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Conveyance team of large marble stone stops over at Thigon bus terminal

MANDALAY, 2 Jan—A convoy transporting the large marble stone to be carved as Maha Thakyaranthi Buddha Image left Saga-in toll gate at 8.10 am on Friday and arrived in Thigon bus terminal in Meiktila Township.

Along Yangon-Mandalay expressway, Chief Engineer U Shwe Lay of Public Works (Bridge) and party, members of Yangon-Mandalay expressway maintenance group and Expressway Police Corps provided necessary assistance for the conveyance process.

At Thigon bus terminal, religious association of Ministry of Religious Affairs and those from Meiktila recited Dhammacakka and Parittas. Restaurants from Thigon terminal offered lights and water. Local people made cash donations. The large marble stone will be conveyed to Nay Pyi Taw on 3 January.—*MNA*

***Large marble stone for Maha Thakyaranthi Buddha Image being conveyed on Yangon-Mandalay expressway.*—MNA**

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw speaker delivers speech at farmers' rally in Dawei

DAWEI, 2 Jan—Speaker of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and Pyithu Hluttaw Thura U Shwe Mann delivered a speech at the rally of over five thousand farmers from Taninthayi Region in Dawei on Friday morning.

In his speech, Thura U Shwe Mann said that today's meeting is more distinctive than other rallies in other regions and states because motions put forward at the meeting are serious, adding that Myanmar can enjoy more democratic and human rights today than during the past fifty years and those rights were effectively applied at the meeting.

According to the speaker, motions covered promotion of farmers' lives, development of agriculture sector, promotion of fishermen's lives, conservation of water resources, settlement of land disputes in accordance with the law and review of law for protection and promotion of farmers' interests.

Thura U Shwe Mann pointed out that only when promotion of farmers' live and agricultural development have been realized, will Myanmar be able to

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An interview on Myanmar's human rights situations approved at 69th Plenary Session of UN General Assembly

U Htin Lynn, acting director-general at the International Organizations and Economic Department.

NAY PYI TAW, 2 Jan—The Third Committee Session of the 69th United Nations General Assembly made a draft resolution with remarks about the situation of human rights in Myanmar on 29 December last year.

In an interview, U Htin Lynn, acting director-general at the International Organizations and Economic Department under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, told the Myanmar News Agency (MNA) that the UN statement recognizes the constructive progress Myanmar has made in its political and economical reforms, democratic transition, national reconciliation, promotion and protection of human rights.

It also welcomes the government's engagement with parliament, political parties and civil society, recognizing its efforts to review and reform legislation, to release prisoners of conscience, and to secure a nationwide ceasefire with ethnic armed groups alongside an all-inclusive political dialogue with the aim of achieving lasting peace.

The remarks praise Myanmar for its establishment of the Centre for Diversity and National Harmony, as well as for its engagement and cooperation with international organizations including the United Nations.

According to reports, the initial draft resolution had been submitted by the European Union to the Third Committee Session on 28 November 2014, with the 69th UN General Assembly session making a draft resolution with some remarks.

Myanmar did not call for a vote on the draft resolution, which the country said welcomes its achievements, taking into consideration the existing bilateral constructive cooperation. A consensus has been reached between Myanmar and the EU through earnest negotiations.

When asked about an urge to end racial and religious discrimination, U Htin Lynn said that certain data are found to be false accusations, which he added could fan hatred among the communities that have resided in unity and harmony for centuries of years in the country. The acting director-general denied the accusations, saying and there is no such

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Police arrested 245 traffickers in 2014, most in Shan State

By *Khaing Thanda Lwin*

YANGON, 2 Jan—Figures of human trafficking incidents in 2014 exceeded the previous year's total 102 nationwide, with most of the cases coming from Shan State, according to the statistics of the Myanmar's Anti-Human Trafficking Police Force.

The numbers of human trafficking cases between January and December reached 124 and Shan State tops the chart with 56 cases, followed by Yangon with 14 cases and by Mandalay with 10 cases.

Bago, Sagaing, Taninthayi, Magway and Ayeyawady regions and Rakhine, Mon, Kachin and Kayin states had fewer than 10 cases; the capital Nay Pyi Taw had three.

Most victims were sold as fraudulent marriage partners and forced labourers in neighbouring countries, especially in China, but there is only one forced adoption case this year. The police exposed 26 human trafficking cases reported in the country where majority of women were put into prostitution.

In 2014, authorities rescued 241 victims—99

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Amyotha Hluttaw speaker tours Rakhine State

NAY PYI TAW, 2 Jan— Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw U Khin Aung Myint, together with Chief Minister of Rakhine State U Maung Maung Ohn and the chairman and members of Amyotha Hluttaw Relief and Care Provision Committee, presented cash and exercise books for monasteries, monastic education schools and educational foundations in Yathedaung, Sittway, MraukU, Kyauktaw and Thandwe in Rakhine State on 30 and 31 December.

Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw U Khin Aung Myint attends presentation of blankets for monastic education school in Thandwe.—MNA

The speaker and the committee donated K 20 million and 72 solar lamps worth K 3.6 million for villages flooded by salt water in Yathedaung, K 6 million and 600 dozens of exercise books for monastic education schools in Sittway, K 10 million for the maintenance of Ngakhutaung monastery, K 10 million for ordination of 500 new monks in Maungtaw, K 5 million for the abbot training school and 18,957 blankets those in need in Sittway.

On 31 December, U Khin Aung Myint and party left for MraukU and paid homage to Shitthaung Pahtoodawgyi Pagoda and donated K 1 million before donating K10 million to Alodawpyae Monastery and K 5 million to monastic education schools.

The speaker and party then left for Kyauktaw and donated K 2 million for the Maha Muni Pagoda, K 5 million for monastic education schools and K 5 million for the social assistance organization.

On 1 January, the speaker and party left for Makyi island in Yanbye township and donated K 17 million for educational, social and religious associations.—*MNA*

Companies home and abroad get licences for microfinance industries

NAY PYI TAW, 2 Jan — According to the resolution of the meeting 6/2014 of the private microfinance industries development supportive committee, one-year licences were issued to 11 microfinance industries.

The licences were issued to seven INGOs, 21 NGOs, 77 cooperative societies, 14 foreign company limited, 95 local company limited, one joint venture company limited, totalling 215. One-year licences were delivered to three foreign company limited and eight local company limited, totalling 11.

The organizations wishing to do microfinance business may contact Nay Pyi Taw Council, region and state microfinance industry development committees and the Monetary Affairs Supervisory Department under the Ministry of Finance.

MNA

WAOs present soft drink, purified drinking water, snacks to MWAF, MCWA members

NAY PYI TAW, 2 Jan — Women's Affairs Organizations of Ministry of Construction and Ministry of Sports and Myanmar Women's Affairs Federation presented bottles of soft drinks and purified drinking water, cakes, coffee mix sachets and candy packets to members of MWAF and Maternal and Child Welfare Association who are participating in the State flag hoisting ceremony of 67th Anniversary Independence Day and the Grand Military Review, at the guest house of Nay Pyi Taw Development Committee, on 1 January.

Patrons of MWAF Daw Ni Ni Win and Daw Mya Theingi, vice president Daw Tin Tin Latt and officials were in attendance.—*MNA*

MWAF officials present cakes to members of MWAF and Maternal and Child Welfare Association.—MNA

Paper-reading session highlights boosting production of beans and pulses, edible oil crops

MANDALAY, 2 Jan — The Trade Promotion Department under the Ministry of Commerce opened the Yadanabon Trade Promotion Centre in conjunction with the Workshop on Beans and Pulses and Edible Oil Crops Development at its office in Chanayethazan Township, Mandalay, on 31 December.

Mandalay Region Minister for Planning and Economy U Aung Zan opened the centre and visited the export goods booth of Mandalay Region.

At the workshop, Head of Mandalay Region Agriculture Department U Hla Myint Aung submitted a paper on boosting production and cultivation of crops, Secretary of Brokers, Merchants and Mill Owners Association U Kyaw Thwin on development of export crops, Secretary Oil Merchants and Dealers Association U Aung Swe Hein on development of oil and oil crops cultivation, Vice Chairman of Agro-based foodstuff producers association U Soe Soe Oo on production of value-added products, Head of Commercial and Consumer Affairs Department of Mandalay Region U Swe Tint Kyu on consumer protection and Head of Region Trade Promotion Department U Myo Thu on boosting production of beans and pulses and edible oil crops.

Thiha Ko Ko (Mandalay)

MRTV, Myanmar Radio to broadcast live flag hoisting ceremony, grand military review ceremony

NAY PYI TAW, 2 Jan — The 67th Anniversary Independence Day flag hoisting ceremony and the grand military review ceremony will be held in front of the grand military review deck in Nay Pyi Taw on 4 January.

MRTV and Myanmar Radio will broadcast live the flag hoisting ceremony as of 4.20 am and the grand military review ceremony beginning 5.30 am.—*MNA*

An interview on Myanmar's human rights . . .

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discriminatory policy in practice in the country, and admitted that some ethnic groups have been left behind in terms of regional development, putting the blame on poor transportation infrastructure due to geographical difficulties.

Regarding some media reports pushing Myanmar to accept "Rohingyas" as citizens, he said that the resolution has just called for equal legal rights for them for their citizenship, adding "no one can force Myanmar's government to grant them citizenship.

The Myanmar delegation at the UN General Assembly explained that "the Myanmar Citizenship Law of 1982 will decide their eligibility for citizenship."

The Myanmar delegation raised an objection to the expression of "Rohinjas", studying that there has been no record of such use in national census since the British colonial times. According to the national census, there are more than 100 ethnic groups in Myanmar.

The delegation went on to say that the continued expression of that word by the UN would irritate the Myanmar people and would not help but delay Myanmar's efforts to find a solution.

The chief minister of Rakhine State sent a letter to the UN in connection with the use of such expression by the UN Secretary General in a press conference during his visit to the country on 12 November last year.

U Htin Lynn pointed out that the international community should play a constructive part in helping Rakhine State develop on all fronts.

Min Min Zaw (MNA); Photo: Htein Nan Naw (MNA)

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw speaker delivers speech...

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struggle out of poverty and become a developed nation, saying that about 90 percent of development needs for farmers and fishermen will be able to fulfilled when the law for protection and promotion of farmers' interests comes into effect after enacting rules and regulations for the law.

The union government has formed a central body composed of union ministers and led by a vice president to enable farmers to enjoy their rights in accordance the law and is exerting efforts for development in agriculture as well as other sectors, according to the speaker.

More development funds have been made available for promotion of farmers' lives as well as for transportation, electricity supply and communication while efforts are being exerted to pave way for investment in industrial sector in addition to previously prioritized trade, agriculture and fishery sectors, he continued.

Local people will be enjoy more opportunities when Dawei Special Economic Zone and Deep Sea Port projects have been implemented and they are required to prepare for human resources development so that they can participate in the projects, the speaker said.

The rule of law is essential for regional development and it is necessary for all to follow laws, rules and regulations, the speaker urged, saying that the government, organizations concerned and the people are required to make concerted efforts for the rule of law.

In conclusion, Thura U Shwe Mann said that cooperation among the region government, the region Hluttaw and local people will result in development of the region as well as of the country.

After the rally, the speaker cordially greeted the participant farmers and viewed round an exhibition of agricultural machinery and products displayed at the rally.

MNA

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing receives Serbian ambassador

NAY PYI TAW, 2 Jan—Armed forces of Myanmar and Serbia have shared a long friendly relations for 65 years and being close friendly nations, the friendship will strengthen in the future, Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing told Ambassador of Serbia to Myanmar Mr Miodrag Nikolin at Bayintnaung Guest House in Nay Pyi Taw on Friday.

The senior general also thanked the ambassador for assistance of Serbia during the independence struggle of Myanmar, saying that there are prospects for economic cooperation with Serbia as it possesses high technology.

Then, the senior general wished Serbia higher development in the new year. The Serbian ambassador said that the two countries have been able to maintain friendly relations in military and economic sectors, adding that his country is willing to cooperate in various sectors and supports Myanmar's reform in economic, political and social sectors, and peace and national reconciliation process.

