in Washington.

On Friday evening, Abed Ayoub of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee said he had fielded about 100 queries from people anxious about the order, which he said he believed could affect travelling green card holders, students, people coming to the United States for medical care and others.

“It’s chaos,” Ayoub said.

During his campaign, Trump tapped into American fears about Islamic State militants and the flood of migrants into Europe from Syria’s civil war, saying refugees could be a “Trojan horse” that allowed attackers to enter the United States.

In December 2015, he called for a ban on all Muslims entering the United States, drawing fire for suggesting a religious test for immigrants that critics said would violate the US Constitution.

His idea later evolved into a proposal for “extreme vetting.”

Trump’s order also suspends the Syrian refugee program until further notice, and will eventually give priority to minority religious groups fleeing persecution.

Trump said in an interview with the Christian Broadcasting Network that the exception would help Syrian Christians fleeing the civil war there.

Legal experts were divided on whether this order would be constitutional.

“If we are thinking about an exception for Christians, in almost any other legal context discriminating in favour of one religion and against another religion could violate the constitution,” said Stephen Legomsky, a former chief counsel at US Citizenship and Immigration Services in the Obama administration.

But Peter Spiro, a professor at Temple University Beacons School of Law, said Trump’s action would likely be constitutional because the president and Congress are allowed considerable deference when it comes to asylum decisions.

“It’s a completely plausible prioritisation, to the extent this group is actually being persecuted,” Spiro said.

Trump’s order had been expected to include a directive about setting up “safe zones” for Syrian refugees inside the country, but no such language was included on Friday.

The order may also affect special refugee programs for Iraqis who worked for the US government as translators after the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

It is already affecting refugees and their families, said Jen Smyers of the Church World Service, a Protestant faith-based group that works with migrants.

Smyers said she spoke to an Iraqi mother whose twin daughters remain in Iraq due to processing delays. “Those two 18-year-old daughters won’t be able to join their mother in the US,” she said.— Reuters

US President Donald Trump signs an executive order he said would impose tighter vetting to prevent foreign terrorists from entering the United States at the Pentagon in Washington, US, on 27 January, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

Trump bars door to refugees, visitors from seven nations

NEWS IN BRIEF

UN agencies urge Trump to allow refugees entry

GENEVA — The United Nations refugee agency and International Organization for Migration (IOM) called on the Trump administration on Saturday to continue offering asylum to people fleeing war and persecution, saying its resettlement programme was vital.

US President Donald Trump on Friday put a four-month hold on allowing refugees into the United States and temporarily barred travelers from Syria and six other Muslim-majority countries, saying the moves would help protect Americans from terrorist attacks.

“The needs of refugees and migrants worldwide have never been greater and the US resettlement program is one of the most important in the world,” the two Geneva-based agencies said in a joint statement.— Reuters

French foreign minister says Trump’s refugee measures are worrying

PARIS — US President Donald Trump’s decision to limit immigration and refugees from some Muslim-majority countries is worrying, the French foreign minister said on Saturday.

“This can only worry us,” Jean-Marc Ayrault, who was speaking at a joint press conference with his German counterpart Sigmar Gabriel in Paris. “Welcoming refugees who flee war and oppression is part of our duty.”

Trump on Friday signed an executive order that will curb immigration and refugees from some Muslim-majority countries and he separately said he wanted the United States to give priority to Syrian Christians fleeing the civil war there.— Reuters

Russia sanctions must be tied to progress on Ukraine peace -Gabriel

PARIS — Germany and France agree that any moves to lift sanctions against Russia must be tied to progress in the peace process for eastern Ukraine, German Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel said on Saturday.

“We in Germany and France have a clear position on the sanctions,” Gabriel said during the news conference with his French counterpart Jean-Marc Ayrault. “We wish to implement the Minsk peace process... And that is the only way that sanctions can be lifted.”

Gabriel said he and Ayrault also agreed that it was important that Germany and France express strong united positions on issues.

He said the two countries would create bilateral working groups to address issues such as Ukraine and Russia.— Reuters

Five Iraqis, one Yemeni barred from Cairo-New York flight -airport sources

CAIRO — Five Iraqi passengers and one Yemeni were barred from boarding an EgyptAir flight from Cairo to New York on Saturday following President Donald Trump’s ban on the entry of citizens from seven Muslim-majority countries, sources at Cairo airport said.

The passengers, arriving in transit to Cairo airport, were stopped and re-directed to flights headed for their home countries despite holding valid visas, the sources said.— Reuters

Syrian army takes over water spring near Damascus — Hezbollah-run media unit

BEIRUT — Syrian government forces entered the village of Ain al-Fija near Damascus on Saturday and took control of a spring that supplies most of the capital’s water, a military media unit run by Lebanese group Hezbollah said.

The Syrian army entered the area in the Wadi Barada valley as part of an agreement with rebels that have been fighting to hold it, the media unit said. The deal will include the evacuation of insurgents from the area, it added.— Reuters

Wall St slips as earnings, data underwhelm

NEW YORK — US stocks edged lower for a second consecutive session on Friday as some underwhelming corporate earnings and gross domestic product data cooled recent enthusiasm over policy actions by President Donald Trump.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average fell 7.98 points, or 0.04 per cent, to 20,092.93, the S&P 500 lost 2.12 points, or 0.09 per cent, to 2,294.56 and the Nasdaq Composite added 5.61 points, or 0.1 per cent, to 5,660.78.— Reuters
A powerful cure for leprosy: inclusiveness

Dr Poonam Khetrapal Singh, Regional Director for WHO South-East Asia

Why greater inclusivity is key to ending leprosy transmission, as well as protecting children from leprosy-related disabilities

There are many diseases medicine is yet to cure. Diabetes is one. Polio is another. Even for asthma, a respiratory disease common in both developed and developing countries, management is the only course possible.

When it comes to treating leprosy, one of humanity’s oldest and most notorious maladies, however, we are in a strong position. If detected early, the nerve-attacking disease can be completely cured through multidrug therapy (MDT), a treatment that has healed more than 16 million people since it was first introduced. Owing to MDT’s remarkable breakthrough, leprosy’s transmission has long been avoidable; so too the crippling disabilities it can cause.

There is no reason that leprosy transmission and associated disabilities should persist. In 2015 almost 212,000 leprosy cases were reported worldwide, of which 899 were found in children. 6.7% of the total number of cases and 80% of the total number of cases in children exhibited grade two disabilities such as visual impairment, muscle atrophy or clawing. Though the 22 countries that account for 96% of reported cases have large leprosy-free areas, the affliction continues to circulate among vulnerable communities. In the South-East Asia Region, six countries still report more than 1000 new cases annually.

Social stigma and discrimination is a major cause. Leprosy’s association with poor social status remains a powerful disincentive to seeking treatment and treatment, leading to the disease spreading among families and social contacts. Fear of the disease’s social and economic consequences is likewise inhibiting early detection among children, causing disability and life-long complications. To make matters worse, several leprosy-affected countries still have legislation in place that allows discrimination against those suffering the disease.

Inadequate access to health care services is also a key deterrent. It is no coincidence that communities in hard-to-reach areas are the most affected, and that the disease’s burden is often highly concentrated. Migrant populations, displaced communities and very poor are particularly vulnerable due to their exclusion from health services generally, and gaps in targeted campaigns more specifically. Ongoing neglect will ensure that endemic areas remain so, and that affected communities continue to bear the disease’s unnecessary burden. To reverse the situation, and to accelerate towards a world in which there is zero disease transmission and zero leprosy-related disability, especially among children, full implementation of the Global Leprosy Strategy 2016-2020 is essential. As the strategy outlines, one of the main strategies is to expand education and training of health workers and patients in all aspects of their programming. Not only will this make policy more responsive, it will also advance the interests and visibility of leprosy-affected persons in the public domain. As part of this, persons suffering the disease should be empowered to carry out advocacy activities, as well as to participate in early case identification and treatment adherence campaigns.

Second, the reach of health systems and targeted programmes should be expanded. Leprosy case finding must be integrated in primary health care services with referral to specialist services where needed. Targeted campaigns should meanwhile be tailored to the needs of groups vulnerable to the problem, while taboos on active case-finding should be challenged and zero discrimination law should be promoted. This will ensure that sanction or abet discrimination against persons suffering leprosy should be repealed. Regressive legislation that discriminates against persons with leprosy continues to exist in several countries in the Region, inhibiting a range of basic rights, from travelling on public transport to those related to marriage or inheritance. Whether from a medical or rights-based perspective, there can be no excuse for this ongoing injustice. Finally, resources should be mobilized to counter harmful social attitudes.

Nongovernmental and civil society organizations should be included in society-wide campaigns to challenge leprosy-related stigma, and to ensure, as per UN resolutions, that discrimination against affected persons and their family members is eliminated. As previous social initiatives demonstrate, change can come remarkably quickly, providing a powerful - and immediate - fillip to public health efforts. Should countries be successful in driving inclusiveness within leprosy programmes, the wider gains will be significant. Greater health coverage will boost progress in tackling other neglected tropical diseases such as trachoma and lymphatic filariasis. More engagement in policy design and implementation will enhance the health programming and health-care health care, enabling the effects of leprosy on health care, including the patients and communities it affects, to be tackled effectively. This final point is fundamental. As in so many areas of public policy, where science has found solutions our social, political and economic structures have created barriers. These barriers must be dismantled.

In our ongoing efforts to achieve this, we must continue to address leprosy transmission and zero leprosy-related disabilities, inclusiveness is the remedy most urgently needed.
Apple strategy in ‘smart home’ race threatened by Amazon

SAN FRANCISCO — In less than a year, Amazon’s combination of the Echo speaker system and the Alexa voice-controlled digital assistant has moved the company closer to delivering on the elusive promise of easy-to-use technology that can control gadgets in the home with a few spoken words. Yet Amazon.com Inc’s (AMZN.O) surprise success sets up a long-term battle with Apple Inc (AAPL.O) and Alphabet Inc’s Google (GOOGL.O) for primacy in the connected household. And the contours of that competition are following a classic tech playbook, the Bank of Italy government said.

Amazon is pursuing an open-systems approach that allows quick development of many features, while Apple is taking a slower route, according more control over the technology in order to assure security and ease-of-use.

The strategic importance of the “connected home” niche looms large: Amazon wants a way to own its customer interactions — mainly shopping online — through an app, a smartphone or a Google Web browser as an intermediary.

Apple needs to keep the iPhone at the center of customers’ lives, and has built a whole home automation architecture, called Homekit, into its smartphone.

Google, for its part, is investing heavily in both intelligent assistant software and home-automation devices like the Nest thermostats and, more recently, the Google Home speaker.

But Google is behind in the race to sell devices that only hit the market in November and are compatible with a handful of gadgets beyond Nest and DropCam, which the company also owns.

“When the iPhone rolled out in 2007, everyone developed [software] for that. Right now, everyone is developing for the voice-activated Internet,” said Mark Mahaney, an analyst and managing director with RBC Capital Markets.

Mahaney estimates Amazon holds as many as 10 million Alexa-enabled devices over the holiday season. Google hasn’t disclosed sales for its Home speaker. Apple has declined to comment on reports that it has a voice-activated speaker in the works.

Apple spokeswoman Trudy Muller said the company is leading the industry by being the first to integrate home automation products into a major platform with Siri. But Apple hasn’t talked about how it might do so.

Apple’s Homekit, by contrast, has about 100 certified devices. And the reasons behind that gap show both the risks and the potential rewards of Apple’s approach.

To be Homekit-certified, gadget makers must include special chips to work with Apple’s system.

Developers that order small volumes of the chips say they can cost as much as $2, though prices are lower for larger buyers.

Apple also requires developers to buy specific WiFi and Bluetooth networking chips that cost more than competitors.

The devices have to be made in special facilities that are certified by Apple.

A confidential Apple document released by Reuters lists more than 800 of these factories, but only a few specialize in home automation technology.

Developers can ask Apple to certify an unlisted factory they want to use.

But a limited selection means that device makers can’t always get the best prices or work with their preferred factories.

The founder of one startup that considered pursuing HomeKit approval for a device that helps control home temperatures said the company picked a factory in a place that was making well known “Star Wars” toys, but it couldn’t use that factory for HomeKit products.

The Italian government wants a legitimate manufacturer that makes tech household brands. And yet they’re not (Apple) certified,” said the founder, who declined to be named because of non-disclosure agreements with Apple.

Manufacturers also have to send product samples to Cupertino, where Apple tests them extensively for compatibility. The whole process can take three to five months. During that time, device makers can’t say publicly that they’re pursuing HomeKit certification.