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing cordially shakes hands with Ambassador of Serbia to Myanmar Mr Miodrag-Nikolin. MYAWADY

Also present at the call were senior military officers from the Office of the Commander-in-Chief.

After the meeting, the senior general and the ambassador posed for a documentary photo.

Serbia is one of the six countries separated from Yugoslavia and it succeeded to Yugoslavia. After establishing diplomatic relations between Myanmar and Yugoslavia on 29 December 1950, the two countries have opened embassies in the capitals and cooperated in the manufacturing of locomotive engines and some weapons, shipbuilding and irrigation.

Myawady

Ethnics in Shan State peacefully stage protests

NAY PYI TAW, 2 Jan—A total of 1,070 Shan ethnics led by Sai Kyaw Nyunt peacefully staged a protest in Hsipaw Township, Kyaukme District, about 2,000 local Pa-O ethnics led by U Khun Tin Htut in Taunggyi and about 1,100 Palaung ethnics led by U Ba Thaung in Namhsam, southern Shan State on 24 December.

Holding placards, they made five demands to the government to carry on internal peace-making process till achieving success, to rapidly undertake development of the nation and reform process, to emphasize ethnic affairs, to create opportunities for all national races to participate in constitutional amendment without a six-party talks and to soonest implement the demands.

They went round the urban areas under the permission of local authorities.

On 26 December morning, about 2,000 local people led by U Aung Soe Min and U Aye Myint Kyaw staged a protest in procession in Myoma ward in Hopan, Wa Self-Administered Division, with demands to the government to carry on internal peace-making process till achieving success, to rapidly undertake development of the nation and reform process, to emphasize ethnic affairs, to enact laws for fulfilling the rights and demands of ethnics and to create opportunities for all national races to participate in constitutional amendment on a wider scale.

Local people supported the discussions on nationwide ceasefire process presented by U Aye Myint Kyaw, regional development by U Thet Tin, national race affairs by U Saw Nyunt and constitutional amendment by U Sai Lu.

On 27 December, over 1,700 Kokang ethnics led by U Aung Naing (a) Ar Chan peacefully made a procession of protest in Ward 2 of Laukkai Township in Kokang Self-Administered Zone, holding placards of six demands in Myanmar and Kokang languages.

Under the permission of the authorities, they expressed their sentiments to rapidly carry out internal peace-making process till achieving success, to undertake development tasks of the nation and reform process as quickly as possible, to fulfill the rights and demands of ethnics, to create opportunities for all ethnics to participate in constitutional amendment on a wider scale without a six-party talks and to soonest implement the demands.

MNA

Pa-O ethnics participate in protest in Taunggyi.—MNA

Police arrested 245 traffickers...

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male and 142 female.In the previous year, 220 victims out of 256 in 102 cases were saved by the police. The anti-human trafficking body could arrest 245 traffickers but 117 suspects are still at large.

Police usually take actions against the suspects under Sections 24 and 25 of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Law enacted in 2005, which will be rewritten in cooperation with both local and foreign legal experts this year, Police Lt-Col Khin Maung Hla said.

Under Section 24 of the law, offenders of trafficking in persons, especially women, children and youth, shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend from a minimum of 10 years to a maximum of imprisonment for life, he added.

GNLM

Correction

Please read "**We have already embarked actively on the path of a multilateral partnership policy in the international community. We will be able to deliver the best possible benefits to our people by means of building strong relationship with all countries of the world including global powers.**" instead of "We are also on the path of a much more dynamic and multi-aligned foreign policy. We see no reason to be friends with any single power or bloc. Unlike what we have done in the past, we should actively seek the strongest possible relations with all countries and all powers and in this way give the Myanmar people the best of all worlds." which appeared in the fifth paragraph on page 4 under the heading "We will be able to establish a Federal Union on the basis of agreements we will reach at political dialogue My Fellow Citizens" on page 1 of this daily issued on 1 January 2015.—*MNA*

Basic education schools commission new buildings into service in Lewe Tsp

LEWE, 2 Jan — A ceremony to put new school buildings into service was held at Basic Education Middle School Branch in Lewe Township, Nay Pyi Taw Council Area, on 31 December.

The Education Ministry allotted the fund for construction of school buildings in 2014-15 fiscal year. Nay Pyi Taw Council member U Phone Zaw Han and officials formally opened the school buildings. U Win Aung of San Phwint Phyo Company that constructed the buildings handed over documents to Township Education Officer Daw Than Than Nwe.

The company constructed one 60x30 feet steel structure two-storey building at Myoma BEMS Branch, one 60x30 feet RC building at Htein-in BEPS and one 80x30 feet RC building at Shachaung BEMS Branch.

Ko Ko Yupa (Nay Pyi Taw)

Basic tour guide course kicks off in Nyaungshwe

NYAUNGSHWE, 2 Jan— The Ministry of Hotels and Tourism and Shan State Government jointly conducted basic tour guide course at the office of Inntha literature and regional development association in Nyaungshwe, Shan State, on 29 December.

Deputy Minister for Hotels and Tourism Dr Tin Shwe, Inntha National Race Affairs Minister U Win Myint of the state and Pyithu Hluttaw representative U Win Swe made speeches.

An official of the ministry said Inlay region is one of the tourist destinations. The training course was aimed at creating job opportunities for local youths and developing the human resources.

Altogether 120 trainees from Nyaungshwe, Taunggyi, Kalay and Hopong townships are attending the four-week course.

Nay Myo Thurein

Mandalay Region High Court honours outstanding trainee

MANDALAY, 2 Jan — A ceremony to present a certificate of honour to a model trainee award winner was held at Mandalay Region High Court on 31 December.

Lower Division Clerk Daw Kay Khaing Kyaw of PyinOoLwin Township Court in Mandalay Region won the model trainee award in the basic clerical course No 42 conducted by Central Institute of Civil Service (Upper Myanmar).

Chief Justice of the region U Soe Thein gave a speech. Mandalay Regional Judicial Officer U Kyin Tin presented a certificate of honour to the outstanding trainee and new year gifts to 78 staff.

Tin Maung (Mandalay)

High Tech donates education fund, vehicles, generator to Kayah State

LOIKAW, 2 Jan — High Tech Concrete Technology Co Ltd donated vehicles and a generator to Kayah State government at the latter's office in Loikaw, Kayah State, on 1 January.

Manager of Biluchaung No 3 power station U Myo Htut explained the purpose of donation.

Officials presented K10 million for students with disabilities to officials, three trash vans to Kayah State Development Affairs Committee and one 93KV generator to Kayah State government office. Kayah State Minister for Bamar national race affairs U Sein Oo spoke words of thanks.

Chief Minister of the state U Khin Maung Oo and officials viewed the generator and vehicles.

The well-wishers's donations amounted to K50 million.

Kayah State IPRD

Agreement reached to spend K100 million fund on development tasks

NYAUNGLEBIN, 2 Jan — A coordination meeting on spending K100 million for development tasks allotted by Pyidaungsu Hluttaw was held at the hall of Nyaunglebin Township General Administration Department in Bago Region on 31 December.

Township Administrator U Thein Zaw Kan made a speech. Chairman of Township Development Supportive Committee U Thein Naing explained implementation of development tasks spending the fund in 2014-15 fiscal year.

Departmental officials and ward and village authorities discussed requirements in their respective sectors.

Nay Lin (Nyaunglebin)

Search teams battle rough weather in hunt for AirAsia wreck

PANGKALAN BUN/SURABAYA, (Indonesia), 2 Jan — Ships and aircraft criss-crossed the seas off Borneo on Friday hunting for the wreck of an Indonesia AirAsia passenger jet, but bad weather was again hindering the search for the plane and the black box flight recorders that should reveal why it crashed.

Officials said more than 20 bodies have now been recovered, along with pieces of the broken-up plane, in the Indonesian-led search for Flight QZ8501 that is concentrated on 1,575 square nautical miles of the northern Java Sea. Strong winds and heavy seas have stopped divers from looking for the fuselage of the Airbus (AIR.PA) *A320-200*, which plunged into the water on Sunday while en route from Indonesia's second-biggest city Surabaya to Singapore with 162 people on board.

"The waves could reach five metres this afternoon. Higher than yesterday," said air force Puma helicopter pilot Flight Captain Tatag Onne, who has been flying missions to recover bodies and debris from the sea.

"We look for breaks in the clouds where conditions improve so that we can approach. Yesterday, when we went to collect a body from the sea we couldn't because the body was being rolled by waves. Sometimes we could see it, sometimes we couldn't." The multinational search operation based in Pangkalan Bun, the town in southern Borneo closest to the search area, was bolstered on Friday by experts from France's BEA accident investigation agency, which attends all Airbus crashes.

Officials said the French team's hydrophones — sophisticated underwater acoustic detection devices— and towed sonar equipment brought by other international experts could not be used on Friday because of high waves.

"The sea state has to be calm," General Sunarbowo Sandi of Indonesia's search and rescue agency said. "We cannot operate it in poor weather." But naval vessels from Indonesia, the United States and Singapore with in-built anti-submarine capabilities were using sonar to sweep the sea floor, he added.

The cause of the crash

Indonesian divers prepare their gear on the deck of SAR ship Purworejo during a search operation for passengers onboard AirAsia flight QZ8501, in Java Sea, Indonesia on 2 Jan, 2015. — REUTERS

— the first suffered by the AirAsia group since the budget operator began flying in 2002 — is unexplained. Investigators are working on a theory that the plane stalled as it climbed steeply to avoid a storm about 40 minutes into a flight that should have lasted two hours.

Officials earlier said it may take up to a week to find the black boxes, which investigators hope will unravel the sequence of events in the cockpit during the doomed jet's final minutes.

Even in bad weather, however, the search for the AirAsia plane is less technically challenging than the two-year search for an Air France jet that crashed into deep Atlantic waters in 2009, or the fruitless hunt for Malaysia Airlines Flight MH370 that disappeared last year. Given Flight QZ8501 crashed in shallow seas, experts say finding the boxes should not be difficult if its locator beacons, with a range of 2,000 to 3,000 metres (6,560 to 9,800 ft) and a battery life of about 30 days, are working.

Twenty-two bodies have been recovered from the sea, Supriadi, mission co-ordinator for the Indonesian search and rescue agency, told a news conference. Debris such as luggage, an emergency slide and a life jacket has also been found.

The bodies are being taken in numbered coffins to Surabaya, where relatives of the victims, most of whom were Indonesian, have gathered. Authorities have been collecting DNA from relatives to help identify the bodies. The first funeral one of the crash victims was held on Thursday, and on Friday officials said the remains of three more had been identified, including a flight attendant. The plane was travelling at 32,000 ft (9,753 metres) and the pilots had asked to climb to 38,000 ft to avoid bad weather just before contact was lost. When air traffic controllers granted permission to fly at 34,000 ft a few minutes later, they got no response.

A source close to the investigation said radar data appeared to show the aircraft made an "unbelievably" steep climb before it crashed, possibly pushing it beyond the *A320*'s limits.

"It appears to be beyond the performance envelope of the aircraft," he said.

Online discussion among pilots has centred on unconfirmed secondary radar data from Malaysia that suggested the aircraft was climbing at a speed of 353 knots, about 100 knots too slow, and that it might have stalled. The Indonesian captain, a former air force fighter pilot, had 6,100 flying hours on the *A320* and the plane last underwent maintenance in mid-November, according to Indonesia AirAsia, which is 49 percent owned by Malaysia-based AirAsia (AIRA.KL).

Three airline disasters involving Malaysian-affiliated carriers in less than a year have dented confidence in the country's aviation industry and spooked travellers.

Malaysia Airlines Flight MH370 disappeared in March en route from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing with 239 passengers and crew and has not been found. On 17 July, the same airline's Flight MH17 was shot down over Ukraine, killing all 298 people on board.