Some developers say it’s worth it. “They found issues with our product before we released it that we didn’t find in our testing,” said Jimmy Chu, CEO of Naos, a smart lighting system. “We know now that we have the certification that it’s rock solid.” —Reuters

Italy government fund has room to recapitalize other banks after Monte Paschi: BOI

ROME — Twenty billion euros earmarked by the Italian government will be enough to help recapitalize other weak banks after Monte dei Paschi di Siena (BMPS.MI), the Bank of Italy government said on Saturday.

Ignaezio Visco did not name any banks that may need government support to bolster their capital but analysts and banks say Banca Popolare di Vicenza, Veneto Banca and Genoa-based Carige will likely have to strengthen their balance sheets.

The government is expected to inject around 6.6 billion euros in Monte dei Paschi, taking a 29 percent stake in the bank after it failed to raise money from private investors in December.

“The injection of public funds into Banca Monte dei Paschi di Siena will presumably use up about a third of the 20 billion euros set aside by the government. There is more than enough room to address the recapitalization needs of any other Italian bank that meets the conditions laid down in the decree”

Visco told a financial conference in Modena.

“However ... the banks must be willing to apply for public support and deal with the ensuing commitments,” Visco said. Italian banks, weighed down by low profitability, high costs and a pile of bad loans accumulated during a painful recession, could no longer put off much needed restructuring.

In some cases they will have to strengthen their capital, while for medium-sized banks mergers were necessary to cut costs and increase efficiency.

Visco said the bulk of Italy’s bad loans were held by banks that were in a sound financial position and therefore did not need to sell them immediately. However, for weaker lenders, getting rid of soured debts was essential.

He said that recovery rates for bad loans averaged 43 per cent in 2006-2015. The rate fell to 23 per cent for an in bloc market sales of loans to specialized investors, who demand high returns.

—Reuters

FBI request for Twitter account data may have overstepped legal guidelines

WASHINGTON — The FBI appeared to go beyond the scope of existing legal guidance in seeking certain kinds of data from Twitter as recently as last year, legal experts said, citing two warrantless surveillance orders the social media company published on Friday.

Twitter said its disclosures were the first time the company had been allowed to publicly reveal the secretive orders, which were delivered with gag orders when they were issued in 2015 and 2016. Their publication follows similar disclosures in recent months by other major internet companies, including Alphabet’s Google and Yahoo.

Each of the two new orders, known as national security letters (NSLs), specifically request a type of data known as electronic communication transaction records, which can include some email header data and browsing history, among other information.

In doing so, the orders bolster the belief among privacy advocates that the FBI has routinely used NSLs to seek internet records beyond the limitations set down in a 2008 Justice Department legal memo, which concluded such orders should be constrained to phone billing records.

The FBI did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

An FBI inspector general report from 2014 indicated that it disagreed with the memo’s guidance.

In a blog post announcing the two NSL disclosures, Twitter said it did not hand over all the information the FBI requested.

“While the actual NSLs request a large amount of data, Twitter provides a very limited set of data in response to NSLs consistent with federal law and interpretive guidance from the US Department of Justice,” Elizabeth Banker, an associate general counsel at Twitter, wrote. The identity of the accounts sought by the FBI are redacted in both of the NSLs.

Andrew Crocker, a staff attorney at the Electronic Frontier Foundation, said the orders disclosed Friday were among a small handful of those publicly released that show the FBI continues to ask for internet records despite the 2008 guidance.

“This is an ongoing practice and it is significantly beyond the scope of what is intended,” said Crocker, whose organization is challenging the constitutionality of NSLs in the Ninth US Circuit Court of Appeals. Twitter has also sued the government to more freely disclose information in NSLs.

National security letters are a type of government order for communications data sent to service providers. They are usually issued with a gag order, meaning the target is often unaware that records are being accessed, and they do not require a warrant.

They have been available as a law enforcement tool since the 1970s, but their frequency and breadth expanded dramatically under the Patriot Act, which was passed shortly after the 11 September, 2001, attacks. Tens of thousands of NSLS are issued annually in the US. The Senate narrowly rejected a Republican-backed proposal to expand the kinds of telephone and internet records the FBI could request unilaterally under the Patriot Act.

They have faced amid opposition from some major technology companies and civil libertarians, but lawmakers have said they intend to pursue the expansion again. —Reuters
ANKARA — Prime Minister Theresa May said in Ankara on Saturday that Turkey should maintain human rights and the rule of law, alluding to the arrests and sackings of thousands of people following last year’s failed coup.

May, visiting Turkey after a trip to Washington where she met US President Donald Trump, is making her first foreign visit as Prime Minister, promoting trade deals to strengthen her hand in negotiations to leave the European Union.

Speaking to reporters at the presidential palace in Ankara after meeting President Tayyip Erdogan, May called Turkey one of Britain’s oldest friends and briefly touched on human rights, a sore point for Erdogan, who accuses the West of not showing enough solidarity following the 15 July military putsch attempt.

“I’m proud that the UK stood with you on the 15 July last year in defense of democracy and now it is important that Turkey sustains that democracy by maintaining the rule of law and upholding its international human rights obligations as the government has undertaken to do,” she said.

More than 100,000 people have been sacked or suspended following the failed coup and some 40,000 jailed pending trial. The scope of the crackdown has worried rights groups and some of Turkey’s Western allies, but Ankara says the moves are necessary to root out supporters of the attempted putsch.

May said the two countries had agreed to form a joint working group for post-Brexit trade and would step up an aviation security program.

Erdogan told reporters that he discussed steps toward defense industry cooperation with May, and that he hoped to increase annual trade between Britain to $20 billion from $15.6 billion now.

He said an important step between the two countries would be taken on Turkey’s TF-X fighter jet project.

“Following her meeting with Erdogan, May was due to hold talks with Prime Minister Binali Yildirim.” — Reuters

### About 40 Turkish NATO soldiers requested asylum in Germany-media

BERLIN — About 40 mostly high-ranking Turkish soldiers who worked at NATO facilities in Germany but were suspended after the failed coup in Turkey in July have requested asylum in Germany, news magazine Der Spiegel and broadcaster ARD reported on Saturday.

No comment was immediately available from the government or NATO officials.

The reports of the asylum applications filed by Turkish soldiers in Germany came as Chancellor Angela Merkel prepares to travel to Turkey to meet President Tayyip Erdogan.

Ties between the two NATO partners have been strained over issues including alleged spying by Turkish clerics in Germany, German concerns about Turkey’s crackdown on dissidents, and Ankara’s accusation that Berlin is harbouring militants from the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) and far-leftists of the DHKP-C.

The report quoted officials with German federal migration office and the interior ministry as saying that the asylum applications would be handled as all others.

Norbert Roettgen, head of the parliamentary foreign affairs committee, told Spiegel that political considerations could not play a role in asylum processes.

NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg told a conference in November that some Turkish military officials posted to NATO in Europe had requested asylum but gave no specific numbers.

Reuters reported in October that Turkey had fired hundreds of senior military staff serving at NATO in Europe and the United States after the coup. Most were recalled to Turkey, but some chose not to return, fearing reprisals.

Greece’s Supreme Court this week ruled against the extradition of eight Turkish soldiers who fled to Greece in July after the abortive coup. — Reuters

### 14 Austrian terror suspects face remand hearings over weekend

VIENNA — The 14 suspects arrested by Austrian authorities following a series of large-scale anti-terror raids on Thursday are to have their remand hearings conducted on the weekend, according to an Austria Press Agency report.

While no information regarding the progress of the investigations has yet been provided, it was confirmed by a public prosecutor in Graz that the 14 men and women are to be taken to prison by Saturday morning, APA said.

From there, the remand hearings would have to take place within 48 hours, to determine whether they will be kept in pre-trial detention or be released from custody, it said.

Four of the suspects are presently being held in Vienna, with the remainder in Graz.

The allegations leveled against the suspects are both suspicion of association with a terrorist organization, in this case Islamic State, as well as connection to an anti-state organization. — Xinhua

### UAE Air Force helps to shoot down Iranian drone in Yemen conflict: media

DUBAI — Arab Coalition Forces destroyed an Iranian military drone at Yemen’s Red Sea coast “with the help of United Arab Emirates (UAE) Air Force.” UAE state news agency WAM reported on Saturday, quoting “a Yemeni military source.”

The unmanned aerial vehicle was at a mobile launching platform, “intended to target Yemeni forces participating in the liberation of Mokha city, and port,” said the report. The drone was “about to take off” for its mission when it was destroyed by an air-to-surface missile in coordination with the UAE Air Force operating in Yemen, WAM quoted General Ahmed Saif Al-Yafei, deputy chief of General Staff of Yemeni Armed Forces.

The general claimed further that the rebel militias have started using the smuggled weapons from Iran to Yemen, including this unmanned aircraft.

He also stressed that the presence of these Iranian weapons in Yemen, which clearly show the “blatant Iranian interference” in Yemen’s crisis, and attempts to “destabilize” the region. The UAE is part of a Saudi-led coalition comprising nine Arab states to support Yemen’s “legitimate” government of PresidentAbd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi. The coalition has been air striking on a daily basis the Iranian-backed Shiite Houthi group that took over Yemen last 26 March when Hadi fled to the Saudi capital Riyadh to take refuge. The coalition said its intervention aims to restore Hadi’s authority in the country. — Xinhua

Merkel says migrant deal with Libya needed, but not possible yet

BERLIN — Europe should work with Libya to control illegal migration, but cannot sign a deal similar to that reached with Turkey, she said in a video podcast, adding that such an accord would only be possible when “the political situation has improved, when the unity government is really a unity government and has control over the entire country, and we can talk about human rights issues, standards and other issues.”

Libya sank into chaos following the 2011 overthrow of veteran ruler Muammar Gaddafi, and the new UN-backed government in Tripoli exercises no control over its territory.

The sea crossing from Libya to Italy, operated by people-smugglers based in the North African country, is now the main route for migrants bound for Europe.

A record 181,000 mainly African boat migrants reached Italy last year, taking the total number of arrivals in the past three years to more than half a million.

European Union leaders, who will meet in Malta next week, are looking at new proposals to handle asylum seekers after more than a year of wrangling over the issue that has undermined the bloc’s unity. EU interior ministers on Thursday already pushed ahead with plans to finance camps in Africa, where the UN migration agency and aid groups would process migrants to prevent them from trying to cross the Mediterranean to Europe. — Reuters
Arkansas governor signs law banning common procedure

FLORIDA — Many people with type 1 diabetes don’t check frequently enough for buildup of ketones, acids that can cause severe damage to the kidneys and other organs, according to a US study.

Ketone monitoring is particularly important when patients with type 1 diabetes are sick or have consistently high glucose levels, the authors write in Diabetes Care.

“Ketones occur when the body burns fat instead of using carbohydrates for fuel,” lead author Anastasia Albanese-Nell told Reuters Health by email. “If high glucose levels and ketones remain untreated, there is an increased risk for a life-threatening condition called diabetic ketoacidosis, which is commonly diagnosed in young kids, and for that reason it used to be called juvenile diabetes.”

Type 1 diabetes is most commonly diagnosed in young kids, and for that reason it used to be called juvenile diabetes. But the disease does not go away, and it can also be first diagnosed in adulthood. While children usually have caregivers to help them manage the disease, adults typically need to manage it themselves.

Past studies have shown that monitoring is regularly testing urine or blood for high levels of ketones. To see how well patients keep up with this requirement, researchers examined data from about 3,000 people who answered an online questionnaire.

Participants included parents of children 4 to 12 years old and adults aged 18 to 89.

More than 60 percent of participants had urine ketone testing kits at home and 18 percent had blood ketone monitors, researchers found. But about one third of the respondents did not have any ketone testing supplies in their homes at the time of the survey.

Many have cost or other factors as a barrier to obtaining supplies, these need to be identified and remedied, Albanese-O’Neill said.

About 5 per cent of people with diabetes have type 1, according to the American Diabetes Association.

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Peru and Colombia vow to stand with Mexico after row with Trump

AREQUIPA — Peru and Colombia vowed to stand with Mexico as the country faces an uncertain economic future and grapples with a crisis that has left Trump administration.

Peruvian President Pedro Pablo Kuczynski said member nations of the Latin American trade bloc the Pacific Alliance must double down on efforts to open markets and strengthen ties as they navigate the "turbulent waters" of protectionist rhetoric.

Peru, Colombia, Chile and Mexico formed the Pacific Alliance in 2011 to remove obstacles to trade and orient their markets to the fast-growing Asia-Pacific region.

"Right now one of us is facing serious difficulties that are not of its own making," Kuczynski said in reference to Mexico as he sat beside his Colombian counterpart on an official visit. "We have to stand together on our ideals, on global trade which has done us so much good."