On board Flight QZ8501 were 155 Indonesians, three South Koreans, and one person each from Singapore, Malaysia and Britain. The co-pilot was French.—*Reuters*

India PM replaces Soviet-style planning body, aiming to boost growth

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi

NEW DELHI, 2 Jan — India has scrapped its 65-year-old Planning Commission, which Prime Minister Narendra Modi has accused of stifling growth with Soviet-style bureaucracy, replacing it on Thursday with a body he said would do more to involve the regions.

The new National Institution for Transforming India (NITI) will act more like a think tank or forum, say its supporters, in contrast with the Commission which imposed five-year-plans and allocated resources to hit set economic targets.

Despite being widely blamed for the slow growth that long plagued India, the Commission survived the market reforms of the early 1990s, riling Modi with its interventions when he was premier of the fast-growing state of Gujarat.

In a series of messages to his 9.1 million followers on Twitter, Modi said the body would replace the old one-size-fits-all approach with a "pro-people, pro-active & participative development agenda".

Modi, elected by a landslide last year on a promise to revive flagging growth and create jobs, had vowed to do away with the Planning Commission that was set up in 1950 by India's first prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru.

But his plans were criticized by the opposition Congress party, which wants to defend Nehru's legacy and regards Modi's vision of "cooperative federalism" as cover for a veiled power grab.

NITI will include leaders of India's 29 federal states and seven union territories. But its full-time staff — its deputy chairman, chief executive and experts — will answer directly to the 64-year-old prime minister.

Congress leaders mocked the launch as a cosmetic relabelling exercise — the new body's acronym-based name means 'Policy Commission' in Hindi, suggesting a less bold departure than the English version does.

Despite winning the biggest lower-house mandate in three decades last May, Modi lacks a majority in the upper house that represents India's states, forcing him to compromise to pursue his development agenda.

Although he has won a series of regional elections since sweeping to power in New Delhi last May, the gains will not show up until later in the upper house, the Rajya Sabha, a third of whose members are replaced every two years.—*Reuters*

Peninsula issues should be resolved through dialogue

SEOUL, 2 Jan — South Korea has stuck to a position that all issues with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) should be resolved through cooperation and dialogue, Seoul's Unification Ministry spokesman Lim Byeong-cheol said on Friday.

"The government of DPRK should come to the dialogue table without any preconditions if it has a sincere will to improve relations," the spokesman told a Press briefing.

Lim's remarks came following DPRK's top leader Kim Jong Un said in his New Year address on Thursday that "there is no reason not to hold the highest-level talks" with South Korea "if atmosphere and environment are created."

The DPRK leader said no faithful dialogue would be held in an environment where war rehearsals are being conducted, calling for the stop of annual military exercises jointly conducted by South Korea and the United States.

Commenting on the remarks, Lim said South Korea would respond to the DPRK's "unilateral" call for the stop of the joint exercise "based on principle."

Lim said South Korea would hold a dialogue with the DPRK " irrespective of dialogue form" for frank and effective discussion, noting that Seoul is open to all forms of dialogue to discuss issues of mutual concern.— *Xinhua*

Cambodia's Prince Ranariddh to return as president of his old party

PHNOM PENH, 2 Jan — Prince Norodom Ranariddh has decided to return as president of the royalist party he led to victory in Cambodia's first democratic election in 1993 but which has dramatically lost popularity since then, party sources said on Friday. In a letter dated on Thursday, Prince Ranariddh said, "I have a great honour and delight to accept to be a president of FUNCINPEC... to continue to lead our party again." FUNCINPEC Secretary General Nhek Bunchay told *Kyodo News* on Friday he is holding talks with all people concerned to set a date for a party congress to nominate Prince Ranariddh as president of the party, which is now led by Princess Arunrasmey.

He revealed that the deal was actually brokered by Prime Minister Hun Sen, who he said seeks reconciliation among the royalists currently split into two rival parties, neither of which has any seats in the National Assembly.—*Kyodo News*

Pakistan, US to hold strategic dialogue this month

ISLAMABAD, 2 Jan — Pakistan and the United States would hold a strategic dialogue in Islamabad this month, the Foreign Ministry said on Thursday.

Spokeswoman Tasnim Aslam said US Secretary of State John Kerry would visit Pakistan for the ministerial dialogue.

She said arrangements for the strategic dialogue, including visit dates, were being finalized.

The last session of the dialogue was held in Washington in January 2014.

The Strategic Dialogue focuses mainly on energy, security, strategic stability, nonproliferation, counterterrorism, economy, law enforcement and defence-related issues.

Talks have taken place in both countries since the dialogue was initiated in 2010. But after 2011, a succession of events and irritants interrupted the process.

Pakistani officials said the resumption of the dialogue last year after a hiatus of three years was seen as an improvement in bilateral relationship after Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif assumed office in June last year.

The next round of the dialogue will also be important following the drawdown of ISAF forces in neighbouring Afghanistan, which also creates new challenges and opportunities for cooperation.

Sources said both sides would also explore ways and means for transforming the post-2014 US-Pakistan transactional relationship into a strategic partnership.

Islamabad insists that Washington will not look at the country from two specific lenses, namely regarding Afghanistan and terrorism, and will give due importance to Pakistan's own security concerns.

When answering a question about the withdrawal of international forces from Afghanistan, the spokeswoman said Pakistan has consistently supported a responsible drawdown from its neighbouring country.

"The transition in Afghanistan will be completed in an orderly and successful manner. Peace and stability in Afghanistan is vital for Pakistan and the region. Therefore Pakistan will continue to play a constructive role in this regard," Aslam said.—*Xinhua*

After deadly blaze, burnt-out ferry towed to Italy

BRINDISI, (Italy), 2 Jan — Tug boats hauled the burnt-out hulk of the ferry that caught fire on Sunday off the coast of Greece to a southern Italian port on Friday, opening the way for an investigation into the cause of the blaze that killed at least 11 people.

Listing visibly to starboard, the *Norman Atlantic* multi-deck car-and-truck ferry was held outside the port of Brindisi as officials decided where it should be moored.

The fire broke out on one of the lower garage levels and left the vessel drifting without power in stormy seas. It took Greek and Italian rescue teams 36 hours to evacuate 477 passengers and crew from the ship amid strong winds.

Most were winched into helicopters from the upper deck of the ship as the blaze raged below, but dozens may still be missing, including migrants not listed on the ship's manifest, Italian officials have said.

"Given that the ship was indisputably carrying illegal migrants who were probably hidden in the hold, we fear that we'll find more dead people once we recover the wreck," Giuseppe Volpe, the Italian prosecutor leading the investigation into the cause of the fire, said earlier this week.

The car ferry Norman Atlantic is seen drawn by tug boats on its way to Brindisi harbour, after a fire in waters off Greece on 2 Jan, 2015.—REUTERS

Reports of the number of missing have varied widely. The Greek coast-guard said on Thursday that 18 are still unaccounted for, while Volpe has said the number may be as high as 98.

In his end-year address, Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi praised the rescue effort for having prevented far more deaths and complimented the ship's captain, Argilio Giacomazzi, for staying aboard the ship until it was evacuated.

But rescued passengers have criticized the ship's crew for mishandling the emergency and not sounding the fire alarm.

"We tried to do everything possible," Giacomazzi told television reporters outside his home on Thursday. "I wanted to bring them all home," he said of the dead and missing.

Italian and Albanian magistrates agreed to impound the ship so the cause of the fire could be investigated.

The Italian-flagged ferry was chartered by Greek ferry operator Anek Lines and was sailing from Patras in western Greece to Ancona in Italy.

Reuters

Brazil's Rousseff vows budget cuts, anti-corruption push in second term

Brazil's President Dilma Rousseff waves to the crowd as she rides towards Congress to be sworn in for a second four-year term in Brasilia on 1 Jan, 2015.
REUTERS

BRASILIA, 2 Jan — Brazil's President Dilma Rousseff began her second term on Thursday vowing to rein in government spending to curb inflation and pull Latin America's largest economy out of a four-year slump.

As she took the oath of office in Brasilia, Rousseff also promised to embark on an anti-corruption crusade in response to a multibillion-dollar graft scandal engulfing state-run oil company Petrobras that threatens to haunt her second term.

With investors fleeing Brazilian assets in disapproval of her management of the economy during her first term, and with a downgrade of the country's debt hinted by at least one ratings agency, Rousseff, a 67-year-old leftist, pledged to pursue more market-friendly policies.

"More than anybody, I know Brazil needs to resume growth. The first steps of this journey are an overhaul of public accounts, increasing domestic savings, beefing up investments and improving productivity," Rousseff said in her inaugural address to Congress.

Rousseff didn't provide specifics on the budget cuts, though she did promise to undertake the belt-tightening in a way that minimizes the pain for average Brazilians who rely on the government for social welfare benefits.

A career bureaucrat who had never run for public office before becoming the first woman to ascend to Brazil's presidency in 2011, Rousseff spent the last four years juggling an economic downturn and high inflation. She was narrowly re-elected in October after a divisive campaign that touted her record at reducing poverty and keeping unemployment near all-time lows.

To spearhead the change in economic policy, Rousseff previously named banker Joaquim Levy as finance minister. An orthodox economist who holds a doctorate from the University of Chicago, Levy is expected to enact budget cuts and other austerity measures to rebalance public accounts.

Those cuts, however, are likely to complicate what is expected to be another tough year for Brazil's economy, given sluggish growth worldwide and a domestic marketplace increasingly accustomed to government largesse.

"It's going to be a very rough year for her," said former Congressman Alfredo Sirkis, a longtime critic to the left of Rousseff, citing an "explosive combination" of problems.

Things will become even more complicated for Rousseff in February when the Supreme Court is expected to reveal the names of dozens of politicians who allegedly received funds from more than $3 billion in kickbacks skimmed from the coffers of Petroleo Brasileiro SA, as Petrobras is formally known.

So far 39 people have been arrested in the scandal, including two former Petrobras directors and scores of executives from Brazil's top construction companies. The construction executives are charged with channeling money from overpriced contracts to bribe officials and politicians.

Rousseff, who was chairwoman of Petrobras when much of the graft took place, has denied knowledge of the corruption.—*Reuters*

Five new countries join UN Security Council as non-permanent members

UNITED NATIONS, 2 Jan — Five new countries joined the UN Security Council as non-permanent members on Thursday, while Chile assumed the rotating presidency of the Council for January.

With the start of a new year, five new countries — Angola, Malaysia, New Zealand, Venezuela and Spain — have begun their two- year term, replacing retiring members Argentina, Australia, Luxembourg, the Republic of Korea and Rwanda.

Octavio Errazuriz, the permanent representative of Chile to the United Nations, took over the rotating council presidency from Cherif Mahamat Zene, the Chadian UN ambassador who held the council presidency for the month of December 2014.

According to the UN Charter, the 10 non-permanent members of the Security Council are elected by the General Assembly, with five elected in October each year, to join the five permanent and veto-wielding members of Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States.

Under the UN Charter, the Security Council has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of peace and security in the world at large.

The council presidency rotates among the members in the English alphabetical order of their names. Each president holds office for one calendar month. —*Xinhua*

Ukraine says rebels keep up attacks into New Year

KIEV, 2 Jan — Ukrainian separatists carried out sporadic attacks on government forces as the New Year began, wounding three soldiers, the Kiev military said, as President Petro Poroshenko told the nation to brace for a year that would "not be easy".

The military said rebels had carried out several mortar and small arms attacks on Ukrainian positions in the east. Local authorities in Luhansk region, bordering Russia, said rebel mortar fire had destroyed two homes in a village on Thursday, killing one civilian.

There was no confirmation of these reports from the rebels.

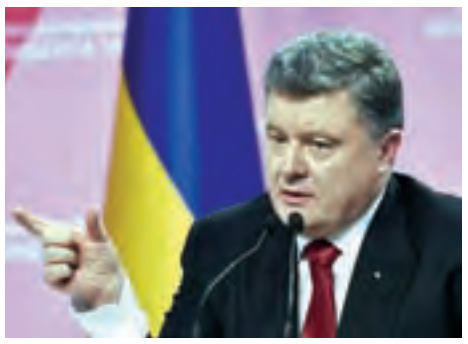
"New Year's night in the zone of the anti-terrorist operation was not a quiet one," a statement by the military said. "Over the past 24 hours three Ukrainian soldiers were wounded as a result of shelling," military spokesman Andriy Lysenko told journalists.