Though Kuczynski did not mention Trump by name, his comments were some of the first rumbles of displeasure with the Trump administration from traditional US allies in Latin America.

Trump has insisted he will force Mexico to pay for a wall—promised to build during his campaign—by renegotiating NAFTA.

Trump cited the deal as one that the US has "lost" to Mexico, but the two countries, which have lasted for decades, Kuczynski said, "are clouds of uncertainty around the world."

Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos said, "We want to join the call of countries that adhere to the principles that have been agreed in the Pacific Alliance represent a market of some 200 million people and that each has emerged from economic crisis in the past by opening markets to global trade."

"Of course there are costs to global trade, of course there are job losses, but it’s also clear that the benefits are bigger," Kuczynski said.

New US UN envoy warns allies: back us or we’ll take names

UNITED NATIONS — The new US ambassador to the United Nations, Nikki Haley, pledged on Friday to work on behalf of the world body and warned US allies that if they do not support Washington, then she is "taking names" and will respond.

Haley made brief remarks to reporters as she arrived at the world body’s headquarters in New York to present her credentials to UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres.

"Our goal with the administration is to show value at the UN and the way that we’ll show value is to show our strength, show our voice, have the backs of our allies and make sure that our allies have our back as well," Haley said.

"For those that don’t have our back, we’re taking names, we will make points to respond to that accordingly," added Republican President Donald Trump’s UN envoy.

Haley, who was South Carolina’s Republican governor when Trump picked her for the post, has little foreign policy and no negatives in our policy and US federal government experience.

French UN Ambassador Francois Delattre and British UN Ambassador Matthew Rycroft said they looked forward to working with Haley.

The United States, Britain and France, along with Russia and China, are permanent veto-wielding members of the UN Security Council.

After her meeting with Guterres, a US official said they had "a good and productive conversation about ways they can work together to reform the UN."

Haley told reporters, "Everything that’s working, we’re going to make it better, everything that’s not working we’re going to try and fix, and anything that seems to be obsolete and not necessary we’re going to do away with."

According to a draft executive order published by The Daily Beast, Trump wants a committee — including his secretary of state, attorney general and director of national intelligence — to carry out a one-year review of US funding to international organizations with the aim of almost halving voluntary funding.

A senior US administration official said on Friday that no such executive order was "expected at this time."

The United States is the largest contributor to the United Nations, paying 22 per cent of the $5.4 billion UN budget and 28 per cent of the $7.9 billion UN peacekeeping budget. These are assessed contributions — agreed by the UN General Assembly — and not voluntary payments.

UN agencies, such as the UN Development Programme, the children’s agency UNICEF, the World Food Programme and the UN Population Fund, are funded voluntarily.

Last year, Trump took to Twitter to disparage the 193-member world body after the United States abstained in a 23 December UN Security Council vote, allowing the adoption of a resolution demanding an end to settlement building by US ally Israel.

Trump, who had called on President Barack Obama’s administration to veto the resolution, warned that “things will be different” at the United Nations after he took office on 20 January. —Reuters

Vatican seeks to work with Japan in abolishing nuclear arms

VATICAN CITY — The Vatican foreign minister expressed his willingness to work with Japan in eliminating nuclear arms and building peace in a recent interview with the Japanese media ahead of his visit to the country starting Saturday.

Paul Gallagher, secretary for relations with states who is scheduled to visit Hiroshima’s Peace Memorial Park among other locations during his stay in Japan through 3 February, called the 1945 atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Western Japan “a symbol of a great human tragedy,” in the interview Thursday in Vatican City.

“It is a symbol of a great conflict, and it is obviously something in which we, as human beings, have to be absolutely committed never to repeat it,” Gallagher said, adding, “We have to learn from the history...and move forward from that.”

“We have to understand that peace is our responsibility today. We are all responsible. We do not just leave it to the politicians. It’s for ordinary people to stand up and do something on the sufferings of the people in the two cities that have lasted for decades.

While he has no plan to visit an area in northeastern or eastern Japan which has been affected by the major earthquake, tsunami and nuclear crisis in 2011, Gallagher said the disasters “made a great impact on the world.”

He also called the nuclear accident at the Fukushima Daiichi plant “a powerful message” that the world must take into consideration in deciding what energy we are going to use in the centuries to come and what risks we prefer to take.

As this year marks the 75th anniversary of the diplomatic relations with Japan, Gallagher said the Vatican is trying to keep the ties “not just alive but flourishing.”

With regard to US President Donald Trump, who has pushed his “America First” protectionism agenda despite controversies since last week’s inauguration, Gallagher implied it is premature to characterize Trump’s measures. “It’s very early days. It’s a sort of wait-and-see situation,” he said.

Imposing the need for dialogue in general, Gallagher said, “You do not always have to agree with everybody you meet. You have to exchange ideas, you have to make constructive criticisms and you have to be able to receive that as well.” —Kyodo News
“Farm Domes” pave way for veggie production on new level

By Nana Kunieda

KANAZAWA, (Japan) —

For years, Katsuyuki Kitagawa dreamed of living in a comfortable home in the shape of a dome-shaped manju dumpling, minus the bean paste.

For over a decade, his company Japan Dome House Co., based in Kaga, Ishikawa Prefecture, central Japan, has come about as close to that realization as possible with the construction of a dome house made of next-generation polystyrene foam with various applications.

The styrofoam, a denser variant of the packing material used for consumer products, is now being used for agricultural purposes and drawing attention because of its durability against earthquakes and energy-saving properties that enable energy savings, replacing more conventional materials like concrete or wood.

“I’d like to change the way of farming,” Japan Dome House President Kitagawa, 72, said about the material, which is ideal for pesticide-free cultivation because it does not rust or rot and is not subject to termite infestation. The streamline curvature of the dome offers gale resistance from winds.

A “Farm Dome” in Kaga measures 7.7 metres wide and 30 metres in length. Although the outside temperature might be close to below freezing, a temperature of about 22 degrees Celsius is maintained inside the structure, suitable conditions for growing succulent summertime vegetables, normally produced outdoors.

Kitagawa was born in Shanghai but grew up in a hot springs village in southern Ishikawa. As a young man he operated a wholesale Japanese confectionery company but opened Aso Farmland, a health-themed recreational facility in Minami-ao Village in Kumamoto Prefecture in 1995.