More than 4,700 people were killed in 2014 in eastern Ukraine in a conflict pitting separatists against government forces loyal to Kiev's pro-Western government.

The fighting has provoked the worst crisis in relations between Russia and the West since the Cold War.

Ukrainian authorities and separatists have exchanged hundreds of prisoners of war as part of a 12-point plan to end the conflict. In a fresh diplomatic attempt to restore peace, Poroshenko is preparing to meet Russian President Vladimir Putin and the leaders of France and Germany on 15 January in Kazakhstan.

The overnight New Year attacks underlined the fragility of a ceasefire that has theoretically been in place since early in September, though frequently



Ukraine's President Petro Poroshenko gestures during a news conference in Kiev, in this 29 Dec, 2014 handout photo provided by the Ukrainian Presidential Press Service. — REUTERS

violated.

Poroshenko, who has acknowledged that Kiev lacks the military means to take back lost territory by force, told Ukrainians on Thursday that they had endured the worst year since the end of World War Two in 1945.

"An angry enemy encroached on our lives, our territory, our freedom and our independence," he said in a New Year's message on the presidential website.

Warning that 2015 would "not be easy", he said he expected it to go down in history as the year when Ukrainians would enact deep-seated reforms opening up the road to membership of the European Union.

The commitment of Kiev's new leadership to European integration following the overthrow of a Moscow-backed president last February has set it at variance with Russia, Ukraine's former Soviet overlord, which wants to keep it within its political and economic orbit.

Reuters

Tourism authority demands tougher precaution measures after fatal Shanghai stampede

BEIJING, 2 Jan — China's top tourism authority made an urgent call on Thursday to beef up precautionary measures against surging tourist numbers during holidays after a fatal Shanghai stampede killing 36 during New Year celebrations late Wednesday.

The National Tourism Administration (NTA) asked local tourism authorities to strengthen security measures, improve emergency response plans, and take strict measures to control tourist flows at scenic spots.

It also required local scenic spots and travel agencies to issue tourist flow information timely to tourists.

Under China's Tourism Law, scenic spots are obliged to inform tourists and report to the local government when tourist numbers could potentially exceed their maximum reception capabilities, so that measures could be taken to timely divert tourists in order to insure security.

The Chinese have a three-day holiday for the New Year's Day.

Xinhua

Kurz says Serbia's experience can be valuable contribution

VIENNA, 2 Jan — During its chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) in 2015, Serbia's experience and position can be very important in resolving the Ukrainian crisis, Austrian Foreign Minister Sebastian Kurz has said.

He told *Tanjug* that Serbia under Prime Minister Aleksandar Vucic had been contributing to resolving old conflicts in the Balkans for a while.

Serbia has been contributing to resolving old conflicts in the Western Balkans for a few years now. Serbia's being selected to hold the OSCE chairmanship should be viewed from the perspective of the constructive role the country has played under Prime Minister Aleksandar Vucic and Foreign Minister Ivica Dacic. I am confident that Serbia will demonstrate this constructive role while holding the OSCE chairmanship as well, said Kurz.

The outgoing year was especially challenging for the OSCE primarily due to the grave crisis in Ukraine, and the organization proved its role as central forum for crisis management here. The crisis will certainly dominate over other issues during Serbia's chairmanship as well, believes Kurz.

The Austrian foreign minister believes that Serbia's historical experience and its regional position could prove very valuable in resolving conflicts.

Austria views Serbia's focusing on issues such as the development of the Western Balkans in a particularly positive light, as Austria's foreign policy objectives include that, he said, adding that Austria and Serbia had already been actively cooperating in the OSCE framework and Serbia could continue to count on the support of the government in Vienna.— *Tanjug*

New Year rings in with tightened NYC security, California arrests

NEW YORK, 2 Jan — Roughly 1 million revellers rang in the new year at New York's Times Square under unusually tight security for the nation's biggest New Year's Eve celebration, while at least 29 protesters were arrested in California after violence broke out at a march against police brutality.

While security is always tight in Times Square on New Year's Eve, particularly since the attacks on the World Trade Centre in 2001, extra precautions were put in place on Wednesday to prevent violence at the famed midtown Manhattan crossroads.

Across the country, a march by 130 demonstrators through downtown Oakland, California, erupted in violence at about 10:30 pm, with bottles and bricks thrown at police officers, trash cans thrown in the street and illegal fireworks ignited, Oakland police said. At least 29 people were arrested on charges including vandalism and assault with a deadly weapon. In New York City, hours before the giant crystal ball was to drop at midnight, bomb-sniffing dogs and counter-terrorism units joined uniformed officers posted on the streets, rooftops and in subway stations around Times Square. But all was peaceful just after midnight as up to 1 million fun-seekers roared in celebration in frigid weather against a backdrop of fireworks.

Sporadic violence and problems marred New Year's celebrations around the United States, from Tampa, Florida, where a stray bullet fired in "celebratory" gunfire wounded a woman at Busch Gardens to the Denver suburb of Aurora, where a fight at a house party left four people with stab wounds, including one who was critically injured.

The year 2014 was marked by months of protests over the deaths of unarmed black males at the hands of white police officers.

Tensions in New York flared up nearly two weeks ago when two officers sitting in a patrol car in Brooklyn were slain in an apparent act of retribution against law enforcement.

The ambush of the two officers, Wenjian Liu and Rafael Ramos, was carried out by a gunman who vowed to avenge the deaths of Eric Garner in New York and Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri.

New York Police Commissioner William Bratton said that over the past week, more than 80 threats against police had been made on social media sites, leading to at least 15 arrests. "Any threat against my officers will be dealt with very quickly, very effectively," he said at a news conference on Wednesday in Times Square. "We're not going to let any of them go by the board." About 100 people protesting excessive police force assembled just south of Times Square several hours before midnight and weaved up city sidewalks towards the packed New Year's festivities.

Revellers play in confetti along a street after midnight during New Year's Eve celebrations in Times Square, New York on 1 Jan, 2015. — REUTERS

Stop Mass Incarceration, the organizers of the event called "Rock in the New Year with Resistance to Police Murder," were denied a city permit to march in the street and instead used the sidewalks. One person was arrested, police said.

A smaller protest with no arrests took place in Boston on Wednesday, with dozens of people peacefully staging a "die-in" demonstration at First Night festivities, a yearly New Year's Eve event that draws hundreds of small children.—*Reuters*

PERSPECTIVES

Saturday, 3 January, 2015

Protection and promotion of interests of farmers is in our national interest

By *Myint Win Thein*

Peasant farmers make up about 70 per cent of the population of Myanmar, and working in the interests of them means serving the national interests. That is why protection and promotion of the interests of farmers was a political catchphrase in successive eras, but the conditions of peasant farmers deteriorated era by era and many of them have become landless farmers now.

This shows us that our country was not actually able to protect peasant farmers' interests and the catchphrase was used just for political purposes. It can also be said that the failures to serve the national interests or the interests of farmers led to the collapse of each era in the recent history of Myanmar.

It is encouraging to learn that protection and promotion of farmers' interests has been a catchphrase in recent months again. Learning lessons from the past, we need to avoid the same mistakes of the past this time. Therefore, it is necessary for our country to make sure that the interests of peasant farmers are really protected and promoted. It is important that every citizen works for the national interest by protecting and promoting the interests of peasant farmers. It is high time we did something for peasant farmers instead of paying lip service.

Write for us

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

Ignorance of Law is no Excuse

U Mya Thein B.A;B.L

There is a legal maxim "Ignorance of Law is no Excuse".

All over the world, each and every country has its own legal system. Everyone whether a citizen or a foreigner who is in the particular country should respect and observe the law of that country; Law of the land. After commitment of a crime no one can say I don't understand the law of the land or I am ignorant of law. Under universal principles of law, it is not acceptable or a reasonable ground to condone the crime committed.

Before getting into one's country, a foreigner needs to know the custom, belief and law of that country like weather, attire, food or so on. One has to understand what are Dos and Don'ts in that country.

Myanmar is a country of multi-racial and multi-religion but majority profess Buddhist faith. We pay respect to three jewels Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha.

Pagoda, Stupa and Monastery are sacred places. A foreigner should understand the Buddhist belief and culture such as before getting into the sacred place, foot wearing is prohibited including socks. Attire must be acceptable by Buddhists. Wearing shorts are prohibited. Manners should be adaptable with the public.

Section 295 of the Myanmar Penal Code says "Whoever destroys, damages or defiles any place of worship, or any object held sacred by any class of persons, with the intention of thereby insulting the religion of any class of persons or with the knowledge that any class of persons is likely to consider such destruction, damage or defilement as an insult to their religion, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to two years, or with fine, or with both".

Section 295 (A) of the Myanmar Penal Code says "Whoever, with deliberate and malicious intention of outraging the religious feelings of any class of persons resident in the Union by words either spoken or written, or by visible representations, insults or attempt to insult the religion or the religious beliefs of that class, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to two years, or with fine, or with both".

In Myanmar culture it is not polite to show something by pointing out with foot or toe. You cannot hug a Myanmar lady as a sign of friendly nature. You cannot touch the head especially of elders. We pay respect to elders by age or by status. You cannot pat the shoulder as a friendly nature to elders. It amounts to disrespect.

We respect our National Flag, National Seal and National Anthem.

You cannot wear shorts printed Myanmar National Flag. We treat lower part of body as inferior. You cannot wear slippers on it printed National Flag and so on. You cannot print or use National Seal or National Flag without proper authority. You cannot lower down the dignity of National Anthem in any way. You have to observe the National Seal Law, National Flag Law and the National Anthem Law.

You cannot smoke in a public place such as in children play grounds, stadiums, hospitals, classrooms, departmental stores, elevators, restaurants, public auditoriums etc. It is punishable under the Control of Smoking and Consumption of Tobacco Product Law.

You cannot take out of the country of any kind of antique such as Buddha statute or carving or old coins without the prior permission in writing of the authority concerned. Without the proper permission of the authority it is punishable under section 5 of the Antique Objects Law.

Any obscene act in a public place is punishable under section 294 of Myanmar Penal Code. Taking picture of nude is punishable under section 293 of Myanmar Penal Code. Myanmar does not practise nudity even on the beaches. Sex with minor girl is an offence of rape and punishable under section 376 of Myanmar Penal Code. After giving promise to marry a woman of age and sex with her but fail to marry in a legal way is punishable under section 417 of Myanmar Penal Code.

Possession, using, sale or trafficking of narcotic drugs of any kind is a serious crime in Myanmar. The punishment is up to capital punishment under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.

Another serious crime in Myanmar is gambling such as participating near the place of cock fighting in a public place. Playing cards in a place that police can legally arrest is also punishable under the Gambling Law. No need to prove that you are actually playing with cards. Under section 18 of the Gambling Law, if you are caught by the police in the vicinity of the gaming house the court may presume that your presence is to gamble. There is a special rule of evidence that the burden of proof of innocence of the accused is on him. The onus or burden of proof is on him. Once caught it is hard to be released.

In every country all over the world a lot of Acts, Rules and Regulations have to be observed by everyone in the country whether you are local or a foreigner. Even local citizens don't understand the intricacy of law, how can a foreigner understand all laws of the country but there is a special rule of presumption "Everyone understands the law of the country". Ignorance of law is no excuse.

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Krislite donates cash, kind to social organizations

YANGON, 2 Jan— Krislite working in electronic business activities in Myanmar donated cash and kind to social associations as part to its 20th founding anniversary commemoration.

During a ceremony to mark its 20th anniversary founding commemoration and to open gallery in Yangon, the lighting company contributed K 10 million to the funds of Sitagu organization and K5 million to the Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association recently, said an information officer of Krislite.

Besides, it also donated street lights worth US$20,000 to Yangon City Development Committee, she added.

Krislite, a total lighting solution provider for the two stadiums in Nay Pyi Taw during the 27th South East Asian Games hosted by Myanmar and for event lighting of the 25th ASEAN Summit, has also worked in lighting business activities as a design and supply package for government projects such as parliamentary buildings and state guest house in Nay Pyi Taw and private projects since its founding in 1994.

Krislite will open its 3rd branch office in Mandalay in the near future, she added.

GNLM

Natthadaw Dam benefits summer paddy fields

Ngazun, 2 Jan — Myingyan District's deputy commissioner U Myint Thin Aung, Mandalay Region Hluttaw representative U Kyaw Tint, Assistant Director U Maung Lwin of District Irrigation Department and officials visited Natthataw Dam in Ngazun Township, Mandalay Region, on 31 December.

Assistant Director U Maung Lwin of District Irrigation Department explained storage of water at the dam, supply of water to monsoon paddy and plan to irrigate summer paddy fields.

The deputy commissioner gave instructions on efficient use of irrigated water and supply of water to summer paddy fields.

The dam will irrigate 100 acres of summer paddy fields this year.—*Zaw Min Naing (Myangyan)*

Businessmen in Mandalay get knowledge about stock exchange market

Mandalay, 2 Jan— Maykha Hall Foundation (Mandalay) of Yangon Institute of Economics conducted an educative talk on stock share market and investment opportunities at Hotel Mandalay in Mahaaungmye Township, Mandalay, on 1 January.

Deputy Director U Thet Tun Oo of Myanamr Securities Exchange Centre (MSEC) gave talks on investment in stock market, profits from the market, preparations for establishment of Stock Market in Myanmar in 2015 and purchase of stock numbers and replied to queries raised by entrepreneurs.

It was also attended by executives of Mandalay Region Chambers of Commerce and Industry, entrepreneurs, company managers and guests.

Thiha Ko Ko (Mandalay)

Village libraries get Sky Net receivers, LED TVs

Yinmabin, 2 Jan — Under the arrangements of alleviation of poverty in rural areas, the meat and fish production and rural development committee of Sagaing Region government provided Sky Net receivers and LED TV at the hall of Basic Education High School in Yinmabin, Sagaing Region, on 30 December.

Head of Township Information and Public Relations Department Daw Soe Soe Win explained the purpose of donations.

Officials presented one Sky Net set each to village libraries of Indaw and Sonchaung villages and one LED TV set each to Aungchantha and Pyaungpya villages.

Tun Ko Ko (Yinmabin)

Gold merchants hope for assistance of government to penetrate international market

Mandalay, 2 Jan — Mandalarian gold merchants facing difficulties to export quality gold of Myanmar to the international market hope for assistance of the government, gold merchants in Mandalay told media.

Executive U Aung Hsan Win of Aung Thamadi Gold and Jewellery Trading said that although Myanmar's gold meets the international standard, only when the government provides assistance of necessary technology, will the merchants export gold to the international market.

"Gold production and its quality meet international standard. Although local gold merchants have high demand in the domestic market, they have many hurdles to penetrate the international market. For example, we need to produce gold through kilo system. So, we need the machinery to apply kilo system and technology. If we have the opportunity to export gold with the assistance of the government's assistance, the government will levy more tax," he continued.

Min Htet Aung (Mandalay Sub-printing House)

Cooperative society members enjoy new harvest feast

Nay Pyi Taw, 2 Jan—Emerald Green agricultural produce cooperative society in Zabuthiri Township, Nay Pyi Taw Council Area, disbursed loans to farmers, breeders, shop owners and odd-job workers at soft interest rate.

Moreover, the society provides paddy transplanting machines and combined harvesters to local farmers. It sells fertilizers and inputs to the farmers at fair prices. So far, the society has been formed with 1,691 members.

The society organized the fourth New Harvest Feast on 31 December evening at Maha Thiri Mingala monastery in Aungchantha Village, Zabuthiri Township, attended by Member of Nay Pyi Taw Council U Myo Nyunt, Amyotha Hluttaw representative U Khin Maung Htay and officials.

The council member purposed a toast at the feast. Chairman of the society U Nwe Oo handed over 351 Buddha images donated by the head of State and family to members of eight branches.—*District IPRD*

Meiktila District police force meets media

Meiktila, 2 Jan — Meiktila District police force held a press conference at the police avenue in Nandawgon ward, Meiktila, on 31 January.

Commander of the district police force Police Lt-Col Sao Nay Lin explained that policing tasks are being implemented in line with the present time. District police force has achieved success in cooperation with local people.

In Meiktila, each police discharges duty for over 1,700 people. So, police force needs public participation in policing tasks.

He continued that the district could arrest 52 fugitives of 192 from October to December 2014. Efforts are being made to arrest remaining 135 fugitives.

He explained cooperation with European Union in community policing tasks, narcotic drugs elimination and exposing of criminal cases. The commander replied to queries raised by media persons.

GNLM-018

US, partners hit Islamic State in Syria, Iraq

*A man carries a girl past damage at a site hit by what activists said was an air strike by forces loyal to Syria's President Bashar al-Assad in the northwestern Homs district of Al Waer on 30 Dec, 2014.—*Reuters

Washington, 2 Jan — The United States and its allies staged 29 air strikes on Islamic State targets in Syria and Iraq on Wednesday, the Combined Joint Task Force said on Thursday.

The action in Syria included 17 strikes near the cities of Al Raqqah, Dayr az Zawr and Kobani. A variety of Islamic State buildings, fighting positions and units were hit.

In Iraq, 12 strikes targeted Islamic State buildings, fighting positions and units near the cities of Mosul, Fallujah and Sinjar.

Fighters, bombs and remotely controlled aircraft were used against Islamic State, which has taken parts of Syria and Iraq in a bloody campaign to establish an Islamic caliphate.

Reuters

2014 deadliest year in Iraq for civilians since 2006-7 bloodshed — UN

Baghdad, 2 Jan — Violence in Iraq in 2014 killed at least 12,282 civilians, making it the deadliest year since the sectarian bloodshed of 2006-07, the United Nations said in a statement.

The majority of the deaths — nearly 8,500 — occurred during the second half of the year following the expansion of the Sunni Muslim Islamic State insurgency in June out of Anbar Province leading to widespread clashes with security forces.

"Yet again, the Iraqi ordinary citizen continues to suffer from violence and terrorism ... This is a very sad state of affairs," said Nickolay Mladenov, head of the UN political mission in Iraq, in a statement released on Thursday.

Islamic State fighters still control roughly a third of Iraq. The army and Shi'ite and Kurdish militia continue to battle the insurgents.

Displaced Iraqi people from the minority Yazidi sect, fleeing violence in the Iraqi town of Sinjar west of Mosul, walk at the Qadia camp on the outskirts of Dohuk Province on 7 Dec, 2014.
Reuters

The figures show that violence has not abated since 2013 when 7,818 civilians were killed, the UN said. The bloodshed remains below the levels seen in 2006 and 2007 when sectarian Shi'ite-Sunni killings reached their peak.

In December, the body said that a total of 1,101 Iraqis were killed in acts of violence, including 651 civilians, 29 policemen and a further 421 members of the security forces.

Thousands of combatants have been killed in clashes involving Iraqi army forces, militia, Islamist militants, tribal forces and Kurdish Peshmerga. Fighting in urban areas has taken a particular toll on civilian populations.

The bloodshed was worst in Baghdad in December, where 320 civilians were killed, followed by Anbar province to the west with 164 dead.—*Reuters*

Syria's Assad shown hugging troops in embattled Damascus district

Beirut, 2 Jan — Syrian President Bashar al-Assad visited a district on the outskirts of Damascus and thanked soldiers fighting "in the face of terrorism", his office said on Twitter late on Wednesday, posting pictures of the rare trip.

Syrian television on Thursday aired footage of the New Year visit, accompanying it with patriotic music. It showed Assad talking to troops, embracing them and sharing a meal outside, in what was presented as a morale boost for soldiers on the frontline of the country's civil war.

The conflict killed 76,021 people in 2014, just under half of them civilians, the British-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said on Thursday.

Syrian President Bashar al-Assad (L) talks to soldiers during a visit to Jobar, northeast of Damascus, in this handout photograph distributed by Syria's national news agency SANA on 1 Jan, 2015. — **Reuters**

The United Nations says around 200,000 people have been killed since 2011. No group enjoys significant momentum going into 2015, and Assad said last month he expected the conflict to be long and difficult.

Assad, who is commander in chief, is not frequently pictured in public, though he has visited troops in the past, according to state media. The presidential website said the latest visit was to Jobar, northeast of Damascus.

"If there was an area of joy which remained in Syria, it is thanks to the victories that you achieved in the face of terrorism," Assad told troops, according to the Twitter account.

State news agency *SANA* said he "wished a speedy recovery to the wounded" and praised their sacrifices.

Lebanese channel al-Mayadeen also showed footage of the trip. Several bangs could be heard in the distance but it was not clear what caused them.

Reuters

Libya sees more progress in extinguishing fire at eastern oil terminal

Tripoli, 2 Jan — Libya has made more progress in extinguishing a fire at oil storage tanks at the country's biggest oil port, Es Sider, that has been raging for one week, a member of a firefighting crew said on Thursday.

Es Sider and its adjacent Ras Lanuf terminal have been closed since a group allied to a rival government in Tripoli moved three weeks ago to try and take them, part of a struggle between former rebels who helped topple Muammar Gaddafi in 2011 but are now fighting for power and a share of oil reserves.

A week ago, a rocket hit Es Sider's storages, destroying up to 1.8 million barrels of crude and at least two tanks, a top official has said.

"We've managed to extinguish all but one tank storage," said a firefighting official. "Tomorrow we hope to finish the job."

The battle for control of the oil ports is part of a wider struggle in the North African country which has had two governments since a group called Libya Dawn seized the capital in August by expelling a rival faction, installing its own prime minister and forcing the recognized premier, Abdullah al-Thinni, to operate out of the east with the elected House of Representatives.

The fighting has reduced Libya's crude output to around 380,000 barrels a day, state-run National Oil Corp (NOC) has said.

Es Sider is fed from fields run by Waha Oil Co, a joint-venture of NOC with US firms Hess, Marathon and ConocoPhillips.

Thinni's government had said this week it had contracted a US firefighting firm for six million dollars. It was not clear whether it has arrived yet.— *Reuters*

Firefighters work to put out the fire of a storage oil tank at the port of Es Sider in Ras Lanuf on 29 Dec, 2014. — **Reuters**

China's Huawei 2014 smartphone sales rise by a third

BEIJING, 2 Jan — Huawei Technology Co Ltd's [HWT.UL] smartphone sales rose by almost a third to $11.8 billion in 2014, according to an internal memo seen by *Reuters*, showing the Chinese telecoms firm's continued ascent in the global handset wars.

The division shipped about 75 million smartphones in 2014, according to the year-end memo to employees sent by Richard Yu, the head of Huawei's consumer business. Although that represented a more than 40 percent year-on-year increase, the figure lagged behind Huawei's previously stated sales target of 80 million units.

Huawei spokeswoman Maggie Qi said the company does not comment on internal memos.

The results, which are due to be publicly announced in the coming weeks, reaffirm Huawei's place among a small coterie of rising smartphone makers, including Xiaomi Inc [XTC.UL] and LG Electronics, whose growth rates are eclipsing those of industry leaders.

Pressured by low-cost vendors, top ranked Samsung Electronics Co is likely to see its shipments nearly unchanged this year, while second-ranked Apple Inc may have posted around 20 percent growth after launching the iPhone 6, analysts estimate.

Those growth rates, however, pale in comparison to the expansion of Xiaomi, which sold 26 million handsets during the first half of 2014.

If it reaches its sales target of 60 million for the year, Xiaomi will have more than tripled its 2013 sales of 18.7 million. Private investors believe it will continue to soar: the Beijing-based company announced this week a new round of equity financing at $45 billion valuation, making Xiaomi the most highly valued private technology company in the world.