Hemisphere-shaped dome houses were developed as accommodations in 2004 when Kitagawa noticed that polystyrene, unlike other materials does not rot. It is highly customizable for everything from residences to educational facilities, or even karaoke bars. What’s more, an antioxidant has been kneaded into the building material and formaldehyde is not used in the construction process.

“I thought I’d be happy if I could scoop out the bean paste from a manju dumpling and live there,” Kitagawa said about one of the products he sold before establishing the modular house manufacturer.

The company began developing the dome houses for agricultural purposes in 2015. The stable structure of the dome, which can be assembled in several days, protects against wind and snow, and is highly earthquake resistant because there are no beams or rods holding it up. It uses about one-tenth the energy of a traditional structure, the company says.

More than 450 dome houses in Aso Farmland were undamaged when a major earthquake hit Kumamoto and its vicinity in April last year and the village was later used as an evacuation site for nearly 700 people.

Not only has the company been expanding domestically, but it has been receiving a string of orders from overseas, from the Middle East, and other areas with harsh climates like Antarctica.

Kitagawa, whose parents died of illness during his childhood, says no one should have to go hungry. “Farm Dome,” he believes, is the first step to achieving the goal. “I want people around the world to be healthy and not go hungry. This is farming that will not be influenced by the weather or disasters,” he said. —Kyodo News

Korea urges repatriation of citizens in South who want return

NEW YORK —

North Korea wants UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres to help some of its citizens whom it claims are being held against their will in South Korea to go home, according to a letter obtained by Kyodo News on Friday.

In the letter to the UN chief, Ambassador Ja Song Nam cited the case of Kim Ryon Hui, who left North Korea in 2011 to seek medical treatment in China, according to media reports.

Kim told Kyodo News in a 2015 interview in South Korea that she had made a mistake and was now without a passport, having been required to turn it over, and is unable to leave the country.

In his letter, Ja claims that such acts constitute a “crime against humanity” and “will be a touchstone testing the true stand of the UN in the promotion and protection of human rights.”

North Korean Counselor Ri Song Chol told Kyodo that a previous letter last May to then UN chief Ban Ki Moon, whom Guterres replaced in January, went unanswered.

“This is a real human rights violation case but they (the United Nations) do not touch this issue,” Ri said. “We have high expectations for the secretary general to solve this issue as an urgent and emergency human rights issue.”

The United Nations has confirmed receipt of the letter but did not offer any further details. North Korea’s human rights record was the focus of discussion in the UN Security Council for the third year in a row last December. The UN General Assembly also adopted last month a Japan- and European Union-led resolution rebuking the North for its continued rights abuses for the 12th year in a row. —Kyodo News

CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE

MV ARCA VOY. NO ( )

Consignees of cargo carried on MV ARCA VOY. NO ( ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 29.1.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T./M.I.P where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT

MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY

AGENT FOR: MS MCC TRANSPORT (S’PORE) PTE LTD

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE

MV YANTRA BHUM VOY. NO ( )

Consignees of cargo carried on MV YANTRA BHUM VOY. NO ( ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 29.1.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT

MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY

AGENT FOR: MS REGIONAL CONTAINER LINES

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE

MV INNWA STAR VOY. NO ( )

Consignees of cargo carried on MV INNWA STAR VOY. NO ( ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 29.1.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T./M.I.P where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT

MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY

AGENT FOR: MS REGIONAL CONTAINER LINES

Phone No: 2301185
TOKYO — Actor Ryan Gosling and director Damien Chazelle stressed the collaboration that went into making their Oscar-nominated film “La La Land”, at their first news conference following the release of nominations on Friday.

“This was such a labor of love to make and it was a real team effort,” said 32-year old director Chazelle, who is poised to become the youngest ever Best Director Oscar winner.

“There were an incredible number of people who came together at the heights of their crafts and really pushed themselves beyond their limit to make this film. So I was really pleased that so many of those people got recognized”, he said before breaking open a celebratory barrel of sake with Gosling. “La La Land” became the movie to beat at the Academy Awards after earning 14 nominations on Tuesday, in a diverse list that silenced the #OscarsSoWhite controversy of the last two years. With nominations that include best picture, actor, actress, director, score and screenplay, the musical about a struggling actress, played by Emma Stone, and her jazz pianist boyfriend, played by Gosling, equaled the record set by the 1997 blockbuster “Titanic” and the 1950 film “All About Eve”.

“La La Land” will vie for Best Picture Oscar with black coming-of-age movie “Moonlight”, and sci-fi film “Arrival” each with eight nods, Mel Gibson’s Hollywood comeback war movie “Hacksaw Ridge”, dramas “Manchester by the Sea”, “Hidden Figures”, and “Lion”, modern western “Hell or High Water” and Denzel Washington’s adaptation of stage play “Fences”.

The musical, which has raked in $174 million worldwide, will be released in Japan on 24 February. Jimmy Kimmel will host the Academy Awards ceremony in Hollywood on 26 February.

—Reuters

Japan artist says latest sticker graffiti aimed at Trump

TOKYO — Japanese graffiti artist known as 281 Antinuke poses for a photo with his sticker art depicting US President Donald Trump in Tokyo’s Shibuya shopping and entertainment district, Japan, on 27 January 2017. Photo: Reuters

A Japanese graffiti artist known as 281 Antinuke says his latest sticker plastered around central Tokyo — takes aim at US President Donald Trump.

Amid the bustling night life of Shibuya, a major shopping and entertainment hub in Tokyo, the artist pastes stickers dealing with social issues to lamp posts and walls to attract the attention of passersby.

His latest postings target the controversial remarks made by Trump about women and minorities during his 2016 campaign.

The stickers show a figure resembling the US president standing between figures in white capes, which symbolize members of the white supremacist group Ku Klux Klan, the artist told Reuters Television in a recent interview.

“My art was produced out of a desire for change in the world,” he said.

Wearing sunglasses and a white surgical mask, 281 Antinuke declined to give his name or reveal his face, saying he feared retaliatory attack for the political views contained in his art.

Graffiti is also punishable by heavy penalties and frowned upon by Japanese society.

Much of 281 Antinuke’s previous artwork criticized nuclear power, inspired after the 11 March, 2011, earthquake and tsunami that caused a meltdown at the Fukushima nuclear plant.

The artist said the more political a sticker — other works have criticized Japan Prime Minister Shinzo Abe — the faster it is taken down. On the busy streets of Shibuya, people who stopped to take a look were initially confused by the anti-Trump stickers.