Meanwhile, close rival LG Electronics Inc may have seen its smartphone shipments rise around 26 percent this year, according to analysts.

Trendforce analyst Alan Chen said in a research note this month that Huawei, Xiaomi and Lenovo Group Ltd, which recently purchased Motorola from Google in a $2.91 billion deal, will battle to be the top Chinese smartphone vendor in 2015.

"How Lenovo's Motorola acquisition plays out and whether Xiaomi can replicate its home market success overseas will be key factors in determining who becomes the top Chinese brand in 2015," Chen said.—*Reuters*

Hostesses hold the the Huawei's new smartphone, the Ascend P7, launched by China's Huawei Technologies during a presentation in Paris, on 7 May, 2014.
REUTERS

Indonesian frog is one of a kind — and not because of its fangs

The newly described frog L. Larvaepartus, male (L) and female, are pictured from the island of Sulawesi in Indonesia, in this undated handout photo provided by Jim McGuire.—REUTERS

WASHINGTON, 2 Jan — Its fangs are not what makes the newly identified Indonesian frog species Limnonectes larvaepartus unique on Earth. The way it makes babies does.

This little amphibian from the rain forests of Indonesia's island of Sulawesi is the only one of the world's 6,455 frog species to give direct birth to tadpoles, eschewing the common froggy practice of laying eggs, scientists said on Wednesday.

"Reproduction in most frogs could not be more different from human reproduction. In this case, what is most interesting, ironically, is that the reproductive mode is more similar to our own," said herpetologist Jimmy McGuire of the University of California, Berkeley, whose research appears in the scientific journal *PLOS ONE*.

This frog, usually gray or brown, measures about 1-1/2 inches long (40 mm), weighs less than two-tenths of an ounce (5 grams) and belongs to the Asian group of fanged frogs. Males possess two fang-like projections from the lower jaw that are used in fighting.

The frog lives along small streams and puddles in rainforest habitats, doing its best to avoid being eaten by larger fanged frog species as well as snakes and frog-munching birds.

Its mode of reproduction sets this frog apart.

"The vast, vast majority of frogs have external fertilization. For mating, the male grips the female around the waist and releases sperm as she releases her eggs," McGuire said.

Those eggs mature through stages including the aquatic tadpole larval phase, typically limbless with a tail that propels it through the water.

About a dozen frog species rely on internal fertilization, McGuire said. All but the newly identified one either deposit fertilized eggs or give birth to froglets, essentially miniature versions of an adult that already passed through a modified tadpole stage while still in an egg capsule inside the female.

The female Limnonectes larvaepartus (meaning "marsh swimmer that gives birth to larvae") instead gives birth to tadpoles.

"It's totally unclear why this mode of reproduction has not evolved more frequently," McGuire said.

"My favourite topic when it comes to frog evolution and diversification is the bewildering variation in reproductive modes that occur. Frogs exhibit all sorts of interesting twists."

There have been frogs that swallowed their eggs and brooded them in the stomach, a species in which the male broods the eggs in his vocal sac, and many species that carry eggs and tadpoles in pouches on their backs and sides, he said. —*Reuters*

Quindell seeks to dispose of operating division

LONDON, 2 Jan — British technology and outsourcing company Quindell Plc said it had entered into exclusivity arrangements with a third party for possible disposal of an operating division to improve its working capital profile.

Quindell said it was also in early discussions with a range of parties interested in exploring possible transactions with the group with respect to its operating businesses in addition to its cash generation initiatives.

The company in November denied actively seeking to sell a 25 percent stake in Nationwide Accident Repair Services in its response to comment from blogger Tom Winnifrith that the company was "desperate" to sell, and was seeking "any offers at all".

The provider of technology used by car insurers to assess claims, among other services, has had a tumultuous few months, facing allegations about its business model and questions about the motivations behind some acquisitions.—*Reuters*

Samsung Electronics says new smart TVs in 2015 to run Tizen platform

SEOUL, 2 Jan — Samsung Electronics Co Ltd said on Thursday that all its new smart television products launched in 2015 will be powered by the Tizen operating system, marking a fresh effort by the company to increase the usage of the software platform.

Smart TVs offer additional software and connectivity functions, such as video streaming and web browsing capabilities. Samsung demonstrated TV sets powered by Tizen at developer conferences last year.

"We are focusing our efforts on Tizen right now," Kim Hyun-suk, Samsung's president of visual display business, told *Reuters* in an interview. "We hope that other TV makers will also use it and help build an ecosystem that will help the platform grow."

Televisions would be an addition to the modest stable of Tizen products, which consists of a few smartwatches and cameras despite years of development and support by the world's top maker of smartphones and TVs. The platform represents the most visible effort on the software front by Samsung, which has sought to free itself from Google Inc's Android platform.

Visitors walk past the Samsung stand at the Mobile World Congress in Barcelona on 24 Feb, 2014.
REUTERS

But Tizen has so far failed to take off, due in part to Samsung's failure to launch a smartphone powered by the system. Some analysts are skeptical about the platform's viability despite Samsung's standing as top smartphone maker, especially as Android and Apple Inc's iOS tighten their grip in the smartphone sector.

Developers say that until there is a meaningful user base for Tizen they will have little incentive to make innovative software applications for the system, deemed crucial if Samsung is to convince wary consumers to try it out.

While the launch of Tizen-based TVs will increase the platform's user base, it is unclear if that alone will be enough to pique developers' interest. Users of smart TVs tend to use fewer apps than they would on smartphones.

Still, the operating system is expected to play a key role in Samsung's smart-home business. Tizen can also run on devices with low computing power such as refrigerators and washing machines, offering a way for users to monitor and control such devices remotely.

Samsung did not give sales targets for Tizen-powered TVs. —*Reuters*

Australia issues warning over deadly crocodiles

SYDNEY, 2 Jan — Residents and tourists in northern Australia are being warned about a growing number of crocodiles that are extra dangerous in the breeding season, authorities said on Friday.

Authorities are especially concerned after four people were killed in crocodile attacks in 2014, the highest on record.

The Northern Territory Parks Wildlife Operations (PWCNT) unit said it had received numerous calls regarding sightings of large crocodiles in the Katherine River, a popular area with tourists and bushwalkers.

"The wet season is breeding time for the estuarine or saltwater crocodile," NT Parks and Wildlife said in a statement.

"Dominant males displace other males out of their territory as they compete for the female's attention."

PWCNT said the recently raised river levels have allowed crocodiles to travel more freely and inhabit any part of the river system.

"It is therefore very important to 'be crocwise'. Don't risk your life."

Xinhua

A man from northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region challenge to spent 72 hours on a 70-metre-long steel wire 50 metres above the ground without any protection in Changsha, capital of central China's Hunan Province.
XINHUA

One killed, several injured in knife and axe attack in England

LONDON, 2 Jan — One man was killed and a number of people were injured on New Year's Day in an alleged knife and axe attack in a pub in southwest England, local police said on Thursday. Police were called to attend the Kings Arms in Tamerton Foliot in Plymouth city of southwest England's Devon County, following initial reports of a man reported to be in possession of a knife and axe between 1-1.30 am (GMT) on Thursday.

A 27-year-old man was transported to a local hospital by ambulance but was pronounced dead on arrival. Police also found one man seriously injured and two men with knife injuries, the Devon and Cornwall Police said.

Police are treating the man's death as "suspicious." A weapon has been recovered and two men, aged 20 and 21 both from Plymouth, have been arrested "on suspicion of murder in connection with the incident."

The suspects are being detained at Charles Cross Police Station in Plymouth. Police are appealing for witnesses following the major disturbance.

"An axe has been found but the knife has yet to be located. We are asking local residents to keep an eye out for anything discarded in their bins or gardens that seems suspicious and to call police if anything is found, without touching it," said Detective Superintendent Jim Colwell from Devon and Cornwall Police.

"We have established a cordon at Station Road to assist with scene investigation and our officers will be active in the area throughout the day conducting enquiries," he added.

Xinhua

Road accidents kill over 2,100 in Cambodia last year

PHNOM PENH, 2 Jan — Road accidents killed 2,148 people in Cambodia last year, up 13 percent from 1,901 deaths in 2013, according to a National Police annual report on Friday.

"Among the deaths last year were 22 foreigners," the report said. Besides the fatalities, the accidents injured 8,057 people last year, up 12 percent from 7,208 people in a year earlier, it said, adding that last year's road crashes caused damage to 2,484 cars, trucks and buses, and 5,056 motorcycles.

Interior Minister Sar Kheng said last month that road traffic crashes cost the country about 337 million US dollars a year.

"High-speed driving and alcohol driving are the main causes of the accidents," he said during a distribution ceremony of helmets to students in Phnom Penh.

"About 73 percent of the victims are motorists and 58 percent of them did not wear helmets."

With the population of 14.8 million, the Southeast Asian nation has about 410,000 registered cars, trucks and buses, and two million registered motorcycles.

Xinhua

Four worshipers killed in Rwanda church collapse

KIGALI, 2 Jan — Four people were killed and 24 others injured when a church building collapsed in northern Rwanda's Burera district on New Years Day.

Police said the incident happened around mid day local time among prayers at an 'unfinished' Adventist Church.

The injured were taken to Ruhengeri Hospital as investigation continues to the cause of the accident.

Police however said the situation was generally calm countrywide as people ushered in the New Year.

The situation has been calm and generally, security has improved during this festive season compared to last year, police said.

"There is an improved sense of responsibility by the merry making public and we encourage people to continue," police said.

Police said all public events in churches, bars and night clubs were peaceful.

Xinhua

Chinese, Costa Rica's FM to co-chair 1st China-CELAC ministerial forum

BEIJING, 2 Jan — Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and his Costa Rica' counterpart Manuel Gonzalez Sanz will co-chair the first China-CELAC ministerial forum, the Foreign Ministry announced on its website on Friday.

The forum, slated for 8-9 January in Beijing, will see representatives from China and CELAC, meeting together with heads of some Latin American regional organizations. A coordinators' meeting will be held on 7 January to prepare for the forum.

Costa Rica currently holds the CELAC rotating chairmanship, while Ecuador is next. The two countries, together with Cuba and Bahamas, make up the CELAC Quartet.

Established in December 2011 in Caracas, Venezuela, CELAC includes all North and South American countries but the United States and Canada.—*Xinhua*

Big fire in southern Germany leaves 40 injured

BERLIN, 2 Jan — About 40 people were injured on Thursday when a big fire broke out in German city Stuttgart, according to German media *Focus*.

The incident took place in an underground parking garage of an apartment building on the morning of New Year's Day. Dense smoke rose through open doors and spread to other areas of the building, local police told media.

Firefighters have fought against the flames until the early morning hours and rescued more than 90 residents living in the building.

Among those injured, nine people reportedly suffered severe smoke poisoning and have been taken to hospitals. Others have been treated at the site.

According to first investigations, two motorcycles in the garage went up in flames and set cars on fire. A police spokesman said it remained unclear whether the fire was caused by fireworks.

Xinhua

A resident collects reuseable materials from a burnt house after a fire in Quezon City, the Philippines, on 2 Jan, 2015. The fire razed more than 800 houses, leaving 4,000 families homeless. Three people died in the accident.
XINHUA

myanmar

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CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV TAUNG GYI STAR VOY NO (1001)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV TAUNG GYI STAR VOY NO (1001) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 3.1.2015 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 Claims 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.

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WEATHER REPORT

FORECAST VALID UNTIL EVENING OF THE 3rd January, 2015: Light rain are likely to be isolated in Upper Sagaing Region and Chin State, weather will be partly cloudy in Lower Sagaing, Mandalay, Magway and Taninthayi Regions, Kachin, Shan and Rakhine States and generally fair in the remaining Regions and States. Degree of certainty is (60%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Squalls with moderate to rough sea are likely at times off and along Myanmar coasts. Surface wind speed in squalls may reach (35) m.p.h.

Announcement of Marriage

Roger Chai Yu

Bachelor of Science (Biomedical Engineering) Ph.D. Candidate,
University of North Carolia at Chapel Hill, Durham, North Carolina,
U.S.A eldest son of Dr. Fuxiang Yu & Mrs.Wen Chai of
No: 4936, Big Nance Drive, Raleigh, North Casdina, U.S.A.

and

Eimon Thet Htun

Doctor of Jurisprudence (J.D), Master of Laws (L.L.M) International & Comparative Law, Duke University School of Law, Bachelor of Science, School of Foreign Service, Georgetown Universtiy, Washington;
grand-daughter of Dr. Aung Than Batu, Director-General (retd), Department of Medical Research, Myanmar; and wife Daw Khin Khin Htwe
grand-daughter of (U Tun Myint & Daw Nyunt Tin), formerly of No.48/B, 7½mile, Pyay Road, Yangon; only daughter of (Dr Pyi Thet Htun) & Dr. Thidar Aung of No 7774, Chipwood Lane, Jacksonville, Florida, U.S.A.
were married according to Burmese custom and practice,
on 20th December, 2014 at Inya Lake Hotel.
A first offering of soon by the married couple and various acts of charity were performed at Thathana Beikman, Yodaya Monastery on the morning
of 21st December 2014,
and a Wedding Dinner was also held on the same evening at Shankan Restaurant, Inya Road, Yangon.

We are most grateful to our grand-parents/ parents/ uncle & aunt and to Dr Kyaw Zin Thant & Wife Daw Thandar Le, who performed the various rituals of the Wedding Ceremony according to Burmese custom and practice.

We offer our heartfelt thanks to the relatives and friends who personally attended the wedding ceremony and offerred good wishes and gifts as well as to those who did the same from afar.

We especially thank our cousins/ nephews/ nieces/ and friends who willingly and with cetana participated as bridegrooms, bridesmaids, flower-girl, garland and ring-holders, ushers and helped to make the wedding a beautiful spectacle and happy occasion.

To the various wedding services and staff who not only carred out their tasks skillfully, but did so with much good will-we are most thankful.

Last but not least, we give our heartfelt thanks to all our relatives and close friends from Department of Medical Reserach (Lower Myanmar) and the Universities of Medicine, Yangon, for helping us in various ways to make the Wedding a successful, happy and joyous occasion.

Roger Chai Yu and Eimon Thet Htun

Another EUR 9 million secured to repair flood-damaged homes

BELGRADE, 2 Jan — Director of the Serbian Government Office for Reconstruction and Flood Relief Marko Blagojevic said that the government has so far allocated RSD 4.2 billion for the reconstruction of houses damaged in the May floods and secured another EUR 9 million for the coming year.

The funds to repair damaged homes in 2015 are secured through the European Union programmes

for the reconstruction of housing objects severely damaged in the floods, Blagojevic told the New Year's edition of Belgrade daily Informer.

Financial aid will be available in late January and early February, and it will also be transferred to the areas hit by September floods, such as the eastern Serbian municipality of Kladovo, on the banks of the Danube, he said.

Blagojevic specified that 17,700 families received funds totaling RSD 4.22 billion for the reconstruction of damaged homes, and accommodation has been provided for 292 out of the 337 families whose homes were completely destroyed by the floods.

"This means that they either received money to buy a new house or a new house was built for them," he explained, adding that the remaining 45 houses under construction are to be completed in January. Most of the new homes are equipped with furniture and home appliances, he added.

The majority of damaged roads have been reopened for traffic, but much is yet to be done to remedy the landslides and repair the damaged banks and infrastructure, said Blagojevic.

As far as the energy sector is concerned, the work is going well and we expect the coal production in Kolubara to be fully restored in the spring, said the director of the Office for Reconstruction and Flood Relief.

Tanjug

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Iran, Turkey to use national currencies in bilateral transactions

TEHERAN, 2 Jan — Iran and Turkey have agreed to use their national currencies in trade transactions, the visiting Turkish economy minister said, *Tasnim* news agency reported on Thursday. The arrangement, part of a preferential trade agreement concluded after 11 years of negotiations, starts on Thursday, *Tasnim* quoted Nihat Zeybekci as saying on Wednesday. "With implementation of the agreement, we plan to increase the value of our bilateral trade transactions from the current 16 billion US dollars to 30 billion dollars," said Zeybekci, who met with Iranian Minister of Industries, Mines and Commerce Mohammad-Reza Nematzadeh.

Iran, which boasts the world's largest natural gas reserves, is Turkey's second biggest gas supplier after Russia. Turkey uses a significant portion of its imported Iranian natural gas to generate electricity.

Turkey's main exports to Iran include machinery, motor vehicles, iron and steel products, and tobacco products. Crude oil and natural gas are Iran's major exports to Turkey.

Xinhua

China's box office sales surge 36 pct in 2014

BEIJING, 2 Jan — China's box office sales totaled 29.6 billion yuan (about 4.84 billion US dollars) in 2014, up 36 percent year on year, the country's film bureau said on Thursday.

Domestic films raked in more than 16.15 billion yuan, accounting for 54.5 percent of last year's box office revenues in the Chinese mainland, said Zhang Hongsen, head of the film bureau under the State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television.

Facing pressures from Hollywood, Chinese films still gained major market share and were welcomed by audiences, he said, citing "The Taking of Tiger Mountain," "Coming Home" and "Dearest" as outstanding domestic films.

A total of 618 Chinese films were produced in 2014, while 638 were made in 2013.

More people went to see movies in 2014, with viewers taking 830 million trips to the cinema, up 34.5 percent year on year, the administration said.

Earnings of 66 films surpassed the 100-million benchmark last year, including 36 domestic productions. In 2013, 60 films surpassed that figure.

China gained 1,015 cinemas and 5,397 screens last year, bringing the total number of screens to 23,600. "On average, 15 more screens were added each day," Zhang said.

Chinese films grossed 1.87 billion yuan overseas, up 32 percent, the official said. As the second-largest film market after the United States, China saw its film industry balloon in 2010, when its annual box office sales surpassed 10 billion yuan for the first time. In 2013, it took only six months for ticket sales to reach 10 billion yuan.

Although box office revenues alone cannot fully reflect the state of China's film industry, attracting larger audiences and increasing domestic market share will help promote the country's soft power, experts said.

Zhang said Chinese filmmakers should be aware of pressures and challenges and enhance filmmaking quality in 2015.—*Xinhua*

Angelina Jolie
credits War hero Louis Zamperini for teaching spirituality

LOS ANGELES, 2 Jan — Actress-filmmaker Angelina Jolie says she will be thankful to World War II hero Louis Zamperini, who is the inspiration for her film 'Unbroken', for teaching her to embrace spirituality.

Zamperini, who died aged 97 earlier this year, became close friends with Jolie, 39, while they worked on the film together, reported *People* magazine.

"When there is an obstacle, you have to rise to the challenge, not be overwhelmed by it. And we're not alone in the world.

"I don't know if there's a name for that — religion or faith — just that there's something greater than all of us, and it's uniting and beautiful," Jolie said, when asked what she learnt from Zamperini.—*PTI*

Kanye West wants Idris Elba to play James Bond

LONDON, 2 Jan — American rapper Kanye West has backed Idris Elba to be the next James Bond, calling the British actor a 'big talent'.

West, 37, said making Elba the first black actor to play the famous spy would be 'visionary', reported Independent online.

His comments follow speculation that Elba is the favourite to take on the role next after a leaked email from Sony Pictures co-chairman Amy Pascal allegedly said that "Idris should be the next Bond."

"James Bond is a role made for British actors and you won't find a British actor who has the talent of Idris. To be honest you won't find many anywhere who have his talent… A black Bond would be visionary no doubt," West said.

West is the latest celebrity to back the Hackney-born actor to play Bond after a minority of commentators said the British spy should not be played by a black actor.

Elba responded to the speculation in a humorous tweet earlier this week.

"Isn't 007 supposed to be handsome? Glad you think I have got a shot! Happy New Year people," he wrote.—*PTI*

Nicole Scherzinger forces herself to work out

LONDON, 2 Jan — Pop star Nicole Scherzinger says she forces herself to hit the gym. The 36-year-old singer said getting herself to the gym is getting harder as she gets older, reported Contactmusic.

"I'm like any woman; my weight fluctuates up and down. I have good days and bad days. For many years I worked out every single day, but now I'm in my thirties it's like pulling teeth. I gotta make myself work out; you need to find that balance," she said.

However, the former Pussycat Doll — who is currently starring in the West End production of Andrew Lloyd Webber's 'Cats' in London — insists staying slender isn't the only reason she hits the gym.

"(Exercise) changes everything about how I approach my day and helps me go about life with confidence. It gives me clarity and makes me feel stronger. It's not so much for the physical and vanity side of it. I do it more for the emotional and mental strength it gives me."—*PTI*

Frank Oz returns as Yoda in new 'Star Wars Rebels' video

***Frank Oz is returning as the voice of Yoda for an upcoming episode of 'Star Wars Rebels'.*—PTI**

LONDON, 2 Jan — Frank Oz is returning as the voice of Yoda for an upcoming episode of 'Star Wars Rebels'.

A new clip from the episode titled 'Path of the Jedi' has been released, with the original voice of Yoda reprising his role, reported *Digital Spy*.

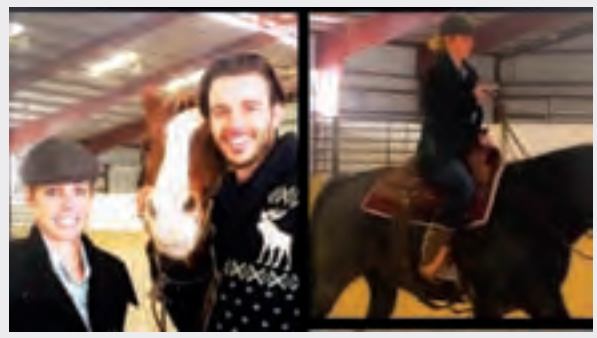
However, Yoda won't be physically appearing in the episode — it is just his voice.

This is because the show is set in the time between 'Star Wars Episode III: Revenge of the Sith' and 'Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope', and to have Yoda physically appear would not fit the Star Wars timeline.

'Star Wars Rebels' centres around the adventures of Jedi Knights Kanan Jarrus and Ezra Bridger and the rest of their crew, travelling on a ship called the Ghost, as they work to evade the Galactic Empire.

The episode will air on the Disney Channel in the New Year.—*PTI*

Britney Spears buys boyfriend a horse



***Britney Spears shared photographs of them riding their new pets around a stable on Twitter.*—PTI**

LOS ANGELES, 2 Jan — Pop star Britney Spears has bought her new boyfriend a horse for his birthday. The 33-year-old singer, who celebrated Christmas with her writer-producer beau Charlie Ebersol and her children last week, splashed out on a dark brown steed for his recent 32nd birthday and also purchased a light brown pony for herself.

The 'Perfume' hitmaker shared photographs of them riding their new pets around a stable on Twitter. "Birthday horses for my birthday boy," she tweeted.

She also presented him with a huge cake covered in romantic photographs of them together, in addition to images of other couples.—*PTI*

Media wants to create feuds between strong women: Madonna

***Madonna: There are those who want to shut me up but they cannot! We still live in a world that discriminates against women.* PTI**

LOS ANGELES, 2 Jan — Pop diva Madonna says there is no bad blood between her and fellow singer Lady Gaga. Madonna, 56, took to Instagram to set the record straight after her manager Guy Oseary shot down rumours that the diva dissed Gaga and called her "a copycat" on a leaked song called "Two Steps Behind".

"There are those who want to shut me up but they cannot! We still live in a world that discriminates against women. (They) are people that are so hateful," Madonna wrote. She went on accusing media of trying to create feuds that don't exist. "They want to create feuds between strong women that do not exist! I do not wish ill will towards any other female artist and I never have!" she continued.

"The world is big enough for all of us! I will fight for my rights as an artist, a human and a woman till the end of my days! Because I am a #rebelheart."—*PTI*

Fan arrested for going into Wenger's dugout

LONDON, 2 Jan — Arsene Wenger played down an incident that led to the arrest of a Southampton fan after his Arsenal side went down 2-0 on the south coast on Thursday.