“Trump is saying white supremacist things, which are much more than America first,” he said.

281 Antinuke, who is wearing sunglasses and a white surgical mask, poses for a photo in Tokyo.


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“My art was produced out of the fear of what may happen to Japan because of such a horrifying leader,” 281 Antinuke said.

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“Trump is saying white supremacist things, which are much more than America first,” he said. “My first impression is that they are hard to understand, but once I get the context of it, it’s very expressive as an art form,” said Tokyo resident Manato Kato.

—Reuters

India orders probe after Bollywood filmmaker thrashed on sets of historical film

NEW DELHI — Indian authorities on Saturday ordered a probe into the assault on Bollywood filmmaker Sanjay Leela Bhansali on the sets of his historical film Padmavati.

A group of protesters belonging to Rajput Karni Sena, a fringe outfit, stormed the film’s sets at Jaigarh Fort in the western state of Rajasthan on Friday, alleging that his film distorts history.

Rajasthan’s Home Minister Gulab Chand Kataria said he had ordered a probe into the incident, stressing “anger should not be shown by breaking the law.”

Bhansali is based on the story of legendary Queen Padmavati who committed suicide along with a number of women after refusing to submit to Emperor Alauddin Khilji when he arrived at the Chittorgarh fort with his army and was about to storm it in 1303.

The protesters alleged that the film contains love scenes between Queen Padmavati and Alauddin Khilji and Bhansali should delete such scenes as they distorted facts.

Bollywood has been united to condemn the incident that was captured on camera.

The film fraternity has demanded actions against the group that carried out the assault on the veteran Bollywood director who is an acclaimed figure in the industry.—Xinhua

Matthew McConaughey would love to be teacher

LOS ANGELES — Matthew McConaughey says if not an actor he would have been a teacher.

The “Gold” star said he has already got a taste of his other dream career as he is a professor at the University of Texas, reported Female First.

“If I weren’t an actor, I’d be a teacher or an astronaut … I’m a professor at the University of Texas at Austin! This semester, I’m teaching students about the science behind the magic of filmmaking,” McConaughey said.

The 47-year-old actor grew up in Texas and is keen to pass some of those core values he learnt as a kid to his own children, Levi, eight, Vida, seven, and Livingston, four, who he has with his wife Camila Alves.

“Things about growing up in Texas that I’ve tried to pass on to my kids are a strong work ethic and no false drama,” he said.—PTI


Chinese Year of Rooster kicks off with fanfare in Nigeria

ABUJA — The Chinese community in Nigeria on Saturday held a carnival-like celebration to mark the beginning of Chinese Lunar New Year 2017, Year of the Rooster.

In Abuja, Nigeria’s capital, the event, organized by the Chinese Embassy in Nigeria, witnessed a large turnout of Chinese citizens, local Nigerian officials, and students.

It was the first of several events outlined for the celebration of what is also known as the Spring Festival observed by the Chinese people.

The revelers, who gathered at the China Cultural Center tucked in the central business area of Abuja city, were enthralled by an exhibition of the Chinese culture and various Chinese and Nigerian art performances as well as the Chinese traditional lion dance performed by students of the Government Girls Secondary School in the Nigerian town of Dutse.

Zhou Pingjian, Chinese ambassador to Nigeria, told Xinhua the celebration was to mark the beginning of good things to come.

In an earlier message to congratulate China, the Chinese community in Nigeria and the world over on the Chinese lunar new year, Nigerian leader Muhammadu Buhari noted the Spring Festival is the most important traditional festival for the Chinese. The celebration emphasizes the concept of family and the opportunity of reunion — values shared by both Nigeria and China.

Buhari wrote in a statement released by his office last Saturday.

The celebration to mark the beginning of Chinese New Year in Dabu County, Guangdong province, China, on 28 January, 2017.

LONDON — A handwritten draft letter of abdication penned by King George III is to go on display for the first time as part of a huge cache of documents from the reign of the last British monarch to rule over America, the royal household said on Saturday.

The letter, covered in blotches, scratches and corrections, was penned during a period of political crisis in March 1783 at the end of the American War of Independence.

“I am therefore resolved to resign my Crown and all the Dominions pertaining to it to the Prince of Wales, my eldest son and lawful successor,” said the letter, which was never sent.

It is among a collection of 350,000 Georgian papers from the royal archives which have been digitally scanned and will be placed on an online portal for historians and the public to study from Chinese dates back to more than 4,000 years and includes displaying fireworks, Chinese new year couplets, preparing Jiaozi (the Chinese dumplings) and having the family reunion dinner on the new year’s eve.—Xinhua

Retired emperor’s duties to remain unspecified under abdication law

TOKYO — The government will not outline Emperor Akihito’s official duties in any legislation drawn up to allow his abdication in an effort to ensure the incoming symbolic figurehead’s role is clearly defined, a government source said on Saturday.

Some critics say that if the current emperor is allowed to abdicate, the coexistence of the new emperor and the retired one could be seen as a conflict of authority. The emperor is widely expected to step down by the end of 2018.

At a gathering of the government advisory panel studying the possible abdication of the emperor on 11 January, the Imperial Household Agency explained that all official duties — both state acts and public duties — will be conducted by the new emperor, brushing aside such concern.

The government classifies the emperor’s activities into three categories — state acts, public duties and other acts deemed private. While the Constitution stipulates the emperor’s state acts, the supreme law does not mention his public duties.

In state acts, the emperor convenes Diet sessions and dissolves the House of Representatives based on the recommendation and approval of the Cabinet.

His public duties include traveling to foreign countries and visiting disaster-hit areas to console and encourage affected people. While the retired emperor is unlikely to perform any state acts, he may take part in unofficial acts such as observing sumo wrestling, according to the source.

The government is mulling a special law that will allow only Emperor Akihito to step down, instead of crafting a permanent law to also be applied to his successors.

The issue of the 83-year-old emperor’s abdication emerged after he strongly hinted in a video message in last August at his desire to resign and hand over the Chrysanthemum throne to his son, Crown Prince Naruhito.

—Kyodo News

Abdication letter and papers give insight into Britain’s ‘mad’ King George

LONDON — A handwritten draft letter of abdication penned by King George III is to go on display for the first time as part of a huge cache of documents from the reign of the last British monarch to rule over America, the royal household said on Saturday.