The Arsenal manager also said the club had received an increased offer from Inter Milan for out-of-favour Germany striker Lukas Podolski.

The Southampton supporter was held by Hampshire Police after having confronted Wenger in his dugout during the Premier League game.

Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger

"The man, arrested on suspicion of going on to an area adjacent to the playing area contrary to the Football (Offences) Act 1991, remains in police custody," the police said in a statement.

Wenger said of the fan: "I don't think he said anything. It was not aggressive at all".

The Frenchman then went on to describe Inter's bid to buy Podolski in this month's transfer window.

"The first proposal was farcical," said Wenger. "After, when they come back a bit more seriously, then you will see what happens now."

Asked whether it was inevitable that Podolski would move to Inter, Wenger replied: "Inevitable? In the transfer window that's very difficult to say but we'll see what happens".

Southampton's victory lifted them to fourth spot in the table, two places above Arsenal.

Reuters

Electricity, gas markets to be liberalised from 1 January

BELGRADE, 2 Jan — A full liberalisation of the electricity market, allowing citizens to choose their suppliers in an open market, will begin from the New Year, with the liberalisation of the gas market set to start as well.

Despite the market liberalisation, small electricity consumers will retain the right to guaranteed supplies from the Serbian electric power company EPS at regulated prices set by the Energy Agency of the Republic of Serbia (AERS).

EPS Director Aleksandar Obradovic has said that he does not expect rival companies to win over household consumers as the EPS electricity price is 30 percent lower than the market price in the region.

The liberalisation of the Serbian electricity market began in 2012 for high-voltage consumers and in 2013 for medium-voltage consumers.

In the first two stages of the liberalisation of the electricity market, around 97 percent of consumers chose to remain with the EPS, with the results of the third stage to depend on the activities of rival companies.

Aside from the liberalisation of the electricity market, the liberalisation of the gas market for large consumers is also set to start from 2015.

Households and small gas consumers will still have the right to guaranteed supplies, to be provided pursuant to existing contracts.

From 2016, they, too, will be able to choose their suppliers on an open market.

Natural gas distributors in Serbia will also lose the right to guaranteed supplies from January 2015.

Serbia currently has around 260,000 natural gas consumers, 250,000 of whom are households and small consumers.

Under the energy law, small consumers are defined as legal persons and entrepreneurs whose facilities are connected to the distribution system and who have less than 50 employees and profits below EUR 10 million. The new energy law, which took effect on 29 December, retains protection for underprivileged energy consumers, for whom RSD 700,000 million worth of subsidies will be set aside next year as well, with all of them to receive a monthly 120-240 kWh of electricity free of charge.

In addition, the monthly gas bills for January, February, March, October, November and December will be reduced by 40-75 cubic metres of gas, depending on the number of household members.

The new, reformist energy law greatly improves the investment climate in the energy sector.—*Tanjug*

Guangdong slaughters chickens after virus found in export to Hong Kong

GUANGZHOU, 2 Jan — Authorities in Huizhou City in south China's Guangdong Province said on Friday that it had slaughtered 13,000 chickens on a poultry farm, as its exports to Hong Kong were found to be infected with the deadly H7N9 virus.

Hong Kong authorities said on Wednesday that it would cull 15,000 chickens at the Cheung Sha Wan Market following the latest discovery of the deadly H7N9 virus in poultry imported from Guangdong.

Authorities in Huizhou traced the infected birds to the Guangdong Lyufeng Poultry Farm, and culled its stock. An immediate inspection was also made in some 1,000 poultry farms in the city. The virus has not been detected in some 7.68 million samples from the farms.

Hong Kong has raised its response level in hospitals to "serious" from "alert", after a 68-year-old woman was hospitalized in Hong Kong on 25 December, and tested positive for avian influenza, the region's first since early 2014. The woman arrived from the neighbouring mainland city of Shenzhen almost two weeks earlier.

Xinhua

Oil tanker collides with Singapore-registered bulk carrier

SINGAPORE, 2 Jan — A Libyan-registered oil tanker collided with a Singapore-registered bulk carrier in Singapore waters about 11 nautical miles north-east of Pedra Branca on Friday morning, the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA) said on Friday.

The collision occurred at about 6 am, with one cargo tank sustained damage, resulting in some spillage of crude oil, the MPA said, adding that it had deployed a helicopter to assess the situation.

Oil spill response resources have been activated, and as part of standard operating procedures for joint oil spill combat in the Straits of Malacca and Singapore, the MPA has notified the Malaysian and Indonesian Authorities.

The two vessels involved in the collision are currently safely anchored and in stable condition. No injury has been reported, and traffic in the port and the Strait of Singapore remains unaffected, according to the MPA.

The cause of the collision is now under investigation.

Xinhua

Cuban military salvos 21-canon salute greeting the coming new year of 2015, in castle Cabana of Havana, Cuba, on 31 Dec, 2014. The ceremony was held on the last night every year in the historic castle, a World Cultural Heritage Site. —XINHUA

MRTV
Entertainment Channel

(3-1-2015, Saturday)

6:00 am
- Travelogue Programme

6:30 am
- Thu Wana Tharma Play (Part-1)

8:15 am
- Myanmar Series

8:35 am
- Teleplay

9:15 am
- Thu Wana Tharma Play (Part-2)

10:15 am
- Myanmar Video

12:00 noon
- Close Down

MITV
MYANMAR INTERNATIONAL

(3-1-15 07:00 am~ 4-1-15 07:00 am) MST

* Local News
* The Prayer Halls and Buddha Images (Part-1)
* World News
* Tea Leaves
* Local News
* Ar Khar New Year Festival
* World News
* The Photographer: Kyaw Kyaw Winn
* Local News
* ID Show "Education"
* World News
* Trishaw Man
* Local News
* Myanmar Entrepreneur "U Nyan Lin"
* World News
* In the Studio "Lann Sa" (Part-2)
* Local News
* Kayin Child Boxer
* World News
* Myanmar Masterclass: 3D
* Local News
* … Changes
* World News
* Wholesale Fish
* Local News
* Kachin Traditional Wedding Ceremony
* World News
* Guiding Star of Song Birds
* Local News
* Mosaic Painting (Precious Stones & Gems)
* World News
* Myanmar Harpist

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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Saturday, 3 January, 2015

City joint top after five-goal Spurs sink Chelsea

LONDON, 2 Jan — Chelsea and Manchester City ended a memorable first day of 2015 locked together at the top of the Premier League as City's dramatic 3-2 win over Sunderland was followed by a shock 5-3 defeat for Chelsea at Tottenham Hotspur.

Chelsea, previously beaten only once this season, were blown away by their effervescent London rivals with inspired front man Harry Kane scoring twice and setting up two more goals.

To rub in the pain for Chelsea fans it was former hero Frank Lampard who came off the bench to give City their victory after they had thrown away a 2-0 lead for the second time in a week.

When the dust settled on a day of drama that underlined why the Premier League remains the most watched domestic competition in the world, City and Chelsea were on 46 points from 20 games with an identical goal difference of plus-25 having both scored 44 goals.

Manchester United are third on 37 points after a 1-1 draw at Stoke City, Southampton occupy fourth spot on 36 after beating Arsenal 2-0, with Spurs up to fifth on 34. Diego Costa put Chelsea ahead but rampant Spurs surged back with goals by Kane, Danny Rose and an Andros Townsend penalty to lead 3-1 at halftime.

Kane fired his second goal seven minutes after the restart and though Eden Hazard pulled one back, Nacer Chadli completed a joyous day for a hugely impressive Spurs with the fifth goal 12 minutes from time before John Terry got a late third for Chelsea.

The result completed a remarkable change in fortunes for Man City who, after dropping points at home to Burnley on Sunday, again allowed a 2-0 lead to slip in a blizzard of second-half goals.

Yaya Toure and Stevan Jovetic put them 2-0 up before City old boys Jack Rodwell and Adam Johnson, with a penalty, made it 2-2.

Lampard then sailed to the rescue, as he has done so often this season, by heading the winner — the fourth goal in a crazy eight-minute spell — three minutes after coming on as a 70th-minute substitute.

The league's bottom two, Leicester City and Burnley, came from behind to draw 2-2 at Liverpool and 3-3 at Newcastle United respectively. There were also draws for two clubs with new managers as Crystal Palace ended 0-0 with Aston Villa and West Bromwich Albion finished 1-1 with West Ham United.

The only winners in the bottom half of the table were Hull City whose 2-0 home success over Everton was a fourth successive defeat for the visitors.

Reuters

*Manchester City's Yaya Toure (L) heads clear from Sunderland's Sebastian Larsson during their English Premier League soccer match at the Etihad Stadium in Manchester, northern England on 1 Jan, 2015.—*REUTERS

Tottenham Hotspur's Harry Kane (R) shoots to score a goal during their English Premier League soccer match against Chelsea at White Hart Lane in London on 1 Jan, 2015.
REUTERS

*Liverpool's Steven Gerrard controls the ball during their English Premier League soccer match against Manchester United at Old Trafford in Manchester, northern England on 14 Dec, 2014.—*REUTERS

Gerrard to quit Liverpool at end of season

LONDON, 2 Jan — Former England skipper Steven Gerrard is set to announce that he will leave Liverpool at the end of the season, according to media reports.

The BBC and Sky Sports were among several media outlets that suggested the 34-year-old midfielder would be moving to a US Major League Soccer club.

Manager Brendan Rodgers said last month that Gerrard, who is out of contract at the end of the season, had been offered a new deal by Liverpool.

"He has been here for 16 years and he is a man who deserves the utmost respect and should be given the time to consider it," added Rodgers.

"One thing is clear, I love working with Steven Gerrard. He is arguably the best player that's ever played in the Premier League and I have enjoyed every single minute of working with him."

Gerrard, who stood down as England skipper after the 2014 World Cup in Brazil, has played nearly 700 games for Liverpool and captained the Anfield club to a memorable Champions League final victory over AC Milan in 2005. The midfielder featured in Liverpool's 2-2 home draw with Leicester City in the Premier League on Thursday.—*Reuters*

Australia have right blend to win Asian Cup — Jedinak

MELBOURNE, 2 Jan — Australia captain Mile Jedinak is confident the Socceroos have the right blend of players to win this month's Asian Cup on home soil and that the younger members of the squad are strong enough to handle the pressure.

"I don't see any reason why not," the 30-year-old midfielder told reporters in Melbourne on Friday when asked if the less experienced players had the mental fortitude to deliver in front of an expectant home crowd.

"A lot of the boys are going to be excited that it's going to be on home soil," the Crystal Palace skipper added.

"We understand that's going to come with added expectation. Are we capable of handling that? I believe so."

A week out from the first major football tournament hosted by Australia, Jedinak had his first training session with the Socceroos as they prepare for their opening Group A fixture against Kuwait in Melbourne on 9 January.

South Korea and Oman are the other two teams in the group.

A virtual ever-present under coach Ange Postecoglou, becoming captain prior to the 2014 World Cup, Jedinak said there was nothing stopping the Socceroos from claiming a maiden Asian Cup title.

"I think 100 percent we've got the right blend (to win the Cup)," he said.

"We know what's happened in the last year, in terms of the games and things like that, it's all been built up towards this point.

"It's great to be in amongst it and you can see the buzz around the camp, the group.

"The boys are looking to get out there and do the job."

Australia lost all three matches in a tough assignment in Brazil against Spain, the Netherlands and Chile but Jedinak believes that baptism of fire and a tough friendly schedule that followed were a perfect buildup for the Asian Cup.

"It was great having the World Cup so soon before this tournament," he said. "It got a lot of the squad to see what a tournament environment feels like.

"Everyone's here to do the job for the national team, that doesn't change from me to the most inexperienced player."

Reuters

*Australia's Mile Jedinak (15) celebrates with teammates after scoring a goal from a penalty kick during their 2014 World Cup Group B soccer match against Netherlands at the Beira Rio stadium in Porto Alegre on 18 June, 2014.—*REUTERS

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