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“I am therefore resolved to resign my Crown and all the Dominions pertaining to it to the Prince of Wales, my eldest son and lawful successor,” said the letter, which was never sent.

It is among a collection of 350,000 Georgian papers from the royal archives which have been digitally scanned and will be placed on an online portal for historians and the public to study from Saturday. The documents include intimate letters between George and his wife Charlotte, household bills and a huge number of letters between the king and the government with detailed notes about the war in America.

There is also an instructional manual from George’s father about kingship.

George, Britain’s longest-reigning king who was on the throne from 1760 until 1820, suffered from health problems in the latter part of his life which was documented in the award-winning 1994 film “The Madness Of King George”.

Current heir-to-the-throne Prince Charles has said George was unfairly remembered by history as mad and the king who lost America, when he was in fact one of Britain’s most dutiful, cultured and misunderstood rulers.

—Reuters
Serena wins Australian Open for 23rd grand slam crown

MELBOURNE—Serena Williams pushed sentiments aside in an emotion-charged 6-4, 6-4 defeat of sister Venus to win the Australian Open on Saturday and a record 23rd grand slam title in the professional era.

Tortured by nerves in a tense family affair, Serena had to produce some of her best tennis to overcome Venus who won the crowd at Rod Laver Arena by scrapping hard to the end.

The American’s seventh title at Melbourne Park was won with an aggressive charge to the net and a desperate defensive handstand from Venus that floated into the tramlines.

Williams slumped to the ground, with hands in the air and eyes wide with joyous disbelief, before congratulating her sister for inspiring her run in Melbourne.

“She’s an amazing person, there’s no way I would be at 23 without her,” the second seed Serena said, cradling the Daphne Akhurst Memorial Cup at the trophy ceremony.

“There’s no way I would have anything without her. She’s the only reason the Williams sisters exist, so thank you for inspiring me to be the best that I can be.”

The win moved her past Steffi Graf on the list of all-time slam winners and she now sits just one shy of Margaret Court’s long-standing record of 24.

The victory also wrested back the world number one ranking from Angelique Kerber who swept it away during her winning run to the US Open championship.

Kerber, like a number before her, may yet be remembered as another caretaker for the rankings before its return to its rightful owner.

Venus was oldest finalist in Melbourne in the professional era and won huge admiration for her unlikely run to the final.

“Serena Williams, that’s my little sister, guys,” she said beaming.

“Congratulations Serena on number 23. I’ve been right there with you, some of them I’ve lost with you.

“You’re win has always been my win, you know that. I’m enormously proud of you, you mean the world to me.” At 35, an age at which most former champions have enjoyed life after tennis for several years, Serena’s powers appear undiminished and she will now train her sights on Margaret Court’s all-time record of 24 major titles.

Rightly or wrongly, many will feel Serena’s top ranking in history is already assured, with Court’s haul split between the amateur and professional eras and the American’s silverware amassed despite numerous physical setbacks.

In the ultimate throwback tournament, Serena met her sister on the same Rod Laver Arena court where 14 years before she had edged her in three sets to claim her first Melbourne Park crown.

Eight years had passed since their last grand slam decider at Wimbledon in 2009, and their combined ages in Melbourne added up to the ‘oldest’ major final ever contested.

They walked down the corridor silently prior to the match, with Serena tuned into headphones and Venus focusing only ahead.

It was a tense start and neither player was able to hold serve until Venus took the fifth game.

Serena was the worst afflicted by the nerves, and she smashed her racket in a rage in just the third game after she slipped behind the baseline when chasing down a ball.—Reuters

Ranieri tells defence to tighten up after Derby draw

LONDON—Leicester City manager Claudio Ranieri called on his leaky defence to plug the holes after they rescued a late draw in their FA Cup fourth round clash against second tier Derby County on Friday.

The Premier League champions were five minutes from exiting the cup but staved off embarrassment thanks to captain Wes Morgan’s late header that rescued a 2-2 draw.

It was another awkward evening for Leicester’s rear-guard, who were the backbone of their stunning title victory last season, but were breached twice before halftime against Derby.

“We have to concentrate. Too many times we concede. We can only work and be more focussed,” Ranieri told the BBC.

Leicester took the lead with a woeful own goal from Darren Bent, who then drew Derby level with a precise header at the other end. Craig Bryson put the hosts ahead as he carved an easy path through the Leicester defence five minutes before half-time.

It was another example of how porous Leicester’s backline has become. Ranieri’s side have conceded 37 league goals in 22 games this season, having let in fewer in the whole of their title winning campaign in 2015/16.

For Derby’s former England manager Steve McClaren it was a missed opportunity.

“We did everything we could, we came across a team who were at it tonight,” he said.

“Our character was fantastic, we dug in in the second half and (Derby keeper) Scott Carson made some saves when we needed him to.”—Reuters

Arsenal’s Wenger given four-match touchline ban

LONDON—Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger has been given a four-match touchline ban after admitting a Football Association (FA) misconduct charge for appearing to push the fourth official during their Premier League win over Burnley on Sunday.

Wenger was charged by the FA on Monday after he was sent to the stands by the referee for allegedly using abusive or insulting language towards fourth official Anthony Taylor after an injury-time penalty was awarded to Burnley.

“It was further alleged that following his dismissal from the technical area, his behaviour in remaining in the tunnel area and making physical contact with the fourth official amounted to improper conduct,” the FA said in a statement on Friday.

“The Arsenal manager, who was also fined £25,000, admitted the charge and requested a personal hearing which took place before an Independent Regulatory Commission today (Friday).”

Wenger reacted angrily after Burnley were awarded a 93rd-minute penalty at the Emirates Stadium, one they scored to level at 1-1. He was sent to the stands by referee Jon Moss, but stood in the tunnel entrance and refused to move as he tried to watch the remainder of the game.

Taylor appeared to encourage Wenger to move away, but the Frenchman was seen pushing back against him.

Arsenal snatched a winner at the death when they were awarded a penalty of their own, which was converted by Alexis Sanchez.

Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger Action . PHOTO. REUTERS

Arsenal travel to face Southampton in the fourth round of the FA Cup on Saturday, before they host Watford in the Premier League three days later.

The other matches Wenger will miss are league encounters away to Chelsea on 4 February and at home to Hull City a week later.

He will return to the dugout should Arsenal reach the FA Cup fifth round or for their Premier League trip to Liverpool on 4 March.—Reuters